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## IN BRIEF

AAP announces plan to go it alone in Punjab

CHANDIGARH  
AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said the party will contest all 13 seats in Punjab in the Lok Sabha election, dismissing the possibility of an alliance with its INDIA partners in the State. » Page 3

Five arrested over violence in Haldwani

NEW DELHI  
The police on Saturday arrested five persons for their alleged involvement in the violent clashes at Haldwani in Uttarakhand that left five dead. » Page 7

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MAGAZINE » 8 PAGES  
CLASSIFIEDS » PAGE 5

## Pak. Army chief pitches for coalition government

Gen. Asim Munir seeks a 'unified govt. of all democratic forces'; he backs Nawaz Sharif's appeal to rival parties to join hands; Independents backed by former PM Imran Khan's party win 102 seats

Press Trust of India  
ISLAMABAD/LAHORE



Back in game: Jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan, in an audio-video message, claimed victory in the election. REUTERS

Pakistan's Army chief Gen. Asim Munir on Saturday urged the country's polarised political leadership to form a "unified government of all democratic forces", as he backed former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's plea to his rivals to help form a coalition government after the general elections appear to have produced a hung Parliament.

Springing a surprise, Independents backed by jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party won the lion's share of 102 seats in the National Assembly in Thursday's election, as the result of 257 seats out of 265 was an-

nounced by the Election Commission of Pakistan. The PTI has already claimed victory in the elections.

**Others' performance**  
The group was followed by Mr. Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) with 73 seats, the Paki-

Peoples Party (PPP) with 54, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) with 17 and smaller parties taking 11. To form a government, a party must win 133 seats out of 265 in the National Assembly.

On Saturday, a statement attributed to Gen. Munir noted that the peo-

ple of Pakistan reposed their combined trust in the Constitution of Pakistan and it was now "incumbent upon all political parties to reciprocate the same with political maturity and unity".

Meanwhile, Mr. Khan, in an AI-generated audio-video message on Saturday, claimed victory in the general elections.

He thanked the people for voting for the PTI and also asked them to ensure the sanctity of their votes was not hijacked by the establishment.

PTI Central Information Secretary Raoof Hasan said any attempt to derail the people's decision would have "deadly consequences".

IMRAN GETS BAIL IN 12 CASES  
» PAGE 10

## Parliament hails temple consecration in resolution

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI



Temple pitch: Home Minister Amit Shah said the Supreme Court verdict on the issue was a 'reflection of India's secular character'. AP

tion was moved by BJP MPs Sushil Kumar Modi and Prakash Javadekar.

Home Minister Amit Shah said Mr. Modi took all sections of society along on the Ram Temple issue and noted the Supreme Court verdict on the matter was a "reflection of India's secular character". In no other country has the majority community waited for so long for a matter related to its faith," he said.

CONTINUED ON  
» PAGE 7

Tenure propelled country towards big changes: PM

NEW DELHI  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his valedictory remarks on Saturday, described the 17th Lok Sabha's five-year tenure as a "period of reform, perform, and transform" that propelled the country towards big changes at a fast pace. "The country will keep blessing the 17th Lok Sabha," the Prime Minister added. » Page 8

HERITAGE IN CRISIS  
Lucknow monuments cry for attention



NEWS » PAGE 9

LIT FEST THE SHARPEST LITERATURE FESTIVAL IN INDIA  
The rise of literary gatherings



MAGAZINE » PAGES 4 & 5

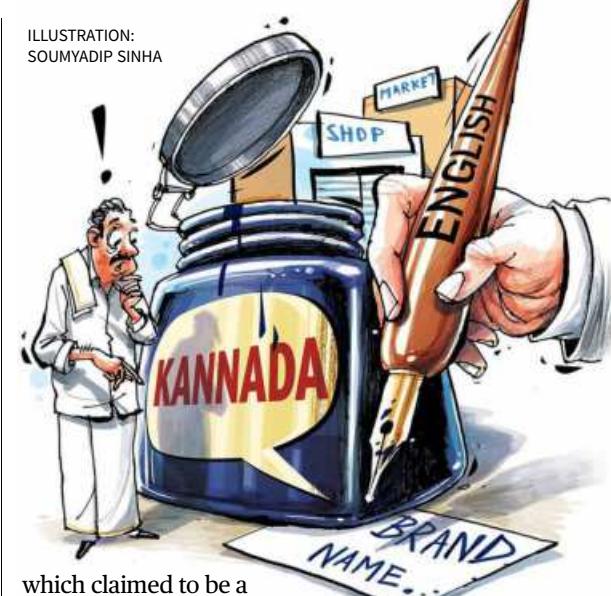
## Kannada signboards lost in translation

Since reinforcement of the rule mandating shops to have 60% usage of Kannada in name boards, Bengaluru residents have been seeing words in the language they have never encountered before

Jahnavi T.R.  
BENGALURU

A shop in Koramangala, Bengaluru, puts its Kannada name out on its signboard as *Angadi hesaru*, which literally translates to "shop's name". A fast-food restaurant in BTM Layout has a Kannada signboard that literally translates to "Friends' food is in a corner". In yet another place in Marathahalli, the word "smokers" is written as "smokers" in Kannada. Such errors of both spelling and grammar on signboards have been spotted at many places in the city, also resulting in a meme fest online.

"I was walking past a hair salon in Indira Nagar



which claimed to be a "global leader in hair restoration". The Kannada version of restoration was *punasathapanayalle*, digital marketer from R.T. Nagar.

On January 4, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) which is not a word at all, recalls Swapnil M.J., a

reinforced its rules about signboards of commercial establishments being 60% in Kannada. The civic body set a February 28 deadline for establishments to adhere to the rules. Soon after, members of a Kannada outfit, the Karnataka Rakshana Vedike, vandalised several commercial establishments in parts of North Bengaluru for not having visible Kannada signboards.

While some citizens are happy that the 60% Kannada rule is being enforced, many say the BBMP should also make sure the names are written correctly.

CONTINUED ON  
» PAGE 7

CM YK

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L-G asks MCD, other depts. to 'clean up their act' in Kirari

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena on Friday visited Kirari village in north-west Delhi after receiving multiple complaints from residents about the lack of sanitation and basic civic amenities in the area.

He instructed the MCD to launch a special cleanliness drive and achieve "visible results" within a month. The L-G said he was displeased by the overflowing sewers, open manholes, garbage heaps, potholed roads, and broken pavements in the area.

In response, the area MLA, Rituraj Govind (AAP), said work on the biggest sewage project in Delhi is going on in Kirari. He added that over the next three months, several new sewer lines will become operational, and 70% of the sewage-related problems will be resolved.

## Spring is in the air in central Delhi with tulips in full bloom

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

With the onset of spring around the corner, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Saturday inaugurated the 'Tulip Festival' at Shantipath in Chanakyapuri to depict the history of tulips as well as their journey from the Netherlands to the flower beds of Lutyens' Delhi.

Children from various schools in Delhi visited the exhibition on the first day.

As part of the festival till February 21, the NDMC plans to organise a photography competition on tulip beautification and curated walks around the areas where they are blooming.

People driving around the city may see them on Shantipath, Connaught Place, Windsor Place roundabout, and Sardar Patel Marg. Nearly two lakh tulips in various colours, including white, yellow, red, pink, orange, purple, and black, have been sourced



Nearly 2 lakh flowers, sourced from the Netherlands, have been planted in the city for the 12-day 'Tulip Festival'. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

from the Netherlands. The cultivation of tulip bulbs started in December last year at various parks and gardens in central Delhi.

The NDMC said that it has focused on cost-effective measures, including the preservation of tulip bulbs from the previous year's festival, which re-

sulted in a 50% reduction in production costs.

Those looking to treat themselves to the hues of spring may also visit the Amrit Udayan at Rashtrapati Bhavan, where visitors can see tulips, daffodils, asiatic lilies, oriental lilies, and many other rare seasonal flowers in full bloom.

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT e-Procurement Notice					
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)					
1.The Executive Engineer HPPWD, Jubbal Distt Shimla H.P on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the online bids on Percentage rate, in electronic tendering system, in 2 Cover System for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved contractors/Firms registered with HPPWD Department.					
Sr. No. Name of Work Estimated Cost (Rs.) Earnest Money (Rs.) Cost of Tender Form(Rs.) Time Allowed Class					
1. Construction of 24.00 Meter span RCC bridge over river kawala Tehsil Jubbal Distt.Shimla H.P (SH-C/O Sub structure and Superstructure of bridge)	15264707/- only	3,05,300/- only	Rs. 5000/-	2 Months	B&C

Tender document and other instructions can be downloaded or viewed online from the portal <https://htenders.gov.in> by the firm/individual registered on the website which is free of cost.

**Key Dates:**  
1. Date of Online Publication 09.02.2024 11:00 HRS  
2. Document Download Start and End Date 09.02.2024 11:30 HRS upto 18.02.2024 17:30 HRS  
3. Bid Submission Start and End Date 09.02.2024 11:30 HRS upto 18.02.2024 18:00 HRS  
4. Physical Submission of EMD and Cost of Tender Document On Line Mode  
5. Date of Technical Bid Opening, 19.02.2024 11:00 HRS  
6. Evaluation of Technical Bid followed by Opening of Financial Bid Date to be announced

HP / 5749/23-24 Executive Engineer, Jubbal Division, HPPWD, Jubbal.

**E-TENDER NOTICE TO BE PUBLISHED IN NEWS PAPERS**  
On line e-tender on lump sum/items basis rate is invited by the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division Palampur on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh in electronic tendering system in two covers for the under mentioned work from the Contractor/Firm of appropriate class.

Name of work	Estimated cost	EMD	Cost of tender
Name of Work:- Construction of balance work of Flow Irrigation scheme Takruhi Kuhl, Purnahali Salian Kuhl & Pernuh Chathami Kuhl in Tehsil Palampur, Distt. Kangra (H.P) (SH:- Construction of reinforcement cement concrete main channel of Purnahali Salian Kuhl = 3612 running metre, Edge wall = 67 meter, Foot path crossing = 12 Nos. & outlet lets = 40 Nos)	Rs. 5,42,39,314/-	Rs. 5,42,400/-	Rs. 2500/-

Last date of filing/uploading the tender through e-tendering upto 20.02.2024 at 5:00 P.M and the same will be opened on 21.02.2024 at 11:30 A.M. The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be obtained from the website.

[WWW.hppwd.org](http://WWW.hppwd.org) and [WWW.htenders.gov.in](http://WWW.htenders.gov.in)

HP / 5730/23-24 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPARK

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED			
Credit Recovery and Management Department			
Administrative Office: No.24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612 001, E-Mail ID: crmd@cityunionbank.in, Phone: 0435-2432322, Fax: 0435-2431746			

### TENDER-CUM-AUCTION SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002

The following properties mortgaged to City Union Bank Limited will be sold in Tender-cum-Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 8 (6) & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of Rs.97,24,372/- (Rupees Ninety Seven Lakh Twenty Four Thousand Three Hundred and Seventy Two only) as on 05-02-2024 together with further interest to be charged from 06-02-2024 onwards and other expenses, any other dues to the Bank by the borrowers / guarantors No.1) Mr. R. Vivek, S/o, Shri U. Ramasubramonian, Residing at No.A-57, Pocket-B, Mayur Vihar, Phase-2, Delhi -110091. No.2) Mrs. Elizabeth Isha, W/o. Shri R. Vivek, Residing at No.A-57, Pocket-B, Mayur Vihar, Phase-2, Delhi - 110091. No.3) Mrs. Meena Kumari, W/o. U. Subramonian, Residing at No.A-57, Pocket-B, Mayur Vihar, Phase-2, Delhi -110091.

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(Property Owned by Mrs. Meena Kumari, W/o. U. Subramonian)

DDA built-up SFS Ground Floor, Flat bearing No 57-A, Pocket-B having Covered Area of 1,108 Sq. Ft. i.e. 103 Sq. Mtrs. out of Four Storeyed Residential Building situated in Mayur Vihar, Phase II, Delhi. Boundaries: North: Other Flat, South: Other Flat, East: Entry, West: Road.

**Reserve Price : Rs.1,42,00,000/-**  
(Rupees One Crore Forty Two Lakh only)

### AUCTION DETAILS

Date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale	Venue
22-03-2024	City Union Bank Limited, New Delhi-Mayur Vihar Branch, C-53, Ground Floor, Shashi Garden, Phase - I, Mayur Vihar, Delhi - 110091.

Telephone No.011-22755089, Cell No.9312284767.

### Terms and Conditions of Tender-cum-Auction Sale:

(1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself / herself. (2) The intending bidders may obtain the Tender Forms from The Manager, City Union Bank Limited, New Delhi-Mayur Vihar Branch, C-53, Ground Floor, Shashi Garden, Phase - I, Mayur Vihar, Delhi - 110091. (3) The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the Tender Form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd., together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of 10% of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of "City Union Bank Ltd.", on or before 01.00 p.m. on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. (4) For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact Telephone No.011-22755089, Cell No.9312284767. (5) The properties are sold on "As-is-where-is". (6) The sealed tenders will be opened in the presence of the intending bidders at 01.00 p.m. on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. Though in general the sale will be by way of closed tenders, the Authorised Officer may, at his sole discretion, conduct an Open Auction among the interested bidders who desire to quote a bid higher than the one received in the closed tender process, and in such an event, the sale shall be conferred on the person making highest bid. The sale, however, is subject to confirmation of City Union Bank Limited. (7) The successful bidder shall have to pay 25% (inclusive of EMD paid) of the sale amount immediately on completion of sale and the balance amount of 75% within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale, failing which the initial deposit of 25% shall be forfeited. (8) The Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful purchaser only after receipt of the entire sale consideration within the time limit stipulated herein. (9) The successful purchaser shall bear the charges/fees payable for conveyance, such as stamp duty, registration fee etc., as applicable under law. (10) The successful bidder should pay the statutory dues (lawful house tax, electricity charges and other dues), TDS, GST if any, due to Government, Government Undertaking and local bodies. (11) The Authorised Officer shall have all the powers to accept or reject the bids or postpone or cancel the sale without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Place : Kumbakonam, Date : 09-02-2024

Authorised Officer

Regd. Office: 149, T.S.R. (B) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612 001, CIN - L65110TN1904PLC001287, Telephone No.0435-2402322, Fax: 0435-2431746, Website: www.cityunionbank.com

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# AAP announces plan to go it alone in Punjab

The party dismisses prospects of an alliance with Congress in the State after weeks-long talks; says it will announce candidates for all 14 Lok Sabha seats in Punjab and Chandigarh in a fortnight

## The Hindu Bureau

CHANDIGARH

**A**am Aadmi Party (AAP) chief and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal reiterated that the party will contest all 13 seats in Punjab in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, thereby dismissing the possibility of a poll alliance with its Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) partners in the State.

Addressing a gathering in Punjab's Khanna along with Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Mr. Kejriwal added that the party would go it alone in Chandigarh as well, which has one Parliamentary seat, and said that the candidates for all 14 seats will be announced in the next fortnight.

The announcement comes after alliance talks between AAP and the Congress stalled, with AAP leaders saying that an alliance between the two parties would only be possible, at most, in Delhi. The Congress and AAP, however, jointly contested the recent mayoral elections for the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation, but faced a setback when their joint candidates lost to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).



Bhagwant Mann and Arvind Kejriwal at the launch of 'Ghar Ghar Muft Ration' scheme on Saturday. PTI

Notably, several Congress leaders in Punjab have been critical of the tie-up with AAP, and have consistently urged the party's central leadership not to go ahead with it.

**Repeat 2022 victory'**  
"Two years ago [2022 Assembly elections], you gave us your blessings. Out of 117 seats, you gave us 92 seats. You created history in Punjab. Today, I again seek your blessings with folded hands. The Lok Sabha elections are taking place in two months. In Punjab, there are 13 seats,

and in Chandigarh, there is one. I urge you to make us win all 14 seats by voting for the party," the AAP chief said to the public gathering.

Mr. Kejriwal, who was speaking after the launch of the 'Ghar Ghar Muft Ration' scheme, aimed at providing free delivery of ration to the people's doorsteps, took a dig at the Opposition parties in the State, alleging that for the last 75 years, ration through the Public Distribution System "never reached the beneficiaries". He added that neither

the Shiromani Akali Dal nor the Congress took any steps to ensure the well-being of the people, and that the ration meant for the poor had been "looted" by them.

Mr. Mann, in his address, said that ever since AAP has come into power in Punjab, "every single penny is being spent on the State's welfare". He also took a dig at the Shiromani Akali Dal, saying, "The Akalis have plundered the State mercilessly besides bruising the psyche of the Punjabis and patronising the mafia".

# A. Raja refuses to apologise for comment on MGR

## The Hindu Bureau

COIMBATORE

Refusing to apologise for his recent remarks on late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran, the Nilgiris Lok Sabha member and DMK deputy general secretary A. Raja on Saturday said AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami should first express regret for insulting late DMK leader and former Chief Minister M. Karu-

nanidhi, as well as Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, on multiple occasions in the past.

At a protest meeting in Avinashi, Mr. Palaniswami advised Mr. Raja to express regret for his remarks, and cautioned that he would face the consequences in the Lok Sabha election for having made the comments.

"Mr. Palaniswami has no locus standi to brand me as an unfit person [to

talk about MGR]," Mr. Raja said.

He added that he was prepared to resign from his party post in the event of Mr. Palaniswami and other AIADMK leaders expressing regret for their derogatory comments on Mr. Stalin and his family.

Asked about Mr. Palaniswami's contention that the DMK had come to power only because of MGR's charisma, Mr. Raja said he would talk about it later.

No factions in Trinamool, says Abhishek

## The Hindu Bureau

KOLKATA

Amid the ongoing speculation on differences within the top leadership of the Trinamool Congress, party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Saturday said there were "no factions" in the party.

"Differences in our approach do not imply personal or political disagreements with Mamata Banerjee," a party statement quoting him said.

# Sameer Wankhede challenges ED case in HC

## Press Trust of India

MUMBAI

Former Mumbai Narcotics Control Bureau zonal director Sameer Wankhede moved the Bombay High Court challenging the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) money laundering case against him, saying it "smacked of vendetta".

The ED registered the case after taking cognizance of a CBI FIR which alleged that Mr. Wankhede had demanded a bribe of ₹25 crore from Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan to spare his son Aryan Khan in the 2021 Cordelia Cruise Drugs case.

# BJP insulted Lord Ram by claiming to bring him to Ayodhya: SP chief

## Press Trust of India

LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday attacked the ruling BJP for "insulting" Lord Ram by claiming it had "brought" the Hindu deity to the temple in Ayodhya.

"When Lord Ram re-

sides in the heart, what is the need to take his name? Lord Ram was there earlier too," Mr. Yadav said during the budget session in the Legislative Assembly.

"Lord Ram is there [Ayodhya] even today. Lord Ram will always be there. When we were not around, Lord Ram was

there, and when we will no longer be here, Lord Ram will still exist. Therefore, by saying that you have brought Lord Ram [to Ayodhya], you are not only insulting him, but also the Hindu religion," he said, adding that the BJP should "stop doing politics in the name of religion".

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**GURUGRAM** 306, City Center, Sector 29 (Near Hotel Piazza)

**PUNCHKUAN ROAD**, Garwal Bhawan, (Near Jhandewalan, Gole Chkr.)

**WAZIRPUR A-5**, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)

**JANAKPUR B-1/2**, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543

**NOIDA**, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP

**LAJPAT NAGAR**, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

Govt. of Bihar

## Public Health Engineering Department

### Public Health Engineering Division, Gaya

RE- TENDER VERY SHORT TENDER NIT No -02/2023-24 /SBNQ(R1)

National Competitive Bidding(Through e-procurement mode on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

1	Designation and Address of Advertiser	Executive Engineer, P.H. Division, Gaya
2	Date of issue of Tender Notice	08.02.2024
3	Period of sale (downloading) of tender Bid Document	15.02.24 to 21.02.2024 up to 15:00 hrs. through www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
4	Date, time & place of pre-bid meeting	10.02.24 at 11.30 hrs. hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer, P. H. Division, Gaya
5	Last date and time of receipt (uploading) of tender	22.02.24 up to 17:00 Hrs on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
6	Last date and time of submission of hard copy of EMD (in original)	23.02.24 up to 15:00 hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer P.H. Division Gaya
7	Date and time of opening of technical bid	A. Executive Engineer, P.H. Division Gaya
8	Date and time of opening of financial bid.	B. Superintending Engineer, P.H.E. Circle Gaya
9	Details of Works:	C. Zonal Chief Engineer, Patna Zone, Patna

Group No	Name of Work	No. of schemes in a Group..	Estimated Cost (in Lakh)	Amount of Earnest Money (in Lakh)	Cost of Tender Document (non-refundable) in Rs.	BSEDC Bid Processing Fee (in Rs.)	Completion Period (in months)
1	Name of Work: Design, Construction, Supply, Testing and Commissioning of Piped Water Supply Schemes for habitations left out under "Har Ghar naal Ka Jal" nischay yojna in areas having ground water quality issues; with Electric Driven Pumps in the District of Gaya, under jurisdiction of P.H. Division, Gaya Bihar on turn-key basis with 6 months Trial Run Period and Comprehensive Operation and Maintenance of 60 months under Mukhyamantri Gramen Peyjal Nishchay Yojna (Non Quality Affected).						
1	Under P.H. Division, Gaya						
1	Sl. No.	Block	Panchayat	Habitation	Ward No.		
1	1		Pura	Mahua Bigha	14		
2	2			Bhagwanpur Nadiapar	6		
3	3			Arakdhbiriya	2		
4	4			Alalpur Bigha	7		
5	5		Simuara	Narayan Bigha Nahar par	11		
6	6			Guleriyachak Mahatala	9		
7	7			Bhuiyan Toli	3		
8	8			Mahadalit Tola	14		
9	9		Tekari	Pakkhi Bigha	4		
10	10			Dighaura	Bali	5	
11	11			Dwarikapur Kheban Bigha	14		
12	12			Englash par	2		
13	13		Jalalpur	Kamalpur Road par	11		
14	14			Mahamana Kusap	13		
15	15			Rupaspur Bigha	3		
				348.81	6.98	10000	According to Online Generated 6
2	Under P.H. Division, Gaya						
1	1		Bodhgaya	Lodha	5		
2	2			Jarhari	5		
3	3			Gopalpur	4		
4	4			Gewal Bhuitola	10		
5	5			Hardiya Nagar	13		
6	6			Gadriya Bigha	13		
7	7			Jamdi Mahatola	5		
8	8			Aashram Par	5		
				211.07	4.23	10000	According to Online Generated 6

For further details please visit : [www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar](http://www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar)

नशे की मार, बर्बाद करे सुखी परिवार।

Executive Engineer,  
P.H Division, Gaya

**ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL DHAULA KUAN**  
RIDGE ROAD, DHAULA KUAN, NEW DELHI- 10 | www.apsdk.com

**TENDER NOTICE**

Sealed Tenders are invited from manufacturers with professional expertise in supplying IT equipments of procurement of computers.

Tender Form can be collected from School reception from 12 Feb 2024 to 20 Feb 2024 between 9:00AM to 3:00PM @ Rs 100/- Forms duly completed in all respect shall be submitted to APS Dhaula Kuan by 24 Feb 2024 at 1500 hrs along with DD (EMD) as per RFP in favour of Army Public School, Dhaula Kuan. For any queries contact Principal on 011-25693131.

Principal, APSDK

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA GROUND WATER DEPARTMENT NATIONAL HYDROLOGY PROJECT**

E-TENDER NOTICE IFB No.TSGW/NHP/2023-24/PW/5220  
(Title: Construction of Protection works to the existing Piezometers)  
Following online tenders are invited by the Ground Water Department, Govt of Telangana from eligible bidders under National Competitive Bidding (NCB)

**Details**

LOT-V • Construction of 136 Nos. of Full / Partial Protection works to the existing piezometers drilled in Telangana region (4 districts viz. Jagtial, Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, Nirmal), Hyderabad, Medchal - Manipur (4 districts viz. Nizamabad, Rangareddy, Sangareddy, Karimnagar and Yadadri - Bhuvanagiri).  
Last Date of Submission: 13/02/2024 (15.00 hrs)  
The details of IFBs are available on <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> (Tender Id No. 2024\_GWTS\_794769\_1, https://gwtd.telangana.gov.in and http://nph.mowr.gov.in websites).  
R.O. No.: 925/PPD-AGENCY/ADVT/2023-24 Director & Nodal Officer, NPH, Ground Water Department

**MEDICAL AND HEALTH RECRUITMENT BOARD, ASSAM**  
ACMR Building, Near Office of the DME, Six Mile, Kharapara, Guwahati-781022  
No: MHRB/60/Faculty/2024/4025

**NOTICE**

Medical and Health Recruitment Board, Assam invites online application in the website : <https://nmhm.assam.gov.in> from the intending candidates having Indian citizenship as mentioned in Article 5 to 8 of the Constitution of India and having requisite qualification and registration under Assam Council of Medical Registration or Medical Council of India / National Medical Commission for recruitment to the posts of Registrar/Demonstrator/Resident Physician etc. in different Departments in Government Medical Colleges under the Medical Education & Research Department, Government of Assam. Detailed advertisement is available on the website of the office of the DME, Assam ([www.dme](http://www.dme.assam.gov.in)

## IN BRIEF



## Mithun complains of chest pain, admitted to hospital

Veteran actor Mithun Chakraborty was admitted to a private hospital in Kolkata on Saturday after he complained of severe chest pain, a hospital official said. The 73-year-old actor underwent an MRI and other tests are currently being conducted, he said. "Mr. Chakraborty has been admitted this morning and is undergoing medical evaluation. We will be able to provide further details later," the spokesperson said. The actor-turned-BJP leader was brought to the hospital at 10.30 a.m. "The reports are awaited. He is currently in the ITU under the supervision of a neuromedicine specialist," a doctor said. PTI

## ED summons Salman Khurshid's wife in money-laundering case

The Enforcement Directorate has summoned Congress leader Salman Khurshid's wife Louise Khurshid for questioning in a money-laundering investigation linked to alleged misuse of government funds in distribution of artificial limbs and equipment by a trust headed by her, sources said on Saturday. She has been asked to depose at the ED zonal office in Lucknow on February 15, they said. Two days ago, an MP-MLA court in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly issued an arrest warrant against Ms. Louise and another accused in this case and fixed February 16 as the next date of hearing. The ED case stems from the State police's FIR of 2017. PTI

## NIA raids 15 places in Jel terror funding case in J&amp;K

## Press Trust of India

The National Investigation Agency on Saturday conducted raids at 15 locations across Jammu and Kashmir as part of its crackdown on the proscribed Jamaat-e-Islami (Jel) in a terror funding case, an official said.

