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India and China must engage at all levels to resolve disputes

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ANOTHER STALEMATE
Gukesh and Ding in sixth straight draw
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Fadnavis back as Maharashtra CM

Abhinay Deshpande
MUMBAI

The Bharatiya Janata Party's Legislature Party Leader Devendra Fadnavis was sworn in as the 21st Chief Minister of Maharashtra on Thursday evening in a grand ceremony witnessed by thousands at the Azad Maidan in Mumbai.

Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr. Fadnavis in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several Union Ministers, and Chief Ministers and Deputy Chief Ministers of National Democratic Alliance (NDA)-ruled States.

The outgoing Chief Mi-



Power point: Eknath Shinde, Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar during the swearing-in ceremony on Thursday. EMMANUEL YOGINI

nister and leader of the Shiv Sena, Eknath Shinde, took the oath as Deputy Chief Minister, alongside Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Ajit Pawar.

No other leader was inducted into the Council of Ministers, with the Cabinet formation expected next

week. Mr. Fadnavis's spouse Amruta and daughter Divija, and the family members of Mr. Shinde and Mr. Pawar were seated among the audience.

Also present were actors Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Ranbir Kapoor,

Ranveer Singh and Madhuri Dixit, cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar and industrialists Mukesh Ambani, Noel Tata, Kumar Mangalam Birla and Deepak Parekh.

The Opposition leaders, including NCP(SP) supremo Sharad Pawar, and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray, skipped the ceremony.

The new government was formed after two weeks of negotiations following the November 23 election results, with the BJP-led Mahayuti securing a massive mandate.

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Uproar in House over Hindi names for Bills

Opposition targets government over Hindi and Sanskrit names of new legislation; Centre defends move as a reflection of culture and legacy

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Language issue: Opposition MPs raising slogans in the Lok Sabha during the Winter Session of Parliament on Wednesday. ANI

Opposition MPs sharpened their attack against the Hindi and Sanskrit names of new laws in Parliament on Thursday, accusing the government of engaging in "Hindi imposition" and failing to meet Constitutional requirements.

The Centre defended the move as a reflection of Indian culture and legacy, noting that it does not violate any laws or the Constitution. The parliamentary fight on the issue, sparked by Tuesday's debate on the Bharatiya Vayyan Vidheyak — which can be translated as the Indian Aircraft Bill — continued for a third straight day.

YSRCP MP S. Niranjan Reddy said there was a constitutional requirement against using a Hindi title for a Bill whose content is in English. "We are now going to have the possibility of a constitutional court, a High Court or the Supreme Court, striking down this part saying that this part is unconstitutional because Article 348 (IB) requires authoritative text to be in English," he said.

"The mandate of the people in 2024 was for diver-

sity, dividend, and the federal principle but the government is persisting in the 'Hindification' of laws. This is Hindi imposition," said Trinamool Congress MP Sagarika Ghose, citing previous examples such as Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which replaced the Indian Penal Code.

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam MP Kanimozhi N.V.N. Somu echoed her complaint. "I would like the Union government to change the title of the Bill to Aircraft Bill, 2024. Don't try to impose Hindi on people who don't speak Hindi. I request the Union government to refrain from naming bills in Hindi and Sanskrit," she said. Earlier in the debate on Tuesday, Congress MP Syed Naseer

IN BRIEF



Six new faces in 12-strong Hemant Soren Ministry

PATNA
Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Thursday expanded his Cabinet with 11 Ministers. Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar administered the oath at a swearing-in ceremony in Ranchi. » Page 14

Sunken ship crew rescued in India, Pak. joint effort

NEW DELHI
In close collaboration with the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (MSA), the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) rescued 12 crew members of the sunken Indian vessel MSV Al Piranpir from the north Arabian Sea in the early hours of Wednesday. » Page 14

India and China hold negotiations on border issues

NEW DELHI
In preparation for the meeting of the Special Representatives on boundary resolution, India and China on Thursday held the 32nd meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs. » Page 14

UGC draft proposes biannual admissions

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The University Grants Commission published the Draft UGC (Minimum Standards of Instructions in the Award of UG and PG Degrees) Regulations, 2024, on Thursday allowing enrolment of students in higher education institutions (HEIs) twice a year.

The regulations also allow students to join two undergraduate or post-

graduate programmes simultaneously, and make UG and PG aspirants "eligible for admission in any discipline" of their choice, besides offering a multiple entry-exit option.

UGC Chairman M. Jagadesh Kumar said the aim of the new guidelines was to transform higher education in the country and introduce greater flexibility.

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Soaring to the skies
The Indian Space Research Organisation successfully launched the PROBA-3 Project for Onboard Autonomy mission aboard a PSLV-C59 vehicle on Thursday.

The Launch: The vehicle took off with a powerful roar precisely at 04.04 p.m. from the first launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota

What is PROBA-3?
The PROBA-3 mission consists of a twin satellite in which two spacecraft (placed inside the satellites) would fly together as one, maintaining a precise formation to study the sun's outer atmosphere

QQ The PSLV-C59/PROBA-3 mission is successfully accomplished. The spacecraft has been placed in the right orbit
S. SOMANATH, ISRO Chairman

FULL REPORT ON PAGE 14

'Contaminated piped water' leads to three deaths in T.N.

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Three persons, including a woman, died in the Pallavaram area here on Thursday allegedly after consuming contaminated piped water.

Though initially, government officials denied linking the deaths to the water supplied, later in the day, the post-mortem on two men said the deaths were caused by severe food poisoning, which could have been caused by contaminated water.

On Thursday, Mohana Rangan of Pallavaram Cantonment, and Thiruvedhi of Mangadu, who had come to visit a relative in the area, fell ill and complained of stomach pain, vomiting and diarrhoea-like symptoms. They died on their way to the Chromepet Government Hospital. Varalakshmi, 88, too died of similar symptoms.

Several residents complained of stomach pain and vomiting, and were admitted to the hospital. The Health Department said 34 persons from the area, who were suffering from diarrhoea, visited the hospital in the past three days as outpatients.



Veiled: An anti-smog gun spraying water as a pollution control measure, at Ring Road in New Delhi on Thursday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA (SEE ALSO: PAGE 7)

Western U.P. farmers refuse to budge despite 'police pressure'

Samridhi Tewari
GREATER NOIDA

As farmers camping at Shambhu border between Punjab and Haryana stood firm in their resolve to march towards Delhi on Friday, their counterparts from western Uttar Pradesh on Thursday alleged that police personnel in large numbers have been deployed in their villages and barricades placed at several points to restrict their movement. Ajab Singh, a farmer from Jun-

pat village in Greater Noida, claimed that a team of 10 policemen has surrounded his village, not allowing anybody to leave. "I am a heart patient, and the police officials have been knocking at my door saying they are here to arrest me. They are pressurising us to end the protest," Mr. Singh said.

The farmers from western Uttar Pradesh have been on protest since Monday over several demands, including higher compensation for the land acquired

by the State government. At a *mahapanchayat* organised by the Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) at Pari Chowk on Wednesday, they decided to continue their stir.

Ground 'Zero Point'
Farmers associated with the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) said they plan to converge at Zero Point on the Yamuna Expressway on Friday as a result of heavy police bandobast in neighbouring areas and villages of Greater Noida.

SKM leaders accused the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister of misusing the police to trespass into houses and detain farmers in the name of house arrest. Dismissing the claims, Additional CP (Law & Order) Shivhari Meena said the police visit villages to understand the problem and initiate a resolution. He added that claims made regarding arrests or detention from villages are incorrect.

Mr. Meena said at least 34 people, who were going from Zero Point to Rashtri-

ya Dalit Prerna Sthal in Noida to hold protest without taking permission, were detained on Wednesday night and later released.

On Thursday, around 120 farmers, including women, gathered at Pari Chowk. "To put pressure on farmer leaders, their family members are being kept in police stations. The police have detained the farmers who were peacefully protesting. They were released only after the *mahapanchayat*," one of them said.



On vigil: The protesting farmers have alleged that family members are being kept in police stations to put pressure on farmer leaders. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



Chief Minister

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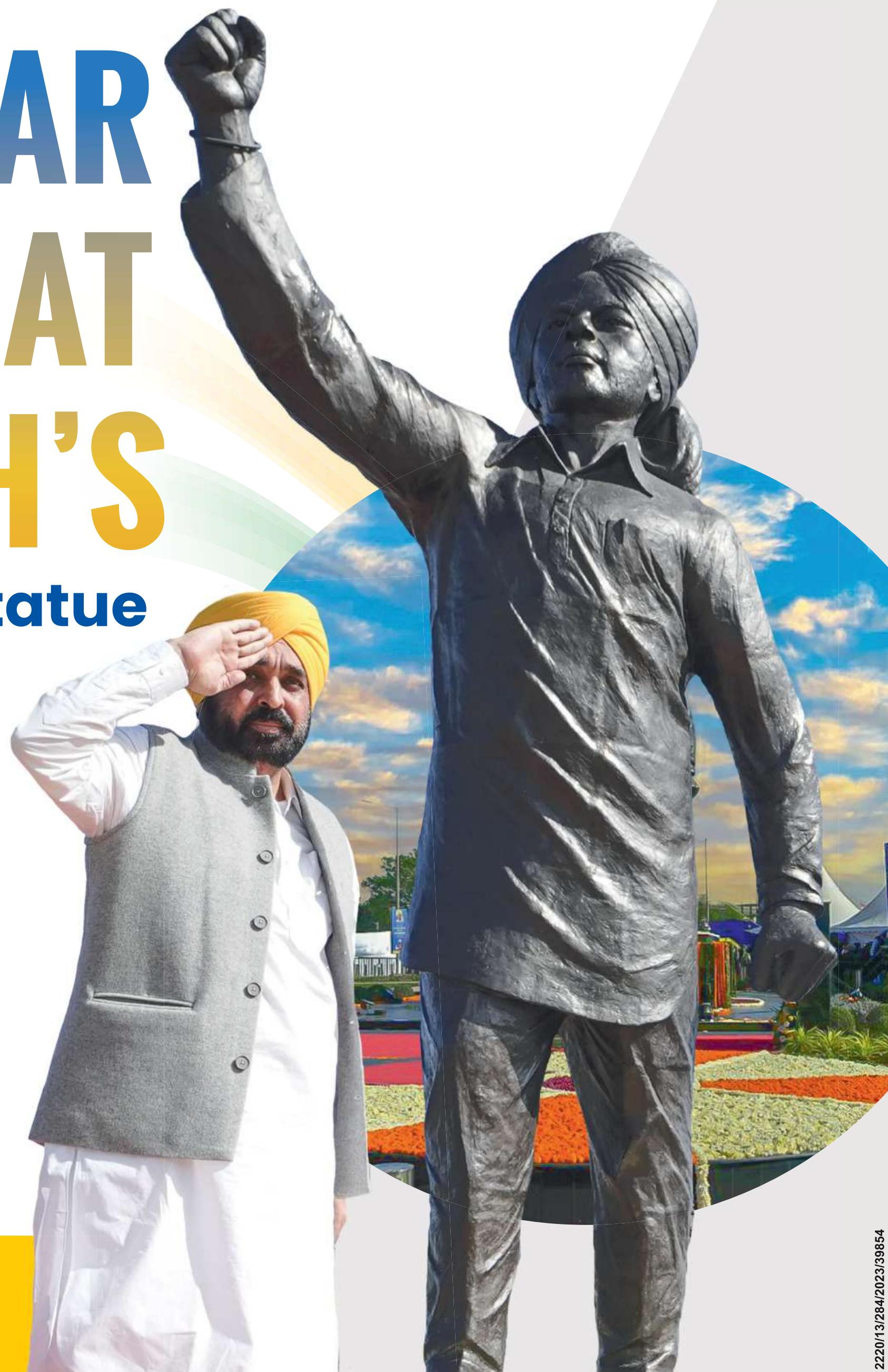
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Bhagwant Singh Mann

Chief Minister, Punjab

Information and Public Relations Department, Punjab

Atishi orders probe into death of schoolboy

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Atishi on Thursday ordered a magisterial inquiry into the death of 12-year-old Prince, who died in his school, Chinmaya Vidyalaya, on December 3, and sought a report in three days. The police have apprehended one of his classmates who allegedly fought with Prince over their shoulders brushing against each other.

Timings DELHI	
FRIDAY, DEC. 06	
RISE 07:01 SET 17:25	
SATURDAY, DEC. 07	
RISE 07:01 SET 17:25	
RISE 11:55 SET 23:15	
SUNDAY, DEC. 08	
RISE 07:02 SET 17:25	
RISE 12:28 SET 00:00	
Delhi Weather	
max Delhi City	min 28 12
Safdarjung	28 12
Palam	26 12

Delhi Palam Today
26°C The dry weather to continue. Mist and haze will occur in very cool morning and night. Day will be comfortable light to moderate breeze.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
25°C Surface wind speed is likely to increase. Morning and night hours very cool. Day will be comfortable. Dry weather to prevail.
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THE HINDU
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AAP prevented talks on public interest issues in the Assembly, says BJP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

LoP Vijender Gupta alleged that his microphone was switched off when he raised questions in the House

lowed to discuss public interest issues, and those demanding a discussion were evicted from the House by marshals," said Mr. Gupta while addressing a press conference.

"The AAP government neither wants to listen to people's issues raised by the Opposition nor wants to allow a discussion on them," said the LoP.

He added, "When I raised the issue of the assault on (Rajya Sabha member) Swati Maliwal, the ruling party disrupted the session, leading to its adjournment."

The two-day winter session was held on November 29 and December 4.

Delhi poll: AAP deploys 5,000 all-woman teams

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

tencies with women voters to talk about the welfare schemes of the AAP government.

Of the city's 1.47 crore voters, 67 lakh are women, according to data published by the Election Commission in January this year.

In 2020, the Delhi government launched the free bus ride scheme for women commuters. In March this year, AAP announced the Mukhyaman-

Triple murder case: accused sent to 3-day police custody

Police recover weapon used in the crime and suspect's bloodstained clothes; Tanwar's browsing history shows he was looking for ways of committing murder, including using insecticide: officer

Alisha Dutta
NEW DELHI

Arjun Tanwar, who was arrested a day earlier for murdering his father, mother, and sister, was remanded in police custody for three days by a city court on Thursday. The 20-year-old suspect, a former State-level boxer, allegedly slit the throats of Rajesh Kumar, 51, his wife Komal, 46, and daughter Kavita, 23, at their home in south Delhi's Neb Sarai on Wednesday morning. He has been booked under Section 103(l) (murder) of the BNS.

The Delhi police on Thursday said they had recovered the murder weapon – an Army knife belonging to Rajesh, an ex-serviceman – as well as the bloodstained clothes of the accused.



Police officers near the house in Neb Sarai where Arjun Tanwar allegedly killed his father, mother, and sister. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

"During interrogation, Arjun told us that he had disposed of the clothes in Sanjay Van, where he used to go for morning walks, soon after committing the crime," an officer said, adding that the evidence was recovered after Tanwar was taken to the forest area to identify the spot where he had concealed the blood-soaked clothes.

The knife was recovered

books and movies, different ways of committing murder. "His browsing history had multiple images of throat slitting and information using chemicals, such as Celphos (an insecticide), for poisoning," said the officer.

Earlier in the day, a trial court, before which the police had moved a plea seeking the legislator's custody, dismissed the custody application and asked the law enforcement agency to approach the court authorised to hear cases of serving MPs and MLAs.

Special judge Kaveri Bawej of the Rouse Avenue Courts remanded Mr. Balyan in judicial custody while stating the need for further arguments regarding Delhi Police's petition seeking the accused's custody for 10 days.

The case will now be heard on Friday.

Naresh Balyan sent to judicial custody in MCOCA case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday sent Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Naresh Balyan, arrested under the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) case, to one-day judicial custody.

He added, "We have gone through all his social media accounts and messaging apps and interrogated people with whom he spoke frequently."

The police said the suspect had started planning the murders a few days ago when his father "thrashed him" in front of some outsiders. "That was the tipping point for him. He was also angry after finding out that his father was planning to bequeath all his property to Tanwar's sister," Joint Commissioner of Police (South) Sanjay Kumar Jain said on Wednesday.

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• JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Nafajgarh 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

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Ajit Pawar breaks record as Dy. CM, but his quest for top job remains unfulfilled

NCP chief claws his way back after the Lok Sabha poll debacle after being labelled 'weakest link' in Maharashtra's BJP-led Mahayuti coalition; proves himself to his new allies by wiping out his uncle's rebels; Baramati strongman has not given up hope of becoming CM: NCP leaders

Abhinav Deshpande

MUMBAI

Ajit Pawar took oath as Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra for a record sixth time on Thursday, even though the top job in the State still remains elusive.

Six months ago, the 65-year-old Nationalist Congress Party chief was being labelled the "weakest link" in the State's ruling BJP-led Mahayuti coalition following a poor performance in the Lok Sabha election, winning just one seat. Now, Mr. Ajit Pawar has emerged as the "strongest player", securing 41 Assembly seats while almost wiping out his uncle Sharad Pawar's rebel faction, NCP (SP), which managed to win only 10 seats.

Playing second fiddle

Mr. Ajit Pawar holds the record for most appointments to this position since its creation in 1978, and has played second fiddle to CMs across the political spectrum, from the Congress to the BJP, and both sides of the Shiv Sena split. This is his second stint as



(From left) NCP leader Ajit Pawar puts his signature after taking oath as Deputy CM; Shiv Sena's Eknath Shinde and BJP's Devendra Fadnavis greet attendees; and Ranveer Singh and Vidya Balan at the swearing-in ceremony at Azad Maidan in Mumbai on Thursday. EMMANUEL YOGINI

deputy to the BJP's Devendra Fadnavis.

The BJP, with its strong ties to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and the 'Hindutvavadi' Shiv Sena have traditionally aligned with right-wing values, while Mr. Ajit Pawar, who rebelled against his uncle, has historically championed secular and progressive ideals.

The Pawar brand of politics, inspired by 'Shahu, Phule, Ambedkar', is deeply rooted in the State's poli-

tical and social fabric and aligned with the Congress to counter the BJP and the Shiv Sena. After the Lok Sabha election this year, Mr. Ajit Pawar found himself in a difficult position with his new allies.

'Strategic silence'
Despite this, the NCP president maintained a 'strategic silence' for over five months right until the Assembly election results were announced when the Mahayuti coalition secured

a commanding majority of 230 out of the 288 seats in the State Assembly.

Mr. Ajit Pawar was elected as MLA from the family bastion of Baramati for the eighth time, defeating his nephew Yugendar Pawar of the NCP (SP).

Despite climbing the ranks in Maharashtra politics and holding multiple stints as Deputy Chief Minister, his aspiration to become Chief Minister remains unfulfilled.

However, NCP leaders

believe the Baramati strongman has not given up. "His ultimate goal is to become Chief Minister. It hasn't happened this time, but we will wait for it, as he has waited all these years," said a senior party leader.

While Mr. Sharad Pawar is often hailed by his supporters as "the best Prime Minister India never had", Mr. Ajit Pawar is determined not to be remembered as "the best Chief Minister Maharashtra never had", the leader said.

Historic win due to collective efforts: Modi

With the BJP's Devendra Fadnavis being sworn in as Maharashtra Chief Minister once again, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Thursday declared that the "Shinde era is over" as the BJP has "tossed him aside", in a jibe against the outgoing CM and his one-time party colleague.

"The fact is that Eknath Shinde's two years of Chief Ministerial era is over, and he will never become Maharashtra's CM again. BJP has used him to the fullest when he was needed. Now that his requirement is over, he has been tossed aside," Mr. Raut told journalists. "[The BJP] can even break the Shiv Sena that he [Mr. Shinde] formed after splitting the party. This is what the BJP does; this has been their line in politics. With every party they work with, once they are done using them, they break, divide, and destroy the core of the same party," he alleged.

Tension in Mahayuti'

Mr. Raut also took a dig at the ruling Mahayuti's delay in forming the government. "BJP won a landslide



Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut speaks to mediapersons in Mumbai on Thursday. PTI

victory in the election and still they could not form the government for 15 days, nor they could announce the name of the CM. This clearly reflects there is a tension and conflict within the alliance as well as the party leaders. All these issues will slowly start reflecting. In fact, the issues will start emerging from Friday," he said.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi said the BJP has a track record of stabbing its allies in the back. Congress's Maharashtra in-charge Ramesh Chemnithala criticised the government for its delay in allotting portfolios among its Ministers. This indecisiveness is mocking the people of Maharashtra who voted for them, he said.

RELATED REPORTS
» PAGE 14

U.P. CM draws parallel between Sambhal and Bangladesh, attracts Opposition ire

Mavank Kumar

LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday said the "nature and DNA of what happened in Ayodhya 500 years ago, and now in Sambhal and Bangladesh, are the same".

Speaking at the inauguration of the Ramayan Mela in Ayodhya, the Chief Minister said, "What a general of Babur did in Ayodhya 500 years ago, the same thing happened in Sambhal, and the same is happening in Bangladesh."

Hinting at the alleged atrocities committed on Hindus in the neighbouring country, Mr. Adityanath cautioned against dismissing the developments in Bangladesh as irrelevant to India.

The Chief Minister's remarks drew a sharp reaction from Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, who said Mr. Adityanath should first get his DNA



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath offering prayers at Ram Janaki temple in Ayodhya on Thursday. PTI

checked.

Talking to reporters, Mr. Yadav said, "I don't know how much science the Chief Minister knows and how much biology he has studied... But I want to request him that he should not talk about DNA... This talk of DNA does not suit him [Adityanath]. Being a yogi in saffron robes, this language should not be used."

Asked to comment on Mr. Adityanath's remarks, Congress MP Tariq Anwar said his language doesn't behove a Chief Minister. "It is surprising and saddening that despite being a big leader of the BJP and the Chief Minister of a large State like Uttar Pradesh, he uses such language which is aimed at dividing people," Mr. Anwar said.

Another Congress MP,

Mohammad Javed, expressed sadness over the developments in Bangladesh and also in Sambhal, where violence erupted last month, leading to the killing of four Muslim men, over a court-monitored survey of a local mosque.

Security tightened

Officials, meanwhile, said security has been tightened in the district on Thursday, a day before December 6 – the day Babri mosque in Ayodhya was demolished by right-wing forces in 1992.

They added that the administration will put up posters of those involved in the November 24 violence in Sambhal even as the police estimated the arson and vandalism damage to be worth more than ₹1 crore.

"We will put up posters of those involved in Sambhal violence... in all likelihood today," District Magistrate Rajender Pensiya said.

Raising the issue of attacks on Hindus in Bangla-

Amid protests over incidents in Bangladesh, Suvendu calls for 'Hindu unity' in Bengal

Shiv Sahay Singh

KOLKATA

Developments in Bangladesh continued to dominate political discourse in West Bengal on Thursday with about 50 Hindu right-wing organisations along with senior Bharatiya Janata Party leaders holding a gathering at Esplanade and calling for "Hindu unity" in the State.

Addressing a gathering at Kolkata's Rani Rashmoni Road, Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari said that unlike other States in India, Hindus are not united in West Bengal. "In Uttar Pradesh Hindus have united under Yogi Adityanathji, in Haryana Hindus have united and now in Maharashtra, the land of Chhatrapati Shivaji, Hindus have united," the BJP leader said.

The gathering was joined by Kartik Maharaj, the monk of Bharat Sevashram Sangha who has been actively raising the issue of attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh. The monk called upon all political parties in Bengal to come together to protect Hindus.



BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari

des, Mr. Adhikari stressed that Hindus of West Bengal should learn lessons from the atrocities in the neighbouring country. He said the country needs a dedicated 'Samana Board' to safeguard the rights and interests of Hindus.

Mr. Adhikari, who led protests at Petrapole on Monday, said he will lead similar protests at the Ghatshila border on December 10.

The gathering was joined by Kartik Maharaj, the monk of Bharat Sevashram Sangha who has been actively raising the issue of attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh. The monk called upon all political parties in Bengal to come together to protect Hindus.

Attack on Badal shows rise of the radical fringe'

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The assassination attempt on former Punjab Deputy Chief Minister and Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Badal within the precincts of the Golden Temple points to the rise of the radical fringe, former Law Minister Ashwani Kumar said on Thursday.

In a statement condemning the incident, Mr. Kumar said, "The rise of the radical fringe and the audacity of fundamentalists to disturb the hard-won peace in Punjab poses a grave political and administrative challenge."

To politicise every event regardless of its merit demonstrates the smallness of our politics in times that demand a largeness of vision and broad political consensus on vital national issues," the former Law Minister added.

HC grants two-week interim bail to Sengar

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday granted a two-week interim bail on medical grounds to expelled BJP leader Kuldeep Singh Sengar, currently serving life term for raping a minor in U.P.'s Unnao in 2017.

The court suspended the sentence in the meantime and directed Sengar's medical evaluation at AIIMS, Delhi, besides ordering him to remain in the national capital.

The court sought a report from the AIIMS medical board and posted the matter for December 20.

Sengar is also serving a 10-year jail term in connection with the custodial death of the rape survivor's father and a plea for interim bail in the case is still

pending before a different Bench of the High Court.

He had sought the suspension of the sentence for two months on the ground of ailments such as cataract, arguing it required urgent attention.

The court was informed that Sengar suffered from "retinal detachment", which required him to travel to a hospital in Chennai, besides getting treated for other complications in Lucknow.

The plea was opposed by the rape survivor's lawyer and the CBI.

The counsel for the rape survivor said Sengar should not be released as it would pose a threat to her safety and security.

The CBI counsel said treatment could be given to Sengar in Delhi while he continued to be in custody.

From negatives to theatres: Kolkata film festival to screen restored Indian classics

Moyurie Som

KOLKATA



Eminent dancer Dona Ganguly performs with her troupe at the inauguration of the Kolkata International Film Festival. FILE PHOTO

Odia, and Manipuri, were produced between 1969 and 1990. They will be screened at KIFF at two venues – Nandan II and Radha Studio – between October 5 and 10.

