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WORLD » PAGE 16



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NEWS » PAGE 12

CHANGE IN APPROACH

The wrong cooks  
spoiling the  
scientific broth  
Scientists must solve  
more real-life problems

EDITORIAL » PAGE 8

## Centre rules out MSP law, offers talks with farmers

Farmers, police clash at Haryana-Punjab boundary; Delhi under tight security net; SKM urges PM to intervene and stop using force against farmers, asks splinter group to join strike on February 16

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

As the protests by farmers' groups escalated into a full-blown conflict with the security forces at various points on the Haryana-Punjab boundary on Tuesday, the Union government yet again made it clear that announcing a guaranteed minimum support price (MSP), the key demand of the farmers, will not be possible. The government, however, offered a third round of talks with the leaders of the groups.

The protests were led by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha - Non-Political (SKM-NP), a splinter group of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM). The constituents of SKM urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to



Chaos ensues: Police personnel fire tear gas at farmers protesting at Shambhu barrier in Punjab on Tuesday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

intervene and stop using force against the farmers and asked the SKM-NP to stop fighting separately and support the rural and industrial strike on February 16.

Union Agriculture Minister Arjun Munda and Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur asked the farmers

to be wary of "disruptive elements" in their movement. Mr. Munda told the media that on a law for guaranteed MSP, the Centre had to look at all sides of it.

The Opposition jumped into the scene, with the Congress saying it would implement a guaranteed MSP if it came to power.

Farmers have been invited for yet another round of talks, which is likely to be held on Wednesday. The two rounds of discussions, led by Mr. Munda and Minister Piyush Goyal, had collapsed. "We will wait for the outcome of it [talks] and if it fails, farmers will breach the blockades and start marching to Delhi," said K.V. Biju, a senior leader of SKM-NP. He said more than 60 farmers were injured in the lathi charge and firing of rubber bullets and tear gas shells on them by the police.

Meanwhile, in anticipation of the march, the boundaries of the Capital remained heavily barricaded.

CONTINUED ON

» PAGE 12

MORE REPORTS

» PAGE 2, 13

Clause in draft India-EFTA pact may hit drug industry

Jacob Koshy  
NEW DELHI

A clause in a draft free trade agreement text being negotiated between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) – Switzerland, Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway – could delay access to affordable, generic versions of patented drugs in India by a minimum of six years, according to documents viewed by *The Hindu*.

A leaked draft of the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) says that within six months of the agreement being signed, signatories should include a "specific duration" during which applicants seeking consent from their country's regulators to sell a drug would not rely on "undisclosed test data" to gain market approval for at least six years.

CONTINUED ON

» PAGE 12

### IN BRIEF



AAP offers one  
Lok Sabha seat to  
Congress in Delhi

NEW DELHI  
The rift between AAP and the Congress seemed to widen further on Tuesday, with the former saying it was ready to offer one of the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi to the Congress. » Page 5

HC sets aside  
Section 144  
at Sandeshkhali

KOLKATA  
The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday set aside the State government's decision to impose prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC at Sandeshkhali. » Page 4

OPPORTUNITIES » PAGES 5 & 7



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## Commuters bear the brunt of blockades on city borders

**Samridhi Tewari**  
**Satvika Mahajan**  
NEW DELHI

The blockades at the Singhu and Tikri borders on Tuesday forced many people to cross roads and cover long distances on foot.

Several senior citizens complained about the inconvenience caused due to heightened security measures. Gulab Chand, a 60-year-old labourer, had gone to Tikri village with his wife to meet their daughter, but the two had to walk back home. "It is hard for me to walk long distances due to the pain in my joints. Last time, when the farmers protested, we couldn't work because it was hard to commute. If it happens again, we don't know if we will receive any assistance from the authorities. It is difficult to navigate through a blockade," he said.

Shailash, an employee at a juice manufacturing



**Long walk:** People in search of transport at Singhu border on Tuesday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

unit in Karnal, had to walk back home with his 60-year-old mother after they missed the bus to Azamgarh. "Nobody provided us with any help," remarked his aged mother.

Kamlesh and his wife Kalawati, travelled from Kundli, located north of the Singhu border, to north-east Delhi's Bhajanpura to meet a family member, but had to make their way back on foot due to the blockade at the Singhu border. "I had to carry my two-year-old daughter

for most of the journey," said Mr. Kamlesh.

Jasbir, a resident of Panipat who had come to Singhu, added that he had to walk for over 10 km since his bus could not cross the barricade. "I had to walk a long distance with my wife and three children. It is difficult because there is no help from the authorities. Nobody wants to listen to our grievances. There is no respite for the poor. If this situation continues, how are we expected to commute?" he said.

Shailash, an employee at a juice manufacturing

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Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended on 31st December, 2023

S. No.	Particulars	INR Lakhs					
		Quarter Ended 31.12.2023 (Un-audited)	Quarter Ended 30.09.2023 (Un-audited)	Quarter Ended 31.12.2022 (Un-audited)	Nine month ended 31.12.2023 (Un-audited)	Nine month ended 31.12.2022 (Un-audited)	Year ended 31.03.2023 (Un-audited)
1	Total income from operations	39,534.00	39,743.46	39,437.92	117,999.40	117,946.37	156,494.36
2	Net Profit/ (loss) for the period before tax (before exceptional items)	28,046.69	27,274.83	26,409.24	80,528.25	74,993.76	98,857.50
3	Net Profit/ (loss) for the period before tax (after exceptional items)	28,046.69	27,274.83	26,409.24	80,528.25	74,993.76	98,857.50
4	Net Profit/ (loss) for the period after tax (after exceptional items)	23,353.46	22,495.58	22,419.94	67,283.64	63,756.03	78,866.33
5	Total comprehensive income for the period [comprising profit for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax)]	23,377.03	22,519.14	22,484.72	67,354.33	63,950.36	78,960.58
6	Paid up equity share capital	395,100.00	395,100.00	395,100.00	395,100.00	395,100.00	395,100.00
7	Reserves (excluding revaluation reserve)	240,328.29	216,949.58	157,981.45	240,328.29	157,981.45	172,991.67
8	Net worth	635,428.29	612,049.58	553,081.45	635,428.29	553,081.45	568,091.67
9	Paid up debt capital/ outstanding debt	6,916.74	7,750.08	25,448.06	7,750.08	25,448.06	19,705.76
10	Outstanding redeemable preference shares	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
11	Debt equity ratio	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.05	0.03
12	Earnings per share (of INR10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)						
13	Basic & Diluted (INR)	0.59	0.57	0.57	1.70	1.61	2.00
14	Capital redemption reserve	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
15	Debenture redemption reserve	2,000.00	2,000.00	3,000.00	2,000.00	3,000.00	2,000.00
16	Debt service coverage ratio	35.13	7.06	24.52	7.51	12.24	9.16
	Interest service coverage ratio	97.85	97.85	61.01	106.56	55.76	56.84

Notes forming part of Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended on 31st December, 2023.

- a) The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly and nine months ended financial results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 52 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the quarterly & nine months ended financial results are available on the websites of the Stock Exchange ([www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com)) and the listed entity ([www.dtl.gov.in](http://www.dtl.gov.in)).
- b) The Financial results for the quarter and nine months ended on 31st December, 2023 have been reviewed by Audit Committee and approved by Board of Directors at their meeting held on 13.02.2024. The Independent Chartered Accountant have conducted the limited review of these financial results.
- c) For the items referred in regulation 52 (4) of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, the pertinent disclosures have been made to the Bombay Stock Exchange and can be accessed on the URL ([www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com)).
- d) No investor complaints were pending at the beginning of the quarter and no complaints were received during the quarter.
- e) Previous period's figures have been regrouped/re-classified wherever deemed necessary.

By order of the Board of Directors  
For Delhi Transco Limited

Ravi Dhaman  
Director (Finance)

Date: 13.02.2024  
Place: New Delhi

## Traffic snarls in Delhi as police ramp up vigil, place barricades

Bumper-to-bumper traffic reported in many areas; gates of several metro stations closed till evening; Red Fort complex shut for visitors; security bolstered near Parliament, Lok Kalyan Marg; police chief visits Tikri border; Section 144 imposed in city

**Samridhi Tewari**  
**Satvika Mahajan**  
NEW DELHI

**T**raffic slowed down to a crawl at several places in the national capital on Tuesday due to the restrictions imposed by the police in view of a 'Delhi Chalo' call issued by farmer associations from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Punjab.

The developments come in the wake of an inconclusive meeting between the farmers, who have been demanding a law on minimum support price, and a team of Union Ministers.

Movement of traffic was hit especially hard at the city's borders with Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, where rows of barricades and barbed wire were spread out to prevent farmers from entering Delhi.

Commuters who tried to enter the Capital through the Delhi Noida Direct (DND) flyway had a harrowing time on the road, with many being forced to turn their vehicles around to avoid the standstill traffic.

Atharva Gaur, a lawyer who travels from Noida to Delhi regularly, said, "I was stuck at the same spot for 20-25 minutes. So, instead of waiting for the traffic to clear, I turned my car around."

Several gates at eight metro stations, including



**City disrupted:** (From left to right) Policemen near DND flyway; heavy traffic on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway near Ghazipur border; containers, barricades, and barbed wire placed at Singhu border. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR / SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



**City disrupted:** (From left to right) Heavy traffic on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway near Ghazipur border; containers, barricades, and barbed wire placed at Singhu border. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR / SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



**City disrupted:** (From left to right) Heavy traffic on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway near Ghazipur border; containers, barricades, and barbed wire placed at Singhu border. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR / SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Rajiv Chowk, Mandi House, Central Secretariat, Janpath, and Barakhamba Road, remained shut till 7 p.m. even as the movement of the trains was not affected.

### 'Metro overcrowded'

Many commuters travelled on the metro to avoid getting stuck in traffic snarls. Smriti Singla, a Delhi resident who travels to Gurugram daily for work, said she found the metro quite overcrowded on Tuesday.

The Red Fort complex was closed to visitors throughout the day. On January 26, 2021, the complex saw chaos unfold when protesting farmers

breached barricades placed by the police and hoisted the Sikh Nishan Sahib flag.

Many government offices, including the Supreme Court, allowed their employees to work from home on Tuesday.

Those travelling to the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport were asked to plan their trips based on the advisories issued by Delhi Traffic Police.

Commuters were encouraged to use Delhi Metro's Magenta Line to reach Terminals 1 and 3 of the IGI Airport.

Police presence was bolstered in parts of central Delhi. Parliament's gates

were blocked by rows of barricades fitted with concertina wire.

Police teams were also deployed at several other key locations, such as Rashtrapati Bhavan, Janpath, and ITO.

### Security arrangements

Elaborate security arrangements were also made at the Lok Kalyan Marg, where the Prime Minister's residence is located, and outside the residences of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Agriculture Minister Arjun Munda.

A senior officer said prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC have been imposed across the nation-

al capital. Surveillance equipment, such as drones and CCTV cameras, is being used to monitor the border areas.

Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora visited the Tikri border on Tuesday to inspect the security arrangements. He was accompanied by Special Commissioner (Law and Order) Madhup Tiwari and Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Jimmy Chiram.

More than 5,000 police and paramilitary personnel have been deployed at the Tikri, Singhu, and Ghazipur border areas to maintain law and order, a senior officer said.

## HC forms panel to optimise 'woefully inadequate' hospitals

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The High Court on Tuesday set up a six-member expert committee to recommend ways to optimise existing resources at hospitals run by the Delhi government and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi.

The committee, headed by Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) chancellor S.K. Sarin, has been directed to make "specific and concrete recommendations" on issues such as timely availability and accessibility of ICU beds for patients in need of emergency care.

### Just 6 CT scan machines

The High Court stated that the infrastructure in the city's hospitals was "woefully inadequate", be it in the form of "machines, medicines or manpower".

"With only six CT scan

machines available in nineteen Delhi government hospitals, which cater to a population in excess of three crore, the infrastructure needs to be ramped up manifold," a Bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Manmohan remarked.

In case of emergencies like a serious accident, stroke or heart attack, "the golden hour of saving a life may be lost" for lack of infrastructure, it added.

Tuesday's hearing was the latest in a series of proceedings on a PIL initiated by the court. Directing the panel to file its report within four weeks, the court posted the case for April 1.

### OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

### DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

**P. MANICKAM** (83), Retired Senior Supervisor (Coms) News. The Hindu Chennai passed away on 13-02-2024. Address: 44, Dr Natesan First Street, Ice House, Triplicane, Chennai - 600005. Contact: 9840943152

### TENDERS

**National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd.**  
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### FIRST ANNIVERSARY

# Supreme Court livid over AAP office 'encroaching' on HC land

No steps taken by Aam Aadmi Party government in city to remove encroachment: *amicus curiae*; apex court orders senior bureaucrats to meet High Court Registrar General and 'sort out all issues'

## The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday hit out at the Delhi government for not removing the office of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) "encroaching" on a plot of land at Rouse Avenue allotted to the Delhi High Court.

Advocate K. Parameshwar, the apex court's *amicus curiae* in the case, informed a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud that the office belonged to AAP, which has been in power in the Capital since 2013, and this fact had "unfortunately" acted in favour of the encroachment.

He told the Bench that the government had taken "no steps whatsoever" to remove the encroachment from the land earmarked



What is this? The High Court is not asking [for] land for judges' bungalows or something. They are asking for a public amenity. The political party is sitting tight on the land...

SUPREME COURT

for the High Court.

Addressing Additional Solicitor General Vikramjit Banerjee, appearing for the Delhi government, the Bench said, "What is this? The High Court is not asking [for] land for judges' bungalows or something. They are asking for a public amenity. The political party is sitting tight on the land... How can you just say the land is encroached by the political party in

power in Delhi?"

"And what is the High Court, after all, going to use the land for? For the citizens of the State, residents of Delhi to come and resolve their disputes in the courts," it added.

### Cabinet resolution

Delhi Principal Law Secretary Bharat Parashar briefed the court that the land originally held a residential bungalow for a Mi-

nister. It was allotted to AAP through a Delhi Cabinet resolution in 2016.

"We have taken up the matter with the Land and Development Office. It is in the process of handing over that portion of the land to us and allotting the political party another portion of the land," Mr. Parashar said.

The Supreme Court directed Delhi's Chief Secretary, Finance Secretary, and Public Works Department Secretary to meet the Delhi High Court Registrar General under the auspices of the High Court Chief Justice and "sort out all issues about the encroachment".

Listing the case on February 19, the court ordered the Delhi government to provide specific timelines for the removal of the "encroachment".

'Can't expect authorities to completely wipe out stray animals off roads'

## The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Municipal authorities cannot be expected to completely wipe out stray animals off Delhi's roads, said the High Court, as it closed a contempt petition accusing agencies of not complying with its 2019 directions on the issue.

In an order dated February 7, Justice C. Hari Shankar said it is the duty of the authorities to take "concerted, sincere, and optimum steps" to ensure that stray animals are rehabilitated and do not become a menace for residents or traffic on the road.

The court was hearing a plea by Salek Chand Jain, a city resident who contended that the High Court's directions issued five years back were not being implemented properly.

### September 2019 order

In a September 2019 order, a Division Bench of the High Court had said, "We expect, from the respondents [authorities], that a committee or other type of body will be constituted immediately... so that they may evolve some scheme or policy on how to control stray cattle, street dogs, and monkeys and the action will be initiated immediately".

At the latest hearing, the court said it perused the status reports filed by the authorities, which state that the estimated cattle population in Delhi at present after the COVID-19 pandemic stands at 83,671 and the four *gaushalas* (cow shelters) in the city have sufficient space to accommodate abandoned cattle.

The court said the reports were sufficient to constitute "substantial compliance" with its 2019 order.

"In any event, in view of the status reports filed by the respondents, it cannot be said that there is contumacious or wilful disobedience on their part in complying with the directions contained in the order dated September 25, 2019. There is a distinction between contempt and enforcement," it remarked, disposing of the plea.

**DLF wins big at fourth PropertyGuru awards**

## The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

DLF Cyber City Developers Ltd. emerged as the biggest winner at the fourth PropertyGuru Asia Property Awards (India), winning the award for the 'Best Sustainable Developer' along with special recognitions in the ESG and sustainable design and construction categories. The latest edition of the awards was held recently at The Athenee Hotel in Bangkok. A wide array of companies and their projects in India were recognised, with winners in different categories such as 'mixed use development' (Brigade Group for Brigade Cornerstone Utopia), 'office development' (Embassy REIT for Embassy Hub Phase 1), and 'landmark office design' (Rajasekaran for Turner House), among others.

## THE HINDU

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# Delhi budget likely to focus on developing roads in rural pockets

## Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government's budget will have a special focus on the development of roads in rural pockets of the national capital, sources said on Tuesday.

Finance Minister Atishi will present the 2024-25 budget in the five-day Assembly session, which will begin on Thursday.

The Aam Aadmi Party government is likely to propose a project for the redevelopment of 1,000 km of roads in villages for which

a four-fold increase in the allocation to the Development Department is expected, sources said.

### 360 villages to benefit

The move is likely to benefit nearly 360 rural and urbanised villages in Delhi.

As part of the project, all village roads that are in poor condition will be resurfaced, the sources said.

The Delhi government had earlier said that the focus areas of the budget would be water, power, health, and education.

The government had al-

so said it would introduce a proposal in the budget to start the "Business Blasters" programme for final-year and pre-final-year college students.

The scheme is currently being implemented in Delhi government schools.

In its previous budget, the government had made allocations worth ₹8,800 crore, focusing on a 'Clean, Beautiful, and Modern Delhi'.

An allocation of ₹21,000 crore was made to bolster the Capital's infrastruc-

## Timings

DELHI

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 14  
RISE 07:01 SET 18:10  
RISE 09:53 SET 23:09

THURSDAY, FEB. 15  
RISE 07:00 SET 18:11  
RISE 10:28 SET 00:00

FRIDAY, FEB. 16  
RISE 07:00 SET 18:12  
RISE 11:06 SET 00:14

Delhi Weather max min  
Delhi City 23 08  
Safdarjung 23 08  
Palam 22 09

Delhi Palam Today  
23°C The weather will be mostly dry. Morning will be cold with shallow fog and mist. The day will be pleasant. Night will be cold and hazy.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow  
24°C A dry weather to prevail. Morning will be cold with shallow fog and mist. Day will be pleasant with light cool breeze. Night also will be cold.

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The State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority – UP (Constituted by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) Government of India), has accorded the Amendment in Environment Clearance of IT/ITES Park "Infosys Noida Campus" at Plot No-A0-A06, Sector-85, Noida, UP, Distt Gautam Budh Nagar by M/s Infosys Ltd. project vide EC Ref. No 407/Parya/SEIAA/4620-4419/2023 dated 07.02.2024.  
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## IN BRIEF



## Life imprisonment for Bihar MLA in 2015 murder case

The Ara MP/MLA court on Tuesday sentenced Manoj Manzil, MLA of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) from the Agaon Assembly constituency to life imprisonment in a nine-year-old murder case. Along with Manzil, 22 others have also been sentenced to life imprisonment in the case related to the murder of J.P. Singh during the 2015 Assembly election in Bihar. The court also imposed a fine of ₹10,000 on Manzil. The 40-year-old firebrand Dalit leader was a first-time MLA, who won by defeating JD(U) candidate Prabhunath Prasad in the 2020 Assembly election. In the 2015 election, too, he had contested from the same seat to secure the third position.

## Udaipur tailor's killing: NIA court frames charges against 9

A special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court in Jaipur on Tuesday framed charges, including under the anti-terror law UAPA, against nine people accused in the murder case of Udaipur tailor Kanhaiya Lal. He was hacked to death at his shop in the busy Hathipole area of Udaipur on June 28, 2022 by two cleaver-wielding men for allegedly supporting a social media post against Islam. The two men, Mohammad Riyaz and Mohammad Gause, had also made a video of the act and posted it online, which sent shockwaves across the country. Next hearing in the case will be held on March 2. PTI

## Rajiv assassination case convict set to fly to Sri Lanka

**Mohamed Imrullah S.**  
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government on Tuesday informed the Madras High Court that the Sri Lanka Deputy High Commission in Chennai has issued a temporary travel document to Santhan, alias T. Suthenthirarajah, one of the convicts in former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's assassination case.

Appearing before a Division Bench comprising Justices R. Suresh Kumar and K. Kumaresan Babu, Additional Public Prosecutor (APP) R. Muniyapparaj submitted a copy of a letter sent from the Deputy High Commission to the State government on February 2, 2024, informing it about the issuance of the travel document.

Santhan is a Sri Lankan Tamil.

The letter stated that the Deputy High Commission had received a request from the Ministry of External Affairs

**Santhan is the first convict in the case to have been granted a temporary passport by the Lankan govt.**

fairs on November 29, 2023 for issuance of a travel document to Santhan, who was released from prison last year on the orders of the Supreme Court but was subsequently lodged in a foreigners' detention camp in Tiruchi.

The APP told the court that the State government, through its Public Secretary, had forwarded the Deputy High Commission's letter to the Foreigners Regional Registration Officer (FRRO) in Chennai on February 9, 2024 itself since the temporary travel document was valid only till August 1, 2024. Santhan is the first convict in the case to have been granted a temporary passport by the Lankan government.

## ED files prosecution complaint in J&amp;K arms licences case

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has filed a prosecution complaint against 21 individuals/entities for allegedly issuing firearm licences in large numbers to ineligible people in Jammu & Kashmir. It is alleged that over 2.78 lakh arms licences were issued from 2012 to 2016.

Among those named are the then arms licence authorities (Deputy Magistrates or Additional Deputy Magistrates), including Rajeev Ranjan and Itrat Hussain Rafiqi, judicial clerks and some officials of the Office of Deputy Magistrate, Kupwara. The accused persons include gun house dealers, agents and middlemen. Three of them have been identified by the agency as Rahul Grover, Syed Addel Hussain Shah, and Syed Akeel Shah. A special court in Jammu has taken cognizance of the prosecution

complaint. The ED had initiated the money laundering probe based on several First Information Reports registered by the Anti-Terrorist Squad/Special Operations Group of the Rajashan police and the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Earlier, the ED had attached properties worth ₹4.69 crore and had also seized ₹1.58 crore in cash and gold worth about ₹92 lakh. In March 2022, had conducted searches against several serving and retired bureaucrats, government officials, and arms dealers across Jammu & Kashmir.

The residential premises of former Deputy Commissioners Rajeev Ranjan (Kupwara), Itrat Hussain (Kupwara) and Ravinder Kumar Bhatt (Kupwara); and Tariq Ather and Gajan Singh, former judicial clerks with the Arms Section, Kupwara Deputy Commissioner's Office were also searched.

## 'Have always done positive politics': day after quitting Cong., Chavan walks into BJP

**Abhinav Deshpande**  
**Shoumojot Banerjee**  
MUMBAI/PUNE

A day after parting ways with the Congress, former Maharashtra Chief Minister and Congress leader Ashok Chavan joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Mumbai on Tuesday. The 65-year-old was welcomed at the BJP office in south Mumbai in the presence of key leaders, including Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and BJP State president Chandrashekhar Bawankule.

Mr. Chavan, son of the former Union Defence Minister and two-time Maharashtra Chief Minister Sharad Pawar, said, "Today is the new beginning of my political career as I joined the BJP. I'm hopeful that we will work for the constructive development of Maharashtra." His close confidant Amar Rajurkar, who tendered his resignation as an MLC on Monday, also joined the BJP on Tuesday.