The raids led to the seizure of incriminating documents and digital devices connected with the activities of Jel and related trusts, and over ₹20 lakh, a NIA spokesperson said.

Official sources said two persons were also detained in Jammu for questioning during the raids at a private school and its functionaries, including its chairman. They said the residences of former Jamaat chief Sheikh Ghulam Hassan and another leader, Sayar Ahmad Reshi, in Kargil district were among those raided.

## Dismiss Shinde govt., impose President's rule: Uddhav

## Shoumojit Banerjee

PUNE



This government protects mobsters, Uddhav Thackeray said in Mumbai on Saturday. PTI

In the wake of the murder of Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) leader Abhishek Ghosalkar in Mumbai, Sena (UBT) chief and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday demanded dismissal of the ruling Eknath Shinde-led Mahayut government and imposition of the President's Rule.

Stating that the law and order situation had deteriorated beyond measure, Mr. Thackeray also called for fresh elections.

"We demand dismissal of the Maharashtra government.... which protects mobsters. Earlier, there used to be a war between underworld gangs. But now, there is a gang war within the government itself," Mr. Thackeray told reporters in Mumbai.

Speaking on the murder of Mr. Ghosalkar, and the

vis said, "I will not give any reaction to anything regarding him. I will pray to God and say 'Uddhavji, get well soon'."

On Friday, Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut had alleged that the ruling party's leaders were threatening policemen, and called for Mr. Fadnavis' resignation.

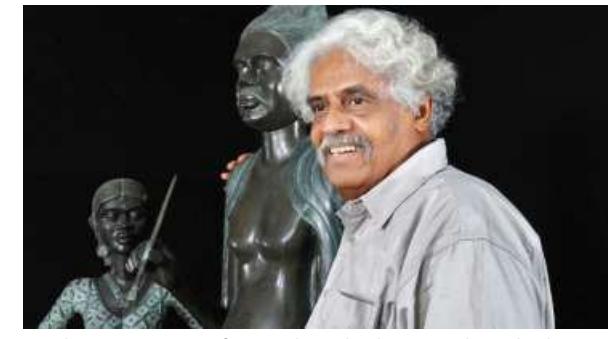
"The two recent incidents underscore Mr. Fadnavis' failure as Home Minister. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah are responsible for imposing this government on us," Mr. Raut said.

He said the crime rate had shot up ever since Mr. Shinde assumed power in June 2022 in an alliance with the BJP.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Pravanya Chaturvedi had earlier written to Mr. Shah, seeking his intervention over the deteriorating law and order situation in Maharashtra.

## He wore his craft with grace and humility

## A. RAMACHANDRAN (1935-2024)



For the connoisseurs of art, Padma Bhushan awardee Achuthan Ramachandran Nair was a total artist for his sheer versatility.

## Uma Nair

Known for translating the poetics of nature into a distinct language of realism rooted in Indian ethos, Achuthan Ramachandran Nair, 89, passed away on Saturday in New Delhi. He is survived by his artist wife Chameli Ramachandran. For the connoisseurs of art, Ramachandran was a total artist for his sheer versatility, and his thought transcended genres. From a master painter and sculptor to a dedicated pedagogue and art historian of repute, the Padma Bhushan awardee wore his craft with grace and humility.

Hailing from Attingal, Kerala, the art of the post-graduate in Malayalam literature was etched by two traditions. His thought was shaped by his conversations with the progressive writers of Kerala and his artistic sensibility was moulded by his mentors in

Santiniketan, where he learnt under the tutelage of master artist Ram Kinkar Baij and celebrated gurus like Nandal Bose and Behari Mukherjee.

Refusing to be swayed by European traditions,

Ramachandran's lotus pond meditations were mythically bound and metaphorically timeless. An avid traveller who loved little Bhil hamlets of Rajasthani, he discovered the quaint pond at Obeshwar and created female figures from his album of fantasia.

In his last lotus pond exhibition at Vadehra Art Gallery, it seemed as if time

had dried up and lent its erosive contexts into the shadows of the lotus leaves. A close encounter with anti-Sikh violence made a deep impact on his psyche and he started questioning realism.

His art turned more lyrical. He faced criticism but over some time his lotus started to speak as much to the discerning as his ac-

claimed Kali Puja (1972). The artist had a great sense of humour and relished satire. Open to criticism, he would say he did suffer from an occasional bout of a disease called male gaze.

Remembered as a revered guru in Jamia Millia Islamia, where he anchored the Fine Arts Faculty, drawing was an integral part of his daily ritual.

"Just like a musician has to string his taanpura every day to do his riyaz, I need to draw. It is my elixir," he would say.

He did self-portraits long before Indians knew of the tradition of drawing and painting oneself. His set of watercolours read like poems. In each of his works, there is a tree, a woman and a pot. In each pot, you will find his self-portrait. He gave it to his Malayali sense of humour. He would appear as insects, birds and even as a bat, which signified that he was neither contemporary nor ancient.

(The writer is a seasoned art curator and critic)

## BJP targets clean sweep in LS poll for third time in party chief's home turf of Himachal

## Vikas Vasudeva

CHANDIGARH

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) appears to be leaving nothing to chance in Himachal Pradesh, the home State of its national president J.P. Nadda, in the run-up to the parliamentary election with the party stepping up "micromanagement" at the booth level in all constituencies to reach out to voters.

The BJP swept all four Lok Sabha seats – Shimla, Kangra, Hamirpur, and Mandi – in 2019 with a vote share of over 69%, repeating its success in the 2014 election. Not only did the BJP retain the seats but each of its four candidates – Suresh Kashyap (Shimla), Anurag Thakur (Hamirpur), Ram Swaroop Sharma (Mandi), and Kishan Kapoor (Kangra) – won by

a margin of over 3 lakh votes. The victory came on the back of a turnout in excess of 70%, the highest ever in the State. The Congress secured just 27% of the votes in the poll.

One of the main factors that worked in the BJP's favour was the strong support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Growing factionalism in the Congress, which was divided into two groups – that of Virbhadra Singh and Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu – further helped the party in the election.

**Bucking the trend**  
In 2014, the BJP had reversed the trend of people voting for the State's ruling party in the Lok Sabha election by securing 53.3% of the votes against 40.7% of the Congress. In 2009, when the BJP was in power



BJP national president J.P. Nadda pays tribute to Syama Prasad Mookerjee and Deendayal Upadhyaya during the party's State-level organisational meeting in Dharamshala on February 4. ANI

in the State, it won three Lok Sabha seats, polling 49.58% of the votes, while the Congress won the Mandi seat and secured a vote share of 45.61%.

However, this time, the party is in no mood to let its guard down having faced defeat at the hands of

the Congress in the bypoll to the Mandi seat in 2021, necessitated by the death of the sitting MP, and the 2022 Assembly election.

The bypoll defeat had dealt a blow to the then Chief Minister of the BJP government, Jai Ram Thakur, as Mandi was his

home turf. Despite the CM pulling out all the stops to campaign for party candidate Brigadier (retd.) Khushal Chand Thakur, Congress candidate Pratibha Singh, wife of late Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh, emerged victorious by a margin of 8,766 votes. It served as a warning to the party's central leadership with Mr. Nadda and Union Minister Anurag Thakur hailing from the State.

Mr. Nadda is now already in poll mode, holding roadshows and public rallies since January in the hill State. He recently also participated in a State-level party meeting to finalise the election strategy.

On January 27, the BJP national president appointed former Uttarakhand Minister Shrikant Sharma as the election in-

desh and Sanjay Tandon as the co-in-charge.

## Social media plan

With the aim of highlighting the BJP's achievements at the Centre under the leadership of Mr. Modi over the past 10 years, the State party unit has started connecting with voters through its frontal wings at the booth level.

This time, the party has decided to put social media platforms to optimal use to win over voters. It has formed WhatsApp groups for 7,380 of the 7,990 polling booths in the State and plans to cover the rest over the next two weeks. "We are all set for the election and working towards strengthening all polling booths. Through WhatsApp groups, we will convey to the people the achievements of the party

and the Prime Minister over the past 10 years," State party chief Rajeev Bindal told *The Hindu*.

The party's frontal wings such as the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, Kisan Morcha, Mahila Morcha, and SC Morcha are also being pressed into action to reach out to voters.

"In the [next] three weeks, members of our frontal wings will be working with full strength on the ground in all constituencies. The party recognises the importance of these wings and has strategically assigned them this job," Mr. Bindal said.

**'Betrayal of Congress'**  
Apart from the party's achievements, voters will be made aware of the "failure" of the Congress government to fulfil its election guarantees.

Mr. Bindal alleged that the State government has betrayed the people during its 14-month tenure.

"The election guarantees promised to the youth, women, farmers, and all sections of society remain only on paper. They were extended only to secure votes. The Congress government has wasted 14 months of the people. Instead of taking the State forward, it has taken it back several years," the State BJP chief said.

"We will expose the government before the people. Before coming to power, the Congress promised to give one lakh jobs to the youth, free electricity up to 300 units every month to all households, and monthly assistance of ₹1,500 to women. None of these promises have been fulfilled," he said.

## Haryana gears up for farmers' march, traffic curbs in place

## The Hindu Bureau

CHANDIGARH

## Mobile Internet services, bulk SMSes will remain suspended in seven districts from Feb. 11

Ahead of the February 13 'Dilli Chalo' call by farmers from Punjab and Haryana to press for their demands, the Haryana government on Saturday ordered suspension of mobile Internet services from 6 a.m. on February 11 across seven districts of the State.

The State's Home Department order said there was apprehension of agitation, damage to public and private property, and disturbance of public peace and tranquillity.

Mobile Internet services, bulk SMSes (excluding banking and mobile recharge) and all dongle services will remain suspended in Ambala, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Jind, Hisar, Fatehabad and Sirsa districts till midnight of February 13.

The Haryana Police also issued a traffic advisory urging commuters to limit travel on the main roads to urgent situations on February 13.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha have announced the 'Delhi Chalo' march by more than 200 farmers' unions on February 13 to press the

Centre for accepting their several demands, including enactment of a law to guarantee a minimum support price (MSP) for crops based on the Swaminathan Commission report.

Other demands include a complete loan waiver for the farmers and farm labour, a monthly pension of ₹10,000 for 58-year-old farmers-farm labourers, withdrawal of the Electricity Bill, 2020, withdrawal of the amendments made in 2015 to the Land Acquisition Act of 2013, cancellation of cases against farmers during the year-long protest (2020) on the Delhi borders and compensation to the families of those farmers who died during the protest.

The farmers have planned to head to Delhi from the Ambala-Shambhu, Khanauli-Jind and the Dabwali borders.

Haryana Police has already deployed 50 companies of central paramilitary forces to maintain law and order in the State.

# Classifieds

## LIFE MADE SIMPLE Matrimonial

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

### BRIDE GROOMS WANTED

#### INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

##### BRIDE GROOMS WANTED

##### BRIDES WANTED

##### BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED

##### MARRIAGE BUREAUS

##### WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

##### COSMOPOLITAN

EDUCATED FAIR Kerala girl(33/5/6') seeks a boy, loyal, educated, settled. Caste no bar. Mb#8971475878

WANTED GROOM FOR MS NYU educated New York based lead data scientist. H1B 162/95 from highly educated affluent family. Father having business in India. Father Sikh and mother Tamil. Brahmin. Please Contact. 9811120090

DOCTOR

BALJA NAIDU M.B.B.S Kettai, Viruchikam 26/165 fair looking girl, Kanchipuram seeks Doctor (or) Professionally settled from Naidu families. Contact: 944380196, 9442202555

GAVARA NAIDU 24/165 MBBS (Attending PG Coaching), Kettai, Upper Middle Class in Coimbatore seeking Doctor groom MD,MS,DG PG or Professionals. Available Abroad. Sub sects no bar. 98426 50751 98653 01920

THIYIA GIRL 31 / 157 Thirikketta MBBS MS DNB (OBG). Doctor Government. Seeks Suitable alliance from Malabar Area Kerala. Call: 8547085851

HINDU TAMIL YADAV 26 MS Surgery PG. Tall Fair Good Looking. Mother Vellarai/Mukkulathor. Parents - Seeks Good habit doctors / dentists with good family background. Ct. 7200365364

MUDHALIYAR: AGE 26, Fair, Cast no Bar. MBBS (DCH). Seeks Doctor or any suitable groom. C: : 78240 23030

NADAR HINDU: 27, Fair. MBBS (DGO). Seeks Doctor or Any Suitable Groom. Contact: 93635 70731

Dr. J.Ramya (Nadar) MBBS, M.S Ophthalmology Vitreo Retina Surgeon Doctor from Same Caste Ct: 9840038499

TAMIL VISWAKARMA, 26, MD, MBBS, M.D., Own Clinic seeks suitable Doctor Groom. Ct: 9842170149

SC AD, 30 yrs, MBBS, Doctor, working in NHS, UK, Hastham, Kannai seeks groom preferably in UK. 900317072

VERY FAIR pleasing MBBS Girl 28, Hindu, working in U.K. Seeks smart, lean professional from British. WhatsApp No.9846992540

KANNADA MADHWRA Brahmin Girl 25 MD Seeks Professionally Qualified Groom. 9944570175, 978978673.

GROOM WANTED

Reputed Reddy Family in Chennai Invites Alliance for Daughter 33/165, Doctor MBBS, MS, Looking for Tall Educated Groom from affluent family CNB. Call: 89256 40111

30/Y MBBS; MD, Divorced-no child. Preferred Groom-from TNearly/30 yrs/ Doctors / Divorced - no child / Cast no bar Ph: 9442154570

DOCTOR GIRL 30/156, MBBS, MD General Medicine, seeks Doctor/suitable grooms. Mob : 9447493034, 9497325579.

Dr. Gargi, 35 Yr, 58, MS, Mch, Prefer Doctors, IAS Contact: 9886023947

KANNADA

HINDU VOKKALIGA Govda 29, BE from Coimbatore seeks Suitable Groom. Contact: 97917 68175

DIVORCED 30 yrs, BCA, not working, no encumbrance, looking fair, good family &amp; traditional, wanted working Groom, any Karnataka Tamilatha Brahmin Community. Interested may send profile to WhatsApp: 9342026162 bruhathnadas@gmail.com

MALAYALAM

SC PULAYA girl 31/47 B.Tech MACL, Software Engineer Hyderabad. OBC also considered. Hyderabad interest preferred. 9446477799

HINDU EZHAVA Girl, 29 / 172 (divorced), Nursing Officer, AIIMS AP, Ph: 97025629657

MBA / CA / ICWA

POM4 BTECH + MBA Manglik Rajput Girl, working MNC, 50 lakhs+ pgs, 5ft 6inch, 8-Oct-90, 7.39 AM, Delhi, 9899374419

NRI

CHRISTIAN FAMILY settled in USA seeking groom for their daughter (29/60cm IT engineer, never married). Looking for groom settled in USA. Phone: 7305/40785 (India) +1 510493282 (USA/WhatsApp)

HINDU PILAI 32/163 cm B.Tech. M.S. working in Ireland seeks suitable groom (CMB) 91 9443654798.

TAMIL

TAMIL Muslim 24/157 MD pathology seeks prof qualified groom. Ct: 822042091 mudhalaisal@gmail.com

TAMIL MUSLIM Doctor, 40yrs, MBBS, MS (OG) Govt. Hospital Madurai seeks suitable Groom (First / Second Marriage). Ct: 98947 88041

Second Marriage Doctor Girl Smp invite Alliance for their Daughter, 35 yrs BDS. (Chennai) MDPD (UK) Tuluken (No Kids) Looking for an Educated &amp; Well Settled Groom Call Wap: 989313631/ 9490166601.

CSI CHRISTIAN Nadar, Tirunelveli Dist well settled MS willing to live in USA 27yrs seeks bride from community, any professional.

HINDU NADAR, 30/160cm, MBBS, MD, Salary-50,000. Seeks Suitable Groom Contact: 9380791999.

Tamil Muslim 24/157 MD pathology seeks prof qualified groom. Ct: 822042091 mudhalaisal@gmail.com

TAMIL MUSLIM girl (24/57") B.E working in Singapore. Need religious person with professional qualification and working in Singapore. Contact: 9841981166

CATHOLIC VELLALAR Girl 31 / 171 MBBS MPH student visa Texas, USA Seeks professional from USA Ct:9150153743

CSI CHRISTIAN (AD) Bridegroom for Bride 31 years BE (ECE), Preferably South Tamilnadu. Ct: 944373523

TAMIL MUSLIM Bride, 29/159cm, AVP in a MNC at Bengaluru seeks qualified Tamil Muslim Groom working in Hyderabad or Bengaluru. Ct:9080501299

TAMIL MUSLIM Girl 37 BE seeks professionally educated Tamil Muslim Groom (First Marriage only). Contact: 9444235779

CHRISTIAN GIRL B.M.B.S, AG, Good Fearing &amp; Good Looking, age 29 work HR software firm &amp; well settled family. Chennai seeks suitable groom. Ct:9860041377 sandipstar@gmail.com

TAMIL/CHRISTIAN RC/SC/AD/25YR,BE, MBKA girl wkg in London seeks

CHETTIYAR Senthamizh 29/ 160 Aswini MBBS, MD (working),seeks Doctor/ IAS/ IPS/ Businessman/ Professionals. Cast no bar &amp; Good family background.

Call: 81488 95304 Email: sendhu94@gmail.com

BRIDE GROOM WANTED

HATHAMAR UDAYAR, Catholic 30 yrs, HR-MNC in Chennai, girl separated shortly with null and void order looking for catholic boy below 33 yrs, premier institute or professional with null and void or unmarried with clean habits, WhatsApp: 638039185

CHRISTIAN DOCTOR, 38/58, MBBS MD Paediatric Neurologist, Fair, Divorcee seeks good looking Doctor/ non Medico Bride Age: 30-34, Kerala/ Tamilnadu. Ct: 943326119/ 8610020066

SC/AD KRITHIKAI 28/168 (Tamil), MBBS, Captain Medical Officer, Indian Army, Kashmiri, Seeks for bride working in Doctor Army Officer. Case No Bar. Contact: 9486008423

ALLIANCE REQUIRED for South Indian Brahmin Iyer girl 31 yrs &amp; 24 yrs mrigashersham &amp; chathayam stars viswamithra gothram employed in US remaining with parents in US exchange of horoscopes post to main s3/ justice sundaram road, mylapore, chennai - 600004

DM Doctor 34/173, Asst.Prof, Chennai, affluant RC Christian Family, seeks suitable Bride. C/R No bar. Contact: 8122083188.

HINDI

SANADHYA BRAHMIN BOY, 1994,56", Working as an AE (Govt.) in UPPCL, Home Town: Bharatpur (Raj). Seeks Working Girl(Govt.), 9887512576

1985/175CM, 50 Lakhs PA, Never Married, Chennai. WhatsApp: 96290 12248

REMARRIAGE SENGUNTHAR 39/165 BE, SWE, MNC Seeks Good Looking Girl without Child 155cm Educated 9443943012

PILLAI VELLALAR, 36, 5.6, s/w Engg. in USA (BE, MS), Seeks a bride, caste/no bar. There is a minor well managed health consideration that might require support on the path to parenthood. Happy to discuss ct. 8488683735.

29, BE, Ele, Railways, Chennai, Inter caste Seeks from State, Central, IT caste no bar, with progressive mind. Cont. 9444413568 / 9003149239

VANNIYAR, MS (USA) 30/172 Swathi Fair, Employed in USA seeks well educated suitable bride. Ct: 944678830.

39, UNMARRIED, MCA, Business, Coimbatore, Matrimony Agencies Please Excuse, Contact 9498603438

KONGU VELLALAR, 36, 5.6, s/w Engg. in USA (BE, MS), Seeks a bride, caste/no bar. There is a minor well managed health consideration that might require support on the path to parenthood. Happy to discuss ct. 8488683735.

39, BE, Ele, Railways, Chennai, Inter caste Seeks from State, Central, IT caste no bar, with progressive mind. Cont. 9444413568 / 9003149239

YADAVA, 27YRS,B.E mechanical engineer,LLB Hons in IP Law (ITI Kharapur) working in a reputed firm as a patent associate earning 11 LPA seeks a well educated and employed girl.ph. 9943558874

36/178, MUTHURAJA/MUDALIYAR groom, BE, PSU 22LPA Visakhapatnam, town: Chennai. 9429989981/ vaish.nand@gmail.com, Caste no bar.

PILLAI 34/175 Uthiram BE, Software Professional @ Chennai Seeks Suitable Bride Ct 9840299966 8903293576

Alliance for Brahmin Tamil Iyer Boy 5ft 10" B. Tech. Ashwin, Kowsika Working in Bangalore prefer Veg Girl working in Bangalore. Ct: 8088020555

BRAHMIN (TELUGU) 46 (Divorce with issues, kids are with the mother) 5'10" Good Looking/ MBA, B.E, Software / Hyd. settled, Good Family Seeks Suitable 1st Marriage Brahmin Bride -prefer Telugu/ Tamil (between 33-38 yrs), Job not necessary, any degree education, Call: 9515349877

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'Fit citizens a must for country's development'

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran said a healthy population is the fundamental requirement in the push towards the country becoming a developed country by 2047.

"It used to be said of China, that it may become older before it becomes richer. It should not be the case that India becomes sicker before it becomes richer," he said in his inaugural address at the Madras Management Association's annual convention 2024 with the theme - India@2047-Leapfrogging to the Future.

"We all saw how our relatively unhealthy population became more vulnerable to the impact of COVID. And today when I see multinationals speak of India as the next frontier for processed food, it makes me worry," he said. The health aspect is a responsibility of businesses and individuals, he added.

He said by the end of March 2024, India's economy would have grown over 7%, which makes it three consecutive years of 7% growth post COVID.

India will be one of the major economic powers, will socially continue to work towards a fair, just, egalitarian society and continue to be conscious of sustainability issues, Vini Mahajan, Secretary, Union Ministry of Jai Shakti, said in her keynote address.

The Hindu Group was the media partner for the convention.

## Protest rages after jumbo tramples man to death in Wayanad

He was attacked by a radio-collared wild elephant translocated from Karnataka; irate locals block vehicles of District Police Chief, Collector



**Seeking justice:** Residents staging a protest after a man was trampled by a wild elephant at Mananthavady town in Wayanad district on Saturday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KALPETTA/KOZHIKODE

Tension prevailed at Mananthavady in Kerala after public anger over the death of a farmer in a wild elephant attack spilled onto the streets on Saturday.

The deceased was identified as Aji, 45, of Panachi at Chaligadda in the North Wayanad Forest Division. Aji was attacked by a radio-collared wild elephant translocated from Karnataka.

The marauding elephant chased Aji into the house compound of his friend at Padmala and trampled him to death. He was returning home after meeting daily wage workers on Saturday morning.

Irre residents blocked all major roads, including the busy main thorough-

fare to Mysuru, alleging apathy on the part of forest officials and Wayanad district administration to intervene in the issue.

Wayanad Sub-Collector and Revenue Divisional Officer Vishal Sagar Bharath imposed Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure in certain divisions of Mananthavady municipality after the elephant triggered panic among residents at Kurukkam Moola, Kuruvu, Kadankolly, and Payyampally. A CCTV camera footage of the elephant attack went viral on social and mainstream media, stoking public anger against the authorities.

People stopped the official car of the District Police Chief, forcing him to walk to the morgue of the Government Medical College Hospital, Wayanad, to see the body of the farmer.

Later, the mob intensified the protest with the body of the farmer in Mananthavady town by raising a slew of demands, including compensation of ₹50 lakh and job for the kin of the deceased, meeting educational expenses of the children, and waiver of his loans.

Wayanad Collector Reenu Raj was detained by the protesters raising the demands when she reached the spot.

