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The warnings should not be ignored

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Rohit finds his touch as India seals series

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31 Maoists, 2 jawans killed in Chhattisgarh encounter

Shubhomoy Sikdar

RAIPUR

In the biggest anti-Maoist operation of the year, at least 31 alleged extremists were gunned down by security forces in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh on Sunday, the police said.

Two security personnel were killed and two injured in the gun battle.

Inspector-General of Police (Bastar Range) P. Sundarraj said the encounter had taken place when a security team conducted a search in the National Park jungles on a tip-off about the presence of Maoists.

"The encounter began around 8 a.m., and the exchange of fire continued intermittently till 4 p.m. The bodies of 31 uniformed Maoists – 20 men and 11 women – were recovered," Mr. Sundarraj said.

The bodies of head constable Naresh Dhruv of the District Reserve Guards and constable Vasit Raote



One of the two constables injured in an encounter with Maoists being brought to a private hospital in Raipur on Sunday. ANI

of the Special Task Force were taken to the district headquarters. The two injured personnel, said to be out of danger, were flown to Raipur for treatment.

Arms and ammunition, including AK-47, INSAS and .303 rifles and grenade launchers, were recovered, the police said.

Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma said nearly 650 personnel took part in the operation in areas along the Chhattisgarh-Maharashtra

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

Biren quits as Manipur CM after meeting Shah

Governor accepts resignation, asks him to continue till 'alternative arrangements made'; Union Home Secretary reviews security situation in State, forces asked to be available at short notice

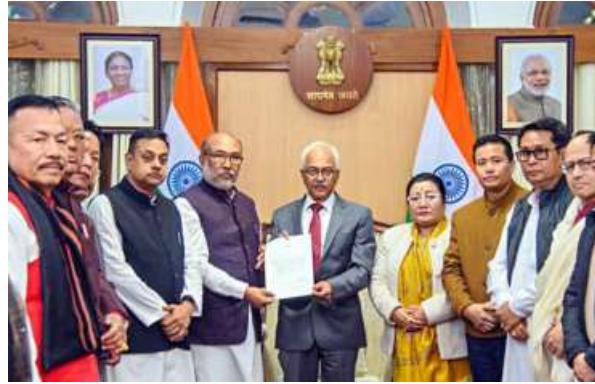
Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh stepped down from the post following a meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Sunday.

Mr. Singh, who was summoned to the national capital by Mr. Shah, tendered his resignation to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla soon after reaching Imphal.

The Governor accepted the resignation and asked him to continue in office till "alternative arrangements are made", the Raj Bhavan said in a statement.

A senior government official said that President's Rule is a likely option in the State only if no other party or BJP member stakes



N. Biren Singh hands in his resignation as Manipur Chief Minister to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla in Imphal on Sunday. ANI

claim to form the government. The BJP State leadership was said to be in a huddle to decide the next course of action.

The Assembly session that was to be convened on Monday was declared null and void by the Governor on Sunday evening.

A top government

source told *The Hindu* that around 11 a.m. on Sunday, ahead of Mr. Singh's resignation, Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan chaired a virtual meeting to review the internal security situation in Manipur. The meeting was attended by the Army, Assam Rifles and Manipur

CM appears to have lost support before resigning

GUWAHATI

Out of 46 MLAs of Manipur's ruling National Democratic Alliance, whose constituents include the Naga People's Front and the Janata Dal(U), only 20 turned up for a meeting held by Chief Minister N. Biren Singh a day before his resignation. » PAGE 11

Security Adviser Kuldip Singh. Security forces were asked to maintain high alert amid likelihood of violence by vested interests.

and were asked to be ready for deployment at "short notice".

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

IN BRIEF



Talks on to pick Delhi CM; party leaders meet L-G

NEW DELHI

A day after the Delhi Assembly poll results, a delegation of the BJP's winning candidates met L-G V.K. Saxena on Sunday, even as senior party leaders met to decide who will be Delhi's next CM. » Page 4

Won't reclaim disbursed Ladki Bahin funds: govt.

MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government on Sunday said that the funds disbursed to 2.46 crore women under the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana, before a scrutiny declared 5 lakh of them "ineligible", would not be taken back. » Page 3

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 5

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SC to hear today plea to grant Rohingya access to public schools, hospitals

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea of an NGO seeking direction to the Centre and the Delhi government to grant Rohingya refugees

based in the Capital access to public schools and hospitals.

A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and N. Kotiswar Singh is scheduled to hear the plea.

On January 31, the top court had asked the Rohin-

gya Human Rights Initiative, a non-profit, to apprise the court about the places where these Rohingya refugees are settled in Delhi and the facilities accessible to them.

It had asked senior advocate Colin Gonsalves to

file an affidavit indicating their places of settlement in Delhi.

Mr. Gonsalves said the NGO sought access to public schools and hospitals for Rohingya refugees as they were denied these facilities due to the lack of

Aadhaar cards.

"They are refugees having UNHCR cards, and therefore they can't have Aadhaar cards. But, for want of Aadhaar they are not being granted access to public schools and hospitals," he had submitted.

Ensure BJP delivers on its vows, Kejriwal tells AAP MLAs-elect

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

A day after losing the Delhi Assembly election to the BJP, senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders, including party national convener Arvind Kejriwal and outgoing Chief Minister Atishi, met the party's MLAs-elect on Sunday to discuss the party's future.

MLAs will sit in the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly.

Addressing the media after the meeting, Ms. Atishi said the party accepts the people's decision. However, she alleged that money and liquor were "distributed" ahead of the poll and that "police turned a blind eye" to the "BJP's hooliganism".

Senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia, who was also present at the meeting, said the party candidates had put up a good fight in the election. "Considering the open misuse of government machinery, distribution of money, and liquor during the election, all our candidates fought remarkably well," he said.

Constructive Oppn.

"AAP will play the role of a constructive Opposition and ensure that the BJP fulfills its promises, such as providing ₹2,500 per month to women by March 8 and providing 300 units of free electricity, and seeing to it that the welfare schemes started by AAP

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Public Notice
BEFORE THE MOTOR VEHICLES TRIBUNAL-CUM-HONOURABLE XII ADDITIONAL DISTRICT JUDGE, NARASARAOPET, PALANADU DIST, ANDHRA PRADESH Between: Government of Andhra Pradesh ...Petitioner And: Sudhakar Singh & others ...Respondents Pet: Sudhakar Singh & others vs. Mr. Khan Mohammad Singh, Karpala, Andhra Pradesh, Dist. Haryana State. Driver of the vehicle: TS 16 B 7281

Witnessed by: Mr. S. K. Narasimha Reddy, Motor Vehicles Act Officer with Regd. Nos. 465 & 475 of the Andhra Pradesh Motor Vehicle Rules, 1969 against the respondents for compensation but as Nazarmatam have failed to appear before the court to answer the cause of action of the petitioner. You are hereby directed to appear before the court on 25/02/2025 at 10.30 a.m. personally or through your counsel to answer the claims and prove the fallibility of which the case will be heard and decided in accordance.

Date of Adjournment : 28-02-2024

As per orders of the Honorable Court

Ananda Kumar, K Advocate Narasimha Reddy, Palanadu Dist, Andhra Pradesh.

Ph. 9700375409

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to all concerned that a Writ Petition filed by the above named petitioner under Article 226 & 227 of the Constitution of India, praying to call for records, issue a writ of certiorari or any other writ or order quashing the order dated 19.01.2018 passed by the I Additional Civil Judge and CJM, Mangaluru D.K. in M.A. No.6/2018 vide Annexure-K and order dated 02.04.2018 passed by the II Additional Senior Civil Judge and CJM, Mangaluru D.K. in M.A. No.6/2018 vide Annexure-M has been registered by this Court.

Notice is hereby given to you to appear in this Court either in person or through counsel duly instructed or through someone authorised by law, to act for you in the above Writ Petition on 25.02.2025 at 10.30 A.M. in case you intend to contest the Writ Petition. If you fail to appear, the same will be dealt with, heard and decided in your absence.

ISSUED UNDER MY HAND AND THE SEAL OF THIS COURT, ON THIS THE 28TH DAY OF JANUARY 2025.

By Order of the Court
Sd/- Assistant Registrar

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Namo Bharat trial begins on new section in Meerut

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The trial runs of Namo Bharat trains began on an additional six-km section between Meerut South and Shatabdi Nagar in Meerut on Sunday, the NCR Transport Corporation said.

The trains will soon bring the operational corridor closer to the heart of Meerut city, and will be operated manually in the initial phase, it added.

Timings		
DELHI		
MONDAY, FEB. 10	RISE 07:03	SET 18:08
	RISE 15:56	SET 05:35
TUESDAY, FEB. 11	RISE 07:03	SET 18:08
	RISE 17:00	SET 06:58
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 12	RISE 07:02	SET 18:09
	RISE 18:00	SET 06:58

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Delhi City	27	08
Safdarjung	27	08
Palam	25	09

Delhi Palam Today
24°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be slight cold with mist and haze. Day will be pleasant. Night also will be cold.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
25°C Morning will be cold with mist and haze. Day will be pleasant with increase in wind speed. Night also will be cold. Dry weather to prevail.

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THE HINDU
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Will not reclaim funds given to 'ineligible' beneficiaries of Ladki Bahin Yojana: Minister

'Inappropriate' to demand refund from 5 lakh women who received the monthly aid and will no longer be part of the scheme, says Aditi Tatkare; Oppn. MVA terms initiative 'election gimmick'

Abhinav Deshpande
MUMBAI



Women and Child Development Minister Aditi Tatkare.

The Maharashtra government on Sunday clarified that the funds disbursed to 2.46 crore women under the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana, before a scrutiny declared 5 lakh of them "ineligible", would not be taken back.

Women and Child Development Minister Aditi Tatkare stated that while "ineligible" beneficiaries would no longer receive funds, the government would not demand a re-

The scheme, which was launched in July 2024, provides a monthly financial assistance of ₹1,500 to women aged between 21 and 65 with an annual family income below ₹2.5 lakh. Between July and December 2024, the State disbursed ₹450 crore under the initiative.

Out of the five lakh women deemed "ineligible", 1.5 lakh women were found to be above the age limit of 65, while 1.6 lakh women either owned a four-wheeler or were receiving benefits from other government schemes such

as the Namo Shetkari Yojana. Another 2.3 lakh women were identified as recipients of the Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Scheme, which disqualifies them from the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana.

Oppn. concerns
However, the scheme has drawn criticism from the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi, which has raised concerns about its financial viability in a State grappling with a fiscal deficit of ₹2 lakh crore. The MVA termed the scheme an "election gimmick".

Congress to contest Haryana civic polls on party symbol for first time

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

The party has invited applications till Feb. 11, the last day for filing nominations for the elections

municipal committees will also go to the polls.

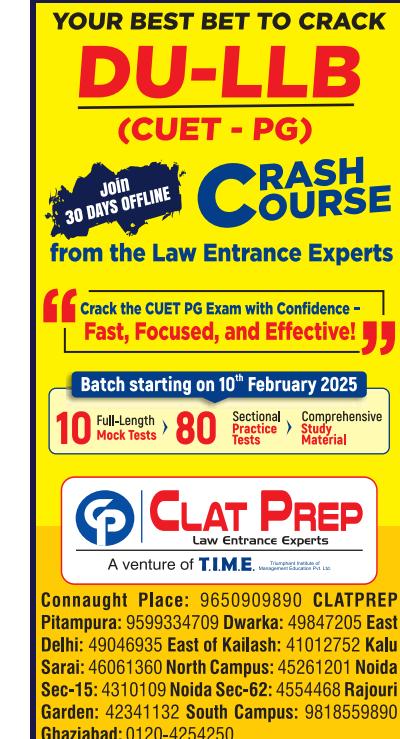
The Congress has never contested the municipal polls on its own symbol, except for the mayoral polls to three municipal corporations in December 2020.

Besides the municipal corporations of Gurugram, Manesar, Faridabad, Hisar, Karnal, Panipat, Rohtak, and Yamuna Nagar, four municipal councils, and 21

porations and presidents in the municipal councils on its symbol.

"It was decided at a party meeting in Delhi two days ago to contest the municipal corporation and council polls on the party symbol. However, the party won't contest the municipal committee polls," State Congress president Uday Bhan told *The Hindu*. He, however, said this decision could later change.

The party on Sunday invited applications from interested candidates till February 11, the last day for filing of nominations for the elections.



Unions, Opposition in Bengal resist new policy of 'diverting tea garden land for tourism'

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Land Diversion Policy that allows 30% of tea plantation land to be used on a freehold basis for tourism and other industries, as such a policy would harm the interests of workers,

worker policy and demand justice for tea workers," a statement by PBCMS said.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee made the announcement of the policy at the Bengal Global Business Summit on February 5. "Yesterday, we made some decisions. Now, wherever land is available where tea plantations are not present, we are allowing 30% for hotel business, for commercial utilisation, for eco-tourism purposes," Ms. Banerjee said.

Mr. Bista has urged Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Leader of the Opposition Suvidha Adhikari to intervene and "protect the rights of the tea garden workers".



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25 FEBRUARY

CHANDIGARH
18 JUNE

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12 FEBRUARY

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18 FEBRUARY

LUCKNOW
11 FEBRUARY

PUNE
20 JANUARY

GTB NAGAR, DELHI

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IN BRIEF



Authorities begin demolition of 'illegal' mosque in U.P.

The district administration has begun the demolition of a mosque allegedly constructed illegally in Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar following the expiration of the High Court's stay order on February 8, officials said. Bulldozers began tearing down the three-storey Madni mosque at 10 a.m. on Sunday under strict security. Authorities, including Circle Officer Kundan Singh and SDM Yogeshwar Singh, arrived at the site early on Sunday morning with police force to ensure the process went smoothly. The area has been sealed and additional security measures have been implemented. PTI

Dallewal's medical aid stopped as veins blocked: farmer bodies

Two prominent farmer bodies on Sunday claimed that medical aid to fasting farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal has been stopped for the past six days as doctors are unable to find his veins for administering intravenous drip. "Mr. Dallewal's medical aid has been stopped for the past six days because his veins are blocked," the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha said in a joint statement. Convenor of SKM (Non-Political), Mr. Dallewal has been on a fast-unto-death on the Khanauri border point since November 26 last year. PTI

Parents of Walayar girls to be tried for heinous crimes

K.S. Sudhi
KOCHI

The parents of the two minor girls found dead in Walayar, Kerala, will be prosecuted for all offences alleged to have been committed by the prime accused, including aggravated form of rape, unnatural sex, sexual assault on a child and penetrative sex, besides other specific charges levelled against them.

The Central Bureau of Investigation has also booked the mother and father for abetment under Section 109 of the Indian Penal Code, and Sections 16 and 17 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act for abetting a sexual offence against a child.

The law puts an abettor



The Justice for Walayar Kids Forum staging a protest in front of the Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. FILE PHOTO: S. MAHINSHA

on the same footing as the offender. Hence, the parents will be tried for all the offences committed by the accused in the case, say judicial sources.

The CBI chargesheet noted that the mother abetted the first accused in committing sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, and

penetrative sexual assault on her younger daughter after knowing well that he had raped and sexually assaulted her elder daughter.

The first accused has been booked for aggravated form of rape committed by those in positions of power, committing unnatural sex, and assault.

SIT led by CBI arrests four in Tirupati laddu adulteration case

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) led by the CBI has arrested four people in connection with the alleged adulteration of the famous Tirupati laddus offered as prasad to devotees at Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple, officials said.

Those arrested have been identified as Vipin Jain, Purnil Jain, Apoorva Chawda, and Raju Rajasekharan, they said.

On the orders of the Supreme Court, the CBI set up a five-member SIT in November last year to investigate the allegations of the use of animal fat in making Tirupati laddus.

14 fishermen from Tamil Nadu arrested by Sri Lankan Navy

The Hindu Bureau
RAMESWARAM

Fourteen fishermen from Tamil Nadu's Ramanathapuram were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on charges of poaching, and two trawlers were seized in the early hours of Sunday.

Fisheries Department officials told *The Hindu* that they had issued 427 tokens at the harbour on Saturday, and the fishermen were expected to return to the shore on Sunday evening.

When 14 fishermen on two vessels were fishing, the Sri Lankan Navy detained them. They were taken to the naval port and handed over to the authorities for further legal action.

Over 50 fishermen had been arrested in less than a

Oppn. in Telangana attacks Cong. govt. over caste census

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The Opposition Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday took on the ruling Congress government in Telangana over the issue of alleged "under-reporting" of Backward Classes (BCs) in the caste census.



While Karimnagar MP and Union Minister of State for Home Bandi Sanjay Kumar criticised the "buggy caste survey", the BRS demanded that the Congress government re-conduct the caste census and an apology from Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy.

Addressing a press conference in Nalgonda, the BJP leader said in the caste census held under Mr. Reddy's leadership, the BC population was deliberately reduced, and a conspiracy was hatched to count Muslims among the BCs.

"It is injustice to Hindus in general and the Backward Classes in particular. Muslims already get Economically Weaker Sections category and other benefits welfare," he said.

As M.P. readies new home for cheetahs, locals share woes of being neighbours to the big cats

SPOTLIGHT

Mehul Malpani

On a windy afternoon in late January 2025, the sun shines bright on the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh. It offers some respite from the cold for Balaram Meena and Narendra Bagdi, who are cleaning inside a quarantine boma (QB), an enclosure that will soon host the fastest land animal on earth, the cheetah.

Meena has been a permanent staff member at the sanctuary for 36 years, while Bagdi joined as a temporary worker three months ago. They are accompanied by deputy ranger Dinesh Kushwaha.

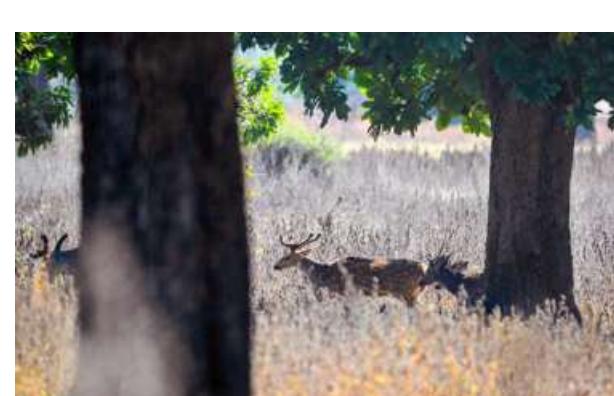
In the past three years, cheetahs have been a much-talked-about subject in India. Declared extinct from India in 1952, they were brought back to Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park in September 2022. Now, Kuno has 26 cats. Eight were first introduced from Namibia; then 12 were flown in from South Africa, as part of the Union government's Pro-

ject Cheetah.

With preparations nearly complete at Gandhi Sagar, six to eight cheetahs are set to be brought in from South Africa.

Mandsaur district forest officer (DFO) Sanjay Raikher says while a date is not fixed, the cheetahs are expected to arrive before summer. "Otherwise, it may be a little difficult for them to directly adapt to the rising temperatures here," he explains. "The plan is to bring four females and two males, but if any of the selected male cats has formed a coalition with their siblings, they will be brought together and can be accommodated in a single QB," he says, adding that males form early bonds, while females prefer to be solitary.

Safety in the details
Each QB at Gandhi Sagar has mud mounds about 5 feet high because the big cat likes to rest at a height, but it also has L-shaped sheds covered with green curtains and mud flooring in case the animal wants to be in a cooler place. The roof of the shed, made of bamboo and dry grass, is



New hunting ground: A herd of chital, one of the animal species being brought in as cheetah prey, at the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh; (right) a painting in Mandsaur district believed to be signs of cheetahs' historical existence in the region. A.M.FARUQUI

another option, and bamboo ladders will be installed for it to reach the top. Each QB has a water saucer fed by an underground pipeline. This is designed keeping in mind the cheetah's sitting position, a little different to other felines.

There are two layers of entries into each QB and the gates can be operated remotely, for the safety of the staff. There is a cage for the staff to put prey in and get out before lifting the barrier so that the cheetah can enter and eat.

There is one surveillance camera in each of the QBs and two high-mast 360-degree cameras, with

each covering three QBs to monitor the cheetahs and observe their behaviour.

As Kushwaha explains the attention to detail, he talks about two tree trunks close to the fencing being wrapped in smooth fibre sheets so the cheetahs don't jump on the tree and make their way out. The QBs also have electric fences powered by solar energy to prevent any other predator from entering.

Raikher says upon their arrival, the cheetahs will spend at least a month inside the QBs as they may be vulnerable to infection or new diseases.

"We will constantly monitor their behaviour

and health and they will only be released in the larger 64 sq km enclosure based on their adaptability," he says, adding that if required, the quarantine period may be extended.

History and geography
Gandhi Sagar was chosen as the cheetah's second home due to its rocky terrain, exposed sheet rock, and shallow topsoil, creating a savanna-like habitat with grasslands similar to what the cheetahs are used to, say officials.

Raikher brings up the region's local belief that cheetahs lived here before they vanished. These originate from Chaturbhuj Na-

la, prehistoric rock shelters, protected by the Archaeological Survey of India. The site near the sanctuary has artwork depicting various aspects of human life. Among them is a painting of a man pointing a bow and arrow at an animal with spots on its body. Locals believe this is a cheetah.

Mandsaur District Collector Aditi Garg says, "People here take pride in the region's rich history. It is not the introduction, but re-introduction of cheetahs."

Close to the herbivore enclosure are signs of human habitation: a temple, a government building,

and some broken houses. Karanpura village is the only one that fell within the 64 sq km area of the boma. It now lies deserted as nearly 280 families that lived here were moved to make way for the introduction of cheetahs.

Neighbour's grouse
Begun in 2013, Raikher says the relocation process "picked up pace in 2015-16 after some initial resistance from the residents". The people were relocated as the village fell in the middle of the sanctuary.

Compensation was given to all families and most moved to Rajasthan. Ramesh Meghwali, 43, who had to move out of Karanpura with his wife and two children, now lives in Khera Bui village of Neemuch district, about 500 metres from the boma fencing. He contends that the compensation was not enough as most of the money was spent on resettlement.

