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Kallop Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has been invited to represent the Government of India at the swearing-in ceremony of the U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on January 20. Mr. Trump has invited several heads of government and heads of state to be present at the event and the subsequent celebrations that are to be held in Washington D.C.

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TALKS WITH EU

Saudi Arabia calls for lifting Syria curbs

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Is Trump's fiat for the EU to buy U.S. oil justified?

EU had already turned to U.S., to stay off Russia

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BREEZING THROUGH
Sabalenka and Zverev ease into round two

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Jaishankar to attend Trump's January 20 swearing-in ceremony in Washington D.C.

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Kumbh confluence



Countdown on: Preparations in full swing in the Sangam area of Prayagraj on Sunday, the eve of the start of the 45-day Maha Kumbh being held after 12 years. The first major bathing ritual, or *Shahi Snan*, will be held today. SANDEEP SAXENA (REPORT ON PAGE 10)

Border issue:
Bangladesh
summons
Indian envoy

Kallop Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

The interim government of Bangladesh on Sunday expressed "deep concern" about the prevailing situation along the India-Bangladesh borders.

Dhaka's message was conveyed by Foreign Secretary Mohammad Jashim Uddin to the Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma during a meeting held soon after the Adviser on Home Affairs, Jehangir Alam Chowdhury, informed presspersons that India has been erecting fences in five locations on the Indo-Bangladesh borders, and alleged that Bangladesh authorities were not consulted before starting the construction work. He announced that the Indian envoy was being "summoned" to discuss the situation.

Mr. Verma also met the media after the meeting as heated exchanges continued between the two sides. "We have an understanding with regard to fencing the border for security. BSF and BGB have been in communication in this regard," High Commissioner Verma told the media.

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Declining fertility levels push up Kerala's maternal mortality ratio

C. Maya

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala's maternal mortality ratio, the lowest in the country at 19 per one lakh live births, is now climbing steadily, much to the consternation of the State Health Department. The reasons for the increase may be beyond the control of officials.

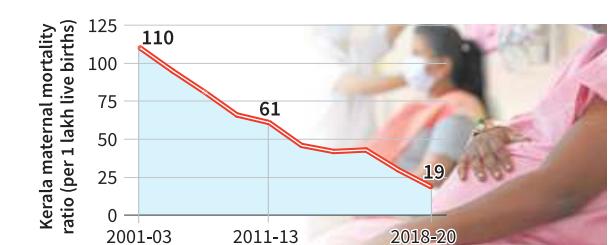
The latest Sample Registration System special bulletin on maternal mortality in India (2018-20), brought out by the Registrar-General of India, put Kerala's MMR at 19. However, while it depended on a sample survey to arrive at the figure, the State Health Department's actual estimates of maternal deaths - Kerala has near 100% institutional deliveries - put the figure at 29.

Except during 2020-21, when Kerala lost many women to COVID-19 during pregnancy and childbirth, the State had consistently held a firm grip over maternal mortality. Ironically, the current spike is not because more women are dying but because there are fewer childbearing than ever in the State.

The State has now hit a low of 3,93,231 births from an average of 5.5 lakh annually earlier, show the latest data of the Economics and Statistics Department

A worrying trend

Kerala's MMR is beginning to climb now because of fewer child births than ever in the State



The State has now hit a low of 3,93,231 births from an average of 5.5 lakh annually earlier

of the State. It is this dip in the denominator that is pushing the MMR up and not necessarily an actual spike in maternal deaths.

The Health Department puts live births in the State between 3.4 lakh and 3.9 lakh currently. The full Vital Statistics Report (VSR) for 2023 is expected by January-end.

The decline in fertility and changing demographics, many fear, are having an irrevocable impact on the State's social fabric, and have been at the heart of many policy-level discussions in Kerala, especially in the past three years.

From an average of 5.5 lakh annual births since the 1980s, the graph went below the five-lakh mark for the first time in 2016, when 4,96,262 live births were recorded. Since 2018, the figure has been plummeting steadily, never going above the five-lakh mark again. The last published VSR (2021) recorded the total number of live births as 4,19,767.

"As part of the Sustainable Development Goals, Kerala was targeting an MMR of 20 by 2030. However, that looks quite unlikely now, given that birth rates are falling steeply. We reckon the State's MMR in 2024-25 has already climbed to 32," says V.P. Paily, a senior consultant in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

"It would now be a herculean task to hold the MMR at 20. Because, while

we have successfully addressed all major medical causes of maternal mortality, the issues that are impacting the State's MMR now are not something essentially within our control. We are seeing the impact of demographic changes like low fertility rates, immigration and changing societal attitudes towards marriage and childbirth in Kerala much earlier than we thought we would," Dr. Paily says.

"It has been three decades since the birth rate began falling in Kerala and the steep fall in the number of children born now is part of a larger trend. But the problem is that once the fertility rate comes down, the graph rarely goes up because demographic transition is hard to reverse," says S. Irudaya Rajan, Chairman of the International Institute of Migration and Development (IIMD).

Kerala led the demographic transition in the South, attaining the replacement level fertility rate of 2.1 in 1987-88. Replacement level fertility is the average number of children a woman needs to have to replace herself and her generation, so that the population is stable.

CONTINUED ON
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Cong's third guarantee: ₹8,500 every month to jobless youth in Delhi

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday promised to provide ₹8,500 per month for one year to educated unemployed youth in Delhi under the 'Yuvा Udaan Yojana' (Youth Apprenticeship Scheme) if voted to power.

This is the third promise by the Congress ahead of the Assembly election scheduled for February 5.

On January 6, the party announced the 'Pyaari Didi Yojana', promising ₹2,500 per month for women and on January 8, it promised free health insurance of up to ₹25 lakh under the 'Jeevan Raksha Yojana'.

Making the promise at a press conference on Sunday, AICC general secretary Sachin Pilot said the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Aam Aadmi Party have "totally ignored" the youth in the past 11 years when they were busy building "Raj Mahal" and "Sheesh Mahal".

"Raj Mahal" and "Sheesh Mahal" are terms used by parties to refer to the "lavish" residences of the Prime Minister and the Delhi Chief Minister, respectively.

Mr. Pilot said that the Congress is committed to fulfilling its guarantees upon coming to power, as

His seat given to Kapil Mishra, BJP MLA Bisht named from Mustafabad

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI



Poll promise: Congress leader Sachin Pilot in the Capital on Sunday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

people have trust and faith in Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leader Rahul Gandhi to implement the promises.

'Not a dole' He added that the ₹8,500 monthly allowance would not be a "dole" for idling youth but a job-oriented stipend to develop and enhance their skills. The Congress leader said while the government will provide the funds, private companies will engage the registered youth to develop their skills and absorb them.

Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Devenver Yadav said, "The stipend will channelise the skills of the youth towards constructive work and give direction to their lives."

If the BJP thinks it will field anyone and win the seat, it is making a big mistake," Mr. Bisht said, adding, "Time will tell the importance of ground-level workers".

Later in the day, the BJP named the legislator from the neighbouring seat of Mustafabad. The MLA did not issue a reaction to the development till the time of going to press.

Ban on construction activities lifted as air quality improves in Delhi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Sunday lifted the ban on construction and demolition activities and plying of BS III petrol and BS IV diesel four-wheeler as the air quality in the national capital improved due to weather conditions.

The air quality index (AQI) of Delhi has been recorded as 278 [poor] at 4 p.m. on Sunday, the Commission for Air Quality



Smog seen over the Yamuna in New Delhi on Sunday. The AQI remained in the 'poor' category in the Capital. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Management in Delhi and NCR stated. "The forecast by IMD predicts another western disturbance in the region around January 14-15," it added. The AQI on Sa-

turday was 327 and falls under the "very poor" category.

The ban, imposed on January 9, was part of a list of actions under Stage III of the Graded Response Action Plan, a set of emergency measures taken to reduce pollution. It also included mandatory class shifting for students up to Class V from 'physical' to 'hybrid mode' in Delhi, Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar.

Kannauj collapse: 28 workers pulled out as rescue operation ends

Press Trust of India
KANNAUJ (U.P.)



Rescue operation underway on Sunday after a building collapsed at the Kannauj railway station. PTI

All 28 workers were pulled out safely by rescuers from the rubble of a collapsed under-construction building at Kannauj railway station following a 16-hour overnight operation, officials said on Sunday.

An FIR has been registered against the contractor and an engineer for various offences including negligence and endangering lives, they said.

The rescue teams, including personnel from the national and State Disaster Response Forces and the Railways, worked through the cold winter night to clear the debris and pull out the trapped workers.

No fatalities have been

reported, the officials said. Twenty-six workers have been admitted to various hospitals in Kannauj, while two with serious injuries were shifted to the Lala Lajpat Rai (LLR) Hospital in Kanpur, they said. The workers at the LLR Hospital are out of danger, hospital sources said.

Leopard seen in Tirupati; man falls off bike in panic

The Hindu Bureau
TIRUPATI

Yet another leopard sighting near Alipiri, at the Tirumala foothills, has sent a fresh wave of panic among residents of Tirupati.

D. Muni Kumar, working as a contract employee at Aswini Hospital at Tirumala hills, saw a leopard jumping off the road median to reach the forest nearby on Saturday. As he panicked and tried to swerve away from the divider, his motor-bike skidded and collapsed on the road. He sustained serious injuries on the head and shoulder.

Leopards have been making frequent appearances on this road during the last several months. The last sighting was reported just a month ago.

The protest of the Munambam residents, spear-

Conduct land survey in Munambam, Waqf Board tells committee

It also asks the judicial panel to take steps to 'protect the interests of the persons occupying the Waqf property' without causing loss to the board

K.S. Sudhi
KOCHI

The Kerala Waqf Board has urged the C.N. Ramachandran Nair Judicial Commission on the Munambam land dispute to recommend to the government steps to "protect the interests of the persons occupying the Waqf property without causing loss to the Waqf".

The Board, asserting that the holding was a Waqf, suggested that the commission issue directions to survey the land covered by the Waqf deed and identify the extent of properties in the possession of third persons and Farook College, and that was lost to sea. The managing committee of the Kozhikode college is the Mutawalli (manager) of the property.

A mere reading of the deed by which the property reached the college would reveal that it was a Waqf property and much of it was alienated, according to the statement filed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Board before the commission last week.

The Kerala Waqf Samrakshana Vedi urged the State government to withdraw the order appointing the commission as the question regarding the nature of the holding was not to be decided by the commission on its Terms of Reference.

The complaint alleged that in November 2022, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation attempted to demolish parts of the restaurant despite an existing interim injunction granted by the Additional Chief Judge, City Civil Court, Hyderabad. "This demolition was halted after the intervention, but on the evening of November 13, 2022, the accused purportedly employed 50 to 60 individuals to vandalise the property and steal valuables," Mr. Kumar said.

As per the FIR, the complainant Nanda Kumar claimed significant financial losses following alleged illegal activities by the accused parties. The properties in question, plot numbers 2 and 3 at Film Nagar, Jubilee Hills, were leased to the complainant for operating a hotel business.

The complaint alleged that in November 2022, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation attempted to demolish parts of the restaurant despite an existing interim injunction granted by the Additional Chief Judge, City Civil Court, Hyderabad. "This demolition was halted after the intervention, but on the evening of November 13, 2022, the accused purportedly employed 50 to 60 individuals to vandalise the property and steal valuables," Mr. Kumar said.

"In January 2024, the Daggubati family allegedly demolished the structure," he added. Mr. Kumar approached Nampally Court for violation of orders and the court ordered investigation into the matter. On Saturday, the court issued directions to the police to file a case.



Strong opposition: A march to the Waqf Board office taken out by the BJP Minority Morcha at Munambam in Kerala. H. VIBHU

party was not a Waqf, but a gift deed, was not maintainable before the commission as the question regarding the nature of the holding was not to be decided by the commission on its Terms of Reference.

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IN BRIEF



Steve Jobs's wife visits temple in Varanasi ahead of Kumbh

Laurene Powell Jobs, the wife of late Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, visited the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi on Saturday before her scheduled visit to Prayagraj for the Maha Kumbh. Swami Kailashanand Giri Ji Maharaj of Niranjanji Akhara accompanied Ms. Jobs to the temple. Wearing a pink suit and a white dupatta covering her head, the American billionaire businesswoman and philanthropist offered prayers from outside the sanctum sanctorum at the Kashi Vishwanath Temple. "The visitor followed the traditions of the temple. She prayed for the successful completion of the Maha Kumbh," said Mr. Giri.

Parents' body files complaint against Jharkhand principal

A Jharkhand parents' body on Sunday wrote to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPNR) seeking action against a Dhanbad school principal who allegedly ordered 80 schoolgirls to remove their shirts for writing messages on them. The Jharkhand Abhibhawak Mahasangh filed a complaint with the NCPNR, accusing the principal of committing a "shameful act" and demanding action under the POCSO Act. The principal was accused of ordering 80 girls of Class X to remove their shirts for writing messages on them, prompting the administration to initiate an inquiry, an official said. The girls were allegedly forced to return home in their blazers without shirts, the parents alleged. PTI

J&K govt. unveils austerity steps to reduce expenditure

Announcing a series of austerity measures to reduce expenditure for the current financial year, the Jammu and Kashmir government has imposed a complete ban on holding of meetings in private hotels and discouraged conducting exhibitions outside the Union Territory. The government also banned creation of new posts and called for surrender of all posts which have remained vacant for more than two years. It also decided to regulate travel expenditure to ensure that each department's spending remains within the allocated budget. In a three-page order, Principal Secretary (Finance Department) Santosh D. Vaidya said sanction is accorded to the rationalisation of expenditure with immediate effect. PTI

Remains of Bhopal's 40-year-old tragic past are pumping up paranoia in Pithampur

SPOTLIGHT

Mehul Malpani

It's close to sundown and a family is gathering in the courtyard of their home near the ancient Bokneshwar Mahadev temple in Tarpura village, Pithampur town of Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district. The Puri family members have been priests at the temple for generations. There's a discussion about the town's tense atmosphere, and the matriarch asks if she and her family of at least 15 will die. Their home is opposite an industrial waste treatment plant.

On January 3, the usually peaceful town of Pithampur, about 35 km from Madhya Pradesh's financial capital Indore, erupted in protest. People across genders and ages were out on the streets of what is one of the largest industrial areas in the State. As the day progressed, two persons attempted self-immolation. The next day, an angry group of protesters peleted stones and tried to march to the waste treatment plant.

It is now a few days past the protests and life in the densely populated town has resumed its regular pace, with markets open, roads full of traffic and trucks honking. However, in Tarpura village, located

on a pahadi (hill) on Pithampur's outskirts, the number of security personnel grows larger close to the plant.

The people's anger is directed towards the Madhya Pradesh government's plan to dispose of 358 tonnes of toxic chemical waste at the Pithampur Industrial Waste Management Private Limited, owned by the Ramky Group. The waste was generated from a disaster 40 years ago.

In the early winter of 1984, on the intervening night of December 2 and 3, M.P.'s capital Bhopal woke up to a nightmare. The toxic gas, methyl isocyanate (MIC), leaked from the Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) factory, killing thousands. The health impact is still felt among those who live here. The waste had been lying at the now-abandoned factory in Bhopal for four decades.

While small protests in the industrial town, as well as in Indore, had been going on since the shifting of waste gained steam around the end of December 2024, the anxiety grew, bursting into protests against the disposal there. On the morning of January 2, 12 trucks carried spill-and-leak-free containers loaded with the waste to the facility in Pithampur.

While the Central government estimates, based on a report by the Office of



On alert: Trucks loaded with toxic waste from the Union Carbide factory, a byproduct of the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy, inside the premises of the Pithampur Industrial Waste Management plant. A.M. FARUQUI

the Welfare Commissioner, Bhopal Gas Victims, say that 5,479 people have died due to the disaster as of 2022, several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and activists have claimed that the numbers surpass 15,000. Government estimates also show that while thousands suffered physical disabilities in the aftermath of the accident, it has also had health implications on more than 5 lakh people over the decades.

Questions and answers From their terrace, Vijay Puri, 24, the matriarch's grandson, and other family members point at the plant and to the police barricades outside. He reiterates

his grandmother's concern: "Why has the government brought Bhopal's waste here?" He and his family draw attention to a statement by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav after the waste reached the town on January 2. "He claimed that the toxicity of the waste lasts 25 years, so now it is not harmful. If it is not harmful, why can't they just burn it in Bhopal?" says Vijay.

People in Tarpura and nearby villages have many questions, including whether the waste disposal will be done safely. Swatantra Kumar Singh, Director of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief and Rehabilitation Department, says it will be

incinerated at 1,200 degrees Celsius. "A batch of 90 kg will be incinerated, after which the toxicity feedback rate will be examined. If it is within limits, the waste will be incinerated in batches of 270 kg and will take about three months. Otherwise, the process will be slowed, and may take up to nine months," he says.

The government has also highlighted a Supreme Court-directed trial in 2015 in which 10 tonnes of the same waste from the UCIL factory was incinerated at the treatment plant. It was after this trial and submission of a success report that the Supreme Court had first issued directions for the incineration of the re-

maining waste at Pithampur.

The people in Pithampur are not convinced. "What will happen if even 10% of what happened in Bhopal happens here? Our children will die in 10-15 years," says Lakshmi Sahu, 28, who runs a tea shop opposite the Pithampur bus stand, the epicentre of the January 3 protests. "It's not easy for us to keep our shops shut for two days but we did that during the protests to save our children's future," she says, as her five-year-old daughter plays.

Vijay shows an old well near the Bokneshwar Mahadev temple, now covered with a grill. Several people in the village say that the well was a major source of water for them before the authorities covered it after the 2015 trial disposal of the 10-tonne UCIL waste. "During the monsoon, when the water pours onto the landfill sites, a foul smell also spreads in the locality," Vijay says.

Decades-long mistrust In 2008, 40 kg of Union Carbide's toxic waste was transported to Pithampur in the dead of night, during a curfew in Indore. This had caused protests at the time. Since the early 2010s, the people of Pithampur have been opposing the plans to burn the waste in

their town. The current task of disposal has been handed to the Ramky Group's plant for ₹126 crore.

Behind the anger and fear of Bhopal's waste is also the scepticism of the "Ramky factory" as it is known locally. Apart from Tarpura, various villages or localities – such as Dhanbad, Chirkan, Akoliya, Bardari, and Silotiya – located around the plant, claim they have been adversely impacted by it. Residents allege that the residue of the industrial waste at landfill sites and two drains from the factory have contaminated local water bodies and the groundwater.

Rajesh Bhariya, 36, a farmer in Tarpura, says that even borewells are not used to water the crops in the village and that farmers rely only on dew for moisture in the winter crops. "The groundwater is red, almost like petrol. If you use it in crops, your current crop will go bad and it will also affect the yield of the next crop," he says.

He points to the chickpea field where his mother, Sarju Bai, 70, is working: "You can see the size of the plants. They are much smaller than usual, because of the lack of water," he says.

His mother intervenes to talk about a well in the valley behind her fields.

"We used to drink water from it until six to eight years ago. Now look at its condition," she says. The well has a layer of foam on its surface. A drain from the plant flows less than 5 metres away. Some 100 metres further into the valley, a larger drain flows.

In an activist's words While various government departments are working to win the public's trust, activists are trying to ensure that the intensity of the public outrage does not dip until the next hearing in the Madhya Pradesh High Court on February 18.

Rajesh Choudhary, a lawyer and activist, whose intervention petition was accepted by the High Court during the January 6 hearing, is now gathering documents related to the case. "The consequences of this disposal may not be visible immediately, but over the years there may be leakages from the buried residue during the rains. If that happens, it is going to pollute the groundwater," he says, claiming that some of the drains from the treatment plant and industries fall into two water bodies – the Kishanpura Lake and Yashwant Sagar reservoir – both of which are in Indore district and are major sources of water in the area.

LINK TO FULL STORY
» <https://bit.ly/3WfY0c>

In Shirdi, Shah takes a dig at Pawar over 'politics of betrayal and treachery'

Union Home Minister credits BJP's Assembly poll victory in Maharashtra to continued stability in the State, says people 'showed NCP(SP) chief and Uddhav their place in the 2024 elections'

Abhinay Deshpande

MUMBAI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday launched a scathing attack on Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) chief Sharad Pawar, accusing him of perpetuating a politics of "betrayal and treachery" in Maharashtra since 1978.

Mr. Shah, addressing the Maharashtra Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) convention in the temple town of Shirdi, claimed that the party's massive win in the 2024 Assembly election signalled the end of the era of instability and dynasty politics.

"The people of Maharashtra rejected Mr. Pawar's and Uddhav Thackeray's politics of betrayal and showed them their place in the 2024 elections," Mr. Shah said. He noted that the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance secured 230 of the 288 seats in the Assembly, with the BJP alone winning 132. The



Union Home Minister Amit Shah offering prayers at the Sai Baba temple in Shirdi on Sunday. ANI

Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance was reduced to 46 seats, with the NCP(SP) and the Shiv Sena(UBT) winning only 10 and 20 seats, respectively.

'Will fulfil promises'

The BJP leader accused Mr. Pawar of exploiting his positions of power, including as Chief Minister and Union Agriculture Minister, without addressing the issues

plaguing farmers, particularly suicides. "Only BJP, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has introduced concrete schemes to alleviate farmers' distress," he said, urging party workers to focus on strengthening the organisation at the grassroots by involving women and farmers.

