



ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା, ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ବିଭାଗ
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧିତ



FIRST WORLD ODIA LANGUAGE CONFERENCE 2024

3rd to 5th February | Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Grand Inauguration by
Shri Naveen Patnaik
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha

February 3rd, 11 AM
Janata Maidan, Bhubaneswar



Highlights of the Conference

- Inaugural & Concluding Events
- Conference Rooms named after Five Eminent Poets of Odisha
- Diverse Academic Sessions: 16 Thought-Provoking Topics
- Global Perspectives: Esteemed International Scholars in Attendance
- Literary Confluence: A Gathering of Hundreds of Brilliant Minds
- Tribute to Eminent Litterateurs and Writers
- Thematic Exhibitions

ଭାଷା ଅତୀରେ ଅସ୍ତ୍ର
ଭାଷା ହିଁ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, Planning (South) Division,
Jayanagar 2nd Block, Bengaluru.

No: EEP (S)/E-Procu/20/2023-24 Date: 02-02-2024
Notice of Postponement of Tender

Subject: Regarding postponement of the dates of publication of tenders called through e-procurement of this office.

Reference: This office tender postponement publication no: EEP (S)/E-Procu/20/2023-24 Date: 25-01-2024

As the tender work called through e-procurement from this office with No: EE/PS/E-Pro/PR/20/23-24 on 25.01.2024 cannot be uploaded online due to technical reasons, the dates called for in the tender notice have been postponed as follows.

Sl. No.	Details	Earlier published date	Postponed date
1	Last date and time to receive tender	09.02.2024 up to 4.00 pm	15.02.2024 at 4.00 pm
2	Date and time of opening of technical bid	12.02.2024 at 4.30 pm	17.02.2024 up to 4.30 pm

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Planning (South), BBMP.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
Track Machine Unit / Royapuram / Chennai

E Tender Notice No. TMC-RPM-01 of 2024 Dt. 30.01.2024
Deputy Chief Engineer/Track Machines/Royapuram/Chennai for and on behalf of the President of India invites Online tenders for the following works as per tender notice and Complete details are given in our e-tender portal www.reps.gov.in.

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Name of the Works	Appx. value of the Works (₹ in Crores)	Amount of EMD (in ₹)	Completion period of Works
1	TMC-RPM-01-2024-01	Periodic overhauling (POH) of Track Relaying Trains (TRT-984 and 994) of Southern Railway.	8.69	5,84,800	12 Months
2	TMC-RPM-01-2024-02	Strengthening, Upgradation with ALC, complete re-wiring of CSM machines 929, 932, 936 and 951 of Southern Railway.	19.68	11,34,400	18 Months

SI. No. 01 & 02 - Tender closing date and time : 23.02.2024 at 15.00 Hrs.
Note: It is the responsibility of the tenderer to check any Corrigendum issued for any correction or modifications uploaded subsequently in website, the same shall be taken into account while submitting Tender.

Follow us on : <https://twitter.com/GMSRailway>

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, Project Central-8
N.R. Square, Bengaluru - 560 002

No: EE/PC-8/TEND/02/2023-24 Dated: 02.02.2024

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)
(Through GOK KPP Portal only) (Two Cover System)

The Executive Engineer, (Project-Central-8) BBMP, Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible Tenderers for the construction of works detailed in the table below.

Name of the Work	Approx. Amount put to Tender (₹. in Lakhs)	EMD (₹. in Lakhs)
Comprehensive Development of Selected Roads by Providing White Topping under GOK Grants. Package-2	10255.00	102.55

Calendar of Events : (1) Tender documents may be downloaded from the KPP Portal of Government of Karnataka from **03.02.2024**. (2) Tenders must be submitted online through KPP portal on or before **17.02.2024** upto **4:00 pm**. (3) A Pre Tender Meeting will be held at the office of the Chief Engineer (Project Central) **09.02.2024 at 4:00 pm**. (4) Technical Bids will be opened in the Office of the Executive Engineer (Project Central-8) on **19.02.2024 at 10:30 pm**. (5) This tender notice can also be seen on the BBMP Website: www.bbmp.gov.in. Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours on working days or from website: <https://kpp.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Project Central-8

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala - 147001)
Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2105G033813 Website: www.pspcl.in
Mobile No. 90461-55325

Short Term E-Tender Enq. No. 7518/P-3/EMP-12557 dated 31.01.24

Dy. Chief Engineer/Headquarter(Procurement Cell-3) GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites E-Tender ID No. 2023_POWER_116720_1 for the Procurement of spares MPO, Classifier blade for bowl mills of Stage-II & III, GGSTP, Ropar for detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 01.02.24/05.00PM onwards.

Note:-Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

RTP- 17/24 76155/12/2662/2023/31999

TRIPURA RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
(Department of Power, Government of Tripura)

PNIe-T.No.F.6(341)/TREDA/NCES/2024/NORTH TRIPURA_UNAKOTI_DHALAI_KHOWAI/4907 Date 01/02/2024

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

On behalf of Tripura Renewable Energy Development Agency (TREDA), Joint Director, TREDA invites e-tender for the work of Supply, installation & commissioning of Stand Alone W-LED based Solar PV Street Lighting Systems including Guarantee/Warranty and Annual Maintenance Contract for 5(five) years (25 years performance guarantee/warranty for SPV Module) under NORTH TRIPURA/UNAKOTI/DHALAI/KHOWAI District on turnkey basis vide DNLE-T No. F. 6(341)/TREDA/NCES/2024/NORTH TRIPURA_UNAKOTI_DHALAI_KHOWAI/4897, dated 01/02/2024.

The tender papers may be downloaded from e-procurement portal <https://tripuratenders.gov.in> and the deadline for submission of online e-bid is 23/02/2024 upto 03:00 PM.

(D S DAS)
Joint Director

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, Project Central-4, N.R. Square, Bengaluru - 560 002.

No: EE/PC-4/TEND/03/2023-24 Date: 02-02-2024

INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT) - (SHORT TERM)
(Two Cover System) (Through GOK KPP Portal only)

The Government of Karnataka Vide G.O. No. UDD 389 MNY 2023-24, Bengaluru dated: 09-01-2024, has accorded approval for the action plan in the Sanctioned Budget 2023-24 for taking up of the work listed below.

The Executive Engineer (Project Central-4), BBMP, Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible Tenderers for the Construction of works detailed below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Approx. Amount Put to Tender Including GST, all Taxes, (Rs. in Lakhs)	EMD (Rs. in Lakhs)
1	Comprehensive Development of Selected Roads by Providing White Topping under GOK Grants 2023-24. (Package-1)	10258.46	102.6

Calendar of Events: 1) Tender Documents may be downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Website: <https://kpp.karnataka.gov.in> from **02-02-2024**.

2) Last Date for Submission of Online Queries is **08-02-2024**.

3) Pre Bid Meeting will be held on **09-02-2024 at 16.00 Hours in the Office of the Chief Engineer (Project)**. 4) Tenders must be Submitted online through e-Procurement Portal on or before **17.30 Hours on 17-02-2024**. 5) Technical Bids will be Opened on the Website: <https://kpp.karnataka.gov.in> at the Office of the Executive Engineer (Project Central-4) on **19-02-2024 at 10.30 Hours**. Further details can be had from the above office

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Project Central-4, BBMP.

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer(Project Central-2), N.R Square, Bengaluru - 560 002.

No. EE/PC-2/TEND/02/2023-24 Date: 02.02.2024

INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT)
(TWO COVER SYSTEM) (Short Term Tender Notification) (Through GOK E-procurement Portal only)

The Executive Engineer (Project Central-2), BBMP, Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible Tenderers for the Construction Work detailed in the table below. The Tenderers may submit Tenders for the Work given in the table through e-Procurement Portal of the Government of Karnataka (viz. <https://kpp.karnataka.gov.in>). The Tenderers are advised to note the Minimum Qualification Criteria specified in Clause 3 of the Instructions to Tenderers to qualify for Award of the Contract as per Standard Bidding Document uploaded in the KPP Portal. Tender Documents may be downloaded from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal of the Government of Karnataka from **02-02-2024**. Tenders must be submitted online through KPP Portal on or before **17:30 hours on 17-02-2024** and the Opening of Tenders will be as per the KPP Portal Guidelines.

Name of the Work : Comprehensive Development of Selected Roads by Providing White Topping Under Gok Grants (Package - 5), Amount put tender (Rs. In Lakh) : 11024.78, EMD (in Lakhs): 110.25, Cost of thender form in Rs: As per Karnataka Public Procurement Portal, Period of Completion : 11 Months (including Monsoon Season).

Other Details can be seen in the Tender Document.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, (Project Central-2) BBMP, Bengaluru.

Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited
(CIN : U40108JH2013SGC001702)
Regd. Office : Engineering Building,
H.E.C., Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004,
Telephone : 0651-2400799 & Fax : 0651-2400799
[https://www.jbnl.co.in](http://www.jbnl.co.in) Email- cecr2018@gmail.com

Emergency Short E-Tender Notice

NIT No. - 406/PR/JBVNL/2023-24

Emergency Short e-tender for selection of full turnkey contractor for development of distribution infra structure in Electric supply Circle, Chas for an estimated cost Rs 156.16 Crores under Loss Reduction of Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) sanction by Ministry of Power, GoI and approved by GoI.

SN	Details of Work
1	Development of distribution infrastructure like replacement of LT Conductor to AB Cable Erection of LT & 11kv line, installation of New DTR, etc
2	Estimated Cost- Rs 156.16 Crores(all inclusive)
3	Calendar of Events :
i.	Date of Publication of NIT on website
ii.	Last Date / Time for receipt of bids(online)
iii.	Last Date / Time for receipt of bids(in hard copy in the office of GM(Coml.)
iv.	Date and Time for Opening of Technical bid

The tender documents with detailed conditions can be obtained through web site <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in> and should upload all relevant documents as mentioned in the tender document only through online e-tender portal/website <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in>

Save Energy ,Save Nation for Better tomorrow

Sd/- General Manager (Coml.)

PR 317763 (Jharkhand Bijlee Vitran Nigam Ltd) 23-24 (D)

Public Health Engineering Department
PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DIVISION, ARA
TENDER NIT No –12R1/SBNQ/2023-24
National Competitive Bidding
(Through e-procurement mode on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

1	Designation and Address of Advertiser	Executive Engineer, Public Health Division, Ara
2	Date of issue of Tender Notice	29.01.2024
3	Period of sale (downloading) of tender Bid Document	12.02.24 to 17.02.2024 up to 15:00 Hrs. through www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
4	Date, time & place of pre-bid meeting	15.02.24 at 11.30 hrs. hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer P. H. Division, Ara
5	Last date and time of receipt (uploading) of tender	19.02.2024 up to 17:00Hrs on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
6	Last date and time of submission of hard copy of EMD (in original).	20.02.2024 up to 15:00 hrs in the Office of the :- A. Executive Engineer P.H. Division , Araor B. Superintending Engineer of P.H. Circle , Araor C. Zonal chief Engineer, of P.H. Zone, Patna
7	Date and time of opening of technical bid	20.02.2024 at 16:00Hrs on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
8	Date and time of opening of financial bid	To be informed later after the approval of technical bid.

9. **Details of works:-** Name of Work: Design, Construction, Supply, Testing and Commissioning of Piped Water Supply Schemes for habitations left out under "HargharnalKala" nischayojna in areas having ground water quality issues; with Electric Driven Pumps and Electric Driven Pumps with Diesel Generators. The scheme will be implemented in 6 months Trial Run Period and Comprehensive Operation and Maintenance of 60 months under MukhyamantriGrameenPejyalNishchay Yojna (Non Quality Affected).

10. **Gr. No.** **Block** **Panchayat** **Habitation** **Ward** **No of Scheme in a Group** **Estimated Cost (in Lakh)** **Amount of Earnest Money (in Lakh)** **Cost of Tender Document (non-refundable) in Rs.** **BSED/C Bid Processing Fee (in Rs.)** **Completion Period (in months)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	BIHIA	MANJHOLI	BELA	2B	8.065	10000	5900	6	20.02.2024	12.00 (Rs.1.00 Lakh online & remaining balance BG/FDR)
			BHADSARA	8B						
			BHADSARA	9						
			KAKHKO	13						
		KATEYA	BANDH	13	20.02.2024	798.18	4.065	5900	6	
			KOIRI TOLA	4						
			OSAI	MAHTO TOLA						9
			BANKAT	4B						
KAMARIYON	YADAVPUR	16	20.02.2024	12.00 (Rs.1.00 Lakh online & remaining balance BG/FDR)	203.22	10000	5900	6		

PR. No. 016546 (PHED) 2023-24 For further details please visit : www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar

विहार में शराब का व्यापार, विक्री एवं जेवन अवैध है। इससे संबंधित शिकायत इस नंबर पर दर्ज करायें, आपकी जानकारी गुरु रखी जाएगी।
टॉल फ्री नं- 15545 या 1800 345 6268

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY
Electrical Department (TRD Branch), Jabalpur
E-TENDER NOTICE: No. JBP/TRD/TENDER/2023/17R date: 01.02.2024
Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD) West Central Railway Jabalpur for and on behalf of the President of India invite sealed tenders from the reputed and experienced contractors having valid Electrical License issued in the name of firm by State Government as required under IE rules, 1956 with one of the partners or in his own name if sole proprietor. **Name of work - Outsourcing of PSI activities of ET(excel)- KTE - (incl.) section for 2 years. Place of work - Jabalpur Division. Completion period - 24 months, Tender value (Cost of the work) - Rs. 1,85,**



FCRA 'VIOLATION' CASE

CBI searches premises linked to Harsh Mander

NEWS » PAGE 8



GAZA TRUE PLAN
Hamas gives 'initial' support

WORLD » PAGE 11



PM ROOFTOP SOLAR SCHEME
Centre likely to bear ₹1-lakh crore bill

NEWS » PAGE 10



SEEKING SHELTER
Along the border, living in limbo
Myanmar refugees in India face an uncertain future

GROUND ZERO » PAGE 7



MEMORABLE DAY
Jaiswal sizzles with unbeaten century

SPORT » PAGE 15

IN BRIEF

AAP, BJP protests choke Delhi roads for hours

NEW DELHI

Protests staged by AAP and the BJP, just a few hundred meters apart in central Delhi, resulted in prolonged traffic jams at several places on Friday. AAP had planned its demonstration in front of the BJP headquarters against the alleged "cheating" in the Chandigarh mayoral poll, while the BJP's protest over alleged "corruption" was near the AAP office. » Page 4

Final UCC report handed over to Uttarakhand CM

NEW DELHI

The five-member committee constituted for drafting the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in Uttarakhand handed over its final report to the State's Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Friday. The committee has suggested keeping the tribal community out of the UCC ambit. » Page 8

Champai Soren sworn in as 12th CM of Jharkhand

Satyinand Bhokta of RJD and Alamgir Alam of Cong. take oath as Cabinet Ministers; 39 MLAs of ruling coalition shifted to Hyderabad ahead of floor test; Hemant Soren sent to 5-day ED custody

Amit Bhalari
RANCHI

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader Champai Soren took oath as the twelfth Chief Minister of Jharkhand on Friday, even as his predecessor Hemant Soren was remanded to five days in the custody of the Enforcement Directorate.

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) MLA Satyinand Bhokta and Congress MLA Alamgir Alam also took oath as Cabinet Ministers in a swearing-in ceremony that came two days after Mr. Hemant Soren's resignation and arrest in an alleged land scam case.

Soon after the ceremony, 39 MLAs of the ruling coalition, who had been staying in the Ranchi Circuit House, were rushed



At the helm: Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren during the swearing-in ceremony at Raj Bhavan in Ranchi on Friday. PTI

straight to the airport and flown to Hyderabad by chartered plane in a bid to prevent them from being poached by the Opposition before the new government seeks a vote of confidence on February 5. The JMM-led alliance has submitted letters of support

from 47 MLAs to the Raj Bhavan.

Before boarding the chartered flight, several MLAs said that they were going to Hyderabad due to fear of harassment by the ED and the Central Bureau of Investigation. The MLAs were met in Hyderabad by

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SC refuses to intervene in plea against arrest

NEW DELHI
A Special Bench of the Supreme Court on Friday refused to intervene in a plea by former Jharkhand Chief minister Hemant Soren challenging his arrest on money laundering charges in a land scam case, and asked him to try his luck in the Jharkhand High Court. » PAGE 9

Telangana Congress leaders Deepadas Munshi and Ponnam Prabhakar and taken straight from the airport to the Leonia Resort in Shamirpet on the outskirts of the city.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

HC refuses interim relief to Gyanvapi mosque panel

Ishita Mishra
VARANASI

The Allahabad High Court on Friday declined to give any immediate relief to the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee that runs the Gyanvapi mosque, which had approached the court seeking an interim stay on the puja that is being observed in the mosque's basement on the orders of the district court.

A large police force, including the Provincial Armed Constabulary, was deployed outside the Gyanvapi mosque as Friday namaz was offered with over 2,000 worshippers in attendance, amid protests from the Muslim community, which shut shops to demonstrate its unhappiness against the court order allowing Hindu worship inside the mosque.

While hearing the application filed by the mosque committee through senior advocate S.F.A. Naqvi, Justice Rohit Ranjan Agarwal pointed out that the applicants have not challenged the January 17 order of the district court appointing the Varanasi District Magistrate as the receiver of the southern cellar of the mosque. On the same application, the district court had, on January 31, allowed puja to be performed inside the Vyas Tehkhana, or cellar, of the mosque. Within hours of the order, the district administration ensured compliance, removing the barricades and fencing around



Keeping vigil: A road leading to the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi on Friday. R.V. MOORTHY

the mosque to let a priest enter the cellar. Puja was then performed during the wee hours on February 1 and is continuing. "You have filed the application under Order 7 Rule 11 (Rejection of Plaintiff) after the appointment of a receiver. How will this appeal be maintainable unless that order is challenged?" the court asked.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8
'NOT AN ISOLATED CASE'
» PAGE 8

Standstill in snow



Cut off: Vehicles stranded on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway in Qazigund town of south Kashmir on Friday. The highway remained closed for the second day as the Union Territory continued to receive fresh snowfall after a dry spell this winter. NISSAR AHMAD

Police visit houses of Kejriwal, Atishi to serve notice over poaching allegations

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Crime Branch officers reached the residences of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Finance Minister Atishi on Friday to serve notice in connection with allegations they had made about the BJP's attempt to buy Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLAs to topple the Delhi government. However, police sources said as neither of them was home, Crime Branch teams will go again on Saturday.

A senior officer from the Crime Branch said the teams had approached the senior AAP leaders seeking "assistance with the names of MLAs whom the BJP had approached".

No FIR has been registered in the case yet.

On January 27, Mr. Kejriwal and Ms. Atishi claimed that the BJP was trying to poach AAP MLAs by offering ₹25 crore each and a ticket in next year's Assembly poll to topple the government. The BJP had dared the Chief Minister to furnish the evidence to back his claims.

On Friday, leaders of the BJP's Delhi unit met the Police Commissioner and submitted a complaint regarding the "false" claims made by the two leaders.

Reacting to reports about police teams visiting the houses of the two senior Delhi Ministers, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva said the Chief Minister must either submit evidence to support his allegations or face criminal proceedings.

Udhav Naik
CHENNAI

Tamil cinema's leading hero Vijay on Friday took the political plunge and announced the formation of his political party "Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam". Positioning himself against the politics of "corruption" and "divisiveness", Mr. Vijay declared that his party would enter the electoral fray in the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly election. It will stay away from the upcoming Lok Sabha election and not extend support to anyone.

Arguably the biggest and highest paid star in Tamil Nadu at the moment, Mr. Vijay, the founder-president of the party, said the State has suffered due to



Vijay @ACTORVIJAY / INSTAGRAM

the Tamil culture of equality and political traditions of the State, and within the framework of Indian Constitution," he said.

The actor had several years ago converted his fans association into Vijay Makkal Iyakkam (VMI), a larger social platform that has now been converted into a political party.

Bussy Anand, general secretary, VMI, was in New Delhi to initiate the process of registering the political party with Election Commission of India. In a three-page statement, Mr. Vijay said the party will start propagating its "Tamil Nadu-centric" ideology and policies,

among the people through public events after the Lok Sabha election.

maladministration and corruption and has been plagued by the politics of hate and divisiveness. "It is a fact that everyone is yearning for governance that is selfless, transparent, corruption-free, and without caste or religious bias. What is important is that such policies are in tune with

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No. 334/Tenders/Register/2024

Dated 02.02.2024

e-TENDER NOTICE

e-Tenders are invited from reputed manufacturers and their authorised dealers for the supply of equipment items. Tender documents and detailed information are available on website www.mptenders.gov.in and information on university website www.ndvsu.org

Schedule: Purchase of online tenders from 05.02.2024 to 23.02.2024. Online submission of bid upto 23.02.2024. Submission of technical/physical bid to the office upto 28.02.2024. Corrigendum, if any, will only be posted in above websites. No press notice will be issued separately.

