



HONOURS FOR T.M. KRISHNA

MSS's name can be used for cash prize

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Allu Arjun arrested, out on bail for 4 weeks

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Fractured bonds along the border

Continued stir affect movement of people, goods into West Bengal

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DIFFERENT STROKES

Kremlin praises Trump and pounds Ukraine

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## IN BRIEF



### SC grants bail to ex-W.B. Minister Partha Chatterjee

#### NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday granted bail to former West Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee in a money laundering case related to a cash-for-jobs scam, but deferred its operation till February 1, 2025. » Page 12

### Two immigrants living illegally in Delhi arrested

#### NEW DELHI

Two immigrants from Bangladesh living illegally in the Capital have been arrested, and over 1,000 more have been identified, the police said on Friday. » Page 2



# Cong. always chose power over Constitution, says Rajnath Singh

In his speech in Lok Sabha, Defence Minister cites Emergency, dismissal of State governments to accuse Congress of violating Constitutional principles; says NDA will never allow basic character of the Constitution to be changed

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Taking a dig at people who "carry a copy of the Constitution in their pockets", Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said that a "particular political party" had tried to appropriate and hijack the making of the Constitution. The Congress had always chosen power rather than the Constitution, he claimed.

Initiating a debate in the Lok Sabha on the 'Glorious Journey of 75 Years of the Constitution of India', Mr. Singh said his government would never allow "the basic character of the Constitution to be changed".

**Caste census proposal**  
Claiming that the BJP had "no objection" to a caste

census as demanded by the Opposition, Mr. Singh said they should offer clear details of their proposal.

"Come up with a blueprint where it is crystal clear which caste will get how much reservation and the percentage of the reservation. We have no objection to even having a

discussion in Parliament," he said.

Leaders of the Congress and other Opposition parties reiterated that they would conduct a caste census if voted to power.

Mr. Singh said the Congress never tolerated autonomy of institutions and instead tried to destroy

Constitutional principles and spirit.

He cited the imposition of the Emergency, the dismissal of many State governments and the supersession of Supreme Court judges to charge the Congress with violating Constitutional principles.

"These days, I see that many Opposition leaders keep the Constitution in their pockets. Actually, this is what they have learnt from childhood, they have seen their families keep the Constitution in their pockets for generations," Mr. Singh said, apparently taking a dig at Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi who has been carrying a pocket Constitution at public rallies and events.

CONTINUED ON  
» PAGE 10

FULL REPORT ON  
» PAGE 10

Priyanka Gandhi takes on PM in debut speech

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not understood that it is 'Bharat ka Samvidhan' (Constitution of India) not 'Sangh ka Vidhan' (rulebook of the RSS), Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadera said in her debut speech in the Lok Sabha.

She also flagged the violence in Manipur and Sambhal in her speech.

CONTINUED ON  
» PAGE 10

## Opposition seeks HC judge's impeachment

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

A six-member delegation of Opposition MPs in the Rajya Sabha handed over a motion seeking impeachment of Allahabad High Court judge Shekhar Kumar Yadav, to secretary-general of the Upper House on Friday, accusing him of engaging in "hate speech" and inciting "communal disharmony" in violation of the Constitution.

The delegation led by Independent MP Kapil Sibal included the Congress's Vivek Tankha and Digvijay Singh, CPI(M)'s John Brittas, RJD's Manoj K. Jha and the Trinamool Congress's Saket Gokhale.

The motion has been signed by 55 Opposition MPs across parties.

The Opposition's move was prompted by Justice Yadav's remarks about Muslims at an event organised by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad last week.

In their 21-page petition,

they have made three allegations – that Justice Yadav "engaged in hate speech and incitement to communal disharmony in violation of the Constitution, targeted minorities and displayed bias and prejudice against them; and entered into 'public debate or expressed his views in public on political matters relating to Uniform Civil Code in violation of the Restatement of Values of Judicial Life - 1997".

The petition states that a judge may be removed from office on grounds of encompassing actions that "undermine judicial ethics, impartiality and public trust in the judiciary".

Justice Yadav's conduct, the Opposition stated, was in contravention of the directive principles enshrined in Article 51A(e) of the Constitution of India, which mandates promoting harmony and renouncing practices derogatory to the dignity of individuals..

## Good catch



**Fishers' day out:** Locals residents have a go at fishing after one of the sluice gates of the Oussudu tank was opened at Pathukannu junction in Puducherry on Friday. S.S.KUMAR

# Former principal, ex-police officer get bail in R.G. Kar case

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KOLKATA

A court in Kolkata on Friday granted bail to Sandip Ghosh, former principal of R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, and Abhijit Mondal, former officer-in-charge of the Tala police station, in the case of rape and murder of a trainee doctor at the State-run health facility on August 9.

The court at Sealdah, where trial in the rape and murder case is going on, granted bail to the two accused, arrested on allegations of tampering evidence, as the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had failed to file a chargesheet against them 90 days after their arrest.

The Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Sealdah, granted bail to both accused on a surety bond



Junior doctors hold a protest in Kolkata on Friday against the grant of bail to the two accused. ANI

of ₹2,000 each and on the condition that the accused would have to appear before the CBI whenever they are called by the Central agency.

The grant of bail created strong reactions in political and social circles.

The West Bengal Junior Doctors' Front reacted to the developments and said that the sentiments of the

people who had participated in the protests against the gruesome rape and murder had not been honoured either by the State government, the Union government, or the Central probe agency.

CONTINUED ON  
» PAGE 10  
SEE ALSO  
» PAGE 12

No Minister is senior to the CM, says Mohan Yadav

**Mehul Malpani**  
BHOPAL

A surprise pick by the BJP leadership last year, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav completed his first year in the office on December 13 after succeeding long-time CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Yadav said that he got regular support from Mr. Chouhan and his previous administrative experience helped him get the hang of the job quickly. He said no Minister is senior to the CM but welcomed varied opinions in the Cabinet meetings.

**INTERVIEW**  
» PAGE 10

## As Oppn. eyes New Delhi seat, Kejriwal says it's 'sons of CMs vs common man'

**Satvika Mahajan**  
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday announced that he will fight the Assembly election due in February next year from New Delhi seat.

Speaking at an event, the AAP chief termed the battle for the constituency could become three-cornered if the BJP decides to field former MP Parvesh Sahib Singh, the son of former Chief Minister Sahib Singh Verma, from the seat. While the BJP is yet to announce candidates for the election, the former BJP MP has already made his intention of fighting from the seat known by posting videos

Delhi MLA from 1998 to 2013.

A day earlier, the Congress announced its decision to field Dikshit's son and former MP Sandeep Dikshit from the seat.

**Three-way fight likely**  
The battle for the constituency could become three-cornered if the BJP decides to field former MP Parvesh Sahib Singh, the son of former Chief Minister Sahib Singh Verma, from the seat. While the BJP is yet to announce candidates for the election, the former BJP MP has already made his intention of fighting from the seat known by posting videos

Dinakar Peri  
NEW DELHI

A new painting adorning the Army chief's lounge, where he greets visiting dignitaries, has miffed the veteran community. The painting replaced the one showing Pakistan's surrender during the 1971 Bangladesh war.

Army sources said the new painting, 'Karam Kshetra - Field of Deeds', done by Lt. Col. Thomas Jacob of the 28 Madras Regiment, portrays the Army as a "guardian of Dharma, fighting not merely as a defender of the nation but to uphold justice and protect the nation's values", and also captures the Army's evolution into a "techno-



Officials seen standing before the painting showing Pakistan's surrender during the 1971 Bangladesh war. ADG PI - INDIAN ARMY/X

logically advanced, integrated force". It shows snow-capped mountains in the backdrop, with the Pangong Tso Lake in eastern Ladakh on the right, and Garuda and Krishna's chariot on the left, along with Chanakya and modern equipment such as tanks, all-terrain vehicles, infantry vehicles, patrol boats, indigenous light combat helicopters and Apache attack helicopters.

This painting represents the Army's timeless commitment to righteousness, as drawn from the teachings of the Mahabharata, sources said. "It portrays the Army as a guardian of

while highlighting its preparedness to meet future challenges with unwavering resolve," the source added. However, several veterans expressed concern on social media over the reason behind the move. Former Northern Army Commander Lt. Gen. H.S. Panag posted, "The photo/painting symbolising India's first major military victory in a 1,000 years and also first as a united nation, in 1971, has been removed by a hierarchy which believes that mythology, religion and distant fragmented feudal past will inspire future victories."

CONTINUED ON  
» PAGE 10

# Police arrest two illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, identify over 1,000 more

Hazrat Nizamuddin Dargah in-charge claims he 'neither met L-G V.K. Saxena nor made a plea' for a drive against illegal Bangladesh immigrants as Raj Niwas officials had 'cited a request by the shrine and residents around while ordering drive'

**Samridhi Tewari**  
**Satvika Mahajan**

NEW DELHI

**T**wo illegal Bangladeshi immigrants have been arrested, and over 1,000 such living illegally in the city identified during the ongoing special drive to trace "illegal settlers", a senior police officer said on Friday.

"We have identified more than 1,000 people during our drive and apprehended two men from Kalindi Kunj and Hazrat Nizamuddin area," DCP (South East) Ravi Kumar Singh said.

Police have identified

the arrested as Abdul Ahad, 26, resident of Sylhet, Bangladesh, and Md Azizul, 32, native of Manik Ganj, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Mr. Ahad was arrested on December 10 and Mr. Azizul on December 12. They were produced at the Foreigners' Regional Registration Office (FRRO) for initiation of deportation proceedings, the DCP said.

During the interrogation, the DCP said, Mr. Ahad revealed that he was working as a labourer in Bangladesh and entered India on December 6 with the help of an agent and stayed in the city to find a job. Mr. Azizul entered In-

dia in 2004, and since then he has been residing in India, the senior police officer said.

The DCP said police were maintaining a record of the inspection and would share it with the FRRO.

The Delhi police had

launched a two-month-long special drive on Wednesday to identify and take action against illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

The drive came on the direction of Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena, who was "requested by a delegation of clerics and residents from the Hazrat Nizamuddin" to take action against the "neighbouring country's infiltrators living in the city".

## Mistaken identity

When *The Hindu* contacted Syed Kashif Ali Nizami, in-charge of the dargah, he said that neither the shrine committee nor its mem-

bers approached the L-G regarding the issue of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants.

"We don't know who met the L-G and who submitted the memorandum regarding these concerns. Dargah's name has been dragged into it. We have approached the police for clarity," Mr. Nizami said.

However, police said they have not received any complaint so far.

Farhad Suri, a former Mayor, said the persons meeting the L-G "were not the real" representatives of the dargah.

The L-G office did not comment on the issue.

# BJP meets CEC, flags 'names of illegal immigrants' in voter list

## The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

A Delhi BJP delegation led by its president Virendra Sachdeva met Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Friday to lodge a protest over names of "illegal Rohingya and Bangladeshi immigrants, duplicate voters, and dead persons" in the voter list of Delhi for the upcoming Assembly poll.

The delegation demanded a probe by the Election Commission (EC) on priority basis to ensure a true and transparent Assembly election.

BJP Delhi MP Bansuri Swaraj, also part of the delegation, submitted "18 pieces of evidence of illegal voters" before the EC.

This comes two days af-



Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva at EC on Friday.

Categorically denying the charge, the BJP has accused AAP of "supporting illegal Bangladeshi and Rohingya immigrants for vote bank."

On Friday, the EC directed the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer to delete illegal or temporary migrants and ghost voters' names from the voter list and not to undertake mass deletion of voters without proper inquiry.

"The process should be scrupulously followed to ensure that changes in the electoral roll are backed by proper inquiry with fullest participation of all parties. The list of Claims and Objections including Form-7 should regularly be shared with all parties and uploaded on the website," the EC stated.

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### TENDERS



**Hockey India**

(Recognized by MYAS, Govt. of India)

The President, Hockey India, New Delhi invites below bids through E-tendering process to conduct FIH Hockey Pro League (Men & Women) 2024-25.

- Proposal Reference No: HI/79/Misc. Services/FIH Hockey Pro League 2024-25 (Men & Women)/2024 dated 13 December 2024
- Proposal Reference No: HI/80/Branding Services/FIH Hockey Pro League 2024-25 (Men & Women)/2024 dated 13 December 2024
- Proposal Reference No: HI/81/Sportainment Services/FIH Hockey Pro League 2024-25 (Men & Women)/2024 dated 13 December 2024

Further details & RFPs documents are available at Hockey India website <https://hockeyindia.org/e-tender>

Last date and Time for Submission of Proposals is 03 January 2025 by 16:00 Hours & Proposals Opening date is 04 January 2025 at 11:00 Hours

President  
Hockey India

### PUBLIC NOTICE

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### E - AUCTION NOTICE (FIRE DAMAGED RS-06 STACKER)

E-Auction forms are invited from interested buyers for disposal, strictly on "As Is Where Is" basis. The auction will be for Fire damaged RS-06 Stackter (Survey handled by: Sahi IS&LA Pvt Ltd) belonging to M/s Delhi International Cargo Terminal Pvt. Ltd, at Panchi Gujran, Tehsil - Ganaur, Dist. Sonipat, Haryana-131101 India can inspect between 14/12/24 to 19/12/24, after taking prior appointment from Mr. Nitin-4810331844, E-Auction to be held on 20/12/24, For E-Auction forms, Contact Ms. Khusht at Mob:-9990573868 of

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Last date for submission of E-auction form is 20/12/24 before 12.30 PM.

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## BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE

Office of the Engineer-in-Chief,  
Head Office Premises, N.R. Square, Bengaluru-560002

No.: EIC/BBMP/PR/1923/2024-25

Date: 12.12.2024

## EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR RAISING FUNDS

(Corrigendum to EIC/BBMP/PR/1923/2024-25)

### BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE INTENDS TO RAISE FUNDS FOR ITS TWIN TUNNEL PROJECT CORRIGENDUM-1

**Sub:** "Funding requirements of the Underground Vehicular Road 3-lane Twin Tunnels with Tunnel Boring Machine for the North-South Corridor of Bengaluru starting from Hebbal Esteem Mall Junction to Silk Board KSRP Junction in the State of Karnataka on BOT (Toll) Mode". - Reg Changes in schedule and amendments in the EOI document with reference to EIC/BBMP/PR/1923/2024-25 dated: 06.12.2024

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), is making the following amendments to the EOI document based on internal discussion and deliberation.

1. The BBMP proposes to borrow INR 8,000 Crores (Rupees Eight Thousand Crores only) for funding the grant requirement and cost of land acquisition related to the North-South corridor only.

The EOI for Funds required for the East-West Corridor will be called separately.

2. Withdrawal of funds: The BBMP reserves the right to draw the amount based on requirement. The loan amount is proposed to be withdrawn over a period of five years, to partly support the construction cost of the concessionaire. The construction of the North-South corridor is expected to start by 2025.

3. Following is the updated calendar of events for the process:

Sl. No.	Particulars	Dates
1	Notice inviting EOI for raising funds	13.12.2024 (Corrigendum)
2	Submission of queries	13.12.2024 to 20.12.2024
3	Compulsory purchase of Draft DPR of the tunnel project @ INR 25,000/- as DD payable to Chief Commissioner, BBMP, submitted to Office of Engineer-in-Chief, BBMP	13.12.2024 to 20.12.2024
4	Pre-bid meeting in the Office of Chief Commissioner, BBMP	23.12.2024 at 04:00 p.m.
5	Last date for submission of bid sealed cover to the Special Commissioner (Finance), BBMP up to 04:00 p.m.	03.01.2025
6	Opening of bids	03.01.2025 at 05:00 p.m.

4. The Proforma for bid submission and the draft DPR may be collected from the Office of the Engineer-in-Chief, BBMP upon submission of the DPR Purchase Fee. The draft DPR is subject to changes.

5. The Proforma for bid submission will require the bidder to furnish key parameters and terms including amount to be sanctioned, tenor, rate of interest, repayment schedule, moratorium, security, other charges, etc.

6. You may kindly contact the following officials for any further information / clarification: Dhananjaya K.K. (+91-98452-08023) or Shilpa (+91-99865-53232).

**Sd/-**  
**Engineer-in-Chief**  
**Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike**

# THE HINDU REWIND 2024 TRIVIA QUIZ

- India extended its first-ever Rupee-denominated Line of Credit under IDEAS in October 2024 to which country?
- Which traditional saree from Gujarat, generally worn during weddings, received the coveted GI tag in November 2024?
- South India's first and the country's largest leopard safari was inaugurated in June 2024 in which city?

Scan QR code or visit [newsthrive.com/RTQPA](http://newsthrive.com/RTQPA) take the quiz. Top 3 winners\* every day win gift vouchers.

Yesterday's Winners:  
1. Swetha A, Hyderabad | 2. Venkat.N, Chennai | 3. Pulkit Khurana, New Delhi

Categorically denying the charge, the BJP has accused AAP of "supporting illegal Bangladeshi and Rohingya immigrants for vote bank."

On Friday, the EC directed the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer to delete illegal or temporary migrants and ghost voters' names from the voter list and not to undertake mass deletion of voters without proper inquiry.

"The process should be scrupulously followed to ensure that changes in the electoral roll are backed by proper inquiry with fullest participation of all parties. The list of Claims and Objections including Form-7 should regularly be shared with all parties and uploaded on the website," the EC stated.

**Women aid scheme to be rolled out this month: Atishi**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Atishi on Friday said that the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman Yojana, the scheme to provide monthly assistance of ₹1,000 to women in the city, would be rolled out in the next 10-15 days as her government was working on the registration process.

"We have kept our promise. Despite all efforts by the Opposition to obstruct this initiative, we have successfully launched it," Ms. Atishi told mediapersons at a press conference.

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday launched the scheme and said the monthly stipend would be hiked to ₹2,100 from ₹1,000 if his government returns to power in Delhi.

Mr. Kejriwal said that the scheme's first instalment could be credited only after the Delhi Assembly poll in February as the model code of conduct was likely to be effective soon.

However, Ms. Atishi stated that women above 18 years of age will receive the scheme money for one or two months before the end of the current financial year - March 31, 2025.

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REWIND 2024

TRIVIA QUIZ

DAY 14

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REWIND 2024

TRIVIA QUIZ

DAY 14

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REWIND 2024

TRIVIA QUIZ

DAY 14

THE HINDU

IIT-Mandi prof. removed over harassment claims by two students

Press Trust of India  
SHIMLA

A professor accused of sexually harassing two female PhD researchers at IIT-Mandi has been removed from his job, the institute said on Friday.

The professor has been compulsorily retired based on the report of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) constituted to investigate the sexual harassment case, Registrar Sambhav Pandey said.

The decision was taken by the IIT Board.

The professor has challenged the decision.

## For second time in a week, Delhi schools get bomb threats via e-mail

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Over 30 schools in the national capital received bomb threats via e-mail on Friday morning, following which a multi-agency search was conducted at the premises of the targeted schools, officials said. However, no suspicious object was found in the inspections by the police and Delhi Fire Services (DFS) personnel with the help of bomb detection squads and dog units and the email was termed a 'hoax'.



Anxious moments: Security and school administration officials at a school in New Delhi on Friday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Arvind Kejriwal said it was the second such instance within a week and wondered how these threats would affect the children. A similar e-mail was sent to 40 schools in Delhi on November 9.

Talking about the investigation into the Friday incident, a senior officer said the email was sent at 12.54 a.m. and it was likely issued from outside the country.

Reacting to the development, former Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party national convener

A DFS official said, "We

received calls from Bhatnagar International School in Paschim Vihar at 4.21 a.m., followed by Cambridge School in Srinivaspuri at 6.23 a.m. and Delhi Public School in East of Kailash at 6.35 a.m." Calls were also received from South Delhi Public School in Defence Colony at 7.57 a.m., Delhi Police Public School in Safdarjung at 8.02 a.m., and Venkateshwar Global School in Rohini at 8.30 a.m., he added.

## Paper leak rumour hits BPSC exam; conspiracy, says panel, vows action

Press Trust of India  
PATNA

Examination Centre at Kumhrar in Patna alleging the question paper was leaked even before the examination started.

BPSC chairman Parmar Ravi Manubhai said, "The BPSC CCE 70th preliminary examination was held in 912 centres across the State... at one centre in Patna, some candidates reportedly snatched questions papers from the invigilators and stormed out of the exam hall screaming that the paper had been leaked."

Around 300-400 aspirants boycotted the BPSC's 70th Integrated Combined Competitive Examination (CCE) 2024 held at Bapu

Delhi Weather max min  
Delhi City 23 09  
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Palam 21 06

Delhi Pali Today  
21°C The dry weather to prevail. Mist and haze will occur in cold morning. Day will be pleasant with cool breeze. Night also will be cold and hazy. Dry weather to continue.

Delhi Pali Tomorrow  
20°C Morning will be cold with mist and haze. Day will be pleasant with cool breeze. Night also will be cold and hazy. Dry weather to continue.

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## BJP govt. working for welfare of farmers, says Rajasthan CM

Dream of developed State would come true only when farmers and cattle-rearers are prosperous: Bhajan Lal Sharma; CM transfers ₹700 cr. as Kisan Samman Nidhi instalment into bank accounts

The Hindu Bureau  
JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma on Friday said the State government is working for welfare of farmers and cattle rearers, and assured them that their interests would be protected in all circumstances. Mr. Sharma said the dream of "developed Rajasthan" would come true only when the farmers are prosperous.

Mr. Sharma was addressing a Kisan Sammelan in Ajmer, organised as part of the Bharatiya Janata Party government's first anniversary celebrations.



Bhajan Lal Sharma honoured 10 progressive farmers for making innovations in agriculture. FILE PHOTO

He transferred ₹700 crore as the second instalment of the Kisan Samman Nidhi to the bank accounts of over 70 lakh farmers and ₹200 crore to 3.25 lakh cat-

tle breeder as an assistance of ₹5 per litre of milk.

Besides, ₹29 crore were given as direct benefit transfer to 15,983 farmers for drip and sprinkler irrigation equipment, ₹96 crore to 14,200 farmers for various works such as fencing, laying of pipelines, farm pond construction, organic manure and agricultural equipment, and ₹80 crore for installation of 8,000 solar pumps.

Mr. Sharma honoured 10 progressive farmers for making innovations in agriculture under the Centrally sponsored ATMA Yojana on the occasion. He said as many as 2,500 MoUs for investment of ₹58,000 crore

in the agriculture sector had been signed in the Rising Rajasthan Global Investment Summit held in Jaipur recently.

"Our government has taken decisions such as distribution of short-term crop loans of ₹20,000 crore to 30 lakh farmers and 8 lakh soil health cards, installation of 26,000 solar plants, allotment of land for food parks at 31 places, and purchase of wheat, moong, groundnut and mustard at MSP," Mr. Sharma said. He also interacted with the farmers who have benefited from the State government's subsidies in various schemes through video-conferencing.

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THE HINDU GROUP

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எனிமைக்கும்  
தியாகத்திற்கும்  
ஓர் உதாரணம்

## IN BRIEF



## Badal completes religious penance, prays at Akal Takht

After completing his 'Tankhah' (religious punishment), former Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal on Friday offered prayers at the Akal Takht. Mr. Badal arrived at the Golden Temple with his former Cabinet colleagues amid tight security. He moved in a wheelchair due to a fracture in his foot. Police had since the morning deployed heavy force near the temple complex. Mr. Badal, 62, underwent the religious punishment pronounced on December 2 by the Akal Takht, highest temporal body of the Sikhs, for "mistakes" made by his Shiromani Akali Dal government in the State.

## Ashwini Bhide new Principal Secretary to CM Fadnavis

IAS officer Ashwini Bhide was on Friday appointed as Principal Secretary to Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Ms. Bhide will continue to hold her current charge as MD of the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation until further direction, said an order from the General Administration Department. The 1995-batch officer replaced Brijesh Singh as Principal Secretary in the Chief Minister's Office. Shrikar Pardeshi, who served as Secretary to Fadnavis when he was the Deputy Chief Minister in the previous government, was recently transferred to the CMO as a Secretary. PTI

## 3 more held in Gurugram nightclub blast case

Press Trust of India  
GURUGRAM

The police here have nabbed three more men in connection with the crude bomb explosion outside a nightclub in Sector 29, an officer said on Friday.

The arrests were made by a Special Investigation Team, led by ACP (Crime) Varun Dahiya, formed by Gurugram Police Commissioner Vikas Kumar Arora in the wake of the bombing.

**Police demand**  
The three were identified as Ankit, 30, and Vinit Malik, 27, both natives of Meerut and Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh respectively, and Vikas, 28, a native of Sonipat in Haryana.

All three have been sent on six days' police remand.

The main accused, Sachin Talyan, 27, is already on seven days' remand.

## No joy for this Sri Lankan refugee stuck in legal limbo

Please help me go back to Sri Lanka or treat me as an Indian citizen by giving me an identity card, says 37-year-old Joy, who had come to India as a child and has been running from pillar to post ever since to get out of no-man's land

L. Srikrishna  
RAMANATHAPURAM

Please help me go back to Sri Lanka or treat me as an Indian citizen by giving me an identity card," said 37-year-old Joy, making a fervent plea in front of the Ramanathapuram Collector's office.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, he said he had been running from pillar to post, in the belief that his dream of going back home (to Sri Lanka) would come true one day, but to no avail. "Sometimes I am frustrated, and sometimes disappointed. But most of the time, I feel alone, and left in the lurch by people around me," he said.