He dismissed concerns over fulfilling the BJP's promises, stating, "Our govern-

ment delivered on Ram Mandir, abrogation of Article 370, and will eradicate Naxalism by March 31, 2026. Let the Opposition watch as we fulfil every assurance."

Mr. Shah also took a dig at the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc, pointing out internal discord among its members. "Shiv Sena(UBT) is contesting local body elections alone, and the Congress and AAP are fighting separately in Delhi. The decline of the Opposition bloc has begun," he said, expressing confidence in BJP's victory in upcoming elections, including the Delhi Assembly poll next month.

The convention marks the BJP's first major event since its November 2024 electoral victory and the formation of a government under Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Nearly 15,000 delegates are ex-

Arrogance shown by T.N. CM is not good: Raj Bhavan

The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI



T. N. Governor R.N. Ravi

A day after Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin made some remarks on the floor of the Assembly against Governor R.N. Ravi, the Raj Bhavan on Sunday reacted strongly, saying that Mr. Stalin's "arrogance" was not good.

In a social media post, the Raj Bhavan contended that the Chief Minister had asserted that insisting on due respect to the national anthem and observing fundamental duties enshrined in the Constitution were "absurd" and "childish."

"Thanks for betraying the true intentions of the coalition of interests and ideologies to which he is a leader that does not accept and respect Bharat as a nation and Her Constitution. Such arrogance is not good," the post said.

"Please do not forget that Bharat is the supreme Mother and the Constitution, the supreme faith for her children. They will not like or tolerate such brazen insult," it added.

Reacting to the Raj Bhavan's statement, DMK gen-

eral secretary and Minister for Water Resources Duraimurugan said in Vellore on Sunday that only Mr. Ravi was "arrogant" and not the Chief Minister. The Governor, Mr. Duraimurugan said, deliberately asked to change the convention that had been followed in the Assembly for all these years. Interacting with journalists, he said: "All these years, the custom followed in the Assembly was that *Tamil Thai Vaazhthu* would be sung at the beginning of the proceedings and the national anthem at the end."

Meanwhile, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) State president K. Annamalai said there is nothing wrong in Mr. Ravi's criticism of Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, and that he was forced to do so.

New State emblem for Tripura sparks row; replace it, says Oppn.

Syed Sajjad Ali

AGARTALA

Leader of the Opposition in the Tripura Assembly Jitendra Chaudhury on Sunday said the State emblem, which was approved by the Centre three days ago, does not reflect the State's "nature, culture, and landscape".

Chief Minister Manik Saha had on January 9 announced that the Union Ministry of Home Affairs granted approval to the

newly designed State emblem. He had termed the development a "significant milestone". Mr. Chaudhury claimed that there were murmurs of dissent regarding the design of the emblem within the ruling BJP as well.

'Respect sentiments' He demanded that the State government "respect the public sentiment" and replace it with "an appropriate design". It has the national emblem at the

centre of an outline of the State map, which is placed in a saffron circle with "Government of Tripura" written below. "State emblem should have reflected the uniqueness of Tripura's landscape," said the CPI (M) State secretary. However, he added, the government has selected a logo that has "triggered controversy". "I am not against any colour, even saffron, but it seems the logo was created intentionally," Mr. Chaudhury said.



Centralising control

The Centre must not attempt to run universities by proxy appointments

In a federal setup, attempts at undermining any stakeholder in the subject matter of education, which is in the Concurrent List, will prove disruptive. The Draft UGC (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment and Promotion of Teachers and Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulations, 2025, seeks to do precisely this. Demonstrating the Centre's penchant for facilitating control over institutions through gubernatorial proxies, it proposes to divest State governments of their role in the selection process for Vice Chancellor (VC) of universities. All powers are sought to be vested in the Chancellor – i.e., the Governor in most State universities – by taking away the function of constituting the search-cum-selection committee from the higher education departments. Such a committee would comprise a nominee each of the Chancellor; UGC Chairman; and of the respective university syndicate/senate. The Chancellor would appoint the VC out of three to five names recommended by the committee. Any violations, the draft warns, could attract debarment from participating in UGC schemes and denial of funding under the UGC Act. This comes against the backdrop of conflicts between State governments and Raj Bhavans on appointing VCs, which have deprived several universities, particularly in Tamil Nadu, of leadership. Naturally, opposition has come from several States, including Tamil Nadu, which passed a House resolution urging the Centre to immediately withdraw the draft. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has argued that the draft is not only against the basic federal principles enshrined in the Constitution but also poses a threat to the higher education system. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, the AIADMK and the CPI-M have endorsed this stance.

A proposal to make non-academics eligible for the VC's job has also drawn criticism. The draft says such non-academics must have served for at least 10 years at a senior level in industry, public administration, public policy and/or public sector undertakings, with a proven track record of significant academic or scholarly contributions. Mr. Vijayan fears this could be used to appoint Sangh Parivar loyalists. However, universities have benefited from the scholarship of non-academics such as former President K.R. Narayanan and scientist Y. Nayudamma; appointing academics does not guarantee visionary leadership. The proposal to extend the VC's tenure from the typical three to five years is welcome. The UGC would do well to remove anti-federal clauses from the draft regulations and allay apprehensions on other provisions. In the long run, it should aim for reforms to obliterate any governmental role in university administration, except maybe, for funding, and elevate them into truly autonomous institutions that nurture excellence.

Law by reflex

Good implementation, not stringency of law, will deter sexual crimes

The tendency to make existing laws more stringent is an administrative reflex action often occasioned by political problems set off by particular crimes. The amendments enacted by the Tamil Nadu Assembly to criminal laws on sexual crimes against women fall under this category. In response to the Opposition moves to corner the DMK regime after a rape within the premises of Anna University in Chennai, the government has moved to enhance punishments under the penal and procedural laws. That the perpetrator is a DMK sympathiser and that some details of the student survivor were leaked added political sharpness to the general criticism over such an offence happening inside the campus. At pains to deny any leniency and overcome the setback to its image after the Madras High Court formed a special investigation team, the DMK government has chosen to amend the law based on the theory that more stringent laws deter sexual assault and harassment. This belief is not founded on any statistical or empirical evidence, but is often invoked by those in government. This invariably means the use of legislative power to send out a political message that the administration is committed to women's safety. After all, necessary amendments need not have to wait for a brazen crime or a public outcry.

This is not to say the amendments are unreasonable: they enhance punishments for a range of sexual offences and extend bail-denying features to such offences as well as those under the POCSO Act. Also welcome is the new provision for passing binding protection orders that will ensure perpetrators do not contact survivors by any means. The death penalty has been introduced for acid attack that results in the victim being reduced to a vegetative state. On the other hand, the newly introduced definition of harassment of women to cover the use of digital and electronic means and even non-verbal means may be too broadly worded and prone to misuse. Few would disagree with the enhancement of jail terms for rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking and voyeurism, but a question does arise whether the mere increase in the quantum of punishment increases the possibility of conviction or reduces the incidence of these crimes. The onus of arresting offenders, gathering credible evidence and proving it in court remains the same. Impartial investigation and resisting pressure for a cover-up while effectively implementing existing laws are more crucial for demonstrating commitment to women's safety. Making workplaces, public space and homes safer for women will work better than merely adding to the severity of laws.

India's data protection rules need some fine-tuning

On January 3, 2025, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) released the much-anticipated Draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Rules – a key moment in India's journey to regulate digital personal data. This step follows the passage of the DPDP Act, 2023, bringing India closer to operationalising its framework for safeguarding personal data.

The draft rules represent a departure from the earlier and controversial Personal Data Protection Bill, which many deemed was overly restrictive and even hostile to industry interests. The Bill underwent extensive framing, reframing and consultations over nearly a decade, only to be rescinded when committees and government stakeholders wisely decided it was untenable.

In contrast, the positive response to the DPDP Act and its accompanying rules, reflected in conversations with businesses and in media coverage, stems from the less prescriptive, principles-based approach of the draft rules.

Unlike the earlier rush to regulate under the so-called "Brussels Effect", where global digital rulemaking mirrored the European Union (EU)'s interventionist regulatory ethos, India has taken a more pragmatic stance. The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), once hailed as a gold standard by privacy experts, now faces criticism for unintended consequences – favouring well-resourced corporations, stifling smaller enterprises, and failing to significantly enhance public trust in the Internet. India's measured approach thus far offers a refreshing alternative to Europe's interventionist policies.

The hits as pragmatism and flexibility

One of the draft rules' standout features is their principles-based framework for notice and consent. While the GDPR has cumbersome requirements, such as notifying users of indirect data acquisition, cross-border data transfers, and automated decision-making processes, India's rules emphasise simplicity and clarity. This helps reduce "consent fatigue", a significant issue in Europe, where users are inundated with unnecessary details, such as the location of data processing – information of little practical use.

In 2023, the European Commission introduced the Cookie Pledge Initiative to address growing frustration over incessant consent pop-ups. However, such course correction would have been unnecessary had the EU taken a less invasive approach to regulating user interfaces and consent mechanisms. The very existence of this pledge highlights the burdens created by prescriptive regulation.

India's DPDP Rules sidestep these pitfalls by focusing on outcomes rather than processes, empowering users without drowning businesses and consumers in unnecessary complexities. The

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Vivan Sharhan
a technology policy expert at Koan Advisory Group



Srishti Joshi
a technology policy expert at Koan Advisory Group

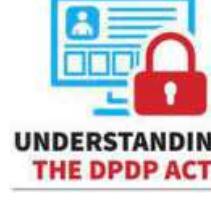
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rules avoid dictating how entities should enable users to exercise their rights to correction, erasure, nomination, withdrawal of consent and to seek information from entities. They require only the publication of relevant information on apps and websites. In contrast, the GDPR is prescriptive about how similar information should be presented, including instances where entities may need to provide this information orally to users. Why should the state dictate every aspect of an app or website's design or user interface? India's approach, thankfully, respects business autonomy and innovation.

The processing of children's personal data requires stricter protection compared to other types of data processing – which the rules provide for. However, as more children engage with digital technologies online, they increasingly benefit from certain activities, such as monitoring and tracking, which are of value in specific contexts. Take the case of educational institutions, including supplementary education and vocational training services. They rely on activities such as behavioural monitoring and tracking to deliver targeted interventions tailored to students' academic performance.

These practices leverage the benefits of learning management systems, which personalise instruction and improve educational outcomes. Recognising this, the rules thoughtfully allow exemptions for specific industries. Educational institutions, clinical and mental health establishments, allied health-care providers, and child-care centres are not required to verify parental consent for tracking and behavioural monitoring, as long as they adhere to guardrails. The exemption for such industries demonstrates a nuanced understanding of industry-specific needs, reflecting the principles of thoughtful policymaking.

The misses as data localisation, overreach

However, the draft rules are not without flaws. Their provisions for restricting cross-border data flows introduce unnecessary complexity and ambiguity. Significant Data Fiduciaries (SDFs) – large enterprises handling substantial data volumes – face potential localisation mandates that extend beyond the legislation's original scope. While the DPDP Act allows the government to restrict personal data transfers, it limits such action to specific notified countries. Differentiating between SDFs and smaller entities, where the second enjoy relaxed transfer rules for the same data, creates the risk of regulatory arbitrage. Smaller entities could exploit the lighter regime to gain an unfair advantage. These inconsistencies may deter investment and drive businesses out of India. The localisation provision likely stems from the challenges faced by law



UNDERSTANDING THE DPDP ACT

gaps highlight the need for thinking about procedural integrity.

What lies ahead

According to IBM, data breaches cost Indian businesses an average of ₹19.5 crore (\$2.35 million) in 2024. Compliance with data protection laws should not be seen as a regulatory obligation, but as critical to protecting business reputation and ensuring continuity.

India must also move beyond reliance on notice-and-consent mechanisms to safeguard citizens' privacy in future laws. Notice and consent originate from the medical profession, where they can still be deemed to work effectively in controlled settings. However, in environments such as malls, airports, or even beaches, individuals have little opportunity to provide consent. With the convergence of the Internet of Things, 5G, and artificial intelligence enabling unprecedented data collection, India must envision privacy frameworks that do not exclusively rely on the fallible principle of consent. As public consultations refine the draft rules, prioritising preservation of the framework's flexibility and industry-specific accommodations is key. This approach will help maintain a balance between innovation, economic growth, and individual rights – something not many jurisdictions have managed to get right.

The views expressed are personal

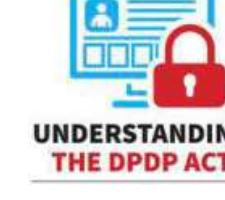
The largely positive response to the Draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Rules flows from its less prescriptive, principles-based approach



Apar Gupta
an advocate and the founder-director of the Internet Freedom Foundation

Transparency is undermined by the government's decision to treat submissions as fiduciary, precluding public disclosure and counter-comments. This controlled feedback process resembles a "corporate consultation" rather than a public one.

Substantively, the Data Protection Rules build on a framework of intentional vagueness and executive dominance. Many compliance obligations are either self-determined by companies handling personal data or left to government discretion. Consider Rule 3, which governs consent notices. It mandates "clear and plain language" but fails to define these terms, leaving interpretation subject to India's vast linguistic and comprehension diversity. Without specific standards, notices risk being overly generic or oversimplified, omitting critical details. Similarly, while the Rules require an "itemized description" of data, they do not clarify whether the disclosure is for categories such as financial or health data; or to specific data points such as account numbers, or even metadata and inferred data. Nor do they define timelines for data breach notifications to users, raising risks for individuals in urgent situations. Such ambiguities, if purely administrative, should have been resolved by the standard setting powers of an independent regulatory authority that does not exist.



UNDERSTANDING THE DPDP ACT

committee address the critiques of political control that plague similar appointment processes? What value does the search committee offer when it has advance knowledge that its recommendations are not binding on the Union Government?

Even after its formation, the DPB is hamstrung. Its authority is largely limited to determining data breaches, and its independence is compromised by service conditions of its members to central government employees. This contravenes long-standing recommendations, such as the 2006 Planning Commission consultation paper on regulation, which emphasised that "the selection, appointment, and removal of chairpersons and members should be insulated against any perceived interference or manipulation that may influence the outcome". How will a subservient DPB apply data protection effectively? Rule 5 exempts data processing for subsidies from consent requirements. In such cases, can there be any meaningful accountability? It is not unreasonable to foresee scenarios where the DPB may fail to act promptly or effectively, particularly

when complaints involve powerful government entities such as the UIDAI that handles Aadhaar. It raises fundamental doubts about what it means for community organisations that may approach it for redress on user rights for things as simple as getting a data record corrected to receive rations.

Finally, regarding Rule 22, which contains the power of the government to requisition information, there is an absence of limitations and safeguards. As many may read this column, they may still wonder why the data protection rules are too late, too little, too vague? The answer may be provided by Mr. Dey who framed his characterisation of the digital policies of the Indian state with a reference to Through the Looking-Glass. When Alice probes Humpty Dumpty on how the same word can have

different meanings, his reply captures the core of India's data protection regime: "The question is... which is to be master – that's all."

Draft digital data protection rules and authoritarianism

In August 2024, as India marked six years since the K.S. Puttaswamy judgment reaffirmed privacy as a fundamental right, the Internet Freedom Foundation hosted its annual "Privacy Supreme" event – not as a celebration, but as a sombre reflection on its unfulfilled promise. Social activist Nikhil Dey shared chilling accounts, from Ajmer in Rajasthan, on how Aadhaar, heralded for efficiency, has excluded vulnerable residents from pensions and rations. This grim reality must be central to tech policy discussions, including the Draft Digital Data Protection Rules, 2025.

Executive overreach, scant transparency
Rulemaking typically fleshes out legislation, ensuring laws passed by Parliament are enforceable while maintaining administrative flexibility. Yet, the draft Data Protection Rules provoke concern on questions of executive overreach and vague governance. Some earlier analysis here bears repetition for these rules are a conscientious pupil in obedience of its master. Here, its parent is the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, that was rammed through Parliament as "a product of the subversion of the democratic process". There is more than a mere lack of trust in how the law was created, for its substantive provisions advance a broader policy of "total state control – a digital leash to yank us and make us stand in line than to serve the preambular objectives of the Constitution of India". Its provisions are deliberately vague, granting broad discretion under the nebulous phrase "as may be prescribed".

Despite the Act's swift passage on August 9, 2023, its implementation remains in limbo. Sixteen months later, the draft Rules have been unveiled for consultation. But are they truly "public"? Published as a 51-page pdf (in Hindi/English as a gazette notification), with a three-page explanatory note that reads as AI glop, a simplistic and vague summary offers little insight into the policy choices during drafting. Comments can only be submitted through the MyGov platform that might encourage expert input but restricts broader participation.

There is a common thread with the parent Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, with its digital leash

The vagueness reflects deeper structural flaws. The Act eschews the creation of an independent regulatory body, instead, consolidating power within the Union Government. Through informal interactions and gazette notifications, the government wields unchecked authority over citizens and the digital marketplace. Even the Data Protection Board (DPB), which has a limited ambit of jurisdiction to adjudicate on breaches, lacks independence. The Board's chairperson is selected based on recommendations of a search and selection committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, raising critical concerns. How will the

No independence for Data Protection Board
The passing of playback singer P. Jayachandran has left a void in the world of south Indian light music. His dulcet voice was very comforting; he could scale the middle octaves with ease. One of his best songs

is a duet with S. Janaki in the film, *Kadal Meengal*. The Ilaiyaraaja composition, "Thaalattudhe Vaanam", is outstanding, harmonious and touching. The interludes were in perfect synchrony. The unassuming singer will remain a role model for many an aspiring singer.

A.V. Narayanan, Chennai

Malayalam film songs have been transformed to another level these days, but the songs sung by Chithra Joseph, Hyderabad

Jayachandran will always find a place in the heart across generations. His voice has the power to evoke nostalgia. His songs are the perfect example of "old is gold".

Chithra Joseph, Hyderabad

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rat-hole mining

The tragic loss of lives in Assam's Dima Hasao mine disaster highlights the need for strict safety regulations. The continued reliance on dangerous rat-hole mining practices is unacceptable (Page 1, January 12). The

government must prioritise the safety of miners by investing in safer extraction methods, improving the welfare of miners, and holding mine owners accountable.

Raksha Hosur Pradeep, Bengaluru

P. Jayachandran

The passing of playback singer P. Jayachandran has left a void in the world of south Indian light music. His dulcet voice was very comforting; he could scale the middle octaves with ease. One of his best songs

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The reforms needed in the MEA

India is on the rise, thanks to its consistent economic growth, political stability, and a bold, autonomous foreign policy. Whether it is the success of its G20 presidency, its strategic autonomy during the Russia-Ukraine conflict, its leadership in vaccine diplomacy during COVID-19, or its initiative in voicing the concerns of the Global South, India has established itself as a major player in global affairs.

However, with this increased global stature comes the need for an organisational framework that supports and sustains such ambitions. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) needs to keep pace with the demands of this new era and evolve to meet them. A critical examination of its staffing, structure, and operational approach reveals significant gaps that must be addressed urgently.

Areas of improvement

The MEA is staffed with about 850 Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officers tasked with formulating and executing foreign policy across 193 embassies and consulates worldwide. While the annual intake of IFS officers has increased from 12-14 to 32-35 in recent years, it remains grossly inadequate. Comparatively, the U.S. has around 14,500 foreign service officers; the U.K., 4,600; and Russia around 4,500 officers.

Given the current intake rate, India would require decades to reach an optimal workforce of 1,500 officers. To address this challenge, the Ministry should consider lateral hiring and absorbing officers from other government services, including defence personnel with experience as defence attachés and academics specialising in international relations. Such recruitment should be subject to stringent selection criteria and probation periods to ensure quality. Additionally, consultants could be engaged for specialised roles. The current perception is that they are stop-gap appointees.

The MEA's internal structure



Col Rajeev Agarwal (retired)

Former Director at Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

requires reorganisation to reduce fragmentation and improve coordination. It has many small divisions, especially territorial ones, which often result in inefficiencies. For instance, India's immediate neighbourhood, a declared priority in its foreign policy, is managed by four separate divisions: the PAI Division (Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran), the BM Division (Bangladesh and Myanmar), the Northern Division (Nepal and Bhutan) and the IOR Division (Sri Lanka, Maldives, and other nations in the Indian Ocean Region). While inputs from these are collated at higher levels, such fragmentation increases the risk of oversight and hinders cohesive regional engagement.

Similarly, the Gulf Division oversees eight Gulf countries, and the WANA Division handles the rest of West Asia and North Africa. Surprisingly, Iran and Türkiye, two pivotal nations in the region, do not fall under either division. Instead, Türkiye is managed by the Central Europe Division, while Iran falls under the PAI Division. Many similar misalignments highlight the need for restructuring and consolidating divisions to create a more efficient and integrated approach.

While officers posted abroad enjoy substantial financial and administrative support, their counterparts in Delhi face significant challenges. Housing facilities have improved, but are still inadequate to accommodate the growing cadre. Furthermore, financial incentives and allowances for officers posted in India are limited, making domestic postings less appealing than foreign assignments. Providing better housing, medical coverage, and educational facilities for their families could work wonders for the morale of these officers. Also, offering financial incentives for Delhi postings could help. After all, this is where critical assessments are made, and key policies are formulated before being executed abroad.

The MEA has long debated the

balance between generalist and specialist roles within the IFS. Language skills, a key aspect of diplomatic expertise, often fall victim to the rotational posting system. Officers undergo rigorous training in one foreign language during their initial years and are typically posted in countries where that language is spoken. However, subsequent postings often do not align with their linguistic expertise, reducing the long-term benefits of this training.

