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ISRO's 100th launch lifts NavIC satellite



New horizons: The GSLV-F15 lifting off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on Wednesday. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation on Wednesday morning launched its historic 100th mission – GSLV-F15 lifting off with a navigation satellite from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

The launch vehicle with an indigenous cryogenic stage lifted off from the spaceport's second launch pad at 6.23 a.m. The rocket successfully placed the NVS-02 satellite in the intended orbit.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

30 dead, 60 injured in stampede as crowds surge at Maha Kumbh

Pilgrims waiting for dip trampled to death as a barricade collapses

Mayank Kumar
PRAYAGRAJ

Thirty people were killed and at least 60 injured in a stampede at the Maha Kumbh here on Wednesday. Authorities said pilgrims waiting for a dip at the Sangam at the auspicious hour were trampled after a barricade collapsed amid the surge of a massive crowd on Akhara Marg and people rushed to the other side.

"Unfortunately, 30 devotees lost their lives, while around 60 people suffered injuries. Between 1 a.m. and 2 a.m., before the Brahma Muhurat, a massive crowd built up on Akhara Marg in the Mela area," Vaibhav Krishna, Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Maha Kumbh,



Stretcher-bound: Rescue personnel carry an injured pilgrim following a stampede which broke out on Mauni Amavasya during the Maha Kumbh at Sangam in Prayagraj on Wednesday. PTI

said. "The administration immediately carried out rescue operations and cleared the crowd. Of the deceased, 25 have been identified, while the rest not yet."

The stampede occurred

President, PM express grief; U.P. govt. forms judicial panel

4 victims are from Karnataka, 2 from Gujarat; one is from Assam

Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswathi. Four of the deceased were from Karnataka, two from Gujarat, and one from Assam.

"A few injured individuals have been taken by their families, while 36 are under treatment at a local medical college. The situation is under control," the DIG said.

The Uttar Pradesh government announced a three-member judicial inquiry commission, headed by Justice Harsh Kumar (retd), a former judge of the Allahabad High Court. The panel will look into what led to the incident.

CONTINUED ON
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POOR PLANNING: CONGRESS
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DEATHS AFTER THE SURGE
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IN BRIEF



Modi slams AAP over Yamuna 'poisoning' claims

NEW DELHI Addressing his first rally in support of BJP candidates in the Delhi Assembly poll, PM Narendra Modi on Wednesday attacked the ruling AAP over its comments about the Haryana government "poisoning" the Yamuna. » Page 11

Tahir Hussain hits campaign trail in Mustafabad seat

NEW DELHI Former AAP councillor and 2020 Delhi riots accused Tahir Hussain on Wednesday launched his campaign in Mustafabad as an AIMIM candidate for the Delhi election. He is out on a six-day custody parole. » Page 2

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₹ in Crores

Particulars	Quarter Ended 31 st Dec 2023	Quarter Ended 31 st Dec 2024
↑ TOTAL BUSINESS	85,185	94,042
↑ NET PROFIT	284	300
↑ OPERATING PROFIT	370	408
↑ NET WORTH	7,668	8,715
↓ GROSS NPA (%)	1.69	1.32
↓ NET NPA (%)	0.98	0.41
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↑ CRAR (%)	25.95	29.35

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Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended			Nine Months Ended		Year Ended
		31.12.2024 (Unaudited)	30.09.2024 (Unaudited)	31.12.2023 (Unaudited)	31.12.2024 (Unaudited)	31.12.2023 (Unaudited)	
1.	Total Income from Operations	1519.94	1564.88	1387.13	4599.69	4075.24	5492.85
2.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	404.44	400.27	367.83	1188.11	1050.57	1393.58
3.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before Tax, (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	404.44	400.27	367.83	1188.11	1050.57	1393.58
4.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after Tax, (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	300.24	303.18	284.23	890.71	818.97	1072.03
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive Income (after tax))	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
6.	Equity Share Capital	158.35	158.35	158.35	158.35	158.35	158.35
7.	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous Year	-	-	-	-	-	7762.85
8.	Earnings Per Share (of Rs.10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)						
a)	Basic:	*18.96	*19.15	*17.95	*56.25	*51.72	67.70
b)	Diluted:	*18.96	*19.15	*17.95	*56.25	*51.72	67.70

NOTE: 1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly / Nine Months Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly / Nine Months Financial Results are available on the website of the Stock Exchange(s) (www.nseindia.com and www.bseindia.com) and on the Bank's Website (www.tmb.in).
2. Information relating to Total comprehensive income and other comprehensive income is not furnished as Ind AS is not yet made applicable to banks.

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DELHI ELECTION

7 days for voting: Rahul-Kejriwal row escalates

Rae Bareli MP says AAP chief is 'against Dalits and minorities' and 'failed to stand by people' during Feb. 2020 riots and COVID, a day after saying that Kejriwal is afraid of PM

Check spread of 'viliifying' content in poll campaigns, HC tells EC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday directed the Election Commission of India (EC) to ensure political parties and their candidates do not use any "viliifying" material in their campaigns for the Assembly election.

The court said the State Election Officer, Chief Election Officer (CEO) and the District Election Officer were fully empowered and duty-bound to check messages and advertising material circulated by political parties. It passed the direction on a plea alleging that unknown numbers were making spam calls and sending voice messages asking the public to vote for a particular political party to continue getting freebies.

The EC counsel said the commission had taken cognisance of the petitioners' complaint and directed the CEO to inquire into the allegations and submit a report.

The petitioners also asked for the poll to be postponed, alleging that the spam calls had created a bias. However, the court rejected the plea.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

With seven days left for voting for the Delhi Assembly election, senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday ratcheted up pressure on Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal, accusing him of being "against Dalits and minorities" for not clearing his stand over the issue of caste census. Mr. Gandhi also said the former Delhi Chief Minister had "failed to stand by people" during the February 2020 north-east Delhi riots.

"Where was he [Mr. Kejriwal] when the Delhi riots were happening or when people were left distressed following the COVID-19 outbreak?" said the Congress leader, addressing a rally in Bawana.

The fresh salvo comes a day after a war of words between the leaders of the INDIA bloc parties. The Rae Bareli MP had on Tuesday alleged that the former CM is "afraid" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Mr. Kejriwal responded by suggesting that the Congress had entered into an "agreement" with the BJP to get a "clean chit" for its "corruption" cases.

While rallying support



Going all out: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at a rally of party candidate from Bawana Surendra Kumar on Wednesday; AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal addressing supporters in Timarpur. ANI / @AAMAADMIPARTY-X



for three-time former MLA Surender Kumar, the party candidate from Bawana, Mr. Gandhi accused the AAP chief of running a "corrupt" government. He also took on Mr. Kejriwal over the issue of pollution in the Yamuna river.

"Modiji lies in his speeches, and so does Kejriwal. Five years ago, he (Kejriwal) said that he would take bath in the Yamuna and drink its water. Five years have gone by, and he is yet to fulfil his promise. You [voters] have

to drink dirty water, but Kejriwal lives in a *sheesh mahal*, which is worth crores," he said.

The Congress leader said unlike AAP and the BJP, the Congress delivers on its promises. "As promised, we waived loans and provided free bus rides to women in Karnataka and Telangana," he said.

On the issue of caste census, Mr. Gandhi said, "We will hold a caste census wherever we're in power. We will also try to get rid of the 50% ceiling."

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday led a no-holds-barred attack against the Congress, urging Delhi residents not to "waste" their votes on the grand old party.

"Some people here are thinking about voting for Congress. Why would you

waste your vote? Congress won't win. It will only cut votes. The Congress and the BJP have struck a deal. They are fighting together to defeat AAP," he said, addressing a rally in north Delhi's Timarpur on Wednesday.

Mr. Kejriwal added, "Never vote to defeat someone. Vote to help someone win."

The former Chief Minister reached out to mem-

bers of the Congress, and the Bharatiya Janata Party, saying he is still a political novice despite having spent 12 years in the field.

"You can ask me to fix electricity, improve water supply, build roads, construct schools, and develop hospitals. I can do all this. But I don't know how to engage in abuses, dirty politics, and political manœuvrings. I am not here

to fight for AAP. I am here for the progress of your families, to help secure the future of your children," the AAP chief said.

Mr. Kejriwal promised that if AAP wins the election, it will fix broken roads and address complaints of contaminated water and overflowing sewers within a month.

"We will address all issues by March 10," he said.

'No end to this nightmare': shelter inmates tired of empty promises

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

With the election approaching, political parties have made several assurances to the poor, including permanent housing for those living in *jhuggis*. However, these promises ring hollow for many voters living in Delhi's night shelters.

Sitting outside a tin shed room at a night shelter near Bangla Sahib Gurdwara, 35-year-old Vineeta Devi says she was born and raised on the footpaths of Connaught Place until the pandemic forced her family to move to a night shelter, where they have been living for the past five years. Her daily income of ₹150-₹200 from selling balloons barely sustains her family. Her three teenage children attend a Delhi go-



Vinod Singh Rawat, 50, a daily wage worker, standing near a night shelter in Kashmere Gate. ALISHA DUTTA

vernment school, while her husband faces difficulties finding a permanent job due to the lack of education and skills.

Same result?
Despite promises by different parties, we still do not have a permanent address. There is no end to this nightmare," she says.

However, Vinod Singh Rawat, 50, who lives in a

night shelter near Kashmere Gate and works as a daily wage worker, says he has lost faith in the electoral system after spending over two decades on the city streets.

Despite holding a voter ID card, Mr. Rawat does not exercise his franchise. "I stopped voting after I figured out that nobody is going to change my living conditions," he says.

Nikhil M Babu
NEW DELHI

Around 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Tahir Hussain, the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) candidate from Mustafabad, stepped out of his office wearing the party banner that read "haqda ko haq dilaana hai, nirdosh ka saath nibhaana hai (have to get the rightful their due, have to stand by the innocent.)"

Holding a microphone in his right hand, his left hand being gripped tightly by a policeman, the former Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) councillor told a gathering of 100-150 people: "I gave 10 years to AAP, but when I had a problem, forget helping me, AAP stopped even taking my name."

Taking on his former

party, Mr. Hussain added, "Promises had been made about making Delhi's roads like those in Paris. But the condition of the roads is worse than when I left five years ago. No government has worked for us," he said. He was granted custody parole to canvass for the Assembly poll by the Supreme Court a day earlier. The court imposed several

conditions on when and how he would be brought in and taken back to Tihar Jail, where he is lodged in connection with the February 2020 north-east Delhi communal riots.

Surrounded by a cordon of around 10 policemen, Mr. Hussain told the gathering, "In Mustafabad, only one person can defeat the BJP and that is Tahir

Hussain. In Delhi, the election is for 70 seats. But the fight on two seats – Okhla and Mustafabad – is a battle against *zulm* (oppression) in the country."

The AIMIM has fielded candidates on both Assembly seats, which have sizeable Muslim voters. Shifa-ur-Rehman in Okhla is also accused in a riots case.

To make the most of his time out of jail, the former councillor tried to cover as much ground in old and new Mustafabad as he was allowed by the policemen surrounding him.

"I don't have the money, the means or the time to go everywhere. So, each of you has to become Tahir Hussain," he told his supporters before he was escorted to a white police van to be taken back to jail.



AAP's Shahdara candidate Jitender Singh Shunty donning a PPE kit. FILE PHOTO

Ambulance Man' wants to uplift city's health infra

Ashna Butani
NEW DELHI

Jitender Singh Shunty, the Padma Shri awardee who gained fame during the COVID-19 pandemic for providing free ambulance services and cremating bodies for the needy, says he is contesting the Delhi Assembly election as an AAP candidate to improve the health infrastructure.

"There are 30 ventilators in city hospitals, but only two are functional. At government hospitals, there is a fight to get an ambulance and in private hospitals, patients are asked to arrange their own," he alleges. When told that improving the State government and MCD-run hospitals is a responsibility of AAP, Mr. Shunty replied, "Given the circumstances, AAP is the best bet. The BJP has a vision for the country, but not for Delhi."

Mr. Shunty, also famous as the 'Ambulance Man of Delhi', wore a PPE kit to file nominations from Shahdara. "In a city like Delhi, lakhs of people died during the COVID-19 times. The entire government machinery failed. Even the oxygen cylinder scarcity was a man-made crisis," he says. If elected, Mr. Shunty adds, he will introduce a pink ambulance, exclusively for women and driven and managed by women, and establish hostels and creches.

He will take on BJP's Sanjay Goyal and Congress's Jagat Singh.

Naresh Balyan denied parole to help 'guide' wife for poll

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday refused to release sitting legislator Naresh Balyan, arrested in a Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) case, on custody parole to help him "guide" his wife, Pooja Balyan, who is contesting the Assembly election on AAP ticket from her husband's seat of Uttam Nagar.

The Delhi police opposed the grant of custody parole to the lawmaker, saying the investigation in the case is under way and certain witnesses had come forward to testify. Justice Vikas Mahajan said he was not inclined to grant relief to the legislator and noted that his case is different from that of Tahir Hussain, who was granted custody parole by the Supreme Court a day earlier.

Middle-class voters, slum dwellers are fed up with AAP'

BJP's election in-charge for Delhi feels the party is poised to return to power in the national capital after 27 years owing to its steadily growing vote share, promises of monthly aid for women and free education, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guarantees, and various 'scams' of AAP government



overnment due to the nature of the political alignments here. But our vote share has grown consistently. In the last civic poll, we had 40% vote share and AAP had around 42%.

Are you concerned about the trend of Delhi voting for one party in the Lok Sabha election and another in the Assembly poll?

Well, I am from Odisha. This is exactly what used to happen there. For 24 years, a regional party (Biju Janata Dal) was in the State. We experienced a similar phenomenon in 2014 and 2019, but in 2024, we bridged this gap. We'll do the same in Delhi.

What is the BJP's core message to people in this election?

During the period that you are speaking about, the BJP has been growing in Delhi. We haven't formed the go-

Shah has 250 promises, including income support for women through direct benefit transfer schemes, which we promised and delivered in Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Maharashtra. AAP promised the same in Punjab, but failed to deliver.

We have made many promises backed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guarantees, in which people have a lot of faith.

Providing free education from 'KG to PG', acquiring 13,000 e-buses, and invest-

ing ₹10,000 crore to build a high-tech city – all these are our commitments to the people of Delhi.

Some argue that the BJP should have projected a chief ministerial face in Delhi.

It's a narrative that AAP has tried to build. They have no answers to the same question because their leader (AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal) cannot be their CM face as he got bail [from the Supreme Court]

There is a view that for

in connection with the exercise policy case] under stringent conditions.

your party to do well, the Congress needs to revive. What is your assessment of the grand old party's chances?

The Congress is fighting for survival now. In the 2024 general election in Delhi, it allied with AAP. We still defeated their alliance comprehensively. What the Congress does is up to its leaders, our target is to win the election.

Do you see a national footprint of this election?

Delhi, being the national capital, gets a lot of attention due to the presence of national and international media. But they are not the ones who will vote. The ballots will be cast by middle-class voters, gig workers, auto drivers, and those living in slums, all of whom are fed up with the ruling AAP government.

Timings

DELHI	
THURSDAY, JAN. 30	
RISE	07:10 SET 17:59
RISE	07:52 SET 18:55
FRIDAY, JAN. 31	
RISE	07:10 SET 18:00
RISE	08:28 SET 20:01
SATURDAY, FEB. 01	
RISE	07:09 SET 18:01
RISE	09:03 SET 21:06

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	25	06
Safdarjung	25	06
Palam	24	09

Delhi Palam Today
23°C Morning will be cold with shallow fog and mist. Day will be pleasant with light cool winds. Night also will be cold & hazy. Dry weather to prevail.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
24°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be cold with shallow fog and mist. Day will be pleasant with light cool winds. Night also will be cold.

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THE HINDU

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2	UHBVN	45/SE/PROJECTS/AMSP/2023-24	DATE EXTENDED CLOSING DATE - 06/02/2025 @01:00 PM OPENING DATE - 07/02/2025 @03:00 PM	www.uhbvn.org.in	9517770153 seprojects@uhbvn.org.in

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Date : 30.01.2025

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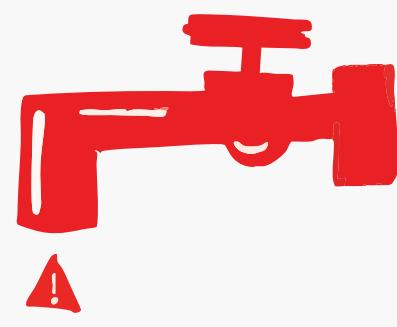
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Advt. No.- BCECEB(PGMAC)-2024/18 Dated : 29.01.2025

Important Notice for Round-3 Online Counselling
In continuation to the Adv.No. BCECEB(PGMAC)-2024/11 & 2024/12 dated : 08.01.2025, Rank Card of all candidates who have duly submitted Fresh Online Application Form as well as who have given their Willingness for participating in Round-3 Counselling or who have been allotted a seat through Round-2 Counselling and given their upgradation as "Yes" for Round-3 Counselling and completed Document Verification process of PGMAC-2024 in between dated 24.12.2024 to 29.12.2024, have been uploaded on Board's website : bceboard.bihar.gov.in. Candidates are advised to download their Rank Card of PGMAC-2024 by clicking the link "Rank Card of Round-3 Counselling of PGMAC-2024" by submitting their PGMAC ID and Date of Birth.
After downloading the rank card, candidates will have to do choice filling for online counselling. For online choice filling, all eligible candidates are required to click on link "Online Counselling Portal of PGMAC-2024". After clicking the link candidates are advised to do the registration for online counselling by submitting the data as asked on the computer screen.
2. The online registration-cum-choice filling for seat allotment (Round-3) will start from 30.01.2025 & close on 31.01.2025 and Provisional seat allotment order result publication on 02.02.2025.
3. Detailed programme and process for Round-3 online Counselling of PGMAC-2024 [MD / MS / PGD / DNB (Degree & Diploma) Course] has been published through Adv. no. BCECEB(PGMAC)-2024/17 dt. 29.01.2025.
Controller of Examination

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Source: Press Release, DIB (Delhi Jal Board), 2024



on February 5,
for cleaner water.

THE HINDU


गांधी स्मृति एवं दर्शन समिति
महात्मा गांधी की
77वीं पुण्यतिथि
30 जनवरी, 2025
सर्वधर्म प्रार्थना सभा
विजय गोयल
उपाध्यक्ष, गांधी स्मृति
पूर्व केन्द्रीय मंत्री


ACES SPORTS QUIZ

1. Who became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal in shooting when she won two at the 2024 Olympics.

2. Jyothi Yarraji shattered her own national record, clinching the 100m hurdles bronze at the 2024 World ___ Games in Chengdu with an impressive timing of 12.78 seconds. Fill in the blank.

3. In February 2024, who became second-quickest bowler to reach 500 wickets in Test history, behind Muttiah Muralitharan, who tops overall list with 800 wickets?


Scan the QR code or visit sstar.news/SSA2025QPA to vote for your favourite stars and take part in the quiz. Top 3 winners every day will win exciting gift vouchers*.

Answers to yesterday's quiz:

- Darts
- Arajeet Singh Hundal
- 18

Yesterday's Winners:

- Nagendra Kumar, Chennai
- Vijayalakshmi, Mumbai
- Nandana Nair, Thiruvananthapuram


Amul
presents
SPORTSTAR ACEs
2025
INDIA TRIUMPHS
#SSaces2025

IN BRIEF



Saif stabbing case: accused sent to 14-day judicial custody

A court in Mumbai on Wednesday refused city police custody of the Bangladeshi national arrested for allegedly stabbing actor Saif Ali Khan, and sent him to judicial remand, noting that there was no fresh ground to extend his police custody. The Bandra Magistrate's Court after perusing the application submitted by the police said no fresh ground was made out. Citing the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita's provisions, the court told the investigating officer that if there was any new development, the police can again seek the accused's custody for the remaining period within permissible time.

J&K MP Rashid Engineer moves Delhi HC for bail

Jammu and Kashmir MP Rashid Engineer on Wednesday moved the Delhi High Court seeking interim bail in a terror funding case. Mr. Rashid sought the reprieve on the ground that he wished to attend the upcoming Budget Session of Parliament. As an alternative, he prayed that he be given custody parole during this period. The plea forms part of his pending petition on the issue of granting him bail in the case by the NIA. In the main petition, he has urged the High Court to either direct the expeditious disposal of his pending bail application by a lower court or decide the matter itself.

Form authority to register live-in relations till laws are passed: HC

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Rajasthan High Court on Wednesday directed the State government to look into setting up an authority in each district to register live-in relationships until the government can bring "appropriate legislation" that governs such relationships.

