



UNCERTAINTY IN MAHARASHTRA
Sena likely to bargain for key portfolios

NEWS » PAGE 12



S. Korea President declares martial law

WORLD » PAGE 16



SRINAGAR ENCOUNTER
LeT 'commander' killed, say J&K police

NEWS » PAGE 12



COP29 FOCUS
Local action amidst global inertia
National actions are making visible progress

OPINION » PAGE 9



A DRAW AGAIN
Gukesh lets Ding off the hook in Game 7

SPORT » PAGE 17

IN BRIEF



Dhankhar urges Centre to talk to farmers on stir

NEW DELHI

Addressing Union Agriculture Minister Shri Raj Singh Chouhan at a function on Tuesday, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar said a dialogue with protesting farmers should happen immediately. » Page 13

Slavery mindset affected Bharat's development: PM

CHANDIGARH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the three new criminal laws had replaced colonial-era laws, which were made for slaves and impacted the development of Bharat to a great extent. » Page 4

OPPORTUNITIES » PAGE 7

India, China have set ties on right track: Jaishankar

Jaishankar cites 'continuous diplomatic engagement' with Beijing for disengagement along the Line of Actual Control; Lok Sabha Speaker disallows questions from Opposition on the matter

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

India and China have set ties in the "direction of some improvement", External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar told Parliament on Tuesday, crediting "continuous diplomatic engagement" and a step-by-step approach with Beijing in achieving disengagement in border areas, where he said the situation had been "abnormal" since 2020 as a "result of Chinese actions".

"We have been very clear that the restoration of peace and tranquillity would be the basis for the rest of the relationship to move forward," Mr. Jaishankar said.

In a 20-minute *suo motu* statement to the Lok Sabha, he recounted steps

Next steps

With disengagement 'fully achieved' at the India-China border, Minister Jaishankar details the developments to follow as per agreement between the two countries

- Talks on de-escalation along Line of Actual Control (LAC)
- Discussions on management of border and confidence-building measures
- Meeting of Special Representatives Ajit Doval and Wang Yi
- Meeting of Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and his Chinese counterpart

We have been very clear that the restoration of peace and tranquillity would be the basis for the rest of the relationship to move forward

S. JAISHANKAR
External Affairs Minister

leading to the agreement announced on October 21, in which the Indian Army and People's Liberation Army (PLA) forces agreed to disengage troops at Demchok and Dapsang, and work towards de-escalating tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla refused requests from the Opposition for any questions or clarifications to the statement.

"As a result of this recent understanding, arrived at after intensive ne-

gotiations, resumption of patrolling to the traditional areas is under way," Mr. Jaishankar said, adding that patrols had conducted the "verification of disengagement on the ground" as well.

He said that disengagement from all friction points at the LAC has now been "fully achieved", and that the next priority would be de-escalation, or the withdrawal of troops from the area. He said the Special Representatives and Foreign Secretaries of the two countries would meet soon to take ties forward.

He said the government's stance during negotiations had been "firm and principled".

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

Dhaka summons Indian envoy after breach at Agartala mission

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) of Bangladesh summoned the Indian envoy on Tuesday to convey Dhaka's concerns about the breach of security at the Assistant High Commission of Bangladesh in Agartala. Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma was called to meet Acting Foreign Secretary Riaz Hamidullah even as Bangladesh suspended consular and visa activities at its mission in Agartala.

Bangladesh Foreign Ministry, in an announcement, cited "security situation" declaring, "all visa and consular services in the Assistant High Commission of Bangladesh will remain suspended till further notice".

"We have wide-ranging, multi-faceted relationship and you cannot reduce it to one issue and one agenda. We have so many inter-



Police guard the Indian High Commission after a call for anti-India protests, in Dhaka.

want to build on those interdependencies. A number of positive developments in the relationship in the last few months, like trade, power transmission, supply of essential commodities have taken place," Mr. Verma said after the meeting.

"We are interested in working with the Government of Bangladesh to fulfil our shared aspirations for peace, security and development," he added.

Sources said the meeting was "cordial".

On Tuesday, protests against alleged atrocities

targeting minority Hindus in Bangladesh continued in Agartala, Assam, and West Bengal. The Sanatan Yuva, a right-wing youth organisation, held a protest rally in Agartala under heavy security presence. Anti-Bangladesh sentiment was on display across Assam.

Congress members gathered outside the Bangladesh mission in Guwahati to protest against atrocities targeting minority Hindus in Bangladesh. Protests were staged by the members of Lok Jagran Manch in the State's Nalbari, Chirang, Hojai, and Jorhat districts.

Bangladesh had reacted angrily on Monday after a group of people, who were

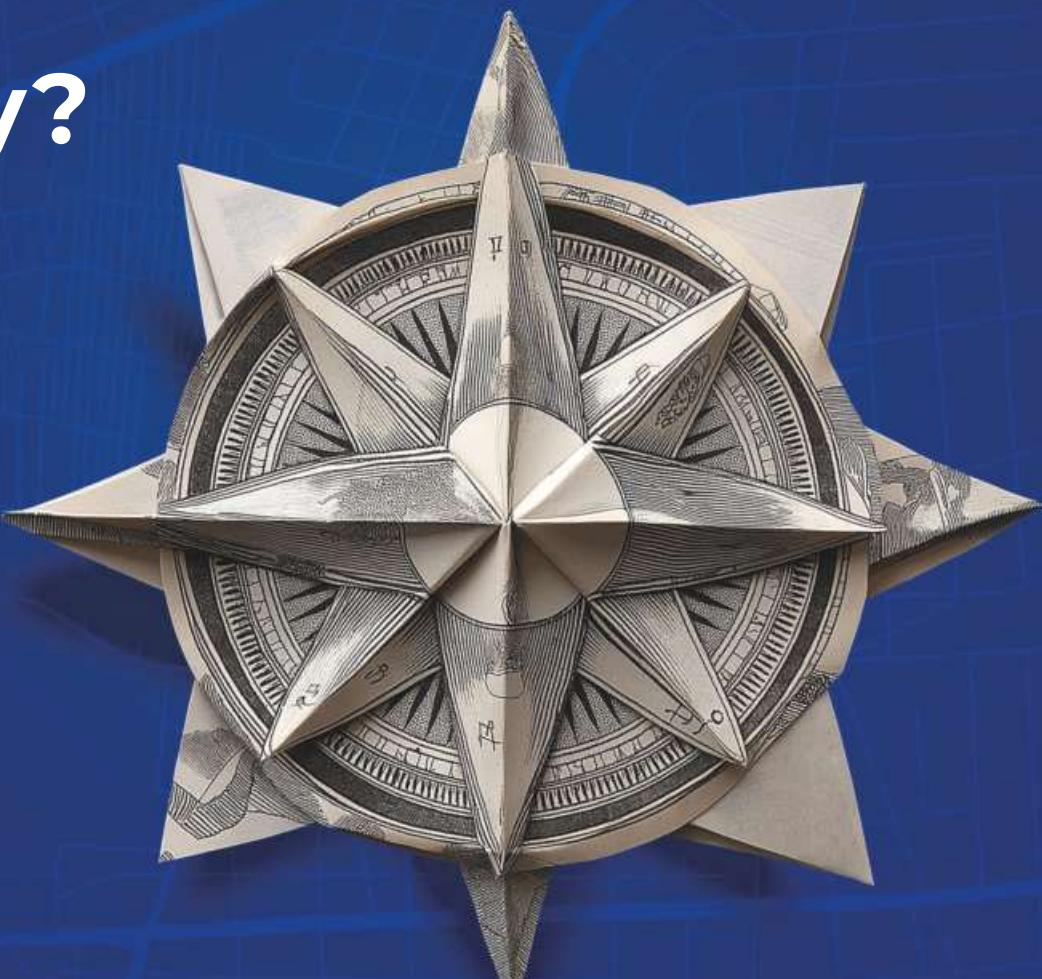
protesting against the arrest of minority community leader Chinmoy Krishna Das's arrest in Dhaka, broke into the Agartala mission and tore the Bangladesh flag.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

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Show-cause notice to Delhi airport on roof collapse

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union government has sent a show-cause notice to Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), following the collapse of a roof at one of its passenger buildings in June, after an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Delhi audit report found structural deficiencies, a senior official of the Ministry of Civil Aviation said. The show-cause notice has been served by the Airports Authority of India.

"The IIT Delhi study has found that certain strengthening is required. The defects have to be corrected. Weaknesses were also found in the parts that did not cave in," the official added.

Timings
DELHI

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 04
RISE 06:59 SET 17:25

RISE 09:49 SET 20:03

THURSDAY, DEC. 05
RISE 07:00 SET 17:25

RISE 10:36 SET 21:07

FRIDAY, DEC. 06
RISE 07:01 SET 17:25

RISE 11:18 SET 22:11

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 28 10
Safdarjung 28 10
Palam 25 12

Delhi Palam Today
26°C The dry weather to continue. Shallow fog and mist will occur in very cool morning and night. Day will be comfortable light breeze.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
25°C Shallow to moderate fog and mist will prevail in slight cold morning and night hours. Day will be pleasant. Dry weather to prevail.

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Give 6 churches to Orthodox faction, SC directs Jacobites

Court asks group to give undertaking that facilities in these churches will be open to all; it also frowned upon Kerala govt. for intervening in the tiff

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the Jacobite Syrian faction to hand over the administration of six churches in Kerala's Ernakulam and Palakkad districts to the Malankara Orthodox Syrian faction in compliance with its judgments and the 1934 constitution of the Church.

A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan, however, asked the Orthodox group to give an undertaking that public facilities in these parish churches, including burial grounds, schools and hospitals, would be open to all members of the community. These facilities must be accessible to all members of the community as per the 1934 constitution, but without insistence on any pledge of allegiance to this constitution and also subject to the Supreme Court's directives.

The top court listed the case after two weeks while voicing hope that both groups would celebrate Christmas in peace and harmony.

The Bench was hearing special leave petitions filed by the Kerala government, the State Police and also members of the Jacobite group against a directive of the Kerala High Court to



St. Mary's Church, known as Piravom Valiya Palli, is one of the churches caught in the dispute. FILE PHOTO

the district administrations to take possession of the six churches.

The court said the Jacobite group was undoubtedly in contempt for having wilfully disobeyed two judgments of the Supreme Court in 2017 and 2020.

'Comply with order'

"Consequently, we direct the petitioners [Jacobite section] to hand over the administration [only] and submit a compliance affidavit, failing which necessary consequences shall follow," the apex court ordered.

"We want you to comply with our judgments first," Justice Kant said.

The court frowned upon the State intervening in the dispute over the management of religious affairs of two groups.

"Intervention by the State is only the last resort. If the State intervenes,

then it should be given a free hand and take over everything... We will direct the State to take over completely your financial and other affairs. To go into your accounts – from where your money is coming from, etc... There is no question of the State standing by as a silent spectator," Justice Kant told both warring groups.

The schism within the Malankara church had impacted over 2,000 parish churches and 30 million followers across the world.

The 2017 judgment had found the 1934 constitution was "appropriate and adequate" for the management of the Malankara parish churches.

In fact, the 2017 verdict reiterated decisions of the Supreme Court in 1958 and 1995 that the 1934 constitution of the Malankara church governed the parish churches under it.

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Chief Guest

Atishi,
Chief Minister, Delhi

Chief Guest

Manish Sisodia
Ex Dy. Chief Minister, Delhi



Power Department, Government of NCT of Delhi

Court seeks details of night shelters for homeless in Delhi ahead of winter 'chill'

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) to file a detailed affidavit explaining the night shelter facilities available for the national capital's homeless.

"We are on the eve of what seems to be a chill winter," Justice K. Viswanathan, who is part of a Bench headed by Justice B.R. Gavai, addressed se-

nior advocate Devadutt Kamat, appearing for the DUSIB.

The court pointedly sought information on the facilities available to accommodate the homeless, the number of persons who could be accommodated in such shelters, the estimated number of homeless requiring such facilities, and in case of any deficiency in these facilities, how the DUSIB proposed to deal with such eventualities.

The apex court has been looking out for the welfare of the poor and homeless, noting that the right to shelter and safety was a fundamental right.

In 2016, the top court had observed that the city's poor shiver in the winter cold as welfare measures like the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) scheme continued to remain a distant dream. At the time, the court had directed a panel headed by former Delhi HC judge, Just-

tice Kailash Gambhir, to be constituted to verify availability of night shelters and whether their operations were in compliance with NULM guidelines.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for one of the petitioners, submitted that the total capacity of shelter homes in Delhi was only around 17,000 people and the DUSIB had demolished nine shelter homes.

The court listed the case for December 17.

APPOINTMENT

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Join us in our mission to build a world-class University that inspires, educates, and empowers. Please send your expression of interest along with a detailed profile to vcsearchcommittee@somaiya.edu by 15th January 2025.



RBI cautions public on deepfake videos of Top Management circulated over social media giving financial advice.

It has come to notice of the Reserve Bank of India that fake videos of the Governor are being circulated on social media that support or claim launch of some investment schemes by the RBI. These videos attempt to advise people to invest their money in such schemes, through use of technological tools.

RBI clarifies that its officials are not involved in or support any such activities and these videos are fake. RBI does not give any such financial investment advice.

Members of the public are, therefore, cautioned against engaging with and falling prey to such deepfake videos circulated over social media.



Scan here to visit the [RBI Website](http://www.rbi.org.in).



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IN BRIEF



Bomb scare at Taj Mahal, declared hoax after search

An email threatening to blow up the Taj Mahal was received by the regional office of Uttar Pradesh Tourism in Agra on Tuesday, but it later turned out to be a hoax, a police officer said. The bomb disposal squad, dog squad and other teams were pressed into service but nothing suspicious was found, ACP Sayed Areeb Ahmad, entrusted with Taj Mahal's security, said. "The matter is being investigated and the sender of the email is being traced," he added. A similar bomb hoax threat was received in March 2021. CISF and Taj Suraksha Police personnel had checked the premises and found nothing.

Delhi HC seeks CBI reply on Kuldeep Sengar's petition

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to respond to expelled BJP leader Kuldeep Singh Sengar's plea seeking suspension of the 10-year jail term awarded to him for the custodial death of the Unnao rape victim's father on medical grounds. The court also asked jail authorities to file a report on Sengar's medical condition and listed the plea for further hearing on January 13 next year. The counsel for Sengar submitted that he was seeking suspension of sentence on medical grounds as his health was deteriorating and it was a medical emergency.

Sambhal violence echoes in Parliament even as Cong. delegation led by Rahul plans visit today

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav alleged that the violence in Sambhal was part of a well-planned conspiracy and linked to recent bypolls. ANI

The violence in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal echoed in Parliament on Tuesday with the Samajwadi Party (SP) raising the issue in both Houses. Meanwhile, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, along with other Congress MPs from Uttar Pradesh, plan to visit the town on Wednesday despite restrictions imposed by the State administration on the entry of outsiders into the area until December 10.

SP president and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday alleged that the violence in Sambhal was part of a "well-planned" conspiracy and linked it to the recent byelections in the State.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha during Zero Hour, Mr. Yadav said that the talk of

"khudai" (digging) across the country by the BJP and its associates will end up hurting communal amity.

Squarely blaming the local police and administration for the Sambhal violence, Mr. Yadav alleged that police personnel fired from official and personal weapons, killing five innocent persons and injuring dozens after some locals pelted stones at them to protest against their high-handedness.

The SP chief demanded suspension and registration of murder cases against the

guilty officials.

Amid occasional interruptions from the treasury benches, the Lok Sabha member from Kannauj narrated the sequence of events before the violence.

He said a local civil judge ordered the survey of the Mughal-era Shahi Jama Masjid on the same day a petition was filed on November 19 claiming that a temple once stood at the site.

The local administration arrived for the survey within a couple of hours. "It is not without basis when we

say that the government does not follow the Constitution," Mr. Yadav said.

The SP chief added that while everyone cooperated with the survey and the Muslim groups were preparing to argue their case at the next hearing on November 29, the administration would not go on record. At this point, the SP and some other Opposition members walked out in protest.

During the survey on November 24, the circle officer abused locals and ordered a lathi-charge when they sought the reason for it, Mr. Yadav alleged. A few people then threw stones and the police personnel resorted to retaliatory firing, he added.

Both the SP leader and Indian Union Muslim League MP E.T. Mohammed Basheer talked about the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, which provides for the maintenance of religious character of places of wor-

ship as it existed on August 15, 1947.

SP leader Ram Gopal Yadav raised the matter in the Rajya Sabha. However, he failed to complete his speech with Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar saying certain parts of his statement would not go on record. At this point, the SP and some other Opposition members walked out in protest.

DM issues instructions
U.P. Congress president Ajay Rai told *The Hindu* that the party delegation led by Mr. Gandhi will meet the victims' families. The Congress delegation is likely to reach Sambhal around 1 p.m. on Wednesday.

In light of the proposed visit, the District Magistrate (DM) of Sambhal wrote to police officials in Gautam Buddha Nagar, Ghaziabad, Amroha and Bulandshahr districts to stop Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders in their respective district borders.

Cast away



In penance: Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Badal at the Golden Temple in Amritsar on Tuesday. With a placard around his neck mentioning the confession of his mistakes, Mr. Badal arrived in a wheelchair due to a hairline fracture. He came to serve the tankah (religious punishment) given by the Akal Takht. PTI

MLAs elected in Rajasthan byelections take oath

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

Seven MLAs elected in the recent bypolls in Rajasthan were sworn in at the State Assembly in Jaipur on Tuesday. Speaker Vasudev Devani, who administered the oath of office in his chamber, asked the newly elected MLAs to uphold the traditions, dignity and decorum of the House.

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party had swept the byelections by winning five of the seven seats where the polling was held on November 13. The Opposition Congress and the Bharat Adivasi Party (BAP) retained one seat each in the results declared on November 23.

After the completion of the byelections, the strength of BJP in the 200-member House is 119, Congress 66, BAP 4, Bahujan Samaj Party 2, Rashtriya Lok Dal 1, and Independents 8.

Nitish, Tejashwi to embark on yatras, interact with voters

Amar Nath Tewary
PATNA

With the Bihar Assembly election due in less than a year, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and the Leader of the Opposition in the State, Tejashwi Yadav of the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), are gearing up for yatras to reach out to voters.

Mr. Kumar, the Janata Dal (United) president, will set off on a 'Mahila Samvad Yatra' on December 15. It will be his 15th such drive since 2005. Mr. Yadav will kick off the third phase of his 'Karyakarta Samvad Yatra' on December 4.

The RJD leader had earlier discontinued his yatra midway because of festival and bypolls in four Assembly seats in Bihar.

Mr. Kumar, who is up-



Bihar CM Nitish Kumar paying tribute to first President Rajendra Prasad in Patna on Tuesday. PTI

beat after the NDA's victory in all four byelections, will meet women voters starting from Valmikinagar in West Champaran district. During his yatra, the JD(U) chief is likely to interact with women members of 'Jeevika Didi' self-help groups and review the progress of various State go-

vernment schemes.

Women are said to have played an important role in keeping Mr. Kumar in power. The JD(U) president introduced several programmes for their welfare, such as a 50% reservation in Panchayati Raj Institutions, 35% reservation in jobs, 1.40 crore Jeevika Didi memberships, and ban on liquor.

"Mr. Kumar will communicate with women supporters during his yatra and gauge what more needs to be done for them," said JD(U) spokesperson Neeraj Kumar. "The State election is just a year away and this is the right time to pep up core voters. The CM is undertaking his yatra at the right time," another senior JD(U) leader told *The Hindu*.

The RJD leader had earlier discontinued his yatra midway because of festival and bypolls in four Assembly seats in Bihar.

Mr. Kumar, who is up-

Lone student who chose mechanical engineering course in Kannada medium decides to pull out

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

Sagar T.S., the only student in Karnataka who was admitted to the Maharaja Institute of Technology (MIT) in Mysuru for Kannada-medium mechanical engineering, has decided to withdraw from the course. He has expressed a desire to continue in the English medium. The student cited the non-availability of enough course material, problems of placement, and absence of classmates as among the reasons for his decision.

However, Mr. Sagar is facing technical obstacles in changing the medium of instruction. The Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU) has to change it, or he has to



Course provider: The VTU is one of the private colleges that offers civil and mechanical courses in Kannada medium. P.K. BADIGER

withdraw from the Kannada-medium engineering course and enrol again in the English course under the management quota.

Many opted out

As part of the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP-2020), the State government introduced Kannada-medium engineering courses in

dium engineering courses during CET counselling in 2021-22. However, they did not join the colleges. In 2022-23 and 2023-24, one student each opted for a Kannada-medium engineering course but withdrew their applications.

During the CET 2024-25 counselling, two students, Raghavendra N. and Mr. Sagar, opted for the Kannada-medium mechanical engineering course at MIT in Mysuru. While Mr. Raghavendra withdrew from the course, Mr. Sagar took admission in the college.

"Along with this, I had also given optional entry to other courses. However, my CET ranking got me this course. I also got the same course during the first and second rounds of the seat allotment process.

So, I joined the college. However, I was the only one in the entire college who was doing engineering in Kannada medium. So, I have decided to continue in English medium," said Mr. Sagar.

From rural area
He further explained: "I am a student from a rural area who studied in the Kannada medium till SSC and scored 85% marks. In the Class 12 exams, I scored 60% marks in English medium in the science stream. But not much course material is available in the Kannada medium. Also, after completing the course, there are no jobs available for Kannada-medium students. I want to continue in English for the sake of my future."

Jharkhand Cabinet: 11 Ministers to be sworn in tomorrow

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

CM Hemant Soren

The expansion of the Hemant Soren government's Cabinet will take place on Thursday at the Raj Bhavan in Ranchi. A total of 11 Ministers are scheduled to take the oath at 12.30 p.m.

The announcement was made on Tuesday after Mr. Soren took oath as Chief Minister for the fourth time on November 28 at the Morabadi ground in the State capital.

"We have sought time from the Governor and the entire Cabinet will take oath on December 5. As far as Ministers from the Congress's quota are concerned, whatever decision the leadership takes will be acceptable to all," said former Jharkhand Congress chief Rajesh Thakur.

The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)-led INDIA bloc won 56 out of 81 seats in the Assembly election.

The JMM won 34 seats, the Congress 16, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) four, and the CPI(ML) Liberation two. Sources said the JMM would have six Ministers, the Congress four, and there would be one Minister from the RJD. Many big

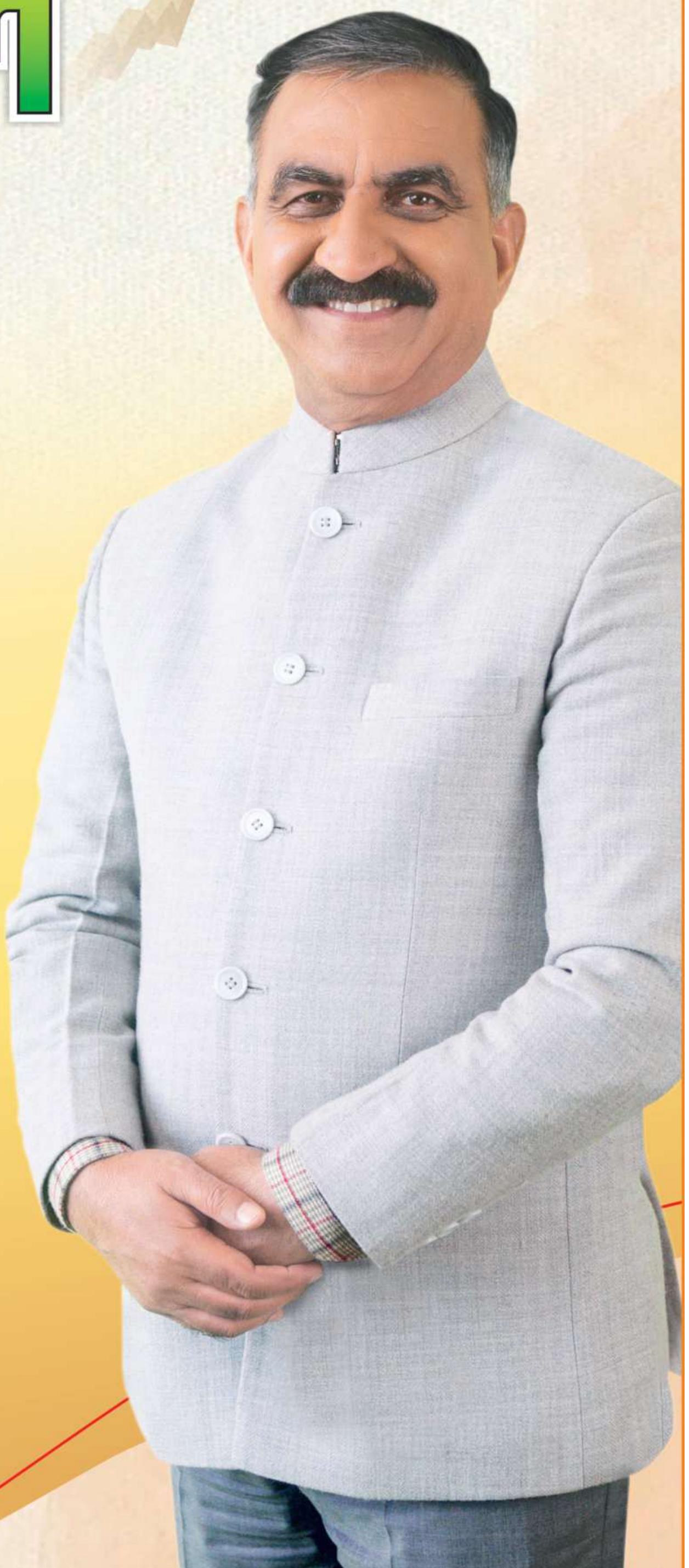
leaders, including Congress in-charge Ghulam Ahmed Mir, will be present at the Cabinet expansion event.

Front runners
JMM MLAs who are front runners in the race for Cabinet positions include Mathura Prasad Mahato (representing the Tundi seat), Samir Mohanty (Baharampur), Hafizul Hasan (Madhupur), Louis Marandi (Jama), Sudhiv Kumar Sonu (Giridih), and Deepak Birua (Chaibasa).

From the Congress, the names of Deepika Pandey (representing the Mahgama seat), Irfan Ansari (Jamtara), Rameshwar Oraon (Lohardaga), and Shilpi Neha Tirkey (Mandar) are doing the rounds. Suresh Paswan, who won from Deoghar, is likely to be the RJD nominee.