New role: Ashok Chavan (right) with Devendra Fadnavis (centre) and Chandrashekhar Bawankule on Tuesday. EMMANUEL YOGINI

Mr. Chavan said, "Sometimes, I was accused of not opposing PM Modi. But I have always done positive politics. I am grateful to Mr. Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president Nadda, Mr. Fadnavis and others." Amid speculation of securing a Rajya Sabha berth from the BJP, he evaded direct responses about communication from Congress leaders Sonia and Rahul Gandhi. "I had set no terms for joining the BJP. I will do what the party tells me to. No one asked me to leave the Congress," he said.

The former Congress

man's entry into the BJP, meanwhile, has dampened Union Minister Narayan Rane's chances of being sent to the Rajya Sabha for a second term, with indications that the BJP may be planning to field him from Maharashtra's Konkan region in the upcoming Lok Sabha election.

**Rane to contest LS poll?** According to sources, the BJP is likely to offer Mr. Chavan one of the three Rajya Sabha seats in Maharashtra that the party will stake claim on. With 104 MLAs, the BJP has the numbers to easily win three of the six

## Back with NDA, Nitish says alliance will win all 40 LS seats in Bihar under Modi's leadership

**Amar Nath Tewary**  
PATNA

A day after the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government led by Nitish Kumar won the floor test in the Bihar Assembly, the Chief Minister on Tuesday exuded confidence in the ruling alliance winning big in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, NDA will win all the upcoming Lok Sabha seats and over 200 seats in the 2025 Assembly poll in the State," he said while speaking on the motion of thanks for the Governor's address.

Bihar has 40 parliamentary and 243 Assembly seats.

Mr. Kumar said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

and the Janata Dal (United) will work together for the development of Bihar. "We have been working together for the State's development since 2005, barring two occasions when I had parted ways with the BJP," he said.

**Slams RJD rule** Pointing towards Hindutani Awam Morcha (Secular) leader Jitan Ram Manjhi, Mr. Kumar recalled that Mr. Manjhi too had been a Chief Minister for nine months and "works [for the development of the State] were carried out smoothly".

He then slammed the previous Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) government, headed by Lalu Prasad and his wife Rabri Devi. "What was happening before



2005? Nothing. People were afraid of coming out of their homes after sunset; there was no roads," he recalled, adding that women could now step out even after 10 p.m.

"About the govern-

ment's work since 2005, the Governor had said everything in detail in his address. We have done a lot of things for the development of the State," Mr. Kumar said.

The Chief Minister reiterated the government's commitment to providing 10 lakh people with government jobs, and added that 5.33 lakh people had already benefited from the effort.

Looking at the NDA legislators, he said that there was no need to "look here and there". "You will win the elections as the government is committed to providing opportunities to all sections of society," he said.

He assured them that he was back with his old ally and that he now would "re-

main with it forever". "Since we [NDA] have been working together for a long time, the State would prosper in the coming years," Mr. Kumar said.

**Budget tabled** Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary, who also holds the Finance portfolio, presented a ₹2.79 lakh crore budget in State Assembly for the financial year 2024-25. Presenting the budget, Mr. Choudhary said the current financial year saw 2.5 crore people rising above the poverty line in the State. "The State also registered a growth rate of 10.64% in the current fiscal," Mr. Choudhary said amid pandemonium by Opposition members of the House.

**BJP veteran Nand Kishore Yadav to be new Speaker**

**Amit Bhelari**  
PATNA

Senior BJP leader Nand Kishore Yadav is all set to become the new Speaker of the Bihar Assembly, with no other candidate filing the nomination papers.

The post fell vacant on Monday after Awadh Bihari Choudhary of the RJD, was voted out in a no-confidence motion before Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's new NDA government won its trust vote in the Assembly.

At present, Deputy Speaker Maheshwar Hazari has been conducting the

proceedings of the House. Mr. Yadav filed his nomination papers at the Assembly Secretariat on Tuesday. The election will take place on February 15.

**Seasoned politician** A seven-term MLA from the Patna Sahib Assembly seat, Mr. Yadav is a seasoned politician, who has served as Cabinet Minister from 2005 holding different portfolios, including health and tourism. Known to be close to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, he has been associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh since 1969.

## HC lifts Section 144 from violence-hit Sandeshkhali

Separate Bench takes suo motu cognisance of charges of sexual assault on women, transfer of tribal land; court seeks report from police, district administration on promulgation of prohibitory orders

**Shiv Sahay Singh**  
KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday set aside the West Bengal government's decision to impose prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) at Sandeshkhali in the North 24 Parganas area. Justice Jay Sengupta of the Calcutta High Court said that the manner in which it was done was not right.

The block about 100 km from Kolkata in the Sundarbans area has been on the boil over allegations of molestation of women allegedly by local Trinamool Congress leaders.

**Curtailing rights**

The district administration has not allowed leaders from the Opposition parties, including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist), to visit Sandeshkhali. Counsel for the petitioners claimed that Section 144 of the CrPC was imposed to curtail the rights of people to protest. The State government's counsel opposed the



Cry for justice: Civil rights activists protesting in Kolkata against alleged atrocities on women at Sandeshkhali. DEBASISH BHADRA

prayer, claiming that the violence was perpetrated by agitators.

Another Bench of the Calcutta High Court on Tuesday took suo motu cognisance of allegations of sexual assault on women and transfer of tribal land there, and directed issuance of notice to the State authorities.

**'Very disturbing'**

Justice Apurba Sinha Roy said that he was "very disturbed" over the happenings at Sandeshkhali. The court directed the Regis-

trar General of the High Court to issue notice to the State government, the Inspector General of Police, the Deputy Inspector General of Barasat range, the Superintendent of Police and the district magistrate of North 24 Parganas district. The matter will come up for hearing on February 20, the Court directed. Justice Sinha Roy appointed advocate Jayanta Narayan Chatterjee as the amicus curiae to assist the court in the matter.

Meanwhile, protests were staged across West

**Protests across State**

The police employed tear gas shells and a baton charge was ordered against the mob. Supporters of the CPI(M) also held protests at various places. A Trinamool Congress delegation led by Minister Partha Bhowmick reached Sandeshkhali on Tuesday afternoon and spoke to the local residents. This is the first time that the Trinamool leadership has reached out to locals. Public anger has been mounting against the party over the unrest.

served as Chief Secretary of the State during the SP government led by Akhilesh Yadav. Talking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Ranjan expressed confidence in standing up to the expectation of the party leadership and putting forth the socialist ideology in the Upper House. "I am thankful to the SP president Akhilesh Yadav and other senior leaders for expressing faith in me. I will try to put forth the party's socialist perspective diligently and work as an asset for the leadership at the best of my capabilities," he said.

All three candidates filed their nomination papers at the State Assembly complex, in the presence of the SP president Akhilesh Yadav, general secretary Shyam Singh Yadav, and other party leaders. The scrutiny of the nomination papers will be on February 16.

While Ms. Bachchan is a four-term Rajya Sabha member, Mr. Suman, a veteran leader served as a MP four times from the Firozabad Lok Sabha seat. He was elected an MP, for the first time in 1977 on a Janta Party ticket and in 1989 on a Janta Dal symbol. Mr. Suman represented the seat between 1999-2009 on the SP symbol.

Mr. Ranjan, a 1978-batch IAS officer of the U.P. cadre, is considered close to the SP leadership and

Besides naming party leaders Sudhanshu Trivedi, and former Union Minister R.P.N. Singh to the Rajya Sabha, the party sprang a surprise by nominating former Agra Mayor Navin Jain, former State Minister Sangeeta Balwant, former MLA Sadhna Singh, Amarpal Maurya, and Chaudhary Tejveer Singh.



# Karnataka tables Bill making 60% Kannada mandatory on name boards

Boards of commercial, industrial and business undertakings, trusts, counselling centres should have text in Kannada in the upper half of the boards; Kannada outfits have been campaigning aggressively to promote use of Kannada on signboards

## The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

**T**he Kannada Language Comprehensive Development (Amendment) Bill, 2024, was tabled in the State Legislative Assembly on Tuesday, making it mandatory for all business establishments in Karnataka to display name boards with 60% of text in Kannada in the upper half of the boards.

The Bill makes a provision that the name boards of commercial, industrial and business undertakings, trusts, counselling centres, hospitals, laboratories, amusement centres, hotels, etc., should be 60% in Kannada.

The Bill said, "It is necessary to amend Kannada Basha Samagra Abhiruddhi Adhiniyama, 2022, to appoint the director, Direc-



**Strong move:** A signboard of a business establishment vandalised by members of a Kannada outfit in Bengaluru. FILE PHOTO

torate of Kannada and Culture, as the member and the secretary of Kannada Development Authority to be the convener of the State-level committee and to make a provision that name boards should dis-

play 60% in Kannada."

The Bill makes display of 60% Kannada language in boards of State government departments, PSUs, cooperative and public undertakings, educational institutions, banks and other

financial institutions, private industries, universities. It said display of officers' designations should also be primarily in Kannada.

It said all tender notifications, advertisements, application forms, digital forms, certificates and notifications issued by the government or local authorities for publication in the State should be in Kannada.

The pamphlets, banners, flex, electronic display boards, informations, notices, and other programmes conducted by the government, local authorities, aided and unaided institutions should be in Kannada.

**Against English names** Kannada outfits such as Karnatak Rakshana Vedi (KRV) have launched an aggressive campaign to promote the use of Kanna-

da on name boards and had earlier removed English name boards from several shops in Bengaluru and other parts of Karnataka. Following the protest, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) started identifying establishments that do not display Kannada name boards, and sent them notices.

### Returns Ordinance

The tabling of the Bill follows Governor Thaawar-chand Gehlot recently returning an Ordinance on the 60% use of Kannada mandatory on signboards of commercial establishments, which was passed by the State Cabinet. The Raj Bhavan said the Governor returned the Ordinance to the government "with advice to present it before both Houses of the State legislature".

**Lokayukta police register case against Shivakumar**

## The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

The Lokayukta police have registered a disproportionate assets (DA) case against Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar.

This follows the Congress government withdrawing consent to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for the DA case against him on November 23, 2023, and referring the case to the Lokayukta police.

The CBI has challenged both orders of the State government – of withdrawal of consent and referring the case to the Lokayukta police – before the High Court of Karnataka and the petitions are pending.

Meanwhile, the Lokayukta police have registered an FIR in the case and have written to the CBI seeking the case file to be handed over to them. "This has now set in motion a conflict between the Central and State agencies – the CBI and the Lokayukta police," a senior official said.

Since the CBI had challenged the State government's decisions, it was unlikely to hand over the case file to him, he added.

The CBI FIR alleged that during the period of 2013 to 2018, Mr. Shivakumar and his family members had acquired DA to the tune of ₹74.93 crore, 44.93% to their known sources of income.

Responding to the new FIR against him filed by the Lokayukta police, Mr. Shivakumar said he would continue his legal fight.

# Trinamool blames BSF for death of children in Chopra

## Shiv Sahay Singh

KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress has blamed the Border Security Force (BSF) for the death of four children in an accident at Chopra in Uttar Dinajpur district of West Bengal and set up a 12-member team to seek the intervention of the Governor.

"In a recent tragic incident in Chopra, Uttar Dinajpur, 4 innocent chil-



West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose. FILE PHOTO

matter to the Company Commander who along with some troops of the BOP reached at the spot and saw that some villagers were digging the earth and were trying to rescue some children who were buried under the soil," the BSF said in a statement.

The border guard force said it always helps and stands by the border population in times of their need, irrespective of the time and is the first responder who provides necessary help and aid to the border population.

The development, however, has taken a political turn with Trinamool Congress leaders seeking response from Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP State president Sukantha Majumdar.

Trinamool Congress spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said that the BJP was showing 'selective outrage' on Sandeshkhali but had ignored the death of the four children in Chopra.

## Revanth flays KCR over non-attendance at Medigadda

### P. Laxma Reddy

MEDIGADDA

leshwaram Lift Irrigation Project inaugurated by Mr. Rao in 2019.

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy flayed BRS supremo and former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao for not considering the call given by the State government to join him during his visit to the damaged piers of the Medigadda Barrage.

The barrage is part of the Ka-

Addressing mediapersons after inspecting the damaged piers, he also demanded that the BRS president attend the Assembly session on Wednesday, and added that he should take part in the debate over the White Paper to be released over the irrigation projects taken up during the BRS regime.

lleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project inaugurated by Mr. Rao in 2019.

## Burglars return stolen film awards to director in T.N.

### The Hindu Bureau

MADRASI

mil on a piece of paper.

Mr. Manikandan directed the 2021 film, *Kadasi Vivasayi*, which won Best Feature Film-Tamil at the 69th National Film Awards in 2023.

The Usilampatti Town police, however, are still on the lookout for the burglars, who also stole ₹1 lakh in cash and five sovereigns of gold along with the awards.

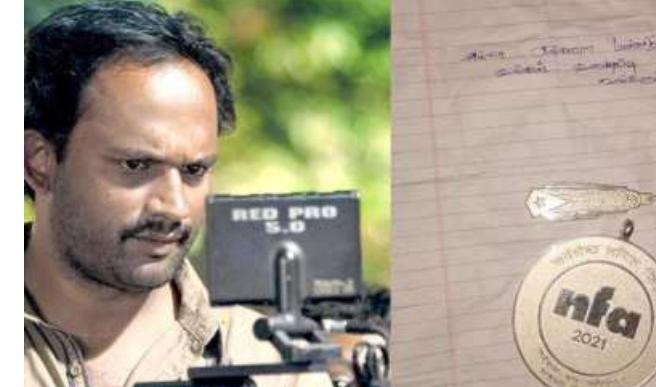
The unidentified men also apologised to the director in a note left along with the awards in a plastic bag, hanging outside the gate of the house. "Your toil is for you" read the note, written in Ta-

mil on a piece of paper.

Mr. Manikandan directed the 2021 film, *Kadasi Vivasayi*, which won Best Feature Film-Tamil at the 69th National Film Awards in 2023.

The Usilampatti Town police, however, are still on the lookout for the burglars, who also stole ₹1 lakh in cash and five sovereigns of gold along with the awards.

The unidentified men also apolo-



Film director M. Manikandan, and, right, the apology note along which the awards returned by the thieves. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## Wild elephant on the loose in Wayanad

### The Hindu Bureau

KALPETTA

Operation 'Belur Makhna' to dart and capture the tuskless radio-collared wild elephant, which moved from Karnataka and killed a farmer in Kerala's Wayanad on Saturday, proved futile again on Tuesday. The officials said the operation would continue on Wednesday.

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No. PHQ/MT-69/2022 Dated Itanagar, the 9th Feb/2024

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# OPPORTUNITIES

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## Intent to hire fresh talent up by 6%

Career Outlook Report by TeamLease notes that e-commerce and technology start-ups top the table of industries keen on inducting freshers into their workforce

### Opportunities Desk

The intent to have freshers on the payroll has witnessed a 6% increase in HY1 of 2024 as compared to the corresponding period in 2023 (68% vs 62%). Career Outlook Report for the first half of 2024, released by TeamLease EdTech, notes this positive hiring intent for freshers is part of an overall sentiment that evokes a sense of enthusiasm about the Indian job market as a whole.

The report notes hiring intent for all categories of job seekers has risen marginally to 79.3%.

As per the report, the top three industries with the highest hiring intent for freshers are e-commerce and technology start-ups (55%), engineering and infrastructure (53%), and telecommunications (50%).

The IT industry sees an

overall decrease in the intent to hire freshers compared to Career Outlook Report for HY2 of 2023 (42% in HY1 of 2024 vs 49% in HY2 of 2023).

Sectors like media and entertainment have seen a decrease of 3%, while travel and hospitality with an increase of 4% (HY1 of 2024 vs HY2 of 2023).

Roles such as graphic designer, legal associate, chemical engineer and digital marketing executive are in high demand across industries for freshers.

### Top skills

Natural language processing (NLP), mobile app development, Internet of Things (IoT), Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and metaverse were listed among the domain skills in demand.

Among cities, Bengaluru leads the way with a hiring intent of 69%, followed by Mumbai at 58% and Chennai at 51%. Delhi at



Snapshot of a job fair in Thiruvananthapuram. FILE PHOTO: MAHINSHA S

45% has seen an increase of 2% from HY2 of 2023. However, the demand for newer talent currently stands at 68%, a marginal increase of 3% for HY1 of 2024 over HY2 of 2023.

### GenAI and jobs

The report emphasises the need for continuous learning and adaptability as freshers enter an era of continuous technological advancement powered by

Generative AI. Roles such as software developers, technical writers, legal assistants, market research analysts, and graphic designers are expected to be transformed. Freshers

need to proactively upgrade their skills and be open to working alongside Generative AI to remain relevant and harness its potential, says the report. The survey covered 526

small, medium, and large companies across 18 industries in India, covering metros, tier-1 and tier-2.

In a release, Shantanu Roop, founder and CEO, TeamLease EdTech, said,

**Bengaluru leads the way with a hiring intent of 69%, followed by Mumbai at 58% and Chennai at 51%**

"Employers played the conservative card for sometime now; hiring had slowed down amidst global turmoil. However, our recent survey reveals employer confidence in India's growth story. Organisations are more confident about their future paths, which reflects in their high confidence to recruit fresh talent and strengthen their talent pool."

Neeti Sharma, co-founder and president of TeamLease EdTech, said, "It is interesting to see industries like manufacturing, engineering and infrastructure, and construction and real estate prioritising apprenticeship to locate the most suitable talent. By proactively hiring degree apprentices, companies can systematically address persistent skill gaps, nurture specialised talent and strengthen their talent pipelines tailored to precise industry requirements."

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14.02.2024

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## Homeward bound

Quiet diplomacy without brinkmanship helped India's case in Qatar

The release of all eight former Indian naval personnel from Qatar, just about three months after they were ordered a shocking death sentence, is a matter of great relief. Ever since the eight men – seven senior retired naval officers, and a sailor – who worked for the Qatar-based Dahra technologies, were arrested in 2022, the details of their case have been sparse. While their families denied reports that the men had been accused of espionage, possibly for a third country, namely Israel, the charges must have been serious enough to have invoked the death penalty. An appeals court did, in December, commute the death penalty to imprisonment terms, but upheld the conviction. It is to the government's credit that it was able to bring about the release of all the eight, seven of whom have now returned. The success seems attributable to the strategies New Delhi employed: to pursue the case in court, showing respect to the Qatari legal system, while providing the accused with full legal support and counsel; avoid all escalatory rhetoric and public sparring; and, to take the case to the highest levels, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussing it with the Qatari Amir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, during a meet in Dubai in December. That Mr. Modi announced an unscheduled leg of travel to Doha on Wednesday, after his ongoing trip to the United Arab Emirates, signifies his personal involvement and his desire to thank the Qatari Amir.

The Qatar case is a timely reminder of the importance of quiet diplomacy at a time of brinkmanship and geopolitical conflict, particularly when it comes to relationships where so much else is at stake. For India, Qatar is an important West Asian power, with increased heft during the Israel-Gaza conflict as an important interlocutor between the West and Hamas. For Qatar, ties with India are historic and dependable, consistent even when Qatar was boycotted by its Gulf neighbours some years ago. Qatar supplies India with a third of its natural gas import needs, and the signing of a \$78 billion LNG deal last week may have been an early sign that the deal for the prisoners' release had been sealed by then. More than 8,00,000 Indians provide important services to Qatar and bring in critical remittance earnings for India. New Delhi's decision not to seek international intervention, as it did in the case of former naval commander Kulbhushan Jadhav, who has been convicted of espionage and terror charges in Pakistan, nor to counter Qatar's charges with the kind of harsh diplomatic countermeasures seen in the aftermath of the Nijjar assassination case in Canada, eventually provided an outcome satisfactory for all.

## Salutary reminder

Inflation should not undermine overall macroeconomic stability

Retail inflation data for January provides a clear reminder as to why the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee opted last week to not only hold benchmark interest rates but also chose to remain resolutely focused on achieving durable price stability. While the data for Consumer Price Index-based price gains show the headline number having eased from December's 5.69% to a three-month low of 5.10% last month, inflation readings for key food items including cereals, vegetables and pulses continued to stay elevated at 7.83%, 27% and 19.5%, respectively, despite moderating from December's levels. Among the vegetables sub-group, 12 of the 19 items monitored by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) posted accelerations in year-on-year price gains last month from their readings in December, signalling that the underlying trend in inflation is persistently high. Cereals, which have the heaviest weight in the food group, also stayed stubbornly stuck in a higher trajectory, with the month-on-month inflation for the sub-group that includes the key staple of rice, barely nudging lower at 0.75%, compared with December's 0.76%. Rice was the primary drag, with its price at non-PDS outlets accelerating both sequentially and on-year, by 1.02% and a six-month high pace of 13%, respectively. With a recent CMIE estimate for rabi sowing of rice, revealing a 2.7% drop from last year, the prospect of prices softening significantly in the near future appears remote.

The data on reservoir storage levels also add to the disquiet on the outlook for prices, particularly of food items. With water storage at 150 reservoirs showing live storage as on February 8 at 49% of capacity, and lagging appreciably behind both the year-earlier and average of the last 10-years levels, output of the rabi sown crops, including cereals and more particularly pulses, are at risk of being impacted. Given food's large share in the overall consumption basket, food price gains pose a wider risk to overall price stability, both directly and through spillover to the prices of non-food items, as a research article by RBI officials concluded. The central bank's survey of households' inflation expectations found the median inflation expectation for three months ahead rose by 10 bps from the previous survey in November to 9.2%, with a greater share of respondents – 78% versus 74% two months ago – expecting inflation to accelerate in the near term. With talks between the government and some farmers' groups breaking down and farmers threatening to intensify an agitation over demands that include assurances on a guaranteed minimum support price, policymakers face a challenge to ensure inflation does not rebound and undermine overall macroeconomic stability.

**W**hile religion is a sacred cow that doubles up as a cash cow, science is a cash cow that can often double up as a sacred cow in India. The popular belief is that a good dose of science in our educational system makes students intelligent, unprejudiced good citizens and inculcates objectivity and other "scientific qualities of mind" in them.

Yet, our institutions are flush with scientists with quarter-cooked scientific temper: power often has the upper hand over knowledge even within these scientific cantonments. The only knowledge that flows freely in our country is that from the barrel of the American journal. All other knowledge remains locked up as grey matter in our human resources. Information and knowledge want to be free, but any such 'misadventure' is instantly thwarted by the powers that be, brandishing a *sengol* in one hand and a sword in the other. A scholarly paper on the "giant gravity hole in the Indian Ocean" scores way above one dealing with the perennially recurring froth in Bellandur lake in Bengaluru. The frothing lake does not attract as many eyeballs as the ocean: the taste buds of the American journal are distinctly American.

### Climb down the ivory tower

The travails of Bellandur, like the threats posed by developments such as artificial intelligence, should be forcing science to slow down its agenda based on a pursuit motivated by quick rewards and a misguided curiosity. The time has come for a large chunk of scientific forces to be re-deployed on the science-society border to scout for solutions to real-life problems. The new road is arduous and bumpy: while the space scientist can look up at the sky and continue romancing the moon, her earthly counterpart needs to climb down from the ivory tower where he has been ensconced tied to the 'scientific method', mingle with the crowd below, and get his hands dirty.

The majority of scientists trained in specific disciplines are content to solve puzzles by applying whichever theory is currently predominant in their discipline. A discipline acts like a lens: it filters out certain phenomena to be able to focus exclusively on others. Such scientists produce quantifiable results through simplified models and experiments that do not consider input from outside the sciences and overlook the social embeddedness of their activities.