To address this, at least one language-trained officer should be posted in each embassy to reduce dependence on interpreters. Often, in tricky negotiations, language skills have proved to be a game changer, and the Ministry could leverage this aspect. Moreover, as officers progress in their careers, they should be encouraged to become specialists or subject matter experts.

As technology increasingly influences foreign policy, the MEA must build capacity in fields such as cybersecurity, space policy, and artificial intelligence. Expecting all IFS officers to master these highly technical areas alongside their core responsibilities is unrealistic. Instead, the Ministry should hire and retain domain specialists who can focus exclusively on these issues throughout their careers.

Steps in the right direction
Despite these challenges, the MEA has made significant efforts to evolve. The establishment of divisions such as Policy, Planning and Research, and the Centre for Contemporary China Studies, reflects its intent to adapt to emerging global trends. The dynamic leadership of Dr. S. Jaishankar has been instrumental in the display of innovation and greater assertiveness in foreign policy and also, as he emphasises, in aligning foreign policy with India's aspirations to become a 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India).

As India moves towards its 100 years of independence in 2047, its foreign policy must evolve in tandem with its global ambitions.

India has established itself as a major player in global affairs. The Ministry of External Affairs needs to keep pace with the demands of this new era

The MEA has long debated the

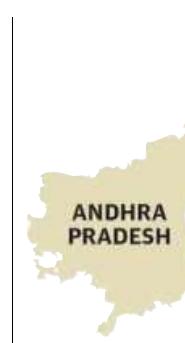
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Building the dream capital

Naidu has set the ball rolling, but he has to develop Amaravati in just three years

STATE OF PLAY

V. Raghavendra
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ANDHRA PRADESH
last year, as per the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014.

Five years after the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government abandoned the Amaravati project, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has set the ball rolling to construct the "people's capital".

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government has approved capital works to the tune of about ₹50,000 crore. This includes construction of the Legislative Assembly and the High Court buildings. It has also taken steps to invite tenders for works and accorded administrative sanction to 20 engineering works valued at ₹11,468 crore.

In its submission to the Supreme Court, where cases relating to the capital are pending disposal, the government said that it would complete the project in three years instead of six months as ordered by the High Court on March 3, 2022. It pointed out that the timelines set in 2014 when the TDP came to power were overtaken by past events".

The government is confident of accomplishing the task within the promised time period. However, this is easier said than done because of the sheer size and number of offices and residential spaces that need to be built, as per its target.

In addition, there is the issue of mobilisation of funds. Loan repayment obligations will impose a huge burden on the public exchequer. But this is inevitable since the State desperately needs a capital after Hyderabad ceased to be the common capital of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

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for which lands were allotted in 2014-19 is an important component in the overall capital development plan.

While infrastructure works, such as connecting the trunk roads in Amaravati to the NH-16, are in various stages of construction, the Centre recently approved a new 57 km-long railway line from Errapalem in Khammam district of Telangana to Nambur in Guntur district via Amaravati. This is bound to give fillip to the development of Amaravati.

For now, the government is busy with the tender floating process. The construction of these buildings is expected to gain momentum this month. Having committed to completing the works in just three years, the government is expected to work ceaselessly. If it does not meet its ambitious deadline, the project will drag on further to the overall detriment of the State. Raising and efficiently using funds for the capital is also a tough task as the government has already been grappling with a shoestring budget.

The master plan was prepared by the London-based Foster + Partners and no major changes have been made to it by the State government. The Assembly building, spanning 103 acres, will feature a 250-meter-tall structure, offering a panoramic view of the city. There will be five administrative towers of which three will have at least 39 floors. Besides these, the government is planning to build a host of buildings. The cost of construction of these have gone up by 42% over the last five years, according to the Municipal Administration Minister.

The establishment of offices of various Central government departments, and reputed educational institutions, have not seen any development.

Over the last few years, Andhra Pradesh was constantly running into trouble regarding its capital. Finally, it is set to have one.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 13, 1975

Idol made plaintiff in Sivapuram Nataraja case

Los Angeles, Jan. 12: A religious idol allegedly stolen from India has become a plaintiff in a \$5.5 million suit to wrest it from a millionaire industrialist and art collector, Mr. Norton Simon.

The complaint in the case was amended on Friday to include the idol – the Sivapuram Nataraja – after the Government of India said that under Indian law the idol is a "juristic person... thereby entitled to own property and may sue or be sued to vindicate its rights."

The complaint, filed by the American Civil Liberties Union against Mr. Simon, seeks return of the idol or \$5.5 million if it is not returned. The suit originally asked for \$2.5 million in lieu of the idol.

The suit contends that Mr. Simon knew the idol had been stolen when he bought it for a million dollars in 1973 from a New York art dealer.

"The whole thing on the part of the Indian government is rather preposterous," Mr. Simon said. "The piece was in a private collection in Bombay for years... it was shown to Government officials, there is printed literature describing it... and all these years they did nothing."

However, the collector said, "I think there is a grave question as to whether it was ever stolen, and if it was, why (the Indian government) were inactive all the years it was in a private collection. There was certainly no reason to consider it anything but perfectly appropriate from our standpoint to purchase the piece."

The idol is at present in the care of a woman in London, who was given the art object to restore it. A British court has ordered her not to dispose of the idol until its actual owner is determined.

The amended complaint said the suit was also launched on behalf of "the worshippers of Nataraja who have been deprived of their right of worship, and therefore, deprived of their right of freedom of religion."

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FROM THE JANUARY 12, 1925 EDITION AS THERE WAS NO EDITION ON JANUARY 13, 1925

New invention in telegraphy

Paris, Jan. 11: A Havas Agency message says the Matin announces that a young French engineer has invented an apparatus by means of which radio-telegrams could be printed instead of read at sound.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Workers rescued from building collapse at Kannauj station

28 The shattering of the under-construction building on the railway station premises had collapsed on Saturday afternoon, trapping the workers. Rescue teams worked through the cold night to clear the debris and safely pull out the trapped workers. PTI

Adani's investment for various projects in Chhattisgarh

65,000 In crore. Adani announced a planned investment of ₹60,000 crore to expand the group's power plants in Raipur, Korba and Raigarh. He also committed ₹5,000 crore for the group's cement plants in the State. PTI

Number of workers who died in Pakistan's coal mine collapse

11 Twelve workers were trapped when the coal mine collapsed in the Sanjdi area, about 40 kilometres from Quetta in the Balochistan province, on Wednesday. In three days of rescue work, 11 bodies were recovered, with rescue workers still searching for the last worker inside the structure. PTI

Number of pilgrims expected to attend the Maha Kumbh Mela

35 In crore. Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh has said that 35 crore pilgrims are expected to attend the Maha Kumbh Mela taking place in the vicinity of Sangam — the confluence of rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati. 24 crore pilgrims visited the Mela in 2019. PTI

Number of civilians killed in Myanmar Junta air strike

15 A Myanmar junta air strike killed at least 15 civilians and wounded 10 others at a market in the northern Kachin state, a spokesman for an ethnic rebel group said. The junta has been accused of carrying out multiple attacks on civilian targets. AFP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Should voter IDs be linked with Aadhaar?

Why was the National Electoral Rolls Purification and Authentication Program launched by the Election Commission? How do already existing voters link EPIC with their respective Aadhaar numbers? What did the Supreme Court mandate in the Puttaswamy case in 2018?

EXPLAINER

Rangarajan R.

The story so far:

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have accused each other of manipulating electoral rolls before the Delhi Assembly elections. This has reignited the debate about linking voter IDs/Election Photo Identity Card (EPIC) with respective Aadhaar numbers.

What is the history of the proposal?

The Election Commission (EC) had in February 2015 launched the National Electoral Rolls Purification and Authentication Program (NERPAP). This was to address the issue of duplicate entries in the electoral roll and to remove such entries. In order to achieve this, the EC began authenticating EPIC data by linking it with the Aadhaar database. It had linked more than 300 million voters in a span of three months. However, the Supreme Court in an interim order, in August 2015, held that the mandatory use of Aadhaar should only be for welfare schemes and PAN linking. Following this order, the NERPA exercise was discontinued.

After the Supreme Court's final order in *Puttaswamy* in September 2018, that upheld the constitutional validity of the Aadhaar Act, the EC sought amendments to the Representation of the People Act, 1950 (RP Act, 1950). The Parliament amended the RP Act, 1950 and The Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 in December 2021 to enable the linking of EPIC with Aadhaar. It provided the format in which Aadhaar information may be submitted to the electoral registration officer by a new voter at the time of fresh registration (Form 6: to establish identity) or an existing voter already included in the electoral roll (Form 6B: for the purpose of authentication). Any other listed document may be submitted only if the voter is unable to furnish their

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Need to verify: A special camp for linking Aadhaar with voter ID card held in Madurai in 2022. FILE PHOTO

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Aadhaar number because they do not have one. However, in order to keep these amendments voluntary in nature, the word 'may' have been used in the amendments. Further, the amendment also specifies that no application for inclusion of name in the electoral roll shall be denied and no entries shall be deleted due to the inability of an individual to furnish or intimate the Aadhaar number due to 'sufficient cause.'

Such individuals may furnish alternate documents like PAN card, Driving Licence, Passport, Bank passbook etc.

While the above amendments were challenged in the Supreme Court, the EC

in September 2023 informed the court that submission of the Aadhaar number is not mandatory. It added that it is looking into issuing appropriate clarificatory changes in the forms introduced for this purpose. However, it may be noted that Form 6 and 6B have not been amended till date and they continue to seek the same details as before from the applicants.

The forms require the voters to declare that they do not have an Aadhar number to avoid providing the same.

What are the pros and cons?

EPIC linkage with the respective Aadhaar

number would definitely help in weeding out duplicate entries; that is essential. At present, more than 650 million Aadhaar numbers have already been uploaded in the process of finalising the electoral rolls. However, there are some concerns about this exercise that need to be considered.

Firstly, the errors in the Aadhaar database, however minuscule, may result in wrongful rejection or deletion of entries from the electoral roll. Secondly, Aadhaar is only a proof of residence and not a proof of citizenship. Thus, it may not help in removing voters who are not citizens from the electoral roll. It would require a separate effort from the EC.

Finally, while the linkage is to happen at the back end and a mere mention of the Aadhaar number on the EPIC/electoral roll may not by itself be a violation of right to privacy, it may still result in misuse as the electoral rolls are widely circulated amongst political parties.

What can be the way forward? The right to vote is a constitutional right and declared so by the Supreme Court in various cases. It is part of the basic structure of free and fair elections and cannot be constricted through legislative action. Citizens are the most important stakeholders in a democracy and any electoral process should gain their confidence. There must be wide publicity about the benefits of linking EPIC and Aadhaar to clean up the electoral roll of duplicate entries, which in turn strengthens the electoral process. Any misplaced concern amongst voters about the secrecy of their vote being compromised because of this linking should be assuaged.

Meanwhile, the forms should be suitably modified without any delay, to reflect that providing Aadhaar is not mandatory, as per the submission of the EC in the Supreme Court in September 2023.

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

THE GIST

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What is different about small language models?

What led to the shift to small language models from large language models? What are the use cases for such models? Are they better than LLMs?

Poulomi Chatterjee

The story so far:

“We've achieved peak data,” former OpenAI chief scientist Ilya Sutskever said onstage at the NeurIPS conference last year. “We have to deal with the data that we have, and there's only one Internet.” Mr. Sutskever's comment comes amidst speculation that the speed of progress in large language models (LLM) was hitting a wall as scaling was reaching its digital end.

Why are smaller models in demand? The race towards building large AI models has been building up ever since OpenAI released their 175 billion parameter LLM, GPT-3, in 2020. In the next three years, the company's LLMs further increased in size with GPT-4 trained on 1.7 trillion

parameters. But, in 2024, researchers started to look at language models differently as scaling training data, scoured from the Internet, was giving marginal gains. The idea of building smaller language models emerged then.

This is evident in announcements made by Big Tech firms. Most of them released a nifty language model alongside their flagship AI models. Google DeepMind released Gemini Ultra, Nano and Flash models, while OpenAI and Meta launched their GPT-4 mini and Llama 3 models. Amazon-backed Anthropic AI launched Claude 3 and Haiku alongside its Opus.

What are the pros and cons of small language models?

Small Language Models (SLMs) are cheaper and ideal for specific use cases. For a company that needs AI for a set of specialised tasks, a large AI model is not

required. Training small models require less time, less compute and smaller training data. French start up Mistral AI, an SLM provider, pitched its AI model to be as efficient as LLMs for specialised, focused applications. Microsoft released a family of small language models called Phi (the latest Phi-3-mini comprised 3.8 billion parameters).

Apple Intelligence, the AI system deployed in the latest iPhones and iPads, runs on-device AI models that can sort of match the performance of top LLMs. If LLMs are built to achieve Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), small language models are made for specific use cases.

How do use cases differ?

“Small language models are perfect for edge cases,” said Rahul Dandwate, ML engineer at Adobe. “When I am using WhatsApp or any Meta application which is powered by the Llama 8B model, I am

trying to learn a new language because it's reasonably good at translation and other basic tasks like this.”

“But they wouldn't do well at most benchmarks that large language models are measured against like coding or logical problems. There still isn't a small language model that's as good at solving more complex problems,” he said.

We still aren't fully aware why this bottleneck exists. “But the best way we can understand this is just as human beings have brains with a massive number of neurons, a smaller animal has a limited number of neurons. This is why human brains have the capacity for far more complex levels of intelligence. This is similar to how small language models and large language models work,” he said.

How does it work for India?

In a country like India, where the scope of AI adoption is immense but resources are constrained, the diminutiveness of SLMs is perfect. Another AI initiative from IIT Hyderabad, Visvam, is building datasets from the ground up to build SLMs that can be used in healthcare, agriculture, education and to “promote and preserve language and cultural diversity through AI,” their website stated. As the world of language model develops, it's not just enough to build frontier models from scratch. Sarvam AI's co-founder Vivek Raghavan said, “We want to build GenAI that a billion Indians can use.”

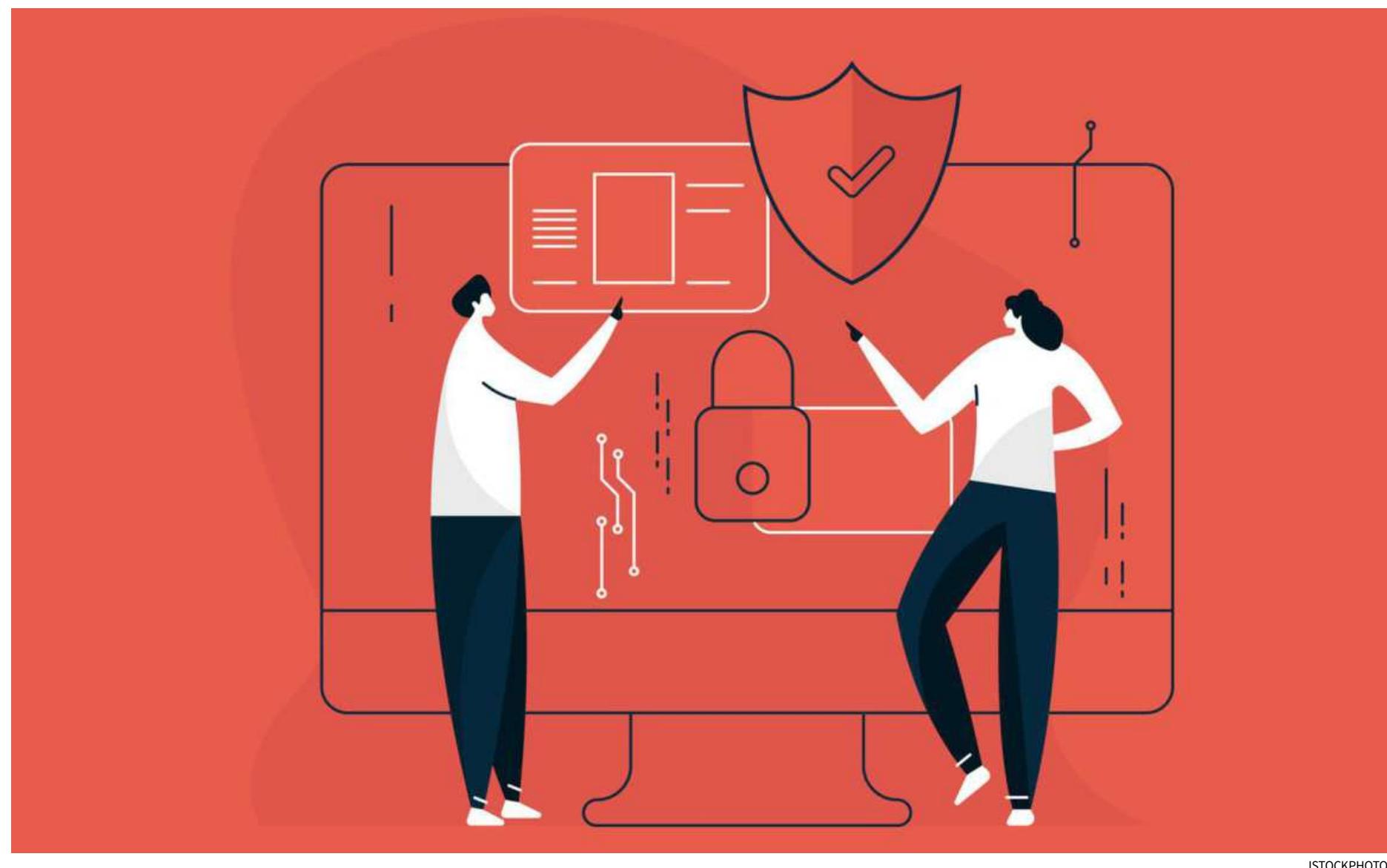
THE GIST

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CACHE



ISTOCKPHOTO

How the draft rules for implementing data protection falls short

Although the draft rules provide some guidance for implementing the DPDP Act, they lack detailed guidelines to help improve the lives of India's digital *nagrikas*. The government needs to seek appropriate expert advice, conduct wide consultations, and clarify timelines for implementation

Jhalak M. Kakkar
Shashank Mohan

After a long wait of 16 months, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has released the draft rules for implementing the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act). These rules are open for public feedback until the middle of February. Various stakeholders, including civil society, academia, and industry, have been eagerly awaiting the publication of these proposed rules as they contain the baseline implementation framework of the DPDP Act.

The DPDP Act is India's first comprehensive data privacy law that applies to all spheres of commerce and industry. It lays down operational obligations for data processors, special protections for children, and rights for all users, and a body for grievance redressal called the Data Protection Board of India. At the time of release, the DPDP Act was criticised by civil society for not instituting a specialised regulator, not incorporating standard protections against government access to data, and excessive delegation of regulatory functions to the Central government.

Lack of detail
The draft rules propose operative guidance for critical mechanisms such as notice and consent to a user for data collection and processing, intimation of data breaches, collection of parental

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consent on behalf of children, data localisation measures, and the procedure for setting up the Data Protection Board. Although the draft rules provide some guidance for implementing the DPDP Act, they lack detailed guidelines to help improve the lives of India's digital *nagrikas*. Let's illustrate some shortcomings from the perspective of two critical avenues that the DPDP Act seeks to introduce – rights of users and the protection of children's data.

User rights
The DPDP Act enhances the autonomy of users over their personal data by providing them with the right to access, correct, complete, update, and erase their data. The law leaves it to the corresponding rules for clarifying the manner in which users can exercise these rights. Unfortunately, the draft rules do not make it clear how users may make these requests. They simply state that users can make requests to data processors for exercising their rights by following the steps published by businesses. This is simply restating what the Act lays down in another language.

For example, as per the right to erasure, can users ask search engines to remove links to certain websites? Courts in India have frequently asked Google to 'de-list' certain links from showing up on its public search engine. The rules could have prescribed standards to clarify the mechanism in these situations such as requiring that users share specific hyperlinks for erasure.

Since the right to erasure may also impact a third-parties' online speech, the draft rules could have articulated certain modes or conditions for objection that data processors could make against such an erasure request. However, the draft rules do not bring out any such clarity.

Protecting children
Today children are increasingly using various websites on the internet including social media platforms.

To safeguard children, the DPDP Act obligates data processors to seek verifiable parental consent before accessing the personal data of children under the age of 18. The manner of obtaining parental consent was to be laid down in the subsequent rules. However, here again the draft rules fall short. There is no detailing of an exact mechanism for identifying children and collecting parental consent. The rules provide that data processors will need to adopt appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure parental consent is obtained prior to accessing data of a child. The rules focus on how data processors must exercise due diligence for checking that parents are identifiable adults. This is a simple rephrasing of what the law lays down in the DPDP Act.

The rules were required to lay down detailed procedures for how businesses are expected to verify the identity of parents. They simply lay down illustrations where parents could either point to their existing user details on a common platform, or prove their identity

by providing details of any kind of formal identity, for example a government issued ID. Again, critical questions remain.

How will data processors identify parental relations, that is, that the adult proving their identity and providing consent is actually the guardian of the child? What if children lie about their actual age when accessing a website? What mechanisms do platforms need to put in place to gauge the veracity of an age claim? Indian families, including children, often share a single device to access digital services, how will businesses identify children in these cases? The draft rules do not provide any guidance to these practical implementation questions.

