



MISRI VISIT
Had frank talks on issues, says China

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Countdown to ISRO's 100th mission begins

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The dynamics of mining politics

Need for the metal must be balanced against ecological concerns

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BEST OF THE BEST
Bumrah named ICC Cricketer of the Year

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DeepSeek AI model jolts global tech landscape

John Xavier
CHENNAI

A new player in the artificial intelligence (AI) race, the Chinese start-up DeepSeek, has created a buzz in global tech circles with the launch of its cutting-edge AI models, claiming they nearly match the capabilities of top industry leaders in the U.S. – all while being far more affordable. The company's AI model, DeepSeek-RI, has ignited a fresh debate over the shifting dynamics of the global AI market.

Monday night's trading session on Wall Street left Big Tech companies reeling as investors scrambled to make sense of the damage. AI chip maker Nvidia's market value declined by half a trillion dollars in the biggest single-session loss for any company ever.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10



Family members of fishermen from Karaikal express anguish over the attack by the Sri Lankan Navy on their kin on Tuesday. PTI

Sri Lankan Navy fires at Indian boat, two fishermen injured

**Meera Srinivasan
R. Rajaram**

COLOMBO/TIRUCHI

strong protest", Sri Lanka claimed that the Indian fishermen were illegally fishing in its territorial waters and had attempted to "assault" its naval officers, adding that two fishermen received "slight injuries" in "accidental fire".

India's Ministry of External Affairs said two fishermen suffered "serious injuries" and were receiving treatment at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

A Sri Lankan Navy patrol fired at a fishing boat from Karaikal in Puducherry in the early hours of Tuesday, causing "serious injuries" to two fishermen. The Sri Lankan Navy also arrested 13 fishermen from Tamil Nadu and Puducherry aboard the boat, on charges of trespassing and fishing in the island nation's waters.

While India lodged a

Modi likely to visit U.S. to deepen ties, says Trump

U.S. President, however, adds a new dimension to the relationship soon after a telephone call with the Prime Minister, calling for putting 'America first' in trade relations with major economies

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Washington DC in February, U.S. President Donald Trump has said.

In an announcement that came hours after Mr. Trump and Mr. Modi spoke over the phone on Monday, the White House called for a "fair bilateral trading relationship", and indicated that India would host the leaders of the Quadrilateral grouping in the coming months.

The two leaders discussed expanding and deepening cooperation. They also discussed a range of regional issues, including security in the Indo-Pacific, the Middle East, and Europe. The President em-



Coming closer: The White House says the two leaders discussed expanding and deepening cooperation. REUTERS

phasised the importance of increasing its procurement of America-made security equipment and moving toward a fair bilateral trading relationship," the White House statement said.

"The leaders discussed plans for Mr. Modi to visit the White House, under-

press note said.

Mr. Modi on Monday said he had a telephone conversation with Mr. Trump and had agreed to work for "global peace" and "security". "Congratulated him [Mr. Trump] on his historic second term. We are committed to a mutually beneficial and trusted partnership," the Prime Minister said. However, President Trump added a new dimension to the relationship soon after holding the telephone call with Mr. Modi, with the call for putting "America first" in trade relation with major economies. "We are going to put tariffs on outside countries," Mr. Trump told a gathering of House Republicans in Florida.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

IN BRIEF

Delhi election:
Rahul, Kejriwal exchange barbs

NEW DELHI
Barbs were exchanged between Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who held AAP's Manish Sisodia responsible for the "liquor scam", and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, who asked how Robert Vadra, the husband of Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, was able to get a "clean chit from the BJP". » Page 2

AAP-BJP tussle over pollution in Yamuna heats up

NEW DELHI
A day after AAP accused the BJP government in Haryana of "poisoning" the Yamuna, both parties on Tuesday lodged complaints against each other with the Election Commission. » Page 11

OPPORTUNITIES » PAGE 17

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DELHI ELECTION

Sisodia is liquor scam architect: Rahul; Modi jailed many, how is Robert Vadra still free: Kejriwal

Alisha Dutta

NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi took a swipe at senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Manish Sisodia on Tuesday, saying Delhi's former Deputy Chief Minister "ran away from his constituency" because "people here already know that he is the architect of the liquor scam".

Ahead of the February 5 Assembly election, AAP had changed Mr. Sisodia's constituency from Patparganj, from where he has been elected thrice, to Jangpura. Civil services tutor Avadh Ojha was fielded in place of the former Deputy CM.

The senior Congress leader also attacked AAP national convener and former CM Arvind Kejriwal, accusing him of disappearing when the city residents needed him. "Where was Kejriwal when the Delhi riots were happening or when people were suffering during COVID?" he



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at a poll event in support of the party candidate from Okhla, Ariba Khan. CONGRESS X

said, addressing a rally in Patparganj.

The Rae Bareli MP added, "I don't know whether the other parties are afraid of [Prime Minister Narendra] Modi, but Kejriwal is afraid of him. He [the AAP chief] promised to do clean politics but built a sheesh mahal and gave shape to the liquor scam."

'What of land grab?'

In response, Mr. Kejriwal launched a sharp counter-attack, targeting the Congress leader over the "National Herald case" and the

"land grab case" involving Robert Vadra, the husband of Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

"Don't preach about fear and bravery. The country knows who is a coward and who is brave," the AAP chief said in a post in Hindi on X.

He added, "Modi put people in jail in fake cases, like the liquor 'scam'. Why haven't you and your family been arrested in open-and-shut cases like the National Herald? How did Robert Vadra get a clean chit from the BJP?"

Unfazed by high-profile visits, Valmiki Basti voters looking out only for job opportunities

The SC community here worked hard to educate its children, but lack of jobs still ails us, says a voter in the area, which has seen several major political developments unfold over the past decade

Satvika Mahajan

NEW DELHI

Party flags in New Delhi's Valmiki Basti change every few minutes, reflecting the hectic political activity in the constituency from which Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal is seeking re-election against Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Parvesh Sahib Singh and Congress's Sandeep Dikshit.

On Tuesday afternoon, the area was awash with Congress flags as party leader Rahul Gandhi and Mr. Dikshit dropped by, spoke to its residents, and offered respect at Valmiki Temple. Within minutes of their departure, the Congress flags were replaced with flags of the BJP before a visit by its campaigners. Soon enough, the area changed colours to AAP's yellow and blue before the entry of the ruling party's pamphlet-carrying workers.

Observing the action



It was in Valmiki Basti in 2013 that AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal first brandished 'jhaadu' (AAP's election symbol). SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

from a distance, Vinod Pihal, a 56-year-old employee of the New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC), said he was unimpressed with the flurry of senior political figures.

"Most of the residents belong to Scheduled Caste communities and work in the NDMC. The most pressing concern here is that our children, unlike us, are well-educated but unemployed. We want someone who will create jobs for them," he said.

Ishwar Ujainwal, 66, a retired NDMC worker, said, "The Valmiki community in the Capital has managed to educate its children. But the problem of lack of jobs looms over us as private firms are unwilling to take members of our community and there are very few government jobs."

Valmiki Basti has, over the past few years, seen several high-profile leaders from up close. In 2013, it witnessed Mr. Kejriwal picking up 'jhaadu' (AAP's

symbol), defeating the then Chief Minister, Sheila Dikshit, and becoming the CM. In 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Swachh Bharat Mission from the Valmiki Temple, where Mahatma Gandhi had lived for a year. The area remains at the centre stage of politics as 12 of the 70 Assembly seats are reserved for the SC communities, and Valmis comprise a huge chunk of Delhi's SC voters.

Divided opinion

While AAP, BJP, and Congress have made various promises to mitigate the unemployment crisis, the voters here appear to be divided over which party's manifesto suits them best.

Rahul, 40, a data-entry operator, said, "AAP made tall promises but did little work." Countering him, 71-year-old Jai Kishan, another retired NDMC employee, said, "AAP has made efforts, but it is the BJP at the Centre that has been stopping them."



SP president Akhilesh Yadav will join AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal for a roadshow in Rithala on Thursday.

Akhilesh, Sinha rallies to boost AAP's outreach to Purvanchalis

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav will join Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal for a roadshow in Rithala on Thursday, said an AAP leader, adding that several other SP MPs will also campaign for Delhi's ruling party.

Trinamool Congress MP Shatrughan Sinha, who hails from Bihar, is also scheduled to canvass for AAP in at least three constituencies on February 1 and 2. The presence of the SP chief and Mr. Sinha in the city is likely to give a boost to AAP's outreach to the Purvanchali voters.

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BEFORE THE 3RD ADDITIONAL DISTRICT CONSUMER REDRESSAL COMMISSION

AT BENGLURU

CONSUMER COMPLAINT NO.-0068/2024

BETWEEN:

RAJEEV KUMAR JHA COMPLAINANT AND

KOTAK MAHINDRA PRIME LTD.,

NOTICE TO THE OPPOSITE PARTY-(6)

THROUGH PAPER PUBLICATION

Opposite Party:- Kotak Mahindra Prime Ltd.

2nd Floor, Sco-61, Old Judicial Complex, Sector-15, Gurgaon, Haryana-122001

Mobile No.:

Email: service.cfarinance@kotak.com

Whereas, the complainant has instituted complaint against the opposite party-(6) under section 35 of the Consumer Protection Act seeking to pass an order directing to refrain from proceeding to the Arbitration regarding filing complaints under Section 136 of the Negotiable Instruments Act for dishonouring of the cheques which they have taken as sum due in settlement of this case and that the same is dismissed accordingly as compensation towards mental trauma, unfair trade practice, anxiety, harassment faced by the complainant as compensation against opposite parties (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and he is hereby directed to appear before the 3rd Additional District Consumer Redressal Commission at Bengaluru in person or through pleader duly instructed or able to answer all such questions on 30.02.2025 at 10:30 am. Take notice that in default of your appearance on the date before mentioned the same will be heard and determined in your absence by placing experts.

Given under my hand and seal of the court on the 10th day of January 2025.

BY ORDER OF THE COURT

Asst. Registrar-Cum

Assistant Administrative Officer

Bengaluru Urban 3rd Addl. District

Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission

1st Floor, BMTCT 'B' Block TTMB Building,

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ADVOCATE FOR COMPLAINANT

Rajeev Kumar JHA

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

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TENDER NOTICE

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

E-Procurement Notice

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

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Sr No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	EMD	Cost of Tender	Eligible class of contractor	Time limit
1.	Construction of Veterinary Hospital building at Domehar, Tehsil Arki, District Solan Himachal Pradesh (S.H.:- Construction of building work, Site development, Providing water supply and sanitary installation, Rain Harvesting tank and septic tank/soak pit) Ground floor)	51,33,145/-	1,02,700/-	2000/-	Class C	8 Months

2. Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission: The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted online on website <http://htptenders.gov.in>. Bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPPWD may obtain the same from the website: <http://htptenders.gov.in>. Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

3. Key Dates

- Date of Online Publication 29.01.2025 10.00 HRS
- Document Download Start and End Date 04.02.2025 10.30 HRS upto 11.02.2025 18 HRS
- Bid Submission Start and End Date 04.02.2025 10.30HRS upto 11.02.2025 18 HRS
- Date of Technical Bid opening ,Evaluation of Technical Bid followed by Opening of Financial Bid 13.02.2025 . 11.00 HRS

The tender documents shall be uploaded online in 2 cover:

- Cover 1 shall contain scanned copies of all "Technical Documents/Eligibility information"
- Cover 2 shall contain BOQ/Financial Bid where contractor will quote his offer for each item.

1. Submission of Original Documents: The bidders are required to submit(a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid documents and(b) original bid security/Earnest Money Deposit(EMD) and other Technical Documents in o/o the Executive Engineer, HPPWD, Arki Divn. HP as specified in Key dates at Sr.NO.4 on Tender Opening Date

2., failing which the bids will be declared non responsive,

6. BID OPENING DETAILS The bids shall be opened on 13.02.2025 at 11.00HRS in the office of Executive Engineer, HPPWD, Arki divn./Superintending Engineer, 3rd Circle, HPPWD, Solan HP by the authorized officer. In their interest the tenderer are advised to be present along with original documents at the time of opening of tenders. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

7. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 75 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

8. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

9. The acceptance of a tender will rest with Executive Engineer, who does not bind himself to accept the lowest tender, and reserves to himself the authority to reject the tender received without the assignment of a reason. The tender in which any of the prescribed conditions are not fulfilled or are incomplete in any respect are liable to be rejected.

Amit Shah sharpens attack on AAP, Cong.

Home Minister says Kejriwal has only misled public with lies; if voted to power in Delhi, BJP will ensure a permanent house for every slum dweller

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

In the run-up to the Delhi Assembly election on February 5, the Bharatiya Janata Party on Tuesday sharpened its electioneering activities, with its 'star campaigners' addressing multiple rallies and roadshows.

Union Home Minister and BJP leader Amit Shah, addressing rallies at Kasturba Nagar, Kalkaji and Badarpur Assembly constituencies, said the people of Delhi have an opportunity to rid themselves of "the disaster called Arvind Kejriwal".

"Kejriwal must understand that victory and defeat are part of election process. However, playing the victim, scaring the people of Delhi, and making baseless accusations against the Haryana government reflect low-level, petty politics," he said, referring to the AAP chief's allegations that Haryana government is mixing ammonia in the waters of the Yamuna river before releasing it to Delhi.

Mr. Shah said, "Whether it is about pollution control, cleaning of Yamuna, or welfare schemes for the poor, Kejriwal has only misled the public with lies. The BJP government, once in power, will ensure that every slum dweller gets a permanent house."

Invoking Kumbh

Taking a dig at the Congress, Mr. Shah added, "I took a holy dip at the Kumbh, but [Congress president Mallikarjun] Khargeji felt the chill



Eyine victory: Union Home Minister Amit Shah leading a roadshow on Tuesday in support of Neeraj Basoya, the BJP candidate from Kasturba Nagar Assembly constituency. ANI

instead! Those who have never experienced the significance of such traditions in their lives can't understand how to help the poor. The Congress leadership – Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi – have always disrespected the Sanatana Dharma. If Khargeji has no faith, no one is forcing him. But I urge him not to mock the 48 crore devotees who are coming to the Kumbh with devotion." Mr. Shah was referring to the Congress chief's remarks on party leaders taking a holy dip at the Sangam in Prayagraj.

"Neither the Aam Aadmi Party nor Congress has ever worked for the betterment of Delhi. That is why I urge you to elect a 'double-engine government' in Delhi, and we will ensure that the city becomes one of the world's finest capitals," he said.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, too, unleashed an attack on AAP. Calling AAP the "new incarnation of the Waqf Board, supporting the Waqf mafia", he said the trend of treating Waqf property as one's own will end soon.



Home turf: Delhi Chief Minister Atishi with AAP's Rajya Sabha member Harbhajan Singh at a roadshow in Kalkaji on Tuesday. PTI

Ease taxes instead of waiving billionaires' loans: Kejriwal to PM

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying that if the "money used to waive loans of billionaires" was redirected in the public interest, "taxes imposed on citizens could be reduced to half".

He also demanded a law prohibiting loan waivers to billionaires. "Common people are paying half their salaries in taxes, while the loans of

the rich are being waived off. Why doesn't the Centre waive ordinary citizens' loans?" Mr. Kejriwal asked.

"We made bus travel free for women and it cost only ₹400 crore for one crore women. They [BJP] spent ₹46,000 crore on just one person," he alleged.

He said an individual who earns ₹12 lakh annually is burdened with income tax, GST, service tax, property tax, education cess, capital gains tax and road tax, and "ends up paying at least ₹6 lakh in taxes".

Their dreams washed away, promises mean little to the dhobi community

Samridhi Tewari

NEW DELHI

Tucked away in central Delhi's winding alleys, a community of dhobis has been washing the city's clothes for generations. Threatened by the constant spectre of demolition, members of the community say welfare measures announced for them can be enjoyed only if their homes and workplaces are protected.

Ahead of the Delhi Assembly election, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has announced seven guarantees, including providing electricity and water at domestic rates, quality education and scholarships for children, skill training for youth, and welfare schemes for the elderly in the community.

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal has also proposed establishing a 'Dhobi Samuday Welfare Board' to address the community's concerns.

Tinku Kanodia, 35, who works as a dhobi by day and drives an autorickshaw by night, stands to benefit from two schemes announced by AAP, a life insurance cover of ₹10 lakh for autorickshaw drivers and a welfare initiative for dhobis. Yet, he remains pessimistic about his future in the city.



A view of a dhobi ghat near New Delhi's ITO. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Despite earning around ₹20,000 from washing clothes, Mr. Sanjeev's monthly expenses for chemicals, detergent, water, electricity, and fuel amount to ₹8,000. Highlighting the struggles of the community, he

points out that two nearby dhobi ghats recently shut down.

Rajjo Devi, 60, who is also struggling to make ends meet acknowledges that the traditional dhobi business will "die slowly" with her generation.

Rising competition

Sanjeev Kanodia, 34, a third-generation dhobi, shares how his family witnessed the transformation the emergence of new

APPOINTMENT

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Tender Nos as per e-Portal	Nomenclature of Items/Services/Equipment	Tender value in Crores (Approx.)	Last date for submission of tenders @17.00 hrs.
KSRTC/2024-25/IND0178	Procurement of First Aid Box with Medicines kits	0.45	11/02/2025
KSRTC/2024-25/IND0177	SHORT TERM TENDER Procurement of Desktop Computers, printers, Laptop, server and Wifi Routers (Pre-qualified Tender)	0.20	30/01/2025
KSRTC/2024-25/SE1513	Selection of Vendor for Supply and Maintenance of AIS-140 compliance devices for KSRTC Buses and Establishment of Command Control Centre Under the scheme "Central Assistance for strengthening Public Transport System in the Country" funded by Morth, GOI.	20.00	7/02/2025
KSRTC/2024-25/SE1514	Engaging an agency to provide Driver Services on contract basis to divisions of KSRTC	35.58	06/02/2025

Further any addendum / corrigendum in respect of change in calendar of events, specification, scope of work other tender terms and conditions etc, will be uploaded/ published through e-portal only.

NOTE: Interested suppliers need to register in the e-procurement portal. For further information log into <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. In case of further assistance, contact e-procurement cell (Phone. No. 080-46010000/080-68948777). Interested bidders may also contact e-procurement cell for training on bid submission. Mail to Support@eprochelpdesk.com for further information if required. In case of bidders need assistance from KSRTC, can communicate at cosp@ksrtc.org (contact: 7760990225, 7760990224)

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ACES SPORTS QUIZ

- After winning all 20 matches in October's India Qualifiers, Nitin Kumar earned the right to represent India at the 2024-25 Paddy Power World _____ Championship.
- India beat Pakistan 5-3 in the Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup for a record extending 5th title. Which player scored four out of the five goals scored by India?
- Gukesh D became the youngest World Chess Champion when he won the 2024 World Chess Championship aged just _____ years.



Scan the QR code or visit sstar.news/SSA2025AQPA to vote for your favourite stars and take part in the quiz. Top 3 winners every day will win exciting gift vouchers*.

Answers to yesterday's quiz:

- Kazakhstan
- Gautam Gambhir
- Volleyball

Yesterday's Winners:

- Juhwani Pala, Shillong
- Srinithi Thirupathi, Madurai
- C.S. Rogith Raadakrishnan, Chennai

Amul
presents
SPORTSTAR
ACES
2025
INDIA TRIUMPHS
#SSaces2025



U.P.'s R-Day tableau wins first place

Press Trust of India

LUCKNOW

U.P.'s tableau at the Republic Day parade won the first place in the People's Choice Award with 40% votes, the State government said on Tuesday.

Timings

DELHI
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 29

RISE 07:11 SET 17:58

RISE 07:10 SET 17:48

THURSDAY, JAN. 30

RISE 07:10 SET 17:59

RISE 07:52 SET 18:55

FRIDAY, JAN. 31

RISE 07:10 SET 18:00

RISE 08:28 SET 20:01

Delhi Weather

max min

Delhi City 24 06

Safdarjung 24 06

Palam 22 07

Delhi Palam Today

22°C Morning will be cold with shallow fog and mist. Day will be pleasant with light cool winds. Dry weather to prevail. Night also will be cold & hazy.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

23°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be cold with shallow fog and mist. Day will be pleasant with light cool winds. Dry weather to prevail. Night also will be cold & hazy.

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THE HINDU

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THE HINDU

India's National Newspaper

IN BRIEF



Former JD(U), BJP and AAP leaders join Cong. in Bihar

Former Rajya Sabha member from Bihar's Janata Dal (United) Ali Anwar Ansari and 'Mountain Man' Dashrath Manjhi's son Bhagirath Manjhi were among a few leaders and social workers who joined the Congress on Tuesday. The inductions took place at the All India Congress Committee (AICC) office in the presence of senior AICC leader Pawan Khera and Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee president Akhilesh Prasad Singh. Former BJP leader Nighat Abbas, former Aam Aadmi Party leader Nishant Anand, social worker Manoj Prajapati and cardiac surgeon and a Padma Shri awardee Jagdish Prasad also joined the Congress.

After SC order, pastor laid to rest in Chhattisgarh

The pastor, whose body lay in a mortuary in Chhattisgarh since January 7 amid a dispute over the burial site, was finally laid to rest on Monday, as per a Supreme Court order. Ramesh Baghel, the pastor's son, had accused some of his fellow villagers of boycotting the Christian community. He moved the apex court after the Chhattisgarh High Court disposed of his plea seeking the burial of his father in the area allotted for Christians at the graveyard in his village. The SC had earlier expressed anguish that a man had to move the court over such an issue, with the authorities failing to resolve the dispute. PTI

Siddaramaiah airs concern over falling conviction rate in SC/ST atrocities cases in Karnataka



Siddaramaiah chaired a meeting of State-level monitoring panel for welfare of SC/STs on Tuesday.
H.S. MANJUNATH

ment will act against those who delay the proceedings," he said.

He directed authorities to make effort to get the stay given by courts in atrocities cases vacated, besides proceeding with investigation in 665 pending cases in which investigation is yet to be completed. Efforts should also be

7 dead, 60 injured after makeshift stage collapses at a religious event in U.P.