## Three cases filed, 51 arrested for Maharashtra city violence

Press Trust of India  
SAMBAJINAGAR

At least 51 people were arrested, and three cases registered so far in connection with the violent protests that broke out in Maharashtra's Parbhani city over vandalism of a replica of the Constitution, police said on Friday.

Violence erupted in the city after a glass-enclosed replica of the Constitution near Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's statue outside the Parbhani railway station was vandalised on the evening of December 10.

A bandh to protest the incident took a violent turn on Wednesday when a mob indulged in arson and damaged shops, vehicles and even the District Collector's office.

**Situation peaceful?**  
The police said the city is peaceful now, and no new incidents of violence have been reported.



Police patrol the streets of Parbhani after violent protests over alleged vandalism of a replica of the Constitution. FILE PHOTO: PTI

Prohibitory orders banning gathering of more than five persons continue in the city, it said.

Meanwhile, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Jadhav slammed the BJP, questioning where leaders of the party were when the violence erupted in Parbhani.

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Jadhav said, "The incident in Parbhani is unfortunate. Finding the person who orchestrated the incident is also a part of the investigation. There were so

many people on the road at the time. How could someone vandalise the replica? The administration should help those who suffered losses in the violence during the protest."

**Sena MP slams BJP**  
"Where did the BJP people go when violence erupted in Parbhani and rioting started? Merely giving speeches and gaining political mileage is easy. But the consequences are tough to handle?" Mr. Jadhav said.

## ED accuses T.N. Minister of derailing trial in 'scam' case

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) on Friday in the Supreme Court accused Tamil Nadu Minister V. Senthilbalaji, who was released on bail by the apex court on September 26 in a money laundering case linked to a cash-for-jobs 'scam', of "derailing" the trial.

**Bail condition**  
The ED, in its affidavit, said a specific bail condition imposed on Mr. Senthilbalaji was that he should not seek adjournments on non-existent or frivolous grounds or create hurdles in the early disposal of the case.

However, following his induction in the Cabinet as State Minister for Minister of Electricity, Prohibition and Excise within 48 hours of his release on bail, the ongoing examinations of prosecution witnesses



V. Senthilbalaji  
have been delayed due to Mr. Senthilbalaji's applications for either copies of the digital records or for change of counsel.

**Key witnesses**  
The Central agency pointed out that some of the key witnesses cited in the prosecution complaint had previously worked under Mr. Senthilbalaji when he was Transport Minister. The allegations against him refer to his previous tenure as Transport Minister.

"This proximity bet-

## Uddhav targets PM over Hindus in Bangladesh

The Hindu Bureau  
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Friday said the Bharatiya Janata Party uses its Hindutva agenda only for "electoral purposes". Addressing a press conference at his residence "Matoshree", he questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the safety of Hindus in Bangladesh and the arrest of ISKCON priest Chimoy Krishna Das in the neighbouring country.

"The Railways has issued a 'fatwa' to remove the 80-year-old Hanuman temple built by the porters of Dadar station. CIDCO [City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra Ltd] is eyeing the temple land. What kind of Hindutva is this?" he said.

## BJP hits back

Reacting to Mr. Thackeray, Maharashtra BJP president Chandrashekhar Bawankule posted on X: "Those who abandoned Hindutva for power and sat alongside Congress are now talking about protecting Hindus...

The BJP stands firmly with Hindus in Bangladesh. That is why the Central government passed the Citizenship Amendment Act [CAA]. At that time, however, you took a timid stance in the Rajya Sabha, fearing Congress."

Mr. Bawankule targeted Mr. Thackeray over his two-and-a-half-year tenure as CM, alleging an "anti-Hindu stance" during the Palghar incident in 2020 involving the killing of two sadhus by a vigilante group.

## Techie death: wife told to appear before Bengaluru police

Press Trust of India  
JAUNPUR

As part of its probe into the suicide of engineer Atul Subhash, the Bengaluru police on Friday issued summons to his wife and asked her to appear before it within three days.

The 34-year-old techie had ended his life on Monday in Bengaluru, alleging harassment at the hands of his estranged wife and her family.

A four-member team, led by Sub-inspector Sanjeet Kumar, visited the techie's in-laws' residence in the Khowa Mandi area in this Uttar Pradesh district around 11 a.m. and pasted the notice.

**Empty premises**  
According to Jaunpur Circle Officer (City) Ayush Srivastava, the notice, addressed to the techie's wife, did not mention other family members, including her mother, uncle and a brother, despite their names being in the FIR. At the time the notice was pasted, the main door of the house was locked and no family members were present.

The Bengaluru police team arrived in Jaunpur late on Thursday. After meeting Superintendent of Police Ajay Pal Sharma, the team proceeded to the city police station for further action.

**Petition in SC**  
Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the case, a PIL in the Supreme Court has sought the appointment of an expert panel to review and reform the existing dowry and domestic violence laws to stop their misuse. The plea further sought a direction to record during the marriage registrations, the articles or gifts given.

**Those in distress may contact Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health suicide prevention helpline: 011-40769002.**

## Need open discussion on 'one nation, one election' proposal: NC

The Hindu Bureau  
SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday sought a thorough discussion on the proposal for simultaneous elections and warned against unilateral decisions on the issue.

"There is a need for a transparent and open discussion on the 'one nation, one election' proposal. It should not replicate the contentious process surrounding the abrogation of Article 370 [which led to the withdrawal of J&K's special status] in 2019," Mr. Abdullah said.

"The Bill is a Cabinet proposal and has not been tabled in Parliament. It should not meet the same

fate as the Bill related to Article 370, which was passed within one or two hours after a token discussion," the National Conference (NC) leader said.

Mr. Abdullah called for an "open discussion" in Parliament.

**Will form an opinion**  
On the NC's position on the Bill, Mr. Abdullah said his party would sit and form an opinion. "Accordingly, our members of Parliament will vote," he added.

Meanwhile, Mr. Abdullah said the rules of business, yet to be finalised for the elected government of the Union Territory, were likely to be completed by the end of December or early January.



Desperate measures: Joy being escorted away by the police after he created a flutter in front of the Ramanathapuram Collectorate.

Narrating his story, Mr. Joy said he was from the fishermen community, and used to live in Talaimannar district in Sri Lanka with his parents when he was a child. In 1997, when he was only 10 years old, he fell asleep in his trawler, and the next thing he knew, he had reached Dhanushkodi in Indian waters with other

refugees from the war-torn island nation. He was subsequently arrested under The Passports Act and sent to a correctional home. "When I was granted bail, I moved from one district to another, hoping to get back home," he said.

Finally, he reached the Mandapam camp in Indian waters with other

Ramanathapuram district. However, the officials at the camp refused to treat him as a refugee, though they allowed him to stay, he claimed. "Like the others in the camp, I was not a registered inmate. I was not given an identity card or any benefits," he alleged.

Upset over the official apathy, Mr. Joy left the camp. When asked what he did for survival, he said he relied on *prasadam* and *annadham* at temples in Rameswaram and other places, and slept wherever he was allowed.

In a last-ditch attempt to get out of no-man's land, he came to the Ramanathapuram Collector's office on

Wednesday, and sought help from the officials. However, the police handed him over to the Q Branch after he created a flutter at the Collectorate.

A senior police officer said Mr. Joy had earlier attempted to end his life in front of the Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari Collectorate.

On seeing his plight, former Sri Lankan Minister Namal Rajapaksa took to social media to urge his country's government to engage with India and bring Mr. Joy back to Sri Lanka.

*Those in distress may contact Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health suicide prevention helpline: 011-40769002.*

"The Bill is a Cabinet proposal and has not been tabled in Parliament. It should not meet the same

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, MEGA LIFT, BHUBANESWAR.**  
Plot No.A 8/2, Bhoi nagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, PIN-751022. E-Mail : cemplpwrd@gmail.com  
**Government of Odisha - "e" Procurement Notice**  
**Bid Identification No. 06ML/2024-25**

On Line open tender is invited for EPC Contract (Turn Key Basis) for Mega Lift, Odisha  
1. Name of Work : Operation and Maintenance of existing 13 nos. schemes with intake points on Tel Basin having command area between 500 Ha. to 2000 Ha. in Meglift Cluster-XIV in the districts of Kalahandi & Bolangir comprising all electro-mechanical & instrumentation equipments installed in pump house & MCC room including pumps and motors, switchyard & Transmission lines, intake well, Sump well, Rising main, Distribution chamber, Gravity main, complete distribution network by UGPL covering cultural command area of 14069.84 Ha, with operation of maintenance of all its 13 completed schemes including its power system connectivity, proper distribution of water to the aycat including watch & ward with the OEM period of 10 years on "turn-key basis".  
2. O & M Period : 120 (One hundred twenty) calendar months.  
3. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal : 19.12.2024, 10 A.M.  
4. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal : 08.01.2025 up to 5.00 P.M.  
5. Name & address of the officer inviting Bid : Chief Engineer, Megalift, A-8/2, Bhoi Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Pin-751022  
Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal "<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>"  
Chief Engineer, Megalift, Bhubaneswar.  
OIPR-32504/11/0009/2425  
A-722:

**विक्रम विश्वविद्यालय, उज्जैन**  
क्रमांक/भण्डार/परीक्षा/961 दिनांक : 13.12.2024  
प्री एण्ड पोस्ट परीक्षा प्रोसेसिंग कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा विज्ञप्ति  
विक्रम विश्वविद्यालय उज्जैन की प्री एण्ड पोस्ट परीक्षा प्रोसेसिंग कार्य कराया जाता है। इस कार्य में दक्षता रखने वाली फर्म/संस्थानों से ई-निविदा [www.mptenders.gov.in](http://www.mptenders.gov.in) पर आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदाओं का विस्तृत विवरण विश्वविद्यालय की वेबसाइट [www.vikramuniv.ac.in](http://www.vikramuniv.ac.in) पर उल्लब्ध है।-  
म.प्र. मायम/ 117788/2024 कुलसंचिव

**HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**e Web : [www.hppwd.gov.in](http://www.hppwd.gov.in) E-mail : [hpp\\_kin@nic.in](mailto:hpp_kin@nic.in) Phone No: 01786-226027 Fax: 01786-226027.**INVITATION FOR BIDS (IB)**

1. The Executive Engineer Kalpa Division, HPPWD, Kalpa, District Kinnar (HP) on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system, from the eligible class of Contractors registered with HPPWD for the works as detailed in the table.

Sr. No. 1 Name of Work :-Retrofitting work of Devi Chandika Govt. St. Sec. School at Kotih in District Kinnar (HP), Estimated Cost (Rs.):- 30,05,659/- Starting Date for downloading Bid:- 12-12-2024, Earnest Money:- 61,000/- Eligible Class of Contractor:- D Class, Deadline for submission of Bid:- 19-12-2024, Date of opening of Technical bid:- 21-12-2024, Time:- Six Months.

Sr. No. 2 Name of Work :-Retrofitting work of CHC building at Pooth in District Kinnar (HP) Estimated Cost (Rs.):- 69,67,094/- Starting Date for downloading Bid:- 12-12-2024, Earnest Money:- 1,40,000/- Eligible Class of Contractor:- C Class, Deadline for submission of Bid:- 19-12-2024, Date of opening of Technical bid:- 21-12-2024, Time:- Six Months.

Sr. No. 3 Name of Work :-Retrofitting work of CHC building at Changi in District Kinnar HP Estimated Cost (Rs.):- 56,48,871/- Starting Date for downloading Bid:- 12-12-2024, Earnest Money:- 1,13,000/- Eligible Class of Contractor:- C Class, Deadline for submission of Bid:- 19-12-2024, Date of opening of Technical bid:- 21-12-2024, Time:- Six Months.

Sr. No. 4 Name of Work :-Retrofitting work of Govt. St. Sec. School at Reckong Peo in District Kinnar HP Estimated Cost (Rs.):- 25,81,254/- Starting Date for downloading Bid:- 12-12-2024, Earnest Money:- 52,000/- Eligible Class of Contractor:- D Class, Deadline for submission of Bid:- 19-12-2024, Date of opening of Technical bid:- 21-12-2024, Time:- Six Months.

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the Executive Engineer, Kalpa Division, department website [www.hptenders.gov.in](http://www.hptenders.gov.in). HP / 3900/24-25**Department of Women and Child Development and Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens**

Office of the Secretary to Government, 1st Floor, M.S.Building, Bengaluru-560001.

Notification No: DWCD/2024-25/IND0057 Date:12-12-2024

**TENDER FOR SUPPLY OF PRE SCHOOL KIT FOR THE YEAR 2024-25**

(Karnataka Public Procurement mode only, Two cover System)

Department of Women and Child Development hereby invites technical and financial tenders (Two cover System) from officially registered and eligible suppliers supply of Pre School Kit to Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) in the State of Karnataka. Interested bidders shall submit the bids through Government of Karnataka's Karnataka Public Procurement portal (<https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>). Tenderer shall deposit the EMD in accordance with the tender document.

- 1) Tender document available for download: Date: 12/12/2024.
- 2) Pre-bid meeting Date: 16/12/2024 at 2.00 p.m.
- 3) Last date and Time for uploading online queries in Karnataka Public Procurement portal Date: 23/12/2024 up to 5.00 p.m.
- 4) Last date for receipt of Tender Date: 10/01/2025 by 5.00 p.m.
- 5) Opening of Technical bid Date: 13/01/2025 by 11.00 a.m.
- 6) Tentatively fixed date for opening of financial bid after verification of documents submitted in technical bid Date: 16/01/2025 by 11.00 a.m.

Copies of tender announcement and tender documents are available from (a) Tender inviting authority – Joint Director, Department of Women and Child Development, Bengaluru (b) State Tender Bulletin Officer – Deputy Secretary, Department of Women and Child Development and Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens, Bengaluru. Further details may be obtained from the office of the Joint Director (ICDS), Department of Women and Child Development, Anand Rao circle, Bangalore (Tel No: 080-22353780).

Sd/- Deputy Secretary to Government and State Tender Bulletin Officer.

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**  
**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (BUILDING)**  
**ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3**

**PRESS NOTICE FOR RE-TENDER**

The Chief Engineer, P.W.D (Building), Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam re-invites bids from Govt. registered eligible Contractors having experience in similar nature of works for the following work.

Details of bid may be seen at e-procurement portal [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in)  
The bidders must be enrolled in [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in)

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Bid Security drawn in favour of	Approx value of work	Completion Period	2% of Bid value for General category, and 1% of Bid value for Reserved category	Cost of Bid
1	Construction & Restoration of Kumarkuchi Satra at Barpeta under Barpeta District	E.E. Barpeta District TBD	Rs. 4,04,76,175.00	12 (Twelve months)	Rs. 8,09,524.00 for General Category and Rs. 4,04,762.00, Reserved Category	Rs. 8095.00

N.B.: 1. Value of work may vary according to the detail NIT.  
2. The Press Notice will form a part of the Bidding Document.

Chief Engineer, PWD, Bldg. Assam Chandmari, Guwahati-3

Janasanyog /C/5122/ 24/14-Dec-24

**17<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY****BECAUSE OF YOU, WE ARE****Mrs. RAJESWARI**  
(PROP: SRI RAMAJAYAM BUS SERVICE, VELLORE)w/o. Dr. G. Viswanathan  
Founder, Chancellor, VIT University.Dr. G.V. Sampath  
(Founder - Chairman - Naruvi Hospitals)

Anitha Sampath - Nithin Sampath - Abirami Sampath

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**PROVIDE ELECTRIC HEATERS AND WARM CLOTHING TO SECURITY AND OTHER STAFF**



- ✓ Avoid open burning of biomass & solid waste
- ✓ Do not use coal and wood for heating purpose

**LET'S PROTECT OUR AIR TOGETHER !**Delhi Pollution Control Committee  
<https://dpcc.delhigovt.nic.in>

Scan QR code to Download Green Delhi App



**नगर पालिक निगम, इन्दौर**  
कार्यालय कार्यालय चंद्री (जलप्रदान)  
संधारण खंडन-2, नगरा परियोजना मुसाखेडी, इन्दौर  
E-mail: ee2\_narmada@rediffmail.com, Ph: 0731-2712846

निविदा सूचना क्रमांक: 43/  
2024-25/नगरा.परि./न.गा.नि.  
निविदा ऑनलाइन खाली कार्यालय परियोजना में पंचीनुक्त उद्देश्यों से अनंताइन निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा का विस्तृत विवरण वेबसाइट <https://mptenders.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकता है।

क्र. टेंडर क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की समयावधि एवं लागत	निविदा प्रप्त का पूर्ण एवं EMD
01 दिसंबर 2024_ UAD_ 387608_1	Survey, Soil investigation, design and execution of various works for improvement of bulk water supply system of City Feeder network which includes construction of 30 ML capacity of under ground Sump with pumping stations, pumping main & Electric sub station complete etc., as per scope of work. (as per schedule)	1) 12 माह वर्षाकाल सहित 2) ₹15,35,78,032/-	1) ₹ 7,67,890/- 2) ₹30,000/-

1. निविदा प्राप्त ऑनलाइन जमा करने की अंतिम दिनांक : 26.12.2024, 17:30 बजे तक  
2. निविदा ऑनलाइन खाली की एंवेलोप (ENVELOPE A/B) : 27.12.2024

नोट: निविदा से संबंधित किसी भी प्रकार के संशोधन का प्रकाशन ऑनलाइन <https://mptenders.gov.in> पर होता है। पृष्ठक से समाचार पत्र में प्रकाशन नहीं किया जाता।

**ODISHA ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
PLOT NO. 4, CHUNOKOLI, SHAILASHREE VIHAR,  
BHUBANESWAR-751021

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Case No. 103 of 2024

Application of GRIDCO Ltd. for approval of Truing up of expense for FY 2023-24 under Section 86 (1) (a) & (b) and all other applicable provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003 read with relevant provisions of OERC (Conduct of Business) Regulations, 2004 & other related Rules and Regulations.

GRIDCO Ltd. has submitted its Application to the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission on 07.12.2024 for approval of Truing up of expenses for FY 2023-24, which has been registered as Case No.103 of 2024. The application has been filed under Section 86(1) (a) & (b) and other applicable provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003 read with OERC (Conduct of Business) Regulations, 2004. The Commission has decided to dispose of the case through a public hearing along with the ARR & BSP application for FY 2025-26 of the applicant in Case No.94 of 2024.

The petition along with all Annexures submitted by M/s. GRIDCO Ltd. in this regard is available in GRIDCO's website [www.gridco.co.in](http://www.gridco.co.in) as well as in Commission's website [www.orerc.org](http://www.orerc.org). The Interested persons / organizations those who were parties to the previous year Tariff Proceedings i.e. for FY 2023-24 want to participate in the above proceeding may file their objections/suggestions, if any, on the present petition of M/s. GRIDCO Ltd. by 16.01.2025 with a copy to GRIDCO Ltd. and GRIDCO Ltd. is to file its rejoinder to the objections/suggestions of the Respondents by 27.01.2025 with a copy to the Respondents. Those who are interested to participate in the public hearing through video conferencing should also indicate their e-mail address and mobile number respectively to the Commission at OERC e-mail ([oerc.vc@gmail.com](mailto:oerc.vc@gmail.com)) before hand.

By Order

Sd/-  
SECRETARY  
OIPR-04056/11/0009/2425

Dated: 13.12.2024

**26<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

19.09.1936                          14.12.1998

**Thiru. N.P.V. RAMASAMY UDAYAR**  
Founder - Chancellor,  
Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research (DU)

You have proved that education alone will not yield one's future.  
Creativity, entrepreneurship, hard work and relentless effort are all necessary to become a leader. The greatest wealth you have left to this country is a medical citadel (SRIHER) which has paved the way for excellent health care professionals. On this day, we bow our head and salute you for your formidable thought and epoch making endeavour.

**V.R. Venkataachalam**  
Chancellor, Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research (DU)  
Family Members  
Trustees, Sri Ramachandra Educational and Health Trust  
Faculty, Staff & Students

**SRI RAMACHANDRA**  
INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH  
(Category-I Deemed to be University) Porur, Chennai

Karnataka HC grants bail to actor Darshan and six others

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka on Friday granted regular bail to seven accused persons, including actors Darshan and Pavithra Gowda in RenukaSwamy kidnap and murder case.

The court cited two reasons for granting bail – police had failed to furnish ground of arrest on the accused persons immediately after their arrest; and all the seven accused have no serious criminal antecedents, they are in custody for the last six months and chance of trial being completed in the near future is very remote.

RenukaSwamy was allegedly murdered by Darshan's men as he sent lewd messages to actor Pavithra.

## Allu Arjun held, released on bail

The actor was arrested in connection with the death of a woman at *Pushpa-2* premiere; the public prosecutor could not convince the judge as to how the case against the actor attracted provisions of culpable homicide not amounting to murder

**Marri Ramu**  
HYDERABAD

In a day of dramatic developments, lead actor of *Pushpa-2* Allu Arjun secured interim bail for four weeks from Telangana High Court on Friday within hours of Hyderabad Police arresting and lodging him in prison in a case of culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

Justice Juvvadi Sridevi of the High Court, who heard the actor's bail application moved as lunch motion, directed Allu Arjun to furnish a personal bond of ₹50,000 to the prison authorities.

The actor should co-operate with the police officials investigating the case, the judge said, granting bail also to two other ac-



Actor Allu Arjun greets his fans in Hyderabad as he leaves a hospital where he was taken for medical check-up before arrest. AP

cused arrested in the case earlier.

Public Prosecutor for Home Palle Nageshwar Rao, presenting his contentions during the hearing, which continued for over an hour beyond regular court closing time, said

the accused cannot be granted bail as he was already remanded in judicial custody. However, the public prosecutor could not convince the judge as to how the case against the actor attracted provisions of culpable homicide not

### Actor not at fault, says husband of woman who died

**HYDERABAD**

The husband of a woman who died when fans jostled during the premiere show of *Pushpa 2*, said on Friday that he doesn't hold actor Allu Arjun responsible for the tragedy. Bhaskar, the woman's husband, said he was "ready to withdraw" his case over the incident. PTI

amounting to murder (Section 106 of BNS which the Chikkadpally police of Hyderabad invoked).

The police issued an FIR on December 5 following the death of M. Revathi, 39, who went to Sandhya theatre to watch film *Push-*

### Vaishnav hits out at Congress-led State government

**NEW DELHI**

Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Friday said the Congress has "no respect for the creative industry", and that the arrest of actor Allu Arjun proved it yet again. He said it was a clear case of poor arrangements by the State and local administration.

*pa-2*, following a stampede-like situation with the arrival of Allu Arjun to the theatre. Her nine-year-old son also sustained injuries in the incident.

The case was registered based on her husband Bhaskar's complaint.

## Eminent journalists share views at *The Hindu* Lit For Life Dialogue

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

From the likelihood of simultaneous polls becoming a reality, to the metamorphosing of the Indian elections into a polarising, hyperlocal and cash-intensive affairs to the BJP's ability to bounce back from the electoral jolt in the 2024 Lok Sabha election were some of the topics that held the audience in a spell at *The Hindu* Lit For Life Dialogue 2025 in Hyderabad on Friday.

The event saw eminent journalists Neerja Chowdhury, Rajdeep Sardesai and Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee chief B. Mahesh Goud, sharing insights and at times trading barbs, during a panel discussion that was moderated by Swathi Vadlamudi of *The Hindu*.

Ms. Chowdhury opined that while simultaneous polls was "not a bad idea", it required a great deal of thought. While largely accepted by the middle class, the rural electorate seek an interface with political leaders as a method of mounting pressure on them to get civic, or similar work, done.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr. Sardesai said, by means of simultaneous polls, wanted to



Neerja Chowdhury, Rajdeep Sardesai and TPCC chief B. Mahesh Goud taking part in *The Hindu* Lit for Life Dialogue 2025 in Hyderabad on Friday. NAGARA GOPAL

turn the country into a Presidential system of democracy.

Mr. Goud said the Congress has opposed simulta-

neous polls as impractical, undemocratic and against the spirit of federalism. Each State, he said, should have a choice of conducting their elections.

Offering her analysis of the outcome of the Maharashtra Assembly election, Ms. Chowdhury said the rise of women as a political force was being witnessed. The BJP, which course corrected quickly, embarked on 'game changing' social welfare schemes, especially for women.

The Congress in Maharashtra, Mr. Sardesai said, became complacent. BJP,

on the other hand, was launching welfare schemes.

Mr. Goud, while conceding to certain arguments, said that the BJP in Maharashtra succeeded in 'manipulating' alliances. That party also succeeded in making stalwarts defect. "They have dismantled the regional feelings," and added that the Congress could not withstand BJP's manipulation.

Mr. Sardesai also raised the 'tragedy' of not giving ticket to Muslims out of concern that Hindus would not vote for them.

