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ME 8 in Top 10	1 AIR ME Aryan Choudhary CLASSROOM COURSE, Online Course & Test Series	3 AIR ME Aman Maan CLASSROOM COURSE, Online Course & Test Series	3 AIR ME Kushagra Dutta Online Course & Test Series	3 AIR ME Chitwan Online Course & Test Series	6 AIR ME Rahul Kr. Patel CLASSROOM COURSE, & Test Series	7 AIR ME Rushi Pradipkumar Kariya Test Series	9 AIR ME Dheeraj Kumar Jha Online Course	10 AIR ME Abhishek Kasaudhan CLASSROOM COURSE, Online Course & Test Series	
EE 9 in Top 10	1 AIR EE Bhanwar Singh Choudhary CLASSROOM COURSE, Online Course & Test Series	2 AIR EE Sourav Pal Online Course & Test Series	2 AIR EE Vikram Beniwal CLASSROOM COURSE, Postal Package & Test Series	4 AIR EE Sitaram Choudhary Online Course & Test Series	5 AIR EE Sarv Verma Online Course & Test Series	7 AIR EE Sitaram Prajapati Online Course & Test Series	8 AIR EE M. Bhau Prakash CLASSROOM COURSE, & Test Series	9 AIR EE Nihal Omar CLASSROOM COURSE, Online Course & Test Series	9 AIR EE Aditya Kalsha Postal Package & Test Series
EC + IN 14 in Top 10	1 AIR IN Akash Srivastava CLASSROOM COURSE, Online Course & Test Series	2 AIR IN Vikram Beniwal CLASSROOM COURSE, Online Course & Test Series	4 AIR IN Sarv Verma Online Course & Test Series	4 AIR IN Vitthal Agrawal Online Course, Postal Package & Test Series	5 AIR EC Rajat Kumar Online Course & Test Series	6 AIR IN Prashant Kumar CLASSROOM COURSE	6 AIR EC Bharat Raheja Online Course & Test Series	7 AIR EC Naveen Jasti Test Series	
	7 AIR IN Harshit Dubey Online Course & Test Series	8 AIR EC Prashant Lavania CLASSROOM COURSE, Postal Package & Test Series	8 AIR IN Bharat Raheja Online Course & Test Series	9 AIR IN Divyansh Chandra Roy Online Course, Postal Package & Test Series	10 AIR EC Gautam Rana Online Course	10 AIR EC B T Bala Vinayagam Test Series			
CS 5 in Top 10	1 AIR CS Jayadeep Sudhakar More Test Series	2 AIR CS Mahek Shamsukha CLASSROOM COURSE		4 AIR CS Satyam Shukla CLASSROOM COURSE, Online Course & Test Series		5 AIR CS Dhruv Harshukhbhai Kathroliya Test Series		10 AIR CS Rishi Raj Singh Test Series	
PI + XE 13 in Top 10	1 AIR PI Sh. Gowtham Gudimella Online Course, Postal Package & Test Series	2 AIR XE Abhishek Kasaudhan CLASSROOM COURSE, Online Course & Test Series	2 AIR PI Rohit Kumar Test Series	3 AIR XE Mayur Ramdas Dhanawade Online Course & Test Series	4 AIR PI Saket Pareek CLASSROOM COURSE, Online Course & Test Series	5 AIR PI Kumar Vishesh Test Series	6 AIR XE Piyush Suktel CLASSROOM COURSE, Test Series		
	7 AIR PI Priyanshu G. Test Series	8 AIR XE Mohd. Shadman Ansari Test Series	8 AIR PI Umashankar Sahu Test Series	9 AIR PI Kadam Pratik Test Series	10 AIR XE Mohit Thanekar CLASSROOM COURSE, Online Course & Test Series	10 AIR PI Lokesh Kumar Gupta Test Series			
ES + CH 8 in Top 10	1 AIR ES Devendra Patil CLASSROOM COURSE, Online Course & Test Series	1 AIR ES Manish Bansal CLASSROOM COURSE, Test Series	4 AIR ES Abhishek Tiwari CLASSROOM COURSE, Online Course & Test Series	6 AIR ES Anubhav Chaturvedi CLASSROOM COURSE	6 AIR CH Bibekananda Sahu Test Series	7 AIR ES Raghvendra Singh Chouhan CLASSROOM COURSE	9 AIR ES Raj Merothia CLASSROOM COURSE, Online Course & Test Series	10 AIR CH Birupakhyta Patro Test Series	

Result Highlights	CE	ME	EE	EC+IN	CS	PI+XE	CH+ES	8 All India Rank 1 (CE, ME, EE, IN, CS, PI, ES)
Selections in Top 10	9	8	9	14	5	13	8	
Selections in Top 20	16	15	16	23	7	21	13	
Selections in Top 100	72	57	70	67	33	68	39	66 Selections in Top 10 (Including all streams)

66 Selections in Top 10
(Including all streams)

406 Selections in Top 100
(Including all streams)

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Evening Batch : N7

3rd Apr, 2023

(6:30 PM - 9:00 PM)

Morning Batch : N8

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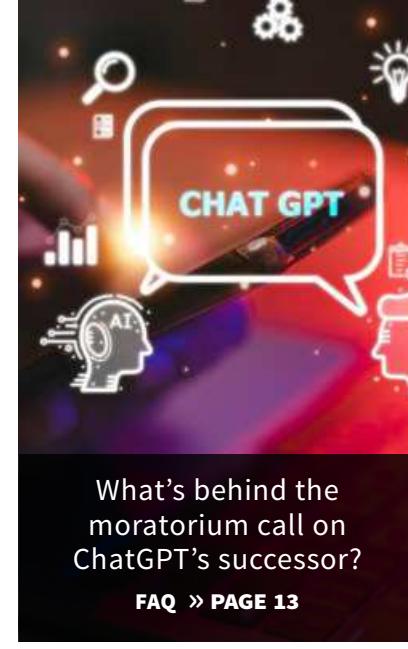
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BUSINESS WOES

J&K's famed pashmina industry in trouble

Exports hit by seizure at airports over alleged presence of banned *shahtoosh* guard hair and poor testing facilities

NEWS » PAGE 10



No idols, no arms: the Pattanam mystery

The iron-age and post-iron-age site in Kerala is unveiling a period of no caste or institutionalised creed, but with a close connect to nature

P.J. Cherian
Deepak P.
PATTANAM



Past perfect: Excavations under way at Pattanam village in Ernakulam district, Kerala. SIBI MANJALI

In the serene village of **Pattanam** in central Kerala lies the only multicultural archaeological site on the southwestern coast of the Indian subcontinent. Often referred to as the **first emporium** of the Indian Ocean, Muziris – of which Pattanam is part – is an example of the Greco-Roman classical age coming into direct contact with an ancient South Indian civilisation.

Excavations so far, that have unearthed less than 1% of the site, point to a startling fact: there is no evidence that institutionalised religion existed in ancient Pattanam. There was certainly no indication of the graded inequality embodied in the caste system that has characterised contemporary Kerala and most of the rest of India.

The technological, metallurgical, literary, and artistic advances of this phase bear witness to rigorous cultural and commercial exchanges. The Pattanam excavations have unearthed over 45 lakh sherds (ceramic fragments); these include approximately 1.4 lakh belonging to the littoral regions of the Mediterranean, the River Nile, the Red Sea, the western and eastern Indian Oceans, and the South China Sea. Recent findings include the seal of a sphinx, native to the ancient Greek city of Thebes.

This wide span of locations confirms the

existence of a thriving urban centre from the 5th century B.C. till the 5th century A.D., with its peak phase from 100 B.C. to A.D. 300.

Amid the excitement of seeing the overwhelming treasure trove, researchers asked another key question: What are the things that did not emerge from Pattanam? Pattanam has not chosen to delight archaeologists with idols of gods and goddesses, or the remains of grandiose places of worship. This iron-age and post-iron-age site was also bereft of sophisticated weaponry. This is in sharp contrast with some Pattanam-contemporary sites such as Berenike in Egypt and Khor Rori in Oman.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

Congress to mount offensive with Oppn. parties against BJP's failure to conduct caste census

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

In the face of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) campaign labelling the Congress as "anti-OBC", the Opposition party is gearing up to rope in other political parties to launch an attack on the ruling party. The failure of the Narendra Modi government to conduct a caste census will be the central rallying call of the joint offensive.

Sources said the plan is at a nascent stage and talks are on with parties such as the Samajwadi Party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Janata Dal (United).

After Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from the Lok Sabha on March 26, the BJP has fielded its rank and file to attack him. Its OBC Morcha has announced a nationwide movement from April 6 to 14 to expose the Congress's "anti-OBC" stand.

The Congress, especially Mr. Gandhi, who is reluctant to engage on the caste question, insists that the BJP's narrative against them is "artificial". In a recent interview to *The Hindu*, party general secretary K.C. Venkopal had said, "It is ludicrous for a political party that cannot conduct a caste census, despite per-



Plan of action: Rahul Gandhi at the Congress plenary in Raipur, which passed a resolution demanding a caste census. FILE PHOTO

sistent demands, to claim love for the OBCs. Of the three Congress Chief Ministers, two are from the OBC community (Ashok Gehlot in Rajasthan and Bhupesh Baghel in Chhattisgarh). Our Karnataka election campaign is led by Siddaramaiah, a stalwart from the OBC community. So, we don't really need to be lectured by anyone."

Countering the BJP

Refusing to comment on whether the party should have shown alacrity in countering the BJP on the OBC question, Congress national coordinator for SC, ST, OBC and Minorities Department K. Raju presents the party's pro-OBC credentials.

"The V.P. Singh government had adopted the Mandal Commission report in 1990, but collapsed soon after. It

then fell upon the Congress-led P.V. Narasimha Rao government to implement reservation for OBCs. In 2012, Congress Minister Arjun Singh introduced the quota in higher education. This was Mandal 2.0."

The BJP's record on pro-OBC policies has been dismal, he contends. "They have failed to accede to the demand to form a ministry for OBC welfare. As of date, none of the Secretary-level officers in the government are from the OBC community. This shows their sincerity," Mr. Raju said.

However, within the Congress, many OBC leaders feel that the party has been far too slow in countering the BJP. They feel the Congress failed to go on the offensive even after a resolution was passed at its recent plenary at Raipur demanding a caste census.

Violence in Howrah: CID takes over investigation

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

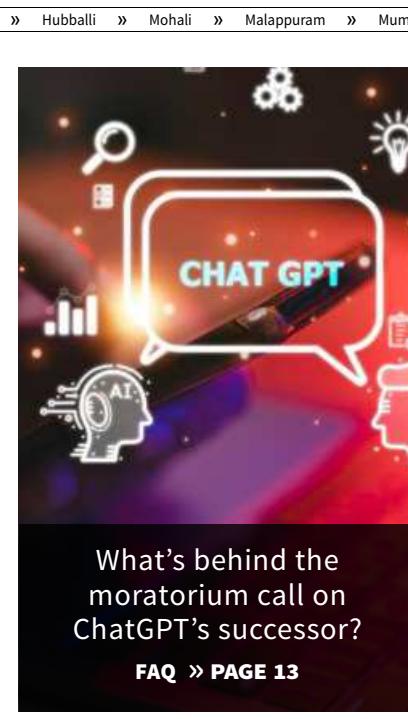
The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the West Bengal police on Saturday took over the investigation into the violence that erupted in Howrah during Ram Navami celebrations on March 30.

A team of forensic experts visited the town and collected samples. The police said traffic movement has been restored and the situation is under control. Thirty-eight persons have been arrested so far in connection with the violence.

'Book the culprits'

Governor C.V. Ananda Bose on Friday evening had issued a strongly worded statement directing the police to be objective, strong and fair in the matter. "There will be effective and concerted action to book the culprits and bring them before the law. Setting fire to public property, that too on the sacred Ram Navami day, is a highly provocative act and will be viewed seriously," it said.

The Governor and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee held a "confidential discussion to review the situation". According to sources, the decision to hand over the probe to the CID was taken at the meeting.



March sees second highest GST collection of ₹1.6 lakh cr.

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

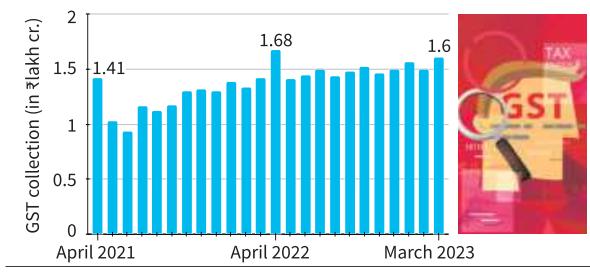
India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenues grew 13% in March, to record the second highest monthly collection of ₹1.6 lakh crore from the indirect tax, with receipts from goods imports rising 8% and inflows from domestic transactions and services imports rising 14% from a year ago.

Gross GST collections for 2022-23 are 22% higher than in 2021-22 at ₹8.1 lakh crore, reflecting an average gross monthly collection of almost ₹1.5 lakh crore.

The growth in GST collections in March was the fastest so far in 2023, marking the 12th month in a row that inflows were over ₹1.4 lakh crore and the fourth month in 2022-23 over the ₹1.5 lakh crore mark.

Revenue check

India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections rose to ₹1.6 lakh crore in March 2023. The revenues were 13% higher than March 2022



March's collections were

the highest ever, the Finance Ministry said.

"93.2% of statement of invoices (in GSTR-1) and

91.4% of returns (in

GSTR-3B) of February were filed till March 2023 as against 83.1% and 84.7% respectively, same month last year," it emphasised.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

IN BRIEF

Contract given to tarnish my image, says PM

RAIPUR
Some individuals have "handed out a contract to tarnish my image" and were determined to "dig my grave", the Prime Minister said on Saturday in Bhopal, where he flagged off the Bhopal-Delhi Vande Bharat Express. » Page 9

Jaipur blasts: govt. to appeal against verdict

JAIPUR
The Congress government in Rajasthan will appeal against the High Court verdict acquitting all the accused in the 2008 Jaipur serial blasts case. » Page 6

SUNDAY MAGAZINE » 8 PAGES
CLASSIFIEDS » PAGE 4

Goodness of Parle-G Combined with the Nutrition of Healthy Grains & Berries

IN BRIEF



'Illegal' construction near dargah in south Delhi razed

The Public Works Department (PWD) on Thursday conducted an anti-encroachment drive and demolished an "illegal" construction at the Syed Abdullah dargah near the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin in south Delhi. The drive was carried out amid heavy security deployment, a senior police officer said. The Delhi High Court, in an order in March 2022, had observed that the government concerned was "duty-bound" to remove all unauthorised constructions that might exist on public land. PTI

Capital records 416 COVID-19 cases; positivity at 14.37%

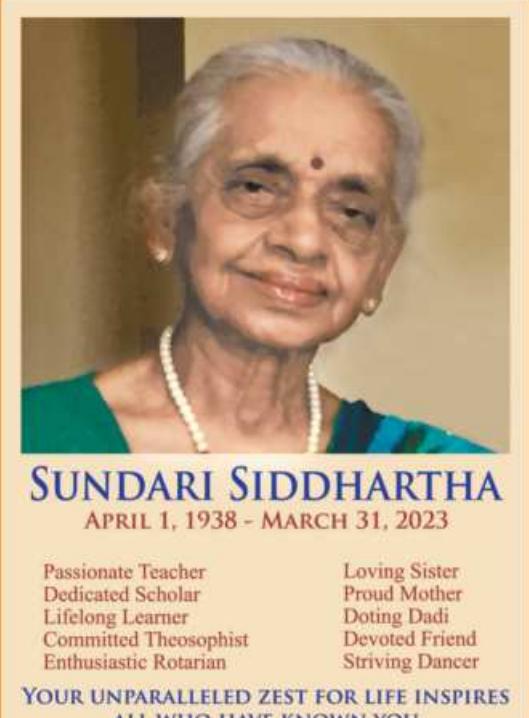
Delhi recorded 416 new COVID-19 cases on Saturday, the highest in over seven months, with a positivity rate of 14.37%, according to data shared by the Health Department. One COVID-related death was also reported, stated the department's latest bulletin. It mentioned that the total death toll so far since the pandemic hit in 2020 stands at 26,529. The Health Department did not share a bulletin on Friday. PTI

Panel suggests free education for EWS students till Class XII

The Delhi Assembly's Committee on Welfare of SC/STs has recommended extending benefits of free education to all students from Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) studying in private schools up to Class XII, officials said on Saturday. The panel, under the chairmanship of Karol Bagh MLA Vishesh Ravi, urged the Delhi government's Education Department to consider its recommendation and take necessary steps. PTI

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH



DEATH ANNIVERSARIES



THE HINDU

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CM YK

Uncertainty over standing committee polls as MCD readies to elect next Mayor

Hearing in connection to the previously held polls for the six posts remains pending before the Delhi High Court, which had on February 25 stayed the re-election called by Mayor Shelly Oberoi

Muneef Khan
NEW DELHI

The term of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has concluded with the end of the year on March 31, fuelling the need to call for the next House meeting to hold fresh polls. However, the first House meeting in its new year is unlikely to see the fresh election of six members to the MCD's standing committee. This is mainly because the hearing in connection to the previously held polls for the six posts remains pending before the Delhi High Court.

On February 24, Mayor Shelly Oberoi had adjourned the House meeting without declaring the results for the standing committee member elections and called for fresh polls.

According to the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, the civic body's year commences from April 1.

In the coming days, the office of the MCD's municipal secretary will write to the Mayor seeking a date for the next House meeting, which will see the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's elections.

"If the court decides that the results of the elections were valid, and directs that there should be no fresh polls for the same, then the constitution of the standing committee will be based on those results. If not, then there will be fresh polls," said Mr. Gupta.

He highlighted that while a new Mayor and Deputy Mayor are to be elected at the beginning of each year, the timeline differs



In limbo: On February 24, Mayor Shelly Oberoi had adjourned the House meeting without declaring the results for the standing committee member elections and called for fresh polls. FILE PHOTO

both the BJP and AAP had won three seats each.

Anil Gupta, former law officer at the erstwhile North Delhi Municipal Corporation, explained that holding fresh polls for the standing committee members will depend on the court's decision.

"If the court decides that the results of the elections were valid, and directs that there should be no fresh polls for the same, then the constitution of the standing committee will be based on those results. If not, then there will be fresh polls," said Mr. Gupta.

He highlighted that while a new Mayor and Deputy Mayor are to be elected at the beginning of each year, the timeline differs

for the standing committee as its term commences only from the day "the chairperson is elected".

According to the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, the civic body's year commences from April 1.

In the coming days, the office of the MCD's municipal secretary will write to the Mayor seeking a date for the next House meeting, which will see the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's elections.

"Based on this communication, the file will be sent to the Lieutenant-Governor's office, via the Delhi government, for appointing the presiding officer for the exercise," said an MCD official.

To be sure, the incumbent Mayor and Deputy

Mayor will continue to hold office till fresh polls are held. Simultaneously, the presiding officer for the exercise has to be a councillor who is not a candidate for the internal election.

Committee composition

The MCD's standing committee consists of 18 members, of which six are elected in the first House meeting.

The remaining members are elected from each of the 12 zones under the MCD.

While each zone is a cluster of wards, financial and policy matters of the civic body are approved by the standing committee before they are discussed in the House.

After the members are elected to the standing committee, the elections are held for the post of the committee's chairperson and deputy chairperson.

However, another senior MCD official differed with Mr. Gupta's observation and said the elections for standing committee members are likely to be held afresh.

"I believe that the petition before the High Court has become infructuous and elections are to be held every year for the standing committee members as well," said the senior MCD official.

The police have levelled additional charges against Mr. Amit for rash driving and causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others (Section 279 of the IPC). The police had initially booked the accused for culpable homicide not amounting to murder and rash driving. Murder charges were invoked three weeks after the incident took place.

As mandated by the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), the police have submitted their chargesheet within the stipulated 90-day period.

Metropolitan Magistrate Sanya Dalal has posted the matter for further consideration on April 13.

Sultanpuri case: police file chargesheet; four charged with murder

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Saturday filed an 800-page chargesheet against seven accused in the Sultanpuri hit-and-run case in which a 20-year-old woman was killed on January 1.

Anjali Singh was killed after a car hit her scooter in the early hours of New Year's Day and she was dragged under it for 10-12 km from Sultanpuri to Kanjhawala before the occupants of the car abandoned her body.

Four of the seven accused – Amit Khanna, Krishan, Mithun and Manoj Mittal – have been charged with murder. The other three accused in the case are Deepak Khanna, Ankush Khanna and Ashutosh Bharadwaj.

While Mr. Deepak's bail plea was rejected by a sessions court, Mr. Bharadwaj and Mr. Ankush are out on bail.

The court has extended the judicial custody of the rest of the five till April 13.

"On completion of the investigation, a chargesheet of about 800 pages has been prepared with 117 witnesses cited in the case," DCP (Outer) Harendra Kumar Singh said on Saturday.

He added that on the basis of the evidence collected, sufficient material has come on record to prosecute the seven persons.

All seven accused have been booked for criminal conspiracy (under Section 120-B of the IPC), destruction of evidence (Section 201) and harbouring offen-



Anjali Singh, 20, was killed after a car hit her scooter and she was dragged under it for 10-12 km. FILE PHOTO

der (Section 212).

Mr. Bharadwaj and Mr. Amit have also been booked under the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, according to the chargesheet.

Additional charges

The police have levelled additional charges against Mr. Amit for rash driving and causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others (Section 279 of the IPC).

The police had initially booked the accused for culpable homicide not amounting to murder and rash driving. Murder charges were invoked three weeks after the incident took place.

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Metropolitan Magistrate Sanya Dalal has posted the matter for further consideration on April 13.

Haj committee asked to vacate office, its chief seeks L-G's help

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Delhi State Haj Committee chairperson Kausar Jahan on Saturday sought the Lieutenant-Governor's intervention after the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) issued the panel a notice to vacate its office over rental dues.

Sharing a copy of the March 23 notice, the BJP attacked the Delhi government, which controls DUSIB. BJP national spokesperson Shazia Ilmi said the move reeked of "political bias" since the ruling AAP could not elect a chairperson of its choice for the Haj panel.

Rented out by the board, the Haj panel's office is in Haj Manzil building, located at central Del-

hi's Turkman Gate.

Ms. Ilmi claimed, "For the last eight years, the chair of the Haj committee was an AAP member, who never paid the rent of this building in almost a decade, which has now accumulated to ₹1.31 crore."

After Ms. Jahan was elected as the panel's chairperson in February, AAP leaders had accused L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena of paving the way for her appointment by "unconstitutionally" replacing the committee members.