व्यवस्था परिवर्तन से आत्मनिर्भर होता **हिन्दूपाल**

- वर्षों से लंबित राजस्व मामलों के निपटारे के लिए प्रदेश के इतिहास में पहली बार विशेष राजस्व अदालतें लगाई गईं। तहसील स्तर पर राजस्व लोक अदालतें आयोजित कर अब तक 2,09,334 इंतकाल, 11,416 तकसीम, 17,548 निशानदेही और 4,504 दुरुस्ती के मामले निपटाए गए हैं।
- राजस्व न्यायालयों में मामलों के समयबद्ध निपटान के लिए हि.प्र. भू-राजस्व अधिनियम, 1954 में संशोधन किया गया है। तकसीम के मामले 9 महीने में, तहसीलदार स्तर पर दुरुस्ती के मामले 3 महीने में और कलैक्टर स्तर के मामले 9 महीने में, निशानदेही 3 महीने में और इंतकाल के मामले 1 महीने में निपटाए जा रहे हैं। अपील और पुनर्विचार मामलों का निपटारा 6 महीने में करना अनिवार्य किया गया है।
- भू-राजस्व मैन्यूअल में बदलाव लाकर पिछले 6 महीनों में 1.57 लाख इंतकाल किए गए।
- प्रदेश सरकार स्वामित्व योजना के माध्यम से ग्रामीण क्षेत्र के लोगों को उनकी सम्पत्ति का अधिकार प्रदान कर रही है। योजना के पहले चरण में 180 गांवों के 2430 परिवारों को सम्पत्ति कार्ड प्रदान कर भूमि पर कानूनी अधिकार दिया गया है।
- ई-स्टैम्पिंग प्रणाली को शत-प्रतिशत लागू किया गया है जिससे स्टैम्प पेपर की प्रिंटिंग और परिवहन पर लगभग 10 करोड़ रुपये की बचत होगी।
- 33 वर्षों बाद लैंड कोड-2023 प्रकाशित किया गया है जिससे जनता को भूमि मामलों के कानून व नियमों की जानकारी मिल रही है।
- भूमि अधिकारों में समानता को बढ़ावा देते हुए बेटी को अलग पारिवारिक इकाई मानकर पुत्र के समान अधिकार प्रदान करने के लिए भू-जोत अधिकतम सीमा अधिनियम 1972 में संशोधन किया गया है।



गारीकर्ता : निदेशक, सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, हिमाचल प्रदेश

**NOTIFICATION FOR FIRST CONVOCATION**

The First Convocation of the Central University of Andhra Pradesh, Ananthapuram will be held in December 2024 / January 2025. All the students who passed Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes and whose examinations results have been declared during the period from 01 June 2020 to 30 November 2024 by the Office of Controller of Examinations, may apply online to obtain their Convocation Degree Certificates at the ensuing Convocation.

All other details will be notified on the University website (<https://cuap.ac.in/>) shortly. Hence, all the students are suggested to regularly get in touch with the University website.

Sd/-Controller of Examinations**प्रधान दीक्षात समारोह के लिए अधिसूचना**

आग्रह प्रदेश के विश्वविद्यालय, अनंतपुरम का पहला दीक्षात समारोह दिसंबर 2024/जनवरी 2025 में आयोजित किया जाएगा। वे सभी छात्र जो साताक और उत्तराखण्ड कार्यपाल उमीदवार कर चुके हैं और जिनके परीक्षा परिणाम परीक्षा नियंत्रक द्वारा 01 जून 2020 से 30 नवंबर 2024 की अवधि के दौरान घोषित किए गए हैं। वे आगामी दीक्षात समारोह में अपनी दीक्षात डिग्री प्रमाणपत्र प्राप्त करने के लिए अनियन्त्रित आवेदन कर सकते हैं।

अन्य सभी विश्वविद्यालय की वेबसाइट (<https://cuap.ac.in/>) पर अधिसूचित किए जाएंगे। अन्य सभी छात्रों को सुझाव दिया जाता है कि निम्निति रूप से विश्वविद्यालय की वेबसाइट (<https://cuap.ac.in/>) पर अधिसूचित किए जाएंगे। अन्य सभी छात्रों को सुझाव दिया जाता है कि निम्निति

रूप से विश्वविद्यालय की वेबसाइट के संपर्क में रहें। **एसडी/- परीक्षा नियंत्रक**

**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL PRISONS AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**

No. 4, Seshadri Road, Bengaluru - 560009.

Ph: 080 22262263, Email: phq.prisons-kar@gov.in

No.: एफ०१/प्र००५३/१५०८-७६/२०२३

Date: 27.11.2024

TENDER NOTIFICATION

The Director General, Prisons and Correctional Services, Bengaluru invited the following tenders for supply, installation and maintenance of Video Conference equipments for various Central and District Prisons as under.

Sd/-Controller of Examinations**प्रधान दीक्षात समारोह के लिए अधिसूचना**

आग्रह प्रदेश के विश्वविद्यालय, अनंतपुरम का पहला दीक्षात समारोह दिसंबर 2024/जनवरी 2025 में आयोजित किया जाएगा। वे सभी छात्र जो साताक और उत्तराखण्ड कार्यपाल उमीदवार कर चुके हैं और जिनके परीक्षा परिणाम परीक्षा नियंत्रक द्वारा 01 जून 2020 से 30 नवंबर 2024 की अवधि के दौरान घोषित किए गए हैं। वे आगामी दीक्षात समारोह में अपनी दीक्षात डिग्री प्रमाणपत्र प्राप्त करने के लिए अनियन्त्रित आवेदन कर सकते हैं।

अन्य सभी विश्वविद्यालय की वेबसाइट (<https://cuap.ac.in/>) पर अधिसूचित किए जाएंगे। अन्य सभी छात्रों को सुझाव दिया जाता है कि निम्निति

रूप से विश्वविद्यालय की वेबसाइट (<https://cuap.ac.in/>) पर अधिसूचित किए जाएंगे। अन्य सभी छात्रों को सुझाव दिया जाता है कि निम्निति

DIPR/CP/AAA/3579/2024-25

The information of Pre-bid meeting, last date and time for tender submission and other details can be obtained at e-procurement portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. For more information, please contact the above office.

**Sd/- Director General
Prisons and Correctional Services
Karnataka State**

**Himachal Pradesh
Jal Shakti Vibhag****NOTICE INVITING E-PROCUREMENT BID**

Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Reckongpeo, on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh, invites the online Lump Sum Contract bids on turnkey basis from the eligible bidders of Indian Entity through online bidding system on or before 12.12.2024 at 5.00PM on the site <https://hptenders.gov.in>. Bidders should be registered with Central or State Govt. or Central or State Govt. undertakings. The contractor / firm who have experience in construction of similar work and have established organization for taking up such work and who satisfy the qualification criteria of bid document need only apply. The scope of work will be as under:

Sr. No.	Description	Estimated Cost	Bid security	Time	Cost of Bid
1.	Providing sewerage system to Village Pangi in Gram Panchayat Pangi, Tehsil Kalpa, Dist. Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh (Sh:- Construction of 0.45 MLD Sewage Treatment Plant based on Biogester and Rootzone Technology)	Rupees 36452425.00	Rupees 402024.00	1 year	Rupees 2,500/-
1. Bid documents and other instructions can be downloaded or viewed online from the portal http://hptenders.gov.in , by the Bidders registered on the website which is free of cost.					
2. Accordingly, the bidder/firm must make all necessary provision for required qualified resource personnel, their time and other costs, and appropriate engineering / technical considerations in recheck and verify of survey, design, construction, erection, execution, commissioning process for the project; including necessary documentation and inspections.					
3. Competitive Bidding for bidders shall be conducted in accordance with "Two Stage Two Envelope" Bidding Procedure. Eligibility information, Technical Bid and Financial bid should be uploaded online as per procurement method. The bids shall be submitted online electronically only.					
4. Bid evaluation criteria- Eligible Technically Qualified lowest evaluated bidder (L1) shall be considered as a successful bidder. However, the acceptance of the proposal shall rest with the EMPLOYER who does not bind itself to accept the lowest proposal, and reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the proposals received without assigning any reason.					
5. As the bids are to be submitted online are required to be encrypted and digitally signed, the bidders are advised to obtain Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from suitable vendors or from any authorized agency at the earliest.					
6. KEY DATES SHALL BE AS UNDER:-					

A	Date of Online publication	02.12.2024 at 05:00Hrs IST (GMT+ 5:30 Hrs)
B	Downloading of e-bid Documents	From 03.12.2024 at 10:00 AM To 12.12.2024 at 5.00PM
C	Date of submission of e-bid	From 03.12.2024 at 10:00 AM To 12.12.2024 at 5.00PM
D	Physical Submission of Original Bid Security (in case of offline deposit of Bid security)	
E	Date of opening of bids:	13.12.2024 at 11:00 AM
i)	Cover-1 Eligibility Criteria & Technical bid	On 13.12.2024 at 11:00 AM
ii)	Cover-2 Financial Bid	Shall be intimated separately
F	Site Visit	Between 11.00 AM dated 03.12.2024 to 5.00 PM dated 13.12.2024 along with the Assistant Engineer/Concerned Junior Engineer Jal Shakti Sub Division R/Peo

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:-

- The e-bid documents shall be uploaded online in 2 (two) covers:-**
 - Cover-1 shall contain Scanned copies of eligibility information and Technical bid.
 - Cover-2 shall contain "Financial bid" on the prescribed form
- (A) Cover-1 shall contain scanned legible copies of following "Eligibility Information" (Scanned legible copies to be uploaded in pdf file).**
- (I) The Bid security in favour of Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division Reckongpeo, shall be submitted either through online mode (e-payment) or offline mode in the form of NSC/ Time deposit receipt/demand draft of any nationalized bank duly pledged in favor of "Executive Engineer" Jal Shakti Division, Reckongpeo.**
- (II) The cost of bid form as shown above shall be submitted online mode (e-payment) or through offline mode in shape of demand draft in favor of "Executive Engineer" Jal Shakti Division, Reckongpeo.**
- (iii) Copy of Certificate of registration with Jal Shakti Vibhag or any other state/central Govt. department or Govt. Undertakings in appropriate class. In case successful bidder is not registered with HP Jal Shakti Vibhag then the successful bidder should get himself registered in appropriate class with HP Jal Shakti Vibhag before award of work.**
- (iv) Copy of Certificate of EPF registration. If not registered then the successful bidder should get registered before award of work.**
- (v) Annual Turnover of last three years.**
- (vi) Bid Form as per Chapter IV of Form – 12 duly accepted.**
- (vii) Pre-qualification criteria proof-A bidder/firm shall be considered pre-qualified for the work if he has-**
 - Financial Qualification:**
Bidder must have achieved minimum average annual financial turnover from contract receipt of works (in all classes of civil engineering construction works only) of 30 % of estimated cost in last three (3) financial years i.e. from year 2021-2022, 2022-2023 to 2023-2024.

(b) Similar Nature of Work:

Bidder must have Experience of having completed similar work during last Seven years ending last day of month previous to the one in which applications are invited, of either of the following values.

Three similar completed works each costing not less than 40% of the estimated cost.

Two similar completed works each costing not less than 50% of the estimated cost.

One similar completed works costing not less than amount equal to 80% of estimated cost.

Definition of Similar work shall be as under:-

- The bidder must have experience of construction of sewage treatment plant for secondary treatment based on any biological process.
- To the above, firm must have completed at least one work of Rootzone/ Constructed Wetland treatment of any capacity in last seven years from the date of uploading the tender failing which summary rejected.

A certificate to this effect from the Engineer-in-Charge not below the rank of Executive Engineer of a State/ Semi Govt. Deptt./Central Govt. or state/central Govt Undertaking of India is mandatorily required. The bidder shall upload the award letter or related agreement to collaborate the experience certificate submitted.

- The value of executed work shall be brought to current costing level by enhancing the actual value of work at simple rate of interest 7% per annum, calculated from the date of completion to previous day of the last date of submission of tender.

NOTE :- Completed work means either completed or completed to the extent of minimum 90 % of award amount (including unpaid amount on account of paucity of funds).

(d) Joint venture is not allowed.

However the firm / bidder shall be free to engage any number of specialist firms (execution of specialized components of the project).

(e) Bid capacity = (A'N'M'-B)

Where :
A= Maximum value of civil engineering works executed in any one year during the last 5 years (updated to the price level of the financial year in which bids are received at simple rate of 7 percent a year) taking into account the completed as well as works in progress.

N= Number of years prescribed for completion of the works for which bids are invited (period up to 6 months to be taken as half-year and more than 6 months as one year).

M = 1.5 (One and half)

B = Value, at the current price level, of existing commitments and on-going works to be completed during the period of completion of the works for which bids are invited.

Note : 1. The bidder shall submit statement showing the values of existing commitments and ongoing works and as well as the stipulated period of completion remaining for each of the works listed should be countersigned by the Engineer-in-Charge, not below the rank of an Executive Engineer or equivalent or shall be submitted in a shape of affidavit.

Note: 2The bidder shall calculate and online submit his Bid Capacity as given in above of Pre-qualification documents. The financial offer of the bidder shall not be opened, whose bid capacity is exhausted or is lower than the probable amount of contract given in the NIT.

(f) The bidder shall submit a list of works which are in progress or in hand on the Performa as below:-

Sr. No.	Name & Particulars of Division where works are being executed.	Amount of work	Position of works in progress	Remarks
---------	----------------------------------------------------------------	----------------	-------------------------------	---------

(g) The work done certificate regarding the similar works from the Engineer-in- Charge not below the rank of Executive Engineer of a State/Semi Govt. Deptt. / Central Govt. Dept. or Govt. undertaking, of India is mandatorily required. The bidder shall upload the award letter or related agreement to collaborate the experience certificate submitted.

(viii) Copy of PAN (Permanent Account No.) & GST registration.

(ix) A value of Civil Engineering works executed during the last five years updated to the price level of the current/financial year.

(x) The authorization letter regarding digital signature certificate (DSC) of the person authorized by the registered bidder to upload the bid, be uploaded along with the other documents online.

(xi) A scanned copy of undertaking (as per Chapter IV of Form – 12) that I have carefully studied all the terms and conditions stipulated in the contract document before quoting the rates.

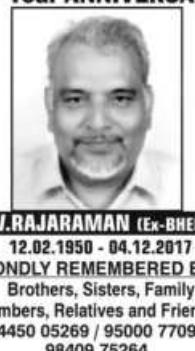
Note: No physical submission of documents, except original Bid Security/bid cost deposited through offline mode, will be allowed. Any document / information found false / fabricated during scrutiny or later anytime, the bid is liable to be cancelled immediately. In such case 'Bid Security' shall be forfeited.

2. (B) Cover-1 shall also contain "Technical bid" which shall be opened along with Eligibility Information "Cover-1" and Cover 01 (Part II) shall contain the following:

- The contractor / firm must upload calculations and size of various components of STP along with their fitment on the uploaded contour plan of site.
- The bids not satisfying technical requirements shall be summarily rejected.

3. Cover-2 shall contain "Financial Bid" which shall be opened at a later date to be notified separately & shall be opened only of those bidders /Firms whose documents as per Eligibility information and technical bid in "Cover-1" will be found in order. The Financial Bids shall contain only Financial Bid /Offer on departmental Schedule of quantity/BOQ where bidder /firms shall quote his /their offer for each item. The Non BOQ Items shall be paid as per Clause 59 of the PWD Form 12 and G/C & S.C.C.

4. Rates quoted must be in IN

OBITUARY &
REMEMBRANCEREMENBRANCE
35th ANNIVERSARYDEATH
ANNIVERSARIES7th Year ANNIVERSARY

V.RAJARAMAN (Ex-BHEL)
12.02.1950 - 04.12.2017
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Brothers, Sisters, Family
Members, Relatives and Friends
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98409 75264

S. Vijayalakshmi
Fondly remembered by
S. SOMIN ASSOCIATES
Chartered Accountants
Chennai - 600 041.
Ph: 044-4205 6080 Cell: 99400 35794

Producers move HC seeking ban on online review of films for 3 days from date of release

Mohamed Imranullah S.
CHENNAI

Tamil Film Active Producers Association (TFAPA) has filed a writ petition in the Madras High Court seeking a direction to the Centre as

well as the State government to ban online review of movies for first three days, from the date of their theatrical release, on social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and X.

Justice S. Sounthar on Tuesday ordered notices, returnable in four weeks, to the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as well as the State Information Technology and Digital Services department. De-

puty Solicitor General R. Rajesh Vivekananthan accepted notice on behalf of the Centre. The judge, however, refused to issue an interim direction, pending adjudication of the main writ petition, for restraining

YouTube channels from recording the views of the audience of newly released movies either inside the cinema theatre premises or in the vehicle parking lots.

When advocate V. Subramanian, representing TFA-

PA, complained about the barrage of negative reviews, also known as 'review bombing' shot in theatres, the judge said producers could always counter such reviews with their own positive reviews.

GENERAL

Comprehensive Cancer Care Hospital based at RAJKOT

REQUIRES

No. of Vacancies

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- **Staff Nurse** 30
- **Co-ordinator** 05
- **Medical Officer** 05
- **Registrar** 02
- **Pharmacist** 03

District 24

NOTE : Remuneration will not be a constraint for the right candidate.

Oral and written English communication skills would be required

Mail your CV to :career.cancercare@gmail.com

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(A Government of India Enterprise)
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CIN No: L74899DL1974GOI007227

Requires Individual Consultants-in the following post(s)/discipline through Interviews at RITES Office

VC No.	Post	Positions	Venue & Date
YP/66/24	Team Leader	01	RITES Office-Gurgaon, Hyderabad, Chennai and online via video conferencing.
YP/67/24	Geo-Technical/Material Engineer	01	
YP/68/24	Quality Assurance Specialist	01	
YP/69/24	Social Safeguard Specialist	01	Date: 18th to 20th December 2024

For details regarding how to Apply, Position, qualification, age, date & venue, selection process etc., candidates may see the detailed advertisement posted on RITES website www.rites.com under Career Section.

COCHIN SHIPYARD LIMITED

(A GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ENTERPRISE)

No. CSL/P&A/RECTT/PERMANENT/EXECUTIVE TRAINEE/2024/6 04 December 2024

VACANCIES OF EXECUTIVE TRAINEES

Cochin Shipyard Limited, a listed premier Mini Ratna Schedule 'A' Company of Government of India, invites Online applications from young professionals for filling up the following disciplines of Executive Trainees:-

Sl. No.	Name of the post	No. of posts	Reservation	Location
1.	Executive Director - Operations	1	GT	TNPL Unit-I & Unit-II
2.	General Manager - Finance	1	GT	TNPL Corporate Office, Chennai
3.	Management Trainee - HR	2	BC (other than BCA)	TNPL Unit-I & TNPL Corporate Office, Chennai
4.	Management Trainee - Plantation	2	BC - 1 (other than BCA) & SC - 1	TNPL Unit-I

SI.No.1 & 2:-
For details relating to age, qualification, experience, etc., please visit our website: www.tnpl.com/careers. Bio-data format (OFFLINE MODE) is available in our website. Candidates who conform to the job requirements as given in the website may apply in the prescribed Bio-data format by post in strict confidence superscribing the name of the post (both in Bio-data and top of the Envelope) within 15 days from the date of release of this advertisement to the below mentioned address, giving full details of age, qualification with year of passing, experience, community, salary drawn and position being held along with copies of testimonials towards proof for the same. Bio-data form with insufficient documentary proof will be summarily rejected.

SI.No.3 & 4:-
For detailed advertisement on disciplines, eligibility criteria, general conditions and instructions for filling the ONLINE APPLICATION, please visit our website: www.tnpl.com/careers. Applicants should download the filled online application and send the hard copy along with the required documentary proof to the below mentioned address.

Online Application - Opening 04.12.2024 - 10.00 AM

Online Application - Closing 18.12.2024 - 5.00 PM

Receipt of Hard Copy of the Application form with Documentary Proof 25.12.2024 - 5.00 PM

GENERAL MANAGER-HR
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COCHIN SHIPYARD LIMITED

(A GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ENTERPRISE)

No. CSL/P&A/RECTT/PERMANENT/EXECUTIVE TRAINEE/2024/6 04 December 2024

VACANCIES OF EXECUTIVE TRAINEES

Cochin Shipyard Limited, a listed premier Mini Ratna Schedule 'A' Company of Government of India, invites Online applications from young professionals for filling up the following disciplines of Executive Trainees:-

Sl. No.	Name of Discipline	UR	OBC	SC	ST	EWS	Total vacancies
1	Mechanical	8	6	3	1	2	20
2	Electrical	2	1	1	-	-	4
3	Electronics	1	-	-	1	-	2
4	Naval Architecture	3	-	2	1	-	6
5	Civil	2	-	-	1	-	3
6	Information Technology	1	1	-	-	-	2
7	Human Resource	2	1	-	1	-	4
8	Finance	2	1	-	-	-	3
Total		21	10	6	5	2	44

For details on age, reservation, educational qualification etc, please read the vacancy notification on CSL website www.cochinshipyard.in (Career page → CSL, Kochi). Last date of receipt of online application is 06 January 2025.

"Hindi version of detailed advertisement is published on the website (www.cochinshipyard.in) of CSL." Sd/-

GENERAL MANAGER (HR & TRAINING)

ENTERPRISE CONNECT

KIET Group of Institutions organizes the annual inter-institute technical fest "INNOTECH 2024"



KIET Group of Institutions, Delhi-NCR Ghaziabad, organized the eleventh edition of its annual technical fest Innotech on the theme 'Sustainable Solutions for Viksit Bharat'. Nearly 150+ projects were registered for the event, which included teams from KIET and different schools, the event began with the ribbon cutting ceremony by Chief Guest, Dr. U.B Desai (Founding Director, IIT Hyderabad), in the presence of Dr. Deepak Matru (IEEE Vice President – Member Geographic Activities), Dr. Alok Rai (Vice-chancellor, University of Lucknow), Mr Rohan Khanna (Vice President, Reliance Jio), and honourable members of KIET's management. Along with the chief guest, guests and members of management, Dr. Preeti Bajaj (Director General), Dr. Manoj Goel (Joint Director), Dr. Vineet Sharma (Dean CSE and Convenor-Innotech 2024) examined all the projects displayed by the students.

HUDCO launches Gift Milk Scheme to supplement nutrition among students of government schools of 3 districts of Chhattisgarh under CSR



In a significant step towards addressing malnutrition among government school children, the Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited, a Navratna CPSE (HUDCO) launched the Gift Milk Programme in Rajnandgaon, Bilaspur and Mungeli districts of Chhattisgarh, under its CSR initiative. Shri Tokhan Sahu, Hon'ble Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, inaugurated the program at the Government School Sendri, in Bilaspur on 30 November 2024. Shri Sanjay Kulshrestha, CMD HUDCO, Shri Sushant Shukla, Member of Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly from Beltara, Shri M. Nagaraj, Director (Corporate Planning), DR. V. Sridhar, Senior General Manager, NDDB along with other dignitaries were present on the occasion. In his inaugural address, the Hon'ble Minister emphasized that eradicating malnutrition among children

is one of the core development goals of the Government of India.

Shri Sanjay Kulshrestha, CMD HUDCO, highlighted the significant role of milk in the physical and cognitive development of children. Shri M. Nagaraj, Director (Corporate Planning) HUDCO, emphasized that improving children's nutritional status not only enhances their health but also strengthens their ability to learn and perform at school.

Eco-Friendly Rides for Devotees at Mahakumbh 2025



In a bid to promote a Green Mahakumbh, the Yogi government has launched an online e-rickshaw and e-auto booking system for devotees attending the Mahakumbh Mela 2025 in Prayagraj. This initiative aims to provide affordable, eco-friendly transportation options for the expected 45 crore devotees. Key Features of the Service are- Online Booking, Fixed Fares, Verified Drivers, Google Voice Assistant and Pink Service. UP's startup, Comfy E Mobility, is spearheading this initiative, offering an online booking platform for e-rickshaws and e-autos. The company aims to provide a convenient, safe, and environmentally friendly app-based e-rickshaw taxi service for devotees.

GAIL signs long-term charter contract with "K" LINE for LNG ship



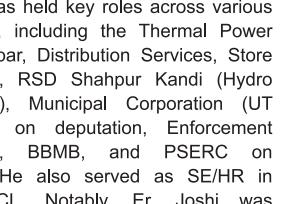
Looking to expand its fleet of LNG carriers, GAIL (India) Limited today signed a long-term time charter contract with Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha, Ltd. ("K" LINE) through the ship-owning company established in Singapore for a new-built LNG ship. "K" LINE has expertise of 40 years in LNG transportation. The LNG ship will be a modern two-stroke vessel having a tank capacity of 1,74,000 cubic metres and will be built by Samsung Heavy Industries Co. Ltd., Korea with which Ship Owning Company has concluded a shipbuilding contract. The contract was signed in the presence of Mr R. K. Jain, GAIL Director (Finance), Mr Sanjay Kumar, GAIL Director (Marketing) and Mr R. K. Singh, GAIL Director (Business Development) by Mr S. Bairagi, GAIL Executive Director (Mktg.-Shipping & Int'l. LNG) and Mr. Satoshi Kanamori, Managing Executive Officer (LNG, Carbon Solution Business), "K" LINE.

SJVN's NJHPS achieved its Design Energy four months in advance.

SJVN's flagship 1500 MW Nathpa Jhakri

Hydro Power Station (NJHPS), has achieved a significant milestone in Design Energy generation. On 1st December 2024, NJHPS achieved its design energy generation of 6612 million units. The Power Station operated at 1650 MW capacity as a result of 110% plant overloading for 116 days. Also, the Power Station continued to operate without a single shutdown, even amid high silt levels in river Satluj demonstrating unparalleled efficiency and operational excellence. SJVN attributed this success to the unwavering dedication and exceptional teamwork of all SJVNites especially Team NJHPS under the guidance of SJVN's Management and expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Ministry of Power, Government of India, Government of Himachal Pradesh, local administration, local populace and all stakeholders for their continuous support.

