



## IN BRIEF



**Two boat crash victims missing; Navy orders probe**

**MUMBAI**  
A day after the Mumbai boat tragedy, two persons, a man and a child, are still missing. Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi said a Board of Inquiry has been ordered into the accident. » Page 12

**Amit Shah meets J&K CM for second time**

**SRINAGAR**  
Jammu and Kashmir CM Omar Abdullah on Thursday met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi and discussed the restoration of Statehood and the hurdles faced by the government in the past two months. » Page 4

## MPs clash outside House over 'insult' to Ambedkar

Two BJP members injured; FIR against Rahul for 'causing grievous hurt, endangering life, using criminal force'; Congress MPs say ruling party leaders manhandled them, file counter complaint

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI



**Major tumult:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi visiting BJP MP Pratap Sarangi, who was injured in a clash on Thursday. PTI

Ties between the Opposition and Treasury benches hit rock bottom on Thursday, with each side accusing the other of physical assault during a protest outside Parliament over alleged insults to the architect of the Constitution, B.R. Ambedkar.

Ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) MPs and Opposition members of the INDIA bloc took out separate protest marches and faced off at the entry gate of the Parliament House, leading to jostling in which two BJP MPs were injured and required hospitalisation.

The Delhi Police registered a first information report (FIR) against Rahul

Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, based on an earlier complaint by BJP MPs, under various sections of the BNS for "voluntarily causing grievous hurt, endangering life and personal safety of others and using criminal force".

The Congress leaders, on the other hand, accused BJP MPs of "manhandling" them to block their entry into the Parliament building. They too lodged a complaint accusing the BJP MPs of using "criminal force, assault and battery" against Congress president

Mallikarjun Kharge. The NDA MPs were protesting the Congress's alleged ill-treatment of Dr. Ambedkar while the INDIA bloc MPs were protesting against Home Minister Amit Shah's statement that it had "become a fashion to keep repeating Ambedkar's name".

**'Not a wrestling ring'** Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju accused Mr. Gandhi of physically pushing former Union Minister Pratap Sarangi and BJP MP Mukesh Rajput, while forcing his way past them to enter Parliament. "Parliament is not a place to show physical strength. It is not a wrestling ring," he said.

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## Hizbul 'commander' among five militants killed in Kulgam

**Peerzada Ashiq**  
SRINAGAR

Five Hizbul Mujahideen militants, including 'commander' Farooq Ahmad Bhat, were killed in an all-night operation in the Kulgam area of south Kashmir on Thursday. Two security personnel were injured in the anti-militant operation.

"Five top Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists, including 'commander' Farooq Ahmad Bhat, were neutralised in Kulgam. Bhat, who was the oldest surviving 'commander' of South Kashmir, was active since 2015. He was instrumental in radicalising youth across the Valley. Their elimination marks a significant step in counter-terrorism efforts," said Brigadier Anirudh Chauhan, Commander of the Army's 2 Sector Rashtriya Rifles.

Besides 'commander' Bhat alias Nali, the slain militants were identified



Army jawans returning from the encounter site in Kulgam on Thursday. IMRAN NISSAR

as Irfan Lone, Adil Hussain, Mushtaq Itoo, and Yasir Javaid, all residents of Kulgam.

Five AK-47 rifles, two grenades, 20 magazines, and ammunition were recovered from the site.

The militant group was hiding at the Kader area of Kulgam when the security forces received a tip-off about their presence, officials said.

The forces made contact with the militants around 3.30 a.m. "Terrorists opened fire at the search party from multiple locations. To ensure the safety of civilians, they were evacuated. The operation concluded in around six hours," Brigadier Chauhan said.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 12

## RS Deputy Chairman rejects no-trust notice against Dhankhar by Opposition

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI



60 members. He said the no-confidence notice under Article 67(b) of the Constitution was not addressed to any specific authority but publicised by the main Opposition party, the Congress. "Invoked Article 67(b) peremptorily mandates at least 14 days' prior notice for any resolution contemplating the Vice-President's removal. Thus, December 10, 2024 notice of intention could

permit such a resolution only after December 24," he said, noting that the Winter Session was scheduled till December 20. "In full know of the situation that the resolution cannot be brought during this session, this was initiated only to set a narrative against second highest Constitutional office and the Vice-President," he said.

**'Casual and cavalier'**

Mr. Harivansh said the notice was replete with assertions to malign Mr. Dhankhar by listing events from the time he assumed office in August 2022. "A look at the notice reveals it couldn't be more casual and cavalier, wanting on every conceivable aspect and severally flawed – absence of addressee, absence of resolution text, incumbent Vice-President's name not correctly spelt in the entire petition, documents and videos asserted not made part, premised on links of disjointed media reports without authentication and many more," the ruling said.

The Deputy Chairman said the notice's lack of bona fides, and subsequent events revealed it being "a calculated unwholesome attempt to garnish publicity; run down the constitutional institution; insinuate the personal image of the incumbent Vice-President – notably, the first from the agricultural community to hold this office in the history of Independent India".

## Flower power



**In bloom:** Villagers harvest water lilies in Guwahati on Thursday. Such ponds are tourist attractions in many parts of India. RITU RAJ KONWAR

## Delhi govt. imposes ban on firecrackers throughout the year; SC directs U.P., Haryana govts. to follow suit

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI



The Delhi government on Thursday imposed a ban on all forms of firecrackers throughout the year in the national capital.

"There shall be a complete ban on manufacturing, storage, selling (including delivery through online marketing platforms), and bursting of all kinds of firecrackers in the National Capital Territory of Delhi throughout the year with immediate effect," an order issued by the government read.

The Delhi government informed the Supreme Court that it had imposed an "all-pervasive, permanent" ban on firecrackers.

pollution rises in the city. This year, too, the government had imposed a ban from October 14 till January 1, 2025.

Appearing before a Bench headed by Justice A.S. Oka, senior advocate Shadan Farasat, representing Delhi, said the order was passed by the Principal Secretary, Environment, Government of Delhi, on December 19 pursuant to the top court's

orders. "We have banned it [firecrackers]... It is permanent, all-pervasive," Mr. Farasat submitted.

The senior lawyer said the statutory order of ban was passed under Section 5 of the Environment Protection Act, 1986.

**'Need similar measures'** The Delhi government counsel, however, said its ban would become really effective only if the other National Capital Region (NCR) States of Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh enforce similar measures.

Meanwhile, advocate Rohini Musa, appearing for 150 firecracker dealers in Delhi, said the top court had directed the Delhi government to take a call on

this issue in consultation with them. "There was no consultation, nothing," Ms. Musa submitted in court.

The hearing saw Rajasthan submit that had imposed a similar ban in its areas that are part of the NCR through an order on December 17.

This left the court to focus on Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. "We direct Uttar Pradesh and Haryana to impose a similar ban as Delhi," the court ordered.

Previous hearings had seen the apex court press NCR States to impose a perennial ban on the manufacture, sale, and bursting of firecrackers in the region in a forceful bid to reduce not only toxicity in air but also noise pollution.

## R.G. Kar victim's parents move HC, say no faith in CBI probe

**Shiv Sahay Singh**  
KOLKATA

Parents of the trainee woman doctor who was raped and murdered at the R.G. Kar Hospital and Medical College on August 9 this year moved the Calcutta High Court on Thursday seeking a fresh investigation into the crime.

The parents have expressed a lack of confidence in the ongoing probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) after a city court granted bail to two accused – former principal of the medical college and hospital and former officer-in-charge of the Tala police station.

Justice Tirthankar Ghosh asked the petition-

er's lawyer to add the CBI as a party in the petition and mention the matter again before the court on Monday. The court also asked the CBI to submit a status report on the investigation in the case, but added that it would not interfere at this moment.

The court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Sealdah on December 13 had granted bail to former principal Sandip Ghosh and Tala police station's officer-in-charge Abhijit Mondal as the CBI had failed to file chargesheets against them within the 90-day statutory period.

While Mr. Ghosh was accused of tampering with evidence in the case, the police officer was accused

of delaying the registering of an FIR after the body was found. The CBI had filed a chargesheet against the prime accused, Sanjay Roy, on October 7.

**Court nod for protest** Meanwhile, representatives of the West Bengal Junior Doctors Front (WBJDF) approached the High Court seeking permission to hold a protest in the city's Esplanade area.

The court asked the State government and the WBJDF to agree on the number of protesters.

During the hearing, the court granted permission to hold the protest opposite Metro Cinema Hall and capped the number of participants at 200.

## GRAP is like giving medicine to an already critical patient: top court

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday compared the implementation of emergency anti-pollution measures like the Graded Action Response Plan (GRAP) in Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) to "medicine given to an already critical patient".

A Bench headed by Justice A.S. Oka said the situation in the national capital was "disastrous" with 3,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste being produced every day and lying untreated as potent mounds of fire, pollution and disease.

"If 3,000 tonnes of solid untreated waste is generated every day, is it not ne-

### Court says day will come when it will have to take a call on halting projects to check solid waste

would thin by mid-2027. Justice Oka countered that the bridge between processed and untreated waste would only widen with the years if things go on the same way.

The court directed the Delhi Chief Secretary to file a detailed affidavit on the number of fires that occurred in landfills in the past year, and what preventive steps were taken.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati said GRAP-IV restrictions were back owing to a disturbing spike in pollution. "The situation remains grim despite GRAP. They [GRAP measures] are like medicines given after a patient falls critically ill. We have to deal with the basic issues," Justice Oka observed.

The Delhi government said it was introducing biomining in its landfills and the gap between waste produced and processed

### HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed percentage rate tender are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer Nahan (B&R) Division HP.PWD Nahan on behalf of Governor of HP from the approved/ eligible contractor registered in HPPWD for the work, so as to reach in this office on 23.12.24 up to 12.00 Noon and shall be opened on the same day at 2.30 PM, in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representative who may like to be present. The tender form can be had from this office against cash payment of Rs.350/- only for each tender (non refundable) up to 11.00 A.M. on 21.12.24 for which the applications should reach in this office up to 11.00 AM on 20.12.24. The tender form will be issued to the contractor giving proof of registration as GST. The earnest money in the shape of NSC/Time deposit account/Saving account in any of the Post Office in HP or FDR/CDR from nationalized bank duly pledged in the name of Executive Engineer Nahan B&R Division HP.PWD Nahan must be accompanied with the application. Conditional tender and tender received without earnest money will be rejected. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 75 days. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning the reason. If there happens to be any holiday the same will be open on the next working day.

- Repair of Dr. YSPGMC at Nahan. ( SH:- Repair work, White washing, Distempering, Tile work & other misc. work etc. in Ayurvedic Hospital & Providing & fixing Fall ceiling ACP Sheets, Distempering & other misc. work etc. Near Principal office Corridor.) Estimated Cost :-Rs. 47972/-only, Earnest Money:- Rs. 9600/- Time: Two months.
- Repair of Dr. YSPGMC at Nahan. ( SH:- Repair work, Painting, Kota Stone, Granite stone of lift, Conference Hall & stair case. & Repair work, white washing, painting & other misc. work etc. Near MS office.), Estimated Cost:-Rs. 48944/-only, Earnest Money:- Rs. 10000/- Time: Two Months.
- Repair of Dr. YSPGMC at Nahan (SH:- Construction of New Lift in Existing fourth floor. ) Phase-I . Estimated Cost:-Rs. 47800/-only, Earnest Money:-Rs. 9600/- Time: Two Months..
- Repair of Dr. YSPGMC at Nahan (SH:- Construction of New Lift in Existing fourth floor) Phase-II. Estimated Cost:-Rs 472974/-only, Earnest Money:- Rs. 8600/- Time: Two Months
- Repair of Dr. YSPGMC at Nahan ( SH:- Construction of Stair case in New OPD Block) Phase-I. Estimated Cost:-Rs. 498544/-only, Earnest Money:-Rs. 10000/- Time: Two Months,
- Repair of Dr. YSPGMC at Nahan (SH:- Construction of Stair case in New OPD Block) Phase-II. Estimated Cost:-Rs. 499559/-only, Earnest Money:- Rs. 10000/- Time: Two Months.,
- Repair of Dr. YSPGMC at Nahan (SH:- Construction of Shed for Generator) Phase-I. Estimated Cost:-Rs. 492363/-only, Earnest Money:- Rs. 10000/- Time: Two Months.,
- Repair of Dr. YSPGMC at Nahan (SH:- Construction of Shed for Generator) Phase-II. Estimated Cost:-Rs. 470516/-only, Earnest Money:-Rs. 9500/ Time: Two Months..
- Improvement of Black Spot on Banog Surla Kaulawala Bhood road km 0/0 to 43/00 (SH:- P/F 'W' beam crash barrier at RD 30/216 to 30/320) Estimated Cost:- Rs. 496425/-only, Earnest Money:-Rs. 10000/- Time: Two Months..
- Construction of Link road Mahdhal km 0/0 to 8/515. (SH:-Formation cutting 5/7 meter wide road in km 2/375 to 2/510) Estimated Cost:- Rs. 494521/-only, Earnest Money:- Rs. 10000/- Time: Two Months.,
- Construction of Link road to village Banakoti km 0/0 to 5/0 (SH:- Formation cutting 5/7 meter wide road in km 3/150 to 3/360) Estimated Cost:- Rs. 499720/-only, Earnest Money:-Rs. 10000/- Time: Two Months,
- C/O Link road to village Banakoti km 0/0 to 5/0 (SH:- Formation cutting 5/7 meter wide road in km 3/360 to 3/570) Estimated Cost:- Rs. 495038/-only, Earnest Money:- Rs. 10000/- Time: Two Months. 13. Construction of Link road Tapper Chuli Narayan Drah via dungi Kandyon km 0/0 to 10/0 (SH:-Formation cutting at RD 7/120 to 7/300) Estimated Cost:- Rs. 496113/-only, Earnest Money:-Rs. 10000/- Time: Two Months.
- Construction of Link road Tapper Chuli Narayan Drah via Dungi Kandyon km 0/0 to 10/0 (SH:-Formation cutting at RD 7/300 to 7/540), Estimated Cost:- Rs. 498729/-only, Earnest Money:-Rs. 10000/- Time: Two Months.
- Restoration of rain damages of Link road from Bedaghat to Gaunt km 0/0 to 5/0 (SH:- Removal of formation deficiencies in km 0/360 to 1/195), Estimated Cost:-Rs. 496896/-only, Earnest Money:- Rs. 10000/- Time: Two Months.
- Restoration of rain damages of Link road from Bedaghat to Gaunt km 0/0 to 5/0 (SH:- Removal of formation deficiencies in km 1/300 to 2/825), Estimated Cost:- 498915 Earnest Money:- Rs. 10000/- Time: Two Month.
- R/R damages to Shambhuwala to Matter Bhedon Road km 0/0 to 7/120 (SH:- C/O Wire Crate R/wall at RD 0/635 to 0/655) Estimated Cost:-Rs. 465523/-only, Earnest Money:- Rs. 9400/- Time: Two Month.
- Restoration of rain damages to Sainwala , Burma Papri and Kaulawala Bhood Panchayats (SH:- Hiring of Excavator cum loader for removal of slips), Estimated Cost:-Rs. 496600/-only, Earnest Money:- Rs. 10000/- Time: One Month.
- Restoration of rain damages Balsar Jhajjar road km 0/0 to 17/500 (SH:- Hiring of Excavator cum loader for removal of slips), Estimated Cost:- 496600/-only, Earnest Money:- 10000/- Time: One Month, 20. A/R & M/O Banog Surla Kaulawala Bhood road km 0/0 to 26/0 (SH:- C/O Balance work of Retaining wall at Rd 6/665 to 6/670) Estimated Cost:-Rs. 383270/- only, Earnest Money:- Rs. 8000/- Time: Two Month.
- Repairing and maintenance of PWD Colony (SH:- Providing and laying Damp proof and other misc. work), Estimated Cost:-Rs. 461393/-only, Earnest Money:- Rs. 10000/- Time: Two Month.
- A/R and M/O Various roads under Nahan Sub- Division (SH:- Cutting of bushes from Shoulder/berms and Berm filling on various road), Estimated Cost:- 499649/-only, Earnest Money:- 10000/- Time: Two Month,
- Construction of link road Mandlak km. 0/0 to 8/515 (SH:- C/o 900 mm dia hume pipe culvert at RD 0/140 & 0/670) Estimated Cost:-Rs. 499438/-only, Earnest Money:- Rs. 10000/- Time: Two Month.
- Construction of link road Mandlak km. 0/0 to 8/515 (SH:- P/L Kharanja Soiling in km. 0/0 to 0/700), Estimated Cost:- 492053/-only, Earnest Money:- 10000/- Time: Two Month,
- R/R damages on L/R Sura Bakara Km.0/0 to 5/00 (SH:-Removal of slips), Estimated Cost:- 498804/-only, Earnest Money:- 10000/- Time: Two Month.
- Repair & maintenance of Circuit House at Nahan. (SH:-Spirit poish, Marble polish & sanitary works), Estimated Cost:- 498606/-only, Earnest Money:- 10000/- Time: Two Month.
- Repair & maintenance of Chuli khairi changan road km 0/0 to 15/500 (SH:- laying of 100 mm thick interlocking concrete block at RD. 8/890 to 8/980 & 9/500 to 9/600) Estimated Cost:- 495500/-only, Earnest Money:- 10000/- Time: Two Month
- R/R damages to sainwala to Burma papri road km. 0/0 to 11/00. (SH:- Removal of slips at RD 4/0 to 8/0) Estimated Cost:- 499536/-only, Earnest Money:- 10000/- Time: Two Month.
- C/O L/R from banethi to dagiar km. 0/0 to 6/500 (SH:- Dagiar side abutment of 4 mtr. RCC span slab culvert at RD 4/200) Estimated Cost:- 466208/-only, Earnest Money:- 10000/- Time: Two Month
- Repair of Dr. YSPGMC at Nahan (SH:- Construction of Shed for Generator) Phase-III. Estimated Cost:-Rs. 445745/-only, Earnest Money:-Rs. 9000/- Time: Two Months
- Repair of Dr. YSPGMC at Nahan ( SH:- Construction of Stair case in New OPD Block) Phase-III. Estimated Cost:-Rs. 497337/-only, Earnest Money:-Rs. 10000/- Time: Two Months.

#### Conditions:-

The tender document shall be issued to only those contractors / firms:-

- Who possess valid Contractor Registration Number in Class-D & Class-C only.
- Who possess valid GST Registration Number.
- Who possess valid Permanent Account Number.
- Who Possess valid EPF Number.
- Ambiguous / telegraphic / conditional tenders or tenders by FAX / E-mail shall not be entertained / considered in any case.
- If any date mentioned above happens to be local / gazetted holiday, the same shall be processed on next days.
- The earnest money for above cited work should be submitted with the applications for purchase of tender form, no exemption for earnest money will be allowed.
- The contractor / Firms are requested to insert the rate in percentage above/below as well as in figures/failing which XEN reserves the right to accept/ reject any or all tenders.
- List of machinery tool plants as per schedule F. i.e. R.C. and purchase bills along with proof of ownership/Affidavit hire basis.

E.E.  
HP / 3987/24-25

HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

HPPWD Nahan.



**Choking hazard:** People wearing face masks amid thick smog in Delhi on Thursday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

## No breather for Delhi as air turns more foul

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

Delhi continued to be the most polluted city in the country for the fourth consecutive day, with the overall air quality plunging into the 'severe-plus' category on Thursday. It is likely to improve slightly to the 'severe' category on Friday, according to official data.

Attacking the Aam Aadmi Party government over air pollution, Bharatiya Janata Party's Delhi unit president Virendra Sachdeva said people have been suffering from pollution for an

extended period, and for the last 72 hours. "The city remains under Stage-IV of the Graded Response Action Plan, leaving all residents troubled in one way or another. Neither Chief Minister Atishi nor Environment Minister Gopal Rai has addressed the gravity of the situation," he said.

The AQI is a measurement of air pollution on a scale of 0-500. An AQI reading between 401 and 450 is considered 'severe', and 451 and 500 'severe-plus'. Delhi's overall 24-hour average AQI was 451 on Thursday.

## Poll preparations: MCD passes proposal to release ₹25.35 cr.

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Thursday approved a proposal to release ₹25.35 crore to begin preparations for the Assembly election due in February next year. The fund

will be used for setting up booths, ensuring electricity, and providing toilets, drinking water and other essential facilities at over 2,500 locations. The MCD is tasked with setting up 13,033 polling booths at 2,538 locations within its jurisdiction.

### क्रांतिसूर्य टंट्या भील विश्वविद्यालय खरगोन (म.प्र.)

E-mail ID : ktbuniv@gmail.com

दिनांक : 19.12.2024

### मुख्य सैद्धांतिक परीक्षा एवं प्रायोगिक परीक्षा की

उत्तर पुस्तिकाओं के क्रय हेतु ई-निविदा वर्ष 2024-25

क्रांतिसूर्य टंट्या भील विश्वविद्यालय, खरगोन (म.प्र.) की मुख्य सैद्धांतिक परीक्षाओं एवं प्रायोगिक परीक्षाओं के उपयोग हेतु उत्तर पुस्तिकाओं के क्रय के लिये अन्तराल ई-निविदा वर्ष 2024-25 अमरित की जाती है। निविदा का अनुमति मूल्य 70,00,000/- (सौपंच सर लाख) है।

निविदा प्राप्त, शर्त, विवरण जानकारी तथा निविदा में भाग लेने पर विश्वविद्यालय की वेबसाइट <http://govtpgcollegekhargone.org/tender> पर देखें।

कुलसंचिव

### Office of SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, 6<sup>TH</sup> CIRCLE H.P. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, KULLU-175101 Ph: 01902\_222530, E.mail.hp-kul@nic.in

### PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJNA (PMGSY) E-Procurement Notice

The Superintending Engineer, 6th Circle HP.PWD, Kullu on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids, in electronic tendering system, for construction of roads under Pradhan Mantri Sadak Yojna (PMGSY) for the following work including maintenance for five years from the eligible and approved contractors registered with HP.PWD/CPWD/P&T/Railways/other State Govt./Central Govt. Agencies. Non registered bidders may submit bids. However, the successful bidder has to register in appropriate Class with appropriate authorisces in HP.PWD.

District	Package No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Period of completion	Bid security (Rs. Lacs) i.e. 2% of the total cost.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Kullu 1	HP-06-152A	Construction of 36.00 mtrs. Span RCC Bow String Arch Bridge over MRL-01 Banjar Bathad road Km. 9/450 in District Kullu (HP) under PMGSY-III.	Rs. 5,44,23,174/-	12 Months	Rs. 10,89,000/-

- Date of release of invitation for Bids through e-procurement on 21-12-2024 at 10:00 AM.
- Cost of Bid Form:- Rs.5,000/- per package/job (non-refundable) only in form of Demand Draft.
- Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission:-The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted online on website [www.pmgsy.tender.gov.in](http://pmgsy.tender.gov.in). The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). "Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering may obtain the same from the website: [www.pmgsy.tender.gov.in](http://pmgsy.tender.gov.in).
- 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 provisions of Clause 4.4B (a) (ii) of ITB with Superintending Engineer, 6th Circle HP.PWD, Kullu, 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 bids through e-tendering:- Upto on 28.12.2024 at 05:00 PM
- The site for the work is available.
- Only online submission of bids is permitted, therefore, bids must be submitted online on website [www.pmgsy.tender.gov.in](http://pmgsy.tender.gov.in). The technical qualification part of the bids will be opened online on 30.12.2024 11:30 AM in the office of Superintending Engineer, 6th Circle HP.PWD, Kullu 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.
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than Seventy Five (75) days after the deadline date for bid submission.
- Bidders may bid for any one or more of the works mentioned in the Table above. To qualify for a package of contracts made up of this and other contracts 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 bid updates, 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.

S/-  
Superintending Engineer,  
6<sup>th</sup> Circle, HP.PWD, Kullu.

HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

HP / 4010/24-25

HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

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# Shah remarks: reject BJP in Delhi poll if you love Babasaheb, says Kejriwal

AAP chief writes to NDA allies – A.P. and Bihar CMs – to ‘reflect deeply’ on the issue; Delhi BJP protests against Cong. for ‘ignoring Ambedkar’s contribution’ during his lifetime and after

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

**A**am Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday asked the voters who revere B.R. Ambedkar to reject the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the upcoming Delhi Assembly election as its senior leader and Union Home Minister “insulted” the architect of the Constitution.

“Amit Shahji, I don’t know who your God is, but our God is Babasaheb Ambedkar. And you dare insult him? You worship Savarkar, that’s your choice. But how dare you disrespect our God? We won’t tolerate this,” Mr. Kejriwal said during a visit to the Valmiki Mandir in the national capital.

Mr. Shah has come under fire from the Opposition parties over his remarks on Ambedkar in the Upper House of Parliament on Tuesday. In response, he has claimed that his comments were distorted after the BJP leaders “exposed” the Opposition party’s [Congress] repeated “insults” to Ambedkar.

Mr. Kejriwal said the time has come to choose between Ambedkar and the BJP. “If you claim to love Babasaheb but vote for the BJP, you’re lying. You must choose between Babasaheb and the BJP. A person who loves Babasa-



Former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Rajya Sabha MPs Sanjay Singh and Raghav Chadha, other leaders during a meeting with Mandir Marg residents in New Delhi on Thursday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

heb would always say no to the BJP,” he said.

Calling himself a *bhakt* (devotee) of Ambedkar, the AAP leader said when he first heard Mr. Shah’s statement, he thought it might be a slip of the tongue. “But the very next day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a statement endorsing Amit Shah’s remarks. Modiji could have distanced himself saying he disagreed, and we might have assumed it was an unintended mistake. Instead, Modiji fully supported Shah’s comments,” he said.

#### Reaching counterparts

Mr. Kejriwal on Thursday wrote to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Bihar

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar alleging that Mr. Shah’s remarks on Ambedkar were not only “disrespectful” but also reflected “the BJP’s mindset towards the Constitution and its architect”. He urged both leaders to reflect deeply on the issue.

#### ‘Slum tourism’

Taking potshots at a Delhi BJP campaign focused on slum dwellers, the AAP chief said, “Today, BJP leaders are frequently seen visiting *jhuggis* and spending time there. Let me tell you, they don’t do this out of genuine love or concern for the people living in *jhuggis* but have been compelled to do so. Why? Because of the Constitution written by Babasaheb. The

Constitution forces them to go to *jhuggis*. How? Because Babasaheb gave every citizen the right to vote.”

Mr. Kejriwal claimed that if Ambedkar hadn’t fought for the right to vote for everyone, slums would have been “demolished and their residents thrown out”.

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said that the nation demands an apology from Congress leaders, particularly the Gandhi family, for the “disrespect shown to Ambedkar during his lifetime and posthumously”.

The BJP’s SC and ST Morcha workers staged protests at four major locations in the national capital on Thursday.

## 3 more dengue deaths in Delhi

Press Trust of India  
NEW DELHI

Delhi reported three more dengue deaths last week, taking the toll from the mosquito-borne disease to eight this year, according to official data. The city has recorded 6,163 dengue cases as of December 14, according to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi’s weekly report.

Timings  
DELHI

FRIDAY, DEC. 20
● RISE 07:10 SET 17:29
● RISE 22:27 SET 11:04
SATURDAY, DEC. 21
● RISE 07:10 SET 17:30
● RISE 23:21 SET 11:34
SUNDAY, DEC. 22
● RISE 07:11 SET 17:30
● RISE 00:00 SET 12:01

**Delhi Weather** max min  
Delhi City 23 05  
Safdarjung 23 05  
Palam 21 07

**Delhi Palam Today**  
22°C The dry weather to prevail. Moderate to shallow fog will occur in cold morning. Day will be pleasant. Night also will be cold and hazy.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
21°C Morning will be cold with moderate to shallow fog. Day will be pleasant. Night also will be cold and hazy. Dry weather to continue.

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JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543  
NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida  
LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

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#### APPOINTMENTS

**ONGC**  
HR/ER DEPARTMENT, CAUVERY ASSET, KARAikal  
Advt. No. HRD/1/2024 (R&P)

ONGC Cauvery Asset, Karaikal invites qualified and experienced retired ONGC personnel from Civil/Structural disciplines for engagement as Consultant/Associate Consultant/Junior Consultant for Engineering Services, on contractual basis for a period of One year as detailed under:

Section	Discipline	No. of posts	Qualification	Required Experience	Selection Methodology
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Level at the time of Retirement: E6 or E4&E5 upto E3 Level.  
Age: Not more than 63 years of age at the time of engagement with relevant qualification and experience.  
Eligible interested candidates are required to send the scanned copy of Application duly signed in the format to the Email address: [hrd\\_cauvery@ongc.co.in](mailto:hrd_cauvery@ongc.co.in) as non-editable file on or before 30.12.2024 or send by post to CGM(HR) - Head HR/ER, ONGC, Cauvery Asset, Neravy, Karaikal, Pin code: 609604.

Date, Venue and reporting time for online test and interview will be intimated to shortlisted candidates in due course, through e-mails.  
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IMPORTANT UPDATE

KIHT will be conducting interviews for various positions of consultants in KIHT and its associate organizations. Corresponding job descriptions are available on website [www.kiht.in](http://www.kiht.in)

# SC stays Kerala High Court directives on elephant parades at temple festivals

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

Striking a balance between animal rights and temple customs, the Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Thiruvambady and Paramakkavu devaswoms to strictly adhere to the Captive Elephants (Management and Maintenance) Rules, 2012 during Thrissur Pooram while staying any directions issued by the Kerala High Court found contrary to the law.

The two devaswoms, which host the centuries-old annual festival of Thrissur Pooram, had approached the top court challenging the Kerala High Court’s back-to-back orders in November,



Grand ceremony: Decorated elephants lined up for 'Kudamattam', the most spectacular event of the Thrissur Pooram. FILE PHOTO

which included directions that elephants paraded at the festival should maintain an exact distance of three metres from each other.