**Aid announced**  
Minister for Forest and Wildlife A.K. Saseendran has said that a special team has been tasked with tranquilizing the wild elephant.

A compensation of ₹10 lakh would be granted to the family of deceased. One of his family members will be given a government job as well.

## Cong. guarantees get special focus in Telangana Budget

**M. Rajeev**  
HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has presented the Budget with an outlay of ₹2.75 lakh crore for the financial year 2024-25.

The vote on account Budget, the first to be presented by the Congress government, projected a revenue expenditure of ₹2.01 lakh crore and capital expenditure of ₹29,669 crore during the year. The Budget, which was presented by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu, has a heavy accent on welfare with special focus on the implementation of the six guarantees the Congress has promised in the run-up to the elections.

### Huge allocations

Accordingly, a huge ₹53,196 crore, one-fourth of the total revenue expenditure, has been earmarked for the implementation of the guarantees through different departments. The government has started implementation of free bus travel for women with a monthly outgo of ₹300 crore and enhanced coverage under Arogya Sri to ₹10 lakh.

Likewise, the Education Department had been provided with ₹21,389 crore which included ₹500 crore for improvement of infrastructure in all the universities including the Osmania University and the medical and health sector had been given ₹11,500 crore.

The State made provision of ₹19,746 crore for the Agriculture department which included review of the Rythu Bandhu and implementation of Rythu Bharosa. A huge quantum of ₹28,024 crore had been allocated to Irrigation department.



Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu

₹16,825 crore.

The Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Department got a lion's share of ₹40,800 crore. Meanwhile, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Welfare were allocated ₹21,874 crore and ₹13,313 crore, respectively. Similarly, ₹8,000 crore had been allocated to the Backward Classes Welfare and another ₹2,262 crore for Minorities Welfare.

The government had also made provision of ₹1,000 crore for construction of new buildings for SC schools and another ₹250 crore for construction of buildings for schools meant for STs.

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## 10 BJP workers held for attacking senior journalist in Pune

**Shoumojit Banerjee**  
PUNE

Ten BJP workers were arrested on Saturday in connection with the attack on senior journalist Nikhil Wagle's car on Friday evening while he was on his way to speak at the 'Nirbhay Bano' event organised by the Rashtra Seva Dal in Pune.

The arrested persons were identified as Deepak Pote, Ganesh Ghosh, Ganesh Sherla, Raghvendra Mankar, Swapnil Naik, Pratik Desarda, Dushyant Mohol, Datta Sagre, Girish Mankar, and Rahul Payne. They were booked under sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) related to rioting and voluntarily causing grievous hurt.

The attack came after an FIR was registered against the journalist on Friday morning based on a complaint by BJP leader Sunil Deodhar for allegedly making offensive remarks over the Centre conferring the Bharat Ratna on veteran BJP leader L.K. Advani.

He was booked under Sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups), 500 (defamation) and 505 (statements conducing to public mischief) of the IPC. Allegedly incited by the remarks, the BJP workers pelted stones at Mr. Wagle's car in an attempt to prevent him from speaking at the event. The journalist, however, managed to reach the venue and deliver his speech.

On Saturday, a second FIR was filed against the journalist for allegedly dis-



Nikhil Wagle

obeying a notice issued by Pune City Police to him and the organisers of the event. The police said permission was not granted for the event. The same FIR also charged BJP city unit chief Dhiraj Ghate, hundreds of party workers, Congress city president Arvind Shinde, NCP-Sharadchandra Pawar leader Prashant Jagtap, and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay More with illegally gathering at the venue.

**Guild condemns attack**  
Condemning the attack, the Editors Guild of India called on the administration in Pune and the Maharashtra government to book the guilty. It noted that FIRs were registered against Mr. Wagle over his comments, and expressed concern over the "misuse of criminal laws against journalists in an effort to intimidate and harass them". "We urge law enforcement agencies to exercise restraint before registering complaints against journalists as an FIR, lest the process of investigation becomes a punishment itself," the guild said.

## Will order probe into irregularities by BRS

**R. Ravikanth Reddy**  
HYDERABAD



Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao visits the project site, which has been in the news after the barrage's pillars sank.

He said if the BRS MLAs prefer another date for the visit, the government would alter the plan as the intention was to show everyone, including the floor leaders of all the parties, the present status of the project.

### Flying high



**Fun time:** A variety of kites are on display as the two-day International Kite Festival kicked off at the Tannirbavi beach in Mangaluru in Karnataka on Saturday. H.S. MANJUNATH

## 7 killed, 15 injured in three-vehicle crash

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NELLORE



Seven persons were killed and 15 injured, several of them critically, after a lorry jumped the road median and crashed into a private travel bus, a few metres away from the Musunuru Toll Plaza, 60 km from here, on Saturday.

The police said, first a lorry hit another lorry, which in turn jumped the median, and collided with a private bus coming in the opposite direction.

According to the Kavali police, the private bus was on its way to Hyderabad from Chennai, when the mishap occurred around 3 a.m. The impact left the

three vehicles mangled, killing four persons on the spot. Three succumbed to injuries at the area hospital at Kavali.

The police said that they had to use gas cutters to retrieve a couple of bodies and injured passengers.

## Church embraces climate fight, calls for green Lent

The Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church has urged congregations to participate in a 'carbon fast' during Lent period and raise awareness about impact of individual actions on environment; it has also unveiled a 'calendar' for devotees to follow

**The Hindu Bureau**  
PATHANAMTHITTA

As the Great Lent, leading up to Easter, commences tomorrow, the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church has urged its congregations to partake in a unique initiative – a carbon fast.

The initiative encourages practical energy-saving measures to reduce individual carbon footprints. It also aims to raise awareness about the broader impacts of individual actions and dedicates each of the seven weeks of the Lent period to a specific theme. "No matter what the individual carbon



The Lent calendar set by Mar Thoma Church for its congregation. Emissions are, the consequences are shared collectively. Those who contribute least to its generation also bear the burden," said Father V. M. Mathew, convener of the Ecological Commission.

under the Church. The first week of the Lent season, titled 'Fast on Ignorance', is envisioned as a week of learning to avoid ignorance of future impacts of climate change. Subsequent weeks will focus on power conservation, reduced food consumption, curbing excessive spending, and fasting from plastics, and minimising private vehicle usage.

The final week that culminates with Easter aims at reducing social media usage and promote direct interpersonal conversations.

The weekly calendar also suggests Bible studies to be followed each week. The Mar Thoma Church

has long embraced ecological conservation as a moral duty while the annual Maramon Convention, held on the sand banks of the Pampa river, is renowned for its strict ecological protocol and eco-friendly constructions, including a massive encampment made of braided coconut leaves. Last year, the Church introduced a green protocol for all its institutions and member families.

Several of the Church's leaders, from Philipose Mar Chrysostom to the reigning Mar Thoma Metropolitan Theodosius Mar Thoma, have all championed the cause of the environment.

## NIT-Calicut committee to examine professor's FB comment hailing Godse

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KOZHIKODE

**Professor Shajia Andavan had written 'Proud of Godse for saving India' under a post by a lawyer**

The National Institute of Technology, Calicut (NIT-C), has set up a committee to look into the recent social media comment by one of its professors hailing Nathuram Godse, Mahatma Gandhi's assassin.

In a release on Saturday, the NIT-C authorities said that "the institute does not endorse or support any comment that goes against the principles and values upheld by the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi".

To address the complaints related to the comment in question, the institute has constituted a committee to thoroughly

written "Proud of Godse for saving India" under a Facebook post by Krishnaraj, a lawyer. The post had said that Hindu Mahasabha leader Godse was a "hero" for many in "Bharat".

About the suspension of Vysakh Premkumar, a final-year student of Electronics and Communication engineering, over the protest against a 'Geeta Gyan' event held on January 21, the authorities said that the action "has been temporarily put on hold". "The student in question has filed an appeal regarding the suspension, which will be reviewed by the Senate. The Senate will convene a meeting to review the appeal."

**From Page One****Parliament hails Ram temple in resolution**

"The Ram Mandir has been built following legal and constitutional mandate," Mr. Shah said, adding that the BJP kept its patience and the Ram Temple was built in Ayodhya in a "harmonious environment". No political slogans were raised at the consecration ceremony, he said, adding, "I say with folded hands that accept the message of unity and move forward". Addressing critics, he said they should "accept the overwhelming popular sentiment on the issue and not vitiate the atmosphere of joy and devotion". "People's struggle for constructing the Ram Temple in Ayodhya began in 1528 and the legal battle for it started in 1858," Mr. Shah said, adding that it all came to an end on January 22 which "rejuvenated India's faith and marked the beginning of the journey of a great India".

"Critics used to mock the BJP over its promises alleging they were driven by electoral exigencies," he said, asserting that the Modi government banned triple talaq as well and fulfilled many other commitments.

Mr. Shah expressed confidence that the Modi government would come back to power after the general elections.

Remembering BJP veteran L.K. Advani's contribution with his "rath yatra", the Home Minister said it acted as an awakening for people and Mr. Modi during his tenure finally fulfilled their aspirations.

In the Rajya Sabha, Leader of the House and Union Minister Piyush Goyal said people from all over India took part in the consecration of the Ram Temple and the movement preceding it, thanking the Prime Minister for his "extraordinary contribution" to the creation of the temple.

BJP president J.P. Nadda, also speaking on the occasion, said that "under Prime Minister Modi's rule, we can hope to establish Ram Rajya".

**EPFO sets interest on PF deposits at 8.25%**

"The CBT has recommended a distribution of historic income amount of ₹1,07,000 crore to EPFO members' accounts on a total principal amount of about ₹13 lakh crore, which were ₹91,151.66 crore and ₹11.02 lakh crore respectively in 2022-23. The total income recommended for distribution is the highest on record," the Centre said, adding that the income had grown by more than 17.39% and principal amount had increased by 17.97%, which is a healthy financial performance.

The issue of non-inclusion of representatives of the INTUC and the AITUC in the CBT were also taken up during the meeting.

A meeting of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) was also held on Saturday. The meeting decided to extend the ESIC's medical benefits to superannuated insured persons with relaxed norms. Superannuating workers, who were insured under the ESIC but who went out of the scheme coverage in view of exceeding the wage ceiling, will get the benefit if the worker was under insurable employment for at least five years before superannuation or voluntary retirement. "The persons who were in the insurable employment for at least five years after April 1, 2012, and superannuated/voluntarily retired on or after April 1, 2017 with wages up to ₹30,000 per month will be benefited under the new scheme," the Ministry said.

It also relaxed existing norms for establishment of dispensaries, medical infrastructure, Regional-Sub Regional offices in north-eastern States, including Sikkim. It also approved a new policy on AYUSH 2023 in ESIC institutions. The ESIC will also acquire land for construction of 100-bed hospitals at Udupi in Karnataka, Idukki in Kerala, and for a 150-bed hospital at Malerkotla in Punjab.

**Kannada signboards lost in translation**

In a city as cosmopolitan as Bengaluru, not all business owners know the local language. Shop owners say they use online translation tools or trust the responsibility of writing in Kannada to painters or board makers.

"If neither the shopkeeper nor the board maker knows Kannada, then such errors are inescapable. BBMP can set up an online platform where shop owners can verify the Kannada names beforehand," suggested Mahendra R., a retired government employee from Puttenahalli.

Kannada activists, who led the signboard campaign, have now started helping commercial establishments with the correction of errors. They also say that chains and big brands are generally accurate with Kannada names, but some individual businesses are struggling to get it right.

"We appreciate people for putting in the effort to use the language. Now that they are putting it on their boards, if there are errors, the activists will help them to get it right. In the meantime, awareness should be raised through media and other means to let people know that translation sites are not accurate," says Arun Javagal, a Kannada activist.

A BBMP official says there is little they can do about spellings and grammar on Kannada boards as an enforcing agency.

To give the 60% Kannada rule legal teeth, a clause is expected to be added to the Kannada Language Comprehensive Development Act, 2022, in the upcoming Budget session.

# All eyes on Manjhi's four MLAs ahead of floor test

Lalu Prasad reportedly offers Manjhi CM's post if Opposition forms govt. in Bihar; HAM(S) issues a whip to its four MLAs asking them to be present in the House on the day of confidence motion

**Amit Bhelari**  
PATNA

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad on Saturday sent his emissary to the residence of Jitan Ram Manjhi, former Bihar Chief Minister and founder of the Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular), who has emerged as a key player ahead of the floor test in the State Assembly on Monday.

MLA Mehboob Alam of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), which is an important constituent of the *Mahagathbandhan* (grand alliance), called on Mr. Manjhi at his residence, and the two had a closed-door meeting lasting nearly half an hour. Mr. Prasad has reportedly offered Mr. Manjhi, who has four MLAs backing him, the Chief Minister's post if the Opposition formed the government in Bihar.

Five days ago, Mr. Manjhi had expressed his disappointment over the allotment of the portfolio he had held previously to his son, Santosh Kumar Summan, in the newly formed National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government. While addressing a public meeting in Gaya, Mr. Manjhi had said that from 1984 to 2013, he had always



**In focus:** Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) chief Jitan Ram Manjhi with party MLAs during a meeting in Patna. FILE PHOTO

been made the Scheduled Caste Welfare Department Minister, and now his son had also been given the same Ministry. He questioned why the Road Construction Department or the Water Resources Department was never given to his son.

Mr. Alam, however, did not say if his meeting pertained to the floor test.

"I had just come here to inquire about his health and he [Mr. Manjhi] is totally fit now and we are sure that he will play well. He knows how to play because he has been raising the voice of the poor people," Mr. Alam said as he came out of Mr. Manjhi's official residence.

Later, the HAM(S) issued a whip to its four

MLAs, asking them to remain present in the House on the day of confidence motion. "The party has issued a whip to all the MLAs to remain present during the trust vote. The whip is not related to voting in favour of or against the government. The whip related to voting is issued on the day of the confidence motion," Danish Rizwan, Mr. Manjhi's political adviser, told *The Hindu*.

Quite like the RJD, the ruling JD(U) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are also not leaving any stone unturned to keep their flock together. The JD(U) on Saturday organised lunch for all its MLAs at the residence of Cabinet Minister Shrawan Kumar, reportedly for the head count.

However, only 38 of the 45 MLAs attended the event.

The seven JD(U) MLAs who missed the lunch were Beema Bharti, Dilip Rai, Sanjeev Kumar, Shalini Mishra, Aman Bhushan Hazari, Anirudh Yadav, and Sudarshan Kumar. Mr. Shrawan Kumar, however, said that the invitees who missed the lunch had personal reasons for their absence and had informed the party beforehand. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar also attended the lunch event briefly. He, however, did not speak to presspersons.

While the Congress shifted its MLAs to Hyderabad, the BJP has shifted all its MLAs to Bodh Gaya on the pretext of a "training camp". The RJD, too, convened its legislative party meeting at the residence of former Deputy Chief Minister Tejaswi Yadav to discuss its strategy for the floor test.

All 79 RJD MLAs have been asked to stay at 5, Deshratna Marg, Mr. Tejaswi Yadav's official residence in Patna, till the floor test. They will reach the Assembly on 12 February directly from here. They are reportedly not allowed to go outside, and their belongings have been brought from their respective houses.

# Congress MP Dhiraj Sahu appears before ED for questioning

**Amit Bhelari**  
RANCHI

Congress MP Dhiraj Prasad Sahu appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) at its Ranchi regional office on Saturday in connection with his alleged links with former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren in a money laundering case.



Congress MP Dhiraj Prasad Sahu arriving at the ED office in Ranchi on Saturday. ANI

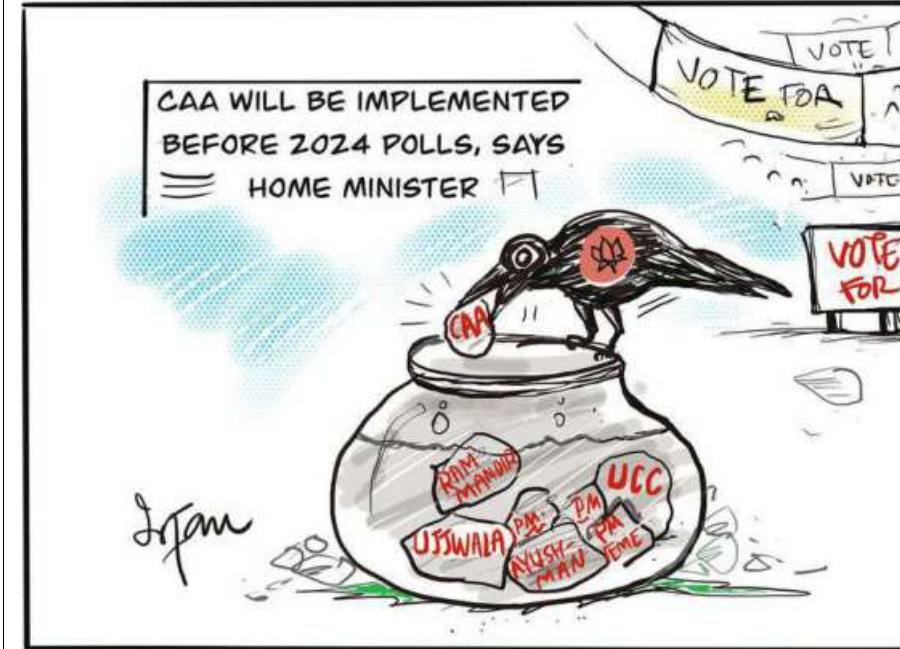
ED also raided the premises of Yogesh Aggarwal, a well-known real estate mogul and businessman in south Kolkata. The searches were also conducted at his locations in Gurugram in the BMW case.

Sources said that the agency officials also went to the address of the company where the BMW was registered. During the investigation, the ED found that whenever Mr. Soren was in New Delhi, he would use the BMW car in question.

The ED had also found video footage to back this up. The Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party had earlier alleged that the money recovered during the I-T raid belonged to Mr. Soren.

ED officials also took Banu Pratap Prasad, former revenue sub-inspector of Bagdai circle to the spot for questioning.

## On the draw



# 5 arrested over violence in Haldwani; officials under fire for ignoring warnings

**Ishita Mishra**  
NEW DELHI

The police arrested five persons on Saturday for their alleged involvement in the violent clashes at Haldwani in Uttarakhand that left five dead. Three FIRs were lodged against 5,000 unidentified persons. The State government has also ordered a magisterial probe by the Kumaon Commissioner.

Violence broke out at Banbhoolpura in Haldwani on Thursday after the demolition of a madrasa and masjid as part of an anti-encroachment drive in Nainital district. Five people died and 14 persons were critically injured in the clashes.

Meanwhile, the district authorities came under criticism for reportedly ignoring alerts in the daily reports of the police's Local Intelligence Unit (LIU), which pointed to the possibility of aggressive protests

by residents that might cause obstructions to the anti-encroachment drive. As per the purported LIU reports making the rounds on social media, the agency mentioned the meeting of Kumaon Commissioner Deepak Rawat with representatives of Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind on January 31 "on a serious matter".

Another LIU input of the same day mentions chances of aggressive protests in case the madrasa in Banbhoolpura's Malik Ka Bagi

is demolished. The LIU reports sent to the administration on February 2 and 3 also reportedly mentioned law and order threat in the area.

Bahujan Samaj Party national president Mayawati took to X and said the incident could have been averted had the government, administration, and intelligence machinery been on alert.

Curfew was lifted from all parts of Haldwani except Banbhoolpura on Saturday.



**Making peace:** The market area wears a deserted look amid curfew at Banbhoolpura in Haldwani on Saturday. PTI

# Congress included PM's caste in OBC list during its rule: Shah

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday termed "unfortunate" the debate on the caste of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had a habit of distorting facts.

Mr. Shah was speaking at the Global Business Summit organised by a television channel in New Delhi. He said it was the Congress government in Gujarat that included Mr. Modi's caste in the list of Other Backward Classes (OBC) in 2000. These people have a habit of distorting facts," he said.

The Home Minister said Mr. Gandhi "has a habit of telling lies and repeating those thereafter."

Mr. Gandhi recently said that Mr. Modi was not an OBC by birth and had got his caste included in the OBC list during the BJP government's tenure in Gujarat in 2000.

"Prime Minister Modi's caste was listed in Gujarat as OBC on July 25, 1994. At that time, the Chief Minister of Gujarat was Chhabildas Mehta and the party in

power was the Congress. Till that time, Mr. Modi had not contested a single election," the Minister said.

"Subsequently, the Gujarat government recommended the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) will be issued before the coming Lok Sabha election, and the process to grant Indian nationality to the beneficiaries will start soon after, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said here on Saturday.

Under the CAA, the Centre wants to grant Indian nationality to persecuted non-Muslim migrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan who arrived in India till December 31, 2014. "The CAA is a law of the country and its notification will definitely be issued. The CAA will be implemented before the elections," Mr. Shah said.

The Home Minister said Mr. Gandhi "has a habit of telling lies and repeating those thereafter."

Mr. Gandhi recently said that Mr. Modi was not an OBC by birth and had got his caste included in the OBC list during the BJP government's tenure in Gujarat in 2000.

# 'Charan Singh's ideals seen in workings of Modi govt.'

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Only a government rooted in ground realities can understand the voices from the ground, Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) president and Rajya Sabha MP Chaudhary Jayant Singh said on Saturday, hailing the Narendra Modi government for conferring Bharat Ratna on his grandfather Chaudhary Charan Singh.

Mr. Singh won the Rajya Sabha election with support of Samajwadi Party and is now headed to an alliance with BJP ahead of the 2024 general election.

His remarks were interrupted when several Congress MPs questioned Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar's decision to allow him to speak, without first con-

sulting the House. The ruling party and Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar accused the Congress of insulting Charan Singh while Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge insisted that he salutes the Bharat Ratna awardees, but rules must be adhered to.

After order was restored, Mr. Singh continued with his speech. He lamented that a leader like Charan Singh is being seen through the political prism and linked to formation and breaking of alliances.

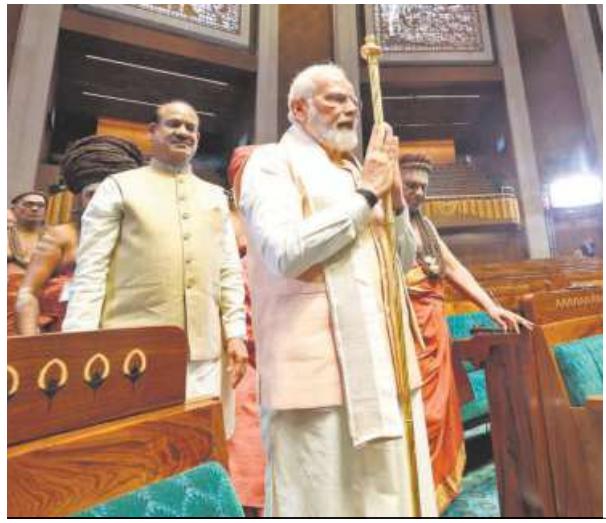
"I admit I was with the Opposition for 10 years. I started sitting here [treasur-

ry benches] just a while ago. I have seen glimpses of Charan Singh's ideals in the working of this government in the last 10 years," he said.

Expressing his gratitude towards the Modi government, the RLD chief said: "Only a government which is rooted in ground realities, understands the voices from the ground and strengthens them can honour *Dhartiputra* [son of the soil] Charan Singh with Bharat Ratna."

The Bharat Ratna honour, Mr. Singh said, brings two broad changes. One, it "institutionalises" the former Prime Minister's legacy and will inspire research in Charan Singh's economic and administrative policies. Second, it instils hope in people.

## Glimpses from the House



THE 17<sup>TH</sup> LOK SABHA, WHICH TOOK OFF WITH THE REMOVAL OF THE SPECIAL STATUS OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR UNDER ARTICLE 370 OF THE CONSTITUTION, ENDED ITS LAST SESSION ON SATURDAY WITH A SPECIAL DISCUSSION ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE RAM TEMPLE AT AYODHYA. KEY MOMENTS OVER FIVE YEARS:

**ABROGATION OF J&K SPECIAL STATUS:** A long-cherished political goal of Jan Sangh ideologue Syama Prasad Mookerjee, the abrogation of the special status of J&K under Article 370 of the Constitution was among the key decisions of Modi government 2.0.

**TRIPLE TALAQ BAN:** Among the first laws that the Modi government brought in its second tenure was the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2019. It banned instant triple talaq.

**FUNCTIONING UNDER COVID-19 PROTOCOLS:** The Monsoon Session in 2020 was the first session that got delayed due to the pandemic. It was held amid major changes due to the COVID-19 protocols. The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha had separate sittings as

members were spread across the two chambers to maintain social distancing.

**THREE FARM LAWS:** In September 2020, Parliament passed three farm laws. Farmers from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh began a protest, forcing the government to roll back the controversial laws in November 2021.

**NEW HOME FOR PARLIAMENT:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the new Parliament building on May 28. Amid vedic chants by priests, the Prime Minister performed pujas and later installed a *Sengol* (sceptre, in picture, left) from Tamil Nadu in the Lok Sabha chamber, right next to the Speaker's chair. The ceremony was boycotted by 19 Opposition parties over what they described as a violation of protocol as it should have

been presided over by the President.

