



V-C APPOINTMENTS IN T.N.
SC urges resolution of State-Governor row

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Aim is to make India hub for mobility sector, says Modi

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ATTACK ON SAIF ALI KHAN
Attacker on the run; 10 teams to probe case

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RAT-HOLE MINING

Dying for black gold in Assam, Meghalaya

The dangerous practice continues unabated

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REWARDING EXCELLENCE
National sports awards given away

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IN BRIEF



SC stays HC order on health scheme roll-out in Delhi

NEW DELHI:
The Supreme Court on Friday stayed a Delhi High Court order to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in the Capital to enter into an MoU with the Centre for implementing the PM-ABHM scheme. » Page 4

End violence before talks: govt. to Kuki-Zo body

NEW DELHI:
The Union Home Ministry on Friday told the members of the Kuki-Zo Council that a cessation of violence is a prerequisite to initiate any political dialogue in Manipur. The tribal leaders insisted that this cannot be a one-sided demand. » Page 9

Gaza truce deal gets Israel Security Cabinet approval

The deal now goes to Israel's full Cabinet of Ministers for final sign-off; the ceasefire could start as early as tomorrow; however, the pact has drawn fierce resistance from Netanyahu's far-right allies

Associated Press
JERUSALEM



Celebration time: People celebrate the news of a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel, in Amman, Jordan, on Friday. REUTERS

Israel's security Cabinet recommended approval on Friday of a ceasefire deal after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed an agreement had been reached that would pause the 15-month war with Hamas in Gaza and release dozens of hostages held by militants there.

Mediators Qatar and the U.S. announced the ceasefire on Wednesday, but the deal hung in limbo for more than a day as Mr. Netanyahu insisted there were last-minute snags he blamed on Hamas.

The militants maintained they were "committed" to the deal, while residents of Gaza and families of the hostages anxiously

waited to see if it would materialise.

The deal now goes to the full Cabinet of Ministers for final sign-off. It is expected to approve the ceasefire, which could start as soon as Sunday, even though it has drawn fierce resistance from Netanyahu's far-right coali-

tion partners. Their objections could destabilise his government, however.

Hamas triggered the war with its October 7, 2023, cross-border attack into Israel that killed some 1,200 people and left some 250 others captive.

Israel responded with a devastating offensive that

has killed over 46,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, who do not distinguish between civilians and militants but say women and children make up more than half of those killed.

Beyond the death and destruction in Gaza, the conflict has also destabilised West Asia and sparked worldwide protests.

On Thursday, Israeli strikes killed at least 72 people in Gaza. In previous conflicts, both sides have stepped up military operations in the final hours before ceasefires as a way to project strength.

Mr. Netanyahu instructed a special task force to prepare to receive the hostages returning from Gaza.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

At least 126 Indians joined Russia Army, 16 'missing', says Centre

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

The government is aware of at least 126 cases of Indians who joined the Russian Army to fight in the war in Ukraine, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday, indicating their numbers continue to rise despite efforts to stop them.

According to the latest figures released, of the 126 Indian men that the Indian Embassy in Moscow has been intimated about, 96 have returned to India thus far. Of the remainder, 12 have been killed in the conflict, including one from Kerala, who died last week, and one is being treated for injuries at a hospital in Moscow. As many as 16 are believed to be "missing", as officials said they could not be traced at present.

"Their whereabouts are not known, and the Russian side has categorised them as missing," said MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, detailing the figures.



The Indian Embassy in Moscow has been informed about 126 men in Russian armed forces.

hir Jaiswal, detailing the figures.

"We remain engaged with the Russian authorities to ascertain the whereabouts of the missing Indian nationals, as also seeking early release and repatriation of those who remain," he added.

On the two most recent casualties, Mr. Jaiswal said that the Indian embassy officials were in touch with Russian authorities to en-

sure that the mortal remains of Binil Babu, a 32-year-old from Thrissur district in Kerala who succumbed to injuries from a drone attack last week, are brought back to India at the earliest. Before he died, Mr. Babu was reportedly in contact with the Embassy, and had wanted to return home.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8



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Har Pal Aapke Saath

Their lives torn between 2 States, migrant workers hold on to their voter IDs

While possessing two or more voter ID cards is against the law and liable for prosecution, many say they help them avail of welfare schemes in both their home State and Delhi

Alisha Dutta
NEW DELHI

When the Assembly poll in Jharkhand was held in November last year, 48-year-old Subhash Sahu (name changed), a migrant labourer, went all the way from Delhi to his home State to exercise his right to vote. Two months later, he is back in Delhi and ready to cast his vote on February 5. What allows Mr. Sahu to cast his ballot in two different places are his two voter identity cards, which otherwise is deemed illegal. Mr. Sahu, however, has been using his two cards every election in the two States for two decades now.

He is not alone. A number of migrant workers have been holding on to two voter cards, which, they say, help them avail of welfare schemes in both their home State and their place of employment.

Possessing two or more Electoral Photo Identity Cards, popularly known as voter ID, of more than one area is against the law. Those found in violation may face imprisonment for up to a year, a fine, or both upon detection.

"But who is responsible to ensure that," argued 27-year-old Rekha De (name changed), who has been working in Delhi for the past six years. A native of Bardhaman in West Bengal, she said that she too votes in her home State as well as Delhi.

Ms. De said her primary gig as a cook in Chittaranjan Park and Kalakaji helps her make ₹20,000 a month but doesn't offer her a sense of economic security or permanence. "When you are struggling to make ends meet, having



Straddling two worlds: Delhi is home to nearly 2.21 lakh migrants. FILE PHOTO

two voter cards to avail of government benefits is far from unfair," she said.

A beneficiary of the Lakshmir Bhandar scheme, a West Bengal government scheme providing financial aid to women, she is waiting for the Aam Aadmi Party government to roll out the Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana of ₹2,100 per month in Delhi in its "next tenure".

As the Election Commission continues to raise concerns over fake voter documents and encourages people migrating to change the address on their voter ID cards using Form 8A, these workers here explain that not surrendering one ID provides them an opportunity to access a few more benefits.

According to a senior Delhi Police officer, having two Aadhaar cards is legally impossible unless one of the cards is forged, and the person can be booked for forgery under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. However, having two voter

cards is more common than thought.

According to the 2023-24 Economic Survey, the Capital is home to nearly 2.21 lakh migrants. Most of the welfare schemes of the Delhi government require proof of residence.

Vijendra Kumar (name changed), 23, casts his vote in both Delhi and Bihar. Originally from Darbhanga, Mr. Kumar has been availing of the Bihar government's scheme of ₹1,000 monthly to unemployed youth between the ages of 20 and 25.

There is another incentive, Mr. Kumar said. "The poor, invisible migrant workers suddenly become important for political parties. Their agents happily provide free train tickets so that we can go and vote for them. Of course, who can say no to other inducements," he said, pointing to newspaper headlines screaming about alleged distribution of cash, shoes and saris by a prominent candidate in Delhi in violation of the poll code.



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Teenager raped, forced to undergo abortion; 3 held

Press Trust of India

FARIDABAD

A 16-year-old girl was allegedly raped by three men and forced to undergo an abortion, the police said on Friday. The three accused – Jaswant, his friend Sultan and Sikander – have been arrested in the case, they said.

The police received a complaint from the child helpline of the District Child Protection Unit in Faridabad reporting that a 16-year-old had undergone an abortion after she was raped. Based on the complaint, an FIR has been registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Further probe is under way, the police added.

Timings
DELHI

SATURDAY, JAN. 18
RISE 07:15 SET 17:49
RISE 22:03 SET 10:00
SUNDAY, JAN. 19
RISE 07:14 SET 17:50
RISE 22:56 SET 10:26
MONDAY, JAN. 20
RISE 07:14 SET 17:51
RISE 23:49 SET 10:53

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	18	09
Safdarjung	18	09
Palam	15	08

Delhi Palam Today
18°C The weather will be mostly dry. Morning will be cold with Fog and mist. Day will be cool. Night also will be cold and foggy.
Dry weather to prevail.

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• JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
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IN BRIEF



In first political remark, Nishant asks voters to back father Nitish

With the Assembly poll in Bihar scheduled for October-November this year, Nishant Kumar, the son of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, for the first time made a political statement backing his father on Friday. He appealed to the people of the State to vote for Mr. Nitish in the upcoming election. Mr. Nishant, who rarely interacts with the media, said his father has done "good work" for the State and people should vote for his party, the Janata Dal (United). Asked if he would join politics, Mr. Nishant smiled and left the venue in Bakhtarpur where he had come for a function organised in the memory of freedom fighters.

Courier firm booked for wrong delivery of Coldplay tickets

The Goa police have booked a well-known courier company and a man for alleged cheating over the wrong delivery of Coldplay concert tickets worth ₹3.86 lakh, an official said on Friday. As per a complaint by Ashley Fernandes with the Colva police in south Goa on Thursday, the courier company's staff delivered four tickets he had bought for the British rock band's concert to another person, Tushar Bansal. He said Mr. Bansal accepted them without any verification. Mr. Fernandes told the police that he had booked the tickets through an online portal. The band is scheduled to perform at D.Y. Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai on January 18, 19, and 21. PTI

In run-up to Delhi election, AAP's opponents plan to 'expose' party's 'unfulfilled' poll promises in Punjab

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

The unrealised poll promises of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led government in Punjab loom large as the campaign for the February 5 Assembly election in Delhi – where the party is in power as well – gets under way.

AAP swept to power in Punjab in February 2022 on the back of several pre-poll promises as well as anti-incumbency against the then Congress-led government. With the party announcing a spate of similar promises in Delhi, its principal opponents, the Congress and the BJP, are pointing to non-fulfilment of several of its assurances in Punjab, including ₹1,000 monthly financial assistance to women aged above 18, restoring the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) for government employees,



Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann

and eradicating the drug menace and corruption.

The ruling party, however, is attempting to counter the Opposition's narrative by presenting its achievements, including giving 300 units of free electricity per month, setting up Aam Aadmi Clinics, and providing around 50,000 jobs.

In the course of the campaigning for the 2022 Punjab election, AAP leaders, including Bhagwant Mann, now Chief Minister, had also publicly favoured procurement of 22 crops at minimum support price (MSP) and assured govern-

ment purchase after coming to power. Senior farmer leader Jagmohan Singh of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha rued AAP "going back on their words" on MSP. "Such backtracking on vows will dent their prospects in Delhi," he said.

Congress campaign

The Congress has announced that starting January 20, their leaders from Punjab will campaign in Delhi to "expose" the unfulfilled promises and failures of the Mann government. "We have formed 11 teams of senior leaders from Punjab and from January 20 all of them will campaign in Delhi for the next fortnight," Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly Partap Singh Bajwa told *The Hindu*.

"They have failed on all fronts. In Delhi, AAP is promising to give ₹2,100 monthly financial assis-

tance to women but they have not yet honoured their promise in Punjab. Before the 2022 [Punjab] poll, AAP promised to raise ₹20,000 crore annually from mining by ending corruption, but now they have set a target of raising only ₹800 crore annually, which means they have failed to curb corruption. The promise of making Punjab a drug-free State remains a distant dream. Even though many AAP Ministers and MLAs have faced graft charges, the action against them has been nothing but an eyewash," the Congress leader said.

Punjab BJP leader Avnash Rai Khanna said his party will do the same in Delhi and "expose" AAP's "unsigned cheques".

Government employees and pensioners, who are annoyed with AAP for not restoring OPS, are also preparing to visit Delhi to cam-

paign against the party. "We will urge people to support only those political parties that would restore the OPS," said Jasvir Singh Talwara, State convenor of the joint employee-pensioners' front, Purani Pension Bahini Sangharsh Committee.

AAP has been maintaining that the government is committed to implementing OPS but about ₹18,000 crore is with the Centre's

Pension Fund Regulatory

and Development Authority and that corpus has not

been refunded yet.

The AAP government in Punjab has fulfilled its key guarantees – be it free power, better schools, or providing jobs. As far as

giving ₹1,000 to women,

we will give it. We have

been given a mandate for

five years, and it's not even

three years yet. People

have faith in us," said party

spokesperson Neel Garg.

Court asks Centre to consider application by Sri Lankan Tamil of Indian origin for citizenship

The Hindu Bureau

MADRAS

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court has directed the Central government to consider the application for Indian citizenship submitted by a Sri Lanka Tamil refugee. She came to India in 1984 when she was aged nine.

Justice G.K. Ilanthyaraiyan directed the Secretary of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs to consider the petitioner Mathine's application and pass orders on merits in 12 weeks after giving her an opportunity for a hearing.

The petitioner said she was born in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, in 1975. Following ethnic strife, she moved to India in 1984 with her family. They entered India with the help of her father's identity certificate issued

in Sri Lanka, and the same was submitted to the office of the Special Deputy Collector, Transit Camp, Kotapattu, Tiruchi district.

She has been living in India since then "with the intention of permanently staying here". She submitted that her parents were Indian-origin Tamils who were denied citizenship in Sri Lanka and lived as stateless persons.

In 2022, Mathine applied



The Madras High Court

plied for Indian citizenship by registration under Section 5(I)(a) of the Citizenship Act. An inquiry was conducted and the application was received by the Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs. However, no further action had been taken, she said.

In Sri Lanka, they were housed in a refugee camp in Colombo, treated as Indians and not given Sri Lankan citizenship. In India, they were housed in refugee camps and tagged as Sri Lankans. They were, in fact, "stateless persons".

Stating she had been living in India peacefully for the past 40 years and had complied with the conditions set out under Section 5(I)(a) of the Citizenship Act, the petitioner sought a direction to the authorities to consider her application for Indian citizenship.

AAP fulfilled many promises, will implement rest after Delhi win'

Former Deputy CM is hopeful of the party returning to power as people are aware that graft allegations against its leaders are baseless and that they won't have a comfortable life without Kejriwal; admits that AAP did not field several sitting MLAs as people were not happy with their performance

INTERVIEW

Manish Sisodia

Nikhil M. Babu
NEW DELHI

Senior AAP leader and former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia spoke to *The Hindu* on Friday about the challenges the party is facing ahead of the Assembly election on February 5 and emphasised that it will work towards realising the unfulfilled promises in its 2015 election manifesto on returning to power. Edited excerpts:

charges its top leaders face?



Manish Sisodia is contesting the poll from the Jangpura seat. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

What is the biggest challenge facing the party this time?

I have never seen the Election Commission this compromised. It has become a 'BJP clean chit agency'.

AAP has not fielded many sitting MLAs this time. Is it nervous as the election nears?

This is part of microman-

agement for the election. Every party does this.

Is it also because people are not happy with these MLAs?

Yes, of course, that is also why we changed them.

Many promises that were part of Kejriwal's 10 guarantees ahead of the 2015 election remain unfulfilled.

There are many promises we have fulfilled. Kejriwal thinks before making promises and he admits some have not been completed. There are many reasons, but we never said we aren't going to fulfil them.

With run-ins with the Lieutenant-Governor likely to continue, how

do you plan to fulfil these promises on returning to power?

Since 2015, we have fulfilled our promises despite confrontations. We installed CCTVs across Delhi, provided free electricity. They tried to stop us, but we still did it.

In the run-up to the last poll, the government was able to implement free bus rides for women and provide free electricity up to 200 units. But this time, it hasn't been able to announce a new scheme in the last six months.

We will do it. I have faith in our fighting spirit.

Delhi's 'revenue

surplus' is dipping and it is likely to become 'revenue deficit'. Will it be viable to implement the party's promises?

This is one of the biggest pieces of propaganda that the BJP is spreading. Delhi can never be in revenue deficit. That is just the interpretation of one officer and it is his viewpoint. In a file, 25 officers might write 25 different opinions. Ultimately, what happens is what is finally written by the Minister or the L-G.

If you fail to cross the majority mark, will you tie up with the Congress to form a government like you did in 2013?

How many seats is the Congress going to win?

Assam BJP elects new chief; Deo to continue as Chhattisgarh president

The Hindu Bureau

GUWAHATI/RAIPUR

Bhabesh Kalita, a former Minister who was on an extended term.

The CM waxed eloquent about Mr. Kalita, acknowledging that he had led the BJP to its highest tally in the 2024 Lok Sabha poll and helped raise the NDA's tally in the 126-member Assembly from 74 to 84 seats.

The BJP, meanwhile, announced that Kiran Singh Deo will continue to lead the party in Chhattisgarh for a full term of three years. His appointment was announced by the party's national general secretary, Vinod Tawde, at the BJP State headquarters.

On Thursday, the three forms received for the election of the party State president had only his name, indicating that he was elected unopposed.

Resolve V-C impasse before next hearing, SC tells T.N. Governor

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday orally asked Attorney General of India R. Venkataramani, appearing for Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi, to urge for a resolution of a stalemate with the State government over appointing Vice-Chancellors in major State universities. opponent".

A Bench headed by Justice J.B. Pardiwala said the Supreme Court would step in and decide the issue one way or the other unless the crisis is not resolved by the next date of court hearing.

"If it is resolved by next week, well and good. Otherwise, we will resolve it," Justice Pardiwala said, posting the case next week.