Despite a 16-month window for drafting and consulting experts for the framing of these rules, the MeitY has released a document that is vague, incomplete, and rushed. Typically guidelines are very detailed, account for consumer privacy, and provide operational clarity for businesses and data processors. Unfortunately, the proposed rules leave much to be desired.

The government needs to seek appropriate expert advice, conduct wide consultations, and clarify timelines for implementation, before finalising the rules that will form the backbone of India's first data privacy law.

Jhalak M. Kakkar is the Executive Director and Shashank Mohan is the Associate Director at the Centre for Communication Governance at the National Law University Delhi.



Visual question:
What is the name given to this temporary makeshift hut used during the Magh Bihu festival in Assam? ANI

THE DAILY QUIZ

A quiz on the various festivals celebrated around India on January 13 and 14

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
Name the hill on the western ghats where the Makara Jyothi in honour of Lord Ayyappa is lit during these period.

QUESTION 2
Traditionally a sprig of fresh *Curcuma longa* is tied around the vessel while making this dish. What is the common name of the plant and what is the dish?

QUESTION 3
Devavrata, the legendary warrior son of Shantanu and

Ganga, decided to leave his mortal body on Uttarayan. How does one better know Devavrata?

QUESTION 4
In which State is the world-famous International Kite Festival held every year on January 14?

QUESTION 5
Simple one. What is the English equivalent of the Makara in the Zodiac?

QUESTION 6
Alanganallur, Avaniapuram, and Palamedu are places famous for which activity?

Questions and Answers to the January 10 edition of the daily quiz: 1. This idiom means to endure with determination and originated from soldiers in the 19th century given this to bite down to help them cope with the pain of an amputation. **Ans: Biting the bullet**

2. This idiom is named after this Greek king of the Hellenistic period. **Ans: Pyrrhic victory; Pyrrhus**

3. This phrase means to solve a complex problem in a decisive/ brute-force manner. **Ans: Cutting the Gordian knot**

4. This phrase connotes someone confronting the unpleasant consequences of her/his actions. **Ans: Face the music**

5. This idiom suggests the release of something leading to great problems or suffering. **Ans: Pandora's box**

Visual: Identify the English word/ idiom. **Ans: Juggernaut after the Rath Yatra of lord Jagannath of Puri. It means a force that cannot be resisted or controlled**

Early Birds: Viswanadha Rao Batchu| Rajmohan Velayudhan| A. Anand| Ankurjyoti Hatimuria| Prashansa Lohumi



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

My friend is now under the pump

I watched his latest performance and was not impressed. It just left me cold

S. Upendran

"What's wrong? Why do you look so depressed?"

"I'm still thinking about the series against Australia! Aren't you sad about how we..."

"Asking the wrong person, I'm afraid. You know that cricket just leaves me cold."

"Cricket leaves you cold? Does it mean it doesn't interest you?"

"Very good! When you say that something leaves you cold, what you're suggesting is that it is something that doesn't excite or interest you."

"In other words, it's not something that sets your heart racing."

"I guess you could say that. Here's an example. People were raving about your favourite hero's movie. It left me cold."

"Nothing unusual in that. You're strange! How about this example? I love reading fiction, especially thrillers. For some strange reason, poetry leaves me cold."

"Better not tell your father that! He'll disown you. I love to listen to different kinds of music. But I like doing that at home. Live concerts leave me cold."

"Really? I quite enjoy them. But it takes some getting used to. Now, coming back to the cricket match. You know, when I..."

"As I said earlier, the game leaves me cold. Let's talk about something else."

"I'm not going to be talking about the game. The Australians used a strange expression while they were giving the commentary."

"That's to be expected. What was this expression?"

"It was one that I'd never heard before – 'under the pump'. The commentators used it often during the fifth test. For example, one of them said that batsmen from both sides have been under the pump. What does the expression mean?"

"It means to be under pressure. It also carries the suggestion that you have a lot to do in a short period of time."

"So, when you're under the pump, you have to work very quickly in order to finish what you're doing."

"And this adds to the pressure. Here's an example. My boss is someone who performs well when he's under the pump. Comes up with some really great ideas."

"The sponsors have him under the pump. They said that unless he loses five pounds, they'll not renew his contract."

"That's a good example! This must your cousin who's a model."

"That's right! With its stocks taking a big hit, my uncle's company has been put under the pump to downsize."

"I hope that doesn't happen. A lot of people probably depend on that company."

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Diminution:

change toward something smaller or lower; the act of decreasing or reducing something

Synonyms: decline, decrease, reduction, step-down

Usage: The tumour shows no sign of diminution.

Pronunciation:

newsth.live/diminutionpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /dɪmɪnju:ʃən/

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

From Page One**Declining fertility levels push up Kerala's MMR**

The State's total fertility rate (TFR) went below the replacement level in 1991 and remained stagnant at 1.8-1.7 for years, before touching 1.5 in 2020. The current TFR of Kerala (2021 VSR) is 1.46. This means that a couple of reproductive age in Kerala mostly have only one child and sometimes none. It is possible that the TFR will drop to 1.35 once the latest data on live births are accounted for.

"Already, the impact of migration, especially the fact that a chunk of those in the reproductive age group are going abroad for higher education or jobs and choosing to settle down there, and the economic impact of the loss of a young workforce and changing attitudes regarding marriage and fertility are hurting us. In the next 10 years, the proportion of elderly population in Kerala is expected to go above that of children and the magnitude of the issues related to the care and welfare of this population is likely to overwhelm us, even though we have been anticipating it," Dr. Rajan says. But the birth rate is expected to plummet further and the consequences will be starkly evident in the next two decades itself.

Not just declining birth rates, the State is also beginning to see the consequences of a higher age at marriage and delayed childbearing. The proportion of older mothers and the increase in pregnancy-related morbidities in this group and their reproductive health issues are emerging concerns, though the State is yet to adduce hard evidence to substantiate this.

"It has been over 35 years since we attained the replacement level fertility rate and the cohort of those women in the reproductive age of 15-49 we had then has now been replaced by a new cohort. The fertility is low in this new cohort of women, either by will or by nature, so naturally, the number of childbirths will go down. Many in this group choose not to get married or not to have children. And even the number of women in this cohort has begun to dwindle," Sajini B. Nair, social scientist, Population Research Centre, says.

By the Census 2011, the female population in the reproductive age group of 15-49 in Kerala was 93,32,494 and the Registrar-General's projected figure for 2021 was 92,23,500.

Meanwhile, the State had not published the VSR after 2021, claiming that there were reporting errors. There is also an ongoing debate about whether Kerala is registering its births properly and on time and the actual data on childbirths in the State collected by various official agencies are not available in the public domain now.

"The demographic transition in the State has been so fast that no long-term projections are possible. We do not know how much abortions contribute to the declining number of live births because we have absolutely no data on this. It would also be interesting to study if our youngsters settling down abroad are choosing to have their children there for reasons of obtaining citizenship and how much this has contributed to the declining birth rate," Dr. Sajini says.

Bangladesh summons Indian envoy

"Foreign Secretary Ambassador Md. Jashim Uddin today expressed deep concern of Government of Bangladesh to High Commissioner of India Pranay Verma... over the recent activities of the Border Security Force (BSF) of India along the Bangladesh-India Border," said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) of Bangladesh in press statement, which referred to the attempts to construct barbed-wire fencing as "unauthorised".

"He emphasised that the construction of barbed wire fences without proper authorisation undermines the spirit of cooperation and friendly relations between the two countries. He hoped the upcoming BGB [Border Guard Bangladesh]-BSF DG-level talks would be able to discuss the matter at length," the press note further stated.

HAL's latest Combat Air Teaming System completes crucial test**Hemanth C.S.**
BENGALURU

Ahead of Aero India 2025, which is scheduled to be held next month, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) achieved a significant milestone by conducting the engine ground run of a full-scale demonstrator, Combat Air Teaming System (CATS) - Warrior, on Saturday.

HAL said that this demonstrates the synergy between various R&D centres of HAL with Aircraft design and integration by the Aircraft Research & Design Centre (ARDC), indigenous Mission Computer from SLRDC and indigenous power plant from AERDC.

It can be recalled that the defence PSU has been developing CATS which involves the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas as the mother-ship platform along with components such as the Hunter, Alpha and Warrior.

'Inflict strikes'
A senior HAL official involved in HAL's R&D has said the CATS is a combined air teaming system with the mothership flying on top along with Hunter which can inflict strikes deep inside the enemy territory. The Alpha will be equipped with swarm drones and the Warrior can strike after entering nearly 700 km inside the enemy territory.

Three women critical after being given 'expired' saline**The Hindu Bureau**
KOLKATA

The health condition of three women who fell ill at the Midnapore Medical College and Hospital allegedly due to the administration of expired intravenous fluids remained critical.

The officials of West Bengal Health Department have decided to shift the patients to a Kolkata facility on Sunday. A 13-member team of experts had visited the hospital on Saturday to look into allegations of expired saline being administered to pregnant women and other patients.

The Congress on Sunday held the West Bengal government responsible for the incident.

Centre's wildlife panel clears oil and gas exploratory drilling in Assam sanctuary**Press Trust of India**
NEW DELHI

The Centre's wildlife panel has approved a proposal to carry out oil and gas exploration in the ecosensitive zone of the Hoollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam's Jorhat district.

The Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL), chaired by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, approved the proposal by Vedanta Group's Cairn Oil and Gas during its meeting on December 21, according to the minutes of the meeting.

Assam's Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and Chief Wil-



Vedanta Group has given an assurance that no commercial drilling will be conducted.

dile Warden had recommended clearance for the project last August, citing "national interest".

The Forest Advisory Committee of the Union Environment Ministry had also granted in-principle approval during its meeting on August 27 last year.

According to the minutes of the NBWL meeting, a team comprising officials from the Union Environment Ministry, the Wildlife Institute of India, and the Assam Forest Department inspected the project site, located about 13 km from the sanctuary.

The inspection committee found that exploratory drilling would cause minimal damage, but said commercial drilling would not be allowed. Vedanta Group has given a written assurance that no commercial drilling will be conducted at the site. It also assured that no hazardous substances would be used during the exploration process, the officials said.

Sri Lankan Navy arrests 8 fishers from T.N., trawlers seized**The Hindu Bureau**
RAMESWARAM

Fishers' associations say that their pleas to put an end to such arrests have not been heard. FILE PHOTO

had let them down, they said a meeting would be held shortly to decide the next course of action.

CM writes to Jaishankar
Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Sunday wrote to Minister for External Affairs S. Jaishankar demanding strong and coordinated efforts through diplomatic channels to secure the release of all the arrested fishermen and their impounded boats.

According to officials, the fishermen had been taken to a naval port in Sri Lanka, and the seized trawlers were towed to the port. The fisheries department identified the boat owners as Mukesh Kumar of Rameswaram and Maria Retriar of Thangachimadam. Fishers' associations have said that their repeated pleas to put an end to such arrests had not been addressed.

Stressing that the Union and the State governments

Assam Rifles vacates post in Manipur, denies villagers' allegation of harassment**The Hindu Bureau**
GUWAHATI

Race against time: Rescue operation under way for the labourers trapped in the Umrao coal mine in Dima Hasao on Sunday. ANI

told *The Hindu*.

Officials said the operations to locate the trapped miners would resume on Monday.

"Water is being pumped out from the ill-fated mine and three abandoned mines in the vicinity with nine pumps," an official

entrusted with draining the mines said.

Meanwhile, the Opposition parties have mounted pressure on the BJP-led Assam government to come clean on rat-hole mining in the State despite an April 2014 blanket ban by the National Green Tribunal.

"Some 20 personnel vacated the Hongbei post after the meeting," a senior

'Crowd turned violent but Assam Rifles personnel used an appropriate and calibrated response'

district officer said, declining to be quoted.

The Assam Rifles personnel intercepted a timber-laden vehicle on Saturday, triggering protests from the villagers. A mob gathered in no time and destroyed the post after accusing the paramilitary force of overstepping its authority by interfering in matters of the State Forest Department.

Leishyo Keishing, MLA, told Assam Rifles personnel that "it is not your duty" when the post commander told him the timber should not be used commercially.

The Assam Rifles refuted the charges that its per-

sonnel often harassed the villagers. "On January 11, Assam Rifles personnel manning the post at Hongbei inspected a vehicle and discerned that the vehicle loaded with timber did not have mandated documents. Assam Rifles personnel stopped the vehicle following procedures," the Assam Rifles said.

It said "nefarious elements" instigated the local people to force the personnel to release the vehicle. It added that the crowd turned violent but the Assam Rifles personnel used an appropriate and "calibrated response".

On Sunday, the Southern Tangkhul Naga Union "advised" Naga village authorities, a women's union, and youth organisations not to allow the Assam Rifles personnel to pass through areas within their jurisdictions.

Security forces gun down five Naxalites in Chhattisgarh**Shubhomoy Sikdar**
RAIPUR

and the Naxalites in the forest of Bandepara-Koranjed, which lasted till 3-4 p.m. Later, during the search from the spot, the bodies of two women and three men, i.e. five Maoists in uniform were recovered," said Mr. Sundarraj.

One SLR, a 12 bore gun, two single-shot rifles, one BGL launcher, a country-made gun, explosives, and Maoist literature were also recovered from the encounter site, the police added.

In the first 12 days of 2025, the forces have killed 14 Maoists in Chhattisgarh.

In a separate incident, two security personnel were injured in an IED blast, allegedly triggered by Maoists, in Bijapur.

Youth power will make India a developed nation, says Modi

PM advises younger generation to step out of comfort zone, reiterates commitment to bring 1 lakh youth into politics; addressing Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue, Modi says goal of developed India by 2047 requires consistent efforts

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the youth would drive progress and make India a developed nation. Setting big goals and achieving them within a time frame was not impossible, and the country was working with that mindset, he said.

Addressing the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue, 2025, held on the occasion of National Youth Day, Mr. Modi said the goal of a developed India by 2047 required daily targets and consistent efforts.

He advised the youth to step out of their comfort zones and take risks, as demonstrated by the participants of the Young Leaders Dialogue. He reiterated his commitment to bringing one lakh young people into politics.

PM's vision

Sharing his vision, Mr. Modi said that in a developed India, both economy and ecology would flourish, and the country would have the world's largest skilled youth workforce.

"Global agencies recognise the youth's potential



Engaging the next generation: Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacting with a participant during his visit to an exhibition at the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue in New Delhi on Sunday. ANI

to significantly boost India's GDP," he said, noting that the Indian youth were leading major global companies. He said the next 25 years – the "Amrit Kaal" – were crucial, and expressed confidence that the youth would realise the dream of a developed India.

On the steps taken by the government to empower them, Mr. Modi said every week a new university and every day a new ITI was being established,

while every third day an Atal Tinkering Lab was opened and two new colleges were established daily. India now had 23 IITs, and in the past decade, the number of IITs had increased to 25 from nine, while the number of IIMs had risen to 21 from 13.

There was a three-fold increase in the number of AIIMS and near doubling of medical colleges in the past decade. The number of higher education institutes in the QS rankings had risen to 46 from nine in 2014, he said.

Overcoming crisis

Citing the example of the economic crisis in the United States in the 1930s, Mr. Modi said the Americans chose the "New Deal" and not only overcame the crisis but also accelerated their development. Singapore, which faced basic life

crises, transformed into a global financial and trade hub through discipline and collective effort. India also had similar examples, such as the freedom struggle and overcoming the food crisis post-Independence.

About India's commitment to green energy, Mr. Modi said India was the first country to meet the Paris Agreement commitments nine years ahead of schedule. He said the country was set to achieve the target of 20% ethanol blending in petrol well before the deadline of 2030.

While highlighting the ambitious goal of hosting the Olympics in the next decade, he said India was making rapid strides as a space power, with plans to establish a space station by 2035. He said achieving such goals would pave the way for a developed India by 2047.

He also interacted with youth at an exhibition and witnessed their innovative ideas. He saw 10 presentations on topics ranging from sustainable development and manufacturing to integrating technology with agriculture. Around 3,000 young leaders from across the country participated in the event.

MVA is united, decision on local body polls made to strengthen party, says Raut

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI



Sanjay Raut

He accused the ruling Mahayuti alliance of trying to destabilise the MVA but expressed confidence that these attempts would not succeed.

On sarpanch's murder

Both Mr. Raut and Mr. Danve criticised the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance, particularly its handling of law and order in Maharashtra. Mr. Danve alleged that Nationalist Congress Party leader and State Minister Dhananjay Munde was involved in shielding criminals linked to the murder of Santosh Deshmukh, the sarpanch of Massajog village in Beed district.

Mr. Deshmukh was allegedly abducted, tortured, and murdered on December 9 for opposing an extortion attempt targeting an energy firm. Walimik Karad, an associate of Mr. Munde, has been arrested in connection with the case.

Mr. Danve asked why Mr. Karad had not been charged with murder despite evidence of his involvement.

"The government is protecting criminals," he said.

CID probe in Karnataka MLC case could lead to a clash between legislature, executive: Horatti

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

Taking exception to the government's decision to institute a CID inquiry into the alleged derogatory remarks made by BJP MLC C.T. Ravi against Women and Child Development Minister Laxmi Hebalkar in the Legislative Council during the Winter Session of the State legislature in Belagavi, House Chairman Basavaraj Horatti has said that it could lead to an unnecessary clash between the legislature and the executive.

"I am not sure about the scope of the inquiry. The Council has the sovereign rights to decide on the issues to be discussed in the House. The Chair has already given the ruling on



Chairman Basavaraj Horatti in the Legislative Council during the Winter Session in Belagavi recently. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the issue based on the Constitution, Rules of Business of Karnataka Legislative Council, Rules of Business of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, Practice and Procedure of Parliament by M.N. Kaul and S.L. Shakdar, and Parliamentary Procedures by Subhash Kashyap," Mr. Horatti said in a letter to Home Minister G. Parameshwara.

Chairman's powers

Drawing the Home Minister's attention to the rights of the Council Chairman in parliamentary practices, he said: "The Council has the powers to punish members for their bad behaviour and abusive language."

Mr. Ravi has been accused of using derogatory words against Ms. Hebalkar on December 19, the last day of the Winter Session. The incident triggered widespread condemnation, and he was arrested by the Belagavi police from the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha premises resulting in a political slugfest between the ruling Congress and the BJP.

Mr. Horatti felt that the move of the government to institute a CID probe that would come in the way of special powers given to the Chairman in the parliamentary practices would lead to an unnecessary tiff between the legislature and the executive.

"You are also aware that

what happens inside the House is the jurisdiction of the Chairman. Both legislature and executive have to function within the constitutional provisions and with mutual respect. You have also held various roles in constitutional institutions and I hope that you also function under the Constitution," Mr. Horatti said.

Meanwhile, the Home Minister said he had not received the letter though he had read about the letter in the media. "We will not allow any tiff between the government and the Chairman," he said.

When his reaction was sought, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said the Home Minister would respond to the letter.

Silver Notice 'more effective' than MLAT, says CBI Director

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

has now been realised.

The notice, aimed at locating illicit assets laundered across borders, is the newest addition to Interpol's suite of eight colour-coded Notices and Difusions, which enable countries to share alerts and requests for information worldwide.

Conventionally, the information on illicit assets is

gathered through MLATs which are treaties between two countries whereby they cooperate to provide and obtain formal assistance in the prevention, suppression, investigation, and prosecution of crime.

Common complaints under MLAT include requests being transferred and lack of response due to a large number of requests.

इंडियन ओवरसीज बैंक Indian Overseas Bank A bank that helps Good people to grow with Information Technology Department Central Office: 763, Anna Salai, Chennai - 600 002 Indian Overseas bank (IOB) invites bids for the following: GOVERNMENT E - MARKET PORTAL - SUPPLY, IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE OF VIRTUAL DESKTOP INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTION BID NO: GEM/2025/B/5794459 DATED: 08.01.2025 The Above GEM Tender document is also available and can be downloaded from the following websites www.iob.in & www.gem.gov.in . For Tender details and future amendments, if any, keep referring to the following website www.gem.gov.in
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Protect State interests like the Tamils do: Telangana CM

The Hindu Bureau

HYDERABAD

"Tamil Nadu has a strong political divide among parties, but when it comes to safeguarding Tamil culture, language or their State interests, they all come together", Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Sunday. Mr. Reddy said this at the launch of the autobiography of BJP leader Ch. Vidyasagar Rao.

"I firmly believe government means not just the ruling party MLAs but all the 119 elected MLAs including those from the Opposition," Mr. Reddy added. The Chief Minister has appealed to senior BJP leaders from Telangana, including Union Ministers G. Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay Kumar, to use their offices to get necessary permissions from the Centre for projects.

Dallewal writes to religious leaders, urges them to put pressure on Centre

Press Trust of India

CHANDIGARH



SKM leaders meeting Jagjit Singh Dallewal. FILE PHOTO

medical aid.

In the letter written to the religious leader by the SKM (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) wrote to the SKM for a meeting on January 15 in Patiala for unity among farmer bodies for a joint fight against the Centre to press for acceptance of farmers' demands including a legal guarantee to minimum support price for crops.

Meanwhile, farmer leaders said the condition of Mr. Dallewal, whose fast unto death entered the 48th day on Sunday, is "deteriorating". Mr. Dallewal, convenor of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political), has been on a hunger strike at the Khanauri border point between Punjab and Haryana since November 26 last year.