**WOMEN'S RESERVATION LAW:** Twenty-seven years after the women's reservation Bill was first introduced in Parliament, the Lok Sabha on September 20, 2023 passed a Bill with near unanimity to amend the Constitution and provide one-third reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies.

**END OF COLONIAL-ERA CRIMINAL LAWS:** The 17th Lok Sabha witnessed the passage of the Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita Bill, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita Bill, and the Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Bill to replace the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively.

**SECURITY BREACH:** On December 13, 2023, the 22nd anniversary of the terror attack on Parliament, two men jumped from the visitor's gallery, into the Lok Sabha chamber. They were carrying canisters that emitted yellow smoke (in picture). MPs apprehended the intruders and handed them to the security staff.

**RECORD SUSPENSION IN A SINGLE SESSION:** The Winter Session of Parliament in December 2023 saw as many as 146 Opposition MPs being suspended from both Houses for bringing placards. The Opposition, however, alleged that the suspensions were aimed at preventing them from

asking questions to the Home Minister on the security breach.

**DISQUALIFICATION AND EXPULSION:** The 17th Lok Sabha saw the disqualification of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi after he was convicted in a defamation case by a Gujarat court. His membership was reinstated days after the Supreme Court stayed the conviction. The House also expelled Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra after the Ethics Committee found her guilty of "unethical conduct" and contempt of the House for sharing her Lok Sabha credentials with unauthorised persons.

# Manmohan Singh missed the reforms bus as PM, says Nirmala

Finance Minister accuses the UPA government of thorough mismanagement after the global financial crisis, says the Modi government had to carefully extricate India's economy out of the thorns the UPA had tangled it in, without ripping its fabric.

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

**T**he United Progressive Alliance (UPA) squandered the opportunity to implement the unfinished reforms agenda from 1991 during its decade in office, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in the Rajya Sabha on Saturday, accusing the Manmohan Singh government of "thorough mismanagement" after the global financial crisis.

Citing a Tamil proverb "Mullu Mel Potta Thuni Mathir" (Like a cloth placed on thorns) in response to a discussion on the White Paper on economy, Ms. Sitharaman said the Narendra Modi government had to carefully extricate India's economy out of the thorns the UPA had tangled it in, without ripping its fabric.

"The economy was like



**Detailed account:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaks in the Rajya Sabha on Saturday. PTI

a piece of cloth on that thorny bush, the thorns were all those malpractices that had torn into the economy. The whole world was using the phrase Fragile Five for all of us. What was the level of fragility? From the bottom, you were within the first five," she said.

"After all, you [UPA] inherited a very good economy from the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government. And

maybe in your first five years, you tried benefiting the people with that good economy. But subsequently, and unfortunately, after the global financial crisis, it was thorough mismanagement," the Minister said.

**'Record for posterity'** Stressing that the White Paper was being brought out now "after 10 years of toiling to bring the economy back on track", Ms.

Sitharaman said it would serve as a record for posterity, when the intent was not good and transparency was not there in the economy.

"We need to have clean and accountable governance, not governance through extra-constitutional bodies," she remarked.

**Issue of black money** She reminded the House that the first Cabinet decisions under Mr. Modi were the formation of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to remove black money and the Expenditure Reforms Commission under Bimal Jalan "so that profligate expenditure of the earlier government could be rationalised".

Referring to the former PM, Ms. Sitharaman said that the "promised reforms of 1991 were not complete" and "when there was an opportunity again between 2004 and

2014, no reforms" were undertaken. "It is one thing to continuously tell us what have you done... What have you done on the two-track approach, which is required for the train to go forward, one to remove the malpractices' impact on the economy and to not only carry forward those pending reforms, which have been waiting from 1991, but also even further to take the economy forward. So, that is the track which we laid for ourselves," she said.

Dismissing Congress MP K.C. Venugopal's charge that the demonetisation of high-value currency notes in late 2016 had wiped out India's micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) and the alarming unemployment rates during Mr. Modi's tenure, Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said on Saturday.

He was speaking during a short discussion on the subject in the Rajya Sabha. The Congress leader averred that when the Finance Ministry was producing a White Paper it should have included the impact of demonetisation. He said, "There is no word on it."

"The stated motive behind demonetisation was to bring back black money. Why haven't you given an account of the black money retrieved?" he asked.

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Mr. Ve-



K.C. Venugopal

nugopal said, had noted after demonetisation that it was a "legalised loot and organised plunder" and predicted that it would reduce GDP growth by 2%.

His prediction had come true, Mr. Venugopal said, adding, "What is the situation of MSMEs? They are finished. And because of the MSMEs' closure, the unemployment rates are skyrocketing. The unemployment rate during the UPA years fell from 8.4% in 2004-05 to 5.6% in 2011-12, while in October 2023 it was 10.05%."

"This is actually not a White Paper, this is a paper hiding the dark truths of this country," he said.

He claimed that during the UPA period, they had

done a better job in managing deficits.

"The poor are becoming poorer and the rich are becoming richer. The gap between the rich and the poor is rising. You said India's average per capita has gone from \$4,000 to \$6,000. You are cleverly using the word 'average per capita GDP'. Per capita GDP will increase in a developing country like India, but the annual average per capita GDP growth fell from 5.9% in Manmohan Singh tenure to 3.8% under Modi tenure," he claimed.

**Targeting election** Taking part in the discussion, Fauzia Khan of the Nationalist Congress Party said, "More than calling it a White Paper on the Indian economy, I would call it a White Paper on the upcoming election."

She said the paper was silent on the rise in corruption in the country.

Trinamool Congress MP Saket Gokhale said that the White Paper was "magical" since it did not mention any of the glaring failures of the Modi government.

## A period of reform, perform, transform'

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the five-year tenure of the 17th Lok Sabha was a "period of reform, perform, and transform" that propelled the country towards big changes.

"The country has moved towards big changes at a fast pace and all members of the House made an important contribution. Such works were completed for which people had waited for centuries," Mr. Modi said in his valedictory speech.

He added that the country "will bless the 17th Lok Sabha".

This was the last session of the Lok Sabha before the general election, which too was touched upon by

Mr. Modi. He said that it might make a few nervous but it was an essential aspect of democracy and "we will accept proudly".

He referred to the resolution on the Ram Temple in Ayodhya passed by the Lok Sabha, stating that the move would give "constitutional power to the generations to come to be proud of our values".

He added that "for gen-

erations, people had dreamt of one Constitution, but this House made that possible by removing Article 370".

The Prime Minister thanked MPs and Speaker Om Birla.

"You [Mr. Birla] always had a smile on your face no matter what happens. You led this House in an impartial manner and I laud you for it. There were times of anger and accusations, but you handled these situations with patience and ran the House wisely," Mr. Modi said.

**'Biggest crisis'**

Referring to the pandemic, Mr. Modi said that during the past five years, the "biggest crisis of the century" was seen, and Mr. Birla made arrangements so that parliamentary work

was not hampered while ensuring the dignity of the House.

"There used to be talk of the need for having a new building in earlier times but the decision of the Speaker made this a reality during the 17th Lok Sabha," he said, adding that the ceremonial installation of the "Sengol" (sceptre) in the House was also made under Mr. Birla's leadership.

He said the 17th Lok Sabha saw 97% productivity. "We are moving towards the end of the 17th Lok Sabha and we resolve that the productivity should go beyond 100% in the 18th Lok Sabha," Mr. Modi said.

He also hailed the passage of the women's reservation Bill and the criminalisation of instant triple talaq.

"We are seeing a steady rise in crimes against Sche-

## Marginalised groups left out: Congress

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

duled Castes in India. The people from the marginalised classes are witnessing the injustice happening with them everywhere," Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi, said.

He said that "Ma Sita's" patience and power was revered by everyone.

"However, is this the experience of Unnai's daughter [a reference to the case involving the gang-rape of a Dalit minor], when she was powerless and alone? Was this the experience of women wrestlers who were fighting for their rights and dignity [a reference to their protest against sexual harassment]?" he asked.

Mr. Gogoi said that out of desperation, youth were falling prey to drugs and crime. They were being discriminated against eve-

rywhere, he said.

"Hence, they are resorting to leaving the country in search of opportunities and dignity," he added.

"Ram is in our minds and hearts," Mr. Gogoi said. "Jai Shri Ram should be uttered with faith and love. Yet, every time the members of the ruling government say it, it's full of hate."

Intervening in the debate on the same subject in the Rajya Sabha, Congress general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala said hatred was being spread in the name of Ram, who is a symbol for love and affection.

**Threat to Muslims** Participating in the discussion in the Lok Sabha, All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief

Asaduddin Owaisi questioned whether the Modi government was only for "Hindutva", and said that the 17 crore Muslims of India were feeling alienated.

He said the government, through its actions, was sending a message to Muslims on whether they wanted to save their life or pursue justice.

Shiv Sena (Uddhav) MP Arvind Sawant said that it was Balasaheb Thackeray who had first coined the Hindutva slogan, and it was after this that the BJP had realised its importance.

The Left parties staged a walkout from the Rajya Sabha, while the DMK, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), and Trinamool Congress were absent during the short debate on the Ram Mandir.

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Email ID :- see2chandikhole@gmail.com  
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	2 Protection to Right Bank of river Baitarani From Bindhan to Confluence Point.		
	3 Renovation to Distributary No.3 of HLC Range-III.		
2. Total No. of Packages	: 03 (Three) No. Individual Packages		
3. Tender Cost	1 Rs.337.75 Lakh (Approximately). 2 Rs.41.23 Lakh (Approximately) 3 Rs.106.22 Lakh (Approximately)		
4. Cost of Bid Document (Non Refundable)	: Rs.10,000.00 (On-line payment) for each Package		
5. Bid Security	: 1. Rs.8,37,800/-, 2. Rs.8,41,300/-, 3. Rs.1,06,300/-		
6. Class of Contractor	1 'A' & 'Special' for Package No. 1 to 2 2 'A' & 'B' for Package No.3		
7. Period of Completion	1 12 (Twelve) calendar months for packages 1 & 2 2 06 (Six) Calendar months for package 3		
8. Other details are as follows.			
Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding	Date of Opening of Technical Bid (Cover-I)
Additional Chief Engineer, Eastern Circle - II, Chandikhole	ACE, EC-II JPD 20 OF 2023-24	From 15/02/2024 at 10.00 AM	To 01/03/2024 up to 5.00 PM
	ACE, EC-II JPD 21 OF 2023-24	at 11.30 AM	
	ACE, EC-II JPD 22 OF 2023-24		
9. e-mail Id	: see2chandikhole@gmail.com		
Further detailed conditions can be seen from the Govt. website <a href="http://www.tendersissa.gov.in">www.tendersissa.gov.in</a>			
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## IN BRIEF



## Uttarakhand govt. sets up panel to draft UCC rules

The Uttarakhand government on Saturday constituted a nine-member committee to prepare the draft rules for the Uniform Civil Code (UCC). The UCC Bill was passed by the Assembly on February 7. The committee will be headed by retired IAS officer Shatrughan Singh. Additional Secretary (Justice) Sudhir Singh, Inspector General of Police Training Barinder Singh, Doon University Vice-Chancellor Surekha Dangwal, and social worker Manu Gaur are among the members of the committee. The Bill will now be sent to the President for approval.

## Kamal Nath meets Sonia, eyes Rajya Sabha seat from M.P.

Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and Congress veteran Kamal Nath met senior leader Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi on Friday ahead of the Rajya Sabha elections on February 27 in which five seats from the State will be up for grabs. The Congress, which has 66 MLAs in the State Assembly, has sufficient numbers for one seat. Even though there was no official word on the meeting, Congress insiders in Delhi and Bhopal told *The Hindu* that Mr. Nath is eyeing a place in the Upper House of Parliament and held discussions with Ms. Gandhi regarding the same.



## PM to inaugurate Hindu temple in UAE next week

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate a major Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi during his upcoming two-day visit to the United Arab Emirates next week, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Saturday. Apart from participating in rituals at the new BAPS Hindu Mandir, Mr. Modi will also hold talks with the leadership of the UAE during his visit on February 13 and 14. The work for the structure has been going on since 2019 and the expansive 27-acre land was donated by the UAE government.

## Jarange-Patil on fresh hunger strike over Maratha quota

Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange-Patil on Saturday launched yet another indefinite hunger strike at his village of Antarwali-Sarathi in Jalna district, accusing the ruling Eknath Shinde-led government of not fulfilling promises pertaining to reservation for the Maratha community. The latest hunger strike - Mr. Jarange-Patil's third - pertains specifically to the activist's demand that the government make good its promise of granting Other Backward Class (OBC) Kunbi caste certificates to blood relatives of Marathas whose records proved them to be Kunbis.

## SUDOKU

2		3			1	5		
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9			3					
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1	4		6			9		

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku								
5	9	4	2	8	7	6	1	3
1	8	6	5	4	3	2	9	7
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8	2	1	3	5	6	9	7	4
9	6	3	4	7	1	5	8	2
4	1	8	7	2	5	3	6	9
2	3	9	6	1	8	7	4	5
6	5	7	9	3	4	8	2	1

CM YK

# 'Heritage spaces in Lucknow not being maintained properly'

Heritage enthusiasts in Uttar Pradesh lament condition of monuments in State capital even as the High Court directs the administration to remove encroachments from protected sites; officials say legal action is being taken to clear encroachers

**Mayank Kumar**  
LUCKNOW

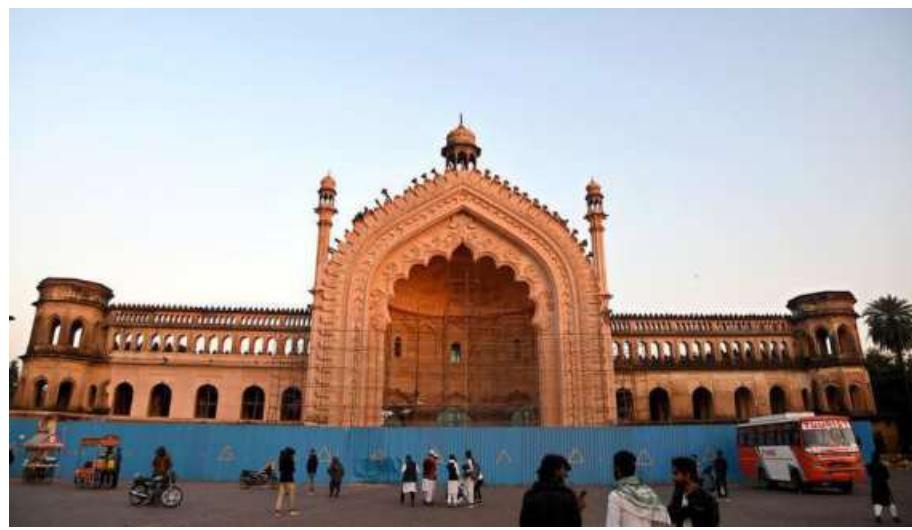
**S**yed Mohammad Haider Rizvi, 50, believes heritage sites are a collective legacy.

A lawyer and heritage enthusiast, Mr. Rizvi was jubilant when the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court on February 7 once again directed authorities to convene a meeting of the committee constituted in 2013 by the High Court, to identify and take action against encroachments in monuments in Lucknow.

"The court had asked the authorities to remove encroachments from Centrally protected heritage sites, but the administration did little," said Mr. Rizvi. The committee has met only 13 times over the past decade.

**60 monuments**

Up to 60 protected monuments in Lucknow have been declared to be of national importance under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). Mr. Rizvi said that most of these structures, built during the Nawab era (17th to 19th



**Need for attention:** Heritage lovers say authorities in both the Centre and U.P. have failed to take concrete steps to remove encroachments. A view of Rumi Darwaza in Lucknow. SANDEEP SAXENA

centuries), have been encroached upon in the last few decades.

Authorities, both Central and State, had failed to take any concrete step to remove intrusions, he alleged. "Despite numerous petitions and public interest litigation pleas, encroachment still exists at Chhattar Manzil, the Kazma buildings, Rumi Darwaza, Bada Imambara, Chota Imambara, among others heritage sites," said Mr. Rizvi.

However, ASI's Superintending Archaeologist in Lucknow, Aftab Hussain, said: "We issue notice to

encroachers and approach the local administration for taking legal action wherever information of encroachment is found correct. We have issued notices to more than 1,100 people in Lucknow alone, and many encroachments have been removed."

The ground reality is different. Lucknow's iconic Bada Imambara, constructed in the late 18th century, has people living within the complex. Declared a protected monument by the ASI in 1920, it also houses a large Asfi mosque and a *bhul-bhulaiya* (labyrinth). It was built

during a devastating famine, by Awadh Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula, who aimed at providing employment to people reeling under poverty and hunger at the time.

The Union Ministry of Culture did a recent assessment of the Kazmain buildings, built mirroring a similar structure in Iraq, considered sacred to Shia Muslims. "The monument shows signs of rising dampness in the external facade on all sides along the plinth level," reads the report published in October 2023. It goes to on to note "structural cracks at

the lintel level", "water seepage...at the ceiling which further led to deterioration of wooden roof structural members", and "missing copper panels [from the dome]."

The *kothi* (large house) at Bibiyapur on the banks of the Gomti river, now in disarray, was built by Asaf-ud-Daula, the Nawab of Awadh, in the late 18th century.

Designed in the neoclassical style by Antoine Polier, who was intermittently a part of the British and Nawab's army, the residence was used as a country retreat for the Nawab.

So far, U.P.'s heritage zones are governed by rules monitored by the local development authorities. "In Lucknow, three heritage zones have been defined by the Lucknow Development Authority: Husainabad Zone, Kaisarbagh Zone, and Lamartine Zone," said Indu Prakash,

a trained archaeologist who worked with the ASI for more than 35 years.

Mr. Rizvi and other heritage enthusiasts feel rules are not enough. "Heritage by-laws are needed. These will act as a catalyst in preserving these monuments," he said.

Navy chief inaugurates new defence systems

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R. Hari Kumar inaugurated a Precision Approach Radar (PAR) at INS *Utkrosh* in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which will enable "highly accurate horizontal and vertical guidance to land an aircraft safely in low visibility conditions, such as heavy rain and fog". He also inaugurated the IUHDS (Integrated Underwater Harbour Defence and Surveillance System) at Naval Jetty, Port Blair, the Navy said.

"The IUHDS is capable of detecting, identifying & tracking surface and under water targets in vicinity of naval jetty thereby enhancing security of Port Blair harbour," the Navy said in a statement.

Adm. Kumar, accompanied by Kala Hari Kumar, President Navy Welfare and Wellness Association, visited Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), the country's sole operational tri-service command, from February 6 to 9. In addition to visiting the headquarters, the CNS also visited Vijay Baug and laid the foundation stone for a sailors' accommodation.

During his visit, Adm. Kumar also interacted with personnel posted in various units across the Command.

## Federalism under attack, say speakers at democracy meet

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI



Historian Romila Thapar, writer Githa Hariharan, and professor Apoorvanand at the event.  
SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Academics and retired bureaucrats on Saturday deliberated on a range of issues related to federalism and the safeguard of constitutional rights and institutions, on the first day of the two-day Democracy Convention 2024.

The 'Federal Contract' group presented its views on "Federalism, Equality of States, and State Rights", stating that measures like "one nation, one election" undermined India's federal structure and conflated the different priorities voters had for national, State, and Panchayati Raj institutions, degrading each one's different sphere of responsibility.

Zoya Hasan, Professor Emerita, Centre for Political Studies (SPS), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), and currently Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development, said over the past few years, policy measures were being increasingly announced without consulting States and parties. She said investigating agencies were being used actively to weaken State governments and Opposition parties.

The office of the Governor had also been misused to weaken the State governments ruled by non-BJP parties.

Professor Hasan also highlighted the issues of the downgrading of Jammu and Kashmir into a Union Territory, "inadequate" tax devolution to States, and "centralisation" of resources by the Centre. "The effort clearly seems to be one of undermining, by the use of economic/fiscal lever, the non-BJP-led governments to win legitimacy with voters at the State and Central level," she said.

Balveer Arora, former Professor of CPS and former

## CSIR NAL flies test-drone that can double up as 'pseudo satellite'

**Jacob Koshy**  
NEW DELHI



The unmanned aerial vehicle developed by NAL.  
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Scientists at the CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) successfully tested an unmanned aerial vehicle, called High Altitude Pseudo Satellite (HAPS), at Challakere, Karnataka earlier this month.

HAPS are like drones, except that they are expected to be in the stratosphere – well above where commercial planes fly – and can be powered enough by solar cells and a battery-system to be able to hover for days on end.

**Variety of applications**  
A fully working HAPS can be used for a variety of applications, from surveillance to beaming 5G waves.

They can double up as "towers in the sky" and have more flexibility than satellites, in being able to map a piece of land from above.

The NAL system is cur-

rently far from these goals. The HAPS that was flown this month is a scaled-down HAPS. The 5-metre-long system, with a wingspan of 11 metres and weighing 23 kg, rose to about 3 km and stayed put for about eight hours. This prototype, scientists associated with the project told *The Hindu*, "met or exceeded all the performance metrics set out for it".

However, a series of tests have been planned and they are expected to culminate in a full-bodied craft – with a wingspan of 30 m (nearly as much as a Boeing 737) – by 2027.

It will be able to rise to

23 km and stay airborne for at least 90 days. "There are very few proven systems anywhere in the world that can do this and given the variety of potential applications, India ought to be able to have such capabilities of its own," said Abhay Pashikar, Director, CSIR-NAL.

**Engineering prowess'**  
While HAPS may look elementary, it requires a fair bit of engineering prowess.

They are unmanned and must fly days and nights on end, meaning they need solar-powered batteries – and not jet fuel – capable of lifting the airframe up to the stratosphere (which extends from 20-50 km above the earth's surface). This ascent into the sky is challenging, given the air turbulence in the atmosphere, and the fact that these are relatively light planes.

"The weight of the airframe is only 8 kg but the entire system's weight is nearly 23 kg. Most of the

weight is of the batteries," said Dr. Pashikar.

Unlike the familiar solar panels on rooftops, those used to power the plane are extremely thin solar films.

"There are only one or two companies in the world capable of making solar-cell films that thin," said L. Venkatakrishnan, Chief Scientist and Head, NAL, and in-charge of the HAPS programme.

"It's like the Hero Honda of the skies. Our test this month gave us the information required to design a bigger system, particularly on how we can ensure that the drone remains balanced given the forces it will be subject to," he told *The Hindu*.

CSIR-NAL aims to design and build the HAPS' propellers, battery management system, carbon-composite airframe, flight-control system, and the high-powered electric motors that can withstand extreme temperature ranges.

## Clampdown in Sandeshkhali in Bengal; Trinamool suspends local leader

**Shiv Sahay Singh**  
KOLKATA

Amid unrest at Sandeshkhali in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas, the district administration on Saturday imposed prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the Cr.PC in certain gram panchayats. The police said more than four people should not assemble in public in that area. Internet services have been suspended.

While there were no reports of fresh violence on Saturday, political temperatures soared over the developments in Sandeshkhali. The area has been on

sue. They demanded that the Governor visit Sandeshkhali immediately after his return from Kerala. "The BJP MLAs will visit Sandeshkhali on Monday to meet the villagers," he said on social media.

Earlier this week, villagers held protests against Trinamool leaders Mr. Shahjahan, Shiboprasad Hazra and Uttam Sardar after they reportedly failed to pay the agreed amount to farmers for taking over their agricultural land for prawn cultivation.

Trying to salvage the situation, the Trinamool leadership suspended Mr. Sardar for six years.

The Trinamool leadership also held a press conference and blamed the BJP and CPI(M) for fomenting trouble in the region. Meanwhile, locals have accused the police of overreach after the violence. The wife of local BJP leader Bhujang Das alleged that the police came to her house in the early hours of Saturday morning and ransacked it and also tried to assault her.

A few women in the area told local news channels that they were taken to party offices by local Trinamool Congress leaders and made to stay there against their will.

**HARRISBURG**

**Trump promises to undo Biden's gun restrictions if re-elected**



Former President Donald Trump, the Republican frontrunner in the 2024 presidential race, while speaking to supporters at an event organised by the National Rifle Association, promised to rescind a rule curbing sales of gun accessories known as pistol braces and other regulations put in place by the Biden administration. REUTERS

**KHARKIV**

**Russian attack on Ukraine's city of Kharkiv sparks 'river of fire', kills 7**



An overnight Russian drone attack on a petrol station in Ukraine's second city Kharkiv killed seven persons, including three children, local authorities said on Saturday. Fuel from the petrol station quickly spread through the neighbouring street forming a 'river of fire', while burning some residents alive and injuring others. AFP

**YANGON**

**Myanmar junta enforces military service law after battlefield losses**



Myanmar's junta is enforcing a law allowing the military to summon all men aged 18-35 and women aged 18-27 to serve for at least two years, it said on Saturday, as it struggles to crush opposition to its 2021 coup. The law was authored by a previous junta in 2010 but was never brought into force. AFP

**GAZA STRIP**

**Six-year-old Gaza girl found dead days after pleading for help**



The body of six-year-old Hind Rajab, who pleaded to be rescued after her family's car came under fire in war-ravaged Gaza City, was found on Saturday two weeks after she made the first distress call. The highly publicised case comes as aid agencies warn that children and families are bearing the brunt of Israel's war with Hamas. AFP

# 'India, Maldives will sort issues bilaterally'

President Wickremesinghe says he discussed India-Sri Lanka economic and connectivity initiatives with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar at the Indian Ocean Conference; New Delhi and Canberra raise concerns about the presence of foreign research vessels in the Indian Ocean Region

**Suhasini Haidar**  
PERTH

**I**ndia and the Maldives would resolve the issues between them "bilaterally", Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe said, emphasising that while Maldives has allowed a Chinese 'research' ship into the Male harbour, no Chinese troops had been allowed in.

