



ASSAM TEA WORKERS
TB survivors prone to fungal infection: study
NEWS » PAGE 12



STATES » PAGE 5



MILKIPUR BYPOLL
Caste, community equations play out
NEWS » PAGE 10



REMEMBERING THE PAST
Genocide and averted gaze

Leaders must think why 'never again' continues to be breached

EDITORIAL » PAGE 6



DOMINANT DISPLAY
Sinner outclasses Zverev, retains title
SPORT » PAGE 15

Republic Day parade taps into heritage, diversity, military might

President Droupadi Murmu leads the celebrations, with Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto as special guest; tableaux celebrating 150 years of tribal activist Birsa Munda and 75 years of the enactment of Constitution were the key highlights

Samridhi Tewari
Satvika Mahajan
NEW DELHI

India showcased its military might and cultural diversity with a parade keeping special focus on the 75 years of the enactment of the Constitution and *Jan Bhagidari* (people's participation), at the Republic Day celebration here on a cold winter morning that continued into a bright sunny afternoon on Sunday.

President Droupadi Murmu led the celebrations, with Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto as the special guest.

The theme for this year was "Swarnim Bharat: Vivasat aur Vikas" (Golden India: heritage and development).

The parade began at



Stately celebrations: President Droupadi Murmu arrives for the Republic Day parade with Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto on Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Sunday; an aerial view of the marching contingents and Army tanks. ANI & PIB/PTI



10.30 a.m., with Prime Minister Narendra Modi visiting the National War Memorial to pay tributes to the fallen heroes.

The President and her Indonesian counterpart were escorted by the President's Bodyguard, the se-

nior-most Regiment of the Army. While the invitees stood still, the National Flag was unfurled, followed by the playing of the National Anthem with a thunderous 21-gun salute using 105-mm light field guns, an indigenous wea-

pon system. The Indonesian Army graced the event with a music band.

Tableaux celebrating 150 years of tribal activist Birsa Munda and 75 years of the Constitution spotlighting the "Father of the Indian Constitution", Dr.

B.R. Ambedkar, were the key highlights.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10
MORE REPORTS ON
» PAGE 11
'REPUBLICAN JOURNEY'
» PAGE 6

'Blast' in Guwahati: ULFA(I) says it's just a warning

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

People across eight north-eastern States defied a boycott call by some extremist groups, including the United Liberation Front of Assam (Independent), to celebrate the country's 76th Republic Day on Sunday.

An aberration in the festival-like atmosphere was a "bomb blast" the ULFA(I) claimed to have detonated on a truck parking lot in the Beharbari area on the outskirts of Guwahati in the morning.

Another bag, suspected to contain an improvised explosive device, was found at the Inter-State Bus Terminus nearby.

The police downplayed the outlawed outfit's claim. "It was a loud sound, not an explosion. We have launched an operation to catch the miscreants in the future".

Police seize bag with IED, say they have launched a search for the miscreants behind the incident

volved," Guwahati's Commissioner of Police, Partha Sarathi Mahanta, said.

Earlier, the Pares Bora-led ULFA(I) claimed it carried out blasts in Guwahati and other parts of Assam "not to harm anyone but send a message to the people to not participate in occupation India's Independence Day and Republic Day programmes in the future".

In an email, a spokesperson of the group said the "blast" was also to remind New Delhi of what it was capable of doing on a larger scale.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

IN BRIEF



Sisodia to be Delhi Deputy CM if AAP wins: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI
AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said if his party returns to power in Delhi, senior leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia will again hold the Deputy CM's post. » Page 2

M.P. CM targets Congress on eve of Mhow rally

BHOPAL
Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Sunday took a swipe at the Congress's scheduled rally in Mhow on January 27, saying "some people are coming here for an event". » Page 4

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 5

AAP is 'corrupt', BJP will rid Delhi of Rohingya, Bangladeshis: Shah

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



taking a dip in the river during Chhath Puja.

Mr. Shah also said that if the BJP is voted to power, Delhi will be made free of "Bangladeshis and Rohingya" within two years.

In response, the ruling AAP said the BJP's "focus is solely on abusing Arvind Kejriwal, not on Delhi's development".

"The BJP neither has a plan nor a vision for Delhi. Amit Shah must answer: what has the BJP done in the last decade to improve Delhi's crumbling law and order? The one job they had – that of ensuring security – has been an outright failure under Amit Shah's watch," read a statement by AAP.

Delhi Police reports to the Union Home Ministry.

BJP MARSHALS BIG GUNS

» PAGE 2

People's stir stopped tungsten project: Stalin

The Hindu Bureau
MADRASI



Chief Minister M.K. Stalin addressing the public at Aittappatti in Madurai on Sunday. G. MOORTHY

Persistent protests by people forced the BJP-led Union government to annul the tungsten mining contract awarded in Madurai, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said on Sunday.

"BJP, the ruling party at the Centre, tried to implement the tungsten mining project in Melur, but protests by people made it withdraw its decision," he said at a function organised at Aittappatti and A. Vellalapatti in the district to felicitate him for supporting the demonstrations and adopting a resolution in the Assembly against the project.

Women welcomed Mr. Stalin by making the "kula-vai" sound – a traditional practice of rejoicing during festive occasions.

Meanwhile, the State government announced that

the four criminal cases registered against those who protested against the mining proposal were withdrawn, in line with an announcement made by Mr. Stalin earlier. An official release said cases had been registered under three sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita in Madurai, Tallakulam, and Me-

lur police stations against a total of 11,608 people.

Mining law amendment

Speaking at the event, Mr. Stalin contended that the main reason why the State government was unable to stall the project initially was an amendment to mining laws passed in Parliament by the BJP govern-

ment. "People should be aware that the DMK and its allies opposed the move in Parliament, but AIADMK leader M. Thambi Durai supported it," he added.

He recalled that thousands of farmers marched to New Delhi, and protested against the Union government against three farm laws, and won after two years of struggle. "But the people of Melur, within two months of the [mining] auction, have won through their protests," he

added. Though the State government had sent its objections twice to the Ministry of Mines, it was deliberately concealed by them [the BJP] for political reasons, he contended.

Pointing to the gram sabha resolutions passed by villagers of Aittappatti and other areas against the project in November 2024, Mr. Stalin said since then, the State government had stood with the people, assuring them of not allowing the project to continue.

"Even when many people criticised me for saying that I would resign if the project was implemented in the area, I reiterated that I have always stood with the people

M.K. STALIN

Tamil Nadu CM

ment. "People should be aware that the DMK and its allies opposed the move in Parliament, but AIADMK leader M. Thambi Durai supported it," he added.

He recalled that thousands of farmers marched to New Delhi, and protested against the Union government against three farm laws, and won after two years of struggle. "But the people of Melur, within two months of the [mining] auction, have won through their protests," he

No extra allocation for MGNREGS; wages delayed

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI



The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), the Union government's flagship scheme to provide guaranteed employment of 100 days for rural workers, has not received an additional budgetary allocation in 2024-25 despite a deficit, resulting in delay in disbursement of wages to workers.

Sources said the Rural Development Ministry was short of ₹4,315 crore for the wages for which a fund transfer order had been generated. Section 3 (3) of the MGNREG Act says "the disbursement of daily wages shall be made on a weekly basis or in any case not

later than a fortnight after the date on which such work was done".

The Centre has a liability of ₹5,715 crore against its share for material components. The Centre bears 60% of the cost of the materials and the remaining 40% is given by the States.

When there is a continued delay in material component payout, the local vendors who supply the raw material become reluctant to supply, breaking the work cycle.

In February 2024, in the last Budget of the Narendra Modi government's second

Academics and activists closely monitoring the programme say the low budgetary allocation leads to artificial suppression of demand. This problem was also flagged by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development in its report tabled in February 2024.

"The pruning of funds at Budget Estimate stage itself does have a cascading effect on various important aspects such as timely release of wages, release of material share etc. which have a telling impact on the progress of the Scheme. The Committee feels that for smooth implementation of MGNREGA at ground level, shortage of funds is a big obstacle," the panel noted in its report.

Trump moots 'clean-out' of Gaza, lifts curbs on bomb

Associated Press
ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE

U.S. President Donald Trump said he would like to see Jordan, Egypt and other Arab nations increase the number of Palestinian refugees they are accepting from the Gaza Strip, potentially moving out enough of the population to "just clean out" the war-torn area to create a virtual clean slate.

During a 20-minute question-and-answer session on Saturday with presspersons aboard Air Force One, Mr. Trump also said he has ended his predecessor's hold on sending 2,000-pound bombs to Is-

rael. That lifts a pressure point meant to reduce civilian casualties during Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza, which is now halted by a tenuous ceasefire.

"We released them today," Mr. Trump said of the

bombs. "They have been waiting for them for a long time."

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

PALESTINE RESPONDS
» PAGE 14



Happy homecoming: A Palestinian who spent 19 years in Israeli jail, greeting his family in West Bank. AFP

CM YK

DELHI ELECTION

IN BRIEF



Cong. takes potshots at AAP after Bhalswa landfill collapse

Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav slammed the ruling AAP on Sunday after a portion of garbage from the Bhalswa landfill fell onto adjacent houses near the Sharadhanand Colony. Two children were injured and several houses were damaged in the garbage collapse, Mr. Yadav claimed. "Arvind Kejriwal, who made a big issue of garbage mountains before the MCD elections, has let down people living near the landfill," he said. However, an MCD official said no one was injured. In the Assembly poll, Mr. Yadav is contesting from Badli constituency, a part of which is Bhalswa.

North West Delhi poll office starts distributing voter slips

The North West Delhi District Election Office announced on Sunday that it has started distributing voter information slips for the Assembly election to be held on February 5. The slips aim to inform the eligible voters about their enrolment in the voter list. District Election Officer and Deputy Commissioner Ankita Anand said, "We encourage all citizens to check their VIS and confirm their details to avoid any issues on polling day."

More than 700 cases of MCC violations recorded till Jan. 25

718 cases of violation of the model code of conduct (MCC) have so far been registered since the guidelines came into force on January 7, an officer from the Delhi police said on Sunday. According to a statement, a total of 21,841 people were arrested under various legal provisions, including the Excise Act, during this period. In addition, the police have confiscated 348 illegal firearms, illicit liquor worth ₹1.7 crore and drugs worth ₹72 crore.

PTI

If AAP is re-elected, Sisodia will again be Deputy CM: Kejriwal

AAP chief says BJP chose to waive debt of its 'billionaire friends' instead of funding Delhi's welfare funds; Kejriwal fooling people, counters BJP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday announced that if his party returns to power, senior leader and Jangpura candidate Manish Sisodia will again hold the post of Deputy Chief Minister.

"If your constituency's MLA is the Deputy CM, all officials will address your concerns over the phone. No officer will dare ignore a call from a Deputy CM's constituency resident," he said while addressing an election rally in Jangpura.

Mr. Sisodia had been Delhi's Deputy CM since 2015 but resigned in February 2023 after being arrested in the excise case.

Addressing the rally, Mr. Sisodia said, "...if, by mistake, an MLA from another party is elected, they will not work for you. Instead, they will keep fighting with Kejriwal ji and obstruct the work".

'Billionaires, priority'
Taking potshots at the BJP, Mr. Kejriwal said the people of Delhi should decide whether the "Ganga of public funds" should flow towards the people under the "AAP model" or towards about 400 billionaires under the "BJP model".

Mr. Kejriwal claimed



Former Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal said BJP "will end AAP's schemes", and it will cost ₹26,000 monthly to each family. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

that the BJP had "waived debts worth ₹10 lakh crore of 400 to 500 billionaires".

"This election is not just about Delhi, it is about deciding the future of the nation – whether public money will be spent on the welfare of citizens or on benefitting a privileged few. Recently, it was revealed that a person with a debt of ₹47,000 crore was let off by settling it at ₹450 crore, essentially providing a benefit of ₹46,500 crore to a single individual. Another person with a debt of ₹6,500 crore had ₹5,000 crore [of it] waived, and the rest was settled for ₹1,500 crore," Mr. Kejriwal said.

The AAP chief said the BJP preferred its "billionaire friends" and "ignored Delhi's welfare schemes", which the Centre could have funded with ₹50,000 crore.

He said if the BJP wins in Delhi, the party will "stop all welfare schemes". "I made a calculation. People enjoy savings of ₹4,000-5,000 monthly through free electricity, ₹10,000 through free education, ₹5,000 through Mohalla Clinics, and ₹2,500 through free bus travel for women. In total, Delhi residents save about ₹26,000 a month," Mr. Kejriwal added.

Failed government

Responding to the allegations, BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said, "He [Mr. Kejriwal] talks a lot about education but built no new schools or colleges. Two-thirds of schools don't teach science or commerce. Mohalla Clinics are corruption-ridden, power is costly, and all buy bottled water."

BJP marshals the big guns to take on AAP, Cong. in final push



BJP supporters at a rally addressed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Narela on Sunday. ANI

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is running a double agenda by not actively participating in his party's campaign," added the Hamirpur MP.

Addressing a rally in south-east Delhi's Okhla, Ms. Irani criticised the ruling party for "failing to deliver" on promises and accused it of "collecting personal data of women voters in the garb of registering them for its promised financial aid scheme".

The leaders of Delhi's main Opposition party, which last held the reins of the Capital in 1998, took on the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Congress for their "corruption, lawlessness, and hollow promises".

At a rally in south Delhi's Saket, Mr. Thakur said, "In this election, the collusion between Congress and AAP is evident. These parties have looted Delhi, and for the first time, the Capital is witnessing a revenue deficit."

"In this poll, [senior

Identify and thwart false narrative, L-G tells voters

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena appealed to the people of Delhi on Sunday to exercise their franchise and vote to thwart "publicity-managed" consent or dissent in the upcoming Assembly election.

"We will have to take the right decision overcoming the spell of publicity manufactured consent and dissent," Mr. Saxena said in his Republic Day address.

The L-G urged the voters to stay cautious against external pressure and determine the difference between right and wrong.

"We will decide the system of health, education, transport, roads, drinking water, sanitation and availability of employment in the next five years. Our vote will decide the steps to be taken by the next government regarding air pollution, Yamuna cleaning and welfare measures for all people, including weaker sections in Delhi," Mr. Saxena said.

He reminded people that voting day is not a holiday but a "day of duty". "The voting on February 5 for the Delhi Assembly poll will decide the next five years of the people, their children, society and Delhi," he said.

On Saturday, Chief Minister Atishi, while addressing a Republic Day event, said the AAP government has taken major strides in the past 10 years to transform schools, improve healthcare and provide uninterrupted power.

Prevent release of 'divisive' film based on 2020 Delhi riots, Singhvi urges EC

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday accused the BJP of trying to "divide society and influence voters" by promoting a film based on the 2020 north-east Delhi riots, which is set to release three days ahead of the February 5 Assembly election.

Addressing a press conference, senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha member Abhishek Manu Singhvi urged the Election Commission of India (EC) to take immediate action to prevent the release of '2020 Delhi'.

He said the EC should follow the precedence set during the 2019 general election when the commission stalled the release of a



Senior Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi.

biopic on Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The trailer of '2020 Delhi' was released earlier last week.

Mr. Singhvi called the film "a directly focussed, distorted, debased narrative against a particular religious community and a brazen attempt to disturb public tranquillity".

"Why do you release a film like this two days before the election? What is the purpose of its coincidental clash? This has become a new technique of the BJP during elections," he added.

He also claimed that Mr. Modi's proposed visit to the Maha Kumbh on the day of the election "is not a coincidence".

"The Prime Minister is welcome at the Maha Kumbh. But you think it is a coincidence that he wants to go there on that day itself?" said the Rajya Sabha member.

'AAP appears hopeless'
Mr. Singhvi said that AAP is "staring at defeat", and accused the ruling party in Delhi of issuing an advertisement against Congress

leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, dubbing them "traitors" while branding itself as "clean".

"This kind of abusive, debasing political discourse and culture must be condemned. Such kind of defamatory advertisements or statements must be immediately policed and taken down by the EC," said Mr. Singhvi.

He said, "We all know that the electoral window and political window is very short and, therefore, prompt action is the need of the hour".

"Is this your [AAP's] only formula to achieve victory in the Delhi Assembly election? Resorting to such tactics shows AAP's helplessness and hopelessness," added the Rajya Sabha member.

The incumbent MLA said he knows the constituency inside out from his days as a civil services aspirant.

Pathak: AAP's behind-the-scenes man

Samridhi Tewari
NEW DELHI

Despite entering electoral politics only in 2022, Durgesh Pathak has been the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) éminence grise since its formation in 2012, playing an instrumental role in expanding the party's national footprint.

Starting as an AAP volunteer with no political background, Mr. Pathak quickly rose through the ranks, taking on various key responsibilities within the party. At 35, he is the youngest member of AAP's Political Affairs Committee, its highest decision-making body, and is seeking re-election from the Raja Nagar Assembly constituency.

The incumbent MLA said he knows the constituency inside out from his days as a civil services aspirant.



Durgesh Pathak with a Che Guevara poster at home. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

rant and has leveraged this knowledge to focus on enhancing basic amenities and governance in the area.

Inspired by Anna Hazare

Mr. Pathak's entry into politics was with the India Against Corruption movement by activist Anna Hazare. "That protest changed my life. I realised that for a vibrant democracy

cy, active public participation and independent and stronger institutions are needed," he said.

Mr. Pathak has formed a WhatsApp group called 'Mohalla Sabha', where residents can raise grievances. "Through this and other social media platforms, I remain connected to over 18,000 people in the area," he added.

However, a lot has changed in the constituency following the drowning of three civil services aspirants a year ago in a coaching institute's basement due to flooding caused by heavy rain, which was exacerbated by a blocked drainage system.

The sitting MLA acknowledges that drainage is a significant concern. "The

tragedy could have been averted had the MCD [Municipal Corporation of Delhi] functioned properly. It was unfortunate. Rather than playing the blame game, political parties should work together to find solutions," he said.

Training his guns at the BJP, Mr. Pathak accused the Opposition party of attempting to dismantle AAP. "Our senior leaders were put in jail [in the excise policy case]. It was a challenging time. We worked united to thwart the BJP's plan to break the party."

In the poll, Mr. Pathak will face BJP's Umang Bajaj, a councillor, and Congress's Vineet Yadav, an Indian Youth Congress member.

EC official assaulted our nominee: Jairam Ramesh

Ashna Butani
NEW DELHI

of a constitutional body like the EC. This unprecedented and illegal act can only be seen as a desperate attempt by AAP and the BJP to stop Sushant's candidature and the growing support for the Congress candidate by an Election Commission (EC) official a day earlier.

Mr. Ramesh alleged that on Saturday, the official tried to halt the 'padayatra' (foot march) of Sushant Mishra, the Congress candidate from Rithala, and "assaulted him". He claimed that Mr. Mishra had obtained police permission for the drive, and blamed AAP and the BJP for the alleged assault.

"This is a case of partisan behaviour by an officer



Parents waiting for their wards outside a Delhi govt. school in Kalkaji, the seat of Delhi CM and Education Minister Atishi. ASHNA BUTANI

sembly election from Jangpura. But for voters in east Delhi's Patparganj, where AAP has fielded civil services tutor Avadh Ojha this time, the state of schools remains an important issue.

"Schools in our area have been transformed over the last 10 years," said 32-year-old homemaker

dest daughter is studying fashion as a skill subject, and she is interested in pursuing a career in it," she said, crediting AAP with improving the state of government schools.

However, she is apprehensive about the school's change of curriculum from the Central Board of Secondary Examination to the DBSE in April last year.

Referring to competitive examinations like CUET, which use the CBSE syllabus, she said, "I am worried because my neighbours have told me that studying from a CBSE school is more helpful when students apply for admission to colleges. But my daughters say that the DBSE prepares them for the future just as well."

While Mr. Sisodia decid-

ed to change constituencies for the upcoming election, the CM, who was elected from Kalkaji in 2020, has stayed put in the south-east Delhi seat.

The state of schools is

just as prominent in conversations in Patparganj as it is in Kalkaji.

When Chanda Devi came to Delhi from Bihar's Dharbanga 13 years ago, she did not intend to settle down in the city. However, she changed her mind when it came to taking a call on her daughters' education.

Two of her daughters have passed out from Delhi government-run Sarvodaya Vidyalaya while two are still studying there. "The school building used to have only one floor. Now, it has three. The infrastructure has also improved a lot," she said.

Fulfilling their dreams'

"My eldest daughter pursued commerce and topped her college. My other daughter is now in a Delhi University college and has gone for her exam today," said Ms. Chanda, adding, "I never got to study, so I'm really happy to see them pursuing their dreams."

Meanwhile, in Jangpura, where AAP won the last two polls, 77-year-old shop owner Ramesh Saini said that "broken roads, overflowing sewage, and lack of potable water" are more important than schools. After a little thought, he added, "But if Sisodia wins, maybe the focus will shift back to schools."

Monk chosen for Padma Shri thanks West Bengal CM for 'criticising' him

Shiv Sahay Singh

KOLKATA

Swami Pradipananda alias Kartik Maharaj, who has been selected for the Padma Shri by the Ministry of Home Affairs, on Sunday thanked West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for "criticising him".

"Certainly *Didi* [Mamata] has showered her blessings on me. She is the one who advertised my name and later the Prime Minister also spoke about me," the monk, associated with Bharat Sevashram Sangha, told journalists.

Maharaj, who is in charge of the Beldanga Ashram of the Bharat Sevashram Sangha, hit headlines during the 2024 Lok Sabha poll when Ms. Banerjee targeted a section of monks accusing them of directly working against the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and supporting the BJP.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had lashed out at the TMC for criticising monks of religious organisations.

Political observers see the honour to Maharaj as a political move, giving credence to his ideology, which emphasises that "Hindus are threatened in West Bengal".

While Maharaj has been chosen in the area of 'spirituality', singer Arijit Singh, who hails from the State's Murshidabad district, was awarded the Padma Shri in the field of arts.

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 24 07
Safdarjung 24 07
Palam 22 08

Delhi Palam Today
22°C Morning will be cold with mist and haze. Day will be pleasant with light cool winds. Night also will be cold. Dry weather to prevail.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
23°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be cold. Day will be pleasant with gusty cool winds. Night also will be cold.

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OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

FIRST ANNIVERSARY



In loving memory of
Mr. V. Sivaramakrishnan
09.02.1940 - 27.01.2024
Your smile, calmness and
willpower will be
remembered forever.
Family & Friends

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY



SANTHI JYOTHI MARTIN
D.O.B: 15.03.1964 D.O.D: 27.01.2020
Vizag Chennai
"Those who are righteous
will be long remembered
(Psalm 112:6)"
Deeply Remembered by
J S Martin & Family,
Near Onees

Constitution inspires us to uphold justice, equality, says U.P. CM

Maha Kumbh spiritual event, not for sports: Akhilesh after dip at Sangam; SP chief would hopefully find peace, desist from hurting sentiments: BJP

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW



U.P. CM Yogi Adityanath, Governor Anandiben Patel, and dignitaries attend the Republic Day celebrations in Lucknow on Sunday. ANI

He added that the vision of a developed India can only be realised by adhering to the principles of the Indian Constitution.

Pledge for harmony

Meanwhile, Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav took a holy dip at the Sangam in Maha Kumbh, Prayagraj.

He told reporters that he aimed to bring harmony, peace, and tolerance in society so that the country continues to move forward with these values.

"On Republic Day, on this auspicious occasion, I got the opportunity to take 11 dips in the Sangam as per tradition. Today, we took a pledge that there should be harmony, goodwill, and everyone should keep moving forward with tolerance," Mr. Yadav said.

Taking swipe at Mr. Adityanath, he said Kumbh is a

spiritual event, not a water sport. Recently, Mr. Adityanath and his Ministers were seen splashing water on each other after a dip at the Sangam following a Cabinet meeting.

"For the BJP, I have to say that if you come to Kumbh, then bathe with patience. People come here for virtue and charity, not for water sports," he said.

The BJP took a swipe at Mr. Yadav, suggesting the SP chief would hopefully find peace after the holy bath and desist from hurting religious sentiments of people with his comments.

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya in a post on X said, "Akhilesh Yadav ji, better late than never. After taking a dip in Ganga in Haridwar and at Maha Kumbh, it is hoped that you will refrain from making statements that hurt religious sentiments."

Geo-tagged digital identity helps Kashmir's chinari trees stand tall

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Facing destruction due to rapid urbanisation and infrastructure projects, a geo-tagged digital identity on the lines of the Aadhaar card has been introduced this week to monitor the health of every chinari tree in the Kashmir Valley.

The JKFR Institute's (JKFRI) 'Digital Tree Aadhaar' initiative gives a unique number to each tree. The chinari at Lal Chowk is CG-JKO10088. Metal cards with barcodes provide information such as the tree's location, height, and health.

"Around 10,000 trees are being metal card-tagged as of now. It will help in the management of trees, and tourists will get to know how old a tree is



Unique number: Workers install QR code-based GIS plates on chinari trees for conservation at Nishat Garden, Srinagar. FILE PHOTO

by scanning the barcodes," Syed Tariq, project coordinator at the JKFR, said.

Dipping numbers

The JKFR began a chinari census in the Union Territory in 2021. According to data from the JKFR, Kashmir was home to around 40,000 chinari trees but the numbers are falling

steadily. The widening of highways has also taken a toll on many trees.

"The aim of the JKFR is to establish a detailed database of chinari trees using the Geographic Information System (GIS)-based, quick response (QR) code-enabled surveys," Mr. Tariq said. Around 28,560 chinari trees have been geo-tagged at ground level.

Girl punished for asking for sanitary pad

Press Trust of India
BAREILLY (U.P.)

A Class 11 student of a girls' school in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly was allegedly made to stand outside her classroom for an hour after she requested a sanitary pad during her examination, sparking outrage and prompting an official inquiry into the matter, officials said on Sunday.