Mr. Dallewal, who also heads the Bharti Kisan Union (Ekta Sidhpur), has so far refused to take any

recently recommended a legal guarantee to MSP and said that it would "greatly benefit the farmers, rural economy and the country." The MSP guarantee law will increase the purchasing power of the farmers, which will greatly benefit the country's economy, the farmers said.

No one paid attention

The farmers said that in the last 48 days, letters were written to the Prime Minister, the Vice President and Supreme Court judges, "but no one paid any attention to our letter nor responded to it."

"History is a witness to the fact that whenever a government goes astray from the right path, saints and religious leaders have worked to bring the government to the right path.

Acceding to the request of the protesting farmers, SKM has advanced from Ja-

nuary 15 to 13 the proposed meeting for deciding on a joint fight.

The move came a day after the SKM (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) wrote to the SKM for a meeting on January 12 or 13 in the wake of "deteriorating" health of Mr. Dallewal.

A six-member committee of SKM, which visited the Khanauri protest site on Friday, had invited the SKM (Non-Political) and KMM for a meeting on January 15 in Patiala for unity among farmer bodies for a joint fight against the Centre to press for acceptance of farmers' demands including a legal guarantee to minimum support price for crops. The SKM, which had led the 2020 agitation against the now-repealed three farm laws, is not part of the ongoing agitation of the SKM (Non-Political) and the KMM.

KIA
 Presents
THE HINDU
LIT FOR LIFE
 2025
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 In association with
CHRIST

LITERARY TRIVIA CHALLENGE

1. Renowned violinist known for his global fusion concerts and author of Raga Harmony, he composed the music for Hey Ram. Name him
2. In The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe, which of the Pevensie siblings first enters Narnia?
3. "A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies. The man who never reads lives only one" is a quote from A Dance With Dragons. Who wrote the book?

Scan QR code or visit newsth.live/LFL2025QZ take the quiz. Top 3 winners* every day win gift vouchers.

Answer to yesterday's quiz:

1. Jenny Erpenbeck and Michael Hofmann | 2. Jeeves | 3. Han Kang

Yesterday's Winners:

1. C Uma, Chennai | 2. Arunima T G, Thrissur | 3. Saka Sreepala, Hyderabad

?

IN BRIEF



5,000 youth have shunned Naxalism, says Gadkari

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday said "Naxalism" has declined significantly in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli, as nearly 5,000 youth have quit the outlawed movement, joined the mainstream and got employment. In the next five years, Gadchiroli will become the highest revenue-generating district in Maharashtra, he said at BJP's State-level convention at Shirdi in Ahilyanagar district. Mr. Gadkari appealed to the BJP workers to channel the party's electoral success into meaningful societal transformation. "The victory in the last year's State Assembly polls should lead to the establishment of *surajya* (good governance)," he said. PTI

21-year-old student found dead in IIT-Kharagpur hostel

The body of a third-year undergraduate student was found in a hostel room at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, in the early hours of Sunday. The deceased has been identified as 21-year-old Shaon Malik, a student of the Electrical Engineering Department. The body was discovered in the Azad Hall of Residence. The IIT-Kharagpur issued a statement and expressed condolences. "The police are conducting a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding Mr. Malik's death. The institute is fully cooperating with the authorities," it said. According to sources, the body was discovered by the parents of the victim, who had come to visit him.

India-U.S. joint Sonobuoy production line expected to be ready by 2027

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

The final assembly of sonobuoys from the U.S., meant for detecting submarines underwater, will be done in India and an operational production line is expected to be ready in 2027, according to the U.S. company Ultra Maritime. The systems will be co-produced in India in partnership with defence public sector undertaking Bharat Dynamics Ltd. (BDL).

In a significant development, India and the U.S. last week announced the "first-of-its-kind partnership on co-production" of U.S. sonobuoys for Undersea Domain Awareness for the Indian Navy, a high-end technology that allows tracking of submarines in the deep seas and oceans. The announcement was made in the fact sheet issued at the end of U.S. Na-

The systems will be co-produced in India in partnership with defence public sector undertaking Bharat Dynamics Ltd.

tional Security Advisor Jake Sullivan's visit to India last week.

"Workshare will be in line with the principles of Make in India. Final assembly will be done in India. Our goal is to have an operational production line in 2027," Ultra Maritime said in response to questions from *The Hindu* sent via email. "These will be U.S.-specification sonobuoys equivalent to those used on the P-8 aircraft."

The chairman of BDL, Commodore A. Madhavarao (retd), had stated that they are looking to set up joint production with Ultra Maritime in

Vishakhapatnam. The U.S.-based company, a world-leader in the design and production of undersea warfare capabilities, has already stated that in line with the U.S.-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (ICET) launched in May 2022, they will also pursue new sonobuoy technologies with BDL teams to optimise their acoustic performance in the unique environment of the Indian Ocean, enabling wide area search through bespoke multi-static active solutions. To a question, the company clarified that this was in addition to the initial production already envisaged.

On the future outlook, Ultra Maritime said it was working with BDL to identify opportunities for Indian suppliers to enter its global supply chain. An Ultra Maritime state-

ment issued last week had stated that the sonobuoys co-produced in India are interchangeable and interoperable between the U.S. Navy, Indian Navy and allied P-8, MH-60R and the MQ-9B Sea Guardian aircraft.

The development is of particular significance as India has over the years acquired a series of military platforms from the U.S. that are also operated by other countries in the region, especially Australia and Japan, which too are part of the Quad grouping and also hold the Malabar naval exercise. These sonobuoys are dropped from aircraft and helicopters. India is also pursuing another technology - sensors embedded on the ocean bed - and recently some progress has been made as a few Indian start-ups showcased the technology now undergoing trials.

Shiv Sahay Singh
SAGAR (WEST BENGAL)

Competing with the Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj, the organisers of the Gangasagar Mela, held at the confluence of the Ganga with the Bay of Bengal in West Bengal, on Sunday announced a slew of initiatives, including a certificate for pilgrims participating in the annual pilgrimage.

A number of Ministers of the West Bengal government, led by Power Minister Aroop Biswas, held a press conference announcing the Bandhan initiative for pilgrims visiting the site in availing a certificate in three languages.

Other initiatives include the e-Anushandhan (pilgrims can access facilities at the mela ground) and e-Parichay (QR code-enabled identity band) to prevent missing people in the mela

crowd. "So far, about 42 lakh pilgrims have visited the island," Mr. Biswas said, expressing hope that the number of pilgrims would cross the record of one crore set in 2023.

While claims of the number of pilgrims visiting the ecologically fragile island during the Makar Sankranti festival is contested by Opposition political parties, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has been

Ahead of Budget, CII suggests moves for ease of business

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

cords, provide information on disputed land and guide necessary reforms.

While India has over the last decade remained focused on improving ease of doing business (EoDB), there is a need to maintain the momentum, especially in certain specific areas, the CII stated.

CII Director-General Chandrajit Banerjee said, "Simplifying regulatory frameworks, reducing compliance burdens, and enhancing transparency should continue to remain our focus agenda for next several years. Compliances for industry related to areas such as land, labour,

dispute resolution, paying taxes and environment offer a vast scope for reduction, vital for boosting competitiveness, driving economic growth and employment generation."

Arguing that labour compliances continue to be extensive and arduous and await the implementation of the four labour codes, it called for the scope of the Shram Suvidha Portal, which facilitates integrated compliances in just a few select central Acts, to be expanded to function as a centralised portal for all central and state labour laws compliances.



Booming market: The optical transceiver market worldwide could grow to \$47.64 billion by 2035, according to an estimate. FILE PHOTO

and its "servers and data centres are based in India, so customers can be assured their digital assets and IP are stored safely in the country", said Arnab Mitra, CEO. Security isn't always a function of the location of data, but over the years, localisation mandates like the RBI's have pushed firms in other industries to seek local storage options, even if they are more expensive due to a lack of scale.

The reason local storage is "becoming an even hotter topic is obviously the rise of privacy", Mr. Mitra said in an interview. He admitted that local storage was more expensive but added that firms looked out for their reputation when making storage decisions for regulatory purposes. "So, it's in many ways priceless," he said.

The firm's CTO, Sunil Khatana, said in a presentation that a significant share of data centre and network infrastructure expenditure was on imported transceivers. DigiBoxx, meanwhile, bills itself as the "first swadeshi SaaS [Software as a Service]-based digital storage and sharing platform"

works, which started after the border clashes in 2020, but the growing impulse to make and market the tech locally.

As per an estimate by the Mohali-based Roots Analysis, the optical transceiver market worldwide could grow to \$47.64 billion by 2035, over four times its current value.

The firm's CTO, Sunil Khatana, said in a presentation that a significant share of data centre and network infrastructure expenditure was on imported transceivers.

DigiBoxx, meanwhile, bills itself as the "first swadeshi SaaS [Software as a Service]-based digital storage and sharing platform"

Bengal govt. announces new initiatives to attract pilgrims to Gangasagar Mela



Official visit: Aroop Biswas at the Gangasagar Mela. He and his Cabinet colleagues are present at the venue. DEBASISH BHADURI

status of a "national mela". Mr. Biswas said elaborate arrangements had been made to transport pilgrims from different parts of the State to Sagar Island, including about 2,500 government and private buses, 21 jetties, nine barges, 32 vessels, and 120 launches.

"About 13,000 policemen have been posted to ensure safety and security at the Gangasagar Mela," the Minister said.

The State government also organises 'Ganga Aarti' every year during the mela, much like the event held at the ghats of Varanasi.

This year, the 'Ganga Aarti' is being organised from January 11 to January 13.

In separate incidents, one person died and two others were airlifted after they fell ill at the Gangasagar Mela.

FAITH

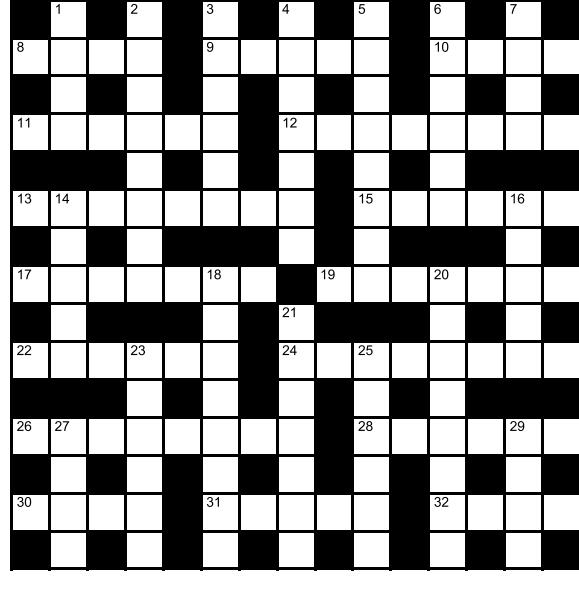
Message of Lohri festival

Lohri is a precursor to the festivals of Maghi, Pongal and Bihu throughout India. It marks the movement of the Sun away from Makar (Capricorn) to the north signifying the last day of the month of Paush. Offering thanksgiving to the Sun God, Lohri heralds the beginning of the end of the dark bleak dreary winters and the beginning of warm days, said Prof. Kumool Abbi. Spiritually, the inner darkness is dispelled.

Anthropologically it is related to the agricultural calendar. It heralds the harvesting of the Rabi crops. A bonfire is lit and oblations are offered to the sacred fire. 'Aadr aaye dalidhar jaye' (may honour come and poverty vanish) in the form of sesame, peanuts, popcorn, puffed rice and jaggery.

Throughout history, fire has been venerated as power and associated with purity, luminescence and glow. Cosmologically the fire has an intimate cultural connection with the institutions of family and kinship, the rituals, customs, ceremonies of birth, marriage and death which invoke Agni. Linked to the solar calendar, Lohri, like Pongal, is a very significant religious and cultural festival. It signifies abundance, bounty, prosperity, fertility symbolising joy, brightness, warmth, continuity, copiousness and the community spirit. The fire is considered to be animate, alive and pure.

A solemnisation of marriage or the birth of a male child is celebrated. However, with modern values and education of daughters, Lohri has also become a new custom. The Sikh religion commemorates the sacrifice of the 40 muktas at the Maghi Mela at Muktsar.

TH CROSSWORD + 14381
(set by Incognito)

Across
8 Billionaire captivated by Meloni? (4)
9 Type of note produced by harps (5)
10 Bone in possession of Moghul nawab (4)
11 Free of charge? (6)
12 Wizened woman on skating arena went ahead (8)
13 One may get fir cones from these (8)

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SUDOKU

3			2	6				
6	1				4	2		
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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to previous puzzle

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XFILES DOWNPLAY

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

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MONEYWISE

BSE expects IPO run to continue unabated in 2025: CEO

MARKETMUSINGS

Reuters
MUMBAI

India's record-breaking capital-raising spree will continue in 2025 given the strong pipeline of firms looking to go public, the head of the country's oldest exchange told Reuters.

"There are 90-plus companies that have already filed their draft prospectus with the regulator, looking to raise an estimated ₹1 trillion (\$11.65 billion) at some point this year," Sundararaman Ramamurthy, the CEO of BSE said.

Last year, 91 large firms went public on the BSE, earlier known as the Bombay Stock Exchange, and the NSE, or National Stock Exchange, raising a record 1.6 trillion rupees via initial public offerings (IPOs), according to analytics firm Prime Database.

Overall public equity fundraising more than doubled to \$3.73 trillion.

Mr. Ramamurthy said the IPO boom has more Offers for Sale (OFS), where large shareholders sell existing shares, with the proceeds going to them, instead of fresh issues that provide firms with capital to invest.

"I would like to see the OFS percentage coming down and fresh capital raising go up."

BSE earned ₹1.57 billion in listing fees in the first-half of 2024-25, according to East India Securities. This compares to ₹1.3 billion in fees reported a year earlier.

Mr. Ramamurthy declined to comment on BSE's financials ahead of its upcoming quarterly earnings.

The gains from the IPO pipeline, however, are being tempered by tighter rules for trading derivatives.

The notional value of derivatives traded in India has declined 40% since September, in anticipation of the new rules, while premiums have fallen 15%-20%, Mr. Ramamurthy said.

A further decline could be expected since three of the six new rules introduced by the markets regulator will be implemented by April.

"We have to wait till April to judge the final impact," Mr. Ramamurthy said.

BSE's shares have doubled since Nov. 20 when the rules were implemented as analysts expect a lower impact on the exchange compared to the NSE, which has larger derivative trading volumes.

BSE, which earns a major chunk of revenue from transaction charges and services to firms including listings, is looking to diversify its income streams, Mr. Ramamurthy said.

It aims to grow its index business, which licences indexes used by funds to benchmark investments.

"We have launched 15 indices since the middle of last year and there is room to continue working on that front," he said.

It is also considering expanding its co-location services, which are in demand as high-frequency and algorithmic trading increase.

"There is good possibility of generating revenue (in co-location), but we have not made a decision yet. We will look at it after April once market volumes settle down."

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

Correction

The article "Uninsured two-wheelers are a major safety concern", published on this page on January 6, had erroneously stated that 'The maximum compensation is ₹7.5 lakh for third-party death or property damage.' It should have stated: 'The maximum compensation for a third party death is decided by the court, and the maximum compensation for third party property damage in the case of bike insurance is ₹1 lakh.' The error is regretted.



Less taxing: Hybrid funds with allocation of more than 65% of portfolio to equity, are equity funds for tax purposes. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

All about the utility of hybrid mutual funds

If you want to maintain equity exposure at a certain level, you may pick a hybrid fund; SEBI has set ranges and within these, there is tracking and rebalancing by the fund manager

MIX AND MATCH

Joydeep Sen

When we think of mutual funds (MFs), we think of equity funds. There are also hybrid funds with their own utility. These funds can add to tax efficiency. To recap, taxation of equity funds, for a holding period of more than one year, is 12.5% plus surcharge and cess. For a holding period of less than one year, it is 20% plus surcharge and cess. For debt funds, it is your marginal slab rate, irrespective of the holding period. For most investors, it is 30% plus surcharge and cess. Hybrid funds with allocation of more than 65% of portfolio to equity, are equity funds for tax purposes. In the process, the debt component of the fund also gets taxed at a lower rate i.e. 12.5%.

Fund details

There are six hybrid fund categories defined by Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI). We start with the category called Aggressive Hybrid funds. These funds are mandated to have allocation to equity in the range of 65 to 80% of the portfolio. It is compulsory to have this allocation to equity, hence, this category is just one notch below equity funds. The allocation to debt, 20-35% of portfolio, leads to lower volatility than pure-play



SEBI defines Dynamic Asset Allocation or Balanced Advantage Funds as those with investment in equity/debt managed dynamically

equity funds. Equity allocation being more than 65% of portfolio, taxation is that of equity.

Then there are Balanced Hybrid funds with equity allocation 40-60%. As per rules, an Asset Management Company (AMC) can have either Aggressive or Balanced Hybrid fund not both. Given a fund with over 65% allocation to equity is taxed as equity and investors prefer equity taxation, AMCs have not initiated Balanced Hybrid funds.

SEBI defines Dynamic Asset Allocation or Balanced Advantage Funds (BAFs) as 'investment in equity/debt that is managed dynamically'.

However, the MF industry has positioned BAF in a particular manner.

Equity component is maintained at over 65%, to be eligible for equity taxation. A part of the equity exposure is 'hedged'. Hedging is done by taking a contra position i.e. sell/short position in stock futures. The effect is the net equity exposure, subject to market volatility, is much lower.

As an illustration, let us say the in a BAF with a corpus of ₹100, equity expo-



Arbitrage Funds earn returns from the price differential between equity stocks in cash market and stock futures market, for 65% of the portfolio.

The price at which a stock is sold in the stock futures market is higher than the price at which it is purchased in the cash or spot market. These funds have 65% or more of the portfolio in cash-futures arbitrage and 35% or less in debt or money market instruments. Returns come from price differential between the two segments.

Multi Asset Funds (MAFs) are those with exposure to a minimum of three asset categories and minimum 10% in each category. Here as well, most AMCs run portfolios with equity exposure of over 65% to be eligible for equity taxation. The balance is invested in debt and gold, or some other asset class.

As we can see in the above fund categories, exposure to equity being less than that of pure-play equity funds, you have diversification built in the fund. At the end of the holding period, you may end up with returns less than equity-only funds, but volatility during holding period will be relatively lower.

debt-oriented funds.

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Conclusion

If you want to maintain equity exposure at a certain level, in a disciplined manner, you may resort to the relevant hybrid fund.

(The writer is a corporate trainer (financial markets) and author.)

Is PPF still attractive?

THINKINVESTOR

You can renew a PPF account till retirement, and each renewal will be for a block of five years after the initial period of 15 years. This makes it an optimal investment for retirement

Venkatesh BangaruSwamy

The new tax regime is the default choice. While tax rates are lower with higher slabs for income under ₹15 lakh, you can no longer claim deduction under Section 80C of the Income-Tax Act. This has led many to wonder about their investments in Public Provident Fund (PPF). Here, we discuss why PPF is still an important part of goal-based portfolios.

Exempt Income

Investments must be evaluated on a post-tax basis. Suppose you consider investing in equity for capital appreciation and in bonds for income returns. Your goal-based investments will attract long-term capital gains tax on equity and your marginal tax rate on income returns.

As the marginal tax rate is higher, you must shield your interest income from taxes. Otherwise, your post-tax expected returns on the portfolio will be significantly lower. It is in this context that your investments in PPF becomes important.

Proceeds, Interest exempt

Accrued interest on PPF investment is exempt from I-T as are the proceeds you receive at maturity. This is true even if you are assessed under the new income tax regime.

Therefore, PPF continues to be an attractive investment, even if you cannot avail the deduction of ₹1.5 lakh annually. Note, interest rate on PPF is reset every quarter. So, rates can decline in line with the government bond yields. Yet, tax exemption on interest income is a dominant factor in favour of PPF.

The maximum amount you can invest annually in PPF is ₹1.5 lakh. Most confuse this with the headroom deduction available under Section 80C. Suppose you are in the old tax regime and your provident fund (PF) contribution is ₹50,000.

The misconception is you can invest only ₹1 lakh in PPF, given the ₹1.5 lakh deduction limit under Section 80C. That is not true. You can invest ₹1.5 lakh in PPF. But you can only claim a maximum of ₹1.5 lakh for all your eligible investments under Section 80C including PF and PPF.

Conclusion

You can renew your PPF account till retirement and each renewal will be a block of five years after the initial period of 15 years. This makes PPF an optimal investment for retirement portfolio and for goals with time horizon of 15 years and more.

To benefit from compounding effect, it is optimal to exhaust PPF investments early in a financial year. Individuals with salary income could consider contribution to voluntary PF, as it carries a higher interest rate.

