

# 'Mann Ki Baat' to take 3-month break for elections, says Modi

## Urges First-Time Voters To Exercise Franchise In Record Numbers

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said his monthly radio address 'Mann Ki Baat' will not be broadcast for the next three months, "adhering to political decorum" in view of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. He also urged first-time voters to exercise their franchise in record numbers.

In his last address before the general elections, the PM said keeping 110 episodes of the programme away from the shadow of the govt is a big success. "It is a programme for the people, for the people, and by the people," he said.

Expressing confidence of winning the election for the third time in a row, PM said, "When we interact in Mann Ki Baat (next time), it will be 11th episode." He added that though the programme is taking a break, the country's progress will not stop even for a while and he urged people to keep posting India's achievements on social media with the hashtag 'Mann Ki Baat'.



PM Narendra Modi with others during inauguration of India's longest cable-stayed bridge Sudarshan Setu at Dwarka in Gujarat on Sunday

Mentioning the Election Commission's initiative 'Meri Pehla Vote - Desh Ke Liye', Modi said through this, first-time voters have been especially requested to vote in maximum numbers. He said the more youth participate in the electoral process, the more beneficial its results will be for the country.

"I would also urge first time voters to vote in record numbers. On turning 18, you are getting a chance to elect a member for the 18th Lok Sabha. That means this 18th Lok Sabha will also be a symbol of your aspiration. That is why, the importance of your vote has risen further," PM said.

Modi also urged influencers from the fields of sports, cinema, literature, other professionals, and influen-

## PM to launch 2,000 rail projects today

**New Delhi:** PM Narendra Modi will on Monday virtually lay the foundation stone of more than 2,000 railway infrastructure projects worth around Rs 41,000 crore. He will also inaugurate the redeveloped Ganti Nagar railway station in Lucknow. He will also lay the foundation stone of 1,500 road over bridges and underpasses spread across 24 states and UTs, to be built at a cost of around Rs 21,520 crores.

The 553 stations, that will be redeveloped, are spread across 27 states and UTs. They will act as 'city centres' integrating both sides of the respective city. **TNN**

cers on Instagram and YouTube to actively participate in this campaign and motivate first-time voters.

# Drone Didis earn PM's praise for boost to farming in rural India

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** PM Narendra Modi hailed "Nari Shakti" during his 'Mann Ki Baat' radio address and lauded the contribution of women in the country's development journey ahead of March 8 observed as 'International Women's Day'. Through an interaction with Sunita Devi from Sitapur, the PM brought into focus the inspiring journey of 'Drone Didis' — women steering change by manoeuvring drones to improve and facilitate farming practices in rural areas.

"Who would have thought till a few years ago that in our country, women living in villages too would fly drones? But today this is becoming possible. Today, there is so much discussion about Drone Didis in every village," the PM said.

A mother of two, Sunita is a farmer and said during

rains, it was hard for farm workers to enter the fields as they were filled with water. She said some processes at such times could be easily done by using a drone while standing along the boundary of the farm. "Farmers feel very satisfied as a lot of time is saved and now, even big farmers are reaching out to drone didis for using a drone for

## 'NARI SHAKTI'

spraying," she said.

Urging women listening to the programme to share their views, the PM said his mission was to make 'Lakshpati Didis'. This is a scheme where the govt will handhold rural self-help group women to engage in a sustainable livelihood option to be able to earn a minimum of Rs 1 lakh per annum.

Pointing out that women were making an impact across all fields, the PM said

women had also demonstrated their leadership abilities in natural farming, water conservation and sanitation.

He went on to interact with Kalyani Prafulla Patil from Maharashtra. An MSc in microbiology, Kalyani is a mother of two and has been working in the gram panchayat for three years where she has been at the forefront of encouraging organic farming and creating an organic spray out of 10 types of flora that the women collected in the village. The panchayat has been focussing on rain water harvesting and has made 20 recharge shafts in the village and secured sanction for another 50.

"Whether it is Sunita ji or Kalyani ji, the success of woman power in myriad fields is very inspiring. I once again appreciate this spirit of our woman power from the core of my heart," the PM said.

# 7 die in cracker factory blast in Uttar Pradesh

**Prayagraj:** At least seven persons died and eight injured after an explosion at a firecrackers factory in Bharwari area of Kohraj police station of Kaushambi district in Uttar Pradesh Sunday noon.