## IN BRIEF



### MP and YSRCP leader Avinash Reddy detained in Kadapa

The Kadapa police in Andhra Pradesh detained Kadapa Member of Parliament Y.S. Avinash Reddy on Friday amid tension in Vemula mandal of his Pulivendula constituency. Apparently, the TDP and YSRCP cadres clashed during the elections to local water societies here. As the two parties gathered at the Vemula Tahsildar office, the MP arrived at the scene to express solidarity with the YSRCP activists who had allegedly been denied the No Dues certificate to contest the elections. As his arrival flared up the tension, police detained him to defuse the situation.

### Hand-chopping case: convict sentenced for life gets bail

A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court has granted bail to M.K. Nasar, one of the convicts in the college teacher hand-chopping case of 2010, after suspending the sentence of life imprisonment awarded to him by a NIA Special Court. The Special Court had convicted 13 accused persons and acquitted 18 accused in the case. Savad, the first accused, who had allegedly chopped off the right palm of Professor Joseph had surrendered recently. The HC passed the order when Nasar's appeal came up for hearing.

### Tomato prices 'reasonable' despite low yield: A.P. farmers

Even as drastic price fluctuations last week and adverse climatic conditions have caused some inconvenience to tomato growers in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh, the farmers say that the price band for the vegetable remains 'reasonable'. On Friday, the first-grade variety was sold at ₹18 per kg at the Madanapalle market in Annamayya district, while the second-grade tomatoes were available at ₹13 a kg. The arrival of stocks stood at 110 tonnes compared to the regular more than 1,000 tonnes during the season.

### Ritualistic offering



Sweet dish: Devotees offer 'Pongala' on the Chakkulathukavu Bhagavathy Temple premises at Neerettupuram in Alappuzha on Friday. During this festival, women prepare a dish made from rice and jaggery in clay or earthen pots. SURESH ALLEPPY

### This year, 177 films from 68 countries will be screened at IFFK

**The Hindu Bureau**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Calling on filmmakers to create diverse films reflecting social realities to counter attempts to present a monolithic view, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has cautioned against attempts by corporates to dictate content. He was speaking after inaugurating the 29th International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK) at the Nishagandhi auditorium here on Friday.

Mr. Vijayan presented the IFFK Lifetime Achievement Award for the year to Ann Hui, one of the pioneers of Hong Kong new wave cinema.

Ms. Hui, in her acceptance speech, said that she would like to share the award, the first lifetime achievement award that has been given to her, with the audience that has supported her films. "It is not just the filmmakers who need to be awarded. Those people who understand and encourage filmmakers to make more films also deserve one," she said.

Mr. Vijayan also felicitated actress Shabana Azmi, the chief guest, on completing 50 years in cinema.

A total of 177 films from 68 countries will be screened across 15 theatres in the capital city over the coming week.

### Sartorial preferences of women should not be subject to moral policing, says HC

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KOCHI

A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court has observed that sartorial preferences that a woman makes is her own choice that cannot be subjected to moral policing or assessment, particularly by courts.

The Bench of Justice Devan Ramachandran and M.B. Snehalatha made the observation recently while allowing an appeal filed by a woman against a Family Court's verdict granting custody of her children to her estranged husband.

**Disagrees with findings**  
The Family Court had observed that the mother was



QQ It is unpardonable and impermissible in any civilised society to judge a woman solely on the basis of her dress or to thus conclude upon her virtue or modesty  
**KERALA HIGH COURT**

a woman of loose morals who used to wear revealing clothes, spend time with her male friends, and post her pictures in certain dating apps.

Disagreeing with the findings and reasoning of the Family Court, the High Court set it aside by saying "courts cannot be suspected to be guilty of even borderline misogyny or sex-

### Administration and teachers' body cross swords at IIT-KGP

**Moyurie Som**  
KOLKATA

have been consulted prior to the order, despite the existence of a 'Hospital Management Committee' meant to represent all stakeholders.

"As this is going to be a highly disruptive move, it needs a thorough discussion and, maybe, it would be prudent to take advice from a larger cross-section of campus community and the students as well as the retired pensioners living outside the periphery of the campus," the IIT-KGP teachers' body wrote in a letter to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors of IIT-KGP on Friday.

In the letter, IITTA also raised questions as to why the shifting has been scheduled a week before the expiry of the tenure of the present Director.

**Why the hurry?**  
"In view of the fact that we are going to get a new incumbent Director from the 1st January, 2025, we wonder what is the big hurry to execute the proposed shifting on the 24th December, 2024, exactly a week before the expiry of the tenure of the present Director?" the teachers' body asked in the letter.

The development acquires significance in light of 86 professors being issued show-cause notices and disciplinary action by the institute's administration.

However, the IIT Kharagpur Teachers' Association (IITTA) has alleged that none of the recognised bodies representing teachers, staff, officers or students

### Balachandrakumar, key witness in actor assault case, dies

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KOCHI

Filmmaker P. Balachandrakumar who had raised serious allegations against Malayalam actor Dileep in the sensational woman actor rape case, died on Friday morning. He was 62.

He had been undergoing treatment at a private hospital at Chengannur for kidney and heart ailments.

A close friend of Mr. Dileep before he came out with allegations against the actor in December 2021, Mr. Balachandrakumar had accused the actor of having possession of the visuals of the alleged sexual assault of the actor in a moving car in Kochi on Fe-



bruary 17, 2017.

The filmmaker, who later became a crucial witness, had alleged that Mr. Dileep had plotted the attack with the help of the key accused after he was upset over her alleged role in creating marital discord.

were open to meeting their father on holidays.

The Bench observed that "clothing is a form of self-expression, being part of an individual's identity, or an expression of general aesthetics. It is unpardonable and impermissible in any civilised society to judge a woman solely on the basis of her dress, or to thus conclude upon her virtue or modesty."

**Grants custody**  
The High Court granted custody of the children to the mother by also taking into account the children's wish that they wanted to stay with her full-time and

# Patients recollect ordeal during deadly fire at hospital in T.N.

Before they could realise what had happened at the facility in Dindigul, they were surrounded by thick smoke. While some of them received help, others did not want to wait. Six of them died of suffocation in a lift. Two are on ventilator support.

## The Hindu Bureau DINDIGUL

**I**t was around 9.45 p.m., and I had finished giving medicines to my mother. Suddenly, I heard people raising an alarm about a fire. I was in a ward on the third floor. When I came out to check what was going on, there was thick smoke all around me. I couldn't see anything," said Sushila of Vadipatti in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu.

She was recollecting her ordeal at City Hospital in Dindigul, where a massive fire claimed six lives on Thursday.

"When I was wondering how to take my mother to the ground floor to reach the exit, someone helped us. I don't know whether the person was a fire and rescue services personnel or a hospital staff. That person carried my mother to the exit, and from there, we were shifted to the Dindigul Government Medical College Hospital in an ambulance," she said.

Like Ms. Sushila, M. Ravi



Digging deep: Forensic experts inspecting the site of the fire in Dindigul district on Friday. G. KARTHIKEYAN

and his wife R. Selvi from Theni district were on the third floor. Mr. Ravi said there was thick smoke, and he did not want to wait for help. He helped his wife to the exit. "My wife has been having breathing difficulties since the ordeal. Thankfully, after receiving treatment, she is feeling better," he said.

### How it started

A hospital staff member, who was at the reception when the fire broke out, said he first heard a loud noise around 9.45 p.m., and before he could realise

what had happened, the outpatient record section was engulfed in flames. "The fire broke out on the ground floor and spread to a portion of the first floor. Thick smoke spread quickly to the floors above. It was dark. But we had to reach out and alert the people about the danger," he said.

"There was thick smoke, and I could not breathe or see anything. We had to break open an emergency exit and let people out," he said. However, the employee did not clarify whether there were smoke alarms or sprinklers at the

hospital. While some patients and their attendants received help, others did not wait. Many panicked and started climbing down the building. The hospital staff said this could have been the reason why eight persons tried to take the lift to go downstairs. Unfortunately, six of them – a child, two women, and three men – died of suffocation. The two others are on ventilator support.

Ayyappan, a patient who had stiches on his head and leg, said he was on the first floor, and the

staff helped him get down. Another patient, Saravanan, climbed down from the third floor. N. Kumar was on the first floor when the fire broke out. The staff came to his aid.

M. Karthik was on the second floor. Both he and his father had been admitted to the hospital after fracturing their legs in an accident. Mr. Karthik had to assist his father to get to the first floor, from where the hospital staff and fire and rescue services personnel helped them get down. Similar was the case with Rani and Mayandi, a couple from Theni district.

While the hospital staff and fire station personnel played a big role in rescuing the trapped patients, unsung heroes like Ashwin and Kavin, who were at the hospital to take care of their uncle Nallaya, also helped other patients and attendants. It is said that they had brought 16 patients to safety.

Over 30 patients were shifted to the Dindigul Government Medical College Hospital for treatment.

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT e-mail ee-roh-hp@nic.in E-Procurement Notice INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)					
The Executive Engineer HPPWD Rohru Distt Shimla H.P on behalf of Governor of H.P invites item rate, bids, in electronic tendering system, in 2 cover system, for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved contractors/firms registered with HP.PWD Department.					
Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (Rs)	Starting Date for download Bid	Earnest money	Deadline for submission of bid
1.	Construction of Govt Sr Sec School Building at Pujari-4 Tehsil Tikkar Distt Shimla (Sh-C/o Civil Work, WS & SJ, Rain Harvesting tank septic tank and site development)	42328495	16.12.2024	846600/-	21.12.2024
The Bidders are advised to note other details for tenders and letter No.PWD(B) A(3) 1/2020 dated 12.01.2023 issued by secretary PWI to the Govt. of himachal Pradesh Works Department from the department website <a href="http://www.hptenders.gov.in">www.hptenders.gov.in</a> , and any corrigendum will be uploaded on the website only.					
Executive Engineer HP / 389824-25 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK HPPWD Division Rohru, Dist Shimla HP					

## GRIDCO LIMITED Janpath, Bhubaneswar-751022, Odisha PUBLIC NOTICE

Application under Section 86 (1) (a) & (b) and other applicable provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003 read with relevant provisions of OERC (Conduct of Business) Regulations, 2004 along with other related Rules and Regulations for determination of Aggregate Revenue Requirement and Bulk Supply Price for the FY 2025-26, filed by GRIDCO Ltd. before the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission, Bhubaneswar-21.

1. GRIDCO Ltd. has filed an Application on 30.11.2024 before the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission for approval of Aggregate Revenue Requirement and determination of Bulk Supply Price (BSP) for the financial year 2025-26 which has been registered as Case No. 94 of 2024. The application has been filed under Section 86(1) (a) & (b) and other applicable provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003 read with relevant provisions of OERC (Conduct of Business) Regulations, 2004. The Commission has decided to dispose of the said case through a public hearing.

2. Copies of the aforesaid filing as mentioned in Para-1 above together with supporting materials along with the related documents are available with the office of the CGM (PP), GRIDCO Headquarters, Bhubaneswar. This public notice along with the details of filing and relevant matters may also be downloaded from the GRIDCO's website [www.gridco.co.in](http://www.gridco.co.in) as well as the Commission's website [www.orerc.org](http://www.orerc.org).

3. The Bulk Supply Price is applicable for supply of power to the Distribution Companies of Odisha by GRIDCO Ltd. The proposed Bulk Supply Price application for the financial year 2025-26 contains details regarding energy charges, demand charges, charges for over-drawal of energy, rebate and delayed payment surcharge etc.

4. The rates and charges proposed by GRIDCO are published herewith for the information of the general public.

5. (A) A summary of the proposal will be posted in the Commission's website after 13.01.2025 for general reference.

(B) Interested persons may inspect/peruse the relevant records pertaining to the matters enumerated in Para-1 above and take note thereof at the office mentioned at Para-2 above, during office hours on or before 16.01.2025 by making a plain paper application to the aforesaid authority.

6. The salient features of the Bulk Supply Price application as mentioned in Para-1 above shall be available to the interested persons from the office mentioned at Para-2 above, during office hours on or before 16.01.2025 on payment of the photocopying charges of Rs.50/- only. The said salient features shall include;

(a) Write up of the BSP application.

(b) Proposed Bulk Supply Price schedule.

(c) Bulk Supply Price revision proposal (T-17).

(d) Revenue Requirement (F-4).

7. A full set of the Aggregate Revenue Requirement and Bulk Supply Price application for the financial year 2025-26 can also be obtained from the office of the CGM (PP), GRIDCO Headquarters, Bhubaneswar during the office hours on or before 16.01.2025 on payment of the photocopying charges of Rs.100/- only.

8. Suggestions/objections, if any, together with supporting materials may be filed before the Secretary, Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission, Plot No. 4, Sailashree Vihar, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar-751021 in person or through Registered Post including Courier Services only so as to reach him on or before 16.01.2025 positively. A copy of the said suggestions/objections along with relevant documents shall also be served on the undersigned.

(a) The suggestions/objections should be filed in seven copies and should carry full name and postal address with PIN Code including e-mail ID & contact Telephone Number of the person/organizations/ institutions sending the suggestions/objections and shall be supported by an affidavit.

(b) There shall be clear indication if the suggestions/objections are being filed on behalf of any organization/institution representing any category of consumers. It should also be specifically mentioned, if it is to be heard in person by the Commission.

(c) Suggestions/objections received after the date mentioned above or those which will prove deficient on any or more of the above points may not be admitted for hearing. Only those objections/suggestions supported through affidavit will be taken up for hearing.

9. As directed by the Commission, the date of hearing shall be duly published in the newspapers and also communicated to the parties whose objections are admitted.

Sd/  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
GRIDCO Ltd.

Note: i) The above public notice along with the proposed Bulk Supply Price schedule is also available in GRIDCO's website [www.gridco.co.in](http://www.gridco.co.in) as well as the Commission's website [www.orerc.org](http://www.orerc.org).

ii) In case of any ambiguity in the notice published in Odia language, the notice published in English language may be referred for authenticity.

### Proposed Bulk Supply Price Schedule of GRIDCO for carrying out Bulk Supply Activity for the FY 2025-26

**Bulk Supply Price:** The proposed Bulk Supply Price is applicable for supply of power to four Distribution and Retail Supply Licensees (TPCSDL, TPWDL, TPNODL & TPSDL) in the State. The total charges shall be calculated by summation of following charges stated in Para (A) to (F) below as applicable:

**A. Energy Charge:** GRIDCO proposes to recover its net Revenue Requirement of **Rs.14,820.37 Crore** through Energy Charge/BSP from the DISCOMS towards sale of **38,813.55 MU**. The average BSP is proposed @ 381.84 P/U only for recovery of above proposed net Revenue Requirement.

**B. Demand Charge:** To establish monthly control measure, the Simultaneous Maximum Demand (SMD) at 105% and the existing annual basis may be revised to monthly basis. This adjustment will determine the monthly SMD for DISCOMS towards the recovery of charges for any excess energy drawn during a month beyond the approved monthly SMD. The 105% SMD limit will be applied and charged on a monthly basis on the annual average SMD being within the approved SMD. The Commission may consider to levy demand charges @ Rs.250/kVA/Month from distribution companies on the excess SMD based on the following conditions:

- When the actual SMD of a DISCOM in a month exceeds the permitted monthly SMD (105% of the approved SMD), the respective distribution company will be billed by GRIDCO @ Rs.250/kVA/Month for the excess SMD.

- Such charges shall not be adjusted at the end of the year even if the actual monthly SMD remains within the permitted monthly SMD in any other month(s) of the same financial year.

**C. Over Drawl Charges:** To issue necessary suitable guidelines to the DISCOMS to adhere to the approved drawl quantum of energy and SMD limit fixed and approved by Hon'ble Commission so as to prevent any kind of additional cost burden on the petitioner, GRIDCO.

**D. Rebate:** As proposed below, the following rebate policy for payment of BSP may be approved in the ARR order for FY 2025-26:

- For crediting the BSP bill of the DISCOM to GRIDCO's designated current bank account through Letter of Credit on presentation or through NEFT/RTGS within a period of five (5) working days, a rebate of 1.5% shall be allowed.

- Where the amount is credited on any day after five (5) working days and within a period of twenty-five (25) days of presentation of bill, a rebate of 1.00% shall be allowed.

- The DISCOMs may pay their BSP dues for eligibility of rebate provided total current BSP dues needs to be settled by the DISCOM within 25th day of presentation of BSP bill.

**E. Delayed Payment Surcharges (DPS):** The surcharge for delayed payment of Bulk Power Supply bills i.e., payment after 30 days from the date of submission of bills, may be allowed by the Hon'ble Commission to be levied at 1.50% per month.

**F. Sale of Power through Specialised Tariff Scheme under Tripartite Agreement:** A special scheme was devised by the OERC allowing industry having CGP with CD above 20 MW who are willing to avail power from DISCOMs and operating at load factor more than 80% to draw power through Tri-Partite Agreement (TPA) at a rate approved in the BSP/ RST order for the respective FY and the said scheme has been in place since FY 2021-22.

The renewable energy available with the DISCOMs remaining unutilised, after meeting the requirement of Green Consumer Certification, can be allotted to the CGP based industries, availing power under the TPA scheme, without any premium considering the benefits of the scheme and to make the scheme more attractive. It is prayed before the Hon'ble Commission to allow the surplus renewable energy with one DISCOM to be shared with the other DISCOM having deficit renewable power under intimation to GRIDCO.

CAD-

OIPR-04056/11/0010/2425

<b>Government of Odisha "e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE WORKS DEPARTMENT</b>	
E-mail : ceworlbankprojects@gmail.com	
<b>Bid Identification No. CE-Bridges - 11 / 2024-25</b>	
1. The Chief Engineer (Bridges), Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for construction of Road & Bridge work as detailed below :	
2. Nature of work	: Bridge / Road works
3. No. of work	: 03 Nos.
4. Tender cost	: Rs.10,00,000 (on-line)
5. Class of Contractor	: Special / Super Class Contractor
6. Available of bid document in the website	: From 10.00 AM of 17.12.2024 to 5.00 PM of 08.01.2025
7. Date of opening of Bid	: Dt.09.01.2025 at 11.30 AM
8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website : <a href="https://tenderodisha.gov.in">https://tenderodisha.gov.in</a> . Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.	
Sd/- Chief Engineer, Bridges, Odisha, Bhubaneswar OIPR-34174/11/0024/2425 B-754	

<b>EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY</b>	
<b>TENDER NOTICE</b>	
e-TENDER NOTICE FOR DIFFERENT ELECTRICAL WORKS OPEN TENDER FOR ELECTRICAL (GENERAL)	
DRM (Electrical) ECR/ Dhanbad for and behalf of the President of India invites e-tender for execution of the following works.. E-Tender No. : EL-28/OPEN/2024-25. Sl. No. (1) Name of work with location and completion of work : Provision of roof top solar plant on buildings at different Railway stations over Dhanbad Division (Completion period : 09 Months) (2) Approx. cost of the work : Rs.13,52,05,262.3 (3) Bid Security to be deposited : Rs. 8,26,000/- (4) Bid Evaluation System : Two Packet (5) Date & Time for submission of closing and opening of e-Tender- Closing of Technical Bid : On 02.01.2025 at 11.00 Hrs. Opening of Technical Bid : On 02.01.2025 at 11.30 Hrs. E-Tender No. : EL-29/OPEN/2024-25. Sl. No. (2) Name of work with location and completion of work : Provision of roof top solar plant at various service buildings over Dhanbad Division (Completion period : 09 Months) (2) Approx. cost of the work : Rs. 8,33,45,709.60 (3) Bid Security to be deposited : Rs. 5,66,700/- (4) Bid Evaluation System : Single Packet. (5) Date & Time for submission of closing and opening of e-Tender - Closing of e-Tender : On 02.01.2025 at 11.00 Hrs. Opening of e-Tender : On 02.01.2025 after 11.30 Hrs. (6) Website particulars : Website : <a href="http://www.irps.gov.in">www.irps.gov.in</a> . Manual offers are not allowed against e-tender. Divisional Railway Manager (Electr.), Dhanbad PR/1685/DHN/DHNGS/T/24-25/48	
<b>U.P. Rajkiya Nirman Nigam Ltd.</b> (ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company) Visheshwarya Bhawan, Gorakhpur, Lucknow	
<b>TENDER NOTICE</b>	
On behalf of Managing Director, U.P. Rajkiya Nirman Nigam Ltd., General Manager (Electrical Zone-1) invites online percentage rate bids in two bid system for:- NIT No. 724/UPTENDER/RNN/24 Date-23.10.2024, Re-tender for Renovation and Modernisation electric Works at Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay University Gorakhpur. Last date of submission of offers upto 03:00 P.M. on Date-26.12.2024 all other details on- website: <a href="http://www.tender.up.nic.in">www.tender.up.nic.in</a> and <a href="http://www.upmn.uspsc.gov.in">www.upmn.uspsc.gov.in</a>	



## Welcome spotlight

Supreme Court's renewed emphasis on monitoring Manipur is welcome

**H**earing a case by petitioners aggrieved with the unremitting hostilities in Manipur, the Supreme Court of India has directed the Manipur government to disclose details of destroyed and encroached properties following the ethnic violence a year and a half ago. The Court had also, a few months ago, extended the working tenure of the Justice Gita Mittal-led Committee supervising the investigations related to the violence and also humanitarian assistance and relief in the State. Ideally, these steps should not have been under the aegis of the Court and, instead, under the remit of the executive governments – in this case, the State and the Union Home Ministry. But the violent imagery of sexual violence, the wanton destruction of property, including places of worship, and the continuing hostility between the State's two ethnic groups had forced the Court's hand into foraying into a supervisory role through the Justice Mittal Committee. It has also become an imperative for the higher judiciary, first, because of the remarkable reticence of the Union government in answering questions from civil society and the political Opposition related to the situation in the State, and second, due to the lack of accountability by the misfiring State government that has been ineffective in bridging the ethnic gap. Even political representatives from the same parties have been split on ethnic lines and there seems little convergence in the political demands being made by the opposite camps.

There is also the rise of non-state actors, armed with sophisticated weapons – many of which are looted from the State armories – exercising their illegal writ on the political process. They have also been engaged in violent acts in places such as Jiribam, which did not see any ethnic conflagrations earlier. Manipur's tragic descent into ethnic hostilities receives national attention only when the scale of the violence is horrifying and reaches unconscionable levels. Despite the government averring that it is taking steps to restore the rule of law and addressing the political differences, a return to the status quo ante before May 2023 seems far away. The Court's renewed attention is, therefore, welcome, but shorn of meaningful steps to reverse the spiral of hostilities, this exercise would remain incomplete. The government's attorneys have also sought to retain a veil of secrecy over the committee's functioning and findings using the tired rhetoric of "national security". The Court should not pay heed to this ploy which seems more a case of seeking to divert attention than helping to find meaningful solutions to the conflict. Across the world, conflict resolution has focused on mechanisms such as "truth and reconciliation" exercises which have privileged accountability and normative actions, something that remains absent in Manipur. The Committee's findings may provide the necessary push in the right direction.

## Beyond faith

The interference of the Akal Takht in the affairs of the Akali Dal is unacceptable

**T**he Akal Takht, the highest Sikh temporal seat, has enforced punishment for Shironmani Akali Dal (SAD) leader and former Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal, and colleagues for the alleged mistakes they committed when they were in power from 2007 to 2017. The punishment has been both religious and political in nature, which is a disturbing collapse of the essential wall between the two spheres. Mr. Badal survived an assassination attempt while performing penance at the Golden Temple, the central place of worship for Sikhs, on December 4. The Akal Takht's punishments for religious misconduct are the accepted norm for practising Sikhs and, as such, are within the realm of faith and custom. However, Mr. Badal's actions that drew the scrutiny of the Akal Takht were not strictly about his faith, and at the very least, overlapped with his political role as Deputy Chief Minister and beyond. The religious authority also pushed for his ouster as SAD president, and issued directions to the party to set up a committee to initiate a membership drive and hold elections for office-bearers within six months. The SAD is a registered political party regulated by the law of the country and the Election Commission of India. That it bends to religious wrists is disconcerting for the polity.

India's legal framework and constitutional principles emphasise secularism, which is reflected in how political parties are regulated. The direct intervention of any religious body in political decisions and affairs of political parties could send the wrong signals on adherence to the Constitution's secular principles. The SAD has been going through a challenging phase following its poor electoral run in the 2022 Assembly and 2024 general elections. It has lost its traditional support base and needs to reimagine its politics to stay relevant in Punjab. The SAD's strategy to revive its fortunes is a return to its pre-1996 'panthic' (Sikh) agenda. But this is a tricky route. There are disturbing signs of a potential revival of extremism among Sikhs, which will do no good to the community or the country. There are global actors that want to reignite the embers of the long-dead 'Khalistan' movement. The assassination bid on Mr. Badal yet again revealed the existence of radical elements willing to resort to violence. The SAD has had a moderating effect on the Sikh community, offering its members a platform for their religious and secular concerns. An effective takeover of the party by the Akal Takht is harmful for both, and the larger polity.

# Wounding the spirit of the Constitution of India

**W**e, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic, republic, and to secure to all its citizens justice, liberty, and equality and promote fraternity among all, have been witness to a mockery being made of our constitutional compact, in full public view, at an event organised within the precincts of a constitutional court, the Allahabad High Court.

