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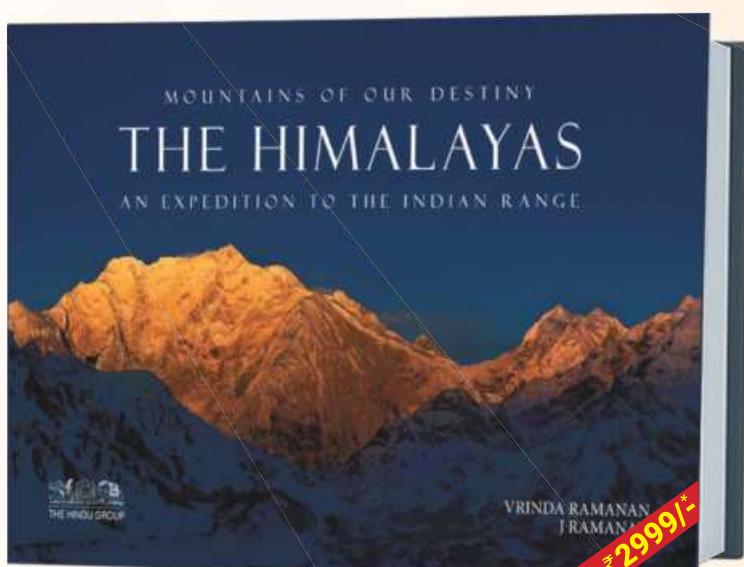
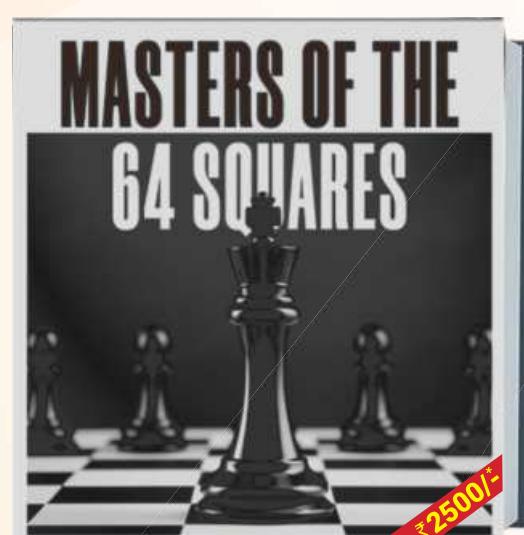
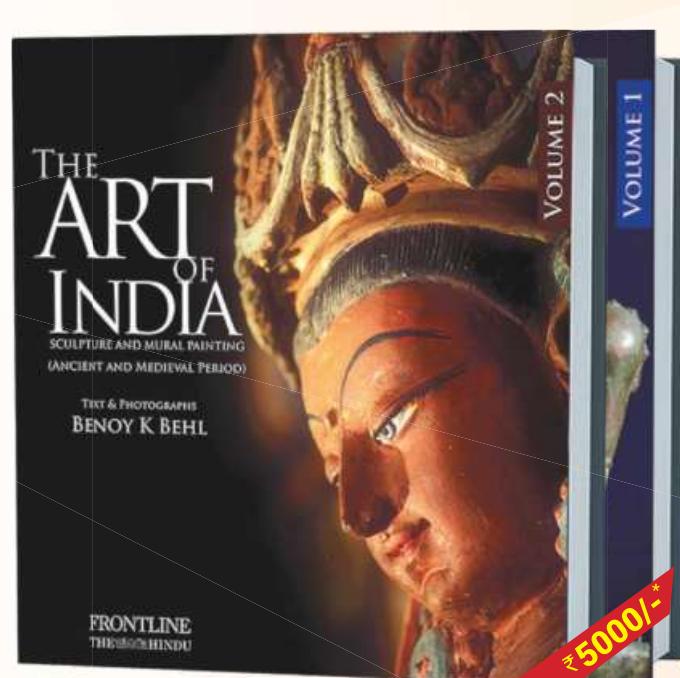
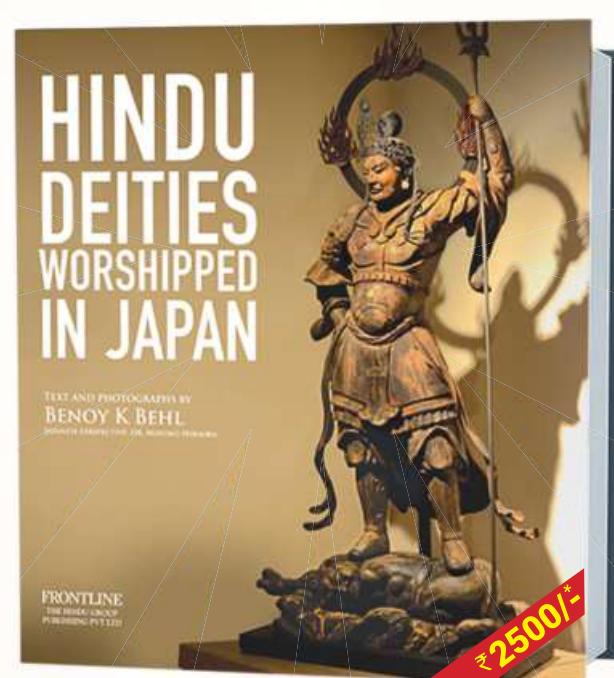
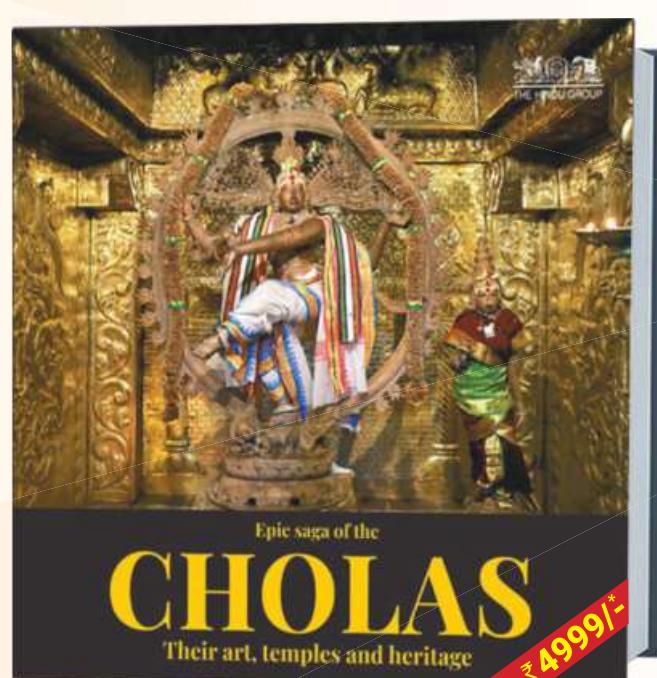
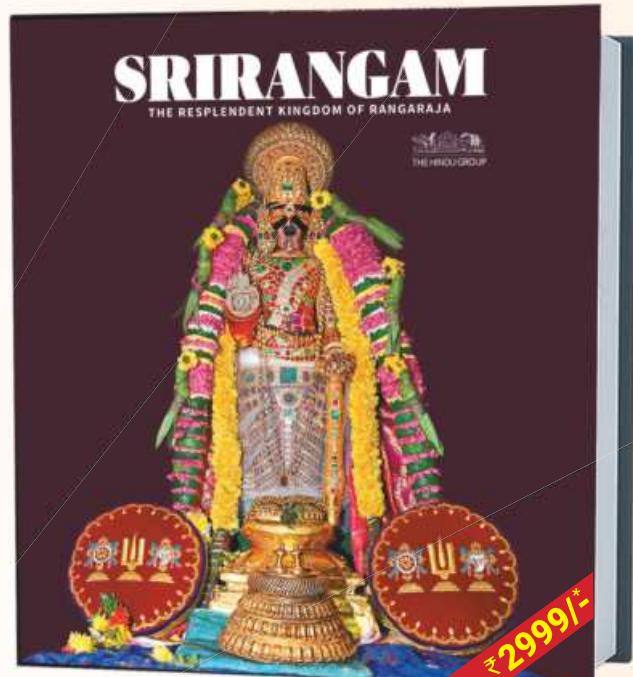
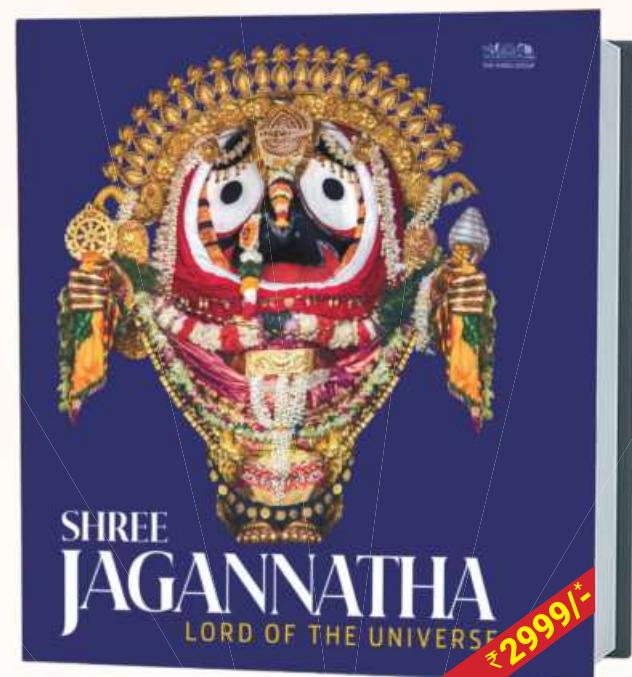
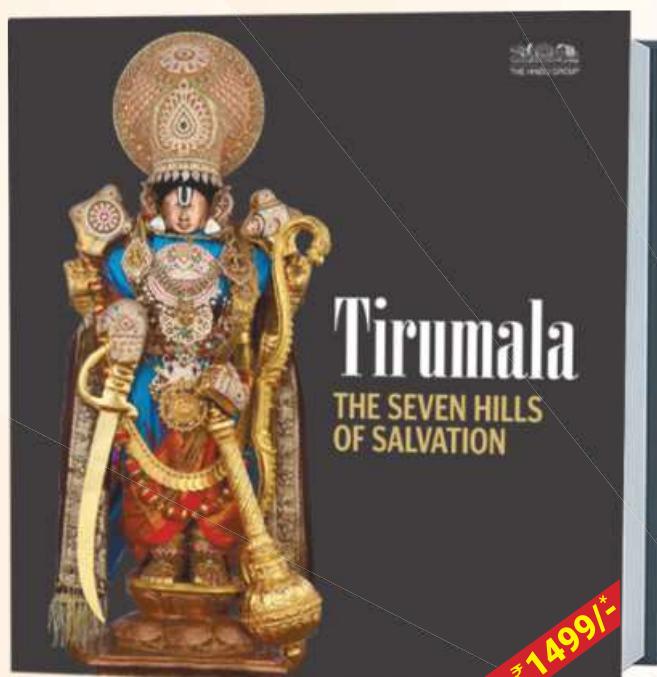


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WORLD'S BIGGEST DAM

China says project won't affect water flow to India

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42ND DAY OF FAST

SC committee meets farmer leader Jagjit Dallewal

NEWS » PAGE 10



SELECTION PROCESS

UGC revises guidelines for appointment of V-Cs

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Nine killed in IED blast by suspected Maoists in Bijapur

Eight of the dead were security personnel returning from an anti-Maoist operation in the Abujhmad forests; their civilian driver was also killed

Shubhomoy Sikdar
BIJAPUR

Eight security personnel and a civilian were killed in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh on Monday as an improvised explosive device planted by suspected Maoists blew up their vehicle. The police said the explosive went off at 2.15 p.m. when a joint-operation party was returning from an anti-Maoist operation in the Abujhmad forests, where five Naxals were gunned down and a DRG jawan lost his life on Saturday, the police said.

The deceased personnel were members of the District Reserve Guard (DRG)



Ground zero: The site where an IED blast blew up a vehicle of security personnel in Bijapur district on Monday. SHUBHOMOY SIKDAR

and Bastar Fighters, both specialised forces of the Chhattisgarh Police raised to combat left-wing extremism in the Bastar region. The civilian was driving the vehicle. When *The Hindu* reached the blast site in the afternoon, it saw dismem-

bered bodies and equipment strewn all around. A piece of uniform worn by the jawans was found on the branch of a tree 50 feet above the ground.

CONTINUED ON
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T.N. Governor walks out of Assembly, alleges 'insult' to National Anthem

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

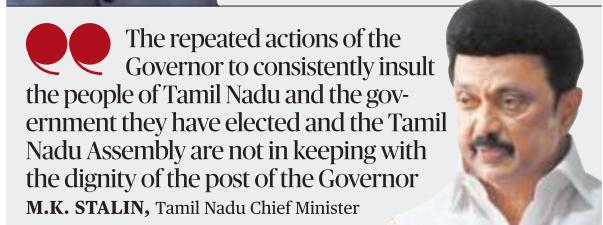
Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi on Monday walked out of the Legislative Assembly without reading out the customary address for the first session of the New Year.

The Raj Bhavan later said the Governor had left the House "in deep anguish" as the "Constitution of Bharat" and the National Anthem were once again "insulted" in the Assembly.

"Today on arrival of Governor to the House only Tamil *Thaai Vaazhthu* [State anthem] was sung. Governor respectfully reminded the House of its constitutional duty... of singing the National Anthem. They cussedly refused RAJ BHAVAN



Today on arrival of Governor [R.N. Ravi] to the House only Tamil *Thaai Vaazhthu* was sung. Governor respectfully reminded the House of its constitutional duty... of singing the National Anthem. They cussedly refused RAJ BHAVAN



The repeated actions of the Governor to consistently insult the people of Tamil Nadu and the government they have elected and the Tamil Nadu Assembly are not in keeping with the dignity of the post of the Governor M.K. STALIN, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister

vently appealed to the Hon'ble Chief Minister who is the Leader of the House and the Hon'ble Speaker for singing the National Anthem. However, they cussedly refused. It is

a matter of grave concern. Not to be a party to such brazen disrespect to the Constitution and the National Anthem, Governor in deep anguish left the House," the Raj Bhavan

said in a social media post.

Since July 1991, as per the convention in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, the State song is played at the beginning and the National Anthem at the conclusion of the Governor's address.

The Raj Bhavan, however, said the National Anthem is sung or played before and after the Governor's address in every State Assembly in the country. "It is also mandatory as per the National Anthem Code," it said.

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CONTRIVED GRIEVANCE
» PAGE 6
'MOTIVE QUESTIONABLE'
» PAGE 4

Bhopal waste disposal: HC gives 6 weeks to M.P. govt.

Mehul Malpani
PITHAMPUR (M.P.)

Amid an ongoing row over the disposal of Union Carbide factory waste, the Madhya Pradesh High Court on Monday gave the State government six weeks and asked it to take steps as per safety protocols.

The court granted the government time after it filed an affidavit regarding the movement of the toxic waste from Bhopal to Pithampur and the subsequent unrest in the town, and sought time to instil confidence in the public.

HMPV infection not new, no cause for alarm: Centre

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The virus has been circulating in the world for many years; it spreads through air

in the world for many years. HMPV spreads through air, by way of respiration. This can affect persons of all age groups. The health systems and surveillance networks of the country are vigilant, and there is no reason to worry." He said agencies in India were closely watching the situation in China and neighbouring countries. The World Health Organization had taken cognisance of the situation.

The Ministry said data from the India Council for

Medical Research and the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme network indicated no unusual surge in influenza-like illness or severe acute respiratory illness in India.

In a social media post, Soumya Swaminathan, former Chief Scientist, WHO, said HMPV was not a cause for panic. "It's a known virus that causes respiratory infections, mostly mild. Rather than jump at detection of every pathogen, we should all take normal precautions when we have a cold: wear a mask, wash hands, avoid crowds, consult doctor if there are severe symptoms."

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» PAGE 10

Main accused in Bastar journalist murder case held

Shubhomoy Sikdar
BIJAPUR

This is the fourth arrest in the case which comes after the arrest of Suresh's three brothers

Suresh Chandrakar, a construction contractor, who is the prime accused in the murder of Bastar-based journalist Mukesh Chandrakar, has been arrested, the Chhattisgarh police said on Monday.

While this is the fourth arrest in the case, Suresh has been evading arrest after the murder and was held in Hyderabad late on Sunday, said Inspector-General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj. The other three accused are Suresh's brothers Ritesh and Dinesh, and supervisor Mahendra Ramteke. Mukesh, a freelance journalist, went missing on January 1. His body was found on January 3 in a septic tank on a property owned by Suresh in Bijapur town, the police had said. Days before his death, Mukesh along with a fellow journal-

ist, had filed a news report highlighting alleged corruption in a road construction work in Bijapur.

This report was aired on NDTV for which Mukesh worked as a freelance journalist, besides running a YouTube channel, 'Bastar Junction', that had 1.59 lakh subscribers at the time of his death. The said construction work was linked to Suresh and is believed to be the motive behind the murder.

Mukesh's death has sparked widespread outcry with protests from journalists across the State. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party BJP and the Opposition Congress traded charges over the issue.

IN BRIEF



J&K's addition to railway network monumental step'

SRINAGAR
Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who virtually inaugurated the new Jammu Railway Division on Monday, said J&K's integration into the national railway network was "a monumental step". Today is a big day for new age connectivity," he said. » Page 12

BJP committing a voter fraud in New Delhi: Atishi

NEW DELHI
Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Monday accused the BJP of committing "large-scale fraud" in the electoral roll of New Delhi Assembly constituency from where AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal is contesting the upcoming poll. » Page 2

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Capital electorate

As per the final roll, the city has a total of 1.55 crore voters

District	Male	Female	Trans persons	Total voters
New Delhi	4,73,874	4,01,252	55	8,75,181
Shahdara	5,46,942	5,02,111	85	10,49,138
South	5,75,436	4,80,601	74	10,56,111
East	6,53,303	5,67,424	81	12,20,808
North East	6,77,302	5,77,799	32	12,55,133
West	7,00,059	6,24,612	83	13,24,754
Central	7,68,291	6,58,313	155	14,26,759
South East	9,27,740	7,21,425	92	16,49,257
North West	9,00,294	7,94,874	156	16,95,324
North	9,56,339	8,17,524	154	17,74,017
South West	11,70,065	10,28,017	294	21,98,376
Total	83,49,645	71,73,952	1,261	1,55,24,858

SOURCE: CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, DELHI

Rush to get new names on roll 'unprecedented', needs scrutiny, says CEO

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Delhi's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) issued the final electoral roll on Monday, pegging the total number of voters at 1.55 crore. The office of the CEO, R. Alice Vaz, stated that 1.67 lakh (1.09%) new names were added to the roll since the draft roll was published on October 29, 2024.

It added that over the past 20 days, there has been an "unprecedented" rush for new voter registrations, with over 5.1 lakh applications received during this period.

The total addition since draft publication to final publication is

3,08,942 and the total deletion is 1,41,613. Hence there is a net increase of 1,67,329 voters during this period," read the statement.

Ms. Vaz's office said that the increase in the applications for new voter registrations in the past three weeks "is unexpected and needs greater scrutiny". It directed the Electoral Registration Officers to strictly scrutinise all such applications as per the Election Commission of India.

An official said the city residents can file applications to get their names included in the electoral roll till 10 days before the last day of filing nominations for the Assembly election.

The office of the Chief Electoral Officer did not respond to the allegations.

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Atishi on Monday accused the BJP of committing "a large-scale fraud" in the electoral roll of New Delhi Assembly constituency while also remarking upon the Election Commission of India's (EC) "highly suspicious approach" in the matter.

"There is a conspiracy to manipulate the election (in the constituency) by adding about 10% new voters and deleting 5.5% of the existing names," she claimed.

Hitting back, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva alleged that the "desperation" displayed by the CM regarding the Assembly seat "has confirmed the suspicion that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is losing the election".

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, BJP's former MP Parvez Sahib Singh, and former MP Sandeep Dikshit of the Congress are in the fray in New Delhi.

The office of the Chief Electoral Officer did not respond to the allegations.



Atishi broke down during the press conference. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters, the CM said a total of 6,167 applications were submitted for deletion of names, of which 4,283 applications were filed by 84 people.

"When the Election Commission sent notices to these 84 people and called them for a meeting, all of them appeared before the commission and denied having filed any application," she claimed.

She added, "The Election Commission's approach has been highly suspicious. Despite overwhelming evidence of such

a massive scam, why hasn't it initiated an investigation? This is a huge scam, yet no action has been taken."

The senior AAP leader said she had written to Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Sunday regarding the scale of the "large-scale voter scam" in the constituency and sought an appointment from him.

The Delhi BJP president said that most residents' welfare associations in the Capital have been "working actively" towards removing the names of "fake" voters from the roll.

CM breaks down over Bidhuri's comments

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Atishi broke down while addressing a press conference on Monday when asked to respond to the comments about her father made by BJP's former MP Ramesh Bidhuri, who is contesting Kalkaji Assembly seat against her.

"Will you do such dirty things for the election? Will you abuse an old person?" she said while welling up.

On Sunday, the former South Delhi MP was criticised by AAP and the Congress over his remarks against the CM and Wayanad MP Priyanka Vadra.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said while political leaders shouldn't make personal remarks, the CM should "ponder over the controversy around her surname".

At a recent rally in Delhi, the PM took a swipe at the ex-CM over the renovation of 'sheesh mahal'

mansion, travels in a ₹8,400-crore aircraft, and wears suits worth ₹10 lakh is now delivering a lecture about the CM's residence."

The BJP has been attacking Mr. Kejriwal over the construction of the bungalow, which it has termed a "sheesh mahal".

Targeting the former CM during a recent rally in Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that he could also have built a "sheesh mahal" for himself, but his dream has been to ensure houses for everyone in the country.

Mr. Patra said that in 2012-13, Mr. Kejriwal used to hold press conferences based on the irregularities highlighted in the CAG reports against the Congress government, which was in power in the Capital then. "Arvind Kejriwal has spent money building his own house but has shown no concern for the public. The people of Delhi are watching and listening, and they will surely give their answer in the upcoming election," said the BJP spokesperson.

Pressure by AAP leaders, CM seeking meeting: New Delhi DEO writes to Chief Electoral Officer

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The New Delhi District Election Officer (DEO), S.K. Singh, has written to the Chief Electoral Officer, R. Alice Vaz, highlighting "concerns pertaining to the independent functioning" due to "pressure exerted by AAP".

In a letter dated January 4, the DEO detailed multiple visits by senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders, including Rajya Sabha members Raghubir Singh and Sanjay Singh, in December and earlier this month.

Representatives of the Aam Aadmi Party have been frequently visiting my office and asking [me] for details which are not mandated to be shared as per ECI guidelines," read the letter.

The DEO claimed to

have received a call from Chief Minister Atishi seeking a meeting on January 4 "without a specified agenda" and sought from Ms. Vaz "guidance about whether I am allowed to attend meetings called by the ruling govt. without any prior meeting agenda".

The official raised similar concerns in a separate letter to the CM.

Adding to the concerns,

the New Delhi Additional District Magistrate (ADM), Nishant Bodh, sought police intervention to maintain law and order at the DEO's office.

Growing tensions

In a letter to the DCP (New Delhi), Mr. Bodh mentioned "growing tensions" and "incidents of ruckus" in the office due to "frequent visits by political representatives".

Cong. unveils first poll promise for Delhi: ₹2,500 per month to women

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday promised monthly financial assistance of ₹2,500 to women under the 'Pyari Didi Yojana' if the party is voted to power in the upcoming Delhi Assembly election. The announcement was made by Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar at the Delhi Congress office and is

"Congress has fulfilled its poll guarantees wherever it has formed the government. The party does not mislead the people with false promises like the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the BJP," Mr. Yadav said.

AAP has announced a similar scheme – Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana – under which women will receive ₹2,100 if the party is voted back to power.

Police say 14 Bangladeshis staying illegally deported

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

A total of 14 Bangladeshi nationals staying illegally in Central Delhi have been deported since the special drive to identify and deport illegal immigrants from the neighbouring country was launched, the area DCP, M. Harshvardhan, said on Monday. The suspects were nabbed from areas around Jama Masjid and Nabi Karim, he added.