These cult classics are a crucial part of our film heritage, and digital restoration enables us to experience them on the big screen in good picture quality," Goutam Ghose, renowned filmmaker and chairperson of the 30th KIFF, told *The Hindu*.

The digital restoration of these six films was done at Shivendra Singh Dungarpur's Film Heritage Foundation, Martin Scorsese's

World Cinema Project, and the joint restoration facility of the National Film Development Corporation and the National Film Archive of India.

Film festival trend'

"Screening restored classics has become a trend across film festivals like Cannes and Venice. The restoration of celluloid is very important, the new generation should know about our film classics," Mr. Ghose said.

Along with restored classics, the 30th KIFF will also screen certain cult films, like Utpalendu Chakraborty's 1983 film *Chokh* (The Eyes), from their original 35-mm negatives. *Chokh* is set to be screened at Radha Studio on December 6 at 6.30 p.m.

BJD leaders urge CWC to suspend dam work

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

last two days to present a memorandum outlining their concerns.

The key issue raised by the delegation was the alleged changes to the flood discharge capacity of the project and the consequent backwater submergence.

After meeting senior officials of the CWC, which included its Chairperson, the BJD leaders held a press conference in New Delhi's Constitution Club of India.

'Not satisfied'
Rajya Sabha MP Sasmit Patra said, "We are not very satisfied with the feedback received so far. No government authority or official could give us any clarity on the impact of the project on the upstream State of Odisha and its people."

व्यवस्था परिवर्तन से आमनिर्भर बनता हिमाचल

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- हिमाचल प्रदेश दूध पर न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य (MSP) देने वाला देश का पहला राज्य बना।
- गाय के दूध पर न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य 32 रुपये से बढ़ाकर 45 रुपये और भैंस के दूध पर 47 रुपये से बढ़ाकर 55 रुपये प्रति लीटर किया गया।
- कांगड़ा जिले के ढगवार में 1.5 लाख लीटर प्रतिदिन की क्षमता वाले ऑटोमैटिक दूध प्रसंस्करण एवं दूध उत्पाद प्लांट का कार्य जारी।
- दत्तनगर में 50 हजार प्रतिदिन क्षमता वाला नया मिल्क प्रोसेसिंग प्लांट शुरू, 20 हजार दूध उत्पादकों को मिल रहा लाभ।
- कूल्लू, नाहन और नालागढ़ में 20–20 हजार लीटर प्रतिदिन क्षमता वाले नये मिल्क प्रोसेसिंग प्लांट लगाए जाएंगे।
- ऊना व हमीरपुर में मॉर्डन टैक्नॉलॉजी के मिल्क चिलिंग प्लांट स्थापित होंगे।
- दूध उत्पादन बढ़ाने के लिए 500 करोड़ रुपये की हिम गंगा योजना शुरू।
- पिछले दो वर्षों में गरीबी रेखा से नीचे रह रहे लगभग 26,000 पशुपालकों को 50 प्रतिशत अनुदान पर गर्भित पशु आहार उपलब्ध करवाया गया।
- मिल्कफेड पशुपालकों से हर रोज लगभग 2 लाख लीटर दूध खरीद रहा है।
- एक नई पहल के अंतर्गत ऊना जिले में पायलट बेस पर बकरी पालकों से 70 रुपये प्रति लीटर की दर से बकरी का दूध खरीदा जा रहा है।



जारीकर्ता : निदेशक, सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, हिमाचल प्रदेश

Orissa HC grants bail to four, tells them to plant trees

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

In an environment-friendly initiative, the Orissa High Court has granted bail to petitioners in four separate cases but told them to plant trees as part of bail conditions.

Justice S.K. Panigrahi on Wednesday granted bail to petitioners accused in cases of murder, attempt to murder and rape. Soumya Ranjan Palei, charged with attacking a person, had moved the court for bail. While granting relief, Justice Panigrahi said, "The petitioner shall plant 50 saplings around his village on government, community, or private land, if it is in the possession of the petitioners." Similarly, Purnamaya Nayak, accused of sexually exploiting a woman, was given bail with a similar precondition of planting 50 saplings around his village.

SC eases anti-pollution curbs in NCR, tells CAQM to keep guard up

Court suggests incorporating GRAP-III along with GRAP-II precautions after AQI levels remain below 300 for almost a week, says special protocol needed to counter farm fires, waste burning; DoE asks all schools in Delhi to resume physical classes

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday relaxed emergency anti-pollution restrictions under stage four of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP-IV) to the less rigorous GRAP-II level in the National Capital Region (NCR).

But a Bench of Justices A.S. Oka and Augustine George Masih asked the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) to keep its guard up while emphasising that GRAP-III must kick in if the air quality index (AQI) deteriorated to 350 and to restore GRAP-IV in case the toxicity crossed 400 in the com-

ing winter days. In fact, the court suggested a hybrid system incorporating GRAP-III along with the GRAP-II precautions.

AQI below 300
The decision of the apex court to relax GRAP levels was based on submissions made by the CAQM, represented by Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, that AQI levels had improved below the 300 mark since November 30 owing to several meteorological conditions.

"There are a lot of fluctuations in the AQI levels. We have to look at how Delhi behaves in November and December. Our geography and meteorological conditions do not permit us to aspire to be in



Bird's-eye view: A drone visual of Lajpat Nagar in New Delhi covered in mist on Thursday. ANI

European status," Ms. Bhati submitted.

But the court drew attention to phenomena like farm fires and garbage burning, pointing out that a specialised protocol needed to be framed with the help of the Indian Space Research Organisation for countering them. The court listed the case

GRAP-IV even "disruptive".

Following the court decree, CAQM issued an order lifting stages III and IV of GRAP with "immediate effect". Actions under stages I and II of GRAP will continue to be in effect.

Meanwhile, the Directorate of Education (DoE) on Thursday issued a circular announcing the resumption of physical classes in all government and private schools in Delhi.

"All government, government-aided, and unaided recognised private schools under the DoE, NDMC, MCD, and Delhi Cantonment Board are required to conduct all classes in physical mode with immediate effect," read the circular.

Friction between L-G and CM grows in J&K

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

With the elected government completing 50 days in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, the friction between Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha is only growing stark over a range of issues, including the appointment of the Advocate General (A-G) and transfers of officers of key departments.

Senior officials in the government told *The Hindu* that Mr. Abdullah's decision to allow A-G D.C. Raina to continue to represent J&K in the courts could not materialise because of opposition from Raj Bhavan.

Appointed by the then Governor Satya Pal Malik in November 2019, Mr. Raina resigned from the post on October 19, days after Mr. Abdullah and his Council of Ministers took over the reins in J&K. However, the

UT sees tussle over appointment of Advocate General, transfers of officers of key departments

CM decided to continue with Mr. Raina and turned down his resignation. Mr. Raina had confirmed the development and said he was "conveyed properly by the top competent authority to continue to serve as Advocate General". He was, however, conspicuously missing from the court.

Mr. Abdullah also reportedly took exception to the recent transfers made by the L-G in the administration. Days ago, four officers, including three IAS officers and a J&K Administrative Service officer, were transferred.

The L-G has the mandate to transfer only IAS officers in the administration, government sources said.



CPI(M) State secretary M.V. Govindan inaugurates a protest by the LDF near Raj Bhavan in Thiruvananthapuram. S. MAHINSHA

LDF activists stage stir over 'denial of Central govt. aid' to Wayanad

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Hundreds of Left Democratic Front (LDF) activists staged marches and sit-in outside Union government offices across Kerala on Thursday in protest against "denial of federal aid" to provide vital help to landslides-hit areas in Wayanad.

The landslides that struck the hill district on July 30 claimed over 200 lives, left several people missing, injured hundreds, and destroyed thousands of properties. Senior leaders, MLAs, MPs, and former MPs joined the protest in various places.

Mr. Govindan said it was incumbent on the Centre to disburse aid.

"Kerala is not holding out its arms for alms from the Centre. It is demanding that the Centre honour its Constitutional obligation and honour the State's inalienable right to disaster compensation," Mr. Govindan said.



The court directed investigators not to arrest BRS MLA T. Harish Rao.

BRS MLA gets relief in 'phone tapping' case

Marri Ramu
HYDERABAD

Former Minister and Bharath Rashtra Samithi MLA T. Harish Rao got relief in the telephone tapping case registered by the Hyderabad Police, with the High Court directing investigators not to arrest him.

Justice K. Lakshman of the High Court, however, said the police can go ahead with the investigation into the case in which Sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy), 386, 409 and 506 read with Section 34 of IPC and Section 66 of IT Act were invoked. This criminal case of telephone tapping is different from the earlier telephone tapping case registered by the

police in which four police officers were arrested while one was accused of fleeing to the U.S.

The fresh case was registered following a complaint lodged by one G. Chakradhar Goud alleging that his mobile phone conversation was eavesdropped by the police at the instance of T. Harish Rao, the then Minister.

Sidharth Luthra, senior counsel who was engaged by the State, contended that it was a serious offence under Telegraph Act.

Former Additional Advocate General J. Ramchander Rao, appearing for T. Harish Rao, contend-

ed that the petitioner had been levelling allegations against Mr. Rao since 2021.

"पूज्य बाबासाहेब भारतीय संविधान के शिल्पकार होने के साथ-साथ सामाजिक समर्पण के अमर पुरोधा थे, जिन्होंने शोषितों और वंचितों के कल्याण के लिए अपना जीवन समर्पित कर दिया। आज उनके महापरिनिवारण दिवस पर उन्हें मेरा सादर नमन।"

- नरेन्द्र मोदी

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SPOTLIGHT



Trees covered in dust from stone-crushing machines, near Khatoli Ahir village, in Haryana's Mahendragarh district. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Living under a dust blanket

In Haryana's Mahendragarh, stone cutting and crushing in the Aravali mountain range impacts health and agricultural output. Ashok Kumar reports on the sufferings of the people who live in close proximity to the crushing machines. Their homes and crops are covered in dust so thick it looks like snow

On the outskirts of Khatoli Ahir village in Haryana's Mahendragarh, an old banyan tree, spread with age, is covered with a thick layer of fine grey dust. Not far from the State boundary of Rajasthan, the tree that appears snow-clad, bears silent testimony to the ordeal of thousands of families across a dozen villages in the region. Here, people are constantly exposed to the harmful dust and noise emanating from the scores of stone crushers running with never a pause.

Seated on a cemented platform below the tree, 60-year-old Gyarsi Lal, diagnosed with tuberculosis a year ago, is resigned to his fate. "Court mein case jeet liya. Maml Supreme Court tak chala gaya. Phir bhi band nahi hue. Hamari kya aukat hai. Hum to mazdoor hain; hamari koi nahi manega (We won the case in court. The matter went to the Supreme Court, yet these units did not shut down. What is our status? We are labourers; no one will listen to us)," says Lal.

His family is among the 80-odd Scheduled Caste families in Khatoli Ahir, who were allotted free plots by the Haryana government on panchayat land on the outskirts of the village in 2012. This was under the Indira Gandhi Awas Yojana, a social welfare programme to give marginalised communities free land.

Of these, only about 20 families shifted into houses they constructed on these plots. They are the worst hit with a crusher unit across the road from where they stay. "This crusher was set up in 2019. It has been five years. It stops only when there is a power cut. We keep the doors and windows shut, but the dust enters through the cracks. Everything inside, even the utensils in the kitchen, remain covered with layers of dust. We don't just breathe this dust in, but also end up eating it," says Suresh Kumar, sitting next to Lal. He claims that tuberculosis has claimed two lives. "Sab dus saal pehle mar jayenge (Everyone will die 10 years earlier)," he adds.

After villagers went to court in 2018 against the crushers, Mahendragarh district officials submitted a joint committee report before the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in 2019, saying there were 158 crushers in the district. "Following this, the NGT ordered closure of 72 units. But another report two years later said there were 162 crushers with 107 in Nangal Choudhary sub-division," says Tejpal Yadav, 32, who belongs to Khatoli Jaat village, but works as a teacher of mathematics at an IIT coaching institute near Jaipur in Rajasthan.

He has been fighting against the crushers both inside and outside court for almost a decade. He says that there were only three or four villages with crusher zones in Nangal Choudhary in 2015, but by 2021 they were spread across 10 villages.

The Regional Officer of the Haryana State Pollution Control Board, Mahendragarh, Krishan Kumar, claims there are currently only 81 stone crushers in the district. "Many crushers have shut down in compliance with the Supreme Court and NGT orders," he says, adding the department also shut some down for violations. He says there are regular inspections and units are fined if they are found not complying.

Health hazard

Vijender, 55, another resident at the settlement, got a skin allergy three years ago, like many fellow villagers. "I sneeze all day. My eyes are always watery and my nose is constantly running. This crusher was running last night as well despite the Supreme Court ban due to high pollution levels in NCR," he says. Up to 55% of Haryana falls un-

I often get to hear that the deceased, mostly the elderly, had a breathing issue. If a proper medical check-up is done, I am sure more of the population in the region will be diagnosed with tuberculosis

TEJPAL YADAV
Teacher-activist

der the National Capital Region that experienced high pollution levels in November, with GRAP IV restrictions kicking in, putting a pause on running diesel-fuelled vehicles and construction-related activity.

People across ages at the settlement show symptoms of dust-related ailments, including laboured breathing, itchy eyes, and skin allergies. Sifting through a heap of prescriptions from different hospitals, Bharat Singh, 34, says his five-year-old daughter has developed a kidney-related ailment, which doctors say could be caused by constant exposure to the harmful dust.

A daily wager, he has worn his financial resources thin to ensure the best possible treatment for her, and has been consulting paediatricians in Jaipur. "Antim also experiences difficulty in breathing after meals. She develops red spots on her skin sometimes. A couple of children from 8 to 10 years in the neighbourhood too have eye-related issues. We don't have the income and the resources to shift elsewhere," says the father.

Manisha, 27, says her two children too have developed skin allergies. "The doctor advises us to keep them away from the dust. But we have nowhere to go," says the mother.

Babli, 42, a mother of three, says she is tired of dusting and cleaning. "At least two people must clean all day long. First with a dry cloth, then with wet cloth," she says, with the women around her nodding.

Talking with her face covered with a veil, Nirmala, 37, says rising health bills have messed up their budgets and they are forced to cut all other expenses to pay for medicines and doctors' fees. "A few big landlords have made fortunes by renting out their land to these stone-crusher units. They live in palatial homes while we suffer," she says. Nirmala recalls the summer of 2023, when the women blocked the road seeking closure of the crusher unit next to their settlement, but the police threatened them and forced them to lift the dharna.

"Sagai wale aate hai aur chai peekar wapas chale jate hain. Kehte hai yahan to unki ladki mariz ho jayegi (People come with marriage proposals, but return after drinking tea. They say that their daughter will become a patient here)," quips Sunita, 45, as the women around her burst into laughter.

Stone dust everywhere

The road to Dholera, a village next to Khatoli Ahir, is dotted with trees on both sides, all co-

vered in thick layers of grey stone dust. Just a kilometre away from a stone-crushing zone with about 50 units, the round-the-clock movement of dumper trucks carrying construction material from the crushing units and mines has damaged the road, making it difficult for small passenger vehicles to ply.

Here too people say they wake up to thick layers of dust inside their houses and on the terraces, with the village surrounded by the crushers. There is a permanent haze in the air throughout the year. Many families – at least those who could get jobs – have left the village over the years, to settle in less polluted places.

Many like Rajender, 52, a farmer, sitting among a group of villagers outside a barber's shop, have no choice. "This is not possible without the patronage of the local authorities and politicians. The dumpers are overloaded and uncovered, and water sprinklers are not used at crushing sites," he says.

The Naraul Civil Surgeon's report to the Haryana State Pollution Control Board in 2021, conceded that the number of air-borne diseases almost doubled in this region within a span of nine years. While 2011 saw 21,329 cases, there were 42,309 cases in 2019, a couple of years after stone crusher units started mushrooming in Mahendragarh district, especially the Nangal Choudhary sub-division.

The report was prepared in compliance with a 2020 NGT order, after the court heard a host of petitions against stone crushers, including that of Tejpal vs State of Haryana and Others. Tejpal disputes the district health official's numbers, saying that the actual number could be far higher. He says that breathing-related ailments are a common cause of death among the elderly in this part of the district. "At condolence meets, I often get to hear that the deceased, mostly the elderly, had a breathing issue. If a proper medical check-up is done, I am sure more half of the population in the region will be diagnosed with tuberculosis," says Tejpal.

A fight for survival

Besides health and the environment, stone cutting impacts agriculture and the Aravali mountain range. People living in Nangal Choudhary, across villages, claim that the thick layers of dust settle on crops, more so in winter. It has impacted agricultural output despite the land being fertile and well-irrigated.

Ravinder Singh, president of the Mahender-

garh Crushers and Labour Association, an unregistered body representing a dozen units, denies charges of pollution and violation of environmental rules.

"Most units are run by locals and adhere to norms like sprinkling water. It is the only industry in this region and also a source of employment for people." He blames dumper trucks from crushing sites in Rajasthan that pass through this region, claiming they are overloaded. "Our share of dumpers on this route is only one-fourth, but we are blamed," he says.

Tejpal's older brother Ajay Yadav, a former journalist, chuckles. "Our fight against the powerful stone crushing and mining mafia can be made into a documentary. It is a mass movement." He talks about how the duo went from village to village to hold meetings and distribute pamphlets to create awareness.

"After every NGT order, we had to hold demonstrations to get it implemented. We were first lured with money, but when we did not budge, we got death threats," he says. He laments that this region has no history of mass movements, except Rao Tula Ram from Rewari, whose rebellion against the British was a part of the 1857 revolt. "We did not get the kind of support from people as we thought we would," says Ajay.

The duo got sucked into a long battle against the stone crushers in 2016 when Tejpal, teaching at a coaching institute in Rajasthan's Sikar, noticed the gradual mushrooming of these units and growing pollution levels in the region. "When I would come home on my motorcycle over the weekend, I began to notice the dust. I worried about the people living here. It motivated me to fight," he says.

"To begin with I mobilised people here against it. We held demonstrations, wrote to the authorities and political representatives. When all our pleas fell on deaf ears, I decided to move the NGT in 2018," he remembers. His strategy was to first get a closure order in his village and then, based on those orders, seek directions against illegally run stone crushers across the district.

In a first major victory for the duo, the NGT, in its order on July 27, 2019, based on the report of the local authorities that 72 stone crushers were not complying with the siting norms, directed the "immediate closure of all illegally operating polluting stone crushers in the area and initiation of action by way of prosecution and recovery of compensation".

In December 2020 and January 2023, the NGT observed the citizens' right to breathe fresh air. It fixed ₹20 lakh compensation against each stone crusher operating in the area on the "polluter pays" principle. "But the orders are yet to be implemented fully even as stone crushers continue to play havoc with the lives of inhabitants, their livelihood, and the environment," says Tejpal.

While the battle continues, Tejpal says his weekends and holidays are devoted to preparing for the legal battle ahead and holding *nukkad sabhas* (neighbourhood meetings) to create awareness. "A substantial chunk of my earnings also goes towards this fight, including the fee for the lawyers."

"I also contested the Assembly election from the Swaraj India party in 2019 at the insistence of political activist Yogendra Yadav, who contacted me after the NGT order in 2019 was widely reported," he says. While he lost the election, he took the opportunity to visit 140 villages, whereas earlier he had gone to about 35, to spread awareness among people in the area.



A stone-crushing machine in Haryana's Mahendragarh district, one of over 200 that causes dust to cloud the air. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



All things pop

Starting today, the NSIC Grounds will become a microcosm of everything pop culture has to offer and Comic Con-2024 is where you'll want to be

Ayaan Paul Chowdhury

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In the winter of 2011, a small but spirited group of comic book enthusiasts, artists, and 13 cosplayers came together at Dilli Haat, drawn by a shared passion for comics, collectibles, and the uncharted promise of India's first Comic Con. There was something electrifying and monumental about that meeting: a sense of community that would soon ignite into a cultural phenomenon.

Jatin Varma, founder and managing director of Comic Con India, reflects on those beginnings with nostalgia and astonishment. "I had no experience in event production," he admits. "It was just me wanting to be the geek who held India's first comic book convention."



In hindsight, perhaps it was inevitable. The global tide of pop culture, from Marvel blockbusters to the global anime boom, was already lapping at India's shores. Comic Con was simply the spark that ignited the inferno. It is hard to overstate how far India's first comic book convention has come. As its 12th edition unfolds at the NSIC Grounds in Okhla on Friday, its scale and stakes are unrecognisable from those early days. Cosplay, once a peculiar novelty, has clearly become the

beating heart of the event. From the handful participants, the event now draws thousands of cosplayers each year. For participants, it is more than merely a hobby. "When you're at a convention, you become a star," Varma explains. "Everyone wants a picture with you. You connect with like-minded fans and really show your love for your favorite character."

"Commercialisation is inevitable as you grow, but I try to be honest about the approach – finding the right balance between fan service and sustainability," says Varma. That balancing act is evident in every aspect of the

event, from its partnerships to its programming.

The online streaming platform for anime, Crunchyroll, for instance, has tapped into the anime boom sweeping the country. "Anime was quietly massive and waiting to erupt," says Akshat Sahu, senior director, Marketing at Crunchyroll. "The passion of the fans, their cosplay, and their love for characters showed us that India was ready to embrace anime in a big way."

This year, Crunchyroll is pulling out all the stops with their Solo Leveling Dome that promises an immersive experience from the global manhua phenomenon. There is also a meet-and-greet with actor Rana Daggubati, who is lending his voice to the Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu dubs of *Solo Leveling ReAwakening*. "It's the perfect blend of storytelling and star power," Sahu notes, and a step towards "making anime more engaging and accessible for all".



between Conserve India (an organisation in India that works towards tackling plastic waste). It addresses the growing textile waste problem in India by recycling handloom cotton waste fabrics and yarns and integrating them into the khadi (handspun, handwoven fabric) value chain. Then there is Where Does It Come From? (a social enterprise that creates eco-conscious clothing and textiles in the UK), Khadi London (a non-profit knowledge hub specialising in regenerative fabrics in the UK) and Khamir (a platform for the crafts, heritage and cultural ecology from Kutch, Gujarat).

Another project at the exhibition, Bequin, is an eco-friendly alternative to conventional sequins, crafted from algae and cellulose. The projects showcase innovation and heritage, too. The Darn initiative, for instance, connects consumers with skilled menders across India, which helps in preserving heritage repair techniques and extending the garment's life.

"The larger goal is to take some of these ideas to different conclaves across India where they can be pitched to potential investors and find access to funding to scale up," Alison adds.

The exhibition brings together partners such as Fashion Revolution, the Fashion, Textile and Technology Institute, University of the Arts London, and the United Nations.



Green practices A handwoven fabric by Circular Khadi and sequins made of algae and cellulose by Bequin. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Anasuya Menon

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Sequins crafted from algae and cellulose, fabric recycled from textile waste, and garments mended the traditional way are some of the climate positive initiatives showcased at an exhibition, Making Matters India and the UK, on at the British Council.

With a bouquet of projects attempting to redefine sustainability in the textile and fashion industry, it spotlights sustainable practices. From research and development to hands-on tool kits, it provides insights and practical solutions for ethical, forward-thinking fashion.

As a part of its work in the arts, the British Council has initiated joint projects between India and the UK to create an understanding of how indigenous craft can benefit from new technology to help build a more sustainable fashion and textile industry.

The idea is to provide a platform for people from the textile industry, academics, and the market to come together and discuss climate positive

outcomes, says Alison Barrett, MBE, director India, British Council. "We deepened our global partnership with collectives working towards sustainability in fashion in India to understand the craft landscape and the needs in the sector," she says.

Among the projects on show is Circular Khadi, a collaborative project

At the British Council, 17, Kasturba Gandhi Marg; Till December 9, 10am to 5.30pm.

Meteoric rise File photo of Cosplayers posing at previous editions of Delhi Comic Con. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

This year's edition promises to be a sensory overload in the best possible way. From the moment you step onto the grounds, you are swept into a whirlpool of sights and sounds: the flash of camera phones snapping cosplayers, the hum of gaming arenas, the chatter of fans swapping theories about their favourite franchises and everything else from live performances by stand-up icons like Rohan Joshi to gaming tournaments and even an exclusive *Lord of the Rings* experience by Warner Bros. India.

The international guests this year include *The New York Times* bestseller, Ryan North, and Eisner-winning artist, Jason Loo. Indian creators like Indusverse and Bakarmax will hold court alongside beloved artists like Abhijeet Kini and Prasad Bhat, creating a space where established names and rising stars rub shoulders.

For attendees, Comic Con is a place where fandoms, no matter how niche, find their tribe. It is a sanctuary for anyone who's ever felt the need to explain why they'd line up for hours to meet a favourite illustrator or debate the finer points of *One Piece* lore. And it is that very same sense of community that remains the event's secret weapon.

The best marketing for Comic Con, Varma notes, does not come from slick ad campaigns, rather from fans. Their vlogs, reels, and unfiltered reactions on social media have become the event's most authentic form of marketing. "Nothing beats seeing someone have the time of their life," Varma notes. "That excitement is contagious, and it tells our story better than any marketing campaign ever could."

