



AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS
Duty timings: DGCA issues new norms

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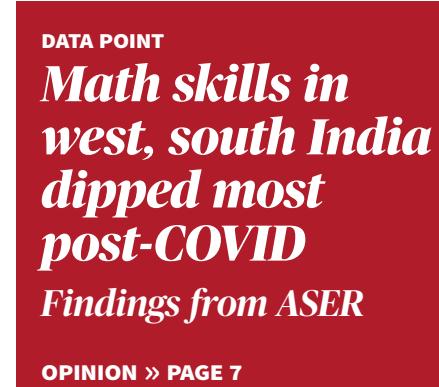
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Rijiju endorses former HC judge's view that top court 'hijacked' the Constitution

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

In a sign of escalating tensions between the Executive and the Judiciary, Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju on Sunday said the majority of people had "sane views", similar to the one expressed by a retired High Court judge, who said the Supreme Court had "hijacked" the Constitution by deciding to appoint judges by itself.

Mr. Rijiju took to Twitter to share a video interview of the former Delhi High Court judge, Justice R.S. Sodhi (retd), and called it the "voice of a judge".

In the interview, Justice Sodhi also said the top court could not frame laws as it did not have the right to do so. "...Only Parliament will amend the Constitution. But here, I feel the Supreme Court for the



Actually majority of the people have similar sane views. It's only those people who disregard the provisions of the Constitution and mandate of the people think that they are above the Constitution of India

KIREN RIJUJI
Union Law Minister

first time hijacked the Constitution. After hijacking, they [the SC] said that 'we will appoint [judges] ourselves and the government will have no role in it,' he said in Hindi.

Endorsing the view, Mr. Rijiju tweeted: "Actually majority of the people have similar sane views. It's only those people who disregard the provisions of the Constitution and mandate of the people think that they are above the Constitution of India."

Another tweet said:

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"Voice of a Judge...Real beauty of Indian Democracy is its success. People rule themselves through their representatives. Elected representatives represent the interests of the People & make laws. Our Judiciary is independent and our Constitution is Supreme." Mr. Rijiju's remarks are the latest in the tussle between the Centre and the Supreme Court over judicial appointments.

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Exim data revised, trade deficit narrows by \$10 bn

Exports between April and November now pegged at \$298.3 billion, almost \$12 billion higher than the initial estimates; import bill seen at \$493.5 billion, about \$1.7 billion up from the earlier figures

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's foreign trade data for the first eight months of 2022-23 have been significantly revised, with the import bill being scaled up or down by at least two billion dollars in each of those months, in comparison to the preliminary estimates issued by the Union Commerce Ministry.

The total merchandise exports between April and November are now pegged at \$298.3 billion, nearly \$12 billion higher than what the original monthly data suggested. The import bill in those eight months is now estimated at \$493.5 billion, about \$1.7 billion higher than the initial numbers. The trade deficit in the first eight months of

Revised trade figures

The table shows India's revised trade balance data from April to November 2022



All figures in \$ million

Months	Trade balance	Initial estimate	Revision
April	-18,360	-20,110	1,750
May	-22,125	-24,290	2,165
June	-22,210	-26,180	3,970
July	-25,607	-30,000	4,393
August	-26,848	-27,980	1,132
September	-29,236	-25,710	-3,526
October	-27,416	-26,910	-506
November	-23,372	-23,890	518
April - Nov.	-195,174	-205,070	9,896

Source: CEIC, Commerce and Industry Ministry

the year is \$10 billion lower than indicated by adding up monthly preliminary estimates.

Economists said such wide variations in data are unusual and make it difficult to formulate policies,

especially when a critical focus area for the economy is managing the current account deficit, fuelled by rising imports and a feared slowdown in exports amid a global recession. The import figure for September

2022 has seen the sharpest revision, from an earlier estimate of just \$61.1 billion to the year's highest tally at \$64.7 billion.

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IN BRIEF



JD(U) weakened,
many leaders in
touch with BJP'

PATNA

A day after the Bihar CM said Upendra Kushwaha has left the party earlier, Mr. Kushwaha on Sunday said the JD(U) had weakened and several party leaders were in touch with the Opposition BJP. » Page 11

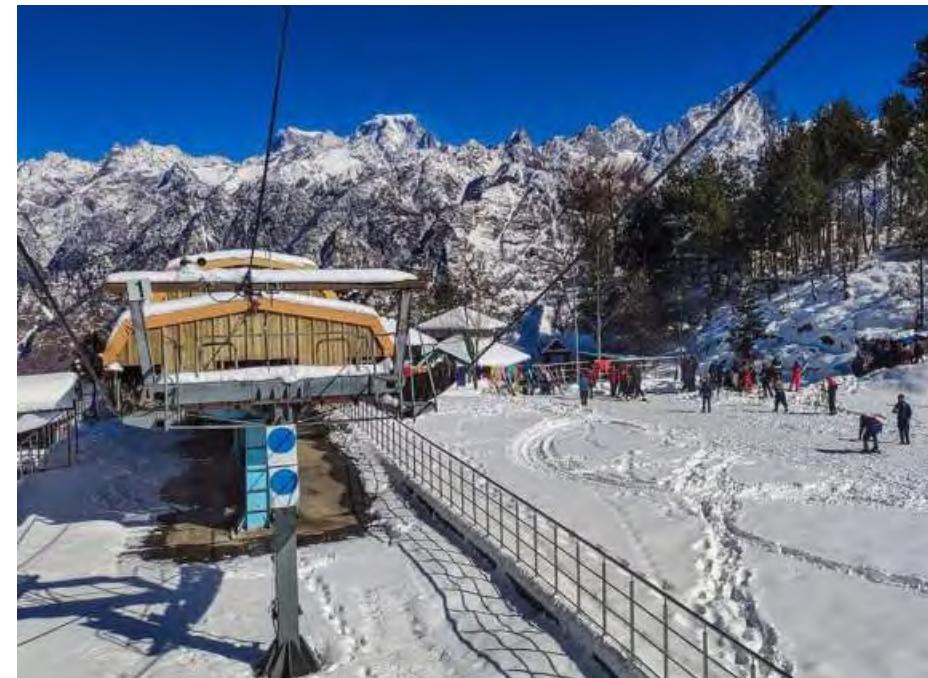
Never opposed ties with Cong., NCP: VBA chief

PUNE

VBA chief Prakash Ambedkar on Sunday said he was never opposed to allying with the Congress and the NCP, and the parties were welcome to join the proposed alliance between the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena and the VBA. » Page 3

EDUCATION PLUS » PAGE 3

Business as usual



Contrasting picture: Tourists at a ski resort in Auli, located over 2,900 metres above sea level in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, following fresh snowfall on Sunday. Since Friday, over 300 tourists visited the destination, just 6 km from Joshimath where land subsidence has wreaked havoc. PTI

Ten killed in shooting near Los Angeles after festival

Associated Press
MONTEREY PARK

Ten people were killed in a mass shooting late on Saturday in a city east of Los Angeles following a Lunar New Year celebration that attracted thousands, the police said. Sgt. Bob Boese of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said the shooting, reported at 10.22 p.m., occurred at a business on Garvey Ave. in Monterey Park, largely an Asian-American neighbourhood.

FULL REPORT ON
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Shah Rukh Khan calls Assam CM to flag violent protest against *Pathaan* in State

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Hours after he feigned ignorance about Shah Rukh Khan, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said he received a call from the actor who expressed anxiety over a violent protest at a theatre in Guwahati ahead of the screening of his latest film, *Pathaan*, which will be released on January 25.

"Bollywood actor Shri @iamsrk called me and we talked today morning at 2 a.m. He expressed concern about an incident in Guwahati during the screening of his film. I assured him that it's the duty of the State govt. to maintain law & order. We'll enquire and ensure no such untoward incidents [happen]," Mr. Sarma said in a tweet.

Many right-wing organisations have demanded a ban on the film for showing actor Deepika Padukone in a saffron bikini in the song *Besharam Rang*.

Mr. Sarma had told journalists on Saturday that he neither knew who the actor was nor anything about *Pathaan*. "Who is Shah

Rukh Khan? I don't know anything about him or his film," he said when asked if the government would take any action against the Bajrang Dal activists who allegedly stormed a theatre in the Narengi area of the city on Friday and set the film's posters on fire.

"I keep receiving calls from many Bollywood peo-



Vociferous protest: Members of a right-wing organisation stage a demonstration against the movie *Pathaan* in Patna on Sunday. PTI

"I keep receiving calls from many Bollywood peo-

"I keep receiving calls from many Bollywood peo-

IN BRIEF**Lokayukta probing graft case against Adesh Gupta, says AAP**

The Aam Aadmi Party on Sunday claimed that the Lokayukta is conducting a probe against former Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta for amassing properties worth crores during his term as the Mayor of North Delhi Municipal Corporation from April 2018 to April 2019. Mr. Gupta termed the allegations "false and politically motivated". AAP chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj said, "The Lokayukta has issued multiple notices to Adesh Gupta, but he has not given any information to date." Mr. Gupta further said that he will file a defamation case against Mr. Bharadwaj.

Minors who stabbed youth to death, burnt his face, arrested

The police on Sunday said two teenage boys have been arrested for allegedly stabbing to death an 18-year-old, slitting his throat and burning his face with a chemical to hide his identity in south Delhi's Bhatti Mines. An officer said the incident took place on Saturday when the victim Harsh Kumar, a Class XII student, was playing cards with 4-5 boys in a forest near the spot of the crime and the two accused tried to snatch his phone. "One of the apprehended CCLs (child in conflict with law) snatched the phone and when the victim tried to stop him, the two accused slit his throat and stabbed him several times in front of the other boys," a senior police officer said.

MCD to install artworks in city markets before G-20 summit

Civic authorities have built a park in Lajpat Nagar market and decorated it with sculptures, while plans are afoot to install public art at other markets also to enhance the look of the city in time for the G-20 meetings. India is expected to host over 200 G-20 meetings and events, which will culminate on September 10. Officials said the MCD has planned to install public artworks in the markets at Greater Kailash-2, South Extension-2, Lajpat Nagar-2, Karol Bagh Market, Chandni Chowk, Surajmal Vihar, Defense Colony 2 Market, Hauz Khas Market, Plaza Market, Vasundhara Enclave, Malviya Nagar Market and Qudsia Park, among other places. PTI

Guided heritage tour on e-bikes starts in Walled City

A guided tour to explore the Walled City of Delhi riding e-bikes was launched on Sunday by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), officials of the civic body said. The tour on Sunday was flagged off by MCD Additional Commissioner A.A. Tazir in the presence of senior officials. The guided tour starts from Kashmere Gate and ends at Delhi Gate, covering seven gates of old Shahjahanabad, in a three-hour ride on e-bikes. It will also facilitate people in travelling through the narrow lanes of old Delhi comfortably, the officials added. PTI

Have turned *tentwaale* schools into *talentwaale* schools, says Kejriwal

Hope L-G won't stop the Finland file after hearing experiences of teachers who have gone abroad for training, says CM; why not get foreign experts here instead of sending teachers outside, asks BJP

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said that the investment in the training and development of school-teachers "is considered an expense by some", whereas it is "an investment in the future of our country". During his tenure as Delhi's CM, Mr. Kejriwal said, he had gone abroad only twice, as he knew that there was nothing to gain from travelling abroad.

"I want you all to go and learn in the best universities of the world. Otherwise, there are also leaders who make two trips abroad every month and see the whole world in five years," he said.

Mr. Kejriwal made the statements at Thyagaraj Stadium in Delhi on Sunday while interacting with the teachers and principals of Delhi government schools whom the AAP government had sent to Finland, Singapore and the U.K. for training over the past eight years.

Questioning the CM, Leader of the Opposition

Foreign exposure

Over the last eight years, the Delhi govt. has sent a total of 1,409 principals and teachers abroad for training

Number of participants

59	University of Jyvaskyla, Finland
939	National Institute of Education, Singapore
411	Judge Business School, Cambridge, U.K.

Areas of training

- Student assessment frameworks and tools
- Self-assessment and communication skills
- Developing strong student-teacher relationships
- Effective use of digital technology



Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal interacting with teachers at Thyagaraj Stadium in the Capital on Sunday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said instead of sending a few teachers abroad, why does the government not call foreign experts to Delhi and train thousands of teachers simultaneously.

The CM's comments come at a time when the Delhi government and Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena have locked horns over the issue of the former's proposal to send its teachers to Finland for training.

Mr. Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia have attacked the L-G over his decision to return the proposal while asking for

"a cost-benefit analysis".

"Had the L-G listened to the experiences shared by the teachers today, he would have been proud to be the L-G of Delhi. I will send a video of teachers' experiences to him and hope that he will not stop the Finland file," Mr. Kejriwal said.

"Teachers have played the most crucial role in Delhi's education revolution. Every Delhi government school is a symbol of change. *Tentwaale* school became *talentwaale* school. The training of teachers and world-class infrastructure changed the

atmosphere and gave splendid results," the CM also said.

Discuss your model?

In response, Mr. Bidhuri challenged the AAP government to convene an Assembly session on its education model.

"The truth is that 22,000 guest teachers were recruited by this government, out of which several thousand have already lost their jobs. To date, the service of not a single guest teacher has been confirmed, nor have their salaries been increased," Mr. Bidhuri said.

First glimpse

Song of God: Haryana's tableau, with 'International Geeta Mahotsav' as its theme for this year, being prepared by artists in Delhi on Sunday. For the second year in a row, an expert committee of the Defence Ministry has selected Haryana's tableau for the Republic Day Parade on Thursday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

22 months and counting: Hardayal library's staff struggle without salaries

Employees at the 163-year-old library have been protesting over unpaid dues since June last year

Muneef Khan

NEW DELHI

Gangaram, an attendant at Hardayal Municipal Public Library in Chandni Chowk, has been on a strike along with his colleagues since June last year over the issue of their pending salaries. The library's staff has not been paid for the past 22 months.

"I am unable to meet my family's daily needs and bills are piling up. I have to continue protesting because no one else is going to help us. I have worked here for 20 years," said Mr. Gangaram.

His colleague Ashok Chaudhary, explaining why the employees of the 163-year-old library have been protesting, said, "If we don't strike, the author-



Still open: Hardayal Municipal Heritage Public Library in Chandni Chowk. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

ities will go ahead and lock the library."

Financial woes

The library functions on an annual grant from the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), which is slightly over ₹4 crore.

However, according to the acting librarian Rajendra

pay pending salaries of employees for up to three months. However, the employees said that amount was too low.

Funds exhausted

When *The Hindu* paid a visit to the library, which opens from 8 a.m. till 10 p.m., only the reading room was open for visitors.

Despite all odds, Mr. Jatav keeps the doors open, he says, to give civil services aspirants a space to study. "I don't think we can pay the electricity bills after the next couple of months."

The MCD's director for press and information Amit Kumar said the grant to the library remains unpaid largely due to the civic body's ongoing financial crunch.

Six months to enforce law for compensating accident victims: HC

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court was hearing a petition by the legal heirs of a person who died in a road accident in 2011

The Delhi High Court has given the central government six months to enforce provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act that provide for grant of compensation to road accident victims even if the errant vehicle is uninsured as well as in cases of hit-and-run.

The direction was passed by a Bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad on January 11, taking into consideration the Centre's submission that it be given "some breathing time".

Since April 1, 2022

Stating that the amendment pertaining to uninsured vehicles came into force on April 1, 2022, the Centre sought six months' time to do the "needful" to ensure implementation of Sections 145-165 of the Motor Vehicles (32nd Amendment) Act, 1988 to the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 across the country.

The High Court's direction came while hearing a petition by the legal heirs of the deceased victim of a road accident. The victim had died in a road accident in August 2011, caused by an uninsured tractor.

The petitioners sought compensation for themselves as well as other vic-

tims of road accidents for the loss suffered due to non-implementation of the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act and its rules.

Serious concerns

While raising serious concerns over accidents caused by uninsured vehicles and hit-and-run cases, the petitioners urged implementation of various amendments under the Motor Vehicles Act in order to ensure that victims even in such cases get the compensation.

The plea drew the court's attention to the Motor Vehicles (32nd Amendment) Act, 2019, which introduced Sections 145-165 to the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 to ensure that a scheme is in place for granting compensation to road accident victims even if the accident causing vehicle is uninsured.

The plea stated that even as the statute provides for compensation to road accident victims in such cases, the Centre has not yet framed any rules or guidelines in this respect.

Man who duped Leela Palace of lakhs sent to 2-day police custody

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Sharif, from his house in Delhi and granted them custody for further investigation.

As per the police, a case was registered on January 14 at Sarojini Nagar police station based on the complaint of the hotel's general manager Anupam Das Gupta, who alleged that a guest who had stayed from August 1 to November 20 had fled without clearing a large amount of his bill.

He allegedly posed as a functionary of the United Arab Emirates royal family and did not pay the bill, believed to be over ₹23 lakh, for his more than three-month long stay at the Leela Palace hotel in Delhi's Chanakyapuri.

During a custody hearing, Duty Magistrate Shivaangi Vyas noted that the police had to recover various items, allegedly stolen from the hotel by Mr. Sharif, from his house in Delhi and granted them custody for further investigation.

The hotel has also accused Mr. Sharif of stealing silverware and other expensive items from the room he was allotted.

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Kumbakonam - 612001. E-Mail id : crmd@cityunionbank.in,
Ph : 0435-243232, Fax : 0435-243146

POSSESSION NOTICE (Immovable Properties)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of City Union Bank Ltd., having its Administrative Office at No.24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612001 and one of the Branch Offices at M-17, Ground Floor, Lajpat Nagar II, South Delhi, New Delhi, Delhi - 110024, Lajpat Nagar Branch under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(2)(B) & (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice Dated 01-02-2022 calling upon the borrowers No.1 Mrs. Gee Dee Enterprises, at II-J-2B, Basement, Central Market, Lajpat Nagar New Delhi - 110024, No.2 Mr. Ram Parkash Verma, S/o. Ganesh Dass, at E-805, Ground Floor, C.R.Park, New Delhi - 110019, No.3 Mrs. Santosh Kumari Verma, W/o. Ram Parkash Verma, at E-805, Ground Floor, C.R.Park, New Delhi - 110019 to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice being ₹68,03,007/- (Rupees Sixty Eight Lakh Three Thousand and Seven only) within 60 days from the date of the said Notice with subsequent interest thereon from 29-01-2023 with monthly rents.

The borrowers above named having failed to repay the amount despite the receipt of the above referred statutory notice, NOTICE is hereby given to the borrowers above named and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the Properties described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 6 of the said Rules on this 18th day of January 2023.

The borrowers above named in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of City Union Bank Ltd. for an amount of ₹6,79,898/- (Rupees Seventy Six Lakh Ninety Nine Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety Eight only) and interest thereon from 07-01-2023 till the repayment of entire dues.

The borrowers' attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Immovable Properties Mortgaged to our Bank**Schedule - A**

Property - 1 : (Property Owned by Mr. Ram Parkash Verma, S/o. Ganesh Dass) Shop No.2, Admeasuring approx 8 x 22 in the Lower Ground Floor of the aforesaid free-hold property bearing Plot No. K-1/38, admeasuring 125 square yards, situated at E.P.D.P. Colony, Known as Chittaranjan Park, New Delhi - 110019 and bounded as under: North : Plot No.37, South : Road, East : Road, West : Plot No.31.