The villages close to the boma are mainly occupied by Gurjar, Banjara, and tribal Bhil communities, whose main occupation is dairy production. Locals, however, say the fencing

and other restrictions in the area have hampered their livelihood as the cheetah home now acts as a barrier between them and their cattle's main source of water, the Chambal.

At a tea shop barely 100 metres from the boma fence, Dholchand Banjara, 63, of Dayli village, says the cattle also struggle to find adequate grass to graze on.

"Most good grazing patches are now inside the fence, so they don't have proper food now," he says.

In Chainpuriya village, Prahlad Gurjar, who is also engaged in the dairy industry, says milk production has come down to nearly half in the past one year.

"I have about 50 cows and buffaloes that used to give about 100 litres of milk every day. It has now come down to around 50 litres because there is not enough water and adequate food for them," he says, adding that most people have to tie buckets to their motorbikes and bring water from far off.

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From brain drain to brain gain

India requires a multi-pronged strategy to transform into a global study destination not just for its own students but also for international learners



OFF THE EDGE

Nandini Raman

I have graduated in Naval Architecture and Ocean Engineering. What are the career opportunities? Should I take the GATE?

Sailesh

Opportunities exist across shipbuilding and repair, offshore engineering, marine hydrodynamics, marine structures, and ocean engineering. You can explore maritime consultancy, academia, research and development, and government agencies like the Indian Navy, Coast Guard, or port authorities. A good GATE score can boost your career prospects and open doors to M.Tech. programmes and PSU jobs in shipping, defence, and oil and gas sectors.

I am in Class 12 (Science). I took Science because my parents insisted. I am a History enthusiast and wish to be an archaeologist but I am uncertain about job opportunities. I am preparing for the engineering entrance exams but am not sure I will be a good engineer even if I clear the exams. I also want to prepare for the UPSC. I feel stuck and confused. Aachal

Dear Aachal,
Is it possible to talk to your parents about your disinterest in engineering with the help of a teacher or trusted adult? If this doesn't work, ask to meet a therapist or career counsellor as soon as possible. Your passion for

V Ramgopal Rao

The recent *Open Doors Report 2024* revealed a telling trend: India has become the largest source of international students in the U.S.; with a record-breaking 3,31,602 students enrolled in 2023-24.

Indian students pursuing higher education abroad are making substantial financial contributions to international economies. In 2022, their direct spending – encompassing tuition fees, housing, and living expenses – was estimated at approximately \$47 billion. This figure is projected to escalate to as much as \$70 billion by 2025.

While this reflects the ambition and global outlook of India's youth, it raises an important question: Why are so many of India's brightest minds compelled to seek education abroad? India aspires to emerge as a global leader in education and innovation.

Yet, the student exodus underscores significant challenges in our higher education ecosystem. The answer lies in transforming India into a global study destination; not just for our own students but also for international learners. This transformation, however, requires a cohesive, multi-pronged strategy addressing education quality, financial sustainability, institutional autonomy, and capacity building.

Diversified financial model

The core challenge lies in India's disproportionate reliance on tuition fees in privately funded institutions and government

grants in public-funded ones as the primary sources of revenue. In globally renowned universities, tuition fees contribute only 15-20% of the total revenue.

In stark contrast, Indian institutions often rely on tuition for over 80% of their funding. Similarly, government-funded institutions draw nearly 90% of their revenue from public funds. Both models are unsustainable and lack the scalability required to meet the growing demands of the education sector.

Ideally, tuition fees should contribute only 30-40% of total revenues. A sliding fee structure, coupled with merit-based scholarships funded by endowments, can help ensure access to quality education without compromising affordability.

Endowments, a mainstay of global universities, should form 30-35% of the revenue base. Encouraging philanthropy from alumni and corporate donors, supported by favourable tax policies and streamlined regulations, is essential to building these endowments.

Additionally, research overheads can contribute 20-25% of revenues through industry-academia collaborations and global research grants. By prioritising applied research that addresses real-world challenges, institutions can generate funding while making meaningful contributions to society. The remaining 10-15% of revenues can come from alternative sources such as executive education programmes, intellectual property commercialisation, and investments in startups.

This balanced approach

reduces the financial burden on students while ensuring that institutions have the resources to invest in research, innovation, and global competitiveness.

Capacity and quality
Financial sustainability is only one piece of the puzzle. Scaling capacity and enhancing quality are equally critical. The government alone cannot meet the growing demand for higher education.

Public-private collaboration is central to this effort. Private institutions, supported by Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, must play a greater role.

India needs to establish new world-class universities while upgrading existing ones with state-of-the-art infrastructure. A vibrant research and innovation ecosystem must be built by fostering industry-academia partnerships, increasing R and D funding, and creating mechanisms for monetising intellectual property. Flexible, interdisciplinary academic programmes aligned with global standards can further enhance the appeal of Indian institutions.

To improve the diversity and quality of education, Indian universities should actively recruit international faculty and forge global academic collaborations. Such measures would not only raise the global profile of Indian institutions but also expose students to a truly international learning environment.

Views expressed are personal.

The writer is Vice Chancellor, BITS Pilani Group of Institutions, and former Director, IIT Delhi.

OFF THE EDGE

Nandini Raman

Stay positive

Uncertain about your career options?
Low on self-confidence?
This column may help

history is a great foundation for a career in Archaeology. Interdisciplinary fields like Archaeological Science (a combination of Archaeology and sciences such as Chemistry, Physics, and Geology) or Heritage Conservation (preserving and restoring historical sites and artefacts) are also interesting. These will also help you with the UPSC exams. Other job opportunities exist across academia, teaching, research, journalism, content writing and so on. Stay positive and make time for hobbies, exercise, and relaxation.

I am in Class 12 and overwhelmed by the vast number of options available. I am interested in filmmaking, especially cinematography, but my parents want me to do a "useful" degree. I like science, films and reading. Anbuselvan

Dear Anbuselvan,
It is important to balance your passions with practical considerations. Explore film-related courses and research film schools in India and abroad, their courses and

specialisations various aspects of filmmaking. Consult a career counsellor to assess your core interests. What course do your parents think will be "useful"? Could a "useful degree" in Sound Engineering, Electronics or Computer Science Engineering be good enough? Will this interest you? Do you have a portfolio to showcase your passion? Have you worked on short films, photography, or other creative projects? If not, then maybe consider a "useful" degree for the immediate future and pursue your passion later.

Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge



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Mass revenge

AAP's welfarism was a failed attempt to sidestep the ideological divide

The outcome of the Delhi Assembly elections is less about the expansion of the BJP and more about the dramatic collapse of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). The BJP has returned to power after over 26 years, while the AAP, a political force that rose spectacularly in 2013, has been swept away. However, this shift does not signify a sudden change in Delhi's political landscape. Since 2014, the BJP has maintained significant control over governance through the Lieutenant Governor, municipal corporations, the Union Urban Development Ministry, and the Delhi Police (Union Home Ministry). Additionally, it has won all seven Lok Sabha seats across three general elections. AAP's rise was rooted in its appeal to Delhi's middle class, transitioning from an anti-corruption movement into a political entity that initially captivated voters with its fresh rhetoric against the traditional political establishment. However, its governance style soon became synonymous with reckless populism, a cynical approach to politics, and an increasingly coarse political discourse. While it sought to consolidate power through unchecked welfarism, the effectiveness of governance declined, and its credibility began to erode. The final blow came when serious corruption allegations surfaced, culminating in revelations that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had spent approximately ₹52.7 crore of public funds to refurbish his official residence. This exposed the contradiction between AAP's founding ideals and its actions while in power, leaving its integrity in tatters.

For the BJP, this decisive victory presents fresh opportunities. The party can now focus on improving infrastructure, civic amenities, and governance, areas that could help it score quick wins. Its grip on the Hindi heartland is now reinforced as Delhi's political and economic dynamics are tied with those of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Haryana. Meanwhile, Mr. Kejriwal's ambitions of positioning himself as a national alternative to Prime Minister Narendra Modi have suffered a severe setback if not a complete collapse. His strategy of securing Muslim voters as a captive support base has also faltered. More broadly, AAP's downfall has implications for the non-BJP Opposition. The assumption that the 2024 general election results signalled a fundamental shift against the BJP now appears unfounded. The Opposition parties must reassess their strategies if they hope to challenge the ruling party effectively. The Congress, despite drawing a blank, might be encouraged by AAP's defeat, but it could also face challenges to its helming of the INDIA bloc as it faces criticism for not helping build a common front against the BJP.

A gift horse's teeth

Higher allocations are not enough to boost scientific research

The Budget 2025-26 announcements suggest a potential bonanza for scientific research and development. The Finance Minister outlined ₹20,000 crore budgetary support for developing small modular reactors, with the goal of readying five such reactors by 2033. Another major initiative is the Research, Development, and Innovation fund, included in the Department of Science and Technology (DST)'s expected expenditure. This substantial allocation is expected to benefit start-ups and sunrise sectors, though these remain undefined. The expectation is that private sector entities will receive financial support to boost R&D, a domain historically dominated by government spending. India's R&D landscape has long suffered from low private sector participation. While government funding has driven most scientific advancements, private investment in research has remained inadequate. Currently, private sector R&D contribution is only 36%; overall R&D spending in India was 0.64% of GDP in 2020, the lowest since 1995. Over the last five years, business enterprises have accounted for around 40% of government R&D expenditure. Public sector R&D units allocated only 0.30% of their sales turnover to research, compared to 1.46% by the private sector in 2020-21, according to DST estimates.

The government's ₹20,000 crore infusion hikes the DST's total budgetary allocation to around ₹28,000 crore, over three times last year's allocation and seven times the actual expenditure in 2023-24. These figures are encouraging, but a key concern is whether such massive investments can be effectively absorbed. Despite India's strengths in technology-driven sectors such as fuel, metallurgy, pharmaceuticals, textiles, IT, and biotechnology, returns from core R&D and intellectual property generation are still meagre. Though the government has launched ambitious missions in quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and other cutting-edge technologies, the supporting infrastructure remains inadequate. India still lacks the essential building blocks, chipsets, semiconductor fabs, a skilled engineering workforce, and a strong innovation ecosystem, to fully capitalise on these investments. Without these, the lofty targets set for R&D growth risk falling short. The government must present a clear road map on how private sector entities can access these funds and what tangible benefits the public can expect. Increased funding alone will not guarantee success unless structural bottlenecks are addressed. To truly transform India into a research powerhouse, the focus must shift to strengthening foundational infrastructure, incentivising private innovation, and ensuring long-term, sustainable engagement from industry leaders.

The present period is proving to be an unpredictable one for most parts of the world. Violence is raging across parts of Europe and in West Asia, while several other regions are facing internecine conflicts to varying degrees. At the risk of repetition, it can be said that the world order after 1945 has broken down irretrievably.

The prolonged war in Ukraine, alongside the wanton targeting of innocent civilians in Gaza and West Asia by the Israeli armed forces, underscore a reality, *viz.*, that the United Nations Security Council and the International Court of Justice have become mere bystanders, if not complicit, in most events of this nature. For political philosophers who still hark back to an earlier era, it should be evident that principles enunciated by the Dutch philosopher, Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), have today become part of the 'detritus of history'. There is no longer any "common moral community" governed by "eternal and immutable ideas of right and wrong". What is apparent today is a 'waste-land of morality'.

Subterranean activity

It would indeed be a gross misjudgment if countries that are in the driving seat today, specially those active in West Asia, were to believe that their current actions are likely to contribute to permanent peace. The war in Gaza and Lebanon may have given Israel, and at one stage removed the United States, an impression that 'peace is at hand' in West Asia. Also, that they had effectively undermined the Iran-led 'Axis of Resistance', and considerably reduced Tehran's influence in the region. Viewed dispassionately, current events can at best be viewed as a 'pyrrhic victory', the impact of which is uncertain. A great deal of subterranean activity is meanwhile beginning to be seen, the outcome of which is unlikely to lead to a lasting peace.

First and foremost, Islamist terrorism has hardly been blunted; nor have other major concerns which have existed for decades abated. Calls for 'global jihad' and activities by 'lone wolf' attackers can still be heard. More important, today's Islamist terrorists are being radicalised online, and have not, by any means, been contained. The belief, hence, that Islamist terrorism is no longer a serious threat would be incorrect.

Most experts hew to the view that Islamist terrorism 3.0 is still alive and threatening. It is multifaceted and decentralised, and is increasingly digitally empowered, making it an evolving threat to global security – possibly more so than in earlier decades. The weakening of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (ISIS), temporarily, should not, hence, contribute to a belief that



M.K. Narayanan
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Islamist terrorism had weakened irretrievably. Rather, the signs are that it is rapidly adapting to digital terrorism, spreading extremist ideologies through social media, and provisioning for an increased role through decentralised groups. In essence, it is evolving into a different avatar. Dealing with this new phase of terrorism can prove difficult. Finding the right method to deal with this problem will not be easy.

Islamist terrorism has been evolving for a long time. If 1979 is regarded as a critical turning point in the evolution of a new wave of Islamist militancy, then a quick look at its evolving dimension over the past five decades may prove useful in finding a solution. It was in 1979 that a new brand of militant Islam reared its head – in Afghanistan, it was the die-hard Sunni brand, and in Iran it was the Shia variant. Both, separately though not jointly, were seeking to bring about a general uprising throughout the Muslim world and even beyond, aimed at overthrowing infidel and pro-western regimes. Radicalisation on the Sunni side resulted in the formation of al-Qaeda and the IS (mainly in Syria), each talking of global jihad. The jihad wave waxed and waned over the years, and while al-Qaeda concentrated its activities outside of West Asia, the IS remained essentially confined to West Asia.

While jihadism has, by no means, been defeated for now, it does appear that the internal dynamics of global jihad may have altered to some extent. Sunni radicalisation has been on the upswing lately, but global jihad is no longer their clarion call. This is notwithstanding renewed calls for unity in the Arab world against the Zionist enemy. Arab states are, instead, increasingly falling back on safeguarding their national interests. This has impacted the region's political landscape, and will impact the future politics of West Asia and beyond.

A revival of terror

Meanwhile, terrorism, per se, is witnessing a revival of sorts. Both the IS and al-Qaeda are showing signs of a resurgence. The al-Qaeda has resumed training camps in Taliban-run Afghanistan, while the IS affiliate operating in Afghanistan – the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) – is beginning to expand its footprint, moving further afield to hit targets beyond Afghanistan and Pakistan. Sporadic attacks in Moscow, Iran and Türkiye do reveal its newer footprints. Increasing attacks on military facilities and transport have also been reported in Pakistan, while isolated attacks have taken place in Bangladesh, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

Sporadic terror attacks in different countries across the globe do not necessarily herald, at this point, a return to the kind of large-scale terror

attacks seen previously. Nevertheless, a succession of smaller scale terror attacks, including of late, in countries in the West, have given rise to concerns in security circles about a possible rerudescence of terror, and, on a wider scale, than what was seen in the past decade. As matters stand today, security agencies across the world do believe that a determined effort is still needed to effectively decapitate the 'terror apparatus' before it takes on a more serious dimension.

Two recent terror incidents have jolted security agencies in the U.S. out of their complacency about possible terror attacks. In January, a yet-to-be-detected explosion took place in a Tesla cyber truck, in Las Vegas outside the hotel in which then U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, was staying. The occupant of the cyber truck was found dead inside the vehicle. He was later identified as someone who had previously been with the U.S. elite Special Forces engaged in counter-terrorism abroad.

In another, and a separate, incident in New Orleans, on New Year's Day, Shamsuddin Jabbar, a 42-year-old American citizen and a military veteran who had worked as an IT specialist, drove a truck into a crowd in New Orleans, killing 14 people and injuring 35. His vehicle had a black IS flag attached to it. Jabbar was shot dead by the authorities before he could be interrogated, but an analysis of the incident suggests careful planning. The two incidents occurring side by side have given rise to fresh concerns of a revival and a resurgence of IS-style terror attacks. Both U.S. nationals, for instance, had a military background. Additional concerns relate to the advent of a new category of recruits into terror ranks. Meantime, U.S. intelligence services claim to have foiled a plot in Virginia.

Warnings that need to be heeded

Counter-terrorism experts, hence, have reason to believe that there is ample cause to be concerned. The two incidents have also revived memories of similar vehicle attacks in France and other European cities during the heyday of the IS. Hence, most counter-terrorism experts believe that the world needs to be prepared for a new wave of terror attacks. The fact that more and more information is forthcoming about a fresh wave of proselytisation by IS and al-Qaeda recruiters, employing the most modern methods, including Artificial Intelligence, is again highly disconcerting. The message that comes through loud and clear is that while matters relating to new terror methods and terror attacks are possibly still at an early stage, the warnings should not be ignored and steps need to be taken at the earliest to prevent a fresh wave of terror.

An aerospace expo to further India's global presence

Aero India 2025, which is being held at the Indian Air Force station at Yelahanka in Bengaluru (February 10-14), is more than just an exhibition. It is a platform for innovation, strategic alliances, and technological advancement. The edition this year promises to redefine the standards of aerospace expositions and elevate India's global presence in the aviation sector.

As the 15th edition, the show is set to become a landmark event in India's journey towards self-reliance in defence production. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, this premier air show has grown to become a global hub for aerospace innovation, collaboration, and strategic partnerships. The theme this year, 'The Runway to a Billion Opportunities', encapsulates India's commitment to fostering cutting-edge advancements in defence technology while opening new doors for international collaboration.

A rapid transformation from the 1990s
As the Secretary (Defence Production), it is a matter of great pride for this writer to witness the remarkable transformation of India's aerospace and defence manufacturing capabilities. What began in 1996 as a modest aviation exposition, has, today, evolved into one of the most significant global defence events.

With an ever-increasing footprint, Aero India now attracts top-tier defence manufacturers, policymakers, industry leaders and visionaries from across the world. Past editions have witnessed extensive participation from industry players and innovators, and Aero India 2025 is poised to surpass milestones, serving as a dynamic platform to propel India's defence production and technological prowess onto the global stage.

Aero India 2025 is set to witness participation from leading global and domestic defence manufacturers, reaffirming its status as a premier defence and aerospace exhibition. A total of 106 original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), including 55 foreign OEMs from 19 countries such



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as Brazil, France, Israel, Japan, Russia, South Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States have already confirmed their presence. Sixteen defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs) have also confirmed their participation. Additionally, 35 Indian OEMs, including industry giants such as Larsen & Toubro, Bharat Forge Ltd, Adani Defence & Aerospace, Mahindra Defence Systems Limited, BrahMos Aerospace, Ashok Leyland Defence, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), and Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL), will showcase their cutting-edge advancements, reflecting the growing synergy between the public and private sectors in bolstering India's defence manufacturing ecosystem.

Highlights of the exposition

For the first time, the exposition will feature two of the world's most advanced fighter jets, the Russian Su-57 and the American F-35. These cutting-edge aircraft will offer aviation experts and enthusiasts a rare opportunity to analyse their capabilities and performance. The Su-57 is engineered for superior stealth and agility, and the F-35 is renowned for its technological superiority. This unprecedented participation signals India's role as a central player in global defence diplomacy and aerospace progress.

India will showcase a model of its fifth generation aircraft 'Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft' (AMCA), which is in the development stage. The indigenous design and development of this twin engine fifth generation stealth fighter aircraft, with 75% domestic content, will propel India into a select league of nations having the capacity to make their own fifth generation aircraft.

Another most anticipated segment that will be on show in Bengaluru is 'Manthan', a dedicated platform to promote start-ups and innovation in the aerospace and defence sectors. The event will showcase pioneering advancements from Indian start-ups at the iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence) pavilion, reinforcing the government's commitment to fostering

home-grown solutions that cater to domestic and international defence requirements. The Indian pavilion will serve as a testament to the country's firm commitment to 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', displaying an impressive array of indigenous defence manufacturing capabilities and state-of-the-art technologies.

The visitor experience

In order to ensure a seamless experience for the over seven lakh visitors expected in this edition, significant improvements have been made in collaboration with the national and State authorities. Key enhancements include: optimised traffic flow made possible by expanded roads, designated routes, and real-time monitoring to ease congestion; enhanced transport services such as comfortable shuttle options to facilitate trouble-free access for attendees; robust security arrangements in the form of a multi-tiered security strategy with advanced surveillance, ensuring the highest safety standards; comfort-driven amenities as spacious halls, increased seating zones, improved dining facilities, and dedicated assistance booths for visitor convenience, and a specialised Aero India 2025 application for updates, schedules, and navigation assistance in real time.

Beyond the static exhibition of cutting-edge military aircraft, visitors will witness an enthralling aerial display, offering a glimpse into India's growing air combat and technological prowess. Additionally, aerospace and defence seminars, live technology demonstrations, and interactive sessions will provide industry stakeholders and enthusiasts, valuable insights into the latest advancements in these rapidly evolving sectors.

Aero India 2025 is a definitive statement of India's intent to emerge as a global leader in defence and aerospace production. As the nation strides towards achieving greater self-reliance in defence manufacturing, this event serves as a crucial catalyst in bridging technological gaps, fostering innovation, and strengthening international partnerships.

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Aero India 2025 will highlight India's intent to emerge as a global leader in defence and aerospace production

whatever sheen it had in the past.
V. Lakshmanan, Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

without consultation within the House or even regulators such as the RBI which governs the MFI sector and whose views are paramount on maximum interest rates. This ordinance could have had the effect of driving credit deprived poor and rural workers back into the hands of usurious moneylenders. While there is no doubt that agencies that use illegal strong-arm tactics for recovery need to be kept in check, this is by no means confined to MFIs. This is seen in the case of credit card and loan recoveries by scheduled banks and NBFCs. It is a law and order problem and errant parties have to be punished on a case by case basis. By and large, all

governments are cash strapped and unable/unwilling to support the needy with minimum credit lines or underwriting, thus leaving them at the hands of unorganised private players. MFIs sought to address this problem through a well-regulated market mechanism — they are also tightly regulated. However,

often for political reasons, governments get into the fray by wantonly waiving loans and micro management measures, thus threatening the sustainability of this industry.
Sunil K. Kolangara, Bengaluru

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Delhi result

Given the nature of the anti-incumbency wave, the Bharatiya Janata Party's Delhi win was on the lines predicted. But the defeats of Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia are inexplicable. The result need not resonate across the country but it confirms that the Congress party has lost

whatever sheen it had in the past.
V. Lakshmanan, Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

MFI ordinance
The MFI ordinance ("Karnataka: Governor returns microfinance ordinance, says existing laws can be used to curb harassment", February 7) was one that was created

India's opportunity at the AI Action Summit

In early January, India accepted France's invitation to co-chair the AI Action Summit on February 10 and 11 in Paris. This summit will be the third of its kind, following meetings focussed on AI safety in the U.K. (2023) and South Korea (2024). In addition to AI safety, the agenda at Paris is to focus on innovation, public interest AI, future of work, and AI governance issues – presenting India an opportunity to continue its global engagement on AI safety and also amplify the voice of the Global South on broader AI issues.