**Distancing ourselves would be a disservice**  
We have witnessed a sitting judge brazenly challenge the spirit and letter of the Constitution of India, in a speech that is nothing but a dog whistle that guarantees impunity to the mobs that will act on his words and views – and have been acting on words such as his emanating from the seats of power. The venom that Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, judge of the Allahabad High Court, spewed on the precincts of the court, has been widely reported in the media. Members of Parliament in the Opposition have initiated an impeachment motion against the judge, the Supreme Court of India has called for a report, and concerned citizens have written to the Chief Justice of India.

None of this, however, captures the sense of collective shock, dismay and grief that it is even possible for this level of public humiliation, violent, incendiary, genocidal street-talk to emerge from a seat of justice under the Constitution. For that is what it is. And it is really time to seek remedies against an incitement to violence of this nature as a part of our solemn affirmation as citizens who gave to ourselves this Constitution. The 'sludge' that was passed as learned judicial speech is an assault on the citizens of India and not an attack on Muslims or minorities or urban naxals or protesters or just any particular group that has become the latest target of mob violence/public incitement. This is not Justice Yadav's views on Muslims, nor is this a case of just one rotten apple. In distancing ourselves from his comments, we do profound disservice to our autonomous and independent determination of the terms on which the collective 'we' is constituted in this country called India that is Bharat.

Justice Yadav's speech is an act of wounding. It is a speech that inflicts deep harms on all of us: in terms of how we experience the life of the mind, knowledge, convivial living and spiritual



**Kalpana Kannabiran**

a sociologist based in Hyderabad

fulfilment in a shared space, the boundaries of which are not determined by narrow walls and fences of bigotry, and in terms of the injuries that religious bigotry inflicts on shifting targets – on people, our lived lives, our dwellings, our worksites, our neighbourhoods and our places of worship. We have also seen the disastrous effects of soft bigotry as a trigger to mob/state violence, especially in the case of places of worship.

Let us not read down Justice Yadav's speech and allow it to pass as something that is inconsequential. It is not something that can be adequately answered by the High Court that offered the space and the possibility for this – a High Court that did not rise in one voice to condemn and censure a member of the Bench for speaking genocide and atrocity. This is a court that ought to have written to the Chief Justice of India condemning Justice Yadav's speech long before the Supreme Court demanded a report in response to the petitioning and the protests by citizens who took note of the speech and mobilised action given the exceedingly slow wheel of the law.

It calls for a different order of collective judicial accountability. Nor can this act be adequately redressed by subjecting it to the low, anodyne chiding that is whispered by the judicial fraternity alone within court halls that allow restricted entry. We have seen the consequences of dog whistles of this kind over the past decade and the irreparable harms they bring in their wake. We also know that mobilising around the Constitution and its core values together as ordinary citizens, elected citizens and judicial citizens, speaking a shared language across vernaculars and faiths, is the only way of effectively affirming our collective and individual human dignity and the unity and integrity of this country – India that is Bharat.

### A commons

This writer has long argued that the Constitution of India, and our rights and responsibilities as citizens, take shape through a deep connection between the intellectual history of constitutionalism and a grounding of that history in our evolving present-futures. Neither constitutional interpretation nor the delineation of our rights need be shackled by narrow reference to precedents and prior judicial wisdom alone, since the spirit of the Constitution (and indeed the Constitution itself) is not judicial

'We' the people of India must not read down Justice S.K. Yadav's speech and allow it to pass as something that is inconsequential

property, but is a commons. It is urgent that we think of the Constitution-as-commons – that a shared ownership and shared understanding govern its use to further the common good which is set out in the Preamble and in the philosophy of civil disobedience of various hues. Satyagraha is our collective inheritance – Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar, Maulana Azad, Jaipal Munda, Dakshayani Velayudhan, Anis Kidwai, A.K. Gopalan....

It is not just rulers but when people who sit on judicial seats speak the undisguised tongue of rulers and the mobs, disobedience is the constitutional route to recuperation. If norms of 'judicial propriety' have come undone, Justice S.K. Yadav of the Allahabad High Court has scripted its ruination. In the resulting crisis that 'judicial propriety' finds itself in, the only resurrection is through the grammar of civil disobedience. Inquiries, explanations, reports, and measured censure will amount to nothing. Impeachment is a good move, but is only symbolic; it is destined to fail when Justice Yadav's political masters have a brute majority in Parliament, unless of course we have an unprecedented and unlikely action by members of the ruling alliance standing with the Constitution.

### The outlines of a response

It is of course a sad comment that S.K. Yadav, as a judge, has political masters. This alone should trigger some deep reflection and public discussion by citizen judges, since the barrier between judicial and political speech (and space) has been breached. Taking this further, in reinstating the dignity compass and rejecting public humiliation in judicial conduct and speech, we need to think through public and judicial action that will draw on the wellsprings of our inheritance of civil disobedience and *satyagraha*. We must craft tactical resistance by refusing to allow a person who speaks this language to judge our cases or judge with us. The 'We' that opens the Preamble to the Indian Constitution is not a 'we' that is a motley group of people identified randomly (with or without their consent) as Hindu.

The 'We' is a constitutionally constituted people. A non-denominational, plural, dizzyingly heterogeneous, and diverse beyond measure people who believe in the spirit of the Constitution and its core values.

# Trump's return and the South Asia outlook

**I**n January 2025, Donald Trump will be sworn-in as the 47th President of the United States of America. Mr. Trump's re-election, and subsequent return to office, have triggered curiosity and "nervousness" in many countries. However, in South Asia, he is likely to offer a distinct continuity. His ideology and foreign policy goals will continue to push for increased cooperation, collaboration, and consultation with India in South Asia even as his leadership style, decision-making nature, and management of great power politics will provide new opportunities and challenges.

### Factors in U.S. India ties

India and the United States have enjoyed an upward trajectory in their relationship since the beginning of the millennium. Acknowledging its leadership in the region, the U.S. even labelled India as a net-security provider in 2009. The Biden administration (2021-24) has emulated a similar outlook. With China's increasing aggressiveness and assertiveness, India and the U.S. have strengthened their engagements and cooperation in South Asia. Through its Indo-Pacific strategy, the U.S. wants to supplement India's regional leadership to counter China and maintain the values-based order. Its cooperation with India on the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) projects in Nepal and helping Sri Lanka out of its economic crisis, indicate this growing cooperation. Besides, Mr. Biden's passive relations with Pakistan after withdrawing from Afghanistan helped India and the U.S. foster a mutual vision for the region.

The relationship has not been free of dissonance and divergences. New Delhi's primary objective of cooperating with the U.S. is to push back against China and offer alternative development partnerships. However, the Biden administration has selectively scrutinised some



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How South Asian countries will cope with the Trump administration, even as they balance China and India, is yet to be seen

countries on democracy and human rights under the pretext of upholding a values-based order and pushing back China. While India supported the Sheikh Hasina government in Bangladesh and pragmatically engaged with Myanmar's junta, the U.S. pressured both regimes, including imposing targeted sanctions. This pressure nudged them closer to China. Similarly, sanctioning Indian firms for collaborating with Russia and accusations of corruption against the Adani Group has faltered two Indian projects in Sri Lanka, leaving India to face the brunt and consequences of the decisions.

### There could be less irritants

However, Mr. Trump's return is likely to assuage these irritants. As in his first term, Mr. Trump has continued to hint at burden sharing, reciprocity, nationalism, and competing against China in his foreign policy. If Mr. Trump walks the talk, he will prioritise pushing back against China while giving less importance to human rights, democracy, and nation-building. He would also want India to take the lead in the region while the U.S. would supplement the same. This would leave less space for divergences and enhance collaborative policies between both countries. Another potential irritant between both countries was concerning their policies on Afghanistan and Pakistan. During his first term, Mr. Trump punished and cooperated with Pakistan and urged India to take an active role in finding a sustainable solution in Afghanistan. With the U.S.'s withdrawal from Afghanistan and Pakistan's little strategic importance, this issue is of little dissonance now.

During his first term, Mr. Trump promoted capacity building, development assistance, defence agreements, and cooperation with the South Asian countries. This nature of assistance would continue, given his ambitions to counter

China and supplement India. Mr. Trump's little focus on democracy, nation-building, and human rights (like in his first term) would also benefit Sri Lanka, where a new government is still looking for economic assistance and exploring a lasting solution to the Tamil issue.

This approach could benefit Myanmar and the Taliban too, although it is unclear to what extent Washington would like to engage them. However, Bangladesh, which is undergoing a political transition under the new regime, will face challenges and a potential reduction in assistance.

### China and the region

Mr. Trump's confrontational approach to China will also put South Asian countries under more pressure. Given his erratic decisions, Washington will likely be less tolerant of South Asian countries' agency and consistent playing of one great power against the other. Besides, the region's consistent politicisation and ambiguity over investments, defence cooperation, and agreements will likely invite more pressure from the U.S. to seek reciprocity. However, his promise of bringing peace between Russia and Ukraine and resolving the crisis in West Asia (if successful) will help weakened South Asian economies to overcome their food and fuel inflationary pressures.

As the world braces for Trump 2.0, South Asia will not be immune to the broader structural shifts. Yet, the region is likely to see more continuity. With India and the U.S. likely to increase their cooperation in South Asia and bridge their divergences, Mr. Trump's ideology, leadership style, and management of great power politics will have opportunities and challenges for the region. How South Asian countries will cope with the new administration, even as they balance China and India, is yet to be seen.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Court's 'freeze' order

The Supreme Court of India's freeze on suits on claims over places of worship is a source of relief. Most Indians are descendants of migrants from other parts of the world – an inconvenient truth for some political narratives. This is a point that was also highlighted by the former Supreme Court judge, Justice Markandey Katju, in 2011. India's history, marked by waves of migrations and invasions, has seen countless instances of places of worship being destroyed, repurposed, or rebuilt. Similarly, invaders have often displaced earlier settlers. Seeking justice for

every such historical grievance is impractical and endless. Worse, entertaining such cases risks perpetuating communal strife and minority demonisation, which may serve divisive agendas but is certainly not in the national interest. No right-thinking citizen could possibly dispute the wisdom behind the Places of Worship Act, 1991. G.G. Menon, Tripunithura, Ernakulam, Kerala

**Fading cooperation**  
A significant stockpile of chemical weapons is said to have fallen into the hands of rebels in Syria. Israel continues its conflicts in Gaza, Lebanon, and other

areas. Meanwhile, the war between Ukraine and Russia persists. Perhaps war is a reflection of our never-ending desires, which we mistakenly perceive as essential for survival. Mutual cooperation is the key to our survival. Yet, we ignore this fundamental truth. Jitesh Mori, Kutch, Gujarat

**The great win, in Singapore**  
D. Gukesh's achievement is a source of great inspiration. His hard work, perseverance and fighting spirit are what have made him a champion and brought glory to India. Dr. Arunachalam, Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu

The nail-biting win reminds me of the phrase, "Success is when preparation meets opportunities". His hard work, determination and perseverance paid off. R. Srivatsan, Chennai

When Bobby Fischer of the U.S. challenged the Soviet Union's Boris Spassky, the Americans rejoiced in it as a victory of their acumen over Soviet might. Today, as India finds ways to tackle China, Gukesh's victory over Ding Liren mirrors this – that Indians are formidable and a young India cannot be underestimated. Pragya Jain, New Delhi

The games between Gukesh and Ding were gripping. It was Viswanathan Anand who elevated Indian chess. It is now the turn of Gukesh and other youngsters to continue the good work. Prabhakaran Vallath, Vatakara, Kozhikode, Kerala

Gukesh's win was the result of his perseverance and mettle in the mind game. His success will attract many young minds towards the game. India has the foundation now to rule the world of chess. D.V.G. Sankara Rao, Vizianagram, Andhra Pradesh

At just 18, Gukesh has demonstrated that conquering the world is

possible at a young age. Thursday was a historic day for Indian chess. Dattaprasad Shirodkar, Mumbai

Gukesh is to chess what Sachin Tendulkar was to cricket. R. Shankaran, Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

It is a historic moment for India. With many youngsters showing great talent in the game, there is a lot of hope in India. Abdulla Ameen P.M., Adimali, Idukki, Kerala

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

# GROUND ZERO



## Fractured bonds along the border

As attacks on minorities continue in Bangladesh, the movement of people and goods into West Bengal has been impacted. Strained bilateral ties and protests by religious organisations, monks, and Hindutva groups are affecting the tourism and medical tourism industries and cultural sector in the State. **Shrabana Chatterjee** and **Shiv Sahay Singh** report on how the ripples of the crisis are spreading to bordering West Bengal

**A** peek into Bangladesh through the integrated check post in West Bengal at the Petrapole-Benapole border shows that a mural of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, which was visible from the Indian side before August 5, has been whitewashed. The flag of Bangladesh unfurls where the mural of Rahman, the founding leader of Bangladesh who has now fallen out of favour, used to be.

Change is visible not only in Bangladesh, but also in India. It is early December. Trucks pass by as usual and people can be heard bargaining with transporters, but the buzz is drowned by slogans of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and 'Jai Shri Ram'.

Anjuna Begum, a Bangladeshi national, is trying to cross the border. Many of her relatives married Indians and stay in West Bengal, so she often visits India. "I heard rumours that the border may be sealed. But our lives cut across the border," Begum says, as she checks her belongings.

As hundreds of people cross over, thousands of saffron-clad men gather at the spot in Petrapole to protest against the attack on Hindus in Bangladesh and demand the release of Chinmoy Krishna Das, a monk from ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness), who was arrested in Bangladesh in November.

By afternoon, the Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Suvidhu Adhikari, arrives and releases saffron balloons in the air. In his speech, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader threatens to stop all trade between India and Bangladesh through Petrapole if the ISKCON monk is not released.

Just five weeks earlier, Adhikari had visited Petrapole with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who inaugurated a new passenger terminal and Maitri Dwar (friendship gate). Shah had said that trade between India and Bangladesh had increased by 64% between 2016-17 and 2023-24. He had also pointed out that 70% of India's total trade (₹30,000 crore) with Bangladesh through land is via Petrapole and stressed that the new infrastructure will increase the passenger capacity to 25,000 daily.

When Adhikari threatened an economic blockade of Bangladesh at Petrapole, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee urged the Union government to take up the matter of attacks on minorities in Bangladesh with the United Nations, so that peacekeeping missions may be deployed. Ever since the West Bengal unit of the BJP and Hindutva groups began protesting against the treatment of Hindus in Bangladesh, Banerjee has been claiming that this is a bilateral issue that should be dealt with by the Union government.

### Tourists go back home

Among the most popular spots for Bangladeshi tourists in Kolkata is located in the centre of the city, just a couple of kilometres from the State Assembly. Every morning, air-conditioned buses with 'Destination Dhaka' written on them line up at Sudder Street, Free School Street, Colin Street,

About 90% of our hotels are generally occupied by people from Bangladesh; now it is down to 5%

**MONTOSH SARKAR**  
Owner of hotels and travel firms

and Marquis Street in central Kolkata, to take tourists back home across the border.

By the end of November and early December, as reports of violence against minorities in Bangladesh piled up, and protests erupted in West Bengal, frightened Bangladeshi nationals started leaving the area, popularly called 'mini-Bangladesh' by the locals. Many of them were receiving frantic calls from home, given the now-strained ties between India and Bangladesh.

On December 2, in response to a Lok Sabha question by BJP MP Jagannath Sarkar, the Ministry of Tourism informed Parliament that the number of foreign tourists from Bangladesh in 2023 was 21.19 lakh and 12.85 lakh until August 2024. The drop in the number of Bangladeshi tourists was 20.26% in July and 38.08% in August compared to the same month of the last year, the Ministry said.

Montosh Sarkar, who runs several hotels and travel firms on Marquis Street, is worried. "About 90% of our hotels are generally occupied by people from Bangladesh; now it is down to 5%. I have more than 35 employees and their families to feed," he says. Sarkar adds that there are about 150 registered hotels in the area which are dependent on Bangladeshi nationals. The situation is likely to worsen if political tensions do not ease and the Indian government does not grant visas to Bangladeshi nationals, he says.

Md Alauddin, 38, who runs the Marquis Calcutta Guest House on Marquis Street, is keen to show how he has transformed an old dilapidated building into a guest house. "There are 13 rooms and only three are occupied by Bangladeshi nationals now. In August, the business was affected, but now the impact is even worse. The move-

ment of people should not stop," he says.

Alauddin emphasises that hotel operators go the extra mile in ensuring the safety and security of people from neighbouring countries, such as by installing CCTV cameras. He then barges into the room of Sadiquillaq Mirsalim, a resident of Dhaka, without knocking. "He is like my brother and will not mind," Alauddin says, smiling, as he introduces his guest from Dhaka.

Mirsalim is on a medical visa and plans to stay for a month at the guest house. "We don't consider India as a foreign country," he says. "We get everything here. If there is a marriage in the family, people come to shop here."

Asked about the political rhetoric, Mirsalim says, "How can we dislike India? This country helps us in so many ways."

Thousands of shops in the area and in the adjoining British-era New Market complex primarily cater to Bangladeshis. Travel agents, garment sellers, traders dealing in spices, and restaurant owners are all counting their losses and hoping that the situation will change.

### The ripple effect

The impact is not limited to trade in central Kolkata; it cuts across sectors, including health. For decades, patients from Bangladesh have come to hospitals in Kolkata for treatment. Tour operators say the number of visas granted to Bangladeshi citizens by the Indian High Commission has dropped, affecting medical tourism.

The fast-deteriorating ties between the two countries has clearly aggravated the situation. A little-known 130-bed hospital in Kolkata, the J.N. Ray Hospital, said that it would not treat patients from Bangladesh. Though it is well known that a prominent BJP leader in Kolkata owns a stake in the private hospital, the remarks created panic for Bangladeshi patients visiting Kolkata.

However, other private hospitals in Kolkata say they have not changed their policy. "Every patient deserves equal care, regardless of nationality or background," says Rupak Barua, Managing Director and CEO, Woodlands Multispecialty Hospital. He adds that the number of outpatient department patients from Bangladesh has fallen by 60% in the last four months at Woodlands.

Sudipta Mitra, CEO of Peerless Hospitals, says on a regular day, the hospital receives around 150 outpatients from Bangladesh and 25 admissions. "The number of Bangladeshi patients has now reduced due to visa issues, but when they come back, we will treat them just as we treat other patients," he says.

With Bangladeshi patients in Kolkata's private hospitals dropping by 60% to 80%, several hospi-



We don't consider India as a foreign country. We get everything here. If there is a marriage in the family, people come to shop here

**SADIQULLAQ MIRSAIM**  
Resident of Dhaka

tals in Kolkata are rescheduling the dates for surgery and other procedures for patients from the neighbouring country.

### An eye for eye

The political developments have also brought religious organisations, monks, and Hindutva organisations into the limelight.

Journalists would visit the ISKCON Centre, located in the posh neighbourhood of south Kolkata, only during the annual Rath Yatra festival. But since November 25, when a monk of the order was arrested in Bangladesh, Radharaman Das, the vice president of the Kolkata Centre, has been giving interviews regularly to the media.

Seated in his office on the second floor, Das explains before TV cameras why he has advised ISKCON monks in Bangladesh not to wear saffron or tilaks. "We have hundreds of centres and thousands of monks in Bangladesh. ISKCON has been a target ever since the Sheikh Hasina regime fell," he says. But Das admits that he is receiving second-hand information and that telephone networks don't work most of the time in Bangladesh.

Monks from other orders, and Hindutva organisations, have also been organising protests across West Bengal. Kartik Maharaj, of the Bharat Sevashram order from Beldanga, has been seen with Adhikari at several protests. The Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha, led by Chandrachud Goswami, has been going to hotels and shops in Kolkata asking them to boycott products and people from Bangladesh. Three or four people of the group burned products from Bangladesh, especially potato chips, which are quite the rage in markets in Kolkata.

The Bangladesh Deputy High Commission has become a popular protest spot. A mural of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the outer wall of the Deputy High Commission has been covered by cloth. Security has been stepped up at the venue after protests by Hindutva groups on November 28 turned violent – protesters broke barricades and burnt an effigy of Mohammad Yunus, the Chief Advisor to the Government of Bangladesh.

By the second week of December, the Trinamool leadership started reacting to reports. Every remark made by politicians in Bangladesh found a reaction from politicians in West Bengal. Both Banerjee and Adhikari demanded that the Indian government intervene in Bangladesh even as India's Foreign Secretary, Vikram Misri, visited the country on December 9 for the first time after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina regime.

Days after Bangladesh National Party leader Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said in Dhaka that if India claims Chittagong, Bangladesh will occupy Bengal, Bihar, and Odisha, Banerjee said, "You will take all this and we will sit and eat lollipops?" When Rizvi burnt sarees from India in Bangladesh, Hindutva organisations set Dhakai sarees from Bangladesh on fire in Kolkata and Durgapur.

### Life comes to a halt

Along the border with Bangladesh, the Border Security Force has been pushed to the zero line in at least three battalions of Murshidabad. Of the 4,096 kilometre-long border with Bangladesh, West Bengal shares 2,216 km.

The heightened activity at the border, the war of words, threats of economic blockade, and the burning of imported goods makes Pabitra Sarkar, 87, sad. "Both Bengals (West Bengal and Bangladesh) were inheritors of the composite culture legacy of undivided Bengal. Everything about our culture – our language and all the songs of Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam – are part of our shared history," says the former Vice Chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University.

The academic, who was born in Dhaka, says he was in that city when the Sheikh Hasina regime fell in August this year. "My friends there kept me protected in August 2024. I have been to Bangladesh 100-150 times. Bangladeshis are such welcoming people," he says. Sarkar is concerned that extremists are gaining ground in Bangladesh.

Academics, artists, publishers, and filmmakers are also upset. Bangladeshi publishers have not confirmed whether they will come to the Kolkata International Book Fair in January 2025. There are hardly any Bangladeshi filmmakers participating at the Kolkata International Film Festival. Clubs at Kolkata Maidan, such as the East Bengal club, have issued statements against the "systemic targeting of minorities" in Bangladesh. Many supporters of the East Bengal Club trace their ancestry to the country.

While the strain in relations peaked in the last week of November, disruptions in the movement of people and goods began in July, when the bus and railway services were suspended. The two trains running between West Bengal and Bangladesh were halted on July 19. The trains are run by the Sealdah Division of the Eastern Railway.

An official of the Railway Division says, "The names of the two trains – Bandhan Express and Maitree Express – are synonyms of our bonds and friendship ['bandhan' means bond and 'Maitree' means friendship], whereas the train between India and Pakistan was called the Samjhauta Express ['samjhauta' means compromise]."

Just outside the Sealdah Railway Station, one of the largest in the State, stands a 20-foot bust of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman alongside one of Mahatma Gandhi. This is probably the only sculpture of his which has not been covered, whitewashed, or removed. The marble busts were erected only a year ago by a local Trinamool MLA, to celebrate the ties between the two countries and particularly between Bangladesh and West Bengal.

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## From Page One

## Cong. chose power over Constitution: Rajnath

Mr. Singh said that some leaders who helped frame the Constitution have been deliberately ignored. He claimed that there were many who were not part of the Constituent Assembly but who contributed to making the Constitution, and mentioned Veer Savarkar, Bhagat Singh, Madan Mohan Malviya and Lala Lajpat Rai.

He said that many "many big leaders" had, in 1944, come out with 'The Constitution of Hindustan Free State' to share their ideas for the Constitution that they felt India should adopt after its independence. The Defence Minister said that they had called for ensuring citizens' religious freedom and said that the State must be secular. The Congress, however, had dubbed them as communal.

The senior BJP leader also recalled a series of instances from the past, when Congress leaders – including Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, and Manmohan Singh – had made several amendments to the Constitution.

Mr. Singh added that while many talk about the founding fathers of the Constitution, not much is spoken about the founding mothers, and mentioned leaders like Sucheta Kriplani, Hansa Mehta, and Kamla Chaudhary while noting that the NDA government had passed the law to reserve legislative seats to politically empower women.

He also criticised the Congress for overturning a Supreme Court judgment to deny alimony to a divorced Muslim woman as "appeasement politics".

Lashing out at the Congress while participating in the debate, Panchayati Raj Minister and Janata Dal (United) leader Rajiv Ranjan Lalani Singh recounted how many times previous Congress governments at the Centre had misused Article 356 to topple Opposition governments in the States.

The JD(U) leader asserted that it is the fear of the Constitution that had prompted Congress governments to invoke Article 356 under the cover of darkness. "Emergency was also imposed at midnight," he said.

As long as Prime Minister Narendra Modi is there, nobody can tamper with the Constitution, the Panchayati Raj Minister said. "Narendra Modi ji is the protector of the Constitution... This is Modi's guarantee," he said.

'Ambedkar wanted UCC'

BJP MP Bhartruhari Mahtab blamed India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru for mishandling Jammu and Kashmir and claimed that B.R. Ambedkar had never supported Article 370 of the Constitution, which conferred a special status on J&K. "It's God's grace and Lord Jagannath's blessings that Prime Minister Modi abrogated it," he said.

Another BJP MP, Jagdambika Pal, recalled how Ambedkar had advocated for a uniform civil code (UCC). If the country moves towards a UCC, it will be a fitting tribute, he said.