“How do you expect an

elephant to maintain a

distance?

They will keep moving. This is impractical,” Justice B.V. Nagarathna, heading a Bench comprising Justice N. Kotiswar Singh, addressed senior advocate Shyam Divan. He was appearing for V.K. Venkatalachalam, a party in the High

Court who opposed the devaswoms’ appeal.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal and advocate Abhilash M.R., representing the devaswoms, alleged that the High Court had overstepped judicial boundaries to issue extensive festival-centric directives over and above the 2012 Rules.

“The court cannot go on supplementing. There is a rule-making body. There were no complaints of violations in this case. Directions cannot be issued in vacuum,” Justice Nagarathna observed.

The management committees of the devaswoms and elephant owners have welcomed the stay imposed by the Supreme Court.

## Left parties form alliance for Delhi Assembly election

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

to fulfil the interests of the citizens of Delhi.

If the Left parties succeed in this election, they aim to implement pro-people policies, such as better public hospitals, quality free education, social welfare pensions for unorganized sector workers above 60 years of age, and housing for SC/ST and other marginalised groups,” the manifesto added.

Delhi State secretary of CPI(ML) Liberation, Ravi Rai, said that the party will field candidates from Narela and Kondli. Shankar Lal, acting State secretary of CPI Delhi, said that his party will fight in a total of around 12-15 seats and the rest of the seats will be announced in the coming days.

## STR gets special police

The Hindu Bureau  
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha has established a dedicated armed police unit to bolster protection efforts in the Simlipal Tiger Reserve (STR). The government has sanctioned creation of 131 posts of different categories as part of the dedicated one company of the Armed Police Reserve. Their disciplinary and administrative control will be with the SP, Mayurbhanj.

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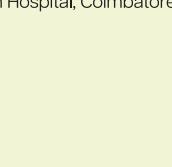
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Dr Ganesh Gopalakrishnan  
Consultant Urologist, Vedanayagam Hospital, Coimbatore.



Dr Maneeesh Sinha  
Senior Consultant Urologist, NU Hospitals, Bengaluru.



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Chief of Bureau (Tamil Nadu), The Hindu (Moderator).



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## IN BRIEF



## CM Mamata inaugurates Christmas festival in Kolkata

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday inaugurated the 'Kolkata Christmas Festival' in the Park Street area of the city. "The festival will be held from December 19 to December 30. On December 24 and 25 there will be no vehicles in the area. Artists from different corners of the country will participate here. We all know that Kolkata is the cultural capital of the country," Chief Minister said while inaugurating the festival. Ms. Banerjee also said that she participates in the Christmas festivities every year and Christmas to her means several things including, peace, love, joy, affection and unity.

## Ajit Pawar urges Centre to scrap 20% onion export duty

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Thursday urged the Centre to revoke the 20% export duty on onions, citing the financial distress faced by farmers. In a letter to Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, Mr. Pawar detailed the challenges confronting onion growers in Nashik, a key production centre, where falling prices are compounding their woes. Farmers are reportedly selling onions at an average rate of ₹2,400 per quintal, significantly below the cost of production. On Thursday, the farmers briefly stopped auctions at the Lasalgao APMC, Asia's largest wholesale market of the key kitchen staple in Nashik district, over the price drop.

BRS leader K.T. Rama Rao booked over 'irregularities'

## The Hindu Bureau

HYDERABAD

The Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Thursday registered an FIR against Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president and former Minister K. T. Rama Rao over allegations of irregularities in the conduct of the Formula-E car race, held in Hyderabad in February 2023.

Mr. Rao was the Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD), Industry & Commerce, Information Technology, at that time.

**Top officials named**  
Then Special Chief Secretary to Government, MA&UD department Aravind Kumar and then Chief Engineer of Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) B.L.N. Reddy were also named in the FIR.

## BJD asks why IAS officer summoned in corruption case by CBI but Minister excluded

## Satyasundar Barik

BHUBANESWAR

Ahead of its 28th foundation day celebrations, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) on Thursday escalated its attack on the Mohan Majhi-led BJP government, asking why the involvement of a Cabinet Minister was overlooked in a bribery case under investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The Central agency has summoned a senior IAS officer in connection with the case.

This is the first major bribery allegation levelled by the regional party since the BJP came to power in Odisha in June.

The Nabarangpur unit of BJD demanded the inclusion of Nitayananda Gond, Minister of ST and SC Development, Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare, in the CBI

investigation.

"When the CBI summoned ST and SC Development, Minorities, and Backward Classes Welfare Secretary Bishnupada Sethi, who has since been removed from the post, over alleged irregularities in awarding contracts linked to the seizure of unaccounted cash amounting to ₹10 lakh, it is surprising that the departmental Minister, Mr. Gond, has not faced similar scrutiny," said senior BJD leader and former Minister Ramesh Chandra Majhi.

**'Consent not taken'**

Mr. Ramesh Majhi said that any work exceeding ₹1 crore in value within the department requires the consent of the State Cabinet. "However, on November 11, 2024, the Secretary awarded two separate contracts totalling ₹37 crore to

the Central Public Sector Unit (PSU) Bridge and Roof Co. Such actions are not permissible without the approval of the departmental Minister," he said.

The BJD said the award of contracts to the tune of ₹387 crore by Mr. Sethi to Central PSUs raised serious questions over transparency. "The Central PSUs often bypass the Odisha Public Works Department in their tendering processes. Instead, they execute empanelled projects through internal tenders or a select group of contractors, leading to project cost escalations by 7% to 10%. These contractors are often linked to huge kickbacks," alleged Pradeep Majhi, a senior BJD leader and former MP.

The party alleged that the role of the Chief Minister also comes into the realm of suspicion.

The decision represents the first set of actions taken on the basis of a November 30 Finance Department directive to departments

request and admit us in the Chhattisgarh Pradesh Congress Committee," states the letter.

**'Letter received'**

A copy of the letter that has been marked to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, AICC general secretary in charge of Chhattisgarh Sachin Pilot, and Leader of Opposition in the Chhattisgarh Assembly

Charan Das Mahant, has surfaced on social media. While the Jogi were unavailable for a comment, Mr. Baij confirmed that the letter had been received.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, he said that a decision was likely by the end of this month.

**'Review panel formed'**

"We have received the letter and a committee of senior leaders is reviewing it. They have not expressed interest in simply joining the Congress party, but the merger of another party which would require elaborate discussions with senior leaders in the State unit too. Finally, a decision will be taken by the AICC," said Mr. Baij.

Asked about his views on the Jogi returning to the Congress fold, Mr. Baij said that it "was not a mat-



In a letter to Chhattisgarh Congress chief, Renu Jogi requested that JCC(J), a party founded by her late husband Ajit Jogi, be merged with Congress as both shared the same ideology. FILE PHOTO

the Janta Congress Chhattisgarh (J) formed by the State's first Chief Minister, late Ajit Jogi, is of Congress ideology. Our party's core committee has unanimously decided that by merging our party with the All India Congress Committee [AICC], all the office-bearers and members can join the Chhattisgarh Pradesh Congress Committee. So please accept our humble

ter of individual perception" and was going to be a collective decision.

Ajit Jogi had a strained relationship with fellow Congress leaders in the State, especially after the party lost the 2003 Assembly election with him as the incumbent CM, and the differences even surfaced publicly on occasions. The former CM had pitched the JCC(J) as a regional alternative to the Bharatiya Janata Party.

While the party won three seats in 2018 (five if the two seats of its then pre-poll alliance partner Bahujan Samaj Party are also considered), it drew a blank in the 2023 Assembly election with both Mr. Amit Jogi and Ms. Jogi, a sitting MLA, losing from Patan and Kota constituencies of Durg and Bilaspur respectively.

A total of 3.28 lakh candidates had appeared for the 70th BPSC preliminary examination held at 912 centres across the State on

## Prashant Bhushan misinformed, says BPSC on alleged paper leak

## Amit Bhelari

PATNA

The Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) on Thursday refuted a social media post of Supreme Court lawyer and human rights activist Prashant Bhushan on allegations of a paper leak in the State and asserted that the exam was conducted peacefully at the remaining 911 centres.

However, BPSC chairman Parmar Ravi Manubhai denied the claim and asserted that the exam was conducted peacefully at the remaining 911 centres.

In a conversation with *The Hindu*, BPSC Examination Controller Rajesh Kumar Singh said: "The commission would not like to get into the argument of what Mr. Bhushan said. But yes, we would surely like to explain the process under which the exam was conducted peacefully. The chairman was explaining the same thing on December 13. What you see in the

video is not the fact, he [Bhushan] is misinformed."

Mr. Singh said the question papers reached the examination centre with more than 10 layers of security. "Mobile jammers were on and no one was allowed to take mobile phones inside the centre. How can students claim there was a paper leak during the exam?" he said.

**Will hold retest: BPSC**

At the BEC, a total of 12,000 candidates had appeared for the exam. According to the BPSC, a retest will be held only at this centre and then all results will be announced together. Mr. Manubhai categorically said he did not receive any complaint of a paper leak from any exam centre in the State.

## Shah meets J&amp;K CM for second time, conducts security review of UT

Omar Abdullah discusses Statehood, hurdles faced by elected govt. with Union Home Minister; will achieve goal of terror-free J&K at the earliest, says Shah in meeting with senior officials

## Peerzada Ashiq

SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi and discussed the restoration of Statehood and the hurdles faced by the elected government in the past two months. Mr. Shah later held the first security review of J&K since government formation in the Union Territory.

It is for the second time since he assumed the office of Chief Minister that Mr. Abdullah sought a meeting with the Union Home Minister. He has been consistently broaching the demand to restore Statehood with the Centre.

"The meeting took place in a cordial atmosphere. Discussions on Kashmir's situation, including the restoration of J&K's Statehood, have been ongoing. It is hoped that these efforts will continue to benefit the people of J&K and lead to the restoration of its State-



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in New Delhi on Thursday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

hood," the Chief Minister said after the meeting.

Official sources said Mr. Abdullah also took up issues with Mr. Shah that need "hand-holding of the Centre for effective governance" in J&K.

"The experience and the hurdles that we faced in the past two months after taking over the reins following the formation of the popular government also came up for discussion during the meeting," the National Conference leader said.

Mr. Abdullah also clarified the reasons behind the delay in the Transaction of Business Rules (TBR), which are yet to be framed even as over two months have elapsed since the new government took office. These rules will define the roles of the Raj Bhavan, Council of Ministers and the Chief Minister in the Union Territory.

Without divulging details about the status of the TBR, he said, "It is our matter. It has no relation to the Government of India. The TBR will be decided by

J&K's elected government and approved by the Cabinet and then sent to the Lieutenant Governor."

Mr. Shah's security review was attended by L-G Manoj Sinha, Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi, NIA Director General Sadanand Date, BSF DG Daljit Singh Chaudhary, J&K Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo and J&K DGP Nalin Prabhakar, among others.

**Security road map**  
Official sources said a detailed security road map was discussed to contain militancy and cross-border infiltration in J&K.

During the review meeting, Mr. Shah said the security agencies, in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's zero-tolerance policy against terrorism, "will achieve the goal of free Jammu and Kashmir at the earliest". He emphasised on the implementation of "area-domination plan and zero-terror plan in mission mode".

## Farmer outfits reject Centre's draft policy on agri marketing

## The Hindu Bureau

CHANDIGARH

Farmer outfits in Punjab have asked the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in the State to reject the draft National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing, asserting it could be an attempt to reintroduce the contentious provisions of the three farm laws, which the Union government repealed following the farmers' protests.

The concerns surrounding the draft were raised at a meeting held here on Thursday between representatives of farmers' unions and Punjab Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Gurmeet Singh Khudian, according to a government statement.

**Minister's assurance**  
The Minister assured farmers' union leaders that the State government will not allow farmers' interests to be affected by the National Policy Framework on agricultural marketing.

"The State government is concerned as this policy could have serious implications for the State and its farmers, so we want to analyse and consult on each and every aspect of the draft policy shared by the

Government of India," Mr. Khudian is quoted in the statement.

He added that agriculture experts and other stakeholders will also be consulted soon to analyse it thoroughly so that not a single point is left unconsidered.

**Potential privatisation'**  
Farmer unions' leaders including Joginder Singh Ugrahan, Balbir Singh Rajewal, Darshan Pal, Ruldu Singh Mansa, Satnam Singh Ajhala, and others expressed deep concerns over potential privatisation, monopolistic practices in the guise of the new policy, the statement said, adding that "it could be an attempt to reintroduce the contentious provisions of the three farm laws".

Farmer leaders urged the State government for further examination before sending a response to the Centre so that Punjab and its farmers' interests could be fully secured.

## FIR against Sambhal Lok Sabha MP for 'power theft'

## The Hindu Bureau

LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party MP from Sambhal, Zia-ur-Rehman Barg, was on Thursday booked by the police for allegedly stealing electricity and consuming unauthorised power at his residence in Deepa Sarai locality of the district in Uttar Pradesh.

The Health Department and the General Education Department topped the list with 373 and 224 such employees respectively.

Other departments included Public Works (47), Technical Education (46), Homeopathy (41), Revenue and Agriculture (35 each), Social Justice (34), Insurance Medical Services (31) and Collegiate Education (27).

In some cases, the disability pension (one of the five social security pensions) was being drawn by individuals who had failed to relinquish it even after getting govt. employment.



A probe had pointed fingers at 1,458 State govt. employees

seeking stern disciplinary action against such employees and the recovery of the pension amount with interest from them.

According to a December 8 order issued by Saju K. Surendran, Director, Soil Survey and Soil Conservation Department, the following staff have been suspended: Naseed Mubarik Manzil, work superintendent (Vadakara); Sajitha K.A., office attendant (Kasaragod), and part-time sweepers Sheejakumari G. (Pathanamthitta), Bhargavi P. (Meenangadi), Leela K.

(Meenangadi), Rajani J. (Thiruvananthapuram).

In November, a Finance Department probe through the Information Kerala Mission had helped identify 1,458 government employees who illegally availed of these pensions.

The Health Department and the General Education Department topped the list with 373 and 224 such employees respectively.

"A case of power theft was registered against the local MP on a complaint by the electricity department officials on Thursday morning. The complaint was registered after the electricity department conducted an inspection at his (Mr. Barg's) house," said Sambhal Superintendent of Police K.K. Bishnoi. Heavy police force was present with the electricity department officials during the inspection.

## Ajit Jogi's political heirs seek reunion with Congress

## Shubhomoy Sikdar

RAIPUR

Eight years after former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister, the late Ajit Jogi, quit the Congress, his political heirs are seeking rapprochement.

In a letter to State Congress president Deepak Baij, Jogi's wife Renu Jogi has requested that Janta Congress Chhattisgarh (J), a party founded by Ajit Jogi, be merged with the Congress as the parties shared the same ideology".



In a letter to Chhattisgarh Congress chief, Renu Jogi requested that JCC(J), a party founded by her late husband Ajit Jogi, be merged with Congress as both shared the same ideology. FILE PHOTO

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**Bid Submission Start Date and Time:** 02:00 PM on 20.12.2024

**Bid Submission Last Date and Time:** Till 02:00 PM on 10.01.2025.

**Date and time of Opening Technical Bid:** At 02:30 PM on 10.01.2025.

**Pre-bid Conference:** On 30.12.2024 at 11:00 AM in the Committee room, Anaj Bhawan, Sector 39-C, Chandigarh.

**VC Link for Pre-Bid:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85616201994?pwd=dDE3CGMallGEBFinEc9zvukghJFLPF.1>

Meeting ID: 856 1620 1994 Passcode: 437727

**Note:** Any corrigendum(s) to the tender shall be published on the above websites only.

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**CORRIGENDUM.**

The E-tenders invited vide this office letter No. PV-SD/CB-Tender/2024-25-8572-81 dated 21.11.2024, which was scheduled as "Starting date for downloading bids 06.12.2024" & "Deadlines for submission of bids 13.12.2024" at 10:30 AM, further corrigendum has been issued vide this office letter No.9161-72 dated 04.12.2024 vide which key dates has been changed i.e. starting date for downloading bid is 21.12.2024 at 4:00 PM and due date of opening of bid is 30.12.2024 at 11:00 AM, but due to technical/administrative reason the key dates/schedule for this tender is hereby postponed as per detail given below.

**Tender Schedule**

1. Starting date for downloading bids	01.01.2025	4.00 P.M.
2. Deadlines for submission of bids	13.01.2025	10.30 P.M.
3. Date of opening of bids	13.01.2025	11.00 A.M.

Others terms and conditions will remain unchanged.  
No.PW-SD/CB/Tender/2024-25-9854-64 Dated: -19.12.2024 Executive Engineer,  
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**e-Procurement TENDER NOTICE NO: 6 TO 11 APSWRE-  
Technical-2024-25, Dated,18.12.2024**

Downloading commencement on 23.12.2024 and closing date may be viewed in e-Procurement.gov.in. Tenders are invited four works (4) from the registered companies. Firms of eligible registered bidders for services and supply of items to APSWRS and estimate cost ranging from 0.58 cr. to 21.50 crores and expression of interest (EOI) for ISO certification and AI/ML based CCTV surveillance to APSWRS. Further details may be viewed at <http://tenders.apswreprocurement.gov.in>. Contact Number: 0863-2347445 Note: Changes/ amendments if any will only be communicated through above e-Procurement platform.

Sd/- V Prasanna Venkatesh,J.A.S., SECRETARY APSWREIS

DIPR No. 3394PP/CL, Dt: 19-12-2024

**BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE**  
Office of the Executive Engineer, Shivajinagar Division  
Thimmaiah Road, Queens Road, Bengaluru.

No. E.E.(SJN)/KPPP/Tend/14/2024-25 Date: 19.12.2024

**NOTICE INVITING SHORT TERM TENDER (NIT)**

Two Cover System Notification (Only through GoK KPP Portal)

The Executive Engineer, Shivajinagar Division, East Zone, BBMP, Bengaluru on behalf the Commissioner, BBMP invites Tenders from eligible contractors registered in BBMP or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES / National Highway or any State Govt. Organisations for the following works.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Approx. Value of work (Rs. in lakhs)
1	Construction of Multi purpose building at M.V. Garden near SC/ST Block No. 39 & 41.	50.00
	EMD Amount : Rs. 1,00,000/-	
2	Construction of Primary Health Center, Library and other necessary activities in M.V. Garden near SC/ST Block No. 53 & 54.	150.00
	EMD Amount : Rs. 2,25,000/-, (Rs. 1,00,000/- through NEFT & Remaining Rs.1,25,000/-by Bank Guarantee).	
3	Construction of Community Hall and Demolishing the dilapidated condition at Rajeev Gandhi Colony near SC/ST Block No. 82/1 & 82/2.	300.00
	EMD Amount : Rs. 4,50,000/-, (Rs. 1,00,000/- through NEFT & Remaining Rs. 3,50,000/-by Bank Guarantee).	

Period of completion : 180 months for each work.

**Calendar of Events:** (1) Tender documents may be downloaded from KPP Portal <https://kpp.karnataka.gov.in> from 23.12.2024, (2) Date of Pre-bid Meeting : 10.01.2025 at 12.00 noon. (3) Last date for uploading the filled tender document : 15.01.2025 upto 4.00 pm. (4) Date of opening of Tender : 17.01.2025, if possible or next working day at 11.00 am. Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours or from KPP Portal <https://kpp.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/- Executive Engineer

Shivajinagar Division, East Zone

- Which country won the gold medal in both the men's and women's categories at the 2024 FIDE Chess Olympiad?
- Which South Indian film became the most-watched film on Netflix in 2024?
- In September 2024, an Indian student named Tapala Nadamuni set a Guinness World Record by creating the world's smallest version of which household item?

\*T&C apply



Scan QR code or

visit [newsth.live/RTQPA](http://newsth.live/RTQPA)

take the quiz. Top 3 winners\*

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Answer to yesterday's quiz:

1. John J. Hopfield and Geoffrey E. Hinton
2. Surfing
3. MechaZilla

Yesterday's Winners:

1. Gowri Naduvantheri, Trivandrum | 2. Ibrahim Bilakhia, Mumbai | 3. Chandrima Ghosh, Bangalore

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

No. CEB/CS/TB-VIII/05/2024/11

**PRESS NOTICE (Re-Tender)**

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

Details of bid may be seen at e-procurement portal [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in)

The bidders must be enrolled in [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in)

Sl. No.	Name of work	Approx value of Work(Bid Value)	Completion Period	Bid Security	Cost of Bid (in Rs)
1	"Construction of 20 (Twenty) new BOPs along the Inter-State Boundary for the F.Y. 2022-23 (Nivang)" at Dima Hasao Distric	Rs. 2,90,41,361.00	12 (Twelve Months)	2 % of Bid value for General category, and 1% of Bid value for Reserved category	Rs. 5,810.00
2	Construction of 20 (Twenty) new BOPs along the Inter-State Boundary for the F.Y. 2022-23 (Sonapur) at Dima Hasao Distric	Rs. 2,90,41,361.00	12 (Twelve Months)	2 % of Bid value for General category, and 1% of Bid value for Reserved category	Rs. 5,810.00

N.B:- 1. Value of work may vary according to the detail NIT.

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

Addl. Chief Engineer, P.W.D. (Planning), Assam  
Chamdari, Guwahati-3.



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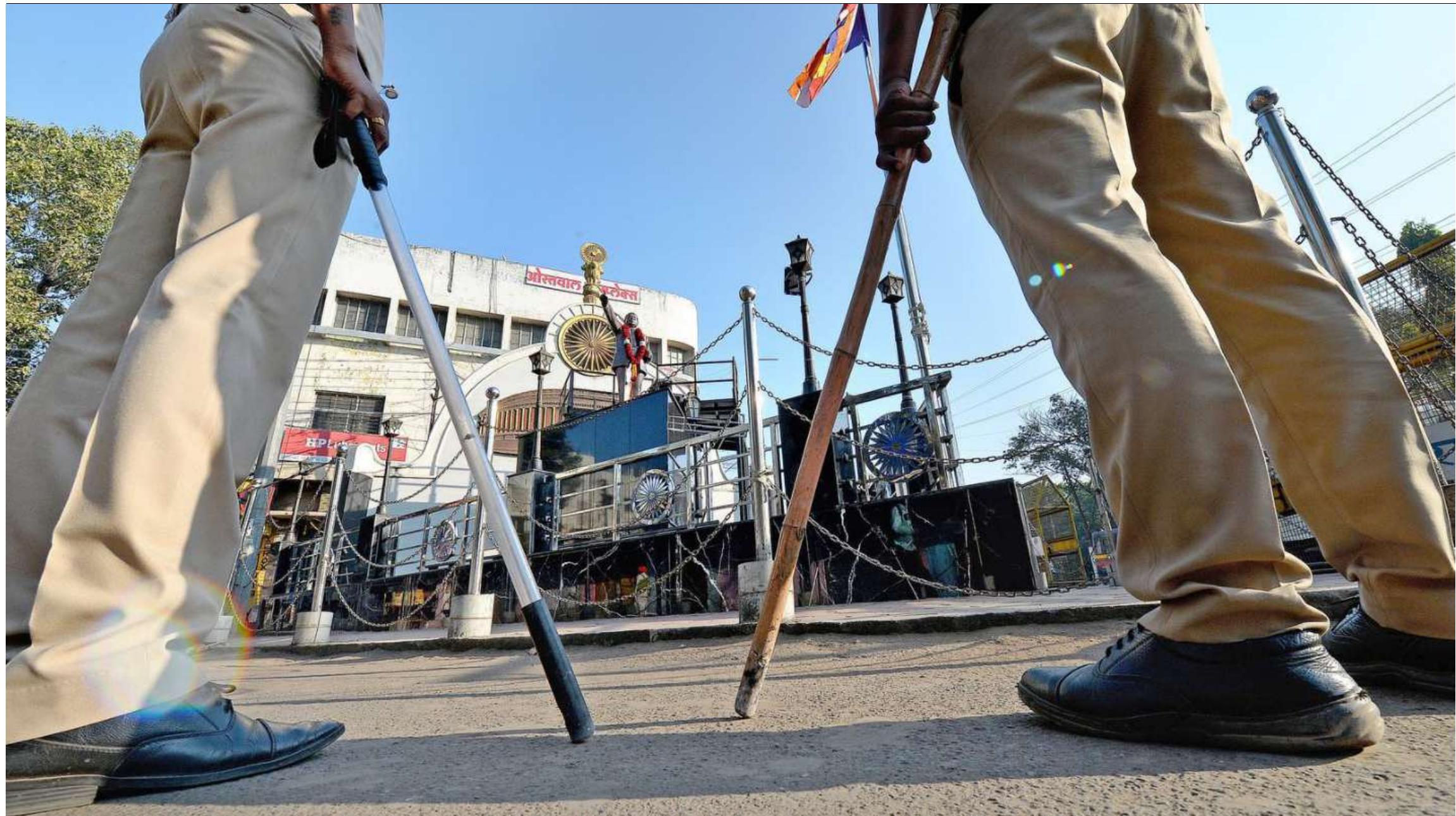
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## SPOTLIGHT



Maharashtra police personnel keep vigil near the statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar at Station Road in Parbhani after violence broke out in the area when a replica of the Constitution was damaged.

VIJAY SONEJI

# The Indian Constitution – violated

On December 11, violence broke out in Maharashtra's Parbhani city after a man damaged a replica of the Constitution, a part of the statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. With tension still in the air, the incident has triggered fear among Dalits, following the death of a member of the community in judicial custody, which it claims was due to 'police brutality', reports **Snehal Mutha**

**J**ust outside the two-platform Parbhani railway station in Maharashtra's Marathwada region flutters the Indian national flag mounted on a pole. Beyond the tea shops selling *misal pav* and hotels catering to travellers, in front of an Art Deco building, is a statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who headed the drafting committee of the Constitution of India. Behind the statue are more symbols of the Indian republic: a replica of the Ashoka Chakra that forms the central symbol of the national flag, and the Ashoka Pillar, the original erected in Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh, where Buddha gave his first sermon. In front is the Constitution, now covered in a blue cloth, the colour of Ambedkar's Scheduled Castes Federation of India flag. From the statue, the Doctor Line market begins, extending about 3 km up to Gandhi Park.

Dilip Ragade, 55, who runs a newspaper stand next to the statue, recalls a scuffle between a man and an autorickshaw driver between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. on December 10. "At first, I thought he had pulled something out of the autorickshaw and thrown it on the road. Later, I realised that it was the replica of the Constitution. The autorickshaw driver had confronted the man," he says. Soon, a crowd of about 200 people gathered and the man was thrashed, say witnesses. People ran towards the market spreading the word, and shops began to shut.

The police, the District Collector, and Ambedkarite leaders showed up and took the badly injured man to hospital, says Ragade. The man was arrested and the police told people that he was mentally ill and had not done the damage on purpose. Ambedkarites, however, were not convinced. They blocked the Nandigram Express for at least 30 minutes. Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Yashwant Kale says the train left Parbhani station only after the Government Railway Police dispersed the crowd.

The next day, following protests by Ambedkarites, there was stone pelting and arson, followed by a crackdown by the Parbhani police. Somnath Suryavanshi, 35, who had come from Pune for his law entrance examination, was allegedly picked up from where he was staying. He died in judicial custody a few days later.

Ambedkarites claim people not from their community joined the protests so the blame for the violence would fall on them. They say the "police brutality" was a reflection of how Dalits are treated in society.

**Protests of different kinds**  
Earlier in the day on December 10, Hindu Sakal Samaj, a right-wing outfit, had taken out a *marcha* (march) condemning the atrocities against Hindus in Bangladesh, which has a prominent border with India. It took place a few metres from the Ambedkar statue where the statue of 17th-century Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji, a symbol of Maratha pride, is located. There was not much movement in the city during the *marcha*, say the residents of Parbhani. Ambedkarites claim several people delivered provocative speeches. This right-wing event combined with the desecration of the Constitution's replica angered Dalits, many of whom are Ambedkar's followers. Around 8 p.m. that night, the administration organised a *shanti samiti baithak* (peaceful meeting). Here, Ambedkarite leaders said they would carry out a protest at five locations in Parbhani the next day. They would also submit a letter to the Collector putting forth their demands, which included charging the man and his 'accomplices' under the stringent Unlawful Activ-

ties (Prevention) Act, 1967, and making him undergo a polygraph test to find out the 'mastermind' behind the act of vandalism. That night, the city went to sleep peacefully.

The following day, Ambedkarite organisations called for a bandh. These included the Republican Sena led by a grandson of Ambedkar; the Republican Party of India (A) led by Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale; and the Buddhist Society of India, founded by Ambedkar himself, who had converted to Buddhism.

Ambedkarite groups began protests across the city around 8 a.m. People gathered in groups ranging from 200 to 1,000. Seven groups peacefully submitted the charter of demands to the Collector. The police say the eighth group got disruptive, forcing its way into the Collector's office. Soon, they say, violence erupted in the market, about 600 metres from the office. There was stone pelting and arson, followed by the firing of tear gas shells, say witnesses.

#### A city unsettled

Ambedkarites say the police reacted violently. A 32-year-old demonstrator says, "The police first stopped us from reaching out to the Collector. That is why we agitated and some of us got on top of the police van to raise slogans. Now, they are looking for me everywhere." She has been in hiding after a video featuring her protesting went viral. Infuriated, she says, "We agitated for something that has given us a dignified life." She says a few men wearing masks and holding lathis had joined the protesters. "The people of Ambedkar Basti did not have these when they left."