A single-judge Bench of Justice Anoop Kumar Dhand noted in the order that the need of the hour was to frame a law to "grant rights and impose obligations on the part of the couples in such relationships", a law that is "competent enough to grant assistance to the children and female partners who become sufferers in such relationships".

Justice Dhand's order came on a batch of petitions that dealt with couples in live-in relationships "facing threat and danger from their families and society for not accepting

their relationship". Justice Dhand asked for the order to be served to the Chief Secretary and Principal Secretary, Law and Justice, of the State government, and the Union Social Justice Secretary, seeking a compliance report by March 1.

Till such a law can be brought in, this registering authority should be able to "address and redress the grievances of such partners/couples who have entered such relationships and the children being born out therefrom", the court said, adding that a website could be launched to redress these issues.

Conflicting opinions
The court considered the legal question of whether couples in live-in relations where one of the partners is still married are entitled to protection of the court, noting the diversity of judicial views and referring this question to the Chief Justice, so it could be placed before a special or

larger Bench.
In the order, Justice Dhand noted that as India was "opening its doors to western ideas", one of them was that of live-in relations. "It appears that the police agencies are overburdened with investigation and the responsibility of maintaining law and order, hence, they hardly get any time to redress the grievance of the aggrieved, but certainly this cannot be a ground for denial, on their part, to look into the matter and decide the representation of such persons by passing appropriate orders," it said.

The court noted that there is no separate legislation that lays down "provisions" for live-in relations or which provide legality to the concept or that protect female partners and children born out of these relationships. Hence, the appropriate legislation is required to be brought in by both the Centre and the State, the court said.

Sandeshkhali: High

Court forms SIT to probe gang rape case

Press Trust of India

KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday formed a special investigation team (SIT) headed by two police officers to probe a case of alleged gang rape at Sandeshkhali in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district last year.

'Delay in probe'

Noting that there has already been a delay in the investigation of the case, which was registered at the Sandeshkhali police station on May 16, 2024, Justice Tirthankar Ghosh directed that the case records be handed over to the SIT by the present investigating officer posted

at the police station.

Justice Ghosh directed that Baduria Sub-Divisional Police Officer Rahul Mishra will be a member of the SIT along with Bireswar Chatterjee, Assistant Commissioner of Police (Homicide Section, Detective Department of the Kolkata police).

He directed that the two officers would choose a team of inspectors and sub-inspectors for investigating the case.

Disposing of the petition by the complainant alleging delay in investigation, Justice Ghosh directed that a progress report be submitted by the SIT once a month to the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Basirhat.

In rare meet in Delhi, NC MP, Hurriyat chief discuss post-2019 Kashmir, issues of Muslims

Peerzada Ashiq

SRINAGAR

Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and National Conference (NC) Lok Sabha MP Aga Syed Ruhullah met in New Delhi on Wednesday and held an hour-long discussion on issues faced by the residents of Jammu and Kashmir after the revocation of Article 370, and Muslims in the country in the wake of the government's steps to introduce the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and the Waqf (Amendment) Bill.

It was the first such meeting between political leaders from divergent ideologies from J&K. The meeting between Mr. Ruhullah, a Shia cleric, and Mr. Farooq, a patron of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Ulema (Amendment) Bill.

is a key development given the contrary positions separatists and mainstream leaders in Kashmir have taken in the past 30 years.

Sources said the two discussed new political scenarios emerging in J&K after the Centre revoked Article 370 in 2019. They also spoke about the "truncated role of the elected government to deliver on the issues faced by the people of J&K", a source said.

Mr. Farooq had ap-

peared before the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill on January 24. He opposed proposed amendments and submitted a six-point memorandum.

Reaching out

Sources said efforts are under way for a meeting between Mr. Farooq and key allies of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance such as Andhra Pradesh CM and Telugu Desam Par-

ty president Chandrababu Naidu and Bihar Chief Minister and Janata Dal (United) chief Nitish Kumar.

Sources privy to the development said a channel of communication is on between Mr. Farooq and the offices of Mr. Naidu and Mr. Kumar "to see a possibility of a meeting" in a bid to apprise them about the concerns of Muslims.

"I had a detailed interaction with Mirwaiz regarding the Waqf Bill. We have decided to approach Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar, and Opposition MPs to express the concerns of Muslims," Mr. Ruhullah said.

The Lok Sabha MP said the Bill was "aimed at suppressing Muslims and making us second-class citizens in the country".

Special court to hand over Jayalalithaa's assets to Tamil Nadu

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

A special court in Bengaluru has decided to hand over all valuables confiscated from former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, in connection with a disproportionate assets case, to the State government on February 14 and 15.

H.A. Mohan, judge of the Special Court for CBI and ED cases, directed officers authorised by the Tamil Nadu government to be present in court on February 14 and 15 to take custody of the valuables that are with the special court.

The special court in July 2023 had rejected the pleas of J. Deepak and J. Deepak, niece and nephew of Jayalalithaa who are her legal heirs, claiming right over the seized properties.

In February 2024, the court fixed dates in March that year, to hand over the valuables to Tamil Nadu.

Stay by HC
Following this, Mr. Deepak and Ms. Deepa had moved the High Court of Karnataka, which stayed the process of handing over the valuables till their petitions against the special court's order was adjudicated.

The High Court on January 13 rejected the petitions claiming right over the confiscated valuables belonging to Jayalalithaa in the disproportionate assets case, in which she was indicted by the apex court.

SC orders complete stop on practice of manual scavenging in six metros

Court directs State officials in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad to file affidavits by Feb. 13 on when and how manual scavenging and sewer cleaning ceased in their cities

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered a complete stop on the practice of manual scavenging and hazardous manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks in top metros across the country.

"We hereby order manual sewer cleaning and manual scavenging shall be stopped in all top metropolitan cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad," a Special Bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Aravind Kumar directed in a petition filed by Dr. Balram Singh.

Centre's submission

The Centre, represented by Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, submitted a report that out of 775 districts in the country, 465 have not reported any manual scavenging.

Amicus curiae, senior



The Centre, represented by Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, submitted a report that out of 775 districts in the country, 465 have not reported any manual scavenging. FILE PHOTO

advocate K. Parameshwar, however, said the data presented by the States to the Union government may not be accurate as some of these districts had not constituted committees to monitor and check the practice under the law.

A December 2024 hearing had witnessed the

Bench observe that claims of fraternity, equality, and dignity among citizens remain a mere illusion if a sizeable section of society was forced to enter sewers for a living and die trapped in them even a decade after the introduction of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavenging

and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013.

The apex court had referred to its October 20, 2023 judgment in which it issued directions to the Union and States to take measures to eradicate manual scavenging and hazardous cleaning in the country. The court had noted that these "inhuman" occupations continue, often with fatal results.

'We will not leave it'

"This is something very close to our hearts and minds. We will not leave it. We tell you, we will go to any extent to get our judgment of October 2023 complied with, come what may," the Bench had observed then.

On Wednesday, the court directed the State of officials in the six metros concerned to file affidavits by February 13 on exactly when and how manual scavenging and sewer cleaning had ceased in their respective cities.

T.N. FIR leak probe: SIT seizes mobile phones of 4 scribes

R. Sivaraman
CHENNAI

any documents or devices related to the case. The journalists appeared before the team on Tuesday and Wednesday, during which their mobile phones and other electronic devices were seized by the investigation officers.

One of the journalists said, "They gave us a set of dossiers containing personal details – whether we had benefited monetarily from circulating the FIR; our marital status (including 'number of wives'); and property details. After the inquiry, they told me they had seized my mobile phone, and I could recover it from the court after filing a petition."

Move condemned

The Chennai Press Club condemned the seizure of the journalists' mobile phones, calling it an infringement on press freedom. "The seizure of mobile phones under the pretext of summoning journalists for inquiry is a blatant act of intimidation and an attack on journalistic freedom. It freezes the contacts and networks journalists have built over the years in the course of their profession," it said in a statement.

Chirag wades into BPSC row, seeks re-exam at all centres

Amit Bhelari

PATNA

The Nitish Kumar government in Bihar faced a new challenge on Wednesday with Union Minister Chirag Paswan supporting the demand to conduct a retest at all centres of an exam held by the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) on December 13 last year. The results of the exam were announced last week.

Mr. Paswan, whose Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) is an NDA constituent but not part of the government in the State, said he learnt about "irregularities on a large scale" in the Integrated 70th BPSC-Combined (Preliminary) Competitive Examination 2024 and that the demands of the students were announced last week.

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At his residence "as whether the search and seizure is vexatious or not is a matter of trial".

The statement of Mr. Natesh, recorded by the ED under Section 17(1)(f) of the PMLA, is ordered to be retracted, the court said.

Justice Hemant Chaudhary passed the order while allowing the petition filed by Mr. Natesh, who had questioned the legality of the ED's actions initiated based on the predicate offence registered against Mr. Siddaramaiah, his wife, and others by the Lokayukta police on registering a First Information Report on September 27, 2024.



ten to the grievances of the students. Ayyog kaan mein tel dalkar chatto ki baato ko sunane ko taiyar nahi hai (BPSC is turning deaf ear to their complaints.)

'Exam was rigged'

"The BPSC conducted re-exam at 22 centres. It means rigging took place. This is not acceptable. An advantage of even one or two marks can impact the entire future of students. In this situation, if students demand re-exam at all centres, what's wrong in that? I support their demand," Mr. Paswan said.

'Accept negligence'

Mr. Paswan said the panel should accept that there was "some negligence" during the exam. He said his own family members, including his nephew and niece, had appeared for the exam and experienced mismanagement. Claiming that the examination was

rigged", he said "question papers were not available for everyone", but were circulating on social media shortly after being printed.

A total of 3,28,990 candidates had taken the exam at 912 centres in the State, out of which 21,581 cleared it. Many candidates had boycotted the exam alleging that they did not receive question papers on time at the Bapu Exam Centre in Patna. Later, the panel held a retest on January 4 at 22 centres, which was taken by 5,943 eligible candidates.

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**HIMACHAL PRADESH GOVT.
RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER**

On-line-item rate bids are invited by the Executive Engineer (RDD) Zonal Office Dharamshala, Distt. Kangra H.P., on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from contractors/ firms of appropriate class registered with HPPWD/JSV for the following work(s) through E-Tendering mode:

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost. (In Rs.)	Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Cost of tender form (In Rs.)	Time Limit	Contractor Class
1.	Construction of Block Development Office Building at Rait, Dev. Block Rait, Distt. Kangra H.P. (SH- C/o Building Portion, Civil Work and water supply & sanitary installation)	3,68,86,217/-	7,37,800/-	5000/- (Non-refundable)	18 Months	B

1. Tender document and other instructions can be downloaded or viewed on line from the portal <https://htenders.gov.in> by the firm/individual registered on the website, which is free of cost.
2. As the bids are to be submitted on line same are required to be encrypted and digitally signed, the bidders are advised to obtain Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from suitable vendor/s or from any authorized agency at the earliest.
3. Key Dates:-

The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be obtained from the website <https://htenders.gov.in>

Date of Online Publication	06-02-2025	5 PM
Downloading of e-tender documents	06-02-2025 FROM 5 PM To 13-02-2025 Up to 5 PM	
Submission of bid along with documents	06-02-2025 FROM 5 PM To 13-02-2025 Up to 5 PM	
Physical submission of documents i/c cost of tender and earnest money in EE (RDD) Dharamshala office	ON OR BEFORE 14-02-2025 Up to 03:30 PM	
Date of opening of tender		
Cover-1-Elegibility criteria	15-02-2025	At 11:30 AM
Cover-2 Financial Bid	Shall be intimated after scrutiny of eligibility criteria	

Conditions:- 1. The E-tender documents shall be uploaded online in 2 (two) envelops

- i) Cover-1 shall contain scanned copies of "Eligibility Information".
- ii) Cover-2 contains "Financial Bid" on the prescribed form BOQ.xls
- iii) Cover-1 shall contain scanned copies of following "Eligibility Information": (Scanned copies to be uploaded).
- iv) Earnest Money: TDR OF ANY NATIONALISED BANKNSC/ SAVING ACCOUNT OF ANY POST OFFICE OF HIMACHAL PRADESH duly pledged in the name of Executive Engineer (RDD) Dharamshala, Distt. Kangra HP.
- v) The cost of tender form (Non-refundable) in shape of demand draft (preferably non account payee) duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer (RDD) Dharamshala Distt. Kangra H.P.
- vi) Certificate of valid registration with HPPWD/JSV in appropriate class and latest renewal thereof.
- vii) PAN, GST AND EPF valid registration as on date.
- viii) Work done certificate issued by competent authority not below the rank of Executive Engineer of Minimum Building Work / Civil work done in last five years (without liquidated damage or compensation) Preceding 31-01-2025

One Building work not less than 40% of the estimated cost or

One Civil works not less than 80% of the estimated cost

Vii) Turnover Balance Sheet for last five years and bid capacity duly verified / calculated by the Chartered Accountant.

viii) An affidavit that the Firm/Contractor should not have more than 02 works in hand in RD & PR Deptt. as on date and have not been black listed by any government/semi government/board/Corporation/Private organization etc.

ix) Before submission of online bids, bidder must ensure that scanned copy of all necessary documents have been uploaded with the bid.

The Tenderer should quote their firm price subject to no escalation what so ever till successful fulfillment of Contract. The financial bid should be inclusive of all taxes and no extra claim will be entertained. Central/State/Local taxes val and any levy charges, including cess as per provision of building and other construction workers welfare cess Act, 1996 and Himachal Pradesh Building and other construction workers Rules, 2008. The Department will deduct labour cess @ 1% from each running bill from the gross amount of work done by the Contractor.

The Tenderer shall have to maintain EPF accounts and bear EPF contribution of its workers/employees.

Cover-2 shall contain "BOQ i.e., Financial Bid where contractor/firm shall quote rate for each item"

3) The intending contractors/ firms are requested to inspect the site of work before submission of bids.

4) The offer shall remain valid up to 90 days after the opening of the bids.

5) If the date of opening the bid happen to be local/ Gazzeted holiday, the same shall be opened on next working day at the same time.

6) No subtlety of work shall be allowed.

7.) Contractor/ firm enlisted in a particular class shall be eligible to tender for his own class and one step below.

8.) Submission of original documents- The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of tender (b) original Earnest money deposit (EMD) (C) and Affidavit on or before 14-02-2025 up to 03:30 PM failing which the bid will be declared non-responsive. Exemption of earnest money shall not be available.

9. The undersigned reserve the right to reject one or all the Bids without assigning reason what so ever for the interest of the Govt.

Executive Engineer (RDD)

HP / 4853/24-25 HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPAK Zonal Office Dharamshala, Distt. Kangra H.P.-176215

बिहार सरकार
भवन निर्माण विभाग
Corrigendum

Letter No.-45 A Tender has been published for operation of Vegetarian Restaurant in Bapu Tower Campus whose PR No. is 17723(BCD) 2024-25 on 22-01-2025.

The space for Souvenir Shop adjacent to the Restaurant area shall be deemed to be included in the same tender and clause- 01- scope and clause-04 (b) of section A located on page-5 and 7 respectively of the said tender document, the date of submission/opening of Tender and the minimum qualification marks for eligibility should be read as follows:-

Clause 1: Scope

The Director, Bapu Tower Samiti, Building Construction Department, Patna (hereinafter referred to as the "Bapu Tower") invites tender(s) for selection of Licensee for lease of space for Vegetarian Restaurant and Souvenir shop for the Fraternity of Bapu Tower in Permanent Campus at Khagaul Road, Gardanibagh, Patna, Bihar 800001 as per the tender document. The bidder shall provide the required vegetarian items to the Bapu Tower Fraternity, and the items should be available all the time at a reasonable or fixed price with best quality and appropriate quantity.

There is a souvenir shop adjacent to the Restaurant which will be the part of the restaurant with the following conditions,

- The bidder shall keep in stock of the following items:-
- 3D printed Souvenir/gift of Mahatma Gandhi.
- Books about Mahatma Gandhi.
- Khadi and Handcrafted items.
- Souvenir/gift and related items of Mahatma Gandhi.
- Innovative items/gifts related to Mahatma Gandhi.
- The Digital items related to Mahatma Gandhi and Gandhian thoughts.

The bidder shall store and display the Souvenir/Gift items in a very attractive manner in the required storage almirahs and display cabinets. The area should be maintained in good condition.

The Souvenir/Gift items should be made available to the visitors by the bidder at prices not exceeding the normal retail price prevailing in the market.

Sr. No.	Property Name (Bapu Tower, Patna, Bihar)	EMD Rs.	Period for Operation & Management Contract
1	1.Ground Floor Restaurant (Area 13.15x12.90=169.635) SQM	2,00,000.00	5 years
	2.Pantry/Serving+Handwash(Area6.95x3.97=27.626)SQM		

*Total-197.265SQM=2123.285QFT

2	Cafeteria furniture	1.Existing@GF	
		- 4 seater Table with chairs - 6 Sets(24chairs)	
		- 6 seater Table with Chairs - 4 Sets(24chairs)	
		2.Reserve Furniture@GF	
		❖ 6 seater Tables with Chairs-4 Sets(24chairs)	

3 Souvenir Shop Area approx. - 630 Sq.ft

Sr. No.	Items	Inches (L X H X B)	Quantity
1.	Big Cupboard	98X24X17	1
2.	Round Shelf	46 (H)	1
3.	Open Book Shelf	83X47X24	1
4.	Glass Book Shelf	47X59X16	3
5.	Small Cupboard	35X16X24	6
6.	Wall Cabinet	95X93X16	3
7.	Fixed Wall Display Cabinet	25X84X16	1
8.	Reception Counter	80X48X27	1

Note:- Successful bidder will have to purchase all the gift/souvenir items already available in the Souvenir Shop at the same rate at which it has been received / purchased by the Bapu Tower Samiti.

The tender document can be downloaded from the website:- www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar [www.baputower.org](http://www.state.bihar.gov.in/bcd and www.baputower.org)

Clouse 4:- (b) Selection of Vendor: Bidders who obtains minimum qualifying marks and are successful in Technical Evaluation will be deemed Eligible for participating in Financial Bid. Successful Bidder will be selected on the highest quoted rate. Minimum rate should not be less than Rs. 35,000/- per month for the restaurant including souvenir shop. GST will be charged additionally as per applicable rate.

Also, the date of submission and opening of Tender should be read as follows:-

(i) Last date for submission of Tender-15th February 2025 up to 01:00 PM.

(ii) Date of opening of Technical Bid - 15th February 2025 at 03:00 PM.

(iii) Date of opening of Financial Bid- will be informed after opening of Technical bid.

♦ The minimum qualification marks for eligibility should be 40 Marks.

♦ Tenderers are also advised to visit Restaurant & Souvenir shop at Bapu Tower before submission of tender.

♦ In Previous uploaded Tender document, wherever it is written Restaurant, it should be read as Vegetarian Restaurant and Souvenir Shop and accordingly the revised Tender Document is also being uploaded with this corrigendum for the convenience of bidders.

Director Museum
BAPU TOWER SAMITI
Bapu Tower, Patna

PR. No. 018474 (BCD) 2024-25

This information is available on website www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar also [www.baputower.org](http://www.state.bihar.gov.in/bcd and www.baputower.org)

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,
CENTRAL (R&B) CIRCLE , BHUBANESWAR.**
Mail i.d. : seccbbs@gmail.com

E-procurement Tender Call Notice No.17 of 2024-25

No. (Estg.) Bhubaneswar the January-2024

The Chief Construction Engineer, Central (R&B) Circle, Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for two numbers Building works to be received in online bidding, double cover system for construction work as detailed in <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from 5.00 P.M. of 30.01.2025 to 4.00 P.M. of 10.02.2025. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened at 5.00 P.M. of 10.02.2025 in the Office of the Chief Construction Engineer, Central (R&B) Circle, Bhubaneswar.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in. Addendum / Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the Website.

Sd/- Er. M.K.Mahananda
Chief Construction Engineer, Central (R&B) Circle, Bhubaneswar,
OPR-34156/11/0017/2425

**Your feedback will keep us
Cleaner, Sharper and Bolder**

Call our toll-free number
1800 102 1878

Or write to us at
customercare@thehindu.co.in

THE HINDU thehindubusinessline.com

FRONTLINE **SPORTSTAR** **YOUNGWORLD** **THE HINDU**

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY
E-TENDERING TENDER NOTICE

Open e-tenders on "Single Packet System" through E-Tender notice No. MCWIZN06RepairofQWSFB are invited by Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer (C&W), North Eastern Railway, Itazagar Division and for on behalf of President of India for the following work:

Name of work:- Repair work of CAMTECH design water facilities(Quick Water system) at Farmakabudha station of Itazagar Division. Estimated Value of work (Rs.): ₹ 10,67,900/- Earnest Money (Rs.): ₹ 21,400/- Cost of tender form-NIL Period of work-30 days from the date of issue of LOA.