The L-G had earlier in January constituted the committee, drawing a sharp reaction from Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

NTPC-run school in Badarpur crumbling; parents move HC

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

Parents of over a thousand students of the Kendriya Vidyalaya run by NTPC Ltd. in south-east Delhi's Badarpur have filed a plea in the Delhi High Court over the school's deteriorating condition.

According to letters accompanying their plea, the parents said that after the closure of NTPC's Badarpur thermal power station in 2018, the state-run utility was able to run the school only till March 31, 2020.

The school has had no fresh admissions in the last two years and the parents

have been verbally informed that the school leaving certificates (SLCs) shall be issued to their wards. The number of students at the school has now reduced to less than 1,500 from 1,819 in 2019.

"There has been a shortage of teachers, electricity and water, and the school's building has not been taken care of," one of the letters, accessed by *The Hindu*, added. After multiple appeals to authorities over the last few years, the parents filed a public interest litigation against the Union Education Ministry, the Delhi government as well as the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan.

BJP slams delay in extension for MCD contractual staff; AAP rebuts

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday alleged that the delay in extending services of the MCD's contractual workers could have been avoided if AAP had tabled the proposal at the civic body's recent meeting.

Hitting back, AAP called the claims "false" and said that services of the contractual employees had been extended on Mayor Shelly Oberoi's directions.

On Friday, the Mayor's office had said all contractual workers will continue to have their jobs. It was in response to the BJP's claims that the Mayor had "put pressure" on MCD officials to terminate the contracts.

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URDU SYED MUSLIM 23/158cm, B.Tech Biomed, deen and beautiful girl, Upper middle class family seeks Tamilnadu based Deen Groom working in European countries. Contact: +919443695550, +919629216106

KERALA HINDU Girl, 34 Yr, 165 cm, Fair, PhD, Asst. Professor, Delhi University. Seeking Er. Dr. Professional, working in Delhi / NCR / abroad. C.N.B. Contact: 9447400247 / 994313295.

DOCTOR

SUNNI, MUSLIM boy, completed MD/MS (clinical), 31 to 34 yrs, from TN belonging to a good family, background to be a suitable match for our daughter, who's 30yrs, M.S. M.S. Ophthalm, currently working. Contact: 9840850536

HINDU, Doctor, Bride, 24 Yrs, 167cm, Sozha Vellala, Punarpoosam, affluent family, finished PLAB, doing clinical attachment in UK, seeks Tall, slim speaking, Doctor Groom, Studying / Working in UK, from similar background. Contact: 9443625539

DKV 27 / 155, Aswini, MBBS. Seeks Doctor Groom Only. Contact : 94429 24441 / 94431 51045

HINDU, DOCTOR MS, Reddy 32Yrs/165cm Fair, Affluent and Currently Settled in Chennai. Seeks Groom from Similar Background. Any Profession / Business Contact: 89256 40111

WE ARE looking for an alliance for our daughter, aged 29 years, residing in UK, PG in Medicine. The groom should hail from a decent, educated (Doctor) family. Contact with (Astrological) details Mobile: 9632737562 or Email to mpmannoor@rediffmail.com

26 YEARS /165cm Doctor . Joining Neurology residency in June 23 at New Jersey USA. Seeks Medical Doctor Groom from BC doing Residency Fellowship in USA. WhatsApp 9677026459

DOCTOR GIRL MD Anesthesiology/33/165 fair pretty cultured & well mannered Chemical based doctors family. Father Doctor, Kerala. Nani. Mother Tamil CSI. Doctor grooms MD MS MCh & Engineers from good family background prfd.

HINDU CHETTIAR doctor 36yrs MBBS, MD (General Medicine) Divorced running hospital with 20 bed with operation theatre, Seeks good Habs. Affluent Groom from Chennai one year only CT 94433 20097.

KANNADA

KANNADA DEVANGAR parents seek groom for divorcee girl 35 yrs TN Govt. Service. Other Suitable caste considered. Ph: 9556896214, 9446516114

MALAYALAM

RCSC GIRL Pursing Ph.D 28/170cm, Project Scientist in Govt. Organisation at Ernakulam. Seeks suitable match. Mob: 944706266

HINDU GIRL, Fair, DOB 28/10/1994, 09.44 AM, doing MD (GYNEC), 2nd Year in Central Govt. Medical College, New Delhi. Proposals from Doctors / Professionals. Mob: 8281425422

HINDU – SC Girl: 37/157, Agri-Scientist - (CG-Pune) from south Kerala, seeks alliance from well educated professionals. Contact: 9792420241, 9447296008

ALLIANCE INVITED for a Menon girl, 29 years / 5ft 4in'/ Moolam (slight dosham) /MS from US, working in leading technology firm in California from parents or equally qualified boys working in US/UK/Singapore/USA. Please contact 097150261499.

NRI

LOOKING FOR alliance for our daughter 32/178cm. Did her BS, MS&MBA from elite universities in the US&France. Groom should be well educated from elite universities and working in UAE/UK/Singapore/USA. Please contact 097150261499.

TAMIL

TAMIL CATHOLIC affluent Doctor parents are looking for a suitable groom working in India or Abroad for their fair, beautiful daughter 29/160, who is an accomplished Doctor. Ct: 9945530186

CSI NADAR Girl, MS Structural Engineering, 26/162cm, fair seeks husband who is God fearing, well educated & settled, tall from an educated family. Ct: 94447 08541 / 98046 96274

AFFLUENT RC Christian family seeks Professionally Qualified well settled Groom from respectable family for 32yrs Bride. MCA/Divorcee(isueless). 944369083/ selvarajeece@gmail.com

TAMIL MUSLIM Divorcee with 8 years boy, MD Dr., age 33, 163cm good looking, seeks tall, seeking Allama Dr., Er., Professional Degree or business man only in chennai or abroad. Ct: H.adamsha 98043 97405

TAMIL

WANTED PROFESSIONAL, Tuluva Velu Mudaliar Good looking Girl 35 Uthirattiy, Meenam, Family Seeks Alliance from First and Unmarried Bachelor Bridegroom Aged 35-37 yrs, Employed, Caste no bar. Contact: 9841182514

DKV MAY 94/167 Fair BE, TCS Chennai, Parents Hindu / CSI. Seeks Groom Dr / Er. Govt Employee. 8056143638

CS/CHRISTIAN 37yrs/165cms B.Tech, I.T., M.B.A. Eng.CTos, Now at UK (Work Permit) seeks B.E & B.Tech MBBS and abroad Bride groom Ct: 971322478, 887056816

BE /WORKING in MNC. Father Business Man, Settled Family Seeks Alliance for their Daughter. 26/Ketai, Pilla/Mudaliar or Any Caste. Call: 98400 93322

POST GRADUATE Doctor MD Anaesthesia 28 SC Govt Service seeks suitable PG Doctor groom. Ct: 7401660086

MANNADIAN Girl 32/156 PhD Chemistry, Avitom, Asst. Professor, Gujarat, Vegetarian. 861481641, 9429815230

SC AD Hindu unmarried MSc 37 Seeking Groom 8610410886.Caste No Bar. Brokers Excuse.

VANNIYAR TAMIL unmarried 57 years PG well settled seeks suitable groom between 60-70 years Ct: 6383024827

PILLA/MUDALIAR, 33, Good looking, MBBS, MD Final yr, Well Settled Family seeks Groom aged 33-36 yrs. Engineer / Business / Doctor. 9345657353

TAMIL HINDU girl, 35, BE and MBA from leading B-School, NRI working in London in MNC, iyer family, earlier wedding nullified, alliance invited from well qualified, well employed groom from good urban family background with modern outlook, upto 40 years, marital status Any (single/divorced/widowed), caste no bar. Contact 9385162677

HINDU NADAR 23, BE 165cm (Studied CBSE). Fair Seeks Educated Well Settled Family Ct: 9840366663 Chennai.

HINDU, DOCTOR MS, Reddy 32Yrs/165cm Fair, Affluent and Currently Settled in Chennai. Seeks Groom from Similar Background. Any Profession / Business Contact: 89256 40111

WE ARE looking for an alliance for our daughter, aged 29 years, residing in UK, PG in Medicine. The groom should hail from a decent, educated (Doctor) family. Contact with (Astrological) details Mobile: 9632737562 or Email to mpmannoor@rediffmail.com

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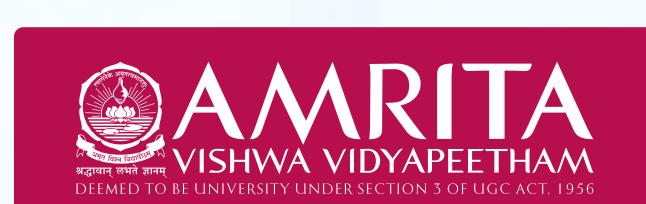
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IN BRIEF



Suspended MLA Raja Singh booked for 'hate speech'

The police in Hyderabad have filed a case against suspended BJP legislator T. Raja Singh for his remarks during a Rama Navami procession in the city. The incident reportedly took place around 9 p.m. on Thursday. According to police, the controversial Hindutva leader spoke about 'love jihad', achieving a 'Hindu Rashtra', his jail time, and also took a dig at leaders of a particular community.

NHAI withdraws toll hike on Bengaluru-Mysuru highway

In yet another flip-flop over toll collection, faced with strong opposition from motorists, implementation of the revised toll on the newly inaugurated Bengaluru-Mysuru expressway in poll-bound Karnataka has been put off. The new charges were scheduled to be collected from Saturday. "We have received directions from higher-ups not to collect the revised toll," a National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) official said.

Pungent odour covers Kochi following leakage of odorant

A pungent odour spread across many areas in Kochi reportedly owing to a minor leak of an odorant mixed in natural gas during the servicing of a pipeline belonging to Adani Group on Friday. Elor Fire Force officials identified the chemical as butyl mercaptan, a mixing agent, that got leaked during the maintenance of a dosing station at Kalamassery where it is mixed with gas. "There was no serious issue. No intervention was needed on our part as the company employees themselves rectified it," said Fire Force officials.

Maharashtra Rythu Sangam leader, others join BRS

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Maharashtra Rythu Sangam leader, Sharad Joshi Praneet, and others joined the Bharat Rashtra Samithi at the Telangana Bhavan in Hyderabad on Saturday. Welcoming them to the party, Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has alleged that the Narendra Modi government withdrew the three farm laws due to the intense pressure and unrelenting fight from the farmers, and also due to the fear of losing elections in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab.

Mr. Rao urged those who joined BRS to get ready to contest in Maharashtra local body elections.

Ritual dance



Tough presentation: An artist performing the 'Nagaraja Thira' at the Sree Muchilottu temple at Kuthiravattom in Kozhikode on Saturday. 'Thira', like Theyyam, is a dance that is part of a religious ritual. While the person participating in Theyyam is considered god, the person taking part in 'Thira' is considered as possessed by god. K. RAGESH

Bandipur completes 50 years as Project Tiger reserve, traces legacy to Maharajas

R. Krishna Kumar
MYSURU

Bandipur completed 50 years as a Project Tiger Reserve on Saturday as it was on April 1, 1973, that the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi launched the flagship conservation programme to arrest the big cat's dwindling population.

There were 12 tigers in Bandipur when Project Tiger was launched, according to Ramesh Kumar, Director, Bandipur Tiger Reserve. But thanks to protection measures, the number of tigers utilising the park is 173 while the number of tigers within the reserve has been pegged at



Humble start: Bandipur had just 12 tigers when Project Tiger was launched. Now the reserve has over 120 big cats. FILE PHOTO

126 as per the 'Status of Tigers Co-predators and Prey in India, 2018' published by the National Tiger Conservation Authority, he added.

But much before the

Pinarayi, Stalin open Vaikom Satyagraha centenary fete

The 100-year-old protest highlights the need for standing together during tough times; the need to fight together will emerge again, says Kerala CM; we both share same thoughts, says T.N. CM

The Hindu Bureau
KOTTAYAM

In a reflection of the growing political solidarity between the ruling dispensations of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin jointly inaugurated the centenary celebrations of the anti-caste struggle Vaikom Satyagraha on Saturday.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Vijayan said Vaikom Satyagraha highlighted the need for standing together during tough times. Tamil Nadu and Kerala had stood together throughout the struggle, he said.

"That same need to fight



Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan and T.N. CM M.K. Stalin inaugurate the centenary year celebrations of Vaikom Satyagraha. VISHNU PRATHAP

together will emerge again. This feeling will be escalated into a sense of great brotherhood," he said.

On the occasion, Mr. Vijayan also declared that the State government would

soon erect a monument at Vaikom in memory of the satyagraha.

"Vaikom Satyagraha was a battle cry against the evil practice of 'Chaturvarnyam'. It was the series of

struggles that followed the Vaikom Satyagraha that paved the way for revival movements including temple entry," he said.

Earlier, Mr. Stalin spoke about his camaraderie with the Kerala Chief Minister, stating that both shared the same thoughts. "While speaking at the venue of the 200th anniversary of the 'Thol Seelai Pottam' (Channar revolt) in Nagarcoil on March 6, I had told Mr. Vijayan about the need to convene a joint celebration on the centenary year of Vaikom Satyagraha.

He agreed to it and invited me to Vaikom on that stage itself. Even though we are separate with our bodies, we are one in our thoughts," he said.

The State govt. will ensure justice to the victims by engaging the best lawyers, says Chief Minister Gehlot

say that the five acquitted are the culprits and have been set free by the HC misses the key issues of fabricated case, botched up investigation, shoddy probe and institutional failure."

She said the State government should have facilitated the release of the four innocent persons from jail and taken steps for their rehabilitation.

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind vice-president M. Salim Engineer expressed outrage over the acquitted persons being described as 'terrorists' and demanded an apology from the State government.

He said the five, incarcerated for 15 years, should be adequately compensated and the police officers who had framed them be punished, as directed by the High Court.

Syed Saadat Ali, one of the lawyers who represented the accused, said though it was the prosecution's right to appeal, the defence lawyers were certain that there was a complete lack of evidence to connect the five with any conspiracy or direct involvement in the blasts.

The BJP staged a demonstration at Badi Chaupad in the Walled City here, alleging that the High Court had set aside the death sentence because of the Congress government's failure to put up a strong case.

Government had already debarred all the teachers, booked in malpractice cases, for five years from all examination duties. The teachers unions said they would not support the teachers booked in 'paper leak' cases.

"The accused teachers approached the court against the decision to remove them from exam duties, but we will file an appeal," the Minister said.

Reacting to the decision to appeal, president of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL)-Rajasthan Kavita Srivastava said, "To

In Dalit outreach, Akhilesh to unveil Kanshi Ram statue

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

In an attempt at reaching out to the numerically significant Dalit community, Samajwadi Party (SP) national president Akhilesh Yadav is likely to unveil a statue of Bahujan Samaj Party founder and Dalit leader Kanshi Ram at a function in Rae Bareli on Monday.

Mr. Yadav will also address a public meeting where he is likely to focus on the party's agenda of Other Backward Classes-Dalit unity, which gained momentum after the 2022 Vidhan Sabha polls.

The main organiser of the Rae Bareli function is Swami Prasad Maurya, a key OBC leader of the SP, who had a long stint in the BSP.

The visit also holds significance as Mr. Yadav has hinted at putting up a candidate from adjoining Amethi, traditionally a Congress bastion, in the 2024 polls.

Rae Bareli is also a Congress pocket borough represented by Sonia



Gandhi. The plan to unveil Kanshi Ram's statue comes days after the SP chief attended a function of the Khatik community, a subgroup within the Scheduled Castes in Kanpur.

Following the gradual decline of the Dalit-centric BSP over the last six years, the SP has been consistently signalling to Dalit voters through its outreach initiatives.

"The gap between the ruling party [BJP] and the SP-led alliance is more than 10%. Akhilesh Yadav is aware that the SP needs support from social groups, apart from its traditional voters, hence this outreach towards Dalits is going on," said Satish K. Jha, a political scientist.

In Bison Hills, wedding bells fall silent as Konda Reddi tribals face 'cultural trauma'



A Konda Reddi tribal habitation to be rehabilitated for the Polavaram irrigation project in Alluri Sitamaraju district.

set to come to an end soon. We do not have any idea how to conduct our tribal rituals in the absence of the river," said Mr. Reddi.

"From birth, wedding to death, every ritual begins with a holy dip in the Godavari. For some rituals, soil and sand are brought from the banks of the river and offered to our local deities to commence the agricultural activities," Mr. Reddy told *The Hindu*.

"We have survived and tackled every transformation that was inevitable for decades as part of development. The absence of the river in our life cannot be managed anyway," says Vetha Mutyala Reddi, a tribe.

As Papi Hill range). This is one of the villages that is set to be rehabilitated before the monsoon sets in, as part of the Resettlement and Rehabilitation exercise of the Polavaram irrigation project.

"We are in a cultural shock as the government

T. Appala Naidu
POCHAVARAM

In December last year, Konda Reddi tribal girl Vala Manga's wedding was performed without missing any rituals that are associated with river Godavari.

In Pochavaram village of Tummileru gram panchayat in Andhra Pradesh's Alluri Sitamaraju district, Ms. Manga's wedding is believed to be the last one performed on the banks of river Godavari.

The Gazetteer notes that the boundary extended from Moyar river forming the southern border towards the Nilgiris, and northwards, it stretched till Gundlupet including the 1,450m-high Himavad Gopalaswamy Betta. The park was named after Venugopala, the deity at the temple atop the hill.

has recorded that several forest areas were not only preserved as Game Reserves but Tiger Blocks were identified and restrictions imposed on shooting. In 1941, the Venugopala Wildlife Park was constituted extending over 800 sq km of which 82 sq. miles was known as Bandipur Sanctuary within the park.

Wildlife Conservation Act, 1972, was passed, the erstwhile rulers of Mysuru had realised the imperatives of conserving the flora and fauna.

The Mysore Gazetteer



Humble start: Bandipur had just 12 tigers when Project Tiger was launched. Now the reserve has over 120 big cats. FILE PHOTO

126 as per the 'Status of Tigers Co-predators and Prey in India, 2018' published by the National Tiger Conservation Authority, he added.

But much before the

'BJD regime has an anti-OBC mindset'

The Naveen Patnaik government has failed in its constitutional responsibility of protecting the rights of the backward classes in Odisha, says the Union Minister for Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, who is a strong critic of the State's failure to provide 27% reservation for OBCs

INTERVIEW

Dharmendra Pradhan

Satyasundar Barik

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) government in Odisha, led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is all set to conduct a comprehensive survey of the social and educational conditions of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), which constitute close to 54% of the State's population. Ahead of next year's Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, the BJD and the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party are trying to champion the cause of the OBCs. Union Minister for Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan has been a strong critic of the State government's failure to provide 27% reservation



Entering poll arena: Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has expressed a desire to contest an election from Odisha. FILE PHOTO

for OBCs in education and government jobs. He spoke about the BJD government's "abdication" of its constitutional responsibility of protecting the rights of the backward classes. Excerpts:

Why are you critical of the Naveen Patnaik government over the reservation issue?

It is simple. The Mandal Commission had recommended 27% reservation for OBCs in education and

jobs. The BJD regime historically has had an anti-OBC mindset and is the only government in the country that has not provided reservation for the backward classes.

Why do you say the BJD has an 'anti-OBC' mindset?

Biju Patnaik, BJD founder and former Chief Minister, had moved the Supreme Court against the implementation of the OBC quota. The father-son duo has

ruled the State for 29 of the 34 years since the V.P. Singh government provided reservation for OBCs. They even withdrew political reservation for such communities. What more proof does one need that this government is against OBCs?

Have you received any response to the three letters you had written to the CM on the reservation issue?

I am yet to receive an acknowledgement. The government has failed to take all political parties into confidence to resolve the quota issue. The government might be dragging its feet because it assumes it does not depend heavily on OBC votes. I belong to the OBC community and it is my duty to raise awareness of the issue.

The government often cites the 50% cap on

reservation. Is it difficult to extend benefits to OBCs?

In *Indra Sawhney vs Union of India*, the Supreme Court ruled that reservation cannot cross the 50% limit unless a special case is made out to relax the rule. In Maharashtra, all political parties came together to provide 27% reservation for OBCs in local body polls. Though the apex court later struck it down, the government had shown intent. Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have made similar efforts. However, Odisha has used the court's ruling as a pretext for not providing reservation.

What is your position on the OBC survey?

The government is not conducting a survey, but collecting information. A survey involves door-to-door visits, but the government

has proposed collecting data from a designated place such as common service centres or government offices. This method has drawbacks. For instance, one third of Ganjam district's OBC population migrates for work. How will people provide information if they are not present in the village?

What role will the OBCs play in the Assembly and Lok Sabha polls?

This issue should not be viewed from the prism of electoral gains. The OBC population has been deprived of its legitimate rights.

You have expressed a desire to contest an election from Odisha. Have you chosen a seat?

Yes, I am in favour of fighting a direct election. However, my party will take a call on it.

45 arrested for violence in 2 Bihar districts; CM Nitish orders probe

Sasaram leg of Amit Shah's Bihar visit cancelled, says State BJP chief; Internet services suspended in several districts

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

The Bihar police have arrested 45 people until Saturday in connection with communal violence that erupted during the Ram Navami festivities in Sasaram and Biharsharif, the headquarters of Rohtas and Nalanda districts respectively.

Ordering a probe, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said the clashes were triggered by some people intent on creating "gadbad" (trouble), and rejected the BJP's charge that the State go-



Police personnel stand guard in Nalanda on Saturday. ANI

vernment was failing on the law and order front. "Such things never used to happen in my State. This is not a natural incident and someone has done it intentionally," he said on the sidelines of a programme in Patna on Saturday.

Mr. Kumar said normally he has been restored and senior officers were camping in the affected areas.

Police said while 18 of the arrests were made in Sasaram, 27 people were held in Rohtas. Internet services have been sus-

pended in several districts. State BJP chief Samrat Choudhary announced that the Sasaram leg of Union Minister Amit Shah's Bihar visit was dropped from the itinerary due to security reasons but he is scheduled to go ahead with his programmes in Nawada on Sunday.

'No Section 144'

Mr. Choudhary attributed the cancellation to the imposition of Section 144 of the CrPC in the area. "Nitish Kumar has given the message that he will not allow anyone to hold programmes in the State," he

said. However, Rohtas District Magistrate Dharmendra Kumar said Section 144 was not imposed in the area. "I never ordered it," he told *The Hindu*.

BJP delegation led by Mr. Choudhary also met Governor R.V. Arlekar at Raj Bhavan.

Asked about Mr. Shah cancelling his Sasaram visit, the CM said, "If any Central Ministers come to Bihar, we provide proper security to them. His visit was not a government programme. There must be some other reasons for cancelling it," he said.