Er. Kamal Joshi Promoted as Engineer-in-Chief, PSPCL



The Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) has announced the promotion of Er. Kamal Joshi, Chief Engineer/Material Management, to the prestigious position of

Engineer-in-Chief. Er. Joshi, joined the department on November 2, 1989, as an Assistant Engineer (AE), has rendered over 35 years of dedicated service. Throughout his career, he has held key roles across various departments, including the Thermal Power Plant at Ropar, Distribution Services, Store Organisation, RSD Shahpur Kandi (Hydro Organisation), Municipal Corporation (UT Chandigarh) on deputation, Enforcement Organisation, BBMB, and PSERC on deputation. He also served as SE/HR in PSPCL/PTCL. Notably, Er. Joshi was entrusted with the additional responsibility of Legal Advisor/PSPCL from April 13, 2019.

Mode Retails Sales and Marketing Pvt Ltd Honored for Excellence at India International Trade Fair 2024

Mode Retails Sales and Marketing Pvt Ltd, a leading name in promoting Indian heritage through innovative luxury products, has been awarded the Best Display and Presentation Award at the India International Trade Fair 2024, held under the Uttar Pradesh Pavilion at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. The prestigious recognition was presented by the Uttar Pradesh Trade Promotion Authority, acknowledging the company's exceptional stall presentation and storytelling approach. Mode Retails showcased its culturally inspired luxury collections, including the Ramayana Series, the Incredible Temple Collection, and other unique product lines under the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative. Each product reflects India's rich cultural heritage and is accompanied by an engaging narrative, seamlessly blending tradition with modern luxury.

OPPORTUNITIES

GENERAL

NALCO

National Aluminium Company Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)



HINDUSTAN AERONAUTICS LIMITED
(A Govt. of India Undertaking
under Ministry of Defence)



Preparing for worse

Extreme weather events will increase in frequency in the coming years

It is not uncommon for the southern peninsula to experience heavy or very heavy rainfall during the northeast monsoon, which is also important for Sri Lanka and Maldives. But when Cyclone Fengal crossed the coast, close to Puducherry, on the night of November 30, neither Tamil Nadu nor Puducherry expected the magnitude of devastation that occurred. In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said nearly seven million families and 15 million individuals have been affected. Sixteen people, including four in Puducherry, lost their lives. A landslip in Tiruvannamalai claimed seven lives including five children. Unusually heavy rainfall (40 cm-50 cm) was recorded in many places in Puducherry and the northern and northwestern parts of Tamil Nadu on a single day. An initial estimate puts over 2.21 lakh hectares of farmland including 10,000 hectares in Puducherry to be under water. The cyclonic storm later weakened and crossed coastal Karnataka, adjoining east central Arabian Sea. Though many southern parts received rain, Puducherry and several districts in Tamil Nadu bore the brunt. What worsened the plight of people in some districts was the flood in the otherwise-dry South Pennai river; on Monday, it had a flow of 2.4 lakh cusecs. Mr. Stalin has sought an immediate release of ₹2,000 crore from the Centre. The Puducherry Chief Minister, N. Rangasamy, has announced assistance of ₹210 crore.

It is time that the authorities concerned prepared themselves to face extreme weather events, given the rising frequency of very high rainfall. Last year, Kayalpatinam in Thoothukudi received 95 cm, whereas, this time, northern and northwestern districts faced a similar experience. A 2022 monograph by the India Meteorological Department concluded that, on an average, four depressions or cyclonic storms could be expected to affect the southern peninsula every season. The authorities should intensify their concrete and tangible long-term steps beyond the routine ways of providing relief and rehabilitation. Even though Chennai was not hit badly this time, the State government must make public the report of the Advisory Committee for Mitigation and Management of Flood Risk in the Chennai Metropolitan Area, led by former civil servant V. Thiruppugazh. Other measures such as a strengthening of bunds, regular removal of silt from water courses and a relentless drive against encroachment of water bodies must be carried out. Only such steps will be purposeful to the people; taking pride about age-old irrigation management is not enough.

Power of pardon

Political interference can corrupt the working of the criminal justice system

O utgoing U.S. President Joe Biden has signed a presidential pardon for his son Hunter, for any federal crimes that he "committed or may have committed or taken part in" between January 1, 2014, and December 1, 2024. The younger Biden was convicted earlier this year on federal gun and drug charges and pleaded guilty to tax charges in California. Addressing the cases against his son, Mr. Biden said that unless there were aggravating circumstances, "people are almost never brought to trial on felony charges solely for how they filled out a gun form". He also noted regarding the tax evasion allegations that late payment of taxes owing to "serious addictions", with subsequent full payment of all taxes, interest, and penalties were typically given non-criminal resolutions, yet it was "clear that Hunter was treated differently". On the one hand, there have been legitimate questions raised about the nature of the pardon – "full and unconditional" – that goes well beyond the gun and tax charges. Most likely, the vagueness of the language is deliberate to allow Hunter Biden to evade prosecutions that the incoming Trump administration might seek to foist upon him, possibly relating to charges of unlawful lobbying, corruption-related payments and similar crimes linked to his foreign business activities. Indeed, Donald Trump has already been impeached in Congress for attempting to pressure, for the sake of political gain, the Ukraine President into conducting investigations against Hunter Biden.

On the other hand, U.S. presidential pardons are hardly uncommon, with even Mr. Trump handing out 143 during his first term – including to Republican Party lobbyist Steve Bannon, the father of Mr. Trump's son-in-law, Charles Kushner, and controversial figures such as Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn, and former George W. Bush aide Lewis "Scooter" Libby. Presidential pardons to family members are not unprecedented either – Bill Clinton pardoning his half-brother Roger, convicted on drug-related charges. Yet, the larger question that Mr. Biden's latest pardon begs is whether justice can be served fairly in a political ecosystem of bitter polarisation, the kind that is presently found in the U.S. When Mr. Biden said that he believed that "raw politics has infected this process" it was a reflection upon the increasing weaponisation of law enforcement authority to score political points – ironically, a charge that Mr. Trump levels against the Department of Justice under Mr. Biden. While there is no reason to assume that Presidents will not continue to issue pardons to their allies, leaders on both sides of the aisle would do well to show restraint and prevent political interference from corrupting the working of the justice system.

Frustration over the slow progress made during COP29 negotiations in Baku is hardly new. History has repeatedly shown us that the politics of climate change and the forces of nature rarely align. Adding to this challenge is the absence of a unified global authority to address the urgency of the issue. There is no world government or state to act on behalf of the planet. Compounding this challenge is the lack of a universal metric system capable of reconciling the diverse political, economic, and social interests of nation-states. While the jury is still out on whether COP29 was a "disappointment", "failure", or "disaster", critics have often pointed out that 'business as usual' does not work. As Brazil prepares to host COP30 in Belém next year, here is an alternative suggestion on the concept of 'representation' for them.

This innovative methodology was pioneered by Bruno Latour, Emeritus Professor at Sciences Po, and Laurence Tubiana, France's Climate Change Ambassador and Special Representative for the 2015 COP21 in Paris. In the lead-up to COP21, in May 2015, there was a week-long public event, hosted by Sciences Po, called the 'Theatre of Negotiations' at Nanterre-Amandiers on the outskirts of Paris. This experiment brought together 200 students from 143 universities worldwide to role play and reimagine a life-sized COP. The goal of this bold pedagogical initiative was to transform the traditional framework of climate negotiations. At its core was a radical rethinking of 'representation'.

As Irish author Sally Rooney writes, "When American colonists famously rebelled against the practice of 'taxation without representation,' [how] is environmental devastation without representation any different? Even if carbon emissions were thoroughly democratically determined – which they are not – why should voters in the world's richest countries have the right to poison the air, sea, soil, and rivers for the entire population of Earth?" People living on Polynesian islands or in Africa have no right to vote in American or European elections. Yet, they



Gaurav Daga
Associate Vice-President at Guidance, Industries Department, Government of Tamil Nadu

Future climate change conferences can achieve meaningful outcomes only if there is honest representation, actionable commitments, and a transparency of intentions

often bear the brunt of the resulting environmental damage.

Granting equal rights

In the approach to representation, humans and non-humans – such as the atmosphere, oceans, and soil – were granted equal rights in negotiations. The idea was to give voice and agency to these non-human entities, allowing them to express their stakes in climate negotiations. Unlike conventional COP meetings, this assembly did not defer to the authority of science or nature, as these too were subjects of negotiation. The aim was to simulate a truly inclusive and representative process.

The theatre setting at Nanterre-Amandiers encouraged dynamic and creative reinterpretations of negotiation. Delegates dramatised and de-dramatised issues, explored alternative spatial-temporal perspectives, and allowed non-speaking entities to 'represent' or 'speak' through proxies. This flexibility opened new avenues for addressing climate challenges, from reframing territorial sovereignty to dramatising the interdependence of ecosystems and nations. For example, the 'Ocean' imposed conditions on the 'United States,' while the 'Atmosphere' directly addressed 'China' regarding greenhouse gas emissions. These novel interactions forced participants to reconsider the boundaries of sovereignty and territorial responsibility. This writer, who was a part of the Philippines delegation, represented a civil society organisation, voicing the concerns of indigenous, rural, and coastal communities. Each delegation comprised a diverse mix of actors – state and non-state representatives, scientists, business leaders, and civil society members – thus ensuring a broad range of perspectives.

The week-long simulation yielded profound insights. For delegates, it underscored the critical need for clear communication of interests, values, and territorial concerns. For organisers, it highlighted the logistical and resource

mobilisation challenges required to facilitate a process of this scale. For students, it revealed alternative pathways for advancing the climate agenda, recognising the limitations of existing negotiation frameworks. As simulators, we achieved our goal of creating a dynamic, inclusive, and scientifically informed pedagogical tool for climate action.

One could argue that the prevailing global governance system does not allow for such 'representation', or critique it from an anthropocentric point of view. While there are gaps in the existing legal-cum-institutional framework to govern and/or implement rights, the recurrent tendency to give representation of non-humans via courts (in the case of India, Pakistan), parliament (Ecuador, New Zealand) or other institutions (Canada) is to only enlarge its legal and political agency. Such tendency stems from the fact that non-humans are 'interest bearers' having moral standing and deserving political and legal representation.

There needs to be transparency

So, if future COPs are to achieve meaningful outcomes, honest representation and actionable commitments must be paired with a transparency of intentions. Hosting COPs in economies which are heavily reliant on oil, sends mixed signals, particularly when the host nation simultaneously promotes investment in state-run oil and gas enterprises. Such contradictions erode trust and undermine genuine progress.

It would be a significant step forward if COP30, held in Belém – the heart of the Amazon, gave representation to the 'Amazon' as an entity, exploring what possibilities this opens up. Bridging the gap between ambition and action requires not just new negotiation methods but also a willingness to align policies with the values we collectively champion. Let us hope we are not sleepwalking through the Anthropocene.

The views expressed are personal

A run-through, on the Editorial and Opinion pages, of the business at the COP29 summit, in Azerbaijan

Reflections on Baku's 'NCQG outcome'

The urgency of climate change has never been more evident. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has highlighted the need for significantly stronger commitments to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Current policies, if continued globally, are expected to lead to a temperature rise of up to 3.1°C. The increasingly visible impacts of climate change across geographies, apart from the growing body of scientific evidence, serve as a constant reminder of the need to accelerate climate action. Cleaner fuels and technological solutions are emerging across sectors and could be increasingly accessed and deployed with adequate focus on the means of implementation.

Against this backdrop with COP 29 (in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November 2024) branded as the "Finance COP", the hope was to see an ambitious outcome (specifically related to the NCQG or New Collective Quantified Goal) which strongly supported this understanding.

Financing needs of the developing world
Finance is a critical component in accelerating the adoption of cleaner alternatives, especially in developing countries. While some of the renewable technologies pay off in the long run due to lower fuel and operational costs, the upfront costs of some of these technologies are much higher than the current options requiring government support to ensure affordability at the consumer end. Other green technologies may still be evolving and are associated with risks of failure that front-runners may need to bear. Given the pressure on government resources that need to be prioritised towards development activities, additional finance must be up-scaled urgently within this decade if transformational changes are to be expected in the adoption of clean and efficient alternatives in developing countries, as access to modern energy and infrastructure improves.

India's expenditure on green energy schemes encompass a wide range of initiatives aimed at expanding renewable energy infrastructure, promoting energy efficiency and clean fuel and technology innovations as part of its commitment to global climate goals. MNRE received its highest ever allocation of ₹19,100 crore in the Budget 2024-25, apart from about ₹40 crore being allocated for enhancing energy efficiency. In the transport sector, a subsidy of ₹5,790 crore has been provided to electric vehicle manufacturers under phase-II of Faster Adoption and



Ritu Mathur
Director, Energy Assessment and Modelling, TERI



Sanchit Saran Agarwal
Associate Fellow, Energy Assessment and Modelling, TERI

Manufacturing of (Hybrid) Electric vehicles (FAME) scheme.

Another aspect of finance required for the transition relates to the source and type of finance. There are growing concerns regarding fiscal debt, which forms the basis of the ask, for part of the financial support from developed countries to be in the form of public grants rather than loans.

The pace and the scale of transitions are also affected by the higher cost of capital in developing countries. Financial flows from developed countries must ideally aim to strengthen fiscal capacities and enable the unlocking of financial markets in developing countries to support and accelerate their climate action. The use of debt instruments to access finance does not work well for developing countries since their high debt burdens limit their ability to successfully incentivise domestic private capital for climate action. It is well recognised that developing countries attract much higher lending rates as compared to developed countries and much of the global financial flows are restricted within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Therefore, ensuring the flow of climate finance to developing countries at affordable lending rates is important.

Role of the NCQG
At Cancun, in 2010, developed countries had pledged to provide \$100 billion annually upto 2020. Further, at COP21 in Paris, the parties decided to establish an NCQG prior to 2025, with the Cancun commitment as the base point. The rationale for establishing the NCQG was pressing. The existing climate pledges have generally been criticised for their lack of specificity and accountability.

Therefore, the NCQG was intended to create a framework for shared climate goals, to establish clear and quantified objectives that nations could aim to achieve, with transparency and accountability at the forefront. At COP26 at Glasgow in 2021, an ad hoc work programme for NCQG discussions was established to run from 2022-24, culminating towards the discussions at COP29.

The Second Needs Determination Report by the Standing Committee on Finance under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) estimated that



between \$5 trillion to \$7 trillion would be needed by 2030 to meet half the needs of 98 countries. Developing countries had put forward a conservative ask of \$1.3 trillion annually at COP 29 (largely from public sources to enable leveraging the rest through private finance).

However, the developed world has in the NCQG agreed to provide an abysmal figure of \$300 billion annually till 2035. This quantum is not only minuscule but hardly represents any major change in real flows – probably a target that could be achieved even with current or minimally additional efforts, if we account for inflation. Further, the mobilisation of funds is expected through all sources of finance including private capital. Undoubtedly, therefore, there is disappointment with the NCQG outcome, both on the quantum and structure of finance since it does not support the narrative of transformative action. While the decision to triple the flow of public resources through various operating entities of the Financial Mechanism, the Adaptation Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund, and the Special Climate Change Fund from the 2023 level by 2035 is a positive aspect, it could also see rather slow progress in the next few years (and not aligned to the narrative of the urgency in climate action).

The road ahead

COP29 saw the finance commitment step up from the earlier commitment of \$100 billion a year to \$300 billion a year. While this is a step in the correct direction, it is clearly not as ambitious as expected given that climate change is clearly recognised as one of the greatest threats and challenges of our time. Overall, the NCQG outcome is rather disappointing and does not seem to have aligned well with the very core of why the goal was set up in the first place. It clearly bypasses the principles of equitable burden sharing and climate justice as it fails to recognise the financial needs of the global south.

The way forward is to keep the talks ongoing. Climate change has no geographical boundaries. Thus, it is imperative that the international community cooperates towards the global good, keeping climate justice at the core and respecting the principles of the Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR and RC). Developing countries must stick together and ensure that any transition is just and fair in the real sense.

Rethinking 'representation' for a meaningful COP30

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Gaurav Daga
Associate Vice-President at Guidance, Industries Department, Government of Tamil Nadu

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So, if future COPs are to achieve meaningful outcomes, honest representation and actionable commitments must be paired with a transparency of intentions. Hosting COPs in economies which are heavily reliant on oil, sends mixed signals, particularly when the host nation simultaneously promotes investment in state-run oil and gas enterprises. Such contradictions erode trust and undermine genuine progress.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Logjam ends

The success of a democracy lies in constructive discussion, engaging debates and fine questioning in Parliament. For a long time, Parliament sessions have been an arena for political vendetta, frequent walkouts and a muzzling of voices, all of which call for accountability. In this regard, the recent

agreement at a meeting between the government and the Opposition in the chamber of the Speaker is a small step in the right direction (Front page, December 3).

R. Srivatsan,
Chennai

It is a blot on democracy that the temple of democracy is not being allowed to function. If

passing Bills without meaningful discussion and debates on sensitive issues is not healthy, equally, it is unacceptable to be having frequent disruptions and misconduct.

S. Seshadri,
Chennai

I would feel bad if there is no discussion on Manipur, one of the most burning topics of the day. Better

sense should prevail among parliamentarians in all parties to discuss the various issues concerning the people of India. Why waste time and money on trivial matters, that too raised by the forces inimical to India?

Govardhana Myneedu,
Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

It is a positive denouement that better counsel

prevailed over both the government and the Opposition. Parliamentary forums are not meant for fights between Kilkenny cats. There should be an end to scoring over the other on the basis of lung power.

Local action amidst global inertia

After hours of intense negotiations, the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) ended with a climate finance goal where developed countries are to provide \$300 billion annually by 2035. However, this is far from what the developing countries need, and once again brings global climate gridlock into the spotlight.

Reaching a consensus
The notion that developed countries should finance climate action in developing nations while also ramping up their own mitigation efforts (such as taking the lead in phasing out fossil fuels and reaching net zero emissions faster) is accepted in principle, but has proven contentious to implement across COPs. The developed world continues to use fossil fuels to meet most of its demands and has no plans of reaching net zero before mid-century. The deadlock has remained a recurring theme at climate negotiations, and COP29 was unsurprisingly no exception. The powerful fossil fuel lobby, especially the oil and gas lobby; the developed world's heavy reliance on fossil fuels; the re-election of climate change deniers; and the differential impacts of climate change across the globe (with the developing world more likely to be impacted than others) are all challenges that hinder reaching a consensus.

Global negotiations are not useless. On the contrary, they are extremely important, even if the victories are few and far between. For instance, the Montreal Protocol, which came into force in 1989, has successfully helped protect the ozone layer and eliminate certain chemicals used in refrigeration (chlorofluorocarbons), a significant contributor to the depletion of the ozone layer. Similarly, the Kyoto Protocol, the first global accord on reducing



Ramya Natarajan
Research scientist at the Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy, a research-based think tank



Jai Asundi
Executive director at the Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy

greenhouse gas emissions, which came into force in 2005; the 2015 Paris Agreement, a consensus on limiting global warming to below 2°C with revised national targets every five years; and the 2021 Glasgow Climate Pact, which introduced a loss and damage fund and in which nations declared their respective net-zero dates, are some COPs to celebrate.

However, unlike the melting of glaciers, the pace of action has been slow. Studies indicate that the 1.5°C target will be breached within a few years, with one study even suggesting that it has already been exceeded. Scientific evidence warns that crossing this threshold will lead to severe consequences in terms of natural disasters and heat stress, which are already apparent across the world. In some instances, the changes expected are unknown and could be catastrophic. Further, studies also point to the fact that the earth's climate will continue to evolve even after global net zero is reached, but the longer we take to get there, the more significant the impact of climate change will be.

India's efforts

Whether the goal is to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C or condemn political aggressors for starting wars, the rate at which action is needed is exponential, but the rate at which it is realistically possible is incremental at best. How then do we reconcile these different scales (exponential versus incremental rates) of action? Our answer is to focus efforts on national and sub-national-level action. In India, several policies and finance have already been put in place towards clean energy transition, assuming that international climate finance contribution will be minimal. Being a developing country with several challenges, India has largely followed the co-benefits approach in addressing climate

While global consensus and funding remain elusive, local and national actions are making tangible progress

change. For instance, the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana provides households with subsidies to install rooftop solar panels, thereby also addressing energy poverty and access. The PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) initiative aims to promote the adoption of zero-emission vehicles, including two-wheelers, three-wheelers, ambulances, and trucks, offering purchase subsidies and supporting essential charging infrastructure to accelerate the transition to clean air and clean transportation. The Perform, Achieve, and Trade (PAT) scheme, soon to be replaced by the Indian Carbon Market, helps mobilise investments needed to improve energy efficiency and emissions reduction in industries. It is important to note that India has been working hard on reducing its emissions intensity (CO₂ per unit of GDP) as per its commitment to the Paris Agreement. Further, in addition to strategies for emissions mitigation, State Action Plans on Climate Change support adaptation strategies tailored to specific vulnerabilities of States, with a focus on agriculture, forestry, water resources, and disaster risk reduction.

While global consensus and funding remain elusive, local and national actions are making tangible progress. The hullabaloo around COPs from "non-parties" is less crucial than the need to drive action on the ground. India deserves praise for already taking steps in the right direction.

Moving forward, sustained efforts in emissions mitigation, mindful consumption aligned with Mission LIFE, a greater emphasis on developing resilient infrastructure and communities, and implementing effective heat action plans to address extreme heat will be essential.



Takeaways from COP29

While there were disappointments, there was much cause for celebration too

Sumanth Sinha

Two major global events took place last month: the G20 Summit in Brazil and the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Baku, Azerbaijan. Catalysing finance to address climate change was a central theme at both events. The deal reached in Baku, though hard-won, falls short of expectations.

To be fair, the expectations for climate finance were never easy to meet. Assessments had shown that developing countries need \$1.3 trillion per year through 2035 to build infrastructure for adapting to climate change; investing in clean energy, land use, and urban development to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and recovering from disasters. This amount was to come from the 24 high-income countries listed in Annex I of the UNFCCC. Given the outlook of slow economic growth, green investments required in their own territories, and the likelihood of the U.S., which accounts for half of cumulative federal spending, pulling back, there was little appetite for a significant commitment.

The biggest disappointment, however, is that even the small commitment made – \$300 billion per year – does not come entirely from public finance, but from sources including Multilateral Development Banks, carbon markets, and private finance. It is recognised that private finance tends to flow to economies where returns are commercially attractive, and it can easily shift back to advanced economies when conditions change. This creates uncertainty about whether emerg-

ing economies will see much benefit. Even larger economies like India are unlikely to get adequate resources for priorities such as adaptation.

That said, there were significant victories as well. The set of agreements on carbon markets concluded a decade of negotiations. While bilateral carbon credit deals between countries had been taking place under Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement, COP29 clarified the procedures for authorising these credits, their transferability between registries, and the standards needed to ensure their environmental integrity. This prevents credits from being revoked and investment getting stranded.

A bigger win was the move towards implementing a global carbon market under Article 6.4, with several procedural rules agreed upon. The swift adoption of these rules by individual countries is crucial to launching this market, which will help direct capital towards the most efficient emission reduction projects worldwide. India is likely to be a major beneficiary in this regard.

Other positive outcomes included new emission reduction pledges from the European Union, Canada, and other regions. Many nations committed to propose steeper 2035 targets in their revised Nationally Determined Contributions than their current commitments. The U.K. and Brazil have announced their updated targets, while Norway is consulting on its own. Mexico, under the leadership of climate scientist Claudia Sheinbaum, became the latest major economy to announce a goal to reach net zero by 2050.



At the G20 Summit, Indonesian President Probowo Subianto unveiled an ambitious plan to retire all coal and fossil fuel-fired plants by 2040. This is significant, as Indonesia is the largest exporter and third-largest consumer of coal globally. It also highlights that the focus on coal is back – a challenge that India stayed off in previous COPs in order to ensure that the focus remained on all fossil fuels. The lack of progress on the "phase-out" of all fossil fuels at both COP29 and the G20 Summit is a cause for concern.

Should we acknowledge that the battle to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C has likely been lost, and adopt a more realistic target? A study released before COP29 indicated that the world was already 1.49°C warmer than pre-industrial levels by the end of 2023. Another suggests that there are still pathways to reverse temperature rise within the 1.5°C limit, even with a temporary overshoot. But this would require the removal of several hundred gigatonnes of carbon using untested carbon removal technologies. At present, large-scale investment in these technologies is not being seriously discussed. Despite this, the 1.5°C goal remains a key leverage point for developing countries, which use it to push for more financial support, and for large economies to take more aggressive steps to cut emissions. There are pros and cons to abandoning the 1.5°C target. It deserves serious thought.

Sumanth Sinha is the founder, Chairman and CEO of ReNew, and was recognised as global climate leader in 2024 TIME100 Climate list

Unpredictable rainfall makes farming in Marathwada even harder

In the last two decades, annual rainfall over Marathwada has been stable but the timing and intensity of rains have become erratic

DATA POINT

Ishita Jalan Lakshminatha N.R.

In Maharashtra's Jalna district, Dada Rao Ghatode, a farmer from Babultara village, owns eight acres of land where he grows soybean, cotton, and pigeon pea (tur) during the kharif season (July to October). This season, he expected at least ₹80,000 in return from four acres of soybean. However, a single day of heavy rains in September ruined nearly 80% of his crop.

This was not an isolated incident. Across Marathwada, farmers are grappling with unpredictable changes in rainfall distribution, which are threatening their livelihoods. Jalna, along with all other districts in Marathwada, has experienced a sharp increase in extreme rainfall events, disrupting traditional farming practices and water management systems.

Rise in extreme rainfall events
Through the last two decades, the distribution of rainfall in Jalna has changed significantly, according to our analysis of daily gridded rainfall data from the India Meteorological Department. The region's total annual rainfall has been relatively stable but the timing and intensity of the rains have become erratic. Already infamous for its droughts, Marathwada now oscillates between periods of little water and those of too much, which also cause severe waterlogging during the kharif season.

Traditionally, farmers grow water-intensive crops such as paddy, maize, pulses, soybean, and groundnut during the kharif cropping season, and expect good yields. But with an increasingly unstable monsoon, the farmers have had to fall back more and more on rabi season (November to April) crops such as sorghum, chana, and wheat, which have lower market prices. Even though most farmers own medium to large land

holdings, they are not prospering.

Data from 2001 to 2023 indicated that rains in July, August, and September accounted for 70% of Jalna's annual rainfall, and that the monsoon arrived late in July and August in most of these years (**Chart 1**). Further, the amount of rain in July and August fell short as much as 70% of the time, while there was a 50% chance of downpours deviating from normal patterns in September.