- Date and time for closing of E-Tender: 20-02-2025 at 17:00 Hrs.
- Tenderers may submit their E-Tenders online up to 17:00 hrs. on 20-02-2025.
- Please go to the Indian railway website www.reps.gov.in to see the complete details and upload/submit the E-Tender.

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THE HINDU</p



Deaths after the surge

The Kumbh stampede could have been avoided with better measures

The stampede at the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh – the third such incident in recent months – confirms India's dubious distinction of having the most number of deaths during religious gatherings. While the day's developments have not yielded conclusive reasons for the stampede that happened in the early hours of January 29, initial investigations suggest an uncontrolled surge of devotees at the bathing ghats. The Uttar Pradesh government had estimated that a hundred million people would have their holy dips on Mauni Amavasya, an auspicious occasion which fell on January 29. According to government estimates, more than a third of those who were expected had performed the ritual early – 36 million people by 10 a.m. – despite temporary closures of the roads leading to Prayagraj after the stampede. This measure of regulating traffic into the city could have been proactively implemented, ensuring a steady and manageable stream of devotees, as the government was well aware of a surge in numbers. The focus, unsurprisingly, is again on the lack of crowd management and the prioritisation of VIP visitors over the common man.

What has been even more alarming was the State government's delay in formally announcing the fatalities and those injured – 30 dead and over 60 injured – deviating from established protocols of transparency during disasters. It is reminiscent of the opacity of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his government after the widespread deaths during the second COVID-19 wave in March 2021, the scale of which was evident later when horrific images of bodies floating in the Ganga emerged. This is the sixth stampede in one of the Kumbhs in the past 70 years, an event that takes place every three years at one of four holy sites for Hindus, at Prayagraj, Haridwar, Nashik and Ujjain. While the reasons for each stampede have been different, they still point to either a lack of fire safety, crowd mismanagement and VIP disruptions, or creaking infrastructure. They also indicate a post-facto treatment of the cause and a disregard for holistic planning. The State government has been most innovative in managing the 45-day-long Maha Kumbh, with aerial surveillance and a tracking of mobile movements to monitor people. It is also an unprecedented achievement to even attempt to handle a population, although transitional, that is twice that of Uttar Pradesh's, between January 13 and February 26 when the Maha Kumbh ends. *The Hindu* had reported on the arrangements for the 65 kilometre temporary district around the Triveni Sangam, but the confluence itself is only about a kilometre in diameter, requiring constant vigil and steady crowd management.

Stifling demand

MGNREGS should not be let down by funding issues and wage delays

The efficacy of a welfare programme is directly proportional to the enthusiasm of the government implementing it. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) will soon be completing 20 years of its implementation. The fact that it has not only survived but also thrived under two regimes across multiple terms suggests its utility and popularity among the rural poor, though, under the National Democratic Alliance, the scheme has acquired a status of being an unwanted necessity after being seen initially as someone else's baby. But as the COVID-19 pandemic showed, the MGNREGS was a necessity and vital in terms of the sustenance it provided to both rural workers and migrant labour returning to their rural homes after the lockdowns were announced. And it is fair to say that it is now seen as "unwanted", as allocations in percentage terms of consecutive Budgets have reduced substantially since the pandemic (from 3.2% in FY21 to 1.78% in FY25 (BE)). Besides, despite the fact that the scheme is demand driven, inevitably leading to the allocation of additional funds beyond the budgeted expenditure, no extra allocation for MGNREGS has been made this financial year even as wages have been delayed and, due to this, demand also suppressed artificially. Reportedly, the Rural Development Ministry was short of ₹4,315 crore for the wages and the Centre has a liability of ₹5,715 crore against its share for material component of the works to be done under the scheme.

There are other issues with MGNREGS implementation that require attention – the need to adjust wages to inflation, and the issues concerning the seeding of job cards with the Aadhaar-based payment system, among others. But the core of the scheme remains the adequacy of the allocations made for it by the Centre. By pruning funds, the purpose of providing demand-driven employment is under-served and it is unfair to rural workers across the country who have used the scheme to augment their incomes, especially in the agricultural off-seasons. There has been much academic study detailing the fruits of the scheme – from helping the destitute to creating village assets such as irrigation canals, rural roads, and water conservation facilities. A demand-driven exercise such as this scheme also puts disposable income in the hands of the village poor and helps the rural economy. The importance of MGNREGS in a country still facing rural poverty needs no elaboration. The Union government must change its attitude towards the MGNREGS. A substantial allocation in the Union Budget, that is true to the demand for the scheme, would be a good start.

There can be no doubt that U.S. President Trump's decision to pull the United States out of the Paris Agreement, which will legally come into effect in a year, is a major blow to global efforts to combat the threat posed by anthropogenic global warming. The U.S., the world's richest nation, owning a third of the world's wealth, and with the highest annual gross domestic product, is singularly responsible for global warming, having contributed well over a fifth of the cumulative emissions of carbon dioxide, from the pre-industrial era to date. Under the principles and terms of the United Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to which the U.S. is a signatory, it is also supposed to take the lead in climate action while providing the financial and technological means to developing countries to do the same.

By any reckoning, climate action by the U.S. has always fallen well short of its responsibility under the global climate regime, irrespective of the dispensation in Washington DC. Its emissions steadily rose from 1992 to 2005, while its political class consistently swung away from serious efforts, resulting in the U.S. Congress, through a bipartisan consensus, keeping the country out of the Kyoto Protocol. Since then, its emissions have declined, though at a rate that is much slower than what it owes the world. The eventual move away from legally binding commitments on developed countries, as in the Kyoto Protocol, to voluntary contributions pledged by all countries in the Paris Agreement, with the pious hope of increasing ambition as time went by, was solely to accommodate the constraints of U.S. domestic politics which would not allow ratification of any binding emissions reduction commitment. Initiated at Copenhagen in 2009 and consolidated at Paris, six years later, this move was Barack Obama's legacy.

After the Trump victory, much is being made of the Biden administration's efforts at climate action. The U.S. became the world's highest producer of crude oil under the Biden administration. The paltry target of \$300 billion annually as climate finance, from COP29 at Baku, was the outcome of the joint obduracy of the U.S. and its developed country allies. Biden's swan song, the updated nationally determined contribution submitted in December 2004, offered to reduce emissions by only 60% below 2005 levels by 2035, perpetuating the continued appropriation by the U.S. of a vastly disproportionate part of the global carbon budget. This does not represent any higher "ambition" as understood in the Paris Agreement, despite the U.S. hectoring the developing countries at the Dubai and Baku climate summits on the need for enhanced mitigation targets for all.



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Developing countries, in the face of the U.S.'s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, need a calibrated strategy that must not fall prey to the illusion that they can make up the huge gap created by America's stand

The Trump withdrawal from the Paris accord fits well within the frustrating pattern of weak commitments and weaker climate action, accompanied by aggressive intervention in multilateral platforms, under Democratic presidencies, followed by the spurning or withdrawal from even these commitments under Republican incumbents. In the event, other countries, notably the large emerging economies, are left with increasing burdens and commitments for climate mitigation. For the bulk of the developing world this has meant the withdrawal of aid and assistance, and even loans, for development and industrialisation, and enhanced energy use to meet basic human development needs. They are sought to be forced into early de-carbonisation that perpetuates global inequalities and deprivation, including rising risk of hunger and food insecurity.

Action and reaction

The reactions to the U.S.'s withdrawal from climate diplomats, national spokespersons, and the media in general, have been a mixed bag of resignation and bravado. The Secretary of the UNFCCC, Simon Stiell, and many others have suggested that it is the U.S. that will miss out on the sterling investment opportunities for private capital that green transitions now provide. If anything, this is a mark of the enduring success of the American contribution to climate discourse – that markets are the best route to deliver climate change mitigation. By this logic, all that the rich countries' governments need to do is to provide signals to the private sector that will release the power of global capital, who will then innovate and invest to achieve the commitments to emissions reduction. The record shows however, that this logic leads to both underwhelming commitments to actions and the failure to achieve even these as promised.

The fact that over 80% of primary energy use in the U.S. and over 70% in the European Union still comes from fossil fuels, 33 years after the UNFCCC was signed, is testament to the failure of markets as the golden bullet to solve the climate crisis. Developed and developing countries' commitments fundamentally differ in the relatively large role that a public sector plays in the latter's economies. This provides a measure of accountability to their commitments than those of the global North lack.

Academia and civil society in the global North have also been complicit in promoting the illusion that, despite national withdrawal, action by sub-national governments, corporations and local communities could substitute. Indeed, as a University of Colorado Law School paper, published in 2024, notes, the number of states moving to anti-regulatory or "emissions inaction" policies or at best marginal policies is much

larger than those with active emissions reduction strategies. At the level of local communities, the paper notes that those with emission regulations are mere outliers with a huge majority having emissions inaction strategies. Without even the weak carrot and stick policies of an Inflation Reduction Act, action is much less likely to flow from actors traditionally unwilling to take the initiative.

The extent of this complicity of climate academia is demonstrated by the lack of any serious discussion of climate denialism in the U.S. within the context of global climate governance in the successive reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), including the first Trump activated withdrawal, which occurred during the period when the bulk of the Sixth Assessment Report was prepared.

Advice for developing countries

Developing countries, in the face of the U.S. withdrawal, need a calibrated strategy that must not fall prey to the illusion that they can make up the huge gap created by this withdrawal. Nor should it be forgotten that the reaction of other developed countries is likely to be more of rhetoric than substance. It may be recalled that the details of the implementation of the Paris agreement were finalised during the first Trump presidency, when the U.S. and other Northern negotiators actively colluded in transferring an increasing part of the burden of climate action on to the global South. The second Trump administration too may not walk out of the negotiations and remain to insist on increased commitments by the global South or at least collude in such calls. Indeed, with outstanding irony, the executive order initiating the withdrawal still refers to the global climate leadership of the United States.

It is equally bravado to call on developing countries to respond to the U.S.'s move by abandoning multilateralism in the climate arena. Adherence to multilateralism is not geneflection to a moral principle but necessitated by the inherent and irreducibly global nature of the global warming challenge. India, as indeed the rest of the global South, must hold its course on climate action, but also prepare for the future with increased attention to urgently bridging development deficits and far greater emphasis on adaptation than seen so far.

In the ultimate analysis, global climate action that is just, equitable and effective requires political will. The future of climate action and the safety of humanity requires concerted political action by all other nations to bring the U.S. back to the path of reason and the path of meaningful international cooperation.

The views expressed are personal

Bridge the milk divide for a nutritionally secure India

For a long time, India has told the incredible supply side story of its milk revolution. The White Revolution that was initiated by Verghese Kurien propelled India to become the world's largest milk producer. It is now time to bring focus to demand and ensure that milk reaches the most vulnerable.

Milk, a vital source of protein, calcium, and other micronutrients, is integral to plant-heavy Indian diets. Research links milk consumption to lower odds of stunting, underweight, and anthropometric failure in Indian children aged between six months and five years. However, milk consumption remains highly inequitable across socio-economic groups and regions. As the Union Budget 2025-26 approaches, addressing these disparities is essential to improved health outcomes for all.

Consumption disparities

The latest Household Consumer Expenditure Surveys (HCES) by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) show that households in the top-income decile consume three to four times more milk (equivalent) per capita compared to households in the lowest-income decile. Despite sharper increases in consumption among lower-income groups, the poorest 30% consumed just 18% of India's milk.

The NSSO primarily captures at-home consumption, which is only about 50% of the total milk production. Out-of-home milk consumption through restaurants, and hotels is not adequately captured by HCES. If accounted for, this would only likely enlarge the consumption difference.

Consumption disparities also show regional, social, and urban-rural divides. Urban households consume ~30% more milk per capita than rural ones, despite most milk being produced in rural India. Among social groups, Scheduled Tribe households consume four litres less milk per capita compared to general category



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The challenge is in ensuring equitable milk access for the most vulnerable while moderating over-consumption among the affluent

households. Regionally, States such as Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana consume between 333 grams to 421 grams per capita daily at home, while eastern States such as Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and West Bengal consume just between 75g to 171g.

Focus on vulnerable groups

While variations in dietary preferences and lactose intolerance levels partly explain these disparities, affordability is a key barrier. The National Institute of Nutrition recommends consuming 300 g per capita of milk daily for an average sedentary adult. However, meeting this level of consumption would require 70% of Indian households to spend 10% to 30% of their total monthly expenditure on milk.

Meanwhile, affluent urban households are likely to consume more than double the recommended levels, which includes high-fat, high-sugar products such as ice cream and packaged milk-based sweets. This raises concerns about overnutrition, obesity, and non-communicable diseases. Given these inequities and challenges, prioritising milk access for vulnerable groups such as young children, pregnant and lactating women, and the elderly in low-income settings is critical. Here is how:

First, enhance milk provision for the vulnerable through the Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirmam (POSHAN), Integrated Child Development Services meals, and take-home rations. Collaborate with institutions such as the National Institute of Nutrition to integrate milk or milk products that align with socio-cultural preferences and tolerances. States such as Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka and Telangana already provide milk or milk powder under these schemes, but quantities remain insufficient. And some States such as Chhattisgarh, have discontinued provisions due to financial constraints. Boosting financial allocations to these schemes could yield

substantial returns. Governments can explore innovative financing options, such as social bonds, tapping into corporate social responsibility funding, and gradually increasing cess on unhealthy foods.

In regions with strong market access and dairy cooperative networks, milk coupons could enhance access, lower distribution costs, and boost local milk markets.

Second, emphasise the nutritional benefits of milk and other locally appropriate food items in awareness campaigns, targeting women through Anganwadi centres, doctors, self-help groups, and civil society organisations. Maharashtra and Bihar are already leading in organising grassroots activities to drive nutrition awareness and interventions, as seen in Poshan Maah 2024. Research highlights that improved women's nutrition awareness significantly enhances household dietary diversity.

The U.K. model

Third, promote healthy consumption awareness using partnerships with doctors, influencers, and the media. Health messaging should encourage moderation in milk consumption among over-consuming affluent groups, advocating diverse, balanced diets. This can mitigate the burdens of over-nutrition from dairy products and increase milk affordability for vulnerable groups. For example, the Change4Life Sugar Swaps campaign in the United Kingdom effectively reduced sugar and fat consumption, and offers a model for similar initiatives in India.

Milk plays an important role in India's nutrition security. Ensuring equitable access for the most vulnerable while moderating overconsumption among the affluent would honour Verghese Kurien's vision of a nutritionally secure India, making the benefits of the milk revolution accessible to all.

The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stampede and safety

The stampede at the Maha Kumbh shows that governments have not learnt any lessons from the past. We continue to have such tragedies whether at places of worship, festivals or at entertainment events. The safety of pilgrims and participants cannot be treated so lightly.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao,
Hyderabad

One is not sure about the extent of the scientific methods being used in the management of crowds at the Kumbh Mela. The point is that there are a number of techniques that have been tried and tested on how to try and survive a crowd crush or stampede. One method is to fold one's arms toward the body, like a boxer, in order to be steady and be safe from

being pulled or caught. One also needs to keep moving in the direction of the crowd rather than fight it. Curling up into a ball and protecting one's neck is another method in case of a fall. It might be worth screening videos of such survival techniques by projecting them on giant screens at large events. People must be educated about the importance of

safety. There could also be demonstrations of such techniques at large events.

Dr. Sunil Arora,
New Delhi

Only 'minimum dose'
The Institution of Homoeopaths Kerala (IHK) – I am its General Secretary – wishes to clarify that homoeopathic practitioners, who adhere to ethical medical standards, do not

prescribe or promote the misuse of alcohol-based preparations. The article (Editorial page, January 28) has been unfair and implies that homoeopathy is responsible for public health hazards due to its alcoholic tinctures. The truth is that genuine homoeopathic doctors follow the principle of 'minimum dose', ensuring that medications are used

strictly for therapeutic purposes without causing harm or intoxication. The issue of misuse arises primarily from quacks and unauthorised individuals. This is a matter of regulatory enforcement. Genuine homoeopathic medicines, when used correctly, pose no threat to public health.

Dr. Muhammed Aslam M.,
Malappuram, Kerala

The copyright conundrum in Carnatic music

During the recent Margazhi season or music season in Chennai, *rasikas* (connoisseurs) hopped from concert to concert. While tuning into the music, they also had to keep in mind copyright law as the *sabhas* (performance venues) forbade them from unauthorised recording. Copyright law has seldom been at the forefront of discussion in the Carnatic music sphere as there is a general belief that copyright law does not apply to it. We need to revisit this view.

In *Indian Performing Right Society Ltd. v. Eastern Indian Motion Pictures Association* (1977), Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer asked whether music meant only the composition of a piece or extended to the soulful tune, voice, and rendering of the piece. This remains unanswered in Parliament. Apart from being a metaphysical question, what is music is also a legal question.

The idea of music

Copyright law across the world defines music as a melody, i.e., a composition which is reduced to print. The idea that music is only a composition stems from a western classical understanding of music. The lawmakers of the Indian Copyright Act, 1914, failed to understand Indian music before enacting the law. The same colonial understanding followed even in the legislation enacted in 1957. This excludes several unique factors of Indian classical music from the realm of copyright law. It is pertinent to ask: should law follow music or should music follow the law?

A song is born after the synchronised efforts of a composer, lyricist, singers, and other performers. The composer and the lyricist get protection over their respective creations for their lifetime and then 60 more years. When a song is recorded onto a medium, there is a separate right over the recording. Called 'mechanical right', this is granted to the one who records the song,



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for 60 years, to commercially exploit it.

Performers' right enables the singer and other musicians to forbid anyone from recording the song. Further, the law enables the performer to be eligible to claim royalty from the streaming of their performances or the sale of their music. Though this right is available to the singer and the accompanists theoretically, they do not enjoy the same in its true sense, in a concert space. It is only in prominent *sabhas* that video/audio recording of the performance is prohibited; this is not a norm everywhere. Several performances of notable singers are posted by third parties on YouTube and Spotify, which is a violation of the Copyright Act and robs the musicians of the chances to monetise their rendering. Any recording that is done without consent is a violation of the performers' right; it is even a violation if the *sabha* does this without the informed consent of the performers. The licence regime within a Carnatic concert is complex even for music that is in the copyright domain.

Since most of the songs that are performed are in the public domain, the form of music has also remained outside the realm of copyright. The works of Tyagaraja Swami, Shyama Shastri, Muddusvami Dikshitar, Purandara Dasa, and Gopala Krishna Bharathiar, for instance, are in the public domain for anyone to perform today, as they were all created even before the inception of the concept of copyright. Whether the additions and improvisations made by the musicians also become a part of the public domain along with the song and whether a musician who improvises a song has any right over such improvisations remain unanswered questions.

When any performer learns these songs from their guru, they inherit their guru's imagination packaged with the original rendition. The learner also has the scope to add their own touch to

the song. They have their own interpretation and perform the song with improvisations which may not have been a part of the original composition. They may even sing the same song in a different raga from what was originally envisioned. For instance, several songs of Gopala Krishna Bharathi are today not sung in the ragas that Bharathi had composed. Does the musical imagination to interpret the song in a different raga become "creativity" under copyright?

Changing the law

The improvisation made by a performer on a stage could be spontaneous and it could be a response to the interest displayed by the audience. The choice of accompanying music could also result in an altogether different version of the song. In several cases, the performers themselves may not be in a position to replicate it exactly in the same way for the second time. The improvisation made by the performer is neglected and there is no scope to grant protection for it under the Copyright Act.

While the compositions of Purandara Dasa were conventionally sung in ragas associated with Carnatic music, Pandit Bhimsen Joshi took it upon himself to introduce the wide collection of Purandara Dasa's compositions to a myriad variety of Hindustani ragas. The song *Eppo Varuwaro* cannot be imagined without the soulful touch of Madurai Mani Iyer; he has inspired generations of singers to perform the song in a particular way. Does he not own his unique additions? It remains unprotected under the copyright laws.

Musicians should have the right to own their soulful additions to a song and also to commercially exploit their performance. The flow of royalty from streaming should be strengthened. Currently, music follows the law. Should the law not be changed to protect the rights of Carnatic musicians in letter and spirit?

Musicians should have the right to own their soulful additions to a song and also to commercially exploit their performance

The mining mafia's free run

Several activists and officials have been targeted in the last three decades

STATE OF PLAY

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The mining mafia in Tamil Nadu is notorious for ruthlessly targeting anyone who dares to challenge its power and influence. The recent murder of a 58-year-old social activist, who had opposed illegal stone quarrying in Pudukkottai district, is reminiscent of many such attacks that have been unleashed time and again to silence whistleblowers.