Property - 2 : (Property Owned by Mr. Ram Parkash Verma, S/o. Ganesh Dass) Space/Unit bearing No.1, on basement having an Area of 8 x 19 Approx (14.19 square metres) of free-hold property bearing Plot No. K-1/38, situated at E.P.D.P. Colony, Known as Chittaranjan Park, New Delhi - 110019 admeasuring 125 square yards, alongwith proportionate, undivided and indivisible freehold ownership rights/share in the land underneath and bounded as under: North : Plot No.037, South : Road, East : Road, West : Plot No.31.

Place : New Delhi, Date : 18-01-2023 **Authorised Officer**

Regd. Office : 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612 001. CIN - L6510T1904PLC001287, Telephone No. 0435-243232, Fax : 0435-2431746, Website : www.cityunionbank.com

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Speedy milestones

- 1** Phase 1 - Rose-Hill to Port Louis (13 Km) including Depot at Richelieu jointly E-launched by Prime Ministers of India and Mauritius on 3rd of October 2019 in record time of 2 years
- 2** Phase 2 - Rose-Hill to Curepipe (13 Km) successfully connecting all towns of the island, commissioned in multiple phases, with final delivery on the 9th of October 2022. (Completed 3 months ahead of schedule)
- 3** Phase 3 - Rose-Hill to Mahatma Gandhi Station in Reduit (3.3 Km). The first extension line connecting to Eastern suburbs through the Cybercity & the University Campus. (Completed 3 months ahead of schedule)

Project Highlights

- **29.3 Km** involving 4.6 Km of elevated section including viaducts and 7 bridges
- **23 Stations** including 2 elevated stations cum commercial hubs at Rose-Hill and Curepipe
- Connects 5 major bus interchanges (Multi-Transit Points) at Curepipe, Vacoas, Quatre Bornes, Rose-Hill & Reduit
- World Class train sets with 100% low floor & high transit capacity
- Track forms to suit urban design, ensure smooth ride & mitigate noise & vibration
- Energy-Efficient DC traction system
- Commuter friendly electronic ticketing and Information System
- Signaling System that integrates Metro Express with Road Traffic
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LARSEN & TOUBRO





Necessary pushback

The Centre should stop seeing judicial appointments as rewards for loyalists

The Supreme Court collegium has done well to push back against the Union government's attempts to block the appointment of some advocates as High Court judges. The three-member collegium, which makes recommendations for High Court appointments, has reiterated its decision to elevate lawyers Saubh Kirpal to the Delhi High Court, R. John Sathyan to the Madras High Court and Somasekhar Sundaresan to the Bombay High Court. As it dealt in detail with the objections raised by the Centre in each individual case, the motives behind the government's ongoing contestation with the judiciary over appointments to constitutional courts stand exposed. Communications between the collegium and the Centre offer a glimpse into the untenable nature of the government's objections to proposed appointees, making it abundantly clear how badly the current regime wants to control judicial appointments. If the objection based on a candidate's sexual orientation smacks of a medieval-minded ideological bias, the effort to stall the elevation of a couple of advocates based on their social media activity exposes a mindset that sees appointments to the higher judiciary as a system of spoils meant for political loyalists. As the collegium has pointed out, neither the sexual orientation of Mr. Kirpal nor the airing of political views by the other two advocates will impinge on their suitability or integrity.

The government appears to think that potential candidates for judicial appointments should not have political views of their own, or that a tendency to make their views or opinion known will amount to a possible bias in their functioning as judges. Nothing can disprove this more than the fact that there are other names – to which the government seems to have no objections – that are closely associated with political parties. Indeed, one can say that the history of judicial appointments is replete with instances of government law officers, who invariably enjoy the confidence of the political leadership at the Centre or the States, and lawyers who represent political leaders being offered positions on both the Supreme Court and High Court Benches. The objection based on sexual orientation is particularly appalling, as it is contrary to the constitutional position against discrimination based on sex or sexual preferences. The viewpoint that the collegium system of appointments is flawed as it is opaque and tends to reduce the zone of consideration is valid. However, the manner in which the current regime is seeking to filter out candidates who, it suspects, may not further its political agenda will surely give the impression that allowing any sort of government interference will pose a threat to judicial independence.

Election bugle

The BJP will continue its experiments with regional parties in the northeast

Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura in the northeastern region of India will elect new Assemblies in February. The Bharatiya Janata Party's stakes are the highest as it seeks to retain power in Tripura and continue to be a key partner of the main ruling entities in the other two States. The BJP is in alliance with Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma's National People's Party (NPP) in Meghalaya and Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio's Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) in Nagaland. The Congress, once the main party in the northeast, is struggling, wiped out in Nagaland, trying to stay afloat in Tripura, and raided by the Trinamool Congress (TMC) in Meghalaya. Regional parties in the northeast tend to align with the ruling party at the Centre, and the BJP has expanded its footprint in the region considerably in recent years. A BJP victory in 2018 ended more than two decades of Left Front rule in Tripura. However, being in power has not been easy; its first Chief Minister, Biplob Kumar Deb, was replaced with Manik Saha, a dental surgeon, in 2022, an effort to reverse the decline in the party's popularity. The emergence of the Tipra Motha, a regional party that swept the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council polls in April 2021 has changed the dynamics in 20 Assembly seats in its area. A Left-Congress alliance is also possible.

TMC leader and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has been trying to gain a foothold in the northeast, but with limited success. In Meghalaya, 12 Congress MLAs defected to the TMC in 2021, but its stock has been depleting since. The TMC is viewed as a Bengali party in the State, where regional sentiments are strong. The party has some patches of influence in the Garo Hills of the State. In Nagaland, the BJP has announced a pre-poll alliance with its current partner the NDPP; in Meghalaya, the BJP and NPP are not only contesting separately but also calling each other names. Alliances in the State are usually forged after the elections. The NPP is facing accusations of corruption, and is being overly influenced by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the BJP's pointsman for the northeast. As usual, indigenous groups in Nagaland have threatened to boycott the polls, pressing various demands. A demand for the creation of Frontier Nagaland being raised by the Konyak Union, an apex tribal body is a new flavour of the season. The BJP is likely to continue with its innovations in dealing with regionalism while the Opposition's capacity to sustain will be tested in these elections.

Changing politics, incompatible Governors

The Governors are once again becoming public spectacles in many States, as seen in Punjab, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Delhi, and in a few others earlier. Three issues stand out in their grandstanding with the elected governments in the States in question.

First, these are States where non-Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) governments are in power. Second, the contrarian interventions of Governors are in the name of the supposed powers of the Union or constitutional rectitude. And third, their disagreements spill out in the open, to the media, reinforcing a political divide. Recently, the Governor of Tamil Nadu, R.N. Ravi, seems to have opened another front, i.e., defining the idea of Indian nationalism and imparting lessons to Tamil people. Fortunately, there are a few Governors, even under non-BJP regimes in States, who have shown the sagacity of sorting out issues with their respective governments without attempting to muddy the waters.

While there have been endless arguments on whether the Governor enjoys discretionary authority or not – and if he does, under what constitutional and legal provisions – they may not be able to clinch the argument on an issue as they do not necessarily rule out the contrarian stances. One of the examples of populist posturing is to play the blame game and accuse the other party of doing the same when it was in power. While such charges may be factually correct or close to the charge, bad precedents may not be good examples to imitate. These charges also do not take into account the great churning that the Indian polity has undergone over the years and the challenges that institutions confront to remain abreast with them.

Sea change in States

The arena of the relative autonomy of States underwent a decisive turn from the late 1980s without formally altering the constitutional frame very much. This transformation was manifest in the rise of new political parties with their focus on States, liberalisation of the economy, and greater devolution of economic responsibility to the States. States were made to realise that they could not pass on this responsibility somewhere else.

This shift of power and responsibility was also



Valerian Rodrigues

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reflected in policy measures such as the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution authorising local governance, inclusion and devolution of powers; reforms initiated by P.V. Narasimha Rao-Manmohan Singh team on the economy; and judicial verdicts such as the Bommai case that mandated that the invocation of President's rule in States called for wider political consensus.

Admittedly, the relative autonomy of States has enhanced their presence as well as responsibilities. This enhanced role of the States does not in any way challenge Union powers, but generally tends to complement and supplement the new challenges and opportunities that it faces. The fears of centripetal tendencies that marked the early years of Independence no more hold good as far as the broad expanses of India are concerned. Atal Bihari Vajpayee detected this shift early and made a remarkable attempt at coalition building (1999-2004) that reflected much sensitivity to the new role that States were called upon to play.

This initiative was also an acceptance of strong regional leaderships in general and regional parties in particular. Strong States were not seen as an affront to national unity but the latter itself was conceptualised as being forged through robust regional bonds. In fact, Vajpayee's political initiative jolted the Congress party from its focus on a centralised polity predisposing it to pre-poll coalitions at its Pachmarhi (1998) and later Shimla conclaves.

While the rise of the BJP and its shift to Hindutva as its ideological plank from 2014 onwards have affected the re-articulation of Indian federalism, the groundswell that led to the appreciation of State autonomy continues to persist even today. Sound reasoning iterates, loud and clear, that States cannot be cordoned off within the boundaries of the fiat of the Centre any longer.

State leadership to the fore

Given the metamorphosis of politics that India has registered, State leadership, be it of the ruling party in the Centre or regional parties, is invariably called upon to assume greater initiative and responsibility. Its performance has a bearing not merely on the States concerned but on the nation as a whole. State-based initiatives have a cascading impact on the neighbouring States as well. If a regional party has performed well, the

Centre should try and outshine it by promising to do better. Interestingly, India's constitutional frame – and particularly its interpretation by the judiciary hitherto – has been in synchrony with this shift in the political arena.

A reality check

In the changed context, Governors assuming that they know better than elected State leadership goes against a reality check, and may not even serve the interests of the ruling party at the Centre. If they invoke constitutional provisions in defence of their actions, such a reading often turns out to be a shibboleth.

While the constitutional reasoning that resulted in the institution of Governor in India may still hold good as far as the broad expanses of India are concerned, Atal Bihari Vajpayee detected this shift early and made a remarkable attempt at coalition building (1999-2004) that reflected much sensitivity to the new role that States were called upon to play.

To be in tune with these demands, Governors should not merely have their ear to the ground but also be attuned to the embedded idea of the common good manifest in its institutions and public culture. In a country such as India it is not difficult to find such persons. It is handy to have in these positions elderly politicians who are surplus in the ruling dispensation or retired bureaucrats and public personnel who are subservient to their political masters. Although criticised for some of his administrative preferences and political views, one Governor who I can recall who measured up to the mark in the changed context was T.N. Chaturvedi, Governor of Karnataka (2002-07), during a difficult period of change of governments both in the State as well as at the Centre.

A reminder of the flaws in India's urbanisation policies

A report by the World Bank, released in November last year, on financing India's urban infrastructure needs, focuses on private investments ameliorating urban problems. The push to attract private capital, since the 1990s, followed by the urban reforms under the United Progressive Alliance I regime, the Smart City mission, and now this report, continues to plague India's policy paradigm in the urban sector.

So, has the reform process really been able to attract private capital to urban infrastructure?

After three decades of reforms, urban finance predominantly comes from the government. Of the finances needed to fund urban capital expenditures, 48%, 24% and 15% are derived from the central, State, and city governments, respectively. Public-private partnership projects contribute 3% and commercial debt 2%.

In the last few years, various reports have estimated a huge demand for funding urban infrastructure; for example, the Isher Judge Ahluwalia report says that by 2030, nearly ₹39.2 lakh crore would be required. Likewise, the 11th Plan puts forth estimates of ₹1,29,337 crore for four basic services, ₹1,32,590 crore for urban transport and ₹1,32,590 crore for housing. A McKinsey report on urbanisation has a figure of \$1.2 trillion, or ₹90 lakh crore.

World Bank estimates

The World Bank estimates that nearly \$840 billion (₹70 lakh crore) would be needed for investment in urban India to meet the growing demands of the population, and \$55 billion would be required annually. The flagship programmes of the government, the Smart City mission, the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), etc., are not more than ₹2 lakh crore (that too for a period of five years). So, how will such a gap between demand and supply



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be matched?

The core idea of the report and the solutions suggested include "improving the fiscal base and creditworthiness of the Indian cities. Cities must institute a buoyant revenue base and be able to recover the cost of providing its services". In simpler terms, it means increasing property taxes, user fees and service charges to name a few.

This report already points out that nearly 85% of government revenue is from the cities. This means that urban citizens are contributing large revenues even as the World Bank report's emphasis is on the levying of more burdens in the form of user charges on utilities, etc. But the point is even enhancing the tax base, will it be sufficient to meet the rising demands of urban infrastructure in the cities?

The answer is that it will not.

Finding alternative paths

The basic problem with this report and other reports drawn up in a similar fashion is that they are made using a top to bottom approach, with too much of a focus on technocentric solutions using very high capital-intensive technologies.

For the urban context, plans must be made from below by engaging with the people and identifying their needs.

Empowering the city governments and the people at large is the second point. In the national task force that reviewed the 74th Constitutional Amendment, chaired by K.C. Sivaramakrishnan, many suggestions were made such as empowering the people, transferring subjects to the city governments, suggesting that 10% of the income-tax collected from cities be given back to them and ensuring that this corpus fund was utilised only for infrastructure building. This would ensure that city governments had an advantage in ensuring rapid transformation.

Another important aspect of urban

infrastructure is linked to urban governance, which is in a shambles in most parts of the country. Regular elections should be held in cities and there must be empowerment through the transferring of the three Fs: finances, functions, and functionaries.

Cities primarily are run by parastatals and the city governments hardly have any role to play in the smooth functioning of such parastatals.

The World Bank in its report has stated in the report (page 69): "As an example, state-level management of urban water and sewerage functions may be devolved in a time-bound manner. An improved urban legal framework that includes a stable and certain fiscal transfer regime, accords financial powers to ULBs [urban local bodies] along with attendant rules/regulations... will determine the medium- to long-term scale of investment flows for urban infrastructure."

The Shimla example

However, the exact opposite is happening. The Shimla water story is an example. The Shimla water works was transformed into a single utility in 2016-17, called the Greater Shimla Water Supply and Sewage Circle (GSWSSC) under the Shimla Municipal Corporation. The Bank rendered help in the form of a soft loan, ensuring an adequate supply of water and proper distribution by the utility, but under the Shimla Municipal Corporation. However, in 2017-18, it changed the character of GSWSSC to a company and formed the Shimla Jal Prabandhan Nigam Limited, now run under a board of directors, but outside the ambit of the municipality.

Such machinations shall not serve the purpose and will be perilous to the entire purpose of the urbanisation in India. The World Bank report is another reminder of the tragedy which Indian urbanisation is witnessing – "policy paralysis from the top".

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Documentary on Gujarat

Maintenance of law and order is the duty of every government (Inside pages, "BBC documentary critical of Prime Minister blocked by I&B Ministry", January 22). But if any untoward events did not occur in Gujarat, one wonders why the government has gone to the extent of blocking the documentary which amounts to a confrontation with the United Kingdom. There are still many who await justice following the riots. The Bilkis Bano case is one such vivid example. The British government cannot be faulted as it had to address the concerns of

some of its citizens of India origin (Inside pages, "British probe into Gujarat riots was to address concerns of our constituents: Straw", January 22).

Manoharan Muthuswamy, Chennai
Ananya Singhāl, Noida, Uttar Pradesh

The unflattering references to the top leader have come at an inopportune time for the ruling party with nine Assembly elections due this year. It is clear that the desperate steps are to ensure that his carefully nurtured image remains intact. While some leaders in the U.K. have rallied to the Indian leader's defence, the BBC has stuck to its guns, which in simple parlance could mean that it is factual. The documentary could well dent the leader's image abroad as and when it is available in other parts of the world.

C.V. Aravind, Bengaluru

The BBC is one of the most reliable and fiercely independent news providers. Despite 10 Downing Street questioning the BBC's patriotism during the Falklands war, the news provider stood its ground. Also, Opposition leaders in India cannot be faulted for accusing the government of imposing censorship. It is pertinent to ask this question: would the government of the day block a BBC documentary or any other programme that portrayed an Indian Opposition leader or party in a bad light?

C.G. Kuriakose, Kothamangalam, Kerala

The documentary unnecessarily seeks to create ripples in Indian politics in what is a closed chapter. It is appalling that there are some agencies wanting to keep the Godhra incident alive.

K.V. Seetharamaiah, Bengaluru

Population and policy
India should not adopt any knee-jerk policies with India set to surpass China as the most populous nation in 2023 ('FAQ' page, "Why is China's population shrinking?" January 22). Women in India are having fewer children than their mothers had and the notion

that India should adopt something like China's former 'one-child policy' is misguided and will have disastrous consequences. It could lead to a range of social problems. The trend in India is towards smaller families and no drastic intervention from the state is required.

Dr. Thomas Palocaren, Vellore, Tamil Nadu



Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

It's time for India's universities to join the world

With India assuming the G20 presidency, it is now time for it to join the world's academic community as a major player. Indians are well-known globally as top scientists and academics, university leaders, and key leaders in high tech, but little is known about the academic environment from which they have emerged. India's academic system is now the world's second largest. And, as articulated in the National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020, the country is actively pursuing reform and improvement.

Opening to the world means making India more visible on the global academic scene and also learning about, and implementing, best practices from abroad. The G20 leadership is an excellent opportunity to do both. Further, one of the priority areas in education during India's G20 presidency is 'Strengthening Research and Promoting Innovation through Richer Collaboration'. India is in a particularly advantageous position – the world sees India as an increasingly important economy and geopolitical player. India also plays an important role in higher education – mainly as an exporter of students and talent in many scientific fields – and especially in information technology and related fields. There is a growing interest abroad in linking with Indian universities and research institutes, not only because of untapped talent but also due to disengagement from China by some Western countries.

Unknown, complex system
India is not only the world's second largest academic system, but also one of the world's most complex and little understood academic environments. Its higher education sector is fragmented, inflexible with tight subject boundaries, and of uneven quality. The NEP's focus is on consolidation, with the goal of bringing flexibility and



Philip G. Altbach
is research professor and distinguished fellow, Centre for International Higher Education, Boston College, U.S.

multi-disciplinary education and improving quality. While private sector colleges and universities will continue to fuel growth, high-quality government institutions such as the IITs and AIIMS are also expanding and improving, and will likely achieve good results if they are adequately funded and permitted to have appropriate autonomy.

India has set up the National Institutional Ranking Framework, which has helped fuel competition among institutions. India's global ranking in scientific publications improved from the seventh position in 2010 to the third in 2020. India ranks third in terms of the number of PhDs awarded in science and engineering. India's Global Innovation Index ranking has also improved significantly, from 81 in 2014 to 40 in 2022, although it lags significantly behind the U.S. and China.