This article outlines how India can leverage the opportunity to advance three key priorities for the Global South. Doing this well could also strongly position India to host the next such summit, which brings together decision makers on AI policy, industry at the forefront of AI development, and civil society representatives for an inclusive dialogue on AI.

Voice of the Global South
The first meeting in Bletchley Park focussed on the safety of 'frontier AI models', the emerging risks of AI, and launched the U.K. AI Safety Institute (AISI). The second meeting in Seoul expanded the scope of the conversation to multilateral collaboration on AI risk management through a network of AISIs with countries/blocs such as the U.S., France, Singapore, Japan, and the European Union. With ministerial and high-level bureaucratic representation through the meetings, India has actively engaged in the global discourse on AI safety. As a next step, India's IT Minister recently announced plans of setting up an AI Safety Institute.

In other multilateral fora with leadership roles, India has championed the cause for the Global South, which has not leveraged the transformative potential of AI as much as more developed parts of the world have. Under India's presidency in 2023, the G20 endorsed a "pro-innovation"



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regulatory/governance approach" to balance AI innovation and the need to develop guardrails for AI. Soon after, the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) meeting hosted by India in December 2023 emphasised the need for "equitable access to critical resources for AI research and innovation" to underscore the need for enabling AI infrastructure for developing AI applications.

Priorities in Paris

India's vision for the Global South could now benefit from the broad agenda of the Paris meeting. To maximise this opportunity, India should focus on three key strategic priorities. First, India must advocate for democratising access to AI resources across the entire AI value chain. While India's domestic initiative of establishing a common computing facility with over 18,600 GPUs and 40% government subsidy sets a compelling example, the scope must expand beyond computing hardware. This includes ensuring equitable access to data sets, data storage infrastructure, cloud computing platforms, foundation models, and application development platforms. In addition, India should promote distributed computing solutions, an alternative to traditional computing infrastructure, and access to innovative safety tools like watermarking technology.

The promotion of open-source AI models deserves particular attention. DeepSeek's success demonstrates both the potential of open-source models and the need to address export control measures that currently constrain AI model development. India must advocate for more flexible cross-border transfer of AI technologies while maintaining appropriate safety standards.

Second, India should call for developing a framework for identifying and prioritising AI use-cases relevant to the Global South's unique contexts. This approach ensures that AI applications serve local needs

rather than becoming solutions in search of problems. Instances include early disease detection systems adapted to local healthcare infrastructure, personalised learning platforms that account for diverse educational contexts, and agricultural productivity tools calibrated to regional farming practices. The establishment of an AI use-case repository following the summit could provide guidance for the Global South in determining its priorities.

Third, India must emphasise the importance of contextualising AI risks and safety measures for the Global South. The challenges faced by developing nations often differ significantly from those of the Global North. Cultural erosion through exposure to large language models trained on "western data" represents one such unique risk. The Yoshua Benjio-led expert report on International Scientific Report on the Safety of Advanced AI highlights that risk is derived from the "probability of an occurrence of harm and severity of that harm." Risks are thus future looking but grounded in already occurred harm. In Paris, India must thus call for collecting evidence of AI-related harms, grounded in Global South contexts, to inform their risk mitigation strategies. A repository of AI-related harms could also help inform any future regulatory approaches of the Global South.

Looking ahead

As co-chair of the Paris meeting, India must leverage its position to advance the key AI priorities of the Global South. Doing so would also position India as an ideal candidate to host the next AI Action Summit, which would ensure continued focus on the Global South perspective on AI. This would, in turn, cement India's role as bridge between the AI superpowers in the Global North and developing nations catching up in the global AI sphere.

As co-chair of the Paris meeting, India must leverage its position to advance the key AI priorities of the Global South

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China contributes substantially to U.S.' biggest imports

The highest share of Washington DC's imports comes from the three nations hit by President Donald Trump's newest trade tariffs

DATA POINT

Nitika Francis

Last week, U.S. President Donald Trump announced additional tariffs on imports from China, Canada, and Mexico amidst what the White House referred to as a national emergency caused by "illegal aliens and drugs". In retaliation, China said it would implement counter tariffs.

Of the more than 75 countries with which the U.S. maintains trade relations, China accounted for 18% of all of its imported services between 2018 and 2023, which is the highest share, followed by Mexico (14%) and Canada (13%).

The U.S. imported goods worth \$17,000 billion between 2018 and 2023. Of these, electrical machinery and equipment accounted for 15%, vehicles and their parts accounted for 11%, and nuclear machinery and appliances, 9%. Chart 1 shows the top 15 goods and services imported by the U.S. between 2018 and 2023 (in %).

Charts 2-10 show the country-wise share of the top nine goods and services imported by the U.S. China's share was the highest in eight of the 15 listed items, including two of the three most imported products – electrical and nuclear machinery. China accounted for the highest share of imported iron or steel, plastics, and clothing (20-30%); furniture (about 40%); and toys (nearly 80%). It also contributed the second highest share in the imports of measuring instruments, organic chemicals, and rubber.

Mexico contributed to the highest share of imported vehicles and measuring instruments. It was also among the top three countries exporting electrical and nuclear machinery, furniture, iron or steel, and rubber to the U.S.

Canada contributed to almost half of the mineral imports to the U.S., as well as high shares of plastic, vehicles, and iron or steel.

Trading blows

The data for the charts were sourced from the United Nations' Comtrade Database

Chart 2: Top exporters of electrical machinery and equipment to the U.S.

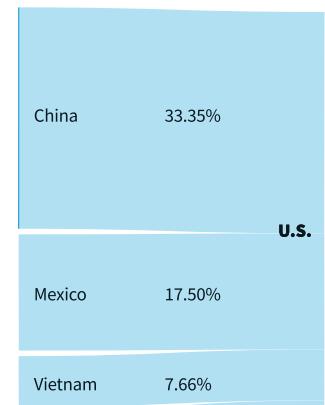


Chart 3: Top exporters of vehicles and related parts to the U.S.



Figures indicate country-wise share of major U.S. goods imports.

* Includes other optical, photographic, measuring instruments

^ Not Elsewhere Specified

Chart 1: Top 15 goods imported by the U.S. between 2018 and 2023 (in %)

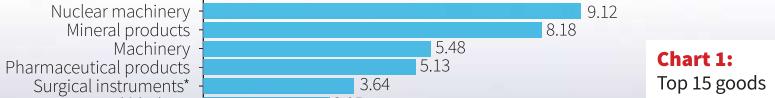


Chart 4: Top exporters of nuclear machinery and mechanical appliances to the U.S.

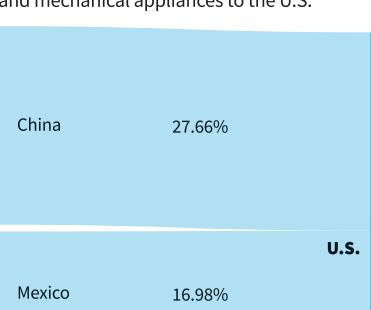


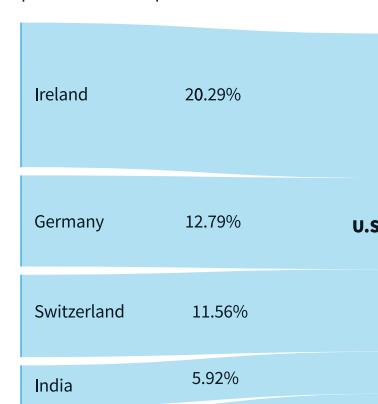
Chart 6: Top exporters of machinery and mechanical appliances to the U.S.



Chart 5: Top exporters of mineral products to the U.S.



Chart 7: Top exporters of pharmaceutical products to the U.S.



Seeking an eye for an eye

The death penalty is a quick-fix approach adopted by governments to quell anger

STATE OF PLAY

Shiv Sahay Singh
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On February 7, the Calcutta High Court rejected the West Bengal government's appeal seeking the death penalty for the man convicted for the rape and murder case of a woman at the R.G. Kar Medical Hospital in Kolkata last year. However, the Court admitted a separate appeal, also demanding the death penalty, by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which investigated the case.

Faced with widespread and prolonged protests after the gruesome incident on August 9, 2024, the West Bengal government was the first to demand the death penalty for the convict. About a month after the incident, it passed the Aparajita Women and Child (West Bengal Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill, 2024, in the State Assembly, which contains provisions for the death penalty in almost all cases involving rape. The Bill is awaiting a nod from the Union government.

However, on January 20, the Additional District and Sessions Judge of Sealdah, Anirban Das, spared the convict of the noose, stating that the crime does not fall in the category of 'rarest of rare' crimes. While awarding the convict life imprisonment, the judge argued that the duty of the court was not to match "brutality with brutality", but to elevate humanity through wisdom, compassion, and a deeper understanding of justice. "In the realm of modern justice, we must rise above the primitive instinct of 'an eye for an eye' or 'a tooth for a tooth' or 'nail for a nail' or 'a life for a

life,'" he noted in the order. The judge added that the court must resist the temptation of bowing to public pressure or emotional appeals.

The judgment was criticised by many people for noting that the crime, which involved extreme brutality, did not fall under the 'rarest of rare' category, and there was a clamour again for the death sentence. Within a week, the State government and the CBI argued before the High Court that their petition seeking capital punishment for the convict in the dead of the night without facing any checks at the hospital gates. Is it a fact that hardly any background checks are conducted while recruiting contractual staff, who are entrusted with helping the law establish discharge their duties. These are the issues that need urgent redress and were in fact some of the demands of the protesters who had hit the streets last August. Even the parents of the victim believe that the death penalty is not the only way to ensure justice. They have said that they want the investigative agencies to look at the "larger conspiracy" and are seeking punishment for others involved in the crime.

The death penalty is a quick-fix approach adopted by governments to quell anger and protests. The trial court judge had rightly recognised and resisted it.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 10, 1975

Tobacco industry to come under Union Govt. control

New Delhi, Feb. 9: The tobacco industry will be brought under the control of the Union Government and a cess will be levied on the entire production of virginia tobacco and on exports of all types of tobacco to finance the proposed tobacco board.

Provisions to this effect are contained in the Tobacco Board Bill that has been introduced in the Lok Sabha at its last session. The Bill is expected to come up for consideration and adoption in the budget session.

The board with its headquarters at Guntur will have 21 members including the Chairman. Barring the three MPs, who will be selected by the two Houses of Parliament, the other members will be appointed by the Union Government. They will include representatives of the Union Ministries dealing with agriculture, commerce, finance and industrial development, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka Governments. Besides these, the Centre will appoint two members to represent the tobacco-growing States, other than Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, by rotation in alphabetical order. There will also be eight members to represent tobacco growers, dealers, and exporters, manufacturers of tobacco products and experts in tobacco.

The Board will regulate production and curing of virginia tobacco, keep a watch on virginia tobacco market, and ensure fair and remunerative price for the growers, develop new markets for Indian tobacco, recommend minimum export price for virginia tobacco, and make purchases from growers to give price support to growers.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 10, 1925

Service ideal in journalism

Calcutta, Feb. 9: Speaking at a meeting of the Indian Journalists' Association yesterday, Mr. Arthur Moore, acting editor of *The Statesman*, said a newspaper does not exist as a publicity organ for aspiring people to find their names in its pages, but there were certain responsibilities on the editorial side of a newspaper whose main function was provision of news and formation of public opinion. A journalist must cultivate a spirit of service.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of Russian drones shot down by Ukraine

70 Ukraine's military said on Sunday that it shot down 70 drones out of the 151 that Russia launched to attack the country overnight. Ukraine's air force said that 74 drones did not reach their targets, likely due to electronic warfare, and two were still in the air. REUTERS

Asylum requests granted in Denmark at a historic low in 2024

860 Denmark's strict immigration policies have led to the granting of the lowest number of asylum requests with the exception of 2020, when COVID-19 lockdowns halted arrivals. The country of six million people registered 2,300 asylum requests last year. AFP

Investment promises before global investors' summit in M.P.

1.8 In ₹ lakh crore. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav courted business leaders in countries ranging from the U.K. to Japan as well as Indian industrial houses in the last few weeks to get investment commitments ahead of the State global investors' summit. PTI

Share of candidates who lost their deposit in the Delhi polls

80 In per cent. Congress candidates lost their security deposits on all but three seats in the Delhi assembly polls. All the candidates of the AAP, BJP and its allies, Janata Dal (United) and LJP (Ram Vilas) managed to save their security deposits after the election results were declared. PTI

Delhi Assembly MLAs that have declared criminal cases

31 The figure is lower than the 43 MLAs in the seventh assembly who had declared criminal cases. One newly-elected MLA in 2025 has declared cases related to attempted murder while two others are facing charges of crimes against women. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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What does the Budget offer Railways?

Knowing that the disappointing financial numbers will not be touched upon, rail watchers, industry and markets clung to one lifeline – capital expenditure. However, the much-anticipated capex push failed to materialise beyond last two years' ₹2.62 lakh crore, signalling that even the government is pausing to reassess

ECONOMIC NOTES

Sudhanush Mani

The erstwhile Railway Budget, presented a couple of days before the Union Budget, was once a grand spectacle where the Indian Railways (IR), awaited its moment of glory. But since its merger with the general Budget in 2017, the IR has been reduced to a mere footnote. In fact, in the last Budget in July 2024 as also in the one presented on February 1, it did not even get a passing mention.

Knowing that the disappointing financial numbers of IR will not be touched upon, rail watchers, industry and markets clung to one lifeline – capital expenditure (capex). With the IR's own earnings barely covering operational costs, the government's increase in budgetary support to the IR has kept the show running. Over the last decade, a staggering ₹13 lakh crore has been pumped into modernising infrastructure – electrification has soared to 95%, track length has expanded, and rolling stock has seen record additions. And yet, the returns are underwhelming. Freight traffic is crawling at just over 2% growth, despite India's booming economy, and while passenger revenue is rising, patronage remains below pre-COVID levels. This Budget delivered more of the same accounting jugglery to keep the Operating Ratio (OR) below 100. It also did not mention any discussion on past announcements. The much-anticipated capex push failed to materialise beyond last two years' ₹2.62 lakh crore, which in real terms is a correction downwards, signalling that even the government is pausing to reassess.

Post-Budget conference

In the absence of any more signs in the Budget, one can only draw clues from the post-Budget press conference given by the Railways Minister. The Minister said that immense thrust has been given for the



Not enough: A group of workers and officers of the South Central Railway working on the electrical lines between Vijayawada and Kazipet junction in the Andhra-Telangana border area in 2024. G.N. RAO
Join FREE WhatsApp Channel <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6RGJOKH6oBd0F>

development of infrastructure, modernisation of stations and trains, enhancement of connectivity, safety and comfort of passengers, and that construction of new railway lines, doubling and gauge conversion and addition of new rolling stock would proceed at an accelerated pace. He added that since 2014, an average of 150 km of new tracks have been laid annually as compared to the average of 113 km annually from 2009-2014. This is a positive announcement as the enhancement of rail network and elimination of saturation will help in improving mobility and connectivity.

The Minister further announced that safety-related initiatives will receive an enhanced budget allocation of ₹1,16,514 crore. While the IR has done well in grade separation work, the most pressing safety issue today is the proliferation of Kavach.

There was no mention of any increase in Kavach coverage for 2025-26. In fact, since the initial rollout of 1,465 km near Secunderabad, not a single kilometre has been added. While the Minister continued with proclamations of massive investment in Amrit Bharat station redevelopment projects, tangible outcomes are visible only at Gandhinagar, Habibganj, Byappanahalli, Cuttack, Ayodhya, and Charlapalli. A stark example of the IR's lacklustre execution is the New Delhi station – one of the busiest and most high-profile stations – whose much-hyped transformation into a world-class hub has been stuck in an endless cycle of re-tendering for nearly a decade. With all redevelopment now being carried out in an Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) mode, following the failure of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects, a key question remains: how will

these edifices be maintained when Railway expenses are outpacing earnings?

Mere spectacle

The Minister mentioned that the IR has achieved an average electrification rate of 294 Rkms per year from 2014-25 – 16 times higher than the 18 Rkms per year achieved during 2009-14 – with India slated to become the only 100% electrified and thus the "greenest" railway in the world. This raises some uncomfortable questions – has this electrification spree outpaced necessity, rendering approximately 5,000 diesel locomotives worth ₹30,000 crore idle or underutilised? Furthermore, much of the electricity powering in IR still comes from fossil-fuel-based plants.

It was declared that 200 more Vande Bharat trains would be introduced; without any mention of a timeline. There has also been no word on major pending projects such as the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor, the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail, or the conversion of Integral Coach Factory (ICF) coaches to Vande Bharat standards. Instead, we were treated to a grand proclamation, that India aims to build a 7,000-km high-speed rail network supporting speeds of 250 kmph by 2047. A vision distant and devoid of clear-cut strategy, it seems no more than a daydream than a roadmap.

The real sleight of hand, however, was the declaration that the IR is poised to become the world's second-largest freight carrier, touching 1.6 billion tonnes of cargo. Given India's size, this number in isolation is meaningless. The real questions remain: how will the IR reclaim its eroding freight share? Can it improve train speeds and comfort beyond token second-class coach additions?

For yet another year, the Budget suggests that the IR is not on track to transformation – it is merely chugging along, waiting for the next headline-grabbing announcement to arrive.

The writer is leader of the Vande Bharat project and an independent consultant.

THE GIST

▼ The Railways Minister said that immense thrust has been given for the development of infrastructure, modernisation of stations and trains, enhancement of connectivity, and safety and comfort of passengers.

▼ There was no mention of any increase in Kavach coverage for 2025-26. In fact, since the initial rollout of 1,465 km near Secunderabad, not a single kilometre has been added.

▼ The real sleight of hand, however, was the declaration that the IR is poised to become the world's second-largest freight carrier, touching 1.6 billion tonnes of cargo. Given India's size, this number in isolation is meaningless

How has the Budget allocated funds for urban development?

Does the Union Budget focus on capital-intensive projects? What about funds for urban local bodies?

Tikender Singh Panwar

The story so far:

In 2015, the NDA government positioned urban development as a key pillar of its growth strategy as cities contribute nearly 67% to the GDP. However, in the government's vision for a "Viksit Bharat," cities seem to be conspicuously absent.

What was allocation for urban India?

The total outlay for urban development stands at ₹6,777 crore, higher than last year's Budget proposal of ₹82,576.57 crore. However, if a modest inflation rate is taken into consideration, there is actually a fall in the outlay. The Revised Estimate (RE) suggests that only ₹63,669.93 crore will be spent by March, reflecting an underutilisation rate of 22.9%. One of the biggest shortfalls is in the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) [PMAY(U)], which had an allocation of

₹30,170.61 crore for FY 2024-25 but saw a drastic cut in RE to just ₹13,670 crore. This highlights a gap between policy ambitions and actual implementation.

The increase in total urban outlay is misaligned with the urgent need to bridge infrastructure gaps in cities. Instead of focusing on employment and sustainable development, the emphasis remains on capital-intensive projects.

How has reduction happened?

Transfers to urban India primarily occur through three channels – direct transfers to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs); Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS); and Central Sector Schemes. There has been a reduction in direct transfers to ULBs. With the abolition of octroi – a key revenue source for cities – the expectation was that the lost revenue would be compensated through central devolution. With the introduction of GST, the source revenue of ULBs fell by over

21%. But instead of increasing support, the share for ULBs has actually declined from ₹26,653 crore last year to ₹26,158 crore this year. This shortfall will force cities to raise their own revenues, burdening citizens with additional taxes.

CSS involve cost-sharing between the Union, States, and local governments. Some major urban programs under this category include PMAY, the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), and the Smart Cities Mission. However, the Budget allocations for these schemes fall flat. The PMAY (CSS component) saw a 30% reduction in allocation compared to last year, and while the SBM (Urban) retains the same outlay as last year at ₹5,000 crore, RE indicates that only ₹2,159 crore will be spent – 56% less than allocated amount. Central Sector Schemes are directly controlled by the Union government and often have strong political overtones. A

major share of such urban development is directed toward capital-intensive infrastructure projects, particularly metro rail expansion. Unlike other urban initiatives, metro projects have seen increased allocations. In FY 2024-25, the budget for Mass Rapid Transit Systems and metro projects was ₹21,335.98 crore. The RE has now risen to ₹24,691.47 crore. Additionally, the 2025-26 Budget proposes ₹31,239.28 crore, reflecting a 46% increase over the previous year. Prioritising metro rails over comprehensive urban mobility raises concerns about the long-term inclusivity of urban development.

What next?

A new Urban Challenge Fund of ₹10,000 crore has been introduced in the Budget. The government has set an ambitious target of ₹1 lakh crore to implement urban redevelopment programs. However, half of this funding is expected to come from private investments – an over-optimistic approach given the sector's negligible contribution to the Smart Cities Mission.

The Budget's approach to urban development is clear – emphasis on capital-intensive projects and less focus on employment generation, green jobs, and sustainable economic policies. While infrastructure investments are necessary, neglecting social and economic equity could widen existing disparities.

The writer is former deputy mayor of Shimla and Member, Kerala Urban Commission.

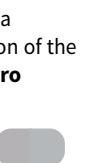
THE GIST

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▼ While infrastructure investments are necessary, neglecting social and economic equity could widen existing disparities.

CACHE



Why are Apple and game-maker Epic facing off against each other again?