L.G. V.K. Saxena had on December last year ordered the Delhi Chief Secretary and the police chief to start a drive against "illegal immigrants".

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2.	Flood mitigation measures for Galah Nallah at Galah in Distt. Bilaspur (SH: C/o Gabion wall protection work for Galah Nallah at Galah in Distt. Bilaspur HP	Rs. 2,02,25,282	06-01-2025	Rs. 40,4600/-	16.01.2025 One year

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in

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HP / 4351/24-25

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2.			

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RISE 07:15 SET 17:40		
RISE 12:06 SET 00:18		
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 08		
RISE 07:15 SET 17:41		
RISE 12:41 SET 01:23		
THURSDAY, JAN. 09		
RISE 07:15 SET 17:42		
RISE 13:21 SET 02:29		

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	17	10
Safdarjung	17	10
Palam	14	09

Delhi Palam Today
18°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be cold with moderate fog. The day will be slight cool. Night also will be cold and uneasy.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
19°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be cold with shallow to moderate fog. The day will be slight cool. Night also will be cold.

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THE HINDU
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Indian fishers tortured in Bangladesh prison: Mamata

Moyurie Som
KOLKATA



India and Bangladesh, as part of a joint agreement, facilitated the mutual exchange of maritime prisoners on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on her visit to Sagar Island in South 24 Parganas district on Monday alleged that the fisherfolk recently released from prison in Bangladesh were subjected to torture in the neighbouring country. "Their hands were tied and they were beaten with sticks," she said.

A total of 95 Indian fisherfolk, apprehended between October and November 2024 for allegedly crossing Bangladesh's maritime boundaries, were repatriated to West Bengal along with six fishing boats on Sunday.

It was part of a joint agreement between India and Bangladesh for mutual exchange of maritime prisoners. On the same day, the Indian Coast Guard

(ICG) escorted 90 Bangladeshi fisherfolk who were apprehended in India for allegedly crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line.

Ms. Banerjee said she understood the Indian fisherfolk were tortured when she noticed some of them limping and with bruises extending from their waist to feet. While speaking to

media, some of the fisherfolk recounted being allegedly tortured in prison in Bangladesh. "They hit me on my head, waist and knees. I could not stand after that," said one.

Another fisher alleged that on October 16 night, Bangladeshi navy personnel tied their hands and tortured some of them through the night.

AAP leader flogs self for failing to ensure justice'

Press Trust of India
SURAT

Aam Aadmi Party leader Gopal Italia on Monday flogged himself at a public meeting in Surat in Gujarat as penance for "failing to ensure justice" for the victims of various crimes committed in the BJP-ruled State. He also sought forgiveness after citing the recent incident of the arrest of a Patidar woman.

candidates

The court said ED officials have sufficient proof against Mr. Bhadra and others to frame charges against them.

The process was delayed for a week as on December 30, Mr. Bhadra reportedly fell ill and lost consciousness after which he was shifted to a medical facility. He was reportedly placed on a ventilator after he complained of uneasiness. He was later shifted to a private facility.

Framing of charges begins in Bengal recruitment scam case

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday started the process of framing charges under Section 4 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) against Sujay Krishna Bhadra over a video call in the West Bengal primary school teachers' recruitment scam case.

Mr. Bhadra, alias Kalighater Kaku, was informed about the charges virtually

as he is still hospitalised. One of the prime accused in the case, he was presented at Kolkata's Banks Hall court virtually at 2 p.m. in front of Judge Subhendu Saha. Charges were also framed against the other five accused – Partha Chatterjee, Manik Bhattacharya, Santanu Bandhopadhyay, Santu Gangopadhyay, and Ayal Sil.

ED officials said all the accused in the case had taken money from the



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PR No. 016440 (B&C/D-2024-25)

Jharkhand women receive first instalment of ₹2,500 under 'Maiya Samman'

CM Hemant Soren transfers financial aid to the tune of ₹1,415.44 cr. to bank accounts of 56.61 lakh beneficiaries, says efforts are being made to turn the wheel of State's economy through women

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Monday transferred financial assistance to the tune of ₹1,415.44 crore to the bank accounts of 56.61 lakh women beneficiaries under the 'Maiya Samman Yojana'.

Ahead of the Assembly election, the ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-led alliance had pledged to increase the monthly honorarium under the scheme from ₹1,000 to ₹2,500 for women between 18 and 50 years, starting December 2024. The initiative has been widely credited with the INDIA bloc's electoral success in Jharkhand where it



CM Hemant Soren and wife Kalpana hand over a cheque to one of the beneficiaries in Ranchi on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

won 56 out of 81 Assembly seats.

It was the first instalment of ₹2,500 transferred to the beneficiaries for the month of December 2024.

The instalment for January would be transferred later this month, officials said.

₹30,000 annually to women in a household represents a transformative boost to household income, particularly in rural areas where women's financial autonomy has traditionally been severely limited.

Mr. Soren added that extensive research from global economic studies demonstrated that women-directed cash transfers consistently led to improved outcomes in family health, education and nutrition.

The Chief Minister expressed happiness that the scheme was being discussed all over India, and other States were also moving forward in the direction of adopting the scheme".

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07th Jan 2025

BIPARD CAMPUS, GAYA (BIHAR)

IN BRIEF

**Highest hospital registrations under Ayushman in U.P.**

Uttar Pradesh has achieved the highest number of hospital registrations in the country under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, both at government and private hospitals, Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak said on Monday. The beneficiaries of the health insurance scheme are receiving free treatment up to ₹5 lakh, Mr. Pathak said, as he directed authorities to ensure maximum coverage for the eligible patients. The State boasts a total of 5,834 hospitals operating under Ayushman Bharat scheme, of which 2,949 are govt.-run and 2,885 are private facilities, the highest in India, Mr. Pathak said. PTI

Tigress found dead in Pench reserve; poaching suspected

The carcass of a tigress, aged four to five years, was found in the Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Madhya Pradesh's Seoni district with an official saying on Monday that it was suspected to be a case of poaching. The carcass, which was 24 to 36 hours old, was found in the Kurai area of the reserve on Sunday, said the official. PTR Deputy Director Rajneesh Singh said the tigress died due to electrocution and the carcass was found on the borders of Jirewada village and Mowgli Sanctuary of the reserve. A case has been registered and efforts are being made to arrest unidentified poachers, he said. PTI

SC to hear Sajjan Kumar's appeal against imprisonment

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday posted for July appeals filed by former Congress leader Sajjan Kumar and the party's former councillor Balwan Khokhar after they were sentenced to imprisonment in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots case.

A Bench headed by Justice J.K. Maheshwari said the petitioners would be at liberty to request the court to suspend their sentence if the hearing was further delayed. In July 2024, the apex court had asked the CBI to respond to Khokhar's plea seeking a reprieve.

Khokhar's life sentence was upheld by the Delhi High Court in 2018, whereas it reversed Mr. Kumar's acquittal by a trial court in 2013 in a case related to the killings of five Sikhs at Raj Nagar in south-west Delhi in November 1984.

Governor's real motive questionable, says Tamil Nadu Leader of the House**The Hindu Bureau**

CHENNAI



Leader of House Duraimurugan

and its summons, Mr. Duraimurugan said: "But, our Governor is acting against the Constitution, which is not good."

1995 incident

Recalling an incident in 1995, when the then State government passed a resolution to recall the then Governor M. Chennai Reddy, the Leader of the House said: "Even then, [the then] Governor read the customary speech as prepared by the government."

Late leader and former Chief Minister M. Karunamihidi, despite his position on the post of Governor, maintained his respect for those holding the post, Mr. Duraimurugan added.

"One could even present the Budget by not proroguing the previous session and by avoiding the Governor's address to the House, such as how it is being done in some States. But, our Chief Minister [M.K. Stalin], who walks in the footsteps of the late Kalaigar, suggested we stick to tradition and facilitate the Governor's address," he said.

The Leader of the House went on to quote former President Ram Nath Kovind, who in his message on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly in August 2021, said: "Much of the richness of Indian democracy is derived from the Tamil Nadu Legislature and is appre-

ciated all across the world."

Mr. Duraimurugan said: "It is our responsibility to protect the pride of this august House from diminishing."

Recalling the Governor's behaviour last year over the national anthem and, eventually, the reply sent to him by the Speaker, he said the Governor had also not read out his speech this year over the same issue and his real motive was questionable.

Raj Bhavan response

Hours after the Tamil Nadu Governor walked out of the Assembly without reading his customary speech, taking exception to the national anthem not being played at the start of his address, the Raj Bhavan said in a statement that the national anthem was sung or played at the beginning and end of the Governor's address in every Assembly in the country.

All-party delegation demands Minister Dhananjay Munde's resignation over murder case**Abhinav Deshpande**

SNEHAL MUTHA



Accused Walimik Karad, a close aide of Dhananjay Munde. PTI

An all-party delegation led by former MP Sambhaji Raje on Monday urged Maharashtra Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan to intervene in the Massajog village sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh murder case and ensure transparency in the investigation. Meanwhile, NCP (SP) supremo Sharad Pawar wrote a letter to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis seeking protection for public representatives.

The appeal submitted to the Governor included the demand for Minister Dhananjay Munde's resignation "considering the involvement and possible interference in this case" and that accused Walimik Karad be booked under BNS 103 (old IPC 302 murder). NCP leader and former Deputy Chief

Anmol Bishnoi named in Baba Siddique case chargesheet

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

The Mumbai crime branch, in a chargesheet filed in the sessions court on Monday, said that the Lawrence Bishnoi gang orchestrated the plan to kill the late Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Baba Siddique.

The chargesheet named 26 arrested and three wanted accused including Anmol Bishnoi, brother of Lawrence Bishnoi.

The 4,590-page chargesheet filed in the Special Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) court mentioned the names of three main accused – Shubham Lonkar, Yasin Akhtar, and Anmol Bishnoi, a police officer said.

The chargesheet mentions Anmol as the mastermind and that the crime was committed based on his instructions. The investigation revealed that all the accused conspired to establish terror and dominance in Mumbai.

On October 12, Baba Siddique was shot outside his son Zeeshan Siddique's office in Bandra East. The chargesheet also mentioned that Baba Siddique was targeted as he was a close aide of actor Salman Khan.

Nithari: CBI urges SC for early hearing of its appeal against acquittal of accused**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday urged the Supreme Court for an early hearing of its appeal against the acquittal of Surendra Koli in the 2006 Nithari serial killings case, calling the incident "very serious and gruesome".



Surendra Koli

25, 2025.

Appearing for Koli, advocate Payoshi Roy urged the court to list the case for final hearing.

Ms. Roy submitted that the only evidence stated to be against her client was a confession statement recorded after 60 days of custody during which he was tortured.

Last year, the apex court had admitted separate appeals filed by the Central

Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the State of Uttar Pradesh against the Allahabad High Court decision to acquit Koli on October 16, 2023.

The High Court judgment had come as quite a turnaround following the trial court's decision sentencing Koli to death in September 2010.

Both Koli and Moninder Singh Pandher, who had employed him as a domestic help at his residence in Nithari, were accused of rape and murder, mostly of children in the neighbourhood.

The High Court had acquitted them in the death penalty case and said the prosecution had failed to prove their guilt "beyond reasonable doubt" while calling it a "botched-up"

investigation.

Reversing the death sentence given to Koli in 12 cases and Pandher in two cases, the High Court said the probe was "nothing short of a betrayal of public trust by responsible agencies".

A total of 19 cases were lodged against the duo in 2007, and the CBI filed closure reports in three cases due to lack of evidence.

Koli in custody

Koli was acquitted in three of the 16 remaining cases, and his death sentence in one case was commuted to life. He is in custody.

The killings came to light with the discovery of the skeletal remains from a drain behind Pandher's house at Nithari in Noida, bordering the national capital, on December 29, 2006.

As 5 of a family 'suffocate' to death in Kashmir, spotlight back on 'killer' heating appliances**Peerzada Ashiq**

SRINAGAR

A 28-day-old infant, an 18-month-old toddler, a three-year-old child and their parents.

The family of five found dead on Sunday, authorities believe, are among eight who suffocated to death this winter so far in Kashmir, putting the spotlight back on the silent killer in the Valley during winters – asphyxiation due to heating appliances.

As shock and disbelief gripped the residents of Srinagar's Pandrathan area following the recovery of the five bodies from a rented accommodation, eyewitnesses said they found the family members dead in their room on Sunday afternoon after their relatives started enquiring about their well-

**Grief-stricken:** People at a burial ground as five members of a family were laid to rest in Srinagar on Monday. PTI

being after failing to contact them on their mobile phones.

Officials have identified the man as Ajiaz Ahmad Bhat, a chef from north Kashmir's Uri area in Baramulla district. Authorities said they found an electric fan heater on in the room.

The police have launched a probe and are yet to reach any conclusion on the cause of deaths. However, initial reports suggested that they may have died due to suffocation, an official said.

The incident has sparked widespread concerns in the Valley as heating appliances, especially electric heaters and wood and coal stoves, are widely used to survive the harsh winters. Kashmir has seen two-three major spells of snowfall so far this winter.

On January 5, a mother and her son were found unconscious in their house in Kulgam. The son, Nisar Ahmad Khan, 24, later died in the hospital. On December 22 last year, two persons from Kupwara district also died due to suffocation.

Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) has issued a public advisory and urged residents to take immediate precaution. CPI (M) MLA M.Y. Tarigami urged the government to provide carbon monoxide sensors to households at subsidised rates. A carbon monoxide sensor raises the alarm at 20 ppm to prove fatal to an individual.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed grief over the incident. "People must... adhere to government-issued advisories on the safe use of heating equipment to prevent such tragic incidents," Mr. Abdullah said.

IN BRIEF



Four killed and 33 injured as bus falls into gorge in Kerala

Four persons were killed and 33 were injured as a Kerala State Road Transport Corporation bus fell into a gorge on the Kottarakara-Dindigul National Highway in Idukki on Monday morning. The bus was carrying 37 people, including the crew, and was on the way to Mavelikara from Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu. The driver attributed the accident to a brake failure on a hairpin bend. Kerala Transport Minister K.B. Ganesh Kumar ordered an inquiry into the incident.

Couple, two children found dead at home in Bengaluru

A software engineer and his wife, Anup Kumar, 38, and Rakhi, 35, and their children aged five and two were found dead in their home in Bengaluru on Monday. The police said Anup had sent a distress mail to his brother on Sunday night saying he had invested a huge sum in a business venture and was cheated. The family was from Prayagraj. Anup was working as a software consultant. Rakhi was a homemaker. (Those in distress, may call Arogya Sahayavani helpline on 104 for assistance)

2 women pilgrims run over by ambulance near Tirupati

Two Tirumala-bound women pilgrims on foot from Punganur were run over by an ambulance at Narasingapuram village in Chandragiri mandal of Tirupati district. The two were killed on the spot and three were injured. The accident happened in the early hours of Monday on the Tirupati-Anantapuram National Highway. The ambulance was carrying a patient from Madanapalle to Tirupati.

High drama as police stop BRS leader from visiting ACB office

Advocates cannot accompany him, the police tell Rama Rao, as per a statement by his office; the ACB had summoned him in Formula-E case

The Hindu Bureau

HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president K.T. Rama Rao returned without appearing before the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Monday morning after he was stopped by the police.

Responding to the summons issued by the ACB in connection with the alleged irregularities in the Formula-E race case, he reached its office in Banjara Hills. His office said that he was stopped by the police at the ACB office saying that advocates cannot accompany him.

"You show me in writing that my advocates cannot accompany me, I shall ask them to stay back," Mr. Rama Rao was seen telling the police who stopped the vehicle. He returned after submitting a written response to the officials concerned.

The ACB filed a case against the former Minister, former Special Chief Secretary to the Government (MA&UD) Aravind Kumar, and former Chief Engineer of Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) B.L.N. Reddy, alleging irregularities of ₹54.88 crore in the Formula E deal.

The Enforcement Direc-



Not today: KTR returning home without appearing before the Anti-Corruption Bureau in Hyderabad on Monday. G. RAMAKRISHNA

torate (ED) also summoned Mr. Rama Rao for questioning on January 7 regarding alleged money laundering linked to the case. Mr. Kumar and Mr. Reddy were asked to appear before the ED on January 8 and 9, respectively.

In his letter addressed to Deputy Superintendent of Police Majid Khan, Mr. Rao said the matter was sub judice and reserved for judgment by the High Court of Telangana. In the letter, he said the FIR against him, dated December 18, 2024, had been challenged before the High Court under Section 528 of the BNSS, 2023.

He pointed out that the court had concluded hearings on December 31, 2024, and reserved its judgment. Given this, Mr. Rao requested the ACB to

defer further proceedings until the court pronounces its decision.

The former Minister said the notice issued to him by the ACB, dated January 2, instructed him to appear before the agency on January 6, to furnish documents and information related to the case.

However, he said the notice lacked clarity regarding the specific documents and details required.

He requested the agency to specify the information sought to enable him to comply within a reasonable time frame.

In his letter, he reiterated his willingness to cooperate with the investigation, stating, "Being a law-abiding citizen, I will cooperate in the matter subject to constitutional and legal rights."

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday expressed her displeasure over tigress Zeenat – rescued from south Bengal by State forest officials – having to return to Simlipal Tiger Reserve.

"In the future, the Odisha government should send their teams to rescue tigers that stray into the State," she suggested.

Ms. Banerjee, who was visiting Sagar Island during the day, said that another tiger had crossed over to south Bengal from Odisha and was posing a threat to the locals.

"I will urge the Odisha government, please send your rescue team and rescue the tiger. Every time do not blame us. For five days our people suffered and the Forest Department rescued the animal without harm. But after rescue you wanted that tiger to be returned. Now another tiger has entered," she added.

The forests of south Bengal have no reports of a tiger population and the mangrove forests of Sunderbans have about 100 tigers. Sources said that the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) had written a letter to the West Bengal government, seeking the release of the captured tiger and questioned why the rescued tiger was taken to Kolkata Zoological Gardens when Simlipal was only a few hundred kilometres away.

In 2018, when a tiger from Jharkhand had strayed into south Bengal, it was killed by locals.



Tigress Zeenat in Odisha.

Bengal.

Ms. Banerjee also added that if a tiger was sent from Odisha, it should be sent forever.

"We are keeping it. If you don't have space, we have a tiger rescue centre, deep forests. We can keep it," she added.

The forests of south Bengal have no reports of a tiger population and the mangrove forests of Sunderbans have about 100 tigers. Sources said that the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) had written a letter to the West Bengal government, seeking the release of the captured tiger and questioned why the rescued tiger was taken to Kolkata Zoological Gardens when Simlipal was only a few hundred kilometres away.

In 2018, when a tiger from Jharkhand had strayed into south Bengal, it was killed by locals.

Elephant numbers

The Chief Minister also expressed concern about the elephant numbers in south Bengal, claiming that its rising population was posing a challenge for forest officials.

Troubled waters



Gaspous ecosystem: Fishermen cast nets in the Vembanad lake on Monday. Climate change and pollution from slaughterhouses and shrimp peeling sheds are choking the ecosystem of the lake, which is rapidly shrinking in acreage. H. VIBHU

'Halt spot booking at Sabarimala for Makaravilakku'

The Hindu Bureau

PATHANAMTHITTA

To prevent overcrowding of devotees during the Makaravilakku festival at the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple, the police have requested the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) to completely discontinue the spot-booking facility for pilgrims on the festival day.

According to officials, halting spot booking will allow the police to establish a checkpoint at Nilakkal, regulating the flow of devotees to Pampa.

Traffic to the hillock will be closely monitored and controlled in the days leading up to the festival.



Railway Board's suggestion on Kerala's rail project disappointing: Sreedharan

Dhinesh Kallungal
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

In a letter to Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, technocrat E. Sreedharan has strongly criticised the Railway Board for suggesting the operation of passenger and freight trains on same broad gauge lines with a speed potential of 160 kmph in place of the semi high-speed rail project submitted by Kerala.

The letter was written on December 6, and Mr. Sreedharan has sent a copy to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well.

The letter, accessed by *The Hindu*, says the suggestions forwarded by the Board to the Kerala government reveal lack of vision

suggested by Kerala; integrating the new line with existing Railway network passing through the State at suitable points; ensuring a speed potential of 160 kmph; and by including Kavach, the indigenously developed Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system to avoid collisions.

The Board at one stage decided to ease curves to increase the speed of trains to 160 kmph on trunk routes. Side by side, the Railways ordered surveys for the third and fourth lines to increase speeds and throughput.

Both suggestions are not workable, Mr. Sreedharan said in the letter.

"Having mixed traffic on high-speed routes is extremely dangerous and the

Commissioner of Rail Safety will not certify it. Further, the purpose of having a speed potential of 160 kmph will not be served," he added.

"The cost for carrying a passenger on rail is 1/6th of the cost on the road and 1/15th of the cost by air. Therefore, common sense dictates that our country should divert the maximum number of passengers to rail. This is possible only if we have a network of high-speed routes by which the present rail journey time is reduced by 60-65% and enough capacity is created for easy and comfortable rail travel for all. A high-speed rail is equivalent to 9 lanes of motorway in each direction."

Atul Subhash suicide case: Karnataka HC declines to stay probe against wife, her family

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka on Monday declined to pass any interim order on a petition filed by Nikita Singhania, wife of deceased Bengaluru-based software engineer Atul Subhash, and her family members, seeking a stay on the probe in the case registered against them for allegedly abetting his suicide.

Observing orally that a complaint by the father of Atul Subhash *prima facie* contains ingredients to invoke Section 108 (abetment to suicide) of the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita,

Mamata says Odisha should send own teams to rescue tigers

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday expressed her displeasure over tigress Zeenat – rescued from south Bengal by State forest officials – having to return to Simlipal Tiger Reserve.

"In the future, the Odisha government should send their teams to rescue tigers that stray into the State," she suggested.

Ms. Banerjee, who was visiting Sagar Island during the day, said that another tiger had crossed over to south Bengal from Odisha and was posing a threat to the locals.



Accused: Nikita Singhania, wife of Atul Subhash, her mother, Nisha Singhania, and brother, Anurag Singhania. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Justice S.R. Krishna Kumar adjourned further hearing while asking the police to file their statement of objection to the petition.

Earlier, the advocate for the petitioners had contended that registration of

criminal complaints by Nikita against her husband cannot be treated as abetment to suicide while seeking the stay on further investigation. However, the court orally declined to pass any interim order.



Contrived grievance

Creating an unsavoury row has become an annual habit with the TN Governor

It is regrettable that the customary address to the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly by the Governor in the beginning of a new year's session is turning into an unsavoury event year after year. For the third consecutive year, Governor R.N. Ravi's penchant for raking up a controversy has come to the fore. He left the Assembly without reading out the address, claiming that the national anthem and the Constitution of India had been insulted because the anthem was not played prior to the delivery of his speech. The State government maintains that the practice in the Assembly was to play the State's invocation to Tamil before the address and the national anthem at the end of the Governor's speech and that this had been conveyed to the Governor's office. As in the previous years, Mr. Ravi has to bear much of the blame for the flagrant politicisation of the event. If he had such prior knowledge about the practice followed in the Assembly, his grievance comes across as a ruse to create a controversy and avoid performing his constitutional duty of propounding the government's policy statement on the floor of the House. In 2023, Mr. Ravi had skipped portions of the address prepared by the State government, including a reference to the 'Dravidian model of governance' and some praise for the law and order situation in the State. Last year, he expressed his inability to read out the address, citing what he termed "misleading claims and facts" in it.

It is noteworthy that there was a recent round of gubernatorial changes and new appointments. Notably, Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, who has been a thorn in the flesh of the Kerala government, was shifted to Bihar, while Manipur and Mizoram got new incumbents in Raj Bhavan. However, Mr. Ravi, whose continuance in Tamil Nadu has been rendered untenable long ago, remains untouched. He completed a combined period of five years as Governor in two States, having been appointed to the office in Nagaland in 2019. He was shifted to Tamil Nadu in 2021, but has often found himself in the thick of political controversy, making overtly political comments on the one hand and holding up legislation on the other by delaying assent to Bills. Going by recent Supreme Court judgments and observations, there ought to be no leeway for Governors to use their position to undermine regimes led by the political adversaries of those in power at the Centre. Given the scale of Mr. Ravi's persistent differences with the elected regime, it is indeed strange and questionable that the Union government should retain him in this office, unless its objective is to test the limits of the State government's tolerance.