The death of Jagaber Ali, who was also an AIADMK functionary, almost passed off as an accident. On January 17, Ali was heading to his hollow block manufacturing unit on a two-wheeler after afternoon prayers in the Vengalar mosque when he was knocked down by a lorry and killed. However, his wife, Mariyam, suspected foul play. She filed a police complaint saying her husband had been facing threats to his life from stone quarry operators in the Thirumayam areas as he had been lobbying and petitioning the authorities against illegal stone quarrying.

The police, which had initially registered a case under Section 194(I) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, then altered it as a case of murder after investigation. The four accused – Rasu, a quarry owner; his son Dinesh; Muruganandham, the lorry owner, and Kasinathan, driver – were arrested over the next couple of days. Ramaiah, a co-owner of the quarry, later surrendered before the police.

The government then transferred the case to the CB-CID. A team of officials of the Department of Geology and Mining that inspected the



quarry at Thulayananur in Thirumayam taluk against which Jagaber Ali had levelled allegations of illegal quarrying, is expected to submit a report to the government soon. The inspector of the Thirumayam police station has been placed under suspension and a few local revenue officials have been transferred. Nevertheless, the perceived inaction of district officials over Ali's complaints that led to his murder sparked outrage. Several parties and organisations, including the Left parties and a few other allies of the ruling DMK, organised protests in Thirumayam. DMDK general secretary Premallatha Vijayakanth led a protest against the murderer in the town.

However, the AIADMK's reaction was rather muted. In a post on X, former Chief Minister and party general secretary, Edappadi K. Palaniswami, expressed shock over the murder of Ali and demanded action against not only those involved in illegal mining of mineral resources, but also those who had failed to act on Ali's repeated complaints.

That the murder took place after Ali complained to the Taisildar, the Assistant Director of Geology and Mining, and the District Collector caused fear among the people, he said.

Environmental activists and local political functionaries were aghast at the audacity of the murder. According to

activists who were associated with him, Ali had submitted a well-documented petition against the illegal stone quarrying to revenue officials a week before his murder.

The murder has triggered calls for enactment of a law to protect whistleblowers. "This is necessary as there is a rising threat to activists in Tamil Nadu," said Henri Tiphagne, Executive Director, People's Watch. Activists have been threatened with dire consequences and sometimes, this has ended up in crimes such as murder in various districts, he said. Activists say such crimes have taken place irrespective of which party is in power in the State. Addressing a press conference in Madurai, Mr. Tiphagne said various stakeholders were clearly working together, which encouraged illegal quarry owners to operate boldly.

It is not just activists who have been targeted. Often, officials of the revenue department and the police, who have sought to enforce rules, have also faced the wrath of the mining mafia. In April 2023, a village administrative officer, Y. Lourdu Francis, was hacked to death by sand miners in Thoothukudi district. Five years prior to that, a police constable was brutally murdered in the neighbouring Tirunelveli district when he was about to arrest culprits mining sand from the Nambiyar river. Several other officials have either been killed or have faced murder attempts over the last three decades in the State. Hit-and-run attacks are very most common.

The alarming regularity of such murderous violence has brought to the fore the need for strong political will and firm measures to rein in the unchecked run of powerful quarry operators.

The old and the new: schemes to look out for on Budget day

Schemes such as Digital India, Startup India and Smart Cities Mission have recorded consistent declines in funding

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

With Budget FY2025-26 scheduled to be presented on February 1, here is a look at some of the recently launched schemes, older schemes with significantly reduced funding, schemes under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) umbrella, and those promoting electric mobility in India.

Table 1 shows a select list of recently launched schemes and their allocations. It includes the scheme for installing solar rooftops which was launched in 2024 and allocated ₹6,250 crore in FY25(BE). Other schemes are the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan to re-imagine panchayati raj institutions, the scheme to upgrade Industrial Training Institute (ITIs) and the controversial PM Vishwakarma scheme, which aims to nurture the guru-shishya parampara or family-based practice of traditional skills. Schemes with the goal of promoting AI in India such as the INDIA AI mission and Centres of Excellence for AI are also a part of the list.

Table 2 shows a select list of older schemes, allocations for which have significantly reduced over the years. Major schemes include the Regional Connectivity Scheme, from unserved and underserved airports, and the Smart Cities Mission to enhance the quality of life in 100 cities. The promotion of the digital payments scheme did not get any allocation in the last Budget. Other schemes include Digital India and Startup India.

Table 3 shows the complete list of schemes which come under the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) umbrella. The largest of them is the successful electronics and IT hardware scheme, with the most recent allocation touching ₹6,200 crore. **Table 4** shows the list of schemes which promote electric mobility, with the FAME scheme being the biggest in terms of allocations.

Budget's highs and lows

The text and data for the tables were sourced from the Union Budget documents. The figures for 2024-25 are budget estimates, for 2023-24 are revised estimates and for 2022-23 are actuals

Table 1: Select list of recently launched schemes and allocations for the latest year in ₹ crore		
Scheme	Explanation	2024-25
PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana	For installing rooftop solar panels	6,250
Centres of Excellence (CoE) in Artificial Intelligence (AI)	To establish three centres of excellence for AI in educational institutions for research and development	255
IndiaAI Mission	To catalyse the AI innovation ecosystem	551.75
National Green Hydrogen Mission	To make India the global hub for production, usage and export of green hydrogen	600
Legal Aid Defense Counsel System (LADCS)	To provide legal aid work in criminal matters	200
PM Vishwakarma	To strengthen and nurture the guru-shishya parampara or family-based practice of traditional skills	4,824
Rashtriya Gram Swaraj	To re-imagine panchayati raj institutions	1063.67
Global Biofuels Alliance	To expedite the global uptake of biofuels	0.01
Mission Anveshan	To fill gaps in seismic coverage and build a robust geoscientific database	332
National Quantum Mission	To create an ecosystem in quantum technology	427
Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN)	To enhance the socio-economic conditions of particularly vulnerable tribal groups	240
National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)	To ensure the safety and dignity of sanitation workers and safe delivery of mechanised sanitation services	116.94
ITI Upgradation Scheme	To upgrade ITIs	1,000

Table 2: Shows a select list of older schemes, allocations for which have significantly reduced over the years. Figures in ₹ crore

Scheme	Explanation	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Regional connectivity scheme	To enhance regional air connectivity from unserved and underserved airports	1,063.81	850	502
Smart cities mission	Aims to enhance the quality of life in 100 selected cities	8,652.92	8,000	2,400
Promotion of digital payment	To help in growth of digital transactions	1,989.62	584	-
Digital India	To transform India into a digitally empowered society	5,518.09	4,428.01	4,216.51
Startup India	Aims to support entrepreneurs and build a strong startup ecosystem	44.21	45.61	0.01
Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)	To generate self-employment opportunities through the establishment of micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector	2733.21	2,958.22	2,300
Unnat Bharat Abhiyan	To enable higher educational institutions to work with the people in rural India in identifying development challenges	11.58	5	5
Internationalisation of Higher Education	Help internationalisation of education services	144.36	100	104
Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)	Provides various measures for the overall development of the backward population of STs	137.18	-	20



Table 3: The complete list of schemes which come under the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) umbrella and allocations for them in ₹ crore

PLI schemes	2024-25
Large scale electronics and IT Hardware	6200
Food processing industry	1,444.02
White goods (ACs and LED lights)	298.02
Toys	0.01
Footwear and leather sector	0.01
Automobiles and auto components	3,500
National programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) battery storage	250
Specialty steel in India	245.82
Multiple PLIs	2,143
Promote telecom and networking products manufacturing in India	-
Drone and drone components	57

Table 4: Shows the list of schemes which promote electric mobility and allocations for them in ₹ crore

Scheme	Explanation	2024-25
FAME	To promote electric mobility in India	2,671.33
Electric mobility promotion scheme	To accelerate the adoption of electric two-wheelers	500
Scheme to promote manufacturing of electric passenger cars in India (SMEC)	To promote manufacturing of electric passenger cars in India	13
PM-eBus Sewa Scheme	To boost India's electric mobility infrastructure	1,300

FROM THE ARCHIVES



FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 30, 1975

Woes of govt. hospitals are many

New Delhi, Jan. 29: Most Government hospitals in the country are in a bad state, beset with problems like overcrowding, shortage of staff and drugs, and paucity of funds, according to a UNI survey. Insanitary conditions, premature discharge of patients, heavy strain on the staff and scanty attention to patients are some of the obvious consequences of over-crowding. Some hospitals have to cope with double the number of patients they are equipped for. The result is that even serious cases are at times treated as out-patients. Many hospitals do not have stand

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Funds approved for the National Critical Minerals Mission

16,300 In ₹ crore. The government on Wednesday approved a ₹16,300 crore National Critical Minerals Mission to promote the exploration of critical minerals within the country and at offshore locations. PTI

Number of suicides among school pupils in Japan in 2024

527 Japan saw a record number of suicides among school pupils in 2024, according to health ministry data. The latest data among those in elementary through high school increased to 527 from 513 cases in 2023. The total number of people dying by suicide fell 7.2%. AFP

Cash seized by Delhi Police ahead of the Assembly elections

1.87 In ₹ crore. The Delhi Police have seized more than ₹1.87 crore in cash in three different operations ahead of the Assembly elections. Police said that the railway unit, northwest, and southwest district police have seized the money in separate operations. PTI

The growth in the Spanish economy in 2024

3.2 In per cent. The Spanish economy expanded 3.2% last year thanks to buoyant exports and consumption. Spain has been consistently outstripping a mostly sluggish eurozone. Tourism, which represents around 13% of the economy, has flourished after the COVID-19 crisis. AFP

Number of people killed in the South Sudan plane crash

18 A plane carrying 21 passengers and crew in South Sudan's Unity State has crashed, killing 18 people, United Nations' Radio Miraya reported. The plane had departed from an oilfield in the northern state when it crashed, according to Radio Miraya. REUTERS

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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How can the Budget arrest growth decline?

How did the period from 2004 to 2011 have a consistent high growth rate accompanied by a reduction in absolute poverty? Does the nature of fiscal expenditure also matter when it comes to private consumption? How would an increase in revenue expenditure, particularly in the social sector, help?

EXPLAINER

Dipa Sinha
Rohit Azad

The Indian economy is going through a rough patch as was evident from the recently released provisional estimates of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The underlying growth rate is lower than what was expected and estimated by the government earlier. What is surprising is that, as noted in the last Economic Survey, this slowdown is despite the rising capital expenditure in various budgets under this regime. To understand the current predicament of the government, it may help to take a longue duree of the Indian economy. In particular, we focus on private consumption since that is the ultimate driver of the domestic market.

We divide the post-reform period into three parts – 1991–2004, 2004–2011, and 2011–2023. The period from 2004 to 2011 stands out as the one with sustained high growth rate accompanied by a reduction in absolute poverty. This period also saw some revival in state interventions in welfare through rights-based legislations as well as new national schemes.

In contrast, the most recent period starting from around 2012, but especially since 2019, has seen a slowdown in growth rates with the current concerns in the Indian economy being related to sluggish private consumption as well as private investment. This period also saw some major shocks to the economy including demonetisation, the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and the lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic. Chart 1 shows the rate of growth of GDP and private consumption over these three periods; and we get inverted U-shaped growth curves in both.

What explains the high growth then and the slowdown now?

Something unique happened during the high growth phase of 2004–2011. While income and wealth inequality were rising for over a decade, this is the only phase in the post-reform period when the share of consumption (out of the total private consumption demand) of the richest 20%, after having risen since 1990, fell significantly. This means that the consumption of the bottom 80% was rising at a faster pace than the richest 20%. But how was this possible when the growth of income was the opposite?

We believe that state policy played a key role in this unique composition of consumption demand. It is not just the amount of fiscal expenditure that matters but its nature as well. Those at the lower end of the income spectrum have a higher propensity to consume as compared to the richest. If state spending tilts in favour of the working class, the income and employment multiplier effects of such spending would be much larger.

To understand this point, let us consider a hypothetical scenario where the government has a choice of spending ₹100 on (A) capital expenditure in commissioning a large scale dam/nuclear project or (B) providing it as National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) wages or pension to the elderly. Let us, for simplicity, assume all wages are consumed and all profits saved.

Under choice A, only a part of the ₹100 is received as wages, which increases workers' consumption demand by that amount. This increase in demand, say on food and clothes, generates income for those employed in producing these

Prosperity then, slowdown now

We divide the post-reform period into three parts – 1991–2004, 2004–2011, and 2011–2023. The period from 2004 to 2011 stands out as the one with sustained high growth rate. This period also saw some revival in state interventions in welfare through rights-based legislations as well as new national schemes.

Chart 1: The growth of GDP and consumption since 1991

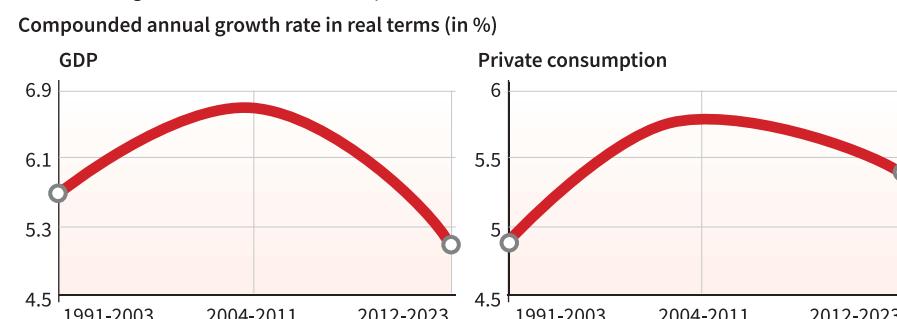


Chart 2: Social sector and development expenditures

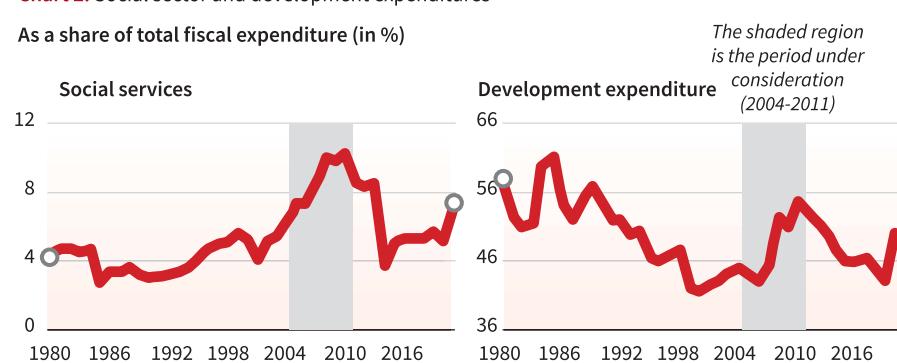


Chart 3: Growth in consumption during 2004–2011

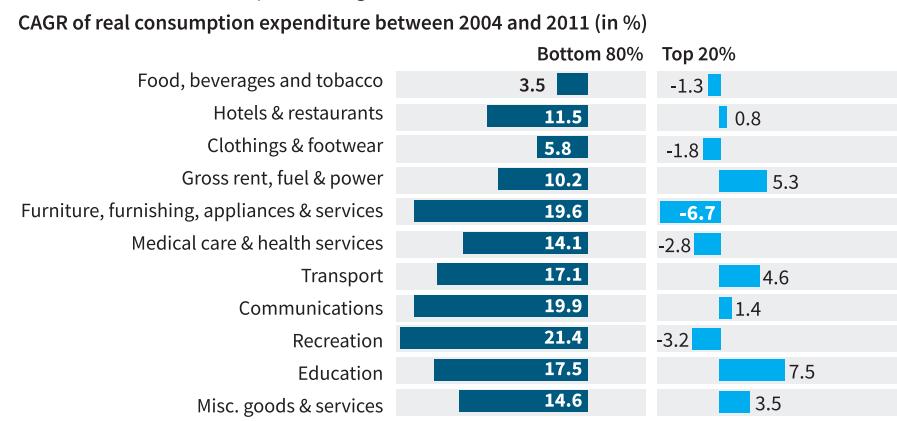
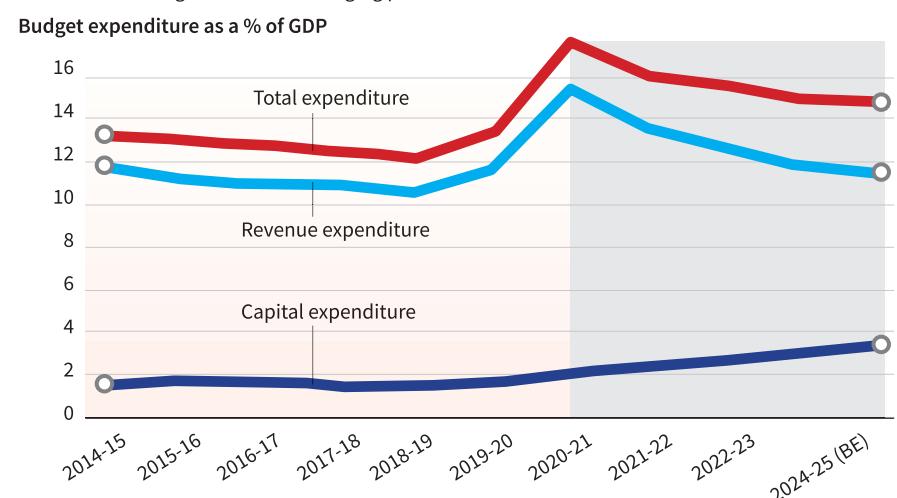


Chart 4: The NDA government's changing priorities



Source: Data from CEIC, Union Budget documents have been used to derive macroeconomic trends, and the India Human Development Survey (IHDS) for household level analysis

commodities and this process, what economists call as multiplier effect, goes on. In contrast, under choice B, the entire ₹100 is received as wages which leads to a larger base on which the income and employment multiplier works.

Additionally, in choice A, there is a likelihood of a greater leakage of demand to the rest of the world in the form of higher imports such as capital expenditure may entail. Heavy machinery required for a dam or a nuclear reactor may have to be imported whereas the import component in choice B will likely be lower. So, the domestic component of choice A's

multiplier might be even lower than what we have described above.

If the state spends as income transfers (whether in cash or kind) a certain amount per worker at the lower end of the income spectrum, this would add to the demand for mass consumption goods. A mere change in the composition of government expenditure in favour of such transfers, therefore, adds an exogenous component to demand. Moreover, the state played an additional role during this period by introducing NREGA and fixing its wages higher than the prevailing market wages. This generated additional

jobs as well as set a floor for rural wages. This rise in rural wages pushed up wages for casual unskilled workers. Investment in agriculture and in rural areas in general also increased during this period contributing to rural incomes.

Chart 2 shows a sharp rise in the share of social services expenditure as well as development expenditures out of the total expenditure of the Union government, which exactly overlaps with the boom of 2004–2011. Developmental expenditure includes expenditure on economic as well as social services and therefore also includes the spending on agriculture and rural development, whereas social sector expenditure only includes the direct social sector spending such as education, health and welfare programmes.

Not surprisingly, this change in the nature of fiscal spending had a significant impact on consumption, across different categories of commodities, for the bottom 80% of the population (see Chart 3). It is this rise in consumption of the bottom 80% (and this trend continues all the way down to the lowest income group as well) in comparison to the top 20% that explains the fall in the latter's share in total consumption.

What has the government done so far to arrest the current slowdown?

While the government has acknowledged the slowdown and the lack of private investment (for example, in the last Economic Survey), its response has been to focus on capital expenditure of the kind mentioned in choice A as discussed above (see Chart 4). This was done even as the share of fiscal expenditure (as a percentage of GDP) was falling. This exclusive focus on capex was done with the expectation that this would crowd-in private investment but unfortunately the corporate sector has not responded either to this or to the tax cuts from 30% to 22% in 2019.

It is not surprising why private investment has not picked up. Under conditions of slowdown or lack of demand, investment responds more to the level of activity than to cost considerations. If the existing factories are not running to capacity, why would the firms invest more even if they are flush with funds (in the form of post-tax profits) or have access to cheap credit? It won't be an exaggeration to argue, therefore, that an increase in capex, especially of a capital-using variety, is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for revival of the economy.

What should be done instead?

An increase in revenue expenditure, particularly in the social sector, would result in a virtuous cycle of higher income for the workers and therefore to a higher income and employment multiplier, which may kickstart private investment as well. Capital expenditure too must be focused on labour-intensive projects that have a higher multiplier. The experience of 2004–2011 is particularly telling in this regard. What is required, therefore, is a two-pronged strategy – (a) fiscal expenditure as a share of GDP has to rise (b) and within that the share of revenue expenditure needs to rise. In other words, a complete reversal in the trend shown in Chart 4.

It remains to be seen on February 1 whether the priority of the government is to placate the markets by keeping such expenses low or to improve the living conditions of the working people of this country to reverse the slowdown.