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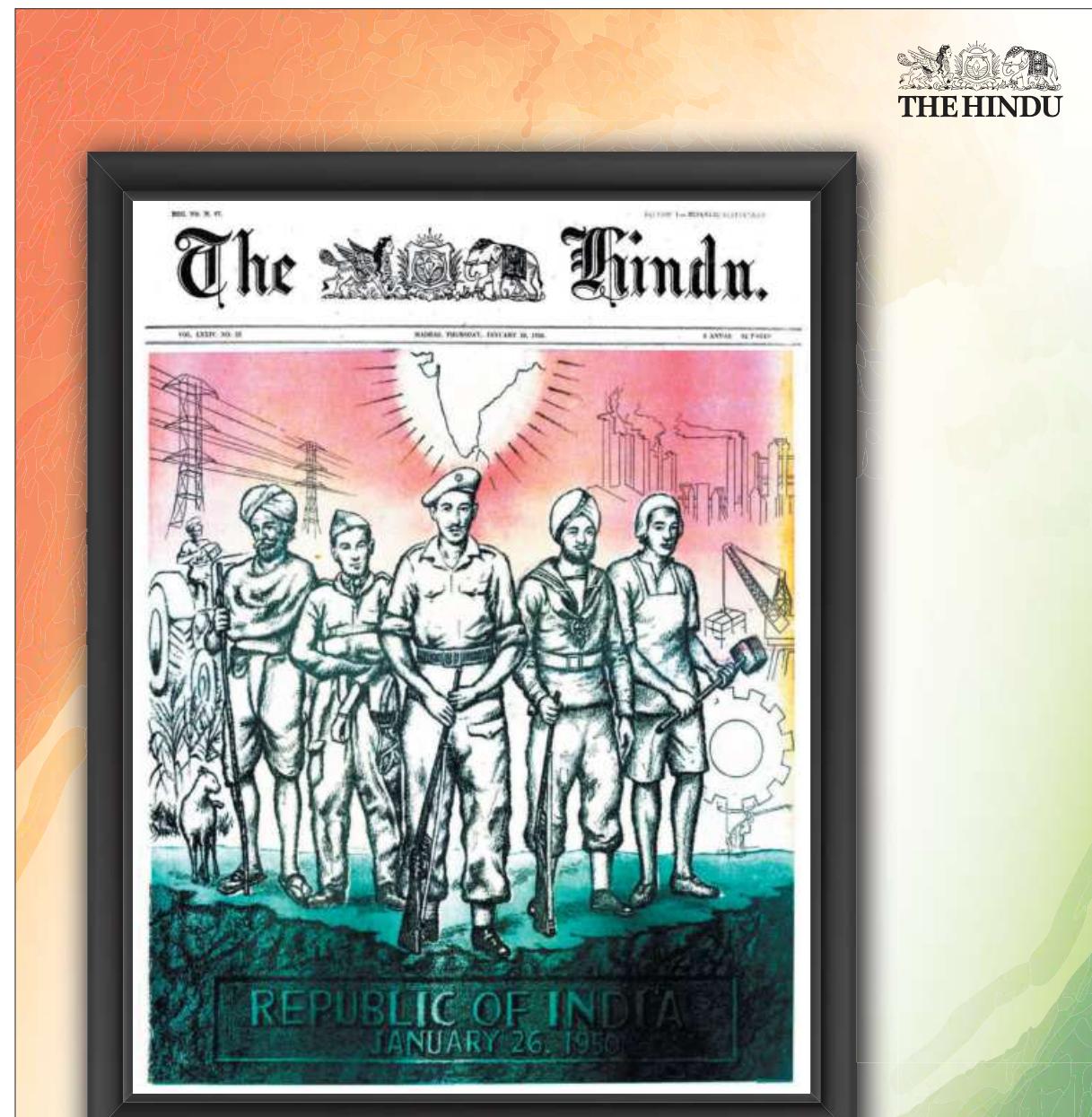
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Timings	
MONDAY, JAN. 27	
RISE 07:12	SET 17:57
TUESDAY, JAN. 28	
RISE 07:11	SET 17:57
RISE 06:22	SET 16:40
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 29	
RISE 07:11	SET 17:58
RISE 07:10	SET 17:48

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ACES SPORTS QUIZ

1. At which ePrix Formula E race did Indian racer Jehan Daruvala finish ninth, marking his first points of the season in 2024?
2. The first Indian to win a medal at 3 consecutive Paralympics competed in which event?
3. In which sport did India's men's and women's teams create history by winning team gold medals at the 45th International Olympiad in Budapest?

Scan the QR code or visit sstar.news/SSA2025A to take part in the quiz and vote for your favourite stars. Top 3 winners every day will win exciting gift vouchers*.

Answer to yesterday's quiz:
1. Delhi
2. Goalkeeper
3. Shot put

Yesterday's Winners:
1. V. Srikanth, Chennai
2. Nirajan, P. Bengaluru
3. Ramu Reddy, Hyderabad

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IN BRIEF



Farmers' plight continues due to Centre's indifference: Mann

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Sunday said the State's farmers had put in their sweat and toil to make the country self-reliant in food production, but their plight unfortunately continued owing to the Centre's "indifferent attitude" towards their demands. Addressing a gathering on the 76th Republic Day in Patiala, Mr. Mann alleged that the Union government had not released the State's pending share of the Rural Development Fund worth ₹5,500 crore, which was an example of the Central government's indifferent attitude towards Punjab.

Cong. routed, BJP wins 10 of 11 mayoral seats in Uttarakhand

The BJP on Sunday swept the urban local body elections in Uttarakhand, winning 10 out of 11 mayoral seats to emerge as the dominant party in the municipal councils and nagar panchayats. While the BJP won 10 mayoral seats, Arti Bhandari, an Independent, won the Srinagar mayoral seat in Pauri district, said State Election Commissioner Sushil Kumar. The Congress, which won two mayoral seats in the last urban local body polls held in 2018, drew a blank this time. In municipal councils too, it finished third behind the BJP and Independents. PTI

M.P. CM seeks joint efforts to enforce liquor ban, targets Cong. on eve of Mhow rally

Ambedkar's birthplace being treated as 'tourist spot', says Mohan Yadav; BJP insulting Constitution every day, Cong. workers will take pledge to oust party from power in next Assembly poll: Patwari

Mehul Malpani
Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Sunday called for joint efforts from the public and the government to enforce the recently announced ban on sale of liquor in 17 religious cities, towns, and villages of the State.

Addressing an event to celebrate the 76th Republic Day at Indore's Nehru Stadium, Mr. Yadav said the decision was taken based on suggestions from various seers and social outfits and that the State government would run awareness programmes.

On January 24, the Cabinet had decided to shut all liquor shops in 17 places of religious significance like Ujjain and Omkreshwar. Mr. Yadav also highlighted the two inter-State river linking projects – Ken-Betwa with Uttar Pradesh and Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal with Rajasthan, launched



Looking ahead: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav at the Republic Day celebration in Indore on Sunday. ANI

in December 2024. He said they would meet water needs of several districts.

At the Republic Day function in Indore, Mr. Yadav shared the target of providing 2.5 lakh government jobs to the youth. He said preparations for the Global Investor Summit, scheduled for February 24 and 25 in Bhopal, had begun and the Prime Minister would be inaugurating it.

Later in the day, the Chief Minister visited Mhow, the birthplace of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and took a swipe at the Congress's scheduled 'Jai Baba, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' rally in the town on January 27, saying "some people are coming here for an event".

Come on key dates'
Speaking to reporters in Mhow, Mr. Yadav said, "Some people look at Babasaheb's holy birthplace as a mere tourist spot. They are coming here for events, not because of

their commitment. If they want to pay true respect to Babasaheb, people should come here on important dates related to him."

Earlier, State Congress chief Jitu Patwari targeted the Bharatiya Janata Party saying that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "new India, the Constitution is insulted every day".

"The purpose of this rally is to express commitment and gratitude towards the Constitution. Every Congress worker is ready to fight till the last breath to save the Constitution," Mr. Patwari said, adding that the State Congress workers would also take a pledge to oust the BJP from power in the State in the next Assembly poll.

Top Congress leaders, including Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, party national president Mallikarjun Kharge, and Wayanad Lok Sabha MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, are expected to attend the rally.



Governor R.N. Ravi and CM M.K. Stalin salute the Tricolour on Republic Day in Chennai on Sunday. B. JOITH RAMALINGAM

the Governor at the saluting base.

CM skips 'At Home'

Mr. Stalin and his Cabinet colleagues, however, skipped the annual Republic Day 'At Home' reception hosted by the Governor at Raj Bhavan on Sunday. Mr. Stalin and his Ministers participated in the 'At Home' reception last Independence Day.

However, the stand-off between the Governor and the ruling DMK escalated this month after Mr. Ravi walked out of the Assembly. The DMK's allies – the Congress, the CPI (M), and the VCK – had earlier announced that they would boycott the event. AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami, too, did not take part in the event.

Revanth disappointed as State's Padma suggestions 'ignored'

R. Ravikanth Reddy

HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is planning to write to Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressing disappointment over the denial of a fair share to the State in the Padma awards.

Sources in the government said despite the State recommending prominent people in various categories, the Union government "ignored them", and this was nothing but an



Gaddar

"insult" to Telangana. The recommendations included prominent personalities like balladeer Gaddar (Padma Vibhushan), educationist Chukka Ramaiah (Padma Bhushan), poet Andesri (Padma Bhushan),

singer and poet Gorati Venkanna (Padma Shri), and poet and historian Jayadeer Tirumala Rao (Padma Shri). "By not recognising their distinguished service, the Centre has insulted the State," a senior official said.

Telangana got two of the 139 awards, including Padma Vibhushan to gastroenterologist Duvvur Nageswar Reddy and Padma Shri to Madiga Reservation Pora Samiti founder Manda Krishna Madiga. As per the CM, the State should have got at least five awards.

Tripura Governor's phones also tapped: Telangana official

The Hindu Bureau

HYDERABAD

Investigation into phone-tapping allegations under the previous BRS government has intensified with officials in Telangana probing links with other States.

Hyderabad Police has recorded the statement of Tripura Governor N. Indrasena Reddy's Officer on Special Duty (OSD) G. Narasimulu in connection

with the case. A senior official said technical evidence revealed that Mr. Reddy's phones were also tapped in November 2023.

"Two SIM cards that were being used by the Governor were in the name of Mr. Narasimulu and so his statement was recorded," the official said. Mr. Reddy was appointed Tripura Governor in October 2023.

The issue came to light in March 2024.

We can sit together, sort out differences: Kerala Governor

The Hindu Bureau

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Observing that 'Viksit Bharat' cannot go ahead without 'Viksit Kerala', Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar on Sunday said standing united and working together are the ways to take the State's development forward.

Addressing the 76th Republic Day celebrations, Mr. Arlekar said Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has a vision for the State and

Governor, Stalin share space on dais at R-Day event

The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

On Republic Day, Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi unfurled the national flag in Chennai in the presence of Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and other dignitaries.

As the Governor and the Chief Minister stood saluting, the national anthem was sung and a helicopter showered flower petals over the national flag near the Labour Statue. An impressive ceremonial march past marked the spirit of the celebrations. As per protocol, the Chief Minister received the Governor with a bouquet of flowers.

As per the custom, the Chief Minister introduced senior officers from the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Coast Guard and the Tamil Nadu police to the Governor. The Governor and the Chief Minister sat next to each other, and took part in the celebrations, notwithstanding the former's remarks during his Republic Day speech on Saturday and the government's response to them.

In a social media post, Mr. Stalin shared a video clipping of him receiving



Kerala Governor Rajendra Arlekar with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan during the Republic Day celebrations on Sunday. ANI

understands the need for its development. "Differences," he said, will be sorted out by "sitting together". "That is what we have envisaged and that is how we will be marching (forward)," he said.

Jalgaon train accident: untold hardships of Nepali migrant workers on Pushpak Express

SPOTLIGHT

Snehal Mutha

Every day, the Pushpak Express (meaning a 'flower chariot') travels from Lucknow to Mumbai, covering a distance of 1,436 km in a little over 25 hours. For those migrating from Nepal to the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) for employment, the train is an important connection.

Kamala Bhandari, 43, had been on the Pushpak Express several times. On January 22, she was returning from Nepal, where she had gone for a short vacation to take a break from her work as a house help in Mumbai's Churchgate area. This time, Radha Bhandari, 35, was accompanying Kamala [her mother-in-law] to find a job in Mumbai.

On January 23, at the Government Medical College in Jalgaon city, about 400 km from Mumbai, Radha waits outside the Department of Anatomy. Her face is pale, and she is trying to hold back tears. "She was the strongest person I knew, the backbone of the family. For the past 14 years, she has been working in Mumbai, and has endured a lot all her life. Even death caused her so much pain," says Radha.

Radha and Kamala were among over 150 passengers

in the general coach of the Pushpak Express, who on January 22 deboarded the train over the fear of a fire breaking out on it.

Many passengers jumped on to the tracks, only to be mowed down by the Karnataka Express, running at 130 kmph.

"Out of the 12 people who lost their lives in the incident, seven were Nepali nationals. Four other Nepali nationals were gravely injured," said Ayush Prasad, District Collector, Jalgaon. All the deceased and injured were either visiting their families or returning to their jobs.

Jobs beckon
Like Kamala, hundreds of people from Nepal cross the border to reach Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow district. "We don't have exact figures on people from Nepal travelling to Mumbai as it is difficult to keep track of general coach passengers. However, at least 40% of train passengers are Nepali. Most of the time, trains are overcrowded with people sitting in the aisle," said a railway officer.

Census data from 2011 show India has over 8 lakh migrants from Nepal. A 2022 study on cross-border migration confirms that most migrants are from Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces in Nepal.

The 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship bet-

ween Nepal and India facilitates the free movement of people across the border of both countries.

Raju Vishwakarma, belonging to the Hill Dalit community, has come to collect the bodies of his relatives Kala Kanchi Kami, 60, Himu Vishwakarma, 11.

Raju's father came to India as a teenager and worked as a security guard. Raju himself came to Thane when he was five and helped his father. Today, he works a double shift as a guard at night and a driver during the day.

"We own some land and the produce is only sufficient for our own consumption. There are hospital bills and the children's education. These can only be paid with the money we earn here," Raju says.

Himu's father is also a security guard. Kala had four children, two of whom migrated to Himachal Pradesh, one in Kalyan, and one who stayed back in their village in Achham district, which is a hilly area.

Experts say hilly regions in Nepal are seeing adverse weather conditions, driving people to migrate to India. According to the study on migration, 21% of Nepali migrants in India work in the hotel/catering industry, 12% in manufacturing, and 12% in agriculture.

Dipendra Parihar, 30, is a cook with a food outlet in Kalyan. He was in the train and is now at the hospital helping his co-passenger and relative Manju Parihar, 25. Dipendra's parents work in a factory in

Thane's Ambernath. He says, "One needs to pay to get a reputed private or government job in Nepal." They take this train to Mumbai as it is the fastest," Shankar says.

A bonded community
Members of the migrant community keep in touch using social media and help each other in hard times. WhatsApp groups thrive, but there is no registered diasporic group.

After the news of the Pushpak Express accident went viral, a network of people stay connected, and, in case of emergencies, he often acts as a connection to relatives back in Nepal. "In last few years, we have helped with at least 16 cases," he says.

Yam Bhadur belongs to the Chhettri ethnicity and has been in Bhusawal for the last 30 years, working as a watchman. He earns ₹15,000 every month, he manages to send ₹10,000 back home.

The force of compulsion
A couple of days after the accident, the Pushpak Express sees no change. Where one berth has the capacity to accommodate three people in a sitting position, the passengers 'adjust' to fit in at least six. The general coach has a capacity of 100; there are at least 180, a railway official on-board says.

In the coach, people carry bags of belongings and packed food. People clutch at the edges of seats for balance; some sit and sleep on the floor.

Many know each other, chatting in Nepali. Manisha Bhadur, 36, sits on a berth with five others. "Travelling is difficult, but worth it. We have no other option. Reservations are difficult as this train is always full," she says, adding that walking from the berth to the washroom in a coach full of men is tough. She says the government should increase the number of general coaches as the trains are filled beyond capacity.

Manisha and her husband, Kamal Bhadur, 48, work in Navi Mumbai – she as a cook, he in a hotel. Together they earn ₹35,000. Kamal works a 12-hour shift. When he goes on holiday, he doesn't get paid. Manisha calls it "maajboori (no choice)". Kamal's relative Rajesh, 18, is travelling to Mumbai for the first time. He has been in Delhi and Hyderabad. He hopes he will like Mumbai the way he liked Delhi.

LINK TO FULL STORY
» <https://bit.ly/4g9AOok>



Tragedy on tracks: The spot near Maharashtra's Pachora where the accident took place; a victim's relative waits to take the body back to his hometown. EMMANUEL YOGIN



gaon. He learnt about the accident from the WhatsApp group, Nepal Pravasi Sangh. "When there's any incident, we get to know about it from the group and reach out to people and try to help. We treat India as our motherland, but we know it is still a foreign land, and we have to take care of each other."

Yam Bhadur belongs to the Chhettri ethnicity and has been in Bhusawal for the last 30 years, working as a watchman. He often acts as a connection to relatives back in Nepal. "In last few years, we have helped with at least 16 cases," he says.

Yam Bhadur, 48, one of the members of Shankar's group, came from Bhusawal, about 30 km from Jal-



Alert mode: Forest Department staff deployed at Pancharakolly hamlet in Wayanad district, Kerala. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Tiger attacks forest staffer; Minister says it will be shot

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

A tiger attacked one of the members of the Rapid Response Team (RRT) deployed to capture the animal at Pancharakolly hamlet in Wayanad district of Kerala on Sunday.

The RRT of the State Forest and Wildlife Department was deployed in the village near Mananthavady after the tiger killed a tribal woman on Friday, while she was harvesting coffee cherries at an estate.

A forest official said RRT member Jayasurya narrowly escaped serious injury as he used a protective shield when the tiger lunged at the team. He sustained minor injuries in his hand and was hospitalised.

Multiple attacks
Following Sunday's attack, Forest Minister A.K. Sa- seendran said the tiger

would be declared a man-eater and shot dead.

After a high-level meeting at the Wayanad Collectorate, the Minister said: "The same animal has attacked humans more than once. We have to treat it as a man-eater."

100 cameras soon
Unconfirmed reports said that when the tiger attacked Jayasurya, another team member opened fire, potentially injuring the predator. Currently, eight teams, each comprising 10 officials, are combing the area to capture the tiger.

The Minister said the existing laws on wildlife need to be changed to prevent deaths in animal attacks.

The meeting also decided to set up more AI surveillance cameras in areas prone to wildlife attacks, within February 1. A total of 100 such cameras will be set up in Wayanad.

Centre trying to take over universities: Telangana CM

Revanth warns of protests if Centre does not withdraw the draft UGC regulations on selection of Vice-Chancellors, says Centre's move to usurp States' powers is tantamount to a 'cultural attack'

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to refrain from the proposed amendments to the University Grants Commission (UGC) regulations on the selection and appointment of Vice-Chancellors of universities, describing the move as an attack on the Constitution.

He expressed concern that the Centre was trying to take over the powers to run universities from the States, and saw a conspiracy in the move. "The Centre's plan to take over the administration of universities may make them platforms for false propaganda by a few individuals," he said.

Various non-BJP State governments had opposed the draft regulations by the UGC on the selection of Vice-Chancellors to universities. The States contend that the regulations are in



Taking the salute: Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy attending the Republic Day event in Hyderabad on Sunday. PTI

violation of the federal principles of the Constitution.

Unveiling a statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on the B.R. Ambedkar Open University campus, Mr. Reddy said the proposed changes in UGC norms were tantamount to a "cultural attack" on the States. It would lead to unnecessary controversies, he said.

Opposes privatisation
"The Centre's moves to usurp the States' powers will be seen as an attack on them. We are not prepared to lose our rights," he said, demanding that the Centre withdraw its move, failing which the State would stage protests if need be.

The Chief Minister said the States would be reduced to "tax collection organisations" if their powers were taken over by the Centre gradually. "Unfortunately, the country is witnessing a debate on the protection of the Constitution," he said, opposing the move to privatise varsities.

Singing a different tune: Haryana artists join anti-drug drive

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

The fight against drug menace has hit a new note in Haryana, with popular singers being engaged in a unique 'bucket challenge'.



Singer Masoom Sharma is the first artist to join the campaign. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

have been accused of promoting a harmful culture among listeners. Music videos like 'Goli Chal Javegi', 'Kasooti 2', and 'Bam Lehri' have been criticised for normalising a lifestyle that glorifies lawlessness and substance abuse.

By engaging popular artists, the campaign intends to make them part of the solution instead of vilifying them, said an official. The singers also bring accountability to the drive, making it more resonant with the audience that looks up to them, the official added.

O.P. Singh, Director General of the HSNCB, explained the campaign's broader strategy: "Music and popular culture are powerful tools to shape societal values. While songs glamorising drugs and violence may be intended for entertainment, they often influence young minds. Through this challenge, we aim to show the contrast between an artist's commercial work and their real-life stance as responsible citizens."

Karnataka govt. to discuss Bill to govern lending firms, start helpline for victims

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

the offices of Deputy Commissioners to help victims to file complaints.

On Saturday, the State government decided to promulgate an Ordinance titled Karnataka Microfinance Institutions (Regulation of Money Lending) Bill after a meeting with representatives from microfinance companies. The Chief Minister had also questioned the dubious methods of lending and re-

covey process at the meeting.

Police feedback

Law Minister H.K. Patil indicated that the draft Bill would be ready over the next four days. "We have circulated the draft among experienced police officers, seeking their feedback. We will also hold discussions with Home Minister (G. Parameshwara), Revenue Minister

(Krishna Byre Gowda), and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar before it is given to the Chief Minister," he told presspersons at Gadag.

"The problem is that the companies have outsourced collection work to rowdy sheeters," he said.

His statements come in the light of cases of harassment against borrowers across the State. Cases of suicide were also reported.

Singers like Mr. Sharma teach poetry? Siddhartha Menon, a teacher and poet, has an eloquent take in his *Building A Cathedral: An approach to teaching poetry*. "I ask myself what I might be doing when I teach poetry. A simple, and perhaps the most honest, answer is that I am pleasing myself and thereby, I like to think, my students". We could also delve deeper by bringing in factors like age and comfort with the language. Then, of course, we need to try out actions. There are neither secret formulae nor short-cuts, and we will have to work our way.

In the recent months, in school we have focused on the text. The poem. We have read poems – alone, in silence, together, aloud, in tandem with online videos online and re-read them. We have begun many days with poems as well. We have tried to encompass a wide range from the classics to the contemporary and from the religious to the revolutionary. In the process, not only have we built up a decent collection of books on poems but have also made inroads into our conversations. Some of us have become friends with poetry and a couple have also fallen in love with it. We understand this is a beginning and sooner than later the students will join us.

The writer teaches English and is associated with a school in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

SCHOLARSHIPS

UCL India Excellence Scholarship

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Rewards: Full tuition fees, living costs, and return airfare.

Application: Online

Deadline: January 31

www.b4s.in/edge/FSSU1

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MBBS, B.Sc. Nursing, and B.Tech +

M.Tech (Integrated five-year programme) in Delhi, Pune,

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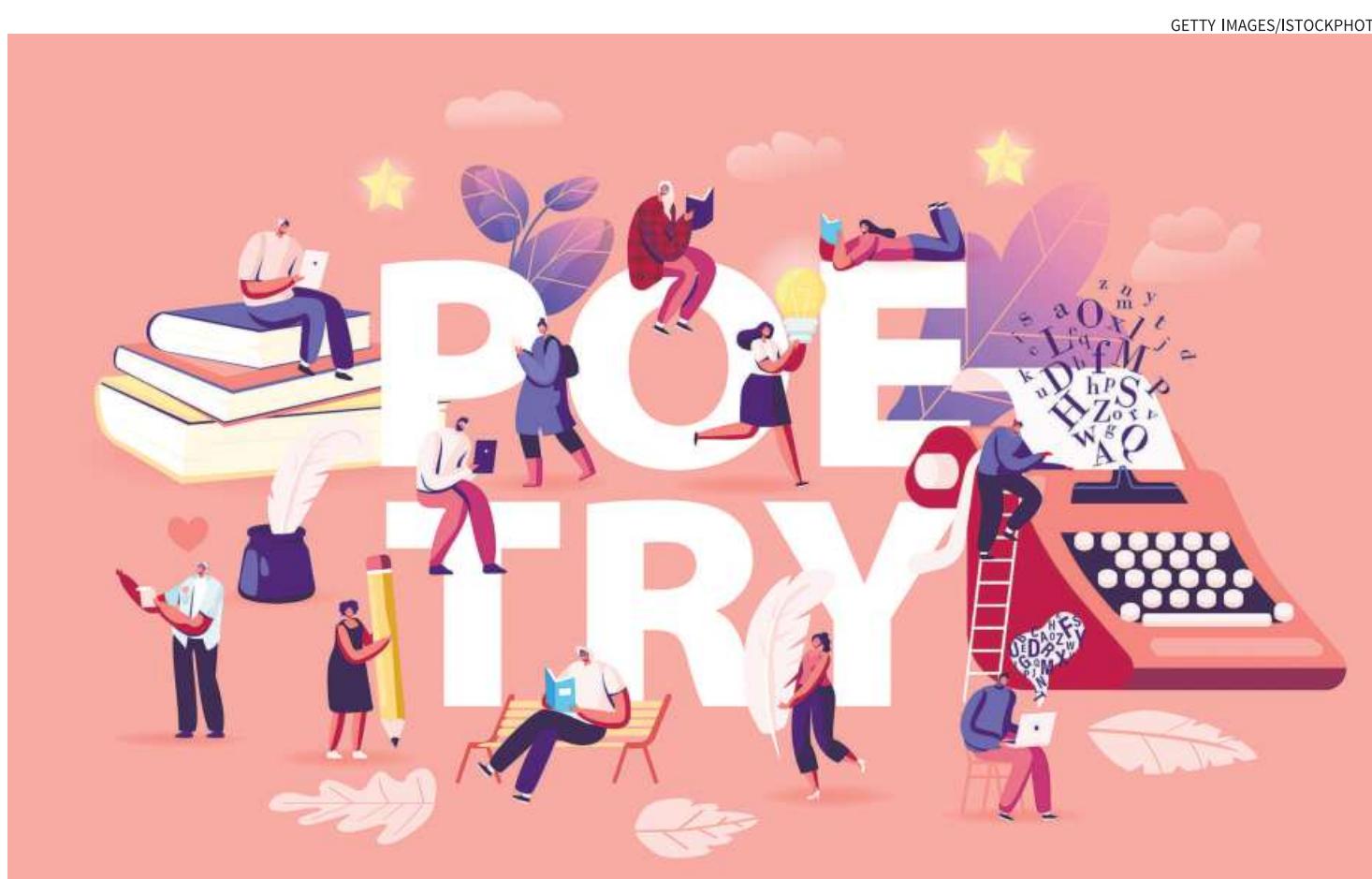
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Rhyme and reason

How do we introduce poetry to students and tell them what it is?

differently without being incorrect. As Samuel Taylor Coleridge once remarked, poetry is "the best words in the best order". As our discussion progressed, my colleagues' struggle was palpable, despite having invested significant time in reading, reciting and listening to poetry. Unfortunately, the

"conventional teacher" runs the risk of reducing a William Wordsworth classic to a list of difficult words with their meanings or explain the beauty of a Robert Frost as THE interpretation of the poem. In other words, we wean children away from poetry. On the other hand, I recall my English teacher who immersed us

in Shelley's *To A Skylark*. I am not sure of the exact impact it had on me or my love for poetry but, even more than two decades later, I can still recall her infectious passion and the skylark she drew on the board. Eugenio Montale famously said, "I wait for poetry to visit me." Poetry surely visited our class that week.

So, what can we do besides, of course, waiting for poetry to visit us?

What we can do
We can begin with the basics. We can figure out what poetry means to us. Or, what is a poem? Paul Celan's response to the latter is epic, "A poem, as a manifestation of language and thus essentially dia-

logue, can be a message in a bottle, sent out in the – not always greatly hopeful – belief that somewhere and sometime it could wash up on land, on heartland perhaps. Poems in this sense, too, are under way: they are making toward something".

And possibly move on to how, if at all, can one

teach poetry? Siddhartha Menon, a teacher and poet, has an eloquent take in his *Building A Cathedral: An approach to teaching poetry*. "I ask myself what I might be doing when I teach poetry. A simple, and perhaps the most honest, answer is that I am pleasing myself and thereby, I like to think, my students". We could also delve deeper by bringing in factors like age and comfort with the language. Then, of course, we need to try out actions. There are neither secret formulae nor short-cuts, and we will have to work our way.

The writer teaches English and is associated with a school in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.