Down, but not out

India lost a close series to Australia because of its batting frailty

A decade-long dominance wound to a close at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Sunday. The Border-Gavaskar Trophy, the second-biggest silverware in terms of stature after the Ashes in cricket, and the biggest on the basis of viewership, has been India's preserve since 2015. Australia last won the title in the 2014-15 home series and after that India claimed the trophy on four occasions. This winning streak ended once the fifth Test concluded at Sydney with Pat Cummins and his men winning by six wickets and seizing the series at 3-1. The margin could hint at a vast gap in ability between the two squads. But it was anything but that and India had its moments and could have finished on the victor's podium. This was a series where the batters played second fiddle to excellent speedsters. It is no surprise that when Jasprit Bumrah, the most dominant among them, got injured and could not bowl during the Australian second innings chase in the last Test, the host prospered. Bumrah began the series as captain, a position he returned to once the regular skipper, the out-of-form Rohit Sharma, opted out at the climax. And Bumrah, with 32 wickets, led the charts. Again with a resilient bat, he even helped India avoid the follow-on at Brisbane's Gabba.

A transition is upon the Indian Test unit, especially after failing to qualify for the ICC World Test Championship final. Having eased out Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane and now dealing with R. Ashwin's retirement mid-series, the selectors and coach Gautam Gambhir need to look at the future of Virat Kohli, Rohit and Ravindra Jadeja. These players were India's core in Tests, but a change is inevitable. Tours Down Under often force a flux. Dilip Vengsarkar retired after the 1991-92 tour, Rahul Dravid and V.V.S. Laxman followed suit after their 2011-12 visit. In the current sojourn, despite scoring a ton in the first Test at Perth, Kohli's overall yield of 190 at 23.75 was poor. Rohit's numbers are even worse as he scored 3, 6, 10, 3 and 9. Yashasvi Jaiswal's runs, K.L. Rahul's initial consistency, newcomer Nitish Kumar Reddy's hundred at Melbourne, and the odd lower-order resistance, bailed out India but that was not enough. India lost due to batting ineptitude, a frailty that affected Australia too before its middle-order found a second-wind through Steve Smith, Travis Head and Marnus Labuschagne. Mohammed Siraj toiled hard but beyond him, Bumrah did not have much support from the bowling ranks. This was a series on which Cummins, through 25 wickets and 159 runs, imposed his will. India will need to find younger heroes, especially batters who are adept at playing both spin and pace, at home and abroad, in Tests and limited overs.

The Collegium and changes – it may still be early days

Two interesting nuggets of information have emanated in recent days about the functioning of the Supreme Court of India's Collegium. As is often the case with the body's processes, reports in the media attribute the news of these decisions to unnamed sources. The collegium, the accounts say, will now conduct interviews of candidates who have been recommended for elevation as judges to the High Courts. The panel will also, to the extent possible, exclude from selection those whose close relatives have served or continue to serve as judges of the High Courts or the Supreme Court.

By themselves, neither of these resolutions might seem especially remarkable. One would think that appointments to important positions in the State – in this case, to the higher judiciary – would require careful consideration, including a meeting by the decision-makers with the nominated candidates.

One would also think that some amount of pruning of nominees is inevitable in any process of selection. Here, the collegium is conscious that a few deserving candidates might miss out in a move to exclude those with kin on the Bench, but it believes, on a balance, that this will help create a more diverse judiciary.

There is still a concern

It is too early to judge the merits of these choices. In time, they may well come to be seen as harbingers of change and reform, but, for now, a familiar concern looms large, threatening to militate against that prospect. Any reform of the collegium system – much needed as it is – will only go so far, if the government is permitted to stonewall proposals, on arbitrary, whimsical and often undisclosed grounds.

At its foundation, the collegium is a product of judge-made law. Thus, it seems to forever stand at a crossroad. It has no formal rules to bind it; it is answerable to nobody; and its functioning – whether it is in the publication of its decisions or in the opacity and the mystique of its methods – is suffused in a certain ad hocism.

Replacing this with a clear set of binding rules is essential to the maintenance of the system's integrity. For example, we are told that there exists a "memorandum of procedure". But does a breach of that manual carry with it any consequences? Will the interviewing of candidates be written into those set of rules? Who is to say how the collegium under future Chief Justices of India (CJI) will function?

In recent weeks, as we marked the 75th anniversary of the Constitution's adoption, we have seen many a paean sung to the document's text and vision. Its survival has enlivened our commitment to equality and social justice. But that we have been unable to determine quite how



Sruthi Parthasarathy

an advocate practising in the Madras High Court

best to appoint our judges is an enduring blemish.

The Constitution's framers debated the question over many days. They were mindful of the foundational ideas underlying the republic: that the legislature, the executive and the judiciary must remain separate. But striking a balance and ensuring that the sovereign function of making judicial appointments would not come in the way of ensuring the autonomy of the courts was always going to be a sticky issue.

The 'middle course' it was

All manners of suggestions were made in the Constituent Assembly. But the drafters, in the Assembly's chairperson Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's words, chose to go down a "middle course". To that end, the Constitution provides that judges to the Supreme Court are to be appointed by the President of India in consultation with the CJI and such other judges that he or she deems fit. Judges to the High Courts are to be appointed by the President in consultation with the CJI, the Governor of the State and the Chief Justice of that court. In the case of transfers, the President may move a judge from one High Court to another, but only after consulting the CJI.

These stipulations are by themselves clear. But in failing to define what manner of consultation ought to be made, in failing to explicate how transparent this process needs to be, the provisions opened themselves up for judicial consideration.

In 1993, in what is popularly known as the Second Judges Case, the Court held that "consultation" must mean "concurrence". And concurrence not only from the CJI, but from a "collegium" of judges. In the process, the Court fashioned a whole new procedure that it believed would maintain both a fidelity to the bare text of the Constitution's words and the chief objective of ensuring an independent and autonomous judiciary.

The process has a number of nuts and bolts to it. But, in short, it postulates the following: the recommendation to appoint a new judge to a High Court or to the Supreme Court, to transfer a judge from one High Court to another, and to elect a new Chief Justice to a High Court, would come from the collegium – a body comprising the CJI and his senior colleagues, in some cases, two members, and in others four. The collegium will make this recommendation after taking the views of "consultee" judges. Once this recommendation is made, the Union government can either choose to accept the proposal or return the proposal for reconsideration. Upon reconsideration, if the proposal is submitted anew, the government has no choice but to sanction the resolution.

While this seems simple enough, seeing as the

law was laid down by the Court sans any attendant and binding rules, the government has a variety of means available to it to block recommendations it deems inconvenient. It can either keep the proposal pending at its end or, on a rerecommendation, stop short of issuing a presidential warrant authorising the appointment or transfer.

This has led to a curious paradox: in theory, the collegium retains primacy over judicial appointments. But the government's capacity to forestall any recommendation made means that the question of primacy remains moot, despite the Court having previously spelled out – in the Fourth Judges Case (2015) – that it is the judiciary alone that must retain pre-eminence and that any tinkering with that position would impinge on the Constitution's basic structure.

The Judges' cases and rule of law

Whatever our position on the collegium's constitutional suitability may be, today, the system represents the rule of law. The government is legally obliged to follow the procedure laid down in the Judges' cases. It enjoys no discretion in the matter. When it sits over recommendations endlessly, and when it resists proposals by simply failing to act, it is effectively stymieing the legal process.

There is no doubt that until such time we manage to find a process that can marry the requirements of accountability with independence, embracing meaningful reforms within the extant process remains critical. The collegium's newest proposals address some of the long-standing concerns over its processes. But at some stage, we must also take seriously the question of implementation.

Until now, while the Court has, on occasion, asked questions of the government when it has failed to follow through on a resolution, it has stopped short of issuing express directions for compliance. Perhaps the Court has felt that orders of this kind might be seen as unnecessarily confrontational. Ultimately, it matters such as these, one would want different wings of the state working together collaboratively to ensure that the procedure stands fulfilled.

But for the collegium system to retain salience, and for it to achieve its purported objective – the maintenance of our judiciary's independence – the rulings in the Judges' cases must be accorded due respect. The Court's ability to function as a counter-majoritarian institution depends as much on its ability to declare the law as it does on its ability to ensure that the law is followed. For, as Chief Justice Coke put it, way back in 1611, summing up the essence of the rule of law, "The king hath no prerogative but what the law of the land allows him."

Enhancing governance the digital way

In recent years, India has embarked on an ambitious journey toward digital governance – a transformation designed not only to improve citizen services but also to bolster the capabilities of government employees. This effort underscores a critical truth: the efficiency of public service delivery is inextricably linked to the skills and competencies of the workforce behind it. Yet, despite the strides made, the question remains – what more needs to be done to fully realise the potential of this digital shift?

At its core, governance is a complex web of decision-making processes that involves stakeholders, from government bodies and non-governmental organisations to local community leaders and influential citizens. Chanakya's governance principles have left a lasting impact, particularly in South Asia, shaping modern governance theories, public administration, and strategic diplomacy, with the Arthashastra's insights into statecraft, economic policy, and ethical leadership continuing to serve as a framework for political strategy and governance ethics. In this context, building the capacity of participants to integrate digital tools has become essential to reimaging governance at every level.

Capacity building in digital governance
Digital governance represents a paradigm shift in how government employees and associated service providers or intermediaries such as contractors should engage with their work. The adoption of technology in governance facilitates more effective communication, informed decision-making, and streamlined workflows. As public expectations evolve, so too must the skill-set of those in governance roles. The pressing need for government employees to become adept at navigating digital platforms is paramount in a world that is increasingly technology-driven.

Initiatives such as the iGOT Karmayogi



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As public expectations evolve, so too must the skill-set of those in governance roles

platform have taken centre-stage. Launched in 2020, this online training portal aims to equip government officials with essential skills in data analytics, public administration, and digital technologies. The flexibility of personalised learning paths fosters continuous improvement – a vital trait where adaptability defines success.

Equally transformative is the e-Office initiative, which digitises government workflows, drastically reducing reliance on paperwork and enhancing operational efficiency. By automating file management, workflows, and grievance redress, the initiative promotes real-time communication and transparency. Another initiative is the transition of procurement processes to the online sphere, with platforms like the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) playing a crucial role.

The government's commitment to enhancing digital literacy is commendable, with various programmes aimed at familiarising employees with the essential tools of e-governance, cybersecurity, and digital communication. However, as we celebrate these advancements, it is imperative to recognise the challenges that lie ahead in this digital governance journey.

Taking digital empowerment forward

Despite these initiatives, hurdles remain that could undermine progress. The resistance to change among some segments of the workforce presents a tangible challenge. Bureaucratic structures can sometimes be slow to adapt, with varying levels of enthusiasm and readiness among employees. While some quickly embrace new technologies, others may benefit from extra training and support to effectively navigate the digital landscape. The government must foster an environment that encourages innovation while providing the necessary resources for those who may resist or struggle to adapt.

The lack of incentives raises concerns that government initiatives such as the iGOT Karmayogi platform could become merely

attendance trackers. True success should not be measured by participation numbers alone but by the platform's ability to deliver real value to employees. It is worth considering whether these trainings lead to meaningful outcomes – such as opportunities to apply new skills through relevant job postings – rather than just enhancing performance reviews.

Additionally, the digital divide is a pressing issue, especially in rural areas where access to high-speed Internet and digital tools can be limited. Without addressing this disparity, we risk leaving many employees, and by extension, many citizens behind in an increasingly digital world.

Cybersecurity also looms large as a concern in the digital governance landscape. As government operations shift online, the risk of data breaches and cyberattacks escalates. Protecting sensitive information is non-negotiable, and training employees in cybersecurity protocols is critical to fortifying digital governance systems.

Finally, the need for continuous learning cannot be overstated. The rapid evolution of digital tools necessitates ongoing training and upskilling opportunities to ensure that employees remain capable and confident in their roles. Ensuring that capacity-building programmes remain dynamic and adaptable to new developments is crucial.

A perspective

India's digital governance initiatives have laid a strong foundation, but much remains to fully harness the potential of digital transformation.

With robust infrastructure, targeted training, and a commitment to building a dynamic workforce, India can set a global benchmark for digital governance. The key lies in ensuring that every employee, regardless of background, rank, or location, is equipped to excel in the digital age. Only then can we achieve a governance model that is accountable, transparent, and inclusive for all.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Decoding vs polarising

In Uttar Pradesh, there seems to be much effort in pursuing 'excavations', presumably in search of temples. Such actions often stir up communal tensions and divert attention from developmental issues that need attention. On the contrary, the Tamil Nadu government has set an inspiring example ("Stalin offers \$1-mn prize for

decoding Indus Valley script," January 6), which is definitely a move aimed at enriching our cultural and historical understanding. This sharp contrast in governance approaches in two States at either end of the country, raises an important question: should our focus as a nation be on fostering knowledge, education and innovation? Or, should it be on

reopening historical wounds that risk dividing our society? While one approach seeks to unite and enable progress through intellectual pursuits, the other appears to dwell in the past, potentially polarising communities. I urge governments across India to prioritise initiatives that promote unity, education and scientific advancement over those

woven with divisive agendas. Only by doing so, can we pave the way for a brighter, more harmonious future for all in India.

Abdul Kalam Azad,

Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh

Chemical waste disposal

In 2015, some of the chemical waste from the site of the Bhopal gas tragedy was incinerated in Pipavaram as a trial

measure in 2015 and a report showed that there were no adverse results. If that was the case, why has the government waited for close to 10 years to incinerate the rest?

D. Sethuraman,

Chennai

It has been reported by this daily that a batch of the waste will be burnt using diesel. Will this not result in

more pollution? Why is plasma torch incineration not being used? The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre has highlighted the use of this technology for universal waste processing which has 'huge potential in environment friendly mitigation of municipal, hazardous, nuclear, [and] e-waste'.

Dr. Sunil Jacob,
Bengaluru

The end of global climate policy

The climate conference in Baku in 2024 turned the climate treaty on its head by scrapping the defining feature of the post-colonial world divided between 'donors' and 'recipients' and suggesting the need for an alternate global sustainability forum. The shift requires that developing countries take charge of their own destiny.

The purpose of the climate treaty in 1992 was to collectively deal with a common concern. In an unequal world, this was defined by the G7 reducing future emissions of carbon dioxide despite the treaty acknowledging cumulative emissions alone matter. Developing countries agreed to take on a problem they did not create in exchange for technology transfer and funds, not realising that the imbalance in research capacity had set the stage for shifting the burden.

The backbone of the current arrangement is the disconnect between academic treatment and rules and practice, providing continuing advantage to the G7. The way global concerns have been selected, agenda defined, and rules implemented – all the time dealing with the symptoms rather than the causes of problems – provides continuing advantages to the G7. The pressure to provide incentives for private finance and dealing with trade restrictions at the same time was never part of the 'grand bargain'. The G7 have now absolved themselves of any responsibility for climate change with, in India's words, the "optical illusion" of providing financial support by 2035.

Two world views
The former colonial powers morphed into the G7 in 1973. Climate change with its reduction in emissions of carbon dioxide is only for the G7 who have overused their fair share of the common atmospheric resource. For the others, the greatest challenge is sustainable development, that is, modifying pathways, lifestyles and



Mukul Sanwal
Former UN diplomat

energy transition. The way the agenda was set masks the injustice within the climate crisis and the extent it is underestimated.

The impact of the Global South, representing four-fifths of the global population and half the GDP, no longer following the lead of the G7 has been felt most significantly in climate change with growing calls for climate justice. The Nationally Determined Contributions of 72 countries explicitly include the concept of a "just transition", reflecting recognition of the social dimensions of climate action.

Climate justice is not about perceptions of fairness of specific policies. It questions the framing of existing distinctions between global and local levels and between mitigation and adaptation. It is not just the disproportionate continuing levels of emissions but also solutions such as carbon pricing and trade restrictions that widen the income gap and increase inequality. Current global rules do not reflect the interests of the Global South.

These views reflect conflicting visions of how society is organised and what constitutes progress. Distinguishing between total emissions of countries and trends, drivers, and patterns of natural resource use as causes of climate change masks the impact of the most stable global trend of urbanisation covering three-quarters of global emissions and natural resource use. A middle class and more equal world is adopting opinions, pathways, and actions distinct from those who developed earlier.

The foundational fact is that patterns of urban natural resource use of the G7 are not being followed by the Global South. The G7 with one-fifth of the population was consuming three-quarters of global resources in 1950, with the U.S. alone consuming 40%. By the 1970s, three-quarters of the population of the G7 had shifted to cities and their lifestyles based on commodity prices kept low by the former colonial powers directly

led to climate change. The real price of the most traded commodity, oil, was not allowed to increase over a century, leading to its wasteful use. In 2050, the G7 will account for 25% of global emissions with a 10% share of the global population, while Asia is expected to account for 55% of the world's emissions equal to its share of the global population.

The time is ripe for new foundational principles of sustainability with justice at its centre. India would have to match the strategic thinking of the U.S. in setting up interlinked voluntary arrangements of the 'rules-based order', with the rules determined by the G7, for a new order for 'shared prosperity' seeking comparable levels of well-being within ecological limits.

Global governance
With global cooperation itself in danger, three initiatives are suggested. First, BRICS and partner countries should take the strategic leap for an alternate sustainability forum to support each other in the urban energy transition. This would not be an anti-G7 forum, but focused on units located in member countries in different continents researching sustainability science, urbanisation, monitoring G7 climate policy and supporting exchange of experiences.

Second, the UN Climate negotiations should be limited to reviewing emissions reductions in the G7 and grants in the \$300 billion to the most vulnerable – Small Island States and Least Developed Countries.

Third, international fora should be seen as what they are: annual stocktaking that helps the world assess its position and decide course-correction accordingly. The World Trade Organization with its dysfunctional dispute settlement could also be allowed to wither away.

The BRICS playing a bridging role in the new multilateralism will entitle them to their rightful place in the UN Security Council.

Bringing justice centre stage requires an alternate sustainability forum

Rumblings in the ruling alliance

A CPI(M) leader's outburst reveals tensions in the ruling front



Tamil Nadu

STATE OF PLAY

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There are tensions within the ruling alliance in Tamil Nadu after outgoing CPI(M) State secretary, K. Balakrishnan, launched a scathing attack against the DMK government, which leads the alliance, last week.

Mr. Balakrishnan accused Chief Minister M.K. Stalin of having imposed an "undeclared emergency" in Tamil Nadu, pointing out that permission is denied even for protests demanding pattas. He also said the CPI(M) could not get permission for a procession in connection with the 24th party State conference.

Addressing the conference, he said: "We thought we would be allowed to carry out a red-flag march. We got no assurance until the last moment and then we were told that permission would not be granted. Should not people organise a procession in Tamil Nadu? Should not an affected citizen fight for his rights? Why does the government fear demonstrations?"

There could be reasons for his anger. But what upset the DMK was Mr. Balakrishnan's rejection of the Dravidian model, touted as a socially and economically equitable model of governance by the DMK. "A Left model would be better than a Hindutva or Dravidian model. The best alternative for the people of Tamil Nadu is the Left," he declared.

Over the last few weeks, the Opposition has been criticising the DMK government for the "poor" law-and-order situation in the State after a female student was sexually assaulted in the campus of Anna University. So far, the police

nure. The police have not remanded anyone who has organised protests. We will take into consideration their demands and fulfil them."

However, *Murasoli*, the official organ of the DMK, published a critical column titled '*Ithu thozhamai kku ilakkanam alla* (This is not good for harmony)'. Published on the front page, the column read, "Mr. Balakrishnan is addressing thousands of people. Does he not know what an emergency is? When he has access to the Chief Minister, why should he go to the streets and raise questions?"

It speculated that Mr. Balakrishnan, or KB as he is known, may be under pressure to provoke Mr. Stalin even though the Chief Minister has always treated him with respect.

The DMK argues that it has no objections to alliance partners organising protests. "But it is against the ethics of the alliance to complain about denial of permission after organising protests," the article in *Murasoli* read.

The writer of the article also demanded to know why Mr. Balakrishnan has joined the people who are seeking to create the impression that women are not safe in Tamil Nadu. The column added, "It is sad that Mr. KB, an experienced politician, fails to understand that such remarks would damage the friendship among the alliance partners."

Mr. Balakrishnan's remarks show that alliance partners, who have restrained themselves from expressing any displeasure regarding the excesses of the government and the police, realise that they cannot afford to remain silent any longer. He seems to be sending out the message that the CPI(M) is no appendage of the DMK even though the two will continue to fight the BJP.

Changing winds: Is BJP distancing itself from the Dalits?

Data show that the BJP's Dalit voter base is declining, especially during national elections

DATA POINT

Devesh Kumar
Sanjay Kumar

On December 17, Home Minister Amit Shah made some contentious comments on B.R. Ambedkar, which not only sparked debates in Parliament but also led to scuffles. There have also been protests against his remarks in parts of the country. While many spokespersons of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have maintained that his words were taken out of context, the Opposition has been keeping the issue alive.

Importantly, this incident coincides with a shifting electoral dynamic which suggests that the BJP's Dalit voter base is eroding, especially during national elections. It remains to be seen whether this act was a deliberate attempt by the BJP to subtly distance itself from the social group or an unprecedented lapse. In this context, let us examine the voting behaviour of Dalits in the last two decades.

Congress and Dalit support
For the most part of the 2000s, the Congress and several regional parties such as the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Rashtriya Janata Dal secured most of the Dalit votes by championing social justice, framing policies to tackle systemic discrimination and exclusion, and contributing to the larger Dalit cause. Conversely, the BJP was relatively popular among the upper castes and other well-off social groups such as some Other Backward Classes. Such group-based support is also contingent on the nature of party competition at the State level.

The National Election Study data by Lokniti-Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) reveals a pattern. While support for the Congress dropped significantly from the party's heydays in the 2000s, the Congress still retained higher party loyalty among Dalits

compared to the BJP in the era of BJP domination in the 2010s and 2020s. **Table 1** also shows that the Grand Old Party enjoyed more loyalty among Dalits than possibly other groups. In terms of voter support, the BJP's support among Dalits increased from what it was in 2004 and 2009, when it was merely 13% and 11% respectively.

Rise and fall
In 2014, the BJP was voted with a majority in the Lok Sabha. Twice as many Dalits voted for the BJP as compared to 2009 (22% in 2014 compared to 11% in 2009). One can argue that this was due to an increased vote share, but voters at large were swayed by the leadership of Narendra Modi. As people were perturbed by rampant corruption, and dissatisfied with the previous government, price rise and underdevelopment, the BJP appeared to be a more promising alternative.

In 2019, the party's vote share among Dalits spiked to 32% (**Table 2**). We believe that this was because the BJP promoted Dalit leadership, tailored welfare schemes to specific groups, promised a better future, and formulated a strategy of social engineering which aimed to capitalise on nuanced sub-caste divisions.

Following the peak in 2019, though, there was a subsequent fall in support in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Not only did the BJP lose a significant number of seats, but it also received a lower vote share among Dalits by three points (although the BJP's overall vote share in 2024 was similar to 2019).

The Congress, meanwhile, experienced a decline in Dalit support in 2014. But since then, its support among Dalits has remained steady (**Table 2**).

While the decline for the BJP may appear nominal, the fall was uneven both in States where the National Democratic Alliance gained votes and in States where it lost votes. Among the top three States where the BJP (along with

an NDA alliance) performed poorly, the INDIA bloc effectively managed to win the votes away from the NDA, a trend that was particularly visible in Maharashtra (**Table 3**). The difference between Dalit votes for both alliances was 12 and 10 points in Uttar Pradesh and in Rajasthan, respectively.

There was also a loss of Dalit votes in States where the BJP outperformed its 2019 vote shares. For example, the NDA gained 15.74 points in Telangana, but here too the INDIA bloc garnered more Dalit votes (46% compared to NDA's 23%) (**Table 3**). In Odisha, however, Dalit votes were significantly higher for the NDA. That said, the contest in Odisha was between the NDA and the Biju Janata Dal and the INDIA bloc was not significant.