## Painting on 1971 surrender replaced in Army lounge

"We are hitting the 'absolute pits' and sadly my NDA course-mates are in the frame," said a veteran on X referring to the iconic picture.

The iconic picture from 1971 shows Lt. Gen. Niazi of Pakistani Army signing the instrument of surrender in East Pakistan in front of Indian Army's Lt. Gen. Aurora that saw the surrender of 90,000 Pakistani soldiers and the birth of Bangladesh.

"One wonders what is the aim behind removal of the iconic 1971 Dacca surrender photo," Air Vice Marshal Manmohan Singh (retd.) said on X. "Dignitaries & military heads of other countries meet the Army Chief here & see the symbol of the GREATEST EVENT IN INDIA's & Indian Army's history. Now, this ham-handed effort - at what?" he observed.

It is not clear where the old painting was shifted to.

## R.G. Kar: ex-principal, ex-police officer get bail

The doctors body, which had hit the streets, observed cease work and fast unto death over the rape and murder of the doctors, indicated that they will resume protests over the grant of bail to the accused. The CPI(M) and Congress leadership in the State alleged of a "setting between" the Trinamool Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

With the grant of bail, former Tala police station official Abhijit Mondal was released from prison later in the evening. Mr. Ghosh, however, will remain behind bars as he has been arrested in another case by the CBI involving financial irregularities at R.G. Kar MCH. The CBI had filed a charge sheet against prime accused in the rape and murder case Sanjay Roy on October 7 and trial in the case had started with the statement of witnesses being recorded. Roy, a civic police volunteer, was arrested by Kolkata Police and the CBI has charged him with rape and murder.

On December 10, the CBI had told the Supreme Court that it will file a supplementary charge sheet in the case.

The development also comes after Supreme Court advocate Vrinda Grover on December 11 said that she will no longer represent the family of the R.G. Kar victim. Ms. Grover and her chamber have been providing legal assistance to the victim's family not only at the Supreme Court but also at the Calcutta High Court and Sealdah court pro bono for over three months since September this year.

## PM should know that Constitution is not Sangh's rulebook, says Priyanka

Wayanad MP accuses BJP of trying to change the Constitution, transferring national resources to a business group, committing atrocities on women, and fuelling violence in Sambhal and Manipur; Akhilesh Yadav calls for caste census

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not understood that it is *Bharat ka Samvidhan* [Constitution of India] not *Sangh ka Vidhan* [Sangh's rulebook], Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said in her debut speech in the Lok Sabha on Friday.



**Maiden speech:** Priyanka Gandhi Vadra addresses the Lok Sabha during the Winter session of Parliament in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

As the first MP from the Opposition benches to speak after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh opened the debate on the "glorious journey of 75 years of the Constitution of India," Ms. Vadra made some sharp political points, was combative but didn't raise her voice as she put forth the major planks of the Opposition.

Alleged attempts to change the Constitution by the BJP, "handing over national resources" to the one particular business group, atrocities on women, the violence in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal and Manipur and the demand for a nationwide caste census were some of the major points in her maiden speech.

The Prime Minister was not present in the House.

In her 32-minute speech, the newly elected member from Wayanad (Kerala) claimed that the

ruling party would have started changing the Constitution, had it not been restrained by the present Lok Sabha mandate of 240 members. She also dared the BJP to hold elections by using the ballot paper, saying it will expose the reality.

**'Protective shield'**

Describing the Constitution as a *suraksha kavach* [protective shield] of justice, unity and freedom of expression, Ms. Vadra alleged that the BJP-led government has made every effort to break this shield in the past 10 years. She accused the BJP of following "divisive politics" and sowing the seeds of "suspicion and hatred".

"The *suraksha kavach* of unity is being broken. The Prime Minister places the Constitution on his fo-

rehead but when there are cries for justice from Sambhal, Hathras and Manipur, there is not a wrinkle on his forehead," the Wayanad MP said. "It seems Prime Minister Modi hasn't understood that *Bharat ka Samvidhan* is not *Sangh ka Vidhan*," she said.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, her mother and Congress Parliamentary Party chief Sonia Gandhi, husband Robert Vadra and son Raghav watched the proceedings from the visitors' gallery.

Her brother and Opposition leader in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi described her speech as "better than mine".

**'Scared to speak truth'**

Ms. Vadra claimed that an atmosphere of fear had enveloped the country but now this fear had "en-

gulfed the ruling party too", as it seeks to "run away" from answering questions in Parliament.

"Today, people are intimidated into submission and are scared of speaking the truth. Be it a journalist or an Opposition leader or a university professor, everyone's mouth is shut. Opposition leaders are investigated by the ED, CBI, IT and are jailed," she said.

Taking on the ruling party for constantly blaming her great grandfather and India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Ms. Vadra said the BJP should tell the country what they were doing now.

"What is your responsibility? Or does all the responsibility lie with Jawaharlal Nehru ji?" she asked, adding, "His name can be erased from the books, but his role in the Independence struggle and nation-building can never be erased from this country".

Responding to Mr. Singh's criticism on the 1975 Emergency, imposed by her grandmother and former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, she said, "My colleague in the ruling party recounted the past, this happened, that happened... what happened in 1975. You also learn from it, you also apologise for your mistakes."

Home Minister Amit

Shah was present in the House along with other senior leaders of the BJP. In her speech, Ms. Vadra pointed to Mr. Modi's absence from the House. "I am new to this House and I have been coming here only for the past 15 days but I could spot *Pradhan Mantri ji* only for 10 minutes," she said.

**SP's push**

Former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, who spoke after her, said that "whenever we get the opportunity, we will conduct a caste census". "It will not deepen caste divisions but reduce them, ensuring rights and equality for those who have been deprived for long. Reservation is the most significant tool for social justice, but it has been diluted by outsourcing and contract-based jobs," he said.

He said the government was trying to end reservation through outsourcing and contractual jobs.

Mr. Yadav claimed efforts were under way to reduce the country's minorities, particularly Muslims, to "second-grade" citizens. "Atrocities against them are increasing daily. Properties are being looted, homes demolished, and places of worship seized with administrative help."



**Trinamool MP's remark on judge's death sparks uproar in LS**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Friday witnessed two adjournments after Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju warned Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra for her remarks about the death of a judge, the circumstances of whose death were examined and settled by the Supreme Court.

Ms. Moitra made a remark on Judge B.H. Loya's death while targeting the BJP for alleged attempts to silence institutions and Opposition leaders critical of the government.

Judge Loya's death in 2014 had created a major row following a media report alleging foul play as he was hearing a politically sensitive case.

Mr. Rijiju said that the Judge Loya case was settled by the Supreme Court. "We will take appropriate parliamentary action. You cannot escape. You are setting a very wrong precedent," he said.

BJP member Nishikant Dubey had first raised the issue after Ms. Moitra finished her speech and soon after Mr. Rijiju intervened.

**War of words**

This agitated the Opposition MPs, who trooped into the Well of the House and demanded an apology. In a post on X, reacting to Mr. Rijiju, Ms. Moitra said all those reporting that "Parliament Affairs Minister warned me – it is he who will face action for threatening me! His remarks to be deleted – not mine!"

When the House reconvened after two adjournments, senior Opposition members including Saugata Roy of the Trinamool Congress and K.C. Venugopal of the Congress, protested against Mr. Rijiju's choice of words, emphasising that it was Speaker Om Birla who is the custodian of Lok Sabha.



**Jagdeep Dhankhar**

talks were held between the two sides.

The proceedings of the day began on a confrontational note with BJP MP Radha Mohan Das Agrawal offering scathing criticism of the Opposition. Raising a point of order, Mr. Agrawal said that the impeachment notice was an insult to the nation and to farmers. He noted that the rules specify that such a notice is to be taken up after 14 days but the Congress leaders have already gone to the press with their allegations.

To this, a visibly angry Mr. Kharge retorted, "How can I respect you? You are insulting me." As he was speaking, the Chairman adjourned the proceedings till Monday. According to sources, Mr. Kharge ignored the invite and no

one showed weakness, I will die for the country, perish for the country." He urged Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge to come for a dialogue with an open mind.

Inviting the ruling and Opposition parties for talks to break the ongoing deadlock in the Upper House, Mr. Dhankhar underlined,

"I am a farmer's son, I will



**Mohan Yadav**

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Projects, trade helped sustain ties with our neighbours: Jaishankar

**Kalol Bhattacharjee**  
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Friday defended the neighbourhood policy of the Indian government and said it was necessary to avoid "punch scoring" in relations with neighbours.

Mr. Jaishankar said the government had promoted development projects and trade that have helped sustain ties with neighbours.

His remarks came in response to a question from the Congress's Chandigarh MP, Manish Tewari, who said the current status of India's relationship with the Maldives, Bangladesh, and Nepal presented a challenging scenario.

"Our neighbours also have their politics. There are ups and downs in their countries, it will have implication for us. It is important that we are mature and we do not get into punch scoring," the Minister said.

Mr. Jaishankar said that as an MP, Mr. Tewari enjoyed privileges while arguing his point, but he would prefer a non-partisan approach towards foreign policy.

"Sir, I am very glad, that the honourable member referred to timing of visits (of leaders of the neighbouring countries). Before PM Narendra Modi went to Nepal, for 17 years there was no visits to Nepal. Does that mean nobody in India cared for Nepal... Visits are important, I accept it. Visits are also subject of timing, of convenience of agenda," he said.

# Sri Lankan President to begin his three-day India visit tomorrow

Dissanayake's visit to India will focus on strengthening bilateral ties, and addressing key issues; it will also mark a shift in India-Sri Lanka relations

**Meera Srinivasan**  
COLOMBO

**S**ri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake will visit India from December 15 to 17, the Foreign Ministries of the two countries said on Friday, announcing his first state visit abroad since he won the Presidency in September and his party swept the polls in the November general elections.

During his visit to New Delhi, Mr. Dissanayake will meet President Droupadi Murmu and hold bilateral discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and "and other Indian dignitaries on a range of issues of mutual interest", Sri Lanka's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on Friday.

President Dissanayake is also scheduled to participate in a business event in New Delhi aimed at "promoting investment and commercial linkages between India and Sri Lanka" and later, travel to Bodh Gaya, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs.

This visit assumes significance in the wake of his party's resounding victory in the recent parliamentary election and amid his government's effort to rebuild the country's crisis-hit economy.

In the meetings scheduled, bilateral development projects and potential Indian investments are



**Future focus:** President Anura Kumara Dissanayake with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in Colombo on October 4. AP

likely to be discussed, in addition to debt treatment as part of Sri Lanka's current IMF programme. India's proposals for greater connectivity with Sri Lanka are expected to be reviewed. Energy sector cooperation and the persisting fisheries conflict in the Palk Strait are also on the agenda, official sources said.

The future of a controversial Adani power project in Sri Lanka will also likely be discussed. Following the recent indictment of the Adani Group by a U.S. court, the Dissanayake administration said it is reviewing the wind power project that the former government had approved for execution in northern Sri Lanka.

While on his campaign trail earlier, Mr. Dissanayake had pledged to cancel the "corrupt deal", challenging the pricing formula in the power purchasing agreement

reached without a competitive bid.

Mr. Dissanayake's visit turns a page in the complex story of India-Sri Lanka ties, especially for the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP or People's Liberation Front) that leads the ruling National People's Power alliance.

In the 1980s, the JVP militantly opposed "Indian hegemony" and the India-brokered Accord. Even as the party with Marxist-Leninist roots refashioned itself, Mr. Dissanayake has repeatedly sought to allay fears of "anti-Indian" sentiments.

"The world has changed, our party has also changed," he told *The Hindu* in a 2023 interview. Further, Mr. Dissanayake's election manifesto stated: "We shall not allow any country or institution to use Sri Lanka's land, sea and air spaces to threaten or risk the national security of any country in the region including India."

The judges wondered.

# Subbulakshmi's name can be used for prize to be given to T.M. Krishna: HC

**Mohamed Imranullah S.**  
CHENNAI

A Division Bench of the Madras High Court on Friday set aside an interim injunction granted by a single judge on November 19 restraining the Music Academy and *The Hindu* from giving away a cash prize of one lakh under the title 'Sangita Kalanidhi M.S. Subbulakshmi Award' to Carnatic singer T.M. Krishna.

The High Court's second Division Bench, comprising Justices S.S. Sundar and P. Dhanabal, allowed an appeal filed by *The Hindu* challenging the single judge's restraint order against the use of the name of M.S. Subbulakshmi for the cash prize being given, since 2005, to the Sangita Kalanidhi awardees selected by the Music Academy.

"Conferment of an award by an organization or a trust in memory of a legend to an individual is a recognition of his/her achievement and is not prohibited in law.... Conferment of award to a person by defendants 1 to 3 (Music Academy and *The Hindu*) in the suit is a right which is not forbidden or prohibited in law," the Bench wrote.

"Even assuming, though we are not agreeing, that the desire of M.S. Subbulakshmi was that no award shall be conferred on anyone in her name, that could have been expressed in simple language. An interpretation contrary to the plain language of the instrument is not permissible in law," the Division Bench said.

Authoring the verdict, Justice Sundar also said, a careful reading of the contents of the will only leads



**High notes:** Carnatic singer T.M. Krishna performing at an event to mark M.S. Subbulakshmi's birth centenary in 2016.

Except some personal reasons against fourth defendant (Mr. Krishna), the plaintiff has no *bona fide* cause in this litigation  
**MADRAS HC**

junction until the disposal of the suit.

The Bench also said: "The testatrix has created a legacy. Every family member enjoys certain respect in the society for being her relative. In such circumstances, it is difficult to accept that everyone in the family of late Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi and many institutions, including the Asian College of Journalism, had auditoriums too named after her, the judges questioned the reason for Mr. Shrinivasan not having challenged any of those awards."

"Every award in the name of M.S. Subbulakshmi was only to remember the great icon of Carnatic music... Except some personal reasons against fourth defendant (Mr. Krishna), the plaintiff has no *bona fide* cause in this litigation," the Bench concluded.

It, however, refused to entertain Music Academy's plea to reject the plaint in toto and said, the plaintiff could establish his case by conducting a full-fledged trial in the civil suit pending before the single judge but held that he had not made out a *prima facie* case for grant of interim in-

# L-G bypasses consultation with Omar, extends terms of two V-Cs

**Peerzada Ashiq**  
SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday extended the terms of two Vice-Chancellors (V-Cs) of two varsities in the Union Territory (UT) as their Chancellor. However, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who is Pro-Chancellor of these varsities, was reportedly "bypassed" while these decisions were made.

In an order, Mr. Sinha extended the tenure of the V-C of Sher-I-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology-Kashmir, Prof. Nazir Ganai, for a period of two years.

In another order, L-G Sinha approved extension of the term of Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice-Chancellor of Jammu University (JU), by three years.

# Funds granted by Union govt. towards disaster relief not enough: Stalin

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI



Chief Minister M.K. Stalin chairing a meeting in Chennai on Friday.

situation in those districts with the respective Collectors.

"Senior IAS officers have been deputed there, and relief operations are on. There has been no report on any major impact. This government is prepared to manage the situation," Mr. Stalin said.

Minister K.K.S.S.R. Ramachandran was coordinating relief operations in Tenkasi district, while Minister K.N. Nehru was doing the same in Tirunelveli

district, he said.

Elaborating on the steps being taken while releasing water from dams, Mr. Stalin said warnings were being issued well in advance, and people had been shifted to camps for their safety.

**Damage assessment**

To a query whether the assessment of rain damage had been completed for distribution of relief, Mr. Stalin said, "The distribution of relief is on. It is almost complete."

# Ex-NCW chief Rekha Sharma elected to RS

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHANDIGARH

Former National Commission for Women (NCW) chairperson and BJP leader Rekha Sharma was declared elected unopposed in the Raja Sabha bypoll from Haryana after the deadline for withdrawal of

nomination ended on Friday.

Ms. Sharma received her certificate from the Returning Officer after being declared elected unopposed. The seat fell vacant when the BJP's Krishan Lal Panwar quit his seat following his election as an MLA in the State Assembly polls.

"Promoting Entrepreneurship, Employment & Skillings – Leveraging the Demographic Dividend". A release from the Prime Minister's Office said the meeting will be another key step towards further boosting the partnership between the Centre and the State governments.

# Court dismisses plea seeking FIR against Kharge for remarks on PM

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court dismissed a plea filed by a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) member to direct the police to register a first information report (FIR) against Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge. The complaint sought action against Mr. Kharge over comments he had made

against Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a rally in Karnataka in April last year.

However, on December 9, judicial magistrate Chaitanya Singh took cognizance of the complaint by advocate Ravinder Gupta and recorded his statement.

The court posted the matter for pre-summoning of evidence on March 27, 2025.

tance of police is required to gather the same. The facts of the case are not such that would warrant a detailed and complex investigation to be carried out by the state agency," the court said while dismissing the plea to lodge an FIR against Mr. Kharge.

The court posted the matter for pre-summoning of evidence on March 27, 2025.

**Jalgaon City Municipal Corporation, Jalgaon Sanitation Department**  
**E-Tender Notice No.05/2024-25**  
Reference Number :- Outward No.JCMC/Sanitation/878/2024-2025 Date, 12/12/2024  
**Inviting E-tender From Registered Institute or Company/Agency for Work of 1. House to House Collection of Municipal Solid Waste (Dry & Wet Separately) up to Processing Plant Via Secondary Transfer Collection Centre. 2. Supply of 500 Labors for Daily Road Sweeping, Drain Cleaning etc. for 5 years Period at Jalgaon City Municipal Corporation Jalgaon Area. All Information and Details of Tender, Like Tender Form Fee, Tender Cost, EMD, Time Schedule etc available on website [www.mahaetenders.gov.in](http://www.mahaetenders.gov.in)**  
**Sd/- Commissioner**  
**Jalgaon City Municipal Corporation, Jalgaon**

# PM to chair conference of Chief Secretaries

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair the fourth National Conference of Chief Secretaries from Saturday.

Organised by the NITI Aayog, the theme of the three-day conference is

"Promoting Entrepreneurship, Employment & Skillings – Leveraging the Demographic Dividend". A release from the Prime Minister's Office said the meeting will be another key step towards further boosting the partnership between the Centre and the State governments.



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Invites offers from interested parties for purchase of Mild Steel scrap items, for the two month period JAN - FEB 2025. Details of the items available for disposal and tender terms and conditions can be had from the Company on written request.

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**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER WATER RESOURCES CIRCLE PALI**  
**Notice Inviting Bid (NIB No: SE/WRD/PALI/03/2024-25)**  
Notice inviting Bid for 04 works for Rs. 1492.29 Lacs in the State of Rajasthan India invited from interested bidders. Date of sale of Bid 17.12.2024 to 16.01.2025 up to 16:00 hours. Date of receiving of Bid 16.01.2025 up to 18:00 hours and Bid will be opened on 17.01.2025 at 15:00 hours. Other particulars of the Bid may be visited on the <http://sppp.raj.nic.in> and <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> of the state; and Water Resources department Rajasthan website.  
UBN: WRD2425WSOB01344  
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**THE NATIONAL SMALL INDUSTRIES CORPORATION**  
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**RFPs for Selection of Vendors for Supply of Tool Kits for Potter, Barber, Cobbler, Goldsmith & Locksmith trades under PM Vishwakarma Scheme**  
NSIC invites online bids on GeM Portal against the RFPs for 5 trades named above under PM Vishwakarma Scheme published on GeM on 05.12.2024. The details of RFPs are available under the web link [gem.gov.in](http://gem.gov.in) and <https://nsic.co.in/Tenders/Index> may be downloaded from GeM portal. GeM Bid no. are GEM/2024/B/5664028, GEM/2024/B/5665947, GEM/2024/B/5666394, GEM/2024/B/5666364, GEM/2024/B/5666444 Last date & time for submission of bids is 26.12.2024. Pre-Bid Meeting Details may be seen under corrigendum uploaded on portal. Any further announcement/ corrigendum regarding RFP will be made available on above two web links.

## IN BRIEF



## SC urges Centre, Punjab to reach out to farmer leader

The Supreme Court on Friday urged the Punjab government and the Centre to provide medical help to Punjab farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewala, who is on a fast-unto-death protest at Khanauri border for over 17 days, and convince him to end his agitation for his life's sake. "You both look into this issue immediately and ensure that it is resolved," a Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan addressed Punjab Advocate-General Gurminder Singh and Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta. The court suggested that Mr. Dallewala may be shifted to PGI Chandigarh or nearby Patiala city for urgent medical intervention, if the need arose.

## Delhi HC rejects petition by Bahadur Shah Zafar's 'heir'

The Delhi High Court on Friday rejected the plea by Sultana Begum, widow of late Mirza Mohammed Bedar Bakht, the great-grandson of Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar, seeking possession of the Red Fort on account of being the legal 'heir'. A Bench of Acting Chief Justice Vibhu Bakshu and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela dismissed Ms. Begum's appeal against the December 2021 decision of a single judge of the court, noting the challenge was filed after a delay of over two-and-a-half years, which could not be condoned. Ms. Begum said she could not file the appeal owing to her poor health and the death of her daughter.

## 30 people drowned per hour in 2021, says WHO

Zubeda Hamid  
GENEVA

The World Health Organization (WHO) published its first-ever global status report on drowning prevention on Friday.

The report, released at an event in Geneva, reveals that three lakh people died by drowning in 2021 around the world (an estimated 30 every hour).

Close to 92% of such deaths took place in low- and middle-income countries, disproportionately affecting the poor and marginalised. The WHO's South-East Asia Region (which includes India) saw 83,000 deaths, or 28% of the global burden.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, via video conference, said the report provided a snapshot of the global burden of drowning. Countries could use the report to raise awareness, guide implementation strategies and track progress on drowning pre-



**Lurking danger:** Unmindful of the risk and warning board, people playing in the sea in Visakhapatnam. K.R. DEEPAK

vention, he said.

Compiled with the participation of 139 countries - including India - the report found that while drowning deaths declined 38% since 2000, the progress had been uneven and the pace slow. The WHO's European Region, for instance, saw a 68% drop, while the South-East Asia Region saw a decline of 48%.

## Children at risk

Primarily at risk are children and young people. Children aged under five

accounted for the single largest share of drowning deaths (24%), with a further 19% of deaths among children aged five to 14, and 14% among young people aged 15 to 29.

The report notes that globally, drowning is the fourth leading cause of death for children in the age group of one-four and the third leading cause of death for children aged five to 14.

Even these staggering numbers however, are an underestimate, notes Caro-

## Training crucial

The report also states that while encouragingly, the WHO's evidence-based drowning prevention interventions are being implemented in many countries, the implementation is to varying degrees. For instance, only 33% of countries offer national programmes to train bystanders in safe rescue and resuscitation, and just 22% integrate swimming and water safety training into their school curriculum. Quality data collec-

tion also remains a challenge.

More than 7.2 million people, mainly children, could die due to this "silent killer" by the year 2050 if current trends continue. Yet almost all drowning deaths are preventable, the report states, highlighting that political will and investment in drowning prevention are critical to save lives. Providing day care for pre-school children and teaching school students basic swimming skills could help protect millions of lives, it says.

Developed in response to a member-state request made through a World Health Assembly Resolution 76.18 (2023) and funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the report underscores that drowning is a complex health issue that requires the involvement of multiple sectors to address the broad range of risk factors. Legislation, even when it exists, is often out of step with the scale of the challenge, it says.

"We thought the CBI would speed up the investigation and bring those responsible to justice. But now, with the accused being granted bail, it feels like the system is failing us," said the mother of the victim whose body was found in the hospital on August 9.

A court in Kolkata's Sealdah granted bail to R.G. Kar

## System failing us: kin of R.G. Kar victim on suspects getting bail

Press Trust of India  
KOLKATA

The parents of the doctor who was raped and murdered at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital said on Friday that they were heartbroken with the two key suspects in the case getting bail and that it felt like the "system" was failing them.

They also expressed disappointment with the probe conducted by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

"We thought the CBI would speed up the investigation and bring those responsible to justice. But now, with the accused being granted bail, it feels like the system is failing us," said the mother of the victim whose body was found in the hospital on August 9.

A court in Kolkata's Sealdah granted bail to R.G. Kar

## Maha Kumbh 2025 is 'maha yagya of unity', says PM in Prayagraj

The Hindu Bureau  
LUCKNOW

The organisation of Maha Kumbh 2025 in Prayagraj will take India's spiritual and cultural identity to new horizons, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday, describing the event as a "maha yagya of unity".



Modi inaugurated and launched 167 development projects worth about ₹5,500 crore in Prayagraj, ahead of the mega event. He highlighted the event's role in promoting social cohesion as well as the economic empowerment of communities, noting that differences among castes and sects disappear during the Maha Kumbh.

"If I had to describe the Maha Kumbh in one line, I would say that it's a maha yagya of unity which will be discussed around the world. It will be one of the largest gatherings in the world where millions of devotees are welcomed daily, with a new chapter of history being written on the land of Prayagraj," Mr. Modi said.

He hailed the contribution of sanitation workers, noting that they play a pivotal role in conducting such a large event. "More than 15,000 sanitation

workers will ensure cleanliness during the 2025 Kumbh," he said, recalling his personal experience of washing the feet of sanitation workers in 2019.