The scientific method is based on beliefs in empiricism, replicability, and free exchange of information (so that others can test or attempt to replicate). It has predominantly followed the strategy of reductionism: an approach to understanding the whole of something by examining its parts (such as explaining heat in terms of the motion of molecules). But the reductionist approach cannot succeed in all cases. We can make sense of some things only by



**Manu Rajan**  
is an information scientist who retired recently from the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru

looking at them holistically. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts: the whole contains properties that cannot in principle be discovered through an analysis of its parts.

In the real world, it is often difficult to untangle a complicated web of causal relationships to determine which one is decisive. Relying only on individual disciplines to confront real-life problems provides a skewed perspective. If humans need to be served by science, science needs to be subservient to humans. Science then must confront the uncomfortable prospect of dealing with human complexities: diverse languages, vocabularies, world views, value systems, beliefs, faiths and cultures.

Many real-life problems call for practical knowledge generated to solve them long before there is enough research to establish an irrefutable point. The goal of achievement of truth or even full factual knowledge becomes a luxury. The boundary between subjectivity and objectivity becomes blurred. Ignorance, assumptions, value systems, uncertainty in fixing system boundaries and formulating problems, indeterminacy and differences in culture have all to be dealt with in the new regime. The carefully structured rule-based turf of normal science or faithful adherence to theoretical principles or agreed upon methodologies is of limited value in solving such complex problems. The natural sciences then need to work in tandem with human sciences.

The human sciences explain phenomena in terms of meanings and purposes rather than mechanical causes and effects. If you want to figure out what a group of people are up to, you cannot simply observe their physical movements; you must try to get 'inside their heads' and understand how they see the situation. The social sciences focus on behaviour: psychology seeks internal explanations while economics, sociology and political science seek explanations that are external to the individual.

### Tap the humanities

The disciplines encompassed by the humanities – art and art history, history, literary studies, music and music education, philosophy, and religious studies – offer strategies for addressing dilemmas and acknowledging ambiguity and paradox. They provide tools for logical analysis and modes of discussing and debating moral and ethical questions.

Philosophy has interacted fruitfully with business and medicine on issues of ethics and reproductive technologies as well as with social scientists who are interested in rational choice theory. A wide variety of phenomena such as the debates on abortion and euthanasia, human cloning, stem cell research, terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have a religious component. The humanities are organised around the production of qualitative knowledge arrived at through sound argument rather than

the empirical testing of theories. Other sources that facilitate addressing real-life problems include oral histories, eye-witness testimonies, artifacts, artistic creations, and forms of tacit knowledge.

A variety of perspectives and methods from different disciplines need to be brought to bear on a complex real-life problem. Connections need to be made between problems and disciplines, between problems and theories, and between problems and accumulated knowledge. All the relevant disciplines and their conflicting insights need to be identified, evaluated, and common ground created among them. An integrative model is then constructed that proposes a realistic solution to the problem. Science leaves this kind of integration of knowledge from other sources out of the "scientific method" altogether.

A traditional puzzle solver scientist is like the mediocre artist who starts with a clearly visualised picture in mind and ends up painting it without leaving any scope for growth and change during the process. The knowledge integration required to address complex real-life problems is, on the contrary, akin to that followed by a highly creative artist who starts painting with a general and often vague idea of what she wants to accomplish and discovers as she goes along what it is that she wants to do, using feedback from the developing work to suggest new approaches.

### Questions to be asked

Are our scientists battle ready for this new role? Do our scientists possess the personality traits to work in collaboration with other disciplines? Will they recognise the ability of common citizens to become both critics and co-creators in knowledge production as part of an extended peer community? Will our scientists learn to live with and plan for contingencies: of managing complexity, uncertainty, and risk? Will they be able to think abstractly and dialectically?

Will our scientific institutions have linkages with external communities to foster multidirectional knowledge flows? Design incentives for sharing knowledge beyond publications? Will our scientists embrace all the elements of a proper scientific temper that must include humility and a yearning to learn lessons from the past and from other co-participants? Engage in cross-cultural conversation? Recognise different forms of knowledge – traditional, local, explicit, tacit? Adopt a humanistic approach to problem solving?

Are our scientists ready to let go of the *sengol* and the sword? Will they engage with other professionals and citizens and make a beginning by harnessing the diverse and dispersed forms of knowledge that are needed to address problems that impact their immediate neighbourhood and beyond? For Indian science and the public at large, that would be the best thing to happen since the invention of *dal-roti*.

## Old-fashioned trust and credibility bind India-UAE ties



**Navdeep Suri**  
was India's Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates

spectacle of Ahlan Modi will undoubtedly dominate the headlines, it should not detract anything from the other substantive aspects of this visit. These include the Prime Minister's address as guest of honour at the 11th World Government Summit in Dubai.

Often billed as Dubai's version of Davos, this is a major annual conference that attracts government leaders, heads of international organisations, captains of industry and thought leaders from around the world. The focus of this year's summit is on 'Shaping Future Governments' and gives India a platform to put forth its own views before an influential global audience.

### Strengthening economic ties

Mr. Modi is also expected to kick off the much-anticipated Bharat Mart, a key initiative of Dubai-based DP World and India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry to boost exports of Indian Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises by providing them retail, warehousing and logistics facilities in Dubai's Jebel Ali Free Zone Area. DP World will build around 800 showrooms and 18 warehouses over the next 24 months on a 1.3 million square feet plot to allow Indian manufacturers of machinery, electrical and electronics products, auto components, medical equipment, furniture, apparel, processed foods, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and handicrafts to showcase their products and access buyers and markets in Iran, Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

The Bharat Mart project comes on the heels of the ambitious India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) which completed its first year in 2023 and has already seen India's trade with the UAE grow by 16% to \$85 billion. In doing so, it has reinforced the UAE's position as India's third largest trading partner and second largest export destination.

The unique combination of CEPA and the Bharat Mart has the potential to provide a strong impetus to export of India's manufactured goods even as the initial steps to start trading in national currencies promise to reduce transaction costs. The memoranda of understanding signed at the bilateral engagement would also further strengthen the economic relationship between India and the UAE.

There are several other major achievements for which the two sides can legitimately take credit. The Indian Institute of Technology Delhi has begun its master's programme in energy transition and sustainability at its interim campus in Abu Dhabi. Rising investments from the UAE have made it the fourth highest source of foreign direct investment into India in 2022-23. The Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) will soon open an office in GIFT City, Gujarat. A 14-year deal, by Indian Oil Corporation Limited, to buy 1.2 million metric tonnes per annum of liquefied natural gas from the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company during 2026-39 has been signed to boost India's energy security. And, discussions on several sensitive areas of defence cooperation are making good progress.

### Regional issues

The talks between Mr. Modi and Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed also provided an opportunity to review the deteriorating situation in the region in the context of the ongoing war in Gaza, the attacks by Houthis on shipping in the Red Sea, and the clear and present danger of an escalation. Longer shipping times, higher freight costs and a possible hike in oil prices can pose a significant risk to India's economic growth, and it is important that the government coordinates closely with a key regional player such as the UAE, along with countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt to make sure that India's interests are protected.

A convergence of strategic interests and regular interactions have resulted in one of India's most dynamic and consequential bilateral relationships

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Back home

The release of eight Indian Navy veterans from prison in Qatar is a happy development with quiet diplomacy winning the day. Now that the men have been released, New Delhi must ensure that such incidents do not recur. **Gregory Fernandes**, Mumbai

Quiet diplomacy has won. The focus is now on the fate of Kulbhushan Jadhav in Pakistan, whose release India must now start working on. **K.V. Seetharamaiah**, Bengaluru

Growing bonhomie between India and Qatar, which has been nurtured by

the Indian Prime Minister in recent times, has evidently played a pivotal role in ensuring the release of the men. Importantly, there is a need for India to leverage this newfound West Asian outreach in strengthening New Delhi's bilateral relations with Pakistan. **G. Ramasubramanyam**, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

Questions remain on what exactly the charges were that warranted such a severe penalty. In the end, India's diplomatic win and the Prime Minister's personal attention to the matter must be leveraged to ensure that such incidents do not recur. From a broader perspective, the

vast Indian diaspora in the Gulf is often treated unfairly by various institutions. India must ensure there is both justice and their well-being. **Anany Mishra**, Bilhali, Chhattisgarh

**On the Governor**  
The Governor is the last residue of the colonial system. He has been

transformed into a puppet controlled by central chains. Instead of playing politics and engaging in a blame game, he could play the role of a neutral umpire and present his advice more politely ("T.N. Governor Ravi refuses to deliver customary address", February 13). **P. David Balasingh**, Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu

# Why India needs deep industrialisation

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way we think about our economic future. Globalisation is now in retreat. Industrial policy and strategic state-led economic interventions are back on the menu everywhere. The Inflation Reduction Act in the U.S., the European Green Deal, and India's Atmanirbhar Bharat are prominent examples.

India's growth momentum has sustained. India recovered relatively quickly from the pandemic, yet it has entered a phase of 'premature deindustrialisation'. The fruits of high growth were shared by a small minority, worsening pre-existing gaps. High-end cars get sold out. Common people struggle to cope with high food prices. This fault line is built into the structure of India's growth. This takes us to a long-standing question: why has India not been able to break out of industrial stagnation and generate employment? Raghuram Rajan and Rohit Lamba offer an unconventional perspective. In *Breaking the Mould: Reimagining India's Economic Future*, they bet their money not on manufacturing-led growth but on high-skill, services-driven growth.

**Why break the mould now?** In 75 years, India has not been able to industrialise sufficiently. Its manufacturing share in output and employment has always been stagnant and below 20%, except during the 'Dream Run, 2003-08'. Even the 1991 economic reforms, which came with the promise of labour-intensive industrialisation, didn't alter this reality. India is now at a crossroads. Its industrial investment is stagnating, with high levels of unemployment and chronic disguised unemployment. Its trade deficit, largely driven by imported goods, has been widening. India is not even producing the goods its consumes, let alone exporting.

In that context, Rajan and Lamba's argument to promote high-skill services powered by

**Kalaiyarasan A.**

is an Assistant Professor at the Madras Institute of Development Studies, India and Visiting Research Fellow at Kings College London

information technology to stimulate manufacturing is a reversal of classical wisdom, which is that services growth rests on manufacturing growth. This is at odds with India's current industrial policy and may not be the solution. In fact, it could even make things worse.

First, employment elasticity of services-led growth is poor. India's experience with services-driven growth since the late 1980s had two negative implications. First, it could not absorb the labour exiting agriculture in the same way that manufacturing would have. Second, the service sector required a large highly skilled workforce that India could not adequately supply. Even as the sector absorbed some labour which migrated to cities, it was deeply unequal. The relative wages of workers with a college degree were much higher than those without one. Inequality from services-driven growth is thus much higher than from manufacturing-led growth. The Gini index of inequality for regular wages in the services sector was 44 compared to 35 for manufacturing (Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2021-22).

Second, early investments in higher education contributed to the near abandonment of mass school education. These higher education institutions cultivated self-serving elites who played a role in India's IT "revolution" while contributing to industrial stagnation. Investments in human capital were deeply unequal from the get-go. India is one of the world's most unequal countries in terms of education. Yasheng Huang, a Chinese economist, said, "Rural entrepreneurship was able to grow out of the traditional agricultural sector on a massive scale [in China]. The rural Indian, in contrast, hampered by a poor endowment of human capital, were not able to start entrepreneurial ventures remotely on the scale of the Chinese."

Third, the returns to education differ across classes and social groups. School enrolment is high,

If economic development and not growth were India's priority, manufacturing that takes along the service sector maybe the solution to the country's problems

Higher education is not as inaccessible as it was earlier. But the differential quality of schooling feeds into the quality of higher education, which feeds into labour market outcomes. The high-skill services pitch would suit the traditional elite but not the majority first generation graduates from colleges in rural areas and small towns. The majority of these students reap poor returns on their investments in education. The poor quality of most state-run schools and colleges is closely linked to the elites' renunciation of public education. Even as these fault lines are new forms of class divide in India, they reflect older ones rooted in the caste system.

**A culturally rooted diagnosis**  
Why has industrialisation been stagnant in India? The lack of mass education meant that an important cultural prerequisite for industrialisation was missing. Economic historian Joel Mokyr suggests that the rise of useful knowledge is key to technological progress and growth in modern economies. For instance, foreign direct investment in India, which was supposed to diffuse technology, didn't take place except in some enclaves. A culture of growth also requires the revaluation of labour, production, and technology. India has looked down upon certain occupations, particularly those that are essential (electrical, welding, etc.), partly impeding organic innovation in manufacturing. Industrialists say that India undervalues the vocational skills needed for manufacturing. Certain skills are not valued even if they command higher wages. Artisanal knowledge doesn't enjoy as much social respect as scholasticism or metaphysical abstraction. Increasing returns and efficiency come from innovation and its diffusion, which are based on mass education and collective absorptive capacity. India needs deep industrialisation, not just the service sector, that has the power of changing the foundations of society.

# Balancing local and national aspirations

There is a message in the Trinamool's nominations to the Rajya Sabha

## STATE OF PLAY

**Shiv Sahay Singh**

shivsahay.s@thehindu.co.in



been nominated to challenge the BJP's support base among the Matuas. With her nomination, the number of women Rajya Sabha MPs from the Trinamool will stand at five.

With the second candidate, Md. Nadimul Haque, who is the owner of a popular Urdu daily from Kolkata called *Akbar-E-Mashriq*, being renominated, the number of Trinamool Rajya Sabha MPs from the Muslim community will be two. One Rajya Sabha MP from the party is from the Scheduled Tribes category.

This shows continuation of one of the core principles of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's politics: to represent every major community which has a significant electoral support base. Of the 16 Rajya Sabha MPs from West Bengal, 13 are from the Trinamool, two from the BJP, and one from the CPI(M).

Mamata Bala Thakur is a two-time Lok Sabha MP from Bongaon and is the BJP MP's relative. Both she and Santanu Thakur hail from the family of the founders of the Matua sect, mostly comprising Dalits who shifted to West Bengal from East Bengal (present-day Bangladesh) without proper citizenship documents. The Matuas, who constitute one-fifth of West Bengal's Scheduled Caste population, have suffered for decades as a result. Over the past few years, the Matuas and their citizenship have been at the centre of the BJP's politics around the CAA. Mamata Bala Thakur has

ed by the Trinamool to the Rajya Sabha. The daughter of Assam Congress stalwart Santosh Mohan Dev, Ms. Dev was elected as an MP from the Silchar seat, a stronghold of her father. Her presence in the Trinamool is crucial to the party's plans in the Northeast, particularly Assam and Tripura.

The nomination that came as the biggest surprise to the Trinamool's rank and file was that of journalist Sagarika Ghose. The Delhi-based journalist had no connection to the party before this announcement. However, this is not the first time that Ms. Banerjee has chosen a political greenhorn with little or no connection to West Bengal to represent the State in the Rajya Sabha. Last year, the Trinamool nominated Right to Information activist Saket Gokhale to the Upper House. The Trinamool wants its MPs in the Rajya Sabha to be articulate and tackle the BJP head on, but at the same time have little say in the party's affairs and internal decision-making.

Sources in the Trinamool say that such nominations are made to avoid factionalism in the party. Nominees to the Rajya Sabha with no interest in the State's politics and in the internal functioning of the party are beneficial to the Trinamool. This is significant especially since the Trinamool is going through a period of churn. The old guard, supported by the Chief Minister, and the new leadership, led by her nephew Abhishek Banerjee, appear to be at loggerheads frequently. The Trinamool has often fielded actors from the Bengali film industry and cultural sphere to represent the party in the Lok Sabha and the State Assembly for a reason – they do not pose any threat to the existing power structure in the party.

# The many lows of the 17th Lok Sabha

Data show that Parliament functioning has been generally been on a decline in the post-1990 period

## DATA POINT

### Ankita Dinkar

**L**all the Lok Sabhas with completed terms, the 17th Lok Sabha witnessed several regrettable firsts. It was the first to not appoint a Deputy Speaker, it recorded the lowest number of sittings, it passed significant legislation such as criminal reform Bills when more than 70% of the Opposition MPs were suspended, and the Prime Minister did not answer any questions orally and only one in writing. While these developments mark a new low in parliamentary functioning, this is not an anomaly; rather, it is a trend that has continued for more than 30 years.

The annual average of Bills passed declined from 65 in the 1952-1990 period to 48 in 1991-2023. The number of Bills sent to committees for scrutiny also dwindled consistently, with the 17th Lok Sabha sending only 16% of Bills for scrutiny, the lowest in the past four Lok Sabhas. (**Chart 1**).

The declining number of sitting days and hours in the Lok Sabha limits the scope for debates and diminishes MPs' participation. Prior to 1990, each Lok Sabha typically convened for over 550 days on average, spanning 3,500 hours. However, post-1990, an average Lok Sabha only meets for 345 days, spanning less than 1,800 hours. The 17th Lok Sabha had the least number of sittings (274). (**Chart 2**).

Scholars and experts identified this trend early on, with a notable instance being a 2000 paper authored by Dr. Subhash C Kashyap, the former Secretary-General of Lok Sabha. He proposed the establishment of a Parliamentary Reforms Commission or a 'Study of Parliament Group' outside parliamentary confines. Urgent and comprehensive parliamentary reforms are imperative to restore the efficacy of parliamentary procedures and practices.

Parliamentary tools allow MPs to ensure executive accountability and remediate potential issues for their constituents. A half-hour discussion enables MPs to deliberate on responses to parliamentary questions. Before the 1990s, there were 88 such discussions per Lok Sabha. Post-1990, there were only 11 half-hour discussions per Lok Sabha. The 17th Lok Sabha permitted only one such discussion, marking an all-time low. Short du-

## Concluding on a low note

The data for the charts were sourced from Statistical Handbook published by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, PRS Legislative Research, and Resume of Work Done by Lok Sabha



Chart 1: This shows the number of Bills passed (left axis) by the Lok Sabha and the % of bills scrutinised (right axis)

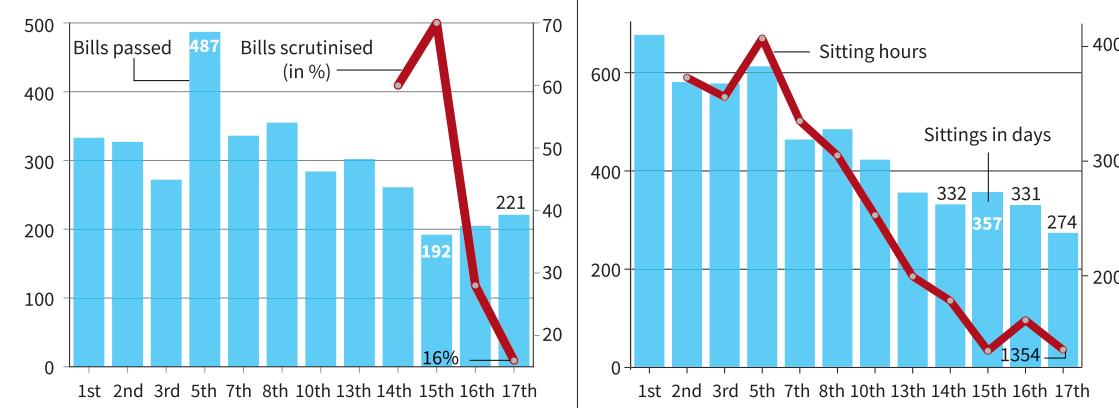


Chart 2: The chart shows the number of sittings in days (left axis) and sitting hours (right axis) per Lok Sabha

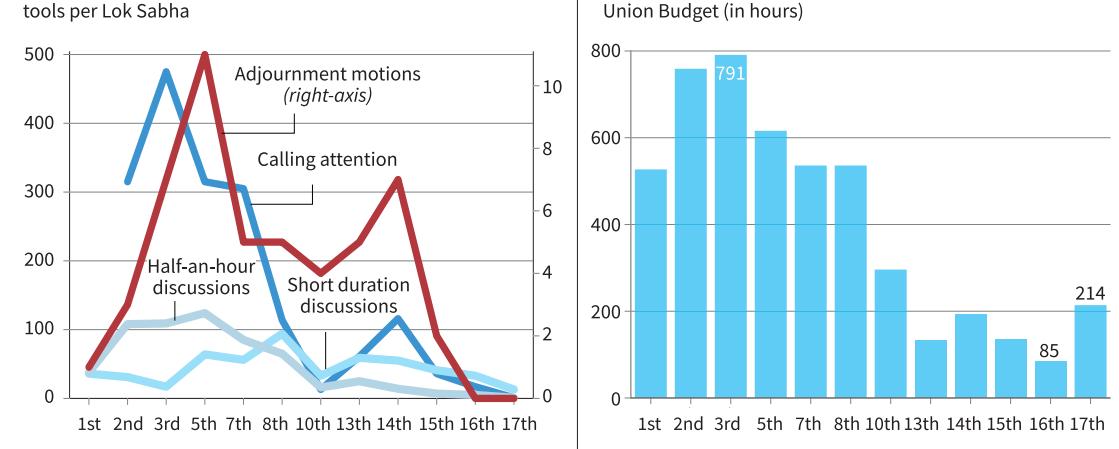


Chart 3: The chart shows the usage of various parliamentary tools per Lok Sabha

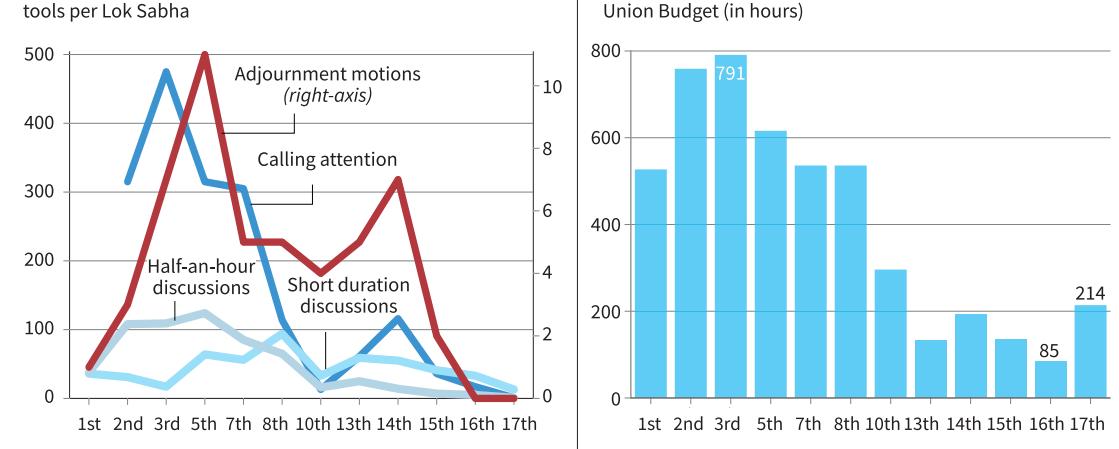


Chart 4: The chart shows the time spent on discussing the Union Budget (in hours)

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

**The Hindu**

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 14, 1974

### Common global strategy for tea exports planned

New Delhi, Feb. 13: India and Sri Lanka have decided to take the initiative to work out a common global strategy, in co-operation with other tea-exporting countries like Kenya, Bangladesh and Indonesia, to secure an equitable, remunerative price for the tea-producing countries in the world market, said Mr. A.G. George, Union Deputy Minister for Commerce, at a press conference here to-day.

Mr. George, who recently returned from a visit to Sri Lanka, where he had talks with the Sri Lanka Minister for Plantation Industries, Mr. Collin D' Silva, said there would be informal consultations among the tea-producing countries before the forthcoming meeting of the sub-group of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) in Rome on June 9 on the question of remunerative prices for the exports.