The top court is hearing multiple petitions filed by the State government, represented by senior advocates A.M. Singhvi, Mukul Rohatgi, P. Wilson, and advocate Sabarish Subramanian, on the conduct of the Governor regarding the grant of assent to key Bills on higher education, pending sanction of prosecutions, remission of prisoners, government orders, and the constitution of search committees for the appointment of VCs. Mr. Wilson said the Governor's conduct suited a "political

'Against Constitution'

The court also agreed to hear an application filed by the State challenging the Governor's decision to refer 10 re-enacted Bills to the President on November 18, 2023, when the case was pending before the court.

The State government argued that the decision of the Governor to reserve the case for the President was "ex facie illegal, without jurisdiction, and in gross violation of the Constitution".

The Madras High Court has asked the Union Ministry of Home Affairs to pass orders in 12 weeks. FILE PHOTO

+
In Sri Lanka, they were housed in a refugee camp in Colombo, treated as Indians and not given Sri Lankan citizenship. In India, they were housed in refugee camps and tagged as Sri Lankans. They were, in fact, "stateless persons".

She has been living in India since then "with the intention of permanently staying here". She submitted that her parents were Indian-origin Tamils who were denied citizenship in Sri Lanka and lived as stateless persons.

Stating she had been living in India peacefully for the past 40 years and had complied with the conditions set out under Section 5(I)(a) of the Citizenship Act, the petitioner sought a direction to the authorities to consider her application for Indian citizenship.

In 2022, Mathine applied

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In Sri Lanka, they were

Decline in Central funds has hit State: Kerala Governor

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, in his maiden policy address to the Assembly on Friday marking the start of the Budget session, sought to reaffirm the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government's declared policies on social welfare, fiscal consolidation in the face of "limited resources," and climate-resilient sustainable development.

In his two-hour address to the House, Mr. Arlekar reiterated the government's commitment to building 'Nava Keralam,' notwithstanding the constraints posed by limited resources.

The policy address expressed serious concern over the liquidity stress faced by the State on account of declining share of Union fiscal transfers. It urged the Centre to adopt an encouraging and positive view on Kerala's efforts to step up capital invest-

ment for building high-quality infrastructure.

Placing stress on a 'citizens-first vision,' the policy address highlighted the government's efforts towards all-round development of key sectors, including agriculture and allied sectors, disaster management, health care, education, energy and industry.

Heat action plans
The proposals for 2025-26 include heat action plans at the local body-level, given the rise in temperatures.

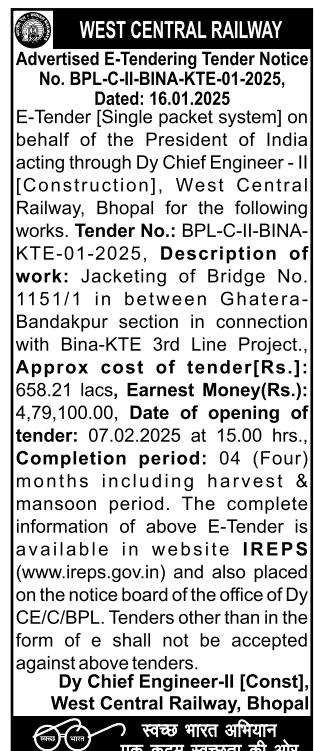
Expansion of home care units and telemedicine services for elderly care, establishment of seven centres of excellence in different aspects of higher education as part of the efforts to position Kerala as a global education hub, and plans for an Invest Kerala Global Summit 2025 in Kochi in February for showcasing the State's investor-friendly ecosystem featured prominently in the policy address.

U.S. opens consulate in Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The U.S. opened a consulate in Bengaluru on Friday. However, it will not immediately offer visa services and will take some time to start full consular services.

U.S. Ambassador Eric Garcetti, along with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, dedicated the site of the consulate, which will become the fifth in India. The consulate is temporarily located at the JW Marriott Hotel on Vittal Mallya Road.



GOVT. OF ASSAM	
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD(ROAD), ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI- 3.	
No.CE/STBR/II/36/2024-25/04	
CORRIGENDUM	
In partial modification of the Short Notice Inviting Tender published vide this office no. CE/STBR/II/36/2024-25/03, dated 08/01/2025, the total amount of "Rs. 4422.44 Lakh" shall be read as "Rs. 4493.15 Lakh" for the work "Construction of ROB in replacement of Railway Level Crossing Gate No. ST-133(Rly Km-498/7-8) on Namrup-Naharkatiya Road in Dibrugarh District under Construction of ROBs on 50:50 Cost sharing Basis". Other terms and conditions shall remain same. Details may be seen at the website http://assamtenders.gov.in and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours.	
Chief Engineer, PWD(Roads) Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati - 3. Janasanyog /CF/3284/24/18-Jan-25	

Board of Secondary Education Rajasthan, Ajmer	
Open tender for printing and supply of security based pre-printed computer stationery for Board are invited through e-procurement from the reputed firms. Estimated value Rs. 180 Lakh Last date of submission of bid is 28/01/2025 till 04.00 pm. Details of tender document is available on www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in and www.sppr.rajasthan.gov.in . UBN : SEB2425WSOB00047 Secretary	
TNPL TAMILNADU NEWSPRINT AND PAPERS LIMITED Mondipatti, Manapparai Tk, Trichy Dist. - 621 306. Phone: 04332-261600. Email : purchaser.m2@tnpl.co.in	
NOTICE INVITING TENDER	

Tender No.	Material Description	Due date
242523 003459	Cooking aid for continuous digester for Pulpmill of TNPL Unit-II	31.01.2025
Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPL Website & NIC Portal only. Detailed Terms & conditions, tender fee, EMD etc., are available in the tender document which can be downloaded from websites : www.tnpl.com & https://tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app		
DIPR/188/Tender/2025 TNPL - Maker of bagasse based eco-friendly Paper		

HIMACHAL PARDESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT e-Procurement Notice						
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)						
The Executive Engineer HPPWD Dharamshala Division on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the Percentage rate bids, in electronic tendering system, for following works from the eligible and approved contractors registered with HPPWD:-						
Sr. No.	Name of work		Estimated cost in Rs.	Earnest Money	Time Limit	Cost of tender form
1.	Construction for Development of Helipad at Rakkar in Tehsil Dharamshala Distt, Kangra (HP) (SH- Construction of Passenger Terminal Building, fire station building, utility building, Pavement, Drain, under ground water tank, Over head water tank, Chain link fencing, Main gate Operational gate, watch tower, Security hut, septic tank, Rain Harvesting Tank, Boundary wall & Chain link fencing, Retaining wall, External water supply sewerage & Drainage)	5,27,57,445/-	10,55,200/-	Eighteen Months	5000/-	20.01.2025
2.	Construction for	5,27,57,445/-	10,55,200/-	Eighteen Months	5000/-	28.01.2025

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the departmental website <http://htntenders.gov.in>. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to reject any tender or all tenders without assigning any reasons. Date of opening of tender is 29.01.2025 at 11:30 AM.

No. PWD-DD/CB/M-27/2024-25-9322-60 Dated:-15.01.2025 Executive Engineer, Dharamshala Division, HP/PWD, Dharamshala, On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh.

HP /4582/24-25 AVAM JAN SAMPAK. On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh.

CHHATTISGARH SAMVAD											
(An Associate organization of Department of Public Relation, Govt. of Chhattisgarh) North Block, Sector-19, Nava Raipur-Atal Nagar, District- Raipur (C.G.) Web: https://samvad.cg.nic.in , Bidderl: cgsamvadelemedia@gmail.com Ph: 0771-2512510, 54											
NOTICE INVITING ONLINE REQUEST FOR THE RATE CONTRACT AND EMANELMENT OF AGENCIES FOR AUDIO-VISUAL PRODUCTION TENDER											
NIT no: 3090/C.G. Samvad/2025 Nava Raipur, Dated: 17/01/2025											
Chhattisgarh Samvad invites online tenders from reputed Audio-Visual Producers for emanelment on rate contract basis for Audio-Visual Production for a period of 2 years. Which can be extended as for need and mutual agreement. The registered firm having proven track record of expertise in above field may submit their online proposal.											
Tender document can be downloaded from website https://samvad.cg.nic.in cost of tender document of Rs. 5,900/- (non-refundable). Modifications/Amendments/Corrigendum, if any shall not be advertised in the newspapers but shall be published in the above website only. The CEO, Chhattisgarh Samvad reserves the right to relax, change the terms and conditions, and select/reject any application without assigning any reason thereof.											
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>(1) Date of Pre-Bid meeting:</td> <td>27/01/2025 from 12:00 pm (Submission of Pre bid queries 29.01.2025 till 5.00 pm Email :-cgsamvad@gmail.com)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(2) Last date of online submission of tender documents:</td> <td>11/03/2025 before 03:00 pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(3) Date of Opening of Technical Bids:</td> <td>11/03/2025 from 04:00 pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(4) Date of Technical Presentations :</td> <td>Shall be Communicated to the Pre-qualified bidders</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(5) Date of Opening of Financial Bids:</td> <td>Shall be Communicated to the Technically qualified bidders</td> </tr> </table>		(1) Date of Pre-Bid meeting:	27/01/2025 from 12:00 pm (Submission of Pre bid queries 29.01.2025 till 5.00 pm Email :- cgsamvad@gmail.com)	(2) Last date of online submission of tender documents:	11/03/2025 before 03:00 pm	(3) Date of Opening of Technical Bids:	11/03/2025 from 04:00 pm	(4) Date of Technical Presentations :	Shall be Communicated to the Pre-qualified bidders	(5) Date of Opening of Financial Bids:	Shall be Communicated to the Technically qualified bidders
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Samvad-42888/5											
Chief Executive Officer Chhattisgarh Samvad Nava Raipur Atal Nagar											

CHHATTISGARH SAMVAD											
(An Associate organization of Department of Public Relation, Govt. of Chhattisgarh) North Block, Sector-19, Nava Raipur-Atal Nagar, District- Raipur (C.G.) Web: https://samvad.cg.nic.in/ , Email :- cgsamvadadv@gmail.com Ph: 0771-2512536, 39											
NOTICE INVITING ONLINE REQUEST FOR THE SELECTION OF A SOCIAL MEDIA AGENCY											
NIT no: 3089 /C.G. Samvad/2025 Nava Raipur, Dated -17/01/2025											
Chhattisgarh Samvad invites online tender from reputed Social Media Agency for selection for a period of 2 years. Which can be extended as for need and mutual agreement. The registered firm having proven track record of expertise in above field may submit their online proposal.											
Tender document can be downloaded from website https://samvad.cg.nic.in/ cost of tender document of Rs. 5,900/- (non-refundable). Modifications/Amendments/Corrigendum, if any shall not be advertised in the newspapers but shall be published in the above website only. The CEO, Chhattisgarh Samvad reserves the right to relax, change the terms and conditions, select/reject any application without assigning any reason thereof.											
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Samvad-42887/1											
Chief Executive Officer Chhattisgarh Samvad Nava Raipur Atal Nagar											

Competition of Tribal films	
Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Department of Tribal Affairs (Plain), Govt of Assam invites Short Film/Documentary on Tribal Affairs for competition in the National Tribal and Literature Festival scheduled to be held in February, 2025 . The films can be in any Tribal language of India with English subtitles, reflecting the cultures and traditions of their tribe. The films may be send to airtscgny@gmail.com latest by 25th January, 2025.	
Rules and Regulations	
1. Films can be in any Tribal language of India with English subtitles, reflecting the cultures and traditions of their tribe. 2. No certification required. 3. Films must be produced after 2020. 4. Multiple entries from a single participant can be submitted. 5. We accept YouTube, Google Drive. 6. Jury decision will be final. 7. Shortlisted entries will be selected for official competition, subject to Jury decision. 8. Films selected for the final round by the Jury will be screened. 9. Film screening and award ceremony will be held on the same day. 10. Festival reserves the right to determine eligibility of any work submitted. 11. Decision of the Festival committee will be final and binding. 12. Festival reserves the right to use posters and images of submitted films for promotional activities.	
Award Categories	
1. Best Short Film 2. Best Documentary 3. Best Director 4. Best Cinematography	
Important Notes	
- The Committee will interact with the submitter and/or the producer of the film only. - The Committee reserves the right of non-disclosure regarding entry and selection status of submitted films. Violation may result in disqualification from the festival.	
Director, Assam Institute of Research for Tribals And Scheduled Castes, Guwahati-22	
Janasanyog /D/11689/ 24/18-Jan-25	

Office of SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, 6 TH CIRCLE H.P. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, KULLU-175101 Ph: 01902_222530, E.mail.hp-kul@nic.in							
E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)							
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 NABARD-RIDF-XXX for each of the following works including maintenance for five years from the eligible and approved contractors registered with HPPWD and HP Jal Shakti Vibhag (Contractors of HP Jal Shakti Vibhag are eligible to participate for the works having amount put to tender above Rs.100 Lacs). Non registered contractors may submit the bids however successful bidder has to register in appropriate Class with appropriate authority in HPPWD.							
District	RIDF	Name of work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Total Cost (Rs.)	Period of completion	Bid Security (Rs.)	
			Construction	Maintenance		The bid security is 2 percent of the total cost, rounded to the nearest Thousand	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Lahaul & Spiti 1	XXX	Up-gradation of link road from Barring to Tibok, Othang and Yanghang Km 0/0 to 9/215 under NABARD-RIDF-XXX 95H- ROFD, M/T, Retaining Wall, Breast wall, CD work, V-shape drain, Parapets, Wire Crate & Sign Board etc.)	6,45,73,531/-	64,13,640/-	7,09,87,171/-	18 Months	14,20,00/-
2. Date of release of invitation for Bids through e-procurement on 18-01-2025 at 10:00 AM							
3. Cost of Bid Form:- Rs. 5,000/- per package/job (non-refundable) only through online mode on the website www.hptenders.gov.in in favour of Executive Engineer, Chenab Valley Division, HP.PWD, Udaipur.							
4. Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission:- The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted online on website www.hptenders.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.hptenders.gov.in .							
Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the valid digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.							
5. 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 per provisions of Clause 4.4B (a) (ii) of ITB with Superintending Engineer, 6th Circle HP.PWD, Kullu, not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the Bid, either by registered post or by hand.							



Inflation matrix

December's price rise numbers do not ring in enough relief

In the final inflation print before the Union Budget for 2025-26 is presented, followed by the first review of the monetary policy led by the new Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in early February, the price rise faced by Indian consumers eased to 5.22% in December. Although a four-month low, this still marked only a mild decline from November's 5.5% uptick in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), and was largely driven by a sequential easing in food prices. Food inflation moderated from over 9% in the previous month to 8.4% last month, and though inflation in vegetables cooled from 29.3% to 26.6%, it still remained generally high. Households still forked out a lot more for their meals than they did a year ago – it must be recalled that overall inflation was 5.7% and food price rise, over 9.5% in December 2023. While prices of some food items, including vegetables, are seen cooling further this month, those of a few critical ingredients have started spiking, including of edible oils, that rose at a 33-month high pace of 14.6% in December. Eggs, meat and fruits also saw inflation accelerating last month along with the relatively humble potato (up 68.2%). Moreover, inflation in wholesale prices has gained pace, signalling that there is room for higher costs to be passed on to consumers for food items as well as manufactured products.

The government and industry want the RBI to cut interest rates to reinvigorate consumption and fading growth impulses by looking through 'volatile' food inflation. But even industry captains admit that just keeping food prices out of the interest rates and growth-inflation balancing act will not suffice. Moreover, even if the weightage for food in the CPI is reduced in line with the recent household consumption spending survey results, food price trends have a material impact on the spending propensity of households and their inflation expectations. Inflation may yet average 4.5% through January to March, as the RBI expects, but the central bank that has committed to await a durable alignment to its 4% goal before slashing rates, has a difficult call to make in February. Tangible measures, if any, to ease price pressures in the Budget, along with some visibility on the Centre's fiscal glide path, could help tip the scales for a rate cut cycle to begin soon, if not next month. There are a few new imponderables that have compounded the trade-off matrix for policymakers in North Block as well as Mint Street – the swift unravelling of the rupee vis-à-vis the dollar in recent weeks which raises the risk of importing inflation, among other collateral effects, especially as global oil prices have resurged to multi-month highs. A very nuanced approach is imperative to avoid fresh missteps.

Script reading

The deciphering of the Indus script should not be clouded by politics

The recent announcement by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, of a \$1-million prize scheme for deciphering the script of the Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC), seems to have revived popular interest in the subject, which remains a puzzle to archaeologists, historians and linguists. His invitation for further research was made in the context of the centenary celebration of the IVC discovery, which was published by then chief of the Archaeological Survey of India, John Marshall, in September 1924. Spread across 1.5 million square kilometres in the territories of modern-day India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan during the Bronze Age (3000-1500 BCE), the IVC, also known as Harappan Civilisation, was regarded as complex as the better-known civilisations of Mesopotamia, Egypt and China. The Indus civilisation was essentially urban. Even though there has been a large number of objects and materials of archaeological value in support of the IVC, the decipherment of seals and tablets has not been to the satisfaction of all. About 20 years ago, a group of western scholars had argued that writing was not a necessity of ancient urban settlements, not even those as massive as those of the Harappans, and that "a handful of unknown symbols" could no longer be claimed as evidence of writing. Since then, there has been an exchange of scholarly views for and against the theory of the Indus civilisation being a highly literate society. It is against this context that Mr. Stalin's announcement needs to be seen. There is also a school of thought that there was a script which was "proto-Dravidian", "non-Aryan" and "pre-Aryan". This could be a reason why a southern State, Tamil Nadu, has made the offer. The State government has also supported a study on Indus signs and graffiti marks of Tamil Nadu as part of a project of the documentation and the digitisation of graffiti and Tamil (Tamil-Brahmi)-inscribed potsherds of Tamil Nadu.