Speaking to *The Hindu* on the sidelines of the Indian Ocean Conference, Mr. Wickremesinghe also confirmed Sri Lanka's decision to join the 15-nation ASEAN-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Cooperation (RCEP) agreement that includes China in the free trade zone, a grouping India walked out of in 2019.

The Sri Lankan Presi-



**Team work:** S. Jaishankar, Ranil Wickremesinghe, Penny Wong and Vivian Balakrishnan at the 7th IOC in Perth on Friday. PTI

dent said he had discussed India-Sri Lanka economic and connectivity initiatives with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, who called on him on Friday evening here, and both sides completed a review of pending programmes as well as Sri Lanka's economic recovery process. Explaining his decision to

apply for RCEP membership, Mr. Wickremesinghe said that Sri Lanka needed to access as many markets as possible.

"India has a vast internal market, but if Sri Lanka has to grow, it has to reach as many external markets as possible. We already have our relationship with India that helps us eco-

nomic as well as the 1998 free trade agreement," Mr. Wickremesinghe said, describing the RCEP as an opportunity to have the "best of two worlds". Asked whether the economic recovery would enable elections in the country, Mr. Wickremesinghe confirmed that Sri Lankan Presidential elections would be held in 2024 itself, while parliamentary elections would be held soon after them.

**No mediation**

He said neither Delhi nor Male had approached Sri Lanka to mediate between them, as tensions have grown over the return of Indian troops, entry of Chinese vessels, and critical comments made by Maldivian Ministers. Sri Lanka hopes the issues would subside "soon" in the inter-

est of the Indian Ocean Region.

"As a friend and a neighbour, we would like to see them [India and Maldives] sort out their issues soon. I would say, Maldives itself has an [internal] process and the two sides are talking. There is a new government there and I think everyone must give these issues time to be sorted out," Mr. Wickremesinghe said.

The presence of foreign research vessels in the Indian Ocean Region has been a prominent concern at the conference, where Dr. Jaishankar referred to "growing anxieties" over "dual purpose agendas"

and Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong spoke about China's "rapid military build-up" in the Indo-Pacific.

Mr. Wickremesinghe did

not respond to a question about whether pressure from India had led to Sri Lanka's one year moratorium on foreign research ships docking in Sri Lankan ports. However, he clarified that regular port calls for fuel and food replenishment as well as naval exercises would continue as normal, including from China. This month, the Lankan Navy accorded India's *INS Karanj* a ceremonial welcome at the Colombo port as a part of such exchanges.

The Sri Lankan President's words came even as the Maldives indicated that it has reached an agreement with India on the issue of the Indian troops stationed on southern atolls.

(*The Hindu* correspondent was an invitee to the Indian Ocean Conference)

# 'Israel's plan for Rafah may lead to tens of thousands of deaths'

**Agence France-Presse**  
GAZA STRIP

Gaza's Hamas rulers warned on Saturday that Israel's planned Army operation in overcrowded Rafah could cause "tens of thousands" of casualties in the city that has become the last refuge for displaced Palestinians.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ordered the Army to set its sights on Rafah, telling military and security officials late Friday to "submit to the Cabinet a combined plan for evacuating the population and destroying the battalions" of Hamas in the southern city.

Hamas said any military action would have catastrophic repercussions that "may lead to tens of thousands of martyrs and injured if Rafah... is invaded".

**Israeli bombardment killed at least 110 people overnight, including 25 in Rafah, say officials**

Mr. Netanyahu's announcement, coming only hours after U.S. President Joe Biden issued his strongest criticism of Israel's response to the October 7 attack, sparked concern among world leaders and the United Nations. Along with the U.S., Jordan, Spain, Germany and Saudi Arabia had issued a warning against the operation.

Witnesses reported new strikes on Rafah on Saturday. The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said Israeli bombardment killed at least 110 people overnight, including 25 in Rafah.

**Indonesia witnesses final leg of rallies ahead of polls**

**Reuters**  
JAKARTA

Tens of thousands of supporters of Indonesia's presidential contenders packed final rallies in the capital Jakarta and the Central Java city of Solo on Saturday, as campaigning draws to a close ahead of the world's biggest single-day election.

Candidates will enter a cooling off period from Sunday to election day on Wednesday, where three contestants are running to succeed the hugely popular President Joko Widodo, who has led Indonesia for a decade and cannot run again.

The contenders to lead the world's third-largest democracy are popular former Governors Ganjar Pranowo and Anies Baswedan, and ex-special forces commander Prabowo Subianto, who has soared in opinion polls with the tacit backing of the President.

At stake is the leadership for the next five years of a mineral-rich Group of 20 economy of 270 million people.

## Imran Khan gets bail in cases of attack on military installations

**Press Trust of India**  
ISLAMABAD

An anti-terrorism court in Pakistan on Saturday granted bail to the country's jailed former Premier Imran Khan in 12 cases linked to the May 9 attacks on military installations by his supporters following his arrest in an alleged corruption case.

ATC Judge Malik Ejaz Asif granted bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party founder Mr. Khan af-

ter fulfilling a surety bond of (Pakistan) Rs 0.1 million in all 12 cases, including the General Headquarters (Pakistan Army) and Army Museum attack.

The court said there was no justification to keep Mr. Khan, 71, under arrest as all accused in May 9 cases were on bail.

Mr. Khan will remain in jail as he is convicted in many other cases.

Former Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was also granted bail

in 13 cases in the same case.

Mr. Qureshi, who is also in prison facing charges in other cases, will not be released either.

**President's invite**  
Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan claimed that President Arif Alvi would invite his party to form the government as they had secured a majority in the National Assembly.

## Act first, report later, S. Korea tells Marines

**Agence France-Presse**  
SEOUL

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol told his Marine Corps on Saturday to "act first, report later" if provoked, following an escalation of threats from

North Korea.

Nuclear-armed North Korea has this year declared South Korea its "principal enemy".

**Kim's threats**

Leader Kim Jong-un repeated on Friday that

Pyongyang would not hesitate to "put an end" to South Korea if attacked.

The hawkish Mr. Yoon has bolstered defence cooperation with the U.S. and Japan since coming to office in 2022, including expanding joint drills, to

counter Pyongyang's threats. "If the enemy provokes us, adhere to the principle of 'act first, report later' and respond decisively and overwhelmingly without hesitation to completely shatter the enemy's will," Mr. Yoon said.

<b>ODISHA STATE SEEDS CORPORATION LIMITED</b> ( A GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKING )	
SANTARAPUR, BHUBANESWAR - 751002.	
Tel-MD 0674-2340573, E-mail - mdossctd456@gmail.com	
<b>NIT No.OSSC/Mktg(Hort)-64/2024</b>	
<b>e-Tender Call Notice for Procurement of TC Pomegranate Plantlet for the Year -2024-25</b>	
OSSC Ltd, invites e-Tender from Producers only on time wise rate contract basis for Procurement of TC Pomegranate Plantlet for the Year-2024-25 in double cover system through online mode only for the work below.	
Name of the work	Purchase of TC Pomegranate Plantlet for the Year - 2024-25
No. of work	One
Availability of bid documents in Portal	15.00 hours on dt.12.02.2024 to 17.00 hours of dt.04.03.2024
Last date of receipt of tender in portal	17.00 hrs of dt. 04.03.2024
Date and Time of Opening of Bid	10.30 hrs of dt. 06.03.2024
The detailed descriptions of crops, varieties, quantity, parameters, terms and conditions and other details of tender specified in the tender schedule would be made available in the e-Tender portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in .Any addendum/ corrigendum/cancellation can also be seen in the said website.	
Sd/- Managing Director, OSSC Ltd.	
CAD-4059: OPR-01106/11/0095/2324	

<b>NON-RESIDENT TAMILS WELFARE BOARD</b> Commissionerate of Rehabilitation and Welfare of Non-Resident Tamils, Government of Tamil Nadu Ezhilagam Annex, 4th floor, Chepauk, Chennai - 600 005.		
The following tender proposals may be accessed for appropriate responses.		
Sl. No.	Tendering Authority & Bid Submission Portal	Subject of Request for Proposal (RFP), EMD and Bid Due Date (BDD) and time
1.	Administrative Officer, NRT Welfare Board <a href="http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in">www.tenders.tn.gov.in</a>	RFP for Establishment of a Project Management Unit (PMU) to support the Non-Resident Tamils (NRT) Welfare Department to implement initiatives for NRTs. Bid Due Date & Time: 22nd February 2024, 2 pm EMD is Rs. ₹ 1,00,000.
All subsequent communications will be available at the site mentioned above. The RFP notifications will also be available at <a href="http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in">www.tenders.tn.gov.in</a> . RFPs can be downloaded till BDD and will be opened on the portal <a href="http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in">www.tenders.tn.gov.in</a> on the respective BDD.		
Administrative Officer, NRT Welfare Board		
DIPR/852/Tender/2024		

<b>GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA</b> <b>OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF,</b> <b>WATER RESOURCES, ODISHA, BHUBANESWAR.</b>			
<b>e' Procurement Notice No.CEMKS 21 OF 2023-24</b>			
1. Name of the Work : Construction of a Creek Irrigation Project over Hansua near village Govindpur (Panchapalli) in Ersama Block of Jagatsinghpur District.			
2. Amount put to Tender : Rs.10,93,91,854.00			
3. Bid Document Cost : Rs.10,00,000.00 (online)			
4. E.M.D. : Rs.10,94,000.00			
5. Class of Contractor : "A" Class & "Special" Class			
6. Period of Completion : 18 Calendar months			
7. Other details are as follows.			
Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender for bidding	Date of Opening of Bid (Cover-I)
Chief Engineer & BM, Mahanadi Kathajodi System, Bhubaneswar	CEMKS MSD 03 OF 2023-24	16.02.2024 10.00 hrs	01.03.2024 17.00 hrs
8. e-mail Id : <a href="mailto:celmbsbr@yahoo.co.in">celmbsbr@yahoo.co.in</a>		DIPR-32252/11/00027/2324	
Further detail conditions can be seen from the Govt. website : <a href="http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in">www.tendersodisha.gov.in</a> . The Corrigendum/Cancellation of Tender, if any, will be uploaded and can be seen from the above website only.			
Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Mahanadi Kathajodi System, Bhubaneswar			

**Army College of Dental Sciences (ACDS)**  
Chennai-CRPF (Road), Jai Jawahar Nagar (Post), Secunderabad – 500 087. Website – [www.acds.co.in](http://www.acds.co.in)

**REQUIRES - PRINCIPAL**  
Army College of Dental Sciences (ACDS), a Private unaided College functioning under the aegis of Army Welfare Education Society (AWES). Estd – 2001, NAAC 'A' Grade, NIRF-Ranking –33, invites applications for the post of Principal. **Eligibility Criteria.** MDS in any specialty with 14 yrs of teaching experience in Dental Institution recognised by Dental Council of India, out of which, 5 yrs as a Professor for Teaching Experience in PG Institution is desirable. Publication/Research work as per Dental Council of India norms (min 40 points for articles and publications). Age: 60 yrs or below as on 01 May 2024. Pay & Allowances. Negotiable. CV as per format given at careers on [www.acds.co.in](http://www.acds.co.in) to be addressed to Registrar, ACDS, at above postal address or e-mail at [acds.careers@gmail.com](mailto:acds.careers@gmail.com). Last date for receipt of application is 08 Mar 2024. Short Listed Candidates will be called for interview. No TA / DA Admissible. Tele : 7382088266

**BENGALURU METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT CORPORATION**  
Central Offices, Mechanical Engg., Dept., K.H. Road, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-560027 Tele No: 080-22537519

**TENDER No.: BMTC/2023-24/SE0217/CALL-2 Dated: 10/02/2024**

**SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER (Through e-procurement mode only)**

(1) BMTC invites tender through E-Procurement Portal for Selection of Service Provider for Procurement, Operation and Maintenance of 120 Nos. 900mm floor height, 9 mtr City type Non AC Electric Buses on Gross Cost Contract (GCC) Model.

(2) Last date for bid submission in e-procurement portal on 19/2/2024 @ 14:30 Hours.

Further, any addendum/corrigendum in respect of changes in calendar of events, scope, other tender terms & conditions etc., will be uploaded/Published through e-portal only.

**NOTE:** Interested bidders need to register in the GoK e-procurement portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> for details. In case of further assistance, the bidders may contact e-procurement Help Desk for support Ph: 080-46010000, or 080-68948777 or e-mail at [eprocurementhelpdesk@gmail.com](mailto:eprocurementhelpdesk@gmail.com). Interested suppliers may also contact e-procurement cell for training on bid submission. E-mail to [eprocurementhelpdesk@gmail.com](mailto:eprocurementhelpdesk@gmail.com) for further information if required.

**Sd/-**  
**CHIEF MECHANICAL ENGINEER**  
(Tender Inviting Authority)  
DIPR/CP/3518/AKAR/2023-24

**COCHIN PORT**  
कोचिन पत्तन प्राधिकरण  
Cochin Port Authority  
Cochin-682 009, Kerala.

Applications are

## SCIENCE

## Probability of survival decreases with increased duration of CPR

**The Hindu Bureau**

A new study published in the journal *The BMJ Open* has found that a person's chance of surviving while receiving cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) for cardiac arrest in a hospital declines rapidly from 22% after one minute to less than 1% after 39 minutes. Similarly, the likelihood of leaving the hospital with no major brain damage declines from 15%

after one minute of CPR to less than 1% after 32 minutes with no heartbeat. The researchers say the findings provide insights that may help guide hospital teams, patients and their families in deciding how long to continue resuscitation.

In-hospital cardiac arrest is a common and catastrophic medical emergency, with only around 25% of patients surviving to hospital discharge. Studies

have shown that a longer resuscitation time for patients with in-hospital cardiac arrest is linked to lower odds of survival, but experts have been unable to make specific recommendations on when to stop resuscitation.

To address this knowledge gap, researchers measured the effect of CPR duration (in minutes) on outcomes for 348,996 U.S. adults (average age 67 years) who had an in-hos-

pital cardiac arrest between 2000 and 2021. CPR was defined as the interval between the start of chest compression and the first return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC) or termination of resuscitation. The main measures of interest were survival to hospital discharge and favourable functional outcome at hospital discharge, defined as a brain performance score of one (good cerebral performance) or two

(moderate cerebral disability) on a five-point scale.

After accounting for potentially influential factors such as age, sex, ethnicity, and a range of pre-existing conditions, the results show that of the 348,996 patients, 233,551 (67%) achieved return of spontaneous circulation with an average CPR duration of seven minutes, whereas 115,445 (33%) did not achieve return of spontaneous circulation with an

average CPR duration of 20 minutes. At one minute's CPR duration, the probabilities of survival and favourable functional outcome among patients were 22% and 15%, respectively.

But as duration of CPR increased, the probabilities of survival and favourable functional outcome decreased to less than 1% for survival at 39 minutes and less than 1% for favorable functional outcome at 32 minutes.

## SNAPSHOTS



## Pollinator-plant interactions disrupted by nitrate radicals

Air pollutants reduce nocturnal hawkmoth pollination of evening primrose flowers by altering the flowers' appealing scents, as per a study. The findings illustrate the impact of anthropogenic airborne pollutants on an animal's olfactory ability and suggest that such pollutants may limit global pollination. Human activities have altered the environment. Airborne pollutants, such as oxidants like ozone and nitrate radicals, are known to degrade the chemical compounds that produce floral scents.

## Transitioning to hyperlocal extreme weather forecasting

**The Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare have initiated the weather information network and data system (WINDS) to generate long-term, hyperlocal weather data**

**Ashish Agarwal**

**W**eather forecasting plays a pivotal role in the country's functioning. Accurately predicting rain, cyclones, heatwaves and drought are critical to inform decision making on disaster management. In India the Indian Meteorology Department (IMD) is the principal government agency in all matters relating to meteorology and it specialises in the incredibly complex science of predicting weather patterns by observing, modelling and interpreting a multitude of variables.

However, in tropical countries like India, weather variability is inherently higher. IMD's forecasts have improved vastly in the last few years as it has upgraded to technologies similar to the ones used by the U.S., the U.K. and Japan, which are known to produce accurate forecasts. Yet, there are still many days and geographies for which Indian forecasts go wrong, especially during winter and summer monsoon.

One of the major hurdles is the lack of weather monitoring ground stations. Currently, IMD operates around 800 automatic weather stations (AWS), 1,500 automatic rain gauges (ARG) and 37 doppler weather radars (DWR). This is against the total requirements of more than 3,00,000 ground stations (AWS/ARG) and around 70 DWRs. It's interesting to note that several In-



**Skills:** Indian forecasts are not accurate especially during winter and summer monsoon

## Why weather forecasts still go wrong

IMD's forecasts have improved vastly in the last few years due to technological upgradation

- IMD currently operates only around 800 automatic weather stations, 1,500 automatic rain gauges, and 37 doppler weather radars
- Over 300,000 ground stations (either automatic weather stations or automatic rain gauges) and around 70 doppler weather radars are required for reliable weather forecast
- Several State governments and private companies together operate over 20,000 ground stations, many of which are not currently used by IMD
- New ground stations need to be installed by IMD and the available data need to be shared seamlessly with IMD to improve the accuracy of forecasts
- The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has initiated the WINDS system to generate long-term, hyperlocal weather data
- Under the WINDS programme, over 200,000 ground stations will be installed

dian State governments and private companies operate a significant network of ground stations (more than 20,000), many of which are not currently used by IMD. The factors range from the inaccessibility of the data to their reliability.

## Not modern

Currently, most of the prediction software used in forecasting are based on the global forecasting system and weather research and forecasting models, both of which are not the most modern. In contrast, with the government's focus on Make in India, its support to start-ups and the huge public and private investments in the sectors of agriculture and climate, many new age companies are switching to artificial intelligence/machine (AI/ML) learning for more

predictions. At the same time though, these technologies are only as good and verifiable as the data they can access. Thus there is an urgent need for an integrated system to fill these data gaps.

A promising step forward was that recently, the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare have initiated the weather information network and data system (WINDS) to generate long-term, hyper-local weather data. The system will also promote the data for wider applications in agriculture and other sectors, it will help in creating a national-level data base, and it will assist in establishing the protocols required to access the country-wide data by the various public and private concerns. Under this pro-

gramme, more than 200,000 ground stations (AWS and ARG) will be installed, which can help in enhancing weather data utilisation and thus in improving weather predictions and decision making.

In the last month large dense fog blanketed the NCR region, leading to near-zero visibility. This happens mainly because of the high particulate matter and smog in the atmosphere. Fog can trap the pollutants close to the ground, leading to an increase in respiratory and other health-related issues. Another cause for worry is that in foggy conditions, some pollutants like nitrogen oxides can react with other compounds to form secondary pollutants, thus posing severe health risks, particularly to children and the elderly.

Air quality monitoring systems are currently very expensive and tend to be imported. Thanks to the Make in India initiatives, however, many Indian companies have started to manufacture low-cost and highly reliable sensor-based air quality monitoring systems. These are also easy to install and have low maintenance costs. Thus, it is now possible to install a large number of such instruments quickly, especially in urban areas. The IITs are helping as well as they have started centres of excellence in this domain, with a mission to establish a nation-wide network of affordable air quality sensors. An integrated AI/ML-based model with data from the new air quality and weather sensors will be a major step forward to accurately predict fog as it will help in timely decision making around transportation and the health-related impacts of air pollution.

With the recent advances India is therefore poised towards establishing a world class, robust air quality and weather information network.

Once seamless data sharing and systems integration is achieved, India will have access to a new information gateway and one that is critical to addressing our climate and environmental challenges.

*(Sachchida Nand Tripathi is Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, IIT Kanpur, and Ashish Agarwal is Founder & Chief Technology Officer, Ingen Technologies)*



**Safety side:** Cervavac HPV vaccine was found to be safe and non-inferior to Merck's Gardasil vaccine.

aged 15-26 years.

The effectiveness of the HPV vaccine is generally higher when given to boys and girls at a younger age. A study that compared the effectiveness of HPV vaccine in different age groups found that 17 studies showed the highest vaccine effectiveness in the youngest age group. It found that vaccine effectiveness estimates for younger adolescents aged 9-14 years ranged from 74-93% whereas in adolescents aged 15-18 years, the effectiveness ranged from

12-90%. "We used immunobridging approach for licensure of Serum's vaccine. This is based on WHO's recommendations for the evaluation of HPV vaccines. Immune responses observed with the new vaccine are compared with those obtained in an efficacy proven population. For Gardasil, efficacy is proven in women aged 15-26 years. Therefore, we compared the immune response of our vaccine to the efficacy proven population – women of age 15-26

years. With this approach, efficacy of the licensed vaccine is bridged to the comparator vaccine," Dr Umesh Shaligram, Executive Director - R&D, Serum Institute and a co-author of the paper says in an email to *The Hindu*.

On why the Serum's Cervavac vaccine administered to boys and girls aged 9-14 is compared with Gardasil given to women aged 15-26 years, Dr. Shaligram says: "For [recipients] aged 9-14 years, one has to immune bridge with the efficacy proven population. Therefore, immune responses in 9-14 girls and boys were compared with women aged 15-26 years receiving Gardasil as a primary endpoint, and this bridges efficacy to these age groups also. This is again in accordance with the WHO guidance. We have also compared [the antibody titres] in girls and boys aged 9-14 years who received Cervavac versus

girls aged 9-14 years who were administered Gardasil, as a secondary endpoint."

Explaining further the reason why the immune responses in boys and girls in the 9-14 years age group (intervention arm) are compared with the immune responses in women aged 15-26 years, Dr. Shaligram says: "For HPV vaccines, the principal target group is young adolescents who have not yet become sexually active. Regulatory authorities agreed that it was not feasible to conduct efficacy trials in this young population due to constraints surrounding evaluation of genital sampling and requirement of a very long duration of follow-up." He further adds: "For the Gardasil vaccine too, for 9-14 years, efficacy was extrapolated based on immunobridging to 15-26 years age group. We have followed the same design as per the WHO guidance."

## Serum's HPV vaccine non-inferior to Gardasil: study

**R. Prasad**

A phase-2/3 trial of Serum Institute of India's human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine Cervavac conducted at 12 tertiary care hospitals across India in girls and boys aged 9-14 years has found the vaccine to be safe and non-inferior to a comparator vaccine Gardasil manufactured by Merck. The Cervavac vaccine is a quadrivalent vaccine that targets four HPV subtypes – 6, 11, 16, and 18, and was compared with Gardasil vaccine which contains the same four HPV subtypes. The trial was carried out between September 2018 and February 2021. The results were published recently in the journal *The Lancet*.

The trial found that in adolescent girls and boys, two doses of the Serum's Cervavac vaccine generated nearly double the antibody response against HPV subtypes 16 and 18 com-

pared with the response generated with Merck's Gardasil vaccine in young adult women; non-inferiority against HPV types 6 and 11 was also shown in the trial.

While Serum's Cervavac vaccine was administered to boys and girls aged 9-14 years in the intervention arm, the control arm had men and women aged 15-26 years who received the comparator vaccine Gardasil. The intervention arm had 738 girls and 369 boys and received two doses of the Cervavac vaccine, while the control arm had 819 women and 381 men and received three doses of the Gardasil vaccine. The geometric mean titre (GMT) of antibodies against HPV subtypes 6, 11, 16, and 18 generated by the Serum's Cervavac vaccine in girls and boys aged 9-14 years was compared with the geometric mean titre of antibodies generated by Gardasil vaccine in women



## Question Corner

## Ice-age

**What likely caused the extreme ice-age more than 700 million years ago?**

Australian geologists have used plate tectonic modelling to determine what most likely caused an extreme ice-age climate in Earth's history, more than 700 million years ago. The researchers have proposed that all-time low volcanic carbon dioxide emissions triggered the 57 million year-long global 'Sturtian' ice age. The extended ice age stretched from 717 to 660 million years ago, a period well before the dinosaurs and complex plant life on land existed. The team went back to a plate tectonic model that

shows the evolution of continents and ocean basins at a time after the breakup of the ancient supercontinent Rodinia. They connected it to a computer model that calculates the carbon dioxide degassing of underwater volcanoes along mid-ocean ridges. The researchers found that the start of the Sturtian ice age precisely correlates with an all-time low in volcanic carbon dioxide emissions. In addition, the carbon dioxide outflux remained relatively low for the entire duration of the ice age.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

## Study shows magma flows into dike below Grindavík

The 15-km-long magma dike that formed beneath Grindavík, Iceland, in November 2023 reached an unprecedented subsurface magma flow rate of 7,400 cubic meters per second. The dike formation preceded the more recent Sundhnúkur eruptions in December 2023 and January 2024. The study shows how tectonic stress can drive magma flow into dikes with only modest overpressure in the feeding magma body. The measurement of such flow rates provides insight into the formation of major dikes.