**Chatbot launched**

Mr. Modi launched the multilingual SahAl'yak' Chatbot, an artificial intelligence-based platform to streamline communication for devotees attending the Maha Kumbh, in 11 Indian languages. The Prime Minister alleged that previous governments had neglected the Kumbh, forcing devotees to suffer difficulties.

"The way different government departments are engaged in the preparations for Maha Kumbh is commendable. Special focus has been given on connectivity here so that there is no problem in reaching Kumbh from any corner of the country or the world," the PM added.

## SPG moves SC against order on vehicle registration

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Special Protection Group (SPG), an elite force which protects the Prime Minister, approached the Supreme Court on Friday against a National Green Tribunal (NGT) order refusing to extend the period of registration of three specialised armoured vehicles by another five years.

The NGT had refused to grant relief to the SPG in its March 22 order, noting that there was a prohibition on plying diesel vehicles that had completed 10 years.

The CBI, which was handed the investigation into the case by the Calcutta High Court, failed to file a chargesheet against the accused within the mandatory 90-day period, leading to their release on bail.

## FAITH

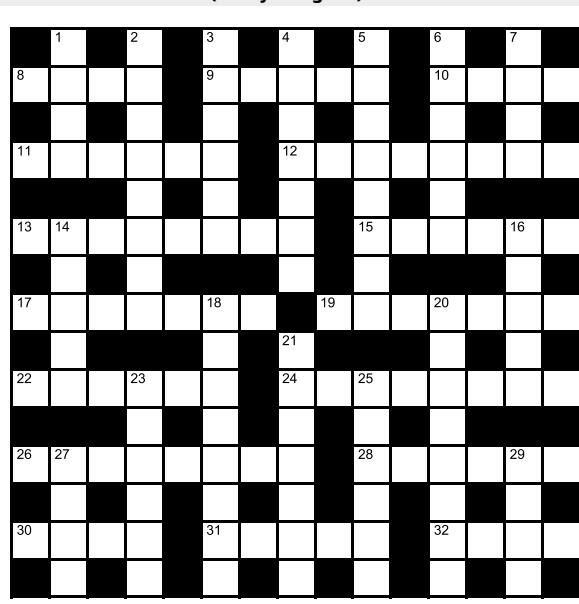
## Pursue goals like Hanuman

Overcoming sensory pleasures and achieving mastery over one's mind are the success formulae for completing set tasks and reaching God. Hanuman shows one the way to control one's wayward mind, meet goals and find a place close to God, said Damal S. Ramakrishnan in a discourse.

When tasked with flying south in search of Sita abducted by Ravana, Hanuman resolved to accomplish his task like Rama's arrow, that great weapon which does not halt anywhere until it reaches its target.

To this end, Hanuman, endowed with both formidable strength and a powerful mind, prepared himself physically. Bringing his palms together in obeisance to the Sun God and the Wind God, he grew rapidly in size, on top of a mountain, watched in astonishment by the other apes. He then pressed his hands and feet on the ground, in readiness for take-off. As he rose into the sky, many trees shot up into the sky, filled with other apes, all of whom followed him for a while, like hosts seeing off a guest, as ordained in the sastras.

As Hanuman progressed, the sea decided to honour Hanuman, as he was on an errand for Rama of Ishvaku clan, the sea's patron. The Sea God commanded Mainaka, the great underwater mountain, to rise up and offer a place of rest for Hanuman. The great ape, however, mistook Mainaka for a hindrance sent by Ravana and slapped him aside. When Mainaka explained its purpose, Hanuman, thanking it for its hospitality, said, "The work I do does not brook any delay. Also, I made a vow that I would not stop on the way." Hanuman's single-minded purpose is worthy of emulation.

TH CROSSWORD + 14356  
(set by Incognito)

## Across

- 8 Brand symbol's record? Nothing! (4)
- 9 Very vulgar 12 dozen (5)
- 10 Bachelor's pain (4)
- 11 Crib: Wrongly cared about student (6)
- 12 Increased depth from enclosure for holding animals, indeed (8)
- 13 Confuse insect to go round feral rodent at first (8)

15 Game for vegetable juice (6)

17 Pretty girls have a right to make money (7)

19 It can be found online and is made up of wee bits (7)

22 Push student's digging implement (6)

24 Giving answer: "Call about European layer" (8)

26 Husband always takes left in corridors (8)

28 See! Wrong hate results in hate... (6)

30 Only auditor's soul (4)

31 Ladies get direction for levels (5)

32 Pacific California male (4)

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

SCAN TO PLAY

## SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

No SS69 Distribution: www.knightfeathers.com

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

## IN BRIEF



## SpiceJet 'clears' ₹160-crore pending provident fund dues

SpiceJet said it has cleared all employees' provident fund (EPF) dues worth ₹160.07 crore pending for over two years. The low-cost carrier, which had been facing multiple headwinds, recently raised ₹3,000 crore, following which it had been clearing statutory Goods and Services Tax, and other dues. According to a release, since October, SpiceJet had been utilising internal cash flows to meet statutory obligations, including EPF and taxes deducted at source.

## Ashok Leyland to hike CV prices by up to 3% from Jan. 1

Ashok Leyland Ltd. (ALL) announced a price rise of up to 3% on its range of commercial vehicles (CVs) with effect January on account of inflation and increase in commodity prices. The extent of price hike will vary depending on model and variant, however all products across the range will be affected, the company said in a filing. This will help mitigate a part of the input cost impact, the firm said. In another filing, ALL said it has bagged a ₹346-crore order from the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation for the supply of 1,475 BS-VI diesel passenger bus chassis.

## Vishal Mega Mart IPO subscribed 27 times

Vishal Mega Mart's ₹8,000-crore Initial Public Offering (IPO) was subscribed 27.3 times on the last day of bidding on Friday. The IPO's total issue size was more than 75 crore shares. The Qualified Institutional Buyers' portion received 80.75 times subscription, while the quota for non-institutional investors was subscribed 14.25 times. Retail investors' category fetched 2.31 times subscription. Vishal Mega Mart's IPO was the fourth largest this year, after Hyundai Motors' ₹27,855 crore share sale, Swiggy's ₹1,327 crore IPO and NTPC Green's 10,000 crore offering.

## Centre consistently hiked capex: FinMin

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

The government has consistently increased its expenditure on infrastructure building over the last five years and aims to achieve the ₹11.11 lakh crore capex target set for the current fiscal, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said on Friday.

The government's capital expenditure increased from more than ₹5 lakh crore in 2021-22 to ₹11.11 lakh crore in 2024-25.

"India's road, air and rail connectivity has improved considerably over



Pankaj Chaudhary

the last 10 years," Mr. Chaudhary told reporters.

Keeping in mind the goal set by PM Narendra Modi to make India a developed nation by 2047, the government will continue to make allocations in Budget for 2025-26, he said.

## Now, CCI raps table tennis body's unfair practices

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

Fair trade watchdog Competition Commission of India (CCI) has directed the Table Tennis Federation of India (TFFI) and its affiliate bodies to cease and desist from indulging in anti-competitive practices.

The "cease and desist" order has been passed against TFFI, The Suburban Table Tennis Association (TSTA), Maharashtra State Table Tennis Association (MSTA), Gujarat State Table Tennis Association (GSTTA) and Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) on December 12 for abuse of dominance and anti-competitive agreements.

## Swiss Shock: EFTA member lobs back India's MFN tax volley

From Jan. 1, Indian entities in Switzerland face higher tax liabilities as country responds to Supreme Court ruling that voided tax treaty benefit

**Vikas Dhoot**  
NEW DELHI

In a development that could hurt India's investment climate and affect firms' international taxation math, Switzerland has decided to suspend the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) treatment for India under the two countries' 30-years old double-taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA), citing an October 2023 ruling against its validity by the Supreme Court on 11 petitions that were combined with a Nelson plea.

A statement by Swiss authorities dated December 11, said the MFN clause under the DTAA will no longer hold from January 1, 2025, considering that India's apex court had said it does not get automatically triggered until notified under the Income Tax Act.

"On the basis of the Indian Supreme Court ruling, the Swiss competent authority acknowledges that its interpretation of para. 5 of the Protocol to the IN-CH DTAA is not shared by the Indian side. In the absence of reciprocity, it therefore waives its unilateral application with effect from 1 January, 2025," a Swiss government communiqué stated.

Terming this as a significant shift in bilateral treaty dynamics, Nangia Andersen's tax partner Sandeep Jhunjhunwala said this would mean increased tax liabilities for Indian enti-



ties operating in Switzerland and increases the complexities of navigating international tax treaties in an evolving landscape.

"Previously, Indian companies benefited from a reduced tax rate of 5% on dividends and other incomes, thanks to Switzerland's earlier application of MFN benefits. With the revision to a 10% residual rate starting January 1, these firms face higher tax liabilities, reducing their competitiveness compared to businesses from countries still benefiting from MFN provisions," reckoned Ajay Srivastava, director of the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).

"Beyond its immediate fiscal impact, this development reflects broader trends in international taxation, with countries like India increasingly asserting stricter interpretations of treaty provisions to protect domestic tax revenues," Mr. Jhunjhunwala noted, adding this underscores the need to align treaty partners on the interpretation and application of tax treaty clauses to

ensure predictability, equity, and stability in international tax framework.

Sameer Gupta, national tax leader at EY India, indicated that all may not be lost in this bilateral economic tangle. "As per the Court's decision, the MFN clause will only take effect once both countries issue notifications... once India provides the required notification, Switzerland can reactivate the treaty provision," he averred.

Mr. Srivastava, however, warned that this suspension not only brings tax challenges for Indian firms in sectors like financial services, pharmaceuticals, and IT, that have operations in Switzerland, but also introduces frictions with other trade and investment partners over the MFN clause interpretations that could hurt inbound and outbound investment flows. If disputes over reading MFN clauses persist, Indian businesses could face similar hurdles in other jurisdictions as well, he said.

"Proactive negotiations to clarify and harmonize interpretations of treaty provisions are essential to safeguard Indian firms' interests abroad. Additionally, India must ensure that its treaty frameworks reflect contemporary business realities, particularly in the digital and service sectors, to reduce tax uncertainties and promote global competitiveness," Mr. Srivastava underlined.

## Winter chill: Fitch, CareEdge trim India's GDP growth hopes

**Vikas Dhoot**  
NEW DELHI

Fitch Ratings on Friday sharply slashed its 2024-25 GDP growth forecast for India from 7.2% to 6.4%, but doesn't expect the recent slowdown in the economy to become 'a prolonged slump'. However, the global rating firm said it expects growth to improve only marginally to 6.5% in 2025-26.

CareEdge Ratings also pared its GDP growth forecast for the year to 6.5% from an earlier projection of 6.8%. This downward adjustment reflects the slower GDP growth of 5.4% in the July-September quarter that was also marked by a deeper contraction in corporate profitability, said the firm's chief economist Rajani Sinha.

She also pointed to the decline in public capex in the first half of the fiscal and the softness in some urban demand indicators.

**Temporary slowdown'** While the first half of the year has now clocked a GDP growth of 6%, CareEdge believes the slowdown is temporary, and the second half will see a 6.8% uptick. "The GDP growth is likely to pick up as the government increases its capex spending, while healthy agricultural production should further bolster rural consumption," Ms. Sinha reckoned.

"Although indicators point to a more mixed picture in recent months, we do not think the softness will translate into a prolonged slump in economic activity. We expect domestic demand to continue

driving economic growth amid a potential trade war between the U.S. and China and a global trade slowdown," Fitch said in a commentary note on asset-backed securities linked to automobile loans.

Citing the above-normal south-west monsoon rains, Fitch economists said the farm sector will be supported by robust summer crop sowing, which bodes well for a more robust harvest. "Better monsoon rains also limit inflationary risks from food price rises and increase rural purchasing power," it averred.

This Wednesday, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) also moderated its forecast for India's growth to 6.5% from 7%, citing, among other factors, 'lower-than-expected growth in private investment and housing demand'.

Last week, the Reserve Bank of India, which had projected a 7% growth in the second quarter at its October monetary policy review, had downgraded its full-year growth forecast of 7.2% to 6.6%. ADB, Fitch Ratings and CareEdge Ratings expect growth to slip below the RBI's forecast.

While Fitch is sanguine about the performance of its rated asset-backed securities linked to auto loans, it said major risks "are likely to come from ongoing geopolitical tensions and oil price volatility, given the cyclical nature of the assets."

"Performance may deteriorate materially if India's economic slowdown accelerates beyond our forecast or if there is a rapid rise in fuel prices following a geopolitical event," it warned.

## MARKETS

## MARKET WATCH

	FRIDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	82,133	1.04
US Dollar	84.80	0.09
Gold	79,500	-1.73
Brent oil	74.28	2.07

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2527.55	23.45
Adani Ports	1259.95	15.95
Apollo Hosp.	7259.45	32.35
Asian Paints	2407.65	18.10
Axis Bank	1148.15	2.50
Bajaj Auto	9021.40	58.15
Bajaj Finance	1782.80	57.00
Bharti Airtel	1681.75	71.20
BPL	301.45	-0.45
Britannia Ind.	4850.10	21.75
Cipla	1447.30	1.90
Coal India	410.30	1.20
Dr Reddy's Lab.	1246.35	0.95
Eicher Motors	4825.90	18.25
Grasim Ind.	2692.70	32.65
HCL Tech	1968.80	32.60
HFCL Bank	1871.70	12.50
HDLC Life	632.55	6.00
Hero MotoCorp	4575.45	18.70
Hindalco	662.10	-6.60
Hind Unilever	2390.10	45.15
ICICI Bank	1344.90	15.65
IndusInd Bank	986.65	-11.30
Infosys	1999.70	12.70
ITC	470.00	9.40
JSW Steel	999.85	-5.95
Kotak Bank	1805.65	36.95
L&T	3887.00	27.10
M&M	3081.40	13.95
Maruti Suzuki	1127.55	105.15
NestleIndia	2253.50	29.45
NTPC	357.15	1.55
ONGC	254.25	0.20
PowerGrid Corp	333.85	4.65
Reliance Ind.	1722.85	9.95
SBI Life	1428.80	-3.70
State Bank	861.55	7.85
Shriram Finance	179.00	-0.85
Slim	3162.55	-85.55
Sun Pharma	1813.45	8.00
Tata Consumer Product	929.70	8.45
Tata Motors	790.30	3.95
Tata Steel	148.95	-1.83
TCS	4473.90	18.95
Titan	3508.85	63.10
Trent Ltd.	7000.25	-12.25
UltraTech Cement	12083.90	226.95
Wipro	309.95	0.85

## EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on December 13

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	84.59	84.91
Euro	88.70	89.03
British Pound	106.96	107.38
Japanese Yen (100)	55.12	55.34
Chinese Yuan	11.63	11.67
Swiss Franc	94.61	94.98
Singapore Dollar	62.73	62.98
Canadian Dollar	59.47	59.70
Malaysian Ringgit	19.00	19.09
Australian Dollar	53.89	54.10

## Kerala Medical Services Corporation Ltd.

(DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, GOVT. OF KERALA)  
Head Office : Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram-14,  
(Telephone No. 0471-2945600, ),  
E-mail : edrugs.kmscl@kerala.gov.in,  
website : www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in, CIN No. U2423KL2007SGC021616

No.KMSCL/ED/100/2024

## E-TENDER NOTICE

Date : 13.12.2024

Online bids are invited from manufacturers/direct importers / loan licensees on behalf of Department of Health, Govt of Kerala for the procurement of Drugs for Thalassemia Management for the year 2024 - 2025.  
**SI. No.** **Tender No. and Date** **No. Drugs**  
1. KMSCL/ED/THALASSEMIA DRUGS/RC/2024/028 05  
Last date and time of online uploading of tender - 26.12.2024, 5.00 pm.  
Date and time of opening of Technical bid - 30.12.2024 11.30 am.  
Tenders shall be downloaded and submitted online through the e-tender portal [www.etenders.kerala.gov.in](http://www.etenders.kerala.gov.in).  
(Sd/-) MANAGING DIRECTOR (Tender Inviting Authority)

## AVNL INSTITUTE OF LEARNING AVADI

UNIT OF ARMoured VEHICLES NiGAM LIMITED  
A GOVT. OF INDIA ENTERPRISE  
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

## ENGAGEMENT OF PERSONNEL UNDER FIXED TERM CONTRACT

(Advt. No. IOLAV/FTC/RECT/2024/03)

## CORRIGENDUM TO ADVT NO. IOLAV/FTC/RECT/2

**LOS ANGELES**

**U.S. charges former head of Syrian prison with torturing detainees**



REUTERS

Samir Ousman Alsheikh, former head of Syria's Adra Prison, was charged in the U.S. on Thursday with torture and conspiracy for allegedly abusing detainees from 2005 to 2008. The charges follow his immigration fraud arrest, highlighting ongoing accountability efforts for rights violations under Bashar al-Assad's regime. AFP

**VIENNA**

**Iran agrees to more monitoring at Fordo enrichment plant, says IAEA**



Iran has agreed to increased monitoring by the UN nuclear watchdog at its Fordo enrichment plant, following its plans to ramp up production of highly enriched uranium at the site, the IAEA said on Friday. Iran insists on its right to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and has denied it is seeking a weapons capability. AFP

**WASHINGTON**

**Ex-Speaker Pelosi hospitalised after injury during Europe trip**



AP

Former U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi was injured on a trip to Luxembourg and has been admitted to a hospital for evaluation, her office said on Friday. Ms. Pelosi, 84, was the first woman to serve as Speaker of the House and had also been a long-time leader of the House Democratic Caucus. REUTERS

**GENEVA**

**Topless anti-Russia protesters damage monument outside UN**



REUTERS

Topless members of the Ukrainian feminist group Femen vandalised the Broken Chair monument outside the UN in Geneva using chainsaws, protesting Russia's actions in Ukraine. The incident, which left significant damage on the sculpture, led to police intervention and the questioning of four individuals. REUTERS

# Kremlin praises Trump, pounds Ukraine in massive aerial attack

Moscow said the attack was in retaliation for the use of ATACMS missiles; Trump said Kyiv's use of U.S. weapons to strike deep into Russia was a 'foolish' idea; Zelenskyy called for more Western air defence systems to protect Ukraine's territory

**Agence France-Presse**

KYIV

The Kremlin said on Friday that U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's opposition to Ukraine's use of U.S. weapons to hit Russia "fully aligned" with Moscow's position, hours after it launched a massive aerial barrage on Ukraine.

The nearly three-year conflict is escalating ahead of Mr. Trump coming to power in January, with both sides seeking to gain an upper hand on the battlefield amid mounting speculation of ceasefire talks.

Russia launched one of its largest missile attacks ever in the early hours of



**Critical strike:** Burning buildings after a massive Russian drone attack in Ukraine's Chernihiv region on Friday. AP

Friday, targeting Ukraine's energy grid as temperatures dropped below freezing, in what Moscow called a retaliatory strike for Kyiv firing U.S. weapons on a southern Russian airfield earlier this week. The Kremlin had

warned it would respond to Kyiv's use of ATACMS missiles and then praised Mr. Trump, who said using the weapons to hit deep into Russia was a "foolish" idea.

"The statement fully aligns with our position,

with our view on the reasons for escalation," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"That impresses us. It is obvious that Mr. Trump understands exactly what is escalating the situation."

Moscow has repeatedly raged against Western arms supplied to Ukraine and said the use of Western weapons makes NATO countries direct participants in the nearly three-year conflict.

"In response to the use of American long-range weapons, a massive strike was carried out by the Russian armed forces... against critical facilities of Ukraine's fuel and energy infrastructure," Russia's Defence Ministry said in a

post on Telegram.

The attack "severely damaged" some Ukrainian power plants, the DTEK power provider said, and knocked out electricity to thousands of people.

Russia fired 94 missiles in the barrage – including cruise and ballistic missiles – and almost 200 drones, according to Ukraine's Air Force. It claimed to have shot down 81 of the missiles.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the attack showed Moscow had no interest in peace.

He called for more Western air defence systems to protect Ukraine's skies and harsher sanctions on Moscow, to limit its ability to wage war.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the attack showed Moscow had no interest in peace.

He called for more Western air defence systems to protect Ukraine's skies and harsher sanctions on Moscow, to limit its ability to wage war.

# Macron chooses centrist ally Bayrou as France's PM

**Associated Press**

François Bayrou

French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday named centrist ally François Bayrou as Prime Minister in an effort to address the country's deep political crisis, after a historic parliamentary vote ousted the previous government last week.

Mr. Bayrou, 73, a crucial partner in Mr. Macron's centrist alliance, has been a well-known figure in French politics for decades. His political experience is seen as key in efforts to restore stability as no single party holds a majority at the National Assembly.

Mr. Macron's office said in a statement that Mr. Bayrou "has been charged with forming a new government".

Former Prime Minister Michel Barnier resigned last week following a no-confidence vote prompted by Budget disputes in the National Assembly, leaving France without a functioning government. Mr. Macron in an address to the nation vowed to remain in office until his term ends in 2027.

Mr. Bayrou is expected to hold talks with political leaders from various parties in the coming days in order to choose new Ministers.

The task appears challenging because Mr. Macron's centrist alliance does not have a majority in Parliament and Mr. Bayrou's Cabinet will need to rely on moderate lawmakers from both the left and right to be able to stay in power.

Some conservatives are expected to be part of the new government.

Mr. Macron's strategy aims at preventing far-right leader Marine Le Pen from holding "make or break" power over the government. Ms. Le Pen helped oust Mr. Barnier by joining her National Rally party's forces to the left to pass the no-confidence motion last week.

National Rally officials, including Ms. Le Pen, have said they want any new Budget law to preserve the purchasing power of the French people.

# 'Imperative' to work against IS in Syria, Blinken tells Turkiye

**Agence France-Presse**

ANKARA

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Friday told Turkiye it was "imperative" to work against a resurgence of the Islamic State (IS) group in Syria following the fall of Bashar al-Assad.

The top U.S. diplomat also said he saw "encouraging signs" on reaching a ceasefire in the war-torn Gaza Strip.

His remarks came on

# Freed U.S. journalist reveals details of shadowy Russian agency behind arrest

**Agence France-Presse**

WASHINGTON



Evan Gershkovich

the second leg of a whirlwind regional tour following Bashar al-Assad's ouster in a lightning offensive spearheaded by Islamist rebels.

He flew to Turkiye on Thursday evening where he met for more than an hour with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at Ankara airport. In response, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told Mr. Blinken Turkiye was committed to ensuring stability in Syria "as soon as possible".

His first article for the *Wall Street Journal* since his 16-month detention scrutinised the little-known Department for Counter-intelligence Operations, which he reported is behind "the biggest wave

of repression" in the country since the time of Joseph Stalin.

Known as the DKRO, it is responsible for the deten-

tion of Mr. Gershkovich and other Westerners as part of an operation that has grown dramatically over recent years, according to the report published on Thursday by Mr. Gershkovich and three colleagues.

After being tasked with securing the release of Russian hit man Vadim Krasikov, jailed in Germany, the DKRO "accelerated a campaign of arresting American citizens," including Mr. Gershkovich, to use as "bait".

Mr. Gershkovich was arrested on espionage charg-

es during a reporting trip in March 2023, and held until a large East-West prisoner swap in August of this year.

The article said the shadowy DKRO was a key player in growing Russian repression domestically and is also involved in foreign interference.

The agency is allegedly headed by Lieutenant General Dmitry Minaev, who Mr. Gershkovich said "has a hands-on role in selecting which Americans to arrest, and which Russians to trade them for".

# Israel orders troops to 'prepare to remain' in Syria buffer zone

**Agence France-Presse**

JERUSALEM

Assad from power.

Since then, the Israeli military has launched hundreds of air and naval strikes against Syrian military assets, targeting everything from chemical weapons stores to air defences to prevent them from falling into rebel hands. The plan to deploy troops in the buffer zone from the Golan Heights.

Israel seized the demilitarised zone on the strategic plateau on Sunday, just hours after Syrian rebels swept President Bashar al-

# Ranquelino claims the Bangalore 2000 Guineas

BENGALURU: Darius Byramji-trained Ranquelino (Sandesh up) won the Bangalore 2000 Guineas (1,600m), the chief event of the races here on Friday (Dec 13). The winner is owned by Manjri Horse Breed Farm Pvt. Ltd., Mr. Mukul A. Sonawala, Mr. Kishore M. Dingra, M/s. DT Racing & Breeding LLP, Mr. S.R. Sanas & Mr. Ashok Ranpishe. Trainer: Darius Byramji.

Ranquelino confidently kept his gelding in handy fourth or fifth position till the bend before manoeuvring the mount from the outside in the home stretch. Ranquelino responded well to the reminders, overtook the leader Mandarino near the 100m, and won comfortably.

RESULTS:

1. ALYDAR PLATE (1,100M): LENA (Ashraf Asbar) 1, Eleanor (Yash) 2, Coldplay (Antony) 3 and Higgs Boson (M. Rajesh K) 4, 3/4, 2 and 5-1/2, Im. 09.32s. ₹153 (w), 33 and 19 (p), SHP: 24, THP: 66, FP: 79, Q: 212, Trinella: 877/271, Exacta: 44,608. Favourite: Coldplay. Owner: Mr. P. Arun Kumar. Trainer: Pradeep Annaiah.