The Minister said that it was decided to initiate consultations under the aegis of the Association of Natural Rubber Producing Countries to evolve a similar strategy in respect of export prices of rubber in the context of the present energy crisis. Malaysia, Thailand, Ceylon, India and Indonesia are the members of the Association accounting for 90 per cent of the world's production of rubber.

Mr. George said that both India and Sri Lanka had recognised the urgent need to evolve a common global export strategy for tea exports. In spite of the boom in the prices of principal raw materials in the export market, the price of tea had remained relatively stagnant and had increased during the last five years only from Rs. 7.14 to Rs. 8 per kilogramme.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 14, 1924

### Japanese loan

London, Feb. 12: The prospectus of the Japanese loan was issued this afternoon. Queues outside issuing banks were very active procuring prospectuses. Clerks emerged into the street with bundles of prospectuses. The prospectus mentions that 150 million dollars loan is being issued in America for the same purposes, namely, conversion and redemption of outstanding balances of the Japanese Government 4.5 per cent loans of Mureh and July 1995, and to meet expenditure on reconstruction work due to earthquake.

# Text & Context

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

**Number of children who went missing in Assam in three years**

**3,700** Over 3,400 of the children were rescued by different agencies, Women and Child Development Minister Ajanta Neog said. She also said that 6,054 cases were registered under POCSO from 2012 to 2023. PTI

**The rise in India's coal imports during December**

**27** in percentage. India registered a rise to 23.35 million tonne (MT) in December, over the corresponding month of the previous fiscal. India's coal import was 18.35 MT in the corresponding month of the previous fiscal. PTI

**Children fighting with armed units in Central African Republic**

**10,000** While 15,000 minors have escaped from rebel forces, children are still recruited as fighters, spies, cooks and even used as sex slaves, the Minister for family and gender said. PTI

**The aid passed by the U.S. for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan**

**95.3** in \$ billion. The U.S. Senate passed the aid package for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, pushing ahead after months of difficult negotiations amid growing divisions in the Republican Party over the role of the U.S. abroad. AP

**Number of candidates to score a 100 in JEE-Main first edition**

**23** Over 11.70 lakh candidates appeared for the engineering entrance exam JEE-Main, the National Testing Agency informed. Seven of the 23 candidates who had a perfect score are from Telangana. PTI  
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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## On the rights of forest-dwellers

Why has the notification of the Thanthai Periyar Sanctuary in the Erode district of Tamil Nadu left forest-dwellers wary? How should national parks and sanctuaries be notified? What was the 'historical injustice' the Forest Rights Act was supposed to rectify?

### EXPLAINER

C.R. Bijoy

#### The story so far:

Earlier this month, the notification of the Thanthai Periyar Sanctuary in Erode district of Tamil Nadu triggered consternation among forest-dwellers around it. They expressed fear that this is a prelude to their rights under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006 (FRA) being denied. They have accused the district and State administrations of violating relevant laws. The Thanthai Periyar Sanctuary is constituted from the North and South Bargur, Thamarai Karai, Ennambalam, and Nagalur reserved forests in Anthiyur Taluk. It is located between the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve of Tamil Nadu, the Male Mahadeshwara Wildlife Sanctuary and the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary of Karnataka. Six tribal forest villages – denied basic rights and facilities because these are not revenue villages – have been excluded from the sanctuary. These settlements are confined to an arbitrary area of 3.42 sq. km.

#### What are forest villages?

In 1990, the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) had ordered that all forest villages be converted to revenue villages. The FRA, enacted 18 years ago, also required all forest villages to be converted to revenue villages. During conversion, "the actual land use of the village in its entirety, including lands required for current or future community uses, like schools, health facilities and public spaces," were to be recorded as part of the revenue village. These rights continue to be denied to date. Strangely, 21 roads 147.1 km long have also been excluded from the notification, as if such exclusion is required for them to remain in use. This is not so by law.

As of 2016, Tamil Nadu had 736 forest villages with a population of 23,125 on record. Of them, 7,764 were from Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities. The corresponding all-India figures are 4,526 forest villages with a population of 22 lakh, with 13.3 lakh from ST communities. There are more unrecorded forest habitations.

The notification that created the sanctuary concedes that the rights admitted under the Tamil Nadu Forest Act 1882 – a time when forests were reserved – and those conferred under the FRA "shall remain and continue to be enjoyed by the persons concerned". The issue here is that Tamil Nadu has been one of the most laggard States in implementing the FRA in the country.

#### What are the rights in the new Sanctuary?

Cattle-grazers can no longer graze in the Thanthai Periyar Sanctuary. Bargur cattle, a traditional breed native to the Bargur forest hills, may now be prevented from accessing their traditional grazing grounds. In March 2022, the Madras High Court revised an older order imposing a total ban on cattle grazing in all the forests of Tamil Nadu and restricted the ban to national parks, sanctuaries, and tiger reserves. Tamil Nadu is the only State in the country where there is such a ban. This order is despite the FRA, which, aside from other community rights, recognised "grazing (both settled or transhumant) and traditional seasonal resource access of nomadic or pastoralist communities" in all forests, including in



**Rights denied:** People fetch water from the tank at the Nellikadu habitation at Bargur hills in Erode district in Tamil Nadu in June 2023. FILE PHOTO

national parks, sanctuaries, and tiger reserves. Grazing rights are community rights of the habitation-level villages and are to be regulated by their gram sabhas.

Of Tamil Nadu's land, 26,419 sq. km or 20.3% is under notified forests. The recorded forest area is a bit higher, around 23.7%. Some 6% of the State is under Protected Areas, with five national parks and 34 sanctuaries (half of which are bird sanctuaries). The State has constituted five tiger reserves in these Protected Areas. The 801-sq.-km Thanthai Periyar Sanctuary joins them now.

#### What does the WLP Act 1972 provide?

Sanctuaries and national parks are notified under the Wildlife (Protection) Act (WLPA) 1972. People inside sanctuaries continue to enjoy all their rights unless prohibited, but they don't in National Parks. No new rights are permitted once the notice of intent is issued. The Collector is to inquire into the rights of all persons, their nature and extent, in the proposed sanctuary or national park. Then, the Collector's office has to decide whether to admit the claims in sanctuaries and to acquire all rights in national parks. The law mandates similar procedures when some land is initially notified as forest. But governments have not followed them.

While courts routinely condone these violations, they have become entrenched within the forest department since the start of the colonial era, with the forest bureaucracy inheriting the same tendencies. In addition, the Indian Forest Act 1927 and its clones, such as the Tamil Nadu Forest Act 1882, the WLPA, the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980, and the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act

2016 are all erected on this colonial edifice.

#### How was the Forest Rights Act established?

A dam of anger ruptured around the nation after the MoEF misinterpreted a Supreme Court order and, in May 2002, required States "to evict ineligible encroachers and all post-1980 encroachers from forest lands in a time-bound manner". In 2004, the MoEF acknowledged in an affidavit to the Supreme Court in *Godavarman versus Union of India* that "the historical injustice done to the tribal forest dwellers through non-recognition of their traditional rights must be finally rectified".

In 2006, the Indian government enacted the FRA to explicitly undo this "historical injustice" resulting from the inadequate recognition of "forest rights on ancestral lands and their habitat ... in the consolidation of State forests during the colonial period as well as in independent India". The FRA requires and authorises the gram sabhas to determine and recognise forest rights, and protect and preserve the forests, wildlife, and biodiversity within their customary and traditional boundaries, including inside Protected Areas. These responsibilities were earlier vested with the Forest Department.

**How do FRA and WLPA compare?** Being a later law, the FRA overrides the WLPA. All provisions in the WLPA that contravene provisions in the FRA are null and void. As a result, when notifying a Protected Area under the WLPA, the government needs to determine rights under the FRA and acquire the consent of

the gram sabhas.

The government specifically incorporated these requirements in a 2006 amendment vis-à-vis the notification of tiger reserves.

The FRA became operational when its Rules were notified in January 2008. Since then, until 2023, the country has acquired 15,605 sq. km of Protected Areas – nine national parks of 3,462 sq. km and 77 sanctuaries of 12,143 sq km – while disregarding the changed legal regime. Of these, Tamil Nadu's share has been 15 sanctuaries spanning 4,146.7 sq. km.

The FRA violations, in the case of Scheduled Tribes, are also crimes under the 2016 amendment to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

#### How has Tamil Nadu implemented the FRA?

According to the 2011 Census, there were 1,808 revenue villages in Tamil Nadu with numerous habitations in them accessing 15,826.9 sq. km of forests within revenue boundaries.

But as of September 2023, the State had recognised and issued individual titles to an extent of just 38.96 sq. km – a paltry coverage of 0.25%. Reportedly, the State has issued 531 community titles but the extent of the area thus titled remains a mystery.

Tamil Nadu is not an exception. The same pattern, more or less, runs across the country: the Environment Ministry and the forest bureaucracy continue to defy the laws, Parliament, and the will of the people, leaving forests, forest-dwellers, and wildlife in peril.

C.R. Bijoy examines natural resource conflicts and governance issues.

### THE GIST

Earlier this month, the notification of the Thanthai Periyar Sanctuary in Erode district of Tamil Nadu triggered consternation among forest-dwellers around it. They expressed fear that this is a prelude to their rights under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006 (FRA) being denied.

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## FROM THE ARCHIVES



ISTOCKPHOTO

## Too many IITs lead to unrealistic expectations and quality problems

While excellent engineering/STEM institutions are needed, they all do not have to be IITs. Some of the newly established institutes can be renamed and provided with sufficient resources to produce high quality graduates and good research

**Philip G. Altbach**  
**Eldho Mathews**

The results of JEE Main 2024 have just been declared. In this article, dated February 20, 2021, Philip Altbach and Eldho Mathews discuss the need to maintain the standard of IITs.

**W**ithout question, the Indian Institutes of Technology, or the IITs, are the crown jewels of Indian higher education. They are world-renowned for the quality of their graduates and for their academic programmes in a range of fields in technology and engineering – and in the past decade, in research and innovation through research parks as well. They are among the few Indian higher education institutions that do reasonably well in the global rankings. However, for the past decade or so, and according to current plans, the IIT "system" has expanded beyond its capacity to maintain its high standards and is in danger of sinking into mediocrity. The recent decision of the University Grants Commission to permit select IITs under the 'Institutions of Eminence' category to set up campuses abroad could further weaken these already stretched institutions. It is time to rethink the changing role of IITs in order to ensure that quality and focus are maintained, by prioritising the needs of India, but with a 21st century twist.

### What the IITs are, are not

The original five IITs were established in the 1950s and early 1960s. Four had a foreign collaborator: IIT Bombay (the Soviet Union), IIT Madras (Germany), IIT Kanpur (the United States), and IIT Delhi (the United Kingdom). Currently, there are 23 IITs. After setting up IIT Delhi in 1961, it took another 34 years to establish the sixth IIT in Guwahati (1994). Since then, 17 more IITs have been established, including several that resulted from upgrading existing institutions.

Funded generously by the central government, the IITs focused exclusively on technology and engineering. They

later added the humanities and social sciences – but these programmes were modest until the 2020 National Education Policy emphasised the IITs should focus more on "holistic and multidisciplinary education".

According to data available with the Council of Indian Institutes of Technology, the IITs are small institutions with average student enrolments in the five older IITs of around 10,000. Some of the newer ones remain quite small, with fewer than 400 students. The older IITs have faculties of around 1,000, while some of the new ones, such as those in Palakkad and Jammu, employ 100 or so. Further, most of the IITs suffer from a severe shortage of professors. For example, IIT Dhanbad is approved to hire 781 instructors but only 301 positions were filled as of January 2021.

**Offerings, students, faculty**  
The IITs are not universities; they have neither the range of disciplines nor the size that characterise universities worldwide. The IITs started as undergraduate institutions; they gradually added small post-graduate programmes, but some are now adding significant post-graduate offerings. IIT-Bombay's student enrolment, for example, was 58% post-graduate during 2019-20. The IITs were, and are, self-consciously elite institutions aiming at the highest international academic standards – a tradition which, in our view, is important but increasingly difficult to maintain.

It is not surprising that IITs' graduates are so successful – the schools may be the most selective institutions in the world. Around 7,00,000 students sit for the national engineering entrance examination for the IITs and several other elite institutions each year and a vast majority of them target the 16,000-plus seats available in the 23 IITs. According to an answer provided in Lok Sabha by the Minister of Human Resource Development, in February 2020, dropout rates at the IITs are infinitesimal and declining, from 2.25% in 2015-16 to 0.68% in 2019-20.

Similarly, the IITs have traditionally

attracted high quality faculty, where most have doctorates from the most respected western universities. Top quality professors have been attracted to the IITs because of the quality of the students, the chance to work with the best academic minds in India, and a commitment to India's development. While salaries do not compare well on the international market, working and living conditions on the older IIT campuses are comfortable.

In recent years, however, things began to change. The IITs could not attract a sufficient number of young faculty to fill vacancies resulting from retirements. The emerging IT and related industries in India offered much more attractive salaries and exciting work opportunities, and many were lured to universities and industry in other countries.

At the same time, the government dramatically expanded the number of IITs, spreading them around the country. Most of the new IITs are located in smaller towns such as Mandi (Himachal Pradesh), Palakkad (Kerala), Dharwad (Karnataka), and others. While it is important to provide educational opportunities outside the major metropolitan areas, top institutions are seldom located far away from urban amenities. There is no doubt a sufficient number of excellent students to attend all of the IITs, but there are not now, nor will there be in the future enough top-quality faculty to staff all of the new institutes, especially those in mofussil locations. Facilities and infrastructure are unlikely to be "world class." It is, thus, inevitable that quality will decline and the "IIT brand" diluted. This would be very unfortunate for India, since the IITs are without doubt India's most recognisable and respected academic institutions.

Another area is the lack of correlation between the local needs and IITs. Most of the IITs and other prominent "Institutes of National Importance" are "academic enclaves" with little connection with their regions. Only a few State governments are effectively utilising the presence of IITs in the local milieu through knowledge sharing networks involving universities, colleges and schools, and local industries

and firms. Similarly, there are few community outreach programmes. Such an approach could prevent disruption, such as that occurring in Goa, where local groups are resisting locating a new IIT in their region.

### What needs to be done

While excellent engineering/STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) institutions are needed, they all do not have to be IITs. Perhaps 10 to 12 "real" IITs located near major cities are practical for India. Some of the newly established institutes can be renamed and provided with sufficient resources to produce high quality graduates and good research. A more limited "IIT system" needs to be funded at "world class" levels and staffed by "world class" faculty, perhaps with some recruited from top universities internationally. Recent decision to liberalise the recruitment rules to attract more foreign faculty is a good step in the right direction.

Further, the IITs need to pay attention to internationalisation beyond sending their brightest graduates abroad and recruiting Indians with foreign PhDs; starting overseas branches is a bad idea, but in-depth collaboration with the best global universities, and hiring foreign faculty, perhaps as visiting scholars, would yield excellent results, and further build the IITs' international brand. IIT Bombay-Monash Research Academy, and University of Queensland-IIT Delhi Academy of Research (UQIDAR), are promising examples. The IITs need robust policies to attract international students. And, of course, adequate and sustained funding is mandatory – both from government and from the philanthropy of tremendously successful IIT graduates at home and abroad. It would be tragic for India's "jewel in the academic crown" to be diminished. And overexpansion will inevitably mean exactly that.

Philip G. Altbach is research professor and distinguished fellow, Center for International Higher Education, Boston College, U.S. Eldho Mathews is a higher education researcher based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

## Know your English

**K. Subrahmanian**

"Mr. R. Sanjeeda Raju, Patnidi, A.P., wants to know the meaning of 'old head on young shoulders.'"

"To have an old head on young shoulders" means "to be a more mature person than is expected for one's age." When a young man has very mature ideas that you normally associate with very experienced people, you say that he has an old head on young shoulders. There are a few young people whose heads are thatched with grey hair. You don't say of them that they have an old head on young shoulders."

"Mr. S. Prakash, Mutharasanallur, Tiruchi, wants to know the meaning of 'sororicide.'"

"It means 'killing of one's sister,' 'killer of one's sister.'

*He is guilty of sororicide.*

"Soror" means "sisterly." "Sororise" means "to associate in a sisterly way." In America "sorority" is a women's society in a university or college. A male students' society in a university or college in America is called a "fraternity."

"Mr. S. Arif Khan, Chrompet, Madras, wants to know the difference between 'agony' and 'anguish.'"

"Agony" is unbearable physical or mental suffering. 'Death agony' or 'last agony' means 'pangs of death.'

*The man who was stabbed was in agony.*

*I was in agony till the doctor told me that the operation was successful.*

"Anguish" means "extreme physical pain or mental distress."

*She was in anguish when the child didn't return from school.*

*Her anguished cries upset him deeply.*

"Agony" is a stronger word than "anguish"; "agony" connotes greater distress than "anguish." The difference is one of degree."

"Ms. S. Jayasree Bannerjee, Sion, Bombay, wants to know the difference between 'near' and 'by.'"

*'By' means beside, 'by the side of.'*

*My house is by the temple.*

It means the house is next or almost next to the temple. When you say "My house is near the temple," it means that the house is close to the temple. It is not next to the temple but at a short distance from the temple. A thing that is "by" you is nearer than a thing that is "near" you."

"Ms. C. R. Rajbanshi, Lucknow, wants to know the difference between a 'cardinal number' and an ordinal number."

"Cardinal numbers tell us how many objects are specified. One, two, three, four... are cardinal numbers. Ordinal numbers tell us in what order objects are arranged. First, second, third, fourth ...

*He took one of my books.*

"One" in this sentence is a cardinal number.

*She got the first prize.*

"First" in this sentence is an ordinal number."

"Ms. Snehalata, Raichur, wants to know the synonyms of 'happy.'"

"Here are some: cheerful, delighted, enchanted, enraptured, glad, thrilled, joyous, merry, jovial, jolly."

*Published in The Hindu on February 5, 1991.*

## THE DAILY QUIZ

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

February 14 is known for the celebration of Valentine's Day across the world. Here is a quiz on many other interesting events that happened on this day

**Sindhu Nagaraj**

### QUESTION 1

On this day in 1989, a fatwa ordering the execution of this writer was issued by the Supreme Leader of Iran, for a controversial book, that got banned in many parts of the world. Name the writer and the book.

### QUESTION 2

On February 14, 2018, this South African politician tendered his resignation over corruption allegations, and scandals, making way for the current President of South Africa. Identify him.

### QUESTION 3

This widely popular social media platform owned by Google was

launched on this day in 2005 by three former employees of PayPal. Name the platform. Name the three people who launched it.

**QUESTION 4**  
Born on this day in 1946, Gregory Hines is one of the most celebrated artists of all time. What was he known for?

**QUESTION 5**  
This English economist, believed to have been born on this day, is known for his population theory that said the power of population is indefinitely greater than the power of the earth to produce subsistence for man. Name the economist.



**Visual question:**  
Identify this film from the image which was released in the U.S. on February 14. Name the actor in the image. What is the name of his character in the film?

**Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:** 1. This island once flourished as a major port for trade in Gujarat and is now connected to the mainland via two bridges. **Ans:** Diu

2. The majority of the people in this island are Muslim. Many people here speak Malayalam with a mix of Arabic. **Ans:** Lakshadweep

3. This island was named after a marine surveyor. **Ans:** Ross Island

4. Two tribes inhabit the Great Nicobar. One of them is the Nicobarese. Name the other.

**Ans:** Shompen

5. This Chief Minister was an MLA of this island. **Ans:** Sarbananda Sonowal

6. This barrier island is a launch site. **Ans:** Sriharikota

Visual: Identify this Railway bridge. **Ans:**

**Pamban bridge**

**Early Birds:** K.N. Viswanathan|

Rajmohan/V. Pamban Bridge| Prashant Nain| Babli Devi

## Word of the day

**Mollycoddle:**

a pampered darling; treat with excessive indulgence

**Synonyms:** spoil, coddle, indulge, baby, pamper, featherbed

**Usage:** You need to stop mollycoddling him.

**Pronunciation:** bit.ly/mollycoddlepro

**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /molɪkɒdələ/

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

**From Page One****Centre rules out MSP law, offers discussion**

More than 100 barricades with barbed wires were set up between a seven km stretch on the Singhu border, in Kundli in Haryana. Teams of the Delhi Police and CAPF, RAPF were also deployed strategically at all points along with anti-riot gears. Some entry and exit gates of select Metro stations near important installations, including Parliament, have been shut as prohibitory orders remain in force.

Heavy police deployment was also witnessed on Delhi's borders with Uttar Pradesh. The Delhi-Noida direct flyaway, Ghazipur border and other prominent locations were under scrutiny. Movement for ambulances and other emergency vehicles was also made difficult despite the police's attempts to ensure smooth traffic flow at these borders.

**Scuffle with police**

Farmers had scuffle with the Haryana Police at various places along the Punjab border and the police resorted to the use of tear gas through drones and water cannons to disperse the agitators from Punjab. Farmers had come in hundreds of 'tractor-trolley' convoys by pushing and throwing away the multi-layer barricades. They were carrying essential supplies, including food, medicine, clothes etc.

Several of them tried to forcefully remove barricades and threw stones at the police personnel. Agitated farmers were also seen vandalising flyover safety barriers on the Shambhu border. According to police, 24 police personnel were injured in stone-pelting during the protest, who have been hospitalised at the government hospitals. A senior police officer confirmed to *The Hindu* that a few protesters were detained, who were later released.

KMM coordinator Sarwan Singh Pandher hit out at the Centre for attacking the farmers and farm labourers marching towards Delhi. Mr. Pandher said the farmers responded to the force by hurling stones.

Urging Mr. Modi to intervene, the SKM said in a letter to him that the repression unleashed on farmers is condemnable and added that the Kisan Movement in India is united and single-minded and will resist any such act of authoritarianism and excessive use of state power.

In an appeal to SKM-NP, the original SKM said various Kisan organisations and platforms are fighting on the same and common demands. Hence, all the like-minded organisations should make an effort to build a common and united struggle on these issues.

(With inputs from Vikas Vasudeva in Chandigarh)

**Clause in India-EFTA deal may hit drug trade**

The "signatories", here, refer to the countries and "applicants" being the pharmaceutical companies. The "undisclosed test data", in this case, is on the drug's efficacy and impact on people.

There is also a line in the draft, which is available on the website [bilaterals.org](#), that suggests this should apply not only to 'new' chemical drugs but also a class of drugs called 'biologics drugs,' – monoclonal antibodies, vaccine formulations – that involve complex mixtures of organic and inorganic entities, and are harder to make copies of. Many Indian biotechnology companies are developing biologics drugs.

*The Hindu* has independently confirmed the existence of this clause from sources.

India, which has over decades, mushroomed a thriving generics drug industry has resisted attempts by foreign pharmaceutical companies to extend monopoly rights over patented drugs. This is mostly because India's generic drug industry has over the years made affordable versions of expensive drugs and become a large global supply itself.

The Indian pharma industry is the third largest in the world and produces over 60,000 generic drugs across 60 therapeutic categories and had an annual turnover of ₹3.4 lakh crore, Minister of State (Chemicals and Fertilizers) Bhagwant Khalsa told Parliament in July 2023.

**Unavailability of drugs**

"These effectively mean that drugs such as bedaquiline (for TB) under provisions of data exclusivity wouldn't be available," said Gopa Kumar, legal researcher, Third World Network.

In the most recent round of EFTA negotiations that were held in Delhi from January 8-13, media reports suggest that officials from both delegations have moved closer to a deal.