## Deep-earth hydrogen reservoir drives outgassing

Direct measurements from deep within the Bulqizé chromium mine in Albania have revealed large quantities of outgassing natural hydrogen, researchers report, suggesting the presence of a faulted reservoir of the gas deeply rooted in the surrounding ophiolite massif. The findings shed light on the geological contexts in which other natural hydrogen sources may be found. At least 200 tonnes of nearly pure hydrogen gas are released from the mine each year.

# FAQ

## What are the changes in the new Water Act?

**Will the amendments weaken the laws that protect rivers and water bodies from industrial pollution?**

**Jacob Koshy**

**The story so far:**

The Lok Sabha this week passed the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Act, 2024. The legislation, which was introduced and passed in the Rajya Sabha on February 5, makes important changes to the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

**What is the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974?**

This Act was the first piece of legislation in independent India that identified the need to have an institutional structure to address contamination of water bodies. This led to the creation, in September 1974, of the Central Pollution Control Boards (CPCB) and State Pollution Control Boards (SPCB) that were charged with monitoring and preventing public water resources from getting contaminated by sewage and industrial effluents. This Act made it mandatory for industrial units to get permission from their respective State boards before setting up factories and submitting themselves to checks on whether their manufacturing and other processes were complying with prescribed norms.

The Parliament of India in its wisdom enacted the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act in 1974 with a view to maintaining

A key change in the new Act is that it removes the provisions of imprisonment for several violations, deemed 'minor', and replaces them with fines, to the tune of ₹10,000 extending up to ₹15 lakh. "pollution," the website of the CPCB notes. While the CPCB is empowered to conduct checks and provide guidance on technical standards to be adhered to, the SPCB files cases and is expected to enforce compliance. Violating the provisions of the Water Act can mean industries being shut down; monetary fines as well as imprisonment of up to six years. That said, there have been no instances of companies or people in India having been imprisoned due to environmental violations.

**What are the amendments?**

Water is a State subject, and the Centre cannot directly pass legislative laws influencing water management. However, the Centre can create legislation, if two or more States demand it, and this can be made applicable by States over their territories if they adopt the legislation in their Assemblies. The amended version of the Act, passed by both Houses of Parliament, will currently apply to Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan and the Union territories. The original Act, passed in 1974, is applicable in 25 States. The most important change is that it removes the provisions of imprisonment for several violations, deemed "minor", and replaces them with fines, to the tune of ₹10,000 extending up to ₹15 lakh.

As per the original Act, the SPCB's permission is needed for establishing any industry or treatment plant, which could discharge sewage into a water body, sewer, or land. In the amendment, the Bill specifies that the Centre, "... in consultation with the CPCB, may exempt certain categories of industrial plants from obtaining such consent...."

However, operating or establishing an industrial unit without SPCB consent can still land you in jail for six years along with a fine.

The Bill also adds that the Centre may issue guidelines for the grant, refusal, or cancellation of consent granted by the SPCB. It also penalises tampering with monitoring devices used in determining whether any industry or treatment plant can be set up. The penalty will be between ₹10,000 and ₹15 lakh. The amended Act also empowers the Centre to frame rules to select the chairpersons of SPCBs and frame guidelines that States can follow on matters for establishing industries and new operating processes.

**What has been the response?**

Explaining the rationale behind the amendments, Environment Minister, Bhupendra Yadav, who steered the Bill, said outdated rules and regulations caused a "trust deficit." The imprisonment provisions for minor violations, which are simple infringements and did not lead to any injury to humans or damage to the environment, often caused "harassment" to businesses and citizens and was not in consonance with the spirit of "ease of living and ease of doing business," he added. In discussions on the Act in the Lok Sabha, Members of Opposition parties raised concerns that the amendments weakened the laws that protected rivers and water bodies from industrial pollution. They argued that the fear of imprisonment acted as an effective deterrent to industrial units that were lax with complying with strict regulations.

## What does Uttarakhand's UCC entail?

**How will the Uniform Civil Code Bill impact divorce, inheritance of property, and live-in relationships? What are the penalties if the new law is violated? Has any community been left outside its purview? Are other BJP-ruled States also considering formulating a UCC?**

**Aaratrika Bhaumik**

**The story so far:**

In February 7, the Uttarakhand Assembly passed the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, becoming the first legislature in independent India to pass a law that proposes common rules on marriage, divorce, inheritance of property, and live-in relationships for all citizens, irrespective of their religion. This stems from Article 44 of the Constitution (Directive Principles of State Policy) which although not enforceable, obligates the State to strive to implement such a uniform law. The Bill will now be sent to the President for her assent after which it will become a law.

**Who is the Bill applicable to?**

It applies to all residents of Uttarakhand except the tribal community which constitutes 2.9% of the State's population. The community has been averse to a UCC from the very beginning. Accordingly, Section 2 stipulates – "Nothing contained in this code shall apply to the members of any Scheduled Tribes within the meaning of clause (25) of Article 366 read with Article 142 of the Constitution of India and the persons and group of persons whose customary rights are protected under Part XXI of the Constitution of India."

**How does it regulate live-in relationships?**

The Bill imposes an obligation on all heterosexual couples (irrespective of whether they are residents of Uttarakhand or not) to register their live-in relationships by submitting a "statement" to the concerned Registrar. Even if such a relationship is terminated, the Registrar has to be kept informed. In case either of the

partners is less than 21 years old, the declaration will also be sent to their parents or guardians.

Subsequently, the Registrar will conduct a "summary inquiry" to ensure that the relationship does not fall under any of the prohibited categories mentioned under Section 380 – if a partner is married or in another relationship, if he or she is a minor, and if his or her consent was obtained by "coercion, fraud or misrepresentation". The Registrar will then have to decide within 30 days. If the registration is refused, reasons have to be conveyed in writing.

Notably, a woman is eligible to claim maintenance in case she is "deserted" by her live-in partner.

In case a couple has spent a month without registering their live-in relationship, they can face a jail term of up to three months or a maximum fine of ₹10,000, or both. Any false statement by them will also attract the same jail term, but a higher fine amount of ₹25,000, or both. Upon being issued a notice, if they still do not register, they may face six months of imprisonment or a fine of ₹25,000 or both.

The Bill abolishes the concept of "illegitimate children" by extending legal recognition to children born in void and voidable marriages, as well as children born in live-in relationships.

**Is bigamy or polygamy permitted?**

One of the conditions stipulated under Section 4 for a valid marriage is that neither party should have "a spouse living at the time of the marriage" thus prohibiting practices such as bigamy or polygamy. The minimum age of marriage, however, will remain the same.

**Do marriages have to be registered?**

Marriages that occur after the enactment of the law have to be compulsorily registered within 60 days. This applies to marriages solemnised within the State or outside its territory, provided that at least one party to the marriage is a resident of Uttarakhand. Although non-registration of marriage will not invalidate it, parties can attract a penalty of up to ₹10,000. A three-month jail term and a fine of ₹25,000 will be also awarded in case false information is intentionally rendered during marriage registration.

Marriage ceremonies can be conducted in accordance with any religious and customary rites detailed under legislations such as The Anand Marriage Act, 1909, Arya Marriage Validation Act, 1937, and The Special Marriage Act, 1954, among others.

**What about divorce proceedings?**

No marriage can be dissolved without a court order or else it can attract imprisonment up to 3



**Towards uniformity:** BJP supporters celebrate after Uttarakhand CM tables the UCC Bill in the State Assembly, in Dehradun, on February 7. ANI

years. Grounds for divorce also include religious conversion but not "irretrievable breakdown of marriage" despite the latter being recognised in several Supreme Court judgments.

Importantly, Section 28 prohibits the initiation of divorce proceedings unless one year has elapsed since the date of marriage. However, an exception can be made if the petitioner has suffered "exceptional hardship" or if the respondent has exhibited "exceptional depravity". Women can specifically seek a divorce in case the husband has been found guilty of rape or any kind of unnatural sexual offence or if he has more than one wife. Following a divorce, the custody of a child up to 5 years remains with the mother.

**How are inheritance rights affected?**

A distinct feature of the Bill is that it abolishes the coparcenary system governing ancestral property under the Hindu Succession Act, 1956. Thus, the same scheme of succession will now apply to both ancestral and self-acquired property for Hindus.

In the event of intestate succession, the Bill guarantees equal property rights for the spouse, children, and parents – a departure from existing personal laws that limit such rights. If there is no immediate family, the property will be equally divided among second-line relatives – first cousins from the paternal side. Others can also stake a claim if no eligible claimants are found.

**Does the Bill criminalise Muslim personal law practices?**

Existing Muslim personal law practices governing marriage and divorce such as *nikah halala*, *iddat*, and triple talaq have been criminalised without explicitly naming them. For instance, Section 30(i) stipulates that the right of a person to remarry the divorced spouse can only be exercised without any condition, such as marrying a third person before such a marriage. This therefore prohibits the practice of *nikah halala*.

Section 32 further provides that anyone who "compels, abets or induces" to observe any such condition before remarriage will be punished with imprisonment up to three years and also be liable to pay a fine of ₹1 lakh.

**What do experts have to say?**

"The mandatory registration of live-in relationships is intrusive and definitely in breach of the fundamental right to privacy as it forces you to submit yourself to the state on something as intimate as a personal relationship," says Alok Prasanna Kumar, Co-Founder and Lead at the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy in Bengaluru.

Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat have also appointed committees to initiate the formulation of a UCC. This, Mr. Kumar says, effectively defeats the purpose of Article 44 since the Constitution framers did not intend for every State to have its own different version of a UCC.

## How can child safety be ensured online?

**What are the dangers and risks for children in the virtual space? What is the responsibility of tech companies? Should public pressure be stepped up to incorporate more safety aspects, especially for use by children? How can governments step in with regulatory frameworks?**

**Ramya Kannan**

**The story so far:**

In early February, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg provided a public apology to parents whose children were victims of online predators during a Congressional hearing, that could be described as hostile to not just Meta, but other tech majors including X, TikTok, Snapchat, and Discord. The Big Tech and the Online Child Sexual Exploitation Crisis hearing was reportedly called "to examine and investigate the plague of online child sexual exploitation" and all their executives were pinned on their abdication of responsibility to protect children on social media platforms.

**What are the issues with children's safety online?**

Tech majors are increasingly finding themselves in the midst of a maelstrom of protests across the world, not just over privacy concerns, but also with the security of users online. Across the world, parents and activists are aggressively advancing the agenda of having the tech companies take responsibility, or provide platforms that are 'safe by design' for children and young users.

A UNICEF report of last year, 'The Metaverse, Extended Reality and Children', attempted an analysis of how virtual environments may evolve

'All the rules that exist in the real world to protect children should also prevail online' and how they are likely to influence children and young adults. These technologies do offer many potential benefits for children, such as in the areas of education and health.

**Are the risks significant?**

The potential risks to children are significant, the report points out. "These include safety concerns such as exposure to graphic sexual content, bullying, sexual harassment and abuse, which in immersive virtual environments can feel more 'real' than on current platforms." Further, vast amounts of data, including about non-verbal behaviour are collected, potentially allowing a handful of large tech companies to facilitate hyper-personalised profiling, advertising and increased surveillance, impacting children's privacy, security, other rights and freedom.

While the complete immersion in an alternate reality which Metaverse promises is still not here, there are multiple virtual environments and games that are not fully immersive, and yet indicative of dangers in coping with that world.

For instance, explains Samnuthi Suresh,

programme co-ordinator, Tulir – Centre for the Prevention and Healing of Child Sexual Abuse,

"in the hugely popular Grand Theft Auto, which does have adult and child versions, there is an instruction in the adult version to 'approach a prostitute and spank her many times'.

Now, adolescents are likely to pick the adult version.

What messages are we sending to children?"

More recently, she adds, there were reports in the media about how children were using Artificial Intelligence to generate indecent child abuse images.

Then there is the mental health aspect, with children facing the prospect of trauma, soliciting and abuse online, which can leave deep

psychological scars that impact lives in the real world too.

Innocuous and innocent sharing of images online can also be twisted by depraved predators.

End-to-end encryption is essential to protect the information that children share online, points out Ms. Suresh.

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Innocuous and innocent sharing of images online can also be twisted by depraved predators.

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**What about the reach of generative AI?**

The Davos World Economic Forum in a paper

last year explained that generative AI brings potential opportunities, such as homework assistance, easy-to-understand explanations of difficult concepts, and personalised learning experiences that can adapt to a child's learning style and speed. "Children can use AI to create art, compose music and write stories and software (with no or low coding skills), fostering creativity," it says. For children with disabilities, a world opens up as they can interface and co-create with digital systems in new ways through text, speech or images.

"But generative AI could also be used by bad actors or inadvertently cause harm or society-wide disruptions at the cost of children's prospects and well-being," the report records. Generative AI has been shown to instantly create text-based disinformation indistinguishable from, and more persuasive than, human-generated content. AI-generated images are sometimes indistinguishable from reality. Children are vulnerable to the risks of mis/disinformation as their cognitive capacities are still developing. There is also a debate about how interacting with chatbots that have a human-like tone will impact young minds.

**What can be done to keep children safe online?**

The primary responsibility is that of the tech companies who will have to incorporate 'safety by design', explains Ms. Suresh. The proceedings of the Congressional hearings have made it obvious that these companies are fully cognisant of the extent to which their apps and systems impact children negatively.

Drawing on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF offers guidance that lists nine requirements for child-centred AI, including support for children's development and well-being, and protecting children's data and privacy. UNICEF recommends that tech companies apply the highest existing data protection standards to children's data in the metaverse and virtual environments.

In addition, governments have the burden of assessing and adjusting regulatory frameworks periodically to ensure that such technologies do not violate children's rights, and use their might to address harmful content and behaviour inimical to children online.

Ultimately, as Ms. Suresh points out, everyone must start from the assumption that all the rules that exist in the real world to protect children, should also prevail online.



**Online shield:** Innocuous and innocent sharing of images online can also be twisted by depraved predators. GETTY IMAGES

# PROFILES

## Fall of the 'Iron General'

**Valerii Zaluzhnyi**

The man who led Ukraine's resistance against Russia's invasion has been sacked by President Zelenskyy after the failed counteroffensive and growing rift between the two

### Stanly Johny

**W**hen Valerii Zaluzhnyi was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in July 2021, there was uncertainty on whether the crisis in the eastern Donbas region, where a civil war was raging between Russia-backed separatists and Kyiv's troops, would escalate into a full-blown war. U.S. intelligence had warned Kyiv that the Russians were planning an invasion. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the comedian-turned-politician who was elected President of Ukraine in April 2019, was sceptical. But Gen. Zaluzhnyi was not ready to take a chance. "There was the smell of war in the air," he recalled those days in an interview later. And his job was to prepare his troops, who lost Crimea in 2014 without even a fight, for the coming big war.

Seven months after Gen. Zaluzhnyi took over as the Commander-in-Chief, President Vladimir Putin of Russia launched his 'special military operation'. In the run-up to the war, many of its allies, including the U.S., thought that Ukraine's troops would fold before the mighty Russians, and relocated their embassies from Kyiv to the western city of Lviv, on the Polish border. But not Gen. Zaluzhnyi. "For me, the war started in 2014 (when Russia annexed Crimea). I did not run away then, I am not going to run away now," he told the Americans in February 2022. Russia made some territorial gains in the initial days of the war, but the Ukrainian defence did not crumble as many had expected.

Russian troops were stopped in Kharkiv, Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. This allowed Ukraine's Western partners to reassess their strategies and start sending supplies to Ukrainian troops to counter-attack Russia. Gen. Zaluzhnyi's popularity rose. While Mr. Zelenskyy emerged as the face of Ukraine's war abroad, Gen. Zaluzhnyi became a national hero. 'The Iron General', memes celebrated his popularity on social networks. 'Ukraine could win this war,' wrote

pundits. The President "allows his Generals to run the show without direct interferences into military business", a former Minister said, referring to the bonhomie between Mr. Zelenskyy and Gen. Zaluzhnyi. But none of these lasted long.

On February 8, weeks before the second anniversary of the Russian invasion, Mr. Zelenskyy sacked Gen. Zaluzhnyi as the Commander-in-Chief at a time when the Ukrainian forces were struggling to defend the frontline. The President had earlier asked the General to step down as part of an attempt to "reorganise" the armed forces, but the latter refused. Then came the dismissal. Col. Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi is the new boss.

#### The rise

Born in 1973 into a military family in northern Ukraine, which was then part of the Soviet Union, Valerii Zaluzhnyi grew up during the Brezhnev era. He wanted to be a comedian, the profession Mr. Zelenskyy came from, but ended up joining the forces, following in the footsteps of his family members. He studied at the Institute of Land Forces of the Odesa Military Academy and the National Defence Academy in Kyiv. When the Russians took Crimea in 2014, Zaluzhnyi was a 41-year-old officer, who, like many other Ukrainian soldiers, felt humiliated and helpless by the loss of the Black Sea Peninsula. He was sent to the east to command units that were fighting the separatists and the "little green men", who were believed to have been dispatched by the Russians.

When Mr. Zelenskyy became President in 2019, the situation in the east had become worse. Parts of the Donbas region were now two self-proclaimed Republics. The Minsk II agreement required Kyiv to introduce structural and constitutional reforms to guarantee autonomy to the eastern Oblasts in return for peace. The Russian threat was looming.

Instead of implementing the Minsk agreements, Mr. Zelenskyy chose to deepen Ukraine's cooperation with the West and strengthen its armed forces. He wanted young blood for the latter. In 2021, he zeroed in on Gen.



ILLUSTRATION: SOUMYADIP SINHA

Zaluzhnyi. "He is a fair professional and a smart person," Andrii Yermak, head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, said about the selection of Gen. Zaluzhnyi. And Gen. Zaluzhnyi's job was to keep his troops ready. "Our task as the Armed Forces is not to wait for manna from heaven. We must prepare for this. And we do everything for this," he said.

He reorganised the armed forces, strengthening the autonomy of mid-level officers so that battlefield decisions can be made quickly instead of waiting for orders from headquarters like the Soviet days. He conducted military exercises to keep the forces combat-ready. He deepened

defence cooperation with the U.S., the U.K. and other NATO countries. For someone who has "read everything [Valery] Gerasimov ever wrote", the enemy is not a pushover. "I learnt the science of war from Gerasimov," he once said, referring to the Chief of the General Staff of Russia. And now, he was preparing to fight Gen. Gerasimov.

#### The war

His tactics were initially effective. Russian forces were stopped in the early stage of the invasion. Later in 2022, the Ukrainians mobilised troops in the south, triggering speculations that they were planning a counter-attack in Kherson. Then, they

launched the attack in Kharkiv, in the northeast, recapturing swathes of territory. Before the Russians recovered from this setback, Ukraine launched another attack in the south, forcing the enemy to retreat from Kherson city to the east bank of the Dnieper River. That is when Gen. Zaluzhnyi peaked. "Zaluzhnyi has emerged as the military mind his country needed," General Mark Milley, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the U.S., once said. "His leadership enabled the Ukrainian armed forces to adapt quickly with battlefield initiative against the Russians." But the Russians also learnt from their battlefield experiences and adapted to the new realities.

By the time Ukraine launched the much-anticipated counteroffensive in June 2023, the Russians were in a stronger position. Mr. Putin had already mobilised some 3,00,000 troops and changed his commander. Russia's military production had recovered from the early effects of the sanctions. They were ready to fight a long war, while Ukraine, which was almost entirely dependent on supplies from the West, wanted quick results.

#### The exit

The counteroffensive turned out to be counterproductive. Ukraine made no substantial territorial gains in months-long fighting, while they also suffered huge losses. In November 2023, Gen. Zaluzhnyi wrote an essay in *The Economist*, in which he said the war was entering "a new phase of static and attritional fighting, as in the First World War", which "will benefit Russia". He also asked Mr. Zelenskyy to mobilise 5,00,000 men for fighting. Reports started surfacing about the growing divide between the President and the Commander, which culminated in the latter's sacking.

"We will fight until the last drop of blood," Gen. Zaluzhnyi once said about the war. However, as the war is set to enter the third year, perhaps the most difficult phase for Ukraine with losses on the frontline, an enemy that is on the offensive and uncertainty about fresh aid from the U.S., the "Iron General" is no longer in the war.

### THE GIST

Born in 1973 into a military family in northern Ukraine, which was then part of the Soviet Union, Valerii Zaluzhnyi grew up during the Brezhnev era

After the Russians took Crimea in 2014, he was sent to the east to command units that were fighting the Russia-backed separatists

He rose to become the most popular General in Ukraine after Russia's initial advances were stalled, but following Ukraine's failed counteroffensive, differences emerged between him and Zelensky

## A balancing act

**Michelle O'Neill**

The Sinn Fein leader, who has become the first nationalist First Minister of Northern Ireland, wants to address the region's bread and butter issues as well as push for Irish unification

### Sriram Lakshman

**S**heltered from the rain in a doorway in the heart of London's swish Green Park area, last Thursday, was a 47-year-old woman, who was waiting for her car to be brought around. In that moment, the woman, Michelle O'Neill, looked like just another Londoner trying to avoid the rain. She is anything but.

Just days earlier, on February 3, Ms. O'Neill had been appointed Northern Ireland's new First Minister – an Irish republican leading a U.K. region whose merger with the Republic of Ireland she hopes to usher in.

Ms. O'Neill was supposed to become the First Minister in 2022, after her party, Sinn Fein, beat the pro-U.K. Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) by a margin of two and won 27 seats. However, a constitutional arrangement, which mandates power-sharing between the largest unionist and republican parties, precluded her from doing so, after the DUP pulled out of the arrangement in 2020, angry over the post-Brexit arrangements for Northern Ireland.

The impasse was resolved following the British government's publication on January 31 of the Safe-guarding the Union agreement. The DUP agreed to return to power-sharing and Ms. O'Neill was appointed First Minister, with the DUP's Emma Little-



ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

Pengelly as Deputy First Minister.

"I will serve everyone equally and be a First Minister for all," Ms. O'Neill said in her inaugural speech in Belfast. On her subsequent visit to London last week, she emphasised the existence of multiple identities in Northern Ireland: British, Irish, others.

**Republican roots**  
Ms. O'Neill was born in 1977 to a family of republicans, almost a decade after the Troubles began, in a village in Northern Ireland's County Tyrone. She did not have an easy adolescence, becoming a mother at the age of 16. Her own mother gave up her job to look after the baby so that Ms. O'Neill could go back to school. Her father, Brendan Doris, was a member of the militant Irish Republican Army (IRA), for which he was jailed. He later went on to become a councillor on a ticket from Sinn Fein, which was then the IRA's political counterpart. Her cousin Tony Doris, also an IRA member, was shot by special forces in 1991. Her uncle Paul Do-

ris, based in Philadelphia, was a fundraiser for the Irish republican cause. "I am sorry for all the lives lost during the conflict. Without exception," Ms. O'Neill said in her inaugural speech, stopping short of offering an explicit apology for the IRA's murders.

In 2005, following her father's decision to quit local politics, Ms. O'Neill won his seat on the Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council. She rose through the party to become Sinn Fein's deputy leader in 2017, after the death of Martin McGuinness.

McGuiness had walked out of a coalition government, leading to its collapse. When the Stormont reformed in 2020, Ms. O'Neill became Deputy First Minister.

The sporadic nature of governance has exacerbated the region's cost of living and public sector challenges, leaving Northern Ireland grappling with long healthcare waitlists as well as affordable housing and childcare crises. Addressing these issues is on the one time," she said.

agenda for Ms. O'Neill and Ms. Little-Pengelly as is the publication of a revenue raising plan. Now that the government has reformed, a £3.3 billion funding package from Westminster will be available. However, both the DUP and Sinn Fein have said this will not be adequate.

Also looming is Sinn Fein's political goal: reunifying Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland. Its president, Mary Lou McDonald, told journalists in London last week that she expected a referendum by 2030. The Good Friday Agreement requires the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, a British official, to call a 'border poll' if it appears "likely" that the majority of those voting would wish to leave the U.K. and merge with Ireland.

Both Ms. O'Neill and Ms. McDonald have talked about the atmosphere for a referendum being inclusive and democratic. There is also a recognition that the U.K. will have to be part of the conversation. The Sinn Fein leadership has also acknowledged that it will need to work on its own lower polling numbers.

During an ITV interview last week, Ms. O'Neill defended her party's ability to address Northern Ireland's many pressing challenges and work towards holding – and winning – a referendum. "I think we can do the two things at the same time," she said.

## The moment of rhythm

**Shakti**

The 50-year-old music band has won the Best Global Music Album award at the 66th Grammy for their pandemic creation *This Moment*

### Gowri S.

**A** few weeks ahead of their 50th anniversary tour's U.S. leg in 2023, transcontinental Indo-jazz band Shakti made a pit stop at NPR for their popular 'tiny desk concert'.

What followed was simply a lesson on ingenious spontaneity that can only be cultivated through years and layers of interaction. British jazz guitarist John McLaughlin's effortless strums were in conversation with the impeccable rhythm of tabla exponent Zakir Hussain, as vocalist Shankar Mahadevan seamlessly joined, while violinist Ganesh Rajagopal and kanjira artiste V. Selvaganesh caught up with violinist.

Today, snippets from this infectious musical dialogue flood social media, as the country revels in the 50-year-old ensemble's win for the Best Global Music Album at the 66th Grammy Awards for their pandemic creation, *This Moment*.