Indian universities have not scored well in the global rankings. The highest-scoring Indian institution in the 2023 Times Higher Education ranking is the Indian Institute of Science, in the 251-300 range. Another 75 institutions are ranked lower. The best-known institutions globally are the IITs. These do not rank well because they are small, specialised schools and not comprehensive universities, but their quality is much better than their ranking scores. The recent announcement that IIT-Kharagpur will establish a branch campus in Malaysia will help. For India to catch up, both in the rankings and in reality, will take significant investment over a sustained period of time. In comparison, China over decades has invested billions of dollars to improve its top universities – and this shows in the rankings and in measures of scientific output.

Distinctiveness
There are elements of India's academic environment that are distinctive and worth highlighting to an international audience. These include the emergence of

about a dozen top-quality non-profit private universities, mostly funded by philanthropically minded Indians. This elite sector is expanding and is focused on building an international 'brand' for Indian higher education. India uses English as the main language of science and higher education, which makes it much easier to interact with the rest of the world. India has more than 100 research laboratories in diverse areas sponsored by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and other Central government agencies. Some are outstanding in terms of their research contributions and their relationships with India's economy.

Exercising leadership
India's universities and its scientific prowess are an important part of a soft power strategy. The internationalisation initiatives outlined in the NEP is an important start. India's G20 leadership is also an excellent opportunity to exercise leadership. Two interesting initiatives have been suggested. One is a conference in India of leaders of universities in the G20 countries with the aim of acquainting them with India's academic opportunities. Another is the creation of a prestigious scholarship programme, similar to the Fulbright programme, that would provide top Indian students and faculty time in leading universities abroad and funding to bring top academic from abroad to India. China's version of this is the China Scholarship Council.

Indian universities, researchers, and academics also need to involve themselves in the global scientific community through participation in joint projects, international meetings, and the like. All this will take careful planning, sustained resources, support from the Central and State governments and an expanded international consciousness in the Indian academic community.

The sway of the seers

Wooing a caste 'math' is a way of making electoral inroads into a community

STATE OF PLAY

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
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It's election season in Karnataka. Political leaders are busy wooing seers of various religious maths associated with specific caste groups. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Bharatiya Janata Party national president J.P. Nadda, senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and others have all been doing 'math rounds' in recent times. Sceptics caution that approval from a caste math does not necessarily translate into votes for the leader or party from that community as a whole. Nevertheless, these maths have emerged as one of the key ways of making electoral inroads into specific communities. Antagonising the maths seems to be out of question for any political party.

Over the last several months, the reservation matrix of Karnataka has been in a flux. The seers of various caste maths – Prasannanandapuri Swami of the Valmiki community, Jaya Murtyunjaya Swami of the Panachamasali-Lingayat community, Nirmalanandana Swami of the Vokkaligas and Niranjandaswami of the Kurubas, among others – have been leading agitations, or appealing to or setting deadlines for the government for a better share of the reservation pie. The government has announced a hike in reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, which will benefit the Valmikis. It has also proposed a hike for Lingayats and Vokkaligas. But not everyone is happy. In fact, there is simmering discontent among the seers of various maths. For instance, Jaya Murtyunjaya Swami has led at

least two agitations in Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai's constituency Shiggaon. The Pancharasali agitation led by the seer seems to be shaking the carefully put-together vote bank of the Lingayats for the BJP.

Meanwhile, the BJP seems keen on wooing Nirmalanandanatha Swami of the powerful Adichunchanagiri math of the Vokkaligas, in order to make inroads into the community and the Old Mysore region, which has been the domain of the Janata Dal (Secular) and Congress parties so far. The BJP appears enthused by the seer's recent comparison of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with modern Bengaluru founder and Vokkaliga icon Kempegowda. However, even Mr. Gandhi visited Nirmalanandanatha Swami during the Karnataka leg of the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

While the maths of the Brahmins and Lingayats are centuries old, other communities have formed their own spiritual centres to organise themselves in more recent times. Over the last four decades, several communities in the Other Backward Classes, SC and ST blocs, and even several sub-castes within other communities, have come up with their own maths. These have now emerged as 'non-partisan' promoters and adjudicators of communities' interests. The proliferation of maths and the fact that politi-

cal parties are wooing them and recognising them as representatives of these various communities have only cemented the hold of these religious-caste institutions over the state's public life. M.M. Kalburgi, who was assassinated in 2015 allegedly by a Hindutva group, had described a math as a "Paryaya Sarkara" (a parallel government).

The power that maths wield in Karnataka's political landscape comes to the fore every now and then. For instance, BJP leaders initially defended the seer of the powerful Veerashaiva-Lingayat Muruga Math, who faced accusations of abusing minor girls in the hostel run by the math. Other parties shied away from even speaking on the issue. Though the seer has now been arrested, activists fighting for the victims allege that efforts are being made to derail the case.

In another instance, the State government recently held a roundtable of seers to decide on the contents of moral education in the State's schools. Two Brahmin math seers who attended it – Gangadharendra Saraswati Swami and Vishwa Prasanna Tirtha Swami – called for only "satvik" food to be served to children at schools. Vishwa Prasanna Tirtha Swami also sought a ban on meat being displayed in marketplaces. Several seers belonging to communities whose members eat non-vegetarian food did not object to this suggestion at the roundtable. Many of them also now participate in Virat Hindu Samavesha, which are organised by the Sangh Parivar's affiliates. All these developments indicate how the proliferation of maths among subaltern communities is aiding Sanskritisation of several communities.

Opening to the world means making India more visible on the global academic scene and also learning about, and implementing, best practices from abroad

Post-COVID-19, math skills of students in south, west dipped most

The adverse impact of the pandemic on arithmetic ability was more pronounced among boys in southern and western India

DATA POINT

Rebecca Rose Varghese & Vignesh Radhakrishnan

The recently released Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2022 shows that the ability of schoolchildren to carry out simple arithmetic calculations was poor in most of the southern, central and western States compared to the children in many northern and eastern States.

While this observation is true both for the pre- and post-pandemic periods, the school closures forced by COVID-19 widened the gap further – the arithmetic learning outcomes of students from the south and west were impacted more than the learning outcomes of students in other regions.

Notably, despite the pandemic, the arithmetic ability of children in the central States – Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh – improved markedly, though from a lower base. Moreover, in the south and west, the adverse impact of the pandemic on arithmetic ability was more pronounced among boys than girls.

The ASER survey's test of arithmetic ability consisted of four tasks. The first task was to recognise numbers 1 to 9. Those who completed this were asked to recognise numbers 11 to 99. Those who completed both tasks were presented with subtraction problems. And those who passed were presented with division sums.

Chart 1 shows the share of students in Classes V and VIII who could carry out all the four tasks successfully. Each circle corresponds to a State, and India's figures are depicted using a plus sign. The farther a circle to the right, the higher the share of students who could carry out all the four tasks successfully.

Chart 2 shows the same for the year 2018.

Among the northern States, the

share of such students in Class VIII was above the national average in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana. Among the eastern States, Bihar's figure was much higher than the national average. On the other hand, except Andhra Pradesh, the share of such students was relatively low in the southern States. Among the western States, such as Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, the share of Class VIII students who were able to complete all the tasks successfully was even lower than in the southern States.

The trend of northern States (except Jammu and Kashmir) leading, closely followed by the eastern States of Bihar and sometimes Jharkhand, the southern States (except Andhra Pradesh) middling and the central and western States near the bottom was also observed in the arithmetic performance of Class V students – with some exceptions. This trend was also true for 2018, as shown in **Chart 2**.

Chart 3 shows the percentage of Class VIII children who completed all four tasks in 2022 and the change in percentage points from 2018. The States above the 0 mark saw an increase in the share of children who completed the tasks – all the central and eastern States are part of this group. The States below the 0 mark saw a decrease – all the southern and western States are part of this group except Andhra Pradesh. This graph shows that the pandemic had a disproportionately higher adverse impact on the arithmetic ability of children in the southern and western States.

And among the southern and western States, the adverse impact was higher among boys than girls, as shown in **Chart 4**. The chart shows the change in the share of Class VIII students who could complete division in 2022 compared to 2018 (in percentage points). For instance, the change was 6.4 percentage points among girls in Kerala and 8.7 percentage points among boys.

Doing the math

The data for the charts are collated from the Annual Status of Education Report (Rural), published based on a survey conducted between September and November 2022



Chart 1 | The share of students in Class V and Class VIII who carried out all the four tasks successfully in 2022

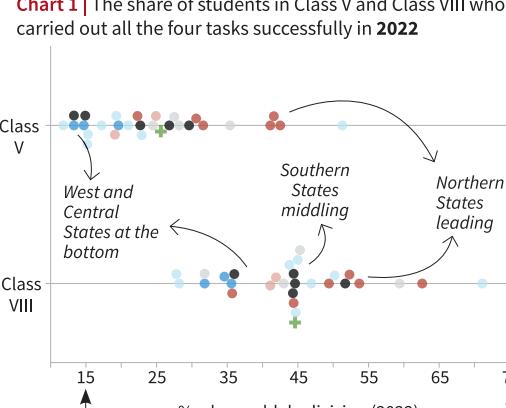


Chart 2 | The share of students in Class V and Class VIII who carried out all the four tasks successfully in 2018

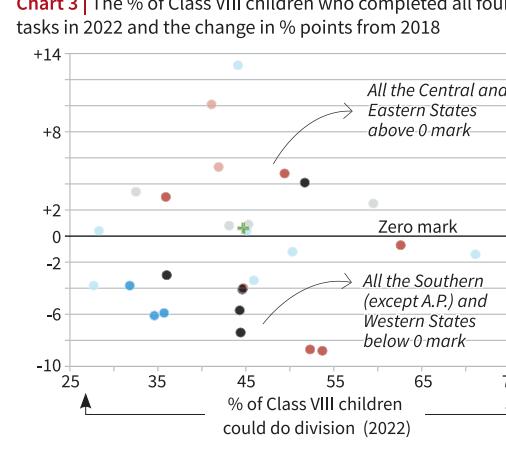


Chart 3 | The % of Class VIII children who completed all four tasks in 2022 and the change in % points from 2018

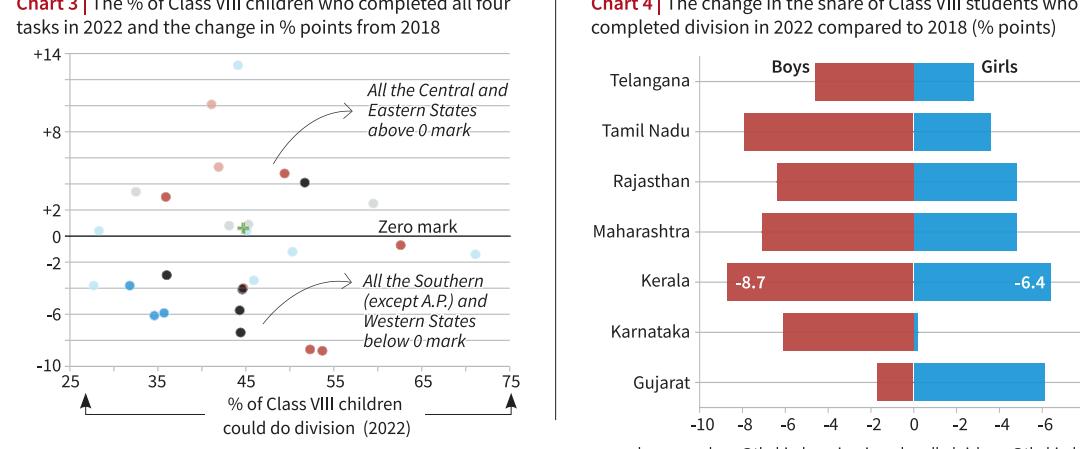


Chart 4 | The change in the share of Class VIII students who completed division in 2022 compared to 2018 (% points)

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 23, 1973

New Wave' Indian films hailed by London critics

Bombay, Jan. 22: "New wave" films will soon brighten Indian movies' image abroad and open up a potential international market, according to the Film Finance Corporation Chairman, Mr. B.K. Karanji. He told UNI yesterday that the low budget films of young artists exhibited at the film festival now being held in London under the joint sponsorship of the Corporation and the National Film Theatre, London, had become popular. Mr. Karanji, who returned from the festival, said the first ever international exposure of the "new wave" films had convinced movie critics that India could offer something other than the conventional song-dance formula. The critics including Miss Dilys Powell and members of several film societies had hailed that they could not believe that such films were being made in India, he added. Mr. Karanji said, impressed by the movies, Mr. Charley Cooper of the contemporary films, London, who distributes Satyajit Ray's films in the United Kingdom suggested that an Indian film centre be set up in London to conduct similar festivals and explore marketing possibilities throughout western Europe. The proposal would soon be placed before the Corporation's board. He said the second in the series of the "image building" festivals would be opened in Paris on January 27. The third would be held in the German Democratic Republic.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 23, 1923

Indian labour for Ceylon

At the meeting of the Ceylon Legislative Council, on January 18, the Hon. Mr. E.R. Tambimuttu asked: – Will the Government be pleased to state the result of its negotiations with the Government of India on the labour question.

The reply: The Hon. Mr. B. Hornsby replied: – The Government of Ceylon is still in negotiation with the Government of India on the subject of the labour question. A draft notification containing the conditions under which the emigration of unskilled labour to Ceylon will be permitted was received a short time ago from the Government of India and was referred for their views to the various public bodies chiefly concerned. Replies have been received indicating that all these bodies consider the conditions acceptable, and a reply has been sent to the Government of India to this effect.

Text & Context

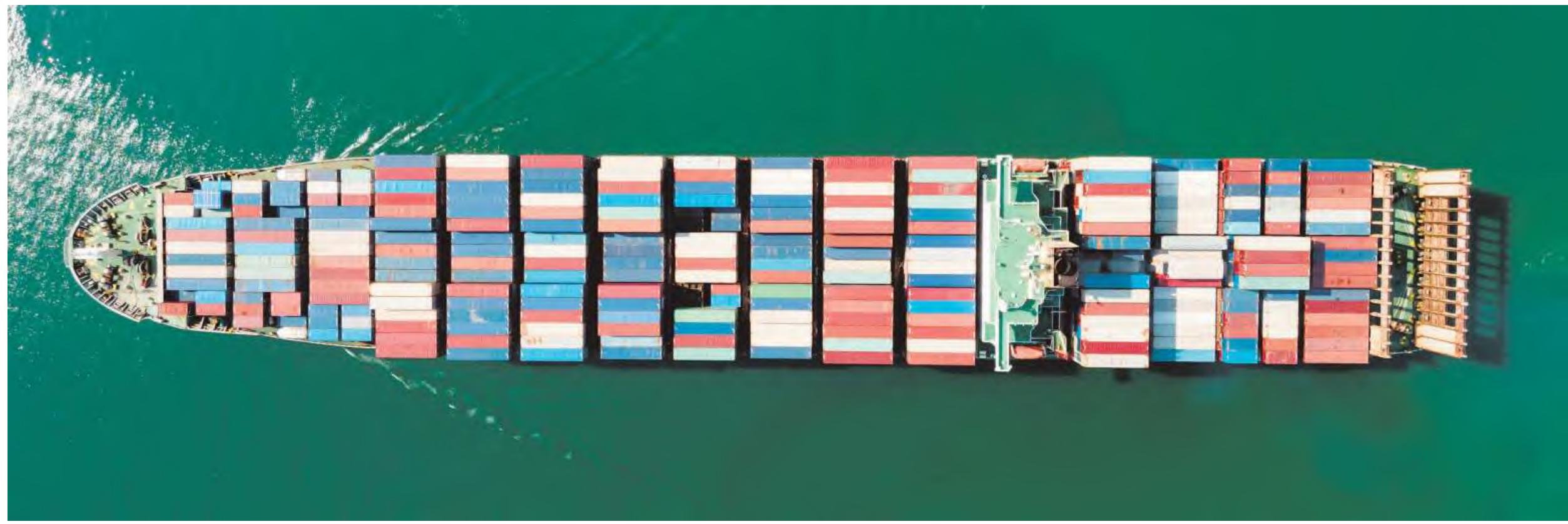
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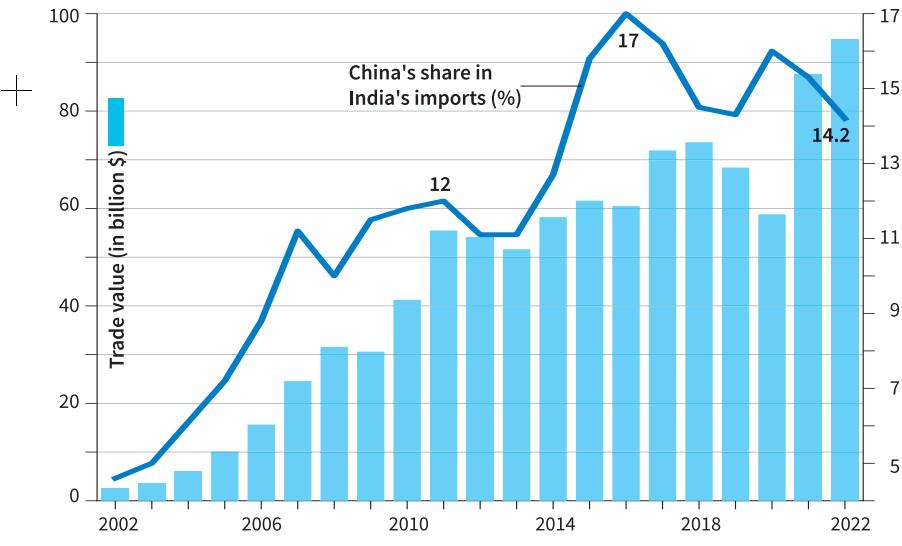
Dragon tightens its grip

In 2022, India's imports from China touched a record high while exports to China fell to a five-year low. This imbalance has further widened the trade deficit. Electrical machinery and mechanical appliances were the most imported goods by India from China. India's dependency on China for such goods has remained high for quite some time now. However, India is not alone as dependency on imports from China has also grown among Indian neighbouring countries and other BRICS nations. **By Jasmin Nihalani**



2022 figures are until November

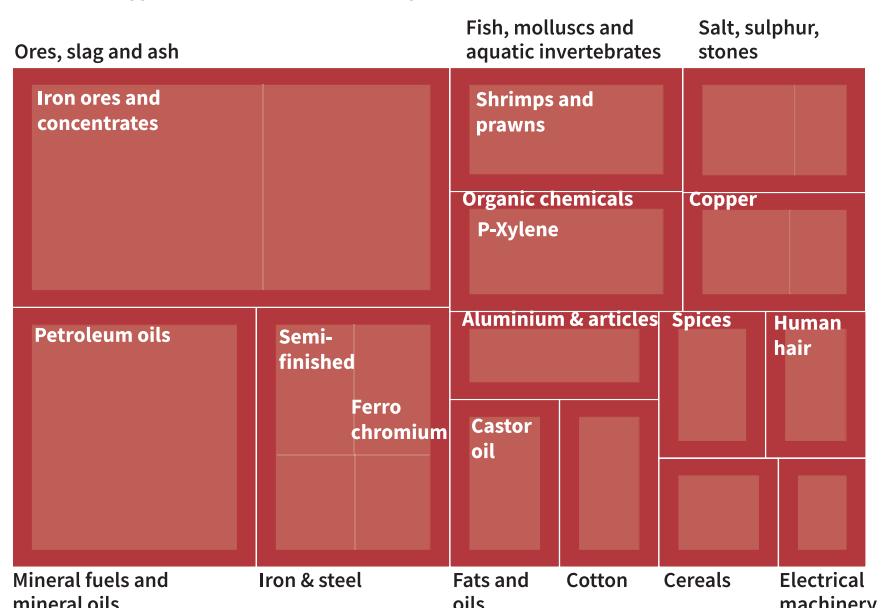
1 RISING IMPORTS | The chart shows the trade value of goods imported from China on the left axis. China's share in India's total imports is plotted on the right axis. In value terms, imports from China soared to a record \$94.7 billion in 2022. When considered as a share of India's total imports, it formed 14% in 2022, though the share peaked in 2016