Conduct relief, rescue operations on war footing, ensure proper treatment to the injured, says CM; Akhilesh Yadav demands probe into the incident; nearly 100 people were present at the function

The Hindu Bureau

LUCKNOW

Seven persons were killed and around 60 injured after a makeshift stage collapsed during a religious event in Baghpat district of Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday.

Rescue operations were initiated to free those trapped under the stage, including devotees and police personnel. Senior district officials reached the spot to expedite relief efforts.

The incident occurred around 8 a.m. during a programme organised for the 'abhishek' of Lord Adinath on Shri Digambar Jain Degree College Ground in Baraut, the police said. The event was part of the Jain community's 'Moksha Kalyanak Nirvana Mahotsav'.

"A wooden structure collapsed and about 60 people were injured. Jain community people were observing Laddu Mahotsav," District Magistrate Asmita Lal said.

U.P. Chief Minister Yogi



Crash down: A security officer at the accident site on Tuesday. The incident occurred during a programme for the 'abhishek' of Lord Adinath on Shri Digambar Jain Degree College Ground in Baraut. PTI

Adityanath directed the officials concerned to conduct relief and rescue operations on a war footing and ensure proper treatment to those injured.

Twenty injured people were discharged after being administered first aid, while 39 continue to receive treatment at a hospital, an officer said, adding that about 100 people were present at the event.

Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav demanded an investigation into the incident and action against those responsible for lapses, adding that the State government could not evade responsibility.

'Ensure relief'
"The accident is extremely sad. The Uttar Pradesh government should take it se-

riously and, first of all, provide relief to the accident victims and ensure the best possible treatment for them," Mr. Yadav said in a post on X.

He added, "The lapses at the level of the government and administration should be thoroughly investigated, and punitive action should be taken to ensure that such accidents do not happen in the future."

Stalin says only DMK persisting in fight to ensure social justice

The Hindu Bureau
VILLUPURAM

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Tuesday said only the DMK was persisting in the fight to ensure social justice at the national level, and its journey towards social justice was continuing even after 100 years.

Speaking after inaugurating a 'manimandapam' (memorial) in honour of 21 social justice activists, and a hall at Vazhuthareddy in memory of former Minister A. Govindasamy, Mr. Stalin recalled that 21 people were "shot dead like sparrows" in a police firing during the struggle for reservation for Vanniyars during the AIADMK regime in 1987.

The DMK government led by former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, which came to power in 1989, created the Most Backward Classes (MBC) category and provided them 20% reservation in education and employment. The DMK government also announced a solium of ₹3 lakh each to the families of the victims, besides a monthly pension of ₹3,000 each, he said.

Mr. Stalin said the DMK had always championed social justice, and continued to work for the uplift of Dalits and other underprivileged sections of society. He recalled that the first amendment to the Constitution to protect reservation for the Backward Classes was introduced due to the efforts of former Chief Minister and DMK stalwart C.N. Annadurai and social reformer Periyar.



Paying tribute: T.N. CM inaugurating a memorial in honour of 21 social justice activists in Villupuram district on Tuesday. S.S. KUMAR

to work for the uplift of Dalits and other underprivileged sections of society. He recalled that the first amendment to the Constitution to protect reservation for the Backward Classes was introduced due to the efforts of former Chief Minister and DMK stalwart C.N. Annadurai and social reformer Periyar.

The inauguration of the memorial to the 21 social justice activists was a testament to the fact that the DMK always stood for social justice. It was only during the DMK regime that the reservation for BCs was raised from 25% to 31%, and the quota for Scheduled Castes was increased from 16% to 18%, Mr. Stalin said.

Bihar Deputy CM Sinha alleges ₹26-crore scam under Tejashwi's watch

Amit Bhelari

PATNA

Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha on Tuesday levelled serious charges against Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav, currently the Leader of Opposition of the Bihar Legislative Assembly, alleging that illegal payments of more than ₹26.16 crore had been made for the construction of three roads in Gaya division during Mr. Yadav's stint as Minister of Road Construction.

Huge financial irregularities have been certified during the investigation of the construction of three roads in Gaya division," Mr. Sinha, who now handles the Road Construction Department (RCD) said.

Irregularities have been found in the construction of three roads in Gaya while Tejashwi was in office, said Mr. Sinha

"Irregularities have been found in the construction of roads between Wazirganj-Tapovan (19.18 km), Jamua-Sevatar (17.5 km) and Bhindus-Chaman-dih (21.3 km). Raja Construction was awarded the contract for these three roads. RCD will now review all the tenders awarded to this construction company," he said, claiming that the owner of the construction company is close to RJD MP Surendra Yadav, who represents the Jehanabad Lok Sabha constituency.

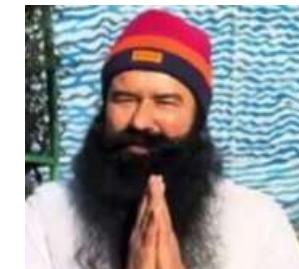
Ram Rahim walks out of jail on 30-day parole ahead of Delhi election, to stay at Sirsa ashram

Ashok Kumar

GURUGRAM

Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, a rape and murder convict, again walked out of Rohtak's Sunaria jail in Haryana on 30-day parole on Tuesday. Temporarily released from jail for around a dozen times since he was convicted in two rape cases in 2017, Mr. Singh's release coincided with the high-stakes Delhi Assembly election scheduled on February 5.

In a first instance since his conviction, Singh has been allowed to stay at his dera headquarters in Sirsa this time during the parole. Unconfirmed reports said he has been accorded permission to stay put at Sirsa ashram till February 6 and would later shift to Uttar Pradesh ashram.



Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh

Confirming his release, Dera Sacha Sauda spokesperson Jitender Khurana told The Hindu that "guru ji" had reached the Sirsa ashram after his release.

According to the Haryana Good Conduct Prisoners (Temporary Release) Act, 2022, a convicted prisoner can be granted 10 weeks of parole in a calendar year on the completion of one year of sentence and it can be availed in two parts.

However, it is not for the

first time that Mr. Singh's release from jail has coincided with the election. Opposing his release on parole during Haryana Assembly poll last year, Anshul Chatrapati, the son of slain journalist Ramchander Chatrapati, in whose murder case Ram Rahim was convicted in January 2019, had, in a letter to Chief Election Commissioner, pointed out that he had been out of jail for 255 days since 2022 and six out of 10 times he was released during the elections. He also questioned the decision to allow him to stay at Sirsa ashram.

"He is still facing trial in a case pertaining to castration of disciples at Sirsa ashram. His frequent release and the permission to stay at Sirsa ashram would create fear in the minds of the witnesses," said Mr. Chatrapati.

Dibrugarh as Assam's second capital: behind BJP's gambit for 2026 Assembly election

NEWS ANALYSIS

Rahul Karmakar

GUWAHATI

There was a reason why the British invested in a 65-km railway track from Dibrugarh to Margherita in the early 1880s, less than two decades after Asia's first oil well was drilled at the nearby Digboi town.

The track helped transport coal, tea, and timber from Margherita and stations en route to the Brahmaputra River port at Dibrugarh. The town developed into the administrative hub of eastern Assam and became a major centre for trade, commerce, and education in the region.

Dibrugarh was one of the highest revenue-collecting centres in India during and after the transfer of power in 1947. However, its graph started dropping a

couple of decades later and accelerated after the Assam Agitation of 1979-85 and the United Liberation Front of Assam brand of extremism.

Dibrugarh and the adjoining Tinsukia district used to be the outfit's strongholds until about two decades ago.

The town celebrated when one of its sons, Sarbananda Sonowal, became the Chief Minister of Assam's first Bharatiya Janata Party-led government in 2016, although he represented Majuli, a constituent of the Jorhat Lok Sabha constituency in the east.

Dibrugarh and the eponymous district, however, did not grab the spotlight as much as it has since Mr. Sonowal's successor, Himanta Biswa Sarma, unfurled the National Flag on the 76th Republic Day.

The focus of the CM's speech was on the government's decision to develop Dibrugarh as the State's se-

cond capital. "The construction work for a permanent Assembly building in Dibrugarh will start on January 25, 2026," he said, promising a session of the Assembly in Dibrugarh every year from 2027.

Through his speech, Mr. Sarma did not only convey the BJP's bid to rule Assam for the third successive

term after the 2026 Assembly election. The CM also indicated his party's determination not to let its support base in 'Ujoni' and 'Namoni' (Lower or western) Assam'. The Ujoni has

been the power centre in the State since 1978 and has given Assam six Chief Ministers who have reigned for a total of almost 30 years, separated unequally by the reign of three others from beyond the 'Ujoni' map, including Prafulla Kumar Mahanta of the Assam Gana Parishad (AGP). The AGP later became the BJP's

regional ladder to climb to the top in Assam. Mr. Sarma, associated with Namoni, broke the longest Ujoni run of 20 years between Congress heavyweight Tarun Gogoi and Mr. Sonowal in 2021.

Barring southern Assam's Bengali-dominated Barak Valley, the Ujoni has largely fuelled the BJP's rise to power in the State and, by default, the Northeast beyond. Much of its electoral performances in the tea-rich eastern part since the 2014 Lok Sabha election have been attributed to the shift of the Adivasi or tea plantation workers, along with the dominant Ahoms and related communities such as the Morans and Matakas, away from the Congress.

ST status issue
These four communities are among six that banked on the BJP to do what Congress could not – grant them the status of Scheduled Tribes (ST).

During the elections, the Congress and the BJP managed to overcome the ST status issue, which is entangled in legal complications. The latter is believed to be warier of how the aggressive campaign of its Namoni leaders backfired in the Jorhat Lok Sabha constituency, which comprises mostly Adivasi and Ahom voters, in 2024.

Jorhat is one of five Ujoni parliamentary seats. The others are Dibrugarh, Kaziranga, Lakhimpur, and Sonitpur – the last two on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra.

The BJP maintained its 2019 tally of nine parliamentary seats, but it was expected to perform better after the 2023 delimitation, which led to the redrawing of the constituency map. However, the loss of the Jorhat seat to Gaurav Gogoi, arguably the tallest Con-



Capital calling: Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, in his R-Day speech, spoke about government's decision to develop Dibrugarh as the State's second capital. FILE PHOTO

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Priyanka seeks steps to ensure safety of people in Wayanad

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, MP, has sought steps to ensure the safety of people of Wayanad, Kerala, and to allay their fears over the increasing instances of human-wildlife conflict in the district.

She was speaking at a meeting held at the District Collectorate on Tuesday. This followed Ms. Vadra's interaction with the family members of Radha, a temporary forest watcher who was killed in a tiger attack on Priyadarshini Estate at Pancharakoli village in Wayanad recently.

She said that everything possible would be done to solve the problems of the residents in upland areas. If the district administration gave a comprehensive report, adequate funds, including those from corporate social responsibility initiatives, could be arranged. She pointed out that lack of funds was a major problem and it would be brought to the attention of the Union and State governments. It would be raised in the Lok Sabha too.

Ms. Vadra suggested that more beat forest officers would have to be appointed on Priyadarshini Estate and in other forest areas. The salary and other benefits of the existing officers should be revised to avoid them working for longer hours for meagre wages.

Ms. Vadra also sought a permanent job for Radha's son. She said that all the family members of those who were killed in animal attacks earlier should be given permanent jobs.

K.C. Venugopal, chair-



Priyanka Gandhi meets family members of Radha who was killed by a tiger in Wayanad.

NTCA seeks report on tiger's death

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

The National Tiger Conservation Authority has sought a report from the Kerala Forest Department on the death of a tiger in Wayanad on Monday.

The animal had killed a tribal woman, Radha, a few days ago.

man, Public Accounts Committee, T. Siddique, Kalpetta MLA, Samshad Marakkar, district panchayat president, and District Collector D.R. Meghsree, among others, were present.

Earlier, the Congress leader visited Radha's house and consoled her family members.

Ms. Vadra was accompanied by senior Congress leaders. She met the family members of N.M. Vijayan, the former district Congress committee treasurer who died by suicide in December last.

Munambam panel awaits HC verdict on appointment

The panel will apprise govt. of issues involved in the land dispute, Kerala govt. tells HC; it is not a judicial body or quasi-judicial inquiry process and cannot enforce recommendation, adds State

K. S. Sudhi
KOCCHI

The C.N. Ramachandran Nair Commission on the Munambam land issue in Ernakulam, Kerala, is awaiting the outcome of a petition challenging its appointment before deciding on its future course of action even as the State government has clarified that the commission has no powers to adjudicate on any questions of title.

The commission, according to the State government, is a mechanism to apprise the government of the land issue. The commission is neither a judicial body nor a quasi-judicial inquiry process and it has no powers to enforce its recommendations, according to a statement filed by



Shoulder to shoulder: Munambam residents form a human chain on January 5 demanding revenue rights for their holdings. H. VIBHU

the State government in the Kerala High Court.

The State filed the affidavit on a petition challenging the appointment of the commission.

The State Cabinet decided to appoint the judicial commission to investigate the Munambam issue and submit its recommenda-

tion for finding a permanent solution to the issues involved.

The decision was taken in the wake of public protests and consequent agitation and the issue gaining public importance. The government wants to collect information on the issue, which is legally permissi-

ble, the State argued.

The government has no intentions to tamper with the findings of any competent court of law through the commission, as alleged by the petitioners in the case, the State contended.

Meanwhile, the panel is awaiting the outcome of the writ petition filed before the High Court to decide on its future course of action.

"If the High Court gives the go-ahead, the panel will proceed with its mandate and file a report to the government. Currently, the panel has completed the public hearing. It has also suggested that stakeholders, who are interested in filing written statements, file them. A few parties have evinced interest in filing the statements," Mr. Nair said.



Rescue work under way at the building collapse site in Burari on Tuesday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Building collapse: two girls among 5 killed in Burari; builder held

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Five persons, including two girls, were killed in the Burari building collapse incident, police said on Tuesday.

The newly constructed four-storey building, located near Oscar Public School, collapsed late on Monday, trapping several people.

The deceased girls have been identified as Saadha, 17 and seven-year-old Radhika. The identity of the three men is yet to be determined, the DCP said.

The rescue operation might continue till Wednesday morning, Mr. Bantia added.

Yogendra Bhati, the building contractor, has been arrested and booked under BNS Sections 105 (culpable homicide), 110 (attempt to commit culpable homicide), and 3(5) (criminal act with a shared intention).

Some of the injured are receiving treatment at a Burari hospital, while those with serious injuries have been referred to the LNJP Hospital.

AAP Burari MLA Sanjeev Jha said compensation of ₹10 lakh for deceased kin and ₹5 lakh for the families of minor victims has been announced.

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi said all possible help would be provided to the affected people.

Case against Malayalam filmmaker over 'contentious' FB posts on actor

The Hindu Bureau
KOCCHI

Sanal Kumar Sasidharan was arrested by the Kochi police on a charge of stalking the same actor in May 2022

Sections 78 1(i) follows a woman and contacts or attempts to contact such woman to foster personal interaction repeatedly despite a clear indication of disinterest by such woman, 78(2) (punishment

for stalking, 351(2)(criminal intimidation), and 356(2)(defamation).

"We will initiate due measures if he is abroad. Since defamation is also alleged, steps will be taken to get the posts deleted. Even the victim can directly apply to Facebook to get these deleted," said Putta Vimaladitya, District Police Chief (Kochi City).

The police were verifying whether Mr. Sasidharan was abroad as he had claimed in one of his Face-

book posts.

He had said that he was posting the video from the U.S. "If he is indeed abroad, then steps will be taken to issue a lookout circular and detain him as and when he returns," said the police.

Mr. Sasidharan was arrested by the Kochi police on a charge of stalking the same actor in May 2022 before being granted bail. Reportedly, the police were yet to file chargesheet in that case.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA												
Office of the Chief Construction Engineer, Southern N.H Circle, Berhampur												
E-mail : senouthbam@gmail.com												
BID IDENTIFICATION NO: 19/CCE/NH/South of 2024-25 - OFFICER ORDER NO.156/DIT/21.01.2025												
1. Sealed tender in the prescribed form to be eventually drawn-up in PWD) Form P4 (Percentage Rate bids) in conformity with detailed Tender Call Notice is invited by the Chief Construction Engineer, Southern N.H. Circle, Berhampur on behalf of Governor of Odisha for tender in double cover system for construction of Road works as detailed in the table below from "B" Class / "A" Class Contractors registered with the State Government and contractor of equivalent grade/class registered with Central Government/MES/Railways, having registration for Civil works on production of definite proof from the appropriate authority.												
2. The bidders may submit bid for the following works.												
S.L. No.	Name of the work	Name of the concerned N.H. Division	Value of work (Approx.) (Rupees in Lakhs) (Excluding GST)	Bid Security (in Rupees)	Cost of tender Documents to be remitted online (Rupees)	Class of Eligible contractor						
1	1. SIR to NH-326 Such as Construction of paver Block from Ch-311,900 to Ch-313,310 km for the year 2024-25	Jeypore	117.90	1,17,900/-	10,000/-	B' / 'A'						
2.	Construction of new RCC drain in Kotpal Town from Ch-11/950 to Ch-12/200 and Construction of new cover slab from Ch-12/200 to Ch-14/100 above existing drain on both side of NH-3 for the year 2024-2025		147.76	1,47,764/-	3 (Three) Calendar Months							
3. Bid documents consisting of plans, specifications, the schedule of quantities and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in the website : https://tendersissa.gov.in on 30.01.2025 to 05.30 PM of 13.02.2025 for online bidding.												
4. The Bid documents will be available in the website : https://tendersissa.gov.in on 11.00 AM of 30.01.2025 to 05.30 PM of 13.02.2025 for online bidding.												
5. The Bid documents will be available in the website : https://tendersissa.gov.in on 11.00 AM of 30.01.2025 to 05.30 PM of 13.02.2025.												
6. Bids shall be received only "on line" up to 05.30 PM of 13.02.2025.												
7. The bidder shall transfer online the Eastern Dairy deposited / Bid Security of the amount specified for the work in above table 5.1 above as part of its bid through a process as mentioned under DTCON. Bid Security amount & Cost of Bid document are to be remitted online through a process as mentioned in DTCON.												
8. The technical bids will be opened at 11.30 A.M on 14.02.2025 in the office of the Chief Construction Engineer, Southern N.H. Circle, Berhampur in presence of the bidders who wish to attend. Bidders who participated in the bid can witness the opening of bids by logging on to the site through their DSC. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.												
9. Any tenderer desires to avail any facility as per certain circular/ order of Government have to apply for the same in writing along with the tender paper. Claim at the time of opening of tender or later will not be entertained.												
10. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents.												
11. The authority reserves the right to cancel any or all bids without assigning any reason.												
12. The Addendum/ Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender if any will be hosted in the website only.												
13. The authority will not be held responsible for any technical problem/ failure of network server during the online bidding.												
b-36: Chief Construction Engineer, Southern N.H Circle, Berhampur. OIPR-3414811/01/2024/2425												

THE TAMIL NADU COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS' FEDERATION LIMITED, RAVIN 11/34, PASUPAM MUTHURAMANGALAN SALAI, NANANDAM, CHENNAI-600035. TELEPHONE : 044-23464500, FAX : 044-23464505, E-MAIL : aavindmeng@vahoo.co.in						
Ref.No.272/Proj./2025 NOTICE INVITING TENDER (e-Submission Only) Dated: 28.01.2025						
The TCMF Ltd., invites two PARTIES through e-Submission through e-Procurement Portal (http://TCMFDCMPU.Dairies.retailerfederation.org/) from the reputed Manufacturers / Authorized Dealers for following items / works for TCMF/DCMPU Dairies under Federation/Union Own Funds / Schemes:-						
S.No.	Name of the works / Items	EMD Value				
1.	Rate Contract for (i) Electronic Milk Adulteration Testing Machine (Advanced) (ii) Solar based UPS	Rs.1,00,000/- each item				
2.	Refinement of Madura Dairy from Manual to Fully Automated	Rs.30,000/-				
3.	Refinement of Thriy Dairy from Manual to Fully Automated	Rs.29,000/-				
4.	NIR Technology based Automatic Dairy Products Analyzer (Food Scan)	Rs.20,000/-				
5.						



A question of hygiene

The GBS outbreak in Pune reveals the fragility of its urban systems

At the heart of the current Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) outbreak in Pune, where over 100 cases of suspected GBS have been recorded, is a bacterial infection. A health investigation has revealed *Campylobacter jejuni*, a bacteria found in contaminated food and water, to be behind the first cluster of cases. In almost all the patients, recent case history has shown episodes of gastroenteritis, vomiting, diarrhoea and nausea before the onset of the characteristic peripheral numbness of GBS, leading to paralysis. One case of death due to suspected GBS has also been recorded – of a patient who had visited Pune. This outbreak reveals the fragility of the scaffolding that urban systems in India are built on, with pathogens managing to breach all safety nets that humans have built for themselves, to emerge through and cause havoc. Any slip up in maintenance or in surveillance, clearly leads to discomfort, ill health and debility for a large number of people. GBS is a rare, autoimmune neurological disorder, in which person's immune system launches an attack on the peripheral nervous system, leading to tingling, weakening of muscles, numbing and paralysis in the arms and legs, not unlike in the acute flaccid paralysis of polio. It can be caused by viral or bacterial pre-infections, as per the World Health Organization (WHO). Globally, it is estimated that GBS has an incidence of 1-2 per 1,00,000 population, and is more predominant among adult males. While India-specific large epidemiological studies on GBS are lacking, as testing for GBS in a resource-poor setting is difficult, according to a WHO report (1993), it was estimated that 138 cases of GBS were seen annually in seven major teaching hospitals, with approximately 75% of cases occurring in adults. While studies across the world have shown numbers to rise in seasons of weather change, it is possible that this is India's largest outbreak in recorded history.