Dipa Sinha is an independent researcher and Rohit Azad teaches economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University

THE GIST

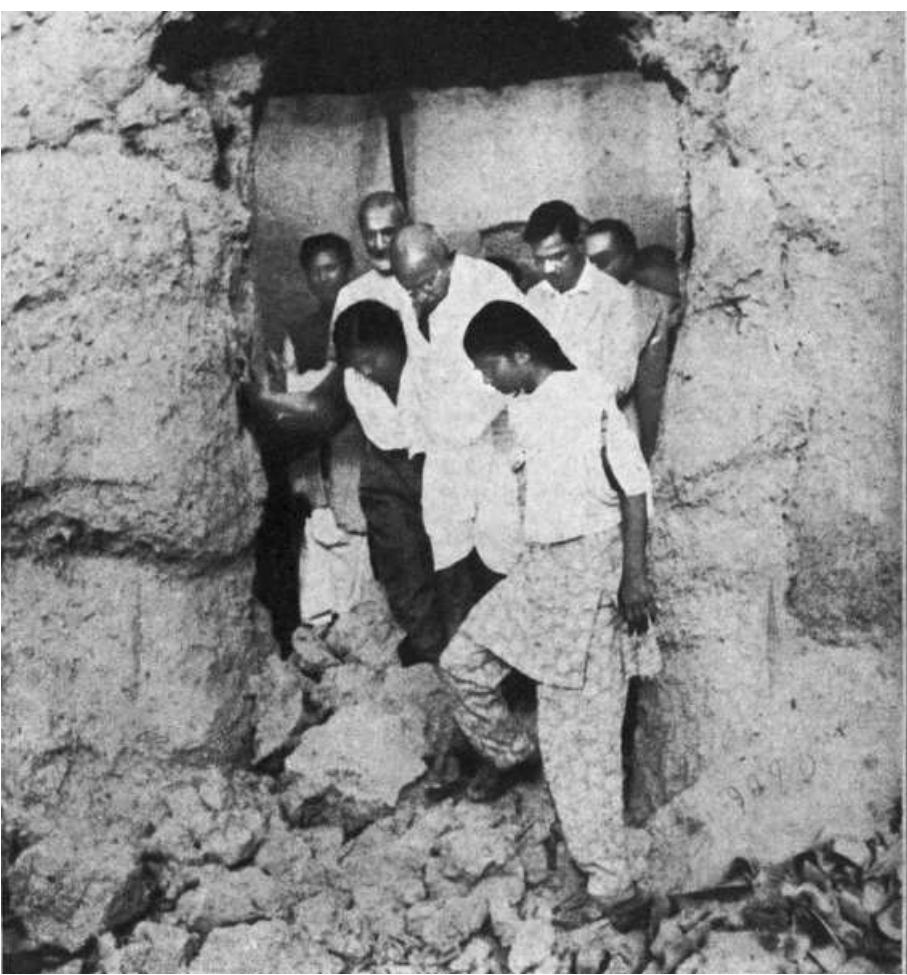
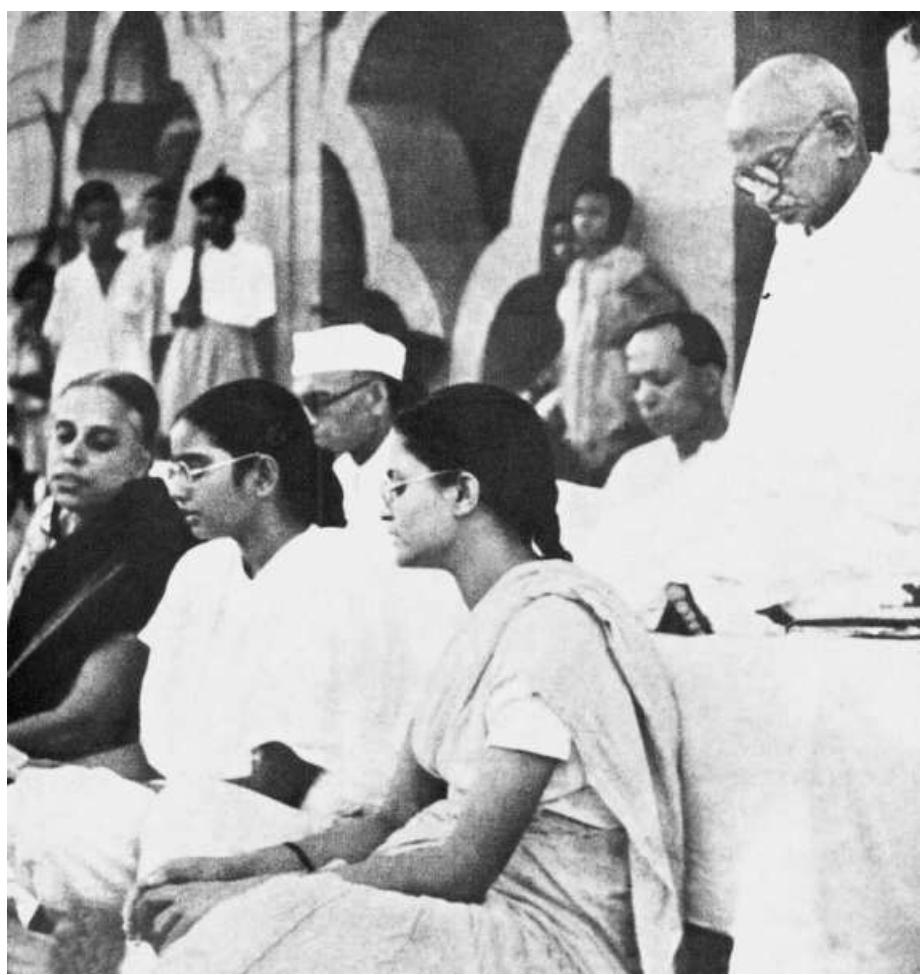
Something unique happened during the high growth phase of 2004–2011. While income and wealth inequality were rising for over a decade, this is the only phase in the post-reform period when the share of consumption of the richest 20%, fell significantly.

Those at the lower end of the income spectrum have a higher propensity to consume as compared to the richest. If state spending tilts in favour of the working class, the income and employment multiplier effects of such spending would be much larger.

An increase in revenue expenditure, particularly in the social sector, would result in a virtuous cycle of higher income for the workers and therefore to a higher income and employment multiplier.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY



The constant bystander: The picture on the left shows Manu Gandhi, Abha, and Mahatma Gandhi at a prayer meet; the one on the right is when Mahatma Gandhi, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mridula Sarabhai and Manu were in Bihar. SABARMATI ASHRAM PRESERVATION AND MEMORIAL TRUST; GANDHI HERITAGE PORTAL

Beloved witness: the extraordinary testimony of Manu Gandhi

Tridip Suhrud has translated the second volume of the diaries of Gandhi's granddaughter, starting on December 19, 1946, and ending the day after the Mahatma's assassination on January 30, 1948. It is a testimony which bears witness to Gandhi's innermost struggles in the last months of his life

Ananya Vajpeyi

The third section of the Mundaka Upanishad is important for our republic, because the phrase "Satyameva Jayate", India's national motto, occurs in verse 6. But in Indian philosophy, especially Vedanta, it is the first verse of this section that is celebrated. It reads: "Two birds, companions and friends, perch on the very same tree. One of them eats the fruit, the other, not eating, looks on." (MuU 3:1:1)

The commentarial tradition from Shankara onwards explicates each word. The two birds (*dva suparna*) are respectively a consumer (*bhogi*) and a witness (*sakshi*). One is engaged in eating, the other in observing the first. These are two conjoined (*sayujya*) aspects of being that share a single tree (*samanam vrksham*), interpreted as the body. One actively partakes of the world, while the other, perched alongside, watches, friendly but not participating.

We should understand Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) and Mridula 'Manu' Gandhi (1927-1969), his granddaughter, as akin to these two philosophically luminous birds (Svetasvatara Upanishad 4:6 is identical). Gandhi acts; Manu bears witness. The second volume of her diaries, starting on December 19, 1946 in Srirampur, and ending the day after Nathuram Godse assassinated the Mahatma at Birla House, New Delhi, has been superbly edited, masterfully introduced and flawlessly translated by Tridip Suhrud.

Moral protagonist
This is the testimony of the second bird, a witness not only to the principal events of

India's history in those years, but also to Gandhi's innermost struggles with his mind and body, his politics and sexuality, his truth and nonviolence. It is an altogether singular work. In our long civilisational quest for self-knowledge, there is no moral protagonist like Gandhi, nor an intimate witness like Manu.

As creatures of fact rather than metaphor, naturally they do not inhabit a single body. But because both are equally subject to the limits of bodily existence, they must be taken as equals. They are not similar at all – one is a man, the other a woman; one is old (almost 80), the other is young (almost 20); one is world-famous, the other unknown outside her family.

And yet, like the inseparable birds of the Upanishadic verse, for the last five years of Gandhi's life from 1943 to 1948, they are joined together in a single experiential space. Manu's diaries give us access to what unfolds in this metaphorical tree where the two birds "nestle" (in Patrick Olivelle's translation), in a way that no one else, not even Gandhi himself, could represent.

On almost any given day that Manu documents, there is a striking simultaneity of the historic and the quotidian. On the one hand, an endless procession of eminences coming and going from wherever Gandhi happens to be staying, all noted with a certain familiarity that is at once startling and understandable: Jawaharlal ji, Sardar Dada, Rajendra Babu, Maulana ji, Khan Sahib, Aruna Behn, Ghanshyamdas ji, Jinah Sahib, Rajkumari Behn, Kripalani ji, Mira Behn, Rajaji, Vijay Lakshmi Behn... besides numerous relatives and ashram associates of Gandhi (and hence of Manu too).

Tumultuous times

Hectic discussions with political leaders, social activists, wealthy businessmen, international press and state officials cover the transfer of populations, the resettlement of refugees, the integration of princely states, widespread communal violence and all manner of other headline events in those tumultuous years of Independence and Partition. Gandhi is terribly unhappy with everything unfolding around him.

Yet true to his character, through all of the tumult engulfing India, he continues to be almost absurdly meticulous about spinning cotton, writing articles for *Harijan*, fasting in protest, adjudicating the minutest of quarrels between members of his inner circle, reading and praying, carrying on a voluminous correspondence, monitoring the food intake of his entourage, and obsessing about his digestion and bowel movements.

Punishing schedule

But in Bapu's close proximity, Manu has her immediate preoccupations, which revolve around his diet and sleep, his health and sickness, washing and darning his clothes, preparing his meals, massaging his head and feet, giving him sponge baths and mud packs, all the while trying to maintain a diary as regularly as possible. She herself is frequently besieged by nosebleeds and fevers, abdominal pains and headaches, and bouts of vomiting and dysentery.

A punishing schedule of relentless travel, gruelling stress, extreme heat and cold, combined with Gandhi's exacting demands that are as much spiritual as physical, clearly take a toll on the young woman. Yet she never expresses concern

for herself – her focus is always and only Gandhi.

Gandhi introduces Manu to many sceptical guests as his "nurse". But then he explains, for example to Lady Mountbatten, visiting him at Bhangi Niwas on July 5, 1947: "I am not only a grandfather to her but also her mother. I wish to cultivate the ideal that even a man can become a mother."

It's difficult to say what caused greater discomfort even to the most loyal Gandhians, and continues to provoke contemporary readers: That he appointed Manu as his chosen witness, or that he appointed himself her mother? To tease out the psychological ramifications of these utterly disjunct relationships, and make sense of his insistence on both roles simultaneously, requires a profound hermeneutics of testimony and of care, outside the scope of this brief review.

On June 21, 1947, Gandhi was on his way back from Haridwar where he and Nehru met hundreds of distressed Partition refugees. Manu records: "We left for Delhi at 5:30... Bapuji, Panditji, and I were in the rear seat... He lay down in the car around 6:15. His feet were in Panditji's lap and head in mine. What a wonderful sight!... This holy picture produced such joy within me!"

On January 31, 1948, in her last entry, she writes: "We reached the cremation ground at 5:00 pm. There was such a multitude of people that even standing near the pyre was difficult. ... I wanted to stay till the pyre burnt. But Sardar brought me home. How would I enter the room bereft of Bapu's presence?"

With the protagonist gone, his beloved witness too, vanishes from view.

Ananya Vajpeyi is a Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian
S. Upendran

"What is the next rule?"

"The rule is: Prefer the short word to the long. H. W. Fowler in *The Dictionary of Modern English Usage* says under "love of the long word": "It need hardly be said that shortness is a merit in words. There are often reasons why shortness is not possible: much less often there are occasions when length, not shortness, is desirable. But it is a general truth that the short words are not only handier to use, but more powerful in effect: extra syllables reduce, not increase, vigour."

This is particularly so in English, where the negative words are short, and the long words are foreign. I open *Paradise Lost* and *The Idylls of the King*, and at each first opening there face me: "Know ye not, then" said Satan, ill'd with scorn; "Know ye not me? Ye knew me once no mate For you, there sitting where ye durst no soar." And in those days she made a little song And call'd her song "The Song of Love and Death." And sang it: sweetly could she make and sing. Fifty-six words, of which fifty-two are monosyllables. Slightly selected passages, indeed, but such as occur on nearly every page: and these are not exercises in one-syllable words for teaching children to read; they are the natural as well as the best ways of saying what was to be said. Nor is it in verse only that good English runs to monosyllables; I open a new religious book, and find at once this passage about the Kingdom of Heaven: *His effort was, not to tell mankind about it, but to show it to them: and He said that those who saw it would be convinced, not by Him, but by it. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*" There for once he spoke in general and abstract terms. Those who are of the truth, those who seek truth for its own sake, will listen to Him and know that what he says is true. Twelve words are not monosyllables: and there is no taint whatever of affected simplicity in the passage. Good English does consist in the main of short words. There are many good reasons, however, against any attempt to avoid a polysyllable if it is the word that will give our meaning best; moreover the occasional polysyllable will have added effect from being set among short words...

"Does this rule apply to the literary use of language?"

"This rule is for those who want to express their views clearly and forcibly. Most people in this country seem to feel that the longer the word, the more impressive it will sound. The sentence "His locomotion is marked by tardiness" is liked by some for its long words. "He walks slowly" is straight forward and clean. As far as possible, we must use short English words rather than words borrowed from French, Italian, Spanish or Portuguese. This is what the fifth and final rule says."

"Before you go any further, please tell me the meaning of 'snarky'."

"'Snarky' means 'irritable', 'short-tempered'. The 'a' in 'snarky' is pronounced like the 'a' in 'part'."

Published in *The Hindu* on December 13, 1994.

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THE DAILY QUIZ

Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by Hindu extremist Nathuram Godse on January 30, 1948. Here is a quiz on infamous assassinations from around the world

Vignesh P. Venkitesh

QUESTION 1

Who fatally shot Martin Luther King Jr., the American civil rights leader who was inspired by Gandhiji's advocacy of non-violence?

QUESTION 2

Whose assassination is considered the immediate cause for the First World War?

QUESTION 3

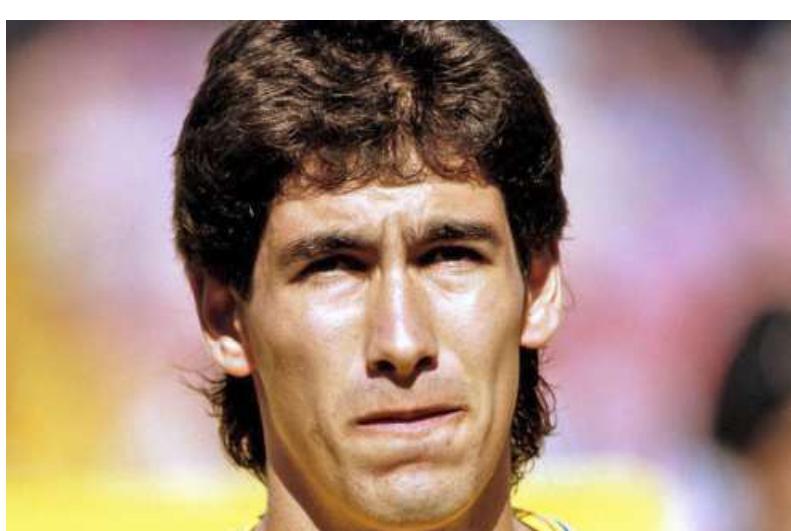
This English musician, part of a legendary music band, was shot dead in New York in 1980. Name the musician and his band.

QUESTION 4

Name the two-time Pakistan Prime Minister who was killed by a suicide bomber in 2007.

QUESTION 5

Name the Mexican revolutionary, nicknamed 'the Robin Hood of Mexico' who was assassinated in 1923.



Visual question:

Name this Colombian footballer and the incident which is considered to have led to his assassination.

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The phrase "axis of evil" was first used by U.S. President George W. Bush to refer to these countries. **Ans: Iran, Iraq and North Korea**

2. This American artist was born on January 29 in 1954. **Ans: Oprah Winfrey**

3. This German mechanical engineer patented the first practical automobile powered by an internal-combustion engine. **Ans: Karl Benz**

4. *The Raven* was written by this poet. **Ans: Edgar Allan Poe**

5. This Indian activist-journalist from Karnataka was murdered outside her home in 2017. She was the editor of this newspaper. **Ans: Gauri Lankesh; Lankesh Patrike**

6. This American journalist and critic died in 1962. **Ans: Mencken**

Visual: Identify this Russian writer. **Ans: Anton Chekhov**

Early Birds: Tamal Biswas| Piyali Tuli| Tito Shiladitya| Rajmohan Velayudhan| Sonali Das

Word of the day

Precocious:

characterised by or characteristic of exceptionally early development or maturity (especially in mental aptitude)

Usage: She was such a precocious child.

Pronunciation:

newsth.live/precociouspro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /prə'keʊʃəs/

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

From Page One**Maha Kumbh: 30 dead, 60 injured in stampede**

The judicial panel will also look into preventive actions for the future.

The Uttar Pradesh government, in a statement, said over 69 million people performed Snan (holy dip) till 6 p.m.

After the stampede, the administration issued an alert in Rae Bareli, Chitrakoot, and neighboring districts of Prayagraj with traffic moving towards the Maha Kumbh partially stopped. The district administration barricaded various places and intersections stopping four-wheeler vehicles going to Prayagraj. Visitors are told that traffic will be restored after the crowd in Prayagraj subsides. The blockade led to thousands of vehicles trapped in massive jams.

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the incident.

Opposition leaders hit out at the BJP government alleging that mismanagement and focus on VIP movement led to the stampede.

Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav called for the Army to be handed over the administration and management of the Maha Kumbh.

The SP president hit out at the Uttar Pradesh government, saying its claims of a "world-class system" had been exposed and those spreading propaganda should take moral responsibility for the people killed.

ISRO's 100th launch lifts NavIC satellite

Nineteen minutes later, it placed the satellite in a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit.

"I am extremely happy to announce from the spaceport of ISRO that the first launch of this year has been successfully accomplished with the GSLV-F15 precisely placing the NVS-02 satellite into the intended orbit. This mission is our 100th launch from here. This is a significant milestone for our space programme," said ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan.

Dr. Narayanan added that over these 100 launches, ISRO has lifted 548 satellites to orbit.

"We have lifted a total of 120 tonnes of payload including 23 tonnes for 433 foreign satellites," he added.

The NVS-02 is the second satellite in the NVS series and part of India's Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC).

The ISRO said NavIC is India's independent regional navigation satellite system designed to provide accurate Position, Velocity, and Timing (PVT) service to users in India and the region extending about 1,500 km beyond the Indian landmass, which is its primary service area.

NavIC provides two types of services: Standard Positioning Service (SPS) and Restricted Service (RS). The former provides a position accuracy of better than 20 metres and a timing accuracy of better than 40 nanoseconds over the primary service area.

Five second-generation NavIC satellites are envisaged to augment the NavIC base layer constellation with enhanced features to ensure continuity of services.

The NavIC system is evolving as the backbone of indigenous satellite navigation ecosystem of the Indian region. The first batch of Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) satellites launched in the previous decades has been successful in establishing the Personal Navigation Device (PND) services in the country. The NVS series is the second generation of these satellites that are progressively being deployed by the GSLV to augment NavIC constellation and further strengthening the PND ecosystem in the nation," Dr. Narayanan said.

On the second indigenous atomic clock, he said that this is a shining example of "Make in India" in critical technology development.

Beating Retreat offers a lilting coda to Republic Day festivities

Samridhi Tewari
NEW DELHI

With the sun setting over the Raisina Hills, the iconic Vijay Chowk reverberated with the melodies played by the military and para-military bands during the Beating Retreat ceremony in the heart of the national capital on Wednesday, marking the culmination of Republic Day celebrations.