Those who died included factory owner Shahid (35), who had licence to run the manufacturing unit. All the dead and injured were factory workers. The injured were admitted to SRN hospital in Prayagraj, where the condition of some was stated critical. Doctors said death toll was likely to climb. The fire department was ascertaining the cause of the accident. Prima facie it appeared that chemicals used in manufacturing crackers caught fire, causing a massive blast. The explosion was heard several kilometres from the factory. Several fire tenders and ambulances rushed to the spot. Expressing deep sorrow over the accident, CM Yogi Adityanath ordered officials to expedite relief operations. **TNN**

# India-Japan army combat drill begins in Rajasthan

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** India and Japan on Sunday kicked off their 'Dharma Guardian' army combat exercise at Mahajan field firing ranges in Rajasthan, continuing with the upward trajectory in their bilateral military engagements.

The aim of the annual exercise, which will continue till March 9, is to foster military cooperation and enhance combined capabilities to execute joint operations in a semi-urban environment.

"The exercise will enable the two sides to share their best practices in tactics, techniques and procedures in conducting tactical operations. It will also develop interoperability, bonhomie and camaraderie between the troops from the two countries," an officer said.

Eastern Army commanding general of Japan Ground Self Defence Force, Lt-General Togashi Yuichi, is scheduled to witness combat shooting demonstrations, special airborne operations and house-intervention drills during the exercise on March 3.

"Tactical drills to be practiced include establishing temporary operating bases, creating an ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) grid, executing cordon and search operations in a hostile village and heli-borne operations," the officer said.

Apart from 'Dharma Guardian' exercise between their armies and JIMEX between their navies, India in January last year had also deployed four Sukhoi-30MKI fighters, two C-17 Globemaster-III strategic lift aircraft, one IL-78 mid-air refueler and around 150 IAF personnel for the first-ever air combat exercise with Japan called 'Veer-Guardian' at Hyakuri air base.

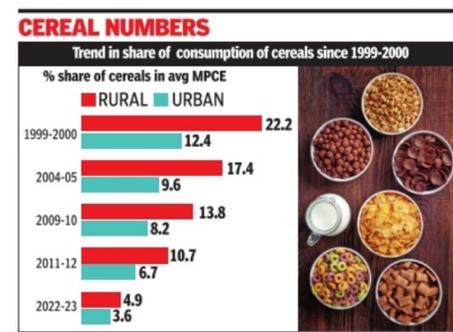
# 'Data may reignite debate over poverty reduction in country'

From P1

The numbers could again reignite the debate over poverty reduction in the country, with the government showcasing its record of inclusive and broad-based growth.

In 2014, a panel headed by former RBI governor C Rangarajan had estimated the poverty line as monthly per capita expenditure of Rs 1,407 in urban areas and Rs 972 in rural. The latest data showed that the bottom 5-10% of the population had an average monthly consumption expenditure of Rs 1,864 in rural areas and Rs 2,695 in urban centres.

"Going by the Rangarajan definition, the survey data clearly shows that poverty levels in India are now significantly lower. As per the panel's definition, a person spending Rs 47 per day in cities and Rs 32 in villages is below the poverty line. According to latest MPCE data, the consumption expenditure of the bottom 5-10% shows that poverty rates in India are now in low single-digit," said Soumay Kanti Ghosh, a part-time member of 16th Finance Commission and group chief economic adviser of State Bank of India. The survey showed that in current prices, rural



monthly per capita consumption spending rose 164% from Rs 1,430 in 2011-12 to Rs 3,773 in 2022-23 while in urban centres, it shot up 146% from Rs 2,630 in 2011-12 to Rs 6,459 in 2022-23.

It also showed significant shifts in rural and urban consumption, with the share of food and cereals coming down.

# Haryana INLD chief shot dead

Sat Singh | TNN

**Rohtak:** Unidentified gunmen shot and killed two-time former Haryana MLA and INLD's state president Nafe Singh Rathee along with one of his three bodyguards inside a moving car at Bahadurgarh in Jhajjar district on Sunday. INLD legislator Abhay Chautala said Rathee recently met CM Manohar Lal Khattar, home minister Anil Vij and the IGP to report threats to his safety, but the BJP-led state govt did not provide him official security "for political reasons". Although the motive behind the fatal attack remains unclear, jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi

and his associate Kala Jathe-di are suspected of having a hand in it, sources said.

Rathee, who was MLA of Bahadurgarh from 1996 to 2005, was in the front seat of his car when the assailants fired from an i10 at Barahi Gate Road. He took bullets in the neck, waist and thigh, doctors said after he was declared dead on arrival at a nearby hospital. INLD spokesperson Rakesh Sihag confirmed that a wounded security guard died, too. A video of the attack and the state INLD chief's bullet-riddled SUV was circulating on social media by the time Jhajjar SP Arpit Jain reached the crime scene.

