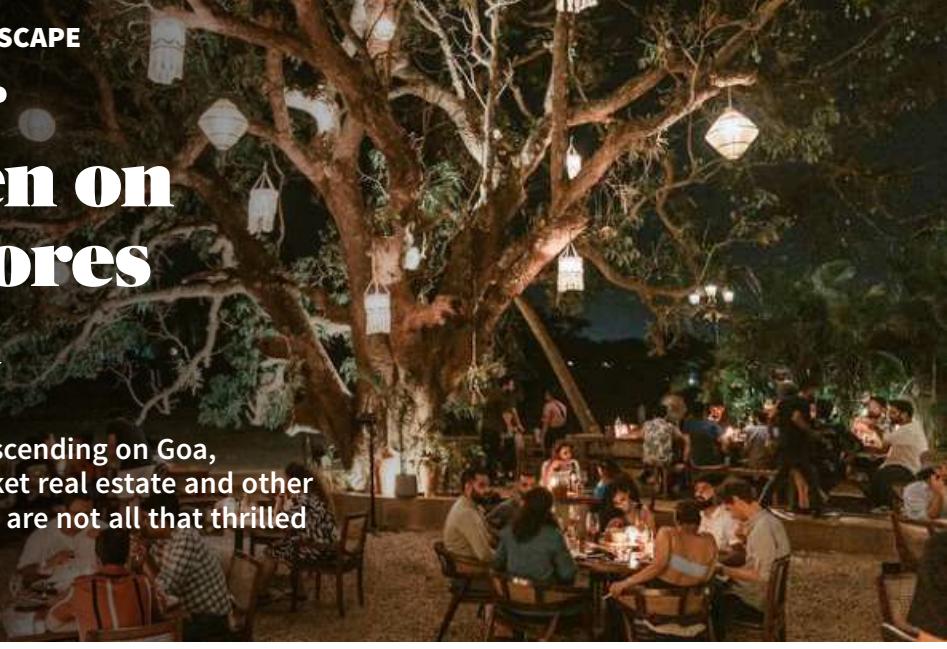


A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Butter chicken on the shores of Goa

Delhi's rich are descending on Goa, bringing in big-ticket real estate and other changes but locals are not all that thrilled

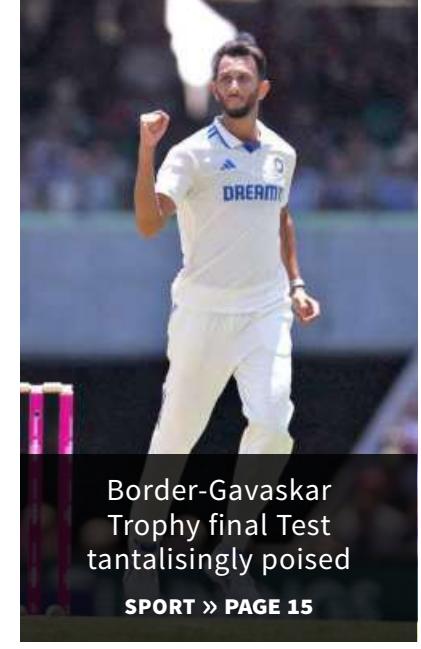
MAGAZINE » PAGE 1



Waker-uz-Zaman:
the General behind
the throne
PROFILES » PAGE 13



R. Chidambaram,
doyen of nuclear
programme, dies at 88
NEWS » PAGE 9



Border-Gavaskar
Trophy final Test
tantalisingly poised
SPORT » PAGE 15

IN BRIEF

Kejriwal served himself, did little for Delhiites: Shah

NEW DELHI
Senior BJP leader and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday attacked AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal for building a 'sheesh mahal' for himself while "ignoring the public's plight". » Page 2

Cong., BJP must make covert ties official: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI
AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday advised the BJP and the Congress to stop covert "collaboration" and formally "announce an alliance" for the Delhi Assembly election due in February. » Page 3

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CLASSIFIEDS » PAGE 6

New Governor suggests use of NSA in Manipur

At his first security review meeting, Ajay Kumar Bhalla calls for employment opportunities for 'misguided' youth; top officials attended the meeting, but Chief Minister did not participate

Vijaya Singh
NEW DELHI



Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla chairing a meeting at Raj Bhavan in Imphal on the law and order situation in Manipur. PTI

A day after assuming charge, Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla held a security review meeting on Saturday and suggested that the State police use legal options such as the National Security Act, 1980, which allows detention for a year without trial, against miscreants and troublemakers, a senior government official told *The Hindu*.

Security Adviser Kuldeep Singh, Director-General of Police Rajiv Singh and other officials attend-

ed the unified command meeting. Chief Minister N. Biren Singh was not present.

Mr. Bhalla discussed employment opportunities for the "misguided" youth, and asked the security

agencies to prepare dossiers on key suspects who were fuelling violence and initiate action against them. The Central Reserve Police Force and the Border Security Force flagged the violation of ceasefire ground rules by the Pangba faction of the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), the oldest armed Meitei insurgent group, which signed a peace agreement with the Union Home Ministry and Manipur government on November 29, 2023.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 7

Dallewal urges farmers from all States to join stir

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH



Jagjit Singh Dallewal being assisted on stage during the Kisan Mahapanchayat at Khanauri in Punjab on Saturday. ANI

exert whatever force it wants but eventually, we will win," he said, addressing the gathering from a stage at the protest site, where he was brought out in a stretcher.

Meanwhile, Punjab Agriculture Minister Gurneet Singh Khudian urged Union

Agriculture Minister Shrivraj Singh Chouhan to break the impasse and revive the dialogue between the Union government and the agitating farmer unions at the earliest.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 7

Cruise terminal proposed for Great Nicobar Island

Pankaj Sekhsaria



An international cruise terminal to facilitate a "global" port-led city, "high-end" tourism, and a ship-breaking yard are among the new additions to the ₹72,000-crore mega-infrastructure project in Great Nicobar Island proposed by the Union Shipping Ministry over the last eight months, according to letters accessed by this writer.

The Ministry has also sought 100 acres of land with a seafront for its proposals.

Until now, the Central government has restricted the right to information (RTI) requests about envi-

Delhi poll: BJP fields former MPs against Atishi, Kejriwal

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday released its first list of 29 candidates for the Delhi Assembly poll. It has fielded former MP Parvesh Sahib Singh from New Delhi against AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and former MP Ramesh Bidhuri against Chief Minister Atishi. The list includes eight leaders who switched over from other parties. AAP has declared candidates on all seats while the Congress has announced 48 names.

It is not clear how the Shipping Ministry's new proposals will be compatible with such concerns.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 7

DETAILS
» PAGE 8

Over 500 flight services hit as heavy fog blankets Delhi, northern States

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Nearly 500 flights were affected at Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi, the country's busiest airport, as the season's worst fog yet engulfed the northern parts of India.

Till 8 p.m. on Saturday, 412 flights were delayed by over 45 minutes, according to a flight tracking website.

Another 45 flights were cancelled, including those affected by bad weather at the destination airport. A total of 19 flights were diverted to alternative airports.

Flights were affected in Chandigarh, Srinagar, Guwahati and Patna as intense foggy conditions pre-

3 and 8.30 a.m. on January 4, according to IMD scientist R.K. Jenamani.

Flight departures and arrivals came to a halt intermittently, as the runway visual range (visibility for pilots in an aircraft aided by lights on the runway) remained between 100 metres and 250 metres throughout, and even dropped to below 50 metres at times, rendering even landings with most advanced navigational aids difficult.

"We assure you that our teams are working diligently to assist all impacted customers, ensuring your journey resumes as soon as the weather improves," IndiGo posted on X. (With inputs from PTI)

vailed over Punjab, Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram.

In Delhi, zero visibility conditions prevailed between 11.30 p.m. on January

Don't pay inflated water bills, will waive if AAP wins, says Kejriwal

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday asked the city residents not to pay "inflated" water bills, promising to waive them if his party returns to power in Delhi.

"Those who think their bills are incorrect need not pay them," he said.

Stating that waiving "inflated" water bills was the "sixth guarantee by AAP to the people of Delhi", Mr. Kejriwal said, "Every month, 20,000 litres of water is provided free to every family. In Delhi, the water bills of more than 12

The BJP said bills should be corrected, not waived, and wondered who was stopping the AAP chief from doing so

lakh families used to be zero. But when I went to jail [in the excise policy case], I don't know what these people [BJP] did behind my back."

The other AAP poll promises include financial assistance to auto drivers, full funding of Dalit students' higher education in top foreign universities, ₹2,100 monthly assistance

to women above 18 years of age, free treatment for senior citizens at any city hospital, and a monthly honorarium of ₹18,000 to temple priests and granthis of gurdwaras.

Reacting to the AAP chief's allegations, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said, "Mr. Kejriwal must tell why the erroneous bills issued by the Delhi Jal Board are not being corrected yet".

He advised Mr. Kejriwal to correct the wrong bills rather than waive them and claimed that such bills could be corrected even when the model code of conduct is in place.

Sanjay Singh's claim of voter names being erased 'baseless': DEO

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

District Election Officer (DEO) of New Delhi, S.K. Singh, on Saturday described as "entirely baseless and unsubstantiated" the allegations levelled by senior AAP leader and Raja Sabha member Sanjay Singh that names of genuine electors are being deliberately deleted.

"All deletions are carried out in strict compliance with the EC's norms to maintain the integrity and accuracy of the electoral roll," the DEO office said in a statement.

The response came a day after Mr. Singh said that he conducted a door-to-door survey in New Delhi and that "the DEO did not provide details" of those who applied for the deletion.

The AAP MP also alleged that the names of two women had been used to apply for the deletion of his wife Anita Singh's name from the voter list.

Rejecting his claims, the DEO said that according to the guidelines of the Election Commission of India (EC), the summary of Form 7, which includes the names of both the objectors and objectees, is shared with all recognised political parties, including AAP, on a weekly basis and this information is uploaded on the official website of CEO Delhi for public access and transparency.

"Merely submitting a list for deletion doesn't start the deletion process," the DEO said.



AAP MP Sanjay Singh has accused the BJP of trying to delete his wife's vote. FILE PHOTO

Form 7 is the form to be filled out to object to the proposed inclusion/ deletion of a name in the existing electoral roll.

In Mr. Singh's wife's case, the election officer reported that two separate Form 7s were filed to delete her name.

"Upon field verification, the Booth Level Officers found her [Mr. Singh's wife] residing at the given address, and both Form 7 applications were rejected. Additionally, an FIR was lodged against the objectors for wrongful filing of Form 7."

BJP backing'

Responding to the DEO's assertion, AAP, in a statement, said there was undeniable proof that the "BJP is trying to delete names" as FIRs have been lodged on the EC's complaint.

However, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said the AAP leaders, including Mr. Singh, were "threatening election officers" to ensure "fake votes are not deleted" from the New Delhi constituency.

The senior BJP leader added that the AAP chief

Kejriwal built a *sheesh mahal* for himself, did little for citizens: Shah

Invite people to your 'palace', Amit Shah dares ex-CM; people will decide whether to vote for those who abuse or those who work, says AAP chief

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Senior BJP leader and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday took on Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for "ignoring the public's plight" while building a "sheesh mahal" for himself, referring to the controversy surrounding alleged irregularities in the renovation of the CM's official residence.

In response, the AAP chief said the BJP has no vision for Delhi and that its campaign hinges on "abusing AAP". He added, "When the time comes, people will decide whether they want to vote for those who abuse or those who work."

Mr. Shah made the comments after inaugurating Sushma Bhawan, a women's hostel in New Delhi named after late BJP leader Sushma Swaraj, a former External Affairs Minister who had also served as Delhi's CM.

"You should invite 10 residents from each ward to your house for tea and show them the big palace you have built for yourself," the Union Minister said.

Mr. Shah also attacked the former CM over the excise policy "scam" and the "scam done in the name of



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with Delhi L-G V.K. Saxena and New Delhi MP Bansuri Swaraj at an event in the Capital on Saturday. ANI

Mohalla Clinics".

'Vote on performance'
Addressing a press conference, Mr. Kejriwal said,

"We are telling people about the work we have done in the last 10 years and the work we will do over the next five years. We are asking for votes based on our work."

He added, "In contrast, the BJP is asking for votes on the basis of abuses hurled at Kejriwal relentlessly for the past decade and with the promise of coming up with even better abuses in future."

"So far, the BJP does not have a Chief Ministerial face, a narrative, or a vision for Delhi. In the last 10 years, it has done no work. This is why its only strategy is to abuse AAP," said Mr. Kejriwal.

BJP wants to show all sides of history: Pradhan on Savarkar row

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Reacting to the recent controversy over naming DU's new college after Hindu ideologue V.D. Savarkar, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday said the BJP was "not trying to change the history but bring out all its aspects".

"We [BJP] are not trying to change history but to bring out all its aspects. I am confident that DU will make history a subject of social discussion from the right perspective. History works as a mirror to see the future, so I have full faith that DU will show the true mirror of this country's civilisation," Mr. Pradhan posted on X.

Speaking at a DU event, he said several people who objected to Savarkar's name had a "colonial mindset". "Savarkar was a great nationalist, but a section of society with a colonial mindset has objections to the DU college being named after him," Mr. Pradhan said.

On Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the Veer Savarkar College in Roshanpur, Najafgarh. The NSUI had requested the late PM Manmohan Singh's name, while the SFI suggested that of reformer Savitribai Phule.

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SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

Item Rate Tenders under two cover bid system is invited for the work mentioned below as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Contractors who have got adequate financial resources, suitable construction equipments, technical man power & sufficient past experience for the following works as per the schedule given below:

Name of the Works : 1) Providing and supplying of 5MLD potable water from BWSSB pumping station in Pinakini Bhavana premises to Devanahalli General Industrial Area in Devanahalli Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District. 2) Formation of Bandikodigehalli Industrial sub Layout including formation of 32m, & 18M wide roads including asphalting, construction of RCC side drains, RCC Ducts, RCC Cross drainage works, RWH & HDPE water supply pipeline at Hight Tech Defence & Aerospace Park (Hardware park) Industrial Area, Bangalore North taluk, Bangalore District near Devanahalli International Airport

The last date and time of receipt of tender is : 18.01.2025 upto 4.30 pm.

Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>.

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DIPR/CP/4159/Zen/2024-25

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Sunday, 5th January 2025
Venue: Govt. Co-Ed. Senior Secondary School No. 3, Kalkaji

Chief Guest

Atishi

Chief Minister, Delhi

Directorate of Education, Government of NCT of Delhi

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(Kamal Modi)

26th Sep. 1951 - 3rd Jan. 2025

A PRAYER MEETING will be held to honor his memory:
Date : Monday, 6th January 2025
Time : 4.00 PM - 5.00 PM
Venue : Chinmaya Mission, Lodhi Road, New Delhi

Your presence will mean a lot to us.

Asha Modi, Saket- Vanita Modi, Shivani-Niren Soni

Modis, Malhotras, Guptas & Sonis

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Notice No: 5017 / PD-190/2024

Date: 31/12/2024

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1. Date of publication of NIT on E-procurement website and OREDA website	01.01.2025
2. Due date of pre-bid query submission as per format of NIT	08.01.2025, Time : 5.00 PM
3. Date and time of pre-bid meeting through virtual mode	10.01.2025, Time : 3.30 PM https://meet.google.com/ac1-hkrv-deh
4. Due date and time for submission of online copies of Technical Bid and price bid.	27.01.2025, Time : 5.00 PM
Due date and time for submission of hard copies of Technical Bid for select Bid Forms only	
Bidders must submit the COST OF BID, BID SECURITY, AND POWER OF ATTORNEY ONLY in hard copy along with JV agreement/Consortium copy (if applicable), as specified in the tender documents. Submitting any additional documents in hard copy, contrary to the tender requirements, may result in rejection of the tender.)	31.01.2025, Time : 5.00 PM
6. Tentative date and time for the opening of Technical Bid for both online copies and hard copies, except price bid.	01.02.2025, Time: 4.00 PM
7. Due date and time for the opening of online price bid applicable only for the bidders whose Technical Bids shall be responsive.	To be intimated later

Details can be seen from the website www.tenderwizard.com/OREDA or www.oredaorissa.com. Further corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded in these websites only.

CAD-2084

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer

OIPR-04065/11/0029/2425

5 'illegal Bangladeshi immigrants' deported

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Five "illegal Bangladeshi immigrants", including a woman and two children, were deported after the Delhi police apprehended them on Saturday. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Ankit Singh said that the teams targeted unauthorised colonies, slums and labor camps in the district. The deported individuals admitted to entering India illegally and were found in possession of Bangladeshi citizenship documents and mobile numbers, the officer said.

Timings		
SUNDAY, JAN. 05		
RISE	07:15	SET 17:39
RISE	11:02	SET 23:15
MONDAY, JAN. 06		
RISE	07:15	SET 17:40
RISE	11:34	SET 00:00
TUESDAY, JAN. 07		
RISE	07:15	SET 17:40
RISE	12:06	SET 00:18

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	20	08
Safdarjung	20	08
Palam	19	07

Delhi Pali Today
17°C The weather will be cool. Morning will be cold with moderate to dense fog. Short spell of light rain is likely at few places.

Delhi Pali Tomorrow
15°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be cold and foggy. The cold day like conditions may occur. Night also will be very cold and uneasy.

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Camps to be organised for claimants of 'Sasta Ghar'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Raj Niwas on Friday wrote to the Delhi Chief Secretary to organise special camps so that beneficiaries of the DDA's 'Sasta Ghar' scheme may avail themselves of the facility.

The housing scheme, approved by the L-G last week, allows construction workers, women, ex-servicemen, *divyangans*, members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and other sections of society to buy houses at a discount of 25%. The DDA said priority will be given to workers, labourers, *jhuggi* dwellers, and those living in rental accommodations.

Raj Niwas said special camps will be organised across the city in a decentralised manner for people to avail themselves of the benefits. The scheme will offer the discount on flats in Narela, Siraspur, and Loknayak Puram.

High time Cong., BJP made covert ties official: AAP chief

Kejriwal reacts to senior Congress leaders, including from Punjab, warning women in Delhi to 'not fall prey' to poll doles; AAP owes ₹34,000 cr. to the women of Punjab: Partap Singh Bajwa

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Congress leaders Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, Ajay Maken, and others addressing a press conference in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

joined by All India Congress Committee treasurer Ajay Maken and Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav at a demonstration in New Delhi's Vijay Chowk, where party workers held placards that read: "In Punjab, they betrayed women; in Delhi, these lies will not get another chance".

"Just like AAP deceived the women of Punjab, similarly, it will deceive the women of Delhi now," the Punjab Congress chief alleged.

Referring to the "promised cash transfer" to women in Punjab, Mr. Bajwa said Mr. Kejriwal owed ₹34,000 crore to the women of Punjab.

Mr. Maken said the Punjab Congress leaders' revelations vindicated his position that Mr. Kejriwal was, in fact, a "Farziwal" (liar) and "anti-national".

Sharpening his attack on the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday advised the two parties to "give up behind-the-scenes collaboration" and formally "announce an alliance" for the Delhi Assembly election due in February.

"The Congress and the BJP should officially declare that they are contesting the elections against AAP in an alliance. This covert collaboration is unacceptable," he alleged.

Mr. Kejriwal's allegations came against the backdrop of a demonstration by senior Congress leaders, including "Punjab women voters", who "warned" the people of Delhi against the "false promises" of AAP, particularly of cash transfers to women.

They said similar promises made ahead of the Punjab Assembly election were "yet to be fulfilled" despite AAP being in power in the State for nearly three years now.

Mr. Kejriwal alleged that the women protesting were "not from Punjab" and were, in fact, "party workers of both the BJP

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• WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)
• JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
• NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
• LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

Projects that PM will inaugurate are joint ventures, says Atishi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of multiple development projects worth over ₹12,200 crore on Sunday, ride in Namo Bharat train from Sahibabad Regional Rapid Rail Transit System (RRTS) station to New Ashok Nagar RRTS station, and address a rally in Rohini.

The projects are joint ventures between the Central and State governments, said Delhi Chief Minister Atishi at a press conference and expressed satisfaction over the successful "collaboration for progress" between the governments. "It is to be noted that in the last decade of



CM Atishi addressing a press meet in New Delhi on Saturday.
SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

the Capital being run by the AAP government, Delhi Metro's length has doubled," she said.

This comes after the Prime Minister took a dig at the Delhi government for "not contributing" to the city's infrastructure.

The Chief Minister said since coming to power, AAP has invested ₹7,278 crore in the expansion of all metro lines in Delhi.

DELHI METRO RAIL CORPORATION LTD.

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Janakpuri West to **Krishna Park Extn.** Section of MAGENTA LINE will be opened for General Public from 3:00 PM onwards on 5th January, 2025 (Sunday)

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DELHI METRO

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Six killed in blast at fireworks unit in TN.

The Hindu Bureau
VIRUDHUNAGAR

Six persons were killed and one injured in an explosion at Sainath Fireworks unit in Bommaiapuram near Sattur in Virudhunagar district on Saturday. The deceased, all of whom worked at the unit, were identified as S. Kamaraaj, R. Kannan, S. Sivakumar, R. Nagaraj, G. Velmurugan, and S. Meenakshisundaram.

Another worker, S. Muhammad Sudeen suffered a fracture in one of the legs.

Chief Minister M.K Stalin announced a solatium of ₹4 lakh each to the deceased. The injured person will be given ₹1 lakh.

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Aarambh Pustakalay will soon open at Adhchini, Vikaspuri, Sector 16B Dwarka & Rohini

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IN BRIEF

**Pushpa 2 stampede case: Allu Arjun finishes bail formalities**

Actor Allu Arjun appeared in a Hyderabad court on Saturday to submit sureties and bonds amid heavy police deployment. This comes a day after the court granted him conditional bail in the Sandhya theatre stampede case, which claimed the life of a woman and left her son hospitalised on December 4. A senior official said the actor is required to sign a record/attendance book to be maintained for this purpose. If he fails to appear, the issue will be brought to the cognisance of the court for further action, the official said. The Chikkadpally police are gearing up to facilitate weekly visits of the actor for the next two months or until the chargesheet is filed as per the court order.

Sack Ashish Patel if he's guilty, Ajay Rai challenges U.P. govt.

Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Ajay Rai on Saturday challenged the Yogi Adityanath government to sack corruption-accused Technical Education Minister Ashish Patel. He also said if Mr. Patel, a member of the Apna Dal (Sonewal), is innocent, then he must break its alliance with the BJP. Mr. Patel was accused by Pallavi Patel, an MLA from Sirathu representing the Samajwadi Party and leader of the Apna Dal (Kameravadi), of corruption in the appointment of department heads in the Technical Education Department. PTI

3 more held in Beed murder case, sent to 14-day custody**The Hindu Bureau**
MUMBAI

Three persons involved in the murder of Beed sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh have been arrested from Pune and Kalyan, police said on Saturday. So far, seven persons have been arrested in the case while one is absconding.

According to the police, Sudarshan Ghule and Sudhir Sangale were nabbed from Pune, while Siddharth Sonawane was arrested from Kalyan in Thane district. They were produced before a court at

Kej in Beed district, which remanded them in 14-day custody of the CID's Special Investigation Team.

Deshmukh was abducted, tortured, and murdered on December 9 for allegedly trying to thwart an extortion bid at an energy firm operating a windmill project. Walimik Karad, an aide of Maharashtra Minister and NCP leader Dhananjay Munde, has been arrested in the extortion case.

Meanwhile, residents of the village, led by Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange-Patil, staged a protest march in Parbhani demanding the arrest of the accused. They demanded that the murderers be given death penalty.

'File murder case'
Targeting Mr. Munde, Mr. Jarange-Patil asserted that the Maratha community will not allow him to roam the streets freely.

BJP MLA Suresh Dhas also launched a fresh attack on the NCP Minister and alleged that the two men arrested from Pune are just "pawns" while the "key accused" are roaming free.

(With inputs from PTI)

A.P. govt. orders to be issued in Telugu, English from now**Sambasiva Rao M.**
AMARAVATI

In a landmark decision, the Andhra Pradesh government announced all official government orders will now be issued in Telugu, alongside English.

Minister for Revenue, Registration, and Stamps Anagani Satya Prasad on Saturday expressed delight over the move, emphasising the government's commitment to promoting the Telugu language. Many Mi-

nisters encouraged citizens to cherish their mother tongue while embracing English proficiency.

Long-pending demand
For years, Telugu writers, poets, and language enthusiasts have demanded the inclusion of Telugu in government communications. With 90% of the State's population speaking Telugu, this initiative is expected to enhance administrative transparency and accessibility.

Message of harmony

Special offering: Union Minister for Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju (centre) at the dargah of Sufi saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer, Rajasthan, on Saturday to offer a ceremonial 'chadar' (sheet of cloth) on behalf of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the 813th Urs to commemorate the saint's death anniversary. He also read out Mr. Modi's message on the occasion, laying emphasis on communal harmony in India. PTI

In Bihar, students are spinning dreams of studying in IITs with the help of a local library**SPOTLIGHT****Amarnath Tewary**

In Patwa Toli village, Gaya district, Bihar, there is a constant whirring and the click-clack of looms that reverberate through the narrow *gali*s (lanes). Away from this background 'score' of the weaving community, students studying for the Indian Institute of Technology-Joint Entrance Examination (IIT-JEE) sit quietly with their books in a double-storey building wedged between the houses. This is the Vriksh Pathshala (that translates from Hindi to 'tree school'), a library that runs 24x7.

Here, students find the space, study materials, and online and offline coaching assistance from teachers and former students to help them crack the challenging examination. There is also food and bed rolls for students to live or spend the night, all free of cost. Since the late 1990s, over 300 students of Patwa Toli have qualified for the IIT-JEE and over 1,000 for other engineering examinations.

Earlier, the impoverished locality was known as the 'Manchester of Bi-

har' because of its history of cotton cloth weaving. However, since 1996, it has come to be known as the 'factory of IITians'.

"The students of Patwa Toli can't study at home because of the lack of space, the ever-present noise from the looms, and of course, financial constraints," says Chandrakant Pateshwar, 32, who, along with some of his friends and seniors from the local government school, like Ranjeet Kumar, Dugeshwar Prasad, Prem Lal, Suraj Kumar, and Kishan Chand, have been running the library. "About 80-90% of Patwa Toli's population is patwas (weavers)," he says.

The motivation
In 1991, Jeetendra Prasad passed the IIT-JEE exam, went on to study in the Indian Institute of Technology in Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Uttar Pradesh, and joined a management consultancy firm in New Jersey, U.S.

"Whenever he came back to Patwa Toli on holiday, he would show the children a photo album of his American life," recalls Pateshwar. For the children of Patwa Toli, the ticket to that life was an IIT

education, which meant cracking the IIT-JEE. Soon, children began to study together at three 'home centres', rooms that people who had large homes gave out to children, so they could escape the distracting sound of the looms. In 2013, Pateshwar's family converted a double-storey building into a space for students to study.

"In 2022, a group of us decided to set up the library Vriksh Pathshala 24x7, giving online and offline coaching," Pateshwar says. That year, 19 students, out of the 40 who wrote the exam, cracked it. In 2023, there were 12 students who made it to IIT

and in 2024, eight. "So far, there are over 100 IITians in Patwa Toli. Every household has at least one engineer," he says.

In his book *The IITians*, journalist Sandipan Deb, himself from the institution, says the IITs are a symbol of the fact that India, where vast numbers of people are still unable to sign their names, has created a system of engineering education that compares with the best in the world.

Ranjeet Kumar, 42, who helped launch Vriksh Pathshala, says the only problem children have in Patwa Toli is the lack of an English-medium education. "Now, we're exploring the possibility of start-



Gearing up: Children studying at the 24x7 Vriksh Pathshala library in Patwa Toli village, Bihar, which is now known as the 'factory of IITians'. (right) Kashish Kumari, 17, a student at the Vriksh Pathshala, with her mother Krishna Devi, who works as a cook. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

ing something so they can read and speak English without difficulty," he says.

A joint endeavour

Once set up, the library began to get small donations, like an iron almirah from a local branch of a bank. "We run the library on donations by former students who now work in local banks, and the Rotary Club, among others," says Pateshwar. Vriksh Pathshala is run under the umbrella of the Vriksh Students Federation, an informal grouping of people interested in educating local youth.

Shubham Kumar, 18, has come from the Sikan-dra area of Jamui district,

Bihar are currently staying at the library. "There are 30 girls too," says Sunil Kumar, who teaches chemistry at Vriksh Pathshala. Sunil, a Patwa Toli resident, graduated with an M.Tech from IIT-Delhi in 2006. Whenever he comes home, he takes offline classes for students, free of cost.

Kashish Kumari, 17, had come to the Vriksh library when she was just 9. Her father, also a power loom worker, had died in 2012. "We are three sisters and a brother. We were almost starving," she says.

Her mother, Krishna Devi, is a cook at the library. "I'll appear for the IIT-JEE for the first time in January 2025. I'm confident of getting a job that will take my family out of poverty," she says. Seven other girls are from Patna; Ranchi and Deoghar are in neighbouring Jharkhand. "The rest are from Patwa Toli itself," says Kashish.

"We eat, sleep, and breathe IIT-JEE. We cannot afford to waste our time," she says. Her friend Smita Kumari, 15, nods in agreement. "We study about 15-16 hours a day. To unburden ourselves, we only chat among ourselves, nothing else," Smita says.

In the village, people say graduating as an engineer from one of India's top institutes is a gateway to financial security and social status.

The weavers' lives
"Despite working for over 16 hours a day, we only earn ₹15,000-20,000 a month. If our children don't get out of this profession, they will starve," says Meghnath Prasad, 42. His three daughters, 12 and below, go to Vriksh Pathshala every day.

Prasad and his wife Girija Devi run five power looms on the ground floor of their unplastered house. The constant whirr of the machines is a deterrent to studying. His neighbour Banarsi Lal, 48, too runs five power looms from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day, weaving cotton towels, sarees, and bedsheets.

"The demand has fallen drastically these days, and middlemen pocket the maximum share of the profit," he says. Both his sons have B.Tech degrees and are looking for jobs. "Once they get jobs, our financial difficulties will end," he says, confidently.

LINK TO FULL STORY
» <https://bit.ly/3BKU225>

BPSC conducts retest at 22 centres in Patna amid demand for cancellation

Preliminary exam results to be announced by end of this month; retest demand had snowballed in recent weeks with a section of students staging protests and several politicians extending support

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

The Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) on Saturday again conducted its 70th Combined (Preliminary) Competitive Examination at 22 centres in Patna district, including the Baba Exam Centre (BEC) where allegations of irregularities had surfaced during the original test across 912 centres in the State on December 13.

The demand for a retest had snowballed in recent weeks with a section of students staging protests for conducting it afresh State-wide. Several politicians extended support to their demand, including Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav, Independent MP Pappu Yadav, and Jan Surya Party founder Prashant Kishor.

Mr. Pappu Yadav had on Friday led his supporters in blocking rail and road traffic in several areas of Patna as well as other parts



Stress-free: Aspirants leave the examination centre after appearing for the BPSC re-exam in Patna on Saturday. ANI

of the State.

The BPSC had earlier announced that a re-examination will be held only for candidates who took it at BEC. On Saturday, only 5,943 of the 12,012 eligible aspirants turned up at the centre.

"The exam was conducted peacefully at all the 22 centres in Patna district. The result of the preliminary exam would be announced by the end of this month followed by the main exam in April," BPSC Examination Controller Rajesh Kumar Singh told *The Hindu*.

Aspirants' fears

Asked about the demand for conducting a full retest, Neetu Kushwaha from Delhi, who sat for the exam on Saturday at Bankipur Girls High School, said, "I did not get the question paper last time at BEC. Only a

handful of genuine students are demanding re-examination."

Saddam Hussain, another student from Gaya who took the retest, expressed apprehension about how the candidates would be evaluated for two separate question papers. "How will marks be given and will there be any scaling during evaluation?" he said.

Hunger strike

Even as the examination went off incident-free in Patna on Saturday, the indefinite hunger strike of Mr. Kishor to press for the demand for cancellation of the December 13 exam entered its third day.

While the district administration said action would be taken against him for sitting in a prohibited area, Mr. Kishor demanded that he will not move an inch from the spot until Chief Minister Nitish Kumar meets the protesting students and listens to their grievances.

20 injured in Tamil Nadu's first jallikattu of 2025**Ancy Donal Madonna**
PUDUKKOTTAI

People take part in jallikattu in Pudukkottai district, Tamil Nadu, on Saturday. M. MOORTHY

Aruna, who administered the oath to the tamers.

As many as 459 bulls were released, and 290 tamers took the field. Bulls were transported from Tiruchi, Pudukkottai, Thanjavur, Perambalur, Ariyalur, Salem, Theni, Madurai, Dindigul, and neighbouring districts to the village in mini trucks. Hundreds of bulls lined up on the Sengipatti-Gandarvakottai Road.

Dope test

"A 30-member team of veterinarians were deployed at the checking point, 'Vadivasa', and collection point to screen and treat the injured bulls. The bulls were subjected to a dope test before they were sent to the 'Vadivasa'. P. Chockalingam, Deputy Director, Department of Animal Husbandry, Pudukkottai, told *The Hindu*.

Earlier, Minister for Law S. Regupathy and Minister for Backward Classes Welfare Siva V. Meyyanathan flagged off the event at 8.15 a.m. District Collector M.

Telangana to study impact of A.P.'s Polavaram project

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD



The A.P. government plans to complete the Polavaram irrigation project on the Godavari by 2027. FILE PHOTO

The Telangana government has decided to study the impact of the Polavaram irrigation project on the State with Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy instructing the Irrigation Department authorities to get it done with the help of experts from IIT Hyderabad and prepare a comprehensive report in a month.

Directions were also issued to appoint a special officer to coordinate with IIT-H in the matter on a regular basis.

The Chief Minister suggested that the impact study shall include the threat to the Bhadrachalam temple upon the completion of the Polavaram project.

The authorities have brought to the notice of the Chief Minister that most of the temple premises got submerged during the floods in the Godavari in July 2022.

It was also decided at the meeting held in Hyderabad on Saturday and attended by Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, Adviser (Irrigation) Aditya Nath Das, and others that the State would also raise its objection to the Godava-

ri-Banakacherla link project, based on the surplus water, being planned by Andhra Pradesh government without any approvals and clearances.

Directive to officials

The Chief Minister asked the authorities concerned to bring Telangana's objections to the project to the notice of Andhra Pradesh's Chief Secretary. He also instructed the authorities to move the Godavari River Management Board and Ministry of Jal Shakti by taking the matter to their notice as part of protecting the interests of Telangana.

Recently, the officials showed a power point presentation to the Chief Minister on the new link project by the Andhra Pradesh government.

Teen stabbed to death outside his school in east Delhi; 7 held

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A 14-year-old student was stabbed to death outside his school in east Delhi's Shakarpur, the police said on Saturday.

Seven persons, including three classmates of the victim, have been apprehended and their roles and motives are being investigated, a police officer said.

The incident occurred on Friday after the boy had an altercation with some of his classmates during a game of dodgeball in school, the officer said.

"Investigations revealed that during a break at 4 p.m., one of the classmates made a call, discussed the dispute, and instructed the person on the line to 'send people,'" Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Abhishek Dhania said.

According to the DCP, around 6 p.m., as students were leaving school, a few classmates of the victim

were waiting outside with a group. One member of the group stabbed the victim with a knife, causing severe injuries, Mr. Dhania said.

The school staff then rushed the boy to hospital, where he was declared dead on arrival, he said.

Swinging into action

Several teams from the Shakarpur police station, including an Anti-Narcotics Cell, were sent to the spot for investigation.

An extensive review of CCTV footage led to all seven accused being apprehended while trying to escape, the DCP said.

Critical pieces of evidence, including the accused's bloodstained clothes, shoes, and the knife, have been seized, the DCP said.

The victim's body will now be sent for post-mortem. A case has been registered at the Shakarpur police station and investigation is in progress.

OREDA LIMITED
(Under the Energy Government of Odisha)
(CIN No: U35105OD2024GCO45786)
(ISO 9001:2008 / ISO 14001:2004)
5/59, MANCHESWAR INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
BHUBANESWAR-751010, ODISHA
Website : www.oredaodisha.com ; E-mail : ceoreda@oredaorissa.com

e-Tender Call Notice

Notice No.: 5021 / PD-190/2024

Date: 31/12/2024

Request for Empanelment (RfE) is invited through e-tender portal from eligible bidders for Design, Engineering, Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning including Comprehensive Maintenance for five (5) years of Roof-top Solar PV On-grid systems of cumulative capacity up to 10 MW in various capacities across Odisha on a rate contract basis.

1. Date of publication of NIT on E-procurement website and OREDA website	01.01.2025
2. Due date of pre-bid query submission as per format of NIT	08.01.2025, Time : 5:00 PM
3. Date and time of pre-bid meeting through virtual mode	10.01.2025, Time : 11:30 AM https://meet.google.com/ufn-nkqo-upx
4. Due date and time for submission of online copies of Technical Bid and price bid.	27.01.2025, Time : 5:00 PM
5. Due date and time for submission of hard copies of Technical Bid for select Bid Forms only	31.01.2025, Time : 5:00 PM
6. Tentative date and time for the opening of Technical Bid for both online copies and hard copies, except price bid.	01.02.2025, Time : 3:00 PM
7. Due date and time for the opening of online price bid applicable only for the bidders whose Technical Bids shall be responsive.	To be intimated later

Details can be seen from the website www.tenderwizard.com/OREDA or www.oredaorissa.com. Further corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded in these websites only.

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer

OIPR-04065/11/0028/2425

Transforming Delhi with Projects worth ₹ 12,200 Crores

Metro & Namo Bharat Network in India now reaches 1000 KM



The Hindu Bureau HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has decided to study the impact of the Polavaram irrigation project on the State with Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy instructing the Irrigation Department authorities to get it done with the help of experts from IIT Hyderabad and prepare a comprehensive report in a month.

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Inauguration of Additional 13 KM Section of Namo Bharat Corridor from Sahibabad to New Ashok Nagar (₹ 4,600 Crores)

• Namo Bharat service reaches Delhi • Significant reduction in travel time with design speed of 180 Kmph • New opportunities for employment & business • Enables significant reduction in congestion & air pollution • Seamless multi-modal integration with other public transport modes

Janakpuri West-Krishna Park Extension Section of Delhi Metro's Magenta Line (₹ 1,200 Crores)

• First Section of Delhi Metro Phase-IV Project • Connecting West Delhi directly with Terminal 1D of the IGI Airport • A boon for connectivity in West Delhi areas such as Vikaspuri, Janakpuri, Krishna Park etc.

Laying of the Foundation Stone for Delhi Metro Rail Project (Phase - IV) Rithala-Narela-Kundli (Sonipat) Corridor (₹ 6,230 Crores)

• 26.5 Km Rithala - Narela - Kundli (Sonipat) Corridor with 21 stations will connect and benefit the people living in Rohini, Bawana, Narela and Kundli area • Enhances connectivity between Delhi, Haryana & Uttar Pradesh • Improving access to residential, commercial & industrial zones

New Building of Central Ayurveda Research Institute (CARI), Rohini, Delhi (₹ 185 Crores)

• State-of-the-art facility with multi-specialty OPD • 100 bedded IPD • World-class laboratory facilities

by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi

Sunday, 5th January 2025 | Time: 12:15 PM

August Presence

Shri Manohar Lal
Union Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs and Power

Shri Prataprao Jadhav
Minister of State (IC), Ministry of Ayush

Shri Tokhan Sahu
Minister of State, Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs

Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena
Lieutenant Governor, Delhi

Ms. Atishi
Chief Minister, Delhi

Watch live telecast on DD News

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
RURAL WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION ORGANISATION
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RWS&S DIVISION, ANGUL : AT : TALCHER
At- Baghuabale, PO- Hatata, Talcher, Dist- Angul, Pin- 759100
(Ph. No./Fax - 06760-240762, E-mail : ewrsang@jail.gov.in)
National Competitive Bidding through e-procurement
Bid Identification No. 11/SE/RWS/SANG/2024-25 Dt:30/12/2024

The Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Division, Angul at Talcher on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Item Rate/ Percentage bid through e-procurement in double/ single cover system according to norm of e-Procurement system in on-line mode.

Nature of Work : PWS Scheme.

1. No. of Tenders : 1 No. 2. Tender Paper Cost : Rs.10,000.00. 3. Value of work : Rs.73.35 Lakhs. 4. Class of Contractor : "A" & "Spl." Class. 5. Date & time of availability of bid document in portal : 06.01.2025 at 13:00 hours to 16.01.2025 upto 17:30 hours. 6. Date & time of seeking tender clarification : 10.01.2025 upto 17:30 hours. 7. Date & time of opening of tender & verification of original document : 17.01.2025 at 12:00 hours in the office of the Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Division, Angul/at:Talcher. 8. Time of completion : 12 (Twelve) Calendar Months. 9.The bidders have to participate in online bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>. 10. Corrigendum if any shall be publish in the above website only.

Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Division, Angul at Talcher, DIPR-25195/11/002/2425

GOVT. OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (ROADS),
ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3.
No. CE/STBR/II/31/2024-25/03
SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER
The Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3, invites Bid on behalf of the Governor of Assam from eligible contractors registered with Assam PWD (Roads) or registered in Central Govt./any State Government/ Semi Govt. Organization / Central or State Public Sector Undertakings for "Construction of ROB on Lezai Kolakhowa Road from Sessa Tiniali to Itakhuli at Railway Level Crossing No. MD/3 in Dibrugarh District of Assam" for an amount of Rs.3859.14 Lakh (Rupees thirty eight crore fifty nine lakh fourteen thousand) only (Approx.). The project is not yet sanctioned by the competent authority. In the event of non-sanction of the project, the bids may be cancelled and no claim what so ever on this account shall be entertained from the bidders. Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.gov.in>. Amendment/Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWD, Assam website <http://assamtenders.gov.in>. Note: NIT value is inclusive of GST (12%), Labour Welfare Cess (1%) etc.

Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads)
Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA - DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER,
BARIPADA IRRIGATION CIRCLE, AT/PO- TAKATPUR, BARIPADA, DIST: MAYURBHANJ
Mail Id : sebicbpd@gmail.com
Government of Odisha "e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Notice No.ACEBIC/MBJ-02/2024-25

Sl. No. Name of work Bid Identification No. Estimated Cost Bid Security / E.M.D.

1 Improvement to service road of left main canal of Balihita Irrigation Project from RD 3000 m to 6500m (working from RD 1860m to 6500 m) 03/24-25 of ACE/BIC Rs.2,50,94,311.00 Rs.2,50,943/-

2 Improvement to service road on Left Bank of Bisoi Distributary from RD 13300M to 20700M Sunei Irrigation Project. 04/24-25 of ACE/BIC Rs.2,50,99,551.00 Rs.2,50,995/-

3 Improvement to canal service road (AT/PO- Takatpur, Baripada, Dist- Mayurbhanj) from RD 10500 M to 19000 m of Kalo main distributary of Kalo Irrigation Project. 05/24-25 of ACE/BIC Rs.2,48,81,204.00 Rs.2,48,812/-

General Instruction for all 11 nos. of works

1. Period of Completion 9 (Nine) Calendar Months

2. Class of Contractor "A" Class & "B" Class

3. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal 31.12.2024 at 10.00 A.M.

4. Last date / time for receipt of bid in the portal 15.01.2025 up to 5:00 PM.

5. Date of Opening of bid 16.01.2025 at 11:00 A.M.

6. Name & Address of the O.I.T. Additional Chief Engineer, Baripada Irrigation Circle, AT/PO- Takatpur, Baripada, Dist- Mayurbhanj

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal "<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>". Additional Chief Engineer, Baripada Irrigation Circle, Baripada OIPR-32162/11/0002/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER:: PWD BUILDING:: ASSAM::GUWAHATI-3.
No. CE/TECH-V/33/2017/Pt/1
PRESS NOTICE
The Chief Engineer, PWD (Building), Assam, on behalf of the Governor of Assam, invites bids from eligible contractors/firms having requisite experience in similar nature of works for the following work. Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e. www.assamtenders.gov.in. The Bidders must be enrolled in www.assamtenders.gov.in.

Sl. No. Name of work Approx. Value of work (in Rs) Bid Security Cost of Document (in Rs) Completion period

1. Construction of Gr-II and Gr- III Judicial Officer's Qr. (RCC-G+2) at Hailakandi. (Balance Work) 2% for General category or 1 % for Reserved category on value of work 6000. 00 18 (Eighteen) Months

N.B.
(i) Value of work may vary according to the detail NIT.
(ii) All terms and conditions will be as per the Bidding Documents.
(iii) The Press Notice will be a part of the Bidding Documents.