2. TUNGABHADRA PLATE (1,200M): MEGA SUCCESS (Jagadeesh) 1, Infinite Spirit (Likhith Appu) 2, Star Comet (Rayan) 3 and The Golden Dream (R. Pradeep) 4, 1/2, 1-1/2 and 1-3/4, Im. 16.33s. ₹45 (w), 16, 31 and 18 (p), SHP: 126, THP: 38, FP: 412, Q: 308, Trinella: 2,419/



**Champion outfit:** Owners S.R. Sanas, Siddarath, Dilip Thacker, Ashok Ranpishe, and trainer Darius Byramji leading in Ranquelino (A. Sandesh up) after the win in the Bangalore 2000 Guineas on Friday.

K. MURALI KUMAR

740. Exacta: 5,044/1,681. Favourite:

Martha. Owner: Mr. S. Pathy. Trainer: Irfan Ghatala.

4. B.B.M.P. CUP (DIV. II), 1,200M: STELLANTIS (Trevor) 1, KNOTTY (Linh) 2, Free To Play (Arvind K) 3 and IL Volo (Angad) 4, 1/2, 1-3/4 and 1-1/4, Im. 15.80s. ₹16 (w), 10, 23 and 20 (p), SHP: 63, THP: 47, FP: 103, Q: 65, Trinella: 316/183, Exacta: 5,096/1,985. Fa-

vourite: Stellantis. Owners: Mr. Rama Seshu Eyyuni, Mr. Marthand Singh Mahindra & Mrs. Rina Mahindra. Trainer: S. Attalaah.

5. BANGALORE 2000 GUINEAS (1,600M): RANQUELINO (FIERO-SUNSET) SANDESH 1, Mandarino (Moonlight Magic-Mandara) L.A. Rozario 2, Positano (Arod-Satinette) Akshay K 3 and Don Carlos

(Cougar Mountain-Renee) Trevor 4, 1-1/2, Hd and 1-1/4, Im. 39.49s. ₹36 (w), 13, 18 and 13 (p), SHP: 62, THP: 54, FP: 372, Q: 215, Trinella: 762/188, Exacta: 8,408/4,204. Fa-

vourite: Positano. Owners: Manji

Horse Breed Farm Pvt Ltd, Mr.

Mukul A. Sonawala, Mr. Kishore

M. Dingra, M/s. DT Racing &

Breeding LLP, Mr. S.R. Sanas &

Mr. Ashok Ranpishe. Trainer:

Darius Byramji.

6. TETRARCH PLATE (DIV. I), 1,100M: REIKO (Sandesh) 1, Lockheed (Srinath) 2, Breeze Blaster (Shreyas S) 3 and Invincible (M. Rajesh K) 4, 1-3/4, 1-1/4, Im. 09.61s. ₹19 (w), 11, 13 and 25 (p), SHP: 29, THP: 58, FP: 53, Q: 30, Trinella: 310/237, Exacta: 5,026/4,308. Favourite: Reiko. Owner: Mr. P. Arun Kumar. Trainer: Prasanna Kumar.

7. B.B.M.P. CUP (DIV. II), 1,200M: BHARAT (Vivek) 1, Eastern Gold (Akshay K) 2, Instructor (R. Pradeep) 3 and Tesorino (Trevor) 4, 2, 1-3/4 and 1-1/4, Im. 14.77s. ₹39 (w), 13, 12 and 19 (p), SHP: 62, THP: 44, FP: 79, Q: 21, Trinella: 256/166, Exacta: 487/190. Favourite:

Eastern Gold. Owners: M/s.

Rajendran, Mr. Ronak J. Kim-

mane & Mr. Ananth Iyengar.

Trainer: Prasanna Kumar.

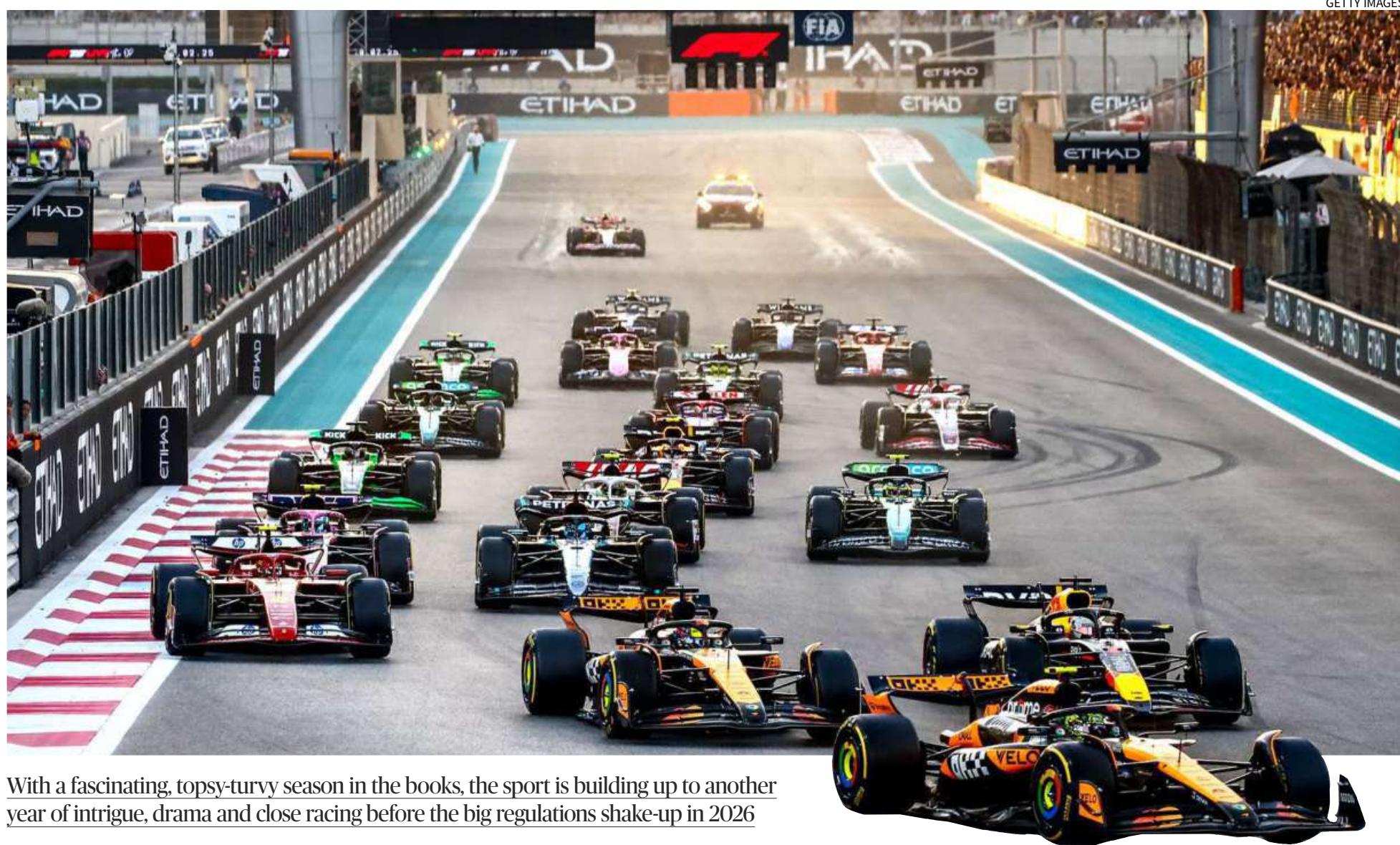
Jackpot: ₹4,789 (54 kts.), runner-

up: 290 (682 tks.); treble (O): 315 (24 tks.); (ii): 668 (38 tks.).

8. AMAZING GRACE STAKES (1,200M), rated 00 to 25, 3-00: 1. Rocking Girl (2) P. Siddha-

ruj 62.5, 2. Bourbon Bay (7) Rayan 61, 3. Emerald (1) Darshan 60, 4. Princess Jasmine (5) K. Suhas 59, 5. Chiraag (6) Vinod Shinde 58, 6. Quevega (4) Angad 56.5, 7. Tankini (8) Salman Khan 56 and 8. Master Victory (3) Arvind K 53.

1. BOURBON BAY, 2. CHIRAG, 3.



With a fascinating, topsy-turvy season in the books, the sport is building up to another year of intrigue, drama and close racing before the big regulations shake-up in 2026

## 2024 done, 2025 loading: the F1 plotlines that could develop new arcs

S. Dipak Ragav

**T**he longest Formula One season in history concluded in Abu Dhabi last weekend, bringing the curtain down on an enthralling year during which the pecking order see-sawed, keeping the fans invested until the final race. *The Hindu* looks at some of the major talking points from the season gone by and gazes into the crystal ball to see what 2025 could offer.

### Four-way title fight in 2025?

At the start of the year, it seemed as if Red Bull and Max Verstappen would run away with both titles after winning four of the first five races.

But from Miami, McLaren slowly established itself as a front-runner. However, the team's operational weakness and driver errors meant it did not maximise its package, allowing Verstappen to add three more wins at events where he probably did not have the fastest car.

McLaren had the fastest car through the summer, even as Red Bull suffered a steep dip in its fortunes. Only Verstappen was able to cover his team's flaws. In between, Mercedes joined the party, snatching three opportunistic victories.

**There is a case to be made that any other driver in the Red Bull would have lost the title... Verstappen buried the notion that he needs a fast car to win**

After the summer break, Ferrari became a genuine contender, and the Italian marque made McLaren sweat it out for the constructors' championship, falling short by just 14 points.

Considering the current regulations stay stable next year ahead of the big shake-up in 2026, the pecking order is unlikely to change drastically unless any team blunders.

Ferrari and McLaren closed the season strongly, while Red Bull addressed some key weaknesses later in the year. If Mercedes can design a car that has a wider operating window than it has now, the intriguing possibility of a four-way title battle opens up.

### Captivating driver field

Though Verstappen had to wait until Las Vegas to seal the drivers' crown and was made to work hard for it, Lando Norris never got close enough to apply real pressure on the four-time champion. Norris, in his first year in a title fight, showed there are still chinks in his armour, notably in his wheel-to-wheel abilities, especially when battling the Dutchman.

It will be interesting to see how Norris addresses his potential weakness next season now that he knows what it is to be in a championship fight. At the same time, Norris will also have to be wary of teammate Oscar Piastri, who took a step in the right direction in his sophomore campaign, claiming two victories. The Australian needs to improve his qualifying performances, as he was often slower by a tenth or two, and

needs to be more consistent in races.

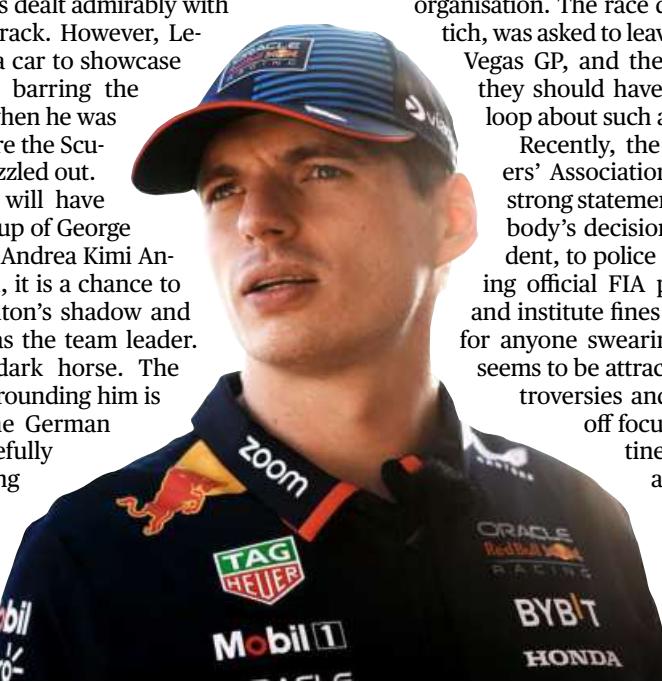
Meanwhile, all eyes will be on Lewis Hamilton in a Ferrari that is on an upward swing. The seven-time champion appeared to lack motivation this year, and he will hope the change will renew his spirit. But he will have a formidable competitor in teammate Charles Leclerc, who was arguably the second-best driver after Verstappen in 2024.

The incumbent Ferrari driver is considered one of the best of the new generation alongside Verstappen and has dealt admirably with the latter on the track. However, Leclerc has not had a car to showcase his full potential, barring the first half of 2022, when he was in contention before the Scuderia's challenge fizzled out.

Mercedes, too, will have an interesting line-up of George Russell and rookie Andrea Kimi Antonelli. For Russell, it is a chance to grow out of Hamilton's shadow and establish himself as the team leader. Antonelli is the dark horse. The hype and buzz surrounding him is enormous, and the German team must carefully manage the young Italian.

### Verstappen's legacy

Having won



**Ferrari and McLaren closed strongly, Red Bull addressed some key weaknesses. If Mercedes can design a car with a wider operating window, the possibility of a four-way battle opens up**

four championships on the bounce, Verstappen has already shattered many records and etched his name among the greats. While the final points margin made it look like an easy win, it's also a stark reminder of how good he has been in 2024, when you account for the fact he has had the second- or third-best car for most of the season.

There is a case to be made that any other driver in that Red Bull would have lost the title, as evidenced by the fact that he scored 437 points while teammate Sergio Perez had only 152. Verstappen showed how big a difference he could make, with no better example than his stirring drive in wet Interlagos, where he charged from 17th to win the race by nearly 20 seconds.

When drivers go on title-winning runs, it becomes easy to downplay their skills, especially if they have a superior package, as Verstappen did in 2022 and '23.

Even though he showcased exceptional driving ability in 2021, the controversy surrounding the manner in which he won the title in the last race in Abu Dhabi has always been held against him. In 2024, Verstappen, once and for all, buried the notion that he needs a fast car to win. More than the record books, this triumph has accentuated his legacy.

### Development race to hit pause?

Next year, one of the subplots to observe will be how the teams tackle their developmental plans. With a massive regulations change in store for 2026, teams could switch their focus by mid-season. However, it gets complicated when they are locked in an intense battle. In 2022, Red Bull took advantage of the big rejig and laid the foundation for Verstappen's three crowns. But now, without the services of design genius Adrian Newey, it is crucial for the energy drink giant to prove it can manage in the absence of F1's most accomplished designer.

Having lost the fight in the constructors' standings this year, Red Bull's current design team has a point to prove. Finishing third gives the former champion slightly more wind tunnel and CFD time than McLaren or Ferrari and could, in a way, help it prepare for the new era.

### Untangling the mess at the FIA

While the action on track this season has often been brilliant, the same can't be said about the happenings off-track. The governing body, the FIA – mainly its president Mohammed Ben Sulayem – and the drivers have not been on the same page on key issues. There has been a massive churn in the FIA, with key people leaving the organisation. The race director, Niels Wittich, was asked to leave ahead of the Las Vegas GP, and the drivers said that they should have been kept in the loop about such a massive change.

Recently, the Grand Prix Drivers' Association (GPDA) issued a strong statement against the apex body's decision, led by its president, to police foul language during official FIA press conferences and institute fines and punishments for anyone swearing. The president seems to be attracting needless controversies and would be better off focusing on more pertinent matters, such as having a panel of permanent stewards to ensure more consistent decision-making.

## STACKING UP



### ATP Men's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Jannik Sinner	23	11,830	17
2	Alexander Zverev	27	7,915	21
3	Carlos Alcaraz	21	7,010	18
4	Taylor Fritz	27	5,100	22
5	Daniil Medvedev	28	5,030	17
6	Casper Ruud	25	4,255	25
7	Novak Djokovic	37	3,910	18
8	Andrey Rublev	27	3,760	27
9	Alex de Minaur	25	3,745	23
10	Grigor Dimitrov	33	3,350	19
11	Stefanos Tsitsipas	26	3,165	22
12	Tommy Paul	27	3,145	21
13	Holger Rune	21	3,025	23
14	Ugo Humbert	26	2,765	26
15	Jack Draper	22	2,685	22

Top Indians ▶

Sumit Nagal	Rank 98	▼ 4 spots
Mukund Sasikumar	Rank 366	▲ 1 spot



### WTA Women's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Aryna Sabalenka	26	9,416	21
2	Iga Swiatek	23	8,295	18
3	Coco Gauff	20	6,530	22
4	Jasmine Paolini	28	5,344	20
5	Qinwen Zheng	22	5,340	21
6	Elena Rybakina	25	5,171	20
7	Jessica Pegula	30	4,705	19
8	Emma Navarro	23	3,589	25
9	Daria Kasatkina	27	3,368	24
10	Barbora Krejčíková	28	3,214	17
11	Danielle Collins	30	3,178	19
12	Paula Badosa	27	2,908	20
13	Diana Shnaider	20	2,895	27
14	Anna Kalinskaya	26	2,743	20
15	Jelena Ostapenko	27	2,588	21

Top Indians ▶

Ankita Raina	Rank 289	▼ 2 spots
Sahaja Yamalappali	Rank 312	▲ 1 spot

### F1 Constructors' standings

Pos	Team	Points	Wins
1	McLaren	666	6
2	Ferrari	652	5
3	Red Bull	589	9
4	Mercedes	468	4
5	Aston Martin	94	0
6	Alpine	65	0
7	Haas	58	0
8	RB	46	0
9	Williams	17	0
10	Sauber	4	0

Top Indians ▶

Max Verstappen	Lando Norris
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### Badminton Men's ranking

#	Player	Points	Events
1	Shi Yu Qi	99,215	14
2	Anders Antonsen	93,821	20
3	Viktor Axelsen	92,290	14
4	Jonatan Christie	85,947	17
5	Kunlavut Vitidsarn	81,408	17
6	George Russell	245	2
7	Lewis Hamilton	223	2
8	Sergio Perez	152	0
9	Fernando Alonso	70	0
10	Pierre Gasly	42	0
11	Nico Hulkenberg	41	0
12	Yuki Tsunoda	30	0
13	Lance Stroll	24	0
14	Esteban Ocon	23	0
15	Kevin Magnussen	16	0
16	Alex Albon	12	0
17	Daniel Ricciardo	12	0
18	Oliver Bearman	7	0
19	Franco Colapinto	5	0
20	Zhou Guanyu	4	0
21	Liam Lawson	4	0

Top Indians ▶

Lakshya Sen	Prannoy H. S.
Rank 12	Rank 26



### Test Batting

# Meet Kevin Goh: the Gukesh victim who bid for world chess' biggest match

The Singapore Grandmaster did not enjoy his first meeting with the Indian prodigy. He was beaten by the then 12-year-old who was in search of his first GM norm. Not even in Goh's 'wildest dreams' did he think that he would host a title match featuring Gukesh six years later

## INTERVIEW

**Kevin Goh****P.K. Ajith Kumar**

**K**evin Goh Wei Ming can now claim that he played a role in the career of D. Gukesh, who became the youngest World chess champion in history on Thursday. It was after beating Goh in a tournament in Bangkok in 2018 that the Chennai lad, who won the World title after defeating Ding Liren in Singapore, secured his first Grandmaster norm. Ironically, the loss had spoiled Goh's hopes of the final GM norm. He wasn't done yet. As Singapore Chess Federation CEO, Goh led Singapore's bid for hosting the World Championship, which became a resounding success. Excerpts from an interview with Grandmaster Goh:

**So when did you think of bidding for the World Championship?**

It was just an idea that I thought of. And then I was discussing with a couple of friends – they don't really want to be named, and they were like, yes, you should. So I was speaking with some chess fans and they were like, 'Dude, you should do this, man. It is the perfect thing to do.' And we are neutral, you know, there are all these geopolitical situations. We are a multi-racial country, we have many people of Indian and Chinese origins.

**What made you bid for it?**

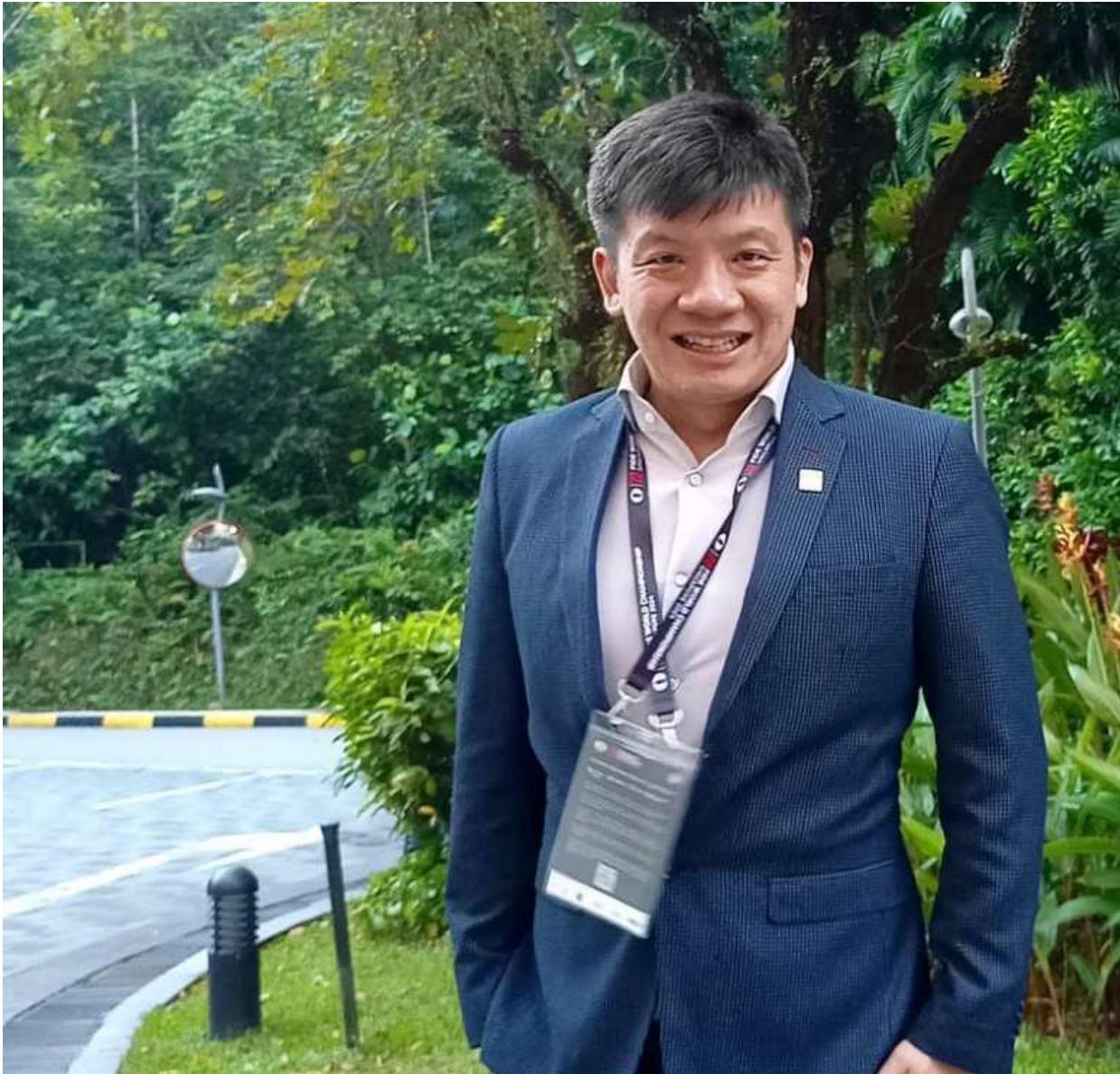
First of all, I am a chess fan. I would love chess to be played in my country. But aside from my selfish reasons, I think that there are a lot of positive narratives for Singaporeans in general. We were confident of our bid because of the geopolitical thing, for one thing, and a neutral country. There were many discussions behind the scenes with FIDE, with my team, with my government.

The government was very supportive. Everyone was proud that we could bring the prestige of this event to Singapore. There were some downsides about bidding, too. What if the event turns out to be a disaster, organisational lapses could happen. What if the glass [wall] collapsed in the middle of the match? What if we couldn't handle the fans?

**The fans, in fact, responded very well to the event, and the side-events, such as the simultaneous displays with some of the legends in the game, proved to be pretty popular.**

Yes, [people like] Vishy [Anand] were gracious and generous with their time. So if you buy a VIP ticket, you literally walk in and you see Vishy on the couch.

**And you got Google as the sponsor... There aren't too many bigger companies.**



P.K. AJITH KUMAR



Everyone was proud that we could bring the prestige of this event to Singapore. There were some downsides about bidding, too... What if the glass [wall] collapsed in the middle of the match?

[and I had two and was looking for my final norm]. I remember the game well. It was a London System, an opening featured at the World Championship here. I was playing white. So I went d4, d5, Bishop f4, Knight f6, e3, c5, Knight f3... As the game went on, I realised that it was not in my notes and I had no idea what to do. I reached some unpleasant isolated queen's pawn position and he just grinded, know, the whole endgame. It was very impressive.

**He was 12 then, wasn't he?**

Yes.