The greater cause for alarm may be the number of rainy days: the frequency of those with more than 3 mm of rain dropped by 30% in August, a critical period for crop growth. September had 18% more rainy days, meaning the land was water-logged just as the crops approached harvest (**Chart 2 and 3**).

These patterns are disrupting farming cycles and putting farmers who depend on kharif-season crops at even more risk. Extreme rainfall events – defined as a day with rain falling in the 99th percentile by quantity – have not only become more frequent but also more intense. The intensity on these days increased from 59 mm/day in 1951-2000 to 70 mm/day in 2001-2023. There are similar trends across central India, where studies have recorded a threefold increase in the frequency of extreme precipitation events.

Black soil and water-logging

Farmers, researchers, and policy-makers often discuss water scarcity in relation to the impact of climate change on agriculture, leaving the challenges of excess water to be still understood. The Marathwada region's black soil can hold a large amount of water before having to discharge it, and is thus prone to waterlogging.

When this soil type becomes saturated with water, it restricts drainage and prevents water from seeping into aquifers, resulting in flooding even with normal rainfall. For farmers, waterlogging is equal to disaster because it deprives the crops of oxygen, which leads to rotting, wilting, and increased sus-

ceptibility to pests and diseases.

The hydrogeology of Marathwada further complicates this situation. Although farm ponds and wells fill quickly after the rains, the underlying basalt rocks are not conducive to long-term water storage. In other words, farmers can't rely on these resources for irrigation throughout the year. The result is a continuous cycle of surplus water in the monsoon and scarcity in the dry months – both of which are bad for farming.

Evolving water management

The changes in rainfall distribution in Jalna reveal a pressing need for new agricultural water management strategies. Prevailing water management practices in Marathwada are based on storing excess water in farm ponds. These ponds do provide some relief, but they don't prevent waterlogging or retain water beyond a single season. This limits their usefulness.

For conventional methods to manage watersheds, experts use historical rainfall data to determine storage capacity. But with the monsoons becoming less predictable, Jalna and other similar areas need watershed structures that can withstand high runoff volumes from extreme rain events. One sustainable approach would be to focus on enhancing the region's drainage networks and improving surface water storage.

Transitioning from farm ponds that depend on groundwater to surface runoff capture systems could also reduce the pressure on aquifers and prevent groundwater depletion.

Additionally, shifting to more water-tolerant varieties of crops can allow the water to percolate through the soil more and help sustain the landscape even when it is inundated.

This combination of improved drainage infrastructure, surface water storage facilities, and resilient land use can foster a balanced water management system capable of withstanding the disruptive weather changes in Marathwada.

Change in rainfall patterns

Data for the charts were sourced from the daily gridded rainfall data of the India Meteorological Department



Chart 1: A long period average was calculated for a period from 1961 to 2010, and each category of rainfall was estimated for that month for the last 22 years (as per the IMD method)

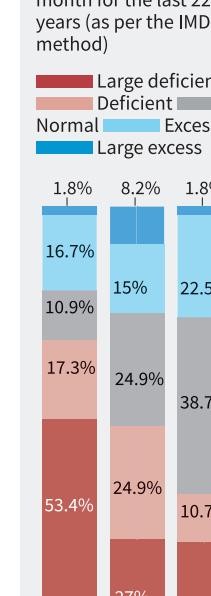


Chart 2: The charts show the number of rainy days for the month of August. The frequency of those days with more than 3 mm of rain dropped by 30% in August, a critical period for crop growth

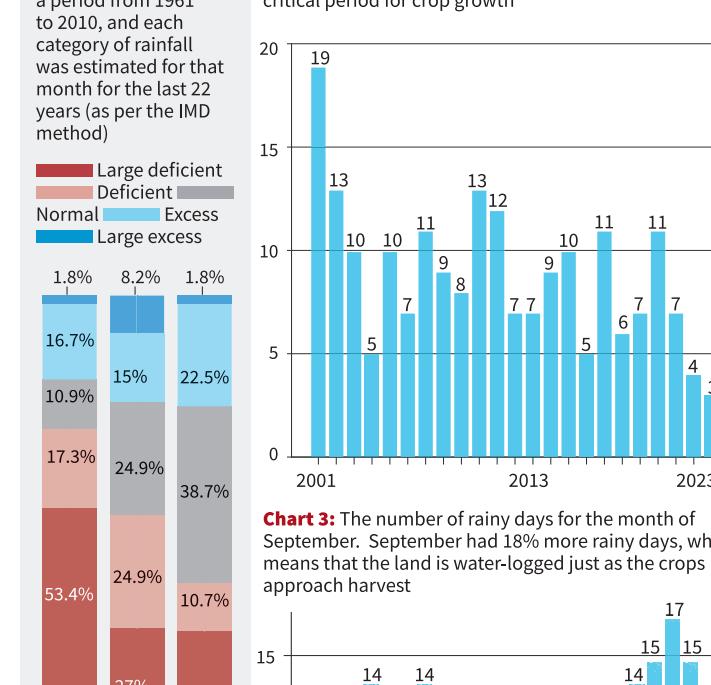


Chart 3: The number of rainy days for the month of September. September had 18% more rainy days, which means that the land is water-logged just as the crops approach harvest

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 4, 1974

Ford explains strategic arms accord with Russia

Washington, Dec. 3: The United States President, Mr. Gerald Ford, said last night that his strategic arms accord with the Soviet Union would allow the two super-powers arsenals of 2,400 nuclear missiles and bombers apiece, and called it a "real breakthrough".

He told a news conference that the agreement, still subject to more detailed negotiations to "convert this agreed framework into a comprehensive accord", would allow the two countries to put multiple warheads on 1,320 of the missiles in each nation's quota.

The agreement would run from 1975 to 1985.

"This does not permit an agreed build-up, it puts a cap on future build-ups," Mr. Ford said, "and it actually reduces a part of the build-up at the present time."

However, Mr. Ford said he intends to push the U.S. strength upto the levels contemplated by the agreement which covers intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched missiles and long-range bombers.

Answering questions, Mr. Ford stressed that nothing in the arms limitations agreement precluded the United States from increasing its throw-weight capabilities, meaning a more powerful missile that could carry a heavier warhead. He said several years ago, the U.S. military authorities made a decision to go in for smaller and more accurate missiles, while the Soviets set guidelines for "heavier missiles".

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DECEMBER 4, 1924

Wireless in Australia

Leafeld (Oxford) Midnight, Dec 3

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Registrations under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

1.45 crore. Around 1.45 crore registrations have been made under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana and 6.34 lakh installations have been completed. The scheme aims to achieve one crore rooftop solar installations in the residential sector by FY27 with an outlay of ₹75,021 crore. PTI

The GST evasion cases recorded in Gujarat in four years

12,803 Central tax officers have booked 12,803 cases of GST evasion and arrested 101 persons in the past four financial years in Gujarat, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman informed the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. PTI

Number of pregnant Filipino surrogates arrested in Cambodia

13 A Cambodian court has sentenced 13 pregnant Filipino women to four years in jail for acting as surrogate mothers, in the latest crackdown on the outlawed practice. The 13 were among 24 foreign women detained by Cambodian police in the Kandal province in September. AFP

Complaints registered under the F&B category in two years

533 The government said on Tuesday that as many as 533 complaints have been registered under the Food & Beverages (F&B) category in the consumer commissions in the last two years. In cases where food samples are found to be non-conforming, penal action is taken. PTI

MCD's expenditure on dengue control measures in 2024

100 In crore. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has spent nearly ₹100 crore on dengue control operations in the financial year 2024-25 so far, up from ₹87.99 crore in the previous fiscal year, according to an RTI response. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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The salience of the Places of Worship Act

Why was there communal violence in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh? What were Justice Chandrachud's remarks in the Gyanvapi case in 2022 and why did it spark political controversy? What does the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 stipulate?

EXPLAINER

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far: A suit filed against the Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal district, Uttar Pradesh, in which the trial court issued an ex parte order permitting a survey of the mosque, triggered violence on November 24, resulting in the death of four persons. The petitioners have alleged that the 16th-century mosque was built at the site of an ancient Hari Har Mandir which was purportedly demolished by Mughal ruler Babur in 1529. The incident is part of a pernicious trend of local courts in States like Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh entertaining civil suits contesting the origins of mosques across the country. Experts have however flagged that such suits constitute a violation of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991.

What does the 1991 Act stipulate? The 1991 Act was introduced by the Congress government under Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao amid the communal turmoil that followed the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in 1992. Then Home Minister S.B. Chavan stated that the "enactment of this Bill will go a long way in helping restore communal amity and goodwill."

The law preserves the character of a place of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947, and prohibits courts from examining whether any place of worship has been altered since that date. Section 3 of the Act forbids the conversion – either in whole or in part – of a place of worship from one religious denomination to another, or even within different sects of the same religion. However, the Ram Janmabhoomi dispute in Ayodhya was explicitly exempted from the Act's purview, as the matter was already sub judice when the law was enacted.

A five-judge Constitution Bench in the 2019 Ayodhya title suit affirmed that the



Tense times: The main gate of the mosque at Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh on November 27. R.V. MOORTHY

law was designed to protect the nation's secular fabric and imposes a positive obligation on the State to preserve the religious character of all places of worship as they stood on the day India attained independence. Although the disputed site was awarded to the child deity Ram Lalla, the top court barred the institution of similar suits concerning other religious places, in accordance with the provisions of the 1991 Act.

Why has it been challenged? A slew of petitions have been filed in the apex court challenging the constitutionality of the law, including one by BJP leader and advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay. The petitioners argue that by freezing the status of religious sites as they stood in 1947, the law effectively prevents Hindus from "reclaiming" their places of worship that were allegedly

"invaded" by Muslim rulers and British colonialists. They further point out that destroyed temples retain their original character under Hindu personal laws and cannot be considered valid mosques under Islamic law without the establishment of a waqf.

In September 2022, a Bench led by then Chief Justice of India (CJI) U.U. Lalit directed the government to file a response on its stand within two weeks. However, two years later, the Centre has still not submitted its affidavit.

Noted academician Prof. (Dr.) Faizan Mustafa told *The Hindu* that the inordinate delay in hearing the challenge has emboldened lower courts to disregard the provisions of the 1991 law. "An authoritative pronouncement from the top court is crucial to preserving the country's social fabric. The government is duty-bound to defend the

constitutionality of parliamentary laws. Similarly, the court must expedite the hearing of the challenge with a presumption in favour of the Act's constitutionality. A heavy burden lies on the petitioners to prove its unconstitutionality," he said.

Why did Justice Chandrachud's remarks stir political row now?

In August 2021, five women associated with the Vishwa Vedic Sanatan Sangh filed a petition in a Varanasi civil court seeking year-round access to pray at a shrine located behind the western wall of the Gyanvapi mosque complex. They claimed the mosque housed several Hindu deities. On April 8, 2022, a Varanasi civil judge appointed an Advocate Commissioner to conduct a videographic survey to ascertain the alleged existence of these idols. The mosque committee challenged the order citing the 1991 Act. However, the High Court and later the Supreme Court refused to halt the survey.

In May 2022, during a hearing on the maintainability of the suit, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud remarked that the 1991 Act does not preclude inquiries into the status of a place of worship as of August 15, 1947, provided there is no intent to alter or convert its character. This interpretation marked a stark departure from the stance taken in the Ayodhya verdict, also purportedly authored by the former CJI. It also broadened the scope for district courts to entertain a host of similar petitions. This oral remark has also recently sparked a political storm, with Congress leader Jairam Ramesh claiming that it has since opened a Pandora's box.

"Oral observations hold no binding authority as they are not formally recorded in the order. The legislative intent of the 1993 Act could not have been any clearer – it explicitly bars even the admission of such suits. Such claims may only be considered if, on August 15, 1947, the site was unquestionably used by multiple religious communities, for instance, as both a temple and a mosque," explained Dr. Mustafa.

THE GIST

▼ The 1991 Act preserves the character of a place of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947, and prohibits courts from examining whether any place of worship has been altered since that date.

▼ A slew of petitions have been filed in the apex court challenging the constitutionality of the law. The petitioners argue that by freezing the status of religious sites as they stood in 1947, the law effectively prevents Hindus from "reclaiming" their places of worship that were allegedly "invaded" by Muslim rulers and British colonialists.

▼ The Supreme Court is yet to decide the preliminary issue raised in several of these suits — whether the 1991 Act bars even the filing of pleas questioning the "original" status of a religious site or just the final alteration of its nature of worship.

What are the controversies around pardoning power?

What is the history of the pardoning power in the U.S.? What is the current controversy?

Rangarajan R.

The story so far:

U.S. President Joe Biden has granted an unconditional pardon to his son Hunter Biden who faced sentencing for federal tax and gun convictions.

Can the President pardon anyone? The 'royal prerogative of mercy' is a historic prerogative of the British monarch to grant pardons to convicted persons. This was originally used by the monarch to withdraw or provide alternatives to death sentences. At present it is used to grant clemency for any sentence or penalty based on ministerial advice. According to the U.S. Constitution, the President can grant pardon except in cases of impeachment. The U.S. President has absolute power of pardon for federal criminal offences. Such a pardon may be issued prior to the start

of a legal case as well as prior to or after a conviction for a crime.

Once accepted, the pardon grants relief from punishment and associated disqualifications but does not erase the conviction record.

What is the current controversy? Right from the pardon to the leaders of the 'whiskey rebellion', who protested against a federal tax, granted by the first President George Washington in 1795 to President Bill Clinton's pardon of his half-brother Roger on the last day of his office in 2001, pardoning power has been mired in controversies. Donald Trump had pardoned his son-in-law's father in 2020. In the instant case, President Joe Biden has granted pardon to his son for tax and gun offences for which he has been convicted, and for any potential federal crimes that Hunter Biden may have committed between 2014 and 2024. This is in contrast to the public promises

that Joe Biden had made earlier that he would not pardon his son. The reason stated by the President was that Hunter Biden was selectively and unfairly prosecuted, and was singled out only because he is his son. Hunter Biden was convicted by a jury of illegally buying and possessing a gun as a drug user. He then pleaded guilty in a tax evasion case.

What is the Indian system? Article 72 and 161 of the Constitution provide powers to the President and Governor respectively to grant pardon, commutation, remission, respire or reprieve to a convict. These are sovereign powers which are to be exercised on the advice of the council of ministers. A pardon in the Indian context absolves the offender from conviction, punishment and all associated disqualifications. There have been various instances in India where the acceptance, rejection or delay in decisions of mercy petitions by ruling

governments have been entangled in political controversies. The Supreme Court in the *Epuru Sudhakar* case (2006) has held that the exercise of pardoning power is subject to judicial review on the grounds of arbitrariness, mala fides or extraneous considerations.

What can be the way forward?

The pardoning power is a practice that has its origins during the time of absolute monarchy when there was no separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary.

Critics have argued that the pardoning power in modern times have been more often used for political considerations than to correct judicial errors.

In the U.K., the Criminal Cases Review Commission has been constituted to investigate alleged miscarriages of justice. It has diminished the use of the royal prerogative of mercy. This is a transparent and judicious manner of correcting judicial errors in a modern democracy, governed by the rule of law. However, till such time the pardoning power continues in the statute books, it must be exercised in a manner that does not reek of nepotism or arbitrariness. It is essential for retaining the trust of people, who are the source of all power in a democracy, in high constitutional offices.

Rangarajan R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Polity Simplified'. Views expressed are personal.

THE GIST

▼ The 'royal prerogative of mercy' is a historic prerogative of the British monarch to grant pardons to convicted persons.

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EXPLAINER

What are the toxins of the 1984 Bhopal disaster?

Past reports have indicated worrisome concentrations of hexachlorobutadiene, chloroform, carbon tetrachloride, and trichlorobenzene at the site of the plant, in addition to elevated levels of heavy metals

Vasudevan Mukunth

Forty years after the Bhopal disaster on December 2-3, 1984, several hundred tonnes of toxic waste still remain around the ill-fated Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Despite pleas from locals and activists – bolstered over the years by orders from the National Green Tribunal and the Supreme Court – to dispose of the waste, the Madhya Pradesh government has only been able to get rid of a small fraction.

Chemical analyses of soil, air, and water samples collected from the area have revealed the presence of toxic compounds at elevated concentrations. This year, Madhya Pradesh received ₹126 crore from the Union government to incinerate around 340 tonnes of the aboveground material, but others have resisted the plan saying burning the compounds will release poisonous fumes that could lead to further contamination and adverse health effects.

What toxins are associated with the disaster?

Union Carbide India, Ltd. (UCIL) built the Bhopal plant in the late 1960s to manufacture an insecticide called carbaryl using a reaction of methyl isocyanate (MIC) with 1-naphthol. MIC is a highly toxic compound. It reacts with water at high temperatures, and its reaction with water also releases heat.

On the night of December 2, 1984, a large quantity of water entered a tank storing MIC at the plant such that the MIC was soon boiling. Facilities at the plant to cool the tank were otherwise diverted, leaving MIC vapours to escape to the environment and spread through the settlements around the plant. MIC doesn't have a particular smell at concentrations at which other gases may become noticeable but it can irritate the eyes. However, given the hours, most of the people exposed to the gas were asleep.

The Union Carbide Corporation has never officially specified which gases were leaked from the plant, including MIC. This decision also compromised health workers' ability to respond effectively to the hordes of people who showed up in clinics and hospitals in Bhopal that night and the next day.

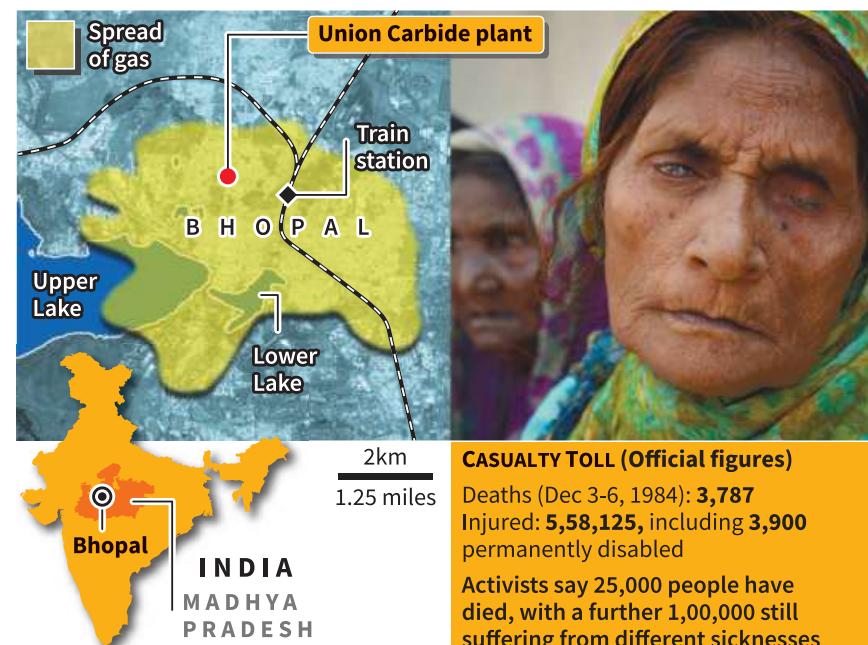
Some visual cues, including the blood-red colour of the viscera of those who died, also raised concerns that hydrogen cyanide was present in the fumes.

What are the toxins at the plant? As *The Hindu* reported on December 2, "a 2010 government-commissioned study showed that ... the factory premises also contain about 11 lakh tonnes of contaminated soil, one tonne of mercury, and nearly 150 tonnes of underground dumps" – in addition to the 340 metric tonnes earmarked for incineration.

In 2001, the *International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health* published an editorial by Jayshree Chander, then at the School of Medicine at the University of California San Francisco. Here, Dr. Chander citing a Greenpeace report released in 1999, based on analyses of samples collected at the site in May that year, wrote that Greenpeace reported the presence of

Toxins linger 40 years on

Chemical analyses of soil, air, and water samples collected from the area around the ill-fated Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh have revealed the presence of toxic compounds at elevated concentrations. Several hundred tonnes of toxic waste still lie around the plant



RESPONSIBILITY	COMPENSATION
The Indian government argues that slack management and deferred maintenance caused the disaster. Then-plant owner, the U.S. firm Union Carbide Corporation (UCC), blamed sabotage	In 1989, UCC paid \$470m to the Indian government to settle litigation stemming from the disaster
In 2010, eight former managers of the plant were convicted of negligence and sentenced to short prison terms	But India is now backing a new court case to secure greater compensation – Dow Chemical, which bought UCC in 2001, denies liability
UCC chairman Warren Anderson, who left India soon after the disaster, was sought by the Indian government, which had called for his extradition from the U.S. He died in September 2014, aged 92	Payouts by the Indian government to Bhopal claimants over the years reportedly average \$550 apiece

Sources: Indian government, Madhya Pradesh government

Picture: AP © GRAPHIC NEWS

mercury, chromium, copper, nickel, and lead. According to her, the report also noted the presence of hexachlorobutadiene, chloroform, carbon tetrachloride, and trichlorobenzene, among other compounds.

Reports from the area have also said the plant was disposing of untreated liquid effluent before the events of 1984.

In 2004, the Supreme Court ordered Madhya Pradesh to supply drinking water from tankers to 14 communities around the plant; by 2013 this exercise had expanded to encompass 22 communities.

In 2017, in response to a plea from an NGO, the court ordered the Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (IITR) to test water samples in 20 more communities.

In 2018, the IITR reported higher than permitted concentrations of nitrate and chloride compounds and heavy metals. The court subsequently ordered Madhya Pradesh to expand its water-supply operations to 42 communities overall. Since then, according to Amnesty International, the same NGO and others have identified persistent organic

pollutants in 29 more communities and have described it as evidence of contamination still spreading from the plant.

How toxic are heavy metals?

Chromium, copper, lead, mercury, and nickel are classified as heavy metals because their density is at least 5x that of water. Mercury has been known to damage multiple organs even at low concentrations by accumulating in soft tissue and preventing normal cellular function.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has said there is "sufficient evidence" for arsenic and its compounds being able to cause cancers of the urinary bladder and the lungs; for hexavalent chromium to cause cancers of the lungs; and for nickel and its mixtures to cause cancers of the lungs, nose, nasal cavity, and the paranasal sinuses.

According to a 2002 paper in the journal *Pathogens and Disease*, "Chromium is an essential nutrient required by the human body to promote the action of insulin for the utilisation of sugars, proteins and fats. ... But high

Note: The toxic effects described in this article are not guaranteed to occur, even at the requisite concentration, because toxicity also depends on the demographic, physiological, and genetic characteristics of the exposed individual.

doses of chromium and long term exposure can give rise to various cytotoxic and genotoxic reactions that affect the immune system of the body."

Lead is capable of damaging chlorophyll and disrupting photosynthesis in plants and rendering structural damage to cells and hampering their ability to produce energy in animals. Also, lead from inorganic compounds has been correlated with stomach cancer and to a lesser degree with cancers of the lungs, kidneys, and the brain.

High levels of copper in the body have been known to damage the liver, the kidneys, and the gastrointestinal system.

How are organic compounds harmful?

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, hexachlorobutadiene is a possible carcinogen in humans.

When inhaled, ingested, or brought in contact with skin, this compound can cause the liver to store too much fat (hepatitis steatosis), destroy cells in the kidneys involved in producing urine, and inhibit brain activity, among other effects. It is also corrosive.

Chloroform by another name is trichloromethane, and is infamous for its effects on the central nervous system. At a sufficient concentration, it can cause an adult to faint, but at even higher ones it can cause death. The IARC has classified chloroform as "possibly carcinogenic" on the back of limited evidence of cancer-causing potential in humans but more reliable evidence in animals.

In the PubChem database of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, carbon tetrachloride, that is carbon tet, is classified as an "acute toxin" and a "health hazard". It is notorious for its ability to damage the liver, including causing cancer. At present, a common way to be exposed to carbon tet is via contaminated groundwater. According to at least one review, ingesting 1 ml of carbon tet can blur vision, damage nerves, and/or cause heartbeat to become irregular.

Trichlorobenzene can take three chemical forms, or isomers, but all of them are volatile and spread easily through the air, although they have also been found in groundwater and in surface water bodies like lakes.

These compounds build up in the body's fatty tissues and at high concentrations can damage the liver and the kidneys.

Finally, Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) refer to organic compounds that don't break down easily and thus last for many years in the environment once they enter it. According to the Stockholm Convention on POPs, their effects include "cancer, allergies and hypersensitivity, damage to the central and peripheral nervous systems, reproductive disorders, and disruption of the immune system." Some POPs have also been associated with developmental disorders and worse outcomes in cancers of the liver, breasts, pancreas, and the prostate.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian Upendran

"How goes it? Everything O.K.?"

"Everything's pretty cool. But what is the meaning of 'how goes it'?"

"It means 'how are you and how are things going'."

"Is it a common way of greeting people?"

"Yes. It is. 'How goes it?' is usually used with people you know fairly well."

"The standard form is 'how are you?'"

"I tell you English is a crazy language."

"Now, now. Take it easy. Don't fly off the handle!"

"Fly off the handle? Oh yes. it means a sudden out-burst of anger, doesn't it? Tell me, is the handle that is referred to in the expression, a door handle?"

"No, not a door handle. But the handle of an axe."

"An axe!"

"Yes. that's right. And the thing that flies off the handle is the axe-head. You see the expression 'fly off the handle' dates back to the time when all our tools were hand-made."

"You mean a time when most of our implements were crude?"

"That's right. In the case of the axe, for example, the handle and the head were crudely fitted together. On occasions, while a person was chopping wood, the axe-head used to fly off, or come off the handle, sometimes injuring the axeman or the people standing nearby."

"That must have caused a lot of commotion."

"It did. And that's why they came up with the expression "fly off the handle". The commotion caused by a flying axe-head was very similar to the commotion caused by someone's sudden outburst of anger."

"So a person who becomes angry, that is, loses his head, is like a flying axe-head. Is that what you are saying?"

"Yes, because both are potentially dangerous. Capish?"

"Ca ... what?"

"Capish. The first syllable 'ca' is pronounced like the 'co' in words like 'continue', 'correct' and 'corruption'."

"And 'pish' rhymes with 'fish', I suppose."

"Not quite. The 'i' is like the 'ee' in words like 'bee', 'see' and 'fee'. The word is pronounced capish, with the stress on the second syllable."

"Capish. I think I've got that. But what does it mean?"