(With inputs from PTI)

Black panther rescued from Goa village

Press Trust of India
PANAJI

A black panther was rescued by the Forest department from a village in South Goa on Saturday, State Forest Minister Vishwajit Rane said. A trapping mechanism was set up at Balli village in Quepem and the animal rescued, he said.

The department will consult Centre and Karnataka officials, the Minister said in a tweet.

Timings

SUNDAY, APR. 02
RISE 06:11 SET 18:40
RISE 15:17 SET 04:14

MONDAY, APR. 03
RISE 06:10 SET 18:40
RISE 16:12 SET 04:45

TUESDAY, APR. 04
RISE 06:09 SET 18:41
RISE 17:07 SET 05:14

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 28 16
Safdarjung 28 16
Palam 28 17

Delhi Palam Today
30°C A mostly dry weather to prevail. Morning will be cool with mist and haze. The weather will be slight warm. Night will be slight cool.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
32°C Rise in temperature. Day will be little warm. Spell of rain and thundershower is likely to occur with gusty winds.

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'It is every citizen's right to know about PM's education'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday continued to target Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his master's degree. Addressing a press conference here, he said the Gujarat High Court setting aside a Central Information Commission order directing Gujarat University to provide details of it has made people wonder if the degree is fake. It is every citizen's right to get information about their PM's education, he added.

'Climate change hoax'

Mr. Kejriwal said he watched a video of the PM addressing some students and saying that climate change is a hoax. "Climate change is a reality that the entire world is grappling with. How will the nation formulate its policy towards the issue if the PM actually believes it is a hoax?" he said, adding that the children could be seen smiling in an embarrassed manner in the video.

AAP MP Sanjay Singh also waded into the issue, urging Mr. Modi to show his degree to the public since "140 crore people of the country have the right to know".

The AAP chief has in recent weeks been making a case for the nation deserving a well-educated PM, someone who can support

HIMACHAL PRADESH UNIVERSITY
NAAC ACCREDITED "A" GRADE UNIVERSITY
GYAN PATH, SUMMER HILL, SHIMLA-171005
MAINTENANCE DIVISION NO.-II

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

Executive Engineer Division No II(Maint.) on behalf of Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of HP University, Shimla-5, invite the online bids on item rate, in electronic tendering system, from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the work as detailed in the table-

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost	Starting date for downloading Bid	Earnest Money	Bid Opening date
1.	Renovation of Director's Room (HRDC) Offices, Conference Hall and VIP Suits in Faculty House of Academic Staff College in HP University, Shimla-5.	7,96,698/-	31.03.2023 to 17.04.2023 upto 10:00 AM	15,950/-	17.04.2023 At 11:30 AM
2.	Providing and Fixing steel racks replacement existing Rusted Window Glazing i/c Painting & White washing in ICDEOL Hostel Room No. 409 allotted to ERP system in H.P. University, Shimla-5.	6,21,698/-	31.03.2023 to 17.04.2023 upto 10:00 AM	12,450/-	17.04.2023 At 11:30 AM

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the departmental website www.hptenders.gov.in and www.hpuniv.ac.in.

Executive Engineer (Maint.)

G20
Government of Jammu & Kashmir
Directorate of Floriculture, Gardens & Parks
Department Kashmir

Tele-fax: 0194-2482032 e-mail kashflor@rediffmail.com

GIST of e-Tender Notice No. 39 of 2023 Dated: - 31/03/2023

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of J&K UT, e-tender is invited from interested bidders for Outsourcing of entry ticketing system of Iqbal Park, Srinagar of Floriculture Department Kashmir as per details given below:-

The bidders have to quote their bid amount in the concerned BOQ:-

S. No.	Period of contract	Value of CDR	Value of security deposit @ 10% of Reserve bid	Cost of tender document
1.	One year from the date of award of contract	Rs. 26,000.00	Rs. 2,600.00 in the shape of e-challan	Rs.1000.00

The bidding document(s) consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, terms and conditions and other details can be seen/downloaded through the Departmental website www.dofkashmir.com/www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of date given below:-

1. Period of downloading of bidding document 31.03.2023 from 03:30 PM to 20.04.2023 up to 02:00 PM
2. Bid submission Start Date 31.03.2023 from 04:30 PM
3. Bid submission End date 20.04.2023 up to 02:00 PM
4. Date and time of Opening of Tenders (Online) 25.04.2023 at 02:00 PM

In case of any eventuality, the date of opening will be considered on any other convenient working day.

Sd/-
Accounts officers (Member Secretary)

DIPK- 19055/22

IN BRIEF

Sambhajinagar set to witness political showdown today

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district in the Marathwada region will be the focal point of political activity on Sunday. While the ruling Shiv Sena-BJP have planned a 'Savarkar Gaurav Yatra' which will begin from Veer Savarkar circle, the MVA will hold a rally just a kilometre away at Marathwada Sanskrutik Mandal ground. Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, NCP leader Ajit Pawar and State Congress unit chief Nana Patole will be the speakers.



Naveen announces first metro trunk route for Odisha

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Saturday announced the creation of the State's first metro project, connecting the capital city Bhubaneswar with other peripheral urban centres – Cuttack, Puri and Khordha, with its own funding. "The route will touch major landmarks such as Nandankanan, Patia, Vani Vihar, Railway Station," Mr. Patnaik said.

Court acquits all 26 accused in case of gang rape, murders

A court in Gujarat has acquitted all 26 persons accused of gang rape and murder of more than a dozen members of a minority community in separate incidents in Kalol during communal riots for want of evidence. Of the total 39 accused, 13 died during the pendency of the case. The accused were part of a mob that went on a rampage on March 1, 2002, during a bandh after the train-burning incident in Godhra on February 27.

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED
Credit Recovery and Management Department
Administrative Office : No. 24-B, Gandhi Nagar,
Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu - 612 001. E-Mail id: crmd@cityunionbank.in,
Phone: 0435-2432232, Fax: 0435-2431746

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

The following properties mortgaged to City Union Bank Limited will be sold in Re-Tender-cum-Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 8 (6) & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of Rs.93,68,263/- (Rupees Ninety Three Lakh Sixty Eight Thousand Two Hundred and Sixty Three only) as on 23-03-2023 together with further interest to be charged from 24-03-2023 onwards and other expenses, any other dues to the Bank by the borrowers / guarantors. No.1 Mrs. Hindustan Steel Co., No.3/G/179, Near Masjid Chowk, NIT, Faridabad, Haryana - 121001. Also at: Mrs. Hindustan Steel Co., Plot No.48, Bajri Industrial Area, Pali Bhakri Road, Faridabad - 121005, No.2 Mr. Abhishek Yadav, S/o. Mr. Sabir Singh Yadav, House No. 134, Sector- 08, Faridabad, Haryana - 121006. No.3 Mr. Sabir Singh Yadav, S/o. Mr. Surjan Singh Yadav, House No.134, Sector - 08, Faridabad, Haryana - 121006. No.4 Mrs. Nidhi Yadav, W/o. Mr. Abhishek Yadav, House No.134, Sector - 08, Faridabad, Haryana - 121006.

Note: That our S11 - Faridabad Branch has also extended Financial Assistance (CREDIT CARD AGAINST LOAN: 51212002020795) dated 25-04-2023 requested by No.1 of you represented by No.2 of you as Proprietor for the facility for a Total Amount of Rs.10,00,000/- The balance outstanding as on 23-03-2023 is Rs.64,737/-

Inmmoveable Property Mortgaged to our Bank

(Property Owned by Mr. Sabir Singh Yadav, S/o. Mr. Surjan Singh Yadav)

House No.134, measuring 156.66 Sq.Yards situated at Sector - 08, Faridabad and is bounded as under: North - Road, South - House No.134, East - House No.1336, West - House No.132.

Reserve Price : Rs.1,00,00,000/-
(Rupees One Crore only)

RE-AUCTION DETAILS

Date of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale | Venue

24-04-2023 | City Union Bank Limited, Faridabad Branch, E5/10, BP Railway Road, Near Neelam Bach Chowk, Faridabad, Haryana - 121001. Telephone No.0129-2421708, Cell No.9354776693

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

(1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself / herself. (2) The intending bidders may obtain the Tender Forms from The Manager, City Union Bank Limited, Faridabad Branch, E5/10, BP Railway Road, Near Neelam Bach Chowk, Faridabad, Haryana - 121001. (3) The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the Tender Form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd., together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of 10% of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of "City Union Bank Ltd.", or on before 12:00 Noon on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. (4) For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact: Telephone No.0129-2421708, Cell No.9354776693. (5) The properties are sold on "As-is-where-is", "As-is-what's and "whatever-else" basis. (6

From Page One

No idols, no arms: the Pattanam mystery

Were Pattanam residents a peace-loving people who did not harbour religious and caste boundaries? The apparent absence of religious and martial remains can only tell us that religion and war did not exist as they are known today. It is safe to say there is no evidence of institutionalised religion or caste.

Driven by curiosity and the collaborative support of leading scientific institutions such as the University of Oxford and the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology in Hyderabad, Pattanam researchers considered another angle of inquiry. Given that death and customs associated with mortality are areas that see the biggest religious and caste divides today, what do the Pattanam remains convey about the death rituals of people of that time? The grave remains at the Pattanam site were confined to fragmentary skeleton remains.

The burials were of a "secondary" nature, where the dead were cremated first and the osseous remains ceremoniously buried later, taphonomic studies and minimal pathological analysis found. Large terracotta urn burials and a wide variety of stone monuments abound in the Periyar delta and basin regions, showing the ceremonial nature of the later burial practices. No artefact found indicates any religious customs.

The genotype results and ancestry analyses of samples point to South Asian, West Asian, and Mediterranean lineages. Indeed, people of widely differing backgrounds were buried the same way, strongly suggesting the prevalence of a secular ethos.

K.V. Balasubramanian and Vaidehi Herbert, researchers focusing on Sangam-era literature, connect this observation with the evidence from Sangam sources to point out that the people of the time were secular in every aspect of their highly sophisticated and pluralistic society.

Material evidence from the site strengthens the belief that Pattanam society may have lived in harmony with nature, like several indigenous societies did, and not viewed people as separate from nature. This had the positive fallout of living life in an ecologically responsible manner. At the very least, such a society did not sanction the exploitation of natural resources that is at the heart of most problems faced by the contemporary world.

Those who aspire to meaningful alternatives of community living, looking beyond a casteless society towards a closer connect with nature, might find answers in the ground beneath, as more of Muziris (Pattanam) is unearthed.

(P.J. Cherian has been the director of the Pattanam excavations since 2006, and Deepak P. has served as co-director since 2019.)

Second-highest GST collection in March

The higher compliance trends under the GST regime could also help enhance the direct tax revenues to an extent, noted Vivek Jalan, partner at consultancy firm Tax Connect Advisory.

The GST collections in March largely reflect transactions undertaken in the month of February. The revenue share between the Centre and the States during the month, after settling IGST collections, is ₹62,954 crore for the Central GST and ₹65,501 crore for the State GST, the Ministry said.

As many as 16 States and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir reported higher growth from domestic transactions during March than the national average of 14.4%, including Bihar and J&K (both at 29.4%), Karnataka (18.4%), Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha and Tamil Nadu (all around 15%). Among the other States, the lowest growth rate was recorded in Himachal Pradesh (8.1%) and Gujarat (8.3%). Revenues from Andhra Pradesh were up 11.3%, with Maharashtra (11.8%), Kerala (12.7%) and Telangana (13.25%) and West Bengal (13.9%) recording higher growth.

700 injured in Ram Navami festivities in Hazaribag

Press Trust of India
HAZARIBAG

Around 700 people were injured while playing with swords and sticks during Ram Navami celebrations in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district, officials said on Saturday.

The celebrations, which began around 8 p.m. on Friday, concluded on Saturday night. Braving heavy rain, 91 *akharas* took part in the centuries-old celebrations in the town's Boddam Bazar in Bada Thakur Bari area, the officials said. The celebrations, marked by well-decorated tableaux touring the length and breadth of the town, was attended by over two lakh people.

3 men discharged in UAPA case by trial court in Delhi

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday discharged three men who were arrested and booked by the National Investigative Agency (NIA) for allegedly being key operatives of Indian Mujahideen (IM). Those discharged include Abdul Wahid Sidibappa, a driver who worked in Dubai and has been in jail since 2016, and Manzar Imam, a former Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) member lodged in prison since 2013. Ariz Khan, who had already been sentenced to capital punishment in the 2008 Batla House murder case, was discharged too.

Additional Sessions

India, Malaysia move beyond dollar to settle trade in rupee

The announcement is seen as a decisive step towards de-dollarisation and an effort to safeguard Indian trade from the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine and its subsequent fallout and sanctions.

Kalol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

India and Malaysia have agreed to settle trade in the Indian rupee, the Ministry of External Affairs announced on Saturday.

The announcement came against the backdrop of ongoing official efforts to safeguard Indian trade from the impact of Ukraine's crisis.

The shift away from the U.S. dollar, which has been the dominant reserve currency for international trade so far, has added significance as it indicates that India is willing to take concrete steps towards de-dollarisation of its international trade.

The Union Bank of India, in a statement, said that it has become the first bank in India to operationalise this option by opening a Special Rupee Vostro Account through its "corresponding bank" in Malaysia – India International Bank of Malaysia.

"Trade between India and Malaysia can now be settled in Indian Rupee (INR) in addition to the current modes of settlement in other currencies. This follows the decision by the Reserve Bank of India in Ju-



Collaborative effort: Malaysia is one of 18 countries allowed by the RBI to open Special Rupee Vostro Accounts to settle payments in the rupee. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO



This mechanism will allow traders to invoice the trade in Indian rupee and achieve better pricing.

UNION BANK OF INDIA

ly 2022 to allow the settlement of international trade in the Indian Rupee (INR). This initiative by RBI is aimed at facilitating the growth of global trade and to support the interests of the global trading community in Indian rupees," the Ministry of External Affairs announced.

Trading in the U.S. dol-

lar has faced growing difficulties, especially after the Russian economy was sanctioned by the Western powers following President Vladimir Putin's launch of a so-called "special military operation" against Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

As a fallout of the sanctions and war-making, payments to Russia in U.S. dollars became increasingly difficult, which in turn triggered a search for solutions in national currencies and de-dollarisation worldwide.

On March 14, the government had informed the Rajya Sabha that banks from 18 countries were al-

lowed by the RBI to open Special Rupee Vostro Accounts to settle payments in the rupee. Malaysia was one of the 18 countries that figured in the statement laid out before the Rajya Sabha, by Minister of State for Finance Dr. Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad.

For better trade

"This mechanism will allow the Indian and Malaysian traders to invoice the trade in Indian rupee and therefore achieve better pricing for goods and services traded. This mechanism is expected to also benefit the traders on both sides as they can directly trade in Indian Rupee and therefore save on currency conversion spreads," a press note from the Union Bank of India informed on Saturday.

The India-Malaysia bilateral trade touched \$19.4 billion during 2021-22 and Saturday's announcement is expected to help bilateral trade to overcome currency-related obstacles.

Malaysia is the third largest trading partner of India in the ASEAN region, after Singapore and Indonesia that account for \$30.1 billion and \$26.1 billion respectively.

Modi calls on armed forces to stay ready to deal with threats

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The PM said steps are being taken to equip the three Services with the weapons and tech.

year to include a few multi-layered and interactive sessions with the participation of soldiers from every command of the Army, Navy and Air Force, including the Tri-Services Andaman and Nicobar Command, the statement said.

This three-day conference of combined apex-level military leadership of the country commenced on March 30 with the theme 'Ready, Resurgent, Relevant'.

"During the conference, deliberations over a varied spectrum of issues were held, including on national security and evolving a joint military vision for the future," the statement added.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had addressed and interacted with the top military brass on Friday.

This year's conference was special, wherein, inputs from the field units were sought on contemporary issues like changes in TTP (tactics, techniques, and procedures) and way forward for greater integration among the three Services, the Ministry said.

Macron invites Modi to Bastille Day parade

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

France has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Paris as a guest at the annual Bastille Day parade in July, sources confirmed, but said the visit is still under discussion.

The visit, which will add to Mr. Modi's already-packed diplomatic calendar, is likely to take place around July 14. The PM and French President Emmanuel Macron are expected to discuss a number of major agreements, including those on the Indo-Pacific region, nuclear power and defence, as the two countries mark the 25th year of their strategic partnership.

French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna, who attended the G-20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM) in Delhi last month, also gave an indication of the upcoming high-level meeting.

'Greater ambition'
"As we are about to celebrate this year as the 25th anniversary of the strategic partnership between India and France, now is the time to show greater ambition," Ms. Colonna had said at an event in Delhi, adding that a "quite visible" gesture could be expected. Last week, French media reported that the Elysée

invitation to Mr. Modi comes after Mr. Macron's inability to travel to Delhi in March, as he was originally expected to, due to a number of domestic issues and scheduling conflicts. Mr. Macron's plans to visit India in "early 2023" had been announced by the government after a visit by a senior French Minister in October last year.

French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna, who attended the G-20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM) in Delhi last month, also gave an indication of the upcoming high-level meeting.

'Greater ambition'
"As we are about to celebrate this year as the 25th anniversary of the strategic partnership between India and France, now is the time to show greater ambition," Ms. Colonna had said at an event in Delhi, adding that a "quite visible" gesture could be expected. Last week, French media reported that the Elysée



Narendra Modi

Presidential Palace had confirmed the invitation, hinting that a possibly large strategic agreement may also be announced at the time.

The External Affairs Ministry and the French Embassy in Delhi declined to comment on reports about the possible visit.

Diplomatic tightrope
If Mr. Modi accepts the invitation, it will add to an extremely busy international travel schedule over the next few months, as India continues to walk a tough tightrope between the

western countries and Russia over the Ukraine conflict. In particular, the government is keen to ensure a smooth summit of G-20 leaders. It will like to forge a consensus over a possible joint statement by then, particularly after the failure to make a breakthrough at two G-20 ministerial meetings including the FMM, where Russia and China refused to accept language from the previous G-20 summit in Indonesia, and France threatened to walk out unless the language was retained.

In May, Mr. Modi will travel to Hiroshima to attend the G-7 outreach at the invitation of Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, following which he will fly to Sydney to attend the Quad summit along with U.S. President Joseph Biden, Mr. Kishida and Australian PM Anthony Albanese. In June, Mr. Modi is likely to travel to the U.S. for a state visit, which will also be the first

for an Indian PM since 2009.

At the end of June, the PM will receive leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), including Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, and Central Asian leaders. While Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is invited to the SCO summit, slated to be held between June 30 and July 2, it is still unclear whether he will attend in person.

Officials did not confirm whether Mr. Modi's visit to France in July will be a standalone visit, or will entail other neighbouring countries. In August, he is also due to attend the BRICS summit along with Mr. Putin, Mr. Xi and Brazil's President Lula, hosted by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa in Durban. The PM will then host G-20 leaders on September 9 and 10 in Delhi.

(With inputs from Aroon Deep)

India-China border stable, says Chinese diplomat

Press Trust of India
KOLKATA

The earlier situation of "emergency control" at the India-China border is a matter of the past, and overall, it is stable at present, a senior Chinese diplomat said here.

Interacting with journalists on Friday evening, the Minister Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in India, Chen Jianjun, said the two Asian giants continued to maintain communication via diplomatic and military channels, promoting the transition of the border situation to "normalised management and control".

"The current border situation is overall stable," he said. "The Chinese side has always viewed and handled China-India relations from a strategic and long-term perspective. Although the relationship faces some difficulties, China's position has never wavered and we have been committed to pushing it back on the track of healthy and steady development," Mr. Jianjun said.

He said the two countries could draw strength from their ancient civilisations and share oriental wisdom with the world, so as to jointly maintain the stability of the global order. "In a world intertwined with changes and chaos, China and India could speak out loud for more institutional rights of developing countries. The two countries working together will bear on the future of Asia and beyond," he added.

Mr. Jianjun said China supports India in fulfilling its role during its presidency of G-20 and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. "China and India's bilateral trade continues to grow. Cultural, scientific, technological, educational and other people-to-people exchanges and cooperation resume in an orderly manner," he said.

700 injured in Ram Navami festivities in Hazaribag

Press Trust of India
HAZARIBAG

Around 700 people were injured while playing with swords and sticks during Ram Navami celebrations in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district, officials said on Saturday.

The celebrations, which began around 8 p.m. on Friday, concluded on Saturday night. Braving heavy rain, 91 *akharas* took part in the centuries-old celebrations in the town's Boddam Bazar in Bada Thakur Bari area, the officials said. The celebrations, marked by well-decorated tableaux touring the length and breadth of the town, was attended by over two lakh people.

3 men discharged in UAPA case by trial court in Delhi

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday discharged three men who were arrested and booked by the National Investigative Agency (NIA) for allegedly being key operatives of Indian Mujahideen (IM). Those discharged include Abdul Wahid Sidibappa, a driver who worked in Dubai and has been in jail since 2016, and Manzar Imam, a former Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) member lodged in prison since 2013. Ariz Khan, who had already been sentenced to capital punishment in the 2008 Batla House murder case, was discharged too.

Additional Sessions

U.P. to speed up survey of enemy properties

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

With the Centre launching a survey to identify enemy properties across the country as a precursor to monetising them, Uttar Pradesh is preparing to speed up its own survey, removing encroachments and assessing the value of such properties in the State. Enemy properties are those once owned by people who took Pakistani or Chinese citizenship after India's wars with those countries.

The U.P. government has sent a list of such properties to the districts where they are located, in order to assess their value. Officials are also removing temporary encroachments or occupancy of these properties, so that they can be auctioned in the future.

"We are working on a



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. FILE PHOTO

ken up and could be ready for being monetised. We are in the process of sending the monetised value of such properties [to CEPI], so they can be auctioned," the official added.

Already occupied
About 2,250 out of the 5,936 existing enemy properties located in U.P. are occupied. Of these, 1,467 such properties are occupied by mafia or by illegal occupants. Co-occupants have taken over 369 enemy properties, while 424 of them are occupied by tenants who were given the properties on rent at nominal rates by the successive State governments.

Out of 361 enemy properties in Lucknow alone, 105 are occupied by tenants who got them on lease at a very minimal rate. Likewise, in Muzaffarnagar, out of 274 such properties

properties, 85 are occupied by tenants.

Lucknow also has the highest number of properties where co-occupants are in possession. Shamli district has the highest number of illegal encroachments on enemy properties, with 268 out of 482 properties under illegal occupation, while Kaushambi district has 197 out of 456 enemy properties illegally occupied.

Encroachments
Earlier in November, during a meeting of the Home department, CM Yogi Adityanath issued guidelines to ensure the security of such properties located in different districts, and decided to appoint a principal secretary-level officer as a nodal officer to supervise the matters related to encroachment of enemy property.