Beating Retreat is a centuries-old military tradition wherein troops disengage from battle at sunset and return to the camps.

The bands of the Army, the Navy, the Indian Air Force (IAF), and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) played 30 foot-tapping tunes during the ceremony, which was attended by President Droupadi Murmu, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Union Ministers, se-



Celebratory mode: The President's Bodyguards offer a salute to President Droupadi Murmu at the end of the Beating Retreat ceremony at Vijay Chowk in New Delhi on Wednesday. PTI

nior officials, and the public.

This year, the focus was on 75 years of the enactment of the Constitution and people's participation

PG medical courses cannot have quota based on residence'

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday held that residence-based reservation for admission to postgraduate (PG) medical courses within the State quota ran counter to the very idea of one citizenship for all and the right to equality under the Constitution.

A Bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy, Sudhan-shu Dhulia, and S.V.N. Bhatti said "domicile" or residence-based reservation in PG medical courses was "constitutionally impermissible". However, it said that the judgment would not impact admissions already granted.

"Our common bond as citizens and residents of one country gives us the right not only to choose our residence anywhere in India but also gives us the right to carry on trade and business or a profession anywhere in India. It gives us the right to seek admission in educational institutions across India," Justice Dhulia, who authored the judgment, observed.

The court acknowledged that though residence-based reservation

SC says seats have to be filled strictly on the basis of merit in the all-India examination

was allowed to a reasonable degree for MBBS courses, a long line of judgments had clearly decided in the negative as far as PG courses were concerned.

"Having made the determination that residence-based reservation is impermissible in PG medical courses, the State quota seats, apart from a reasonable number of institution-based reservations, have to be filled strictly on the basis of merit in the all-India examination," it said.

"State governments use the term 'domicile' when what they actually intend to mean is 'permanent residence' or even 'residence'. All Indians have only one domicile, which is the Domicile of India. The concept of regional or provincial domicile is alien to the Indian legal system. Permanent residence or residence has a meaning which is different from that of 'domicile,'" Justice Dhulia observed.

The court acknowledged that though residence-based reservation

Panel clears report on Waqf Bill amid Opposition dissent

This allows the government to introduce the Bill in the upcoming Budget Session; all 11 Opposition members moved dissent notes opposing key provisions, warning that they could spark disputes

Sobhana K. Nair

NEW DELHI

The Joint Committee on Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 adopted its report by a majority vote on Wednesday, clearing the decks for the government to move the Bill during the upcoming Budget Session of Parliament. All 11 Opposition members moved dissent notes on the Bill, claiming that it will open new disputes and endanger Waqf properties.

DMK MPs A. Raja and M.M. Abdullah went to the extent of branding it as the "Waqf Annihilation Bill". The Opposition members also pointed out procedural lapses in the committee's functioning.

Mr. Raja and Mr. Abdullah said that the "Waqf by User" provision has existed since the time of Prophet Muhammed.

AIMIM leader Asaddu-din Owaisi, who filed a 231-page dissent note, said the 1995 Act did not create "Waqf by User" but merely gave it statutory recognition. Weighing in on this,



Parliamentary Committee members on the Waqf Bill interact with committee chairman Jagdambika Pal, on Wednesday. ANI

the Congress's Deputy Leader in the Lok Sabha, Gaurav Gogoi, pointed out that the government's own records showed that 4.02 lakh of the total 8.72 lakh recorded Waqf properties fall under the definition of "Waqf by User". By removing this concept, the Bill leaves no scope for any such Waqfs to exist in India.

Comparisons with analogous statutes governing the management of Hindu, Sikh, and other religious endowments highlight the discriminatory nature of this amendment."

Three Congress MPs, in

a joint dissent note, said that it raises the question of whether other religious endowment acts should also include practitioners of other religions. Such a precedent would open a Pandora's box, requiring similar changes across all religious laws, which is not practical or desirable."

Govt. interference

The Bill gives powers to the District Collector to arbitrate in case there is a dispute that a government property has been declared as Waqf. Trinamool Congress MPs, in their dissent note, said that the issue should be considered as a civil dispute to be adjudicated in the courts.

"The said amendment hits the basic tenants of the property laws. The government is not meant to create its property by taking recourse in an unauthorised manner. When the government acts as a trespasser, such unauthorised acts cannot be legalised by the proposed amendment," Trinamool Congress's Kalyan Banerjee and Nadimul Haq, in their note, said.

How many cases lodged under triple talaq law, SC asks Centre

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered the Centre to collect the total number of criminal cases registered against Muslim men under a law which penalises the declaration of triple or instant talaq.

The utterance of triple talaq was declared "null and void" by a Constitution Bench in a majority judgment in August 2017. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019 came into force with retrospective effect from September 19, 2018. The law held triple talaq to be a non-bailable offence punishable with three years imprisonment.

The court questioned the point of a penal law when the practice of divorce by triple talaq had itself been declared void.

"The relationship as a husband and wife continues... What you have criminalised then is the process?"



Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna asked Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appealing for the Centre.

The Bench, including Justice Sanjay Kumar, directed the Centre to produce on record the number of first information reports (FIRs) registered and chargesheets filed against Muslim men under the 2019 Act. The court said it specifically wanted data on the number of FIRs lodged in rural areas of the country.

Advocate Nizam Pasha, appearing for the petitioners, said the law endeavoured to penalise even a threat of divorce.

Mr. Mehta said "crimi-

This is the minimum required to be done to protect women. The effect of triple talaq was instantaneous, irrevocable

TUSHAR MEHTA
Solicitor-General

nal intimidation" was basically a threat. "Yet it is an offence under Section 506 of the Indian Penal Code... It is not the threat, but the consequences of the threat that really matters," he argued.

Mr. Pasha responded that Section 506 of the IPC did not, however, criminalise an ineffectual threat made by a husband to his wife to divorce her.

The Solicitor-General said the law was brought to counter the abandonment of Muslim women by their husbands. "This is the minimum required to be done to protect women. The effect of triple talaq was instantaneous, irre-

vocable... You say talaq to your wife, and the very next moment, she is not your wife," he said.

But, Mr. Pasha interjected to point out that the practice of triple talaq ceased to have any legal effect since the Supreme Court declared it "manifestly arbitrary" in the *Shayara Bano* case in 2017.

Justice Khanna, after the hearing, orally remarked that not a single advocate present in the courtroom would say triple talaq was a good thing. But he indicated that criminalising a practice after it was declared void would raise doubts. The court fixed the next hearing in the week commencing on March 17.

The petitioners, including Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind, said the Act was both "disproportionate and excessive". Another petition by Samastha Kerala Jemiyathul Ulama claimed the sole objective of the new law was "to punish Muslim husbands".

SFJ inciting Sikhs in Army and police to 'desert', says Centre

Vijaita Singh

NEW DELHI

The Union government informed an Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act tribunal that the Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) run by designated terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun was "inciting Sikh personnel in the Army and police forces to desert" their units.

India had approached the Interpol to trace an international number that was used to send a pre-recorded voice message, with the voice of Pannun, threatening to bomb the Indian Parliament and Red Fort area to promote the Khalistan referendum. The calls were received on the fixed-line phone of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and on the mobile phones of two Communist Party of India (Marxist) MPs - A.A. Rahim and V. Sivadasan in July 2024. Pannun resides in the U.S.

The government informed the tribunal that the SFJ was "inciting the Christian community in Manipur to raise their voices for a separate country". It accused the pro-Khalistan group of inciting the people of Tamil Nadu to raise flags of "Dravidistan" and "stoking Muslim sentiments by raising the bogey of minority persecution".

The UAPA tribunal upheld the ban against the SFJ for another five years in an order dated January 27. The group was first banned in 2019 for five years, which was extended for another five years in July 2024.

At least 122 cases have been registered against the SFJ by various State police forces and the National Investigation Agency since 2018 and 105 people have been arrested.

"SFJ has been trying to provoke on social media, the Sikh Soldiers of Indian Army for mutiny by asking them to leave the Indian Army and join SFJ. Pannun had urged Sikh Soldiers to join the SFJ movement and offered ₹5,000 more than the salary given by Indian Government. He also tried



to provoke the Sikh soldiers posted in Ladakh to not to fight for India against Chinese aggression. Pannun also tried to provoke the Punjab Police officials urging them not to stop farmers going to Jalandhar, Pathankot and Abohar and to stop the Prime Minister for his upcoming rallies," the government's submission to the tribunal read.

The submission also reveals that SFJ activists and sympathisers were involved in at least two incidents of railway sabotage in 2023 in Punjab. On March 14, 2023, the clips of a track at Lehra Mahout village in Bhatinda were removed while four days later, around 50 clamps were removed from the railway track near Pathala Railway Station on the directions of Pannun, "thereby endangering the life of passengers travelling by the train, halting the economic activity as well as causing terror in the minds of the people".

Pannun and his associates also asked "Pro-Khalistani Elements [PKEs] to sabotage railway tracks in Punjab to cause derailment or accident of passenger and goods trains, particularly those ferrying migrant labourers to take revenge of recent killings of PKEs based abroad".

The railway track between Ludhiana and Sirhind was learnt to be the preferred target for the attack, the government said.

The Punjab Police registered a case against the SFJ for issuing death threats to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi in 2023.

J&K Rifles, Delhi Police best marching contingents

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The marching contingent from the Army's J&K Rifles regiment was adjudged the best among the three Services while Delhi Police was adjudged the best marching contingent from among the Central Armed Police Forces and other auxiliary forces at the Republic Day parade.

Among the tableaux, Uttar Pradesh, which showcased the Maha Kumbh, with the theme

"Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas", bagged the first spot.

Tripura's tableau, themed "Eternal Reverence: the Worship of 14 Deities in Tripura - Kharchi Puja", came second, while Andhra Pradesh's "Etikoppaka Bommalu - Eco-friendly Wooden Toys" stood third. The tableau from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, "Janatiya Gaurav Varsh", was declared the best among Central Ministries and departments.

drawn buggy. The tri-service chiefs welcomed Ms. Murmu, Mr. Dhankhar, Mr. Modi, and Mr. Singh.

The ceremony began with the massed band's *Kadam Badhaye Ja* tune. The event came to a close with the ever-popular tune of *Sare Jahan se Achha* played by the Buglers.

as the Republic Day celebrations were a unique blend of India's rich cultural diversity, unity, equality, development, and military prowess.

The Beating Retreat ceremony began with the President, who is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, arriving in a colonial-era horse-

primenewspapers search on telegram

Did not violate any laws: AAP chief to EC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday replied to the Election Commission notice over his claims that the Haryana government was "mixing poison" in the Yamuna, and denied having violated any laws. The EC on Tuesday had asked him to provide evidence to substantiate his allegations following a complaint filed by the BJP.

In his reply, Mr. Kejriwal cited a letter of the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) CEO, which stated that the ammonia levels in the river had exceeded the treatable limit of 1 part per million (ppm). According to him, the DJB CEO's letter highlighted the persistent and alarming increase in ammonia in the water being supplied to Delhi. Earlier, the DJB had refuted the allegations as "factually incorrect" as "ammonia in Yamuna increases" between October and February. Meanwhile, the Haryana government lodged a case against the AAP chief under the Disaster Management Act.

At rally, Modi slams AAP over Yamuna 'poisoning' claims

During a campaign in support of BJP candidates in Delhi, he asks how poison could be mixed in water he drinks, says ruling party and Cong. have not worked for development of national capital

Satvika Mahajan
NEW DELHI

Taking a swipe at the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Congress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday addressed his first rally in support of the Bharatiya Janata Party candidates from Chandni Chowk, Northeast and East Delhi in the Assembly election to be held on February 5.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing an election rally at Kartar Nagar in New Delhi on Wednesday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Attacking the AAP over its comments about the Haryana government "poisoning" the Yamuna, Mr. Modi said: "AAP-da has crossed limits of lying. They are making nasty allegations against Haryana, and the country will not forget this". He used the term AAP-da (a play on the word 'disaster') to mock the ruling party in the national capital.

"Can anyone think of poisoning Modi? Has Haryana BJP mixed poison in

water? What are you saying? It is in the nature of Indians to forgive mistakes but neither Delhi nor India forgives sins committed with ill-intention," he said.

Mr. Modi said: "Three elections have passed, but they have not cleaned the Yamuna. And you know what they say 'Yamuna ji doesn't vote, so we won't clean the Yamuna.' They want our Purvanchali

brethren to pray during Chhath puja in a dirty Yamuna every year."

Mr. Modi said, "In Delhi, first with the Congress for 14 years and now 11 years with AAP, you have seen no development. For the past 25 years, these two have ruined two generations of the capital. Despite such long terms in government, Delhi has not changed, its problems are

the same." "Delhi wants a double engine government," Mr. Modi said.

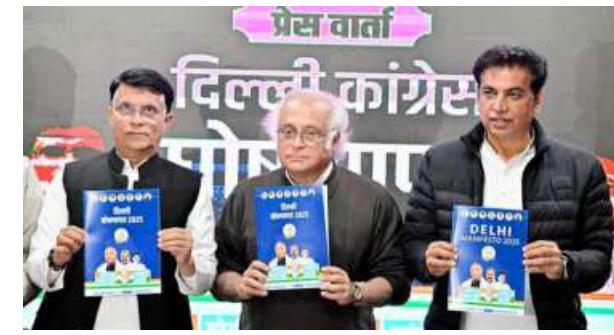
"I have been working for the rest of the country; this time, give me the opportunity to work for Delhi," he added.

Reassuring the people that the BJP would not stop the ongoing welfare schemes in the capital, such as free electricity and water, Mr. Modi said, "We are not the party that shuts down welfare schemes. We are the people who give them a stronger system."

Reacting to the comments, AAP said in a statement: "It is deeply tragic that such a massive disaster occurred at the Maha Kumbh today. We stand with the affected families. But even on a day of such sorrow, Modi was only focused on his election campaign. He came to Delhi not to address the tragedy but to hurl abuses at Mr. Kejriwal and AAP."

Cong. promises stipend for unemployed youth, caste survey ahead of Delhi poll

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Action plan: Congress leaders Pawan Khera, Jairam Ramesh and Devender Yadav launching the manifesto. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

With a focus on the Purvanchali community, women and unemployed youth, the Congress on Wednesday launched its manifesto promising ₹2,500 for women and ₹8,500 for unemployed youth. It also promised to conduct a Delhi caste survey and set up a Ministry for the welfare of Purvanchalis.

As he unveiled the manifesto with 22 segments, Congress MP Jairam Ramesh said, "A guarantee means that it is the right of every citizen and if it is not fulfilled, they can go to court. Nowadays, every party uses the word guarantee. The Congress has given five main guarantees for the Delhi elections."

The five guarantees included ₹2,500 for women in poor households, free healthcare up to ₹25 lakh for all residents, including

free medicines and diagnostics, and a one-year apprenticeship in the private or public sector along with a stipend of ₹8,500 for unemployed youth. It includes cooking gas at ₹500 a cylinder, a free ration kit and 300 units of free electricity.

The National Education Policy, 2020 would be replaced by a 'Delhi Education Policy'. A section in the manifesto for the LGBTQ+ community included promises such as scholarships for transgender persons and accessible wash rooms. It also promised 4% reservation for People with Disabilities.

Speaking about the segment on Purvanchali com-

Poor arrangements, focus on VIPs led to Maha Kumbh tragedy: Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Hitting out at the Centre and Uttar Pradesh government over the stampede at the Maha Kumbh, the Congress on Wednesday alleged that the administration's focus on VIP movements was responsible for the tragedy.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the news of "many people losing their lives" and many

getting injured on the banks of the Tirthraj Sangam was "heartbreaking".

Expressing condolences to families of the deceased and wishing a speedy recovery to the injured, Mr. Kharge, in an X post, said, "Half-baked arrangements, VIP movement, paying more attention to self-promotion, and mismanagement were responsible for this." He urged the Union and State governments to improve the system to

avoid a repeat as many important shahi snans [holy dips] were still left.

"Arrangements for accommodation, food, first aid and movement of devotees etc., should be expanded and VIP movement should be reined in," Mr. Kharge said.

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, too blamed mismanagement, poor arrangements and focus on VIPs for the tragic incident.

Mr. Gandhi, in an X post, said "VIP culture" needs to end immediately and the government should make better arrangements to fulfil the needs of common devotees.

Offering her condolences, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, in a post on her WhatsApp channel, appealed to the government to airlift the injured people and arrange for their treatment.

High-level meet discusses Labour Code rules, issues of gig workers

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Setting the stage for the possible implementation of the four Labour Codes from April 1, a meeting of officials and Ministers of the Union and State Labour Ministries reviewed the progress in drafting of rules under the codes by March 31.

The meeting noted that over 18 States and Union Territories have imple-

mented a majority of the reforms and more than 32 of them have pre-published the draft rules. The remaining have made satisfactory progress and all 36 are expected to complete pre-publication of harmonised draft rules in line with the Labour Codes by March 31.

The two-day meeting, chaired by Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, discussed labour reforms and issues of gig and

platform workers. Dr. Mandaviya said a fine balance between workers' welfare and industrial growth must remain at the core of all policy decisions.

The Minister also launched the State and Union Territory microsites under the e-Shram initiative and the Occupational Shortage Index (OSI).

The OSI will match labour market demand and supply, enhancing employment outcomes across the country.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION ORGANIZATION, ERNAKULAM JN
TENDER NOTICE NO: 01-CE-CN-ERS-2025-EPC DATE 25.01.2025
Name of work: THIRISUR-Redevelopment of station on EPC mode.
Tender Value: ₹ 3394.60 Lakhs
Bid Security: ₹ 1,69,73,00/-
Completion Period : 40 Months
Date and time-of tender closing: 06/03/2025.
Complete details and tender document will be available at <https://www.reps.gov.in>
Chief Engineer/Construction Ernakulam Jn

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY-734142,
ODISHA (INDIA)
MEDICAL DEPARTMENT
FILE NO.: CMG-STORE/130/2025/5 DATE: 24.01.2025
E-TENDER CALL NOTICE
E-tenders are invited on behalf of Paradip Port Authority for the work "Supply, Install, operate and maintain the equipment along with supply of professional manpower for Trauma and Burn Care Unit in PPA Hospital for a period of 5 years extendable by another 2 years". The estimated cost put to tender is ₹24,60,00,000.00 (Rupees twenty four crore sixty lakh) only. The last date & time of submission of bid is 13.02.2025 on 17.15 hrs. For details, please refer website <http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>.
Sd/- Dr. Dy. Chief Medical Officer, Paradip Port Authority
PPA/PR/59/2024-2025 dttd.28.01.2025

NATIONAL AYURVEDA RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR PANCHAKARMA
(Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences), Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India
P.O. CHERUTHURUTHY, THIRISUR DIST, KERALA-679 531
आंतरालाइन साक्षात्कार/Online Interview
फा. मे. 2/1/2024/NARIP/Esst. Date: 28.1.2025
संस्थान, आंतरालाइन साक्षात्कार के माध्यम से अनुबंध आधार पर वरिष्ठ अनुसंधान अङ्गठी (जैव-साक्षात्कार) की नियुक्ति करना चाहता है। आवेदन की अंतिम तिथि 08.02.2025 (मास 4.30 बजे) है। अधिक विवरण के लिए परिपेक्ष की वेबाइट www.ccras.nic.in का भ्रमण कर सकते हैं।
The Institute proposes to engage the services of one Senior Research Fellow (Bio-Chemistry) on contractual basis through online interview. The last date for submission of application is 08.02.2025 (4.30 PM). For details visit Council's Website www.ccras.nic.in डॉ. संजीव कुमार
सहायक निदेशक प्रभारी

भारत सरकार - अंतरिक्ष विभाग / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA - DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
श्रीहरिकोटा / नेल्लूर (जिला), आ.प्र. / SRIHARIKOTA - 524124
संक्षिप्त ई-निविदा सूचना / Brief E-TENDER NOTICE
ई-निविदा सूचना सं./e-Tender Notice No: CMG/C/CON/248736 Date: 29.01.2025
भारत के राष्ट्रीयता की ओर से, "(प्रेषित जू. 2) ई-पीसी मोड-III के एसप्रैसलरी प्रमोन्ट परिसर (एसप्रैसलरी), रिस्वेंद्रू तथा सतन्द्रकुमार तातुक, शुथ्युक्ती जिला, तमिलनाडु में सड़क (वेस कार्स), आरपीसी बॉक्स पुलिया का निमाण तथा अन्य संबद्ध सिविल कार्यों। (₹1183.00 लाख) के लिए ई-निविदा के माध्यम से मद दर निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा दर्तावाद 19/02/2025 को 14:30 बजे तक डाउनलोड किए जा सकते हैं। रिस्लूट सूचना हेतु इच्छुक निविदाकार हमारी वेबसाइट www.isro.gov.in या www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO देखें।
On behalf of President of India, online EPC tenders are invited through e-tendering for "(Package 2): Construction of Roads (Base Course), RCC box culverts, and other allied civil works at SSLV Launch complex (SLC), Tiruchendur & Sathanikulam Taluk, Tuticorin District, Tamilnadu in EPC Mode-III" (₹1183.00 Lakhs); Tender documents can be downloaded up to 19/02/2025, 14:30 hrs. Interested tenderers may visit www.isro.gov.in or www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO for details.