Republican journey

The President of India should stay clear of partisan political discourse

In her customary address to the nation on the eve of the 76th Republic Day, the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, said that the Constitution has become a living document due to the millennia-old civic virtues of the country. Ms. Murmu also paid tribute to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who chaired the Drafting Committee, and other members of the Constituent Assembly, who created a document that would guide the country's progress. Connecting India's journey as a modern Republic to its heritage, the President said the constitutional values of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity have always been a part of India's civilisation. Sceptics who doubted India's prospects at the time of Independence have been proven wrong due to these inherent strengths of the country. The President highlighted the representative character of the Constituent Assembly, whose members were drawn from every part of, and communities in, the country, including 15 women. While women's equality was at that time only a distant ideal in much of the world, Indian women were contributing to shaping the nation's destiny, she noted. Reflecting on the progress over 75 years, Ms. Murmu commended the Union government's efforts to move past the relics of the colonial era, particularly the "audacity of vision" of replacing colonial-era criminal laws with three new laws rooted in Indian traditions of jurisprudence.

The President strongly advocated the controversial proposal for simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies as a means to redefine good governance. The draft Bill on simultaneous elections, introduced by the Narendra Modi government, is under review by a joint committee of Parliament. The President waded into the debate with the argument that synchronised elections would promote consistency in governance, prevent policy paralysis, mitigate resource diversion, and reduce financial burdens. It is a contentious topic and Opposition parties that are a part of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance have opposed the plan on the ground that it violates the basic structure of the Constitution and undermines federalism. Not surprisingly, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has alleged that there is a "tendency" to impose a "One Nation, One Party" agenda by undermining the Opposition. The President could have stayed clear of this topic. The government will need to tread carefully to ensure that the First Citizen is not drawn into what is essentially a partisan political debate. Unity without uniformity is key to a more perfect union. And Republic Day is as good as any other day to reiterate that.

India with Indonesia

The two Asian nations must now build on their historic ties

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto's visit to India, as chief guest at the Republic Day parade, was replete with the symbolism of historically important ties between the two countries, albeit short on concrete outcomes. India and Indonesia's ancient ties, that rest on trade and travel to the spread of an adapted form of Javanese Hinduism, as well as the use of Vedic scriptures and Sanskrit works, have given the two countries a formidable engagement. In the previous century, it was their solidarity against imperialism, which led to independent India's support to Indonesian leaders fighting Dutch colonialism, with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru banning Dutch overflights and sending Indian planes to evacuate the Indonesian Prime Minister and Vice President – in an article in *The Hindu* on January 5, 1950, Indonesia's first President, Sukarno, wrote about Indonesia's gratitude. Next, India and Indonesia were united by their aversion to great power politics. They supported the creation of the non-aligned movement (NAM), beginning with the Bandung Conference. Ties were also forged by their innate similarities as two Asian nations that dominated South Asia and South-East Asia by size. Both were countries where large religious majorities practised tolerance towards sizable minorities, as well as economic powerhouses committed to an equitable development of their large populations. In the recent past, ties have been spurred by common concerns over western sanctions after the start of the Ukraine war, U.S.-China rivalry and China's aggression in the Indo-Pacific, worries over "food, fertilizer and fuel" security and a weakening multilateral order. Their efforts to forge consensus at the G-20 summits in Bali (2022) and Delhi (2023), will now be put to further use as Indonesia has joined BRICS. In that sense, Mr. Subianto's visit, in the 75th year of bilateral ties, is a full circle: from Bandung to an enlarged BRICS.

Given the historical, strategic and geopolitical importance of relations, the announcements were more modest than expected. There were five MoUs in health, traditional medicine, maritime security, digital development and cultural cooperation and the joint statement referred to strengthening defence cooperation. However, no specific progress was announced on the sale of India's BrahMos missile, or on the Sabang port project and Aceh-Andamans connectivity initiatives. The joint statement was also pointedly non-committal on their world view, despite their similar positions on recent geopolitical conflicts, and initiatives to engage the Trump administration and China. India's Republic Day invitation and Mr. Subianto's visit, fresh in his presidential term, are, however, an important statement for both capitals to make. There is the impetus for the two Asian powers to forge the next phase in their ties.

Genocide and the world's averted gaze

Eighty years ago, on January 27, 1945, Soviet soldiers stumbled upon the barbed wire surrounding Auschwitz-Birkenau. Inside they found 8,000 emaciated prisoners, along with 44,000 pairs of shoes, piles of spectacles, and mounds of cooking utensils. This was all that remained of the approximately 1.1 million people, mainly European Jews, who were killed at Auschwitz. As the retreating Nazis destroyed their meticulous records along with much evidence of the brutally efficient killing operation, a precise figure is not available. This year, on the anniversary of the liberation, the few remaining survivors and world leaders have been invited to remember the dead and to renew the international community's pledge of never again allowing genocide to take place.

A stain in human history

As the Genocide Convention of 1948 recognises, the crime of genocide – 'acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group' – has stained human history down the ages. The United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, said on December 9, 2020, on the international day to commemorate victims of genocide, 'Genocide always has multiple clear warning signs.'

The Soviet soldiers who liberated Auschwitz later said they were wholly unprepared for what they found. However, while the industrial scale of the killing that would eventually claim six million Jewish lives, in addition to tens of thousands of Roma, Sinti, and other people deemed inferior or political opponents, was not known in its entirety, the Allies were not entirely unaware.

On assuming power in 1933, the Nazis codified the persecution of Jews in hundreds of laws, culminating in the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 that took away German citizenship from Jews and others considered 'non Aryan'. Yet, when those Jews who could overcome restrictive German emigration laws tried to leave (until 1941, when Germany forbade Jewish emigration), they encountered bureaucratic obstacles, xenophobia and antisemitism.

Following the 1929 Stock Market Crash, the United States tightened already restrictive immigration quotas. The United Kingdom required those entering until 1938 to be self-supporting or sponsored; after the Anschluss it introduced a visa system. Neither made provisions for refugees. After 1938, Britain also



Priyanjali Malik
writes on international affairs, security and defence, with a special focus on nuclear politics

restricted Jewish immigration into Palestine, then a British mandate. Some Jews moved to neighbouring European countries, only to be caught in Hitler's net as German tanks rolled over Europe. France, Belgium and the Netherlands were particularly assiduous in following Nazi orders to round up Jews for concentration camps.

The reality of 'Never again'

The Allies responded to the growing refugee problem by gathering at Evian in July 1938; apart from sympathetic statements, the 32 delegates offered little else. By the time the U.K. and the United States met at the Bermuda Conference of April 1943, reports of mass Jewish killings were unambiguous. The World Jewish Congress had submitted a report outlining Hitler's plans that Jews, 'after deportation and concentration in the East, be at one blow exterminated' (Riegner telegram, December 1942). The Polish Government-in-Exile in London published a pamphlet in December 1942 titled 'The Mass Extermination of Jews in German Occupied Poland': Escapees from the concentration camps brought their own harrowing stories. The evidence for genocide was mounting, but the Allies would not, or could not, look too closely.

Never again, they declared in 1945. And yet, between 1975 and 1979, the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia are estimated to have killed over two million people by execution, starvation, disease and exhaustion as they sought to recreate Cambodian society in some communist ideal. As refugees fled to neighbouring countries and a new regime was installed in Phnom Penh after Vietnam's invasion, the international community's responses were conditioned by Cold War calculations: China and the West supported the fleeing Khmer Rouge while Vietnam and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) supported the newly installed communist government.

Never again. And yet, in Rwanda, in 1994, between 8,00,000 to 10,00,000 people, mostly minority Tutsi with some moderate Hutu, were murdered over 100 days while UN peacekeepers watched helplessly. In July 1995, 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were herded from a UN compound in Srebrenica – a place declared a safe zone (it is inescapable that safe zones were also created to prevent refugees flooding out of the former Yugoslavia) – and executed, as part of a careful campaign of ethnic cleansing. The Dutch UN commander requested reinforcements from

both the UN and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which never arrived. It was the culmination of three years of indecision by Europe and America on how to respond. This year is the 30th anniversary of Srebrenica (July 11).

Never again. Less than a decade later, violence broke out in Darfur, Sudan. Approximately 2,00,000 people were killed in 2003-05 in what the International Criminal Court (ICC) and some states have recognised as genocide. The violence in Sudan continues and there are renewed fears of genocide occurring now while the international community's attention is focussed on Ukraine and Gaza.

In Gaza

Then there is Gaza. As world leaders gather at Auschwitz on January 27 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of its liberation, Gazans will attempt returning to the rubble of their homes. Some will be sifting through the debris to locate the remains of family still buried underneath, part of the 10,000 estimated to be missing. The International Court of Justice is examining whether Israel is guilty of genocide under a case brought by South Africa. The ICC has issued arrest warrants for the Israel Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the former Israel Defence Minister, Yoav Gallant, for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Gaza in response to Hamas' October 7, 2023 attacks. There are arrest warrants for Hamas leaders too.

And, yet, America's and western Europe's response was to criticise the ICC, expressing outrage that there should be any semblance of equivalence in the arrest warrants for the leaders of Hamas and Israel. In some perversion of international norms, there seems to be an acceptance of a hierarchy of suffering. Arms have continued to flow to Israel, even as the death toll in Gaza crosses 47,000, mostly women and children. The UN estimates that 92% of all homes have been destroyed, health-care infrastructure and 87% of schools destroyed, and entire populations forcibly displaced multiple times. All this happened while Gaza was under siege, the foreign press was barred from entering, and the world acquiesced in looking away.

Israel has a right to defend itself, and Hamas' actions in October 2023 are completely indefensible. Yet, when does self-defence cross over into genocide? Where is that line? Arguably, that line is where we avert our gaze.

A checklist for the Dhruv helicopter investigation

The fatal accident on January 5, 2025, where an Advanced Light Helicopter, Dhruv, of the Indian Coast Guard, had a fatal accident, has triggered the grounding of what is the workhorse of the country's armed forces. In aviation, accidents happen. But this does not reduce the gravity of the flight safety issues that India's flagship helicopter programme faces; flagship, because it is tailor-made for India's demanding operating conditions.

This writer was first associated with the project in 1988 when it was in the mock-up stage and engineering drawings were being converted to real parts which were being fused in the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) hangar. Those were heady days as we, the test aircrew, reviewed the prototype coming up adjacent. To view one's recommendations bear fruition was pure bliss. This writer moved on for a staff course abroad and one's satisfaction knew no bounds when he read in the foreign press about its first flight on August 20, 1992. That the project had its fair share and more of problems is well documented but the initial decade of its operational service was, to put it mildly, very challenging.

As this writer had the unpleasant task of being the presiding officer of the court of inquiry of the first fatal Dhruv crash (in 2007) and later as Assistant Chief of Air Staff at Air Headquarters looking after helicopter operations, here are a few suggestions for the decision makers.

Search for the reason

The world over, new aircraft face problems in the induction phase. The Dhruv has had its own long list – from serious ones such as premature main gear box withdrawals and cabin vibrations to operational irritants such as rainwater leaks in the cabin.

There has also been the poor supply of spares and the exasperatingly long overhaul times



Air Vice Marshal Manmohan Bahadur (retired)

is former Additional Director General, Centre for Air Power Studies

The investigation of the Coast Guard ALH accident could be an inflexion point in India's helicopter programme

whenever a machine entered an HAL hangar for maintenance. Though these have been, hopefully, addressed over time to some extent, a new and worrying problem of flight controllability has emerged. After each such accident, short and long-term fixes have been made to keep the Dhruv flying. The fact that three weeks (and counting) have passed and the Dhruv has still not been cleared to fly, shows that something more serious has happened, and/or the cause has not yet been determined. It is no shame to keep the machine grounded till the root cause is found and a permanent fix implemented; the Boeing 737 MAX remained grounded for almost two years till its flight control problem was resolved.

Involve domain specialists

The composition of a court of inquiry in India, even where such a basic characteristic such as flight controllability has been affected, is still no different than a 'normal' accident inquiry. Thus, as in the media, HAL (which could be blameworthy), the Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification, or CEMILAC (the certification agency which could be blameworthy too), and the Coast Guard are the main investigators in the January 5 accident.

Considering that the Coast Guard mishap is, at a minimum, the sixth accident involving the loss of flying control, the problem should, logically, have been found by now.

Since this has been a repetitive problem, should not there be a *de novo* look at the design issues for studying stresses, the metallurgy used and the fabrication process of flight critical components? Thus, a fresh fault analysis is necessary by co-opting outside specialists, say from academia or any other relevant field, to ferret out the root cause. Having an independent committee to holistically look at the Dhruv programme would be ideal.

Where rectification action is required from

HAL, the speed of the implementation of recommendations leaves a lot to be desired. In the fatal accident of 2007, referred to earlier, our recommendation for the institution of measures to warn a pilot of an impending 'flight control saturation' situation took the better part of a decade. One understands that even the fitting of the new stainless steel control rods – after an investigation of the earlier flight control-linked accidents – is still an ongoing process.

Apportioning of responsibility

HAL is the primary organisation for the production of airworthy assets. While design is frozen earlier, it is the quality of production that needs monitoring with a hawk eye too.

CEMILAC's responsibility is to ensure both – the soundness of design and production quality control. These two organisations too must be held responsible for the proper discharge of their duties since the combat fleet of the nation and its security posture get affected. To aid CEMILAC in the discharge of its task, having flight test crew on its rolls could result in an element of greater inquiry.

One needs to remember that the Prachand (Light Combat Helicopter), which is planned as the mainstay of the attack helicopter fleet, has also been affected as its transmission system is the same as the Dhruv's. We have the Light Utility Helicopter in its final flight-testing phase and the Indian Multi Role Helicopter, a 13-tonne heavy machine with greater complexities, is in the offing. The investigation of the Coast Guard accident could, thus, be an inflexion point in the journey of India's helicopter programmes. In the midst of the *atmanirbharta* thrust, which is laudable, and other pressures, the only element driving decision making should be professionalism.

Precious lives and the standing of India's nascent helicopter industry are at stake.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Indonesia and India ties

It is of significance that on India's very first Republic Day celebrations, we had the pleasure of having Sukarno, the first President of Indonesia, as the chief guest. Now, President Subianto was present on our completing 75 years as a Republic. In the 1950s, Nehru and Sukarno, leaders of two nascent republics, bonded well to further the cause of developing Afro-Asian nations liberated from the colonial yolk. Though our bilateral relations did traverse rough patches, our deep historical bonds and shared culture have endured. If Sukarno

means 'good', Subianto means 'inner purity'.

R. Narayanan,
Navi Mumbai

The visit raises critical questions about the future of India-Indonesia relations. Can this visit catalyse a substantial increase in bilateral trade? How will both nations address the geopolitical pressures from China while enhancing their strategic partnership? Further, what concrete steps will be taken to deepen defence cooperation and maritime security in the Indo-Pacific? These inquiries are vital for realising the full potential of

this historic partnership.

Anshu Bharti,
Begusarai, Bihar

Court on noise
The Bombay High Court has taken a tough stand on the use of loudspeakers by religious institutions by asserting that loudspeakers are not an essential part of any religion. Law enforcement agencies have been directed to take strict action against those who violate this. Religious institutions take advantage of the stoic resignation of people towards noise. Instead of creating a tranquil atmosphere for worship,

many religious places have become noise-creating places. People should not be deprived of their right to live in quiet places. People who suffer much discomfiture from noise from other sources are forced to endure the cacophony of loudspeakers too.

Let us hope that the directive against the use of loudspeakers in religious institutions will be implemented all over the country.

Venu G.S.,
Kollam, Kerala

Rural reading rooms
It is heartening to note and read about ("Inside India's

rural reading rooms", January 25). Books are power houses of knowledge. The habit of reading is losing its way and direction at a time when information is being sought in the online mode.

Rural India has immense potential and it is through such wonderful initiatives as reading rooms, that knowledge can be shared and imparted among the young. The young of today, born in digital times, should be taught about reading, writing and gaining knowledge the proper way. Reading rooms would help them spend time prudently and, most importantly,

would limit the use of time on electronic gadgets, specifically mobile phones. Rural reading rooms should be encouraged.

Balasubramanian Pavani,
Secunderabad

Dr. K.M. Cherian
Dr. K.M. Cherian is a legendary figure in the field of cardiac surgery. His passing is a loss to the medical world as he endeared himself to countless patients.

Manoharan Muthuswamy,
Chennai
Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address

An enduring commitment to the Indo-Pacific

The inauguration of Donald Trump as the 47th President of the United States marks an unparalleled comeback in American political history. It also signals a vital moment in global geopolitics, particularly for the Indo-Pacific region. During his first term, Mr. Trump redefined U.S. engagement in the Indo-Pacific. As he embarks on his second term, expectations of a more assertive U.S. security posture and strengthened alliances are high. The presence of the foreign ministers from India, Japan, and Australia – America's key Quad partners – at the inauguration underscores the strategic importance of this grouping in Mr. Trump's foreign policy vision. With the Indo-Pacific being central to U.S.'s strategic priorities, Trump 2.0 signals a renewed focus on deepening defence, economic, and technological cooperation with 'like-minded' nations to address persisting and emerging challenges, while ensuring regional stability.

Importance of Indo-Pacific
Mr. Trump's first term marked a pivotal shift in Washington's approach to this region, redefining the strategic landscape in three ways. First, under Trump's leadership, the U.S. adopted the term 'Indo-Pacific', replacing the previously favoured 'Asia-Pacific', which reflected a recalibration of the geopolitical lens, moving beyond a focus solely on East Asia and the Pacific Rim to encompass a wider area critical for global trade, security, and strategic stability. The term expanded the geographic focus to include the Indian Ocean, emphasising the importance of securing sea lines of communication, addressing maritime challenges, and underscoring the U.S.'s intent to counterbalance China's growing influence. The Indo-Pacific expanded the strategic narrative, integrating defence, security, and political considerations alongside

**Harsh V. Pant**

Vice President at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi

**Pratnashree Basu**

Associate Fellow, Indo-Pacific, Observer Research Foundation

economic cooperation. Second, there were structural changes in the U.S. defence and security framework, including the renaming of the U.S. Pacific Command as the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command in 2018, reflecting the operational import accorded to the Indo-Pacific. The Office of the Secretary of Defence was reorganised to establish specialised units focusing on Indo-Pacific allies and partners.

Third, the revival of the Quad underscored the Trump administration's recognition of the Indo-Pacific as the fulcrum of 21st century geopolitics, reflecting a pragmatic convergence of interests among its members. The U.S. provided a robust push to institutionalise the grouping. The Trump administration elevated the Quad dialogue to the ministerial level, laying the groundwork for deeper collaboration in maritime security, supply chain resilience, and technological standards.

The Joe Biden administration inherited the Indo-Pacific framework and maintained its strategic centrality. Mr. Biden elevated the Quad further by convening the first-ever Quad leaders' summit in 2021, marking a significant institutional leap. He emphasised multilateralism and sought to broaden the Quad's agenda by initiating collaboration on vaccines, climate change, critical technologies, and infrastructure development. He also introduced the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework in 2022, complementing the strategic focus with economic engagement. The emphasis on a rules-based order and inclusive development in the Indo-Pacific aligned the Quad's mission with broader global governance goals.

Prospects in Trump 2.0
The bipartisan consensus on the Indo-Pacific's importance ensures continuity in U.S. engagement. While Mr. Trump could take a more assertive stance against China, his reliance on India,

Under the new Trump administration, the Indo-Pacific is likely to regain prominence but with a sharper focus on hard power dynamics

Japan, and Australia to share the burden of regional security would remain and likely be strengthened.

The new administration's first major foreign policy initiative was a meeting of the Quad foreign ministers on January 21. At his confirmation hearing, the U.S. Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, characterised China as the most formidable adversary the U.S. has faced, noting that the challenges prompting the Quad's revival under Mr. Trump have intensified. This was the administration's first significant engagement with foreign leaders. All four members reaffirmed Washington's unwavering commitment to the Indo-Pacific region while also setting the stage for this year's Quad Summit early in the Trump Presidency. Mr. Rubio also met with the three Quad foreign ministers separately with India being the first bilateral meeting.

A joint statement released after the meeting emphasised the importance of international law, peace, stability, and maritime security for regional prosperity while opposing unilateral actions to alter the status quo through force or coercion. It also highlighted the dedication to enhancing regional maritime, economic, and technological security, alongside promoting resilient and reliable supply chains. The members agreed to hold regular ministerial meetings and prepare for a leaders' summit to be hosted by India.

Under the new Trump administration, the Indo-Pacific is likely to retain prominence but with a sharper focus on hard power dynamics. The Indo-Pacific has changed since Mr. Trump's last term in office, and so have the priorities that would influence the President's approach this time. It is likely that alongside boosting security-related frameworks, Mr. Trump may also bolster mechanisms that have a broader and more diverse agenda so long as they serve to preserve the existing rules-based order.

The failed Delhi model'

Under the AAP regime, fiscal space was created by reducing capital expenditure

STATE OF PLAY**Sthanu R. Nair & Dhruv Jain**

As Delhiites prepare to elect a new government, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government has been pushing its welfare-based governance model, called the 'Delhi model', on the campaign trail. It has been advertising its welfare schemes, such as the free electricity and water supply, bus travel for women, and primary health care, arguing that it not only managed to prioritise human capital development by spending more on the social sector, but has also succeeded in augmenting the fiscal space by cutting down inefficient government spending and mobilising revenues.

To check the validity of these claims, we examined the fiscal indicators of Delhi on average during the 10 years when the AAP was in power (2015-16 to 2024-25) compared with those in the pre-AAP decade (2004-05 to 2012-13).

Before the AAP came to power, Delhi had demonstrated fiscal prudence from 2004-05 by containing revenue deficit and gross fiscal deficit (GFD). The revenue account remained in surplus throughout the pre-AAP and AAP regimes. However, the revenue surplus declined on average from -2.38% of gross state domestic product (GSDP) during the pre-AAP regime to -0.82% under the AAP regime. Although the GFD-GSDP ratio was within the Fiscal Responsibility Legislation (FRL) limit of 3% in the pre-AAP and AAP regimes, it declined from 0.68% on average in the pre-AAP regime to 0.25% in the AAP regime. But this downward correction in GFD was achieved by reducing much-



needed capital outlay, a violation of a 'golden rule' in public finance.

The AAP government successfully reduced Delhi's debt-to-GSDP ratio to 2% on an average from 13.7% earlier. This is a stupendous achievement.

The share of revenue expenditure in the total spending of Delhi increased significantly from 58.27% on average in the pre-AAP regime to 77.63% in the AAP regime. Concomitantly, the share of expenditures which are incurred on asset creation, namely capital expenditure (CE) and capital outlay (CO), declined significantly on an average from 41.73% (CE)/15.82% (CO) in the pre-AAP regime to 22.37% (CE)/10.32% (CO) in the AAP regime. These trends show that public expenditure quality deteriorated under the AAP regime.

Both the quantity and quality of the development expenditure and its components were compromised in the AAP regime. As a percentage of GSDP, expenditure on social services declined from 3.60% in the pre-AAP regime to 3.41% in the AAP regime. In the case of economic services, the decline was steeper from 2.29% to 1.28%. This drop was caused by a cut in the capital expenditure on these two functional heads. The capital expenditure on social services declined from 0.82% of GSDP in the pre-AAP regime to

0.56% in the AAP regime. In the case of economic services, the decline was steeper from 1.82% of GSDP to 0.38%.

As a percentage of GSDP, the expenditure on education and medical and public health increased by only 0.08 and 0.06 percentage points in the AAP regime over the previous regime. The expenditures on water supply and sanitation, housing, urban development, transport, and communication declined as a percentage of GSDP under the AAP regime, with the decline being the highest for roads and bridges, water supply, sanitation, and urban development.

On the revenue front, too, the AAP regime has performed poorly. On average, Delhi's total revenue receipts declined from 7.42% of GSDP in the pre-AAP regime to 5.82% in the AAP regime. Both own tax revenue and non-tax revenue contributed to the decline. The own tax revenue-GSDP ratio declined from 5.85% in the pre-AAP regime to 4.84% in the AAP regime. Own non-tax revenue decreased sharply from 0.85% to 0.10%, implying that the AAP government's free electricity, water supply, bus travel, and health care policy have adversely impacted non-tax revenues. Interestingly, Delhi received more grants from the Centre (0.88% of GSDP) than the previous regime (0.71%).

Overall, the revenue and expenditure trends reveal that the AAP regime has not augmented its revenue capacity to fund welfare programmes. Instead, fiscal space was created by reducing the much-needed capital expenditure.

Sthanu R. Nair teaches Economics and Public Policy at IIM Kozhikode; Dhruv Jain is a post-graduate programme student at IIM Kozhikode. Views are personal

India and U.S. lead Coursera enrolments for Gen AI courses

Corporate sponsorship plays a significant role in boosting enrolments in India

DATA POINT**The Hindu Data Team**

The demand for generative AI training has grown significantly among learners and enterprises, according to Coursera data, highlighted in the Future of Jobs Report 2025. India and the U.S. are leading this global trend in enrolments, but the factors driving demand differ between the two countries. While individual learners primarily drive demand in the U.S., corporate sponsorship plays a significant role in boosting enrolments in India.

Globally, individual learners on Coursera are focusing on foundational generative AI skills and conceptual topics, such as prompt engineering, trustworthy AI practices, and strategic decision-making around AI. Meanwhile, institution-sponsored learners are prioritising practical workplace applications, including using AI to enhance productivity in tools such as Excel or developing applications with AI-driven solutions.

Chart 1 shows the Generative AI enrolment trend for 2022-2024 in Coursera. The demand for generative AI training is not happening in isolation but is closely tied to broader technological shifts reshaping industries worldwide. The survey reveals that among nine transformative technologies, AI and information processing technologies are expected to have the most significant impact on businesses by 2030, with 86% of employers identifying them as likely to drive business transformation. This surpasses the anticipated influence of robots and autonomous systems (58%) or energy generation and storage technologies (41%).

Chart 2 shows the technology trends driving business transformation, as answered by the surveyed employers.

Since the release of ChatGPT in November 2022, investment flows

into AI technologies have increased nearly eight-fold, driving significant advancements in the field. This influx of capital has been matched by investment in the physical infrastructure required to support these technologies, such as servers.

The growing demand for generative AI training is also closely tied to the shifting landscape of job roles driven by technological advancements. Employers expect technological developments such as AI and robotics to play a pivotal role in shaping the workforce, says the survey. By 2030, roles such as Big Data Specialists, FinTech Engineers, AI and Machine Learning Specialists, and Software and Applications Developers are projected to experience the fastest net growth. **Chart 3** shows the top jobs by fastest net growth as projected by surveyed employers.

The interplay of humans, machines, and algorithms is fundamentally reshaping the nature of work. Automation and advancements in technology are driving a shift in how tasks are performed across industries. According to the survey, 47% of tasks today are completed primarily by humans, while 22% are handled mainly by technology, and 30% involve a mix of both. By 2030, tasks are expected to be more equally divided.

This shift is driven largely by increased automation. Of the nearly 15% point reduction expected in the proportion of work tasks performed solely by humans between 2025 and 2030, approximately 82% will be attributable to advancing automation, while the remaining 19% will result from expanded human-machine collaboration.

Chart 4 shows the share of work tasks expected to be delivered predominantly by human workers, by technology, or by a combination of both.

This transition highlights the growing importance of equipping the workforce with the skills needed to thrive in a world increasingly shared with intelligent machines.