"It means 'understand'. It's from an Italian dialect. In American English, 'capish' is usually used as a question. Here are two examples. You have to go to college tomorrow. No more arguments. Capish? If you don't submit your assignment by one on Friday, you'll get a zero, capish? By the way, you won't find the word in dictionaries. It is a buzz word. The younger generation considers it fashionable to use the word."

"I think I understand."

"Good. Ciao, then."

"Ciao? Oh yes. I remember! It means 'goodbye' in Italian."

"That's right. I've got some work. See you later."

Published in *The Hindu* on April 19, 1994.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Cyclone Fengal has wreaked havoc across the country. The name 'Fengal' was proposed by Saudi Arabia. Here is a quiz on cyclone names and its conventions

Sindhu Nagaraj

QUESTION 1

Cyclones in the North Indian Ocean are named by member countries of the World Meteorological Organization and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific panel. This panel includes how many countries? This system has been in place since which year?

QUESTION 2

Following Fengal, what is the name of the next cyclone that will make a landfall. Which country has named it?

QUESTION 3

Cyclone Ockhi was a strong tropical cyclone that devastated parts of Sri

Lanka and India in 2017. It wreaked havoc in Kerala, Goa, Lakshadweep and Tamil Nadu. The name was given by which country?

QUESTION 4
Cyclone Dana made landfall along the Odisha coast in October 2024. Dana's name was suggested by Qatar. What did it mean?

QUESTION 5
This cyclone, named by India, is regarded as the worst tropical cyclone to ever strike the Yemeni island of Socotra, causing destruction there after Cyclone Chapala hit the same island, in 2015. What was it called?

QUESTION 6
What is the maximum number of letters the name of a cyclone can have?



Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. This country has hosted the most Day and Night Test matches after Australia. **Ans: India**

2. This non-Test playing country has hosted Day and Night Test matches. **Ans: UAE**

3. This country has played in the most Day and Night Test matches after Australia. **Ans: England**

4. This player has scored the most runs and most hundreds. **Ans: Marnus Labuschagne**

5. This player has picked up most wickets. **Ans: Mitchell Starc**

6. This player holds the best bowling figures in an innings. **Ans: Devenender Bishoo**

7. This is the only bowler to pick up five or more wickets in each innings. **Ans: Axar Patel**

8. The common connection between the South Africa versus Zimbabwe Test match and India versus England. **Ans: Both Tests got over in just 2 days**

9. The connection between the achievements of Shafiq and Holder.

Ans: They are the only players to win the award despite ending up on the losing side

Visual: Identify the players. **Ans: Azhar Ali and David Warner. Only batters to score a triple century**

Early Birds: Tito Shiladitya| Tamal Biswas| Sonali Das| Dodo Jayaditya

Word of the day

Equable:

not easily irritated; not varying

Synonyms:

even-tempered, good-tempered, placid

Usage:

The climate is equable, with pleasant springs and cool winters.

From Page One

'India, China have set ties on right track'

They were driven by "unstable" local situation, and the impact of the tensions on the bilateral relationship, he said, adding that the negotiations included 17 meetings of the WMCC (Working Mechanism for Cooperation and Coordination) and 21 rounds of the SHMC (Senior Highest Military Commanders meeting) since 2020.

The Minister said that the October 21 agreement had followed the two meetings he had with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in July, and one meeting between National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval and Mr. Wang in September. Since the agreement, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had met Chinese President Xi Jinping, and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and the Foreign Ministers had met on the sidelines of various conferences.

He also said that the focus had been on Demchok and Depsang since September 2022, which were the two remaining points of friction after the governments had achieved disengagement on five other points, including the Pangong Tso Lake and the Hot Springs area.

While he did not refer to "buffer zones" directly, Mr. Jaishankar said that "steps of a temporary and limited nature" had been taken in order to avoid further friction, and would be revisited "as the situation demands". In the wake of the October 21 agreement, several former military and diplomatic officials have questioned how *status quo ante* could be restored unless the buffer zones were dismantled.

Mr. Jaishankar claimed the government had ensured India's national security was upheld, with three key principles during the talks – that both sides should strictly respect and observe the LAC; that neither side should attempt to unilaterally alter the *status quo*; and that agreements and understandings reached in the past must be fully abided by in their entirety.

Dhaka summons Indian envoy after breach

Student activist and adviser to the interim government of Bangladesh, Nahid Islam, hit out at India on Tuesday and described West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's call for deployment of UN forces in Bangladesh as "baseless remark".

"Her misplaced concern is ironic, given the vandalism of our Assistant High Commission in Agartala," said Mr. Islam who came to prominence during the student-peoples uprising of July-August that overthrew the Sheikh Hasina government.

In a detailed post on X, Mr. Islam described Indian people as "friends" but said, "India's ruling elite and Hindutva forces do not want such democratic relations and harmony. They perceive Bangladesh's uprising and the political awakening of its students as a threat."

"India must not forget that its stability and integrity are closely interlinked with the stability and integrity of Bangladesh... Anti-Bangladesh and anti-Muslim politics will not serve India's national interest or contribute to its unity," Mr. Islam said.

Three police sub-inspectors in Tripura were suspended for negligence following the security breach at the Bangladesh mission in Agartala. Seven protesters from the Hindu Sangharsh Samiti have been held in connection with the breach. Security agencies are reviewing CCTV footage and social media posts to identify those involved.

Following New Delhi's assurance of enhanced security measures outside the mission, CRPF and Tripura State Rifles troops have been deployed, and two checkpoints have been set up outside as a security measure. Two additional checkpoints have been created on the Akhaura Road leading to the Agartala Integrated Check Post. (With inputs from Syed Sajjad Ali in Agartala and Rahul Karmakar in Guwahati)

Congress seeks raw Maharashtra voter data from poll body

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A delegation of Congress leaders on Tuesday met the Election Commission and flagged "discrepancies" in the Maharashtra Assembly election.

The party said there was an unprecedented increase in the number of voters in the five-month period between the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, and glaring inconsistencies in the voter turnout data.

Congress leaders Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Mukul Wasnik, Nana Patole, Pawan Khera, Praveen Chakravarty, Gurdeep Sappal, Sasikant Senthil, Omar Hoda, and Sanjeev Singh were part of the delegation.

Talking to presspersons later, Mr. Singhvi said the meeting took place in a very cordial manner. The delegation sought raw data, both booth-wise and constituency-wise.

A note submitted to Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar by Mr. Praveen Chakravarty highlighted that 75 lakh more voters exercised their franchise in the Maharashtra Assembly election compared with the Lok Sabha election. The delegation also flagged the addition of 39 lakh voters in the electoral rolls since the Lok Sabha polls.

Mr. Chakravarty said they sought raw data for Form 6 and Form 7 through which deletions and additions in voter lists are done.

LeT 'commander' killed in Srinagar encounter: police

Junaid Bhat was behind the attack at a tunnel construction site in Ganderbal in October that left seven civilians dead; J&K Police and Rashtriya Rifles launched the operation on Monday night

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

ALashkar-e-Taiba "commander", allegedly behind an attack on workers at a tunnel construction site in Ganderbal in October, was killed in an overnight anti-militancy operation in the Harwan area of Srinagar, the police said on Tuesday.

They said Junaid Ahmed Bhat, a resident of Kulgam, was killed in a joint operation by the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Army's Rashtriya Rifles in the upper reaches of Dachigam.

The operation was launched on Monday night and resulted in a gunfight with hiding militants.

"The operation was based on specific intelligence inputs. It was conducted in the rugged and forested outskirts of Srinagar," Inspector-General of Police V.K. Birdi said.

The police said Bhat's



Security personnel stand guard during an encounter in the Dachigam forest area of Srinagar on Tuesday. IMRAN NISSAR

face was captured on CCTV camera when he led the attack on workers in the Gagangir area of Ganderbal on October 20. Seven civilians – a local doctor and six non-local workers – were killed in the attack.

Mr. Birdi said the security forces tracked Bhat for a considerable time, "leading to the successful conclusion of this operation".

Security forces and militants had exchanged fire in

the same forest range on November 10. However, the militants managed to escape.

VDG found dead

In a separate incident, a missing village defence guard was found dead with bullet wounds at Udhampur. The victim was identified as Ashok Kumar.

"A member of the VDG who went missing has been found dead under mysterious circumstances

far from his house in Chapper, Latti area of district Udhampur. He was hit by a bullet," Amod Nagpure, Senior Superintendent of Police, Udhampur, said.

He said the police recovered a .303 rifle from the spot.

"As per our investigation, including FSL examination and post-mortem, it largely looks like a suicide, and there is no terror angle to it," Mr. Nagpure said.

Two women detained

The police detained two women under the Public Safety Act in Udhampur for allegedly working as overground workers for militants.

The police identified the accused as Maryama Begum and Arshad Begum.

"The two women have been detained under provisions of the PSA because the two were intentionally and wilfully providing logistical support to the terrorists," Mr. Nagpure said.



Justice Manmohan

vation increases the Supreme Court's judicial strength to 33, one short of the full sanctioned strength.

The Supreme Court Collegium, headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, had recommended Justice Manmohan's name for appointment as a top court judge on November 28. He was also the first recommendation to the Supreme Court Bench from the Collegium led by Chief Justice Khanna.

The two vacancies had arisen in the top court with the retirements of Chief Justice Khanna's predecessor, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, and Justice Hima Kohli.

In good health, says Shinde after routine check-up at hospital

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The distribution of key portfolios remains a contentious issue within the Mahayuti

Maharashtra's Caretaker Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, who reported sick for the past couple of days, visited a private hospital in Thane on Tuesday for a medical check-up, just days ahead of the new government's swearing-in ceremony. The event is scheduled to be held on Thursday at the Azad Maidan in Mumbai.

Shortly after the check-up, Mr. Shinde, who returned to Varsha, the CM's official residence, said that he was in good health. "I came for a routine check-up. My health is fine," he said.

Later in the evening, Chief Minister-probable and BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis met Mr. Shinde at Varsha. Mr. Shinde had been experiencing throat-related issues and underwent precautionary tests, including an MRI.

"He had a fever and throat infection that caused some weakness. However, he tested nega-

tive for dengue. It is a routine check-up," said Shiv Sena leader and MLA-elect Uday Samant.

Mr. Shinde, a key figure in the BJP-led Mahayuti coalition, had been staying at his private residence in Thane after feeling unwell during the recent State election campaign. His visit to his native village in Satara last week had fuelled speculation about potential dissatisfaction with the new government's formation.

The Maharashtra BJP will hold a meeting on Wednesday to elect its legislature party leader.

The distribution of key portfolios remains a contentious issue within the Mahayuti alliance. Shiv Sena leaders have staked a claim to the Home portfolio, citing alliance conventions.

Shiv Sena will leverage Shinde's clout to bag a few important portfolios

NEWS ANALYSIS

Vinaya Deshpande
Pandit
MUMBAI

There's a repeated sentiment one hears from Shiv Sena leaders in Maharashtra: "Respectable treatment should be given to our leader Eknath Shinde." It comes attached with an unsaid warning: "Don't trifile with him. Don't take him lightly."

With the Mahayuti still dragging its feet on government formation days after its sweeping victory in the Maharashtra Assembly election, most Shiv Sena leaders seem to have accepted that the party's 57 seats are unlikely to bring Mr. Shinde back to the Chief Minister's chair given the BJP's 132-seat tally, but they emphasise this means that their party – and their leader – must be given a larger consideration in other areas as their just due.

As he prepares for an imminent stepdown, the Caretaker Chief Minister faces the dilemma of how to best use it to leverage the party's bargaining power, for stronger portfolios including the Home Department, as well as a larger role in the Union government. Shiv Sena leaders stress the need to preserve Mr. Shinde's legacy as the common man's CM, who set a precedent by opening the doors of his office and residence to ordinary people.



Caretaker CM of Maharashtra Eknath Shinde during a meeting to review preparations for 'Mahaparinirvan Day' in Mumbai. PTI

position. We did not say anything because we had the Chief Minister's position in Maharashtra. Now, if that is being taken away, then our party needs to grow too," one Shiv Sena leader said.

All the Shiv Sena leaders spoke with denied rumours about the party declining the position of Deputy CM or giving mere outside support to a BJP government.

Over the past two-and-a-half years, Mr. Shinde has established himself as a strong leader who brought electoral gains to the Mahayuti alliance from the bitter split with Uddhav

Thackeray's Sena. From being expected to play second fiddle to the BJP, to coming into his own over a short span of time, he has shown political presence of mind.

"Whoever becomes the CM now will have larger shoes to fill. He showed how to be a people's man. He would stop his convoy to greet people, he would open his doors for the poor and the needy, without any bureaucratic considerations," a senior Sena leader said.

"For me, the biggest position is being the favourite brother of my favourite sister," was Mr. Shinde's response to all the speculation. He let his actions speak instead of words: just two days before a new government is formed, despite his illness, the Caretaker CM called for a meeting of the State administration to conduct business as usual.

Post-mortem on militants killed in Manipur shows fatal bullet wounds

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Strict watch: State and Central forces patrol after armed militants carried out an attack on civilians in Jiribam last week. PTI

kept pending till the chemical analysis reports on their viscera were received from the Directorate of Forensic Sciences in Guwahati.

As per the examination of the deceased militants, the bodies of Ngurte, Lalzarlen, Hmar, and Lalsanglen had one eye each that appeared severely damaged.

The reports detailed many of the wound trajec-

tories suggesting that the bullets hit them from behind.

CRPF Director-General Anish Dayal Singh did not respond to queries from *The Hindu* about the nature of injuries found in the post-mortem examination reports.

In all the reports, the cause of death had been

Markadwadi residents drop 're-election' plan

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

A plan by residents of Markadwadi village in the Malshiras Assembly constituency in Solapur district of Maharashtra to hold a "re-election" using ballot papers was called off on Tuesday following intervention from the local police and administration.

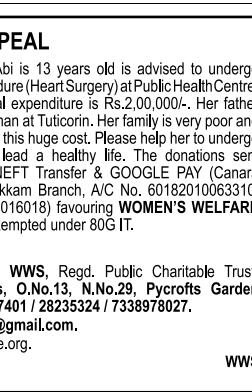
A controversy had



Loudes Antony Abi is 13 years old and is advised to undergo Kaveshna Procedure (Heart Surgery) at Public Health Centre, Chennai. The total expenditure is Rs 2,00,000. Her father works as a fisherman at Tuticorin. Her family is very poor and they cannot afford this huge cost. Please help her to undergo the surgery and lead a healthy life. The donations sent through Cld.DNEFT 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. GF1, Cordel Apartments, O.No.13, N/o.29, Pyrcroft Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401 / 28235324 / 7338978027. E Mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com. Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org.

erupted when villagers, dissatisfied with the results of the November 20 election, expressed distrust over EVMs and said they would organise a ballot paper "re-poll" on Tuesday. However, the administration imposed prohibitory orders till December 5. The authorities rejected the villagers' demand, asserting that the elections were conducted lawfully.



WWS

Dhankhar asks govt. to hold talks with protesting farmers

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Wondering why there has been no dialogue with protesting farmers, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar said in Mumbai on Tuesday that farmers in distress and agitating farmers did not augur well for the overall well-being of the nation. He was speaking at the Centenary Foundation Day of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research Central Institute for Research on Cotton Technology.

The Vice-President asked Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who was also present at the function, if any promise had been made to farmers, and said that dialogue with the farmer should happen immediately. "Honourable Agriculture Minister, did the previous Agriculture Ministers make any written promises? If so, what happened to them?" he said.

"Agriculture Minister Sir, every moment is critical for you. I request you to please tell me, was any promise made to the farmer, and why has it not been fulfilled? What are we doing to fulfil the promise? There was an agitation last



Jagdeep Dhankhar

year, and there is one this year as well, and time is passing, but we are doing nothing," he said.

Mr. Dhankhar asked Mr. Chouhan to consider the dialogue with the farmers as a challenge that should not be considered any less than the unity of India. "We cannot fight with our own people; we cannot put them in this situation where they are left to fight on their own. Can we create a boundary between the farmer and the government? Those whom we need to embrace cannot be pushed away," Mr. Dhankhar said.

Speaking on the minimum support price (MSP), he said he failed to understand why a formula could not be worked out in consultation with economists and think tanks that would reward farmers.

Bank Bill passes LS, allows one account, 4 nominees

Finance Minister says proposed amendments will strengthen governance and enhance customer convenience; Opposition criticises government over inflation being higher than economic growth

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Tuesday passed the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the first Bill of the Winter Session after the week-long lagan ended.

The Bill, piloted by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, was approved by a voice vote.

The Bill allows bank account holders to have up to four nominees in their accounts and also proposes changes related to redefining "substantial interest" for directorships, which could increase to ₹2 crore instead of the current limit of ₹5 lakh.

It proposes to increase the tenure of directors (excluding the chairman and whole-time director) in cooperative banks from eight years to 10 years, so as to align with the Constitution (Ninety-Seventh Amendment) Act, 2011.

Once passed, the Bill will allow a director of a Central Cooperative Bank to serve on the Board of a State Cooperative Bank. The Bill also seeks to give greater freedom to banks



Discussions begin: Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Winter Session of Parliament. PTI

in deciding the remuneration to be paid to statutory auditors.

It also seeks to redefine the reporting dates for banks for regulatory compliance to the 15th and last day of every month instead of the second and fourth Fridays.

The proposed amendments will strengthen governance in the banking sector and enhance customer convenience with respect to nomination and protection of investors," Ms. Sitharaman said while moving the Bill for consid-

eration and passing.

Depositors will have the option of successive or simultaneous nomination facility, while locker holders will have only successive nomination. "The intention is to keep our banks safe, stable, healthy, and after 10 years you are seeing the outcome," Ms. Sitharaman said.

Participating in the debate earlier, the Opposition parties criticised the Bill.

Gaurav Gogoi, Deputy Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha, questioned the rising imports from

China at a time when relations between the two countries were strained. He also questioned the government over demonetisation and electoral bonds.

Rani Srikumar of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam questioned the fees for basic banking services such as ATM withdrawals and SMS alerts and expressed concern over the vulnerability of senior citizens to cyberfraud.

Nationalist Congress Party (Shradchandra Pawar) leader Supriya Sule proposed a stricter approach to tackling financial fraud, and suggested that perpetrators compensate victims before serving prison sentences.

Congress MP Karti Chidambaram said the Indian rupee against the US dollar was at ₹84.73, and the growth rate in quarter two of FY25 was 5.4%, the lowest in seven quarters, while the inflation was 6.21%. "Whenever inflation is greater than economic growth, it will lead to stagflation. Against this backdrop, this government has brought about the Banking Laws Amendment Bill," he said.

IN BRIEF



Trinamool and SP missing at INDIA's protest on Adani row

Having reached an agreement with the government after a week of disrupting Parliament sessions, some Opposition parties on Tuesday took their protest against the government's silence on the Adani indictment to the Makar Dwar, the main entrance of the Parliament complex. Top leaders at the protest included Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, the AAP's Sanjay Singh, the RJD's Misa Bharti, and the Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Arvind Sawant. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam MPs and those from Left parties joined in. The Trinamool Congress and Samajwadi Party MPs were significant absentees.

Received 42 adjournment notices under Rule 267: VP

For the first time since the start of the Winter Session, the Rajya Sabha functioned smoothly on Tuesday. Chairperson Jagdeep Dhankhar said that he received 42 adjournment notices under Rule 267 on various issues, the highest so far in the last quarter century of the adoption of the Constitution. He did not accept any of the notices. Mr. Dhankhar said that one of the MPs had given more than one notice under Rule 267 and it was humanly impossible to accommodate the member. He also expressed anguish that a notice had been made public even before it was considered. He termed it a "disregard of provisions" and said it was too serious a matter.

More cases filed under SC/ST Act due to awareness, says Minister

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Tuesday told the Lok Sabha that "growing awareness, wider publicity, and capacity building of police personnel" were among the reasons for the increasing number of cases being registered across the country under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) show that over 67,000 cases had been registered in 2022 under the SC/ST Act. This is the highest number of cases registered under this Act since 2013, according to the NCRB data provided by the Social Justice Ministry.

Among them, 57,582 and 10,064 cases were registered with regard to atrocities against people belonging to SC and ST communities, respectively.

Social Justice Minister Giriraj Singh tabled a statement in the House on Tuesday. The statement came in response to a question from Janata Dal (U) MP Alok Kumar Suman.

Mr. Suman had asked the government to provide data with regard to discrimination in Central universities, the Indian Institutes of Technology, the Indian Institutes of Management, the All India Institutes of Medical Science, and public sector undertakings. "Data regarding discrimination against SC/STs in the educational institutions and public sector units in not centrally maintained," Mr. Kumar said in response.

Mr. Kumar, however, added that various steps had been taken to "reduce discrimination", which included setting up SC/ST cells, equal opportunity cells, and student grievance cells, and appointing liaison officers.

Considered proposals for inclusion of 365 groups on Central OBC list, says govt.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The National Commission for Backward Classes has considered proposals for inclusion of 365 castes and communities on the Central list of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the 10 years between March 2014 and November 2024, the Union Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

In considering these proposals, the NCBC had tendered advice 147 times, the government added, without disclosing how many of them were in favour of inclusion and how many were rejected.

In a government report released in June 2023 to celebrate the National Democratic Alliance government's nine years in power, the Social Justice Ministry had said it had facilitated the inclusion of 16 communities on the list since 2014.

Mr. Owaisi had asked for details of groups, castes and communities that had approached either the government or the NCBC with proposals for being included on the Central OBC lists since 2014 and their current status. He had further asked for de-



Seeking details: The response was to a question raised by AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi in Parliament. FILE PHOTO

The information on proposals for inclusion with the NCBC was provided by Minister of State for Social Justice B.L. Verma in response to an unstarred question from AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi.

'More details'
Mr. Owaisi had asked for details of groups, castes and communities that had approached either the government or the NCBC with proposals for being included on the Central OBC lists since 2014 and their current status. He had further asked for de-

tails of proposals that had been rejected and accepted and are under consideration of the government.

In response, the government said Parliament was entitled to include or exclude communities from the Central list of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes by law.

It said this process was "an ongoing exercise" depending on the receipt of a complete proposal with ethnographic report from the State or Union Territory concerned along with the outcome of a mandated public hearing.

Ladakh has been prot-

Centre proposes 95% govt. job reservation for locals in Ladakh

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has proposed 95% reservation in government jobs for locals in Ladakh, one-third reservation for women in hill councils and has agreed to address concerns regarding land-related matters, according to

leaders from the region who attended a high-powered committee (HPC) meeting on Tuesday.

The Centre has also pro-

posed to work on a draft to ensure "constitutional safeguards" to preserve the land and culture of Ladakh and also agreed to declare Urdu and Bhoti the official languages of Ladakh. The Ministry proposed to review 22 pending laws to address local concerns, empowerment and wildlife areas.

Ladakh has been prot-

esting for the past five years since it lost constitutional safeguards ensured under Article 370 of the Constitution.

Former BJP MP, Thupstan Chhewang, chairman of the Leh Apex Body (LAB) who attended the talks, said a separate public service commission was not constitutionally possible for Ladakh as the Union Territory did not have a legislature.

Recruitments soon
"The government has assured us that recruitments will start immediately. We said recruitments for gazetted posts should be done through the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC)," Mr. Chhewang said.

"The next meeting is on January 15 where sixth schedule will be dis-

cussed," he said.

For the past five years, people in Ladakh have been pressing for four demands – Statehood for Ladakh, inclusion of Ladakh in the sixth schedule of the Constitution, thus giving it a tribal status, job reservation for locals and a Parliamentary seat each for Leh and Kargil.

Stop assaults on Hindus, Jama Masjid Imam tells Bangladesh

Terming mistreatment of minorities as a "reprehensible act", Shahi Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid, Syed Ahmed Bukhari, on Tuesday asked the Bangladeshi government to stop injustices and assaults against Hindus in the country. Condemning the unilateral actions against the minority community, Mr. Bukhari said there was no justification for such actions. "Wherever in the world there is any form of oppression, coercion, prejudice and hatred against minorities or issues related to their fundamental rights and participation, it is the right of every nation, under international laws and regulations, to raise questions about it," he said.

Cyclone Fengal: T.N. MPs seek immediate financial assistance

Seeking immediate relief for the devastation caused in Tamil Nadu by cyclone Fengal, DMK leader T.R. Baalu urged the Centre to send an assessment team to the State. Raising the matter in the Lok Sabha during the Zero Hour, Mr. Baalu said the fury of the cyclone has caused heavy damages in 14 districts of the State. He said 12 people have lost their lives while 1.5 crore have been affected. Congress's Manickam Tagore and DMK MP Kanimozhi also made similar demands.

Government of Rajasthan (Water Resources Department)
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER WATER RESOURCES (NORTH)
HANUMANGARH
Notice Inviting Bid
(NIB Code- WRN2425A0056)
Bid for 01 No of package estimated cost Rs 2496.38 lacs involving Renovation and Modernization of Shyam Singh Wala (SSW) distributary Km. 0.000 to 29.45 of Bhakara canal system District- Hanumangarh is invited from prospective bidders up to 20.12.2024 at 6.00 PM. Other particulars of the bids may be visited on the procurement portal <http://www.proc.rajarajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppro.rajarajasthan.gov.in>, and the state website www.water.rajarajasthan.gov.in departmental website.
UBN No.- WRN2425WLOB00226
DIPR/C/12101/2024
Chief Engineer

Centre has no role to play in deletion of MGNREGS job cards, says Ministry

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

The Centre has no role in Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme job-card deletions, the Union Rural Development Ministry said on Tuesday. The response was to oral questions during Question Hour in the Lok Sabha.

The government also denied any correlation between the mandatory imposition of Aadhaar-based payment system for MGNREGS wages and high rate of job-card deletions.

Congress MP K.C. Venugopal said that in the past four years, names of 10.43

crore MGNREGS workers had been deleted from the programme. He said that in 2021-22, 1.49 crore were removed which jumped by 247% in 2022-23 with the deletion of 5.53 crore. Terming the jump "shocking", he asked whether this surge coincided with the directions making Aadhaar-based payments mandatory for paying MGNREGS workers.

Relying to the ques-

tion, Minister of State and TDP leader Chandra S. Pemmasani said that Aadhaar seeding of the job card was aimed at increasing transparency and was not an obstacle. He said the job cards are deleted based on five factors – fake card, duplicate card, if the beneficiary has moved from one panchayat to another, or the beneficiary has expired, or the beneficiary no longer wants to work under the programme or the area has been reclassified as urban.