At NSIC Exhibition Ground Gate 6, Okhla Phase 3 Road, NSIC Estate, Okhla Industrial Estate; December 6 to 8; 11am to 8pm; Book tickets on Insider ₹899 upward

STEP OUT



Dance fete Artistes from across India will be seen at an evening of classical dance recitals at the Manasija Samman event that celebrates the preservation and promotion of India's classical heritage. The performances include Odissi by Vinod Kevin Bachan, Arunima Ghosh and troupe; Bharatanatyam by Arohi Munshi, and Kathak by Diksha Rawat. At Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Estate; December 10; 7pm



An ode to the guru

Ganesha Natyala has been celebrating its golden jubilee with a year-long celebration, Swarna Saroja, in honour of its founder Saroja Vaidyanathan, and has successfully hosted 26 events across India and abroad. This week, 125 students, trained by the alumni, will perform a two-hour dance programme. At Tamil Sangam, RK Puram; December 10; 6pm



A visual story

Portraits of Persistence – Enduring Communities of North Bihar by Eklayva Prasad showcases the resilience of communities who face floods frequently and endure these calamities with incredible strength. At Art Gallery, India International Centre Annex, Max Mueller Marg; December 6 to December 12; 11am to 7pm

Differing figures

Group exhibition Transformative Vision explores the timeless tradition of figurative art reimagined by contemporary artists. Yashodhara Dalmia curates the works of Sudhir Patwardhan, Rameshwar Broota, and Jogen Chowdhury, among others who have explored forms and identities and expressed their external realities and inner worlds. At Threshold Art Gallery, C-221, Sarovada Enclave; Till December 14 (Monday to Saturday); 11am to 7pm



Eco-friendly fashion practices

British Council exhibition Making Matters India and the UK showcases climate positive solutions for sustainable fashion

Anasuya Menon

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Sequins crafted from algae and cellulose, fabric recycled from textile waste, and garments mended the traditional way are some of the climate positive initiatives showcased at an exhibition, Making Matters India and the UK, on at the British Council.

With a bouquet of projects attempting to redefine sustainability in the textile and fashion industry, it spotlights sustainable practices. From research and development to hands-on tool kits, it provides insights and practical solutions for ethical, forward-thinking fashion.

As a part of its work in the arts, the British Council has initiated joint projects between India and the UK to create an understanding of how indigenous craft can benefit from new technology to help build a more sustainable fashion and textile industry.

The idea is to provide a platform for people from the textile industry, academics, and the market to come together and discuss climate positive

Soma Basu
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The distance between DLF Golf and Country Club, Gurugram, and West End Greens, a posh locality in South Delhi is 17 kilometres and roughly takes 33 minutes on the Delhi-Gurugram Expressway. But during a recent trip, when property baron KP Singh was caught in the labyrinthine traffic en route, the interminable delay on the four-lane highway gnawed at him. For, this was not quite how the man from Bulandshahr, who was among those who transformed erstwhile Gurgaon into the millennium city it is today, had envisioned it.

"It was meant to be a sprawling green organised metropolis and a blueprint for the future. Not just bricks and concrete. There's been myopic thinking; our cities are crumbling under their own weight," says the developer, who saw Gurgaon's potential as a world class city three decades ago and scripted DLF's success. It frustrates him to see how the high-tech city is now besieged by drainage problems, flooding, traffic congestion, pollution and water shortage that collectively affect the quality of life.

Lessons in a book Singh, who mostly spends his time overseas, was in the capital to release his book *Why the Heck Not?*, co-authored with Aparna Jain (published by Penguin Random House). In his book he pens down the challenges he navigated to transform DLF into a real estate giant.

"Urban planning has to be done 100 years in advance with the town planners' understanding of what citizens will require and want in future. The planning process is

Blueprint for the future

Real estate baron KP Singh of DLF says visionary collaborations and urgent action plans are imperative to save our cities from falling into deeper chaos



Futuristic A view of the DLF Cyber City in Gurugram and cover of KP Singh's book. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

dictated by the people; cities should be able to stand up to scrutiny even decades later," he says.

"The local master plan should be a legacy addressing critical imperatives that make cities robust enough to weather the storms of rapid urban evolution," Singh adds. Among the issues the book discusses is how Gurugram witnessed a wild building boom without a comprehensive masterplan for the city's development. While developers built the

infrastructure inside their projects, the Haryana Urban Development Authority failed to match the unstoppable growth. It resulted in two different worlds inside and outside the super luxury homes.

"There is a need for a massive overhaul of Government policies with trickle-down prosperity at the core. Private sector experts, planners with foresight and environmentalists should innovatively collaborate and think like Edwin Lutyens who planned New Delhi a century ago," says Singh.

Much like his father-in-law, Chaudhary Raghavendra Singh, who established Delhi Land and Finance (DLF) in 1946 and transformed urban housing in the capital anticipating the influx of migrants and a surge in demand for housing post-Independence, Singh also conceived turning barren land in Haryana into thriving communities interspersed with green spaces where

people could live with contentment. Once a colony is built and equipped with roads, sewage, electricity and drainage, major upgrades for more space become impossible without pulling down the buildings. "Urban development planning is impacted when the Government is short-sighted about managing the evolving urban demand," he says.

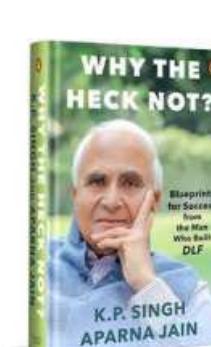
Upgrading spaces

Gurgaon was like an economic wasteland and DLF took advantage of relaxed land acquisition laws in Haryana. "I took some prudent risks, navigated policy and political challenges, created surplus and larger spaces in tune with emerging needs of the future," says Singh who led DLF's growth focussing on building a self-sustained modern city with state-of-the-art residential complexes, commercial and recreational spaces.

On the international advisory board of multinational company General Electric, he played an instrumental role in bringing GE to India. Large BPO operations spurred development making Gurugram home to numerous Fortune 500 companies. Today, the cyber city contributes to 60% of Haryana's tax revenue.

"With entrepreneurs driving growth today," says Singh, "Government bodies and public agencies have to work in tandem in off-site infrastructure development and keep track of progress toward sustainability, low carbon footprint, resilience and equity objectives."

"The shared responsibility of healthy development can no longer be ignored if we wish to leave behind a healthy atmosphere for future generations to grow."





Fresh start

Devendra Fadnavis has the opportunity to drive a new phase in Maharashtra

The return of Devendra Fadnavis as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra marks the culmination of one phase and the beginning of another in the State's politics. In 2014, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged as the single largest party in the Assembly, overtaking the Shiv Sena, its long-term ally. After a decade of political realignments in the State, the BJP has now established itself as the primary pole. This primacy has been achieved through several controversial and unethical manoeuvres but its definitive electoral mandate can usher in a phase of stability in politics and governance. Mr. Fadnavis, who played a central role in the ascent of the party in recent years, has grown in strength and stature. As the Chief Minister of a State with many resources, he is well placed to climb new heights, but has his task cut out. He will have to balance the many conflicting community and class interests in the State and within the BJP while simultaneously delivering good governance to sustain and enhance his standing. The outgoing Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has agreed to be a Deputy Chief Minister in the new government, but not before expressing his displeasure. Ajit Pawar, the other Deputy Chief Minister, is buoyant after his faction established itself as the more popular faction of the Nationalist Congress Party. Mr. Shinde and Mr. Pawar have accepted the new reality of the dominance of the BJP, and the coalition government is as stable as it can get.

There are governance challenges that await the new government. Agrarian distress and industrial expansion are two areas that require early attention. The BJP had to face allegations of discrimination by the Centre against the State in industrial promotion, and Mr. Fadnavis will have to work with BJP national leadership to dispel them. The agricultural sector requires immediate and long-term interventions in terms of investment and price management. The coalition has promised a farm loan waiver, which may be necessary, but can only provide temporary relief. Cash handouts to eligible women under the Ladki Bahin Yojana will go up from ₹1,500 to ₹2,100, if the Mahayuti coalition fulfils its campaign promise. The government will have to account for the massive expenses that fulfilling all the promises entail. The State will have to continue to attract investment and launch projects, as well as speed up ongoing ones. Maharashtra attracts migrants and its urban centres require constant upgrades. The BJP and Mr. Fadnavis have a golden chance to drive a new era of Maharashtra's progress by judiciously handling all these challenges.

A slow return

India and China must engage intensely at all levels to resolve border disputes

The government's decision to offer statements on China, *suo motu*, in both Houses of Parliament and to brief a parliamentary panel are positive but long overdue steps. Since 2020, following the Chinese transgression along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the deadly Galwan clashes, it has avoided divulging details of the negotiations with China over the actions of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), only announcing agreements on disengagement at six points of friction, as they occurred in 2021, 2022 and 2024. In a democracy, the people must not be kept in the dark on matters of national interest. But the statements by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and the briefing by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri appear to have been substantial. Mr. Jaishankar focused on three aspects of the LAC negotiations. He said India has made it clear to China that "normal" engagement in other parts of the relationship were contingent on the LAC tensions being resolved. India has adopted a policy of "continuous engagement" and a step-by-step approach involving 17 meetings of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs, 21 meetings of the Senior Highest Military Commanders meeting mechanism, and several meetings between the Foreign and Defence Ministers and Special Representatives of both countries. Finally, he said that with disengagement "fully achieved", the next priorities would be troop de-escalation and de-induction, followed by a discussion on how to manage ties in the border areas, given the problems in the last few years. Mr. Jaishankar said that for Dapsang and Demchok, "patrolling arrangements" had been agreed upon, but the resumption of patrols is still "underway". For the other areas of North and South Pangong Tso lake, Gogra and Hot Springs, disengagement had been achieved through "steps of a temporary and limited nature" – a euphemism for LAC "buffer zones".

But the government's nearly 2,500 word statement gave no indication of the *casus belli* for the Chinese actions nor any reference to when the return to "status quo ante", or to positions of 2020, can be expected. The statement laid stress on India's "national security" interests being upheld, without mentioning India's "territorial integrity" at any point. The government must now expedite efforts to build a common understanding of the LAC and to demarcate the boundary. It is important to tell the nation about the nearly 20 Modi-Xi meetings prior to 2020, in spite of which the PLA acted the way it did. The past few years should have demonstrated to the 'doves and hawks' in India's establishment that such an intensive engagement is no guarantor of peace, nor can conflicts be resolved without the kind of intense and "continuous engagement" that New Delhi and Beijing have sustained in the past few years.

States and the challenge before the Finance Commission

The Government of Tamil Nadu recently hosted the Sixteenth Finance Commission, which was chaired by Arvind Panagariya. With its distinguished experts from various fields, the Commission is uniquely positioned to address the critical fiscal challenges facing India and rectifying the skewness in the relationship between the States and the Union.

Opportunities from global changes
The decisions taken by this Finance Commission will not only shape the fiscal fate of the nation for the next five years but will also influence India's economic trajectory in the decades to come. The Sixteenth Finance Commission's work coincides with significant shifts in global economic trends. Concepts such as "friendshoring" and "reshoring" are reshaping international trade and investment patterns. These trends present a unique opportunity for India and Tamil Nadu. To seize these opportunities, the critical challenge for the Finance Commission lies in striking a balance between equitable redistribution and incentivising growth in high-performing States such as Tamil Nadu.

Since 1951, when the first Finance Commission was formed, each Finance Commission has adapted its own approach towards the fiscal challenges of its time. Every Commission has sought to achieve an equitable redistribution of resources by increasing the share of States under vertical devolution and channelling funds to less-developed States through horizontal devolution.

But there have been clear gaps between their declared objectives and outcomes; therein lies



M.K. Stalin
President of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

There needs to be a progressive resource allocation methodology for performing States such as Tamil Nadu

our case for a new and fair system of distribution of resources. For instance, while the Fifteenth Finance Commission awarded the vertical share of the divisible pool to the States as 41%, the effective devolution to States in the first four years of the award period amounted to only 33.16% of the Union's gross tax revenue. The unprecedented levying of cess and surcharges by the Union is the fundamental reason for this effective decline in devolution.

Hike States' share, incentivise performers
The States, which are near to people, bear substantial developmental expenditures, and, hence, their share should be further increased substantially. The financial strain on the States has been particularly severe due to increases in counterpart funding for centrally sponsored schemes on the one side and inadequate devolution on the other side. Hence, a fair and equitable share for States would be 50% devolution of the gross central taxes, allowing States greater fiscal autonomy in funding and implementing locally relevant schemes.

On horizontal devolution, it is evident that the redistribution policy followed for the first four and a half decades in our country has yielded limited results in driving real growth. Hence, the fundamental question would be this: should the focus be on a smaller national pie with a larger share for less-developed States or a larger national pie with equitable distribution that provides greater absolute resources for all? The answer is difficult, yet a more balanced approach would ensure a larger national economic pie, allowing for reasonable shares for less-developed States and adequate resources for progressive

States to continue their upward trajectory. This would clearly necessitate a progressive resource allocation methodology for the performing States so as to allow them to fulfil their potential to be India's growth engines.

Unique challenges in progressive States

Amidst this, it is also important to note that progressive States such as Tamil Nadu also face unique challenges in demography and urbanisation. With a median age higher than the national average, the State's capacity to generate consumption-based tax revenue is declining, even as the costs of supporting an aging population are rising. It is imperative to ensure that such States do not fall into the "middle-income trap", where growth stagnates and they "grow old before becoming rich". Next, the challenges due to urbanisation in fast-growing States merit adequate address. A State like Tamil Nadu is witnessing the fastest rate of urbanisation in the country, due to which it will have a 57.30% urban population in 2031, against the expected national average of 37.90%. The resources for fulfilling the infrastructure needs of urbanisation should be earmarked to ensure the long-term sustainability of our growth.

We should keep in mind that the mandate of the Commission goes beyond fiscal arithmetic. It is about envisioning a future where every State contributes to and benefits from the nation's progress. Whether it is fostering manufacturing, addressing urbanisation challenges, or ensuring climate resilience, the Commission's decisions will impact millions of lives and determine the trajectory of the country's destiny, to take its place among the world's leading economies.

A three-nation visit as a foray into summit diplomacy

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Nigeria, Brazil, and Guyana (November 16-21, 2024) was exceptionally well designed to achieve multiple objectives. It was India's latest foray into summit diplomacy covering three different geographic regions – Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean – and encompassed an extensive interaction on bilateral, regional and global issues. While the Prime Minister's primary purpose was to represent India at the nineteenth summit of the Group of 20 (G-20), in Brazil, his spending ample time in the two other countries enhanced the impact of this trans-continental journey. A close look at how the visit unfolded, and its outcome, is an index to understanding India's current foreign policy priorities.

Nigeria, the first leg

The halt at Abuja, Nigeria, was not a pit stop. It was a full-scale state visit to Africa's most populous nation and the fourth-largest economy. This West African nation's international heft has been increasing, as evidenced by its presence at the G-20 summit last year at India's invitation and the BRICS' invitation to join it as a partner state. Nigeria's recent chairship of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is relevant too. As two large democracies and multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and multi-linguistic societies devoted to 'unity in diversity', India and Nigeria are natural partners.

The Nigerian leadership gave ample signals to convey its appreciation of India's expanding economic and political influence and its robust Africa policy. The formal gifting of the keys of the city of Abuja to Mr. Modi, the ceremonial welcome at the State House complete with a 21-gun salute, and the conferment of a top national award were clear giveaways. The award citation referred to his leadership and stellar contribution to fostering India-Nigeria ties and noted that India has been positioned as a global powerhouse under his transformative governance.

Nigeria, an important beneficiary of India's development assistance and human-resource



Rajiv Bhatia
Distinguished Fellow at Gateway House, a former High Commissioner to South Africa, and the author of three books on foreign policy

The Prime Minister's recent visit to Nigeria, Brazil, and Guyana offers an understanding of India's current foreign policy priorities

development-related programmes, has been keen to advance the 'strategic partnership'. India seemed ready and willing. The dialogue at Abuja confirmed the two leaders' assessment that much potential existed for expanding bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, education, energy, health, culture, and people-to-people ties. New areas such as agriculture, urban transportation, renewable energy, and digital transformation were identified. Besides, they renewed their commitment to joint combat against terrorism, extremism, and radicalisation. Despite closeness at the political level, only three memoranda of understanding (MoU) were signed due probably to bureaucratic delays on the host side. Overall, the visit was a clear plus for the India-Nigeria friendship.

G-20, the centrepiece in Brazil

The nineteenth summit of G-20, comprising 19 powerful economies and two regional organisations, was hosted in Rio de Janeiro (November 18-19). It took forward the people-centric decisions adopted at the New Delhi summit by mainstreaming key perspectives of the Global South into the G-20 decision-making. The Rio Declaration highlighted the three priorities defined by the Brazilian presidency: social inclusion, sustainable development and reform of global governance institutions.

On the first issue, the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty was launched. It will serve as a platform for "mobilizing finance and knowledge sharing" on a wide scale. Regarding sustainable development, the G-20 reiterated its previous positions but failed to make headway on climate finance. On the third issue, the new achievement was the adoption of the road map for "Better, Bigger and more Effective Multilateral Development Banks", with the group calling for its early implementation. On the United Nations and World Trade Organization (WTO) reform, there was nothing new in the G-20's pronouncements.

As conflicts rage in Europe and West Asia, leaders sought peaceful resolution and focused

attention on the significant issues of economic development and climate change. While experts debated what the G-20 summit achieved, many expressed the view that it was time for the group to concentrate on implementing its decisions.

The Rio summit provided many opportunities for leaders to interact in the plenary hall and on the sidelines. Mr. Modi met several leaders, notably from the United States, Europe, and the Global South countries. The Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi to devise the next stage of the India-China rapprochement.

Guyana, as the wrap up

On the third leg, Mr. Modi travelled to Guyana, a nation of fewer than one million people in the Caribbean region. Its importance came into focus: 40% of the population is of Indian origin, a robust bilateral cooperation programme exists, Guyana has energy resources and is an important player in regional affairs. Decisions were announced to expand cooperation in diverse sectors such as energy, defence, urban development, digital collaboration, education, and food security as 10 MoUs were signed.

India and the Caribbean Community held their second summit in Georgetown, Guyana. This enabled Mr. Modi to interact with about a dozen leaders of this successful regional body. He proposed seven pillars to deepen cooperation, covering capacity building, agriculture and food security, renewable energy and climate change, innovation, technology and trade, cricket and culture, ocean economy, and medicine and health. The commonality in these pillars, he told them, was that they were all based on "your priorities and needs".

In sum, the Prime Minister's visit packed a lot within six days. It contributed to enhancing India's global standing and Mr. Modi's image and popularity abroad. Guyana's President Irfaan Ali hailed him as "a champion among leaders" who has "led incredibly". Through the expeditious implementation of the decisions announced, New Delhi could optimise the outcomes of this bold essay in diplomacy.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A surprise in South Korea

The planned impeachment motion against South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol after his shock attempt to impose martial law is an extraordinary juncture in South Korea's political history.

The short-lived development in South Korea is not merely a domestic political event. It has profound implications for global democracy. In a world grappling with creeping authoritarianism, South Korea's institutions will now face a critical test. The martial law incident raises troubling questions about the limits of executive power and the necessity of checks and balances. If South Korea's democratic institutions succeed in resolving this impasse – through legal, constitutional, and non-violent means – they will reaffirm the resilience of democracy in the face of challenges. However, any failure to address the core

concerns transparently could erode public trust in governance. As the world watches, this is an opportunity for South Korea to showcase the maturity of its democratic ethos. The message is clear: power must always remain subservient to the will of the people and the rule of law.

Pavithra M.,
Tiruchi

The short-lived attempt at declaring "emergency martial law" shows that the country's decades-old democracy remains robust. The reversal of the development is sure to have spelt big relief for many countries that have security and economic stakes in South Korea. The sudden event is a lesson for other democracies.

Gregory Fernandes,
Mumbai

The world and plastic use
It is unfortunate that despite the world

recognising the urgent need to curb plastic pollution, there was no definitive solution found at the Busan summit. The global community must face the uncomfortable truth that the only way to address the plastic crisis is to turn off production.

H.N. Ramakrishna,
Bengaluru

Though one must confess that plastic waste is one area of serious concern, there are no other alternatives to plastic which are equally efficacious. It is unlikely that all nations will concur on the total stoppage of the production and the use of plastics.

V. Lakshmanan,
Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

recognising the urgent need to curb plastic pollution, there was no definitive solution found at the Busan summit. The global community must face the uncomfortable truth that the only way to address the plastic crisis is to turn off production.

It has taken us 150 years to wake up to the perils of plastics post its creation in 1862, and may be 50 more to stop its use. Yet, man's genius would continue to drive his curiosity and innovation. Take human genetic intervention and modification, for instance. Man, who is gifted with brilliance, is also cursed with a lack of foresight. His eagerness to pander to creativity dulls his sense of equilibrium. The battle between man's own twin genius, for creation and destruction, is unending.

R. Narayanan,
Navi Mumbai

Senior citizens, rail travel
There seems to have been some debate in the Lok Sabha on the Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2024. However, an issue that needs more focus is the need to restore senior citizen concessions. The fare concession was withdrawn in 2020 and senior citizens pay fares similar to that of

other passengers. The Indian Railways may have benefited from a significant increase in revenue due to the withdrawal of the concession, but this is a move that has imposed a financial burden on senior citizens.

S. Sankaranarayanan,
Chennai

Bid on leader's life
I write this letter as a former Union Minister for Law and Justice. The attempt on the life of former Punjab Deputy Chief Minister and Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Badal outside the Golden Temple deserves our strongest condemnation. The rise of the "radical fringe" and the audacity of fundamentalists to disturb hard-won peace in Punjab pose a grave political and administrative challenge. Regrettably, the political reaction of most political parties is focused on finding fault with the State administration, which in this case is untenable.

The incident must show us the way for the unity of nationalist forces on the critical issues of peace, communal harmony and national security.

Ashwani Kumar,
New Delhi

Think biocentric
Tamil Nadu is still recovering from the devastating effects of cyclone Fengal and "World Wildlife Conservation day" (December 4) has passed. Yet, there seems to be no recollection of the crucial role that wetlands play in mitigating environmental disasters. At the turn of the current century, the city of Chennai alone had over 600 wetlands. It is time to replace the anthropocentric view with a biocentric outlook.

G. Parameswaran,
Coimbatore

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

Is Israel's war in Gaza putting the global order at peril?

PARLEY

Navtej Sarna
served as India's envoy to the United States, Israel and the United Kingdom



Trita Parsi
Executive Vice President of the Quincy Institute in Washington, and author of books on Iran-U.S. relations



A man holds the body of a child who was killed from shrapnel following an Israeli strike in Gaza. AFP

Nearly 400 days since the October 7, 2023, attacks on Israel that led to the Israeli bombardment of Gaza, West Bank, and Lebanon, more than 43,000 have been killed, mostly civilians. Despite calls by the United Nations (UN) for action to address the humanitarian crisis; an International Court of Justice (ICJ) verdict on the risk of genocide being perpetrated in Palestine; and warrants issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, and Hamas military leader Mohammed Deif for alleged war crimes, there seems no let-up in the violence. Is Israel's war in Gaza putting the global order at peril? Navtej Sarna and Trita Parsi discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Suhasini Haidar. Edited excerpts:

When it comes to global institutions, why is the world so polarised? In particular, what explains the policy of the U.S. on enforcing rules on Israel?

Trita Parsi: Put simply, this is a genocide and we can see it happening live, on our phones. *The Lancet* estimates the toll to be over 1,86,000 because 43,000 is only the number of bodies that have been counted in hospitals. So, I'm not surprised by the world's outrage in comparison to what was felt over [Russia's invasion] of Ukraine. Roughly, 700 children were killed in Ukraine through Russian bombardment over two-and-a-half years. More than 20,000 children have been killed in Gaza in about a year already. The intensity of this exceeds anything we have seen in any modern war.

What is surprising is America's reaction. The Biden administration, in particular, has violated its own regulations to allow the Israeli government to do exactly what it wants. This has never happened before. The U.S. is shifting away from supporting the same international institutions, regulations, and laws that it played a crucial role in establishing. The first shift was away from international law to what it calls the 'rules-based international order'. The rules-based order is not centred on law; it is centred on rules, and it is unclear who makes those rules. In reality, it ends up being a coalition or a willing partnership of countries, mostly allies, which is not universally accepted or applicable. This is what we are seeing when it comes to the ICC warrants as well.

Navtej Sarna: The U.S. has a sort of umbilical relationship with Israel. The U.S. has treated Israel as if it is a part of the U.S. which needs to

be protected at all costs. Now the protection is for strategic reasons, but also because Israel represents a sort of a moral burden. It is the Jewish homeland, and after the Holocaust, there is a need to protect all Israelis and not let them lose the homeland. In the view of the U.S., Israel is also a democracy, a vulnerable democracy in a very hard neighbourhood, the only democracy in West Asia. While it is unstated so far, Israel is also believed to be a nuclear power, and one that can be a deterrent against another potential nuclear power that could be Iran. Now there are some contradictions: Israel's democracy comes up against the fact that it has also been an occupying power and it is no longer vulnerable. But that has been overlooked because of the U.S.'s need to protect Israel for the other reasons I mentioned, particularly after the October 7 terror attacks by Hamas.

Israel has said the ICC warrant makes no sense because it is not a member state of the ICC, much like how India isn't, and doesn't submit to its jurisdiction. Can a warrant still be issued against Prime Minister Netanyahu?

TP: Of course it can, because Israel is conducting war crimes in another country's territory [Palestine]. This was an issue that the ICC had to address before taking up this issue.

NS: More than the ICC warrant, it is necessary to look at what has been done to international humanitarian law on the ground. Countries may react to the warrants one way or the other, but the sad part is that international humanitarian law has been flouted for months in [full] visibility of the world. Therefore, everybody has a responsibility to bear for allowing the [bombardment of Gaza to continue]. The U.S. has simply been putting up a diplomatic performance. If it really wanted to stop this, it could have.



Things are going to get worse, but there is going to be a tipping point in which a critical mass of countries will recognise that it is in their interest to have a functioning global order and effective institutions that help uphold international conventions and laws

TRITA PARSI

Why didn't India join the ICC and what is its position on this warrant now?

NS: The ICC has only 124 member states. India participated in the negotiations in the preparatory stages that led up to the setting up of the ICC in 2002. India participated in the negotiations of the Rome Statute. But it did not sign it or ratify it. India negotiates in good faith and when it finds that it can't agree to some of the terms, it doesn't sign. It is better than signing and flouting the terms. The reasons for not signing at the time were many. The Indian government felt that the ICC did not give sufficient place for national administrative and judicial institutions to deal with such crimes and it did not recognise the use of nuclear weapons and the use of other weapons of mass destruction as a crime which could be punished. It also did not recognise terrorism as a punishable crime against humanity, which, I think, was probably the breaking point for India, which had been a victim of terrorism for decades. Regarding the present ICC warrants [in the cases of both Russian President Vladimir Putin and Mr. Netanyahu], India has made it clear that it does not have much faith in the ICC.