Patients are treated with plasma exchange or intravenous immunoglobulin therapy, and most recover. However, these treatments are most effective if started within two weeks of the first symptoms, making early detection and initiation of treatment absolutely crucial. Rapid response teams in Pune are in place, collecting water samples and mounting surveillance on the community, and a central team has also been rushed to affected areas. It is key to ensure that all measures are in place to pick up patients, and initiate treatment as soon as possible. It is the duty of the local and State governance to provide clean drinking water to all residents and ensure that adequate social messaging is provided periodically on avoiding contaminated, unhygienic food.

Mining politics

Strategic need for tungsten must be balanced against ecological concerns

By annulling the Nayakarpatti tungsten block auction in Madurai, the Union Government has halted protests against a project that was red-flagged, tardily, by the State citing environmental and cultural concerns. Rarely has the Narendra Modi government made a swift 'U-turn' in the face of opposition. Nayakarpatti was among eight critical and strategic mineral blocks put up for auction last February by the Mines Ministry. Eight months later, the contract for mining 2,015.51 hectares was awarded to Vedanta's Hindustan Zinc Limited. However, the presence of Arittappatti, Tamil Nadu's first biodiversity heritage site, in the vicinity, triggered concerns. An Assembly resolution pointed out that mining could endanger historical cave temples, Jain symbols, Tamil Brahmi scripts and a habitat for rare species. The Centre and the BJP were initially on the defensive, arguing that of the 20.16 sq. km area, only 1.93 sq. km within Arittappatti and Meenakshipuram villages had been notified as a biodiversity site. Last month, the Ministry deferred issuance of Letter of Intent to the bidder, and asked the Geological Survey of India (GSI) to explore redefining the boundaries by excluding the biodiversity site. But the Centre annulled the auction before the GSI could act, after a meeting with community leaders from Madurai, led by BJP State president K. Annamalai, and the Mines Minister.

Politics seems to have played a larger role than India's strategic need for tungsten or the Centre's and State's claims that they had acted in deference to people's wishes. Tungsten, or wolfram, a dense lustrous metal, is crucial for industries such as defence and in high technology fields. It has no effective substitutes. Globally, tungsten is stockpiled. Indigenously rare, only 5% of tungsten mining resources are in Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Uttarakhand and West Bengal, with the rest distributed in Karnataka, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Though the State had flagged the biodiversity issue to the Centre, there is no clear indication that the DMK government was openly opposed to the auction. Reports suggest that prior to the amendment of the Mines and Minerals Act, which empowered the Centre to exclusively auction mining leases for critical minerals, the State's Natural Resources Department had requested permission to mine tungsten and molybdenum through joint ventures. Regardless of the political dynamics, the importance and scarcity of tungsten cannot be overstated. The Centre might have been more effective had it consulted the State and waited for the GSI's report before making a decision, striking a balance between environmental concerns and the strategic need for tungsten mining by adjusting the block boundaries.

The U.S.'s immigration blocks as a self-defeating path

What do we see in the bustling corridors of Silicon Valley, the research labs of Boston, and the biotech hubs of San Diego? Skilled immigrants do not just fill jobs; they create them. They launch startups, file patents and drive innovation, expanding the very foundation of American employment.

However, to understand this, we need to challenge our most basic assumptions about how labour markets work in knowledge economies.

The debate over H-1B visas in the United States seems to hinge on a seemingly very intuitive argument: that restricting skilled immigration will translate into more jobs for native workers. On the contrary, extensive research has shown that this approach is flawed and, in fact, counterproductive to innovation and job creation.

Impact on jobs

A study by Britta Glennon found that in response to increasing H-1B visa restrictions, American companies do not typically hire more U.S. workers. Instead, they just accelerate foreign hiring. This might seem like an unforeseen consequence, but faced with visa restrictions, it is not entirely unthinkable that they will turn to countries with large pools of skilled workers (India and China).

The numbers are very significant. A decrease of 1% in initial employment from the H-1B supply could have an impact in terms of the foreign affiliate growth rate of between 10 and 20%. And it is not just replacement hires. Entire teams and operations could move overseas. For every 10 H-1B positions denied, U.S. multinational firms hire an average of eight foreign workers abroad. Other research shows that each H-1B visa holder creates 1.83 additional jobs for native-born American workers over the next seven years. Immigrant-founded companies in the U.S. have, historically, attracted significant investment, creating jobs at higher rates than native-founded firms. Research by the National Foundation for American Policy shows that more than half of America's billion-dollar startups have been started by immigrants.

The argument that H-1B workers suppress wages also does not hold up to scrutiny. Research by Giovanni Peri and colleagues has shown that native wages actually rise when foreign science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) workers are hired, by increasing productivity and innovation, particularly in technical fields.



Arindam Goswami
is a Research Analyst in the High-Tech Geopolitics Programme at The Takshashila Institution

Aggregating at the national level, foreign STEM workers flowing in may account for 30% to 50% of the aggregate productivity growth and 4% to 8% of the skill-biased productivity growth. Another report by the American Immigration Council challenges the widespread idea that H-1B workers earn lower wages than their U.S. counterparts, and, therefore, negatively affect wage growth. For instance, it shows that the median wage for H-1B workers was more than double that for the general U.S. workforce in 2021. And between 2003 and 2021, it rose by 52%, while wages for all U.S. workers grew by 39%. Recent studies have shown that knowledge spillovers and productivity gains from high-skilled immigration actually increase native wages. When companies do not face hurdles in hiring the talent they need, they expand operations domestically, which in turn, creates more opportunities for everyone.

A study in the *Journal of Labor Economics* found that a 10% increase in foreign STEM workers leads to a 0.5% to 0.6% rise in native wages and a 0.3% to 0.7% increase in patents per capita. Research by Jennifer Hunt shows that a 1% increase in immigrant college graduates in the population causes patents per capita to increase by 9% to 18%. Cities with higher concentrations of H-1B workers, such as Silicon Valley, have become global innovation hubs. Up to 71% of tech workers in Silicon Valley are foreign-born, says a report. Restricting this talent flow risks undermining the very foundation of America's technological leadership.

'Brain circulation', India's experience

By some estimates, Indians receive around 70% of H-1B visas annually. This phenomenon, earlier considered to be "brain-drain", is now being looked at as "brain circulation", since the experience these Indians receive abroad has significantly bolstered India's tech sector and innovation ecosystem. Skilled migration benefits both the sending and receiving countries.

Today's world is highly interconnected. Competition is for both global talent and future innovation hubs. Canada's success in attracting tech companies through its liberal immigration policies offers a stark warning: when the U.S. restricts skilled immigration, it does not protect jobs. It exports them.

What is the solution? Blanket restrictions will not work. We need nuanced immigration policies that emphasise the complementary relationship between foreign talent and domestic job creation,

while also protecting against abuse.

The H-1B visa regime, therefore, needs more, not less, flexibility. Visa caps should be adjusted to reflect market demands. Current fixed caps create artificial scarcity. This restricts the ability of American companies to scale, and, thereby, reduces potential job creation.

Recognising the importance of skilled immigration, fast-track processing mechanisms should be put in place for critical skills, providing dedicated pathways for entrepreneurs who can drive innovation and job creation. Opportunities for permanent residency for STEM graduates which allow for seamless transitions for foreign students trained in US universities will help in this endeavour.

And, finally, labour market modernisation is the need of the hour: transparent wage determinations and real-time analytics to match skills with opportunities will go a long way in matching demand with supply seamlessly.

A talent flywheel

While the H-1B debate in America unfolds, India needs to be ready to transform its relationship with skilled migration – not merely as a talent exporter, but as a dynamic participant in global innovation networks, where outward mobility generates inward flows of knowledge, capital, and innovation.

This transformation will ultimately rest on three pillars. First, talent is not about building walls, but about creating magnetic poles of innovation. India needs more specialised innovation clusters with global standards, tax incentives, and research grants. Second, India needs to switch gears from playing catch-up to setting new paradigms and creating new global standards. IndiaStack and UPI stand out as shining examples.

Third is the cultivation of a true innovation ecosystem that supports risk-taking and experimentation. A startup visa programme, for instance, could attract global entrepreneurs to build in India.

Implementation requires maintaining a delicate balance between short-term wins, like streamlined OCI processes and pension portability agreements, and long-term transformation, such as automated talent mobility systems, joint research funding, shared patent applications and technology transfer agreements.

The core principle to remember is that talent mobility is not a zero-sum game.

The Budget pipeline and India's foreign policy ambitions

When the Union Budget is presented every year, most of the public attention often centres on taxation, infrastructure, and defence. In this, however, the budget for India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) deserves closer scrutiny. Last year, the MEA budget saw a rare 23% spike, up from the modest 4% annual increase between 2017 and 2023. Despite efficient Budget utilisation, exceeding 96% of the revised estimates, the MEA remains one of the least-funded Ministries. The MEA's allocation not only reflects the government's foreign policy priorities but also its capacity to deliver on its global ambitions and commitments.

The vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047 hinges on sustained global partnerships. Here, India is positioning itself as a global leader: from leading the Global South; strengthening ties with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations; enhancing regional connectivity, engaging with the Quad (India, Australia, Japan and the U.S.) and creating institutions such as the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.

Impact on plans

Partner countries also expect more from India, requiring a stronger MEA. Countries anticipate timely project delivery, financial support, and diplomatic follow-through. Yet, the MEA's current budget – just 0.4% of India's overall expenditure – falls short to deliver on these plans. In 2022, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs suggested raising this to 1% of the total budget. While such an increase (approximately 63%) seems unlikely, even a gradual increase to 0.6% or 0.8% would signal intent.

Two areas demand greater budgetary resources to beef up India's diplomatic clout: economic tools for regional integration and cooperation, and the MEA's institutional capacity

by expanding human resources and research expertise. India's regional connectivity faced new challenges in 2024, including Bangladesh's regime change, Myanmar's instability, strained ties with Nepal, and the Maldives' "India Out" stance. But visits by Sri Lanka's President and Bhutan's Prime Minister bolstered commitments in cross-border projects. Sustaining momentum under the 'Neighbourhood First' policy requires economic support, amid China's growing influence. Enhanced financial backing is crucial for advancing connectivity initiatives in South Asia.

Foreign aid and shifts

Budgetary trends reveal nuanced shifts. India's aid to foreign countries declined by 10% in 2024-25, while loans to foreign governments, increased by 29%. Approximately 50% of India's grants is directed to its neighbourhood. Bhutan remained the largest recipient of Indian aid, reflecting historical ties and a new impetus on energy interdependence, including hydropower development and sub-regional grid connectivity. Aid to Bangladesh declined from ₹200 crore in 2023-24 to ₹120 crore in 2024-25, while Sri Lanka saw a 63% increase in budgetary allocation.

A notable shift is the move from outright grants to lines of credit (LoCs), with 45% of the LoCs directed to the neighbourhood, Bangladesh being the largest recipient at ₹7.86 billion. While LoCs enable sustainable infrastructure financing, they also demand robust disbursement and oversight mechanisms, stretching India's diplomatic machinery.

Another critical indicator is MEA resources to build institutional capacity. These are less visible but critical catalysts to enable long-term growth, including through a stronger Indian Foreign Service (IFS), supported by an expert research ecosystem.

While the MEA's training budget saw a 30%

increase in 2024-25, overall capacity-building allocations remain insufficient. The IFS remains a chronically understaffed diplomatic corps. Coordination challenges, delayed expansion plans, and limited lateral entry efforts hinder progress.

Last year's MEA budget allocation for its foreign missions, training programmes, and cultural diplomacy grew by only 7% but key academic institutions such as Nalanda University and South Asian University experienced cuts of 20% and 22%, respectively. While the MEA has invested massively in convening international conferences and dialogues to foster India's image as a bridging and argumentative power, it must also find more budgetary resources to support policy-relevant and evidence-based research at Indian universities and think tanks.

Need for declassification, digitisation

According to the External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, "Track 1 has been consistently ahead of Track 2 when it comes to diplomacy, foreign policy, and keeping up with the world." If this is the reality, and "needs change" as the Minister beckoned, the MEA could lead by example by allocating specific resources in the next Budget to accelerate the declassification and the digitisation of hundreds of thousands of its records. Public e-access will help scholars map India's rich diplomatic history, contest deeply-held myths and get a better grasp of the underappreciated context and constraints that regulate Track 1 decision-making. And in turn, such Track 2 research may also help current MEA decision-makers to learn from past successes and failures, avoid reinventing the wheel, and articulate India's uniqueness based on the power of historical record, rather than mere political proclamation.

The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Citizenship by birth

In India there is no citizenship by birth. But the largest number of immigrants who have claimed citizenship by birth in the United States are, unfortunately, Indians who are wanting to do so because of the material advantages. This may not be the right thing to do. That way, U.S. President Donald Trump was right in passing an order cancelling 'citizenship by birth' which has been stayed by a Federal Court for two weeks. Mr. Trump may not be wrong when he says that he

wants to improve the lot of the Americans, but one is curious to see how he is going to explain not giving citizenship to a large number of Mexicans who have been allowed to cross the border and have slogged for the American owners of vast estates – something which the ordinary American is not willing to do. It is to be seen how citizenship is denied to them and their children. It is obvious that America is following a policy that is not based on any high moral ground, but one based on convenience. That apart, India should promise a

better deal to its citizens, many of whom are compelled to go to America because of the unsatisfactory living conditions here.

N.G.R. Prasad,
Chennai

Tinctures and health
The article, "Getting drunk, on homoeopathy" (Editorial page, January 28), is misleading in certain places – where the writers bring in the point of tinctures and "alcoholic hepatitis" and also being "incapable of any cure". In practice, these are used in very small quantities, usually 10 to 15

drops; approximately 1 ml is the usual dosage, which will not cause such adverse effects. There should be regulation as far as unauthorised sale and consumption is concerned.

All tinctures used in homoeopathy are manufactured under the guidelines of the Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia of India, or HPI, which are proven and verified for efficacy.

Dr. Sunil Kannada,
Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh

I have homoeopathic medicines for various diseases such as BP, burning sensations in the feet, and stomach troubles. I have never got intoxicated. Allopathic medicine, if taken continuously, has side effects. In Kerala, there are a number of people who like homoeopathic medicines.

Rajappan K.K.,
Keezhampara, Kottayam, Kerala

The writers seem to have split an enormous amount of legal acumen in an attempt to argue that people get drunk if they have homoeopathic medicine – of alcoholic tinctures with 12% alcohol in a bottle of 30ml, all

because of a lack of proper regulation. As a person who has depended on homoeopathic preparations for the past 50 years, I feel the learned writers would have gathered some glory for their public concern had they known that the laws of drug regulation are different from the laws of homoeopathic medicine. Alas, their prejudice got the better of their legal scholarship.

D. Narasimha Reddy,
Hyderabad

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

Substantive equality in child marriage laws

In *Sanjay Chaudhary v. Gudan* (2024), the Allahabad High Court annulled the marriage of a couple, who got married when the man was 12 and the woman was nine, under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006. While the man had filed a petition for divorce when he was 20 years, 10 months and 28 days old, he later amended his plea for nullification of the marriage under Section 3 of the PCMA. This allows any party who got married as a child to seek annulment of the marriage as long as the petition is filed within two years of attaining majority.

Artificial differentiation
While 'child' in PCMA means a girl below 18 years and a boy below 21 years of age, under the Majority Act, 1875, majority is attained on completing the age of 18 years, without any distinction between men and women. A literal reading of the provisions of the PCMA thus suggests that both male and female parties can seek annulment before they attain 20 years of age. The question that arises is whether the male party can annul the marriage at 23 years or 20 years, due to the gender-based difference in the minimum age of marriage.

In 2011, the Madras High Court in *T. Sivakumar v. The Inspector of Police* held that a literal interpretation will create an unfair disadvantage for males married at 20 who, despite being married below the legal age, would not be able to annul their marriage, and thus interpreted the age limit for annulment for males to be 23. Now, the Allahabad High Court in *Sanjay Chaudhary* has countered this by reasoning that male parties entering into marriage after attaining 18 years cannot claim ignorance of law or incapacity, as a male above 18 years is criminalised under PCMA for marrying a female child. The Allahabad High Court noted that the difference in the minimum age of marriage stems from patriarchal



**Anindita
Pattanayak**

Legal Researcher at Enfold Proactive Health Trust



Swagata Raha

Director-Research at Enfold Proactive Health Trust

notions that expect men to be older and financially responsible in a marriage, while women are perceived as secondary partners and child-bearers. It opined that having the same age limit, i.e., within 20 years of age, to file a nullity petition is aligned with the principle of gender equality.

Despite these observations, the Allahabad High Court felt bound by the Supreme Court's observation in *Independent Thought v. Union of India* (2017), which mentioned that men could file annulment petitions till the age of 23 years. Consequently, the Allahabad High Court annulled the child marriage, and the wife, aggrieved by this ruling, has appealed before the Supreme Court. While the Supreme Court will decide the age limit for boys and men to file nullity petitions under the PCMA, the High Court's reasoning strikes at gendered assumptions that may require re-examining the legal age for marriage.

In *Independent Thought*, the issue before the Supreme Court was the constitutionality of the marital rape exception in respect of wives below 18 years, and not the age limit for filing a nullity petition under the PCMA. Its observation that "a male child can get the marriage annulled before attaining the age of 23 years" was made without examining in detail annulment under the PCMA. This interpretation results in a substantive unfair disadvantage, giving males more time than females to exit a child marriage, leaving wives unprotected and disproportionately affected, which undermines the central objective of the PCMA to protect and advance the status of women.

Men are given more time than women to exit a child marriage. This calls for a uniform age of marriage at 18, not 21

A case for no difference
This case exemplifies the need for an uniform age of marriage in India, but raising it to 21, as was proposed in the now-lapsed Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021, to delay pregnancy and marriage, and advance women's education and

health, will do more harm than good. Indian laws recognise 18 as the age at which all major civil and political rights take effect such as voting, buying and selling property, and entering into contracts, among others. To delay the civil right to enter into marriage and blur the distinction between adults and children would deprive adults between 18-21 years of their right to life, liberty, decisional autonomy, privacy, and dignity. A 2024 study by Enfold Proactive Health Trust and Civic Data Lab, based on 174 PCMA judgments from three States, revealed that 49.4% of these marriages were self-initiated, with the girls' families lodging complaints in 80% of these cases as opposed to families reporting it in only 30.9% of arranged or forced marriages. Raising the age of marriage will further extend state and parental control over the agency of women to be with a partner of their choice. It will also place them at greater risk of deprivation of social protection and health services as they may fear criminal repercussions if their child marriage is reported. It will result in more arrests, detention, breakdown of families, and institutionalisation of young people, at a significant socio-economic and health cost, and overburden the criminal justice system. Gender equality and improved health maternal outcomes can be better achieved through less restrictive and more substantive alternatives such as access to free and compulsory education till 18 years, social security schemes, barrier free access to health services, and comprehensive sexuality education.

An opportunity
This is an opportunity to examine the injustice in women's access to annulment arising from different minimum ages for marriage, consider an increase in the time limit for seeking annulment, and prescribe 18 as the uniform age of marriage for all genders.

A case of troubled waters

Many questions have been raised over the Godavari-Banakacherla project

STATE OF PLAY

G.V.R. Subba Rao
subbarao.gavaravarapu@thehindu.co.in

The Andhra Pradesh government's ambitious plan to link the waters of the Godavari and Krishna rivers has become controversial.

Touted by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu as a "game changer," the Godavari-Banakacherla project aims to provide drinking water to 80 lakh people and ensure an additional 7.5 lakh acres of irrigated land. It is estimated to cost ₹80,112 crore and is expected to be completed in three years.

The Telangana government has protested against the project. According to the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, if any State wants to build a project on any river in these two States, it must inform the Godavari River Management Board and the Krishna River Management Board as well as the neighbouring State. Telangana argues that Andhra Pradesh took up the project without providing this information.

The division of water resources has been a source of friction between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh ever since the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh in 2014. Telangana, which is upstream, asserts its right to use waters of the Krishna river for projects such as the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme, while Andhra Pradesh believes that these initiatives are detrimental to the flow downstream and would potentially impact projects such as Banakacherla. Both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana refer to the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, to make their case.

Recalling that the Reorgani-



sation Act provides for project-wise allocation of water between the riparian States, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has also stated that his government would put up a strong case before the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II for the allocation of Krishna river water to Telangana under Section 3 of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act (ISRWDA), 1956.

The Andhra Pradesh government has said that a hybrid model would be adopted for completion of the project and would involve State and Central funding and private partnerships. It clarified that the project will not be under private control and that the government will "pay annuity" to the investors akin to toll collected by the road users. There are apprehensions that the burden of the annuity will be passed on to the farmers. The government should clear the air on this issue before going ahead with the project.

While the State government has embarked on this project, 86 other irrigation projects remain pending in Andhra Pradesh. The status on the Polavaram project, which is considered the lifeline of Andhra Pradesh, remains unclear. If work on the Banakacherla project begins, these pending projects as well as the issues relating to the Polavaram project are likely to be on the back burner. In the next three to four years, discussions will probably centre around the Banakacherla project.

Govt. schoolchildren lead recovery in basic skills; private ones lag

Not all States conformed to the national trend. Students in many States are yet to recover from pandemic lows

DATA POINT

Samreen Wani
Vignesh Radhakrishnan

The closure of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the ability of rural schoolchildren to divide three-digit numbers and read a paragraph in their regional language. The latest data for 2024, published in the Annual Status of Education Report (Rural), broadly indicates that rural schoolchildren have largely recovered from the learning loss experienced during the pandemic. However, the recovery appears uneven when the data are analysed in detail.

To understand the learning losses during the pandemic as well as the post-pandemic recovery, the story used data for Class 5 children from the report. First, while children showed significant improvement in their arithmetic abilities, their progress in reading ability has been less pronounced.

Second, government schoolchildren showed strong recovery in reading abilities, with the share of those who can read a paragraph in their regional language reaching pre-pandemic levels. While private schoolchildren have made some progress from the pandemic-induced decline, the share who could read a paragraph in their regional language remained well below pre-pandemic standards.