A pornography app that can now be accessed in the EU with an iPhone has reignited a long simmering battle between Apple and Epic. In the EU, the Digital Markets Act lets iOS and iPadOS users install apps from alternative app marketplaces or even from an authorised developer's website

Sahana Venugopal

The story so far:

In February 3, an app platform AltStore introduced a new app as "the world's 1st Apple-approved porn app". The new pornography app and the way it was advertised has reignited a long-time feud between iPhone-maker Apple and the game-maker Epic. Though Apple does not allow pornography apps on its App Store, users in the European Union can still download this particular adult app on their iPhones. That's because of the bloc's anti-competitive policy that allows non-Apple app marketplaces to offer their own line-up of products to Apple customers. Previously, they could only download apps from the App Store.

Which app is causing the problem? 'Hot Tub' app is at the centre of this new discontent between Epic Games and Apple. The adult content browser app provides its users privacy and security without sending ads or tracking their location. Rated for users aged 18 and above, the app is available for download through the AltStore PAL—an open source, alternative app marketplace in the EU. AltStore enjoys financial support from Epic Games, as per AP. The Fortnite videogame maker's founder and CEO Tim Sweeney is a strong critic of Apple as the

iPhone maker collects 30% commission from app developers that charge their users for in-app purchases. In 2020, Epic sued Apple on antitrust grounds in the U.S., and the two companies faced off in court for more than a couple years.

Meanwhile, in the EU, the Digital Markets Act (DMA) sought to foster competition by making Apple let its iOS and iPadOS users install apps from alternative app marketplaces or even from an authorised developer's website. Apple was reluctant to allow this.

What is Apple saying about the matter?

Apple is deeply unhappy about recent developments. The iPhone-maker stressed that AltStore's statement about the porn app being "Apple approved" was false, and that it would never offer Hot Tub through its own App Store, per AP. "The truth is that we are required by the European Commission to allow it to be distributed by marketplace operators like AltStore and Epic who may not share our concerns for user safety," Apple was quoted as saying.

The iPhone-maker also expressed concern for children's safety in the EU due to the presence of the porn app. Apple has in the past raised concerns about the security risks of opening up its app marketplace ecosystem to rivals, but the process is not a free-for-all. Instead,

Apple has a review mechanism called "notarisation" to ensure that all apps from diverse distribution channels meet fundamental accuracy, functionality, safety, security, and privacy standards. However, Apple warned that "even with these safeguards in place, many risks remain."

AltStore, in turn, claimed that Hot Tub was indeed "approved" by Apple since it passed the tech company's notarisation process and was not rejected. "To be perfectly clear, Apple has not endorsed Hot Tub in any way. However, they did approve it," said AltStore in an X post on February 5. AltStore further noted that users will have to add Hot Tub's source (URL) to make it appear in the AltStore PAL marketplace, meaning that people who do not wish to see the porn app cannot stumble across it by accident.

What is Epic's argument?

Epic Games' Sweeney has lashed out against Apple's statement, claiming that it is false and calling the company "extremely disingenuous." In an X thread on February 4, Mr. Sweeney raised the counter-argument that Apple did indeed allow "hardcore" pornography by hosting other apps with adult content or pornography – such as Reddit – on its own official app store. "So, if this Hot Tub app available through AltStore continued to host its current porn, and also added

lots of non-porn content, the Apple's App Store terms would welcome it. And if they treated it like Reddit, they'd even give it a 17+ (!!!) rating and Editors Choice Award," Mr. Sweeney posted.

Separately, the CEO claimed that the Epic Games Store for PC and mobile did not host any porn apps.

What is the EU's stance?

The EU calls the DMA "one of the centrepieces of the European digital strategy" to maintain fair competition among businesses in the region by identifying tech behemoths, or "gatekeepers" such as Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, ByteDance, Meta, and Microsoft, and holding them accountable. The DMA is meant to protect consumer choices and level the playing field by making sure gatekeepers do not abuse their dominance in the marketplace.

On the flip side, the availability of a native pornography app on iPhones and iPads in the EU raises serious questions. For one, it brings up the issue of not just who offers apps to Apple product users, but also what type of apps these marketplaces host.

That being said, many social media users were quick to point out that an Apple customer trying to watch pornography could simply open up the company's Safari browser and start typing away, with or without the DMA.

THE DAILY QUIZ

As we have reached the business end of domestic cricket's premier tournament, the Ranji Trophy, here's a quiz related to it as the quarterfinals are on

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

Srinivasan Ramani

QUESTION 1

The powerhouse of the Ranji Trophy has historically been the Mumbai/Bombay team, which has won the tournament a record 42 times. The second best number is just eight. Which State/team holds this distinction?

QUESTION 2

Wasim Jaffer holds the record of scoring the most runs in the Ranji trophy – a whopping 12,038. Among active cricketers, who holds the record for the most runs? Hint: He was till recently, a prominent Test batsman and ranks 12 in the overall list.

QUESTION 3

When this batsman was batting on 443 not out for Maharashtra against

Kathiawar during the 1948-49 Ranji Trophy season, he was just nine runs short of the then first class batting record held by Sir Don Bradman (452 n.o). Kathiawar's captain Pradyumansinhji Lakhajirajsinhji conceded the match to avoid embarrassment. Who was this batsman?

QUESTION 4

Speaking of Bradman, which erstwhile Test cricketer held the Bradman-esque average of 98.35 after scoring 3,639 runs in the Ranji Trophy?

QUESTION 5

What distinction is jointly shared by Premangsu Chatterjee of Bengal (achieved in the 1956/57 season) and Pradeep Sunderam of Rajasthan (achieved in the 1985/86 season) in the Ranji Trophy?



Visual question:

Identify this bowler who owns the record for most wickets taken in the Ranji Trophy, 637 and yet never got a chance to play for India. Which State/team did he represent in domestic cricket? THE HINDU ARCHIVES

Questions and Answers to the February 7 edition of the daily quiz:

1. This actor voiced Pinocchio as well as this character. **Ans: Dick Jones; Alexander**

2. Name the island in the Pinocchio world which is cursed. **Ans: Pleasure Island**

3. The movie is based on the works of Carlo Collodi who wrote the original story titled this in this Italian magazine. **Ans: La storia di un burattino; Giornale per i bambini**

4. This person sang the song which won the Best Original song award for Pinocchio. **Ans: Cliff Edwards**

5. Styled with a signature blue top hat, this character is the narrator of the movie. **Ans: Jiminy Cricket**

Visual: This director created a stop-motion animated version of the film. **Ans: Guillermo del Toro**

Early Bird: Aditi Mishra



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

He blacked out when he was jogging

We had to postpone our trip to Switzerland due to the whiteout in some areas

S. Upendran

"I heard that a good friend of yours was arrested last night. Is it true?"

"Kranthi was arrested a couple of days ago, not yesterday. He's not, what I'd call, a very close friend."

"I see. Was he questioned?"

"For a couple of hours, I understand. The police said that Kranthi's account of what happened didn't really add up. So, they arrested..."

"Didn't add up? There are no numbers to add here. What are you..."

"The expression 'add up' has several different meanings. When you say that the explanation that someone has provided doesn't add up, what you're suggesting is that it doesn't sound very reasonable. It doesn't fit the facts."

"In other words, it doesn't make any sense. The explanation has loopholes."

"I guess you could say that! Here's an example. Some of the claims that the presenter made just didn't add up."

"As far as the Police are concerned, the story that the accused told them just didn't add up."

"That's a good example."

"So, how did Kranthi react when he was told he was being arrested?"

"Apparently, he had a blackout."

"He had a blackout? Don't you mean that there was a blackout in the station?"

"You're right! The word 'blackout' is normally used to refer to a power failure – a period of time when there's no electricity."

"During summer, we experience blackouts for a couple of hours."

"That's a good example! It's also possible, however, to use the word 'blackout' with human beings. When someone has a blackout, he loses consciousness for a short period of time. For example, Sarita had a blackout after walking in the afternoon sun for a couple of hours."

"The batsman had a blackout after being hit by a bouncer."

"By the way, when you wish to use the word as a phrasal verb, you write it as two words – black out. The old man blacked out when he saw a snake on his lawn."

"Prabhu was laughing so hard that he almost blacked out."

"As he entered the house, he blacked out and collapsed on the floor."

"Tell me, does the word 'whiteout' exist?"

"Yes, it does!"

"Really? What does it mean?"

"Like the word 'blackout', 'whiteout' too has several different meanings. One of them is heavy snowstorm."

"I see. The falling snow and heavy winds probably make it very difficult for a person to see. Everything looks so white."

"Exactly! This is an expression mostly used in countries where it snows heavily. We had to postpone the trip because of the whiteout."

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Canard:

a deliberately misleading fabrication; a false or improbable account

Usage: The book should refute the old canard that he is guilty.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/canardpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /kə'nɑ:d/

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

From Page One**Biren quits as Manipur CM after meeting Shah**

The Army and police were instructed to deploy checkpoints on arterial roads to prevent the infiltration of Meitei insurgent groups from neighbouring Myanmar, watch out for protests by women groups such as Meira Paibis, and were asked to keep a check on the activities of the Kuki-Zo insurgent groups in the hills.

The source said that the meeting was convened owing to the expected political developments in the State coupled with availability of a large number of looted police weapons with civilians and other armed radical groups. Districts such as Jiribam, Kakching, Imphal, Moirang and Thoubal were identified as "likely hotspots" for violence.

No-confidence motion

A no-confidence motion was expected to be moved against Mr. Singh by Congress legislators in the Assembly session which was set to begin on Monday.

Later on Saturday, Mr. Singh, along with five others, had landed in New Delhi on a chartered flight. On Sunday afternoon, Mr. Singh met Mr. Shah for 15-20 minutes at the latter's residence and upon his return to Imphal, he submitted the resignation to the Governor. He was accompanied by the Bharatiya Janata Party's Manipur in-charge Sambit Patra and State party president A. Sharda Devi.

The resignation also comes in the wake of a February 4 order by the Supreme Court to ascertain the veracity of the alleged audio recordings said to be that of Mr. Singh, where the speaker is heard claiming credit for orchestrating violence against the Kuki-Zo community.

Reacting to the development, Rahul Gandhi, Congress MP and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, said on X that "for nearly two years, BJP's CM Biren Singh instigated division in Manipur".

'Restore peace'

"The resignation of CM Biren Singh shows that mounting public pressure, the SC investigation and the no-confidence motion by the Congress forced a reckoning. But the most urgent priority is to restore peace in the State, and work to heal the wounds of the people of Manipur," he said.

In his resignation letter, Mr. Singh said he was grateful to the Central government for timely actions, interventions, developmental work and implementation of various projects for safeguarding the interest of every single Manipuri.

Requesting the Centre to "maintain the territorial integrity of Manipur which has a rich and diverse civilisational history over thousands of years", Mr. Singh reiterated his stand "to crack down on border infiltration, to formulate policy for the deportation of the illegal immigrants... and to continue the revised mechanism of FMR [Free Movement Regime]."

31 Maoists, two jawans killed in Chhattisgarh

Union Home Minister Amit Shah had last year set a deadline of March 2026 to wipe out left-wing extremism in the country. On Sunday, he reiterated the deadline and termed the encounter a success.

"In the direction of making India Naxal-free, the security forces have achieved a big success in Bijapur. Today, we have lost two of our brave soldiers in the effort to end anti-human Naxalism. This country will always be indebted to these heroes. I express my heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyred soldiers," he posted on X.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister hailed the security forces for "entering the Naxalites' den" and eliminating them.

Bengaluru police give Ed Sheeran a Beatles moment**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

British policemen objecting to the Beatles' impromptu concert on the rooftop of their Abbey Road studios in London is part of the legendary musical band's lore. Eighteen years later, U2's rooftop performance of Where The Streets Have No Name got similar treatment in 1987. Iconic events and incidents that marked the Fab Four's decade-long musical journey have seen parallels in the lives of claimants to the Beatles mantle.

On Sunday afternoon, another impromptu performance on a city street, this time by British pop singer Ed Sheeran on Church Street in Bengaluru, was stopped abruptly by the police. The global music icon, who is in the city for his Mathematics concert,

was singing his pop hit number 'Shape of You' on Church Street when a policeman disconnected his microphone. In a video, Mr. Sheeran could be heard saying, "We have permission to be here."

He took to Instagram and shared a story saying, "We had permission to busk by the way. Hence, us playing in that exact spot, was planned out before. It wasn't just us randomly turning up."

Shekhar H.T., Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central Division), Bengaluru City Police, told *The Hindu* that Mr. Sheeran had no permission to busk on Church Street on Sunday. "We even received a call from the public to our emergency helpline 112, following which our personnel went and stopped the artist's performance," he said.

Plan to amend nuclear liability law may enthuse American, French firms

Announcement comes ahead of Modi's visit to Paris and Washington this week; government's U-turn a decade later spells hope for Westinghouse, Electricité de France plans, deals for new-age small reactors; experts hail the decision, but call for more clarity on the amendments proposed

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

A head of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Paris and Washington from Monday, the Union government's announcement that it would amend the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damages Act (CLNDA), 2010, and the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, is likely to enthuse American and French nuclear power companies, whose projects have been deadlocked due to legal concerns for more than 15 years. However, experts who welcomed the decision, called for more clarity on the amendments.

The announcement, which marked a sharp U-turn from the government's position in 2015, was made in the Budget speech on February 1. In particular, it is meant to help progress the Electricité de France (EDF) MoU to build six EPR1650 reactors at Jaitapur in Maharashtra that was signed in 2009 (with Areva), and American Westinghouse Electric Company's (WEC)

MoU, signed in 2012, to build six AP1000 reactors at Kovvada in Andhra Pradesh.

In addition, it is expected to help India tap into new nuclear power technologies, particularly for small modular reactors (SMR), now gaining popularity in developed economies.

"For an active partnership with the private sector towards this goal, amendments to the Atomic Energy Act and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act will be taken up," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said in the speech, calling for "at least 100 GW" of nuclear energy by 2047, and making an outlay of ₹20,000 crore for the development of five SMRs to be operationalised in India by 2033. India has a nuclear power capacity of 6,780 MW from 22 reactors, and the only foreign operator in India is Russia's Rosatom.

High liability
Western nuclear power companies have, however, said clauses in the CLNDA are unacceptable as they



Joint effort: India's only foreign nuclear operator, Rosatom, is involved in the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tamil Nadu.

mandate a high degree of liability for suppliers and contradict the international Convention for Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage (CSC) which focuses only on the liability of operators of the plant. The clauses were inserted in 2012, following heated debates in Parliament, where the then-in-Opposition NDA members had accused the government of letting Western companies off from liability, citing the Union Carbide-Bhopal gas leak case that killed thousands in 1984 and the Fukushima nuclear leak in Japan in 2011.

"This law was amended by the government just to satisfy the Opposition at the time, even though it was clear that the international operators' legal liability clause would create problems down the road," Shyam Saran, former Foreign Secretary, who was the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Nuclear Affairs and Climate Change at the time, told *The Hindu*, adding that the amendments now being planned must be made in consultation with international partners and ensure the liability issue was dealt with in contracts signed.

The External Affairs Mi-

nistry declined to comment on what the proposed amendments would entail. Officials aware of discussions on the issue said that while the CLNDA would be amended to separate operator's liability from supplier's liability to bring it in line with the CSC, the Atomic Energy Act would liberalise investment in power projects in India.

Legal standard

"The pragmatic way out is to break the deadlock by amending the CLNDA to bring it on par with international conventions to which India itself is a party – so that there is a clear legal standard in our domestic legislation aligned with international standards and is applicable to international partners and domestic industry," said Venkatesh Verma, former Ambassador to Russia, who was part of negotiations for all India's civil nuclear agreements and led the External Affairs Ministry's Disarmament and International Security Affairs desk. With the Trump administration keen to en-

courage U.S. energy exports, for both oil and LNG, as well as nuclear power, and France and India negotiating deals for SMR projects, the issue will be on the agenda as Mr. Modi travels to France and the U.S. this week. It remains to be seen whether the government's plans to amend the laws will finally forge the breakthrough required, two decades after India signed civil nuclear deals with the U.S. and France.

Significantly, in a "Frequently Asked Questions" memorandum issued by the Ministry after the Republic Day visit to India by U.S. President Barack Obama in February 2015, the government had said that there was "no proposal to amend the Act or the Rules", and that U.S. officials had reached a "general understanding that India's CLND law is compatible with the [International] Convention for Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage (CSC)". However, the "understanding" did not result in any serious contracts for nuclear power.

Gold smuggling has reduced after import duty cut: CBIC chief**Press Trust of India**
NEW DELHI

Gold smuggling has reduced significantly since July 2024 when the government slashed import duty on the precious metal to 6%, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) Chairman Sanjay Kumar Agarwal has said.

As per the latest available data, Customs and DRI officers seized 847 kg of gold worth ₹544 crore at various airports in the April-June period of the current fiscal.

In July, the government reduced customs duty on gold to 6% from 15%.

"After the rate of duty was reduced on gold in last year's Budget, there is a significant reduction in the smuggling of gold," Mr. Agarwal told PTI in an interview.

Although Mr. Agarwal did not reveal the quantum or value of gold seizures,

he said authorities are keeping regular watch over the international passenger traffic, porous borders, and commercial cargoes coming into the country to cut the smuggling of narcotics through any route.

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), under CBIC, is the apex agency of the Indian customs in the field of anti-smuggling in India.

During the 2023-24 financial year, DRI officers alone seized 1,319 kg of gold.

Smuggling through India's porous eastern borders, particularly with Bangladesh and Myanmar, has also emerged as a major concern for law enforcement agencies.

Gold smuggling through air routes in India remains a prominent method used by smugglers, with West Asian and South East Asian countries being the major points of origin.

In poll-bound Meghalaya, rat-hole coal mining hopes ride on Article 371**The Hindu Bureau**
GUWAHATI

A regional party in poll-bound Meghalaya has indicated that bringing the State under the purview of Article 371 could help resume rat-hole coal mining, which has been banned since April 2014.

Article 371 of the Constitution grants special powers to certain States.

Strong Pillar Kharjana, one of the candidates of the Voice of the People Party (VPP), cited the example of Nagaland to seek Article 371 for Meghalaya.

Specific to Nagaland, Article 371A has special provisions guaranteeing the protection of land and its resources apart from the Naga customary law and procedure.

Mr. Kharjana is contesting from the Mawkhark-Pynthorumkrah constituency of the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (KHADC) where elections



Narrow path: A file photo of rat-hole mines seen in East Jaintia Hills district of Meghalaya. RITU RAJ KONWAR

are scheduled for February 21. Elections to the Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council (JHADC) will also be held on the same day.

The two tribal councils have 30 seats each but elections are held in 29 while the Governor nominates a member.

Claiming that rat-hole mining is rampant in Nagaland, Mr. Kharjana said the National Green Tribunal (NGT) cannot interfere with the coal mining activities in Nagaland because of

Article 371A. The NGT banned rat-hole mining in Meghalaya in 2014. The ban, upheld by the Supreme Court, was extended to other areas of Northeast.

"We understand that the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India empowers a district council to make laws on allotment of land, social custom, forest, etc., but Paragraph 12A of this Schedule allows the State's law to prevail over that of the district council if there is any conflict," Mr.

Kharjana said. In February 2024, Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio told the Assembly that Article 371A has been the major hurdle in the State government's efforts to regulate small-scale illegal coal mining activities.

Barring the VPP and the Congress, which advocated the incorporation of some provisions of Article 371 to make the Sixth Schedule more potent, the other parties agreed that the two constitutional provisions were incompatible.

The discussions on Article 371 intensified a week after the Coal Controller under the Ministry of Coal signed three escrow agreements with the project proponents for mining sites at three locations - Pyndengshala in West Khasi Hills, Saryngkham in West Jaintia Hills, and Lumikhi Wahsang in the East Jaintia Hills district.

The votes will be counted on February 24.

Maintain a diary to track irregular periods'**The Hindu Bureau**
CHENNAI

Experts have underlined the need for women to maintain a menstrual diary to keep track of irregular periods.

Speaking at a webinar on "Management of heavy menstrual bleeding" as part of *The Hindu*'s "Healthy India, Happy India" initiative in collaboration with Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore, Abraham Peedicayil, senior consultant in gynaecology at the hospital, emphasised the importance of maintaining haemoglobin levels through iron supplements or blood transfusions, if necessary.

He highlighted key indicators of abnormal menstrual bleeding, such as cycles lasting more than seven days, heavy clotting, frequent periods occurring within 21 days, delays

beyond 35 days, and post-coital bleeding. Three doctors from Naruvi Hospitals provided insights into the causes, diagnosis, and latest treatment options for this condition, aiming to raise awareness and enhance women's health.

Dr. Peedicayil emphasised that a woman's menstrual cycle involves both the ovarian and uterine cycles, not just the period itself. He explained that a typical cycle lasts between 21 and 35 days, with menstruation occurring for two to seven days. Menopause generally occurs around the age of 50," he added.

He also stressed the importance of menstrual hygiene, recommending regular changes of menstrual products, wearing breathable clothing, and maintaining proper genital hygiene to prevent infections and control odour.

Regarding perimeno-

pausal bleeding is considered abnormal and requires immediate investigation to rule out potential cancer risks.

Heavy bleeding

P.B. Akilasree, senior consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology at Naruvi Hospitals, addressed the issue of heavy menstrual bleeding in adolescents. She explained that normal blood loss during a cycle is around 30 ml-40 ml. However, if blood loss exceeds 80 ml or requires more than one pad per hour, it is classified as heavy menstrual bleeding.

She highlighted major causes of excessive bleeding in adolescents, such as anovulation, hormonal imbalances, and thyroid dysfunction. The condition often leads to school absenteeism and emotional distress.

For treatment, she re-

commended non-hormonal medication, iron supplements for anaemia, and, in some cases, surgical intervention for fibroids. "Using high-absorbency sanitary products and consuming iron-rich foods can help manage symptoms," she advised.

She also urged young women to seek medical attention if they experience severe cramps or excessive bleeding.

Jeyasheela Kamaraj, consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology at Naruvi Hospitals, discussed heavy menstrual bleeding in women aged 19 to 45.

"It is essential to identify whether the bleeding is due to infections," she said. Treatment options include iron supplements, tranexamic acid, and combined oral contraceptive (COC) pills.

(The video is available on bit.ly/3XhalPf)

E-rickshaw driver held for rape, murder of minor**The Hindu Bureau**
KOLKATA

The Bidhannagar city police have arrested a 22-year-old e-rickshaw driver in connection with the rape and murder of a 13-year-old girl in the Newtown area of Kolkata.