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Geology

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Cohort 1 starting on: 19 February 2024

B-11, 2nd Flr, Main Road, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, DELHI

9810975937 / 011-47092329

TENDERS

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tenders are invited on the prescribed form for the supply of the below mentioned items to DoubleTree by Hilton Sector - 56, DoubleTree by Hilton Sector - 50 & Hilton Garden Inn-New Delhi Saket for the Period of 01st April, 2024 till 31st March, 2025.

SUPPLIES (PERISHABLE):

Indian Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, Imported & English Vegetables, Imported Fruits, Sweet & Namkeen, Milk & Milk Products, Ice-Cream, Chicken, Mutton, Pork items, Tenderloin Sea Foods (Fish & Prawns), Eggs, Breads & Noodles, Indian Cheese, Imported Cheese, Frozen items.

GROCERY:

Dry Fruits, Atta/Maida, Rice, Sugar, Pulses, Spices & Condiments, Bakery Products.

OTHERS:

Office Stationary, Cleaning Supply, Gel Fuel, Dry Room Amenities, Charcoal, Service Contracts - House keeping, Stewarding, Valets, Security, Engineering. Tender documents can be obtained from the purchase department from date 05th Feb., 2024 to 14th Feb., 2024 between 09:00 to 18:00 hours - with a Payment of Rs. 200/- each category (non-refundable).

Sealed tenders will be received till 18:00 hrs. by 20th February, 2024 at purchase department.

The Management Reserves the right to accept or reject the tender without assigning any reason. The management decision will be final and binding.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Sh. Roop Lal Jindal, had expired on 22/04/2021, and the Shares of the deceased, in the Company - M/s Ocean Carpets & Furnishing (I) Pvt. Ltd., BH-7, Shalimar Bagh, (East), New Delhi - 110088, covered under Folio No. 01, Share Certificate No. (s) 01, bearing Distinctive no. 01 to 5250, were transmitted in the name of his wife Smt. Shiksha Jindal on 22/04/2021, being the legal successor of the deceased.

Sd./

(Auth Signatory)

Ocean Carpets & Furnishing (I) Pvt. Ltd.

TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CONTACT

Mr. N SELVA KUMAR

PH: 9820350726

selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in

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India's National Newspaper

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

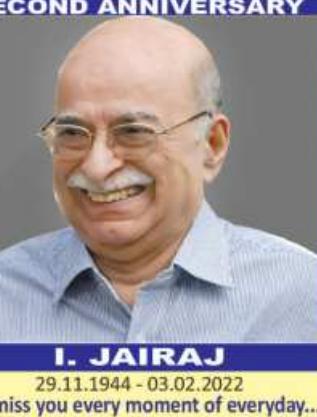
In Loving Memory Of

SRI CHINTAGUNTA MALLIKARJUNA RAO
(1932-2024)

attained the Lotus Feet of Lord Narayana on Thursday, 1-2-2024.
He is deeply mourned by his children: Vathsala, Manjula, Pradeep Kumar, and their families. He is survived by his beloved wife, Smt. Pramila Rao.

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

SECOND ANNIVERSARY



29.11.1944 - 03.02.2022

We miss you every moment of everyday... Nirmala, Siddharth, Bharat & your Entire Family & Friends

I. JAIRAJ

3/1/2022

Ocean Carpets & Furnishing (I) Pvt. Ltd.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"- PROCUREMENT NOTICE

WORKS DEPARTMENT

E-mail : ceworldbankprojects@gmail.com

Bid Identification No. CE-W.B.P. (O) - 52 / 2023-24

1. The Chief Engineer (World Bank Project), Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for construction of Road & Bridge work as detailed below :
2. Nature of work : Bridge work
3. No. of work : 01 no.
4. Tender Cost : Rs.10,00,000 (on-line)
5. Class of Contractor : A / Special Class Contractor
6. Available of bid document : From 10:00 AM of 03.02.2024 to 5:00 PM of 19.02.2024 in the website
7. Date of opening of Bid : Dt.20.02.2024 at 11:30 AM
8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website : <https://tenderodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Chief Engineer (Bridges), World Bank Project, Odisha.

OIPR-3403/11/090/2324

B-1728 :

JHARKHAND STATE RURAL ROAD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

3rd Floor, F.F.P. Building, H.E.C. Dhrurwa, Ranchi – 834 004

Memo No. JSRRDA-360 / 2023-403 Ranchi, Dated 31.01.2024

CORRIGENDUM TO PR NO.: 315606 dated 10.1.24

e-Tender Nit NO. 257 / 2023-24 dated 27.1.24

The NIT issued vide PR No. 315606 dated 10.1.24 regarding e-tender for Construction and Maintenance for the five years of the works in District West Singhbhum, Block-Goeikera, under PMGSY-I scheme is amended and should be read as follows in the bidding document which is available in website www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in :-

In place of			Read as	
Sl. No.	Package No.	Name of the Bridge	Package No.	Name of the Bridge
1.	JH-22-BR-WSM-01-A	Bridge over Local Nala, (34.24 M), Ch. 17.5 KM Sarbil to Patung Road	JH-22-BR-WSM-01-A	Bridge over Local Nala, (34.24 M), Ch. 17.5 KM Sarbil to Patung Road
2.	JH-22-BR-WSM-01-B	Bridge over Local Nala, (34.24 M), Ch. 16.85 KM Sarbil to Patung Road	JH-22-BR-WSM-01-B	Bridge over Local Nala, (34.24 M), Ch. 16.85 KM Sarbil to Patung Road
3.		Bridge over Local Nala, (26.24 M), Ch. 16.10 KM Sarbil to Patung Road	JH-22-BR-WSM-01-C	Bridge over Local Nala, (26.24 M), Ch. 16.10 KM Sarbil to Patung Road

All other terms and conditions will remain same.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer
JSRRDA, Ranchi

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority

Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida-201301 (U.P.)

Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.in

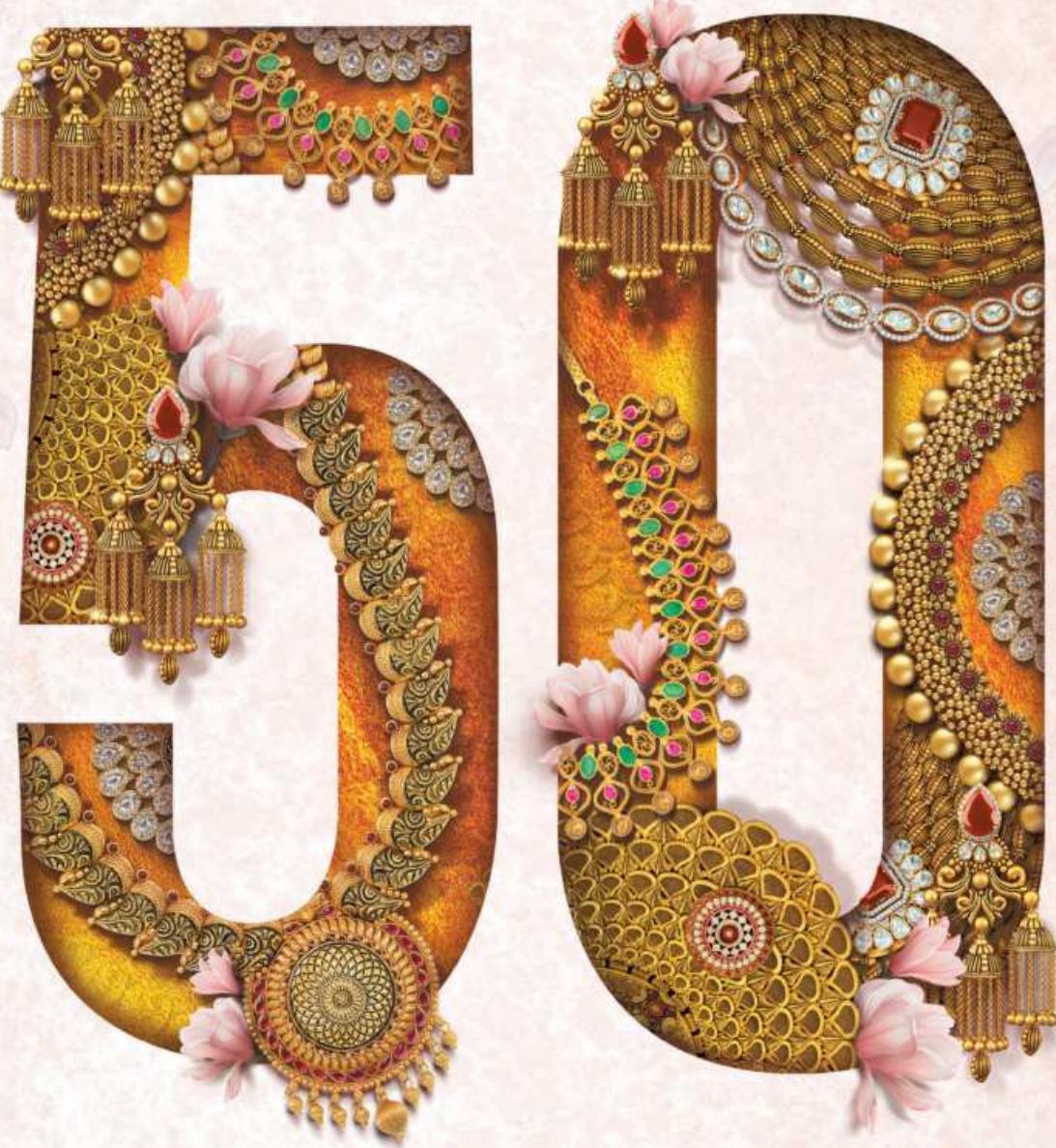
E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened / downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.in & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

S.No.	Job no/Work name	Amount (Rs. in Lacs)
1	70/D(H)/D(H)-IV/2023-24,M/o Green Belt/RSP with two year Maintenance Sector-63, 63A/Noida	55.49
2	71/D(H)/D(H)-IV/2023-24,M/o Park/Green Belt/RSP with two year Maintenance Sector-16, 16A, 16B All Parks, Green Belt including 16A Under Ground Car Parking and RSP (Auto Market, Sector-16A Internal Road and Along D.N.D Road) Noida	90.19
3	74/D(H)/D(H)-IV/2023-24,M/o Park/Green belt with two year Maintenance Sector-22 and 23 All Park and Green Belt Noida	90.20
4	77/D(H)/D(H)-IV/2023-24,M/o Park with Two year Maintenance Sector-6 to 10 All Park Noida	88.71
5	86/D(H)/D(H)-IV/2023-24,M/o Park with two year Maintenance sector- 17 and 18 all Park and Multilevel Car parking sector-18 and RSP Atta Peer to DLF Mall Between Sector-17 and 18 and Atta Peer to Sector-17 BHEL Gate) Noida	85.62
6	88/D(H)/D(H)-IV/2023-24,M/o Park/Green Belt with two year Maintenance Sector- 56 Park and Green Belt Noida	82.17
7	92/D(H)/D(H)-IV/2023-24,M/o RSP with two year Maintenance Kamal Marg, kondli marg and Rajat Vihar to Between Sector-55, 56, 57, 58 and including Triangules Noida	75.04
8	62/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2023-24,M/o Park, Green Belt Sector-35 & Morna Shiv Mandir & School for two year maintenance	58.18
9	63/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2023-24,M/o Park, Green Belt Sector-33 for two year maintenance	75.12
10	65/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2023-24,M/o Park, Green Belt & RSP Sector-28, 29, 37 for two year maintenance.	94.23
11	71/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2023-24,M/o Park, Green Belt & RSP Sector-77, 116 For two year maintenance	98.07
12	75/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2023-24,M/o R	

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IN BRIEF



CBI opposes Sisodia's bail, custody parole applications

The CBI on Friday opposed two applications filed by Senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia, seeking bail and custody parole respectively, in the alleged Delhi excise scam case. The CBI made the submissions before Special Judge M.K. Nagpal in its reply to the applications filed by the politician and sought their dismissal. "A common reply has been filed today on behalf of the CBI to the application for regular bail as well as the other application seeking custody parole filed by the accused Manish Sisodia... As requested and agreed jointly, the above applications of accused are now being listed for arguments at 2 p.m. on February 5, 2024," the judge said. PTI

HC rejects plea for probe into death of two IIT-D students

The Delhi High Court has rejected the plea of parents of two Indian Institute of Technology Delhi students, who allegedly committed suicide inside campus hostel, seeking an "impartial investigation" into alleged caste based discrimination against the students. In its verdict on January 30, the High Court noted that it was aware of the plight and the agony of the grieving parents of the two young students. However, it added that the order for either registration of FIR or directing the Central Bureau of Investigation to investigate the matter cannot be passed "on the basis of mere sentiment or sympathy".

First day of U.P. budget session sees chaos, shouting of slogans by SP, BJP legislators in House

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

The budget session of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly began on Friday amid chaos as the Samajwadi Party (SP) MLAs and MLCs disrupted Governor Anandiben Patel's address with slogans of "Rajyapal wapas jao" (Governor go back). They also carried banners while staging the protest in the well of the House.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders chanted "Jai Shri Ram" in response.

The Governor continued to read her address in the joint sitting of both Houses – Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council.

The Governor in her address described the Ram Temple in Ayodhya as "an affirmation of country's cultural pride and indeli-



SP MLAs staging a protest on the first day of budget session in Lucknow. SANDEEP SAXENA

ble mark on the its history". "Establishing the national temple..., it stands as a profound manifestation of the resolve and deep-seated faith of the Indian people. It represents further affirmation of India's cultural pride," she said.

Talking about the U.P. Global Investors Summit 2023, Ms. Patel said investment proposals worth more than ₹40 lakh crore

received have the potential to generate job opportunities for more than 11 million people in the State. "To translate these proposals into reality, ground breaking ceremony will be conducted, fostering extensive employment opportunities," she said.

Listing the State government's achievements, Ms. Patel said, "My government, with its zero tolerance policy towards crime and corruption, robust law and order, uninterrupted power supply and control over red tapism, has effectively controlled the pathetic condition of the State before 2017."

She said approximately six crore people in the State have been lifted out of poverty through efficient and effective policies of the government.

(With inputs from PTI)

Ex-chief engineer among two arrested in DJB contract case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested a former chief engineer of the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) and another person in a money laundering case over alleged corruption in giving work contract to a private company.

An official on Friday said the accused have been identified as Jagdish Kumar Arora, who was the DJB Chief Engineer, and Anil Kumar Aggarwal. On Thursday, the two were produced before a special court that sent them to the ED custody till February 5.

The ED's money laundering probe is based on a Central Bureau of Investigation FIR, which alleged that Mr. Arora awarded a DJB contract worth over ₹38.02 crore to NKG Infrastructure Ltd.

As per the ED, NKG Infrastructure obtained the bid by submitting forged documents and Mr. Arora was aware that the firm was ineligible for the tender involving the supply, installation, testing, and commissioning of electromagnetic flowmeter.

The agency alleged that NKG Infrastructure subcontracted the work to Integral Screws, a proprietorship firm of Mr. Aggarwal. On receipt of the funds, he transferred about ₹3 crore to Mr. Arora, it added.

L-G nod in PWD case
Meanwhile, Delhi Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena on Friday allowed the Anti Corruption Branch to register a case against an executive engineer of the Public Works Department for allegedly benefiting from a contract awarded for road strengthening work.

Indian value system, collective identity highlighted at Jaipur lit fest sessions on second day

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

Indian value system, collective identity, attacks on the voices of dissent and threats to secularism were highlighted at some of the sessions in the ongoing Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) here on Friday, with the distinguished authors throwing up a gamut of ideas for the audience. The speakers affirmed that promoting pluralism and multi-culturalism would only strengthen the nation.

Diverse themes
The second day of the five-day festival witnessed discussions on diverse themes, ranging from fiction and memoir to politics, espionage, travel, Second World War, and India's economic future. The inspirational and re-



British historian Jerry Brotton in conversation with historian William Dalrymple (right) during the Jaipur Literature Festival on Friday. PTI

lative sessions covered multiple genres in books by acclaimed and award-winning writers and speakers.

Political theorist Rajeev Bhargava said at a session on 'The new India: Between hope and despair' that the distortion of Indian secularism by its opponents would create divisions in society and weaken the country. "Secularism is necessary for maintaining pluralism within the Hindu religion as well," Mr. Bhargava said, while laying emphasis on the collective ethical identity.

India's new place in the comity of nations was discussed at a session which centred on the new book,

'The Elephant Moves', authored by Stanford University's Amit Kapoor.

BJP banking on PM's Sambalpur rally, Ram Temple euphoria to boost prospects in Odisha

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to inaugurate the first phase of construction of the permanent campus of Indian Institute of Management-Sambalpur and address a public meeting in the western Odisha town on February 3, marking the first political visit by a top BJP leader in the State ahead of the simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly polls later this year.

The BJP, having swept all five Lok Sabha seats in the western part of the State in 2019, holds high hopes for victory here once again. While it may admittedly be difficult to repeat the success of 2019 against a well-oiled BJD machinery – the party has been in power in Odisha for the last five consecutive terms – the BJP expects a significant boost to

its prospects from the hype around the recent Ram Temple consecration in Ayodhya as well as the vote-catching ability of Mr. Modi.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, of the 21 seats in the State, the BJD had won 12, the BJP eight, and the Congress only one. Five of the eight seats won by the BJP – Bargarh, Kalahandi, Balangir, Sambalpur and Sundargarh – are situated in western Odisha. The BJD had raked in a 38.88% vote share against the BJD's 43.32%, with the Congress being reduced to an almost non-entity with only 13.99% vote share. However, despite the five percentage point gap, the BJP's performance in the 2019 Lok Sabha election is considered to be its best in the recent past.

No-show by MPs
While western Odisha has

been considered a BJP stronghold, the party's MPs, after their poll victory, however, were conspicuous by their absence from the region, leaving the public annoyed, especially in constituencies like Kalahandi, Sambalpur, and Bargarh.

Since then, the BJD has made a sizeable effort to strengthen the organisation and bolster welfare programmes in western Odisha to recover from its losses in the region. After the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic was over, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched projects worth over ₹2,085 crore in Kalahandi, including the inauguration of an irrigation project on the Indravati river. The BJD leadership, including Mr. Patnaik's closest aide V.K. Pandian, have made multiple visits to the region in the last five years, and in 2022, the party won the



PM Modi's February 3 trip will be the first visit to Odisha by a top BJP leader ahead of the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls. FILE PHOTO

crucial zila parishad elections in all districts, leaving little scope for the BJP to work its manoeuvres. Just last month, Mr. Patnaik also unveiled the much-awaited Lower Suktel irrigation project, with the potential to irrigate more than one lakh

acres of agricultural land, providing benefits to over 80,000 farmers and drinking water to 70,000 people across 203 villages situated in Balangir and Subarnapur districts.

Political analysts add that there can be no match

between the BJD and BJP as far as organisational strength is concerned. The regional party, at present, clearly displays an upper hand in mobilising cadres on the ground. Its push to launch developmental projects worth thousands of crores of rupees also helped make the party a frontrunner, seemingly beating the threat of anti-incumbency despite 24 years of rule.

Temple inauguration
Despite all these factors, the BJP seems upbeat about its prospects this time around, too. The much-awaited consecration of the Ram Temple on January 22 gained huge traction in the districts of western Odisha, with scores of people holding prayer meets at a community level to mark the event. The BJP also draws comfort from the fact that

the electorate in Odisha in the past have shown the tendency to split votes, with the State favouring one party in the Lok Sabha poll, and another in the State election, both held in the same year. BJD leaders, therefore, assert that they will be the "preferred party" among Odisha's voters in the upcoming Lok Sabha election.

Above all, the BJP considers Mr. Modi its biggest trump card, with internal surveys suggesting a very high acceptance rate for the Prime Minister in the eastern State. Mr. Modi's public meet on February 3 in Sambalpur, too, is likely to give a push to BJP's strategy of translating its popularity to win Lok Sabha seats.

Mr. Modi will launch projects worth close to ₹70,000 crore in the State. As per the National Thermal Power Corporation



Security outside Kejriwal's residence. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Delhi CM skips fifth summons by ED in excise policy case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party said its national convener and Delhi Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal, did not appear before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday for questioning in connection with the Delhi excise policy case as the summons issued by the probe agency were "illegal".

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aim is to topple the Delhi government," the AAP added in a statement.

The BJD said AAP must move court and get the notice issued to Mr. Kejriwal quashed if it believes the summons to be "illegal".

The CM has skipped all five summonses issued by the ED so far.

Ensure appropriate medical treatment to Yasin Malik: Delhi HC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday ordered Tihar Jail authorities to ensure proper medical treatment to jailed separatist leader Yasin Malik, who is currently serving a life sentence in a terror funding case, and claims to be suffering from serious cardiac and kidney problems.

The court's order came after Malik moved a plea seeking direction to the authorities to produce his medical records and refer him to a hospital in the Capital or Jammu & Kashmir for appropriate treatment for his ailments.

During the hearing, the court was informed by the Centre and the Director General of Prisons (Tihar Jail) that Malik was "refusing treatment" given to

him by the authorities.

On being asked by the court as to what the objection to the treatment was, Malik's lawyer said that the set of doctors treating his client had been "suddenly switched" by the authorities, and a new medical board had been formed.