Chart 1 shows the share of rural schoolchildren in Class 5 who could read a Class 2-level text (a paragraph) in their regional language. The share of government school students who could read the text dropped from 44.2% in 2018 to 38.5% in 2022 and improved to 44.8% in 2024 – a 6.3 percentage point recovery. For private school students, it dropped from 65.1% in 2018 to 56.8% in 2022 and improved to 59.3% in 2024 – only a 2.5-point recovery.

Third, the proportion of children who were able to perform

basic arithmetic operations exceeded pre-pandemic levels among both government and private schools, as per the 2024 data. However, the recovery was stronger among government schoolchildren compared to their private counterparts.

Chart 2 shows the share of rural schoolchildren in Class 5 who could divide three-digit numbers. The share of government school students who could do this declined from 22.7% in 2018 to 21.6% in 2022 and improved to 26.5% in 2024 – a 4.9-point recovery. The share of private school students who could do the same dropped from 39.8% in 2018 to 38.7% in 2022 and improved to 41.8% in 2024 – only a 3.1-point recovery.

Fourth, not all States followed the national trend. There were many patterns and variations in State-level data. Table 3 shows the State-wise share of rural schoolchildren in Class 5 who could read a Class 2-level text (a paragraph) in their regional language in 2018, 2022, and 2024. Table 4 shows the same for those who could divide three-digit numbers.

In Table 3, States/Union Territories such as Assam, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, and Tamil Nadu conformed to the national trend. In Andhra Pradesh and Kerala, the share of government schoolchildren who could read did not recover from the pandemic lows. In Bihar, the reading ability of private schoolchildren did not recover. In Chhattisgarh, there was no recovery among government schoolchildren or among private ones.

In Table 4, States such as Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh conformed to the national trend. In Kerala, the share of those who could divide three-digit numbers did not recover from the lows recorded during the pandemic in both private and public schools. In fact, in 2024, the share worsened further in Kerala.

Evaluating student performance

The charts were sourced from the Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2024



Chart 1: The share of children in Class 5 who can read Class 2-level text (in %)

Govt. Pvt.

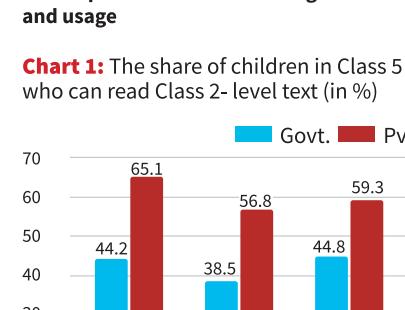


Chart 2: The chart shows share of children in Class 5 who can divide numbers (in %)

Govt. Pvt.



Table 3: Shows State-wise data for chart 1

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State

Year

Govt. Pvt.

↓

Table 4: Shows State-wise data for chart 2

↓

State

Year

Govt. Pvt.

Table 3: Shows State-wise data for chart 1

↓

State

Year

Govt. Pvt.

↓

Table 4: Shows State-wise data for chart 2

↓

State

Year

Govt. Pvt.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 29, 1975

Canada's abrogation of nuclear export contracts perplexing

New Delhi, Jan. 28: The Indo-Canadian relations have run into further difficulties following the cancellation of the export licences for shipment of nuclear equipment which have remained only suspended after the peaceful Indian nuclear test explosion.

During the recent talks in Delhi, India was given to understand that Canada had merely suspended its nuclear co-operation pending detailed discussions between the two countries on the scope, purpose and implications of the Indian nuclear programme.

The Government of India feels that the abrupt cancellation of the suspended export licences was contrary to the spirit of this assurance. The Canadian Government has taken this unilateral action for whatever reason, before the conclusion of the current series of discussions on the subject. The fact that the ban can be lifted later on, if the two countries are able to arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement on new safeguard procedures, does not make matters any easier, in India's view, for settling these differences consistent with their respective positions.

The Canadian Prime Minister sent his Political Adviser, Mr. Ivan Head, to Delhi recently for exploratory talks to narrow down the differences and prepare the ground for a negotiated settlement. The two sides embarked on this dialogue, in continuation of the exchanges that had already taken place at the first meeting in Ottawa, with the clear understanding that these talks were more in the nature of friendly discussions than formal negotiations.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 29, 1925

Sun's rays and wireless

Leaford (Oxford) Jan. 28: It appears that the solar eclipse last Saturday, undoubtedly had an effect on the reception of wireless signals. Experts of the British Broadcasting Corporation Co., have been studying reports sent in by listeners and officials. The Company states that although round London the reception showed no variation from the normal, listeners living upwards of 70 miles from London, reported a great change in the strength of signals during the eclipse.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The unemployment rate of Spain declined in 2024

10.61 In per cent. Spain's unemployment rate in 2024 went down from 11.76% the previous year. Its economy added 4,68,100 jobs in the last 12 months to reach a total of 21.8 million, the highest level ever registered. AFP

Murder charges filed against 'pro-Sheikh Hasina' journalists

140 Human Rights Watch said that under Muhammad Yunus' interim administration, the police had "returned to the abusive practices that characterised the previous government" to target Hasina's supporters, filing charges against tens of thousands of people. AFP

People killed in clash between pro-Rwandan forces, Congo army

17 Clashes in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo's besieged city of Goma have killed at least 17 people and wounded nearly 370, hospital sources said on Monday, as the Congolese military fought to hold off M23 forces backed by the Rwandan army. AFP

Losses faced by Boeing since fatal aircraft crashes in 2019

35 In \$ billion. Boeing posted a fourth-quarter loss of \$3.8 billion as a machinists strike and other problems continued to plague the troubled aircraft manufacturer. Boeing has lost more than \$35 billion since 2019 following the crashes of two then-new Max jets that killed 346 people. PTI

Number of people dead due to a platform collapse in U.P.

7 Seven people died and about 60 others were injured on Tuesday after a wooden platform collapsed during a religious gathering in northern India. The incident happened in the Baghpat district where hundreds of devotees from the Jain faith had gathered at a temple. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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The impact of classifying denotified tribes

How many denotified, semi-nomadic, and nomadic tribes have been comprehensively categorised by the Anthropological Survey of India and Tribal Research Institutes? What will be the impact on SC, ST and OBC reservations? How many communities were classified for the first time ever?

EXPLAINER

Abhinav Lakshman

The story so far:

The Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) and Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) across the country have for the first time comprehensively categorised 268 denotified, semi-nomadic, and nomadic tribes that were thought to have never been classified before. After a three-year study, the AnSI and TRIs have recommended the inclusion of 179 of these communities in the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes lists. At least 85 of these communities are being recommended for a classification for the first time ever. The study also found that 63 communities that had never been classified were "not traceable" anymore – meaning that they had likely assimilated into larger communities, changed their names, or migrated to other States.

Why was the study needed?

Ever since the Criminal Tribes Act of 1924 was repealed in August 1949, after which communities notified as "criminal" had been denotified, successive commissions have tried to classify these communities, starting with the First Backward Classes Commission headed by Kaka Kalelkar.

Since then, the Lokur Committee (1965), the Mandal Commission (1980), the Renke Commission (2008), and the Idate Commission (2017) have tried to classify such tribes across the country. However, they have fallen short of being able to identify all such communities.

The last Commission tasked with this was the one headed by Bhiku Ramji Idate, which submitted its report in December 2017. In this report, it had listed a total of over 1,200 denotified, semi-nomadic, and nomadic tribes across the country, apart from which, it said there were 267 communities that had never been classified. The Idate Commission's report



Official recognition: Members of the Adi tribe in Siang, Arunachal Pradesh on January 28. ANI

had noted that previous commissions had never been able to classify these communities, recommending strongly that the classification work be completed as soon as possible. To this end, the Prime Minister's Office constituted a Special Committee in February 2019, headed by the Vice Chairperson of the NITI Aayog, consisting of Mr. Idate, Dr. J.K. Bajaj of the Centre for Policy Studies, and the Director-General of the AnSI as members. This Committee gave the work of classification to the AnSI and TRIs, which began work on the project in February 2020, submitting a report in August 2023.

What is the need for categorisation?

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment had in a December 2022 report said that it had repeatedly flagged the government's

"inability to take necessary action" on the speedy categorisation of these communities. "Delay in locating them would increase their suffering and they would not be able to get benefits of the prevailing schemes meant for the welfare of SC/STs," the House panel said.

S. Narayan, Professor Emeritus at the Institute of Social Sciences in New Delhi pointed out that the issue with wrong categorisation began with some of the first Censuses ever conducted by colonial administrations. "There were many instances of tribes being classified as castes and vice versa. Many of it may have had political considerations behind it and this continued after Independence as well." He added that while the act of including communities in SC, ST, OBC lists may be political, when one applies an anthropological lens to it, the

classifications are bound to be different.

Further, community activists and experts like Dr. B.K. Lodhi, who also assisted the Idate Commission in its work, said that in the absence of a complete list of denotified, semi-nomadic, and nomadic communities across the country, it has been very difficult to organise the communities and its peoples. "Some are classified as SC, ST, OBC, some of this is also incorrect. And beyond this, there are hundreds that have not been classified."

What will be the impact?

Now that almost all denotified, nomadic, and semi-nomadic tribes are closer to being classified than ever before, one impact has been political. Community activists across U.P., Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat are pushing hard to question the premise of classifying these communities as SC, ST, and OBC altogether, with an eye on reservations.

Within the Development and Welfare Board for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities, there are now two strands of thoughts. One calls for the completion of the classification process so that all denotified, nomadic, and semi-nomadic tribes get benefits meant for them as per the classification of SC, ST, or OBC, including that of reservation. The other calls for creating a separate classification altogether – for denotified tribes in the form of a Schedule in the Constitution. Secondly, depending on what action the government takes on the recommendations on this study, it will make it easier for State governments to initiate the process of inclusion if they so decide to do it.

What next?

While the AnSI and TRIs have completed the ethnographic study, this report remains with the Special Committee headed by the Vice-Chairperson of the NITI Aayog. Officials have said that this committee is now "scrutinising" the recommendations and will soon prepare a final report, on which the Government will take a call.

THE GIST

Ever since the Criminal Tribes Act of 1924 was repealed in August 1949, after which communities notified as "criminal" had been denotified, successive commissions have tried to classify these communities.

Community activists across U.P., Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat are pushing hard to question the premise of classifying these communities as SC, ST, and OBC altogether, with an eye on reservations.

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THE GIST

Birthright citizenship is a legal principle that grants automatic citizenship to individuals born within a country's territory. In the U.S., this right is enshrined in the 14th amendment of the Constitution.

U.S. District judge John Coughenour issued a temporary restraining order halting the enforcement of the executive order, nationwide. He described the order as "blatantly unconstitutional".

Nations worldwide largely determine citizenship through two principles – "jus soli" (right of the soil), which grants citizenship by birthplace, or "jus sanguinis" (right of blood), which grants it by familial descent.

Primeneewspapers search on telegram Is Trump's order on birthright citizenship constitutional?

What does the 14th amendment of the U.S. Constitution state? On what grounds has U.S. District judge John Coughenour blocked President Trump's executive order?

Kartikey Singh

The story so far:

In January 23, U.S. District judge John Coughenour in Seattle blocked President Trump's executive order attempting to curb 'birthright citizenship'.

What is birthright citizenship? Birthright citizenship is a legal principle that grants automatic citizenship to individuals born within a country's territory, regardless of their parents' citizenship status. In the U.S., this right is enshrined in the 14th amendment of the Constitution, ratified in 1868, which states: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." The 14th amendment was the hard-won result of a prolonged legal

and political struggle to abolish slavery and advance racial equality. It directly overturned the infamous *Dred Scott versus Sandford* (1857) judgment, which had denied citizenship to African Americans.

Nations worldwide largely determine citizenship through two principles – "jus soli" (right of the soil), which grants citizenship by birthplace, or "jus sanguinis" (right of blood), which grants it by familial descent. The U.S. employs both. The jus soli principle was reinforced in *United States versus Wong Kim Ark* (1898), which upheld the citizenship of a man born in California to Chinese parents despite the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act barring their naturalisation. This ruling solidified birth in the U.S. as the primary basis for citizenship, irrespective of parental status.

What does Trump's order say? Trump's executive order reinterprets the

14th amendment, arguing that birthright citizenship excludes persons born in the U.S. but not "subject to the jurisdiction thereof". The administration interprets this to mean that children born in the U.S. to undocumented parents or parents with temporary legal status, such as tourists or foreign students, are not automatically granted citizenship unless at least one parent is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident.

The administration's interpretation hinges on the phrase "subject to the jurisdiction thereof," claiming it excludes children of non-citizens. However, this contradicts historical and legal precedent. The order also narrowly defines "mother" and "father" as "female biological progenitor" and "male biological progenitor," excluding transgender and queer parents from its scope. The administration justifies the order as necessary, arguing that birthright

citizenship encourages 'unauthorised immigration', draining 'public resources'.

Why did the judge block the order?

U.S. District judge John Coughenour issued a temporary restraining order halting the enforcement of the executive order, nationwide. He described the order as "blatantly unconstitutional", remarking, "I've been on the bench for over four decades. I can't remember another case where the question presented was as clear as this one is".

During a hearing in Seattle, Judge Coughenour questioned Justice Department attorney Brett Shumate, expressing his disbelief saying "Frankly, I have difficulty understanding how a member of the bar could state unequivocally that this is a constitutional order. It just boggles my mind". The ruling came in response to a legal challenge brought forth by four States.

President Trump could also pursue a 'constitutional amendment' to revise the law. According to Article V of the U.S. Constitution, an amendment can be proposed by two-thirds of both houses of Congress or two-thirds of the States and must then be ratified by three-fourths of the States. Meanwhile, other legal challenges are underway, signalling that the final resolution may ultimately rest with the U.S. Supreme Court.

Kartikey Singh is a final year student at RGNU, Patiala, Punjab.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



GETTY IMAGES

Union Budget: understanding its formulation and implications

There are three major components of the Budget — expenditure, receipts and deficit indicators. Depending on the manner in which they are defined, there can be many classifications and indicators of expenditure, receipts and deficits

Zico Dasgupta

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Union Budget for the upcoming year on Saturday, February 1, 2025. In this article, dated January 31, 2022, Zico Dasgupta helps us understand how to decode the Budget.

The story so far:

The Budget, which will be tabled in Parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, is the Government's blueprint on expenditure, taxes it plans to levy, and other transactions which affect the economy and lives of citizens.

What are the major components of the Budget?

There are three major components — expenditure, receipts and deficit indicators. Depending on the manner in which they are defined, there can be many classifications and indicators of expenditure, receipts and deficits.

Based on their impact on assets and liabilities, total expenditure can be divided into capital and revenue expenditure. Capital expenditure is incurred with the purpose of increasing assets of a durable nature or of reducing recurring liabilities. Consider the expenditure incurred for constructing new schools or new hospitals. All these are classified as capital expenditure as they lead to creation of new assets. Revenue expenditure involves any expenditure that does not add to assets or reduce liabilities. Expenditure on the payment of wages and salaries, subsidies or interest payments would be typically classified as revenue expenditure.

Depending on the manner in which it affects different sectors, expenditure is also classified into (i) general services (ii) economic services, (iii) social services and (iv) grants-in-aid and contribution. The sum of expenditure on economic and social services together form the

development expenditure. Economic services include expenditure on transport, communication, rural development, agricultural and allied sectors. Expenditure on the social sector including education or health is categorised as social services. Again, depending on its effect on asset creation or liability reduction, development expenditure can be further classified as revenue and capital expenditure.

The receipts of the Government have three components — revenue receipts, non-debt capital receipts and debt-creating capital receipts. Revenue receipts involve receipts that are not associated with increase in liabilities and comprise revenue from taxes and non-tax sources. Non-debt receipts are part of capital receipts that do not generate additional liabilities. Recovery of loans and proceeds from disinvestments would be regarded as non-debt receipts since generating revenue from these sources does not directly increase liabilities, or future payment commitments. Debt-creating capital receipts are ones that involve higher liabilities and future payment commitments of the Government. Fiscal deficit by definition is the difference between total expenditure and the sum of revenue receipts and non-debt receipts. It indicates how much the Government is spending in net terms. Since positive fiscal deficits indicate the amount of expenditure over and above revenue and non-debt receipts, it needs to be financed by a debt-creating capital receipt. Primary deficit is the difference between fiscal deficit and interest payments. Revenue deficit is derived by deducting capital expenditure from fiscal deficits.

What are the implications of the Budget on the economy?

The Budget has an implication for aggregate demand of an economy. All Government expenditure generates

aggregate demand in the economy since it involves purchase of private goods and services by the Government sector. All tax and non-tax revenue reduces net income of the private sector and thereby leads to reduction in private and aggregate demand. But except for exceptional circumstances, the GDP, revenue receipt and expenditure typically show a tendency to rise over time. Thus, the trend in absolute value of expenditure and receipts in themselves have little use for meaningful analysis of the Budget.

The trend in expenditures and revenue is analysed either by the GDP or as growth rates after accounting for the inflation rate.

Reduction in expenditure GDP ratio or increase in revenue receipt-GDP ratio indicates the Government's policy to reduce aggregate demand and vice-versa. For similar reasons, reduction in fiscal deficit-GDP ratio and primary deficit-GDP ratios indicate Government policy of reducing demand and vice versa.

Since different components of expenditure and revenue can have different effects on income of different classes and social groups, the Budget also has implications for income distribution. For example, revenue expenditure such as employment guarantee schemes or food subsidies can directly boost the income of the poor. Concession in corporate tax may directly and positively affect corporate incomes. Though both a rise in expenditure for employment guarantee schemes or reduction in the corporate tax would widen the fiscal deficit, its implications for income distribution would be different.

What are fiscal rules and how do they affect policy?

Fiscal rules provide specific policy targets on the basis of which fiscal policy is formed. Policy targets can be met by using different policy instruments. There exists no unique fiscal rule that is applied

to all countries. Rather, policy targets are sensitive to the nature of economic theory and depend on the specificity of an economy.

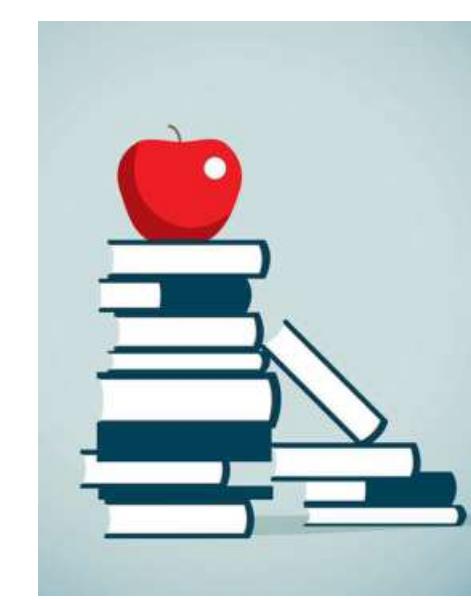
In India's case, its present fiscal rule is guided by the recommendations of the N.K. Singh Committee Report. Allowing for some deviations under exceptional times, it has three policy targets — maintaining a specific level of debt-GDP ratio (stock target), fiscal deficit-GDP ratio (flow target) and revenue deficit-GDP ratio (composition target).

Though both expenditure and revenue receipts can potentially act as policy instruments to meet specific set of fiscal rules, tax-rates within the existing policy framework happen to be determined independent of the expenditure requirement of the economy. Accordingly, in the present institutional framework in India, it is primarily the expenditure which is adjusted to meet the fiscal rules at given tax-ratios.

Such an adjustment mechanism has at least two related, but analytically distinct implications for fiscal policy. First, independent of the extent of expenditure needed to stimulate the economy or boost labour income, existing fiscal rules provide a cap on expenditure by imposing the three policy targets. Second, under any situation when the debt-ratio or deficit ratio is greater than the targeted level, expenditure is adjusted in order to meet the policy targets. By implication, independent of the state of the economy and the need for expansionary fiscal policy, existing policy targets may lead the Government to reduce expenditure.

In the midst of the inadequacies of fiscal policy to address the contemporary challenges of unemployment and low output growth rate, the nature and objective of fiscal rules in India would have to be re-examined.

Zico Dasgupta is an Assistant Professor at the School of Arts and Science, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

**K. Subrahmanian
S. Upendran**

"The fourth rule is ..."

"Before you discuss the fourth rule, please tell me the difference between 'waste' and 'wastage'."

'A lot of people use them as if they were synonyms. They have different meanings. Some think that wastage and waste mean the same but wastage is more impressive! 'Waste' means 'rubbish or refuse', 'useless excess material.' These are the waste products. It is a waste of precious time and energy. Wastage means 'amount that is wasted'. It also means 'loss by use, wear or leakage.' In places where petrol is stored, you must allow for wastage of petrol because of evaporation. Wastage is the result of natural causes. When a person is told that he has wasted something, there is a tone of criticism. 'Waste' implies moral censure. 'Wastage' has no such moral undertones. In commercial language, natural wastage means 'loss of employees because they retire and move to other places and not through redundancy'."

"What is redundancy?"

"Redundancy is 'a state of being redundant.' Redundant means 'not needed, superfluous'. Good writing must be clear and precise: no word should be redundant or vague. Let me read out a passage from Somerset Maugham: 'Some writers who do not think clearly are inclined to suppose that their thoughts have a significance greater than at first sight appears. It is flattering to believe that they are too profound to be expressed so clearly that all who run may read, and very naturally it does not occur to such writers that the fault is with their own minds which have not the faculty of precise reflection. Here again the magic of the written word obtains. It is very easy to persuade oneself that a phrase that one does not quite understand may mean a great deal more than one realises. From this there is only a little way to go to fall into the habit of setting down one's impressions in all their original vagueness. Fools can always be found to discover a hidden sense in them. There is another form of wilful obscurity that masquerades as aristocratic exclusiveness. The author wraps his meaning in mystery so that the vulgar shall not participate in it. His soul is a secret garden into which the elect may penetrate only after overcoming a number of perilous obstacles. But this kind of obscurity is not only pretentious: it is shortsighted. For time plays it an odd trick. If the sense is meagre time reduces it to a meaningless verbiage that no one thinks of reading'."

"Very good. By the way, what's the meaning of 'sendee'?"