Lessons to be learned
The overall picture suggests that the BJP's peaking in vote shares in 2019 followed by a decline was more pronounced when it came to Dalit support, with the INDIA bloc gaining from this pattern.

Although public memory is short, and the Opposition's exhortations may lose steam, Dalits might not be as forgiving about the BJP's foibles when it comes to their icons or issues. While the BJP took steps to mitigate the fallout by calling a press conference and blaming the Congress for "distorting facts", and undertaking other measures as part its damage control exercise, the lack of strong statements by senior leaders further raises suspicion that the party is subtly distancing itself from an important social group.

In contrast, the Congress has tried to present a strong ideological position on this issue. The Opposition will now try to keep the issue alive and mobilise Dalit groups. For the BJP, the lesson is to be careful and not find itself in such a controversy again.

Devesh Kumar is a researcher at Lokniti-CSDS; Sanjay Kumar is a professor with CSDS and a political commentator

Split loyalties

The tables are based on the Lokniti-Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS)' National Election Studies (NES) conducted across years



Table 1

	Party loyalties		Election year (%)			
	NES 2004	NES 2009	NES 2014	NES 2019		
Congress	All traditional supporters	30	32	20	15	
	Among Dalit supporters	28	32	19	16	
BJP	All traditional supporters	27	21	25	19	
	Among Dalit supporters	14	12	16	13	

Table 2

	Vote share		Election year (%)			
	NES 2004	NES 2009	NES 2014	NES 2019	NES 2024	
Congress	Overall vote share	26.44	28.56	19.31	19.49	21.19
	Among Dalit voters	27	27	19	20	20
BJP	Overall vote share	22.16	18.81	31.05	37.36	36.56
	Among Dalit voters	13	11	22	32	29

Table 3

States	NDA vote share difference (2024 - 2019)	NES 2019		NES 2024	
		INDIA Bloc	NDA	INDIA Bloc	NDA
NDA's top 3 worst performing States					
Rajasthan	-9.25	42	41	47	37
Uttar Pradesh	-5.87	3	30	38	26
Maharashtra	-7.35	18	21	46	35
NDA's top 3 best performing States					
Andhra Pradesh	+52.52	1	<1	1	48
Telangana	+15.74	34	7	46	23
Odisha	+7.04	12	33	15	45

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The number of women executed by Iran in 2024

31 Norway-based Iran Human Rights (IHR) NGO, which closely tracks executions in Iran, said in a report that the figure for 2024 marked the highest number of women to be hanged in Iran since it started documenting the use of capital punishment in 2008. AFP

Number of people in Sudan who require aid, as per the UN

30 in million. Sudan has been torn apart and pushed to the brink of famine by the war that erupted in April 2023 between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. The UN has launched a \$4.2 billion call for funds, targeting 20.9 million people across Sudan. AFP

People in J&K detained for drug peddling in 2024

300 Police have recovered over 43 kg of heroin worth several hundred crore in the Jammu district in 2024, officials said. The police also attached 11 properties of drug smugglers worth ₹4.69 crore in the district during the same period. PTI

Number of Rohingya refugees who arrived in Indonesia

264 The mostly Muslim ethnic Rohingya refugees, who arrived in Indonesia's province of Aceh after floating at sea for days, are persecuted in Myanmar and thousands risk their lives each year on long and dangerous sea journeys to reach Malaysia or Indonesia. PTI

Number of Palestinians killed in Gaza since Oct. 7, 2023

45,854 The health ministry in Gaza said that 45,854 people have been killed in more than 15 months of war between Israel and Palestinian militants. Israel's offensive has wounded 1,09,139. AFP

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Decoding the National Anthem controversy

What is the practice followed in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly during and after the Governor's address? Why did Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi leave the Assembly without delivering his address? Is the singing of the National Anthem during certain occasions mandatory?

EXPLAINER

D. Suresh Kumar

The story so far:

On January 6, Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi left the Legislative Assembly without delivering the customary address on the opening day of the first session of the year complaining that the National Anthem was not played before his scheduled address. Last year too, he had refused to read out his address.

What did the T.N. Raj Bhavan say?

The Raj Bhavan has alleged "the Constitution of Bharat and the National Anthem were once again insulted in the Tamil Nadu Assembly". It said respecting the National Anthem is among the first fundamental duties enshrined in our Constitution. It is sung in all the State legislatures at the beginning and at the end of the Governor's address. Not to be a party to such "brazen disrespect to the Constitution and the National Anthem," the Governor left the House.

What is the practice in Tamil Nadu?

As per convention, the State anthem – 'Tamil Thai Vazhthu' – is played at the beginning of the Governor's address. The National Anthem is played at the end of the address. The practice of playing the State anthem at the commencement of the Governor's address and the national anthem at the end in the Tamil Nadu Assembly was introduced in July 1991 when the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) government, led by Jayalalithaa, was in power. At that time, Bhishma Narain Singh was Governor. Prior to that, the Governor would enter the House, deliver the address, and leave.

What is the practice in other States?

Each House follows its own convention. For instance, in Nagaland, the national anthem was not played at all for several



Problems in procedure: Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi and Chief Minister M.K. Stalin salute the national flag, in Chennai on January 26, 2024. S. R. RAGHUNATHAN

decades. It was played for the first time in February 2021 when R.N. Ravi was the Governor of the northeastern State. Likewise, it was only in March 2018, that the national Anthem was played for the first time in the Tripura Assembly.

What is the practice when the President's address is delivered?

When the President reaches his seat on the dais, a band installed in the lobby of the central hall to the right of the President, plays the National Anthem. The President then reads the printed address, in Hindi or English, followed by a reading of the address in another version if necessary, by the Chairman of the Raja Sabha. After the conclusion of the address, the President rises in his seat, followed by the members and visitors in the galleries, when the National Anthem is played again. The President, thereafter,

leaves the central hall in a procession.

What does the Constitution say?

Section 51 (A) (a) of the Constitution of India dealing with fundamental duties, says, "It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the national flag and the national anthem."

What does the order issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs say?

The full version of the National Anthem shall be played on the following occasions – during civil and military investitures; when the national salute is given in accompaniment with the National Anthem to the President or to the Governor/Lieutenant Governor during ceremonial occasions within their respective States/Union Territories; during parades; on arrival of the

President at formal State functions and other functions organised by the Government and on his departure from such functions; immediately before and after the President addresses the nation over All India Radio; on arrival of the Governor/Lieutenant Governor at formal State functions within his State/Union Territory and on his departure from such functions; when the National Flag is brought on parade; when the regimental colours are presented; and for the hoisting of colours in the Navy.

When is mass singing of the national anthem required?

The full version of the anthem shall be played accompanied by mass singing on the following occasions – on the unfurling of the National Flag, on cultural occasions or ceremonial functions other than parades; and on the arrival of the President at any government or public function (excluding formal State functions) and also immediately before his departure from such functions.

Can punishment be imposed if it isn't played at official functions?

On January 29, 2019, the Prime Minister, Tamil Nadu Governor and Chief Minister had participated at a function in Madurai for laying the foundation stone for an AIIMS building. The national anthem as well as 'Tamil Thai Vazhthu' were not played at this function. Objecting to this, a woman had moved the Madras High Court seeking a direction to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to frame the rules for imposing punishment, and also to take action against the Chief Secretary for disobedience in not playing the National Anthem.

The court pointed out that a bare reading of her representation made it abundantly clear that when the petitioner herself has stated that there is no mandate for the National Anthem to be sung, and is only a customary practice, mandamus sought against the respondents, cannot be issued. The court dismissed her petition.

THE GIST

▼ Each House follows its own convention. For instance, in Nagaland, the national anthem was not played at all for several decades.

▼ In Tamil Nadu, as per convention, the State anthem – 'Tamil Thai Vazhthu' – is played at the beginning of the Governor's address. The National Anthem is played at the end of the address.

▼ Section 51 (A) (a) of the Constitution of India dealing with fundamental duties, says, "It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the national flag and the national anthem."

What is the human meta-pneumovirus?

Is the unknown pathogen a reason for concern? How does it spread and can it be prevented? What are the symptoms exhibited after being infected by the human metapneumovirus?

Zubeda Hamid

The story so far:

China's disease control authority said that it was piloting a monitoring system for pneumonia of unknown origin. The country was already witnessing an upward trend in overall infections as of mid-December, and is expecting to see more respiratory infections in the winter and spring. One of the pathogens that was detected, especially among people under the age of 14, was human metapneumovirus. Subsequently, posts showing crowds of people in what looked like Chinese hospitals appeared on social media along with statements about China declaring an emergency over the virus. So far, there has been no such declaration.

What is human metapneumovirus?

Human metapneumovirus (HMPV) is a

respiratory virus that causes mild infections similar to that caused by a common cold. First identified by scientists in 2001, the virus belongs to the *Pneumoviridae* family, of which respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), measles and mumps are also members. HMPV can cause both upper and lower respiratory tract infections and is generally seen in winter and early spring. Children, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems are more susceptible to the infection and to developing complications from it. The symptoms of HMPV can resemble those caused by a common cold. They include a cough, runny or blocked nose, sore throat, fever and wheezing. The estimated incubation period is three to six days. In most people, the illness goes away on its own within a few days, with rest and supportive care at home. In a few people however, complications such as

bronchitis or pneumonia may arise, requiring medical care.

How does HMPV spread?

HMPV spreads through contact with an infected person or touching objects that have the virus on them. This can be through secretions from coughs and sneezes; close contact with someone who has the infection by shaking hands, hugging; touching a doorknob or a phone or a keyboard that may be contaminated with the virus and then touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

How is HMPV treated?

There is no vaccine and no specific antiviral to treat HMPV. Most people require over-the-counter medications to relieve fever and pain, possibly with a decongestant. Antibiotics will not work for HMPV. However, the virus can be prevented. As with most other respiratory

viruses, the best way to protect yourself from illness is to wash your hands frequently with soap and water, avoid close contact with infected persons, avoid touching your face, nose, eyes and mouth and wear a mask if you think you may be infected, so that you can prevent transmitting it to others. People with lung conditions such as asthma or COPD should be extra cautious and protect themselves from infection.

What has the Indian govt. said?

In light of the reports from China, the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) under the Union Health Ministry is closely monitoring respiratory and seasonal influenza cases in the country, and is in touch with international agencies. "We will continue to monitor the situation closely, validate information and update accordingly," sources said.

HMPV cases have been confirmed in two infants from Karnataka and one in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. In Chennai too, two children tested positive for the virus. The Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda in a video statement said, "Health experts have clarified that the HMPV is not a new virus. It was first identified in 2001 and it has been circulating in the entire world for many years. HMPV spreads through air, by way of respiration... The health systems and surveillance networks of the country are vigilant and there is no reason to worry."

THE GIST

▼ Human metapneumovirus (HMPV) is a respiratory virus that causes mild infections similar to that caused by a common cold.

▼ There is no vaccine and there is no specific antiviral to treat HMPV. Most people require over-the-counter medications to relieve fever and pain, possibly with a decongestant.

▼ In light of the reports from China, the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) under the Union Health Ministry is closely monitoring respiratory and seasonal influenza cases in the country.

ABSTRACT

Analysing the 2023 caste-based Census of Bihar

Why a caste-based Census is imperative in India to understand the socio-economic conditions of disadvantaged groups, particularly backward classes

Rebecca Rose Varghese

G. Z. Christophe and Himanshu. 'Caste and Socio-economic Inequality in Bihar: A Disaggregated Analysis of the 2023 Census', *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol 59, Issue no. 47, November 23, 2024

In India, caste has been extensively studied, both historically and academically, to understand its impact on society, and the socio-economic challenges faced by various communities. Scholars have examined caste dynamics from different perspectives.

While colonial authorities conducted studies on caste for ease of administration, post-independence, caste became central to affirmative action policies aimed at addressing inequalities. Despite the breadth of research, the lack of comprehensive and uniform caste data remains a significant gap, highlighting the need for a caste-based Census to better address caste-based disparities.

Why a caste-based Census

The three broad administrative categories devised for affirmative action – Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) – group a multitude of diverse caste groups under generalised classifications. While people from the SC are those, who have historically faced untouchability, people from the ST are recognised for their social and economic backwardness, and social and economic disadvantages characterise people from OBC. Communities outside these categories are classified as the General Category.

In this context – where concerns persist that certain castes may dominate and monopolise benefits, that additional castes may need inclusion, or that aid fails to reach those who genuinely require it due to lack of reliable data, and how broad administrative categories fail to show the complexities of caste and tribe disparities – the importance of a caste-based Census becomes undeniable. Addressing these issues, the authors, Christophe Z Guilmoto and Himanshu, through their article "Caste and Socio-economic Inequality in Bihar: A Disaggregated Analysis of the 2023 Census", undertake an in-depth examination of Bihar's 2023 caste Census. This initiative by the State, similar to recent efforts undertaken by Karnataka and other regions, shows the increasing need for more detailed data on caste.

A caste Census is vital for backward-caste politics, as it enables accurate identification of OBCs, many of whom lack verifiable data for inclusion. It also supports demands to reassess the Supreme Court's 27% reservation cap, reflecting their demographic share. Finally, it prevents misuse of benefits by revealing intra-community disparities, fostering a more equitable system.

The caste history of Bihar

The socio-political landscape of Bihar has been deeply influenced by caste dynamics. From the colonial era's regimental assignments to identify "criminal tribes," caste data has been integral to administrative and political strategies. Post-independence, the



Need for more data: JD(U) workers and supporters celebrate after the declaration of Bihar's caste-based Census report, in Patna, on October 4, 2023. PTI

Constitution institutionalised affirmative action through Articles 16(4) and 340, recognising the socio-economic backwardness of certain groups. However, these classifications were often based on "expert assessments" rather than empirical data, as seen with the Mandal Commission.

Since the 1950s, caste-based politics has shaped Bihar's socio-political landscape. Key milestones include the 1978 Karpoori Formula and the Mandal Commission's 1990 implementation, which empowered OBCs under leaders like Lalu Prasad Yadav of the Janata Dal (JD). Internal divisions within OBCs led to political splits, including the rise of the Janata Dal (United) [JD(U)] and the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), while Nitish Kumar's 2007 Mahadalit mission stratified SCs. While repeated calls for a national caste Census did not materialise, Bihar went ahead, conducting its own in 2023, addressing data gaps and highlighting the socio-economic disparities within caste categories.

Methodology

The 2023 Bihar caste Census, overcoming legal challenges regarding the State's authority to collect caste, gender, and religion data, was conducted in two phases – house listing in early 2023 and socio-economic data collection mid-year.

After the Patna High Court dismissed petitions against the survey, reports were released detailing caste and socio-economic data. Using a predefined list of 215 communities, the Census categorised SCs, STs, OBCs, Most Backward Classes (MBCs), forward castes, and a separate "other reported castes" (ORC) group.

Over 98% of the population fall into backward classes (BCs), GCs, MBCs, and SCs, with BCs and MBCs making up nearly two-thirds. The Yadavs are the largest group at 14.3%, followed by Dusadhs, Chamars, and other significant communities. Despite dominant groups, the population is highly fragmented, with the 10 most prominent castes comprising less than half of the total population. The fractionalisation index of 0.96 highlights extreme diversity, exceeding even the ethnic diversity of countries like China or the U.S.

To analyse socio-economic status across communities, factor analysis was employed. This analysis focused on the 78 largest communities with populations over one lakh, as data from smaller populations is less reliable. These 78 groups represent 98.2% of Bihar's population. While the Census included key socio-economic data, the authors note its limitations. Key indicators such as age, land ownership, and regional

breakdowns were excluded, limiting the scope and depth of the findings.

Disparities in income and education

The authors explain that Bihar's caste clusters (GC, ORC, BC, MBC, SC, ST) reveal stark socio-economic disparities. ORCs and GCs lead in income and education, while Dalits, particularly Musahars and Bhuiyas, fare the worst. Over 40% of SC and ST households earn below ₹6,000/month, compared to 25% of GCs. Meanwhile, 12% of ORCs earn above ₹50,000/month, while Dalit incomes average ₹8,000/month, far below ₹39,000 for Kayasthas.

Educational disparities mirror income trends. Dalits have less than 3.5% higher education attainment, compared to 17% among GCs. Musahars and Bhuiyas average less than four years of schooling, while Kayasthas average 10.7 years. A polynomial regression ($r^2=0.90$) highlights a strong correlation between income and education, with higher education yielding returns, particularly for upper castes.

Within clusters, socio-economic diversity persists. BCs generally perform better than MBCs, but some MBC groups, like Dangis and Halwais, surpass many BCs. Yadavs, Bihar's largest caste, align with regional averages but exhibit internal disparities: 40% are poor, yet 6% are highly educated. Muslim groups like Pathans and Sheikhs face challenges akin to BCs. These findings underscore that broad administrative categories fail to capture the nuanced realities of caste-based inequalities.

Employment and asset ownership

Employment data reveals glaring inter-caste disparities. GCs dominate both the public and private sectors, while SCs like Musahars and Bhuiyas are largely confined to manual labour. Although reservations have narrowed disparities in government jobs, they disproportionately benefit dominant castes like Kurmis, Kushwahas, and Yadavs. Marginalised groups and Muslims remain underrepresented.

Asset ownership and migration patterns further underscore the socio-economic inequalities in Bihar. GCs and ORCs lead in housing and asset ownership, while marginalised groups such as Musahars, Tiyars, and Bhuiyas struggle with kutch housing and homelessness. Migration trends also highlight disparities, with forward castes dominating student migration, while both affluent and impoverished groups are engaged in labour migration.

Using Principal Component Analysis (PCA), the authors evaluated socio-economic status across communities, focusing on variables such as housing, employment, assets, and migration. PCA, which utilised 19 variables, revealed that Musahars, Tiyars, and Bhuiyas were the most deprived, while Kayasthas emerged as the wealthiest. This ranking, based on various living standard indicators, is also closely aligned with the rankings based on education and income.

Through a detailed look at the Bihar Census 2023, the authors highlight the deep-rooted socio-economic inequalities in the State, where higher castes benefit from better income, education, and employment opportunities, while marginalised groups like Musahars and Bhuiyas remain excluded.

The Bihar caste Census is proof of the need for detailed caste data. By offering comprehensive insights, this Census shows how it can become an essential tool for informing policies and ensuring resources are allocated effectively to address disparities and foster more equitable reforms.

Rebecca Rose Varghese is a freelance journalist.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian
S. Upendran

"... So I asked her if she could and she told me..."

"Stop beating about the bush and get to the point, will you?"

"Stop beating about the bush! What..."

"... I know what it means. It means don't ramble, get to the point. What I want to know is how this expression came into being."

"It goes back to the days of bat fowling."

"Is it spelt f.o.u.l.i.n.g?"

"No, no. It's spelt f.o.w.l.i.n.g. It's pronounced the same way as f.o.u.l.i.n.g. A 'fowl' is a bird, especially one that can be hunted or eaten as food."

"O.K. Tell me more about this bat fowling."

"Bat fowling was a night sport and the people who took part in it were called bat fowlers. And what the bat fowlers used to do was hunt birds at night."

"How did they do that?"

"The bat fowlers used to carry a bat and a lamp with them. They used to go into bushes where the birds were sleeping and wake them up by making a noise."

When the frightened birds came out flying, the bat fowlers showed them the lamp. The bright light made the birds temporarily blind. And while they were in this helpless state, the men killed them with their bats."

"How crude! But what does this have to do with beating about the bush?"

"Along with the lamps and bats, the bat fowlers used to take with them some servants. They were called 'beaters' and their job was to frighten the birds out of their hiding place."

"How did they do this? Did they shout?"

"No, they used to beat the bushes."

"The bush in which the birds were hiding?"

"No, it was usually the bush next to the one in which the birds were hiding."

"Really? Incidentally, Americans say 'around' instead of 'about'. So they were actually beating about the bush!"

"Yes, they were."

"What did they do with the birds? Did they make soup and have a bowl of it?"

"The 'ow' in 'b.o.w.l.' is pronounced like the 'o' in words like 'pole', 'hole' and 'sole'."

"O.K. So it's a bowl of soup. And talking about soup, has your mother made her famous vegetable soup lately?"

"No, not recently."

"Come to think of it, I haven't seen her for a long time. Please tell her I asked about her."

"I'll tell her you asked after her."

"After her?"

"That's the correct expression. Please tell your parents I asked after them. Ciao."

Published in *The Hindu* on August 16, 1994.

THE DAILY QUIZ

A decade after a deadly terrorist attack on its offices over a controversial cartoon, French Magazine *Charlie Hebdo* will release a special issue. A quiz on cartoons

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

Vighnesh P. Venkitesh

QUESTION 1
Where did the controversial cartoons that led to the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* first appear?

QUESTION 2
Name the 1939 cartoon by David Low which has two figures in it greeting each other as "The scum of the earth, I believe?" and "The bloody assassin of the workers, I presume?" Name the two figures as well.

QUESTION 3
Name the *New Yorker*

cartoon that came under fire in 2008 over its depiction of then U.S. President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama?

QUESTION 4
Name the cartoonist and the cartoon which appeared in *The Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1754, emphasising the importance of the U.S.'s then-disjointed colonies joining together.

QUESTION 5
Name the *Washington Post* cartoonist who quit last week after her cartoon depicting its owner Jeff Bezos and U.S. President-elect Donald Trump was rejected.



Visual question: Which Indian author's cartoons are exhibited here? MUSTAFAH K.K.

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The christened name of A.R. Rahman. The full name of Kapil Dev. Ans: A.S. Dileep Kumar; Kapil Dev Ramlal Nikhanj

2. Kapil Dev's last and record-setting 434th scalp. Ans: Adam Parore (New Zealand)

3. The two films for which Rahman won the National Film award for Best Background Score. Ans: Mon and Ponniyin Selvan

4. Kapil scored the unbeaten 175 during the 1983 Prudential World Cup at this ground. Ans: Nevill Ground in Tunbridge Wells (Kent)

5. Rahman was nominated for multiple Oscars for this 2011 film but did not get any of them. Ans: 127 Hours

6. The latest autobiography of Kapil. Ans: Straight from the heart

7. Name the musical that Rahman created in collaboration with Andrew Lloyd Webber in 2002. Ans: Bombay Dreams

Visual: Name this one-off album. Ans: SuperHeavy

Early Birds: Tito Shiladitya| Rajmohan Velayudhan| Piyal Tulsi| Tamal Biswas| Varghese Joseph

Word of the day

Cognate:

one related by blood or origin, especially on sharing an ancestor with another; a word is cognate with another if both derive from the same word in an ancestral language; related in nature

Synonyms:

akin, blood-related, consanguine, kin, blood relative

Usage: In this part of the world, society was organised on cognate kinship.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/cognatepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /kɒg.net/, /'kɒg.nɪt/, /'kɒg.næt/

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

From Page One**Nine killed by suspected Maoists in Bijapur**

Forensic experts said the elliptical crater created by the explosion was around eight feet deep and up to 10-16 feet wide.

Around 4.45 p.m., police officers said that while the remains of the jawans in their uniforms had been recovered, they were searching for the body of the civilian. Suspecting that the body may have fallen into a rivulet a few hundred metres away, divers were also being called, said a senior police officer at the spot. Hundreds of personnel combed the vast open areas around the blast site, searching for body parts and ruling out the possibility of lurking Maoists.

Parvati Nath, a resident of nearby Kutru village, said she had heard the explosion from 2 km away.

With the latest incident, security forces have lost nine personnel in just the first six days of 2025, as against 19 in the whole of 2024.

In terms of casualties, this is the first major IED blast since April 2023, when 10 DRG personnel and a civilian driver were killed in a similar blast in Dantewada. The *modus operandi* in Monday's blast was similar to the Dantewada incident where the blast was triggered using electrical wires.

The blast happened on the Kudri Bedre road near Ambeli village in the Kutru police station limits, nearly 450 km from the State capital Raipur, and close to the Maharashtra boundary. A senior police officer told presspersons that *prima facie*, it seems 60-70 kg of explosive material was used, which had been planted long ago as the wire connected to it was trapped well beneath the ground and grass had grown over it. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai expressed their condolences on X.