"You have a right to treatment, which is well-recognised, and we appreciate it. But we have reservations if you say that you want to be treated by some particular doctor," the court said.

The court, meanwhile, ordered prison authorities to ensure that any treatment required by Malik is "duly provided to him at the jail hospital in accordance with the law", and directed them to submit Malik's medical report by the next date of hearing on February 14.

'Cong. should apologise for remark on separate nation'

Ministers raise Karnataka MP Suresh's remark in both Houses; Pralhad Joshi urges Lok Sabha Speaker to refer issue to Ethics Committee; Mallikarjun Kharge says MP has been misquoted

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Ministers in both Houses of Parliament on Friday demanded an apology from the Congress after one of its Lok Sabha members, D.K. Suresh, allegedly said that south India may seek a separate nation if they don't get enough funds in the Union Budget.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi urged Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to refer the matter to the Ethics Committee, and sought an apology from Sonia Gandhi, who heads the Congress Parliamentary Party.

On Thursday, offering his response to the Union Budget to Kannada chan-



D.K. Suresh

nels, Mr. Suresh said, "Our tax money is being distributed to north India, if we don't condemn it there might arise a situation where we will have to demand a separate nation."

Raising the issue during the Zero Hour in the Lok Sabha, Mr. Joshi termed Mr. Suresh's remarks an insult to the architect of the Constitution, Babasaheb Ambedkar.

"I condemn the statement of the Congress member and demand that the matter be referred to the Ethics Committee of the Lok Sabha," Mr. Joshi said. "The Congress traditions on dividing the country still persists. I demand that Sonia Gandhi take action against the member and also clarify whether the party supports the views of the Congress member," he said.

Members of the Opposition INDIA bloc, including the Congress and the DMK, were on their feet.

In the Rajya Sabha, Union Minister Piyush Goyal sought an apology from the Congress for the MP's remarks, which he said reflect the "divisive" thinking of the Congress. He said

the statement cannot be ignored as it is an attack on the Constitution.

Congress chief and Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge said the party will not tolerate any statement that calls for breaking the country. "...India is one from Kanyakumari to Kashmir and will remain one. It is for this cause that Indira Gandhi gave the supreme sacrifice of her life and Rajiv Gandhi gave his life. Can such a party talk of breaking the country?" he said.

At the same time, he said Mr. Suresh was being misquoted. "If he has said anything, the matter should be looked into by the Privileges Committee," Mr. Kharge added.

Gowda defends Kumaraswamy's saffron shawl

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU



Deve Gowda
raswamy, he cannot fight there, and there is no need to discuss much about it," Mr. Gowda told press persons in Delhi.

The Congress had attacked Mr. Kumaraswamy for wearing the saffron shawl during a recent protest at Keragodu village in Mandya district that witnessed tension over the flag issue.

Top court dismisses ED plea to cancel bail of Bineesh Kodiyeri

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to cancel the bail granted to Bineesh Kodiyeri, son of late CPI(M) leader Kodiyeri Balakrishnan, in a narcotics-related money laundering case.

He was arrested by the ED on October 29, 2020,

and was granted bail by the Karnataka High Court in October 2021.

The Supreme Court Bench headed by Justice B.R. Gavai remarked that Mr. Bineesh did not face any charges of misusing his freedom while he was out on bail.

The case was reportedly registered following his arrest in a drug case registered by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Bengaluru. Later, he was arrested by the ED, Bengaluru, on a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The ED, in its petition before the top court, said the details of the case lead to a deep-rooted organised drug trafficking network in Bengaluru city, which involves highly influential Indian and foreign nationals.

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Time: 6 PM onwards

Visit the link: sstar.news/AcesLive
to watch the event live on the day.



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Population priorities

No survey can substitute the Census, yet to be conducted for this decade

In what was an intriguing statement in her Interim Budget speech, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that a high-powered committee will be constituted to consider the challenges arising from "fast population growth and demographic changes". With the Union government repeatedly postponing the decennial Census – it has not been conducted for the first time in a decade since 1881 – there is no direct evidence to support this statement. It is evident that India is now the most populous country, but the Sample Registration System statistical report in 2020 and the National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21) have shown that the total fertility rate (TFR) in India has fallen to 2 overall, with only a few States – Bihar (2.98), Meghalaya (2.91), Uttar Pradesh (2.35), Jharkhand (2.26) and Manipur (2.17) – having a TFR above 2.1. Clearly, the high population growth of the kind seen in the 20th century has been largely arrested – the TFR fell from 5.7 in 1950 to 2 in 2020, albeit differentially across regions. The population share of the southern States, reduced to 21% in 2011 from 26% in 1951, largely a consequence of a rapid reduction in TFR due to better socio-economic outcomes and education, and despite higher migration to these States. While the surveys mentioned are robust and necessary, they are no substitute for the comprehensive Census; the continued delay in its implementation reflects poorly on the Union Home Ministry that is motivated by other priorities rather than executing a vital programme of Indian governance.

The demographic shift in India and rising life expectancy have resulted in challenges and opportunities. The much touted demographic dividend – the relatively high proportion of the working age population in the developing world – is meaningful only if there are sufficient jobs and if they enjoy some degree of social security that will help them when they age. With high unemployment and the creation of non-farm jobs, which will increase productivity and cater to skilled employment, relatively slack in the last few years, there is the possibility of the country squandering this dividend. The "high-powered" committee will be performing a crucial role if it engages meaningfully in addressing questions related to jobs and social security and the challenges citizens face due to rapid urbanisation and mechanisation of work. However, if the committee focuses on the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's pet bogies of looking at population issues through the lens of religion and immigration, it will only distract governance from making use of the fast eroding democratic dividend in the country.

Two states

Britain has the historical responsibility to recognise a Palestine state

British Foreign Secretary David Cameron's remarks that the United Kingdom is considering recognising the Palestine state signals a change in the thinking of at least a section of the British government towards the Palestine question after the Israel-Hamas war of October 7. The comment triggered criticism within Conservative Party circles, with Downing Street stating later that the British government's policy towards the issue had not changed. Yet, the debate, which included reports in the American media that the State Department is reviewing options for possible recognition of the Palestine state, suggests that the Palestine question is back at the centre of the political parleys of the major powers. Before October 7, Israel, its Arab partners and western allies thought they could ignore the Palestine question and go ahead building a new West Asia. Hamas attacks and the subsequent Israeli invasion of Gaza show that finding a solution to the Palestine question is an imperative for peace and stability in a strife-stricken West Asia. And, one of the globally recognised and practical pathways to peace is a two-state solution – a viable, independent, sovereign Palestine state created with international recognition.

Britain has a historical responsibility to push for a solution. The British government was the first major power that recognised the Zionists' claim to the land of Ottoman Palestine. In 1917, during the First World War, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, supporting the creation of "a homeland" for the Jewish people "in Palestine". The declaration gave a major boost to the Zionist movement, promoting Jewish migration from Europe and the building of settlement communities in historical Palestine (Ottoman and British), culminating in the creation of Israel in 1948. At least from the Oslo process of the early 1990s, there were multiple diplomatic attempts in finding a mutually acceptable two-state solution, but which were futile as Palestine remained under occupation. Today, there are roughly 7,00,000 Jewish settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem; and Gaza is being destroyed by Israel. Israeli leaders, including Benjamin Netanyahu, have repeatedly rejected the two-state solution, while the far-right settlers are pushing for the control of the whole of Palestinian territories. This is an unsustainable scenario, producing cycles of violence and instability. The two-state proposal is already on its deathbed, given the mushrooming of settlements, growing violence, and the rise of far-right extremists in Israel and Islamist militants in Palestinian territories. If the British government realises its historical responsibility, does a reality check of its current policy and becomes ready to offer a political horizon to the Palestinians, it would be a welcome step.

Exposing India's financial markets to the vultures

In September 2023, J.P. Morgan unveiled its plan to include Indian local currency government bonds (LCGBs) in its Government Bond Index-Emerging Markets (GBI-EM) Global index suite, set to become effective from June 2024. This announcement heightened expectations across the Indian financial landscape, prompting anticipation from other influential index providers such as Bloomberg-Barclays and FTSE Russell. About four months later, on January 8, 2024, Bloomberg Index Services mirrored J.P. Morgan's move by proposing the addition of India's "fully accessible route (FAR)" bonds to the Bloomberg Emerging Market Local Currency Index, set to take effect in September 2024. The spotlight now turns to FTSE Russell, which, in the wake of J.P. Morgan's revelation, declared India's retention on its watchlist for a potential upgrade, emphasising the call for reforms in the government bond market anticipated by global investors.

A process that began in 2019

India commenced the process of incorporating its government bonds into global indices in 2019. As a part of this initiative, by 2020, a segment of government bonds became officially accessible to foreign investors without constraints, thanks to the introduction of the FAR. Despite encountering delays linked to the government's stance on capital gains taxes and local settlement, the fundamental policy remained unaltered. While negotiations are expected to continue, the recent moves by J.P. Morgan and Bloomberg indicate a potential inclusion of the Indian LC government and corporate bonds in more benchmark indices.

In October 2022, a report by the Inter-Departmental Group (IDG) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) detailed efforts to internationalise the rupee, particularly by integrating Indian LCGBs into global indices. The document outlines various benefits, including diminishing dependence of public finance on domestic institutions, thanks to access to large international resources and a greater stability of funds tracking indices compared to other portfolio inflows. While recognising potential risks such as heightened sensitivity of domestic monetary and financial conditions and policies to external factors, the report asserts that the perceived benefits outweigh the risks.

Several observers have also pointed out that opening local bond markets would facilitate the financing of current account and fiscal deficits by engaging institutional investors with long-term investment horizons. Furthermore, it is argued that the cost of public borrowing would decline as the influx of funds into LCGBs lowers domestic interest rates. It is also expected that these funds would relieve the balance sheets of local financial institutions holding LCGBs, thereby increasing lending and private investment.

A key benefit of opening local bond markets to foreign investors emphasised by the mainstream, relates to the so-called "original sin" problem – that is, the inability of emerging economies to borrow internationally in their own currencies. Unlike local currency debt, external debt denominated in reserve currencies exposes debtors to the exchange rate risk. In times of sharp currency declines, this exposure could result in widespread private insolvencies and large public deficits – as seen in various instances of crisis in Asia, Latin America and elsewhere.

By opening bond markets and borrowing in local currency, the exchange rate risk is passed



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onto international lenders. However, this does not come free. It needs to be compensated. Furthermore, since these bonds are generally subject to domestic jurisdiction, lenders also face an additional default risk. This also needs to be compensated.

Thus, local currency bonds need to offer higher returns than forex bonds issued under foreign jurisdiction – in higher interest rates and/or capital gains. Indeed, even when large international investment in local bonds of emerging economies made after the global crisis in 2008 helped reduce local interest rates, the bond index in local currency terms outperformed the index in U.S. dollars, thanks to large capital gains from currency appreciations.

Loss of autonomy, greater risks

The internationalisation of bond markets in emerging economies also entails a significant loss of autonomy in controlling long-term rates and exposes them to greater interest rate risks. When global risk appetite and liquidity conditions deteriorate, and access to international capital markets is impaired, domestic bond markets too can get crippled due to adverse spillovers. This was seen after the Lehman collapse in September 2008 and when the US Federal Reserve revealed its intention to start reducing its bond purchases in May 2013. Again, after the recent normalisation of monetary policy in the U.S., local bond rates in emerging economies also shot up and continued moving with shifts in investors' assessment of the possible course of policy stance of the Federal Reserve.

There is a misconception among proponents that foreign portfolio inflows into local currency bond markets (LCBM) provide stable and long-term funding. Unlike sovereign bonds of main reserve-currency countries such as the U.S. Treasuries, local currency sovereign debt of emerging economies is not held by central banks as international reserves, but fickle investors, primarily money managers from advanced economies, holding liabilities in their home currencies. As the adage suggests, everyone is a long-term investor until they recognise the impending end. When apprehensions emerge regarding short-term capital losses, be it due to rising interest rates, local currency depreciation, or a combination of both, stability tends to dissipate swiftly.

With the move to floating and increased exchange rate volatility, local currency bond inflows to emerging economies have become increasingly volatile because of the exchange rate risk borne by investors. There are significant variations over time in the share of foreigners in local bond markets and several instances of sudden stops and exits. In Malaysia, during 2014-15, the rapid exit of investors from local currency assets, including bonds, resulted in large reserve losses and sharp declines in the ringgit, pushing it to below the levels seen during the Asian crisis. In Türkiye, where macroeconomic imbalances were much more serious, foreigners totally left the bond market after Spring 2018, and reserve losses and currency declines were aggravated as unhedged local forex debtors joined in to avoid exchange rate losses.

In times of market distress, external debt in local currency plays a greater role in the drain of reserves and currency declines than forex debt because of investors' exchange rate risk. Indeed, evidence shows that the volatility spillover for local currency bond funds is significantly larger

than that for reserve-currency bond funds.

As per the October 2022 report from the IDG of the RBI, the opening of the LCBM to foreign investors and the inclusion of Indian LCGBs in global bond indices represent just one facet of the broader effort to internationalise the Indian rupee. Another crucial element involves permitting banking services in the rupee INR outside the country. The case of settling trade with Russia in the Indian rupee for crude oil resulted in an accumulation of the rupee in Russian banks.

Additionally, as reported by Bloomberg, the RBI has granted authorisation to 17 banks to settle trade in the Indian rupee across 18 countries and establish 65 offshore deposit accounts. This effectively creates an offshore INR market and introduces new avenues for speculation and potential instability, in addition to opening the LCBM to foreign investors.

The Malaysia and Türkiye experiences

Malaysia's experience during the 1997 Asian crisis serves as a notable example. Many of the woes of the Malaysian economy during that period were due to the offshore ringgit market in Singapore. As market confidence waned alongside the broader regional downturn, currency traders in the offshore market engaged in speculative activities in anticipation of a substantial devaluation. Offshore ringgit interest rates surged, exerting upward pressure on domestic interest rates, deepening downturn, exacerbating outflows of ringgit funds and compounding banks' liquidity challenges and overall financial distress. The Malaysian authorities could only regain control after effectively closing the offshore ringgit market in September 1998 through the implementation of capital controls. Again, more recently in Türkiye in 2022, the offshore lira market in London became a major source of speculation against the Turkish currency, and the government took measures to curb it, including restrictions on bank lending to firms trading liras offshore.

As Y.V. Reddy, a former Governor of the RBI, writes in his article for The India Forum (June 2023), experience indicates that "currency internationalisation cannot be decided in one day and pursued the next. It comes about after a long evolutionary process, when all the building blocks are in place". He also points out that the Indian rupee is yet to be regarded as an international currency and its internationalisation is "likely to be more an outcome of sustained development of the financial system and improved economic performance".

To sum up, the internationalisation of bond markets and currencies of emerging economies is often presented as a recipe for overcoming the consequences of the original sin, enhancing the resilience to external shocks and improving the volume and allocation of investment. This is also encouraged by international investors and financial media which see large profit opportunities in unhindered access to markets of these economies, as is the case with India now. However, the risks involved are seriously underestimated. Given the inherently unstable international financial markets, a more likely outcome of such a step would be increased exchange rate instability and boom-bust cycles in capital flows. After several episodes of crisis in emerging economies, we should all know by now that when policies falter in managing financial integration, there is no limit to the damage that international finance can inflict on an economy.

A rising tide lifts all boats



Suneeta Reddy
is the Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals Group

The Interim Budget has captured a decade of transformation and the opportunities ahead, in health, tourism and research

non-communicable diseases, and significantly reduce India's disease burden. We urge the government to consider incentivising individuals to undertake preventive health checks.

India has made remarkable strides in health indicators over the last four decades, with the drop in infant mortality and maternal mortality. Maternal and child health care receives a comprehensive focus in the Budget, and rightfully so. If mother and child are well, women's participation in the workforce will increase even more than it has.

Life expectancy has increased from 53 years to 70 years in the last four decades. This has been achieved with less than 2% budgetary allocation for health over the years – if this can be increased to 5%, remarkable strides can be made in achieving better population health outcomes.

The foundation for an innovation revolution
In highlighting 'innovation' as a key pillar of development in today's era, the government has decided to set aside a corpus of ₹1 lakh crore with 50-year interest-free loans to provide long-term financing and refinancing to the private sector to invest in research and technology. Integration of technology has the potential to create a significant impact at scale across various domains. In health care, deeper tech collaborations will help us touch more lives and boost access to quality care, overcoming

limitations such as the skewed doctor-patient ratio and even reducing health-care costs significantly.

Medical value travel

While the Interim Budget touched upon the impact of tourism flowing from religious and iconic places and has made provision for States to promote this in a big way, there is another facet of tourism that is steadily attracting more tourists and becoming a tangible reason to travel, namely health care or 'medical value travel'. We have seen the landscape being transformed in the past decade with 'Heal in India' touching new heights. India's superior talent and global standards of clinical outcomes have made India a lucrative health-care destination for the world.

Further, enhancing connectivity through new corridors with the railways along with more airports and air routes has the potential to help Indians in getting much easier access to quality health care.

Perhaps even more important than what the Budget said, were the hidden figures – private expenditure and its rise, an increase in consumption, and the underlying core theme that the private sector has risen beyond all expectations to play a meaningful role in not just the economy but in how we will live our lives. And if all of us continue to work together, India will truly be limitless.

In the life cycle of evolution and all of history, there are moments of transformation. India has seen a decade of transformation, from being under-developed to developing to now becoming the fastest growing economy in the world. India is an economic bright spot, growing consistently at 7%, while other world economies are growing at 2.5%.

This dramatic acceleration of pace has translated to a meaningful present and a promising future. India's space programme has won the admiration of the world. The country has also balanced the fine line between renewable and non-renewable energy more skillfully than any other nation, and is ahead in terms of targets.

It is this buoyancy of metrics and of spirit that was evident in the Interim Budget as well. The Budget reflected the aspirations of a new India by laying out the immense opportunity ahead of us.

Preventive health checks are needed

No country can afford if its citizens fall ill. That is why healthy living and preventive health care are very important. The initiative in the Interim Budget to promote the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination among young girls, to prevent cervical cancer, is an excellent step – something that we have sand-boxed at Aragonda in Andhra Pradesh – my father's village. We can take similar steps for several types of cancers and all

'slogan-rich' document hardly means anything. The benefits of reform and performance have not percolated to the poor.
A.G. Rajmohan, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh

There may be fiscal prudence but a pressing

issue such as rising inequality has been overlooked. The government's confidence in electoral success seems to overshadow targeted policies. Addressing inequality and revitalising growth should be prioritised for inclusive economic

development.
Shahim Maindala, Bantwal, Mangaluru

We only got an exercise in juggling with rhetoric and statistics. The Interim Budget did not spell out how it was proposed to exploit, optimally, the

strength of the nation's demographic dividend. There was no road map to arrest record and soaring unemployment. It is a pro-corporate Budget.
P.K. Sharma, Barnala, Punjab

India can never realise its

growth story unless there is a planned approach to ensure job creation at a rapid pace. One cannot take solace in the fact that sectors like IT and start-ups can satiate the hunger for employment for millions.
Madhusree Guha, Kolkata

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A flip through

The Interim Budget leaves the poor in the lurch. Proposals such as a focus on the railways, doubling the number of airports, reducing corporate tax, and no changes in income-tax slab make it a budget with the haves in mind. The

GROUND ZERO



Although closed to vehicular traffic, the Indo-Myanmar Friendship Bridge across the Tiau river connecting Mizoram's Zokhawthar and Myanmar's Khawmawi is vital for local trade. People on both sides of the border are interdependent for day-to-day existence. RAHUL KARMAKAR

Along the border, living in limbo

With Myanmar in the grip of violence, its citizens have been fleeing to India and seeking shelter in Mizoram or Manipur. But they now face an uncertain future as the Indian government has decided to fence the 1,643 km-long India-Myanmar border and end the Free Movement Regime. **Rahul Karmakar** reports on the refugees, who share the same culture and roots as the Mizos, and their worries about the civil war and India's stand

Soon after the Tatmadaw, or Myanmar's military, seized power in a coup d'état in February 2021 by displacing the National League for Democracy (NLD)-led government, Sumi, 18, fled the country. She crossed the border into India and finally secured a job in Treasury Square, the administrative hub of Aizawl, Mizoram's capital.

Sumi was not too worried about leaving her home in Tedim, the second largest town in Myanmar's Chin State, for Aizawl, covering 255 kilometres over five days by public transport. "She knew she would be among her own people in this foreign land that is much safer and more peaceful than ours," says Margaret Ngaihi, Sumi's family acquaintance.

Sumi became Margaret's apprentice. Margaret, too, had left Tedim about 40 years ago to work at the house of L.R. Sailo, a former director of Mizoram's Information and Public Relations Department at Treasury Square. Margaret says Sumi, from the Chin community, did not take long to settle down at the house of Sailo, a Mizo.

Margaret had left Tedim under similar circumstances in the 1980s. Myanmar, then called Burma, was under the military dictatorship of Ne Win. The Free Movement Regime (FMR) which promotes local trade and allows residents along the 1,643 km-long India-Myanmar border to move up to 16 km into each other's territory without travel documents, was not in place then; the agreement between India and Myanmar was implemented only in 2018. She married a Mizo and they had two sons.