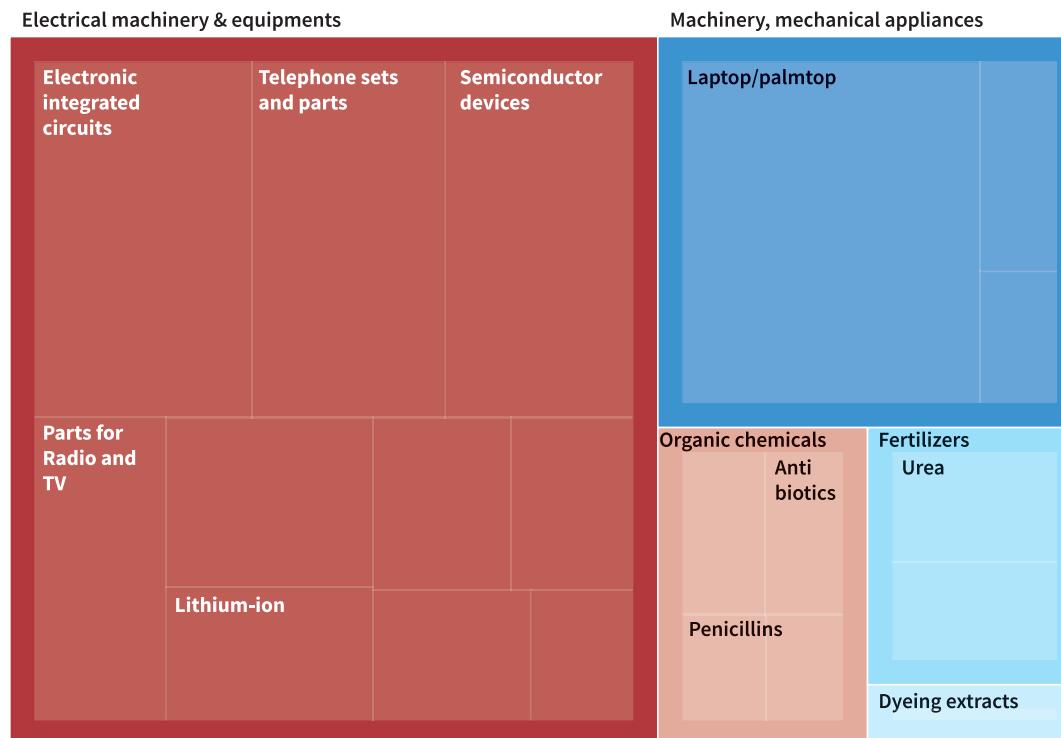
2 MINISCULE EXPORTS | The chart shows the trade value of goods exported to China on the left axis. China's share in India's total exports is on the right axis. In value terms, India's exports to China are at a five-year low (till November 2022). Its share in total exports has decreased from about 7% in 2020 to 3.4% in 2022, a level last seen in 2016



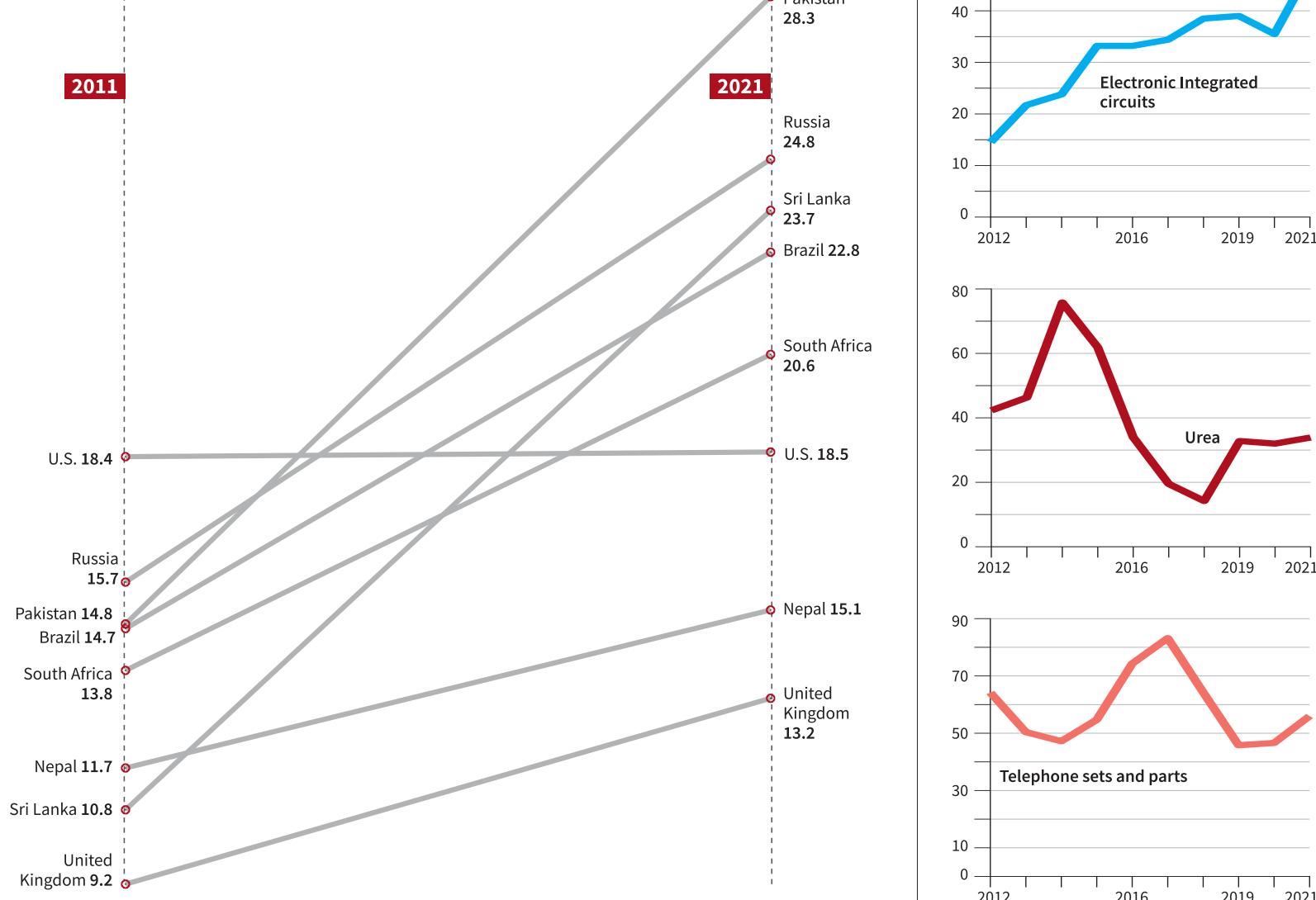
3 MOST EXPORTED ITEMS | The chart shows the 20 most exported goods by India to China in the past three years combined -- 2022, 2021 and 2020. Of these, the most exported items were related to categories such as ores, mineral fuels and oils and iron and steel. The bigger the size of the square the higher the value of exported items



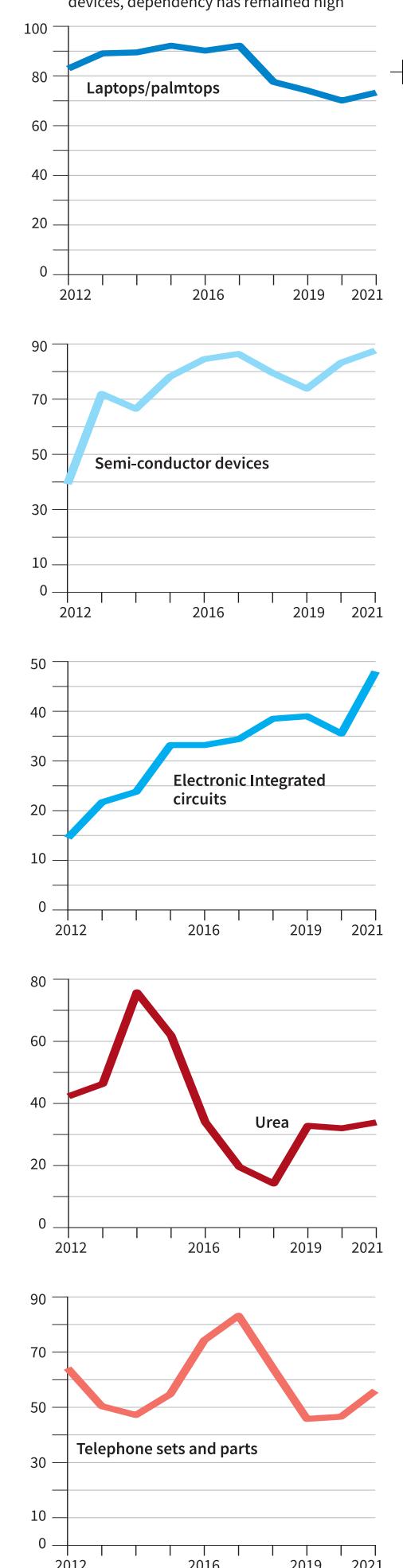
4 MOST IMPORTED GOODS | The chart shows the 20 most imported goods by India from China in the past three years combined -- 2022, 2021 and 2020. Of these, the most imported items were related to electronic machinery and equipment, mechanical appliances, organic chemicals and fertilizers. Laptops, electronic integrated circuits and telephone sets were the most imported items. The bigger the size of the square the higher the value



5 COUNTRY-WISE DEPENDENCY | The chart shows the dependency on China's imports (in % terms) in two different time periods 2011 and 2021 across select nations. Dependency on imports from China increased among India's neighbours — Pakistan and Sri Lanka — and BRICS nations, namely Russia, Brazil and South Africa. It remained unchanged in the U.S. and increased slightly in the U.K. All figures are in %



6 ITEM DEPENDENCY | The charts show India's dependency on China for select imported goods (in % terms). In the case of goods like laptops and semiconductor devices, dependency has remained high



NEWS IN NUMBERS

Cost overruns for 343 infrastructure projects, says MOSPI

4.5 In ₹ lakh crore, the cost overruns for 343 infrastructure projects out of 1,438 projects, each entailing an investment of ₹150 crore or more, according to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI). The original cost for the implementation of projects was ₹20.35 lakh crore. The latest completion cost is ₹24.86 lakh crore. PTI

Foreign portfolio investors pull out equities in January

15, 236 In ₹ crore, the net worth of equities pulled out by foreign investors this month so far on attractive Chinese markets and concerns about the U.S. economy entering a recession. The outflow in January came following a net inflow of ₹11,119 crore in December and ₹36,239 crore in November. PTI

Displaced Syrians killed in building collapse in Aleppo

13 The number of people killed, including children, authorities and media in a building collapse in Syria's war-torn city of Aleppo. A Kurdish news agency said five children were among the dead. A war monitor said that they were all Syrians displaced during more than a decade of fighting in the country. The five-storey building collapsed in the early hours of the day. AFP

Drop in the inflow of gold exchange-traded funds in 2022

90 In percentage, the drop in the inflow of gold exchange-traded funds (ETFs) to ₹459 crore in 2022 due to rising prices of the yellow metal, and increasing interest rate structure coupled with inflationary pressures, according to the Association of Mutual Funds in India. This is lower than an inflow of ₹4,814 crore seen in the segment during 2021. PTI

National capital's air quality index worsens drastically: IMD

407 Delhi's 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) on Sunday, declining from 294 on Saturday, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). However, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) chose not to invoke curbs in view of a prediction of "immediate improvement". PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

FROM THE ARCHIVES

A lesson from China on gig and platform workers' rights

The swell of public opinion in China has enabled government regulation and change in company policy. Indians should also make an effort to be better informed about the way these platforms work

Sowmiya Ashok

On January 20, foodtech delivery platform Swiggy announced that it was laying off 380 employees due to challenging macroeconomic conditions. In this article dated September 30, 2021, Sowmiya Ashok explains how the Indian public need to be more informed about the plight of gig workers, taking a leaf out of China's experience with the same

In September 20, 2021, the Indian Federation of App-based Transport Workers, on behalf of gig workers, filed a public interest litigation in the Supreme Court demanding that the Union government provide succour to workers affected by the pandemic. The petition has asked for 'gig workers' and 'platform workers' to be declared as 'unorganised workers' so they come under the purview of the Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008. In short, the petition demands social security benefits from food delivery platforms such as Zomato and Swiggy and taxi aggregator apps such as Ola and Uber.

That same week, China strode ahead in this regard. Owing to public pressure, two of its food delivery platforms, Meituan and Ele.me, committed to end the practice of forcing workers to register as 'independent businesses', which has long helped these platforms evade responsibilities as employers. Both platforms run a duopoly in the sector, capturing over 90% of the market share, and employ millions of gig workers. In a notice to labour aggregator partners, Meituan said it prohibited signing on delivery workers "through deceptive or coercive means".

'Invisible' to 'frontline'
The one major factor that the pandemic has helped change is the erstwhile 'invisibility' of delivery workers. Through 2020, a trend that spanned China, India, the U.S. and Europe saw 'invisible workers' being propelled to 'frontline workers'. In China, this was especially the case in Wuhan, the pandemic's epicentre, where there was a clear transition of social discourse in favour of delivery workers. *People's Daily*, the largest state-affiliated daily in China, responded to public sentiment by ranking delivery



RAGHUNATHAN S. R.

work among the top 10 occupations.

The media aided this transformation. In the fall of 2020, *Renwu*, a monthly Chinese magazine, took an exhaustive look at the plight of delivery workers across the two food delivery platforms. Titled 'Delivery Riders, Trapped in the System', the article was shared over 200 million times on the Chinese internet indicating how deeply Chinese social media users connected with the issue. One indicator of how seriously an issue is taken by the public is its virality on the Chinese web. In 2015, for instance, a TED-style talk on China's pollution crisis got 100 million views across major video streaming sites within 48 hours of its release, resulting in policy change.

The *Renwu* piece highlighted how delivery workers were trapped in a "sophisticated labour control system" that they had unwittingly downloaded onto their phones. Simply put, the algorithm that is put in place by platforms is designed to create animosity between app users and workers, where the platform inherently shifts the pressure of receiving orders and maintaining smooth flow of deliveries onto the workers.

But it is important to note that the pushback against influential platforms had begun long before COVID-19. Over the years, strikes in different parts of China have reflected this growing backlash. As food delivery platforms expanded through the pandemic period, growing massively in revenue and scale, strikes increased in numerous Chinese cities and

have continued despite various barriers to collective action. In early 2021, in successive strikes spanning over two months, delivery workers protested against poor working conditions. In cities such as Shenzhen, Tongxiang and Linyi, delivery workers protested against new company policies that slashed their pay per delivery. A protest in Taizhou saw a delivery worker set himself on fire demanding unpaid wages.

In 2018, an Associate Professor of Sociology at Harvard University, Ya-Wen Lei, documented strikes in Chongqing, a municipality in southwest China. She found that workers had mobilised through social media and offline meetings. They united to protest against "decreasing piece rates" and "unilateral change of contract terms or platform rules". At the time of her fieldwork, the Chinese state had not intervened in the market to restrain the monopoly powers of platforms or initiate antitrust investigations. This provided platforms with unrestricted powers to exercise technological control.

But the pandemic was curious in this regard. It began with the Chinese state indicating that platforms should help soak up the devastating effects of the pandemic on the workforce. And it ended with the state asserting "increased control" over major tech companies, including Meituan for allegedly abusing its dominant market position, via the new anti-monopolistic guidelines.

In China, where the government is now

focused on "common prosperity", which seeks to narrow a widening wealth gap that threatens the country's economic rise, the government's scrutiny over food delivery platforms has increased. The authoritarian context, a weak civil society and the absence of independent labour unions leaves gig workers in China with very little option but to go on strike or protest, despite the risks, to affect change. In April, Caixin reported that a government official disguised himself as a Meituan driver and worked a 12-hour shift barely making RMB 41 (\$6.32) for a day's work. He was featured in a television programme in Beijing and stated that the experience left him feeling humiliated. In July, seven government agencies jointly passed guidelines directing online food delivery platforms that they should not set evaluation criteria based on optimisation algorithms, must respect the rights of delivery workers and ensure that they earn at least a minimum wage with social insurance. Many of these government initiatives have been public-driven. It was in the government's interest to intervene when it realised that there was growing discontent not only among the delivery workers but also the public about their plight.

The Indian context

The situation is vastly different in India. Any reform in this sector is led wholly by delivery workers, not the public. For 27 days in 2020, close to 3,000 delivery workers from Swiggy went on strike in Hyderabad to protest the slash in remuneration from ₹35 to ₹15 per order. The strike disbanded only after the Joint Commissioner of the Labour Department called a hearing with the platform's operations manager and the workers' union. It was the first time in India that such a negotiation was taking place, that too on the street. This year, in the lead up to Zomato's July IPO, several anonymous Twitter accounts set up by delivery workers called customers' attention to what they deem as "exploitative practices" employed by platforms. The PIL in the Supreme Court is another major step in this regard.

The biggest lesson from China is the swell of public opinion that has partly led to government regulation and change in company policy. In the U.S., a gig workers collective has urged customers to delete the Instacart app as a show of solidarity until demands for better working conditions are met. Indians could make an effort to be better informed about the way platforms work by seeking out delivery workers and asking about their work conditions and the pressures they face. We will then be aware of the price that a person, who we only see as a miniature bike on our apps, pays for our convenience.

Sowmiya Ashok is an independent journalist based in Chennai.

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

You should use shank's mare to go to office from now on

My neighbour was admitted in the hospital for a week, after which he was removed to hospice care

S. Upendran

What is the meaning and origin of the idiom 'shank's mare'? (Amit Tanwar)
This is a relatively old expression. Some dictionaries list it as 'shanks's mare'. According to scholars, 'shank's mare' is a translation of the Scottish 'shank's naig'. 'Mare', which rhymes with 'share', 'dare' and 'ware', is a female horse. The word 'shank' does not refer to a person; in the context of the idiom, it refers to the portion of the leg between the knee and the ankle. When you say that you will be using 'shank's mare' to get from one place to another, what you mean is that you are going to be using your legs – not the mare's shank, but yours! In other words, you are going to be walking to your destination. It is also possible to say, 'shank's pony'. We have similar slang expressions in our own languages. For example, the Tamil equivalent of 'shank's mare' would be 'Nataraja service' – which is a corruption of 'nada da raja'!