RSS chief bats for 'Akhand Bharat', says it is the truth

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat on Friday said 'Akhand Bharat' was the undisputed truth and a divided Bharat was a nightmare.

Mr. Bhagwat said the separated parts of Bharat would unite one day. The RSS chief said Pakistan was "unhappy" as it got separated from India, and it would, one day, be merged into 'Akhand Bharat'.

"I am not saying that India should attack Pakistan, but there will be a day when people will think of doing it [becoming part of Akhand Bharat]. And it will happen," he said. He was speaking at a function in Bhopal to mark the birth anniversary of freedom fighter Hemu Kalani.

He stressed that Indians had a target to rejoin all the parts of India that were divided in the past. "A broken body cannot survive, it has to be fixed... We can leave that part of India but can never forget our relation which is attached with hearts," he added.

Some people have given contract to tarnish my image, says Modi

Flagging off the **Bhopal-Delhi Vande Bharat Express** in the **Madhya Pradesh capital**, he says that while some individuals are determined to dig his grave, every Indian, including from the deprived sections, has become his 'security shield'

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR



Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagging off the Vande Bharat Express at Rani Kamalapati station in Bhopal on Saturday. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan is present. ANI

pal. While he did not name anyone, it is understood that his words were aimed at Opposition parties that have continuously accused him of protecting businessman Gautam Adani over the past few months. The Opposition has also targeted the government over the recent disqualification

of Mr. Gandhi from Lok Sabha, and the alleged misuse of Central agencies.

'Security shield'

In his speech, Mr. Modi asserted that while "such people are somehow trying to tarnish his image", every Indian, including the deprived sections, had be-

come his "security shield".

Meanwhile, flagging off the Vande Bharat Express, the first such train for Madhya Pradesh and the 11th in the country, the Prime Minister said new arrangements and traditions were being put in place in modern India.

He also criticised pre-

vious governments saying that those who were busy with *tushikaran* (appeasement) could not focus on *santushtikaran* (satisfying people's needs).

Launching an attack on the Congress, he said the party believed that "one family was the first family of the country". He stated since the launch of the train was scheduled for April 1, many in the Congress thought "Modi would make everyone April Fool", but the train had actually started chugging on the same date.

Earlier, Mr. Modi expressed condolences for the people who lost their lives in the Indore stepwell disaster on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Sangeeta Sharma, vice-president of the Madhya Pradesh Congress Media Department, was reportedly detained by the police in Bhopal on Saturday. The party alleged that the detention was linked to the Prime Minister's visit.

IN BRIEF



Navjot Singh Sidhu released from prison in Patiala

Cricket-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu was on Saturday released from the Patiala prison in Punjab, after he served a one-year sentence in a 1983 road rage death case. Soon after his release, the Congress leader hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government at the Centre, alleging that every institution in the country was facing threat and that democracy was being muzzled and "has been chained." Debate and dissent, which are essence of the democracy, are being throttled, Mr. Sidhu said. The Congress leader added that Punjab was the country's shield, but there was a conspiracy being hatched to break the shield by attempting to impose President's Rule in the State.

Sanjay Raut claims death threat from Bishnoi gang

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Saturday claimed he allegedly received a death threat from the Lawrence Bishnoi gang calling him "anti-Hindu". He said it threatened to kill him like Punjabi singer Sidhu Moose Wala. Based on a complaint, the Mumbai Police on Friday took into custody a youth from Kharadi in Pune for allegedly sending the message. According to sources, the Rajya Sabha member received a WhatsApp message on Friday evening which said he would meet Sidhu Moose Wala's fate and that they would kill him with AK-47 in Delhi. "I have informed the police and I do not want to make it a political issue," the Sena MP said. Deputy Chief Minister Fadnavis, however, said the man had sent the message to Mr. Raut under the influence of alcohol and there was no *prima facie* link to Lawrence Bishnoi.

'Modi govt. is weakening laws on conservation of forests and wildlife'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



memorandum," Mr. Ramesh said.

Mr. Ramesh said the Bill on the proposed amendment had been referred to a Joint Select Committee and not the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Environment and Forest, that he heads, because the government simply wanted an endorsement of its proposal.

Earlier, the Congress leader had written to Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar to register his protest against the decision to send the Bill to a Joint Committee, and called the move a "devaluation and denigration" of Standing Committees.

Hitting back at Mr. Ramesh, Union Minister for Environment and Forests Bhupendra Yadav tweeted, "Jairam Ramesh says referring the Forest Conservation Amendment Bill to a

Joint Committee is 'devaluation and denigration' of processes. Will serve him well to take a hard look at how many Bills introduced in Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha were sent by Cong govt to the Joint Committee."

The Minister also shared details of how many times previous Congress governments had sent Bills to such Joint Committees. "The Congress is involved in a nefarious project to create doubt in the minds of people regarding all democratic institutions and democratic processes. They are doing this in India and also on foreign soil. This is a dangerous trend and must stop," Mr. Yadav added, in an apparent reference to former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi's lecture last month at the Cambridge University in U.K. that stirred up a controversy.

India is now exporting to over 85 countries, the Ministry said in a statement. "Indian industry has shown its capability of design and development to the world, with 100 firms exporting defence products at present. The rising defence exports and participation of 104 countries in Aero India

Defence exports have touched all-time high of ₹15,920 cr.: Rajnath

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

2023 are proof of India's growing defence manufacturing capabilities," it stated. The Ministry said India exports major platforms such as Dornier-228, 155 mm Advanced Towed Artillery Guns, BrahMos missiles, Akash surface-to-air missiles, radars, simulators, mine-protected vehicles, armoured vehicles, Pinaka rocket launch systems, ammunition, thermal imagers, body armour and others.

"There is growing global demand of Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)-Tejas, Light Combat Helicopters, aircraft carrier, Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul activities," the NGT said. The government can raise funds from households, commercial establishments and tourists who contribute to waste generation, as per the order. As per the order, 70.23% of the total 600 million litres per day of sewage generated in the State is currently not treated. Similarly, 28.2% of the total 3,871 tonnes per day of waste is also not processed.

Chhattisgarh to set ₹1,000 cr. for waste management: NGT

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has ordered the Chhattisgarh government to set aside ₹1,000 crore for solid and liquid waste management. "Ring-fenced amount of at least ₹1000 crores be set aside in terms of statement of the Chief Secretary, Chhattisgarh, which has been taken on record and such funds be kept as 'non-lapsable,'" the NGT said. The government can raise funds from households, commercial establishments and tourists who contribute to waste generation, as per the order. As per the order, 70.23% of the total 600 million litres per day of sewage generated in the State is currently not treated. Similarly, 28.2% of the total 3,871 tonnes per day of waste is also not processed. There is 7.71 lakh metric tons of legacy waste (unprocessed waste collected over the years) in seven Urban Local Bodies in the State and there is no categorical information about legacy waste in the remaining 162 ULBs.

WhatsApp group admins step in to restrict political messages

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

As election fever catches up in Karnataka, WhatsApp group admins are sending out disclaimer messages to group members to be cautious in sending unnecessary political forwards and requesting them not to put political messages in the groups.

Ubiquitous during elections and otherwise, reigning in unverified advertisements, photographs, hate speeches, and fake news on the platform has been a challenge for a long time. With conversations about politics heating up as the election nears, many admins, tired of political arguments and messages, are putting up restrictions on such chats and coming up with an unwritten code of conduct for groups.

One such message in Kannada on a WhatsApp group reads, "Since there is a model code of conduct in the State due to the elections, political debates, chats, fake news on politicians or political parties are not entertained in this group and members have to restrict putting up such



Illustration: Sebastian Francis

messages in the group and the admins are not responsible for any such messages."

Mohan D. on Bengaluru, an admin for a WhatsApp group, has also requested participants to restrict any politically motivated and misleading messages. "Before elections were announced, there were a few fake and propaganda-based political messages being circulated in the groups. But after the election date was announced, we are seeing a lot of such messages, which not only create fake propaganda but also lead to unnecessary political debates. Then we thought of warning the group members to avoid such messages."

A major tool for political parties

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

WhatsApp is also a big tool for political campaigning.

A volunteer in a social media team of a major political party said, "WhatsApp access and engagement time is far more than other social media platforms. We have more than 2,000 WhatsApp groups and are targeting to reach over 5,000."

Meanwhile, the Election Commission is monitoring political advertisements on social media and also fake news. All political advertisements on social media will require pre-certification from the Media Certification and Monitoring Committees at the district and State levels.

Provisions of the model code of conduct will also apply to the content being posted on social media by candidates and political parties. Any violation can lead to action by the EC.

No. 1/23-24

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The last date for receiving application is 28.04.2023.

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Sd/-
Registrar

Municipal Board Fatehpur-Shekhwati (Sikar)

Tel Ph. No. 01571-230020 email: fatehpur.jaipur@yahoo.com

Date: 10-03-2023

Notice inviting online bids for Rejuvenation of Water Bodies & Green Space work

NIB Code :- DLB2223A9935, Bid Title / (UBN) - DLB2223WSOB32343

Municipal Board Fatehpur (Sikar) invites online unconditional bids on behalf of the Governor of Rajasthan through e-procurement portal <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> in accordance with the RTPPAct2012 and RTPPRules2013, amended up to date and under national Competitive Bidding with Single Stage -two envelope Bidding procedure for following works. Tender Fee and Bid Security fee must be submitted on Nagar palika Account No 915010027964897 IFSC UTB002348 Axis Bank Ltd. Fatehpur and UTR Number Received from Bank written on submitted bid only Egrass Platform

MD RISL Fee On Account (8658-00-102-16-01) Local Bodies Department, Office Name/Code 33764 Municipal Board Fatehpur and all Challan will be upload on online bid.

Bid Issue Date 10-03-2023

Online Bid Submission Start Date 16-03-2023 Time 6:00 PM

Online Bid Submission End Date 05-04-2023 Time 6:00 PM

Technical Bid Opening Date 06-04-2023 Time 3:00 PM

S. No. Name of Work Estimated Cost (Rs. In Lacs.) Bid Security(2%) of Estimated Cost (in Lac.) Tender Fee pay to EO, Municipal Board, Fatehpur Shekhwati

1. Rejuvenation of Water Bodies & Green Space work near Dholi Satti with 5 Years O&M 308.49 6.17 5000/- 1500/- 12 Months

1. Detailed NIT & Bid Documents can be seen at the websites sppp.raj.nic.in and <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> and may be downloaded free of cost from <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>

2. Any subsequent addendum/corrigendum shall be published only at the websites sppp.raj.nic.in and <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>.

3. Bid Security & Tender Fee Payable to Executive officer Municipal Board Fatehpur Shekhwati (Sikar) & Processing Fee Payable to M.D. R.I.S.L. at Jaipur.

4. Technical sanction letter ref. no. 398 dated 16.02.2023 the following conditions are consider intender.

5. It including New Rules75A and notification on dated 22/02/2021.

6. The work shall be executed strictly as per the guideline of AMRUT2.0 after execution of the work, the benefits shall be delivered to citizen of city.

Raj Samwad/C/22/17183

Chairman

Executive Office

M ND-NDE

IN BRIEF



Pradhan's visit to boundary village in Odisha triggers row

Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan visited Phatsimeru, a village at Kotiagram panchayat in Koraput district to celebrate Odisha's Foundation Day on Saturday, escalating Opposition charge that the Biju Janata Dal government has utterly failed to protect the State's jurisdictional integrity. Both Odisha and Andhra Pradesh governments have been claiming their jurisdictional authority over Koti, which comprises 21 villages, for the past five decades. The visit of Mr. Pradhan assumes significance as the Naveen Patnaik government has been constantly drawing flak for not being able to protect the villages.

NIA nabs two persons in West Bengal detonator seizure case

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday arrested two persons in connection with the seizure of a huge cache of electric detonators in Birbhum district of West Bengal in June 2022. The agency had earlier arrested another accused, Rintu Sk., in connection with the case. The two accused arrested from Raniganj were identified as Merazuddin Ali Khan, a resident of Bokaro and Mir Md. Nuruzzaman, a native of Birbhum. "While Mir Md. Nuruzzaman had supplied 27,000 kg of ammonium nitrate to Rintu Sk., Merazuddin Ali Khan had supplied electric detonators and gelatine sticks to Rintu Sk.," a press statement by NIA said on Saturday.

Bhutanese King to meet PM, President on 3-day India visit

Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck will pay a three-day visit to India beginning Monday to expand the bilateral ties especially in the sphere of economic and development cooperation. The King will hold talks with President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Mr. Wangchuck will be accompanied by Tandi Dorji, Bhutanese Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said announcing the visit. It said the visit of the King is in keeping with the long-standing tradition of regular high-level exchanges between the two countries. *PTI*

Same-sex marriages attack on family system: Muslim body

Opposing petitions seeking validation of same-sex marriages, Muslim body Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind has moved the Supreme Court saying they are an attack on the family system and in complete contravention of all personal laws. Seeking intervention in the batch of petitions pending before the top court, the organisation also cited the Hindu traditions, saying the aim of marriage among Hindus is not merely physical pleasure or procreation but spiritual advancement. "This concept of same-sex marriage goes to attack the family system rather than making a family through this process," the Jamiat said. *PTI*

SUDOKU



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Poor testing of pashmina shawls still poses a problem

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI), a Valley-based traders' body, has raised the issue of confiscation and poor testing of pashmina shawls with the Union Minister for Forest, Environment and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav.

According to the body, there has been a growing seizure of shawl consignments by the Customs Department at international airports in the country.

"Exports of Kashmiri shawls will touch anywhere between ₹1,000 crore and ₹2,000 crore mark if the hurdles are removed. We apprised the Minister of the centuries-old cottage craft that has provided employment to tens of thousands of male and female artisans. We also discussed the product demand within and outside

the country," Javid Ahmad Tenga, president of the KCCI, said. The hurdles Mr. Tenga talks about begin at the airport. Basic microscopes may detect banned shahtoosh guard hair (wool from the chiru goat or Tibetan antelope) in what are classified as pashmina shawls (wool from the pashmina goat). Pashmina wool has a thread width of 13 to 16 microns, while shahtoosh has a width below 11 microns (the diameter of human hair is 70 micron).

Testing delays
"The shawl is then sent for further testing to laboratories, either in Dehradun or Kolkata. We have to wait for months together to get a report. Many times, the reports are inconclusive. By the time, traders are questioned and even CBI raids are carried out on artisans involved in the weaving of these pashmina



Going south: Exports of the shawl has dipped from ₹305 crore in 2018-19 to ₹272 crore in 2019-2020, ₹172 crore in 2020-2021, and ₹166 crore in 2021-2022. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

shawls," Tariq Dar, a Kashmiri exporter who owns the label Pashmkaar, said.

Mr. Tenga said the Ministry has promised to set up a DNA testing lab in Gugram. "We are hopeful this will help in the fast processing of consignments at the Customs Department," he added. The KCCI also demanded installation of the latest pashmina testing machine in

₹272 crore in 2019-20, to ₹172 crore in 2020-21, to ₹166 crore in 2021-22.

The Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) says that 537 illegal imports of shahtoosh scarves have been spotted by Switzerland authorities in the past five years, pointing at the continuous illegal trade.

Shahtoosh ban

Manufacturing of shahtoosh shawls was stopped in Kashmir since the ban was imposed in 2002 by the J&K government. The move came after the chiru population showed a downward spiral in the 1980s. A senior official of the WTI put the number of chiru in 2003 between 200-500 in the trans-Himalayan deserts of Ladakh. However, the population of chiru has been stabilising.

Traders are aware that shawls with shahtoosh fibre could be confiscated overseas for being a

banned item and attract stricter actions than in India. They say only a minuscule section may be involved in illegal trade. However, contamination is a reality that the government needs to look into.

Mahmood Shah, director of the Handicrafts and Handloom Department in Kashmir, said contamination is a "high possibility" and needs to be looked into from a scientific perspective. "Both pashmina goat and chiru are inhabitants of Ladakh's high-altitude Changthang belt. There is a possibility of herders mixing pashmina and shahtoosh fibre, when these animals shed their coats seasonally. Two, once traders purchase pashmina wool with shahtoosh contamination for spinning, artisans can't make out the difference. So, contamination at source is a high probability," Mr. Shah said.

It's the season of 'Aaya Ram, Gaya Ram' as many shift from BJP, JD(S) to Congress

Party-hopping has begun in Karnataka with the EC declaring the schedule for the Assembly poll; several MLAs, MLCs have secured Congress tickets after relinquishing their posts in rival parties

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

With the countdown for polling in Karnataka having begun, it is the season of party-hopping. Over a dozen leaders have quit the BJP and the JD(S) and joined the Congress over the past few days.

Political commentators often dub such candidates as 'Aaya Ram, Gaya Ram', alluding to Gaya Lal, a Haryana MLA who flitted in and out of the Congress thrice in a few days in 1967.

Several legislators like Kudligi BJP MLA N.Y. Gopalakrishna have quit the Assembly and are set to join the Congress. Mr. Gopalakrishna had won four times on a Congress ticket and may return to Molakalmuru, his home constituency.

Last week, two BJP MLCs, Puttanna and Baburao Chinchansur, quit their posts and joined the Congress.

Mr. Puttanna, a four-time MLC belonging to the Vokkaliga community, has been given the ticket for Rajajinagar in Bengaluru. He is likely to face BJP veteran S. Yediyurappa. The Congress will field him against the



Baburao Chinchansur



U.B. Banakar



Puttanna

Five-time MLA Mr. Chinchansur, who served as Minister in previous Congress governments, hails from the Koli community in Kalaburagi. Owing to differences with the Kharge family, he had quit the party in 2018 and joined the BJP. He seems to have played a crucial part in the defeat of Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge in 2019. The party is likely to give him a ticket to contest from Gurmitka. Nagangouda of the JD(S) had won the seat in 2018.

Yediyurappa's confidant
Former BJP MLC Mohan Limbikai also joined the Congress. A Lingayat leader from Hubballi, he was considered a close confidant of BJP veteran B.S. Yediyurappa. The Congress will field him against the

Upset over the denial of a ministerial berth in the Cabinet, BJP MLC A.H. Vishwanath has sided with the Congress. Former Minister H. Nagesh, who won as an Independent in 2018, has been given the ticket for Sorab. His opponent will be his brother and MLA Kumara Bangarappa of the BJP.

The Congress has also roped in former BJP MLA U.B. Banakar and offered him the ticket for Hirekerur. His opponent will be Agriculture Minister B.C. Patil (BJP). Former BJP MLA from Kollegal, Nanjundaswamy, was inducted into the Congress. His name is likely to figure in the second list. Former BJP MLA V.S. Patil from Yellapu too joined the party. He would be pitted against Minister Shivaram Hebbar.

Arsikere MLA K.M. Shivalinge Gowda has dropped enough hints of quitting the JD(S) and joining the Congress. Earlier, Y.S.V. Datta (JD-S) joined the Congress and is expected to get the ticket for Kadur.

Between brothers
Madhu Bangarappa, a former JD(S) MLA, joined the Congress and has been given the ticket for Sorab. His opponent will be his brother and MLA Kumara Bangarappa of the BJP.

India-Romania pact on defence to help in better cooperation

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

The defence cooperation agreement signed between India and Romania earlier this week will enhance collaboration through the exchange of expertise and knowledge on subjects of mutual interest including co-development and co-production of military hardware, says Simona Cojocaru, State Secretary and Chief of the Department for Defence Policy, Planning and International Relations of Romania.

"The agreement will promote cooperation in the field of defence between our States. Furthermore, this agreement will open up enormous opportunities in sectors such as defence medicine, scientific research, technology and research and development," Ms. Cojocaru told *The Hindu* on a couple of days ago.

Deepening ties
During her visit, she held discussions with her Indian counterpart, Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane.

She said the talks covered a wide gamut of issues, including the security situation in the Black Sea region and in the Indo-Pacific region and cooperation in the multilateral framework".

Northeast to have projects worth ₹1.76 lakh cr: Shah

The Hindu Bureau

GUWAHATI

The northeast will have functional connectivity projects worth ₹1.76 lakh crore by 2025, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said at Aizawl on Saturday.

The most significant of these projects is the **Kalandan Multimodal Transit Transport Project** in India, which has undertaken in Myanmar, he said after inaugurating and laying the foundation stones of 11 projects worth ₹2,500 crore in Mizoram. The Kalandan project connects southern Mizoram to the Sittwe port in Myanmar.

"Even with the introduction of CANI, they [BSNL] could not provide the service adequately," Dr. Irfan said, adding he had switched to Airtel at home. Overall, Dr. Irfan said, there was still much left to be desired. "Even after three years of [CANI's] launch, the services are not at a par to the States of mainland India," he said.

Undersea cable interests telcos, but is yet to solve Andaman's struggle with poor Internet

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

The undersea cable between the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Chennai, connecting the Union Territory to global Internet, has seen a reasonable level of interest from telecom operators, which have to buy bandwidth on the system to be able to serve islanders on mobile and fixed line connections with fast Web access.

According to information provided to *The Hindu* by the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), the BSNL alone has been allotted 40 GBPS in bandwidth in the largest segment of the 2,300-km-long cable, the one between Chennai and Port Blair.

Airtel has bought 20

GBPS in bandwidth on the smaller parts of the cable, between Port Blair and islands such as Car Nicobar, Campbell Bay, Long Island, and Rangat. The Chennai-Andaman & Nicobar Islands (CANI) cable was inaugurated in August 2020, and soon after, islanders with wired

home broadband and mobile connections in Port Blair, the capital, saw their speeds improve dramatically.

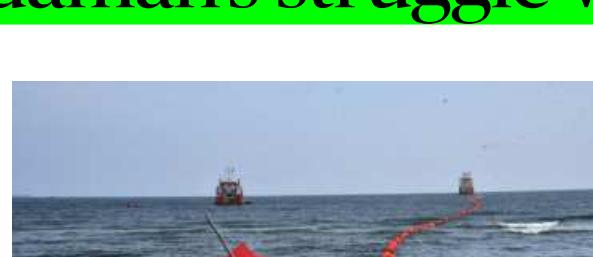
Mixed response
Nirman Lall, 39, a resident of Port Blair, said over a phone call, "Previously, I was paying ₹12,000 to

₹15,000 [for Internet] during the main [tourist] season... Now, I am paying 10% of what I used to pay for 10 times the speed."

However, outside Port Blair, the experience of Internet access remains mixed. "As you move away from the city, [Internet] lacks stability, as in some places it's good, and in other places it's weak or nil," Mohammed Irfan, a dental surgeon from Phoenix Bay, at the heart of Port Blair, said.