Swiss Economy Minister Guy Parmelin, who heads the EFTA, posted on X last month after he flew to India on a "last-minute" invitation of India's Commerce Minister Piyush Goel for negotiations on the TEPA, following which they had reached "balanced solutions" to concerns around the agreement. While details of these solutions are not public, intellectual property (IPR) concerns are a major sticking point.

Patented drugs give exclusive marketing rights to the inventor, or whoever files for the patent first, for 20 years. This has often resulted in essential drugs and medicines being unaffordable in several countries, including in India. Under internationally accepted provisions of compulsory licensing, Indian law allows drug maker to reverse-engineer and sell generic, or copy-cat versions of the drug, after only three years of it being patented in India.

(With inputs from Suhasini Haidar)

**Sharad Pawar files appeal in SC against EC order on party name**

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) founder Sharad Pawar has appealed the Supreme Court against the Election Commission (EC) decision in February to recognise the faction led by his nephew Ajit Pawar as the 'real' party.

The EC had allotted NCP symbol 'wall clock' to the Ajit Pawar group, seemingly at the time to end months of factional fight within the party.

Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra Ajit Pawar has already filed a caveat through advocate Abhilaksh Pratap Singh in the Supreme Court, urging to be heard before any order is passed in the special leave petition filed by the elder Pawar.

The appeal has been filed by Mr. Sharad Pawar just days ahead of the expiry of the deadline given by the Supreme Court to Maharashtra Speaker Rahul Narwekar to decide the disqualification petitions against the breakaway faction headed by Mr. Ajit Pawar. The SC had extended the deadline from January 31 to February 15.

**Centre 'open' to talks with Kerala on financial woes**

SC terms the readiness shown by both parties as an example of 'cooperative federalism'; a team led by Kerala Finance Minister will fly to New Delhi today to hold discussions with Union govt.

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday hailed the readiness shown by the Centre and Kerala to meet for a "dialogue" on the State's financial woes as an example of "cooperative federalism".

"The government has agreed to keep a meeting. I hope they can engage in an open dialogue," Attorney General R. Venkataramani informed a Bench of Justices Surya Kant and K.V. Viswanathan.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Kerala, said a delegation from the State would fly to the capital to meet with the Central team on Wednesday itself.

Kerala Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal told *The Hindu* on telephone from Thiruvananthapuram that a four-member delegation led by him will participate in the discussions with the Centre.

Apart from the Finance Minister, Advocate General of the State Gopalakrishna Kurup, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister K.M. Abraham and State Principi-



**Clearing the air:** Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, middle, with Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal, left, in New Delhi on Feb. 7. ANI

pal Finance Secretary Rabin德拉 Kumar Agarwal will meet the representatives from the Centre. "We welcome the Supreme Court's decision. We will participate in the discussions and present our stand," said Mr. Balagopal.

Justice Kant said the dialogue could identify the issues and areas of discussion.

"As for urgency, you have to tell them instead of telling us," Justice Kant told Mr. Sibal.

The court fixed the next hearing on Monday for directions.

It said an atmosphere of cordiality between the Un-

ion and the States "works for the country".

Mr. Sibal had said the financial crunch may even impact the release of provident funds and essential payments. "The elections will come now," he said.

Mr. Venkataramani had said the issue posed wide economic connotations across the country.

**Undue interference**

The developments came in an original suit filed by Kerala criticising the Centre of undue interference, amounting to encroachment in the legislative and executive power of the State, to manage its own af-

fairs. In an unvarnished attack, Kerala has accused the Centre of adopting policies and making amendments in law devised to push States to a state of penury.

The Centre had hit back by accusing Kerala of being "one of the most financially unhealthy States".

A note submitted by the Attorney General in the top court had said the "fiscal edifice of Kerala has been diagnosed with several cracks". The Centre had said the poor financial indicators of Kerala point to a "lack of proper management of its public finances". Mr. Venkataramani's note highlighted that debts run by States affect the credit rating of the whole country.

Kerala had responded by contending that the Union government accounted for approximately 60% of the total debt or outstanding liabilities of India. It had said all the States put together account for the rest of the 40% of the total debt of the country. The State argued that the Union had a "dismal record of reining in its own debt".

**Supreme Court refuses to stay law on CEC, EC appointment**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to pass any interim orders staying the operation of a new law on the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners.

Appearing before a Bench headed by Justice Sanjiv Khanna, advocate Prashant Bhushan, representing Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), said the elections were near and Election Commissioner Anup Chandra Pandey was retiring on Wednesday.

However, the Bench recalled that there were other petitions challenging the law and they had been posted for hearing in April. The court, issuing notice, said the current plea would also come up for hearing along with the others.

The new law had removed the Chief Justice of India from the committee to be replaced by a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister, effectively giving the government primacy in the appointment process.

**Farooq Abdullah fails to show up before ED**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
SRINAGAR

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Tuesday failed to appear before the Enforcement Directorate (ED), saying he was "out of town".

The agency had issued summons on Monday to Mr. Abdullah in connection with an alleged case of misappropriation of funds by the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association during his term as its president.

This is the second time this year that he failed to appear before the ED.

Officials suggested that ₹113.67 crore was released by the BCCI from 2002-03 to December 2011 towards the JKCA. There are allegations that there was variation in the two sets of balance sheets of around ₹10 crores for the financial years 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10.

The 72-year-old has been battling illness for a long time and had stepped back from many party engagements, including the recent election campaigns.

**Sonia Gandhi to file nomination for RS polls from Rajasthan**

**Sobhana K. Nair**  
NEW DELHI

Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson and former party president Sonia Gandhi will be filing nomination for the Rajya Sabha elections from Rajasthan on Wednesday, said sources. Ms. Gandhi, MP from Rae Bareli, is currently serving her fifth term in the Lok Sabha and if elected, it will be her first stint in the Upper House.

The decision to opt out of the Lok Sabha race has triggered speculation that her daughter and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi could make her electoral debut from Rae Bareli.

The 72-year-old has been battling illness for a long time and had stepped back from many party engagements, including the recent election campaigns. The party took a strategi-



cal call to field Ms. Gandhi from Rajasthan instead of Telangana or Karnataka, to ensure that it does not limit itself to the southern States.

"Our president Mallikarjun Kharge comes from Karnataka, our former president Rahul Gandhi is an MP from Wayanad. We can't have another former president to represent a southern State, that would mean we are entirely giving up on the electoral battle in the North," a Congress leader explained.

The party is yet to make an official announcement.

**Magazine told to take down article on Army torture**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has ordered *The Caravan* magazine to take down a story it published on the subject of the Army's alleged "torture and murder of civilians in a restive Jammu," the Delhi-based monthly said in a statement on X.

The order, which *The Caravan* says it will challenge, targets a piece that was part of a series of articles on the magazine's February issue on "The Military Under Modi".

"Screams from the Army Post: The Indian Army's torture and murder of civilians in a restive Jammu," written by journalist Jatinder Kaur Tur, speaks among other things on allegations by civilians in Poonch and Rajouri, two heavily militarised districts in Jammu.

**IN BRIEF****JD(U) names Sanjay Jha as its candidate for Rajya Sabha**

The Janata Dal (United) on Tuesday named party leader and former Minister Sanjay Jha (right) as its candidate for the Rajya Sabha elections. Mr. Jha is considered to be a close associate of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, and was the Water Resources Department and Information and Public Relation Department Minister in the previous *mahagathbandhan* (grand alliance) government, and an MLC since 2019. Hailing from Jhanjharpur in Madhubani district, he has been a Minister in Nitish Kumar cabinet three times. He contested the 2014 Lok Sabha election from Darbhanga seat but had lost the election. The buzz in political circles of Bihar is that it was Mr. Jha who had played a crucial role in bringing back Mr. Kumar and his party to the BJP fold to form the NDA government in the State on January 28.

**Gujarat govt. seeks review of comments in Bilkis judgment**

The Gujarat government moved a review petition in the Supreme Court on Tuesday to reconsider the comments in the Bilkis Bano case judgment. A Bench led by Justice B.V. Nagarathna had quashed the State's move to remit the life sentence of the 11 convicts accused of gang-rape and murder in the case. The court, in its judgment, had directed the men to surrender. The January 8 verdict had also made scathing remarks about the Gujarat government's usurpation of authority to release the convicts prematurely. The court had concluded that Gujarat had no jurisdiction to release the convicts. "The extreme observation made by this court that the State of Gujarat 'acted in tandem and was complicit with [one of] the accused' has caused serious prejudice to the State of Gujarat," the review petition said.

**Why Venkataraman was against system of Address by President, Governors**

**T. Ramakrishnan**  
CHENNAI

Monday's events in the Tamil Nadu Assembly – wherein Governor R.N. Ravi refused to read out the customary address and walked out of the House – have yet again raised questions about the purpose behind the practice of having a Governor's Address.

In this context, it may be worthwhile to recall that R. Venkataraman, as President during 1987-1992, was a bitter critic of the practice of address by Presidents and Governors to the legislature at the commencement of the first Session of the Houses every year.

In his memoirs, *My Presidential Years*, published in 1994 by Indus, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers India, the former



President described it as a "British anachronism" and a "meaningless formality". He had recommended more than once to Prime Ministers – Rajiv Gandhi in March 1989 and Chandra Shekhar in February 1991 – that the institution of the address to the legislature be deleted through a Constitutional amendment.

**Mouthpieces of regime** According to him, the address, prepared by the government, contained only views of the regime. The President and Governors were "mouthpieces". It was for this reason that he also found fault with those who criticised the President or Governors for the contents of the address. During his presidency, he felt perturbed over controversies regarding the ad-

dress to the Parliament in February 1988, was to change the expression "My government" to "The government". The original practice, he reasoned, was a part of the British legacy and not relevant in India which, according to Venkataraman, had a Constitution framed by people themselves through the Constituent Assembly and wherein "the powers of the President, Prime Minister, etc. are given by the people".

He pointed out that it was "incongruous" for the President to call it "My Government".

Besides, he observed that "since the entire address is a statement of government policies and programmes, I left it to the government to present it in the form and manner it preferred".

I am Hasina aged 14 years from Muthuthala, Kerala. I have a twin sister named Hasna. Both of us are suffering from Spinal Muscular Dystrophy and are in need of one Electric wheelchair costing around Rs.1,00,000/- for our mobilisation, which we will share. We are studying in 9<sup>th</sup> std, hailing from a poor family and require your generous contribution. The donations sent through WWS, Regd Public Charitable Trust, Flat No.GF 1, Cordell Apartments, O.No.13, N.O.29, Pyroto Garden Lane, Chennai - 600010. Ph: 044-42137401/28235324/7338978027. E Mail ID: [womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com](mailto:womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com). Website: [www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org](http://www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org).

**APPEAL**  
I am Hasina aged 14 years from Muthuthala, Kerala. I have a twin sister named Hasna. Both of us are suffering from Spinal Muscular Dystrophy and are in need of one Electric wheelchair costing around Rs.1,00,000/- for our mobilisation, which we will share. We are studying in 9<sup>th</sup> std, hailing from a poor family and require your generous contribution. The donations sent through WWS, Regd Public Charitable Trust, Flat No.GF 1, Cordell Apartments, O.No.13, N.O.29, Pyroto Garden Lane, Chennai - 600010. Ph: 044-42137401/28235324/7338978027. E Mail ID: [womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com](mailto:womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com). Website: [www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org](http://www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org).

# Opposition says Modi govt. at war with farmers, slams police action

Congress says farmers were only asking government to fulfil the promises made to them two years ago; Mamata terms it 'BJP's brutal assault' on those fighting for their basic rights while CPI's D. Raja says the measures reeked of 'authoritarianism'

## The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

**C**ondemning the police action on protesting farmers, including the use of tear gas and sealing of multiple entry points to New Delhi, the Opposition said the Narendra Modi government seemed to be at war with the farmers.

Congress general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala said the Centre was using unusually heavy force against the farmers though they had held peaceful protests so far.

"The way they have dug ditches, blocked roads with concrete boulders and heavy vehicles, it feels like we are in the midst of a war. The government is treating the farmers' protest on a par with attack from enemy country," he said at a press conference.

Mr. Surjewala said the



**Running for cover:** Farmer running after tear gas shells were fired on them by the police at the Shambhu Barrier in Punjab on Tuesday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

farmers were only demanding the implementation of the promises that had been made to them two years ago, like the guarantee on the minimum support price (MSP) and waiving debts of farmers and farm labourers. Demanding that Mr. Modi should talk directly to the farmers to get them justice,

Mr. Surjewala asked whether the farmers did not have the right and freedom to come to the national capital in support of their demands.

He asked where the farmers should go if not to the Prime Minister for justice.

West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Con-

gress chairperson Mamata Banerjee also joined in condemning the measures taken to control the protests, dubbing it the "BJP's brutal assault" on farmers.

"How can our country progress when the farmers are attacked with tear gas shells for fighting for their basic rights? I strongly condemn the brutal assault on

our farmers by the BJP," Ms. Banerjee said. "Instead of suppressing their protest, the BJP must focus on humbling their inflated egos, power-hungry ambitions, and inadequate governance that has harmed our nation," she added.

CPI general secretary D. Raja said measures like imposing Section 144 of the CrPC across Delhi to prohibit mass gatherings reeked of authoritarianism.

"On one hand, the Modi government boasts about giving Bharat Ratna to M.S. Swaminathan, but it refuses to implement his report that recommended legal backing for MSP. First, they commit blunders and then they use brutal force against those who point out the blunders," he said.

All India Forward Bloc general secretary G. Deva- rajan said the party stood in solidarity with the farmers.

# Congress promises MSP legal guarantee if voted to power

## Shubhomoy Sikdar

RAIPUR

Expressing solidarity with the protesting farmers, the Congress on Tuesday promised that it would provide a legal guarantee for minimum support price (MSP) if the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) was voted to power.

The party claimed that the move would benefit nearly 15 crore farmers.

At a Bharat Jodo Yatra rally in the Ambikapur area of Chhattisgarh, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and leader Rahul Gandhi announced the plan to provide MSP in accordance with the farm income recommendations of the Swaminathan Committee, a primary demand of the protesting farmers.

"The Congress announces that we will provide comprehensive procurement of crops along with legal guarantee of MSP to the farmers. When



Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi in Chhattisgarh. PTI

our government comes,

this legal guarantee will definitely be there, this is our first guarantee," Mr. Kharge said.

He lauded the police action against farmers. "The farmers who have been fighting for their rights, iron spikes were laid on the road and cement walls were placed to stop them. What kind of democracy is this?" he said.

"Farmers are not getting what they deserve. They are only saying that they should get the reward for their hard work," Mr. Gandhi said.

In a first, police use drones to drop tear gas shells on protesters

## Vijaita Singh

NEW DELHI

The Haryana Police on Tuesday dropped tear gas shells on the protesting farmers from unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) at the Shambhu Barrier on the Punjab-Haryana boundary. This is the first time drones have been used to launch tear gas grenades by any police force in the country.

The State government used drones made by Drone Imaging and Information Service of Haryana Limited (DRISHYA), a public limited company incorporated in 2021, a police official told *The Hindu*.

According to a Haryana government press release dated April 4, 2023, the drones are to be utilised for "surveying infrastructure projects, monitoring of agriculture and horticulture crops, and surveillance of sensitive areas for security purposes".

The drone-based tear smoke launcher to control riots and other crowd control situations was developed by the Tear Smoke Unit (TSU) of the Border Security Force (BSF) in 2022 but it has yet not been sold to any State Police force.

Officials said it is possible that Haryana procured the launcher from a private vendor. The tear smoke canisters launched from the drone were however made at a TSU in Tekanpur, Madhya Pradesh.

"The drones are capable of firing several munitions at one go. The launch is controlled by a remote. Sometimes when fired manually from pump guns the canisters are thrown back at the security forces injuring them. This reduces the possibility as multiple canisters are dropped," said a senior government official.

# Congress yatra to be cut short by 10 days

## The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Congress is planning to cut short its Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra.

The party has already finalised its plan to reduce the Uttar Pradesh leg of the yatra by four days.

According to sources, the decision was prompted by party president Mallikarjun Kharge, who urged senior leader Rahul Gandhi, who is leading the yatra, to return to the capital at the earliest, in time for the Lok Sabha polls.

Mr. Kharge was of the opinion that the entire Congress machinery was far too focused on the yatra rather than preparing for the 2024 Lok Sabha election, sources said.

Party's general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal and general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh have been following Mr. Gandhi for most of the yatra, putting electoral preparations out of gear.

"The yatra that was to culminate on March 20 will now end around March 10. The drones are capable of firing several munitions at one go. The launch is controlled by a remote. Sometimes when fired manually from pump guns the canisters are thrown back at the security forces injuring them. This reduces the possibility as multiple canisters are dropped," said a senior government official.

## Maurya quits as SP general secretary

### Mayank Kumar

LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Swami Prasad Maurya on Tuesday resigned from the post of the party's national general secretary.

He alleged attempts being made by certain leaders of the party to "weaken" his initiative to unite the Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, and minorities. "I will continue to work for strengthening the party, without holding any position," he said in a letter to SP chief Akhilesh Yadav.

# Haldwani toll rises to six; police set up outpost at site of violence

## Ishita Mishra

HALDWANI

The toll in Haldwani violence rose to six on Tuesday, after a 50-year-old resident, Mohammad Israr, died of bullet injuries.

Five were killed and 14 critically injured in violent clashes that broke out in the Banbhoooplura area of Haldwani on February 8, during an anti-encroachment drive by the Nainital district administration.

Six more people were arrested on Tuesday in

connection with the violence, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Prahlad Narayan Meena told *The Hindu*. "We have also recovered two country-made pistols from the accused, along with live bullets. The arrests were made on the basis of CCTV footages from the violence site," said Mr. Meena.

### 36 arrests in all

With the six new arrests, 36 persons have been arrested in connection with the violence so far. The

police said that over 100 police personnel were injured in Thursday's violence.

Suhail, son of Mohammad Israr who died on Tuesday, told *The Hindu* that his father had been in coma after a bullet hit his skull. Israr's brother and 16-year-old nephew had died the day the violence broke out.

"Three people in our family died in that violence in which we had no role to play. This is so unfortunate that poor and innocent pay

the price in such situations," said Mohammad Suhail, elder son of Israr.

Meanwhile, within a day of Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami announcing that the government would build a police station on the land that was "freed" during the anti-encroachment drive, the district police put up a temporary security outpost at the spot.

The outpost was inaugurated by two women sub-inspectors, who were injured in the violence.

## KALYANA KARNATAKA ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION STORES & PURCHASE DEPARTMENT, CENTRAL OFFICES, Sarige Sadana, Main Road, Kalaburagi-585 102. Tel. & Fax No. 08472-260502, Mobile No. 77606 86172 (COSP), 77609 92029 (S.O.). No. KKT/CC/COSP/802/2023-24 Dated: 12.02.2024

### NOTICE INVITING TENDER (THROUGH KPP MODE ONLY)

Tenders through KPP portal (pre-qualification & commercial) are invited for supply of following items.

No. & date	Tender nomenclature	Value in Crores	Last date for online submission
A-29-08.02.24	Procurement of Spring Leaves	11.58	26.02.2024
A-30-08.02.24	Procurement of Ball & Roller Bearings	3.53	26.02.2024
A-31-08.02.24	Procurement of Malleable Components	2.79	26.02.2024

All the details of Tender, Registration, Tender form documents etc. are available at <https://kpp.karnataka.gov.in> Mail to cospnkrkt@gmail.com or support@eprocelpdesk.com for further information if required. Further, any addendum / corrigendum related to changes in terms and conditions of tender, specification and calendar of events etc. will be uploaded only through KPP portal.

Sd/- Controller of Stores and Purchases (Tender Inviting Authority)

DIPR/Kalaburagi/814/KSMC&A/2023-24

## IN BRIEF



## Plea in SC seeks review of Adani-Hindenburg verdict

A review petition was filed on Tuesday in the Supreme Court seeking a relook of its January verdict backing the investigation of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in the Adani-Hindenburg case and refusing to transfer the probe to the Central Bureau of Investigation or a Special Investigation Team. The petition seeking a review of the judgment, a rare remedy, said the investigation reports of the market regulator should be made public. The SEBI has been conducting 24 separate investigations after the Hindenburg Research published a report accusing the Adani Group of having manipulated its share prices.

## 16-year-old JEE aspirant found dead in Kota hostel

A 16-year-old JEE aspirant was found dead in his hostel room, hours after the National Testing Agency published the answer key for the first edition of JEE-Main 2024, the police said on Tuesday. This is the third case of suspected suicide by coaching students in Kota this year, they added. The boy was a student of Class 12 and had appeared in the JEE-Main 2024 examination, Circle Officer DSP Bhawani Singh said. He had been preparing for JEE at a coaching institute here and was living in the hostel for two years. Twenty-six cases of alleged suicide by coaching students were reported in Kota in 2023. (Those in distress may contact Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health suicide prevention helpline 011-4076 9002) PTI

## 23 boys top JEE (Main) with 100 percentile score



All smiles: Rishi Shekhar Shukla, a JEE (Main) topper from Telangana celebrating in Hyderabad on Tuesday. ANI

Maitri Porecha  
NEW DELHI

Of the 11.7 lakh students who appeared for the Joint Entrance Examination (Main) for engineering admissions, 23 candidates – all boys – bagged 100 percentile score.

Among the toppers, seven are from Telangana, followed by three each from Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, two from Haryana and one each from Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka.

One of them, Telangana-based Rishi Shekhar Shukla, a 16-year-old student of the Pallavi Model School in Hyderabad, told the *The Hindu*, "I packed in nine hours of study per day, devoting three hours each to physics, chemistry, and mathematics."

Rishi Shekhar said he

woke up at 5.30 a.m. to squeeze in two hours of study before attending school. He attended coaching classes for around three hours. Rishi Shekhar will be preparing for his Class 12 Board exams till March 12, before turning his attention to the JEE (Advanced). The JEE (Advanced) – for admission to IITs – is slated for May 26.

"I want to secure a good

all-India rank in JEE (Advanced) and study computer science course in IIT Bombay," he said.

The NTA has said that the second session of the JEE (Main) will be held between April 4 and April 15 for which students can submit forms online till March 2. The top 2.24 lakh rank holders in the JEE (Main) qualify to appear for the JEE (Advanced).

"A recent media report has highlighted that in some cases, the veracity of

## MEA told to monitor organ transplantation process for foreigners

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Aimed at preventing any possible commercial dealings in organ or tissue transplantation sought by foreigners, Health Secretary Apurva Chandra, in a written communication, alerted the Ministry of External Affairs to possible violations of rules and asked support to establish systems for monitoring the process.

The Health Ministry said foreign nationals were coming to India for various types of organ transplantation. They could be a prospective recipient or donor of organs and might be visiting on a medical or attendant visa.

"A recent media report has highlighted that in some cases, the veracity of

the documents to establish relationship between the donor and the recipient, their identity documents, proof of residence etc cannot be established confidently and the same may not be genuine," Mr. Chandra said in his letter to Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra.

Listing out the provisions under the Transplantation of Human Organ and Tissues Act, 1994, the Ministry sought that these rules be disseminated to all embassies and missions of foreign countries in India and also to the government concerned, in case an embassy or a mission does not exist in India. It also requested that a nodal officer be identified for coordinating the process of organ donation and transplantation for foreigners.

## Govt. revises guidelines for community radio stations

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

Minister of Information and Broadcasting Anurag Singh Thakur released the revised policy guidelines for setting up community radio stations at the Regional Community Radio Sammelan (South), a two-day conference, which commenced here on World Radio Day on Tuesday.