Eight FIRs were registered, over 200 people booked, and 50 arrested, including minor girls from Dalit *bastis* (neighbourhoods) in Parbhani such as Gautam Nagar, Priyadarshini Nagar, Rahu Nagar, and Bhim Nagar. The police booked people on charges of rioting, assault on public servants, promoting enmity, and damaging public property. Two police vans, two four-wheelers, 18 two-wheelers, and hundreds of shops were damaged. Nine police personnel were injured. Five women were released a day after detention," says the ASP. "So far, 27 people have been arrested," he says.

On December 11, orders were issued under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, preventing the assembly of five or more people. Social activists and locals have criticised the administration for taking a whole day to do this. "The State Reserve Police Force (SRPF) unit was stationed a few kilometres from here in Hingoli, yet the police did not act," says a 49-year-old retailer in the area. The SRPF was deployed the next day after 2 p.m.

Vijay Wakode, an Ambedkarite leader, who



A victim of the violence offers prayers in front of statuettes of Buddha and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar at her home in Parbhani, Maharashtra. VIJAY SONEJI

died of a heart attack while protesting against the death of Somnath, had said the protest was peaceful until 1 p.m. "Then things went haywire and we cancelled the rally scheduled to be held after the protest," he had said, adding that people not part of the Ambedkar movement got mixed in the crowd, making Ambedkarite organisations the scapegoat "to malign us".

During the Maharashtra Assembly's winter session in Nagpur, the Opposition slammed the Mahayuti government over "poor law and order" in the State. In response, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said, "The government will never do anything against the Constitution and the insult of it will not be tolerated."

Meanwhile, newly appointed Minister and MLA from Jintur in Parbhani Meghana Bordikar told mediapersons that "Suryawanshi's death was due to a heart attack". She also defended the police, saying, "They arrested the accused immediately."

#### A market on edge

One of the shops that was damaged belonged to Kapil Chonde, 25. As news of the violence spread, he quickly bundled up sweaters, caps, and dark glasses that lay on his makeshift platform under a tarpaulin tied between an electric pole and bamboo struts. On seeing the mob rush in his direction, he sought safety in a *pucca* shop, but a lot of his goods were burnt. "The crowd was massive; they could have burnt anything that came in its way. The anger was visible and the police were hiding," Chonde says, two days after the incident, distraught. He estimates his loss at ₹40,000. He has taken a loan of ₹60,000 and wonders how he will pay it back.

Several traders are grappling with the task of assessing the extent of damage. Boards were damaged, doors bashed in, pushcarts broken, and bits thrown into the gutter. The Parbhani police estimate that property worth at least ₹30 lakh was damaged. Doctor Line has shops owned by a variety of trading communities from different ethnicities and religions. However, Kashinath Shinde, 45, one of the owners, says, "Most shops are of the Maratha community. The violence was targeted at them as the perpetrator is a Maratha."

The area around the Ambedkar statue has been cordoned off with barricades. Riot Control Police vans are stationed at the opposite end of the road. At least 10 police personnel are deployed every 300 metres, and police vans stationed at every kilometre, with patrolling every half an hour. The government also suspended Internet services for two days.

Rumours abound in the city. One talks about the arrest of a 10-year-old girl, another the custodial death of a woman. The moment a rumour is spread, the shutters of shops go down. This happens a couple of times. The police announce on loudspeakers that these claims are untrue.

#### Dalits traumatised

In Dalit settlements, people are gripped with fear of getting picked up by the police. Kalawanti Dabade, 50, a daily wage earner, says, "The police are searching every house and taking our children." A demonstrator from Bhim Nagar says, "We started pelting stones when the police resorted to lathi charge and opened tear gas. We missed our exams because they are looking for us and many of us are in hiding." His body is covered with black and green scars that he says are a result of the lathi charge. "The government hospital refused to take me in, saying I was a rioter."

Vachala Manavte, 53, was hospitalised after

she was released from jail on December 12. She works at a nearby hospital and was allegedly thrashed for recording a video of the police while they were detaining youth in Priyadarshini Nagar. "After dragging me there, they threw me in the lock-up and slapped and kicked me. They were trying to retrieve my mobile phone's password to delete the video," she says.

Rutuja, 20, and Pooja, 27, along with two minor sisters, aged 14 and 12, from Bhim Nagar were taken into custody. "They treated us like animals and humiliated us for being Dalit. I could actually relate to *Jai Bhim* [a Tamil movie on a tribal woman fighting for justice]. They asked us to kneel and not look up," says Rutuja, adding that the police also took her hall ticket for her first-year BA exams. Pooja tells a similar story. The minor girls' mother has sent them to Nanded to avoid harassment by the police.

Politicians have been visiting the area following the violence. Athawale visited the Ambedkar statue, garlanded it, met officials in-charge of the administration, and residents of Bhim Nagar. Sujat Ambedkar, the great-grandson of Ambedkar, also garlanded the statue and visited Bhim Nagar.

On December 17, Prakash Ambedkar, Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi chief and Sujat's father, posted a video on X and wrote: "A mother of a newborn was brutally assaulted by the police in her house. She had locked herself in the bathroom to save herself from the violence, but the police broke the door down and brutally beat her up."

#### Conspiracy theories

The man who desecrated the Constitution is from Mirzapur village in Parbhani district and worked at grocery shops in Parbhani. His father-in-law, who asked not to be named, says his younger son was the first to receive a call from the police informing them about the incident. He adds that he will accept what the law decides. "For the last two months, he had been hospitalised in Akola [about 200 km from Parbhani] and arrived in the city on the day of the incident," he says. "For the past 16 years, he has been under treatment for mental health issues." A doctor confirms this.

Ambedkarite organisations believe the man was used. "This could be a conspiracy to create a rift between Marathas and Dalits. The police must probe this under the Supreme Court's observation," Bhimrao Hattiangire, an Ambedkarite leader from Parbhani, says.

However, District Collector Raghunath Gaware calls this a "mere coincidence" and dismisses such a possibility. "Prima facie there is no correlation between the two incidents. We are investigating this angle. This was a huge but unintentional mistake."

Somnath's brother Premnath Suryavanshi is now fighting for justice. His lawyer, Pawan Jondhale, says Somnath had no role in the events of December 11 and was picked up with other men from Shankar Nagar, where a number of Dalits live. "He came to Parbhani from Pune to fulfil his dream of becoming a lawyer," he says. "He did odd jobs, from driving to labour work, and supported his family."

Vilas Kale, who calls himself a Parbhani, sits outside a restaurant whose board was damaged in the violence. In February, during the Urs (death anniversary of a Muslim holy man) of Hazrat Sayyid Shah Turabul Haq Baba, which saw the participation of both Hindus and Muslims, tensions over the molestation of a woman resulted in stone pelting. "The Urs was cut short by four days citing law and order issues," he says. "Parbhani has always been sensitive."

**Arif Zakaria**  
tells us how he  
portrayed the  
dichotomies that  
characterised  
Jinnah in *Freedom  
At Midnight*

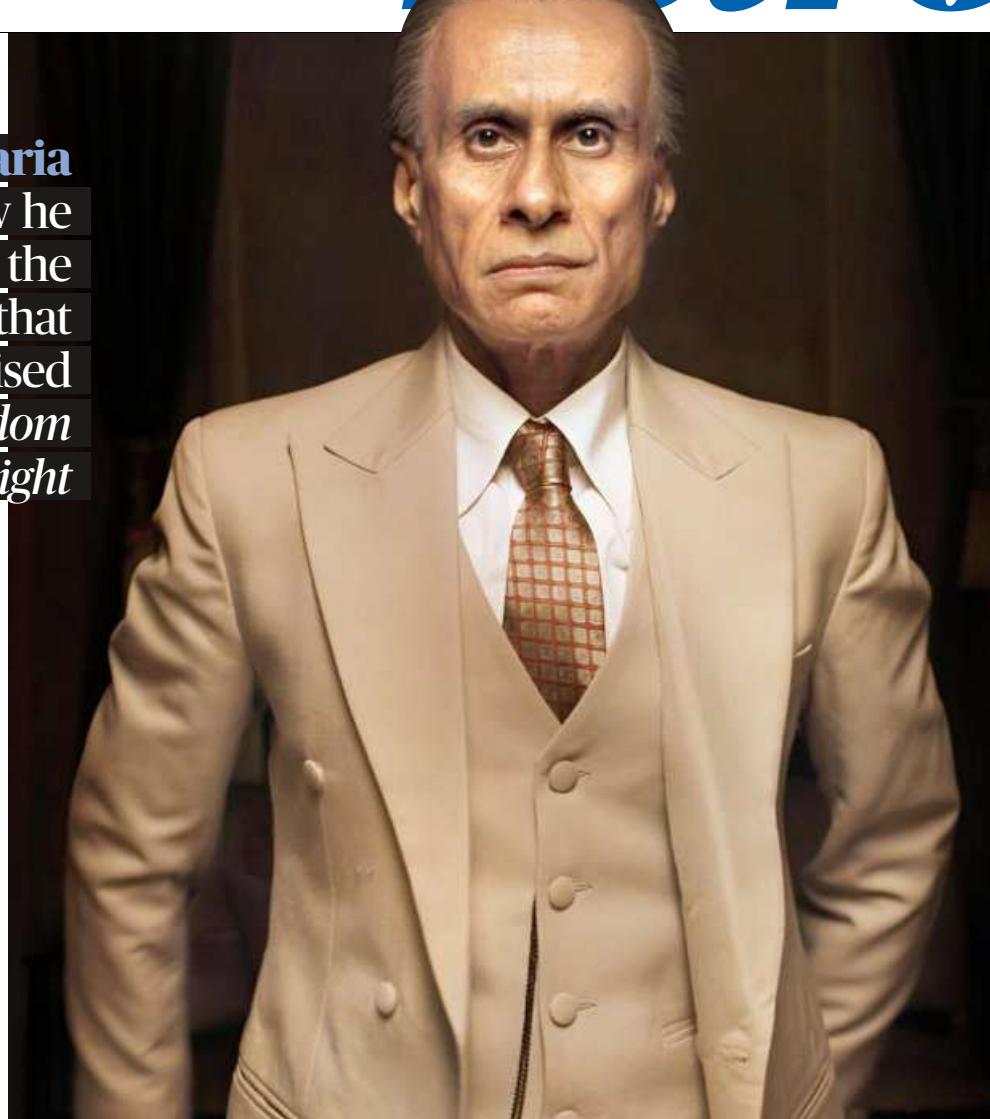
**Anuj Kumar**  
anuj.kumar@thehindu.co.in

One of the performances of 2024 that will stay with us for some time is Arif Zakaria's portrayal of Muhammad Ali Jinnah in *Nikhil Advani's Freedom At Midnight*. An industrious actor, Zakaria comes from a political family in Mumbai that produced stalwarts like Rafiq Zakaria and, interestingly, had played Jawaharlal Nehru in the past.

Growing up in South Mumbai, Zakaria says he could sense the spirit of Jinnah in the air. "Apart from practising in the Bombay High Court, Jinnah was a socialite who frequented the Willingdon Club and Bombay gymkhana. During our walks in the neighbourhood, my father would share stories of his bungalow on Malabar Hill that still exists in a dilapidated state."

Zakaria saw Jinnah as an introvert with a strange mix of superiority and inferiority complexes. "He would claim to be the sole representative of Muslims but was not a practising Muslim himself. Barring the name, you can't consider Jinnah a Muslim from any angle. He would not even get Urdu poetry and switched from suit to sherwani quite late in his public life for political reasons. While Gandhiji smartly reached out to grassroots politics, he limited himself to armchair intellectual discussions for a long time. I felt, deep inside, that he must have been conscious of this dichotomy. The writing provided me an opportunity to bring up these delicate layers."

An effective performance, says Zakaria, demands time.



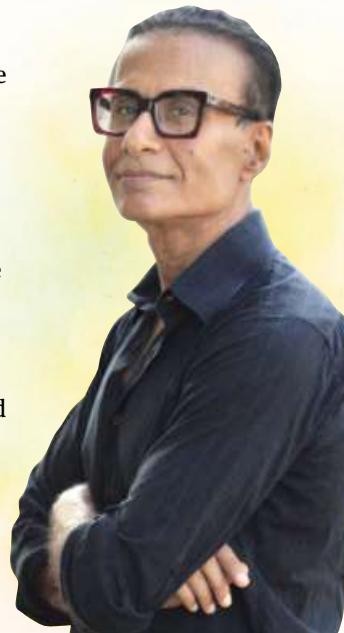
## Groundbreaking roles

in *Leila*. It is the physicality part of historical characters that I am conscious of. My aim is not to recreate but to represent the character. Their walk was similar but unlike Jinnah, I saw Nehru as a gregarious person with lesser hair on the pate."

"As the shoot got postponed for a year because Nikhil wanted more time for research, it provided the opportunity for several workshops and table reads to work out the nuances." Zakaria has this habit of writing the traits of the character on the side of the script.

"I saw Jinnah as a domineering figure whose dialogue delivery would be like a bark. It required the tone of an egoistic man whose gaze would be piercing and his gait had to be strong and elegant. But then we also had to incorporate into the portrayal his ailment, tuberculosis." The toughest part for Zakaria was to portray Jinnah as a chain

**My aim is not to recreate but to represent the character**



**Versatile** Actor Arif Zakaria does multiple roles. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

After making a name on Doordarshan with engrossing campus stories, Zakaria made a foray into films with a complex gender-fluid role in *Kalpana Lajmi's Darmiyaan* and is still remembered for his sensitive portrayal of a transgender called Immi. It is said that Lajmi approached several mainstream actors, including Shah Rukh Khan, before settling for Zakaria.

He says actors talk about their urge for challenging roles but when the real challenge knocks at the door, many turn away. In the '90s, he says, exploring the feminine side of the central protagonist was taboo. "Screenwriters were not writing 'hero in a sari' scenes then." He followed it up with the role of a Bharatanatyam dancer in *Dance Like A Man* for which he learnt the dance form. He gives credit to co-actor danseuse Shobana and director Mahesh Dattani for helping him make the dance portions believable.

"Along with Mardana in *Nanak Shah Fakir*, I see them as fragile characters that must be imbued with sensitivity. Even the strongest characters like Jinnah have a fragile side; if the writing allows, the actor can humanise them." The seeds of change in Jinnah's personality, he says, come through in the scenes depicting the Nagpur session of the Congress where Jinnah is shouted down by delegates supporting Gandhi.

After the serious stuff, Zakaria is preparing himself for a musical comedy in *Bollywood Masala* that will be staged in Paris this week. "It is a spoof on Bollywood that provides me with an opportunity to try physical comedy and a smattering of French dialogues." It is his second collaboration with theatre director Toby Gough after *The Merchants of Bollywood*. Playing a chef who caters to the taste of top Bollywood stars, "It is a kind of mini tour of India that provides a glimpse of our cuisines and cinema in between elaborate dance sequences."

## STEP OUT



### Evolution of quilting

Rooted in India's regional traditions, quilting has transformed over time from a functional craft into a dynamic art form. The Art of Quilting exhibition

highlights the extraordinary craftsmanship, innovation, and narrative power of contemporary quilting through techniques such as applique, thread painting, and surface embellishments. The showcased quilts tell compelling stories inspired by personal experiences, Nature, social issues, and abstract concepts.

At Gallery Art Motif, Safdarjung Enclave; Till December 28; 10am to 6pm



### Kabir on canvas

Inspired by the timeless poetry of the 15th Century mystic poet Kabir, a group of 14 artists have reimagined Kabir's teachings through their

unique expressions. Conceptualised by Shubhika Lal and curated by Durga Kainthola, the exhibition features the works of Arpana Anand Singh, Aradhna Tandon and Arpana Caur among other artists.

At Arpana Fine Art Gallery, Siri Fort Institutional Area; Till December 24; 11am to 7pm



**Thought provoking** Sculpture artists Neeraj Gupta and (below) Narayan Lakshman pose with their artworks at the Forces of Imagination exhibition at India Habitat Centre. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Art Gallery. "The innovative art pieces in eclectic mediums such as marble, bronze and stainless steel reflect the growing mastery of our sculptors. Their works are open to interpretation and are not mere representation," says Neeraj Gupta, DAS founder and a master in Makrana marble himself.

His new body of work at the show evokes surreal imagery, structured around the interactivity of disparate parts in tight sonorous arrangements. They project disunities and interpersonal separations, a sense of an invasive and turbulent past, stemming from their environment, he says.

Tapas Sarkar's work in bronze with numerous folk imagery attains spiritual grandeur. In the deeply carved style, there is an elaboration of the narrative as seen in *On The Bench* and *Way to the Dancing Ground*. Sarkar, founder of the Bengal sculptor's group, says the narration is an embellishment he uses as a metaphor in a scarred world.

Vibhor Sogani's installations in steel transcend boundaries imposed by geographies and cultural desire. A Slice of Sky takes the form of floating lotus petals with the soft metal curving gently to create a space where mirror finish droplets evoke a sense of serenity and wonder. The light installation, Magical

Bloom is made of countless polished stainless steel orbs in the shape of a flower mimicking the beauty provided in abundance by Nature. Each orb reflects a world of its own.

### First foray

In the mixed group of trained sculptors, stone carvers and installation artists is Narayan Lakshman, an artist from Chennai, who explores Zen through abstract expressionism on canvas and has taken the plunge into sculpture as a natural and organic extension of his artistic vision.

"It is a big jump," he says. It is easier to put your thoughts and feelings onto a two-dimensional canvas, but putting the same ideas of stillness and silence into three-dimensional stone work is completely different," says Narayan, the only participant with two of his paintings also on display.

Narayan hopes the discerning

audience would capture the sensorial link between his two art forms. His pink Makrana marble sculpture titled *Protected* captures the interpersonal and communitarian aspect of love and peace. It is an ode to the human empathy that leads to the resolute protection of an individual by the community.

"You could see it in the context of asylum seekers or those who undertake treacherous journeys across turbulent seas and land on a foreign shore, or the situation in Gaza and other conflict zones. It is about the people standing up for each other, the triumph of spirit that manifests in togetherness," he says.

Some of the other notable works are by Somnath Chakraborty, Chandan Roy, Subrata Pal, Pabitra Ganguly, whose pieces are all nurturing and soulful.

Says Shibani Chawla, director, Chawla Art Gallery, "Our focus was on blending time-honoured techniques and contemporary creativity."

"A sculptor's practice is meditative, explorative, and creative. This exhibition helps to understand the impact and legacy of contemporary Indian sculpture," says curator Nanak Ganguly.

## Lobster love

After London, New York, Dubai and Bangkok, the UK's legendary Burger & Lobster debuts in Shangri-La Eros Delhi

### Geetika Sachdev

They say, all good things come in small packages. Well, that is not the case with the iconic UK-origin Burger & Lobster, which has made Grappa Bar at Shangri-La Eros Delhi its home until December. The menu features a selection of its signature prime-cut burgers, wild Atlantic lobsters from Canada, rolls, starters and desserts.

After setting up shop in seven locations including London, New York, Dubai and Bangkok, the seafood epicureans decided to pop up in the national capital.

"We believe Delhi's audience, with its growing appreciation for international cuisine, is ready to experience this unique offering of premium burgers and lobsters," says Abhishek Sadhu, general manager, Shangri-La Eros. "It is an opportunity to introduce this brand to a market that values quality ingredients and innovative culinary adventures."

My meal began with two cocktails from the limited drinks menu, jointly curated by Burger & Lobster and Grappa Bar. The tequila-based Southern Spice with spiced mango syrup and lime juice instantly reminded me of the popular Picante. Indian Sour, with walnut-infused whisky at its centre, was a revelation. It was enhanced with the addition of lime juice and fig, adding to its sweet-tangy taste. The drinks were paired with Lobster Mac and Cheese and Soy Butter Prawns.

Next, I tried the Yucatan Chicken Roll

- a melt-in-the-mouth brioche stuffed with grilled chicken and moistened with lime juice, chilli, coriander, guacamole and pico de gallo. It came with a serving of crisp French fries and house salad. The signatures from the menu included the Mayfair, one of Burger & Lobster's most popular dishes with a striploin burger patty, pickles, onion, and a generous helping of its secret sauce. The patty, if juicier, would have been extraordinary. But the lobster made up for it. A part of it was grilled while the other was steamed, with juices overflowing in both. It came with a lemon butter sauce on the side.

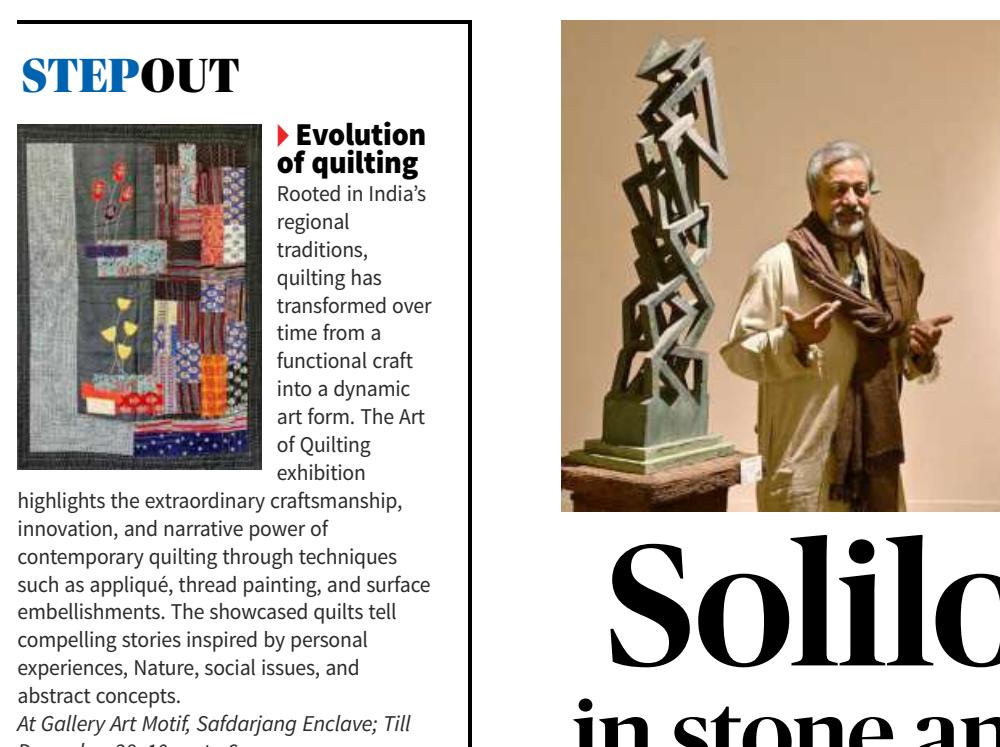
There are other options that one can order including the Waffle Chicken Burger, Atomic Smashed Burger and the B&L Beast Burger. The pop-up also offers Stuffed Chicken Wings and some other bespoke dishes like the Surf and Turf Roll and the vegetarian Gaia burger to appease the Indian palate. "Our commitment is to deliver an authentic experience. The menu remains true to the quality found in our international outlets," adds Chef Brian Benet Chong, corporate development chef. "It's about blending the best of both worlds without losing the essence of what makes us unique."

The menu does not have too many desserts. If you are a coffee lover, go for the decadent Espresso Semi Freddo topped with coffee caramel and sea salt.

At Shangri-La Eros, Janpath; Till December 31; Price for two (all inclusive): ₹7,000. For details, 41191040.



**Legendary** Burger & Lobster dish served as part of the pop-up menu. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



## Soliloquy in stone and metal

The Forces of Imagination, an ongoing exhibition at the India Habitat Centre, explores the many manifestations of sculpture as it exists in the contemporary art landscape

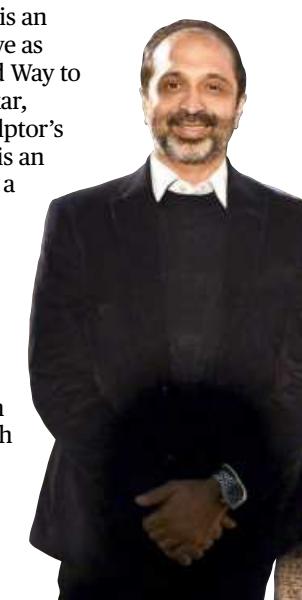
**Soma Basu**  
soma.basu@thehindu.co.in

**A**t the Visual Art Gallery leading up to the Central Atrium at the India Habitat Centre, you will find yourself immersed in a world of sculptural brilliance. A diverse group of sculptors from Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai and Mumbai have come together with their transformative artworks that define the evolution of sculptors in India.

It is interesting to see how every artist, while exploring the intersection of tradition and modernity, occupies a different vision of what sculpture can be. The energy and variety of the 14 sculptors is evident in each piece as the exhibition, *The Forces of Imagination*, takes viewers on a journey of emotions, creativity and processes of the artists.

This is a rare show with 100

sculptures on display, put together by the Delhi Art Society (DAS), Calcutta Sculptors and the Chawla



discerning



At India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road; Till December 31; 11am to 7pm



### Kabir on canvas

Inspired by the timeless poetry of the 15th Century mystic poet Kabir, a group of 14 artists have reimagined Kabir's teachings through their

unique expressions. Conceptualised by Shubhika Lal and curated by Durga Kainthola, the exhibition features the works of Arpana Anand Singh, Aradhna Tandon and Arpana Caur among other artists.

At Arpana Fine Art Gallery, Siri Fort Institutional Area; Till December 24; 11am to 7pm



## Positive direction

India must ensure greater transparency in talks with China

The 23rd meeting of the "Special Representatives" (SRs) of India and China – National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Affairs Minister and Senior Politburo member Wang Yi – was a milestone in the restoration of ties since October this year. Although the meeting of SRs is a stand-alone process, meant to look at the broader boundary dispute and resolve differences over the 3,500 kilometre-long Line of Actual Control (LAC), it had been paused since the military standoff in 2020. There were a few firsts too: the two men meeting in their capacities as SRs since 2019, although they have held talks in the interim; such a high-level visit to China and also Mr. Doval travelling to Beijing since 2020. This indicates that the decision to hold the SR talks, as mandated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping during talks in Kazan in October, is a signal that with only LAC disengagement completed, New Delhi is willing to move ahead on other mechanisms for talks with Beijing, without waiting for the next processes of de-escalation and de-induction. The two sides have agreed to restart the Kailash-Manasarovar Yatra from India, border trade in Sikkim, and data sharing for trans-boundary rivers. Other suspended ties, including direct flights, business and student visa liberalisation, and journalist exchanges, are also understood to be under discussion. On the boundary question, the Doval-Wang talks yielded what the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs termed as "six consensuses", and the Ministry of External Affairs referred to as "positive directions" in its release. These involve continuing to implement the LAC de-escalation process; revert to the SR process on resolving the boundary issue according to the Eleven-articles set out in a 2005 agreement; strengthen Confidence Building Measures at the border and cross-border exchanges; enhance coordination of the SR process, and the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs to follow up agreements and to hold the next Doval-Wang talks in 2025 in India.

The optics and the messaging of the SR meetings indicate a certain momentum in re-engagement after four years of serious military tensions, and the suspension of regular contact, although bilateral trade continued to thrive. The meeting comes just ahead of 2025, which marks 75 years of diplomatic relations, and a likely visit to China by Mr. Modi as it hosts the next SCO summit. While restoring the links is important, it is necessary to strike a note of caution so that the situation caused by the amassing of troops and LAC transgressions by the PLA in 2020 is not repeated. The government must also ensure more transparency in its conversations with Beijing over the future steps in normalising ties, the dismantling of buffer zones, restoration of *status quo ante* to 2020, and mechanisms for future deterrence against aggression at the India-China boundary.

## For survival skills

India must have survival-at-sea training in schools and workplaces

The Mumbai boat tragedy is a wake-up call for improving marine safety. A busy port, a naval dockyard, the Mazagon dockyard, fishing boats, and a popular tourist destination – the Gateway of India, a launching pad for tourist boat rides – are all located in the same area. Merchant ships and naval vessels jostle for space with tourist and fishing boats, creating a congested and potentially hazardous environment. Sea trials of a new craft involve testing it under the most stringent operating conditions to determine whether machinery and hull are safe and seaworthy. Typically, sea trials for merchant ships are conducted in open waters. However, the naval speed boat that collided with *Neelkamal* is typically housed inside a naval ship and launched only for operations. This means it must be tested for maximum speed and manoeuvrability in shallow waters, possibly ruling out open-sea testing. During sea trials, machinery and controls are often subjected to strenuous conditions, increasing the likelihood of failure. On Wednesday, such a failure likely occurred, leading to the collision. *Neelkamal* is an old-fashioned V-shaped wooden boat prone to capsizing if it takes on water, though it will not sink. When the accident occurred, pilot boats from the port rescued around 100 passengers, most of whom were wearing life jackets, which are a proven defence against drowning. Unfortunately, those who could not hold on to the capsized boat or were not wearing life jackets did not survive.

An inquiry will determine whether the boat was carrying more passengers than its capacity and if there were enough readily accessible life jackets. It is necessary to establish guidelines for life jackets that can be donned quickly and easily, even by panic-stricken individuals, without being prohibitively expensive. Tragedies such as the 2009 Thekkady boat disaster have raised significant awareness in Kerala about the importance of life jackets. However, this incident serves as a broader reminder that sea or water transport is fundamentally different from road and rail travel. The sea – and even deep freshwater bodies – remains an inhospitable domain for humans. Without assistance, drowning or hypothermia is likely. In Scandinavian countries, where the sea is an integral part of daily life, survival skills for the water are taught to everyone. It may be time for India to incorporate survival-at-sea training into schools and workplaces, alongside first aid and other life-saving measures, to foster greater awareness and preparedness.

**M**any in Sri Lanka closely tracked their President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's recent visit to India. The ceremonial red carpet welcome he received from Indian President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his various engagements, and, importantly, the joint statement issued by the two governments, drew much notice in the local media.