Whenever I have to go to the club, I prefer to use shank's mare.

What is the difference between 'hospital' and 'hospice'? (T. Jagannathan, Hyderabad)

We all know what a hospital is. We may spend a few hours there or it could be a few days – the duration depends upon the seriousness of the illness or the injury. The important thing, however, is that most patients who go to a hospital hope to come back alive – and many of them actually do. The fact that we may spend some time there should not come as a surprise, for the word 'hospital' comes from the Latin 'hosptiale' meaning 'guest house'. In the past, it referred to the shelter provided by churches and monasteries to weary travellers. With the passage of time, the word took on the meaning that we are familiar with today.

A 'hospice' is very different from a hospital; only the terminally ill are usually admitted to one. In other words, those who are seriously ill and have no chance of recovery are admitted to one. Someone who is admitted to a hospice knows that he will be dying there. The function of the medical staff in a hospice is not to cure a patient of his illness, but to keep him as comfortable as possible till his death. The word 'hospice' consists of two syllables. The first (hos) rhymes with the words 'boss', 'loss' and 'toss', while the second (pis) rhymes with 'miss', 'kiss' and 'hiss'.

You need to be in a hospice and not a hospital.

upendrankye@gmail.com

THE DAILY QUIZ

'Netaji' Subhas Chandra Bose, a fierce nationalist and prominent freedom fighter, was born on January 23, 1897. A quiz on the occasion of Netaji's 126th birthday

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1

Who is credited with giving the honorific 'Netaji' to Subhas Chandra Bose?

QUESTION 2

In 2021, the Government of India announced that his birthday would be celebrated as what?

QUESTION 3

Name the political party founded by Bose in 1939 after resigning from the Indian National Congress.

QUESTION 4

What name and profession did Bose

assume when he escaped from India in January 1941?

QUESTION 5

In the much-acclaimed Shyam Benegal work *Bose: The Forgotten Hero*, who enacted the protagonist?

QUESTION 6

Who dubbed Bose 'Prince among Patriots' and with what title did the latter reciprocate the former in a radio address in July 1944?

QUESTION 7

What names had Bose suggested for Andaman and Nicobar Islands when he was active as the leader of the Azad Hind Fauj? And which island in the UT was named after him in 2018?



Visual question:
Former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee is paying homage at which temple in Japan that has a statue of Bose and purportedly the ashes of the leader. PTI

Questions (abridged) and Answers to the January 20 edition of the daily quiz: 1. This President was the first to be inaugurated on January 20. Ans: Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was sworn into office for a second term

2. This former President attended his son's inauguration in 2001. Ans: George H.W. Bush and his son George W. Bush

3. This post-ceremony tradition was started by Jimmy Carter in 1977. Ans: Walk all the way from the Capitol to the White House with the family after the ceremony.

4. Barack Obama and Donald Trump took their oath on a Bible used by this former President. Ans: Abraham Lincoln

5. This President's ceremony was the first to be telecast on the Internet. Ans: Bill Clinton's second term in 1997

6. The only President not to attend an inauguration ceremony in the 21st century. Ans: Donald Trump in 2021

7. The common link between *The Gift Outright*, *On the Pulse of Morning*, and *One Today*. Ans: Poems read by their authors at the inauguration

Visual: Name this lady. Ans: Amanda Gorman who recited *The Hill We Climb* at the 2021 inauguration

Early Birds: K. N. Viswanathan| Himani Sahai| Bhanu Priya Ashok

Word of the day

Vacillate:

be undecided about something; waver between conflicting positions or courses of action; move or sway in a rising and falling or wavelike pattern

Synonyms: oscillate, hover, waver, fluctuate

Usage: He keeps vacillating between having a night in or going out for dinner.

Pronunciation: bit.ly/vacillatepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /væ.sə.leɪt/, /væ.sɪ.leɪt/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to letters@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Text & Context'

From Page One**Exim data revised, trade deficit narrows**

September now marks the worst monthly trade deficit of \$29.23 billion for India.

As per earlier data, July 2022 was reckoned to have the worst goods trade deficit on record of \$30 billion, but its import bill has been subsequently scaled down sharply from \$66.3 billion to a little short of \$64 billion, while exports have been raised by \$2.1 billion. Consequently, July's deficit is now pegged at just \$25.6 billion, which was, in fact, lower than the deficit recorded over the next three months.

October and August 2022 recorded the second and third highest monthly deficits in merchandise trade at \$27.4 billion and \$26.8 billion, with the import bill for these months being revised up by \$2.3 billion and almost \$2 billion, respectively.

The steepest revision in export numbers has been made for August and November at \$3.1 billion and \$2.8 billion, respectively. As per preliminary estimates, exports in November had grown just 0.6% to \$31.99 billion, but revised numbers signal a 9.6% year-on-year rise, with shipments worth \$34.85 billion.

'Policy making affected'

"The trade numbers influence the current account deficit trajectory. Policy making to address this must be evidence-based, but if the data is going haywire, and not by a small margin, we have a problem," said noted trade economist Biswajit Dhar, who is a Professor at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning at Jawaharlal Nehru University. "A \$3.5-billion discrepancy in import estimates for a month is not a small thing," he said.

Queries about the trade data revisions mailed to the Commerce and Industry Ministry on Friday did not elicit a response till late Sunday evening.

In a report on November's foreign trade data, rating firm ICRA also flagged the "large discrepancy between the monthly data on merchandise exports and the cumulative data for the same that accounts for revisions, both of which are released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry".

Widening gap

By November, the gap between preliminary export estimates for each month and the cumulative figure for the full year so far, stood at \$8.6 billion, it said. This gap has now stretched to \$11.6 billion after November's exports were also revised higher.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in an article on the state of the economy in its latest bulletin, has alluded to the corrections in trade numbers, while referring to the merchandise trade deficit reaching an all-time high of \$83.5 billion and the current account deficit (CAD) rising to 4.4% of the GDP in the second quarter (Q2) of 2022-23.

"It is noteworthy, however, that the CAD for Q1 was revised down from 2.8% to 2.2% on account of downward adjustment in customs data. Similar adjustments may impinge on the CAD for Q2:2022-23 as customs data or imports are revised," the article said.

Incidentally, revised goods trade estimates for July to September included in the same bulletin peg the deficit for the second quarter lower at \$81.69 billion.

Net exports' contribution

In its December bulletin, the central bank said that the net exports' contribution to aggregate demand in Q2 was negative as imports grew faster. Net exports were "the highest drag on aggregate demand from the external side since Q4 of 2012-13", it cautioned.

The RBI also noted that imports continued to decelerate and November's \$55.9 billion import bill marked "a ten-month low". Subsequent data revisions put November's imports at 58.2 billion, which was the lowest in seven months.

Rijiju endorses former HC judge's view on SC

On January 20, the Supreme Court Collegium took the unprecedented step of making public the government's objection to some of its recommendations for judgeship.

These names included Saurabh Kirpal (Delhi High Court), whose gay status was objected to; Somasekhar Sundaresan (Bombay High Court) and John Sathyan (Madras High Court), who shared social media posts that were critical of the Narendra Modi government.

Rejecting the Law Ministry's objections, the Collegium reiterated five of its earlier recommendations, including the ones cited above, and urged the government to expeditiously clear their appointments.

PM's response

However, hours after the Law Minister's tweets, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to Twitter on Sunday to laud the Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud for advocating the use of regional languages, and technology, in courts.

"At a recent function, the Hon'ble CJ Justice DY Chandrachud spoke of the need to work towards making SC judgments available in regional languages. He also suggested the use of technology for it. This is a laudatory thought, which will help many people, particularly youngsters," Mr. Modi tweeted.

"India has several languages, which add to our cultural vibrancy. The Central Government is undertaking numerous efforts to encourage Indian languages including giving the option of studying subjects like engineering and medicine in one's Matru Bhasha," the PM added.

NIA inspects blast site in Jammu; security beefed up for Republic Day, Yatra

Nature of blasts yet to be disclosed; joint meet of forces held to review internal security; civilian injured in Srinagar as militants hurl grenade; Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist held in south Kashmir

The Hindu Bureau

JAMMU

A team of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), along with the Army, on Sunday inspected the site of explosions in the Narwal area of Jammu that left nine people injured on Saturday.

Sources said the J&K Police were questioning the suspects. Security agencies were yet to disclose the nature of the blasts, which could be of improvised explosive devices, either triggered by a timer or used as a sticky bomb, they added.

Meanwhile, officials said security had been beefed up across J&K.

A review meeting was also held to further strengthen the security grid for the upcoming Republic Day celebrations, and the ongoing march of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in J&K, as part of his Bharat Jodo Yatra campaign.



No stopping: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi leading the party's Bharat Jodo Yatra at Hiranagar Morh in Kathua on Sunday. The yatra will arrive in Jammu on Monday. NISSAR AHMAD

In the Valley, frisking of commuters and searches of vehicles, especially two-wheelers, have been increased, officials said. Fresh checkpoints have been set up across the Valley, especially in Srinagar, to thwart any movement of militants, officials said.

A joint meeting of the

Army, the J&K Police, the CRPF, the BSF and intelligence agencies were held in Rajouri to review internal security in the wake of the recent militant attack that left seven civilians dead in Dangri.

In Srinagar, militants hurled a grenade towards a security installation on

Sunday evening, which left a civilian, Ajaz Ahmed Deva from Sangam, injured.

In south Kashmir, the police arrested a Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist, active since 2017.

Nasir Ahmed Sher Gojri, alias Qasim Bhai, is from Hom Huna Nagbal, Shopian.

Raj Bhavan sends R-Day invite; Tamil Nadu emblem, name reappear

The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

The official invite sent by the Tamil Nadu Governor's office for this year's Republic Day has carried the emblem of Government of Tamil Nadu (GoTN) and the nomenclature 'Tamil Nadu' [in the Tamil text]. This is in contrast to the Government of India's (GoI) emblem carried in its invite sent earlier this month for Pongal celebrations.

The Raj Bhavan's Pongal invite attracted criticism as it carried only the GoI's emblem as against the norm of carrying GoTN's emblem. The Tamil part of the invitation was criticised for using the word "Tamizhaga" instead of Tamil Nadu in the Governor's title. However, the invite for Republic Day has used

the word "Tamil Nadu" in both English and Tamil.

The criticisms on the Pongal invitation came against the backdrop of Governor R.N. Ravi stating that he deemed the name "Tamizhagam" more appropriate than "Tamil Nadu" at a function on January 4. However, he recently clarified that he used the word "Tamizhagam" as an appropriate expression "in a historical and cultural context", and did not suggest changing the name of the State.

The change in the emblem was noticed in banners, used as backdrop in the two recent events held in the Raj Bhavan. During the Governor's interaction on January 10 with a group of candidates awaiting the UPSC's interview, the banner had the emblem of GoI.

'Personal pay' to address disparity between Brigadier, Major-General

Dinakar Peri

NEW DELHI

To address the long-pending issue of reduced pay between the rank of Brigadier and Major-General, a 'personal pay' of ₹14,900 has been proposed to be added to the latter, it has been learnt.

Defence sources said the proposal was endorsed by the Defence Ministry's finance division, but the file has been pending with the Finance Ministry since January 2022. A legal process is also under way with several officers having approached the court.

In addition to other ranks, all officers up to the rank of Brigadier are entitled to a Military Service Pay (MSP) to the tune of ₹15,500, first approved in the Sixth Pay Commission, which stops once an individual is promoted to the

rank of Major-General.

The pay of a Brigadier is ₹2.17 lakh and with MSP it becomes ₹2.33 lakh. For a Major-General, the pay is ₹2.18 lakh but there is no MSP. So, in effect a Major-General earns less pay than a Brigadier. To address this, a personal allowance of ₹14,900 was proposed to be added to the salary of Major-General and Lieutenant-General which does not fall in the basic pay and will bridge the difference, a defence source said.

Several officers in the rank of Major-General had gone to the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT), and there are 13 judgments in favour of them. Of the 13, only three have been implemented – all in the Air Force. However, when the Defence Ministry is approached for their implementation, the assertion is



Defence Ministry has endorsed the proposal, say sources.

that an order is being brought out on it but there has been no progress, officials in the know said.

In the case of Maj. Gen. D.N. Hasija and 68 others, the High Court of Punjab and Haryana have directions on February 9, 2022 to resolve the pay anomaly within six months which expired on August 8, 2022.

This was also intimated to the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) on August 25, 2022.

Contempt of court pro-

ceedings were initiated by the petitioners and the next date of hearing is February 21, 2023. Compliance-cum-reply has been sought from the DMA by the court before the hearing date, officials stated.

MSP factor

The MSP is paid to service personnel for the unique hardship they face in the line of duty and was introduced in the Sixth Pay Commission. In the Seventh Pay Commission, the MSP was ₹5,200 for Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) and ORs and ₹15,500 for officers from Lieutenant to the rank of Brigadier.

For Major-General, the MSP was rejected with the logic being that the retirement age of 58 is close to that of the civilian counterparts, which is 60.

U.S. missions in India to raise staff strength to speed up visa processing

Suhasini Haidar

NEW DELHI



Swift action: The U.S. Embassy said it will also extend the hours of operation. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

the extra hours to meet the needs of international travellers and bring down wait times," said Mumbai Consular Chief John Ballard. "This is part of a mission-wide effort to find innovative solutions to facilitate travel to the United States," he added.

The embassy is also extending its hours of operation, expanding conditions to offer those who have previously been given visa

"interview waivers" or process them through "remote interviews", and offering slots in other countries for Indians as third country nationals.

In addition, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Julie Stofft had revealed last November that applications from India were being adjudicated by U.S. consular officers in other countries including China, where an interview takes about 296 days in Islamabad and 394 days in Dhaka.

Arrest warrant against Oreva Group promoter

The Hindu Bureau

AHMEDABAD

Mr. Patel. Meanwhile, fearing his arrest, Mr. Patel moved a local court seeking anticipatory bail. The court deferred the hearing to February 1.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the tragedy had cited several lapses by the Oreva Group in the repair, maintenance and operation of the British-era bridge.

Earlier, four employees of the Group were arrested in connection with the case.



I am Sabitha aged 17 years, suffering from Relapsed Acute Myeloid Leukemia and require Chemotherapy & Radiation therapy at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. The total expenditure is Rs.12,00,000/- Please donate and support me as my family is extremely poor and cannot afford this high cost. I need your blessings. Donations sent by CND/NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE Donations sent through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No.GF1, CNRNB0016018 favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is exempted under 80G IT.

All correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, O.P.O. No.13, N.No.29, Pyrocks Garden Lane, Chennai - 600006. Ph: 044-42137401/282353247338978027. E Mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org

Sabitha

As JD(U) has weakened, several leaders in touch with BJP, says Kushwaha

The party's Parliamentary Board chief is said to be unhappy with its decision to leave the NDA to form the *mahagatbandhan* govt. in Bihar; he is also said to be seeking the post of Deputy CM

Amaranath Tewary

PATNA



Signs of difference: JD(U) leader Upendra Kushwaha addressing a press conference in Patna on January 7. ANI

A day after Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar commented that Janata Dal(U) Parliamentary Board chief Upendra Kushwaha had left the party twice or thrice earlier only to return, the MLC on Sunday said several top leaders of the ruling party were in touch with the BJP as it had weakened.

"The bigger the JD(U) leaders, the more they are in touch with the BJP leaders. The issue is that the JD(U) is getting weak and I am trying to make it strong," Mr. Kushwaha told presspersons at the Patna airport after returning from Delhi.

Mr. Kushwaha is said to be in touch with some State-level leaders of the BJP who visited him while he was recently admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Delhi for a routine check-up.

A picture of BJP leaders

Prem Ranjan Patel, Sanjay Tiger and Yogendra Paswan visiting him at the hospital had triggered speculation that he would be switching sides again.

Asked what Mr. Kumar felt about his earlier defection, Mr. Kushwaha said, "Even his party had gone to the BJP as per its convenience."

"When I have to meet the Chief Minister, I do not need any medium for this... I can speak to him in minutes," Mr. Kushwaha said in response to Mr. Kumar's remark where he had asked Mr. Kushwaha to speak to him.

"I was admitted to a Del-

hi hospital but people did my post-mortem report here [in Patna]," he said.

Mr. Kushwaha is an old associate of Mr. Kumar and was made the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly in 2000, but parted ways in 2005 to join the Nationalist Congress Party. He returned to the JD(U) in 2010 and became a Rajya Sabha member. In 2013, he again quit the JD(U) and his membership of the Rajya Sabha.

He floated the Rashtriya Lok Samata Party (RLSP), which later became part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in 2014. The RLSP won three Lok Sabha

seats. Mr. Kushwaha became the Minister of State for Human Resource. In the 2019 Lok Sabha election and the 2020 Assembly election, the RLSP drew a blank. He merged the RLSP with the JD(U) in March 2021. Mr. Kushwaha was made chairman of the JD(U)'s Parliamentary Board. He is currently an MLC.

The ambitious Mr. Kushwaha is said to be unhappy with his party's decision to come out of the NDA to form the *mahagatbandhan* (grand alliance) government in the State with the Rashtriya Janata Dal, the Congress and other smaller parties. The buzz in the political circles is that Mr. Kushwaha is putting pressure on the party's top leadership to be made a Deputy Chief Minister along with Tejashwi Yadav. On Saturday, Mr. Kumar said that he could not gauge the other person's intention. He pointed to Mr. Kushwaha's changing sides in the past only to return.

Poll-bound Nagaland hit by defection after Meghalaya, Tripura

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Imkong Imchen quit the NDPP, citing personal reasons and joined the BJP, an ally in the State govt.

After Tripura and Meghalaya, election-bound Nagaland is facing the politics of defection.

Former Nagaland Minister Imkong L. Imchen resigned as MLA of the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) less than a year after joining it. He has joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a minor ally of the NDPP in the Nagaland government.

Mr. Imchen, who has represented the Kordang Assembly constituency since 2003, cited personal reasons in his resignation letter to the Nagaland Legislative Assembly Secretary. The resignation is with effect from the forenoon of January 20. "I have joined the BJP because I have been impressed by the performance of the party under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he said.

Mr. Imchen won the Kordang seat four times as a Naga People's Front (NPF) candidate. He was among the 21 NPF legislators who merged with the NDPP in April 2022.

The NPF now has three MLAs left. Meghalaya has

seen several MLAs defecting or quitting the House since November 2021. All of them changed party colours. The Congress lost all its 17 MLAs – 12 to the Trinamool Congress and five to the National People's Party (NPP), the BJP and the United Democratic Party.

Four Trinamool legislators later joined the NPP and the BJP. The NPP also lost a couple of MLAs.

In Tripura, three of the eight MLAs of the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT) joined the TIPRA Motha headed by the State's royal scion, Pradyot Bikram Manikya Deb Barman. A BJP legislator also joined the TIPRA Motha.