"Deletion of job cards is the State's responsibility and the Centre has no role in it," he said. He also answered ques-

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
KARNATAKA SLUM DEVELOPMENT BOARD
No. 55, Abhya Complex, Risaldar Street, Seshadripuram, Bengaluru-560 020. Ph.: 080-23460085
Dated 28.11.2024
INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)

(THROUGH KPP PORTAL MODE ONLY) (TWO COVER SYSTEM)
The Karnataka Slum Development Board (KSDB) Bangalore invites Expression of Interest for the Qualified Architectural and Engineering Firms (AE Firms) for Preparation of Layout plan, building plan, designs/drawings, Detailed Project Report, tender documents and allied services etc.) & Appointment of Project Management Consultants (PMCs) for supervision, quality assurance and documentation for Proposed construction of KSIC Bhavan at Queens Road, Bangalore City.
Calendar of Events
Downloading of tender documents up to 16.12.2024 at 5:30 PM
Date and Time for Pre-Proposal Conference 09.12.2024 at 03:30 PM
Last date and time for receipt of tender Documents 16.12.2024 upto 5.30 PM
Time and Date of Opening of Tender Document 18.12.2024 at 11:00 AM
(Qualification Criteria) Technical bid
Place of Pre-Proposal Conference and Opening of Tender Documents Office of the Chief Engineer, Karnataka Slum Development Board, 55, 1st Floor, Abhya Complex, Risaldar Street, Seshadripuram, Bengaluru-560020
Phone: 080-884492377, Email ID: ksdbce@gmail.com
Website: www.ksdb.karnataka.gov.in
If there are any changes to the above notification, it will be published in e-procurement portal only. Tender Documents, schedule, specifications are available on the website: www.kpp.karnataka.gov.in. Tender form fees & EMD details are available on the kpp portal. EMD and tender processing fees shall be paid using e-procurement payment modes only. Tender application must be accompanied by earnest money deposit specified for the works and shall have to be valid for 45 days beyond the validity of tender date.
Sd/- Commissioner, Karnataka Slum Development Board, Bangalore

IN BRIEF



President gives away award for empowering disabled

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday conferred the National Award for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities on 22 individuals and 11 institutions in recognition of their contributions to the sector, highlighting the "courage and determination of persons with disabilities", and calling them a "source of inspiration" for society. In her address, the President said that these awards have a far-reaching social significance, noting that they not only celebrate the achievements of the awardees in their respective fields but also "serve as motivation for society at large".

CJI recuses from pleas against new law for EC appointments

Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna on Tuesday recused from hearing petitions alleging that a new law dealing with the appointment of Election Commissioners (ECs) gives the Central government a dominant role. The petitions have primarily challenged the validity of Section 7(l) of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service, and Term of Office) Act of 2023. The petitioners claimed that the 2023 law, especially Section 7(l), was introduced to dilute a Constitution Bench judgment of the Supreme Court in the Anoop Baranwal case on March 2, 2023.

Minister slams Delhi, Bengal over women safety schemes

Union Women and Child Development Minister Annapurna Devi on Tuesday criticised the Delhi and West Bengal governments for failing to implement women's safety measures such as one-stop centres (OSCs) and fast-track courts despite adequate Central assistance. Addressing a press conference here, Ms. Devi said the Delhi government had not paid the staff of OSCs established for distressed women. "The Centre has consistently supported States through initiatives such as Nirbhaya Fund, but it is disappointing to see delays in implementation at the State-level," she said.

National Achievement Survey to assess 23 lakh students

Around 23 lakh students of approximately 88,000 schools in 782 districts across 36 States and Union Territories will be covered in the PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024, or the National Achievement Survey (NAS), to be held on Wednesday, the Ministry of Education said. *The Hindu* had earlier reported that NAS will be carried out in December for students of Classes 3, 6, and 9. The students will be assessed in the subjects of language, mathematics, the "world around us", science and social science. NAS is a baseline study to understand the achievement of the stage-specific competencies at the end of foundation, preparatory and middle stages as per NEP 2020.

Congress demands probe into privatisation of airports

Party says govt. has 'offered aviation sector on a platter to a few friends'; refers to privatisation of six AAI airports that were all bagged by the Adani Group in February 2019 after a bidding process

Iagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Syed Naseer Hussain demanded a comprehensive probe into the privatisation of six airports of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) as part of its appeal for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) investigation into the bribery allegation against industrialist Gautam Adani.

This government has given the "aviation sector on a platter to a few friends", the MP said in the Rajya Sabha during a discussion on the Bharatiya Vayyan Vidheyak Bill, 2024.

'Monopoly in sector'

The MP said that the AAI should be renamed "Adani Authority of India" in view of the monopoly in the airport sector of the Adani Group, which now has eight airports in its kitty. The Rajya Sabha member referred to the privatisation of six AAI airports that were all bagged by the Adani Group in February 2019 after a bidding process.



Debate on: Members of the Rajya Sabha during the Winter Session of Parliament on Tuesday. PTI

Referring to *The Hindu*'s report on July 28, 2019, the Congress leader asked why were the suggestions of the Department of Economic Affairs and NITI Aayog for not awarding more than two airports to the same entity as well as prior experience on operations and management of an airport brushed aside by the Public Private Appraisal Committee.

Mr. Hussain also said that after the privatisation of airports, the landing and parking charges had increased exponentially, including at the Lucknow airport where he said there was a hike of 418% to 471%.

"After stiff opposition in Kenya, the proposal for awarding an airport to the Adani Group was withdrawn. But in our country when we demand [the

same] inside Parliament, no one agrees to an investigation. Agreements are being cancelled in other countries, but in our country they are being awarded contracts over contracts," he said.

"In the U.S. too, the Adani Group has been indicted over bribery allegations," the MP said while demanding a "comprehensive" investigation into the privatisation of airports as well as bribery allegations.

BJP plea

BJP MP Laxmikant Bajpai urged the Speaker of the House for certain references to the Prime Minister to be omitted as rules required that a discussion over a Bill should be confined to arguments in support or against the Bill.

BJP president J.P. Nadda too condemned the attempts to malign the Prime Minister and using objectionable language and urged for maintaining the dignity of the House and requested for those comments to be removed from records.



The principal contractor will be Lockheed Martin.

to its armed forces," the notification said.

The principal contractor will be Lockheed Martin and any offset agreement will be defined in further negotiations.

Other items which do not fall in the major defence equipment category and are part of the prospective sale include advanced data transfer systems; external fuel tanks; forward-looking infrared systems; an operator machine interface assistant; spare containers; facilities study, design, construction and support; support and test equipment; munitions; integration and test support; spare and repair parts; and intermediate and depot-level repair capabilities and spares.

U.S. approves \$1.17-bn deal for equipment for MH-60R helicopters

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The United States has approved a possible \$1.17-billion deal to sell India support equipment for MH-60R multi-role helicopters under its Foreign Military Sales programme.

Nine of the 24 choppers contracted under a \$2.2-billion deal with Lockheed Martin in February 2020 have been inducted into India's armed services so far, officials said.

The U.S. Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) delivered the required certification notifying the U.S. Congress of this possible sale of follow-on systems.

"The Government of India has requested to buy 30 Multifunctional Information Distribution System-Joint Tactical Radio Systems," the DSCA said.

To deter threats

"The proposed sale will improve the Government of India's capability to deter current and future threats by upgrading anti-submarine warfare capabilities. India will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment and services in-

Procurements worth ₹21,772 crore receive nod from DAC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

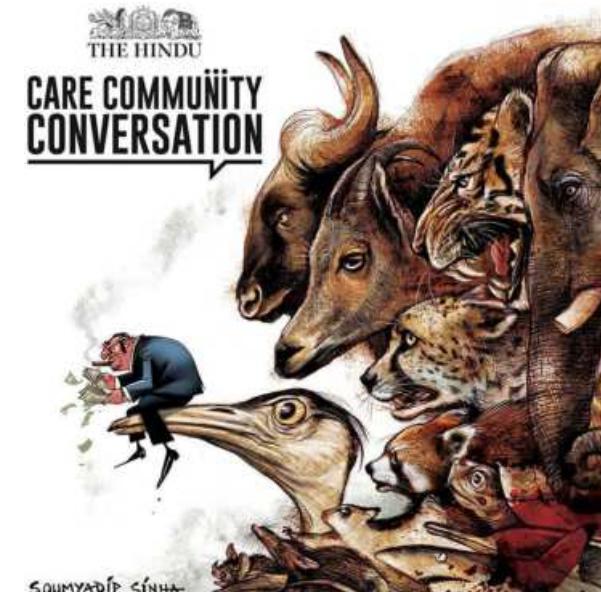
The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday approved five capital acquisition proposals worth ₹21,772 crore. These include water jet fast attack craft, fast interceptor craft, electronic warfare suite (EWS), next-generation radar warning receiver and advanced light helicopters for surveillance in coastal areas.

"The DAC granted Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for the procurement of 31 New Water Jet Fast Attack Crafts for the Indian Navy. These are designed to perform the task of low intensity maritime operations, surveillance, patrol, and search and rescue operations close to the coast," a Defence Ministry statement said. In addition, these vessels will play an effective role in anti-piracy missions, it stated.

India has 10 biogeographic zones and is home to 8.58% of the mammalian species documented so far, with the corresponding figures for avian species being 13.66%, for reptiles 7.91%, for amphibians 4.66%, for fish 11.72% and for plants 11.8%.

Four of the 34 globally identified biodiversity hotspots, namely the Hima-

On World Wildlife Day, making a clarion call to protect India's critically endangered species



layas, Indo-Burma, the Western Ghats-Sri Lanka and Sundaland, are located in India.

As the most populous country in the world and with 65% of the population aged under 35, India's growth trajectory implies a hunger for natural resources: land, wood, timber, forest produce, precious metals, coal and more. This unfortunately conflicts with wildlife habitat, bringing several species – of the land and air – too close to

comfort with human settlements.

Indian civilisation has absorbed a tolerance, even reverence for several wild animals as is evidenced in its religious mythology.

The wildlife reserves and sanctuaries in India, set up to conserve certain endangered species, are unfenced, unlike the big game reserves in Africa and neither is hunting permissible in India as a licensed, recreational sport.

Risk of extinction

However this doesn't imply that India is a haven for wildlife. There are 73 "critically endangered" species in India as of 2022 – the most updated estimates made available by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classifies species as critically endangered when they are at the highest risk of extinction in the wild. The number of critically endangered species has risen from 47 in

2011, though this also due to improvements in data availability and monitoring and not entirely due to animals of a species getting decimated.

Of the nine species of mammals considered critically endangered, eight are endemic, which means that their habitat is limited to a small geographic area within India. These include the Kashmir stag or Hingul, Malabar large-spotted civet, Andaman Shrew, Jenkins' shrew, Nicobar shrew, Namdapha flying squirrel, large rock rat and Leafletted leaf-nosed bat.

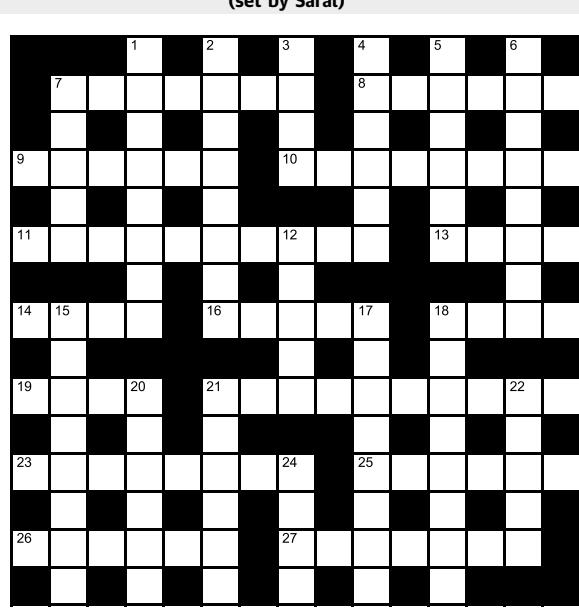
While the carnivores of the cat family – lions, tigers, cheetahs – garner considerable attention because of their appeal to tourism, they are only three on the list of critically endangered animals.

Birds such as the Great Indian Bustard face threats from sources such as powerlines in Rajasthan and often fail to garner the attention they deserve for their conservation.

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



TH CROSSWORD + 14347



- Across**
- Alert secret agent nabbing leader of rioters (4)
 - Real term used often (4)
 - Heard a groan in inlet (5)
 - Starts to purchase one roro ticket in harbour (4)
 - Flightless birds found in the museum (4)
 - New suitor's ad is ultimately terrible (10)
 - Channel finally covering European game (8)
 - Every now and then groups stalked stock taker (6)
 - Permanent shelter for horses (6)
 - Conspicuous way to restrain a legal right (7)
 - Mixing a veg with brie for waffle (8)
 - Grand master with international club, hugging ace kid (8)
 - Dust around knob (4)
 - Presentation of mostly standard model (6)
 - Like an article on originally, simple yoga postures (6)
 - Curt reel created for academic (8)
 - Gradually destroy bar in eastern Spain (5)
 - We're ordering small pitchers (5)
 - Hangovers of disheartened men with tears sadly gulping last drop of gin (8)
 - Falcons, beautiful, rising up circling half of street (8)
 - Indian lady with daughter following agent from south collapsed (8)
 - Writer cries out holding book (6)
 - Exclude some Hindi spelling (6)
 - Dark underpass near lodge is terrifying for starters (5)
 - Deftness in arranging saree right away (4)

IN

- Arab gentleman drunk with this stylish barman (7)
- Preparing soy with bits of tuna, eel, roe for seafood (6)
- Shake and stumble missing hard whiskey earlier (6)
- Control from meditation perhaps without ego (8)
- Workers leave before end of shift in branch (10)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Lakshmi's graceful glance

Praying to Mahalakshmi and seeking to come under Her benevolent glance will bear fruit if one attempts it with complete devotion and humility. Nothing exemplifies this better than the episode of Rama successfully bending Sita's formidable bow at Sita's *swayamvara*, said S. Perunvala in a discourse.

Why did Janaka, Sita's father, institute such a task for prospective suitors of Sita? Janaka once saw Sita playing with her friends and when the bow in which the bow lay came in the way of play, She lifted it with one hand and set it aside. The Mithila ruler immediately realised that She was special and could not marry any ordinary ruler.

Rama followed sage Viswamitra into Mithila. In his *Ramayana*, Kamban says that as Rama was nearing the palace, he looked up at a balcony where Sita was standing, and looking into her eyes, he could look at nothing else. "What shall we say is the cause that Lakshmi left Her lotus home and was born on earth?" he asks, emphasising the role Narayana and Mahalakshmi were to play in destroying Ravana, for which they manifested on earth as Rama and Sita. While Viswamitra and others wait for Rama to lift the bow in the *swayamvara*, He looks at Sita, seeking her glance, communicating as it were to Her, "Unless you, who is none other than Mahalakshmi, look at me and your gaze rests on my shoulder, I cannot attain you." Following this silent exchange, Rama looked down, lightly grasped the bow, strung it and drew it to the full. The bow broke and fell at his feet as if surrendering to the Lord, seeking *saranagati*. Whoever surrenders to Perumal will receive the blessings of not only Rama but also Mahalakshmi.

IN BRIEF

**Swiggy's Q2 loss narrows marginally to ₹626 crore**

Food and grocery delivery platform Swiggy on Tuesday reported narrowing of consolidated net loss at ₹625.53 crore for the second quarter ended September 30, 2024, on the back of continued growth of food delivery business. The company, which is declaring its quarterly results to stock exchanges for the first time since it went public last month, had posted a consolidated net loss of ₹657 crore in the year-earlier period. PTI

Post withdrawal, 98.08% of ₹2,000 notes returned: RBI

The total value of ₹2,000 banknotes in circulation, which was ₹3.56 lakh crore at the close of business on May 19, 2023, when its withdrawal was announced, declined to ₹6,839 crore at the close of business on November 29, 2024, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said on Tuesday. "Thus, 98.08% of the ₹2,000 banknotes in circulation as on May 19, 2023, has since been returned," it said. Despite the withdrawal, ₹2,000 banknotes continue to be legal tender.

Tata AutoComp appoints Manoj Kolhatkar as MD, CEO

Tata AutoComp Systems Ltd. (TACO) has announced the appointment of Manoj Kolhatkar as its new MD & CEO. Mr. Kolhatkar, a Tata veteran has spent about 22 years in the Tata Group across Tata Motors and TACO. "Manoj Kolhatkar's extensive industry knowledge, visionary leadership, and track record of driving transformative growth align perfectly with Tata AutoComp's mission to innovate and excel," said Arvind Goel, chairman, Tata AutoComp Systems.

IndiGo files law suit against Mahindra, seeks to prevent use of '6e' mark in e-SUV**Lalatendu Mishra**

MUMBAI

Low-cost airline Inter-Globe Aviation Ltd. (IndiGo) has filed a law suit against Mahindra Electric Mobility Ltd., a subsidiary of Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. (M&M) in the Delhi High Court, charging the electric SUV company with trademark infringement.

Last week, Mahindra unveiled two electric SUVs and one of them is named BE 6e. IndiGo, which has its call sign as 6E, believes that the use of 6e (e in lowercase) is a violation of its identity and trademark.

"The 6E mark is an inte-



gral part of IndiGo's identity for the past 18 years and is a registered trademark that holds strong global recognition. The 6E mark, whether standalone or in its variants and formative forms, is extensively used by IndiGo for its offerings and for goods and services

provided in collaboration with trusted partners," IndiGo said in a statement.

Infringement

"Any unauthorised use of the 6E mark, whether standalone or in any form, constitutes an infringement of IndiGo's rights, reputation, and goodwill. IndiGo is committed to taking all necessary and appropriate steps to safeguard its intellectual property and brand identity," IndiGo, India's biggest airline by market share, said.

The Gurugram-headquartered company did not provide a copy of the law suit.

Tanishq eyes high double-digit growth in diamond jewellery sales**Lalatendu Mishra**

MUMBAI

Titan Company is targeting to achieve higher double-digit growth in the sale of diamond studded jewellery in the country through its jewellery brand Tanishq. Ajoy Chawla, CEO of the firm's jewellery division told *The Hindu*.

This comes in the backdrop of Titan Company having entered into a tie-up with diamond mining company De Beers a few months ago to promote natural diamonds in India.

"The penetration of diamond jewellery among customers in India is in single digits, or at best 10% to 11%. If you look at the size of the total jewellery indus-



try, it is about ₹5.5 lakh crore to ₹6.4 lakh crore. The size of the diamond industry is between ₹70,000 to ₹75,000 crore," he said.

Limited penetration
"Despite all the work in the last several decades, the penetration of diamonds

has remained limited even though it has grown. Our tie-up with De Beers will drive the growth of diamond industry in India," Mr. Chawla said.

"The whole idea is to increase the penetration. So, we are growing at a certain rate. There is good double-digit buyer growth for diamond jewellery, pre-festive, festive, post-festive growth. So, unlike what many in the media sometimes think, there is a double-digit buyer growth," Mr. Chawla emphasised.

Stating that while gold has achieved 100% penetration in India, he said diamond studded jewellery has only seen about 8.9% penetration.
"And, therefore, certain-

ly, we want higher growth. How much higher growth, we have not put a number to it. We have our goals. And, there is an expectation that the diamond studded jewellery market will grow at a faster rate," Mr. Chawla noted.

Diamonds may sparkle

Amit Pratihari, managing director of De Beers India Pvt. Ltd., said natural diamonds' consumption is set to rise in India.

"We estimate it is around \$8.5 billion diamond jewellery market. And, it is expected to grow to almost \$20-\$22 billion in the next 7-8 years. So, that's a huge opportunity considering the penetration is only 8.9%," he said.

"And, therefore, certain-

Third spike in a row lifts Sensex to almost 45-day high

The Nifty also gained 0.75% to close near a one-month peak of 24,457 points with 41 of 50 stocks rising; Adani Ports & SEZ, NTPC, State Bank of India and Larsen & Toubro were top Sensex gainers

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Recovery path: The 30-share Sensex hit 80,845.75, 0.74%, or almost 598 points over Monday's close. FILE PHOTO

The Indian markets continued to rebound for the third straight day on Tuesday, after a weak streak in recent weeks, lifting the benchmark BSE Sensex to the highest level in about a month and a half, and the Nifty to about a month-high.

The 50-stock Nifty rose 0.75% or 181.1 points to close at 24,457.15 points, while the 30-share Sensex hit 80,845.75, 0.74% or almost 598 points over Monday's close. The last time

the Sensex closed above this level was on October 21. 41 Nifty stocks surged on Tuesday, while 25 Sensex stocks advanced, led by Adani Ports and SEZ that

jumped 6%, NTPC (up 2.6%), as well as Larsen & Toubro and State Bank of India, both of which rose 2.12% each.

"Cash market volumes

on the NSE rose 16% to ₹1.15 lakh crore and the broader market indices rose more than the Nifty even as the advance decline ratio rose to 2.8:1," remarked Deepak Jasani, head of retail research at HDFC Securities.

Market observers' hopes that China will unveil fresh measures to boost the world's number two economy following reports that authorities will hold a key meeting next week even as the yuan fell to a one-year low vs the US Dollar, also played a part in Asian markets' uptick, Mr. Jasani noted.

Rupee sinks to fresh low of 84.75/USD before late recovery

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Chinese Yuan fell a sharp 0.15% to CNY 7.28 per dollar, a day after the Rupee tanked 0.2%. International factors have more to do with the rupee's fall than domestic factors, said Bank of Baroda chief economist Madan Sabnavis.

"The U.S. Dollar has been strengthening and Mr. Trump's threat to the BRICS nations about an 100% duty on their products for embarking on an alternative currency has added to that," he noted.

The rupee fell to a fresh all-time low of ₹84.75 against the U.S. Dollar on Tuesday, but recovered to ₹84.68 by the end of the day, even as U.S. President Elect Donald Trump's warning of a 100% tariff on the BRICS economies if they pursued a new common currency to counter the U.S. Dollar's global hegemony reverberated across global currency markets.

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GST rate hike claims are 'premature, speculative'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs dismissed reports indicating significant indirect tax rate changes and hikes in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates of various goods and services, as 'premature and speculative', and stressed that a ministerial group tasked with rationalising the multiple GST rates is yet to finalise its recommendations.

While the GST Council, set to meet in Jaisalmer on December 21, had constituted a Group of Ministers (GoM) to suggest a reform of its rate structure, the Council has not yet deliberated on any GST rate changes, a statement said.

"The Council has not even received the recommendations of the GoM. In fact, the GoM has yet to finalise and present its recommendations to the Council after which the Council will take a final view on the recommendations of the GoM," it added.

"It is the GST Council chaired by the Union Finance Minister and including Ministers of all the States and Union Territories, which is empowered to recommend GST rates including changes to them. The GoM is only a recommendation body," it noted.

On Tuesday, stocks of firms with exposures to sin goods like cigarettes and aerated beverages, such as ITC, slid as reports said the GoM had recommended a GST levy hike on such goods from 28% to 35%.

MARKETS**MARKET WATCH**

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	80,846	0.74
US Dollar	84.68	0.04
Gold	79,000	-0.25
Brent oil	73.66	2.76

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2514.20	.57.15
Adani Ports	1288.65	72.85
Apollo Hosp.	7126.55	60.75
Asian Paints	2469.40	-9.65
Axis Bank	1160.50	23.40
Bajaj Auto	9161.80	31.45
Bajaj Finserv	1607.10	10.45
Bharti Airtel	6675.45	24.80
Bharti Elec.	312.10	5.20
BPCL	294.25	0.10
Britannia Ind.	4909.60	2.35
Cipla	1533.90	26.20
Coal India	422.10	0.40
Dr Reddys Lab.	124.50	2.75
Eicher Motors	4844.35	23.65
Grasim Ind.	2714.00	20.45
HCL Tech	1890.75	19.25
HDFC Bank	1826.30	21.60
HDFC Life	634.00	6.20
Hero MotoCorp	4697.00	-51.45
Hindalco	667.55	4.95
Hindustan Unilever	2482.85	3.70
ICICI Bank	1308.40	3.75
IndusInd Bank	998.35	7.40
Infosys	1892.10	12.30
ITC	472.55	-4.65
JSW Steel	998.80	9.00
Kotak Bank	1749.90	-4.05
L&T	3787.05	83.00
M&T	3027.30	10.90
Maruti Suzuki	11279.25	39.95
NestleIndia	2261.70	9.85
NTPC	367.45	9.25
ONGC	262.35	4.80
PowerGrid Corp	329.65	1.80
Reliance Ind.	1233.30	14.15
SBI	1440.95	18.90
State Bank	853.95	17.55
Shriram Finance	3155.55	61.35
Sun Pharma	1800.05	8.50
TataConsumerProduct	955.00	-2.00
Tata Motors	801.25	11.20
Tata Steel	146.54	0.13
TCS	4302.75	26.10
Tech Mahindra	1749.50	3.55
Titan	3332.75	25.90
Trent Ltd.	6041.35	36.05
UltraTech Cement	11852.35	203.80
Wipro	291.65	-0.63

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on December 03

	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	84.49	84.81
Euro	88.89	89.23
British Pound	106.99	107.40
Japanese Yen (100)	56.43	56.65
Chinese Yuan	11.60	11.64
Swiss Franc	95.53	95.91
Singapore Dollar	62.83	63.08
Canadian Dollar	60.18	60.41
Malaysian Ringgit	18.89	18.98
Australian Dollar	54.81	55.03
Source: Indian Bank		

GOVERN

TBILISI

Georgia PM accuses political rivals of backing violence at protests



Georgia Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze threatened to punish his political opponents, accusing them of being behind violence at mass protests, as Tbilisi's top court rejected a key lawsuit to annul the result of a contested October vote. He also suggested he would take retribution on public servants if they take part in protests. AFP

BEIJING

China's Xi vows to support Nepal's infrastructure development bids



President Xi Jinping told Nepali Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli that China will offer more support to develop Nepal's infrastructure. China was ready to "deepen cooperation with Nepal, build the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and enhance connectivity in areas such as ports, power grids and telecommunications," Mr. Xi said. AFP

BANGKOK

China bans exports of gallium, germanium, antimony to the U.S.