Chief Engineer, PWD (Building)
Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3.

Join FREE WhatsApp Channel <https://chat.whatsapp.com/0029Van2VRb6RGJOKH6oBd0F>

Join FREE Telegram Channel <https://t.me/+Bu7senHpQdhf0Dg1>

Classifieds

LIFE MADE SIMPLE

Matrimonial

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

BRIDEROOMS WANTED

INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEROOMS WANTED

BRIDES WANTED

BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED

Classification Common for Brides, Bridegrooms, Brides & Grooms

ASSAMESE

AWADHI

BENGALI

BHOJPURI

BIHARI

CHHATTISGARHI

ENGLISH

GUJARATI

HARYANI

HINDI

KANNADA

KASHMIRI

KONKANI

MALAYALAM

MANIPURI

MARATHI

MARWARI

NEPALI

ORIYA

PARSI

PUNJABI

SAURASHTRA

SINDHI

TAMIL

TELUGU

TULU

URDU

ADVOCATE

BUSINESS

DEFENCE

DOCTOR

ENGINEER

FINANCE/ BANKING

GOVERNMENT/ QUASI-GOVERNMENT

IAS / ALLIED SERVICES

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

MBA / CA / ICWA

NRI

COSMOPOLITAN

DIVORCEE

PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED

MARRIAGE BUREAUS

WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

COSMOPOLITAN

ATTRACTIVE, CARING, 28, 168cm, active professional (US MS). Seeking driven, kind, compatible partner. Community no bar. Call/WhatsApp 9345634365.

WANTED A post-graduate & well educated Groom from a small & respected Indian family for a Tamil Mudaliar girl employed in UK. PG (Finance) 28 yrs / 165 Cms who prefers eco-friendly simple marriage and dowry-free alliance. WhatsApp details & photo to 6362465704

DIVORCEE

SMP INVITE alliance for daughter, PG, 30, 163cm. Preferred NRI family, boy in Saudi, Eng/Dr/CA, less than 35. W/Ph: 0096650792384

DOCTOR

SUNNI MUSLIM Urdu, 33yrs, 170 cm, MBBS MD. Never Married, from Well Settled Family. Looking for PG Doctors / Engineers from Well Settled Families. Preferably from South India, UK, Middle East. Ct: 944551651

HINDU TAMIL BC Doctor 26/ 175 cm Fair, Clear Horoscope Seeks Tall Handsome PG Doctors with Good Habits from Simple family. Contact with Full view Photograph, Horoscope and biodata. Ph: 7200365364

BEAUTIFUL RICH Dr Girl Veg 29 MD Gen Medicine Kettai Chennai seeks PG Dr Boy Veg only WhatsApp 9384086399

HINDU, CNB, 24 years, MBBS, Pursuing (MS) ENT Seeks Groom Ct: 9677199925

TAMIL

HINDU PILLAI, 25 Yrs, MBBS, Doctor at Chennai, Income 12 Lakhs. Ct 8136900557

TAMIL BEAUTIFUL girl 2003 Born / 163cm/ Chennai/ from a traditional family is looking for suitable match (080-69129233)

HINDU SC AD Magam girl 29/157cm, MCA, TL @ Infosys 12LPA. Seeking Same caste groom from Chennai. 9840365908

MUDALIAR 32 DM (Cardiology) Seeks PG Doctors / Engineers/CAs/Govt Officers from Any Mudaliar Community Ct:9445151998

MUDALIAR 26, BE, MBA, 162cm, Good Looking well Settled Family. Alliance CNB, Ct: 8778514465/ 7200866346

HINDU NADAR, 30 yrs, M.Arch, (US) Elite Business Family in Chennai 9841329471 / 9380791999

HINDU VANNIYAKULA Kshetra girl Chennai 27 yrs smart modern outlook professionally qualified post graduation from UK upper middle class family seeks professionals equally qualified well placed like minded grooms from good family background from same or similar castes WhatsApp 9840714368

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HINDU NADAR, 24 yrs, 165 cms, B.Arch, Lives in Chennai, Father is a Businessman, Upper middle class family. Looking for a like minded match from the same community. Contact: 9080629216

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BRIDES WANTED

COSMOPOLITAN

ENGINEER

HINDU

TAMIL

SC AD 37 BE

From Page One

New Governor suggests use of NSA in Manipur

The group advocates for the secession of Manipur and largely operates from Myanmar. Around 80 members of the group with 31 weapons had surrendered.

Yaingangpokpi (YKPI) in Imphal East, a buffer zone between the valley and hills, has become the latest flashpoint of violence in Manipur. The area had witnessed at least 50 incidents of firing since December 24, another government official said.

The trigger for the violence on Friday in Kangpokpi, where the Superintendent of Police (SP) was injured after a protest rally organised by the Kuki-Zo body Committee On Tribal Unity (CoTU) became violent, was the demand for withdrawal of a camp set up by Central Armed Police Forces on December 30 at Saibol village, close to YKPI.

The official said that YKPI, shaped like a bowl, is surrounded by National Highway 202 (Imphal-Ukhrul) on one side and Khamenlok-Gwaltabi reserved forest area on the other. It had often been a problematic area where Kuki-Zo volunteers had set up a bunker at a vantage point after ethnic violence erupted in the State on May 3, 2023. Central security forces removed the bunker and set up a camp in Saibol on December 30. The move was protested by local women and several of them were injured in clashes with CAPF personnel. This area didn't have security camps in place earlier.

The camps of Kuki-Zo insurgent groups and Meitei insurgent group UNLF are also located on the periphery of YKPI.

Escalating violence

A defence source said that a few rounds were fired from bunkers in the valley district of Imphal East towards the Kuki-Zo areas in the hills on December 24, which escalated the violence and the intermittent exchange of fire between the two communities continued till December 29. A joint combing operation was conducted a day later and six bunkers of Kuki-Zo village volunteers were dismantled at Phaimol near YKPI.

"Since the Kuki-Zo bunkers are at a height, particularly at Phaimol and Urangpat, the Meiteis feel threatened and this area in YKPI has seen several instances of firing. The Meitei groups have demanded the removal of the bunkers," said the source. Since June 2023, buffer zones between the valley areas where the Meiteis live and the hills where the Kuki-Zos live have been created to stop any kind of clash or arson. The buffer zones are guarded by CAPF personnel.

Dallewal urges farmers from all States to join stir

He said the Punjab government supported the farmers' legitimate demands and was enthusiastic about working with the Union government to achieve the goal of "prosperous agriculture".

The call for the Kisan Mahapanchayat was given by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, the umbrella bodies spearheading the agitation in Punjab.

In Haryana's Tohana, SKM held another Kisan Mahapanchayat to reject the recently released draft of the National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing (NPFAM).

According to SKM's statement, farmer leader Inderjit Singh placed the resolution opposing the draft of NPFAM, which was unanimously disapproved by the Mahapanchayat. The resolution appealed to all gram panchayats to send letters to the Central government demanding the withdrawal of the draft.

Pharma units get 12 months more to carry out revisions

Union Minister claims agriculture, allied sectors to grow at 3.5% to 4%

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Saturday revised the date of implementation of the revised standards of Schedule M of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act to give pharmaceutical manufacturing industry 12 more months to comply.

Pharmaceutical firms must now comply with the improved manufacturing practices by December 31, 2025. The extension follows a request from the manufacturing units for time to upgrade their facilities.

Required standards
Schedule M is a part of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1945 that outlines Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) for pharmaceutical products in India. It covers the requirements for premises, plants, and equipment used in the manufacturing process.

Ministry proposes cruise terminal and high-end tourism infra on Great Nicobar

Shipping Ministry also seeks 100 acres of land with seafront for shipbuilding, repair facilities, exim port; six-month-long running correspondence has no mention of security and strategic concerns earlier cited by Environment Ministry to deny RTI requests on further details of Great Nicobar project

Pankaj Sekhsaria

The Union Shipping Ministry is making ambitious plans for high-end tourism along with a shipbuilding and repair yard on Great Nicobar Islands, according to a series of letters written to the Andaman and Nicobar administration and the Union Home Ministry over the last eight months.

The current ₹72,000-crore project already includes an international container transshipment port proposed at Galathea Bay, an airport, a power plant, and a massive greenfield township and tourism project to be spread over 130 sq. km of land that is now pristine tropical forest. The project is being implemented by the Port Blair-based Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation Ltd (ANIIDCO). The Stage I forest clearance for diversion of 130 sq. km of forest land was granted in October 2022 and followed in November 2022 by environmental and coastal regulation zone (CRZ) clearances.

In April 2024, Rajeev

Kumar, an Under Secretary in the Shipping Ministry, wrote to the Chief Secretary of the A&N administration, asking for 100 acres of land with a 500-metre seafront for ship repair and shipbuilding facilities in Campbell Bay, the administrative headquarters of Great Nicobar Island. In May, he wrote to the A&N Shipping Secretary, to enable Campbell Bay to be declared an exim port to import construction material from neighbouring countries for the transshipment terminal at Galathea Bay.

More recently, on September 18, Shipping Secretary T.K. Ramachandran wrote to the Home Secretary, noting that the vision was "to transform Great Nicobar island into a 'Global Port-Led City' with a strategic focus on establishing a 'sustainable and High-End Eco-tourism Destination'." He advocated for an international and domestic cruise terminal "to accommodate high-end and domestic tourists".

The responses, from the A&N Chief Secretary on October 23 and from an ANIIDCO general manager



Experts say that the project will open up Great Nicobar Island to foreign vessels and national and international tourists. GETTY IMAGES

the next day, indicate their reluctance to commit to these proposals. Their letters ask the Shipping Ministry to engage a specialised consultant on its own to explore the techno-economic feasibility of the cruise terminal and to discuss the exim port proposal with the Ministry concerned.

They also argue that ship repair will not be compatible with the purpose of the greenfield township and "could undermine the envisioned water front activities, particularly the tourism infrastructure envisaged for Great Nicobar Island". In an earlier response in July, ANIIDCO had also noted that the coast-

line comes under a coastal regulation zone (CRZ 1a) as it has coral reefs along almost the entire east coast and that this would be a constraint for ship repair activity.

Requests denied

Concerns have already been raised about the impact of the existing project but multiple requests for more details have been denied under Section 8(1)(a) of the RTI Act that invokes issues of sovereignty, integrity, security, and the strategic concerns of the country. In November 2022, Mumbai-based researcher Prasad Kale had filed an RTI application asking the

Environment Ministry for information related to the clearances granted to the project.

The Ministry refused, invoking Section 8(1)(a) and also relying on a Ministry of Home Affairs order stating that the proposed airport was a dual-use military-civil facility which will come under the operational control of the Indian Navy. This argument was upheld by the Central Information Commissioner in its June 2024 order.

"It is strange that information about these projects is being denied on grounds of sovereignty and integrity of India, and security and strategic interests," says Debi Goenka of the Conservation Action Trust, which has challenged the project before the National Green Tribunal.

"At the most, information about the airport could have been excluded but there is no rationale for refusing to divulge information about the other three."

Given the Home Ministry's stance and the consistent denial of information on the grounds that the project required secrecy

because of its strategic location and security concerns, the Shipping Ministry's recent proposals stand out. There is no mention anywhere in the Ministry's six-month-long running correspondence about these strategic concerns that have been used to deny information about the environment and other risks. It also does not account for the fact that many of these activities – such as ship breaking, a cruise terminal and high-end international tourism – are themselves contrary to this strategic purpose. Emails sent to officials in the Shipping Ministry and ANIIDCO seeking their clarification in the matter did not receive any response.

These projects, Mr. Goenka notes, will open up Great Nicobar Island to foreign vessels and national and international tourists. "The policy followed since Independence of keeping Great Nicobar Island isolated from foreigners will be overtaken," he warns.

(Pankaj Sekhsaria is an author and editor whose most recent work is *The Great Nicobar Betrayal*)

M.P. to seek time from HC for Bhopal waste disposal as protests get violent in Pithampur



An incineration facility at Pithampur where waste from Bhopal's Union Carbide factory has been brought for disposal. PTI

Mehul Malpani
BHOJPUR

The Madhya Pradesh government has decided to seek some time from the High Court to dispose of the Bhopal gas tragedy's toxic waste from the Union Carbide factory in Pithampur, Chief Secretary Anurag Jain said on Saturday, amid the ongoing protests in the industrial town against the government's plans.

During a discussion with reporters in Bhopal, Mr. Jain said, "We are going to inform the court about the public's apprehensions and ask for some time to take everyone into confidence. We don't know how much time the court will

grant us but the government would like to dispose of the waste with the public's consent."

The government plans to submit an affidavit in the court on January 6 on the recent developments, including the transfer of 358-

tonne toxic waste from the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal to an incineration facility in Dhar district's Pithampur, which is about 35 kilometre from Indore.

Meanwhile, protests continued in Pithampur on Saturday with a mob

throwing stones at the incineration facility, Ramky Group's Pithampur Industrial Waste Management Private Limited, after a rumour that the unloading and burning of the waste has begun and that some labourers had fallen sick.

Dhar Additional Superintendent of Police Indrajeet Bakalwar, who was at the facility at the time, said that in the morning a group of protesters, including women, from a nearby village, suddenly marched towards the factory with stones, sticks and chilli powder.

"They began to throw stones and chilli powder towards the facility but the police dispersed them quickly," he told *The Hindu*.

Dhar Collector Priyank Mishra said, "The entire waste is in the same condition as it had been brought from Bhopal. The Chief Minister has also confirmed that no further action will be taken at the moment."

The district authorities had already issued prohibitory orders under Section 163 of BNSS around the factory.

While the government has said the waste will be incinerated using scientific methods and the smoke will only be released in the air after a four-layer filtration and residue buried with two-layer membrane, local residents worry that it may pollute their environment and contaminate their waterbodies.

Four soldiers killed in Bandipora road accident

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Four soldiers were killed in a road accident in north Kashmir's Bandipora district on Saturday.

An Army spokesperson said a vehicle on duty in Bandipora district skidded and fell into a gorge due to inclement weather and poor visibility.

"The injured soldiers were promptly evacuated for medical care with assistance from Kashmiri locals, for which we express gratitude towards the citizens in providing immediate succour. Tragically, the bravehearts lost their lives in the unfortunate accident," the Army said.

The Hindu Bureau



Shriji Singh Chouhan during a video conference on reforms in the agriculture sector, at his residence in New Delhi on Saturday. ANI

Continuous progress
Highlighting a host of schemes run by the Ministry, such as the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, PM Crop Insurance Scheme, Minimum Support Price scheme, and Agri Infra Fund, and the progress made under them, Mr. Chouhan said, "There is

continuous progress in the agriculture sector and we are all constantly making efforts for it."

He added that the meeting was primarily called to get inputs on suggestions for the upcoming Budget. He said, "For this, we have also talked to farmers and stakeholders. The Agriculture Ministers will be able to explain the problems of farmers in a better way. If there is any suggestion or amendment required in relation to the Budget and the ongoing schemes, then

give necessary suggestions in this regard."

The Agriculture Minister further said that the Centre had now decided to assess crop losses through satellites i.e. remote sensing, as opposed to manual assessments, which he said will ensure "correct and accurate" assessments of crop losses under the crop insurance scheme.

Assuring that the Centre will put in its share immediately, Mr. Chouhan urged the States to do the same, adding, "If any insurance company delays in giving the claim, then it will have to pay 12% interest on the amount."

He also said that in the case of tomato, onion, and potato crops, to bridge the price difference between the producer and consumer States during the peak time of harvesting, the government has decided to bear the cost of transportation and storage for the work done by the Central nodal agencies.

The Supreme Court clarified that bail can only be granted if the conditions specified in MCOCA are met. The court referred the bail applications back to HC for reconsideration.

Courts must stick to strict conditions for bail, says SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has made it clear that constitutional courts cannot relax or overlook stringent conditions in special statutes like the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) or Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in order to grant bail on grounds other than the violation of the fundamental rights of accused persons.

The judgment was based on an appeal filed by a widow of a man who was killed in an alleged gang attack in Pune in 2020. The Bombay High Court gave the accused, charged under MCOCA, bail citing insufficient evidence.

The Supreme Court clarified that bail can only be granted if the conditions specified in MCOCA are met. The court referred the bail applications back to HC for reconsideration.

Political controversy erupts over murder of journalist in Bastar

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

The murder of young journalist Mukesh Chandrakar in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region acquired a political hue on Saturday even as the police arrested three people in connection with the crime.

At a press conference in State capital Raipur, Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister Vijay Sharma alleged that Suresh Chandrakar, a construction contractor and one of the four accused, was a Congress office-bearer. On the other hand, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi wrote on X that the journalist was killed for exposing corruption.

According to the police, the four accused identified so far include brothers Ritesh Chandrakar, Dinesh Chandrakar, and Suresh Chandrakar, who are construction contractors, and

Mahendra Ramteke, who is their employee. Suresh is absconding while the other three have been arrested. It is being alleged that Ritesh and Ramteke attacked Mukesh Chandrakar with an iron rod following an argument over Mukesh's news report on irregularities in a road construction project.

Deputy CM Vijay Sharma said that a Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been constituted to expedite the investigation of the case. He said that a speedy trial would be conducted by presenting the chargesheet within four weeks.

Meanwhile, journalists across the State registered their protest against the incident, demanding strict possible punishment against the accused.

The incident has sparked a political battle between the Congress and BJP, with accusations flying regarding the affiliations of the accused.

BJP names 29 candidates in first list for Delhi Assembly election

Former MP Parvesh Sahib Singh to take on Kejriwal in New Delhi; ex-MP Ramesh Bidhuri pitted against CM Atishi in Kalkaji; list has eight leaders, including former Delhi Ministers, who switched over from AAP and Congress; poll is due in February

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The BJP released its first list of 29 candidates for the Delhi Assembly election, a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a blistering attack against the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

Former MP Parvesh Sahib Singh has been fielded from New Delhi, where he will take on AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal and former MP Sandeep Dikshit of the Congress. Mr. Singh is the son of former Chief Minister Shekhar Singh Verma, while Mr. Dikshit is the son of former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit. The AAP leader had last month termed the battle for the constituency, which he has held since 2013, a contest between the "sons of Chief Ministers and the common man".

Another seat that will see a three-way fight is Kalkaji, where the BJP has pitted former MP Ramesh Bidhuri against senior AAP

Hot seats

Exciting three-way contests, including several high-profile candidates, are on the cards in at least two constituencies

NEW DELHI



KALKAJI



leader and Chief Minister Atishi and the Congress's women's wing president, Alka Lamba. Congress leader Danish Ali termed the BJP's decision to field Mr. Bidhuri "shameful", and accused the party of

having "tarnished democracy". Mr. Bidhuri's remarks against Mr. Ali in Parliament had led to a furor in 2023.

The list includes eight leaders who had switched over from the AAP and

Congress, including former Delhi Ministers Kailash Gahlot and Raaj Kumar Anand, and former Delhi Congress chief Arvinder Singh Lovely, as well as three national-level office bearers – Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Dushyant Kumar Gautam, and Ashish Sood.

Talking about the composition of the nominees, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva, who has decided not to contest the election, said, "It is a combination of youth and experience. There are women candidates and former MPs. We are confident that they will win and set the stage for a double-engine government in Delhi."

The BJP, which last held the reins of Delhi in 1998 and won three and eight seats in the elections of 2015 and 2020, respectively, is looking to secure a majority in the 70-member Assembly, the election for which is due in February.

The AAP has announced candidates for all seats while the Congress has released 48 names so far.

Mr. Lovely, a former Delhi Minister, has been fielded from east Delhi's Gandhi Nagar, where he will replace the legislator Anil Bajpai, who had defeated him in 2020.

Tarvinder Singh Marwah, who was elected to the Assembly thrice when he was with the Congress, joined the BJP in 2022, has been fielded from Jangpura, where he will take on senior AAP leader and former Deputy CM Manish Sisodia.

Mr. Gahlot and Mr. Anand, who served as Cabinet Ministers in the AAP government, will fight from Bijwasan and Patel Nagar, respectively.

Chhattarpur MLA Kartar Singh, who also switched to the BJP from the AAP, has been fielded from the same seat.

Former AAP MLA N.D. Sharma has been fielded from Badarpur, former Congress councillor Kumari Rinku from Seemapuri and former Congress legislator Rajkumar Chauhan from Mangolpuri.

Delhi police register first chargesheet in MCOCA case

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police recently filed the first chargesheet in a case registered under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA), in which Aam Aadmi Party MLA Naresh Bawali is an accused.

The chargesheet showed Rithik Peter as the main accused while the AAP MLA has not been named. Filed in the court of Special Judge Vishal Gogoi on December 26 during the winter vacation of the court, the chargesheet will likely be taken up for consideration by the Bench of Special Judge Kaveri Bawali on January 9.

Mr. Bawali was arrested in November and is in judicial custody. The AAP MLA's name was linked to

AAP MLA Naresh Bawali, an accused in the case, has not been named

the case last year when a news channel telecast an alleged telephonic conversation between a gangster, allegedly Mr. Peter, and the MLA in which a discussion on "collecting ransom" was heard.

The court is expected to hear the bail application of the AAP MLA on January 8.

According to the chargesheet, Mr. Peter was part of an organised crime syndicate with links to Kapil Sangwan, who had fled the country, sources said, adding the chargesheet revealed connections with multiple arrests, including that of the AAP MLA.

BJP has 'vested interest' in keeping Manipur on the boil, says Congress chief

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

A day after fresh violence erupted in Kangpokpi district of Manipur, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday took aim at the Bharatiya Janata Party, and said that the party in power at both the Centre and in the State had "vested interests" in keeping the border State on the boil.

In a post on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr. Kharge said: "BJP is the matchstick which burnt Manipur!"

In his post, Mr. Kharge said that the last time the Prime Minister had been in Manipur was three years ago, in January 2022, "for



seeking votes for the BJP".

"Your incompetent and shameless Chief Minister has expressed regret but has conveniently brazened out your absence in the State," Mr. Kharge said.

"We are repeating with utmost responsibility that the BJP has some vested interests to keep the beautiful border State on the

boil," the Congress president said, adding that even the Supreme Court had said it was the primary responsibility of the Centre and State to ensure peace and normalcy.

Three requests

He reiterated to the Prime Minister that the Congress had made three "specific and simple requests" of him – visit Manipur by the end of 2024, meet the State's political parties, and show direct involvement in ending the conflict – none of which he had done.

"Even if you do one of the above, you cannot escape the Constitutional culpability of not following the Rajdhama," Mr. Kharge said.