At the UN Security Council (UNSC), there has been a logjam over votes involving Israel and Russia. Even in cases where the UNSC has passed resolutions, such as Afghanistan and Myanmar, the regimes in power are flouting directions with impunity. Are we reaching a point where the international world order, as is defined by these institutions, is unable to function? What would it take to make states including Israel compliant?

NS: It is clear that UNSC resolutions don't mean a thing anymore. In the case of Israel, the U.S. veto is used almost automatically. Naturally, Russia is going to use its veto for its own purposes, to protect itself, as it has in the past few years. The fact remains that the situation in which the UN was formed has changed from 1945. So even if the UNSC believes it can still deliver, the truth is it cannot. Every country has decided to live on a transactional, immediate

short-term policy paradigm. There are no 'value-based international relations' today. It is not as if countries did not work in national interest earlier, but the brazenness with which we see 'realpolitik' used is at a different level. Until this situation changes – and I don't see any signs of that – this kind of breakdown of international systems will probably increase.

TP: I agree that we are in a very bad situation. However, I don't think there is a collective desire not to have any rules and laws that will guide state to state conduct at this point. We can point to all of these examples in which clearly the system has not worked, but those are perhaps 5% of the situations. Of the interactions that are taking place in the world, there are many in which laws are being followed.

The UNSC absolutely needs reform. It has become a joke and at some point, it will become irrelevant. Things are going to get worse, but there is going to be a tipping point in which a critical mass of countries will recognise that it is actually in their interest to have a functioning global order and effective institutions that help uphold international conventions and laws.

Do you see Israel being brought to account internationally, or a ceasefire in Gaza any time soon, especially given the upcoming change in U.S. administration?

TP: There is a likelihood of a ceasefire because incoming U.S. President Donald Trump will take a tough position on ending the war. While he has shown little regard for global institutions, and sees transactional value in backing Israel, I think he does not want to see the U.S. get dragged into another war in West Asia.

NS: I think Mr. Trump's main motivation would be to show himself as the ultimate winner who can say he delivered on his campaign promise to stop the wars. But a ceasefire will not mean peace. Mr. Trump's next step will be to want to go back to the Abraham Accords, which will be more difficult than it was in Trump 1.0 (2017-2021). The landscape has changed considerably for the countries that signed the accords (the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, Morocco) and those that the U.S. was trying to bring on board (Saudi Arabia). There won't be a return to peace or negotiations until the heart of the problem is addressed, which is the need for the establishment of a Palestinian state.



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NOTEBOOK

'Who is winning?: The inevitable question that reporters face'

The unenviable job of prediction is best left to political pundits

Abhinay Deshpande

For a reporter, it is always exciting and challenging to cover elections. There is plenty of ground to traverse, people to talk to, clues to pick up on, issues to report, and interviews to conduct. Reporting also involves observations and listening – for instance, to chatter in various places, such as tea stalls and village kattas (where people gather for conversions) – to gauge the mood. Before the recent Maharashtra Assembly elections, I heard diverse voices and issues across constituencies. Farmers spoke about crop losses, loan waivers, and Minimum Support Price. Young voters said they were frustrated about the job situation. Women spoke about inflation. In urban pockets, religious and caste polarisation, infrastructure issues, and the popularity of a few leaders dominated conversations. But to predict an outcome is a different game altogether. Yet, the inevitable question that journalists face from colleagues, family, friends, acquaintances, and even leaders during elections is "Who is going to win?"

At some point during this election, this became a common conversation starter as though reporters are privy to some secret knowledge about the numbers game. As voting day approached, the question was posed as a challenge – a friend even said, "If you are covering the polls, you should know the outcome, right?" I had some unhelpful stock replies: "Let's wait and see" or "It is a tough fight".

None of this is surprising, especially since TV journalists often wade into the tricky waters of election forecasting. When people pose this question, the (wrong) assumption is that journalists are not the chroniclers, but architects of history. But with experience, I have learned to refrain from getting too entangled in the arithmetic of polls or predicting outcomes; that unenviable job is best left to political pundits.

A seasoned journalist once told me, "In political journalism, the wind blows

where it pleases. Our job is just to catch its scent." While we managed to catch the scent – a broad spectrum of people, including women in rural areas, seemed to favour the Mahayuti alliance – predicting the scale of victory was trickier. It is safe to say that few imagined the scale of the Mahayuti's victory. This was the case during the 2024 Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections too. Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's YSR Congress Party won merely 11 seats out of 175, leaving many journalists and analysts stunned and scrambling to explain the extent of his defeat.

The BJP got a historic mandate in Maharashtra with 132 seats, exactly 10 more than what the party had secured a decade ago. I heaved a sigh of relief for surviving another election cycle without sticking my neck out too far. But predictably, the question shifted and people began to ask, "Who is going to be the Chief Minister?" This is a relatively simpler question to tackle. In Maharashtra, the political grapevine had been buzzing for days and the name of one leader was floating about. But it is necessary to be cautious in this regard too, as politics always throws up surprises. In Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, for instance, leaders who were not in the race were suddenly sworn in as Chief Minister. Again, I did not commit to an answer.

This is not to say that there is no temptation to predict the outcome or reply with some confidence. But doing so or reporting certain events and statements too early can backfire, especially in a profession where credibility is currency. As my editor says, "is not about breaking news; it is about breaking it right."

As the dust settles on another election, I know that it is okay to not answer some questions. Reporters are not here to speculate or foresee the outcome. We are here to report stories that matter the most to the people, to provide a balanced view of the political climate, and to catch the scent as it were.

deshpande.abhinay@thehindu.co.in

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

A deluge that left a paper trail



The aftermath: The documents and certificates of students and staff at a private school, which were damaged in the rainfall brought by Cyclone Fengal, being kept in the open to dry, at the school premises at Arakandanallur in Villupuram district, Tamil Nadu. S.S. KUMAR

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 6, 1974

Ban on company donations to parties to go

New Delhi, Dec. 5: The Union Cabinet to-day decided to lift the ban on donations by companies to political parties and to raise the permissible limit.

The Companies Act would be amended for the twin purpose possibly at the next session of Parliament.

The Hindu.

It is not considered feasible to attempt this legislation at the current sitting which is to close on December 20.

The original ceiling fixed in the Companies Act (Section 293-A), prior to the imposition of the ban on donations to political parties, was Rs. 25,000 or five per cent of the average net profits of a company during the three financial years immediately preceding, whichever is greater.

Under the proposed amendment, the ceiling will be Rs. 50,000 or five per cent of the average net profits during the three preceding financial years.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DECEMBER 6, 1924

Greek refugee loan

Leafeld (Oxford), Midnight, Dec. 5: The prospectus of the Greek Government seven per cent refugee loan issued under the auspices of the League of Nations is published. It confirms details previously announced. The amount offered for subscription is seven and a half millions sterling being part of the total authorised amount of twelve millions three hundred thousand.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The delivery time of M-Now, Myntra's quick commerce service

30 minutes. Fashion and lifestyle e-commerce platform Myntra on Thursday announced the launch of its quick commerce service 'M-Now', which promises delivery within 30 minutes. In November, Myntra piloted M-Now in select pin codes of Bengaluru to test its feasibility. PTI

Srinagar's night temperature drops to season's lowest

-2.1 degrees Celsius. Cold conditions intensified in Kashmir as the minimum temperature settled below the freezing point across the valley, with a few places experiencing the season's coldest night. The city registered a low of -2.1 degrees Celsius on November 28 as well. PTI

The solar electricity contract signed by Meta with Invenergy

760 MW. Meta Platforms Inc. announced a deal to buy green credits from four large U.S. solar energy projects that will help it meet its clean electricity goals. Meta signed four contracts with energy project developer Invenergy for 760 MW of solar electricity. PTI

NHAI's special purpose vehicle to raise funds via green bonds

1,000 In ₹ crore. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) said its special purpose vehicle DME Development Ltd. will raise ₹1,000 crore through green bonds to implement climate-friendly measures on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway project. PTI

The economic losses due to natural disasters in 2024

310 In \$ billion. In a year set to be declared the hottest on record, natural disasters caused \$310 billion in economic losses globally in 2024, as climate change increasingly takes its toll, Swiss Re said on Thursday. AFP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Is Syria's Assad regime in danger?

What was the role of Russia in the Syrian civil war back in 2016? How was the Bashar al-Assad regime able to recapture Aleppo then? Who are the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and what is their connection to the al-Qaeda? How were the militants able to make such extensive territorial gains?

EXPLAINER

Stanly Johny

The story so far:

Islamist militants in Syria's northwest launched a surprise attack last week against the forces of President Bashar al-Assad and made dramatic territorial gains. The Syrian civil war, which broke out in 2011 amidst Arab Spring-inspired anti-government protests, had entered into a frozen stage in late 2016 after the regime recaptured most of its territories. There was relative calm, but no real peace in the Arab republic. With the latest clashes, peace has been broken and hot war has resumed.

How has Syria's control map changed in the span of a week?

In 2015, before Russian President Vladimir Putin decided to send troops to Syria, the Assad regime was on the brink of collapse. He had lost most of the population centres, except Damascus and the Alawite-dominated coastal cities. There were multiple rebel and jihadist factions such as the Free Syrian Army, Jabhat al-Nusra (al-Qaeda's Syria branch) and the Islamic State (IS). The IS was controlling eastern Syrian cities of Raqa and Deir Ezzor as well as the ancient city of Palmyra. Al-Nusra and the Free Syrian Army were controlling parts of Idlib in the northwest. Other militant groups were controlling Hama, Homs, and even some neighbourhoods of Damascus. In the south, Daara and Quneitra were restive.

The Russian intervention played a pivotal role in turning around the civil war. While Kurdish militias, backed by the U.S., fought the IS in the east and in the Kurdish border towns, the Syrian army, backed by Russia, Iran and Hezbollah, fought other rebel groups, recapturing lost territories. For example, by December 2016, more than a year after the Russian arrival, the regime retook Aleppo, Syria's second largest city and its commercial capital. The militants continued to hold on to Idlib when the war got frozen.

Last week, the rebels launched their offensive from Idlib. Their initial objective was to capture the western neighbourhoods of Aleppo. But the ease with which they pushed the regime forces out of Aleppo's suburbs prompted them to expand the scope of the offensive and march towards the city. Within days, they captured Aleppo. They have now entered Hama, a regime stronghold. In the northeast of Aleppo, militants have captured territories from Kurdish rebels. In less than a week, the Idlib militants have more than doubled the territories they hold.

Who are the main actors?

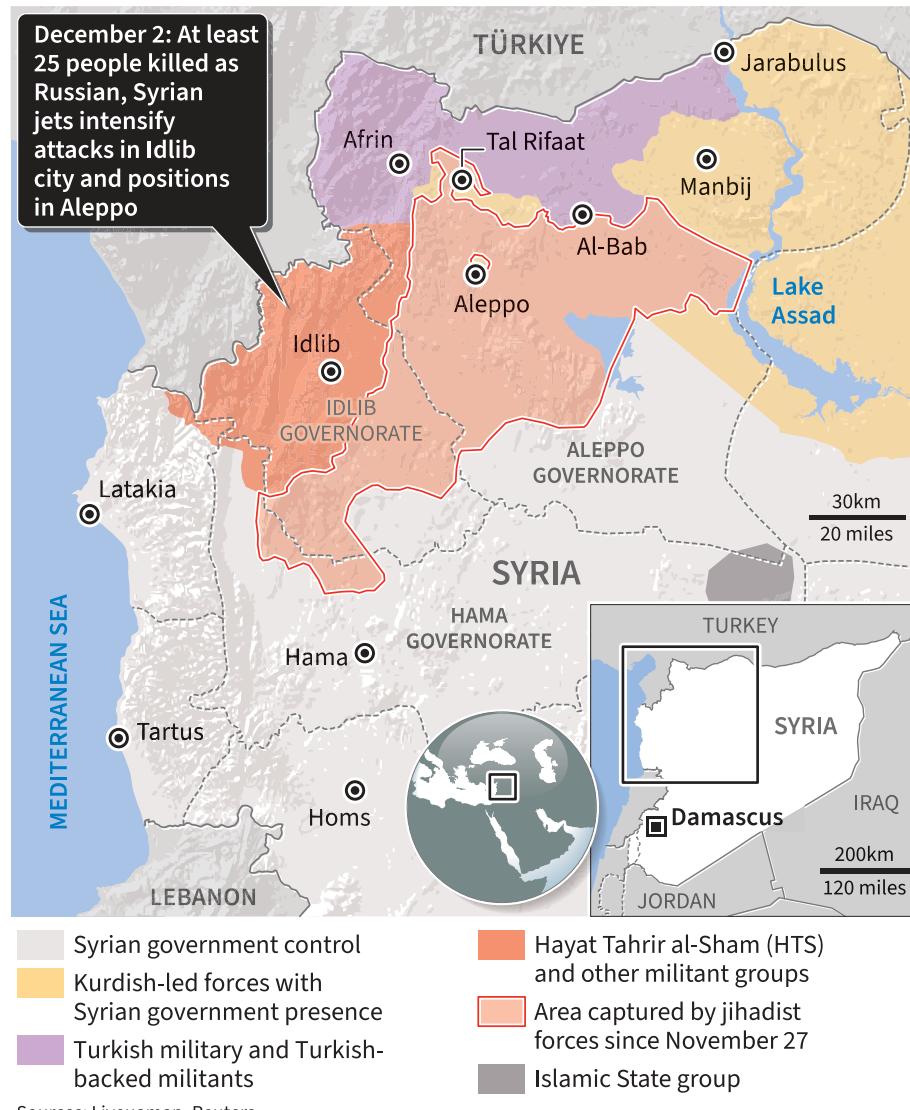
There are three main actors in Syria today. The most important actor is the regime, which is backed by Iran and Shia militias from Iraq and Russia. The second player is the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which is basically an umbrella militia group involving the People's Protection Forces (YPG), the main Syrian Kurdish militia that controls Syrian Kurdistan (Rojava). From the early stages of the civil war, the regime and the YPG had entered into a detente. The Kurds, who got their relative autonomy, and the regime forces stayed away from targeting each other. The third actor is Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the main anti-government force that is in control of Idlib. The Turkey-backed Free Syrian Army, which is today called the Syrian National Army



Dramatic offence: Militants of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham drive along a street in al-Rashideen, Aleppo province, Syria on November 29. REUTERS

The extent of the militants' advance

It took four years for Bashar al-Assad to recapture Aleppo in 2016. It took just four days for him to lose it to the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. The regime faces a full-blown civil war, with Syria getting ready for another prolonged spell of bloodshed



(SNA), is practically a sidekick of the jihadist HTS. The ongoing offensive is led by the HTS, along with the SNA.

What is HTS?

The HTS is led by Abu Mohammad al-Julani, a 42-year-old Syrian militant. Julani had moved to Iraq in his early 20s to fight the American occupation of the country (2003) and joined the al-Qaeda. When the al-Qaeda in Iraq was commanded by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Julani emerged as one of his close lieutenants. When Baghdadi decided to send a contingent of al-Qaeda jihadists across the border to Syria to fight President Assad after the civil war broke out, he chose Julani to lead the pack. He set up Jabhat al-Nusra. Later, Julani fell out with Baghdadi as the former wanted al-Nusra to join the Islamic State. Julani wanted to retain his group as an autonomous al-Qaeda branch in Syria.

When the world's focus shifted towards the Islamic State, Julani steadily built his

empire in Idlib. The Islamic State was defeated and Baghdadi was killed, but Julani emerged as the face of the anti-regime Syrian militancy. He first changed the name of al-Nusra to Jabhat Fateh al-Sham. Later, the name was changed again to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) as he sought to distance his group from al-Qaeda – though the HTS never renounced its Islamist ideology. Over the years, Julani's men built a parallel state in Idlib. Julani is a U.S.-designated terrorist, but, after establishing his rule over Idlib, he declared that his fight was against Mr. Assad, not against the U.S. He has not faced any major attacks from the U.S., which still has hundreds of soldiers in eastern Syria.

Why did the militants attack now?

Julani had always said that bringing down the Assad regime was one of his objectives. The Syrian regime wanted to attack Idlib and recapture the governorate. But it could not have carried

THE GIST

Islamist militants in Syria's northwest launched a surprise attack last week against the forces of President Bashar al-Assad and made dramatic territorial gains.

The HTS is led by Abu Mohammad al-Julani, a 42-year-old Syrian militant. Julani had moved to Iraq in his early 20s to fight the American occupation of the country (2003) and joined the al-Qaeda. When the al-Qaeda in Iraq was commanded by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Julani emerged as one of his close lieutenants.

Without direct support from Iran, Hezbollah and Russia, Syria's troops were vulnerable. The militants, reportedly backed by Turkey, made use of that vulnerability and made swift advances to the whole of Aleppo.

out such an attack against an enclave of 3 million people without Russia's active support. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan staunchly opposed any offensive at Idlib, saying it would trigger another refugee influx into Turkey. This was also the time Russia's Mr. Putin and Mr.

Erdogan entered into an entente. Russia forced Syria to accept a ceasefire, leaving Idlib in the hands of the HTS and the SNA. This led to the tense calm in Syria.

However, geopolitical dynamics have since shifted. Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Moscow is today preoccupied with the ongoing war, and has also withdrawn thousands of soldiers from Syria. During the height of the civil war, Qassem Soleimani, the charismatic Iranian Quds Force General, was in charge of building and deploying Shia militias in Syria that fought the anti-regime militants. Gen. Soleimani was assassinated by the Americans in January 2020. Over the past year, several senior Iranian Generals were killed in Syria by Israeli air strikes. Hezbollah, which fought on the frontlines against the rebels during the early phase of the civil war, is today busy reorganising itself after months of direct fighting with Israel. Israel's repeated air strikes in Syria over the past several years have substantially weakened Iranian, regime and Hezbollah positions in the country. These geopolitical developments provided an opportunity for the militants to launch their offensive. Without direct support from Iran, Hezbollah and Russia, Syria's troops were vulnerable. The militants, reportedly backed by Turkey, made use of that vulnerability and made swift advances to capture the whole of Aleppo.

What happens next?

It took four years for Mr. Assad to recapture Aleppo in 2016. It took just four days for him to lose it to the HTS. This is an embarrassing setback for the regime. On December 5, the militants entered Hama, the central city. They are now likely to march towards Homs. The collapse of the regime forces in the north has reinvigorated other smaller rebel groups elsewhere in the country who started attacking government positions, especially in the south. The regime faces a full-blown civil war. It's too early to rule out Mr. Assad, who survived a years-long civil war once. His regime has deep roots in the coastal regions and among the country's minorities. After the initial setback, regime forces are now coordinating with Iran for reinforcements. Thousands of fighters from Iraqi militias such as Kataib Hezbollah and Badr Organisation have already joined the battle. But the regime's inability to arrest the militant advances should set alarm bells ringing in Damascus. The militants on the other side sense a great opportunity in expanding their territorial control. Syria appears to be getting ready for another prolonged spell of bloodshed.

IN THE LIMELIGHT



GETTY IMAGES

Critical measures: should film reviews on social media platforms be banned?

In a post-internet world, the know-how of film criticism is scattered but accessible, and the growing passion for movies has enabled audiences to read films more sensibly. Therefore, a gag order on a platform censors every voice, good or bad

Bhuvanesh Chandar

Earlier this week, the Tamil Film Active Producers Association (TFAPA) filed a writ petition in the Madras High Court, seeking a ban on movie reviews on social media for the first three days of release. The counsel representing the TFAPA listed three reasons that necessitated the request – review bombing through reviews shot in cinema theatres, stage-managing fake reviews by purchasing bulk tickets, and intentionally propagating a negative image of the film through fake social media accounts.

These are pivotal concerns that need redressal and creators must be protected from targeted harassment. Paid reviews are real and, as Taapsee Pannu recently quoted Shah Rukh Khan as saying, are nothing more than advertisement spaces for sale. And so when the said space is used to unfairly demean a film, a business, or an entity, the legislature needs to step in and protect the affected parties. However, concerns also arise about the apparent discrepancies in how film chambers navigate these issues; like the ambiguity in using terms like ‘reviewers’; the irony in how YouTube reviews are used when favourable and flattering; and who is referred to as a ‘reviewer’.

Who is a reviewer?

Every time a star film that had promised big bites the dust, we are reminded of the times when the filmmaking ecosystem

tended to pride itself on one key aspect – that audiences have the final say and that the industry respects their judgement.

Closely observing recent discourses paints a startling picture of the idea of film criticism that remains. You exit a cinema hall on a Friday afternoon and are faced with a mike-borne journalist asking for your review – an industry-propagated technique used in post-release campaigns. Or you are an independent YouTube reviewer shooting a video review for your portal. If you shower praises on the film, it can be used to further promote the title; if you criticise it in a language the makers deem offensive, you might be slapped with a defamation suit or a copyright strike. Or, as a recent example showed, the partner of the film’s leading man would label you a pawn of a larger ‘propaganda group’. The very people who empower the audiences as ‘kings’ strip away their powers to decide for themselves.

A star like Vijay Deverakonda might argue that his film *Family Star* was a victim of review bombings, and Jyotika might have evidence to call the *Kangava* debacle the handiwork of Suriya haters, but refraining from specifically calling out these fake accounts or nefarious internet entities serves no purpose or change. Instead, it suggests an attitude of intolerance towards criticism. Calling these reviews the work of a homogenous group called ‘reviewers’ or ‘social media reviewers’ also adds to the woes of the industry’s favourite scapegoat – traditional film critics. From being

stigmatised as a profession as immoral paupers to being denounced as the killers of a ‘creator’s child’, the film critic has always been the film industry’s favourite punching bag to vent its shortcomings.

Pensiveness, insight, and the ability to read films and write incisive pieces that celebrate and propagate film appreciation are what the pundits claim differentiate a critic. But in a democratised post-internet world, the know-how of film criticism is scattered but accessible, and the growing passion for movies has enabled audiences to read films more sensibly. In the competitive media space of today, the passion and resolve it takes to make film criticism a profession, build experience over time, and sharpen said skills are what sets apart a film critic from a film buff with a blog. In all their steps to tackle abusive trolls, film producers have maintained that their steps protect the interests of sensible reviews, but one wonders who the adjudicator of reviewing sensibilities is. A gag order censors every voice, good or bad.

Read the finer lines of TFAPA’s writ petition and you sense a generosity towards critics from notable newspapers and online portals, “who provide constructive criticism.” But what confidence does an ecosystem that attacks one section of the audience’s freedom of speech instil in others? In the past, names like Kairam Vashi and Amol Kamwal have been attacked for their unfavourable reviews. The irony is in how producers who claim to stand by noteworthy newspapers and portals,

pigeonhole such critics as ‘niche’ and offer other film-related opportunities like interviews to the same sensationalist YouTube media they claim need regulation.

The industry believes that promotions and reviews, positive or negative, certainly influences the opinion of the audiences. Introspectively, even if film critics are shielded from any future censorship, a gag order on platforms meant for all would disrupt the quiet in an ecosystem that both film producers and film critics depend upon.

The law’s reaction

From what transpired at the Madras High Court during the hearing of the TFAPA’s arguments, one is certain that the court stands against curtailing free speech, lending an ear only to guidelines that can keep online platforms safe from targeted attacks and intentional review bombings. Earlier, in 2021, in hearing a petition to ban film reviews for seven days of the release, the Kerala High Court appointed an amicus curiae, who suggested a few regulations for movie reviews, including a 48-hour cooling-off period; avoiding spoilers in reviews; avoiding disrespectful language, personal attacks, or derogatory remarks; and constituting a dedicated portal to resolve grievances related to review bombings.

How the Madras High Court might navigate TFAPA’s complaints remains to be seen, but the ambiguous usage of terms by the producers’ body does raise concerns about censorship.

THE DAILY QUIZ

The President of South Korea declared martial law and was forced to withdraw the decision. A quiz on some instances of martial law being imposed across the world

Radhika Santhanam

QUESTION 1

This liberal was once Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party. When he died, thousands mourned him and demanded that his legacy be recognised. The mourning soon turned into protests against the corrupt and repressive one-party rule, and soon, martial law was declared in Beijing. Name this leader, who China rehabilitated in 2005.

QUESTION 2

This Irish officer ordered martial law in most parts of a particular region in India following a bloody incident under British rule. He was assassinated by a revolutionary, who was played by Vicky Kaushal in a 2021 film. Who was this officer and who was the character played by Kaushal?

QUESTION 3

In 1978, soon after martial law was declared, security forces fired on a large protest at the Jaleh Square killing at least 100 people. This event led to the abolition of the monarchy in that country less than a year later. What is it known as?

QUESTION 4

In the 1900s, Hawaii spent three years under martial law since military officials doubted the loyalty of at least one third of its residents. After what incident did Hawaii suddenly wake up to this announcement and who were these residents?

QUESTION 5

X has been under martial law since 2022. The UN urged X to take a “compassionate and humane” approach to the enforcement of martial law after reports emerged that the men of X were defying orders to stay and were attempting to cross into neighbouring countries to claim asylum. Name X.



Visual question:

This Chief of Army Staff was also Chief Martial Law Administrator. He went on to serve as President. Name him.

Questions and Answers to the previous day’s daily quiz: 1. Nelson Mandela’s birthname. Ans: Rolihlahla

2. Nelson Mandela’s nickname inspired from a popular novel about a hero with a secret identity. Ans: The black pimpernel

3. The island where Mandela spent 18 of his 27 years in imprisonment. Ans: Robben Island

4. This man shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Mandela. Ans: F.W. de Klerk

5. The movie in which Mandela appeared in a guest role. Ans: Malcolm X

Visual: The connection between Mandela and this flower. Ans: It is named after him as Paravanda Nelson Mandela

Early Birds: Rajib Ganguly| Rahul Nair| Dhruv Yadav| Jose Joji| Giselle Pulikkoden



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subramanian Upendran

“Here is the ‘wood interdental stimulator’ you wanted.”

“Wood interdental stimulator! A very long name for a toothpick, don’t you think?”