Addressing the conference through a video message, Mr. Thakur said that the revised guidelines allowed a single institution to set up a maximum of six stations in different districts of operation, increased the advertising time for the stations from seven minutes to 12 minutes per hour, and increased the rate of advertisement from ₹52 per 10



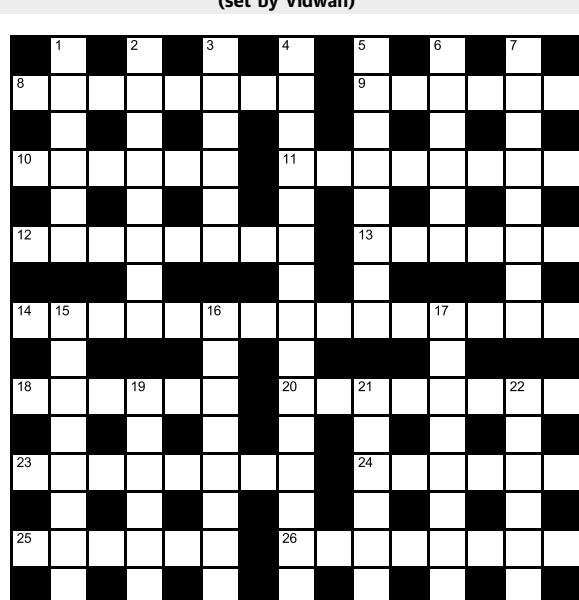
Anurag Singh Thakur  
seconds to ₹74 per 10 seconds.

rendra Modi came to power in 2014.

Highlighting that there were 481 community radio stations in India at the moment, he expressed hope that the number will increase over the next three years. He said each station was a reflection of the local model that had been built over the years and the experiential learnings collected and shared.

Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L. Murugan, who delivered his speech through video conference, said there cannot be a better way to reach out to the community than this relatively inexpensive medium of community radio stations. He appealed to the stations to publicise the various welfare schemes being implemented by the government.

## TH CROSSWORD + 14097



## Across

- 8 Kind surgeon operated and sealed her heart (8)
- 9 Moulded by a priest inside shack (6)
- 10 Part executed without intravenous drug (6)
- 11 Grey, bored by sex! A time to be on the edge! (8)
- 12 Spooner's 24 hours hog farm for purebred (8)

## Down

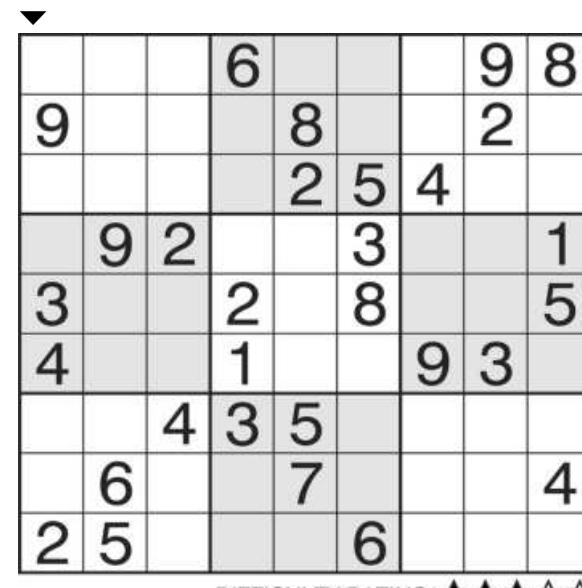
- 1 Monk going south for vinegar (6)
- 2 Popular school lament about English lines, something that bugs the bugs (6,9)
- 3 Rodent consuming second dessert (6)
- 4 Pause that is extremely elongate, perhaps (8)
- 5 Good actor, heading out to military base (8)
- 6 Liberal prison official wanting women for pantry (6)
- 7 Festival! Leave out fellow who eats heartily! (6)
- 8 Pet waste reused for flowering plant (8)
- 9 Small dog or cat tiptoes occasionally (6)
- 10 Iron men imbibing popular, stylish aspect of women (8)
- 11 So pure hash is fake? (6)
- 12 Am in space scheme programmed for avoiding ground realities (6,9)
- 13 Assess site redeveloped by friend (8)
- 14 Plunder run by headless barbarian (6)
- 15 Green is mixed with red in the end to make a fresh sketch (8)
- 16 About a new baby, one shifting to a South African province (8)
- 17 A sure try possibly for source of funds (8)
- 18 Intelligent's inflamed, leading to irate fights (8)
- 19 New start with adult classes (6)
- 20 Special live broadcast runs for runner-up's medal (6)
- 21 Famous talks about fringe focusing on a particular subject (6)

No. 5298 Distribution www.knightfeathers.com

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCAN TO PLAY

## SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

S	B	A	S	M	S	O		
F	O	O	L	F	A	L	V	E
L	A	F	U	L	A	E		
P	S	C	H	O	R	E		
Y	I	C	H	O	R	E		
T	K	R	O					
W	I	E	D	E	A	L	E	R
T	Y	A	O	O	O			
L	I	F	E	B	R	T		

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



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FAITH

## Thiruvaheendrapuram link

The second half of the tenth mantra of Apratiratha Suktas says: "asmaakam veeraah uttare bhavantu." Sayanacharya, the 14th century commentator, said this was a prayer that one's soldiers should be stronger than those of one's enemies. In a discourse, V.S. Karunakarachariar explained the mantra from a Visishtadvaitic angle. If the mantra is talking about opponents, then who are the opponents of a Visishtadvaitin? They are those who oppose the teachings of Ramanujacharya. Those who argue with these opponents, and establish Ramanujacharya's point of view are the soldiers of a Visishtadvaitin. Every school of philosophy has its defendants, and Visishtadvaita is no exception to this. The second half of the tenth mantra can be specifically related to the deity at Thiruvaheendrapuram in Tamil Nadu. Every year, in the Tamil month of Thai, the processional deity of the Thiruvaheendrapuram temple is taken to the banks of the Pennar.

When Vedanta Desika resided in Thiruvaheendrapuram, he used to accompany the deity to the river bank, and on such occasions, debated with scholars from other schools of philosophy. So the latter portion of the tenth mantra can be taken to refer to Thiruvaheendrapuram, where Desika refuted those who questioned the validity of Visishtadvaita.

CM YK

M ND-NDE

## Indira Gandhi, Nargis Dutt National Film Awards renamed

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI



Actor Madhavan greets actor Waheeda Rehman during the 69th National Film Awards at Vigyan Bhavan. FILE PHOTO

clubbed with 'Best Film on Social Issues' and 'Best Film on Environment Conservation/Preservation'

In a report adopted by the Information & Broadcasting Ministry, the committee constituted under the chairmanship of the Additional Secretary (I&B) made several recommendations. Accordingly, changes have been incorporated in the 70th National Film Awards (2022) Regulations.

The Best Actor award has been renamed 'Best Actor in a Leading Role'; and the Best Actress to 'Best Actress in a Leading Role'. As recommended, the Best Supporting Actor award has been titled 'Best Actor in Supporting Role' and the Best Supporting Actress award to 'Best Actress in a Supporting Role'. The committee had also recommended that only one award be given in each category.

## IN BRIEF



## BHEL reports Q3 net loss of ₹149 cr. on higher expenses

BHEL on Tuesday posted a consolidated net loss of ₹148.77 crore for the third quarter ended December 2023, impacted by higher expenses. The state-owned company had posted a net profit of ₹42.28 crore in the October-December period of the 2022-23 financial year, it said in a filing. Total income rose to ₹5,599.63 crore, from ₹5,353.94 crore a year earlier. Expenses increased to ₹5,816.87 crore from ₹5,320.84 crore in Q3 of the last fiscal. PTI

## JSW Steel-JFE JV to set up unit at ₹5,500-cr. investment

JSW Steel on Tuesday announced plans to set up a grain-oriented electrical steel manufacturing facility through a joint venture with JFE Steel Corporation at an estimated investment of ₹5,500 crore. Japan-based JFE Corporation also holds a 15% share in JSW Steel. The new company, JSW Electrical Steel Pvt. Ltd., to be renamed JSW JFE Electrical Steel Pvt. Ltd., will have its manufacturing base in Bellary district, Karnataka, JSW Steel said in a statement. PTI

## Bosch Q3 net rises to ₹518 cr. on surge in vehicle demand

Bosch Ltd. on Tuesday said increased demand for vehicles had resulted in robust growth in Q3 net profit. The company posted a net profit of ₹518 crore, a 12.3% YoY jump. Revenue from operations grew 14.9% to ₹4,205 crore. "This growth was driven by surging demand in the overall automotive market, mainly passenger cars and heavy commercial vehicles," said Guruprasad Mudlapur, President of Bosch Group, India, and MD, Bosch Ltd.

## Wipro to buy \$66-mn stake in Aggne Global

## The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU



Our expertise will allow us to bring clients an end-to-end offering that will help them drive competitive advantage

HARPREET ARORA  
Senior Vice-President, Wipro

ty & casualty (P&C) insurance space to Wipro, the tech firm said.

"Our combined domain expertise will allow us to bring clients a truly end-to-end offering that will help them drive competitive advantage and customer loyalty," said Harpreet Arora, Senior Vice-President and Global Head of Banking, Financial Services and Insurance Domain & Consulting at Wipro.

Wipro said it is currently acquiring 60%, with an option to purchase the remaining stake over some time. The transaction is expected to be completed by February 14, 2024.

## IP in insurance

The acquisition would bring a unique set of capabilities and intellectual property (IP) in the proper-

## IRDAI issues exposure draft on Bima Sugam

## N. Ravi Kumar

HYDERABAD

Insurance regulator IRDAI has issued an exposure draft on electronic marketplace Bima Sugam, which has been mooted as a one-stop solution to facilitate a range of services related to insurance policies—from purchase, sale, servicing and settlement of claims to grievance redressal.

A not-for-profit company is to be established for Bima Sugam. The revenue model will be self-sustainable and consumers will not be charged for availing the services of the e-marketplace, the IRDAI said in the draft document.

Mr. Firodia said KEL had

CM YK

## Food prices may keep inflation high

Most economists don't expect the pace of price rise faced by consumers to slow much further in the near term. Consumer Food Price Inflation stood at 8.3% in January, a tad below the 9.5% mark of December, but still sharply above October's 6.6%

## The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

**A** slight downturn in food price inflation may have cooled retail inflation to a three-month low of 5.1% in January, but most economists don't expect the pace of price rise faced by consumers to slip much further in the near term with prices of vegetables, cereals and pulses still elevated.

Consumer Food Price Inflation stood at 8.3% in January, a tad below the 9.5% mark of December, but still sharply above Oc-

## A brief respite

The drop in retail inflation in January is seen as temporary with prices of vegetables, cereals and pulses still elevated



■ Economists say high frequency vegetables price data so far suggest inflation may not fall any further

■ Prices of vegetables and other food items have held firm through the first 10 days of the current month

■ Last week, RBI Governor Das had cautioned that food price shocks may interrupt the disinflation process

tobr's 6.6% pace when retail inflation was at 4.87%.

Inflation "may not drop further from these [5.1%] levels in February, as per high frequency vegetables

price data so far", HSBC economists Aayushi Chaudhary and Pranjal Bhandari said in a note on Tuesday, noting that prices of vegetables and other

food items have held firm through the first ten days of this month.

Cereals inflation may have cooled from 15 successive months of double-digit rise, but still remains high at 7.8%, India Ratings and Research economists Sunil Kumar Sinha and Paras Jasrai said. "... Higher food inflation continues to be a worry area for RBI because it has the potential of impacting the core inflation via wage-price spiral," they noted, projecting retail inflation to remain around 4.9% in February and March.

Last week, RBI Gover-

nor Shaktikanta Das had cautioned that "recurring food price shocks could interrupt the ongoing disinflation process, with risks that it could lead to de-anchoring of inflation expectations and generalisation of price pressures."

SBI group chief economic advisor Soumya Kanti Ghosh said that evolving food prices will determine domestic inflation and retail inflation is expected to remain slightly above 5% in the remaining two months of 2023-24. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has projected an average inflation of 5% for this quarter.

## U.S. consumer prices rose more-than-expected in Jan.

## Reuters

WASHINGTON

U.S. consumer prices increased more than expected in January amid rises in the costs of shelter and healthcare, but the pick-up in inflation likely does not change expectations that the Federal Reserve will start cutting interest rates in the first half of this year.

The consumer price index (CPI) increased 0.3% last month after gaining 0.2% in December, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics said on Tuesday.

In the 12 months through January, the CPI increased 3.1%. That fol-



lowed a 3.4% advance in December. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the CPI rising 2.9% year-on-year. The annual increase in consumer prices has moderated from a peak of 9.1% in June 2022.

Financial markets anti-

cipate the Fed will start cutting interest rates in May, though some economists are gravitating towards June, given the still tight labour market and persistently elevated services inflation.

## Core inflation

Excluding the volatile food and energy components, the CPI rose 0.4% last month after increasing 0.3% in December. In addition to rents, beginning of the year price increases also likely accounted for rise in the so-called core CPI.

The core CPI advanced 3.9% year-on-year in January, matching December's increase.

While, this comes amidst softening EV demand, Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd.

## In a first, Tata Motors cuts its EV car prices

## Jagriti Chandra

NEW DELHI

The market leader in electric passenger vehicles, Tata Motors, has slashed prices for two of its electric vehicle (EV) cars by up to ₹1.2 lakh in a first such cut by a car maker in India.

The price of the Nexon.ev has been cut by up to ₹1.2 lakh with the long range Nexon.ev now starting from ₹16,990 lakh. The Tiago.ev has got a price reduction of up to ₹70,000 with the base model now starting at ₹7,990 lakh.

While, this comes amidst softening EV demand, Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd.

(TPEM) attributed the decision to a reduction in raw material cost.

"Battery constitutes a substantial part of the overall cost of an EV," Vivek Srivatsa, Chief Commercial Officer, TPEM, said in a statement. "With softening of battery cell prices... we have chosen to pass on the benefits to customers," Mr. Srivatsa added.



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## ALL invests ₹537 cr. in U.K. unit Optare

## The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI



## ALL's shareholding in Optare has risen to 92.59% from 92.19%, while Hinduja Auto holds 6.9% stake

nounced it would invest ₹1,200 crore in its electric vehicle arm Switch Mobility as equity through Switch's holding firm Optare, in one or more tranches. On December 5, Ashok Leyland had invested ₹663 crore in Optare.

Earlier, ALL had an-

## ENTERPRISE CONNECT

5 days Training Programme commences at Patanjali Training Centre



A five day long training programme on development of Bakery Products were commenced at Patanjali Training Centre here today. The Programme was inaugurated by Charanjit Singh, Additional Secretary, Union Rural Development Ministry in the presence of Anand Saroop, CEO UKSLRM. The motive behind organising the camp was to promote the Bakery products made by women self-help groups (SHGs). Speaking on the occasion, Mr Singh said "The Ministry now recognises Patanjali as National Resource Organisation for its National Rural Livelihoods Mission. The PM Modi Government is committed to help rural SHG women by promoting their products by organising these camps to provide training to women." During the camp, the women should be trained how to make cakes, biscuits, bread, the branding of their products, packaging, labelling as well as the marketing of their products. On the occasion, Anand Saroop expressed gratitude to the Patanjali for such training camps and workshops for the upliftment of the women SHGs.

**New Delhi World Book Fair 2024** was declared open by Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Minister of Education and Minister of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship on 10 February 2024 at Bharat Mandapam

In his inaugural address, he stressed on the importance of books as an intellectual product and the rise of e-learning and e-reading ethos. National Digital Libraries for All, announced in the Budget 2023-24, was also launched at the inaugural function. This initiative is aimed at democratizing access to knowledge across India's diverse linguistic landscape. The dais was shared by Mr. Saleh bin EID Al-Husseini, Hon'ble Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to India; Ms Annapurna Devi, Hon'ble Minister of State for Education; Shri Sanjay K Murthy, Secretary (Higher Education); Shri Sanjay Kumar, Secretary (School Education & Literacy); and Chairman & Director, NBT-India. Further details unveiled at the New Delhi World Book Fair 2024 include Special Modules aligned with NEP 2020, teaching-learning resources and subject-specific modules. Additionally, resources promoting G20 initiatives, Viksit Bharat and Nari Shakti were launched, highlighting India's commitment to social development and empowerment. Themed around 'Multilingual India: A Living Tradition (Bahubhashi Bharat: Ek Jeevan Parampara)', New Delhi World Book Fair 2024 celebrates the mosaic of languages woven into the cultural fabric of our nation. As per tradition, with a Country as the Guest of Honour at NDWBF - this year the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the esteemed Guest Country, fostering cultural exchange, literary discourses, and dialogues among the two nations. Extending a warm welcome to all attendees, Prof. Milind Sudhakar Marathe, Chairman, NBT-India stressed the role of NDWBF as a platform for fostering intellectual dialogue and promoting leadership.

**Banasthal Vidypith and Saadho Sangha Launch Centre of Excellence for Conscious Leadership**

Banasthal Vidypith and Saadho Sangha Foundation have announced the establishment of the Centre of Excellence for Conscious Leadership. This groundbreaking initiative was formalized with a Memorandum of Understanding signed on February 6th, 2024, at IFFCO Sadan, New Delhi, marking a significant step towards integrating ancient Indian wisdom into contemporary education and leadership. Aligned with Banasthal Vidypith's commitment towards incorporation of Bharatiya culture and ethos in management, the Centre will focus on, Leadership

## MARKETS

## MARKET WATCH

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	71,555	0.68
US Dollar	83.08	-0.09
Gold	63,100	-0.07
Brent oil	82.77	1.17

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	3178.45	8.70
Adani Ports	1264.80	15.45
Apollo Hosp.	6718.90	104.45
Asian Paints	2971.60	17.80
Axis Bank	1070.75	24.05
Bajaj Auto	7917.40	87.45
Bajaj Finance	1568.00	10.75
Bharti Airtel	1117.85	-0.85
BPCL	584.30	-6.15
Britannia Ind.	4981.60	11.40
Cipla	1457.75	23.00
Coal India	452.55	19.55
Divis Labs	3700.45	-39.70
Dr Reddy's Lab	6335.35	1.85
Eicher Motors	3854.20	-17.65
Grasim Ind.	2064.15	-83.20
HCL Tech	1665.60	-1.35
HDFC Bank	1394.45	4.45
HDFC Life	589.55	12.35
Hero MotoCorp	4744.80	57.30
Hindalco	510.10	-72.35
Hindu Unilever	2394.00	8.35
ICICI Bank	1019.80	23.70
IndusInd Bank	1463.90	16.75
Infosys	1684.55	4.45
ITC	406.75	-0.10
JSW Steel	812.65	1.15
Kotak Bank	1737.15	27.60
L&T	3321.50	21.95
LTMInfraTree Ltd.	5557.15	40.65
M&M	1646.75	-13.70
Maruti Suzuki	10794.50	84.80
NestleIndia	2457.35	-1.70
NTPC	321.55	5.40
ONGC	259.50	1.60
PowerGrid Corp	270.25	-0.05
Reliance Ind	2930.20	25.50
SBI	1467.60</	

**MOSCOW**

Russia declares Estonian PM 'wanted' in war memorials spat



REUTERS

Russia declared Estonian leader Kaja Kallas and other European officials as "wanted" on Tuesday over their alleged involvement in the destruction of Soviet-era war memorials. The monuments had long been controversial in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and seen by many as symbols of their time under Soviet occupation. AFP

**YEREVAN**

Armenia says four killed in border flare-up with arch-rival Azerbaijan



AP

Armenia and Azerbaijan accused each other on Tuesday of opening fire on the border, with Yerevan saying Azerbaijani forces killed four of its soldiers and Russia urging restraint. Yerevan and Baku have fought two wars over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region, which Azerbaijan recaptured in a lightning offensive last September. AFP

**COLOMBO**

Sri Lanka to amend controversial Online Safety Act after blowback



AP

The Sri Lankan Cabinet has decided to amend the Online Safety Act, the government said on Tuesday, after it came under attack for stifling dissent and harming the potential growth of the country's digital economy. The legislation would have led to the creation of a panel which would issue punitive rulings on offences. PTI

**TEHRAN**

Iran fires first ship-based long-range ballistic missiles



AFP

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said on Tuesday it has launched long-range ballistic missiles from a warship for the first time. The launch from the Shahid Mahdavi during naval manoeuvres involved firing two ballistic missiles capable of striking targets up to 1,700 km away. AFP

'Islamic State group kills nine Syrian soldiers'

**Agence France-Presse**  
BEIRUT

Islamic State group jihadists killed nine Syrian soldiers in the war-torn country's vast Badia desert on Tuesday, a war monitor said.

"Nine Syrian soldiers were killed and three wounded" when they had gathered in the east of Hama province in central Syria, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

IS has stepped up attacks in Syria in recent months, particularly in the Badia desert which runs from the outskirts of Damascus to the Iraqi border.

On February 2, the Sunni Muslim extremist group killed five members of forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

## Pakistan's leading parties agree to form coalition without Imran's PTI

Nawaz Sharif of PML-N party, which will lead the government, nominates brother Shehzad as PM candidate and daughter Maryam for CM of Punjab province; party says it hopes the decisions would help the country come out of crises

**Press Trust of India**  
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's leading parties, minus jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party, on Tuesday announced that they will try to form a coalition government led by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, ending speculation about the future form of the political set-up.

PML-N president Shehzad Sharif has been nominated for the slot of Prime Minister of Pakistan by his party.

Taking to X, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz spokesperson Marriyum Au-rangzeb said PML-N supre-



**Deja vu:** Pakistan's former Prime Minister Shehzad Sharif, centre, speaks at a press conference in Lahore on Tuesday. AP

mo Nawaz Sharif, 74, has nominated his younger brother Shehzad Sharif, 72, as candidate for the slot of Prime Minister and his daughter Maryam Nawaz, 50, for Chief Minister of

Punjab province. "Nawaz Sharif has thanked the political parties which provided support to the PML-N (in forming the government) and expressed hope that

through such decisions Pakistan will come out of crises," she said.

Mr. Shehzad along with Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui of Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) met at the residence of Shaukat Hussain of Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) after a consultative meeting.

**Thankful to allies'**

"Today we have united to tell the nation that we all accept the split mandate. I am thankful to Zardari and Bilawal that they decided for their party to vote for the PML-N," he said.

To form a government, a party must win 133 seats

out of 265 contested seats in the 266-member National Assembly.

The Election Commission of Pakistan has announced that independent candidates, a majority of them supported by the PTI secured 101 seats, followed by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) with 75 seats, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) getting 54 seats, and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) bagging 17 seats.

Other parties got 17 seats while the result of one constituency was withheld.

Mr. Shehzad said the new government would pull the cash-strapped country out of trouble.

**They were extrajudicially killed for supporting the ethnic Amhara militia known as Fano, it says**

killed during a door-to-door search by government forces in a different part of Amhara earlier in the month, the EHRC said.

The killings in Merawi followed months of clashes last year between Ethiopia's military and Fano and prompted the United States last week to call for an investigation.

According to the EHRC, security forces also rounded up and arrested an unknown number of people in Merawi on suspicion of being members of Fano.

## Talks open in Cairo for truce in Gaza

**Reuters**  
CAIRO/JERUSALEM

Officials from the U.S., Egypt, Israel and Qatar were meeting in Cairo on Tuesday to try to agree a truce in Gaza as international calls grew for Israel to hold back on its planned assault on the Palestinian enclave's southern city of Rafah.

**A million lives**

More than one million displaced civilians are crammed into Rafah, mainly living in camps and makeshift shelters, having fled to there from Israeli bombardments in other areas of Gaza during more than four months of warfare.