Researchers face certain challenges while resolving the Indus riddle. There is a complaint that the entire database regarding the seals has not yet been made available in the public domain. While allowing free access to these resources, central and State authorities should ensure that context for them is also provided. More importantly, studies should be carried out without any interference. The likelihood of the proposed study's findings going against the established and particular narrative should not be allowed to cloud intellectual pursuit. There is also scope for well-coordinated work among South Asian countries, including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, to unravel the mystery. But if political differences are permitted to adversely impact the execution of any such study, the world, and India, will be much the poorer for it.

The First Advance Estimates (FAE) of National Accounts for 2024-25 show a real GDP growth of 6.4% and a nominal GDP growth of 9.7%. These numbers have fallen short of the Reserve Bank of India's revised growth estimate of 6.6% for real GDP, as in its December 2024 monetary policy statement and 10.5% for nominal GDP growth as in the 2024-25 Union Budget presented in July 2024.

The annual growth of 6.4% can be seen as consisting of 6% growth in the first half and 6.7% growth in the second half. There is, thus, a clear improvement expected over the Q2 growth of 5.4%. The sharp fall in 2024-25 annual GDP growth from that of the previous year at 8.2% is seen only in the case of GDP. With respect to Gross Value Added (GVA), this difference, between 7.2% and 6.4%, is much less. On the GVA side, it was the manufacturing sector which suffered a sharp fall in sectoral growth from 9.9% in 2023-24 to 5.3% in 2024-25.

Growth prospects for 2025-26

The Gross Fixed Capital Formation rate at constant prices has ranged between 33.3% and 33.5% during 2021-22 to 2024-25. Thus, it appears to have stabilised around 33.4%. It is expected to continue at this level in 2025-26. The average Incremental Capital Output Ratio (ICOR) has been marginally higher than 5 in recent years. Assuming ICOR to be 5.1 in 2025-26, we may consider a 6.5% real GDP growth to be realistic.

There may not be much change in the global economy even though Donald Trump's assumption of office may create more uncertainty. India will have to largely depend on domestic demand.

In particular, the Government of India has to ensure that there is no relaxation in its investment expenditure. In fact, the slightly lower



C. Rangarajan

is former Chairman, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, and former Governor, Reserve Bank of India



D.K. Srivastava

is Honorary Professor, Madras School of Economics, and Member, Advisory Council to the Sixteenth Finance Commission

Over the next five years, the best that India may hope for is a steady real GDP growth rate of 6.5%

growth in 2024-25 is largely linked to the slowdown in the Government of India's investment growth which has remained negative at (-)12.3% even after eight months into the fiscal year.

With a lower nominal GDP growth in 2024-25 of 9.7% as compared to the budgeted nominal GDP growth of 10.5%, the budgeted Gross Tax Revenue (GTR) of ₹38.4 lakh crore may not be realised if the budgeted buoyancy of 1.03 is maintained. As per Controller General of Accounts (CGA) data, GTR growth for the first eight months was 10.7%. If this growth is maintained for the remaining months also, the realised buoyancy would be about 1.1, which is higher than the budgeted buoyancy. In such a case, tax revenue shortfall will be minimal. In other words, any revenue constraint or likely pressure on fiscal deficit would not constrain the government's ability to achieve its capital expenditure target of ₹11.1 lakh crore.

Reason for the dip

However, after the first eight months, the level of the Government of India's capital expenditure has remained limited to ₹5.14 lakh crore, that is 46.2% of the Budget target. In the remaining four months, the Government of India's capital expenditure may be accelerated. It may still fall well short of the target. This has been the main reason for the dip in overall real GDP growth in 2024-25.

Going forward in 2025-26, the Government of India will have to continue to rely on an accelerated capital expenditure growth which can be kept at least at 20% on the revised estimates for 2024-25. Sustained government capital expenditures can have a favourable effect on private investment. The size and the pattern of investment expenditure of the government

should be designed to accelerate private investment as well.

Medium- to long-term growth prospects

Over a period of next five years, the best that India may hope for is a steady real GDP growth rate of 6.5%. This is in line with the International Monetary Fund's real GDP growth projection for the Indian economy, as in its October 2024 release, which is at 6.5% over the period 2025-26 to 2029-30. This real GDP growth may be accompanied by an implicit price deflator (IPD)-based inflation of about 4% which can give a nominal GDP growth in the range of 10.5%-11%. In years in which global conditions improve and the contribution of net exports to GDP growth becomes significant, real GDP growth may touch even 7%. If a real growth of around 6.5% and a nominal growth in the range of 10.5%-11% are maintained over the long run with an average exchange rate depreciation of 2.5% per annum, India should be able to reach a per capita GDP level consistent with a developed country status in the next two and half decades. But the task is not going to be easy. It will be hard to grow at 6.5% as the base keeps on increasing. In fact, in the earlier years, the growth rate will have to be higher. But, at present, the potential rate of growth appears to be 6.5%. However, it can change.

In the light of a potential growth rate of 6.5%, the achievement of 6.4% in 2024-25 should not be considered as disappointing. In fact, the achievement of 8.2% in 2023-24 should be considered as a flash in the pan. The current year's growth rate of 6.4% as in the first advance estimates should be seen in the context of India's potential growth rate.

The views expressed are personal

The multiple layers of the Gaza ceasefire

Just days before the swearing-in of United States President-elect Donald Trump, and a few hours before outgoing President Joe Biden gave his final address to the American people on January 15, 2025, Israel and Hamas announced that the long-elusive ceasefire agreement over Gaza had been struck. The state of Qatar, long stuck in between as a mediator, said the deal was to take effect from January 19, 2025, a day before Mr. Trump takes charge. An exchange of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners is at the centre of this arrangement.

The deck and the cards

The news of the agreement saw Palestinians in Gaza take to the streets in celebration, having faced death and destruction at the hands of the Israeli military whose response to the October 7, 2023 terror attack went on for over 15 months even as political deadlocks continued. In a statement, Hamas has highlighted that the movement "dealt with all responsibility and positivity, based on its responsibility towards our patient and steadfast people in the honorable Gaza strip, by stopping the Zionist aggression against them and putting an end to the massacres and war of genocide to which they are being subjected".

In Washington DC, Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden reportedly worked in unison to deliver the deal even as both tried to lap up the credit. For Mr. Trump, who previously demanded that such a deal be reached before his presidency, this was a marketable advertising of renewed American strength as promised in his election campaign. For Mr. Biden, it is an attempt to salvage legacy.

The joker in this geopolitical deck is Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Amidst misplaced perceptions that Mr. Trump would allow Mr. Netanyahu a longer leash to continue his military operations in Gaza unabated, opinion prevailed that anyone but Mr. Biden would be good for both stemming the ongoing conflicts and



Kabir Taneja

is Deputy Director and Fellow, Strategic Studies Programme, Observer Research Foundation

Despite the complexities, the international community must play its role by pushing for the sustainability of this deal

reigning in Israel's military posturing. It is in all likelihood not a coincidence that the Israeli leadership agreed to the deal – which, in parallel with Hamas, it has scuttled many times – to send a message of partnership and resolve to Mr. Trump.

Why Mr. Netanyahu would go out of the way to court Mr. Trump, even after the Israeli leader was invited by the Republicans to address a joint session of Congress in July 2024, is a question that has a simple answer. Mr. Trump prioritises personality over policy. Agreeing to this deal with Hamas is offering Mr. Trump a victory at potentially big domestic costs for Mr. Netanyahu. For long, Mr. Netanyahu has maintained that only a complete victory over Hamas is acceptable. With this deal, he becomes an Israeli Prime Minister who has cut a political settlement with the arch foe, but without a complete elimination of Hamas.

On Hamas and Israel

There is no doubt that Hamas and also Hezbollah in Lebanon have had their capacities diminished over the past year after leadership decapitation operations conducted by Israel.

Simultaneously, outgoing U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has also said that assessments show that Hamas has recruited as many new militants as it has lost. The lack of a political track acting as insurance for the ceasefire remains a concern. Hamas is expected to continue to be in control of Gaza in the time to come as barely any movements have taken place to reorganise Palestinian politics in a way where the group can be brought under a wider and more mainstream Palestinian-led political ecosystem.

Hamas, by itself, will remain steadfast in its ideology against Israeli security and sovereignty, while Hamas and Israel continue to remain on the same page against a two-state solution, despite a global push for this being the only viable option

available for lasting peace.

The prevailing situation of this status quo, despite the ceasefire, can be leveraged by Mr. Netanyahu in case Hamas resumes attacks against Israeli territories and populations. In such a situation, Mr. Netanyahu will be able to approach Mr. Trump from a vantage point, having agreed to the Hamas deal. A return to retaliatory tactics at this juncture will in all likelihood come with the full support of Mr. Trump, manoeuvring the Israeli position back to one of strength – like one it enjoyed under Mr. Biden. Previously, Mr. Trump has publicly stated that there would be 'hell to pay' for Hamas if Israeli hostages, which includes American citizens, are not released.

Gaza and its rebuilding

Beyond the political intricacies of this ceasefire arrangement, the most important deliverable would be that of critical aid to the people in Gaza as food and medical shortages surpassed criticality a long time ago. Beyond the aid front, the rebuilding of Gaza may yet be a premature discussion until alternative political mechanisms are envisioned within the Palestinian fold. This is where the Arab powers have an opportunity to exert influence, and seek a remoulding, a re-shaping, and a revitalisation of the Palestinian Authority to better equip Palestinian politics as a core stakeholder for a challenging future, where the much sought-after two-state solution remains a distant reality.

Finally, the international community must also play its role to push for the sustainability of this deal. The future of West Asian prosperity, newer geo-economic architectures such as the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, a potential expansion of the Abraham Accords, and even the radicalism of a Saudi Arabia-Israel normalisation, ultimately hinges on this momentum. At the end of the day, the management of regional geopolitical fissures by regional powers will determine all outcomes.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Disbanded

Expectedly, on the eve of Donald Trump assuming the presidency of the United States, high profile Hindenburg Research has announced its closure (Page 1, January 17).

The short seller's abrupt downing of its shutters is undeniably a blessing in disguise for the Adani conglomerate, which was rocked by its startling revelations. One can make a safe guess that the high-pitched calls by the Opposition parties in India, particularly the Congress (Inside pages, January 17), for a probe of the Group by a Joint Parliamentary Committee will fade away sooner than later.

V. Johan Dhanakumar, Chennai

Memorial and legacy

It is silly that the controversy regarding a suitable memorial for former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh continues (Inside pages, January 17). It is time to revisit the relevance and the viability

of allotting vast acreage of land for this purpose. A more viable option would be to set up an institute for economic research in Dr. Singh's name or have a museum, a library or a park which would be of much greater benefit to the people as well as be a more befitting memorial for a great leader.

P.J. Thomas, Vazhapally, Kerala

The effect is visible
There is little doubt that the emphasis in T20 cricket, on 'power hitting' and aggressive stroke play, has affected the skills of Indian batters in matches or series where it calls for one's temperament to stand up and carry the day with sound technique (Opinion page – 'Parley', January 17). While India's dominance in limited-overs formats continues, its performance in Test cricket has been inconsistent. This shift raises the important question whether the passion for the longest

format has been replaced by the instant gratification offered by T20 cricket. Also, the influx of foreign players in the Indian Premier League and the overwhelming attention given to it have overshadowed the value and the importance of Indian domestic cricket.

R. Sivakumar, Chennai

The debate on whether exposure to T20 cricket has an impact on the performance of Indian batters in the longer versions of the game has been raging for quite some time. And, if statistics are any indication, the effect is plainly visible. As far as batters are concerned, they should possess different mindsets for T20, which is nothing but slam-bang cricket. In Test cricket, the batters have to concentrate more on defensive techniques, as longevity at the crease is paramount. It is this factor that makes someone such as

Cheteshwar Pujara an asset in the five-day game, and Sanju Samson and Tilak Varma perfect choices in T20 cricket.

C.V. Aravind, Bengaluru

India is a huge country and it may make sense to have separate cricket coaches for separate formats. For example, Gautam Gambhir is perhaps more suited to be a T20 (head) coach as the game here needs a hit out approach from the very first ball. Cheteshwar Pujara, VVS. Laxman and Rahul Dravid may be more suited as Test match coaches as the game here needs more of a defensive approach and staying at the crease. ODIs (with 50 overs) need both a defensive and hit out approach. Virender Sehwag may be more suited as an ODI coach. It would be ideal to have three separate teams for the three different formats so as not to mix up batting styles.

P.V. Madhu Nirviti, Secunderabad

Deadly event

The report in this daily, "Six persons die in jallikattu and other bull-related sports in T.N." (January 17), highlights the urgent need to ban 'jallikattu', a savage sport and an annual event during Pongal festivities.

How this abhorrent and abominable sport attracts youth participation is unfortunate. One wonders how the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu continue their stoic silence. Readers must join hands to ask the Chief Minister to end this 'sport' once and for all.

Mani Nataraajan, Chennai

The disturbing picture in the report, of a group of people trying to tame a bull, is nothing short of torture and violence inflicted on a lone animal. Ancient Tamil literature describes jallikattu only as 'Eru Thazuvudhal' (embracing the bull) without causing the animal any harm or pain. There is no gainsaying

the fact that today's jallikattu is a blood sport. The humane treatment of bulls has been described in classical Tamil literature.

Kangan R. Narasimhan, Chennai

It is painful to note both man and animal experiencing trauma for the sake of some cash awards for the winners. There is cruelty to animals and grave danger for many innocent people.

A.J. Rangarajan, Chennai

'Lit for Life'
Literature has the power to inspire, challenge and transform lives and it is wonderful that *The*

GROUND ZERO



Rescue workers go down 300 metres in search of the men who have been missing ever since the mine in Kalamati in Dima Hasao district of Assam flooded on January 6, 2025. RITU RAJ KONWAR

Dying for black gold

On January 6, a rat-hole mine in Assam's Dima Hasao district was flooded, trapping nine men. More than 10 days after the incident, only four bodies have been retrieved. Though banned, rat-hole mining, which is dangerous but lucrative, continues unabated in Assam and Meghalaya. **Rahul Karmakar** reports on the incident and the prevalent practice that provides livelihoods while claiming lives

Rajib Barman, 39, had heard that the job of a rat-hole miner was hazardous, but he chose to do it because he had a debt of ₹60,000 to pay off. A resident of Sitalbazar village in western Assam's Kokrajhar district, Barman decided to work at the Kalamati mine in the Umrangso area of Dima Hasao district via a middleman. He hoped to bring home ₹90,000 by working in the mine for two months at about ₹1,500 per day – more than thrice the usual wage in the rural parts of Assam. This translated into earning ₹90-100 per kilogramme of coal extracted at an average of 15 cart-loads of the fossil fuel stripped off the mine.

On January 6, 2025, Barman descended into the dark pit for the first day of mining. "The sardar (supervisor of miners) had told us the previous night that we could start working as the water that had accumulated in the mine had been drained out," Barman says. "We went down 250 feet below the ground at 4:30 a.m. and began working inside one of the tunnels."

Barman's body ached as he was working in an awkward position for the first time. After more than two hours, he decided to take a break and crawled back towards the mouth of the tunnel. Rat-holes are the labyrinthine passages that branch out from 300-foot-deep pits.

A few feet from the opening, Barman heard screams and the sound of gushing water growing louder. "Seconds later, I was swept into the pit," he recalls. "I managed to clamber up the chain of the crane (used to haul coal) and get out. But my three room-mates could not make it."

So far, of the nine miners trapped inside, only four bodies have been recovered. Search and rescue operations by the Indian Army, Navy, the National Disaster Response Force, and the State Disaster Response Force were on for the others, but five days ago, Navy divers were withdrawn from the operations. While dewatering of the mine continues, the government has assessed it could take up to 60 days to drain out all the water.

On January 16, the Assam Cabinet approved a judicial inquiry into the tragedy and decided to constitute a Special Investigation Team to probe the incident, one of the deadliest in recent times. It also decided to frame a standard operating procedure (SOP) to enforce a blanket ban on rat-hole mining in Assam apart from sealing some 220 pits surveyed so far.

Dangers lurk below

For Raju Basumatary, 55, this is the second time a disaster like this has taken place. The first time this happened was at Ksan in Meghalaya's coal-rich East Jaintia Hills district on December 13, 2018. Then too, he was about 200 metres from the pit that devoured some of his fellow miners.

These, though, are not the only mishaps that Basumatary has encountered in 26 years as a rat-hole miner. He came to Kalamati from the Khlieh-riat area of Meghalaya four years ago.

"Khibakhibi hoibe thaake (Something or the other keeps happening)," he says, rattling off all the possibilities. "A miner slips to death in the pit, another is asphyxiated, somebody else dies after smelling toxic gas, the fourth drowns..."