"I am deeply saddened by the news of the loss of DRG soldiers in an IED blast in Bijapur. I express my deepest condolences to the families of the brave soldiers. We will end Naxalism from the land of India by March 2026," Mr. Shah said. Mr. Sai said Naxalites were frustrated with the ongoing counter-insurgency operation in the Bastar region and therefore resorted to such cowardly acts.

The jawans killed in the incident were identified as DRG head constable Budhram Korsa; constables Pandaru Ram Poyay, Baman Sodhi and Dumma Markam; Bastar Fighters constables Somdu Vetti, Sudarshan Vetti, Subarnath Yadav and Harish Korram. The civilian was identified as Tuleshwar Rana, the police said. While Korsa and Sodhi belonged to the Bijapur district, other jawans hailed from neighbouring Dantewada. The civilian was a resident of Bastar district.

T.N. Governor walks out of Assembly

Last year, the Governor had expressed inability to read the address, claiming it contained passages with misleading claims and facts and reading them would have amounted to the Governor's address "becoming a constitutional travesty". In 2023, the Governor had created a furore by omitting certain portions and adding extempore remarks to the address and subsequently walking out. As in the previous years, the Assembly on Monday adopted a resolution moved by Leader of the House Duraimurugan to take on record only the approved text of the Governor's address. Thereafter, Speaker M. Appavu read out the Tamil version of the same.

Describing the Governor's action as "childish", Mr. Stalin in a social media post said while it was part of the tradition for the Governor to deliver his customary address to the Assembly, it has "become the habit of the Governor" to violate the practice. The Governor, "who included and deleted some parts in the prepared text" earlier, has chosen not to read out the speech this time. "The repeated actions of the Governor to consistently insult the people of Tamil Nadu and the government they have elected and the Tamil Nadu Assembly are not keeping with the dignity of the post of the Governor," he charged. He said the question lingering on everyone's mind was why should he [Governor] stick to his post if he was unwilling to discharge his Constitutional duties.

HMPV infection not new, no cause for alarm'

Dr. Neeraj Nischal, Additional Professor, Internal Medicine, All India Institute of Medical Science, Delhi, said the HMPV could not be compared with the novel coronavirus, which was completely new and people did not have any immunity against it.

"HMPV has been described since 2001, and even based on evidence, it dates back to the late 1950s. By the age of 10, the majority of the children develop immunity against this," he said.

The two cases from Karnataka were identified through routine surveillance for multiple respiratory viral pathogens, as part of the ICMR's ongoing efforts to monitor respiratory illnesses across the country.

The Health Departments of Delhi, Karnataka, and Maharashtra have issued an advisory to tackle the possible spread of the virus. The Union government also noted that it is monitoring the situation through all available surveillance channels, while the ICMR will continue to track trends in HMPV circulation throughout the year. The WHO is already providing timely updates regarding the situation in China to further inform ongoing measures.

(With inputs from State Bureaus)

SC panel urges Dallewal to accept medical help

SC-appointed high-powered committee meets farmer leader at Khanauri; KMM coordinator Pandher criticises Centre for its 'indifferent approach'; court adjourns hearing to January 10

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI /CHANDIGARH

A Supreme Court-appointed high-powered committee constituted to negotiate with farmers protesting on the Punjab-Haryana inter-State boundary on Monday met farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, whose hunger strike entered the 42nd day.

The former Punjab and Haryana High Court judge Justice Nawab Singh, who is heading the committee, told presspersons that the panel had urged Mr. Dallewal to take medical aid in the interest of his health.

"We repeatedly requested Mr. Dallewal to take medical aid. He said for him, farming comes first and health later. We all want and pray that he should stay healthy. We said we have not come here to say that the agitation should end but to say that your [Mr. Dallewal's] health should be good. Also, we conveyed that whenever he says, we



Reaching out: A member of the court-appointed panel meets farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal in Patiala on Monday. ANI

will be available," he said after the meeting at Punjab's Khanauri.

Mr. Dallewal, who is the convener of the umbrella body Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political), has been on an indefinite hunger strike at the protest site in support of several demands, including a legal guarantee for purchasing crops at the minimum support price (MSP).

He has been on a fast

since November 26. At Shambhu, Kisan Mazdoor Morcha coordinator Sarwan Singh Pandher criticised the Union government for its indifferent approach towards the farmers' struggle and the health of Mr. Dallewal.

Earlier, the Supreme Court adjourned the case related to the protest to January 10 when informed by senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Punjab Court itself.

along with the State's Advocate-General Gurinder Singh, that the farmers have agreed to meet Justice Singh.

A Bench headed by Justice Surya Kant expressed hope that "better sense prevails upon everyone" while assuming that the committee would be filing a report in court on the meeting.

Besides Justice Singh, the committee included retired IPS officer B.S. Sandhu, agriculture expert Devinder Sharma, professor Ranjit Singh Ghuman and Dr. Sukhpal Singh, agricultural economist from the Punjab Agricultural University.

The farmers' inclination to meet the committee was seen by the court as a positive signal as they had previously refused an invitation for a meeting.

The farmers' reluctance had made the court to declare that they could present their grievances directly in the Supreme Court itself.



The SKM expressed regret that the President could not meet the farmers' delegation.

stitutional institutions to adhere to democratic principles and hold discussions with the farmers.

"Instead of discussions to resolve their distress, the NDA-3 Government has been facilitating fresh onslaught by the agribusiness corporations on agriculture and livelihood of the farmers, agricultural workers, small traders and petty producers and on the federal rights of the State Governments through the introduction of the new National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing -NPFAM that is dangerous than the repealed 3 Farm Acts," it said.

Top court suggests AFT Benches in J&K, H.P. to shed backlog

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday suggested constituting Benches of the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) in Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh to deal with the growing pendency in defence-related cases from these two areas.

A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and N. Kotiswar Singh said that at present AFT Chandigarh was handling the burden of cases from there while setting up circuit Benches at Jammu and Kashmir, Shimla and Dharmsala would considerably relieve the backlog.

"There are sitting judges of this court who head committees. Even I head some of the committees which look after the appointment of members of the tribunals. Sometimes the workload is so much that the process gets de-

Supreme Court asked the Centre to collate data of the total sanctioned strength of tribunals and vacancies in these quasi-judicial bodies

layed. We have to devise a mechanism so that a process for filling of the vacancies gets started six months before the prospective vacancy arises in a tribunal," Justice Kant addressed Attorney General R. Venkataramani, appearing for the Centre.

The top court asked the Centre to collate data of the total sanctioned strength of tribunals and vacancies in these quasi-judicial bodies, and furnish suggestions on systematically filling these posts. The Centre was further directed to furnish the details of the ongoing processes for filling the posts in the tribunals within four weeks.

No sanction given for death sentence, Houthis handling nurse's case: Yemen Embassy

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

In a new development, the Embassy of Yemen in India has announced that the Chairman of the Presidential Leadership Council, Rashad al-Alimi, has not "ratified" the death sentence of Indian nurse Nimisha Priya and declared that the Houthi militia of the country handled the "entire case". The announcement came days after it was widely reported that the death sentence for the nurse had been approved by Mr. Alimi.

The Yemeni government emphasises that the entire case has been handled by the Houthi militias and therefore, His Excellency Dr. Rashad Al-Alimi, Chairman of the Presidential Leadership Council, Republic of Yemen has not ratified the judgement," a statement issued by the Embassy of Yemen de-



Nimisha Priya

clared on Monday while responding to reports published by a media outlet in Kerala.

The statement further said that Ms. Priya is "currently detained in Sanaa under the authority of the Houthi militia."

The statement comes days after a high-level Iranian official had declared that Tehran would "take up" Ms. Priya's case. While the declaration by the Yemen embassy has added a new dimension to the case,

A foreigner facing charges cannot leave country: SC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said when a foreigner's presence was required in India to answer a criminal charge, permission to leave the country must be refused. A Bench headed by Justice A.S. Oka clarified the law in a case of a Nigerian national involved in a narcotics case.

The top court made it plain that a court, on granting bail to a foreigner, must direct the state or the prosecuting agency to immediately inform the registration officer concerned under the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1992.

Houthi militants of Yemen are organised along the Ansar Allah group, which controls capital Sanaa and around 50% of the population. Ms. Priya was given the death sentence in Sanaa for the murder of her business partner Talal Abdo Mahdi in 2017.

U.S. to remove Indian entities from restricted lists, says Jake Sullivan

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

The United States will soon remove Indian scientific and nuclear entities from the "restricted lists" in order to "fully realise" the potential of the India-U.S. nuclear deal that was signed between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President George W. Bush, visiting U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said here on Monday.

Speaking at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, Mr. Sullivan presented the space and nuclear sectors as arenas of greater cooperation between the two sides.

"So today I can announce that the U.S. is now finalising the necessary steps to remove long-standing regulations that have prevented civil nuclear cooperation between India's leading nuclear en-



tities and U.S. companies. The formal paper work will be done soon," said Mr. Sullivan declaring the initiative. He described the move by the Biden administration as an "opportunity to turn the page on some of the frictions of the past and create opportunities for the Indian entities that have been on the re-

visit. Following the meeting, Mr. Modi remarked, "The India-U.S. Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership has scaled new heights, including in the areas of technology, defence, space, biotechnology and Artificial Intelligence. Look forward to building upon this momentum in ties between our two democracies for the benefit of our people and global good."

The External Affairs Ministry, in a statement, announced that Mr. Sullivan met his Indian counterpart, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, and briefed him about the "updates brought out by the Biden administration to U.S. missile export control policies under the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) that will boost U.S. commercial space cooperation with India."

Meet farmers, SKM urges President after she declines request

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha has urged President Droupadi Murmu to reconsider her decision not to meet a farmers' delegation on the issue of the hunger strike of farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal.

A Bench headed by Justice Surya Kant expressed hope that "better sense prevails upon everyone" while assuming that the committee would be filing a report in court on the meeting.

Besides Justice Singh,

the committee included

retired IPS officer B.S. Sandhu, agriculture expert Devinder Sharma, professor Ranjit Singh Ghuman and Dr. Sukhpal Singh, agricultural economist from the Punjab Agricultural University.

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The SKM had sought an appointment with Ms. Murmu and her office told them in a letter that their request had been considered, but "could not be acceded to due to paucity of time". The SKM said in a statement here on Monday that it expresses its deep regret that the President could not meet the farmers' delegation.

"Instead of discussions to resolve their distress, the NDA-3 Government has been facilitating fresh onslaught by the agribusiness corporations on agriculture and livelihood of the farmers, agricultural workers, small traders and petty producers and on the federal rights of the State Governments through the introduction of the new National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing -NPFAM that is dangerous than the repealed 3 Farm Acts," it said.

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Firms choosing to invest abroad rather than at home: Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The reluctance of the private sector to invest in India is a "corporate motion of no-confidence" in the Narendra Modi government, the Congress said on Monday.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh urged the government to focus on stimulating and sustaining domestic investment in the Union Budget.

Claiming that the investment environment in India had been sluggish in the "Modi decade", Mr. Ramesh said the Gross Fixed Capital Formation had fallen from an average of 32% of the GDP during Manmohan Singh's Prime Ministerial decade to consistently being below 29% of the GDP in the past 10 years.

"Investment is sluggish because mass consumption is not accelerating, tax and other authorities are threatening and intimidating businesses, and be-

Jairam Ramesh urges the govt. to focus on sustaining domestic investment in the upcoming Budget

cause of the growing perception that only four to five business groups can grow in the Modi regime. Now comes fresh evidence of the private sector's reluctance to invest in India under this government – net foreign direct investment (FDI) fell to a 12-year low in April–October this year (2024). Gross FDI inflows have stagnated," he said, citing a news report.

"Indian firms are increasingly choosing to invest abroad rather than at home. This is a corporate motion of no-confidence in the Modi government," he said. "How to stimulate and sustain domestic investment has to be the central concern of the Union Budget to be presented 26 days from today," Mr. Ramesh said.

At 'Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0' event, Lok Sabha Speaker hails role of women representatives, says their better and more sensitive leadership effectively addresses community concerns

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Highlighting the positive impact of women leading representative institutions at the panchayat level, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday said the inclusion and empowerment of women, especially from rural and tribal communities, were pivotal for socio-economic change.

Mr. Birla emphasised the importance of leveraging women's leadership in addressing pressing rural issues. He praised the entrepreneurial spirit of tribal women who had been creating self-reliant villages through initiatives in traditional crafts, online businesses, and local production.

Addressing "Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0", an event to felicitate women panchayat representatives, the Speaker sought further



Fostering progress: The Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0 event saw the participation of more than 500 tribal women representatives.

support to ensure that these women-led enterprises reached global markets, contributing to economic growth while preserving India's cultural heritage.

He said there was a positive impact of women leading representative institutions at the panchayat level, citing better and more sensitive leadership that effectively addresses community concerns.

cratic systems, and said their increased involvement would yield greater socioeconomic transformation in people's lives.

The Speaker noted that from the grassroots level in panchayats to the national arena in Parliament, the leadership of women had been instrumental in driving change, ensuring accountability, and creating inclusive development models. He lauded the growing presence of women in panchayati raj institutions, with several States surpassing the mandated 33% reservation for women, reaching over 50% in some cases. These measures, he stressed, are not symbolic but significant steps toward sustainable and inclusive governance.

The event saw the participation of more than 500 tribal women representatives from panchayati raj institutions of 22 States and Union Territories.

Mamata says Centre backs Kumbh Mela but not Gangasagar

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Observing that the Gangasagar Mela is no less important than the Kumbh Mela, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said that the government at the Centre supported the Kumbh Mela but did not extend any support to the Gangasagar Mela.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) chairperson promised "national mela status" to the Gangasagar Mela in future, whenever her party had a say in the government at the Centre.



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at Kapil Muni temple on Sagar Island.
DEBASISH BHADURI

Chief Minister took stock of the preparations for the upcoming Gangasagar Mela, and visited the Kapil Muni temple and the Bharat Sevashram Sangha.

Bridge to island

The Chief Minister said that about one crore people visited Gangasagar Mela every year, and the island, surrounded by water on all sides, required a bridge for easy access from the mainland.

Sagar island, where the annual pilgrimage of Gangasagar is held on Makar Sankranti, is the biggest island in the Sundarbans archipelago, with a population of over two lakh people.

"A few years ago, a Union Minister promised to build a bridge connecting Gangasagar. We waited but the bridge was not built," Ms. Banerjee said. The Chief Minister said the State government is building a bridge over the Muri ganga river to connect the Ganga Sagar island.

"The tender has been done. It will cost ₹1,500 crore. The bridge will be built within two to three years. There is no need to hurry so that the structure collapses. The bridge will have to serve future generations," Ms. Banerjee said.

During the day, the

Naveen launches scathing attack on Mohan Majhi govt.

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR



Leader of the Opposition in Odisha Assembly Naveen Patnaik during a protest in Bhubaneswar on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president and Leader of the Opposition Naveen Patnaik on Monday criticised Mohan Majhi-led Odisha government in Bhubaneswar, terming it a "double engine, double blow" administration.

The BJP government came to power in June, and seven months have passed since then. However, all we hear are long speeches, with little action on the ground. Prices of essential commodities continue to rise, yet no concrete measures have

been taken. While this government claims to represent the people, it appears disconnected from their

joys and struggles," the former Chief Minister said.

Mr. Patnaik said, "Be it pulses, edible oil, grocer-

ies, medicines, or vegetables – prices of essential commodities are skyrocketing. The government seems to have lost control over the market, content instead with spinning tales that do little to address the crisis. Life has become an everyday struggle for ordinary citizens."

"Unseasonal rains and crop losses have pushed farmers to the brink, leading to an alarming rise in suicides. Meanwhile, some leaders are preoccupied with self-promotion, oblivious to the pain around them. Markets are filled with restless people, mothers in despair, and

farmers on the verge of breaking, while the government remains in a state of deep slumber," said the former Chief Minister.

"This government came to power by peddling lies and making false promises. The BJP has ascended to power despite receiving fewer votes than the BJD. The so-called 'double engine' has delivered a 'double blow' – on one hand, the relentless burden of inflation, and on the other, GST imposed on virtually everything," he continued.

"The BJP had shown a rosy picture in its trailer. But the film that followed is 'MM (Mohan Majhi) Sarkar–Mahanga Mada (price rive) Sarkar'. The protest of four-and-a-half crore Odias will expose the real face of the government," said the veteran leader.

Meanwhile, reports of farmer deaths due to crop loss caused by unseasonal rain are coming from different parts of the State. Many farmers are either taking their own lives or succumbing to shock in their fields. Two spells of unseasonal rainfall in the last week of December, just as paddy crops had ripened, dashed their hopes for a bumper harvest.

**OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL,
M.P.C.AUTONOMOUS COLLEGE,TAKHATPUR,BARIPADA**
No-A-2 (1-A) : 064 // Date : 06-01-2025

QUOTATION CALL NOTICE FOR LABORATORY EQUIPMENT

Sealed tenders/quotations in prescribed Application form are invited from original manufacturer/registered firms/ dealers/suppliers having valid GST registration, PAN and IT Clearance for the supply, installation and commissioning of laboratory equipment/instrument to the different departments of the College so as to reach the undersigned on or before 27-01-2025, 05:00 P.M. through registered /speed post or Courier service only. The quotations will be opened on 29-01-2025 at 11:00 A.M. in the chamber of the undersigned in presence of intending tenderers or their representative. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all quotations without assigning any reason thereof. The details of terms, conditions, list of equipment/instrument, application form and financial bid form are available in the Website of the college: www.mpcautocollege.org.in

Sd/-
Principal

**DIRECTORATE OF MINES & GEOLOGY
STEEL AND MINES DEPARTMENT, GOVT. OF ODISHA, BHUBANESWAR**
Heads of Department Building, Unit-V, Bhubaneswar-751001, Tel No.: 0674-2391537, Fax No.: 0674-2391684; Email ID: dmrmines_odisha@rediffmail.com

PT1-DoMG-INV1-INVG-0020-2024, No.139 /DoMG, Dt. 06.01.2025

TENDER CALL NOTICE

The Directorate of Mines & Geology, Odisha, Heads of Department Building, Unit-V, Bhubaneswar-751001, invites Separate Sealed Tenders on behalf of the Governor of Odisha, in two bid system (Technical Bid and Price Bid) from reputed Firms/ Agencies/ Manufacturers or their authorized Distributors/C&F Agents/ reputed Dealers/ Suppliers/ EPM rate contract holders fulfilling the eligibility criteria to purchase the items as listed below during the year 2024-25.

Sl. No.	Description of the Items	Ernest Money Deposit (EMD) in ₹	Tender Processing Fee in ₹
1.	Geosoft Oasis Montaj Software	₹ 3,60,00,000	₹ 3,54,00
2.	Proton Magnetometer (Two Units)	₹ 1,05,00,000	₹ 1180,00

The detail Tender/Tender Document shall be available in the Departmental Website <http://www.odishaminerals.gov.in>. There will be no manual sale of Tender document. Interested bidders are requested to download the Tender Document from the website www.odishaminerals.gov.in and shall have to submit the Sealed Tender along with the Tender Processing Fee and EMD amount stated above against respective Bids.

A Pre Bid meeting shall be conducted on 10.01.2025 at 11.30AM in the Conference Hall of this Directorate of Mines & Geology, Odisha, Bhubaneswar, to clear up any confusion regarding tender details, scope of participation, solicitation of documents and any other specific matter if any.

Corrigendum/ Addendum if required any or any other notice or correspondence related to this Tender process shall be uploaded in the above website. Hence, interested Firms/Agencies/ Bidders are requested to be in continuous touch with the above web site, for further updates.

The Director of Mines & Geology, Odisha, reserves the right to accept / reject any / all Bids / Cancel the entire tender process at any stage without assigning any reason thereof.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Date of Commencement of Process : 07.01.2025 /10.00 A.M.
- Pre-Bid Conference : 10.01.2025 /11.30A.M.
- Closing date of Submission of Tender : 28.01.2025 / 5.30 P.M. (Only through Regd. Post/Speed Post/Courier)
- Date of Opening of Tender : 29.01.2025 /11.30 A.M.

(R.K. Kar)

ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR (GEOLOGY)

OPI-30028/11/0005/2425

G-43:

**KERALA IRRIGATION
INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION LTD**
Thiruvananthapuram
NOTICE INVITING RFP

KILDC, a PSU under Govt of Kerala invites Request for Proposal (RFP) for Developing Irrigation Tourism Project in between the Land adjacent to the waterbody at Kanjar and Kolapra Island, Idukki District under Muvalutupuzha Valley Irrigation Project, through PPP from Local Self-Government Organisations/Institutions or Other Government Organisations/Institutions or Private Organisations/Institutions or Individuals or Societies. Detailed RFP along with formats and timelines is uploaded in the KILDC website: kildc.kerala.gov.in

Chief Executive Officer

Government of Odisha "e" procurement Notice OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, DHENKANAL DIVISION, DHENKANAL

E-Procurement Bid Identification No.-09-DFO/DKL of 2024-25

1. Name of the work: Construction of Wooden Kraal for adult Bull, Elephant Open Moat with Hanging Solar System, EPT, Entry Gate, Camera System, Observation Tower for Wooden Kraal and Open Moat and Treatment Kraal for Juvenile and Calf Elephant at Kapilash Rescue Center of Dhenkanal Forest Division. 2. Estimate cost : Rs. 1,03,51,731/- (Approximate). 3. Period of completion : 2 months. 4. Date & time of availability of the Bid documents in the portal : From 10:00 AM on 06.01.2025 to 5:00 PM on 16.01.2025. 6. Last date / Time of receipt of the bid in Portal : 16.01.2025 up to 5:00 PM. 7. Date of Opening : 17.01.2025 at 11:00 AM. 8. Class of Contractor : "B" & "A" Class Contractor. 9. Name and Address of the Office : Office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Dhenkanal Division, Dhenkanal. Further details can be seen from the e - procurement Portal "<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>".

Divisional Forest Officer, Dhenkanal Division OIPR-08037/11/0010/2425

E-mail ID:cebbuildings_orissa@yahoo.co.in; cebbuildings@rediffmail.com; Tel:-(0674)-2391523, File No. B-IV-H-(H&D)-16/2024 Lr.No. - 395 Bhubaneswar, the 3rd Jan., 2025
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)
Invitation For Bids - Bid Identification No.C.E. (B)-26 / 2024-25
1. The Chief Engineer, Buildings-I (IC), Odisha, Bhubaneswar, on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Building work as mentioned below:
2. Nature of work : Building works
3. No. of work : 04 Nos.
4. Bid Cost : ₹ 10,000/- (each)
5. Class of Contractor : 'A' / Special Class
6. Availability of Bid Documents in the website : From dt.13.01.2025 to 17:00 Hours of dt.28.01.2025.
7. Date of Opening of Bid : Dt. 29.01.2025 at 11:30 AM
8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.

Chief Engineer, Buildings-I (IC), Odisha, Bhubaneswar. OPR-341711/11/0052/2425

B-818:

By E-Mail-Despatch: E_Mail ID: serv_balasore@yahoo.co.in Ph-No-06782/60318, Balasore

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BALASORE

"e" Procurement Notice for Road Work

Identification No.- Online Tender- Bridge N.C.C. No.15 for 2024-25 Date.03/01/2025

Letter No.: - 16

1. Name of the Work : Balance Road Works under PMGSY-III (2022-23)

2. Total No. of Work : 01 Nos.

3. Estimated Cost : Rs.273.89 lakhs (Approximately)

4. Eligible Class of Contractor : "B' & 'A' Class (of Odisha P.W.D.) or relevant Class of other Licensing authorities (as per annexure).

5. Period of Completion : From 09 Calendar Months for the work

6. Other Details : Procurement Officer Bid Identification No. Availability of Tender Online for bidding From To Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Cl-ification Technical Bid Financial Bid

1	Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Balasore.	2	3	4	5	6	7
	N.C.C., No.15 of 2024-25	Dt.08.01.2025 at 11.00 A.M.	21.01.2025 Up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt.20.01.2025 Up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt.22.01.2025 at		

IN BRIEF



Prashant Kishor released from jail after getting bail

Jan Suraaj Party leader Prashant Kishor was released from jail on Monday evening after a Patna court granted him "unconditional" bail, his lawyer said. He was arrested earlier in the day while staging an indefinite hunger strike seeking cancellation of the 70th Bihar Public Service Commission Combined (Preliminary) Competitive Examination following an alleged paper leak. The same court had granted him conditional bail on a personal bond of ₹25,000. However, he refused to obey the condition mentioned in the personal bond and chose to go to jail. The court then sent him to judicial custody for 14 days.