"The Chins and Mizos belong to the same ethnic stock. They were inhabiting Zogam (the land of the Zo people) for ages before the British divided our homeland in the 1800s. Marriages and other social interactions between people on either side of the international border are quite common in these parts. It is also not unusual for children in Myanmar to study in Mizoram," says Sailo. Zogam comprises present-day Mizoram, the Chin State of Myanmar, and areas beyond.

Margaret has occasionally visited her relatives in Tedim. "The civil war has been forcing our people to hunt for jobs abroad. The younger lot in Myanmar prefer Malaysia, which is where Sumi lives now, but we cannot think of a better place than Mizoram, the land of our own people," Margaret says. Mizoram currently shelters about 35,000 people displaced from Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Manipur.

She is not aware of the geopolitics in the region, specifically about Manipur's insistence on fencing the India-Myanmar border to block the entry of refugee-seekers from the civil war-torn country. In January, Home Minister Amit Shah announced that the Centre would fence the entire border to restrict free movement into India. But discussions in the neighbourhood on the

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The people of Mizoram are treating us well but we cannot live at the mercy of people in a different country forever

TUMNEITHANGA
Member of a committee of refugees in Zokhawthar

fencing have made her understand that it might not be easy for her people to travel across the border as easily as she and Sumi did, four decades apart.

In January, Sangthankima, 63, a social worker who runs Mizoram's largest orphanage, Thutak Nunputuite Team, was awarded the Padma Shri by the Indian government. While he is happy about the recognition, he is now worried. He faces the prospect of losing easy access to the orphanage and rehabilitation centre run by his charitable organisation at Tahan, in the Sagaing Division of Myanmar. The centre at Tahan houses about 100 orphans and is the smallest of his five centres. The other centres are in Champhai, Kolasib, Aizawl, and Lunglei – all in Mizoram.

Waiting for calm

Not everyone eyes Mizoram for a living. Unlike Margaret and Sumi, Julali, who is her late 20s, was working as a nurse at a 200-bed government-run hospital in Falam, the former headquarters of Myanmar's Chin State. She joined the Civil Disobedience Movement after the military coup in 2021. She was forced to quit her job and be on the run until she reached Zokhawthar, a border town in Mizoram, in the autumn of 2022. Two of her pro-democracy colleagues at the Falam hospital also made it to Zokhawthar.

The three of them were entrusted with running the makeshift Lailun Medical Centre in Zokhawthar, referred to as the 'refugee clinic' by the Mizo people. The centre primarily treats sick or injured Myanmar nationals who have been displaced. It is located about 110 km from their hospital at Falam, which had the highest concentration of Myanmar nationals displaced by the civil war, which is being fought between armed civilian groups called the People's Defence Forces (PDF), which are allied to the self-declared National Unity Government in exile, and the Buddhist-dominated military.



Partei Asangneihpari, an English teacher at the Zokhawthar Government Primary School, with her students in class. RAHUL KARMAKAR

The Lailun Medical Centre was set up by the Myanmar-based Institute of Chin Affairs with help from community-based organisations such as the Young Mizo Association and church bodies. The Mizos, the dominant community in Mizoram, are ethnically related to the Chins of Myanmar, the Kuki-Zos of Manipur, and the Kuki-Chins of Bangladesh.

The door of the medical centre faces the road that brought Julali from Falam to Khawmawi, Myanmar's border town, which is connected to Zokhawthar by a 30-metre steel bridge across the Tiau River. Once the passage for formal trade between India and Myanmar, the bridge has been closed to traffic since the COVID-19 pandemic but residents are allowed to walk across up to a certain point on either side of the border.

The PDF and its associated groups have taken control of much of Chin State over the past few months forcing more than 500 Myanmar soldiers to flee to India from where they have been evacuated to Mandalay and other Myanmar military bases.

Thanks to intuition, and knowledge of the history of the conflict, Julali knows that it could be months before she can return to Falam. "Thankfully, the fighting cannot get any closer than this (800-900 metres beyond the Tiau river). We can only go back when the fighting stops completely, and I am not sure if it will be anytime soon although I hear the junta (military) is losing ground," Julali says. She yearns to work again at the Falam hospital in a peaceful atmosphere. Her co-workers at the hospital are currently divided unequally into pro-democracy and pro-junta groups.

Her biggest worry is India's move to fence the border and end the FMR, which might not let her take refuge in Mizoram if things at home go wrong again. "We cannot stay here forever. Our country has been caught in one conflict or the other, and we may have to seek refuge in India again after we go back home," she says.

Ebb and flow

Large swathes of India's present-day Northeast were under the reign of Burmese king Bagyidaw until he lost the first of the three Anglo-Burmese Wars in 1826 and signed the Treaty of Yandaboo. This led to the demarcation of the territories of British-ruled India and Burma, similar to the current alignment of the border between the two countries. The invisible border through hills and jungles hardly made a difference for "separated" locals, belonging to the same ethnic stock and dependent on each other for local trade, farming, and social events. India's independence in 1947 and Burma's in 1948 did not impact the movement of people across the porous border much, except during military operations against Northeast-based extremist outfits that have been using Myanmar as a haven. The visits across the border became more frequent when the two countries agreed in 2018 to implement the FMR. India suspended the FMR in September 2022, given the continued escalation of the refugee crisis after the military coup in Myanmar.

While some 2,000 Myanmar nationals, mostly the Chin people, took refuge in Manipur, the number of displaced people who entered Mizoram touched the 40,000-mark within a year of the coup. The number dropped to about 33,000 by the end of October last year and increased again less than a month later after the civil war reached the Mizoram border.

"The number fluctuates as the Myanmar nationals living close to the border with India come and go depending on gunfights or bombings from the air. The Champhai district is currently sheltering 12,432 Myanmar nationals," says V.L. Hruaimawia, the Mizoram government-appointed liaison officer for the District-Level Committee on Myanmar Refugees.

Almost half the refugees in the district are in

Zokhawthar and adjoining villages. Among them is Mawihlengkim, a primary school teacher from Lumbang near Falam. She is among the earliest inmates of Bethel Camp, the largest of the three in and around Zokhawthar housing 503 people.

"We were four teachers at a government-run school teaching all subjects to about 30 students from nursery to Class 4. The other teachers who joined the Civil Disobedience Movement and the students are hopefully safe wherever they are," she says, insisting that life in Myanmar was not so uncertain before the Tatmadaw overthrew the NLD-led government in February 2021.

She arrived in Zokhawthar with her three children on the back of a mini-truck almost two years ago. "Do they have any chance of growing up and studying in the land of our ancestors," she asks.

Two of her children are among the 20 from the refugee camp enrolled at the Zokhawthar Government Primary School, about 1.5 km away. The school has 420 students and only 60 of them are locals. The enrolment in nine other schools in Zokhawthar, four of them private or run by missionaries, is also skewed in favour of refugees.

"How can we not allow the children of people facing a major humanitarian crisis to study in our schools? And they are our people with the same roots and culture divided into two nations without consulting our forefathers," says Thangkunga Pachaua, a teacher at the school.

Partei Asangneihpari, who teaches English at the school, initially found it difficult to manage "so many children" - 50 of the 80 children in her class are Myanmar nationals - who could neither communicate in English or Duilian, the Mizo tongue. "But they picked up the local language fast probably because each of them speaks at least four languages," she says.

Dealing with the older refugee children has been tougher for the teachers, especially because they suffer bouts of depression caused by the memories of violence back home and the atmosphere of hopelessness in the refugee camp.

"The scars of the civil war are not easy to forget. Unlike many of our brothers and sisters caught in the war, we are fortunate to be safe across the Tiau. The people of Mizoram are treating us well but we cannot live at the mercy of people in a different country forever," says Tumneithanga, a member of a committee of refugees in Zokhawthar. A farmer who left an agriculture plot of 1 sq. km behind in the Chin State's Sekan, he keeps himself occupied with menial jobs.

Bilateral relations

Myanmar's displaced Chins include several lawmakers and government officers who prefer to remain incognito. They are enthused by the news



How can we leave our own people in the lurch? We are passionate about the issue of Zo reunification. This makes our church organisations, individuals, and NGOs take care of the people displaced from Myanmar

CLEMENT LAIHMINGTHANGA
Retired Lieutenant Colonel

of the PDF and ethnic militias gaining ground against the junta, but are wary of the history of ethnicity-based conflicts in Myanmar and the possibility of the Tatmadaw bouncing back from setbacks. India's strategic ties with the Myanmar military and conflicting views on the refugee issue - Manipur wants the border with Myanmar sealed while Mizoram prefers a status quo - are also causes of worry.

India is not a signatory to the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol. It does not have a refugee law. Apart from instructing the security forces to push back the refugees, New Delhi was indifferent to requests from the Mizoram government for ₹10 crore as fiscal assistance to look after the displaced people although it agreed belatedly to help in kind. A sulking Mizoram government, then headed by Zoramthanga of the Mizo National Front, later ignored the Centre's order to collect the biometric data of the refugees from Myanmar, an exercise that leaders of the party felt would discriminate against "people of our blood".

Mizoram has a new government now, headed by Lalduhoma, who has been vocal about his party, the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM), having inherited a State deep in a financial crisis. This triggered apprehension among the refugees about a possible change in the government's policy. The ZPM has allayed such fears although it has admitted that it cannot stop the Centre from fencing the border and ending the FMR.

"How can we leave our own people in the lurch? We are passionate about the issue of Zo reunification. This passion makes our church organisations, individuals, and NGOs take care of the people displaced from Myanmar," says Clement Laihmingtontha, a retired Lieutenant Colonel who represents the Champhai South Assembly constituency.

Among the NGOs focused on the welfare of the refugees is the Village-Level Committee on Myanmar Refugees (VLCMR). "We may not be politically relevant to New Delhi but we hope our Central leaders have a humanitarian streak to reconsider the decision to cut off our brethren with a barbed-wire fence, however impractical it might seem given the terrain," Biaktinsanga, a key functionary of the VLCMR, says.

The emphasis is on humanitarianism because many in Mizoram believe that the civil war in Myanmar is less of a factor than the ethnic conflict in Manipur for the decision to fence the India-Myanmar border. The Bharatiya Janata Party-led Manipur government wants its 390-km border with Myanmar fenced primarily to stop people of the neighbouring country from entering the State. The Manipur government has been blaming the ethnic conflict since May 2023 between the majority Meitei community and the Kuki-Zomi people on "infiltrators" from Myanmar.

From Page One

Champai Soren sworn in as CM of Jharkhand

The MLAs are likely to stay put in the resort till Monday morning. Earlier, after taking his oath, Mr. Champai Soren said that he would continue the former CM's work to strengthen tribal rights. "Under the leadership of Hemant Soren, the State developed a lot. He raised the voice of the tribals and tried his level best to resolve their problems... We will work on every sector – be it health, education, agriculture or law and order – keeping public interest in mind," the new CM said.

Mr. Champai Soren also held his first Cabinet meeting, at which it was decided to convene a special two-day session of the Jharkhand Assembly from February 5.

Remanded to ED custody

Earlier in the day, a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act court granted the ED five days remand of Mr. Hemant Soren, who was arrested in connection with a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam.

The Supreme Court has refused to entertain his plea against his arrest, and asked him to approach the High Court.

The former CM had resigned on Wednesday after ED officials held him for over seven hours of questioning for the second time, at his official residence.

After his resignation, senior JMM leader and Transport Minister Champai Soren was elected as the leader of the legislative party. A five-time MLA from Sarakela, Mr. Champai Soren earned the nickname of 'Jharkhand Tiger' while playing an active role in the movement for Jharkhand's Statehood in the 1990s, alongside JMM patriarch Shibu Soren.

Before taking oath, the new CM went to meet the party chief – who is also Mr. Hemant Soren's father – and sought his blessings.

'Remote control CM'

BJP leader and Ranchi MLA C.P. Singh mocked Mr. Champai Soren, alleging that he would become a 'remote control Chief Minister'.

"It is true that Champai Soren is a senior leader and close to Shibu Soren's family, so it is obvious that he will operate through a remote control and that remote would be in the possession of Soren's family. He will not be allowed to take any decision on his own. He will just follow the instructions of Soren's family. Congress and RJD are there and they will blackmail him. Loot will increase ahead of the Assembly election in Jharkhand, because little time is left," Mr. Singh alleged.

The Jharkhand BJP held its legislative party meeting at party headquarters in Ranchi to discuss the present political situation in the State.

No interim relief to Gyanvapi mosque panel

It directed the mosque committee to amend its plea and set the next date of hearing for February 6. The court also ordered the district administration to maintain law and order in the town.

Thousands offer namaz

Over 2,000 Muslims gathered at the Gyanvapi mosque to offer namaz on Friday afternoon, putting the police on its toes to maintain the law and order situation.

Announcements were made to ensure that worshippers did not gather at any one spot. Senior members of the Muslim community made appeals to the people to peacefully offer Friday prayers.

The police also conducted a flag march ahead of the prayers. The mosque committee had also appealed to Muslims to keep their shops and businesses closed, and most complied.

"We had urged the young generation of our community to maintain complete peace. But one can easily see that there is an anger among people of the community as so many of them have gathered at Gyanvapi to offer namaz. We had to ask many people to return as the mosque had a limited space," said S.M. Yaseen, joint secretary of the mosque committee.

As Ariha turns three, mother Dhara Shah appeals to PM to intervene

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

As Ariha Shah, the Indian child taken into parental custody by German Youth Services in 2021 turned three years old, her mother Dhara Shah made another plea to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene in the matter, alleging that German authorities were making no attempt to introduce her to Indian culture.

Ms. Shah, who was allowed to visit her daughter under supervision last week, says that despite the Ministry of External Affairs' (MEA) request that German Youth Services or

Jugendamt ensure the child is brought up culturally "as an Indian", Ariha speaks only German and is not being taught English or any other Indian language. She also said that the Jugendamt had turned down a request from the Indian community in Berlin to allow Ariha to attend the Indian Embassy's Republic Day function.

"She now doesn't call me Mama, and refers instead to her guardian as her mother," the mother, in tears, told *The Hindu*. "I am now trying to learn German so I can speak to her," she added.

When asked, sources said that the MEA remains

CBI searches 2 premises linked to ex-IAS officer in FCRA 'violation' case

The enquiry was instituted on a written complaint from the Union Home Ministry against associations such as CES, Aman Biradari Trust, Oxfam India, and Action Aid Association

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday searched two premises linked to former Indian Administrative Service officer and social activist Harsh Mander, in a case of alleged Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) violation involving a non-government organisation, Centre for Equity Studies (CES).

The agency has named the Delhi-based organisation and its chairperson-cum-secretary, Mr. Mander, as the accused in the case, which has been registered on the basis of a preliminary enquiry launched on April 13, 2023.

Charitable purposes

According to the First Information Report (FIR), the enquiry was instituted on a written complaint from the Union Home Ministry against associations such as CES, Aman Biradari Trust, Oxfam India, and Action Aid Association, for alleged violation of the FCRA.



Officials of the CBI are seen at the office of CES. AFP

Established in 2001, CES was registered as a trust with the Sub-Registrar (Delhi) for charitable purposes. Its office is located in Delhi's Adchini and the organisation got FCRA registration in 2010. As alleged, the agency found that CES transferred over ₹32.71 lakh, other than salary/wages/ remuneration from its FCRA account to those of some individuals during 2020-21 in violation of the FCRA provisions. It also allegedly diverted ₹10

In a press statement, over 250 activists, academicians, lawyers, and concerned citizens condemned the CBI action and demanded closure of the FIR.

Human rights activist

"...Harsh Mander is a widely respected and internationally acclaimed human rights activist who has taken up issues of those most oppressed. Today's raid is a part of the long chain of harassment of Dr. Harsh Mander, his colleagues, his family and former and present board members of the Centre for Equity Studies," it said.

Describing the action against Mr. Mander and CES as an attack on all of civil society in the country and all those who worked to promote constitutional values, they said it was clear from the FIR that the charges were "entirely fabricated and without any material basis".

In September 2021, the Enforcement Directorate had carried out searches on the premises linked to Mr. Mander in connection with a money laundering probe.

What we are seeing in Varanasi is not an isolated incident'

Ziya Us Salam
NEW DELHI

There was no temple where Jama Masjid or Gyanvapi Masjid stands in Varanasi. This was stated at what was probably the largest press conference of six prominent Muslim bodies in recent years. The Muslim leaders also expressed "disappointment with various lower level courts for failing to uphold the Places of Worship Act", and accused the Executive of testing the patience of the Muslim youth.

"Islam does not permit destruction of another place of worship to build a mosque," said Khalid Saifullah Rehmani, president, All India Muslim Personal Law Board. "What we are seeing today is an attempt to destroy Hindu-Muslim relations in the name of temple-mosque. For centuries Hindu temples have stood here. They were not disturbed by Muslim rulers," Mr. Rehmani said.

Giving voice to their deep regret and concern, Muslim leaders said here that the swift initiation of puja in a cellar of Gyanvapi mosque, despite the court granting a seven-day window for the administration to make necessary arrangements, had raised questions about apparent collusion between the administration and the plaintiff, attempting to fo-

reclose any effort by the Masjid Managing Committee to pursue remedies against the District Court's order.

'Facilitating takeover' The leaders expressed apprehension that the Babri Masjid saga could be repeated, the way things have unfolded in Varanasi in recent weeks.

Arshad Madani, president, Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind, drew attention to the increasing number of petitions filed in various courts seeking change in the character of Muslim places of worship since the Babri Masjid verdict came in November 2019.

"What we are seeing in Varanasi is not an isolated incident... There is a question around Eidgah in Mathura, another mosque in Ahmedabad, another in Sambhal, and Delhi's Jama Masjid too. The speed with which these issues have been raised makes one feel that the courts have developed certain elasticity to facilitate the takeover of places of worship," said Mr. Madani.

Mr. Rehmani said the Muslim leadership has always advised the community to remain patient and have faith in the judiciary. "However, for how long," he asked even as all leaders expressed the apprehension that their faith in the judiciary was wearing thin.

Doubt Cong. will get 'even 40 seats' in LS polls, says Mamata

Press Trust of India
KOLKATA

Trinamool Congress supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday challenged the Congress to take on the BJP in the Hindi heartland States even as she expressed doubt in its ability to secure "even 40 seats" in the upcoming Lok Sabha election.

Ms. Banerjee's remarks followed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's assertion that discussions on seat-sharing with the ruling party in West Bengal were ongoing and the matter would be resolved.

Strongly criticising the Congress's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, Ms. Banerjee compared it to a "mere photo opportunity" for "migratory birds" aimed at dividing minority votes in the State.

"I proposed that Congress contest 300 seats across the country where BJP is the main opposition but they refused to heed.

Now, they have arrived in the State to stir up Muslim voters. I doubt whether they will secure even 40 seats if they contested 300," she asserted. Addressing a dharna in Kolkata to demand the clearance of the State's dues by the Centre, Ms. Banerjee reiterated her party's willingness to form an alliance with the Congress for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in West Bengal but emphasised that it was the grand-old party which declined her offer.

"We were open to an alliance, offering them two seats, which they rejected. We will fight alone and defeat the BJP in Bengal," she said.

Asked why the Congress was giving importance to Ms. Banerjee, Mr. Gandhi said, "Neither Mamataji has said, nor the Congress has come out of the alliance. Even Mamataji is saying that she is in the alliance. Seat negotiations are on from both ends. It will be resolved."

SP, Congress reach final agreement on seat sharing

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party (SP) general secretary Ram Gopal Yadav on Friday said the party has reached a final agreement with the Congress on seat distribution in Uttar Pradesh and added that the SP will declare more candidates soon for the Lok Sabha election scheduled for April-May this year.

"We announced candidates for 16 Lok Sabha seats. We will declare more seats in a couple of days," said Mr. Yadav, a five-time Rajya Sabha member.

"Our alliance with the Congress is final... We have offered 11 seats to them [Congress]. The INDIA alliance will make sure that in Uttar Pradesh, the BJP will get defeated," said SP spokesperson Sunil Singh Yadav 'Sajan'. There are a total of 80 Lok Sabha seats in the State. The SP on January 30 had announced 16 candidates for the Lok Sabha elections.

Uttarakhand panel on UCC submits report to CM Dhami

Ishita Mishra
LUCKNOW

The five-member committee constituted for drafting the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in Uttarakhand handed over its final report to Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Friday. The UCC draft, spanning around 750 pages and spread across four volumes, is written in Hindi and does not have a single word of Urdu or any other language.

The committee has recommended strict punishment for triple *talaq* and *halala* practices, pertaining to Muslim personal laws and also suggested keeping tribal communities out of the UCC ambit.

Speaking to media in Delhi, Mr. Dhami said that the Uttarakhand government is all set to bring the UCC law as promised. "We had formed an expert committee under Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai (retd.) to make a draft for UCC in Uttarakhand. The submis-

Centre notifies appointment of new Chief Justices to 6 High Courts

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Law and Justice on Friday notified the appointments of new Chief Justices (CJs) across six High Courts (HCs).

The new appointments are at the High Courts of Allahabad, Gauhati, Meghalaya, Orissa, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan.