China announced on Tuesday that it is banning exports to the U.S. of gallium, germanium, antimony and other key high-tech materials with potential military applications. Beijing announced the move after the Washington expanded its list of Chinese companies subject to export controls on computer chip-making equipment. AFP

CAIRO

Hamas, Fatah to create a joint committee to run post-war Gaza



Hamas and Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas's Fatah party have agreed to create a committee to jointly run post-war Gaza. The committee would be composed of 10 to 15 non-partisan figures with authority on matters related to the economy, education, health, humanitarian aid and reconstruction. AFP

NATO chief avoids talk of Ukraine's membership

Associated Press
BRUSSELS

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte on Tuesday sidestepped questions about Ukraine's possible membership of the military alliance, saying that the priority now must be to strengthen the country's hand in any future peace talks with Russia by sending it more weapons.

"The front is not moving eastwards. It is slowly moving westwards," Mr. Rutte said. "So we have to make sure Ukraine gets into a position of strength, and then it should be for the Ukrainian government to decide on the next steps, in terms of opening peace talks and how to conduct them."

S. Korea President declares martial law, parliament votes against move

Yoon Suk Yeol cites 'threats' posed by the North; constitution mandates that martial law be lifted when a majority in parliament demands it; Army chief takes charge as martial law commander, issues a decree banning 'all political activities'

Agence France-Presse
SEOUL

South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol on Tuesday declared martial law, accusing the opposition of being "anti-state forces" and saying he was acting to protect the country from "threats" posed by the North.

Lawmakers quickly voted to oppose the shock declaration but the military backed Mr. Yoon, setting up a stand-off with no clear way forward.

The National Assembly was sealed late on Tuesday night and helicopters were seen landing on the roof.



Limited rights: The police stand guard in front of the National Assembly in Seoul on Tuesday after martial law was declared. AFP

Troops entered the building for a short time, while hundreds of protesters gathered outside parliament chanting "Arrest

Yoon Suk Yeol" and faced off with security forces guarding parliament.

Some 190 MPs managed to get in to the Assembly in

the early hours of Wednesday, where they unanimously voted in favour of a motion to block the martial law declaration and call for its lifting.

Under the constitution, martial law must be lifted when a majority in parliament demands it.

Mr. Yoon gave a range of reasons to justify his announcement – South Korea's first declaration of martial law in more than 40 years. "To safeguard a liberal South Korea from the threats posed by North Korea's communist forces and to eliminate anti-state elements plundering people's freedom and happiness," he said.

I hereby declare emergency martial law," Mr. Yoon said.

Army chief General Park An-su took charge as martial law commander and immediately issued a decree banning "all political activities".

Democratic South Korea is a major ally for the United States in Asia, and the U.S. State Department said it had "grave concern" about the situation.

China, a key ally of North Korea, urged its nationals in the South to stay calm and exercise caution, while Britain said it was "closely monitoring developments".

U.K. does not have to choose between U.S. and Europe: Starmer

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer strongly rejected the idea that Britain had to choose between the U.S. and its allies in Europe.

Mr. Starmer is one of several European leaders navigating Mr. Trump's imminent return to power.

Mr. Trump is expected to meet several Heads of State on Saturday when he visits Paris for the re-opening of the Notre Dame Cathedral. As U.S. President, Mr. Trump had a testy relationship with the EU, over trade, defence expenditure and positions on Russia and Ukraine.

"That somehow we are with either America or Europe is plain wrong. I reject it utterly," Mr. Starmer said during a foreign policy speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet in London on Monday evening. "The national interest demands that we work with both," he added.

Mr. Starmer said the U.K. would "never turn away" from its relationship with the U.S., calling the bilateral relationship the "cornerstone" of the U.K.'s security and prosperity for over a century.

Hard-headed realism? The Prime Minister said the two countries being close was not based on sentimentality but "hard-headed realism", as he highlighted areas of cooperation that were important in current times: tech, AI, security and military cooperation.

Both the Observatory and pro-government media outlets reported that Syrian government forces on Tuesday captured the village of Khanaser, days after losing it. Khanaser sits on one of the roads that lead to Aleppo.



Trump, then a presidential candidate, that his government "would invest more deeply than ever" in the U.K.-U.S. relationship.

"And we will rebuild our ties with Europe too," Mr. Starmer said during his speech on Monday night.

New envoy to U.K. Mr. Trump announced the appointment of billionaire Warren Stephens for the post of U.S. Ambassador to the U.K. Mr. Stephens, the CEO of financial services company Stephens Inc., was initially a donor to Mr. Trump's Republican rivals in the latest election cycle before donating to the Trump campaign.

Mr. Stephens had also donated in support of Mr. Trump's campaign in 2019 and 2020. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau had taken action against Integrity Advance, a payday loan company in which Mr. Stephens had a 40% stake.

Warren has always dreamed of serving the U.S. full time. I am thrilled that he will now have that opportunity as the top Diplomat, representing the U.S.A. to one of America's most cherished and beloved Allies," Mr. Trump said on Truth Social, his social media platform.

Iran President shows apprehensions about a planned hijab law

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has expressed doubts about new legislation imposing tougher penalties on women who flout mandatory hijab regulations.

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, women in Iran have been required to cover their hair in public.

However, increasing numbers are appearing without hijabs, especially since protests erupted following Mahsa Amini's death in custody in September 2022.

She had been arrested for allegedly violating the dress code.

Parliament has approved the new "hijab and chastity" law, but it requires the President's signature on December 13 to take effect.

"As the person responsible for promulgating this law, I have many reservations about it," Mr. Pezeshkian told state television late Monday.

"We risk ruining a lot of things in society because of this law," the Iranian President said, adding that leaders must avoid actions that could alienate the public.

Militants capture four Syrian towns, Army reclaims some lost territory

Associated Press
BEIRUT

Syrian Islamist militants captured four new towns early on Tuesday, bringing them closer to the central city of Hama, opposition activists said, while government forces retook some territory they lost last week.

The capture of the towns is the latest in the push by insurgents led by the salafi jihadi Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, as well as Turkiye-backed opposition fighters. Insurgents now are about 10 km from Hama, the country's fourth largest city.

The latest push is part of



Finders keepers: A militant sitting atop a tank abandoned by the Syrian Army on the highway to Damascus on Tuesday. AFP

a wide offensive by forces opposed to Syrian President Bashar Assad that over the past days has captured large parts of the northern city of Aleppo,

Syria's largest, as well as towns and villages in southern parts of the northwestern Idlib province.

The insurgents' military

operations administration said gunmen killed 50 government forces as they captured the central towns of Halfaya, Taybat al-Imam, Maardis and Soran.

The pro-government Dama Post media outlet reported intense clashes in and around the towns.

State media reported intense airstrikes by Syrian and Russian air forces in the area.

Both the Observatory and pro-government media outlets reported that Syrian government forces on Tuesday captured the village of Khanaser, days after losing it. Khanaser sits on one of the roads that lead to Aleppo.

Sport

Manchanda, the 'Old Fox' of Indian squash, passes away

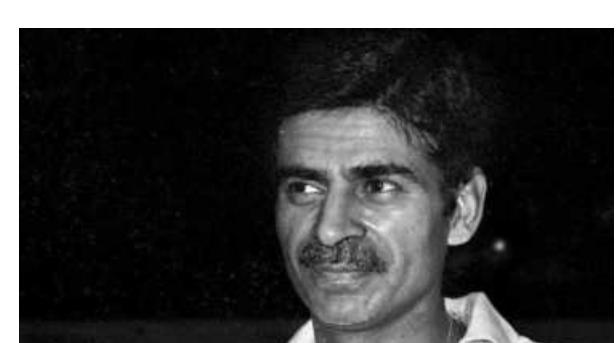
Sports Bureau

Brig Raj Manchanda, the 'Old Fox' of Indian squash, passed away in Delhi on Sunday. He was 80. Manchanda was visiting Delhi to attend a wedding and was cremated with Military Honours at Brar Square.

A six-time National champion and an Arjuna Awardee, Manchanda was acknowledged for his untiring resilience and exceptional ability to outlast opponents.

He took to coaching after his retirement. Among his international feats was a fourth place at the 1984 Asian Championships in Jordan.

"He was a dream father, more of a friend. Never



Terrible loss: Raj Manchanda was a six-time National champion and an Arjuna Awardee. THE HINDU ARCHIVES

hurt anyone and loved to share his experience with young squash players," said his daughter, Shibani, who played squash at the National level with her younger brother, Anshul.

A popular figure for his talent for singing and com-

Ebenyo, Kebede headline elite field

Sports Bureau
KOLKATA

Defending champions Daniel Ebenyo of Kenya and Sutume Kebede of Ethiopia will be among the top international athletes who will take part in the Tata Steel World 25K Kolkata run, the first World Athletics Gold Label race over the distance, here on December 15. Both Ebenyo and Sutume hold the current event records of 1:11:13 and 1:18:47 for men and women races respectively.

The women's line-up includes Bahrain's Desi Jisa, the winner in 2022 and the second-place finisher in Doha (2023) and Seoul (2024) marathons.

Tamil Nadu teams storm into semifinals

Sports Bureau

KOLKATA

Tamil Nadu, powered by Aakash and Priyadarshan, overcame a strong challenge from Uttar Pradesh and won 66-55 in the boys' quarterfinals of the National youth basketball championships at the Sabuj Sathi Indoor Stadium, Howrah, on Tuesday. TN will face defending champion Rajasthan, a 76-67 winner over Punjab. Reigning champ TN girls also made it to the last-four, getting past Gujarat 81-55 and setting up a clash with Kerala. The Kerala outfit eased past Rajasthan 74-38 in another last-eight contest.

The results (quarterfinals):
Boys: Tamil Nadu 66 (Aakash 20, Priyadarshan 19, Vimal 16) bt Uttar Pradesh 55 (Ayush Kumar Jonnalagadda 10).

QUICK SINGLES

Bangladesh gets a sizeable lead over WI

KINGSTON: Bangladesh turned an 18-run first-innings lead against the West Indies into a competitive 211-run advantage on day three of the second Test at Sabina Park on Monday.

Bangladesh defended its first-innings 164 by bowling out the host for 146 just after lunch as pacer Nahid Rana took his maiden Test five-wicket haul.

As the pitch started to ease up in the sun, Bangladesh batted with unexpected boldness, especially Mehidy Hasan Miraz and Shadman Islam, and grabbed a handy lead at 193 for five when bad light ended play.

The scores: Bangladesh 164 in 71.5 overs & 193/5 in 41.4 overs (Shadman 46, Mehidy Hasan Miraz 42) vs West Indies 146 in 65

PoM: Sufiyan Muqeem



Nahid Rana. FILE PHOTO: R. RAGU

overs (Keacy Carty 40, Nahid Rana 5/61).

Big win for Pakistan

BULAWAYO: Left-arm wrist spinner Sufiyan Muqeem starred with a five-wicket haul as Zimbabwe was routed for its lowest T20 total of 57 and Pakistan romped to a series-clinching 10-wicket win at Queens Sports Club on Tuesday.

The scores: Zimbabwe 57 in 12.4 overs (Sufiyan 5/3) lost to Pakistan 61/0 in 5.3 overs.

PoM: Sufiyan.

posing, Manchanda was a kind man.

"As a teenager, he once took his collection of trophies and requested the sports shop owner to sell them and use the money to help squash players," recalled Shibani.

SAFE ZONE

A draw that could make Ding feel more confident going forward



Ding Liren could be feeling more confident after his great escape against D. Gukesh in the seventh game of the World chess championship. "I thought it was a total failure during the game because I thought I was getting outplayed," he said after playing out a 72-move draw.

ROVING EYE

Gambhir keeps a tab as players sweat it out at training session



Gautam Gambhir was a watchful presence at the Adelaide Oval on Tuesday. The Indian coach, who had returned home for personal reasons after the first Test at Perth, arrived in the early hours of the day. He kept an eye on his wards as Rohit Sharma's men had their first training session in the lead-up to the second Test.

COLLECTOR'S DELIGHT

Bradman's 'baggy green' cap goes for \$250,000 at auction



A baggy green Test cap worn by Australian great Don Bradman sold for \$250,000 at auction on Tuesday as collectors vied to own a rare piece of cricketing history. The cap showed signs of "insect damage." Auction house Bonhams said Bradman wore the cap during India's 1947-48 tour of Australia, his last Test series at home.

THRILLS & SPILLS

Giants and Bulls in an exciting tie; U Mumba beats Puneri Paltan



Gujarat Giants and Bengaluru Bulls played out an exciting 34-34 tie on Tuesday to kick off the Pune leg of PKL Season 11. For the Bulls, Nitin Rawal scored seven points while Pardeep Narwal and Sushil got six each. U Mumba defeated Puneri Paltan 43-29 in the day's other match.

Ding pulls off a Houdini act against Gukesh in an absorbing Game 7

Defending champion keeps his cool under pressure to hold on for a draw in 72 moves; Indian GM lets winning position slip away

P. K. Ajith Kumar
SINGAPORE

Ding Liren hasn't had an ice cream here, despite all the memes back home from China.

He may have been tempted to treat himself to 'bing qi lin' - Chinese for ice cream, and thus the play on his name, 'Ding Chillin' - on Tuesday night. He did everything to earn such a sweet delicacy.

His position had been delicate at several points of the game, and was staring at defeat in Game 7 of the World chess championship. But, then, Ding is World champion for a reason.

He had showcased tremendous fighting spirit in the World title match against Ian Nepomniachtchi last year. His form may have deserted him since, and he may be ranked only 22nd in the world now, while Gukesh is fifth.

Sport, of course, is not just about numbers.

It is also much about resilience, a quality Ding



Escape to draw: A determined Ding, playing black, managed to ward off Gukesh and time pressure to share the honours. FIDE

showed in abundance. Yes, he could draw because of some inaccurate moves from Gukesh. But the defending champion had to find the correct moves - and he had to fight against the clock, too - if he wanted to escape with a draw.

Houdini would have approved.

Time trouble

Gukesh opened by taking his knight to the 'f3' square, to which Ding re-

ponded by pushing the pawn in front of his queen by two squares.

On the seventh move, the challenger sprang a surprise, bringing his rook to 'e1', and that got Ding to think for some 28 minutes.

That was only the beginning of his trouble with the clock.

There was a time when he had to make 15 moves in as many minutes. And he had just seconds to make his last move in the first

time control. Gukesh did well to get a clearly better position, which he turned into a potentially winning one. But, he erred at some crucial junctures, allowing Ding to claw his way back.

Still better, but...

Gukesh still was better when the game reached a rook-and-bishop against rook-and-knight ending.

But on the 46th move, he made a costly mistake, with his bishop, when he

should have played with his king. There was, however, only one move that could have salvaged half-a-point for Ding, an 'f' pawn push. And he found it.

The game was eventually drawn in 72 moves, with just Ding's king and Gukesh's king and bishop remaining on the board.

The longest game of the match so far lasted five-and-a-half hours.

Ding truly was chilling on this night.

GAME 7: MOVES

```
1. Nf3 d5 2. g3 g6 3. d4 Bg7 4. c4
c6 5. Bg2 Nf6 6. 0-0-0 7. Re1
dxc4 8. e4 Bg4 9. Nbd2 c5 10. d5
e6 11. h3 Bxh3 12. Bxf3 exd5 13.
exd5 Nbd7 14. Nx4 b5 15. Na3
Qb6 16. Bf4 Rfe8 17. Qd2 Rad8 18.
Nc2 Nf8 19. b4 c4 20. Be3 Qa6 21.
Bd4 Rxel+ 22. Rxe1 Qxa2 23. Ra1
Qb3 24. Ra3 Qb1+ 25. Kg2 Rd7 26.
Ra5 Qb3 27. Ra3 Qb1 28. Ra5 Qb3
29. Rx5 Qd3 30. Qf4 Qxc2 31.
Bxf6 Qf5 32. Qxf5 gxf5 33. Bxg7
Kxg7 34. Rc5 Ng6 35. Rxc4 Ne5 36.
Rd4 Nc6 37. Rf4 Ne7 38. 5. Kf5 Kf6 39.
Rd4 h6 40. Kf1 Ke5 41. Rh4 Nxd5
42. Rxh6 Nc3 43. Rc6 Ne4 44. Ke1
f6 45. h4 Rd3 46. Bd1 f4
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47. gxf4+ Kxf4 48. Bc2 Rd5 49. Rc4
f5 50. Rb4 Kf3 51. Bd1+ Kg2 52.
Rb3 Re5 53. f4 Re7 54. Re3 Rh7
55. h5 Nf6 56. Re5 Nxf5 57. Rx5
Ng3 58. Rf8 B7 59. Ba4 Kf3 60. f5
Kf4 61. f6 Ne4 62. Bc2 Nd6 63. Rdb
Ke5 64. Bb3 Nf7 65. Rd5+ Kxf6 66.
Kd2 Rd6 67. Bc4 Rd6 68. Kc3 Rxd5
69. Bxd5 Nd6 70. Kb4 Nxb5 71.
Kxb5 a6+ 72. Kxa6
```

Game drawn.

"dear mate and fellow lefty" on X.

Fraser "was a true gem in a golden era of Australian tennis legends - an incredible World No. 1, a Grand Slam champion, and a Davis Cup icon," Laver posted. "Neale bested me in 2 major finals, pushing me to become a better player. I'll miss you dearly, buddy."

Fraser helped Australia win four consecutive Davis Cup titles as a player and rejected lucrative offers to turn professional in a quest to succeed Harry Hopman as the national team captain, has died at 91.

Tennis Australia released a statement on Tuesday saying the sport "has lost one of its giants." Fraser beat Australian tennis great Rod Laver to win Wimbledon in 1960, in between sweeps at the U.S. Open where he won the singles, men's doubles and mixed titles in 1959 and '60.

He won 11 Major men's doubles titles, including at least two at each of the four Grand Slam tournaments.

Laver, the only man to twice win all four singles Majors in a calendar year, posted a tribute to his

Not sharp enough for a comeback: Woods



Big click: Woods and HeroMoto Corp chairman Munjal strike a pose ahead of the Hero World Challenge. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

V.V. Ramanan
NASSAU (BAHAMAS)

There was some news to cheer about - and some not - ahead of the Hero World Challenge golf tournament set to tee off at the picturesque Albany Golf Course in the Bahamian capital on Thursday.

Addressing the media here on Tuesday, Pawan Munjal, chairman of Hero MotoCorp, announced that his company, which has been associated with the invitational event for 10 years, will continue as the title sponsor.

In addition, the legendary Tiger Woods, who hosts the tournament through the TGR Live foundation, will remain Hero's global corporate partner until 2030.

Woods, while thanking Hero for the continued support, said he was dis-

Team India gets down to business at the nets for Adelaide challenge

INDIA IN AUS

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
ADELAIDE

In cricket, Indian players are the rock stars. A routine pre-game training session at the Adelaide Oval here on Tuesday, acquired a festival air as nearly 3,000 fans thronged the venue, lending their full-throated acoustics as an accompaniment to the thwack of the pink ball thudding into an eager bat.

As Sania Mirza once said about Indian fandom, truly 'we are so many of us!'

Camera-phones got busy, photos taken, calls made, social media was spammed and cries of 'Kohli' and 'Rohit' rent the air. Seemingly immune to this external noise, the cricketers got down to the business of sweating it out while the venue's guards were perplexed at all this attention. There was a scramble for space around the nets before a tiny area was earmarked for the media.

"I still need to keep training to give myself the best chance going into next year and the events ahead," said the 15-time Major champion.

"I'm still not there. These are 20 of the best players in the world and I'm not sharp enough to compete against them at this level. So when I'm ready to compete and play at this level, I will," said Woods, who has won this event five times.

(The writer is in Nassau at the invitation of Hero MotoCorp.)



Next assignment: After the Perth win, the Indians will be brimming with confidence. FILE PHOTO: ANI

lian captains have spoken about how they are all used to this overwhelming Indian presence across the globe. It was the turn of the Adelaide Oval to reiterate this truth.

Initially the fans were stumped as Rohit and Rishabh Pant turned in an hour early and sought their quiet time. All it needed was for a few to spot them and then the rush began. One youngster moved to the side of the net and said: "Hello Rohit." The skipper politely told the intrusive follower to move further away and watch. The batters then got into their groove, and swapped their sessions against throw-downs and regular bowlers.

Rohit asked his friend

and assistant coach Abhishek Nayar about his impressions. The latter spoke about some changes spotted in the former's initial trigger movement. Rohit clarified that he is aware and then spoke about countering the angle of left-arm speedsters, obviously a veiled reference to Mitchell Starc. The sessions continued and Pant was astounded that Rohit could tackle the light and shadow variance on his pitch as the sun descended.

As word spread, more turned up through the gates past the River Torrens. Meanwhile, the full squad appeared and indulged in a spot of kick-volleyball, a sport in which only legs are employed and some rare headers are dis-

We will find ways to counter Bumrah: Carey

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
ADELAIDE

The Jasprit Bumrah threat, the alleged batter-bowler divide in the Australian camp and the number 36, seem to be the general themes during press conferences in the lead-up to the second Test here from Friday. And it was the turn of Alex Carey to square up and answer these queries when he met the media at the Adelaide Oval on Tuesday.

The Australian, all soft words and a shy grin, handled the inquisition with the same ease with which he collects the ball within his wicket-keeping gloves. As for Bumrah, Carey replied: "He is a fantastic bowler and our batters are world class as well and will find ways to come up with solutions. I have had a look at him now, so hopefully we can combat that first and second spell, get him bowling a bit deeper in the innings with an older ball. We saw Travis (Head) sort of counter punch (at Perth)."

Ever since Josh Hazlewood casually spoke about bowlers looking ahead towards the second Test while the first Test was in the balance at Perth, a rumour about a split between batters and seamers has done the rounds. It was Carey's turn to deny these whispers: "If you ask the batters, we all want to perform better. As cricketers you go there to score a 100 and if you don't do that, you are at times disappointed. But we are a very united group."



Reminded about bunting out India for 36 at this same venue in 2020, Carey adopted a guarded tone: "They were obviously amazing days in cricketing history. But no, we don't go out there expecting to do that again. We have a plan and will try to execute that, and whatever happens, happens. But I wasn't here for that Test match. I tried to get in, but I missed it. And it happened too quickly. But yeah, we are excited and we do take a lot of confidence out of our record with pink ball cricket."

IN BRIEF



Bhawana propels India past Hong Kong in its opener

India warmed up for tougher challenges with a 31-28 win over Hong Kong in a group-B league match of the 20th Asian women's handball championship in New Delhi on Tuesday. The hosts led 16-10 at half-time, but Hong Kong fought back to make it 19-20. However, India pulled ahead again, thanks to Player-of-the-Match Bhawana.

The results (league): Group-A: Kazakhstan bt China 28-26; Korea bt Singapore 47-5.
Group-B: India bt Hong Kong 31-28; Japan bt Iran 34-14.

Madhya Pradesh girls pip defending champ Haryana

Madhya Pradesh girls shocked defending champion Haryana 3-2 in a keenly contested quarterfinal, while last year's runner-up Jharkhand downed Maharashtra 12-0 and stormed into the semifinals of the 14th Hockey India Sub-junior national women's championship at RRC Ground in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

The results: Quarterfinals: Jharkhand 12 (Leoni Hemrom 5, Shruti Kumari 2, Thekla Hora 2, Rina Kullu 1, Sanga Sugan 1, Pushpa Manji 1) bt Maharashtra 0. Mizoram 1 (Lalitlanchhungi 1) bt UP 0. Haryana 2 (Diksha 1, Durga 1) lost to Madhya Pradesh 3 (Rubi Rathore 2, Sallu Palkhrambani 1) bt Haryana 2 (Diksha, Durga). Odisha 3 (Anjana Xaxa 1, Lugun Shibani 1, Sanjna Kujur 1) bt Delhi 0.

LIVE TELECAST

U-19 Asia Cup: India vs UAE, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 10.30 a.m.; Pakistan vs Japan, Sony Sports Ten 3 (SD & HD) & LIV, 10.30 a.m.

Chess: World championship, Chessbase India YouTube channel, 2.30 p.m.

ISL: Sports 18-3 & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.

PKL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 8 p.m.

West Indies vs Bangladesh: 2nd Test, day 5, FanCode, 8.30 p.m.



Aggressive knock: Karan didn't allow the Bihar bowlers to apply any pressure. VIJAY SONEJI

Karan powers Bengal to a win over Bihar

Hyderabad suffered another middle-order collapse, falls seven runs short of Madhya Pradesh's 179-run target in the other match

MUSHTAQ ALI TROPHY

Sahil Mathur

RAJKOT

Opener batter Karan Lal continued his spectacular run in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy as his unbeaten 94 powered Bengal to a nine-wicket win over Bihar in a group-A encounter at the Niranjan Shah Stadium Ground C here on Tuesday. Chasing 148, Karan hit six sixes and nine fours but missed out on a well-deserved century after the ball flew off Sudip Gharami's edge and went for four to finish the chase in 14 overs.

Karan's aggressive knock didn't allow Bihar bowlers to apply any pressure despite removing Abishek Porel in the third over. Porel hit four fours enroute his 19 off 10 but got

caught at covers driving the ball off Prashant Singh.

Captain Gharami played the second fiddle with Karan during their 122-run stand as Bihar bowlers ran out of ideas to control the scoring rate.

Earlier, Sakibul Gani played a brilliant knock of 79, showcasing a clear gulf between him and the other batters.

After negating Mohammed Shami and Kanishk Seth's new ball spell,

Gani took the game forward on a slow and low surface where boundaries were a luxury.

Gani ran hard and began to accelerate once he crossed his 40s with boundaries against Sayan Ghosh and Seth. The right-hander used the pace to target behind square leg region and looked set to take Bihar close to the 160-run mark.

However, in an attempt to steal a double, Prayas

caught at covers driving the ball off Prashant Singh. Ray Barman's direct hit found him short of the crease despite a desperate dive. Gani remained on his knees knowing his fate, and got a pat on the back by Shami, before slowly walking back to the pavilion.

After his wicket in the 18th over, Bihar could only add 13 runs more to finish on 147 for six.

In the other game, Hyderabad suffered another middle-order collapse and fell seven runs short of Madhya Pradesh's 179-run target.

From 125 for three to 143 for seven, Hyderabad lost four wickets within 16 balls including the big wicket of Tilak Varma, who scored 46 off 34 balls.

MP's new opening pair of Subhransu Senapati and Harsh Gawali added 92 runs to lay a strong platform for the rest to take the team to 178 for eight.