“What’s in a name?”, said Shakespeare.

“A lot actually. Last week, you called a pencil ‘a portable, hand-held communications inscriber.’ And today you call a toothpick, ‘a wood interdental stimulator’. It all sounds crazy.”

“It does, doesn’t it? It’s called the language of ‘doublespeak’.”

“Doublespeak?”

“Yes, and the purpose of doublespeak is to only pretend to communicate.”

“What do you mean ‘pretend to communicate?’ You mean it actually doesn’t?”

“No, it doesn’t. Doublespeak is the kind of language that is ambiguous or obscure.”

“You mean it’s like the kind of language politicians use?”

“It’s not just politicians who indulge in doublespeak. Everyone makes use of it. Advertisers, bureaucrats,...”

“Can you give some examples?”

“When the U.S. invaded Grenada in the 1980’s, it didn’t call it an invasion. The Government announced that there had been a ‘pre-dawn vertical insertion’.”

“But who would understand something like ‘pre-dawn vertical insertion’?”

“That’s exactly the point. No one is expected to understand it. You see the aim of doublespeak is to make the bad appear good, the simple appear complex, the unpleasant, attractive...”

“So instead of saying there are lots of poor people in India, I would...”

“...Say, there are many ‘fiscal underachievers’. Or you could refer to them as ‘economically non-affluent.’”

“Economically non-affluent! Sounds very impressive.”

“One of the aims of doublespeak is to make things sound impressive. For example, instead of saying our roads are full of potholes, we could say there are many ‘pavement deficiencies’. And if a patient dies because the doctor gave him the wrong treatment...”

“...Something which happens everywhere.”

“Then the doctor could say it was a ‘diagnostic misadventure of a high magnitude’.”

“And what about the poor patient?”

“Well, he ‘merely failed to fulfil his wellness potential.’”

“His, ‘wellness potential’!”

“Well, you’d better get used to it because doublespeak is becoming a part of our everyday life. Just look around you. Teachers are beginning to call themselves ‘learning facilitators’ or ‘classroom educators’.”

“Stop, Stop! I think I’ve heard enough. And irregardless of what you...”

“Irregardless?”

“Yes, irregardless. And don’t tell me the word doesn’t exist, because I’ve heard it being used.”

“It’s used, all right. But it’s considered substandard. ‘Irregardless’ is the standard.”

Published in The Hindu on May 3, 1994.

Word of the day

Complaisant:

showing a cheerful willingness to do favours for others

Synonyms: obliging

Usage: *He was a complaisant worker.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/complaisantpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /kəm'plɛsənt/

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

From Page One**Uproar in House over Hindi names for Bills**

Fellow BJP MP Bhim Singh said it was no surprise that a party which could oppose Vande Mataram would also oppose the use of the word 'vayuyan'. "The party which can oppose it when our government puts 'Bharat' instead of India on a board, why will such a party and its leaders not oppose 'Vayuyan?'" he asked.

Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu insisted there were no Constitutional or legal violations in the naming of the Bill. "I am a proud Telugu person. I am very proud of my upbringing. But even in Telugu, Bharat is Bharat and vayu is also a Telugu word. So Bharatiya Vayu Vidheyak is half Telugu for me. It is a mixture of all languages," he said.

He added that a cultural cocoon had developed during colonialism; now, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Centre wants to break that cocoon, and let the butterfly emerge. "The name is a small indication of this. The text of the Bill is in English. There should not be any problem."

Noting that vayuyan is a word in the classical Sanskrit language, he pointed out that the Centre has recently categorised five more languages as classical – Marathi, Assamese, Bengali, Pali and Prakrit – and is making a conscious effort to promote and protect all languages.

Fadnavis back as Maharashtra CM

A special session of the Maharashtra Legislature will be held from December 7 to 9 in Mumbai for the swearing-in of the newly elected members. The Winter Session is likely to follow in Nagpur from December 16 to 23.

This marks the third time Mr. Fadnavis, 54, an MLA from Nagpur South-West, would occupy the Chief Minister's office on the sixth floor of the Mantralaya (State administrative headquarters). His previous terms were from 2014 to 2019 and briefly in November 2019, when his government lasted only 72 hours due to a lack of majority support.

UGC draft proposes biannual admissions

"The regulations incorporate provisions for multiple entry and exit, recognition of prior learning, and the flexibility to pursue two UG/PG programmes simultaneously. We have also decoupled eligibility for UG and PG admissions from the rigid discipline-specific requirements of school education. Under these regulations, students can choose to study in any programme irrespective of their past disciplinary qualification if they demonstrate their competency by clearing the relevant entrance examinations," Professor Kumar said.

He added that these regulations provide autonomy to HEIs to determine student attendance requirements, ensuring they align with evolving academic needs. "Additionally, students will now have the option to earn 50% of their credits in their major discipline, while the remaining credits can be allocated to skill development, apprenticeships, or multidisciplinary subjects, fostering holistic development," he said.

The draft allows biannual admission for HEIs and they may admit students twice a year, in July/August and January/February. Provisions for multiple entry and exit, continuous formative assessment, and recognition of prior learning are some of the features of the guidelines. Irrespective of the disciplines taken by a student in Class 12 or in UG, a student is "eligible for admission in any discipline" of UG or PG programmes if the student has qualified in the "National-level or University-level entrance examination in the discipline of UG/PG programme", it said.

The duration of an undergraduate degree shall be either three or four years, and a postgraduate degree shall normally be either one year or two years. "However, duration of an undergraduate degree can be shorter or longer," it said, highlighting provisions in the Accelerated Degree Programme (ADP) and the Extended Degree Programme (EDP).

'Contaminated water' leads to 3 deaths in T.N.

Of them 14 were discharged and 19 were hospitalised. While one person is undergoing treatment at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, two others are being treated at a private hospital.

State MSME Minister T.M. Anbarasan, Pallavaram MLA E. Karunanidhi and senior officials of the Tambaram Corporation rushed to the affected areas of Pallavaram Cantonment and five streets in Ward 13.

A senior official of the Tambaram Corporation said health officials have started camps at six places and have distributed medicines to the residents. Civic body officials have seized a private tanker lorry that supplied water in the locality.

Corporation officials have taken samples of the piped water being supplied in the Pallavaram Cantonment area and the five streets in Ward 13. They have sent those to the Kings Institute for tests and the results would be known in three days, an official said.

Six new faces in 12-strong Hemant Soren Ministry

Six Ministers are from the JMM and four from the Congress; one is from the RJD; CPI(ML) decides against joining Cabinet; Governor appoints Stephen Marandi pro-tem Speaker for Winter Session

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Thursday expanded his Cabinet with 11 Ministers. Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar administered the oath of office at a swearing-in ceremony at the Raj Bhavan in Ranchi.

Of the new Ministers, six belong to the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and four to the Congress. One is from the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD).

From the JMM, Deepak Birua, Ramdas Soren, Sudhivya Kumar, Chamra Linda, Yogendra Prasad, and Hafizul Hasan took oath.

From the Congress, Deepika Pandey Singh, Irfan Ansari, Radhakrishna Kishore, and Shilpi Neha Tirkey are in the Cabinet.

The RJD, which won four seats, got one Ministerial berth. Party leader Sanjay Prasad Yadav, three-time MLA from the Godda Assembly constituency, took oath as a Cabinet Minister.

Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya had already announced that the party would not be



New team: Jharkhand Governor Santosh Gangwar and Chief Minister Hemant Soren with his wife, Kalpana Soren, and the new Ministers after the swearing-in at the Raj Bhavan in Ranchi on Thursday. PTI

part of the Cabinet.

In the Jharkhand election, of the 81 Assembly seats, the JMM-led Indian National Democratic, Inclusive Alliance bloc won 56 seats, whereas the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) could secure only 24, fewer than it had got in the previous Assembly election.

The JMM won 34 seats whereas the Congress got 16. The RJD secured four seats and the CPI(ML) won two.

In the NDA, the BJP had won 21 seats and the All Jharkhand Students Union,

Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) and Janata Dal (United) one each. The Jharkhand Loktantrik Krantikari Morcha (JLKM), led by Jai Ram Tiger Mahto, won one seat.

Community breakdown

Four MLAs from the Scheduled Tribes, four from the Other Backward Classes (OBC), two from the minority category and one from the Scheduled Castes (SC) have been made Ministers.

Mr. Hasan took the oath in Urdu and the remaining in Hindi.

Five former Ministers have been continued in the Cabinet, while there are six new faces.

Exercising his constitutional power, Mr. Gangwar appointed Stephen Marandi pro-tem Speaker of Jharkhand Legislative Assembly for the winter session to be held from December 9 to 12.

According to the Information and Public Relations Department, the Chief Minister has called his first Cabinet meeting with the new Ministers at the Cabinet Secretariat from 3 p.m. on Friday.

India and China hold negotiations over border coordination

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

leaders in their meeting in Kazan on October 23," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

The Indian delegation was led by Gourangal Das, Joint Secretary (East Asia), and the Chinese delegation was led by Hong Liang, Director-General of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The 31st round of WMCC meeting was held on August 29 in Beijing.

Both sides reviewed the situation in the border areas, and "reflected on the lessons learnt" from the events of 2020 in order to prevent their recurrence, the statement said. They agreed on the need for effective border management and maintenance of peace and tranquillity in accordance with relevant bilateral agreements and understandings reached between the two governments, the MEA added.

PSLV-C59 places PROBA-3 satellites into designated orbit with precision

Sangeetha Kandavel
SRIHARIKOTA

After being rescheduled for a day as an anomaly was detected, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Thursday successfully launched the PROBA-3 (Project for On-board Autonomy) mission of the European Space Agency aboard a Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle-C59 rocket.

The vehicle took off with a powerful roar precisely at 4.04 p.m. from the first launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota. "The PSLV-C59/PROBA-3 mission is successfully accomplished. The spacecraft has been placed in the right orbit," ISRO Chairman S. Somanath said. The agency said the mission had successfully achieved its launch objectives, deploying the satellites into their designated orbit with precision.

Josef Aschbacher, Director-General, ESA, said:



Roaring start: A PSLV-C59 rocket takes off with the PROBA-3 Mission from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre on Thursday. R. RAGU

"The latest member of ESA's family of in-orbit demonstration missions, PROBA-3 comprises two spacecraft launched together which, once safely in orbit, will separate to begin performing precise formation flying... Almost instantaneously after separation, Yatharagga station in Australia started to receive the spacecraft's signal. Telemetry is flowing to ESA's mission control centre in Belgium."

On its website, the ESA said: "A pair of spacecraft

were launched together today from India with the potential to change the nature of future space missions. ESA's twin PROBA-3 platforms will perform precise formation flying down to a single millimetre, as if they were one single giant spacecraft. To demonstrate their degree of control, the pair will produce artificial solar eclipses in orbit, giving prolonged views of the Sun's ghostly surrounding atmosphere, the corona."

The ESA said the two sa-

Parents of R.G. Kar rape victim irked with BJP's role

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

12 crew members of sunken vessel rescued in joint effort by India, Pak.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

In close collaboration with the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (MSA), the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) rescued 12 crew members of the sunken Indian vessel M/S Al Piranpir from the north Arabian Sea in the early hours of Wednesday.

"This humanitarian search and rescue mission saw close collaboration between the ICG and MSA, with both nations' Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres (MRCCs) maintaining continuous communication throughout the operation," the ICG said in a statement on Thursday.

They said, "We had asked for a meeting with Amit Shah ji, even he did not meet us. It is like our daughter and her pain has been forgotten by them and the loss is only ours."



Mooring to safety: Crew members of the ship Al Piranpir, which sank in the Arabian Sea on Wednesday, being rescued. PTI

ly hours of Wednesday due to rough seas and flooding, the statement said.

The distress call was received by the ICG's MRCC, Mumbai, which promptly

Naxalites kill two former Chhattisgarh village heads

The Hindu Bureau
RAIPUR

Naxalites killed two former village sarpanches in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Wednesday, the police said.

One of the victims, Suklu Parsa, was a BJP worker. A police officer said his body was found on Thursday with a pamphlet next to it asking BJP workers to quit the party, and threatened them of dire consequences if they did not.

The second victim, Sukhram Avlam, was accused of helping the police establish a camp in Bijapur.

Shinde's late decision builds up suspense ahead of swearing-in

Purnima Sah
MUMBAI

Even two hours before the swearing-in ceremony of the new Maharashtra Chief Minister on Thursday, there was suspense over whether outgoing Chief Minister Eknath Shinde would be seen at Azad Maidan in Mumbai during the grand event.

In the three days leading to the oath-taking ceremony, leaders from the BJP as well as Shiv Sena party workers made all possible efforts to convince Mr. Shinde to agree to take oath as the Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

Earlier in the day, Shiv Sena leader Uday Samant told presspersons in Mumbai that if Mr. Shinde refused to take oath as Deputy CM, everybody in the alliance wants him to join the government. He was thinking whether he should make someone else Deputy CM so that he could focus on increasing the party's strength. If he wanted to mount pressure on the BJP for a particular role in the government, why would he make a statement that he would accept any decision from Mr. Modi and Mr. Shah?

After taking oath, Mr. Shinde said that he always worked as a common man when he was the CM of the State, and he would continue to do so in the future.



Eknath Shinde

Rahul Gandhi is a 'traitor of the highest order', alleges BJP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday alleged that a triad of a George Soros-linked foundation, a global news portal, and senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi were part of a conspiracy to destabilise India, and accused Mr. Gandhi of being a "traitor of the highest order".

At a press conference by BJP MPs Sambit Patra and K. Laxman, the party cited a report by French newspaper *Mediapart*. Mr. Patra alleged that George Soros's Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), Mr. Gandhi, and *Mediapart* were three sides to a "dangerous triangle".

"It was an attempt to tarnish India's image... on July 2, 2021, the Congress held a press conference attacking the Indian government and Covaxin...", he said.

"Similarly, OCCRP has repeatedly attacked India's industrialists. Their reports aimed to destabilise India's economy, and to tank the shares of the Indian stock market, thereby financially weakening the general Indian people, so that they opposed the government and caused a regime change... whenever such reports came, Mr. Gandhi did press conferences," he said. Such reports would come before Parliament sessions, leading to the disruption of its proceedings, he added.

Mr. Patra earlier said that according to the report in *Mediapart*, a major portion of the funding for the OCCRP came from the Open Society Foundation associated with Mr. Soros, while many U.S.-based bodies and government agen-



Sambit Patra

cies also funded it.

Mr. Patra said that during the COVID-19 pandemic, when India was engaged in the "Vaccine Maitri" initiative, Brazil had placed orders for Covaxin. However, on July 1, 2021, the OCCRP published an article saying that Brazil had cancelled its order.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, the BJP MP quoted a report in French media about the funding of the investigative media platform Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), and how its reports were often used by the Congress-led Opposition to derail parliamentary proceedings.

Stating that the billionaire was funding the OCCRP, the MP tried to put questions to Mr. Gandhi and his sister and Wayanad MP, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

Mr. Dubey alleged that Mr. Soros, the OCCRP and the Congress were trying to register their protest against the remarks made by the BJP.

Responding to Mr. Dubey, Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal, MP, called him

Lok Sabha erupts as BJP MP links Rahul to George Soros

Dubey says U.S. billionaire, investigative media platform, Congress trying to derail India's success story under Prime Minister's Narendra Modi's leadership; Congress calls him 'an agent of Adani'; Opposition MPs register protest with Speaker

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha witnessed multiple disruptions before being adjourned for the day on Thursday as Opposition members protested over BJP member Nishikant Dubey's remarks linking Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi to U.S.-based billionaire George Soros.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, the BJP MP quoted a report in French media about the funding of the investigative media platform Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), and how its reports were often used by the Congress-led Opposition to derail parliamentary proceedings.

Stating that the billionaire was funding the OCCRP, the MP tried to put questions to Mr. Gandhi and his sister and Wayanad MP, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

Mr. Dubey alleged that Mr. Soros, the OCCRP and the Congress were trying to register their protest against the remarks made by the BJP.

Outside the Parliament building, INDIA members formed a human ring to protest over its demand for



Call to action: Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra stage a protest on the Adani issue outside Parliament on Thursday. PTI

"an agent of Adani". Opposition MPs also met Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to register their protest against the remarks made by the BJP.

Counter protests
The BJP's afternoon aggression inside the House seemed as counter to protests by the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) over the Adani issue.

Outside the Parliament building, INDIA members formed a human ring to protest over its demand for

an investigation against the Adani group, which has been indicted by a U.S. court on charges of bribery.

Inside the House, Congress MPs were seen wearing jackets with stickers that read "Modi Adani Ek Hai" (Modi and Adani are together) and "Adani Safe Hai" (Adani is safe).

Mr. Gandhi was wearing a sticker that had the same slogan over a photo of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and industrialist Gautam Adani.

While Lok Sabha Speak-

er Om Birla cautioned members against wearing such stickers and badges, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju called it a "fashion show".

"They (Opposition) came into Parliament wearing colourful clothes, and outside Parliament, they have started a fashion show wearing those colourful clothes. This lowers the dignity of Parliament and I condemn it. Such disruptions will achieve nothing; it won't fetch votes," Mr. Rijiju said after the House reassembled at 2

p.m. after the first round of disruption. After the first adjournment, Jagdambika Pal, who was in the Chair, tried running the House at 2 p.m. by asking Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw to reply to the debate on the Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2024, that took place on Wednesday. When protests continued, he adjourned the House until 3 p.m. and subsequently for the day.

Though the House had functioned smoothly during the Question Hour, it erupted during Zero Hour when Mr. Birla allowed Mr. Dubey to speak while Deputy Leader of the Congress Gaurav Gogoi was pressing for a statement on Mr. Gandhi being stopped from going to Sambhal by the Uttar Pradesh government.

Mr. Dubey alleged that Mr. Soros, OCCRP and the Congress were trying to derail India's success story that is taking place under Mr. Modi's leadership. Continuing with his allegations, the BJP member said the Congress had sought to derail Parliament on reports published by the OCCRP, including the Pegasus spying row, questioning the efficacy of vaccines against COVID-19 developed in India and the Hindenburg reports.

Foreign hand stalling India's growth story, says BJP MP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha witnessed an adjournment on Thursday as BJP member Sudhanshu Trivedi alleged a "foreign hand" was stalling India's growth story, particularly in the past three years.

Opposition members rose in protest as soon as Mr. Trivedi questioned the timing of the publication of the indictment by the U.S. Department of Justice against Indian businessman Gautam Adani, just days ahead of the commencement of the ongoing Winter Session of Parliament.

Speaking during Zero Hour, Mr. Trivedi cited instances during the past three years, including the Hindenburg report, the COVID-19 vaccine report, and a report on Indian farmers, wherein issues concerning India were raised by international entities just before or during Parliament sessions.

"Ever since India is emerging as a strategic, economic and diplomatic power, it has been seen that in the last three years, there have been attempts to attack India's established systems and interests on economic and social fronts through activities from abroad," he said.

Mr. Trivedi also said that it was the first time the Russian government had claimed there was foreign intervention in India's elections, with another government denying it. The BJP MP sought to know whether all these reports were coincidental or deliberate.

Investigation needed

"I want to point out that the Russian government had stated that there is foreign intervention in India's elections. Never has such a thing happened in the country's history. I want to ask the Opposition whether all this is happening by default or nefarious design. If this is happening by default, then all MPs should only debate the issue, and if it is deliberate, then there should be a thorough investigation," Mr. Trivedi said.

After expressing concern for farmers, Dhankhar hails Modi's work for them

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Two days after expressing concern over farmers' protests and asking the Centre to hold discussions with them, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar said in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi brought the issues of farmers to the centre stage.

He was responding to former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, who ap-

preciated Mr. Dhankhar for expressing his concern for farmers.

The Vice-President, who is ex-officio Chairman of the Upper House, said the Prime Minister prioritised farmers in every scheme, including affordable housing, solar houses, drinking water supply through taps and technology.

"Therefore our expectations are bound to be high. It is a time when there is convergence to take the

farmer to a greater height," Mr. Dhankhar said.

'Will go a long way'

Mr. Dhankhar said he had no doubt what was being done at the moment would gain greater momentum and that all agencies were converging to achieve it. "Our expectations are high, but our accomplishments are also historic; our achievements are also splendid, and this will go a long way for the nation," he said.

Mr. Gowda recalled that

Mr. Dhankhar on Tuesday spoke about farmers and their issues. "You are so much concerned about the farming community. I am a farmer," he said.

Mr. Dhankhar, at a function in Mumbai, had asked Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan to hold dialogue with protesting farmers. He had also ridiculed the perception that more minimum support price to farmers would result in inflation.

Bharatiya Vayyan Vidheyak Bill gets nod in Rajya Sabha

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Parliament on Thursday passed the Bharatiya Vayyan Vidheyak Bill, 2024, which is expected to provide some relief to aviation personnel in their licensing processes.

The Rajya Sabha passed the Bill on Thursday. The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on July 31 and was passed by the Lower House on August 9.

The most significant

change in the Bill is that the radio telephone operator restricted certificate and licence testing process, which was hitherto conducted by the Department of Telecom for aviation personnel, including aircraft maintenance engineers, flight dispatchers, and pilots, has been moved to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. This will ensure a single-window clearance process as aviation personnel can now secure all their certifi-

cates from one authority. Personnel taking exams, including trainee pilots, have alleged that there was rampant corruption in the conduct of the RTR exam under the DoT, with candidates required to cough up several lakhs in bribes.

The Bill also adds power to regulate the design of aircraft, as well as the places where they are being designed, in addition to retaining provisions for their manufacture, repair, and maintenance.

Naruvi Hospitals, The Hindu to launch 'Healthy India, Happy India' initiative

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Aimed at promoting health and wellness nationwide, Naruvi Hospitals, in collaboration with *The Hindu*, is set to launch the "Healthy India, Happy India" initiative on Saturday.

The event, which will take place at Naruvi Hospitals in Vellore, marks the beginning of a public interest campaign aimed at fostering a culture of health, happiness, and well-being. The initiative seeks to inspire individuals and communities to prioritise their health for a brighter and healthier future for India.

The event will be attended by several distinguished figures from Tamil Nadu. Deputy Chief Minister Udayanidhi Stalin, the chief guest, will inaugurate the campaign and deliver the keynote address.

Other prominent guests include Water Resources Minister Duraimurugan, Minister for Handlooms and Textiles R. Gandhi, and Minister for Health



and Family Welfare Ma. Subramanian. Special addresses will be given by G.V. Sampath, Founder and Chairman of Naruvi Hospitals; L.V. Navaneeth, CEO of The Hindu Group; and N. Ram, Director of THG Publishing Pvt Ltd.

The inaugural event, set to begin at 10.30 a.m., will focus on the importance of

health and wellness as essential pillars of national strength. It will officially launch the initiative, which aims to educate and inspire people to adopt healthier lifestyles and create a more health-conscious society.

Dr. Sampath expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership with *The Hindu*, explaining the hospital's long-standing emphasis on "health over disease" as a guiding principle. He highlighted that Naruvi Hospitals has always focused on preventative care, a philosophy that aligns perfectly with *The Hindu*'s mission for this campaign.

The initiative will feature a 15-part wellness webinar series, anchored by *The Hindu*'s editorial team, and will address topics such as mental health, nutrition, and disease prevention, with expert speakers from various fields.

To learn more about the campaign, individuals can visit healthyindiahappyindia.thehindu.co.in.

Four contractors have been held responsible for deficiencies detected in the construction of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway and strict action will be taken against them, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari informed Parliament on Thursday.

The rectification work is being carried out by the contractors at their own cost as per the clause in the contract on the Defect Liability Period of 10 years, he said while responding to a question in Lok Sabha.

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY PARADIP PORT-754142,ODISHA(INDIA) ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT (ESTATE/WING) No.AD/EST/LAND-459/2024/3658 Dt.03.12.2024 e-Tender-cum-e-Auction Notice An e-Tender-cum-e-Auction Notice invites bids for "Allotment of 2 Nos. patches of Port land about 30 Acres each for setting up of Container Freight Station (CFS) on long term lease basis for a period of 30 years" is available in the website from 03.12.2024 to 30.12.2024. For details, interested bidders may log on the website : <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app/> Sr. Dy. Secretary Paradip Port Authority PPA/PR/55/2024-2025 / 04/12/2024

CHHATRAPATI SAMBAHJINAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, CHHATRAPATI SAMBAHJINAGAR E-Tender Notice 2024-2025 Tender Notice E-Tender in B-1 form for the following work invited by Administrator, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar Municipal Corporation, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (Phone No. 0240-2333536-40) from Government Registered Contractors / Companies / Firms of Appropriate Category.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Tender Amount Rs.
1	Development of Museum using modern technologies at Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar Research centre, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar.	20,95,47,375/-

Details regarding the tender for the said works will be available on <http://mahatma.gov.in> From, dt 05/12/2024. Administrator, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar Municipal Corporation, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar reserves all the rights to reject/cancel any or all tenders without assigning any reason.

Sd/-
Administrator
CSMC, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar

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Unit - 2 : Mondipatti - 621 306, Trichy District, Tamil Nadu. Ph.: 04332 - 261600.
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Tender No.	Scope of Work	Due date
242513 004862	Design, Manufacturing, Testing and Supply of 11KV Switchgears for RSPS-2 in TNPL Unit - I.	28.12.2024
242523 003047	Design, Manufacturing, Testing and Supply of Distribution Transformers for TM #5 in TNPL Unit - II.	28.12.2024
242523 003057	To run Defoamer for wet end on package cost basis for Board Machine (CCK) of TNPL Unit - II.	20.12.2024
242523 003000	Liquid Non Ferric Alum for Board Machine (CCK) of TNPL Unit - II.	21.12.2024
242523 003001	Cationic Rosin for Board Machine (CCK) of TNPL Unit - II.	21.12.2024
242523 003009	Descaling agent for continuous digester for Pulpmill of TNPL Unit - II.	20.12.2024
Email	242513004862 ; 242523003047 - pmid1@tnpl.co.in 242523003057 ; 3000 ; 3001 ; 3009 - purchasesm.u2@tnpl.co.in	

Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPL Website & NIC Portal only

IN BRIEF



Justice Manmohan sworn in as Supreme Court judge

Justice Manmohan (right, in picture) was sworn in as a Supreme Court judge on Thursday, raising the judicial strength of the court to 33, one short of the sanctioned number of judges. Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna administered the oath of office to Justice Manmohan in the Chief Justice's courtroom. The Supreme Court Collegium had recommended the appointment of Justice Manmohan, who was the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court, to the top court on November 28. Justice Manmohan was ranked second in the combined all-India seniority of High Court Judges at the time the collegium recommended him for the top court.