Shifting landscapes

The charts are sourced from the 'Future of Jobs Report 2025' released by the World Economic Forum

Chart 1: The chart shows the Generative AI enrolment trend for 2022-2024. The chart reveals significant growth in demand for Generative AI training among both individual learners and enterprises

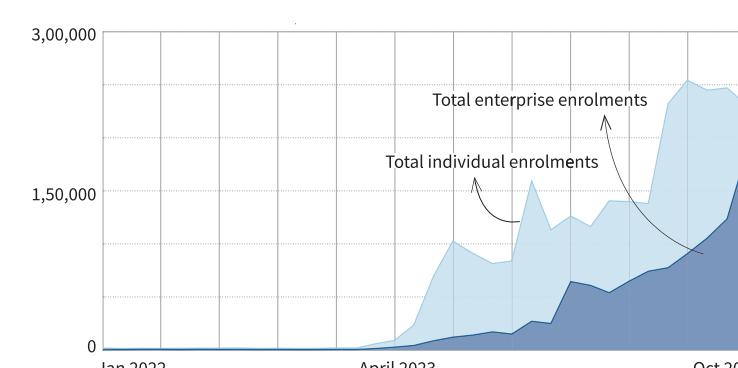


Chart 2: Share of employers surveyed who identify the stated technology trend as likely to drive business

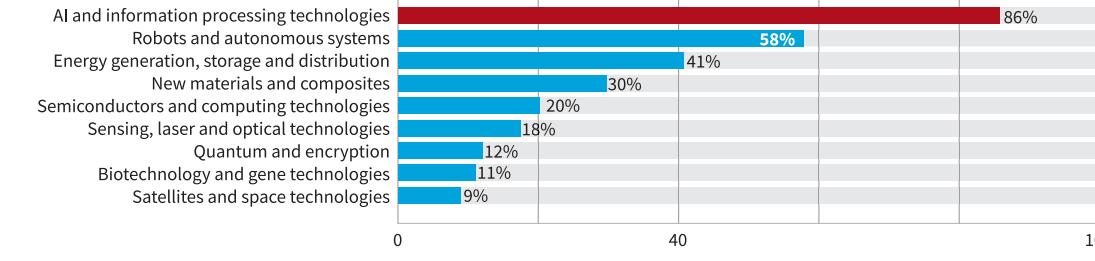


Chart 3: The chart shows the top jobs by fastest net growth by surveyed employers. The fastest growing job roles by 2030 tend to be driven by technological developments.

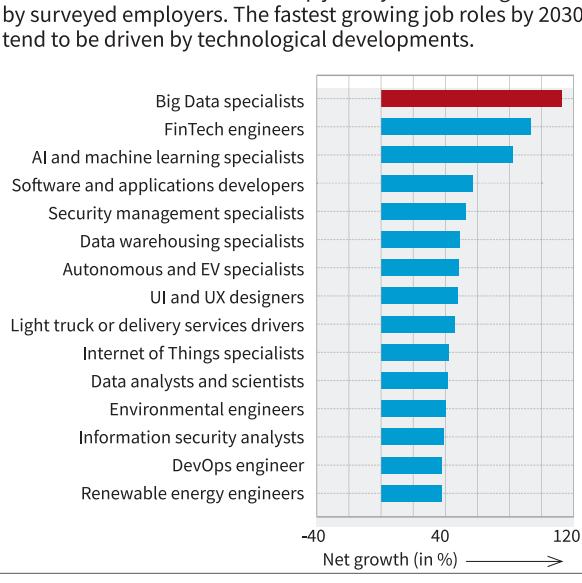
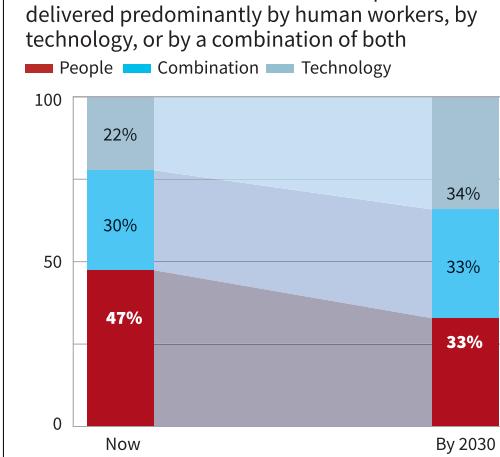


Chart 4: Share of total work tasks expected to be delivered predominantly by human workers, by technology, or by a combination of both

**FROM THE ARCHIVES****The Hindu**

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 27, 1975

Austerity marks Republic Day celebrations

New Delhi, Jan. 26: The nation to-day celebrated the Republic Day with gaiety. In New Delhi the highlight of the celebration was the parade at which the President, Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, took the salute.

Reports received from all over the country show that the silver jubilee of the ushering in of the Republican Constitution was observed with subdued austerity.

In the Capital itself, the duration of the Republic Day parade was cut short but this did not prevent hundreds of thousands of people gathering to witness the celebration. Both sides of the Rajpath were filled with seething humanity to watch the national spectacle of colour and pageantry. The visiting President of Zambia, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda and his wife Mrs. Betty Kaunda were among the distinguished guests who witnessed the parade.

Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed who took the salute for the first time since becoming President, arrived at the site along with the Zambian President.

He was received by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and her senior colleagues. Before the start of the parade, Mrs. Gandhi laid a wreath at the India Gate memorial dedicated to the immortal soldiers. She was cheered by the crowds as she drove down to the saluting base at Rajpath. The entire function thus acquired a dignified solemnity.

Among the other distinguished guests at the parade were the Australian Minister for Overseas Trade, the Swedish Army's Commander, the Secretary-General of the ILO, Iran's Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Iraq's Minister for Higher Education, and the Deputy Chief of Army Staff of Bangladesh.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 27, 1925

"Fight leprosy" campaign

The following appeal has been issued by the Viceroy for funds in aid of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association (Indian Council): I make an appeal to-day to India on behalf of the Leprosy Relief Association. I am confident that the object of my appeal cannot fail to command itself to the sympathy both of the rich and the poor and to all classes and creeds without distinction in India.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Percentage growth in automobile exports from India in 2024

19 in per cent. Automobile exports from India rose 19% year-on-year in 2024 led by a robust dispatch of two-wheelers, passenger vehicles, and commercial vehicles, according to SIAM data. Overall shipments rose to 50,98,810 units last year. PTI

Migrant transfers from Italy to Albania detention centres

49 Italy's navy on Sunday was taking 49 migrants it picked up in international waters to detention facilities in Albania, the Ministry said, resuming a plan to curb sea arrivals mired in legal controversy. A further 53, who were also picked up, were in Italy awaiting verification of their status. REUTERS

People killed in gasoline tanker explosion in Nigeria

18 At least 18 people died and 10 others were injured in southern Nigeria after a gasoline tanker exploded. The accident happened along the Enugu-Onitsha expressway in the southeastern state of Enugu. Earlier this month, 98 people were killed in a gasoline tanker blast in north-central Nigeria. AP

Death toll among UN and South African peacekeepers

13 Malawi and Uruguay said four of their troops were killed in clashes in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo against Rwandan-backed rebels, bringing the death toll among United Nations and southern African peacekeepers to at least 13 by Sunday. REUTERS

Mayoral seats won by BJP in urban local polls in Uttarakhand

10 The BJP on Sunday swept the urban local body elections in Uttarakhand, winning 10 out of 11 mayoral seats to emerge as the dominant party in the municipal councils and nagar panchayats. A total of 5,405 candidates were in the fray. PTI
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Should Governors head State universities?

The Governor's role as Chancellor of State universities has become politicised, undermining university autonomy and causing governance issues, especially in States with Opposition-led governments: various reform models have been proposed to reduce political interference and improve university administration

LETTER & SPIRIT

K. Ashok Vardhan Shetty

The role of the Governor as Chancellor of State universities is a subject of intense debate. It is often misconstrued as a post-Independence measure to safeguard universities against political interference. This role has not been assigned to the Governor by the Constitution of India but by State university laws. Inherited from British colonial rule, it was designed to restrict university autonomy rather than promote it.

In 1857, the British established the first three universities in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, appointing Governors of the respective presidencies as their ex-officio Chancellors to maintain direct control. As Chancellor, the Governor became the head of the university and was granted powers such as appointing Vice-Chancellors, nominating members to university bodies like the Syndicate, approving delegated legislation under the university law, and presiding over convocations. Unfortunately, this model of "Governor as Chancellor" was adopted wholesale for State universities even after Independence, without reassessing its relevance in a democratic and federal context.

A politicised office

Initially, from 1947 to 1967, the dominance of the Congress party at both the Centre and State levels ensured that Governors remained ceremonial figures, with Chief Ministers wielding real power. Consequently, there was little impetus to amend the colonial-era provision of "Governor as Chancellor."

However, the political landscape changed after 1967 when several States were ruled by parties other than the ruling party or coalition at the Centre. Governors increasingly transformed from neutral constitutional functionaries to political instruments of the Central government. This change saw them asserting control over university affairs, which often resulted in clashes with State governments. Efforts to amend university laws for change of Chancellor faced roadblocks, as Governors either delayed approving such amendments or referred them to the President. Only a few States succeeded in getting the amendments passed.

Even the Centre's First Administrative Reforms Commission (1966-77) criticised the politicisation of the Governor's office, highlighting the appointment of defeated politicians, which eroded the office's dignity. The Sarkaria Commission (1983-88) on Centre-State Relations, revealed that over 60% of Governors had been active politicians, many of them immediately before their appointment, with quality declining steeply after the Nehru era. Professor Ashok Pankaj's study (1950-2015) found that 52% of Governors were politicians, 26% were retired bureaucrats, and only 22% hailed from academia, the judiciary, or the armed forces. It highlighted a growing trend of appointing Governors based on political loyalty, undermining the office's credibility and exacerbating its misuse.

Governor's dual role

Constitutionally, a Governor's powers are divided into two categories: those exercised as Governor, where he is bound to act on the advice of the Council of Ministers as per Article 163(1), and those conferred by statutes, such as the role of Chancellor of State universities, where he can act at his discretion, independent of ministerial advice, unless the statute



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mandates otherwise. The Supreme Court has upheld this distinction. This has enabled Governors to bypass ministerial advice in critical university matters like appointing Vice-Chancellors, nominating members to university bodies, and approving subordinate legislation, particularly in Opposition-ruled States.

Governor and the President

Despite similar legal frameworks, a stark contrast exists between the Governor's role as Chancellor of State universities and the President's role as Visitor of Central universities. The key difference is the level of consultation and legislative oversight.

The President maintains a cordial relationship with the Centre. He functions through the Ministry of Education and consults with it for appointments of Vice-Chancellors, nomination of members to university bodies, and approval of 'statutes' (a type of delegated legislation under the university law). Central university laws require the statutes, along with other types of delegated legislation called 'ordinances' and 'regulations', to be laid before the Parliament.

In contrast, the Governor acts unilaterally while performing similar functions for State universities, often bypassing the State's Ministry of Higher Education entirely, particularly in Opposition-ruled States. State University laws do not mandate laying delegated legislation – statutes, ordinances, and regulations – before the Legislature. This is a significant flaw rooted in the continuation of colonial-era practices.

Existing challenges

The persistence of the "Governor as Chancellor" model has caused numerous problems in the governance of State universities.

While State governments fund these universities, Governors wield substantial power without corresponding accountability. This creates a dual authority system, forcing university leadership to serve two masters, often with conflicting demands.

Disagreements between Governors and State governments, particularly in Opposition-ruled States, lead to delays in appointing Vice-Chancellors, causing administrative paralysis. These delays affect areas such as the appointment of staff, the implementation of projects, and

even the awarding of degrees.

Many Governors lack the academic qualifications or experience necessary to effectively guide educational institutions. They tend to rely on limited, non-transparent advice, leading to questionable decisions.

Rather than insulating universities from politics, some Governors exacerbate political interference, often prioritising the Centre's political agenda over the universities' autonomy and interests.

Allowing Governors – appointed by the Centre – to control State institutions compromises the principle of federalism. State universities should be fully accountable to elected State governments.

Insights from Commissions

Various commissions have examined the Governor's role as Chancellor and proposed reforms. The Rajamanan Committee (1969-71) on Centre-State relations, appointed by the Government of Tamil Nadu, argued that the Governor's statutory functions are included within the meaning of 'functions' under Article 163(1). So, the Governor should perform his statutory functions as Chancellor or on the advice of the State government. However, the Supreme Court has not upheld this interpretation.

The Sarkaria Commission (1983-88) on Centre-State relations, recognised that the Governor's role as Chancellor is statutory, not constitutional, and must be defined by State laws. It recommended that Governors consult with Chief Ministers while retaining independent judgment in university matters.

The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (2000-02), headed by Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah, advocated for political neutrality, a clearer definition of the Chancellor's functions, a supportive rather than authoritative role, and greater university autonomy.

The M.M.Punchhi Commission (2007-10) on Centre-State relations recommended that the Governor focus on constitutional responsibilities, avoiding statutory roles like that of Chancellor to preserve the dignity of the office. It suggested that States appoint eminent academics or experts as Chancellors to ensure academic independence and prevent conflicts.

Alternative models

The ideal Chancellor model, based on

global best practices, envisions the Chancellor as an eminent public figure who provides ceremonial leadership, presides over convocations, acts as an institutional ambassador, and has no executive authority. Universities in the U.K., from whom we borrowed the concept of Chancellor, exemplify this model. There are several ways to amend State university laws to implement this reform: The Governor as Ceremonial Chancellor model removes the Governor's discretionary powers, mandating him to act on the advice of the State Council of Ministers in university matters. Gujarat (1978), Karnataka (2000), and Maharashtra (2021) have adopted variations of this approach.

In the Chief Minister as Chancellor model, critics argue that a ceremonial role does not suit a powerful political figure like the Chief Minister. West Bengal and Punjab passed Bills in 2023 to adopt this system, but they await Presidential assent. In a variation, Tamil Nadu passed a Bill in 2022 substituting 'Government' for 'Chancellor'. It also awaits Presidential assent.

The State-appointed Chancellor model, implemented in Telangana in 2015, has the State government appoint a ceremonial Chancellor. A similar Bill was passed by Kerala in 2022, but it is still awaiting Presidential assent. The Kerala Bill specifies that the appointee should be an eminent academician or public figure.

The Chancellor elected by the University Bodies model empowers university bodies and alumni to elect a ceremonial Chancellor as in Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh universities.

In the Chancellor appointed by the University's Executive Council model, several universities in the U.K. (Birmingham, Canada (McGill) and Australia (Melbourne)) appoint ceremonial Chancellors through their Executive Council or Board of Governors, following transparent selection processes.

Among these, the State-appointed Chancellor model is the most practical for India, provided the appointees are distinguished academicians or public figures, excluding politicians. The M.M.Punchhi Commission had recommended it.

Dismantling a colonial legacy

Reforming State universities in India demands a careful balance of key principles: ensuring accountability to elected State governments, minimising political interference, promoting institutional self-governance, and fostering academic freedom and excellence. The vital first step is divesting the Governor of his colonial-era role as Chancellor.

While States like Gujarat, Karnataka, Telangana, and Maharashtra have implemented reforms, others such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, and Punjab face indefinite delays in obtaining Presidential assent for their proposed changes. This disparity underscores the need for impartial treatment by the President and Government of India. There is no valid reason for withholding approval of the pending Bills and resolving such matters through the Supreme Court under Article 131 should be avoided. The Centre should facilitate progressive reforms that seek to dismantle colonial-era administrative structures, guide States towards aligning their university governance models with global best practices, and enable universities to focus on academic excellence free from political entanglements.

The author is a retired IAS officer and a former Vice-Chancellor of the Indian Maritime University, Chennai

THE GIST

▼ The Governor's role as Chancellor of State universities has led to political interference and diminished university autonomy, particularly in Opposition-ruled States.

▼ Over the years, Governors have increasingly become political appointees, undermining the credibility of the office and exacerbating conflicts between State governments and the Centre.

▼ Various commissions have recommended reforms such as appointing academics or public personalities as Chancellors to preserve university autonomy and reduce political influence.

CACHE

Why are crypto withdrawals being restricted for investors?

Cryptocurrency exchanges operating in India can block or suddenly restrict crypto withdrawals for users in India, leading to confusion, fear, and a loss of trust in Indian fintech companies

Sahana Venugopal

The story so far:

Mudrex, a crypto platform that is "U.S.-headquartered and Bengaluru-based" made headlines this month when it announced it was temporarily pausing crypto withdrawals until January 28, to "enhance the security of our platform and safeguard against bad actors," said the company in an official blog post on January 12. This comes soon after another crypto exchange popular with Indians – CoinDCX – also confused customers with conflicting information regarding its crypto withdrawal policy. Indian crypto investors want to deposit, withdraw, and trade crypto just like their international peers, but this is easier said than done. Crypto traders in the country face several barriers when transacting through centralised exchanges due to unclear domestic laws and vaguely defined risks. Crypto companies often cite these factors to justify restricting crypto withdrawals for customers, thus sparking alarm amongst investors.

What problems are crypto investors in India facing?

A crypto trader in India who signs up with a popular centralised exchange must undergo a detailed registration process and Know-Your-Customer (KYC) procedures in order to comply with India's Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) regulations.

Customers submit their national identity documents and verify themselves so they can use the company's platform without hurdles, ensuring seamless service in a market sector where asset prices can soar and crash in a matter of seconds.

It is no wonder that many users experience anger or panic when they make profits by trading in crypto through the centralised exchange but then learn to their shock that they cannot withdraw their crypto through the same company.

The social media platform X is filled with complaints from crypto exchange customers who claim that crypto withdrawal policies have changed without warning or that they were not flagged clearly in the first place. This naturally leads to fear as crypto investors wonder if their exchanges are trying to hold on to user assets or are experiencing liquidity shortages.

Why are cryptocurrency exchanges restricting withdrawals?

Different crypto exchanges in India have different policies governing crypto withdrawals. While some allow crypto withdrawals, and others allow it for select users or under special circumstances, there are also companies that block crypto withdrawals for all users without exception.

The most common reasons cited include fears that the Indian authorities could penalise the crypto exchange as a whole if it is discovered that users have been withdrawing their assets in crypto. There are also fears that the withdrawn crypto could be used to carry out illicit acts or buy banned products through dark markets.

CoinDCX did not respond to *The Hindu*'s emails regarding its crypto withdrawal policy for this report, but co-founder Sumit Gupta published a



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thread on X outlining the company's approach in this area.

Mr. Gupta on January 15 acknowledged that while users wanted unrestricted crypto withdrawals, the company had to comply with India's "strict capital controls." He noted the risks of expert criminals escaping detection.

"But once law enforcement agencies get to know about any such cases, they freeze the entire exchange bank accounts indefinitely while they investigate. These exchange bank accounts hold funds from both bad actors and genuine users, directly impacting liquidity of INR funds of our genuine users," said Mr. Gupta in his post on X, when justifying the block on crypto withdrawals.

Another platform, CoinSwitch, followed a similar policy. "We do not allow crypto withdrawals on our platform, however, users can withdraw

their investments by converting their crypto into INR on an exchange like ours, and receive the money in their bank accounts," said Balaji Srihari, vice president, CoinSwitch, in response to *The Hindu*'s query.

Meanwhile, crypto exchange Zebpay, which has its headquarters in Singapore apart from other international offices, offers two customer experience modes. One allows crypto withdrawals, while the other does not.

In response to *The Hindu*'s query, Raj Karkara, COO, ZebPay, confirmed that crypto withdrawals were allowed for manual transfers, but not for instant deposits.

"The Instant Deposit feature allows users to add INR funds instantly to their ZebPay accounts, enabling full access to trading and fiat withdrawals. However, crypto withdrawals are disabled while

crypto deposits are fully available. This feature requires a one-time virtual account setup and supports transfers through IMPS, NEFT, and RTGS, following standard banking procedures," said Mr. Karkara.

UPI will not be supported in this case.

Meanwhile, manual transfers will have users add Zebpay's bank details to their net banking apps, deposit funds from their registered bank accounts, and upload the image of the transaction receipt or bank statement for proof.

On the other hand, Binance – though not an Indian crypto exchange – registered as a reporting entity with FIU-IND in 2024 after previously being hit with legal action by the Indian authorities.

"Users based in India can withdraw crypto from their Binance accounts," a Binance spokesperson said in response to *The Hindu*'s query and did not note any restrictions.

Why is there such a difference? One reason is that Indian law enforcement authorities take a serious view of turning Indian rupees into other currencies, especially when an easily traced asset (like INR) is converted to a harder to trace asset (like Bitcoin) that can be more easily laundered, sent to militants, or channelled into private wallets.

However, users should keep in mind that Binance and WazirX are locked in a legal dispute over whether or not Binance owns the Indian exchange. The legal situation is murky, with a lack of transparency from both sides and is expected to continue for some time.

What options do crypto users in India have?

When crypto withdrawals are no longer an option for traders in India using centralised exchanges in the country, they often have to wait for policies to change with time or pursue less desirable options.

For example, in the face of crypto withdrawal restrictions, many investors might resort to workarounds such as selling off their crypto and withdrawing their assets in rupees, even if this does not align with their investment plan.

Others may be driven to international crypto exchanges that do not comply with Indian tax laws.

Some traders may even avoid this hassle entirely by investing their funds through unregulated/decentralised exchanges with poor safeguards, or relying on platforms actively run by malicious actors.

What needs to happen to enable crypto withdrawals?

The most glaring issue is the absence of clear regulations and laws governing the flow of crypto in India. While the government taxes crypto gains and transactions, the existing legislation does not protect Indian investors and does not encourage Indian crypto businesses either.

In the meantime, several crypto exchanges that support INR trading pairs are upgrading their security and KYC protocols.

CoinDCX's Mr. Gupta said on X the exchange was working on an "enhanced due diligence framework" that would let eligible users withdraw their crypto in the future.

Mudrex also noted that it was working on security, but did not respond to *The Hindu*'s email.

CoinSwitch's Mr. Srihari called for regulations so that crypto withdrawals could be opened.

"To officially enable crypto withdrawals for all customers in India, the introduction of clear regulations and a well-defined policy framework for VDAs is essential," he said.

"Proper regulatory guidelines would provide clarity and address concerns around security, compliance, and the prevention of misuse, creating a safe and transparent environment for crypto transactions," he added.

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

THE DAILY QUIZ

The Constitution of India came in effect on January 26, 1950. A quiz on the most important legal document

Radhika Santhanam

QUESTION 1

This country's Constitution was adopted in 1937. India's Constitution borrows X from this country's Constitution. X are the ideals that a state must keep in mind while framing policies or enacting laws. Name X. Also name the country from which X was borrowed; it also fought Britain.

QUESTION 2

This student of Abanindranath Tagore was influenced by the murals in the Ajanta caves. He was among the first Fellows of Lalit Kala Akademi. Name this artist who illustrated the Constitution.

QUESTION 3

Both Nehru and Ambedkar opposed the inclusion of this word in the Constitution

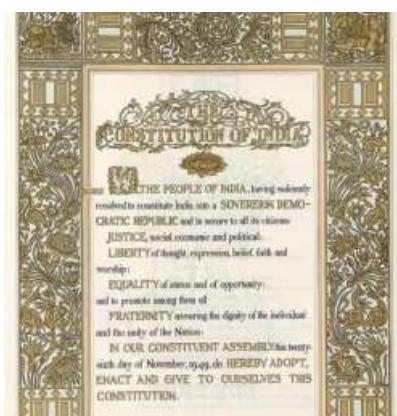
as they believed that the way in which it is used and understood in the Western context would not fit into India's multireligious landscape. It was in 1976 that this word was finally added in the Preamble. What is this word that we hear all the time in political discourse?

QUESTION 4

He is often known as the architect of modern Bihar. Who is this man, who was the first chairman of the Constituent Assembly?

QUESTION 5

On January 26, 1950, India was declared a Sovereign Democratic Republic in the Government House's Darbar Hall. This last Governor-General of India was present at the ceremony. He was one of the Chief Ministers of the Madras Presidency and leader of the Indian National Congress. Name him.



Visual Question:

This is the original Preamble of the Indian Constitution. Who was the calligrapher who wrote in English?

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. Before becoming an actor, Ghai acted in some films. In which superhit flick did he play the role of Flight Lieutenant Prakash? **Ans: Aradhana**

2. Name the two Shatrughan Sinha starrers, bearing the names of two popular cricketers of that era, that were the first two films of Ghai as a director. **Ans: Kalicharan and Vishwanath**

3. Name the production company that he formed in 1982. **Ans: Mukta Arts**

4. Which Ghai film had the controversial song 'Choli Ke Peeche Kya Hai'? **Ans: Khalnayak**

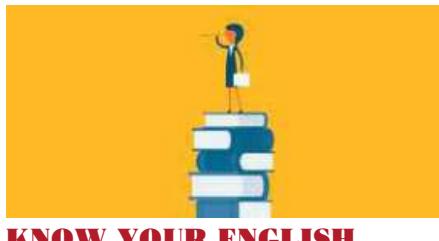
5. Which actress made her first appearance in 'Pardes'? **Ans: Mahima Chaudhry**

6. Name the film institute set up by Ghai in 2006. **Ans: Whistling Woods International**

7. Which film of his received the National Film Award for Best Film on Other Social Issues? **Ans: Iqbal**

Visual: This is a still from which Ghai film. **Ans: Saudagar**

Early Birds: Piyal Tuli | Tamal Biswas | Tito Shiladitya | Rajmohan Velayudhan | Sonali Das



His speech was peppered with anecdotes

His salty comments made the meeting uncomfortable

S. Upendran

"You were supposed to have been here an hour ago!"

"I know! But our Society meeting went on longer than expected."

"I forgot about that! Was there any of the usual shouting and screaming? Did any of..."

"Surprisingly no! One or two people, however, got salty with our President because..."

"They got salty with him? Did they abuse him? Did they call him names?"

"Of course, not! Why would they abuse the poor man? He's doing..."

"Some time ago, you told me that one of the meanings of the word 'salty' is to use abusive language. We talk about salty language. I was shocked to hear the salty language that the old woman was using."

"You must remember, however, that the word 'salty' has several other meanings as well. In informal contexts, it's frequently used to mean angry or upset."

"So, someone who is annoyed is salty?"

"I guess you could say that. Here's an example. I prefer not to play with someone like Dilip. Every time he loses, he becomes salty."

"Meaning he gets very upset when he loses. How about this example? My cousin Mala gets salty whenever I refuse to go shopping with her."

"Doesn't she know you hate shopping?"

"She chooses to conveniently ignore that fact."

"That definitely sounds like Mala! So, tell me, did a lot of people ask questions at the meeting?"

"The poor President was peppered with questions. He just..."

"Peppered with questions? Does it mean to ask someone a lot of questions?"

"Like the word 'salt', 'pepper' has many different meanings. When you pepper someone, it usually suggests that you're hitting him repeatedly with your fists."

"Only with the fists? Can it be with a rod or a stick?"

"Yes, it can be any object. The old boxer peppered with his young opponent with jabs."

"The teacher peppered the student stinging blows with his cane."

"The expression 'pepper with' can be used figuratively as well. The fast bowlers peppered the batsmen with bouncers."

"Does the expression have any other meaning?"

"Yes, it does. When you pepper something, you use it or include it in many different places. For example, as expected, Rajesh peppered his presentation with jokes and anecdotes."

