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South East Central Railway

E-Tender Notice for miscellaneous work
Sr. No. (1) E-Tender No.DRM-ENGG-BSP-T-113-24-25, Date: 04/12/2024.

Work: Execution of miscellaneous P/Way work for maintenance of track under the jurisdiction of SSE/P/Way/Bilaspur for two years. Tender Value (In Rs.): ₹ 2,49,89,239.01/-, EMD (In Rs.): ₹ 2,75,000.00/-, Completion Period: 24 Months.

Sr. No. (2) E-Tender No.DRM-ENGG-BSP-T-114-24-25, Date: 04/12/2024.

Work: Execution of miscellaneous P/Way work for maintenance of track under the jurisdiction of SSE/P/Way/KGB for two years. Tender Value (In Rs.): ₹ 2,18,46,056.64/-, EMD (In Rs.): ₹ 2,59,200.00/-, Completion Period: 24 Months.

Start date of Submission of Tender: From 11.00 hrs. on 16-12-2024, **Last date of Submission of Tender:** Upto 11.00 hrs. on 30-12-2024. The complete information of above e-Tender Notices is available over websites <https://www.reps.gov.in> Bids other than e-bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders.

Divl. Railway Manager (Engg.)

CPR/10/PR/365 S.E.C.Railway Bilaspur

T South East Central Railway @scrail

Janasanyog /C/5040/ 24/12-Dec-24

Superintending Engineer, P.W.D.
Goalpara Building Circle,
Goalpara

CENTRAL RAILWAY

Chief Administrative Officer
(Construction) / Road Safety Project

Work related to Elimination
of Level Crossings
Open e-Tender Notice No.:
Cons-RSP-01 Dated 04/12/2024

All concerned please note, this tender was earlier published in the newspapers on 07/12/2024, with the wrong dates. The Corrected Tender is as under:

Name of Work : The work for undertaking feasibility study, Detailed project report (DPR) preparation work, detailed design including bid management in connection with elimination of level crossings by construction of grade separators / merger/diversion of roads etc. on Central Railway. Approx. Cost : ₹ 15,69,72,168/- Earnest Money : ₹ 9,34,900/- Completion Period : 12 Months incl. Monsoon. Cost of Tender : ₹ 0.00. Availability of

Tender Documents : Tender document will be available on IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in up to 11.00 hrs. of 06/01/2025.

Office Address : Chief Administrative Officer (Cons) / Road Safety Project's Office, 2nd Floor, GM's Building, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, Mail id : dccecrpcr@gmail.com, Date & Time of Submission & Opening of

Tender : The e-tender duly completed

in all respect should be uploaded electronically up to 11.00 hrs. on

06/01/2025 on the above mentioned website. **Important Note for**

Tenderers: (a) Prospective Tenderers are advised that before tendering their offer electronically, they should refer to the Tender details regarding terms and conditions, eligibility criteria mode of

submission of cost of EMD & tender document. (b) Tender documents and corrigendum issued from time to time are available on the above website at

least 15 days in advance of opening

Tender and may be seen on this

website.

अपने जानवरों को रेल साइन से दूर रखें

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED

Credit Recovery and Management Department
Administrative Office : No. 24, Gandhi Nagar,
Kumbakonam - 612 001. E-Mail id : crrmd@cityunionbank.in, Ph : 0435-2432322, Fax : 0435-2431746

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

The following properties mortgaged to City Union Bank Limited will be sold in Re-Tender-cum Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 9 (6) & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of Rs.10,84,54,67/- (Rupees Ten Crore Eighty Four Lakh Fifty Four Thousand and Sixty Seven only) as on 05-12-2024 together with further interest to be charged from 06-12-2024 onwards and other expenses, any other dues to the Bank by the borrowers / guarantors No.1) Ms. Shree Vimal Sagar Jewellers, 1159, First Floor, Kucha Mahajan, Chandini Chowk, Delhi. 6. Represented by its Proprietor : Manish Jain, Also at, Ms. Shree Vimal Sagar Jewellers, through its Proprietor : Manish Jain, Slo. Vinod Kumar Jain, having its Registered Office, Shop PV 1 No.8, On Upper Ground Floor, Part of built up Property bearing MPL Nos.1158,1159 and 1160, Kucha Mahajan, Chandini Chowk, Delhi - 110006. No.2) Mr. Manish Jain (also legal heir of late Mr. Vinod Kumar Jain), Slo. Vinod Kumar Jain, D-24, Upper Ground Floor, Block-D, C.C.Colony, Opposite Rana Pratap Bagh, Delhi -110007. Also at, Mr. Manish Jain (also legal heir of late Mr. Vinod Kumar Jain), Slo. Vinod Kumar Jain, Property No.87, Block-E, Displaced Jain Co-operative House Building Society Ltd., Situated at Veer Nagar, Jain Colony, Delhi - 110007. No.3) Mrs. Neha Jain, W/o. Manish Jain, Slo. Vinod Kumar Jain, D-24, Upper Ground Floor, Block-D, C.C.Colony, Opposite Rana Pratap Bagh, Delhi -110007. Also at, Mrs. Neha Jain, W/o. Manish Jain, Property No.87, Block-E, Displaced Jain Co-operative House Building Society Ltd., Situated at Veer Nagar, Jain Colony, Delhi - 110007. No.4) Mrs. Veena Jain (also legal heir of Late Mr. Vinod Kumar Jain), W/o. Vinod Kumar Jain, D-24, C.C.Colony, Delhi -110007. Also at, Mrs. Veena Jain (also legal heir of late Mr. Vinod Kumar Jain), W/o. Vinod Kumar Jain, Property No.87, Block-E, Displaced Jain Co-operative House Building Society Ltd., Situated at Veer Nagar, Jain Colony, Delhi - 110007. No.5) Mrs. Hema Agarwal (legal heir-cum-D/o. Late Shri Vinod Kumar Jain), W/o. Shri Atul Agarwal, Residing at H No.5A/2, 2nd Floor, Daryaganj, Central Delhi - 110002. No.6) Mrs. Naina Jain (legal Heir-cum-D/o. Late Shri Vinod Kumar Jain), W/o. Shri Mohit Jain, Residing at H No.22, Tarun Enclave, Pitam Pura, North-West Delhi, Delhi - 110034. No.7) Mrs. Meeta Jain (Legal Heir-cum-D/o. Late Shri Vinod Kumar Jain), W/o. Shri Kapil Jain, Residing at C-376, Ashok Vihar Phase -2, Ashok Vihar, North-West Delhi, Delhi - 110052.

Note : That our 253-Chandini Chowk Branch has also extended Financial Assistance (CUB OSL TERM EMR-BM : 5018200031346) dated 20-09-2017 requested by Nos 2, 4 & 6 and Late Vinod Kumar Jain of you for which Nos.2, 4 & 6 and Late Vinod Kumar Jain of you stood as Co-organis for the facility for a total amount of Rs.3,00,00,000/- at a ROI of 12.4% outstanding balance as of 10-12-2024 is Rs.1,56,20,984/- plus further interest and penal interest of 2.00% with monthly rests to be charged from 06-12-2024 till the date of realization.

Immovable Properties Mortgaged to our Bank
Schedule - D (Property Owned by Mrs. Veena Jain, W/o. Vinod Kumar Jain & Mr. Manish Jain, Slo. Vinod Kumar Jain)

Entire Upper Ground Floor of built up Property bearing No.24, in Block-D(known as D-24), built on land measuring 220 Sq.yards to which 183.94 Sq.mtr, without its roof terrace rights, along with share of still Parking Floor, Block-D, C.C.Colony, Opposite Rana Pratap Bagh, Delhi -110007. Boundaries : East: House No.D-23, West: House No.D-25, North: Road 30 ft. Wide, South: Service lane 15 ft. wide.

Reserve Price : Rs.2,05,00,000/-

(Rupees Two Crore Five Lakh only)

RE-AUCTION DETAILS

Date of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale | Venue
31-12-2024 | City Union Bank Limited, Delhi-Chandini Chowk Branch, 1917-18, 1st Floor, Opp. Gurudwara Sisganj Sahib, Chandini Chowk, Delhi - 110006. Telephone No.011-23929803, Cell No.9350011163.

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

(1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself/herself. (2) The intending bidders may obtain the tender forms from The Manager, City Union Bank Limited, Delhi-Chandini Chowk Branch, 1917-18, 1st Floor, Opp. Gurudwara Sisganj Sahib, Chandini Chowk, Delhi - 110006.

(3) The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the tender form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd., together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of 10% of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of "City Union Bank Ltd.", on or before 12.00 Noon on the date of "Tender-cum-Auction Sale" hereby notified. (4) Inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact Telephone No.011-23929803, Cell No.9350011163. (5) The properties are sold on "As-is-where-is", "As-is-what-is" and "whatever there is" basis. (6) The sealed tenders will be opened in the presence of the intending bidders at 01.00 p.m. on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. Though in general the sale will be by way of closed tenders, the Authorised Officer may, at his sole discretion, conduct an Open Auction among the interested bidders who desire to quote a bid higher than the one received in the closed tender process, and in such an event, the sale shall be conferred on the person making highest bid. The sale, however, is subject to confirmation of City Union Bank Limited. (7) The successful bidder shall have to pay 25% (inclusive of EMD paid) of the sale amount immediately on completion of sale and the balance amount of 75% within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale, failing which the initial deposit of 25% shall be forfeited. (8) The Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful purchaser only after receipt of the entire sale consideration within the time limit stipulated herein. (9) The successful purchaser shall bear the charges payable for conveyance, such as stamp duty, registration fee etc., as applicable under law. (10) The successful bidder should pay the statutory dues (lawful house tax, electricity charges and other dues), TDS, GST if any, due to Government, Government Undertaking and local bodies. (11) The Authorised Officer shall have all the powers to accept or reject the bids or postpone or cancel the sale without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Place : Kumbakonam | Date : 10-12-2024 | Authorised Officer

Regd. Office : 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612 001, CIN - L65110TN1904PLC001287, Telephone No. 0435-2402322, Fax : 0435-2431746, Website : www.cityunionbank.com

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE**DEATH**

SAD DEMISE

R. RAMESH (Age 59)
Sahaja Yoga Meditation Practitioner
Attained the lotus feet of God on Sunday 8th December 2024
Survived by wife Anusha Ramesh
Ph: 97910 28302

Sri M.K. MUTHUVELU,
Director Meticulous Group
Born:13/11/1941 Expired: 11/12/2024
Deeply Mourned by His wife, daughters and their family members.
Cremation done on 11th December 2024
Contact No: 98405 19210

DEATH

G R PUSHPA
09.01.1939 - 07.12.2024
Wife of G R Gangasamy and a mother to not just her children, but the entire Gandharvakkottai Ramaswamy Family, her softness, her enduring love and her giving spirit extended even under the toughest of circumstances not just to the people around her, but every living being. As she joins her beloved husband in his heavenly abode barely eight months after his passing, she leaves a void in the hearts of her loved ones that is irreplaceable.
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E-mail Id : upcl@upcl.org

Notice Inviting e-Tender

(Tender Identification No. 02/IT/UPCL/2024-25 dated: 10-12-2024) For "Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of 25 TB Unified Storage."

Uttarakhand Power Corporation Limited, Dehradun invites tender from eligible bidders for "Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of 25 TB Unified Storage." The references for the tender are given below:-

Tender Identification No.	02/IT/UPCL/2024-25 dated: 10-12-2024
Cost of Tender Document (Tender Fee)	Rs. 2,360.00 (2,000.00 + 360.00) inclusive of GST @ 18%
Earnest Money Deposit/Bid Security	Rs. 71,000.00 (Rupees Seventy One Thousand Only)
Estimated cost (including GST)	Rs. 35.40 Lakh
Last Date & Time of submission of Bid (online & offline mode)	26th December-2024 upto 12.00 Hrs.
Due Date of Opening of Technical Bid	26th December-2024 at 16:30 Hrs.
Due Date of Opening of Financial Bid	To be notified later

Detailed document, eligibility criteria and prescribed format for submission of bids will be available on website www.uktenders.gov.in and www.upcl.org from 11th December-2024 onwards. In case any of the above date is a holiday, the due date shall be the next working day at the same time. Any amendment/corrigendum in the future against the above mentioned tender shall be uploaded at www.uktenders.gov.in and www.upcl.org.

Superintending Engineer (IT, SCADA & ERP)

No.: 673/EE(CM)/UPCL/A-2 Date: 10.12.2024
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LEGAL NOTICE**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT** (Order V, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

IN THE COURT OF SH. SURINDER S. RATHI, LD. DISTRICT JUDGE (COMMERCIAL COURT)-11, CENTRAL DISTRICT, ROOM NO. 310, TIS HAZARI COURT, DELHI CASE NO. CS(CEOMM)/5178/2021

NEXT DATE OF HEARING 19.12.2024

ICICI BANK LTD.

Vs.

DIWAKAR KUMAR RAI

To,

NETIZEN ENGINEERING PVT. LTD. BRANCH MANAGER

PLOT NO



FURTHERING BOARD'S RIGHTS

Lok Sabha clears amended Railways Bill

NEWS » PAGE 11

WHO MALARIA REPORT 2024
India makes up half of Southeast Asia's cases

NEWS » PAGE 12



Unleashing American Energy
TRUMP'S AGENDA
'Ukraine crisis bigger priority than West Asia'

WORLD » PAGE 14

U.K. BILL

The long and complex road to assisted dying

Issue linked to dignity, alleviation of suffering

EDITORIAL » PAGE 6



IT'S 6.5-6.5

Ding defends well as Game 13 ends in draw

SPORT » PAGE 15

IN BRIEF



Subramania Bharati continues to inspire us: PM

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday released a compendium of the complete works of Tamil poet and freedom fighter Subramania Bharati and hailed his contributions. » Page 4

India does not endorse Hasina's statements: Misri

NEW DELHI

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Wednesday said India does not endorse deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's criticism of the interim government in Bangladesh and it remains a pinprick in India-Bangladesh relationship. » Page 10

Parliament sees chaos amid BJP-Cong. tussle

Lok Sabha sees disruptions over Congress leaders raising Manipur issue; both Houses witness BJP leaders accusing the Opposition party of association with American billionaire investor Soros

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha failed to function on Wednesday with uproar from Treasury and Opposition benches over the no-confidence notice against House Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar, while the Lok Sabha witnessed repeated adjournments and sparring despite getting off to a smooth start following a meeting between Speaker Om Birla and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi.

"I held a meeting with the Speaker and told him that derogatory comments against me should be expunged. The Speaker said he would look into it," Mr. Gandhi told presspersons after his morning meeting.



Taking a stand: Opposition members continue their protest in Parliament on Wednesday. ANI

However, the Lower House witnessed a ruckus in the afternoon when the Congress's Deputy Leader, Gaurav Gogoi, raised the issue of violence in Manipur and accused the government of using the "Soros" issue to hide its failures. Hitting back, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal ac-

cused the Congress leadership of having links with U.S. billionaire investor George Soros-funded outfits that were allegedly working to destabilise India.

In the post-lunch session, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee got into a spat af-

ter the Trinamool leader made a personal remark against Mr. Scindia. Though Mr. Birla expunged the remark and Mr. Banerjee apologised, the Minister said, "I don't accept his apology".

Between repeated interruptions, the Lower House passed a Bill pertaining to the Railways.

In the Rajya Sabha, Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju defended the Chairman and criticised the Opposition for the notice, with Mr. Nadda too accusing the Congress of colluding with Mr. Soros to "destabilise" the country.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10
A WIDE AISLE
» PAGE 6

Protect Places of Worship Act, say multiple pleas in SC

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI



The Shahi Eidgah mosque committee is also among the petitioners.

that its results would impact claims that the mosque was situated on the Krishna Janmabhoomi.

Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind filed a writ petition arguing that the filing of multifarious suits in local courts to "reclaim" temples destroyed by Muslim invaders in the 16th century was nothing but retrogression.

The Shahi Eidgah mosque committee has also sought permission to intervene in the case, arguing

Opposition plans motion to impeach U.P. judge

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Opposition has started efforts to move an impeachment motion against Allahabad High Court judge Shekhar Kumar Yadav for his controversial statements at a recent Vishwa Hindu Parishad event.

Independent MP and senior lawyer Kapil Sibal has initiated the work to submit separate notices to both Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to impeach Justice Yadav.

The notice needs the endorsement of 50 MPs in the Rajya Sabha to be considered by the Chairman or 100 MPs in the Lok Sabha to be taken up as an impeachment motion in the Lok Sabha.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10
MOSQUES FACING PETITIONS
» PAGE 8

Rain check



Choppy sea: A boat navigates the rough waters off the coast of Pamban in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu on Wednesday. A low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal is expected to bring intense rain to the delta districts of the State. L. BALACHANDAR

Our drive against manual scavenging will continue: SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday vowed to go to "any extent possible" to ensure that manual scavenging and hazardous manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks are wiped out, saying the issue dealt with the question of human dignity.

"This is something very close to our hearts and minds. We will not leave it. We tell you, we will go to any extent to get our judgment of October 2023 complied with, come what may," a Special Bench of Justices Sudanshu Dhulia and Aravind Kumar addressed the Central go-

vernment. The Centre was represented by Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati.

October judgment

The Supreme Court was referring to its October 20, 2023 judgment in which it had issued directions to the Union and State governments to take measures to eradicate manual scavenging and hazardous cleaning across the country.

The court had noted that these "inhuman" occupations continue, often with fatal results when workers die of asphyxia.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

Court relaxes Sisodia's bail condition

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

days and Thursdays at 10 a.m.

The apex court had granted him bail in August in both the CBI case connected to the Delhi liquor policy case and the ED's money laundering charges linked to the case. A Bench

of Justices B.R. Gavai and K.V. Viswanathan, which had allowed him bail, deleted the condition, saying it found it quite unnecessary.

The relaxation of the bail condition is common to both CBI and ED cases, the court said.

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By G. Rajsekhar Sir

Date : 14, 15, 16 Dec., Time : 12 pm to 2.30 pm

Mode : Online

UPSC INTERVIEW ORIENTED CURRENT AFFAIRS SESSION (Online Mode)

(i) International Relations

By Shri Skand Ranjan Tayal, IFS (Retd.)

Date : 20 Dec., Time : 5 pm to 7 pm

(iii) Environment/Ecology & Disaster Management

By Vice-chairman Sikkim State

Disaster Management Authority

Date : 22 Dec., Time : 5 pm to 7 pm

(v) Miscellaneous Current Affairs

By Shri Arpit Sir, Date : 24 Dec., Time : 5 pm to 7 pm

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW ORIENTED SESSION (For Engineering Background UPSC Aspirants)

By Shri A.K. Mangotra, IAS (Retd.) Former Secretary Govt. of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, (B.E. from BITS Pilani)

Date : 26 Dec., Time : 5 pm to 7 pm, Mode : Online

Meet to Former Chairman of UPSC through "Mentorship Program" (One-to-one Session)

Date : 4 Jan. 2025, Time : 10.30 am to 4 pm, (Mode : Offline)

with Prof. D.P. Agarwal

Former Chairman, UPSC

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Indian scientists develop novel gene therapy to provide one-time solution for haemophilia

Jacob Koshy

NEW DELHI

Scientists in India have reported success with using gene therapy to treat severe haemophilia A, a rare hereditary condition resulting from a faulty gene which triggers severe, spontaneous, and potentially fatal bleeding episodes.

Though only tested on five patients in Tamil Nadu so far, none of them have reported bleeding episodes over an average follow-up period of 14 months. It is not unusual for those with haemophilia to have weekly bleeding episodes, requiring frequent treatment. The results of the study were re-



Costly affair: Per-patient cost of treating haemophilia in India is reported to be ₹2.54 crore over a 10-year period. GETTY IMAGES

ported in the peer-reviewed *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) earlier this week.

The trial was led by Alok Srivastava of the Centre for Stem Cell Research (CSCR) at the Christian Medical College in Vellore, and financially supported by the Union Department of Biotechnology.

One-time solution

The typical treatment requires in-

jections at frequent intervals, with infusions of a "clotting factor" to prevent bleeding. Gene therapy treatments, however, promise to be a one-time solution. A gene introduced into the body teaches it to create enough of the clotting factor that can prevent such haemorrhage.

Haemophilia can be classified as minor or severe depending on the percentage of clotting factor present. Haemophilia A, the more common version of the condition, is caused by the absence of a blood-clotting factor called Factor VIII. Even though haemophilia is a rare disorder, India has the world's second-largest patient pool, with an estimated 40,000

to 1,00,000 patients.

Those with Severe Haemophilia A have less than 1% of the clotting factor, and manage the condition with repeated Factor VIII replacement, monoclonal antibodies, or injecting substances that mimic Factor VIII to stop or prevent bleeding. Because of the nature of the condition and the relatively low numbers of patients, treatment can be expensive. A March 2024 research study in the journal *Helix* estimates the per-patient cost of treating a haemophilia patient in India to be \$300,000 (or ₹2.54 crore) over a 10-year period.

CONTINUED ON

» PAGE 10

540 touts arrested from airport this year for duping passengers

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Over 540 touts have been arrested from the IGI Airport so far this year, the police said on Wednesday.

Touting involves coercing or enticing passengers with the false promise of

cheaper services, including taxi rides, hotel stays, and shopping tours, which leave them vulnerable to harassment, financial exploitation, and safety risks.

"The arrests are as a result of an extensive crackdown on touting activities at the airport," said DCP

(IGI) Usha Rangnani. As part of the drive against touting, which is prohibited under the Delhi Prevention of Touting and Malpractices against Tourists Act, the police solved several high-profile cases, including one in which a foreign national was duped

of ₹98,700 in September, said the DCP.

"The tout, posing as a helpful resident, had falsely informed the passenger that Delhi was witnessing heavy protests, causing all hotels and public transport to shut down. The tout and his associates lured the

passenger into their trap with promises of alternative arrangements," added the DCP. The accused charged the foreign national ₹98,700 on the pretext of arranging a private vehicle to Varanasi and abandoned him on the roadside, said the senior officer.

THE HINDU REWIND 2024 TRIVIA QUIZ

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OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE
NIT No.: LWS-TC-OPN-TA-TPM-2024. Date: 10.12.2024. Name of work: Work of rewinding and repair of coil of Main Stator, Exciter Rotor, Rotor Shaft, Main rotor pole connection supporting ring, Exciter stator and pole (Main field) of TA of DPC & Work of rewinding and repair of TM 4303 BHEL Armature (As per scope of work) **Estimated Cost of work:** Rs.71,44,777/- (Seventy One Lakh Forty Four Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy Seven) Place of work: Loco & Wagon workshop Ajmer. Bid Security/Earnest money deposit: Rs.1,42,900/- (Rs. One Lakh Forty Two Thousand Nine Hundred only) Last Date & Time for submission and opening of E-tender: 31/12/2024 Up to 11.00 Hrs E-tender will be opened at 11.15 HRS on same day. Due to indispensable reasons bid opening schedule may change. Website particular where complete details of e-tender can be seen and participated: www.reps.gov.in (Note- This is E-tender so tenderer can participate through e-tendering process only on mentioned website within bidding period) 1421-AR/24

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एक बड़ा उत्तमता की ओर

Yesterday's Winners:
1. Sidharth M Joy, Trivandrum | 2. Kaniyan, P, Chennai | 3. Shyam, B, Bengaluru

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every day win gift vouchers.

Answer to yesterday's quiz:
1. Jyoti Ratne
2. All We Imagine As Light
3. Kozhikode

Yesterday's Winners:

Police launch drive against immigrants living illegally in city

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Delhi police on Wednesday started a door-to-door drive to identify Bangladeshi residents staying in the city illegally.

The drive was conducted in several areas in south-east Delhi, including Shaheen Bagh and Jamia Nagar, said a senior officer, adding that residents were asked to show their Aadhaar and voter cards.

"Some people were identified as suspects. They may be sent to detention centres after the conclusion of the legal process," said a senior officer.

Some people were identified as suspects. They may be sent to detention centres after the conclusion of the legal process, said a senior officer



Police personnel at the spot where crude bombs were hurled on Tuesday. FILE PHOTO

Terror outfit's role suspected in bomb attack in Gurugram

Press Trust of India GURUGRAM

Terror outfit Babbar Khalsa International's (BKI) involvement in the crude bomb attack on a Gurugram bar has come to light, officers said on Wednesday.

This was revealed during the interrogation of a man who was arrested red-handed while hurling crude bombs that exploded outside the bar in the Sector 29 market on Tuesday, a senior police officer said.

The L-G office had earlier written to several senior officials in the national capital, including Mr. Dharmendra and Mr. Arora, on November 14, citing a sudden spurt in the number of illegal immigrants.

In it, Raj Niwas had asked the police chief to conduct a month-long "special drive" to identify illegal immigrants and take action "in coordination with Central agencies".

In the letter, Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena's office had cited the demand by "prominent Ulemas" for a city court remanded Taliyan in police custody for seven days. The accused, who was carrying a yellow and blue striped bag, was overpowered by the policemen deployed in the area on Tuesday night. A country-made weapon, two crude bombs, and a phone were seized from him, said the police.