"Sendee means a person or a party to whom a thing is sent. It is formed on the analogy of 'vendee', the purchaser".

Published in The Hindu on December 6, 1994.

Word of the day

Punctilious:

marked by precise accordance to details

Synonyms: meticulous

Usage: He is punctilious in his attention to rules of etiquette.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/punctiliouspro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /pʌŋktɪli.əs/



Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The number of crew members in the Challenger Space Shuttle. This was its primary goal. **Ans: Seven; it was to launch the second Tracking and Data Relay Satellite (TDRS-B)**

2. The female crew member who would have become the first teacher in space. **Ans: Christa Corrigan McAuliffe**

3. Number of seconds after which the tragedy happened. The last words heard from pilot Michael Smith. **Ans: 73 seconds; 'Uh-oh'**

4. This caused the death of the astronauts. **Ans: Loss of cabin pressure and oxygen deficiency minutes before impact**

5. The connection Neil Armstrong and Sally Ride have with the Challenger disaster. **Ans: They were part of the 'Rogers Commission' that investigated the disaster**

6. Name the Nobel Laureate who demonstrated that loss of O-ring resiliency was the prime cause for the disaster. **Ans: Richard Feynman**

Visual: This astronaut later became the first teacher to go into space. **Ans: Barbara R. Morgan**

Early Birds: Kanchan Sharma|Ashish Nair

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

Sindhu Nagaraj**QUESTION 1**

The phrase "axis of evil" was first used by U.S. President George W. Bush on January 29, 2002. Which countries did he refer to, to pinpoint the common enemies of the U.S.?

QUESTION 2

This American artist, dubbed the queen of all media, was born on this day in 1954. Once, she was the world's only black billionaire. Identify her.

QUESTION 3

This German mechanical engineer patented the first practical automobile powered by an internal-combusion engine. Today, the brand associated with his name is one of the world's largest premium vehicle brands. Name the engineer.

QUESTION 4

The Raven was first attributed to this American writer in print in the *New York Evening Mirror* on this day in 1845. Which poet wrote it?

QUESTION 5

This Indian activist-journalist from Karnataka was born on this day in 1962. She was murdered outside her home in 2017. At the time of her death, she was known for being a critic of right-wing Hindu extremism. Identify her. What was the name of the newspaper that she worked for as an editor?

QUESTION 6

This American journalist and critic died on this day in 1962. One of his well-known works include this book in which the title has two words: one is his name, and the other is the word 'Chrestomathy'. Name the first word/his name.

Visual question:

Identify this Russian writer who was born on this day.

From Page One

Modi likely to visit the U.S. to deepen ties

"Well... they mean us harm, but they basically want to make their country good. China is a tremendous tariff-maker, and India, Brazil, and so many other countries. (But) we are not going to let that happen any longer... because we are going to put America first," Mr. Trump said. The Trump administration held the Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting on January 21 following the swearing-in ceremony in Washington DC that was attended by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.

The leadership summit of the Quad grouping is expected in the coming months which will be held in India this time. The Trump administration has zeroed in on immigration, H1B visas and tariffs that are of great relevance to India's interest in its relations with Washington DC.

Sri Lankan Navy fires at Indian boat, two injured

Three fishermen sustained minor injuries. Indian Consulate officials in Jaffna are extending all possible assistance to the fishermen, the Ministry said, emphasising India's position on treating issues pertaining to fishermen in a "humane and humanitarian manner".

India summoned the Acting High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in New Delhi and lodged a strong protest. "Our High Commission in Colombo has also raised the matter with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sri Lankan government," it said in a statement. This is the latest escalation in a long-running conflict, with 540 Indian fishermen facing arrest on charges of illegal fishing last year. "The use of force is not acceptable under any circumstances whatsoever," the External Affairs Ministry said.

The Sri Lankan Navy, on the other hand, accused the Indian fishermen of attempting to "assault" naval personnel and "snatch a firearm from a naval officer", thus "endangering the lives of the naval personnel."

Fisheries Department sources in Karaikal said the arrested fishermen had been identified as K. Manikavel, 39, N. Dhinesh, 30, R. Karthikesan, 27, C. Senthamizh, 27, R. Maivizhinathan, 22, and M. Vetrivel, 28, from Karaikal district; V. Navendhu, 34, K. Rajendran, 36, and R. Ramki, 30, from Mayiladuthurai district; and P. Sasikumar, 26, K. Nanthal Kumar, 30, V. Babu, 31, and M. Kumaran, 28, from Nagapattinam district. They had ventured into the sea on Sunday morning.

DeepSeek AI model jolts global tech landscape

The impact reverberated across global markets as tech and AI stocks plummeted. Though the sell-off steadied on Tuesday, the low-cost Chinese AI model continues to be popular globally.

Commenting on the development from China, U.S. President Donald Trump said: "The release of DeepSeek AI from a Chinese company must be a wake-up call for our industries as we need to be laser focused on competing to win."

Mr. Trump said DeepSeek was a positive development for the U.S. tech industry as they "will be doing that too and won't be spending that much to get the same results".

DeepSeek's flagship AI Assistant, powered by its DeepSeek-v3 model, has already made significant waves by dethroning OpenAI's ChatGPT as the highest-rated free app on Apple's App Store. This achievement signals a potential turning point in the competition between U.S. and Chinese AI firms.

In a recent paper, DeepSeek revealed that the training of its DeepSeek-v3 model cost under \$6 million, utilising Nvidia's H800 chips – dramatically undercutting the billions of dollars spent by leading U.S. firms. The company also claimed its latest DeepSeek-R1 model is nearly 50 times cheaper to operate than OpenAI's GPT-4, for a specific task.

The emergence of DeepSeek is particularly noteworthy because it flips the narrative that Chinese AI models lag behind their U.S. counterparts. While China's early attempts at creating a local alternative to ChatGPT – such as Baidu's Ernie bot – were met with widespread disappointment due to quality gaps, DeepSeek has changed the game by offering models that rival the best from Silicon Valley.

Despite the buzz, DeepSeek has faced its share of scepticism. Some experts have questioned the true cost of developing and training DeepSeek's models, with some analysts casting doubt on the \$5.58-million figure provided by the company for the v3 model's computing power. Others have raised concerns about the start-up's access to cutting-edge Nvidia chips, claiming the company may have up to 50,000 Nvidia H100s – chips restricted for sale to Chinese firms under U.S. export controls. DeepSeek has yet to address these claims.

Moreover, cybersecurity experts have noted that it is critical to engage with DeepSeek with a degree of caution as the start-up operates within a regulatory environment where government oversight of data is stringent.

DeepSeek was founded in 2023 in Hangzhou, Zhejiang by Liang Wenfeng, co-founder of the Chinese quantitative hedge fund High-Flyer. The fund, known for its involvement in AI research and development, has played a key role in DeepSeek's growth, though the exact extent of High-Flyer's financial backing remains unclear.

Congress asks if status quo has been restored at LAC

It is unclear if Indian troops can access areas that had become out of bounds post May 2020, says Congress as it questions the timing of announcement to normalise ties between India and China

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Questioning the timing of the announcement to ease relations between India and China, the Congress on Tuesday alleged that the "Prime Minister's cronies and friends" would be the beneficiaries of the "so-called normalisation while critical areas are off-limits to our troops".

In a statement, Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh posed some key questions to the government on ties with China, and asked whether the status quo was restored as of May 2020 at the border in eastern Ladakh. He said there were still many unanswered questions about the disengagement agreement of October 21, 2024, and it was still unclear if Indian troops could access areas that had become out of bounds post May 2020.

The party's statement came a day after New Delhi and Beijing agreed to restore commercial and cultural ties, including bringing back direct flights between



Raising doubts: The Congress's statement came a day after New Delhi and Beijing agreed to restore commercial and cultural ties.

the two capitals, resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, liberalised visa regime and other measures following the recent Beijing visit of the Foreign Secretary.

The right time?

"The Modi government has not yet satisfactorily explained to the country why this is the right time to normalise relations with China. Ever since the Chinese occupied 2,000 sq. km of territory in eastern Ladakh that had been accessed by Indian patrols until May 2020, the people and the armed forces of the country have held that

must insist on a restoration of the status quo ante as it stood prior to that," Mr. Ramesh said in his statement.

Quoting Army chief Gen. Upendra Dwivedi, who had remarked, "We want to go back to the status quo of April 2020... thereafter we will be looking at disengagement, de-escalation and normal management of the LAC," Mr. Ramesh said: "Yet successive statements by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) casts doubt on whether we have returned to the status quo."

He also recalled External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's statement in Parliament on December 3,

2024, that "in a few other places where friction occurred in 2020, temporary and limited measures were implemented, based on local conditions, to prevent further friction".

The Congress leader added that this alluded to the creation of "buffer zones", areas where Indian troops and local graziers were restricted from accessing; such "seemingly one-sided concessions" were unlike previous confrontations, including Sudorong Chu in 1986 and Depsang in 2013 that ended after the complete restoration of the status quo.

"Even as critical areas appear off-limits to our troops, this so-called normalisation will only amplify the trends whose only beneficiaries appear to be the Prime Minister's cronies and financiers," the Congress leader said.

Restating their earlier questions, the Congress leader asked if Indian troops would be able to "patrol up to our claim line in Depsang to five patrolling points past the Bottleneck junction as they were able to earlier?"

Waqf panel asks govt. to bring in new law to protect tribal lands

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

In its 655-page-long draft report circulated less than 24 hours before the panel's final meeting on Wednesday, the Parliament's Joint Committee on Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, has urged the government to introduce a law to protect tribal land from being declared as "Waqf" property.

The panel, in its report, claimed that it has recently noticed numerous cases concerning declaration of Waqf lands in tribal areas. This, the report said, creates a serious threat to the existence of these cultural minorities whose religious practices are distinct and do not follow those prescribed under Islam. "The increase in the quantum of land acquired by the Waqf Board and the number of litigation underscore the urgent need to address this serious concern," the panel said in its report.

The report does not provide clarity on the number of complaints that the panel received on the issue or the number of such cases it has looked into.

The report, as per sources, has directed the

Panel exceeded its limits: Muslim Law Board

NEW DELHI
The Muslim Personal Law Board has come down heavily on the allies of the Bharatiya Janata Party for supporting the Waqf Bill and appealed to the Opposition to unite to defeat the Bill in Parliament. It said the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Waqf had "exceeded its limits and flouted democratic conventions".

government to ensure that the protection accorded to Scheduled Tribes and tribal lands under the Fifth and Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution must be upheld and any threat, "perceived or real", needs to be addressed. The panel has asked the Union Minority Affairs Ministry to take "appropriate legislative measures to forestall declaration of tribal lands as "Waqf land".

The Opposition MPs on the panel criticised BJP leader and panel Chairperson Jagdambika Pal for circulating the report with little time to go over it before the final meeting.

Tahir Hussain gets parole to campaign

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed the release of Tahir Hussain, AIMIM candidate for the Delhi Assembly polls, on custody parole for poll campaigning on a daily basis for the period between January 29 and February 2.

A three-judge Bench directed Mr. Hussain, who is an accused in the 2020 riots case, to pay the expenses for the jail van and police officers who will provide him security and an escort vehicle.

Mr. Hussain's counsel gave an undertaking that his client would not make any public comments about the pending cases. He would be allowed to visit the party office and hold meetings within his constituency.

The court made it clear that the order would not be taken as a precedent.

Choice of secular inheritance law should apply to all faiths, says CJI

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna on Tuesday orally observed that the freedom to become a non-believer and choose to be governed by secular inheritance laws of the country must apply across faiths.

The Chief Justice's observation came while hearing a petition filed by a Kerala-based woman, Safiya P.M., who said that though born a Muslim, she was now a non-believer and wished to be governed by secular statutes like the Indian Succession Act rather than the Sharia law.

"If it is to apply to one faith, it must apply to all faiths," Chief Justice Khanina, who was heading the Bench comprising Justices Sanjay Kumar and K.V. Viswanathan, said.

The CJI, at one point, observed that "under the Hindu Succession Act, if you convert, your inheritance is taken away... if you convert, you lose your right of inheritance".

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Union of India, said one could still inherit through a Will irrespective of the restrictions in the Hindu Succession Act.

However, the Chief Ju-

tice said there were also situations of intestate successions and even the Joint Hindu Family property.

'Give time for response'

Mr. Mehta agreed that the petition posed an interesting question and the Union government must be given time to file a considered response in the form of a counter-affidavit.

Chief Justice Khanna indicated that if the petition succeeded, changes in official forms would have to be considered. "Where [in a form] you have to mention your religion, the option not to mention one's religion must be there."

AAP told to apologise over Ambedkar statue 'neglect'

The Hindu Bureau

Condemning the desecration of a statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in Punjab's Amritsar, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday demanded an unconditional apology from the State government for the "neglect and mistreatment" of his statues in the holy city.

Mr. Kharge also sought strict action against the perpetrators and claimed that both the Centre and the Punjab governments would be viewed as "promoting" such vandalism if they fail to act.

ASER study shows post-COVID recovery, but many students still lag in reading, arithmetic

Maitri Porecha

NEW DELHI

After a prolonged decline due to learning loss during COVID-19, the latest Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2024 reveals that there has been recovery in foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) learning among school students.

A total of 6,49,491 children aged between three and 16 across 605 rural villages participated in the survey. Using the 2011 census frame, 30 villages were randomly selected from each district, and 20 households from each village. Children between five and

Assessing reading levels

The table shows the percentage of children in Classes 3 and 5 able to read a Class 2 text in government schools

Class 3: % children reading at Class 2 level

2018	20.9
2022	16.3
2024	23.4

Class 5: % reading at Class 2 level

2018	44.2
2022	38.5
2024	44.8



SOURCE: ASER(RURAL) 2024

16 years of age were assessed for basic reading and arithmetic skills.

While the percentage of Class 3 students enrolled in

and has now increased to 23.4% in 2024. Despite the recovery, the survey reveals that 76.6% of the Class 3 students were unable to read a Class 2 text. The reading tasks were disseminated in 19 languages.

When Class 5 students were given the same Class 2 text, one in two students are unable to read it. According to previous iterations of the survey, in 2018, 44.2% of the fifth graders were able to read it, which declined to 38.5% in 2022, and in 2024 this more or less plateaued again at 44.8%.

By the time the students reach Class 8, the survey reveals that 67.5% were

able to read a Class 2 level text. The report states that children's basic arithmetic levels – recognising numbers, conducting numerical subtraction for two digits with borrowing, and solving division problems consisting of three digits by one digit – have shown a substantial improvement in both government and private schools.

Percentage point improvement in States such as Himachal Pradesh and Bihar was less at 4 to 5.9 points, as compared with States such as Odisha, Haryana, West Bengal, and Jharkhand, which showed more improvement at 6 to 9.9 percentage points.

Urgent hearing sought in plea against Biren

The Hindu Bureau

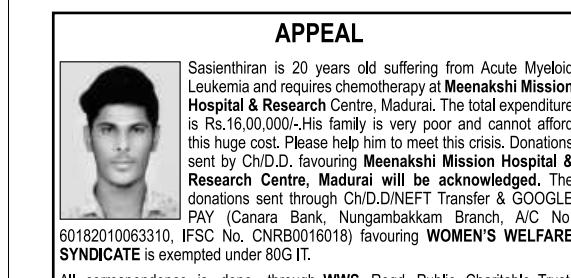
NEW DELHI

the Kuki Organisation for Human Trust, represented by advocate Prashant Bhushan, claiming Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh was instrumental in inciting and organising violence in the State which led to the loss of many lives.

The Chief Justice, however, told Mr. Bhushan to first make a written application.

Mr. Bhushan submitted that the petitioner had already complied with a direction from the top court in the previous hearing, on

November 11 last year, to produce audio tapes and any other material to substantiate its claim. He said the case was listed on February 7, but sought an earlier hearing. "The petitioner is being hounded," Mr. Bhushan submitted.



Sasienthiran is 20 years old suffering from Acute Myeloid Leukemia and requires chemotherapy at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. The total expenditure is Rs. 16,00,000/- His family is very poor and cannot afford this treatment. Please help him to meet this crisis. Donations sent by ChD.D. favouring Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai will be acknowledged. The donations sent through ChD.D.NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No. 60182010063310, IFSC No. CNRB0016018) favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is exempted under 80G IT.

All correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No. GF 1, Cordell Apartments, O.No.31, N.No.29, Pyrocks Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401 / 2823532 /

SC's journey reflects evolution in rights and reach, says CJI

Seventy-five years have transformed the top court and yet it stands anchored in its foundational mission, he says at the Ceremonial Bench

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, speaking at the Ceremonial Bench held to commemorate the closure of the Diamond Jubilee Year of the Supreme Court on Tuesday, said the three challenges before the court are pendency which continues to delay justice, mounting litigation costs and, the most fundamental of them all, practice of falsehood.

"While the court's journey reflects remarkable evolution in rights and reach, three challenges demand our attention. First, the weight of arrears which continues to delay justice. Second, mounting costs of litigation threatens true accessibility. Third, and perhaps most fundamentally - justice cannot thrive where and when falsehood is practised. These challenges mark the next frontier in our pursuit for justice," Chief Justice Khanna said in his formal address at the head of the Ceremonial Bench.

The Bench comprised all the serving judges of the Supreme Court. It was held in the Chief Justice of India's courtroom. Senior Bar leaders, including Attorney-General R. Venkataaraman, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, Supreme Court Bar Association president and senior advocate Kapil Sibal, senior advocates C. Vaidyanathan and Dushyant Dave and Su-



Transformation reflects a deeper recognition - that justice must be both principled and practical. In doing so, it makes the constitutional promise of justice a living reality for millions of Indians

CJI SANJIV KHANNA
Supreme Court

preme Court Advocates-on-Record Association president advocate Vipin Nair were in attendance among others in the packed courtroom.

Seventy-five years have both transformed the Supreme Court and yet it stands anchored in its foundational mission, he said.

"This transformation reflects a deeper recognition - that justice must be both principled and practical. In doing so, it makes the constitutional promise of justice - social, economic, and political - a living reality for millions of Indians," Chief Justice Khanna said.

Evolving role'

The CJI said the two decades of the 21st century stand as a testament to the Supreme Court's evolving role in our constitutional framework. No other apex court had navigated such an expansive domain, from personal liberty to environmental issues, from intellectual property rights to privacy to the right to information.

Chief Justice Khanna

Cong. wants to eradicate Sanatan Dharma: BJP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Questioning the "conditional" apology of Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge over his remarks on the Maha Kumbh, the BJP on Tuesday accused the party of being against Sanatan Dharma.

"He said that he apologises if anyone's sentiments have been hurt. It became evident that the sentiments of the Congress president and the Congress party were not hurt. It clearly shows that the Congress's sentiments are linked to eradication of Sanatan Dharma and dismantling global Hindutva," BJP spokesperson Sudhan-shu Trivedi said.

"It is in the very nature of Congress to be against Indian culture and Sanatan Dharma, because of which they make such deplorable statements without a hitch," he said.

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

DNB-PDCET 2025

NOTICE

National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) shall conduct the DNB-PDCET 2025 on 25th March 2025.

Please refer to the Information Bulletin at NBEMS website <https://natboard.edu.in> for details regarding DNB-PDCET 2025.

The online applications are being invited from 30th January 2025 to 19th February 2025 at NBEMS website <https://natboard.edu.in>

Candidate Care Support: +91-7996165333

• Helpdesk Portal on applicant login page

• Communication Web Portal on NBEMS Website

With complaints of unfulfilled vows piling up, AAP battles to retain tag of 'change agents'

NEWS ANALYSIS

Sandeep Phukan

NEW DELHI

Last week, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) returned to a campaign style that was synonymous with them in their initial days and propelled them to power for the first time in the 2013 Delhi Assembly election.

A poster, shared on the AAP's official X handle, declared Arvind Kejriwal the most honest leader, who outweighed all his "dishonest" rivals.

Their list of dishonest leaders included not only heavyweights such as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister Amit Shah but also Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and the Congress candidate against Mr. Kejriwal and MP Sandeep Dikshit.

said the evolution began with strengthening electoral democracy by establishing voters' right to information about candidates as an extension to freedom of expression, which included the right to impart and receive information.

The court dismantled gender stereotypes in employment. It recognised emerging digital rights as a new frontier of constitutional protection and struck down vague restrictions on online speech, extending constitutional safeguards to digital spaces.

In socio-economic justice, it broadened affirmative action to include economic criteria, recognising diverse forms of disadvantage in modern society, the CJI noted.

The court's decisions have strengthened India's economic landscape by injecting clarity, efficiency and fairness - be it the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, the Arbitration and Conciliation Act or strengthening alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, he added.



New challenge: Aam Aadmi Party leader Arvind Kejriwal going to file his nomination for the Delhi Assembly election. FILE PHOTO

now very much a part of the system that it once sought to change.

Despite the fact that both the AAP and the Congress are constituents of the INDIA bloc, the fault lines between the two parties have deepened.

While this could be par for the course in election season, there are significant differences between the 2013 Delhi Assembly polls, when the AAP joined electoral politics, and the 2025 polls. The party is

Facing his toughest political battle yet, Mr. Kejriwal has spared no effort to convey that other members of the INDIA bloc, like Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, had endorsed his party over the Congress.

Contrast this with the time when the AAP entered the political arena.

Mr. Kejriwal was the outsider, who was determined to "cleanse" the political system. And most of the parties, including those whose endorsement he had displayed to burnish his credentials, were part of the "corrupt" system.

Common man narrative

Though the Congress coined the slogan *Congress ka haath aam aadmi ke saath* [Congress' hand is with the common man] during the 2004 Lok Sabha poll, Mr. Kejriwal managed to carry forward the 'aam aadmi' narrative better.

However, after two full terms in power, the AAP's position as a change agent is under scrutiny, with complaints of unfulfilled promises piling up.

The AAP, for its part, claims that the Centre has

stifled the Delhi government by amending laws governing the National Capital Territory to ensure that its nominee, the Lieutenant-Governor, has the final say on most policy matters.