**Agony days:** Palestinian children wait for food cooked by a charity kitchen in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Tuesday. REUTERS

Israel says it wants to flush out Hamas militants from hideouts in Rafah and free Israeli hostages being held there, and is making plans to evacuate trapped Palestinian civilians. But

no plan has been forthcoming and aid agencies say the displaced have nowhere else to go in the shattered territory.

Israeli tanks shelled the eastern sector of Rafah

overnight, causing waves of panic, residents said.

Rafah neighbours Egypt but Cairo has made clear it will not allow a refugee exodus over the border.

**133 new deaths**

Gaza health officials announced 133 new Palestinian deaths in the past 24 hours, bringing the total to 28,473 killed and 68,146 wounded since Oct. 7.

Supplies of food, water and other essentials are running out and diseases are spreading in the densely populated enclave.

Around half of Gaza's 2.3 million people are now packed into Rafah, many of whom fled other areas under fire.

## U.S. Senate passes Ukraine aid Bill

**Agence France-Presse**  
WASHINGTON

The U.S. Senate on Tuesday approved long-delayed funding for Ukraine's war effort, part of a foreign aid package that right-wing House Speaker Mike Johnson has indicated his Republican-led chamber will reject.

Republican and Democratic lawmakers have been negotiating the Bill for months, but strong opposition from likely Republican 2024 presidential nominee Donald Trump and his allies in Congress still threatens to sink it.

The \$95 billion package includes funding for Israel's military and key strategic ally Taiwan, but the lion's share - \$60 billion - would help Ukraine restock depleted ammunition supplies.

**Biden's latest push**

The legislation, which the Senate voted on early on Tuesday morning and which easily passed 70-29 with cross-party support, is the latest effort in a tortuous process to save U.S. President Joe Biden's policy of leading a Western response to the Russian attack on democratic Ukraine.

## Netherlands and Australia register facile wins against Spain and Ireland

**FIH PRO LEAGUE**

**Uthra Ganesan**  
BHUBANESWAR

The Dutchmen returned to winning ways with a 3-0 win against Spain in the FIH Pro League here on Tuesday in a game that was as much about patience as aggression.

Having lost the shootouts to India, the Dutch appeared determined to take full points from Tuesday's outing but avoided being too aggressive or attacking, content to sit tight and assess their opponents before attempting anything.

They took charge of the



**Hitman:** Australia's Willott lines up to fire in one of his two goals against Ireland. BISWARANJAN ROUT

game but preferred to stick to their structure and a gradual build-up to squeeze Spain from both flanks. Despite trying everything, however, they could not break past the Spanish defence before Jip Janssen

continued to accumulate goals, converting the Netherlands' second penalty corner seconds before the end of first quarter.

Spain stepped up in the second and even seemed to get level but the ball was

shown to be deflected off Borja Lacalle's foot instead. A few half chances later, a Dutch counter saw Floris Middendorp display his 3D skills along the backline despite the presence of six Spanish defenders and give back to Duco Telgenkamp, who only had to lift into the net.

Australia maintained its winning record against Ireland with a 5-0 victory, Ky Willott scoring a brace in a game Australia dominated despite some spirited defensive work by Ireland.

**The results:** Australia 5 (Tom Craig 17, Jeremy Hayward 22, Ky Willott 25, 57, Nathan Ephraums 43) bt Ireland 0; Netherlands 3 (Jip Janssen 15, 51, Duco Telgenkamp 26) bt Spain 0.

## Debutant Guarrotxena is Mumbai City's hero against East Bengal

**ISL-10**

**Amitabha Das Sharma**  
KOLKATA

Mumbai City FC returned to winning ways as it downed host East Bengal by a solitary goal in a match-week 15 fixture of the ISL-10 at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Tuesday. Spanish striker Iker Guarrotxena made his debut for Mumbai memorable by finding the target in the 24th minute.

The visitor dominated the opening session with 71% ball possession and made a creditable 41 incursions in the attacking third. Despite having the control



**The finisher:** Guarrotxena, executing a bicycle kick, was on target. PTI

over the midfield, and making attacks at will, Mumbai failed to convert the advantage into more goals.

The goal happened off a nicely coordinated move as the Spanish midfielder



**Alberto Noguera** took a back-centre from Akash Mishra and tossed the ball in the East Bengal box to find Guarrotxena. The fellow-Spaniard striker, who was filling in for the Scottish forward Greg Stewart,

nicely controlled the ball while shielding it from a couple of East Bengal defenders and finished with a tap-in to end the impasse.

East Bengal coach Carles Cuadrat, who opted for rotations initially by bringing in a few from the bench, made some changes in the roster after the break in an attempt to bring balance in the team's performance.

This helped the host gain some control over the proceedings but not enough to find the equaliser against a much better organised opposition.

**The result:** East Bengal 0 lost to Mumbai City FC 1 (Guarrotxena 24).

M ND-NDE

**NOT RULED OUT**

It's not that you won't see rank turners going forward: Kuldeep



India spinner Kuldeep Yadav on Tuesday said that rank turners might come into play in the ongoing Test battle against England but admitted that sporting tracks, like the ones seen in the first two games, are "good for cricket". "The fast bowlers also come into play, like in the last match. So (good wickets) are good for cricket".

**RECOGNITION**

**Joseph and Hunter win ICC Player of the Month awards**



Latest pace sensation Shamar Joseph on Tuesday became the first West Indian to win the Men's ICC Player of the Month award for his heroics in the Australia Test series. Ireland's explosive young batter Amy Hunter claimed the honour in the women's category after her dominance against Zimbabwe.

**UP THE LADDER**

**Smriti climbs to the fourth spot among batters in one-dayers**



India opener Smriti Mandhana jumped two spots to grab the fourth position in the latest ICC Women's ODI Player Rankings for batters. The 27-year-old from Mumbai surpassed South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt, who slumped to fifth place after a lacklustre show in the ODI series against Australia.

**THRILLING CONTEST**

**Patna Pirates claws its way back to pip Telugu Titans**



Patna Pirates showcased a stunning come-from-behind win to become the fifth team to qualify for the Pro Kabaddi League Season 10's playoffs as it clinched a 38-36 win over Telugu Titans in Kolkata on Tuesday. Manjeet starred for Pirates with 8 points, while Titans skipper Pawan Sehrawat's superb 16-point show went in vain.

# India mainly has three selection issues to address

To persist with Bharat behind the wickets or hand Jurel his debut is a key call, while Sarfaraz is a front-runner in the race with Padikkal for middle-order; it's Kuldeep vs Axar if Jadeja is fit



**Sweating it out:** Wicketkeeper Jurel and the slip cordon of Patidar, Jaiswal and Sarfaraz had a rigorous training on Tuesday. VIJAY SONEJI

**ENGLAND IN INDIA**

**Amol Karhadkar**

RAJKOT

**T**he third day is perceived to be the decisive one when a Test goes the distance. Similarly, the third Test is considered critical to the outcome of a five-match series. With the ongoing series squared one-game apiece heading into the third, all eyes will be at the proceedings at Kharderi over the next week.

With 13 of India's 17-member squad – barring opener Shubman Gill (resting at the hotel due to a slight discomfort), batter Devdutt Padikkal and the pace duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Akash Deep (all three yet to join the squad) – undergoing a gruelling train-

ing session on Tuesday afternoon, here is a look at the three primary questions that the team-management will have to address over the next two days.

**The 'keeper choice**

Ishan Kishan has not been considered. K.S. Bharat has been mediocre with the willow in the first two Tests closer to his home.

Behind the stumps, Bharat has only been adequate. Does it mean it's time India opts to look beyond Bharat and hand Dhruv Jurel a debut on Thursday?

On Tuesday, Jurel donned the keeper's gloves as the slip cordon – with Sarfaraz Khan at first slip, Yashasvi Jaiswal at second and Rajat Patidar at gully – took a fair number of catches against pace. Later in the sprawling nets area, both

Jurel and Bharat had good batting stints.

Is it time for Jurel to be rewarded with a Test cap?

**Sarfaraz set to debut?**

Shreyas Iyer has been omitted. And K.L. Rahul is yet to be fully fit. As a result, Sarfaraz – domestic heavy-weight – is obviously the first-in-waiting to be handed a debut cap.

Sarfaraz had two long stints in the nets on Tuesday, with captain Rohit Sharma complementing his Mumbai junior at times.

Logically, Sarfaraz being preferred over Devdutt Padikkal, the reserve specialist batter on a maiden Test call-up, looks likely.

But that will mean India will have Patidar – who made his debut last week – at No. 4 and another debutante at No. 5? Can the duo replicate their success in

domestic cricket into the international arena?

**The third spinner**

Ravindra Jadeja had a long stint with the willow at the start of the training session at his home ground. The southpaw gently rolled him arm over for a very short time. But the Indian camp exuded confidence in the all-rounder being cleared match-fit.

Then, India will have to pick either Kuldeep Yadav's wrist-spin or Axar Patel's orthodox variety. As he displayed in Visakhapatnam, Kuldeep has the X-factor and can pick wickets even when the pitch isn't offering turn. Axar provides an additional batting option.

It will be interesting to see how captain Rohit Sharma and head coach Rahul Dravid resolve the combination issues.

# Bazball approach makes a spinner more focused: Kuldeep

**Amol Karhadkar**  
RAJKOT

Ollie Pope may have stressed that the use of the term Bazball is disallowed in the England group. But just like the rest of the cricketing group, India spinner Kuldeep Yadav is excited with England's new-found approach of adopting an ultra-aggressive strategy, especially while batting, in Test matches.

"Usually in Tests you are not used to teams attacking you with this kind of approach (Bazball), but it also involves you a lot more. As a spinner it makes you more focused on how you want to bowl and what your approach is," Kuldeep said here on Tuesday, ahead of India's third Test against England starting Thursday.

"Normally when you play Tests, you don't worry about batters attacking you, you are only focused on how you want to get them out. But here the approach is different, they are in attacking mode, so you also have to plan how

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## IN BRIEF



## De Swardt and von Berg lead Proteas' recovery

All-rounders Ruan de Swardt, left in pic, and Shaun von Berg led a South African rearguard action on Tuesday as it recovered to 220 for six after New Zealand had dominated the start of the second Test in Hamilton. De Swardt reached his maiden half-century (55 batting) at stumps on day one, while von Berg was unbeaten on 34 on his Test debut, with the pair having added for 70 off 27 overs. The tourists, who won the toss, were 64 for three at lunch and 150 for six early in the final session.

**The scores:** South Africa 220/6 in 89 overs (Raynard van Tonder 32, D. Bedingham 39, Ruan de Swardt 55, Shaun von Berg 34, Rachin Ravindra 3/33) vs New Zealand. **Toss:** South Africa.

## Sportscast India to broadcast England-Asia Cup 2024

Sportscast India, in association with the Indian Indoor Sports Federation, will show the England-Asia Cup 2024 indoor cricket tournament to be played at U-Pro Colombo live on its YouTube channel. Teams from India, England, Sri Lanka, Singapore and UAE will take part in the competition to be played from April 10-18, 2024.



## Rutherford, Russell set up WI's win; Aussies clinch series

Andre Russell and Sherfane Rutherford put on the biggest sixth-wicket partnership in a T20I to steer the West Indies past Australia by 37 runs in the third and final clash in Perth on Tuesday. Both cracked half-centuries to propel the visitors to 220 for six with Australia managing just 183 for five in reply. David Warner top-scored with 81 in his last appearance for Australia at home.

**The scores:** West Indies 220/6 in 20 overs (Roston Chase 37, Sherfane Rutherford 67 n.o., Andre Russell 71, Xavier Bartlett 2/37) bt Australia 183/5 in 20 overs (David Warner 81, Tim David 41 n.o., Romario Shepherd 2/31, Chase 2/19). **Po:** Russell. **Pos:** Warner. **Australia wins series 2-1.**

## Athletes Rachna Kumari and Nirmala Sheoran suspended

The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) has suspended hammer thrower Rachna Kumari for 12 years for a second anti-doping rule violation. Rachna returned positive results for multiple anabolic androgenic steroids in samples collected out of competition at Patiala on September 24 and on November 1 at the National Games last year. Rachna had earlier served a four-year suspension from 2015 to 2019. Her current suspension has begun from November 24 last. In another doping case, quartermiler Nirmala Sheoran has been handed an eight-year suspension by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for a second doping violation. She reportedly tested positive for anabolic androgenic steroids and testosterone.

## Ganemath and Munek place 14th in mixed skeet

The pair of Ganemath Sekhon and Munek Battula shot 140 and placed 14th in mixed skeet in the Shotgun World Cup in Rabat on Monday. The other Indian team of Areeba Khan and Abhay Singh Sekhon shot 134 for the 19th spot. Earlier, in men's skeet, Sheeraz Sheikh scored 120 out of 125 and missed the final by one point. He placed 11th, after shooting 24 in each of the five rounds. Abhay Singh (116) and Munek Battula (109) were 32nd and 62nd respectively. In women's skeet, Ganemath Sekhon shot 114 for the 12th spot.

## Arjun Prasad on top in PGTI Players' Championship

Delhi golfer Arjun Prasad scored an exceptional eight-under 62 to take sole lead in the first round of the Tata Steel PGTI Players' Championship in Kolkata on Tuesday. Defending champion Sachin Baisoya was a shot behind in second place.

**The scores (first round):** 62-Arjun Prasad; 63-Sachin Baisoya; 64-Stepan Danek, Udayan Mane, Karan Pratap Singh, Mohammad Sanju; 65-Manav Bais, Anirudh Kamireddypalli, Mani Ram, Samarth Dwivedi, Rahil Gangjee, Manu Gandas.

# Ranji Trophy has produced some scintillating finishes this season

Quite a few matches have seen fortunes swing wildly every day in different conditions, the latest being the Tamil Nadu-Karnataka contest



**Charm of the game:** Karnataka has been involved in a few humdingers. VIJAY SONEJI

## Close encounters

- Haryana bt Saurashtra by **four wickets** (Group A, Round 2, Rajkot)
- Gujarat bt Karnataka by **six runs** (Group C, Round 2, Ahmedabad)
- J&K bt Odisha by **two wickets** (Group D, Round 3, Cuttack)
- Karnataka bt Tripura by **29 runs** (Group C, Round 4, Agartala)
- Uttar Pradesh bt Mumbai by **two wickets** (Group B, Round 4, Mumbai)
- Delhi bt Uttarakhand by **seven runs** (Group D, Round 4, Mohali)
- Services bt Haryana by **one run** (Group A, Round 5, Rohtak)
- Karnataka bt Railways by **one wicket** (Group C, Round 5, Surat)
- Tamil Nadu **drew with Karnataka** (Group C, Round 6, Chennai)
- J&K bt Pondicherry by **19 runs** (Group D, Round 6, Puducherry)



## CRICKET

## S. Dipak Ragav

CHENNAI

The current edition of Ranji Trophy has produced pulsating encounters that bring out the game's unique charm in its traditional format.

Some of these matches have seen fortunes swinging wildly for the teams every day in conditions ranging from rank-turners to green tops and everything in between across the length and breadth of the

## country.

On Monday, traditional rivals Tamil Nadu and Karnataka were locked in one of the most thrilling matches of the season at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium – a venue famed for classic contests – with all three results possible till the last over of the game before it ended in a draw on the fourth and final day.

After conceding a 215-run lead, TN looked down and out at the start of the day, chasing 355 on a pitch that had plenty of help for the spinners.

However, session by ses-

sion, TN kept chipping away at the target and suddenly looked in a good position to go for a win before the Karnataka bowlers managed to stop the home team from crossing the finish line.

## Roller-coaster ride

From trying to salvage a point at the start of the day to being disappointed with just one point and not getting the full six, it was a roller-coaster ride for Tamil Nadu.

In a league where every point matters, it could prove decisive.

Like the Southern Derby, there have been several close encounters this season over the first six rounds.

Karnataka itself has been part of two more such games. Against Gujarat, Mayank Agarwal's side took a 110-run lead and needed the same to chase down in the final innings.

It was cruising at 50 for no loss before suffering a spectacular collapse to get bowled out for 103 and lost the match by seven runs.

In the game against Railways, Karnataka was chasing 226 and looked in deep

trouble at 133 for seven before Manish Pandey and V. Vyshak's 64-run eighth wicket partnership got the innings back on track. Pandey then farmed the strike to knock off the last 12 runs along with No. 11 batter V. Koushik.

A

day

before

TN

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Karnataka

battled it out, a little farther away from Chennai, Pondicherry and Jammu & Kashmir played out a thriller of a different kind in a low-scoring encounter on a rank-turner.

C

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J&amp;K

fully defended 87 runs against the hosts to win by 19 runs to keep its qualification hopes alive.

A few weeks ago, up north in Rohtak, Services and Haryana played the closest game of the season to date.

## Low-scoring match

In a match that saw no team cross 150, Services off-spinner Pulkit Narang and left-arm spinner Arjun Sharma's five-wicket hauls in the last innings helped their side defend a target of 145 by the slimmest of margins – just one run.

## Chelsea late show deepens Crystal Palace crisis

## EURO LEAGUES

## Agence France-Presse

LONDON

Conor Gallagher struck twice to condemn his former club Crystal Palace to a damaging 3-1 defeat on Monday and keep Chelsea in the hunt for European football next season.

The injury-ravaged Eagles were on course for a huge win in their battle to remain in the Premier League when Jefferson Lerma's long-range strike opened the scoring.

But Palace has won just three times in 19 games and was undone late on after Gallagher equalised within two minutes of the second half. Gallagher fired home his second of the night and Enzo Fernandez added the third in stoppage time to lift Chelsea up to 10th and within two points of seventh.

Defeat leaves Palace still just five points above the relegation zone in 15th.

Manager Roy Hodgson and the club's board are under fire from the fans

and banners held up before kick-off took aim at a "weak club culture" and "weak transfer policy."

Inter Milan has a seven-point lead and a game in hand at the top of Serie A after its closest challenger Juventus fell to a shock 1-0 home defeat to Udinese on Monday.

Juve's title hopes took a hit at the Allianz Stadium in Turin after Lautaro Giannetti poked home the only goal of the game in the 25th minute.

Argentine defender

Giannetti's strike was his first since signing for Udinese last month and gave his team just its third league win of the season.

Gabriele Cioffi's team is three points above the relegation zone after consigning disappointing Juve to its second straight defeat after last weekend's narrow loss at Inter.

Juve, missing injured striker Dusan Vlahovic, can have no complaints as it created very little and was booed off by its fans frustrated at the poor per-

formance and their team's wilting title challenge.

The closest Juve came to equalising was when Arkadiusz Milik nodded in from a corner but the goal was ruled out for Federico Chiesa's cross going out of play.

## The results:

**Premier League:** Crystal Palace 1 (Lerma 30) lost to Chelsea 3 (Gallagher 47, 90+1, Fernandez 90+4).

**LaLiga:** Almeria 0 drew with Athletic Bilbao 0.

**Serie A:** Juventus 0 lost to Udinese 1 (Giannetti 25).



**Two-goal hero:** Gallagher scores Chelsea's second against Crystal Palace. GETTY IMAGES

## United World Wrestling lifts the suspension on WFI

## Y.B. Sarangi

KOLKATA

The United World Wrestling (UWW) on Tuesday lifted the suspension on the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) with immediate effect, asking it adhere to certain conditions related to athletes' welfare.

Now the Indian wrestlers, who had to compete under the UWW flag during the suspension period, will be able to compete under the National flag in UWW events.

UWW had provisionally suspended the WFI on August 23 last after the National federation failed to hold its elections in time owing to the wrestlers' protest against former pre-

sident Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

The UWW Disciplinary Chamber had found sufficient grounds to impose the provisional suspension as the situation in the federation prevailed for at least six months.

## Conditions

The UWW Bureau, which met on February 9, decided to lift the suspension under the following conditions:

"The WFI has to re-convene the elections of its Athletes' Commission. The candidates for this commission shall be active athletes or retired for no longer than four years. The voters shall be exclusively athletes."

These elections shall take place during trials or any senior national championships where this operation can take place, but no later than July 1, 2024," said the UWW in a statement.

The UWW asked the WFI not to discriminate against the protesting wrestlers, particularly the leading trio of Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik.

"The WFI has to immediately provide UWW with written guarantees that all wrestlers will be considered for participation without any discrimination in all WFI events, in particular trials for the Olympic Games and any other major national and interna-

tional events. This non-discrimination includes the three athletes who protested against alleged wrongdoings by the former president.

"UWW remains in touch with the wrestlers and will follow up with them in the coming days."

After the successful conduct of the WFI elections on December 21, the Union Sports Ministry had 'suspended' the National body and had asked the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to form an ad-hoc body to run the federation.

According to sources, a case has been filed in the Andhra Pradesh High Court challenging the suspension imposed by the Government.

silver and two bronze.

**The results:** Junior 10m air rifle: Men: 1. Umamahesh Maddineni 628.1 (252.1), 2. Parth Mane 629.6 (250.6), 3. Ajay Malik 229.0 (627.1).

**Women:** 1. Isha Taksale 251.8 (630.1), 2. Gwenllian Thorne (GBR) 249.7 (614.6), 3. Shambhavi Kshirsagar 227.6 (627.9); 4. Anvii Rathod 205.4 (626.8).

**Mixed:** 1. India (Isha, Umamahesh) 16 (627.4), 2. India-2 (Anvii, Abhinav Shaw) 8 (629.0); 3. Britain 16 (616.8).

**Mixed junior air pistol:** 1. Georgia-B 17 (572), 2. Georgia 9 (577), 3. Spain 16 (561); 6. India 560 (Drishti Sangwan, Paras Khola).

## LIVE TELECAST

**Sri Lanka vs Afghanistan:** 3rd ODI, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 2.30 p.m.

**ISL:** Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.

**PKL:** Star Sports 2.1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 8 p.m.

**Serie A:** Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 11.30 p.m.

**Champions League:** Sony Sports Ten 1, 2 & 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 1.30 a.m. (Thursday)

**New Zealand vs South Africa:** 2nd Test, day 3, Prime Video, 3.30 a.m. (Thursday)

**CM YK**

# India-England Test series set for more fascinating cricket

With the honours even after two of the most absorbing Tests, the remaining three promise to provide riveting action going by the track record of the teams' skirmishes over close to a century

**P.K. Ajith Kumar**

The England dressing room at Chennai's M.A. Chidambaram Stadium had a surprise visitor shortly after the first Test of the 2008 series ended. India had pulled off a stunning chase of 387 on a fifth-day pitch.

After Virender Sehwag blasted a 68-ball 83 and added 117 for the first wicket with Gautam Gambhir, Sachin Tendulkar, with an unbeaten hundred, and Yuvraj Singh took India home. Then Tendulkar walked up to England's dressing room and thanked the players for coming back to India after the Mumbai terrorist attack.

**Tendulkar's gesture**

Steve Harmison was one of the players who were bowled over by Tendulkar's gesture. "Here was the greatest cricketer of our generation coming to our dressing room to thank us," the former quick said during a *talkSport* show.

Coming as it did after the terrible tragedy in Mumbai, the win in Chennai meant much for India as a country, more so with its favourite son making a hundred and hitting the winning shot. And that remains the biggest successful chase in a Test in India.

England was presented with a chance to break that record at Visakhapatnam last week, but India did not let it, as the host paid back for the defeat in the first Test at Hyderabad in style. The series is tied 1-1, with three matches remaining.

**The tradition**

The series has already produced some outstanding Test cricket – among the finest this country has seen for years – and there could be more. We haven't seen too many absorbing and even battles between bat and ball in recent times in India as we have at Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam.