The official data – which indicates that only two telcos have bought a small amount of bandwidth between the capital and other islands – reflects this inequality.

Notably, the BSNL, which oversaw CANI's laying, does not appear to have updated its home



A file photo of the work on an undersea cable between Andaman and Nicobar and Chennai, on the Pattinampakkam beach.

broadband speeds to reflect the vast bandwidth it now has access to.

Tariffs listed on the BSNL Andaman & Nicobar Circle's website indicate that they exclude streaming subscriptions offered in other parts of the country, and only run up to 10 MBPS. Only 93 of its wireless base stations have 4G capability, with most only delivering 2G and 3G bandwidth.

"Even with the introduction of CANI, they [BSNL] could not provide the service adequately," Dr. Irfan said, adding he had switched to Airtel at home. Overall, Dr. Irfan said, there was still much left to be desired. "Even after three years of [CANI's] launch, the services are not at a par to the States of mainland India," he said.

JERUSALEM

Israeli police fatally shoot man at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque



The Israeli Police shot dead a man who they alleged tried to snatch an officer's gun at an entrance to a Jerusalem holy site Al-Aqsa Mosque on Saturday. Palestinian worshippers at the site had a different account, saying that police shot the man at least 10 times after he tried to prevent them from harassing a woman. AP

TORONTO

Indians among eight migrants found dead near Canada border



The Canadian Police said they recovered the bodies of two more migrants who drowned in the St. Lawrence river while trying to enter the U.S. illegally, taking the toll to eight, including members of an Indian family. The bodies were found on Friday in a marsh on the riverbank near Akwesasne. One other person is still missing. PTI

JALALABAD

Taliban shut down radio station run by women for playing music



A women-run radio station in Afghanistan's northeast has been shut down for playing music during the holy month of Ramzan, a Taliban official said on Saturday. Sadai Banowan, which means women's voice in Dari, is Afghanistan's only women-run station and started 10 years ago. It has eight staff, six of them women. AP

WYNNE

At least 18 killed after tornadoes batter U.S. Midwest and South



Storms that dropped possibly dozens of tornadoes killed at least 18 people across the South and Midwest of U.S., tearing a path through the Arkansas. Other deaths were reported in Alabama, Illinois and Mississippi, along with one near Little Rock, where the mayor said over 2,000 buildings were in a tornado's path. AP

Trump 'shocked', but 'ready to fight' charges against him

The leader is to be booked, fingerprinted and have a mugshot taken at a Manhattan courthouse on Tuesday before appearing before a judge as the first former U.S. President to face criminal charges

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

Donald Trump's legal team went on the offensive on Friday following his historic indictment, vowing the former President would never seek a plea deal and was ready "to fight" all charges. 76-year-old Trump, who is hoping to recapture the White House in 2024, chimed in with attacks on the prosecutors who brought the charges against him and the judge expected to hear the case.

"ELECTION INTERFERENCE, KANGAROO COURT!" Mr. Trump posted on his social media platform Truth Social, adding that Juan Manuel Marchal, the judge who may preside over an eventual trial, "hates me."

Mr. Trump is to be booked, fingerprinted and will have a mugshot taken at a Manhattan courthouse on Tuesday afternoon before appearing before a judge as the first ever former American President to face criminal charges.



Standing by Trump: A woman waves a flag in support of former U.S. President Donald Trump in Palm Beach on Saturday. AP

"The (former) President will not be put in handcuffs," said Joe Tacopina, one of Mr. Trump's attorneys, adding that he does not believe prosecutors will "allow this to become a circus."

Mr. Tacopina said the hush-money case being brought by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg against Mr. Trump faces "substantial legal challenges" and the former President would plead not guilty.

Mr. Tacopina said the hush-money case being brought by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg against Mr. Trump faces "substantial legal challenges" and the former President would plead not guilty.

Mr. Trump's pending arrest throws a political grenade into next year's White

House race and President Joe Biden sidestepped questions from reporters about the indictment of the Republican.

A New York grand jury indicted Mr. Trump on Thursday over a \$130,000 hush-money payment made to a porn star to buy her silence during his 2016 campaign. He has denied any wrongdoing and accused Mr. Bragg, a Democrat, of waging a "political witch-hunt" to derail his new White House bid.

In predicting his indictment, Mr. Trump called for protests and warned it could lead to "potential death and destruction" for the country. In a statement, the ex-President said he had already raised \$4 million for his 2024 presidential campaign following news of the indictment.

Extra security has been deployed for days around the courthouse where Mr. Trump is to be booked and arraigned, with the New York Police Department saying on Friday there were "no current credible threats" to the city.

Biden tells Russia to release U.S. reporter

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden on Friday called for Russia to release *Wall Street Journal* reporter Evan Gershkovich, who is being held on espionage charges, while rebuffing a call from the paper's editorial board to expel Russian journalists from the United States.

Asked by White House reporters what his message was to Russia regarding Mr. Gershkovich, a U.S. citizen, Mr. Biden said: "Let him go." The *Wall Street Journal*'s board of opinion editors called in a piece published on Thursday afternoon for the expulsion of Russia's Ambassador to the United States, and "all Russian journalists working here".

The timing of the arrest looks like a calculated provocation to embarrass the US and intimidate the foreign press still working in Russia," it added.

The Journal's editor in chief, Emma Tucker, sent a note to the newspaper's staff on Friday, saying that "we will carry on doing everything in our power to secure Evan's release".

Pakistan posts highest-ever annual inflation; stampedes for food, aid kill at least 16

Reuters
ISLAMABAD

Consumer price inflation in Pakistan jumped to a record 35.37% in March from a year earlier, the statistics bureau said on Saturday, as at least 16 people were killed in stampedes for food aid.

The March inflation number eclipsed February's 31.5%, the bureau said, as food, beverage and transport prices surged up to 50% year-on-year.

Thousands of people have gathered at flour distribution centres set up across the country, some as part of a government-backed programme to ease the impact of inflation.

At least 16 people, including five women and three children, have been killed in stampedes at such centres in recent days, police and officials have said. Thousands of bags of flour have also been looted from trucks and distribution points, according to official records.

The Pakistani police on Saturday arrested eight people in the southern port city of Karachi after a stampede killed 12 people at a Ramzan food and cash distribution point a day earlier.



A woman carries her child on her shoulder and a flour bag in Islamabad. AP

vance. The chief minister of Sindh province, where Karachi is located, announced compensation for people injured in the stampede and relatives of the victims.

On Saturday, police fired tear gas at crowds who gathered to receive free flour bags in the north-western city of Peshawar.

Annual food inflation in March was at 47.1% and 50.2% for urban and rural areas respectively, the bureau said. Core inflation, which strips out food and energy, stood at 18.6% in urban areas and 23.1% in rural areas.

The South Asian nation has been in economic turmoil for months with an acute balance of payments crisis while talks with the IMF to secure \$1.1 billion funding as part of \$6.5 billion bailout agreed in 2019 have not yet yielded fruit.

Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves have fallen to cover barely four weeks of imports. A monthly economic outlook report issued by the Finance Ministry on Friday projected inflation would remain elevated.

Post-U.S. visit, Taiwan President arrives in Central America

Agence France-Presse
GUATEMALA CITY



noon, where she was received with military honours and met by Foreign Minister Mario Bucaro. She held a brief meeting with Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei, whose government has declared Taiwan "the only and true China," before the two staged a joint press conference. "The ties between Guatemala and Taiwan are unbreakable," Mr. Giammattei said.

Iran's Chief Justice threatens to punish women without veils

Reuters
TEHRAN

Faced with an increasing number of women defying the compulsory dress code, Iran's judiciary chief has threatened to prosecute "without mercy" women who appear in public without veils, Iranian media reported on Saturday.

Gholamhosseini Mohseni Ejei's warning comes on the heels of an Interior Ministry statement on Thursday that reinforced the government's mandatory hijab law.

"Unveiling is tantamount to enmity with (our) values," Mr. Ejei was quoted as saying by several news sites. Those "who commit such anomalous

acts will be punished" and will be "prosecuted without mercy," he said.

Mr. Ejei, Iran's Chief Justice, said law enforcement officers were "obliged to refer obvious crimes and any kind of abnormality that is against the religious law and occurs in public to judicial authorities".

A growing number of Iranian women have been ditching their veils since the death of a 22-year-old Kurdish woman in the custody of the morality police in last September. Mahsa Amini had been detained for allegedly violating the hijab rule.

Government forces violently put down months of nationwide revolt unleashed by her death.

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice

Tender No : T No. 117 to 118/2022-23/SE/Q, AMRUT KIIFB - Construction of weir across Kallada river at Njanakadavu, construction of Transformer building, approach road retaining wall etc. at Njanakadavu and Vasoorichira. EMD : Rs. 50,000,000, Tender Date : 16.504.2023, 09.00 AM, Last Date for Submitting Tender : 25-04-2023, 02:00 pm, Phone : 04742745293, Website : www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in Superintending Engineer PH Circle, Kollam

AJMER VIDYUT VITRAN NIGAM LIMITED

Corporate Identification Number (CIN) : U40109RJ2005SC01542
Regd. Off.: Vidyut Bhawan, Panchsheel Nagar, Malaviwall Road, Ajmer - 305 004.

(TURN KEY WORKS CIRCLE) Phone : +91-145-2644507, Fax : +91-145-2644507, E-mail : etawvn2022@gmail.com, Website : www.avvn.com

No. AVVN/SE (TW)/XEN (TW)/I/EN/TN-443/D.3922 Dated - 31/03/2023

निविदा सूचना संख्या 23 (2022-23)

'E Bids in two parts (Technical Bid and Price Bid) are invited from eligible contractors for tenders enquiry under TN-443 for 11 circles of Ajmer Discom.

1. Short Term NIT No. AJD/SE/TW/ TN-443 for decide the operation & maintenance of 173 Nos. 33/11 KV Substation (in various Lots) in domain of Ajmer Discom. (UBN No. : AVV/2023SLOB00671)

All the details regarding tender is available at our website www.avvn.com and www.eprajasthan.gov.in. In future corrigendum/extension, if any shall be published only website www.avvn.com and www.eprajasthan.gov.in. Raj.Samwad/C/22/17158 Superintending Engineer (TW)

TAMILNADU MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD.

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Sl. No. Online Tender no./ Lot/Contract (RC) No./ Item with qty/ Document Cost

1. Online Tender No. E540/CGW/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 03.04.2023 - 18.04.2023

2. Online Tender No. E541/PLC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 03.04.2023 - 18.04.2023

3. Online RC Tender No. E542/SCOPER/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

4. Online RC Tender No. E543/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

5. Online RC Tender No. E544/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

6. Online RC Tender No. E545/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

7. Online RC Tender No. E546/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

8. Online RC Tender No. E547/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

9. Online RC Tender No. E548/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

10. Online RC Tender No. E549/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

11. Online RC Tender No. E550/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

12. Online RC Tender No. E551/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

13. Online RC Tender No. E552/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

14. Online RC Tender No. E553/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

15. Online RC Tender No. E554/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

16. Online RC Tender No. E555/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

17. Online RC Tender No. E556/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

18. Online RC Tender No. E557/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

19. Online RC Tender No. E558/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

20. Online RC Tender No. E559/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

21. Online RC Tender No. E560/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

22. Online RC Tender No. E561/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

23. Online RC Tender No. E562/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

24. Online RC Tender No. E563/TPC/RC/NT/UMS/CENG/2023, 05.04.2023 - 12.04.2023

25. Online RC Tender No. E5

SCIENCE

Novel catalyst offers to make hydrogen more viable as fuel

P. Sunderarajan

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mandi, have developed a novel carbon-based catalyst to make water electrolysis more efficient, as well as being more stable and affordable than other catalysts that perform the same function.

The findings were published in the journal *Carbon Trends* in October 2022.

The electrolysis of water

to split it into its constituent atoms using electricity — consumes a lot of energy. The traditional solution is to use a catalyst to induce the water molecules to split at a lower energy. Common catalysts are based on iridium and ruthenium, which are expensive and in great demand in other sectors.

In the new study, research groups of Assistant Professor Swati Sharma and Associate Professor Aditi Halder reported a po-

rous carbon material containing nitrogen that functions both as a catalyst and as the anode in electrolyzers, and could substitute the metal-based catalysts. The researchers produced this material, called 'laser carbon', by exposing a sheet of a polyimide polymer to a laser beam, carbonising the exposed bits and leaving the remainder rich in nitrogen.

In an electrolyser, the nitrogen atoms drew electron clouds towards them-

selves, encouraging nearby carbon atoms to bond with atoms or molecules containing electron pairs. So, the location of these atoms became active sites for the oxygen evolution reaction (OER).

The OER is a stumbling block in electrolysis because it has many intermediate steps and proceeds slower than the rest of the reaction cycle, thus reducing the energy efficiency.

Laser carbon intervenes by reducing the OER over-

potential: the difference between the voltage at which the OER takes place in reality and the minimum voltage at which it can take place. Lowering the overpotential allows OER to proceed vigorously.

According to Dr. Sharma, laser carbon is cheaper to produce, simpler to synthesise, and "can be batch-manufactured with a laser" in an environmentally friendly process, unlike other carbon-based catalysts.

Dr. Halder also said the production process increases the surface area laser carbon present to catalyse the reaction.

While the researchers also said that the material's catalytic activity is inferior to that of metal-based catalysts, it can be improved "in the fabrication process and use of other polymers".

(*Sunderarajan Padmanabhan is a Delhi-based freelance science correspondent*)

SNAPSHOTS



Indigenous cultures adopted horses of Spanish origin

Indigenous cultures of the American Great Plains and northern Rockies had integrated domestic horses of Spanish ancestry into their life ways long before the arrival of European colonisers to the region (*Science*). By integrating osteological, genomic, isotopic, paleopathological and radiocarbon evidence, Taylor et al. discovered that early domestic North American horses show a genetic affinity to Spanish horse, indicating a European origin and had spread throughout the region far earlier than previously believed.



Theropod dinosaur teeth were hidden behind thin 'lips'

Contrary to more than a century of scientific and popular depictions, the large teeth of *Tyrannosaurus rex* and other toothy theropod dinosaurs were likely completely covered by thin, scaly "lips" when the mouth was closed, a study says (*Science*). In contrast to their closest toothed crocodilian relatives, theropod teeth lacked any evidence of outer surface wear, indicating the existence of extraoral tissues and oral secretions needed to keep them hydrated and protected from exposure.



Intergalactic stream of cosmic carbon feeding massive galaxy

Radio telescope observations have revealed a cold stream of intergalactic atomic carbon gas feeding star formation in a massive radio galaxy in the young Universe. The findings provide observational evidence supporting theoretical cosmological models and offer new insights into the origins of the cosmic materials that enable galaxies to accrete gas, either in mergers with other galaxies or from streams of cold molecular gas.

Marburg virus outbreak in two African countries

Bani Jolly
Vinod Scaria

Early this year, Equatorial Guinea and Tanzania reported outbreaks of Marburg virus disease (MVD), the first-ever outbreaks of the disease in these countries. As the countries respond to the outbreaks through contact tracing and restricting movement across affected regions, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated the risk of spread of the disease as "very high" across both countries.

The Marburg virus was first identified in 1967 during outbreaks in Germany and Serbia and is known to cause severe and fatal viral haemorrhagic fevers in humans.

The virus is closely related to another deadly virus, Ebola and is rated as a high-risk pathogen by the WHO. Marburg virus is transmitted to humans through contact with infected animals such as fruit bats, and further human-to-human transmission can occur through direct contact.

with the bodily fluids of an infected patient or contaminated surfaces resulting in outbreaks.

Since its initial detection in 1967, several outbreaks of Marburg virus have been detected between 1975 and 2023, with African countries being the most affected and often with high fatality rates up to 90%, depending on the early access to quality care.

In recent years, and for the first time, isolated cases have been reported in Guinea and Ghana in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

New outbreaks

An outbreak of unknown haemorrhagic fever linked to a funeral ceremony was reported from Equatorial Guinea on February 7, 2023, which was later confirmed as Marburg virus on February 13 by the WHO. A month later, Tanzania reported an outbreak of MVD on March 21, after the detection of eight suspected cases, five of which were fatal. The genome sequence of a



Caution: There are no approved vaccines, antivirals or monoclonal antibodies for Marburg virus yet. GETTY IMAGES

Marburg virus from Equatorial Guinea was quickly made available in public domain by researchers. The sequence shows high similarity with Marburg virus genomes previously found in fruit bats, suggesting a potential zoonotic origin.

Is there a concern?

There are no approved vaccines, antivirals or monoclonal antibodies for Marburg virus yet and supportive care to manage symptoms and pre-

vent complications forms the mainstay. However, the WHO aims to accelerate trials of some investigational vaccines. Case detection through contact tracing, molecular diagnosis and quarantine is central to managing the spread of the disease.

While the two outbreaks have triggered a rapid response to control the spread, the outbreak in Equatorial Guinea has spread to multiple provinces and has even crept into a populous city, Bata.

(The authors are researchers at the CSIR Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, New Delhi. All opinions expressed are personal)

Surveillance

As the affected countries continue to make efforts to contain the disease and another country, Burundi, investigates a suspected outbreak of viral haemorrhagic fever, surveillance of emerging viral diseases is crucial to help early detection, monitoring the circulation and evolution, and develop effective diagnostics, prevention and control measures.

It is only natural that the concept of One Health is increasingly taking centre-stage.

(The authors are researchers at the CSIR Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, New Delhi. All opinions expressed are personal)

nutrients around the globe. This influences climate, sea level and the productivity of marine ecosystems.

According to a release, Matthew England, Deputy Director of the ARC Centre for Excellence in Antarctic Science (ACEAS) at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, says the modelling shows that if global carbon emissions continue at the current rate, then the Antarctic overturning will slow by more than 40% in the next 30 years — and on a trajectory that looks headed towards collapse.

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



Question Corner

Climate change

Will climate change result in slowing down Antarctic circulation?

Antarctic circulation could slow by more than 40% over the next three decades, with significant implications for the oceans and climate. Such decline of the ocean circulation will stagnate the bottom of the oceans and generate further impacts, affecting climate and marine ecosystems for centuries to come.

Cold water that sinks near Antarctica drives the deepest flow of the overturning circulation — a network of currents that spans the world's oceans. The overturning carries heat, carbon, oxygen and

The moratorium call on ChatGPT's successor

Why are tech leaders calling for a pause on developing more powerful artificial intelligence systems?

John Xavier

The story so far:

In March 29, Elon Musk and a group of AI experts signed an open letter calling for a moratorium on developing artificial intelligence (AI) systems that are more powerful than OpenAI's recently launched large language model (LLM), GPT-4. The letter, which at the time of writing had over 1,300 signatories, called on all AI labs to immediately pause, for at least six months, training of any systems more powerful than GPT-4.

What does the letter say?

Citing one of the Asilomar AI principles on how advances in AI could profoundly impact people's lives, the Future of Life Institute (FLI) issued letter noted that "AI labs are locked in an out-of-control race to develop and deploy ever more powerful digital minds that no one – not even their creators – can understand, predict, or reliably control." The Asilomar AI Principles are one of the earliest sets of AI governing principles laid out at the Beneficial AI 2017 conference hosted by FLI.

What is the context?

FLI's open letter comes amid rapid development and deployment of AI technology in several industries. Since OpenAI dropped its generative pre-trained (GPT) chatbot in November, allowing

Some AI experts feel the world is moving towards a scenario where machines will triumph over humans; others see AI advances as mediocre intelligence, which is potentially unreliable

could correct software codes, and explain almost everything on the Internet. Roughly three months after its launch, the company allowed developers to integrate ChatGPT's API with their applications for a fee. Enterprise version of the chatbot, called ChatGPT Plus, has already been integrated by Snapchat, Unreal Engine and Shopify in their applications. Such rapid adoption by businesses is heating up competition. Google has taken up the gauntlet.

The Alphabet-owned company launched Bard, a version of its Llama language model. In China, Internet giant Baidu has launched Ernie, an AI-powered chatbot that can summarise financial statements. Separately, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's media lab has developed ELSA, an AI bot that can act as a psychotherapy counsellor. It could potentially be deployed in cognitive behavioural therapy sessions.

Why does FLI's letter focus on GPT-4?

On March 14, OpenAI launched its most advanced LLM yet: GPT-4. This model has been trained on a trillion parameters, compared to ChatGPT's 175 billion parameters. Having access to such a large dataset allows GPT-4 to learn and understand complex patterns and nuances in natural language far better than its predecessor. Unlike ChatGPT, GPT-4 is capable of handling both text and image-based queries. This makes it versatile when compared to other AI language models. Such multi-modal advances give GPT-4 scale to get closer to artificial general intelligence (AGI). That means machine intelligence could be as good as human intelligence. Computer scientists and ethicists are grappling with this eventuality. Even Sam Altman, OpenAI's co-founder, wrote about the potential negative aspect of AGI stating this technology could come with "serious risk of misuse, drastic accidents, and societal disruption." He called on developers of AGI to figure out a way to get it right. "A gradual transition gives people, policymakers, and institutions time to understand what's happening, personally experience the benefits and downsides of these systems, adapt our economy, and to put regulation in place," he wrote.

What is the view of AI experts?

AI experts who have signed FLI's letter approach the rise of LLM-based bots from different vantage points. Some see these developments as accelerating humanity towards a doomsday scenario where machines will triumph over humans. Others see these advances as mediocre intelligence that are potentially unreliable.

Will it have the desired impact?

It is hard to say whether the letter will have its desired impact as OpenAI is already training GPT-4's successor. And the Microsoft-backed company has not yet responded to the open letter. According to some developers and tech entrepreneurs, GPT-5 could be indistinguishable to humans, and the language model could achieve AGI by the end of this year. This prediction comes at a time when there are no regulations in place to enforce a ban on developing AI. Currently, governments do not have any policy tools to halt work in AI development.

Can countries be sued over climate change?

Why has the UN asked the International Court of Justice to give an 'advisory opinion' on whether countries have legal obligations to protect people from climate extremities? Which country brought this issue to the UN? What happens next?

Suhasini Haidar

The story so far:

In March 29, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution that asked the International Court of Justice at The Hague to provide an opinion on what kind of obligations countries have towards climate change reduction, based on the promises they have made to the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC). What made it particularly important was that the resolution passed by consensus had been pushed through by one of the smallest countries in the world, the Pacific Island of Vanuatu, an island that was devastated in 2015 by the effects of Cyclone Pam, believed to have been spurred by climate change, that wiped out 95% of its crops and affected two-thirds of its population.

What does the resolution seek?