The party's positioning of having *kattar imaandar netas* [rigidly honest leaders] has also suffered as many of its leaders including Mr. Kejriwal himself and his former deputy, Manish Sisodia, spent considerable time in jail over allegations of receiving kickbacks to change the liquor excise policy. Amid allegations and counter allegations, Mr. Kejriwal and his colleagues are now relying on the 15 guarantees and populist measures such as free bus travel, subsidised electricity and water charges for *aam aadmis* to bail them out in what promises to be a closely contested election.

Primenewspapers search on telegram

BJP wants Kejriwal barred from campaigning following controversy over ammonia in Yamuna

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

A war of words ensued in the national capital ahead of the Assembly election, a day after the Aam Aadmi Party accused the BJP-led Haryana government of mixing ammonia in the waters of the Yamuna river before releasing it to Delhi, which could have caused "mass genocide".

The BJP, refuting the charge, sought a ban on Mr. Kejriwal's participation in campaigning until the completion of the electoral process for the Assembly elec-

tion, alleging that his continued participation may lead to "potential public unrest". The party sought the filing of an FIR against the former Delhi Chief Minister.

Mr. Kejriwal reacted with a scathing attack against the BJP, saying he would not "let people die in Delhi" because of poisonous water.

"Go ahead, file a case. Is there anything left that you haven't already done? You have sent me to jail, so hang me if you must. File a case, but will you kill the people?" he said at a press con-

ference. Mr. Kejriwal warned against 'playing politics' on an important issue concerning the health of people.

A BJP delegation comprising Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Bhupender Yadav, and Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh, met the Election Commission (EC), asking that the AAP leader be directed to retract his charge, and apologise for creating "panic" among people.

The BJP said Mr. Kejriwal's allegation was not only baseless but also dangerous to public order and

times above normal", warning that such water could not be treated or supplied to residents of the city without risk to their health. Ms. Atishi appealed to the EC to intervene in the matter.

EC asks for evidence
The EC asked Mr. Kejriwal to provide factual evidence to substantiate the allegations and directed him to furnish his response on the BJP complaints, especially on the factual and legal matrix along with evidentiary support thereof by 8 p.m. on January 29.

TVS HOLDINGS LIMITED

(Formerly known as Sundaram-Clayton Limited)

Regd office: "Chaitanya", No.12, Khader Nawaz Khan Road, Nungambakkam, Chennai 600 006.
Website : www.tvsholdings.com Tel : 044-2833 2115 Email : corpsec@tvsholdings.com
CIN : L64200TN1962PLC004792

STATEMENT OF STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

(Rs. in Crores)

S. No	Particulars	Standalone		Consolidated	
		Quarter ended 31.12.2024	Year ended 31.12.2023	Quarter ended 31.03.2024	Year ended 31.12.2023
		(Unaudited)	(Audited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)
1	Total Income	150.49	165.76	1,646.56	11,476.63
2	Net Profit / (Loss) before tax (before Exceptional Items)	114.61	17.34	415.19	1,023.64
3	Net Profit / (Loss) before tax (after Exceptional Items)	114.61	17.34	410.12	1,023.64
4	Net Profit / (Loss) after tax (after Exceptional Items)	85.07	8.57	338.74	685.45
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income / (Loss) (after tax)]	83.89	7.35	336.08	647.48
6	Equity share Capital (Face value of Rs. 5/- each)	10.12	10.12	10.12	10.12
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)			1,439.45	
8	Securities Premium Account	36.44	36.42	36.42	36.42
9	Networth	1,551.06	1,409.78	1,440.37	3,615.78
10	Outstanding Debt (Excluding Non Convertible Redeemable Preference Shares)	643.64	-	550.00	27,998.91
11	Outstanding redeemable Preference Shares	-	873.03	-	873.03
12	Debt Equity Ratio (Including exceptional item)	0.03	NA	0.31	6.10
13	Earnings Per Share (Face value of Rs. 5/- each) (not annualised) (In Rs.) (i) Basic (ii) Diluted	42.05 42.05	4.24 4.24	167.43 167.43	190.81 110.86
14	Capital Redemption Reserve			NA	
15	Debenture Redemption Reserve			NA	
16	Debt Service Coverage Ratio (Excluding NBFC Subsidiaries) (Times)	NA	NA	NA	2.44
17	Interest Service Coverage Ratio (Excluding NBFC Subsidiaries) (Times)	NA	NA	NA	15.37
18	Current ratio (Times)	NA	0.50	NA	NA
19	Long term debt to working capital (Times)	NA	NA	NA	2.24
20	Bad debts to Accounts Receivable (Times)	NA	-	NA	-
21	Current Liability Ratio (Times)	NA	0.98	NA	0.60
22	Total debts to total assets ratio (Times)	0.28	NA	0.23	0.60
23	Debtors Turnover ratio (Times)	NA	11.77	NA	23.72
24	Inventory Turnover ratio (Times)	NA	319.15	NA	6.10
25	Operating Margin (%)	NA	19.18	NA	NA
26	Net Profit Margin (%)	56.53	5.17	20.57	5.97

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulations 33 & 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the financial results are available on the Stock exchanges websites (www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com) and on Company's website (www.tvsholdings.com).
- Pursuant to the scheme of arrangement approved by Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, Chennai, the Die casting business of the Company was demerged on 10th August 2023. Accordingly, the results for the quarter ended 31st December 2023 are not comparable with the figures presented for the other periods.
- Figures for the previous periods have been regrouped, wherever necessary, to conform to the current period's classification.
- The Un-Audited Financial Results of the Company for the quarter ended 31st December 2024 can be accessed through the below QR Code:



Place : Bengaluru
Date : 28th January 2025

For TVS Holdings Limited
Sudarshan Venu
Managing Director

IN BRIEF



Markets snap 2-day fall, banks shine on RBI liquidity move

Snapping the two-day decline, benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded on Tuesday following intense buying in banking and rate-sensitive stocks as the RBI decided to inject liquidity into the financial system. The 30-share Sensex climbed 535.24 points, or 0.71% to settle at 75,901.41. The broader 50-share NSE Nifty appreciated by 128.10 points, or 0.56%, to close at 22,957.25. Among the sectoral indices, Bankex climbed the most by 1.49%. PTI

SBI Cards' net profit declines 30% in Q3 on delinquencies

SBI Cards and Payment Services has reported a 30% fall in net profit to ₹383 crore for the third quarter ended December 2024 on rising delinquencies. The pure-play credit card company, promoted by SBI, had posted a net profit of ₹549 crore during the corresponding period of the previous financial year. Its total income grew marginally to ₹4,767 crore during the October-December quarter from ₹4,742 crore in the year-ago period, SBI Card said in a regulatory filing. The company's total operating cost declined by 13% to ₹2,107 crore for the third quarter of FY25 from ₹2,426 crore a year ago. PTI

Sundaram Home Finance posts Q3 net of ₹62.6 crore

Sundaram Home Finance recorded a net profit of ₹62.6 crore for the October-December 2024 quarter, the company said on Tuesday. The Chennai-based company, a subsidiary of Sundaram Finance Ltd., had registered a net profit of ₹62.3 crore during the corresponding quarter of last financial year. Disbursements during the quarter under review rose by 35% to ₹1,692 crore. Net profit for the nine-month period ended December 31, 2024 stood at ₹173.09 crore as against ₹179.03 crore recorded in the corresponding period of last financial year. Disbursements surged 29% to ₹4,588 crore. PTI

NMDC unveils ₹70,000 crore capex plan

N. Ravi Kumar
HYDERABAD

State-owned miner NMDC will invest more than ₹70,000 crore over the next five years on augmenting its production to 100 million tonnes, building evacuation infrastructure and transforming the digital ecosystem.

"This is not business as usual... 100 million tonnes by 2030 is a priority effort for NMDC, a once in a lifetime opportunity towards building a global mining powerhouse," CMD (additional charge) Amitava Mukherjee told a vendors' meet hosted by the iron ore producer in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

"We are looking at a capital expenditure of approximately ₹70,000 crore," he added.

The company promised ease of doing business and in return, solicited speed and quality of the highest order from the partners, NMDC said on the meeting in which apart from Mr. Mukherjee, director (commercial) V. Suresh, director (technical) Vinay Kumar, and other senior officials interacted with the firm's contractors, consultants and vendors.

NMDC, which had clocked a record 45 million tonne iron ore output last fiscal, has drawn up roadmap to achieve the plan to more than double the production by the decade.

The company is exploring feasibility of partnerships for specific expansion projects to reach the ambitious 100 MT target by 2030, its top brass said.

Hyundai Motor India Q3 net slips 19%

Revenue from operations dipped 1.3% for automobile major who blamed lower margins on subdued demand and geopolitical headwinds; recently listed firm is betting big on Creta EV driving growth and has three more EVs lined up

Lalatendu Mishra

MUMBAI

India's second largest automobile producer Hyundai Motor India Ltd. (HMIL) on Tuesday reported a 19% slippage in its consolidated net profit during the third quarter (Q3) ended December 31, 2024, citing lower margins that were largely driven by subdued demand and geopolitical factors.

HMIL's net profit stood at ₹1,160.7 crore in Q3, down from ₹1,425.2 crore in the same quarter of 2023-24, while revenue from operations dipped a marginal 1.34% to ₹16,648 crore, from ₹16,875 crore over the same period.

"While the challenges persist in the overall market due to global factors, our business fundamentals remain strong, and we remain confident in our ability to leverage our strengths and actively explore potential opportunities to improve our volumes and profitability,"



Hot wheels: HMIL, which recently launched the Creta Electric, has a positive outlook on the Indian EV market. PTI

HMIL managing director Unsoo Kim said. The company sold a total of 1,86,408 units of passenger vehicles, including 1,46,022 units in the domestic market with a strong contribution from the SUV segment. During the same

quarter of last year, HMIL had sold a total of 1,90,979 units, including 1,47,329 units that were sold in the domestic market.

In a sign that rural demand is holding up while urban demand remains tepid, HMIL's rural penetration reached 21.2% compared with 19.7% a year ago. Export volumes stood at 40,386 units during Q3. Hyundai also achieved its highest-ever CNG penetration during the quarter, reaching 15% from 12% in the year ago period.

"With access to HMC's global powertrain technologies like hybrids, hydrogen, flex fuel, the company believes it is well placed to adapt to any change in demand dynamics and regulatory environment," it said in a statement.

country's EV landscape. The company is building a strong EV ecosystem in India through localisation, charging infrastructure and expects to have a robust pipeline with three more EVs planned in due time. Aligned with its capacity expansion plans from Pune plant, the company would also be focusing on diversifying its product portfolio, and would also look to explore opportunities in alternate eco-friendly powertrains.

With a positive outlook on growing electric vehicle (EV) penetration in India, the firm said it expects its recently launched Creta Electric to drive growth and reckoned it will be a 'game-changer' in the year ago period.

With a positive outlook

on growing electric vehicle (EV) penetration in India, the firm said it expects its recently launched Creta Electric to drive growth and reckoned it will be a 'game-changer' in the year ago period.

TVS Motor's Q3: PAT up 19%, revenue 11%

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

TVS Motor Company Ltd. reported Q3 consolidated net profit rose 19% to ₹609 crore from ₹510 crore in the year-earlier period.

Consolidated revenue from operations grew 11% to ₹11,135 crore as against ₹10,114 crore a year earlier.

The overall two-wheeler and three-wheeler sales including exports grew by 10% registering 12.12 lakh units in quarter as against 11.01 lakh units in the quarter ended December 2023. Motorcycle sales grew 6% at 5.56 lakh units in the quarter as against 5.23 lakh units in the same period last year.

Scooter sales for the



quarter grew by 22% to 4.93 lakh units as against 4.04 lakh units in the year-earlier period.

Three-wheeler sales for the quarter under review were at 29,000 units as against 38,000 units in the same period last year.

Electric scooter sales for the quarter grew by 57% to 76,000 units as against 48,000 units in the year-earlier period.

Aurobindo Pharma dips 3% after U.S. FDA move

The Hindu Bureau

HYDERABAD

Aurobindo Pharma shares dropped over 3% on Tuesday in the backdrop of U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) inspection report with a voluntary action indicated (VAI) classification to subsidiary Apitiora Pharma's active pharmaceutical ingredient plant near Hyderabad.

The U.S. FDA inspection of conducted from September 23-27, had concluded with 10 observations. The unit has since received a FDA report classifying the facility as VAI, the parent company said.

Local sales hit, Bajaj Auto Q3 PAT up 8%

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

Bajaj Auto Ltd. reported an 8% growth in its third-quarter (Q3) consolidated net profit to ₹2,196 crore from ₹2,033 crore in the year-earlier period.

Consolidated total revenue from operations increased 8% to ₹13,169 crore compared with ₹12,165 crore in the same period last year.

On a standalone basis, the company posted a net profit of ₹2,109 crore as compared with ₹2,042 crore a year ago, up 3%. Total revenue from operations grew to ₹12,807 crore as compared with ₹12,114 crore a year ago, up 6%.

Domestic two-wheeler volumes during the quarter at 5,87,855 units grew 10% from 6,55,453 units a year ago.

Commercial vehicle volumes too declined 3% during the quarter to 1,19,250 units as compared with 1,22,828 units.

Total exports during the quarter under review grew 22% to 5,17,367 units compared with 4,22,716 units a year earlier.

Primenewspapers search on telegram for daily newspaper

TVS MOTOR COMPANY LIMITED

Regd office: "Chaitanya", No. 12, Khader Nawaz Khan Road, Nungambakkam, Chennai 600 006
Website: www.tvsmotor.com Telephone No. (044) 28332115 Email: contactus@tvsmotor.com CIN:L35921TN1992PLC022845

STATEMENT OF STANDALONE & CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

(Rs. In Crores)

S. No	Particulars	Standalone		Consolidated	
		Quarter ended	Year ended	Quarter ended	Year ended
		31.12.2024	31.12.2023	31.03.2024	31.12.2024
1	Total income from operations	9,097.05	8,245.01	31,776.37	11,134.63
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional items)	836.68	775.02	2,780.66	905.92
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional items)	836.68	775.02	2,780.66	905.92
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after exceptional items)	618.48	593.35	2,083.00	609.35
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income / (Loss) (after tax)]	619.74	604.41	2,063.26	573.02
6	Paid up Equity share capital (Face value of Re.1/- each)	47.51	47.51	47.51	47.51
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	-	-	7,683.53	-
8	Security Premium Account			- NOT APPLICABLE -	
9	Networth	9,576.12	7,615.14	7,725.95	8,299.15
10	Outstanding Debt	1,145.39	1,162.83	1,027.61	23,357.35
11	Outstanding redeemable Preference Shares			- NOT APPLICABLE -	
12	Debt Equity Ratio (Times)	0.12	0.15	0.13	2.82
13	Earnings Per Share (Face value of Re. 1/- each) (i) Basic (in Rs.) (ii) Diluted (in Rs.)	13.02	12.49	43.84	11.91
14	Capital Redemption Reserve			- NOT APPLICABLE -	
15	Debenture Redemption Reserve			- NOT APPLICABLE -	
16	Debt Service Coverage Ratio (Excluding NBFC Subsidiary) (Times)	5.49	2.21	2.52	3.22
17	Interest Service Coverage Ratio (Excluding NBFC Subsidiary) (Times)	30.43	28.88	21.64	12.88
18	Current Ratio (Times)	0.60	0.70	0.64	1.03
19	Long term debt to working capital (Times)	-	-	-	1.99
20	Bad debts to Accounts Receivable ratio (Times)	-	-	-	-
21	Current liability ratio (Times)	0.87	0.77	0.79	0.66
22	Total debts to total assets ratio (Times)	0.07	0.10	0.09	0.59
23	Debtors Turnover ratio (Times)	24.70	28.75	27.86	22.39
24	Inventory Turnover ratio (Times)	17.48	17.82	17.97	11.87
25	Operating Margin (%)	11.9	11.2	11.1	10.7
26	Net Profit Margin (%)	6.8	7.2	6.6	5.5

Notes:

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 & 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the financial results are available on the Stock exchange websites (www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com) and on Company's website (www.tvsmotor.com).
- Figures for the previous periods have been regrouped, wherever necessary, to conform to the current period's classification.
- The Detailed Financial Results of the Company for the quarter ended 31st December 2024 can be accessed through the below QR Code:



MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	75,901	0.71
US Dollar	86.57	-0.30
Gold	82,840	-0.19
Brent oil	77.09	-0.20

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE

</tbl

NEW YORK

Israel defies UN and vows to cut ties with UNRWA, with U.S. blessing



Israel, backed by the U.S., will stop contact with the UN's Palestinian humanitarian relief agency UNRWA and any other body acting on its behalf, its UN envoy said. Signalling a shift in the U.S. position by the Trump administration, U.S. envoy Danny Danon called for a probe into Israeli claims that UNRWA sites were used by Hamas. AFP

DHAKA

Bangladesh risks repeating Hasina govt's errors: Human Rights Watch



Reprisals against scribes and indiscriminate arrests risk the chance to end Bangladesh's legal abuses seen under ousted premier Sheikh Hasina, the Human Rights Watch warned. The watchdog's Asia director Elaine Pearson called for the Mohamed Yunus-led interim government to implement swift and structural reforms. AFP

WASHINGTON

Trump plans to revise Pentagon's policy on transgender troops



U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order directing Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth to revise the Pentagon's policy on transgender troops, likely setting in motion a future ban on their military service. Mr. Trump also provided for the deployment of a space-based missile defence shield for the U.S. AP

SEOUL

176 people aboard evacuated as South Korean airplane catches fire



The tail of a passenger aircraft caught fire at an airport in South Korea's second-largest city on Tuesday, forcing the evacuation of 176 people on board. The Air Busan plane bound for Hong Kong from Gimhae International Airport in southeastern Busan caught fire at around 10:30 p.m. local time (1900 IST). AFP

Lab holding Ebola sample in Goma is at risk: Red Cross

Agence France-Presse
GENEVA

The Red Cross voiced alarm on Tuesday over the risk that fighting in the DR Congo city of Goma could cause samples of Ebola and other pathogens held in a laboratory to escape.

The Red Cross is "very concerned about the situation in the laboratory of the national biomedical research institute, which is facing a risk of power cuts", ICRC regional director for Africa Patrick Youssef said.

Speaking to reporters in Geneva, he warned of "unimaginable consequences if the (samples), including the Ebola virus, that it contains were to spread."

Troops battle Rwanda-backed rebels as protests erupt in Congo's capital

Demonstrators attack several foreign embassies, including those of Rwanda, France and Belgium; UN says humanitarian situation in Goma is extremely worrying with a hospital coming under attack, killing newborns and pregnant women

Associated Press
GOMA

Security forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo were fighting on Tuesday against Rwanda-backed rebels who advanced into a key eastern city in a major escalation of a decades-long conflict.

Residents reported gunfire overnight in Goma, a city of 2 million people which the rebels claimed to have captured on Monday. Explosions and gunfire were heard near the now-shut Goma airport.

Goma is a regional trade and humanitarian hub



Chaos unfolds: People protest in Kinshasa on Tuesday against M23 rebels' advance into the city of Goma in Congo's east. AP

holding hundreds of thousands of the more than 6 million people displaced by eastern Congo's prolonged conflict over ethnic tensions.

Dozens of demonstrators attacked several foreign embassies, including those of Rwanda, France

and Belgium, on Tuesday demanding that they oppose the advance of M23 rebels into Goma. Police fired teargas at the protesters as they marched to the embassies in Kinshasa, looting and setting fires to parts of the buildings. The embassies of Kenya and Uganda were also attacked.

The humanitarian situation in Goma "is extremely worrying, with a new threshold of violence and suffering reached today," Bruno Lemarquis, the United Nations humanitarian coordinator for Congo, told reporters on Monday.

There were active combat zones in all areas of the

city, with civilians taking cover and heavy artillery fire directed at the city center on Monday, Mr. Lemarquis said. He said several shells struck the Charité Maternelle Hospital in central Goma, "killing and injuring civilians, including newborns and pregnant women."

Three South African peacekeepers were killed on Monday, while a fourth soldier succumbed to injuries sustained in fighting days ago. That makes 17 peacekeepers and foreign soldiers who have been killed in the fighting, according to UN and Army officials.

Pak. Senate passes Bill that can 'scuttle freedom of speech'

Associated Press
ISLAMABAD



Pakistan's upper house of parliament on Tuesday passed a controversial Bill that critics argue is designed to suppress freedom of speech.

The Bill, passed by the lower house of parliament on last Thursday, grants the government extensive powers to impose heavy fines and incarcerate social media users for spreading disinformation.

The approval removes the last obstacle in the Bill's path. It will now be sent to the President Asif Ali Zardari, who is likely to sign it quickly.

Under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act,

authorities would create an agency with the power to order the immediate blocking of content deemed "unlawful and offensive" from social media, such as content critical of judges, the armed forces, parliament or provincial assemblies. Those failing to comply could face temporary or permanent bans.

Primenewspapers search on telegram for daily newspaper

+ Serbia PM quits in attempt to calm anti-graft protests

Associated Press
BELGRADE



ing his resignation. Novi Sad Mayor Milan Djuric also stepped down.

Way forward

Mr. Vucevic's resignation could lead to an early parliamentary election. The resignation must be confirmed by Serbia's Parliament, which has 30 days to choose a new government or call a snap election.

Opposition parties have said they would insist on a transitional government that would create conditions for a free and fair election.

"It is my appeal for everyone to calm down the passions and return to dialogue," Mr. Vucevic told a news conference announc-

Qatar reaffirms support for two states as Trump moots relocation of Gazans

Agence France-Presse
DOHA

Qatar reaffirmed its support for a two-state solution on Tuesday after U.S. President Donald Trump repeated his call to move Palestinians from Gaza to Egypt or Jordan.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari did not reveal details of conversations with U.S. officials, but said Qatar often didn't see "eye to eye" with its allies.