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

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
HDFC Bank	10.85-24.00	10,834-14,384	2,167-2,877	Up to Rs 6,500
Tata Capital	11.99 onwards	11,120 onwards	2,224 onwards	Up to 5.5%
State Bank of India	11.45-14.85	10,984-11,856	2,197-2,371	NIL
ICICI Bank	10.85-16.25	10,834-12,226	2,167-2,445	Up to 2%
Bank of Baroda	11.05-18.75	10,884-12,902	2,177-2,580	Up to 2% (Maximum Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	11.00 onwards	10,871 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99-16.99	10,869-12,424	2,174-2,485	Up to 5%
Bank of India	10.85-16.20	10,834-12,212	2,167-2,442	Up to 1% (Minimum Rs 250 and Maximum Rs 10,000)
Canara Bank	10.95-16.40	10,859-12,266	2,172-2,453	Up to 0.50% (Maximum Rs 2,500)
Punjab National Bank	11.40-17.95	10,971-12,683	2,194-2,537	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	10.15-16.00	10,660-12,159	2,132-2,432	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.49-14.49	10,994-11,762	2,199-2,352	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	11.35-15.45	10,959-12,013	2,192-2,403	Up to 1% (Maximum Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	10.00-31.00	10,624-16,485	2,125-3,297	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	11.25-14.00	10,934-11,634	2,187-2,327	0.50%-1%
South Indian Bank	12.85-20.60	11,338-13,414	2,268-2,683	Up to 2%
UCO Bank	12.45-12.85	11,236-11,338	2,247-2,268	Up to 1% (Minimum Rs 750)
IDFC First Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	2%
Bank of Maharashtra	10.00-12.80	10,624-11,325	2,125-2,265	Up to 2% (Min. Rs 2,500 Max. Rs 8,500)
Karnataka Bank	13.68	11,551	2,310	Up to 3.5%
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 3.5%

Car Loans

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

MANILA

Philippines deploys coast guard ship to counter China patrols



The Philippines said on Sunday it had deployed a coast guard ship to challenge Chinese patrol boats attempting to "alter the existing status quo" of the disputed South China Sea. Manila said Chinese patrol ships had this year come as close as 111 km west of the main Philippine island of Luzon. AFP

ISLAMABAD

Malala slams Taliban for instituting 'gender apartheid' against women



Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai slammed the Taliban for instituting a system of "gender apartheid" against women by disguising their crimes in the cloak of culture and religion. "The Taliban do not see women as human beings. These policies are a violation of human rights," she said while speaking on girls' education in Islamabad. PTI

SEOUL

South Korea's Yoon will not attend first impeachment hearing



South Korea's suspended President Yoon Suk Yeol will not attend the first hearing of his impeachment trial next week because of safety concerns, his lawyer said. The Constitutional Court has scheduled five trial dates spanning January 14 to February 4, which will proceed in his absence if he does not attend. AFP

ZAGREB

Croatia's President Milanovic is the favourite to win run-off elections



Croatia's incumbent President Zoran Milanović, left, was the favourite to win reelection as he faced Dragan Primorac from the ruling conservative party in a run-off on Sunday. The left-leaning Milanović comfortably won the first round on December 29. He fell short of securing 50% of the vote by just 5,000 votes. AFP

Saudi Arabia calls for lifting Syria curbs at talks with EU

The meeting also included officials from West Asia and the UN; German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock wants a 'smart approach' that would enable aid to reach Syrians

Agence France-Presse

RIYADH

S

The Gulf kingdom is seeking to increase its influence in Syria after Islamist-led militants toppled longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad last month, analysts say.

"We stressed the importance of lifting unilateral and international sanctions imposed on Syria, as



Way out: Saudi Arabia hosts top diplomats from West Asia and Europe to discuss Syria in Riyadh on Sunday. AFP

their continuation hinders the aspirations of the Syrian people to achieve development and reconstruction," Saudi Foreign

Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said after Sunday's talks concluded in Riyadh.

The agenda included a meeting of Arab officials as

well as a broader gathering that also included Turkiye, France, the European Union and the UN.

The European Union's top diplomat, Kaja Kallas, said on Friday that the 27-nation bloc could begin lifting sanctions if Syria's new rulers took steps to form an inclusive government that protected minorities.

European Foreign Ministers are due to meet on January 27 to discuss the issue, she said.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said in Riyadh that her government wanted a "smart approach" that would enable aid to reach Syrians.

Firefighters scramble to contain Los Angeles fires

Agence France-Presse
LOS ANGELES

Firefighters battled on Sunday to get on top of massive wildfires around Los Angeles as winds ramped up, pushing the blazes toward previously untouched neighbourhoods.

At least 16 persons were confirmed dead from fires that have ripped through the city, leaving communities in ruins and testing the mettle of thousands of firefighters – and millions of California residents.

Despite heroic efforts, including precision sorties from aerial crews, the Palisades Fire continued to grow, pushing east and north to the densely populated San Fernando Valley.

A brief lull in the wind was rapidly giving way to



No respite: A fire-fighting helicopter at work near the Mandeville Canyon neighbourhood in California on Saturday. AFP

gusts that forecasters warned would feed the blazes for days to come.

"Critical fire-weather conditions will unfortunately ramp up again today for southern California and last through at least early next week," the National Weather Service said.

"This may lead to the spread of ongoing fires as well as the development of new ones."

The Palisades Fire was 11% contained on Saturday but had grown to 23,600 acres, while the Eaton Fire was at 14,000 acres and 15% contained.

Yunus asks U.K. to probe 'graft scandal' of Hasina's niece

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

"Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus has called for an investigation into the properties of British Minister Tulip Siddiq and her family, indicating that they may have acquired them through unlawful means during her aunt Sheikh Hasina's tenure as Bangladesh premier," reports said on Sunday.

In an interview with the Times newspaper, Mr. Yunus condemned the use of properties gifted to Ms. Siddiq and her family by "allies of her aunt's de-

posed regime". He demanded the return of the assets to Bangladesh if she is found to have benefited from "plain robbery."

Ms. Siddiq, a member of Britain's Labour Cabinet, serves as the Economic Secretary to the Treasury and City Minister, responsible for addressing corruption within the U.K.'s financial markets.

Italy's Justice Minister asks court to release Iranian man held on U.S. warrant

Associated Press
ROME

Italy's Justice Minister has asked an appeals court to revoke the arrest of an Iranian citizen wanted by the U.S. over a drone attack in Jordan that killed three Americans a year ago.

Mohammad Abedini was scheduled to appear at a Milan court on Wednesday in connection with his bid for house arrest pending the extradition process to the U.S.

Iransaid Mr. Abedini will return to Iran "within hours." The report said the release and return of Mr. Abedini came after Iranian journalist Cecilia Sala was de-



Quid pro quo: Italian journalist Cecilia Sala, believed to have been held as a bargaining chip, had returned home last week. REUTERS

the case with Italy.

Mr. Abedini was arrested based on a U.S. warrant on December 16, three days before Italian journalist Cecilia Sala was de-

tained while on a reporting trip to Iran. Ms. Sala, who was believed to have been held as a bargaining chip for Mr. Abedini's release, returned home last week,

giving rise to speculation about his fate.

Finer details

The Justice Ministry on Sunday said that under Italy-U.S. extradition treaties, "only crimes that are punishable according to the laws of both sides can lead to extradition, a condition which, based on the state of documents, can't be considered as existing."

The potential charge against Mr. Abedini – criminal association for violating the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, a U.S. federal law – "did not correspond to any conduct recognised by Italian law as a crime."

Myanmar junta air strike kills 15 civilians, says rebel group

Agence France-Presse
BANGKOK

the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), said.

"All those killed were civilians including gold miners and local shopkeepers," he said.

The KIA, which can call on around 7,000 fighters, has been battling the military for decades for autonomy and control of local resources in Kachin State.

The State is home to huge jade mines and rare heavy earth elements, most of which are exported to China. Naw Bu said

as resistance to its 2021 coup. The latest attack happened around 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, Colonel Naw Bu, a spokesperson from

Jemimah's century sets up series win for India

IRELAND IN INDIA

Press Trust of India
RAJKOT

A collective batting performance headlined by Jemimah Rodrigues' maiden hundred ensured India's commanding 116-run win against Ireland in the second women's ODI here on Sunday as the hosts took an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

India scored a massive 370 for five riding on three half-centuries and a ton before restricting Ireland to 254 for seven in the stipulated 50 overs.

Skipper Smriti Mandhana was the first off the blocks with an attacking 73 off just 54 balls, while Jemimah (102 off 91) ensured a smooth finish for the hosts.



wal (67 off 61 balls) and the seasoned Harleen Deol (89 off 84 balls) also made merry against a sub-par bowling attack.

Ireland batted steadily

but never had the firepower to surpass a gigantic total.

Save Christina Coulter Reilly's 80, there wasn't much fight from the other

batters as off-spinner Deepti Sharma emerged the pick of the Indian bowlers with three for 37.

Earlier, India's total was

based on two big stands –

156 off 19 overs between Smriti and Pratika and 183 off 28 overs between Jemimah and Harleen.

Carnage

In all, the Indian batters smashed an astounding 44 boundaries and three sixes in 50 overs.

As far as Jemimah was concerned, her record has been one that flattered to deceive with just six half-centuries across 40 games.

But once she got the boundary off medium pacier Arlene Kelly, the relief was palpable as she did a mock guitar-playing act with her willow.

The scores: India 370/5 in 50 overs (Smriti 93, Pratika 67, Harleen 89, Jemimah 102) beat Ireland 254/7 in 50 overs (Sarah Forbes 38, Christina Coulter Reilly 80, Deepti Sharma 3/37). **Toss:** India: PoM: Jemimah. India won by 116 runs and leads series 2-0.

Blaze. Owner: Mr. V. Narendra Reddy. Trainer: G. Shashikant. **4. RED SATIN PLATE (DIV. II)** (1,200M): **FIRST LADY** (Santosh Raj N.R) 1, Normai (Mukesh) 2, Glimmer Of Hope (Gaurav) 3 and Sargent (H.M. Akshay) 4, 4/12, Neck and 1/2, Im, 12, 59s, ₹22 (w), 11, 13 and 52 (p), SHP: 28, TPH: 137, SHW: 18 and 33, FP: 58, Q: 30, Tanala: 1,565. Favourite: First Lady. Owners: Mr. G. Krishnamoorthy Rao, Mr. Prabhakar Chowdary Triparaneni & Mrs. T. Roini. Trainer: D. Netto.

5. VIJAY REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (1,600M): PEPPY (A. Ashad Asbar) 1, See My Attitude (Afroz K) 2, Bellington (B.R. Kumar) 3 and Oskars Officer (H.M. Akshay) 4, 2/4, 2/3 and 1/2, Im, 12, 59s, ₹22 (w), 11, 13 and 52 (p), SHP: 28, TPH: 137, SHW: 18 and 33, FP: 58, Q: 30, Tanala: 1,565. Favourite: Peppi. Owners: Mr. G. Krishnamoorthy Rao, Mr. Prabhakar Chowdary Triparaneni & Mrs. T. Roini. Trainer: D. Netto.

6. COMMON LAND PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200M): RIVAL (P. Sai Kumar) 1, Golden Gazelle (H.M. Akshay) 1, Happy Soul (Kuldeep Jr.) 3 and Mr. Perfect (Mohit) 4, 2, 2 and 3/4, Im, 11, 57s, ₹28 (w), 10, 14 and 29 (p), SHP: 41, TPH: 46, SHW: 13 and 20, FP: 113, Q: 45, Tanala: 633. Favourite: Rival. Owner: The United Racing & Bloodstock Breeders Ltd. and Neck. Rival. Trainer: D. Netto.

7. CHALLURI SUSHEELA & NARASIMHA REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (1,400M): MISS SMILEY ANGEL (H.M. Akshay) 1, N R I (Ashad Asbar) 2, Infinia (Ashad Asbar) 3 and Konaseema (Abhay) 4, Head, 2 and 2, 26, 75s, ₹33 (w), 74, 12 and 13 (p), SHP: 38, TPH: 44, SHW: 126 and 18, FP: 3, 496, Q: 929, Tanala: 17,638. Favourite: N R I

HYDERABAD: Trainer M. Srinivas Reddy. Owner: Mr. G. Shashikant. **4. RED SATIN PLATE (DIV. II)** (1,200M): **FIRST LADY** (Santosh Raj N.R) 1, Normai (Mukesh) 2, Glimmer Of Hope (Gaurav) 3 and Sargent (H.M. Akshay) 4, 4/12, Neck and 1/2, Im, 12, 59s, ₹22 (w), 11, 13 and 52 (p), SHP: 28, TPH: 137, SHW: 18 and 33, FP: 58, Q: 30, Tanala: 1,565. Favourite: First Lady. Owners: Mr. G. Krishnamoorthy Rao, Mr. Prabhakar Chowdary Triparaneni & Mrs. T. Roini. Trainer: D. Netto.

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6. COMMON LAND PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200M): **DARLING'S BOY** (Akshay) 1, Cherie Chevalier (P. Sai K) 2, Pacific Heights (Saqlain) 3 and Smart Operator (Mukesh) 4, 2, 10, 1/2 and 2/1, Im, 11, 57s, ₹32 (w), 17 and 10 (p), SHP: 18, TPH: 41, SHW: 19 and 10, FP: 81, Q: 39, Tanala: 80. Favourite: Cherie Chevalier. Owners: M/s. Arun Alagappan Racing LLP & Mr. S. Pathy. Trainer: N. Rawal.

7. DECCAN BOOKMAKERS WELFARE ASSOCIATION DARLEY ARABIAN MILLION (GR. 3) (1,200M): HOME RUN (Akshay Kumar) 1, Cherie Chevalier (P. Sai K) 2, Pacific Heights (Saqlain) 3 and Smart Operator (Mukesh) 4, 2, 10, 1/2 and 2/1, Im, 11, 57s, ₹32 (w), 17 and 10 (p), SHP: 18, TPH: 41, SHW: 19 and 10, FP: 81, Q: 39, Tanala: 80. Favourite: Cherie Chevalier. Owners: M/s. Arun Alagappan Racing LLP & Mr. S. Pathy. Trainer: N. Rawal.

8. PETRA ACT (Mukesh Kumar) 1, Dali's Champion (P. Ajeeb K) 2, Golden Inzil (P. Sai K) 3 and Exponent (Md. Ekram) 4. Not run: That's Mission 5/1, 3/4 and 7-3. Im, 11, 57s, ₹32 (w), 22, 10 and 17 (p), SHP: 32, TPH: 39, SHW: 87 and 15, FP: 82, Q: 23, Tanala: 952. Favourite: Dali's Champion. Owners: M/s. Boppidi Sharad Sunder Reddy, Chandrasekhar Reddy, Challa Srikrishna Rao Thota & Venkata Krishna Reddy Challa. Trainer: Magan Singh Parmar.

Jackpot: (i) 70%: ₹83,266 (1 tkt.) & 30%: 3,244 (11 tkt.). (ii) 70%: 35,751 (14 tkt.) & 30%: 674 (318 tkt.). Mini Jackpot: (i) 1,90,717 (1 tkt.), (ii) 5,117 (7 tkt.). Treble: (i) 1,86 (11 tkt.), (ii) 461 (154 tkt.), (iii) 1,469 (30 tkt.).

Sport

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IN THE OPEN

Djokovic reveals 'energetic disc' as his new secret weapon



Novak Djokovic has revealed a new secret weapon that he credits with helping keep him healthy — a green "energetic disc." Known for his new-age spiritual interests, he has a device made by an engineer in Serbia which he claims has helped him deal with several ailments. The 37-year-old showed off the dinner-plate size disc on Instagram.

LOVE-ALL

Ruud says proposing to girlfriend topped any Grand Slam final



Casper Ruud is a three-time Grand Slam finalist, but the World No. 6 admitted his pulse was racing when he went down on one knee to propose to his girlfriend Maria Galligani. Asked if he was more nervous playing Rafael Nadal in the French Open final or asking his fiancee to marry him, he visibly tensed up, stuttering in his on-court interview.

IN THE HOT SEAT

Shreyas is Punjab Kings skipper, aims to deliver team's maiden title



IPL franchise Punjab Kings announced Shreyas Iyer as its captain for the 2025 season. "I am honoured that the team has reposed its faith in me. I am looking forward to working again with coach Ricky Ponting. I hope to repay the faith shown by the management by winning our maiden title," said Shreyas.

TRIPLE DELIGHT

Jamshedpur FC outclasses Mumbai City, climbs to third spot



Jamshedpur FC defeated Mumbai City FC 3-0 in an ISL match in Mumbai on Sunday to move to third spot, courtesy its ninth win. The visiting team converted all of the three shots it took on target into goals. **The result:** Mumbai City FC 0 lost to Jamshedpur FC 3 (Mohd Sanan 64, Jordan Murray 86 (in pic), Hernandez 90+6).

Toofans blow away the Lancers' challenge

Peillat nets two goals as the Hyderabad franchise comes from behind to register a 5-1 win; Casella, Brand and Arshdeep add to the team's tally as it climbs to the second spot

HIL

Y.B. Sarangi
ROURKELA

Hyderabad Toofans rode on German drag-flicker Gonzalo Peillat's brace to record another come-from-behind win — its second in two days — in the Hockey India League at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium here on Sunday. The 5-1 victory over Vedanta Kalinga Lancers, its second outright win, took it to the No. 2 spot.

Lancers suffered because of their below-par short corner conversion — only one of 11 — while Toofans benefited from the great work of 'keepers Vikas Dahiya and Dominic Dixon as well as the defenders.

An eventful first quarter saw turnovers and eight penalty corners, of which Lancers earned five. Both sides scored a goal apiece, too.

Alex Hendrickx executed a low drag-flick to put Lancers ahead in the fifth minute and Peillat returned the favour in a similar manner in the next minute.

The closing seconds of



Happy bunch: Toofans' two-goal hero Peillat, centre, and fellow goal-scorer Arshdeep celebrate a strike along with teammates. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the first period witnessed a heated exchange between players of both sides after Lancers were awarded their fifth penalty corner.

Going ahead

Maico Casella scored a freakish goal in the 21st minute to give Toofans the lead and the momentum.

The Argentinian, posted on the right, brought down Zachary Wallace's long aerial pass from the left and hammered in a cross-batted cricket shot from a narrow angle as the ball sailed

over custodian Krishan Pathak's head and left him stunned. Lancers created some good moves in the second quarter but could not find the equaliser.

Toofans, after seeing Shilanand Lakra hitting straight into Pathak's body off a counter-attack, made it 2-1 as Peillat unleashed a diagonal drag-flick at the stroke of half-time.

Free-flowing end-to-end action continued in the second half.

But the hosts did not have the luck as an attempt

from a short corner hit the post for a second time.

Toofans grew in confidence, attacked with composure and extended the lead early in the final quarter with Tim Brand tapping it in.

As Lancers removed their goalkeeper, the hard-working Arshdeep Singh scored another one for Toofans to seal the game.

The result: Hyderabad Toofans 5 (Peillat 6 & 30, Casella 21, Brand 47, Arshdeep 54) bt Vedanta Kalinga Lancers 1 (Hendrickx 5).

Jansen on the double as Warriors ease past Pipers in opening game

Santadeep Dey

RANCHI

Yibbi Jansen, the most expensive foreign player of the first-ever women's Hockey India League, set the tone for the competition with a brace in the lung-opener as Odisha Warriors made a strong statement with a 4-0 win over Delhi SG Pipers at the Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Munda Astro Turf Stadium here on Sunday.

Warriors produced a sterling defensive show in the first 15 minutes after opting to push-back. When Delhi midfielder Lily Owley went on a run down the right flank, an alert Sakshi Rana marred the Rio 2016 gold medallist's attempt to cross the ball into the danger zone.

Meanwhile, Delhi custodian Elodie Picard's wrong-footed slide kept at bay the opposition skipper Neha Goyal, who had sneaked into the circle in the third minute.

Odisha snuffed an opportunity again in the second quarter when it won the first penalty corner of the game.

Dutch forward Freeke Moes' injection found compatriot Jansen, and the most successful goal-scorer at Paris 2024 didn't break a sweat as she found the target with a piercing drag-flick.

Five minutes later, Pip-



Yibbi! Jansen, gung-ho after scoring a goal, led Warriors' charge against Pipers. K.R. DEEPAK



Colourful start: Folk artists perform during the opening ceremony of the Women's Hockey India League. K.R. DEEPAK

ers looked to equalise through a penalty corner after a stray stick tackle from Lilly Stoffelsma. But Jyoti Singh made a mess

while trapping the insertion. Sunelita Toppo and Mumtaz Khan's sizzling runs after the half-hour mark found little support

from teammates.

And to add salt to the wounds, Jansen added to her tally through another penalty corner conversion.

Shoulders had begun to droop as Pipers meekly resigned to the status quo. Warriors, smelling blood, pumped in two more goals from open play as Baljeet Kaur and Moes joined the party.

The Delhi side earned a penalty corner in the dying moments of the game but the scoresheet remained unchanged.

The result: Odisha Warriors 4 (Jansen 16 & 37, Baljeet 42, Moes 43) bt Delhi SG Pipers 0.

Sabalenka and Zverev storm into round two

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Agence France-Presse
MELBOURNE

Aryna Sabalenka powered past Sloane Stephens to begin her quest for a third consecutive Australian Open crown on Sunday with Alexander Zverev and Zheng Qinwen also winning as storms caused havoc on day one of the Grand Slam.

Belarusian top seed Sabalenka had a first-set wobble but was otherwise in control against 2017 US Open champion Stephens, romping home 6-3, 6-2 in 71 minutes on Rod Laver Arena.

Sabalenka is aiming to become the first woman since Martina Hingis (1997-99) to win three consecutive titles at Melbourne Park.

If she lifts the winner's Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup again, she will join a select group of Margaret Court, Evonne Goolagong, Steffi Graf, Monica Seles and Hingis as the only women to complete a three-peat.

"Always tough matches against her," said Sabalenka, who won the Brisbane International in the lead-



The quest begins: Sabalenka, who swept past Stephens in her opener, is looking to become the first woman since Hingis to win three consecutive titles at Melbourne Park. AFP

up. "I didn't play my best, probably, but I'm glad I was able to close the match in two sets."