Sudip Roy Barman and Ashish Saha quit as BJP legislators and joined the Congress while another BJP legislator Ashish Kumar Das was disqualified for "misconduct". Elections to the 60-member Tripura Assembly is on February 16. Meghalaya and Nagaland will go to the polls on February 27.

IN BRIEF



Over ₹10 lakh unaccounted cash seized in Meghalaya

Authorities in poll-bound Meghalaya have seized unaccounted cash of over ₹10 lakh in a village in East Jaintia Hills district, officials said in Shillong on Sunday. The unaccounted cash was recovered from vehicles, coming from Assam, in three separate operations in the Sutenga-Saipung Assembly seat. "The district authorities have seized ₹10.72 lakh in cash. No one was arrested so far," Chief Electoral Officer F.R. Kharkongor said. East Jaintia Hills SP Jagpal Dhanoa said the "cash was seized from vehicles on Friday" as the occupants could not produce any valid document for carrying the liquid asset. PTI

Puri hopes oil firms will cut prices on recouping losses

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Sunday hoped petrol prices will be reduced soon after state-owned oil companies recoup losses. The Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. have for the past 15 months not revised petrol and diesel prices in line with the cost. The losses incurred are now being recouped after oil prices slid. "I will hope if under-recoupages (or losses) end, prices should come down," he said in Varanasi. At one time, profit on petrol was ₹10 a litre but subsequent firming of oil prices have trimmed it down to half. PTI

Tripura polls: IPFT in talks with TIPRA, BJP for seat-sharing

The Hindu Bureau

GUWAHATI

The Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT) is holding parallel talks with its current ally, the Bharatiya Janata Party, and the four-year-old Tipraha Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance (TIPRA) for the February 16 Assembly election in Tripura.

IPFT president and Tribal Welfare Minister Prem Kumar Reang on Sunday said the core members of his party held a closed-door meeting with a TIPRA team led by party chief Pradyot Bikram Manikya Deb Barman in Guwahati on Saturday. "Our seat-sharing arrangement has remained inconclusive. We are in talks with both the TIPRA and the BJP," he said. Mr. Reang said the IPFT had a pre-poll alliance in 2018. "We would like to continue with the arrangement if the BJP fulfils our demands," he said.

The IPFT wants the areas under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAACD) to be declared a full-fledged State. Its demand since 2009 differs from that of the TIPRA, which

Trinamool MPs share links to BBC documentary

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

Lashing out at the Centre, Trinamool Congress MPs Mahua Moitra and Derek O'Brien on Sunday shared the link to the controversial BBC documentary on the 2002 Gujarat riots and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and vowed to fight against "censorship". The government on Friday directed Twitter and YouTube to block links to the documentary titled "India: The Modi Question".

Mr. O'Brien was among the Opposition leaders whose tweet on the documentary was removed by Twitter. The two MPs also shared a list of Twitter links "blocked" on the government's direction. "Twitter links of citizens blocked by Govt. for sharing @BBC report. @dere-kobrienmp & @pbhushan1 on it. My link is still up," Ms. Moitra said in a tweet.

Ms. Moitra said she will not accept "censorship". She posted a link to the documentary on her official handle stating – "Sorry, Haven't been elected to represent world's largest democracy to accept censorship. Here's the link."

Rise in attempts to revive militancy in Punjab, say speakers at police meet

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Post 2015, there has been a rise in attempts by state and non-state actors from Pakistan and extremist elements based in western countries to destabilise and revive militancy in Punjab, according to one of the deliberations at the three-day annual police meeting in New Delhi that concluded on Sunday.

According to a presentation made by Punjab Director-General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav at the conference, which was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, the State police have successfully solved at least 17 cases of targeted killings in Punjab that pointed to an organised attempt to create unrest in the State. The subject of discussion was "Khalistan extremism: communication and logistic networks".

The role of Pakistan in aiding and sheltering Khalistani terrorists, namely Wadhwani Singh Babbar, Harwinder Singh Rinda, Ranjeet Singh Neeta and



Intense discussion: Narendra Modi, Amit Shah, NSA Ajit Doval attending the 57th All India Conference of Police in New Delhi. PTI

Lakhbir Singh Rode, was highlighted. The effective use of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA) against the terror suspects was also cited. A senior official said the diaspora in the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and other European countries were also channelling funds and radicalising the youth in Punjab.

years is the nexus between organised criminal gangs and fugitive terrorists, further bolstered by narco-trafficking gangs, an official said. Jailed gangsters recruiting and planning attacks from prisons was also a cause of concern and reforms in the management of prisons was suggested.

The official said that according to an assessment,

radical elements exploit religious gatherings at gurdwaras in western countries to give provocative speeches and collect donations from the diaspora that is routed to Punjab for extremist activities. In all, 16 topics were discussed at the conference organised by the Intelligence Bureau.

PM calls for prison reforms and repeal of obsolete laws

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

At the annual police meet that concluded on Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi suggested prison reforms to improve the jail management, and recommended repealing obsolete criminal laws.

Mr. Modi attended the 57th All India Conference of Directors-General and Inspectors-General of Police organised by the Intelligence Bureau (IB) on Saturday and Sunday.

A government statement said the Prime Minister suggested making the police forces more sensitive and training them in emerging technologies. He emphasised the importance of the National Data Governance Framework for smoothing of data exchange across agencies.

"The Prime Minister suggested that while we should further leverage technological solutions like biometrics etc., there is also a need to further strengthen the traditional policing mechanisms like foot patrols etc.," the statement added.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the Ministers of State for Home, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, and Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla were present.



dards for police organisations across States. He also discussed strengthening of border as well as coastal security by organising frequent visits of officials to these locations.

He emphasised enhanced cooperation between the State Police and the Central agencies to leverage capabilities and share best practices.

"He suggested replicating the model of the conference at the State/district levels for discussing emerging challenges and evolving best practices among their teams," the statement added.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the Ministers of State for Home, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, and Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla were present.

SC notice on Kerala GST law permitting levy of tax under repealed VAT regime

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

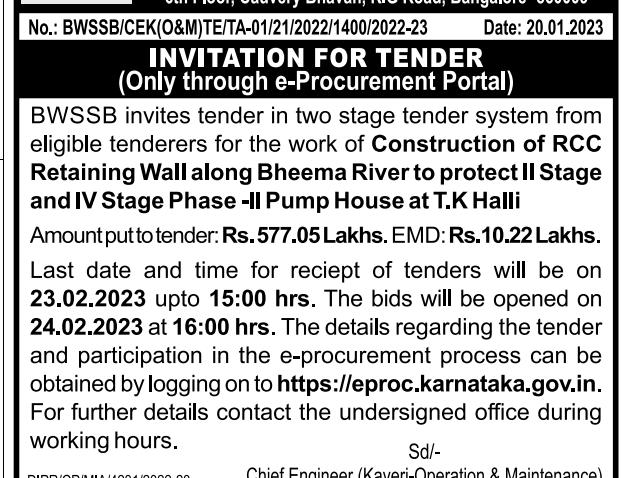
The Supreme Court has sought response from commercial tax authorities in a petition challenging the legality of provisions in the Kerala Goods and Services Tax (GST) law which allows assessment, levy and collection of tax under the repealed Value Added Tax (VAT) regime.

A Bench of Justices S. Ravindra Bhat and Dipankar Datta recently protect-

ed traders, including the lead petitioner, T.S. Belaraman, represented by advocate S. Mahesh Sahasranaman, who were affected by the levy of tax under the VAT system.

Oppressive tax laws
Advocates Arjun Garg, Akash Nandolia and Sagun Srivastava also appeared for the petitioner.

The special leave petition was filed in the top court against a November 30, 2022 judgment of the Kerala High Court in a batch of petitions which challenged the constitutionality of the Kerala GST Act.



Chief Engineer (Kaveri-Operation & Maintenance)

M ND-NDE

MONEYWISE

ASKUS

N. Sree Kanth

Q I am a senior citizen drawing pension. For the past 15 years, I have been investing in tax-saving instruments, mostly in ELSS funds. Kindly clarify:

- 1) Which investments come under exempt, exempt and exempt, and
 - 2) Under which category do ELSS and SCSS fall under
- Also, kindly advise me on investing ₹1,50,000/U/S80C.

A. KRIPANIDHI

A Point-wise reply:

- 1) Exempt Exempt Exempt (EEE) investments under Section 80C include Public Provident Fund, Employee Provident Fund, Life Insurance, ULIPs and Sukanya Samridhi Yojana. It is to be noted the conditions as construed in the section and respective investments/instruments are to be followed in order for the aforementioned investments/instruments to be EEE

2) ELSS is not taxable when the total long-term capital gains derived from listed equities, equity-oriented mutual funds and ELSS of an assessee in a year is less than ₹1 lakh.

Such LTCG amounts in excess of ₹1 lakh is taxable. ELSS mutual funds can be Exempt Exempt (EE) or Exempt Taxable (ET) from assessee to assessee based on the gain made during the relevant year.

Interest accruing from SCSS is taxable, however, on maturity the principal portion is not taxable, hence it is Exempt Taxable Exempt (ETE)

3) PPF has a lock-in period of 15 years whereas ELSS mutual funds are linked to the equity markets which are considered to be very volatile.

You may look at investments in SCSS or tax-saving FDs as deposits have a much shorter lock-in period in comparison with PPF. However, the interest is disbursed on a quarterly basis with respect to SCSS. It is to be noted that the interests earned on SCSS and tax-saving FDs are taxable but the initial investment is eligible for a deduction under Section 80C making them ETE.

Q I used to work in the U.S. between 2011 and 2018. I relocated to India for good in late 2018.

During my stay in the U.S., I had invested in the U.S. stock market.

After my relocation to India, I did not close my positions. I continue to trade in the U.S. stock market and continue to pay capital gain taxes in that country. I pay taxes for the interest earned in India for the amount I transfer from the U.S. to India to meet my expenses here. I file my tax returns both in India and the U.S.

As an Indian, do I have to make any disclosures in India for all my equity holdings in the U.S. stock market?

ARVIND

A Since you are a Resident Indian, you are required to disclose your foreign assets and incomes in "Schedule FA - Details of Foreign Assets and Income from any source outside India" which is available in ITR-2 and ITR-3.

Under this schedule, you are required to disclose your foreign holdings along with the details sought with respect to Foreign Depository Accounts held (including interest paid/credited), Foreign Custodian Accounts held (including interest paid/credited), Foreign Equity and Debt Interests held (including proceeds from sale/redemption and gross amounts paid/credited), Foreign Cash Value Insurance Contracts or Annuity Contract held, Financial Interest in any Entity held, Immovable Property held outside India, Other Capital Assets held outside India, Accounts in which signing authority is possessed, Details of trusts created under laws outside of India, details of other income derived from any source outside India which is not covered in the aforementioned points.

As a Resident Indian, your global incomes are taxable in India, you are required to disclose the incomes earned outside India appropriately in the ITR, the tax paid thereon (if any) and you are eligible to claim relief under DTAA entered between India and USA for the taxes paid in U.S.

(The writer is a partner, GSS and Associates, Chartered Accountants, Chennai)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.



Navigating passive debt funds

Passive debt funds can help meet many goals, from buying a car or meeting the down payment for your home, to funding retirement or generating a regular income after it

PASSIVE INVESTING

Aarati Krishnan

Stock market investors are by now used to index funds and Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) which mimic a stock index. But there's an emerging category of passive debt funds that can help meet many goals from buying a car or meeting the down payment for your home, to funding retirement or generating a regular income after it.

If held for three years plus, passive debt funds work as a more tax-efficient alternative to fixed deposits and small savings schemes



If held for three years plus, passive debt funds work as a more tax-efficient alternative to fixed deposits and small savings schemes

fied basket of securities, all of which mature on the fund's maturity date. The interest earned accrues to the fund's NAV. At maturity, the fund winds up and returns principal and accumulated interest (if you opt for the growth option).

This protects investors from interest rate risk. The yield-to-maturity at which you buy into a target maturity fund roughly corresponds to the returns you can expect to earn from it, with a small adjustment for the fund's expenses. Expense ratios on TMFs are quite low at between 0.06 and 0.16% on direct plans and 0.06 and 0.50% for regular plans.

TMFs with a diversified portfolio typically track a custom-built index, but may not exactly mirror it. While some TMFs are constructed as ETFs, some are run as open-end funds. Edelweiss' Bharat Bond ETF series, for example, invests in highly-rated PSU bonds, and is available for different maturity dates – 2023, 2025, 2030, 2031, 2032 and so on. Other fund houses run open-end TMFs that invest in a mix of government securities, PSU bonds and State Deve-



The funds offer anytime liquidity, while other debt options lock in money. They come at a much lower cost than active debt MFs

lopment Loans (SDLs) in different combinations. Some instances are Aditya Birla Sun Life SDL plus PSU Bond 2026 60:40 fund, SBI CPSE plus PSDL Sep 2026 fund, Kotak Nifty SDL April 2027 fund and so on.

The fund name tells you both the portfolio composition and maturity date. Apart from the target date matching your goal, the key features to look is the latest YTM (yield-to-maturity) of the portfolio, expense ratio and mix of securities owned.

Gilt TMFs

A less complex variant of the diversified TMF is the gilt or SDL TMF, which only own one type of security (Central government securities or State Development Loans) with a common maturity date. Nippon India Nifty G-Sec 2036, IDFC Gilt 2027, Kotak Nifty SDL April 2032, ICICI Pru Nifty SDL September 2027, HDFC Nifty G-Sec July 2031 are some instances.

Usually, TMFs investing in Central g-secs own only one or two securities, while the SDL funds own a basket of bonds from different State governments.

Your choice of gilt TMF should again depend on the timing of your goal, the current YTM of the fund and the expense ratio charged. To play it absolutely safe, gilt TMFs should be your choice while SDL TMFs offer you a shot at higher yields for slightly more risk. The expense ratios are usually lower than diversified TMFs.

Constant MFs

Constant maturity funds (MFs) do not have a specific end date, but always own securities of a certain maturity. So, a 10-year constant maturity fund would always own gilts with end-dates averaging out to 10 years. As the gilts in the portfolio mature, the fund acquires new ones with a similar 10-year term.

Entry, exit

Returns on constant maturity funds, unlike those on TMFs, depend on your entry and exit timing. When interest rates rise sharply in a short span, a 5 or 10 year constant maturity fund can suffer NAV losses, which are made up over time. Investors in such funds, therefore, need to time their entry to some extent or match their goals to the fund's stated maturity and brace for volatile returns in the interim. Presently, these funds are available in 5-year and 10-year variants, with expense ratios of 0.50-0.70% on regular plans and 0.20-0.50% for direct plans.

The living years

THINKINVESTOR

You can determine the retirement corpus needed to buy a joint life annuity with return of purchase price to moderate the issue associated with life expectancy

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

You must determine how long you will live if you want to invest for your retirement portfolio. This portfolio is one into which you accumulate money through your working life to buy income-generating products at retirement to support post-retirement living. In this article, we discuss certain factors you must consider for determining your life expectancy.

Goldilocks principle

Your estimate of life expectancy should be just right – not too conservative nor too aggressive. Why? A conservative estimate would assume you will live longer, say, 100. Such assumption would be valid if many in your family have lived long.

Otherwise, assuming longer life has its consequences on current lifestyle. Suppose you start work at 22 and intend to retire at 60. You have 38 years of working life during which you will pursue life goals such as buying a house and funding your child's education. You must also provide for over one year of retired life for every year you work! This could stress your current cash flows.

An aggressive estimate would assume you will live till, say, 75. That could not stress your current lifestyle but leads to longevity risk – the risk that you will outlive your investments post-retirement. So, how should you balance between an aggressive and a conservative estimate? Life

expectancy is an average age an individual is likely to live, assuming the rates apply throughout the person's remaining life. For instance, according to WHO, life expectancy in India in 2020 was 70.8. But the actual years an individual is likely to live can be more or less than 70.8. You need to adjust your life expectancy based on your lifestyle and genes. If your parents live past 80, there is a high probability that you will too. Determining life expectancy is easier said than done. You should, therefore, revise the estimated amount you need at retirement continually through working life to account for any change in lifestyle and health conditions.

Conclusion

You can determine the retirement corpus needed to buy a joint life annuity with return of purchase price to moderate the issue associated with life expectancy. This product from a life insurance firm pays you or spouse, whoever survives longer, through life. So, the impact of the error in estimating life expectancy can be moderated. Having accumulated the corpus, you can decide at retirement whether to buy an annuity or any other income-generating product that best fits post-retirement needs.

(The writer offers training programmes for individuals for managing their personal investments)

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%)			
	Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Small Finance Banks				
AU Small Finance Bank	7.75	6.10	7.75	7.20
Capital Small Finance Bank	7.50	7.10	7.10	7.10
Equitas Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.50	7.75	7.00
ESAF Small Finance Bank	8.00	5.50	5.75	5.25
FinCorp Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.25	7.00	7.00
Jana Small Finance Bank	7.85	7.25	7.85	7.25
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.51	7.00	7.25	6.75
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	8.00	6.50	7.20	7.20
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.50	7.50	7.50
Private Sector Banks				
Axis Bank	7.26	6.75	7.00	7.00
Bandhan Bank	7.50	7.25	7.25	5.85
CSB Bank	7.50	5.00	5.75	5.75
DBS Bank	7.25	6.25	6.50	6.50
DCB Bank	7.85	7.25	7.85	7.60
HDFC Bank	7.00	6.50	7.00	7.00
ICICI Bank	7.00	6.60	7.00	7.00
IDFC First Bank	7.50	6.75	7.50	7.00
IndusInd Bank	7.50	7.00	7.50	7.25
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	7.25	6.75	6.50	6.50
Karnataka Bank	7.30	6.80	5.75	5.75

Home Loan Interest Rates

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)		
	Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
(In %)			
Public Sector Banks			
State Bank of India	8.75-9.50	8.75-9.40	8.75-9.40
Bank of Baroda	8.60-10.35	8.60-10.35	8.60-10.60
Union Bank of India	8.60-10.50	8.60-10.70	8.60-10.70
Punjab National Bank	8.60-9.35	8.55-9.25	8.55-9.25
Bank of India	8.60-10.60	8.60-10.60	8.60-10.60
Canara Bank	8.90-13.70	8.90-13.70	8.90-13.70
UCO Bank	8.75-9.75	8.75-9.75	8.75-9.75
Bank of Maharashtra*	8.35-10.55	8.35-10.80	8.35-10.80
Punjab and Sind Bank	8.60-9.70	8.60-9.70	8.60-9.70
Indian Overseas Bank	9.30-10.70	8.50 onwards	8.50 onwards
Indian Bank	8.50-10.15	8.50-10.15	8.50-10.15
Private Sector Banks			
ICICI Bank	8.75-9.85	8.75-9.85	8.75-9.85
Axis Bank	8.60-12.70	8.60-12.70	8.60-9.05
HSBC Bank	8.55 onwards	8.55 onwards	8.55 onwards
South Indian Bank	9.60-12.35	9.60-12.35	9.60-12.35
Karur Vysya Bank	8.95-11.85	8.95-11.85	8.95-11.85
Karnataka Bank	8.95-10.12	8.95-10.12	8.95-10.22

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)		
Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh &		

BEIJING

China logs 13,000 COVID-19 deaths in a week; peak period over: official



China reported nearly 13,000 COVID-related deaths in hospitals between January 13 and 19, after a top health official said the vast majority of the population had already been infected. However, this figure does not include those who died at home. An official also said that China has passed the peak period of COVID-19 infection. **AP**

LIMA

Peru closes Machu Picchu as anti-government protests grow



The Culture Ministry in Peru said it had indefinitely closed the famed ancient ruins of Machu Picchu, the country's most famous tourist attraction, as well as the Inca Trail leading up to the site "to protect the safety of tourists". This is the latest sign that anti-government protests are increasingly engulfing the country. **AP**

WASHINGTON

Biden to name ex-pandemic policy adviser Jeff Zients as Chief of Staff



U.S. President Joe Biden will name as his Chief of Staff Jeff Zients, a former White House pandemic policy coordinator, sources said. He was credited with overseeing Mr. Biden's efforts to get Americans vaccinated, but also faced criticism that the administration did not do enough early on to boost testing capacity. **REUTERS**

MOGADISHU

Six killed in Al-Shabaab attack at Mayor's office in Somalia capital



At least six people were killed on Sunday in an attack by Al-Shabaab militants at the Mayor's office in central Mogadishu. A suicide bomber set off a huge blast that tore through building near the office complex with gunfire erupting afterwards, Somali police spokesman Sadik Dudishe said at the end of the four-hour siege. **AP**

Gunman kills 10 during Lunar New Year fete in U.S.