S

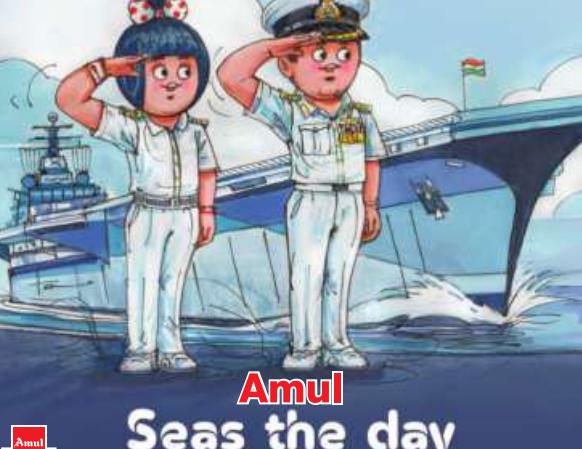
Shrivalli bows out in first round

Sports Bureau

Shrivalli Bhamidipaty was beaten 6-1, 6-3 by Amandine Hesse of France in the first round of the \$100,000 ITF women's tennis tournament in Dubai on Tuesday.

Other results: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Aline Charaeva & Ekaterina Reynolds bt Sofie Costoulas (Bel) & Sahaja Yamalapalli 6-4, 6-3.

Our Navy's making waves!



Amul
Seas the day

diCunha/AB/992

MUSHTAQ ALI TROPHY SCORES - SIXTH ROUND

Group-A: Rajkot: Bihar 147/6 in 20 overs (Sakibul Gani 79) lost to Bengal 150/1 in 14 overs (Karan Lal 94 n.o., Sudip Kumar Gharami 32 n.o.); **Toss:** Bengal; **Points:** Bengal 4(20), Bihar 0(8).

Madhya Pradesh 178/8 in 20 overs (Subhransu Senapati 42, Harsh Gawli 51, Rajat Patidar 36, Chama Milind 33, Ajay Dev Goud 3/20) bt Hyderabad 171/9 in 20 overs (Tanmay Agarwal 47, Tilak Varma 46, Kamal Tripathi 3/31); **Toss:** MP; **MP 4(20), Hyderabad 0(8).**

Rajasthan 161/9 in 20 overs (Kartik 50, Shubham Garhwali 32, Baltej Singh 3/32) lost to Punjab 162/5 in 17.4 overs (Prabhjot Singh 62); **Toss:** Rajasthan.

Punjab 4(16), Rajasthan 0(20).

Meghalaya 118/6 in 20 overs (Jaskirat Sachdeva 68) lost to Mizoram 112/4 in 17.2 overs (Agni Chopra 56 n.o., Anish Charak 3/31); **Toss:** Meghalaya.

Group-B: Indore: Uttarakhand 182/7 in 20 overs (R. Samarth 54, Kunal Chandra 43, Aditya Tare 54, Vishal Jayswal 4/27) lost to Gujarat 185/2 in 13.1 overs (Urvi Patel 115 n.o.); **Toss:** Gujarat; **Points:** Gujarat 4(20), Uttarakhand 0(8).

Saurashtra 235/5 in 20 overs (Harvik Desai 55, Prerak Mankad 43, Ruchit Ahir 56, Sammar Gajjar 55 n.o., Gurjapreet Singh 53/53) bt Tamil Nadu 177/9 in 20 overs (Boopathi Kumar 65, Chirag Jain 3/38); **Toss:** TN; **Saurashtra 4(20), TN 0(8).**

Karnataka 169/8 in 20 overs (R. Smaran 38, Abhinav Manohar 56 n.o.) lost to Baroda 172/6 in 18.5 overs (Shashwat Rawat 63, Baroda Pania 42, Shreyas Gopal 4/19); **Toss:** Karnataka; **Baroda 4(20), Karnataka 0(12).**

Sikkim 91 in 19.3 overs (Parvez Sultan 4/13) lost to Tripura 92/2 in 10 overs (Bikramkumar Das 42 n.o., Jiwanjot Singh 32); **Toss:** Tripura; **Tripura 4(8), Sikkim 0(0).**

Group-C: Mumbai: UP 157/6 in 20 overs (Shivam Mavi 45 n.o., M. Ashwin 3/24) lost to Jammu & Kashmir 160/4 in 19.1 overs (Qamran Iqbal 37, Shubham Khajuria 85 n.o.); **Toss:** J & K; **J & K 4(12), UP 0(16).**

Himachal 152/7 in 20 overs (Mani Sharma 53, Rishi Dhawan 42, Anshul Kamboj 3/26) lost to Haryana 154/3 in 19.2 overs (Yuvraj Singh 82 n.o.); **Toss:** Haryana; **Haryana 4(12), HP 0(8).**

Delhi 154/8 in 20 overs (Priyansh Arya 38, Anu Rawat 49) lost to Jharkhand 157/5 in 19 overs (Utkarsh Singh 38, Kumar Kushagra 55 n.o.); **Toss:** Delhi; **Jharkhand 4(20), Delhi 0(20).**

Manipur 119/9 in 20 overs (K. Priyot 36, Mohit 3/18, Tempol 3/25) bt Arunachal 99 in 19.5 overs (Hardik Varma 35, Jotin Pheiroijam 3/11, L. Bishorjit 3/18); **Toss:** Arunachal 99 in 19.5 overs (Hardik Varma 35, Jotin Pheiroijam 3/11, L. Bishorjit 3/18).

Group-D: Visakhapatnam: Odisha 120/7 in 9 overs (Swastik Samal 69, Sandeep Pattnaik 31); **Toss:** Goa; **Goa 4(4), Maharashtra 0(8).**

Assam 57 in 8.1 overs; **Toss:** Assam; **Odisha 4(6), Assam 0(12).**

Vizianagaram: Vidarbha 206/5 in 20 overs (Athvara Taide 34, Mandar Mahale 39, Shubham Dubey 52 n.o., Jitesh Sharma 38, Shashank Singh 3/41) bt Chhattisgarh 190 in 19.5 overs (Anuj Tiwary 98, Darshan Nalkande 3/42); **Toss:** Chhattisgarh; **Vidarbha 4(18), Chhattisgarh 0(6).**

Chandigarh: Chandigarh 162/7 in 20 overs (Pardeep Yadav 64, Nikhil Sharma 36 n.o., R. Sharma 3/8) lost to Railways 163/5 in 18.4 overs (Upendra Yadav 52 n.o., A.R. Pandey 35 n.o.); **Toss:** Railways; **Railways 4(10), Chandigarh 0(12).**

Group-E: Hyderabad: Kerala 87 in 18.1 overs (K.V. Sasikanth 3/23) lost to Andhra 88/4 in 13 overs (Srikrishna Bharat 56 n.o., Jalaj Saxena 3/13); **Toss:** Andhra; **Andhra 4(20), Kerala 0(16).**

Mumbai 192/4 in 20 overs (Suryakumar Yadav 70, Shivam Dube 71 n.o.) bt Services 153 in 19.3 overs (Mohit Ahlawat 54, Shardul Thakur 4/25, Shamsul Mulani 3/40); **Toss:** Services; **Mumbai 4(16), Services 0(8).**

Maharashtra 193/6 in 20 overs (Arshin Kulkarni 44, Ankit Bawane 51, Nikhil Naik 40) lost to Goa 194/6 in 19.3 overs (Suyash Prabhudesai 66, Vikas Singh 31 n.o., Mukesh Choudhary 3/33); **Toss:** Goa; **Goa 4(4), Maharashtra 0(8).**

Unadkat elated by new-found spirit in Saurashtra's batting line-up

Vivek Krishnan

INDORE

Crane necks from watching the ball repeatedly sail over the boundary has been common for Saurashtra's last two opponents in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy.

At the Emerald Heights International School ground on Sunday, Baroda was at the receiving end as the Jaydev Unadkat-led side thumped 20 sixes on way to its record total of 266 for six.

At the Holkar Stadium on Tuesday, Saurashtra's free-spirited batters took it to 235 for five against Tamil Nadu.

These displays have extended Saurashtra's run to four wins on the trot. As skipper, Unadkat is understandably pleased particularly given that this is a predominantly young batting



I'm in a really good space at the moment as a bowler

unit.

"The results do show a lot of things. It's the way we have set up this young team. There have been two or three debuts this season and the guys who have come in have been given the message of playing with freedom," Unadkat told *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

"The intent has been really positive from ball one. That's what we were missing in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy until this season. There is a lot of calibre in the young guys who have come in. I hope they go from strength to strength. I am there to give

them all the freedom they want."

Apart from deriving immense satisfaction from watching his batters plunder plenty of runs, Unadkat, who is approaching 200 T20 appearances, is also ensuring that his performances with the ball reflect his vast experience in the domestic circuit.

On some flat tracks where batters are further emboldened by the small boundaries, the left-arm pacer's economy of 7.4 in six matches is commendable.

"I'm in a really good space at the moment as a bowler," the 33-year-old said.

"I am looking to bank on the strengths I have and bowl in pressure situations. That's when I need to step up. If it comes from me, obviously the other guys will follow."



Unadkat. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Rajbhar's brace steers Indian Navy past PSPB

Sports Bureau

NEW DELHI

Pawan Rajbhar scored two goals to guide Indian Navy to a 4-3 victory over Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) in a quarter-final league match of the SNBP 60th Nehru hockey tournament at the Shivaji Stadium here on Tuesday.

The Navy team led 4-1 after three quarters before the Petroleum team struck twice in the last quarter to make it a lively contest.

The results (quarterfinal league):

Indian Navy 4 (Pawan Rajbhar 2, Sushil Dhanwar, Bhavin Kushalappa) bt PSPB 3 (Vishal Pandey, Devendra Walmiki, Gurjinder Singh). Punjab National Bank 8 (Gurjinder Singh 2, Jenjen Singh 2, Naveen Antil, Lovepreet Singh, Gursimran Singh, Bharat) bt ITBP 0.

ing Benjamin and Vishnu Vardhan 14-11 in the fourth rubber after Hyderabad had won the third match – the mixed doubles.

Well served

Rajasthan Rangers was well served by Rohan Bopanna as it recorded a 57-43 victory over Gujarat Panthers which had Sumit Nagal in its ranks.

Stunning

Mumbai Eagles beat Punjab Patriots 55-45 (Zenep Sonmez lost to Elina Avanesyan 12-13; Karan Singh bt Mukund 18-7; Zenep & Jeevan Nedunczehany lost to Avanesyan & Saketh Myneni 12-13; Jeevan & Karan bt Mukund & Saketh 13-12).

The results:

Chennai Smashers bt Bengaluru SG Pipers 54-46

Rajbhar's brace steers Indian Navy past PSPB

from Pakistan and South Africa to Canada and the West Indies. England have no objection to their players taking part in the IPL, the richest and the most sought-after tournament ever

Olympiad performance shows the progress India has made

I want to become 2700 (Elo) first. I mean I've been at 2600 for the last one-and-a-half years. So, I think it's long enough and I should make the jump soon



R. RAVINDRAN

INTERVIEW

LEON LUKE MENDONCA

S. Prasanna Venkatesan

Grandmaster Leon Luke Mendonca, who played in the Challengers' section of the second edition of the Chennai Grandmasters classical chess tournament recently, spoke about the popularity of chess in Goa, his travels for training, how GM Vishnu Prasanna changed his playing approach, his breakthrough title triumph at the prestigious Tata Steel Challengers (Wijk aan Zee) in January and his major takeaway from it, the inspirational gold-winning performance of the India men's team at the 2024 Olympiad, and his short-term goal. Excerpts:

You are only the second chess Grandmaster from Goa, a State one wouldn't normally associate with chess. So, how big a sport is chess in Goa?

So, chess is not too prominent in Goa. I think the first time we pretty much heard about chess was when this girl Ivana Furtado won double golds or something in the world youths (u-8) World Championship twice in a row. I'm not sure how many years back, but quite a long time back (2006 and 2007). That was the first time Goa pretty much heard of chess. But still, it was not a big thing. It still is not very big in Goa.

Coming from Goa, a place with little or no association with chess whatsoever, how did you get into chess? If you can shortly share the journey you've had...

My journey was kind of a bit different. My family never had a chess background. We never knew anything about chess until my sister started playing. So, my elder sister first started playing. I think she received a chess set or something for her birthday. And she started playing casually. Then slowly, she became more interested in it. And my parents enrolled her with one local academy. A couple was teaching chess to kids. So, she started

going to that academy. I also kind of understood the rules by then. And she would come back from the lessons and show me some things she learned from there. So, that was how I first started.

And I liked to play. Like, I would usually just sit and play a game for both sides. That's how I started playing in the beginning. Then, my parents realised that I was interested. So, they also enrolled me with the same people. And slowly, I even started playing some local tournaments in Goa.

So then, I started playing tournaments in India (outside Goa) as well. Soon, I started playing some age category events outside India as well. And then, my first open tournament outside India was in 2016. It just continued and never stopped.

Did you go anywhere outside Goa for training?

They never really did online training too much. At least, online wasn't a real thing back then. So, it was mostly just in-person training. And also, we preferred it that way.

In the beginning, I was training with various coaches in Goa. The first time I went outside Goa for training was with Akash Thakur sir in Nagpur. He had like an extra guest room. So, he allowed us to stay there. He was a FIDE master and a very good trainer. He instilled in me some good training habits. He was one of the best trainers I've had in my early growth. He basically instilled in me a lot of good values and trained me very well.

And also other coaches like Rajesh Bahadur from Madhya Pradesh. Shashikant Kutwal, who is Akash Thakur's friend. He's from Pune.

Then, my first prolonged training with somebody was with R.B. Ramesh sir. Here in Chennai (Chess Gurukul). I was rated 1600 or 1700 (Elo rating) back then. I think it was in the beginning of 2015. And he would have these normal training sessions for the people in Chennai. So, we used to go especially to Chennai just for those training sessions. Sometimes, we would stay there for long periods of time just to get the training. And that, of course, helped me tremendously and improved my level a lot. I was there until the beginning of 2018.

Then, I started training with Vishnu Prasanna sir. He's mentoring me right

now. Just giving me psychological advice. He is my mentor and will be my mentor. He brought me to a new level and helped me understand chess in a much more broader horizon.

If you can be a bit more specific as to what he did...

So, before that, I was just training chess, like, for results. I trained to get better to get good results. But he made me understand chess from a philosophical point of view - understanding the game, studying the game, forgetting about results and all that stuff. So, just to study the game, the nature of the game. That kind of viewpoint he instilled in me.

In the beginning, it was very confusing because I'd never seen chess this way. But slowly, I got used to it and it definitely helped me

understand chess a lot better. And, of course, chess-wise, he has trained me quite a bit and he brought me from 2200 (Elo) to where I'm right now.

Other than that, I've also been with WACA (WestBridge Anand Chess Academy).

So, you've travelled quite a bit for training. From your perspective, which place has a very strong chess culture in India?

Definitely, Chennai. It's the chess capital of India and I feel like I used to come to Chess Gurukul quite often in those days. So, it just felt like coming home, actually.

In January this year, you won the Tata Steel Challengers in Wijk aan Zee (The Netherlands). How was it playing in such a prestigious tournament?

First of all, I was very fortunate to get an invitation. I'm pretty sure Vishy (Viswanathan Anand) sir put in a good word to the organiser. Playing that event was a great experience, because it's known as the Wimbledon of chess. I wanted to win the tournament, definitely. But, of course, I knew it was not going to be super easy.

And it definitely wasn't. I was always in the second place, but never really winning until I got the opportunity in the last round. So, it was quite unexpected. But mainly, I was just focusing on playing my best and just giving my best in every game. And

then, the thing of result only came at the end - in the last round - because I suddenly had a good chance.

In general, it was just a very good experience. I played very strong players as well.

Would you say that it's a major breakthrough in your career?

Yes, I think so.

So, what's the major takeaway from the tournament?

I mean I understood my style a bit more because I suddenly started outplaying people in chaotic situations, which I didn't know I could do before. So, I only discovered it during that tournament. And I won many games in the second half of the tournament because of that.

I just enjoyed the experience, and I'm happy that I've got the opportunity to play next year as well because I won.

How are you looking forward to that?

It's going to be my first super tournament. I'm very excited. After this event here in Chennai, I'll be preparing full-time for it. And I won't play any more open events.

You said that you sort of understood your style at the Tata Steel Challengers. So, how would you describe your style?

It's hard to understand myself. Sometimes, I play well in slow situations, and recently, I've also been playing well in chaotic situations. I mean I remember in Tata Steel, I think five games out of 13, my King was roaming around like madness. But somehow, I didn't lose a single of those games.

So, yes, since then I've discovered that I could do that. Also, in recent tournaments, I've played some games like that.

Would you say that you've become more resilient?

I think I've always been like that, but even in these situations, it was more apparent. Suppose it was just a dead loss, then I would create chances. I think, yes, it brought out that

resilience in me.

Did you follow India men's gold-medal winning performance at the 2024 Olympiad? How inspiring was it?

It's very inspiring. Because, India had never won a gold, but it was pretty apparent that they were the favourites. So, it just shows the progress that Indian chess has made.

And I'm very happy to be a part of this generation of India taking over chess. I mean they made a dominating stance in Hungary. And yes, they played very well - all of them.

Was there anyone or anyone's play that was particularly impressive? For instance, we've had people raving about Gukesh's endgame versus China's Wei Yi...

Yes, I think that was one of the turning points. Maybe, the turning point for India taking the gold. That match against China. It was a very tense game and in the last moment, it became tricky and Gukesh took over. So, that cost China the match and brought the victory to India.

But in general, I think all of them did really well. Even Arjun just kept winning games. He's so good at that. Just keeps winning. I think they all did well and played well at the right moments.

You are from Goa, where people generally go to relax and have fun, and have become a GM at 14! Are you an ambitious person?

Actually, it is true that Goa has got that reputation. But my parents are pretty much normal people. My mother is a doctor, and my father is an engineer. I grew up pretty normally and level-headed. In fact, I'm the last person to go to a party.

In general, I'm ambitious. I haven't progressed as far as I thought I should have since I became GM. But yes, my ambition hasn't slowed down.

Do you have any short-term goal that you would like to achieve?

I want to become 2700 (Elo) first. I mean I've been at 2600 for the last one-and-a-half years. So, I think it's long enough and I should make the jump soon.

SCIENCE

ecDNA challenges law of genetics, groundbreaking new studies find

In normal human cells, the DNA is enclosed in 23 pairs of chromosomes. Some natural processes can damage DNA; cells can also make mistakes in DNA when making copies to imbue in new cells. Such processes could cause a small part of the DNA to break away and float freely inside the nucleus. This is ecDNA

Manjeera Gowravaram

Once brushed aside as a curiosity, extrachromosomal DNA (ecDNA) is now taking centerstage in the complex field of cancer biology. Scientists first discovered it as a small fragment of genetic material in cancer cells 50 years ago. Because it was present in only 1.4% of tumours, they didn't consider it to be important.

But more sophisticated genomic techniques later revealed their mistake: one study published in 2017 revealed ecDNA is present in nearly 40% of cancer cell lines and in up to 90% of patient-derived brain tumour samples, revealing its pivotal role in cancer biology.

On November 6, three papers were published in the journal *Nature* by a team called eDyNAmeC – an international collaboration led by Stanford University professor Paul Mischel. The studies explore how ecDNA is formed and contributes to the progression of cancer and drug resistance.

Importantly, the findings also challenge a fundamental law of genetics.

What is ecDNA?

In normal human cells, the nucleus contains 23 pairs of chromosomes that enclose the DNA. There are some natural processes that can damage DNA. For example, in chromothripsis, which occurs in some cancers, the chromosomes are broken and rearranged. Cells can also make mistakes in the DNA when making copies of it to imbue in new cells. Such processes could cause a small part of the DNA to break away from the main chromosome and form a circular structure that floats freely inside the nucleus. This is ecDNA.

One of the three studies was led by eDyNAmeC members Mariam Jamal-Hanjani and Charles Swanton, both professors at University College London. They analysed the mutation patterns in tumours before and after the formation of ecDNA. They identified various environmental factors, including smoking, exposure to certain substances, and genetic mutations, to be triggers of DNA damage that could lead to the formation of ecDNA. In the same study, the researchers attempted a comprehensive analysis of samples from nearly 15,000 cancer patients from the U.K.'s 100,000 Genomes Project, covering 39 tumour types. They validated their findings using a method called fluorescence in-situ hybridisation (or FISH), which specifically looks for certain cancer-related genes in tissue samples.

They found that ecDNA was present in



Researchers analysed samples from nearly 15,000 cancer patients from the U.K.'s 100,000 Genomes Projects. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

about 17% of tumour samples but more so in liposarcomas, brain tumours, and breast cancers. They also reported that the prevalence of ecDNA rose after treatments like chemotherapy and correlated with metastasis and worse patient outcomes.

ecDNA and cancer growth

ecDNA present in tumours often contains multiple copies of oncogenes – mutated genes capable of causing cancer – that are required to activate tumour growth. But these oncogenes are not present in chromosomes, where scientists used to believe they lived.

A study published in 2021, led by another Stanford University professor, Howard Chang, showed that while chromosomal DNA is fixed within specific regions in the cell, ecDNA moves freely and can interact with other ecDNA to form hubs – concentrated zones where oncogenes are expressed more.

Cells transcribe DNA to mRNA to use the latter to manufacture proteins. The 2021 study also found that when cells transcribe ecDNA to mRNA, the process causes specific oncogenes to become four-times more common in the cell than if the DNA came from the chromosomes.

This anomaly has the potential to accelerate the evolution of tumours and help the cancer resist drugs.

An inheritance of loss

Another finding reported in the new studies involves a fundamental shift in scientists' understanding of genetics.

ecDNA was present in about 17% of tumour samples but more so in liposarcomas, brain tumours, and breast cancers. Prevalence of ecDNA rose after chemotherapy and correlated with metastasis and worse patient outcomes

Typically, when cells divide, they duplicate the chromosomes and distribute them equally among their daughter cells. In this process, researchers have known the genes on the same chromosome are inherited together while those on different chromosomes are distributed independently of one another. This basic genetic principle is called Mendel's third law of independent assortment (named after Gregor Mendel).

But in the second of the three studies, a team led by Mischel and Chang used single-cell sequencing, imaging, and modelling to report that ecDNA is passed on in clusters to the daughter cells during cell division – a violation of the third law. This clustering gives some cancer cells an advantage because it allows them to enhance gene interactions, support cancer growth, and preserve favourable genetic combinations over multiple life-cycles. The researchers have called this the "jackpot effect."

This discovery has profound implications. It overturns the idea that gene inheritance is entirely random when the genes are not linked by DNA strands. The researchers also reported that the

transcription process – from DNA to RNA – facilitates the coordinated segregation of ecDNA during cell division.

A new vulnerability in cancer cells

But for the new threats posed by ecDNA, the third study uncovered a potential weakness in tumours that depend on ecDNA. The unusual structure of the ecDNA and its interactions with other DNA elements increase the activity of specific genes. This can lead to a conflict between the cellular machinery involved in making RNA and the activity of cancer cells that leads to DNA damage.

Cells respond to this conflict by the heavy use of a protein called CHK1, which helps fix DNA and allows the cell to keep growing. When the researchers used a drug called BBI-2779 that blocks CHK1, they found the drug selectively killed cancer cells with ecDNA, significantly reducing the number of tumours in mice with stomach cancer.

A San Diego-based biotechnology company co-founded by Mischel and Chang, called Boundless Bio, is currently working to translate these discoveries for clinical use. The company's stated aim is to give patients new treatment options that target vulnerabilities created by ecDNA. This is particularly crucial for patients with ecDNA-driven cancers, such as glioblastoma and ovarian and lung cancers, where current treatments often fall short.

(Manjeera Gowravaram has a PhD in RNA biochemistry and works as a freelance science writer. gmanjeera@gmail.com)

THE GIST

An international collaboration by a team called eDyNAmeC has discovered how ecDNA contributes to the progression of cancer and drug resistance. The findings contradict Mendel's third law of independent assortment

eDyNAmeC members analysed mutations in tumours and identified environmental factors, including smoking, exposure to certain substances, and genetic mutations, to be triggers that could lead to the formation of ecDNA

ecDNA in tumours often contains copies of oncogenes that are required to activate tumour growth. But these are not present in chromosomes, where scientists used to believe they lived

Researchers have found a drug called BBI-2779 that selectively kills cancer cells with ecDNA. A company is now working towards clinical use. This is crucial for patients with ecDNA-driven cancers, such as glioblastoma, ovarian, and lung cancers

BIG SHOT



This aerial view shows a school bus atop the Daniel-Johnson Dam in Quebec, Canada, on July 26. Hydroelectricity production in Canada is plummeting as extreme weather linked to climate change, including sudden swings between drought and flood, has limited output and threatened the structures of the dams themselves. A world leader in hydropower, Canada has also been forced to cut exports to the U.S., which have reached their lowest levels in 14 years. AFP

QUESTION CORNER

When a storm passes over land



Q: What is landfall?

A: Once it's fully formed, a tropical cyclone (in the northern

hemisphere) has a complex 3D structure. Two important parts of it are the eye and the eyewall. The eye is the centre around which the cyclone rotates. It consists of cold air descending from the cyclone's top with warm air rising in a spiral around it. The eyewall consists of high thunderstorms that bring rain, lightning, and powerful winds.

As long as the cyclone moves over water, it can draw more moisture from below to produce new clouds and rain events around it. But when the storm crosses over onto land, its moisture supply declines drastically, and the cyclone weakens.

Landfall is the moment in a tropical cyclone's life when its eye moves over land. Stormy weather brought by a cyclone is stronger around the eye, and landfall events can be deadly because they expose human settlements on land to strong winds and heavy rain. Their effects can be compounded by storm



Tidal waves triggered by Cyclone Fenger lashed the R.K. Beach in Visakhapatnam on November 30. DEEPAK K.R.

surges that flood coastal areas and prevent inland areas from draining normally.

If the air over land is drier, among other factors, a cyclone weakens quickly after landfall. Depending on environmental conditions, it may dissipate completely, or it could pass over land and re-emerge on the other side. In 2021, Cyclone Gulab made landfall over coastal Andhra Pradesh, weakened as it moved across peninsular India, and re-emerged four days later as Cyclone Shaheen in the Arabian Sea.

- The Hindu Bureau

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