The illegal tag has only increased the price of coal; it has not stopped mining

AGNES KHARSHING
Anti-mining activist

Basumatary says miners put themselves at risk in the dark depths of the earth. All they have is a torch strapped to their head to guide them. "Still, the money is good and it is guaranteed as long as you extract coal during the season," he says.

The "season" he refers to is the mining period between November and March. During the first two months of this period, workers invariably drain the water that fills the mines, which are often interlinked beneath the ground, because of rainfall and seepage from April to October.

Then they crawl into the mines and using pick-axes, extract coal from the walls of a rectangular tunnel that is 2-3 metres high or shovel about 20 kg of coal lumps onto a cart. They drag this to the mouth of the tunnel. Large metal troughs, operated with pulleys from a crane, haul a tonne or two of the coal to the surface.

Joseph Soren, 40, was in charge of loading the coal onto one of the troughs eased down from a crane when disaster struck on January 6. He was the last of the 23 miners who made it after helping those who could not swim escape first.

"I heard shouts of 'water, water!' and rumbling sounds. Before I could figure anything out, water carrying the miners shot out of the tunnels. We grabbed anything – the chains from the crane, the pipe of a water pump, ropes thrown down from people above – to save ourselves. The murky, stinging water made our eyes burn as we moved up. I struggled to keep my head above the water level," he says.

Soren, who is from western Assam's Chirang district, has worked in half a dozen mines in the Umrangso area, of which Kalamati is a part, over as many seasons, but he now has second thoughts about continuing mining. But then, the payment per season is good enough for his family of five to last at least a year.

The money was good enough for Ganga Bahadur Shresth, 38, of Nepal's Rampur village, to travel three days from his home to a mine each season, says his wife, Sushila Rai. His was the first of the four bodies retrieved by rescue workers from the Kalamati mine. "His income from mining made our lives quite comfortable but he never let us know how dangerous his work was. We found this out too late," says Rai, a mother of three.

Shresth came with more than 20 workers from Nepal to work in Umrangso. Among them was Lijan Magar, 27, who also lost his life. His was the second body to be retrieved. "We started liv-

ing here after our wedding two years ago. I don't know where to go with our two-month-old baby," says Junu Pradhan, Magar's wife.

The other two bodies retrieved were of Khushi Mohan Roy, 57, from Kokrajhar district's Fakiragram, who was one of Barman's room-mates; and of Sarat Goyari, 37, who hailed from Thailapara in north-central Assam's Sonitpur district.

'A huge scam'

For Assam's landless or marginal farmers such as Mohammed Saifuddin Ahmed of Dalgao in Darrang district, all roads lead to the mines when family expenditure exceeds income. The last time the 55-year-old worked in a coal mine was in March 2012, three months before 15 miners died in a flooded mine at Nongalbibra in Meghalaya's South Garo Hills district. The mishap, and a petition filed by the All Dimasa Students' Union of Assam, led to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) banning rat-hole coal mining in Meghalaya on April 17, 2014. Upheld by the Supreme Court later, the ban was extended to the other States in the Northeast. "But circumstances made me return to mining after all these years because, ban or not, no other job pays as much," Ahmed says.

The Ksan incident in 2018 and Kalamati now make it evident that the ban has largely been on paper. In Meghalaya, the Justice (retired) B.P. Katrekey-headed committee, which was appointed by the High Court of Meghalaya in April 2022 to investigate ongoing illegal coal mining and transportation, continues to receive complaints. One of the new complaints the panel has received relates to illegal mining in Nongalbibra, where the process of banning rat-hole mines began.

"The illegal tag has only increased the price of coal; it has not stopped mining," says Shillong-based anti-mining activist Agnes Kharshing, who survived a violent attack by coal mine owners in 2018. "Hundreds of trucks continue to transport coal on the highways feeding the coke units and cement plants. You can see mounds of freshly extracted coal on the roadside. The police, politicians, bureaucrats, landowners... almost all of them are involved." In 2023, the High Court of Meghalaya made a similar observation, saying the complicity of the State with the mafia operating illegal coal mines was "clear and obvious".

The tribal land ownership system in Meghalaya, a Sixth Schedule State, is often cited to justify the rampant mining since the 1980s. A provision of the Sixth Schedule calls for tribal land and resources to be protected. Another empowers the District and Regional Councils to grant licenses or leases for the extraction of minerals within their jurisdiction. Some council administrators and landowners believe that no one can interfere in their operations within their territory.

The Sixth Schedule applies to Dima Hasao, a district governed by a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led autonomous tribal council. Autonomy means limited involvement of the BJP-led Assam government in the affairs of the council.

"That, however, does not mean that the heads of the two governments cannot collude to share the spoils of a high-yielding illegal operation," says Jagadish Bhuyan, a former minister, who had filed Right to Information requests seeking details about rat-hole mining in Assam. He is also the general secretary of the Assam Jatiya Parishad, a political party borne out of the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act movement in 2019.

"If a worker risks his life for ₹1,500-2,000 a day, imagine the stakes the mine owners and everyone else along the chain has, to keep the illegal operations going. It is naive to think that the Centre is unaware of the illegal coal trade in Assam and elsewhere in the Northeast," he says.

Bhuyan continues, "Look at the chronology of events. Soon after the mishap, the Chief Minister tweeted that the mine appeared to be illegal. Then he said the mine was abandoned 12 years



If a worker risks his life for ₹1,500-2,000 a day, imagine the stakes the mine owners and everyone else along the chain has, to keep the illegal operations going.

JAGADISH BHUYAN
Former minister

ago, but was under the Assam Mineral Development Corporation Limited (AMDCL). The Government of India, which owns fossil fuels and minerals under the earth, suspended the AMDCL's operating license 12 years ago. So, the AMDCL has no right to extract coal and neither does it have the right to mine or trade OB coal." OB refers to the layers of soil, rock, etc. that need to be removed to extract coal.

The Assam Congress president, Bhupen Kumar Borah, says illegal coal mining in Umrangso, about 260 kilometres from Guwahati, was just the tip of the 'Syndicate Raj' iceberg in the State. "Illegal syndicates are controlling everything. If Assam is really under the control of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, he should be aware of the coal syndicate. That it has been allowed to operate for years explains the government's silence on Debola Gorlosa and his wife," he says.

Politics of former rebels

Gorlosa is the chief executive member (CEM) of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, which administers the Dima Hasao district. After the mine flooded, Opposition parties fished out an invoice that was issued to Kanika Hojai, Gorlosa's wife, for buying OB coal, or overburden coal, from the AMDCL.

While Gorlosa is incommunicado, his aides believe that he is being targeted. Gorlosa used to be the commander-in-chief of the Dima Halam Daogah, an armed group which was disbanded in 2013. "Once mauled by militancy, Dima Hasao district had three CEMs in as many years before Gorlosa. He ensured peace, stability, and development. Some failed leaders of the Dima Halam Daogah, who are desperate to be in power, are carrying out a smear campaign against him," claims one of his aides.

Meanwhile, others believe that Punish Nunisa, who was arrested for allegedly operating the mine illegally, has been made the scapegoat to keep the focus off the "real culprits".

Money matters

Amid the blame game, the AMDCL has come under the scanner for allegedly doing what it is not authorised to do, which is mining coal or residue.

In the line of fire, Anand Natarajan, the AMDCL's Managing Director, insists that the corporation has not set a foot wrong. "I am being maligned for reviving the corporation that once struggled to pay salaries to its employees. Apart from helping increase the State's revenue, we acquired a coal block in Jharkhand and won the bidding for two coal blocks in Assam - Garampani in Dima Hasao and Koilajan in the Karbi Anglong district - more than a year ago," he says. Natarajan adds that the AMDCL was the first to lodge an FIR relating to the Kalamati mine, which is 850 metres beyond the area under its Garampani block. The Indian Forest Service officer also says the dealing in OB coal was within the legal ambit. "If we don't use the OB coal lying in our depot for ages, our revenue will drop," he says.

Miners Basumatary and Ahmed worry that their incomes will drop too because of the incident. "We won't go hungry as long as there is demand for coal. Maybe, we should let the dust settle and wait for the next offer," Basumatary says.



Rescue workers search for the missing miners. RITU RAJ KONWAR

'Direct CBI to lodge FIR against High Court judge'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Senior advocates wrote to Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna on Friday to direct the Central Bureau of Investigation to lodge a first information report against Allahabad High Court judge Shekhar Kumar Yadav after taking *suo motu* notice of communal comments reported to have been made by him during a speech at an event organised by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad on December 8.

The petition addressed to the CJI through the Secretary-General of the Supreme Court and copied to other senior judges, including Justices B.R. Gavai, Surya Kant, Hrishikesh Roy, and A.S. Oka, was written by advocates, including Indira Jaising, Aspi Chinoy, Navroz Seervai, Anand Grover, Chander Uday Singh, Jaideep Gupta, Mohan V. Katarki, Shoeb Alam, R. Vaigai, Mihir Desai, and Jayant Bhushan.

The petition said that Justice Yadav's comments "drew a stark and inflammatory distinction" between two religious communities. It was a blatantly divisive rhetoric disregarding judicial impartiality.

BJP releases first part of manifesto for Delhi polls

Party says it will continue welfare schemes; it offers nutritional kits and ₹21,000 aid for pregnant women; increased pension and LPG cylinders at ₹500 for low-income families also on the cards

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Poll promises: J.P. Nadda and other BJP leaders during the launch of the *Sankalp Patra* in New Delhi on Friday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

With 18 days left for the Delhi Assembly election, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) released the first part of its three-part *Sankalp Patra* (manifesto) here on Friday.

BJP president J.P. Nadda assured citizens that if the BJP forms the government in Delhi, not only will the existing welfare schemes continue, but they will be made more effective and corruption in these schemes will be weeded out.

Striking a balance between freebies, subsidies, and expanded healthcare benefits, the BJP manifesto, to outbid the Aam Aadmi Party and the Congress, promises six nutritional kits and ₹21,000 financial assistance for pregnant women under the Mahila Samriddhi Yojana.

It promises LPG cylinders at ₹500 to women from low-income families in addition to a free cylinder each on Holi and Deepavali.

Deepavali. The party will also provide ₹2,500 to women under the Mahila Samriddhi Yojana.

The BJP also plans to implement the Ayushman Bharat Yojana to provide free treatment up to ₹5 lakh, with the Delhi government providing an additional ₹5-lakh cover for all low-income households.

Senior citizens over 70 will receive free OPD and diagnostic services, as well as free treatment up to ₹10 lakh.

The party has promised an increase in the senior citizens' pension for those in the 60-70 age group from

₹2,000 to ₹2,500. The pension for senior citizens, widows, *divyang*, and destitute aged over 70 will be raised from ₹2,500 to ₹3,000.

Hitting out at the AAP, Mr. Nadda said the ruling party in the Union Territory had promised AAP can-teens in *jhuggi-jhopri* (JJ) clusters, but it never happened. The BJP plans to open Atal Canteens in JJ clusters to provide nutritious meals at ₹5.

Mr. Nadda said the manifesto reflects a transformed culture of Indian politics. "Earlier, political parties themselves would forget the promises written

in their manifestos. But today, the culture has changed as manifestos have evolved into commitments," he said.

'Glaring contradictions' AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal pointed out the glaring contradictions in the BJP's manifesto, which simultaneously promises to emulate the AAP's welfare schemes while advocating for the shutdown of Mohalla Clinics, a transformative project lauded nationally and internationally for making primary healthcare accessible and affordable.

Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Deven Yadav said the BJP was only doing a copy-paste job of the Congress party's guarantees for the Delhi Assembly election. He said no one will believe the BJP's promises as it has failed to honour its election promises in the 22 States where it holds power.

He said the BJP's promises for Delhi will end up as mere election rhetoric, like Mr. Kejriwal's futile guarantees.

Lokpal ordered probe in 24 cases in 5 years, granted nod for prosecution in 6 of them

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Nearly 90% of the complaints were rejected as they were not in correct format

Twelve years since the Lokpal Act was passed and five years after the Lokpal – the country's first anti-corruption body – started to function, it has ordered investigation in just 24 cases and granted prosecution sanction in six cases, data show.

The Lokpal, which has the powers to investigate complaints against public functionaries, received three complaints against Prime Minister Narendra Modi in October and December last year.

The Lokpal has rejected a large number of complaints, nearly 90%, over the past five years as they were not in the correct format.

At least 2,320 "defect-free" complaints were registered with the Lokpal in five years, with 226 complaints lodged from April 1 to December 2024.

Of the total complaints,

3% were against the Prime Minister, Member of Parliament, or Union Minister;

21% complaints were against Group A, B, C, or D officials of the Union government;

35% complaints against chairperson or

employees who were brought in during the transitional period, said an official.

The Lokpal awaits decision on proposals sent to the Union government on several occasions for filling up the post of the Director of Inquiry and the Director of Prosecution.

In the meanwhile, preliminary inquiries and investigations are being entrusted with the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) as mandated, the official added.

According to Section 11 A of the CVC Act, 2003, a Director of Inquiry, not below the rank of Joint Secretary, ought to be appointed in the CVC by the Union government for conducting preliminary inquiries referred to it by the Lokpal. However, presently, in the absence of Director of Inquiry, the cases referred by the Lokpal are being inquired into with the aid of Central Vigilance Officers (CVO) of the Ministries or organisations concerned.

The Lokpal is also in the process of framing regulations under Section 60 of the Act to improve its operational efficiency.

End violence before political talks: Centre to Kuki-Zo Council

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has told the members of the Kuki-Zo Council that a cessation of violence is a pre-requisite to initiate any political dialogue in Manipur. The tribal leaders insisted that this cannot be a one-sided demand.

Four members of the newly formed council, the apex body of Kuki-Zo tribes in Manipur, met A.K. Mishra, the Ministry's Security Adviser for north-eastern India, on Friday.

Manipur has been affected by ethnic violence since May 3, 2023, which has claimed the lives of

more than 250 people so far.

"The Home Ministry of officials said that for the political talks to happen, there should be peace first. No violence and no firing. We told them there are circumstances when we are attacked and have no option but to retaliate. You cannot only ask us for peace, it has to be from both sides. From our side, we are ready to maintain peace," said Ginza Vualzong, spokesperson of the Kuki-Zo Council (KZC).

He said the KZC also pressed its demand for a separate administration or a Union Territory with a legislature for the Kuki-Zo

people who live in the hill districts. Mr. Vualzong said that in the past, various organisations such as the Committee On Tribal Unity in Kangpokpi and the Indigenous Tribal Leaders Forum in Churachandpur were in talks with the Union government at different levels.

From now on, however, the KZC will be the unified body representing the community in talks with the Home Ministry. It will be the main platform to discuss the issues of the community, he said, adding that when it comes to local issues, the groups active in specific areas will take responsibility.

'Social media firms largely compliant with rulings'

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

Social media companies are working smoothly with the Grievance Appellate Committees (GACs) that hear appeals against content complaints and takedowns, offering little resistance to GAC rulings, a top IT Ministry official and a member of one GAC told *The Hindu*.

The GACs were set up under the Information Technology Rules, 2021, with a mandate to hear appeals from Indian users against social media firms which have more than 5,00,000 active Indian users. The committees can rule on whether content has to be taken down or reinstated.

Firms like Meta Platforms Inc, which owns Facebook and Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) have largely been cooperative with the GACs and comply with their orders. The GACs have received 2,454 appeals since October 2023, and have disposed of 2,347.

In six transparency reports published by Meta for the period between June and December 2024, the firm said it complied with 100% of the 271 orders it received from the GAC. Google also reported complying with all appeals except one, though the firm has yet to disclose data beyond September 2024. (In the one exception, "the GAC's directions could not be complied with whilst al-



The most common types of complaints arise from incidents of impersonation and hacking.

so preserving Google's position as an intermediary under Indian law," the firm said, without providing any details. X has not yet disclosed any statistics on appeals from the GAC.

Ashutosh Shukla, a retired IPS officer who is a member of the second GAC – which he says has handled the majority of

complaints filed so far – told *The Hindu* that social media firms "generally comply" with the GAC's orders. Union Secretary for Electronics and Information Technology S. Krishnan said in an interview with *The Hindu* that the GACs have had "a fairly good dynamic", and that the system has been working smoothly to redress users' complaints.

The number of appeals has been rising exponentially, Mr. Shukla said. While the GAC members work remotely in a "digital" manner, with secretarial assistance from the IT Ministry in New Delhi, he said that the rise in appeals is keeping committee members engaged with the work. Mr. Krishnan added:

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"- PROCUREMENT NOTICE WORKS DEPARTMENT
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3. No. of work : 01 no.
4. Tender Cost : Rs.10,00,000.00 (On-line)
5. Class of Contractor : A / Special Class Contractor
6. Available of bid document in the website : From 10.00 A.M. of 21.01.2025 to 5.00 PM of 06.02.2025
7. Date of opening of Bid : Dt.07.02.2025 at 11.30 AM
8. 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 Engineer, Bridges, Odisha, Bhubaneswar,
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No. BMTC/COSP/STR/SDS/608/2024-25 Date: 17.01.2025

"e"-Auction Notice

Scrap Materials available at BMTC will be sold through e-Auction to be conducted by M/s. M.S.T.C. (A Govt. of India undertaking). The e-Auction schedule is as under: (1) Scrapped Materials Date of e-Auction: 28.01.2025. The interested bidders may log on to www.mstccommerce.com for further details and registration. They may also contact M/s. M.S.T.C. LTD., at below mentioned address for needful clarification. Address: M/s. M.S.T.C. LTD., No.19/5, 19/6, 3rd Floor, Karim Tower, Cunningham Road, Bengaluru- 560 052. Contact phone Nos: 080- 22260054, 22266417, 22287356. FAX No. 080- 22256365 BMTC Contact phone Nos: + 91 7760991988 / 7760991157.