विशेष शाखा, पुलिस मुख्यालय, मध्यप्रदेश, भोपाल
क्रमांक-विधा / स्टोर / 2024-25 (576) दिनांक- 09.12.2024
निविदा सूचना का शुद्धिपत्र
विशेष शाखा पुलिस मुख्यालय की निविदा सूचना क्रमांक SB / Store / 2024-25 (535). Dated - 13.11.2024 द्वारा उपकरण CCTV Surveillance System High Court Jabalpur, Indore & Gwalior के क्रम हेतु ई-निविदा सूचना जारी की गई है। उपरोक्त आमतिर निविदा में क्रम विधे जाने वाले उपरोक्त उपकरण की समय-सारणी में आशिक संशोधन के संबंध में "शुद्धिपत्र" (Corrigendum) जारी किया गया है जो website <https://mptenders.gov.in/nicgep/app> पर निविदा की वेबसाइट www.mppolice.gov.in पर उपलब्ध है।

सहायक पुलिस महानिरीक्षक
विशेष शाखा (जी), म.प्र. भोपाल
दृश्या क्र. 0755-2443654
ईमेल: sec25-ab@mppolice.gov.in

PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJNA
NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)

The Chief Engineer (S2) HPPWD Shimla on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system for construction of roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna for each of the following works including their maintenance for five years from the eligible and approved contractors registered with HPPWD/CPWD/PST/Railways/Other State Govt/Central Govt. Agencies. Non registered bidders may submit bid, however, the successful bidder has to register in appropriate class with appropriate authority in HP/PWD.

Sr. No	Name of Distt.	Package No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (In lacs) Excluding 15% GST	Total cost (In lacs)	Period of completion	Bid Security
					Const. Cost		
1.	Shimla	HP-09-354	C/O Balance work of Dhara Kokoi Kangri road km 0/0 to 7/720 (SH- C/O R/B walls CD works, PCC Drain,PCC parapets, logo Sign Board M/T , KM Stone etc. and five years routine maintenance under pkg.HP09-354)	250.01	43.36	293.37	18 months

- Date of release of invitation for bids through e-procurement 10.12.2024
- Cost of bid from cost of Bid form Rs.5000 (non-refundable) in shape of Demand draft in favour of Executive Engineer HPPWD Division Rohru.
- Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission - The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted online on website www.pmsgtenders.gov.in. The bidder would be required to register in the website which is free of cost. For submission the bids, the bidder is required to have valid digital signature certificate (DSC) from one the authorised certifying authorities (CA) Aspiring bidder who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in PMGSY may obtain the same from the website: www.pmsgtenders.gov.in. Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering bidders already possessing valid digital signature issued from authorised CAs can use the same in this tender.
- * Non registered bidders may submit bids: the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.
- Submission of original documents: The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security in approved form and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provision of clause 4.4B(a) (ii) TB with Superintending Engineer 14th circle HPPWD Rohru address and detail of office where to be submitted on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the bid either by registered post or by hand .
- Last date/ Time for receipt of bid through e-tendering last date/time for receipt of bids through e-tendering on dated 16.12.2024 up to 6:00PM.
- The site for the work is available.
- Only online submission of bids is permitted, therefore bids must be submitted online on website www.pmsgtenders.gov.in. The technical qualification part of the bids will be opened online at 11:00 A.M. on 17.12.2024 in the office of Superintending Engineer 14th circle HPPWD Rohru by the authorized officers. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened online on the next working day at the same time.
- The bidder is not required to quote his rate for routine maintenance. The rates to be paid for routine maintenance are indicated in the bill of quantities. Further, the payment for routine maintenance to the contractor shall be regulated based on his performance of maintenance activities.
- All the required materials like Cement/Steel/Bitumen/Explosive etc shall be arranged by contractor at his own level.
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than ninety days after the deadline date for bid submission.
- To qualify for a package of contract made up of this for which bids are invited in the same NIT, the bidder must demonstrate having experience and resources sufficient to meet the aggregate of the qualifying criteria for the individual contracts.
- Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The Employer shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any update, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

(Pramod Kumar Upeti)
Superintendent Engineer
14th circle HPPWD Rohru
Tel: 01781241713, 240921
email-hp-sh12@nic.in
For Chief Engineer HPPWD
Nigam Vihar Shimla-1712002

HP / 383/24-25

HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

Govt. of Bihar
Planning & Development Department
Old Secretariat, Bihar, Patna-800015.

Notice inviting e-tender no: P&DD/RFP-03/2024-25
(Through e-procurement mode only)
(Website-www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

Tender no: P&DD/RFP-03/2024-25

The Planning & Development Department Government of Bihar, Patna invites e-tender under two bids system from reputed Agencies for Selection of Agency for To provide human resource in Yuva Nishchay call center for Bihar Student Credit Card Scheme, Mukhyamantri Nishchay Swayan Sahayata Bhatta Yojana and Kushal Yuva program. The RFP Document can be downloaded from the website-www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in. The bid document should accompany the cost of RFP document in the form of e-payment mode in rupees.

This invitation to bid is open to all bidders meeting minimum eligibility criteria as mentioned in this RFP.

S.N.	Scope of Work	RFP Document Fee (inclusive of GST @18%) to be paid through e-payment mode (In Rupees)	Tender Processing Fee (None Refundable) (inclusive of GST @18%) to be paid through e-payment mode (In Rupees)	Earnest Money Deposit (In Rupees)	Time of Completion
1	To provide human resource in Yuva Nishchay call center for Bihar Student Credit Card Scheme, Mukhyamantri Nishchay Swayan Sahayata Bhatta Yojana and Kushal Yuva program.	Rs. 5,900/-	Rs. 5,90/-	Rs. 2,00,000/- (Two Lakhs Only)	Within 30 days from date of agreement

Tender Schedule/Programme

S.N.	Activity	Date/Time: Duration
1.	Date of issue of notice inviting tender	10.12.2024
2.	RFP Release date (Start Date)	12.12.2024 3:30 PM (www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
3.	Pre-Bid Meeting	16.12.2024 - 03:00 PM Venue- Planning & Development Department, Room No-164 Old Secretariat, Bihar, Patna-800015.
4.	Last Date/Time for submission/uploading of offer/Bid	03.01.2025 up to 5:00 PM
5.	Date & Time for opening of technical bid	06.01.2025 - 11:00 AM (www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in) Venue- Planning & Development Department, Room No-164 Old Secretariat, Bihar, Patna-800015
6.	Nodal Officer for any queries	Himanshu Kumar Rai (Special Secretary) Email: - sec-py-plande-bih@nic.in Mobile No: 8809972596
7.	Financial Bid Opening Date and Time	To be Notified Venue- - Planning & Development Department, Room No-164 Old Secretariat, Bihar, Patna-800015

Detailed description of the item and instruction for submitting bid/offer can be downloaded from e-tender website (www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
This information is available on state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar also

Special Secretary
(Planning & Development Department)
Bihar, Patna.

PR- 14582 (Planning) 2024-25

नशे की मार, बर्बाद करे सुखी परिवार।

CM YK

M ND-NDE

No alliance with Cong. for Assembly poll, reiterates AAP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Wednesday said it will not enter into a tie-up with the Congress for the Delhi Assembly poll.

In a post on X, AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal said, "There is no possibility of any alliance with the Congress."

The speculation of a tie-up began again after Mr. Kejriwal met various INDIA bloc leaders on Tuesday.

Timings DELHI

THURSDAY, DEC. 12	
RISE 07:05	SET 17:26
RISE 14:44	SET 03:33
FRIDAY, DEC. 13	
RISE 07:05	SET 17:26
RISE 15:27	SET 04:42
SATURDAY, DEC. 14	
RISE 07:06	SET 17:27
RISE 16:17	SET 05:53

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	23	05
Safdarjung	23	05
Palam	20	06

Delhi Palam Today
22°C The weather will be dry. Shallow fog and mist will occur in cold morning. Day will be pleasant with moderate cool winds. Night will be cold.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
21°C Morning will be cold with mist and haze. Day will be pleasant with cool breeze. Night also will be cold and hazy. Dry weather to continue.

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THE HINDU
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Kejriwal leads AAP leaders to CEC over 'voter removal', seeks no further deletion

Cong. too expresses concern, sees conspiracy to 'cut count of voters from particular community'; BJP says ruling party in 'panic' in anticipation of defeat in the upcoming Delhi Assembly election

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A n Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) delegation led by national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday met Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar, urging him to "safeguard the integrity of the electoral process" by disallowing further deletion of voters ahead of the Delhi Assembly poll.

The Congress too expressed concern over the issue, with its former Delhi vice-president Chatterjee demanding a probe by the Election Commission (EC) into the "conspiracy to reduce the number of voters from a particular community".

Delhi's ruling AAP has been raising the issue for quite some time, with its leaders alleging that names of voters are being deleted from the electoral roll in the party strongholds at the "behest of the BJP".

However, the BJP dismissed the allegation, with its Delhi chief Virendra Sachdeva saying the AAP delegation's meeting with Mr. Kumar shows the "panic" in the ruling party in anticipation of defeat in the election due in February next year.

However, Mr. Kejriwal, a former Delhi Chief Minister, accused the BJP of "orchestrating a conspiracy" to remove voters in the



Arvind Kejriwal and other AAP leaders leaving the Chief Election Commissioner's office after a meeting. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Capital, especially those belonging to marginalised communities.

"We submitted 3,000 pages of proof to the CEC showing how the BJP has been conspiring to delete votes," Mr. Kejriwal told reporters.

"We submitted how, in Shahdara, a BJP worker gave a list of 11,800 voters for deletion and how the Election Commission worked on this silently," he added.

Mr. Kejriwal said the CEC assured them that no mass deletion of votes would take place and if they decide to delete any name, a field inquiry will be conducted by the area booth-level officer (BLO), who will be accompanied by representatives from different political parties.

He said Mr. Kumar told them that if anyone makes more than five entries for the deletion of voters, the SDM concerned will carry out a field inquiry.

Nefarious designs'

Former Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia and Rajya Sabha member Raghav Chadha also accused the BJP of submitting bulk applications to remove voters' names from the electoral rolls fearing defeat in the upcoming election.

Mr. Sisodia alleged that the BJP is using "nefarious means" such as submitting mass applications to delete names of 22,000 voters from the electoral rolls in seven Assembly seats.

"These applications target people who have lived at the same address for years. BJP workers are actively involved in getting

thousands of votes deleted in various constituencies," he added.

The Delhi BJP chief equated Mr. Kejriwal with a "desperate commander giving excuses to hide his party's imminent defeat in the Assembly election". Mr. Sachdeva said whether it is BJP workers or common people, "everyone is actively working to eliminate fake votes from their respective areas".

"Wherever people find information about votes being cast by Rohingya, Bangladeshis, or other infiltrators, they are filing objections themselves," he said in a statement.

Statistics baffling'

Meanwhile, the former Delhi Congress vice-president said it was baffling that while the number of voters in the Capital increased by more than 10% between 2018 and 2020, the increase in the past four years has been just 3.06%.

In 2008, Delhi had about 1.07 crore voters and their number increased to over 1.47 crore by 2020, Mr. Singh said in a party release, adding that the number increased to just over 1.53 crore in the past four years. "After assessing the data of 70 Assemblies, we found that 17 segments reported a decrease in voters," he added, demanding a probe into the issue.

Delhi govt. must fulfil vows to auto drivers now: BJP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A day after AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal reached out to autorickshaw drivers at the Hazrat Nizamuddin railway station on Wednesday to talk about the AAP chief's "hollow promises". "Kejriwal claims that if he

gets another chance, he will fulfil the promises made to auto drivers. But his government is in power now. Why not address these issues immediately?" Mr. Sachdeva told reporters.

THE HINDU GROUP

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Former Chairman,
Union Public Service
Commission (UPSC)



P K Sidharth Ramkumar
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Kiran PB
IPS,
(National Interview Topper, 2022)



Soma Basu
Senior Deputy Editor,
The Hindu (Moderator)

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KAROL BAGH, DELHI

17 DEC, 9 AM | 29 NOV, 5 PM

GTB NAGAR, DELHI

13 DEC, 6 PM | 23 DEC, 8 AM



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4
JANUARY

5
DECEMBER

16
DECEMBER

9
DECEMBER

3
DECEMBER

5
DECEMBER

5
DECEMBER

ADMISSION OPEN: CHANDIGARH | PUNE
13 DEC, 8 AM | 23 DEC, 11 AM

जयपुर
16
DECEMBER

जोधपुर
3
DECEMBER

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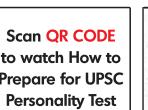
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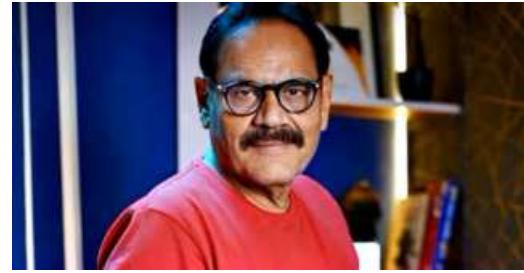


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IN BRIEF



'Welcome' actor Mushtaq Khan kidnapped, escapes

Actor Mushtaq Khan, best known for his roles in films like "Welcome" and "Stree 2", was allegedly kidnapped on the pretext of being invited to an event in Meerut, police said on Wednesday. The actor managed to escape after being held captive for a day. A complaint regarding the incident was filed by the actor's event manager, Shivam Yadav, at the Bijnor Kotwali police station on Tuesday. Just last week, actor-comedian Sunil Pal filed a similar complaint alleging that he was abducted en route to Uttarakhand for a show. The case is being probed by Uttar Pradesh police.

Race to save 5-year-old boy stuck in Rajasthan borewell

Rescuers are racing against time to pull out five-year-old Aryan who is stuck in a 150-feet-deep borewell in Rajasthan's Dausa for more than 50 hours. The incident occurred at around 3 p.m. on Monday and rescue operation began one hour later. As they dig a parallel borewell to reach the child, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel say there are myriad challenges in the operation. The water level in the area may be around 160 feet and difficulty in capturing any movement of the child on camera due to steam underground. NDRF commandant Yogesh Kumar said drilling machines have dug up to 110 feet. PTI

J&K govt. mulls allowing trekkers to carry satellite phones in remote areas

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir government is mulling over allowing the use of satellite phones by trekkers in high altitudes of the Kashmir valley to boost adventure tourism.

Raja Yaqoob, Director, Tourism Department, Kashmir, on Wednesday revealed that the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) were "in advanced discussions to allow the use of satellite phones in remote areas of Jammu and Kashmir".

Connectivity issue
Mr. Yaqoob highlighted that the initiative was aimed at addressing network connectivity in high-

The Union Territory is witnessing growing footfall of domestic and foreign tourists who are inclined towards trekking

altitude and inaccessible regions. "It will ensure the safety of tourists and trekkers," he said.

Security angle
Satellite phones have been under security agencies' scanner in Kashmir after militants used them to communicate in the Valley. Official sources said security forces keep a close tab on the use of such phones and have carried out several raids in the past to curb illegal use of these gadgets.

Of late, J&K is witnessing growing footfall of domestic and foreign tourists who are inclined towards trekking and high-altitude locations in the Union Territory; it has received over 40,000 foreign visitors this year. "Every day, 200 to 500 foreign tourists arrive in Kashmir," Mr. Yaqoob said.

Funds approved
Earlier this year, the government approved funds for advanced trekking instruments, tents, skiing equipment and a snow groomer machine to maintain slopes in Kashmir tourist hubs, especially Gulmarg. "This machine will be procured after 30 years, ensuring better facilities for winter sports," the officer said.

Gangster-terror nexus: NIA conducts searches in Punjab and Haryana

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday searched multiple locations in Punjab and Haryana in connection with a gangster-terror nexus case against banned Khalistan Terrorist Force (KTF) and involvement of Canada-based "terrorist" Arsh Dalla.

The searches were carried out at the premises of suspects linked to arrested accused Baljeet Maur, as well those connected with Dalla and KTF. "The searches covered the districts of Bhatinda, Muktsar Sahib, Moga, Ferozepur, Sangrur and Mansa in Punjab and Sirsa in Haryana," said the agency.

The search teams seized mobiles/digital devices and documents, which are being examined. The case was registered earlier this year by the NIA on the directions of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The NIA has been investigating various terror outfits engaged in criminal conspiracies to recruit India-based associates to carry out terror acts, raise funds through large-scale extortions, smuggle "terrorist" hardware into India, and facilitate movement of such illegal arms and ammunition through "dead drop" model.

Cadre recruitment

"Investigations so far have revealed attempts by foreign-based main accused and handlers of terrorist outfits to carry recruitment of cadres in India for carrying out terror acts on the Indian soil," the agency said.

Techie death: victim's family demands justice, seeks strict action against harassers

Press Trust of India
SAMASTIPUR/JAUNPUR

The family of the 34-year-old techie has demanded justice for him and strict action against his harassers. Atul Subhash, who worked for a private firm in Bengaluru and was found dead on Monday, had left behind a 24-page note giving details of what he alleged was years of emotional distress due to marital issues. He mentioned multiple cases filed against him, and harassment by his wife and relatives, and a judge based in Uttar Pradesh, police said.

Following Subhash's death, a case of abetment of suicide has been registered against his wife, her mother, father and an uncle, a police official said.

Subhash's brother Bikas said, "I want my brother to get justice. I want this country to have a legal process through which even men can get justice." Alleging corruption in the system, he said justice can be expected only when it is corruption-free, when every party is heard equally and arguments are based on facts.

".... if it does not happen, then people will slowly start losing faith in judicial system. It may lead to a situation where people may get afraid to get married. Men may start feeling that if they get married, they will just end up being an ATM machine for vending money," he alleged.

A placard reading "Justice is due" was found in the room where Subhash's

body was discovered. He also recorded a lengthy video on Rumble, explaining the circumstances behind his decision.

Meanwhile, Subhash's uncle Pawan Kumar alleged his nephew was being harassed and tortured for money and that he was also humiliated by his wife and the judge.

"They [wife and family] were constantly demanding money. To the best of his capacity, he was giving money for child maintenance." Initially they wanted ₹40,000 per month, doubled it later and then wanted ₹1 lakh, Mr. Kumar said.

(Those in distress may contact Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health suicide prevention helpline: 011-40769002)

Quota rosters yet to be completed for posts in reunified MCD

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

More than two and a half years after the reunified Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) came into existence, it is yet to finish preparing reservation rosters for its posts, a document vital to the implementation of reservation orders, promotions, and seniority, a parliamentary panel has noted with "serious concern" in an action-taken report tabled in the House on December 6.

The report was discussing the action taken by the Central government on the recommendations it had made in its 31st report on the implementation of reservation in the MCD. In this report too, the panel had noted with concern that the reservation roster had not yet been prepared.

In the action-taken report, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) told the pa-



Parliamentary panel flags concern in report; MHA asked to finalise reservation roster for all Municipal Corporation of Delhi posts within six months. FILE PHOTO SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

nel on May 29 this year that after the reunification "all efforts are being made" to prepare reservation rosters for all categories - SC/ST/OBC/PwD/EWS. It added, "The Corporation shall make all efforts to prepare rosters for ST/SC/OBC/PWD/EWS as per the directions of the Hon'ble Committee. Roster of many posts have been prepared."

In its comments, the 29-member panel, headed by BJP MP Faggan Singh Kulaste, said, "The Committee are surprised to visualize as to how without the roster, reservation policy is being implemented in MCD." It said that the MHA's "vague" reply brought no clarity on which rosters had been completed and which were

Recent recruitments
Records of the panel's earlier proceedings on the subject showed that 1,681 direct recruitments had been made after the May 2022 reunification across Groups A, B, and C. Across the categories, the ST and OBC quota are fulfilled at 7.7% and 29.9%; but there is marginal shortfall in SC

quota at 14.03% and a shortfall in the EWS quota at 5.29%.

During these discussions, the MHA said all requisitions for filling posts in the MCD are being sent to the Delhi Subordinate Services Selection Board or the Union Public Service Commission, "which contains specific mention of the vacancies under SC/ST category employees".

A May 29 response by the MHA included in the December 6 action-taken report said, "Recently, on 15.03.2024, Offer of Appointment letters to 205 General Duty Medical Officers (GDMO-II (Group A) have been issued." Of these 205 posts, 23% were filled by unreserved candidates (including SC/ST candidates in unreserved category by merit), 23.4% were filled by EWS candidates, 38.04% were filled by OBC candidates, 9.75% were filled by SC candidates,

and 3.9% were filled by ST candidates, the MHA data showed.

In subsequent parts of the action-taken report, the parliamentary panel has reiterated recommendations to maintain scrupulous registers of grievances filed by SC and ST employees and pressed for the Central government to come up with a law to counter the problem of false caste certificates in consultation with the concerned Ministries.

Regularisation policy
The panel also recommended the formation of specific policy to ensure timely regularisation of *safai karamcharis* who had been working with the MCD. It pointed out that the regularisation of over 7,700 workers had not yet been completed out of the total 9,790 such workers entitled to such regularisation.

Goa jobs scam: AAP seeks judicial probe

Press Trust of India
PANAJI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Wednesday demanded a judicial probe into the cash-for-jobs scam in Goa, claiming that an inquiry by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) will not yield any result.

Goa BJP spokesperson Giriraj Pai Vernekar, however, said the Opposition itself had demanded an ED inquiry which was now underway and there was nothing to hide.

ED an agency of BJP?
"I feel that the ED's inquiry will fetch no results as it is yet another agency of the BJP," he alleged.

Mr. Palekar alleged some BJP functionaries were involved in the scam, hence his party has demanded a judicial inquiry into it. AAP MP Sanjay Singh also recently targeted the State BJP government over the scam.

Stalin's son-in-law met Adani, claims T.N. BJP president

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

T.N. BJP chief K. Annamalai

private and personal secretaries have met Mr. Adani and officials of the group. Even last week, a meeting took place. Let the Chief Minister deny this. We are ready to provide proof," he said.

'Diversionary tactics'
Instead of adopting diversionary tactics, let the Chief Minister explain how the contract was awarded to Mr. Adani, the BJP leader said.

He termed the *Kalaigar Kaivinai Thittam* a 'cut-copy-paste' version of the Centre's Vishwakarma scheme. Mr. Annamalai said that about 8 lakh beneficiaries from Tamil Nadu had registered for the Vishwakarma scheme, and urged the State government to drop the *Kalaigar Kaivinai Thittam* and implement this scheme.

IN BRIEF



Allu Arjun moves HC to quash FIR regarding woman's death

Actor Allu Arjun has moved the Telangana High Court and has filed a criminal petition seeking to quash an FIR filed against him in connection with the death of a woman at Sandhya Theatre during a premiere of his film *Pushpa-2*. A woman died, and her eight-year-old son was hospitalised after a large crowd gathered at the theatre on the night of December 4 to catch a glimpse of the actor. The mere presence of the actor, which resulted in overcrowding, at the screening cannot attract criminal liability by any stretch of imagination, the petitioner said. (With PTI inputs)

Three of a family dead, one battling for life in Telangana

Three of a family of four, who attempted to end their lives due to debt at Kasipet village in Telangana on Tuesday, died while undergoing treatment on Wednesday. The police identified the deceased as Mondalaih, 58, a small merchant, his wife Sridevi, 53, and daughter Chaitanya, 30. His son Shivaprasad, 28, who also attempted to kill himself, is battling for life. (To overcome suicidal thoughts, dial Roshni at 8142020033/44).

Kerala govt. eases curbs on Treasury Department

The Finance Department of Kerala on Tuesday issued directives to the Treasury Department, enhancing the Ways and Means limit to ₹25 lakh. The move eases curbs on the Treasury in clearing bills. The government had placed restrictions on the Treasury from clearing bills over ₹5 lakh in 2023 citing financial crunch. In June, the department had eased the curbs, which were then reinstated in September.

BJP-led Central govt. creating obstacles in Himachal Pradesh's progress: Sukhu

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu (right) with Congress leaders at an event in Bilaspur on Wednesday. PTI

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Wednesday said the previous government led by the BJP had "ruined" the State through corruption even as the Congress-led government is working to make the hill State self-reliant in the next three years. The CM made the comment while addressing a public gathering in Bilaspur on the occasion of the Congress government completing two years in the State. He said the previous BJP government was "completely ineffective" and a

"failed regime". "The wealth of Himachal was looted during the BJP's regime...police recruitment exam papers were leaked, jobs were sold through the Subordinate Staff Selection Commission, and a PPE kit scam was done," Mr. Sukhu alleged. He said the

Congress government implemented the Old Pension Scheme for 1.36 lakh employees "despite pressure from the Central government". He accused the Centre of creating hurdles in the State's development. "During last year's monsoon,

Will develop Amaravati in three years, A.P. govt. tells SC

Amaravati has been 'firmly concluded' as capital, State says in an affidavit filed in top court; as per the promises made to people, State govt. will comply with HC judgment of March 3, 2022, it adds

V. Raghavendra
VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court stating that it has 'firmly concluded' Amaravati as the State capital. It has said that it was taking up development activity as per the extant master plan, with a target to complete it in three years.

Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad said in the affidavit that taking into account the current situation with regard to the promises made to people, espe-



Capital issue: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu inspecting a waterbody in Amaravati. FILE PHOTO

cially the stakeholders of the Land Pooling Scheme, it has decided to comply with a High Court judg-

ment of March 3, 2022. The officer said that the government would, as per the development agree-

ment, continue with and complete the construction of a single Capital located at Amaravati with offices of the State's three civic wings in terms of the master plan notified on February 26, 2016.

By undertaking to comply with any directions from the top court, Mr. Prasad prayed for the disposal of the special leave petitions filed in the matter. Amaravati was envisioned not only as an administrative city but also as an economic hub comprising 27 townships of 1,000 acres each within the capital city.

Mamata thanks all who supported her to lead INDIA bloc

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday thanked several senior leaders of the INDIA bloc who endorsed her to lead the Opposition coalition.

'Stay well INDIA'

"I am indebted to everyone for the respect they have shown for me. I pray for their good health. I want them as well as their party to stay well. I also want INDIA to stay well," Ms. Banerjee said in Digha.



In an interview with a Bengali TV news channel, the West Bengal CM had expressed her dissatisfaction with the functioning of the INDIA bloc. FILE PHOTO

The Trinamool Congress chairperson refused to speak more on the issue.

Several leaders of the Trinamool Congress in the past and recently party leader Kalyan Banerjee had said that the leadership of INDIA bloc may be handed over to Ms. Banerjee.

Leaders such as NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar have also backed her.

'TMC, BJP allies'

However, West Bengal State Congress president Subhankar Sarkar said whenever the BJP faces a problem, the Trinamool gives oxygen to it as well as the Central government.

Despite being part of the INDIA alliance, the Trinamool Congress and the Congress fought the Lok Sabha elections separately in West Bengal.

The Trinamool won 29 seats and the Congress one, whereas the BJP got 12 seats.

32 FIRs were filed based on Hema panel report, Kerala govt. tells HC

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Kerala government on Wednesday informed a Special Bench of the High Court that as many as 32 FIRs have been registered on the basis of the K. Hema Committee report. The government also said investigations into the complaints are on.

The submission was made by Advocate-General K. Gopalakrishna Kurup when a *suo motu* case registered in the wake of the report came up for hearing

Balachandra Menon gets anticipatory bail

KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Friday granted anticipatory bail to filmmaker Balachandra Menon in a sexual assault case filed by an actor. He submitted that the case had been filed to malign his image.

before the Bench.

The Advocate-General also submitted that 11 FIRs registered were based on a

HC stays probe into case against director Ranjith

BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has stayed the probe into the case registered against Malayalam film director Ranjith Balakrishnan on the allegation of sexually assaulting a male actor in 2012 in Bengaluru.

complaint of a single victim. Four cases were closed as there was no material available to proceed

further. In fact, the SIT had sought permission of the State Police Chief to register and probe the cases.

Meanwhile, the Kerala Film Producers Association filed a petition seeking to implead in the case.

The court, however, dismissed a plea filed by P.M. Mohammed Hassan, former acting president of the Kumbalam grama panchayat in Ernakulam, seeking to implead in the writ petition filed by the Women in Cinema Collective (WCC) pending before the Bench.

SC seeks response from Guruvayur panel on 'Udayasthamana' puja plea

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has sought a response from the Guruvayur Devaswom management committee on a plea challenging a decision to stop the 'Udayasthamana Puja' on Vrishchika Ekadasi day for the sake of public convenience.

"Despite the Centre's hurdles, the State has managed to generate additional revenue of ₹2,200 crore. Our true celebration will be in 2027 when Himachal will become self-reliant," he said.

Meanwhile, the BJP submitted a memorandum to Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla regarding the "scams and black deeds" of the Congress government. J.K. Maheshwari said. The

Bench also issued notice to the head priest or the temple thanthri and the State of Kerala, posting the case after four weeks. Meanwhile, the court directed the schedule of the temple to remain unchanged.

The petitioners led by P.C. Hary, represented by senior advocate C.S. Vaidyanathan and advocate

QQ The puja is for the deity, for increasing the divinity of the deity. Management will have to find other ways to increase public convenience

SUPREME COURT BENCH

Karthik Ashok, are members of the Puzhakkara Chennas Mana, the thantri family of the Guruvayur temple.

The petitioner contend that the decision taken by the Guruvayur Devaswom management committee to not perform the Udayasthamana puja in the temple on the day of Guru-

vayur Vrishchika Ekadasi was encroachment into the age-old custom and tradition of the temple.

Section 10 of the Guruvayur Devaswom Act, 1978, mandates the committee to exercise its duties subject to the custom and usage followed by the temple.

The Act bars the committee from interfering with religious and spiritual matters.

Guruvayur Ekadasi is one of the most important annual festivals observed in the temple. Udayasthamana puja is the most important puja performed on this auspicious day," the petition said.

Panchamasali seer says police instigated violence in Belagavi

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

A day after Panchamasali reservation agitation in Karnataka's Belagavi turned violent, Basava Jayamruthunjaya Swami of the Kudalasangama Panchamasali Peetha, honorary president of the Panchamasali reservation agitation committee, denied the charge that members of the committee threw stones, damaged vehicles, and injured police personnel.

He, in turn, alleged that some policemen in plainclothes had thrown stones at vehicles and injured their own fraternity, only to defame the Panchamasali community.

"The whole thing was a conspiracy. The police staged the attack on the protesters by strategic planning," he alleged.

He went on to allege that Additional Director-General of Police R. Hitendra was responsible for the mismanagement of the protest and the lathi-charge. He demanded action against the police officer and demanded that cases registered against the protesters be withdrawn.

"We have been fighting for over two years, to seek the re-categorisation of the Panchamasali community into OBC 2A category. All our protests have been peaceful. No government in the past has oppressed us," the seer said.

Veteran leader S.M. Krishna cremated in native village in Karnataka with state honours

R. Krishna Kumar
MANDYA

Former Union Minister and Karnataka Chief Minister S.M. Krishna was cremated with state honours at his ancestral village of Somanahalli in Mandya district on Wednesday.

Krishna passed away in Bengaluru on Tuesday at the age of 92.

When his body was brought to his native village by road on Wednesday, a large number of people lined up en route and paid their respects to the departed leader.

Cutting across party lines, numerous political leaders, dignitaries and supporters gathered at his



People pay their last respects to S.M. Krishna as his body was being taken to his ancestral village in Karnataka on Wednesday. PTI

village to pay their final respects. They included Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Home Minister G. Parameshwara, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R. Ashok, former Chief Mi-

nisters and BJP leaders B.S. Yediyurappa and Basavaraj Bommai, Union Ministers Pralhad Joshi and H.D. Kumaraswamy, and former Mandy MP Sumalatha. Religious heads and seers of various maths were also present.

Google will launch operations in Vizag: Naidu

The Hindu Bureau
VIZAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Google on Wednesday.

The tech giant will launch operations in Visakhapatnam, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said at the District Collectors' conference that began in Amaravati.

"Minister Nara Lokesh's efforts have paved the way for this," he said.

The Chief Minister, in a post on X, said the government's progressive industrial policies created a business-friendly ecosystem, paving the way for employment opportunities.

Kerala launches site to make Sabarimala pilgrimage easy

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Tourism has launched a multi-language microsite (<https://www.keralatourism.org/sabarimala/>) and an e-brochure providing comprehensive information about the Sabarimala temple, making the pilgrimage easy and simple.

The multilingual microsite provides pilgrims with information about the hill shrine's traditions, customs, and culture, as well as the latest updates and geographical insights.

The microsite was launched by Kerala Tourism Minister P.A. Mohamed Riyas at a function here on Wednesday. The site includes details of other important temples near Sabarimala, a detailed route map, and hotel facilities near temples, which will help pilgrims.

The micro site is available in five languages – English, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, and Kannada

site is available in five languages: English, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, and Kannada.

The microsite will provide all required information for pilgrims visiting the Sabarimala and help them have a comfortable and seamless pilgrimage experience," the Minister said.

The site includes details of other important temples near Sabarimala, a detailed route map, and hotel facilities near temples, which will help pilgrims.



A wide aisle

Parliament must remain the forum for airing the views of all representatives

In a move that is unprecedented in India's parliamentary history, 60 Members of the Rajya Sabha have expressed a loss of confidence in the Chairman, Jagdeep Dhankhar, who is also the Vice-President of India. These Members of Parliament, from the Opposition, have given notice for a resolution seeking his removal from office. The resolution is unlikely to face a vote, and will be defeated if it does. But that is beside the point. What is real and damaging for democracy is the trust deficit between the Chair and the Opposition members. Mr. Dhankhar's rulings and his public statements have been cited by the Opposition as proof of his partisanship. Mr. Dhankhar's decision to allow Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MPs to speak on the subject of an adjournment motion that he himself had rejected on December 9 was the final trigger for the extreme step by the Opposition. These members also see, among other things, a pattern of the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, being disallowed to speak, and Mr. Dhankhar publicly amplifying views of the government and berating those of the Opposition. Most often, it is career politicians who are elected, through a partisan contest, to supposedly apolitical positions such as President, Vice-President and Speaker of the Lok Sabha. Once in office, they largely stay above the fray. Hence, the notice for a no-confidence motion against the Rajya Sabha Chairman marks an unfortunate turn for democracy.

It is no coincidence that all this comes against the backdrop of a constant campaign by the BJP to shrink the Opposition space. Criticism of the government is portrayed as an anti-national act, and institutions and individuals are often targeted through insinuations. There is little engagement between the BJP and the Opposition. If Parliament merely becomes yet another platform for political diatribe, it will erode rather than reinforce democracy. The message from parliamentary proceedings to the citizenry should be that the government is sensitive to their voices. The government's defence of Mr. Dhankhar included a reference to his caste, and condemnation of the principal Opposition party, with the insinuation that it was anti-India. While the government gets its way by virtue of its majority, the Opposition must have its say. When Parliament is held hostage to hostility between the government and the Opposition, the Chair is expected to mediate and find a way forward. This role of the Chair is possible only when its occupant is neutral and seen as such. Regardless of the merit of the grievances, the Chairman could take a proactive approach to reassure his critics that he is above the political fray for the sake of institutional integrity.

Bench and bigotry

High Court judge's remarks on minorities require a stern response

Political affiliations are seldom considered a disqualification to hold judicial office, but there is no doubt that open bigotry should be one. The controversial remarks of Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav of the Allahabad High Court, including an unacceptable slur against the Muslim community, at an event organised by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) cast a shadow on his impartiality as a judge, if not his suitability to remain in office. Justice Yadav observed ominously that "this is India and it will be run as per the wishes of its majority". It was clear from the context of a Hindu-Muslim dichotomy that he was speaking about, that he was not referring to a governing majority in a democracy, but the sort of numerical superiority that would give the larger group the final word on how the country is run. The judge also sought to compare Hindu and Muslim children and comment on how Hindus learn kindness and tolerance, while Muslims purportedly do not because they witness the slaughter of animals. He is previously known to have observed that the cow is the only animal that inhales and exhales oxygen and made remarks against conversion. It is a welcome development that the Supreme Court of India has taken note of reports highlighting Justice Yadav's remarks and asked for details from the High Court. It is too early to speculate whether there will be an in-house inquiry, or a response to calls for his removal, but it is quite certain that the judge's conduct and functioning will come under justified scrutiny.

Even though the event was a discussion on the need for a Uniform Civil Code, it was not an ideal stage for a meaningful debate. The VHP is an aggressive proponent of a Hindu majoritarian view, responsible for spearheading a violent movement for demolishing the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya and installing a Ram temple in its place, and an organisation that has been banned in the past for fomenting riots, discord and much bloodshed. It was quite obvious that the forum would be more inclined to assail minorities than extol the virtues of a uniform law for civil matters. Judges of constitutional courts are not expected to grace the platform provided by such groups. It is regrettable that the judge forgot the ethical principles that bind the higher judiciary. In 1997, the Supreme Court had adopted a 'Statement of Values of Judicial Life', a set of guidelines under which the behaviours and conduct of members of the higher judiciary must reaffirm the people's faith in the institution's impartiality and any act that erodes such a perception should be avoided. While lapses from such principles are not rare, Justice Yadav presents a rather glaring example.

In November 29, 2024, while introducing the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill 2024-25 (The Assisted Dying Law) to the British House of Commons, the Member of Parliament, Kim Leadbeater told a rather distressing story of an "agonising death".

A 47-year-old music teacher with a young son, Ms. Leadbeater said, had suffered from bile duct cancer which obstructed his bowel. On his last day, this saw him vomit faecal matter for five consecutive hours, before he choked and died. The vomiting was so violent that he could not be sedated and, what is worse, he had stayed conscious through the ordeal. All the while, his wife pleaded with doctors to help. But the physicians treating him were helpless. The look of horror on his face as he died, his family say, is something that will never leave them.

Ms. Leadbeater narrated the teacher's case to illustrate the suffering that many others face from deadly illnesses, with no choice available to them to seek assistance in ending their pain. The draft law – which gives terminally-ill adults (in England and Wales), with less than six months to live, the right to die, once they have a request signed off by two doctors and a high court judge – was intensely debated. Eventually, the Bill was passed with a majority of 55 votes, with 330 members voting for it and 275 against.

In somewhat unusual circumstances, the Members of Parliament had been released from the tethers imposed on them by their party whips. They had been asked to decide as their conscience willed. As a result, what ensued was all manners of interesting voting patterns. Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his Conservative predecessor Rishi Sunak voted in favour. The Deputy Prime Minister, Angela Rayner, and the Health Secretary, Wes Streeting, rejected the draft.

The complexity of the issue

With its passing in the Commons, the proposal is now slated for review by a Public Bill Committee, which will scrutinise, fine tune, and suggest amendments to its various clauses, before it returns the draft to Parliament for an ultimate sanction. Therefore, there is still some way to go. But seeing how previous efforts, to bring about a law to allow assisted dying, have floundered, the Bill's passing represents a milestone, a victory for those who consider the right to die, when faced with an intolerable ailment, as intrinsic to human liberty.

At the same time, the sharply divergent views expressed amongst lawmakers in Britain also shows us just how complex an issue this is. The debates contain in them lessons that the rest of the world can take, in deciding how best to allow



Suhrit Parthasarathy

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people to both lead, and end, their lives, with dignity and compassion.

The opposition to the law primarily rests on two planks. First, opponents argue that the law is premised on a "slippery slope" – that it would be practically impossible to draw boundaries limiting the right to assisted death, and that the old and the disabled might be pressured into choosing to end their lives in the midst of fears that they might wind up becoming a burden on their loved ones.

Critics also claim that a similar law employed in Canada has produced worrying results. Originally, following a 2015 judgment of the country's Supreme Court, the government opened up avenues to allow assisted dying for those whose death was "reasonably foreseeable". But the law has since been expanded through judicial interpretation to make it applicable even to those facing a "grievous and irremediable medical condition". In so doing, the bright lines of the rule, the Bill's detractors say, have been dimmed.

There are legitimate cases

Proponents of the law counter the criticism by pointing to how the very invocation of a slippery slope suggests that those making the argument are offering a concession: that there are legitimate cases where it might be justifiable to help someone die. Moreover, the law, as drafted, they say, is carefully tailored: it only includes adults competent to make decisions, who are ailing from a terminal diagnosis and who have less than six months to live, to seek assistance in ending their lives.

Additionally, the person making the claim will be independently assessed by two doctors, with a 14-day reflection time afforded to them, and no decision will be sanctioned without the High Court's approval. Lord David Neuberger, the former President of the U.K. Supreme Court, argues that the Bill's clauses are tightly worded enough to ensure that the law respects people's right of personal autonomy, and that there really is no chance of its scope being enlarged through judicial challenge.

The second cause for opposition stems from rather more traditional, philosophical grounds, sometimes resting on considerations of religion and faith. The proposed law, these critics claim, is simply deceit disguised as compassion, and offends the inviolability of the right to life. In response, the Bill's supporters concede that in most cases, there ought to be serious objections to the taking of one's life, and to avoidably allowing people to die. In ordinary circumstances, objections founded on a person's right to life would prevail. But the conflict here, as they demonstrate, is not especially

irreconcilable. For, as Ms. Leadbeater and others have shown, the moral background in which the debate resides cannot permit a wholesale embargo on physician-assisted deaths. After all, every adult, we generally recognise, has the right to make significant decisions on how best to lead their respective lives. This freedom, grounded in the sovereignty of our bodies, may stem from religious faith or simply from conscience, but, regardless, it is something that is embedded in each of us as human beings.

The state, no doubt, owes to us a duty to ensure that we do not indulge in what Ronald Dworkin described as "irrevocable acts of self-destruction". But, equally, the exercise of this duty can under no circumstances "justify forcing a competent dying patient to live in agony a few weeks longer". To do so would impinge squarely on the freedom that each of us enjoys over our lives and bodies.

On choice and dignity

In many ways, the debates in Britain assume universal value. In India, the Supreme Court has previously recognised a limited freedom to die, a right both to passive euthanasia and a right to make an "advance medical directive" – that is a liberty to stipulate one's preferences for medical treatment, or the withdrawal thereof, should one become incapacitated in the future. In its judgment in *Common Cause (A Regd. Society) vs Union of India* (2018), the Court found this right as essential to liberty, as "an element of the privacy of the being".

The road from here to assisted dying is clearly a long one. But the reasons which compel one to hold in favour of individual dignity surely apply just as vigorously to how one might want to go about dealing with a terminal illness in their last days. The latter choice is as critical to one's dignity and independence as it is to any other decision that a person makes over her body and life.

Deliberations made in Britain's Parliament have shown us that making laws to govern assisted dying is a complicated affair. But the mere prospect of a slippery slope, or the possibility of abuse, cannot detract from the fact that at stake here is something central to human dignity – that is, the ability to allow people to make conscious choices to alleviate the most crushing forms of pain and suffering.

One can argue over the fine print of what a law that allows for assisted dying must contain. But there can be no doubt that the rudimentary principle on which such a legislation will inevitably rest is founded on ideas that are central to our existence, to our freedom to lead meaningful lives, and to the rights to privacy, dignity, and autonomy.

Vaikom — two States, two leaders and a tale of reform

A little over a 100 years ago was a landmark socio-political moment like no other. The Vaikom Struggle, which culminated in the lifting of the barriers to the entry of backward caste Hindus to the local temple in the erstwhile Travancore princely state, would be the first of many mass movements that brought political attention to religious reform. Since then, the Dravidian Movement founded by Periyar E.V. Ramasamy and its self-respect principles have enabled wider reforms within the Hindu religion and paved the way for a more egalitarian society. What is less understood is that this was made possible only due to the insertion of a key clause in the Constitution by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Celebrating the centenary of Vaikom is not just a tribute to Periyar's persistence and B.R. Ambedkar's acumen but also a re-assertion of the strong reformist tendencies that continue to pervade through modern-day politik in South India.

The evolution of a mass movement
The Vaikom Struggle was fought against the prohibition of backward caste Hindus from walking on the streets adjacent to the Vaikom Mahadeva temple. When leaders of Kerala State Congress Committee and other social activist leaders began agitating against the injustice, they faced a clamp down by the administration. With the entry of Periyar in 1924, it slowly became a mass movement, bringing people from all classes within its fold. In November 1925, when the restrictions to walk on the streets finally lifted, the long arc of political movement began tilting towards social justice. In the decade that followed, movements erupted in other parts of the country, with B.R. Ambedkar leading protests to enter the Ambadevi Temple and Kalaram Mandir, where Dalits were denied entry.

However, the trajectory of reform in South



Manurai Shumugan Sundaram

an advocate practising before the Madras High Court and Spokesperson of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)

The Vaikom Struggle was a landmark socio-political moment like no other

India was progressing at a faster pace with the Legislative Assembly introducing a Bill to allow temple entry in 1932, followed by the Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation in 1936, the Malabar Temple Entry Bill 1938. There was also the entry of backward castes in the Madurai Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple and the Thanjavur Brihadeeswara Temple in 1939. The Madras Temple Entry Authorization Act 1947 enabled Hindus of all castes to enter and offer worship in all temples within the then Madras Presidency.

Though many of these reforms took place prior to the adoption of the Constitution of India, the Constituent Assembly took great care in delimiting the right to freedom of religion. During discussions on December 7, 1948, B.R. Ambedkar included the prefix 'subject to public order, morality and health' restricting the extent of the fundamental right and thereby enabling state intervention when necessary.

These seven words went on to form the legal and legitimate basis for reforms within the fold of religion, thereby enabling constitutional courts to intercede when there was a contestation of fundamental rights, namely between those of equality and religion.

State and the issue of regulation

The larger issue has always been whether temples, and religion at large, can be regulated by the state. If this is allowed, some argue, then the government will lose its secular character. There can be nothing further from the truth or logic. The intervention of the State to regulate temples, which are public spaces, is to ensure equality and access. A long history, beginning with the enactment of the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act 1927 to the present-day Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act 1959, would make it apparent the legislative intent to manage religious affairs in

consonance with public order and morality. This position has been confirmed through various judgments beginning from *The Commissioner, Hindu Religious Endowments, Madras vs Sri Lakshmindra Thirtha Swamiar of Sri Shirur Mutt* 1954 (Shirur Mutt case), where the Supreme Court of India upheld the proposition that the state can manage the secular affairs of the temple and propounded the test of essential religious practice.

Since then, successive governments in Tamil Nadu, beginning in 1970, have enacted laws to enable backward caste Hindus to be appointed as *archakas* (priests), which some have regarded as a contentious act of interference in religious affairs. In such instances, the Court has upheld the right of the State to manage secular matters in temples while carving out a special category of 'Agamic temples'.

Change and resistance

Over the last few years, Governments of Kerala and Tamil Nadu have appointed hundreds of trained *archakas*, *Odhuvaars* and *Bhattacharyas* from non-Brahmin castes. These have been met with resistance within and outside the courts of law. These reforms challenge orthodox religious beliefs and entrenched social diktats. Nevertheless, the push for reforms is stronger than before. One hundred years after Vaikom and over 75 years since the Constituent Assembly debate on this issue, there is a compelling moral consensus that is emerging. While the Governments of Tamil Nadu and Kerala have collaborated to commemorate the centenary of the Vaikom Struggle on December 12, 2024, they are also celebrating a historic event that brought together two States. They are paying tribute to the start of a social reform trajectory that was made possible due to the coming together of two of the greatest leaders.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INDIA bloc leadership

Solving the 'problems of the INDIA bloc' is not that simple as the main issue now seems to be about leadership. With some leaders in the bloc for a 'change of the captain', it cannot be passed off as worth ignoring. The Leader of the Opposition's advice to his party MPs 'not to react to remarks by allies' on the subject can only indicate his lack of wisdom or diplomacy. The situation now is no

surprise especially when parties that are ideologically different or with no ideologies make unions. Meanwhile, the proposal by several Congress leaders that the party fight elections on its own has its sides. The Congress has not completely lost its status as a Grand Old Party. Then again, the leadership comes into the picture. The truth is that it is only the Congress that has the background to be an effective Opposition

in the country – which is the prime political necessity.
P.R.V. Raja,
Pandalam, Kerala

A weak and fragile Opposition is only helping the ruling party. Crucial decisions are being taken without 'quality questioning' and this does not augur well for the nation. The new Parliament building, built with a lot of fanfare, raised hopes of a positive environment. But,

sadly, it is a case of non-functional business. As far as the Congress is concerned, it needs to share some of the blame as it seems clueless and directionless.
Balasubramaniam Pavani,
Secunderabad

S.M. Krishna

In the passing of S.M. Krishna, the nation has lost a stalwart politician who shaped and elevated the garden city to an international level with a

well-established "Brand Bengaluru". His passing marks the end of an era in politics, leaving behind a legacy of public service and progressive governance.
R. Sivakumar,
Chennai

Indian territory and China

The External Affairs Minister, in his statement in Parliament on the border issue with China, said, "The House is cognizant of the fact that China is in illegal occupation of 38,000 km² of

Indian territory in Aksai Chin as a result of the 1962 conflicts and the event that preceded it. Furthermore, Pakistan illegally ceded 5,180 km² of Indian territory to China in 1963, which has been under its occupation since 1948." There needs to be more clarity on how India will prevent the loss of more territory.
Ved Shaha,
Kolhapur, Maharashtra

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

Chief Justices need longer tenures

In September, Chief Justices were appointed to eight High Courts across India. While a good move, the fact that all of them, with the exception of one, will have very short tenures is unfortunate. This is a persistent problem that calls for urgent remedial action since it affects the institutional effectiveness of the judiciary.