The draft resolution (A/77/L.58) invoked article 96 of the UN Charter to ask the ICJ to deliberate on two questions: 1) What are the obligations of states under international law to ensure the protection of the climate system for present and future generations? 2) What are the legal consequences under these obligations for states where they, by their acts and omissions, have caused significant harm to the climate system, particularly for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and for people who are harmed. The



India has been cautiously silent about the move, although it is supportive of the need for climate justice.

resolution refers to several international protocols including the Paris Agreement (2015), the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and even the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The entire process is expected to take about 18 months for the ICJ to deliberate and deliver its opinion.

What is India's position?

India has thus far been cautiously silent about the move, although it is generally supportive of the need for climate justice, and holding the developed world accountable for global warming. The government is understood to have referred the resolution to legal authorities in the country who will look into the implications and international ramifications of the ICJ opinion. India has updated its NDC (nationally determined contribution) commitments, as required by the 2015 Paris Agreement and has said it's on its way to sourcing half its electricity from renewable sources by 2030. However, it is significant that India did not join the overwhelming majority of countries that co-sponsored the draft resolution. In the neighbourhood, the list of co-sponsors included Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and a number of island countries in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). India is also watching how global powers like the U.S. and China respond to the resolution, as without their support, it will be hard to implement. During the discussion on the resolution, the U.S. representative voiced concerns about whether "launching a judicial process" was the best way to reach "shared goals". "Successfully tackling the climate crisis is best achieved via diplomatic efforts," the U.S. representative added, according to a UN press release. Indian officials have also said that the ICJ process can only speak about climate change issues and problems broadly and that it cannot name or profile any one country in the process. Pointing to the Paris agreement as a landmark shift towards a "bottom-up" approach, where states themselves determine their ability to mitigate climate change, they also said any attempt to impose an opinion in a "top-down" manner would be resisted. Many other countries are likely to voice their opinion as the process gathers momentum in the months ahead.

What do sponsors of the resolution want?

A legal opinion from the ICJ, the highest global court recognised by all 193 UN members is expected to bolster the efforts under the UNFCCC to ensure all countries work towards mitigating climate change and global warming to the suggested 1.5-2°C limit. While it is expected to give its opinion on the basis of the Convention

already consented to by all countries, what will be watched closely is what it says about more contentious issues such as climate reparations by the developed world, legal culpability for countries that don't achieve their NDC promises, and climate support to the most vulnerable parts of the world battling the effects of global warming. According to the latest IPCC "Synthesis report", global climate levels have already increased 1.1 degrees since pre-industrial levels in the past century, and deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions reductions, as much as by a half are required by 2030 to keep this goal. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said that the ICJ opinion was "essential", and would "guide the actions and conduct of states in their relations with each other, as well as towards their own citizens."

The UNGA route adopted by Vanuatu and its supporters also appears to have been more inclusive than two other attempts for an Advisory Opinion sought in December 2022 by Small Island States to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea; and another by Colombia and Chile in January 2023 at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) asking for an Advisory Opinion on human rights obligations for countries pertaining to the "climate emergency".

What sparked the idea for the resolution?

The original idea for taking the case for climate obligations to the highest legal court came from a group of 27 Pacific Island law students, who set up a campaign and brought it to the Pacific Islands Forum. Since 2019, the Vanuatu government, with the support of an 18-member "core group" of countries, has been promoting the idea of an Advisory Opinion from the ICJ. It prepared the draft resolution that was eventually co-sponsored by 132 countries at the UNGA and went through without a vote. While the U.S. was among a few countries that expressed some reservations, no country opposed the resolution. Vanuatu's Prime Minister Ishmael Kalsakau, who spearheaded the campaign, called it a "win for climate justice of epic proportions".

Is the advisory opinion of the ICJ binding?

The ICJ is being asked for an "advisory opinion", which by definition would not be legally binding as an ICJ judgment. However, its clarification of international environmental laws would make the process more streamlined, particularly as the COP (Conference of the Parties) process looks at various issues like climate finance, climate justice, and the most recently agreed to "loss and damages" fund at the COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh last year. The ICJ carries "legal weight and moral authority", said the sponsors of the resolution, and gave as examples advisory opinions given in the past on the Palestinian issue (Construction of the Wall) and nuclear threats that have been respected.

Why has Israel paused judicial reform plan?

What is the controversy around Benjamin Netanyahu's plan to overhaul the judiciary? Does it aim to curb the powers of the courts? Will the Prime Minister be able to build consensus with opposition parties to push through the Bills?

Stanly Johny

The story so far:

In the night of March 27, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that he would delay his government's plan to overhaul the country's judiciary by a month. The government's plan had triggered massive protests and strikes by the opposition, civil society as well as unions who accused the government of weakening the judiciary. Mr. Netanyahu, who came to power late last year with the support of ultra-orthodox and far-right parties, says he will not step back from the plan but seek to build consensus before pushing to pass it in the Knesset (Israel's Parliament).

What is the government's plan?

The judicial reform plan has a set of proposals which, together, will strengthen the government's hand over the country's courts. Currently, the Supreme Court can strike down any law passed by the Knesset. The government proposal seeks to curtail judicial review over legislation and then empower Parliament to override court decisions with a simple majority of 61 votes (out of 120). Another proposed change seeks to abolish the "reasonability test"

Faced with public anger, Prime Minister Netanyahu decided to delay contentious plans for the judiciary

the Supreme Court will no longer be able to judge the reasonability of Knesset legislation, government decisions or appointments. The government also seeks to take control of judicial appointments. Under the current set-up, judges are chosen by a nine-member committee – three Supreme Court judges (including the court President), two members of the Israeli Bar Association, two members from the Knesset and two from the government (Ministers). According to the proposed reforms, the members of the Bar Association would be replaced by two "public representatives" picked by the government, which means the government will have a majority of votes in the committee.

Why is the government pushing these Bills?

Over the years, Israel's polity has shifted towards the extreme right. The current government, composed of Likud (right-wing), United Torah Judaism and Shas (ultra-Orthodox) and Religious Zionist and Jewish Power, is the most right-wing government in the country's history. The far-right and religious parties have argued that Israel has lost its balance between the judiciary and the executive and the legislature. They are essentially saying that the judiciary is controlled by liberals and leftists, while the polity has shifted to the right. The government wants to give mass exemption from conscription to religious Jews. They have also passed a law preventing legal authorities from removing the Prime Minister from office terming him "unfit to rule" (only the Knesset and the Cabinet can remove the leader from office). But the government fears that the Supreme Court can strike down these plans unless the judiciary's powers are clipped. So for right-wing parties, the existing judicial structure is an impediment for their push to remake the Israeli state.

Why did Mr. Netanyahu back off?

The government's move to table the Bills in the Knesset triggered immediate protests. The protesters said that the Bills would weaken the judiciary and destroy the checks and balances in the system. Mr. Netanyahu himself is facing multiple charges and the Attorney General had asked him to stay away from the judicial

overhaul. Earlier this year, the Prime Minister had to drop one of his ultra-Orthodox colleagues from the Cabinet after the Supreme Court said the appointment of Aryeh Deri, leader of the Shas, as a Minister, was "highly unreasonable". They said the reforms, if passed, would give the government unchecked powers over the courts. Mr. Netanyahu initially dismissed the protests, while Itamar Ben-Gvir, the far-right leader of Jewish Power, warned the Prime Minister against "surrendering to the anarchists". But the protests only grew in strength, drawing in criticism from abroad as well. The turning point was Defence Minister Yoav Gallant breaking ranks with the Prime Minister. Mr. Gallant, a former Major General and a member of the Prime Minister's Likud party, asked the coalition to delay the judicial overhaul, citing security concerns. Opposition to the Bills had spread to Israel's reservists as well as its diplomatic community. Some of the military reservists, in protest, failed to report, mounting pressure on the defence establishment. Mr. Netanyahu fired Mr. Gallant, but it only made matters worse. Spontaneous protests broke out across the country on Monday and Israel's largest union, with some 8,00,000 members, struck work, grounding flights, shutting government offices, universities and public places. Faced with unprecedented public anger, Mr. Netanyahu decided to delay his plans.

What happens next?

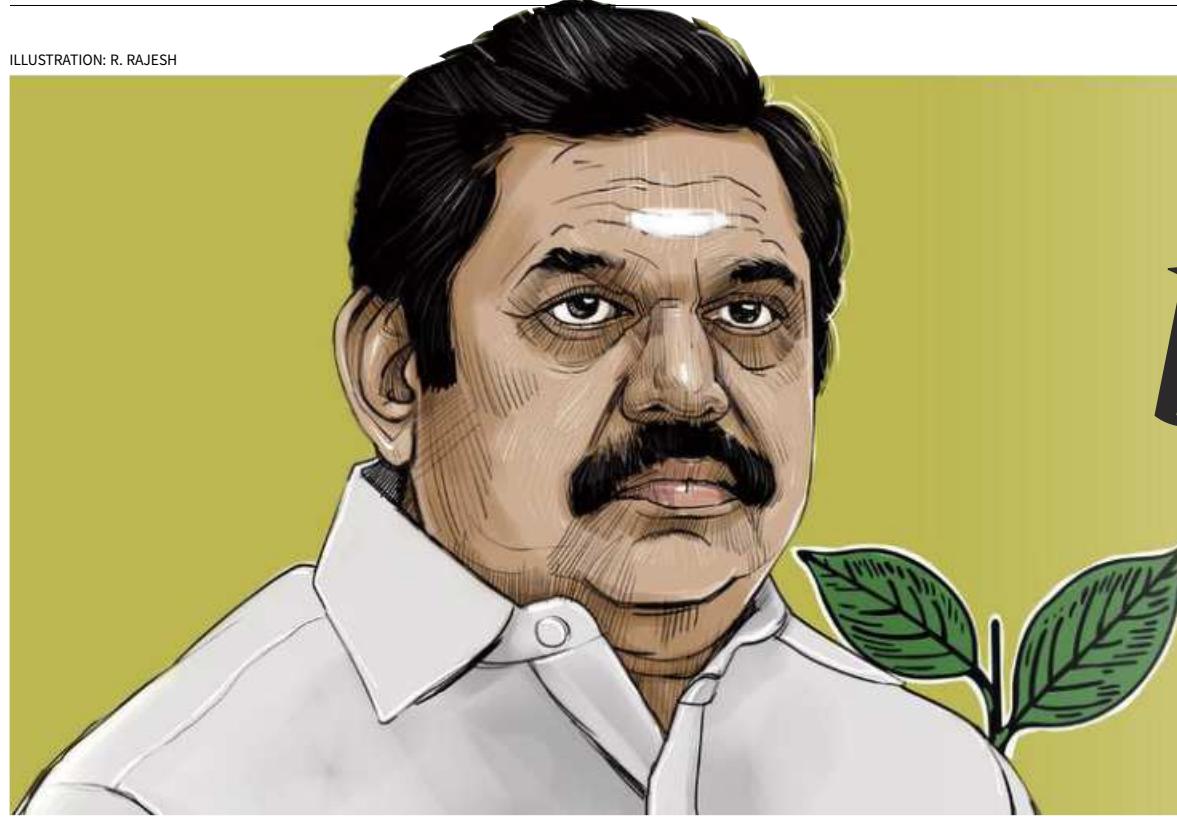
For now, Mr. Netanyahu, despite the setback, has managed to keep his right-religious coalition together. But Israeli media have reported that to get Mr. Ben-Gvir's approval for the delay, the Prime Minister has agreed to form a new security body called the national guard under Ben-Gvir's National Security Ministry. Mr. Ben-Gvir and other allies have supported the delay for now, but they have not backed off from their push to reform the judiciary. Mr. Netanyahu plans to build consensus with main opposition parties Yesh Atid and Blue and White before pushing for the Bills. But it's not clear how much compromise Mr. Netanyahu's allies would accept. Even if a compromise formula emerges, how will the Prime Minister sell it to the public as the protests were not driven by opposition parties alone. Mr. Netanyahu, who first came to power in 1996, has seen many a rise and fall. From every challenge, he has emerged stronger. But this is perhaps the biggest political challenge he is facing in his career.



Stiff resistance: Clashes erupt during a demonstration against the Israel government's judicial overhaul in Jerusalem on March 27. GETTY IMAGES

PROFILES

ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH



Accidental leader, born politician

Edappadi K. Palaniswami

The former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, who rose to the top from the political uncertainty that followed Jayalalithaa's death, has since won the loyalty of party colleagues, neutralised challengers and consolidated his grip over the AIADMK

D. Suresh Kumar

In politics, accidental leaders eventually fade away after hogging the limelight in the positions to which they were catapulted by circumstances or by their masters. Only a few manage to change the tide in their favour or outwit their political handlers.

Former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami belongs to that breed of politicians who emerge from relative obscurity and seize opportunities to checkmate opponents by making the right moves on the political chessboard. Starting off from the lower rung, he has taken over as general secretary of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), a party that had ruled the State for over 30 years. Ahead of the Lok Sabha election in 2024, this role puts him in the driver's seat of an AIADMK-led alliance, which will likely include the Bharatiya Janata Party.

His rise was slow and steady for much of his political career, but accelerated in recent years by an element of impatience and an uncanny ability to ruthlessly neutralise opponents.

In 1989, at 35, he debuted in the Legislative Assembly with his leader Jayalalithaa, then heading a faction of the AIADMK after the death of party founder M.G. Ramachandran (MGR). The name of his constituency, "Edappadi", got prefixed to his name. He served briefly in the Lok Sabha (1998-99), before joining Jayalalithaa's Cabinet in 2011. Yet, Mr. Palaniswami largely remained an inconsequential

political figure outside his native turf in western Tamil Nadu. There was nothing noteworthy about the performance of this jaggery trader-turned-politician in the Assembly or Parliament.

As a Minister holding the meatier portfolios of Highways and Public Works Department (PWD) and ranked within the top five in the Cabinet seniority order, he preferred to be reverent to Jayalalithaa. Till her death in December 2016, he remained out of media limelight as were most Cabinet colleagues. There were whispers in political corridors about him being one among Jayalalithaa's kitchen cabinet members. In the party hierarchy, he was not prominent, though Jayalalithaa appointed him propaganda secretary, a post created by MGR for her in the early 1980s, and later an organising secretary.

Household name

It was only on Valentine's Day in 2017, when he met Governor C. Vidyasagar Rao staking claim to form the government, that Mr. Palaniswami became a household name in Tamil Nadu. However, the only perception people had was that of Mr. Palaniswami being a protégé of V.K. Sasikala, an extra-constitutional authority and former close aide of Jayalalithaa. People cringed at visuals of him crawling and prostrating to seek her blessings. What no one guessed was that the rustic man, with a tinge of holy ash smeared on his forehead and a toothy smile that would become his trademark, had stooped to conquer.

The circumstances under which he

emerged as Chief Minister-designate were tumultuous. Ms. Sasikala had planned to step into her "surrogate sister" Jayalalithaa's role after getting O. Panneerselvam, hand-picked by her to be a "remote-controlled Chief Minister", to resign. Misguided by some external handlers, he revolted. She faced another setback when the Supreme Court convicted her in a corruption case in which Jayalalithaa was the prime accused.

With a majority of the AIADMK legislators herded together in a backwater resort to prevent defections to the Panneerselvam camp, Mr. Palaniswami, regarded by Ms. Sasikala as a loyalist, made the right moves. With the backing of his Gounder community, which had a large bloc of MLAs, he opened up resources to get more support. Given the precarious numbers in the Assembly, many believed Mr. Palaniswami may not last his tenure. But they were yet to see his survival instincts.

Before Ms. Sasikala headed to the Bengaluru prison, she appointed her nephew T.T.V. Dhinakaran, who had been expelled by Jayalalithaa, as the AIADMK deputy general secretary. The former MP decided to contest the bypoll in the Dr. Radhakrishnan Nagar constituency in Chennai, vacated by Jayalalithaa.

Mr. Palaniswami, a born politician, quickly sensed it will not be long before Mr. Dhinakaran came for his Chief Ministerial seat. Cognisant that he was no mass leader, he did what it took to earn the confidence of his Cabinet colleagues and legislators. He presented them with a choice – be

subservient to the Sasikala family and survive on their benevolence; or stand by his side and enjoy the fruits of power. The Sasikala family was soon isolated. Thereafter, Mr. Palaniswami quelled a rebellion from 19 legislators supporting Mr. Dhinakaran, by extending an olive branch to Mr. Panneerselvam and his 10 MLAs to save the government. The AIADMK migrated to a dual leadership with Mr. Panneerselvam and Mr. Palaniswami enjoying equal powers as coordinator and joint coordinator.

Mr. Panneerselvam, a three-time former Chief Minister, appeared content with his rehabilitation as Deputy Chief Minister in the Cabinet. But Mr. Palaniswami was quietly doing everything to keep legislators and party functionaries happy and consolidating his hold on the party. This helped him foil Mr. Panneerselvam's bid to be the party's Chief Ministerial face in 2021.

Blessing in disguise
As an administrator, he was initially seen as weak and doing the bidding of the Narendra Modi government at the Centre. This partly led to the AIADMK alliance's crushing defeat in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, he appeared clueless, calling it only a "rich man's disease". However, the same pandemic proved a blessing in disguise for Mr. Palaniswami to stabilise his administrative position. After grasping the situation, he toured Tamil Nadu overseeing measures to contain the spread of the infection. He began to confidently handle questions

from journalists, taking him closer to the people who watched him on news channels. Over time, he would address meetings without speech notes.

Eventually, Mr. Palaniswami managed to give the DMK-led front a tough fight and his alliance won 75 seats – many from western Tamil Nadu – in the 234-member House. But he grew wary of the AIADMK's dual leadership. Mr. Panneerselvam, who had fewer supporters in the party's general council, was using his co-signatory powers to extract disproportionate benefits in matters of election ticket distribution. So, last July, Mr. Palaniswami sprang a surprise on Mr. Panneerselvam by getting his supporters to push for migrating to a unitary leadership. It was a political fight, which a miserably outnumbered Panneerselvam converted into a legal fight. It led to Mr. Panneerselvam and his supporters being expelled. With a single judge of the Madras High Court clearing the decks, Mr. Palaniswami has taken over as the general secretary, earning the acknowledgement of alliance party leaders. Mr.

Panneerselvam has gone to appeal before a Division Bench. There is little doubt that Mr. Palaniswami would have the last laugh in this matter. However, the challenge has just begun for him. His performance as the Leader of Opposition has been lacklustre. To survive in the long term, he would have to proactively take on the ruling DMK and win battles on the electoral front. The Lok Sabha polls are just a year away and he has to deliver to keep the flock together.

THE GIST

In 1989, at 35, he debuted in the Legislative Assembly with his leader Jayalalithaa, then heading a faction of the AIADMK after party founder M.G. Ramachandran's death

He served briefly in the Lok Sabha (1998-99), before joining Jayalalithaa's Cabinet in 2011, but largely remained an inconsequential political figure outside his native turf in western Tamil Nadu

It was only on Valentine's Day in 2017, when he met Governor C. Vidyasagar Rao staking claim to form the government, that Palaniswami became a household name in Tamil Nadu

Into the future

Humza Yousaf

Scotland's new First Minister faces great challenges as he has to unite the party, rebuild public support for its independence campaign while addressing economic headwinds

Narayan Lakshman

With the election of Humza Yousaf (37) as the new head of the Scottish National Party (SNP) and the next First Minister of the country, social media was agog with jokes about how, between him and U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, two sons of Pakistan and India, respectively, would negotiate the partition of the U.K. and independence of Scotland generations after a similar drama played out in the Indian subcontinent. The irony of the colonial project coming full circle in a small corner of Western Europe is undeniable. Yet, it is a fact that Mr. Yousaf, the son of Pakistani immigrants, the first ever Muslim and person of Asian descent to take up the top executive role in the Scottish government, and also the youngest leader in that capacity, has a long and potentially bumpy road ahead to make good on his campaign promises, including delivering the independence Scotland.

A life in politics

Born in Glasgow in 1985, Mr. Yousaf is the grandson of immigrants who travelled from Punjab to Scotland in the 1960s. While his father's family is originally from Pakistan, his mother's family were based in



Kenya. Growing up in Glasgow, Mr. Yousaf was privately educated at Hutchison's Grammar School and became interested from a young age in politics, a subject that he went on to study later at the University of Glasgow, graduating with an MA in 2007.

Mr. Yousaf kicked off his political journey as an office manager for the SNP's Bashir Ahmad, the first Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) of Muslim-Asian heritage. In the wake of Ahmad's passing in 2009, Mr. Yousaf went on to work for other MSPs, including Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon, both First Ministers of Scotland.

In 2011, he was elected as an MSP from the Glasgow region, and he made waves for taking his oath to the Queen in English and in Urdu, and then repeated this after his 2016 re-election. For example, his record running Scotland's National Health Service came under fire for long waiting times and he was criticised for urging the public to "think twice" before calling 999 in late 2021.

Yet, more than any of these expected comments from his detractors in Scottish politics, the greatest challenge that Mr. Yousaf faces is the factionalised state of the SNP itself. Mr. Yousaf has pitched himself as the "continuity candidate" who will step into the shoes of his predecessor Nicola Sturgeon and take her agenda forward on the Scottish independence campaign. However,

the SNP government was a long a fruitful one, which saw him serve in multiple capacities over the years, including as Transport Minister, Justice Secretary and Health Secretary.

However, he has often faced brickbats for leading sectors of government that underperformed in terms of service delivery to the people. For example, his record running Scotland's National Health Service came under fire for long waiting times and he was criticised for urging the public to "think twice" before calling 999 in late 2021.

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Plan for the paradise

Great Nicobar Project

After getting a series of expeditious clearances in the last two years, a ₹72,000-crore mega project for the 'holistic development' of the Great Nicobar Island is now in the offing

Diksha Munjal

In February 2021, India's National Marine Turtle Action Plan mentioned Galathea Bay on the south-eastern coast of the Great Nicobar Island as one of the "Important Marine Turtle Habitats in India". Beaches on either side of the Galathea River are the most important nesting sites in the northern Indian Ocean for the Leatherback turtle, the world's largest marine turtle. The Action Plan says coastal development projects are major threats to turtle populations. But this kind of development is exactly what is planned for the future of Galathea Bay under the ₹72,000-crore mega project piloted by NITI Aayog for the "holistic development" of the Great Nicobar Island (GNI), situated at the southern end of the Andaman and Nicobar group of Islands in the Bay of Bengal.

If he wishes to leave behind a legacy for Scotland, Mr. Yousaf will not only have to unite the SNP and rebuild support for its independence campaign, but he will have to do so while facing the economic headwinds of rising inflation and energy costs, and tackling the difficult question of NHS reforms.



through a bruising leadership contest in the wake of Ms. Sturgeon's surprise resignation as First Minister, Mr. Yousaf appears to have lost the support of his rival, Kate Forbes, a pro-business candidate, who rejected his subsequent offer to become Rural Affairs Secretary, likely as it was considered a demotion from her prior role as Finance Secretary.