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OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA, BHUBANESWAR

INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

File No. B-4V-H-(H&D)-16/2024 1704 / Bhubaneswar, the 13th Jan, 2025

Invitation For Bids - 1st Corrigendum - Tender Reference No.C.E.(B)-26/2024-25

Name of the Work - Construction of 50 Bedded Critical Care Block at MC&H Balasore, Odisha. The following changes have been made in Bid Identification No.C.E.(B)-26/2024-25

1. Bid documents such as DTCN / BOQ etc. can be seen / downloaded from the Govt. Website i.e. www.tendersorissa.gov.in, during the period from dt.21.01.2025 to 17.00 hours of dt.07.02.2025 instead of dt.13.01.2025 to dt.28.01.2025 for ONLINE BIDDING respectively.

2. Online bids shall be received till 17.00 Hours of dt.07.02.2025 instead of dt.28.01.2025.

3. The technical bids will be opened at 11.30 A.M. of dt.10.02.2025 instead of dt.29.01.2025.

All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

Chief Engineer, Buildings-I (I/C), Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
B-842

OIPR-34174/11/0054/2425

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL MEDICAL EDUCATION & TRAINING, UTTAR PRADESH
6th FLOOR, JAWAHAR BHAWAN, LUCKNOW

No.: ME-3/2025/127 Lucknow: Dated 17 January, 2025

The Time Schedule of Third Round of Online Counseling for UP NEET PG-2024

The time table of online counseling for the Third round for admission to postgraduate courses (MD/MS/Diploma and DNB) in Government/Autonomous/Private Medical Colleges/Institutes/Universities/Hospitals under Medical Health is as follows:-

S.No.	Description	Dates	Total Days
1	Date of Online deposition of Registration fee Security money	22nd January 2025 (From 11:00 AM) to 23rd January 2025 (Till 2:00 PM)	02 days
2	Date of Online Choice Filling	24th January 2025 (From 2:00 PM) to 28th January 2025 (Till 2:00 PM)	04 days
3	Date of Declaration of result of seat allotment	30th January 2025	01 day
4	Date for downloading allotment letters and admission process	31st January 2025 to 01st February and 03rd February to 05th February 2025	05 days

• Only registered candidates under UP NEET PG-2024 can participate in the counseling process.

• Those candidates who are registered and have not been able to deposit the registration fee and security amount due to some reason, can participate in the counseling process by depositing the registration fee and security amount.

• Only those registered candidates who have deposited the registration fee and security amount will be eligible for choice filling.

• Candidates should assess their eligibility themselves as per the provisions contained in the Government Order No. I/687326/2024 dated 09 July 2024 regarding UP NEET PG 2024 policy and the brochure of UP NEET PG-2024.

• All the information related to UP NEET PG-2024 counseling will be uploaded on website <https://upneet.gov.in> and [www.dgme.up.gov.in](http://dgme.up.gov.in). Candidates are advised to visit the website on regular basis.

DIRECTOR GENERAL

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Tenders are invited through e-Tendering in SRM system from the registered vendors

2ndCall –Two Bid system Tenders Tender No. & Description of Material SITC of capacitor banks -	Estimated Amount (in Rs. Lakhs) Tender Fee (in Rs.)	Date Due & Time (Hrs.) Submission & Opening - Tender
SP/0-0608/0125 [RFX No. 700034930] voltage ratings of 11kv & 22 kv--205 MVAR at 14Nos. of EHV Substations in Phase-VI [6.10] under Pune 1 Div Pune zone .	1470.73 25000.00	30.01.2025 17:00 30.01.2025 17:15

Contact Person: Office of the Executive Engineer (P&C) Ph.No.8329909813
Tel. No.022-26474211/022-26472131 Extn.2491/2493.
Email:secpa@mahatransco.in, eegrp6@mahatransco.in, dyeegrp6@mahatransco.in
For further details visit our website <http://www.srmeter.mahatransco.in>

Sd/-Executive Engineer (P&C)

NMDC Ltd
(A Government of India Enterprises)
BIOM, BACHELI COMPLEX,
PO: BACHELI, DIST DANTEWADA (CG) 494553

OPEN TENDER NOTICE

Tender Enquiry No: NMDC/Bachel/MM/9/24/25/ET/686 Date: 14.01.2025

Item Description : Sale Order to lift the Used oil with drum for a period of one year

Estimated off Take : Rs.96.57 Lakhs

Tender Viewing period : From 14.01.2025 to 27.01.2025 (up to 3PM)

For complete details, please : [https://www.mstccommerce.com/eprochome/nmdc/</](http://https://www.mstccommerce.com/eprochome/nmdc/)

IN BRIEF

**SBI Life Q3 net surges 71% to ₹551 cr. on premium income**

SBI Life Insurance Company's net profit for the third quarter ended December increased more than 71% year-on-year to ₹550.82 crore. Net premium income rose over 11% to ₹24,827.54 crore. Total income, however, declined to ₹18,542.16 crore from ₹38,803.36 crore on the back of ₹6,281.65 crore loss on investment income (net of amortisation and losses, including capital gains). Investment income stood at ₹16,468.64 crore a year earlier.

Eight former, current Paytm staff pay up to settle SEBI case

As many as eight current and former officials of One97 Communications, which owns and operates Paytm, collectively paid ₹3.32 crore to SEBI to settle allegations of flouting securities market norms. It was claimed independent directors, part of Nomination and Remuneration Committee, failed to discharge duties with respect to matters involving benefits to company MD and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma and relatives, in violation of LODR Regulations, 2015. PTI

Indian Hotels Company's Q3 net rises 29% to ₹582 crore

Indian Hotels Company Ltd. (IHCL) reported a 29% year-on-year growth in net profit to ₹582 crore for the third quarter ended December 31. Revenue also climbed 29% to ₹2,592 crore. "In Q4 and subsequent quarters of the next financial year, the sector will continue to witness demand buoyancy on account of large-scale regional events, weddings and sustained transient travel," said Puneet Chhatwal, managing director and chief executive officer, IHCL.

Tech Mahindra kicks off Chennai AI-savvy production hub

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Tech Mahindra Ltd. has opened an advanced manufacturing experience centre on its Sholinganallur campus in Chennai. The centre was inaugurated by Anand Mahindra, Chairman of Mahindra Group, and Mohit Joshi, CEO and managing director of Tech Mahindra.

The facility will help manufacturers quickly prototype and scale AI-driven innovations to address industry challenges such as high operational costs, process inefficiencies, supply chain disruptions, and complex operational hurdles, the company said.

The centre would also serve as a hub for custom-



Anand Mahindra (R) and Mohit Joshi (L) inaugurating the centre in Chennai. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

CBIC needs to reassess gold limits under Baggage Rules: Delhi HC

Soibam Rocky Singh
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has said the value of gold permissible under the Baggage Rules for travellers coming from abroad to India will have to be relooked by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), saying it "appears to be completely not in tune with the current market value of gold".

A Bench of Justices Prathiba M. Singh and Dharmesh Sharma said they had seen a number of cases where "even small quantities of jewellery are sometimes seized by the



Customs department if the passenger is walking through the green channel – which is for passengers not having any dutiable or prohibited goods".

"Moreover, the court is of the view the Baggage Rules may also require a relook, considering the

'To fix economy, boost consumption'

Reserve Bank of India officials moot monitoring of sticky food inflation and its 'second order effects', pin hopes on rekindling private capex through improved disposable incomes for people amid an 'anything but ordinary' global economy

Vikas Dhoot

NEW DELHI

One way to revive the animal spirits amid India's tripping economic growth is to boost consumption, senior Reserve Bank of India (RBI) officials said on Friday, noting that private capex is yet to show any visible signs of pick-up while government capex has slipped.

While they identified investment and manufacturing as the biggest drags on growth in an assessment of the economy, RBI officials, including the now former Deputy Governor Michael D. Patra, reckoned that the



Feeling the pinch: The middle class is pinning hopes on relief from food inflation and higher disposable incomes, RBI officials said. PTI

time is "apposite to rekindle the animal spirits, create mass consumer demand and trigger a boom in investment".

"The middle class is pinning hopes on relief from

food inflation and hence higher disposable incomes, especially the urban segment," they said in the RBI bulletin. While December's 5.22% inflation print was driven by "win-

ter easing of prices when the earth offers up a rich bounty of fruits and vegetables", the bulletin article said food inflation "continues to remain high, with key products" seeing high double digits inflation."

"The stickiness in high food inflation, in an environment of firming rural wages and corporate salary outgoes, warrants careful monitoring of second order effects," it said.

Weighing in tangentially on the threat posed by quick commerce and e-tailers to mom-and-pop stores, the article said private final consumption is the brightening spot in the

economy, driven by e-commerce and q-commerce among which fostering competition is better than being restrictive.

The global economy is shaping up to be 'anything but ordinary' in 2025, and disinflation can be expected to be uneven, limiting monetary policy easing space. While disinflation would bring relief for households with severely stretched finances, they said the inflation battle is "entering a new phase with fresh upside threats on the horizon – the weaponisation of uncertainty – and the future path of interest rates is becoming hazy."

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	FRIDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	76,619	-0.55
US Dollar	86.60	0.01
Gold	82,000	0.86
Brent oil	80.90	0.48

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2399.80	-28.05
Adani Ports	1163.50	12.75
Apollo Hosp	6828.10	38.45
Asian Paints	2261.00	-45.40
Axian Bank	991.05	-46.95
Bajaj Auto	8581.40	-0.55
Bajaj FinServ	1680.65	-16.70
Bajaj Finance	7182.10	-77.65
Bharti Airtel	282.15	6.00
Bharti Airtel	1627.50	-2.70
BPCL	273.60	6.70
Britannia Ind	4954.40	9.85
Cipla	1442.30	-1.20
Coal India	387.65	8.80
D Dr Reddy's Lab.	1309.40	6.65
Eicher Motors	5012.30	-35.50
Grafix Media	2375.85	25.15
HCL Tech	1788.90	-3.35
HFDC Bank	1636.75	-15.30
HFDC Life	642.20	0.80
Hero MotoCorp	4098.00	23.90
Hindalco	617.00	14.40
Hind Unilever	2354.00	9.00
ICICI Bank	1225.45	-23.65
IndusInd Bank	970.95	-4.40
Infosys	1815.45	-113.00
ITC	440.20	7.35
JSW Steel	908.60	1.80
Kotak Bank	1758.60	-46.95
L&T	3568.65	60.75
M&M	2917.35	-63.25
Maruti Suzuki	12136.35	44.05
NestleIndia	2217.20	47.90
NTPC	326.15	0.65
ONGC	266.57	3.39
PowerGrid Corp	302.60	4.95
Reliance Ind	1302.35	35.90
SBI	1540.50	26.90
State Bank	764.10	-2.20
Shriram Finance	526.50	-20.30
Tata Consumer Prod.	1786.55	23.25
Tata Motors	954.45	16.75
Tata Steel	130.28	2.47
TCS	4124.30	-82.00
Tech Mahindra	1660.30	-77.35
Titan	3357.40	40.50
Trent Ltd.	6216.55	5.00
UltraTech Cement	10580.00	-56.20
Wipro	281.95	-6.10

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on January 17

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	86.41	86.73
Euro	89.03	89.37
British Pound	105.36	105.76
Japanese Yen (100)	55.53	55.74
Chinese Yuan	11.79	11.83
Swiss Franc	94.78	95.14
Singapore Dollar	63.20	63.44
Canadian Dollar	59.92	60.15
Malaysian Ringgit	19.17	19.25
Australian Dollar	53.54	53.74

Source: Indian Bank

TechM Q3 profit after tax surges 93% to ₹983 crore

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

IT major Tech Mahindra Ltd.'s consolidated net profit for the third quarter ended December 31, 2024, increased to ₹22,319 crore from the ₹22,205 crore logged in the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

Net profit margin expanded by 350 bps (basis points). Total contract value of new deals surged 95.4% to ₹745 million. Revenue was up 1.4% to ₹13,286 crore. Total headcount at the end of the quarter stood at 1,50,488, up 4,238. Last 12-month IT attrition was 11.2%.

For the fourth quarter, the tech firm expects IT services revenue in the range of ₹2,602 million to ₹2,655 million.

"In a seasonally-weak quarter, our strong in-quarter execution helped us deliver above the top

Wipro Q3 net up 25%, to pay ₹6 dividend

The Hindu Bureau

SOUTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE

Odisha ties up with Singaporean entities for skilling and R&D

Satyasundar Barik

BHUBANESWAR

Odisha signed eight memoranda of understanding (MoU) with different Singaporean entities as Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam embarked on a two-day visit to the State on Friday.

The MoUs pertaining to IT education, skill development, research and development (R&D) in sustainable energy, consultancy services and development of production facility for green hydrogen and its derivatives were signed in the presence of Mr. Shanmugaratnam and Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi.

Singapore-based ITE Education Services (ITEES), a global consultancy agency, entered into an MoU with Odisha Skill Development and Technical Education on extending cooperation in the field of technical and vocational education and training to enhance skill development ecosystem and the semiconductor industry in Odisha.

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, will collaborate with GRIDCO Ltd., a State government undertaking, and IIT Bhubaneswar to enable R&D in sustainable energy technologies.

Similarly, the MoU between Sembcorp and Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation will explore the feasibility for an industrial park's development in the State.

Semi-Conductor Laboratory Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Govt. of India Sector 72, SAS Nagar 160071, Punjab, Ph: 91-172-2296101-04

Advertisement No. SCL/01/2025 Date:- /01/2025

SCL invites applications for the following post on Deputation from the eligible Officers from the All India Services or Central Services Group - A:

S. No.	Name of the Post	No. of vacancies	Pay Band & Level in the Pay Matrix
1	Controller	01	Level 14 in the Pay Matrix, 7th CPC (Rs. 144200-218200)

The Applications of only such Officers will be considered as are routed through proper channel and are accompanied with (i) bio-data (ii) ACR/APAR dossier of the Officer containing upto date APARS or clear photocopies of ACR/APAR for at least last five years duly self-attested; (iii) cadre clearance; (iv) clearance from vigilance and disciplinary angle; (v) statement giving details of major or minor penalties, if any, imposed on the officer during the last ten years; (vi) a certificate that in the event of selection, the Officer would be relieved to join the duties of the post; and (vii) certificate of Head of Office/Forwarding Authority to be forwarded by their respective organisation to the undersigned within 45 days from the date of publication. Applications not accompanied with the required certificates/documents stated above or applications received after the closing date will not be considered. For more details including eligibility, qualification, required experience please visit SCL website: www.scl.gov.in. Head, P&GA

SMART CITY THIRUVANANTHAPURAM LIMITED CIN U75302KL2017SGC05027 E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited for the following projects of Smart City Thiruvananthapuram Limited			
<tr

LOS ANGELES

Mulholland Drive and *Twin Peaks* director David Lynch dies at 78



David Lynch — the director of *Mulholland Drive* and television's *Twin Peaks*, who depicted the darkness lurking beneath the wholesome surface of American life — has died. He was 78 years old. The cause and location of death were not specified. Lynch had suffered from emphysema after years of heavy smoking. AFP

WASHINGTON

Indian sentenced to eight years for attempted attack on White House



Indian national Sai Varshith Kandula, 20, was sentenced to eight years for an attempted attack on the White House with a rented truck on May 22, 2023. Born in Chandanagar, Kandula was a lawful permanent resident of the U.S. with a green card. The picture shows a police officer inspecting the site of attack. PTI

WASHINGTON

U.S. Supreme Court upholds law banning TikTok in the country



The U.S. Supreme Court upheld a law that will ban TikTok, potentially denying the video-sharing app to 170 million users in two days. The court ruled that the law does not violate free speech rights and that the U.S. government had demonstrated national security concerns about a Chinese company owning the app. AFP

WASHINGTON

Trump and Xi speak over phone, promise to improve relations



Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping spoke by phone, with both leaders vowing to take a positive approach to improving ties between the rival countries. Mr. Xi said he hoped for a "good start" to relations with the U.S. President-elect, who in turn said "it is my expectation that we will solve many problems together." AFP

China's population declines for third consecutive year, straining economy

China's population stood at 1.408 billion at the end of 2024, a decline of 1.39 million from the previous year. The figures follow trends worldwide, but especially in East Asia, where Japan, South Korea and others have seen birth rates plummet.

Associated Press

TAIPEI

China's population fell last year for the third straight year, its government said on Friday, pointing to further demographic challenges for the world's second most populous nation, which is now facing an ageing population and an emerging shortage of working age people.

China's population stood at 1.408 billion at the end of 2024, a decline of 1.39 million from the previous year.