Congress reiterates demand for Amit Shah's resignation, plans year-long foot march

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday released the official pamphlet of its "Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan" campaign, pressing for the resignation of Union Home Minister Amit Shah over his remarks in Parliament that "insulted" B.R. Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Constitution.

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, the Congress's Media and Publicity Department chairman, Pawan Khera, said that under this campaign, which began on Friday, party leaders would hold "chaupals" (village-level meetings) in every district till January 26, telling people how "the BJP-RSS had been insulting Ambedkar and demeaning the Constitution for decades".

The campaign was initially supposed to begin with a rally in Belagavi of



Pawan Khera showing the pamphlets at the press conference on Saturday. ANI

Khera said, was to safeguard Dr. Ambedkar's legacy and values, and would connect villages and towns across the country with the message of unity and social justice. It would continue till Republic Day 2026.

"We hoped that the Home Minister would apologise and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would intervene in this matter," Mr. Khera said. By supporting Mr. Shah, Mr. Modi had "become a partner in insulting" Dr. Ambedkar, he said. Mr. Khera also accused the BJP leadership of trying to "normalise the demonisation" of national leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar and Jawaharlal Nehru, who had left an indelible mark on the country's history.

The Congress said that through the pamphlets, the party sought to reveal how the BJP had been "conspiring against 90 per cent of India's population".

The foot march, Mr.

TAMIL NADU VETERINARY AND ANIMAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

ADMISSION NOTIFICATION FOR POSTGRADUATE DEGREE / DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES - 2024-25

Online applications are invited for admission to Postgraduate Degrees (MScs, MTech, MSc, PhD) and PG Diploma Programmes of Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University for the academic year 2024-25 from 06.01.2025, 11.00 AM to 24.01.2025, 05.00 PM.

After submitting the online application, a non-refundable amount of Rs. 100/- will be paid by the employed candidate (State/PSAU/PSAU/PSAU/PSAU) and the unemployed candidate (State/PSAU/PSAU/PSAU/PSAU) will take printout of filled-in application form, attach photocopy of uploaded certificates / documents for each course separately and send through proper channel to the "Chairman, Admission Committee (PG), Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Madhavaram Milk Colony, Chennai - 600 051", so as to reach on or before 24.01.2025, 05.00 PM.

For Online application, procedure, eligibility conditions, mode of selection and other details, please visit TANUVAS website <https://adm.tanuvas.ac.in> or <https://tanuvas.ac.in> from 06.01.2025, 11.00 AM onwards.

Place : Chennai - 600 051 Date : 05.01.2025 DIPR/06/Display/2025 ADMISSION COMMITTEE (PG), TANUVAS

CHAIRMAN, ADMISSION COMMITTEE (PG), TANUVAS

MAHATRANSO

Digitally signed online bids are invited through SRM E-tender process of MSETCL in two bid system from bidders who are registered Electrical Vendors/Contractors of MSETCL for following SRM E-tender;

Villages will play a key role in realising dream of Viksit Bharat, says Prime Minister

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

In a dig at the Opposition, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that "some people" were working to "weaken the social fabric" of the nation by trying to "spread poison in society in the name of caste", as he inaugurated the Gramene Bharat Mahotsav, 2025 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.

With the Congress and other Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc parties raising the pitch on their demand for a nation-wide caste census since the results of the Lok Sabha elections were announced, Mr. Modi said these "conspiracies" had to be thwarted so that the common heritage of villages could be "preserved and strengthened".

Stating that his government had been consistently in service of rural India since 2014, he highlighted a host of schemes and programmes that had benefited rural Indians in the past 10 years, and also cited a recent study by the State Bank of India to say that rural poverty had dropped below 5% in 2024, compared with 26% in 2012, and that his government was closing the urban-rural gap in consumption.

Mr. Modi said that under his government, toilets had been made a part of the Swachh Bharat Mission, crores of people in rural India had been given pucca houses as part of the PM



Empowering rural areas: Prime Minister Narendra Modi visiting a stall at Gramene Bharat Mahotsav in New Delhi on Saturday. ANI

nuary 4 to 9 with a focus on enhancing rural infrastructure, creating self-reliant economies, and fostering innovation within rural communities, Mr. Modi said that his government had been centring the development of villages since 2014, adding that villages would play a key role in realising the dream of a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

The Mahotsav will celebrate rural India's entrepreneurial spirit and cultural heritage", a statement from the Prime Minister's Office said, adding that its theme this year was "Building a resilient rural India for a Viksit Bharat, 2047" with a motto of "Nation will progress when villages do".

It will see various discussions, workshops, and masterclasses being conducted to enhance rural infrastructure, create self-reliant economies, and foster innovation in rural communities with a special focus on empowering rural women through entrepreneurship.

During his speech, Mr. Modi highlighted the importance of creating economic policies to strengthen the rural economy.

Inaugurating the Gramene Bharat Mahotsav, which will be held from Ja-

SRM E-Tender Notice

RFx No.	E-Tender No.	Particulars	Estimated Cost	EMD	Tender Fees
7000034783	T- 37 / 2024-25 (2nd call)	Work of replacement of existing 0.4 ACSR conductor along with hardware by High Performance Conductor (HPC) of 220kV Gangapur - Satana line (Length= 111km) for RE power evacuation under Green Energy Corridor (GEC) under Nashik Zone	7682.77 Lakhs (Including GST)	Rs. 76,82,773.83/-	Rs. 25,000/- + GST
7000034787	T- 41 / 2024-25 (2nd call)	Work of Replacement of existing conductor with High Ampacity Conductor of 220kV Gangapur - Shivajinagar Line for RE power evacuation under Nashik Zone	5678.04 Lakhs (Including GST)	Rs. 56,78,047.14/-	Rs. 25,000/- + GST

Sale period: 03.01.2025 to 24.01.2025, **Last Date of Submission:** 24.01.2025 up to 13:00 Hrs, **Date of opening (Tech. bid):** 24.01.2025 at 13:30 Hrs (if possible). **Contact person:** Executive Engineer, EHV PC O&M Zone, Nashik. Phone No. 0253-2403010/02/07 Fax No. 0253-2403000. For further details please visit to <https://srmtender.mahatransco.in>

Chief Engineer, EHV PC (O&M), Zone, MSETCL, Nashik

KFC Kerala Financial Corporation

SARB(SZ) : VELLAYAMBALAM, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695033 Phone: 0471 - 2737570 email: sarsz@kfc.org website: www.kfc.org

SALE NOTICE FOR THE SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for the sale of immovable assets under section 29 of State Financial Corporations Act, 1951. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrowers and Guarantors that the below described immovable properties mortgaged / charged to Kerala Financial Corporation, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Kerala Financial Corporation will be sold on 01-02-2025, 11.00 AM onwards. "As is where it is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" condition.

1.Branch- SARB - Thiruvananthapuram Unit Name: Brilliance Square, Thampanoor

SI No.	Name of Borrowers/guarantors	Balance outstanding as on 27.12.2024	Details of property
1.	Sri.Rajeev,C.R Brilliance Square, TC 2-1197, S.S Kovil Road,Thampanoor Thiruvananthapuram-695001	Rs.17,27,87,170/- (Rupees Seventeen Crore Twenty-seven Lakh Eighty-seven thousand one hundred and seventy only) with future interest & other charges	30.50 cents of land & building in Re-Sy. No.

IN BRIEF



Piyush Goyal chairs meeting to review projects in Mumbai

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal chaired a meeting with local government authorities to review infrastructural projects in Mumbai North, which also happens to be his parliamentary constituency. Projects including road realignment, hospital repairs, and upgrades to civic amenities worth ₹60,000 crore were discussed in the meeting, the Brihammumbai Municipal Corporation and the office of Mr. Goyal said in a joint statement. This is the third such review meeting in the past five months. The meeting assumes significance as it comes months in advance of local body elections in Mumbai.

Former sub-inspector held in passport fraud case in Kolkata

The Kolkata police arrested a retired police sub-inspector on Friday in connection with an alleged passport scam in the city. According to the police, the accused used to work with verification processes in the Police Department's Passport Section. Police officials said that 61-year-old Abdul Hai was arrested from his residence at Kamarpur in North 24 Parganas in connection with the probe surrounding the recently discovered fake passport ring. The police said at least 150 Indian passports were found to have been issued, including to Bangladeshi nationals, with the help of fraudulent documents by the racket.

Govt. permits export of 2 lakh tonnes of wheat to Nepal

The government has permitted the export of two lakh tonnes of wheat to Nepal, a notification issued on Saturday said. The export is permitted through National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL), the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT). Though the export of wheat is banned to maintain domestic supply, outbound shipments are allowed on the basis of permission granted by the government to certain countries to meet their food security needs and on request. DGFT said inputs imported for synthetic knitted fabrics by advance authorisation holders, export-oriented units and special economic zones shall be exempted from minimum import condition. PTI

NIA chargesheets 4 members of CPI(Maoist) for murder

The National Investigative Agency (NIA) charged four members of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist) for abducting and killing a Maharashtra youth, Dinesh Pusus Gawde, for allegedly being a police informer and a member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), according to an official statement released on Friday. The arrested persons, Doba Wadde, Ravi Pallo, Sattu Mahaka and Komati Mahaka, were accused of the abduction and murder. The NIA said that the accused persons were active CPI(Maoist) members and they had already committed crimes allegedly to spread terror in the minds of local villagers.

SUDOKU



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Experts hopeful, but flag data localisation, parental nod plans

They find the draft as leaving the door open for government to restrict the overseas processing of Indians' data; the rules mandate that platforms verify parents' identity first for minors to sign up for online services, raising concern

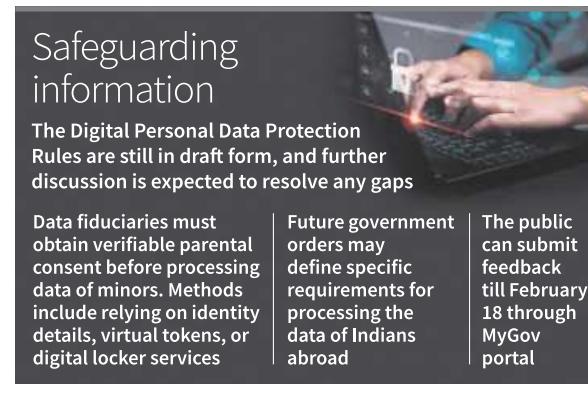
The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Experts working with the tech industry tentatively welcomed the draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025, issued on Friday. The draft rules document "gives broad direction to the industry to start preparing for compliance", Aparajita Bharti, a founding partner at TQH Consulting, which works with tech companies in complying with Indian laws, said in a statement.

"It is encouraging to finally witness progress on this front," Shreya Suri, senior partner at IndusLaw, said in a statement.

They highlighted gaps, but they hope that the ensuing consultation process will resolve them. Industry associations have so far not directly commented on the draft.

"The draft rules provide some clarity on framing and displaying notices [to users, or "data principals"]



Safeguarding information

The Digital Personal Data Protection Rules are still in draft form, and further discussion is expected to resolve any gaps

Data fiduciaries must obtain verifiable parental consent before processing data of minors. Methods include relying on identity details, virtual tokens, or digital locker services

Future government orders may define specific requirements for processing the data of Indians abroad

The public can submit feedback till February 18 through MyGov portal

under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, but they fall short in offering guidance on the mode of delivery or issuance – something well-defined under GDPR", Ms. Suri said, referring to Europe's General Data Protection Regulation.

"One key concern in the rules is potential room for bringing data localisation requirements for significant data fiduciaries as they mention that a committee may do so in the future," Ms. Bharti said, referring to the draft leaving the door open for the go-

vernment to restrict the overseas processing of Indians' data. Tech companies are likely to seek particular clarity on this front, as they usually store and process user data in servers around the world.

Parental consent

The draft rules around minors having to get parental consent to sign up for online services raised some eyebrows, as the rules mandate that platforms verify parents' identity first.

"How do you know if someone is a parent or not?"

Nikhil Pahwa, editor of the tech policy website MediaNama asked. This could mean that "platforms will have to verify EVERYONE," he speculated on X.

Ms. Suri opined that the government's "approach might rely on self-declaration by users, allowing them to indicate whether they are minors or adults," but hinted at broad data collection. "Depending on the implementation, this could potentially lead to broader processing of parental or guardian data, which raises interesting considerations regarding the scale and scope of such data collection," she said.

Exemption concerns

The DPDP Act, 2023 already exempts government organisations from the law, and the Rules set out the "standards" for such exemptions.

However, Ms. Bharti said, "The draft rules also do not explicitly address exemptions, processing grounds, or other frame-

works specifically tailored for AI model training purposes."

The Internet Freedom Foundation flagged a lack of specificity in the draft, saying in a statement that terms such as "reasonable safeguards", "appropriate measures", or "necessary purposes" are used without adequate elaboration in the text. Since the Data Protection Board will not be a fully independent entity, the IFF added, "large parts of the implementation and enforcement will be administered by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology raising apprehension."

"We want to ensure that in finality, the age verification process, complaints and enforcement are easier for people and not yet another burdensome run-around with no recourse where their data is illegally collected, used, shared and breached," Mishi Choudhary, founder of the New Delhi-based Software Freedom Law Centre said.

'Personal data rules balance regulation, innovation'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Digital Personal Data Protection Rules drafted by the government create a balance between regulation and innovation while protecting citizens' rights, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Saturday. The government issued draft rules for the Digital Personal Data Protection Act on Friday for public consultation till February 18.

"Rules have to be within four walls of the Act. It is within the ambit of the Act passed by Parliament. These rules have been framed to ensure a balance between regulation and innovation while completely safeguarding the rights of citizens," Mr. Vaishnaw said. He said earlier there was only one template available to the world – the European data protection rule – but Indian rules have tried to balance the regulation with innovation to safeguard the boom in innovation ecosystem developing among start-ups in the country.

Cowpea seeds sprout in space, and first robotic arm operated, says ISRO

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A batch of cowpea seeds – better known as *lobia* in Hindi or *thattapayaru* in Tamil – have successfully sprouted in space, days after they were taken into orbit by an Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) mission. The space agency has also successfully operated India's first space robotic arm, it announced on Saturday.

The two experiments were part of the 24 payloads flown on the PSLV-C60 SpaDeX mission's PS4-Orbital Experiment Module (POEM-4) on December 30. In a series of posts on X, ISRO said, "Life sprouts in space! VSSC's CROPS (Compact Research Module for Orbital Plant Studies) experiment onboard PSLV-C60 POEM-4 successfully sprouted cowpea seeds in 4 days. Leaves expected soon."

"#RRM_TD, India's first space robotic arm, is in action onboard #POEM4! A



Sprouting up: The experiment plans to grow eight cowpea seeds in a closed-box environment with active thermal control. ISRO

pride #MakeInIndia milestone in space robotics. #ISRO #SpaceTech," the agency said in another post.

"The Relocatable Robotic Manipulator-Technology Demonstrator (RRM-TD) a 7 Degree of Freedom (DoF) robotic arm that will perform relocation through 'inchworm walking' to defined targets on the POEM-4 platform."

Growing crops in space

The CROPS payload, developed by the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), is envisioned as a multi-

phase platform to develop and evolve ISRO's capabilities for growing and sustaining flora in extraterrestrial environments.

"Designed as a fully automated system, a five- to seven-day experiment is planned to demonstrate seed germination and plant sustenance until the two-leaf stage in a microgravity environment," ISRO had said prior to the launch. The experiment plans to grow eight cowpea seeds in a closed-box environment with active thermal control.

Naval vessel Tarini with two woman officers starts new leg of circumnavigation

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini left Lyttelton Port in New Zealand on Saturday morning at about 9.30 a.m. local time for Port Stanley in Falkland Islands in the third leg of the ongoing global circumnavigation journey by two woman Navy officers under *Navika Sagari Parikrama-II*.

This is the longest leg of the expedition with a distance of approximately 5,600 nautical miles (approximately 10,400 km) to cover. This will also be the southernmost transit of *Tarini* at about 56 degrees South, the Navy said in a statement.

"With the frontal weather systems of the Southern Ocean, Team Tarini can expect to experience challenging seas with up to 50-60 knots (90-110 kmph) winds."

INSV Tarini had arrived in Lyttelton on December 22, completing the second leg of the double-handed

circumnavigation, which is being undertaken by two Indian Navy women officers – Lt. Cdr. Dilna K. and Lt. Cdr. Roopa A.

"During the period in Lyttelton, the crew undertook repairs and maintenance of the boat with particular focus on the next leg where the vessel will cross the South Pacific, pass through the treacherous Drake Passage, and cross Cape Horn to reach Port Stanley," the Navy said.

"While in Lyttelton, the crew also interacted with the Indian community who were eager to visit

the boat and query the crew about various aspects of ocean sailing."

Members of Indian diaspora and various dignitaries turned up for the flag off ceremony of the vessel. Traditional Maori prayers for the crew by members of the Maori community were also undertaken during the ceremony.

The expedition was flagged off from Goa on October 2, 2024 by Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi. The circumnavigation will cover around 23,000 nautical miles in around 240 days.

Miles to go: Lt. Cdr. Dilna K. and Lt. Cdr. Roopa A. have 5,600 nm to cover from Lyttelton Port to Port Stanley. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Chidambaram, doyen of nuclear programme, no more

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Rajagopal Chidambaram, 88, former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission who was involved in both of India's nuclear tests in 1974 and in 1998, died in Jaslok Hospital in Mumbai on Saturday. He was the longest serving Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Indian government with a tenure from 2002 to 2018.

An atomic energy scientist who spent his whole career with the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and its affiliated agencies, Dr. Chidambaram was the nuclear scientist whose professional history was intertwined with the history of India's nuclear ambitions. In 1974, he was part of an operation, codenamed 'Smiling Buddha', which was carried out in great se-



R. CHIDAMBARAM (1936 - 2025)

crecy as a "peaceful nuclear test" at Pokhran, Rajasthan. This made India the sixth country to test a nuclear device, though it invited condemnation, particularly from Canada and the U.S. The plutonium for the test came from the Cirus reactor at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre in Mumbai, which was supplied by Canada, and heavy water from the U.S.

Operation Shakti

In 1998, as the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, he led a similar operation, again at Pokhran, to detonate four nuclear fission and one nuclear fusion bomb on May 11 of that year. Called Operation Shakti, this was a more explicitly military test and invited international sanctions, and led to six nuclear tests by Pakistan in the same month.

energy, and strategic technologies. As Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet, he championed advancements in energy security, materials science, supercomputing, and nanotechnology, says a statement from the Office of the PSA.

'Visionary leadership'

"Dr Chidambaram's unparalleled contributions to India's scientific and strategic capabilities and his visionary leadership in science and technology will forever be remembered," the DAE said in a statement.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh described him as among the titans of Indian science and technology. "He was a man of great learning and erudition in diverse disciplines. Meeting and listening to him was always a deep education. Behind that steely ex-

terior, he had a wonderful sense of humour. Dr. Chidambaram was intellectually very active till his end. People like him are very, very rare," Mr. Ramesh said in a post on the social media platform X.

As the PSA, Dr. Chidambaram stressed the importance of combining basic research and technological applications through an approach called "directed basic research". His tenure as PSA saw the launch of several initiatives, including the Rural Technology Action Group (RuTAG), which empowered rural communities through innovative technologies; the Society for Electronic Transactions and Security (SETs) to contribute towards advancing India's cybersecurity and hardware security infrastructure," a press note from the Office of the PSA said.

IN BRIEF



Honda Motorcycle sales rose 32% at 58.01 lakh units in 2024

Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India on Saturday reported a 32% growth in total wholesales at 58,01,498 units in 2024 over the previous year. This included domestic sales of 52,92,976 units and 5,08,522 units exports, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) said in a statement. Last month, total sales stood at 3,08,083 units, which included domestic sales of 2,70,919 units and 37,164 units exports, the company added. PTI

B R Goyal Infra sets SME IPO price band at ₹128-135 a share

B R Goyal Infrastructure on Saturday said it has fixed a price band of ₹128-135 per equity share for ₹85.21 crore initial share sale, which will hit the markets on January 7. The initial public offering (IPO) will end on January 9 and bidding for anchor investor will open for a day on January 6, the company said. At the upper end of the price band, the company is going to fetch about Rs 85.2 crore, while shares of the company will be listed on the BSE's SME platform, it added. PTI

DPIIT joins hands with Stride Ventures to help start-ups

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) on Saturday said it has joined hands with venture debt firm Stride Ventures to support high growth potential start-ups. It said this collaboration will be instrumental in creating enormous opportunities for start-ups by integrating financial support with strategic mentorship and market access. Start-ups from tier-2 and tier-3 cities will receive access to a global mentor network, it added. PTI



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu during a visit to Sri City last year. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

‘Sri City attracted ₹3,750 crore of investments in 2024, provided 17,000 jobs’

N. Anand
CHENNAI

Sri City, an integrated business city located in A.P.’s Tirupati district, ended calendar year 2024 by attracting investments of ₹3,750 crore and has provided jobs to more than 17,000 people, according to its founder.

“The investment highlights exceptional performance of Sri City in a year that was interrupted by elections in India and the U.S. The creation of new jobs will strengthen livelihoods and employment opportunities in and around our premises,” its founder and managing director Ravindra Samanreddy said during an interaction.

Stating that 2024 had been another remarkable year, he said that Sri City had yet again proved to be an “undisputed leader” when it came to driving economic growth, generating employment and advancing sustainable development.

According to him, more than 220 companies from 29 countries have invested

in Sri City, representing a diverse manufacturing portfolio consisting of automobiles, air-conditioning, electronics, engineering, formulations, FMCG, food processing and warehousing among others.

The cumulative exports since inception stands at \$4 billion.

Mentioning that construction is an ongoing activity in Sri City, Mr. Reddy said, “The entrepreneurs don’t stop with one unit. They keep on expanding. Currently, nine companies have started construction activities, 16 units commenced full-scale operations and nine units expanded to meet growing demands,” he said.

With over 26 Japanese companies, Sri City has quickly grown to become India’s second-largest investment destination for Japanese brands.

Mr. Reddy said Sri City is also known as ‘a gateway for manufacturing activities’, as ‘cool capital’ since it has the maximum number of air-conditioning facilities, and as ‘Shree City’ since it employs more women.

Switch Mobility aspires to become a global player in e-mobility, says CEO

N. Anand
CHENNAI



Mahesh Babu

Switch Mobility Ltd.’s aspiration to become a global player in the e-mobility space is taking shape with the maiden launch of a low floor electric bus in the European market, said CEO Mahesh Babu.