"In other words, there was a liberal sprinkling of jokes in the presentation."

"In school, whenever we were asked to write an essay, my friend always tried to impress the teacher by peppering his essay with big words."

"That's something that all students wish to do - use big words. Now, thanks to ChatGPT, it's become easy to do."

"Students pepper their essay with words they don't even know the meaning of."

"Here's another example. The film was great. It was peppered with salty dialogue."

"Sounds like your kind of movie." upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Fastidious:

giving careful attention to detail; hard to please

Synonyms: Perfectionist, critical, particular

Usage: She is very fastidious about keeping her room clean.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/fastidiouspro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /fæstɪdɪəs/

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

From Page One**R-Day parade taps into heritage, military might**

The parade had a unique blend of India's rich cultural diversity, unity, equality, development and military prowess.

Nearly 10,000 special guests from various walks of life were invited. According to the Defence Ministry, over 77,000 passes were issued, with 32,000 passes having been sold for citizens. The parade was heralded by 300 cultural artists playing "Sare Jahan Se Achha" with musical instruments such as shehnai, sundari, nadaswaram, been, mashak been and ransingha. Lieutenant-General Bhavni Kumar, General Officer Commanding, Delhi Area, commanded the parade.

Slowly, the Brigade of the Guards, the Jat Regiment, the Garhwali Rifles, the Mahar Regiment, the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles Regiment, the Corps of Signals, and others marched down Kartavya Path, with patriotic music and beats. Over 31 tableaux added colour to the show. For the first time, a tri-services tableau rolled down Kartavya Path, displaying the spirit of jointness and integration.

With the theme "Shashakt aur Surakshit Bharat", the tableau depicted a Joint Operations Room facilitating networking and communication among the three Services.

Another highlight was a veterans' tableau on the theme "Viksit Bharat ki Ore Sadaiv Agrasar", which was a heartfelt tribute to the unwavering spirit of veterans, symbolising discipline, resilience, and unyielding dedication.

The ceremony culminated with the National Anthem and the release of balloons carrying banners with the official logo depicting 75 years of enactment of the Constitution in both English and Hindi.

Guwahati 'blast': ULFA(I) says it's just a warning

Adhering to a decades-old template, the ULFA(I) and some other extremist groups in the northeast called for the boycott of the Republic Day celebrations. They have often struck on or before January 26 and August 15 to show they mean business. The goriest of such attacks was on August 15, 2004, killing 13 people, including 10 children, in eastern Assam's Dhemaji.

Speaking at a Republic Day programme in eastern Assam's Dibrugarh, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the government was developing infrastructure to turn Dibrugarh, Tezpur and Silchar towns into cities.

"Dibrugarh will have an Assembly complex by 2027 and will be Assam's second capital. Tezpur will emerge as the cultural capital and will house a Raj Bhavan. Silchar will house a mini-secretariat and the Chief Secretary's Office," he said.

He also announced the inclusion of chess in Assam's school curriculum and a rollback of the New Pension Scheme for State government employees from April 1.

Call for peace

Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh hoped the Republic Day celebration would mark the beginning of the return of peace in the ethnic violence-scarred State.

"On this historic day, as we commemorate the adoption of our glorious Constitution in 1950, let us reaffirm our commitment to upholding the values and principles that define India – its unity, integrity, and vibrant spirit," he posted on X.

His Mizoram counterpart Lalduhoma said, "Republic Day is a reminder of our collective commitment to democracy, equality, and progress. It is a day to reflect on how far we have come and the work still ahead in building an inclusive and just society." Mr. Lalduhoma has been critical of Mr. Singh's handling of the ethnic conflict.

In Nagaland, Governor La. Ganesan said the State government had made every effort to resolve the "Naga political issue", a euphemism for the peace talks between the Centre and various factions of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland.

In his speech, Tripura Governor Indra Sena Reddy Nallu lauded the State government for resolving the decades-old insurgency issues in 2024.

Trump moods 'clean-out' of Gaza, lifts bomb ban

Asked why he lifted the ban on those bombs, Mr. Trump responded, "Because they bought them."

Mr. Trump has built his political career around being unapologetically pro-Israel. On his vision for Gaza, Mr. Trump said he had a call earlier in the day with King Abdullah II of Jordan and would speak on Sunday with President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt.

Such a drastic displacement of people would openly contradict Palestinian identity and deep connection to Gaza. Still, Mr. Trump said the part of the world that encompasses Gaza, has "had many, many conflicts" over centuries. He said resetting could be temporary or long term."

"Something has to happen," Mr. Trump said. "But it's literally a demolition site right now. Almost everything's demolished, and people are dying there."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a statement on Sunday, thanked Mr. Trump for "keeping your promise to give Israel the tools it needs to defend itself." He did not mention Mr. Trump's suggestion on Palestinian refugees.

Sri Lankan Navy arrests 34 fishers from Tamil Nadu

Men from Rameswaram have been arrested on charges of poaching in the sea, says a statement from the navy; 3 trawlers have been impounded

L. Srikrishna
RAMANATHAPURAM

In a fresh incident, the Sri Lankan Navy personnel arrested 34 fishermen from Rameswaram and impounded three trawlers on charges of poaching on Saturday night.

According to the Fisheries Department officials, they had issued 439 tokens on Saturday, and the fishermen were expected to reach the shores in the early hours of Sunday.

Preliminary inquiries indicated that when they were fishing between Dhanushkodi and Mannar, the Sri Lankan Navy, under surveillance, secured the fishermen in the north of Mannar.

Three of the arrested fishermen were identified as Regan, 43, Christopher, 33, and Innasi Jenson, 42.

According to a statement from the Sri Lanka Navy, they arrested the fishermen to curb illegal fishing practices of foreign boats considering the live-



In troubled waters: The fishermen from Rameswaram who were arrested on Saturday night. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

lihood of their local fishermen.

The Northern Naval Command and Coast Guard had deployed their fast attack craft to drive away the Indian fishing boats poaching in the sea area north of Talaimannar.

The arrested fishermen and their boats were handed over to the Assistant Director of Fisheries, Killinochi, for further legal proceedings, the release said.

Meanwhile, fishermen

leaders in Rameswaram condemned the arrest and seizure of the property under what they termed as false charges.

They urged the Union government to intervene in the matter and take up the issue with the Sri Lankan government and bring back the fishermen safely with the trawlers.

"A meeting is likely to be convened by the fishermen associations in the coastal district," the sources added.

Keep a watch on thyroid disorders and do regular check-ups, suggest experts

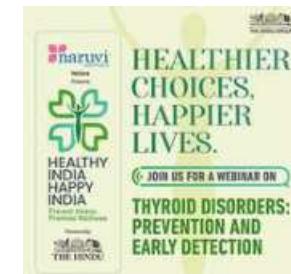
The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

At a webinar hosted by *The Hindu* in collaboration with Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore, under the Healthy India Happy India initiative on Sunday, medical experts focused on thyroid disorders, their prevention and the importance of early detection.

Aravindan Nair, consultant general and endocrine surgeon at Naruvi, gave a bird's-eye view on thyroid disorders emphasising on its prevalence and the need for regular check-ups.

"Thyroid gland produces thyroxine, which is extremely important for normal functioning of the body. When it gets low, it is hypothyroid, and if it is high, it is hyperthyroid," he explained and added that swelling of thyroid was a very common occurrence.

"If you look at a population survey, 40% to 50% of the population will have undiagnosed thyroid problem and only a small percentage will get detected," said Dr. Nair, who also spoke on malignant thyroid conditions.



He said cancers of thyroid are completely curable in 90% cases with treatment and not every thyroid swelling is malignant.

"Imaging and clinical examination are essential for early intervention and to avail minimum morbidity and zero mortality treatment," Dr. Nair said.

His colleague, Sai Krishnappa Chaitanya P, consultant endocrinologist, detailed thyroid function tests, hypo and hyperthyroid conditions, and thyroiditis (inflammation of the thyroid gland). Identifying the condition is very important, he noted.

"Most individuals can be diagnosed as a part of health packages. But specific tests are recommended when there is a gradual weight gain or weight loss, an increase in lethargy and sleepiness, having no interest in work, feeling tired

and sleepy, having constipation or diarrhoea, menstrual irregularities, persistent palpitations and sweating, chronic cough, difficulty in swallowing or breathing, delayed growth in children are symptoms where hypo or hyperthyroidism are suspect and individuals need to get examined for thyroid function test," Dr. Chaitanya pointed out.

Discussing thyroid disorders in pregnancy, Pooja Ramakant, Professor of Endocrine Surgery at King George's Medical University, Lucknow, stressed the need for early detection and management because of changes that happen in the body of a pregnant woman mimic thyroid disorders, which is the second most common disorder after diabetes in pregnancy.

"These physiological changes can continue for at least a year after pregnancy and delivery; gynaecologists can have endocrine evaluation because we need to detect them early to be able to treat them," emphasised Dr. Pooja.

(Webinar is available at <https://bit.ly/4jutgfk>)

Justice Jagdish Khehar's decisions often contradicted Centre's views

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar (retd), the first Sikh Chief Justice of India who was selected for the Padma Vibhushan on Saturday for 'public affairs', has a judicial legacy that collided with the views of the Union government and once ruled in favour of an embattled Opposition in the first term of the NDA regime.

Heading a multi-faith Constitution Bench in August 2017, the very last month of his tenure as Chief Justice from January 2017, Justice Khehar upheld triple talaq or instant talaq in his minority verdict as a fundamental right. The 44th Chief Justice of India had found the "1,400-year-old" practice of Muslim men divorcing their wives by saying 'talaq' three times is an integral part of the freedom of religion.

The Centre had argued that instant talaq was not fundamental to Islam and personal law must abide by the principles of dignity and non-discrimination.

The same month had witnessed a nine-judge



Jagdish Singh Khehar

Bench headed by Chief Justice Khehar elevated the right to privacy to the echelons of fundamental rights. The court declared privacy as a part of the right to life, dignity and integrity under Article 21 of the Constitution. The Union government had found the concept of privacy an elitist concept, at the most a common law right, which must readily give way to public interest.

Justice (as he was then)

Khehar, in October 2015, overcame his "awkward predicament" of being a rebel Congress government of Kalikho Pul and paved the way for the return of Congress's Nabam Tuki government in 2016. The court had quashed the then Arunachal Pradesh Governor J.P. Rajkhowa's decision to advance the Assembly ses-

est courts, unconstitutional. Justice Khehar found it difficult for the judiciary to share its wisdom of appointment of judges with the political executive. The judgment had dismissed the Centre's argument that NJAC was the "will of the people" and cannot be reviewed.

However, Justice Khehar had taken an unconventional approach to invite public suggestions to improve the collegium system, but the reworked draft of the Memorandum of Procedure for Appointment of Judges has not seen the light of the day.

The Supreme Court itself had blamed the subsequent delay in judicial appointments to the government's grouse of having lost the NJAC case.

A unanimous decision of a Constitution Bench headed by Justice Khehar showed the door to the BJP-propelled rebel Congress government of Kalikho Pul and paved the way for the return of Congress's Nabam Tuki government in 2016. The court had quashed the then Arunachal Pradesh Governor J.P. Rajkhowa's decision to advance the Assembly ses-

sion which led to President's Rule in the State.

Subsequently, Mr. Pul's wife linked the Constitution Bench decision with the suicide of her husband. Dangwimsai Pul wrote a two-page note to Justice Khehar, who was Chief Justice by then, seeking a CBI probe into her husband's suicide note which raised allegations against Supreme Court judges and politicians.

Allegations were levelled against two of the judges on the Constitution Bench, including Justice Khehar himself. She later withdrew the note from the Supreme Court after her note was converted into a petition and placed on the judicial side of the court.

A "tough judge", as Chief Justice T.S. Thakur once described him, Chief Justice Khehar did not shirk from punishing judges who stepped out of line. In May 2017, he led a seven-judge Bench which took the unprecedented decision to sentence a sitting Calcutta High Court judge, C.S. Karnan, to six months' imprisonment for contempt and for reducing the Indian judiciary into a "laughing stock".

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri in Beijing for talks with Chinese officials

Press Trust of India
BEIJING

January 29, during which the country will officially shut down for a week.

Soon after his arrival, Mr. Misri met Liu Jianchao, head of the influential International Department of the ruling Communist Party, which sets the tone for China's foreign policy.

The two sides exchanged views on jointly implementing the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, strengthening exchanges and dialogues, and promoting the improvement and healthy

and stable development of China-India relations, as well as international and regional issues of common concern, state-run *Global Times* reported.

"The resumption of this bilateral mechanism flows from the agreement at the leadership level to discuss the next steps for India-China relations, including in the political, economic, and people-to-people domains," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a brief statement.

On Friday, China welcomed Mr. Misri's visit and sounded positive about its outcome, saying the development followed a series of interactions between top leaders and officials from both countries after over four years of stalled ties over the Ladakh military standoff.

"We welcome Foreign Secretary Shri. Vikram Misri's travel to China for the meeting of the Foreign Secretary-Vice Minister mechanism between China and India," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning told a media briefing in Beijing.

Trump moods 'clean-out' of Gaza, lifts bomb ban

Asked why he lifted the ban on those bombs, Mr. Trump responded, "Because they bought them."

Mr. Trump has built his political career around being unapologetically pro-Israel. On his vision for Gaza, Mr. Trump said he had a call earlier in the day with King Abdullah II of Jordan and would speak on Sunday with President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt.

Such a drastic displacement of people would openly contradict Palestinian identity and deep connection to Gaza. Still, Mr. Trump said the part of the world that encompasses Gaza, has "had many, many conflicts" over centuries. He said resetting could be temporary or long term."

"Something has to happen," Mr. Trump said. "But it's literally a demolition site right now. Almost everything's demolished, and people are dying there."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a statement on Sunday, thanked Mr. Trump for "keeping your promise to give Israel the tools it needs to defend itself." He did not mention Mr. Trump's suggestion on Palestinian refugees.



Safety in unity: A tri-services tableau rolls down Kartavya Path for the first time in a Republic Day parade. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR



On top: Dimple Singh Bhati, first woman Army officer to present a salute to the President from a motorcycle. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR



Exotic tunes: The Indonesian National Armed Forces take part in the parade on Kartavya Path. AFP



Salute to tech: The Army displays robotic mules, or multi-purpose legged equipment, during the Republic Day parade in Kolkata. PTI

Army's missile firepower thunders down Kartavya Path in show of strike options

The parade features key missile systems, including BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, upgraded Pinaka Multi-Rocket Launch System, BM-21 Grad MRLS, and the Pralay quasi-ballistic missile system; the new Battlefield Surveillance System, Sanjay, was showcased for the first time

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

The missile systems showcased on Kartavya Path during the Republic Day parade on Sunday capture the evolving long-range tactical strike options for the Indian military, especially the Army, the need for which is one of the key lessons from the war in Ukraine.

BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, upgraded Pinaka Multi-Rocket Launch System (MRLS) with a range of 75 km, BM-21 Grad, which is a 122 mm MRLS, and Pralay quasi-ballistic missile system were among those showcased.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) showcased a model of the indigenous Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) on its tableau.

In addition to Pralay, the Army's new Battlefield Surveillance System, Sanjay, was at the parade for the first time. Sanjay has been jointly developed by the Army and Bharat Electronics Ltd. at a cost of ₹2,402 crore, and the systems will be inducted in all operational brigades, divisions and corps of the Army in three phases between March and October.



Upgraded tech: The Pralay quasi-ballistic missile system being displayed during the 76th Republic Day parade on Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Sunday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

As one of the most advanced rocket systems globally, the fully automated 214 mm Pinaka MRLS battery can deliver a salvo of 72 rockets on the target up to 75 km in 44 seconds, the commentary booklet distributed at the parade on Sunday said. The Army has

four Pinaka regiments in service and six more are on order.

Twin-launched Pralay

The Pralay with a twin launcher system showcased at the parade is a quasi-ballistic missile and India's first ballistic missile designed for conventional role. Development trials of Pralay are over and the development is now complete, as reported by *The Hindu* earlier. The Defence Acquisition Council has ac-

corded Acceptance of Necessity for a few hundred of the missiles for the Army and the Air Force. "In threat scenario, Pralay is capable of destruction of war waging potential of adversary even before the commencement of contact battle owing to its flexible range and lethality," the booklet stated.

The upgraded Pinaka is going to be the mainstay of the Army's long-range rocket artillery. Last November, the DRDO an-

nounced the successful completion of flight tests of guided Pinaka rockets of 75 km range, paving the way for its induction by doubling the original range of 37 km. Work is on to enhance the range to 300 km.

Last September, the Army's Director-General of Artillery, Lt. Gen. Adosh Kumar, said that the Pinaka system was being widely exploited and its ability was second to none. "We are looking at extending the range of the Pinaka rockets and a lot of work is going on. The DRDO is confident of achieving it."

In addition to Pinaka, the Army has five Grad rocket regiments and three Smerch regiments with a range of 90 km. Another missile, Nirbhay sub-sonic cruise missile, the longest range option, is in an advanced stage of development trials and can be expected to be showcased in the next few years.

Specialised ammunition

Another aspect adding to the lethality of Pinaka is specialised ammunition. Trials have been comple-

ed using high-explosive pre-fragmented rockets in the Pinaka system, which will increase the range by 15-20%, and an area denial munition (ADM) system, which can be anti-tank and anti-personnel. Contracts for procurement of both are expected to be signed soon, Lt. Gen. Kumar had said.

The Grad proved its worth during the 1999 Kargil War when its ability to deliver a salvo of 40 rockets in just 20 seconds played a key role in neutralising fortified enemy positions on high-altitude ridges. Initially mounted on the Ural-3750 truck platform, the BM-21 underwent a significant upgrade, transitioning to the indigenously developed Ashok Leyland super stallion platform. This upgrade enhanced mobility, increased payload capacity, and streamlined maintenance, the commentary noted.

The BrahMos detachment on Kartavya Path, led by Captain Suraj Singh, was from the 344 Missile Regiment, the youngest unit within the BrahMos fraternity.

Southern flavour fills 'At Home' reception of President Murmu



Droupadi Murmu, Narendra Modi, Indonesian President Joko Widodo, and Jagdeep Dhankhar during the 'At Home' reception. ANI

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

While the invite was executed by the National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad, and its Bengaluru campus, the staff of the Rashtrapati Bhavan put together the menu featuring Udupi udina vadas, filter coffee, murukku, tapioca chips, Mysore Pak, rava kesari and Andhra Pradesh and an extensive menu featuring snacks from each of them.

The theme was a continuation of the invitation itself, which featured craft from the five States – from Kalamkari weaves to a fridge magnet made of Ganjifa art of Mysuru and miniature Etikoppaka dolls. The idea for the theme for the reception, marking the completion of 75 years of the Indian Republic, was floated by President Murmu herself, but had its roots in past customs as well.

Guests were greeted by Yakshagana and Kathakali artists as they entered Amrit Udayan where the reception was held.

Instrumental music featuring South Indian songs were played throughout the event.

Special invitees included drone *didis*, organic farmers and people with disabilities.

Rashtrapati Bhavan officials say that this will not be the last time that such themes are applied for functions.

With thousands on parade pathway, Delhi comes under a security blanket

Samridhi Tewari
Satvika Mahajan
NEW DELHI

Drawing thousands of people from across the country, the 76th Republic Day celebrations witnessed loud cheers, a sense of pride among parade-goers and a thick layer of security in the national capital on Sunday.

The buzz for the parade on Kartavya Path began early in the morning as queues started forming as early as 4 a.m. The Defence Ministry had issued more than 77,000 passes, including 32,000 that were sold. As many as 10,000 guests were special invitees.

Eager to see the defence forces in action, children, especially girls, came dressed in the colours of the National Flag.

A group of students of fourth grade marched from the Central Secretariat metro station to Kartavya Path at 7 a.m., singing "Vande Matram" in unison. "I am very excited to see the fighter jets, and the Army's daredevils on motorcycles. I even made my sister paint a tiranga on my face early in morning," Kshitij Nagar, an eight-year-old dressed up as an Army man, said.

Ahead of the parade, an



Eager wait: People gather to watch the 76th Republic Day parade on Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Sunday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Army contingent participating in it started the day with a prayer on the lawns of India Gate, where Army tankers had been parked. A small table was set up adjacent to the tankers for prayers as the personnel paid their respects to God.

Thick layer of security

More than 15,000 personnel had been deployed across the national capital to strengthen security, aided by CCTV cameras and drones in monitoring. Entry to the event included a four-layer security check and frisking. Wallets were checked for coins, keys and other non-permissible items. Bags were not allowed. Many had reached as early as 5 a.m. anticipating the security measures and overcrowding. The Delhi Police's duty began

Kharge flays efforts to impose 'one nation, one party' on Indians

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

There is an attempt to impose "one nation, one party" on the country's citizens and the Constitution had come under constant attack from the ruling party, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said on Sunday.

In his message on the occasion of the 76th Republic Day, the Congress chief mounted a scathing attack on the ruling party.

"There is an inherent tendency to impose 'one nation, one party' on 140 crore diverse people, who believe in 'Unity in Diversity'. Every sacred tenet of the Constitution is being shredded into pieces by an authoritarian regime," Mr. Kharge said.

The Congress chief said that whenever failures of the Union government were pointed out, it either indulged in whataboutery or resorted to diversionary tactics or labelled whistleblowers as "antinationals".

Constant intrusion

Mr. Kharge said that universities and self-governing institutions had witnessed "constant intrusion", large sections of the media had been converted into "propagandists" for the ruling party,

and dissent was being "strangled by witch-hunt of Opposition leaders".

Economic inequalities had widened, even as the country's resources were being "handed over to crony capitalist and billionaire friends" of those in power, the Congress leader said.

He charged the BJP with practising "pseudo-nationalism".

The Opposition leader also accused the ruling party of following "a vicious, hateful agenda immersed in religious fundamentalism" in the past one decade.

"Minorities are being targeted, and those who are secular are being tarnished by the paint of Goebbelsian propaganda. The weaker sections are being treated as second-class citizens. Atrocities and unheard-of violence against them have become a regular occurrence," he said.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER & BASIN MANAGER, INDRAVATI & KOLAB BASIN, BARINIPUT (JEYORE), DIST-KORAPUT, PIN-764006 e-mail id: cebmkb@gmail.com	
e- Procurement Notice - Bid Identification No. CEBMKB-02/2024-25	
Online tenders are invited on EPC mode of contract from prospective bidders for the following work :	
1. Name of work	: Construction of Underground Pipe Line (UGPL) Distribution System for Turi-Guntat Irrigation Project in the District of Nabarangpur on EPC mode of contract (Turn Key basis) including power connectivity, Electro-Mechanical components, PIM and operation & maintenance of complete commissioned system for 5 years or 5 kharif seasons whichever is more
2. Approximate value of work put to tender.	: ₹ 212.37 Cr (Excluding GST)
3. Class of contractor	: 'Super' Class or equivalent
4. EMD	: ₹ 2,12,36,900/-
5. Tender Fee	: ₹ 10,000/- (Non-refundable) through on-line mode
6. Period of Completion	: 30 (Thirty) calendar months including Rainy reason
7. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal.	: Dt. 29/01/2025 from 10:00 AM to Dt. 03/03/2025 up to 05:30 P.M.
8. Date & time of pre-bid Conference.	: 06/02/2025 at 11:30 AM in the O/o the Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Indravati & Kolab Basin, At/Po: Bariniput, District : Koraput in physical/virtual mode through Google Meet. The interested bidders should ask for link by giving their e-mail Ids to cebmkb@gmail.com well in advance.
9. Last Date / Time for receipt of bids in the portal	: Dt. 03/03/2025 up to 05:30 P.M.
10. Date & time of opening of Technical bids	: Dt.04/03/2025 at 11:30 AM.
11. Place of opening of bids	: O/o the Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Indravati & Kolab Basin, At/Po: Bariniput, District: Koraput
12. Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Indravati & Kolab Basin, At/Po: Bariniput, District: Koraput

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>" Addendum/ Corrigendum/ Cancellation if any required will be published in Govt. website only.

Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Indravati & Kolab Basin, Bariniput, OIPR-32456/11/0002/2425

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD		
INVITATION FOR TENDERS (Through KPP Portal Only)		
BWSSB invites tenders in two stage tender system from eligible contractors for the following works.		
SI. No.	Name of the Works	
Office of the Chief Engineer (WMM-East), 5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bangalore - 560 009.	Amount put to Tender	EMD Amount
IFT No.:BWSSB/CE(WMM-E)/DCE(WMM-E&W)/TA-1/1067/2024-25	Date:23.01.2025	
1	Providing and Laying of 900mm dia RCC NP-3 class sewer pipeline from Byrasandra Lake to SG Palaya Police Station coming under AEE(WMM-N-K&T)-2 Sub Division (Call-2).	Rs. 407.25 Lakhs
		Rs. 7,208 Lakhs
IFT No.:BWSSB/CE(WMM-E)/DCE(WMM-E&W)/TA-1/1069/2024-25	Date:23.01.2025	
2	Providing and Laying of 900/1000mm dia RCC NP-3 class sewer pipeline from Sarakkai 18 MLD ISPS to Sarakkai Lake Bund JP nagar and 11th Main Jayanagar to Marenahalli, Jayanagar coming under AEE(WMM-N-K&T)-2 Sub Division (Call-2).	Rs. 369.08 Lakhs
		Rs. 5,536 Lakhs
For both the above works, Last date for receipt of tenders: 10.02.2025 upto 17:30 Hrs. Technical Tenders will be opened on: 12.02.2025 at 16:00 Hrs.		
Sd/- Chief Engineer (WMM-East)		
The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to https://kpp.karnataka.gov.in For further details contact the above signed office during working hours.		
DIPR/CP/JA/4522/2024-25		

IN BRIEF



Four persons killed in vehicle collision in T.N.'s Krishnagiri

Four persons were killed and three others were injured in a multiple-vehicle collision on the Chennai-Krishnagiri National Highway, near Athithimarthapullam, in Tamil Nadu's Krishnagiri district on Sunday. The police said V. Narayanan, 45, of Sholapur in Maharashtra was driving a lorry carrying onions from Maharashtra to Chennai. Near Athithimarthapullam, he lost control of the vehicle. The lorry crossed the median and collided with another one coming on the opposite side. A minivan, which was coming behind the second lorry, then collided with it. In the accident, Narayanan, lorry drivers R. Arul Jothi, 54, and S. Manikandan, 40, of Dindigul district sustained grievous injuries and died on the spot. V. Badhami, 40, of Maharashtra died on the way to hospital.

Ashwini Vaishnaw interacts with invitees of Mann Ki Baat

Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw on Sunday interacted with special invitees of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's *Mann Ki Baat* programme who were selected as distinguished guests for the Republic Day parade. They were invited by Akashvani to its New Delhi office. "On the special invitation of the Prime Minister, individuals and representatives of organisations who have undertaken remarkable work, had been invited to witness the Republic Day parade. These individuals have been personally mentioned by the Prime Minister over the past 10 years in the iconic *Mann Ki Baat* programme broadcasted on Akashvani," read a press release.

Assam tea workers prone to post-TB fungal disease: study

Chronic pulmonary aspergillosis, or CPA, is a life-threatening infection that strikes individuals with immunodeficiency; an earlier study had flagged prevalence of epidemic dropsy in State's tea belt

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI



Persistent problem: TB has been a major public health issue across the tea belts in Assam's Brahmaputra and Barak valleys. ANI

Two years after a study flagged the epidemic dropsy threat, a new research paper has identified a life-threatening fungal infection mostly in the damaged lungs of tuberculosis survivors among Assam's tea plantation workers.