Short tenures

In fact, one Chief Justice has already completed his tenure. Justice Rajiv Shukla, who was Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court, retired after just 24 days, on October 18. Just as he was settling into his role, he had to attend his farewell. Justice Manmohan, who had been serving as the Acting Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court, was sworn in as Chief Justice on September 29. On December 3, the Union government announced the appointment of Chief Justice Manmohan as a judge of the Supreme Court. Justice Tashi Rabstan will serve a tenure of about six months as Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Justice Suresh Kumar Kait, who was appointed as the Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court, has a tenure of about eight months. Justice K.R. Shriram, appointed as Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, will serve a one-year tenure. Justice Indra Prasanna Mukerji, the Chief Justice of the Meghalaya High Court, will also be retiring around the same time as Justice Shriram. Justice Nitin Madhukar Jamdar, Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court, has a tenure of about 15 months. The only judge who will serve a relatively long tenure of about four years is Justice M.S. Ramachandra Rao, who has been appointed as Chief Justice in Jharkhand.

The Chief Justice of a High Court plays a pivotal role in sustaining the all-round health of the institution. The Chief Justice administers the institution, tracks its financial health, plays an



N.L. Rajah
Senior Advocate,
Madras High Court

By the time Chief Justices have understood the functioning of the Court, it is time for them to retire

important role in recommending names for judgeship, constitutes various committees to administer the institution, attends to the welfare of the staff of the High Court, takes disciplinary action against erring trial court judges and staff when warranted, arranges for defence of such action before appropriate authorities when questioned, responds to innumerable mundane administrative requests, accepts invitations and participates in various symposia, seminars, and functions that are not necessarily restricted to law, participates in functions organised by the Bar Councils and various advocate associations across the State, and addresses problems related to legal education in the State apart from, of course, discharging the function as the top judicial authority of the State. Clearly, doing all of this in the time available is a daunting task.

High Courts are not compact institutions. Further, the tasks that need the attention of a Chief Justice in a High Court situated in one part of the country could be vastly different from what is required of a Chief Justice in a High Court in another part of the country. To understand each of these institutions in their entirety or even substantially takes time and effort. Most Chief Justices barely understand the requirements of the institution by the time their terms cease.

A lot has been said about the short tenure of Chief Justices. During his farewell speech in 2022, Supreme Court Justice L. Nageswara Rao said those elevated as judges to the top court must get a "minimum seven to eight years" in office "if not 10 years". He said, "It takes them (Chief Justices) 1.5 to two years to understand how the Court functions here because it is completely different from the High Courts." He added that by the time they settle down, "they are looking at their retirement". Several Chief Justices who have

voiced similar sentiments. This is a similar lament among Chief Justices of the High Courts too. Yet, little attention has been paid to the problem.

A lesson from the British

It was not so during British rule. Back then, it was a norm for Chief Justices to have long tenures. The Madras High Court came into existence in 1862. When it completed 150 years in 2012, it had completed 85 years as a Court in British India and 65 years as a Court in independent India. The first Chief Justice was Sir Colley Harman Scotland. In 1947, when it had completed 85 years, the Madras High Court had had just 11 Chief Justices. Each of them had enjoyed an average tenure of a little less than eight years. During the Madras High Court's 150th year celebrations, Justice M.Y. Iqbal was the 35th Chief Justice. So, in 65 years, the Court had had 24 Chief Justices, which means the average tenure of those judges was hardly 2.75 years. The average term reduces further when we deduct the tenures of Chief Justice P.V. Rajamannar, who served a term of 13 years, and Chief Justice Veerawami K., who had a tenure of about seven years. This means that there were 22 Chief Justices in 45 years, which brings down the average term of each to merely more than over two years.

While the tasks of Chief Justices are only increasing and becoming more complicated, the duration given to them to address these are becoming shorter and shorter. When the system provides such little time for the incumbents to even understand the system, what scope is there for innovation, reform, and improvement?

The attempt here is not to provide prescriptions to the malady. It is to emphasise that the problem needs to be addressed. It can only be resolved by a joint deliberation of stakeholders, including the Bar. It is important that they evolve a solution before the problem seriously affects the system.

The BRS: defeated but not destroyed

The party's aggressive narrative has put Congress on the back foot in Telangana

STATE OF PLAY

B. Chandrashekhar
chandrashekhar.bhalki@thehindu.co.in



Telangana

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), which faced an ignominious defeat in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections by failing to win a single seat despite putting up a decent show in the Assembly elections held earlier this year, has succeeded to a large extent in rebuilding its organisation. Stunned by its dismal performance but determined to fight back, the BRS has been watching the ruling Congress government closely and using every opportunity to attack it.

The BRS has been trying to reconnect with the people, understand its own mistakes, and slowly get back some of the support that it had lost, especially in the rural areas, by constantly highlighting the "failures" of the Congress government. It has been doing this without its founder, former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao, being in the public eye much.

The BRS has been highlighting the Congress's struggles in implementing the six guarantees and other promises made in the manifesto. This includes the delay in the disbursement of the balance instalment of the Rythu Bandhu/Bharosa for the 2023-24 Rabi season, the non-disbursement for the 2023-24 Kharif season, and the partial implementation of the ₹2 lakh crop loan waiver.

The BRS has also focused on the marking/demolition of settlements as part of the government's Musi Riverfront Development Project, the razings of structures of poor and middle class households near water bodies and 'nals' (drains) by the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Pro-

tection Agency, and the slow pace of paddy procurement.

In late November, following protests, the State government withdrew the notification that it had issued for acquiring 1,358 acres of land from nearly 600 farmers in Dudyala mandal for setting up 'pharma villages'. However, the BRS has been keeping the land acquisition issue alive. It has led a group of tribal women from the village to approach the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the National Human Rights Commission to highlight the alleged police atrocities against their families following the attack by some villagers against some of the authorities, including the District Collector. Leaders such as K.T. Rama Rao, T. Harish Rao, K.P. Vivekanand, Padi Kaushik Reddy, Marne Krishnamoorthy, B. Vinod Kumar, and Danoju Sravan, have been organising protests, press conferences, and posting on social media.

Despite its best efforts, the Congress has been forced to be on the defensive. Two weeks ago, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy rejected the ₹100 crore donation from the Chairman of the Adani Group to the Young India Skills University in Telangana. He also announced that land would be acquired in Kodangal for an industrial corridor and not for the pharma cluster. These

statements were made to avoid possible attacks from the Opposition.

In late November, at a meeting at Vemulawada, the Chief Minister also said that the Congress government has achieved in 10 months what the BRS government could not achieve in 10 years. However, given its long list of unkept promises and its failure to counter the strong narrative of the BRS, the Congress government has apparently conceded some ground to the Opposition. A senior leader of the BRS said, "Congress leaders, including the Chief Minister, are asking for Mr. Chandrashekhar Rao to be present on every forum but they seem to be unable to deal with the attacks by the BRS leadership. Mr. Rao will come into the picture at an appropriate time."

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) too has been raising its voice on various issues but its efforts appear to be lukewarm compared to the BRS. It expressed solidarity with the poor who live along the Musi river but has been inconsistent in its criticism. As a result, the enthusiasm among its ranks has waned.

While the Congress has its challenges, the BRS faces inquiries instituted by the State government into the previous government's irrigation and power deals. While the ruling party may be struggling to keep its promises given the constraints in funding, and the BJP, despite its good performance in the last Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, remains out of the battle ring, the BRS undoubtedly has an uphill task. Attacking the government is easy, but building the party, infusing energy in its ranks, and rebuilding its image is a more challenging task.

'Excessive heat' among most searched terms in 2024 in India

The top searches were otherwise dominated, as usual, by sporting events and elections

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

In 2024, cricket and elections dominated Google searches in India. The Indian Premier League was the most searched term, followed by the T20 World Cup, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and election results 2024. The Olympics 2024 was the fifth most searched keyword. Excessive heat ranked as the sixth most searched term, highlighting concerns about extreme weather events. Industrialist Ratan Tata, who passed away in October, was the seventh most searched keyword. The Congress secured the eighth spot, while the Pro Kabaddi League and the Indian Super League secured the ninth and tenth spot.

Chart 1 shows the most searched terms in 2024 in India and the week these terms trended. The darkest shade points to the week when interest peaked in a particular news term, while the lighter shades point to the other weeks when the term was searched but there was relatively less interest in it.

Wrestler Vinesh Phogat was the most searched personality this year. *Heeramandi*, *Mirzapur*, and *The Last of Us* were the most searched shows. *Street 2*, *Kalki 2898 AD*, and *12th Fail* were the most searched movies. The terms 'All eyes on Rafah', 'Aakay', and 'cervical cancer' were the most searched for their meanings by Indians. Aakay is the name of Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma's son.

'AQI near me' was searched the most in the 'near me' category, followed by 'Onam Sadhya near me', and 'Ram Mandir near me'.

Chart 2 shows the same information for searches across the world. Copa America and the UEFA European Championship were the top two searches. Singer Liam Payne, U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, and Princess of Wales Kate Middleton were among the top 10.

A year in search terms

The data for the charts were sourced from Google Trends' "Year in Search 2024" analysis

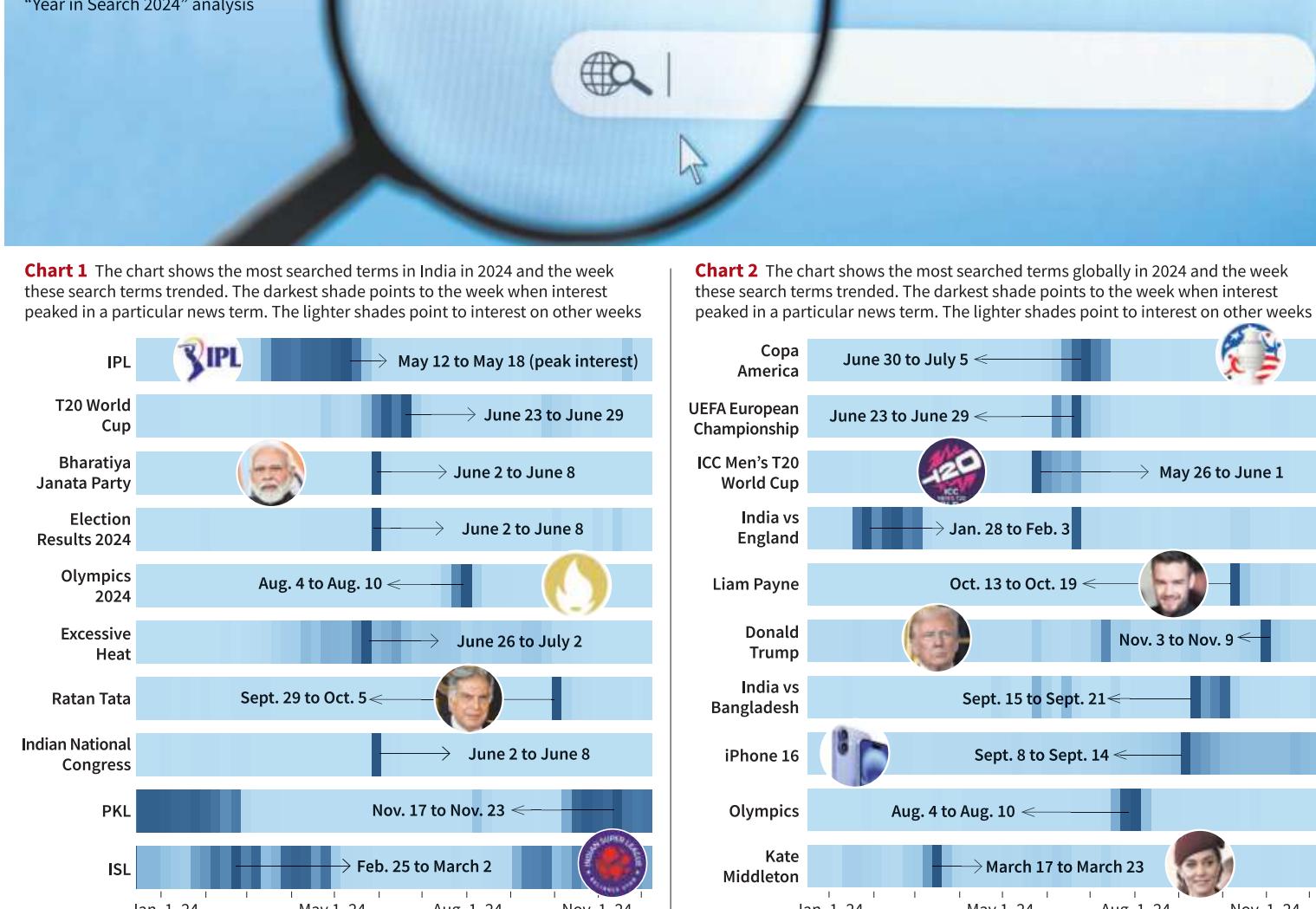


Table 3 The top 10 most searched phrases in India across various categories throughout 2024

MOVIES:
1. Street 2 2. Kalki 2898 AD 3. 12th Fail
4. Laapata Ladies
5. Hanu-Man
6. Maharaja
7. Manjummel Boys
8. The Greatest of All Time 9. Salaar
10. Aaveshan

SHOWS:
1. Heeramandi
2. Mirzapur 3. The Last of Us 4. Big Boss 17
5. Panchayat
6. Queen of Tears
7. Marry My Husband
8. Kota Factory
9. Big Boss 18
10. 3 Body Problem

HUM TO SEARCH: TOP SONGS
1. Naadaniyan
2. Husn 3. Illuminati
4. Chirag Paswan
5. Pawan Kalyan
6. Shashank Singh
7. Poona Pandey
8. Radhika Merchant
9. Abhishek Sharma
10. MASHA ULTRAFUNK

PEOPLE:
1. Vinesh Phogat 2. Nitish Kumar
3. Hardik Pandya
4. Katchi Sera 5. Ye Tune Kya Ki Raat
6. Aaj Ki Raat
7. Jo Tum Mere Ho
8. Yeh Raatein Yeh Mausam - Lofi 9. Aasa Koonda
10. Lakshya Sen

MEANING:
1. All Eyes on Rafah
2. Aakay
3. Cervical Cancer
4. Tawaif 5. Demure
6. Pookie
7. Stampede
8. Moye Moye
9. Consecration
10. Good Friday

NEAR ME:
1. AQI
2. Onam Sadhya
3. Ram Mandir
4. Sports Bars
5. Best Bakery
6. Trendy Cafes
7. Polio Drops
8. Shiva Temple
9. Best Coffee
10. Hanuman movie

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 12, 1974

Cease-fire in Rhodesia's guerilla war: detainees to be freed

Salisbury, Dec. 11: Prime Minister Ian Smith, to-night announced a ceasefire in Rhodesia's guerilla war and the release of African political detainees as a prelude to a constitutional conference.

Mr. Smith made

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Cases resolved through mediation in Thane since 2021

2,330 Altogether 2,330 legal disputes have been resolved through mediation in Maharashtra's Thane since 2021. Ishwar Suryavanshi of the District Legal Services Authority shared figures and underscored the significance of mediation. PTI

Migrants who have landed in the Canary Islands till December

41,425 The number of migrants who are undocumented reaching Spain via the Canaries has increased sharply. 41,425 migrants landed in the Islands between January and November compared to 39,910 for the whole of last year. AFP

Suspects booked for alleged propaganda against Pakistan Army

150 Pakistani authorities have booked 150 suspects and arrested 22 of them, mostly belonging to Imran Khan's party, for allegedly posting against the army on social media about the killings of party workers in Islamabad on November 26, an official said on Wednesday. PTI

The temperature recorded in Sikar, Rajasthan on Tuesday

1.5 degrees Celsius. Temperatures in parts of Rajasthan dropped over the 24 hours leading up to 8:30 am on Wednesday, with extreme cold wave conditions recorded in one or two areas, the India Meteorological Department said. The lowest minimum temperature was recorded in Sikar. PTI

The conviction rate recorded by National Investigation Agency

95.23 In per cent. The National Investigation Agency (NIA), which registered 640 cases since its inception, has recorded a conviction rate of 95.23% in 147 cases which have been decided by courts. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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The mosques which face survey petitions

Why has an oral observation made by Former Chief Justice of India DY. Chandrachud led to repercussions at the lower judiciary? What is the contestation against the origins of the Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra and the Ajmer dargah? What about the provisions of the Places of Worship Act, 1991?

EXPLAINER

Ziya Us Salam

The story so far:

During a hearing of the Gyanvapi petition in 2022, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud made an oral observation that Sections 3 and 4 of the Places of Worship Act, 1991 do not prohibit the "ascertainment of religious character" of any place of worship. His oral observation has had repercussions at the lower judiciary with a number of districts and sessions courts in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan admitting petitions seeking to "ascertain the religious character" of mosques and other places of worship built in medieval India and ordering their surveys. Among the places facing calls for survey are the Ajmer Dargah, Adhai Din ka Jhonpra, the Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal, the Teelewali Masjid in Lucknow, the Shamsi Jama Masjid in Badaun, the Atala Masjid in Jaunpur besides the better known cases of Gyanvapi Masjid, and Eidgah in Mathura.

Are calls for surveys increasing?

Shortly after a civil judge in Sambhal ordered a survey of the town's Jama Masjid on November 19, there has been a slew of petitions calling for surveys of mosques and dargahs. On November 24, there was a repeat survey of the Sambhal mosque which led to violence in which six people were killed. Following the violence, the Supreme Court asked the report of the advocate commissioner to be kept in a sealed cover, and directed the mosque's committee to approach the Allahabad High Court to hear the case.

Around the same time, Ajmer's West Civil Court admitted a petition claiming that the Ajmer dargah was originally a Sankat Mochan Mandir. The demand led to uproar as the dargah is frequented by people of all religions and the Prime Minister himself sends a chador for its annual Urs in January. Disturbed by these



Historic site: People outside the Ajmer Sharif Dargah in Ajmer, Rajasthan, on November 28. PTI

petitions, a number of retired bureaucrats and Army personnel wrote to the Prime Minister asking him to curtail what they called, an "ideological assault on India's civilisational heritage".

What about Adhai Din ka Jhonpra? The dargah petition triggered demand for the restoration of the 12th century mosque Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra to its alleged pre-Islamic heritage. The mosque, located a few minutes away from the dargah, is an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) protected site. The demand came from Ajmer's Deputy Mayor Neeraj Jain who reiterated claims that the Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra was originally a Sanskrit college and a temple before being demolished towards the end of 12th century. Earlier the demand for a Sanskrit college and a temple at the site was raised

after a Jain monk visited the mosque along with some functionaries of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Soon after Rajasthan Assembly speaker Vasudev Devnani demanded an ASI survey at the historic site, arguing, "An ASI survey should immediately be done at Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra to find out whether the Jain delegates' claim is true. It's a subject to research whether it was occupied and converted into a mosque."

The mosque was built by Qutubuddin Aibak around the time he built the Quwwat-ul-Islam Masjid in the Qutub Minar complex in Delhi. Sultan Iltutmish beautified it in AD 1213 with a screen pierced by corbelled engrailed arches which appears in this country for the first time. A protected monument, its name stems from an Urs (fair) that used to be held here for two and a half days. Hence

the expression *Adhai Din* or two and a half days. However, the claim of the site being a mosque has been disputed by author Har Bilas Sarda who argued in his book, *Ajmer: Historical and Descriptive*, that Seth Viramdeva Kala built a Jain temple here in celebration of the Jain festival Panch Kalyan Mahotsava in 660 AD. The temple was destroyed by Afghans of Ghor in 1192, he claimed.

The ASI doesn't agree with the assertion. About the mosque, the ASI website states, "It was commenced by Qutubuddin Aibak in about 1200 AD with carved pillars used in colonnades... The pillared (prayer) chamber is divided into nine octagonal compartments and has two small minarets on top of the central arch. The three central arches carved with Kufic and Tughra inscriptions make it a splendid architectural masterpiece."

What about the Shamsi Jama Masjid? The 800-year-old Shamsi Jama Masjid is the latest mosque to face contestation. A fast-track court is hearing the claims of Mukesh Patel of the Hindu Mahasabha who filed a claim against the mosque, insisting it was an ancient Neelkanth Mahadev temple. In response, the Shamsi Shahi mosque's intezamia committee argued the suit was non-maintainable. Incidentally, the mosque is built on an elevated area called Sotha Mohalla, and is said to be the highest structure in Badaun town. After Quwwatul Islam and Adhai Din ka jhonpra, it is the third oldest mosque in north India.

After Badaun, cries are being made about the historic Jama Masjid in Delhi too – that it's built at the site of a Vishnu temple. With the districts and sessions courts continuing to freely admit such petitions, the provisions of the Places of Worship Act 1991 which prohibit changing the character of places of worship as they stood on August 15, 1947, stand ignored. Meanwhile, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board appealed to the Supreme Court to take suo moto notice of such petitions and bar the lower level judiciary from entertaining them in the future.

THE GIST

▼ Shortly after a civil judge in Sambhal ordered a survey of the town's Jama Masjid on November 19, there has been a slew of petitions calling for surveys of mosques and dargahs.

▼ Among the places facing calls for survey are the Ajmer Dargah, Adhai Din ka Jhonpra, the Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal, the Teelewali Masjid in Lucknow besides the known cases of Varanasi's Gyanvapi Masjid, and the Eidgah in Mathura.

▼ The 800-year-old Shamsi Jama Masjid is the latest mosque to face contestation. A fast-track court is hearing the claims of Mukesh Patel of the Hindu Mahasabha who filed a claim against the mosque, insisting it was an ancient Neelkanth Mahadev temple.

Has the government clarified its stance on ONOS?

Why did the 'One Nation, One Subscription' plan invoke criticism after it was unveiled last month?

The Hindu Bureau

The story so far:

On November 25, the Indian government announced the launch of its 'One Nation, One Subscription' (ONOS) plan to improve access to research journals for the country's public education and research institutes. The announcement was accompanied with scant details and broached widespread criticism from the research community, especially over what was perceived to be its disproportionate expense and lack of support for open-access publishing. On December 11, government officials conducted a press conference in New Delhi that addressed many of these concerns.

What is ONOS's purpose?

When scientists conclude an experiment, they write up their methods and findings and publish it as a paper in a journal. The

journal collects, reviews, edits, publishes, and archives these papers as a service to other scholars and the people at large. In exchange, journals levy a fee. Subscription-based journals charge readers a fee to read papers. Some forms of Open-Access (OA) journals, called 'gold' OA, charge researchers to publish their paper. Institutes in India had subscribed to subscription journals through 10 or so consortia within the country. ONOS will replace these consortia as a single window through which all government-funded institutes in the country will be able to access more than 13,000 journals published by 30 major international publishers.

Why did ONOS provoke criticism? At the time of announcement, a Ministry of Education press release didn't specify which journals would be part of ONOS, how ONOS would be implemented, how its allocation of ₹6,000 crore (for three

calendar years) would be spent, and how ONOS would support efforts to make research OA. Experts on the topic also asked whether the allocation for foreign journals could have been used to support domestic publishing efforts instead.

Also it wasn't clear whether ONOS would help scientists pay to publish in gold OA journals or whether these payments – called article processing charges (APCs) – could be discounted.

What was revealed on December 11? The press conference was attended by officials from the office of the Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA), the Department of Science & Technology, and the Department of Higher Education.

The package: Students and staff at all public institutes will be able to access all papers in the journals participating in ONOS irrespective of their discipline. Negotiations are underway to bring in more journals.

Phases: Remya Haridasan, a scientist at the PSA's office, said the government would implement ONOS in three phases: (i) merge all the consortia and work to facilitate journal access in all public institutes; (ii) expand to include private institutions; (iii) create "universal access" to all citizens "through designated access points at public libraries".

Open access: In a pilot, ONOS would set aside ₹150 crore a year to pay for APCs. The government has also negotiated APC discounts for researchers to publish in certain OA journals. The officials said they are aware of transformative OA models and that ONOS would encompass them as it progressed. As of today, they said, around 65% of papers published by Indian scientists were in subscription-based journals.

Domestic efforts: Officials at the press conference acknowledged the need to support domestic publishers. They said there were five repositories in the country – servers where researchers could deposit digital copies of their papers and where others could freely access them – but that scientists were using them to a less-than-ideal degree. They added that other efforts need to take place, such as "enhancement, promotion, and support of Indian journals" and changes in how institutes evaluate the work of researchers, especially to reduce dependence on journal titles and increase focus on the merit of each person's work.

THE GIST

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AFP

Way in the world: how Muslim women travelled from 17th-20th centuries

In 45 essays, three editors gather multiple travel accounts by Muslim women who, alone or chaperoned, veiled or unveiled, travelling for work or pleasure, bust every stereotype. Apart from records of the new and the unexpected, there are also observations about all aspects of life

Rakhshanda Jalil

I began reading *Three Centuries of Travel Writing by Muslim Women* (Zubaan Books) chronologically, hoping rather ambitiously to read it from cover to cover, one essay at a time. That was a mistake, I think. The book is better served, and savoured, if the reader were to dip into it in no particular order. Each essay is so precisely contextualised by the immaculate 'Introduction' prefacing each entry and followed by 'Further Reading' and 'Notes' that even a casual reader can dip into this richly documented, beautifully translated volume of disparate writings and partake of the spirit behind it.