CSIR-INDIAN INSTITUTE OF CHEMICAL TECHNOLOGY iict
Uppal Road, Tarnaka, Hyderabad – 500 007,
Telangana State, India,
<https://www.iict.res.in>

Advertisement No. 02/2025 Dated: 30.01.2025
Date of Commencement of : 31.01.2025 at 09.00 AM onwards
Online Application
Last date for receipt/submission of : 03.03.2025 at 11.59 PM
Online Application

CSIR-INDIAN INSTITUTE OF CHEMICAL TECHNOLOGY
(Council of Scientific & Industrial Research)
Hyderabad - 500007.
WALK-IN-INTERVIEW NOTIFICATION NO. 01/2025
CSIR-IICT, Hyderabad is conducting Walk-in-Interviews on 10th February, 2025 for the positions of Project Staff having qualifications of M.Sc. in (Chemistry / Life Sciences / Biotechnology) / B. Tech in Chemical Engineering / M. Pharm / 10th plus ITI in Refrigeration & AC Trade etc.
For full details visit our website www.iictindia.org Sd/-
Controller of Administration

KMML
The Kerala Minerals & Metals Ltd
(A. Govt. of Kerala Undertaking) Sankaramangalam, Kollam-691583
Phone : +91-47-2651215 to 217, E-mail : md@kmml.com, URL: www.kmml.com
TENDER NOTICE
For more details, please visit E-Tendering Portal <https://tenders.kerala.gov.in> or www.kmml.com
No. E-Tender ID
1. 2025_KMML_726048 For the supply of Class 1 Brick Acid Resistant for Digester
2. 2025_KMML_728107 For the supply of Baggage Scanner
3. 2025_KMML_731189 For the Supply of Quick Opening Door for Rotary Digester-4 Nos
4. 2025_KMML_731409 For Supply of Integrated Condensate Recovery System
5. 2025_KMML_731409 For the supply of Gear Box for Digester with Fabricated casing-I No Chavara. 29.01.2025 Sd/ Managing Director for The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd

Dept.of Water Resources, Government of Odisha
"e" Procurement Notice No. ACEDC-CTC-07 / 2024-25

- Name of the Works : Total 01 (one) no. of Drainage work.
- Estimated cost : Rs. 827.96 lakh
- Period of Completion : 18 (Eighteen) months
- Date and time of availability of bid document in the portal : From 11.30 hours of Dt.01.02.2025 to 18.00 hours of Dt.15.02.2025
- Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal : 18.00 hours of Dt.15.02.2025
- Name and address of the Officer inviting Bid : Additional Chief Engineer, Drainage Circle, Ghandarpur, Cuttack - 753003.
e-mail id : sedrainagecircle@gmail.com

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal of Odisha Government <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. All information, notices, addendum, corrigendum, cancellation notice etc. if required, will be published in this portal.

Additional Chief Engineer, Drainage Circle, Cuttack
OIPR-32174/11/0014/2425
A:-

Sd/- Controller of Administration

Early Childhood Development in Meghalaya Project, (ECDMP)
Address : 1st Floor, MIIT Campus, Brookdene, Jowai Road Dhanketi Shillong, Meghalaya – 793001, Email : mecdms2022@gmail.com

Invitation for Bid Nos : MECDM/ADB(PROC) Eggs/PKG47/224/2023-24/1900
MECDM/ADB(PROC) Eggs/PKG48/225/2023-24/1901
MECDM/ADB(PROC) Eggs/PKG49/226/2023-24/1902

Date	24-01-2025
Loan No. & Title	4335:IND Early Childhood Development in Meghalaya Project, (ECDMP)
Package Title and Number	1. PKG 047 : Procurement of Eggs for Garo Hills Region 2. PKG 048 : Procurement of Eggs in Khasi/Jaintia/Ri-Bhoi Hills Region 1 st Package 3. PKG 049 : Procurement of Eggs in Khasi/Jaintia/Ri-Bhoi Hills Region 2 nd Package
Pre-Bid Date for all the 3 packages	19-02-2025 at 03:00 P.M. in the office of the purchaser
Deadline, address of Purchaser and Place of Submission	1. PKG 047 : 04-03-2025 at 02:00 P.M. 2. PKG 048 : 05-03-2025 at 02:00 P.M. 3. PKG 049 : 06-03-2025 at 02:00 P.M. Meghalaya Early Childhood Development Mission, 1 st Floor, MIT Campus, Brookdene, Jowai Road Dhanketi, Shillong, Meghalaya – 793001 Email : mecdms2022@gmail.com
1. The Government of India (GoI) (hereinafter called the "Borrower") has received financing from the Asian Development Bank (hereinafter called the "Bank") in the form of a "loan" towards the cost of "Early Childhood Development in Meghalaya (ECDM) Project" (hereinafter called the "Project"), and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this financing to payments under the contract named above. Bidding is open to Bidders from eligible source countries of ADB. 2. The Early Childhood Development in Meghalaya Project (ECDMP), a Government of Meghalaya undertaking, represented by its Chief Executive Officer, invites sealed bids from eligible suppliers for Procurement of Eggs for the above mentioned 3 Packages. 3. Open Competitive Bidding shall be conducted by following IS2E (single stage two envelope) bidding procedure of ADB, as defined in the tender document. Bidding is open to all suppliers and other interested eligible bidders. 4. To obtain further information and details, interested bidders may download the tender document from the project website <	

primenewspapers search on telegram

IN BRIEF



Centre asks airlines to curb airfare hike for Kumbh Mela

Following concern over "spiralling" airfares for flights to Prayagraj during the ongoing Maha Kumbh festival, the Centre on Wednesday advised airlines to ensure "reasonable" ticket prices for devotees. IndiGo said it had slashed airfares by 30% to 50% on all routes to and from Prayagraj. Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu held a meeting with airline representatives "to review adequacy of air connectivity to Prayagraj from across the country while maintaining reasonable fares during the once in 144 years Maha Kumbh Mahotsav," the Ministry posted on X.

R.G. Kar case: regularise absence of medics who protested, says SC

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed hospitals, including Delhi's All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), to regularise the absence of doctors who protested against the rape and murder of a doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. The order was passed by a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna in pursuance of an earlier order of the apex court on August 22, 2024, directing authorities not to take any coercive action against protesting doctors who return to duty. "We deem it appropriate to clarify that the period of absence in case the protesting doctors have joined after the order dated August 22, 2024 will be regularised," the Bench cleared the air.

Lack of a protective law exposes domestic workers to abuse, says SC



Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

Anguished by the years of abuse an impoverished tribal woman from Chhattisgarh suffered as a domestic worker in the national capital and neighbouring cities, the Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Union government to work on bringing a law to protect this burgeoning but unorganised workforce from exploitation.

"The simple reason for this harassment and rampant abuse, which seems to be prevalent throughout the country, is the legal vacuum which exists vis-a-vis the rights and protection of domestic workers... As a result, they frequently endure low wages, unsafe environments, and extended hours without effective recourse," the court observed in a judgment.

A Bench of Justices Su-

rya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan ordered the Centre to form an inter-ministerial committee to "consider the desirability of recommending a legal framework for the benefit, protection and regulation of the rights of domestic workers".

The committee must comprise experts from the Ministries of Labour, Women and Child Develop-

ment, Law and Justice and Social Justice and Empowerment. The report of the committee must be placed before the Union government in six months, after which the Centre would decide on the necessity of a law for domestic workers, who were mainly women.

Justice Kant, who wrote the judgment, said the lack of a Central law was indeed a vacuum.

State laws

The court drew attention to States such as Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Kerala which had not waited for a Central law but took the initiative to enact their laws to safeguard domestic workers. These three States had constituted specialised bodies under their respective laws to administer various social security benefits, maternity and childcare, education assis-

tance, and medical expense reimbursement, etc.

The court noted that multiple attempts were made in the past to bring a Central law to protect domestic workers, from the Domestic Workers (Conditions of Employment) Bill of 1959 to the Domestic Workers (Regulation of Work and Social Security) Bill of 2017. None of these proposed laws were enacted.

Justice Kant said the demand for domestic workers was mounting in India in consonance with rapid urbanisation. However, this indispensable workforce remained the most vulnerable to abuse. Noting that, "Domestic workers often belong to marginalised communities, such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and Economically Weaker Sections."

Nearly a year after the Centre launched the ₹75,000-crore PM Surya Ghar scheme, 8.5 lakh households have installed rooftop solar connections, Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy Pralhad Joshi said at a public event on Wednesday. First announced following the inauguration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last January, the scheme was officially launched on February 15, 2024.

The scheme, on the whole, targets one crore household installations across India. Mr. Joshi said that this target is likely to be met "within the next two or three years".

Last month, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Energy remarked about the "slow pace" of



Keeping it affordable: The PM Surya Ghar scheme was officially launched on February 15, 2024. ISTOCKPHOTO

installations. Only five lakh installations, of a total 20 lakh applications made on the Surya Ghar portal, had been completed as of October last year, the committee noted. The Secretary of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy told the committee that there were "rain-related delays" but the Centre was on track to ensure that 12 lakh households were covered in the financial year

2024-25. With time, the pace of installations would accelerate, the official said. He explained that from 3,000 in a day, the number of daily installations had risen to 9,000.

Subsidy given

The scheme subsidises 60% of the solar unit cost for systems up to 2 kW capacity and 40% of additional system costs for systems between 2 kW and 3 kW capacity. The subsidy has been capped at 3 kW capacity.

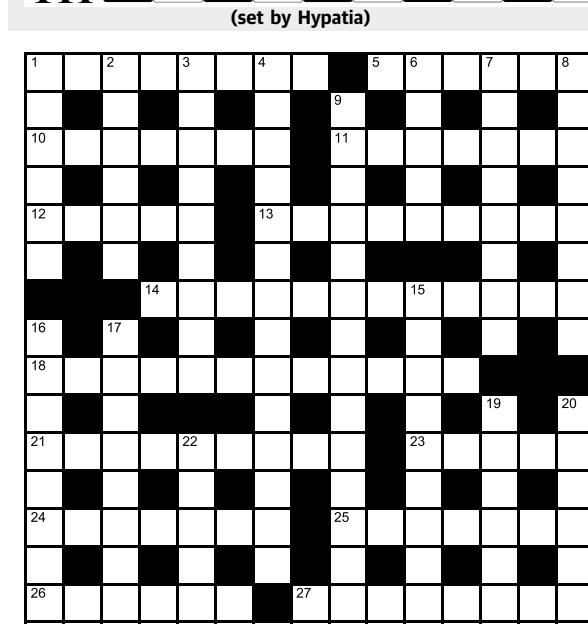
At current benchmark prices, this means a ₹30,000 subsidy for a 1-kW system, ₹60,000 for 2-kW systems, and ₹78,000 for 3-kW systems or higher.

Speaking at the India Energy Transition Conference, organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the Union Minister said India is set to add 50 GW of new renewable capacity annually in the coming years. In the past 10 years, India's installed renewable capacity has risen by 200%, from 75.52 GW in 2014 to 220 GW today. The tariff for grid-connected solar power plants has decreased by 80%, from ₹10.95 per unit in 2010-11 to just ₹2.15 per unit, making India a leader in affordable renewable energy, he added.

ACROSS

- 1 Pouch always contained English tea (8)
- 5 Was read by alternately taking tips from Indic language (6)
- 10 Cordial at a fair ground (7)
- 11 Country song inspiring universal saint (7)
- 12 Better charger? (5)
- 13 Reverend's hair colours clothing accessories (5-4)

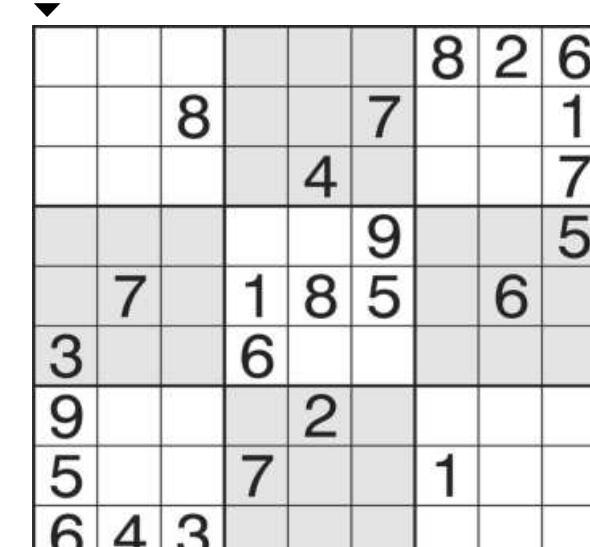
TH CROSSWORD + 14395



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



SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

No SS6415 Distribution: www.knightfeathers.com

Solution to previous puzzle

S	E	A	S	C	A	P	E	H	E	R	M	E	S
A	C	O	R	S	M	A	L	V	I	C	O	M	T
V	I	C	O	M	T	E	P	I	S	T	E	L	I
A	O	P	S	R	T	E	F	I	E	T	E	G	S
G	E	S	S	O	E	A	V	E	S	D	R	O	P
E	T	S	N	I	I	I	I	D	U	T	C	O	R
3	6	7	1	8	5	6	9	2	3	7	4	5	8
9	5	4	3	2	1	6	8	7	9	5	6	3	2
5	7	6	8	9	4	3	1	2	5	4	7	6	9
6	4	3	5	1	2	7	6	8	3	9	5	2	1

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Actions have consequences

People undertake various activities to derive comfort. The activities may differ, but the objective remains the same. Why do not all get the expected comfort or benefit? The reason is the effect of karma. An oft-repeated, unjustifiable and adamant argument is that when everything is pre-decided by destiny, can a person remain without performing anything to derive comfort or pleasure? We cannot be without making efforts that arise automatically in our minds out of the influence of the same karma.

Specific unwanted, unexpected, and unpleasant happenings may occur in a man's life, such as contracting a disease, incurring loss, or having an accident. No one relishes these, but they become inevitable. Scriptures say they may be the outcome of some harmful deeds committed before.

Sri Muralidhara Swamigal said in a discourse that Saint Ramalinga Adigal (Vallalar) had listed some of the ill deeds for our sake and awareness. They are: whether he made the minds of good people shiver and tremble; whether he prevented people from giving to charity or donating; whether he was treacherous with his friends; whether he made the stomach of poor people burn; whether underpaid labourers for their work; whether indulged in backbiting and disturbed any family; whether betrayed any person; whether failed to revere Guru out of disobedience; whether caged birds; whether disrespected and transgressed the words of father or mother; whether degraded the godly and pious men; or whether made inane slanders on God out of sheer ignorance and infatuation. He says he did not know what sin he had committed.

IN BRIEF

**Indian Bank's Q3 net profit rises 35% to ₹2,852 crore**

Indian Bank reported a 35% rise in net profit for the third quarter (Q3) ended December 31, 2024, to ₹2,852 crore, compared with ₹2,119 crore in the year-earlier period. Net interest income rose 10% year on year to ₹6,415 crore, the bank said in a filing. During the quarter, the bank made provisions of ₹1,059 crore, of which ₹611.23 crore was towards non-performing assets (NPAs). In Q3 last year, provisions were ₹1,349 crore with NPAs accounting for ₹906 crore of the provisioning.

Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Q3 PAT grows 6% to ₹300 crore

Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd. (TMB) reported a 6% rise in Q3 net profit to ₹300 crore from ₹284 crore in the year-ago period. Net interest income grew 6.15% to ₹570 crore year on year (YoY). Gross NPAs decreased to 1.32% from 1.69%, improving by 37 basis points (bps), while net NPAs decreased to 0.41% from 0.98%, improving 57 bps. One bp equals 0.01%. The bank's Provision Coverage Ratio (PCR) increased to 69.07% from 41.93%. Advances by the bank during the quarter grew 13.71% to ₹43,650 crore.

Brookfield commits to invest \$12 billion in Mumbai infra

Brookfield Corporation, a Toronto-based investment firm, committed to invest \$12 billion or nearly ₹1.03 lakh crore in Mumbai's infrastructure development at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority said on Wednesday. The commitment will involve investments in Mumbai's road, bridge metro, data centres, global capability centres among others for a duration of about five to seven years.

Cabinet okays ₹16,300 crore mission to secure critical minerals

Reuters
NEW DELHI

India has approved a ₹16,300 crore (\$1.88 billion) plan to develop its critical minerals sector, the Information Minister said on Wednesday, as the world's fastest-growing major economy aspires to secure raw materials such as lithium.

The government also said it expects additional investment of ₹18,000 crore from the public sector in critical minerals.

"The mission will intensify the exploration of critical minerals within the country and in its offshore areas... Additionally, the mission will offer financial incentives for critical mineral exploration," the government said in a statement on Wednesday.

The funding illustrates India's efforts to reduce its reliance on imports of minerals such as lithium, key to energy transition technologies. India is still in the process of developing lithium processing technology, a sector predominantly led by China. India has contacted many countries, including Australia, Russia and the U.S. for technical help to develop lithium processing technology.

India is looking to expand its investments in Argentina's mining, gas and oil sectors, with a focus on lithium, to secure resources needed for its energy transition, Mines Secretary V.L. Kantha Rao told Reuters on a visit to Buenos Aires for the first in-person official meet since the two nations signed a preliminary bilateral pact in 2022 on critical minerals supply.

ITC Hotels debuts on bourses, unveils plan to ramp up to over 200 hotels in 5 years

N. Ravi Kumar
HYDERABAD



ITC Hotels, the new entity formed consequent to the demerger of ITC's hospitality business, got listed on the stock exchanges on Wednesday, and with it, also announced plans to expand its portfolio to over 200 hotels in five years.

The expansion, as part of an asset right strategy, will have it expand its footprint across India and in proximal markets.

From the more than 140 properties with 13,000 keys across 90 plus locations it operates now, the plan is to expand the portfolio to more than 200 hotels with 18,000 keys in next five years, with approximately two-third salience of managed properties, the new pure play hospitality player said.

As many as 30 hotels were launched since 2023 and the robust target is to add at least one hotel a month on an average over the next 24 months, it said.

ITC Ltd. to retain 40% The well-diversified ITC Ltd. will retain a 40% stake in ITC Hotels, with the remaining 60% distributed among existing shareholders of the parent firm.

The new entity, while accelerating its independent growth trajectory, will also continue to leverage ITC Ltd.'s institutional strengths, globally acclaimed sustainability credentials, high-quality talent pool, digital capabilities, robust governance and sourcing of quality products.

ITC Hotels said it had

debuted with zero-debt balance sheet and a cash/cash equivalents of ₹1,500 crore to cater to planned growth and contingency requirements.

The debut on the bourses was rather tepid with the stock listing at ₹188 on the BSE and ending the day 5% lower at ₹178.60 each. On the NSE, the shares opened at ₹180 and closed 3.53% lower at ₹173.65 apiece.

"Listing of ITC Hotels marks not just a new chapter for the ITC Group's hospitality business but a bold step forward in our commitment to creating enduring value for all stakeholders. ITC Hotels is committed to achieving new global benchmarks in hospitality while staying rooted in its vision of sustainability and inclusivity... future promises exciting opportunities to expand, innovate and redefine luxury experiences," Chairman Sanjiv Puri said in a statement.

"ITC Hotels is ready to take bold strides as an independent, agile and pure play hospitality entity. We aim to be a global leader in Indian hospitality," the firm's managing director Anil Chadha said.

Fairfax India secures investor nod to raise stake in BIAL to 74%

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU

Fairfax India Holdings Corporation said its shareholders have approved a one-time deviation from its investment concentration restriction, allowing the acquisition of an additional 10% equity interest in Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), which is the operator of the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in Bengaluru, the third busiest in India.

The company had held a special meeting of shareholders on January 28 in this connection.

In December, Fairfax had entered into an agreement to acquire an additional 10% equity interest in BIAL from Siemens Project Ventures GmbH. On December 3, the company announced, once the transaction is completed, Fairfax India's equity interest in BIAL would increase from 64% to 74% (30.4% to be held by a wholly-owned subsidiary and 43.6% by its subsidiary Anchorage Infrastructure Investments Holdings Limited).

"At the special meeting, the special resolution was approved by 100% of the votes cast by holders of multiple voting shares, and approximately 99% of the votes cast by holders of subordinate voting shares," Fairfax India informed on Wednesday.