TB has been a major public health issue across the tea belts in Assam's Brahmaputra and Barak valleys, afflicting 217 per 1,00,000 population according to the National TB Prevalence Survey of 2019-2021. The risk factors include poverty, poor nutrition, kitchen smoke, close contact with smear-positive patients, and living in congested environments.

A team of researchers from the Assam Medical College and Hospital in Dibrugarh has now put the focus on chronic pulmonary aspergillosis (CPA), an infection caused by *Aspergillus fumigatus*, a fungus that strikes individuals with immunodeficiency. CPA is a chronic lung disease that occurs commonly in pre-existing lung cavities. It mostly occurs in post-TB or active TB patients and shares similar clinical features with

tuberculosis.

The study, the first of its kind among tea workers, was published in the journal *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*. Its authors are Aishwarya Selvasekhar, Reema Nath, Gourangie Gogoi, and Pronami Borah.

The team examined 128 patients visiting three tea garden hospitals and two referral hospitals in Dibrugarh district, which has 177 of Assam's 803 major tea estates and a high TB burden. These patients – tea workers and their dependents from four tea estates – experienced chronic cough, haemoptysis (coughing blood), weight loss or fatigue, and other respiratory symptoms for

three months or more.

Using advanced serological testing and radiological imaging, the researchers recorded a CPA prevalence of 17.18% in the year-long study. CPA seropositivity was 18.5% in active TB patients but spiked to 48.9% in those who had completed treatment, underlining the fungal infection as a post-TB health issue.

Worse than Africa

The mean age of the patients was 41.9 and CPA was found to be more common in middle-age male workers (80 against 48 females).

According to the study, Assam's high CPA prevalence of 60 cases per 1,00,000 people exceeds the global average of 42.

The scenario is worse than in African countries such as Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the prevalence ranges from 20 to 50. The researchers suggested testing for Aspergillus antibodies in patients who come with respiratory symptoms after completion of TB treatment to diagnose the cases early and treat them subsequently.

"This will help to decrease the morbidity and mortality due to this neglected and under-diagnosed disease in tea garden hospitals as well as other TB hospitals," they said. The researchers advised campaigns to train healthcare providers to recognise CPA symptoms and educate workers about respiratory health, nutrition, and hygiene.

In the context of nutrition, health experts pointed to a two-year-old study on epidemic dropsy published in the *Cureus Journal of Medical Science*.

Epidemic dropsy is caused by the consumption of edible oils contaminated with the oil from *Artemesia mexicana*, a poppy of Mexican origin.

Flute-maker hopes Padma award will open up new avenues

Shubhomoy Sikdar
NARAYANPUR



Pandi Ram Mandavi

With weekdays immersed in creating wooden art forms, Sundays for Pandi Ram Mandavi is a time for rest. But this one, which coincides with Republic Day, is different. It has been spent answering a steady stream of congratulatory calls from across the country and beyond, on his humble feature phone.

Mr. Mandavi has been chosen for the Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian award, for his contribution to the field of wood craftsmanship and is particularly known for popularising a specially designed flute.

From wooden art that ranges from tiny combs to gigantic statues of Muria tribal men and women and even doors and pillars with engravings, it is the flute that earned Mr. Mandavi much recognition. "In the early 1990s, when it was being exhibited in Delhi, it caught the fancy of a group of visiting Japanese schoolchildren, each wanting to buy more than a piece. I realised its potential and over the years, I have lost count of the number of pieces I have sold," he says.

His flute differs from the traditional flute. Sound is produced by holding it in the hand like a wand and spinning it, a process that uses the air entering the long cylinder through a combination of three metallic washers stacked together at one end.

Cardiac surgeon who performed India's first coronary bypass surgery passes away

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

India's pre-eminent cardiac surgeon K.M. Cherian, who performed India's first coronary bypass surgery, died in Bengaluru on Saturday. He was 82.

His son, Sanjay Cherian, shared a note that said, "It is with profound grief that I inform you all that my beloved father, Dr. K.M. Cherian, passed away around 11:55 p.m. last night [January 25]. Dad and I had attended a wedding reception in Bengaluru and as we were leaving, he collapsed..." He also said that Dr. Cherian was rushed to Manipal Hospital where he was declared dead. The funeral will be held on January 30.

Only a couple of days ago was his autobiography, *Just an Instrument*, launched at the Kerala Literature Festival.

Born on March 8, 1942,

in Kerala, Dr. Cherian worked for over 50 years in the field of cardiology, training under world-renowned leaders in the field. He was also credited with performing the first heart-lung transplant in India, the second cardiac transplant, and strangely, for a profession where people stick to their chosen specialisation, was also a pioneer in paediatric cardiac surgery. He set up Frontier Lifeline Hospital in Chennai and Frontier Mediville, a large medical science park on the outskirts of the city, to help spur research into indigenous cardiac valves and other technologies.

During the book launch in Kerala, Dr. Cherian said each surgeon should consider the patient part of his own family. Some of the experiences he shared on the occasion include how he performed heart surgeries on 20 Iraqi children and



DR. K.M. CHERIAN (1942 - 2025)

how he played the diplomat in the release of four Indian drivers who were imprisoned in Iraq. He went on to explain his association with Mother Teresa, upon whose request he performed a surgery on a poor boy in Kolkata at minimal cost.

After having completed his medical education in Kasturba Medical College, Manipal, he went on to teach in Christian Medical College, Vellore, before heading out to the far shores of Australia and New Zealand to train further in cardiac surgery. He chose to come back to India to serve the people and the country. In the 50-plus years he served in the field, he also had a term as honorary cardiac surgeon to the President and worked extensively with patients who came from foreign nations for treatment, and was awarded the Padma Shri.

barefoot to school to playing marbles on the street with friends, and a love to don paint to participate in the tiger dance during Onam. He confessed to getting zero in mathematics in Class 5, but the school managed to give grace marks to all students as the exam was unusually tough.

K.R. Balakrishnan, chairman-cardiac sciences and director of the Institute of Heart and Lung Transplant and Mechanical Circulatory Support in MGM Healthcare, recalled coming to Chennai in November 1984 "fresh from training in Bombay". Dr. Cherian was a mentor, with whom he conducted experiments during his stint at the Railway Hospital. "We did exciting stuff at that time," he said.

"He has travelled all over the world, planning for Madras Medical Mission (MMM). When I was working in Auckland in New Zealand, he stayed with me almost a week, visiting hospitals, and a love to don paint to participate in the tiger dance during Onam. He confessed to getting zero in mathematics in Class 5, but the school managed to give grace marks to all students as the exam was unusually tough.

Subsequently a lot of people followed. But he was always one step ahead," Dr. Mallasari said, adding: "He put effort into research, which usually doesn't happen in a private centre. He was pushing you to research, be it stem cell or lab work. He would push us to write and encourage us to present in international congresses."

Sowmya Swaminathan, former chief scientist of World Health Organisation and chairperson of M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, in her post on X, said, "Deeply saddened to hear of Dr. KM Cherian's passing. His memoir was just released and we had long conversations recently – about the future of innovation and health technology development in India. Certainly a source of inspiration to many, apart from the countless lives he saved! RIP."

"The first bypass surgery, coronary artery bypass surgery, the heart transplantation in the private sector, a lot of paediatric surgeries were pioneering efforts in this country. He had a great vision of the future," he said. Dr. Cherian "believed standalone centres will have no

FAITH

Greatness of Ramanuja

Sri Vedanta Desika, in his work "Yathiraja Sapthathi," venerates and commands the nobility of acharya Sri Ramanuja, the founder of Visishtadvaita philosophy. Thirukkudandhai Dr. Venkatesh said in a discourse that Swamy Desika dedicated the first 10 slokas to invoking the blessings of various acharyas (Guru Parampara). He begins with Lord Narayana, who revealed the Vedas to the world and formulated Agama Sastras to be followed to worship Him. That Lord is the first Guru. For any good work like the performance of homas and yagnas, a person must do the same with his spouse, and then only the ritual will be complete. Lord has taken a resolve to protect us, and in that yagna of dharma, His divine consort, Goddess Lakshmi, remains always with Him. She comes next to the Lord. Then comes the chieftain of the celestial Vishwakarma. The Vedas have tried to reveal the qualities of God. The apostle Nammazhwar has given the essence of the Vedas through his work "Thiruvaimozhi" in Tamil, which is easily understandable. Swamy Desika pays his obeisance to Nammazhwar. Then, the acharyas Nathamuni, Uyyakkondar, and Manakkal Nambi are revered. After Peria Nambi, Swamy Desika starts praising the great acharya Sri Ramanuja..

Sri Ramanuja used to keep "thridandam" (a staff with three sticks). This symbolises the worship of Narayana through mind, word, and deed. He is the king of ascetics (Yathi Raja). He is the manifestation of the five divine weapons (panchayudha) of Lord Vishnu.

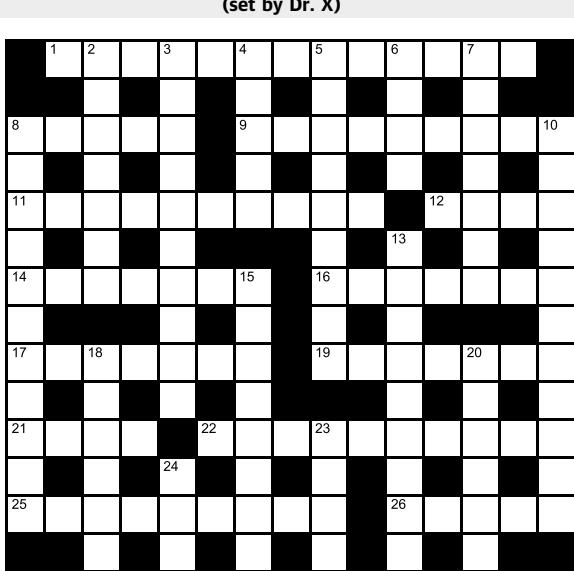
Swamy Desika praises Ramanuja as the central gem of the preceptor lineage, a priceless pendant.

TH CROSSWORD

14392

(set by Dr. X)

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



Across

- 1 Intoxicated babe runs over girl, stirring up emotions (6-7)
- 8 Wants new, versatile German player (5)
- 9 Sworn statement by American diva involved in argument in retreat (9)
- 11 See 10 Down
- 12 Censure fellow dumping conservative miss (4)

Down

- 10 / 11 What matador might do to boldly tackle difficulty (4,3,4,2,3,5)
- 13 Insulting ignorant rogue suppressing fine female (10)
- 15 Posh models dancing close to Greek dramatist (9)
- 18 Become involved in attempt to hire English cast (3,4)
- 20 High after consuming ecstasy, couple of ladies reveal everything (4,3)
- 23 Check patient's butt bitten by animal (5)
- 24 Sheet of floating ice in stream, reportedly (4)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

2	5	3	9	4
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MONEYWISE

Should you link your credit cards to UPI?

EASYPAY

Rohit Chhibbar

Since the integration of Rupay Credit Cards with UPI, a number of credit card issuers have launched Rupay variants of their popular cards, with some offering new cards on the Rupay network. Some card issuers have also started incentivising UPI payments with accelerated value-back.

Earlier, UPI transactions were limited to the funds available in your savings account. With the linking of credit cards with UPI, you can make UPI spends using the limit available on your credit card, eliminating the need to carry a physical card everywhere.

In addition to offering convenience of digital payments, this facility opens up more opportunities for cardholders to earn rewards and cashback. However, it also comes with the risk of overspending along with certain other downsides.

Let us begin with the advantages of adding your credit cards to UPI.

Value-back

Rewards are one of the most important advantages that credit cards have over debit cards. By linking RuPay credit cards to UPI, you can earn rewards or cashback on UPI transactions, allowing you to maximise benefits on everyday expenses like groceries, dining, or bill payments.

Of late, several UPI-focused credit cards have also been launched, which provide accelerated rewards or cashback on UPI spends. For example, HDFC UPI Rupay credit card offers up to 3% CashPoints on UPI transactions and IndusInd Bank Platinum Rupay Credit Card offers 2% rewards on UPI spends.

Rupay variants of other popular cards like Tata Neu Infinity HDFC credit card and Myntra Kotak credit card provide value-back on UPI transactions, though at the base rate.

Check caps

However, it is important for cardholders to check the capping and restrictions applicable on UPI transactions. For example, HDFC Moneyback Plus credit card caps the rewards on UPI spends at 500 points per month. Moreover, all small value transactions may not earn rewards. For instance, if the reward rate is 5 points per ₹200, transaction value below ₹200 will not fetch any reward points.

Convenience

Another major advantage of credit cards on UPI is wider acceptance. Making payment through credit cards could be a challenge at kirana stores and local shops as most of these do not have POS machines. By linking your credit card to UPI, you can make instant payments almost everywhere without the need for physical cards.

Easy credit access

Linking your credit card to UPI acts as a backup payment option, which allows you to make big-ticket purchases or make a sizeable payment in case of emergencies even if you have limited funds in your bank account.

While linking your credit card to UPI offers convenience and additional purchasing power, incurring several smaller transactions on your card may be difficult to track and could lead to overspending. Hence, like any other credit card, it is advisable to track your outstanding balance, before the dues become difficult to manage.

Adding your credit card to UPI can be quite beneficial if used wisely. It not only makes your transactions more convenient but also allows you to maximise credit card rewards and benefits. Evaluate your spending habits and select a credit card that best suits your lifestyle.

With responsible usage, you can effectively maximise the benefits of linking credit cards with UPI.

(The writer is chief business officer, credit cards, Paisabazaar)

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



Horns of dilemma: Term insurance is a pure risk cover with no returns. This leads to confusion about its utility. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Why do Indian consumers ignore term insurance?

A term cover for life must be part of any prudent financial plan, especially during the income generating years of a family's breadwinners. But its adoption rate remains surprisingly low

TAKE COVER

Sarbvir Singh

In this world, nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes. Benjamin Franklin expressed the realities of life several centuries ago. Despite its inevitability, often we see untimely death leading to a family facing severe financial consequences.

Term insurance is the purest form of insurance, where for a relatively small premium, a very high cover (-500-600x) is available.

Term insurance needs to be part of any prudent financial plan especially during the income generating years of the family's breadwinners. Despite being one of the simplest and the most affordable life insurance product, its adoption rate remains surprisingly low.

Only 60-70 lakh Indians have term insurance plans and there too, the amount covered under term plan is mostly inadequate.

What stops India's middle class from buying term insurance cover?

Limited awareness

A large segment of the population is unaware of the benefits of term insurance. Insurance in India is largely a push product and often, sales advisors don't push term insurance as it has a lower ticket size than other insurance products. Given its relatively late introduction in the country,



Term insurance is seen as low priority after addressing essential expenses and loan repayments. Insurance premiums are often seen as an avoidable expense

familiarity is low.

No-returns bias

India is a price-sensitive market where any investment is linked to tangible future returns. It is a pure risk cover with no returns. This leads to confusion around its usefulness and consumers often end up choosing other products which have much lower coverage but some returns.

Low priority

Term insurance is seen as low priority after addressing essential expenses and loan repayments. For many middle-class households, immediate financial needs outweigh the importance of long-term protection. Insurance premiums are often seen as an avoidable expense.

Procrastination

The widespread belief of "I will do it later" is perhaps the biggest deterrent. Some think they're too young to obtain term insurance or perhaps too old?

The truth is this stems from an inherent optimism bias which leads people into assuming accidents, illnesses or untimely death won't hit them. This



The middle class must rethink their financial planning; bargaining long-term security for immediate gratification is neither a wise decision nor sustainable

couldn't be further from the truth.

In fact, purchasing term insurance early lets you lock your premium when you have a healthier and lower risk profile which translates to lower premiums for life. While a 30-year-old can obtain a ₹1 crore cover for ₹1,000, a 40-year-old will pay double the premium for the same coverage.

India's vast addressable market for term insurance lies in the middle – taxpayers without a safety net and families dependent on current incomes. The middle class must rethink their financial planning. Bargaining long-term security for immediate gratification is neither a wise decision nor sustainable.

Incentivise adoption

The deep-seated challenges require all stakeholders to work in tandem and create a conducive environment for consumers -

• Linking CIBIL score to term insurance. When you have a term plan, it signals that your liabilities, such as loans or outstanding debts, will be covered even in your absence. This assurance reduces the risk and

positions you as 'good debt'. Linking term insurance ownership to show a stronger CIBIL score would be a great way to incentivise adoption.

• Expanding tax benefits, specifically for term insurance or offering premium subsidies, could help spur adoption. The recent discussion around removing or lowering the Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates on life and health insurance plans is welcome. It would be a further boost if a tax deduction can be granted only for term insurance under the new income tax regime.

• One major reason people hesitate to buy term insurance is the fear they'll keep paying premiums throughout their life, only for family's claim to be rejected after their death. To address this mistrust, the industry needs to talk more about claims paid and the stories of the families who benefitted from the product. Such an initiative would also reinforce the core purpose of term insurance – providing financial security and peace of mind to families.

Insurance is both a private purchase and a public good. It is also a selfless act as the benefits go to family members and society.

Governments have driven adoption in various sectors through many schemes and sops.

Applying similar strategies to term plans could make financial protection more universal.

(The writer is joint group CEO, PB Fintech)

An annual mutual fund ritual

THINKINVESTOR

You must typically rebalance your mutual fund investments every year to slash the risk of losing unrealised gains; this means you sell some units and take profit and reinvest the cash in bank deposits

Venkatesh Bangarawaswamy

Previously, in this column, we discussed the cost of switching from a regular plan to a direct plan for your mutual fund (MF) investments. To complete the discussion, we look at the growth and income distribution cum capital withdrawal (IDCW) options offered by fund houses.

Reinvesting cashflows

The IDCW option was earlier called the dividend option. This option allows a MF the discretion to return a portion of the portfolio to unitholders. The portfolio, determined as the net asset value (NAV) per unit, consists of unitholders' capital invested, unrealised gains on stocks held, realised gains on stocks just sold and held as cash and dividend income earned on the stocks in the portfolio.

Suppose you invest in an equity fund to achieve a goal. You must earn a pre-determined compounded annual return on your investment to accumulate the amount required to achieve the goal. So, it is better to let investment in the fund compound annually. If you choose the IDCW option, you must find avenues to reinvest the cash flows received from the MF. The point is MF managers are better placed than us to find attractive avenues to reinvest. This makes the growth option better.

You must also consider the tax incidence of growth and IDCW options. Tax laws continually change. The principle is, however, simple. You pay taxes on growth option only when you sell your units. Also, given that you are investing to achieve your life goal, you are likely to hold the investment for more than one year. Long-term capital gains tax on equity is typically lower than your marginal tax rate. Therefore, if cash flows from IDCW continue to be taxed at your marginal tax rate, the growth option is tax efficient. But what if tax laws change and IDCW is tax exempt, as the dividend option was earlier? Then, IDCW would be efficient for taxable investors. But you must reinvest the cash flows. So, you could consider the IDCW reinvestment option, if available then.

Conclusion

Under the current tax laws, the direct plan growth option of an equity fund is optimal for goal-based investments. You must typically rebalance your mutual fund investments annually to reduce the risk of losing unrealised gains. This requires you to sell some units and take profits greater than your annual expected return in the fund, and reinvest the resultant cash flows into bank deposits.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
HDFC Bank	10.85-24.00	10,834-14,384	2,167-2,877	Up to Rs 6,500
Tata Capital	11.99 onwards	11,120 onwards	2,224 onwards	Up to 5.5%
State Bank of India	11.45-14.85	10,984-11,856	2,197-2,371	NIL
ICICI Bank	10.85-16.65	10,834-12,332	2,167-2,466	Up to 2%
Bank of Baroda	11.05-18.75	10,884-12,902	2,177-2,580	Up to 2% (Maximum Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	11.10-22.00	10,896-13,809	2,179-2,762	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99-16.99	10,869-12,424	2,174-2,485	Up to 5%
Bank of India	10.85-16.20	10,834-12,212	2,167-2,442	Up to 1% (Minimum Rs 250 and Maximum Rs 10,000)
Canara Bank	10.95-16.40	10,859-12,266	2,172-2,453	Up to 0.50% (Maximum Rs 2,500)
Punjab National Bank	11.40-17.95	10,971-12,683	2,194-2,537	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	10.15-16.00	10,660-12,159	2,132-2,432	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.49-14.49	10,994-11,762	2,199-2,352	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	11.35-15.45	10,959-12,013	2,192-2,403	Up to 1% (Maximum Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	10.00-31.00	10,624-16,485	2,125-3,297	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	11.25-14.00	10,934-11,634	2,187-2,327	0.50%-1%
South Indian Bank	12.85-20.60	11,338-13,414	2,268-2,683	Up to 2%
UCO Bank	12.45-12.85	11,236-11,338	2,247-2,268	Up to 1% (Minimum Rs 750)
IDFC First Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	2%
Bank of Maharashtra	10.00-12.80	10,624-11,325	2,125-2,265	1% (Rs 1,000-Rs 10,000)
Karnataka Bank	13.68	11,551	2,310	Up to 2% (Min. Rs 2,500 & Max. Rs 8,500)
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 3.5%

Car Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
Union Bank of India	8.70 - 10.45	10,307 - 10,735	NIL
Punjab National Bank	8.75 - 10.60	10,319 - 10,772	Up to 0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 1,500)
Bank of Baroda	9.00 - 12.70	10,379 - 11,300	Up to Rs 750
Bank of India	8.85 - 12.20	10,343 - 11,148	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 5,000)
UCO Bank	8.45 onwards	10,246 onwards	Nil
State Bank of India	9.10-10.15	10,403-10,660	NIL

KABUL

Iran and Afghanistan call for better ties during high-level Kabul talks



Iran and Afghanistan called for increased cooperation during a trip to Kabul by Tehran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Sunday, the highest-level Iranian official to visit the Afghan capital since the Taliban's takeover in 2021. Mr. Araghchi met his Afghan counterpart, Amir Khan Muttaqi, and Taliban Prime Minister Hassan Akhund. AFP

MINSK

Belarus President Lukashenko wins polls with 87.6% of the vote



Belarus's autocrat leader Alexander Lukashenko, in power since 1994, won a re-election that saw no real competition, a state exit poll said on Sunday. The Moscow-aligned Mr. Lukashenko won a seventh consecutive term with 87.6% of the vote. All of the 70-year-old's meaningful opponents are in prison or in exile. AFP

SEOUL

North Korea tests sea-to-surface strategic guided cruise missile



North Korea has test-fired sea-to-surface strategic guided cruise missiles, state news agency KCNA reported Sunday, adding that the weapons "precisely" hit their targets. The missiles hit their marks after travelling along the 1,500-km elliptical and figure-eight orbits. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw Saturday's test. AFP

SEOUL

South Korean president indicted as 'ringleader of an insurrection'



South Korean prosecutors indicted impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol for being the "ringleader of an insurrection" after his abortive declaration of martial law, ordering the suspended leader to remain in detention. The move was widely expected after a court twice rejected requests by prosecutors to extend his arrest warrant. AFP

Palestine President condemns 'any projects' to displace citizens of Gaza

We will not allow the repetition of the catastrophes that befell our people in 1948 and 1967, says Mahmud Abbas; Trump had said that he wanted Jordan and Egypt to take Palestinians from Gaza, suggesting 'we just clean out that whole thing'

Agence France-Presse

RAMALLAH

Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas condemned on Sunday "any projects" to relocate the people of Gaza outside the territory, after U.S. President Donald Trump suggested moving them to Egypt and Jordan.

Without naming the U.S. leader, Mr. Abbas "expressed strong rejection and condemnation of any projects aimed at displacing our people from the Gaza Strip", a statement from his office said, adding that the Palestinian people "will not abandon their



Anticipated moment: Displaced Palestinians wait to return to their homes in the northern part of the Gaza Strip on Sunday. AP

land and holy sites".

Mr. Trump, less than a week into his second term as President, said on Saturday that he wanted Jordan

and Egypt to take Palestinians from Gaza, suggesting "we just clean out that whole thing".

The idea was swiftly re-

jected by Jordan, while Egypt has previously spoken out against any suggestions that Gazans could be moved there.

In the statement issued by the Palestinian presidency, based in the occupied West Bank, Mr. Abbas said: "We will not allow the repetition of the catastrophes that befell our people in 1948 and 1967."

The former is known to Palestinians as the Nakba, or "catastrophe", when hundreds of thousands were displaced during the war that coincided with Israel's establishment. The 1967 Arab-Israeli war, during which Israel conquered

Gaza and the West Bank, is known as the Naksa, or "setback", and saw several hundred thousand more displaced from those territories.

Mr. Abbas also rejected what he called "any policy that undermines the unity of the Palestinian land in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including east Jerusalem".

He called on Mr. Trump to "continue his efforts to support" the ceasefire in Gaza that began on January 19 and said the Palestinian Authority remained ready to take on the governance of the war-battered territory.

Russia says captured east Ukrainian town of Velyka Novosilka

Agence France-Presse

MOSCOW

Russia on Sunday said its forces had captured the east Ukrainian town of Velyka Novosilka in the embattled Donetsk region, almost three years into their offensive.

Russia has made steady advances on the battlefield in eastern Ukraine for months.

Moscow's Defence Ministry said Russian troops led "active offensive actions" and "liberated the settlement of Velyka Novosilka", which lies in the west of the Donetsk region.

The town lies in the west of the Donetsk region and is close to the southern front line in Ukraine

Velyka Novosilka is close to the southern front line in Ukraine – which has remained largely static but where fears of a fresh Russian offensive have risen for weeks. Both sides have raced to gain an advantage in the almost three-year as Donald Trump – who has vowed to hold talks to end the conflict – returns to the White House.

Associated Press

GOMA

The international airport in Goma was evacuated and commercial flights temporarily grounded on Sunday as fighting between Rwanda-backed rebels and government forces raged around eastern Congo's key city, leaving at least 13 peacekeepers and foreign soldiers dead and displacing thousands of civilians.

The M23 rebel group has made significant territorial gains along the border with Rwanda in recent weeks, closing in on Goma, the provincial capital that has a population of around



Running for cover: People displaced by the fighting with M23 rebels make their way to the centre of Goma on Sunday. AP

2 million and is a regional hub for security and humanitarian efforts.

Goma's international airport, which is the east of

the city, was evacuated by the military and commercial flights were temporarily grounded due to fighting, an airport agent said.

The United Nations on Sunday told its staff not to go to the airport and to shelter in place.

Congo, the United States and UN experts accuse Rwanda of backing M23, which is mainly made up of ethnic Tutsis who broke away from the Congolese Army more than a decade ago. It's one of about 100 armed groups that have been vying for a foothold in the mineral-rich region, where a long-running conflict has created one of the world's largest humanitarian crises.

The Congolese Foreign Ministry said late Saturday it was severing diplomatic ties with Rwanda.

the deadliest suicide attacks targeting soldiers in recent years.

Tanker blast

Meanwhile, 18 persons were killed in a truck accident in south-eastern Nigeria, a week after a petrol tanker explosion left at least 98 dead. Those killed had been burnt "beyond recognition".

The tanker, which was loaded with premium motor spirit, experienced break failure and the driver lost grip of the wheels before crashing into 17 other vehicles, sparking a fire.