London is also in no mood for compromise, it appears: while Westminster might have hemmed and hawed over Ms. Sturgeon's forays into referendum territory, it appears to perceive the relative lack of internal strength within the SNP at this time, and might be content to string Mr. Yousaf along as he struggles to build momentum for his campaign. Support for independence has dropped among Scots, to 39%, less than the 44.7% who backed the campaign in the 2014 referendum, and considerably lower than the 58% that the proposal got in 2020.

For the population, the Shompen and the Nicobarese were the sole inhabitants of the island until the government set up seven revenue villages, settling 330 ex-servicemen families from 1969 to 1980. These three communities make up the over 8,000 population of southern Nicobar, which includes GNI, Little Nicobar, and other small islands. The island has been home to two isolated and indigenous tribes – the Shompen and the Nicobaris – for thousands of years. The GNI was declared a biosphere reserve in 1989 and included in UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme in 2013. It has an unparalleled array of microhabitats. These habitats host numerous species, including marine animals, reptiles, birds, mammals and amphibians. Several of these, like the Nicobari Megapode, are endemic to GNI and found nowhere else in the world.

This unique ecological setting faces significant and imminent alterations as the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) late last year cleared the decks for the mega project, which ecologists, anthropologists, domain experts, and former civil servants have called an impending ecological disaster. NITI Aayog, however, says its plan is aimed at tapping the "largely unexplored potential" of the island.

The plan has four components – a ₹35,000 crore

prehistoric rainforests.

For a project of this scale, size, and duration, the Great Nicobar plan has been accompanied by uncharacteristic haste in receiving various clearances. The plan was first floated at the height of the pandemic in 2020 and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO), based in Port Blair, was charged with implementing the project. In September of that year itself, NITI Aayog issued a request for proposal for preparing the master plan for the project. In March 2021, a little-known company, Gurugram-based AECOM India, released a 126-page pre-feasibility report for NITI Aayog. In October last year, it got stage-1 (in-principle) forest clearance, while the environmental clearance was given on November 11 by the Ministry.

The GNI lies between the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea in a tectonically sensitive zone. Researchers and NGOs from across the country have raised several concerns relating to the tectonic volatility and disaster vulnerability of the islands, which have experienced nearly 444 earthquakes in the past 10 years. The tribal communities, who were displaced in the 2004 Tsunami, are still recovering from its impact.

The GNI has a transshipment port at Galathea Bay, a dual-use military-civil international airport, a power plant, and a township, to be built over 30 years on more than 160 sq. km of land, of which 130 sq. km is primary forest. The northern end of the project falls in the biosphere reserve, which means a part of this protected region will have to be allotted to the project.

Hasty clearances

As for the population, the Shompen and the Nicobarese were the sole inhabitants of the island until the government set up seven revenue villages, settling 330 ex-servicemen families from 1969 to 1980. These three communities make up the over 8,000 population of southern Nicobar, which includes GNI, Little Nicobar, and other small islands. The island has been home to two isolated and indigenous tribes – the Shompen and the Nicobaris – for thousands of years. The GNI was declared a biosphere reserve in 1989 and included in UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme in 2013. It has an unparalleled array of microhabitats. These habitats host numerous species, including marine animals, reptiles, birds, mammals and amphibians. Several of these, like the Nicobari Megapode, are endemic to GNI and found nowhere else in the world.

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IN BRIEF



SAIL posts record steel production in 2022/23

Steel Authority of India (SAIL), the country's biggest state-owned steel producer, said it posted record high annual production in the 2022/23 year ended March 31. The steel maker produced 19.41 million tonnes of hot metal, up 3.6% from a year earlier, the company said in a statement. Crude steel production stood at 18.29 million tonnes, up 5.3% from last year. **REUTERS**

ECB's De Guindos warns of broad risks in financial sector

The European Central Bank (ECB) is monitoring broad risks across the financial sector and will act to preserve stability in the euro area, ECB VP Luis de Guindos said. He also reassured on the established banking sector in the single currency zone, saying banks had strong capital and liquidity positions but warned of wider dangers elsewhere in the system. Mr. De Guindos added while headline inflation was likely to decline considerably this year, underlying inflation dynamics would remain strong. **REUTERS**

India office space demand slid 19% on global uncertainties'

India's office demand has been affected by global economic uncertainties with gross leasing of workspace falling 19% in January-March across six major cities, according to Colliers India. The real estate consultant on Saturday released data on the office market. "Share of the technology sector has declined steadily from 34% in Q1, 2022 to 22% in Q1, 2023, as corporates continue to focus on building in operational efficiencies through a hybrid model," said Peush Jain, MD, Office Services, India, Colliers. **PTI**

Polyester, yarn makers can get BIS stamp till July 3

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

The Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals has given time till July 3 for manufacturers of polyester filament, POY, industrial, grey and white yarns to get Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) certification. The Quality Control Orders for these were earlier mandatory from April 3.

Welcoming the announcement, Ravi Sam, chairman of Southern India Mills' Association, however sought exemption for specialty fibres, be it viscose or polyester, that are not made in India.

SEBI said to be probing some Adani offshore deals for possible rule violations

Reuters
MUMBAI

India's market regulator is investigating possible violation of 'related party' transaction rules in the Adani Group's dealings with at least three offshore entities that have links to the brother of the conglomerate's founder, two people said.

The three entities allegedly entered into several investment transactions with unlisted units of the ports-to-power conglomerate founded by billionaire Gautam Adani over the last 13 years, said the sources

with direct knowledge of the matter.

Vinod Adani, Gautam Adani's brother, is either a beneficial owner, director or has links with those three offshore entities, said the two sources, adding the regulator, the Securi-

ties and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), is probing if lack of that disclosure violated 'related party transaction' rules.

Under Indian laws,

direct relatives, promoter groups and subsidiaries of listed companies are considered related parties. A promoter group is defined as an entity that has a large shareholding in a listed company and can influence company policy.

Transactions between such entities have to be disclosed in regulatory and public filings and require shareholder approval above a set threshold.

Aerospace sector on upswing; unlikely to see any alarming signs of recession'

Sustainability is the most critical focus area for the global aerospace industry today; India is already becoming a significant player in global aerospace industry, says Eaton's Aerospace Group executive

INTERVIEW

Desmond Goh

Mini Tejaswi



the aerospace sector as a whole?

The aerospace industry is now witnessing an upswing globally and is unlikely to see any alarming signs of recession, said Desmond Goh, MD-Asia Pacific, Aerospace Group, Eaton, a Dublin-based intelligent power management firm.

What will be the impact of a global recession and the ongoing geopolitical tensions on

gotten out of the recession, after the pandemic. It is on an upswing and is expected to continue to see a rising market for some time. We are continuing to monitor the situation, however, from the overall industry or from market perspective, we don't see any near-term alarming signs.

What are the emerging trends in the industry?

Sustainability is one of the most dominant trends that is sweeping across the global aerospace industry today. It's about developing the most sustainable aircraft, designing the best energy-efficient engines

and deploying more eco-friendly systems. It is about electrification, additive manufacturing and 3D printing, to minimise the use of aviation fuel, reduce the weight of the aircraft, and bring down the impact of flying on the planet.

Is India on the same page as global industry?

India is already becoming a significant player in the global aerospace industry. For instance, Aero India 2023 held in Bengaluru, saw a substantial presence of the entire ecosystem and not just traditional market segments like Boeing, Airbus and Cummins.

Small savings to nudge up govt. interest cost'

Bank of Baroda economists see interest cost on borrowings from these instruments rising to 6.75% from 6.47%; still expect costs on those borrowings will be significantly lower than the estimated average cost range of 7.29%-7.35% for the Centre's planned ₹8.88 lakh crore market borrowings in H1

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

The Centre's decision to increase interest rates by 10-70 basis points on most small savings schemes for this quarter, will raise the government's interest costs on borrowings from these instruments to 6.75% from 6.47%, according to an assessment by Bank of Baroda economists.

The government plans to tap small savings schemes for financing its debt beyond the record gross market borrowings of ₹15.43 lakh crore proposed in 2023-24.

Despite the increased

Small price

The 10-70 basis points increase in interest rates on small savings will marginally bump up the Centre's borrowing costs

■ Govt. plans to tap small savings for financing its debt beyond FY24's proposed gross market borrowings of ₹15.43 lakh crore

■ Centre has budgeted ₹6.48 lakh crore as receipts from small savings this fiscal

■ Interest outgo on small savings to rise to ₹43,731 crore, from ₹41,917 crore: Abhyankar

rates on small savings, the interest costs on those borrowings will be significantly lower than the average cost range of 7.29%-7.35% estimated by the economists for the ₹8.88 lakh crore market borrowings

the Centre plans to undertake in the fiscal first half.

"For 2023-24, the Government has budgeted ₹6.48 lakh crore as receipts from small savings," Bank of Baroda economist Jahnavi Abhyankar wrote in a

research note. "After deducting repayments, the net securities against small savings have been earmarked at ₹4.74 lakh crore," she added.

Inched up'

"By calculating the component-wise borrowing costs and using the revised interest rates, it has been estimated the overall interest payment for government with the revision has inched up to 6.75% from 6.47%," Ms. Abhyankar said, adding this would entail a marginal uptick in the interest cost, from ₹41,917 crore based on the old rates, to ₹43,731 crore.

While the Public Provi-

dent Fund (PPF) rate has been retained at 7.1%, the Finance Ministry has raised rates for most other small savings schemes including time deposits with post offices, National Savings Certificate, Kisan Vikas Patra and the Sukanya Samridhli Account (SSA).

The SSA will now yield 8% to investors, but the highest return is being offered on Senior Citizens' Savings Schemes at 8.2%. The returns on the PPF and the SSA are tax-free.

As per Reserve Bank of India data on small savings from last year analysed by Ms. Abhyankar, the PPF accounts for almost 8% of investments in small savings

schemes, savings certificates account for another 23% and time deposits amount to 69%.

Starting Saturday, a new small savings instrument, the Mahila Samman Savings Certificate, 2023, has been introduced for women and is available at 1.59 lakh post offices. The scheme, valid for two years, offers 7.5% return for investments up to ₹2 lakh, and provides a partial withdrawal option.

Separately, the Centre has doubled the investment limit into the Senior Citizens' Savings Scheme to ₹30 lakh, and that on the Monthly Income Account Scheme to ₹9 lakh.

Maruti, Hyundai, Tata report record wholesales in FY23

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Govt's total liabilities rose 2.6% in Q3 FY23: report

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Centre's total liabilities rose to ₹150.95 lakh crore in December 2022 quarter from ₹147.19 lakh crore in the September quarter, as per the latest public debt management report.

The rise reflects a quarter-on-quarter increase of 2.6%. With regard to the yield, interest rate on 10-year benchmark security softened from 7.40% at the close of the September quarter to 7.33% at the close of December quarter.

Maruti Suzuki India reported its highest wholesales to date at 19,66,164 units, up 19% from 16,52,653 units in 2021-22. Domestic dispatches rose 21% to 17,06,831 units, from 14,14,277 units.

Hyundai Motor India said overall wholesales last

fiscal, up 18% from 4,81,500 units in the 2021-22 financial year.

The country's second-largest carmaker said it was its best performance to date in terms of sales volume in the domestic market in a financial year.

Tata Motors also reported the best-ever passenger vehicle dispatches in the domestic market last fiscal at 5,38,640 units, up 45% from 3,70,372 units.

"We expect industry growth to be in the 5.7% range this fiscal, said Maruti's Senior Executive Officer, Marketing and Sales, Shashank Srivastava.

FRONTLINE
LEADING THE DEBATE SINCE 1984

The Amritpal Singh mystery

Who is Amritpal Singh? Frontline got one of the last interviews with the radical preacher and separatist before he went on the run. While the interview throws light on his meteoric rise, writers such as Manjit Singh, Amandeep Sandhu, and Saba Naqvi speak of what makes Punjab vulnerable to the likes of an Amritpal.



Rahul Gandhi vs the BJP. The battle for power between the Congress and the BJP gets uglier with each passing day. Where does this leave the so-called third bloc?



Mallika Sarabhai. The new Chancellor of the famed Kerala Kalamandalam outlines her plans to repurpose, refocus, and repackage the 93-year-old institute.



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Now on stands

April 7, 2023

LIGHTS OUT!

Floodlights malfunction, lead to delay in chase



Kolkata Knight Riders' chase against Punjab Kings in the IPL match on Saturday was delayed by almost half an hour due to floodlight malfunction. The PCA-IS Bindra Stadium has six floodlights at a comparatively lower height. Once the Knight Riders came out to bat, quite a few bulbs in multiple towers didn't turn on.

AMAZING

Ruturaj's sixes were clean and pure timing, says Kumble



Anil Kumble was impressed with CSK opener Ruturaj Gaikwad's six-hitting prowess during his knock of 92 against Gujarat Titans on Friday. "We don't associate him (Ruturaj) with six hitting, but to smash nine sixes in an innings is really amazing. It was not like he was going out of shape and trying to muscle it, just pure timing," said Kumble.

IN THE BALANCE

Knee injury may cut short Williamson's IPL stint



New Zealand captain and Gujarat Titans' Kane Williamson's continuation in the IPL season is in doubt after he suffered a right knee injury in the match against Chennai Super Kings on Friday. He was injured while attempting to intercept a possible six hit by Ruturaj Gaikwad and limped off the field in the 13th over.

ALL PRAISE

Hangaragekar has pace and will get better with time, says Dhoni



CSK skipper M.S. Dhoni praised IPL debutant Rajvardhan Hangaragekar who took three wickets in the match against Gujarat Titans. "I think Raj (Hangaragekar) has pace and he will get better with time. I think the bowlers will get better, a no-ball is something that's in your control, so you need to work on that," said Dhoni.

Rain scuttles KKR's chase, swings it Punjab Kings' way

Knight Riders had clawed back to launch a final assault, but was still behind the DLS par score by seven runs when play was stopped at the end of the 16th over

IPL-16

M.R. Praveen Chandran
MOHALI

The rain came as an uninvited guest, killed a gripping contest and handed host Punjab Kings a seven-run win (DLS method) over Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League at the I.S. Bindra Stadium here on Saturday.

Chasing 192, Knight Riders had clawed back to launch a final assault on the target when heavy rain stopped play at the end of the 16th over. Knight Riders, who were 146 for seven at the time of stoppage, was behind the DLS par score by seven runs.

Early blows

After Arshdeep Singh dealt early blows, Andre Russell (35) and Impact Player Venkatesh Iyer (34) revived a hopeless chase with a quickfire stand of 50 runs for the sixth wicket.

But the loss of both the



Taking flight: Arshdeep's strikes at the top of the order put the skids on Knight Riders after Rajapaksa guided Kings to a big total. R.V. MOORTHY

batters in quick succession put paid to Knight Riders' hopes.

In hindsight, the 23-minute delay due to the malfunctioning of light towers at the start hurt Knight Riders' chase.

Earlier, put in, Punjab



Kings got off to a rollicking start with opener Prabhhsimran Singh setting the early pace with a nonchalant flick over square-leg for six off Umesh Yadav. Tim Southee's erring line was also punished as Prabhhsimran clattered a couple of boundaries and hoisted a six before edging a catch to wicketkeeper Rahmanullah Gurbaz in the same over.

Bhanuka Rajapaksa continued the carnage, stepping out thrice to loft Sunil Narine for two boundaries



and a six in the leg-spinner's first over in the PowerPlay. While Shikhar Dhawan dropped anchor, Bhanuka attacked the bowling and Shardul Thakur bore the brunt of his forcing strokes. The Sri Lankan comple-

ed his 50 off 30 balls before holing out to long-on off Umesh Yadav.

Varun Chakravarthy's strangulating spell in the second half of the innings, during which he cleaned up Dhawan (40), slowed down the scoring. But a

SCOREBOARD

PUNJAB KINGS

Prabhhsimran Singh c Gurbaz b Southee 23 (12b, 2x4, 2x6), Shikhar Dhawan b Varun 40 (29b, 6x4), Bhanuka Rajapaksa c Rinku b Umesh 50 (32b, 5x4, 2x6), Jitesh Sharma c Umesh b Southee 21 (11b, 1x4, 2x6), Sikandar Raza c Nitish b Narine 16 (13b, 1x4, 1x6), Sam Curran (not out) 26 (17b, 2x6), M. Shahrukh Khan (not out) 11 (7b, 2x4); Extras (1b-1, nb-2, w-1): 4; Total (for seven wkt. in 16 overs): 146.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-13 (Mandeep, 1.1), 2-17 (Anukul, 1.6), 3-29 (Gurbaz, 4.2), 4-75 (Nitish, 9.2), 5-80 (Rinku, 10.1), 6-130 (Russell, 14.5), 7-138 (Venkatesh, 15.3).

PUNJAB KINGS BOWLING

Curran 3-0-38-1, Arshdeep 3-0-19-3, Ellis 3-27-1, Raza 3-0-25-1, Rishi (Impact Player in place of Rajapaksa) 1-0-15-0, Rahul Chahar 2-0-12-1, Harpreet 1-0-7-0.

Toss: Knight Riders; **PoM:** Arshdeep.

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING
Umesh 4-0-27-1, Southee 4-0-54-2, Narine 4-0-40-1, Varun 4-0-26-1, Shardul 4-0-43-0.

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Mandeep Singh c Curran b Arshdeep 2 (4b), Rahamanullah Gurbaz b Ellis 22 (16b, 3x4, 2x6), Anukul Roy c Raza b Arshdeep 4 (5b, 1x5), Venkatesh Iyer (Impact Player in place of Varun) c Rahul Chahar b Arshdeep 32b, 3x4, 1x6), Nitish Rana c Rahul

Next assignment

PBKs: April 5 vs. RR
Guwahati, 7.30 p.m.

KRK: April 6 vs. RCB
Kolkata, 7.30 p.m.

late flourish from Sam Curran (21 not out) and Shahrukh Khan (11 not out) saw Kings finish with what proved a match-winning total.

After Mayers and Pooran flay the Capitals attack, Wood fires Lucknow to comfortable victory



Super Giants: Mayers went ballistic at the top of the order for Super Giants before Wood proved unplayable. AP

home against the Netherlands at the moment, Kyle Mayers would probably have had to wait longer for his IPL debut.

Since Quinton de Kock is on national duty, the West Indian got his Super Giants chase.

The England quick not merely ended the opening stand of 41 between captain David Warner (56, 48b, 7x4) and Prithvi Shaw, he removed the dangerous Mitchell Marsh with his

next ball. Both the batters were beaten by the express pace.

Once Rilee Rossouw (30, 20b, 3x4, 1x6) fell lbw to Ravi Bishnoi, on review, it was going to be an uphill task.

Slow start
Earlier, Super Giants could make only 30 for one from the PowerPlay. With the new ball, Khaleel Ahmed and Mukesh Kumar had been getting some swing.

SCOREBOARD

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

K.L. Rahul c Axar b Sakariya 8 (12b, 1x6), Kyle Mayers b Axar 73 (38b, 2x4, 7x6), Deepak Hooda c Warner b Kuldeep Yadav 17 (18b), Krunal Pandya (not out) 15 (13b, 1x6), Marcus Stoinis c Sarfaraz b Khaleel 12 (10b, 1x6), Nicholas Pooran c Shaw b Khaleel 36 (21b, 2x4, 3x6), Ayush Badoni c Sarfaraz b Sakariya 18 (7b, 1x4, 2x6), K. Gowtham (Impact Player in place of Badoni) (not out) 6 (1b, 1x6); Extras (b-1, lb-2, w-5): 8; Total (for six wkt. in 20 overs): 193.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-19 (Rahul, 3.6 overs), 2-98 (Hooda, 10.6), 3-100 (Mayers, 11.3), 4-117 (Stoinis, 14.1), 5-165 (Pooran, 18.3), 6-187 (Badoni, 19.5).

CAPITALS BOWLING

Khaleel 4-0-30-2, Mukesh Kumar 4-0-34-0, Sakariya 4-0-53-2, Axar 4-0-38-1, Kuldeep Yadav 4-0-35-1.

DELHI CAPITALS

Prithvi Shaw b Wood 12 (9b, 2x4), David Warner c Gowtham b Avesh 56 (48b, 7x4), Mitchell Marsh b Wood 0 (1b), Sarfaraz Khan c Gowtham b Wood 4 (9b, 1x4), Rilee Rossouw c Mayers b Bishnoi 30 (20b, 3x4, 1x6), Rovman Powell lbw b Bishnoi 1.

Next assignment

LSG: April 3 vs. CSK
Chennai, 7.30 p.m.

DC: April 4 vs. GT
Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

We were a bit match underdone, admits CSK coach Fleming



The finishers: Rashid and Tewatia took Titans over the line. VIJAY SONEJI

N. Sudarshan

AHMEDABAD

day we would have got 200. I loved the aggressive nature of the innings," the Kiwi added.

Titans, for whom Shubman Gill top-scored (63, 36b, 6x4, 3x6), reached the 179-run target only in the last over, having to rely in the end on the bludgeoning blades of Rashid Khan (10, 3b) and Rahul Tewatia (15, 14b).

But skipper Hardik Pandya stated that at no point was the team worried. "Just that we lost one too many wickets," Hardik said. "What Rashid did, we sort of expected. We have a lot of trust in his batting."

"When we lost [Kane] Williamson (to a knee injury), it did set us a little back. The kind of shots Shubman [Gill] and I played put us in a [slightly] difficult situation."

"But Rashid getting the best out of his ability and Rashid coming out and showing what he can do... overall happy, but quite a lot to learn."

P.K. Ajith Kumar

LUCKNOW

A dash of Caribbean flair and a fiery Mark Wood proved too hot for Delhi Capitals on Saturday night.

Lucknow Super Giants, after posting 193 for six, won by 50 runs to open its campaign on the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Cricket Stadium.

If South Africa was not playing an ODI series at

next ball. Both the batters were beaten by the express pace.

Once Rilee Rossouw (30, 20b, 3x4, 1x6) fell lbw to Ravi Bishnoi, on review, it was going to be an uphill task.

Slow start
Earlier, Super Giants could make only 30 for one from the PowerPlay. With the new ball, Khaleel Ahmed and Mukesh Kumar had been getting some swing.

But before long, it was Mayers who was swinging the bowlers out of the park.

Turning point
The left-handed opener had been dropped on 14, by Khaleel off Chetan Sakariya.

The excellent home crowd got to watch more of the left-handed Caribbean flair. He also saw his captain K.L. Rahul depart early after flicking Sakariya's shorter, slower ball to Axar Patel at deep backward square-leg.