Mobile Internet ban extended in nine districts of Manipur

The Manipur government on Thursday extended the suspension of mobile Internet for two days in nine districts of the State till December 7. An order issued by the Home Department said the suspension was extended in Imphal West, Imphal East, Kachching, Bishnupur, Thoubal, Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, Pherzawl, and Jiribam till 5.15 p.m. on December 7. "The State government after reviewing the prevailing law and order situation and its correlation with the general operation of Internet services has decided to continue suspension of mobile internet and mobile data services," it said. PTI

India slams developed nations for climate crisis

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India slammed developed countries for causing the climate crisis during a landmark hearing at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Thursday, saying they exploited the global carbon budget, failed to honour climate finance promises and are now demanding that developing countries restrict their resource use. The court is examining what legal obligations countries have to address climate change and the consequences if they fail.

Representing India, Luther M. Rangreji, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, said, "If the contribution to degradation is unequal, the responsibility must also be unequal." India said developing nations were the hardest hit by climate change, despite contributing the least to it. "The developed world, which historically contributed the most, is ironically the best equipped with the technological and economic means to address this challenge," Mr. Rangreji said.

India also slammed the lack of action on climate finance commitments.

Bhutan and India discuss Gelephu, hydel power plans

The leaders agreed on the need for early conclusion of the Punatsangchhu-I hydro power project; both sides discussed cross-border connectivity projects, including a rail line and digital networks

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

India and Bhutan on Thursday discussed bilateral projects in the fields of electricity and urban planning during the visit of the King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk and Queen Jetsun Pema. Mr. Wangchuk met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and both sides reiterated continued collaboration on multiple fronts including in the Gelephu Mindfulness City project and hydropower.

A joint statement issued after the meeting said Mr. Modi "reassured His Majesty of India's continued support for the Gelephu Mindfulness City Project, which will bring prosperity and well-being in Bhutan and also the border areas, and further strengthen economy and investment linkages between the two countries".

The two sides on Thursday also discussed the hydel power projects including the 1020-MW Punatsangchhu-II hydro power project and expressed satisfaction as it



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk during the meeting on Thursday. PTI

was "nearing completion".

"The leaders agreed on the need for early conclusion of the Punatsangchhu-I hydro power project. The two sides reiterated the importance of cooperation in the hydropower sector, and their commitment to advancing it, including through finalizing modalities urgently for new projects, including reservoir hydro projects," the joint statement said.

Both sides also discussed cross-border connectivity projects includ-

ing a rail line as well as digital networks.

The visit of the Bhutan royal comes days after the visit of Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay who inaugurated the Global Cooperatives Alliance in New Delhi on November 25. India's commitment for the Gelephu project while hosting the Bhutanese King is significant as it comes against the backdrop of diplomatic setbacks that South Block has faced in the neighbourhood, especially in Dhaka

where India's ties with the interim government of Bangladesh has failed to stabilise since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government in August.

In Nepal too, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has prioritised Kathmandu's ties with Beijing and sealed a new Framework for Belt and Road Cooperation on Wednesday during his first foreign trip since taking power in July this year.

The Hindu had earlier reported that the Adani Group was in talks with Thimphu for investing in the project in Gelephu. In July, Mr. Wangchuk and Prime Minister Tobgay had travelled to Gujarat where they sought cooperation with the Adani Group on airport, infrastructure and renewable energy projects.

While India's neighbours, including Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have announced reviews of Adani projects in the past few weeks, and the U.S. Department of Justice indictment of the Adani Group has cast a shadow, the Bhutanese government has so far not commented on the issue.

Cannot accept proposal on pension hike, Centre tells SC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court was informed by the government on Thursday of the latter's decision to not accept recommendations for enhancing pension by 10% to retired regular Captains of the Indian Army in accordance with the One Rank, One Pension scheme (OROP).

Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the government, apprised a Bench headed by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna of the non-acceptance of the recommendations on the pension hike.

The apex court was hearing an appeal filed by the government against an order of December 7, 2021 of the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) at Kochi. The AFT had directed the government to take a decision on the pension payable to retired regular Captains.

The Bench then asked counsel appearing for retired Army Captains, including M. Gopalan Nair, who are fighting for enhanced pension, to challenge the non-acceptance of the recommendations as time was of the essence in such matters.

Cyclone Fengal exposes poor standards in Chennai airport, pilot proficiency

Capt. A. Ranganathan

Weather system Fengal has exposed the Achilles heel of the Indian civil aviation system. On the night of November 29, Indigo flight 6E 5048, arriving from Mumbai around 8 p.m. at the Chennai airport, wobbled quite a bit on approach and floated over the runway for more than 4,000 feet before going around and making another approach to land. Because it was night, no one had taken a video to expose the incident on social media.

On November 30, 2024, another Indigo flight, 6E 683, coming in for a landing at Chennai, appeared fully out of control, touched down briefly, and went around with its wing dropping sharply to the left. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

All modern jet aircraft are fitted with Digital Flight



On November 30, an Indigo flight coming in to land at Chennai appeared out of control, touched down briefly, and went around with its wing dropping sharply to the left. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Data Recorders that record several hundred parameters. Flight control inputs are recorded; the data are downloaded regularly and the flight safety departments of airlines are to analyse the data, identify the trends, and recommend corrections to pilots. The idea is to prevent accidents due to habits that develop when wrong inputs are made on a regular basis. It appears that trend analysis is not done diligently. Airlines' Flight Operations Quality Assurance (FOQA) programmes need proactive identification to recognise the threats.

The runway surroundings of the Chennai airport were flooded at the time of the incident. During heavy rain, the water depth would have been more than 3 mm and the runway condition will come under the Contaminated Category. In contaminated conditions, the landing distance required is more than 325% of the dry runway requirement (source: Flight Safety Foundation ALAR toolkit data). Do airlines comply with this, though

they all claim safety is paramount? When we filmed several landings and take-offs in heavy rain from close range using high-speed, high-definition cameras, it was noticed that the water depth was more than 50 mm. But the runway condition reported to pilots only mentions 'wet', which requires just a factor of 1.95%.

On October 30, the taxi tracks at Chennai were closed due to flooding before they finally shut the airport down stating "hazardous conditions". The rainfall at the airport on November 29 was 23.8 mm, November 30, 60.2 mm, and December 1, 123.8 mm (source: Greater Chennai Corporation website). An airport that gets flooded with just 2 cm to 12 cm of rain shows how pathetic the conditions are. No wonder Chennai is losing its standing on the aviation map. During a meeting on November 13, 2024, with the Director General of Civil Aviation on the imple-

mentation of the proposed norms on Duty Time Limitation for pilots, Air India said the new norms would hurt the interest of cockpit crew as their flying hours would be reduced, along with their allowances! Pathetic, that an airline would compromise safety to increase emoluments. Pilot bodies have rejected this claim. This throws light on the mindset of airlines in India, whose managements have no regard for fatigue-induced errors.

Training standards

The DGCA Civil Aviation Requirement mandates that all pilots undergo one hour of ALAR (Approach and Landing Accident Reduction) and AWO (Adverse Weather Operations) ground training, followed by one hour of simulator training and another hour of simulator check. This is in addition to the four-hour recurrent training (two hours as pilot flying and two hours as pilot monitoring) and the four-hour

check on the simulator. Do airlines comply with this strictly, and has the DGCA carried out strict monitoring of the same during their safety audits? There have been instances where boxes were ticked even without spending one minute on the simulator.

There is a DGCA requirement that the minimum total cockpit time on the type of aircraft has to be 500 hours. For example, if the pilots are flying an A320/321, the combined time of the captain and the co-pilot has to be 500 hours on an A320/321. To simplify, if the captain has 100 hours as pilot-in-command on an A320, the co-pilot must have 400 hours on an A320. This is a safety requirement. Are airlines complying with this rule?

With large-scale induction and accelerated training programmes, do airlines have the numbers to comply with this requirement? Earlier, the monsoon restriction was from June to September, but it

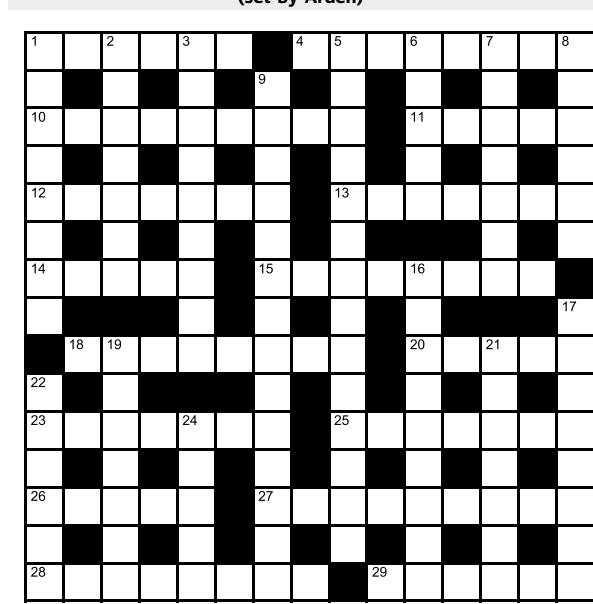
was later modified to April to September. With global warming being a reality, we experience adverse weather throughout the year. The DGCA must immediately make the minimum cockpit time on type all year long. It must also make it mandatory for airlines to store electronic records of the ALAR and AWO checks on simulators to ensure that pilots demonstrate their proficiency to the required standards. All simulators have this facility. Airlines should also encourage manual flying when weather conditions are good and traffic density is low.

Fengal has held up a mirror to poor standards at the Chennai airport as well as pilot proficiency. Do we need a fatal accident for governments to wake up?

(Captain A. (Mohan) Ranganathan is a former airline instructor pilot and aviation safety adviser. He is also a former member of the Civil Aviation Safety Advisory Council (CASAC), India)

TH CROSSWORD

14349



Across

- Story teller's name lands in soup (6)
- Greek hero's main set back - catching cold (8)
- Maestro in pants or for decreasing clothes (5,4)
- Praise old lot on return... (5)
- ...for keeping one in bag everyday (7)
- On the grill, last of the T-bone - get a break (7)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site.

@ <https://qrgo.page.link/jipTn>



SCAN TO PLAY

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

BUTTON	PROSPECT	S	R	O	U	R	A	R
THRE	EATEN	N	A	B	R	O	A	R
EAT	IN	D	I	N	T	E		
PROTEC	TING	I	N	T	O			
INCL	DESES	S	O	L	E			
SMACKS	ANNOYING	E	A	U	N			
SALT	POSTHORTEM	E	A	U	N			
MIR	WBA	A	A	U	N			
ASHORE	EXERCISE	A	W	B	A			
MONSTERS	SADDLE	N	R	R	E			

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Faith in humanity

Spiritual leaders who not only stood steadfast in their faith, but also stood as a beacon of courage during testing times are universally revered. One such leader was Guru Tegh Bahadur, said Prof. Kumool Abbi in a lecture.

He has been an epitome of valour, bravery, fortitude and fearlessness. Devout and spiritual, his holiness is reflected in the 115 *shabads* he has contributed to the sacred Guru Granth Sahib. He is also credited with 15 ragas and his *bhagats* are ascribed with seventy-two *bani* compositions,

Born in 162

IN BRIEF



Hyundai Motor to hike prices by up to ₹25,000 from Jan. 1

Hyundai Motor India Ltd. (HMIL) said it would raise prices across models by up to ₹25,000, effective January 1. "The price increase has been necessitated owing to an increase in input costs, adverse exchange rate and increase in logistics costs," the company said. "With sustained rise in input costs, it has now become imperative to pass on a part of this escalation through a minor price adjustment," said Tarun Garg, whole-time director and chief operating officer of HMIL.

Nifty hits seven-week high amid global markets' bounce

In a trading session marked with high volatility, the benchmark index Nifty ended up for the fifth straight day on Thursday, rising 1% to 24,708.4 points, its highest level in seven weeks. The BSE Sensex also closed 1% higher at 81,765.9 points, but broader indices saw a milder rise. HDFC Securities' head of retail research Deepak Jasani said Thursday's rally was in sync with a global uptick after Wall Street indices ended at record highs, and bitcoin traded over \$1,00,000.

Fairfax India to add \$255 mn stake in airport operator BIAL

Fairfax India Holdings will buy an additional 10% stake in Bengaluru airport operator BIAL, hiking its overall shareholding to 74%. "The transaction is expected to close in Q1 2025, upon which the additional 10% equity interest in BIAL will be acquired by Fairfax India for an aggregate \$255 million," Fairfax India said in a release. Fairfax India is acquiring the 10% stake from Siemens Projects Ventures. PTI



Adani Group to invest \$2 billion for Europe port acquisitions

The Hindu Bureau

The Adani Group is planning to invest \$2 billion for acquisitions in the ports sector to expand its presence in the international market, a company spokesperson said.

The company's flagship Adani Ports & Special Economic Zones (APSEZ) Ltd. is scouting for terminals in Europe, which accounts for 40% of the global sea trade. "We are looking for two or three terminals in Europe only and deals should happen in the near future," the spokesperson said. The company has ports in Sri Lanka, Israel, Australia, Tanzania and Greece and is seeking to further expand abroad.

In India, the company, with a cargo handling capacity of 633 million metric tonnes at 15 ports, has a market share of 27% which it is planning to enhance to 40% by 2030. For this purpose, capacity addition is planned in the west coast.

Last year, the company had reported an EBITDA of ₹17,590 crore, while its half-yearly EBITDA had reached ₹18,846 crore in 2024-25, the firm said.

RBI's Rate Dilemma: Nov. inflation likely eased to 5%

Vegetable meal inflation eased to 7% last month from 20% in October, reckons Crisil; Nomura economists reiterate the central bank may surprise markets today with a 25 basis points rate cut

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's retail inflation is likely to have eased to around 5% in November from October's 14-month high of 6.2%, with some cooling of food prices on a month-on-month basis though vegetable, pulses and edible oil prices remained elevated compared to last November, and home cooked vegetarian meal costs rose 7%, according to two price tracking reports.

Prices monitored by Bank of Baroda for its Essential Commodities Index rose 5.5% in November compared with 7% in October. "We expect the Consumer Price Inflation to settle around 5% in November, with risks tilted to the downside," the bank's economist Dipanwita Mazumdar said in a note, adding base effects would also provide some relief. However, core inflation, which excludes food and energy prices, has an upside risk from festive demand push, she reckoned.

The assessment assumes significance ahead of the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meet that concludes Friday, in the backdrop of a spike in October's inflation and a sharp slump in economic growth with GDP rising just 5.4% in the July-September quarter. Union Ministers handling economic



Pain points: Despite some cooling, vegetable, pulses and edible oil prices were elevated compared with last November. FILE PHOTO

portfolios, and industry bodies like the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), have called for interest rate cuts to support growth and encourage private investments.

The MPC, at its last review in October, had changed its policy stance to 'neutral' from 'hawkish', but reiterated it was "unambiguously" focused on durably aligning inflation to its median 4% target, terming the downward trajectory of inflation as slow and uneven. While 42 of 49 economists surveyed by Bloomberg expect the central bank to hold the key repo rate at 6.5% this week, Nomura economists said the RBI is likely to surprise markets with a 25 basis points (bp) rate cut, owing to weaker growth and a benign one-year forward inflation outlook. One basis point equals 0.01%.

"We do not see any policy trade-offs from lower-

ing rates at this juncture. We continue to expect 100bp of cumulative cuts by mid-2025 to a terminal rate of 5.50%," a Nomura note said on Thursday, stressing that India now appears in the midst of a cyclical slowdown and expectations of a sharp growth recovery in the second half of the year are not backed by data.

"The RBI's primary objective is to maintain price stability, while keeping in mind the objective of growth... We have long held the view that growth sacrifice was on the rise... GDP growth has already moderated below trend, and should mean placing a higher weight on the growth objective of the mandate," economists Sonal Varma and Aurodeep Nandi said.

November relief
Onions led the relative respite on the food inflation

front, with prices dropping 4.4% in November – the first such contraction since July 2023 – from a 44% surge in October.

However, despite some downturn from October levels, tomato and potato prices remained a pain point for consumers last month, with a rise of 35% and 50%, respectively, from a year ago. Crisil's monthly tracker of food costs showed the average cost of a vegetarian meal stood at ₹32.7 in November, 2% below October's cost, while a non-vegetarian plate needed ₹61.6. This was the second highest price for both categories in 15 months.

This is the first time since August that vegetable meal costs have risen in single digits, following an 11% uptick in September and 20% spike in October. Overall food inflation as per the official retail price rise gauge, had surged to a 15-month high of 10.9% in October, with vegetable inflation at 42.2%.

The price of pulses rose 10% from last November while vegetable oil prices rose 13%, as per Crisil's monthly Roti Rice Rate report said. An 11% drop in fuel cost helped temper the rise in food plate costs.

Wholesale prices of tomato, onion and potato, are also on the deflationary path so retail prices could correct further, even as the winter harvest comes in, Ms. Mazumdar averred.

Inflation well-behaved, barring some food items'

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

Asserting India's underlying growth story is intact and one must not 'over-interpret' the economy's slowdown in the second quarter of this fiscal year, Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V. Anantha Nageswaran said on Thursday that the economy's health remains robust as per several macro-economic indicators and overall headline inflation is 'well-behaved'.

"There are some specific food items that are contributing to the sharp rise in inflation, but it is confined to a very small percentage of the overall Consumer Price Index basket of goods and services," Mr. Nageswaran said at an Assocham summit.

The CEA also stressed India's long-term inflation average is coming down and will converge with the price rise pace in developed countries thanks to supply-side investments.

Asking industry to play its part in spurring consumption to drive domestic growth in an uncertain world economy, the CEA said corporate profitability hit a 15-year high in 2023-24 but much of this was diverted to reduce leverage.

Mooting a balance between profitability and workers' incomes, he said: "Without this parity, there will not be adequate demand in the economy for corporate goods to be purchased." He cited the fact that wage growth for contract workers has not kept pace with inflation.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	THURSDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	81,766	1.00
US Dollar	84.71	0.04
Gold	79,150	0.38
Brent oil	72.42	-1.57

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2522.55	+2.78
Adani Ports	1277.05	+7.50
Apollo Hosp.	7274.75	+42.40
Asian Paints	2452.20	-7.25
Axis Bank	1166.40	+6.95
Bajaj Auto	8891.95	-107.20
Bajaj Finserv	1644.10	+16.00
Bajaj Finance	6850.40	+110.40
Bharat Elec.	314.50	+1.65
Bharti Airtel	1615.35	+31.25
BPCL	297.00	+3.35
Britannia Ind.	4872.00	+20.45
Cipla	1498.25	+2.60
Coal India	418.40	+1.75
Dr Reddy's Lab.	1239.85	+24.30
Eicher Motors	4837.55	+40.50
Grasim Ind.	2706.80	-10.50
HCL Tech.	1924.00	+26.35
HDFC Bank	1865.75	+5.65
HDFC Life	643.15	+7.10
Hero MotoCorp	4644.35	+8.50
Hindalco	670.85	+7.80
Hind Unilever	2494.60	+30.10
ICICI Bank	1336.50	+20.45
IndusInd Bank	998.20	-0.65
Infosys	1934.85	+45.60
ITC	467.50	+0.40
JSW Steel	999.20	+4.35
Kotak Bank	1775.15	+17.65
L&T	3831.55	+41.65
M&M	3071.60	+39.85
Maruti Suzuki	11182.85	+52.40
NestleIndia	2265.50	+7.70
NTPC	369.15	+3.60
ONGC	261.30	+0.60
PowerGrid Corp	328.35	+3.30
Reliance Ind.	1322.05	+13.10
SBI Life	1431.85	+20.75
State Bank	865.45	+5.75
Shriram Finance Ltd.	3126.30	+6.00
Sun Pharma	1813.45	+13.25
Tata Consumer Product	966.45	+5.25
Tata Motors	792.55	+4.45
Tata Steel	147.07	+1.22
TCS	4464.05	+109.65
Tech Mahindra	1786.95	+27.35
Titan	3441.05	+76.60
Trent Ltd.	6970.10	+146.30
UltraTech Cement	11932.80	+166.00
Wipro	299.30	+5.30

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on December 05

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	84.53	84.85
Euro	89.07	89.41
British Pound	107.63	108.04
Japanese Yen (100)	56.28	56.50
Chinese Yuan	11.64	11.68
Swiss Franc	95.70	96.07
Singapore Dollar	63.05	63.30
Canadian Dollar	60.15	60.37
Malaysian Ringgit	19.10	19.19
Australian Dollar	54.43	54.64

Source: Indian Bank

APOC will significantly cut down the time passengers spend in queues at airports'

The Airport Operations Command Center can anticipate glitches instead of just reacting to them, explains WAISL, the firm behind its development



INTERVIEW
Rishi Mehta
Sobhana K. Nair

A day after Amazon Web Services (AWS) India's announcement on hosting a digital twin-powered integrated Airport Operations Command Center (APOC), developed by WAISL Ltd., aimed at bringing all airport stakeholders under one roof for integrated solutions to improve passenger experience and airport efficiency, WAISL CEO Rishi Mehta spoke to *The Hindu* on the sidelines of "AWS re: Invent 2024" in Las Vegas, on what it will mean for travellers.

What is the Airport Operations Command Center (APOC) and how will it change the air travel experience for the passengers?

WAISL is an end-to-end technology and IT partner to the airport ecosystem. We bring in all the technology that goes into the airport, from CCTV cameras, flight information display systems, Wi-Fi routers, baggage handling and so on. We also manage it 24/7. Airport Operations Command Center is an integrated centre where you can monitor the entire airport. Importantly, APOC anticipates the problem instead of only reacting to it when it happens. To do this, we collect data from various

which airline is coming at what time, what gate they need to be assigned to and so on. With APOC you are not only managing the terminal, you are also looking at the kerbside to plan for better movement of traffic to avoid congestion. It will significantly cut down the time that travellers spend at the check-in and security queues. APOC can ensure that travellers are kept in loop in real-time with timely alerts.

What is AWS role in this entire exercise?

So far we had deployed the solution on premises. Airports are regulated entities which want the data to stay in the same data centre. Now, basically, we are able to move a significant amount of data to the cloud. Which is where AWS comes in. It is significant, because cloud computing offers me higher scale and efficiency. In the cloud even if one zone was to go down, the other would take on seamlessly.

When is the system launching in India and which airport?

We have rolled it out at one of the Tier 1 South Indian airports. It is live, but the public announcement will come in a few days when it is officially inaugurated. Till then, we cannot reveal the name of the airport.

(The writer is at AWS re:Invent 2024 in Las Vegas at the invitation of AWS)

A BLANK PAGE IS CALLING. ANSWER IT WITH A STORY.

Let your imagination come to life in the form of an original short story within 1000 words for *The Hindu Lit for Life 2025* short story contest. The best stories will win exciting prizes and be showcased at the festival.

DIFFERENT BALLGAME

Pink cherry certainly does more than the red one, says Rohit



Rohit Sharma on Thursday said every batter has to devise his own method to deal with the challenges posed by the pink ball during the day-night Test against Australia as it would do a bit more than the red cherry. "You are so used to playing with red ball, and pink ball certainly does a little bit more than the red one," said Rohit.

NOMINATED

Bumrah in the shortlist for ICC player-of-the-month award



Jasprit Bumrah was on Thursday nominated as one of the three contenders for the ICC player-of-the-month award for November following his superb show in India's win against Australia in Perth. The speedster was nominated along with South African left-arm seamer Marco Jansen and Pakistan pacer Haris Rauf.

WELCOMED ABOARD

It is awesome to have someone like Scotty come straight in: Cummins



Australia skipper Pat Cummins welcomed pacer Scott Boland's return to the XI in Adelaide. "As a captain, it is pretty awesome to have someone like Scotty come straight in... he can bowl a huge amount of overs, is super consistent, and has performed at this level," said Cummins. Boland has replaced Josh Hazlewood.

EXTERNAL NOISE

We try not to notice and just go about our things: Cummins



Pat Cummins is under the pump after the loss in the opening Test in Perth. Asked about the external noise, Cummins had his riposte: "When things don't go right there are enough commentators that will support you, but also some that will try and create some headlines. We try not to notice and just go about our things".

Chance for India to set right its away record in pink-ball Tests

The visitors will look to banish the demons of 2020 when the team was bundled out for a paltry 36 at this venue

INDIA IN AUS

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
ADELAIDE

Blazing sunshine and dry heat prevailed for a large part of Thursday before the clouds made a fleeting appearance over the Adelaide Oval. The air was still and through the public-address system, the national anthems of India and Australia were played as part of the preparations for the day-and-night second Test that will commence here on Friday afternoon.

There is forecast for the odd thunder-shower on the opening day, a disruption that may not have a major effect. India leads 1-0 in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series, an advantage that Rohit Sharma's men want to build upon at a venue which offers mixed signals from the past.

Sunil Gavaskar, Sandeep Patil, Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Virender Sehwag, Ajit Agarkar and Virat Kohli, have been heroes here at varying points. Hundreds, wickets and triumphs in the 2003 and 2018 games, add to the halo before the 36 registered in the 2020 pink-ball Test, offers a grim reality check.

In the lead-up to the latest contest, there have been exhaustive discussions about how the pink ball would move under lights and the tricky phase of dealing with twilight. India has won three of its four day-and-night Tests and all those triumphs were scripted in home conditions. Having lost the lone overseas encounter here in 2020, the visitors get a chance to make amends.