The Ashok Leyland subsidiary is also eyeing West Asian, African and South East Asian countries as the growth in these markets in the next 10 years is forecast to be faster compared with that of the U.S. and China.

The first two Switch E1 low-floor buses were delivered to the City Council of Benidormin, Spain, after a virtual launch by Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi recently.

Mentioning that construction is an ongoing activity in Sri City, Mr. Reddy said, “The entrepreneurs don’t stop with one unit. They keep on expanding. Currently, nine companies have started construction activities, 16 units commenced full-scale operations and nine units expanded to meet growing demands,” he said.

On the order book position, he said that tenders for 800 buses were in the pipeline and were expected to be floated in 2025. “Switch will be participating in it,” he added.

“Our focus will be outside of India. We are getting a left-hand drive of e-bus E1V2 and right-hand drive in E1. We aspire to be global,” he said.

According to him, these buses are currently being produced in Sherburn, Leeds, U.K. Switch also has a facility in Spain and a manufacturing facility in Ras Al-Khaimah, GCC.

“Currently, E1 is produced at Leeds. The U.K.

Kirloskar firms challenge SEBI diktat to disclose family settlement deed

Kirloskar siblings, with Sanjay on one side, and Atul and Rahul on the other, have been in a feud since 2016 over the deed for the assets of the more than 130-year-old Kirloskar group; Sanjay had filed a complaint for non-disclosure of the DFS

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Four Kirloskar companies on Saturday said they have filed an appeal before the Securities Appellate Tribunal challenging the SEBI letter asking them to disclose the deed of family settlement that was signed by members of the Kirloskar family on September 11, 2009.

In a joint statement, the Kirloskar companies – Kirloskar Ferrous Industries Ltd. (KFL), Kirloskar Industries Ltd. (KIL), Kirloskar Pneumatic Company Ltd., and Kirloskar Oil En-



Third umpire: The firms said they had filed the appeal before SAT challenging SEBI’s letter dated December 30, 2024. REUTERS

gines Ltd. – said they had filed the appeal before SAT challenging the SEBI letter dated December 30, 2024, wherein the market regulator advised them to dis-

close the Deed of Family Settlement (DFS). On December 31, these companies stated that they were preparing to legally challenge the SEBI letter. The

regulator stated that “since the DFS is subsisting in nature, indirectly creates a restriction on the listed entities managed/promoted by the parties to such DFS, warrants disclosure, regardless of whether such listed entity is a party to the agreement or not” under relevant provisions and advised the company to disclose DFS in terms of LODR Regulations.

Kirloskar siblings, with Sanjay (Kirloskar Brothers Ltd. CMD) on one side, and Atul and Rahul on the other, have been in a feud since 2016 over the DFS for the assets of the Kirloskar

group. Rahul Kirloskar is the executive chairman of Kirloskar Pneumatic Co. Ltd. and Atul Kirloskar is the Executive Chairman of Kirloskar Oil Engines Ltd. (KOEL). Sanjay Kirloskar had filed a complaint for non-disclosure of the DFS.

KOEL on September 11, 2023 responded to the NSE that it was “nothing but one more of his repeated attempts to try and somehow cause KOEL to be bound by the DFS for his own ulterior motives and in furtherance of his personal vendetta with the other family members, which is now public record”.

Exports of special technical textile products on the rise

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE

Exports of special technical textile products grew 6.2% between April and November 2024, compared with the same period last year, said Ashok Kumar Malhotra, Mission director of the National Technical Textiles Mission (NTTM).

Mr. Malhotra told *The Hindu* that the exports from April to November 2024 were worth ₹2,915 crore compared with ₹2,345 crore during April-November 2023.

“India imports a lot of technical textile products. With increasing consumption, the domestic demand is growing. It is important to promote domestic production and ensure that imports do not increase,” the director said.

Packing technology and geo textiles are two segments of technical textiles that are growing rapidly. “India has a strong base of natural raw materials. These need to be developed into functional textiles.” Of the total outlay of ₹1,480 crore for the Mission, more than 50% had already been spent and another ₹500 crore had been earmarked for creating an ecosystem by training the right personnel.

“Those who want to benefit from the schemes in the Mission can apply till March 2026,” said Mr. Malhotra.

Apparel exporters seek tax sops in Budget to boost shipments

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister.

Other demands include extension of concessional tax rate for new manufacturing units to encourage setting up of new garment units; simplification in the procedure of imports of trims and embellishments under IGCR (Import of

Goods at Concessional Rate); and liberalizing e-commerce export procedures.

“Ready Made Garments (RMG) industry has also demanded removal of Sec43B (H) of IT Act in the ensuing Budget which pertains to payment to any MSME companies within a maximum 45 days’ time to claim any deduction in tax. This has increased tax liabilities and has disrupted the cash flow of exporters,” the AEPC said. It added that the cap per consignment of export value under e-com be increased to minimum ₹25 lakh.

Plywood industry agrees to implement QC norms: Goyal

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

After initial resistance, the plywood and MDF board industry has agreed to implement the mandatory quality control norms as they have recognised the long-term benefits of adhering to high-quality standards, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) had introduced quality control orders (QCO) for plywood, MDF boards, and other wooden products to boost domestic manufacturing and cut imports of sub-standard goods.

Due to the opposition of the domestic industry, the implementation of the QCO was extended.

“The industry themselves realised the merit in focusing on high quality standards particularly when they are making that quality,” Mr. Goyal said.

SMART CITY THIRUVANANTHAPURAM LIMITED CIN U75302KL2017SCG05027 E-TENDER NOTICE				
Sl. No.	Name of Project	E-Tender ID	PAC Amount (Exclusive of GST)	Bid Submission Last Date
1	Development of Chai Warehouse and Commercial Complex in Thiruvananthapuram Circle	2024_SCLTL_716160_2	Rs. 7,38,42,276/-	17-Jan-2025 03:00 PM

All the RFP documents and details are available on the e-Tender Website.

Bids are only accepted online on the Website <https://etenders.kerala.gov.in>

(sd/-) CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SMART CITY THIRUVANANTHAPURAM Ltd.

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT Telephone N. 01894-230566. E-mail- hp-kan3@nic.in					
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)					
The Superintending Engineer HPPWD 5 th Circle Palampur H.P. on behalf of Governor of H.P. re-invites the percentage rate bids, in the electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the works as detailed in the table.					
Sr. No.	Name of Division	Name of work	Estimated Cost (In lacs).	Starting Date for downloading Bid.	Earliest Money (In lacs)
1.	Shahpur	Construction of Link road	952.62	08.01.2025 10:00 AM	19.06 17.01.2025 'A' Class.
		from Laeta to Banu Mahadev, Dhanot Km. 0/00 to 6/185 i/c 40.00 mtr. span bridge over Chambi Khad, (SH:- Formation cutting passing places, R/Walls, CD work, WBM-II, WBM-III, tarring work side drain and parapets, including C/o 40.00 mtr span bridge) (under NABARD RIDF-XX)			

The bidders are advised to note other details of tender from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in. Date of opening of tender is 18.01.2025 at 11.30 AM.

Superintending Engineer, 5th Circle, HP.PWD, Palampur. Pin No. 176061. E-mail- hp-kan3@nic.in on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh

HIMLOK SAMPAK.

HIMACHAL PRADESH JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG PRESS NOTICE FOR ONLINE TENDER

The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Bharmour invites tenders on behalf of Government of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following work(s) through online process.

Sr. No.	Name of Work:- Rem. Of LIS (FIS) Garola in GP Garola Tehsil Bharmour Distt Chamba (SH-C/O Head weir, 7 Nos outlet Chamber & Excavation L/J & testing of HDPE pipe 110 mm dia PN 4 RD 1565/780/0 to 1565/780/100 & RD 2000/1790/837/0 to 2130/1300, HDPE pipe 110 mm dia PN 4-180 mm outer dia RD 1565/780/0 to 200 & 2130/390 to 960, HDPE pipe 110 mm dia PN
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SCIENCE

Study traces the route of Ebola virus to the skin surface

The Hindu Bureau

While transmission of Ebola virus through contact with bodily fluids from an infected person is well known, more recent Ebola outbreaks have demonstrated that the infectious virus is also found on the skin's surface of those who have succumbed to infection or at late times during

infection. In a new study, researchers in the U.S. have traced a cellular route the virus uses to traverse the inner and outer layers of skin and emerge onto the skin's surface. The study identifies new cell types within the skin that are targeted by the virus during infection and shows that human skin specimens actively support virus infec-

tion. The results published in *Science Advances* suggest that the skin's surface may be one route of person-to-person transmission.

The researchers developed a new approach to examine which cells within the skin are infected by Ebola virus. They created a human skin explant system using full-thickness skin

biopsies from healthy individuals, which contained both deeper (dermal), and surface (epidermal) layers of skin.

Previous clinical and animal studies had reported that cells within the skin become infected with the virus, but the specific cells targeted by the virus had not been identified. In the new study, the team

showed that the virus infected several different cell types in the skin explant, including macrophages, endothelial cells, fibroblasts, and keratinocytes. While some of these cell types are also found to be infected by the virus in other organs, keratinocytes, which are unique to the skin, had not been previously appreciated to sup-

port Ebola virus infection. Interestingly, virus replication was more robust in the epidermal layer than in the dermal layers on a per gram basis. Additionally, the infectious virus was detected on the epidermal surface within three days, indicating that the virus rapidly spreads and moves through the explants to the skin's surface.

SNAPSHOTS



Legs of modern humans are made for running

Modern humans could outrun our ancient human relatives according to an analysis of a 3D digital model of the iconic 'Lucy' fossil. The model with 3.2 million-year-old skeleton, the muscular features of modern apes and an estimate of muscle mass based on the bones' surface area showed that Lucy could run on two legs, albeit slowly, despite lacking the lengthened Achilles tendon and shortened muscle fibres of modern humans, which suggests these muscle adaptations prepare us for endurance running.

Why public health nutrition policies need precise targeting

A medley of nutrients prevents anaemia, and the whole diet works better than the sum of its parts. Therefore, rather than focusing on select nutrient deficiencies, it is time to diversify diets effectively

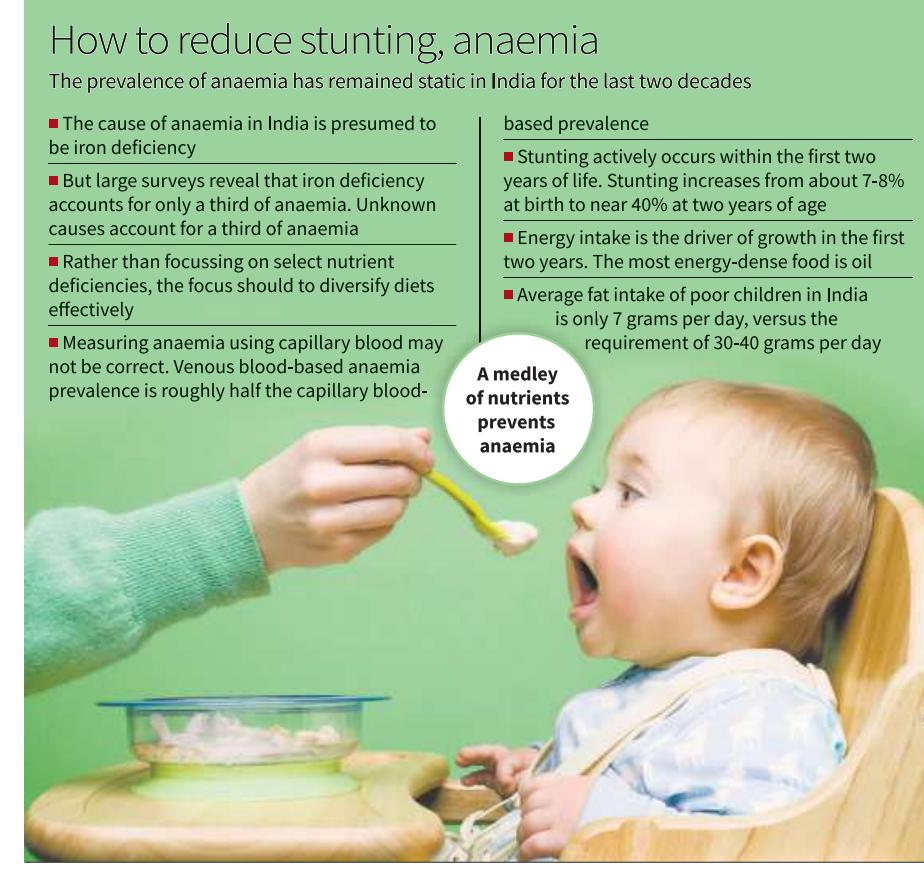
**Anura Kurpad
Harshpal Singh Sachdev**

Global Nutrition Targets (GNTs) were set by the World Health Assembly as key national indicators of the effect of public health policies in alleviating maternal and child malnutrition. Some of the targets were – to reduce stunting by 40% in under-5 children, reduce anaemia by 50% in women of reproductive age, and no increase in childhood overweight.

A recent evaluation of the global progress toward the achievement (or not) of the targets was published in *The Lancet*. This colossal analysis provided estimates of progress at a regional and national level in 204 countries from 2012 to 2021, with projections up to 2050. In general, there appeared to be slow and insufficient progress across countries. By 2030, it was projected that few countries (not India) would meet the targets for stunting, and none would meet low birthweight, anaemia and childhood overweight.

We are now in the last year of the first quarter of the 21st century. Fresh thinking is needed if the same sorry situation is to be avoided at the end of the next quarter of this century. The immediate questions are: why is there slow progress, and what next?

Slow progress can be blamed on poor programme implementation. However, other important aspects merit consideration too. For instance, the prevalence of anaemia has remained static in India for the last two decades. First,



How to reduce stunting, anaemia

The prevalence of anaemia has remained static in India for the last two decades

- The cause of anaemia in India is presumed to be iron deficiency
- But large surveys reveal that iron deficiency accounts for only a third of anaemia. Unknown causes account for a third of anaemia
- Rather than focusing on select nutrient deficiencies, the focus should be to diversify diets effectively
- Measuring anaemia using capillary blood may not be correct. Venous blood-based anaemia prevalence is roughly half the capillary blood-

based prevalence

- Stunting actively occurs within the first two years of life. Stunting increases from about 7-8% at birth to near 40% at two years of age
- Energy intake is the driver of growth in the first two years. The most energy-dense food is oil
- Average fat intake of poor children in India is only 7 grams per day, versus the requirement of 30-40 grams per day

A medley of nutrients prevents anaemia

children in India is just 7 grams per day (NNMB reports), versus their requirement of 30-40 grams per day. But it is encouraging to note that the new POSHAN guidelines for feeding children aged under 3 with take-home rations now include oil, which was not specified earlier.

Finally, *The Lancet* paper showed that overweight had increased in children in almost all countries but was less than the prevailing undernutrition. This might mean that policy should continue to focus on undernutrition. But overweight does not capture the risk of 'metabolic overnutrition' in children. It has been shown that metabolic risk occurs in no less than 50% of Indian children aged 5-19 years, even in those stunted and underweight. Therefore, the burden of childhood overnutrition should be an important policy target.

The slow progress in GNTs on undernutrition, notwithstanding the considerations pointed out above and the hidden overweight burden, tells us that the need of the hour is to zealously and precisely focus on double-duty actions to simultaneously address the under- and over-nutrition burden. Else, ongoing efforts that are skewed towards undernutrition will continue to fuel overnutrition and related non-communicable diseases.

(Anura Kurpad is Professor of physiology and nutrition at St John's Medical College, Bengaluru. Harshpal Singh Sachdev is a senior consultant in paediatrics and clinical epidemiology, Sitaram Bhartia Institute of Science and Research, New Delhi)

with no national surveys, we do not know the cause of anaemia in India. This is presumed to be iron deficiency, resulting in policies to improve dietary iron intake through fortification and supplementation. But recent large-scale surveys reveal that iron deficiency accounts for only a third of anaemia, while unknown causes account for another significant third. A medley of nutrients prevents anaemia, and the whole diet works better than the sum of its parts. Therefore, rather than focusing on select nutrient deficiencies, it is time to diversify diets effectively.

Second, the static anaemia prevalence begs the question of the metrics of measurement, which vary by context and method. In

India, a national survey of children showed that venous blood-based anaemia prevalence (as recommended by WHO) was roughly half the capillary blood-based prevalence in comparable national surveys. Third, the actual diagnostic cut-off for anaemia (true for stunting as well) is the subject of much science: one cut-off might not fit all populations. Accurate metrics are crucial for successful public health interventions.

The consequences

As for the sustained negligible progress in the target for stunting, the knee-jerk response might be to feed even more. But this has unintended consequences – children are more likely to grow fatter

rather than faster when overfed after two years of age. This is because stunting actively occurs within the first two years of life; in India, stunting increases from about 7-8% at birth to nearly 40% at two years of age. On average, children reach half their adult height in two years. If already stunted at two, it is difficult to un-stunt children by overfeeding in the hope of faster growth. Prevention in the first two years is most important, even though the global nutrition target refers to stunting in under-5 children.

Second, energy intake is

the driver of growth in the first two years. The most energy-dense food is oil. It is disheartening that the average fat intake of poor

children in India is just 7 grams per day (NNMB reports), versus their requirement of 30-40 grams per day. But it is encouraging to note that the new POSHAN guidelines for feeding children aged under 3 with take-home rations now include oil, which was not specified earlier.

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Lipase inhibitors cause mosquito sterility, study shows

R. Prasad

As per a study published recently, the development of *Plasmodium falciparum*, which causes malaria, can be severely impacted when the lipid transport by lipophorin (Lp) in *Anopheles gambiae* mosquitoes is targeted. The study found that exposing adult female mosquitoes to broad-spectrum lipase inhibitors prior to an infectious blood meal can induce mosquito sterility. Impairing the breakdown of the stored fat in the mosquitoes can be lethal for the embryos. When lipolysis is impaired, the embryos develop normally during early embryogenesis but fail to hatch due to severely impaired metabolism. This is because lipoproteins, particularly lipophorin and the yolk protein vitellogenin (Vg), which transports approximately 5% of lipids within oocytes, are essen-

tial for egg development. The results were published in the journal *PLOS Biology*.

The authors demonstrated that the maternal lipolytic machinery in the mosquitoes plays a key role in shaping the development and survival of progeny. Silencing triglyceride lipase or lipid storage droplet of the mosquitoes significantly disrupts the progeny's energy metabolism, which stops embryos from hatching and results in embryonic death. Treating adult females with orlistat, a broad-spectrum hydrolase inhibitor, mimics the effects of silencing triglyceride lipase, causing death of embryos. "These data provide a proof of principle that targeting lipolysis can aid mosquito control and increase our understanding of the importance of lipid metabolism during pregnancy and embryonic development,"



Sterility: Exposing mosquitoes to lipase inhibitors prior to an infectious blood meal can induce sterility. AP

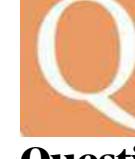
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files of the embryos from triglyceride lipase-depleted mosquitoes were strikingly different. While the controls showed a steady increase in major metabolites over time, the embryos of triglyceride lipase-depleted mosquitoes had significantly reduced levels of most of these metabolites. "While changes in lipid and metabolite composition started early during embryogenesis, we observed limited differences in the transcriptional profile of the two groups at the two earlier time points. However, by 38 hours post oviposition, there were large differences in the triglyceride lipase-depleted group characterised by hundreds of up- and down-regulated genes," the authors write. "This reveals that maternal triglycerides are essential for driving key metabolic processes during embryogenesis, even the metabolic pro-

cesses that when these lipids are limiting, embryos cannot complete development."

Since mosquitoes absorb insecticides and sterilising compounds through their legs when they land on bed nets coated with these ingredients, as in the case of pyriproxyfen nets, the authors tested the delivery of lipase inhibitors by allowing mosquitoes to rest on a surface coated with lipase inhibitor orlistat before blood feeding. As tested in the lab, the number of larvae emerging from eggs was drastically reduced in a dose-dependent manner in field settings.

"The data reveal that the development of *Anopheles*-specific lipase inhibitors may represent a promising tool for field interventions aimed at reducing the size of field mosquito populations," they write.



Question Corner

Heart repair

How are zebrafishes able to repair damaged hearts?

Unlike humans, zebrafish grow new heart muscle cells: they have a regenerative capacity. When a zebrafish heart is damaged, it can fully restore its function within 60 days. Researchers have discovered that the protein Hmgal plays a key role in heart regeneration in zebrafish. The Hmgal gene is present in mice and humans too, and the Hmgal protein is important during embryonic development when cells need to grow a lot. However, after embryonic development, the gene for this protein is

turned off in mice and humans. The researchers discovered that Hmgal in zebrafish removes molecular 'roadblocks' on chromatin, which is the structure that packages DNA. When it is tightly packed, genes are inactive. When it unpacks, genes can become active again. The Hmgal protein clears the way allowing dormant genes to get back to work. While in human hearts, as in adult mice, the gene for the Hmgal protein is not active after a heart attack, in zebrafish the gene for the Hmgal protein is active during heart regeneration.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

FAQ

Why is rupee weakening against dollar?

What has caused the currency to depreciate? Why made the central bank to intervene?

Prashanth Perumal

The story so far:

In the last week of December, 2024, the rupee breached the 85 mark against the U.S. dollar, touching an all-time low of 85.81. The currency depreciated about 3% in 2024, continuing its long-term trend of gradually but consistently losing value against the dollar.

What causes a currency to depreciate?

The price of any currency in the foreign exchange market is determined by the demand for the currency vis-a-vis its supply. This is similar to how the price of any other product is determined in the marketplace. When the demand for a product rises while its supply remains constant, this causes the price of the product to rise in order to ration the available supply. On the other hand, when the demand for a product drops while its supply remains constant, this causes sellers to drop the price of the product in order to attract sufficient buyers.

The only difference between the goods market and the forex market is that currencies are exchanged for other currencies rather than for goods in the foreign exchange market.

A currency depreciates against a foreign currency when the demand for it (in terms of the foreign currency) drops compared to its available supply in the market. When the currency's value depreciates, the value of the

The value of India's foreign exchange reserves dropped to an eight-month low of \$640 billion as of the last week of December from over \$700 billion in September

rise or fall, respectively.

There are various factors that determine the demand for and the supply of any currency in the foreign exchange market.