New appointments Justice Manindra Mohan Shrivastava, who was the acting Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court, has been appointed as Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court.

Justice Arun Bhansali of Rajasthan High Court, Justice Vijay Bishnoi, will now be the new Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court.

Another judge of the Rajasthan High Court, Justice S. Vaidyanathan, judge of the Madras High Court, has been appointed as the Chief Justice of the Meghalaya High Court.

Justice Ritu Bahri, acting Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court, has been appointed as the Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court.

Justice Chakradhari Sharvan Singh of the Patna High Court has been appointed as the Chief Justice of the Orissa High Court.

In December last year, the Supreme Court Collegium had made the recommendations of Justices Vaidyanathan, Sharvan Singh and Bahri were made by the Supreme Court Collegium a month earlier in November 2023.



The parents received a major setback after the Family Court in Berlin granted Ariha's custody to the Jugendamt in 2023. FILE PHOTO

the parents, and Indian mission officials have handed over "resource materials" on Indian festivals and customs to help her remain in touch with her faith and culture.

"The MEA is making efforts, but we don't see any results so far," Ms. Shah said in a taped statement addressed to PM Modi.

"Please, she is three years old today, please help us bring her home as soon as possible. Please Modiji save Ariha, repatriate Ariha," she said in the video released on Friday. While the MEA and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has taken up the Ariha case publicly, stressing that

the child should be allowed to return to India, even if her custody is not restored to her parents, Mr. Modi has not so far commented or intervened in the matter, or in his public interactions with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz who visited India twice in 2023.

The parents, Bhavesh Shah and Dhara Shah re-

ceived a major setback after the Family Court in Berlin granted Ariha's custody to the Jugendamt in June 2023, two years after she was taken from her parents on charges of serious abuse. The Shahs have denied the charges of intentional abuse, and held the

injuries that the child had been taken to the hospital with were "accidental". The Shahs are now working on the appeals process, but that could take years, and failing any order in their favour, Ariha will stay in Germany custody, cared for by appointed caretakers until she turns 18.

"Today is Ariha's third birthday – like any parents our child's birth-

day is very important but we can't see her today as we don't have permission.

She is living like an orphan,

all alone for 2.5 years with German services. We can't bear to see our child like this," Ms. Shah said in her plea.

M ND-NDE

Opposition, ruling members engage in heated debate in LS

Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi says government is trying to divert attention from joblessness and economic distress; INDIA bloc is like a cricket team with 11 captains, says BJP's Heena Gavit

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Friday started the discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address to a joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament, with members of the Treasury and Opposition benches engaging in a heated debate.

Opening the debate, BJP MP Heena Gavit focused on the development record of the Modi government, while Gaurav Gogoi of the Congress led the Opposition's charge by raising issues such as growing unemployment, misuse of Central agencies, and border transgressions by China.

Targeting the Opposition INDIA bloc, Ms. Gavit compared it to a cricket team with 11 captains, none willing to accommodate the other. "INDIA bloc leaders are like 'Big Boss' participants who live under one roof but everyone eyes the 'trophy' of becoming the Prime Minister," she said.

Ms. Gavit added that it would not be surprising if INDIA bloc leaders started switching sides one after another, witnessing the all-



Raising charges: Deputy Leader of Congress in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi speaking in Parliament, New Delhi on Friday. ANI

round development under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Hitting back, Mr. Gogoi accused the government of resorting to "attention management" to distract the nation from economic distress, and trying to silence the Opposition by unleashing the Central investigation agencies against them.

Diverting attention

Claiming that the Modi government had "a doctorate in attention management", he pointed out that when the Opposition asked why the Prime Minister had not visited strife-torn Manipur, the government talked about G-20. "When we raise questions on China entering our territory, they try to divert the attention

by saying that 'we are more powerful than the Maldives'. When we say 10% of the population is controlling 50% of the country's wealth, they claim to be the fastest-growing economy," he added.

Asaduddin Owaisi of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimineen claimed that "17 crore Muslims in India felt like how the Jews did in Germany during the Second World War".

Rajendra Agarwal, BJP MP from Meerut, said that despite the perception being created by the Opposition, Prime Minister Modi – through measures like aspirational districts – signalled that he only saw development and not vote bank politics.

"Congress has not only contributed to corruption

but also appeasement politics and division in society," he said, adding that the Opposition's reaction to the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya undervalued a matter of faith for crores of people.

BJP MP Tejaswi Surya and Congress MP Karti Chidambaram faced off on the question of imposition of Hindi. Mr. Surya said that it was the Congress which "imposed Hindi" through repeated education policies and the three-language formula. "It was only when the NEP [National Education Policy] was brought in by the Modi government that this was removed and higher education in local language was encouraged," he said.

He said the BJP was consistent in its stand against the imposition of any one language across the country. Mr. Chidambaram said that Mr. Surya's words were not borne out by reality. "In reality, the ruling party believes that uniformity is unity, whereas we in the Opposition will always fight to preserve the linguistic and religious diversity of India," he said, describing the ruling party as going in for "one language, one religion and now even one God".

Kharge targets Centre over unemployment, inflation, and attempts to end reservation

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Mallikarjun Kharge

The Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, on Friday attacked the Centre over rising unemployment, inflation, and reported attempts to end reservation.

In the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he accused the BJP members of promoting and protecting the "monocentric style" of Mr. Modi.

Participating in a discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address, Mr. Kharge said the recent developments in Jharkhand and Bihar showed that regime changes could be smooth if someone joined the BJP's side.

While Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren had to wait two days for his swearing-in, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar could resign and take oath within hours.

Mr. Kharge asked Mr. Modi to rein in statements and actions that support de-reservation.

He said the Prime Minister should have condemned the recent draft guidelines of the University Grants Commission (UGC) on de-reserving faculty posts meant for candidates from the scheduled communities. "The Prime Minister is silent

when SC, ST, OBC and women are attacked. Otherwise, he would speak for hours on anything. But on issues such as Manipur violence, he would be silent. Why didn't you go to Manipur?" he asked.

He said the Prime Minister should have spoken when the attackers of Bilkis Bano were welcomed in Gujarat with garlands and sweets.

"PM should have condemned [it when] Bilkis Bano's attackers were garlanded," he said.

He also raised the recent issue of violence against a girl student in Banaras Hindu University.

Piyush Goyal, the Leader of the House, said the Congress chief was raising divisive issues. He also claimed that the data on inflation placed by Mr. Kharge was baseless.

Speaking on unemployment, the Congress leader pointed out that youngsters were willing to risk

their lives for a job in Israel rather than die of starvation in India. "People are saying that had they got any jobs here, they would have stayed in India," he said, adding that unemployment had only increased under the Modi regime. "You have all powers. Why don't you fill 30 lakh vacancies with the Centre," he said and added that jobs in the government sector and PSUs were the only hope for marginalised communities. "If you deny them that, they would say *Inquilab Zindabad* (long live revolution). Do not test their level of tolerance," he said.

Mr. Kharge noted that there was a decrease of 45,696 in the number of officers belonging to the OBCs in public banks and insurance companies in the past five years. He said that 41.1% of vacancies of doctors in AIIMS are not filled".

"There are about 4,600 vacancies in IITs, 32% faculty posts are vacant in Central Universities and among them, 39% belong to SC, 46% belong to ST, 45% belong to OBC and 72% belong to economically weaker sections," he said, adding that experiments like Agnipath were imposed on the defence forces without any consultations.

'Governors have little regard for Constitution'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The conflict between Governors and Chief Ministers in several States was raised by Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) MP T.R. Baalu in the Lok Sabha on Friday, where without mentioning names, he said that the behaviour of some Governors was "as if they had no care about what is there in the Constitution". He requested President Droupadi Murmu to "pull them up".

He also raised the issue of lack of funds promised by the Union government for dealing with the "unprecedented" floods in Tamil Nadu.

The allusion to Governors and their roles was in the context of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, where relations between the government and the Governors have not been harmonious.

Many Governors think they have a halo behind their heads, as if they have no care about what is there in the Constitution. They feel they are above everyone else. One Governor only read the last line of his address to the State Assembly," he said.

"In some States, the Governor is competing with the Opposition to scold the government," he added.

Opposition stages walkout in protest against Soren arrest

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



'No time limit for panel to submit report on one nation, one election'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Law Minister Arjun Meghwal on Friday informed the Lok Sabha that no specific time limit had been provided for the high-level committee on simultaneous polls, headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind.

In a written reply, Mr. Meghwal said that the committee on 'one nation, one election' had so far received 35 responses from political parties.

He noted that "no specific time limit" had been provided for the submission of the report by the Kovind panel.

No deadline

To a question on whether the committee had set any deadline to consider the suggestions received from various quarters, the Law Minister replied in the negative.

Set up in September last, the high-level committee's mandate was to examine and make recommendations for holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha, State Assemblies, municipalities and panchayats keeping in view the existing constitutional framework.

Meanwhile, in a separate statement, the Law Ministry said that the high-level committee held its fifth meeting, during which a delegation from the Confederation of India Industries called on them.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
(CONSTRUCTION ORGANISATION)
E-TENDER NOTICE No. 70-CENCMS-23-24-E-427632
Dated: 12.01.2024

For and on behalf of The President of India, The Chief Engineer, Construction, Southern Railway, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008 invites e-tender for the following work(s) as per Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) in our portal www.reps.gov.in. The Tenders / Contractors intending to apply for the tender needs to get enrolled in the portal www.reps.gov.in and only online tenders will be accepted.

NAME OF THE WORK

Tiruchirappalli Division - Villupuram + Pondicherry Section. Proposed construction of Road Over Bridge in lieu of existing LC No.45 at Km. 36/500-600 between Villupuram & Pondicherry Stations - Substructures with Pile Foundation and Super Structure with composite girder of overall length 1x30.90m (Effective span 1 x 30.00m) across the tracks and approach span with PSC T girder with Subway and other miscellaneous works (TWO PACKET SYSTEM)

Cash Value (₹)	Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	Period of Completion (Months)	Closing Date @ 15.30 hrs.
58218536736	3060900.00	12 Months	07.02.2024

For further details, please refer to website www.reps.gov.in or contact Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Construction, E.V.R. High Road, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.

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CIN: U40101WB2007SC113474 + web: www.wbsetcl.in

E-TENDER FOR THE FOLLOWING WORKS ARE INVITED:-

NIT No.: CE(P)/WBSETCL/Procurement/23-24/28 Date: 03.02.2024 Engagement of Certifying Agency for carrying out jobs of Information Security Audit leading to ISO:27001 Certification at SLDC, WBSETCL. Bid documents can be downloaded from 03.02.2024, 11:00 A.M. and bids shall be submitted (online) up to 04:00 P.M., 27.02.2024.

NIT No.: CE(Procurement)/WBSETCL/Auditor_ISO/23-24/29 Date: 05.02.2024 Engagement of Certifying Agency for carrying out jobs of Information Security Audit leading to ISO:27001 Certification at SLDC, WBSETCL. Bid documents can be downloaded from 05.02.2024, 11:00 A.M. and bids shall be submitted (online) up to 04:00 P.M., 05.03.2024.

Visit the following websites:- www.wbtenders.gov.in, www.wbsetcl.in for details.

ICAI- T2583(3)/2024

SC asks Hemant Soren to approach High Court

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A Special Bench of the Supreme Court on Friday refused to intervene in a plea by former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren challenging his arrest on money laundering charges in a land scam case, asking him to approach the Jharkhand High Court.

"Why don't you go to the High Court. It is a constitutional court. The High Courts are open to everyone... Once we permit you to come directly here, we will have to permit everybody," Justice Sanjiv

Khanna told senior advocates Kapil Sibal and A.M. Singhvi, appearing for Mr. Soren.

The Bench, also comprising Justices M.M. Sundresh and Bela M. Trivedi, requested the High Court to consider and decide Mr. Soren's petition expeditiously.

Mr. Sibal alleged the Centre was "trying to topple the government" in Jharkhand. "There are matters which you have directly entertained. My Lords should be consistent... You see, there are situations and then there are situations," Mr. Sibal emphasised.

Mr. Singhvi said the Supreme Court had concurrent jurisdiction with the High Court. Discretion lay with the Supreme Court whether or not to entertain cases.

Justice Khanna said he and his Associate Judges on the Bench were of the consistent view that petitioners ought to adhere to the tiers of appeal and not jump the queue to come directly to the Supreme Court.

"Please go to the High Court... We have to do this in a consistent manner," Justice Khanna said.

When Mr. Sibal asked the Bench to give the High

Court a timeline to complete the hearing, Justice Khanna said he did not want to "control" the High Court.

Additional Solicitor-General S.V. Raju, for the Enforcement Directorate (ED), said Mr. Soren had filed an "identical petition" in the High Court. "The fact of the matter is the High Court is hearing his petition," he addressed the Bench. He remarked that the jail had been converted to a five-star hotel.

The court, in its order, noted how Mr. Soren had, on his own initiative, withdrawn his writ petition

challenging provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) from the Supreme Court while "seeking liberty to approach the High Court for the same set of reliefs" on September 18, 2023.

The ED arrested Mr. Soren under the PMLA on January 31 after he submitted his resignation as Chief Minister. Mr. Sibal mentioned that the case of arrest of Mr. Soren again highlighted the misuse of powers by the ED owing to the ambiguity about the actual intent of Section 19 (procedure for arrest) of the PMLA.

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STATEMENT OF UNAUDITED STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

Sl. No.	Particulars	Standalone			Consolidated		
		Quarter ended	Nine months ended	Quarter ended	Quarter ended	Nine months ended	Quarter ended
31.12.2023	31.12.2023	31.12.2022	31.12.2023	31.12.2022	31.12.2023	31.12.2022	31.12.2022
		(Unaudited)				(Unaudited)	
1	Total Revenue from Operations	1,180.62	3,630.58	1,226.87	1,367.25	4,199.83	1,403.03
2	Net Profit for the period (before tax and exceptional items)	155.58	464.17	142.05	171.85	517.42	156.50
3	Net Profit for the period (before tax)	155.58	464.17	142.05	171.85	517.42	156.50
4	Net Profit for the period (after tax)	116.19	346.65	106.13	129.44	391.23	118.07
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	119.80	363.97	115.72	139.19	404.54	134.98
6	Equity Share Capital (Face Value of Re 1/- each fully paid up)	21.01	21.01	21.01	21.01	21.01	21.01
7	Earnings Per Share (EPS) (for continuing and discontinued operations) (Face value of Re 1/- each) (not annualised) (in Rs.)	5.53	16.50	5.05	6.12	18.4	

IN BRIEF



Former Madhya Pradesh CM Chouhan meets BJP chief

Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan called on BJP national president J.P. Nadda in New Delhi late on Thursday. Taking to X, Mr. Chouhan posted: "Had a courtesy call on the national president of the BJP, J.P. Nadda ji in New Delhi today." Mr. Chouhan was in Delhi to attend the wedding reception of Indore Lok Sabha member Shankar Lalwani's son. A BJP source said Mr. Chouhan accompanied Mr. Nadda in his car to his home where the two held talks for more than an hour. The meeting comes just days after Chief Minister Mohan Yadav was in the national capital to meet Mr. Nadda and various Union Ministers.

SC clarifies stay order on ex post facto environmental nod

The Supreme Court on Friday clarified that its order, which stayed government directives allowing retrospective environmental clearance to projects affecting ecology, will not affect authorities from considering applications seeking modification/alteration of schemes cleared prior to July 7, 2021. It had on January 2 stayed the implementation of two directives issued by the Ministry of Environment on July 7, 2021, and January 20, 2022. A Bench said that the stay would not "come in the way of authorities considering proposals for modifications in the environmental clearances if the projects have valid clearance prior to July 7, 2021".

Law panel suggests retaining criminal defamation provision

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The 22nd Law Commission has recommended that criminal defamation should be retained within the scheme of criminal laws in India, the Law Ministry said on Friday.

The panel submitted its report to the Ministry on Thursday. In its report, the Law Commission argued that the right to reputation is derived from Article 21 of the Constitution that guarantees the right to life and personal liberty and that is why it has to be protected.

"Reputation is something which can't be seen and can only be earned. It's an asset which is built in a lifetime and destroyed in seconds. The whole jurisprudence around the law on criminal defamation has the essence of protecting one's reputation and its facets," it said.

The matter was referred to the law panel by the Ministry in August 2017. Noting that it could be argued that criminal prosecution for defamatory statements stands opposed to the freedom of speech and expression, the law panel advised exercising caution.

"Speech ought to be illegal only where it is meant to do substantial harm and when such harm materialises," the panel cautioned.

Referring to the issue of punishment, it said the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita has added a provision of community service as an additional punishment. "This law gives a balancing approach, wherein it has safeguarded the interest of the victim and has also neutralised the scope of misuse by giving an alternate punishment of community service," it said.

Sharmila takes special status fight to Delhi

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee president Y.S. Sharmila has taken the fight for Special Category Status (SCS) and other key projects promised in the Andhra Pradesh State Reorganisation Act, 2014, to the national capital.

On Friday, Ms. Sharmila led a protest by leaders and workers at the A.P. Bhavan in Delhi. The protesters held placards and raised slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi for denying SCS to Andhra Pradesh and Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for failing to question the BJP government at the Centre.

"Mr. Modi had said he would grant SCS to the State and fulfil all promises made in the Reorganisation Act. What has happened to his promises?" she questioned.

To rein in rice prices, millers, traders told to declare stocks

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Worried over the increase in rice prices, the Centre has asked traders/wholesalers, retailers, big chain retailers and processors/millers to declare their stock position of rice and paddy every Friday.

Union Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said the decision is to manage the overall food inflation and to prevent unscrupulous speculation.

Traders and millers will have to declare the stocks of paddy and almost all categories of rice, such as broken rice, non-basmati white rice, parboiled rice and basmati rice, on the Ministry's designated portal, Mr. Chopra said.

Further, to check inflationary trends, the Centre has decided to start retail sale of 'Bharat Rice' to generate

consumers. "In the first phase, 5 lakh tonnes of rice has been allocated for retail sale under 'Bharat Rice' brand through three agencies, NAFED, NCCF and Kendriya Bhandar. Retail price for sale of Bharat Rice to general consumers will be ₹29 per kilogram. Rice will be sold in five kg and 10 kg bags," he said.

He said the retail prices had increased by 14.51% over the past year. "In an effort to curb the prices of rice, various steps have already been taken by the government," he said. Sufficient stock of good quality rice is available with the FCI, which is being offered to traders/wholesalers under open market sales scheme at a reserve price of ₹29/kg.

He said the government's policy of curbs on certain varieties of rice will continue.

Navy foils piracy attempt off east Somalia, rescues 11 Iranians, 8 Pakistanis

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy foiled a piracy attempt on an Iranian-flagged fishing vessel off the east coast of Somalia on Friday and ensured the release of the crew – 11 Iranian and eight Pakistani nationals – along with the boat.

"Information regarding piracy attempt on fishing vessel FV *Omaril* was monitored on January 31. The Indian naval remotely piloted aircraft (RPA), undertaking surveillance in the area, successfully located FV *Omaril*, and INS *Sharda*, deployed for anti-piracy mission in the region, was diverted to intercept the boat," the Navy said in a statement on Friday.

Seven pirates had boarded FV *Omaril* and taken the crew hostages, ac-

Solar panel scheme will boost battery industry, says Modi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that government initiatives such as rooftop solar scheme and clean cooking mission would provide boost to the battery manufacturing industry and bring down the cost of batteries for electric vehicles.

There is as yet no budgetary outlay specified for the scheme. However back-of-the-envelope calculation suggests that electrifying one crore households could cost at least ₹1.5 lakh crore. A 2 kilowatt to 3 kilowatt (kw) system is sufficient to draw a minimum 300 units for a household. Currently, it costs about ₹50,000 per kw, said Mr. Singh, implying ₹1,50,000 capital cost for a household. The Budget suggests that only ₹4,555 crore has been allocated this year, but being an interim Budget, this could change.

Households with consumption of over 300 units can also use the scheme. However, they would be required to fund the 40% themselves through a loan or self-financing. "It's still a great scheme because it would pay itself back in seven to 10 years after which you can sell electricity back to the grid and earn," he added.

Each public sector unit will be tasked with reaching out to specific States.

They will form special purpose vehicles (SPV) with private companies to execute the programme.

Speaking at the inauguration of the three-day Bharat Mobility Summit, Mr. Modi said, "If I push the clean cooking movement [in the country with] 25 crore households so that you have rooftop solar [panels] and provision for battery storage, this will fuel clean cooking and demand for batteries. This will bring down the cost of car batteries."

The Prime Minister said the tyre industry should also collaborate with farmers in order to reduce dependence on import of rubber.

Facilities for drivers
He also announced that the government was working on a project to construct 1,000 buildings on National Highways for truck and taxi drivers with amenities such as food stalls, clean drinking water, toilets, parking and rest places.

"This will give a boost to both ease of living and ease of travelling for truck and taxi drivers, thereby improving their health and also help in preventing accidents," he said.