Woman, daughter escape attack by rhino in Kaziranga

A woman and her daughter had a close shave in Assam's Kaziranga National Park (KNP) when they fell off a safari vehicle with rhinos in close proximity, an official said on Monday. The girl fell from the open vehicle while they were taking a safari on Sunday inside the Bagori range of the KNP and her mother jumped out to pick her up, the official said. The driver, however, stopped the vehicle and the two climbed into it again, the official said. The two were not injured but were taken for medical aid as they were in a state of shock for a while. PTI

Labourers trapped in 'flooded' coal mine in Assam

The Hindu Bureau

GUWAHATI

At least half a dozen labourers are feared trapped in a flooded coal mine in Dima Hasao district of Assam.

There is no clarity on how water seeped into the mine but a preliminary police report, citing some local people, said four to six workers have been trapped inside the pit since about 8 a.m. on Monday. The spot is about 30 km from the nearest police station at Umrangso and takes about seven hours to reach from Haflong, the district headquarters.

"Leaves have emerged! VSSC's CROPS (Compact Research Module for Orbital Plant Studies) aboard PSLV-C60 POEM-4 achieves a milestone as cowpea sprouts unveil their first leaves in space," the ISRO said in a post on Monday.

It can be recalled that the cowpea seeds had a couple of days ago successfully sprouted in space.

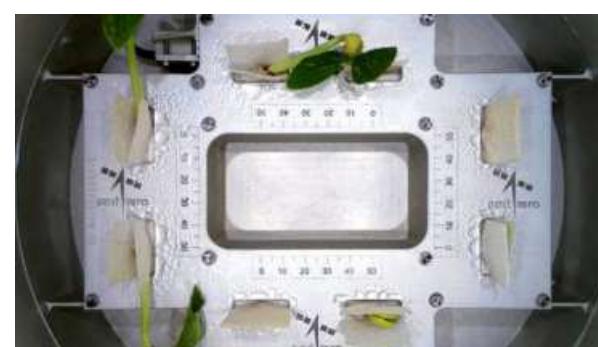
The CROPS payload, developed by the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), is envisioned as a multi-phase platform to develop and evolve the ISRO's capabilities for growing and sustaining flora in extraterrestrial environments.

Leaves flutter in space: ISRO's experiment reaches milestone

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

A batch of cowpea seeds which were taken into orbit by an Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) mission and which recently sprouted has unveiled their first leaves.



Life cycle: Cowpea seeds that were sent into space by the ISRO, sprout their first leaves. ISRO/X

Space docking experiment postponed to January 9

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation on Monday said the docking of two SpaDeX satellites, scheduled for January 7, has been postponed to January 9.

"The docking process requires further validation

through ground simulations based on an abort scenario identified today," the ISRO said in a post.

It had launched the Space Docking Experiment mission on December 30.

The postponement is not a cause for concern if the experiment is executed within the window that lasts till January 10.

Akasa Air pilot removed from training duties by DGCA

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Monday relieved a pilot of Akasa Air from training duties in connection with an unstable landing in Bengaluru last March for which the airline allegedly failed to provide mandatory corrective training to the cockpit crew.

In an order on January 6, the regulator said it was withdrawing its approval for the Line Training Captain (LTC) status granted to Captain Kuljeet Yadav. LTCs carry out practical training for trainee pilots during commercial flights. He is barred from supervising landings and take-offs of under-trainees, according to the order.

The incident of "abnormal runway contact" occurred on an Akasa Air flight from Bagdogra to Bengaluru on March 1.

this committee, but in many States the Governors changed this norm and started nominating their person for the committee, leading to conflicts with the States.

Releasing the draft, Mr. Pradhan said the guidelines would infuse innovation, inclusivity, flexibility and dynamism in every aspect of higher education, empower teachers and academic staff, strengthen academic standards and pave the way for achieving educational excellence.

Explaining the provision, UGC Chairman Jagadesh Kumar said individuals could qualify for faculty positions based on their performance in a subject of their choice in UGC-National Eligibility Test. "Also, the subject of the Ph.D. degree precedes the disciplines studied in undergraduate and postgraduate degrees for faculty selections. This is an important flexibility to remove rigid subject boundaries and allow faculty applicants to transition across disciplines," Professor Kumar said.

Integration of J&K into railway network a monumental step'

Peerzada Ashiq

SRINAGAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who virtually inaugurated the new Jammu Railway Division on Monday, said J&K's integration into the national railway network was "a monumental step".

"Integration of J&K into the national railway network is a monumental step towards transforming the Indian Railways into a global leader in efficiency, speed, and passenger experience," Mr. Modi said, while also virtually inaugurating railway projects for Telangana and Odisha.

Mr. Modi referred to the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Link (USRL), the Anji Khad cable-stayed bridge, and the Chenab rail bridge in Jammu and Kashmir. "These achievements are the symbols of India's growing infrastructure capabilities. Such advancements in India's railway system are not only a source of pride for me but for the entire nation."

Speaking on the occasion, J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed hope that the extension of the rail network would "create jobs, enhance trade, and boost tourism".



Narendra Modi

Bharat'

Mr. Modi also highlighted successful trials of the Vande Bharat Express train that will connect the Kashmir Valley with the rest of the country for the first time. "The introduction of high-speed Vande Bharat trains and the expansion of metro networks demonstrate India's commitment to world-class transport systems," the PM said.

He inaugurated the new Jammu railway division and the new Charlapalli terminal station in Telangana, and laid the foundation stone for East Coast Railway's Rayagada Railway Division building.

Speaking on the occasion, J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed hope that the extension of the rail network would "create jobs, enhance trade, and boost tourism".

Social media accounts can be deleted after death: draft rules

Aroon Deep

NEW DELHI

A key provision of the draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025 could lead to the disappearance of the social media accounts of the deceased.

According to Rule 8(1) of the draft Rules, which have been issued for public comment, "A Data Fiduciary... shall erase such personal data, unless its retention is necessary for compliance with any law...if, for the corresponding time period...the Data Principal neither approaches such Data Fiduciary for the performance of the specified purpose nor exercises her rights in relation to such processing."

This essentially means that social media companies, e-commerce firms, and online gaming companies – the three types of enterprises outlined specifically in the Rules – will have to proactively delete inactive accounts, a provi-

sion which may erase public-facing social media accounts of individuals who died in recent years.

IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said in a recent interview that the Rules may have a two-year timeline for compliance, and consultations around this issue are ongoing.

In the past, social media platforms have had to contend with the issue of dead users when planning purges of inactive accounts. In 2019, the erstwhile Twitter announced that old accounts that had not been used in over six months would be removed after some warnings, and their usernames would be made available.

Public outrage ensued from relatives of deceased users, in addition to concern that notable accounts of public personalities would disappear from the platform. Under Elon Musk, who acquired Twitter in 2022 and renamed it X, the policy resurfaced, and accounts started dis-

appearing in May 2023.

Mita has a process in place to memorialise accounts of the deceased in accordance with the wishes of relatives.

+

IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said in a recent interview that the Rules may have a two-year timeline for compliance, and consultations around this issue are ongoing.

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FAITH

Three types of emersion

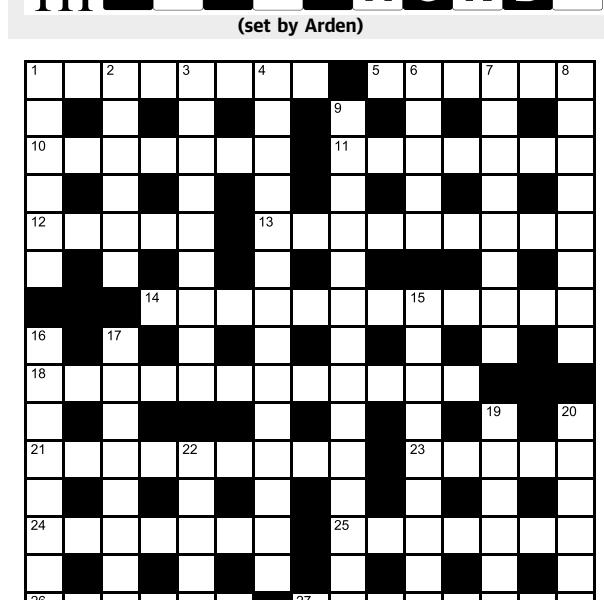
People can derive God's blessings if they study sacred texts written by various saints and acharyas with deep faith and belief. Lord Siva is very simple and unassuming. Apostle Manick Vasakar says Lord Siva calls upon people to accept liberation like street vendors who sell their ware.

Lanka Sri Jeyaraj said in a discourse that no person is inferior. God sends all with equal innate talents, and it is up to the people to use their intelligence effectively. It is not the intention of the Supreme Being to send the living beings only to suffer in this world. God is yearning and waiting to see people return to Him like honey bees that swarm flowers. God will automatically transcend down towards those who become refined. The lives of the various apostles and saints are the best examples. Emancipation from the tyranny of worldly things is the path to liberation, the gateway to immortality.

There are three types of weariness: physical tiredness, mental exhaustion, and the soul's lassitude. Physical emersion is the first stage, which can be relieved by resting the faculties. It does not affect the other two. If a person is mentally worn out, it may disturb him, and through that, he may also be physically exhausted, but it won't affect the soul. Only the soul's exasperation will tire a person of worldly activities and seek liberation. The soul's tiredness will make both physical and mental strength feeble. Manick Vasakar says he has taken various births such as grass, weeds, worms, insects, birds, trees, animals, snakes, ghosts, monsters, and asuras and got exhausted (*pirandhu ilaihen*). He prays to Lord Siva through his work Thiruvachakam to extend His blessings and liberate him.

TH CROSSWORD

14376



Across

- Ruin game with a bloomer (8)
- Loves to cut in half used sponge (6)
- Ground grains added to a drink (7)
- It goes up in surprise (7)
- Country crop - morning plant (5)
- Cannot get solution for a trigonometric function (9)

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



SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

No. 55693 Distribution: www.knightfeathers.com

Solution to previous puzzle

ADAMS NEEDLE NAP

BNT TSEPEE

SIENNA TACKINESS

EOLLAOCODE

NAUSEATED ECCLAT

TNE ENEFA

INCUBUS RATE

AEA RYD

SCAM PRESUME

CAKOGA GEE

ANVAS BARCELONA

NDPBTNSN

CARNATION SPLITT

ECCNEUA

LOWEAGERBEAVER

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

7 1 5 4 6 2 8 3 9

8 4 3 1 7 9 2 5 6

6 2 9 8 5 3 7 1 4

2 3 4 5 9 8 6 7 1

9 5 8 7 1 6 3 4 2

1 6 7 2 3 4 9 8 5

3 7 2 9 4 5 1 6 8

4 9 1 6 8 7 5 2 3

5 8 6 3 2 1 4 9 7

CM YK

M ND-NDE

IN BRIEF



Govt. to soon take decision on raising sugar MSP: Minister

Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said the government will soon take a decision on increasing the minimum support price (MSP) of sugar. The MSP stays unchanged at ₹31 per kg, a rate set in February 2019. However, industry bodies demanded an increase due to rising production costs and economic pressures faced by sugar mills. "We will take a decision whether to increase [MSP] or not shortly," Mr. Joshi told reporters during an event. PTI

RBI added 8 tonne gold to its reserves in November : WGC

Central banks around the world, in November, added 53 tonne of gold to their reserves, of which the Reserve Bank of India's addition was eight tonne, the World Gold Council (WGC) said. In 2024, central banks – mostly from emerging markets – were keen gold buyers, driven by the need for a stable and secure asset amid global economic uncertainties. The gold price dip following U.S. polls may have given some central banks added impetus to accumulate, it said. PTI

NCLAT to hear Meta plea against CCI penalty on Jan. 16

Meta Platforms Inc. moved corporate appellate tribunal NCLAT against the order passed by fair trade regulator CCI, which imposed a penalty of ₹213.14 crore for abuse of its dominant position. The petition was mentioned before a National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) bench. Senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Meta, sought an urgent hearing in the matter considering the importance and nature of the matter. PTI

Inflation likely cooled a tad in December

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

India's retail inflation likely eased a bit from November's 5.5% mark amid a mildly lower uptick in essential commodities' prices even as the average cost of home cooked vegetarian and non-vegetarian meals rose 6% and 12% compared to last year.

As per Crisil's monthly food plate tracker, month-on-month, a vegetarian meal's cost eased 3% in December, aided by a 12% sequential drop in tomato and onion prices, while a non-vegetarian meal's price rose 3% to hit a 16-month high of ₹63.3 thanks to a surge in broiler prices. Compared to December 2023, last month saw a



2.4% rise in tomato prices while potato prices rose over 52%. Onions became 1.2% cheaper, as per the Bank of Baroda (BoB) Essential Commodities Index that tracks 20 food items. The index rose 5.4% in December compared with 5.5% in November. Aditi Gupta, an economist at BoB, estimated that Consumer Price Inflation moderated to 5% in December.

Sensex tanks 1,258 points amid HMPV concerns

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

Frontline stock market indices on Monday plunged more than 1.5% owing to a host of factors including concerns over spread of the Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) in China and reporting of a few cases in India, weak corporate earnings of certain companies, and continued selling by foreign institutional investors (FIIs), said analysts.

The S&P BSE Sensex fell 1,258 points, or 1.5%, to 77,965. The top Sensex losers included Tata Steel (4.41%), NTPC (3.65%), Adani Ports (3.04%), and Zomato (2.95%).

Construction growth to hit three-year low: ICRA

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

Credit rating agency ICRA has reduced its revenue growth estimates (GE) for construction companies for FY25 to 8-10% from 12-15% projected earlier.

It said the growth momentum of construction firms would hit three-year lows in FY25, as construction activity slowed down.

ICRA said the slowdown was due to the imposition of the model code of conduct in Q1 FY25 and an elongated monsoon period, along with milestone-based billing in Q2 FY25 which impacted construction activity.

Services rebounded to 4-month high in Dec. on new orders

HSBC India Services Activity Index reverses November moderation to hit 59.3 in December; however, global orders growth hit three-month low

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Manufacturing levels in India's private sector may have slumped to a 12-month low in December, but Services activity regained momentum last month after a mild moderation in November as new orders and output levels hit a four-month high, as per a private survey-based gauge.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services Business Activity Index – based on a single question asking how the level of business activity compares with the situation the month before – rose from 58.4 in November to 59.3 in December. A reading of over 50 on the index indicates an expansion. Within the services sectors, Finance & Insurance again registered by far the strongest increases in both new orders and business activity. PTI



Money-spinners: Finance & Insurance registered by far the strongest increases in both new orders and business activity. PTI

the fastest pace in nearly 12 years during November.

However, December's price hikes were above the long-run average. While cost pressures increased at the highest pace for consumer services firms, price hikes were highest in the transport, information and communication category, S&P Global noted.

Capacity pressures seem to be building up for some firms, as the rate of backlog accumulation quickened to a seven-month high, and companies continued to hire to keep up, although the rate of hiring slowed November's 'unprecedented' up-tick in permanent and temporary staffers' hiring.

While international orders continued to rise, their growth retreated to a three-month low. Moreover, despite the improved

trend in December, optimism among services players fell from November's six-month high mark. But overall, service providers remained confident of output rising over the coming 12 months.

"Forward-looking indicators such as new business and future activity suggested that the strong performance will likely continue in the near future. The easing of input price inflation in the month also supported business sentiment," said HSBC economist Ines Lam.

Ms. Lam also pointed out the contrast in the services index reading "with the growing signs of a slowdown in the manufacturing industry." The stronger services performance, in fact, lifted the growth in aggregate output levels of industry.

Announce 8th Pay Commission soon, trade unions tell FM

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Ten Central Trade Unions (CTUs) in the Opposition camp and the Sangh Parivar-backed Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) have demanded the Centre constitute the eighth Pay Commission immediately.

The trade unions made the demand at a pre-Budget discussion with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman here.

Senior BMS leader Pawan Kumar said they also demanded wage negotiations in public sector undertakings (PSUs) must begin immediately and income threshold for income tax raised to ₹10 lakh with existing exemptions.

"Pensioners must be made exempt from paying income tax on pensions," as per BMS memorandum.

The platform of 10 CTUs



Nirmala Sitharaman

private players. We asked them for an increase in the threshold of Provident Fund and State Insurance coverage for employees as well as to extend the cover for the benefit of the informal economy workforce including gig/app-based workers and domestic workers steadily to make the statutory schemes inclusive," said AITUC general secretary Amarjeet Kaur.

BMS wanted Centre to ensure appropriate funding for unorganised sector social security boards.

"Ensure funding for different industrial boards like the beedi workers welfare board, contract labour board, etc. which were earlier (before the GST regime) funded via cess. Provide special packages for labour-intensive sectors like plantation, beedi, agriculture, and fisheries," the BMS demanded.

They also asked the FM to raise the minimum pension for PF pensioners from ₹1,000 to ₹5,000 as a first step and then get 50% of minimum wages notified and link it to variable dearness allowance.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	MONDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	77,965	-1.59
US Dollar	85.68	0.12
Gold	79,000	-0.87
Brent oil	76.91	-

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2474.45	-90.15
Adani Ports	1163.05	-36.50
Apollo Hosp.	7429.15	130.80
Asian Paints	2267.15	-68.80
Axis Bank	1063.40	-21.50
Bajaj Auto	8823.85	-141.85
Bajaj FinServ	1684.60	-16.50
Bajaj Finance	7349.35	-57.90
Bharat Elec.	282.15	-9.80
Bharti Airtel	1588.45	-10.40
BPLC	284.85	-11.55
Britannia Ind.	4791.25	-42.85
Cipla	1491.40	-19.85
Coal India	378.75	-14.90
Dr Reddy's Lab.	1350.35	-2.30

Eicher Motors

Grasim Ind.

HCL Tech

HDFC Bank

HDFC Life

Hero MotoCorp

Hindustan Unilever

ICICI Bank

IndusInd Bank

Infosys

ITC

JSW Steel

Kotak Bank

L&T

M&M

Maruti Suzuki

Nestle India

NTPC

ONGC

PowerGrid Corp

Reliance Ind.

SBI Life

State Bank

Shriram Finance

Ltd.

Sun Pharma

Tata Consumer Product

Tata Motors

Tata Steel

TCS

Tech Mahindra

Titan

Trent Ltd.

UltraTech Cement

Wipro

Source: Indian Bank

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on January 06

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	85.63	85.95
Euro	89.28	89.62
British Pound	107.43	107.84
Japanese Yen (100)	54.44	54.65
Chinese Yuan	11.69	11.74
Swiss Franc	94.96	95.22
Singapore Dollar	63.05	63.31
Canadian Dollar	59.81	60.04
Malaysian Ringgit	18.98	19.06
Australian Dollar	53.84	54.04

Source: Indian Bank

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FRONTLINE SPORTSTAR THE HINDU

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT "CORRIGENDUM"

The following amendments in the online tender invited vide this office letter No. PWD/DEH/CB/TENDER/2024-25-8840-4-5 dated 01.01.2025 for the work construction/Establishment of 50 Bedded Critical Care Block & DIPHL at Civil Hospital Dehra in District Kangra (H.P.) (SH: Building Portion including Water Supply & Sanitary Installation, Rain Water Harvesting System and Boundary Wall) are hereby made as under:-

1. The Estimated Cost may be read as amounting to Rs.16,83,40,717/- instead of Rs. 16,83,40,625/-
2. The Earnest Money may be read as amounting to Rs.33,67,000/- instead of Rs. 34,00,000/-.

All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged.

Endst. No.: PWD/DEH/CB/TENDER/2024-25-9067-71

BEVERLY HILLS

The Brutalist and *Emilia Perez* triumph at 82nd Golden Globes



Brady Corbet's postwar epic *The Brutalist* and Jacques Audiard's Spanish language trans musical *Emilia Perez* — won top honours at the 82nd Golden Globes. *The Brutalist* won Best Director for Brady Corbet and Best Actor for Adrien Brody. *Emilia Perez* won best film, comedy or musical along with three more awards. AP

LONDON

Starmer defends record over child sex gangs after Musk criticism



Keir Starmer defended his work as Britain's top prosecutor on Monday, refusing to mention U.S. billionaire Elon Musk by name but addressing his criticism that, long before he became Prime Minister, he had failed to prosecute gangs who sexually abused girls. Starmer also slammed 'those spreading lies and misinformation'. REUTERS

WASHINGTON

Venezuela opposition seeks Army backing, leader to meet Biden



Venezuelan opposition leader Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia called on Sunday for the military to recognise him as commander-in-chief, as he continued an international tour seeking to pressure President Nicolas Maduro to relinquish power. He has been recognised by the U.S., Italy and several Latin American nations as president-elect. AFP

MOSCOW

Russia claims to have captured industrial town of Kurakhove



Russia said its forces had captured the "important logistics hub" of Kurakhove in eastern Ukraine in what would be a key advance after months of steady gains. The industrial town of Kurakhove, which had a pre-conflict population of around 22,000 people, is located next to a reservoir and is home to a power station. AFP

Trudeau quits as party leader, vows to continue as PM for the time being

Canadian PM says it had become clear he cannot be the leader during the next elections due to internal battles; parliament, which was due to resume on January 27, to be suspended until March 24, allowing for a Liberal Party leadership race

Associated Press

TORONTO

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced his resignation on Monday in the face of rising discontent over his leadership, and after the abrupt departure of his Finance Minister signaled growing turmoil within his government.

Mr. Trudeau said it had become clear to him that he cannot "be the leader during the next elections due to internal battles." He planned to stay on as Prime Minister until a new leader of the Liberal Party



Tough call: Justin Trudeau became unpopular due to issues such as soaring cost of food and housing, and surging immigration. AP

is chosen.

"I don't easily back down faced with a fight, especially a very important one for our party and the

country. But I do this job because the interests of Canadians and the well being of democracy is something that I hold dear," he said.

Mr. Trudeau came to power in 2015 after 10 years of Conservative Party rule, and had initially been hailed for returning the country to its liberal past.

An official familiar with the matter said parliament, which had been due to resume on January 27, will be suspended until March 24. The timing will allow for a Liberal Party leadership race. All three main opposition parties have said they plan to topple the Liberal Party in a no-confidence vote when parliament resumes, so a spring election to pick a permanent replacement was almost assured.

The political upheaval comes at a difficult moment for Canada internationally. U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has threatened to impose 25% tariffs on all Canadian goods if the government does not stem what Mr. Trump calls a flow of migrants and drugs in the U.S. – even though far fewer of each crosses into the U.S. from Canada than from Mexico.

But the 53-year-old became deeply unpopular with voters in recent years over a range of issues, including the soaring cost of food and housing, and surging immigration.

The attack occurred in the Palestinian village of Al-Funduq, on one of the main east-west roads crossing the territory. Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service said two women in their 60s and a man in his 40s were killed, and the military said it was looking for the attackers.

The Palestinian Health Ministry says at least 838

Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to "reach the despicable murderers" behind Monday's attack and "settle accounts with them and with everyone who assisted them. No one will be spared." Hamas praised the attack in a statement but did not claim responsibility for it.

Associated Press

TEL AVIV

Gunmen opened fire on a bus carrying Israelis in the occupied West Bank on Monday, killing at least three persons and wounding seven others. Violence has surged in the territory since Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack out of Gaza ignited the ongoing war there.

The attack occurred in the Palestinian village of Al-Funduq, on one of the main east-west roads crossing the territory. Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service said two women in their 60s and a man in his 40s were killed, and the military said it was looking for the attackers.