Neither have we watched such exhibitions of pace bowling like the ones put up by Jasprit Bumrah and James Anderson in just the second Test alone. The series has already given us two epic, match-winning hundreds, by Ollie Pope (196) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (209).

The Tests between India and England have always produced some fascinating cricket, right from the first ever Test between the two countries. In 1932 at Lord's, India, playing its maiden Test, had England in trouble at 19 for three, and it would take two fine innings from captain Douglas Jardine, who would, later that year, achieve infamy with the Bodyline series in Australia, to lead the host to a 158-run victory. India's pace trio of Mohammed Nisar, Amar Singh and Jahangir Khan took 14 wickets among them.

India has gone on to play more Tests against England than it has against any other team – 133, of which it has won 32.



K.R. DEEPAK

Many of those Tests have given Indian cricket some of its most memorable moments, like Sunil Gavaskar's 221 at the Oval in 1979, which took India so close to chasing down a target of 438, Dilip Vengsarkar's three successive hundreds at Lord's, Sachin Tendulkar's maiden Test century at the age of 17, Mohammad Azharuddin's three consecutive hundreds from his Test debut at home

and then his two back-to-back hundreds of exquisite beauty in England, Sourav Ganguly and Rahul Dravid's impressive debuts in the same Test at Lord's, Kapil Dev hitting Eddie Hemmings for four sixes in a row when 24 were needed to avoid the follow-on and nine wickets were down.

You wonder what Rajkot, Ranchi and Dharamshala have in store.



Here was the greatest cricketer of our generation coming to our dressing room to thank us

**STEVE HARMISON**  
Former England fast bowler,  
referring to Tendulkar

## 'An embarrassment' – Brazil fails to qualify for Paris 2024 Olympics

**Associated Press**

SAO PAULO

Brazilian football fans were already in a funk after a year that saw a string of poor results, a coaching void and a political tug of war at the country's federation.

Things got even worse Sunday after Brazil failed to qualify for the Paris Olympics after a loss to arch-rival Argentina, meaning the two-time defending champion will not be part of the tournament this summer.

"It is sad, but it is more of an embarrassment," striker John Kennedy said after the 1-0 loss. "We should have wanted to win more than we did."

Brazil also failed to qualify for the 1992 and 2004 editions of the Olympic tournament, but those blips didn't coincide with a crisis for the senior national team. Brazil is only in sixth place in South American qualifying for the 2026 World Cup and its biggest star Neymar has been out with a serious knee injury since October.

Some fans and analysts had hoped 17-year-old striker Endrick – who is set to join Real Madrid this summer – would provide some cause for optimism by showcasing his talent during the Olympic qualifying tournament. And many supporters had been hoping to see

Endrick and the 32-year-old Neymar play together on the Olympic team in Paris and lead Brazil to an unprecedented third straight gold medal.

But the Brazilian teenager scored only twice in seven matches in Olympic qualifying. Argentina's World Cup-winning midfielder Thiago Almada netted five.

The Olympic football tournament features mainly Under-23 players and does not carry nearly the same status as the World Cup or continental championships – such as the Copa America that starts in June – but missing out completely still stings the pride of many Brazilians.

Especially those who are viewing Endrick as the country's next big star, and had been expecting him to show that he could help lead the senior team's attack alongside Vinicius Jr. and Rodrygo at the Copa America.

Meanwhile, Brazil's senior team will return to action in March in friendlies against England and Spain amid serious concerns about its current form.

Last year, Brazil lost a home match in World Cup qualifying for the first time ever; 1-0 to Argentina at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro. It also lost at Uruguay and Colombia in the South American round-robin competition after two poor performances.



"Brazil wasted a full year in preparations because we waited for a top coach (Ancelotti) who had signed no contract with us," said former Brazil left-back Júnior. "We burned a promising coach, Fernando Diniz, just so he could be interim for a year. The time to fix all this for the next World Cup is very short."

Rodrigues, the confederation head, is also facing calls for his resignation. He was removed by a Rio de Janeiro court in December due to irregularities in his election but returned weeks later after a ruling from Brazil's top court. His full case is yet to be reviewed.

History, though, shows that missing out on the Olympics doesn't necessarily bode ill for the future.

The team that failed to qualify for the Barcelona Games in 1992 included Cafu, Márcio Santos and Roberto Carlos, who all went on to win the World Cup. And the squad that missed out on the Athens Games in 2004 included future stars Maicon, Diego and Robinho.

"They will have to prove this elimination is no different from those two," said 2002 World Cup winner Vampeta. "There's great players in this team, but they will be judged by whether they can drag the senior team out of the quagmire it is in now. It is an uphill battle to end this crisis."



Vaughan. GETTY IMAGES

## Vaughan calls Australia's Test side 'Dad's Army'

**Press Trust of India**

LONDON

Former captain Michael Vaughan feels Australia looked jaded in the recent home Test series against the West Indies and said England stand a great chance in next year's Ashes if a "Dad's Army" is fielded by their arch-rivals.

Vaughan said most of the players in the current Australian Test side are ageing and the need of the hour is to infuse fresh talent in order to continue dominating world cricket.

"There was not much optimism in Australia that it would be a great Test summer because the two touring teams, Pakistan and West Indies, had poor recent records Down Under. But it was actually very competitive, as proved by the Windies pulling off that stunning win at the Gabba," Vaughan wrote in a column for *The Telegraph*.

"I could see Australia being quite a jaded team by then. David Warner has become the first of that set of great players to retire, and the rest are in their thirties now, so the age profile is a concern for them."

"Time passes and minds start to turn to what comes next in life. This group of players has won everything going, so what motivates them? I know well from experience after 2005 how quickly things can unravel when a Dad's Army team plays in the Ashes. You can look over the hill very quickly," he added.

Vaughan said the unexpected loss in Brisbane at the hands of the West Indies has raised England's hopes in the Ashes next year.

"Australia remain a very good side. Pat Cummins is an outstanding leader and when they need a big session to turn a game, they usually find it."

"That was why I was staggered when they lost in Brisbane, and that game was a sign for me that England have a great opportunity in the Ashes in 2025/26," he wrote.

Vaughan feels apart from inducting fresh faces, Australia also need to rotate their bowling line-up.

# The untapped potential of stem cells in menstrual blood

The endometrium has a remarkable capacity to regrow itself each month. It provides a site for an embryo to implant during pregnancy and is shed during menstruation. It undergoes roughly 400 rounds of shedding and regrowth before a woman reaches menopause.

Sneha Khedkar

**R**oughly 20 years ago, a biologist named Caroline Gargett went in search of some remarkable cells in tissue that had been removed during hysterectomy surgeries. The cells came from the endometrium, which lines the inside of the uterus. When Dr. Gargett cultured the cells in a petri dish, they looked like round clumps surrounded by a clear, pink medium. But examining them with a microscope, she saw what she was looking for – two kinds of cells, one flat and roundish, the other elongated and tapered, with whisker-like protrusions.

Dr. Gargett strongly suspected that the cells were adult stem cells – rare, self-renewing cells, some of which can give rise to many different types of tissues. She and other researchers had long hypothesised that the endometrium contained stem cells, given its remarkable capacity to regrow itself each month. The tissue, which provides a site for an embryo to implant during pregnancy and is shed during menstruation, undergoes roughly 400 rounds of shedding and regrowth before a woman reaches menopause. But although scientists had isolated adult stem cells from many other regenerating tissues – including bone marrow, the heart, and muscle – “no one had identified adult stem cells in endometrium,” Dr. Gargett says.

**Several types of self-renewing cells**  
Such cells are highly valued for their potential to repair damaged tissue and treat diseases such as cancer and heart failure. But they exist in low numbers throughout the body, and can be tricky to obtain, requiring surgical biopsy, or extracting bone marrow with a needle. The prospect of a previously untapped source of adult stem cells was thrilling on its own, says Dr. Gargett. And it also raised the exciting possibility of a new approach to long-neglected women’s health conditions such as endometriosis.

Before she could claim that the cells were truly stem cells, Dr. Gargett and her team at Monash University in Australia had to put them through a series of rigorous tests. First, they measured the cells’ ability to proliferate and self-renew, and found that some of them could divide into about 100 cells within a week. They also showed that the cells could indeed differentiate into endometrial tissue, and identified certain tell-tale proteins that are present in other types of stem cells.

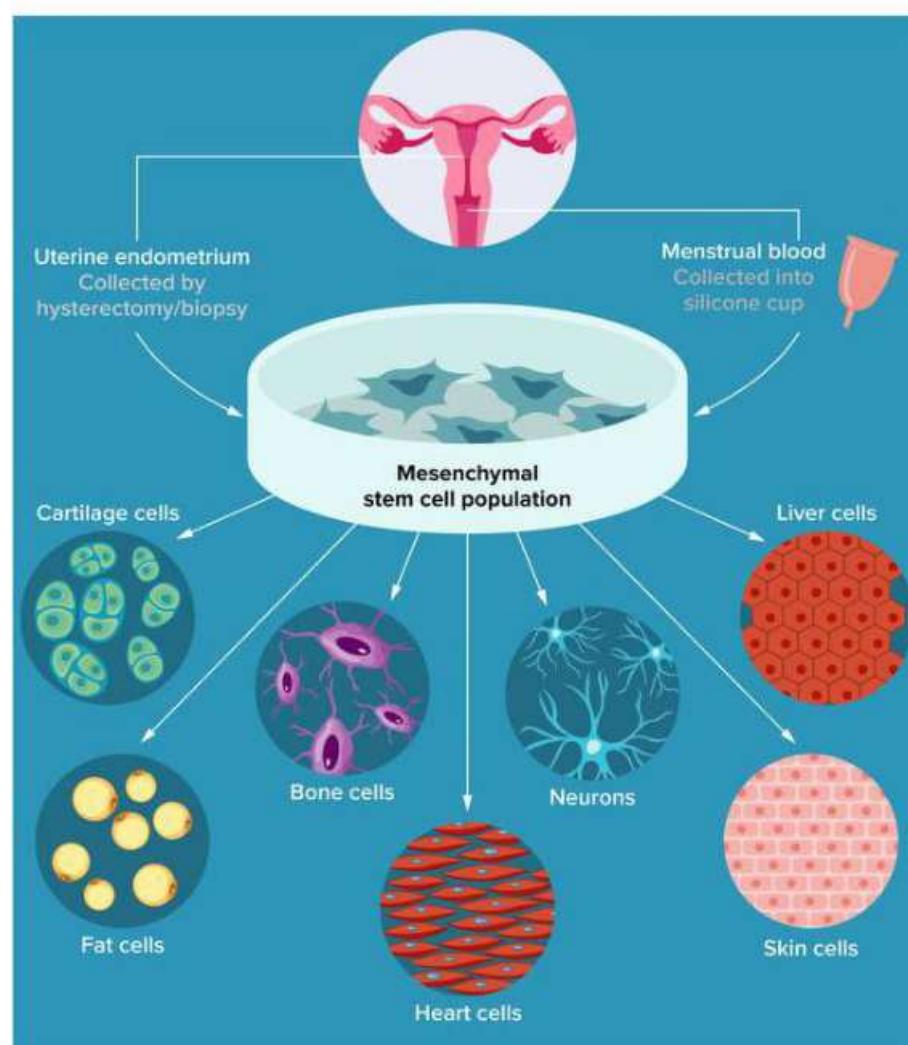
Dr. Gargett, who is now also with Australia’s Hudson Institute of Medical Research, and her colleagues went on to characterise several types of self-renewing cells in the endometrium. But only the whiskered cells, called endometrial stromal mesenchymal stem cells, were truly “multipotent,” with the ability to be coaxed into becoming fat cells, bone cells, or even the smooth muscle cells found in organs such as the heart.

**Special stem cells**  
Around the same time, two independent research teams made another surprising discovery: Some endometrial stromal mesenchymal stem cells could be found in menstrual blood. Dr. Gargett was surprised that the body would so readily shed its precious stem cells. Since they are so important for the survival and function of organs, she didn’t think the body would “waste” them by shedding them. But she immediately recognised the finding’s significance: Rather than relying on an invasive surgical biopsy to obtain the elusive stem cells she’d identified in the endometrium, she could collect them via menstrual cup.

More detailed studies of the endometrium have since helped to explain how a subset of these precious endometrial stem cells – dubbed menstrual stem cells – end up in menstrual blood. The endometrium has a deeper basal layer that remains intact, and an upper functional layer that sloughs off during menstruation. During a single menstrual cycle, the endometrium thickens as it prepares to nourish a fertilised egg, then shrinks as the upper layer sloughs away.

Dr. Gargett’s team has shown that these special stem cells are present in both the lower and upper layers of the endometrium. The cells are typically wrapped around blood vessels in a crescent shape, where they are thought to help stimulate vessel formation and play a vital role in repairing and regenerating the upper layer of tissue that gets shed each month during menstruation. This layer is crucial to pregnancy, providing support and nourishment for a

## The diverse fates of menstrual stem cells



SOURCE: I. UZELIENE ET AL / STEM CELLS INTERNATIONAL 2018

KNOWABLE MAGAZINE

Stem cells from the endometrium can be collected through a biopsy or in menstrual blood. Under the right conditions, they can differentiate into cell types including neurons and cartilage, fat, bone, heart, liver and skin cells.

developing embryo. The layer, and the endometrial stem cells that prod its growth, also appears to play an important role in infertility: An embryo can't implant if the layer doesn't thicken enough.

### Testing for endometriosis

Endometrial stem cells have also been linked to endometriosis, a painful condition that affects roughly 190 million women and girls worldwide. Although much about the condition isn't fully understood, researchers hypothesise that one contributor is the backflow of menstrual blood into a woman's fallopian tubes, the ducts that carry the egg from the ovaries into the uterus. This backward flow takes the blood into the pelvic cavity, a funnel-shaped space between the bones of the pelvis.

Endometrial stem cells that get deposited in these areas may cause endometrial-like tissue to grow outside of the uterus, leading to lesions that can cause excruciating pain, scarring and, in many cases, infertility.

Researchers are still developing a reliable, non-invasive test to diagnose endometriosis, and patients wait an average of nearly seven years before receiving a diagnosis. But studies have shown that stem cells collected from the menstrual blood of women with endometriosis have different shapes and patterns of gene expression than



Despite the relative convenience of collecting adult multipotent stem cells from menstrual blood, research exploring and utilising the stem cells' power still represents a tiny fraction of stem cell research

from healthy women.

Several labs are working on ways to use these differences in menstrual stem cells to identify women at higher risk of the condition, which could lead to faster diagnosis and treatment. Menstrual stem cells may also have therapeutic applications. Some researchers working on mice, for example, have found that injecting menstrual stem cells into the rodents' blood can repair the damaged endometrium and improve fertility.

### Beyond gynaecological diseases

Other research in lab animals suggests that menstrual stem cells could have therapeutic potential beyond gynaecological diseases.

In a couple of studies, for example, injecting menstrual stem cells into diabetic mice stimulated regeneration of insulin-producing cells and improved blood sugar levels. In another, treating injuries with stem cells or their secretions

helped heal wounds in mice.

A handful of small but promising clinical trials have found that menstrual stem cells can be transplanted into humans without adverse side effects. Dr. Gargett's team is also attempting to develop human therapies. She and her colleagues are using endometrial stem cells – those taken directly from endometrial tissue, rather than menstrual blood – to engineer a mesh to treat pelvic organ prolapse, a common, painful condition in which the bladder, rectum or uterus slips into the vagina due to weak or injured muscles.

The condition is often caused by childbirth. Existing treatments use synthetic meshes to reinforce and support weak pelvic tissues. But adverse immune reactions to these materials have led these meshes to be withdrawn from the market. Dr. Gargett's research – so far conducted only in animal models – suggests that using a patient's own endometrial stem cells to coat biodegradable meshes could yield better results.

### Misogyny and cultural taboos

Despite the relative convenience of collecting adult multipotent stem cells from menstrual blood, research exploring and utilising the stem cells' power still represents a tiny fraction of stem cell research

As of 2020, she found, menstrual stem cell research accounted for only 0.25% of all mesenchymal cell research, while bone marrow stem cells represented 47.7%.

Dr. Manica attributes the slow adoption of menstrual stem cells in part to misogynistic ideas that uteruses are outside the norm, and to reactions of disgust.

“There's certainly something of an ‘ick factor’ associated with menstrual blood,” agrees Victoria Male, a reproductive immunologist at Imperial College London who coauthored an article about uterine immune cells in the 2023 *Annual Review of Immunology*.

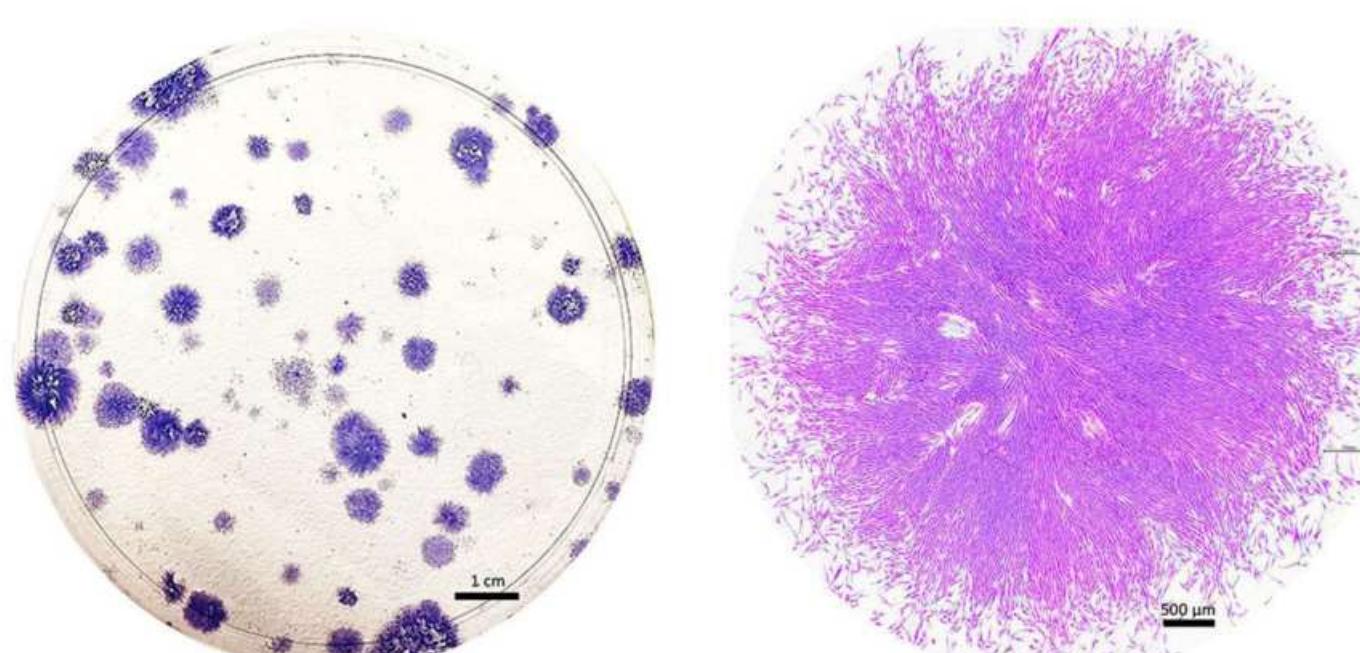
Cultural taboos surrounding menstruation – and a general lack of investment in women's health research – can make it difficult to get funding, says Dr. Gargett.

Immunologist Dr. Male has faced similar challenges – it was easier to obtain funding when she used to study immune cells in liver transplantation than it is now that she works on immune cells in the uterus, she says.

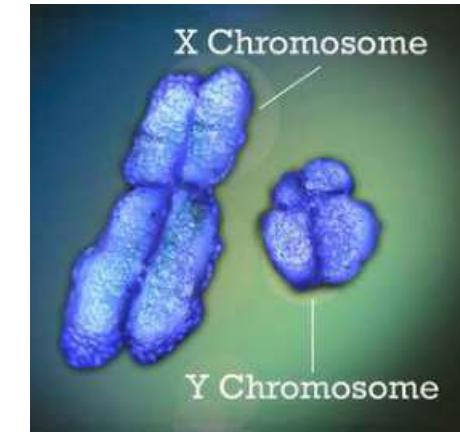
“If we want more research on menstrual fluid, we need more funding,” says Dr. Male, noting that the logistics of collecting menstrual fluid over multiple days can be expensive.

For that to happen, “we have to tackle sex and gender bias in research funding.” Through more equitable investments, she and others hope, menstruation will be recognised as an exciting new frontier in regenerative medicine – not just a monthly inconvenience.

(Sneha Khedkar is a biologist-turned freelance science journalist based out of Bengaluru. This article is republished from Knowable Magazine.)



These purple blobs are clones of the stem cells that researcher identified in menstrual fluid. Each cluster began as a single cell. On the right, a close-up view of one blob, magnified at least 20x, reveals the tightly packed cells' spindled shapes. K. SCHWAB, C. TAN, AND C. GARGETT, THE RITCHIE CENTRE, HUNDSON INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH AND MONASH UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY, MELBOURNE.



A molecular coating that is found in half of the X chromosomes in women might be the reason behind auto-immune disease. AP

## The role of X chromosome in auto-immune diseases

Arkatapa Basu

In recent times several international celebrities have spoken up about their diagnosis and subsequent struggles with auto-immune diseases. A majority of these celebrities are women. This bias is not just a fluke of nature but a reflection of a worldwide phenomenon. A 2023 study by the University of Oxford stated that about 10% of the population they had studied had autoimmune diseases of which 13% were women and 7% were men.

The higher susceptibility of women to autoimmune diseases has puzzled researchers for decades. Several factors can cause autoimmune disease such as environmental factors, genetics, hormonal imbalance and lifestyle habits. However, since women are more susceptible to these diseases, scientists previously thought that it could be related to sex hormones or faulty regulation of the X chromosome. Now, a group of scientists have found a molecular coating that is found in half of the X chromosomes in women might be the reason behind this phenomenon.

Human females (and most mammals) contain two X chromosomes while the males of the species contain one X and one Y chromosome.

The molecular coating of the X chromosome is a combination of RNA and proteins and is crucial to a process called X-chromosome inactivation which ensures that one set of X chromosomes in females remains active and functional in all the cells of the body while the other is muffled.

females remains active and functional in all the cells of the body while the other is muffled.

How is this achieved? The chromosome is wrapped in long strands of RNA called XIST that attract proteins and tamp down the expression of the gene inside.

However, not all genes are muffled in this manner and the ones that escape the X inactivation process are thought to be the cause of autoimmune diseases. Not only this, the XIST molecule too has been known to elicit inflammatory immune responses.

Additionally, one of the co-authors, Howard Chng noted that many of the proteins that are attracted to the XIST also induced the response of autoantibodies, a type of antibody that reacts with self-antigens.

To see if these autoantibodies attacking the XIST molecule were another reason for autoimmune diseases, Dr Chang, bioengineered male mice to produce a modified version of XIST which did muffle the gene expression but still retained the ability to form the RNA and proteins that covered the gene.

They found that when a lupus-like disease was introduced in the mice, the ones that expressed XIST had higher levels of autoantibody levels than the ones that didn't. Their immune cells were also on higher alert which suggests a proneness to autoimmune attacks.

Since XIST is expressed only in cells with two X chromosomes, women are more susceptible to autoimmune diseases and attacks. Further studies in this field would help in determining exactly which XIST-related antigens contribute to sex-biased immunity resulting in expedited detection and diagnosis, the authors noted.

For feedback and suggestions  
for 'Science', please write to  
[science@thehindu.co.in](mailto:science@thehindu.co.in) with the  
subject 'Daily page'