SUDOKU

7			6	5				
	1		4	5	3			
		8				1		
3	1		2	6				
5						7		
	7	4		8	1			
9			6					
	3	9	1		8			
4		3				2		

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

MANGALDEEP
PREMIUM QUALITY INCENSE

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FAITH

Nothing but the truth

A *grantha* should set forth at the beginning what its main focus is. This is called *vishaya*. How is the *grantha* going to benefit those who read it has also to be told. This is *prayojana*. Who is the *adikari*, or the one qualified to expound on the text has also to be mentioned. *Sambandha*, which is the connection between *vishaya*, *prayojana* and *adikari*, must also be specified. *Srimad Bhagavatam* begins with three *mangala slokas*, said Valayapet Ramachariar in a discourse. Here the *vishaya* – that is the main theme of the work – is given as dharma.

Vyasa was the author of the work, and it came to us through his son *Suka*. *Vyasa* tells us about dharma in this work. There are two kinds of dharma – siddha dharma and sadhya dharma. Siddha dharma is the Supreme One, Lord Narayana. *Kathopanishad* says that one may be a scholar, or a devotee, but it is Divine will that determines what we should receive. To attain *moksha* He is the means. Sadyha dharma refers to the means we use to reach Him.

Srimad Bhagavatam gives us more peace of mind than the study of Vedanta. It talks about the dharma of virtuous people, whose hearts are pure (*nirmatsaraanaam*). They are free from pride. *Bhagavatam* speaks nothing but the truth. The Lord is not just the goal, but the means to attain that goal, and *Srimad Bhagavatam* shows us this.



Across
1 India briefly in the midst of coal shortage, may be gets a professional digger (13)
10 It can turn both ways (5)
11 International language, best to be exposed - each one to follow (9)
12 Make it look pretty with morning glories spread outside (9)

Down
2 Control frames - skill up or teach new skills (7)
3 He had briefly taken shelter, was protected (9)
4 Some time left to raise the tree (5)
5 He may not hear you, but knows what you're talking about (3,6)
6 Key test for a mountain dweller (5)
7 Fermented grains added to a drink (7)
8 I'm categorised to direct these plays (13)
9 They do recall going around with old penny, rather unemotionally (4-9)
15 Bid to stop crime at minister's house (9)
17 Appeal - Let current flow inside (9)
19 Half chicken - I can say it is from Timbuktu (7)
21 Make a face, a serious one (7)
23 Cast in gold for so long (5)
25 Asians add a drop of alcohol in this (5)

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



No SS65 Distribution www.knightfeatures.com

CM YK MN-ND-E

SEOUL

North Korea fires more cruise missiles in testing spree



North Korea fired multiple cruise missiles on Friday, Seoul's military said, continuing a streak of weapons testing as Kim Jong-un ramps up what he calls "war preparations". So far this year, Kim has said South Korea is his country's "principal enemy", and threatened war over "even 0.001 mm" of territorial infringement. AFP

No power in many Ukraine homes after drone attack

Agence France-Presse
KYIV

Ukraine said on Friday that tens of thousands of people were without power after a barrage of two dozen Russian drones damaged energy infrastructure in the centre of the country.

The overnight attack echoed the systematic bombardments by Russian forces last winter that left millions in Ukraine without power, heating or water for extended stretches.

The air force said Moscow had launched 24 Iranian-designed drones at Ukraine, where a national energy provider said its facilities in the Dniproprostrovsk region were damaged.

"This led to a power outage for more than 40,000 subscribers," the head of the region, Sergiy Lysak, said on social media, adding that two mines were also without power.

Rohingya members protest, flee Malaysia detention centre

Associated Press
KUALA LUMPUR

More than 100 Rohingya immigrants have escaped from a detention centre in Malaysia after a protest, with one confirmed killed in a road accident, officials said on Friday.

This was the second time in two years that such a breakout occurred. In 2022, 528 Rohingya refugees staged a protest and escaped from detention in northern Penang state.

Immigration Department Director-General Ruslin Jusoh said in a state-

In 2022, 528 Rohingya refugees escaped from detention in northern Penang

ment that 131 detainees escaped from a centre in Perak state late on Thursday. He said one of the detainees was killed in a road accident.

Nearly 400 personnel were deployed to hunt them down, he added, without giving details on what sparked the breakout.

KUALA LUMPUR

Malaysian former PM Najib Razak's prison sentence halved to six years



Malaysia's pardons board said on Friday it had halved the jail term for former Prime Minister Najib Razak, currently in prison for corruption, to six years. Najib was sentenced in 2022 to 12 years in jail for offences linked to the misuse of public money in the multi-billion-dollar 1MDB financial scandal. AFP

NAIROBI

Truck with gas canisters explodes, killing three, injuring 280 in Kenya



A truck laden with gas canisters exploded in a densely populated residential area in Kenyan capital Nairobi, setting off a devastating blaze that killed three and injured 280. The blast at what has been described as an illegal gas depot ignited a huge fireball leaving a trail of destruction and sending residents running for their lives. AFP

ISLAMABAD

24 militants killed in last three days in Pakistan's troubled Balochistan



At least 24 militants were killed in the past three days during security operations in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province, the Army said on Friday. On Thursday, Balochistan was rattled with at least 10 bomb and grenade attacks, killing at least one person and injuring six persons, including a police officer and a jail warden. AP

Hamas gives 'initial' support to truce plan as fighting rages

It has been presented with a three-stage plan which would start with a six-week halt to the fighting that would see more aid deliveries into Gaza; Health Ministry says 112 killed in past 24 hours

Agence France-Presse
GAZA STRIP

Fighting in Gaza raged on Friday with scores reported killed overnight, after mediator Qatar said Hamas had given its "initial" support to a hostage-prisoner exchange deal that would pause its war with Israel.

The Health Ministry in the Hamas-run territory said 112 people had been killed over the previous 24 hours, while the Hamas press office reported Israeli air and artillery bombardment around Khan Younis – southern Gaza's main city and the focus of recent fighting.

Nearly four months of fighting have left Gaza "uninhabitable", the United Nations says, while an Israeli siege has resulted in dire shortages of food, water, fuel and medicines.

Winter storms brought torrential rain to Gaza on Friday, piling more misery on the hundreds of thousands of displaced civilians who have sought shelter in bombed out buildings and makeshift camps.



Ray of hope: Palestinians line up for food during the ongoing Israeli air and ground offensive in Khan Younis on Friday. AP

death toll have triggered calls for a ceasefire.

After a truce proposal agreed with Israeli negotiators was presented to Hamas on Thursday, Qatar's Foreign Ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari said there were hopes of "good news" about a fresh pause to the fighting "in the next

couple of weeks". "That proposal has been approved by the Israeli side and now we have an initial positive confirmation from the Hamas side," he said.

But a source close to Hamas said: "There is no agreement on the framework of the agreement yet – the factions have important observations – and the Qatari statement is rushed and not true."

A Hamas source said the group had been presented with a three-stage plan which would start with an initial six-week halt to the fighting that would see more aid deliveries into Gaza. The pause would also see the release of "women, children and sick men over 60" among the Israeli hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners in Israel, the source said.

Iran Guard among 3 dead in Israel strikes in Syria, say reports

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

Three pro-Iran fighters were killed in Israeli strikes south of Damascus on Friday, a war monitor said, with Iranian media reporting an adviser from the Revolutionary Guards was among the dead.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said "three members of pro-Iran groups, including an Iranian and an Iraqi" were killed in "Israeli air strikes".

Israel rarely comments on individual strikes but has said repeatedly that it will not allow Iran to expand its presence in Syria.

The targets included a site operated by Lebanese militant group Hezbollah on a road leading to the Sayyida Zeinab district and a site on the road to Damascus airport that had recently been vacated by pro-Iran groups, the Britain-based war monitor said.

Iran's Mehr news agency said an Iranian adviser from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Saeed Aliafi, was killed in the strikes.

Syrian state media reported damage from "Israeli" air strikes south of Damascus but did not mention casualties.

During more than a decade of civil war in Syria, Israel has launched hundreds of strikes, primarily targeting Iran-backed forces.

Pro-Iran group in Iraq vows to keep up U.S. strikes

Agence France-Presse
BAGHDAD

Iraq's pro-Iran Al-Nujaba movement said on Friday it intends to press on with attacks on U.S. troops in West Asia, despite Washington's threat to hit back after three of its soldiers were killed in Jordan.

"Any (U.S.) strike will result in an appropriate response," Al-Nujaba leader Akram al-Kaabi said, adding the group would continue its actions until its demands are met for U.S. troops to leave Iraq and an end to Israel's war on Hamas.

The Al-Nujaba movement forms part of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an alliance of Iran-backed armed groups that the U.S. has blamed for last weekend's deadly drone attack in Jordan.

Another of the alliance's factions, Kataeb Hezbollah (the Hezbollah Brigades), announced earlier this week that it was suspending its attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria, a decision that Al-Nujaba said it understood and respected.

The Al-Nujaba statement came as U.S. President Joe Biden prepared to receive the bodies of the slain U.S. soldiers at an air force base near Washington.

India will 'replace' its military personnel by May 10: Maldives

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

India will "replace" its military personnel in the Maldives in two phases by May 10, the Government of Maldives has stated after the second meeting of the high-level core group between the two sides that was held here on Friday.

The decision came in the backdrop of Male's demand to end the presence of Indian military personnel in the archipelago nation, which was further complicated because of social media controversy over remarks by three Ministers of the Mohamed

The move came a day after the revised Indian Budget estimates gave Maldives a bigger financial allocation

Muizz government that were found to be disrespectful of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The statement, however, did not clarify if the military personnel of India will be replaced by civilian operators or by another batch of armed forces personnel.

A statement from the Ministry of External Affairs

(MEA) said that the two sides had "agreed on a set of mutually workable solutions to enable continued operation of Indian aviation platforms that provide humanitarian and medevac services to the people of Maldives." The Maldivian side reiterated that the two countries will continue cooperation in the fields of defence and security.

The development came a day after the revised Indian Budget estimates for 2023-24 gave Maldives a bigger financial allocation than it was previously granted in the current financial year.

Uttar Pradesh New & Renewable Energy Development Agency, (UPNEDA)
(Dept. Of Additional Sources of Energy, Govt. of U.P.)

Notice Inviting Tender
UPNEDA invites Online Bids from Prospective Bidders through GeM Portal for Empanelment of Agency for Implementation of 85 cum per day Bio Gas plant at various districts/sites in the State of Uttar Pradesh as per the details given in Bid Document/Bid Number: GEM/2024/B/4567445.

S.No	Name of Work	Tentative Quantity (Nos)	Estimated Cost including GST (Rs)
1	Empanelment of Agency for Implementation of 85 cum per day Bio Gas plant at various districts/ sited in the State of Uttar Pradesh.	10 Nos	Rs. 2.20 Crores

The work completion time for all the above work is 4 (four) month. The Bid document is available at GeMPortal from 01.02.2024. Interested bidders may view, download the Bid document, seek clarification and submit their Bid through GeM Portal upto the date and time mentioned in the table below:

(a) Availability of tender document on GeM Portal	From : 01.02.2024
(b) Bid submission end date & Time	On: 12.02.2024 upto 6:00 pm
(c) Pre-Bid Meeting date & Time	On: 05.02.2024 upto 12:30 pm
(d) Online technical Bid Opening date & time	On: 12.02.2024 at 6:30 pm
(e) Financial Bid Opening date & time (Only of technically qualified bidders)	Shall be intimated later
(f) Venue of opening of technical & financial Bids	UPNEDA Head Office, VibhutiKhand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-222601

Numbers of the system mentioned as above, may increase or decrease. Director, Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency, (UPNEDA) reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof. The decision of Director UPNEDA will be final and binding.

Director, UPNEDA

गुरुवार प्रणाली क्रमसंक्षेप

TAMIL NADU MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD.
No.417, Pantheon Road, Egmore, Chennai-600 008.
Phone : 28191890 / 28190259; Fax: 044 - 28190636 E-Mail: equipment.tnmsc@tn.gov.in
INVITATION FOR BIDS FOR LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING
(1) The Government of Tamil Nadu has received a Loan (Loan No. ID-P251) from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) towards the cost of Tamil Nadu Urban Healthcare Project and it is intended that part of the proceeds will be applied to eligible payments under the contracts for which this Invitation for Bids is issued. (2) The General Manager (Equipment), TNMSC Ltd. now invites bids from eligible bidders for supply of the following goods:

Sl No	Tender/Item with Qty./Document cost	Sale start date	Pre-bid Meeting	End of Submission of bid	Opening of bid
1	Online Tender No. PKG44R/C1/2/P2/LCBTNUH/PU/JICA/TNMSC/ENG/2024-dt-29.01.2024 – Optometry Equipment - I for 3 Tertiary Care Hospitals - Rs.5,725/-	05/02/2024	16/02/2024	28/02/2024 11:00 AM	28/02/2024 12:00 Noon
2	Online Tender No. PKG44R/C1/2/P2/LCBTNUH/PU/JICA/TNMSC/ENG/2024-dt-29.01.2024 – Optometry Equipment - II for 3 Tertiary Care Hospitals - Rs.5,725/-	05/02/2024	16/02/2024	29/02/2024 11:00 AM	29/02/2024 12:00 Noon

(3) For details visit www.tenders.tn.gov.in.
(4) All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in Indian rupees as specified in the bid document.

DPR/59/3/Tender/2024

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
ELECTRICAL CIRCLE (R&B), NIRMAN SOUDHA, BHUBANESWAR**
E-mail : seec.bbsr@gmail.com
Bid Identification No. S.E.E.C (R&B) 30/2023-24
No. 379 / Date 31.01.2024

The Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for E.I.works which are to be received through online bidding, double cover system as detailed in : <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>. The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from dt.03.02.2024 at 05.00 P.M. to dt.17.02.2024 up to 05.00 P.M. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened dt.19.02.2024 at 11.30 A.M. in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal www.tendersorissa.gov.in. Addendum / Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the Website.

SD/- Superintending Engineer,
Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, BBSR.
Candidate Care Support: +91-7996153333

B-1724: OPR/34006/11/0039/2324

NATIONAL BOARD OF EXAMINATIONS IN MEDICAL SCIENCES
(Autonomous body of the M/o. Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)
NAMS Building, Medical Enclave, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi – 110029

National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) – MDS 2024 NOTICE

National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) shall conduct the next NEET-MDS on 18th March 2024.

Please refer to the Information Bulletin at NBEMS website <https://natboard.edu.in> for details pertaining to eligibility criteria, fee structure, scheme of examination and other details.

Important Dates	

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IN BRIEF

**CUB net rises 16% to ₹253 cr. on improved recovery**

City Union Bank Ltd. (CUB) said it had posted a 16% year-on-year increase in standalone net profit to ₹253 crore for the December quarter due to improved recovery and reduced slippages, despite challenges. Total income grew by 6% to ₹1,519 crore and interest income by 10% to ₹1,362 crore. Non-interest income slid to ₹193 crore, from ₹224 crore, while net interest income (NII) contracted by ₹40 crore to ₹516 crore, the private sector lender said.

NMDC logs best ever January iron ore sales at 36.49 MT

State-owned mining major NMDC posted a more than 8% increase in iron ore production to 4.54 million tonnes for January, while sales at 4.56 MT is the best ever for the month and nearly 19% higher year on year. For the first 10 months of the fiscal, production at 36.32 MT was an increase of about 17% y-o-y. Sales rose 23% to 36.49 MT. These are the highest ever cumulative production and sales in the company's history during a 10-month period, NMDC said.

Capital SFB fixes initial public offer price band at ₹445-468

Capital Small Finance Bank Ltd. has announced to open the initial public offering (IPO) of its equity shares at face value of ₹10 on February 7 in the price band of ₹445-468 per share. Bids can be made for a minimum of 32 shares and in multiples of 32 shares thereafter. The IPO will close on February 9. The IPO comprises a fresh issue aggregating to ₹450 crore and an offer of sale of up to 1,561,329 shares by the selling shareholders.

Sundram Fasteners posts 9% rise in Q3 net profit to ₹116 cr.**The Hindu Bureau**
CHENNAI

Sundram Fasteners Ltd. (SFL) registered a 9% rise in net profit to ₹116 crore for the December quarter from the year-earlier period.

Revenue from operations slid by 4% to ₹1,181 crore, of which domestic sales accounted for ₹812 crore and export sales ₹339 crore, the manufacturer of high-tensile fasteners said in a statement.

Pursuant to the recent floods in Chennai, SFL's facilities at Padi, Velappan-chavadi and Gummidi-poondi suffered damages to certain inventories and property, plant and equipment, the company said.



SFL had recorded a net loss of ₹7 crore after adjusting minimum insurance claim based on an initial survey undertaken at these facilities. The company said it continued to have an all-time low debt-equity ratio of 0.11.

Sundram Fasteners said so far it had incurred capital expenditure in line with its planned allocation of ₹300 crore for FY24.

Sundaram Home Fin Q3 net rises 18% to ₹62 crore**The Hindu Bureau**
CHENNAI

Sundaram Home Finance Ltd. (SHFL), reported third-quarter net profit rose 18% year-on-year to ₹62 crore.

Disbursements increased by 27% to ₹1,252 crore, the wholly owned subsidiary of Sundaram Finance said in a statement.

Assets under management (AUM) stood at ₹12,800 crore, against ₹10,500 crore. SHFL hired more than 500 people in the first nine months.

"Tier 2 and 3 towns in the southern market remained strong in the first nine months of the year," said Managing Director D. Lakshminarayanan.

Sundram Fasteners said so far it had incurred capital expenditure in line with its planned allocation of ₹300 crore for FY24.

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tata Motors Ltd. reported third-quarter consolidated net profit surged over two times to ₹7,025 crore as compared with ₹2,957.71 crore in the year-earlier period due to better performance of all its divisions.

The company, for the period ended December 31, 2023, reported revenues of ₹10,799.22 crore as compared with ₹8,783.21 crore a year earlier, up 25%.

The company's India business reported third-quarter standalone profit grew to ₹4,570 crore as compared with ₹506 crore a year earlier. The revenue

India Cements posts Q3 net loss of ₹17 cr.**The Hindu Bureau**
CHENNAI

The India Cements Ltd. (ICL) reported standalone net loss of ₹17 crore for the December quarter against net profit of ₹91 crore in the year-earlier period.

Revenue from operations slid to ₹1,082 crore from ₹1,219 crore. The result included a one-time gain of ₹26 crore (₹294 crore) from the sale of a ship, the cement major said in a statement.

On the back of better sales realisation for cement and improved operating performance, ICL pared the losses and made cash profit of ₹6 crore, the company said. Earnings before interest, depreciation, tax and amortisation turned around to a positive ₹66

ICL's capacity utilisation was muted on account of stressed working capital conditions

crore against a negative EBITDA of ₹66 crore, signalled a possible turnaround, ICL said.

ICL's capacity utilisation was muted on account of stressed working capital conditions and it was around 51%. There was further improvement in operating performance with reduction in variable cost on account of lower fuel price and improved blending ratio, ICL said.

The cement and clinker volume contracted to 19.85 lakh tonnes, from 21.82 lakh tonnes.

IndiGo's aircraft groundings surpass 70 after engine issue**Iagrith Chandra**
NEW DELHI

Budget carrier IndiGo reported a fifth straight quarterly profit even as the number of aircraft groundings of its Airbus A320neo planes rose to more than 70, from 40 earlier, following a recent powder metal issue with the fleet's Pratt and Whitney engines.

"Our aircraft on ground are in the mid-70s, which is a slight improvement from our previous estimate," IndiGo's Chief Financial Officer, Gaurav Negi, said on a post-earnings call.

Until October-end, the groundings were in the "mid-40s". In July, the U.S.-based engine supplier PW had said that a powder metal defect could lead to the cracking of some engine components in the twin-engine Airbus A320neo planes and called for accelerated inspections.

However, this has not affected the airline's growth in capacity, which is expected to surpass 20% for the financial year 2024 beating its earlier projection of a "mid-teens" rate.

The airline, which has a total of 358 aircraft in its fleet, expects to continue to add a plane a week, and along with additional measures such as aircraft on wet leases, foresees the ongoing fleet expansion to help offset the groundings in a "few months".

IndiGo reported a profit of ₹2,998 crore for the quarter ended December.

"We continue to recover from the losses of COVID and have now become net worth positive again," the airline said in a statement.

Auditors found the bank's reliance on the IT infrastructure of OCL (One97 Communications Ltd., the listed parent entity) remained absolute and there was no operational segregation. Many transactions were routed through the OCL owned apps, raising concerns on data privacy and data sharing.

On several occasions, compliance details submitted by the bank were found to be false upon verification by RBI supervisors, the people added.

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Shamar Joseph rekindles the embers of an old sporting dynasty

The 24-year-old fast bowler is a modern version of the legendary quicks who powered the West Indies to the top of world cricket. His heroic performance in the famous win at the Gabba and his passionate support for the Test format have allowed fans of Caribbean cricket to dream again



GETTY IMAGES

K.C. Vijaya Kumar

Men have a strange equation with their lacrimal glands. They would rather blink hard than cry. It could be social conditioning ever since those hunting days of yore when dark caves and a warm fire were the only luxuries that mankind knew. The tear ducts are often wrongly deemed a vestigial remnant by the male half of the species and then you have those wretched tropes like men don't cry.