It helps that a full-strength playing eleven is on the cards with Rohit and

From red to pink

As India and Australia gear up for the pink-ball showdown, a lowdown on how the two teams have fared in Day-Night encounters

INDIA-AUSTRALIA H2H IN DAY-NIGHT TEST		
Played 1	India 0	Australia 1
2020, Adelaide: Australia won by eight wickets		

INDIA IN PINK-BALL TESTS

Played	Won	Lost	MOST RUNS
4	3	1	Kohli 277 6 inns
2019, Kolkata: bt Bangladesh by an innings and 46 runs			
2020, Adelaide: lost to Australia by eight wickets			
2021, Ahmedabad: bt England by 10 wickets			
2022, Bengaluru: bt Sri Lanka by 238 runs			

“The more time you spend playing the pink ball, it gets easier”

ROHIT SHARMA
India skipper

AUSTRALIA IN PINK-BALL CHALLENGES

Played	Won	Lost	MOST RUNS
12	11	1	Labuschagne 894 14 inns
2015, Adelaide: bt New Zealand by three wickets			
2016, Adelaide: bt South Africa by seven wickets			
2016, Brisbane: bt Pakistan by 39 runs			
2017, Adelaide: bt England by 120 runs			
2019, Brisbane: bt Sri Lanka by an innings and 40 runs			
2019, Adelaide: bt Pakistan by an innings and 48 runs			
2019, Perth: bt New Zealand by 296 runs			
2020, Adelaide: bt India by eight wickets			
2021, Adelaide: bt England by 275 runs			
2022, Hobart: bt England by 146 runs			
2022, Adelaide: bt West Indies by 419 runs			
2024, Brisbane: lost to West Indies by eight runs			

MOST WKTs

Starc 66 23 inns

I don't see a huge shift from red-ball cricket to pink-ball cricket

PAT CUMMINS
Australia captain

The teams (from): INDIA: Rohit Sharma (Capt.), Jasprit Bumrah (Vice-capt.), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Devdutt Padikkal, Shubman Gill, K.L. Rahul, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant (wk), Dhruv Jurel (wk), R. Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep, Prasidh Krishna and Harshit Rana

AUSTRALIA: Pat Cummins (Capt.), Usman Khawaja, Travis Head, Steve Smith, Marnus Labuschagne, Josh Inglis (wk), Alex Carey (wk), Mitchell Marsh, Nathan McSweeney, Mitchell Starc, Scott Boland, Nathan Lyon, Beau Webster, Sean Abbott and Brendan Doggett

Shubman Gill slotting themselves back. The former also put to rest all the speculation over his batting position by clearly stating that K.L. Rahul will open along with Yashasvi Jaiswal. The Indian captain said that the duo played well atop the order at Perth and in the team's interest it is better he himself plays in the middle order.

Whether India steps in without R. Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, like it did at

Perth, remains to be seen. Kohli's unbeaten 100 in the first Test, the manner in which Jasprit Bumrah has occupied head-space among all Aussie batters, and the performance of the two debutants Harshit Rana and Nitish Kumar Reddy, are all handy psychological brownie points. Australia at home tends to be dominant even if India has punctured this perception through series victories over the previous two

tours. Pat Cummins and his men are keen to win and the Australian skipper said: "We had a long break after the first Test and now this second Test seems like a first Test for us."

The 295-run loss at Perth did amplify the external critical voices Down Under, but the host would rather not read too much into these inputs. The worries, though, remain as middle-order bulwarks Steve Smith and Marnus Labuschagne

are searching for runs.

Among the bowlers, Scott Boland, who will replace injured Josh Hazlewood, has the requisite skills as Australia continues to have a potent seam attack while off-spinner Nathan Lyon would chip in too. With the River Torrens flowing nearby, both rivals would hope to cause some ripples at this lovely ground.

Match starts at 9.30 a.m. IST.

Schutt leads the charge as Australia women steamroll India in opener

INDIA IN AUSTRALIA

Press Trust of India
BRISBANE

India put up a dismal show with the bat as Australia stamped its superiority over the visitors with a five-wicket win in the first Women's ODI here on Thursday.

Opting to bat, India collapsed for 100 all out in 34.2 overs with Australia pacer Megan Schutt returning an impressive five-wicket haul.

Australia did experience a minor stutter in the run chase, when Renuka Tha-



Megan's day out: Schutt struck at regular intervals as the Indian batters kept returning to the dugout. GETTY IMAGES

kur struck twice in the same over, before coasting to victory in 16.2 overs.

Debutant opener Georgia Voll (46 not out off 42 balls) produced a mea-

sured knock to ensure a comfortable win. Her effort included a six off Renuka in the cow corner region.

Her opening partner Phoebe Litchfield (35 off 29 balls) was the aggressor in their 48-run stand, smashing six fours in a row, four of those coming off Renuka and two off debutant pacer Titus Sadhu.

The second ODI will be played at the Allan Border Field here on December 8.

The scores:
India 100 in 34.2 overs (Megan Schutt 5/19) lost to Australia 102/5 in 16.2 overs (Georgia Voll 46 n.o., Renuka Thakur 3/45).

Just more of the same, says Scheffler on preparations for the coming year

GOLF

V.V. Ramanan
NASSAU

Scottie Scheffler was both humorous and frank with his replies as the world's top-ranked golfer spoke to the media ahead of the defence of his crown at the Hero World Challenge that began at Albany on Thursday.

The American, who reaped it rich in 2024, said that there would not be much of a change to his preparations after such an incredible year.

"As 2024 went pretty



Scheffler. GETTY IMAGES

mething that happens overnight, it takes a lot of time and I still feel like there are areas of my game that I can continue to improve without making drastic changes to the DNA of what I do."

Queried on his views on the reports of Americans being paid for their services in the Ryder Cup, Scheffler said he had no problem with the idea but added that he was not in the game for the money.

"As far as I'm concerned, I don't play golf for money. I've been playing golf my whole life for free and the money's just a bonus. If somebody wants to

pay us to come out and play, that's great, I'm not going to say no to it."

"I'm going to do the best I can in my community to steward that money well," was the matter-of-fact response from a star who led the Tour in earnings this year, raking in more than \$29 million in prize money.

At the same time, he also echoed Irishman Rory McIlroy's view that players were more than willing to pay to be part of the team in the biennial competition between the USA and Europe.

(The writer is in Bahamas at the invitation of Hero MotoCorp)

AN-NDNE

IN BRIEF



Susan hails 'classy' Gukesh for Arjun appreciation

Susan Polgar was impressed with Gukesh's reply to a question at the press conference about Arjun Erigaisi reaching the magical 2800 Elo mark. The former World champion called the Indian 'classy'. Gukesh had said: "Congrats to Arjun, it's fully deserved. He is the second Indian after Vishy Sir to cross 2800... it's a very important achievement."

"It motivates the others to work even harder. I am also happy for him, but it's also a motivating factor."

Rickelton's ton powers SA on first day of second Test

Ryan Rickelton's maiden Test century spearheaded South Africa to 269 for seven against Sri Lanka on the opening day of the second Test at St. George's Park in Gqeberha on Thursday.

The scores: South Africa 269/7 in 86.3 overs (Rickelton 101, Bavuma 78, Verreyne 48 batting) vs. Sri Lanka.

Zimbabwe pips Pakistan in thriller for consolation win

Zimbabwe grabbed a consolation two-wicket victory over Pakistan in a thrilling final Twenty20 international in Bulawayo on Thursday, with tailender Richard Ngarava getting the team over the line with one ball to spare. The visitors won the series 2-1.

The scores: Pakistan 132/7 in 20 overs (Salman Agha 32) lost to Zimbabwe 133/8 in 19.5 overs (Brian Bennett 43, Abbas Afridi 3/4). **Toss:** Pakistan.

Dabang Delhi plays out thrilling tie against Yoddhas

UP Yoddhas and Dabang Delhi K.C. produced a gripping contest, battling to a thrilling 32-32 tie in their opening match of the Pro Kabaddi League on Thursday. For Yoddhas, Gagan Gowda scored 13 points and Bhavani Rajput bagged 10 points while Ashu Malik picked up yet another Super 10 for Dabang.



Odisha's home scoring run ends, goes goalless with MCFC

Odisha FC and Mumbai City FC played out a goalless draw in an Indian Super League match in Bhubaneswar on Thursday as the Juggernauts were unable to find the back of the net for the first time in a home game after 10 matches.

The game began on a positive note for Odisha as it stepped on the offensive right from the start to assert itself but there were no goals.

Aman, Rohit fashion Hyderabad's thumping win



In good touch: Aman Rao came up with a quickfire 67. VIJAY SONEJI

Sahil Mathur

RAJKOT

Hyderabad wrapped up its Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy campaign with a 10-wicket win over Mizoram in the last league match of Group-A at the Niranjan Shah Stadium ground C here on Thursday.

Aman Rao (67 off 42 balls) and Rohit Rayudu (53 off 28 balls) powered the 124-run chase with six maximums and 11 fours between them as Hyderabad finished the game in the 12th over.

Aman and Rayudu began comfortably even when Mohit Jangra used change-up deliveries to utilise the slow and low surface. The openers often danced down the track to either go over the infield or

find the gap to run, trying to negate the conditions.

Against spinners, this tactic helped the duo clear the fence with ease, targeting the straighter boundary. Fittingly, Rayudu

eastern side raced to 43 in 4.3 overs before Agni was caught off Ravi Teja. Jangra hit a six and added 40 more to the total with Anderson for the second wicket.

Once Nitin Sai claimed Jangra in the 10th over, Mizoram collapsed. Tilak Varma scalped Anderson in the next over and took one more to finish with two for 26. Mizoram failed to raise partnerships and was bundled out for 123 in the penultimate over. Ravi Teja and Nitin Sai took three wickets each.

In the other game, Bengal beat Rajasthan by seven wickets to confirm a place in the quarterfinals, while Rajasthan lost a spot to Madhya Pradesh, which won its final match against Bihar later in the day. Ab-

ishek Porel smashed 78 off 48 balls to finish the 154-run target with nine deliveries to spare.

Sudip Ghamari gave solid support from one end while Porel struck seven fours and four sixes from the other. Even when Rajasthan struck back later to take two quick wickets, including Porel's, Ghamari calmly completed the chase without further hiccups.

Earlier, Mohammed Shami removed opener Abhijeet Tomar off the second ball and later claimed the wickets of Shubham Garhwal and Deepak Chahar to finish with three for 26.

Kartik Sharma and Mahipal Lomror were the only positives in an otherwise poor show by the batters.

TOP MUSHTAQ ALI TROPHY — SEVENTH ROUND SCORES

Group-A: Rajkot: Meghalaya

142/7 in 20 overs (Arpit Bhatwala 31) lost to Punjab 144/3 in 9.3 overs (Abhishek Sharma 106 n.o.);

Toss: Meghalaya; **Points:**

Punjab 4(20), Meghalaya 0(0).

Rajasthan 153/9 in 20 overs

(Kartik Sharma 46, Mahipal Lomror 45, Mohammed Shami 3/26) lost to Bengal 154/3 in 18.3 overs (Abhishek Porel 78, Sudip Kumar Ghamari 50 n.o.);

Toss: Bengal; **Bengal 4(24), Rajastan 0(20).**

Mizoram 123 in 18.3 overs (Jehu Anderson 33, T. Ravi Teja 3/26, Nitin Sai Yadav 3/21) lost to Hyderabad 127/0 in 11.4 overs (Aman Rao 67 n.o., Rohit Rayudu 53 n.o.);

Toss: Mizoram; **Hyderabad 4(12), Mizoram 0(0).**

Group-B: Indore: Baroda 349/5 in 20 overs (Shashwat Rawat 43, Abhimanyusingh Rajput 53, Bhau Pania 134 n.o., Shivalk Sharma 55, Vishnu Solanki 50) bt Sikkim 86/7 in 20 overs; **Toss:**

Baroda; **Baroda 4(24), Sikkim 0(0).**

Gujarat 251/5 in 20 overs (Aarya Desai 73, Urvil Patel 33, Abhishek Desai 47, Axar Patel 56 n.o.);

Toss: Arunachal; **Delhi 4(24), Arunachal 0(0).**

Uttar Pradesh 160/8 in 20 overs (Rinku Singh 45, Bal Krishna 3/27) bt Jharkhand 150 in 19.5 overs (Anukul Roy 91, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 3/6); **Toss:** Jharkhand; **UP 4(20), Jharkhand 0(20).**

Group-D: Visakhapatnam:

Pondicherry 175/8 in 20 overs (Arun Karthik 30, Akash Kargave 58, Kunal Yadav 3/38) lost to

Railways 178/4 in 13.3 overs (Ravi Singh 56 n.o., Ashutosh Sharma 50 n.o.);

Toss: Railways; **Railways 4(14), Pondicherry 0(8).**

Vizianagaram: Odisha 205/7 in 20 overs (Gaurav Choudhary 74, Aashirwad Swain 43 n.o.) lost to Chandigarh 209/8 in 20 overs (Arslan Khan 51, Amrit Lubana 52, Gaurav Puri 37); **Toss:**

Chandigarh; **Chandigarh 4(16), Odisha 0(6).**

Group-E: Hyderabad: Andhra 229/4 in 20 overs (K.S. Bharat 93, Ashwin Hebbar 52, Ricky Bhui 68) lost to Mumbai 233/6 in 19.3 overs (Prithvi Shaw 34, Ajinkya Rahane 95, Shivam Dube 34, Suryansh Shedge 30 n.o., C. Stephen 4/45);

The knockouts: **Dec. 9:** Pre-quarterfinals: Bengal vs Chandigarh; Andhra vs UP; **Dec. 11:** Quarterfinals: Baroda vs TBD (to be decided); Delhi vs TBD; MP vs Saurashtra; Mumbai vs Vidarbha; **Dec. 13:** Semifinals; **Dec. 15:** Final. All at Bengaluru.

No breakthrough yet as draw streak continues

Game 9 of the World Championship also ends in a peace treaty after 54 moves, the sixth straight in the sequence; the match is tied 4.5-4.5 as it heads into a rest day on Friday



Deadlock: Gukesh and Ding haven't been able to find a win for the last six games. FIDE

P.K. Ajith Kumar
SINGAPORE

There wasn't much to choose between Ding Liren and D. Gukesh on Thursday. Just as there hasn't been for much of this match for the World chess championship.

The two previous games may have witnessed some sharp battles, though they both were drawn. Not on this night. It was a peaceful draw in the ninth game at World Resorts Sentosa. They signed the peace treaty after 54 moves.

And the two men could have a bit more peace: they head into a rest day on Friday. They will resume their engrossing battle on Saturday with the scores still le-

vel, at 4.5-4.5. One needs 7.5 points to lift the World title.

In Game nine, Gukesh had the white pieces. In keeping with the theme of his title match, he chose a new opening. He began with moving his Queen's pawn by a couple of squares, and it was a Catalan Opening for the first time here.

Another theme of this match has been Ding's struggle with the clock. He went with that theme for this game, too, as he took on his time to find the right answers to the questions posed by Gukesh's excellent preparation, for which he had thanked his team at the press conference after the previous game.

Ding had to make 21 moves in about half-an-hour while Gukesh had an hour and 20 minutes.

Ding, however, not for the first time here, made up for the lost time, and he even pushed Gukesh behind the clock at one stage.

After an initial exchange of pieces, the Indian had a slightly better position, with some space advantage, but that wasn't going to be enough. The game meandered towards a dead draw position.

The queens were exchanged on the 26th move and the ending featured rook and minor piece with equal number of pawns on the same flank. Any result other than a draw, at this level of chess, was just about as likely as snow in Chennai, Gukesh's hometown.

Then there was none on the board: all the pieces and pawns were exchanged, leaving just the two kings on the board,

GAME 9: MOVES

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 Bb4+ 4. Bd2 Be7 5. Bg2 d5 6. Nf3 0-0 7. 0-0 c6 8. Qc2 Nbd7 9. Rd1 b6 10. Bc3 Bb7 11. Nbd2 Qc7 12. Rac1 Rfd8 13. b4 c5 14. bxc5 Bb6 15. Qb2 Nb6 16. Ba5 dx4 17. Nxc4 Bxf3 18. Bxb6 axb6 19. Bx3 Ra6 20. Qb5 Rxa2 21. Nxb6 Qa7 22. Qb1 Rb8 23. dx5 Ra6 24. Qb5 Bxc5 25. Qxc5 Qxb6 26. Qxb6 Raxb6 27. Rc6 Rx6 28. Bxc6 g5

29. Kg2 Rb2 30. Kf1 Kg7 31. h3 h5 32. Ra1 Rc2 33. Bb5 Rc5 34. Bd3 Nd7 35. g4 f6 36. gx4 f3 37. Kf2 Nc5 38. Ke3 Nxd3 39. exd3 Rc2 40. Kf3 Rd2 41. Ra3 Kg6 42. Rb3 f6 43. Ra3 Kf5 44. Ra5+ e5 45. fx5 Rxd3+ 46. Ke2 Rx3 47. exf6+ Kxf6 48. Kf2 h4 49. Kg2 Rg3+ 50. Kh2 Kg6 51. Rb5 Rg2 52. Rxg5+ Kxg5 53. Kh3 Kg6 54. Kxh4.

Game drawn

staring at each other, just a square apart.

It was indeed an even fight. The accuracy level for both players was over 99% - 99.2 for Gukesh and 99.3 for Ding.

That means they were making the best possible moves – according to the computers, even – at just about every turn.

Liverpool held in Newcastle thriller, Arsenal beats United



Costly error: Newcastle's Schar, right, about to make Liverpool keeper Kelleher pay dearly for his blunder. REUTERS

Agence France-Presse

LONDON

Liverpool's Premier League lead was cut to seven points by Arsenal and Chelsea after the Reds conceded a 90th-minute equaliser in a thrilling 3-3 draw at Newcastle on Wednesday.

Chelsea thrashed 10-man Southampton 5-1 to go second on goal difference ahead of Arsenal, which beat Manchester United 2-0. Manchester City snapped its seven-game winless run by beating Nottingham Forest 3-0 to go fourth.

Mohamed Salah's second-half double was not enough to extend Liverpool's seven-game winning run in all competitions as it failed to win for just the third time in 21 games under Arne Slot. Twice the league leaders were forced to come from behind at St. James' Park as Alexander Isak blasted Newcastle into a 1-0 half-time lead.

Curtis Jones levelled before Anthony Gordon restored Newcastle's lead. Salah twice converted Trent Alexander-Arnold assists to turn the game around, taking his tally for the season to 15 goals.

However, there was a late sting in the tale as a rare error from Liverpool goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher allowed Fabian Schär to squeeze in a late equaliser for the Magpies.

The results: Premier League: Arsenal 2 (Timber 54, Saliba 73) bt Manchester United 0; Aston Villa 3 (Rogers 21, Watkins 28-pen, Cash 34) bt Brentford 1 (Damsgaard 54); Everton 4 (Young 10, Mangala 33, Dawson 49-og, 72-og) bt Wolves 0; Manchester City 3 (Silva 8, De Bruyne 31, Doku 57) bt Nottingham Forest 0; Newcastle 3 (Isak 35, Gordon 62, Schär 90) drew with Liverpool 3 (Jones 50, Salah 68, 83); Southampton 1 (Aribo 11) lost to Chelsea 5 (Disasi 7, Nkunku 17, Madiuke 34, Palmer 76, Sanchez 87).

La Liga: Athletic Bilbao 2 (Berenguer 53, Guruzeta 80) bt Real Madrid 1 (Bellingham 78).

Strikers edge past Eagles, stay on top of the table



Sports Bureau
MUMBAI

Harriet Dart beat Zenep Sonmez 15-10 to pave the way for Hyderabad Strikers' 52-48 victory over Yash Mumbai Eagles in the preliminary phase of the Tennis Premier League (TPL) at the CCI here on Thursday.

Karan Singh, Zenep and Jeevan Nedunczeyan did well in the next three rubbers to keep the Mumbai team close to the top.

Hyderabad stayed on top with 164 points, followed by Mumbai (157) and Rajasthan Rangers (154).

Sumit Nagal did well to win his singles against Bernabe Miralles and the doubles with Vijay Sundar Prashanth to guide Gujarat Panthers to a 53-47 victory

over defending champion Bengaluru SG Pipers 58-42 (Elina Avanesyan bt Kamilla Rakhimova 13-12; S Mukund bt Niki Poona 18-7; Avanesyan & Saketh Myneni lost to Kamilla & Sriram Balaji 10-15; Mukund & Saketh bt Balaji & Poonacha 17-8).

The results (league): Hyderabad Strikers 52-48 (Harriet Dart 27, Zepen Somez 15-10; Benjamin Lock lost to Karan Singh 12-13; Harriet & Vishnu Vardhan lost to Bernabe Miralles 13-12; Rohan Bopanna bt Rithvik

NZ unchanged in its bid to hit back against England

Opener Conway and wicketkeeper Blundell retain their places despite lean form:
Skipper Latham says he expects the green-looking pitch to suit pace



Key players: New Zealand skipper Latham believes he has insurance in the form of spinning all-rounders Phillips and Rachin, in pic., if the pitch breaks up. Right: Root will hope on send down a few over if the need arises. AFP

ENGLAND IN NZ

Agence France-Presse
WELLINGTON

New Zealand named an unchanged team on Thursday as it looks to hit back in the second Test against England, resisting the urge to recall batsman Will Young or a specialist spinner.

A day after the visitor announced it would play the same XI that won the series-opener in Christchurch by eight wickets, the Black Caps followed suit for the match starting in Wellington on Friday.

Four seamers will spearhead the home attack despite spin being the decisive factor in the most recent

Test at the Basin Reserve. Australia's Nathan Lyon took 10 wickets in a 172-run defeat of New Zealand in March and England will be looking for success from its own off-spinner, Shaib Bashir, who claimed four first-innings wickets in Christchurch.

Skipper Tom Latham defended New Zealand's decision to again overlook his squad's lone spinner, Mitchell Santner, who was highly effective during the recent 3-0 sweep away in India.

Latham said he expected the green-looking pitch to suit pace but believes he has insurance in the form of spinning all-rounders Glenn Phillips and Rachin Ravindra if the pitch breaks up.

Meanwhile, England captain Ben Stokes talked

up a healthy rivalry between Joe Root and Harry Brook, who are one and two respectively in the updated ICC Test batting rankings. Veteran Root retained the top spot while Brook is up two places to second following his dynamic 171 in Christchurch.

The third and final Test will be in Hamilton from December 14.

The squads: New Zealand: Tom Latham (Capt.), Devon Conway, Kane Williamson, Rachin Ravindra, Daryl Mitchell, Tom Blundell, Glenn Phillips, Nathan Smith, Tim Southee, Matt Henry, Will O'Rourke.

England: Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Jacob Bell, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ollie Pope, Ben Stokes (Capt.), Chris Woakes, Gus Atkinson, Brydon Carse, Shaib Bashir.

Arthur, 24, will take the place of departing Spaniard Carlos Sainz alongside Charles, 27, at Yas Ma-

ICC chairman Shah vows to take cricket to 'unprecedented heights'

Press Trust of India
DUBAI

Jay Shah, the newly appointed ICC chairman, on Thursday vowed to take cricket to "unprecedented heights" following his first visit to the headquarters of the game's global governing body as its head.

Elected unopposed in August, the 36-year-old Shah became the youngest and fifth Indian to take over as the ICC chair. His term began on December 1.

Shah visited the ICC Headquarters in Dubai for the first time in his role as chairman as he described it as "productive and in-



Jay Shah. FILE PHOTO

spiring." "While I am encouraged by what I have seen, I recognise that this is just the beginning," said Shah in an ICC release.

"The hard work to elevate cricket to unprecedented heights starts now,

and I am confident that together, we will deliver on this vision."

Speaking after meeting with the ICC Board Directors and staff, Shah emphasised the importance of collaboration in shaping the future of cricket.

"This visit provided an invaluable opportunity to connect with my colleagues on the ICC Board. We discussed the initial roadmap and strategy to shape the future of this incredible sport. I was equally delighted to meet the dedicated ICC team working tirelessly behind the scenes to propel cricket forward."

ICC deputy chairman

Imran Khawaja commended Shah for his ambitious vision.

"On behalf of the Board I would like to welcome Jay Shah to the role and share our enthusiasm for his tenure," Khawaja said.

"Shah's ambition and experience will be instrumental in guiding the ICC and the sport into the future."

"It has been a very productive visit for everyone, and we look forward to working alongside him, the Members and ICC team in achieving success."

Shah succeeded Greg Barclay who had held the post of ICC chairman since 2020.

Leclerc and Leclerc to practice for Ferrari

FORMULA ONE

Reuters
ABU DHABI

Charles and Arthur Leclerc will be the first brothers to drive in a Formula One session as teammates when they turn out for Ferrari in opening practice at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix on Friday.

Ferrari posted a picture on X on Wednesday showing the brothers together in matching overalls with the caption 'history makers'.

Arthur, 24, will take the place of departing Spaniard Carlos Sainz along with Charles, 27, at Yas Ma-

rina to fulfil the team's young driver commitments. Great Britain's Oliver Bearman, the team's reserve, is ineligible as he has already taken part in three races this season with Ferrari and Haas.

Bearman took Charles Leclerc's car in practice in Mexico and then replaced the unwell Kevin Magnussen at Haas in the Brazilian Grand Prix.

Brothers have raced each other in Formula One, notably Grand Prix winners Michael and Ralf Schumacher, but not with the same team.

Mexicans Pedro and Ricardo Rodriguez did both race for Ferrari, but not at the same time.

Indian Navy at 2 p.m.

The results (league): Indian Navy 3 (Pawan Rajbar 2, Nitesh 1) drew with Punjab National Bank 3 (Gurssimran Singh 2, Jenifer Singh).

PSPB 5 (Gurjinder Singh 4, Vishal Pandey) bt Indo Tibetan Border Police 0.

Jindal Panther beats Vimal Arion Achievers

Chris Mackenzie scored all six goals for the team but Vimal Arion Achievers was beaten 7-6 by Jindal Panther in a league match of the D'Monde Cup polo tournament at the Army Equestrian Centre, Delhi Cantonment, on Thursday.