That proved a turning point in the match. Mayers looked majestic, as he displayed timing, power - even outside edges went for the maximum - and the

flair was complemented by Wood's fire.

CM YK

M ND-NDE

RCB faces litmus test in its opener against MI

Du Plessis' men keen to break the title duck after entering playoffs the last three seasons, Kohli's batting spot adds interesting sub-plot; visitors look to make amends for poor show last year

IPL-16

Ashwin Achal

BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) will face the might of five-time champion Mumbai Indians (MI) in their IPL 2023 opener, at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Saturday.

The new season presents yet another chance for RCB to finally claim a maiden IPL trophy.

Skipper Faf du Plessis will lead a side which has made it to the playoff stage for the last three seasons, but is yet to take that final step to reach the top of the hill.

RCB will miss the services of Australian fast bowler Josh Hazlewood, who is out with an injury.

Looking to Topley

England left-arm seamer Reece Topley has been brought in as cover, even if it is tough to fill the shoes of a proven performer like Hazlewood.

It remains to be seen if RCB uses Virat Kohli as an opener, or in a middle-order role he plays for the Indian team.



Skippers' tale: Rohit will be eager to fire while du Plessis will look to go all the way. K. MURALI KUMAR

TODAY'S MATCHES



Hyderabad, 3.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 16

SRH 8 | RR 8

PREVIOUS MEETING

RR won by 61 runs, 2022



Bengaluru, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 30

RCB 13 | MI 17

PREVIOUS MEETING

RCB won by seven wickets, 2022

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA APP

Rohit raring to go, Archer 'ready to come steaming in to bowl' against RCB

Ashwin Achal

BENGALURU

Mumbai Indians (MI) head coach Mark Boucher stated that skipper Rohit Sharma is fit and raring to go in the IPL opener against Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) here on Sunday. Rohit did not attend the IPL captains' photoshoot a few days ago, raising concerns about his fitness.

"Rohit Sharma is fit. He didn't feel well on the morning of the photoshoot. As a precaution, he stayed at home. But he has trained with us in the last two days, and he is 100 per cent ready to go," Boucher said.

Jofra Archer missed MI's optional training session here on Saturday, but the fast bowler is "ready to put the spikes on and come steaming in tomorrow to bowl," Boucher said.



Words of wisdom: Javagal Srinath speaks to RCB's Bangar and du Plessis at a practice session. MI's Boucher gives Brevis a few pointers ahead of their opener. K. MURALI KUMAR

Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) head coach Sanjay Bangar stated that the side hopes that batter Rajat Patidar recovers quickly from an injury. Patidar is currently undergoing rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy here, and is set to miss RCB's first

few matches

"The situation with Rajat is out of our control. He is undergoing treatment at NCA. We are awaiting clarification from him," Bangar said in a press conference here on Saturday.

Bangar hinted that the onus lies on the NCA to re-

lease him for RCB duty quickly. "NCA might take a sporting call on what its future holds," Bangar said.

Sri Lankan spinner Wanindu Hasaranga is away with international commitments, and will join the RCB squad on April 9, Bangar said.

Bangar said that the onus lies on the NCA to re-

Sinner deals Alcaraz a double blow



Big flex: Sinner got the better of Alcaraz in an enthralling and entertaining power-hitting performance. GETTY IMAGES

Agence France-Presse

MIAMI GARDENS

Jannik Sinner ended Carlos Alcaraz's hopes of the 'Sunshine Double' and his reign as World No. 1, winning 6-7(4), 6-4, 6-2 in the Miami Open semifinal on Friday. It had been an enthralling power-hitting performance from both men in the first set, with an incredible 25-shot exchange

in the seventh game. The intense, high quality set was eventually won by the Spaniard, but an inspired Sinner fought back and won in three hours.

Sinner will meet Russian Daniil Medvedev, a 7-6(5), 3-6, 6-3 winner over countryman Karen Khachanov. In the women's final, Elena Rybakina will meet Petra Kvitova who beat Sorana Cirstea 7-5, 6-4.

Stan Ravan

KOCHE

The Kerala Blasters are likely to appeal against the All India Football Federation Disciplinary Committee's decision on Friday to fine them ₹4 crore for walking off the pitch and thereby forfeiting their Indian Super League playoff match against Bengaluru FC in Bengaluru on March 3.

After hearing all the parties concerned, the AIFF Disciplinary Committee – chaired by Vaibhav Gaggar – also directed Blasters to issue a 'public apology' for the unsporting conduct of abandoning the match, failing which the total fine would be increased to ₹6 crore.

The club is yet to officially come out with its response but sources in the team said Blasters would appeal against the AIFF

Disciplinary Committee's order.

Despite the walkout, there is a huge wave of support for Blasters from their fans – the club is the team with the biggest fan base in the ISL – and it is not clear at this stage whether the public apology would happen, though the threat that the penalty would be raised by ₹2 crore could move the club to come out with one.

The Blasters' walkout happened after a hotly-disputed goal scored by Bengaluru's Sunil Chhetri off a freekick. The Kochi-based club had filed a protest to the AIFF earlier against referee Crystal John for the manner in which he allowed Chhetri to take the freekick that resulted in the goal. But it was rejected.

The AIFF Disciplinary Committee's order on Friday also punished the Blas-

Former champions Sunrisers and Royals come to grips



Rise and shine: Bhuvneshwar, who will lead in the first game, will be keen to swing things Sunrisers' way. Royals' spin duo of Chahal and R. Ashwin will look to forge a lethal combination. NAGARA GOPAL



V.V. Subrahmanyam

HYDERABAD

Yuzvendra Chahal, winners of the Orange and Purple Caps in the last season.

Royals would look to Buttler to continue his recent, impressive form and joining him at the top will be the very promising Yashavini Jaiswal.

Another equally-talented youngster Devdutt Padikkal will be followed by captain Sanju Samson.

West Indian batter Shimron Hetmyer adds the extra dimension to the Royals batting with his explosive batting.

In bowling, the crafty R. Ashwin should be the one to watch in the company of pacers left-arm Trent Boult, Navdeep Saini, San-

deep Sharma and Obed McCoy.

On the other hand, SRH's hopes hinge on the form of the batters – the big-hitting Harry Brook, Glen Phillips, experienced Mayank Agarwal, Amolpreet Singh, Abdul Samad, left-arm spinning all-rounder Abhishek Sharma and Rahul Tripathi.

The SRH bowling attack has a lot of depth and variety.

It comprises the likes of leggie Adil Rashid, pacers Kartik Tyagi, Bhubaneswar, Umran Malik, and T. Natarajan, all capable of testing the best of batters with all-rounder Washington Sundar ready for any challenge.

Teams ready for new season, new challenges

V.V. Subrahmanyam

HYDERABAD

Sunrisers Hyderabad captain Bhuvneshwar Kumar felt confident that the issue of finding finishers has been sorted out. "I think the middle-order is well-settled now," he said.

On Harry Brook, the SRH captain felt that contrary to the general impression about foreign players, he was very good against spinners. "We hope he continues his recent good form in the T20 Leagues," he said. "It is a new season and a different challenge with new domestic and international players."

The bowling unit is very experienced now. Umran is the youngest but he is also experienced now and he has played for the country. He did well in the last season as well. It is just a matter of going out there and doing well," he said.

Kumara Sangakkara, Royals Director of Cricket and head coach, said they had a great last season but this season is different with new rules and different players.

"We discussed the (Impact Player) rule and we have got that right, hopefully. But, as the league goes on, the teams will get more and more used to how well to use it," Sangakkara said.

Tuchel begins Bayern stint with emphatic win over Dortmund

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse

MUNICH

Bayern Munich went back to the top of the Bundesliga on Saturday, defeating Borussia Dortmund 4-2 at home to give Thomas Tuchel a winning start as coach of the Bavarian giant.

A shocking own goal from Dortmund goalkeeper Gregor Kobil, as well as two trademark finishes from Thomas Muller had Bayern 3-0 up by the 25th minute. Kingsley Coman added a fourth shortly after half-time to send Bayern two points clear of the visitors despite two late consolation goals.

Tuchel, who won a German Cup title during a two-



Muller the menace: The German slotted home two goals and proved a constant threat. AP

year stint in charge of Dortmund, had one only training session with Bayern before this match.

In the Premier League, Gabriel Jesus scored his first goals for six months as Arsenal maintained control of the title race with a 4-1 defeat of relegation-

threatened Leeds United. Manchester City showed it can win without goal machine Erling Haaland as it put four goals past Liverpool.

Julian Alvarez, Kevin De Bruyne, Ilkay Gundogan and Jack Grealish were all on target for Pep Guardiola.

la's side in an entertaining return to Premier League action after the international break.

Arsenal's seventh successive league win moved it to 72 points from 29 games with City on 64 having played one game less.

Important results:

Premier League: Arsenal 4 (Jesus 35-pen, 55, White 47, Xhaka 84) bt Leeds 1 (Kristensen 76); Crystal Palace 2 (Iverson 59-pen, Mateta 90+4) bt Leicester 1 (Pereira 56); Manchester City 4 (Alvarez 27, De Bruyne 46, Gundogan 53, Grealish 74) bt Liverpool 1 (Salah 17).

Bundesliga: Bayern Munich 4 (Kobel 13-pen, Mueller 18 & 23, Coman 50) bt Borussia Dortmund 2 (Can 72-pen, Malen 90); RB Leipzig 0 lost to Mairz 0 3 (Ingvarsson 9, Ajorque 57, Kohr 67); Union Berlin 3 (Becker 51, Behrens 65, Ito 68-og) bt VfB Stuttgart 0.

Blasters likely to appeal Vukomanovic's 10-match ban and hefty fine



Vukomanovic.

code). This will mean that Vukomanovic would not be permitted to be a part of the team's dressing room or the team bench.

Vukomanovic has also been directed to issue a 'public apology' for his misconduct failing which the fine to be imposed on him would be increased to ₹10 lakh along with the ban.

Comply in a week

The disciplinary committee has directed the Blasters and Vukomanovic to comply with this order within one week.

However, the club and the head coach have a right to file an appeal against the order.

The Blasters are scheduled to play the Super Cup, the tournament will see ISL and I-League teams play each other, which begins in Kozhikode and Matheran on April 8.

Kush Maini bags his maiden podium

Press Trust of India

MELBOURNE

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IN BRIEF



Bavuma takes South Africa closer to WC qualification

Captain Temba Bavuma took South Africa closer to automatic World Cup qualification with an unbeaten 90 in an eight-wicket win over the Netherlands in the second ODI in Benoni on Friday. A win in Johannesburg on Sunday – or a no-result – will take South Africa into the eighth and final qualification place for the World Cup in India in October and November.

The scores: Netherlands 189 in 46.1 overs (Vikramjit Singh 45, Teja Nidamanuru 48; Tabraiz Shamsi 3/25, Sisanda Magala 3/37) lost to South Africa 190/2 in 30 overs (Temba Bavuma 90 n.o., Aiden Markram 51 n.o.).

Verstappen takes second pole of the year in a tight session

Double World champion Max Verstappen claimed pole on Saturday for the Australian Grand Prix ahead of Mercedes' George Russell, but his Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez had a torrid time and will start last. Lewis Hamilton in the other Mercedes was third ahead of Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso in a tight session that went to the wire. It was the second pole of the year for Dutchman Verstappen.

LIVE TELECAST

NBA: MTV, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 5 a.m.

Formula One: Australian GP, F1 TV Pro & F1 TV App, 10.30 a.m.

BWF: Madrid Masters: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 1.30 p.m.

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 3.30 & 7.30 p.m.

Serie A: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 4, 6.30, 9.30 p.m. & 12.15 a.m. (Monday)

LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 5.30, 7.45, 10 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Monday)

Premier League: SS Select 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 6.30 & 9 p.m.

Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 7 & 9 p.m.

Sindhu on the cusp of glory

Overcomes Min in an intense semifinal; Tunjung stuns top seed Marin



Focused: Sindhu kept her nerve to prevail over Min. FILE PHOTO

MADRID MASTERS

Press Trust of India

MADRID

P. Sindhu reached her first final of the year as she eked out a straight-game victory over Singapore's Yeo Jia Min at the Madrid Spain Masters Super 300 tournament here on Saturday.

The second-seeded Indian toiled hard for 48 minutes to pull off a 24-22, 22-20 win over the lower-ranked Singaporean shuttler in an intensely fought semifinals. Sindhu had come into the match with a 4-0 head-to-head record against Min.

The win will come as a huge morale boost for Sindhu who has been struggling for form since returning to action following a long injury lay-off.

She made a first round exit from the All England Championship and failed to defend her Swiss Open title. She had also made first-round exits at the Indian Open and Malaysia Open in January.

In the second game,

Sindhu trailed 1-4, before opening a five point lead at 11-6. World No. 33 Min however, played a gorgeous drop shot to level at 17-17. Sindhu then had two match points but Min managed to save both of them before driving one wide, giving the Indian her third match point. This time Sindhu made no errors as Min found the net.

Sindhu will take on Indonesia's Gregoria Tunjung, who stunned the top seed and local favourite Carolina Marin 10-21, 21-15, 21-10.

The win will come as a huge morale boost for Sindhu who has been struggling for form since returning to action following a long injury lay-off.

She made a first round exit from the All England Championship and failed to defend her Swiss Open title. She had also made first-round exits at the Indian Open and Malaysia Open in January.

SNAPSHOTS

Yuki-Saketh duo wins its seventh Challenger title

GIRONA: Yuki Bhambri and Saketh Myneni defeated the Spanish duo of Oriol Batalla and Inigo Servantes 6-4, 6-4 in the final of the €73,000 Challenger in Girona on Saturday. This is the seventh Challenger title from eight finals for the Indian pair.

Ankita Raina beat China's Hanyu Guo 7-6(3), 6-4 to make the final of the \$25,000 ITF women's tennis tournament in Jakarta.

Sabeera misses semifinals shotgun WC

LARNACA (CYPRUS): Sabeera Haris shot 108 and missed the semifinals



Spanish delight: Saketh and Yuki picked up another Challenger crown on Saturday. INSTAGRAM/YUKIBHAMBRI

by four points in women's trap in the shotgun World Cup on Saturday. Sabeera had a series of 23, 21, 20, 22 and 22.

In men's trap, Lakshay Sheoran shot 114 for the 50th place in a field of 131 shooters.

Competing in the RPO section, Prithviraj

Tondaiman could muster only 110, following a series of 21, 24, 21, 22 and 22.

Vihaan, Sree Syleswari clinch titles

MADURAI: Third seed Vihaan Reddy scripted a 6-3, 6-4 win over top seed Pratyaksh in the boys' final of the TVS ITF juniors

tennis championship on Saturday.

In the girls' title decider, qualifier Sree Syleswari Velmanikandan defeated third seed Amodini Naik 6-1, 7-5 to clinch her maiden ITF junior crown.

Uzbekistan beats India to finish 13th

KUCHING (MALAYSIA): The Indian boys were beaten 2-1 by Uzbekistan in the match for the 13th place in the Asia-Oceania World junior under-14 tennis tournament on Saturday.

The results: Final: Japan bt Pakistan 2-1.

Play-off 13th place:

Uzbekistan bt India 2-1

(Abdulkhodij Khosilov bt Rudra Batham 6-4, 6-2; Akmal Abdullaev bt Shivtej Shirhule 1-6, 7-5, 10-6); Akmal & Abdulkhodij lost to Rudra & Shivtej w/o).

Bibisara holds Humpy, regains sole lead

FIDE WOMEN'S GP

Rakesh Rao

NEW DELHI

K. Humpy and new leader Bibisara Assaubayeva drew while R. Vaishali proved equal to D. Harika in the seventh round of the FIDE Women's Grand Prix chess tournament here on Saturday.

When Humpy agreed to Bibisara's draw offer, computer-aided evaluation of the position showed the Kazakh had erred with her last move, a pawn-push on the king's side. The 37-move draw gave Bibisara (4.5 points) a half-a-point lead.

The Vaishali-Harika encounter involved a series of exchanges that left the kings and three pawns of each colour on the board when a draw was agreed in 42 moves.

Aleksandra Goryachkina scored her third victory to be within striking distance of the leader. She defeated Georgia's Nino Batsiashvili to keep alive her prospects of catching up with Bibisara, who has played a game more.

The results (seventh round): Bibisara Assaubayeva (Kaz, 4.5) drew with K. Humpy (3); R. Vaishali (1.5) drew with D. Harika (2); Nino Batsiashvili (Geo, 1.5) lost to Aleksandra Goryachkina (FIDE, 3.5); Nana Dzagnidze (Geo, 2) lost to Katerina Lagno (FIDE, 3.5); Zhu Jiner (Chn, 4) Polina Shuvalova (FIDE, 2.5) bye.

Petronas TVS Racing faces a tough challenge

MOTORSPORTS

Ravan Rozario

COIMBATORE

The Petronas TVS Racing boys, which has been dominant for over three decades, will be challenged by Hero MotoSports in the first round of the FMSI-MRF MOGRIP National supercross championship set to begin at the Codissia grounds here on Sunday.

The team has Rugged Bargude (Pune), C.D. Jinan (Kerala), Nataraj (Bengaluru), Imran Pasha (Mysuru) and Iksahan Shanbag (Sathara).

They have raced in Coimbatore before and are

familiar with the custom-made track.

In excellent form

The team is happy that all its riders are in excellent form and eagerly await the season's opener.

The country's first factory racing team, which made a clean sweep in all the three categories it participated last year, is confident of repeating the same.

The riders and crew look to maintain the winning streak.

"We are optimistic of a strong performance and hope to continue our winning streak this year," said Vimal Sumbly, Head Business-Premium, TVS Motor Company.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(See Section 82 Cr.P.C)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Amandeep Singh, Aman Homeo Pharmacy CSC-5, Shop No.35, Sector-7, DDA Market Near Saibaba Mandir, Rohini has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case Reg. No. 15323/2016 u/s 138 NI Act, P.S. South Rohini, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Amandeep Singh cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Amandeep Singh has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Amandeep Singh of case Reg. No. 15323/2016 u/s 138 NI Act, P.S. South Rohini, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 10.05.2023.

By Order,

Mansi Malik

Metropolitan Magistrate (N/W)

DP/3205/RD/2023 Room No.107, 1st Floor, Rohini Courts, Delhi

HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LIMITED

(A State Government Undertaking)

"Notice Inviting Tender" (E-Tendering Mode Only)

Online tenders (two parts bid) are invited for the supply of following item(s), on the prescribed form (Tender Documents). The start, end dates and times of submission and opening of Techno Commercial Bid of tender are as per detail given below. The detailed tender notice, terms and conditions along with tender documents can be viewed/downloaded from website <https://www.hptenders.gov.in>.

Sr. No.	Tender No.	Description of Items	Qty. (In Nos.)	Estd. Cost (In Lacs)	Tender fee i/c of GST@ 18% (Non-refundable) (In Rs.)	Date of online Publication and download of tendered documents from website	Start date & time of bid submission	End date & time of bid Submission	Date & Time of opening of Techno Comm. bid
1.	CE(MM)-01/2023	ISI Marked 11/0433KV class, 3 phase Distribution Transformers of assorted ratings,	19 Nos.	269.13	1180/-	01.04.2023	17.04.2023 (from 03:00 pm) (upto 11:00 am) (at 03:30 pm)		
2.	CE(MM)-02/2023	ISI Marked (A) 1.1 kV LT XLPE cable 3.5 C x 500 mm ² 1 C x 1000 mm ² (B) 11 kV XLPE cable, 3/3 C x 400 mm ²	5.3 KM	136.38	1180/-	01.04.2023	12.04.2023 (from 03:00 pm) (upto 11:00 am) (at 03:30 pm)		
3.	CE(MM)-03/2023	ISI Marked 3 phase, 1/2 Wire, HT Static DLMS Compliant Trivector smart Meters of accuracy class 0.55 with cellular based communication technology and RS-485 port-Category-B & Category-C, PT ratio-110 Volts & CT ratio-1/6-5Ampere (4) Common Meter Reading Instrument (CMRI), 2 Nos.	72 Nos.	0.10	590/-	01.04.2023	12.04.2023 (from 03:00 pm) (upto 11:00 am) (at 03:30 pm)		

Chief Engineer, (MM), HPSEB Ltd, Vidyut Bhawan, Shimla

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Square cut: A willow tree cut down to make cricket bats is checked before being transported to a manufacturing unit in Kashmir.



Running out of willow

Cricket bat manufacturers in Kashmir fear that the industry will not be able to survive due to a shortage of the wood



Nissar Ahmad

nissar.ahmad@thehindu.co.in

The cricket bat industry in Kashmir is on the verge of collapse, as it is facing a shortage of willow – a lightweight hardwood that is vital raw material for the manufacturing units.

More than 400 bat manufacturing units in Anantnag district of south Kashmir are staring at an uncertain future as they worry that a shortage of willow clefts (pieces of willow wood) may force their factories to shut shop.

Javed Ahmed Paray, owner of MJ Sports, says, "We have been in this business for the past 22 years. In future, there will not be enough willow trees to fulfil the demand." The government has not supported the industry, he adds.

Mr. Paray believes that the willow tree numbers are dwindling fast, leaving the manufacturers struggling in an already competitive industry.

The centuries-old cricket bat industry in Kashmir had upped its standards over the years to compete with manufacturers that work with the fabled English willow. But bat manufacturers fear the willow shortage here could be a big blow to

the ₹300-crore enterprise that provides livelihood to over 1,00,000 people. More and more cricket leagues are coming up around the world and the demand for bats has been on the increase.

Shahid Bashir, a manufacturer from Bijbehara in Anantnag, said, "We have appealed to the government to help us in growing more willow trees." He says land could be set aside for only willow cultivation. Farmers today prefer to raise trees such as poplar that grow faster than willow for supply to the plywood and building industries.

The current lot of manufacturers and workers in bat factories may well be among the last the way things are going.

Juicy shot: The lightweight hardwood of the willow in Kashmir makes it suitable for crafting cricket bats.



All in a row: Clefts of willow are stacked at a factory in Sangam in Anantnag district of south Kashmir.



Tough wicket: A carpenter expertly shapes a cricket bat.



Humongous field: The ₹300-crore enterprise of cricket bat manufacture employs over 1,00,000 people.



Deft touch: There is always demand for carpenters in the industry as more and more cricket leagues are coming up around the world.



Fine balance: A worker weighs cricket bats before they are painted, branded and packaged for sale.



Pitch perfect: While the fabled English willow is still favoured by many, cricket bats made of the willows of Kashmir have an expanding market too.

Game theory: A customer tries out a bat at a sports shop at Sangam in Anantnag district.