The body of the victim was found in a desolate location on Friday.

CCTV footage showed the girl walking alone and taking the e-rickshaw of the accused on February 6 night. According to the police, the driver, after dropping off other passengers, took the girl to the desolate spot, sexually assaulted her and strangled her.

The accused has been booked under Sections of the POCSO Act.



Jagdeep Dhankar

Only 20 of 46 NDA MLAs took part in meeting held by Biren

Dissidents were unhappy with how he handled the situation arising out of the prolonged ethnic conflict in Manipur; he was summoned twice to New Delhi as the Congress decided to move a no-confidence motion against his government

Farmers hold political and economic strength: V-P

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankar on Sunday said farmers played a key role in the country's development and no one could undermine their contribution to India's growth.

Addressing the Akhil Mewar Region Jat Mahasabha in Chittorgarh, Mr. Dhankar said: "When the economic situation of farmers improves, the country's situation improves. After all, farmers are the providers and they should not look to anyone or depend on anyone for help because farmers with their strong hands possess political strength and economic capability." He said today's governance system bowed to farmers.

Recognising the contribution of the Jat reservation movement, he highlighted the community's efforts in advancing social justice in society.

"There are over 730 agricultural science centres to help farmers. Don't leave them alone, go there and ask them: 'What services will you offer us?' Learn about new technologies and government policies," he said.

Urging the youth to take up agricultural business, he said: "My appeal is to farmers and to the sons and daughters of farmers. Agriculture production is the world's largest and most precious trade. Why are farmers not involved in the trade of their products? Our youth is talented." He said more farmers should work in agricultural production businesses for a long-term positive economic outcome. (With PTI inputs)

Rahul Karmakar

GUWAHATI

Speculation was rife about a change of guard in Manipur as early as Saturday evening when N. Biren Singh left for New Delhi in a chartered flight soon after holding a meeting with the MLAs of the ruling National Democratic Alliance, whose constituents include the Naga People's Front and the Janata Dal (U).

Out of 46 MLAs of the alliance, only 20 turned up for the meeting. Mr. Singh resigned a day later on Sunday.

The meeting was apparently convened to discuss the Budget Session starting on Monday, but BJP insiders said Mr. Singh wanted to find out how many MLAs were with him as a dissident group had been seeking a change in leadership. The dissidents were unhappy with how he handled the situation arising out of the prolonged ethnic conflict between the tribal

Spiral of violence

The ethnic conflict in Manipur has been manifesting in ghastly violence since May 2023, under N. Biren Singh's watch. Here is a timeline:

2023

■ **May 3:** A 'tribal solidarity march' called by the All Tribal Students Union of Manipur to protest the move for inclusion of Meiteis on Scheduled Tribes list turns violent in the Turbung area of Churachandpur; violence spreads to Meitei-dominated Imphal Valley and peripheral hills

■ **May 4:** Rioters loot thousands of weapons from security establishments, many of which have still not been recovered. Ethnic violence claims almost 100 lives within the first 24 hours

■ **July 1:** Amid high drama, supporters, mostly women, stop then Chief Minister N. Biren Singh from going to the Raj Bhavan to tender his resignation

■ **Truth Labs** later says 93% of the voice in the clip matches his

■ **February 3:** Manipur Congress flags Singh's threat against any MLA who moves a no-confidence motion in the Assembly session starting February 10

■ **February 8:** Manipur govt. claims an audio clip in which Singh is heard making allegedly offensive remarks against the State's ethnic minorities is fake; non-profit

■ **February 9:** Biren Singh resigns

Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities that broke out on May 3, 2023.

Apart from the dissidents, mostly from the Meitei community, seven BJP legislators belonging to the Kuki-Zo community have stayed away from the State capital, Imphal.

On February 7, the State Congress announced it would move a no-confidence motion against the

Biren Singh government. This was four days after a delegation apprised the Governor of a threat to "hound out" any MLA who goes for a no-trust motion against the government.

The Congress, which has five MLAs, was hoping to get the support of the BJP dissidents apart from the six MLAs of the National People's Party to take the number beyond the 10 re-

quired for the no-trust to stand.

Two recent developments are believed to have worked against Mr. Singh.

One was the "93% confirmation" by the non-profit Truth Labs that the voice in a leaked audio clip heard making offensive remarks against a minority community matched his. The other was the possibility of a section of BJP Minis-

ters and legislators siding with the Congress for the expected no-confidence motion on Monday.

A footballer-turned-editor of a local publication, the 64-year-old Mr. Singh won his maiden Assembly election from the Heingang constituency in 2002 as a candidate of the regional Democratic Revolutionary Peoples Party. He later joined the Congress and rose to become an influential Minister but fell out with the party's leadership and joined the BJP ahead of the 2017 election.

He took charge as the 12th Chief Minister of Manipur in March 2017 after helping the BJP cobble together an alliance despite the party winning 21 seats. He defied the odds to lead the BJP to victory in the 2022 Assembly polls and become the Chief Minister for the second term.

On Saturday night, members of an unidentified armed group looted arms and ammunition from an outpost of the Manipur Rifles in Thoubal. Ms. Atishi was the third woman to hold the post after Sushma Swaraj and Sheila Dikshit.



Atishi resigns, to continue in post till new govt. takes over

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Sunday handed over her resignation to Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena a day after the BJP secured a decisive victory in the Delhi Assembly election. Mr. Saxena asked Ms. Atishi to continue in the post till the formation of a new government.

The official handle of the Raj Nivas on X posted: "Hon'ble Lt Governor, Shri VK Saxena today received the resignation of Hon'ble CM, Ms Atishi.

He asked her to continue in her position till the formation of the new government."

Ms. Atishi took over as Chief Minister from Arvind Kejriwal on September 17, 2024, after he resigned days after his release from the Tihar Jail on bail. Mr. Kejriwal is charged with money laundering in the alleged Delhi liquor scam. Central investigation agencies are investigating the matter.

Ms. Atishi was the third woman to hold the post after Sushma Swaraj and Sheila Dikshit.

Assembly dissolved

A notification by the Assembly Secretariat on February 8 read, "In exercise of the power conferred upon me by sub-section (2) (b) of section 6 of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991, I, Vinai Kumar Saxena, Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, hereby dissolve the Seventh Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi with effect from February 8, 2025."

L-G's actions, excise probe, AAP-da led to AAP's election setback

Jaideep Deo Bhani

Nikhil M Babu

NEW DELHI

In the first week of January, the Bharatiya Janata Party's campaign for the Delhi Assembly election started with Prime Minister Narendra Modi leading the attack from the front on the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

It was on Mr. Modi's leadership and "Modi's guarantee" that the BJP fought the rest of the election, without a chief ministerial face. But there was another man, though never part of the election campaigning, who had been keeping the AAP and its chief Arvind Kejriwal on edge – central government-appointed

pointed Lieutenant Governor (L-G) V.K. Saxena.

On January 3, Mr. Modi coined the term "AAP-da" (disaster). He said that "AAP-da" had befallen Delhi in the past 10 years and promised people to get rid of the disaster that has stalled the national capital's development.

The main focus of his speeches was establishing two things: first, there has been no development and no welfare of people in Delhi under the AAP, and secondly, the AAP has become corrupt.

But it seems that the groundwork for the political message was laid by the BJP over three years in two ways: one, Mr. Saxena was appointed L-G of the na-



Power play: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Delhi Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena in New Delhi on January 3. PTI

tional capital in May 2022, and two, a change in law in May 2023.

Major moves
Though the AAP had run-ins with the previous LGs too, the friction between the AAP and the Gover-

nor's office worsened to unprecedented levels under Mr. Saxena's tenure, who unlike his two predecessors was not a retired IAS officer and was seen by many as close to the BJP at the Centre.

Within two months of

his appointment, Mr. Saxena in July 2022 recommended a CBI probe into the Delhi excise policy, which led to the arrest of top AAP leaders, including party chief Arvind Kejriwal and his deputy, Manish Sisodia.

Both of them, who are out on bail, lost the 2025 Delhi election, delivering a big blow to the AAP.

The second factor of the change in law happened in May 2023.

Delhi is essentially a Union Territory with an Assembly, and land, police, and law and order were under the control of the L-G. This led to the run-ins between the AAP and the L-G since it came to power in Delhi in 2013. Also, who

kept raising the issue that the officials were not listening to them and were undermining and stalling different projects and schemes on the directions of the BJP at the Centre through the L-G. The BJP dismissed it and termed it AAP's politics.

Historic win'
"It is a historic win and not a usual victory as the people of Delhi have shown the door to 'AAP-da'. Delhi has become 'Aapda-mukt,' Mr. Modi said.

Though the term 'AAP-da' was used only for a little over a month by the BJP in the run-up to the election, its intended meaning was in the making for about three years.

AAP losing power in Delhi Assembly poll revives the Congress's spirits in Punjab

Vikas Vasudeva

CHANDIGARH

The Aam Aadmi Party's debacle in the Delhi Assembly election is all set to lift the Congress's spirits in Punjab. The Congress is the principal Opposition in the State and is wasting no time in pinning down the ruling AAP electorally.

The AAP is now powerless only in Punjab. The next Punjab Assembly election will be held in 2027.

Claiming that the defeat in Delhi had burst the AAP's bubble, senior Congress leader and former Punjab Chief Minister Raja Kaur Bhattal on Sunday said the poll results would augment the already existing restlessness in the AAP cadre, which would eventually bring about the party's end.

"There's a lot of restlessness in members of the AAP, including the MLAs, and this defeat would only increase the restlessness. Many of the AAP members are former Congress people. So, anything is possible. Besides, within the AAP, there's rivalry, and differences between the Delhi and Punjab units,



Uncertain future: Punjab CM Bhagwant Singh Mann and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal.

which could widen after the defeat," Ms. Bhattal told *The Hindu* when asked about AAP MLAs connecting with the Congress.

'AAP exposed'

"The AAP was able to form governments in Delhi and Punjab on lies. But their defeat in Delhi reflects they have been exposed. They failed to keep their promises. The AAP will meet the same fate in Punjab as well," she said. The Congress, which has already been campaigning against "misgovernance" by the AAP government in Punjab, will now corner the ruling party with a renewed vigour over its "failures" and "unfulfilled promises" in the days to come.

Apart from the Congress, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are also expected to sharpen their attack against the AAP's unkept promises after three years of power in Punjab.

Raut questions Anna Hazare's silence on 'BJP's corruption'

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

Social activist Anna Hazare has expressed satisfaction over Arvind Kejriwal's defeat in the Delhi Assembly polls, according to Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut. However, Mr. Raut has raised questions about Mr. Hazare's silence on corruption allegations against the Narendra Modi-led government, sparking a fresh political debate.

On Sunday, Mr. Raut criticised Mr. Hazare for not speaking out against

corruption under the Modi government. "The country is being looted, with wealth concentrated in the hands of a single industrialist. What is the reason behind Hazare's silence?" Mr. Raut asked.

He also spoke about the alleged irregularities in the electoral process, pointing to voter list discrepancies in Maharashtra, Delhi, and Haryana. "There was similar pattern of confusion in voter lists in Maharashtra and Delhi. These issues will likely arise in the upcoming Bihar polls as

well," he said.

Mr. Raut suggested that the Delhi poll results might have been different if the AAP and Congress had formed an alliance.

Mr. Hazare, while speaking on Saturday, had criticised Mr. Kejriwal for ignoring his advice. "I have always said a candidate's conduct and thoughts must be pure, their life should be blameless, and they must embrace sacrifice. I told this to Kejriwal, but he did not listen. He was overwhelmed by money power," he said.

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IN BRIEF



President to visit Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj today

President Droupadi Murmu will visit the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj on Monday and take a holy dip at the Sangam, her office said. Maha Kumbh, which began on *Paush Purnima* (January 13), will continue till *Mahashivratri* on February 26. "During her day-long visit to Prayagraj, the President will take holy dip and perform puja at Sangam, perform puja and darshan at Akshayavat and Hanuman Mandir, and also visit the Digital Kumbh Anubhav Centre," the Rashtrapati Bhawan said in a statement issued on Sunday. Sangam is the confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the mystical Saraswati river. According to a Uttar Pradesh government release, Ms. Murmu will also offer prayers at the Akshayavat and Bade Hanuman Temple, accompanied by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Shinde extends financial aid to kin of Tukaram descendant

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has extended financial assistance of ₹32 lakh to the family of the late *kirtankar* (religious singer) Shrirish Maharaj More, who recently committed suicide due to financial distress. The decision was made on the occasion of Mr. Shinde's birthday. The amount was handed over to the family by MLA Vijay Shrivare on Mr. Shinde's behalf. Shrirish Maharaj More, a descendant of Sant Tukaram Maharaj and a renowned *kirtankar* from Dehu, took his own life last week after being overwhelmed by debt. In the note he left behind, More revealed that he was burdened with a loan of ₹32 lakh, which he was unable to repay, leading him to take the extreme step. (*Those struggling with distressing thoughts may call DISHA helpline at 1056*)

In a first, chiefs of Air Force and Army fly together in light combat aircraft Tejas

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh and Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi created history on Sunday as they flew together on the light combat aircraft Tejas on the eve of Aero India 2025.

The two service chiefs, who were course mates at the National Defence Academy in Pune, took off on a Tejas trainer aircraft from the Air Force Station, Yelahanka, Bengaluru, and landed a few minutes later upon completion of a successful sortie. This is the first time that two service



Making waves: Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, right, and General Upendra Dwivedi after taking a sortie in a Tejas on Sunday. PTI

chiefs were aboard a military jet.

General Dwivedi termed the flight the best moment of his life. Former Chief of

the Army Staff General Bipin Rawat had also flown in the trainer version of the Tejas during Aero India 2019.

U.S. aircraft to be a major draw at Aero India

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The fifth-generation F-35 fighter jet, the aerial refuelling tanker aircraft KC-135 Stratotanker, the B-1 supersonic heavy bomber, and F-16 fighter jets are among the aircraft from the U.S. that will be on display at the Aero India 2025 in Bengaluru.

This is the 15th time that the U.S. is participating in Asia's biggest air show, which will be held from February 10 to 14.

Over 20 exhibitors

At Aero India, more than two dozen U.S. exhibitors will engage with Indian counterparts, explore new business opportunities, and demonstrate innovative solutions in aviation and defence. These companies will display advanced



Supersonic flight: A view of the fifth generation F-35 fighter jet, which will be on display at Aero India 2025. AP

cements in unmanned aerial systems, fighter aircraft, advanced avionics, and defence electronics.

Jordan Andrews, Charge d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, will lead the high-level delegation of representatives

from the U.S. Departments of State, Defence, and Commerce.

"The United States is excited to once again participate in Aero India and to spotlight our strong defence ties with India. Our cooperation in defence, trade, and training is integral

to our growing strategic partnership," Mr. Andrews said.

General Kevin Schneidler, Commander, U.S. Pacific Air Forces; Brigadier-General Patrick Teague, senior defence official, U.S.'s Mission in India; and Consul-General Chris Hodges, U.S. Consulate General Chennai, will also be part of the U.S. delegation.

Deepened defence ties

Since Aero India 2023, the U.S. and India have deepened defence ties, including through technology innovation, expanded trade, and increased cooperation in maritime security, cybersecurity, logistics, and counter-terrorism operations.

General Schneider said: "Aero India 2025 is an ideal forum to showcase U.S. defence aircraft and equipment and ultimately contribute toward our compatibility and interoperability with other nations."

"The growth in Indian and U.S. bilateral defence trade has corresponded with growing interoperability through information sharing, liaison officers, training exercises, and defence enabling agreements. The importance of our partnership continues to grow, particularly as we face an increasingly complex and dynamic security environment in the Indo-Pacific," he added.

Final Approach, the 10-member ensemble of the United States Air Force Band of the Pacific, will perform for the public at Aero India on February 13 and 14 and at 5 p.m. on February 11 at the Christ University auditorium.

FAITH

Plight of Sita at Asokavana

Children will feel disgusted if anybody speaks ill of their parents, and a disciple will feel sorry if any slanders are hurled at his Guru. Devotees will become upset if anyone indulges in the vilification of God. A woman cannot tolerate any derogatory remarks about her husband.

Tenderness of heart, compassion of the extreme type, fidelity, wisdom of the most genuine kind, courage of the heart, and endurance are all qualities that make Sita a harmonious abode.

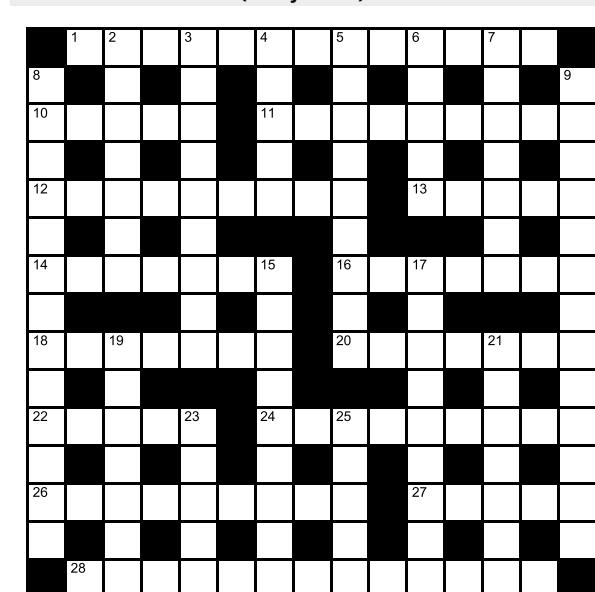
Sri Damodara Dikshitar said in a discourse that Sita was upset while kept captive at Asokavana. All that Sita looked upon was hateful, and all that she heard from Ravana was murderous in the extreme. Ravana and the demons not only threatened her but dispraised her beloved husband, Rama.

Sita felt her family was tormented like people struggling in a capsized boat. Sita told Ravana, "However independent I am, I did not get permission from Rama. Otherwise, I would burn and reduce you to ashes. It would be a disgrace to Rama if I had killed you." She said destiny would follow people in different forms, and it came to her through a golden deer.

Sita plunged into a sea of sorrow. She said she could not be separated from Rama. She advised Ravana not to violate dharma and tread the path of sin. She pleaded with Ravana to restore her to Rama, but Ravana paid no heed.

Sita lamented that she talked ill of Lakshmana and Bharatha and is suffering now. She bemoaned that Rama need not save her as her husband but as a personality in whom the blood of mercy runs.

TH CROSSWORD (set by Arden)



Across

- 1 Got state transport, didn't like it at first (8,5)
- 10 Get them out in the next spell - both evacuated (5)
- 11 Dish for poor loser... in case (9)
- 12 Both sides accept only the French style, for example (4,5)

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



SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

No SS642 Distribution www.knightfeathers.com

MONEYWISE



Gold, silver on a roll

PRECIOUS METALS

B Krishnakumar

Precious metals commenced the new year with a bang with both gold and silver closing on a strong note by the end of January 2025.

The sentiment towards precious metals turned positive on concerns relating to the wide-ranging tariff announced by the newly-elected President of the United States of America Donald Trump who took charge on January 20.

As a result, Comex gold moved to a record high crossing the psychological \$2,800 mark. Comex silver is yet to hit an all-time high but managed to post handsome gains in January.

Comex gold closed 7.35% higher in January to settle at \$2,835 an ounce. Comex silver gained 10.34% in January to close at \$32.26 an ounce.

Reflecting the positive trend in the global markets, MCX gold gained 6.17% to settle at ₹82,233 per 10-gram at the end of January. MCX silver moved 7% higher last month to close at ₹93,328 per kilogram.

Resumes uptrend

Comex gold resumed its uptrend after the price registered a breakout from the prior range that the prices were confined to. The breakout imparted momentum to the uptrend and pushed the Comex gold price to the target of \$2,850-\$2,900 mentioned last month. The short and medium-term outlook for gold remains positive.

Eyes \$3,050-\$3,100

The price is likely to head to the next target of \$3,050-\$3,100. The positive outlook for gold would be under threat only if the price closes below \$2,580-\$2,600 range.

Comex silver price, too, headed higher last month but the price is yet to cross the positive trigger level of \$33 that was mentioned last month.

A move past this level would impart momentum to the upside and could push the silver price to the next target of \$35.5-\$36. The positive outlook would be invalidated on a close below \$29. MCX gold price, too, managed to breakout from the prior trading range and the price hit a new all-time high a couple of days ago. The short-term trend as a result has turned positive and the price could now head to the next target of ₹88,500-₹89,500 range. The positive view would be negated if the price closes below ₹81,000.

Near all-time high

MCX silver price too ruled firm last month and the price is now trading near its all-time highs. The short-term outlook is positive and expect the silver price to reach the next target of ₹1,00,500-₹1,05,500. This expectation would be under threat if MCX price were to close below ₹86,500.

To summarise, the short and the medium-term outlook for both gold and silver has turned positive as the prices have resumed their major uptrend. The positive outlook would be invalidated only if the price drops below the levels mentioned above.

(The author is a Chennai-based analyst and trader. The views and opinions featured in this column are based on an analysis of short-term price movement in gold and silver futures at COMEX & Multi Commodity Exchange of India. This is not meant to be a trading or investment advice.)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in. 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.



ILLUSTRATION: SAAI

Market Downturn: Don't make these mistakes

Successful investing is not about timing the market perfectly or finding the next 'hot' stock. It is about building a diversified and carefully chosen portfolio with a huge margin of safety

AVOIDING PITFALLS

G.R.Balaji

Stockmarket corrections, like the one unfolding in recent months, can be challenging for investors. Yet, they also offer opportunities for those who navigate them wisely. Here are some common mistakes that hinder investors' ability to tap them.

*One of the most common errors investors make is viewing stocks solely from a drawdown perspective, the peak-to-trough decline in a specific period. While drawdowns can give signal some potential opportunities, fixating on them can lead to poor decision-making. Investors often become overly focused on how much a stock has fallen from its peak, rather than considering its intrinsic value and future potential especially during market downturns, as such firms often lack the financial stability and market depth to weather economic downturns.

This approach of investing only in aggressively rising themes of the market, is reflected in the inflow data of mutual funds, where many small and thematic funds raised a large corpus in the last three years. This meant investors were avoiding large-cap equities and other investment products, creating a portfolio imbalance.