The results (league): Jindal Panther 7 (Simran Shergill 4, Siddhant Sharma 2, Shamsher Ali) bt Vimal Arion Achievers 6 (Chris Mackenzie 6).

NEW DELHI ROUND-UP

Indian Navy makes semifinals of Nehru hockey

Indian Navy squandered a 3-0 half-time lead but made the semifinals despite a 3-3 draw against Punjab National Bank (PNB) in the last league match of the SNBP 60th Nehru hockey tournament at the Shivaji Stadium here on Thursday.

In the other match of the day, Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) outplayed Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) 5-0.

In the semifinals on Friday, PSPB will play Comptroller and Auditor General XI at noon, and Railways Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) will be challenged by

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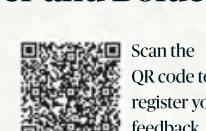
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CORRIGENDUM

The E-tenders invited vide this office letter No. PW-SD/CB-Tender/2024-25-8572-81 dated 21.11.2024, which was schedule as "Starting date for downloading bids 06.12.2024" & "Deadlines for submission of bids 13.12.2024" at 10:30 AM, are hereby postponed due to technical/administrative reason as per detail given below.

Tender Schedule

1. Starting date for downloading bids	21.12.2024	4.00 P.M.
2. Deadlines for submission of bids	30.12.2024	10.30P.M.
3. Date of opening of bids	30.12.2024	11.00 A.M.

Others terms and conditions will remain unchanged.

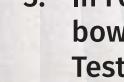
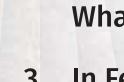
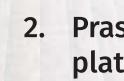
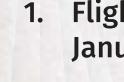
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THE HINDU REWIND 2024 TRIVIA QUIZ

DAY 06



IN BRIEF



Three-time Olympic gold medallist Dujardin suspended

Three-time Olympic dressage gold medallist Charlotte Dujardin was on Thursday banned for a year following a horse-whipping controversy that led to her withdrawal from the Paris Games. The British rider's international suspension, handed out by the International Federation for Equestrian Sports, is backdated to July this year.

Alexandersson named India women's U-20, U-17 coach

Swede Joakim Alexandersson on Thursday was appointed chief coach of the India women's U-20 and U-17 national teams by the All India Football Federation. The 48-year-old Alexandersson has come as part of an agreement between the All India Football Federation and the Swedish Football Association. His stint will commence with a two-month long U-20 national camp beginning in Bengaluru from December 10.

LIVE TELECAST

Australia vs India: 2nd Test, day 1, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 9.30 a.m.
U-19 Asia Cup: Semifinals, India vs Sri Lanka, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 10.30 a.m.; Bangladesh vs Pakistan, Sony Sports Ten 3 (SD & HD) & LIV, 10.30 a.m.
South Africa vs Sri Lanka: 2nd Test, day 2, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 1.30 p.m.
Chess: World Championship, FIDE YouTube Channel, 2.30 p.m.
ISL: Sports 18-3 & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.
PKL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 8 p.m.
Golf: Hero World Challenge, FanCode, 12 a.m. (Saturday).
Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 1 a.m. (Saturday).
Serie A: gxr.world, 11 p.m. & 1.15 a.m. (Saturday).
New Zealand vs England: 2nd Test, day 2, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 3.30 a.m. (Saturday).

Piyush fires Rajasthan boys to the title

Scores 27 points as team beats Karnataka and retains crown; Deepika, Nidhi star for Karnataka as it defeats TN in a closely-fought girls' final



Champions: Karnataka girls and Rajasthan boys who triumphed.

BASKETBALL

Sports Bureau

KOLKATA

Rajasthan boys and Karnataka girls emerged as champions in the 39th National youth basketball championships on Thursday.

Rajasthan rode on top-scorer Piyush Choudhary's 27 points to beat Karnataka 85-67 in the final to retain its title.

Deepika P.P. and Nidhi Umesh scored 16 points apiece to help Karnataka defeat Tamil Nadu 61-54 in

a closely-fought girls' final and regain the trophy.

Tamil Nadu boys and Kerala girls claimed the third spots.

The champions, runners-up and third-place finishers received ₹3 lakh, ₹2 lakh, and ₹1 lakh each.

Khurram Singh (Rajasthan) and Taarusree Tarun (Karnataka) were adjudged the 'Most Valuable Player' among boys and girls and bagged a prize money of ₹50,000 each.

Yadesh Kumar (Tamil Nadu) and Nidhi Umesh (Karnataka) were named the best boys and girls shooters.

The results: Finals: Boys:

Rajasthan 85 (Piyush Choudhary 27, Bupendra Singh 22, Zuber Khan 16, Muhammed Raje Khan 13) bt Karnataka 67 (Samarth Manur 24, Harshan Yatish 19, Aditya Sheno 10).

Girls: Karnataka 61 (Deepika P.P. 16, Nidhi Umesh 16, Mahek Sharma 11, Taarusree Tarun 10) bt Tamil Nadu 54 (Jeffrin A. 15, Smitha Sundares 10).

Third spot: Boys: Tamil Nadu 101 (Aakash L. 35, Priyadarshan A.R. 22, Yashesh Kumar 22, Vishal V. 16) bt Haryana 100 (Shekhar Rathee 24, Veer Singh 22, Ajay 21, Chirag 16).

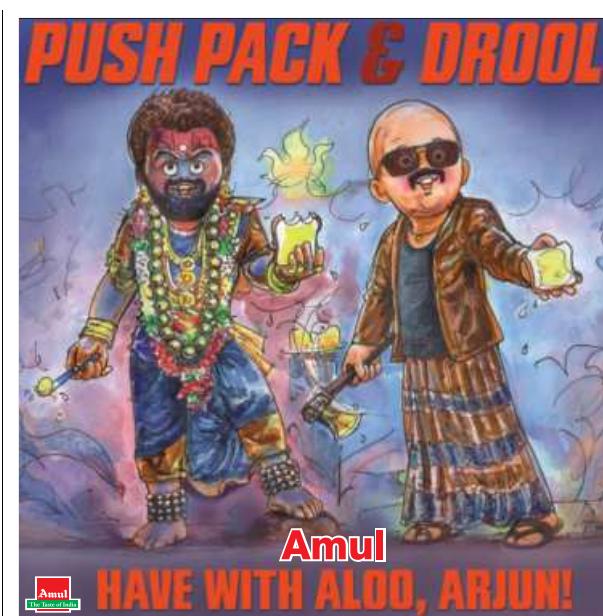
Girls: Kerala 83 (Diya Biju 22, Arthika K. 20, Liya Maria 14, Vaigha 11, Ananymol 8, Claudia 6) bt Maharashtra 54 (Reva Kulkarni 24).

Tanisha beats Odorizzi to make the quarterfinals

TENNIS

Sports Bureau

Sixth seed Tanisha Kashyap beat Caterina Odorizzi of Italy 7-5, 6-3 in the pre-quarterfinals of the \$15,000 ITF women's tournament in Stellenbosch, South Africa, on Thursday.



August and Magnus may fight out the finish of the Karnataka Police Trophy

BENGALURU: August and Magnus may fight out the finish of the Karnataka Police Trophy (1,800m), the main event of the races to be held here on Friday (Dec 6). False rails (width about 5m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

1 ALMATI PLATE (Div. II, 1,400m), rated 20 to 45, 2.00 p.m.: 1. Storm Shadow (2) Trevor 60, 2. Blue Saint (5) Arshad 55.3, Daith (4) M. Rajesh K 55.5, 4. Mystic Air (8) Akshay K 54.5, 5. Supercharge (1) R. Pradeep 54.5, 6. Legendary Impact (7) Shreyas S 54.7, Valencia (3) A. Ramu 54 and 8. Versace (6) S. Shareef 53.5.

1. STORM SHADOW, 2. MYSTICAL AIR, 3. VALENCIA

2 NARMADA PLATE (1,200m), rated 00 25, 5-y-o & over, 6.00 a.m.: 1. Dawn Rising (6) Arshad 62.5, 2. Ice Storm (7) M. Rajesh K 62.5, 3. Lady Invictus (2) Tousif 61.5, 4. Sacred Creator (1) Kiran Rai 61.5, 5. Emeraldo (4) Darshan 59.5, 6. Loving Pearl (9) Chethan K 59.5, 7. Flying Brave (8) R. Pradeep 58.5, 8. Lady Godiva (3) Afzar 58.5 and 9. Burning Arrow (5) Angad 52.5.

1. EMERALDO, 2. BURNING ARROW, 3. ICE STORM

3 DECEMBER PLATE (1,400m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 3.10: 1. Adelanto (1) Tauseef 57, 2. Amusing (9) B.L. Paswan 57, 3. Force Of Nature (2) R. Pradeep 57, 4. Glowing Moonlights (7) Chethan K 57, 5. Noble Cause (5) B. Nayak 57, 6. Torobravo (6) L.A. Rozario

1. CORINTHIAN, 2. MONTERIO, 3. FEMME FATALE

Day's best: CORINTHIAN Double: STORM SHADOW - VYASA Jkt: 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6; Tr (i): 1, 2 and 3; (ii): 4, 5 and 6.

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Can The Adelaide Oval become Siraj's theatre of dreams?

He will have his first taste of pink-ball action starting Friday. The Hyderabad quick has been working hard at nets to familiarise himself with a cherry he isn't accustomed to, and a useful outing against a Prime Minister's XI in Canberra on Sunday means he is as prepared as possible



AP

R. Kaushik

Here, in Australia, was where it all started for Mohammed Siraj. When India travelled down under in November 2020 for a multi-format series played under the giant shadow of the coronavirus, the Hyderabad quick had already made his international debut in both limited-overs formats, but was still a work in progress when it came to the five-day game. He came to Australia as understudy to Jasprit Bumrah, Umesh Yadav and Mohammed Shami, and sat out the opening Test in Adelaide. By the end of the four-Test series, he was perforce compelled to assume the status of the lead paceman with the aforementioned trio picking up tour-ending injuries at various stages.

Not long after the Indians landed in Australia following the delayed IPL 2020 in the UAE, Siraj lost his father, Mohammed Ghaus, after a brief ailment. Had he returned to India at the time, his tour would have been practically over because of the quarantine regulations as they existed. His mother exhorted him to stay on with the team because that's what 'your father would have wanted'. Ravi Shastri, the head coach, drilled home a similar message. Despite restrictions on physical contact with the squad members all in mandatory isolation, Siraj was overwhelmed by the support, understanding and empathy he received from his colleagues. The boy quickly grew up to become a man.

The story behind the man
Siraj's is one of those heartwarming stories that serves as an inspiration for everyone aspiring to dream big. It wasn't until he was in Class Seven that he first played cricket, and his first taste of the cricket ball was only in 2015, when he was 21. Remarkably, that same year, he made his Ranji Trophy debut, and the big breakthrough came the following season, under fortuitous circumstances.

In the one year that Anil Kumble was head coach of the national team, Bharat Arun slipped into a similar role with the Hyderabad state side. The 2016-17 season was to be a watershed in Siraj's career. Under S. Badrinath's captaincy and with Arun steering the ship with his firm but benevolent hand, Hyderabad surged into the quarterfinals on the back of their pace attack with Siraj in the forefront, and M. Ravi Kiran and Chama Milind as

able allies. Siraj led the wicket-taking charts with 41 scalps, Milind took 35 and Ravi finished with 34 sticks as Hyderabad relished the tournament being played on neutral venues and therefore having the opportunity to ply their wares in the north and the east of the country, where there was plenty of assistance for the quicks during the winter.

It was a given that when Arun returned to the Indian set-up in the middle of 2017 after Ravi Shastri replaced Kumble, Siraj would break down the doors to national selection. He made his international debut in a T20I against New Zealand in November that same year, and his first 50-over outing came some 14 months later, on a limited-overs tour of Australia following India's historic 2-1 triumph in the preceding Test series. By the time of the 2020-21 tour to the Antipodes, Siraj had made good on his promise.

Steely resolve
Summoning the fortitude to stay on and process his emotions in physical solitude in the immediacy of his father's demise, Siraj was excellent in his three Tests in Australia in 2020-21. In both Melbourne, where he made a solid debut with five wickets, and in Sydney, he had Bumrah's expertise and experience to feed off. By the time of the decider in Brisbane, with the series level 1-1 and Bumrah took joining the burgeoning list of the injured, the two-Test veteran was expected to lead the way.

India's attack for that Brisbane game read Shardul Thakur (one Test old, and who had bowled only 10 balls in Test cricket on debut before limping off injured two years previously), Navdeep Saini (one Test) and debutants T. Natarajan and Washington Sundar. It was a far cry from the line-up that started the series - Bumrah, Umesh, Shami and R. Ashwin. Australia hadn't lost at the Gabba since 1988, India was without more than half the XI that started the showdown in Adelaide. David vs Goliath? Or a rout of epic proportions?

Siraj gave India a dream start by packing off David Warner in the first over of the Test, but it was in the second innings, with India trailing by 33, that he truly stepped up. He got rid of Marnus Labuschagne, Matthew Wade (first ball) and Steve Smith, and when Thakur held the catch at third-man to see the back of last man Josh Hazlewood, completed his first five-for in Test cricket. In the most extenuating of circumstances, in only his

third outing, in his new avatar as the bowling lynchpin.

He has only two other five-wicket hauls, both overseas and the last of them in January, when he destroyed South Africa on the first morning in Cape Town with six for 15, but especially in Shami's long injury-enforced absences, he has slotted in as an excellent foil for the irrepressible Bumrah, who isn't just the premier pacer in the world right now but also a guide and a mentor to his fast-bowling comrades.

Since that bittersweet Australia sojourn in 2020-21, Siraj has a runner-up medal each in the World Test Championship (2021 and 2023) and the 50-over World Cup (2023) as well as the winner's medal at the T20 World Cup in Bridgetown earlier this year. After a brief lull when the lack of numbers in the wickets column weighed him down and took the fun out of his bowling, a spell of self-introspection and commonsensical messaging from Arun and Bumrah have brought him back on track and Siraj is beginning to more and more resemble the 'streak bowler' who, like England's Stuart Broad, is known to get on a roll and wreak havoc in a single spell, like in Cape Town early this year or in the final of the Asia Cup against Sri Lanka in Colombo in September last year.

Quiet reflection
After Cape Town, India played Test cricket exclusively at home between January and November before embarking for Australia. Siraj figured in eight of those ten matches against England, Bangladesh and New Zealand, but managed just 12 wickets, four of those coming in a single innings against the Englishmen in Rajkot. With Shami still on the sidelines and the tour of Australia, where pace would play a big part, imminent, Siraj sat back and reflected on why success was proving elusive.

"I also spoke to Arun sir and he told me to stop chasing wickets. He urged me to enjoy my bowling and have fun and pointed out that if I did that, the wickets would come on their own," Siraj said the other day. "Jassi bhai (Bumrah) also said pretty much the same thing. That's what I did in Perth; I forgot about wickets and focussed on the process."

That worked wonders. The spring in his step was back, the mouth worked overtime, the ball left his hand beautifully and asked numerous searching questions of Australia's batters.

Bumrah was the star, of course, with five wickets in the first innings and three in the second, but he couldn't have done it all alone. Old buddy Siraj and new colleague Harshit Rana stepped up, Siraj reaping the rewards for a necessary shift in attitude with two for 20 from 13 terrific overs in the first dig and three for 51 on a slower, easier-to-bat surface in the second.

From Friday, Siraj will have his first taste of pink-ball action, all other things being equal. He hasn't played in any of India's previous four day-night Tests and has been working hard at nets to familiarise himself with a cherry he isn't accustomed to. The pink ball, with a harder, more pronounced seam and multiple layers of lacquer to ensure the shine doesn't go off rapidly, isn't anything like its white or red counterparts and can take some getting used to, not just for the batters and the fielders but also the bowlers. Siraj admitted to 'some confusion' initially when bowling with the pink ball, but after numerous overs in the nets and a useful outing against a Prime Minister's XI in Canberra on Sunday, he is as prepared as possible in the reasonable turnaround time between the first and the second Tests.

The need of the hour

Siraj is at that stage of his career where he will feel the need to start his pulling his weight more consistently. His 32 Test appearances have brought him 85 wickets, which might not appear a lot, but he has an average bowled eight and a half overs less in a Test than Bumrah has. In 41 Tests, Bumrah averages 192.7 balls per game; the corresponding number for Siraj is 141.4. Bumrah, the genius that he is, takes a wicket every 43.6 balls, Siraj averages 53.2 deliveries per Test scalp. As far as support acts go, these are terrific numbers, but history will eventually judge a player on statistics, not context, and that's why Siraj will be mindful of adding to the wickets column - without losing sight of the fun element and without going consciously looking for wickets.

Hitting the deck back of a length and getting the ball to nip around awkwardly at pace is a Siraj speciality which the pink ball will facilitate under lights, when seam movement is exaggerated. The Adelaide Oval could so easily turn out to be Siraj's theatre of dreams, with a bit of help from Bumrah and the Aussie batters.

THE GIST

▼ The pink ball, with a harder, more pronounced seam and multiple layers of lacquer to ensure the shine doesn't go off rapidly, can take some getting used to

▼ Hitting the deck back of a length and getting the ball to nip around awkwardly at pace is a Siraj speciality which the pink ball will facilitate under lights

▼ Although he has boasts exceptional numbers (averaging 53.2 deliveries per Test scalp) Siraj will be mindful of adding to the wickets column — without losing sight of the fun element and without going consciously looking for wickets.

SCIENCE

How tuberculosis destabilises the mental moorings of patients

TB is stigmatised due to the fear of contagiousness, association with poverty, and unhealthy behaviour. This leads to both social and self-stigma, which leads to mental health challenges. These mental health issues cause hopelessness, despair, and impaired decision-making skills.

Chapal Mehra
Lancelot Pinto

In 2022, 2.42 million Indians were diagnosed with tuberculosis. A silent crisis, TB is associated with a deep stigma, and those affected have stories of being ostracised and mistreated by families, communities, and even the health system. All of this has a significant impact on the mental health of those fighting TB. In truth, TB and mental illness are co-epidemics.

Evidence suggests that people with mental health issues are more likely to develop TB. Also, TB-related stigma adversely impacts a TB-affected individual's mental health from diagnosis through treatment and its side effects. TB-related mental health issues also significantly diminish an individual's quality of life.

Why does this happen? TB is stigmatised due to the fear of contagiousness, association with the disease with poverty, and unhealthy behaviour. This leads to both social and self-stigma, which leads to mental health challenges. These mental health issues lead to general feelings of hopelessness, despair, and impaired decision-making skills, which can also lead the individual to lose hope in recovery, not be able to follow medical advice, discontinue treatment, etc.

Physical scars

TB treatment is long and comes with extreme side effects. This leads to several mental health issues that affect the individual but sometimes even families who are providing care. Those affected see changes in physical appearance, extreme side effects from rashes to psychotic episodes, and lose self-confidence. It comes as no surprise that the mental toll often parallels the physical damage. Up to 84% of patients with TB have concomitant depression.

It's important for policy and programmes to recognise that the association of TB and poor mental health is bidirectional. While the TB stigma, prolonged treatment, and adverse side effects can have deleterious effects on an individual's mental health, poor mental health can also predispose a person to TB. A weakened immune system known to be associated with mental stress and depression possibly contributes to vulnerability. In addition, addiction to tobacco, alcohol, and narcotics, all associated with mental health disorders, has been associated with a high incidence of TB, suggesting a causal association. The global burden of disease study estimates that in 2017, 197.3 million (95% UI 178.4–216.4) Indians had mental health disorders, making such persons a sizable TB high-risk population.

Standards of care in TB now mandate screening for diabetes and HIV infection among those diagnosed. Shouldn't we also screen for depression and other mental health issues? In a global survey of national TB programmes (NTP's) of 26 countries, it was found that only two NTPs included routine screening for any mental disorder, four assessed alcohol or drug use, and five had standard protocols for the co-management of disorders.

India needs to lead the way with a comprehensive framework and policy on TB and mental health. This should incorporate mental health screening as



A patient is examined at a TB hospital in Gauhati. AP

part of TB care. Studies have used simple questionnaires to screen all patients with TB at the time of diagnosis and these have yielded a good sensitivity. These questionnaires can be self-administered, or administered by community health workers or DOTS providers. Offering psychological support during treatment should also be a standard of care, with the knowledge that treatment can be arduous and stressful.

Screening for mental stress

Offering mental health supportive services is needed not only from the perspective of the individual patient, but also from a perspective of arresting TB transmission. Studies have demonstrated that those with unaddressed mental health disorders are less likely to adhere to treatment, more likely to drop out of the treatment programme, and have a higher risk of poorer outcomes.

Once screened, we need to address the need for psychological support. While the challenges of limited personnel numbers remain, multiple studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of remote digital therapies such as cognitive behaviour therapy for mild depression.

App-based solutions, augmented with artificial intelligence, have been

promising. India could leverage smartphone penetration to deliver such services if they are not available locally. As is the case for most community-based mental health interventions, we need to move out of hospitals and deliver such services close to communities.

There is also an urgent need to engage with communities not just to be spokespersons but also work with those affected through support groups and informational support both to affected individuals and families. This has been done successfully in certain small experiments but now needs to be expanded at a national level to create community-based support systems and destigmatize mental health and TB. The community needs to be stakeholders at all levels in policy and programme design.

When care needs to be escalated, pathways for early referral to psychiatrists and prompt initiation of treatment need to be in place. This is likely to be challenging, considering the dearth of psychiatrists in the country. Given the magnitude of the burden of mental health disorders in the country, training more psychiatrists to serve an unmet need needs to be prioritised.

We cannot eliminate TB from India unless we comprehensively address the

Mental health support is needed not only from the perspective of the individual but also to arrest TB transmission. Studies have demonstrated that those with mental disorders are less likely to adhere to treatment, more likely to drop out, and have a higher risk of poorer outcomes

mental health care needs of TB-affected individuals. Addressing the intersection of TB and mental health demands a collaborative and comprehensive approach. Policymakers must focus on creating integrated policies that provide mental health (MH) support. They also need to allocate resources and prioritise MH services within TB programmes. We need to start by recognising that TB and mental health are commodities, and the integration of mental health care in TB care is needed at every step of the TB care cascade.

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THE SCIENCE QUIZ

What is universal healthcare?

Ramya Kannan

On December 12, the world will observe International Universal Health Coverage Day, and nations will dust off their old promises to provide universal health coverage for their populations. Universal Health Coverage (UHC) encompasses equal access for all to good quality health services and affordability for all. Here's some trivia to update your knowledge of UHC.

QUESTION 1

Primary healthcare is the fulcrum of UHC, at the very root. When did the World Health Organization embrace PHC as a part of its goal of health for all?

comprehensive provision and free services to all. When was the NHS launched?

QUESTION 3

One American President attempted twice to establish UHC in the United States and failed both times. Who was this?

QUESTION 4

The U.S. government claims it is the largest payer of healthcare in the United States, covering nearly 90 million Americans. What are the various insurance schemes through which it does this?

QUESTION 5

In 2018, India launched the Aushman Bharat scheme as its path to reach UHC for its people. It was launched with two components: one was the setting up of a vast network of health and welfare centres delivering comprehensive primary health care. What was the second?



Visual: We all know who this is. Your question is: What is his link with UHC in the US? GETTY IMAGES VIA AFP



The Institute of Mental Health Erragadda in Hyderabad. FILE PHOTO

Why mental health patients continue to stay in institutions after rehab?

Snehal Mutha

On a rainy September morning in Karjat, near Mumbai, 25 patients from the Regional Mental Hospital (RMH), Yerwada, arrived at the Shraddha Rehabilitation Centre, run by an NGO, to be reunited with their families. Among the patients was Lukhi, a woman in her 40s. Lukhi was brought to the RMH in 2016 and lived there for eight years, though she was ready to be discharged within a year.

Lukhi's is not an isolated case. Hundreds continue as residents of government-run mental health institutions for years across India, even after completing treatment, experts and activists say. Last year, the National Human Rights Commission stated that over 2,000 patients who were fit to be discharged continued to remain at 47 government mental healthcare institutions. The NHRC report states: "None of the institutes have taken effective and long-term measures to ensure that mentally ill person can exercise his right to unfettered community living."

In 2022, Mumbai-based psychiatrist Harish Shetty filed a petition in the Bombay High Court, taking up the matter of a woman who had been a resident of the Regional Mental Hospital, Thane, for 12 years. His plea said that this was a violation of the provisions of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, and also violated the rights of the individual. He said families must be kept engaged throughout, and the process should ensure patients return

Hundreds continue as residents of government-run mental health institutions for years across India, even after completing treatment

home as soon as treatment is completed.

Most patients of mental healthcare institutions are brought in by families who do not have access to mental healthcare in their hometowns, are unable to care for their loved ones, or are found wandering. While some get treated and rejoin their families, others remain at institutions for years or even decades. Under the Mental Healthcare Act of 2017, a person cannot be admitted to a hospital/mental health institute for more than 90 days. This admission can be extended, or the patient can be readmitted for up to 90 days in cases of patients who still require care, but the State's Mental Health Review Board (MHRB) has to review these cases. But in practice, the law is often not implemented, say experts.

Mumbai-based psychiatrist Swarali Kondwarkar said institutions do contact families of patients when they have their details, but when patients from other cities/states are involved, this may be neglected. "The institution does not have the will to go the extra mile and find the family. Many families lack the resources to travel and find their relatives. In some of these cases, it is assumed that the patient is abandoned." Language is also a barrier in several cases. In some cases, the patients remain because they have nowhere to go.

Families are often overwhelmed by the process of seeking treatment and caregiving, and acceptance of a diagnosis of a mental illness does not come easily to many, said Padmavati Ramachandran, director, Schizophrenia Research Foundation, Chennai. "Stigma continues to persist against persons with mental illnesses. Families may be afraid to allow relatives to mingle. When this continues, the caregiver also starts withdrawing from social activities; the whole family is then affected and may feel that leaving the patient at an institute is their only choice."

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