It was Mr. Dissanayake's first state visit abroad, after he won the presidency in September this year, and the ruling National People's Power (NPP) won a spectacular two-thirds majority in the general election in November. India was hosting not just one of Sri Lanka's most powerful Presidents but also a leftist leader from a party (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna - JVP or the People's Liberation Front) that once furiously opposed India and its perceived "interventionist" role in Sri Lanka.

Much has indeed changed in India, Sri Lanka, and in India-Sri Lanka relations. The JVP is not the same today, as the story of its rise to state power reveals. Neither is Sri Lanka, whose political landscape stands radically altered in ways few imagined possible two years ago. Analysts are yet to fully decipher the astounding victory of the JVP-led NPP, especially in the island nation's north, east, and the hill country that are home to the country's Tamil, Muslim and Malayaya Tamil minorities. India's priorities, too, have seen a marked shift, as New Delhi remains preoccupied with countering Chinese influence in the neighbourhood.

### Changing Indian interests

While everything else changes, Sri Lanka's long-pending national question remains, with all past governments in Colombo failing to deliver a definitive political settlement. India's past involvement as an arbiter of Tamil rights, for many in Sri Lanka, set high expectations for its influence in more recent decades, including the post-war years since 2009. In an interview to this daily in 2022, late Tamil leader R. Sampanthan said "India has a special duty" in ensuring that the spirit of the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987, and the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution born out of it, are fully implemented. Except, Indian interests today are evidently different.

The joint statement issued by New Delhi and Colombo on December 16, 2024, offers a reality check. The 34-point document, titled 'Fostering partnerships for a shared future', and spanning political, economic, and strategic cooperation, makes no reference to the pending political solution, or post-war reconciliation, or Tamil aspirations. The only power sharing that finds mention is in a proposal for a high-capacity grid



Meera Srinivasan

interconnection between India and Sri Lanka.

However, in his remarks at the joint press conference, Mr. Modi said, "We hope that the Sri Lankan government shall fulfil the aspirations of the Tamil people. And that they shall fulfil their commitment towards fully implementing the Constitution of Sri Lanka and conducting the Provincial Council Elections." He did not reference the 13th Amendment.

Mr. Dissanayake framed the issue differently. He said, "People from all the Provinces – North, South, East, and West – representing diverse communities and various walks of life contributed to this mandate. As a leader entrusted with such an important responsibility by my people, I clearly understand that the essence of democracy lies in the coexistence of diverse political views and groups."

The NPP's poll manifesto includes an assurance to hold elections to the provincial councils, now defunct for over five years, and enact a new Constitution based on wide public consultations. President Dissanayake, too, has made the pledge more than once. But his government is yet to spell out its own vision for a durable political solution.

The NPP has consistently avoided the language of the "13th Amendment" that till date carries the baggage of "Indian imposition" for the country's Sinhala-Buddhist majority, and likely triggers discomfort for the JVP party base. In a recent column, 'NPP in Power: Possibilities for Post-War Reconciliation through Civic Nationalism', Sri Lankan political scientist Jayadeva Uyangoda observed that the NPP shuns both the "devolution discourse" introduced by India, and the "liberal peace discourse" of conflict resolution, reconciliation, and peacebuilding, promoted by agencies of the United Nations, global and local rights groups. He wrote, "The NPP does not seem to want its agenda for inter-ethnic peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka to be seen as a continuation of what it sees as 'failed' past attempts."

### Contentious amendment

The controversial 13th Amendment continues to evoke mixed, and often strong, reactions among Sri Lankans. Even the Tamils are divided over whether it is a necessary but insufficient measure of power devolution, or a problematic legislation that tamed historic demands for federalism. The last time that the 13th Amendment went out of focus was when the Maithripala Sirisena-Ranil Wickremesinghe administration (2015-19) attempted drafting a new constitution. The effort failed, but Mr. Dissanayake has said his government would build on the draft.

It is true that two main formulations of the past have not proved successful for the Tamil people.

The joint statement issued by New Delhi and Colombo during the Sri Lankan President's India visit reveals the neighbours' current preoccupations

It is also not hard to see why the JVP may be wary of using either discourse. But the Tamils who contributed significantly to the NPP's big win are justified in seeking greater clarity on what the government has in mind for them. Fifteen years after the end of the civil war, they are still doggedly chasing the truth about their forcibly disappeared loved ones. They are still fighting to reclaim their land held by the military. They are still struggling to rebuild their livelihoods shattered in those years of bloodshed and mass destruction. They still do not have a say in how their provinces, setback by a devastating war, should be reconstructed.

The government's promise of national integration or a unified "Sri Lankan identity" can be evaluated only based on its specific policies to address war-time accountability, political agency, and meaningful development in the north and east. A new political order may now be at the country's helm, but old questions will not go away.

The recent elections have given Mr. Dissanayake and the NPP rare national momentum and unprecedented legislative influence. The government now has a real chance to reimagine the political solution through people's post-war realities.

### State of the Tamil polity

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's Tamil polity, too, faces a big challenge. After the electorate delivered a clear message to the regional Tamil parties in the recent polls – the NPP beat them in all but one district in the north and east – the Tamil polity is struggling to regain its voice.

After habitually looking to the international community to push for Tamil rights, the Tamil political leadership is now forced to confront its own failure. Those counting on India would do well to understand that the Tamil question is no more an issue that serves a domestic political compulsion or provides diplomatic leverage to New Delhi. It is time they recognised India's waning interest and influence on the Tamil question. Besides, they must ask if India has any moral standing to ask another country to treat minorities better.

The Tamil polity's core strategy of engaging western powers dominating UN bodies, India, and the Tamil diaspora has clearly not yielded substantive progress on the ground. To remain relevant and rebuild credibility, the Tamil polity appears to have little choice but to reorient itself to the people it seeks to represent. The Tamil people in Sri Lanka have reminded their leaders, who were busy talking to actors elsewhere for years, to listen to them now.

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## Crimes against humanity and an obtuse Indian stance

**I**n December 4, 2024, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution approving the text of a proposed treaty governing the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity (CAH treaty). This marks the beginning of the negotiation process among states for the conclusion of a CAH treaty. This resolution comes five years after the International Law Commission submitted the draft text of the CAH treaty to the Sixth Committee – the primary forum for considering legal questions in the UNGA. This development is a landmark in the international community's quest to combat impunity for CAH.

**There is a gap in accountability**  
Alongside genocide and war crimes, CAH are among the grave international crimes which the International Criminal Court (ICC), established under the Rome Statute, seeks to punish. Importantly, genocide and war crimes are also governed by dedicated treaties, i.e., the Genocide Convention of 1948 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949, respectively. However, CAH are governed only under the Rome Statute, which includes specific criminal acts such as murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, torture, imprisonment, and rape committed as part of a 'widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack'. CAH were first codified in the 1945 London Charter establishing the Nuremberg Tribunal to investigate and prosecute the crimes committed in connection with the Second World War, and later in the statutes of the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia, and Rwanda. However, there is no dedicated treaty for CAH yet, creating a gap in terms of accountability in the legal architecture of international criminal justice. There are three reasons justifying the need for a CAH treaty.



Varsha Singh  
Assistant Professor  
at the National  
Law University,  
Jodhpur, Rajasthan

First, the jurisdiction of the ICC covers a limited number of states, making it challenging to punish perpetrators of CAH in non-member states. Second, the Rome Statute and the ICC only address individual criminal responsibility. A dedicated CAH treaty would allow for holding states accountable under international law for their failure to prevent the commission of CAH, as is the case with the Genocide Convention of 1948. For instance, in 2019, The Gambia filed a case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Myanmar for alleged violations of the Genocide Convention against the ethnic Rohingya population. A dedicated CAH treaty would create an obligation for state parties to adopt administrative, legislative, or judicial measures to prevent the commission of CAH. Failure to meet this obligation could become the basis for the ICJ's jurisdiction if the CAH treaty so provides. Third, a CAH treaty presents an opportunity to enlarge the scope of CAH to include, as suggested by various states in the Sixth Committee, starvation of civilian populations, gender apartheid, forced pregnancy, the use of nuclear weapons, terrorism, exploitation of natural resources, and crimes against indigenous populations.

### India's stand

India is not a party to the Rome Statute and has consistently objected to the ICC's jurisdiction over issues such as the powers of the ICC prosecutor, the role of the UN Security Council under the Rome Statute, and the non-inclusion of 'use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction' as a war crime. Further, India has argued that crimes committed only during armed conflicts – and not those committed during peacetime – should be considered CAH. Moreover, India does not favour the inclusion of 'enforced disappearance' as an act that can

constitute CAH. Instead, India advocates for the inclusion of 'terrorism' as an act amounting to CAH. India's response to a CAH treaty aligns with its aversion to the Rome Statute and the ICC. For the last five years, since 2019, India has consistently argued for an 'in-depth study' and thorough discussion on the need for a dedicated treaty. India's stance at the UNGA reflects its scepticism that a CAH treaty might duplicate the already existing regime under the Rome Statute. Further, India takes issue with the exclusion of 'terror-related acts' and the 'use of nuclear weapons' from the definition of CAH in the proposed treaty. Most importantly, reiterating that it is not a party to the Rome Statute, India has stressed at the UNGA that national legislations and the jurisdiction of national courts are more appropriate fora for dealing with CAH and other international crimes.

### Lead the way

Currently, India does not have domestic legislation prohibiting international crimes. In 2018, Justice S. Muralidhar of the Delhi High Court in *State vs Sajjan Kumar* observed that 'neither crimes against humanity nor genocide have been made part of India's criminal law, a lacuna that needs to be addressed urgently'. Nonetheless, there is little or no debate on the need for such laws in the domestic legal and policy spaces. The recent amendments to the criminal law were a missed opportunity to include these crimes in the penal law. This is inconsistent with India's own insistence on the primacy of national and territorial jurisdiction for dealing with CAH. India should incorporate CAH and other international crimes into its domestic law, even if it is not a party to the Rome Statute, and lead the way in ending impunity for grave human rights violations – a role that befits a true Vishwaguru.

India's response to a 'crimes against humanity' treaty aligns with its aversion to the Rome Statute and the International Criminal Court

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### In Parliament

Just what is happening to our elected representatives? Are they street fighters or political representatives? The much vaunted debate on the Constitution of India was a waste of time. Instead of a well-thought-out and dignified review of the Constitution, we were treated to long stretches of meaningless arguments. Mutual and personal recrimination dominated Parliament. In the past, battles were

fought well and dignity was never bruised. Our politics and their practitioners have plumbed low depths. **T.C. Narayan**, Bengaluru

**Leaving on his terms**  
With R. Ashwin's retirement, Indian cricket has bid farewell to a true legend ('Sport' page, December 19). From spinning webs around the world's best batsmen to his astute cricketing intellect, Ashwin redefined

off-spin bowling. His staggering achievements, which include invaluable all-round performances and strategic mastery, have left an indelible mark. Off the field, his engaging YouTube channel and mentorship of young talents showcased his passion for nurturing the next generation. Salutations to him for choosing to respect the legacy of Anil Kumble by retiring gracefully, even when he had much potential left. A student of the game and a

leader on and off the field, Ashwin's legacy will inspire generations. **L.S. Hareesh**, Chennai

Ashwin will be remembered as one of the toughest competitors with a sharp

#### Corrections & Clarifications

The caption of a standalone photograph titled "Honouring the brave-hearts" (Inside pages, December 17, 2024) erroneously identified the Chief of the Army Staff as General Manoj Pande. It should have been General Upendra Dwivedi.

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cricketing brain. He would have made an astute captain. He was willing to re-invent himself. He left on a high note and in the right way where everyone was left asking 'Why?' **Subash Balakrishnan**, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

It is very unfortunate that Ashwin had to make an unceremonious exit from international cricket – this is the perception. He has had a rough journey throughout his career. In every match, he had to prove his position in the team. **S. Venkateswaran**, Chennai

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

# Should legislatures in India have fixed tenures?

**PARLEY**

**T**he Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2024, introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 17, 2024, mandates a fixed five-year term for the Lok Sabha, with State Legislative elections aligned to this cycle. If the Lok Sabha or any State Assembly is dissolved before completing its full term, mid-term elections will be held only for the remainder of the five-year term. Should legislatures in India have fixed tenures? P.D.T. Achary and M.R. Madhavan discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Aaratrika Bhaumik. Edited excerpts:

**Do fixed legislative tenures promote better governance by reducing the disruptions of frequent elections?**

**P.D.T. Achary:** It is worth questioning whether this Bill and the proposal for simultaneous polls are necessary at all. The claim that such a system will reduce electoral expenditure lacks credibility. A portion of the expenditure is allocated by the Election Commission and State governments through budgetary provisions from the Centre and the States. However, the majority of election spending is incurred by political parties. Even if some costs are saved, it is improbable that political parties would redirect these funds towards development or infrastructure projects. More importantly, frequent elections enhance political accountability, compelling representatives to regularly engage with the electorate.

**M.R. Madhavan:** This Bill does not propose a fixed term for legislatures, as it allows for mid-term elections. It ensures accountability to the legislature, in line with the core tenet of the parliamentary system. By permitting mid-term elections, the Bill is also in conformity with the basic structure of the Constitution. The key change, however, is that in the event of a mid-term election, the term of the newly elected legislature will be shorter than five years. Whether this improves governance is uncertain. However, it does not provide the same stability as the U.S. presidential system, for instance, where the incumbent President can only be removed through impeachment.

**Does aligning the tenure of State Assemblies with that of the Lok Sabha compromise federalism and pose a threat to political plurality?**

**MRM:** I find the Bill symmetrical since it also aligns the tenure of Parliament with that of



The winter session of the Parliament, in New Delhi. ANI

State Assemblies. For instance, if the Central government collapses after three years, fresh elections will be conducted for the Lok Sabha, and the newly elected legislative body will serve only a reduced term of two years. Therefore, I don't think State Assemblies are being aligned with Parliament. Rather, the Bill standardises the timing of all elections to a common date. I do not see any threat to federalism in this approach.

The argument that simultaneous polls would drive voters to select the same party for both the Centre and the State Assembly is flawed, as it underestimates the electorate's intelligence. Historical examples, such as the 2014 elections in Delhi, demonstrate that voters can and do make distinct choices. Despite the BJP's overwhelming victory at the Centre, voters elected the AAP in the State Assembly, despite both polls being held within six months of each other.

**PDTA:** For the first time, this Bill seeks to make the tenure of State Assemblies contingent upon that of Parliament. For instance, if Parliament completes its full term while a State Assembly is only in its second year, the Assembly would be prematurely dissolved, with elections held concurrently with Parliament. This approach undermines the principles of federalism. Under the existing constitutional framework, State Assemblies function as autonomous legislative bodies. This Bill seeks to alter their independent tenure, a crucial attribute of the federal structure.

**Could such a system discourage attempts to destabilise governments and curb practices like horse-trading?**

**PDTA:** This is a novel proposal, and it is difficult to predict whether such a system can



Under the existing constitutional framework, State Assemblies function as autonomous legislative bodies. This Bill seeks to alter their independent tenure, a crucial attribute of the federal structure

**P.D.T. ACHARY**

effectively deter these practices at this stage. However, a greater concern lies in the potential erosion of India's identity as a federal republic, which is rooted in the autonomy of its legislative bodies.

**MRM:** My understanding of the Bill is that it aligns the tenure of State Assemblies with Parliament for the first time. However, after a few electoral cycles, if a mid-term election occurs for Parliament, State Assemblies will continue and will not be dissolved.

Recent large-scale defections in Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka, where MLAs resigned or were disqualified, triggered by elections. However, I doubt the Bill will curb such practices. A more significant concern is the dissolution of the House. If a government falls after three and a half years, mid-term elections will be necessary, taking an additional 4-6 months. This would result in a Lok Sabha with a tenure of one year or less, which I believe is undesirable.

**Does the Bill adequately account for political exigencies? For instance, if the ruling party splits but the breakaway faction refuses to side with the Opposition?**

**MRM:** I believe the Bill effectively addresses such contingencies. For instance, the 2013 Delhi and 2005 Bihar legislative Assembly elections resulted in hung Assemblies. In Delhi, the Congress, AAP, and BJP were unable to arrive at a consensus and form the government. The Bill resolves such deadlocks by allowing fresh elections to take place. The only difference is that the newly elected legislature will serve a reduced tenure rather than the full five years.

**PDTA:** The Constitution prescribes a five-year term for State Assemblies and the Lok Sabha but allows for their dissolution to address political exigencies. This flexibility reflects a pragmatic approach to governance. While fixed legislative tenures provide stability, the option to dissolve legislatures is crucial for addressing political instability. For instance, State governments have often dissolved Assemblies

to seek a fresh and decisive mandate through mid-term elections – a contingency the Bill fails to adequately address.

**Could the German model of a constructive vote of no-confidence help resolve political stalemates?**

**PDTA:** Such a proposal was rejected by the high-level committee led by former President Ram Nath Kovind. It has also been deliberated upon previously, but I doubt its adoption is feasible in India.

**MRM:** I don't think it is a viable option given our system. In most instances, when a ruling government loses a no-confidence motion, no alternative government commands a majority in the House. This could lead to a situation where the incumbent government remains in power but lacks the majority needed to pass essential bills or the budget.

**The U.K.'s Fixed-term Parliaments Act of 2011, repealed in 2022, was criticised for triggering constitutional crises and policy paralysis. Are there lessons for India?**

**MRM:** The Bill is being misunderstood as proposing fixed legislative tenures when it only introduces a "maximum term". This is different from the system that existed in the U.K., where a newly elected legislature would complete its full five-year term, even if mid-term elections were to be held. In contrast, under the system proposed by the Bill, if the government loses the confidence of the legislative majority, mid-term elections will be called, and the newly elected legislature will then serve a truncated tenure.

**PDTA:** In a country like ours, political instability is a real possibility, especially at the State level. While Parliament will continue to have its five-year tenure, States may encounter situations that necessitate mid-term elections, resulting in shorter tenures for State legislatures. I firmly believe that, despite its flaws, the current system should be preserved. The proposal for simultaneous elections risks creating unnecessary turmoil, and there is no compelling reason to pursue it at this juncture. The government should instead focus on tackling more pressing challenges that affect the people.



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**NOTEBOOK**

## The social character of scientific knowledge

In science, not knowing is ubiquitous. The problems arise when we don't know, or choose to overlook, where science ends and faith begins

**Vasudevan Mukunth**

**M**any of us want to know how the SARS-CoV-2 virus originated. To do that, right now we need to unravel its evolution from its bat coronavirus ancestor by sequencing the genomes of animals and viruses near the outbreak site and we need to effect China's cooperation to check whether SARS-CoV-2 could have 'leaked' from a lab. Where the virus came from was once singularly important because the answer could have pointed the way to avoiding similar outbreaks in future. But today, there is good reason for this question to take the back seat.

We don't know where or how the virus originated. If it did in a lab, we would have to re-examine how we regulate research facilities and their safeguards and the manner of political oversight that won't curtail research freedom. If the virus is an nature, we would have to institute and/or expand pathogen surveillance, eliminate wildlife trafficking, and improve social security measures to ensure populations can withstand outbreaks without becoming distressed. But even as these possibilities aren't equally likely (according to scientists I trust), the origin of SARS-CoV-2 is less important than it once was because the COVID-19 pandemic caused us to implement all these outcomes to varying degrees.

SARS-CoV-2 isn't special of course; it's still difficult to conclusively say what really happened with many things, scientifically. In 1977, a telescope in the U.S. recorded a signal from outer space that remains strange to this day. We don't have a physical explanation for the "spooky" result of an experiment Anton Zeilinger and co. conducted in 1998. We lack a complete understanding of how general anaesthesia works its magic on the brain. Not even their makers fully know how powerful AI models work the way they do. No existing theory of nature can say what happens in intervals shorter than 10^-43 seconds.

In fact, not knowing is ubiquitous. To quote philosopher Nicholas Rescher, "no one can say in advance what questions natural science can and cannot answer." But science communication has taught me not all of us can know everything unless we invest considerable, perhaps even impossible, resources. Years ago, the philosopher Daniel Sarewitz wrote an article that changed my relationship with science. He argued that while we may know about the Higgs boson particle and that it gives other elementary particles their masses, we can't truly know any of this until we learn the complicated mathematics required to make sense of it. Until then, we just have faith in the physicists who know. This relationship goes for most technical information in our lives.

Science journalists like me communicate science by providing for scientists' claims, to quote Rescher, "the backing of a rationale that renders [their] correctness evident", but I still demand a considerable amount of faith from readers. At some point faith also becomes trust but trust still isn't understanding. (This said, the system of sanctions should they err provides a reasonable backstop for trust in scientists' and journalists' work.) The general idea here is that you pick someone you trust and you believe what they say to be true. Let's call this the social character of scientific knowledge.

When people encounter a weighty concept scientists aren't able to explain fully, the social character becomes more apparent than it normally is. Some people trust impassioned scientists unwilling to consider extra-scientific possibilities. Some lean towards authority figures who don't trust science to provide the answer. Historically, people have turned to faith in the face of the unknown. The problems arise when we don't know, or choose to overlook, where science ends and faith/trust begins. Then we fixate on answers that may never matter at the expense of answers that are already useful.

[mukunth.v@thehindu.co.in](mailto:mukunth.v@thehindu.co.in)

## PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Welcome home, champ!



D. Gukesh, who made history by winning the 18th Chess World Championships, arrives at a felicitation function in Chennai. Gukesh beat Ding Liren of China in the 14th and final classical game of the match to become India's second world champion after Viswanathan Anand. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

**The Hindu**

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 20, 1974

## Panel's concern over Railway finances

New Delhi, Dec. 19: The Railway Convention Committee, expressing a sense of anxiety in regard to railway finances, has recommended the continuance in 1975-76 of the existing rate of dividend to the general revenues and a relief of about Rs. 39 crores over the Fifth Plan

period in regard to capital works.

The committee's sixth report presented to the Rajya Sabha has asked the Railways to expedite the costing studies on "social burdens" so that they might review the freight structure in the light of the findings.

According to the Ministry of Railways, social burdens were of the order to Rs. 225.44 crores in 1973-74 and out of this amount, the loss on low-rated commodities was Rs. 115.4 crores while the losses on coaching and unremunerative branch lines were Rs. 95 crores and Rs. 10.98 crores respectively.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DECEMBER 20, 1924

## Leprosy relief in India

Mr. Frank Oldrieve, Secretary, British Empire Leprosy Relief Association, in an interview with a representative of the Associated Press, said that the Madras Government was to be warmly commended on the excellent beginning it has made in opening the Lady Willingdon Leper Settlement in Chinglepet, as this is the first settlement to be opened by a Provincial Government in India.

# Text & Context

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

### Strength of Odisha's new Armed Police Reserve Force

**131** The Odisha government has set up a company of Armed Police Reserve force to strengthen wildlife protection in Simlipal Tiger Reserve. The purpose is to bolster anti-poaching efforts, protect wildlife and forest resources, maintain law and order within the reserve, a notification said. PTI

### Indian companies meeting U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer

**13** Prime Minister Keir Starmer hosted a delegation of 13 Indian companies on what the British government described as a "curated visit" to enhance the bilateral partnership and boost investment flows. The visit follows Starmer's meeting with PM Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G20 Summit. PTI

### Norway central bank keeps policy interest rate on hold

**4.50** in per cent. Norway's central bank held its interest rate unchanged at a 16-year high of 4.50% on Thursday, and said it plans to start cutting borrowing costs in March next year. The Norwegian monetary policy stance contrasts with other Western central banks. REUTERS

### Number of casualties due to Cyclone Chido in Mayotte

**31** France's President Emmanuel Macron arrived Thursday in the Indian Ocean archipelago of Mayotte to survey the devastation that Cyclone Chido wrought across the French territory as thousands of people tried to cope without the bare essentials such as water or electricity. AP

### Rise in German exports to United Kingdom

**5.30** in per cent. German exports to Britain are growing faster than to any other country among the G20 nations due to an ongoing gold rally, according to preliminary data from the German statistics office. REUTERS  
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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## The political crisis in South Korea

**Yoon Suk Yeol's presidency reached a breaking point with his controversial declaration of martial law on December 3, which was overturned by the National Assembly; his impeachment by the Assembly on December 14 has now set the stage for a prolonged legal battle in South Korea's Constitutional court**

### WORLD INSIGHT

**Sandip Kumar Mishra**

**N**ine days after coming to power, Democratic Party president Moon Jae-in appointed a new Chief of the Seoul Central District Prosecutors' Office on May 19, 2017. The new Chief was able to indict two former Presidents belonging to the main conservative party in South Korea – Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye. Mr. Moon and his party were impressed and in June 2019, the protagonist was appointed the Prosecutor General of South Korea. The Prosecutor General was Yoon Suk Yeol, who later became the President of South Korea and is now a key figure in the current political crisis, having been impeached by the National Assembly on December 14, 2024.

#### How it started

Mr. Yoon was playing a key role in the Moon Jae-in administration, but it was announced on August 9, 2019, that Cho Guk would be the next Justice Minister. Mr. Cho had studied at the same university as Mr. Yoon, with Mr. Yoon being a few years his senior. After learning of Mr. Cho's nomination, Mr. Yoon reportedly approached President Moon expressing his disapproval. Mr. Moon, however, appointed Mr. Cho on September 9, 2019.

Mr. Yoon used his Prosecutor office to reveal several corruption charges against Mr. Cho. Allegations against him included that he plagiarised his writings, that an institute run by his family evaded taxes, and his family invested in illicit business activities, his daughter submitted false documents related to academic achievements. His wife was charged and later sent to jail for four years. All this led to huge protests by conservative party supporters demanding Mr. Cho's removal. Finally, he resigned after just 35 days in office.

The incident led to a contest between the Moon Jae-in administration and Mr. Yoon. Mr. Moon avoided taking any undemocratic means to remove Mr. Yoon from his post, but subsequent Justice Ministers under his administration tried to settle scores with Mr. Yoon. On November 24, 2020, Justice Minister Choo Mi-ae suspended Mr. Yoon, accusing him of ethical violations and interference in key investigations. However, Mr. Yoon challenged the suspension in court and was reinstated.

Interestingly, Mr. Yoon, who was considered close to the Democratic Party and instrumental in the indictment of two conservative Presidents, became a hero among conservative party supporters.

In various opinion surveys, Mr. Yoon had the highest popularity among all the existing conservative leaders, and suggestions became strong that if he became the conservative party's presidential candidate, he might be victorious. Conservative supporters were very hurt by two of their former Presidents in jail – one of them Ms. Park, who was the eldest daughter of Park Chung-hee whom the conservatives adore as a major Korean leader. The conservative supporters thought Mr. Yoon would be the right leader to teach Moon Jae-in and his peers in the Democratic Party a lesson.

Mr. Yoon grabbed this opportunity and resigned from the position of Prosecutor General on March 4, 2021, and announced his presidential candidacy in June 2021. He officially joined the conservative People Power Party (PPP) in July 2021. Despite making several political blunders, careless and controversial



**Fight on:** A protester, wearing a mask of impeached Yoon Suk Yeol, performs in a mock prison during a demonstration calling for Yoon's ouster in Seoul, on Thursday. AFP

remarks, and lacking political experience, Mr. Yoon was selected as the PPP's presidential candidate in November 2021. He had a difficult battle against the Democratic Party's Lee Jae-myung but defeated him in the March 2022 presidential elections by a margin of less than one percent.

#### Two Koreas in South Korea

Over the years, the divide between conservatives and liberals in South Korea has become very sharp. Generally, conservative party supporters tend to be older, less educated, wealthy businessmen, and residents of Gyeongsang North, Gyeongsang South, and Gangwon provinces. Young, more educated, middle-class, people coming from Jeolla North and Jeolla South Provinces are more inclined towards the liberal party. In a way, the division is not only ideological but also generational and regional. In recent years, young males in South Korea have also moved towards conservative parties, as they feel that ultra-feminism has ruined traditional gender and social relations. For the conservatives, authoritarian leader Mr. Park Chung-hee who is considered to be the main architect of South Korea's economic development is the source of inspiration and, for the liberals, Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun are the leaders who brought democratisation to the country. Conservatives are typically pro-American, more accommodating toward Japan, and confrontational towards North Korea. Liberals, on the other hand, advocate for greater autonomy in South Korea's foreign policy (while maintaining the U.S. alliance), are critical of Japan's rising assertiveness, favour engagement with North Korea, and seek better relations with China.

The divide has been further accentuated by the prevalence of social media. In the tenures of the last five Presidents, there have always been street protests, affecting the smooth running of the country. Polarisation between the two groups has led to vendetta politics, where each new administration seeks to implicate and punish its predecessors on charges of corruption or illegality. It has led to a situation that all the previous Presidents of South Korea belonging from both conservative and liberal parties have been either exiled (Syngman Rhee), killed (Park Chung-hee), had jail sentences (Chun Do-hwan, Roh Moo-hyun, Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye), charged for corruption (Kim Dae-jung and Moon Jae-in) or committed suicide (Roh Moo-hyun).

#### Presidency under Yoon

In March 2022, Mr. Yoon was elected as the President of South Korea. However,

his popularity ratings were very low, hovering around 20%-30%. His inexperience and incompetence in politics became evident early in his tenure. Rather than working on South Korean domestic and foreign policies in a deft, nuanced manner, he started using broad strokes. Most acts and policies were announced as 'big moves'.

For example, he tried to reach out to Japan despite the popular mood in South Korea not favouring it and Japan not making any concessions. He did not oppose Japan releasing the Fukushima nuclear power plant water into the sea, a decision disapproved by over 70% of South Koreans. He attended the annual summit meeting of NATO which was the first time by any South Korean leader. He visited Ukraine and indirectly supported it. He announced an Indo-Pacific strategy and opted for a tit-for-tat policy towards North Korea. All these 'bold moves' were not only disliked by liberals but also by most of the Korean people, especially those who believe that South Korea is a middle power and should not get into great power politics. His foreign policies strained relations with Russia and China while allowing North Korea to strengthen its ties with both nations.