JANGAON PLATE

(Div. I), 1,200m, 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 250; 1. Yesterdays (9) Surva Prakash 60, 2. Kings Best (5) Gaurav 61, 3. First Class (7) Mukesh 57, 4. Lady Dancer (2) Nikhil 55, 5. N.R 1 Ultrapower (6) Abhay Singh 55, 6. Sun Dancer (3) Afroz K 55, 7. Just Incredible (1) Kuldeep Sr. 54, 8. Ampere's Touch (3) Neeraj 53, 9. China Town (4) P. Ajeeth K 53, 10. Divine Destiny (10) Ashad Asbat 53, 11. Alpine Girl (12) Santosh Raj 52, 12. Role Model (8) Md. Ekrain 52, 13. Shah of Iran (P) P. Sai K 52, 14. S. Nidhi 52.

FIRST CLASS, 2, JUST INCREDIBLE, 3, CHINA TOWN

1. CHAMPIONS WAY, 2. HIGH COMMAND, 3. CHINA TOWN

SAROORNAGAR PLATE

(Div. I), 1,200m, 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 250; 1. Yesterdays (9) Surva Prakash 60, 2. Kings Best (5) Gaurav 61, 3. First Class (7) Mukesh 57, 4. Lady Dancer (2) Nikhil 55, 5. N.R 1 Ultrapower (6) Abhay Singh 55, 6. Sun Dancer (3) Afroz K 55, 7. Just Incredible (1) Kuldeep Sr. 54, 8. Ampere's Touch (3) Neeraj 53, 9. China Town (4) P. Ajeeth K 53, 10. Divine Destiny (10) Ashad Asbat 53, 11. Alpine Girl (12) Santosh Raj 52, 12. Role Model (8) Md. Ekrain 52, 13. Shah of Iran (P) P. Sai K 52, 14. S. Nidhi 52.

REINING QUEEN, 2, GLIMMER OF HOPE, 3, HOPING WIND

1. REINING QUEEN, 2, GLIMMER OF HOPE, 3, HOPING WIND

SAROORNAGAR PLATE

(Div. II), 1,200m, 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. III) – 145; 1. Country's Maximus (1) H.M. Akshay 62, 2. Hoping King (3) Shivaan 56, 3. Prince (5) R. S. Jodha 62, 4. Hawk Wing (6) Neeraj 56, 5. Sadiya (5) Deepak 60, 6, 5. Tupac (2) A.A. Vikrant 59, 7. Deccan Ranger (7) Uday Singh 56 and 8. Blue Brigade (4) Kuldeep Sr. 52.

HAWK WING, 2, COUNTRY'S MAXIMUS, 3, BLUE BRIGADE

1. HAWK WING, 2, COUNTRY'S MAXIMUS, 3, BLUE BRIGADE

KAMARADEY CUP

(1,800m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 45 (Cat. III) – 215; 1. Miss Marvellous (10) Saqlain 60, 2. Das (3) Deepak 59, 3. Skyray (7) Gaurav 58, 4. Black Dust (5) P. Sai K 56, 5. Caraxes (6) Mukesh 56, 6. Peppi (4) Ashad Asbat 55, 7. Federer (9) P. Ajeeth K 54, 8. Exclusive Spark (2) Santosh Raj 52, 9. Black Onyx (2) B. Nikhil 60, 10. Wandering Warrior (1) Rafique Sk. 51.

MISS MARVELLOUS, 2, PEPPI, 3, SKYWARD

1. MISS MARVELLOUS, 2, PEPPI, 3, SKYWARD

VEGAVATHI CUP

(1,600m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 250; 1. Yesterday (9) Surva Prakash 60, 2. Kings Best (5) Gaurav 61, 3. First Class (7) Mukesh 57, 4. Lady Dancer (2) Nikhil 55, 5. N.R 1 Ultrapower (6) Abhay Singh 55, 6. Sun Dancer (3) Afroz K 55, 7. Just Incredible (1) Kuldeep Sr. 54, 8. Ampere's Touch (3) Neeraj 53, 9. China Town (4) P. Ajeeth K 53, 10. Divine Destiny (10) Ashad Asbat 53, 11. Alpine Girl (12) Santosh Raj 52, 12. Role Model (8) Md. Ekrain 52, 13. Shah of Iran (P) P. Sai K 52, 14. S. Nidhi 52.

REINING QUEEN, 2, GLIMMER OF HOPE, 3, HOPING WIND

1. REINING QUEEN, 2, GLIMMER OF HOPE, 3, HOPING WIND

SAROORNAGAR PLATE

(Div. II), 1,200m, 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 250; 1. Yesterdays (9) Surva Prakash 60, 2. Kings Best (5) Gaurav 61, 3. First Class (7) Mukesh 57, 4. Lady Dancer (2) Nikhil 55, 5. N.R 1 Ultrapower (6) Abhay Singh 55, 6. Sun Dancer (3) Afroz K 55, 7. Just Incredible (1) Kuldeep Sr. 54, 8. Ampere's Touch (3) Neeraj 53, 9. China Town (4) P. Ajeeth K 53, 10. Divine Destiny (10) Ashad Asbat 53, 11. Alpine Girl (12) Santosh Raj 52, 12. Role Model (8) Md. Ekrain 52, 13. Shah of Iran (P) P. Sai K 52, 14. S. Nidhi 52.

REINING QUEEN, 2, GLIMMER OF HOPE, 3, HOPING WIND

1. REINING QUEEN, 2, GLIMMER OF HOPE, 3, HOPING WIND

SAROORNAGAR PLATE

(Div. II), 1,200m, 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 250; 1. Yesterdays (9) Surva Prakash 60, 2. Kings Best (5) Gaurav 61, 3. First Class (7) Mukesh 57, 4. Lady Dancer (2) Nikhil 55, 5. N.R 1 Ultrapower (6) Abhay Singh 55, 6. Sun Dancer (3) Afroz K 55, 7. Just Incredible (1) Kuldeep Sr. 54, 8. Ampere's Touch (3) Neeraj 53, 9. China Town (4) P. Ajeeth K 53, 10. Divine Destiny (10) Ashad Asbat 53, 11. Alpine Girl (12) Santosh Raj 52, 12. Role Model (8) Md. Ekrain 52, 13. Shah of Iran (P) P. Sai K 52, 14. S. Nidhi 52.

REINING QUEEN, 2, GLIMMER OF HOPE, 3, HOPING WIND

1. REINING QUEEN, 2, GLIMMER OF HOPE, 3, HOPING WIND

SAROORNAGAR PLATE

(Div. II), 1,200m, 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 250; 1. Yesterdays (9) Surva Prakash 60, 2. Kings Best (5) Gaurav 61, 3. First Class (7) Mukesh 57, 4. Lady Dancer (2) Nikhil 55, 5. N.R 1 Ultrapower (6) Abhay Singh 55, 6. Sun Dancer (3) Afroz K 55, 7. Just Incredible (1) Kuldeep Sr. 54, 8. Ampere's Touch (3) Neeraj 53, 9. China Town (4) P. Ajeeth K 53, 10. Divine Destiny (10) Ashad Asbat 53, 11. Alpine Girl (12) Santosh Raj 52, 12. Role Model (8) Md. Ekrain 52, 13. Shah of Iran (P) P. Sai K 52, 14. S. Nidhi 52.

REINING QUEEN, 2, GLIMMER OF HOPE, 3, HOPING WIND

1. REINING QUEEN, 2, GLIMMER OF HOPE, 3, HOPING WIND

SAROORNAGAR PLATE

(Div. II), 1,200m, 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 250; 1. Yesterdays (9) Surva Prakash 60, 2. Kings Best (5) Gaurav 61, 3. First Class (7) Mukesh 57, 4. Lady Dancer (2) Nikhil 55, 5. N.R 1 Ultrapower (6) Abhay Singh 55, 6. Sun Dancer (3) Afroz K 55, 7. Just Incredible (1) Kuldeep Sr. 54, 8. Ampere's Touch (3) Neeraj 53, 9. China Town (4) P. Ajeeth K 53, 10. Divine Destiny (10) Ashad Asbat 53, 11. Alpine Girl (12) Santosh Raj 52, 12. Role Model (8) Md. Ekrain 52, 13. Shah of Iran (P) P. Sai K 52, 14. S. Nidhi 52.

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TOO GOOD

Sinner is the best player in the world by far, says Zverev



"It hurts to be standing next to this thing (trophy) and not being able to touch it," said Alexander Zverev after losing the final. "But congratulations to Jannik. You're the best player in the world by far." Zverev has lost 13 times to a top-five opponent at a Slam, with his only win coming against Carlos Alcaraz in Melbourne last year.

MILESTONE

Siniakova clinches 10th Grand Slam women's doubles crown



Czech Republic's Katerina Siniakova, right, won her 10th Grand Slam women's doubles title on Sunday when she and American partner Taylor Townsend clinched the Australian Open crown. The top seeds and reigning Wimbledon champions downed Chinese Taipei's Hsieh Su-wei and Latvian Jelena Ostapenko 6-2, 6-7(4), 6-3.

DREAM RUN

Tilak sets world record during knock against England



Tilak Varma set a new world record during his unbeaten 72 against England in the second T20I in Chennai. The 22-year-old has scored 318 runs in T20Is without being dismissed and went past New Zealand batter Mark Chapman's record of 271 runs between dismissals set in 2023.

ON A ROLL

India cruises past Bangladesh, continues merry run in U-19 WC



Reigning champion India continued its dominant run in the ICC Women's U-19 World Cup with an eight-wicket win over Bangladesh in its Super Six encounter in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday.

The scores: Bangladesh 64/8 in 20 overs (Vaishnavi Sharma 3/15) lost to India 66/2 in 7.1 overs (Trisha Gongadi 40). **PoM:** Vaishnavi.

SNAPSHOTS**City downs Chelsea**

MANCHESTER: Erling Haaland inspired a Manchester City fightback from 0-1 down to beat Chelsea 3-1 and move into the Premier League top four at the Blues' expense on Saturday.

Top results: Premier League: Manchester City 3 (Gvardiol 42, Haaland 68, Foden 87) bt Chelsea 1 (Madueke 3); Crystal Palace 1 (Esse 85) lost to Brentford 2 (Mbeumo 66-pen, Schad 80); Tottenham 1 (Richarlison 33) lost to Leicester 2 (Vardy 46, El Khannouss 50).

LaLiga: Sevilla 1 (Bade 61) drew with Espanyol 1 (Kumbulla 15); Valladolid 0 lost to Real Madrid 3 (Mbappe 30, 57, 90+1-pen); Rayo Vallecano 2 (Nteka 80, 83) bt Girona 1 (Gil 58).

Serie A: Napoli 2 (Anguissa 57, Lukaku 69-pen) bt Juventus 1 (Kolo Miani 43); Udinese 1 (Lucca 38) lost to Roma 2 (Pellegrini 50-pen, Dovbyk 65-pen).

Gukesh takes joint lead
WJKK AAN ZEE: D. Gukesh moved into joint lead at the Tata Steel Masters, outplaying his World championship second P. Harikrishna in the seventh round. It was Gukesh's third win and put him on course for his maiden title here as he shared the lead with R. Praggnanandhaa and Nodirbek Abdusattorov (five points).
Top results: D. Gukesh (Ind, 5) bt P. Harikrishna (3.5); Wei Yi (Chn, 3.5) drew with Leon Luke Mendonca (Ind, 1.5); Max Warmerdam (Ind, 3.5) bt Arjun Erigaisi (Ind, 1.5); Jorden van Foreest (Ned, 2.5) drew with R. Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 5); Anish Giri (Ned, 3) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 5).

Challengers: R. Vaishali (Ind, 4) drew with Benjamin Bok (Ned, 4); Miao Yu (Chn, 4.5) beat Divya Deshmukh (Ind, 1.5); Faustino Oro (Arg, 2.5) lost to Nguyen Thai Dai Van (Cze, 5); Erwin L'Ami (Ned, 5) drew with Aydin Suleymanli (Aze, 3). He also had words of

Ice-cool Sinner towers over Zverev, retains title

The World No. 1 becomes the first Italian – man or woman – to win three Grand Slams; Zverev's long wait for a maiden Major continues, falling short once again in his third big final

AUSTRALIAN OPEN**Agence France-Presse**

MELBOURNE

A clinical Jannik Sinner swept past Alexander Zverev to retain his Australian Open title on Sunday and cement his status as the world's dominant player in men's tennis.

The 23-year-old Italian came through a tense final between the two highest-ranked players 6-3, 7-6(4), 6-3 on Rod Laver Arena, raising his arms in the air and looking to the sky in celebration.

In doing so he became the first Italian, man or woman, to win three Grand Slams, surpassing Nicola Pietrangeli.

In elite company

The emphatic victory also thrust him alongside Andre Agassi, Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic as the only men to successfully defend their Melbourne Park titles this century.

But it proved more misery for Germany's Zverev, who remains one of the world's best players never to taste Grand Slam glory, falling short once again in his third big final.

"We worked a lot to be again in this position. It's an amazing feeling to share this moment with all of you," Sinner said, referring to his coaching team.

He also had words of

Sky-rocketing success

1 The first man to successfully defend his maiden Major title since Nadal at the 2006 French Open

3 Only the third active player (after Alcaraz and Wawrinka) to triumph in his first three Grand Slam finals

5 The fifth man to win three straight hard court Majors, and the first since Djokovic (2015-16)

10 He now has 10 successive straight-set victories over top-10 opponents, the first player to do so since the rankings were introduced



ALL STATS ARE FROM THE OPEN ERA | COMPILED BY ANIRUDH VELAMUR

consolation for Zverev.

"A tough day for you. You're an amazing player. Keep believing in yourself because I think we, all the players, and the coaches, whoever is involved in the sport, know how strong you are, not only as a player, but also as a person."

"So keep it up. Keep working hard because we all believe that you can lift one of these very, very soon."

Ice-cool Sinner proved to be a tower of mental strength again in Australia, with his defence coming against the backdrop of an ongoing doping case after he twice tested positive for traces of the steroid clostebol last year.

Behind the scenes

Hanging over his head has been a World Anti-Doping Agency appeal against his exoneration, with the global body seeking a long

This one was joy. We managed to do something incredible this time, because the situation I was in was completely different from a year ago here. I had more pressure

JANNIK SINNER

47 The Italian has pulled level with Borg and Connors for most wins (47) in their first 50 matches as ATP World No. 1

60 Since the start of the 2024 season, he has won 60 of his 63 hard court matches, the best on the men's circuit

ban. He denies knowingly doing.

A hearing is scheduled at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) for April.

He cast all the worries aside to notch a 19th career title and extend his incredible winning streak to 21 matches.

Last year Sinner needed five sets to tame Daniil Medvedev and win his first Grand Slam, but it never looked like going the distance this time.

Tilak's modus operandi – targeting England's best



Productive shot: Tilak used the pull to good effect in the second T20I. R. RAGU

S. Dipak Ragav

CHENNAI

In cricket, transitions from one era to another are often tricky and involve a phase during which the new crop takes time to grow.

India, though, has been lucky in that regard in T20 cricket. The youngsters have found their feet and comfortably filled the shoes left by Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, and Ravindra Jadeja, all of whom exited the scene after winning last year's World Cup.

Tilak Varma is one such player from the next-gen who has made a telling impact in a short time at the crucial No. 3 spot.

His last four scores in T20Is reads as 107 not out, 120 not out, 19 not out and 72 not out.

The most recent one, which came against England on Saturday here at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium, could be one of the best knocks he has played in his brief career so far.

the park.

"They were consistently bowling short, and Archer and (Mark) Wood were bowling 150kph, I think. With that pace, I think it will be slightly tougher if you want to hit it square of the wicket. So, I wanted to use the pace and hit it behind (fine) as much. That's what I have done, and it has given me success."

Another striking aspect of his innings was how seamlessly he switched gears, attacking when needed but also being circumspect at times.

"That is what I discussed with Gautam sir in the last match. He said that 'you can score at over 10 (an over) and below that also. When the team requires, you should be flexible,'" said the Hyderabad-born player.

"During the drinks break, he said that 'this is the time you can show people you can play both (ways)'. I said whatever happens, I will stay till the end and finish the game."

Rutuja ensures Odisha Warriors gets its name engraved on glitz trophy

Manush proves too strong for Payas; Diya stuns Sreeja to emerge champion

Amol Karhadkar

SURAT

Manush Shah and Diya Chitalie joined the elite list of men's and women's national champions after outclassing Payas Jain and top seed Sreeja Akula in the singles final of the 86th senior table tennis championship, which concluded at the Pandit Dindayal Upadhyay Indoor Stadium on Sunday.

Manush, the bespectacled southpaw who hails from Vadodara – not too far from the diamond city, but representing his employer Reserve Bank of India (RBI) – continued his clinical run to overcome Payas in five games in the best-of-seven final.

An hour earlier, Mumbai's Diya, also representing RBI, bounced back after trailing 2-0 against hot favourite Sreeja – India's top-ranked international paddler – and won a thrilling women's final that



Thrilled: Manush and Diya ecstatic after laying their hands on the trophy they had their eyes on for a decade. AMOL KARHADKAR

turned out to be the longest match of the final day's proceedings.

The singles win meant Diya finished the tournament with a double crown, having clinched the doubles crown on Saturday.

Both Manush and Diya took home a kitty of ₹3.20 lakh each. But more than the purse, it was the glittering trophy that the duo was thrilled with. After all, having been crowned sub-

angles to precision. Diya, on the other hand, changed her gameplan midway through the match and started using her backhand topspin more effectively to put Sreeja under pressure.

The results: Men: Final: 3-Manush Shah (RBI) bt Payas Jain (Del) 10-12, 11-6, 11-6, 12-10, 11-8, 11-9. **Semifinals:** Payas bt Divyansh Srivastava (UP) 11-9, 11-8, 11-9, 11-7; Manush bt 2-Ankur Bhattacharjee (PSPB) 13-11, 11-4, 11-9, 12-10.

Women: Final: 7-Diya Chitalie (RBI) bt Sreeja Akula (RBI) 10-12, 8-11, 13-11, 12-10, 11-8, 9-11, 11-9. **Semifinals:** Sreeja bt Yashashwini Ghorpade (PSPB) 11-5, 8-11, 11-9, 11-9, 11-9; Diya bt Syndrela Das (Ben) 11-8, 11-8, 11-5, 11-6.

Mixed doubles: Final: Akash Pal & Poymante Baisya (RSPB) bt Jash Mod & Taneesh Kotcha (Mah) 11-9, 11-5, 11-6, 11-4.

Semifinals: Akash & Poymante bt Payas Jain (Del) & Suhana Saini (Har) 11-7, 14-12, 7-11, 11-2; Jash & Taneesh bt Abhishek Yadav (Bol) & Aarti Chaudhary (UP) 11-2, 9-11, 13-11, 11-9.



All smiles: Warriors players and support staff savour their triumph. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

denied by Soorma's defence.

Soorma's Charlotte Englebert spent five minutes of the first quarter on the naughty step after clattering into Victoria Sauze. Ishika Chaudhary, looking to take advantage, hovered atop the dotted line but wasn't able to test Savita Patal.

In the 13th minute, Neha was in the thick of things again, slithering into the circle before passing the

baton to Rutuja. Maria Verschoor had to jump into action on that occasion to keep the ball out.

However, Rutuja couldn't be warded off for long. Sauze's lightning-quick swipe found a lucky deflection off Vaishnavi Phalke's stick before the 22-year-old lobbed it over Savita.

As the trend this season, Soorma made a meal out of the first penalty corner, but when the second op-

The 5,000-seater Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Stadium here was packed to the rafters on Sunday to witness history unfold as Odisha Warriors took on JSW Soorma Hockey Club in the summit clash of the inaugural season of the only commercial women's hockey league in the world.

The teams didn't disappoint, trading blows in equal measure, but it was eventually Rutuja Patal who ensured Warriors got their name engraved on the glitz Women's Hockey India League trophy with a thrilling 2-1 win.

Neha Goyal, the winning captain, was the first to find an opening through the left, linking up with Freeke Moes at the baseline. However, the latter was

IN BRIEF

**Jyothi wins 60m hurdles gold with national record time**

Jyothi Yarraj clinched gold in her first race of the season, that too with a national record, winning the 60m hurdles in 8.04 seconds at the Elite Indoor Meeting in Nantes (France). She broke her own earlier national record of 8.12 twice in a few hours on Saturday. She first clocked 8.07 in the heats and then bettered her time in the final of the World Athletics Indoor Tour bronze level meet. Her timing is however still short of the qualifying mark of 7.94 for the World Indoor Championships in Nanjing (China) in March.

Mumbai City eases past misfiring Mohammedan

Mumbai City FC beat Mohammedan SC 3-0 in an ISL match in Mumbai on Sunday. L. Chhangte (78) and T. Krouma (82) scored for Mumbai after the host went ahead through G. Bora's 73rd-minute own goal.

Pakistan's Saim all but ruled out of Champions Trophy

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Chairman Mohsin Naqvi all but ruled out young opener Saim Ayub for the ICC Champions Trophy tournament due to an ankle injury for which he is taking treatment in London. Saim had fractured his ankle on the first day of the second Test against South Africa earlier this month in Cape Town. Naqvi told reporters that no risk would be taken with Saim's future and he was personally monitoring his rehabilitation progress.

Lyles launches season with victory in 60m

American Olympic 100m champion Noah Lyles launched his 2025 season with a 60m victory in 6.62s at an indoor university meet in Gainesville (USA) on Saturday. Lyles, who hadn't raced since winning gold in the 100m and 200m bronze in Paris last year, cruised to victory – clocking 6.62 in both his heat and the final. His opening time of the season put him a tick behind Olympic 100m runner-up Kishane Thompson of Jamaica, who clocked 6.56 on Saturday in Kazakhstan.

Real Kashmir continues to excel at home

Real Kashmir FC maintained its unbeaten home record in the I-League with a 2-0 win over Goa's Dempo Sports Club on Sunday. Lalrumsanga (52nd) and Abdou Karim Samb (58th) scored as Real Kashmir sealed its fourth home victory of the season and moved to fifth with 16 points from 10 matches. Dempo remained in eighth with 11 points from 10 matches.

**WI scents series-leveelling win against Pakistan**

Kevin Sinclair led a West Indian spin trio to give the tourists a sniff of a series-leveelling win in the second Test on Sunday with Pakistan on the ropes at 76 for four after day two in Multan. West Indies scored 244 in its second innings to set the host a daunting 254-run target on a spinning pitch. At stumps, Saud Shakeel was unbeaten on 13 and night-watcher Kashif Ali on one.

The scores: West Indies 163 & 244 in 66.1 overs (Brathwaite 52, Sajid 4/76, Noman 4/80) vs Pakistan 154 & 76/4 in 24 overs.

LIVE TELECAST

U-19 Women's T20 World Cup: Hotstar, 8 a.m. & 12 p.m.
Pakistan vs West Indies: 2nd Test, day 3, FanCode, 10 a.m.
Hockey: HIL, DD Sports, Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 3 (SD & HD) & LIV, 6 & 8.15 p.m.
ISL: Sports 18-3 & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.
Serie A: gxr.world, 1.15 a.m. (Tuesday)
LaLiga: gxr.world, 1.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Sport

Ajith Ram and Sai Kishore skittle out Chandigarh; TN consolidates top spot

Both left-arm spinners scalp four each as the host wins the contest by 209 runs; Vohra's ton goes in vain as the visitor gets bundled out for 193

RANJI TROPHY

Tarun Shastry
SALEM

It took just the first six deliveries on the final day for Tamil Nadu left-arm spinner S. Ajith Ram (19-2-89-4) to trap Chandigarh's overnight batter Vishu Kashyap plumb in front, providing the perfect start for the host's march towards victory at the Salem Cricket Foundation Ground on Sunday.

The win was sealed in 69 minutes of the morning session. TN trounced Chandigarh by 209 runs in the Ranji Trophy Elite Group-D match and consolidated its position at the top of the table.

TN skipper and fellow left-arm tweaker R. Sai Kishore (21-6-62-4) joined



Meek surrender: Chandigarh batters fell flat in front of the Tamil Nadu spinners. E. LAKSHMI NARAYANAN

the action by dismissing Mayank Sindhu and Jagit Singh cheaply, leaving opposition captain Manan Vohra (100 n.o., 13lb, 6x4,

6x6) stranded at the non-striker's end as he watched his team collapse like a house of cards for the second time in two days.

But that didn't stop him from reaching his 11th First Class hundred. He stepped down the track to both the tweakers, smashing six

RANJI SCORES — ROUND 6 (DAY FOUR)**Elite: Group A: Shillong:**

Meghalaya 198 & 294 in 92.2 overs (Sumit Kumar 51, Jaskirat Singh Sachdeva 82, Sunil Roul 4/61) lost to Odisha 548/7 decl.

Points: Odisha 7(17), Meghalaya 0(0).

Agartala: Tripura 212 & 357/5 decl. in 83 overs (Bikramkumar Das 85, Sridam Paul 48, Mandeep Singh 124 n.o., Srinivas Sharath 66) drew with Services 294 & 101/2 in 19.1 overs (Ravi Chauhan 53 n.o.).

Services 3(16), Tripura 1(13).

Nashik: Maharashtra 297 & 464/7 decl. in 119 overs (Siddhesh Veer 41, Ruturaj Gaikwad 89, Saurabh Nawale 126 n.o., Ramakrishna Ghosh 99) bt Baroda 145 & 177 in 36 overs (Jyotsnil Singh 40, Atit Sheth 51, Mukesh Choudhary 5/76).

Maharashtra 6(14), Baroda 0(27).

Group B: Hyderabad: Hyderabad 565 bt Himachal Pradesh 275 & 247 in 45.4 overs (Shubham Arora 66, Ankit Kalsi 44, Tanay Thyagarajan 6/118, Anikethreddy 4/46).

Hyderabad 7(16), HP 0(21).

Puducherry: Andhra 303 & 319/6 decl. in 82.4 overs (K.S. Bharat 41, Karan Shinde 119 n.o.) drew with Pondicherry 260 & 152/0 in 46 overs (V. Ganga Sudharaju 75 n.o., Jay Pande 59 n.o.).

Andhra 3(7), Pondicherry 1(3).

Jaipur: Vidarbha 165 & 428/9 decl. in 138.1 overs (Yash Rathod 98, Akshay Wadkar 139, Nachiket 0/16).



Tanay Thyagarajan (6/118, Hyd vs HP). FILE PHOTO: G. MOORTHY

Bhute 87, Kukna Ajay Singh 5/104) bt Rajasthan 265 & 107 in 43.3 overs (Harsh Dubey 5/51).

Vidarbha 6(34), Rajasthan 0(16).

Group C: Patna: Bihar 248 & 236 in 90.4 overs (Ayush Loharuka 49, Sachin Kumar 50, Shivam Sharma 5/58) lost to Uttar Pradesh 603/2 decl.

UP 7(13), Bihar 0(1).

Thiruvananthapuram: Madhya Pradesh 160 & 369/8 decl. drew with Kerala 167 & 268/8 in 104 overs (Mohammed Azharuddine 68, Aditya Sarwate 80).

Kerala 3(21), MP 1(10).

Group D: Guwahati: Railways 250 & 124/5 decl. in 30 overs (Anchit Yadav 47, Vivek Singh 52) drew with Assam 216 in 65.2 overs (Sibsankar Roy 56, Sumit Ghadigaonkar 107, Himanshu Sangwan 4/59, Kunal Yadav 5/65).