Yet last Sunday, many men across the cricketing globe, despite being in denial, found some moisture seeping into their eyes. For those under the camera's relentless gaze, especially cricketing stars like Brian Lara and Carl Hooper now doubling up as commentators, there was no place to hide. Lara's eyes brimmed while Aussie great Adam Gilchrist held him tight and Hooper strode towards a wall, trying to conceal his fragile but happy state.

The bridge of nostalgia

Equally for men of a certain vintage, and women too, belonging to an era that worshipped Vivian Richards and Malcolm Marshall, the eyes turned damp. Old friends were texted, this was the bridge of nostalgia, and a shared pride rippled along with the triumphant West Indians at Brisbane's Gabba. The men from the Caribbean had finally defeated Australia in a Test Down Under

I'm not afraid to say this. I will always be available to play for the West Indies, no matter how much money comes towards me. I will always be here to play Test cricket

SHAMAR JOSEPH

after 27 years. A two-Test series was drawn level at 1-1. Even the vanquished skipper Pat Cummins seemed happy!

This was joy unbridled. Current fans of the willow game may have New Zealand as their second favourite side after their respective national squads but for many, hiding their age with hair-colour but forever believing that their hearts are young, the West Indies is an eternal favourite.

And who best to rekindle the torrid embers of an old sporting love affair but a young fast bowler? Shamar Joseph is a modern version of those dispensers of fire whom some like Michael Holding were referred to as 'Whispering Death'. There is an element of the late Marshall too in him, be it in his height or the way he steams in to land his thunderbolts while his back arches for a millisecond and the arms blur.

The 24-year-old is from Guyana, a tiny nation resting upon the top fringes of South America, and yet considered as part of the West Indian archipelago, specifically when it comes to cricket. Hailing from Baracara, a tropical village where timber logging was his primary vocation, Joseph played tape-ball cricket and eventually moved to a town called New Amsterdam. In a rapid ascent to top-flight cricket, he caught the selectors' eye and soon played for Guyana. He finally learnt the game's finer points and technique. The rough-cut granite now seemed set to evolve into a polished diamond.

Still, pathos was the overwhelming theme that

shadowed the West Indians. These men even failed to qualify for last year's ICC World Cup in India. The dirge was being played and be it sunshine, a silver lining or even that elusive rainbow, all seemed impossible. But Joseph, like Moses parting the seas, lent hope. He snapped up a five-for on debut in the first Test at Adelaide, and scalped the likes of Steve Smith and Marnus Labuschagne. He also scored some handy runs even if the host prevailed with a 10-wicket victory.

When Kraigg Brathwaite's men moved to Brisbane, it seemed as if another defeat was just around the corner. Fans wavered between dreams about West Indian miracles and presumptions about inevitable Australian wins. The first innings joust mildly tilted towards the visitors thanks to a 22-run lead but this was against Australia in its backyard. Not much could be read into such a wafer-thin advantage.

Overcoming adversity

The West Indians ended up setting a target of 216 but a massive worry was centred around Joseph, who found a Mitchell Starc yorker thud into his boot. The batter retired hurt and questions remained about whether the bowler within him had turned comatose. Rationality can hold an unforgiving mirror but sport can crack that glass into smithereens. It did through Joseph.

He bowed through pain, running in hard even if he gingerly walked towards the top of his run-up. This was a man willing himself to fight and his



It's unbelievable. Twenty-seven years to beat Australia in Australia. Young, inexperienced, written off... this West Indies team and West Indies cricket can stand tall today

BRIAN LARA

yield of seven for 68 is one of the greatest spells of fast bowling. It helped the West Indies win by eight runs. Stumps were rattled, edges were taken and often Joseph ran with exuberance while his teammates converged on him.

Battle-hardened men like Lara, Hooper and Ian Bishop struggled with misty eyes. The trio knew what it was to win in their playing days but as commentators they have been the harbingers of bad news pertaining to the West Indies. These were men, who in their prime had relished the services of fast merchants like Curtly Ambrose and Courtney Walsh. Bishop himself was a mean speedster before injuries forced him to step aside.

This was a moment that many awaited with bated breath, even if ICC trophies were won in the past, be it the Champions Trophy (2004) or the World T20 (2012 and 2016). To win a Test against a strong rival was deemed impossible even if in limited overs' contests, the West Indies could often sting.

But finally a Test was won and again it was Australia that sparked the turnaround. It was losses incurred primarily due to Australian spearheads like Dennis Lillee that forced Clive Lloyd to jettison spin and opt for his fiery quartet of Andy Roberts, Joel Garner, Holding and Marshall. That mid-1970s move toppled cricket's hierarchy and with Gordon Greenidge, Desmond Haynes, Richards and Lloyd lending batting might, the West Indies became an indomitable force.

Gentler flavours

Climaxes involving the West Indies became a one-way street while the rivals quivered. And then gradually the losses started, talent migrated towards basketball and the fancy shores of the United States. There were fast bowlers but not many lasted and a new template was found. Dwayne Bravo, Kieron Pollard and Darren Sammy, with their big hits, agile fielding and medium pace of the lower notch, became the gentle flavours of Caribbean cricket.

Besides propping up their national unit in coloured clothing, they found a heaven in the Indian Premier League. The fear of lining up against a West Indian pacer had dwindled and the mind wistfully recalled those witty placards held up in Australia during the 1980s: "Rain, rain go away, come when the West Indies come!" Back then, the Calypso men with their raw pace and muscular batting were something to sigh over and praise.

For now, Joseph and his mates hint at a revival, and his words backing Tests are obvious boostershots. While he takes a break and tends to his battered toe, the West Indies will wait for him. We will too and maybe the box of tissues can be kept handy.

STACKING UP**ATP Men's Top 15**

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Novak Djokovic	36	9,855	19
2	Carlos Alcaraz	20	9,255	18
3	Daniil Medvedev	27	8,765	21
4	Jannik Sinner	22	8,310	22
5	Andrey Rublev	26	5,050	24
6	Alexander Zverev	26	5,030	27
7	Holger Rune	20	3,685	23
8	Hubert Hurkacz	26	3,540	24
9	Taylor Fritz	26	3,195	26
10	Stefanos Tsitsipas	25	3,025	24
11	Alex de Minaur	24	2,970	25
12	Casper Ruud	25	2,965	23
13	Grigor Dimitrov	32	2,785	23
14	Frances Tiafoe	26	2,600	22
15	Tommy Paul	26	2,050	26

**English Premier League Standings**

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Liverpool	22	15	6	1	51	19	32	51
2	Man. City	21	14	4	3	51	24	27	46
3	Arsenal	22	14	4	4	44	21	23	46
4	Tottenham	22	13	4	5	47	33	14	43
5	Aston Villa	22	13	4	5	44	30	14	43
6	West Ham	22	10	6	6	36	33	3	36
7	Man. United	22	11	2	9	28	32	-4	35
8	Newcastle	22	10	2	10	44	33	11	32
9	Brighton	22	8	8	6	38	37	1	32
10	Chelsea	22	9	4	9	36	35	1	31
11	Wolves	22	8	5	9	33	35	-2	29
12	Bournemouth	21	7	5	9	29	40	-11	26
13	Fulham	22	7	4	11	28	36	-8	25
14	Crystal Palace	22	6	6	10	25	36	-11	24
15	Brentford	21	6	4	11	31	36	-5	22
16	N. Forest	22	5	5	12	27	40	-13	20
17	Luton Town	21	5	4	12	28	38	-10	19
18	Everton *	22	8	4	10	24	28	-4	18
19	Burnley	22	3	3	16	22	45	-23	12
20	Sheffield	22	2	4	16	19	54	-35	10

* Everton deducted 10 points following a breach of the Premier League's Profitability and Sustainability Rules. That decision is currently under appeal.

Spanish LaLiga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Real Madrid	22	18	3	1	47	14	33	57
2	Girona	22	17	4	1	52	25	27	55
3	Atletico Madrid	22	15	2	5	44	24	20	47
4	Barcelona	22	14	5	3	44	29	15	47
5	Athletic Bilbao	22	12	6	4	38	21	17	42
6	Real Sociedad	22	9	4	3	42	21	11	36
7	Real Betis	22	8	10	4	25	24	1	34
8	Valencia	22	9	5	8	27	26	1	32
9	Las Palmas	22	9	4	9	22	19	3	31
10	Getafe	22	7	8	7	28	30	-2	29
11	Alaves	22	7	5	10	22	27	-5	26
12	Osasuna	22	5	9	8	19	28	-9	24
13	Rayo Vallecano	22	6	5	11	33	45	-12	23
14	Villarreal	22	3	11	8	19	26	-7	20
15	Real Mallorca	22	3	8	11	27	36	-9	17
16	Sevilla	22	3	8	11	27	36	-9	17
17	Celta Vigo	22	3	8	11	21	32	-11	17
18	Cadiz	22	2	10	15	31	31	0	16
19	Granada	22	2	5	15	22	44	-22	11
20	Almeria	21	0	6	15	21	46	-25	6





GETTY IMAGES



He's an absolutely incredible manager... personally he has been my biggest rival. I will miss [him], [but] I am pleased because without him I will sleep a little bit better!

PEP GUARDIOLA
Manchester City manager

Shankly will always be the man who turned the club into a world power and Paisley will probably never be surpassed in terms of domestic and European silverware. Dalglish was worshipped as a player and manager and adored for his conduct around and since the Hillsborough tragedy.

These men all flourished when Liverpool was invariably the strongest team in England whereas Klopp has dealt with a more competitive era and overseen a transformation that has not been witnessed at the club in several decades. "Over the years my role was a pretty dominant one," said Klopp. "It was not intentional, but it happened."

Filling a vacuum
It's why replacing the 56-year-old will be so difficult. Legendary managers often leave behind a considerable vacuum, regardless of the talent at the disposal of their successor.

Liverpool is keen to avoid the fate suffered by United after Ferguson left, when the success dried up. The Merseyside club has said an "orderly process" to pick a new manager will be conducted privately, but that has not stopped the speculation from moving into hyperdrive.

Xabi Alonso, the Spanish former Liverpool player who has guided Bayer Leverkusen to the top of Bundesliga this season, is the bookmakers' favourite. Brighton boss Roberto De Zerbi is also in the running after leading the Seagulls into Europe this season for the first time. Julian Nagelsmann, Ange Postecoglou and even Steven Gerrard have been linked to the job, too.

Klopp said the solidity of Liverpool's foundation means he will step away without reservations about the team's future and he won't be offering his two cents on the way out.

"So many people work here with only one idea: to find a perfect solution for Liverpool FC," he said. "And the last thing they need is advice from the old man walking out telling them, 'By the way, make sure you bring him in,' or whatever. I will definitely not do that."

This team is set up for the future...

Whoever comes in, you can-

not ever guar-

antee to win

trophies, but

has a really

good chance

to play really

good

football

KLOPP

Reds face testing times as Klopp era winds down

The German, who changed Liverpool's fortunes, will go down as one of the club's greatest managers. His players want to harness the emotion of his departure to ensure his trophy-laden reign ends with more silverware. Replacing the 56-year-old will be no easy task, however.

Associated Press
Agence France-Presse

When Jurgen Klopp explained his decision to leave Liverpool after a successful but demanding eight and a half years, he again showed why he is such an effective, unique communicator. "We're not young rabbits anymore," he said, "and we don't jump as high as we once did."

For those who prefer mean machines to fluffy animals, he produced a different turn of phrase. "I am like a proper sports car," he said. "Not the best one, but a pretty good one. I can still drive 160, 170, 180 miles per hour, but I am the only one who sees the tank needle is going down."

Energy demands

Excellence demands near-limitless energy, especially for those whose methods rely heavily on it. "My coaching, my managing style is based on energy, I usually have enough to give it to a lot of people," Klopp said. "And if that's not there I am not the same."

The Liverpool job also took a lot out of the German. Having built up a reputation as a winner by leading Borussia Dortmund to back-to-back Bundesliga titles in 2011 and 2012, he faced an even more challenging task on Merseyside: that of resurrecting a giant.

Klopp changed Liverpool's fortunes after arriving at Anfield in 2015, returning the club to one of European football's powerhouses. In addition to guiding the Reds to their first league title for 30 years in 2020 and to Champions League glory in 2019, Klopp presided over triumphs in the FA Cup, League Cup, FIFA Club World Cup, UEFA Super Cup and Community Shield.

These successes, in isolation, merit high praise. When you consider that Klopp was up against Manchester City's seemingly unlimited

resources – it has been charged with 115 breaches of the Premier League's financial regulations – and Pep Guardiola's genius, the value of these trophies increases substantially.

Klopp has been the perfect manager for Liverpool. His force of personality, charisma and coaching nous have resonated with an emotive fanbase. The club's history has been marked by tragedy as much as triumph. He quickly understood the emotion that drove the club, the impact of Hillsborough (the disaster, which killed 97 Liverpool fans in 1989, has left indelible scars), the respectful city rivalry with Everton and the far more visceral rivalry with Manchester United.

He knew the power of The Kop and engaged with the fans to gain the maximum benefit from that famous Anfield atmosphere, as he ran to them with his famous fist-pumping celebration, with his frenzied, toothy laughter, and they roared their appreciation and loved him back for recognising it.

So it was not shocking that his first match at Anfield after making his decision public, the FA Cup game against Norwich City, was even more emotionally charged than usual. "I get it, it's very emotional," Klopp told the BBC. "I just have to make sure that I don't get on that side of it. In the games, we need to be warriors and not celebrate the old man on the sidelines."

Four-pronged pursuit

Liverpool players have said they want to harness the emotion, so Klopp's trophy-laden reign can end with more silverware. The Reds' four-pronged trophy pursuit is alive, having secured a place in the League Cup final, advanced to the fifth round of the FA Cup and the knockout stages of the Europa League, and positioned themselves at the top of the Premier League.

But Liverpool will, like it has so often in the recent past, find City in its way. The clubs have jostled in several epic title clashes since Guardiola

and Klopp both took charge, contributing to the most storied managerial rivalry since Alex Ferguson and Arsene Wenger locked horns. There are echoes of Ferguson-Wenger in Guardiola-Klopp – not unlike Wenger at Arsenal, Klopp has had to overcome an adverse balance of financial power.

Both Klopp and Guardiola have also pushed each other to become even better – their tactical battles have redefined football, changing the way the game is played across the world. "He's an absolutely incredible manager... personally he has been my biggest rival," said Guardiola. "I will miss [him], [but] I am pleased because without him I will sleep a little bit better!"

Klopp's impact on Liverpool extends beyond the field. His reign has helped Fenway Sports Group (FSG), its US owners, to reap a massive increase in valuation. FSG bought Liverpool for \$383 million in 2010; the club is now valued about \$5 billion, according to Forbes.

It's not surprising, therefore, that Klopp will go down as one of Liverpool's greatest managers. He is statistically the best the club has ever had in terms of win percentage (about 61%). His on-field success ranks him alongside other managerial greats at Anfield – Bill Shankly (11), Bob Paisley (20) and Kenny Dalglish (9), the only ones to have won more trophies for the club than Klopp's 7.



GAME THEORY

Sabalenka carves her name into history

Aryna Sabalenka joined the exclusive list of multiple-time women's singles champions at the Australian Open last Saturday. A look at the most prolific female winners at the tournament, which began as the Australasian Championships in 1905, became the Australian Championships in 1927 and took its final form as the Australian Open in the Open Era in 1969:



Aryna Sabalenka

Player	Titles	Editions won	Player	Titles	Editions won
Margaret Court	11	1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1973	Joan Hartigan	3	1933, 1934, 1936
Serena Williams	7	2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2015, 2017	Martina Navratilova	3	1981, 1983, 1985
Nancye Wynne	6	1937, 1940, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1951	Martina Hingis	3	1997, 1998, 1999
Daphne Akhurst	5	1925, 1926, 1928, 1929, 1930	Margaret Molesworth	2	1922, 1923
Evonne Goolagong	4	1974, 1975, 1976, 1977 (Dec)	Coral Buttsworth	2	1931, 1932
Steffi Graf	4	1988, 1989, 1990, 1994	Thelma Coyne	2	1952, 1954
Monica Seles	4	1991, 1992, 1993, 1996	Mary Carter	2	1956, 1959
			Chris Evert	2	1982, 1984
			Hana Mandlíkova	2	1980, 1987
			Jennifer Capriati	2	2001, 2002
			Victoria Azarenka	2	2012, 2013
			Naomi Osaka	2	2019, 2021
			Aryna Sabalenka	2	2023, 2024

PICTURE THIS



Ski thriller

Italy's Hannah Auchentaller competes during the women's 7.5 km sprint event at the BMW IBU World Cup Biathlon Ruhpolding in Germany recently.

The biathlon is a winter sports discipline, with roots in

Scandinavian skiing practices and Norwegian military training. It combines cross-country skiing and rifle-shooting in a race format.

Contestants ski through a cross-country trail whose distance is divided into shooting rounds. The shooting rounds are not timed. But, depending on

the type of competition (sprint, relay, mass start, pursuit, individual), missed shots result in a penalty loop of 150m, which must be skied before continuing the race.

In the sprint, for instance, the distance (10 km for men, 7.5 km for women) is skied over three laps. The biathletes start in intervals and shoot twice in any

shooting lane, once prone and once standing, totalling 10 shots. Every miss adds a penalty loop of 150m, which must be skied before continuing the race.

The World Cup is one of biathlon's premier competitions, a season-long series which has been staged since 1977-78 for men and 1982-83 for women.

PROLIFIC

Jaiswal has joint second-most runs in a day's play for India vs. England



K.R. DEEPAK

Yashasvi Jaiswal's unbeaten knock of 179 after day one of the second Test match is the joint-second-most runs scored in a day's play for India vs. England. Sunil Gavaskar had scored 179 in a day in 1979 at the Oval. Karun Nair leads the list with 232 runs scored in a single day in Chennai in 2016.

41 AND COUNTING!

Anderson becomes the oldest pacer to play in a Test in India



K.R. DEEPAK

England's James Anderson, at the age of 41 years and 187 days, became the oldest pace bowler to play a Test in India during the second Test match at Visakhapatnam. Anderson broke Lala Amarnath's record (41 years and 92 days old) when he played his final Test match against Pakistan at Eden Gardens in 1952.

UNFORGETTABLE

Debutant Bashir receives Test cap from Somerset teammate Leach



GETTY IMAGES

Shoaib Bashir got his Test cap from Jack Leach, his teammate at Somerset. The offie in fact was replacing the injured Leach. "He had some nice words to say... me and him get on really well," said Bashir. England skipper Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum told Bashir he would be playing during the training on Thursday.

PROUD MOMENT

Bopanna meets PM Modi after his historic Australian Open triumph



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

World No. 1 Rohan Bopanna, who became the oldest man to win a Major, at 43, at the Australian Open, met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday on his return to India. "Glad to have met you @rohanbopanna. Your accomplishment makes India proud and your dedication motivates several people," Modi posted on X.

Classy Jaiswal's big, unbeaten ton anchors India's innings

The young southpaw, who stitched together vital partnerships, was nimble with his footwork, timed his shots sweetly, and drove and lofted with panache on his way to a well-crafted second Test century

ENGLAND IN INDIA

P.K. Ajith Kumar
VISAKHAPATNAM

Yashasvi Jaiswal's favourite song is *My Heart Will Go On* by Celine Dion. Luckily for India on Friday, along with his heart, his batting also went on and on.

If it didn't, India would have found itself on the back foot on day one of the second Test against England at the Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy Stadium. Jaiswal is still there. India will want him to be there for some more time on Saturday.

Gifting away wickets

Riding on Jaiswal's brilliant knock (179 batting, 257b, 17x4, 5x6), India finished at 336 for six. That is certainly two or three more wickets the host would have wanted to give away after choosing to bat. Some of those wickets were indeed given away, after the batters did well to get themselves in on a surface that looked good for batting.

None of the other batters reached 35, and that shows the significance of Jaiswal's second Test hundred. That second hundred could have come in the first Test at Hyderabad, but he was one of the three Indian batters who



Elegant: Jaiswal was a delight to watch as he tackled the English attack with aplomb. K.R. DEEPAK

got out in the 80s, which cost India dearly.

On this day, Jaiswal put a price on his wicket. He showed that in the years to come, his could be among the wickets the bowlers value more in international cricket.

It wasn't easy early on, with the 41-year-old James Anderson, who hadn't played for six months, coming up with a probing spell with the new ball. But Jaiswal raised 40 for the opening wicket with captain Rohit Sharma, who looked so determined that he didn't hit even one

boundary during his 41-ball stay.

Rohit's watchful knock was ended by the debutant off-spinner Shoaib Bashir, who had to be ruled out of the first Test after his visa was delayed. The 20-year-old ran a few yards and pumped his arms in delight after his low off-break was glanced straight to leg-slip by the Indian skipper.

Anderson's bunny

Shubman Gill (34, 46b, 5x4) raised hopes of getting back into form, but the magnificent Anderson had him caught behind. The

champion bowler was dismissed for the fifth time in seven Test innings.

Jaiswal added 90 for the third wicket with Shreyas Iyer, 70 for the fourth with debutant Rajat Patidar, who looked good while making 32, and 52 for the fifth with Axar Patel.