In another 'bold move', he announced the doubling of seats for medical students, which were frozen for more than a decade. His approach to targeting Opposition leaders, combined with the heavy-handed use of prosecutors and police, further deepened public unease. Meanwhile, the South Korean economy, which was already facing problems in the post-COVID phase, was negatively affected. Moreover, his wife's conduct and allegations of several corruption matters, including the 'Dior bag scandal', made him more unpopular.

This led to the growing unpopularity of Mr. Yoon and his party PPP. In the National Assembly elections in April 2024, six Opposition parties secured 192 seats out of 300 seats, which led to a huge problem of governance under Mr. Yoon. The Opposition started asserting against the President's policies, his appointments of close friends to important positions in government, and demanded a special probe on charges against his wife.

#### What lies ahead

Mr. Yoon had no experience in dealing with political contests, and the Opposition's aggressive approach in the National Assembly after April 2024 left him frustrated. In desperation, he decided to declare emergency martial law on December 3, 2024, at 10:24 p.m., despite reported opposition from most of his Ministers. Mr. Yoon, along with the Defence Minister, sent the military and police to various places including the

National Assembly. He was in constant touch with them and ordered them to arrest several political leaders. He also reportedly ordered that members should not be allowed to enter into the National Assembly.

However, military and police officials moved reluctantly and they were not willing or able to stop a large number of people gathering in front of the National Assembly. National Assembly members voted 190-0 against martial law by midnight. As per the South Korean constitution, a simple majority in the 300-member House may repel martial law and the President has no choice but to comply. Finally, at the dawn of December 4, Mr. Yoon announced the withdrawal of martial law.

On December 5, an impeachment motion was brought in the National Assembly and put up for vote on December 7 evening.

Meanwhile, the ruling PPP was in fix on how to respond to this crisis. If it supported the impeachment motion, they would lose the support of hardcore conservatives, a substantial set of the electorate, and if they opposed it, they would lose face to the rest of the Koreans. So even though most of the conservative leaders expressed opinions against martial law, they refrained from supporting the impeachment motion. The PPP decided not to take part in the voting and the motion could not get passed. As impeachment requires the support of 200 out of 300 Assembly members, the motion failed with only three PPP members voting in favour.

The Opposition decided to bring another impeachment motion, which was voted on December 14. Mr. Yoon declared to be impeached by 204 votes in favour of the motion in the National Assembly. Mr. Yoon still stubbornly says that he would fight it out in the Constitutional court of South Korea and refused to resign.

The Constitutional court could deliberate on the impeachment for many months. Of the court's nine seats, three are currently vacant, and a minimum of six affirmative votes is required to validate the impeachment. It means all present judges must agree with the motion and Mr. Yoon is aware that four of the six judges reportedly have conservative leanings, and one was appointed by him. Although popular pressure would be high on judges, Mr. Yoon still hopes for his survival.

Meanwhile, delaying tactics would mean that the leader of the main Opposition party, Mr. Lee, may get a jail sentence as the case against him for corruption charges is scheduled to be decided by February-March next year. Mr. Cho, who launched a political party and won 18 seats in the National Assembly, was given a two year jail sentence by the Supreme Court on December 12 and the Opposition thinks that if Mr. Lee also falls, it would be less advantageous for the Democratic Party in the next Presidential election.

The political crisis in South Korea may get over in a few months. However, it has laid bare the immaturity of its political leaders and parties and the weakness of its democratic institutions. The ray of hope comes from the South Korean people, who, while divided in two opposite camps seem to agree that the present represents an existential crisis for its democracy. If the political crisis does not get resolved and democratic institutions are not strengthened, the implications on South Korea's image could be severe.

*Sandip Kumar Mishra is Professor, Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi*

### THE GIST

▼  
Yoon Suk Yeol, a former Prosecutor General, became South Korea's President in 2022 despite limited political experience. His tenure was marked by controversial policies, strained foreign relations, and deepened public dissatisfaction.

▼  
Facing mounting opposition and governance challenges, Yoon declared martial law on December 3, 2024, which was swiftly repealed by the National Assembly. This move enraged the public and intensified calls for his impeachment.

▼  
Although an initial impeachment motion failed due to the ruling PPP's abstention, a second motion on December 14 succeeded with 204 votes. Yoon has refused to resign and plans to challenge the decision in the Constitutional court, where his fate remains uncertain.

## IN THE LIMELIGHT



Film maker (right) Goutam Ghose with Marco Leonardi. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## In *Parikrama*, Goutam Ghose probes the human and spiritual cost of development

The Indo-Italian production that had its Asia premiere at the 30th Kolkata International Film Festival calls attention to the adverse consequences that Indigenous people and pilgrims face because of big-ticket dam projects on the mighty Narmada

Anuj Kumar

**D**estiny and development politics delicately come together in Goutam Ghose's latest work of art, depicting the threat to human settlements and the environment from big-ticket dam projects in the Narmada basin. Long in the works, the film has come when big dams are being discouraged worldwide because of socio-economic and environmental concerns.

At the outset, the Indo-Italian production appears like a venture to sell the serene Narmada valley to the Indians who historically love to travel and explore the cultural diversity of India. However, as the narrative takes shape, Ghose, one of the vanguards of the Parallel Cinema movement in India, displays how the lightness of touch can be a subversive device, reviving memories of the days of the New Wave when projects co-funded by the State didn't shy away from speaking truth to power.

**Layered contradictions**

Mounted like a picturesque canvas, *Parikrama* carries the contradictions of tradition and technology, growth and development in its layers. The story follows Alessandro or Alex (Marco Leonardi), a conscientious Italian filmmaker who makes films on environmental displacement. He is keen on making a documentary on the pilgrims

that circumambulate the Narmada but discovers that because of multiple dams that have come up on its vast course, the sacred river and the pilgrimage are fast losing their character. With the change in physical dimensions, the landmarks have become unrecognisable and the comfort of hospitality has submerged with the villages forcing pilgrims to circumambulate the stagnant waters of the lakes along the way.

A single father, Alex leaves his son Francesco (Emanuele Esposito) behind with his grandmother in the Mediterranean country to explore the journey of the mighty Narmada into the Arabian Sea.

In India, he is joined by Rupa (Chitrangada Singh), a social worker in the field of child welfare who is battling her own demons. Keen to find a voice for the film, Alex comes across Lala (Aryan Badkul), a street-smart teenager selling curios on the banks of the river. As the two develop an enduring bond, the otherwise ebullient Lala narrates the tragic backstory of how his village got submerged in the river because of a dam project. Only an unhinged man in the village dare speak against the development and a child is left to tell the tale of the devastation of his family life. Through the eyes of a child, the film reflects on how the Sardar Sarovar Project built to dam the Narmada has swallowed fertile lands, archaeological sites, and places of worship leaving devastated

dreams in its wake. Simultaneously, the film also critiques the Western gaze on India and feels like a poetic follow-up piece to Roberto Rossellini's ethnographic docu-fiction *Matri Bhumi* (1959). In the Italian master's picturesquely depiction of Nehruvian India, the narrator Devi finds livelihood and safety from floods at the then-upcoming Hirakud Dam on Mahanadi. Six decades later, Lala loses his land, livelihood, and possibly hope because another monstrous concrete structure has emerged in the middle of Narmada. And if you look closely, a portrait of Nehru, covered with years of dust, hangs in a government office where the officer refuses to provide compensation without papers. That Yesterday's solution could be today's problem, that progress could be cruel, shines through as the narrative makes our emotional reservoir swell.

For Marco, who emerged as a teenage star with *Cinema Paradiso* (1988), *Parikrama* is a cinematic circumambulation of sorts as three decades after playing the teenaged Toto in the Italian classic, he gets an opportunity to be an Alfredo for the doughty Lala. Like Rabindranath Tagore's *Kabuliwala*, Alex, a foreigner travelling for sustenance, sees the reflection of his motherless son in Lala who has lost his motherland.

**Intertwined lives'**  
The film has an interesting phrase for this bond: *humra naseeb* (*our fate*). It not only

explains how the marginalised surrender to their fate, but also, how our lives seem to be intertwined. This twinning of destinies comes through the background score as well when Ghose interpolates Operatic music in the scenes depicting environmental displacement around Narmada. When Alex gets enraged with giant structures protruding out of the river that have killed the sacred confluence of Cauvery and Narmada, he refers to Atlantis, the fictional island in Plato's work that was lost to the world because of human hubris. Ghose's incisive gaze links it to the revelry in the water parks where consumers perhaps don't process the price Indigenous tribes have paid for their giant wheels of entertainment to revolve.

Impeded by the pandemic, the impact of certain scenes is not fully realised and the conversations between Alex and Rupa tend to drag. Aryan has an unmistakable charm and flair for performance but, his enthusiasm, at times, leaves an impression as if he is in a summer workshop.

Ghose doesn't give up on his quest though and even submits his point of view to scrutiny. Rupa questions Alex's morality for milking Lala's heart-rending story for his project and wonders whether his gaze is voyeuristic. The same question could be asked of Ghose. *Parikrama* takes a few extra rounds to avoid easy answers but the question it raises leaves you numb.

## THE DAILY QUIZ

With 2024 coming to an end, dictionaries and round-up articles have reviewed the year in words. A quiz on some of the words, phrases, terms that became popular this year

Abhinaya K

**QUESTION 1**

If the Barbhimer phenomenon defined the summer of 2023, this word was the tune of the season this year. Inspired by the namesake album of a popular artist, the word became a trend, an aesthetic, and also was part of the U.S. Presidential campaign. Identify the word.

**QUESTION 2**

After a year of many key elections, Merriam-Webster announced 'polarisation' as its word of the year. Another word that stood out in the year, according to the dictionary, means "to say, do, or provide

what someone wants even though it is not proper, good, or reasonable". Identify the word that was also very popular during the elections.

**QUESTION 3**

This word is the name of a titular character from a children's book but means something else in the context of the economy. Name the word.

**QUESTION 4**

\_\_\_\_\_ is a new word used to describe spam/unwanted content related to Artificial Intelligence.

**QUESTION 5**

In our hyper-online era, this phrase was used to encourage people to participate in real-world experiences. It was added to the Merriam-Webster dictionary recently. Identify the phrase.

**Visual question:**

This word was declared Cambridge Dictionary's word of the year. It was highly searched after the Paris Olympics and Singer Dua Lipa's headline slot. Identify the word. AP

**Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:** 1. Who was Ashwin's opponent in his Test debut? **Ans: West Indies**

2. Ashwin was part of two ICC tournament-winning Indian teams. **Ans: 2011 ICC World Cup and 2013 ICC Champions Trophy**

3. In which year did Ashwin win the ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year and ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year awards? **Ans: 2016**

4. What is common to the following Test matches against West Indies at Mumbai (2011) and Antigua (2016), versus England at Chepauk (2021), and against Bangladesh at Chennai (2024)? **Ans: To score a century and take five or more wickets in the same Test**

5. Ashwin belongs to an elite club along with Shane Warne and Stuart Broad. What achievements are these the only three to achieve? **Ans: The rare double of 3000 plus runs and 500 or more wickets in Test cricket**

6. Against which two nations has Ashwin taken 100 or more wickets? **Ans: Australia (115) and England (114)**

7. With which legendary spinner does Ashwin share the record for the most Player-of-the-series? **Ans: Muttiah Muralitharan**

Visual: Ashwin is being congratulated after scalping the first of the 537 Test victims. Who was the batter? **Ans: Darren Bravo**

**Early Birds:** Dodo Jayaditya | Tamal Biswas | Tito Shiladitya | Sonali Das | Piyali Tuli



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

## Know your English

**K. Subrahmanian**  
**S. Upendran**

If I hear you complain about Padma one more time, I'll show you the door."

"Show me the door? What for? I can see it from here. It's the same old door, isn't it? I've been..."

"... When you say you'll 'show someone the door', it means you're asking him/her to leave because you're angry with the person concerned. When Priya questioned the Principal's authority, she was shown the door."

"When I tried to enter the stadium without a proper ticket, I was shown the door."

"Really? When was this?"

"About two years ago. By the way, didn't you say you would take me to 'Fiddler on the Roof' tomorrow?"

"I'm afraid our movie plans will have to be put on ice for the time being."

"Put on ice"? What does it mean?"

"When you put something on ice, you take no action on it for a period of time. When Suresh lost his job, his plans to get married were put on ice."

"From your examples, it seems to me that 'put on ice' means the same thing as 'put into cold storage'."

"You're right. The two expressions mean more or less the same thing. When you put a plan into cold storage, you postpone it for a while rather than put it into action immediately."

"Now tell me, why do you want to put our movie plans into cold storage?"

"Because I have a lot of things to do."

"You can do them later. You must take me to the movie tomorrow."

"I'm not obligated to."

"Obligated? You mean 'obliged', don't you?"

"Both 'oblige' and 'obligate' imply commitment of some kind. The British use 'oblige' for legal obligations. Mohan was obligated to repay the loans he took from the bank. When giving testimony in court, you are obligated to tell the truth. Americans, on the other hand, use 'oblige' and 'obligate' interchangeably. A student is obligated to turn up in time for the class. Or you could say..."

"... a student is obliged to turn up in time for the class."

"By the way, can 'criteria' be used as a singular?"

"No. It is used as a singular by some. But it is wrong. 'Criterion' is the correct singular. His one criterion was the greatest good for the greatest number. What are the criteria for judging great literature? The word 'criterion' is from Greek 'krítes' meaning 'to judge'. The word 'critic' is also from the same root. Do you know what 'criticaster' means?"

"No."

"A criticaster is a petty or inferior critic."

"But how does..."

"If you don't stop pestering me, I'll be obliged to show you the door."

Published in The Hindu on June 28, 1994

## Word of the day

**Obdurate:**

stubbornly persistent in wrongdoing

**Synonyms:** adamant, inflexible, unmanageable

**Usage:** She remained obdurate, refusing to apologise.

**Pronunciation:** newsthr.live/obduratepro**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /'ɒbdʒʊrət/

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

**From Page One****MPs get into clash over 'insult' to Ambedkar**

The Minister said both the BJP MPs were taken to the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital after they were said to have sustained head injuries. Mr. Sarangi, the 69-year-old BJP MP from Balasore, had to get stitches on his temple.

A third BJP MP, Phangnon Konyak, who represents Nagaland in the Rajya Sabha, claimed that she "felt very uncomfortable" as Mr. Gandhi came close and started shouting at her.

Soon after the face-off, Prime Minister Narendra Modi telephoned Mr. Sarangi and Mr. Rajput to inquire about their health, while Mr. Rijiju warned of appropriate action against the Lok Sabha LoP.

Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Kharge, in turn, accused BJP MPs of "manhandling" and "pushing" to prevent them from going inside the Parliament building. "I am sure your cameras would have captured the scenes. When I was trying to enter Parliament, the BJP MPs tried stopping, pushed me and threatened me," Mr. Gandhi told reporters and TV crews.

**Police complaints**

Escalating the face-off, BJP MPs Anurag Thakur, Bansuri Swaraj, and Hemang Joshi had earlier lodged a police complaint against Mr. Gandhi at the Parliament Street police station, accusing him of being involved in an "attempt to murder, physical assault and incitement".

For their part, Congress MPs Digvijaya Singh, Mukul Wasnik, and others lodged a counter complaint, accusing the BJP MPs of using "criminal force, assault and battery" against Mr. Kharge.

Expressing solidarity with Mr. Gandhi, INDIA (Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance) bloc MPs – including the DMK's T.R. Baalu, Trinamool Congress's Sougata Ray, and the Nationalist Congress Party's Supriya Sule – shot off a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, accusing three BJP MPs of manhandling Mr. Gandhi.

Coming to the defence of her brother, Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said, "They protested for the first time today and stopped everyone, resorted to pushing and shoving. And now to save Amit Shah ji's skin, they have started a conspiracy that my brother pushed someone."

In a separate letter to the Speaker, Mr. Kharge claimed he had been pushed by BJP MPs, lost his balance and was forced to sit on the ground, injuring his knees that have already undergone surgery. The Congress chief demanded an inquiry into the "attack".

NDA MPs claimed that Mr. Gandhi tried to push his way through the middle of the stairs where they were standing, ignoring a side passage, and that lead to jostling and injury.

**Hizbul 'commander' killed in Kulgam**

Two soldiers also sustained injuries during the initial exchange of fire with the militants. Both are said to be stable in the hospital. "On being challenged, militants opened indiscriminate and heavy volume of fire at the search party," the Army said.

**'A success'**

The Army sees Bhat's killing as a success. According to security forces, he played a key role in "reviving terrorism in south Kashmir". There were 37 First Information Reports (FIRs) filed against Bhat for his involvement in militant attacks.

"His death, along with the elimination of the other terrorists, has dealt a severe blow to the Hizbul Mujahideen," the Brigadier said. He also praised local residents for "their cooperation and for providing critical information".

"This operation not only eradicates Hizbul Mujahideen's presence in Shopian and Kulgam but also marks a notable step in curbing terrorism in Kashmir," he said.

**Disrobing of women is a blot on the Constitution: SC****The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday in a judgment said the disrobing, grievous assault and public humiliation committed on two women accused of witchcraft in rural Bihar in 2020 amounted to a blot on the constitutional spirit of equality and dignity.

A Bench of Justices C.T. Ravikumar and Sanjay Karol castigated the Patna High Court for staying criminal proceedings against the accused.

**It also pulled up Patna High Court for staying the criminal proceedings against the accused**

manner of surprise that such allegations were most often directed against women who were either widows or elderly. A variety of reasons are accepted to be the reasons for casting such aspersions – caste-based discrimination, retaliation for defying social norms, etc., Justice Karol observed in a 19-page judgment.

The court held that each case of inhumane and degrading incidents against women accused of witchcraft potentially went against the spirit of the Constitution.

"Witchcraft is deeply intertwined with superstition, patriarchy and social control, leaving it to no

**U.S. urges court to reject plea of Rana against extradition**

India has sought extradition of Tahawwur Rana, who is wanted in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack case; Rana claims he has been acquitted by Illinois court, Solicitor-General says not an all counts

**Press Trust of India**  
WASHINGTON

The United States government has urged the U.S. Supreme Court to dismiss a petition filed by Mumbai attack accused Tahawwur Rana, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, to avoid his extradition to India.

India is seeking the extradition of Rana as he is wanted in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack case.

Having lost the legal battle against his extraditions in lower courts and several federal courts, including the U.S. Court of Appeals for the North Circuit in San Francisco, Rana on November 13 filed a "petition for a writ of certiorari" before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In a long battle, this is Rana's last legal chance to avoid extradition to India.

Rana, currently lodged



Tahawwur Rana

in a jail in Los Angeles, faces charges for his role in the Mumbai attacks and is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.

"The petition for a writ of certiorari should be denied," U.S. Solicitor-General Elizabeth B. Prelogar said in its filing before the Supreme Court on December 16.

Rana is not entitled to

relief from extradition to India in this case, she argued in a 20-page submission.

**Tried and acquitted**

In his "petition for a writ of certiorari to review the judgment of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit", Rana has argued that he was tried and acquitted in the federal court in the Northern District of Illinois (Chicago) on charges relating to the 2008 terrorist attack on Mumbai.

"India now seeks to extradite him for trial on charges based on the identical conduct at issue in the Chicago case," the plea has said.

Ms. Prelogar disagreed. "The government does not concede that all of the conduct on which India seeks extradition was covered by the government's prosecution in this case. For example,

India's forgery charges are based in part on conduct that was not charged in the United States: petitioner's use of false information in an application to formally open a branch of the Immigration Law Centre submitted to the Reserve Bank of India," the U.S. Solicitor-General said.

"It is not clear that the jury's verdict in this case – which involves conspiracy charges and was somewhat difficult to parse – means that he has been convicted or acquitted on all of the specific conduct that India has charged," Ms. Prelogar said.

A total of 166 people, including six Americans, were killed in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks in which 10 Pakistani terrorists laid a more than 60-hour siege, attacking and killing people at iconic and vital locations of Mumbai.

**Only Union govt. can decide, says HC on Rahul citizenship row****The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

**The petitioner said he has details from U.K. govt. to prove that Rahul is a British citizen**

claimed that he had submitted a detailed representation-cum-complaint to the Foreigners Division of the Union Home Ministry, in which he had requested the authorities concerned to cancel Mr. Gandhi's Indian citizenship under Rules and Regulations of Section 9(2) of the Citizenship Act, 1955, read with Rule 40(2) of the Citizenship Rules, 2009 and Schedule III of 2009 Rules.

On Thursday, he told the court that he has details from the U.K. government that proves that the Congress leader is a British citizen. As the Home Ministry needed time to decide on the representation, the court adjourned the matter for further hearing on March 24, 2025.

**SC rejects contempt plea over dharam sansad nod****The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to entertain a plea filed by senior bureaucrats and activists seeking contempt action against the Ghaziabad district administration and Uttar Pradesh Police for allowing a *dharam sansad*.

However, a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna directed the authorities to keep track of the happenings in the *sansad* and record the event.

The petitioners led by activist Aruna Roy, represented by advocates Prashant Bhushan and Cheryl D'Souza, alleged that the administration gave permission to the Yati Narasinghanand Foundation to hold the *dharam sansad* between December 17 and 21 at Ghaziabad despite the programme advertisements showing communal statements against the followers of Islam, inciting violence against Muslims.

They argued that the alleged lapse on the part of the district administration and the State Police amounted to a "wilful and deliberate contempt of the orders of the Supreme Court wherein it had directed all competent and appropriate authorities to take *suo motu* action against individuals or groups who indulge in communal activities and hate speeches."

The Chief Justice asked the petitioners to approach the authorities concerned. "All matters cannot come to the apex court. If I entertain one, I have to entertain all," the CJI said. Mr. Bhushan insisted that one case should be made an example. "If it happens in one case, it will stop," he argued.

**Assam STF arrests eight, says they are members of a global terror group****The Hindu Bureau**  
GUWAHATI

The police searching for missing persons on Thursday, a day after 13 people died in a ferry-Navy craft collision off the Mumbai coast. PTI

**Two Mumbai boat crash victims missing; Navy orders inquiry****The Hindu Bureau**  
MUMBAI

A day after the Mumbai boat tragedy, two persons, a man and a child, are still missing.

The Colaba police said a patrolling team is searching for them. One of them has been identified as Hansaram Bhati, 43, who had come with his family for a picnic at the Gateway of India.

The Indian Navy said search and rescue (SAR) efforts are on. "Two persons from the ferry are still reported to be missing and SAR operations to this end are in progress by eight Na-

vy craft and a naval helicopter augmented by a Coast Guard vessel," the Navy mentioned.

Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi offered his condolences, and said that a Board of inquiry has been ordered into the accident to establish the facts of the case.

Hansaram was among the 115 people who had boarded the private ferry on Wednesday that capsized at Karanji. His brother Jongaram Bhati said, "With time passing, we are scared about what news will come next. His family is petrified with the thought of losing him."

The crackdown, code-named 'Operation Praghat', was led by Assam STF chief Partha Sarathi Ma-

hanta and carried out with the help of the Kerala and West Bengal police forces.

The Assam Police said the operation had been based on intelligence inputs on "clandestine anti-national activities" by a group of individuals under the direction of one Mohammad Farhan Israk, a close associate of ABT chief Jasimuddin Rahmani.

**Mission to expand base** The police said Radi started his activities in Assam and West Bengal after entering India to meet the ABT's sleeper cell activists before moving to Kerala to expand the base.

The module worked to establish sleeper cells in the country, particularly in Assam and West Bengal.

"These sleeper cells were intended to serve as covert operational units, poised for subversive and violent activities," the police said, adding that the other persons played a pivotal role in helping Radi to identify, recruit, and indoctrinate individuals who shared or were inclined towards similar fundamentalist ideologies.

"By exploiting local vulnerabilities, religious sentiments and fault lines, they aimed to create a network capable of operating under the radar while remaining loyal to the broader objectives of their organisation, to create disruption and chaos in India," they said.

They argued that the alleged lapse on the part of the district administration and the State Police amounted to a "wilful and deliberate contempt of the orders of the Supreme Court wherein it had directed all competent and appropriate authorities to take *suo motu* action against individuals or groups who indulge in communal activities and hate speeches."

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"If it happens in one case, it will stop," he argued.

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

A positivity camp for teenagers will be conducted online by MiTran Global on December 21 and 22. *The Hindu In School* is the media partner for the webinar.

The transformative programme is designed for those aged 11 to 17 to equip themselves with practical

tools to build resilience, foster a positive mindset, and navigate both academic and personal challenges with confidence.

The camp focuses on three vital areas: academic excellence, emotional resilience, and personal growth. It will contain three modules – Transform Your Exam Experience with "I Love Exams", Transform Your Study Strategies with "Accelerated Learning Methodology" and Transform Your Mindset with "Positive Mind Mastery".

Camp 1 will be held between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on December 21 and 22, and Camp 2 will be held between 2.30 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. on both days.

The registration fee is ₹199. Register by visiting hub.mitranglobal.com/services/ipc or by scanning the QR code. For details, call 7483262507.

Kindly send donation, however small, by Cheque/D.D./M.Favouring Save Poor Lives A/c Fariba Jannat, Our Account Details: S/B Account No. 20000583487, State Bank of India, R.A. Puram, SICCODE 314000355. You can donate through Google Pay No. 9884607377, UPI ID savepoorlives@okbl. All donations are exempted under 80G of the Income Tax Act.

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**Inspections bring out enrolment violations in many CBSE schools****The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

In surprise inspections at 29 schools across six regions, the Central Board of Secondary Education found that a majority of the

schools violated the Board's rules and enrolled students beyond their actual attendance records, effectively creating "non-attending" or dummy enrolments. Many schools had also flouted infrastruc-

**APPEAL**

Baby Fariba Jannat, 5 months old, daughter of Muntu Miya, is diagnosed to be suffering from Congenital Heart Disease - Common, Complete AVSD, Moderate AVR (Prolapsing Leaflets), Severe PAH. She was advised to undergo early ICDR repair. The baby would need further ICDR care for 2 to 3 weeks more. The estimated cost is **Rs. 6,00,000/-**. Kindly send donation, however small, by Cheque/D.D./M.Favouring Save Poor Lives A/c Fariba Jannat, Our Account Details: S/B Account No. 20000583487, State Bank of India, R.A. Puram, SICCODE 314000355. You can donate through Google Pay No. 9884607377, UPI ID savepoorlives@okbl. All donations are exempted under 80G of the Income Tax Act.

# BJP president says Cong. stands exposed on Ambedkar issue

Nadda says Congress and its rotten ecosystem have been revealed; he alleges 'Pandit Nehru hated Dr. Ambedkar', asks Congress to stop lying

**Devesh K. Pandey**

NEW DELHI

**B**haratiya Janata Party (BJP) president J.P. Nadda on Thursday said the Congress had been exposed on the issue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar by those who "believe in truth, democracy, and social justice".

"Since yesterday, the Congress and its rotten ecosystem have been exposed by all those who believe in truth, democracy and social justice," he said through a series of posts on X.

"So, I thought of sharing some facts to illustrate the deep congress hate towards Dr. Ambedkar... Pandit Nehru hated Dr. Ambedkar. Yes, it was unfiltered hate. That is why



J.P. Nadda

overnment which had the honour of developing 26, Alipur Road into an iconic place," he said, sharing a photograph of it.

Accusing the Congress leaders of "spreading lies about India on foreign soil", the BJP chief said: "...they never bothered about a place in London where Dr. Ambedkar himself lived. During PM @narendramodi's 2015 U.K. visit, he went there, and subsequently, it was acquired by the Maharashtra Government."

"I want to tell the Congress and their rotten ecosystem: In June, you lost the Lok Sabha polls for the third consecutive time.... At least now stop lying, because your lies will not go unchecked...The truth will always win," he said.

"26 Alipur Road should have been converted into a grand memorial that would inspire people long back. But, Dr. Ambedkar-hating Congress did nothing. It was our NDA Go-

# BJP indulging in distraction, Shah should apologise, resign: Congress

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Hours after the acrimonious face-off between the BJP and Opposition MPs on parliamentary premises on Thursday, the Congress termed the BJP "anti-Ambedkar" and "anti-Constitution", and said the ruling party was trying to "divert" attention from the fact that Home Minister Amit Shah "insulted" B.R. Ambedkar. Mr. Shah, the party said, must apologise for his remarks and resign.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi addressed a joint press conference at the Congress headquarters here. "The BJP wants to divert attention from Shah's remarks on Ambedkar and that is why they are raising other issues," Mr. Kharge said.

He said the Opposition had demanded his resignation on Wednesday, but Mr. Shah was not even ready to accept that he made a



Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge with Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

mistake. Calling Mr. Shah's comments "factually incorrect" and "tragic", Mr. Kharge said, "First, he should probe the facts before making such statements. Then he can insult Nehru ji and Ambedkar ji. What he said about them is lies. Had I got the chance, I would have spoken in Parliament."

Mr. Kharge said the Opposition expected Prime Minister Narendra Modi to dismiss him, but with that unlikely to happen, it decided to take the issue to the public by way of protest.

"We were walking back from Babasaheb Ambedkar's statue in a peaceful manner. But I don't know

what came to their mind. When we reached the Makar Dwar... they stopped us at the door," Mr. Kharge said. He further added that the ruling party's male MPs obstructed the Opposition's female MPs. Mr. Kharge said that in the jostling, he lost his balance, and sat on the floor. "I am in no condition to push anyone. I couldn't balance myself, and I sat down. Now they are alleging we pushed them," he stated.