Men's second seed Zverev was clinical in his match against French wildcard Lucas Pouille, who made the last four in 2019 before losing to eventual champion Novak Djokovic.

The German, who is on the same side of the draw as Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz, cruised home 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 as he bids to better the semifinal he made in 2024.

Olympic champion Zheng

had the honour of playing the first point on centre court against Romania's 110th-ranked Anca Todoni.

She came through 7-6 (3), 6-1 but was rusty after opting not to play a warm-up event.

Zheng had three set points on her own serve at 5-3 in the first set, but allowed Todoni to come roaring back before closing her down in the tiebreak then racing through the second set.

"The first match is always not easy," she said. "Just happy to get through

the match, the tiebreak and find my rhythm."

The 22-year-old enjoyed a breakthrough 2024 with her Australian Open exploits helping spur her to Olympic gold — beating Iga Swiatek on the way — and three WTA titles.

While Zheng was able to play, the action on outside courts at Melbourne Park was halted barely an hour after it started when storms rolled in that turned the sky black.

India's Sumit Nagal lost

to Czechia's Tomas Machac. The 27-year-old Nagal, 91st in the ATP rank-

ings in singles, lost to his

World No. 25 opponent 6-3, 6-1, 7-5 in two hours and five minutes.

Saikia, Bhatia take over as secretary and treasurer of BCCI

Amol Karhadkar

MUMBAI

Devajit Saikia's and Prabhjeet Singh Bhatia's uncontested election as the secretary and treasurer, respectively, of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) was formalised during the BCCI's Special General Meeting (SGM) on Sunday.

With Saikia, the incumbent joint secretary, and Bhatia, who has earlier served as a councillor, being lone candidates in their respective categories, there was no need for a ballot vote. Election officer A.K. Joti formally appointed the duo as office-bearers in the SGM that lasted 10 minutes.

The need for election had arisen since Jay Shah and Ashish Shelar had to vacate their posts for varied reasons. While Shah resigned as secretary on November 30 before taking over as the International Cricket Council chair on December 1, Shelar had to step down immediately after being sworn in as a Minister in Maharashtra's Ca-



Devajit Saikia. PTI

binet last month.

The BCCI will now have to conduct an election for joint secretary's post in the next 45 days, with Mumbai Cricket Association vice-president Sanjay Naik being a frontrunner to fill in till the AGM later this year.

Saikia played four Ranji Trophy games for Assam in 1990-91. However, he has had a glittering career ever since stepping into the Assam Cricket Association in 2016. He has been instrumental in developing the Barsapara Cricket Stadium in Guwahati.

Bhatia, a young entrepreneur, was a councillor for three years from 2019 to '22.

Atletico claims LaLiga lead

Agencies

VENICE

Julian Alvarez's strike helped Atletico Madrid move top of LaLiga with 1-0 win over Osasuna on Sunday.

Diego Simeone's side climbed one point clear of Real Madrid and six ahead of third-placed Barcelona at the halfway mark in the Spanish league season.

Inter Milan secured a 1-0 win at lowly Venezia on Sunday that lifted it to second place in Serie A.

The results: LaLiga: Las Palmas 1 (Januzaj 88) lost to Getafe 2 (Coba 70, Mayoral 86); Atletico Madrid 1 (Alvarez 55) bt Osasuna 0.

Serie A: Genoa 1 (Frederick 65) bt Parma 0; Venezia 0 lost to Inter Milan 1 (Darmian 16).

Bundesliga: RB Leipzig 4 (Simons 23, 35, Sesko 47, Baumgartner 90) bt Werder Bremen 2 (Weiser 26, Burke 90+3).

On Saturday: Serie A: AC Milan 1 (Morata 51) drew with Cagliari 1 (Zortea 55); Torino 1 (Vlasic 45+) drew with Juventus 1 (Yildiz 8).

Bundesliga: Borussia

M'Gladbach 0 lost to Bayern Munich 1 (Kane 68+pen).

LaLiga: Espanyol 1 (Cabrerizo 2) drew with Leganes 1 (Cisse 14); Sevilla 1 (Pedroso 90+3) drew with Valencia 1 (Riola 61).

nings in singles, lost to his World No. 25 opponent 6-3, 6-1, 7-5 in two hours and five minutes.

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IN BRIEF



14-year-old Ira Jadhav hits 346 in U-19 one-dayer

Fourteen-year-old Mumbai opener Ira Jadhav became the first Indian to score a triple hundred in u-19 cricket, when she made 346 (157b, 42x4, 16x6) against Meghalaya in the U-19 Women's One Day Trophy in Bengaluru on Sunday. This is also the highest score in Youth List A matches by an Indian but the world record stands in the name of Lizelle Lee of South Africa, who made 427 in 2010.



Stage set for the Kho Kho World Cup

The Indira Gandhi Stadium in New Delhi on Sunday was abuzz with activity as the 24 participating nations came together to create a carnival atmosphere in the build-up to the inaugural Kho Kho World Cup. The Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) will hope that this tournament, which begins on Monday, acts as the catalyst for the traditional tag game to gain in popularity beyond the subcontinent. After the opening ceremony on Monday evening, the first game will see host India take on Nepal in the men's section. India is in Group A alongside Nepal, Peru, Brazil and Bhutan. In women's competition, 19 teams are taking part. Here too, India is in Group A with Iran, Malaysia and South Korea.

Shi and Se-young take the honours in Malaysia Open

China's Shi Yuqi and South Korea's An Se-young captured the Malaysia Open men's and women's singles badminton crowns in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday. Shi beat Denmark's Anders Antonsen 21-8, 21-15 and Se-young got the better of China's Wang Zhiyi 21-17, 21-7 in the final.

New Zealand recalls proven trio for Champions Trophy

Seasoned players Kane Williamson, Devon Conway and Lockie Ferguson were recalled on Sunday to an experienced New Zealand squad for the Champions Trophy one-day tournament.

The squad: Mitchell Santner (Capt.), Will Young, Devon Conway, Rachin Ravindra, Kane Williamson, Mark Chapman, Daryl Mitchell, Tom Latham, Glenn Phillips, Michael Bracewell, Nathan Smith, Matt Henry, Lockie Ferguson, Ben Sears and Will O'Rourke.

Shahidi to lead Afghanistan in Champions Trophy

Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) on Sunday announced that Hashmatullah Shahidi will lead the national side in its maiden ICC Men's Champions Trophy campaign.

The squad: Hashmatullah Shahidi (Capt.), Ibrahim Zadran, Rahmatullah Gurbaz, Sediqullah Atal, Rahmat Shah, Ikrar Ali Khil, Gulbadin Naib, Azmatullah Omarzai, Mohammad Nabi, Rashid Khan, A.M. Ghazanfar, Noor Ahmad, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Farid Malik and Naveed Zadran. **Reserves:** Darwish Rasooli, Nangyal Kharoti and Bilal Sami.

Alastair Gray beats Maxim Zhukov, wins another title

Alastair Gray of Britain won his second successive title on Indian soil as he beat Maxim Zhukov 6-3, 6-4 in the final of the \$30,000 ITF men's tennis tournament in Bhopal on Sunday. Gray who won last week in Indore, has not dropped a set in 10 matches over the fortnight.

Delhi holds Rajasthan United, Churchill demolishes Aizawl

A resilient Delhi FC, which was reduced to 10 men, staged a brilliant comeback to secure a 1-1 draw against Rajasthan United FC while Churchill Brothers FC (Goa) outplayed Aizawl FC 6-0 in the I-League on Sunday.

The results: Rajasthan United 1 (Oyarzun 70) drew with Delhi 1 (Okwa 83).

At Panaji: Churchill Brothers 6 (Lekay 3, 53-pen, Dias 27, 79, Gassama 73, Haokip 90+6) bt Aizawl 0.

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Haryana scrapes past Gujarat in a low-scoring thriller

Chasing a target of 197, the defending champion loses five wickets for 19 runs before crawling past the finish line in the 45th over; Karnataka awaits in the semifinals; leg-spinner Bishnoi's superb spell goes in vain for Axar's team

HAZARE TROPHY

S. Dipak Ragav

VADODARA

Haryana made heavy weather of a modest chase before holding its nerve in the end to beat Gujarat by two wickets in the quarter-finals of the Vijay Hazare Trophy at the Kotambli Stadium here on Sunday.

In pursuit of 197, the defending champion was cruising to victory at 173 for three in the 35th over but found itself in trouble when it lost five wickets for 19 runs in the next eight.

Opener Himanshu Rana (66, 89b, 10x4) led the way for Haryana at the top, stroking a fine half-century. Rana and his fellow opener Arsh Ranga got their side off to a brisk start - the latter smashing left-arm pacer Arzan Nagwaswalla for five boundaries in the pacer's first two overs.

Rana batted sensibly without taking risks and stitched two crucial partnerships, a 54-run stand with Ankit Kumar for the second wicket and then added 55 alongside Parth Vats (38) for the third.

Seemingly out of now-

The semifinal line-up:

Jan 15: Haryana vs Karnataka

Jan 16: Vidarbha vs Maharashtra

ere, Haryana pressed the self-destruct button when victory was in sight.

Leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi, introduced into the attack only in the 24th over, got Gujarat back into the contest by removing Rana, who was caught at covers.

The 24-year-old troubled the batters with his attacking lines and later struck thrice in three overs. Bishnoi dismissed the well-set Vats caught behind, then had Rahul Tewaria stumped and later castled Sumit Kumar to set the cat amongst the pigeons in Haryana's camp.

Ultimately, Dinesh Bana and Anshul Kamboj ensured their side huffed and puffed across the finish line to send Axar Patel's men packing.

Bowlers on the job

Earlier, the Haryana bowlers vindicated their skipper Ankit Kumar's decision to field first by bowling out Gujarat for just 196. Debutant pacer Anuj Thakral and left-arm spinner Nishant Sindhu were the wreckers-in-chief, scalping three

wickets each.

The Gujarat batters showed poor application against some disciplined bowling.

After racing to 45 for no loss, Urvil Patel got run out, providing an opening for Haryana.

Thakral then took three wickets in four overs to break the back of the top-order, and the home state was soon in trouble at 84 for five in the 20th over.

During the middle overs, spinners Amit Rana and Sindhu further choked the flow of runs as the batters went into a shell.

From 137 for eight, Hemang Patel (54, 62b, 2x4, 5x6) played a valiant counter-attacking knock, raining sixes by slogging the bowlers through the leg-side to lend some respectability to the total, which almost proved enough.

The scores:

Gujarat 196 in 45.2 overs (Hemang Patel 54, Anuj Thakral 3/39, Nishant Sindhu 3/40) lost to Haryana 201/8 in 44.2 overs (Himanshu Rana 66, Ravi Bishnoi 4/46).

Rajasthan 291/8 in 50 overs (Deepak Hooda 45, Shubham Garhwal 59, Kartik Sharma 62, Yash Thakur 4/39) lost to Vidarbha 292/1 in 43.3 overs (Dhruv Shorey 118 n.o., Karun Nair 122 n.o.).



Top knock: Himanshu Rana played a key role in Haryana's victory.
SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR



Karun Nair slams his fourth straight List A century

Press Trust of India

VADODARA

Karun Nair scored his fifth century in the Vijay Hazare Trophy as Vidarbha outclassed Rajasthan by nine wickets to move into the semifinals here on Sunday.

Karun's unbeaten 82-ball 122 (13x4, 5x6) was the fifth hundred in his last six innings. His run reads 112 not out vs. JK, 44 n.o. vs. Chhattisgarh, 163 n.o. vs. Chandigarh, 111 n.o. vs. Tamil Nadu, 112 vs. Uttar Pradesh, did not bat vs. Mizoram, 122 n.o. vs. Rajasthan. He now has 664 runs from eight matches.

He is now on par with Devdutt Padikkal, Kumar Sangakkara and Alviro Petersen with four successive List A hundreds. The record for most consecutive List A hundreds stands in the name of N. Jagadeesan (TN), who smashed five centuries on the trot in the 2021-22 Vijay Hazare Trophy.

Champions Trophy team selection deferred after BCCI's missive to ICC

Amol Karhadkar

MUMBAI



Devajit Saikia. AFP

India's squad for the Champions Trophy will be picked on January 19, a day after the Vijay Hazare Trophy final. This development came about after the BCCI asked the ICC for the squad submission deadline to be deferred by a week for the Indian team.

"We are waiting for some domestic matches that are going on, so, maybe, some good performance in the ongoing domestic matches will also be considered," Devajit Saikia, the newly elected BCCI secretary, told reporters here on Sunday. Despite Saikia's emphasis on the Vijay Hazare Trophy, *The Hindu* understands that the primary reason for the BCCI seeking extension is the fitness status of pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Mo-

hammed Shami.

Bumrah, the Player of the Series in Australia despite sitting out of the last day's play in the series, is likely to take six more weeks to be match-fit after a recurrence of his back injury. It may result in him being match-fit only in March, with the league stage being all but done with.

Shami, meanwhile, is being monitored daily for

Karman Kaur gets wild card for New Delhi ITF event

Sports Bureau

NEW DELHI



Rohit and Virat FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

Karman Kaur Thandi, returning to the professional circuit after more than a year, has been awarded a wild card entry for the \$40,000 ITF women's tennis tournament to be played at the DLTA Complex from Tuesday.

The 26-year-old Karman, who was ranked a career best 196 in the world in 2018, had last played the WTA tournament in Hong Kong in October 2023.

Vaishnavi Adkar, Riya Bhatia and Akanksha Nitrite were the others to be given the wild cards for the main event.

Only Ankita Raina, Shravalli Bhamidipaty and Vaidehi Chaudhari could get direct entry into the main draw, in which Darja Semenistaja of Latvia has been seeded No.1.

Pranjala Yadlapali, returning to the circuit after missing the whole of last year, got beaten in the first round of the qualifying event by Misaki Matsuda of Japan.

Five other Indian players, Diva Bhatia, Shefali Arora, Lakshmi Gowda, Yashika Shokeen and Lakshmi Prabha also found it hard against high quality players and failed to win a set between them in the first round of the qualifying event. The second and final qualifying round will be played on Monday.

LIVE TELECAST

Australian Open: Evening session, Sony Sports Ten 2, 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 1.30 p.m.

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

Hockey: HIL, DD Sports, Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 3 (SD & HD) & LIV, 8.15 p.m.

Kho-Kho World Cup: India vs Nepal, SS Select 1 & Hotstar, 8.30 p.m.

Australian Open: Sony Sports Ten 2, 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 5.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Tamil Nadu men, Railways women retain National basketball titles

Sports Bureau



On top: The victorious Railways women's team.

Tamil Nadu and Railways comfortably defended their men's and women's titles respectively in the 74th National basketball championship at the Sidsar Sports Complex in Bhavnagar on Sunday.

Tamil Nadu men won 80-56 over Punjab after leading 48-26 at half-time. Railways posted an 86-53 victory over Kerala in the women's final after leading 46-36 at the interval.

The Most Valuable Player awards, with a Maruti WagonR car as prize, were bagged by Pranav Prince of Tamil Nadu and Darshini Thirunavukkarsu of Railways.

The champion teams received ₹5 lakh each, and the runner-up ₹3 lakh.

Third place: Railways 71 (Sahaj

Railways men and Tamil Nadu women won the third place and took home ₹2 lakh each.

R. Sreekala of Kerala and Kanwar Gurbaz Singh Sandhu were presented ₹50,000 each for their prowess in shooting three-pointers.

The results: **Men: Final:** Tamil Nadu 80 (Ananthraj 17, Aravind Kumar 17, Muin Bek Hafeez 15) bt Punjab 56 (Amritpal Singh 20, Amjyot Singh 15). **Third place:** Tamil Nadu 86 (Darshini 17, V.J. Jayalakshmi 12).

Women: Final: Railways 86 (Dharshini Thirunavukkarsu 16, Pushpa Senthil Kumar 14, Poornam Chaturvedi 13) bt Kerala 50 (Abhishek Gowda 19, Pratyanshu Tomar 11).

Second place: Railways 71 (Sahaj

Railways men and Tamil Nadu women won the third place and took home ₹2 lakh each.

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Railways men and Tamil Nadu women won the third place and took home ₹2 lakh each.

"We have the England series, following the Champions Trophy, so we have to think about one (assignment) at a time. We have had a lot of discussions during the last two days and we are trying to streamline our drawbacks and we have to overcome them," said Devajit Saikia, the newly-elected BCCI secretary. "We are talking all the experts' opinions also. Both have struggled with the willow right through the season, thus making India's batting line-up appear fragile. While Kohli last featured in a Ranji game for Delhi in 2012, Rohit's last Ranji appearance was in November 2015. Mumbai will take on Jammu and Kashmir at home from Jan. 23 while Delhi will travel to Rajkot to face Saurashtra. With the duo expected to join the ODI squad and as a result miss the last round of the Ranji Trophy league stage starting on Jan. 30, it will be the only opportunity for both the veterans to play a competitive red-ball match.

Last season, Ishan Kishan and Shreyas Iyer were not considered for the central contracts for having ignored the BCCI's diktat to play domestic cricket.

The last week has seen frantic action in the Indian cricket corridors following India's inability to qualify for the World Test Championship final. A review meeting on Saturday night dissected the Australia tour and also discussed the way forward.

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TENDERS

PUBLIC NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF THE PRINCIPAL SENIOR CIVIL COURT SANAND,
AHMEDABAD [GUJARAT].
Ex-14
S.P.C.S. No. 41/2022,
Next Date, 3/2/2025

Plaintiff : Nishit Chandauli Joshi
Res. B-102, Dev Aditya Arcade,
Opp. Bagban Party Plot, Thaltej, Ahmedabad
Versus

Defendant: Xalta Infrastructure And Services Pvt. Ltd.
through its Director Shri Vinod Sehwag.
Reg. Add. RZ-37A, Naya Bazar, Rati Ram Park,
Najaf Garh, New Delhi-110043

By this public summons, it is hereby submittted to the defendant that by filling the present suit, the plaintiff has prayed relief to pass necessary order and decree to cause the defendant to execute registered sell deed in favour of the plaintiff by accepting remaining sell consideration from the plaintiff as laid down in the Agreement For Sale duly registered before the office of Sub-Registrar, Sanand vide Serial No. 5246/2018 on previous Dt. 24-04-2018 for the property being Non-agricultural (1) S. No. 413 Paiki 1, admeasuring about 11432 sq. mtrs., (2) S.No. 413 Paiki, part admeasuring about 5716 sq. mtrs., (3) S. No. 416, admeasuring about 5059 sq. mtrs., (4) S. No. 421/1/1, admeasuring about 400 sq. mtrs., situated laying and being at Pipan (sim), Taluka Sanand, in the Registration District Ahmedabad and Sub-District Sanand. Moreover, as the said defendant has taken loan by mortgaging the said land, the defendant shall repay the said loan and shall cause to registered mortgage release deed in respect of the said land and afterwards the defendant shall execute registered sell deed in favour of the plaintiff. In any circumstances, if the defendant will not execute registered sell deed in favour of the plaintiff then the Hon'ble Court may execute registered sell deed in favour of the plaintiff by appointing Court Commissioner or Court Receiver after depositing remaining sell consideration in the Court by the plaintiff. Moreover, the plaintiff has also prayed to pass order against the defendant to pay the cost and expenses of the suit to the plaintiff by the defendant.

Hence, the defendant shall have to remain present before the present Hon'ble Court by himself or through acquainted person/advocate at 11:00 hours in the morning on the adjournment Dt. 3/2/2025 If the defendant will cause any default in the same then the said suit shall proceed further on ex-parte basis in absence of the defendant by considering that the defendant doesn't want to say anything. Do take serious note of the same.

Given under my hand and the seal of the court, this 9th Day of January 2025.

Prepared By Checked By **COURT STAMP** By Order
(D.S.Patel) (P.A.Javre)
Supintendent Supintendent
(H. N. Kosrekar)
Principal Senior Civil Court, Sanand

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is for general information that Zubair Muztar Bhat
Son of Muzafer Ahmad Bhat, residing at House No. 29
Kani Pora, P.O. Nati Pora Saddar, Nowganj, Jammu & Kashmir Pin -190015, declare that as per direction
of Sheikh Owais Ahmad Sidiq Bhat, son of Sheikh Ro
1375 dated 10/10/2023, I am revoking/cancelling the Deed of
Property Bearing Number 3rd Floor Flat Masjid
Side, Khasra Number 454/181, Property Number 122 oppo. Transformer, Jaffa Farm, Noor Nagar Ext.
Jama Nagar Okha New Delhi-110025 in the favour of
Bashir Ahmad Sheikh, Son of Muzafer Ahmad Bhat, Pehl
Pora VTC Safepura District-Langenderbal pin-193504 along with some terms and conditions, but
due non-compliance, of the terms and conditions I am
revoking/cancelling the DEED of Gift, although I have
already reviewed/cancelled the Gift-Deed on dated
15th March 2024 orally with the above said Bashir
Ahmad Sheikh.