**Were you really surprised by the way he played in that game?**

Yeah, very. And he had very good manners, by the way. He still has.

**You probably could not have imagined that he would be playing for the World Championship and you would be hosting him...**

Not even in my wildest dreams.

**You were playing for Singapore at the Chennai Chess Olympiad, where Gukesh had his breakthrough performance, as he posted eight wins on the trot on the top board for India-2 and won the individual gold medal.**

I noticed his fearlessness. The body language, the posture.... But there were some key advantages he had in that event. He had a bunch of friends, teammates around him. All of them were playing well. So this sort of energy is transferable. It could be like, you know, I have my friends next to me. They are all playing well. It gives me confidence.

**That helped India at this year's Olympiad at Budapest, too.**

Definitely. Because you see Arjun [Erigaisi] winning most of his games. R. Praggnanandhaa is solid, so is Vidit Gujrathi. P. Harikrishna never loses.

**You yourself have had a rather long Olympiad career.**

I have been playing 30 years of chess and 20 years of Olympiad, more or less, yeah. I have missed only a few since my first Olympiad in 2004. Now I am done, but I will always be a chess player at heart.

**Playing Gukesh] was not a positive experience. But it was fun. As the game went on, I realised I had no idea what to do. He had very good manners, by the way. He still has**

It was a conversation between me and Scott Beaumont, Google's president of Asia-Pacific, that got it going. So I had a common connection and somehow got in touch and then we spoke. This is great for chess. And it's great for Google as well, because, you know, there are so many connections between chess and AI.

And I thought he was pretty sold. In three days, he sent me an informal proposal. And that was it. I think that was a huge advantage that we had in our bid, because it shows that we have already secured some kind of in-principle support from a corporate giant.

I personally am a little bit disappointed that we couldn't get more corporate sponsors in. And that is something that we need to reflect on and ask ourselves what we could have done better. Apart from Google, we had World Resorts Sentosa and Academic Labs.

**How did you think Singapore benefited from hosting the World Championship?**

I think the exposure of chess, and hopefully that young players will be inspired to learn the game. More people are aware of the benefits of the game and they want to learn chess. And

hopefully we can somehow get chess in schools.

**Your reflections on the match, as a Grandmaster? It turned out to be much closer than most people – especially top chess players – anticipated.**

I was with the majority. Everybody thought so. So it was a pleasant surprise [the way things went]. It could have led to the kind of massacre which many players have suggested. And we did not want the match to end the way the 2021 match between Magnus Carlsen and Ian Nepomniachtchi did. From a chess point of view, we had a great match.

**And you have a special connection with Gukesh, haven't you?**

That was not a positive experience. But it was fun.

**You were one of the victims of Gukesh for his first Grandmaster norm, weren't you?**

Yes, it was at the Bangkok Chess Open tournament in 2018. He didn't have a norm at the time

## GAME THEORY

**Premier League: goals vs. expected goals**

Erling Haaland and Mohamed Salah lead the Premier League's goal-scoring chart so far this season, but the Liverpool winger is outperforming his expected goals (xG), unlike the Manchester City centre-forward. A look at the top goal-scorers in the English top division in 2024-25 and the margin between their tallies and the xG they have generated (xGDiff):



Erling Haaland

Player	Club	Games	Goals	xG	xGDiff
Erling Haaland	Man City	15	13	13.67	-0.67
Mohamed Salah	Liverpool	14	13	11.12	1.88
Cole Palmer	Chelsea	15	11	9.72	1.28
Chris Wood	N. Forest	15	10	6.52	3.48
Bryan Mbeumo	Brentford	15	9	4.33	4.67
Yoane Wissa	Brentford	12	9	6.69	2.31
Nicolas Jackson	Chelsea	14	8	7.69	0.31
Matheus Cunha	Wolves	15	7	3.41	3.59
Ollie Watkins	Aston Villa	15	7	10.38	-3.38
Alexander Isak	Newcastle	13	6	6.12	-0.12
Brennan Johnson	Tottenham	15	6	6.69	-0.69
Danny Welbeck	Brighton	14	6	6.29	-0.29
Jamie Vardy	Leicester	14	6	4.52	1.48
Jorgen Strand Larsen	Wolves	15	6	4.27	1.73
Liam Delap	Ipswich	15	6	6	0
Alex Iwobi	Fulham	15	5	2.68	2.32
Bukayo Saka	Arsenal	14	5	4.5	0.5
Dominic Solanke	Tottenham	12	5	6.97	-1.97
Harvey Barnes	Newcastle	15	5	2.51	2.49
James Maddison	Tottenham	15	5	4.45	0.55
Jhon Duran	Aston Villa	15	5	4.6	0.4
Justin Kluitert	Bournemouth	15	5	5.26	-0.26
Kai Havertz	Arsenal	14	5	7.01	-2.01
Luis Diaz	Liverpool	14	5	3.93	1.07
Noni Madueke	Chelsea	14	5	5.35	-0.35
Raul Jimenez	Fulham	15	5	5.96	-0.96

## PICTURE THIS



GETTY IMAGES

## Treading snow

In this photograph, Germans Lucas Boegl and Florian Notz compete in the 20km free mass start event of the FIS World Cup Cross-Country Ruka in Finland earlier this month.

A mass start involves all

skiers starting at the same time, the winner being the first one to cross the finish line. This differs from the individual start, in which skiers start one after the other in 30-second intervals; the winner is the skier who completes the course the fastest.

Cross-country skiing evolved

from being a means of transport — several thousand years ago, as per historical evidence

— to being both a recreational activity and a competitive sport. In cross-country, skiers can propel themselves in the classic style by striding forward, but the faster, more modern skate-skiing style, which in-

volves side-to-side motion, is preferred.

Courses should test both the technical and physical abilities of the skiers and are typically laid out in a manner that best utilises the natural terrain. The ideal is to have smooth transitions among the uphills, downhills and undulating terrain.



SOURCE: whoscored.com

**THANKING ALL**

A moment to remember our sacrifices: Gukesh's mother



Gukesh's mother J. Padmakumari reflected on the sacrifices the family made to shape his career. "It is a moment for us to remember all the sacrifices we made, especially Gukesh's father. All our family — grandparents, in-laws, sisters, friends — all came forward to help us in our journey. We are thankful to each one of them," she said.

**WINNING QUALITIES**

I also exhibited better character and willpower, says Gukesh



Gukesh was not perturbed by the criticism over the standard of the title match. "I think the World championship matches are decided not purely by chess but by who has the better character and willpower. I think I showed those qualities quite well," said Gukesh, who took home \$1.35 million. Ding was richer by \$1.15 million.

**CHAMPION STUFF**

Gill and Team India praise Gukesh for winning the World crown



D. Gukesh's title-winning run in the World championship in Singapore found a warm echo 6,156 km apart at Brisbane. "I congratulate Gukesh on behalf of the Indian cricket team for becoming the World champion. To be the youngest World champion is a great feat," said Shubman Gill.

**RECOGNITION**

Tamil Nadu CM announces ₹5 crore award for Gukesh



Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin has announced a sum of ₹5 crore to D. Gukesh on being crowned the World champion. Stalin spoke to the 18-year-old and commended him on becoming the youngest to do so. "Your achievement continues India's rich chess legacy and helps Chennai reaffirm its place as the 'global chess capital'", said Stalin.



Crowning glory: Gukesh with his prized possession. FIDE

## All hail the new king Gukesh!

The Indian GM receives the World championship trophy at a glittering ceremony; lavishes praise on the vanquished rival Ding again



P.K. Ajith Kumar  
SINGAPORE

**T**he Indian flag wrapped over his shoulders, D. Gukesh walked up to the stage. It was set up just a few yards away from where he had been sitting on a big gaming chair, behind a glass wall, for the past three weeks, fighting the battle of his life.

He was presented with the medal and was also garlanded.

Then that moment arrived.

FIDE president Arkady Dvorkovich handed over to Gukesh the World championship trophy. He took a close look at it — he had to; he had been dreaming of it every day — he smiled at the cheering audience, and posed for the cameras.

Then came his acceptance speech.

After thanking the organisers and the Singaporeans, he looked at Ding Liren, his opponent and the World chess champion till a day ago, and said, "I admire you, and thank you for this amazing fight."

**All grace**  
Grace in the moment of triumph is an enviable quality.

A couple of days ago at the press conference, shortly after missing a winning move in Game 13, and thus potentially weakening his chances of becoming the champion, it was evident that he was having a tough time. When there was a question on Viswanathan Anand, India's first World champion, Gukesh smiled, and wished happy birthday to his mentor, who had turned 55 on that day.

Grace under pressure is an enviable quality.

And he is just 18.

He may be a gentle soul off the board, well-mannered, soft-spoken, sporting a friendly smile on his bearded face, but on the chessboard, he has an uncompromising style. As Ding often found out, he is not the one who would take the easy out for a draw and preserve the energy for the following game.

**Shades of Carlsen**  
He would, like the World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen, grind, trying to build on the slightest of advantages. He would grind even if there is no advantage and the game had reached a drawn position for all practical purposes.

And he is young enough that he could be several years from his peak. That may not be a pleasant thought for all those top Grandmasters eyeing the crown that is sitting pretty on his head.

That quality of Gukesh came to the fore right through the match. It helped him win the final

game, too, and thus the World title without having to play the tie-breakers. Many, including Ding in all likelihood, had felt that Gukesh had probably lesser chances in the tie-breaker of shorter time controls. But they weren't aware of the countless blitz games he had played during his preparation.

His strong preparation, especially in the opening, was apparent in the match. He had a clear edge in the opening, during which he usually made his moves at frenetic speed, giving him an advantage on the clock. Ding himself admitted that he was often surprised by Gukesh's openings.

His biggest strength is his ability to calculate his moves accurately. Daniil Dubov, who worked as a second for Carlsen for two World championships, told this correspondent recently that Gukesh at his best was like a chess engine (computer).

Gukesh may not have been at his very best here, perhaps. He still was good enough to win the World championship.

And he is young enough that he could be several years from his peak. That may not be a pleasant thought for all those top Grandmasters eyeing the crown that is sitting pretty on his head.

Asked about Rohit skipping the media interaction, Gukesh replied: "This was an optional practice session and I think he has practised enough." He then explained why Australia is a tough place to tour: "The intensity at which games are played here, especially Tests, is one of the most difficult things. Maintaining that intensity throughout the course of five days is what makes touring Australia so difficult. The conditions are challenging but there is a period between 30-35 overs and the second new ball, when it gets easier to bat. But you have to maintain mental intensity."

Probed about his batting, Gukesh opened up: "I was feeling good. In the first innings (at Adelaide) I went into a shell and missed a straight ball. In the second innings, everyone was hav-

## Series at its tipping point as India and Australia pad up for the Brisbane Test

**INDIA IN AUS**

K.C. Vijaya Kumar  
BRISBANE

Weded between high-rises, a massive hospital, busy roads lined with flame of the forest and frangipani trees, super-markets and old-world cafes, the Gabba seems an oasis of calm. The multiple shades of green on the turf inside, remained as they were while the pitch began to shed its tropical moist look and acquired a dry deciduous facade.

Life still lurks in this surface and on Saturday, the silence here will give way to full-throated cheer, the stomping of a speedster's boots and the thud of a red cherry into a seasoned willow. The Border-Gavaskar Trophy series is at its tipping point. With a 1-1 backdrop, the third Test, the middle one in a long drawn battle of five contests, should offer a fascinating insight into how India and Australia will shape up for the rest of the series.

**Onus on batters**

The previous clashes at Perth and Adelaide had an air of inevitability due to India's 295-run triumph and Australia's riposte - a ten-wicket victory. The spice-quotient, though,

### The Gabba challenge

India has aced the Brisbane Test only once in seven attempts, but it came during its previous visit Down Under.

**India-Australia H2H in Brisbane**

PLAYED	INDIA
1	
5	
1	
7	

1991: Australia won by 10 wickets

2003: Drawn

1947: Australia won by an innings and 226 runs

1968: Australia won by 39 runs

1977: Australia won by 16 runs

1991: Australia won by 10 wickets

2014: Australia won by four wickets

2021: India won by three wickets

1991: Australia won by 10 wickets

2014: Australia won by four wickets

2021: India won by three wickets

1991: Australia won by 10 wickets

2014: Australia won by four wickets

2021: India won by three wickets

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1991: Australia won by 10 wickets

2014: Australia won by four wickets

2021: India won by three wickets

1991: Australia won by 10 wickets

2014: Australia won by four wickets

2021: India won by three wickets

# Rahane powers Mumbai into the final

Hardik Pandya fails to get going in the semifinal; Patidar's strokeful half-century helps Madhya Pradesh knock out Delhi

## MUSHTAQ ALI TROPHY

### Ashwin Achal

BENGALURU

**A**jinkya Rahane (98, 56b, 11x4, 5x6) tore into the Baroda attack to give Mumbai a six-wicket win in their Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy semifinal at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Friday.

Rahane put on a brilliant attacking display, using classical shots to maximum effect. The 36-year-old made light of the 159-run target set by Baroda, helping his side reach the finish line in 17.2 overs.

Mumbai will take on Madhya Pradesh in the final here on Sunday.

Rahane's intent was clear early, as the opener hit left-arm pacer Lukman Meriwala for two fours and

a six in the first three deliveries he faced.

Rahane flourished in the company of captain Shreyas Iyer (46, 30b, 4x4, 3x6), who proved to be an able foil. The duo put on 88 runs for the second wicket, which took Baroda out of the contest.

Batting first, Baroda could only manage a modest score. Krunal Pandya made a handy 30, but the side's star player Hardik Pandya fell cheaply for five. Shivalik Sharma (36 n.o., 24b, 2x4, 2x6) and Atit Sheth (22, 14b, 2x4, 1x6) came good at the death.

In the second semifinal, Madhya Pradesh rode on fine knocks from Rajat Patidar (66 n.o., 29b, 4x4, 6x6) and Harpreet Singh (46 n.o., 38b, 4x4, 2x6) to knock Delhi out.

Patidar and Harpreet added an unbroken 106-

run fourth-wicket stand to guide Madhya Pradesh to victory.

After being put in, Delhi failed to get going and finished with a disappointing 146 for five. Only Anuj Rawat (33 n.o.) and Priyansh

Arya (29) managed to get among the runs, even as the run-rate stayed under par.

Madhya Pradesh skipper Venkatesh Iyer scalped two wickets in two overs with his medium pace.

**The scores:** Baroda 158/7 in 20 overs (Shashwat Rawat 33, Krunal Pandya 30, Shivalik Sharma 36 n.o.) lost to Mumbai 164/4 in 17.2 overs (Ajinkya Rahane 98, Shreyas Iyer 46).

**Toss:** Mumbai, **PoM:** Ajinkya Rahane

Delhi 146/5 in 20 overs (Priyansh Arya 29, Anuj Rawat 33 n.o.) lost to Madhya Pradesh 152/3 in 15.4 overs (Harsh Gawali 30, Harpreet Singh 46 n.o., Rajat Patidar 66 n.o.). **Toss:** MP, **PoM:** Rajat Patidar.



**Blistering knock:** Rahane was in blazing form as Mumbai rolled into the final. K. MURALI KUMAR

## India squads for WI series

### Sports Bureau

CHENNAI

India's 15-member squads for the limited-overs series against the West Indies were announced on Friday.

**The squads:**

**T20Is:** Harmanpreet Kaur (Capt.), Smriti Mandhana (Vice-capt.), Nandini Kashyap, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wk), Uma Chetry (wk), Deepthi Sharma, Sajana Sajeewan, Raghu Bist, Renuka Singh, Priya Mishra, Titas Sadhu, Saima Thakor, Minnu Mani, and Radha Yadav.

**The schedule:** Dec. 15, 17 and 19, all at DY Patil Stadium (Navi Mumbai), 7 p.m.

**ODIs:** Harmanpreet Kaur (Capt.), Smriti Mandhana (Vice-capt.), Pratika Rawal, Jemimah Rodrigues, Harleen Deol, Richa Ghosh (WK), Uma Chetry (WK), Tejal Hasabis, Deepthi Sharma, Minnu Mani, Priya Mishra, Tanuja Kanwar, Titas Sadhu, Saima Thakor, and Renuka Singh.

**The dates:** Dec. 22 and 24 (1.30 p.m.) and 27 (9.30 a.m.), all games at Kotambi Stadium (Vadodara).

## The newer version of Rahane is fearless and eager for more success

### Ashwin Achal

BENGALURU

For the most part of his career, Ajinkya Rahane made a name for himself as a classical, sedate batter. But in the last couple of years, Rahane has reinvented himself as an attacking T20 opener.

Rahane tops the run charts in this year's Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, smacking 432 runs at an impressive strike rate of nearly 170. He has been in a devastating touch in the last three games, with scores of 98, 84 and 95.

The most recent knock, a 56-ball 98 in the semifinal here on Friday, knocked the fight out of Baroda.

The first signs of Rahane's hitting abilities came in IPL 2023, when he represented Chennai Super Kings. He went at a tournament strike rate of



**Upgrade:** Rahane has reinvented himself as an attacking batter and tops the run charts. K. MURALI KUMAR

172.48, as the M.S. Dhoni-led unit claimed the IPL title.

"The message from CSK was clear - play your natural game. When I played for other teams, the message was to bat till 15-16 overs while others would play around me.

"That was why I was playing at a strike rate of 120 to 130. I am now allowing myself to bat with free-

dom," Rahane said here on Friday.

In IPL 2025, Rahane will turn out for Kolkata Knight Riders, which signed him for his base price of ₹1.5 crore.

At 36, Rahane is in the final phase of his playing career. A former India captain and middle-order mainstay,

Rahane has represented the nation in 85 Tests, 90

ODIs and 20 T20Is.

His last international cap came in July 2023, in a Test against West Indies. The desire to wear the Indian jersey once again, however, has not diminished.

"The love and passion for cricket keeps me going. I still love the game, and the fire inside me is still alive to represent India," Rahane said.

## Services will be keen to defend its crown

### SANTOSH TROPHY

#### Sports Bureau

HYDERABAD

Hyderabad, once the hot-spot of Indian football, will host the prestigious Santosh Trophy national championship from Saturday after a gap of 57 years, featuring 37 matches. The top four teams from each six-team group will qualify for the quarterfinals.

Three matches will be played on the opening day with Services, the defending champion and seven-time titlist winning six of the last 11 titles, taking on former champion Manipur in the morning.

The home team, coached by Shaik Khaleel, should look to put up a much-improved performance when it takes on Rajasthan.

The opening day will also witness the record 32-time winner West Bengal taking on Jammu & Kashmir in the evening.

But for Sanjoy Sen and his men, history matters little as they aim to end a seven-year title drought.

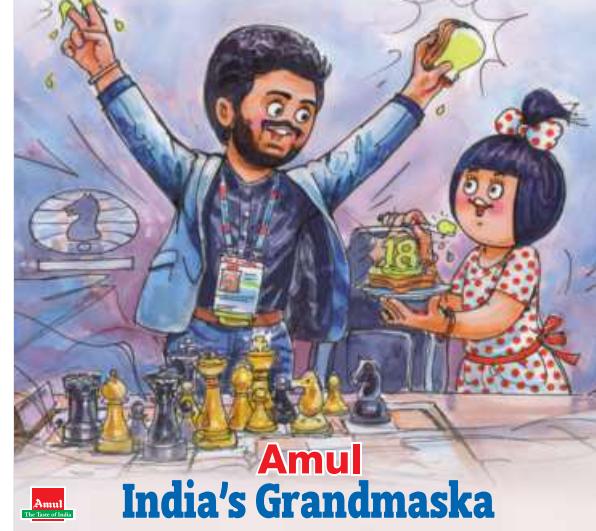
The Group B matches will commence on Sunday with strong contender Kerala taking on Goa, with the two teams sharing 12 titles.

Tamil Nadu, meanwhile, will entertain Meghalaya and will be high on confidence.

**The groupings:** **Group A:** Services, West Bengal, Manipur, Telangana, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan.

**Group B:** Goa, Delhi, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Meghalaya.

## Loved across the Board



### IN BRIEF



## Siverio's strikes give JFC fifth home win of season

Javi Siverio's brace powered Jamshedpur FC to a 2-1 win over Punjab FC in an ISL match at Jamshedpur on Friday. This was Jamshedpur's fifth home win of the season. The hosts broke the deadlock in the added time of the first half as Siverio fired home. Punjab retaliated immediately in the second half through Ezequiel Vidal. However, Siverio nodded home the winner in the 84th minute.

**The result:** Jamshedpur FC 2 (Siverio 45+4 & 84) bt Punjab FC 1 (Vidal 46).

## Treesa-Gayatri bow out of BWF World Tour Finals

The Indian women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand missed out on a semifinal spot at the BWF World Tour Finals after losing to Japan's Nami Matsuyama and Chihiro Shida 21-17, 21-13 in their third and final group A match here on Friday.



## Devank, Ayan shine again as Pirates climb to second

Tamil Thalaivas produced a spirited show but Patna Pirates' raiders Devank (12 points) and Ayan (13) propelled the three-time champion to a 42-38 win in a PKL 11 contest in Pune on Friday. Shubham Shinde registered a High 5. For Thalaivas, Moein Shafagh (II) and Sachin (8) performed well. Puneri Paltan cantered to a 56-18 win over Bengaluru Bulls in the other match.



## Wawrinka gets wild-card entry for Australian Open

Three-time major champion Stan Wawrinka was among nine wild-card entries awarded on Friday for the Australian Open in January. Tennis Australia said Wawrinka would be joined at Melbourne Park - where the main draw begins on Jan. 12 - by Australians Tristan Schoolkate, Li Tu, James McCabe, Daria Saville, Ajla Tomljanovic, Emerson Jones, Talia Gibson and Maya Jant. It said more main draw wild cards and wild-card entries to the qualifying tournament will be announced soon.

## Gillespie resigns as Pakistan's red-ball coach

Jason Gillespie stepped down from his role as Pakistan's Test team coach and former pacer Aaqib Javed has replaced the Australian for the upcoming two-match series against South Africa, PCB announced on Thursday. Aaqib is currently the interim coach of Pakistan white-ball outfits.

## India in Asia Cup semis; qualifies for Junior WC

### HOCKEY

#### Press Trust of India

MUSCAT

Deepika led the way with four goals as defending champion India returned to winning ways in style, crushing Thailand 9-0 to enter the semifinals of the Women's Junior Asia Cup and also qualified for the upcoming Junior World Cup here on Thursday.

India opened the scoring in the 17th minute

through Sakshi Rana.

The Indians were not able to breach the Thai defence in the initial moments of the game but once the deadlock was broken, there was no looking back.

Kanika Siwach (23) found the back of the net six minutes later and made it 3-0 for India with another strike in the 25th minute off a penalty corner.

Lalrinpuui scored a field goal in the 27th minute to put Thailand under tremendous pressure.

It was the turn of Deepika to get into the score-sheet as she struck India's fifth goal in the 28th minute.

India led 5-0 at half-time, making a remarkable comeback after its 2-1 defeat to three-time winner China on Wednesday.

Deepika returned to score the team's sixth goal in the 31st minute and then achieved her hat-trick in the 35th minute.

Kanika found her third goal when she scored her

team's eighth goal in the 40th minute.

India completed the rout of Thailand with Deepika's fourth strike in the 55th minute.

The semifinals are slated for Saturday, with the final scheduled for Sunday.

India had clinched the title in the last edition held in Kakamigahara, Japan, defeating South Korea 2-1 in the summit clash.

**The result:** India 9 (Sakshi Rana 17, Kanika Siwach 23, 25, 40, Lalrinpuui 27, Deepika 28, 31, 35, 55) bt Thailand 0.



**Outstanding:** Kanika's phenomenal performance, including a hat-trick, earned her the Player of the Match award. X@THEHOCKEYINDIA

## Ajeetesh crowned Vishwa Samudra Open champion

### GOLF

#### Sports Bureau

NEW DELHI

Ajeetesh Sandhu stayed solid right through the fourth round for a 1-under 71 to run away with the trophy, with an overall 12-under 276, in the ₹2 crore Vishwa Samudra Open golf championship at the Delhi Golf Club on Friday.

It was the seventh title of his career, and fifth in the domestic circuit for the 36-year-old Ajeetesh – and the first in five years – as he won by five shots against the champion of the last event in Digboi, Jamal Hossain of Bangla-

desh. The champion collected ₹30 lakh.

"I have seen the greats of Indian golf win here at the DGC. So, I too wanted to win here," said Ajeetesh, quite pleased to have won at the historic course in the presence of his wife, Tvesa Malik, herself a leading professional golfer.

Ajeetesh had jumped into the lead on the second day and stayed ahead thereafter.

**Double bogey**

Jamal had a double-bogey on the sixth hole and fell behind by four shots against the leader, and lost the race for the title. He won ₹20 lakh.



**Triumphant:** Ajeetesh won with an overall score of 12-under 276. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

### LIVE TELECAST

#### Zimbabwe vs Afghanistan: 3rd

T20I, FanCode, 5 p.m.

#### ISL: Sports 18-3 & JioCinema, 5 & 7.30 p.m.

#### LaLiga: gxr.world, 6.30, 8.45, 11 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Sunday)</h4