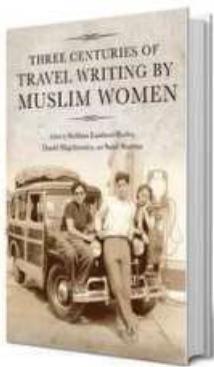
For the more serious reader/researcher, there is of course the scholarly introduction by Siobhan Lambert-Hurley and Daniel Majchrowicz who edited the book (along with Sunil Sharma). They write: "On the face of it, the premise of this volume is simple: a comparative study of travel narratives by Muslim women who travelled the world before the 'jet age' transformed modern mobility. Yet in our contemporary moment, the very juxtaposition of these terms – Muslim, women, travel mobility – instantly raises a number of questions."

Colonialism, gender, travel, religion, money come together in unexpected ways throughout this book. What is more, these accounts by educated and "privileged" Muslim women also contain descriptions – sometimes empathetic, occasionally derisive – of other Muslim women they meet during their travels

who are poor and disadvantaged and, being illiterate, could not have recorded their experiences or left written records of their lives. So, apart from records of the new and the unexpected, there are also observations about the different practices of child-rearing, food, cooking habits, dress, religious and social practices.

Multiple voices

These first-hand accounts, originally written in Urdu, Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Chaghtai, Turk, Punjabi, Bengali, Indonesian, German and English, span the 17th to 20th centuries thus presenting an array of experiences and impressions. Written variously as conventional travelogues (Halide Edib, Zainab Cobbold), excerpts from autobiographies (Salamah Bint Said/E Emily Ruete, Huda Shaarawi), diary entries (Muhammad Begum, Begum Hasrat Mohani), written for limited circulation as magazine articles (Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, Shams Pahlavi), recorded for family and friends (Begum Sarbuland Jung, Ummat al-Ghani Nur al-Nisa), or with a pronounced political overtone (Suharti Suwarto, Melek Hanim) quite naturally, therefore, present different voices and concerns. Chatty, informal, informed when the writing is for herself or her family members; or formal, structured, detailed, sometimes even didactic when she knows what she is writing is meant for public consumption.



Travel as life

There are 45 accounts in all, grouped under four headings: Travel as Pilgrimage, Travel as Emancipation and Politics, Travel as Education, and Travel as Obligation and Pleasure. While large numbers of Indian women have written hajj accounts, there is only one Indian in the second section, Shareefah Hamid Ali, who

represented India at the United Nations and travelled by air. Several Indian Muslim women chose to travel for education, sometimes their own, or their husband's or sons'. There is Mehr-al-Nisa from Hyderabad who joined her doctor husband in Ohio to train as an x-ray nurse, and Zaib-un-Nisa from Karachi writing an account of her 60 days in America as a member of the U.S. Department of State-sponsored Foreign Leader Exchange Programme where she crosses the breadth of the United States in a hired car with her husband. Safia Jabir Ali, daughter of the esteemed Tyabji clan, married Jabir Ali who travelled extensively for business from their home in Burma to Europe. Her memoir, written in Urdu, is brimming with an easy confidence: "I had to travel by myself from Bombay to Marseilles, and that was the first time I had occasion to depend entirely on myself and spend more than three weeks among entire strangers. However, as probably some of you know by

experience, on board the steamer, one gets to know people very soon. I was lucky in being able to travel on the Loyalty, the steamer of an Indian company where there were a good many Indian passengers, and some of us soon became great friends."

Connecting the dots

The last part, 'Travel as Obligation and Pleasure', has by far the most interesting experiences: Mughal Princess Jahanara's mystical meeting in Kashmir; Salamat Bint Said, a princess of Zanzibar, who flees her home to unite with her German lover in Hamburg, converts to Christianity and takes the name Emily Ruete; and Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's pleasure trip to the Himalayas, among others.

While most women travelled with a male (husband, father, son, brother), some travelled alone: "Safia Jabir Ali travelled alone from Bombay to meet her husband in post-First World War Britain, Sediqeh Dowlatabadi from Tehran in 1923 to study at the Sorbonne in Paris, Selma Ekram from 'Stamboul' to New York in 1924 on the promise of work, Muhammadi Begum with her infant child from Bonn to Oxford in the mid-1930s, and Herawati Diah en route to study at Barnard College in New York in 1937."

Alone or chaperoned, veiled or unveiled, travelling for work or pleasure, these accounts by Muslim women bust every stereotype. In one voice, these women seem to be saying: "only connect".

Rakhshanda Jalil is a translator and literary historian.

THE DAILY QUIZ

The first radio transmission across the Atlantic Ocean took place on December 12, 1901. Here is a quiz on the event that transformed perceptions of communication

Vighnesh P. Venkitesh

QUESTION 1

Who designed the transmission system and received the first signal?

QUESTION 2

Name the source and destination of the transmission?

QUESTION 3

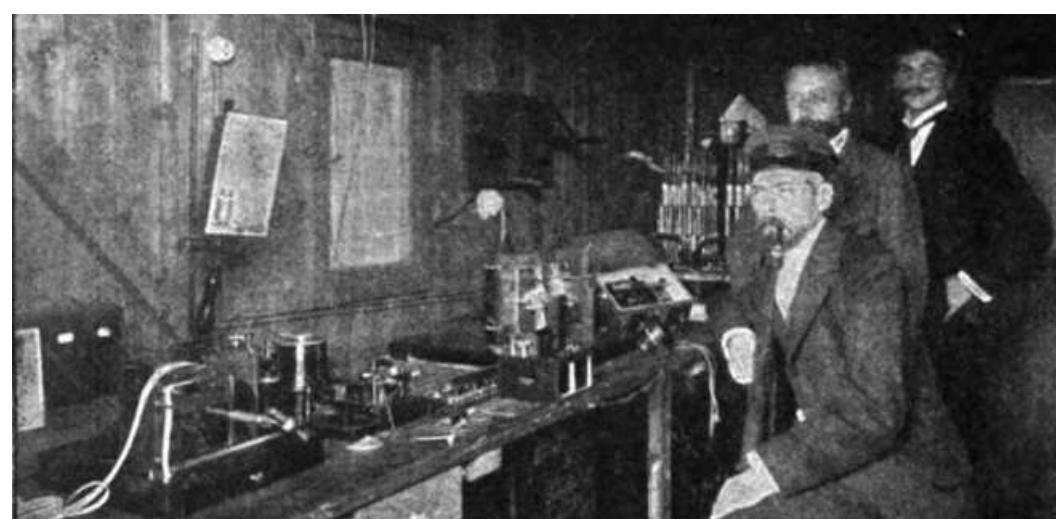
What was the transmitted message?

QUESTION 4

What did detractors believe would happen during the experiment?

QUESTION 5

Name the device invented by Edouard Branly that helped in transmitting long-range signals?



Visual question:

Name this German scientist who shared the Nobel Prize in Physics with the answer to question 1 for his contributions to wireless communication.

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. S.M. Krishna was Governor of this State. **Ans: Maharashtra**

2. S.M. Krishna was elected from this seat in Karnataka in 1962. **Ans: Maddur**

3. This task force was the brainchild of S.M. Krishna which ran from 1999 to 2004. **Ans: Bangalore Agenda Task Force**

4. This scheme designed to better the nutritional status of children was introduced in Karnataka when S.M. Krishna was Chief Minister. **Ans: Mid-day meal scheme**

5. Krishna's son-in-law passed away in 2019, and was the founder of this multinational food chain. **Ans: V.G. Siddhartha; Cafe Coffee Day**

Visual. The significance of this photo. **Ans: Film actor Dr. Rajkumar was kidnapped by forest brigand Veerappan**

Early Birds: Sonali Das| Tito Shiladitya| Siddhartha Viswanathan| Barnali Biswas| Lekshmy Harikumar



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian Upendran

"... and If I do that, do you think it'll help my complexion?"

"It's not COMplexion, but comPLEXion. The stress is on the second syllable and the 'o' of the first syllable is pronounced like the 'a' in 'China'."

"So 'com' is pronounced like the 'com' in words like 'complete', 'compel' and 'complain'. Is that right?"

"That's right."

"ComPLEXion. Good. Now about my complexion. Do you think if I..."

"Don't ask me any mickey mouse questions."

"Mickey mouse question! What does it mean?"

"Mickey mouse means 'nonsense, trivial, time-wasting'. For example, I can say, the report was a lot of mickey mouse."

"Now getting back to my complexion, sorry comPLEXion, I wonder ..."

"Let's change the channel."

"Change the channel? But the TV isn't on."

"I'm not talking about the TV I'm talking about you."

"You want me to change the channel. What does it mean?"

"You tell me."

"Well, when you change the channel of a TV set, you switch from one programme to another. So when you're talking about something and somebody asks you to change the channel, I suppose it means you are asked to change the topic."

"Excellent. To change the channel means 'to switch to some other topic of conversation'. Mohan is a difficult person to talk to because he keeps changing the channel frequently."

"That's true. So if I don't want him to keep changing the topic, can I say 'don't change the channel'?"

"Yes, you can. Now I definitely want you to change the channel."

"O.K. What do you plan to do during... . . . what do you plan on doing.. I am always confused. Is it 'plan to do' or 'plan on doing'?"

"Both are correct. You can either say 'What do you plan on eating' or 'What do you plan to eat'?"

"I see. So, what do you plan to do this evening?"

"I don't plan on doing anything. Could you please pass me the portable hand-held communications inscriber?"

"Portable what?"

"The portable hand-held communications inscriber."

"What is that?"

"A pencil!"

"You're joking."

"No. That's what the U.S. army calls a pencil."

Published in The Hindu on May 17, 1994.

Word of the day

Sublime:

the product of vapourisation of a solid; direct energy or urges into useful activities; make more subtle or refined; change or cause to change directly from a solid into a vapour without first melting; vapourise and then condense right back again

Synonyms:

rarefy, subtilise

Usage: I sublimated my grief by throwing myself into work.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/sublimatepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /səblɪmt/

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

From Page One**Parliament sees chaos amid BJP-Cong. tussle**

Addressing an INDIA bloc press conference, Congress president and Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that Mr. Dhankhar was working as a "government spokesperson" and acting like a "school headmaster".

"We have no hesitation in saying that the biggest disrupter in the Rajya Sabha is the chairman himself," Mr. Kharge said, adding, "His loyalty is towards the ruling party, instead of the Constitution and constitutional traditions. We can see that he is acting as a government spokesperson for the sake of his next promotion."

Setting the tone for the day, Mr. Rijiju attacked the Opposition for the no-confidence notice moved against Mr. Dhankhar. "You have no right to be members if you can't respect the Chair. We have taken an oath to protect the sovereignty of the country," he told the Opposition before raising the issue of alleged links between Mr. Soros and the Congress.

The INDIA bloc held a press conference to explain why they were "forced" to bring the motion against the Rajya Sabha Chairman. Mr. Kharge said the Chairman's conduct had been contrary to the dignity of the post he held; he targeted Opposition leaders and often praised the government. However, he clarified that the notice against Mr. Dhankhar was not about "personal grievances" or "political battles". "We are fed up with his behaviour and partiality. That is why we have given the notice for his removal," he said.

Protect Places of Worship Act, say pleas in SC

The Jamiat pointed out that the Ayodhya judgment of the apex court in November 2019, following which the suits mushroomed, had itself categorically upheld the 1991 Act and the essential feature of secular values it protected.

"The mere mentioning of the averment that the Muslim place of worship in question was built by Muslim invaders bars the suit under Section 4 of the 1991 Act which specifically provides the cut-off date of August 15, 1947 and preserves the religious character of a place of worship as it existed on that date. However, despite the clear mandate of law, the suits are being entertained," the petition said.

Opposition plans motion to impeach U.P. judge

An Opposition MP told *The Hindu* that the notices would be moved in a day or two.

"We are preparing the notices for both the Houses. So far, we have received about 40 signatures from the Rajya Sabha. More than 100 MPs from the Lok Sabha are also willing to sign the notice. The process has started. Mr. Sibal is in touch with MPs across political parties," he said.

Justice Yadav's remarks, particularly the comment that the country would function as per the wishes of the majority, had evoked widespread criticism.

Indian scientists develop novel gene therapy

There is only one gene therapy – Roctavian – which was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for commercial use in 2023. Its effectiveness was established based on results from a cohort of 112 patients followed up for at least three years after Roctavian treatment. Following the infusion, the average bleeding incidents decreased from 5.4 bleeds per year at baseline to 2.6 bleeds per year.

The majority of patients who received Roctavian also received corticosteroids to suppress their immune systems for the gene therapy to be effective and safe, according to the U.S. FDA.

This approach, the authors say in their paper, is safer than using an adenovirus, and potentially opens up the gene therapy treatment to children.

An independent expert described the study as "ground-breaking".

'Drive against manual scavenging will continue'

"As regards total eradication, it has not happened anywhere, not even in one municipality... Show us one model municipality where there is no hazardous cleaning," Justice Dhulia said.

Amicus curiae, senior advocate K. Parameshwar said the proof that sewer deaths remain unabated is found in three recent judgments of the Delhi High Court, which had ordered the payment of enhanced compensation to the victims' families. "We don't have to go too far for proof, it is there right in the national capital," he said.

The court directed the Social Justice Ministry to meet with the States in the next two weeks and iron out an action plan for implementation of the October 2023 judgment. The court afforded the government the opportunity to iron out the creases in the implementation or face contempt action.

India does not endorse Hasina's statements: Misri

Former Bangladesh PM's criticism of interim govt. a pinprick in bilateral ties, Foreign Secretary tells House panel; New Delhi's ties with Dhaka are not based on a 'single political party', he says

Suhasini Haidar
Sobhana K. Nair
Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

Briefing the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, headed by Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Wednesday said India does not endorse deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's criticism of the interim government in Bangladesh and it remains a pinprick in India-Bangladesh relations.

He said India's relation with Bangladesh was not limited to a "single political party" or a government and that India was focused on the "people of Bangladesh".

Mr. Misri said Ms. Hasina was using "private communication devices" to make her comments and that the Government of India was not involved in providing her with any platform or facility that enables her to carry out her political activity from Indian soil. This, he said, was



Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met his Bangladesh counterpart, Mohammad Jashim Uddin, in Dhaka on Monday. AFP

part of India's traditional practice of avoiding interference in third countries.

Mr. Misri's remarks acquire significance as Ms. Hasina has been making video messages criticising the interim government in Bangladesh.

Mr. Misri informed the committee that during his visit to Dhaka on Monday, he informed the interim government that India's relation with Bangladesh went beyond "a particular political party" or a particular government and that India prioritised relation with the people of Bangladesh and would engage

with the government of the day.

Mr. Misri briefed the committee a day after returning from Dhaka, where he conveyed India's "concerns" about the "regrettable incidents" in Bangladesh.

The Foreign Secretary said India was concerned about the lack of acknowledgment of the alleged incidents of violence against minority communities but welcomed the latest report that authorities in Bangladesh had arrested 88 persons related to the violence against minority communities after the fall of the Ha-

sina government. Mr. Misri, according to sources, also said that there had been tangible improvement in the relationship after his visit.

Both sides, Mr. Misri said, explained their concerns.

For India, he said, the Bangladesh authorities' decision to release many of the convicted "terrorists" who are indulging in anti-India rhetoric, remained an issue of deep concern.

The Bangladesh authorities, meanwhile, flagged the "disinformation" campaign in the Indian press about the events unfolding in that country.

Many committee members raised the arrest of ISKCON monks in Bangladesh, but no reply, as per the sources, was forthcoming from Mr. Misri on the issue.

He, however, told the members that during his visit to Dhaka, he informed the authorities there that there had to be an "acknowledgment" of the incidents that involved attacks on temples and the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre.

Only light-touch regulation will help innovation: official

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

It will lead to deeper listener engagement, empowering India's creators, says I&B Secretary

tal radio broadcasting in India. As part of our efforts, we are set to roll out digital FM radio broadcasting in 13 metros and major cities in the coming months, marking a significant step forward," he said.

"This initiative arrives at a crucial juncture as the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India engage in public consultations for a Digital Radio Broadcast Policy for private broadcasters," read a release issued by the organisers.

Highlighting the significance of digital radio, ICEA chairman Pankaj Mohindroo said: "The transition to digital radio is not just essential – it is overdue. With India's rich cultural landscape, digital radio technology offers unparalleled opportunities for innovation, multilingual content, and varied genres tailored to India's diverse demography."

EU envoy meets Rahul; bilateral ties discussed

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Ambassador of the European Union to India Hervé Delphin and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, on Wednesday, discussed topics relevant to the relations and future of their democracies in a world marked by challenges, geopolitical tensions, and crises.

The Congress posted pictures of Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Delphin from the meeting on X and, said, "They had a lively and detailed discussion covering a broad range of topics relevant to the relations and future of our democracies in a world marked by challenges, geopolitical tensions and crises."

"Dense and lively discussion with Rahul Gandhi, covering a broad range of topics of relevance for the EU-India relations and the future of our democracies," the envoy said.

Protest against vandalism of Constitution replica turns violent in Parbhani district

Snehal Mutha
MUMBAI

The bandh called in protest against the vandalism of a Constitution replica turned violent on Wednesday in Maharashtra's Parbhani district and the police imposed prohibitory orders in the area. The protesters demanded quick action and a probe against the "mastermind behind the incident".

In the beginning, the bandh remained peaceful, but later on, violence broke out with the protesters torching vehicles and tyres and throwing stones in the railway station area. The mob vandalised the Collector's office. The police imposed the ban orders in Parbhani district, suspended Internet in Parbhani city, and appealed to the people to maintain law and order. Additional forces, including Rapid Action Police and Riot Control Police, were deployed.

"The situation is under control now; we arrested



Burning rage: A structure set on fire during protests, which continued for the second day, over alleged vandalising of a replica of the Indian Constitution, in Parbhani, Maharashtra, on Wednesday. PTI

the accused and soon the FIR will be filed. The accused was inebriated and had been suffering from mental health ailments," District Magistrate Raghu Nath Gawade told *The Hindu*.

The violence was triggered when 45-year-old Sopan Pawar, a resident of Parbhani, allegedly damaged the Constitution repli-

ca kept in a glass box in front of Dr. Ambedkar's statue in the Parbhani railway station area around 5 p.m. on Tuesday. At least 200 people gathered near the statue after learning about the incident. According to police officials, the locals indulged in rail roko, blocking the Nandigram Express for at least 30 minutes. The train left the

Parbhani station around 6.50 p.m. after the Government Railway Police managed to disperse the crowd. "Some 70-80 people have been booked for rioting under Section 191 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sahitata," Additional Superintendent of Police Yashwant Kale told *The Hindu*.

Condemning the incident, Parbhani MP Sanjay

Jadhav called out police negligence and said, "The youth got suspicious of conspiracy behind the incident. The way the police administration handled the situation is questionable. If the police had imposed ban orders in the night itself, this could have been avoided."

Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale demanded strict action against the accused and a probe into the matter. "Humbling Constitution is an extremely critical matter and a treasonous offence. The protest reflects the sentiments of Ambedkarites. However, I appeal to them to maintain peace," said Mr. Athawale, adding that he would request Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to investigate the prime person behind the incident.

Vanchit Bahujan Aaghaadi president Prakash Ambedkar demands that the administration arrest all the miscreants.

Amid crackdown by police, UN team visits Jammu slum housing Rohingya

The Hindu Bureau

JAMMU



The government has already passed directions against snapping power and electricity supply to these families in Jammu. PTI

The visit assumes significance as it came in the wake of a fresh crackdown on "illegal" immigrants in Jammu since November. The drive also attracted spotlight after the authorities started cutting off water and electricity supplies to Rohingya and Bangla-

deshi settlers following an order passed by a magistrate on a petition by the police.

However, J&K's ruling party National Conference, including Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and party president Farooq Abdullah, have opposed any

Consular access plea: HC notice to MEA, Embassy in Qatar

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

cedural support to his son before the foreign court.

"His signatures were allegedly forged to transfer shares... through an agreement dated October 25, 2017. Additionally, a document dated November 8, 2017, purportedly notarised before the Documentation Department, State of Qatar, is also claimed to be forged," the plea said.

It contended that he could not have signed these documents while imprisoned during the relevant period. "However, due to his imprisonment, Mr. Muhammed Bava has been unable to pursue legal action against the individuals who defrauded him," it added. The court will hear the case again on January 27 next year.

'Drive against manual scavenging will continue'

"As regards total eradication, it has not happened anywhere, not even in one municipality... Show us one model municipality where there is no hazardous cleaning," Justice Dhulia said.

Amicus curiae, senior advocate K. Parameshwar said the proof that sewer deaths remain unabated is found in three recent judgments of the Delhi High Court, which had ordered the payment of enhanced compensation to the victims' families. "We don't have to go too far for proof, it is there right in the national capital," he said.

The court directed the Social Justice Ministry to meet with the States in the next two weeks and iron out an action plan for implementation of the October 2023 judgment. The court afforded the government the opportunity to iron out the creases in the implementation or face contempt action.



A view of the Lit for Life festival, 2024, at the Sir Mutha Concert Hall in Chennai. V. VELANKANNI RAJ

Literature fests celebrate books, writing, and ideas behind words

Nirmala Lakshman

Chairperson, The Hindu Group, and Founder and Chair, The Hindu Lit for Life

Literature festivals celebrate books and writing and in essence the ideas behind them. They are spaces for the communion of ideas that emerge from books, spaces where vibrant interactions between readers and writers can happen, spaces where enriching discussions and dialogue can promote better understanding between a diverse group of people with varied points of view.

The *Hindu's* Lit for Life is a festival that while promoting a love for literature can also light up one's life by the ideas that one encounters, provoking new pathways of thought and by paving a way for greater clarity when dealing with the complex world around us. So, it is literature for life as well as being lit up for life.

For the last 13 years, we have consciously created a platform that is inclusive in nature and showcases a variety of expression in the arts, in literature and in culture. Diversity and the free expression of it is at the core of a democratic society and what better way can there be of celebrating this than by facilitating and providing a forum that fosters this. In this endeavour we have been greatly supported by the input and presence of wonderful writers, speakers, artists and public intellectuals. We are privileged to continue year upon year and put together a festival that will always shine a light.

IN BRIEF



'Govt. must ensure protection of minorities in Bangladesh'

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said the Centre must ensure protection of minorities in violence-hit Bangladesh. This comes even as multiple religious outfits across West Bengal and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are holding rallies across the State to protest against the attack on minorities in the neighbouring country. In a public address, Ms. Banerjee said that protecting minorities was the Union government's responsibility. Yet, she said, "As part of the Opposition, we are showing more responsibility. The task that should be done by the Prime Minister is being done by the Opposition."

Lawyer Vrinda Grover not to represent R.G. Kar victim's kin

Supreme Court advocate Vrinda Grover on Wednesday announced that she will no longer represent the family of the doctor who was raped and murdered at Kolkata's R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital on August 9. Ms. Grover and her chamber had been providing legal assistance to the victim's family not only at the Supreme Court but also at the Calcutta High Court and Sealdah court where the trial in the case has commenced. "At this stage, on account of certain intervening factors and circumstances, the chamber of Advocate Vrinda Grover is constrained to withdraw from the case proceedings in this matter and will no longer be representing the victim family," a statement said.

Three from Bangladesh get five years' imprisonment

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Special Court, Mumbai, has sentenced three Bangladeshi nationals to five years of imprisonment for illegal infiltration into India and possession of fake documents, the NIA said in a press statement on Wednesday.

The three accused persons were convicted and sentenced to five years in jail, along with ₹2,000 each as fine.

The case had originated from an FIR registered in March 2018 based on inputs received regarding several Bangladeshi nationals staying in Pune without valid documents, and abetting and aiding members of the ABT, a front organisation of the proscribed terror organisation, the al-Qaeda.

Based on its investigations, the NIA filed a chargesheet on September 7, 2018, against the accused under Section 120B of the IPC of criminal conspiracy, Section 471 for using forged documents, Sections 17, 19 and 20 of the Unlawful Activities [Prevention] Act, 1967 for unlawful activities and terrorism, and Section 14 of the Foreigners Act, 1946.

Recent killings in Bastar raise concern amid security gains

The latest to be killed is a BJP worker in Bijapur; in almost all the cases, it was alleged that the victim was a police informer, according to police

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

The killings of five people allegedly by Naxals in the past seven days in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh has flagged some emerging vulnerabilities for the residents of the interior regions of conflict-hit Bastar.

The latest to be killed is the BJP worker Kudiam Mado, 35, in Bijapur district, on Tuesday. Mado was dragged from his home at Somanpalli village and strangled to death. A pamphlet found at the scene said the Maoists took responsibility for the murder while claiming Mado was a police informer.