One of the most important determinants of the supply of a currency in the market is the monetary policy of a country's central bank. A central bank adopting looser monetary policy compared with other central banks will cause the supply of its currency in the market (for both goods trade and investment purposes) to rise relative to other currencies, causing the currency's value to drop. Central banks adopting relatively tighter monetary policy, on the other hand, are likely to see their currencies appreciate in value.

A crucial factor that determines the demand for any currency, on the other hand, is the demand among foreigners for the goods and assets of the country. Since foreigners will first have to purchase the local currency before they can purchase a country's goods and assets, high demand for a country's goods and assets translates to high demand for its currency and which in turn leads to a rise in the value of the currency. A fall in demand for a country's goods or assets, on the other hand, will cause the value of its currency to fall.

What is behind the rupee's fall?

The current bout of rupee depreciation is seen as driven primarily by the exit of foreign investors from India, which has put pressure on the rupee.

Global investors have been shuffling their investments across countries as central banks recalibrate their monetary policies to varying degrees. High inflation in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic led to monetary tightening by central banks which is now being reversed as inflation comes more under control. This has pushed investors to withdraw money from markets like India and invest in more advanced markets.

Meanwhile, the longer term trend of the rupee's depreciation against the dollar is attributed to higher inflation in India than in the U.S. due to the Reserve Bank of India's looser monetary policy compared to the U.S. Federal Reserve. India's traditional demand for high-value imports such as crude oil and gold (which boosts demand for the dollar and weakens the rupee) to keep its economy going and its inability to boost exports (which can help boost demand for the rupee) have also contributed to the lackluster performance of the rupee. The RBI has been using its dollar reserves to prop up the value of the rupee by artificially increasing the supply of dollars in the foreign exchange market, and thus the dollar demand for rupees.

As a result, the value of India's foreign exchange reserves dropped to an eight-month low of \$640 billion as of the last week of December from over \$700 billion in September.

Analysts believe the rupee's depreciation would have been far worse if not for the RBI's intervention to support the rupee against the dollar.

The RBI's traditional stance has been to manage the rupee's exchange value in such a way as to allow for a gradual depreciation in its value without too much volatility that could disrupt the economy.

Is India's forest cover growing enough?

What has the State of Forest Report, 2023 found? What do the findings signify? Which are the States that have increased forest cover, where has it declined? What does the report say on vulnerable areas such as the Western Ghats? Why is tree planting not a blanket fix?

**Privali Prakash
Vasudevan Mukunth**

The story so far:

The State of Forest Report (SFR), 2023 was released by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav at the Forest Research Institute, Dehradun, on December 21, 2024. The SFR is a biennial exercise the Government of India undertakes to track tree and forest cover, carbon stock, forest fires, and other parameters related to the country's green cover.

What did SFR, 2023 find?

According to SFR, 2023, 25.17% of India's area is under forest and tree cover. Of this, forests cover 21.76% of land and trees 3.41%. These figures represent marginal increases from 21.71% and 2.91%, respectively, as reported in SFR, 2021. In absolute terms, the increase is 1,445 sq. km. The National Forest Policy, 1988, which governs green cover in India, requires 33% of the country's geographical area to be under tree or forest cover. Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, and Odisha led the list of States that increased forest and tree cover while Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Ladakh (Union Territory), and Nagaland were the top four where forest and tree cover has dropped.

What is green cover?

Forest cover in India means an area of a hectare or more "with a tree canopy of more than or

Not all ecosystems are suited for trees, and damaging them by planting trees could be counterproductive

equal to 10%, irrespective of ownership and legal status," per the report. Likewise, tree cover refers to all tree patches that exist outside of forest area and which occupy "less than one hectare in extent, including all the scattered trees found in the rural and urban settings, and [are] not captured under the forest cover assessment".

The SFR uses a mix of satellite data and details from the National Forest Inventory, plus ground-truthing to verify the information. Forest cover estimates come from satellite data and growing and carbon stock estimates from the Inventory. The 2023 report uses satellite data from October to December 2021 and NFI data from 2017 to 2022.

How have sensitive areas fared?

In 2014, the Union government first notified the Western Ghats Eco-Sensitive Area (WGESA) along the country's west coast under the Environment Protection Act, 1986 for special protection. According to SFR, 2023, the Western Ghats Area has lost 58.22 sq. km of forest cover in the last decade. While the cover of "very dense" forests increased, those of "moderately dense" and "open" forests fell. "Very dense" forests have a canopy density of at least 70%, "moderately dense" forests of 40-70%, and "open" forests of 10-40%.

The Nilgiris forests are part of the WGESA and a UNESCO biosphere. Between 2013 and 2023, they lost 123.44 sq. km of forest cover. Nilgiris district reported a fourfold increase in the number of forest fires from 2022-23 to 2023-2024.

Mangroves – tropical trees in the intertidal zones of coastal areas – are withdrawing as well. The report has estimated 0.15% of India's total geographical area as under mangrove cover following an overall decrease of 7.43 sq. km from 2021 alone. Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra increased their State-wise share but Gujarat's Kutch area reported a significant decrease. These trees stabilise coastlines, mitigate erosion, encourage biodiversity, shield coastal communities from sea-level rise, and temper the fury of cyclones.

The northeast occupies less than 8% of India's total land area but more than 21% of its tree and forest cover. Per SFR 2023, tree and forest cover in the region shrunk by 327.3 sq. km. There have been reports in the press that at least part of the decline is due to conversion of forests for agricultural use.

What is the SFR's applicability?

While the definitions are straightforward, what they include or exclude has prompted concerns.

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For example, as trees became popular as a 'solution' for climate mitigation because of their ability to sequester carbon, many lawmakers as well as researchers began to tout tree-planting as a blanket fix.

In due course, two important problems emerged with this idea. First, not all ecosystems are suited for trees, and damaging them by planting trees could have repercussions that negate the original purpose of the exercise. Second, only native and mature species in the right environments can sequester carbon efficiently. Young trees or those unsuitable for their environs either wouldn't help as much or not at all. One direct analogue in the SFRs is that the definition of forests includes "orchards, bamboo, and palm". Divya Gupta, assistant professor of environmental studies and sustainable communities at the State University of New York, thus called the report's marquee finding a "celebratory statistic". "By including plantations, orchards, palms, and non-native ecosystems, it erases the distinction between natural forests and monocultures," she added. "This aggregation misrepresents forest health, obscures deforestation and degradation, and offers a distorted view of what we should truly prioritise."

"The share of actual increase in forest cover appears to be very minimal ... compared to the 1,445 sq. km of forest and green cover increase claimed in the document," Sudeep Budhaditya Deb, deputy conservator of forests at the Office of the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (North Bengal), said.

Is SFR related to climate action?

Exercises to understand how much carbon can be sequestered use the term carbon stock to denote all the carbon held in living and non-living biomass in an ecosystem. In a mature forest, for example, the carbon collects in the trees as they grow both aboveground and below, in the leaf litter surrounding the trees, in the deadwood, etc.

In 2022, India committed to increase its carbon stock by 2.5-3 billion tonnes "through additional forest and tree cover by 2030". The current stock of this variety is around 30.4 billion tonnes. According to SFR 2023, India increased its carbon stock by 81.5 million tonnes and the growing stock – the sum (by number or volume) of all the trees living/growing in forests – by 4.25% between 2021 and 2023.

But experts have said the report doesn't say anything about the quality of forests contributing to increases in forest cover nor provides data on the actual causes of forest degradation. "Key ecological indicators such as forest fragmentation and biodiversity health are missing, making it impossible to evaluate the true significance of the statistics reported," Ms. Gupta said. "Moreover, the report lacks mechanisms to track ecosystem losses caused by land-use changes and deforestation."

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Green canopies: The Folding Hills and the Shola ecosystem are considered the heart of the Nilgiri biosphere reserve. SATHYAMOORTHY M.

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Why was the no-detention policy rolled back?

What led to the amendment of the Right to Education Act, 2009 Rules? What have schools been allowed to do? Is there something wrong with the appraisal system? What are some of the best ways to test a child's learning? Who should be made accountable?

Priscilla Jebara

The story so far:

The Union government amended the Rules of the Right to Education Act, 2009 in December 2024 to allow schools to detain students in Classes 5 and 8 if they are unable to meet the promotion criteria after a year-end examination. Students will be given a second chance re-examination after two months of extra teaching. This rollback of the RTE Act's vision of a no-detention policy was initially brought through an amendment of the law in 2019, following which 18 States and UTs have reinstated the option to detain students; the 2024 amendment now extends the option to Central government-run schools too.

What was the rationale behind the original no-detention policy?

When the RTE Act was passed in 2009, it included Section 16, which stipulated that "No child admitted in a school shall be held back in any class or expelled from school till the completion of elementary education [Classes 1 to 8]". The spirit of a no-detention policy was to ensure that children can learn without unnecessary pressure. Detention is demoralising to children. There was also an understanding

'No detention became no testing, and in many schools, no teaching. It was a slippery slope'

that a single final year-end examination is not the best way to assess learning and decide on their progress," said Vimla Ramachandran, a former professor at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration. "But it was implemented very shoddily. No detention became no testing, and in many schools, no teaching. It was a slippery slope."

She noted that government schools in many States simply stopped testing in any form until Class 5, automatically promoting children without bothering to find out if they had acquired grade-specific skills and knowledge. Monitoring systems focussed on inputs or maybe indicators, rarely on outcomes.

Efforts to introduce a Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) programme instead, in coordination with UNICEF, were largely stymied by a lack of resources and training, and teacher apathy. In many schools, NCERT's CCE forms were simply filled in masses by teachers without an assessment of individual children's skills. A number of boards abandoned the model of multiple formative and summative assessments, retreating to the familiarity of a final year-end examination.

Why has it been rolled back?

Surveys conducted by both government and private entities in recent years have documented an alarming learning gap in India's schools.

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), a respected survey spearheaded by the NGO Pratham, found that only 42.8% of Class 5 students could read a Class 2-level text in 2022, a fall from 50.5% in 2018. Only 25.6% of them could do basic arithmetic problems in 2022, a slight drop from 27.9% in 2018.

Even more worryingly, ASER 2023 tested foundational skills in youth aged 14 to 18 years and found that a quarter of them still cannot read a Class 2 level text fluently in their regional language. More than half struggle with division (3-digit by 1-digit) problems, a skill taught in Class 3 and 4.

The Department of School Education's National Achievement Survey 2021 also showed clear declines as students moved up the school ladder. Out of a maximum 500, Class 3 students

scored an average of 323 in language and 306 in Mathematics. By Class 5, the scores dropped to 309 and 284 respectively, and to 302 and 255 by Class 8.

A government analysis of Classes 10 and 12 results across 59 State and national boards in 2023 showed that more than 65 lakh students had failed to clear their examinations, with a failure rate ranging from 12% in national boards to 18% in State boards.

"In the name of promoting all students in the younger classes, we are adversely affecting them in later life," said Joseph Emmanuel, who was academic director of the Central Board of Secondary Examination (CBSE) till a few months ago, when he took charge of the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE). "There is a clear learning gap that was exacerbated by the COVID disruptions. This [rollback of the no-detention policy] is a good example of evidence-based decision making."

Dr. Ramachandran said the amendment represents a regression, and instead called for better mechanisms to assess children's learning and hold teachers accountable.

What is the way forward?

"Timely remedial action is needed at every stage. There must be regular assessment done at the school level in every class, not at the board level. Who is the best judge of a child's learning? It is their own teachers. We must trust teachers and equip them," said Dr. Emmanuel.

He noted that the Rules require the class teacher to "provide specialised inputs after identifying the learning gaps at various stages of assessment" and stipulate that the school Head personally monitor the progress of the children who are held back. "More accountability is being brought in," he said.

Dr. Ramachandran said the focus of accountability must change. "Instead of detaining and punishing the child for not doing well, we need a way to hold the teacher responsible and accountable," she said. Too many teachers only focus on the children in the front rows of their classroom, often discriminating against those from lower socio-economic backgrounds who may struggle more and are more likely to be detained. "Rigorous teacher appraisal is needed to ensure inclusive teaching. There must be some consequences for the teacher, not just the student, as well as incentives to ensure this," she urged.



New rules: Students appear for exams at a school in Gurugram in 2024. PTI

PROFILES

The General behind the throne

Waker-uz-Zaman

As the interim government of Muhammad Yunus is being pushed and pulled by different actors in a chaotic Bangladesh, the powerful military chief, who is already in charge of law and order, continues to play a balancing act between different power centres

Kalol Bhattacharjee

The year 1985 was a difficult one in the chequered history of Bangladesh. It was a decade since the father of the nation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was assassinated, and almost a decade and a half had passed since the deadly Cyclone 'Bhola' that devastated the country before it got independence from Pakistan. But despite the years, the country was not yet ready for another political or natural disaster. In the summer of 1985, a massive cyclone ripped through the coastal part of Bangladesh and left at least 11,000 people dead. It was in that dramatic condition of natural fury and the subsequent political breakdown that a young cadet, Waker-uz-Zaman, joined the infantry of Bangladesh. Nearly four decades later, as the head of the Army, Gen. Waker-uz-Zaman was thrown into the labyrinthine politics of Bangladesh on August 5, 2024.

It was a tense morning with families across the capital, Dhaka, stepping out for one last confrontation with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's law and order machinery. Ms. Hasina led the government for a decade and a half with an iron hand. As teachers, students, lawyers and housewives bid goodbye to their families and started flooding the streets of Dhaka, there was anticipation of a bloodbath as the police and the military were expected to crush the uprising and enforce a lockdown that Ms. Hasina had ordered.

But by 11 am, it became clear that something had changed during the night and that the military had decided not to support the month-long crackdown that had left hundreds dead. As Ms. Hasina boarded a helicopter and flew out of the country, the systemic reflex action in Dhaka pushed Gen. Zaman to the forefront.

By afternoon, representatives of all the major political parties and civil society figures received an urgent call to converge under his leadership and have a discussion about the road ahead. By the evening, Bangladesh heaved a sigh of relief when Gen. Zaman held a press conference to

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announce that the military would hold the fort until a new interim government is formed.

The role of Gen. Zaman has been keenly watched from the beginning of the latest political turbulence that hit Bangladesh in July 2024 when the students took to the streets under the leadership of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement (Boishommo Birodi Chhatra Andolan).

The crackdown against the students-led uprising was led by the police and security forces, and the military, though at times accused of firing upon violent mobs, more or less kept away from the scenes of extreme violence. *Daily Star* reported that the night before the expected final showdown between the government and protesters, the military's top officials met Gen. Zaman and decided that the military would not enforce the lockdown Ms. Hasina had ordered.

This was subsequently conveyed to Ms. Hasina, which meant that the Prime Minister no longer had the support of her military.

In charge of policing

The interim government under Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, however, has been suffering from a congenital problem as it has failed to revive the police and the security forces whose credibility nosedived before the people as they were seen as complicit in the anti-student crackdown. Lack of effective policing has left the law and order in a fragile condition since the fall of Ms. Hasina, which prompted the military to take up magisterial power in the country on September 17, putting the Army effectively in charge of policing.

Ever since August, every action of Gen. Zaman has been minutely observed in the media. On January 2, he met former PM Khaleda Zia at her residence which triggered intense speculation about what he was up to next.

Starting with the infantry in 1985, Gen. Zaman grew to ultimately command the Infantry Battalion of Bangladesh. He was a distinguished instructor at the School of Infantry and Tactics, the Non-commissioned



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Officers' Academy and the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations Training. He also served as the Military Secretary in the Army Headquarters and Principal Staff Officer under Prime Minister Hasina. He has experience of handling military operations, military intelligence and UN peacekeeping affairs of the Bangladesh Army.

What adds political context to Gen. Zaman is his background. The General is married to academic Sarahna Kamalika Zaman, the eldest daughter of late Gen. Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman, who served as the Army chief during Ms. Hasina's first prime ministerial stint in the late 1990s. Gen. Rahman had married a cousin of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In that way, Gen. Zaman is a distant relative of Ms. Hasina.

This family link had come up for discussion among anti-Hasina forces when she was evacuated in a military aircraft. It was alleged that Gen. Zaman had saved Ms. Hasina from the wrath of the protesters because of family links. But the role of the military and his own position in the interim period became clear with an interview that Gen. Zaman gave to *Prothom Alo* on December 30. In the interview, he

extended explicit support to the interim government but criticised the failures of the authorities in rebuilding the policing structure. "At the end of the day, it is my soldiers who have to take to the field. They have been five months in the field now," he said. He toned down the anti-India rhetoric that had gone ballistic with strong speeches by the student leaders.

Targeting Constitution

The interview coincided with a dramatic declaration by several student-coordinators, including Hasnat Abdullah and Sarjis Alam of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, that they would "bury" the current Constitution in a massive rally at the Shaheed Minar on December 31. The interim government has already constituted several commissions for reforms, including one that is being led by Professor Ali Riaz of Illinois State University, for reform of the Constitution and it was felt that a public call for "burying" the Constitution by the students would unleash further chaos in the country.

On January 30, the interim government pledged to come out with its own "July Proclamation" that would lay down a roadmap for the future of Bangladesh. It was reported that the interim government's initiative was prompted by Gen. Zaman and other members of the Bangladesh military who had expressed concern over the call to dismantle the Constitution. Student protest of December 31 fizzled out but the students have given a deadline of January 15 for the announcement of the "July Proclamation".

The role of the Army chief is also important as the incoming Trump presidency in the U.S. is expected to create further problems for the unstable interim government as President Trump is a known critic of Mr. Yunus, who has not given a clear timeline for holding elections.

If Mr. Trump cold-shoulders the Yunus government, the most important player in Dhaka will be Gen. Zaman who has so far refrained from taking over direct power while effectively being in charge of law and order.

THE GIST

On August 4, as Bangladesh was in the grip of massive student protests, the military's top officials met Gen. Zaman and decided that the military would not enforce a lockdown that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had ordered. The next day, Ms. Hasina resigned



During the transition period, when law and order collapsed in Bangladesh, the military, under Gen. Zaman, stepped in



On December 30, in an interview, the military chief extended explicit support to the interim government but also criticised the failures of the authorities in rebuilding the policing structure

Crusader of farmers' rights

Jagjit Singh Dallewal

The farm leader, who is on a 'fast-unto-death' protest, says he is ready to sacrifice his life for the cause of the farming community

Vikas Vasudeva

The year 2024 saw farmer and farm labour groups from Punjab resuming their protests highlighting the agrarian distress and asking the Union government to enact a law for guaranteed buying of their crops at the minimum support price (MSP).

Under the banner of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM), protesters have been camping at Shambhu-Ambla and Khanauri-Jind, the inter-State boundaries between Haryana and Punjab from February 13, 2024. Their mission: start a 'march' to New Delhi to press the government on their demands, including a complete farm loan waiver and legal guarantees for purchasing their crops.

Elaborate security arrangements were set in place by the BJP-ruled Haryana government, and the 'farmers march' has been at a halt for close to 11 months. With the farmers not willing to relent, on November 26, 2024, Jagjit Singh Dallewal, a veteran leader, started an indefinite hunger strike in support of their demands, at the Khanauri protest site in Punjab's Sangrur district.

As Mr. Dallewal's fast-unto-death has completed 40 days, the 67-year-old is



visibly frail, yet he is unwilling to back down unless the government meets the farmer community's demands.

Born on October 4, 1958, in a farmer-family at Dallewala village in Punjab's Faridkot district, Mr. Dallewal completed his primary education in nearby Golewala and later pursued a Bachelor in Arts at the Government Brijendra college in Faridkot. He has a Master's degree in political science. But his heart was in farming. After studies, Mr. Dallewal, who owned around 17 acres of farmland in his native village, opted to be a full-time agriculturist.

Open letter to PM

Ahead of launching his latest fast, Mr. Dallewal transferred his properties to his son, daughter-in-law and grandson, indicating his willingness to sacrifice his life for the cause of the farming community. In December, in an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr. Dallewal eq-

uated the MSP for farmers to the fundamental right to live. Asserting that his death would possibly wake up the Union government from its deep slumber, he wrote: "To stop the deaths of farmers, I have decided to sacrifice my life..."

The ongoing protest has rekindled the memories of the year-long agitation during 2020-21 when scores of farmers camped at several places, including Singhu-Tikri, at Delhi's boundaries, and chaos prevailed in the national capital and surrounding areas of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. Back then, the farmers were demanding a repeal of three farm laws enacted by the Centre, which were eventually repealed.

The movement was spearheaded by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body of farmer outfits, in which Mr. Dallewal's BKU (Ekta Sidhupur) was also a player. However, in 2022, when SKM leader Balbir Singh Rajewal formed the Samyukt Samaj Morcha (SSM) and decided to contest the Assembly election in Punjab, Mr. Dallewal, who was not in favour of jumping into politics, broke away and formed his new forum – the SKM (Non Political), which claims to be an amalgamation of around 28 organisations. The SKM (Non Political) is now at the forefront of the protests.

Adithya Narayan

Former Prime Minister of Georgia Bidzina Ivanishvili, who is the founder of the country's ruling Georgian Dream party, has been sanctioned by the U.S. In a statement dated December 27, Secretary of State Antony Blinken accused the billionaire – whose \$7.6 billion net worth exceeds a quarter of the country's GDP – of trying to "derail Georgia's Euro-Atlantic future for the benefit of Russia".

Two days later, Mikheil Kavlashvili, previously a Manchester City striker, took charge as the former Soviet republic's President, replacing pro-western Salome Zurabichvili.

Prior to the sanctions on Ivanishvili were the "disputed" elections of October 26. Defying pollsters' predictions, the nation's electoral authority had announced victory for the Georgian Dream, extending its 12-year grip on power since its formation in 2012. In late November, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze decided to suspend talks regarding accession plans into the EU. This spawned protests which have continued to date and even prompted then-President Zurabichvili, once a supporter of the Georgian Dream, to lock horns with the party.

Agent of pivot

Bidzina Ivanishvili

The billionaire founder of Georgia's ruling party, who has been sanctioned by the U.S., warns against the 'Global War Party', and seeks closer ties with Russia



At one of these protests, an effigy of Mr. Ivanishvili was burnt. For, citizens believe that though his Prime Ministership lasted just for over a year between 2012 and 2013, the billionaire continues to cast a shadow over the Georgian Dream and its policies.

Like Georgia, Mr. Ivanishvili's past, present and future too are intertwined with those of its larger neighbour. Born in 1956 in Chorvila, western Georgia, Mr. Ivanishvili obtained a degree in engineering from Tbilisi and went on to pursue a degree in economics in Moscow. He started out in the twilight of the Soviet Union selling electronic goods, before branching out to mining and establishing his own bank, Rosiyskiy Kredit.