Mr. Gandhi said the BJP MPs who blocked their way to Parliament were holding sticks. He further said the Congress had repeatedly said the BJP-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh school of thought was fundamentally "anti-Constitution" and "anti-Ambedkar".

Industrialist Gautam Adani's indictment in the U.S., he said, was the main issue. The BJP was suppressing all discussions on the subject. Their "full-time job" was to create "distractions", he alleged.

Govt. asks X to delete 'partial' clips of Shah's comments

**Vijaya Singh**

Aroon Deep

NEW DELHI

The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), under the Union Home Ministry, has demanded that X take down a clip of Home Minister Amit Shah's contested remarks in Parliament on B.R. Ambedkar and the Congress.

In an email to certain Congress MPs and to the official Congress X handle, the social media company cited the I4C charge that the viral clip "violates the law(s) of India". X told the Congress account-holders that it had not taken any action on the government's demand.

"Under what basis was this demand issued," Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinivas asked on Thursday, defending the posts.

The BJP has said that the clip cuts off at a misleading point.

The I4C used powers granted under Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology Act, 2000 to send notices to X to take down the video. In March, I4C was authorised and designated as an agency to issue 'Take Down Notices' to social media intermediaries and platforms to remove "unlawful content".

Other than I4C, this power is entrusted to all law enforcement agencies, including the State police.

The I4C was established by the Home Ministry to provide a framework and ecosystem for these law enforcement agencies to monitor and deal with cybercrime in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

A government official said that notices under Section 79(3)(b) of the IT Act to take down online content can be issued even without the registration of a First Information Report (FIR).

I4C CEO Rajesh Kumar did not answer queries on whether any FIR had been filed in this case.

# Amit Shah should resign and renounce politics, says Lalu

**Amarnath Tewary**

PATNA



RJD chief Lalu Prasad. FILE PHOTO

Shah and the BJP are anti-Constitutional who spread hatred. The language used in Parliament is condemnable," he said.

Earlier, on Tuesday, Mr. Shah in his address in the Rajya Sabha had said that it had become a fashion to repeatedly invoke Dr. Ambedkar's name. "If God's name was taken so often, they would have earned a place in heaven," he had said.

The statement triggered protest from the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc MPs in Parliament with the Congress demanding a public apology. On Wednesday, Mr. Shah had hit back at the Congress. "The party twisted facts and distorted my comments," Mr. Shah said.

condemn what Mr. Shah has said [over Dr. Ambedkar] who is great. I've seen and heard his [Mr. Shah's] comment. He [Mr. Shah] should resign, renounce politics, and leave," Mr. Prasad told mediapersons in Patna on Thursday.

"Amit Shah has gone mad. He has a hatred for Baba Saheb Ambedkar. We

# Shah's remark: T.N. Minister flays EPS

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Law Minister S. Regupathy on Thursday questioned AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami's silence over Union Home Minister Amit Shah's remark on B.R. Ambedkar.

While the DMK was holding protests across the State over the issue, Mr. Palaniswami, by staying silent, was supporting the forces that were attempting to make derogatory remarks on Dr. Ambedkar, he posted on social media.

Mr. Palaniswami said he did not take Mr. Regupathy's remark seriously. He said, he endorsed the views expressed by AIADMK's D. Jayakumar.

# Both Houses adjourned without any transaction

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Rajivji sought an apology from Mr. Gandhi for "intimidating" BJP MPs.

Both ruling and Opposition party members raised slogans forcing Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar to adjourn the House, first till 2 p.m. and later in the afternoon, for the day.

When the Lok Sabha met at 11 a.m., Speaker Om Birla read out a condolence message on the demise of former Union Minister E.V.K.S. Elangovan. Soon after the House observed silence paying homage to Elangovan, Opposition members began their protests and Mr. Birla adjourned the House till 2 p.m. At 2 p.m., Dilip Saikia, who was in the Chair, adjourned the House for the day. Mr. Birla also issued

instructions not to allow any protests by any political party in front of the Parliament gates.

In the Rajya Sabha, Ms. Konyak said she was standing just below the staircase of the Makar Dwar when "Leader of Opposition of Lok Sabha Shri Rahul Gandhi ji" came in very close proximity to me. I really felt very uncomfortable and he started shouting at me which I felt is very unbecoming of a leader of the Opposition."

Mr. Dhankhar said he had received a communication from Ms. Konyak. "She was literally in tears... She could never believe that as a lady member she could suffer so much at the hands of another member of Parliament," he said.

# Rahul unfit to be Leader of Opposition in LS, says BJP

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday accused the Congress of undermining the Indian democracy and the Constitution by indulging in "unruly and shameful" behaviour inside the Parliament complex. Rahul Gandhi did not deserve to be the Leader of Opposition (Lok Sabha), it added.

The ruling party accused Mr. Gandhi of injuring its MPs, Pratap Chandra Sarangi and Mukesh Rajput, while trying to force his way into Parliament.

Rajnath Singh, Defence Minister and Deputy Leader of the Lok Sabha, said that such incidents should not happen in a healthy democracy. BJP MPs Anurag Singh Thakur, Bansuri Swaraj and Hemang Joshi filed a complaint against Mr. Gandhi under Sections 109 (attempt to murder), 115 (voluntarily causing hurt), 117 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt), 125 (act endangering life or personal safety of others), 131 (Punishment for assault or criminal force otherwise than on grave provocation), and 351 (criminal intimidation) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

**GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYAT RAJ DEPARTMENT**

**Notice Inviting Tender**  
G.O. (Ms) No. 186 Rural Development & Panchayat Raj (SGS-I) Department. Dated:17.12.2024

**Construction of 34 bridges in 18 Districts (2024-25)**

1. For details, visit [www.tenders.gov.in](http://www.tenders.gov.in)

2. e-Bids are invited by the Additional Collector (Dev.)/Project Director, DRDA of Villupuram-3, Salem-6, Thanjavur-1, Tiruchirappalli-3, Dindigul-1, Madurai-1, Coimbatore-1, Cuddalore-1, Dhamapuri-1, Erode-1, Krishnagiri-4, Namakkal-2, The Nilgiris-1, Tirupur-1, Thoothukudi-2, Tirunelveli-1, Vellore-3 and Virudhunagar-1 districts for the Construction of bridge works package wise under two cover system.

3. The package wise bid documents can be downloaded at free of cost from [www.tenders.gov.in](http://www.tenders.gov.in) from 20.12.2024 to 09.01.2025.

4. Common date and time for downloading of Bid document, submission and opening:  
i) Last Date and Time for downloading and Online Submission of Bid documents : 09.01.2025 upto 3.00 pm  
ii) Date and Time of online opening of Bid documents : 09.01.2025 4.00 pm onwards

Director  
Rural Development and Panchayat Raj.

DIPR/5540/Tender/2024

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FORTNIGHT.**  
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[www.thehindugroup.in/](http://www.thehindugroup.in/)

**TCED/DRSS-8599/24** Dated: 18.12.2024  
**THRISSUR CORPORATION  
ELECTRICITY DEPARTMENT**  
**e-TENDER NOTICE**  
**Supply Erection  
of LT UG Cable**  
[www.tced.in](http://www.tced.in)  
Log on to  
[www.etenders.kerala.gov.in](http://www.etenders.kerala.gov.in)  
Last Date : 27.01.2025  
(Sd/-)  
Assistant Secretary

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA** eMail: [se\\_nerwkrj@rediffmail.com](mailto:se_nerwkrj@rediffmail.com)  
**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE - KEONJHAR**  
**e Procurement Notice for Road Works under MMSY - Improvement to Existing RD Roads/SACI**  
**Bid Identification No. CCB-20 / RWCKJR/2024-25**  
No. 3767 // Date : 17.12.2024

1. Name of the Work : Construction and Maintenance of roads under MMSY-Improvement to Existing RD Roads/SACI in the District of Keonjhar.  
2. No. of Work : 06 (Six) Nos.  
3. Estimated Cost : As per Annexure in NIT.  
4. Class of Contractor (Eligible) : As per Annexure in NIT  
5. Period of Completion : As per Annexure in NIT  
6. Other details:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for bidding	Last Date & Time of Seeking of Tender	Date & Time of Opening of Tender in OIC C.C.E.R.W.Circle, Keonjhar
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Keonjhar	NCB-20/ RWCKJR / 2024-25	From 11:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.	07.01.25 up to 5:00 P.M.	08.01.25 at 11:00 A.M.
				Will be intimated later

Further details can be seen from the website [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in)  
Chief Construction Engineer, R.W.Circle, Keonjhar.

O-925:

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"- PROCUREMENT NOTICE  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, KHORDHA (R&B) CIRCLE, KHORDHA WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**Tender Call Notice** E-mail: [rbcirclekhurda@gmail.com](mailto:rbcirclekhurda@gmail.com)  
Bid Identification No. CCE-Khordha (R&B) Circle - 23/2024-25 Memo No.: 2512 Dt.13.12.2024

The Chief Construction Engineer, Khordha (R&B) Circle, Khordha on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE mode from eligible contractors for building works as detailed in the table below:

No.	Description	Value
1.	Nature of Work	6 Nos
2.	No. of Work	Rs.10000.00 (On-Line)
3.	Tender Cost	R & A Class
4.	Class of Contractor	From 10.00 AM of DL27.12.2024 up to 05.00 PM of Dt.03.01.2025 up to 5.00 PM
5.	Available of Bid document	DL04.01.2025 at 11.00 AM
6.	Date of opening of Bid	DL04.01.2025 at 11.00 AM

7. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website: <https://tenderodisha.gov.in>. Any Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Chief Construction Engineer, Khordha (R&B) Circle, Khordha  
OIFR-34127/11/0027/2425

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER  
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR**  
(At/Po:- Ambupuri, Near Income Tax Office, Berhampur-760011, Ganjam, Odisha)  
(E-Mail:- [serwbpr2004@yahoo.com](mailto:serwbpr2004@yahoo.com); Tel. No.:-0680-2404287)

No. e-tender //4107 // RWC// BAM// Dated 18/12/2024 E-Mail/E-despatch  
**2nd Corrigendum to Bid Identification No. Online Tender /13-2024-25/BPR**

1) The partial modification of Road works under PERIODICAL MAINTENANCE vide above identification has been made as follows.

Date of Availability of tender	06.01.2025 to 20.01.2025 upto 5.30 PM instead of 20.12.2024 to 03.01.2025 up to 5.30 PM
2. Last Date & Time of seeking tender	18.01.2025 at 5.30 PM instead of 01.01.2025 at 5.30 PM
3. Date of opening of Technical Bid	21.01.2025 at 11.00 AM instead of 04.01.2025 at 11.00 AM
4. Date of opening of Financial Bid	Will be intimated later on.

All other contents will remain unchanged.

Q-916: Chief Construction Engineer, R.W.Circle, Berhampur  
OIFR-2507/11/0024/2425

**Women & Child Development Department**  
Government of Odisha  
Lokseva Bhawan, Bhubaneswar-751001  
Telephone Number - 0674-2392976  
Website- <https://wcd.odisha.gov.in>  
Email ID- [subhadraojana1@gmail.com](mailto:subhadraojana1@gmail.com)

Advt. No...../2024 Date:.....

Proposals are invited from the bidders for the purpose of selection of an agency for Operation and Management of Command & Response Centre under W&CD Department, Odisha.

The tender document along with all related information can be obtained from the website : <https://wcd.odisha.gov.in/>.

SI. No.	Event Description	Date
1	Last date and time for submission of Proposal	21.01.2025 up to 05:00 PM
2	Opening of Technical Proposals	22.01.2025 at 11:

## IN BRIEF



## Modi to interact with students during Pariksha Pe Charcha

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address school students in the eighth edition of *Pariksha Pe Charcha* in January 2025, the Ministry of Education said in a statement. The event will most likely be scheduled in the last week of January, before annual examinations begin across the country. Registrations have begun on *MyGov.in* from December 14 and will remain open until January 15. In 2024, 2.26 crore participants took part in the programme (photo shows a view of the event). Planned to reduce examination stress and encourage students, teachers, and parents, the Prime Minister had addressed students at the event over the past seven years.

## J&amp;K Police identifies lawyer Mian Qayoom as 'conspirator'

The J&K Police's special wing, State Investigation Agency (SIA), on Thursday filed a supplementary chargesheet against 80-year-old Mian Abdul Qayoom, former president of the High Court Bar Association-Kashmir (HCBA-K), and claimed documentary and technical evidence about his role in the murder of lawyer Babar Qadri in 2020. Mr. Qayoom is a senior lawyer and was seen as a close aide of the late Hurriyat chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani. A police spokesman said it had taken over the investigation and on the basis of sufficient evidence, it arrested Mr. Qayoom on June 25 this year "as the principal conspirator behind Qadri's killing".

**Badlapur case: forced to beg, parents of accused tell HC**

## Purnima Sah

MUMBAI

Parents of Badlapur sexual assault case accused Akshay Shinde, who died in a police encounter, informed the Bombay High Court on Thursday that they are forced to live on footpath near a railway station and beg for survival as nobody gives them jobs anymore. They also told the court that they had to leave their home in Badlapur because the villagers threatened them.

Before hearing the petitioners, the Division Bench of Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and Prithviraj Chavan asked people inside the courtroom to vacate so that the parents of the accused could speak freely, without feeling pressured, hesitant or scared and that no one should identify them.

## Eklavya schools struggle to meet 5% PVTG sub-quota; dropouts on the rise

## Abhinav Lakshman

NEW DELHI

About four years after the Centre introduced a sub-quota of 5% for the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in admissions to Eklavya Model Residential Schools for tribal students across the country, government data show that they are struggling to meet this quota. Just 3.4% of students in these schools now are from these communities.

The number of such students dropping out has been rising for three years in a row. Data obtained by *The Hindu* through the Right to Information Act show that of the 1,30,101 students enrolled into all 407 such functional schools as of October, 4,480 belong to PVTG communities, which amounts to about 3.4% of the total student popula-



Of the 1.3 lakh students in 407 Eklavya Model Residential Schools as of October, 4,480 belong to PVTG communities. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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



- 13 Prayer at entry, close to the gate is made up (8)
- 15 Tramp in cocktail parties (7)
- 17 Unfortunate one, learner at University of California, knowingly shallow (7)
- 20 Democratic artist over time gets brown sugar (8)
- 22 Pups identified to have an advantageous aspect (6)
- 23 Loved a party with radical journo (6)
- 25 Timidity of firm lad on the fringes? Get a measure (4,4)
- 26 Two pubs having a competition primarily, wild (8)
- 27 Person behind stumps is vital, according to report (6)

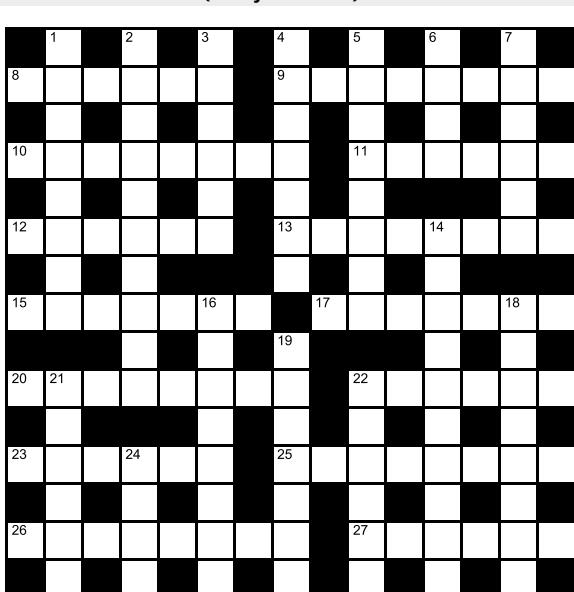
## Down

- 1 Child changes cap for amusement (8)
- 2 Mostly violent behaviour with a Sikh leader at England and advance (10)
- 3 Guard's a railway official, new joined on first of December (6)
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- 22 1 + 51 + 1000, egghead is distinct (6)
- 24 Polish last variety of mineral stone (4)

## TH CROSSWORD

14361

(set by Afterdark)



## Across

- 8 Tom first goes to say, Puducherry to get a strong cord (6)
- 9 Obsessed with one idea of building a new rocket (3-5)
- 10 Torture comes from hostile guards; to be sacked and swap positions of two characters (8)
- 11 British prime minister almost is at war (6)
- 12 Intoxicated son's stress leads to depression primarily (6)

## SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

PM Modi and King Charles reaffirm ties of India, U.K.

Sriram Lakshman  
LONDON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Britain's King Charles III spoke on the phone on Wednesday, reaffirming the India-U.K. partnership and exchanging greetings for Christmas and the New Year.

"Recalling the historic relations between the two countries, they both reaffirmed [their] commitment to further strengthen the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and the U.K.," a government readout said.

tact with the outside world in the past few days.

The Tunis embassy's website mentions a government of India travel ban to Libya since April 2016, "in view of security considerations", referring to the protracted civil war in the country since the fall of the Muammar Gaddafi government in 2011. The embassy states, "still a few Indian workers manage to reach Libya through third countries in search of jobs".

Those assisting the kin of the workers say fake recruitment agencies exploit the unemployed in rural areas by advertising fake high-paying overseas jobs.

Mujahid Husain Khan, president of the U.P. Indian Personnel and Promotion Export Council, says, "This practice of duping migrant aspirants begins at the many training centres that have mushroomed nationwide. People often get trapped through WhatsApp, Facebook or YouTube channels. Training centres cannot facilitate emigration. That can be done only by government-registered recruitment agencies, which are listed on the official eMigrate website of the MEA."

Mr. Modi and King Charles also discussed climate action and sustainability, areas that the British monarch has been active in for several decades. "[The] Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for His Majesty's sustained advocacy and initiatives on these issues and briefed him on the multiple initiatives undertaken by India," readout said.

Mr. Modi conveyed his best wishes to the King for his health and well-being, the government said.

## India and France sign MoU for new National Museum

## Sreeparna Chakrabarty

NEW DELHI

India and France on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the development of the new National Museum, on the lines of the Louvre in Paris, at the historic North Block and South Block in the national capital. The museum, named Yuga Yu-

geen Bharat, when completed would be the largest in the world.

The agreement was signed by Hervé Barberet, Director General and CEO of France Museums, and B.R. Mani, Director General of the National Museum of India.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, who was present at the signing, said, "I think we would veritably be seeing the inspiration for the remaking of Bharat," when South Block and North Block become the

kind of museums that are envisaged.

"It is a very important expression of international cooperation. We are also seeing a very important cultural collaboration and, as all of you know, culture is in a sense the essence of soft power," Mr. Jaishankar said.

"With France, we have had a strong relationship, what in our profession we call strategic partnership, and underpinning that India and France see each other as important poles in a multi-polar world," he said.

The 'Yuga Yu-

geen Bharat' museum will be developed through adaptive reuse in collaboration with France, which is renowned for its expertise in such projects – exemplified by the Louvre, the Grand Palais, and the Hotel de la Marine.

## FAITH

## The true doer is the Divine

In the Bhagavad Gita, (Chapter XI, verse 33), Lord Krishna offers profound advice to Arjuna, emphasising the importance of humility and surrender. Krishna urges Arjuna to arise, conquer his foes and enjoy prosperous rulership, but with a crucial caveat: acknowledge that the true doer is the Divine, not the individual ego, said Swami Mitrandaaji.

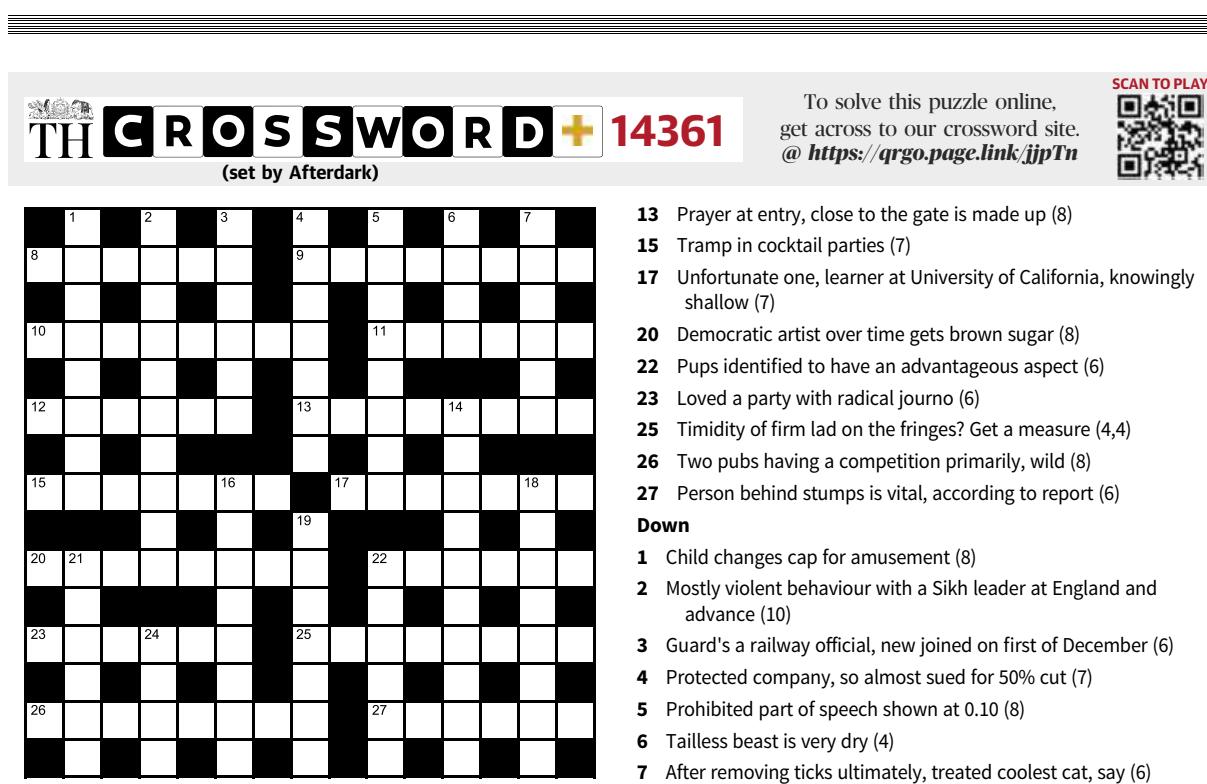
Krishna tells Arjuna, "Tasmad tvam uttishta yasho labhasva jivita shatrun bhunkshva rajayam samridddham mayava nihata purvam eva nimitta matram bhava sanya sachin." How should one understand this?

Our ego often claims doership, taking credit for our accomplishments and creating a false sense of self-importance. However, this assertion is rooted in illusion. In reality, the Divine is the ultimate creator. We, as mere instruments, can only assemble and utilise the resources created by the Divine.

Let us realise that the Divine makes the things available for us to assemble. So, it is absolutely absurd to assert that we are doers. Divine does and we claim a false doership and our ego gets flattered by it.

Krishna's advice to Arjuna serves as a powerful reminder to relinquish our false claims of doership. By surrendering our ego and acknowledging the Divine as the true doer, we can become empty vessels, akin to a bamboo flute in the hands of the Divine.

Just as the flute becomes a musical instrument in the hands of a skilled musician, we too can become instruments of the Divine, creating harmony and beauty in the world.



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## IN BRIEF

**JSW Infra to invest ₹30,000 cr. to expand port capacity**

JSW Infrastructure (JSWIL), the second-largest private port operator in India, plans to invest ₹30,000 crore over FY25-30 to expand its cargo-handling capacity to 400 million tonne per annum (MTPA) by FY30. "JSWIL's robust financial foundation, with a solid balance sheet and zero net debt, fuels our ambitious expansion plans," said Lalit Singhvi, CFO and whole time director, JSW Infrastructure said. "We are strategically positioned to drive capacity additions."

**Bharti Airtel prepays spectrum dues of ₹3,626 cr.**

Bharti Airtel prepaid ₹3,626 crore to the Department of Telecom to clear all its liabilities for spectrum acquired in 2016, the firm said. With this, Bharti Airtel has prepaid all spectrum dues with interest costs higher than 8.65%. "Bharti Airtel has prepaid ₹3,626 crore to the Department of Telecom, clearing all its liabilities for spectrum acquired in 2016," it said. The firm has prepaid a total of ₹28,320 crore of spectrum liabilities this calendar year, the telco said. PTI

**'CCI raids Pernod, AB InBev in liquor-industry crackdown'**

India's antitrust body raided offices of alcohol giants Pernod Ricard and Anheuser-Busch InBev (AB InBev) as it investigates accusations of price collusion with retailers in a Southern state, according to sources. Wednesday's surprise raids by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) targeted offices in the city of Hyderabad and some retailers in nearby Telangana State, the five sources said, in one of the biggest such industry crackdowns in recent years. REUTERS

**Centre sets June '26 deadline for solar firms to adopt India-made solar cells**

**Jacob Koshy**  
NEW DELHI

In a step towards discouraging foreign imports of components used in solar panel manufacturing, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has set a deadline of June '26, after which solar companies must use only India-made solar photovoltaic cells in their panels to participate in government procurement programmes.

"With installed capacity of solar PV cells in the country expected to increase substantially in next year, it has been proposed to issue List-II of solar PV cells under ALMM, which shall be effective from 1st June 2026," says an office order from the MNRE, issued earlier this month.

"List-II" refers to a list of companies that make solar cells. Indian solar companies primarily rely on solar cells from China and Southeast Asia. Relying on domestic supplies is however likely to make solar power costlier.

Schemes such as the ₹75,000 crore PM rooftop-solar programme, PM Kusum programmes that part pay the cost of installing solar panels to urban and rural consumers, must source panels from domestic companies approved by the MNRE.

The price of Indian solar cells are 1.5 times to twice that of those from China even after Basic Customs Duty. Such high prices can drive up the cost of capital cost of solar power projects by ₹5-10 million per megawatt. This will

**FedEx mulls setting up air cargo hub in India**

**N. Anand**  
CHENNAI

raise tariffs by 40-50 paise per unit," Sehul Bhatt, Director- Research, Crisil Market Intelligence and Analytics, said in a statement.

So far, 92 gigawatt of solar capacity has been installed in India. Currently, India has installed solar-module manufacturing capacity of about 63 GW and solar-cell manufacturing capacity of about 5.8 GW. Government and industry estimates expect that 80 GW of module capacity will be added by 2027 and cell manufacturing capacity rise to 60 GW by FY27, with ₹30,000 crore in investments.

Earlier this year, the MNRE introduced a list of Approved List of Module Manufacturers. Those setting up solar installations and wishing to avail of government subsidies necessarily had to source modules only from these manufacturers. These lists are part of a larger government strategy to encourage domestic production of solar panels, however India still lacks the capacity to manufacture components used in cells such as wafers and ingots and will continue to depend on China and South East Asia for these.

FedEx International Chief Operating Officer and FedEx Airline CEO Richard Smith said that India was a fast growing market and occupied the third slot after Vietnam and Mexico. It had the potential to overtake them, he added.

**Press Trust of India**

NEW DELHI

**U.S. Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti** on Thursday said India is the "highest tariff" major economy in the world and New Delhi and Washington need to work together to lower tariffs to increase trade for making it "fair and equal".

His comment comes days after U.S. President-elect Donald Trump said that India charged "a lot" of tariff, reiterating his intention to impose reciprocal tariffs in retaliation for what New Delhi would im-



**Tariff war:** Mr. Garcetti observed that as the two countries "become closer", they are able to be "more blunt" with each other. PTI

pose on the import of certain American products.

Addressing an event organised by the U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) here, Mr. Garcetti observed that as the two countries

"become closer", they are able to be "more blunt" with each other.

"We need together to lower tariffs, not to see them go up. We need together to increase trade

and to make it more fair and equal. We need to together make sure that there's training and talent that meets the needs of companies on both sides of the Indo Pacific," he said.

In an interactive session after his address, Mr. Garcetti pointed out that "despite the difficulties on both sides", the India-U.S. bilateral trade had witnessed a "10-fold increase", with America becoming the country's number one trading partner.

"I think that as you hear, as recently as yesterday, President-elect Trump talk about trade and how tariffs

need to be done fairly, let us have honest conversations. I think it's helpful for us to speak bluntly, but let us use that as a starting point to negotiate much more deeply than we do," the U.S. Ambassador to India said.

He further outlined that even though the U.S. and India don't really talk in ambitious ways about trade, yet the two countries have expanded trade ten-fold since 2001. Mr. Trump has repeatedly claimed that India is a "tariff king" and imposes "tremendously high" tariffs on American products.

**Sensex sinks 1%, Rupee hits all-time low to 85.13/Dollar****Lalatendu Mishra**

MUMBAI

Frontline stock indices on Thursday tumbled more than 1% while the rupee sank to an all-time low after the U.S. Federal Reserve's hawkish comments hinting at two rate cuts in 2025 instead of the four previously announced.

The sell-off, likely led by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs), caused the Indian rupee (INR) to depreciate to an all-time low of 85.1300 (spot) to U.S.\$.

The INR fell over 18 paisa to a dollar from its previous close of 84.9450.

The global markets slipped into the red on Wednesday after the U.S. Fed announced a 25 basis point rate cut and raised inflation forecast.

The S&P BSE Sensex plunged 964 points, or 1.2%, to 79,218 led by Bajaj Finserv (-2.5%), JSW Steel (-2.33%) and RIL (-1.79%).

In the 30-share index, which fell for the fourth



consecutive day, IndusInd Bank, Nestle India and Asian Paints hit 52-week lows. The NSE Nifty-50 index too fell 247 points or 1.02% to 23,952 points. IT, Defence, and financial indices shed over 1%.