This comes close on the heels of similar incidents on December 4 when two former sarpanches, one of them a BJP worker, were killed by Naxalites in separate places in Bijapur district and on December 6, when a woman anganwadi assistant was murdered in the district. Another woman was strangled to death by Maoists here on December 7.



People in the interior villages of Chhattisgarh depend on last-mile workers who are critical for service delivery. SHUBHOMOY SIKDAR

In almost all of these cases, it was said that the victim was a police informer. The murders were carried out by militia cadres in plainclothes, according to the police.

In four of those, the police have identified militia members involved who execute the orders for the Maoists.

Panchayat elections

Data show that of the 68 civilians killed by the Maoists this year, nearly half, or 32, were from Bijapur. There have been past waves of such killings too around panchayat elections and other such events, but this

time, police officers feel the trigger is different.

Notably, 207 Maoists have been killed this year, the highest tally since 2001.

The party base of the Maoists has traditionally been strong in the Ganjam area of Bijapur which is why it has been a key recruitment centre.

With the State cracking down on the outlaws with continuous anti-Maoist operations that have left over 200 Maoist cadres dead, police officers believe that in Bijapur, as elsewhere in the affected zone, a frustration is creeping in among the Maoists.

Parents donate body of newborn baby for medical education

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

For Ram Mahra and Nancy, the joy of becoming parents again on December 8 was short-lived as their baby died of a heart ailment just 60 hours after she was born. In the middle of their grief, however, the Uttarakhand couple decided to donate their infant daughter's body for the purpose of medical education and research.

Mr. Mahra, a machine operator who dropped out of school after Class 8, said that he was guided toward body donation by his family doctor who is associated with Dadichi Dehdaan Samiti, an NGO which encourages body and organ donation.

"I lost my daughter before I could feel her properly. By donating her body, I am making her immortal. She will serve a greater cause for mankind which we could do," said the mother, who is still admitted in the hospital.

The body was donated to the Anatomy Department of Doon Medical College on Wednesday. "The baby, whose parents haven't named her yet, was named Saraswati by the office-bearers of the Dehdaan Samiti. Saraswati is the goddess of knowledge and this baby girl too will help in making students learn the anatomy of a infant through her," said Rajesh Maurya, a doctor in the Anatomy Department.

This case is likely to be the youngest body donation in India, says an NGO officer

district, Mr. Mahra married Ms. Nancy four years ago. The baby, who died just two-and-a-half days after birth, was their second child. Though the extended family supported the couple in their decision to donate their child's body, the final call was taken by Ms. Nancy.

'Making her immortal'
"I lost my daughter before I could feel her properly. By donating her body, I am making her immortal. She will serve a greater cause for mankind which we could do," said the mother, who is still admitted in the hospital.

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ILO report asks nations to uphold freedom of association at work

A.M. Jigeesh

NEW DELHI

The Social Dialogue Report of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), released in Geneva on Wednesday, has recommended the governments to uphold fundamental principles and rights at work, especially freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.

The report, focusing on 'peak-level social dialogue' (PLSD), also asked the member countries to equip labour administrations and social partners with the necessary resources and technical capacities for effective participation in PLSD.

It found that countries' compliance with freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining



Workers' rights: The ILO has said that governments must recognise the right to collective bargaining. FILE PHOTO

sultation and information exchange on issues relating to labour, economic and social policy. PLSD includes bipartite processes - where only the social partners engage, notably for reaching collective agreements - as well as tripartite processes, which also involve government representatives," the report said.

"This edition of the Social Dialogue Report is published amid economic and geopolitical instability," said ILO's Assistant Director-General for Governance, Rights and Dialogue Manuela Tomei. "In a context where technological advances, climate change and demographic shifts are deeply transforming labour markets, social dialogue remains a credible governance model for navigating complexity and identifying fair solutions."

ensuring fair and inclusive low-carbon and digital transitions.

The report adds that PLSD involves processes that bring together representatives of governments, employers' and business membership organisations (EBMOs) and workers' organisations (the social partners) at the national and sectoral levels. "These processes are designed to facilitate negotiation, con-

India accounts for half of malaria cases in Southeast Asia in 2023

Bindu Shajan Perappadan

NEW DELHI

The World Health Organisation (WHO) South East Asia Region contributes about 1.5% of the burden of malaria cases globally and India accounted for about half of all estimated cases in 2023, followed by Indonesia, which carried just under one-third.

Estimated malaria deaths in the region fell by 82.9%, from 35,000 in 2000 to 6,000 in 2023. Together, India and Indonesia accounted for about 88% of malaria deaths in the region.

"In the period 2022-2023, four countries achieved reductions in their malaria caseload - Bangladesh (9.2%), India (9.6%), Indonesia (-5.7%) and Nepal (-58.3%).

The report notes that since 2000, the WHO South-East Asia Region has made remarkable progress against malaria and esti-



Preventive mode: A health employee gives a malaria injection to a child in Abidjan of Ivory Coast in West Africa. FILE PHOTO

mated malaria cases in the region fell from 22.8 million in 2000 to 4 million in 2023 - a reduction of 82.4%.

"In the period 2022-2023, four countries achieved reductions in their malaria caseload - Bangladesh (9.2%), India (9.6%), Indonesia (-5.7%) and Nepal (-58.3%).

The report notes that since 2000, the WHO South-East Asia Region has made remarkable progress against malaria and esti-

17.7 million fewer estimated cases and a 93% decrease in case incidence since 2000," the report said.

Meanwhile, new data from the WHO revealed that an estimated 2.2 billion cases of malaria and 12.7 million deaths have been averted since 2000, but the disease remains a serious global health threat, particularly in the WHO African Region.

According to WHO's latest World malaria report, there were an estimated 263 million cases and 5,97,000 malaria deaths worldwide in 2023. This represents about 11 million more cases in 2023 compared to 2022, and nearly the same number of deaths. Meanwhile, as of November 2024, 44 countries and one territory had been certified malaria-free by WHO.

FAITH

Dispelling darkness

It is easy to dispel earthly darkness by lighting a lamp. How does one overcome inner darkness (ignorance)? To help devotees overcome this problem, God asked His divine weapon *saranga* (bow) to be born on earth and light the lamp of knowledge. Accordingly, *saranga* was born as Tirumangai Azhwar in the Tamil month of Kartigai, under the Kartigai star, said Tirukkudanthai Dr. Venkatesh.

Unlike the other Vaishnavite saints, Tirumangai led an ordinary life. One day, he held up the procession of newly weds, who were none other than Perumal and Thayar. When Tirumangai tried to remove the toe ring of the deity but could not, the brigand bit the metal, but to no avail; and he asked the groom what magic he was wreaking. Perumal took him aside to the shade of a peepal tree and imparted spiritual knowledge. The Narayana mantra (quintessence of the Vedas) thus received, changed the brigand forever and he dedicated himself to the service of the Lord, stealing our hearts with his works. He composed Periya Tirumozhi (1,084 hymns), Tirukkurundankam (20 verses), Tirunedundantakam (30 verses), Tiruvezhukkutirukkai (single poem), Siriya Tirumadal (155 lines) and Periya Tirumadal (297 lines), all of which help dispel ignorance. These works all form a significant portion of Nalayira Divya Prabhandam.

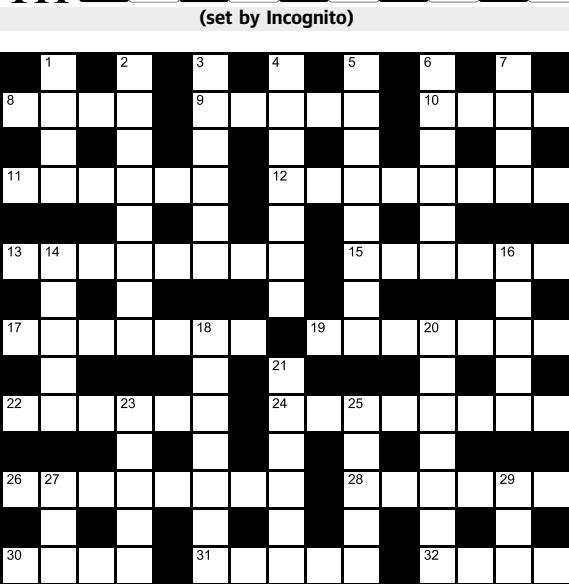
It is believed that he was reborn many times, including as Nampillai and Asukavi Villurswami (born under same star). During the month of Kartigai (from December 8 to 14), at the pavitrotsavam of Rama at Vaduvur, the Lord smilingly listens to the discourse on Villurswami's Sanskrit composition on His smile.

TH CROSSWORD

14354

(set by Incognito)

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



Across

- 8 Present American soldier with a foot on his backside (4)
- 9 Meal available in Kunlun, China (5)
- 10 Norwegian capital invested in Czechoslovakia (4)
- 11 Animals found in desolate landscapes (6)
- 12 Doctors! Be finest to get advantages... (8)
- 13 Rewrites pages about lubricant material lost due to deterioration in quality (8)

Down

- 1 Invoice Clinton (4)
- 2 In America, tinsel is used to make items of kitchen equipment (8)
- 3 Sadly, to some extent, Kansas' state (6)
- 4 Gave a cold shoulder and rejected buns kept on mattress (7)
- 5 Small Chinese hag travels with one in Chinese city (8)
- 6 A couple of females lie amidst money in Dracula's bed (6)
- 7 Apartment initially looking awful covered by foot (4)
- 14/16 Recommend: Add one term to the lexicon, perhaps (3,2,1,4)
- 18 Settle in tanner forged by Chinese (8)
- 20 Executive committee records contain upper class sweetheart's poems (8)
- 21 Limp Alaskan protects animals (7)
- 23 Rodent's got endless power and is followed by that lady (6)
- 25 Sketcher rejecting prize (6)
- 27 American journalist's not new (4)
- 29 Carry bear having new breathing organ in chest (4)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

No SS6461 Distribution: www.knightfeathers.com

L	S	B	L	O	J	R	W	N	E	I	P	C	M	3
W	I	N	E	S	E	U	P	A	N	O	R	T	G	M
O	T	T	O	P	G	M								
A	N	K	A	R	A	P	R	O	C	U	R	E	D	
D	O	M	I	N	E	R	F	R	A	T	A			

IN BRIEF



New Camry hybrid electric launched at ₹48 lakh

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) announced the India unveiling of its Camry hybrid electric sedan on Wednesday, priced at ₹48 lakh (ex-showroom). The firm said the car is equipped with advanced 5th generation hybrid technology, delivering significantly improved efficiency and enhanced performance. Masakazu Yoshimura, MD and CEO, TKM, said, "Our product strategy aligns with India's priorities to lower carbon emissions and achieve energy security goals."

MobiKwik's IPO sold out in first hour as investors rush in

One MobiKwik Systems' IPO of ₹572 crore got fully subscribed within an hour of opening of the issue on Wednesday. The initial share sale received bids for 2.16 shares, as against 1.18 crore on offer, translating into 1.82 times subscription, as per data available with NSE till 11:40 hours. Retail Individual Investors subscribed 7.69 times, while the Non-Institutional Investors received 1.55 times subscription. The IPO is available for public subscription till December 13. PTI

Top shareholders offer to take India's Renew Energy private

A group of shareholders, including Renew Energy's founder Sumanth Sinha and major investment firms, has proposed taking the company private by offering \$7.07 per share, a premium of 11.5% to the stock's last close, an SEC filing showed on Tuesday. This move comes as Renew's market capitalisation is \$2.37 billion, and its shares have dropped 36% since its February 2021 listing. REUTERS

CCI may tackle staff poaching by Big Tech

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's anti-trust watchdog said Wednesday it is open to taking action to protect smaller companies if big digital platforms try to poach their talent ranks working on areas like Artificial Intelligence (AI), as similar poaching practices are being seen in developed markets like the United States and the European Union.

"When you are looking at multi-faceted markets, consumer welfare may indicate something different, whereas what is impacting other stakeholders like your startups, small enterprises, they may need a different dispensation," the Competition Commission

of India chairperson Ravneet Kaur said, adding this makes their role quite challenging as they have to balance these two aspects.

Ms. Kaur said there are concerns about "poaching of staff" by "big gatekeepers" and digital platforms that have a first mover advantage in the EU and U.S.

"Even in the case of AI, they are poaching upon staff of small startups and companies working on generative AI. We have so far not looked at anything of that sort here. But if there is a requirement that they are trying to escape notification before the Commission and do this kind of a thing, then maybe that context will also be looked at," the CCI chief said.

Coca-Cola to sell 40% of its stake in India to Jubilant Bhartia Group

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Global beverage major Coca-Cola on Wednesday announced sale of 40% stake in its India bottling business Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages Pvt Ltd (HCCBL) to Jubilant Bhartia Group.

Though the company has not disclosed the amount of the deal, some media reports have pegged it at around ₹10,000 crore for 40% stake in Hindustan Coca-Cola Holdings.

The Bhartia family-led group in a statement said "they have entered into a definitive agreement for a strategic investment whereby Jubilant Bhartia Group will be acquiring a

40% equity interest in Hindustan Coca-Cola Holdings Pvt Ltd, India (HCC) through its entity Jubilant Beverages Limited". The transaction is subject to regulatory approval.

This deal is a part of The Coca-Cola Company's strategy to divest its stake in bottling operations globally as per its asset-light strategy.

"With its diverse experience in various sectors, Jubilant brings decades of rich experience that will help accelerate the Coca-Cola system, enabling us to win in the market and provide greater value to local communities and consumers," Coca-Cola India President Sanket Ray said.

RBI Governor Malhotra vows best batting stance in public interest

Taking charge at Mint Street, the cricket-loving new central bank boss steers clear of outswingers on growth and inflation, vows to play with a straight bat after getting a flavour of the pitch; says focus would be on continuity, stability and certainty

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

The 26th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Sanjay Malhotra took charge of Mint Street on Wednesday, opening his account with a straight bat, committing to uphold and strengthen public trust in the central bank while maintaining a sense of continuity and the commitment to take appropriate decisions at the right time in public interest.

"I can assure you that we will put the best foot forward in public interest to deliver what the public of India looks forward to, which is trust, growth, sta-



New Innings: Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra took charge as the 26th Governor of RBI for the next three years on Wednesday. ANI

bility and certainty in policy," Mr. Malhotra said.

The computer science engineer turned bureaucrat, who was named the new banking regulator this Monday, said emphasis would be placed on tech-

nology and innovations to enhance financial inclusion and expansion.

A cricket lover and coffee aficionado Mr. Malhotra, in his first press conference as Governor, shied away from commenting on the legacy of the RBI.

issues like growth and inflation. He said, "It is my first day and so if I start playing my shots from day one, from ball one, I don't think it will be appropriate on my part."

Agile to challenges

Mr. Malhotra said that while maintaining continuity and stability, the RBI would be alert and agile to challenges.

Mr. Malhotra, who is learnt to have been briefed about his appointment hours before it was made public, said it was "an honour to head this august institution and a huge responsibility" and that he would continue to uphold the legacy of the RBI.

With this appointment Mr. Malhotra, a Punjabi, who was born, raised and has worked in North India, will make Mumbai his home for at least three years and gain a first-hand experience of what makes the port city and India's financial capital tick.

Highlighting RBI's 90th anniversary theme of stability, trust and growth, he said these were pertinent for the economy. Noting the RBI has done a tremendous job in monetary policy management and financial inclusion, he said one needs to be conscious that one does not have a monopoly on all knowledge, so external expertise should also be tapped.

Sri Lanka: Adani Ports drops \$0.5 bn U.S. loan plea

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Adani Ports & Special Economic Zone Ltd. (APSEZ) has withdrawn the \$553 million loan request from the U.S. Development Finance Corporation and instead has decided to fund the Colombo West International Terminal (CWIT) from internal sources.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	WEDNESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	81,526	0.02
US Dollar	84.83	-0.95
Gold	80,400	0.77
Brent oil	73.03	0.52

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2457.25	-9.95
Adani Ports	1233.80	-14.95
Apollo Hosp.	7340.80	-82.50
Asian Paints	2417.30	-28.40
Axis Bank	1147.25	-6.40
Bajaj Auto	9069.85	-56.55
Bajaj Finance	1686.50	-23.10
Bharat Elec.	314.10	-0.75
Bharti Airtel	1586.00	-7.35
BPCL	307.45	-3.95
Britannia Ind.	4889.50	-102.25
Cipla	1454.10	-1.10
Coal India	416.95	-2.90
Dr Reddy's Lab.	1238.75	-1.80
Eicher Motors	4801.95	-11.10
Grasim Ind.	2670.75	-15.45
HCL Tech	1930.90	-5.45
HFDC Bank	1863.10	-5.00
HFDC Life	634.65	-1.35
Hero MotoCorp	4650.45	-62.15
Hindalco	670.50	-1.60
Hind Unilever	2401.35	-4.00
ICICI Bank	1327.50	-2.95
IndusInd Bank	984.85	-0.55
Infosys	1974.15	-25.60
ITC	465.25	-0.20
JSW Steel	1000.20	-12.75
Kotak Bank	1794.70	-0.00
L&T	3916.75	-6.40
M&M	3072.05	-5.15
Maruti Suzuki	1127.75	-79.55
NestleIndia	2241.05	-26.60
NTPC	365.50	-3.65
ONGC	256.60	-0.30
PowerGrid Corp	327.55	-0.35
Reliance Ind	1278.20	-6.65
State Bank	861.60	-5.90
Shriram Finance	3248.25	-61.75
Sun Pharma	1814.00	-4.05
TataConsumerProduct	935.05	-8.30
Tata Motors	799.10	-0.80
Tata Steel	150.60	-0.28
TCS	4427.45	-5.10
Tech Mahindra	1762.80	-0.75
Titan	3473.10	-2.65
Trent Ltd.	7063.30	-185.25
UltraTech Cement	11898.50	-152.70
Wipro	309.00	0.90

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	84.63	84.95
Euro	88.86	89.20
British Pound	107.73	108.14
Japanese Yen (100)	55.45	55.66
Chinese Yuan	11.64	11.69
Swiss Franc	95.77	96.14
Singapore Dollar	62.96	63.21
Canadian Dollar	59.66	59.89
Malaysian Ringgit	19.08	19.18
Australian Dollar	53.73	53.94

Source: Indian Bank

States to be responsible in their borrowing plans, and stressed that addressing the mounting intergenerational debt is a priority.

"Responsible economies cannot be run with borrowings so large that the next generation and the generation after that already knows what it is liable to repay. After all, that will have to be passed through as taxation, as you are not going to be able to

generate that resource to pay back the debt that you have taken," she said.

"It is absolutely important for governments and for industry to work together to see how best debt can be managed at the national, and I hate using this word, but I would say at the sub-national level, I mean the federal and the provincial level, it is important for us to manage our debt," she underlined.

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Walk-In-Interview

"Walk In interview" against vacant posts of "Senior Resident and Junior Resident" on Contractual basis as per departmental requirement for 01 (one) year which can be extended for a maximum of 03 years, which will be held from 16th December, 2024 at 10:00 am daily (except on public holidays) at the office of the Principal, Soban Singh Jeena Government Institute of Medical Science & Research, Almora, Near Vikas Bhawan, Pandeykhola, Almora, Distt-Almora, Uttarakhand-263601".

fixed honorarium :

Senior Resident all Departments. - Rs. 90,350/- per month

Senior Resident, Department of Radiology- Rs. 2,00,000/- per month plus 10% annual increment.

Junior Resident all Departments - Rs. 76,600/- per month

* Educational qualification and age as per NMC norms.

* Reservation - As per the Uttarakhand Government order.

Principal
SSJ Govt. IMSR Almora
Almora.

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT, MAHARANA BHUPAL GOVT. HOSPITAL, UDAIPUR
क्रमांक: एस.ओ. १-प्र० ८५० पर्मि. ०५.०० प.मि. ०५.०० प.मि. २७.१२.२०२४
Notice Inviting Bid 28/5.12.2024
NIB No.: GHU 2425A034

Bids for below works in M.B. Govt. Hospital, Udaipur are invited from interested bidders for S.No. 1 upto 05.00 PM dated 27.12.2024 other Particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.rjnic.in>) of the state.

S. No.	Details	UBN No.
1	अधिकारी महात्मा गांधी अस्पताल राजस्विकारालय, उदयपुर से Rate Contract (GHU2425 GLRC00063) for Gauze Than and Bandage उपलब्ध कराने हेतु नियमित।	DIPR/C/12601/2024
	Superintendent, M.B. Govt. Hospital, Udaipur	

DEIR AL-BALAH

Israeli strikes on Gaza home and refugee camp kill 29 people



Israeli strikes pounded Gaza overnight and into Wednesday, hitting a home where displaced people were sheltering in the isolated north and a built-up refugee camp. At least 29 people were killed. Militants in central Gaza meanwhile fired four projectiles into Israel on Wednesday, two of which were intercepted, the military said. AP

DHAKA

BNP workers hold protest march as tensions continue with India



Thousands of members of youth and student bodies belonging to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party on Wednesday held a road march from Dhaka toward its eastern border with India to protest against an attack on a diplomatic mission earlier this month and alleged desecration of Bangladeshi flags in India. AP

SEOUL

South Korean police blocked from raiding President Yoon's office



South Korean police said security guards were blocking a raid on President Yoon Suk Yeol's offices to investigate his brief imposition of martial law, with the opposition accusing his staff of protecting an insurrectionist. Meanwhile, Defence Minister Kim Yong-hyun was stopped from attempting suicide while in detention. AP

BANGKOK

Myanmar ethnic armed group claims control of border region



A Myanmar ethnic armed group claimed complete control of a key region along the Bangladesh border, piling further pressure on the junta battling opponents elsewhere across the country. The Arakan Army said late on Tuesday it had complete control over Maungdaw – a district that is home to 1,10,000 people. AP

Ukraine crisis bigger priority than West Asia, says Trump

U.S. President-elect says Moscow and Kyiv are losing thousands of soldiers, while calling the Gaza war and its fallout a 'less difficult situation'; Trump says Syria will have to take care of itself

Agence France-Presse

PARIS

Donald Trump said solving the Ukraine crisis would be his top priority once he assumes office next month, describing West Asia as a "less difficult situation."

"I think we have to solve the Ukraine problem with Russia," the U.S. President-elect told French magazine *Paris Match* in an interview recorded on Saturday and released on Wednesday.

"Both those countries are losing numbers that nobody can believe. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers are being killed," Mr. Trump said, replying to a



Peacemaker: Donald Trump met Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy during his visit to France on Saturday. AFP

question about his top priority on the international stage.

"And the Middle East [West Asia] is of course a big priority. But I think that

the Middle East [West Asia] is a less difficult situation than Ukraine with Russia," Mr. Trump said.

Mr. Trump flew to Paris for the Saturday reopening

of Notre Dame Cathedral following a devastating fire in 2019. He met with French President Emmanuel Macron and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy during his visit to France, his first international trip since his re-election.

On Tuesday, Mr. Zelenskyy said he was grateful for Mr. Trump's "strong resolve" to end the war in Ukraine.

He also reiterated his call for Washington not to intervene in Syria where longtime president Bashar al-Assad was toppled by rebels in a lightning offensive at the weekend. "Syria will have to take care of itself," Mr. Trump said

Rights of all religious groups guaranteed, says Syria's new PM

Agence France-Presse

KABUL

brutal rule by his clan.

"Precisely because we are Islamic, we will guarantee the rights of all people and all sects in Syria," said Mohammad al-Bashir, whom the militants appointed as the transitional head of government.

Asked whether Syria's new constitution would be Islamic, he told Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* that "we will clarify all these details during the constituent process". Mr. Bashir is tasked with heading the multi-ethnic, multi-sectarian country until March 1.

Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid deplored a "cowardly attack" carried out by the Islamic State (IS) group, saluting a "great fighter" who "fell as a martyr".

The explosion, which was the first attack targeting a Minister since the Taliban returned to power in 2021, "happened at the Ministry for Refugees and minister Khalil Ur-Rahman Haqqani has been martyred along with some of his colleagues," a government source said.

Minister for Refugees in Afghan Taliban killed in suicide blast

The attack on the Minister – the first since Taliban came to power – has been blamed on IS

The explosion, which was the first attack targeting a Minister since the Taliban returned to power in 2021, "happened at the Ministry for Refugees and minister Khalil Ur-Rahman Haqqani has been martyred along with some of his colleagues," a government source said.

Sport

Four meet records rewritten on concluding day

ATHLETICS

Y.B. Sarangi

BHUBANESWAR

Local favourite Pratik Maharan defied a sore back to script a new meet record while securing the under-18 men's 200m gold medal on the concluding day of the National junior athletics championships at the Kalinga Stadium here on Wednesday.

Running in good rhythm, Maharan held on to his lead confidently as he lowered his personal best from 21.41, clocked at the South Asian junior meet in Chennai in September, to 21.28 to record an impressive victory.

"I did light training to balance my rehab and preparation for this com-



Impressive: Odisha's Maharan clocked his personal best (21.28) while claiming the win. BISWARANJAN ROUT

petition. I was aiming for the National record (21.08), but had to settle for the meet record," said 17-year-old Maharan, training at Rourkela.