Mr. Ivanishvili took the political plunge when the country was disenchanted by the rule of Mikheil Saakashvili – the President who presided over the 2008 war with Russia, which saw Georgia cede 20% of its territory. Mr. Ivanishvili sparked hope in people by offering his vision of a socialist democracy in his native town of Chorvila. Separately, he built a castle for himself on a mountaintop in Tbilisi, complete with a helipad, an art gallery and a shark tank. Mr. Saakashvili is currently in jail.

Ultimately, Mr. Ivanishvili and other Georgian Dream leaders have managed to paint a picture. One in which they have drummed up anti-Western rhetoric; espoused 'Christian values', and homophobic and transphobic remarks; mongered a theory about a 'Global War Party'; and cited the war in Ukraine to sell their vision of peace. The party's vote share in Georgia's heartland is testament to the popularity of these values.

Clashing with them is another group of Georgians who seek integration with the EU. But the West's support for the opposition's claims that the October elections were fraudulent and the subsequent American sanctions on Mr. Ivanishvili have further deteriorated the relations between Georgian Dream and western capitals. As Georgian Dream, undeterred by protests and pressure tactics from the West, is tightening its grip on the state, Mr. Ivanishvili remains the power behind the throne.

Ties with Moscow

Reports suggest the 68-year-old's first brush with the Russian bureaucracy came when his brother was kidnapped back in the day. To secure his release,

MOSCOW

Russia promises response after ATACMS missiles target Belgorod



Russia vowed to retaliate after it accused Ukraine of firing U.S.-supplied ATACMS missiles at the border region of Belgorod on Friday. Outgoing U.S. President Joe Biden authorised Kyiv to use the long-range weapons against Russia last year in a move the Kremlin denounced as a grave escalation of the three-year conflict. AFP

NAYPYIDAW

Myanmar releases thousands of prisoners on Independence Day



Myanmar junta released more than 6,000 prisoners and has reduced other inmates' sentences as part of a mass amnesty marking the 77th anniversary of independence from Britain on Saturday. They included a few hundreds of political detainees jailed for opposing Army rule since the military seized power in February 2021. AP

BUENOS AIRES

Venezuelan opposition candidate seeks support on regional tour



Venezuelan opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia met Argentine President Javier Milei on Saturday on a regional tour to drum up support ahead of President Nicolas Maduro's swearing-in for a third term. Mr. Gonzalez Urrutia flew into Buenos Aires on Friday night from Madrid, where he has been living in exile. AP

LAHORE

Imran Khan claims he was given chance to leave Pakistan on exile



Pakistan's jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan said he was offered a chance to leave the country on exile for three years but he declined. In a post on X, the 72-year-old cricketer-turned-politician said, "I was offered the opportunity of a three-year exile while I was in Attock Jail, but I will live and die in Pakistan." PTI

'U.S. mulling sale of arms worth \$8 bn to Israel'

Reuters
WASHINGTON

The Biden administration has informally notified the U.S. Congress of a proposed \$8 billion arms sale to Israel that includes munitions for fighter jets and attack helicopters, Axios reported on Friday, citing two sources.

The deal would need approval from House and Senate committees and includes artillery shells and air-to-air missiles for fighter jets to defend against threats such as drones.

"The President has made clear Israel has a right to defend its citizens, consistent with international humanitarian law, and to deter aggression from Iran and its proxies," a U.S. official said.

Israeli strikes kill dozens in Gaza as new truce talks begin

At least 70 killed, including 12 from a family with victims including several children; Israeli mediators were dispatched to resume talks in Doha brokered by Qatari and Egyptian mediators

Reuters
CAIRO/GAZA

An Israeli military strike killed 12 persons in a house in Gaza City early on Saturday, bringing the death toll from strikes across Gaza to 70 over the last day, Palestinian medics said, as mediators launched a new ceasefire push in Qatar.

Residents and medics said at least 14 persons had been in the house of the Al-Ghoul family when the strike took place in the early hours, destroying the building.

People scoured the rubble for possible survivors trapped under the debris and medics said several



Same story: A Palestinian sits amid the destruction in the Shujaiya neighbourhood of Gaza City in northern Gaza on Saturday. AFP

children were among those killed.

The military said in a statement on Saturday that its forces had continued their operations this week in Beit Hanoun town in the

northern edge of the enclave, where the Army has been operating for three months, and had destroyed a military complex that had been used by Hamas.

A surge in Israeli operations and the number of Palestinians killed in recent days comes amid a renewed push to reach a ceasefire in the 15-month-old war and return Israeli hostages before U.S. President-elect Donald Trump takes office on January 20.

Israeli mediators were dispatched to resume talks in Doha brokered by Qatari and Egyptian mediators, and U.S. President Joe Biden's administration, which is helping to broker the talks, urged Hamas on Friday to agree to a deal.

The death toll from Israel's military campaign had reached 45,717, according to Gaza's Health Ministry

Russia attacks Pokrovsk aiming to cut off supply lines

Reuters
KYIV

Russian forces continue to launch attacks near the Ukrainian city of Pokrovsk in an effort to bypass it from the south and cut off supply routes to Ukraine's troops, the Ukrainian military said on Saturday.

The capture of the road and rail hub in the eastern Donetsk region could create serious difficulties for the Ukrainian Army on the eastern front and also allow Russia to reinforce and advance its front line to the west.

"The Pokrovsk direction remains the hottest and there the Russians attacked 34 times (in the past 24 hours) and tried to break through our defences south of Pokrovsk," Viktor Trehubov, spokesman for Ukraine's Khortytsia



Ukraine claims Russians attacked 34 times in the past 24 hours to break through its defences in the south of Pokrovsk, Reuters

group of forces, told Ukrainian national television.

Mr. Trehubov said Russian forces were trying to block supply routes by sending small groups of soldiers to settlements south of Pokrovsk.

He said Kyiv's forces were using drones and precision weapons to try and prevent Russian troops from reaching their targets.

Cartoonist quits WaPo over rejected Trump sketch

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

An award-winning political cartoonist for *The Washington Post* has announced her resignation after a cartoon depicting the newspaper's billionaire owner Jeff Bezos groveling before Donald Trump was rejected.

Ann Telnaes posted on Substack late on Friday that this was the first time she "had a cartoon killed because of who or what I chose to aim my pen at."

The cartoon – which she included in her post – depicts Amazon founder and *Washington Post* owner Jeff Bezos, as well as Facebook and Meta founder Mark Zuckerberg and other media and tech moguls, kneeling and holding up bags of money before a massive Mr. Trump.

Trump's sentencing in hush-money case is set for January 10

Associated Press
NEW YORK



Donald Trump

conditional discharge – meaning the real estate tycoon would not be subject to any conditions.

The sentence would nevertheless see Mr. Trump entering the White House as a convicted felon.

Mr. Trump faced up to four years in prison but legal experts – even before he won the November presidential polls – did not expect Merchan to send the former President to jail.

Protests in South Korea as Yoon resists arrest

Agence France-Presse
SEOUL

Thousands of rival South Korean protesters rallied in the capital on Saturday, a day after a failed attempt to arrest suspended President Yoon Suk Yeol for imposing a short-lived martial law decree that led to his impeachment.

The country has been plunged into political chaos since last month, with Mr. Yoon holed up in the presidential residence, surrounded by security who resisted efforts by prosecutors to arrest him.

Thousands of protesters, both for and against Mr. Yoon, gathered in front of the residence and along major roads in Seoul on Saturday – either demanding his arrest or calling for his impeachment to be declared invalid.

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

No.CE/TB-VII/86/2024/9

PRESS NOTICE FOR RE-TENDER

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

Details of bid may be seen at procurement portal www.assamtenders.gov.in. The bidders must be enrolled in www.assamtenders.gov.in.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Approx Value of Work(Bid Value)	Completion Period	Bid Security	Cost of Bid (in Rs)
1	Construction of Proposed Circuit House at Nalbari	Rs. 15,64,80,691.00	20 (Twenty) Months	Rs. 31,29,614.00 for General category, and Rs. 15,64,807.00 for Reserved category	Rs. 20,000.00

N.B.:-

1. Value of work may vary according to the detail NIT.

2. The Press Notice will form a part of the Bidding Document.

Janasanyog /C/6101/ 24/4-Jan-25

Chief Engineer, P.W.D. Building, Assam Chandmari, Guwahati-3

GOVT. OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (ROADS),
ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3.

No. CE/STBR/II/34/2024-25/03

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3, invites Bid on behalf of the Governor of Assam from eligible contractors registered with Assam PWD (Roads) or registered in Central Govt./Any State Government/ Semi Govt. Organization / Central or State Public Sector Undertakings for "Construction of ROB at Makum (Neat Railway LC Gate No.DD-53) leading to Tinsukia Medical College" for an amount of Rs.3924.54 Lakh (Rupees thirty nine crore twenty four lakh fifty four thousand) only (Approx.).

The project is not yet sanctioned by the competent authority. In the event of non-sanction of the project, the bids may be cancelled and no claim whatsoever on this account shall be entertained from the bidders.

Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.gov.in>. Amendment/Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWD, Assam website <http://assamtenders.gov.in>.

Note: NIT value is inclusive of GST (12%), Labour Welfare Cess (1%) etc.

Janasanyog /C/6122/ 24/5-Jan-25

Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads)
Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3.

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD

(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)

49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khanjia Bhavan Race Course Road Bengaluru – 560 001. Phone No. 080-22265383 website : www.kiadb.in

IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-36/2024-25

Date: 04.01.2025

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

Item Rate Tenders under two cover bid system is invited for the work mentioned below as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Contractors who have got adequate financial resources, suitable construction equipments, technical man power & sufficient past experience for the following works as per the schedule given below:

Name of the Work : Establishment of Electronics Manufacturing Cluster under Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC-2.0) Scheme at Kochanahalli Industrial Area, Mysuru Taluk, Mysuru District. (2nd call).

The last date and time of receipt of tender is : 18.01.2025 upto 4.30 pm.

Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>.

Sd/-

Chief Engineer-1, KIADB Bengaluru

Associated Press
LAS VEGAS

A highly decorated Army soldier who fatally shot himself in a Tesla Cybertruck just before it blew up outside the Trump hotel in Las Vegas left notes saying the New Year's Day explosion was a stunt to serve as a "wake-up call" for the country's ills, investigators said on Friday.

Matthew Livesberger, a 37-year-old Green Beret from Colorado Springs, Colorado, also wrote in notes he left on his cellphone that he needed to



Matthew Livesberger wanted to cleanse his mind of the brothers he lost and relieve the burden of the lives he took. GETTY IMAGES VIA AFP

The explosion caused minor injuries to seven persons but virtually no damage to the Trump In-

ternational Hotel. Livesberger's letters covered a range of topics including political grievances, societal problems and both domestic and international issues, including the war in Ukraine. He said in one letter that the U.S. was "terminally ill and headed toward collapse."

Livesberger harbored no ill will toward President-elect Donald Trump, law enforcement officials said. In one of the notes he left, he said the country needed to "rally around" Mr. Trump and Tesla CEO Elon Musk.

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Sport

PRIZED SCALP

Kohli is never an easy wicket, says Australia coach McDonald



Australia coach Andrew McDonald has found joy in the manner in which Virat Kohli has been dealt with. "He has tried some things but you know, the relentless nature of Scotty (Scott Boland) has been incredibly difficult for him to combat. But he is never an easy wicket," McDonald said after the second day's play in Sydney.

PROTEAS ON TOP

Rickleton smashes 259 in South Africa's massive total



Pakistan was struggling at 64 for three in reply to South Africa's massive total of 615 at close on the second day of the second Test in Cape Town on Saturday. Opener Ryan Rickleton, in pic., made 259 while wicketkeeper Kyle Verreyne scored 100. **The scores:** South Africa 615 in 141.3 overs vs Pakistan 64/3 in 21 overs.

REVIVAL

Haaland doubles up in Man City stroll over West Ham



Manchester City pummelled West Ham 4-1 in the Premier League on Saturday while Chelsea's recent woes continued with a 1-1 draw at Crystal Palace. **The results:** Manchester City 4 (Coutinho 10-og, Haaland 42, 55, Foden 58) bt West Ham 1 (Fullkrug 71); Crystal Palace 1 (Mateta 82) drew with Chelsea 1 (Palmer 14).

COMEBACK WIN

10-man Real Madrid edges past Valencia, tops LaLiga



Ten-man Real Madrid snatched a 2-1 victory at Valencia on Friday to take it top of LaLiga. **The results:** LaLiga: Valencia 1 (Duro 27) lost to Real Madrid 2 (Modric 85, Bellingham 90+6). Premier League: Aston Villa 2 (Barkley 58, Bailey 76) bt Leicester 1 (Mavidi 63); Tottenham 1 (Solanke 4) lost to Newcastle 2 (Gordon 6, Isak 38).

India sweats over Bumrah's fitness

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
SYDNEY

India will sweat over Jasprit Bumrah, its skipper and spearhead, who retreated to the dressing room during the post-lunch session on the second day of the fifth and final Test against Australia here. Later, he went to a hospital for scans and his fellow pacer Prasidh Krishna gave an update during a media interaction on Saturday evening.

"Yes, he had a back spasm, he had gone for scans, the medical team is monitoring him, so we will know whenever the medical team gets back to us," Prasidh said. With the fifth Test on the cusp of a result, Bumrah's presence is essential for India to strive for a miracle on Sunday.

With 32 wickets so far in this Border-Gavaskar Trophy series, Bumrah is in red-hot form and has been the main threat to an Australian line-up nursing a 2-1 lead. It remains to be seen if he could turn up and scuttle the host's chase as and when it happens.

Pant & Boland's heroics leave tie evenly poised

The second day witnesses the fall of 15 wickets; India copes with Bumrah's absence to gain a slender first-innings lead; the visitor reaches 141 for six in its second essay

INDIA IN AUS

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
SYDNEY

The Border-Gavaskar Trophy series is at its tipping point. Having commenced at Perth on November 22nd, the sporting caravan is now stationed 3290 kilometres away at the Sydney Cricket Ground, and a feverish climax is due.

The fifth and final Test's second day witnessed the fall of 15 wickets as pacers found their mark on a surface that nodded in approval. At close on Saturday, India scored 141 for six in its second innings and leads by 145.

After bowling out Australia for 181 in the first innings, and snatching a four-run margin, the visitor lapsed into a top-order slump before Rishabh Pant emerged with all guns blazing. Prior to him, a similar vein was exhibited by Yashasvi Jaiswal, who carved 16 from Mitchell Starc's opening over.

K.L. Rahul too pulled

one over fine-leg and just as India galloped, Scott Boland castled the former. The speedster then dismantled Jaiswal's timber and Virat Kohli walked into boos from a section of the audience. He returned to the pavilion after a while but this time the audience stood up to applaud a great batter, who perhaps may have played his last Test innings in Australia.

The fetish to fish outside the off-stump consumed Kohli again and Boland was on target. Next man Pant greeted Boland with a six and when Shubman Gill tried to emulate, he fell to Beau Webster. Ravindra Jadeja joined forces with Pant, whose buccaneering ways continued. A pick-up six off Starc over square-leg was outstanding.

Dormancy period

When the southpaw (61 from 33 balls) fell to Pat Cummins, a period of dormancy followed. Nitish Kumar Reddy succumbed to the relentless Boland and when stumps were drawn, Jadeja and Washington Sundar were at the crease.



Counterpunch: Pant took the attack to the Australian bowlers. GETTY IMAGES

Earlier, in the middle session, Australia leaned on Webster. The debutant drove and pulled to good effect. His partner Alex Carey clipped some fours while India coped with Jasprit Bumrah's absence as the skipper left the venue for some precautionary scans.

This was an opportunity for the support-cast to deliver and they did as Prasidh Krishna cleaned up Carey with one that homed into the stumps. Webster, meanwhile, got to his 50 but Cummins was ambushed by Nitish. The fourth seamer drew the edge and India's stand-in

captain Kohli took a sharp catch.

In his next over, Nitish dismissed Starc. And once Prasidh accounted for Webster and Mohammed Siraj slipped one through Boland's gate, it capped a remarkable bowling and fielding effort by the Indians, with Kohli, Rahul

SCOREBOARD

INDIA — 1ST INNINGS

185 in 72.2 overs

AUSTRALIA — 1ST INNINGS

Sam Konstas c Jaiswal b Siraj 23

(38b, 3x4), Usman Khawaja c

Rahul b Bumrah 2 (10b), Marnus Labuschagne c Pant b Bumrah 2

(8b), Steve Smith c Rahul b

Prasidh 33 (57b, 4x4, 1x6), Travis Head c Rahul b Siraj 4 (3b, 1x4), Beau Webster c Jaiswal b Prasidh

57 (105b, 5x4), Alex Carey b

Prasidh 21 (36b, 4x4), Pat

Cummins c Kohli b Nitish 10 (20b,

1x4), Mitchell Starc c Rahul b

Nitish 1 (4b), Nathan Lyon (not

out) 7 (17b), Scott Boland b Siraj 9 (9b, 2x4); Extras (b-9, lb-2, nb-1):

12; Total (in 51 overs): 181.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-9 (Khawaja, 2.6 overs), 2-15

(Labuschagne, 6.2), 3-35 (Konstas,

11.2), 4-39 (Head, 11.5), 5-96

(Smith, 27.1), 6-137 (Carey, 37.5),

7-162 (Cummins, 44.6), 8-164

(Starc, 46.1), 9-166 (Webster, 47.2).

INDIA BOWLING

Bumrah 10-1-33-2, Siraj 16-2-51-3, Prasidh 15-3-42-3, Nitish 7-0-32-2, Jadeja 3-0-12-0.

INDIA — 2ND INNINGS

Yashasvi Jaiswal b Boland 22 (35b, 4x4), K.L. Rahul b Boland 13 (20b, 2x4), Shubman Gill c Carey b

Webster 13 (15b, 2x4), Virat Kohli c

Smith b Boland 6 (12b, 1x4),

Rishabh Pant c Carey b Cummins

61 (33b, 4x4), Ravindra Jadeja

(batting) 8 (39b, 1x4), Nitish Kumar

c Cummins b Boland 4 (21b),

Washington Sundar (batting) 6 (17b); Extras (b-4, lb-4); Total (for six wkts, in 32 overs): 141.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-42 (Rahul, 7.3), 2-47 (Jaiswal, 9.5), 3-59 (Kohli, 13.1), 4-78 (Gill, 15.2), 5-124 (Pant, 22.2), 6-129 (Nitish, 27.3).

AUSTRALIA BOWLING

Starc 4-0-36-0, Cummins 11-4-31-1, Boland 13-3-42-4, Webster 4-1-24-1.

Australia 39 for four and in trouble. Steve Smith, though, batted fluently, and found an ally in Webster. However, Smith poked at a Prasidh delivery and Rahul exulted at second slip. At the break, the host scored 101 for five, and the rest of the day veered slightly towards India.

There is enough bounce for India, feels Prasidh

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
SYDNEY

It has taken nearly a year for Prasidh Krishna to bowl again for India in Test whites. Having played in South Africa during the 2023-24 two-Test series, the pacer was picked for the fifth and final Test here following an injury to Akash Deep.

The Karnataka seamer did well and bagged a three for 42 which forced Australia to stumble at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Saturday. Prasidh dismissed Steve Smith, Alex Carey and Beau Webster.

"When I got the ball in hand, obviously there was a bit of nerves. The first ov-

er went well, the next few didn't go well," the bowler said.

Prasidh tweaked his approach after lunch: "The analyst and I sat together and we had a better idea of what my reference point is when I am bowling, and that really helped."

Despite a start-stop career, the Bangalorean is optimistic: "Honestly I haven't really thought about how much time I have missed in cricket. I have had two injuries in two years, but it feels great (to be back) and hopefully keep doing this on the field for longer."

About the surface, Prasidh said: "It is getting difficult in some areas, the ball

is keeping low sometimes but there is enough bounce for us to be in the game and look for those edges and try and beat them on either side of the bat."

Having relished Rishabh Pant's onslaught, Prasidh said: "It was real fun, all of us were sitting together and watching him bat. I know it's a lot of risk but that's the way the game is played today."

No target in mind

Probed about an ideal target for the host, Prasidh replied: "There is no particular number in mind but getting as many runs as possible is good and we are ready to bowl them out."

Not going to leave the game: Rohit Sharma

Press Trust of India

SYDNEY

Rohit Sharma on Saturday firmly dismissed his retirement rumours, saying he is "not going anywhere" and offered poor form as the reason for him "standing down" from the Sydney Test against Australia.

"I have not retired. I stood down, that is what I would say. Basically, the chat that I had with the coach and the selector was very simple. I am not able to score runs, there is no form, it is an important match and we need a player with form," Rohit

told *Star Sports*.

"This is not a retirement decision. I am not going to leave the game. There is no such decision. But I am out of this game because the batting is not firing. But there is no guarantee that the batting will not fire after five months."

'Ground staff have done an incredible job'

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
SYDNEY

Australian coach Andrew McDonald reiterated his team's desire to reclaim the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Speaking to the media at the Sydney Cricket Ground here on Saturday, he said: "We are here to win a series. Would we get great satisfaction out of winning a series against India? There's no doubt about that."

Asked about the surface on offer for the fifth Test, he said: "The ground staff have done an incredible job of creating a wicket with something in it. Traditionally it's quite benign and we had a lot of draws but this game has sped up."

Reacting to Rishabh Pant's rapid knock, McDonald said: "He has got an incredible ability to put pressure back on to bowlers. His was an innings that you would say was right for this time."

The coach was thrilled with the way Scott Boland has performed: "Every time he pitches up in the Australian colours, he delivers. He is relentless on a length, moves the ball both ways and it is difficult (for the batters), particularly on this surface."

New plan
Responding to Jasprit Bumrah's niggle, McDonald said: "He is a threat any time. And, yeah, if he isn't there, then India would have to come up with a new plan."

K.C. Vijaya Kumar

SYDNEY

The journey to Bowral is a leap back in time. The train swerves past rolling hills, scythes through jungle, slithers into tunnels, weaves across undulating plains with cattle grazing and horses stomping, tiny stations blur on the window, and the odd country home pops into view.

Two hours away from Sydney, the Australian hinterland is even more pretty. Ancient churches, gnarled trees and the old post office are part of the mix. And Bowral, the land of Sir Don Bradman, is high on aesthetics and staggering

history, all centred on one man with a Test average of 99.94, an Everest that has never been scaled.