The elegant left-hander was a treat to watch: he timed his shots sweetly, was nimble with his footwork, drove and lofted with panache, and got to his hundred hitting the first Test hero Tom Hartley over long-on for a six, dancing down the track.

SCOREBOARD**INDIA – 1ST INNINGS**

Yashasvi Jaiswal (batting) 179 (257b, 17x4, 5x6), Rohit Sharma c Pope b Bashir 14 (41b), Shubman Gill c Foakes b Anderson 34 (46b, 5x4), Shreyas Iyer c Foakes b Hartley 27 (59b, 3x4), Rajat Patidar c Rehan 32 (72b, 3x4), Axar Patel c Rehan 27 (51b, 4x4), K.S. Bharat c Bashir 27 (51b, 4x4), R. Ashwin (batting) 5 (10b, 1x4); Extras (nb-1): 1; Total (for six wkt, in 93 overs): 336.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-40 (Rohit, 17.3 overs), 2-89 (Gill, 28.5), 3-179 (Shreyas, 50.4), 4-249 (Patidar, 71.1), 5-301 (Axar, 85.5), 6-330 (Bharat, 90.6).

ENGLAND BOWLING

Anderson 17-3-30-1, Root 14-0-71-0, Hartley 18-2-74-1, Bashir 28-0-100-2, Rehan 16-2-61-2.

Toss: India.

Earlier, India made three changes to the eleven. Patidar and Kuldeep Yadav replaced the injured duo of K.L. Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja. Mukesh Kumar came in place of Mohammed Siraj, who has been released from the squad for this Test but will be available for the third Test, while the recently-released Avesh Khan has rejoined.

Sounds a little confusing? Maybe not as much as some of the shots Indian batters played to get out, especially after the disappointment in the first Test.

He came into the Test after scoring a couple of hundreds against England

Patidar feels the wait for his chance was worth it



Decent beginning: Patidar justified the faith reposed in him with a short but solid knock. K.R. DEEPAK

P.K. Ajith Kumar
VISAKHAPATNAM

A spectacular Test debut it wasn't, but Rajat Patidar showed why the selectors and the team management put faith in him. He batted well for his 32 and put on 70 important runs for the fourth wicket with Yashasvi Jaiswal, the star on the opening day of the second Test against England.

"It was a dream-come-true moment for me," the 30-year-old said at a press conference. "I didn't feel any pressure as I have played a lot of games in domestic cricket on this track. Yes, I slept well last night. It was normal for me."

He came into the Test after scoring a couple of hundreds against England

that are in my hands. So at the age of 30, I came here and it feels good."

Lauds Jaiswal

He was all praise for Jaiswal's superb unbeaten hundred. "He is a very good player," Patidar said. "There is something special about the way he takes on the bowlers. I felt my innings was a good one, but I need to make a big one."

He enjoyed his partnership with Jaiswal. "We were talking about taking our stand as far as possible," he said. "We were playing each ball on merit."

Patidar, who made his ODI debut in South Africa recently, said it was a good wicket to bat on. "We will try to bat as long as we can," he said, looking ahead to the second day.

Dhas, Saharan put India in semifinal



Swing factor: Dhas and Saharan, who added 215 for the fourth wicket, took the game away from Nepal. X@BCCI

UNDER-19 WORLD CUP

Press Trust of India
BLOEMFONTEIN

Sachin Dhas and skipper Uday Saharan hit fluent centuries and lifted India from a tricky 62 for three to a formidable 297 for five against Nepal in its final Group I Super Six match of the Under-19 World Cup here on Friday.

Dhas punished the Nepal bowling attack in his innings of 116 runs off 101

balls (11x4, 3x6). Saharan made his 100 off 107 deliveries (9x4), the duo weathering the early storm with a mammoth partnership of 215 in 202 balls.

In reply, Nepal was restricted to 165 for nine.

Left-arm spinner Saumy Pandey sparked the collapse with a spell of 10-1-29-4. The win helped India qualify for the semifinal.

The scores:
India 297/5 in 50 overs (Uday Saharan 100, Sachin Dhas 116) bt Nepal 165/9 in 50 overs (Saumy Pandey 4/29).

Strong Indian team is firm favourite against Pakistan



Historic clash: The Pakistan and India teams during the draw ceremony. AFP

DAVIS CUP

Press Trust of India
ISLAMABAD

India will be without its top singles players but the visitors, who have come to Pakistan after 60 years, will still start as favourites in the historic Davis Cup World Group I play-off tie, which is being played within a restricted environment due to security concerns.

India has never lost to Pakistan in Davis Cup history, winning all seven ties so far, and the trend is likely to continue.

However, the host is expected to put up a good

fight through its biggest stars, Aisam-ul-haq Qureshi and Aqeel Khan, after choosing to play on grass courts.

If Pakistan stood a chance against India, it had to be on the grass courts because both Aisam and Aqeel are tremendous fighters, and this surface brings the best out of them.

The courts in Islamabad are fast with low bounce, and it made sense that N. Sriram Balaji, a doubles specialist, has been asked to play singles on the opening day along with the team's best singles player, Ramkumar Ramanathan.

India's non-playing captain Zeeshan Ali felt that it

will be a close tie and refused to engage in discussion on why the Indian cricket team or other Indian athletes do not travel to Pakistan for competition.

"We are here to play tennis. Certain decisions are taken by the government and we have no role in that. We have come prepared, and we have a job to do," he said.

The draw: Feb. 3: Ramkumar Ramanathan vs. Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi; Aqeel Khan vs. Sriram Balaji. Feb. 4: Barkatullah & Muzammil Murtaza vs. Yuki Bhambri & Saket Myeni; Ramkumar Ramanathan vs. Aqeel Khan; Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi vs. Sriram Balaji.

The young crop of Indian shooters doing well: Anjali

**Sports Bureau**

Anjali Bhagwat, a member of the Sportstar Aces Awards jury, was delighted with the achievements of the Indian shooters and archers in 2023.

The Olympian shooter was particularly pleased with the young shooters who have made a mark in the international arena.

"Our young crop is doing so well, and whoever has won the Olympic quota or is on the Indian team is all below 20, the nation's youth. They won the Olym-



pic quotas not just with medals but with good scores. Our shooters are catching up with the world. I am optimistic that our performance in the Olympics will be good," she added.

Anjali hailed para archer Sheetal Devi's breakout performances in 2023, which saw her top the world rankings and win medals across several international events.

"I saw her shooting two shots back-to-back on point – we call it a 10.9, a dead centre – that requires

tremendous focus and confidence.

"When you know you're shooting well, you need to have control over your mind, as your thoughts will drift to the podium or some unwanted thoughts might creep in and distract you. But she held her nerve and was so confident of winning that tournament, and that's the best part," she explained.

Anjali was pleased that selecting winners has become increasingly difficult each year. "We had difficulties arriving at a conclusion about some of the awards. This time, we've looked at factors like the overall impact on the nation and the overall popularity of the athlete.

"These things matter because we're trying to inculcate a certain sporting culture among the people of the country. We're bidding for the 2036 Olympics. We need this kind of culture and excitement among people in the country, and how athletes contribute to this also matters," she said.

IN BRIEF



Bartlett has dream debut, Australia eases past Windies

Fast bowler Xavier Bartlett took four for 17 in his ODI debut as Australia thrashed West Indies by eight wickets in their series opener on Friday. "Amazing way to start my career," the 25-year-old player-of-the-match Bartlett said.

The scores: West Indies 231 in 48.4 overs (Cartwright 88, Chase 59, Bartlett 4/17) lost to Australia 232 for 2 in 38.3 overs (Inglis 65, Green 77 n.o., Smith 79 n.o.). **Toss:** Australia. **PoM:** Bartlett. Australia leads the three match series 1-0.

Lankan openers dominate against Afghanistan

Sri Lanka openers Dimuth Karunaratne and Nishan Madushka put on 80 quick runs in the first day's final session to unnerve Afghanistan in their one-off Test on Friday. Earlier, Afghanistan was all out for 198.

The scores: Afghanistan 198 (Rahmat 91, Asitha 3/24, Vishwanath 4/51, Jayasuriya 3/67) vs. Sri Lanka 80/0. **Toss:** Sri Lanka.

India-A bowlers take the fight to England Lions

India-A staged a remarkable comeback to dismiss England Lions for 199 before the batters propelled the home team to a position of strength on the second day of the third and final 'Test' in Ahmedabad on Friday. At stumps, India-A was well-placed at 148 for three in their second innings, 141 runs ahead of the visitors.

The scores: India-A 192 and 148/3 in 48.2 overs (Sai Sudharsan 54 batting, Tilak Varma 46, James Coles 3/63) vs England Lions 199 in 64.3 overs (Alex Lees 64, Akash Deep 4/56, Yash Dayal 3/32).



Mainoo saves United's blushes in a seven-goal thriller

Kobbie Mainoo scored a 97th minute winner as Manchester United snatched a dramatic 4-3 win at Wolves on Thursday after blowing a two-goal lead.

The results: **Premier League:** West Ham 1 (Ward-Prowse 61-pen) drew with Bournemouth 1 (Solanke 3); Wolves 3 (Sarabia 71-pen, Kilman 85, Neto 90+5) lost to Manchester United 4 (Rashford 5, Hojlund 22, McTominay 75, Mainoo 90+7). **LaLiga:** Getafe 0 lost to Real Madrid 2 (Joselu 14, 56).



Warriors get the better of Dabang in the PKL

Bengal Warriors started the New Delhi leg of this season's Pro Kabaddi League with a 45-38 win over the local team Dabang Delhi on Friday. Skipper Maninder Singh (11 points) and Nitin Kumar (13)'s Super 10s highlighted Warriors' win. In the second match, Haryana Steelers edged Gujarat Giants 34-30. Meanwhile, the playoffs and final will be held in Hyderabad from February 26 to March 1.

LIVE TELECAST

India vs England: 2nd Test, day 2, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 9.30 a.m.
Ranji Trophy: Jio Cinema App, 9.30 a.m.
Sri Lanka vs Afghanistan: Only Test, day 2, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 10 a.m.
Men's U-19 CWC: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 1.30 p.m.
ISL: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 5 & 7.30 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 1, 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 6, 8.30 & 11 p.m.
LaLiga: Jio Cinema App, 6.30, 8.45, 11 p.m.; Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 1.30 a.m. (Sunday)
Serie A: Jio Cinema App, 7.30, 10.30 p.m. & Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 1.15 a.m. (Sunday)
PKL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 8 p.m.
New Zealand vs South Africa: 1st Test, day 1, Prime Video, 3.30 a.m. (Sunday)

CYK

Jyotsnil notches up a brisk, unbeaten century

On a truncated opening day, the Baroda opener cashes in on Delhi's limited attack to run up a big stand for the second wicket with Shashwat who was batting on 71

RANJI TROPHY

Rakesh Rao
NEW DELHI

Delhi's limited bowling resources stood exposed once again as Baroda moved to a position of strength at 202 for one on the opening day of their Ranji Trophy league match here.

Opener Jyotsnil Singh smashed an unbeaten 124 and added 199 runs for the ongoing second-wicket stand with Shashwat Rawat (batting 71) to offset the cheap dismissal of Kinnit Patel. On Saturday, Delhi could find it tough to contain the Baroda batters.

Asked to bat after a delayed start due to poor visibility and wet outfield, Baroda kept Delhi at bay on Friday.

Ishant Sharma, who plays only home games these days, bowled Patel in the third over. Thereafter, it was the Baroda duo all the way.

Milestone
Jyotsnil, whose second Ranji Trophy century also saw him get past the 1000-run mark in the competi-



Hitting out: Jyotsnil's knock has been studded with some big shots. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

tion in his 15th match, dominated Delhi's bowling. So far, he has smashed two sixes and 13 boundaries in his 124-ball innings.

At the other end, inform Shashwat was far more circumspect. Playing a supporting role, he faced 168 deliveries and hit six fours.

Last month, Shashwat scored a career-best 207

against Himachal Pradesh and 102 against Orissa.

For Delhi, which made five changes to the squad that beat Uttarakhand in Mohali last week, Himanshu Chauhan proved economical without causing any damage.

Ishant, too, could not make an impact after the early success. Off-spinner Hrithik Shokeen looked ineffective, as did left-arm

spinner Shivank Vashisth, and 102 against Orissa.

The scores:
Baroda – 1st innings: Jyotsnil Singh (batting) 124, Kinnit Patel b Ishant 2, Shashwat Rawat (batting) 71; Extras (b-4, nb-1) 5; Total (for one wkt. in 64 overs): 202.

Fall of wicket: 1-3.
Delhi bowling: Ishant Sharma 12-30-1, Himanshu Chauhan 12-3-26-0, Pranshu Vijayran 10-2-33-0, Hrithik Shokeen 20-1-69-0, Shivank Vashisth 10-0-40-0.

La Reina claims Stayers' Trial Stakes

BENGALURU: Imtiaz Khan-trained La Reina (Antony Raj up) won the Stayers' Trial Stakes, the chief event of the races held here on Friday (Feb. 2). The winner is the property of Queen's Gambit Racing Syndicate represented by M/s. Medappa P. Bellappa. Both Antony Raj and Imtiaz Khan won three races on the day.

RESULTS:

- 1. VANISAGAR PLATE:** GREELEY (S. John) 1, Eco Friendly (Afzal Khan) 2, Marvo Polo (C. Umesh) 3 and Double Vision (Indrajeet S.) 4. 2-1/2, Hd and 2. Im, 27.04s. ₹20 (w), 11, 25 and 22 (p), SHP: 54, THP: 53, FP: 212, Q: 173, Trinella: 996, Exacta: 4,422. Favourite: Greeley.
- Owner:** Mr. S. Pathy. **Trainer:** Irfan Chatla.
- 2. KADAMBI FALLS PLATE (DIV. 1):** RAFFLES (P. Siddaraju) 1, Way Of Life (A. Ramu) 2, Solid Power (S. Saqlain) 3 and Emeraldo (S. Shareef) 4. Not run: Meggi Success. 2-1/4, 2 and 1-1/2, Im, 26,62s. ₹29 (w), 13, 23 and 12 (p), SHP: 78, THP: 38, FP: 392, Q: 234, Trinella: 1,317, Exacta: 3,670. Favourite: Singhssab.
- Owners:** Dr. M.A.M. Ramaswamy Chettiar of Chettinad Charitable Trust. **Trainer:** S. Ganapathy.
- 3. STAYERS' TRIAL STAKES: LA REINA (Antony) 1, Auspicious Queen (Angad) 2, Kushaq (Suraj) 3 and Karanveer (F. Norton) 4. 5, 2-1/2 and 1-1/4, 2m 30,69s. ₹14 (w), 13 and 14 (p), SHP: 35, THP: 26, FP: 72, Q: 45, Trinella: 121. Favourite: La Reina.**

Owner: Queen's Gambit Racing Syndicate's rep. by M/s. Medappa P. Bellappa. **Trainer:** Imtiaz Khan.

3. FEBRUARY STAKES: ADJUSTMENT: (Antony) 1, Fast Response (Koshi K) 2, Vayu (G. Vivek) 3 and Striking Memory (Shreyas) 4. 5, 1-3/4 and 1-3/4, Im, 05,79s. ₹29 (w), 16, 18 and 37 (p), SHP: 64, THP: 73, FP: 153, Q: 61, Trinella: 1,052, Exacta: 74,252. Favourite: Immortal Beauty.

Owner: Arion Horse Co Pvt Ltd. **Trainer:** Imtiaz Khan.

4. DR. THIMMAHAI MEMORIAL CUP: STELLAR GOLD (Darshan) 1, Golden Time (G. Vivek) 2, Bruce Almighty (I. Chisty) 3 and Armory (Angad) 4. 1/2, 10-1/4 and 7-1/4, 2m, 04,52, ₹24 (w), 12 and 24 (p), SHP: 39, THP: 62, FP: 132, Q: 45, Trinella: 839, Exacta: 4,532. Favourite: Positano.

Owners: Mr. Daulat Chhabria, Mr. Ashok Ranipise, Mr. Teja Golapudi & M/s. Rapar Galloping Stars LLP. **Trainer:** Rajesh Narredu.

7. KADAMBI FALLS PLATE (DIV. 1): KLIMT (Antony) 1, Je Ne Sais Quoi (C. Umesh) 2, Chiraag (Md. Aliyar) 3 and Embosom (G. Vivek) 4. 2, 4-1/4 and 5m, ₹25,82s. ₹25 (w), 13, 22 and 49 (p), SHP: 53, THP: 127, FP: 169, Q: 99, Trinella: 4,098, Exacta: 12,256. Favourite: Kliment.

Owner: Bachawhat Farms Pvt Ltd rep. by Mr. Vikram Bachhwat. **Trainer:** Imtiaz Khan.

Jackpot: ₹2,381 (112 tks.); Runner-up: 363 (315 tks.); Treble (i): 495 (19 tks.); (ii): 318 (63 tks.).

Mohun Bagan, under new coach Habas, looks to regain bragging rights from East Bengal

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

The oldest football rivalry of the country will see its fourth edition of the season on Saturday, when Mohun Bagan SG will look to regain the bragging rights from East Bengal at the Salt Lake Stadium, their usual battleground, in the Indian Super League.

Fresh from its triumph in the Kalinga Super Cup where it comfortably beat its traditional rival in the group stage to reach the

semifinals, East Bengal has

proved that it has considerably gained in strength compared to the Durand Cup final (in August last year) where it had lost in the title clash to its footballing *bete noir*.

This is the first time two city rivals are meeting in this edition of ISL, which will be making the contest even more absorbing.

While the previous events saw the teams having the allowance of fielding six foreigners, the upcoming ISL fixture will

have this reduced to four.

Mohun Bagan, which played the Super Cup without seven Indian players who were on national duty, will have a complete roster and will be a much bigger proposition compared to its previous avatar that East Bengal defeated.

Moreover, East Bengal's successful coach Carles Cuadrat will have to find new strategies to contain its biggest rival, which will be appearing under its new coach Antonio Lopez Habas.

Indian women hope to put Olympic heartbreak behind

FIH PRO LEAGUE

Sports Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

It's been two weeks since the Indian women's hockey team's Olympic dreams ended in Ranchi but the side is already planning for the next challenge at the FIH Pro League beginning here on Saturday. And despite brave words from coach Janneke Schopman about looking forward, it won't be easy.

The two-leg mini tournament, across Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, will see

India take on China in its opening game, followed by Netherlands, Australia, and USA. Barring the host, all the teams have qualified for Paris, but that won't make it any less challenging. Of its four opponents, India has a better record against only China, including their last meeting at the Asian Champions Trophy but China won the one that really mattered - at the Asian Games. The Dutch and the Aussies have a massively one-sided track record but they haven't played India in an official competition since 2022.

The two-leg mini tournament, across Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, will see

Top grapplers to test themselves ahead of Olympic qualifiers

NATIONAL WRESTLING

Y.B. Sarangi
JAIPUR

In the backdrop of an ongoing tussle between the Union Sports Ministry and the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) over recognition of the latter, several top wrestlers of the country will test themselves ahead of the Olympic qualifiers when they compete in the three-day National wrestling championships, starting at the Railway Stadium here on Saturday.

With two National championships being held back-to-back in Pune and Jaipur, the government has made it clear that it would not recognise the results from the Pune event as it was organised by the 'suspended' WFI, headed by former president Brij Bhushan Sharman Singh's acolyte Sanjay Singh.

As the Ministry has backed the Nationals organised by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) appointed ad-hoc body



Innovative: The Railway Stadium has been converted into a makeshift indoor facility. Y.B. SARANGI

here, it was no surprise that names of several elite wrestlers - who would need the Sports Authority of India's funding for their Olympic preparation - feature in the list of participants.

Among them, two-time World champions bronze medallist Vinesh Phogat (55kg) is making a comeback after her knee surgery. As per the WFI records, Vinesh had competed in 2019 National championships in Jalandhar.

Two other Worlds medalists Anshu Malik (59kg) and Sarita Mor (59kg), Asian championships silver medallist Nisha Dahiya (68kg) and Asian Games

Ashmita enters semifinals

THAILAND MASTERS

Press Trust of India
BANGKOK

Ashmita Chaliha dished out a brilliant performance to beat Ester Nurumi Wardoyo of Indonesia 21-14, 19-21, 21-13 and enter the women's singles semifinals of the Thailand Masters badminton tournament here on Friday. The Indian will next take on fourth seed Supanida Katethong.

The 24-year-old remains the only Indian in the fray after Mithun Manjunath lost his men's singles quarterfinals and the women's doubles pairs of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand also exited from the Super 300 tournament in the last-eight stage.

The results (quarterfinals):
Men: Mark Caljouw (Ned) bt Mithun Manjunath 21-19, 21-15.
Women: Ashmita Chaliha bt Ester Nurumi Wardoyo (Ind) 21-19, 21-21, 21-13.
Doubles: Febriana Dwiputri Kusuma and Amallia Cahaya Pratiwi (Inda) bt Treesa Jolly & Gayatri Gopichand 21-12, 17-21, 23-21.

Next step: Schopman and Savita will be keen on helping India move on after missing out on the Paris berth. BISWARANJAN ROUT

M-NDE