Too many stocks In recent years, the Indian stock market has seen a significant expansion, with over 1,000 new stocks added in five years, many of them representing novel business models. This poses challenge as attempting to follow too many stocks can lead to an information overload, making it difficult to take informed decisions. This "bandwidth issue" can result in hasty decisions based on incomplete information. Investors are advised to stick to



Investors often become overly focused on how much a stock has fallen from its peak, rather than considering its intrinsic value and future potential



One of the most dangerous assumptions investors make during a correction is expecting rapid market recovery. Data shows recoveries can take a long time

a universe of stocks based on preferred criteria.

*One of the most dangerous assumptions investors can make during a correction is expecting a rapid market recovery. Historical data shows market recoveries can take considerable time, and portfolios focused on narrow themes or sectors may take even longer to regain ground.

In India, there have been several instances where market recoveries took longer than anticipated. The 2008 global financial crisis had triggered a drop of 50% for the market. The market only regained its pre-crisis level in 2010. More recently, the small cap index fell close to 50% during the 2018 meltdown, and took three years to hit a new high, reflecting the prolonged period to recover from it.

*Another mistake to avoid is overexposing portfolio to narrow themes, such as capex-related stocks or policy-related beneficiaries. They are vulnerable to policy changes and economic shifts.

For instance, the recent

focus on public capex has led to an increased interest in infrastructure and related stocks. But capex growth has slowed this year, triggering a correction in some stocks.

*Investors are often trained to buy on dips. This has been successful at times. However, this strategy might not work well when the broader economy experiences challenges on growth and inflation, amid elevated stock valuations.

So, navigating market corrections needs discipline, patience and a clear understanding of such common pitfalls. By avoiding these mistakes, investors can position themselves to weather market downturns effectively. Successful investing is not about timing the market or finding the next "hot" stock. It is about building a diversified portfolio with lots of margin of safety, based on policies and rules laid down by you in alignment with your long-term financial goals.

By learning from past market cycles and avoiding common errors, investors can navigate corrections with greater confidence and set themselves up for long-term success. As Benjamin Graham said in 'The Intelligent Investor', "Whether making money becomes effortlessly easy, keeping it is about to become extraordinary hard".

(The writer is a certified financial planner)

Relief in tax slabs has stolen the limelight'

BUDGETGAZING

Sunil Badala

The Union Budget 2025 aims to unlock India's potential in its journey to become a developed nation by 2047. Over the years, the Government has introduced several reforms for ease of doing business and reducing compliances, such as faceless assessment, taxpayers' charter, faster processing of returns, and the Vivad se Vishwas scheme to settle disputes. Continuing with these efforts, a new Income Tax Bill is proposed to provide tax certainty, simplification and reduce tax litigation.

Of course, what has stolen the limelight is the relief in the tax slabs which has overshadowed all the other announcements. This was a long pending ask of the middle class and the enhancement of tax exemption limits will promote more liquidity, boosting household consumption, savings, investment, and uplift the overall sentiment of the middle class.

Ease of doing business

Rationalisation of TDS / TCS provisions for ease of doing business is another long pending ask which has been addressed. The extension of the date of set up of operations, till 2030, have been proposed for several sectors in the IFSC - like ship and aircraft leasing - which should give investors a good long term horizon view. Rationalisation of provisions for arms-length price determination should also help in certainty and reducing litigation. Other tax amendments focus on increasing voluntary compliance by extending the time limit to file updated tax returns up to four years, support to the startup ecosystem by extending the sunset date by another five years, introducing compliance obligations for crypto assets, and harmonization of provisions of significant economic presence in India. A few key tax expectations which did not find mention were implementation of the OECD's BEPS 2.0 - Global Minimum Tax, extension of the sunset date for new manufacturing companies and weighted deduction for R&D spends.

Consistency in GST changes

Most proposed GST amendments align with ensuring consistency without major surprises, including the retrospective change that tightens legal provisions by explicitly changing "plant and machinery" to "plant and machinery". This is in line with the government's intent to disallow input tax credit on the construction of immovable property; however, its future impact remains to be seen. The decision to not treat vouchers as goods or services, thereby exempting them from GST, offers welcome relief to industry. Several steps have been unveiled to streamline compliance, support local firms and recalibrate import duties. The Budget is a testament to India's commitment to foster a balanced and sustainable economic environment. The successful implementation of its various initiatives will be crucial.

(The writer is Head of Tax, KPMG in India)

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%)				
	Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure	
Small Finance Banks					
AU Small Finance Bank	8.10	7.25	7.50	7.25	
Equitas Small Finance Bank	8.25	8.10	8.00	7.25	
ESAF Small Finance Bank	8.38	6.00	6.75	6.25	
Jana Small Finance Bank	8.25	8.25	8.25	8.20	
NorthEast Small Finance Bank	9.00	7.00	9.00	8.00	
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.60	8.25	8.25	8.60	
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	8.25	8.25	7.20	7.20	
Unity Small Finance Bank	9.00	7.85	8.15	8.15	
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.00	8.50	7.75	
Private Sector Banks					
Axis Bank	7.25	6.70	7.10	7.00	
Bandhan Bank	8.05	8.05	7.25	5.85	
City Union Bank	7.50	7.00	6.50	6.25	
CSB Bank	8.00	5.00	5.75	5.75	
DBS Bank	7.50	7.00	6.50	6.50	
DCB Bank	8.05	7.10	8.05	8.05	
Federal Bank	7.50	7.00	7.10	7.10	
HDFC Bank	7.40	6.60	7.00	7.00	
ICICI Bank	7.25	6.70	7.00	7.00	
IDFC First Bank	7.90	6.50	6.80	6.75	
IndusInd Bank	7.99	7.75	7.25	7.25	

Home Loan Interest Rates

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)		
	Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
(In %)			
Public Sector Banks			
State Bank of India	8.50-9.85	8.50-9.85	8.50-9.85
Bank of Baroda	8.40-10.65	8.40-10.65	8.40-10.90
Union Bank of India	8.30-10.75	8.30-10.90	8.30-10.90
Punjab National Bank	8.45-10.25	8.40-10.15	8.40-10.15
South Indian Bank	7.40	6.70	6.00
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	7.60	7.00	6.50
Canara Bank	8.50-11.25	8.45-11.25	8.40-11.15
UCO Bank	8.30 #	8.30 #	8.30 #
Bank of Maharashtra	8.35-11.15	8.35-11.15	8.35-11.15
Punjab and Sind Bank	8.50-10.00	8.50-10.00	8.50-10.00
Indian Overseas Bank	8.40-11.00	8.40-11.00	8.40-11.00
Bandhan Bank	9.16-15.00	9.16-13.33	9.16-13.33
Bank of India	8.35-10.85	8.35-10.85	8.35-11.10
RBL Bank	9.00 #	9.00 #	9.00 #
CSB Bank	10.49-12.34	10.49-12.34	10.49-12.34
HDFC Bank Ltd.	8.75 #	8.75 #	8.75 #
City Union Bank	8.25-9.50	8.50-10.00	8.75-10.50
Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)			
LIC Housing Finance	8.50 #	8.50 #	8.50 #
Bajaj Housing Finance	8.50 #	8.50 #	8.50 #
Tata Capital	8.75 #	8.75 #	8.75 #
PNB Housing Finance	8.50-14.50	8.50-14.50	8.50-11.45
GIC Housing Finance	8.80 #	8.80 #	8.80 #

TULKAREM

Israeli forces kill two women in West Bank; one victim pregnant



Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank shot dead two women on Sunday, including one who was eight months' pregnant, with the military saying it had "targeted terrorists" in a raid. The raid was conducted in the Nur Shams refugee camp, on the outskirts of Tulkarem in the northern West Bank, at dawn on Sunday. AFP

Israeli forces withdraw from a key Gaza corridor

Associated Press

MUGHRAQA
Israeli forces withdrew from a key Gaza corridor on Sunday, Israeli officials and Hamas said, part of Israel's commitments under a truce deal with Hamas.

Israel agreed as part of the truce to remove its forces from the six-kilometre Netzarim corridor, a strip of land that bisects northern Gaza from the south that Israel used as a military zone during the war.

At the start of the ceasefire last month, Israel began allowing Palestinians to cross Netzarim to head to their homes in the war-battered north. The withdrawal of forces from the area fulfills another commitment to the deal.

After demolition of Mujib's house, focus shifts to party launch of student activists

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

With the demolition of the historic 32 Dhammondi, the official residence of Bangladesh founder Muammar Rahman that represented the birth of Bangladesh in 1971, the student-coordinators of Bangladesh politics have flexed their muscles. The incident comes at a time when the student coordinators have announced their intent to launch a new political party.

The demolition of 32 Dhammondi took place more than a month after the students, a major force behind the interim government, attempted to "bury" the constitution of Bangladesh. The student coordinators had called for a massive rally on December 31, 2024, arguing that they would announce the "July Proclamation" to formalise the political charter of the uprising that led to the overthrow of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

That attempt was led by coordinators Hasnat Abdullah and Sarjis Alam of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement but the move fizzled out as the claim of "burying" the constitution prompted some behind the scene activities as well as open criticism by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). To deal with the student activists, the interim government of Prof. Mohammad Yunus had also announced that it would formulate its own July Proclamation by 15 January 2025 which however did not materialise.

The demolition of 32 Dhammondi was seen largely as a sign that Hasnat



The demolition of 32 Dhammondi was seen as a sign that student leaders had the ability to mobilise thousands of foot soldiers. AP

Abdullah had the ability to mobilise thousands of foot soldiers. Subsequently, social media videos have surfaced showing Mr. Hasnat calling for "mob justice" while dealing with the student activists of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League. The Chhatra League of Awami League, a major wing of Awami League was banned in October 2024 but the organisation has been indicating its existence in the mobilisation of minority communities in Bangladesh as well as in country-wide pamphlet distribution programmes defending exiled PM Sheikh Hasina.

Real intent
Student coordinators' increasing influence has raised questions about the real intent as leaders of both the BNP and the Awami League are out of Dhaka with Mr. Hasina and her top lieutenants in exile and BNP's top leader Khaleda Zia travelling abroad for medical reasons.

Hasnat Abdullah announced on February 5 that the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement and the National Citizens Committee will launch

TEHRAN

Displacement of Palestinians threatens West Asia, says Iran



Iran Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Donald Trump's plan to move Palestinians out of the Gaza Strip represents a threat to stability and security in West Asia. "Forcibly displacing Palestinians from Gaza is part of a scheme to eliminate Palestine in a colonial manner," he told his Egyptian counterpart Badr Abdellatif. AFP

Will do the job of executing Trump's Gaza plan: Israel PM

Netanyahu says the U.S. President's proposal for relocating Gazans is the first fresh idea in years; he says 'the real issue' is finding a country that will agree to take in the displaced population

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has hailed U.S. President Donald Trump's widely criticised plan to move Palestinians out of the war-battered Gaza Strip, saying Israel is willing to "do the job".

In a Fox News interview aired late on Saturday as the Premier was wrapping up a visit to Washington, Mr. Netanyahu defended Mr. Trump's proposal, which has sparked concern and condemnation across the Middle East [West Asia] and the world.

"I think that President Trump's proposal is the



Constant pressure: Protesters demand 'relocation for the hostages' in Tel Aviv on Friday. GETTY IMAGES

first fresh idea in years, and it has the potential to change everything in Gaza," Mr. Netanyahu said, adding that it represents a "correct approach" to the

future of the Palestinian territory.

"All Trump is saying, 'I want to open the gate and give them an option to relocate temporarily while

SEOUL

N. Korea's Kim slams partnership between U.S., South Korea, Japan



North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said an elevated U.S. security partnership with South Korea and Japan poses a grave threat to his country and vowed to bolster his nuclear weapons programme. Kim has previously made similar warnings, but his latest remark implies again that he won't embrace Trump's overture to meet him. AP

WINDHEOK

Namibian independence leader Sam Nujoma dies aged 95



Namibia's founding father Sam Nujoma, who led his country's fight for independence from South Africa, died on Saturday aged 95, the presidency announced. Nujoma had been hospitalised over the past three weeks, battling an illness from which he "could not recover", President Nangolo Mbumba said in a statement. AP

New Delhi's remarks are unwarranted, says Dhaka

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

Asserting that the demolition of the residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the country's internal matter, the interim government on Sunday said India's remarks on the incident was "unexpected and unwarranted".

India on Thursday voiced anguish over the destruction of the historic residence, and said the "act of vandalism" should be strongly condemned.

India's remark
"It is regrettable that the historic residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a symbol of the heroic resistance of the people of Bangladesh against the forces of occupation and oppression, was destroyed on February 5," External Affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal had said.

Reacting to India's remarks, Bangladesh Foreign Ministry on Sunday said the incident at Dhammondi 32 pertains to the country's internal affairs, state-run BSS news agency reported.

"A statement from India's Ministry of External Affairs on this matter, issued on February 6, 2025, has come to the attention of the interim government. Such remarks from India's foreign ministry on Bangladesh's internal affairs are unexpected and unwarranted," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mohammad Rafiqul Alam was quoted as saying by BSS.

"Bangladesh does not officially comment on the internal affairs of any state, and it expects the same level of conduct from others," he said.

Netanyahu's 'Palestinian state on Saudi land' remark flayed

Agence France-Presse

RIYADH

Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries on Sunday condemned remarks by Israel's Prime Minister who appeared to suggest in an interview that a Palestinian state could be established on Saudi territory.

Benjamin Netanyahu's remarks, which some Israeli media characterised as a joke, came with the region already on edge following Mr. Trump's proposal for relocating Gazans.

'Departure from old'

Mr. Netanyahu said Mr. Trump's plan was a departure from the "same old, same old, same old - we leave, Gaza becomes again occupied by these terrorists who use it as a base to attack Israel."

"I think we should pursue it," he added, cautioning that "the real issue" was finding a country that would agree to take in displaced Gazans.

The Saudi foreign minis-



Dire straits: A Gaza resident poses in front of his destroyed home in Jabalia in the northern part of the Strip on Saturday. AFP

try stressed "its categorical rejection to such statements".

In a television interview on Thursday, right-wing Israeli journalist Yaakov Bardugo was discussing with Mr. Netanyahu the prospect of diplomatic normalisation with Saudi Arabia when he appeared to mis-speak, attributing to Riyadh the stance that there

would be "no progress without a Saudi state".

"Palestinian state?" Mr. Netanyahu corrected him.

"Unless you want the Palestinian state to be in Saudi Arabia," the Israeli premier quipped. "They (the Saudis) have plenty of territory."

Mr. Bardugo responded that he did "not rule this out".

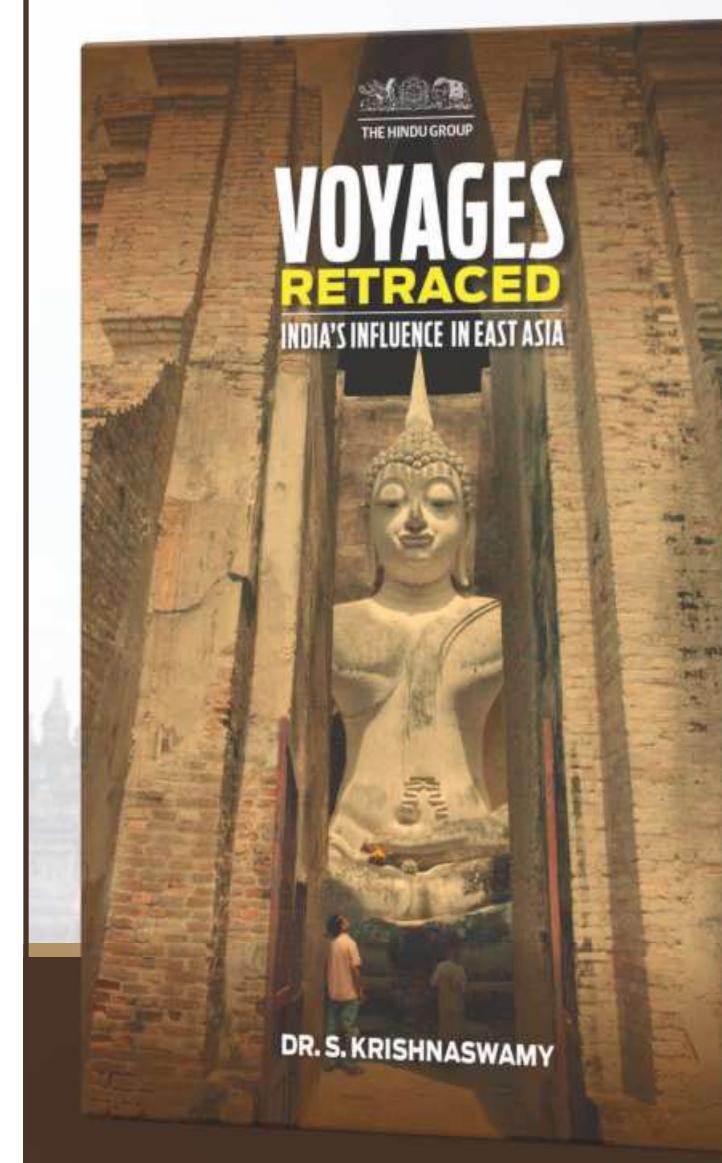


THE HINDU GROUP

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

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SUPER SUNDAY

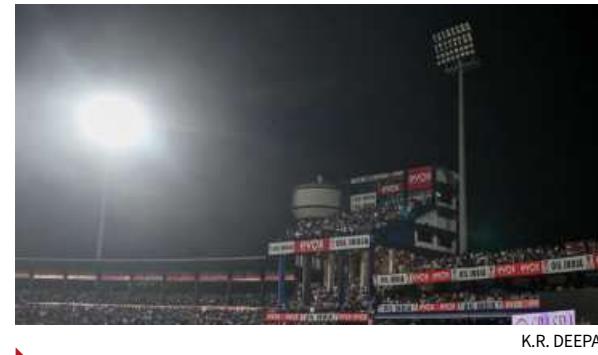
Rohit becomes fourth-highest run-getter for India in ODIs



Rohit Sharma, in his 50th ODI as India captain, scored 119 against England on Sunday. He became the fourth-highest run-getter (10,987) for India in the 50-over format, overtaking Rahul Dravid (10,889). Sachin Tendulkar (18,426), Virat Kohli (13,911) and Sourav Ganguly (11,363) occupy the top three spots.

LIGHTS OFF

Floodlight failure halts proceedings in Cuttack



Play in the second India-England ODI in the over six-decade-old Barabati Stadium was stopped as one of the six towers of the floodlights malfunctioned. The incident happened when the tower adjacent to the iconic clock tower malfunctioned, resulting in a brief stoppage at 6.15 p.m. The lights were restored at 6.45 p.m.

TRUST

Indian dressing room has always backed skipper Rohit, says Jadeja



Ravindra Jadeja showered praise on skipper Rohit Sharma. "The entire world may be behind him but in our dressing room, there was no such atmosphere. He is such a great player that he knows exactly how to build his innings. It didn't even feel like he hadn't scored runs in the previous innings," Jadeja said on Sunday.

TERRIFIC TOUR

Australia wins second Test, secures series sweep against Sri Lanka



Australia wrapped up a dominant 2-0 sweep of the Test series against Sri Lanka at Galle on Sunday, romping to a nine-wicket victory before lunch on day four. **The scores:** Sri Lanka 257 & 231 in 68.1 overs (Matthews 76, Kusal 50; Kuhnemann 4/63, Lyon 4/84) vs Australia 414 & 75/1 in 17.4 overs. **PM:** Carey. **PS:** Smith.

Rohit roars back to form as Team India thrashes England, seals series in style

The skipper's 32nd ODI century helps the Men in Blue chase down a target of 305 with ease; Gill proves able foil with a stroke-filled half-century

ENGLAND IN INDIA

Y.B. Sarangi
CUTTACK

Rohit Sharma shone bright in the Silver City to end a prolonged lean patch with a magnificent hundred and guide India to a convincing four-wicket win against England in the second ODI and seal the three-match series at the Barabati Stadium here on Sunday.

Electing to bat, England relied on Ben Duckett and Joe Root's fifties to score a challenging 304. India rode on skipper Rohit's breezy knock (119, 90b, 12x4, 7x6) to cruise to the target and delight the home fans in the run-up to the Champions Trophy.

Opening the innings with Shubman Gill, Rohit broke the shackles off the seventh ball he faced by charging down and getting a four in the third-man region. Showcasing his old touch, the India captain flicked the next delivery over midwicket for a six to a rousing approval from a partisan crowd.

A lofted shot over cover and a stunning straight-batted six off Saqib Mahmood in consecutive overs underlined Rohit's class. His riveting tale of revival, relying on his self-belief, dwarfed the lanky Gill's graceful half-century (60, 52b, 9x4, 1x6). The 100-ball 136-run opening stand featured some glorious strokes on the leg-side.

Rohit, who did not lose his focus despite an interruption due to floodlights malfunction, played trademark shots on both sides of



Demolition man: Rohit's blistering 119 snuffed out England's challenge. K.R. DEEPAK

the wicket. Virat Kohli, who replaced Yashasvi Jaiswal after missing the first ODI due to a knee problem, took guard much to the delight of his fans.

Kohli lasted just eight

balls before DRS overturned the on-field umpire's decision and ruled him caught behind.

Rohit continued to light up the night sky with his blitzkrieg and brought up

his 32nd hundred in style by stepping out and hoisting leg-spinner Adil Rashid for a six over long-off. His dazzling performance ended when he skied Liam Livingstone to mid-wicket.

India lost Shreyas Iyer, K.L. Rahul and Hardik Pandya before Axar Patel and Ravindra Jadeja finished the task.

Earlier, England openers Duckett and Phil Salt batted smartly as they played the ball late and found the gaps to post their third 50-plus partnership on the trot.

Varun breaks through
Debutant spinner Varun Chakaravarthy provided the breakthrough in his second over. Salt, let off on six, mistimed one and Jadeja took a high catch at mid-on in the 11th over.

Southpaw Duckett (65, 56b, 10x4), who cut, pulled and flicked, fell shortly after England crossed 100.