# 'Tripura zoo authorities responsible'

From P1

This sparked public outrage, leading to a PIL filed by VHP's Bengal unit in Jalpaiguri circuit bench of Calcutta HC on Feb 21. The HC bench ordered changing the names of the lion park. However, the Bengal forest department clarified that the names were given by Tripura, and any modification was the responsibility of Tripura zoo authorities. VHP then filed a writ petition in HC, claiming that the names were irrational and amounted to blasphemy. "The court expressed its displeasure over the naming..." said advocate Subhanakar Dutta.

# 'Hemil's last call to his family lasted for over two hours'

From P1

Hemil, too, always aspired to go abroad," he said. "He left India for Russia on Dec 14 via Chennai. He would call his family regularly."

Hemil's last call to his family lasted for two hours. "He insisted that he was doing well there. It is hard to believe that just hours after the phone call, he was killed," Atul said.

The young man learned of the Russian army looking for "helpers" on social media. Based on a recruitment agent's directions, he reached that country and took up a job that apparently paid handsomely. "Hemil's first salary of Rs 2.3 lakh hit his bank account a few days ago," his uncle said.

Hemil's family intends to request the govt to contact the Russian authorities for clarity on the circumstances of his death.

A police officer said Hemil went to Russia on a normal visa. "We have started an inquiry into how he reached Russia and started working there. The family is unable to talk immediately, hence we are waiting."

# Shinde changes tone, warns Jarange against 'political language'

**Mumbai:** Days after both houses of the state legislature passed a bill for a separate 10% quota for Marathas, CM Eknath Shinde on Sunday departed from his conciliatory tone and accused activist Manoj Jarange of constantly changing his demands, reports Chaitanya Marpakwar. Warning him against testing govt's patience, Shinde said Jarange was now speaking a "political language" and was certain that he was being puppeteered by someone else. "I wonder why Jarange's speech looks like the script generated by Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray." He said the political conspiracy would soon be exposed.

The CM's aggressive stance came on a day Jarange levelled multiple allegations against deputy CM Devendra Fadnis, including hatching a plot to kill him, which took even his supporters by surprise. Shinde said Jarange was initially sincere about fighting for the cause of the Marathas and govt was with him, but "now his language seems political". "I can smell that someone is behind him who is making him talk," he said.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

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## NEET-UG: NTA adds 14 exam centres abroad

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

The National Testing Agency (NTA) has decided to add new examination centres overseas for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test Undergraduate (NEET-UG).

The NTA's move came soon after the agency received requests from aspirants. Earlier, the information bulletin for the exam had no mention of centres outside India for candidates to attempt the test. Following this, applications are now invited from candidates residing abroad for NEET-UG. The registration process for the entrance test began on February 9 with a deadline set for March 9. "It has been decided that the exam will also be conducted in 14 foreign cities in 12 countries," stated the NTA senior director (Exams) Sadhna Parashar. The 14 foreign cities where the exam will be conducted include Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah (UAE); Kuwait City in Kuwait; Bangkok in Thailand; Colombo in Sri Lanka; Doha in Qatar; Kathmandu in Nepal; Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia; Lagos in Nigeria; Manama in Bahrain; Muscat in Oman; Riyadh in Saudi Arabia; and Singapore. Besides, the exam will be held at 554 centres across India.

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**APPENDIX - IV-A**  
[See proviso to Rule 8(6) and Rule 9(1) of Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002]  
**SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) and Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (54 of 2002).

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower, Co-Borrower (sland Mortgagee) (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Aditya Birla Finance Limited on 21.08.2023, will be sold through E-Auction on "As is where is". "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis on 03.04.2024 for recovery of Rs.3,32,48,319.04 (Rupees Three Crore Thirty Two Lakhs Forty Eight Thousand Three Hundred Ninety and paise Four Only) due and payable as on 22.08.2022 and further interest and other expenses thereon till the date of realization due to the Secured Creditor from the Borrowers/ Co-Borrowers/ Mortgagees namely Libox Chem (India) Private Limited (through its Administrator Mr. Ram Ratan Kanoongo), Mr. Arvind Manubhai Mehta, Mr. Sheshmal Bhatia and Mr. Dinbandhu Dilip Sheth.

The Reserve Price of the immovable property (description of which is mentioned below) is Rs. 4,75,97,083 (Rupees Four Crore Seventy-Five Lakhs Ninety-Seven Thousand and Eighty-Three Only) and Earnest Money Deposit Amount is Rs. 47,59,708.3 (Rupees Forty-Seven Lakhs Fifty-Nine Thousand Seven Hundred Eight and paise Three Only)

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