The Palestinian Health Ministry says at least 838

Three killed in attack on bus carrying Israelis in West Bank

Associated Press

TEL AVIV



Out of the blue: Israeli soldiers at the site of the shooting in the village of Al-Funduq in West Bank on Monday. GETTY IMAGES

Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank since the start of the war in Gaza. Most appear to have been militants killed in battles with Israeli troops, but the dead also include participants in violent protests and civilian bystanders.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to "reach the despicable murderers" behind Monday's attack and "settle accounts with them and with everyone who assisted them. No one will be spared."

Hamas praised the attack in a statement but did not claim responsibility for it.

Bangladesh ICT puts out second warrant against ex-PM Hasina

Press Trust of India

DHAKA

Bangladesh's International Criminal Tribunal (ICT) on Monday issued arrest warrants against deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and 11 others, including former military generals and a former police chief, for their alleged role in incidents of enforced disappearances.

This was the second arrest warrant by the ICT against Ms. Hasina, who fled to India after her Awami League government's toppling following unprecedented anti-government

protests in August last year.

The tribunal has so far recorded three cases against her. Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mojumdar, chairman of the tribunal, issued the arrest warrant after hearing a prosecution plea," an ICT official said.

February deadline

The IG of Police was ordered to arrest the twelve persons, including Ms. Hasina, and produce them before the tribunal on February 12 in the case filed over complaints of enforced disappearances of several hundred people.

India 'unequivocally condemns' Pakistani bombing of Afghan targets

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI



Pakistan targeted areas in Afghanistan's Barmal on December 24 and 25 that led to the killing of at least 46 people. AFP

bours for its own internal failures. We have also noted the response of an Afghan spokesperson in this regard," Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of

External Affairs said. Pakistan Air Force jets bombed targets in Barmal district of Paktika December 24 and 25 that led to the killing of at least 46 pe-

ople. Following the attacks, the Taliban regime's Defence Ministry said, "The Islamic Emirate considers this brutal bombing a violation of international principles and a clear act of aggression."

Afghanistan and Pakistan troops have clashed along the Durand Line near Paktika for several weeks. Pakistan said that the aerial attacks were aimed at assets of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, a designated terror group in Pakistan. Islamabad has in the past accused TTP of carrying out attacks against military bases, schools and other civilian targets.

Russia is 'guilty' over downed Azerbaijan plane, says Aliyev

Agence France-Presse

BAKU

Azerbaijan's President said on Monday that Russia was "guilty" over the downing of an airline last month that Baku says was shot by Russian air defences. An Azerbaijan Airlines Embraer 190 jet crash-landed in Kazakhstan on December 25, killing 38 of the 67 people on board.

The guilt for the death of Azerbaijani citizens lies with representatives of the Russian Federation," Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said on Monday. Mr. Aliyev was meeting surviv-

The Azerbaijani leader, who is close to Mr. Putin, has issued rare fierce criticism of Moscow

ing crew and family members of crew who died in the incident.

The Azerbaijani leader, who is close to Mr. Putin, has issued rare fierce criticism of Moscow over the crash. On Monday he said Russia's "concealment" of the causes and "delusional versions" being put forward "cause us justifiable anger".

Sport

SPORTSTAR ACES

Sportstar of the Year (Male) award

2024 was a landmark year for Indian sports with a host of achievements across several disciplines. The annual Sportstar Aces Awards seek to honour the trailblazers.

SUMIT ANTIL



Defended his Paralympic title in Paris Games

Broke the Paralympic record twice enroute the gold medal

Broke the WR at least eight times over the past five years

Claimed gold in World Para Championships

P.R. SREEJESH



Clinched bronze at the Paris Summer Games

Conceded just five goals from penalty corners during Olympic campaign

Won FIH Goalkeeper of the Year Award for the third time

As coach, led youth team to Junior Asia Cup crown

Voting lines open for 2025 Sportstar Aces Awards.
Scan the QR code



Truth clinches the Sri. A.S. Krishna Memorial Cup in Monday's races

HYDERABAD: Trainer S. Sreekanth's grey gelding Truth, ridden by Akshay Kumar, won the Sri. A.S. Krishna Memorial Cup, the feature event of Monday's (Jan. 10, 2024) races. The winner is owned by M/s. N.V. Rohin Kumar & G.K. Keshavmurthy.

1. ATTRACTRESS PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200M): PACIFIC HEIGHTS (S. Saqlain) 1, Emerald Touch (Ashad Asbar) 2, Sharanga (Abhay Singh) 3 and Misty Night (Nakhat) 4: 2-1/2, 3-1/2 and 1-1/4. Im 13. 73s. ₹13 (w), 10, 56 and 14 (p). SHP: 41, THP: 46, SHW: 10 and 36. FP: 59, Q: 58, Tanala: 221. Favourite: Cherie Chevalier. Owners: Mr. Seshadri Reddy Pochana, Mrs. Smita Bajaria, Mr. Bolbeni Krishnamai, Mr. Teegala Vijender Reddy, Mr. Teegala Sumanth Reddy & Mr. Pochana Arjun Reddy. Trainer: K.S.V. Prasad Raju.

2. BRAVE HUNTER CUP (DIV. I) (1,200M): SWISS GIRL (Akshay Kumar) 1, Blue Pantheress (H.M. Akshay) 2, Morning Mist (Deepak) 3 and Battle On (P. Sai K) 4: 1-1/2, Neck and Head. Im 13. 86s. ₹40 (w), 25, 12 and 26 (p). SHP: 53, THP: 57, SHW: 18 and 27. FP: 13. ₹126, Tanala: 336. Favourite: First Class. Owner: Mr. Rajeev Sharma. Trainer: Magan Singh.

3. ASTONISH PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200M): SILVER LINING (Afroz Khan) 1, Char Ek Char (Mohit) 2, Inderdhanush (Deepak) 3 and Lights On (Ajay K) 4: 1-1/4, 2-3/4 and Short Head. Im 14. 08s. ₹82 (w), 25, 12 and 26 (p). SHP: 53, THP: 57, SHW: 14 and 23. FP: 64, Q: 68, Tanala: 3,021. Favourite: Challenger. Owner: Mr. Hothu Sajjad Waheb. Trainer: A. Imran Khan.

4. EVERLY TURK MILLION (GR. 3) (1,200M): GACHCHHATU (Neeraj Rawal) 1, See The Light (Trevor) 2, Turiya (Mukesh) 3 and Stars Ended (Akshay K) 4: 2-3/4, 1-1/4 and 5-3/4. Im 11. 97s. ₹29 (w), 10, 13 and 14 (p). SHP: 33, THP: 39, SHW: 10 and 29. FP: 68, Q: 28, Tanala: 322. Favourite: See The Light. Owners: M/s. Vara Prasad Reddy, N. Shyam Sunder & D.N. Kempegowda. Trainer: N. Rawal.

5. BRAVE HUNTER CUP (DIV. II) (1,200M): SOPRANOS (P. Sai Kumar) 1, Challenger (Nakhat) 2, Sweet Dreamer (P. Ajeth K) 3 and Mr. Perfect (Mohit) 4. Not run.

Classical Music. 1. 1/4, 1-1/4 and 3/4. Im 13. ₹62.5s. ₹34 (w), 11, 13 and 13 (p). SHP: 38, THP: 21, SHW: 10 and 17. FP: 80, Q: 36, Tanala: 300. Favourite: Challenger. Owner: Mr. Hothu Sajjad Waheb. Trainer: A. Imran Khan.

Jackpot: 70%; ₹14,819 (32 tkt.), 30%; 1,188 (171 tkt.). Mini Jackpot: (i) 34 (34 tkt.), (ii) 4,957 (15 tkt.). Treble: (i) 106 (231 tkt.), (ii) 897 (84 tkt.), (iii) 282 (230 tkt.).

Siddharth (Trevor) 3 and Detective (Neeraj) 4: 2-3/4, 2-1/4 and 1-1/4. 2m 34. 94s. ₹44 (w), 13 and 23 (p).

SHP: 33, THP: 29, SHW: 13 and 43. FP: 66, Q: 43, Tanala: 112. Favourite: Truth. Owners: Mr. N.V. Rohin Kumar & Mr. G.K. Keshavmurthy. Trainer: S. Sreekanth.

6. EVERLY TURK MILLION (GR. 3) (1,200M): GACHCHHATU (Neeraj Rawal) 1, See The Light (Trevor) 2, Turiya (Mukesh) 3 and Stars Ended (Akshay K) 4: 2-3/4, 1-1/4 and 5-3/4. Im 11. 97s. ₹29 (w), 10, 13 and 14 (p). SHP: 33, THP: 39, SHW: 10 and 29. FP: 68, Q: 28, Tanala: 322. Favourite: See The Light. Owners: M/s. Vara Prasad Reddy, N. Shyam Sunder & D.N. Kempegowda. Trainer: N. Rawal.

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Sport

EYING STRONG RETURN

Jaiswal terms maiden Australia tour a learning experience



Yashasvi Jaiswal termed his maiden tour of Australia a learning experience and vowed to come back stronger. The 23-year-old amassed 391 runs at an average of 43.44. "I learnt a lot in Australia... unfortunately, the result wasn't what we had hoped for, but we'll be back stronger," Jaiswal posted on Instagram.

WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT

Bumrah doubtful for home white-ball series against England



Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who sustained back spasms, is likely to be rested for the majority of India's home white-ball series against England, keeping an eye on the ICC Champions Trophy, starting from February 19. India will face England in five T20Is and three ODIs from January 22.

SOMETHING TO PONDER

ICC exploring the possibility of two-tier Test system



The ICC in collaboration with cricket Boards of India, Australia and England is exploring the possibility of a two-tier Test system. The Age reported that ICC chairman Jay Shah is set to meet Cricket Australia chair Mike Baird and his England counterpart Richard Thompson later this month to discuss the finer points.

ON A ROLL

South Africa sweeps series with 10-wicket win over Pakistan



South Africa earned a seventh successive win after beating Pakistan by 10 wickets on day four of the second Test in Cape Town on Monday and swept the series 2-0. The scores: South Africa 615 & 61/0 in 7.1 overs bt Pakistan 194 & 478 in 122.1 overs (Shan Masood 145, Babar Azam 81). PoM: Ryan Rickleton; PoS: Marco Jansen.

Grim truth points at transition following batters' capitulation

Rohit fails miserably, while Kohli develops a fatal attraction around the off-stump; the Indian line-up lacks players who can bat inexorably long

IND IN AUS

K.C. Vijaya Kumar

SYDNEY

Late on Sunday night, Mitchell Starc and some of his teammates got into a sports utility vehicle and left the Sydney Cricket Ground. The celebrations in the Australian dressing room stretched long and spilled onto the turf. Some ambled near the ropes and a few went close to the pitch.

Reclaiming the Border-Gavaskar Trophy after a decade, the host has to thank the players who made this possible, and above all respect is owed to Pat Cummins. He bagged the wickets (25), scored vital runs (159), led well and Australia won by a 3-1 margin.

The Indians, meanwhile, had left the venue in the evening. They have enough to chew upon, grapple with and crease their foreheads. Commencing their tour with a 295-run victory in the first Test at Perth, the force was with them. The warm-up game against the Prime Minister's XI at Canberra was pocketed too, before the campaign unravelled.

The Adelaide pink-ball Test was lost, and rain and the lower order secured a draw in Brisbane. And when R. Ashwin retired, the squad was in churn. The script turned morbid through a terrible last session and the Melbourne game was squandered. Finally at Sydney, even after snatching a four-run first innings lead, an inept second innings, despite Rishabh Pant's firework, meant that Australia had an attainable target. An injured Jasprit Bumrah's absence was a ghastly blow to India's chances.

Big impact
If one man had a large bearing on how India shaped up through this series, it was Bumrah, who also led in the first and fifth Test. His 32 wickets, till a



Hopes faded: Kohli faded away after the hundred in the opening Test in Perth. GETTY IMAGES

back-spasm laid him low, meant that the Australian batters never felt they were fully settled at the crease. Every media interaction would involve a 'Bumrah-question' and the answers would range from shock to awe.

Among his support cast, Mohammed Siraj ran in all day. His effect may have varied but he has 20 wickets to show.

The reality is if India capitulated eventually, a large share of the blame has to be apportioned to the batters. Skipper Rohit Sharma failed miserably, while Virat Kohli, after a ton at Perth, developed a fatal attraction around the off-stump. The former even skipped the last Test.

Cause for worry
Meanwhile, with their bats, Yashasvi Jaiswal (391 runs), K.L. Rahul, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Pant, Washington Sundar and Ravindra Jadeja, had their moments. However, these were sporadic. A youngster like Shubman Gill going through a drought is also a

cause for worry.

Coach Gautam Gambhir spoke about converting the 20s and 30s into big hundreds. However, this line-up seemingly lacks players who can bat inexorably long. It was an attribute that Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, V.V.S. Laxman and Cheteshwar Pujara had.

In all this talk about momentum, the fine-print about a draw being a honourable result was forgotten.

If Melbourne was drawn, India would have reached Sydney at 1-1, and anything could have transpired.

Chairman Ajit Agarkar and his fellow selectors have to figure out the nucleus of the Test squad, starting with the England tour from June, later this year. After 2013, when India moved on from the Tendulkar era following his retirement, the present is another tipping point.

But more than the perceived offences, what caused consternation among their peers - 24-time Slam winner Novak Djokovic included - was the total secrecy. The World Anti Doping Agency has since appealed Sinner's exoneration and a decision is expected after the Australian Open.

But doubles legend Todd Woodbridge, winner of 16 men's doubles Majors, said that the issue will not cloud proceedings at Melbourne. "One of the great positives to come out of those cases is that our sport is dealing with them properly," the Australian told select media.

Back to normal

"There was so much negativity about Simona Halep's process and how long it took (more than a year). But that has been fixed. You should be innocent

about it," Woodbridge said. "He's got to prove [to Alcaraz and Sinner] that he's not willing to give it all up yet. It's unfinished business [for him]."

"This is his best chance yet," Woodbridge said. "He didn't get to Australia after winning his first Major [in

Tennis is dealing with doping issues properly: Woodbridge

N. Sudarshan

BENGALURU

Australian Open, the season's first Grand Slam tournament, is popularly called the 'Happy Slam'.

Two players who will be desperate for it to be so are men's World No. 1 and defending champion Jannik Sinner, and women's World No. 2 and five-time Major winner Iga Swiatek.

The duo failed dope tests last year, with Sinner provisionally suspended - later overturned - and Swiatek accepting a one-month ban in November.

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Back to normal

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High praise: Sinner is the best player in the world right now, according to Woodbridge. GETTY IMAGES

until proven guilty. Sinner and Swiatek were able to show the cause and the effect, and it has allowed everybody to get back to normal."

Woodbridge, in fact, rated Sinner's chances highly. "He is the best player in the world right now and been the most consistent. But he hasn't defended a Slam title yet. It is different mentally. Great players like Novak look at it as a singular new tournament rather than a title-defence. That's what Sinner has to contemplate."

The 23-year-old Italian is set to face tough competition from Carlos Alcaraz, who can complete a career Grand Slam (winning all four Majors at least once). But the Spanish World No. 3 has not been past the quarterfinal in three prior visits.

"This is his best chance yet," Woodbridge said. "He didn't get to Australia after winning his first Major [in

Mumbai City edges past East Bengal

ISL

Amitabha Das Sharma

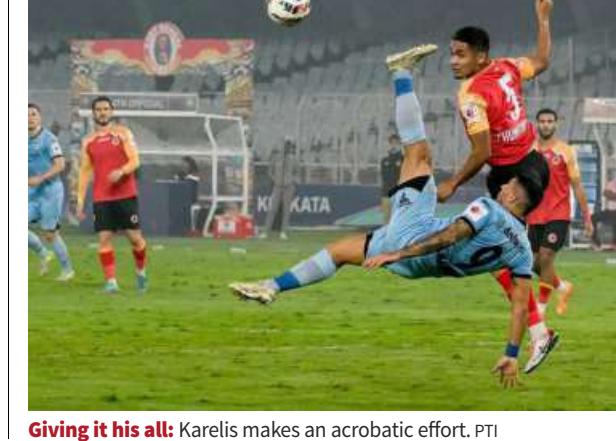
KOLKATA

Mumbai City FC halted East Bengal's resurgence by downing the home favourite 3-2 in an ISL fixture at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Monday. Mumbai jumped to fifth spot in the standings with 23 points from 14 matches while East Bengal remained in the 11th position with 14 points from as many matches.

Mumbai got its act together to mount continuous pressure on a tentative home defence to secure a two-goal lead at half-time.

The opening goal came off a nice diagonal pass from Brandon Fernandes in the 39th minute that found Lallianzuala Chhangte free on top of the East Bengal box. The Mumbai captain unleashed an angular grounder to find its way home.

The result: EBFC 2 (Panwar 66-og, Lalhiansanga 83) lost to MCFC 3 (Chhangte 39, Karelis 43, 87).



Giving it his all: Karelis makes an acrobatic effort. PTI

Border-Gavaskar Trophy (2024-25) in numbers

Batting	M	Inns	Runs	HS	Avg	100s/50s
Head	5	9	448	152	56.00	2/1
Jaiswal	5	10	391	161	43.44	1/2
Smith	5	9	314	140	34.88	2/0
Nitish	5	9	298	114	37.25	1/0
Rahul	5	10	276	84	30.66	0/2



Bowling	M	Inns	Wkts	BBI	SR	5WI/10WM
Bumrah	5	9	32	6/76	28.37	3/0
Cummins	5	10	25	5/57	40.08	1/0
Boland	3	6	21	6/45	29.04	1/1
Siraj	5	10	20	4/98	47.15	0/0
Starc	5	10	18	6/48	51.11	1/0

IN BRIEF



Rishi Dhawan retires from white-ball cricket

Former India all-rounder Rishi Dhawan announced his retirement from domestic limited-over tournaments after the conclusion of the group stage matches of the Vijay Hazare Trophy. Dhawan, who played three ODIs and a T20I for India in 2016, took the decision after Himachal Pradesh failed to advance to knockout stages. The 34-year-old will be available for selection for the remainder of the Ranji Trophy season, starting on Jan. 23. Dhawan had led Himachal to its only Vijay Hazare title in 2021-22. "It's with a heavy heart, even though I have no regrets, that I'd like to announce my retirement from Indian cricket (limited over). It's a sport that has defined my life for the past 20 years," Dhawan wrote in social media. "This game has given me immeasurable joy and countless memories that will always stay close to my heart."

Rashid spins Afghanistan to series win over Zimbabwe

Leg-spinner Rashid Khan took his seventh wicket as Afghanistan wrapped up a 72-run victory over Zimbabwe on Monday to win the two-Test series 1-0. Zimbabwe was 205 for eight overnight with captain Craig Ervine unbeaten on 53 and needing 73 more runs to win the Test in Bulawayo. The home team failed to add a run and Afghanistan needed just 15 deliveries to seal a win. "I am recovering from back surgery so taking 11 wickets was very encouraging. It was all about adapting to the conditions, which initially favoured the bowlers, then the batters," Rashid said.

The scores: Afghanistan 157 & 363 vs Zimbabwe 243 & 205 in 68.3 overs (Ermine 53, Rashid 7/66). **PoM:** Rashid. **Pos:** Rahmat.

LIVE TELECAST

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

Main challenge is beating the first-rusher: Jugraj

He says they are now well prepared because of video analysis and protective equipment; adds he works a lot on dragging from left to right or right to left and where to shoot

HIL

Y.B. Sarangi
ROURKELA

Guided by veteran Rupinder Pal Singh, a fresh approach to drag-flicking has helped Jugraj Singh to be among the top goal-scorers in the Hockey India League (HIL).

Jugraj, who won his India cap in 2022 and has scored 20 goals in 63 Internationals, has performed well for Shrikrishna Rarh Bengal Tigers.

With the league entering its second week, he has converted three penalty corners to perch atop the scorers' list prior to the 10th day's action.

Special performance

At a time when drag-flickers are finding it difficult to breach strong defensive walls, the 28-year-old produced a special performance and scored a brace in Tigers' commanding 4-1 win over Delhi SG Pipers at the Birsa Munda Stadium the other night.

It enabled Tigers to jump to the top spot on the points table.

Jugraj, a two-time Asian Champions Trophy gold winner and a Commonwealth Games silver medallist, acknowledges his captain Rupinder's support.

"I get a lot of confidence from Rupinder, who is India's best drag-flicker.



Backing: Jugraj acknowledges his captain Rupinder's support.

M. VEDHAN

"I pick his brain and ask him where I am committing mistakes and how I can improve," Jugraj told *The Hindu*.

The defender recalls Ru-



I get a lot of confidence from Rupinder, who is India's best drag-flicker. I pick his brain and ask him where I am committing mistakes and how I can improve.

"It can impact and spoil your regular game."

"One must remember that drag-flick and normal play are two different things."

"If you don't score, you should wait for the next opportunity."

"I just do that."

Jugraj, the namesake of well-known 2002 Asian Games silver medallist drag-flicker, feels a flicker wins half the battle if he beats the first-rushers, who are now well prepared because of video analysis and protective equipment.

"The main challenge is beating the first-rusher. I work a lot on this area – dragging from left to right or right to left and where to shoot."

Prepared

"Nowadays you see less number of goals from penalty corners as the rushers also work on their game, study the drag-flickers and come prepared like we do about them," said Jugraj, looking forward to continuing his good work in the remainder of the HIL.

Karnataka tames formidable Punjab

NATL. BASKETBALL

Sports Bureau

Karnataka beat the formidable Punjab 89-83 after trailing 28-37 at half-time in a Group-B league match of the 74th National basketball championship in Bhavnagar on Monday.

Aravind Arumugam, Pratyanshu Tomar, Abhishek Gowda and Anil Kumar combined well to tame Punjab for which Amijot Gill and Amritpal Singh scored 38 points between them. The defending champions in the men's and women's sections, Tamil Nadu and Railways beat the Delhi teams.

The results (league):

Men: Group-A: Services 92 (Y.P. Abhishek 22, Rahul 22, Mahipal Singh 13, Sahil 11, Siva Sakthivel 10) bt Rajasthan 82 (Ashik Hooda 20, Mahaveer 18, Mohammad Ishan 13, Jaideep Rathore 12). Tamil Nadu 95 (A. Anantharaj 17, Lokeshwaran 15, Muni Bek 14, Aravind Muthukumar 12) bt Delhi 62 (Prakriti Ranjan 22, Namrata 13). Madhya Pradesh 81 (Yashika Singh 22, K. Riya 12, Kushi Singh 12) bt Punjab 41 (Manmeet Singh 14, Priyanka Behal 10). **Group-B:** Kerala 68 (Susan Florentina 15, R. Sreeka 12, Swapna Marin Jiju 12) bt Chhattisgarh 45 (Divyani Gangwal 25). Tamil Nadu 65 (Lopamudra Thimmaiah 19, R. Sruthi 12, S. Krithika 10) bt Gujarat 47 (Naomi Lakhanpal 12).

West Indies arrives for first Test series in Pakistan in 18 years

Press Trust of India

KARACHI

The West Indies cricket team arrived in Islamabad on Monday for its first Test series in Pakistan in 18 years. West Indies last toured Pakistan for a Test series in 2006 though it has been to the country for two white-ball rubbers in

between. The visitor will play a three-day tour game against Pakistan Shaheens from January 10 in Islamabad before the first Test in Multan from January 17.

The second Test is scheduled from January 25 at the same venue. The series will conclude their assignments in the current WTC cycle.

Why cannot we play like this everywhere else: Fernandes



Consistency is key: Fernandes said Manchester United should play like it did against Liverpool to progress in the league. AP

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
LIVERPOOL

Frustrated Bruno Fernandes said if Manchester United can perform at Anfield then it must "do it everywhere" after the side secured a 2-2 draw against Premier League leader Liverpool on Sunday.

Cody Gakpo cancelled out Lisandro Martinez's shock opener for United before Mohamed Salah put Liverpool ahead from the penalty spot, but Amad Diallo scored a late equaliser.

The point for Liverpool takes it six clear of second-placed Arsenal with a game in hand. United is way down in 13th place but at least it has ended its three-game losing run in the league.

"We have been criticised, and fairly," United captain Fernandes said.

"Our position in the table says it all, we have lost too many points."

"Even today we can't be happy with a point. We need the points and we could've won the game at the end, but it's a fair result. Both teams played good football."