The accurate Jadeja, who kept it tight, struck in his opening over as Duckett found Hardik at long-on.

Joe Root (69, 72b, 6x4), who survived two lbw shouts, and Harry Brook forged a 66-run stand.

Harshit Rana broke the association as Gill ran to his right from mid-off to pluck a spectacular catch and send back Brook.

Root, who pulled and reverse-swept with elan, and Jos Buttler added 51 off 53 deliveries. Hardik removed Buttler with Gill taking a low catch at mid-off.

Root scooped one to Kohli at long-off and Jamie Overton was caught by Gill – the fielder's third of the night – as Jadeja completed his three-for.

Livingstone's cameo took England past the 300-mark but it wasn't enough once Rohit found his range.

SCOREBOARD**ENGLAND**

Phil Salt c Jadeja b Varun 26 (29b, 2x4, 1x6), Ben Duckett c Hardik b Jadeja 65 (56b, 10x4), Joe Root c Kohli b Jadeja 69 (72b, 6x4), Harry Brook c Gill b Harshit 31 (52b, 3x4, 1x6), Jos Buttler c Gill b Hardik 34 (35b, 2x4), Liam Livingstone run out 41 (32b, 2x4, 2x6), Jamie Overton c Gill b Jadeja 6 (10b), Gus Atkinson c Kohli b Shami 3 (7b), Adil Rashid run out 14 (5b, 3x4), Mark Wood run out 0 (1b); Saqib Mahmood (not out) 0 (1b); Extras (lb-2, nb-1, w-12): 15; Total (in 49.5 overs): 304.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-81 (Salt, 10.5 overs), 2-102 (Duckett, 15.5), 3-168 (Brook, 29.4), 4-219 (Buttler, 38.4), 5-248 (Root, 42.3), 6-258 (Overton, 44.6), 7-272 (Atkinson, 47.1), 8-297 (Rashid, 48.5), 9-304 (Livingstone, 49.4).

INDIA BOWLING

Shami 7.5-0-66-1, Harshit 9-0-62-1, Hardik 7-0-53-1, Varun 10-0-54-1, Jadeja 10-1-35-3, Axar 6-0-32-0.

INDIA

Rohit Sharma c Rashid b Livingstone 119 (9b, 12x4, 7x6), Shubman Gill b Overton 60 (52b, 9x4, 1x6), Virat Kohli c Salt b Rashid 5 (8b, 1x4), Shreyas Iyer run out 44 (47b, 3x4, 1x6), Axar Patel (not out) 41 (43b, 4x4), K.L. Rahul c Salt b Overton 10 (14b, 1x4), Hardik Pandya c Overton b Atkinson 10 (6b, 2x4), Ravindra Jadeja (not out) 11 (7b, 2x4); Extras (lb-1, w-7): 8; Total (for six wkts. in 44.3 overs): 308.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-136 (Gill, 16.4), 2-150 (Kohli, 19.3), 3-220 (Rohit, 29.4), 4-258 (Shreyas, 36.6), 5-275 (Rahul, 40.4), 6-286 (Hardik, 41.6).

ENGLAND BOWLING

Mahmood 6-0-36-0, Atkinson 7-0-65-1, Wood 8-0-57-0, Rashid 10-0-78-1, Overton 5-0-27-2, Livingstone 7-0-29-1, Root 1.3-0-15-0.

Toss: England; **PM:** Rohit. **India won by four wickets with 33 balls remaining to lead three-match series 2-0.**

Third and final ODI: February 12, Ahmedabad, 1.30 p.m.

Stunning run: Maharashtra's Aishwarya broke her own women's 400m National Games record while winning. RITU RAJ KONWAR

Quartermiler Aishwarya triumphs

NATIONAL GAMES

Stan Rayan
DEHRADUN

Quartermiler Aishwarya Mishra has thrown up many surprises in the past. She has skipped meets and then popped up with some very fast times, but on Sunday she produced a season-opening stunner that virtually knocked out everybody watching her in the 38th National Games athletics competition at the Ganga Stadium here.

The 24-year-old from Maharashtra clocked a personal best 51.12s – the fourth-fastest Indian time ever – while winning the 400m gold by a huge margin and breaking her own three-year-old National Games record by more than one second.

Vithya Ramraj, the defending champion, was more than three seconds behind for the silver.

"I couldn't believe that I have run a personal best, I really thought it would be something like 52s. I was like in a trance for five to 10 minutes," Aishwarya, the Asian silver medallist, told *The Hindu*.

"It felt like I was running 300m, not in 400. I'm very happy about that."

Nobody, not even National record-holder Hima Das (record 50.79s, Jakarta Asian Games 2018) has started the season like this.

Are there bigger things coming as the season gets into full swing?

"I'm hoping to break the National record if everything goes well," said Aishwarya whose previous best (51.18) came in April 2022.

Aishwarya said she had been training at Dehradun for the last 20 days.

Meanwhile, Odisha's Bapi Hansda bettered his personal best while winning the men's 400m, whereas Maharashtra's Tejas Shirse and Andhra Pradesh's Asian champion Jyothi Yarraj broke their own Games records while taking the men's and women's sprint hurdles gold.

"Not really happy, I was expecting 12.7 or 12.8... I'm in good shape, but sometimes things don't work out the way we want. But I'm glad I competed here," said Jyothi.

The results:

Athletics: **Men: 400m:** 1. Bapi Hansda (Odi) 46.82s, 2. Vikrant Panchal (Har) 46.92, 3. T.S. Manu (Ker) 47.08. **110m hurdles:** 1. Tejas Shirse (Mah) 13.65s MR, OR own 13.71, 2015; 2. Manav Rajanarayanan (TN) 14.03, 3. Muhammed Lazan (Ker) 14.23.

High jump: 1. Aadhaar Ram (TN) 2.14m, 2. Swadhin Kumar (Odi) 2.11, 3. Sudeep (Kar) 2.08.

4x100m relay: 1. Odisha (39.47s MR, OR 39.94, 2011), 2. Tamil Nadu (40.08), 3. Kerala (40.73).

Decathlon: 1. N. Thowfeeq (Ker) 6915 pts, 2. Yamandeep Sharma (Raj) 6831, 3. Rohit Roman (AP) 6753.

Women: 400m: 1. Aishwarya Mishra (Mah) 51.12s MR, OR own 52.20; 2. Vithya Ramraj (TN) 54.43, 3. Devyaniba Zala (Guj) 54.44.

100m hurdles: 1. Jyothi Yarraj (AP) 13.10s MR, OR own 13.22 2023; 2. Moumita Mondal (WB) 13.36, 3. Nithya Ramraj (TN) 13.60.

Long jump: 1. Moumita Mondal (WB) 6.21m, 2. Sandra Babu (Ker) 6.12, 3. Deepanshi Singh (UP) 6.11.

Javelin throw: 1. Jyoti Rakesh (Har) 55.55m, 2. Karishma Sanil (Ker) 55.55, 3. Ramyashree Jain (Kar) 54.85. **4x100m relay:** 1. Karnataka (45.99s), 2. Kerala (4.04), 3. Telangana (47.58).

Tennis: Women's doubles semifinals: Vaidehee Chaudhari & Zeel Desai (Guj) vs Anjali Rath & Aditi Tyagi (Har) 6-1, 7-6 (5); Pooja Ingale & Akansha Nitture (Mah) Diya Chaudhary & Jaya Kapoor (Utk) 5-7, 6-4, 1-8.

Fiery Teichmann rules the day

MUMBAI OPEN WTA 125

Tarun Shastry
MUMBAI

In a showdown of contrasting styles, Switzerland's Jill Teichmann's aggressive game trumped Thailand's Mananchaya Sawangkaew's soft touches at the Cricket Club of India on Sunday. The 27-year-old former World No. 21 overwhelmed Sawangkaew 6-3, 6-4 in the final to clinch the L&T Mumbai Open WTA 125 title.

Teichmann took the opening game of the first set with a combination of net play, powerful serves, and solid forehands. The 22-year-old Thai, currently ranked 121, responded well, hitting a stunning ace to level. However, the relentless Teichmann quickly asserted her dominance, showcasing remarkable



Teichmann.

broke Teichmann and then held serve with a superb lob, earning a thumbs-up and smile from her opponent.

Teichmann stopped her from making a comeback and sealed the first set 6-3.

The second began on similar lines, with the left-hander breaking Sawangkaew's serve early to lead 1-0. She continued her dominance, producing a stunning forehand winner to double her lead.

Sawangkaew bounced back by winning three consecutive games to make it 3-3. However, Teichmann held firm with her exceptional groundstrokes to win the final with relative ease in straight sets.

Earlier in the doubles final, the Indo-Dutch duo of Prarthana Thombare and Arianne Hartono went down to Amina Anshba and Elena Pridakina 7-6 (1), 6-2, [10-7].

She dominated rallies, producing stunning cross-court shots and backhand winners. Her perfectly executed serves down the 'T' was a key weapon, helping her win four consecutive games to establish a 5-1 lead. Sawangkaew refused to back down. In the seventh game, after a series of amazing rallies, she

Buoyed by French support, Jacquet pockets the title

CHENNAI OPEN

S. Prasanna Venkatesan
CHENNAI

Kyrian Jacquet ensured that it was a rather memorable maiden visit to the SDAT tennis stadium for budding nine-year-old fan Tamara, as the Frenchman beat Swede Elias Ymer 7-6 (1), 6-4 in the final to clinch the Chennai Open ATP Challenger title here on Sunday.

Buoyed by the support from his compatriots in the stands, he earned \$22,730 and 100 ranking points.

</div

IN BRIEF



Bengaluru FC gets back on track with a facile win

There was relief in a beleaguered Bengaluru FC camp as the side recorded a 3-0 win over Jamshedpur FC in their Indian Super League clash at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on Sunday.

The result: BFC 3 (Edgar Mendez 43, Alberto Noguera 57, 82 bt JFC 0.

Manas Dhamne clinches the title in Monastir

Qualifier Manas Dhamne beat Lorenzo Carboni of Italy 2-6, 6-0, 6-2 in the final of the \$15,000 ITF men's tennis tournament in Monastir, Tunisia for his maiden title in the professional circuit.

Other result: Semifinals: Manas bt Alberto Campos (Esp) 6-4, 6-3.

Gujarat Stallions gets the better of Punjab Warriors

Trendon Hankerson top scored with 24 points, had six rebounds and five assists, to guide Gujarat Stallions to a 83-74 victory over Punjab Warriors in the INBL Pro basketball league at the Thyagaraj Indoor Stadium on Sunday.

The results: Gujarat Stallions 83 (Trendon Hankerson 24, Jock Perry 15, Prince Tyagi 11, Tushal Singh 10, Joshua Duach 10) bt Punjab Warriors 74 (Lucas Barker 19, Gurbaz Sandhu 13, Uche Dibiamaka 12).



Mbappe secures Real a derby draw against Atletico

Kylian Mbappe secured Real Madrid a 1-1 draw against rival Atletico Madrid which kept Los Blancos top of LaLiga on Saturday.

The results: On Saturday: LaLiga: Las Palmas 1 (Fuster 84) lost to Villarreal 2 (Baena 53, Perez 66); Real Madrid 1 (Mbappe 50) drew with Atletico Madrid 1 (Alvarez 35-pen).

Serie A: Empoli 0 lost to AC Milan 2 (Leao 68, Gimenez 76).

LIVE TELECAST

Ranji Trophy: Quarterfinals, JioCinema, 9.30 a.m.

Tri-series: 2nd ODI, New Zealand vs South Africa, FanCode, 10 a.m.

Zimbabwe vs Ireland: Only Test, day 5, FanCode, 1.30 p.m.

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

Serie A: gxr.world, 1.15 a.m. (Tuesday)

LaLiga: gxr.world, 1.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Christophany bags the Mulraj Goculdas Trophy

RACING

MUMBAI: Trainer Imtiaz Sait's ward Christophany, ridden by Neeraj Rawal, claimed the Mulraj Goculdas Trophy, the chief event of Sunday's (Feb. 9) races.

The winner is owned by Mr. C. Arayama Sundaram.

Jockey A. Sandesh stole the lime-light by riding three winners of the day.

1. NAWABZADA RASHIDUZZAFAR KHAN TROPHY (1,600M): SUBSTANTIAL (A. Sandesh) 1, Mighty Sparrow (Ajinkya) 2, Eaton Square (S.J. Sunil) 3 and Chardikar (Zervan) 4, 1/4-2/4 and 3/4. Im 36. 62s. ₹21 (w), 14, 13 and 19 (p). SHP: 45. FP: 857. Q: 120. Tanala: 353 and 240. Favourite: Substantial.

Owners: Mr. Gautam Lala rep. Gainville Stud & Agl. Farm Pvt. Ltd., Mr. Kishore P. Runting, Mr. S.R. Sanas, Mr. Achuthan Siddharth, Mr. Saleem Fazelbhoy, Mr. Ajay K. Arora & Miss. Ameeta Mehra. Trainer: Adhiraj Singh Jodha.

2. MULRAJ GOULDAS TROPHY (1,400M): CHRISTOPHANY (Neeraj Rawal) 1, It's My Time (Sandesh) 2, Alpine Star (Aditya) 3 and Soni of Gun (Mustakim) 4, 1/4-2/4 and 3/4. Im 22. 85s. ₹14 (w), II and 15 (p). SHP: 45. FP: 22. Q: 24. Tanala: 37 and 16. Favourite: Christophany.

Owner: Mr. C. Arayama

Sundaram. Trainer: Imtiaz A. Sait.

3. SONNY BRAR TROPHY (2,000M): KIMIKO (A. Sandesh) 1, Endurance (Mustakim) 2, Giant King (Vivek G) 3 and Multiverse (S. Kamble) 4. Long Neck, 4 and 3/4. 2m 01. 85s. ₹43 (w), 22 and 12 (p). SHP: 49. FP: 355. Q: 129. Tanala: 966 and 276. Favourite: Gordon.

Owners: Mr. Roopesh M. Kaul rep. Phantom Racing LLP & Mr. Tagbir Singh Brar rep. Sarainaga Racing Pvt. Ltd. Trainer: Kartik Ganapathy.

4. NADIR & YAWAR RASHID TROPHY (1,400M): BASHR (A. Sandesh) 1, Celestial (Vivek G) 2, Axrold (T.S. Jodha) 3 and Lord And Master (Merchant) 4, 4-1/2, 1 and Short Head, Im 22. 19s. ₹18 (w), 10, 10 and 15 (p). SHP: 34. FP: 47. Q: 19. Tanala: 69 and 42. Favourite: Bashir.

Owners: Mrs. Anasuya Gupta & Mr. Abhiroop Gupta rep. A.G. Bloodstock LLP. Trainer: Karthik Ganapathy.

5. R.M. & RUKMANI GOULDAS MILLION (1,000M): MALET SPRING (Santosh G) 1, Mojo (Vivek G) 2, Maysara (Bhawani) 3 and Arbitrage (Gore) 4, 3/4, 2/1 and 1/2. 58. ₹103 (w), 25, 12 and 10 (p). SHP: 25. FP: 857. Q: 120. Tanala: 1,004 and 338. Favourite: Maysara.

Owners: M/s. Kunal N. Sharma & Chirag Sharma. Trainer: Adhiraj Singh Jodha.

6. N.M. IRANI TROPHY (1,400M): RED BISHOP (C. Umesh) 1, Superstar (Vivek G) 2, Abhyankar (S.J.

Sunil) 3 and Machiavellian (C.S. Jodha) 4, 1/2, 3-1/2 and 1-1/2. Im 23. 59s. ₹79 (w), 14, 13 and 71 (p). SHP: 28. FP: 256. Q: 106. Tanala: 10,681 and 4,577. Favourite: Superstar.

7. GENTLEMEN'S GROOMERS TROPHY (1,200M): APPLAUSE (S. Zelvion) 1, Otello (2nd) 2, Trillionaire (Mustakim) 3 and Dagger's Strike (Mosin) 4, 4, Long Neck and 3. Im 11. 19s. ₹28 (w), 13, 17 and 18 (p). SHP: 59. FP: 74. Q: 46. Tanala: 394 and 368. Favourite: Applause.

Owners: Mr. K.N. Dhuunjibhoy, Mr. Z.K. Dhuunjibhoy & Ms. Anosha Meyers rep. Five Stars Shipping Co. Pvt. Ltd. Trainer: P. Shroff.

8. RISING STAR PLATE (Div. I) (1,200M): TERMS Maiden, 3-yo only, 1-10 p.m.: 1. Arizona Sun (3) Akshay K 56, 2. Country's Dictator (II) Tograllu 56, 3. Quick Bay Fox (A) A. Prakash 56, 4. Racing Ruler (II) Trevor 56, 5. Sharanga (5) Abhay 56, 6. Calabasa (4) P. Ajeeth K 54.5, 7. Golden Bourbon (6) Mohit 54.5, 8. Her Ladyship (1) B.R. Kumar 54.5, 9. Infinia (9) Ashad Asbar 54.5, 10. N.R. High Power (7) Kuldeep Sr. 54.5 and 11. Senti (10) Md. Ekrana 54.5.

1. RACING RULER, 2. CALABASA, 3. ARIZONA SUN.

9. SIR BRUCE PLATE (1,600M), 5-yo and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 1-45 (whips not permitted): 1. N.R.I. Skypower (7) Santosh Raj 60, 2. Alcaloh Free (4) Rafique Sha 59, 3. Antidote (6) Akshay K 59, 4. Federer (8) P. Ajeeth K 59, 5. London Bell (5) R.S. Jodha 58, 6. Caraxes (1) Mukesh 57.5, 7. City Cruise (2) Md. Ekrana 53.5 and 8. Exclusive Spark (3) Mohit 53.5.

10. ANTIDOTE, 2. FEDERER, 3. CARAXES.

11. RISING STAR PLATE (Div. II) (1,200M), 2-term Maiden, 3-yo only (Cat. II), 2-20.1. Beast Master (2) G. Naresh 56, 2. Mauritius (4) Ashad Asbar 56, 3. Real Thalaivaa (8) Mohit 56, 4. Royal Warrior (6) P. Sal K 56, 5. Yuvraj (10) B.R. Kumar 56, 6. Emerald Touch (9) Neeraj 54.5, 7. Gusto's Baby (1) Afroz 54.5.

12. RISING STAR PLATE (Div. II) (1,200M), 2-term Maiden, 3-yo only (Cat. II), 2-20.1. Beast Master (2) G. Naresh 56, 2. Mauritius (4) Ashad Asbar 56, 3. Real Thalaivaa (8) Mohit 56, 4. Royal Warrior (6) P. Sal K 56, 5. Yuvraj (10) B.R. Kumar 56, 6. Emerald Touch (9) Neeraj 54.5, 7. Gusto's Baby (1) Afroz 54.5.

13. RAKATIYA MILLION (1,200M): RAJA BAHADUR VENKATARAMA REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (Div. I) (1,200M), 5-yo and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 4-40: 1. Livermore (—), 2. Lucky Zone (7) Surya Prakash 59, 3. Brooklyn Beauty (1) G. Naresh 56.5, 4. Decoy (3) Akshay K 56, 5. Silver Act (4) Mukesh 55, 6. Delhi Heights (2) B. Nikhil 54, 7. Golden Gazelle (5) Trevor 54, 8. Hurricane Bay (—) and 9. True Icon (6) P. Ajeeth K 55.

14. RAJA BAHADUR VENKATARAMA REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (Div. II) (1,600M), 5-yo and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 4-40: 1. Livermore (—), 2. Lucky Zone (7) Surya Prakash 59, 3. Brooklyn Beauty (1) G. Naresh 56.5, 4. Decoy (3) Akshay K 56, 5. Silver Act (4) Mukesh 55, 6. Delhi Heights (2) B. Nikhil 54, 7. Golden Gazelle (5) Trevor 54, 8. Hurricane Bay (—) and 9. True Icon (6) P. Ajeeth K 55.

15. SILVER ACT, 2. DECOY, 3. GOLDEN GAZELLE.

16. ABERADER PLATE (Div. I) (1,100M), 4-yo and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 5-15: 1. Morning Mist (1) Deepak 62, 2. Bold Beauty (3) Santosh Rai 61.5, 3. Hoping Star (4) R.S. Bhati 61, 4. Shoolin (4) Mukesh 60, 5. Classy Dame (9) R.S. Jodha 58, 6. Shooting Star (1) Akshay K 56.5, 7. Smart Boy (12) B.R. Kumar 56.5, 8. Pinatubo (5) Kuldeep Sr. 56, 9. Logo (2) H.M. Akshay 53.5, 10. Golden Unicorn (10) Rafique Sha 53, 11. Jim (6) Uday Kiran 52.5, 12. Nav Khaba (7) Surya Prakash 52.5, 13. Niloufer The Great (13) P. Ajeeth K 52 and 14. Most Beautiful (8) Afroz K 50.

17. RAJA BAHADUR VENKATARAMA REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (Div. II) (1,600M), 4-yo and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 5-15: 1. Morning Mist (1) Deepak 62, 2. Bold Beauty (3) Santosh Rai 61.5, 3. Hoping Star (4) R.S. Bhati 61, 4. Shoolin (4) Mukesh 60, 5. Classy Dame (9) R.S. Jodha 58, 6. Shooting Star (1) Akshay K 56.5, 7. Smart Boy (12) B.R. Kumar 56.5, 8. Pinatubo (5) Kuldeep Sr. 56, 9. Logo (2) H.M. Akshay 53.5, 10. Golden Unicorn (10) Rafique Sha 53, 11. Jim (6) Uday Kiran 52.5, 12. Nav Khaba (7) Surya Prakash 52.5, 13. Niloufer The Great (13) P. Ajeeth K 52 and 14. Most Beautiful (8) Afroz K 50.

18. MORNING MIST, 2. BOLD BEAUTY, 3. SHOOTING STAR.

Day's Best: SILVER ACT.

19. KAKATIYA MILLION (1,200M): RAJA BAHADUR VENKATARAMA REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (Div. I) (1,200M), 4-yo and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 4-40: 1. Livermore (—), 2. Lucky Zone (7) Surya Prakash 59, 3. Brooklyn Beauty (1) G. Naresh 56.5, 4. Decoy (3) Akshay K 56, 5. Silver Act (4) Mukesh 55, 6. Delhi Heights (2) B. Nikhil 54, 7. Golden Gazelle (5) Trevor 54, 8. Hurricane Bay (—) and 9. True Icon (6) P. Ajeeth K 55.