"We expect INR to trade with a negative bias on global equities following a hawkish Fed and a strong Dollar. Concerns over slowdown in the economy may further weigh on INR. However, weak crude oil prices may support the INR at lower levels. U.S.-INR spot

price is expected to trade in a range of 84.90 to 85.25," said Anuj Choudhary, research analyst, Mihra Asset Sharekhan.

**SEBI mandates timelines for NFO fund deployment****Press Trust of India**

NEW DELHI

Markets regulator SEBI has decided to introduce timelines for deploying funds raised through New Fund Offers (NFOs) by asset management companies (AMCs) and relaxed regulatory framework regarding the alignment of AMC employees' interests with those of unit-holders.

Additionally, the regulator has mandated disclosure of stress testing for all mutual fund schemes to provide greater transparency to investors.

These proposals, approved by SEBI's board on Wednesday, aimed at enhancing operational flexibility for mutual funds while ensuring greater accountability and trust among investors.

Regarding deployment timelines, SEBI said fund managers must deploy money collected during NFO as per the specified asset allocation of the scheme, typically within 30 days.

**Lessors slap legal notice on SpiceJet for aircraft parts theft****Jagriti Chandra**

NEW DELHI



Three aircraft lessors have served a legal notice on SpiceJet accusing it of theft of parts that include engines from five of the Boeing 737 freighter planes they had rented to the airline.

The parts removed from these five aircraft are being used on other planes deployed for commercial flights, as per the legal notice. The airline dismissed the charge from the lessors as "baseless and incorrect".

The lessors, Ireland-based NGF Genesis Limited, NGF Charlie Limited, NGF Alpha Limited, have already removed two of these five planes - leased over 2018 and 2019 - from India, and intend to fly out the remaining three over unpaid dues totalling \$12.68 million.

"It must be pointed out that you didn't seek the approval of my clients before

taking the aforementioned action and neither have you paid for the use of my clients' high value equipment. Therefore, prima-facie, you are, inter alia, guilty of theft," said a December 18 notice by advocate Nitin Sarin, managing partner, Sarin & Co.

"Contrary to the claims in your query, we are in active discussion with the lessor to return the grounded aircraft to service within the first quarter of 2025. Additionally, we are in advanced discussions with the same lessor for the induction of wide-body and turboprop aircraft into our fleet," the airline said in response to a query from The Hindu.

**MARKETS****MARKET WATCH**

	THURSDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	79,218	-1.20
US Dollar	85.13	-0.22
Gold	78,300	-1.01
Brent oil	72.74	-1.76

**NIFTY 50**

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2419.55	-38.05
Adani Ports	1205.00	-5.05
Apollo Hosp	7297.55	60.15
Asian Paints	2291.85	-53.60
Axis Bank	1108.90	-13.35
Bajaj Auto	8982.65	25.90
Bajaj Finserv	1589.55	-41.20
Bajaj Finance	6918.55	-155.90
Bharti Elec.	289.50	-5.30
Bharti Airtel	1600.30	-1.60
BPCL	294.55	6.25
Britannia Ind	4785.75	3.10
Cipla	1506.95	34.15
Coal India	391.95	-3.85
Dr Reddys Lab	1325.60	50.20
Eicher Motors	4771.95	22.20
Grasim Ind	2539.05	-55.10
HCL Tech	1934.25	-26.10
HDFC Bank	1793.50	-17.20
HDFC Life	623.55	-1.00
Hero MotoCorp	4406.95	17.50
Hindalco	629.35	-3.65
Hindu Unilever	2389.85	0.65
ICICI Bank	1286.90	-27.25
IndusInd Bank	964.40	-0.80
Infosys	1946.20	-32.95
ITC	466.55	-3.95
JSW Steel	925.95	-20.90
Kotak Bank	1762.10	-17.90
L&T	3716.35	-41.80
M&M	3014.65	-36.55
Maruti Suzuki	10955.35	-47.10
NestleIndia	2160.40	-27.65
NTPC	337.40	-4.35
ONGC	241.85	-2.30
PowerGrid Corp	321.65	0.10
Reliance Ind	1230.45	-22.80
SBI Life	1405.90	7.90
State Bank	832.80	-5.35
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2945.45	14.05
Sun Pharma	1823.30	-22.25
TataConsumerProduct	907.10	-2.25
Tata Motors	744.05	-11.65
Tata Steel	143.26	-1.20
TCS	4271.90	-75.95
Tech Mahindra	1754.35	-24.55
Titan	3356.85	-45.05
Trent Ltd.	7092.00	-21.75
UltraTech Cement	11670.80	-93.15
Wipro	312.75	0.15

**EXCHANGE RATES**

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen as on December 19

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	84.87	85.19
Euro	88.36	88.70
British Pound	107.36	107.77
Japanese Yen (100)	54.08	54.29
Chinese Yuan	11.63	11.68
Swiss Franc	94.70	95.06
Singapore Dollar	62.47	62.71
Canadian Dollar		

**JERUSALEM**

**HRW accuses Israel of genocide for restricting Gaza water access**



Human Rights Watch on Thursday accused Israel of committing "acts of genocide" in Gaza by systematically depriving civilians of water, leading to thousands of deaths. The report details intentional damage to water infrastructure and calls for international sanctions against Israel, which denies these allegations. AFP

**WASHINGTON**

**Trump opposes deal to avert govt. shutdown, claims it betrays values**



U.S. President-elect Donald Trump urged Republicans on Wednesday to reject a bipartisan spending Bill to prevent a government shutdown, claiming it betrays conservative values. His intervention, supported by Elon Musk, threatens the Bill's passage, risking federal agency funding before the Friday deadline. AFP

**ISTANBUL**

**Turkiye won't halt Syria military activity until Kurd fighters 'disarm'**



Turkey on Thursday said it will continue military preparations in northern Syria until Kurdish fighters disarm, citing ongoing threats along its border. Concerns rise over a potential Turkish assault on Kobane, as Ankara refuses to negotiate with the SDF, which it views as linked to its nemesis, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). AFP

**LAGOS**

**Police say 35 children killed, six injured in Nigeria fair stampede**



A stampede at a school fair in Ibadan, Nigeria, resulted in 35 children dead and six injured, the police said on Thursday. Eight individuals have been arrested, including the event's main sponsor. Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde expressed condolences, emphasising the need for safety at public events. AFP

# U.K. could train soldiers in Ukraine: Defence Secretary

Currently, Britain has a team of medical personnel in Ukraine and has been training its troops within the U.K. since 2022; Starmer told Trump that allies should 'stand together' to help Kyiv

**Sriram Lakshman**

LONDON

The U.K. could send troops to Ukraine to train Ukrainians, U.K. Defence Secretary John Healey has suggested.

The U.K. has only a team of medical personnel within in Ukraine and has been training Ukrainian troops within Britain since 2022. The suggestion comes as European countries seek to strengthen Kyiv's hand before any negotiations to end the war with Russia.

The U.K. would need to make the training of troops "a better fit" for what Ukraine needed, Mr. Healey said en route to Kyiv on Wednesday, as per a report in *The Times*.

"We will look wherever we can respond to what the Ukrainians want. They are the ones fighting," he said when asked about whether this meant British



Britain's Defence Secretary John Healey visits St Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv on Wednesday. GETTY IMAGES

troops training Ukrainians in Ukraine, *The Times* reported.

**Aid for Ukraine**

Western countries have aided Ukraine in terms of financing, weaponry and intelligence but avoided sending troops to the country in order to not become direct parties to the conflict with Russia, which invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

Mr. Healey's remarks came on a day when U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer and U.S. President-elect Donald Trump spoke on the phone.

Mr. Starmer told Mr. Trump that allies would need to stand together to support Ukraine and ensure it is in the strongest possible position", Downing Street said.

Several European countries and the head of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are trying to ensure that Kyiv is strengthened before any negotiations with Moscow.

**Call for ceasefire**  
NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte reiterated this message on Wednesday in Brussels during a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and some other European leaders, who had gathered in the Belgian capital for a European Union summit level meeting with Mr. Zelenskyy on Thursday.

Mr. Trump has suggested the U.S. could pull out of NATO and curb funding for Ukraine. The President-elect has also expressed a keenness and had called for an "immediate ceasefire" after meeting Mr. Zelenskyy in Paris on December 8.

**'Corruption may hamper China military modernisation'**

**Agence France-Presse**  
WASHINGTON

Corruption within China's military has led to the removal of at least 15 high-ranking officials and may hamper the country's modernisation efforts, according to a Pentagon report on Wednesday.

Investigations into these leaders, who oversaw crucial missile development projects, could disrupt progress toward China's 2027 military goals, which include enhancing capabilities in various areas.

The ongoing anti-corruption campaign, initiated by President Xi Jinping, aims to address these issues but has resulted in significant personnel turnover that could affect operational effectiveness.

# Mass rape orchestrator gets 20-year jail term in France

**Agence France-Presse**  
AVIGNON

A court on Thursday sentenced a French man to 20 years jail for committing and orchestrating the mass rapes of his now former wife Gisele Pelicot with dozens of strangers, but her children expressed disappointment at what they saw as overly-lenient sentences for the other men convicted.

The convictions of all 51 defendants and their sentencing brought to a close a three-month trial that has horrified France, resonated across the world and turned Gisele Pelicot into an icon of female courage.

Dominique Pelicot, who had already confessed to the crimes, was earlier found guilty by the court in the southern city of Avignon.



that there was "no question" of any of the children wanting to speak to their father after the conviction.

Delivering sentence, the presiding judge said Dominique Pelicot will not be eligible for parole until he has served two thirds of his sentence.

Dominique Pelicot, 72, has admitted to drugging Gisele Pelicot for almost a decade so he and strangers he recruited online could rape her.

The case has sparked protests and drew fresh attention to male violence in France.

Rights activists hope that the trial will lead to change in society.

"It's time that the macho, patriarchal society that trivialises rape changes," Gisele Pelicot said in November.

# Putin ready to meet Trump 'anytime' to talk Ukraine deal

**Agence France-Presse**

MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday he was ready for talks "anytime" with U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, who has touted his ability to strike a Ukraine peace deal within hours of coming to office.

Mr. Trump, who will return to the White House in January, has stoked fears in Kyiv that he could force Ukraine to accept peace on terms favourable to Moscow.

Holding his annual end-of-year press conference, the Kremlin leader said his



Vladimir Putin

troops held the upper hand across the battlefield, but was forced to admit he does not know when Russia will take back the western Kursk region where Ukrainian troops launched an incursion in August.

# Israeli air strikes hit Yemen's rebel-held capital and port city

**Associated Press**

DUBAI

A series of intense Israeli air strikes shook Yemen's rebel-held capital and a port city early Thursday and killed at least nine people, officials said, shortly after a Houthi missile targeted central Israel.

Thursday's strikes risk further escalating conflict with the Iranian-backed Houthis, whose attacks on the Red Sea corridor have drastically impacted global shipping. The rebels have so far avoided the same level of intense military strikes that have targeted Palestinian militant group

Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah, fellow members of Tehran's self-described "Axis of Resistance".

**Two waves**  
Israel's military said that it conducted two waves of strikes in a preplanned operation that began early Thursday and involved 14 fighter jets. The military said the first wave of strikes targeted Houthi infrastructure at the ports of Hodeida, Salif and the Ras Isa oil terminal on the Red Sea.

Then, in a second wave of strikes, the military said its fighter jets targeted Houthi energy infrastructure in Sanaa.

**EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY****Open E-Tender Notice**

On behalf of president of India, DRM (Commercial), E.C.Railway, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya invites e-auction for under mentioned ATM locations situated at different stations over Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya division for installation of ATM machines from Public sector banks.

**Scheduled Commercial Indian Banks/Indian co-operative Banks/White label ATM service providers.** Details are as under:-

1-AA/1: Name of work with its location and completion period : Space for installation of ATM near booking office (UTS/PRS building) in circulating area at Anugraha Narayan Road Railway station for 05 years (1826 days).

E-Auction Catalogue No.: ATM-DDU-25-01, E-Auction Lot No.: ATM-DDU-UADR-Gen-9-23-1, Date & Time for E-Auction : E-auction will start at 10:00 hrs and close at 10:30 hrs on 01/01/2025.

AA/2: Name of work with its location and completion period : Space for installation of ATM in circulating area at Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Railway station for 05 years (1826 days).

E-Auction Catalogue No.: ATM-DDU-25-01, E-Auction Lot No.: ATM-DDU-DDU-Gen-3-24-1. Date & Time for E-Auction : E-auction will start at 10:00 hrs and close at 10:40 hrs on 01/01/2025.

2. Website particular where complete details of E-Auction available.

www.ireps.gov.in (E-auction Leasing)

Divisional Railway Manager(Comm)/ECR/PT, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya

PR/01723/DDU/Comm/I.N/24/25/44

**EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY****E-Auction Notice**

On behalf of president of India, DRM (Commercial), E.C.Railway, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya invites e-auction for under mentioned ATM locations situated at different stations over Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya division for installation of ATM machines from Public sector banks.

**Scheduled Commercial Indian Banks/Indian co-operative Banks/White label ATM service providers.** Details are as under:-

1-AA/1: Name of work with its location and completion period : Space for installation of ATM near booking office (UTS/PRS building) in circulating area at Anugraha Narayan Road Railway station for 05 years (1826 days).

E-Auction Catalogue No.: ATM-DDU-25-01, E-Auction Lot No.: ATM-DDU-UADR-Gen-9-23-1. Date & Time for E-Auction : E-auction will start at 10:00 hrs and close at 10:30 hrs on 01/01/2025.

AA/2: Name of work with its location and completion period : Space for installation of ATM in circulating area at Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Railway station for 05 years (1826 days).

E-Auction Catalogue No.: ATM-DDU-25-01, E-Auction Lot No.: ATM-DDU-DDU-Gen-3-24-1. Date & Time for E-Auction : E-auction will start at 10:00 hrs and close at 10:40 hrs on 01/01/2025.

2. Website particular where complete details of E-Auction available.

www.ireps.gov.in (E-auction Leasing)

Divisional Railway Manager(Comm)/ECR/PT, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya

PR/01723/DDU/Comm/I.N/24/25/44

**CITY UNION BANK LIMITED**

Credit Recovery and Management Department  
Administrative Office : No. 24-B, Gandhi Nagar,

Kumbakonam - 612 001. E-Mail id : crmd@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 8 (6) & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of Rs.1,94,83,988/- (Rupees One Crore Ninety Four Lakh Eighty Three Thousand Nine Hundred and Eighty Eight only) as on 11-11-2024 together with further interest to be charged from 12-11-2024 onwards, other expenses and any other dues to the bank by the Borrowers / Guarantors No.1) Ms. Sapna Enterprises, 3rd Floor, 267, Kandile Kashan Street, Fatehpur, Delhi - 110009. No.2) Mr. Prashant Gupta, S/o. Mr. Yogendra Gupta, Flat No. 1A-230, Upper Ground Floor, Vijay Vihar, Phase-I, Rohini, Delhi - 110085. No.3) Mrs. Varsha Dabas, W/o. Mr. Prashant Gupta, Flat No.1A-230, Upper Ground Floor, Vijay Vihar, Phase-I, Rohini, Delhi - 110085. No.4) Mr. Yogendra Gupta, S/o. Mr. Hari Om Gupta, Flat No. 1A-290, Upper Ground Floor, Vijay Vihar, Phase-I, Rohini, Delhi - 110085.

**Inmorable Properties Mortgaged to our Bank**

**Schedule - A : (Property Owned by Mr. Yogendra Gupta, S/o. Mr. Hari Om Gupta)**

Open Terrace measuring 140.47 Square meters of Third Floor of Property bearing No.264 to 269, Ward No.6, situated at Gali Kandile Kashan, Fatehpur, Delhi, along with common facilities and proportionate undivided share in the land and bounded as under:- East - Property No.380 to 387, West - Gali Kandile Kashan, North - Property No.270, South - Property No.263.

**Reserve Price : Rs.70,00,000/- (Rupees Seventy Lakh only)**

**Schedule - B : (Property Owned by Mr. Yogendra Gupta, S/o. Mr. Hari Om Gupta)**

Built-up Shop measuring 14 feet 3 inches x 13 feet 5 inches or say 18.15 Square Meters, on Third Floor of Property Bearing Municipal No.267, Ward No.VI, situated at Gali Kandile Kashan, Fatehpur, Delhi, along with common facilities and proportionate undivided share in the land and bounded as under:- East - Property No.250 to 257, West - Gali Kandile Kashan, North - Property No.263.

**Reserve Price : Rs.15,00,000/- (Rupees Fifteen Lakh only)****RE-AUCTION DETAILS**

Date of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale | Venue

07-01-2025 | City Union Bank Limited, Delhi-Chandni Chowk Branch, 1917-18, 1st Floor, Opp. Gurudwara Sisganj Sahib, Chandni 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-Chandni Chowk Branch, 1917-18, 1st Floor, Opp. Gurudwara Sisganj Sahib, Chandni 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 of 10% of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of "City Union Bank Ltd.", or on before 12.00 Noon on the date of tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. (4) For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact : Telephone No.011-23929803, Cell No.9350011163. (5) The property/ies 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 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 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 stip

**SAD EXIT**

Ashwin deserved much better and also a fitting farewell, says Kapil



Former India skipper Kapil Dev said R. Ashwin deserved a fitting farewell. "I was shocked by how one of India's greatest cricketers chose to leave the game. I also saw a tinge of hurt on his face. He looked unhappy, and that was sad to see. He deserved much better, a fitting farewell," Kapil said.

**RICH TRIBUTE**

Ashwin had a fantastic career, sure it will be celebrated: Starc



Australia's left-arm pacer Mitchell Starc has heaped praise on the just-retired India off-spinner R. Ashwin. "He has always been a bit of a thorn in our side over in India and played a part in series here in Australia. It's been a fantastic career and I'm sure it will be celebrated that way," said Starc.

**IMPASSE ENDS**

India to play its Champions Trophy matches at a neutral venue



India will play next year's Champions Trophy matches on a neutral ground after refusing to visit Pakistan, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Thursday following weeks of wrangling. The announcement ended a standoff after India told the ICC it would not send its team to Pakistan because of security fears.

**SUPER SHOW**

Yoddhas cuts Giants down to size; Mumba too strong for Pirates



UP Yoddhas produced a dominant performance to beat Gujarat Giants 59-23 in a PKL match in Pune on Thursday. Gagan Gowda scored 19 points while Bhavani Rajput registered a Super 10 as the Yoddhas extended their unbeaten run to eight games. U Mumba defeated Patna Pirates 43-37 in the other match of the day.

# How the Ashwin retirement drama unfolded at Gabba

History tells us there is something about contests involving Australia which forces the greats of the game to mull about life choices



**The big call:** Ashwin made his retirement announcement in the presence of skipper Rohit. ANI

**INDIA IN AUS**

**K.C. Vijaya Kumar**  
MELBOURNE

The morning after has been one of reflection and praise. Once R. Ashwin retired from international cricket at Brisbane's Gabba on Wednesday evening, the overwhelming reaction was unanimous respect.

But there was a lot that happened in the lead-up to the announcement that stunned the cricketing universe.

Just as Wednesday was oscillating between rain and the odd streak of sunshine, and the third Test was vacillating between India's resilience and Australia's win-at-all-cost approach, there was a sudden twist.

X, formerly Twitter, was agog with an expected 'big announcement', and the instant speculation was about a probable release of the ICC Champions Trophy schedule.

As the minutes ticked by

and the rains had the last word in a game that ended in a draw, the latest inference was about a probable retirement of a legendary player.

This veered towards Rohit Sharma. He had left his batting gloves near the dugout after his dismissal in the first innings. Was that a sign? Then analysis rested on Virat Kohli. He had relinquished Test captaincy through a statement on social media, and was something even more drastic afoot?

**Eureka moment**

Suddenly, the eureka moment occurred when a television grab of Kohli and Ashwin engaged in a chat emerged from the pavilion.

The former leant sideways and hugged the latter, and then the penny dropped. In the press box, all the scribes dug into their inner Sherlock Holmes.

So this is finally about Ashwin, one of the legends of the game! The assumption proved right when he came along with Rohit and

met the media. Soon there was a massive breaking-news moment.

This was slightly different from what Sourav Ganguly did at Bengaluru's M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in 2008. He addressed the press ahead of a Test against Australia. Just as the interaction wound to a close and reporters were removing their recorders, the former India captain paused and said: "Just one last thing, lads."

Quickly he declared that the Test series against Australia would be his last in the India colours.

Once he left, the correspondents were hollering into their phones about Dada's retirement. Perhaps there is something about contests involving Australia which forces the greats to mull about life choices.

Even M.S. Dhoni at Melbourne in 2014, left after a routine press conference, and then the BCCI issued a note about his retirement from Tests. Reporters immediately rushed to the team hotel but Dhoni lapsed into silence.

With more than 47,000 spectators chanting her name, Richa (54, 21b, 3x4, 5x6) guided India to a massive 217 for four – its high-

Rousing welcome back home for Ashwin

**Sports Bureau**  
CHENNAI

A day after announcing his retirement from international cricket in Brisbane at the conclusion of the third Test against Australia, R. Ashwin arrived in Chennai early on Thursday morning to a rousing welcome.

Speaking to reporters at his house, the 38-year-old said, "It's emotional for a lot of people, and maybe it will sink (for me) in but personally, it is a great sense of relief and satisfaction. It was very instinctive and it has been running in my head for a while. I just felt it on day 4 and called it a day."

However, the wily off-spinner said that he still has the desire to play as long as possible in club cricket.

"I am going to play for CSK and don't be surprised if I aspire to play for as long as I can. I don't think Ashwin the cricketer is done, I think Ashwin the Indian cricketer has probably called it a time," remarked Ashwin.

# India will be glad to go all square to Melbourne after the great escape

**K.C. Vijaya Kumar**  
MELBOURNE

Over a month in Australia, India has seen it all. The high at Perth, the low at Adelaide and the stalemate at Brisbane, with the weather lending a generous hand in the last fixture. The Border-Gavaskar Trophy series is level at 1-1 and with two Tests remaining, Rohit Sharma's men will get extra opportunities to revive their campaign.

R. Ashwin's sudden retirement has added another layer and it is never easy to move on when a champion departs. In a sense, without meaning it that way, he has revived the transition process, a movement which saw Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane lose their Test spots.

From the original core-group, Rohit, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja are still part of the mix. But time and tide wait for none and in the coming months and years, more storied careers will hit the full-stop button. In this series, Kohli found his voice at Perth before the old vulnerability around off-stump cropped up again. Rohit, meanwhile, has strived but either succumbed to tough deliveries or erred in his judgement.

Jadeja, finally getting an opportunity at the Gabba, was rusty as a bowler and doughty as a batter. With Ashwin's exit, he becomes the number one spinner in terms of legacy within the squad, even if that doesn't necessarily guarantee a spot in the playing eleven while competing overseas.

K.L. Rahul's consistency (235 runs averaging 47) and the lower-order's pluck, has bailed out India. But the other batters have to rally around, be it veterans like Kohli and Rohit, or youngsters like Shubman Gill and Yashasvi Jaiswal. To expect Jasprit Bumrah and Akash Deep to bowl incisively and also bat with gumption, all the time, is too lopsided a hope.

The duo, in a sense, saved the third Test by helping India avoid the follow-on. The constant rains through the Test meant that it became a rare contest which lasted five days. It scuppered the host's plans to maximise the value of a first innings score of 445. However, India would be glad to have staged the great escape.

With the fourth Test commencing here from December 26, Rohit's men get some time to unwind, train well and also firm up their strategies. The failure of the established batters, Rahul being an exception, has meant that Rishabh Pant, stepping in at five, is burdened with the task of rebuilding. He and Nithish Kumar Reddy, offer some insurance, but being constantly saddled with a salve operation can be a draining experience.

The coaching staffed by Gautam Gambhir have to find a way to choke Travis Head. The southpaw has papered the cracks and launched counter-attacks. Australia will miss the services of an injured Josh Hazlewood but Scott Boland is a strong replacement.

On Thursday, Brisbane stirred awake to a sunny morning and Melbourne had clear skies and a summer vibe marinated with the Christmas spirit. Hopefully, in the coming days, India will gain a sunny perspective.

# Richa enters record books as India clinches series

**Shayan Acharya**  
NAVI MUMBAI

est total in the format – as the Women in Blue recorded a 60-run win in the third T20I and pocketed the series 2-1.

Coming on the back of a dominating victory, West Indies' move to field back-fired as none of its bowlers could make an impact.

Despite Uma Chetry departing early, India piled on the runs as stand-in captain Smriti Mandhana (77, 47b, 13x4, 1x6) and Jemimah Rodrigues put on a 98-run partnership for the second wicket.

Smriti set the tone by scoring 13 off the third over and 20 off the fourth. As she smashed the bowlers all over the park, en route her third consecutive fifty,



**Dazzling show:** Richa joined Australia's Litchfield and Kiwi Devine in scoring the fastest fifty in women's T20I. PTI

Smriti not only made bat-toss look quite easy, but also set the record for most runs (193) by an Indian woman in a bilateral T20I se-

ries. Making the most of West Indies' listless bowling and sloppy fielding, Smriti also became the batter with most runs in a ca-

lendar year in women's T20Is with a tally of 763.

Once the Smriti-Jemimah partnership ended, Richa forged a 70-run stand with Raghvi Bist and carried on the carnage.

Richa found the fence with ease as India scored at nearly 10 an over.

However, with heavy dew settling in, the Indian bowlers had a tough job on hand.

But left-arm spinner Radha Yadav dashed Windies' hopes with figures of four for 29.

**The scores:** India 217/4 in 20 overs (Smriti 77, Richa 54, Jemimah 39) bt West Indies 157/9 in 20 overs (Henry 43; Radha 4/29); **Toss:** West Indies.

**PoM:** Richa; **Pos:** Smriti.

# Karnataka men claim first National badminton title in nearly five decades

**N. Sudarshan**  
BENGALURU

Karnataka and Haryana emerged the men's and women's team winners at the 2024 Senior National Badminton Championship at the KBA courts here on Thursday.

The host produced a splendid performance to beat fancied Railways 3-1 for its first men's title in nearly five decades.

In fact, no one at the venue – not even Anup Sridhar, one of Karnataka's best players – could agree on when the previous victory was.

Karnataka Badminton

Association later confirmed 1977 as the year and the body duly announced an additional cash prize of ₹6.5 lakh. For Haryana, remembrance was not a problem, for it was its maiden win. An additional bounty of ₹5.5 lakh made it sweeter.

Karnataka's success came courtesy two outstanding results from S. Bhargav and the young doubles pairing of Nicholas Nathan Raj and Tushar Suveri.

Bhargav beat junior world championship bronze medallist Ayush Shetty over three games before Nicholas and Tushar



**A day to cherish:** Karnataka men produced a splendid performance to beat fancied Railways while Haryana women had to work harder against Gujarat in the summit clashes. K. MURALI KUMAR

outlasted K. Pruthvi Roy and K. Sai Pratheek, runners-up at the recent Syed Modi International.

M. Raghu brought the title home with a 21-12, 21-10 rout of Siddharth Pratap Singh.

Railways did not field former champion Mithun Manjunath, who was nursing a slight ankle injury sustained on Wednesday.

"We are extremely happy," said Karnataka coach Jagdish Yadav. "Doubles

bles rubbers to help Haryana triumph.

**The results:** **Finals: Men:** Karnataka bt Railways 3-1 (D.S. Saneeth lost to Chirag Sen 21-23, 16-21; S. Bhargav bt Ayush Shetty 13-21, 21-18, 21-16; Nicholas Nathan Raj & Tushar Suveri bt K. Pruthvi Roy & K. Sai Pratheek 16-21, 21-9, 21-19; M. Raghu bt Siddharth Pratap Singh 21-12, 21-10).

**Women:** Haryana bt Gujarat 3-2 (Devika Sihag lost to Tasnim Mir 25-27, 10-21; Anmol Kharb bt Adita Rao 14-21, 21-17, 21-15; Unnati Hooda & Anmol Kharb bt Shanen Christian & Anjali Rawat 21-8, 21-12; Unnati lost to Shreya Lele 21-19, 19-21, 15-21; Devika & Ridhi Kaur Toor bt Tasnim & Adita 9-21, 21-19, 21-13).

## IN BRIEF



## India u-19 women post facile win over Bangladesh

Player-of-the-match G. Trisha's (pic) unbeaten 58 (46b, 10x4) helped India score an easy eight-wicket win over Bangladesh in its first Super Four match of the women's under-19 T20 Asia Cup in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday. Chasing a modest 81, India raced past the target in 12.1 overs.

**The scores:** Bangladesh U-19 80/8 in 20 overs (Mosammat Eva 14, Ayushi Shukla 3/9, Sonam Yadav 2/6) lost to India U-19 86/2 in 12.1 overs (G. Trisha 58 n.o., Nikki Prasad 22 n.o.).

## Atal's century takes Afghanistan to record win

Afghanistan recorded its biggest ODI victory – a 232-run win over Zimbabwe after opener Sediullah Atal's maiden century and off-spinner A.M. Ghazanfar's spell of three for nine in Harare on Thursday. Afghanistan amassed 286 for six in its 50 overs, led by Atal's 104 (128 balls) as part of an opening stand of 191 with Abdul Malik (84, 10lb). Zimbabwe struggled from the start of its reply and was bowled out for 54.

**The scores:** Afghanistan 286/6 in 50 overs (Atal 104, Malik 84) bt Zimbabwe 54 in 17.5 overs.



## Paddlers Priyanuj and Syndrela claim under-17 titles

Priyanuj Bhattacharyya of Assam edged out Tamil Nadu's P.B. Abhinand 10-12, 11-6, 10-12, 13-11, 12-10 to lift the youth boys' under-17 title in the UTT National ranking table tennis championships at the Sree Kanteerava Indoor Stadium, Bengaluru, on Thursday. In the youth girls' final, West Bengal's Syndrela Das coasted past Divyanshi Bhowmick 11-8, 11-3, 11-9.