Railways 3(17), Assam 1(6).

Jamshedpur: Chhattisgarh 230 & 250 in 81.1 overs (Ayush Pandey 40, Anuj Tiwary 66, Ashutosh Singh 64, Vikash Singh 4/30) lost to Jharkhand 376 & 105/2 in 31.5 overs (Kumar Suraj 59 n.o.).

Jharkhand 6(14), Chhattisgarh 0(11).

Salem: Tamil Nadu 301 & 305/5 decl. bt Chandigarh 204 & 193 in 50 overs (Manan Vohra 100 n.o., R. Sai Kishore 4/62, S. Ajith Ram 4/89).

TN 6(25), Chandigarh 0(19).

Plate (final): Sovima: Goa 276 & 517/7 decl. in 158 overs (Snehal Kauthankar 202 n.o., Kashyap Bakale 161, Darshan Misal 67) vs Nagaland 216 & 33/0 in 10 overs.

Big thing for me to get this award after Dhyan Chand ji: Sreejesh

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI



I want to thank my country which has given me back more than what I gave

an interview.

"Receiving this award after retiring from the game has made me feel that the country is honouring me for whatever I have done for Indian hockey in the last 20 years. I want to thank my country which has given me back more than what I gave," he said.

"I got a call from the sports ministry in the morning but was waiting for the official announcement till evening. All this time everything was going on in my mind like a flashback. I was watching an HIL match in Rourkela when the awards were announced," Sreejesh said in

"I did not know that. It feels like a dream."

Rajan Beri downs top seed Chandra Bhushan for over-60 title

TENNIS**Sports Bureau**

Rajan Beri beat top seed Chandra Bhushan 6-3, 3-6, [10-5] in the over-60 final of the ITF Masters tennis tournament at the Joygoan Academy in Jhajjar.

Harpreet Bajpai won the women's over-35 title, and the mixed doubles title with Aditya Khanna.

The results: Finals: Men:

Over-30: Govind Maurya bt Mayank Kumar 6-1, 6-2; **Over-35:** Pukit Mishra bt Kartikeya Verma 6-3, 6-4; **Over-40:** Aditya Khanna bt Raj Kumar 6-7(1), 6-2, [10-3];

Over-45: Amit Tilak bt Syed Babar Zaidi 6-1, 6-4; **Over-50:** Manish Mehrotra bt Deepak Bagora 1-1 (retired); **Over-55:** Laxmi Kant Tanwar bt Raj Dutt 6-1, 6-2; **Over-60:** Rajan Beri bt Chandra Bhushan 6-3, 3-6, [10-5].

Women: **Over-35:** Harpreet Bajpai bt Komal Aggarwal 6-1, 6-1.

Boxer Nishant triumphs over Wiggins on pro debut

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Indian boxer Nishant Dev made a smashing professional debut as he demolished USA's Alton Wiggins in the super-welterweight category in Las Vegas. In a dominating bout, Nishant won the contest with a few seconds left in the first of the six rounds in technical knockout on Saturday.

He knocked Wiggins down twice before the referee called for the stoppage with 20 seconds left in the first round.

Rethin thought he had sufficiently recovered on time for his milestone event and had even won the first set 7-5 and was 2-0 up in the second versus the then junior World No. 9 Oskari Paldanious (Finland) in the first round.

But then, his injury hampered his ability to play his backhand, which his opponent exploited to win the match 5-7, 6-4, 6-0.

In a telephonic interview on Friday, Rethin said: "The draw was a bit unlucky."

"I got to play with the World No. 9 in the first

Pranav feels injury hampered Australian Open juniors' campaign

TENNIS

S. Prasanna Venkatesan
CHENNAI

Earlier this month, Rethin Pranav (17) had the most significant moment of his teen tennis career so far. He got to play in the main draw of the Australian Open juniors, an upgrade from playing in last year's qualifying draw of the US Open juniors.

But a left thumb injury he had sustained in November played a dampener.

Rethin thought he had sufficiently recovered on time for his milestone event and had even won the first set 7-5 and was 2-0 up in the second versus the then junior World No. 9 Oskari Paldanious (Finland) in the first round.

But then, his injury hampered his ability to play his backhand, which his opponent exploited to win the match 5-7, 6-4, 6-0.

In a telephonic interview on Friday, Rethin said: "The draw was a bit unlucky."

"I got to play with the World No. 9 in the first



Rethin Pranav. FILE PHOTO

round. It was a really tough match. I couldn't play the backhand because of it (his injury). He knew that and dominated the third set. The guy I lost to played the semifinals.

"So, he was a really good opponent. If my hand was fine, I could have won. A bit unlucky."

Speaking about his overall experience, he said: "It was like a dream come true! I was practising on one court and on the next court, (Novak) Djokovic was practising!"

Last year, Rethin made

Gary Hall joins Inspire Institute as High Performance Director

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

Gary Hall, who guided British taekwondo to 10 Olympic, four Paralympic and 37 World Championship medals, has been appointed as the High Performance Director by JSW Sports at the Inspire Institute of Sports (IIS) in Vijayanagar.

Not just taekwondo, Hall has 22 years of experience in developing performance strategies of athletes and leading multi-disciplinary teams.

In his new role, he aims to guide IIS athletes to enhanced performance across all levels.

"I am happy to drive an exciting, positive, creative and supportive performance culture."

"I firmly believe that IIS athletes can be intensely competitive and deliver medal-winning performances that inspire the whole of India," said Hall in a statement on Sunday.

"Therein lies a perplexing problem. The ICC doesn

Tilak – the T20 behemoth is a fusion of power and finesse

Having followed big names from Hyderabad, the southpaw is cut from a different cloth and the win in Chennai is proof that there's more to the batter than just the explosive game; the MI batter will have challenges as the team heads towards the next T20 WC where he would be one among the seniors



R. RAGU

R. Kaushik

Tilak Varma has smashed 57 fours and 41 sixes in his fledgling Twenty20 International career, which is 22 matches young. Of them all, the boundary that would have given him the greatest satisfaction was a punched off-drive that scurried past mid-off and thudded into the boundary boards beyond long-off.

As he cleared his front leg and drove Jamie Overton wide of the straight field at Chepauk on Saturday, Tilak started to run, his eyes unwaveringly on the ball. Once it had gotten past the mid-off fielder, there was no doubt about its final destination. But it wasn't until the ball had hurtled past the rope that Tilak's gentle run manifested itself into a triumphant, gravity-defying leap. After all, it was the winning boundary, the shot that took India past England's 165 for nine, the stroke that helped complete a terrific victory, fashioned as well as taken to its logical denouement by the 22-year-old from Hyderabad.

Tilak has now gone four T20I innings without being dismissed. In this period, he brought up his first T20I century (in Centurion last November), then became only the second Indian after Sanju Samson to register hundreds in successive T20Is. His 41-ball century in Johannesburg, which came during a stunning 210-run stand with Samson, is the third fastest by an Indian in the 20-over format. Since falling for a run-a-ball 20 in the second of four matches against South Africa in Gqeberha, Tilak has stacked up 318 runs in 174 deliveries, 24 fours and 22 sixes, without getting out. If those aren't stunning numbers, then very few are.

Strong basics

Very much the new-age Indian batter - flowing locks, the ubiquitous beard, studded ear - Tilak is the perfect example of fusing the conventional with the modern. His basics are strong, without which one can't succeed at any level in any format, and don't let anyone say otherwise. He has all the shots in the book and is unafraid to play them, though any innings of substance that emanates from his flowing willow is dominated more by the orthodox than the innovative and the cheeky.

A product of tennis-ball cricket, like many in the country, who was spotted by an eagle-eyed coach (Salam Bayash) when just 11, Tilak's been a steady and gradual journey that highlights the robust

talent-spotting and age-group mechanism that is one of the less celebrated facets of Indian cricket. There was a time when apart from talent, one needed oodles of good fortune - being in the right place at the right time and being spotted and recognised by those who matter when it mattered - to break through. Organised matches were few and far between, it was easy for even the gifted to slip through the cracks if they didn't measure up to scratch in 'selection' matches simply because the volume of cricket was limited and the supply chain abundant.

Today, there is greater structure to age-group action even in remote corners, facilities abound in tier-two and tier-three cities and cricket is no longer restricted to only the traditional powerhouses. Not that Tilak comes from a cricketing outpost.

Hyderabad has given India some of the most stylish batters, starting from the late M.L. Jaisimha and peaking with V.V.S. Laxman. Tilak isn't cut from the same cloth in the sense that he isn't quite the wristy magician that Laxman, and Mohammad Azharuddin before him, were. But he has the class and elegance of a left-hander, tall and rangy, a crisp driver along the carpet but also a wonderful clearer of the boundaries both down the ground and behind square on the leg-side.

From his tennis-ball days to making it to the India Under-19 team after breaking into the Hyderabad senior side when only 16 and then grabbing the attention of Indian Premier League franchises, appears a seamless graduation, but it wasn't without the fair share of challenges that any young sportsperson anywhere in the world has to grapple with. For every individual who cracks the code, there are thousands who don't, and oftentimes for no fault of theirs, never mind the vibrant structures in place. Tilak was determined not to fritter his talent away, fusing ambition with unwavering work ethics and being rewarded with a Mumbai Indians cap in the most visible Indian domestic tournament with an international flavour.

At the mega auction before 2022, Tilak went to Mumbai Indians for ₹1.70 crores, showcasing how highly the ultra-efficient talent scouts that served the multiple-times champions rated the then-teenager. MI have given India some of the most celebrated superstars, not least the T20 World Cup-winning duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya. But unlike these two who burst through from relative anonymity, Tilak already had a reasonable volume of work and therefore

was less of a punt than his two illustrious seniors in the franchise and in the Indian team.

It didn't take Tilak long to justify the faith reposed in him. Understandably, he was nervous stepping into a dressing-room that was full of massive names, none more than Rohit Sharma, who had just recently taken over as the country's all-format captain. Rohit is a huge hit with his colleagues for how effortlessly he makes them feel welcome; during his first meeting with Tilak, the current Test and ODI captain embraced the young man in a warm hug, stressed the lack of a senior-junior nomenclature divide and immediately put him at ease. Tilak's nerves evaporated instantaneously. He was now free to focus on his game, on expressing himself, on showcasing his undisputed skills on a larger platform.

Daunting stage

The IPL can be a daunting stage, with the pressure to perform in front of packed stadiums game after game immense and intense. Tilak took to that pressure-cooker cauldron with ridiculous ease. He played all 14 of his franchise's matches in his debut season, scoring 397 runs at an average of 36.09 and a strike-rate of 131.02. That same year, he broke into the India-A team and travelled to Bangladesh on a shadow tour just ahead of the senior team's visit to that country but suffered a terrible setback when an auto-immune issue forced him to return home.

It took a while for Tilak to recover physically from that ailment, but by the time of the IPL, he was back at peak fitness. For a sportsperson, the second season is a very important period. There is a certain novelty factor when one first arrives on the scene which enables one to flourish but especially after a successful first season, one becomes a marked person. Tilak put to bed any fears of second-season blues by producing 343 runs in 2023 at a better average (42.88) and strike-rate (164.11) than 12 months previously. This was the real deal, not a flash in the pan.

Reward was swift in coming in the form of a call-up to the T20I side on the tour of the West Indies in July-August 2023. Three months shy of his 21st birthday, the Hyderabadi announced himself in international cricket with 39 off 22 on debut in Tarouba, backing it up with 51 and 49 not out in the next two outings in Providence. This was no IPL hero alone, not just a franchise tiger but someone to whom the highest stage held no fears. Tilak Varma was here to stay.

Sport has a way of levelling things up, so a slump of sorts after that terrific initiation was inevitable. Four of his next five innings produced single-digit scores, including a sequence of 0, 1 and 2, but an unbeaten 55 against Bangladesh in Asian Games in Hangzhou reignited the flame and there has been no looking back since. True, Tilak only got to play when the big boys weren't available and had to gracefully - did he have a choice? - make way when they returned ahead of the T20 World Cup in the Americas last June. But India are now clearly in the rebuilding phase following the T20I retirements of Rohit and Virat Kohli, and it won't be any surprise if Tilak's is the second name on the team list at the time of selection, behind skipper Suryakumar Yadav.

Special thanksgiving

In South Africa in November, Tilak approached Suryakumar, his Mumbai Indians teammate, asking if he could assume the No. 3 position that Suryakumar has made his own in the last few years. The older man obliged, and the younger one expressed thanksgiving with back-to-back centuries. Tilak won't always bat at No. 3 because India have embarked on a largely uncompromising approach of always having a left-right combination in the middle, which has been made possible by the presence of four right-handers and as many left-handers in the top eight. But in his brief forays at one-drop, he has shown both the tactical nous and the temperamental maturity to bat according to the situation and the need of the hour.

The next T20 World Cup, at home, is a little over 12 months away and unless things go drastically south, Tilak will be among those entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring a successful title defence. By then, he will be one of the leaders with enough experience under his belt to contribute more than just sizzling runs.

In the top four, he is a worthy successor to several of the stalwarts who have driven India's T20 revolution and is in the unique position of leaving behind a lasting legacy, but Tilak won't be satisfied with that alone. Regarded as a T20I behemoth, he averages 50.16 in 18 first-class games and will insist that his red-ball ambitions are very much alive and kicking.

Tilak hasn't yet seriously been discussed as a Test prospect, for no fault of his. It won't be long before that eventuates if he continues to light up the cricketing landscape like he did Chepauk on Saturday night.

THE GIST

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SCIENCE

Indian space programme breaks into 2025 in 'mission mode'

The PSLV-C60 mission laid the foundations for Chandrayaan-4 and the Bharatiya Antariksh Station. Forthcoming test flights will move India closer to human spaceflight, soon to receive a helping hand from a third launch pad at Sriharikota, continuing work on NGLV, and a change of guard at ISRO

INDIA IN SPACE

Pradeep Mohandas

Just as 2024 was the year India developed a vision for its space programme, 2025 is likely to have the programme in mission mode. The PSLV-C60 mission, underway as the year began, laid the foundations for Chandrayaan-4 and the Bharatiya Antariksh Station.

Forthcoming test flights will move India closer to human spaceflight, soon to receive a helping hand from a third launch pad approved for construction at Sriharikota, continuing work on the Next-Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV), and a change of guard at ISRO.

SpaDeX, a team effort

On December 30, 2024, the PSLV-C60 mission lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Center (SDSC) in Sriharikota. About 15 minutes after liftoff, the rocket delivered the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) satellites at slightly different velocities into a 475-km circular orbit.

Then ISRO chairman S. Somanath said the nominal date for the docking attempt would be January 7, 2025. M. Sankaran, director of the UR Rao Satellite Centre (URSC), said this was to allow the satellites to power up their solar cells.

Indian private company Kepler Aerospace provided ground station-as-a-service support for the mission alongside ISRO. It was able to simultaneously command the two SpaDeX satellites and provided "comprehensive mission support in under a month."

Swiss space situational awareness company s2a systems also shared details of the distance between the two satellites on social media.

This separation reached far rendezvous conditions, i.e., 10-20 km, on January 2, 2025, and started moving closer on January 6. ISRO had originally planned a webcast for January 7 but rescheduled by two days before calling it off altogether.

On January 8, the organisation said when the inter-satellite distance was reduced from 500 m to 225 m, the drift between the satellites was greater than expected. So it re-increased the separation to 6-8 km on January 9 and started over.

On January 10, the satellites were put on 'hold' mode to maintain an inter-satellite distance of 1.5 km then moved closer together on January 11 and 'held' at 230 m. On January 12, the inter-satellite distance was reduced further to 105 m, subsequently to 15 m, and then to 3 m. At this point, ISRO decided to move the satellites apart once again so it could analyse data from the satellites' sensors before the next attempt.

According to s2a systems, the inter-satellite separation grew to 10.9 km on January 12, and from there the next docking attempt was launched. They came within 2.6 km of each other on January 13 and to 900 m on January 15.

Finally, on January 16, ISRO issued a statement saying the two satellites had successfully docked and stabilised themselves in orbit. ISRO thus made history by completing its first in-orbit rendezvous and docking. Later that day, both satellites were controlled together from one of them, a feat necessary for lunar and space-station docking.

ISRO said the next steps involved transferring power from one satellite to the other and, later, undocking.

POEM4, the orbital testbed

After the PSLV-C60 mission deployed the SpaDeX satellites, the rocket's fourth stage was moved to a 350-km circular orbit and had its fuel dumped (a process called passivation, done so that the fuel doesn't explode and create a debris field). In this form, it was ready for the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM4) phase of its mission, when the fourth stage was to orbit the earth like a satellite. It carried 24 payloads: 14 from ISRO and 10 from academia and private industry.

ISRO's Relocatable Robotic Manipulator-Technology Demonstrator tested its movement and relocation capability by moving from one part of POEM4 to another. The Debris Capture Robotic Arm Manipulator also moved its arm, but ISRO wasn't clear about whether it managed to capture the piece of debris tethered to the payload. The Compact Research Module for Orbital Plant Studies (CROPS) had cowpea seeds germinate in orbit and studied the leaves.

On December 31, 2024, Manastu Space's Vyom 2U payload fired its green



ISRO launches the PSLV-C60 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on December 30, 2024. AFP

propulsion system for 30 seconds, tilting the POEM4 stage by 24°. The system used the company's proprietary green fuel MS289. Manastu fired the system once again on January 13, this time having POEM4 perform a somersault with an angular velocity of 1.5° per second.

Similarly, Bellatrix Aerospace fired its RUDRA payload for 60 seconds to impart an angular velocity of 1.4° per second and turn POEM4 around by 80°.

N Space Tech's payload, SwetchaSAT-VO, established communications with its ground station. The payload, designed and built in-house, tested communications in the UHF to Ku bands.

The SJC Institute of Technology and the Upagraha Amateur Radio Club at URSC said they had successfully received data from BGS-ARPIT, their jointly-developed amateur radio messaging payload. Many amateur radio operators also shared images received from BGS-ARPIT on amateur radio mailing lists.

GalaxEye also announced the successful performance of its payload, GLX-SQ. The company said it had

achieved all mission objectives, including using GLX-SQ to create a synthetic-aperture radar (SAR) image.

TakeMe2space successfully conducted an in-orbit demonstration of its MOLTD payload. An artificial intelligence unit, it uploaded "large models from the ground station, [executed] external code on the satellite, and [downlinked] the ... results." The company said it faced "a critical failure in the camera hardware," however.

Amity University said its Amity Plant Experimental Module in Space (APEMS) yielded positive results in its attempt to grow a plant in controlled conditions onboard POEM4.

Change of guard

While the SpaDeX and POEM4 missions were being executed in space, V. Narayanan took over from Somanath as ISRO chairman on January 14.

Narayanan was director of the Liquid Propulsion Systems Center, Thiruvananthapuram, and led work on the cryogenic and semi-cryogenic engines. He also chaired a committee to examine the failure of the Chandrayaan-2

On January 16 the two satellites docked and stabilised in orbit. Later both satellites were controlled together from one of them, a feat necessary for lunar and space-station docking. ISRO said next steps involved transferring power from one to the other and undocking

moon-landing attempt.

Aboard Transporter 12

Three Indian companies flew their payloads onboard SpaceX's Transporter 12 mission on January 15. They were part of another 131 payloads that the Falcon 9 rocket delivered to orbit.

First, Pixxel Space's three Firefly hyperspectral satellites became the first private Indian satellite constellation; three more are to fly in the future. The company announced on social media that all three satellites had deployed their solar arrays and had started generating power, were stabilised, and had established two-way communication links.

Second, Digantara launched its Space Camera for Object Tracking for space situational awareness and to augment its ground capabilities. The company said the satellite was generating solar power and had stabilised. The satellite will now move to its commissioning phase to prepare for its mission: to precisely track objects in low-earth orbit.

Third, XDLINX Labs' Elevation 1 miniaturised communications satellite, built for US-based Almagest Space Corporation on its XDSATINS platform, was assembled, integrated, and tested by Ananth Technologies. The satellite has a small E-band satellite communications payload that sent a "hello from space" message to mark the start of its mission.

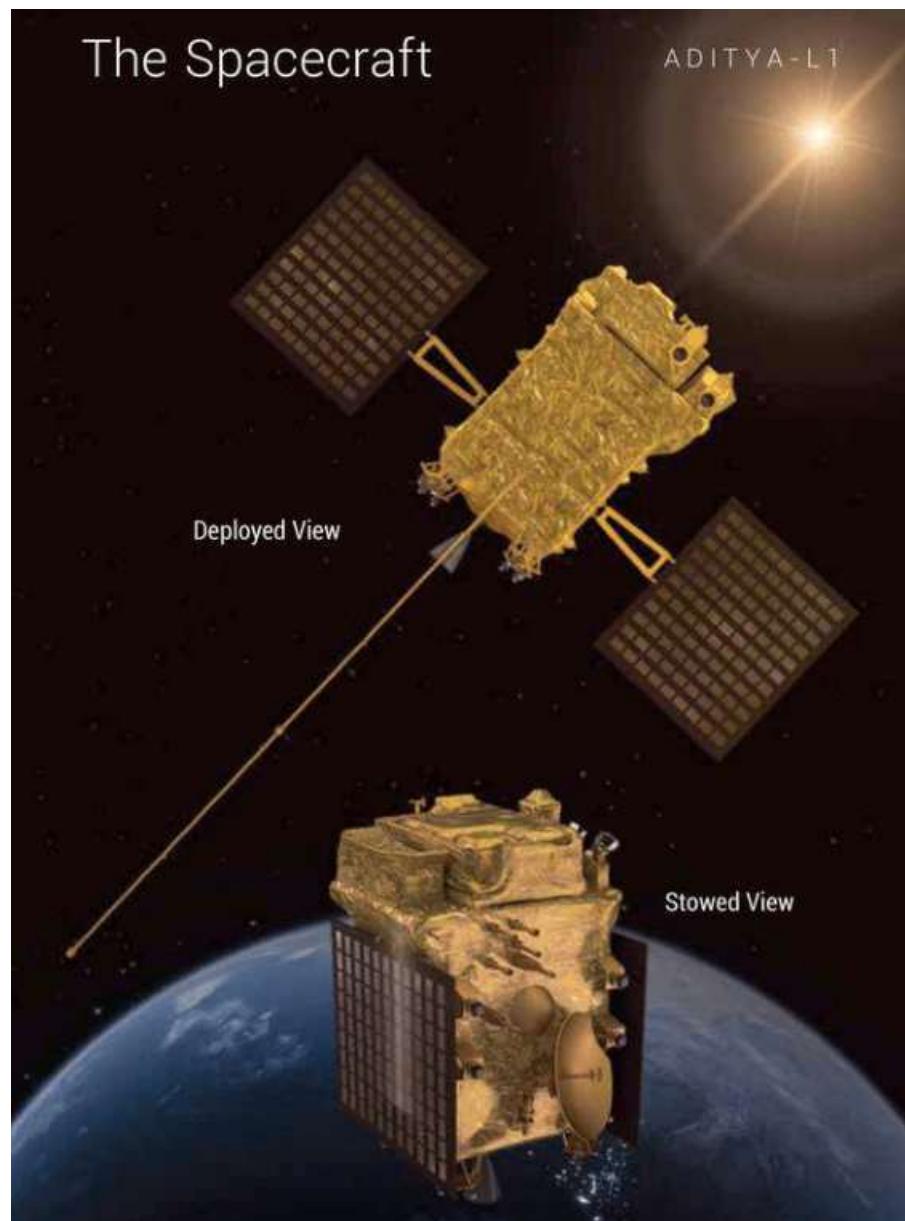
Space tech and science

The Union cabinet approved the construction of a third launch pad at SDSC at a cost of ₹3984.86 crore. It's expected to be built by 2029, to serve as a backup for the second launch pad as well as support for human spaceflight facilities and ISRO's NGLV.

ISRO also successfully tested its Vikas engine's ability to restart, i.e., stop firing, then start again, at its propulsion complex in Mahendragiri. The engine was fired for 60 seconds, shut off for 120 seconds, and fired again for seven seconds. ISRO has more tests planned ahead of certifying the engine's readiness to operate in this way in the atmosphere. The fourth-stage liquid engine of the PSLV already has restart capability in the vacuum of space.

Finally, on January 6, ISRO released the first tranche of data collected by its Aditya-L1 mission, exactly a year after the mission had started to study the sun and its effects on the inner solar system.

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Aditya-L1 is India's first space-based observatory to study the sun. This artist's impression shows the spacecraft in its deployed and stowed configurations. ISRO



Remains of *Mbiresaurus raathi*, which was only about one metre tall, with a long tail, and weighed up to 30 kilograms, were found in Zimbabwe in 2019. AFP

Where did dinosaurs first evolve?

Reuters

Dinosaurs long dominated the earth's land ecosystems with multiple forms, including plant-eating giants like Argentinosaurus, meat-eating brutes like Tyrannosaurus, and weirdos like Therizinosaurus, with its Wolverine-like claws. But the origin of dinosaurs – precisely when and where they first appeared – remains a bit of a puzzle.

Researchers are now proposing a surprising location for the birthplace of dinosaurs, based on the locations of the currently oldest-known dinosaur fossils, the evolutionary relationships among these early forms, and the earth's geography during the Triassic Period. This locale spans the modern-day Sahara desert and Amazon rainforest regions, now separated by thousands of kilometres and an ocean thanks to a geological process called plate tectonics.

"When dinosaurs first appear in the fossil record, all the earth's continents were part of the giant supercontinent Pangaea. Dinosaurs emerged in the southern portion of this landmass, known as Gondwana," said Joel Heath, a palaeontology doctoral student at University College London and the Natural History Museum in London and lead author of the study, published on Thursday in the journal *Current Biology*.

"Our research suggests they likely originated in the low-latitude regions of Gondwana near the equator, an area that today includes northern South America and northern Africa," Heath added.

The earliest-known dinosaur fossils date to roughly 230 million years ago, including Eoraptor and Herrerasaurus

Research suggests dinosaurs likely originated in low-latitude regions of Gondwana near the equator, an area that today includes northern South America and northern Africa

from Argentina, Saturnalia from southern Brazil, and Mbiresaurus from Zimbabwe. While sharing certain traits defining them as dinosaurs, they had sufficient differences that suggest millions of years of dinosaur evolution had already occurred.

"While earlier research has focused on southern South America and southern Africa as the area of origin of the dinosaurs, based on where their fossils first appear, we suggest that significant gaps in the fossil record, particularly in regions that today include the Sahara desert and the Amazon rainforest, may hold the potential to reveal where the earliest dinosaurs were living," Heath said.

The researchers said dinosaurs probably emerged approximately 245-230 million years ago, when these equatorial regions were extremely hot and dry.

"It likely included deserts, savannah-like habitats, and possibly forested areas prone to seasonal wildfires. Previously, it was believed that dinosaurs were absent from these harsh environments," Heath said.

Fossils from this time and region are rare. This might be because the conditions were not ideal for preserving the remains of land animals or because the rocks containing these fossils haven't been discovered yet, Heath said.

The Amazon and the Sahara also are difficult for palaeontologists to explore due to the logistical challenges.

Dinosaurs evolved from more primitive reptiles after the earth's biggest mass-extinction event caused by extreme volcanism at the end of the Permian Period, about 252 million years ago.

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