20. RAJA BAHADUR VENKATARAMA REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (Div. II) (1,600M), 4-yo and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 4-40: 1. Livermore (—), 2. Lucky Zone (7) Surya Prakash 59, 3. Brooklyn Beauty (1) G. Naresh 56.5, 4. Decoy (3) Akshay K 56, 5. Silver Act (4) Mukesh 55, 6. Delhi Heights (2) B. Nikhil 54, 7. Golden Gazelle (5) Trevor 54, 8. Hurricane Bay (—) and 9. True Icon (6) P. Ajeeth K 55.

21. RAJA BAHADUR VENKATARAMA REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (Div. I) (1,200M), 4-yo and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 4-40: 1. Livermore (—), 2. Lucky Zone (7) Surya Prakash 59, 3. Brooklyn Beauty (1) G. Naresh 56.5, 4. Decoy (3) Akshay K 56, 5. Silver Act (4) Mukesh 55, 6. Delhi Heights (2) B. Nikhil 54, 7. Golden Gazelle (5) Trevor 54, 8. Hurricane Bay (—) and 9. True Icon (6) P. Ajeeth K 55.

22. RAJA BAHADUR VENKATARAMA REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (Div. II) (1,600M), 4-yo and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 4-40: 1. Livermore (—), 2. Lucky Zone (7) Surya Prakash 59, 3. Brooklyn Beauty (1) G. Naresh 56.5, 4. Decoy (3) Akshay K 56, 5. Silver Act (4) Mukesh 55, 6. Delhi Heights (2) B. Nikhil 54, 7. Golden Gazelle (5) Trevor 54, 8. Hurricane Bay (—) and 9. True Icon (6) P. Ajeeth K 55.

23. RAJA BAHADUR VENKATARAMA REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (Div. I) (1,200M), 4-yo and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 4-40: 1. Livermore (—), 2. Lucky Zone (7) Surya Prakash 59, 3. Brooklyn Beauty (1) G. Naresh 56.5, 4. Decoy (3) Akshay K 56, 5. Silver Act (4) Mukesh 55, 6. Delhi Heights (2) B. Nikhil 54, 7. Golden Gazelle (5) Trevor 54, 8. Hurricane Bay (—) and 9. True Icon (6) P. Ajeeth K 55.

24. RAJA BAHADUR VENKATARAMA REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (Div. II) (1,600M), 4-yo and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 4-40: 1. Livermore (—), 2. Lucky Zone (7) Surya Prakash 59, 3. Brooklyn Beauty (1) G. Naresh 56.5, 4. Decoy (3) Akshay K 56, 5. Silver Act (4) Mukesh 55, 6. Delhi Heights (2) B. Nikhil 54, 7. Golden Gazelle (5) Trevor 54, 8. Hurricane Bay (—) and 9. True Icon (6) P. Ajeeth K 55.

25. RAJA BAHADUR VENKATARAMA REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (Div. I) (1,200M), 4-yo and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 4-40: 1. Livermore (—), 2. Lucky Zone (7) Surya Prakash 59, 3. Brooklyn Beauty (1) G. Naresh 56.5, 4. Decoy (3) Akshay K 56, 5. Silver Act (4) Mukesh 55, 6. Delhi Heights (2) B. Nikhil 54, 7. Golden Gazelle (5) Trevor 54, 8. Hurricane Bay (—) and 9. True Icon (6) P. Ajeeth K 55.

26. RAJA BAHADUR VENKATARAMA REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (Div. II) (1,600M), 4-yo and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 4-40: 1. Livermore (—), 2. Lucky Zone (7) Surya Prakash 59, 3. Brooklyn Beauty (1) G. Naresh 56.5, 4. Decoy (3) Akshay K 56, 5. Silver Act (4) Mukesh 55, 6. Delhi Heights (2) B. Nikhil 54, 7. Golden Gazelle (5) Trevor 54, 8. Hurricane Bay (—) and 9. True Icon (6) P. Ajeeth K 55.

27. RAJA BAHADUR VENK

A never-say-die attitude – the force behind Yuki's pursuit of perfection

The Indian tennis player has overcome a spate of injuries, criticism and the resulting uncertainty through his career and channelled his experience into his life's next chapter - mentorship.

Kamesh Srinivasan

There is a simplicity and sharpness about Yuki Bhambri that lends much power to his tennis, and depth to his personality. Behind his lean, tall frame is a mind that makes him feel comfortable with the very best on tennis courts worldwide.

There is an assurance about Yuki's tennis that gives one the confidence that he is capable of achieving every goal he sets out to achieve, something that came about only after enduring years of uncertainty. Yuki struggled with injuries early on in his career, enough for many to question if he would ever make it big in the sport.

It pushed him back to square one, from where he worked on perfecting his craft in the doubles.

Switch to doubles

Moving lanes was never going to be easy for Yuki. He enjoyed a stellar singles junior career as the World No.1 also winning the 2009 Australian Open junior title. He worked his way to a career-high No. 83 in April 2018. His doubles swap is a relatively new challenge but one that has become key to help him stay with the sport.

The 32-year-old closed the season as the World No. 48, which meant Yuki can compete regularly on the ATP Tour instead of slogging it out in the Challenger circuit.

"There is so much to learn in doubles," Yuki said in a chat with *The Hindu* at the Roundglass Academy in Chandigarh.

Yuki made it to the third round of the Australian Open doubles in 2014 with Michael Venus. He then went on to win a Challenger doubles title with Mahesh Bhupathi in 2016, has indeed come a long way after years of agony and uncertainty. With Saketh Myneni, he won the \$15,000 ITF men's events in Lucknow and Gurugram in 2021 to pave the way for his switch to doubles.

The following year, Yuki and Saketh won seven titles, including five Challengers. After a robust campaign in 2023, when he won a Tour event with Lloyd Harris, Yuki settled into a fruitful partnership with the towering Albano Olivetti in 2024.

The pair won two Tour titles and finished as the runner-up in two other events.

"Munich was special because it was our first Tour title on clay. We beat a lot of good teams," he said remembering his triumph in Munich with Olivetti.

More importantly though, they did well in the Grand Slams, reaching the second round of Wimbledon and the third round of the US Open.

After parting ways with Saketh and joining hands with Marcelo Demoliner at the 2023 US Open, Yuki had to go through a bunch of players last year in search of his ideal partner. He played the early part of last season, including the Australian Open, with Robin Haase. They made it to the semifinals of the Dubai ATP 500 event as qualifiers, which ended up being their last outing together.

Later, Yuki played alongside Venus, Ariel Behar, Francisco Cabral, and Lloyd Glasspool before settling down with Olivetti, and the pair played 16 tournaments in the latter part of 2024.

After an early exit at the Australian Open this year, Yuki and Olivetti went their separate ways. The Indian then teamed up with three-time doubles Major winner Ivan Dodig at the Open Occitanie, where they bowed out in the quarterfinals.

Mentoring kids

Not one to shy away from challenges, Yuki was presented another one at the Roundglass Academy. In his role as a teacher and mentor for dozens of aspiring tennis players, he has the guidance of long-time coach Aditya Sachdeva.

On a rainy day, when the players had to get off the slushy clay courts and huddle inside a warm enclosure, a delightful feast of tennis knowledge welcomed them, with Yuki answering every question that was thrown at him.

"Top players know what to do with the ball. They can hit the same ball in so many different ways. You make small improvements and that adds up to your game," he said.

"Make sure that you don't make the same mistake twice. I find different ways to lose," he quipped sheepishly.

Yuki also stressed the importance of



GETTY IMAGES



Physio Deeksha Gautam, coach Hardeep Singh Sandhu, chief coach Aditya Sachdeva with Yuki Bhambri at the Roundglass Academy in Chandigarh.

closing out a match rather than experimenting and losing focus.

"If you can win 6-2, 6-2, do it. Don't make it 6-2, 7-6. Tennis is a long grind, and you keep meeting the same players," he said, emphasising the advantage of the psychological dominance that comes from clinical execution.

"Initially, you try to hit the ball past the service box. As you grow, you try to hit deeper, bringing down the trajectory. When Rafael Nadal hits the ball, it is difficult to play, not just because of the spin, but also the pace he hits it with."

"An alert mind is half the battle won. When you are playing a new opponent, get as much information as possible in the first few games. Once into the match, it is natural for you to focus on your strengths and hide your weakness".

Skills and technical acumen aside, Yuki insisted that perseverance was the trump card.

"The match is over only when you shake hands with the opponent. Till then, whether you are up or down, the match is alive. It can go the other way, if not handled well. I have realised that the most dangerous game is when you are serving for the match."

"The opponent is eager to stay alive and will throw everything at you. You go for your favourite serve and when the ball comes back, we will see what to do with



it. Learn to be comfortable under pressure," he said.

"Doing the same things in training may be boring. But you need to love doing the boring job. The work you do in training helps you have an easy match. If you have

it easy in training, it will be a hard match for you," Yuki warned.

He dismissed the myth that a tennis player's work was only on a tennis court and shed light on how off-court discipline can make or break a player.

The romance of routine

"It is a 24-hour job. Everything you do or don't matters, every single day. You go through practice, gym, nutrition, recovery, sleep. If you spend more time being awake and watching more reels on Instagram, it all adds up. Sport is about being disciplined".

Yuki also believes that the tougher the coach, the better it is for the player.

"Trust the coach. He is trying to make you better. He can't do it without your active cooperation. Listen and learn," he said.

"Finally, if you want to excel, learn to use every part of your body, including the brain!"

For Yuki, the mind has always been as much if not more important than the physicality of the sport he plays. Keeping himself sharp mentally has also allowed him to enjoy competition better.

Challenges notwithstanding, Yuki remains eager to make the most of his years on the men's circuit in the doubles. While success is never guaranteed, the New Delhi-born player has shown he has the tenacity to stick it out.

THE GIST

Yuki, who won a Challenger doubles title with Mahesh Bhupathi in 2016, has indeed come a long way after years of agony and uncertainty. With Saketh Myneni, he won the \$15,000 ITF men's events in Lucknow and Gurugram in 2021 to pave the way for his switch to doubles

The 32-year-old has dismissed the myth that a tennis player's work was only on a tennis court and shed light on how off-court discipline can make or break a player.

Learning from his own tendency to show haste in high-pressure situations, Yuki swears by prioritising the win rather than experimenting and dragging a game too deep. He underlines the psychological high that comes with clinical execution.

SCIENCE

Will the baby be a boy or a girl? SRY gene claims to have the answer

Exceptional instances of females possessing the SRY gene have been reported three times in medical literature. Two were in 2024 itself: one from researchers at the Renato Dulbecco University Hospital in Italy and the other from researchers at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, USA

D.P. Kasbekar

Will the baby be a girl or a boy? What decides the outcome? These might well be among the earliest questions asked by our ancestors. We can now offer a fairly comprehensive two-line answer. The SRY gene, located on the Y chromosome, triggers development along the male pathway. In its absence, development proceeds along the default female pathway.

Exceptional instances of females possessing the SRY gene have been reported three times in the medical literature. Two were in 2024 itself: one from researchers at the Renato Dulbecco University Hospital in Italy, in the journal *Genes*, and the other from researchers at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, USA, in *Molecular Genetics and Genomic Medicine*.

These exceptions further strengthen the SRY gene's claim to the primary role in male development.

The SRY gene

All eggs are alike but all sperm are not. All eggs contain one copy of each of our chromosomes (numbered 1-22) plus one copy of the sex chromosome (called X). Sperm cells also contain one copy each of chromosomes 1-22. But only half of them contain the X chromosome: the other half contain the other sex chromosome, Y.

The fusion of a sperm cell and an egg cell produces the zygote cell, from which the baby develops. Thus, the baby has two copies of chromosomes 1-22, plus either two Xs (XX) or an X and a Y (XY). Those with the Y chromosome develop into males. Those with two X chromosomes develop into females.

After a baby grows to become an adult, depending on their sex it will be their turn to make eggs/sperm. Only one chromosome of each of the 23 pairs is transmitted to the eggs and sperm. Again, the eggs and sperm contain one copy each of chromosomes 1-22. All eggs contain an X, while half of the sperm contain the X and the other half the Y.

The Y chromosome, which leads to the development of maleness, contains the SRY gene. An XY embryo that receives an SRY gene rendered non-functional by a mutation develops ovaries, which produce the female hormone oestrogen and lead to the development of other female sexual characteristics.

SRY in an XX individual

Very rarely, a mutation can occur that transfers the SRY gene from the Y chromosome to the X. These mutations are called translocations. When a sperm bearing a translocation X chromosome

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An ultrasound scan reveals a foetus. Representative image. MART PRODUCTION
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fertilises an egg, an XX baby is born with the SRY gene. In most cases, XX individuals with the SRY gene develop testes and become biological males. The testes produce the male hormone testosterone and initiate the development of other male sexual characteristics. However, they don't produce mature sperm because other Y chromosomal genes required for sperm formation are absent. Since these males are sterile, the translocation is not transmitted to future generations.

Consider, however, the exceptional XX biological females found to possess the SRY gene. The Italy group identified four healthy biological females in three generations of a family, all with the SRY gene. Their discovery has shown it's possible for an SRY-bearing translocation X chromosome to be passed through generations via fertile females. The individuals bearing the translocation showed no evidence of any abnormalities.

The researchers from the Cincinnati hospital reported the discovery of a different SRY-bearing X translocation in an otherwise typical female foetus. The foetus went on to develop into a healthy female baby. But after the baby's birth, the family didn't accede to follow-up studies.

What is it about these two translocation chromosomes that led to the development of healthy females instead of infertile males?

The answer seemed to lie in a detail both groups spotted: both translocations



The fusion of sperm and egg produces the zygote. Thus, the baby has two copies of chromosomes plus either two Xs or an X and a Y. Those with Y develop into males. Those with two X chromosomes develop into females

occurred in parallel to the loss of a small portion of the X chromosome, which did away with one or more genes required for viability. The translocations that produced infertile males didn't have these deletions.

Random v. biased inactivation

During female development in mammals, one of the two X chromosomes is inactivated in all the body's cells. This makes the effective 'dosage' of X chromosome genes the same in XY males and XX females. The X chromosome's inactivation also promotes female development by lowering the levels of maleness genes located on the X chromosome.

In some cells, the inactivated X chromosome is the one inherited from the father, and in other cells it is the one received from the mother. Thus, female mammals effectively have two types of cells: those that express the paternally- or the maternally-derived X.

In the exceptional SRY-positive females, however, the translocation X chromosome that had become inactivated. Had the inactivated chromosome been the non-translocation X, the cell wouldn't have survived because essential genes missing from the translocation X wouldn't be expressed. The 'biased' X inactivation resulted in silencing the SRY gene, allowing for typical female development.

That only a silenced SRY gene can persist in a biological female's genome underscores its significance in triggering male development.

The Cincinnati researchers expressed their concern that low-level expression of the translocated SRY gene in later life could lead to disorders in sex development. Surveilling this possibility would require long-term follow-up through puberty. Unfortunately, the family wasn't available for postnatal follow-up studies.

The two studies highlight the importance of examining translocation chromosomes for associated deletions that selectively inactivates the X chromosome. The genome sequences of thousands of biological females are now available. Knowing how many of them carry cryptic SRY-bearing translocations could in future help genetic counsellors make more informed personal and medical decisions.

(D.P. Kasbekar is a retired scientist.
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THE GIST

All eggs are alike, but sperm are not. All eggs contain one copy of each of our chromosomes plus one copy of the sex chromosome X. Sperm cells also contain one copy each of chromosomes. But only half of them contain the X chromosome: the others contain the other sex chromosome, Y

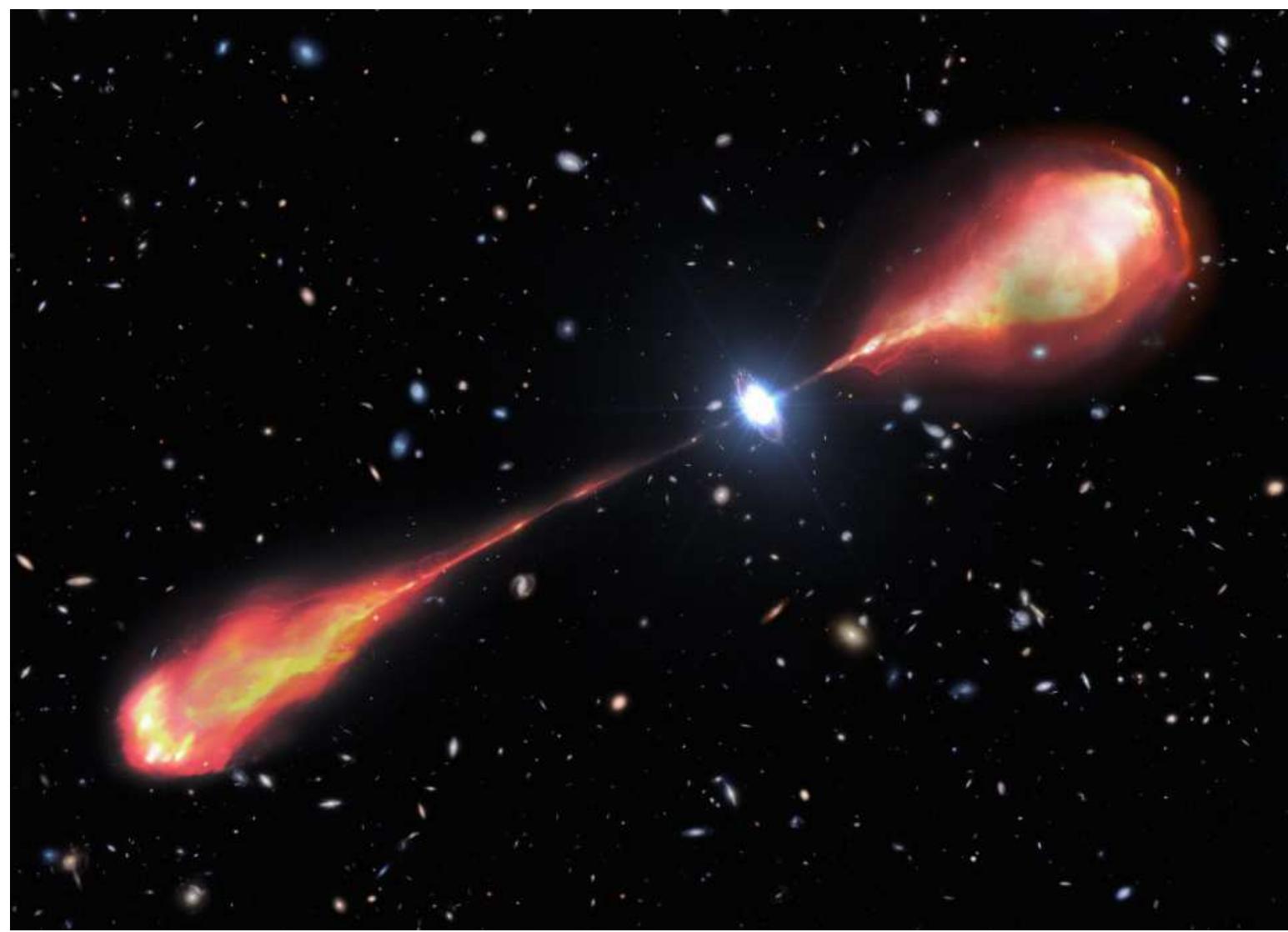
The Y chromosome, which leads to maleness, contains the SRY gene. An XY embryo that receives an SRY gene rendered non-functional by a mutation develops ovaries, which produce oestrogen and lead to the development of female characteristics

In SRY-positive females, the translocation X chromosome is inactivated. This inactivation silences the SRY gene, allowing for female development. That only a silenced SRY can persist in a female's genome underscores its significance in triggering male development

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BIG SHOT



Telescopes around the world spotted a colossal radio jet issuing from a quasar dating back to the first billion years of the universe. Twice as wide as the Milky Way galaxy, this jet of radio waves is the biggest ever detected so early in the history of the universe, astronomers reported on February 6. NOIRLab/NSF/AURA/M. GARLICK

WHAT IS IT?

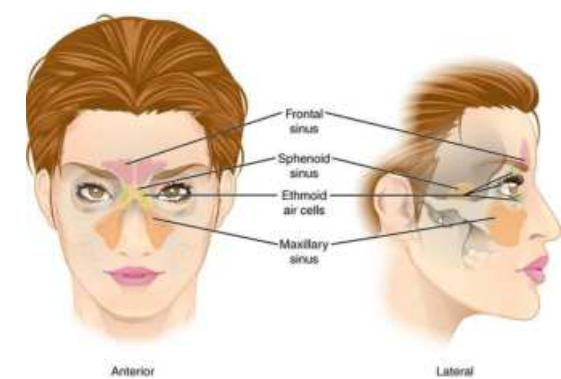
Sinuses: little balloons in the face

The Hindu Bureau

In colloquial use, the term 'sinus' refers to the paranasal sinuses, air-filled sacs arranged around the middle of the face. The frontal sinuses are located above both eyes, fanning out from the top of the bridge of the nose. The sphenoid sinus is located behind the eyes, underneath the bridge, while the maxillary sinuses are also behind the eyes but flanking the nose. The ethmoidal sinuses are located between the eyes. They are all connected to the brain through the trigeminal nerve, which is also responsible for sensing stimuli on the face.

For all the detail with which scientists have studied them, the precise role of the sinuses is unclear. They have been known to produce nitric oxide, which helps the body retain oxygen.

The sinuses are connected to the nasal cavity through narrow passages called ostia, which can become blocked when the nasal lining is inflamed



Head-on and side-on views of the locations of the various paranasal sinuses. CFCF (CC BY-SA 3.0)

due to a cold or an allergic reaction. As a result, the sinuses can't drain the mucus they produce and the individual is said to have sinusitis.

The condition can also arise if the individual has a dental infection, growths in the nose called polyps or a weak immune system. Sinusitis can be cleared by drugs that dilute the blockage and/or ameliorate any of the other stressors.

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