10 wounded in the shooting; the celebration in Monterey Park is one of California's largest and had attracted tens of thousands through the day; most residents are Asian immigrants from China

Associated Press
MONTEREY PARK

A gunman killed 10 people at a ballroom dance studio amid a day of Lunar New Year celebrations and then may have tried – but failed – to target a second dance hall, authorities said on Sunday. An urgent search was under way across the Los Angeles area for the suspect.

Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna said that 20 to 30 minutes after the shooting at the Star Ballroom Dance Studio in Monterey Park late on Saturday, which left five women and five men dead and another 10 people injured, a man with a gun entered the Lai Lai Ballroom in nearby Alhambra. Mr. Luna said it's still unclear whether the events are



Standing guard: The police patrolling the crime scene along Garvey Avenue in Monterey Park, California, on Saturday. **AP**

connected. "We believe that there's an incident that may be related," said Mr. Luna of the incident in Alhambra. "We're not quite there yet, but it's definitely on our radar screen." Mr. Luna said a "male Asian suspect" entered the Alhambra club with a "firearm" and that people wrestled the gun away

from him before he fled. Investigators are interested in a white cargo van that was seen in the area and that police have the gun from Alhambra. He declined to say what type of gun was recovered in Alhambra, and said that investigators believe the firearm used at Monterey Park was not an "assault rifle".

The shooting happened in the heart of its downtown where red lanterns decorated the streets for the Lunar New Year festivities. A police car was parked near a large banner that proclaimed "Happy Year of the Rabbit!" The celebration in Monterey Park is one of California's largest and had attracted tens of thousands throughout the day.

Israelis take to the streets against government's plan to overhaul judicial system

Associated Press
TEL AVIV

Tens of thousands of Israelis gathered in Tel Aviv on Saturday night to protest against plans by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new government to overhaul the judicial system, measures that opponents say imperil the country's democratic foundation. The Israeli media, citing the police, said some 1,00,000 people were out protesting.

The protest followed another demonstration last week that also drew tens of thousands in an early challenge to Mr. Netanyahu and his ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox government – the most right-wing in Israeli history. The government says a power imbalance has given judges and government legal advisers too much sway over lawmaking and govern-



Up in arms: Israelis protest against the proposed judicial reforms to reduce powers of the judiciary, in Tel Aviv on Saturday. **REUTERS**

nance. Mr. Netanyahu has pledged to press on with the changes despite the opposition.

Protecting democracy?

Protesters filled central streets in the seaside metropolis, raising Israeli flags and banners that read, "Our Children will not Live in a Dictatorship," and "Israel, We Have A Problem." "This is a protest to defend the country,"

said Opposition leader and former Prime Minister Yair Lapid, who joined the protest. "People came here today to protect their democracy."

Other protests took place in the cities of Jerusalem, Haifa and Beersheba.

Earlier this week, Mr. Netanyahu, who is on trial for corruption, vowed to continue with the judicial overhaul despite the protests.

Netanyahu fires Cabinet ally, heeding court ruling

Associated Press
TEL AVIV

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fired a key Cabinet ally on Sunday, heeding a court ruling commanding him to do so.

Mr. Netanyahu announced he was firing Aryeh Deri, who serves as Interior and Health Minister, at a meeting of his Cabinet. Israel's Supreme Court decided last week that Mr. Deri could not serve as a Cabinet Minister because of a conviction last year over tax offences. The ruling came as Israel is mired in a dispute over the power of the judiciary.

According to his office, Mr. Netanyahu told Mr. Deri he was removing him from his post with "a heavy heart and great sorrow."

"This unfortunate decision ignores the people's will," he said. "I intend to find any legal way for you to continue to contribute to the state of Israel."

Hindu girl abducted, raped in Pakistan

Press Trust of India
KARACHI

A married Hindu girl abducted from Pakistan's southern Sindh province has said she was threatened by her kidnappers to convert to Islam and raped after she refused to change her religion.

This is the latest in a string of such atrocities committed against members of the minority com-

munity in the country.

The girl said in a disturbing video uploaded on social media that she was raped for three days in Samro town in Umarkot district and the police are yet to register a case against the suspects.

Till Sunday, the police in Mirpurkhas have failed to register a case against the accused persons named by the girl, a Hindu local leader said.

More classified documents found in search of Biden's home

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

for another term in 2024. Mr. Biden insists he has done nothing wrong and has downplayed the situation as an innocent mistake.

Documents from his time as Vice-President and marked as classified first turned up in an office at a Biden-affiliated think tank in Washington last year, and then again at his home in Delaware. Altogether they are about a dozen documents.

After the second find, the White House offered to

let the Department of Justice search the Delaware home – the search was carried out on Friday and is now concluded, Mr. Biden's attorney Bob Bauer said.

Full access

"Department of Justice took possession of materials it deemed within the scope of its inquiry, including six items consisting of documents with classification markings and surrounding materials," Mr. Bauer said.

Some of the new papers seized were from Mr. Biden's time in the Senate and some were from his tenure as Vice President, according to Mr. Bauer.

Mr. Bauer said Mr. Biden's personal lawyers and White House counsel previously arranged with the Justice Department to be present during the inspection, and they agreed to not publicise news of the search in advance "in accordance with its standard procedures."

The White House has said the earlier batches of documents were turned over to the Justice Department and National Archives, which handles presidential records, as soon as they were found.

On Thursday, Mr. Biden dismissed the furore over the discovery of the old classified documents.

Extra steps

"We found a handful of documents... were filed in the wrong place. We immediately turned them over to the Archives and the Justice

Department. We're fully cooperating and looking forward to getting this resolved quickly," he said.

Attorney General Merrick Garland earlier this month appointed a special counsel, former government lawyer Robert Hur, to act as special counsel for the investigation.

Mr. Garland said the "extraordinary circumstances" of investigating a sitting President required him to take the extra step of bringing in an outside prosecutor.

Ryan, Dillon, Sai Sanjay notch wins in MRF F2000; Double for Arjun and Ritesh

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

Four races, four winners marked the premier MRF Formula 2000 category while Coimbatore ace Arjun Narendran bagged a double in the Indian Touring Cars class as the third and penultimate round of the MRF MMSC FMSCI Indian National Car Racing Championship 2022 concluded here on Sunday.

The competition in the MRF F2000 category was fierce with Sohil Shah (Bengaluru), Dillon Thomas Zachariah (Chennai) (15mins, 41.751sec); Divy Nandan (Gurugram) (15:45.155); 3. Mohammed Ryan (Chennai) (15:45.403). Race-3 (8 laps): 1. Mohammed Ryan (15:12.845); 2. Sohil Shah (Bengaluru) (15:13.898); 3. Divy Nandan (15:19.875). Race-4 (10 laps): 1. Sai Sanjay T (Salem)

The results (Provisional):
MRF Formula 2000 (Race-2, 10

laps): 1. Dillon Thomas Zachariah (Chennai) (15mins, 41.751sec); 2. Divy Nandan (Gurugram) (15:45.155); 3. Mohammed Ryan (Chennai) (15:45.403).

Race-3 (8 laps): 1. Mohammed Ryan (15:12.845); 2. Sohil Shah (Bengaluru) (15:13.898); 3. Divy Nandan (15:19.875). Race-4 (10 laps): 1. Sai Sanjay T (Salem)

MRF Saloons (Toyota Etios) (Race-2, 10 laps): 1. Angad Mathroo (Chandigarh) (20:52.676); 2. Justin Singh (Gurugram) (20:54.991); 3. Jai Prashanth Venkat (Coimbatore) (21:19.977).

Indian Touring Cars (Race-2, 12 laps): 1. Arjun Narendran (Coimbatore, Arka Motorsports) (27:34.644); 2. Arjun Balu (Coimbatore, Race Concepts) (27:34.913); 3. Jeet Jabakh (Hyderabad, Rayo Racing) (27:52.303).

Indian Junior Touring Cars (Race-2, 12 laps): 1. Akkineni Anand Prasad (Chennai, Performance Racing) (28:07.045); 2. Raja Rajan (Chennai, Performance Racing) (28:11.000); K Srinivas Teja (Chennai, Performance Racing) (28:15.481).

Super Stock (Race-2, 12 laps): 1. Ritesh Rai (Chennai, Performance Racing) (29:05.372); 2. Diljith TS (Thrissur, DTS Racing) (29:13.249); Jason Sandalha (Mangalore, DB Motorsports) (29:14.491).

Volkswagen Polo Cup (Race-3, 8 laps): 1. Sandeep Kumar (Chennai) (15:43.185); 2. Jeet Jabakh (Hyderabad) (15:47.025); 3. Aditya Swaminathan (Bengaluru) (15:47.891).

Race-4 (10 laps): 1. Sandeep Kumar (19:43.676); 2. Raaj Bakharu (Mumbai) (19:48.119); 3. Aditya Swaminathan (Bengaluru) (19:55.032).

Sport

Ryan, Dillon, Sai Sanjay notch wins in MRF F2000; Double for Arjun and Ritesh

happy bunch: Winners of the four MRF F2000 races – Sohil Shah, Sai Sanjay, Mohammed Ryan and Dillon. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Arjun Narendran (Arka Motorsports), winner of the first race on Saturday swept to another fine win starting from fifth on the reverse grid in the Indian Touring Cars category.

The results (Provisional):
MRF Formula 2000 (Race-2, 10

laps): 1. Dillon Thomas Zachariah (Chennai) (15mins, 41.751sec); 2. Divy Nandan (Gurugram) (15:45.155); 3. Mohammed Ryan (Chennai) (15:45.403).

Race-3 (8 laps): 1. Mohammed Ryan (15:12.845); 2. Sohil Shah (Bengaluru) (15:13.898); 3. Divy Nandan (15:19.875). Race-4 (10 laps): 1. Sai Sanjay T (Salem)

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Priceless Gold tipped for the Qutab Shahi Million

HYDERABAD: Rajesh Narreddu's ward Priceless Gold should score over his rivals in the Qutab Shahi Million, the chief event of Monday's (Jan 23) races.

1 BHUPAL PALLY PLATE (1,400m), rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 3:15: 1. Kingston (3) R.S. Jodha 55, 5. Reining Queen (7) P. Ajeeeth Kumar 53.6, 5. Riffa (3) G. Naresh 52, 7. Cape Town (8) D.S. Deora 51.5, 8. Delhi Heights (4) Surya Prakash 51.5, 9. Blue Brigade (1) Rafique Sk. 51.

1 IVANHOE, 2. MASTER TOUCH, 3. REINING QUEEN

4 BRAVE HUNTER CUP (1,400m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 3:15: 1. Thanks (4) Kuldeep S 60, 2. True Icon (6) B. Nikhil 56, 3. Barbet (5) Kiran Naidu 55.5, 4. Star Racer (7) Surya Prakash 53.5, 5. Rhythm Selection (3) Md. Ismail 53, 6. Strauss (1) Akshay Kumar 52.5, 7. Wind Sprite (8) Afroz Khan 52.5, 8. Wallop And Gallop (2) Gaurav 51.

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BACK AGAIN

Morgan to play in Legends League Cricket Masters



The Legends League Cricket (LLC) announced that 2019 World Cup winning England captain Eoin Morgan would return to the cricket field for the upcoming LLC Masters season to be held in Qatar from February 27 to March 8. "I am excited to be part of the Legends League Masters and enjoy my game with the Legends."

RECOGNITION

Mehidy Hasan promoted to all-format BCB contract



Mehidy Hasan Miraz's stunning performances throughout 2022 have earned him an all-format Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) contract from January to December 2023. Miraz joined Litton Das, Shakib Al Hasan and Taskin Ahmed in the list of players with all-format contracts.

SENIOR'S ADVICE

If you work on line and length you can rule: Shami to Umran



Indian pacer Mohammed Shami feels young Umran Malik "can rule the world" if he works on his line and length. "There's only one piece of advice I want to give. I don't think it's easy to play against the pace that you have. Just that we need to work a little on line and length. If we can get a command over it, we can rule the world."

CLEAN SLATE

Indian Women's hockey team holds SA, remains unbeaten



The Indian women's hockey team remained unbeaten in its South Africa Tour as it registered a 2-2 draw against the hosts in its fourth match in Cape Town on Sunday. India had won the earlier three games. Debutante Vaishnavi Vithal Palkhe scored both the goals for the visitors. India takes on Netherlands on Monday.

India tumbles out after a dramatic shootout against New Zealand

An erratic performance, especially after leading by two goals twice, from the host costs it dearly and it will now have to fight for 9-16 places in classification matches

HOCKEY WORLD CUP

Uthra Ganesan
BHUBANESWAR

It took 19 shots in the shootout and the sudden death to separate the two teams but in the end, India was left ruing the multitude of what-ifs as it lost 5-4 on penalties to New Zealand after being tied 3-3 in regulation time in the hockey World Cup crossover match here on Sunday night. Worse, India lost P.R. Sreejesh for the last three shots through injury and although Krishan Pathak did his best, India's attackers fumbled.

It was not the way the team would have imagined its medal hopes would end at home when it took a two-goal lead twice through the game, dominating the Black Sticks for long periods and creating chances upfront that went abegging. It was a much improved performance after the Welsh disappointment but it was not enough against a gritty New Zealand that set up a quarterfinal clash against reigning champion Belgium for its efforts.

The things coach Graham Reid had spoken about that needed work



Super save: New Zealand goalkeeper Hayward blocks Shamsher's effort during the shootout. BISWARANJAN ROUT

were improved. The forwards backed each other up but did not crowd in. The finishing was more on-target. But the elusive penalty corner conversions continued – India earned 10 and could only convert one, taken by Varun Kumar.

Harmapreet Singh, the talismanic Indian captain and its best hope to advance, was expected to finally come good but his woes continued – including missing a key shot in the shootout. New Zealand, on the other hand, was two-in-two with its PCs in a space of six minutes.

India's second half woes also continued, surprising

given its dominance in the first. In fact, India got increasingly error-prone in defence as the game progressed, conceding turnovers and mis-passing towards the end.

India started strongly and despite an opening attack from New Zealand, took control and had its first shot at goal in the seventh minute. It kept pushing into the opposition circle from either flank and the forwards, despite missing a few chances, were more in the right positions compared to their previous outing.

A steal in the Indian 25-yard area by Harmanpreet initiated India's first goal. A

long through ball to Akashdeep Singh, sending it to Shamsher before the latter sent a perfectly placed cross to Upadhyay, who took it on the run, took his time to get into position and slammed it into the board in the 18th minute.

India looked to have doubled the lead five minutes later off back-to-back penalty corners but Nilakanta Sharma's third-shot rebound was cancelled for a backstick from Abhishek in the final pass. Two minutes later, though, Sukhjeet slotted in a rebound off another PC and this time there was no confusion.

India also paid the price for ignoring the key danger

men for New Zealand. Veteran Simon Child had been expected to feed Sam Lane and create PCs for Kane Russell and he was everywhere for NZ. Inexplicably, the Indians time and again left him alone and the former took full advantage, repeatedly setting up the latter, creating the PC that Russell converted and made quite a few goaline saves during India's PCs.

The host will now travel back to Rourkela for the 9-16 classification games.

The result: New Zealand 3 (Sam Lane, Kane Russell, Sean Findlay) drew with India 3 (Lalit Upadhyay, Sukhjeet Singh, Varun Kumar). New Zealand won 5-4 via penalty shoot-out.

We let ourselves down by giving the ball away too easily: Reid

Uthra Ganesan

BHUBANESWAR

India coach Graham Reid finally admitted penalty-corner conversions let the team down in the crucial crossover match against New Zealand.

"Obviously our PC conversion (was off) but we also had a lot of circle penetrations that we couldn't convert. We scored three goals today and 3-4 goals would normally be enough. We probably needed to be more in front and tighter in defence," he said.

But he put the entire team in the dock for allowing New Zealand to take control despite being up by two goals twice. "We still created enough tonight to win. The problem was that every time we won the ball, we just gave it back to him and that was the telling factor. They got their 2nd and 3rd goals when we gave the ball back just after we won it. At this level you can't do that."

"We made mistakes which we don't normally do, we need to analyse and talk about them and come up with solutions before our next game. I am sure pressure and expectations all come into mix. Tonight we let ourselves down in the last quarter and threw the ball away. We probably have to go back to the drawing board... it's still execution at the end of day."

Spain prevails over a resolute Malaysia



Star of the day: Goalkeeper Mario Garin, right, was Spain's hero in the shootout against Malaysia. BISWARANJAN ROUT

Aashin Prasad

BHUBANESWAR

Spain had all the possession, circle penetration and shots on goal but in the end, it needed a penalty

corner to prevail against a resolute Malaysia in the crossover match and book its quarterfinal berth. Goalkeeper Mario Garin, who watched the 2-2 draw from the bench, turned hero in the shootouts with two saves to give Spain a 4-3 win here at the Kalinga Stadium on Sunday.

Malaysia didn't go away though as it equalised in the fourth quarter through Shello Silverius, who reverse hit the ball past Adrian Rafi from inside the six-yard area.

Malaysia survived with a draw with some tense defending in the final minutes but in the end, Garin came up trumps with saves against Marhan Jalil and Firhan Ashari to send Spain through to the next round.

The result: Malaysia 2 (Faizal Saari 34, Shello Silverius 48) drew with Spain 2 (Marc Miralles 40, Xavier Gispert 41) Spain won 4-3 via penalties.

Shami – playing the role of senior pro

NZ IN INDIA

Amol Karhadkar
INDORE

If Mohammed Shami is the *Ustad* (master) of the full ball and seam-up pace bowling in India, Mohammed Siraj is his *shāfi* (protege).