Past Cashmere Essentials and a bakery where the town's people gather for coffee, pies and gossip, the road turns left. Every step retraces a past when a lad hit a cricket ball and then became a colossus in the cricketing universe. "He used to smack the ball all over the park, didn't he?" an elderly gentleman pipes up.

Hearing a 'who?', he says: "Bradman, who else?" Every individual seems to have a Bradman connection; in a sense they all own him, nurse his me-

mory passed by awe-struck grandparents, and they are mighty proud of him. All roads lead towards the Bradman Oval, the turf where the great man worked on his craft and became so good that his name had to be embossed on the venue. Inside, a lady walks her dog, two youngsters sprint, a few mimic the cover drive and pose for pictures, some make video calls back home. The

ground is tree-fringed and in the distance, a green hill looms. The pavilion is woody and stately while Bradman's statue in the back garden, is charming. And just around the corner is the Bradman Museum.

This is not a place focused on one man even if the name suggests that. It is a spot that celebrates cricket, that old game accidentally shaped

IN BRIEF



Jamshedpur FC shocks Bengaluru

Jamshedpur FC came from behind to pip Bengaluru FC 2-1 in an Indian Super League fixture at the J.R.D. Tata Sports Complex in Jamshedpur.

The results: At Jamshedpur: Jamshedpur FC 2 (Murray 84, Uvais 90) bt Bengaluru FC 1 (Noguera 19).

At Bhubaneswar: Odisha FC 2 (Jahouh 29 pen, Mawihmingthanga 88) lost to FC Goa 4 (Brison 8, 53, Udanta 45+2, Ranawade 56 og).

Sahaja loses to top seed Kathinka in the semifinals

Top seed Kathinka von Deichmann of Liechtenstein beat Sahaja Yamalapalli 6-0, 6-3 in the \$60,000 ITF women's tennis semifinals at Nonthaburi (Thailand) on Saturday.

HAZARE TROPHY — SEVENTH-ROUND FIXTURES

Group-A: Jaipur: Assam vs Uttarakhand, Goa vs Jharkhand, Haryana vs Manipur, Gujarat vs Odisha.

Group-B: Mumbai: Andhra vs Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra vs Railways.

Navi Mumbai: Rajasthan vs Sikkim, Meghalaya vs Services.

Group-C: Ahmedabad: Arunachal Pradesh vs Hyderabad, Pondicherry vs Punjab, Mumbai vs Saurashtra, Nagaland vs Karnataka.

Group-D: Vizianagaram: Chhattisgarh vs Tamil Nadu, Mizoram vs Vidarbha.

Visakhapatnam: Chandigarh vs Jammu & Kashmir.

Group-E: Hyderabad: Baroda vs Delhi, Bengal vs Madhya Pradesh, Bihar vs Kerala.

All matches begin at 9 a.m.

LIVE TELECAST

Hockey: HIL, DD Sports, Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 3 (SD & HD) & LIV, 6 & 8.15 p.m.

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

Australia vs India: 5th Test, day 4, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 5 a.m. (Monday)

Bengal Tigers outclass Delhi SG Pipers

Jugraj leads the way with a twin strike; Sukhjeet and Abhishek score a goal each; Team Gonasika defeats Hyderabad Toofans for its first victory



Under attack: The Hyderabad Toofans custodian goes all out to keep the Team Gonasika forwards at bay. BISWARANJAN ROUT

HIL

Y. B. Sarangi

ROURKELA

Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers rode on Jugraj Singh's superb brace to outplay an error-prone Delhi SG Pipers 4-1 and record its third consecutive win and jump to the top of the table in the Hockey India League (HIL) at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium here on Saturday.

In the second match of the evening, Team Gonasika, which had only one point so far, defeated Hyderabad Toofans 3-1 to post its first win and earn three points.

With its clinical ap-

proach and tactical superiority, Bengal Tigers showed why it has emerged as a top side early in the league.

Seizing the initiative
Tigers seized the initiative in a flash as Affan Yousuf provided a fine pass to Sukhjeet Singh on the right and the latter slotted in a diagonal shot through a narrow opening in the 23rd second.

Pressure
Pipers, despite issues with their passing, created pressure on the Tigers' citadel, but the Colin Batch-coached side held its nerves and its compact defence. With the ever-active Affan playing brilliantly,

doming crucial roles all over the field, Tigers doubled their lead early in the second quarter as Jugraj launched a low drag-flick to sound the board.

Pipers got some good opportunities through three consecutive penalty corners in the third quarter, but an alert Jamie Carr blunted the attempts under the bar.

Interesting battle
As Pipers desperately tried to catch up, one witnessed a fascinating duel between the Graham Reid-coached team's forwards and the Tigers' defenders.

Jugraj brought variety to his trade as he completed his brace with a high flick that got deflected off the

goalkeeper Pawan's right glove in the third quarter.

Abhishek Nain made the best use of Florent van Aubel's pass from the right to put it past Benjamin Rennie in the final quarter.

Pushing hard

Delhi pushed hard in the closing stages and Gareth Furlong pulled one back beating substitute goalkeeper Atal Dev Singh Chahal.

The results:
Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers 4 (Sukhjeet 1, Jugraj 17 and 38, Abhishek 47) bt Delhi SG Pipers 1 (Furlong 53).

Team Gonasika 3 (S.V. Sunil 2, Victor Charlet 33, Sanjeev Nilam Kess 60) bt Hyderabad Toofans 1 (Timothy Daniel 12).

Former sports journalist K. Datta passes away

Sports Bureau

NEW DELHI

Renowned sports journalist K. Datta passed away in New Delhi on Saturday at the age of 93. He was the former sports editor of *The Times of India*.

He joined the newspaper in December 1949 and went on to work for the publication for more than four decades.

As per his wishes, his body will be donated to a medical college.

TN, Railways head field in National basketball

Sports Bureau

Defending champions, Tamil Nadu men and Railways women, head the field in group 'A' in the 74th National basketball championship to be held in Bhavnagar (Gujarat) from Sunday.

The tournament, played on a league-cum-knockout basis, features 30 men's and 25 women's teams. The top-10 teams in the two sections figure in the first two groups, while the rest compete in the next level.

The groups: Men:

Group A: Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Services, Rajasthan, Kerala. **B:** PLEASANT STAR, 2. ANNHLATOR, 3. UCHCHAIHSHRAVAS

Group B: DECCAN PRINCE PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II) - 245. 1. Minecraft (I) Ashad Asbar 61, 2. Best Buddy (Md.) Ekram 59.5, 3. D Minchu (II) Deepak 59, 4. Anzio (5) P. Sai K 56.5, 5. Shri Can (13) Akshay K 55, 6. Tripurari (2) Mukesh 54, 7. Dyanosho (8) Surya Prakash 53, 8. High Reward (3) Nakhat 53, 9. Amyra (7) P. Ajeeth K 52.5, 10. Mikimoto (4) Kuldeep Sr. 52.5, 11. Renai (10) Afroz K 52, 12. Ponteract (12) Saqlain 51.5 and 13. Gatiman (9) 3. COMING HOME

Group C: AGOSTINI PLATE (Div. I) (1,400m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) - 105 pm. 1. Clefairy (2) Deepak 62.5, 2. Sun Dancer (8) Saqlain 62.5, 3. Coming Home (3) Mukesh 57.5, 4. Iconic Star (1) R.S. Bhati 56.5, 5. Una Paloma Blanca (5) Surya Prakash 54.5, 6. Jungle Girl (4) Gaurav 54, 7. Desert Sultan (4) Akshay K 53 and 8. Tuzac (7) Kuldeep Jr. 52.5, 9. N.R. Alvi (1) Afroz Jr. 52.5, 10. China 1. DESERT SULTAN, 2. SUN DANCER, 3. COMING HOME

Group D: 1. AGNOL RATTAN PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) - 140. 1. Yesterday (7) Suraj (Prakash) 60, 2. Alpine Girl (4) Shivansh 58.5, 3. Carnival Lady (3) Gaurav 58.5, 4. Sugar (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Secret Saint (1) Trevor 58, 6. Divine Destiny (10) Kuldeep Jr. 57.5, 7. N.R.I. Ultrapower (11) Abiy Singh 57.5, 8. Ampere's Touch (8) Mukesh 56.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (6) Afroz K 56, 10. China

Group E: 1. DHARWAR PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. II) - 105 pm. 1. Yesterday (7) Suraj (Prakash) 60, 2. Alpine Girl (4) Shivansh 58.5, 3. Carnival Lady (3) Gaurav 58.5, 4. Sugar (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Secret Saint (1) Trevor 58, 6. Divine Destiny (10) Kuldeep Jr. 57.5, 7. N.R.I. Ultrapower (11) Abiy Singh 57.5, 8. Ampere's Touch (8) Mukesh 56.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (6) Afroz K 56, 10. China

Group F: 1. AGNOL RATTAN PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) - 140. 1. Yesterday (7) Suraj (Prakash) 60, 2. Alpine Girl (4) Shivansh 58.5, 3. Carnival Lady (3) Gaurav 58.5, 4. Sugar (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Secret Saint (1) Trevor 58, 6. Divine Destiny (10) Kuldeep Jr. 57.5, 7. N.R.I. Ultrapower (11) Abiy Singh 57.5, 8. Ampere's Touch (8) Mukesh 56.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (6) Afroz K 56, 10. China

Group G: 1. AGNOL RATTAN PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) - 140. 1. Yesterday (7) Suraj (Prakash) 60, 2. Alpine Girl (4) Shivansh 58.5, 3. Carnival Lady (3) Gaurav 58.5, 4. Sugar (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Secret Saint (1) Trevor 58, 6. Divine Destiny (10) Kuldeep Jr. 57.5, 7. N.R.I. Ultrapower (11) Abiy Singh 57.5, 8. Ampere's Touch (8) Mukesh 56.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (6) Afroz K 56, 10. China

Group H: 1. AGNOL RATTAN PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) - 140. 1. Yesterday (7) Suraj (Prakash) 60, 2. Alpine Girl (4) Shivansh 58.5, 3. Carnival Lady (3) Gaurav 58.5, 4. Sugar (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Secret Saint (1) Trevor 58, 6. Divine Destiny (10) Kuldeep Jr. 57.5, 7. N.R.I. Ultrapower (11) Abiy Singh 57.5, 8. Ampere's Touch (8) Mukesh 56.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (6) Afroz K 56, 10. China

Group I: 1. AGNOL RATTAN PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) - 140. 1. Yesterday (7) Suraj (Prakash) 60, 2. Alpine Girl (4) Shivansh 58.5, 3. Carnival Lady (3) Gaurav 58.5, 4. Sugar (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Secret Saint (1) Trevor 58, 6. Divine Destiny (10) Kuldeep Jr. 57.5, 7. N.R.I. Ultrapower (11) Abiy Singh 57.5, 8. Ampere's Touch (8) Mukesh 56.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (6) Afroz K 56, 10. China

Group J: 1. AGNOL RATTAN PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) - 140. 1. Yesterday (7) Suraj (Prakash) 60, 2. Alpine Girl (4) Shivansh 58.5, 3. Carnival Lady (3) Gaurav 58.5, 4. Sugar (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Secret Saint (1) Trevor 58, 6. Divine Destiny (10) Kuldeep Jr. 57.5, 7. N.R.I. Ultrapower (11) Abiy Singh 57.5, 8. Ampere's Touch (8) Mukesh 56.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (6) Afroz K 56, 10. China

Group K: 1. AGNOL RATTAN PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) - 140. 1. Yesterday (7) Suraj (Prakash) 60, 2. Alpine Girl (4) Shivansh 58.5, 3. Carnival Lady (3) Gaurav 58.5, 4. Sugar (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Secret Saint (1) Trevor 58, 6. Divine Destiny (10) Kuldeep Jr. 57.5, 7. N.R.I. Ultrapower (11) Abiy Singh 57.5, 8. Ampere's Touch (8) Mukesh 56.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (6) Afroz K 56, 10. China

Group L: 1. AGNOL RATTAN PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) - 140. 1. Yesterday (7) Suraj (Prakash) 60, 2. Alpine Girl (4) Shivansh 58.5, 3. Carnival Lady (3) Gaurav 58.5, 4. Sugar (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Secret Saint (1) Trevor 58, 6. Divine Destiny (10) Kuldeep Jr. 57.5, 7. N.R.I. Ultrapower (11) Abiy Singh 57.5, 8. Ampere's Touch (8) Mukesh 56.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (6) Afroz K 56, 10. China

Group M: 1. AGNOL RATTAN PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) - 140. 1. Yesterday (7) Suraj (Prakash) 60, 2. Alpine Girl (4) Shivansh 58.5, 3. Carnival Lady (3) Gaurav 58.5, 4. Sugar (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Secret Saint (1) Trevor 58, 6. Divine Destiny (10) Kuldeep Jr. 57.5, 7. N.R.I. Ultrapower (11) Abiy Singh 57.5, 8. Ampere's Touch (8) Mukesh 56.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (6) Afroz K 56, 10. China

Group N: 1. AGNOL RATTAN PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) - 140. 1. Yesterday (7) Suraj (Prakash) 60, 2. Alpine Girl (4) Shivansh 58.5, 3. Carnival Lady (3) Gaurav 58.5, 4. Sugar (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Secret Saint (1) Trevor 58, 6. Divine Destiny (10) Kuldeep Jr. 57.5, 7. N.R.I. Ultrapower (11) Abiy Singh 57.5, 8. Ampere's Touch (8) Mukesh 56.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (6) Afroz K 56, 10. China

Group O: 1. AGNOL RATTAN PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) - 140. 1. Yesterday (7) Suraj (Prakash) 60, 2. Alpine Girl (4) Shivansh 58.5, 3. Carnival Lady (3) Gaurav 58.5, 4. Sugar (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Secret Saint (1) Trevor 58, 6. Divine Destiny (10) Kuldeep Jr. 57.5, 7. N.R.I. Ultrapower (11) Abiy Singh 57.5, 8. Ampere's Touch (8) Mukesh 56.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (6) Afroz K 56, 10. China

Group P: 1. AGNOL RATTAN PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) - 140. 1. Yesterday (7) Suraj (Prakash) 60, 2. Alpine Girl (4) Shivansh 58.5, 3. Carnival Lady (3) Gaurav 58.5, 4. Sugar (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Secret Saint (1) Trevor 58, 6. Divine Destiny (10) Kuldeep Jr. 57.5, 7. N.R.I. Ultrapower (11) Abiy Singh 57.5, 8. Ampere's Touch (8) Mukesh 56.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (6) Afroz K 56, 10. China

Group Q: 1. AGNOL RATTAN PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) - 140. 1. Yesterday (7) Suraj (Prakash) 60, 2. Alpine Girl (4) Shivansh 58.5, 3. Carnival Lady (3) Gaurav 58.5, 4. Sugar (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Secret Saint (1) Trevor 58, 6. Divine Destiny (10) Kuldeep Jr. 57.5, 7. N.R.I. Ultrapower (11) Abiy Singh 57.5, 8. Ampere's Touch (8) Mukesh 56.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (6) Afroz K 56, 10. China

Group R: 1. AGNOL RATTAN PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) - 140. 1. Yesterday (7) Suraj (Prakash) 60, 2. Alpine Girl (4) Shivansh 58.5, 3. Carnival Lady (3) Gaurav 58.5, 4. Sugar (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Secret Saint (1) Trevor 58, 6. Divine Destiny (10) Kuldeep Jr. 57.5, 7. N.R.I. Ultrapower (11) Abiy Singh 57.5, 8. Ampere's Touch (8) Mukesh 56.5, 9. Miss Marvelous (6



Long road: A woman brings her grandson for treatment at a primary health centre.



The other side: A village health nurse and an ASHA worker cross a waterbody on their way to a tribal village.

Moving mountains

While poor connectivity, lack of infrastructure, and threat of wild animals pose challenges, healthcare workers of the Nilgiris hill district remain steadfast in their drive to deliver care to the isolated hamlets; their work has proven vital to the welfare of the vulnerable population



M. Sathyamoorthy
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The Nilgiris, a hill district in Tamil Nadu, is occupied by various tribal groups. With some tribal hamlets having no proper roads or public transport, providing medical care for the residents is a big challenge for the district administration.

This is where a team of health workers and support staff has proven indispensable. There are currently 94 village health nurses, 128 mid-level health providers and 403 accredited social health activists (ASHA) in the district.

They act as a bridge between the district healthcare system and the tribes, providing basic healthcare to the tribal people at their doorsteps. Navigating rough terrain and shallow water bodies, the health workers often have no option except to walk to the tribal villages.

Kavitha of Kunjapanai is an ASHA worker whose field work from Maamaram takes her to tribal villages inside one of the most dangerous forest in the Nilgiris where elephants, gaurs, tigers, leopards, and venomous snakes are found. "There are 10 villages here, but I get time to attend to only 10 people a day as I have to get back by evening to avoid wild elephants on the

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way," she says. Her work includes checking the vitals of the villagers, coordinating with doctors and getting necessary medicines to them, and keeping track of pregnant women and newborn babies. But some are still wary of the visits, she says. "Many tribes cooperate but some people run away on seeing us. Most of them ran into the forest during the COVID-19 vaccination drive and it was extremely difficult to convince them to take the vaccine."

While the healthcare workers take tremendous efforts to care for the tribal people, some feel their work remains both incomplete and underappreciated.

In spite of all their efforts and treatment, many tribes remain malnourished, Kavitha says.

"Earlier, people used to grow ragi in their own fields. But now they have switched to rice from ration shops," says P. Sivagami, an ASHA worker. The shift may not be a healthy one, she says.

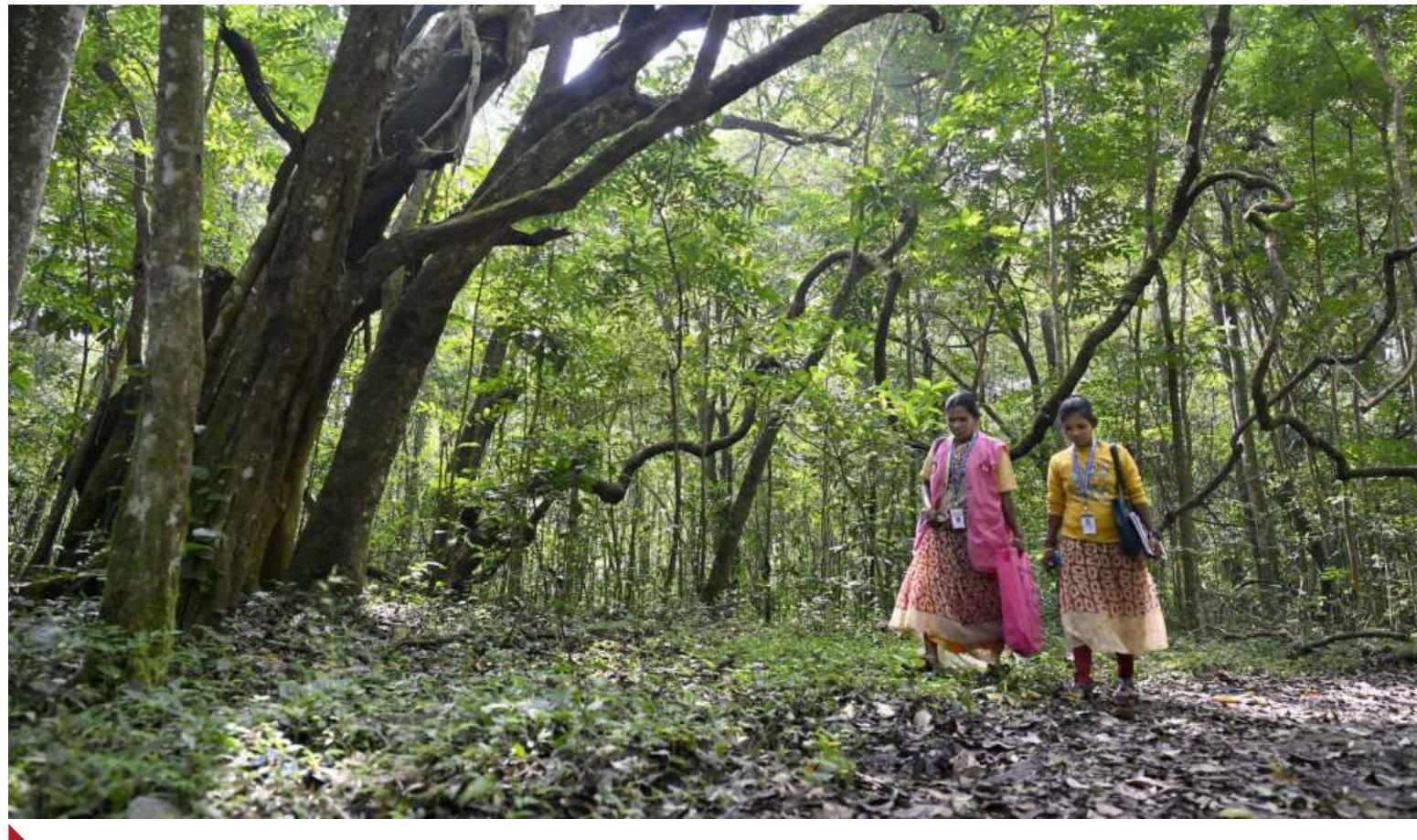
However, the workers remain steadfast in their drive to deliver care to the isolated hamlets. Poor connectivity, lack of infrastructure, and threat of wild animals are daily challenges that simply need to be overcome.



Join FREE Telegram Channel <https://t.me/+Bu7senHpQdhfODg1>
Complete care: The healthcare workers keep track of the vitals of the villagers, coordinate with doctors, and get medicines to villages.



Key personnel: The staff act as a bridge between the district health care system and the tribal people, providing basic health care to the tribal people at their doorsteps.



Rough terrain: The healthcare workers would often have to walk hours through forests to reach isolated tribal hamlets.



No walk in the park: After their rounds, the staff exit via a gate built into a solar-powered electric fence set up around Kolithorai village to keep elephants away.



Busy days: A village health nurse has breakfast with her husband before leaving for duty.



Daughters of the soil:
An ASHA worker carries firewood from the forest for domestic use.



Keeping track: An ASHA worker takes a geo-tagged photo of a new patient in a tribal village.



Vital check: A mid-level health provider takes the blood pressure of a tribal woman. The service at the doorstep is critical for the vulnerable population.

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