"Our position has always been clear to the necessity of the Palestinian people receiving their rights, and that the two-state solution is the only



Long way back: A displaced Palestinian pushes an elderly woman on their return to their homes in northern Gaza. AP

path forward," Mr. Ansari told a regular media briefing when asked about Mr. Trump's comments. "We don't see eye to eye on a lot of things with all our allies, not only the United States, but we work very closely with them to make sure that we formulate policy together," he added.

Qatar, the U.S. and

Train services stop across Bangladesh as union strikes

Associated Press
DHAKA

Trains were cancelled across Bangladesh on Tuesday as railway staff went on strike for higher pensions and other benefits, affecting tens of thousands of passengers and freight transport.

Saidur Rahman, acting president of the Bangladesh Railway Running Staff and Workers Union, said the strike was called after a meeting with the interim government headed by Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus failed to reach a deal late on Monday.

Sport

Hyderabad Toofans loses shootout to Gonasika but makes semifinals

HIL

Ashin Prasad
ROURKELA

With 20 seconds left, Jack Waller slid to make a connection from a cross, but Dominic Dixon made a sprawling save to keep the scores level (3-3), securing Hyderabad Toofans' place in the Hockey India League semifinals.

Toofans lost the shootout 1-3 but the point in regulation time was enough for Toofans in a thrilling contest against Team Gonasika at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium on Tuesday. Gonasika didn't help itself when an early error allowed Jacob Anderson to race through the middle



Super saver: Payne came to Gonasika's rescue in the shootout against Toofans. M. VEDHAN

and score off a reverse hit after just 20 seconds on the clock to put Toofans 1-0 up, setting up for a goal-filled opening two quarters.

Toofans survived a scare when Sumit cleared the ball off the line before it got its second. Gonasika forward Arjeet Singh found himself outside his own cir-

cle and was dispossessed by Maico Casella. The forward's fierce strike took a deflection of Tim Brand's stick and into the net.

Gonasika cut the lead by one when Victor Charlet's penalty corner struck the midriff of Arthur de Sloover, leading to a penalty stroke on referral. Toofans swapped out the goalkeeper for Dixon but Charlet got the better of him from the spot by placing it low to his right.

In the third quarter, both teams kept cancelling each other out as Toofans squandered five short corners in the period with Gonzalo Peillat having an off night with his drag-flicks.

Gonasika made Toofans sweat for the final five minutes when Charlet converted his penalty corner to set up a thrilling finish before Dixon emerged with a season-defining save.

The result: Team Gonasika 3 (Charlet 12 & 55, Hundal 24) drew with Hyderabad Toofans 3 (Anderson 1, Brand 6, Lakra 25); Gonasika won 3-1 in shootout.

'I still think [Sindhu] can be competitive. It's about how efficient she becomes'

N. Sudarshan

BENGALURU

There is no sugar-coating the fact that P.V. Sindhu is not the player she once was. The 29-year-old double Olympic medallist didn't win a trophy in 2023, had a disappointing time at the 2024 Paris Games and ended her two-year title-drought only at the Syed Modi International last year.

However, Agus Dwi Santoso, the famed Indonesian coach who trained Sindhu in the lead up to the Paris Olympics, and someone who has trained the elite in Thailand, Korea and back home, felt all was not lost for one of India's sporting greats.

"It is also about the mind," Santoso opined. "You may be a good attacking player, but if you are

player so I cannot talk freely, but when I see, it is all about focus and priority," the 59-year-old said after a training session at Game Fit Academy in the city's suburbs where he heads the high-performance coaching program.

"I still think she can be competitive. It's about how efficient she becomes."

Santoso cited current Badminton World Federation president Poul-Erik Hoyer Larsen from Denmark, who won the men's singles gold medal at the 1996 Atlanta Games at nearly 31, to highlight how badminton was not just about physical prowess.

"He was mentally very strong. It was very difficult to get even one point from him. So how to beat such



players? You have to attack the mind."

Santoso was however happy with India's talent pool and felt the supply line of champions would long continue.

"I see a lot of good young talent. Especially in women's singles, compared to other countries, India has a lot of potential."

"But only a few become world's [best] players. How? The culture has to change."

"Indians were born clever. But they are not able to manage pain, sorrow and suffering. Many players want the shortest route to success. They do not see it like a process. But you should [aspire to] be the best professional [there is]."

not strong in the mind, then... A good example is Poul-Erik Hoyer Larsen. Back then only those in the 20s were winning. But how did he win?

"He was mentally very strong. It was very difficult to get even one point from him. So how to beat such

CM YK

ON A ROLL

Varun continues good run, rewrites Kuldeep's record



Varun Chakaravarthy broke Kuldeep Yadav's record for most wickets by an Indian spinner over a 10-match stretch in T20Is. With his five-for on Tuesday, Varun took his tally to 27 scalps in his last 10 games and overtook Kuldeep's mark of 25. Overall, Varun has played 16 T20Is and taken 29 wickets.

HE'S BACK!

Shami bowls three overs at full tilt, allays concerns over his fitness



When Mohammed Shami marked his run-up before the toss, it was confirmed that he would be playing his first international since the ODI World Cup final in November 2023. Shami, who replaced Arshdeep Singh, bowled the opening over of the match. He bowled at close to 140kmph, allaying concerns over his fitness.

RECORD-BREAKER

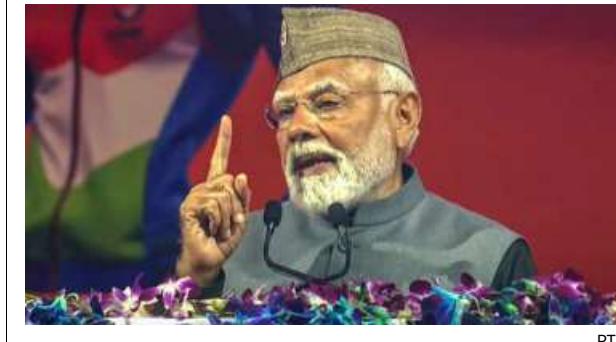
Trisha's historic hundred sets up India's big win over Scotland



Trisha Gongadi scored the first-ever century in the women's U-19 T20 World Cup and set up India's 150-run win over Scotland in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday. **The scores:** India 208/1 in 20 overs (Trisha Gongadi 110 n.o., G. Kamalini 51) bt Scotland 58 in 14 overs (Ayushi Shukla 4/8, Vaishnavi Sharma 3/6, Trisha 3/6). **PoM:** Trisha.

GRAND PLANS

Hosting Olympics will take Indian sports to new heights: PM



Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the country is using all its might to get the hosting rights of 2036 Olympics, which will take Indian sports to new heights. "Wherever Olympics happen, all sectors gain. It creates better facilities for athletes," he said while speaking at the opening ceremony of the 38th National Games in Dehradun.

Duckett, Livingstone and the bowlers keep England alive with gritty show

The seamers and leg-spinner Rashid put the skids on the Indian chase; skipper Suryakumar perishes cheaply yet again; Varun's five-for goes in vain

ENGLAND IN INDIA

Sankar Narayanan E.H.
RAJKOT

An indifferent Indian batting line-up made a meal of England's 171 for nine as the visitor stormed back into the five-match series with a 26-run victory in the third T20I at the Niranjan Shah Stadium here on Tuesday.

The top-order's no-holds-barred approach right from the go opened the door for England and the tourist grabbed the chance with alacrity.

Each of the three English pacers used in the PowerPlay claimed a wicket as Sanju Samson, Abhishek Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav perished after choosing to take the ultra-aggressive route.

Tilak Varma's circumspect method, though, was not enough to defend his stumps against Adil Rashid (4-0-15-1).

India stood at 68 for four after eight overs and the target looked far away.

After four consecutive overs without a boundary, Washington Sundar felt the pinch and was unsuccessful in his attempt to clear mid-on off Jamie Overton (4-0-24-3).

Once Axar Patel and Hardik Pandya went back to the hut, the England camp would have felt assured of its spirited bow-



Game-changer: Livingstone, with England reeling at 127 for eight, shifted gears. VIJAY SONEJI

ling effort yielding the right result.

Mohammed Shami – who bowled three overs on his international comeback – did hit a six in his four-ball stay but the game had drifted away by then.

Earlier, England fell flat in front of Varun Chakaravarthy (4-0-24-5) once again after being asked to bat.

The first wicket to fall was that of Phil Salt, who

was outfoxed by Hardik. The move to bowl a full-length slower bowler after a well-directed short ball made the England opener hit one straight to Abhishek at cover.

Ben Duckett (51, 28b, 7x4, 2x6), however, ensured England recovered from the early loss. His five boundaries in a row – the first three off Hardik and two off Washington – provided an ideal launch pad

for the visitor. Suryakumar's ploy to employ the spin-bowling variety at his disposal proved a masterstroke as Varun and Axar struck in their second overs.

While Varun had Buttler caught by Samson off a seam-up delivery, the left-arm spinner forced Duckett to hit straight to long-on.

Harry Brook's horrid run continued as he

SCOREBOARD**ENGLAND**

Phil Salt c Abhishek b Hardik 5 (7b, 1x4), Ben Duckett c Abhishek b Axar 51 (28b, 7x4, 2x6), Jos Buttler c Samson b Varun 24 (22b, 1x4, 1x6), Harry Brook b Bishnoi 8 (10b), Liam Livingstone c Jurel b Hardik 43 (24b, 1x4, 5x6), Jamie Smith c Jurel b Varun 6 (4b, 1x6), Jamie Overton b Varun 0 (1b), Brydon Carse c Tilak b Varun 3 (4b), Jofra Archer b Varun 0 (2b), Adil Rashid (not out) 10 (9b, 1x4), Mark Wood (not out) 10 (10b); Extras (b-5, nb-1, w-5): 11; Total (for nine wkts. in 20 overs): 171.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-7 (Salt, 1.3 overs), 2-83 (Buttler, 8.6), 3-87 (Duckett, 9.6), 4-108 (Brook, 12.4), 5-115 (Smith, 13.3), 6-115 (Overton, 13.4), 7-127 (Carse, 15.4), 8-127 (Archer, 15.6), 9-147 (Livingstone 17.1).

INDIA BOWLING

Shami 3-0-25-0, Hardik 4-0-33-2, Washington 1-0-15-0, Varun 4-0-24-5, Bishnoi 4-0-46-1, Axar 3-0-19-1, Abhishek 1-0-4-0.

INDIA

Sanju Samson c Rashid b Archer 3 (6b), Abhishek Sharma c Archer b Carse 24 (14b, 5x4),

chopped one off Ravi Bishnoi and ignited another collapse. Jamie Smith, too, fell after trying to muscle one out of the ground off Varun. When Overton was dismissed for a golden duck off the next delivery, England slipped further.

Varun was not done for the day as he came back to become the third Indian to claim multiple five-fors in T20Is after Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Kuldeep Yadav.

After getting Carse caught in the deep, Varun brought out the googly and Archer's defence was no match to the pacer.

Livingstone (43, 24b, 1x4, 5x6) farmed the strike at the fag end of the innings.

His three mighty sixes off Bishnoi over midwicket not only revived England but also set up a total that helped Buttler's men stay alive in the series.

PM throws open National Games



Let the games begin: PM Modi and Uttarakhand CM Dhami at the opening ceremony. PTI

Press Trust of India

DEHRADUN

the stadium riding on a decked-up golf cart along with Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami.

An estimated 25,000 spectators packed the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium despite the chilly weather to catch the ceremony live.

The PM had also opened the last two editions of the Games in 2022 (Gujarat) and 2023 (Goa).

Indian Olympic Association President P.T. Usha and Commonwealth Games Federation chief Chris Jenkins were also in attendance at the ceremony.

Uttarakhand's own Lakshya Sen, a world championships medal-winning shuttler, brought the Games torch and handed it over to Modi, who placed it in its designated place.

Most of the established sporting stars of the country such as javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, shuttler P.V. Sindhu, shooter Manu Bhaker are giving it a miss, leaving the stage for other athletes to make a mark.

Relentless Bumrah wins the ICC Cricketer of the Year prize

Press Trust of India

DUBAI

India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah on Tuesday won the prestigious Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC men's Cricketer of the Year after delivering "a masterclass in skill, precision, and relentless consistency" across formats in a record-shattering 2024.

The 31-year-old was adjudged the ICC's Test Cricketer of the Year on Monday and was also named in the Test Team of the Year last week.

"Jasprit Bumrah has been honoured with the prestigious Sir Garfield Sobers Award for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year at the ICC Awards, recognising his extraordinary 2024, in which he dominated opponents in the longest as well as the shortest format of the game," the ICC said.

Bumrah played a key role across formats for India as he became the fifth winner of the award from the country after Rahul



Lethal weapon: Bumrah played a big role in India's triumph in the T20 World Cup. FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

Dravid (2004), Sachin Tendulkar (2010), Ravichandran Ashwin (2016) and Virat Kohli (2017, 2018).

In Tests, Bumrah finished the year with 71 wickets in only 13 matches at an average of 14.92, which was also the second best among Indian fast bowlers behind Kapil Dev's 75 wickets in 1983.

New Zealand all-rounder Amelia Kerr made his

tory by becoming the first Kiwi recipient of the prestigious Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy, earning the title of ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year for her exceptional performances in 2024.

The 24-year-old stood out among her peers, surpassing Laura Wolvaardt, Chamari Athapaththu, and Annabel Sutherland to claim the top honour in women's cricket.

National champion TN suffers a few jitters on slippery court

Stan Rayan

DEHRADUN

For a brief while in the third quarter, as Services took a 52-44 lead against Tamil Nadu, coach C.V. Sunny was very worried. Tamil Nadu had won the men's National basketball title just a couple of weeks ago, but the team's National Games opener did not start the way he had planned.

Services, riding on Sahil's impressive form, hung on to that lead and moved to 65-58 midway through the last quarter.

"I realised then that if we didn't do something different, we wouldn't win the game. I asked them to go for full-court pressure and our opponents could not bring the ball to the front. And we got a lot of interceptions and converted some baskets," a relieved Sunny told *The Hindu* after pulling off a 76-69 victory in the league match at the MPSC indoor stadium here on Tuesday.



Tough fight: Services' Sahil was in great form but TN came up with strong defence in the last quarter to win the day. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The court had a newly-laid, shiny wooden floor but the national champions did not appear very comfortable on it.

"For our sort of game, it was very slippery, that affected us a lot. They could not stand, they were sort of sliding on the floor," ex-

plained Sunny. But in the end, they went home a happy lot.

Meanwhile, a fighting Delhi edged past Chhattisgarh 75-71 in a women's league match. Delhi was down 33-41 at half-time but managed to stay calm at crucial moments and that

made a difference.

"It was our mistake only, we were not playing well. They are good shooters and we allowed them to shoot at will," said Delhi's 21-year-old Rashi Kotani who played a big role in her team's recovery with her shooting, defence and rebound skills.

"In the second quarter, we thought, it's okay, we still have 20 minutes, but in the end, pressure was building. We were gaining the lead and then conceding it again," she said.

The results (league): Men:

Tamil Nadu 76 (Lokeswaran Mohan 16, Muin Bek Hafeez 11, Pranav Prince 11) bt Services 69 (Sahil 22).

Delhi 116 (Vishesh Bhriguanshi 17, Sunil 17) bt Madhya Pradesh 61 (Anmol Sharma 15, Rakesh Sharma 12).

Women: Delhi 76 (Rashi Kotani 21, Simran Kaur 23, Namrata 16) bt Chhattisgarh 75 (D. Kirtin 18, Neha Karwa 17, Nisha Kashyap 17).

Punjab 96 (Komalpreet Kaur 28, Amolpreet Kaur 19) bt Uttarakhand 54 (Anju 27, Aparna Singh 14).

Lakshya's presence lights up badminton event

Sports Bureau

DEHRADUN

Lakshya Sen, the No. 1 Indian in the World rankings, will be the star to watch in the National Games men's badminton event which begins at the Parade Ground indoor hall here on Wednesday.

The men's and women's badminton begins with the team event but it is not clear whether Olympian Lakshya, the World No. 10 and a former World Championship bronze medallist, will play the inter-State championship but organising officials confirmed that he will play for the National Games host Uttarakhand in men's singles which start on February 2.

But Maharashtra's young star Malavika Bansod, who was tipped to be the top seed in women's singles, has pulled out of Games.

IN BRIEF



Venezia, Verona share points, last-placed Monza loses again

Venezia and Verona were still looking for their first win of the year after the relegation-threatened clubs drew 1-1 in Serie A. Verona was fourth from bottom, while Venezia remained second to last, three points ahead of Monza, which missed a chance to move off the bottom by losing at Genoa 2-0.

The results: Venezia 1 (Zerbin 28) drew with Verona 1 (Tchatchoua 76); Genoa 2 (De Winter 61, Vasquez 84) bt Monza 0.

Diya Ramesh puts it across Sanmitha Lokesh

Top seed Diya Ramesh downed qualifier Sanmitha Lokesh 6-2, 7-6(4) in the girls' first round of the ITF junior tennis tournament in Indore on Tuesday.

The results, u-18 first round: Boys: Shaurya Swarup bt Abhinav Putta (Aus) 6-2, 6-0; Dev Patel bt Amit Moond 7-5, 6-1; Yashwin Dahbiya bt Arav Dhekial 3-6, 6-2, 6-1; Aashraya Mehra bt Sri Sai Myagapula 6-3, 6-2; Daksh Kukreti bt Prakaash Sarran 6-3, 6-2; Tanush Ghyldal bt Fazal Ali Meer 6-2, 6-2.
Girls: Diya Ramesh bt Sanmitha Lokesh 6-2, 7-6(4); Saina Vaidya (Sgp) bt Divya Ungrish 2-6, 6-3; Sejal Bhutada bt Nainika Bendram 3-2 (retired); Aanya Choubey bt Siya Prasade 6-3, 6-3; Deepshika Vinayagamurthy bt Asmi Raghwanshi 6-2, 6-2.

Suleman Elahi leads in men's trap with 74

Suleman Elahi led with 74, following rounds of 25, 25, 24 in men's trap in the third Digvijay Singh shotgun championship at the Madhya Pradesh Academy in Bhopal on Tuesday. Akash Kushwaha, Vivaan Kapoor, Vinay Pratap Singh, Akash Saharan, Olympian Prithviraj Tondaiman, Arshad Khan, Mohd. Sultan, Fahd Sultan and Rayyan Rizvi, were on 73. National champion Shardul Vihani was in the 27th spot. In women's trap, Neetu, Preeti Rajak and Pragati Dubey were in joint lead with 95 after four rounds and they were followed by Olympian Rajeshwari Kumari (94). The top-6 shooters will make the finals after five rounds.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SCHEDULE

Aston Villa vs. Celtic, Bayer Leverkusen vs. Sparta Prague, Borussia Dortmund vs. Shakhtar Donetsk, Young Boys vs. Red Star Belgrade, Barcelona vs. Atalanta, Bayern Munich vs. Slovan Bratislava, Inter Milan vs. Monaco, RB Salzburg vs. Atlético Madrid, Girona vs. Arsenal; Dinamo Zagreb vs. AC Milan, Juventus vs. Benfica, Lille vs. Feyenoord, Manchester City vs. Club Brugge, PSV Eindhoven vs. Liverpool, Sturm Graz vs. RB Leipzig, Sporting Lisbon vs. Bologna, Brest vs. Real Madrid, Stuttgart vs. Paris Saint-Germain.
(all matches on Jan. 30, 1.30 a.m. IST).

LIVE TELECAST

U-19 Women's T20 World Cup: Hotstar, 8 a.m. & 12 p.m.
Sri Lanka vs Australia: 1st Test, day 1, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 10 a.m.
I-League: Sony Sports Ten 1 (SD & HD) & LIV, 3.30 & 7 p.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.
Champions League: Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 3, 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 1.30 a.m. (Thursday)

DeChambeau the star attraction as the International Series gets underway

GOLF

Kamesh Srinivasan

GURUGRAM

Bryson DeChambeau, the reigning US Open champion, may be the star attraction, but it was the DLF Golf course that won all the admiration, as players got a feel of the course in preparation of the \$2 million International Series event here on Tuesday.

"Wasn't expecting such a beauty. It is awesome," said Sebastian Munoz of Colombia, in an interaction with the media.

Anirban Lahiri had made an earnest effort to convince the best of players from around the world to make the trip to India for the event, nicely slotted at the start of the



Ready for the ride: Ortiz, Niemann and Munoz answer the media about competing in the International Series tournament. KAMESH SRINIVASAN

season, and the stars expressed their appreciation for him both as a player and a person.

"Anirban convinced us to come here. He didn't disappoint," said Joaquin Niemann, who had won two titles on the PGA tour before joining the LIV Golf.

As champion SSP Chawrasia put it, the course

could be challenging, as it is not just about hitting long at the DLF. The fast and firm greens could pose some serious challenge even for the best.

"Am excited to be here. The course being difficult or easy, depends on how well you play," said Carlos Ortiz from Mexico.

For Chawrasia himself it

was good to be back at the DLF and play an event in such a strong field. "Am looking forward to playing my best," said Chawrasia.

"It is a fantastic tournament. Puts us on the golf map. People will get to see the course. It is good for Indian golf. Really fun to play," said Rahil Gangjee.

The praise for Bryson

was unanimous, as the two-time Major champion was seen to be getting more people to watch golf around the world.

"He is doing what Tiger Woods had done to the game. I want to see him hit the ball," said Gangjee.

"Bryson has changed he way people watch golf. He is the guy to watch when he plays well," said Ortiz.

"A lot of people come to the course to watch Bryson play. Indians can enjoy his game," said Niemann.

The players had the novel experience of hitting the ball from the 22nd floor of a building near the course, and were quite excited about it. With a high number of top players in action, in the beautifully challenging course, it should be an exciting fare from Thursday.

7-6(7), [10-7]; Alevtina Ibragimova & Elena Pridankina bt Vaishnavi Adkar & Maaya Rajeshwaran 7-6(6), 6-7(7), [10-7].