The figures announced by the government in Beijing



Dwindling lot: Rising cost of living has been attributed as one of the main reasons for people to not have children. AFP

plummet. China three years ago joined Japan and most of Eastern Europe among other nations whose population is fall-

ing. The reasons are in many cases similar: rising costs of living are causing young people to put off or rule out marriage and child birth while pursuing higher education and careers. While people are living longer, that's not enough to keep up with rate of new births.

Lopsided sex ratio

Countries such as China that allow very little immigration are especially at risk. China also has a lopsided sex ratio, with as many as millions more boys born for every 100 girls, raising the possibility of social instability among Chi-

na's army of bachelors. Friday's report gave the sex imbalance as 104.34 men to every 100 women, though independent groups give the imbalance as considerably higher.

More disturbing for the government was the drastically falling birthrate, with China's total population dropping for the first time in decades in 2023 and China being narrowly overtaken by India as the world's most populous nation in the same year. A rapidly aging population, declining workforce, lack of consumer markets and migration abroad are putting the system under severe pressure.

Pakistani court sentences Imran, wife to prison for graft

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD

A Pakistani court on Friday sentenced the country's already-imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife to 14 and seven years in jail after finding them guilty of corruption, officials and his lawyer said. It's yet another blow for the former Premier who has been behind the bars since 2023.

The couple are accused of accepting a gift of land from a real estate tycoon in exchange for laundered money when Mr. Khan was in power.

Prosecutors say the businessman, Malik Riaz, was then allowed by Mr. Khan to pay fines that were imposed on him in another case from the same laun-



Latest setback: Supporters of Imran Khan protest in Peshawar against the court verdict on Friday. AP

dered money of £190 million that was returned to Pakistan by British authorities in 2022 to deposit with the national exchequer.

Mr. Khan has denied wrongdoing and insisted since his arrest in 2023 that all the charges against him are a plot by rivals to keep him from returning to office.

A post from Khan's ac-

Migrant boat capsizes off West African coast killing 40 Pakistanis

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD

More than 40 Pakistanis are feared to have drowned in the capsizing of a boat off West Africa's Atlantic coastline, which has emerged as a primary point of departure for migrants aiming to reach Europe. President Asif Ali Zardari expressed grief over the deaths.

Pakistan said it had been informed by its embassy in Morocco that a boat carrying 80 passengers, including some Pakistanis, had set off from Mauritania and capsized near Dakhla, a Moroccan-controlled port city in the disputed Western Sahara.

Russian and Iranian officials say the "comprehensive strategic partnership treaty" covers all areas — from trade and military cooperation to science, education and culture.

Mr. Putin praised the deal as a "real breakthrough, creating conditions for the stable and sus-

Russia and Iran sign treaty to deepen their ties in the face of Western sanctions

Associated Press

MOSCOW



Common interests: Vladimir Putin, right, and Masoud Pezeshkian at the Kremlin in Moscow on Friday. AP

tainable development of Russia, Iran and the entire region."

He said the amount of

eration was still insufficient, voicing hope the new treaty will help expand them. He said the countries are trying to re-

solve technical obstacles to advance planned projects to ship Russian natural gas to Iran and build transport corridors to Iranian ports in the Gulf.

Mr. Pezeshkian said the projects are feasible, adding that experts were working to resolve the remaining obstacles.

His visit came ahead of Monday's inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump, who has pledged to broker peace in Ukraine and take a tougher stance on Iran, which is grappling with growing economic problems and other challenges, including military setbacks in its sphere of influence across West Asia.

Russia sentences three Navalny lawyers to years behind bars

Agence France-Presse

PETUSHKI

Russia on Friday sentenced three lawyers who had defended Alexei Navalny to several years in prison for bringing messages from the late opposition leader from prison to the outside world.

The case, which comes amid a massive crackdown on dissent during the Ukraine offensive, has alarmed rights groups who fear Moscow will ramp up trials against legal representatives in addition to jailing their clients.

The Kremlin has sought

Vadim Kobzev, Alexei Liptser and Igor Sergunin were found guilty of participating in an 'extremist group'

to punish Navalny's associates even after the Russian dissident's unexplained death in an Arctic prison colony last February.

Vadim Kobzev, Alexei Liptser and Igor Sergunin were found guilty of participating in an "extremist organisation" by a court in the town of Petushki.

Sport

Two batting powerhouses to battle for glory

HAZARE TROPHY

Dhruba Prasad

VADODARA

Two batting powerhouses, led by two prolific captains, will face off for the highest honour in 50-over domestic cricket as Karnataka and Vidarbha go head-to-head in the Vijay Hazare Trophy final at the Kotambli Stadium here on Saturday.

While Karnataka will be eyeing a record-equalling fifth title, and first since the 2019-20 season, Vidarbha will have a taste of the final for the first time against a side that is yet to be beaten in the summit clash of the competition.

But, taking a cue from skipper Karun Nair, Vidarbha will not delve too much into the past. Karun

has had a scarcely believable tournament, averaging 752 with the bat while slamming five hundreds in the last seven innings.

Consistency
He has married this consistency with a newfound power-hitting ability, which was on full show during his 44-ball 88 not out blitz against Maharashtra in the semifinal.

On the other hand, Karnataka skipper Mayank Agarwal is second only to Karun in the top run scorers' list this season but has fallen to single-digit scores in the last two games.

More context
That the two former teammates will go up against each other will only add more context to this tantalising contest.

But over-reliance on the

top order is something both sides will be wary of, particularly Vidarbha. Dhrub Shorey, Yash Rathod and Karun have faced almost 80 per cent of the total balls bowled to Vidarbha's batters in the tournament, allowing little game time to the middle and lower order.

Watery grave
Meanwhile, after Mayank's early departure, Karnataka's campaign could have met a watery grave in the semifinal if not for Devdutt Padikkal and R. Smaran's match-winning alliance in a middling 238-run chase against Haryana.

On current form, Vidarbha's batting may hold the edge, but Karnataka's well-rounded attack, led by V. Koushik and Shreyas Gopal, could have its measure.

Aralina primed to deliver in main event

BENGALURU: Aralina, who is in fine nick, may score an encore in the R.W.I.T.C. Trophy (1,400m), the feature event of the races to be held here on Saturday (Jan 18). False rails (width about 5.5m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

1 ALAKNANDA PLATE (1,400m), rated 0 to 25, 6-y-o & over, 1-30 p.m.: 1. Benzema (2) Rayan 62, 2. Lady Invictus (7) Trevor 61.5, 3. Capri Girl (4) R. Pradeep 61, 4. Super Creator (3) Angad 60.5, 5. My Solitaire (1) Jagadeesh 59, 6. Sand Castles (5) Darshan 59, 7. Princess Jasmine (6) Koshi K 58 and 8. Recreator (8) K. Suhas 55.

1 DUFFY, 2. INFINITE SPIRIT, 3. NAIRAMI

3 INDRAVATI STAKES (DIV. I, 1,400m), rated 20 to 45, 3-30: 1. Able One (8) G. Praveen 60, 2. The Dream (2) Akshay K 59.5, 3. Cascais (4) Sandesh 56, 4. Adelanto (1) Tauseef 55.5, 5. AmazingStride (7) David Allan 55.5, 6. Grey Impact (3) Vivek 55.5, 7. N. R. Gold (6) Sharqi 55.5, 8. Thuthmose (5) Jagadeesh 55.5.

1. DESERT KINGDOM, 2. LUX AETERNA, 3. MICHIKO

3 INDRAVATI STAKES (DIV. II, 1,400m), rated 20 to 45, 3-30: 1. Equalizer (9) Tauseef 60, 2. Knotty Scotty (6) Trevor 60, 3. Habibti (1) Sandesh 55.5, 4. Southern Aristocrat (7) A. Prakash 59.5, 5. Feeling Good (4) K. Suhas 59, 6. Supercharge (3) Ashish Asbat 59, 7. Tuneman (8) Darshan 59, 8. She Rules (5) Akshay K 58.5 and 9. Daiki (2) Rajesh K 58.

3 INDRAKRISHNA RAO MEDICAL CUP (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 4-00: 1. Circle Of Dreams (7) Akshay K 56, 2. Refreshmen (3) Trevor 56, 3. Contessa (4) Suraj 55.5, 4. Cupid's Way (1) Vinod Shinde 54.5, 6. Higgins 54.5 and 8. Ziva (5) L.A. Rozario 54.5.

1. METZINGER, 2. MAPLE LEAF, 3. AGERA

9 ABBEY FALLS PLATE (DIV. I, 1,200m), rated 80 & above, 4-30: 1. The Protector (4) Srinath 62.5, 2. Priceless Gold (5) M. Prabhakaran 61.5, 3. Aldgate (2) Aleemuddin 54.5, 4. Forseti (1) Shreyas S 50, 5. Kamaliti (3) Akshay K 50 and 6. Aralina (6) Sandesh 50.

1 ARALINA, 2. THE PROTECTOR

8 VIJAYANAGAR PLATE (1,200m), 5-00: 1. Southern Force (2) Srinath 62.5, 2. Indian Blues (8) Angad 62, 3. Maple Leaf (4) Koshi K 57.5, 4. Lauterbrunner (3) Kiran Rai 55, 5. Solo Prince (7) L.A. Rozario 54, 6. N.R. Touch (7) Jagadeesh 53.5, 7. Metzinger (1) Akshay K 53 and 8. Own Legacy (6) Shreyas S 51.

1. METZINGER, 2. MAPLE LEAF, 3. AGERA

9 ABBEY FALLS PLATE (DIV. I, 1,200m), rated 20 to 45, 6-y-o & over, 5-30: 1. Star Admiral (10) Rayan 62, 2. Hasting Sunrise (6) Ganesh S 61, 3. Sheer Bluster (7) Adarsh 61, 4. Breeze Bluster (2) Srinath 60, 5. Augusto (3) Arvind K 59.5, 6. Schafenberg (9) P. Mani 59.5, 7. Mega Success (11) Jagadeesh 59, 8. Peridot (8) Pavan 59, 9. Star Comet (5) Koshi K 59, 10. Agera (1) Darshan 57.5 and 11. Silver Swift (4) A. Prakash 56.5.

1. BREEZE BLUSTER, 2. AUGUSTO, 3. AGERA

Day's best: CIRCLE OF DREAMS Double: LIVE THE DREAM — ARALINA

Trainer: 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9; Tr (i): 1, 2 and 3; (ii): 4, 5 and 6; (iii): 7, 8 and 9.



Big game: Karnataka skipper Mayank will be keen to come good against Vidarbha. VIJAY SONEJI

Weekend Sport

**K.C. Vijaya Kumar**

Unlike his precise deliveries, Jasprit Bumrah's press conferences can be elaborate affairs. The Indian spearhead with an air of a headmaster speaks at leisurely pace while giving voice to wide-ranging perspectives. After concluding a statement, he often offers a half-smile before moving on to the next query.

But on Wednesday (January 15), he posted a pithy line on X, formerly Twitter. And it read: "I know fake news is easy to spread but this made me laugh." There was a smiley emoticon and a few more words, but the message was driven home, just like his yorkers zooming past wilting legs and flailing bats.

The import of his utterance was akin to a radio announcement about a cyclone crossing the coast without causing damage to life and proper-

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Preserving a spearhead's menace: why keeping Bumrah healthy is Indian cricket's chief priority

Since bursting onto the international scene, the speedster has become the world's finest fast bowler and the team's go-to man. But carrying such a hefty load has increased the risk of injury. Given his exceptional match-winning value across formats, India needs a plan to lengthen the 31-year-old's career

ty, at worst maybe knocking down a few coconut trees. There was an overwhelming sense of relief. Bumrah was reacting to a story doing the rounds about how he has been advised bed rest due to a bulge in his back.

Just like Sachin Tendulkar's tennis-elbow in the past, Bumrah's back is quite the rage in news circles. Currently, the world's finest pace bowler is nursing a back injury suffered during the recent Sydney Test. While worst-possible scenarios are being trumped up, his social media post tried to quell these needless fires.

Obviously, more transparency from the BCCI would be appreciated as no official proclamation has been made. We just have Bumrah's reaction for now. In hindsight, the injury seemed inevitable. Bearing the weight of the Indian attack, the pacer has been the pivot on which India's fortunes rested during the recent tour Down Under.

Statistically, Bumrah bowled fewer overs (151.2) than Pat Cummins (167). But the Australian captain had the support of Mitchell Starc, Scott Boland and partly Josh Hazlewood. Despite Mohammed Siraj's 20 scalps, for Bumrah it was often a lonely road. He had to strike at will, choke the runs and always dispense hope. It was a burden too heavy to bear, physically and psychologically. Add to it a batting line-up that did not offer a cushion of runs, and the picture gets even more ghastric.

Australia prevailed 3-1 to reclaim the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in the five-Test series but it was a result much closer than the final number suggests. Leading this resistance was Bumrah, also skipper in the first and last Tests at Perth and Sydney, respectively. His 32 wickets at 13.06 were from the top-drawer of fast-bowling excellence.

The host batters had no clue to the thunderbolts he unleashed while analysts delved into the speedster's hyper-extension. Travis Head and Sam Konstas may have tried to unsettle Bumrah with their unconventional shots but the Indian pacer often had the last word. It came to such a pass that Usman Khawaja admitted to being 'Bumrah'd'.

Making an impact

It is a tribute to Bumrah's impact that the Aussies grudgingly admitted to gaining an advantage while mounting a fourth-innings chase at Sydney as the speedster could not bowl owing to back spasms. Maybe India would have prevailed if he had bowled and the series tied at 2-2. For now, they all remain in the realm of conjecture.

In terms of a fast-bowler leaving a singular impact on a long series, cast your eyes all the way back to the 1982-1983 season when India toured Pakistan. Imran Khan was at his destructive best and bagged 40 wickets to derail Sunil Gavaskar's men. This was a great cricketer imposing his will. These days, Bumrah does that too.

Ever since he was pitchforked into the national side after catching the eye in the Indian Premier League, Bumrah has been India's go-to bowler. Never conventional, Bumrah walks a bit, lengthens his stride, breaks into a gallop almost



Bumrah has to strike at will, choke the runs and always dispense hope. It can be a burden too heavy to bear, physically and psychologically. He requires the right support-cast

as an after-thought on sighting the bowling crease, leans backwards and then springs forward to deliver. This is like a high-strung catapult being used to good effect.

The strain on the shoulders, spine, knees and ankles are bound to be enormous. This is an action that can force the release of a biomechanical cautionary note. Yet, it works for Bumrah. Thankfully, just like how Sri Lanka nurtured the unorthodox Lasith Malinga, India did the same with the man from Gujarat. In the risk weighed against rewards index, the gifts that Bumrah offers need to be cherished.

Freakish ability

With 205 Test wickets at a mind-boggling average of 19.40, the best for anyone with 200-plus scalps, Bumrah is both a freak and a fiery exponent of lathering speed onto a red cherry. Since Mohammad Nissar and Amar Singh, India has had some good fast bowlers but they were often lost among wristy batters and twirly spinners.

Kapil Dev, Javagal Srinath, Zaheer Khan, Ishant Sharma, Bumrah and Mohammed Shami have all added to the mystique around Indian pacers. However, for any spearhead to survive, he needs a support-cast. Kapil had a few but they were sporadic. It was the same with Srinath.

The rare instances when Indians hunted as a pack include Srinath, Zaheer and Ashish Nehra bowling in tandem during the 2003 ODI World Cup in South Africa. A trend further amplified by Bumrah, Shami and Ishant during a phase in 2018-19 when they combined for 139 Test wickets.

Otherwise, it has been a case of revolving doors. Shami has been plagued with injuries. Siraj is evolving into an ally but it is taking time. Bumrah is 31 and he is vulnerable to a body that resists exploitation. India needs to have a plan to

lengthen his career.

Though the last word is yet to be known on when Bumrah will be available for selection, ideally, he should be rested from bilateral ODIs and T20Is unless they lead up to a World Cup. In Tests at home where spin tends to have the upper hand, based on the nature of India's lead in the series, the selectors can rest Bumrah at times.

A fit Bumrah is essential. But more important is a fast and hostile Bumrah. The last thing India needs is the injured pacer peddling military-medium stuff. Two decades ago, Rahul Dravid spoke about Aussie speedsters: "You play and play, say 20 balls, 30 balls, but you never feel 'in' and then you get this ball on and around off-stump and you edge."

Changing the culture

Bumrah's technique is similar. It is a relentless inquiry and if he is in the mood, a deceptive bouncer is banged in too. In a land that worshipped its batters, Bumrah has shredded that script. He has tapped into a collective primal desire to shatter stumps. Many kids are aspiring to be him.

During India's latest tour, the Australian media praised Virat Kohli in their reviews. He was this star expected to fill stadiums and lure eyeballs to television. When the series ended, Bumrah was the rockstar, towering over the rest. Australia may have won but it was the Indian pacer who reigned individually.

Ian Bishop is seen as this lovely commentator with the right words, astute knowledge and empathy. But in his prime, the West Indian was a terrific fast bowler before a fragile back laid him low and forced him to seek the comfort of a microphone. This is a cautionary tale and India cannot afford Bumrah to go the Bishop way.