The now-quintet took shape in 1973 as a two-person aspiration towards melding the musical sensibilities of the East and the West. Zakir Hussain, who was then already touring with his father and tabla maestro Ustad Alla Rakha, roped in the British guitarist with a penchant for Indian music and spirituality, John McLaughlin, to actualise this shared dream. They were introduced to

each other by a music shop owner in Greenwich Village, New York. The latter's fusion group Mahavishnu Orchestra – a jazz band with an Indian name – had already disbanded by then. Violinist L. Shankar and ghatam exponent 'Vikku' Vinayakram joined in 1974 to make Shakti a quartet with a unique sound.

Hussain's incomparable command over rhythm met McLaughlin's curiosity to learn the alleyways of Indian classical music despite his well-known prowess over jazz. Vikku's ghatam and Shankar's violin added an unexpected but fitting Carnatic flavour.

They found common ground in the concept of improvisation, and the quest for a global sound, right in the heels of Pandit Ravi Shankar and The Beatles, whose experiments had already put Indian music on the global map by then.

In an interview with *The Hindu* in 2023, Vikku Vinayakram fondly recalled, "Rhythm has been our only mode of communication since we first met." A wide range of shared video from last

years shows the 80-year-old conversing with his former bandmates Hussain and McLaughlin through a delightful 'konnakol' (a rhythmic rendition of Carnatic percussion syllables). While the 'East meets West' conversation was very much at the core of Shakti's sound, the band also celebrated the differences and similarities of classical music from the north and south of India.

**A fresh sound**  
Five years and three albums later, in 1978, Shakti splintered as the musicians left to pursue personal projects, before regrouping in the late 1990s, with new members and a fresh sound.

This time, McLaughlin and Hussain were joined by U. Srinivas on mandolin and legendary flautist Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia on a reunion tour titled 'Remember Shakti'. On the vocals was Shankar as Selvaganesh took over the reins from his father Vikku Vinayakram to wield the kanjira.

Following the sudden and tragic loss of Srinivas

in 2014, Shakti once again went silent until early 2020 when two sold-out concerts in India and Singapore led to the ensemble's resurrection on stage. This time around, on the violin was Ganesh Rajagopal.

After the Grammy win, an ecstatic and emotional Ganesh said, "We want to thank John ji and Zakir bhai for the 50 years of hard work. We are just piggybacking." Selvaganesh added, "Without them, we are not here."

Hussain won two more Grammys, sharpening India's presence at this year's event further: one for best global music performance for *Pashtha* and the other for best contemporary instrumental album for *As We Speak*, alongside American banjo player Bela Fleck and American bassist Edgar Meyer, featuring Indian flute player Rakesh Chaurasia, nephew of flautist Hariprasad Chaurasia.

*This Moment* is the band's new studio album in more than 45 years. An inherent sense of playfulness characterises the album. It is nothing but a reflection of their love for varied worlds that make space for each musician's sensibilities and knowledge. Their sound goes beyond what we traditionally refer to as 'fusion' – it is rather, a long-drawn experiment that continues to spring surprises.

So naturally, 50 years on, Shakti's sound still ticks on a global stage. The Grammy stands witness.



PTI

## IN BRIEF



## Aurobindo Pharma Q3 net surges to ₹940 crore

Aurobindo Pharma reported consolidated net profit surged more than 91% YoY to ₹939.9 crore (₹491 crore) in Q3 on the back of a nearly 14.7% increase in revenue from operations. "Pleaseed with the considerable progress we have made in our operations and the cost efficiencies achieved, this quarter's highest ever sales and EBITDA reflect the same," MD K. Nithyananda Reddy said. Aurobindo has declared an interim dividend of ₹1.5 per equity share (face value of ₹1).

## Regulators ensure fair play, are not a nuisance, says CEA

Regulators are here to ensure sustainable growth for corporates and businesses and not to create hurdles, Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran said in Chennai on Saturday. "Corporates should not see regulators as a nuisance. Businesses don't realise that regulators are here not to create hurdles for your growth and development, but to ensure that they continue uninterrupted much longer," he said, addressing the MMA Annual Convention 2024.

## redBus joins ONDC, offers multi-modal travel bookings

Bus ticketing platform redBus said it had joined the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) and now offers multi-modal transport booking services on its platform in various cities. By integrating with ONDC it will offer auto rickshaw bookings in Bengaluru, Delhi, Chennai and Hyderabad, and metro ticket bookings in Chennai and Kochi. redBus said this makes it the first independent mobility app on ONDC with focus on first and last-mile connectivity.

## Panasonic firm's top priority to develop India into export hub'

N. Ravi Kumar  
HYDERABAD

India as a market and manufacturing site remains 'top priority' in the global expansion strategy for Panasonic Electric Works Company of Japan.

The company plans to enhance production capabilities by leveraging surplus facilities at Sri City factory in Andhra Pradesh, said Ryo Matsumoto, General Manager, Living Energy Business Division, Electric Works Company, Panasonic Corporation.

"Our strategic investment roadmap includes 100 billion yen (about ₹7,000 crore) allocation for global electrical and equipment business growth by fiscal 2030, excluding Japan. Of this 30 billion yen (about ₹2,100 crore) is earmarked for investment by fiscal 2024," he replied on email following a company conducted media tour of some facilities in Japan recently.

While he did not disclose specific investments for India, he said the company will focus on capacity expansion, integrating new technologies and reinforcing its market position in the next 5-10 years.

**'Remarkable growth'**  
Executive VP, Panasonic Corporation and President of Electric Works Company Kiyoshi Otaki speaking at a media briefing said, "among our priorities, India holds a special place as the world's most populous country with remarkable economic growth. We aspire to expand operations... in future, we will actively pursue exports



Kiyoshi Otaki, Executive VP, Panasonic Corporation

and investments from India to Africa."

Panasonic Electric Works is one of the four business domains of Panasonic Corporation and its electrical construction materials' business reported net sales was 1 trillion yen (about ₹62,500 crore) in FY-2022.

**Beyond acquisition**

In India, Panasonic had acquired Anchor Electricals in 2007. Following this, significant investments were directed towards manufacturing facilities, said Toshinobu Kawasaki, Joint MD of PEWIN, Panasonic Life Solutions India.

"We have upgraded and expanded the plants in Daman, Haridwar and Kutch and established a new manufacturing hub in Sri City to strengthen production capabilities across India... (we are) committed to further investments in the existing facilities to enhance operational efficiency and output. Our strategy includes actively exploring mergers and acquisitions to expand into new business segments and increase capacities," he replied to a query over mail.

Panasonic Electric Works India is a business

unit of Panasonic Life Solutions India and in FY-22 posted net sales, in the country, of 83 billion yen (about ₹5,180 crore).

**Emerging hub**

On land availability for expansion at older units - other than Sri City - he said "for the three plants [in Haridwar, Daman and Kutch] where expansion space is limited we are intensifying efforts to enhance productivity per unit area. This will involve advancing automation and improving production efficiency.

While the Daman plant currently plays a significant role in export production, we are considering shifting some export-focused activities to the Sri City plant, aligning with our goal to establish India as a pivotal export hub."

"Currently, exports constitute 2% of our total business... by 2030, we aim to increase our export business to account for 10% of our total operations," said Mr. Kawasaki. The focus is on expanding and diversifying the product range to meet the evolving market demands.

(The correspondent was in Japan at the invitation of the company.)

**Tata Steel's Odisha plants receive 'Responsible Steel' tag****Press Trust of India  
BHUBANESWAR**

Tata Steel's Kalinganagar and Meramandali plants in Odisha have received the prestigious Responsible Steel certification, a company statement said.

Responsible Steel is a global multi-stakeholder standard and certification initiative that works with steel producers, consumers, and intermediaries towards building a sustainable steel industry by addressing pressing challenges including climate change, diversity and human rights, it said.

Its certification process involves a detailed review of key policies and work at the site by an independent external assessor.

Tata Steel CEO and MD T.V. Narendran said, "The Responsible Steel certification for our sites is a testament to Tata Steel's unwavering commitment to sustainability. It reflects our proactive approach towards addressing the evolving challenges of the steel industry and shaping a better tomorrow. We are progressing well towards our target of certifying all our existing steel-making sites in India by 2025." Three facilities in Jamshedpur were awarded the certification in October 2022.

In India, Tata Steel now has more than 90% of its steel production from Responsible Steel-certified sites, the statement said.

The inclusion of Kalinganagar and Meramandali plants reaffirms the company's dedication to responsible business practices and environmental stewardship, it said.

# JSW to set up ₹40,000 cr. EV industrial complex in Odisha

The mega project, first of its kind in the eastern state, is expected to create 11,000 jobs; it consists of a 50 GWH EV battery plant, EV plant, lithium refinery, copper smelter, and other units

**Lalatendu Mishra**  
MUMBAI

**J**SW Group has signed a MoU with the Government of Odisha to set up an Integrated Electric Vehicles (EV) and EV Battery Manufacturing project at Cuttack and Paradip in Odisha with an investment of ₹40,000 crore. The first of its kind mega project in the eastern state, is expected to create 11,000 jobs.

The project consists of a 50 GWH EV battery plant, EVs, lithium refinery, cop-



'World's largest': The battery manufacturing project will be the world's largest single location project in the sector. ANI

per smelter and related component manufacturing units.

The battery manufac-

project said.

JSW will also set up an Original Equipment Manufacturing Plant for EVs and components in the same complex. The EV and its battery manufacturing investment will be made in two phases. JSW said it is planning to invest ₹25,000 crore and would generate more than 4,000 jobs.

The EV components plant will come up at the port town of Paradip. This complex will comprise of a Copper and a Lithium smelter in the third phase of its footprint.

"An exporter waited for 45 days and booked a cargo on Friday at a very high cost by sea. This will not be viable for exporters send-

ing small volumes," he said.

**Time and cost**

If sea cargo used to take 32 days to reach a European port from India costing \$700 (a 40-foot container), it now takes 55 days and costs almost \$4,000. If buyers share the costs, there could be some relief to exporters.

"There are hundreds of instances where exporters are waiting and exploring viable options for shipments," he said. "Some shipping lines are also studying the possibility of alternative routes such as Caspian Sea, but hesitating to take risks," he added. This has raised demand for space in airlines, he said.

## AVGC-XR sector to become \$26-billion industry by 2030

**Mini Tejaswi**  
BENGALURU

India's animation, visual effects, gaming and comics, and extended reality (AVGC-XR) sector is all set for a quantum leap in the next five to six years, say industry players and policymakers.

Extended reality encompasses augmented, virtual and mixed reality.

The industry, which currently employs 2.6 lakh people across the country, is expected to create 23 lakh direct jobs by 2032. Also, the revenues are expected to cross \$26 billion by

witnessing a high pace of growth with some segments within AVGC-XR already growing at 30 or 35% annually," observed Ashish Kulkarni, Chairman of FICCI AVGC Forum, founder of Punnaryug Artvision, an art village in Pune.

"As we navigate the ever-evolving dynamics of animation, visual effects, gaming and comics, all stakeholders in this space are certain of the sector's limitless possibilities," said Biren Ghose, country head, Technicolor India and President, ABAI, the apex body for AVGC in Bengaluru.

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**BACK-TO-BACK TITLES**

**Afif's hat-trick inspires Qatar to Asian Cup glory**



Akram Afif scored a hat-trick of penalties to secure back-to-back Asian Cup titles for Qatar in a 3-1 win over Jordan at the Lusail Stadium in Doha on Saturday.

**The results:** Jordan 1 (Al-Naimat 67) lost to Qatar 3 (Afif 22-pen, 73-pen, 90+5-pen).

## India needs to be on its toes against the resilient Aussies

Saharan leads the batting charts and the team was pushed only in the semifinal against SA; Australia captain Weibgen, opener Dixon, seamers Straker and Vidler have been consistent

**UNDER-19 WORLD CUP****Press Trust of India**

BENONI

Few careers will get wings to soar while some will fade into oblivion but on Sunday, all those sprightly young Indian boys will leave no stone unturned to win a record sixth ICC U-19 World Cup when they face Australia in the summit clash here.

The Aussies have a quartet – skipper Hugh Weibgen, opener Harry Dixon, seamers Tom Straker and Callum Vidler – the consistent performers during this edition who could spell trouble for India.

**Favourite**

India U-19 had beaten Australia in the 2012 and 2018 finals, and will again start favourites during this edition's title match.

Truth be told, the current team led by Saharan, didn't initially look like a great outfit as it even failed to enter the final of the U-19 Asia Cup a couple of months back.

But here all pieces of the puzzle has fallen in place.

Saharan leads the batting charts with 389 runs as the team's performance got better with each match and the only time it has been pushed to a corner in

**All set for the summit clash**

As India and Australia gear up to square off at Willowmoore Park in Benoni, an overview of the records from the U19 World Cup

**U19 World Cup Finals**

Year	Winner	Runner up	Winning captain	Host
1988	Australia	Pakistan	Geoff Parker	Australia
1998	England	NZ	Owais Shah	SA
2000	India	Sri Lanka	Mohammad Kaif	Sri Lanka
2002	Australia	SA	Cameron White	NZ
2004	Pakistan	WI	Khalid Latif	Bangladesh
2006	Pakistan	India	Sarfraz Ahmed	Sri Lanka
2008	India	SA	Virat Kohli	Malaysia
2010	Australia	Pakistan	Mitchell Marsh	NZ
2012	India	Australia	Ummukt Chand	Australia
2014	SA	Pakistan	Aiden Markram	UAE
2016	WI	India	Shimron Hetmyer	Bangladesh
2018	India	Australia	Pritvi Shaw	NZ
2020	Bangladesh	India	Akbar Ali	SA
2022	India	England	Yash Dhull	WI

Most titles	IND 5	AUS 3
Most finals	IND 9	AUS 6

Most runs	Eoin Morgan - 606
Most wickets	Kwena Maphaka - 28
Most runs in single edition	Dewald Brevis (South Africa) - 506 (2022)
Most wickets in single edition	Enamul Haque Jr (Bangladesh) - 22 (2004)

Most runs current edition	Uday Saharan (India) - 389
Most wickets current edition	Kwena Maphaka (South Africa) - 21

**Sport****IPL CALLING**

**Shamar Joseph joins Super Giants as replacement for Mark Wood**

**OPPORTUNITY**

**Gujarat Giants ropes in Tahuhu in place of injured Cheatile**

**DOMINANT**

**Patna Pirates beats U Mumba, moves a step closer to playoffs**

**BACK-TO-BACK TITLES**

**Afif's hat-trick inspires Qatar to Asian Cup glory**



Akram Afif scored a hat-trick of penalties to secure back-to-back Asian Cup titles for Qatar in a 3-1 win over Jordan at the Lusail Stadium in Doha on Saturday.

**The results:** Jordan 1 (Al-Naimat 67) lost to Qatar 3 (Afif 22-pen, 73-pen, 90+5-pen).

West Indies pace sensation Shamar Joseph, who single-handedly won a Test against Australia last month, was on Saturday roped in by Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) for the upcoming Indian Premier League season as replacement for England's Mark Wood. He will join LSG for ₹3 crore.

## Akash Deep gets Test call-up; Kohli still unavailable

**ENGLAND IN INDIA****Amol Karhadkar**

MUMBAI

Virat Kohli will remain on the sidelines due to personal reasons, thus missing a Test series for the first time since his debut, while Shreyas Iyer has been dropped for the last three games of India's ongoing five-match series versus England. All-rounder Ravindra Jadeja and batter K.L. Rahul return to the squad pending a final fitness clearance. Pacer Akash Deep has received a maiden Test call-up in the 17-member squad.

Jay Shah, the Board of Control for Cricket in India secretary, announced the squad on Saturday morning after the national selectors met on Friday evening in Chennai to finalise the squad. The Hindu understands that the selectors chose to wait as much as they could to have clarity over Kohli's availability and assess Rahul and Jadeja's fitness.

"Virat Kohli will remain unavailable for selection for the remainder of the series due to personal reasons. The Board fully respects and supports Mr. Kohli's decision. The participation of Ravindra Jadeja and K.L. Rahul is subject to fitness clearance from the BCCI medical team," the BCCI statement read.

With the Indian squad – given a break after the second Test concluded in Vi-



**Recognition:** Akash Deep, the Bengal pacer, has been brought in place of Avesh Khan. V. RAJU

sakhapatnam on February 5 – set to reassemble in Rajkot on Sunday evening, a final call on Jadeja and Rahul's participation may be taken during Monday's training session.

Shreyas, meanwhile,

has been dropped on the back of an average run in the ongoing World Test Championship cycle. He has managed just 187 runs in his previous 12 innings. Apparently his mode of dismissals in the first two Tests has also not gone down well with the team management and the selectors.

Despite a back trouble having reportedly resurfaced for Shreyas, the statement finds no mention of the injury.

Rajat Patidar, who came in as Kohli's replacement ahead of the series and made his debut in Visakhapatnam after Rahul was unavailable, and Sarfaraz Khan have retained their

Haaland nets a brace as Man City pips Everton

**EURO LEAGUES****Agence France-Presse**

MANCHESTER

Manchester City's Erling Haaland scored for the first time since November to take the side home in a gritty 2-0 win against Everton on Saturday.

Pepe Guardiola's side was well below its best as it laboured to break down a stubborn Everton at a nervous Etihad Stadium.

But Haaland struck twice late in the second half to get back on the score sheet for the first time since returning from an absence of nearly two months.

**The results:**

**Premier League:** Fulham 3 (De Cordova-Reid 6, Muniz 36, 52) bt

Bournemouth 1 (Senesi 50); Liverpool 3 (Jota 31, Diaz 52, Nunez 79) bt Burnley 1 (O'Shea 45); Luton 1 (Morris 52-pen) lost to Sheffield United 3 (Archer 30, McAtee 36-pen, Souza 72); Manchester City 2 (Haaland 71, 85) bt Everton 0; Tottenham 2 (Sarr 61, Johnson 90+6) bt

Brighton 1 (Gross 17-pen); Wolves 0 lost to Brentford 2 (Norgaard 35, Toney 77).

**LaLiga:** Alaves 1 (Ormorodion 25) drew with Villarreal 1 (Cuenca 42); Cadiz 0 lost to Real Betis 2 (Willian Jose 6, Fornals 46).

**Serie A:** Salernitana 1 (Weissman 69) lost to Empoli 3 (Zanoli 23-og, Niang 88-pen, Cancellieri 90+4); Cagliari 1 (Gaetano 51) lost to Lazio 3 (Deiola 26-og, Immobile 49, Felipe Anderson 65).

**Bundesliga:** Borussia Dortmund 3 (Malen 16, 45+7, Fuellkrug 87) bt Freiburg 0.

## Hunter storms past Volynets into the final

**MUMBAI OPEN****Kamesh Srinivasan**

MUMBAI

Former World No. 1 doubles star Storm Hunter gave a glimpse of her singles competence with a 6-4, 7-6(4) victory over Katie Volynets of the USA in the semifinals of the L&T Mumbai Open WTA tennis at the CCI on Saturday.

What was remarkable was that the 29-year-old Aussie bounced back from being down 0-5 in the second set to win in straight sets. Hunter did miss her chance while serving for the match at 6-5, having won six games on the trot, as Volynets proved a tough nut to crack with her sharp strokes and athletic approach.

In the tie-break, Storm had little trouble in asserting her game. She will be looking for a fourth singles title of her career, when she faces Darja Semenista of Latvia in the final.

Darja recovered from being down 3-5 in the first set, to win 7-5, 6-4 against Arianne Hartono of the Netherlands. Darja will be



Hunter. KAMESH SRINIVASAN

looking for her 16th singles title on Sunday.

In doubles, Arianne Hartono returned to the court with Prarthana Thombare to continue with her entertaining play for the faithful enthusiasts who had stayed back. The Indo-Dutch team beat Zhibek Kulambayeva and Sohyun Park 6-2, 6-1; Dalila Jakupovic (Slo) & Sabrina Santamaria (USA) bt Naiktha Bains (GBR) & Fanny Stollar (Hun) 6-4, 6-1.

**The results (semifinals):**

**Singles:** Darja Semenista (Lat) bt Arianne Hartono (Ned) 7-5, 6-4; Storm Hunter (Aus) bt Katie Volynets (USA) 6-4, 7-6(4).

**Doubles:** Prarthana Thombare & Kamesh Srinivasan (IND) bt Zhibek Kulambayeva (Kaz) & Sohyun Park (Kor) 6-2, 6-1; Dalila Jakupovic (Slo) & Sabrina Santamaria (USA) bt Naiktha Bains (GBR) & Fanny Stollar (Hun) 6-4, 6-1.

## Nagal through to title clash; Saketh-Ramkumar pair wins

**CHENNAI OPEN****Nihit Sachdeva**

CHENNAI

Sumit Nagal survived a late injury scare to book his place in the final of the Chennai Open, an ATP Challenger Tour event, on Saturday with a 6-3, 6-4 win over Dalibor Svrina at the SDAT Stadium here.

In his eighth Challenger final, Nagal will face 20-year-old Luca Nardi, the top-seeded Italian. The winner of Sunday's summit clash is guaranteed to make his top-100 debut in the ATP rankings.

Nagal, up by a double break, failed to serve for the match for the first time at 5-2 in the second set as his forearm started misfiring. The 26-year-old then took a medical timeout to receive some treatment for the pain in his right shoulder. Nagal tried to close the tie for the second time and at 30-all, hit a forehand down the line which the linesman ruled 'out' before the chair umpire reversed the call.



Victorious: Saketh and Ramkumar beat Rithvik and Niki to clinch the doubles crown. R. RAVINDRAN

From a chance to break Nagal again and bringing things back on serve, Svrina now faced a match point. The 21-year-old Czech netted a forehand return early in the next rally and threw his cap away in frustration, ending the semifinal which fell five minutes short of the two-hour mark.

In a closely contested first set, it was Nagal's performance on the second serve which made the difference. The Indian won five out of nine second

## Indian men outclass Spain to start with victory in Pro League

**Uthra Ganeshan**

BHUBANESWAR

The Indian men started their competitive campaign in the Olympic year with a comprehensive 4-1 win against Spain in their FIH Pro League opener on Saturday, the win as impressive for the performance as the result.

The Indians, coming in from a mixed South Africa tour that saw them win easily against lower-ranked host and France before losing big against the Netherlands – India's next opponent here on Sunday – kept the tempo high.

It was the midfield that was at the heart of the Indian team's superiority, with Hardik Singh controlling it brilliantly to set up the attacks.

The vice-captain was instrumental in earning the first PC for India that captain Harmanpreet Singh converted, slamming hard into the board.

In front of packed-as-



ual stands, the Indians showed both speed and control, racing away with the ball when in possession but taking time inside the circle to get into the right positions.

Although there was only one open goal –

**IN BRIEF****Pugilists Panghal and Nikhat among six Indians in final**

Dominant efforts by two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen and Commonwealth Games gold medallist Amit Panghal headed Indian boxers' march into six finals at the 75th Strandja Memorial boxing tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria, on Saturday. Nikhat will square off against Uzbekistan's Sabina Bobokulova in the gold medal match on Sunday. Panghal will take on the reigning world champion Kazakhstan's Sanzhar Tashkenbay on Sunday. The others to make the final are Arundhati Choudhary (66kg), Barun Singh Shagolshem (48kg), Sachin (57kg) and Rajat (67kg).

**Tamil Nadu boys and girls make it to the last-eight stage**

Tamil Nadu topped Group-A and entered the girls' quarterfinals of the National junior basketball championships in Bhubaneswar on Saturday, along with Maharashtra and Kerala. Tamil Nadu boys, too, reached the last eight from Group-B with Rajasthan and Chandigarh.

**The results, league: Boys:** Uttar Pradesh 58 (Harsh Dagar 22, Kushal Singh 13, Kunal Kumar Singh 12, Muhammad Kaif 11) bt Punjab 64 (Bhanu Pratap Sood 19, Japsanjam Singh 11, Sahibjit Singh 11); Chandigarh 86 (Sanju Gajhiye 23, Vipul 22, Himanshu Hooda 18) bt Tamil Nadu 81 (S. Pragalathan 36, S. Deepak 20); Rajasthan 115 (Akshit Hooda 36, Lokesh Kumar 20, Ishan Muhammad 15, Banti Choudhari 10) bt Andhra Pradesh 46 (Dwarkantha Reddy 14).

**Girls:** Uttar Pradesh 58 (Himanshi Kumari 13, Nancy Gupta 11, Anushka Chouhan 10) bt Haryana 56 (Anjali Suresh Kumar 23, Manu Rajbir 13, Kafi Satpal 11); Maharashtra 82 (Sanika Phule 24, Ananya Bhavaras 19, Mansi Nimalkar 13) bt Kerala 50 (P.A. Alka 12); Tamil Nadu 73 (Sona Resalin 12, Sadhana Veronica 10, Juana Chrisolin 10) bt Chandigarh 54.

**Siddhant & Sai Karteek lose in the quarterfinals**

Siddhant Banthia and Sai Karteek Reddy lost 2-6, 1-6 to Samuela Pieri and Dan Alexandru Tomescu in the doubles quarterfinals of the \$25,000 ITF men's tennis tournament at Antalya, Turkey.