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Credit Recovery and Management Department

Administrative Office: No.24-B, Gandhi Nagar,

Kumbakonam - 612 001. E-Mail id: crmd@cityunionbank.in,

Phone: 0435-2432322, Fax: 0435-2431746

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

The following properties mortgaged to City Union Bank Limited will be sold in Re-Tender-cum-Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 6 (6) & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of Rs.73,93,354/- (Rupees Seventy Three Lakh Ninety Three Thousand Three Hundred and Fifty Four only) as on 03-01-2025 together with further interest to be charged from 04-01-2025 onwards other expenses and any other dues to the bank by the Borrowers / Guarantors No.1) M/s. Bhagwati Colour Centre, Shop No.124, Tikona Park, NIT, Faridabad, Haryana - 121001. No.2) Mr. Sunny Ahuja, S/o. Mr. Balwant Kumar Ahuja, House No.1E/ WH/49 NIT, Faridabad, Haryana - 121001. No.3) Mr. Balwant Kumar Ahuja, S/o. Mr. Sundar Lal Ahuja, House No.1E/ WH/49, NIT, Faridabad, Haryana - 121001. No.4) Mrs. Geetika Ahuja, W/o. Mr. Sunny Ahuja, House No.1E/WH/49, NIT, Faridabad, Haryana - 121001.

Immovable Property Mortgaged to our Bank
(Property Owned by Mr. Balwant Kumar Ahuja, S/o. Mr. Sundar Lal Ahuja)

Eastern part of House No.1-E/WH-49 measuring 62 Sq.Yds. (10 x 56) ft. situated at NIT Faridabad and is bounded as under: North : House No.1-E/WH-50, South : Other Property, East: Road, West: Remaining Part of House No.1-E/WH-49.

Reserve Price : Rs.40,00,000/-

(Rupees Forty Lakh only)

RE-AUCTION DETAILS

Date of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale	Venue
30-01-2025	City Union Bank Limited, Faridabad Branch, E5/10, BP Railway Road, Near Neelam Baba Chowk, Faridabad - 121001.

Telephone No.0129-2421708, Cell No.9354776593.

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

(1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself / herself. (2) The intending bidders may obtain the Tender Forms from The Manager, City Union Bank Limited, Faridabad Branch, E5/10, BP Railway Road, Near Neelam Baba Chowk, Faridabad - 121001. (3) The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the Tender Form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd., together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of 10% of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of "City Union Bank Ltd.", on or before 12.00 Noon on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. (4) For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact Telephone No.0129-2421708, Cell No.9354776593. (5) The properties are sold on "As-is-where-is", "As-is-what-is" and "whatever-there-is" basis. (6) The sealed tenders will be opened in the presence of the intending bidders at 01.00 p.m. on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. Though in general the sale will be by way of closed tenders, the Authorised Officer may, at his sole discretion, conduct an Open Auction among the interested bidders who desire to quote a bid higher than the one received in the closed tender process, and in such an event, the sale shall be conferred on the person making highest bid. The sale, however, is subject to confirmation of City Union Bank Limited. (7) The successful bidder shall have to pay 25% (inclusive of EMD paid) of the sale amount immediately on completion of sale and the balance amount of 75% within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale, failing which the initial deposit of 25% shall be forfeited. (8) The Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful purchaser only after receipt of the entire sale consideration within the time limit stipulated herein. (9) The successful purchaser shall bear the charges / fees payable for conveyance, such as stamp duty, registration fee etc., as applicable under law. (10) The successful bidder should pay the statutory dues (lawful house tax, electricity charges and other dues), TDS, GST if any due to Government, Government Undertaking and local bodies. (11) The Authorised Officer shall have all the powers to accept or reject the bids or postpone or cancel the sale without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Place : Kumbakonam, Date : 09-01-2025

Authorised Officer

Regd. Office: 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street - Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District,

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THE

HINDU

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The Economic Survey 2023-2024 indicates that 65% of India's fast-growing population is below the age of 35. Of this, only 51.25% of the country's youth are employable. This is because they lack the skills needed for the current industrial sectors. The report highlights the fact that there exists a gap between what is taught in educational institutions and what is needed by industry and society.

Of late, there has been an increased effort to focus on the learner rather than the teacher in India. Intensive measures are being undertaken to bridge the gap between teaching and learning but the focus is on

What have they learnt?

Outcome-Based Learning focuses on measurable skills and ensures that students are equipped for real-world challenges

the process, not the outcome. Educational outcomes are the abilities the students acquire and demonstrate at the end of the learning experience. Hence the emphasis at the global level is on the educational outcomes.

What is OBE?

The Learning Outcome Framework (LOCF), which has been adopted in India, expects the teachers to visualise what the students will be able to

do by undergoing the course/programme and how to measure their ability to do what they should and to facilitate acquisition of the ability expected of them. Outcome-Based Education (OBE) requires that the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment focus on student learning outcomes. This method of curricular design and teaching pre-fixes how students can apply their knowledge and skills after they complete a course/programme.

Thus, the learning outcomes are pre-decided and the course content, delivery and assessment are planned to achieve the desired outcomes, which need to be well-defined, realistic and measurable.

The advantage of adoption of OBE based approach is that both students and the teachers are aware of the desired outcomes from the beginning. Further, the approach trains students working towards the goal. The

teaching and assessment methodologies need to be more flexible enabling students to showcase their mastery. National agencies like National Accreditation Assessment Council (NAAC) and National Bureau of Accreditation (NBA) emphasise the adoption of LOCF and expect the institutions to spell out the Graduate Attributes, Programme Outcomes and Course Outcomes. Institutions should also periodically check for the attainment of these outcomes, so that remedial measures can be undertaken both at the institutional level and personal level.

To enhance the employability of learners, the teaching and learning process must be changed. Online education has changed classroom teaching and experiential learning and problem-solving skills with an application-oriented approach can produce the right impact. Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) should turn into centres where talent nurturing is given priority. Even assessment methodologies need to change and test higher-order thinking skills and promote critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

However, it is not enough to just design a purposeful curriculum. Teachers also need to be trained in this novel approach. Moving towards a student-centric approach from a teacher-centric one is a challenge as is fine tuning the academic curriculum to the changing needs of the industry with the available expertise in educational institutions. However, this can be overcome by involving industrial experts.

With the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, emphasising the adoption of the Learning Outcome Framework in HEIs, the OBE model of education, which aims to bring out the graduate's potential, will enhance the employability potential of the graduates.

The writer is Professor, Dean, School of Sciences and Senior Prof of Chemistry, Gandhigram Rural Institute-Deemed To Be University.

SCHOLARSHIPS**University of Oxford Felix Scholarships**

Offered by the University of Oxford, the U.K.

Eligibility: Indian nationals with a first-class Bachelor's or Master's degree from an Indian university, willing to pursue a full-time Master's or D.Phil. courses at the Oxford University.

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Tagore National Fellowship for Cultural Research

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Rewards: Up to ₹80,000 for two years, and other benefits

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Offered by the National Commission for Women

Eligibility: Open to second-year students of Law, Sociology, Social Work or Gender studies. First-year students can participate in an unpaid internship.

Could the Champions Trophy be the blessing in disguise Gambhir desperately needs?

The head coach and his support staff are under pressure to arrest a recent downward spiral and the second biggest 50-over ICC tournament after the World Cup offers them a shot at redemption and set the house in order for the man in the hot seat



GETTY IMAGES

R. Kaushik

Ine of the many advantages of being a player is the belief and the confidence that one can influence the outcome of a sporting contest. That might not always eventuate, because if belief and confidence alone were the decisive factors, everyone would succeed all the time. But at least the player has the opportunity and the means to make a difference, whether they can actually do so or not notwithstanding. That's a luxury a coach doesn't possess, because their job ends the moment the players step on the field. It's a reality that has now started to stare Gautam Gambhir in the face.

Gambhir has been retired from representative cricket for six years now, having last played for Delhi in the Ranji Trophy against Andhra in December 2018. He went out on a high, making 112 and helping his team secure the lead in a drawn encounter after Andhra had piled up 390. His last competitive game was much later, in the Legends League in December 2023. Between those two games five years apart, he was the mentor of Lucknow SuperGiants in their first two tilts at the IPL, in 2022 and 2023, before reprising a similar role with Kolkata Knight Riders in IPL 2024.

Celebrated homecoming
Call it coincidence, or whatever, KKR broke a decade-long trophy drought last season, going all the way under the leadership group of skipper Shreyas Iyer and head coach Chandrakant Pandit. And Gambhir, of course. It was when the spunky left-hander was the captain that the Kolkata franchise won its first two titles, in 2012 and 2014. As homecomings go, this was right up there with the most celebrated.

Perhaps in May, Gambhir might not have been everyone's obvious choice to replace Rahul Dravid as India's head coach at the end of the T20 World Cup in the US and the Caribbean in June. Admittedly, despite his mentoring role, he didn't have any coaching credentials as such. But then again, what is the role of a coach in international cricket? It's not so much about the high left elbow or the forward press. A coach is more of a man-manager, a facilitator whose primary objective is to foster a good dressing-room environment and confer on his wards the tools that will give them the best chance

to succeed. From all accounts, Gambhir met those criteria.

His appointment as head coach in July was met with great optimism but six months on, it can be said that that optimism has been slightly unfounded. A first One-Day International series defeat in Sri Lanka in more than two and a half decades, first home Test series loss in a dozen years and a first Test series defeat to Australia since 2015 aren't the sort of results one would like on their CV, but that's where Gambhir stands early in his coaching career. Is he under external pressure to start delivering? Maybe not yet. But for a fierce competitor who hates losing and who doesn't know what it is to take a backward step, is he feeling pressure from within to arrest a disturbing trend and embark on an upward spiral? Without a shadow of doubt.

It's said, and not entirely without reason, that a coach is only as good as their team. But Gambhir's team isn't that bad, is it? After all, wasn't it just 14 months back that pretty much the same set of players entranced the cricket world by waltzing into the final of the home 50-over World Cup? More or less the same bunch that, 10 months back, rallied from losing the first Test to England in Hyderabad to complete the most commanding 4-1 triumph? And largely the same group that rewrote history six months back by winning the T20 World Cup in Bridgetown for the first time since 2007? India couldn't have gone from a crack outfit at the start of October, soon after their 2-0 annihilation of Bangladesh at home, to a rickety, hapless one at the start of January, right?

Difficult phase
And yet, the results would indicate a team in decline. From the middle of October, it has all been spectacularly downhill. India have lost six and won just one of eight Tests; three of those defeats came at home, three more in Australia where the last time India lost more than two Tests in a series was in 2011-12. Gambhir was a part of that showdown under Mahendra Singh Dhoni which Australia bossed 4-0. In some ways, he would have empathised with his two senior batters in Australia this time around. Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli had outings to forget, the captain making just 31 runs in five innings and opting out of the final Test, his predecessor scoring 100 of his 190 runs in

one knock and being dismissed caught behind the stumps eight times out of eight. On his only Test tour of Australia, Gambhir himself managed just a solitary score of more than 35 in eight innings.

But empathising is one thing, getting them, and the rest of the batting group, to pull up their socks is quite another. At the end of the two-and-a-half-day drubbing in Sydney, Gambhir acknowledged that India's batting woes weren't exclusive to this series overseas, that they had also struggled on turning tracks against the Kiwis at home. Unless those woes are addressed quickly, the road ahead will be long, foreboding, arduous...

Transitions in sport are demanding periods that require patience and careful handling. India are extremely close to that phase and therefore Gambhir will perhaps get a longer rope when a break is made from the Rohit-Kohli Test era, whenever that is. But how long that rope will be is anyone's guess. It won't be fair to expect Gambhir to wave the magic wand and right the wrongs in an instant, but signs of progress must be visible and obvious if the national side is to retain the confidence and interest of the biggest stakeholder of the sport in the country, the unabashed fan.

Gambhir wasn't the first coach to bring his own support staff personnel to a team set-up. The 43-year-old didn't get Abhishek Nayar, Morne Morkel and Ryan ten Doeschate on board because they are his good friends, but because this bunch has worked together in the past, knows each other inside out, trust is total and implicit and has forged a style of functioning that has been both effective and efficient. But, as is inevitable when the desired results prove elusive, the focus will be as much on the support staff as the playing group and that's where these former internationals find themselves now.

Balancing act
Gambhir has to tread a delicate tightrope, planning for the future and working out a roadmap that involves restructuring without disregarding immediate results because that isn't a trade-off acceptable to the lay Indian fan. He has thrown his lot behind domestic cricket, thundering that whenever players are available, they must return to playing for their state, especially in the Ranji Trophy. Sometimes, that's easier said than done, especially when it comes to the fast bowlers. But for batters, the tools that will give them the best chance

it is imperative that they return to the drawing board, they re-familiarise themselves with Indian conditions - however silly that line might seem - and re-engage with playing quality spin, hopefully from time to time on surfaces that help the spinners, because that is an art that seems to be rapidly fading. Mitchell Santner and Ajaz Patel exposed India's technical failings against the turning ball. While packed calendars can sometimes preclude a return to state duties and the threat of burnout will mean reasonably careful monitoring, one suspects the days of cotton wool and blanket exemption from domestic cricket have already slipped into the past.

India's next assignment is the 50-over Champions Trophy, where they will play all their matches in Dubai. The second most prestigious ODI tournament after the World Cup, it will offer Rohit, Gambhir and the core group a grand opportunity to at least temporarily banish the dark clouds hovering over the Indian team. While the final 15 has yet to be named, India have the resources, the personnel, the nous, the experience and, dare one say, the fire and the hunger to leave an indelible mark on the competition. The proximity of the Champions Trophy to the debacle in Australia is certain to rule out far-reaching, knee-jerk decision-making, and a settled leadership methodology will only be in the team's best interests.

Whatever squad India put out will be more Rohit's team than Gambhir's for obvious reasons, and the captain who has spearheaded the influx of an exciting brand of batting, primarily, will be determined to reiterate that he is far from a spent force.

Gambhir is reputed to be an uncompromising task master who doesn't think twice about cracking the whip, no matter who the person at the receiving end is. But there have been whispers of a lack of communication within the group, of a house divided, of the need for greater cohesion between the head coach and his talented wards. Again, these are all fallouts of negative results. If there is any truth at all to these whispers, they need to be addressed post-haste. Gambhir needs to be more inclusive and accommodating, the players need to reciprocate and be willing to take the hard knocks. At the end of the day, everyone is in it for the same reason, the same purpose, the same goal. Why not do it with a smile?

THE GIST

▼
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SCIENCE

An unlikely mystery: studies shed new light on how genes are made

In 1970, Japanese-American biologist Susumu Ohno proposed that the main source of new genes is gene duplication. When the body's genome has two copies of the same gene, one copy can continue to provide the original function while the other is free to mutate and acquire new functions

D.P. Kasbekar

The likeness of identical twins can be startling. They are alike because all their genes are alike. Genes are those segments of the genome where, if changes occur, the characteristics of an organism change. Non-identical twins vary in 50% of their genes and are much less alike. Thus, genes define our individuality in many ways.

In December 2024, two research groups addressed how new genes are created. The University of Nevada, Reno, group reported its findings in *Molecular Biology and Evolution*, and the other, from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Biology Plön, Germany, reported in *Genome Biology and Evolution*.

The 24 molecules

A group of 24 molecules of DNA gives identity to our 24 chromosomes. These are the chromosomes numbered 1 to 22 and the sex chromosomes X and Y. Our cells contain two sets of the genome: one derived from the mother's egg and the other from the father's sperm. Eggs and sperm receive only one chromosome of each pair. When they fuse and form the zygote, the latter has two sets again. The zygote then multiplies to form a baby.

The cells in human bodies possess two copies of chromosomes 1-22. Biological females have two X chromosomes, whereas biological males have an X chromosome and a Y chromosome.

Identical twins arise from a single zygote, while non-identical twins arise from two zygotes produced simultaneously.

Each DNA molecule has two strands held together by bonds between compounds on the strands, called base pairs. Our genome contains 3.2 billion base pairs. A gene is typically a few-thousand base-pair-long segment of DNA.

When a gene is 'expressed,' it means a cell will transcribe the underlying base pair sequence to a molecule called messenger RNA (mRNA), and read the mRNA like a recipe to make a protein.

In the human genome, there are 20,000 protein-coding genes and 20,000 genes that cells use to create RNA that influences the expression of other genes. There are also some genes, called promoters and enhancers, which tell the cell when and where other genes are copied into mRNA.

Two compounds involved in forming the base pairs are cytosine and thymine. Sometimes the cytosine molecules bind to a methyl ion and are said to be methylated. A methylated cytosine

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Each DNA molecule has two strands held together by bonds between compounds on the strands, called base pairs. Our genome contains 3.2 billion base-pairs. Representative illustration. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

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Cells possess two copies of chromosomes 1-22. Females have two X chromosomes, whereas males have an X chromosome and a Y chromosome

Duplications create new genes

In 1970, Japanese-American biologist Susumu Ohno proposed that the main source of new genes is gene duplication. When the body's genome has two copies of the same gene, one copy can continue to provide the original function while the other is free to mutate and acquire new functions.

Ohno's proposal was simple but had one flaw: it didn't explain how the organism's cells would deal with producing twice the quantity of the same proteins as a result. Protein over-expression can lead to debilitating conditions. The University of Nevada, Reno, researchers addressed this problem.

Humans and mice last shared a common ancestor 75 million years ago. The researchers compared genes duplicated in human or mouse genomes, those duplicated in both, and those not duplicated in either.

They found the promoters of duplicated genes had more methylated DNA than the promoters of genes that hadn't been duplicated. Increased methylation would have prevented the cells from manufacturing twice as many proteins, minimising the ill effects of duplication and allowing the duplicate gene to survive long enough to acquire

new functions.

The researchers reported that the higher rate of methylation also elevated the rate of mutation.

Random sequences to incipient genes

The Max Planck Institute group inserted exogenous DNA into a population of cells derived from a human. (Exogenous means the DNA came from sources separate from the cells.) The researchers were careful to insert the DNA at a specific site in the genome and allowed the cells to make proteins with them.

The exogenous DNA had a chunk that consisted of a random sequence of base-pairs – which means the proteins the cells made with it would be random as well.

The researchers put together a collection of cells of 3,708 types and nurtured them for 20 days. At regular intervals they checked the relative abundance of different cell types.

After 20 days, the team found that 53% of cell types had become less abundant, 8% more abundant, and 40% didn't swing either way. That is, more often than not, random DNA sequences affected cell

growth and thus became relevant for evolution to act upon.

In yet other words: the random DNA inserts behaved like incipient genes.

Keeping vs. chucking a gene

For a genome to retain a gene, it must have some use, or the genome allows it to mutate. But establishing a gene's usefulness is challenging.

Consider blood groups. Individuals can have one of four groups – A, B, AB or O – depending on which variants of the ABO gene they've inherited. If a person receives A and A or A and O, they have the A blood type. If they have B and B or B and O, they have the B blood type. If they have A and B or O and O, then they have the AB or the O blood types, respectively.

In sum, every individual lacks either one or two of the variants, which means no variant is really essential. The O variant also encodes a protein with no known function and whose amino acid sequence is markedly different from those encoded by A and B.

Primates and humans took different branches on the tree of evolution millions of years ago but share blood types – which is to say evolution both found a way and saw fit to retain all three variants in so many species for a very long amount of time. Scientists don't yet have a simple answer to why evolution has done this, but they aren't complaining.

(D.P. Kasbekar is a retired scientist.
kasbekard@yahoo.co.in)

THE GIST

A group of 24 molecules of DNA gives identity to our 24 chromosomes. Our cells contain two sets of the genome: one from the mother and the other from the father. Eggs and sperm receive only one chromosome. When they form the zygote, the latter has two sets again.

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Researchers found the promoters of duplicated genes had more methylated DNA. Methylation prevented the cells from manufacturing twice as many proteins, minimising the ill effects of duplication and allowing the duplicate gene to survive.

Primates and humans took different branches on the tree of evolution millions of years ago but share blood types – which is to say evolution both found a way and saw fit to retain all three gene variants in so many species for a very long amount of time.

BIG SHOT



African tiger fish (*Hydrocynus vittatus*) in the Okavango river in Botswana. Freshwater environments cover about 1% of the earth's surface but account for more than 10% of known species. In a new study in *Nature*, researchers assessed the status of 23,496 species of freshwater animals and found 24% of them to be at high risk of extinction. REUTERS

WHAT IS IT?

IMD: India's weather tracker

Vasudevan Mukunth

On January 15, 2025, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) will turn 150 years old.

The organisation was set up by the provincial British government in the country in 1875, and its first (Imperial) Meteorological Reporter was Henry Francis Blanford. The IMD's genesis can be traced to the importance of the monsoons over South Asia and the formation and effects of cyclones from the Indian Ocean.

Its formation was particularly accelerated by the 1864 Calcutta cyclone, which devastated the city and left more than 60,000 people dead, and the Orissa famine that followed just two years later because the monsoons had failed. So the government at the time decided to funnel weather data collected around the country into a single set of records, managed by a bespoke organisation. This organisation was the IMD.

It was originally headquartered in Calcutta but by 1944 had moved to New Delhi. In independent India, the IMD became a member of the World Meteorological Organisation in 1949.



Students taking part in an event to mark the 150th anniversary of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) in Chennai. ANI

The IMD currently operates six Regional Meteorological Centres, a Meteorological Centre in every State capital, plus a panoply of centres for various meteorological services. Aside from tracking and studying phenomena like rainfall and cyclones, the IMD helps record earthquakes and atmospheric pollution and generates alerts and warnings about impending anomalous weather. It also maintains a complicated communications system that collects data from a variety of sources, including ground observatories, naval vessels, atmospheric balloons, and satellites.

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to science@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Daily page'.

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