Frustrating

"I'm pretty upset. If we show this level at Liverpool, first in the league, why can't we do this everywhere? It frustrates me. Also, finally I did a proper performance. We said we need much more from ourselves to get more from this season."

Meanwhile, Roma triumphed 2-0 against local rival Lazio on Sunday to give Claudio Ranieri his biggest win since the veteran coach took charge of his boyhood club for the third time.

Lorenzo Pellegrini and Alexis Saelemaekers netted in eight first-half minutes which gave Roma the points in a fraught atmosphere at the Stadio Olimpico in Rome.

Tough contest

The midfielder said next week's FA Cup tie at Arsenal would be tough for the holder but "we want to get to the final again".

Liverpool skipper Virgil van Dijk said it could have been worse for his team if Harry Maguire had converted a late chance.



On a roll: Matsuyama recorded his third win in the last 10 months, all against some of the strongest fields. AFP

Matsuyama starts the season with a record-breaking win

GOLF

Associated Press
KAPALUA (HAWAII)

Hideki Matsuyama got the new season off to a smashing start on Sunday when he broke the PGA Tour record with that final birdie, his 35th hole at birdie or better for the tournament. Smith in 2022 and Sungjae Im last year held the previous record.

Matsuyama made an 8-foot birdie putt on the par-5 18th hole here. That put him at 35-under 257,

breaking by one the 34-under par by Cameron Smith set at Kapalua in 2022.

Matsuyama set another PGA Tour record with that final birdie, his 35th hole at birdie or better for the tournament. Smith in 2022 and Sungjae Im last year held the previous record.

It added to his 11th career title on the PGA Tour, and his third win in the last 10 months, all against some of the strongest fields. Morikawa had to settle for second place despite not posting a round worse than 66 all week.

Satwik-Chirag duo leads Indian charge

MALAYSIA SUPER 1000

Press Trust of India
KUALA LUMPUR

India's doubles duo of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will aim for a strong result. Lakshya Sen will look to build on his recent form and H.S. Prannoy will hope to shake off rust after a lengthy break

at the season-opening Malaysia Super 1000 tournament starting here on Tuesday.

For Satwik and Chirag, seeded seventh, this \$1.45 million event marks the start of a new season like it did in 2024. Last year, although they narrowly missed out on the title, the pairing went on to reach three more finals, winning two of them.

Arnav eases past fifth seed Kerem Yilmaz

TENNIS

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

Arnav Paparkar played a sharp game to outwit the fifth seed Kerem Yilmaz of Turkey 6-1, 6-4 in the first round of the ITF junior tennis tournament at the DLTA Complex on Monday.

Arnav was joined in the second round by top seed Rethin Pranav, Samarth Sahita, Varun Verma and sixth seed Hitesh Chauhan.

In the girls section, Aishwarya Jadhav beat Daria Koreshkova for the loss of five games, and Rishitha Basireddy had a tougher outing against Eva Korysheva of Kazakhstan while winning 7-6(4), 6-3.



Arnav. KAMESH SRINIVASAN

Maaya Rajeshwaran will play fourth seed Ada Kumru of Turkey on Tuesday.

In the boys section, Arjun Pandit, Arjun Rathi and Sehaj Singh Pawar will play their first round matches on the morrow.

The results: (first round):
Under-18 boys: Rethin Pranav 6-3, 6-4; Eito Komada (Jpn) 6-3, 6-4; Alexey Shibaev bt Jay Lin Gibson

Mathys Erhard is top seed for ITF's men's tournament

Sports Bureau

Mathys Erhard of France has been seeded No.1 in the \$30,000 ITF men's tennis tournament to be played at the Arera Club in Bhopal from Tuesday.

In the absence of Ramkumar Ramanathan, none of the Indian players have got the seeding.

However, some of the good players like Sidharth Rawat, Dhakshineswar Suresh, Sai Karteek Reddy, Yuvan Nandal, Rohan Mehra and Parth Aggarwal qualified to strengthen the home challenge. Only five Indian players

Aryan Shah, Siddharth Vishwakarma, Chirag Duhani, Dev Java and S.D. Prajwal Dev got direct entry into the main draw.

As luck would have it, Aryan plays Prajwal in the first round.

Chirag will challenge the champion of the last tournament Alastair Gray of Britain in the first round.

The seedings:
1. Mathys Erhard (Fra), 2. Oliver Crawford (GBR), 3. Bogdan Bobrov.
4. Florent Bax (Fra), 5. Yurii Dzhavakhan (Ukr).
6. Eric Vanshelboim (Ukr).
7. Dominik Palan (Cze), 8. Egor Agafonov.

Odisha announces sponsorship deal for Indian kho team

Press Trust of India
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government on Monday announced a three-year sponsorship deal for the Indian national kho team, marking a significant step forward in promoting indigenous sports in the country.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said the state will invest ₹5 crores annually from January 2025 to December 2027, with funding provided through the Odisha Mining Corporation.

India needs Bumrah the bowler more than Bumrah the captain

He is seen as the natural and logical successor to Rohit, but the latest Sydney episode begs the question – should that be the case?

The management of the speedster's workload has been one of the topics of great discussion in Indian cricket

R. Kaushik
SYDNEY

Iver the years, Indian cricket has been remarkably fortunate to have unearthed numerous leaders, not just captains, of great integrity and no little tactical acumen. Though there were several stalwarts before him, 'Tiger' Pataudi is credited with bringing a sense of 'team' to the national side, using his standing and charm to explode the divisive air of regionalism that dogged Indian cricket. Numerous worthy successors took the torch forward.

Interestingly, three of the modern masters of the game held the captaincy mantle for only a combined period of five and a half years or so. Sachin Tendulkar was captain across two terms, the first lasting 15 months and the second less than half that tenure. Rahul Dravid, one of India's most successful skippers who oversaw Test series triumphs in the Caribbean and England after 35 and 21 years respectively, stepped down after two years; it's one of those great travesties that he will be remembered more for India's first-round exit at the 50-over World Cup in the Caribbean in 2007. Anil Kumble was the captain for a little over a year and a quarter, a tricky period when he showed exceptional statesman-like qualities on the tempestuous tour of Australia in 2007-08, a series rocked by numerous shockingly poor umpiring decisions, a vast majority of them going against India, and the Monkeygate scandal that threatened an early end after Andrew Symonds accused Harbhajan Singh of racist abuse.

Since the end of 2008, when Kumble retired midway through Australia's tour of India, there have been three long-term, regular skippers – Mahendra Singh Dhoni for six years from 2008 till the end of 2014, Virat Kohli from 2015 to 2022, and Rohit Sharma for 34 months now. Dhoni was outstanding in the two white-ball formats but more defensive in Test-match action, perhaps because he felt he didn't have the bowling attack to stay competitive overseas. Kohli brought new verve to the team, shaking up the established order with an uncompromising focus on fitness and on assembling a fast-bowling group that helped stack up overseas victories. Rohit, who had led Mumbai Indians to five IPL titles when he took charge of the Test team, brought greater empathy and understanding with him, drawing from his own painful experiences, allowing the youngsters to learn from their mistakes and establishing himself as a players' captain.

Courageous call

Rohit's unprecedented decision to stand himself down for the final Test against Australia in Sydney because he felt he didn't deserve a place in the best XI for the decider hasn't got the due it deserves. Mischievous whispers that he was nudged in that direction notwithstanding, it takes courage, selflessness and the ability to sift logic from emotion to arrive at a decision of such magnitude. It's another matter that the man he made way for, Shubman Gill, didn't justify his inclusion with two terrible strokes.

In Rohit's absence, both from the first Test in Perth which he missed owing to the birth of his second child and in Sydney, Jasprit Bumrah took over as captain. The pacer supreme had previously led the team in England in the summer of 2022 in the last Test of a five-match series that had spilled over from 12 months earlier, and not with great success.

India allowed England to scale down 378 in the fourth innings for the loss of just three wickets at 4.93 runs per over despite posting 416 batting first, Bumrah finishing the game with five for 142 but going at 3.94 runs per over (Test career economy after 45 matches, 2.76).

Bumrah seemed to be chasing the game, a half-step slower tactically. India's short-ball strategy on a flat deck where the ball came nicely on the bat was widely criticised but as Perth showed, that was a one-off. At the Optus Stadium, Bumrah was on top of his leadership game, inspiring his troops, eliciting energy and enthusiasm even though his batters had only post 150. It helped, of course, that he produced magic with the ball, his five-wicket haul primarily responsible for Australia being bowled out for 104.

Eight wickets for the fixture and his unquestionable influence on the 295-run win earned him the Player of the Match award. Bumrah was calm and unruffled throughout the game, different from Rohit in many ways and yet similar in his



thought process. The continuity was striking, as was Bumrah's equanimity when he dismissed a suggestion made in jest that he might want to continue in that role even on Rohit's return.

Awe and adulation

Bumrah again fronted up at the SCG, but this time, there was neither individual success nor collective joy. Between Perth and Sydney, the legend of Bumrah grew massively in Australia, where there was respect for him even seven weeks back. Now, that respect has been supplemented by awe. By a tinge of envy. A smidgeon of dread. Massive apprehension. How do you play this guy with the crazy action, this guy who bucks all conventions of fast bowling? Who walks when you are supposed to charge in, who explodes in five or six steps, who delivers the ball from closer to the batter than anyone else, who makes the ball go this way or that without any discernible change in action? How?

In the first four Tests, Bumrah had 30 wickets, three five-wicket hauls. Along the way, he became the first bowler in Test history to reach 200 wickets at an average of less than 20. It was crazy, the attention and adulation he attracted. He put bums on the seat. Imagine that, an Indian fast bowler making waves in the land of Lillee and Thomson, McGrath and Lee and Starc and Cummins. Killing 'em softly, with a smile, with humility and with greatness sitting lightly on his shoulders.

Like in Perth, Bumrah was given only a modest total to bowl with by his batters in Sydney – 185. He again struck early, with the wickets of Usman Khawaja and Marnus Labuschagne late on the first evening and first thing on the second morning respectively. His first spell was 6-0-20-2. He bowled three more overs in

the second hour, and then the second over after the lunch break, when there were no outward signs of trouble. After that over, his 10th of the innings – and, as it turned out, his last of the tour – he had a long chat with Kohli, then walked briskly off the park. Ah, a temporary passing of the baton, we thought.

Million-dollar question

An over went by, and there was no sign of Bumrah. Ten minutes, and still no Bumrah. Twenty, ditto. Thirty, ditto. Then, as the clock ticked over to 2 pm, he emerged from the dressing room in his tracks and practice jersey, gingerly boarded an SUV and was driven to a nearby hospital for scans on his back following spasms. He batted on day three, couldn't bowl in the second innings on what he called the 'spiciest' pitch of the series when Australia came out to chase 162. For whatever reason, injuries to Indian cricketers tend to assume the proportion of national secrets, so it's no surprise that even after the Test ended, there was no official word on the exact nature of the injury, the extent of the damage, the future course of action. So much for transparency and honest forthrightness.

Bumrah is seen as the natural and logical successor to Rohit as and when. But the latest Sydney episode begs the question – should that be the case? The management of Bumrah's workload has been one of the topics of great discussion in Indian cricket. How much does he play? How much does he rest? Which are the Tests where India can make do without him? When must he be rested, especially given that he had back surgery a couple of years ago, and that the back is beginning to bother him again – even if this turns out to be a one-off?

Can India appoint Bumrah the Test skipper and still be in a position to rest him mid-series, or even for an entire series? Does that bode well for continuity and stability in leadership? It's true that by and large, the team philosophy won't necessarily change from one captain to another in the matter of a Test or a series, but should we even get into that situation of possibility? Injuries are inevitable in competitive sport and more so in cricket, which places unusual demands on an individual's body because most of the movements on the cricket field are unnatural.

The leadership group, of which Bumrah too is an integral part, must ask if it is the most commonsensical tack to punt on a key player with a history of injuries, a vital cog in the wheel who needs be handled with care and tact and for whom rest and recuperation is perhaps more important than for most others.

Bumrah has shown himself to be an inspirational, if not yet inventive, leader. But India need Bumrah the bowler more than Bumrah the captain. The temptation to overreach when one is in a decision-making role could seep into Bumrah's thinking. There has been a marked reluctance on the part of the powers-that-be to invest in bowler-captains, especially fast-bowler-captains, for a specific reason. Bumrah doesn't agree with that theory, nor does Pat Cummins, his Australian counterpart who is surrounded by a supremely skilled pace unit as opposed to the Indian, who has Mohammed Siraj and a rush of newcomers for support in the continued absence of Mohammed Shami. India can't afford to have a grumpy Bumrah, for sure, but a grumpy Bumrah is still better than no Bumrah. What say?

THE GIST

Since the end of 2008, when Kumble retired midway through Australia's tour of India, there have been three long-term, regular skippers – Dhoni for six years from 2008 till the end of 2014, Kohli from 2015 to 2022, and Rohit for 34 months now

Rohit's unprecedented decision to stand himself down for the final Test in Sydney because he felt he didn't deserve a place in the best XI for the decider hasn't got the due it deserves

There has been a marked reluctance on the part of the powers-that-be to invest in bowler-captains, especially fast-bowler-captains, for a specific reason

Twigstats: new tool reveals hi-res genetic view of people's ancestors

A fresh analysis using Twigstats has determined more precisely than ever individual-level ancestry at a very high resolution. An international collaboration was even able to revisit the ancestry of population groups in the far-flung western frontiers of the Roman Empire

Sridhar Sivasubbu
Vinod Scaria

Prehistoric human ceremonial burials, mass graves, and war graves scattered around the world are a treasure trove of ancient genetic material that scientists consider key to unlocking secrets from our past. The ancient DNA (aDNA) at these sites opens windows into population dynamics, including the expansion and replacement of populations using peaceful, natural, or violent means; admixture events involving two or more sub-populations; cultural transitions; migrations for hunting; and wealth at individual, local, and global scales.

That said, tracing genetic ancestry in particular across populations still remains a challenging task. This is because populations across geographical regions often tend to be very similar, statistically speaking.

Different sample sizes

For example, studies in the past have documented genetic differences between ancient groups such as the hunter-gatherers, early farmers, and the steppe-pastoralists of the Stone and Bronze Ages. Similarly, numerous studies in recent years have provided insights into the genetic diversity of medieval populations across the world. But comparing the genetic ancestry of ancient and medieval populations has been hampered by differences in sample sizes. There are fewer samples bearing aDNA, resulting in lower sequencing quality compared to that of medieval or modern genomes, which come from larger cohorts.

The incorporation of genetic material in the form of gene flows laterally, from an ancient line into a modern one after ancient times, adds an additional layer of complexity.

Traditionally, researchers' studies of aDNA have involved analysing single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs), which are natural genetic variations in the genomes. The method has been extensively used to reconstruct genetic histories and ancestry models using aDNA derived from Indo-European and Native American populations.

In a 2009 study, researchers from the Broad Institute in the US and the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad, reconstructed India's population history as well. They analysed 25 diverse groups and identified two ancient populations in the country that were ancestral to most Indians. Ancestral North Indians were found to be genetically closer to Central Asian, European, and Middle Eastern populations, while Ancestral South Indians were a distinct group. The analysis of SNPs is a powerful technique when the task is to understand populations, but it's restricted by the need for high-quality DNA samples and its inability to resolve the histories of groups with closely related ancestors.

Combining various techniques

Alternatively, analytical methods that use haplotypes, or shared segments of DNA, and rare variants instead of only SNPs have been found to be more powerful.



Tracing genetic ancestry in particular across populations still remains a challenging task. This is because populations across geographical regions often tend to be very similar, statistically speaking CHUTTERSNAP

Researchers have applied the genealogical tree inference method to modern and ancient genomes to understand their population structure, demographics, locations of ancestors, etc.

This method captures information from haplotype-sharing, or identity-by-descent, and rare variants simultaneously, includes time-resolved information about genetic ancestry, and provides comprehensive insights into how individuals 'share' their ancestors.

For example, in a study published on January 1 in *Nature*, a collaboration led by the Francis Crick Institute in the UK and including multiple research groups across the UK, Japan, and Sweden developed a new way to infer genome-wide genealogies. The team has called it Twigstats. It uses time-stratified ancestry analysis that boosts the statistical power of existing methods by a magnitude and reduces statistical errors.

A particularly unique aspect of Twigstats is its ability to take into account the coalescence of populations in recent times.

The moving Viking

The authors first tested Twigstats on multiple simulated genetic conditions, including to verify using previously published work, to ascertain its robustness. Then they applied it to the task of reconstructing the genetic history of 1,556 aDNA samples belonging to individuals who lived in northern and central Europe from 500 BC to 1000 AD, spanning the Iron, Roman, and Viking ages on the European continent.

This fresh analysis using Twigstats has determined more precisely than ever individual-level ancestry at a very high resolution.

The researchers were even able to revisit the ancestry of population groups in the far-flung western frontiers of the Roman Empire in the first millennium AD. Twigstats models also provided direct evidence and

high-resolution maps of the migration of individuals who spoke Germanic languages and had Scandinavian-like ancestry across Europe in the first century AD.

In the region represented by present-day Poland, the analysis of ancient genomes using Twigstats suggested a unique shift in ancestry over historical timelines. For example, the team found signs of a shift away from the corded ware cultures in the middle to late Bronze Age (1500 BC to 1000 BC). For another, in the first to the fifth centuries AD, populations associated with the Wielbark culture peeled away from Bronze Age groups.

In the appropriate historical and anthropological contexts, these insights are significant – and Twigstats should be credited for uncovering them. By analysing a large dataset of ancient genomes, the researchers could reconstruct fine population movements and admixture events that coincided with key cultural transitions, offering new insights into the genetic legacy of groups like the Vikings and the impact of migrations on the genetic makeup of modern Europeans.

The study also uncovered evidence of Scandinavian-like ancestry present in the British and the Baltic regions before the traditional commencement of the Viking Age. This suggests interactions with and migrations from Scandinavia began sooner than researchers believed was the case. The presence of Scandinavian ancestry in Britain was also linked to the Anglo-Saxon migrations, while its presence in the Baltic region indicated early contact with Scandinavian groups.

While Scandinavian ancestry expanded significantly across Europe, the study also revealed gene flows into Scandinavia before the Viking Age. Specifically, the researchers reported evidence of ancestry related to continental Europe and the British Isles in pre-Viking Age

Researchers reconstructed fine population movements and admixture events coinciding with cultural transitions, offering new insights into the genetic legacy of groups like the Vikings and the impact of migrations on the genetic makeup of Europeans

Scandinavian individuals. The implication is that the flow of genes was bidirectional. Evidence of the movements of Vikings is recorded in the genetic makeup of the populations of Britain, Ireland, and Iceland.

Cultures and genes

In the historical context, the study seems to confirm the widespread impact of Viking activity as well as highlight the complex and dynamic nature of population movements during the Viking Age.

Taken together, the new study is a good example of how the use of innovative methods for genomic analysis can refine our understanding of the dynamics of early medieval populations. By combining genetic data with archaeological and historical evidence, and adding the fact that cultural shifts are often associated with genetic changes as well, researchers can now offer a more nuanced and detailed picture of the complex processes that shaped the cultural histories of our ancestors.

As the researchers wrote in their paper, "Our approach can be used for the reconstruction of new high-resolution genetic histories around the world."

(The authors work at Karkinos Healthcare and are adjunct professors at IIT Kanpur and Dr DY Patil Medical College, Hospital and Research Centre. All opinions are personal.
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Please send in your answers to science@thehindu.co.in

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

100 years ago, science found the colossal squid...

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

The colossal squid is the planet's largest squid, mollusc, and invertebrate (by mass) -- yet it isn't without its own predators. Based on a few studies, its top predator seems to be _____, which is the earth's largest toothed predator. They get their name from the oily substance filling their heads. Fill in the blanks.

QUESTION 2

Among squid species that live in similar waters, the colossal squid has an unusually high _____, as evidenced by the fact that a female can produce as many as 4.2 million oocytes. Fill in the blank with a term that denotes the reproductive capacity of a given species.

QUESTION 3

While other organisms of comparable mass living in a similar environment have X of size around 10 cm, the colossal squid has X that are around three-times as large, allowing it to detect predators more than 120 metres away. Name X, a common organ among animals.

QUESTION 4

Name the squid species that has been known to grow to even greater sizes than the colossal squid -- up to 13 metres in one case -- but is still lighter because most of its length is in its tentacles.

QUESTION 5

Scientists know that many species of animals dwelling in the deep sea are larger than shallow-water species to

which they are related. What do zoologists call this phenomenon?

Answers to January 2 quiz:

- Tree-shaped progression of electric discharge through an insulator – Ans: Lichtenberg figure
- Abstract data type in which each node has two child nodes – Ans: Binary tree
- Fractal shape created by fragmenting the ends of a line segment – Ans: Fractal canopy
- Tree-like representation to elucidate syntactic structures – Ans: Parse tree
- Hunting practice involving dogs barking target animals up trees – Ans: Treeing
- Visual: Stanford University
First contact: Joe V.R. | Nairnisha Pasupuleti | K.N. Viswanathan | Viswanadharao Batchu | Anmol Agrawal

Answers to January 3 quiz:

- Cervical cancer's rank among cancers in terms of prevalence – Ans: Fourth
- Some other cancers caused by the human papilloma virus – Ans: Skin cancer in those with epidermodysplasia verruciformis; head and neck cancers; other anogenital cancers
- Whether men can be carriers of the human papilloma virus – Ans: True
- Agency involved in 2009 demonstration of the HPV vaccine – Ans: Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health
- Character of vaccines to treat cervical cancer – Ans: Preventive
Visual: Visual inspection with acetic acid
- First contact: K.N. Viswanathan | Joe V.R. | Kittu Choudhary | Anmol Agrawal



A child looks at a ten-metre long giant squid at a marine exhibit in the Melbourne Museum. AFP



A Joshua tree in the foreground as the York fire lights up the hills in the Mojave Preserve. AFP

Various countries declare 2024 heat records

Agencies

Brazil, China, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, and Taiwan are among the countries that have reported 2024 was their hottest year on record. India said 2024 was its hottest year since 1901. Australia's Bureau of Meteorology said it was second-warmest year since records began in 1910.

Germany's weather agency said in December that 2024 was the hottest year since records began 143 years ago.

The Czech weather service said on Thursday that 2024 was "by far the hottest" in Prague since records started in 1775, beating the previous records from 2018 and 2023 by 0.5°.

In November, the World Meteorological Organisation said the 2024 January-September mean surface air temperature was 1.54°C above the pre-industrial average.

Brazil

Last year was Brazil's hottest on record, its weather agency has said, after a record-breaking drought and flooding in the country that experts have linked to global warming.

The average temperature in 2024 was 25.02°C, which is 0.79° above the 1991-2020 average, the National Institute of Meteorology said.

It was the warmest year since records began in 1961, exceeding the 2023 figure of 24.92°C, which was also a record high.

According to a study released last week, Brazil experienced an "alarming" increase in climate disasters between 2020 and 2023, with almost twice as many events each year, on average, as in the previous two decades.

Official data showed an annual average of 4,077 climate-related disasters in the four-year period, including droughts, flooding, violent storms, and extreme temperatures, the research by the Federal University of São Paulo showed.

The study found a correlation between weather disasters suffered in the country and a warming of ocean surface temperatures.

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China

China is the leading emitter, in total volume, of the greenhouse gases driving global heating. It aims to ensure carbon dioxide emissions peak by 2030 and be brought to net zero by 2060.

The average national temperature for 2024 was 10.92°C, a deviation of 1.03°C. It was "the warmest year since the start of full records in 1961," the China Meteorological Administration said on its website.

"The top four warmest years ever were the past four years, with all top 10 warmest years since 1961 occurring in the 21st century," it added.

Warming

Global warming is not just about rising temperatures but the knock-on effect of all the extra heat in the atmosphere and seas. The effects are wide-ranging, deadly, and increasingly costly, damaging property and destroying crops.

Globally, 2024 saw deadly flooding in Spain, Kenya, China, and India; multiple violent storms in the US and the Philippines; and severe drought and wildfires across South America.

Natural disasters caused \$310 billion in economic losses in 2024, insurance giant Swiss Re has estimated.

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