**The results: \$25,000 ITF men, Antalya: Doubles, quarterfinals:** Samuele Pieri (Ita) & Dan Alexandru Tomescu (Rou) bt Siddhant Banthia & Sai Karteek Reddy 6-2, 6-1.

**\$25,000 ITF men Hamamet, Tunisia: Doubles, pre-quarterfinals:** Thomas Fancutt (Aus) & Aziz Ouakaa (Tun) bt Sathi Reddy Chirala & Jay Clarke (GBR) 6-3, 6-0.

**\$15,000 ITF men, Sharm El Sheikh: Doubles, pre-quarterfinals:** Hayato Matsuoka (Jpn) & Faris Zakaria (Egy) bt Kevin Portmann (Ita) & Rishabh Shekhwat 6-2, 6-0.

**\$25,000 ITF women, Wesley Chapel, USA: Doubles, pre-quarterfinals:** Lia Karataancheva (Bul) & Victoria Ousiguen (USA) bt Riya Bhatia & Amanda Elkin (Mex) 6-3, 6-2.

**\$15,000 ITF women, Monastir, Tunisia: Doubles, pre-quarterfinals:** Selina Dal (Ger) & Stephanie Visscher (Ned) bt Sandeepi Singh Rao & Demi Tran (Ned) 6-4, 6-7(4), [10-3].

**LIVE TELECAST**

NBA: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7 a.m.

**Ranji Trophy:** Jio Cinema App, 9.30 a.m.

**Men's U-19 CWC:** (final), Australia vs India, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 1.30 p.m.

**Australia vs West Indies:** 2nd T20I, Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 2 p.m.

**Sri Lanka vs Afghanistan:** 2nd ODI, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 2.30 p.m.

**Serie A:** Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 5, 7.30, 10.30 p.m. & 1.15 a.m. (Monday)

**LaLiga:** Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 6.30, 8.45, 11 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Monday)

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

**Premier League:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 7.30 & 10 p.m.

**Bundesliga:** Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 8 & 10 p.m.

**PKL:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 8 p.m.

**Sport****Jalaj's seven-for gives Kerala upper hand after Akshay's ton**

The off-spinner, in a mesmerising spell, reduces Bengal to 172 for eight; only Abhimanyu plays with conviction but his dismissal opens the floodgates and the visitors collapse from 107 for one

**RANJI TROPHY**

**M.R. Praveen Chandran**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

**B**engal's worst fears came true after tea on the second day of the Ranji Trophy cricket match against Kerala on Saturday.

The pitch changed character from batter-friendly to spin-friendly in the first session. The Kerala innings ended at 363 with Akshay Chandran completing his century. The wicket had good bounce and turn and Jalaj Saxena, found his form and in a mesmerising spell (seven for 67) reduced Bengal to 172 for eight. Karan Lal (22 batting) – who was bowled off a Jalaj no ball – and Suraj Sindhu Jaiswal (nine batting) added 21 runs for the ninth wicket.

Jalaj was relentless and kept pitching the ball at the same spot from where it bounced and turned. He varied his pace and line to confuse the batter. Only opener Abhimanyu Easwaran looked capable of dealing with Jalaj's variations. But Abhimanyu feathered a catch to Rohan Kunnummal at short-leg.

Abhimanyu's dismissal opened the floodgates and the Bengal batters fell like dead petals as it collapsed



**In seventh heaven:** Jalaj's spell had the Bengal batters in a spin after Akshay completed a deserving hundred. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

from 107 for one to 151 for eight with Jalaj picking up the seven wickets. Karan and Jaiswal added useful runs to frustrate Kerala in the final session.

Early in the morning, Sachin Baby and Akshay Chandran extended the fifth-wicket partnership to 179. However left-arm spinners Ankit Mishra and Shahbaz Ahmed relished the bounce and made life difficult for the Kerala batters. Baby was caught by Manoj Tiwary in the slips as the ball turned and bounced.

Akshay Chandran (106) completed his century, but was bowled by Shahbaz. Kerala lost wickets in a hurry as it slumped to 324 for eight. But Basil Thampi (20) and N.P. Basil (16) added useful runs.

**Kerala — 1st innings:** Rohan S. Kunnummal c Manoj b Jaiswal 19, Jalaj Saxena c Abhishek b Mishra 40, Rohan Prem c Abhishek b Akash Deep 3, Sachin Baby c Manoj b Karan 124, Sanju Samson c Manoj b Shahbaz 8, Akshay Chandran b Shahbaz 106, Mohammed Azharuddeen c Akash b Mishra 13, Shreyas Gopal c Manoj b Shahbaz 20, N.P. Basil c Manoj b Mishra 16, M.D. Nidheesh (not out) 3; Extras (b-4, lb-3, w-1, nb-1); 9; Total (in 127 overs): 363.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-26, 2-40, 3-82, 4-112, 5-291, 6-312, 7-317, 8-324, 9-351.

**Bengal bowling:** Jaiswal 1-0-2-0.



**The scores:**  
**Kerala — 1st innings:** Rohan S. Kunnummal c Manoj b Jaiswal 19, Jalaj Saxena c Abhishek b Mishra 40, Rohan Prem c Abhishek b Akash Deep 3, Sachin Baby c Manoj b Karan 124, Sanju Samson c Manoj b Shahbaz 8, Akshay Chandran b Shahbaz 106, Mohammed Azharuddeen c Akash b Mishra 13, Shreyas Gopal c Manoj b Shahbaz 20, N.P. Basil c Manoj b Mishra 16, M.D. Nidheesh (not out) 3; Extras (b-4, lb-3, w-1, nb-1); 9; Total (in 127 overs): 363.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-26, 2-40, 3-82, 4-112, 5-291, 6-312, 7-317, 8-324, 9-351.

**Kerala bowling:** Thampi 2-0-16-1, Jalaj 20-3-67-7, Nidheesh 8-1-28-1, Shreyas 7-30-0, Basil 11-2-25-0, Akshay 1-0-2-0.

**RANJI SCORES, ROUND 6, DAY 2**

Karan Nair (Vidarbha, 128 batting). FILE PHOTO: G.P. SAMPATH KUMAR

**Elite: Group-A: At Jaipur:** Saurashtra 328 in 116.5 overs (Sheldon Jackson 116, Aniket Choudhary 43, Kukna Ajay Singh 5/120) vs Rajasthan 159/6 in 61 overs.

**Ahmedabad:** Manipur 67 & 51/6 in 32 overs vs Services 333 in 106.1 overs (Ravi Chauhan 108, Rajat Palwal 122).

**Jamshedpur:** Haryana 509 in 134.5 overs (Rahul Tewatia 144, Sumit Kumar 86, Anukul Roy 5/80) vs Jharkhand 119/9 in 38.2 overs (Jayant Yadav 4/35).

**Pune:** Maharashtra 208 in 56.4 overs vs Vidarbha 439/6 in 106 overs (Dhruv Shorey 92, Karun Nair 128 batting, Akshay Wadkar 90).

**Group-B: Vizianagaram:** Andhra 261 & 191/1 in 4.3 overs vs Uttar Pradesh 198 in 51.5 overs (Aryan Juyal 60, K.V. Sasikanth 5/54).

**Raipur:** Mumbai 351 in 101.4 overs (Ashish Chouhan 6/105) vs Chhattisgarh 180/4 in 66 overs (Shashank Chadrakar 56, Sanjeet Desai 41).

**Thumba:** Kerala 363 in 127.3 overs (Sachin Baby 124, Akshay Chandran 106, Shahbaz Ahmed 4/73) vs Bengal 172/8 in 49 overs (Abhimanyu Easwaran 72, Jalaj Saxena 7/67).

**Guwahati:** Assam 405 in 121.4 overs (Abhishek Thakuri 115, Mrinmoy Dutta 72 n.o., Sakibul Gani 4/91) vs Bihar 134/5 in 46 overs.

**Group-C: Chandigarh:** Chandigarh 356 in 116 overs (Mayank Sidhu 41) vs Tripura 187/4 in 62 overs (Ganesh Satish 67 batting, Bikramjeet Debnath 50 batting).

**Cuttack:** Uttarakhand 342 in 131.3 overs (Vaibhav Bhatt 115, Akhil Rawat 50) vs Odisha 123/6 in 41.2 overs (Aasirawat Swain 54).

**Plate: At Hyderabad (1st semifinal):** Hyderabad 462/8 decl in 107 overs (Pragnay Reddy 47) vs Nagaland 206 (Joshua Ozukum 50, Rongsen Jonathan 41, R.S. Jagannath Siniwas 44, Tanay Thiyagarajan 7/63) & 20/1 in 5 overs.

**Mangaldoi (2nd semifinal):** Mizoram 144 & 153 in 38 overs (Agni Chopra 69, Akash Choudhary 5/33, Aryan Bora 4/49) vs Meghalaya 145 (Mohit Jangra 5/32, K.C. Carriapa 4/59) & 125/4 in 31 overs.

**India dominates BIMSTEC aquatics with 54 medals**

**Juric strikes twice as NEUFC puts it across East Bengal****ISL-10**

**Press Trust of India**  
GUWAHATI

Tomi Juric struck twice as NorthEast United registered a 3-2 win over East Bengal to move into the top-six of the Indian Super League (ISL) table here on Saturday.

Juric (fourth, 66th) and Nestor Albiach (15th) scored for the hosts, while Nandhakumar Sekar (53rd) and Felicio Brown Forbes (82nd) found the back of the net for East Bengal.

NEUFC seemed eager to stamp its authority early on. Spanish attacker Nestor Albiach was at the forefront of it, setting up the opening strike by Juric, before scoring the second 15 minutes into the match. In the fourth minute, Nestor squared up a delivery for Juric that the latter merely tapped in to open the scoring.

However, the second goal was even more impressive, with the Highlanders capitalising on the high line that the East Bengal defence had employed.

Juan Pedro Benali's side broke into a swift counter attack, with Redeem Tlang splitting open the visitors with a sharp assist that Nestor got to the end of and doubled the lead.

East Bengal was energised after the break and clawed back with a move similar to the one that had resulted in the strike by Nestor.

Cleiton Silva helped the team break through the NEUFC backline with a through ball for Nandhakumar in the 53rd minute.

In the 66th minute, Juric



**In good touch:** Juric was in the thick of the things for NorthEast United. PTI

launched a powerful shot from the left edge of the box, which beat a fully stretched Prabsukhan Singh Gill.

Silva then dribbled actively inside the box before shooting with his left foot and Forbes headed in the rebound from close range in the 82nd, but it was not enough to secure the team a point.

**The results:** NEUFC 3 (Juric, 4, Albiach 15) bt East Bengal 2 (Nandhakumar 53, Forbes 82)

**At Kolkata:** Mohun Bagan 2 (Anirudh Thapa 12, Jason Cummings 45+2) bt Hyderabad FC 0.

**BIDAR PLATE: AQUATIC** (I. Chisty) 1, Stormy Ocean (G. Vivek) 3 and Minchu (Kuldeep Singh) 1, Midsummer Star (Md. Ekram Alam) 4. 1-1/2, 2-1/2, 3-1/2 and 4-1/2. Im 26. 22s. 33 (w), 11 and 14 (p). SHP: 22, THP: 20, SHW: 16 and 19, FP: 34, Q: 10, Tanala: 1,476. Favourite: Midsummer Star.

**MECHAL PLATE (DIV. I): MARY** (Hindu Singh) 1, Golden Forza (A.A. Vikrant) 2, Deccan Daisy (P. Sai Kumar) 3 and Swiss Girl (Kuldeep Singh) 4. 3/4, 2-1/2 and Neck. Im 14. 05s. 19 (w), 11, 36 and 11 (p). SHP: 168, THP: 34, SHW: 20 and 143, FP: 440, Q: 361, Tanala: 1,420. Favour-

ite: Miracle Mary.

Owner: Mr. C. Aryama Sundaram. Trainer: L.D. Silva.

**5. BONZER CUP: CROWN WITNESS** (P. S. Kumar) 1, Sucker Punch (G. Nares) 2, Alcaloh Free (Surya Prakash) 3 and Sundance Kid (Abhiraj Singh) 4. 2-1/2 and 4-1/2. Im 20. 38s. 22s (w), 16, 14 and 29 (p). SHP: 38, THP: 96, SHW: 13 and 24, FP: 75, Q: 62, Tanala: 1,302. Favourite: D Battle.

Owner: Mr. Teja Gollapudi. Trainer: Lakman Singh.

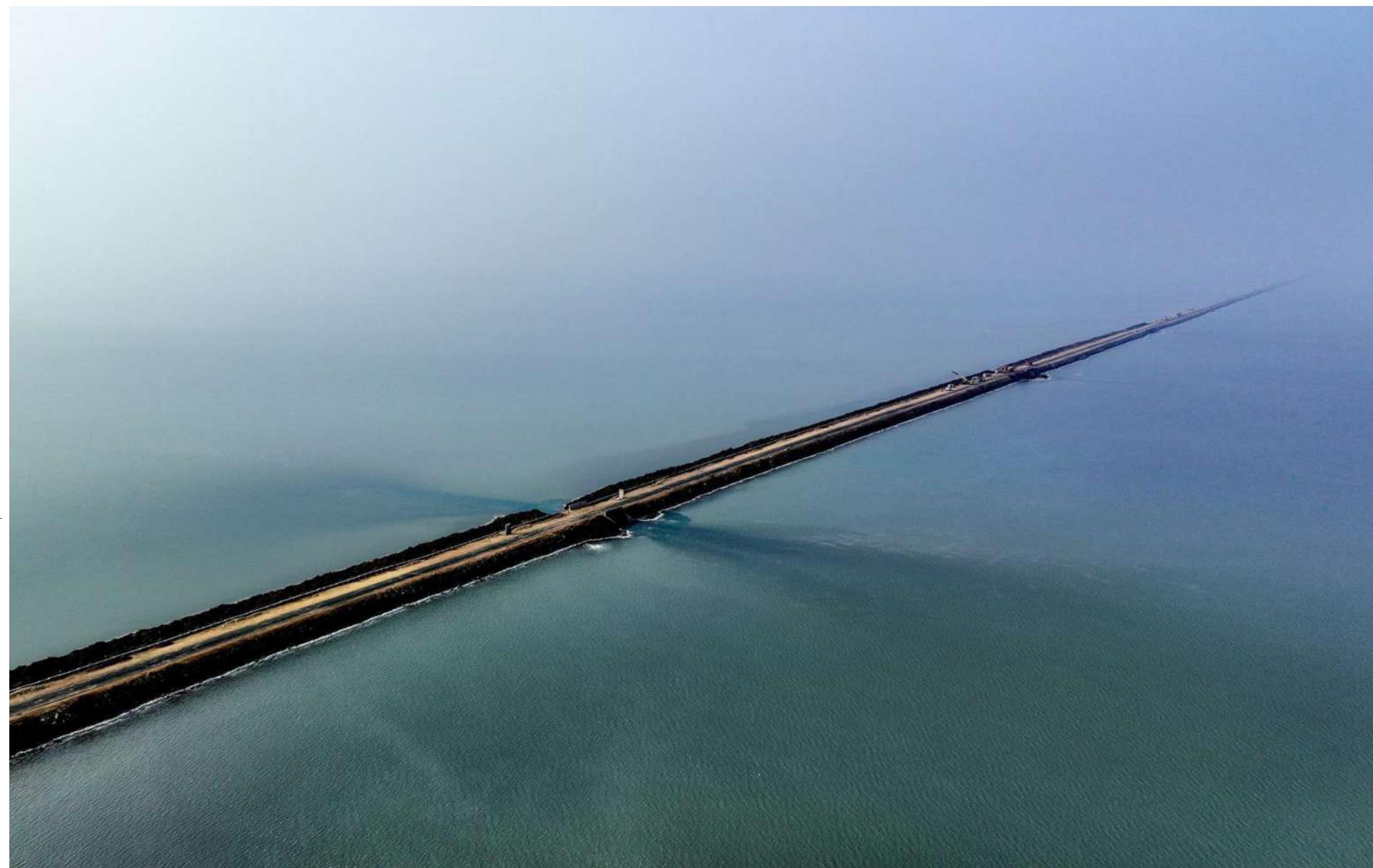
**6. GODOLPHIN BARB MILLION: DIVINE**



Gates of paradise: Entrance to the Road to Heaven from Khavda side in Kutch District.



Blissfull journey: View from a tourist bus travelling through the Road to Heaven.



Road of tranquillity: An aerial view of The Road to Heaven in Kutch district of Gujarat.

# Where a road is the destination

The 31.9 km-long Khavda-Khadir road to reach the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Dholavira, a Harappan city situated on the island of Khadir, opened for tourists in 2023

**T**ill not so long ago in Gujarat, the distance from Bhuj to Dholavira was around 240 km via Rapar and Bhachau. But in the run-up to the G-20 Summit, the Government of India cleared 31.9 km-long Khavda-Khadir road, through the Rann of Kutch, on a priority basis (though road widening works are ongoing).

The road was originally sanctioned in 2019, but was delayed, and finally opened for tourists in 2023. Dholavira, a UNESCO World Heritage Site was once a Harappan city situated on the island of Khadir, where the remains of the famous Indus Valley Civilisation can be found.

Now, it takes just 130 km to reach Bhuj, the capital of Kutch, says Jilubha Sodha, sarpanch of Dholavira.

The Rann of Kutch is famous for its white salty desert sand and is reputed to be the largest salt desert in the world.

Motorbike tourists who shared images of the road, while it was under construction, say it was a "heavenly experience" to be riding there.

And so the name 'Road to Heaven' stuck, as can be seen on Google Maps.

Many tourists, particularly bikers, and YouTubers travel just for the road trip. This magnificent stretch of road passing through the Great Rann of Kutch, where both sides are the endless white Rann, is a favourite destination for them to explore.

There are many other locations for nature lovers in Khadir, such as Fossil Park, Bokad Gado, Bhim Godo, Sonpari, Cheria Bet, Chhipar, Sunset point at Bhanjado Hill, and Dholavira.

With all these sites, the Road to Heaven has put Khadir on the world map, says local social worker Mahadev Barad.

Tourists interested in bird watching, wildlife, history/archaeological, art and handicraft, tribal studies are already flocking to this area. Many of them also visit Smriti van Earthquake Memorial of Bhuj.

The Road to Heaven seems to be the *pièce de résistance*.



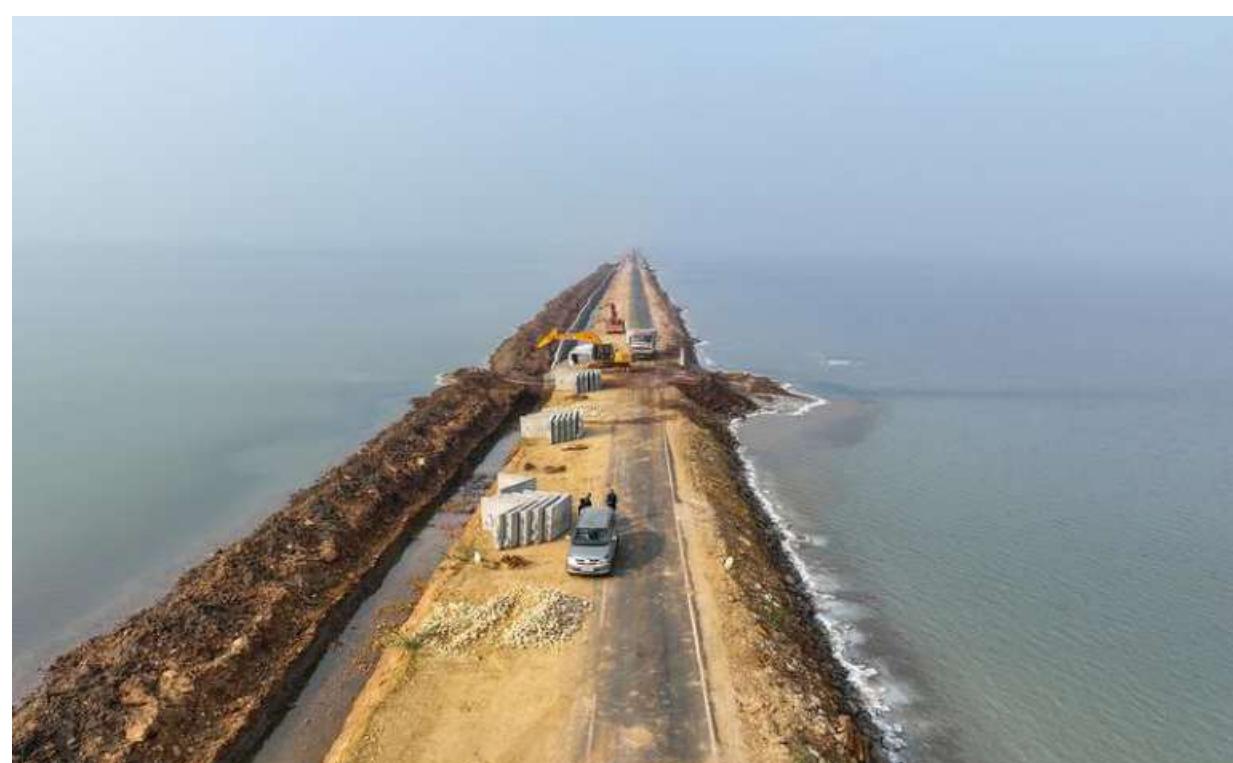
Rich history: A guide explains about Dholavira archaeological site to visitors.



VIJAY SONEJI  
soneji.v@thehindu.co.in



**Birds of heaven:** A group of Lesser Flamingos seen from the Road to Heaven.



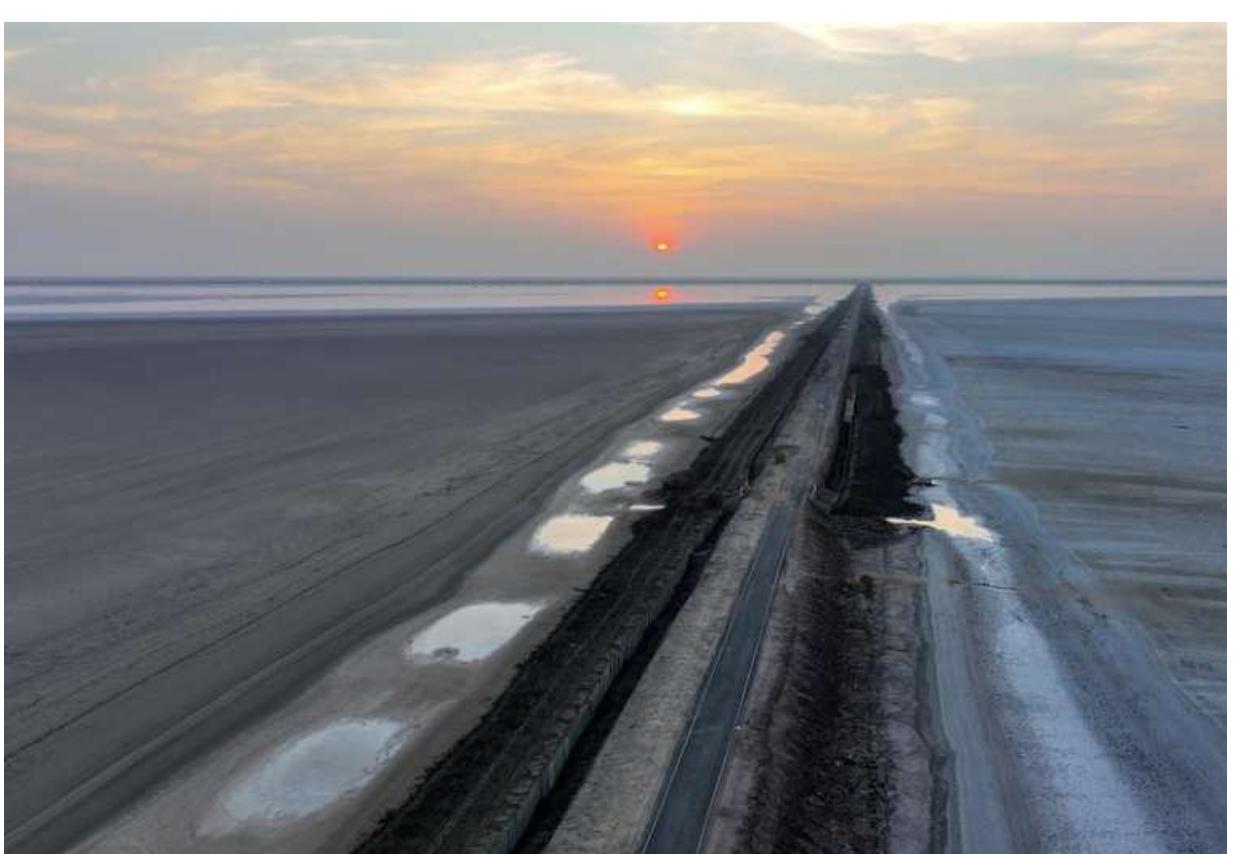
**Work continues:** Road expansion works ongoing at the Road to Heaven.



**Search of frames:** A pre-wedding shoot at the Road to Heaven.



**Gracious hosts:** Workers make traditional Bhunga huts for travellers to stay near the Road to Heaven.



**To infinity:** A sunset seen from The Road to Heaven.