While the protege has stolen the limelight in the four ODIs in 2023 so far, the master was at his artistic best on Saturday, with Siraj playing the support role to perfection. The duo's lethal opening spell, dominated by Shami's literally unplayable deliveries, spelt doom to the New Zealand top-order in Raipur.

Riding on his effective, economical and rewarding spell, India bundled the Kiwis out for a meagre 108.

Despite being the seniormost pacer in India's unit, Shami downplayed a query about his evolving role in the team, especially in Jasprit Bumrah's absence. But he stressed the fact that game-time was the top-most priority in an era dominated by workload management.

"Load is being managed



Shami. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Parshavi sets up India's big win

ANI
POTCHEFSTROOM

A stunning spell of leg-spin bowling by Parshavi Chopra led India to a hasty, seven-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in their second Sup-

er Six match in the inaugural ICC Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup here on Sunday.

The scores:
Sri Lanka 59/9 in 20 overs (Parshavi Chopra 4/5) lost to India 60/3 in 7.2 overs.

Arsenal shades five-goal thriller

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
MANCHESTER

Arsenal moved five points clear at the top of the Premier League thanks to Eddie Nketiah's 90th minute winner to beat Manchester United 3-2 on Sunday.

Earlier, Erling Haaland's fourth hat-trick in 19 Premier League appearances helped Manchester City register a 3-0 win over Wolves.

"I always talk to the bowlers. I know when someone is putting in the effort, but not getting the desired results, it can be very helpful if you talk to your partner. That is the role I like to play when I am bowling," he said.

The results:

Premier League: Leeds 0 drew with Brentford 0; Manchester United 3-2 on Sunday.

LaLiga: Rayo Vallecano 0 lost to Real Sociedad 2 (Sorloth 15, Barrenetxea 36); Atletico Madrid 3 (Morata 18, Griezmann 23, Hermoso 28) bt Real Valladolid 0; Sevilla 1 (Rakitic 89-pen) bt Cadiz 0.

Serie A: Salernitana 0 lost to Napoli 2 (Di Lorenzo 45+, Osimhen 48).

Bundesliga: Union Berlin 3 (Doekhi 73, 89, Leweling 90+6) bt Hoffenheim 1 (Beblob 43).

Rybakina stuns top seed Swiatek; Ostapenko beats Gauff

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Agence France-Presse
MELBOURNE

Top seed Iga Swiatek and Coco Gauff crashed out in straight sets in the last 16 on Sunday on another day of shocks at the Australian Open.

Swiatek's defeat to Elena Rybakina makes it the first Grand Slam in the Open era – since 1968 – to lose the top two seeds in the men's and women's draws before the quarterfinals.

Jessica Pegula surged into the last eight with a 7-5, 6-2 win over former French Open champion Barbora Krejcikova.

Wimbledon champion Rybakina swept past the 2022 French and US Open winner Swiatek 6-4, 6-4 in 1hr 29min. Jelena Ostapenko provided the second upset of a crazy few minutes by knocking out seventh seed Gauff 7-5, 6-3.

Victoria Azarenka reached the quarterfinals at 2:17 a.m. after winning a bruising late-night encounter 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 against China's Zhu Lin.

The men's draw has also



Major upset: Rybakina's defeat of Swiatek makes this the first Grand Slam in the Open era to lose the top two men's and women's seeds before the quarterfinals. GETTY IMAGES

seen a series of surprise results.

Greece's Stefano Tsitsipas, the highest remaining men's seed at three, avoided the fate of Rafael Nadal and Casper Ruud with a dogged victory over Jannik Sinner. Tsitsipas, who is pursuing a first Major crown, defeated the Italian 15th seed 6-4, 6-4, 3-6, 4-6, 6-3.

Women: fourth round: 22-Rybakina (Kaz) bt 1-Swiatek (Pol) 6-4, 6-4; 17-Ostapenko (Lat) bt 7-Gauff (USA) 7-5, 6-3; 3-Pegula (USA) bt 10-Krejcikova (Cze) 7-5, 6-2; 24-Azarenka (Blr) bt Zhu Lin (Chn) 4-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Lehecka added to the list of fallen seeds by beating sixth-seeded Felix Auger-Aliassime 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (2), 7-6 (3). Giantkiller Sebastian Korda clawed into a maiden Grand Slam quarterfinal with a 3-6, 6-3, 6-2, 7-6 [10-7] upset of 10th seed Hubert Hurkacz.

The committee will investigate various allegations, including charges of sexual harassment of some woman athletes, slapped by some prominent wrestlers.

WFI AGM called off

Sports Bureau

Following the Union Sports Ministry's direction to the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) to suspend all its activities immediately until the Oversight Committee is formally appointed and takes over day-to-day functioning of the federation, the WFI called off its general body and executive body meetings scheduled at Gonda on Sunday.

On Saturday night, the Ministry had issued an order asking the WFI to stop its activities and cancel the National ranking tournament at Gonda. It also suspended WFI assistant secretary Vinod Tomar to ensure proper functioning of the WFI.

"We are obeying the Government orders. We had to call off the meetings scheduled today because of the Ministry's order to put all activities on hold," WFI secretary general V.N. Prasad said. "We have to wait until the Oversight Committee finishes its work in four weeks."

The committee will investigate various allegations, including charges of sexual harassment of some woman athletes, slapped by some prominent wrestlers.

IN BRIEF



FC Goa pulls off a facile win over Kerala Blasters at home

FC Goa got the better of Kerala Blasters 3-1 in an Indian Super League match at the Fatorda Stadium in Margao on Sunday. With 23 points from 15 games, Goa is now in the fifth spot, while Blasters stay on 25 points after 14 matches.

The result: FC Goa 3 (Iker Guarratxena 35-pen, Noah Sadaoui 43, Redeem Tiang 69) bt Kerala Blasters 1 (Dimitrios Diamantakos 51).

Wheelchair tennis legend Kunieda calls it quits

Shingo Kunieda, 50-time Grand Slam champion and one of the greatest wheelchair tennis players of all time, retired on Sunday saying he had "done enough". The 38-year-old Japanese player spent a total of 582 weeks as World No. 1 and won four Paralympic golds, including at the Covid-postponed Tokyo Paralympics in 2021. Kunieda was No. 1 in the International Tennis Federation's year-end ranking 10 times, the first in 2007 and as recently as last year.

RoundGlass Punjab thumps Mohammedan Sporting

Juan Mera and Luka Majcen scored a brace each as RoundGlass Punjab FC thrashed Mohammedan Sporting 4-0 in an I-League match in Kolkata on Sunday. Mera scored in the 17th and 75th minutes, while Majcen found the back of the net in the 41st and 52nd minutes.

The scores: RoundGlass Punjab FC 4 (Juan Mera 2, Luka Majcen 2) bt Mohammedan Sporting.



Vine wins Tour Down Under; Yates ends second

Australia's Jay Vine (UAE Team Emirates) finished second in the final stage but defended his overnight lead to win the Tour Down Under cycling race on Sunday. Simon Yates of Britain won the final stage and moved up from third to second overall. Vine came into the final stage with a 15-second lead on general classification having finished second in the second, and third in the third stages.

LIVE TELECAST

Australian Open: Sony Sports 2, 3, 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 5.30 a.m. & 1.30 p.m.
Hockey World Cup: SS Select 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 4.30 & 7 p.m.
I-League: Eurosport (SD & HD), 7 p.m.
Women's T20 tri-series: Star Sports 2 & Hotstar, 10.30 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 1.30 a.m. (Tuesday)
Serie A: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 1.15 a.m. (Tuesday)
LaLiga: Jio Cinema App, 1.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Sidharth Rawat falls at the final hurdle

Sidharth Rawat went down fighting to second seed Arthur Weber of France in the final of the \$15,000 ITF men's tennis tournament in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Sunday. The 30-year-old Weber won a second singles title of his career, as he beat Sidharth 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 in the two-hour duel.

Weber's earlier title had also come in Jakarta.

ta, in a \$25,000 tournament.

The defeat apart, it was a fruitful outing for Sidharth who had played three sets in all the five rounds, and had beaten the top seed Thomas Fancutt of Australia in a dramatic fashion in the semifinals.

The results:
\$15,000 ITF men, Jakarta, Indonesia: Final: Arthur Weber (Fra) bt Sidharth Rawat 6-4, 3-6, 6-3.

Kunlavut masters Axelsen to script a fantastic triumph

In a memorable day for the challengers, Se-young raises her game to bounce back and stun top-seeded Yamaguchi for the women's crown; Liang-Wang combine takes the honours in men's section while the other two doubles finals see walkovers

INDIA OPEN

Kamesh Srinivasan
NEW DELHI

The challengers rose to the occasion and tamed the top seeds to emerge champions.

The talented Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand and An Se-young of Korea asserted their tenacity as they beat the reigning World champions to bag the men's and women's singles titles respectively in the \$900,000 Yonex Sunrise India Open at the KD Jadhav Hall here on Sunday.

For the excited fans who packed the stands, it was high-quality entertainment that compensated for the two walkovers in the women's and mixed doubles finals, as the Chinese fell sick.

It was a dream come true for the three-time World junior champion, the 21-year-old Kunlavut to beat the World and Olym-



Great going! Kunlavut and Se-young with their reward after reigning supreme in the singles events on Sunday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

pic champion Viktor Axelsen 22-20, 10-21, 21-12.

The outrageously talented Kunlavut, who swung the racquet behind his back and between his legs to unleash some stunning shots, did not get carried away and played purposefully in the decider.

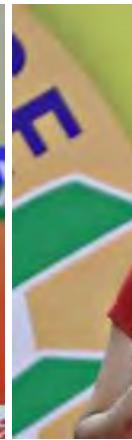
In contrast, Axelsen looked resigned to his fate as he hurtled to defeat, hurrying many shots to the net from 10-12 in the third game.

The towering Axelsen graciously walked under

the net to congratulate the champion who was celebrating on an emotional high. Axelsen had beaten the Thai in three finals, including the World Championship.

The winner pocketed \$59,500 and the runner-up \$28,900.

The prize money was the same for the women, and there was no dearth of entertainment as well, as the 20-year-old An Se-young rode on the encouragement from the stands, and found admirable re-



YONEX

serves of energy at the crunch, to overcome top seed Akane Yamaguchi 15-21, 21-16, 21-12.

Superb shots

Yamaguchi was unable to get into a higher gear and failed to fight on from 11-13 in the decider, even as the 20-year-old Korean came up with superb shots for her 12th title on the Tour.

It was absolutely top-class to see how Se-young turned the match around from 12-12 in the second

Khalin Joshi and Kartik Sharma earn Asian Tour cards

GOLF

Press Trust of India
HUA HIN (THAILAND)

India's Khalin Joshi and Kartik Sharma grabbed two of the 35 cards on offer at the five-round 90-hole Asian Tour Qualifying School Final Stage, ensuring themselves a fair number of starts on the Tour in 2023.

The Indian duo totalled 9-under for five rounds and were tied 26th. It was a long test over 90 holes with more than 240 players starting out.

The top 140 and ties played after the first two rounds.

A total of 13 Indians started out in the 234-player field and nine made the first cut applied after 36 holes and then just two – Joshi and Sharma – were left among the top-70 and ties.

Australian Jack Thompson graduated with first class honours after winning the Final Stage by two shots over countryman John Lyras and China's Bai Zhengkai.

Indian women keen to carry momentum against West Indies

TRI-SERIES

Press Trust of India
EAST LONDON

Hoping for the seniors to return to the playing XI, India will look to continue the winning run, when it takes on West Indies in the Women's T20 Tri-Series match here on Monday.

The Indians, without skipper Harmanpreet Kaur in the win over hosts South Africa, gave a good account of themselves in their opener.

Harmanpreet missed the tie against South Africa owing to illness and it remains to be seen if she returns for the match against the West Indies.

Irrespective of whether the seniors return or not

against the West Indies, a bit of focus will surely be on the 21-year-old Amanjot here on Monday, when the Women in Blue will look to consolidate their position in the tournament.

Even though some seniors have taken ill and teen sensations Shafali Verma and Richa Gosh are busy with their commitments in the Under-19 World Cup, India can call on the services of senior all-rounder, Deepti Sharma.

The tri-series is significant as it is the last tournament before the Women's T20 World Cup next month.

The scores:

On Saturday: South Africa 141/5 in 20 overs (Marizanne Kapp 52, Sune Luus 30) bt West Indies 97/8 in 20 overs.

Pragg scores second win, while Arjun and Gukesh lose

TATA STEEL CHESS

Sports Bureau

R. Praggnanandhaa (4.5 points) took his time to nail local hope Jorden van Foreest in 64 moves for his second victory from seven rounds of the Masters section of the Tata Steel chess tournament in Wijk aan Zee on Saturday.

Nodirbek Abdusattorov (5.5) consolidated his lead by inflicting a first defeat on Arjun Erigaisi (3) while D. Gukesh (1.5) suffered a second straight loss and fourth in all after running into Wesley So.

In the Challengers section, R. Vaishali (3) scored her second successive victory while B. Adhiban (3) suffered his first loss after

six draws.

The results (seventh round):

Masters: R. Praggnanandhaa (4.5) bt Jorden van Foreest (2); Arjun Erigaisi (3) lost to Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 5.5); D. Gukesh (1.5) lost to So Wesley (USA, 4.5); Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 3.5) bt Richard Rapport (Rom, 2.5); Levon Aronian (USA, 3.5) drew with Anish Giri (Ned, 4); Vincent Keymer (Ger, 2) drew with Ding Liren (Chn, 3.5); Parham Maghsoudloo (Iri, 3.5) drew with Fabiano Caruana (USA, 4.5).

Challengers: R. Vaishali (3) bt Luis Supi (Bra, 3); B. Adhiban (3) lost to Jerges Pechac (Svk, 1.5); Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb, 5) bt Eline Roebers (Ned, 2); Alexander Donchenko (Ger, 3) bt Mustafa Yilmaz (Tur, 4.5); Max Warmerdam (Ned, 3) drew with Velimir Ilic (Ser, 4.5); Thomas Beersden (Ned, 4.5) bt Abhimanyu Mishra (2.5); Amin Tabatabaei (Iri, 4) bt Erwin L'Ami (3).

Angad Vir Singh Bajwa tops in skeet final

SHOOTING

Sports Bureau

Olympian Angad Vir Singh Bajwa roared back to the top as he beat Abhay Singh Sekhon 39-34 in the skeet final of the National shotgun selection trials at the New Moti Bagh Gun Club in Patiala.

After qualifying in the third place behind Man Singh (124) and Anantjeet Singh Naruka (120), world record holder Angad shot the best in the semifinals and final.

After the Tokyo Olympics, Angad had taken nearly a year off to rekindle his hunger for the sport.

In the women's section,

Ganemat Sekhon topped by beating Parinaaz Dhaliwal 36-30.

National champion Maheshwari Chauhan was placed in the fourth spot behind Zahra Mufaddal Deesawala.

Skeet: Men: 1. Angad Vir Singh Bajwa (29) 118; 2. Abhay Singh Sekhon (27) 116; 3. Anantjeet Singh Naruka (28) 120; 4. Mairaj Ahmad Khan (18) 116.

Junior men: 1. Rituraj Singh Bundela 117; 2. Harmeher Singh Lally 116; 3. Abhay Singh Sekhon 116.

Women: 1. Ganemat Sekhon (28) 113; 2. Parinaaz Dhaliwal (25) 113; 3. Zahra Mufaddal Deesawala (25) 111; 4. Maheshwari Chauhan (13) 110.

Junior women: 1. Sanjana Sood (114); 2. Zahra Mufaddal Deesawala (111); 3. Yashasvi Rathore (108).

A profitable day for Tamil Nadu hoopsters

JR. NATL. BASKETBALL

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

Tamil Nadu women thrashed Nagaland 133-27 at the 72nd junior National basketball championships at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on Sunday. The men's team beat Mizoram 88-71 to make the day doubly sweet.

Important results:

Men: Karnataka 67 (N.M. Vishnu 24, K. Lingesh 14) bt Maharashtra 55 (Sahil Dhanvant 17, Shivraj Patel 13); Rajasthan 84 (Rahul 26, Harin Saini 17, Vikas Choudhary 15) bt Kerala 63 (C.K. Rinil 16, Alfin Charley 16, Emmanuel T. Shaibu 15). Tamil Nadu 88 (S. Ajay 16, V. Sharan 16, B. Subinvel 15, S. Pragalathan 11) bt Mizoram 71 (Emmanuel Awmpua 14, Lalrakaima 14, Moses Lammananzoa 10). Uttarakhand 93 (Hardik Sharma 31, Priyanshu Chand 20, Priyanshu Kumar 11, Sihal Dhami 11) bt Delhi 78 (Toshit Tomar 24, Mohit 18, Siddant Tomar 15).



On-court action: Tamil Nadu men got the better of Mizoram. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT
Paramjeet Shekhawat 10). Madhya Pradesh 82 (Vikas Sharma 21, Bhagat Singh 26, Harshi Ahlawat 10) bt Andhra Pradesh 70 (Gurucharan 17, Adarshpaul 15, Satya Prakash 13, Swarka Natha Reddy 12).
Women: Tamil Nadu 133 (Sadhana Veronica 24, H. Harshana 22) bt Nagaland 27 (Keneingunu 11). Maharashtra 68 (Mansi Nirmalakar 18, Anya Bhaskar 18, Riccha Ravi 15, Bhumiika Sarje 13) bt Karnataka 62 (Mekhala Gowda 13, Aadhya Gowda 10). West Bengal 125 (Smriti Kanakabiraj 34, Diya Hazra 27, Swati Sanu 26, Ananya Mandal 21) bt Meghalaya 32 (Wanrikynti Kurhab 12, Lynette P. Mylliemgap 12). Kerala 65 (Ashlin Shiju 21, Avani Nanda 11) bt Madhya Pradesh 62 (Khushi Pal Singh 31, Samya Wadhani 10). Uttar Pradesh 95 (Nancy Gupta 38, Vidhi Yadav 18, Anavai Anand 16) bt Haryana 82 (Anju 35, Mannu 26, Nancy 17).

Tikhonova stuns Zuger to clinch title

Sports Bureau

Fifth seed Anastasia Tikhonova of Russia silenced second seed Joanne Zuger of Switzerland with a 6-4, 6-1 victory in the final of the \$40,000 ITF women's tennis tournament at Bhopal on Sunday.

Tikhonova had dropped two sets along the way, one to the top seed Nigina Abduraimova of Uzbekistan and the other to Karman Kaur Thandi.

Having lost in the final qualifying round of the Australian Open, it was some consolation for Tikhonova to rush to India and capture a title.

It was the fourth title of her career for the 22-year-old Tikhonova, who had won a \$60,000 event in Pretoria last year.

The 22-year-old Joanne could not add to her two titles won at the \$15,000 level. She had also lost to Diana Shnaider in the first qualifying round of Australian Open. Diana beat Tikhonova in the third round.

Shubhankar finishes tied-seventh

GOLF

Press Trust of India
ABU DHABI

India's Shubhankar Sharma shot a 69 on the final day, and with a total of 13-under, he finished tied seventh in the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championships here on Sunday.

Shubhankar was on fire in the first six holes with two birdies and an eagle and a close look at another birdie