STACKING UP



ATP Men's Top 15						
#	Player	Age	Points	Events	GP	W
1	Jannik Sinner	23	11,830	17		
2	Alexander Zverev	27	7,635	21		
3	Carlos Alcaraz	21	7,010	18		
4	Taylor Fritz	27	5,350	22		
5	Daniil Medvedev	28	5,030	17		
6	Casper Ruud	26	4,210	25		
7	Novak Djokovic	37	3,900	18		
8	Alex de Minaur	25	3,535	23		
9	Andrey Rublev	27	3,520	27		
10	Grigor Dimitrov	33	3,200	19		
11	Tommy Paul	27	3,195	21		
12	Stefanos Tsitsipas	26	3,195	22		
13	Holger Rune	21	2,910	23		
14	Lugo Humbert	26	2,765	26		
15	Lorenzo Musetti	22	2,600	28		



Top Indians ▶

Sumit Nagal	Rank 91 ▲ 5 spots
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Mukund Sasikumar	Rank 367 ▲ 4 spots
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English Premier League Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Liverpool	20	14	5	1	48	20	28	47
2	Arsenal	21	12	7	2	41	19	22	43
3	N. Forest	21	12	5	4	30	20	10	41
4	Newcastle	21	11	5	5	37	22	15	38
5	Chelsea	21	10	7	4	41	26	15	37
6	Man. City	21	10	5	6	38	29	9	35
7	Aston Villa	21	10	5	6	31	32	-1	35
8	Bournemouth	21	9	7	5	32	25	7	34
9	Brighton	21	7	10	4	32	29	3	31
10	Fulham	21	7	9	5	32	20	3	30
11	Brentford	21	8	4	9	40	37	3	28
12	Man. United	21	7	5	9	26	29	-3	26
13	West Ham	21	7	5	9	27	41	-14	26
14	Tottenham	21	7	3	11	43	32	11	24
15	Crystal Palace	21	5	9	7	23	28	-5	24
16	Everton	20	3	8	9	15	26	-11	17
17	Wolves	21	4	4	13	31	48	-17	16
18	Ipswich Town	21	3	7	11	20	37	-17	16
19	Leicester City	21	3	5	13	23	46	-23	14
20	Southampton	21	1	3	17	13	47	-34	6

Spanish LaLiga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Atletico Madrid	19	13	5	1	34	12	22	44
2	Real Madrid	19	13	4	2	43	19	24	43
3	Barcelona	19	12	5	2	51	22	29	38
4	Athletic Bilbao	19	10	6	3	29	17	12	36
5	Villarreal	19	8	6	5	34	31	3	30
6	Real Mallorca	19	9	3	7	19	21	-2	30
7	Real Sociedad	19	8	4	7	17	13	4	28
8	Girona	19	8	4	7	27	25	2	28
9	Rayo Vallecano	19	6	7	6	22	22	0	25
10	Real Betis	19	6	7	6	21	23	-2	25
11	Osasuna	19	6						

GETTY IMAGES



Weekend Sport



You learn from him – how he prepares, how he thinks after stopping a good ball, his mentality after conceding a goal, what he does during penalty corners and shoot-outs and how he reacts in pressure situations

JASHANDEEP SINGH

How game-changer Vincent Vanasch is inspiring a generation of goalkeepers

The legendary Belgian custodian, a World and Olympic champion, is setting a high benchmark in the Hockey India League. In addition to being an exceptional role model, he is a generous mentor – it's no surprise that young Indian goalkeepers are benefitting from his presence

Y.B. Sarangi

If the many young Indians who feature in the Hockey India League's new avatar, two – H.S. Mohith and Jashandeep Singh – are among the most privileged. Even though they have not received much game-time – only Mohith has made his debut, in JSW Soorma Hockey Club's sixth outing – the two consider themselves fortunate to have legendary Belgian custodian Vincent Vanasch, a great role model and fabulous mentor, as their teammate.

For the Indian duo, watching the ever-reliable Vanasch is an education. The 37-year-old, who helped Belgium win the 2018 World title in Bhubaneswar and the 2020 Olympic crown in Tokyo with his superb showing in the penalty shootouts of both finals, has set a high benchmark in the HIL.

I try to give quite a lot of tips. It's nice to see that they have a lot of respect and they are listening... I try as much as I can to help them develop their techniques because everyone is different

VINCENT VANASCH

"You learn from him – how he prepares, what he does after training, how he thinks after stopping a good ball, what is his mentality after conceding a goal, what he does during penalty corners and shoot-outs and how he reacts in pressure situations. These are small things that have a big impact," says 25-year-old Punjab 'keeper Jashandeep, a regular on the domestic circuit.



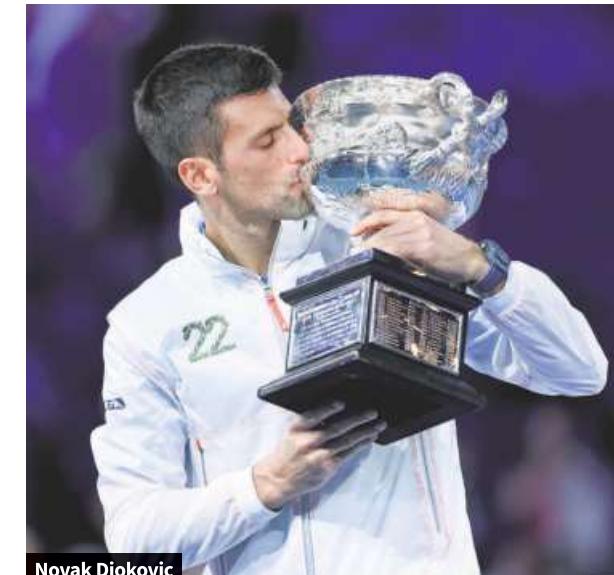
Goalkeepers' union: Vanasch with Mohith (left) and Jashandeep (right).

HOCKEY INDIA LEAGUE

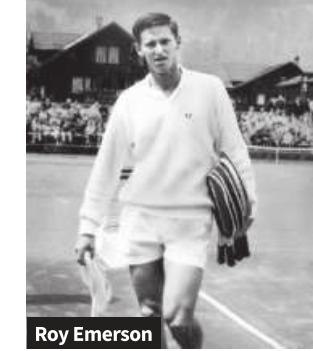
GAME THEORY

Trophy collectors Down Under: men's edition

With the 2025 Australian Open set to enter its second week, we take a look at the most successful men's singles champions at the event in all its avatars. The tournament began as the Australasian Championships (1905) before becoming the Australian Championships (1927). Its final form as the Australian Open came into being when the Open Era commenced in 1969.



Novak Djokovic



Roy Emerson



Roger Federer

Player	Titles	Editions won
Novak Djokovic	10	2008, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2023
Roy Emerson	6	1961, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967
Roger Federer	6	2004, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2017, 2018
Jack Crawford	4	1931, 1932, 1933, 1935
Ken Rosewall	4	1953, 1955, 1971, 1972
Andre Agassi	4	1995, 2000, 2001, 2003
James Anderson	3	1922, 1924, 1925
Adrian Quist	3	1936, 1940, 1948
Rod Laver	3	1960, 1962, 1969
Mats Wilander	3	1983, 1984, 1988
Rodney Heath	2	1905, 1910
Anthony Wilding	2	1906, 1909
Pat O'Hara Wood	2	1920, 1923
John Bromwich	2	1939, 1946
Frank Sedgman	2	1949, 1950
Ashley Cooper	2	1957, 1958
John Newcombe	2	1973, 1975
Guillermo Vilas	2	1978, 1979
Johan Kriek	2	1981, 1982
Stefan Edberg	2	1985, 1987
Ivan Lendl	2	1989, 1990
Boris Becker	2	1991, 1996
Jim Courier	2	1992, 1993
Pete Sampras	2	1994, 1997
Rafael Nadal	2	2009, 2022

Source: Australian Open

PICTURE THIS



Flight path

Ski jumping isn't for the faint of heart. It's no surprise then that it draws the thrill-seekers.

Imagine skiing down a curved ramp at high speed, jumping off it and gliding as far as possible before landing

further down the hill – as Finland's Antti Aalto is in the middle of doing in this photograph from the Four Hills Tournament in Oberstdorf, Germany – and you realise this is a sport of high skill and enormous pluck.

The Four Hills Tournament, which ended earlier this month, is one of ski jumping's

premier events – a "highlight" of the calendar, according to the official Olympics website.

It consists of four World Cup events staged in the winter in Germany and Austria. Conducted annually since 1953, the tournament has, with some exceptions, featured the four venues of Oberstdorf, Garmisch-

Partenkirchen, Innsbruck and Bischofshofen, in that order.

In each competition, jumpers aim to achieve the farthest distance; the competitor's aerial style also contributes to the final score. The Four Hills champion is the one with the most points over the four events.

SWEATING IT OUT

Rohit trains with white ball ahead of England series



INSTAGRAM@ROHITSHARMA45

Rohit Sharma has been honing his white-ball skills in preparation for the upcoming ODI series against England and the Champions Trophy. In a video on Instagram, the 37-year-old was seen playing his signature shots, including flicks, drives, lofted hits, and pulls against the white ball during a training session.

RED-TAPE

England pacer Mahmood gets visa for India tour after delay



AFP

England pacer Saqib Mahmood has received his visa for the team's upcoming white-ball tour of India, starting with the T20I series opener in Kolkata on January 22. Mahmood, who is of Pakistani heritage, had faced a delay in procuring the travel document, forcing him to miss an England training camp in the UAE.

GRIT

Shakeel, Rizwan lead Pakistan's recovery on truncated first day



AFP

Saud Shakeel and Mohammad Rizwan helped Pakistan reach 143 for four before bad light ended day one's play after 41.3 overs in the first Test against West Indies at the Multan Stadium on Friday. **The scores:** Pakistan 143/4 in 41.3 overs (Saud Shakeel 56 batting, Mohammad Rizwan 51 batting) vs West Indies; **Toss:** Pakistan.

Dominant show

Kho Kho World Cup: Indian teams to face South Africa in semifinals



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Indian men's team beat Sri Lanka 100-40 at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi on Friday to enter the semifinals of the Kho Kho World Cup. The women's team, too, sealed an emphatic 109-16 victory against Bangladesh. Both the men's and women's sides will face South Africa in the semifinals.

Attacking Pipers call the tune against Soorma

Sangita and Dipika sound the boards to give the Delhi franchise its maiden victory and consign the JSW outfit, which failed to make good of eight PCs, to its first loss in the women's competition

HIL

Y.B. Sarangi
ROURKELA

Delhi SG Pipers' attacking game enabled it to beat table-topper JSW Soorma Club 2-0 and record its maiden win in the women's competition of the Hockey India League at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium here on Friday.

Apart from their aggressive frontline, Pipers' gritty defence was crucial in fetching them three crucial points. Soorma could not make the most of their eight penalty corners as they suffered their first defeat.

Pipers had a better share of ball possession and circle entries as they looked to open the account in the league. Soorma maintained a good structure while focusing on defence.

Pipers threatened the Soorma post with a few attempts, including two penalty corners.

Mumtaz Khan's solo effort from the right and reverse stick was brilliantly blocked by the experienced Savita Punia under the bar.

Minutes earlier, Soorma had a superb chance when Hina Bano penetrated the



Joy unbound: The Pipers team is ecstatic after Sangita's strike. R.V. MOORTHY

circle from the right and ended up earning a penalty corner before it was disallowed following a Pipers' referral.

Pipers kept up the pressure but Savita stood tall. Finally, Pipers converted their third penalty corner as Sangita Kumari tapped in a deflection in the 25th minute.

The Delhi-based side getting five short corners in the second period spoke about their domination even though it did not re-

flect in the 1-0 scoreline at the half-time. Soorma pressed in the third quarter but could not break Pipers' one-on-one marking.

Soorma's Salima Tete, who rushed back from Delhi after receiving the Arjuna Award, shot well from the top of the circle to see it getting blocked.

Cancelled

Soorma secured two successive penalty corners and slotted one from a melee but it was cancelled fol-

lowing a referral in the 43rd minute. A couple of more short corners was also to no avail.

Deepika doubled Pipers' lead early in the final period. She unleashed a low flick to sound the board off their 10th penalty corner.

Her team controlled the game until the end even as Soorma ejected Savita for nearly last five minutes to apply more pressure.

The result: Delhi SG Pipers 2 (Sangita 25, Deepika 47) bt JSW Soorma Hockey Club 0.

Kohli, Pant back in Delhi's Ranji squad following BCCI diktat

Vivek Krishnan
NEW DELHI

A day after the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) made participation in domestic matches mandatory for players to remain eligible for selection in the Indian team, Delhi's squad for the next Ranji Trophy game against Saurashtra wore a star-studded look with Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant part of a 22-member contingent.

The sixth-round Group D fixture will be played in Rajkot from January 23 to 26.

Kohli's participation, however, is subject to availability. It is understood that the 36-year-old had a neck sprain after returning from the five-Test series in Australia.

His last appearance in the Ranji Trophy dates back to November, 2012, when he played against Uttar Pradesh in Ghaziabad for a Delhi team also featuring current India head coach Gautam Gambhir.

"Even if Kohli doesn't



Kohli and Pant. AFP

(DDCA) president Rohan Jaitley on Tuesday.

He hasn't played in the First-Class competition since leading Delhi in the 2017-18 Ranji final against Vidarbha in Indore. The 27-year-old has chosen not to take up the captaincy and Ayush Badoni will continue as captain.

"Pant feels that the leadership of the team is settled with Badoni and things should continue as such," Jaitley told *The Hindu* on Friday.

Jadeja too could return

Saurashtra had named a 17-member squad, led by Jaydev Unadkat, on January 13. Ravindra Jadeja doesn't feature in it, but the experienced all-rounder could make himself available closer to the game considering the scrutiny on national players.

He scalped eight wickets in his last Ranji game for Saurashtra against Tamil Nadu in January, 2023. On the recent tour of Australia, he played in three of the five Tests. Stand-by players: S. Nandhana, J. Ira and T. Anadi.

U-19 Women's T20 WC: India gears up for title defence

Press Trust of India
KUALA LUMPUR

India's GenNext cricketers will be eager to extend their dominance in the global stage as they seek to defend the title in ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup title beginning here on Saturday.

Clubbed with the West Indies, Sri Lanka and hosts Malaysia in Group A, India will begin its campaign against the Caribbeans at the Bayuemas Oval here on Sunday.

With the ODI World Cup at home later this year, the Niki Prasad-led squad will be eager to seize the opportunity and make the transition to the senior team.

India squad: Niki Prasad (Capt.), Sanika Chalke (Vice-capt.), G. Trisha, G. Kamalini (wk), Bhavika Ahire (wk), Ishwari Aswares, Mithila Vinod, Josphitha, Sonam Vadav, Parunika Sisodiya, Kesari Drithi, Ayushi Shukla, Anandita Kishor, Shabnam, S. Vaishnavi; Stand-by players: S. Nandhana, J. Ira and T. Anadi.

President gives away the Khel Ratna and other National sports awards



Fantastic four: President Droupadi Murmu conferring the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, from right, on Gukesh, Harmanpreet, Praveen Kumar, and Manu. PTI

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Manu Bhaker and D. Gukesh provided a sprinkling of stardust but it were the para-athletes who walked away with the most boisterous applause when President Droupadi Murmu bestowed the National Sports Awards in a regal ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here on Friday.

Double Olympic-medalist Bhaker, 18-year-old

chess World champion Gukesh, men's hockey captain Harmanpreet Singh and Paralympic gold-winning high jumper Praveen Kumar were presented the country's highest sporting honour – the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna.

Thirty two athletes were honoured with the Arjuna Award out of which 17 were para-athletes.

The para-athletes outnumbered the able-bodied ones in the list this time

due to the magnificent Paralympics performance in which they returned with 29 medals, including seven gold. President Murmu repeatedly broke tradition to receive some wheelchair-bound athletes.

Heart-warming

A heart-warming moment of the ceremony was when India's first Paralympic gold-medallist Murlikant Petkar walked up to the President on crutches to

receive the Arjuna Award (lifetime). The President met the 80-year-old war hero half way to present him the award.

Dignitaries, including sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya and sports secretary Sujata Chaturvedi, were among those who attended the ceremony.

While the Khel Ratna comes with a cash prize of ₹25 lakh, the Arjuna and Dronacharya awards have cash prize of ₹15 lakh.

Vintage Djokovic joins Alcaraz, Zverev in last 16; Sabalenka, Gauff move up

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Agence France-Presse
MELBOURNE

Novak Djokovic produced a vintage display to join Carlos Alcaraz and Alexander Zverev in the Australian Open last 16 on Friday, but Naomi Osaka's bid for a third Melbourne crown is over with injury.

Also on day six, women's defending champion Aryna Sabalenka set up an intriguing showdown with teenage talent Mirra Andreeva.

Red-hot Coco Gauff was an emphatic winner once again to underline her title credentials.

Djokovic, who is chasing a record-extending 11th Melbourne title and historic 25th Grand Slam crown, is on a collision course with Alcaraz in the quarterfinals.

Under new coach and old rival Andy Murray, the 37-year-old Djokovic needed four sets in both of his opening two matches. But not this time, swatting aside Czech 26th seed Tomas Machac 6-1, 6-4, 6-4 and letting out a roar at the end.

Spain's Alcaraz, who raced into the last 32 for the loss of just 12 games, suffered a wobble in the third set against Portugal's unseeded Nuno Borges.