Sumit Rathore (8:45.75) won by a margin of more than 11 seconds while leading a pack of four runners, who smashed the meet re-

cord in under-20 men's 300m steeplechase.

National record holder Deepika (52.45m) rewrote the meet record with her second throw as she claimed the under-20 women's javelin title.

Sakshi Chavan, who took the under-20 100m gold, switched to under-18

200m to pick up her second gold with a meet record (24.14).

Homeboy Dondapati Murtyam Jayaram - who added the under-20 200m crown to his 100m title - and Prachi Devkar, making her National debut in the 3000m steeplechase after winning the 5000m yellow metal, also snatched their second gold medals.

Haryana took the team championships in both men and women.

The results: Winners only:

Under-20: Men:

200m: Dondapati Murtyam Jayaram (Odi) 21.27, **800m:** Bejoy K. (Ker) 1:50.84; **400m hurdles:** Arjun Pradeep (Ker) 51.75; **3000m steeplechase:** Prachi Devkar (Mah) 10:41.07;

4x400m relay: Tamil Nadu 3:13.53; **Triple jump:** Rishika Awasthi (UP) 12.37m; **Javelin:** Deepika (Har) 52.46 (NMR, Old, 49.05, Pushpa Jakharia, 2016).

Under-18: Men: **200m:** Pratik

Maharan (Odi) 21.28 (NMR, Old, 21.34, Shammuga Srinivas, 2019); **Shot put:** Omnkar Prasad Nanda (Odi) 19.96m; **200m:** Nipam (UP) 24.74.

Best athletes: U-20: Men: Jay Kumar (400m), **Women:** Sakshi Chavan (200m); **U-18: Men:** Kiran C. (110m hurdles), **Women:** Abinaya Rajarajan (100m); **Boys:** Dhairya Bhanderi (javelin), **Girls:** Shrourya Ambure (ambush); **U-14: Boys:** Bhiky Barman (javelin), **Girls:** Minakshi (javelin).

Yadav (UP) 69.73m.

Women: 200m: Sakshi Chavan (Guj) 24.14 (NMR, Old, 24.24, Jisna Mathew, 2017); **800m:** Laxmipriya Kisan (Odi) 2:14.44; **400m hurdles:** Sreevathani S.K. (TN) 1:00.61; **3000m steeplechase:** Prachi Devkar (Mah) 10:41.07;

4x400m relay: Tamil Nadu 3:13.53; **Triple jump:** Rishika Awasthi (UP) 12.37m; **Javelin:** Deepika (Har) 52.46 (NMR, Old, 49.05, Pushpa Jakharia, 2016).

Under-18: Men: **200m:** Sakshi Chavan (Guj) 24.14 (NMR, Old, 24.24, Jisna Mathew, 2017); **800m:** Laxmipriya Kisan (Odi) 2:14.44; **400m hurdles:** Sreevathani S.K. (TN) 1:00.61; **3000m steeplechase:** Prachi Devkar (Mah) 10:41.07;

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SALUTING A LEGEND

Gukesh wishes Anand on his 55th birthday, calls him 'an inspiration'



It may not have been a perfect day for D. Gukesh, but he didn't forget to wish Viswanathan Anand who now mentors him and other Indian prodigies, a happy birthday. "He has been an inspiration and a role model for me and millions of others," said Gukesh while wishing the legend on his 55th birthday.

THE GAMEPLAN

'Will continue my career, but maybe play fewer tournaments'



Regardless of what happens in this World championship — whether he retains the crown or not — Ding Liren said he would continue to play chess. To a question after Game 13, in which he earned a draw, the Chinese said: "I think I will continue my career, but maybe play fewer tournaments, more rapid and blitz than classical."

FORMALITY

FIFA announces the hosts for the 2030 and 2034 men's World Cups



Saudi Arabia will host the men's football World Cup in 2034 while the 2030 edition will be held in Spain, Portugal and Morocco, FIFA President Gianni Infantino announced following a virtual extraordinary Congress. With both the editions having only a single bid, they were confirmed by acclamation.

BOOKING A SPOT

Steelers prove too hot for Bulls, become first team to qualify



Haryana Steelers confirmed its playoff berth after a resounding 37-26 victory over Bengaluru Bulls in their PKL 11 match in Pune on Wednesday. For Steelers, Vinay and Shivam Patare combined for 15 points, and Mohammadreza Shadlou scored six points. U Mumba eased past Tamil Thalaivas 47-31 in the other match.

It all comes down to the final day after Game 13 ends in draw

With less than five minutes to make 10 moves, Ding finds the only one that will salvage his position from a possibly devastating defeat at such a stage of the match; if there's another stalemate in Game 14, tie-breaks will be played



P.K. Ajith Kumar
SINGAPORE

If Ding Liren needed some background music at the World chess championship, a song in Tamil — one of the official languages here in Singapore — would be a top contender: Anuradha Sriram's *Karuppu thaan enaku pidicha colour* (*The colour I like is black*).

But for a blip in Game 11, in which he lost with black pieces, Ding has been superb with the colour usually less favoured in chess. A draw with black pieces is considered worthier than with white. It is almost priceless when you could do it in the penultimate round of a keenly-fought, still tied World championship.

So with just one game remaining in the classical format, the match is tied 6.5-6.5 at World Resorts Sentosa. The situation is simple after Game 13 ended in a draw.

On Thursday, the winner of Game 14 will become the World champion. If it is a draw, the tie-breaks of



Top-notch defence: Ding's inner Houdini made an appearance yet again against Gukesh. FIDE

speed chess will be played on the following day.

On Wednesday, when he had less than five minutes to make 10 moves, Ding found the only one that could salvage his position. He had to move his rook to the 'f8' square. Any other move would have led to a possibly devastating defeat at such a stage of the match with just one game remaining.

So, he found 31...Rf8. Not for the first time, Ding's inner Houdini made an appearance. His defence has been top-notch here.

Ding is the defending

champion in more ways than one. After he found the right defence, he was able to complete the 40 moves in the first time control.

He has struggled to do that for much of the match. It was no different in Game 13.

And Gukesh had come up with an opening surprise even before the opening. He arrived at the venue earlier than Ding, who had joked earlier about having to wait for his rival to arrive every day.

He opened by pushing his King's pawn by two

squares (1. e4), something he had done in the first game, which he had lost. As was the case in that game, Ding replied with French Defence.

Gukesh got an opportunity to put Ding in deep trouble after the latter erred with his queen on the 30th move. But the Chennai youngster missed the crucial rook exchange, and then Ding came up with that game-saving move with his rook.

It was going to be a draw from then on. And it was, after 68 moves, with a rook-and-pawn ending.

GAME 13: MOVES

Gukesh vs Ding

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. e5 Nfd7 5. Nce2 c5 6. c3 Nc6 7. a3 Be7 8. Bc3 Nb6 9. Nf4 cxd4 10. cxd4 Nc4 11. Bxc4 dxc4 12. Nge2 b5 13. 0-0-0 14. Nc3 Rb8 15. Nh5 16. exf6 Bxf6 17. Qf3 Qe8 18. Nxf6+ Rf7 19. Qe2 Qg6 20. f3 Rf8 21. Rad1 Ne7 22. Bf4 Rb6 23. Bc7 Rb7 24. Bd6 Re8 25. Bxe7 Rxe7 26. Qe5 a6 27. d5 exd5 28. Qxd5+ Qe6 29. Qc5 Re8 30. Rde1 Qf7 31. Ne4 Rf8



32. Nd6 Rc7 33. Qe5 Qf6 34. Qd5+ Kh8 35. Re5 Re7 36. Rfe1 Rxe5 37. Rx e5 68. Qc5 Bd7 39. Ne4 Qf4 40. Re7 Bf5 41. Qd4 Rg8 42. h3 Qc1+ 43. Kf2 Bx e4 44. Rxe4 c3 45. bxc3 Qxa3 46. Kg3 Qb3 47. Re7 a5 48. Rb7 Qc4 49. Qe5 Qc6 50. Qxb5 Qxc3 51. Ra7 Qe1+ 52. Kh2 Qb4 53. Qxb4 axb4 54. Rb7 Ra8 55. Rxb4 Ra2 56. Kg3 Kh7 57. Rb5 Kg6 58. f4 Kf6 59. Kf3 Rc2 60. g3 b3+ 61. Kg4 Ra3 62. h4 Rc3 63. Rb6+ Kf7 64. f5 h5+ 65. Kf4 Rc4+ 66. Kf3 Rc3+ 67. Kf4 Rc4+ 68. Kf3

Rc3+ **Game drawn**

Agassi praises Alcaraz, but with a sprinkling of caution

N. Sudarshan

BENGALURU

What sportspersons covet the most is the respect of their peers and appreciation from past champions. In a short career, Carlos Alcaraz has received plenty of it, and on Wednesday, he got another healthy dose from none other than Andre Agassi, albeit with a sprinkling of caution.

"Alcaraz defends like Novak [Djokovic], has power and spin like Rafael Nadal, and has hands and finesse like [Roger] Federer,"

said Agassi on the sidelines of the TiE Global Summit 2024 here. "But just because he has the best of all three doesn't mean he can do what they did. Decision-making, injuries and luck... there are so many things."

But one thing everyone will agree on is that Alcaraz, along with Jannik Sinner, has ushered in a brand-new era. And after Nadal's retirement, 24-time Slam winner Djokovic is the last man standing from the previous generation.

"I think he'll run out of energy more than capability, especially when the people you came to the dance with have left," Agassi said of Djokovic. "When Pete [Sampras] retired, I had to rediscover my inspiration. Djokovic has lost the guys



A mix of the Big Three: Agassi feels Alcaraz defends like Djokovic, has power and spin like Nadal, and has hands and finesse like Federer. FILE PHOTO: VIVEK BENDRE

he made history with. Emotionally it's tougher. But I would never bet against him".

Agassi was part of a golden generation of American singles players in the 1990s that won multiple Majors. But since Andy Roddick at the 2003 US Open, the United States hasn't had one. The eight-time Slam winner, however, believes this could soon change.

"We [have] got five guys in the top 20 [sic: 25], and I think you need each other to succeed. In my group, I was the first one to turn professional, and I made [Michael] Chang, Pete, [Jim] Courier believe.

"Chang was the first one to win [1989 French Open]. He made Pete believe that he could win. He then made Courier believe. And

Courier said, 'well, I can be No. 1 in the world'. We all helped each other, and I think these Americans are now starting to prove [the same]."

The women, though, are up there, with Coco Gauff leading the way. "The women's game hasn't had to deal with Federer, Novak, Rafa, Sinner and Alcaraz," Agassi said with a smile. "But they have their own version of it. Serena [Williams] is the Novak of the women's game and you have Coco who has got potential."

"The reason for Americans not winning is an unfortunate set of decades where the guys [Federer, Nadal and Djokovic] were very stingy and greedy. I mean, 66 Grand Slams in the same generation! There's not a lot left there".

Can Nitish the bowler be the answer to India's balancing act in Tests?

IND MEN IN AUS

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
BRISBANE

Ever since Kapil Dev bowed out of the game after an ODI against the West Indies at Faridabad in 1994, India has been on a perennial search for the fast bowling all-rounder.

Early rival wickets and the insurance cover of runs down the order is a sought after trait in cricket. Kapil offered that and more, including safe hands and the 1983 World Cup!

Practical demands
Four decades since Kapil stepped aside, the quest for his replacement is now constricted by practical demands. The candidate should bowl at a reasonable speed, not necessarily express, and should score a few vital runs, not perhaps an unbeaten 175. Many cricketers were force-fit into this toned-down requirement.

To be fair, Manoj Prabhakar was a strong contender, and at one time he opened the batting and bowling. Later, it was Ajit Agarkar's turn. And over the years, Irfan Pathan,



Spring in the step: India will be a more dangerous side if Nitish the bowler comes to the fore. AP

Stuart Binny, Hardik Pandya and Shardul Thakur, to name a few, have all been seen through the prism of the Kapil lens.

Even if M.S. Dhoni, earlier, and Rishabh Pant now, give that all-round punch, both as wicket-keeper and marauding batter, the seam-bowling willow-wielder is very much part of the selectors' shopping list.

This demand for a player, who will lend balance, is again at play Down Under. Nitish Kumar seems to have answered the query for now and bowling coach Morne Mor-

kel's words at Perth, seem prophetic: "He is one of the young guys who has got that sort of batting all-round ability. He (as a bowler) can hold one end up and he hits the bat a little bit harder than you think. It is a lovely opportunity for him to fill that all-round spot. He is a player you can keep your eye on in this series."

As the Indians landed in rain-swept Brisbane on Wednesday, Nitish, just like Washington Sundar, the spin all-rounder, are all part of the youth brigade, expected to flower. If Nitish gets his opportunities in the remaining three fixtures, starting with the third Test at the Gabba here from Saturday, and does well, it will surely leave Rohit Sharma's men in a happy space.

McSweeney growing in confidence

K.C. Vijaya Kumar

BRISBANE

Stepping into David Warner's shoes can be a daunting task and Nathan McSweeney is dealing with that onerous challenge in the current Border-Gavaskar Trophy series. Warner's buddy Usman Khawaja is his partner and matters get even more delicate as the former opener is now keeping a close eye as a commentator.

McSweeney, though, has Gabba, his home ground to lean on. Back in a familiar environment here on Wednesday, the opener respectfully dealt with Warner's shadow: "David was an unbelievable player with massive shoes to fill when he left. If I can be half the player he was, I am going alright." And then he added: "A Gabba ground I know really well, so hopefully I can spend some time out there and put Australia is now keeping a close eye as a commentator.

Drawing strength from the 67-run second-wicket partnership that he shared with Marnus Labuschagne during the second Test's first innings at the Adelaide Oval, McSweeney said: "Marnus made an unbelievable 64 in the context of the game. For us to come out



McSweeney. GETTY IMAGES

and get through a tricky period was massive. Hopefully I can spend some more time out there with him. I got two good balls in Perth. I had some confidence to go to Adelaide and really trusted my game."

With a morning drizzle serenading Brisbane, the weather may get sticky but local boy McSweeney felt it was a false alarm: "Obviously a bit of a weather in the last few days, but it's a long way from the game (third Test). At the Gabba, it has great bounce, can seem around, and if there are overheads (clouds) it can swing around a bit. As a batter you prepare for all scenarios. It's definitely a new-ball wicket and if you can get past that, it's a lovely ground to bat at."

HFC managed to slowly ease itself into the game, with Andrei Alba testing Mohammad Nawaz with a second yellow for time-wasting. The visitor's best chance came in the ensuing corner where Alba smashed the ball into the woodwork.

Irfan's goal proves the difference for CFC

ISL

Joan Mathew Jacob
CHENNAI

Chennaiyin FC secured its first home win of the Indian Super League season after edging Hyderabad FC 1-0 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here on Wednesday.

CFC opened the scoring in the fifth minute as Irfan Yadwad found the back of the net after running up to a beautifully weighted through ball from Lukas Brambilla.

HFC managed to slowly ease itself into the game, with Andrei Alba testing Mohammad Nawaz with a second yellow for time-wasting.

However, Irfan's early strike remained the point of difference.

The result: Chennaiyin FC (Irfan 5) bt Hyderabad FC 0.

IN BRIEF



Linde's exploits helps South Africa prevail over Pakistan

South Africa beat Pakistan by 11 runs in a thrilling T20I that went to the last over at Kingsmead. Set 184 to win, Pakistan was thwarted on 172 for eight. Mohammad Rizwan's steady but slow innings put pressure on his partners to swing hard.

The scores: South Africa 183/9 in 20 overs (Miller 82, Linde 48, Shaheen 3/22, Abrar 3/37) bt Pakistan 172/8 in 20 overs (Rizwan 74, Ayub 31, Linde 4/31). **Toss:** South Africa; **PoM:** Linde.

West Indies wins ODI series against Bangladesh

West Indies beat Bangladesh by seven wickets to win the second ODI at Basseterre (St. Kitts and Nevis) on Tuesday and seal an ODI series against the Asian nation for the first time in 10 years.

The scores: Bangladesh 227 in 45.5 overs (Mahmudullah 62, Seales 4/22) lost to West Indies 230/3 in 36.5 overs (King 82, Lewis 49, Carte 45); **Toss:** WI; **PoM:** Seales.

LIVE TELECAST

Chess: World championship, FIDE YouTube channel, 2.30 p.m.
Conference League: Sony LIV, 6.30, 9, 11.15 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Friday)
West Indies vs Bangladesh: 3rd ODI, FanCode, 7 p.m.
ISL: Sports 18-3 & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.
PKL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 8 p.m.
Europa League: Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 3, 5 (SD & HD) & 11.15 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Friday)

Mumbai's batting comes to the fore against Vidarbha

Shaw and Rahane put on a show; Baroda eases past Bengal while Saurashtra downs Madhya Pradesh; Rawat's scintillating knock helps Delhi beat Uttar Pradesh

MUSHTAQ ALI TROPHY

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

The might of the Mumbai batting line-up was on full display as the side outclassed Vidarbha by six wickets in the quarterfinal of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy at the Alur Cricket Stadium here on Wednesday.

Chasing a formidable 222, Mumbai got the perfect start as openers Prithvi Shaw (49, 26b, 5x4, 4x6) and Ajinkya Rahane (84, 45b, 10x4, 3x6) put on an 83-run stand in seven overs.

Rahane kept the score moving at a fast clip after Shaw returned to the hut. As the required rate started to climb, Shivam Dube (37 n.o., 22b, 1x4, 2x6) and Suryansh Shedge (36 n.o., 12b, 1x4, 4x6) got together for a match-winning unbroken fifth-wicket partnership.

Mumbai will take on Baroda in the first semifinal on Friday.

Baroda recorded a comfortable 41-run win over Bengal at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium.

Shashwat Rawat (40) and Abhimanyu Singh (37) took Baroda to a handy 172



Commendable: Baroda bowlers defended their 172 with ease. K. MURALI KUMAR

for seven. Bengal's chase was derailed early, as left-arm pacer Lukman Meriwala scalped three wickets in the fourth over.

Shahbaz Ahmed (55, 36b, 3x4, 4x6) tried to keep Bengal in the hunt, but it was too little too late.

Bengal pacer Mohammed Shami had a lacklustre day, conceding 43 runs in his four overs.

Partial amends

Shami made partial amends by bowling zippy yorkers in the death, and picked up two wickets.

There was disappointment in store for fans of the Pandya brothers who turned up at the stadium,

as Hardik and Krunal fell for 10 and seven respectively.

In another last-eight fixture, Anuj Rawat (73 n.o., 33b, 7x4, 5x6) came alive to power Delhi past Uttar Pradesh. Batting at four, Rawat feasted on short deliveries, swivelling neatly to loft the ball behind square.

In the second semifinal, Delhi will take on Madhya Pradesh, which dispatched Saurashtra by six wickets.

The scores:

At Alur grounds: Saurashtra 173/7 in 20 overs (Chirag Jani 80 n.o.) lost to Madhya Pradesh 174/4 in 19.2 overs (Arpit Gaud 42, Venkatesh Iyer 38 n.o., Rajat Patidar 28). **Toss:** Madhya Pradesh; **PoM:** Venkatesh Iyer.

At M. Chinnaswamy Stadium: Baroda 172/7 in 20 overs (Shashwat Rawat 40, Abhimanyu Singh 37) bt Bengal 131 in 18 overs (Shahbaz Ahmed 55, Lukman Meriwala 3/17, Atit Sheth 3/41). **Toss:** Bengal; **PoM:** Ajinkya Rahane.

At A. P. Muthiah Stadium: Delhi 193/3 in 20 overs (Priyansh Arya 44, Yash Dhull 42, Anuj Rawat 73 n.o.) bt Uttar Pradesh 174 in 20 overs (Priyam Garg 54, Prince Yadav 3/36). **Toss:** Uttar Pradesh; **PoM:** Anuj Rawat.

a second round against Punnin Kovaputukku of Thailand in the \$25,000 ITF women's tennis tournament on Wednesday.

Akanksha Nitture, Humera Baharmus and Laaliya were the other Indian players progressing into the second round on this day, and they all beat Indian opponents.

Other results: **First round:** Eva Garkusha bt Tanisha Kashyap 6-2, 7-5; Valentina Grammatikopoulou (Gre) bt Aakruti Sonkusare 6-1, 6-2; Ekaterina Kazionova bt Zuzanna Pawlikowska (Pol) 3-6, 7-6(6), 6-1; Diana Marcincikova (Lat) bt Zeel Desai 6-2, 6-4, 6-4; Akanksha Nitture bt Smriti Bhasin 7-5, 6-4; Ekaterina Yashina bt Maria Mikhailova 6-1, 6-3; Humera Baharmus bt Soha Sadiq 6-2, 6-4; Laaliya Kalluri bt Sejal Bhutada 6-3, 1-6, 6-0.

Doubles: Humera Baharmus & Pooja Ingale bt Riya Bhatia & Zeel Desai 6-4, 4-6, [13-11]; Thasaporn Naklo & Bunyawi Thamchaiwat (Tha) bt Ekaterina Kazionova & Ekaterina Reyngold 7-5, 6-2; Vaishnavi Adkar & Sahaja Yamalapalli bt Abhilasha Bista (Nep) & Paavanii Paathak 6-3, 6-1.

SNAPSHOTS

Indian teams in last-eight stage at World team squash

India entered the quarterfinals of the men's and women's sections of the WSF World team squash championships in Hong Kong on Wednesday.

Indian men upset fifth-seeded Malaysia 2-1 while the women defeated Australia 2-1. In the quarterfinals on Thursday, India will meet France, the third seed, in the men's section and second seed USA in the women's.

The results (pre-quarterfinals): Men: India bt Malaysia 2-1 (Abhay Singh lost to Eain Yow Ng 11-13, 9-11, 5-11; Veer Chotran bt Mohammad Syafiq Kamal 11-8, 11-6, 11-5; Velavan Senthilkumar bt Sanjay Jeeva 11-8, 7-11, 11-3, 11-4).

Women: India bt Australia 2-1 (Anahat Singh bt Jessica Turnbull 11-9, 11-6, 11-3; Akashika Salunkhe bt Alex Haydon 11-8, 11-5, 11-6; Nirupama Dey lost to Sarah Cadwell 11-8, 8-11, 9-11, 9-11).

Badminton doubles coach Tan Kim Her back

Malaysian doubles specialist Tan Kim Her will be back with the Indian badminton team for the second time. Tan, who was largely instrumental in pairing Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy during his first stint, will focus on developing strong doubles partnerships and bench strength ahead of the 2026 Asian Games and 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, according to a Badminton Association of India media release on Wednesday.

Shrivalli advances in Solapur ITF tournament

Shrivalli Bhamidipaty raced past Ekaterina Reyngold 6-4, 6-1 to set up

Top seeds G. Sathiyan (PSPB) and Baishya Poymanteer (RSPB) lost in the pre-quarterfinals of the UTT National-ranking table tennis tournament at the Jimmy George indoor stadium in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday.

The 10th-ranked Akash Pal (RSPB) upset Sathiyan 13-11, 8-11, 11-9, 11-8, while Jennifer Varghese (Maharashtra), ranked 14th, shocked Baishya 11-4, 14-16, 11-8, 11-7.

However, Jennifer couldn't repeat her giant killing act against her teammate Taneesha Koteka in the quarterfinals, losing 11-8, 9-11, 6-11, 5-11.

Smriti wages lone battle as Australia sweeps series

IND WOM IN AUS

Press Trust of India

PERTH

Opener Smriti Mandhana's elegant century went in vain as India lost to Australia by 83 runs in the third Women's ODI to suffer a 0-3 series whitewash here on Wednesday.

Opting to field, India had Australia on the ropes at 78 for four before Annabel Sutherland's scintillating 95-ball 110, and brisk half-centuries from Ashleigh Gardner (50) and skipper Tahilia McGrath (56 n.o.), lifted the host to a competitive 298 for six at

the WACA. In reply, India was bowled out for 215 in 45.1 overs.

The stylish Smriti anchored the innings beautifully during her 105 off 109 balls.

The problem with the Indian innings was that the senior batter lacked support from the others after Alana King ended a 118-run partnership between Smriti and Harleen Deol by dismissing the latter.

Spin-bowling all-rounder Gardner completed a fine match by taking five wickets for 30 runs after her contribution with the willow.

Earlier, Australia survived a stellar spell from In-

dia pacer Arundhati Reddy to post a challenging total.

Sutherland led Australia's recovery after Arundhati struck four times in quick succession for career-best figures in limited-overs cricket.

Arundhati got the ball to swing back from a fuller length which led to the fall of last match's centurion Volla, who saw her stumps disturbed.

Phoebe Litchfield was caught behind chasing an away swinger and all the momentum gained by Australia was suddenly lost.

Next to depart was Elyse Perry who had no answer to a beauty from Arundhati that held its line

to hit the top of off-stump.