## Real Madrid beats Pachuca in Intercontinental Cup final

Real Madrid beat Mexican team Pachuca 3-0 in the Intercontinental Cup final on Wednesday, making Carlo Ancelotti the most decorated coach in the club's history. Ancelotti lifted his 15th title with the Spanish powerhouse, surpassing the 14 trophies that he and Miguel Munoz had won. Munoz had coached the team in the 1960s and 70s.

**The result:** Real Madrid 3 (Mbappe 37, Rodrygo 53, Vinicius 84-pen) bt Pachuca 0.

## LIVE TELECAST

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

**PKL:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 8 p.m.

**Bundesliga:** Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 1 a.m. (Saturday).

**Serie A:** grx.world, 1.15 a.m. (Saturday).

# Parneet lights up the day with three podium finishes

The compound archer claims two gold medals and a bronze; in recurve Deepika and Ankita survive a shoot-off apiece to set up the summit clash

## NATIONAL ARCHERY

**Y.B. Sarangi**  
JAMSHEDPUR

**C**ompound archer Parneet Kaur displayed her brilliance to claim two gold medals and a bronze in the National archery championships at the Gopal Maidan here on Thursday.

Parneet, a women's team gold medallist in the World championships and Asian Games, shot good scores to help Punjab, also comprising Avneet Kaur and Asmat, take the women's bronze medal. She also secured the mixed team gold with Uday Kamboj and her maiden individual crown to record her best showing.

Even as individual finals were shifted to different targets at the last moment to finish the action before sunset, the 19-year-old maintained her focus and scored perfect 30s in first and third ends while beating Srishti Singh 146-142 in the final.

"I stay prepared for challenges. Happy with my performance," said Par-



**On a roll:** Parneet winning the compound women's individual event on Thursday. R. RAGU

neet, the ranking round topper.

Even without proper warm-up, Abhishek Verma scored 30s in the last two ends to defeat Kamboj 147-145 for the men's individual gold.

In recurve, Paris Olympics team-mates Deepika Kumari and Ankita Bhakat survived a shoot-off apiece to set up a women's individual summit clash.

B. Dhiraj reached the men's final, while top-

ranked Neeraj Chauhan and Atanu Das got eliminated prior to the quarter-finals.

**The results: Recurve:**

**Individual: Semifinals: Men:**

Divyansh Chaudhary (Har) bt Atul Verma (Utk) 7-1, B. Dhiraj (SSCB) bt Chingakham Achanba Singh (Ar) 7-1. **Women:** Ankita Bhakat (Jha) bt Bhargavi Bhagora (Gu) 7-6 (shoot-off: 9\*-9), Deepika Kumari (PSPB) bt Simranjeet Kaur (Pun) 6-4.

**Team: Men: Gold:** Maharashtra bt SSCB 235-231; **Bronze:** Haryana bt Punjab 237-235

**Women: Gold:** Maharashtra bt Rajasthan 234-220; **Bronze:** Punjab bt Railways 228-226.

**Mixed: Gold:** Punjab bt Maharashtra 158-156; **Bronze:** Rajasthan bt Manipur 157-155.

## INDIA'S PREMIER MASHWINNER!



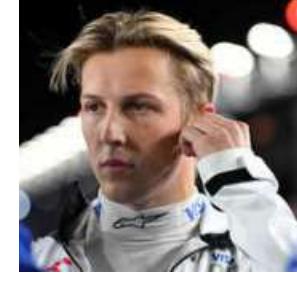
**Amul**  
**HAVE WITH OFFIE OR TEA!**

dcunha/AB/997

## Lawson replaces Perez in the Red Bull team

## FORMULA ONE

**Reuters**  
LONDON



New Zealander Liam Lawson will replace Sergio Perez as teammate to four times World champion Max Verstappen at Red Bull next season, the Formula One team said on Thursday. Mexican Perez's departure was announced on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Valterri Bottas will return to Mercedes as a reserve driver for the 2025 season, the team announced on Thursday, after the Finn left Sauber at the end of the season.

The 35-year-old Bottas spent five seasons from 2017 to 2021 at Mercedes driving alongside Lewis Hamilton before moving to Alfa Romeo, which later became Sauber. Bottas had a roller coaster ride at Sauber, finishing 10th in his first season but not winning a point in 2024.

## Kerala stays atop Group B after third straight win

## SANTOSH TROPHY

**Sports Bureau**  
HYDERABAD



**Intense action:** Kerala had it easy against Odisha. X@KERALAFA

Kerala scored its third win in-a-row, when it notched up a 2-0 win over Odisha, to maintain its position at the top of Group B with nine points while Meghalaya recorded its first victory in the final round of the 78th Santosh Trophy National football championship at Deccan Arena here on Thursday.

Former champion Kerala took the lead in the 40th minute when Muhammad Ajsal raced from the half-way line, left two defenders in the lurch, and rifled a left-footer into the bottom corner.

Kerala doubled the lead with a rapid turnover in the 54th minute. Odisha lost the ball in the middle of the park and Muhammed Musharaf was quick to turn and release Naseeb Rahman through on goal.

A composed Rahman

tucked the ball past Siddhanta Padhan in the Odisha goal.

In another match, Donlad Diengdoh fired Meghalaya into top gear against Delhi, striking twice in the space of two minutes to leave Delhi stunned.

The first goal came in the 49th minute as he took poked home from close range after the Delhi goalkeeper Raj Kumar Mahato saved a long-range strike.

The Delhi defence was caught napping two mi-

nutes later as Diengdoh latched onto a through ball and went around Mahato, who had ventured out to the edge of the box in an attempt to clear the ball.

As the Delhi defenders rushed to the goal-line, the Meghalaya forward squeezed the ball into the net with precision.

**The results: Group B:** Kerala 2 (Muhammad Ajsal 41, Naseeb Rahman 54) bt Odisha 0; Meghalaya 2 (Donlad Diengdoh 49, 51) bt Delhi 0; Goa 1 (Ronaldo Oliveira 90+2) bt Tamil Nadu 0.

## India qualifies for Rod Laver Junior Challenge World event

## TENNIS

**Sports Bureau**  
SINGAPORE



The Indian team asserted its prowess by beating Japan 4-2 in the second league match of the Asia-Oceania IC Rod Laver Junior Challenge tennis event at the Winchester Arena on Thursday.

India, thus qualified for the Worldwide challenge, which will be hosted by Spain next year.

The Indian team won the four singles through Aradhya Kshiti, Sohini Mohanty, Samarth Sahita and Rishitha Basireddy to ensure its qualification from the three-team competition.

## Good day

Later, the Japanese were able to assert themselves by winning both the boys and girls doubles matches.

India had won the Worldwide challenge last year through Manas Dhamne, Rushil Khosla, Sohini Mohanty and Asmi

Adkar, with the team receiving the trophy from the legend himself in the USA.

The captain of the Indian team, Vikram Anand, captured the thrill of the tie against Japan.

## Incredible win

"Samarth and Sohini really came back from the brink to clinch this incredible victory for us."

"The high humidity and the heavy Slazenger balls made the play difficult on the indoor arena."

"The Japanese don't play many ITF junior tournaments and thus it was difficult to know about their game."

"Our players will continue to play the international circuit and should be ready for the Worldwide challenge, when it is held in Spain, tentatively in June," said Vikram Anand.

The host Singapore was the third team, and went down to both India and Japan.

## The results (league): India bt

Japan 4-2 (Aradhya Kshiti bt Junya Kawamura 6-1, 6-3; Sohni

Mohanty bt Kei sawaki 7-5, 6-4;

Samarth Sahita bt Tomoki Fujiwara 7-6(3), 6-1; Rishitha

Basireddy bt Miyu Takiguchi 6-1,

6-3; Aradhya & Samarth lost to Kawamura & Fujiwara 4-6, 6-3,

4-6; Sohni & Rishitha lost to Sawaki & Takiguchi 5-7, 3-6).

## Isn't She Beautiful for Dr. M.A.M. Ramaswamy Memorial Trophy

BENGALURU: Isn't She Beautiful, who has been well prepared, is expected to score in the Dr. M.A.M. Ramaswamy Memorial Trophy (1,200m), the feature event of the races to be held here on Friday (Dec. 20). False rails (width about 6m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

**1 SEATTLE SLEW PLATE** (1,400m), 1 maiden 2-y.-only, (Terms), 2-00 p.m.; 1. Circle of Dreams (4) Akshay K 56, Money Bags (6) Trevor K 56, 3. Ashwa Jimbare (3) Sharqi Md 54.5, 4. Ashwa Kali Bhanji (5) Suraj 54.5, 5. Devate (2) Sandesh 54.5 and 6. Sassy Sarah (1) S. Shareef 54.5.

1. MONEY BAGS, 2. CIRCLE OF DREAMS

**2 VIRAJET PLATE** (1,200m), 2 maidens 3-y.-only, (Terms), 2-30; 1. Amusing (8) Arshad 57, 2. Daiki (12) M. Rajesh K 57, 3. Defence Counsel (1) Suraj 57, 4. Grey Impact (9) Trevor 57, 5. Royal Decan (11) Antony 57, 6. Absolute Katrina (6) Darshan 55.5, 7. Felisa (10) L.A. Rozario 55.5, 8. Jolly (4) Sharqi Md 55.5, 9. Live The Dream (5) Akshay K 55.5, 10. Martino (2) Arvind K 55.5, 11. N.R.I Jetpower (7) Tauseef 55.5 and 12. Valencia (3) Ramu 55.5.

**1. LIVE THE DREAM, 2. DEFENCE COUNSEL, 3. GREY IMPACT**

**3 KRISHNA PLATE** (DIV. II, 1,200m), rated 20 to 45, 4-y.-o & over, 3-00; 1. Extraordinary (3) Ramu 61, 2. Star Comet (5) Rayan 61, 3. Ebotsé (6) Anthony 54.5, 4. Altamonte (8) Jagadeesh 54.5, 5. Domina (9) Sharqi Md 53.5, 6. Megham (4) Lakman S 53, 7. N.R.I Millennium (2) Arshad 53, 8. Everyone Godfather (7) Salman K 52.5 and 9. Embosom (1) Likith Appu 50.

**1. STAR COMET, 2. EBOTSÉ, 3. EXTRAORDINARY**

**4 GLASS HOUSE TROPHY** (1,400m), rated 40 to 65, 3-30; 1. Victoria Doreasani (6) Pavan 60, 2. Crosswater (2) Anthony 58.5, 3. Hand of God (10) Akshay K 56.5, 4. Storm Shadow (9) Trevor 56, 5. Classic Charm (1) Koshi K 55, 6. All Attraction (3) Anish Anamo H 53.5, 7. Hasting Sunrise (7) Sharqi Md 53, 8. Metzinger (8) Vinod Shinde 53, 9. Bestidentification (12) A. Ramu 52, 10. LC Star (1) Suhas K 50.5, 11. Corinthian (4) Shreyas S 50 and 12. Li in The Mist (5) R. Robert 50.

**1. CORINTHIAN, 2. CROSSWATER, 3. STORM SHADOW**

**7 KRISHNA PLATE** (DIV. I, 1,200m), rated 20 to 45, 4-y.-o & over, 5-00; 1. The Gallery Time (2) M. Naveen 62.5, 2. Cat Whiskers (9) Akshay K 62, 3. Vayu (5) R. Robert 62, 4. Smile Of Beauty (1) Tousif 61, 5. Isabelle (10) Pavan 60.5, 6. Prophecy (6) Sandesh 59, 7. Divo (8) G. Praveen 58.5, 8. Step To Destiny (4) Suhas K 58, 9. Springsteen (3) Antony 57 and 10. Double Vision (7) Jagadeesh 52.

**1. CAT WHISKERS, 2. THE GALLERY TIME, 3. PROPHECY**

**Double: CORINTHIAN - ISN'T SHE BEAUTIFUL**

Jkt: 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; Tr: 0; 2, 3 and 4; 5, 6 and 7.

**5 M. A.M. RAMASWAMY MEMORIAL TROPHY** (1,200m), rated 80 & above, 4-00; 1. Isn't She Beautiful (4) Sandesh 62, 2. Priceless Gold (3) Vinod Shinde 62, 3. Czar (5) Aleemuddin 62, 4. Star

## &lt;h

# It's Ash-win all the way

The off-spinner took to red-ball cricket like a duck to water after an impressive beginning in white-ball formats; his problem-solving abilities enabled him to come up with the right answers more often than not; his batting was a thing of beauty and he was blessed with natural timing



**Master of his craft:** Ashwin's most unforgettable moment with the white ball came in the 2013 Champions Trophy final. He was in his own flashlight after the match-winning show in a 2016 T20 World Cup game. VIJAY SONEJI & AKHILESH KUMAR

## R. Kaushik

**A** white-ball international for 17 months when he made his first Test appearance, it didn't take R. Ashwin long to make an impact on the red-ball ecosystem. As early as on debut, he served notice of his immense potential with nine wickets for the game and six in the second innings alone against West Indies in Delhi in November 2011, walking away with the Player-of-the-Match award.

Cricket is replete with narratives of players starting off with a bang and fading into oblivion as rapidly. The apprehension when a young bowler comes through, especially, is whether he can sustain excellence for a significant length of time. Ashwin was 25 when he made his Test debut - not too young for a spinner, maybe just about right given that he had five seasons of first-class action under his belt - but even at the Kotla when he was spinning a web around the Caribbeans, one sensed that barring the unforeseen, he would have a magnificent career.

There was no danger of Ashwin fading away, because he belongs to that unique school determined to keep improving, desperate to add new tricks to his repertoire, driven by an inner fire to be the best version of himself game after game, day after day, and then figure out how to better that best. Towards that end, he left no stone unturned. If it meant driving his coaches to distraction with constant questions, so be it. If it meant seeking out help and advice and assistance from the best in the business when he was still a star-in-the-making, he did so without a second thought. But even as he looked outward for cues and clues, he was always his best judge and his worst critic.

Ashwin believed that he knew himself best - his body, his craft, the feel of the ball in his big right hand, the revs he imparted on the cricket ball with his long fingers. So, while he reached out to the established stars, he also self-introspected. He asked tough questions of himself, and his problem-solving abilities enabled him to come up with the right answers more often than not. He used the nets as his vast laboratory of experimentation, his restless mind compelling him to spend hours poring over the physics of his craft as much as the larger science behind it.

It helped that his sharp mind had been formally shaped by a degree in

engineering, like his illustrious Statemate S. Venkataraman and the genius from Bengaluru, Erappalli Prasanna, both outstanding off-spinners themselves and two parts of the legendary spin quartet of the 1960s and 70s. He put his bookish knowledge to exceptional practical use, bringing angles and trajectories into play and posing a challenge every delivery even though he seemed to be doing little special. Spin is essentially the art of deception - off the pitch, yes, but most endearingly in the air. Ashwin made a name for himself as the master of deception who willed things to happen with his command over his primary skill, not waited for them to unfurl because his overactive mind wouldn't allow him to sit back and be reactive.

The Player-of-the-Match award on debut would be the first of ten such honours during a wondrous 106-Test career, the five-wicket haul in the second innings the first of 37 times he would achieve that feat. Only the peerless Muttiah Muralitharan, with an extraordinary 67 five-wicket hauls, is ahead of Ashwin in that regard; Ashwin shares second place with another genius, the late Shane Warne, who was so gifted that he could have taken wickets with an orange, if he so desired. That's not a bad league to be a part of.

## Astute young man

"I was at the tail end of my career when he came onto the scene, but he struck me as an astute young man eager to learn," Murali has been quoted as saying by *Telecom Asia Sport*. "He sought advice, asked thoughtful questions and put in the hard yards to better himself. That drive and hunger are what set him apart. He started his career as a batsman but shifted his focus to bowling. Hats off to him for making that bold pivot and achieving what he has. Reaching 500 Test wickets is no walk in the park."

Murali should know. After all, he is Test cricketer's leading wicket-taker with a monumental 800 scalps, a record that should comfortably stand the test of time. Even Murali must have been dumbfounded at the number of variations Ashwin could summon - variations in his run-up, in his loading, in his release, among other things - and the ease with which he could handle each of those changes, subtle but significant and necessitating relegating muscle memory to the deepest recesses of one's brain.

Ashwin is hailed as a magical red-ball

exponent, and with good reason too, but one must not forget that he more than held his own in the two limited-overs versions as well. Despite having played a reasonable number of Ranji Trophy matches for Tamil Nadu, it was his exploits for Chennai Super Kings, under Mahendra Singh Dhoni, in the Indian Premier League that brought him into national consciousness, caught the eye of the selectors and hastened his entry into the big league. Ashwin made himself comfortable with the new ball, with bowling in the PowerPlay. He got increasingly adept at delivering at the death, with the batters looking to line him up and tee off. It was here that his carrom ball, delivered with a flick of a most powerful right middle finger, came in handy.

The carrom ball and the *doosra* do pretty much the same thing in that they defy convention and break from leg to off when a right-hander is batting. The latter is often accompanied by raised eyebrows because it's extremely tough, if not practically impossible, to deliver it without a bent elbow. The carrom ball hardly carries a trace of illegality to it. It comes with hours and hours of tireless practice, of mastering something even more difficult potentially than wrist-spin. Hours and hours of practice is what got Ashwin going, so it's no surprise that he used the carrom ball to devastating effect, including as recently as in Mumbai last month, in the final Test against New Zealand.

While bowling remained his primary and stronger suit, Ashwin's batting was a thing of beauty. There come along a few batters blessed with natural timing, with great elegance, with an effortlessness that takes one's breath away. Most of them are batters who populated the upper half of the batting order, specialist batters like Mark Waugh and V.V.S. Laxman and Ashwin's last Test captain, Rohit Sharma. Without lapsing into hyperbole, it will be no exaggeration to state that in the grace stakes, Ashwin didn't suffer in comparison. His pulls off the front foot were out of the Laxman-Rohit playbook. The caressed cover-drives were mesmeric, entrancing, almost an apologetic contact of the bat with a ball that sped across the turf as if sufficiently woofed.

Perhaps so immersed in his primary craft was Ashwin that he neglected his batting somewhat with the passage of time, which is inevitable. But six

centuries, four of them coming from No. 8, are hardly trifling. When the mood seized him, Ashwin went into overdrive without appearing to do so. His last two tons, against England in 2021 and Bangladesh this September, came at a breakneck pace on dodgy surfaces, reiterating his adaptability and his propensity to use the tricks learned in one discipline to terrific effect in the other.

Ashwin wasn't afraid of shaking up the established order, of laying down his own rules, of walking on a path of his own creation. When the pundits scoffed at his over-reliance on his numerous variations at the stock off-break, he didn't lose sleep. When he questioned his leg-stump line of attack, bowling round the stumps to right-handers, he didn't stop to answer them. And when others sought to impose their version of morality on him when he had no compunctions in running out batters at the non-striker's end who backed up too far, he remained unruffled and committed to his beliefs, playing to the laws of the game and ignoring convenient barbs alluding to the spirit of the game being sullied. Ashwin didn't kowtow or take a backward step, especially when it came to this form of run outs. He didn't care if it put the 'virtuous' off. Once he felt he was in the right, he took his actions to their logical conclusion, no matter what cost it came at.

For Ashwin's vast legion of fans who will understandably be distraught that he won't don the India jersey again, there is the IPL and a return to his mother franchise to look forward to. Beyond that, the YouTube sensation who lorded that space even when he was an active Indian cricketer is certain to ramp up his game on that platform. At some stage, as Rohit said minutes after Ashwin's shock retirement announced at the Gabba on Wednesday, he is bound to join the band of those commenting on the game and who have therefore earned the wrath sometimes of those who they are commenting on. That should be an interesting change for Ashwin, to comprehend and experience what life on the other side of the fence is like.

Ashwin is a worthy successor to his mentor and role model Anil Kumble, the greatest match-winner in Indian Test history. Like the legendary leg-spinner, he has carved an unmatched niche and done so with equal parts panache and bloody-mindedness. Bravo.

## THE GIST

▼ The Player-of-the-Match award on debut was the first of 10 such honours in his career

▼ He used the carrom ball to devastating effect  
Ashwin wasn't afraid of shaking up the established order, of laying down his own rules

# SCIENCE

# Never events: unacceptable failures in implementing patient safety protocol

Never events as a term was introduced in 2002 by the National Quality Forum (NQF) in the United States. It has since been adopted in the Western world, particularly in countries like the U.S., U.K., and Canada, and they maintain a list of never events. They highlight the importance of preventing harm by strict adherence to a safety regime.

C. Aravinda

The concept of 'never events' (NE) is described broadly as serious and largely preventable incidents that should never occur in healthcare settings if proper safety protocols are followed. Never events as a term was introduced in 2002 by the National Quality Forum (NQF) in the United States. It has since been adopted in the Western world, particularly in countries like the U.S., U.K., and Canada, and they maintain a list of never events. They highlight the importance of preventing harm through systemic checks, improved processes, and strict adherence to safety protocols.

Never events lack a universal definition and overlaps with terms like 'sentinel events' or 'serious reportable events'. These categories generally share the theme of preventable harm resulting in severe patient consequences such as operating on the wrong side of the limb, insulin overdose, or mismatched blood transfusion.

This could lead to disability, death, or great discomfort for the patient. The broad scope of never events overshadows the systemic complexities behind such incidents.

Organisations like the National Health Service (NHS), Cigna, and Leapfrog share the goal of improving patient safety, but they differ in their focus on the description of never events, financial penalties, root cause analysis learning, and breaches of safety protocols.

#### Variations in lists across systems

The list of never events varies across organisations. For example, the United Kingdom's NHS's updated 2021 list includes 16 events (enlisted in the table), while the United States recognises 29 events. This variation reflects the complexity of healthcare as a socio-technical system. Healthcare involves numerous stakeholders and interactions between social, technical, human, organisational, economic, and regulatory components, all shaping how never events are defined, occur, and addressed in the system.

What does one do after a never event? According to the Leapfrog Group, when a never event occurs, it is essential to take specific steps to address the situation in the aftermath of the incident. First, the healthcare provider should offer a sincere apology to the patient. The incident must then be formally reported to ensure transparency. A detailed root cause analysis should follow to uncover the

#### List of never events as per NHS

Never events are difficult to eradicate, but efforts and a method to prevent them are critical.



CATEGORY	NEVER EVENT
Surgical	Wrong site surgery
Surgical	Wrong implant/prosthesis
Surgical	Retained foreign object post-procedure
Medication	Mis-selection of a strong potassium solution
Medication	Administration of medication by the wrong route
Medication	Overdose of insulin due to abbreviations or incorrect device
Medication	Overdose of methotrexate for non-cancer treatment
Medication	Mis-selection of high-strength midazolam during conscious sedation
Mental health	Failure to install functional collapsible shower or curtain rails
General	Falls from poorly restricted windows
General	Chest or neck entrapment in bed rails
General	Transfusion or transplantation of ABO-incompatible blood components or organs
General	Misplaced naso- or oro-gastric tubes
General	Scalding of patients
General	Unintentional connection of a patient requiring oxygen to an air flowmeter
General	Undetected oesophageal intubation

factors that led to the event. Finally, any costs incurred directly because of the incident should be waived as a gesture of accountability and fairness.

**Are never events fully preventable?** The idea of completely preventing never events is a subject of ongoing debate and contention. While achieving absolute prevention is often seen as the ultimate goal, no consensus remains on whether it is practically possible. Studies reveal that never events persist at a rate of 1 to 2 per 100 incidents, with overall patient safety incidents occurring in 2 to 3 out of every 100 consultations.

Despite significant investments in safety mechanisms and interventions, the persistence of these incidents in healthcare systems shows its complexity. Never events cannot be viewed in isolation from the complex interplay of socio-technological systems, organisational dynamics, and cultural factors.

This complexity suggests that while the

#### Medical complications are expected risks inherent to medical procedures. Latrogenic causes may overlap with complications but are specifically tied to medical interventions, whether acceptable or negligent

frequency of never events might be substantially reduced, the notion of their complete prevention is more aspirational than practical. Adopting the As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP) principle – a balanced risk management approach – offers a pragmatic framework for addressing and minimising these incidents. Never events also have a problematic tendency of concentrating accountability disproportionately on frontline healthcare workers. It evokes strong emotional and punitive responses.

This approach fails to account for systemic failures, such as organisational inefficiencies, poor infrastructure, and

communication gaps, contributing to never events incidents. Evidence points to the reality that frontline staff, though closest to these incidents, are not fully responsible for their occurrence.

#### The Indian context

Never events as a term has not been explicitly acknowledged or used in the Indian context. Instead, medical negligence is applied in medico-legal cases and allegations of professional misconduct in healthcare. While never events emphasise preventable harm within healthcare systems, in India, similar incidents are categorised and addressed under the broader legal framework of medical negligence.

Medical negligence occurs when a healthcare provider fails to meet the expected standard of care, leading to harm, as per the Bolam test.

This may involve acts of commission, such as administering incorrect medication, or omission, like neglecting to check for retained placenta in the uterus after delivery. The evaluation of negligence is based on whether the actions align with what a competent peer would have done under similar circumstances.

Medical errors can be unintended mistakes arising from misjudgements, such as a missed diagnosis or an incorrect treatment arising without deliberate deviation from the standard of care. Latrogenic events are harms directly caused by medical interventions.

Some latrogenic effects are unavoidable and accepted as part of treatment, such as hair loss during chemotherapy, while others, like leaving a surgical pad in a patient, indicate negligence. Medical maloccurrences are outcomes that cannot be prevented even with appropriate care, such as rib fractures during CPR or rare recanalisation of fallopian tubes after sterilisation. Differentiating these phenomena is critical.

Medical complications are expected risks inherent to medical procedures that occur despite proper care and do not imply negligence. Latrogenic causes may overlap with complications but are specifically tied to medical interventions, whether acceptable or negligent. Medical negligence represents clear failures in duty. Medical maloccurrences are outcomes that, while undesirable, are not preventable even under optimal conditions.

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#### THE GIST

Never events are preventable incidents that result in severe patient consequences: operating on the wrong side of the limb, insulin overdose, or mismatched blood transfusion

When a never event does occur the healthcare provider should offer an apology, prepare a formal report, conduct a root cause analysis, and finally cover any costs

While never events might be reduced, complete prevention is more aspirational than practical. Adopting the ALARP principle offers a pragmatic framework for addressing and minimising these incidents

#### HUMERUS



# Disability and queer health in medical education – India under the lens

Bindu Shajahan Perappadan

India's National Medical Commission's (NMC) alleged non-inclusion in its medical curriculum of disability and queer rights is at the forefront of a commentary piece *One step forward, two steps back: urgent priorities to embed disability and queer health in medical education systems* published online in *The Lancet Regional Health – Southeast Asia*.

The commentary also notes that on the global front, out of the 110 Lancet Commissions, aside from mental health and the Holocaust, there is no dedicated commission for disability or the queer community.

In India, the mandatory inclusion of disability rights as disability competencies in India's new medical curriculum in 2019 was highlighted as one of the 17 lighthouse initiatives by UN India during the SDG mid-point review.

**Hampers human rights**  
Explaining why exclusion will continue to hamper human rights one of the authors of the commentary, Satendra Singh from the Department of Physiology, University College of Medical Sciences & GTB Hospital, University of Delhi, said



A protest on 'International Day of Persons with Disabilities' in Kolkata. ANI

Lancet Commissions are science-led, international, and multidisciplinary collaborations aimed at achieving transformational change, with a particular focus on policy and political action. "Their evidence-based recommendations provide critical data to influence policymakers in revising health policies. Currently, there are 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 years, accounting for 16% of the global population. A similar proportion (16%) of people globally experience disability, with more individuals joining this group every year," said Dr. Singh.

India has among the highest number of road accident fatalities worldwide (as of 2022); additionally, it is recognised as the "diabetes capital of the world," where complications such as gangrene, limb loss, and ocular conditions contribute to disability.

Also historically, both the disability and transgender communities have experienced mistrust to

ward the medical establishment, said Dr. Singh, adding that these two groups share similar vulnerabilities, which contribute to health inequities and undermine the Agenda 2030 goal of "leaving no one behind." He stated that things will only change when voices from these two communities are part of these Lancet Commissions.

India has the highest number of medical colleges in the world, producing future doctors and medical professionals. "Many of these graduates also represent the largest group of international medical professionals working in the USA and Canada. A compassionate medical graduate, well-versed in the health inequities faced by vulnerable groups, can play a crucial role in dismantling long-standing structural and attitudinal barriers," they explain.

#### Educating future medics

Co-author of the commentary Rohin Bhatt, who is also a human rights lawyer, argues that both of these groups have been marginalised in healthcare settings. "They have borne the brunt of discrimination and marginalisation in healthcare settings. So, when the doctors of tomorrow are educated, it is essential that they do not repeat the mistakes of their predecessors and ensure that disabled and queer patients are not deprived of the right to advocate for

themselves, but also so that the doctors see these patients not as a collective of symptoms but as full humans in their own right," he said.

The paper adds that it is important to recognise that amidst a variety of factors that perpetuate inequality, non-inclusive language warrants attention.

"Prioritising inclusive language – clear, consistent, and respectful – recognises diversity. It shouldn't be left to minorities to advocate for this but should be everyone's responsibility, especially policymakers," said the paper.

In India, the National Medical Commission in its preamble emphasises improving access to quality, affordable medical education, promoting equitable healthcare, encouraging community health perspectives, and enforcing high ethical standards in medical services that are flexible.

"The circumstances in India are, however, not just a dereliction of the duty of the NMC but also, arguably, an action that is ultra vires the parent legislation and thus, ex facie illegal," states the paper.

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