But the third seed, who has won four majors but never been beyond the quarterfinals in Melbourne, regained his focus to ease through 6-2, 6-4, 6-7(7), 6-2.

Germany's second seed

1 Osaka was forced to retire due to injury for the first time at a Grand Slam

2 Djokovic is only the second man (after Federer – R4 in 2019, Semifinals in 2020) to reach the Round of 16 at the Australian Open aged 37 or older since 1988

2 Gauff is only the second player in the last 15 years (after Swiatek) to reach the women's singles fourth round at the Australian Open for three consecutive seasons before turning 21

4 Alcaraz has become the fourth player in the Open Era (after Wilander, Nadal, and Djokovic) to win

91.5 Djokovic has the best win rate (91.5%) among both men and women at Grand Slams since turning 30 in the Open Era

SATURDAY'S PICKS: THIRD ROUND
Men: 1-Sinner vs Giron, 4-Fritz vs Monfils, 8-Minaur vs Cerundolo, 13-Rune vs Kecmanovic

Women: 2-Swiatek vs Raducanu, 4-Paolini vs Svitolina, 6-Rybalkina vs Yastremska, 8-Navarro vs Jabeur

Day six in numbers



10 Men's Singles matches at each of the four Grand Slams before turning 22

5 Sabalenka is the first woman to reach the fourth round at the Australian Open five consecutive times since Halep (2018 - 2022)

21 Zverev has reached the fourth round at Grand Slams 21 times, the second-most among German men after Becker's 31

3 Andreeva is only the third player (after Hingis and Vaidisova) to reach consecutive Women's Singles Rounds of 16 at the Australian Open before turning 18 in the last 30 years

Gauff

26-Machac (Cze) 6-1, 6-4, 6-4; 14-Humbert (Fra) bt 20-Fils (Fra) 4-6, 7-5, 6-4, 1-0 retd; 15-Drapier (GBR) 6-3, 6-4, 6-4; 3-Alcaraz (Esp) bt Borges (Por) 6-2, 6-4, 6-7(3); 6-2; Davidovich Fokina (Esp) bt Menisik (Cze) 3-6, 4-6, 7-6(7), 6-4, 6-2; 24-Lehecka (Cze) bt Bonzi (Fra) 6-2, 6-3, 6-3; 7-Djokovic (Srb) 6-4, 6-5, 7-6(10-8).

Women: 27-Pavlyuchenkova (Rus) bt Siegemund (Ger) 6-1, 6-2; 1-Sabalenka (Blr) bt Tauson (Den) 7-6(5), 6-4; 18-Vekic (Cro) bt 24-Shaiba (Rus) 7-6(4), 6-7(3), 7-5; 11-Badosa (Esp) 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

Mixed doubles: First round: Bopanna (Ind) & Zhang (Chn) bt Dodig (Croatia) & Mladenovic (Fra) 6-4, 6-4.

17-Kostyuk (Ukr) 6-4, 4-6, 6-3; 14-Andreeva (Rus) bt 23-Frech (Pol) 6-2, 1-6, 6-2; Bencic (Srb) bt Osaka (Jpn) 7-6(3) retd; 3-Gauff (USA) 7-6(3), 6-1.

TOP RESULTS

▼

Third round: Men: 12-Paul (USA) bt Carballes Baena (Spa) 7-6(0), 6-2, 6-0; 2-Zverev (Ger) bt Fearnley (GBR) 6-3, 6-4, 6-4; 3-Alcaraz (Esp) bt Borges (Por) 6-2, 6-4, 6-7(3), 6-2; 24-Lehecka (Cze) bt Bonzi (Fra) 6-2, 6-3, 6-3; 7-Djokovic (Srb) 6-4, 6-5, 7-6(10-8).

Women: 27-Pavlyuchenkova (Rus) bt Siegemund (Ger) 6-1, 6-2; 1-Sabalenka (Blr) bt Tauson (Den) 7-6(5), 6-4; 18-Vekic (Cro) bt 24-Shaiba (Rus) 7-6(4), 6-7(3), 7-5; 11-Badosa (Esp) 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

Mixed doubles: Second round: Bopanna (Ind) & Zhang (Chn) bt Dodig (Croatia) & Mladenovic (Fra) 6-4, 6

IN BRIEF



Tamil Nadu's Anupama claims National snooker title

Tamil Nadu's Anupama Ramachandran beat Madhya Pradesh's Amee Kamani 4-1 (59-26, 67-42, 39-58, 55-48, 71-33) in the National women's snooker championship final in Indore.

Churchill strengthens hold on top spot in I-League

Churchill Brothers held off Delhi FC's second half onslaught to eke out a significant 2-1 victory in their I-League match, in Mabalpur (Punjab), on Friday. The win extended its lead at the top of the table. Wayde Lekay (17th minute) and Trijoy Dias (36th) scored for Churchill, while Hridaya Jain (60th) struck for Delhi.



Belgium parts ways with coach Tedesco

Belgium's football association on Friday announced the sacking of national team coach Domenico Tedesco after disappointing results in Euro 2024 and the Nations League.

Maaya exits in the semifinals after losing to Polina

Maaya Rajeshwaran's fine run was stopped by Polina Kuharenko with a 6-3, 6-3 defeat in the semifinals of the ITF junior tennis tournament at the DLTA Complex in Chandigarh on Friday. The champion of the last tournament in Delhi, the 15-year-old Maaya had kept the Indian hopes alive by winning three matches. It was physically a hard task and the talented girl from Coimbatore, who is accompanied by the coach from the Rafael Nadal Academy in Spain, Miguel Frago, had commendably sustained her strong game till she found her match. In the boys' doubles final, Hitesh Chauhan and partner Ilya Maltsev were beaten 10-8 in the super tie-break by Aaron Gabet and Hyeon Seok Seo.

The results: Boys: Singles (semifinals): Donghyun Hwang (Kor) bt Erasly Bakhtiyar (Kaz) 6-1, 6-2; Ruslan Kastsiukovich bt Roman Kharlamov 6-2, 6-0.

Doubles (final): Aaron Gabet (Fra) & Hyeon Seok Seo (Kor) bt Hitesh Chauhan & Ilya Maltsev 4-6, 6-1, [10-8].

Girls: Semifinals: Daria Koreskova bt Masa Jankovic (Srb) 7-6(2), 2-6, 6-3; Polina Kuharenko bt Maaya Rajeshwaran 6-3, 6-3.

Doubles (final): Polina Berezina & Daria Koreskova bt Yesung Choo (Kor) & Yu-Chen Lin (Tpe) 6-4, 7-6(1).



Mbappe was jealous of Messi in Paris: Neymar

Striker Neymar said his former PSG teammate Kylian Mbappe became "a little jealous" after superstar Lionel Messi joined the French club in August 2021 in a free transfer.

LIVE TELECAST

Women's U-19 T20 World Cup: Hotstar, 8 a.m. & 12 p.m.

West Indies vs Pakistan: 1st Test, day 2, FanCode, 11 a.m.

Badminton: India Open, FanCode, 12 p.m.

Vijay Hazare Trophy: (Final), JioCinema, 1.30 p.m.

Australian Open: Evening session, Sony Sports Ten 2, 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 1.30 p.m.

I-League: Sony Sports Ten 1 (SD & HD) & LIV, 4.30 & 7 p.m.

ISL: Sports 18-3 & JioCinema, 5 & 7.30 p.m.

Kho-Kho World Cup: (semifinals) SS Select 1 & Hotstar, 5 p.m.

Premier League: SS Select 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 6, 8.30 & 11 p.m.

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

LaLiga: gxr.world, 6.30, 8.45, 11 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Sunday)

Satwik-Chirag duo storms into the India Open semifinals

End of the road for Sindhu and Kiran as Indian challenge fizzles out in the singles event

BADMINTON

Uthra Ganeshan
NEW DELHI

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty posted a comprehensive 21-10, 21-17 win over Korea's Yong Jin and Kang Min Hyuk to enter the men's doubles semifinals at the India Open at the Indira Gandhi stadium on Friday.

The seventh-seeds will next face third-seeds Sze Fei Goh and Nur Izzuddin of Indonesia for a spot in their second consecutive final.

Even when the Koreans looked like staging a minor fightback towards the end of the second game, there was no reason for concern as the Indians wrapped it up in 41 minutes, their shortest match here so far.

The Indian pair raced to a 9-1 lead, then controlled proceedings to pocket the game in just 18 minutes. They continued in the



Smashing it up: Satwik and Chirag made short work of their opponents. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

same vein in the second game. With a 13-8 lead, the Indians were in a hurry to finish but the Koreans began mixing up their serves and tightened their defence to push back, levelling at 16-16.

Satwik and Chirag though held their nerve and shut the door on them.

Earlier, it looked like

Sindhu had finally found a chink in Gregoria Mariska Tunjung's armour before bowing out 21-9, 19-21, 21-17 in the quarterfinals.

Kiran George's dream run ended with a fighting 13-21, 19-21 loss to China's Hong Yang Weng.

The results (quarterfinals):
Men: Lee Cheuk Yiu (Hkg) bt

Fang-Jen Lee (Tpe) 21-11, 21-17; Satwicksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty (Ind) bt Yong Jin & Kang Min Hyuk (Kor) 21-10, 21-17

Women: An Se Young (Kor) bt Yeo Jia Min (Sin) 21-11, 21-12; Tomoka Miyazaki (Jpn) bt Wang Zhi Yi (Chn) 21-16 retd.; Pornpawee Chochuwong (Tha) bt Han Yue (Chn) 21-17, 21-16; 4-Gregoria Mariska Tunjung (Inda) bt Sindhu (Ind) 21-9, 19-21, 21-17.

Doubles: Pearly Tan & Thinaah Muralitharan (Mas) bt Yuki Fukushima & Mayu Matsumoto (Jpn) 21-18, 21-21; Kim Hye Jeong & Kong Hee Yong (Kor) bt Baek Ha Na & Lee So Hee (Kor)

21-23, 21-19, 21-19; Li Yi Jing & Luo Xu Min (Chn) bt Yeung Nga Ting & Yeung Pui Lam (Hkg) 21-12, 21-17; Arisa Igarashi & Ayako Sukuramto (Jpn) bt Liu Sheng Shu & Tan Ning (Chn) 21-15, 21-19

Mixed doubles: Chen Tang Jie & Toh Ee Wei (Mas) bt Ruttananapak Oupthong & Jhenicha Sudjaipraparat (Tha) 21-16, 21-17; Goh Soon Huat & Lai Shevon Jemie (Mas) bt Yang Po-Hsuan & Hu Ling Fang (Tpe) 21-11, 21-15; Jiang Zhen Bang & Wei Ya Xin (Chn) bt Guo Xin Wa & Chen Fang Hui (Chn) 21-14, 18-21, 22-20, 23-21; Goh Sze Fei & Nur Izzuddin (Mas) bt Fang-Chih Lee &

Chou Tien Chen (Tpe) 21-15, 21-8; 3-Viktor Axelsen (Den) bt Loh Keen Yew (Sin) 21-19, 13-21, 21-8; Weng Hong Yang (Chn) bt Kiran George (Ind) 21-13, 21-19.

Doubles: Aaron Chu & Soh Wooi Yik (Mas) bt Kittinupong Kedren & Dechapol Puavaranukroh (Tha) 21-18, 21-18; Kim Won Ho & Seo Seung Jae (Kor) bt Liang Wei Keng & Wang Chang (Chn) 12-21, 22-20, 23-21; Goh Sze Fei & Nur Izzuddin (Mas) bt Fang-Chih Lee &



Eze, left, scored JFC's equaliser.

Honours even between Jamshedpur and Bagan

Sports Bureau

Jamshedpur FC and Mohun Bagan Super Giant shared the spoils 1-1 in an Indian Super League fixture at the JRD Tata Sports Complex in Jamshedpur on Friday.

The league leader took the lead in the first half courtesy of a goal from Subhashis Bose whereas Jamshedpur clawed its way into the game when Stephen Eze found the equaliser at the hour mark.

With this draw, the Men of Steel climbed to the second spot, eight points behind (28) the Mariners (36) with a game in hand.

The result: JFC 1 (Eze 60) drew with MBSG 1 (Bose 25).

Golden day for Shardul and Sabeera in National shooting

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

Shardul Vihan sustained his fine form as he won the mixed trap gold medals with Sabeera Haris in the 67th National shotgun championship at the Dr. Karni Singh Range on Friday.

After a spectacular performance in the individual event on Thursday, when he won the men's trap gold and the junior silver, Shardul continued to hit the targets with conviction in coasting to the two gold medals in the mixed trap event.

Sabeera had also given a good account of herself in the individual event and thus was able to support Shardul in clinching the two gold medals for Uttar Pradesh, which beat three teams to the gold by two points, in the non-Olympic



Podium finish: Mixed trap silver medallists Nivetha and Prithviraj, champions Shardul and Sabeera, and bronze medallists Preeti and Karan. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

event that does not have a final.

The Tamil Nadu pair of Prithviraj Tondaiman and Nivetha Nenthirasigamani was able to beat the Army and Haryana teams for the silver in the shoot-off.

In the junior event, Shardul and Sabeera proved too strong with their combined score of 136 in beating Rajasthan's Vinay Pratap Singh and Nandika Singh by 10

points.

The results: Mixed trap: 1. Uttar Pradesh (Shardul Vihan, Sabeera Haris) 133; 2. Tamil Nadu (Prithviraj Tondaiman, Nivetha Nenthirasigamani) 131(4); 3. Army (Karan, Preeti Rajak) 131(3); 4. Haryana (Lakshay Sheoran, Ashima Ahlawat) 131(2).

Juniors: 1. Uttar Pradesh (Shardul Vihan, Sabeera Haris) 136; 2. Rajasthan (Vinay Pratap Singh, Nandika Singh) 126; 3. Tamil Nadu (Nilaa Baalu, S.M. Yogan) 125.

Udvardy rides Samson's challenge, enters semifinals

TENNIS

Kamesh Srinivasan
NEW DELHI

Second seed Panna Udvardy overcame a slow start to beat Laura Samson of the Czech Republic 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 in the quarterfinals of the \$40,000 ITF women's tennis tournament at the DLTA Complex on Friday.

It was the second three-set victory for the Hungarian, who will play fourth seed Yuriko Miyazaki of Britain after her win over sixth seed Dalila Jakupovic.

The other semifinal will be between top seed Darja Semenistaja, who has dropped only 10 games in all in three rounds, and seventh seed Tatiana Prozorova.

In the doubles semifinals, Ankita Raina combined strongly with Naiktha Bains of Britain to score a 6-2, 6-4 victory over Riya and Vaidehi Chaudhari.



Dynamic duo: Ankita and Naiktha during their semifinal victory over Riya and Vaidehi. KAMESH SRINIVASAN

The results: Quarterfinals: Darja Semenistaja bt Anastasia Tikhonova 6-1, 6-3; Tatiana Prozorova bt Maria Kozyreva 6-1, 6-1; Yuriko Miyazaki bt Dalila Jakupovic 6-1, 6-3; Panna Udvardy bt Laura Samson 4-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Doubles: Semifinals: Jessie Aney & Jessica Failla bt Kristina Tikhonova 6-4, 3-6, [10-8]; Naiktha Bains & Ankita Raina bt Riya Bhatia & Vaidehi Chaudhari 6-2, 6-4.

Srikanth bullish on the next four years

V.V. Subrahmanyam
HYDERABAD

but I don't feel it is yet unreachable for me," said Srikanth. "I would love to be back at my best and make all the efforts needed to achieve that goal," he said.

"No one becomes a World No. 1 in any sport just like that. We in India have great talent and I am sure there will be many more No.1s in the future," he added.

"In terms of infrastructure we are getting better and have improved a lot since I started playing in 2010. Everyone has to come together to support sports in a big way. We cannot only look at the governments, central or state, or any one company to do that. There has to be a collective effort to provide the desired impetus to sports," he said.

On his partnership with Hundred, Srikanth said that they would be organising a couple of exchange programmes for coaches and players with Asian powerhouses in badminton from this April to help Indian shuttlers move to the next level.

"The standard of the game has gone up for sure



Three-goal hero: Diallo scores United's second against Southampton. GETTY IMAGES

United secured a morale-boosting FA Cup win at Arsenal on Sunday, which followed a battling 2-2 draw at league leader Liverpool.

But it had a point to prove to its long-suffering home fans after three straight Premier League defeats underlined the huge rebuilding task facing new manager Amorim.

The win lifts United to 12th in the table and leaves Southampton 10 points from safety.

"We were like innocent

Namdhari adds to Gokulam's home woes

I-LEAGUE

P.K. Ajith Kumar
KOZHIKODE

After posting back-to-back wins in the last two away games, it was a familiar tale of disappointment at home for Gokulam Kerala in the I-League on Friday night. The former champion was beaten 0-2 by Namdhari FC.

This was the fourth home match for the Gokulam men, and their wait for a win at the Corporation Stadium continues. They had to pay the price for poor finishing.

In the first 10 minutes alone, Gokulam really tested the Namdhari goalkeeper Jaspreet Singh, who would have an excellent game, and won a couple of corner kicks as well. But, the home side squandered all those chances.

The result: Gokulam Kerala 0 lost to Namdhari FC 2 (Manvir Singh 15, Cledson da Silva 19-pen).