When Beth Mooney departed, Australia was reduced to 78 for four.

Sutherland and Gardner then shared a 96-run stand for the fifth wicket.

McGrath joined Sutherland in the 35th over and the duo pushed the score towards 300. Sutherland got to her hundred by dispatching Deepshi for a six over mid-wicket in the final over and set the table for another Australian victory.

The scores: Australia 298/6 in 50 overs (Sutherland 110, Gardner 50, McGrath 56 n.o., Arundhati 4/26) bt India 215 in 45.1 overs (Smriti 105, Harleen 39, Gardner 5/30); **Toss:** India; **PoM & PoS:** Sutherland.



Clutch performance: Sutherland's timely century got Australia out of trouble. GETTY IMAGES

Salah keeps Liverpool perfect, vital wins for Real and PSG

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Agence France-Presse

PARIS

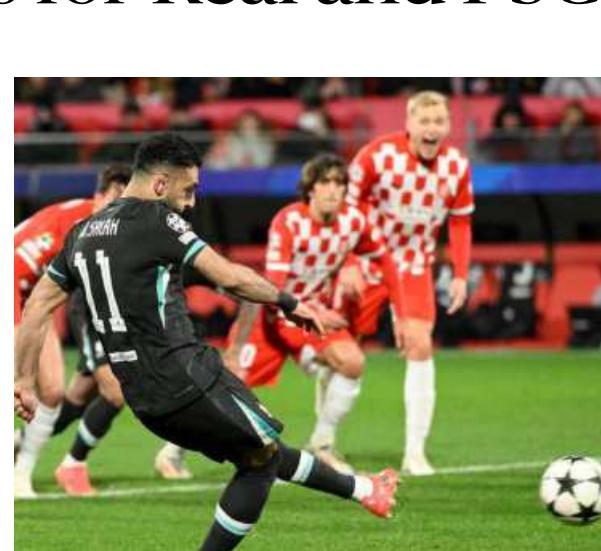
Mohamed Salah helped maintain Liverpool's perfect record in the Champions League on Tuesday while holder Real Madrid bounced back from its defeat at Anfield to topple informants Atalanta.

Elsewhere, struggling Paris Saint-Germain gained a vital win at Salzburg, while Bayer Leverkusen edged Inter Milan to move second.

Aston Villa, in its first appearance in the continent's elite club competition for 41 years, maintained its bright progress beating Leipzig 3-2 to sit third.

Decisive
In Spain, Salah's 63rd-minute penalty proved decisive against dogged debutants Girona.

Under new coach Arne Slot Liverpool is virtually



Goalscoring machine: Salah moved to 50 goals in the tournament with this strike from the spot for Liverpool against Girona. AFP

assured a place in the last 16.

Salah sent Paulo Gazzaniga the wrong way to net his 50th Champions League goal, pulling the Egyptian level with Filippo Inzaghi as the 10th highest goalscorer of all-time in the competition.

Vinicius Junior had Real back on top before the hour, with Jude Bellingham also on the scoresheet for a 3-2 win over the Serie A leader.

PSG put the wheels back

on its stuttering campaign with a much needed 3-0 win on the road at Salzburg.

Bayern swept aside Ukraine side Shakhtar Donetsk in Gelsenkirchen 5-1. Fellow Bundesliga giant Leverkusen became the first team to score against Inter in this year's competition in a 1-0 win that lifted it five points adrift of Liverpool at the top of the league.

The results: Dinamo Zagreb 0 drew with Celtic 0; Girona 0 lost to Liverpool 1 (Salah 63-pen); RB Leipzig 2 (Openda 27, Baumgartner 62) lost to Aston Villa 3 (McGinn 3, Duran 52, Barkley 85); Shakhtar Donetsk 1 (Kevin 5) lost to Bayern Munich 5 (Laimer 11, Muller 45, Olise 70-pen, 90+3, Musiala 87); Atalanta 2 (De Ketelaere 45-pen, Lookman 65) lost to Real Madrid 3 (Mbappe 10, Vinicius Jr. 56, Bellingham 59); Club Bruges 2 (Quaresma 24-og, Nielsen 84) bt Sporting 1 (Catambo 3); Salzburg 0 lost to PSG 3 (Gonalogo 30, Nuno Mendes 72, Doue 85); Brest 1 (Le Cardinal 43) pt PSV Eindhoven 0; Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Mukiele 90) bt Inter Milan 0.

NEW DELHI ROUND-UP

Ajeetesh jumps to the lead

Ajeetesh Sandhu shot a five-under 67 in the second round to take the sole lead with an overall 8-under 136 in the ₹2 crore Vishwa Samudra Open golf championship at the Delhi Golf Club on Wednesday.

Ajeetesh rose from overnight second with a bogey-free card.

"A bogey-free round at DGC is only possible when you hit a lot of fairways. I did that today. I was solid off the tee, and stuck good iron shots. I was in the rough only a couple of times and that too, just off the fairways. It was a solid day," said Ajeetesh.

Manish Thakran followed in second spot, with a 2-under 70 for the day, that saw him accomplish a hole-in-one on the 12th. He was three shots behind Ajeetesh at 5-under 139. Manish Thakran followed in second spot, with a 2-under 70 for the day, that saw him accomplish a hole-in-one on the 12th. He was three shots behind Ajeetesh at 5-under 139. Ajeetesh Sandhu.

natural tendency to attack the pins. It was a great feeling to make my first hole-in-one in a tournament," said Manish. Overnight leader Jamal Hossain of Bangladesh, dropped down to the third place as he went 1-over 73 for the day and an overall 4-under 140. Among others, S.S.P.

Chawrasia rose from obscurity to joint 10th with a 4-under 68 for the

The season that was – a breath of fresh air and challenge to monopoly

The 2024 F1 chapter could likely be important in the annals of the sport as there were several indications that there were contenders to Verstappen's throne; a look at the drivers who could become the next big thing in the sport



Leclerc. GETTY IMAGES



Russell. REUTERS



Sainz. GETTY IMAGES



Hamilton. GETTY IMAGES



Verstappen. GETTY IMAGES



Norris. GETTY IMAGES



Hulkenberg. REUTERS



Piastri. GETTY IMAGES



Tsunoda. GETTY IMAGES



Alonso. AFP

S. Dipak Ragav

The 2024 Formula One season was a refreshing change from the one-sided domination of Max Verstappen and Red Bull Racing in the previous year. The 75th running of the championship was far more exciting as seven drivers won a race and a few others in the midfield also impressed and produced incredible finishes. *The Hindu* ranks the top 10 drivers of the 2024 season.

● **Max Verstappen (2024 finish: 1st, 437 points):** In a sport where having the best car determines success than just having the fastest driver, Verstappen showed the difference a driver can make. While it might be a no-brainer to put the champion at the top of the rankings, who also won the most number of races (nine), the way he went about his season was far more impressive than the eventual result. The 27-year-old maximised his car's advantage when it was the class of the field, winning four out of the first five races. Once McLaren started to get its act together, Verstappen still won three more races where the former could have and should have won. The Dutchman and his team made the difference in executing the right strategy, and his excellent race craft helped him build a sizeable lead. Even when he went without a win for 10 races, Verstappen minimised the damage in a tricky car that he didn't particularly like but managed to bank crucial podiums that laid the foundation for his fourth straight drivers' crown. The icing on the cake was the victory in Brazil in treacherous conditions, where he pierced through the field from 17th on the grid to win the race and reaffirm his status as the best driver on the grid.

● **Charles Leclerc (3rd, 356):** This will probably go down as the Ferrari driver's best season since his debut in 2018. He won three races and scored 12 podiums to finish third in the championship despite the Prancing Horse going through a run of races during the summer with not-so-competitive machinery. The Monagasque driver won at two iconic venues, which were also the two most significant events for him and his team.

His first win of the year came in his home event of Monaco, the most glamorous race on the calendar. Then, after the summer break, Leclerc showed excellent tyre management skills to nick a win from McLaren's Oscar Piastri at Ferrari's home race in Monza. He closed

the season strongly, winning in Austin, followed by podiums in Mexico, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi, finishing within 18 points of Lando Norris in second place.

Leclerc could claim to be the fastest driver over one lap, and this year, he has been clinical in races and reduced his mistakes, which has held him back in the past. Had Ferrari given him a competitive car from the mid-point of the year, it would not be wild to suggest he would have given Verstappen a lot more headache.

● **Lando Norris (2nd, 374):** In 2024, Norris realised his dream of becoming a Grand Prix winner and unexpectedly found himself in a title fight against Verstappen. The McLaren driver was brilliant over one lap and had spellbinding weekends, like in Zandvoort, Singapore and Abu Dhabi, where he posted dominant victories from pole position. He obliterated the field and lived up to his billing as an up-and-coming mega-star driver. However, at the same time, there were also major misses on his part despite having the fastest car for most of the season.

His errors and a bit of meekness at times made life easy for Verstappen, and the 25-year-old should have taken the title fight down to the wire. The fact that he converted only three of his eight pole positions to victories shows there is still work to do if he has to beat Verstappen. Even in wheel-to-wheel battle, Norris seemed timid against the Dutchman, who often pushes the boundaries of acceptable racecraft. The Briton needs to draw a line in the sand quickly and not let the four-time champion bully him on track.

● **Oscar Piastri (4th, 292):** The Australian took a massive leap in only his second year in the sport, winning two races. Significantly, he improved on his apparent weakness in his maiden season. In 2023, his race pace and tyre management were an issue; this year, Piastri has gotten on top of those. Once McLaren got its significant upgrades in Miami, Piastri wasn't far from Norris.

In fact, during a stretch of seven races in the middle of the year, he collected the most points and was crucial in McLaren winning the constructors' championship for the first time since 1998. At times, Piastri was too fast for McLaren's comfort, meaning he took points away from Norris when the latter was mounting his title challenge.

But there were weekends like

Barcelona, Zandvoort, and Singapore where he struggled for pace compared to his teammate. While he was robust in battling other cars, he also got in some tangles later in the season and would want to address those. For 2025, Piastri will want to improve his qualifying record against his teammate to take the next step and not play second fiddle to his teammate as he had to do this year. But overall, he had a fine second year, and if he can show the same level of progress next year, he could be a force to reckon with.

● **George Russell (6th, 245):** For the second time in three years, Russell got the better of his illustrious teammate, Lewis Hamilton. Though both drivers won two races each, Russell generally had the upper hand, especially in qualifying (19-5). In fact, Hamilton's second win came courtesy of Russell's disqualification at the Belgian GP, where the latter had won an impressive one-stop strategy before his car was found to be underweight. However, Russell also had a few anonymous races and finished just 22 points ahead of Hamilton, who had mentally checked out after deciding to end his 12-year-stint at the team at the end of the year. Russell is now the clear team leader for Mercedes and needs to prove that he can be Hamilton's successor and guide the German giant back to winning ways.

● **Carlos Sainz (5th, 290):** The Spaniard had the most challenging job among the drivers in the top four teams. Before the start of the season, Sainz was out of a job after Ferrari hired Hamilton for his seat in 2025. It meant the 30-year-old was driving for his future and, considering the pressure, showed an excellent account of himself. His win in Australia, coming weeks after undergoing an appendix surgery, displayed his tenacity. When the Ferrari was unpredictable, Sainz showed great adaptability, but once the Scuderia became competitive, he fell short against Leclerc just a bit consistently.

● **Lewis Hamilton (7th, 223):** The seven-time champion started the season with a bombshell announcement that he would join Ferrari in 2025 which signalled that he had lost faith in Mercedes' ability to give him a car that could fight for the championship. Russell outperformed the 40-year-old at the start of the year, though the British legend came back strongly during the summer.

The highlight of his season came at his home track of Silverstone, where he took

a record ninth British GP win. But post the summer break, the momentum swung back to Russell. Fans and Hamilton himself will hope for better days at Ferrari, which is on an upswing.

● **Nico Hulkenberg (11th, 41):** The German driver has long been considered to have failed to deliver on his potential. It hasn't helped that his raw speed has not always worked well in the Pirelli era, where there is more premium on being softer to the tyres than the ability to get every last tenth of the car. Once Renault (now Alpine) dropped him after 2019, it appeared his career was over. Though he did well as a stand-in during the Covid years, he has found a second wind at Haas. This year, he completely demolished his teammate Kevin Magnussen and almost helped Haas move up the table in the constructors'. He also was a bit unlucky in that he finished 11th, just outside the points six times. If not for Alpine's 2-3 finish at the São Paulo GP, Haas would have finished sixth in the championship. He will now race for Sauber in 2025 before it becomes the works Audi team in 2026, and the German driver will lead the iconic brand's F1 challenge.

● **Fernando Alonso (9th, 70):** The two-time champion had a miserable time in his second year at Aston Martin as the squad failed to build a decent car. At 43, the Spaniard showed he had not lost his speed by wringing consistent points finishes out of uncompetitive machinery, especially in the early part, by dragging his car into the top-10 in the first seven rounds. Last year, Aston fought for podiums consistently in the first half before trailing off towards the end, and that downward trend continued in 2024.

Still, if not for Alonso's heroic efforts, who contributed nearly 75% of the team's tally, the British outfit would not have finished fifth in the constructors' table.

● **Yuki Tsunoda (12th, 30):** The Japanese driver was saddled in a tricky car but continued to improve his stature in the sport through his impressive performances for the second year. Tsunoda comfortably saw off the challenge from Daniel Ricciardo, scoring points consistently and pretty much ended the latter's career.

Once Liam Lawson replaced Ricciardo, Tsunoda comfortably out-qualified the New Zealander and won their intra-team battle. But despite doing all he can, it is not clear yet that he will be considered for promotion to Red Bull Racing.

THE GIST

While it might be a no-brainer to put Verstappen atop the rankings, the way he went about his season was far more impressive than the eventual result

Had Ferrari given Leclerc a competitive car, at least from the middle of the year, he would have probably given the Dutchman a tougher time

Norris had spellbinding weekends in Zandvoort, Singapore and Abu Dhabi and posted dominant victories from pole position. He was largely instrumental in McLaren regaining the Constructors' title after a long gap

SCIENCE

Climate impact of exploring space passing below the radar

Making satellites is an energy-intensive process. Every launch also releases carbon dioxide, black carbon, and water vapour. Rocket propellants deplete the ozone layer and disrupt atmospheric circulation. Satellites burning up in the air release ash into the atmosphere's middle layers

Shrawani Shagun

As the world becomes more reliant on space technology for vital functions like climate monitoring, the environmental consequences of space activities also become increasingly urgent and in need of more attention. The rapid growth of the number of satellites in orbit has led to concerns about interference with climate monitoring systems and the accumulation of orbital debris. With no specific international regulations addressing these challenges, it is crucial the world's governments act quickly to ensure space exploration doesn't drift into unsustainability.

How rockets affect the environment
Every rocket launch releases carbon dioxide, black carbon, and water vapour into the atmosphere. Black carbon is of particular concern because it absorbs sunlight 500 times more effectively than carbon dioxide does, amplifying global warming. As commercial space ventures become more common, the cumulative impact of these emissions will worsen.

Rocket propellants, especially those using chlorine-based chemicals, deplete the ozone layer at high altitudes, increasing exposure to ultraviolet radiation on the ground as well as disrupting atmospheric circulation – both of which affect the global climate. According to a December 9 article in *MIT Tech Review*, when satellites “burn up in the atmosphere” once their missions end, they release “satellite ash in the middle layers of the earth’s atmosphere. This metallic ash can harm the atmosphere and potentially alter the climate.”

Next, like many other forms of manufacturing, the production of satellites demands energy-intensive processes involving metals and composite materials, whose extraction and preparation have large carbon footprints of their own. Satellites also use propulsion systems to adjust their location and orientation in orbit, and their emissions add to the overall count. Equally, the rise of space mining – e.g. extracting valuable (on the earth) minerals from asteroids – could lead to increased industrial activity both in space and on the ground. Such mining activities haven’t begun yet, but they are sure to be part of the future.

While space technology supports essential climate monitoring and disaster management, the environmental costs for the earth’s atmosphere and space are escalating, requiring urgent redressal.

Dangers of orbital debris

Orbital debris, or space junk, refers to defunct satellites, spent rocket stages, and pieces of satellites produced when they break apart in low earth orbit (LEO). According to the European Space Agency, as of September 2024, there had been around 6,740 rocket launches since 1957 that placed 19,590 satellites in orbit. Around 13,230 are still in space, and of them, 10,200 are still functional.

Since the space in earth’s orbit is a resource just like water bodies and land masses on the ground, the occupation of orbits by non-functional objects constitutes a form of pollution as well – with the added threat of risk magnification.

For example, space surveillance



A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket lifts off from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Florida. The rocket carried 23 Starlink satellites. AP

networks have catalogued around 36,860 space objects thus far, including those produced in the 650+ fragmentation events (break-ups, explosions, and collisions). The total mass of all space objects in orbit exceeds 13,000 tonnes. As this mass continues to increase, the collision risks to satellites increase as well. Most space junk can reach speeds of up to 29 km/hr. When moving so fast, even a minuscule piece of metal can smash through a satellite like a bullet, damaging critical components, including those used for communication, navigation, and to monitor climate parameters of merit.

Orbital debris also poses an indirect threat by interfering with scientists’ ability to collect data about the earth – from tracking disasters to monitoring weather – from space, such as by interfering with radio waves. Such threats also obligate satellite operators to invest in shielding satellites and actively perform costly manoeuvres to avoid collisions; both requirements drive up mission cost.

The risks are even more significant for human-crewed missions. For example, the International Space Station frequently adjusts its orbit to avoid debris.

Barriers to space sustainability

Regulation is key to ensuring space remains accessible and space activities remain environmentally sustainable. Without clear guidelines, the unchecked growth of emissions and debris will harm the earth’s climate and increase the barriers to future space exploration.

Space activities currently fall outside international sustainability instruments like the Paris Agreement, so governments need to establish standards for emissions from rockets and satellites to prevent them from becoming overlooked contributors to global warming.

Without regulations, the increasing number of satellites and debris will overcrowd LEO, rendering future missions more expensive, which in turn would subtract from space’s identity as a shared global resource that needs to be

The mass of objects in orbit exceeds 13,000 tonnes. As this increases, the collision risks increase as well. Most space junk can reach speeds of up to 29 km/hr. Even a minuscule piece can smash through a satellite

equally accessible to everyone. International cooperation through bodies like the Committee on the Peaceful Use of Outer Space (COPUOS) is necessary to create enforceable standards in this context.

Governments can also ensure such frameworks align with the Outer Space Treaty’s principles of responsible use of space while addressing the treaty’s current lack of binding provisions. This unity is particularly crucial if countries are to address the environmental impacts of space activities.

Achieving sustainability

Achieving sustainability in space exploration requires innovative solutions, which also present challenges of their own. For example, reusable rockets like those developed by SpaceX and Blue Origin reduce manufacturing waste and lower costs by allowing engineers to reuse rocket components in multiple missions. But the reusable parts are often heavier, which increases fuel consumption. These also have limited applicability for high-orbit missions, and their wear and tear invoke costly refurbishments. Thus scaling this technology while maintaining efficiency remains a hurdle.

Second, transitioning to cleaner fuels like liquid hydrogen and/or biofuels can minimise harmful emissions during liftoffs. However, hydrogen is currently produced with non-renewable energy, negating its environmental benefits. Cryogenic fuels – which provide more thrust for the same mass – are more expensive and more complex to handle, keeping them out of reach of smaller

operators. Electric propulsion is another option, but its low thrust restricts its use to specific missions like in-orbit manoeuvres.

Third, designing satellites with biodegradable materials that naturally disintegrate during re-entry can prevent long-term debris accumulation. On the flip side, these materials currently lack the durability required for the extreme conditions of space. High development costs and limited adoption further slow progress. Autonomous debris removal (ADR) technologies such as robotic arms and laser systems also offer hope for cleaning up orbital debris, but again, they are currently expensive as well as need more legal clarity before they can begin to operate safely.

A global traffic system to monitor satellites and debris in real time could reduce collisions and optimise orbit use. Resistance to data sharing, including due to security and commercial concerns, and the lack of a unified international authority hinder its development, however.

None of these hurdles are permanent, of course. Moreover, whereas individual solutions face significant challenges, a combined approach may be more feasible.

For example, binding agreements through COPUOS can standardise emission limits, debris mitigation, and data-sharing practices; governments and private entities can prioritise funding for green technologies, ADR systems, and satellite biodegradability; and financial rewards, subsidies, or penalties can nudge private actors towards sustainable practices.

At the intersection of technological advancement and environmental responsibility, the choices we make today will define the future of space exploration.

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Spiral galaxy NGC 628, located 32 million light-years away, in an image taken by the James Webb Space Telescope. REUTERS

Webb confirms the cosmos is expanding at unexpected rate

Reuters

Fresh corroboration of the perplexing observation that the universe is expanding more rapidly than expected has scientists pondering the cause – perhaps some unknown factor involving the mysterious cosmic components – dark energy and dark matter.

Two years of data from NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope have now validated the Hubble Space Telescope’s earlier finding that the rate of the universe’s expansion is faster – by about 8% – than would be expected based on what astrophysicists know of the initial conditions in the cosmos and its evolution over billions of years. The discrepancy is called the Hubble Tension.

The observations by Webb, the most capable space telescope ever deployed, appear to rule out the notion that the data from its forerunner Hubble was somehow flawed due to instrument error.

“This is the largest sample of Webb Telescope data – its first two years in space – and it confirms the puzzling finding from the Hubble Space Telescope that we have been wrestling with for a decade – the universe is now expanding faster than our best theories can explain,” said astrophysicist Adam Riess of Johns Hopkins University in Maryland, lead author of the study published on Monday (December 9, 2024) in the *Astrophysical Journal*.

“Yes, it appears there is something missing in our understanding of the

The observations by Webb, the most capable space telescope ever deployed, appear to rule out the notion that the data from its forerunner Hubble was somehow flawed due to instrument error

universe,” added Riess, a 2011 Nobel laureate in physics for the co-discovery of the universe’s accelerating expansion. “Our understanding of the universe contains a lot of ignorance about two elements – dark matter and dark energy – and these make up 96% of the universe, so this is no small matter.”

“The Webb results can be interpreted to suggest there may be a need to revise our model of the universe, although it is very difficult to pinpoint what this is at the moment,” said Siyang Li, a Johns Hopkins doctoral student in astronomy and astrophysics and a study co-author.

Dark matter, thought to comprise about 27% of the universe, is a hypothesised form of matter that is invisible but is inferred to exist based on its gravitational effects on ordinary matter – stars, planets, moons, all the stuff on Earth – which accounts for roughly 5% of the universe.

Dark energy, believed to comprise approximately 69% of the universe, is a hypothesised form of energy permeating vast swathes of space that counteracts gravity and drives the universe’s accelerating expansion.

What might explain the anomalous expansion rate? “There are many hypotheses that involve dark matter, dark energy, dark radiation – for example, neutrinos (a type of ghostly subatomic particle) – or gravity itself having some exotic properties as possible explanations,” Riess said.

The researchers employed three different methods to measure a specific telltale metric – distances from the earth to galaxies where a type of pulsating star called Cepheids has been documented. The Webb and Hubble measurements were in harmony.

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Could you slow down?

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

In km/hr, the value of this unit is 1.14×10^{-12} . It translates to one micrometre per year and is used in the earth sciences to measure the speed at which a surface becomes narrower or less thick due to erosion. What’s the unit called?

QUESTION 2

X is rising at 0.3 trillionths of a km around the world every hour. While this seems slow, it’s becoming faster thanks to global warming and researchers and lawmakers alike are concerned that X will eventually pose great harm to countries everywhere with a shoreline. What is X?

QUESTION 3

In one billion years, Y will have moved 4.7 km away from the earth. If we work backwards, this means Y was once only 22,500 km away from the earth and over time moved to its position 4 lakh km away today. Name Y.

QUESTION 4

Z is the world’s fastest-growing woody plant and grows at 0.000014 metres every 24 hours. This rapidity has prompted scientists to suggest they might be good for afforestation and carbon sequestration. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 5

In 1995, Archie set a world record (at the time) for being the fastest _____ by travelling a distance of 33 cm in

just two minutes at the world championship in Congham, UK. Fill in the blank.

Answers to December 10 quiz:

- Procedure in which a live animal is dissected – **Ans: Vivisection**
 - Person credited with discovering hormones – **Ans: William Bayliss**
 - First known gaseous hormone – **Ans: Ethylene**
 - Series of reactions launched by hormone reaching its target – **Ans: Signal transduction**
 - Name for hormones that act on cells that secrete it – **Ans: Autocrine**
- First contact: K.N. Viswanathan | Basavaraj Meti | Anmol Agrawal | A. Izhar



Visual: In the 20th century, the melting of parts of this glacier was responsible for 4% of the process in Q2. It’s also one of the world’s fastest glaciers at 4 mm/s. Name the island to which it’s ‘attached.’ CREDIT: GILES LAURENT (CC BY-SA 4.0)

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

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