Diana Marcinkevica (Lat) & Naho Sato (Jpn) bt Zeel Desai & Pranjali Yadlapalli 6-2, 6-4; Yuriko Miyazaki (Gr) & Kathinka von Deichmann (Lie) bt Priska Nugroho (Ina) & Alana Smith (USA) 6-1, 6-2; Tian Fangnan (Chn) bt Vaishnavi Adkar 6-3, 6-4; Kathinka von Deichmann (Lie) bt Daria Kudashova 6-4, 6-3; Iryna Shmyrovych bt Zarina Diyas (Kaz) 3-6, 6-2, 6-3; Camilla Rosatello (Ita) bt Sara Bejlek (Cze) 3-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Doubles (pr-quarterfinals): Eden Silva (Gr) & Anastasia Tikhonova bt Ines Ibbou (Alg) & Naima Karamoko (Sui) 6-1, 6-4; Lina Glushko (Isr) & Aleksandra Krunic (Srb) bt Camilla Rosatello (Ita) & Panna Udvardy (Hun) 2-6, 6-1.

Sahaja, Shrivalli in second round

TENNIS

Sports Bureau

Sahaja Yamalapalli fought her way past qualifier Na-Ho Sato of Japan 6-7(4), 6-1, 6-3 in the first round of the NECC \$60,000 ITF women's tennis tournament at the Deccan Gymkhana in Pune on Tuesday.

The results: **Singles (first round):** Leolia Jeanjean (Fra) bt Alice Robbe (Fra) 6-1, 6-2; Sahaja Yamalapalli (Ita) bt Naho Sato (Jpn) 6-7(4), 6-1,



Pragmatic: Karan, third from left, while calling it an honour to play for India, is being realistic about his chances of getting a match.

Excited about Cup debut, says Karan

TENNIS

Uthra Ganeshan

NEW DELHI

With Indian tennis in a churn for the past couple of years and uncertainties around the availability of several top players for national duty for a variety of reasons, the upcoming Davis Cup tie against Togo because there will be an intriguing one.

While the three seniors in the side are expected to shoulder a major portion of the burden in a tie where India is favourite, at least on paper, youngster Karan Singh is excited about making his debut in India colours while being realistic about his chances we travel alone."

He also was positive of getting to play but added it was up to the coach and captain, admitting that it was tough to be on the bench biding his time. "I'm expecting, but let's see how the tie goes. It's a bit tough but you have to see what's best for the team. The captain and coach, they know better. Of course I want to be there and show what I can do. Whenever I get the chance, I'm going to give my best. I think we should be good," he hoped.

Rajpal, on his part, backed the 21-year-old to do well. "I definitely think he's one of the guys that's going to be playing singles for India."

Jamshedpur gets the better of host Punjab

ISL

Vivek Krishnan

NEW DELHI

A wondrous long-range strike by substitute Ezequiel Vidal couldn't prevent Punjab from suffering a 1-2 defeat to Jamshedpur in an Indian Super League (ISL) fixture at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here on Tuesday. Pratik Chaudhuri and Javier Hernandez were the goal-scorers for Jamshedpur.

The opening goal for Jamshedpur came in the 41st minute. It was via a corner, with Japan's Rei Ta-chikawa playing the role of provider by delivering a deadly cross into the six-yard zone. Chaudhuri did the rest, leaping above Punjab's defenders and ensuring that his powerful header sped into the back of the net.

Jamshedpur doubled its lead soon after resumption. In the 48th minute, defender Ivan Novoselec played a back pass to goalkeeper Muheet Shabir even as Hernandez charged into the box to exert pressure. It paid dividends as Shabir's shabby clearance rebounded off Hernandez and went in.

Fantastic effort

Punjab did cut down the deficit through Vidal's stunning effort in the 58th minute. From around 30 yards out, the attacking midfielder from Argentina made a crisp connection with his left-footed shot and found the bottom corner.

Punjab had its moments as well. But the precision needed in the 18-yard box was sorely missing as its winless run extended to a seventh game.

The result: Punjab FC 1 (Vidal 58) lost to Jamshedpur FC 2 (Chaudhuri 41, Hernandez 48).



Hit-man: Hernandez celebrates with teammates after netting Jamshedpur's second goal. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

pass by Punjab's Khaiminthang Lhungdim was seized on by Imran Khan in a dangerous position. The winger passed the ball to Javier Toro, who set it up for Hernandez to take aim with his left foot. Hernandez made good contact, but the shot went just wide of the right post.

Punjab had its moments as well. But the precision needed in the 18-yard box was sorely missing as its winless run extended to a seventh game.

The result: Punjab FC 1 (Vidal 58) lost to Jamshedpur FC 2 (Chaudhuri 41, Hernandez 48).

Sahaja, Shrivalli in second round

TENNIS

Sports Bureau

Sahaja Yamalapalli fought her way past qualifier Na-Ho Sato of Japan 6-7(4), 6-1, 6-3 in the first round of the NECC \$60,000 ITF women's tennis tournament at the Deccan Gymkhana in Pune on Tuesday.

The results: **Singles (first round):** Leolia Jeanjean (Fra) bt Alice Robbe (Fra) 6-1, 6-2; Sahaja Yamalapalli (Ita) bt Naho Sato (Jpn) 6-7(4), 6-1,

7-6(7), [10-7]; Alevtina Ibragimova & Elena Pridankina bt Vaishnavi Adkar & Maaya Rajeshwaran 7-6(6), 6-7(7), [10-7]. Diana Marcinkevica (Lat) & Naho Sato (Jpn) bt Zeel Desai & Pranjali Yadlapalli 6-2, 6-4; Yuriko Miyazaki (Gr) & Kathinka von Deichmann (Lie) bt Daria Kudashova 6-4, 6-3; Iryna Shmyrovych bt Zarina Diyas (Kaz) 3-6, 6-2, 6-4; Camilla Rosatello (Ita) bt Sara Bejlek (Cze) 3-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Doubles (pr-quarterfinals): Eden Silva (Gr) & Anastasia Tikhonova bt Ines Ibbou (Alg) & Naima Karamoko (Sui) 6-1, 6-4; Lina Glushko (Isr) & Aleksandra Krunic (Srb) bt Camilla Rosatello (Ita) & Panna Udvardy (Hun) 2-6, 6-1.

A ND-NDE

OPPORTUNITIES

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT • JOBS • TECHNOLOGY

The changing character of the resume

Opportunities Desk

In the 2025 job market, to stand out from the crowd, one would need "extraneous" push. It is not about endorsement from distinguished peers or luminaries in the field. The push is entirely impersonal and can be managed by the candidate themselves. "New Year, New Job" a report for 2025 by visual communication platform Canva has the details about it. The report pieced together with insights garnered from quizzing 4,200 hiring managers and 6,000 job seekers makes a strident announcement: artificial intelligence (AI), social media, and accessible de-

sign tools are hugely impacting the hiring process. The survey conducted by Sago in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, India, Germany, Spain, France, Mexico, Brazil and Japan. Increasingly, many hiring managers are incorporating AI tools into their recruitment processes, signalling a shift towards leveraging technology for greater efficiency and improved decision-making. So, the one on the other side of the table – the interviewee, the candidate – should also make use of these invaluable props to present a compelling picture of oneself to the potential employer. Here are insights presented by the report,

based on interviews with Indian hiring managers and job seekers.

AI assistance

1. A whopping 87% of job seekers use generative AI for resume updates or creation, with 80% saving time, 79% finding it easier, and 76% feeling more creative.

2. While 69% of hiring managers are open to candidates using AI to create or update their application. A significant portion (65%) of hiring managers believe AI usage makes it harder for candidates to stand out and feel disclosure is necessary.

Interactive resumes

1. Indian job seekers are

leading the way in personalised applications, with 63% consistently customising their resumes – significantly higher than most other countries.

Additionally, 84% of Indian job seekers view design skills as crucial for standing out in a new job role.

2. The hiring landscape is evolving, with 79% of hiring managers predicting the obsolescence of text-based resumes and 83% favouring digital portfolios.

3. 69% favour resumes with visual elements and 77% prefer interactive features, emphasising the growing demand for creativity and innovation in job applications.

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Unearthing hidden gems in the land of the Great Barrier Reef

The Happy Slam was one to remember for Tien, Lys and Fonseca as they proved what hungry, motivated Next-Gen players can achieve on the sport's grandest stage



Creating a ripple: Tien, Lys and Fonseca made heads turn at the Australian Open, the first Slam of the year. REUTERS, AFP & AP

Bhavin Shivaai

The pinnacle of sport as you know it. Grand Slam tennis - there's nothing like it. There's no room for error. Perfection is the norm. Anything below, and you will struggle to keep up. Show the slightest sign of crumbling - one bounce more than optimal before your serve, two extra sips of water to calm your nerves, three beads of sweat that don't belong and stand out like a sore thumb - and you'll be eaten alive.

Majors are the best test of your endurance - mental and physical. Three or five sets of gruelling, mind-numbing, and terrifying tennis that will have you craving for respite. That is why the favourites remain the favourites. What sets them apart from the rest, you ask? Winner's mentality.

In a year when the usual suspects proved their mettle and soared to greater heights Down Under, a fair few unusual "unsuspects" took the world by storm with the upsets they caused at the Happy Slam.

Learning on the go

Four hours and 49 minutes. That's how long it took for 19-year-old Learner Tien to achieve the greatest win of his career as he beat last year's runner-up and the then World No. 5 Daniil Medvedev in a thrilling five-setter.

In his first Grand Slam tournament outside the US Open, Tien took on Camilo Ugo Carabelli in the first round of the main draw. He displayed great resilience and character to beat the Argentinian 4-6, 7-6(3), 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 and claim his maiden Major win. The reward? A marathon with a former World No. 1.

Tien was immediately thrown straight into the deep end as the rookie was to match up against the stone-cold Medvedev. If the tale of David and Goliath were ever to have a live-action adaptation, this would have been it.

Medvedev is a Goliath of tennis in every sense of the word. US Open winner, three-time Australian Open runner-up, 380 career singles victories, and more. Once you look past all that, his freakishly towering height, at 198cm, would make most players feel infinitesimally small and powerless on the court.

With two daring, defying left-handed forehands down the line to win the first two sets, reminiscent of a certain Spaniard's touch, Tien was well poised to pull off one of the biggest upsets of the

tournament. But class comes through, and rightly so.

So self-assuringly unflinching, Medvedev saved a match point in the third set and pulled it back to make it two sets apiece. The decider headed to a tie-break, with Tien serving for the tie. And as the ball let fly from his racquet and swerved inwards of the centre line, Medvedev's return would go long, and he had done it.

The teen had scaled his highest peak yet. He would go on to become the youngest man to make it to the round-of-16 since Rafael Nadal when he beat Frenchman Corentin Moutet, before going down to Lorenzo Sonego.

B(Lys)tering through

It was a sombre feeling in German Eva Lys' camp following her defeat to Destanee Aiava in the qualifiers, knowing that a win would have assured her a spot in the main draw. But, as all things in life, there is always a second chance.

Elation. Scratch that. There was no time to react as Lys found out she would be competing in the first round as a "lucky loser" following 13th seed Anna Kalinskaya's withdrawal 10 minutes before her fixture.

With nothing to lose and at least AUD\$132,000 assured in prize money, the young German took to the court with no warm-up, pep talk, or pre-match routine. Call it novice fortune.

It mattered not as Lys took the Kia Arena by storm as she beat Aussie wildcard Kimberly Birrell in straight sets

6-2, 6-2 to progress to the second round, where she got the better of Varvara Gracheva.

Unexpected but joyous, young Lys had to reschedule her flights home with each passing win. Now, in listless waters, she faced Romanian Jaqueline Cristian in the third round.

It seemed Lys had reached breaking point as she lost the first set 2-6. But Cristian's sins were sufficient for Eva to redeem herself as a forehand that went long from the former restored parity.

On the break with two match-points, Lys let fly a cross-court forehand, and that was that. She had become the first lucky loser to reach the fourth round of women's singles at the Australian Open in the Open Era. She had set up a meeting with five-time Slam winner Iga Swiatek, who ultimately ended her dream run.

The magic didn't stop there as Lys discovered she had pocketed a tidy sum of AUD\$420,000 for her exploits. "I never went that far in a tournament... that is a number I've never even heard in my life," remarked the truly lucky loser.

Fiery freshman

On the back of his second Challenger title at the Canberra Tennis International, 18-year-old Joao Fonseca announced himself in style at this year's Australian Open. The Brazilian teenager, along with fellow qualifiers Learner Tien and Martin Landaluce, made history as the trio's qualification to the main draw marked the first time three teenagers had qualified for

the main draw of a Major since 2015.

Having breezed through qualifying without dropping a set, Fonseca was given the daunting task of handling the relentless Andrey Rublev. The Russian had just missed out on a top-eight seeding in Melbourne following his shock first-round loss at the Hong Kong Open and surely had a point to prove.

Do you know the pros of being a rookie? There are no expectations. No pressure to perform from the outside. No noise. Nothing weighing you down.

And soar he did with his newfound wings. Fonseca outplayed Rublev at his own game: high-octane, aggressive, first-strike tennis. With five set-points in the tie-break, the Brazilian phenom returned a serve down the centreline as the crowd roared the teenager on.

He had won the first battle. Growing into the game with every point. Fonseca was oozing confidence by the second set. An ever-so-cheeky drop shot followed by a ferocious cross-court backhand winner, the tables had turned. Attacking every point with an endearing arrogance, he comfortably - if I may say so - took the set six games to three.

It was all about mental endurance now. Could the teenager of trembling touch hold his nerve to seal the victory and cause the tournament's biggest upset? Matching the World No. 9 blow for blow, the third set went into a tie-break.

With five points apiece, an unforgiving backhand down the line saw Fonseca within touching distance. With his hand to his ear, the teenager was now teasing the crowd. Never had a rookie looked more at home. One forehand later, it was over. He triumphed against the odds.

With that, Fonseca had made history, becoming the first teen to beat a top-10 player in the first round of a Major since Mario Ancic at the 2002 Wimbledon Championships.

He would next play eventual quarterfinalist Lorenzo Sonego in the second round, where he would meet his end. But not before he pushed the Italian to the brink as the contest went down to the wire, with the match being decided in the fifth set.

Although Fonseca's ascendancy will inevitably be shadowed by Jannik Sinner's unrelenting title defence in the grand scheme of things at this edition of the Australian Open, his ferocity in sizing up against the top dogs is a telltale sign of the fortunes that await him.

THE GIST

▼ Four hours and 49 minutes. That's how long it took for the 19-year-old Tien to achieve the greatest win of his career as he beat 2024 runner-up Medvedev in a thrilling five-setter

▼ Unexpected but joyous, young Lys had to reschedule her flights home with each passing win. The magic didn't stop there as she discovered that she had pocketed a tidy sum of AUD\$420,000 for her exploits

▼ Brazilian Fonseca, along with fellow qualifiers Tien and Landaluce, made history, for it was the first time three teenagers had qualified for the main draw of a Major since 2015



SCIENCE

New study decodes when the Nicobarese people came to the island

For a long time, scientists believed the Austroasiatic ancestors of the Nicobarese community migrated to the island more than 11,000 years ago; the new study corrects this impression by taking a closer look at DNA mutations, showing that they arrived at the island around 5,000 years ago

Sanjukta Mondal
BENGALURU

More than half a million years ago, one of humans' ancestors took a bold step and ventured beyond Africa, the cradle of humankind, in search of greener pastures. Since then humans have explored every habitable corner of the globe, often driven by the need to find new sources of food and to escape diseases and natural disasters.

Researchers have documented many migrations in great detail in the historical and archaeological records – but even now, some chapters are missing from this epic tale.

One part of the missing story was recently published in the *European Journal of Human Genetics*. Scientists from India have reported finding the genetic heritage of the people of the Nicobar Archipelago in the Indian Ocean.

The team conducted a detailed analysis of genetic data collected from 1,559 individuals across South and Southeast Asia. They found ancestral ties between the Nicobarese and the Htin Mal community, a population from the Laos-Thailand region.

The Nicobarese were also found to have retained their Austroasiatic language roots – a language family spanning Southeast Asia – of the Khmuic branch.

"Almost 20 years ago, we collected DNA from tribes in the Andaman and Nicobar region. We could not gather much information from DNA for the Nicobarese population but we related them to some South Asian groups and estimated their age to be around 11,500 years," said Kumarasamy Thangaraj of the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad.

He co-led the study with Gyaneshwar Chaubey of Banaras Hindu University.

"Since then, we [have] analysed many people within India and saw many advancements in technology," including the sequencing of one million human genomes. "Using these new techniques, we found that the Nicobarese are closer to Southeast Asian groups who migrated approximately 5,000 years ago," said Mr. Thangaraj.

Uncovering the ancestry trail

The Andaman and the Nicobar Islands are separated by the Ten Degree Channel, which is around 150 km wide. Though they're close to each other, the peoples of the two islands have significantly different physical features, which also differ from those of the people of mainland India. These differences have stoked scientists' curiosity about where the Nicobarese people originated.

In 2005, one research team that included the co-leads of this study investigated the origins of Andaman



A group of Nicobarese people gather to inaugurate a new hut on Teressa island in the Nicobar. TRIBAL COUNCIL, TERESSA/FILE PHOTO

Islanders by analysing mitochondrial DNA, which is passed down by mothers to their children. They discovered that the indigenous tribal groups Onges and Great Andamanese preserved two ancient maternal genetic lineages called M31 and M32, meaning they had a common ancestor. These lineages likely evolved in isolation for a long time, with a genetic history found to date back to humans travelling along the Indian Ocean coast 50,000 to 70,000 years ago.

The study also revealed the Nicobarese were closely linked to Southeast Asian populations.

However, it couldn't say when exactly they set foot on Nicobar.

In the new study, rather than mitochondrial DNA, the researchers analysed biparental and uniparental genetic markers from 1,554 previously studied individuals and five newly collected samples from the Nicobarese population. Biparental genetic material is inherited from both parents and uniparental is from one parent.

Biparental genetic material in particular is more instructive than mitochondrial DNA because it contains the complete genome (DNA contributed by both parents), paving the way for researchers to uncover more clearly relationships and differences between populations.

Equipped with their data, the team carried out an admixture analysis, a method for estimating how much of an individual's genetic makeup comes from different ancestral populations. The team also used principal component analysis, a

Earlier study of mitochondrial DNA to investigate origins of Andaman Islanders had also revealed that the Nicobarese communities were closely linked to Southeast Asian populations

statistical tool that can assess complex genetic datasets and create simple visualisations that elucidate the genetic similarities and differences.

The results confirmed previously suggested links between the Nicobarese and Southeast Asian populations and also provided a higher-resolution view of their genetic stories by pinpointing their ancestral links to the Htin Mal.

Correcting the timeline

For a long time, scientists believed the Austroasiatic ancestors of the Nicobarese migrated to the island more than 11,000 years ago. The new study corrected this impression by taking a closer look at DNA mutations.

Some sections of human DNA can evolve and mutate over centuries, often under the influence of environmental factors – e.g. when a population moves to a new land with different weather conditions. These mutations can provide clues about when a population might have migrated to a region.

Due to its geographical isolation, the ancient Nicobarese tribe has preserved its genetic identity without significant admixture with different populations. So by comparing the differences in

mutations between the genetic ancestors and the migrated populations, the scientists were able to trace their time of arrival at the Nicobar Islands: approximately 5,000 years ago, according to Mr. Thangaraj.

Future ventures

Despite bearing genetic similarities with Southeast Asian groups, the lifestyle of the Nicobarese is entirely different, Mr. Thangaraj said. "I have visited the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and collected samples from the Nicobarese, so I've seen their lifestyle first-hand. It is fascinating to compare them with linguistically similar groups elsewhere."

Indeed, the unique societal dynamics of the Nicobarese people are still largely uncharted.

Mr. Thangaraj also singled out their isolation from pathogens. "For example, during COVID, [the Nicobarese] were protected unless someone from the mainland brought the virus," he said. "Unlike us, who have adapted to polluted and pathogen-filled environments, they might struggle with infections if exposed to other regions."

The team plans to dive further into the genetic adaptations of these isolated populations to uncover how natural selection and environmental factors have shaped their survival strategies and immune response to diseases.

Sanjukta Mondal is a chemist-turned-science-writer with experience in writing popular science articles and scripts for STEM YouTube channel. (sanjuktamondal.sm@gmail.com)

THE GIST

Due to its geographical isolation, the ancient Nicobarese tribe has preserved its genetic identity without significant admixture with different populations

By comparing the differences in mutations between the genetic ancestors and the migrated populations, the scientists were able to trace their time of arrival at the Nicobar Islands

But the unique societal dynamics of the Nicobarese people still remain largely uncharted

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BIG SHOT



Cooling down: An aerial view shows homes destroyed in the Palisades Fire in California, U.S., covered in snow on Monday. Rain and snowfall across Southern California has temporarily tamed the threat of major wildfires in the region. AFP

QUESTION CORNER

What is the corpse flower?

The Hindu Bureau

QOn January 24, a rare plant known as the corpse flower bloomed in Sydney, Australia, for the first time in more than a decade. A similar flower bloomed in New York in the U.S. on the same day.

In both instances, the plant emitted an odour likened to rotting flesh, delighting hundreds who queued for a whiff.

For the past week, curiosity seekers have been visiting the Sydney specimen, nicknamed "Putricia", at the Royal Botanic Garden. The Brooklyn Botanical Garden in New York dubbed its plant "Smelliot".

The two flowers are *Amorphophallus titanum* and *Amorphophallus gigas*. In each case, the oversize flower features fluted crimson petals and can measure more than a metre across with a pointed centre stalk that can top 3 metres. The plant typically doesn't bloom more than once every few years and lasts only about a day. A specimen has not bloomed in Sydney since 2010. The plant emits the foul odour to attract carrion insects for pollination. These insects feed on the rich concentration of organic compounds in decomposing matter, thus the name. As the sheath enclosing the stalk



The 'corpse flower' seen at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Sydney, Australia. REUTERS

opens, the stalk heats up to 37°C and periodically releases compounds like dimethyl trisulphide, isovaleric acid, and indole, which are responsible for the smell.

The emissions peak at evening and night, when carrion insects are most active, and their smell is discernible even a few hundred metres away. (With agency inputs)

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