The equity interest in BIAL owned by Indian state promoters – the Airports Authority of India and Karnataka State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. stays unchanged at 13% each, the firm said.

Maruti Suzuki keeps the engine running with Q3 rise

Sales income grew 15.5% to ₹36,802 crore during October-December 2024 even as the automaker incurred higher sales promotion expenses possibly to beat a downturn in demand

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

India's biggest passenger car firm Maruti Suzuki India Ltd. (MSIL) reported a 12.6% rise in net profit at ₹3,525 crore for Q3 2024-25.

During the quarter, the automaker incurred higher sales promotion expenses, possibly to beat the downturn in demand in Q2. The firm, however, did not disclose how much it spent on this aspect though. Sales income rose 15.5% to ₹36,802 crore. Maruti sold 5,66,213 vehicles against



On fast lane: Maruti Suzuki India sold 5,66,213 vehicles in the third quarter, reflecting a 13% uptick from Q3 last year. REUTERS

5,01,207 sold in the same period last year, up 13%.

Domestic market sales were up 18.7% at 466,993

27,855 units, while the compact segment dipped 4.6% to 1,82,227 units and the mid-size segment grew 17.6% to 1,720 units.

The utility vehicles (UV) segment, however, grew 20.2% to 1,85,298 units, and the van segment rose 2.1% to 33,920 units. Light commercial vehicles grew 9.3% to 8,871 units. Sales to other OEMs grew 89% to 27,102 units.

The MSIL board also approved a scheme of amalgamation of Suzuki Motor Gujarat Private Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary, with Maruti Suzuki India.

Q3: I-T refund lifts Ambuja Cement PAT to ₹2,620 cr.

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Adani Group firm Ambuja Cements Ltd.'s Q3 consolidated net profit more than doubled year-on-year to ₹2,620 crore. The higher profit came on reversal of income tax provisions of earlier years worth ₹829 crore against which a refund has been received.

Revenue from operations grew 4.5% to ₹8,415 crore compared with ₹8,052 crore in the same period last year.

Tata Motors' net slides 22% to ₹5,578 cr. on subdued demand

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

With domestic demand not picking up as expected and Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) facing headwinds in China, Tata Motors Ltd.'s third quarter consolidated net profit declined 22% to ₹5,578 crore from ₹7,145 crore a year earlier.

Consolidated revenue from operations increased 3% to ₹1,12,833 crore year on year. The company reported a 69% drop in standalone net profit to ₹1,404 crore and 9% drop in revenues to ₹16,897 crore.

Commercial vehicle (CV) revenues declined on account of lower volumes and mix. However EBITDA margins improved to 12.4% from 11.1%, primarily reflecting material cost saving and the impact of production-linked incentive.

Passenger vehicle (PV) revenues were down 4.3%, however EBITDA margin was up by 120 bps at 7.8% due to cost controls and the PLI incentive.

The company said it has received sanction of the automotive production-linked incentive (PLI) in December 2024 and accordingly, an income of ₹351 crore had been recognised during the quarter.

"The fundamentals of the business are strong and therefore despite external challenges, we are confident of delivering another strong performance this year," group chief financial officer P.B. Balaji said on an earnings call.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	WEDNESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	76,533	0.83
US Dollar	86.55	0.02
Gold	83,750	1.09
Brent oil	77.08	-0.01

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2318.60	32.55
Adani Ports	1096.95	16.25
Apollo Hosp.	6784.30	75.35
Asian Paints	2223.15	-18.65
Axis Bank	983.40	-0.40
Bajaj Auto	8625.85	227.45
Bajaj Finserv	1790.45	21.45
Bajaj Finance	7759.65	153.05
Bharat Elec.	267.20	8.95
Bharti Airtel	1600.45	-17.90
BPCL	257.00	-1.05
Britannia Ind.	5037.05	-23.70
Cipla	1423.95	3.35
Coal India	379.45	8.80
Dr Reddy's Lab.	1181.20	-0.05
Eicher Motors	5182.90	77.50
Grafix Ind.	2453.65	42.35
HCL Tech	1719.00	25.75
HDFC Bank	1677.30	6.90
HDFC Life	628.35	16.80
Hero MotoCorp	4072.45	46.10
Hindalco	584.10	10.25
Hind Unilever	2383.95	-4.90
ICICI Bank	1251.65	4.75
IndusInd Bank	948.30	14.15
Infosys	1881.25	51.50
ITC	433.35	-2.10
ITC Hotels Ltd	171.85	88.15
JSW Steel	937.60	21.45
Kotak Bank	1920.35	32.60
L&T	3449.70	35.80
M&M	2924.35	53.75
Maruti Suzuki	11977.90	-145.85
NestleIndia	2180.70	24.40
NTPC	321.25	3.00
ONGC	251.40	2.72
PowerGrid Corp	287.85	3.90
Reliance Ind.	1235.50	-1.10
SBI	1460.90	41.40
State Bank	758.45	6.05
Shriram Finance	553.50	23.40
Ltd.	553.50	23.40
Sun Pharma	1735.35	29.85
Tata ConsumerProd-	960.50	-0.75
uct	752.50	24.25
Tata Steel	130.80	2.18
TCS	4099.80	59.50
Tech Mahindra	1681.15	32.80
Titan	3370.75	44.85
Trent Ltd.	5597.15	142.05
UltraTech Cement	11544.85	246.50
Wipro	312.45	8.85

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on January 29

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	86.34	86.66
Euro	89.81	90.14
British Pound	107.22	107.62
Japanese Yen (100)	55.53	55.75
Chinese Yuan	11.91	11.97
Swiss Franc	95.23	95.59
Singapore Dollar</td		

KYIV

Mother, toddler killed as Ukraine drones strike Russian oil refinery



A Ukrainian drone attack killed a mother and her toddler in western Russia on Wednesday, in a major overnight barrage that set an oil refinery ablaze and targeted a nuclear facility. Ukraine said one of its strikes had hit an oil refinery in the town of Kstovo around 800 km from the front lines in eastern Ukraine. AFP

RAMALLAH

Israeli forces kill two persons in raids in occupied West Bank



Palestinian officials said Israeli forces killed two persons in separate overnight raids in the occupied West Bank, including one in Jenin, where the Israeli military is conducting a major offensive. The Israeli military has launched an intense assault on the Jenin area, now in its eighth day, to root out Palestinian militant groups. AFP

LAGOS

Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger officially leave West Africa bloc



Junta-led countries Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso officially left West Africa's main political and trade group ECOWAS on Wednesday after more than a year of diplomatic tensions. The rupture was sparked by the July 2023 coup in Niger, after military leaders in Burkina and Mali had also seized power since 2020. AFP

BEIJING

Hundreds of millions in Asia celebrate Year of the Snake



Hundreds of millions of people across Asia celebrate the Lunar New Year with their families on Wednesday, as they bid farewell to the Year of the Dragon and usher in the Year of the Snake. The festival is celebrated in countries such as China, South Korea and the autonomous region of Taiwan. AFP

M23 expands control of Goma in east Congo as Rwanda leader seeks truce

Residents say the Rwanda-backed rebels controlled most parts of the city while government exerted power in some pockets; Rwandan President Paul Kagame speaks with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on the need to ensure a truce'

Associated Press

GOMA

Rwanda-backed rebels captured large parts of Goma, the biggest city in eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, including its airport, the United Nations said, as Rwanda's President on Wednesday joined calls for a ceasefire in the decades-long conflict amid mounting international pressure.

Much of Goma was calm after a day during which thousands of fleeing people hunkered down by roadsides as missiles flew overhead, and injured peo-



Keeping vigil: Rwanda-backed M23 rebels stand guard at the Gisenyi border point in Congo on Wednesday. AP

ple streamed to overwhelmed hospitals.

While government forces still control pockets of Goma, residents said that

the M23 rebel group was in control of much of the city.

The M23 rebels, who said that they captured the city on Monday after a

weeks-long advance, are one of about 100 armed groups vying for a foothold in mineral-rich eastern Congo. The conflict escalated with the rebels' advance into Goma, which left bodies on the streets and drove hundreds of thousands of already displaced people to flee once again.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame said on X that he spoke with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on "the need to ensure a ceasefire and address the root causes of the conflict once and for all."

His government denies supporting M23, despite

reports from UN experts who estimate there are up to 4,000 Rwandan forces in Congo. Rwanda has accused Congo of enlisting Hutu rebels and former militiamen whom it blames for the 1994 genocide.

The East African Community, whose members include both Rwanda and Congo, are scheduled to discuss the conflict at a meeting on Wednesday. Congolese President Félix Tshisekedi won't be able to participate in the virtual summit. Pope Francis called for the cessation of hostilities and the protection of civilians.

Russia, in bid to retain military bases, holds talks with Syria

Reuters

MOSCOW

Russia said on Wednesday it had held "frank" discussions with Syria's new de facto leader as it tries to retain its two military bases in the country, but it declined to comment on what he was demanding in return.

A Syrian source familiar with the discussions said that the new leader, Mohammed al-Jolani (Ahmed al-Sharaa), had requested that Moscow hand over former Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who fled to Russia when he was toppled by Jolani's militant group in December.

Syrian news agency Sana said Damascus also wanted Russia, which backed Mr. Assad in the



Common ground: Russia's Mikhail Bogdanov and Syria's Mohammed al-Jolani during their meeting in Damascus. AFP

country's civil war, to rebuild trust through "concrete measures such as compensation, reconstruction and recovery".

Asked to confirm whether Russia had been asked to return Mr. Assad, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov declined to comment.

Russia, whose troops and air force backed Mr. Assad for years against Syrian rebels, is seeking to retain its naval base in Tartus and Hmeimim air base near the port city of Latakia. Losing them would deal a serious blow to its ability to project power in the region.

U.K. Chancellor Reeves backs third runway at Heathrow, cuts regulation to spur growth

Sriram Lakshman

LONDON

Following months of poor economic growth numbers and depressed business sentiment following a tax increase announced in her October Budget, U.K. Chancellor Rachel Reeves signalled on Wednesday that Britain was not destined to decline, as she announced a slew of projects and regulatory changes.

"Low growth is not our destiny. But growth will not come without a fight," Ms. Reeves told business leaders at a Siemens medical equipment factory in Oxfordshire. She defended her October Budget — which included a £25 billion increase in employer payroll contributions — as necessary to "fix the foundations" of the economy.

Among the plans Ms. Reeves laid out was the creation of a "growth corridor" between Oxford and Cambridge, which, as per the Chancellor, had the potential to become Europe's "Silicon Valley". Ms. Reeves also announced that the U.K. government would officially back a third runway at London's Heathrow airport.

A third runway, which has been opposed by environmental groups, was officially approved first by the former Labour government in 2009 but failed to take off under successive governments.

Visa regime
The Chancellor also reiterated that the government was looking into the visa regime for "very highly skilled people". Last week, Ms. Reeves had suggested that visa reform would be focused on AI and life sciences professionals.

Ms. Reeves said on Wed-



Police officers walk past tractors as farmers protest outside Siemens Healthineers where Rachel Reeves spoke on Wednesday. REUTERS

Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds would visit New Delhi next month to restart FTA talks

nesday that her government would build on the U.K.-U.S. "special relationship" with the new U.S. administration of Donald Trump.

She announced a reset of ties with the European Union (EU), blaming the Conservatives for not engaging with the bloc, which is the U.K.'s largest trading partner. The Chancellor also said the U.K. would continue strengthening ties with emerging economies such as India and China.

Ms. Reeves confirmed that Trade and Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds would visit New Delhi next month to restart talks for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which has been under negotiation since January 2022.

Plagued by low productivity and a slow post-pandemic recovery, the U.K. did not grow in the second half of 2025 with the government hoping business and investor sentiments would be buoyed by falling inflation and positive

18 killed in plane crash in remote part of South Sudan

Associated Press

JUBA

A small plane crashed in a remote part of South Sudan, killing at least 18 people on Wednesday.

The flight, chartered by Chinese oil firm Greater Pioneer Operating Co., had 21 people on board, including two pilots, said Gatwech Bipal, the Minister of Information in the oil-rich Unity state, where the crash happened earlier on Wednesday. The plane crashed while it was taking off near an oil field to head to the international airport in Juba, the South Sudanese capital.

Local media reported that the plane was carrying oil workers.

Egypt and Jordan reject Trump's call for forced displacement of Palestinians

Agence France-Presse

CAIRO

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and Jordan's King Abdullah II rejected on Wednesday any forced displacement of Gazans after U.S. President Donald Trump floated an idea to move Palestinians from the territory to the two Arab countries.

In his first public response to Mr. Trump's comments, Mr. Sisi said that displacing "the Palestinian people from their land is an injustice that we cannot take part in".

Speaking at a press conference in Cairo with Kenyan President William Ruto, he added that Egypt's historic position in favour of the creation of a Palesti-

nian state "can never be compromised".

'Will work with Trump'

Mr. Sisi said Egypt was nonetheless "determined to work with President Trump, who seeks to achieve the desired peace based on the two-state solution". "We believe that President Trump is capable of fulfilling this long-

awaited goal of establishing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East [West Asia]," he added.

Meanwhile, in Brussels, Jordan's King Abdullah II stressed his country's "firm position on the need to keep the Palestinians on their land and to guarantee their legitimate rights, in accordance with the two-state solution".

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA									
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, KENDRAPARA-JAJPUR AT-CHANDIKHOLE, PO-SUNGUDA, JAIPUR - 754296, Email - serv_kpd@yahoo.com									
Letter No. 112 / Date:- 24.01.25 1 st Corrigendum Notice									
1 st Corrigendum to Bid Identification No. Tender Online RCK-01/25 invited this office Letter No.-54, Dt-16.01.2025. The changes as detailed below are hereby made in the above N.I.T.- 1. Clause no.-05 of NIT Modified below :-									
Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender On-line for bidding				Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of opening of Tender		
		Previously Modified on	Presently Modified on	Previously Modified on	Presently Modified on	Previously Modified on	Previously Modified on	Previously Modified on	Previously Modified on
Chief Construction Engineer, R.W. Circle, Kendrapara-Jajpur	Tender Online RCK-01/25	From 20.01.2025 at 11.30 A.M. to 03.02.2025 upto 05.00 P.M.	From 20.01.2025 at 11.30 A.M. to 13.02.2025 upto 02.00 P.M.	From 20.01.2025 up to 02.00 P.M.	From 13.02.2025 up to 02.00 P.M.	03.02.2025 at 11.30 A.M.	04.02.2025 at 11.30 A.M.	14.02.2025 at 11.30 A.M.	Will be intimated later
All other conditions of NIT remain unaltered.									
O-1354.									
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Kendrapara-Jajpur.									
OIPR-25129/1/0027/2425									

Government of Rajasthan Office of the DSO JALORE Email: dsofood-jalorj@nic.in Phone No.: 02973-222227 Date: 13/01/2025

F (/)Resad/Distribution/PDS Tender/2024/120

NOTICE INVITING BID

e-Bids for selection of Handling and Transportation of Food grains Under PDS from FCI Depots in District JALORE are invited from interested bidders up to 04-02-2025. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> or <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>) of the state, the approximate value of the procurement is 4.09 Crore for One year.

UBN : FCC2425A0078 FCC2425SLOB00108

DIPR/C/900/2025 District Supply Officer Jalore

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E-Mail ID : olict123@bsnl.in, olictd@mail.com; http://odishalift.com	
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement	
No. IT- 07 /2025 - 841 / OLIC , Dated - 29.01.2025	
The Managing Director, OLC Ltd., Bhubaneswar invites online tender in percentage rate through e-procurement for installation, electrification, energisation & commissioning of deep bore wells in different districts of Odisha state. Interested Bidders may visit website: www.tendersodisha.gov.in to view and download Detailed Tender Call Notice and bid documents. The bidders should be submitted only online in the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in .	
Important features of this NCB are as under :	
A. Brief description of Work : Installation, electrification, energisation & commissioning of Deep borewells in Angul & Sundargarh districts. (05 Packages)	
B. Estimated cost of works : Varies from Rs.802.01 Lakhs to Rs.1588.34 Lakhs	
C. Date and time of availability of bid document in the portal : From dt.30.01.2025 to dt	

ELITE COMPANY

Smith storms into 10,000-run club, joins legends Tendulkar, Ponting



Steve Smith joined a select group of batters to reach 10,000 Test runs on day one of the opening Test against Sri Lanka in Galle. Smith started the match on 9,999 runs and pushed for a single off Prabath Jayasuriya to be the 15th player and fourth Australian to the milestone, joining Ponting, Border and Steve Waugh.

UPWARDLY MOBILE

Tilak rises to No. 2 in T20I rankings; Varun enters top five



Tilak Varma climbed one spot to second, while mystery spinner Varun Chakaravarthy made a massive leap of 25 places to break into the top five in the latest ICC men's T20I rankings released on Wednesday. Tilak now sits just behind Travis Head in the batters' list. Varun's five for 24 in the third T20I propelled him to the fifth.

TRUMP CARD

Rashid has been the most important player for us: Buttler



England captain Jos Buttler was all praise for his lead spinner Adil Rashid. "He's the most important player for us, and he always just seems to keep getting better. He's got so many different styles of bowling. He's an absolute trump card to have as a captain and he's been brilliant the last couple of games," said Buttler on Wednesday.

SHOCK RESULT

Sri Lanka u-19 ends Australia's unbeaten run ahead of semifinal



Sri Lanka posted a 12-run victory over Australia in the ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup on Wednesday. Australia had already qualified for the semifinals but was unable to carry its unbeaten record into the last four. **The scores:** Sri Lanka 99/8 in 20 overs (Bassingtonwaite 3/7) bt Australia 87/9 in 20 overs (Bray 27).

Dragons hit back to hold Rudras, enter semifinal

The Tamil Nadu outfit sets up a clash with Bengal Tigers; Soorma Club earns a spot in the last four after a draw in its final league match and will meet Hyderabad Toofans

HIL**Aashin Prasad**

ROURKELA

In a straight shootout for the last semifinal place, Tamil Nadu Dragons came from behind to hold UP Rudras 2-2 in a tantalising Pool B fixture in the Hockey India League (HIL) to make sure of its spot at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium on Wednesday.

A point was enough for Dragons to confirm its place in the top four, but it was made to work hard for it.

Rudras won a consolation penalty shootout 3-2 in the final pool match.

Starting the game placed fifth, Rudras dominated Dragons in the opening quarter, going up 2-0 after goals from Sudeep Chirmako and Lalit Kumar Upadhyay to leave the side from Tamil Nadu kicking the turf in frustration.

Dragons came out firing in the second half with Selvam Karthi squandering a glorious opportunity. But Dragons' pressure paid off from a penalty corner



Joy-stick: Sorsby's 53rd-minute strike sent Dragons into the knockouts. M. VEDHAN

when Blake Govers slid the ball behind to Jip Janssen, who fired his drag-flick low into the corner to give his side a lifeline.

Good saves
Rudras' keeper James Mazarelo made two excellent saves from Janssen but was undone in the final quarter when Thomas Sorsby deflected Govers' short corner past Mazarelo to draw his side level.

In the earlier game, Soorma Hockey Club sealed its place in the semifinal after it played out a 1-1 draw with Rarh Bengal Tigers.

ers in regulation time with the former winning the shoot-out 3-0.

Tigers, without injured skipper Rupinder Pal Singh, was well off the pace in the opening exchanges, allowing Soorma to capitalise on the lax passing.

In the 10th minute, Jasjit Singh Kular looked to shepherd the ball behind the line inside the circle but Nicolas Keenan sneaked behind him to win the ball and squared it for Gurjant Singh to tap the ball in.

Tigers finished the game strongly piling on the at-

tack with Jugraj Singh finding the mark with four minutes to go, when he fired it high into the net from a penalty corner to earn a point for his side.

In the semifinals on Friday, Tigers will take on Dragons, while Soorma will face Hyderabad Toofans.

The results:
Soorma Hockey Club 1 (Gurjant 10) drew with Rarh Bengal Tigers 1 (Jugraj 56). Soorma won shootout 3-0.
UP Rudras 2 (Sudeep 8, Lalit Kumar 15) drew with Tamil Nadu Dragons 2 (Janssen 32, Sorsby 53). Rudras won shootout 3-2.

Varun unperturbed by his five-for not securing a win

Sankar Narayanan E.H.
RAJKOT

Varun Chakaravarthy is a match-winner.

The 33-year-old has won 10 of his 16 T20Is for India, playing a significant role in most of those victories.

18 of his 29 scalps have come in successful outings for the Men in Blue as his impeccable line and length, combined with the mystery element, worked wonders.

However, Varun also holds an unwanted T20I record as he became the first player to have multiple five-fors coming in a losing cause.

His five for 24 against England in the third T20I here went in vain just as his five for 17 did against South Africa at Gqeberha in November 2024.

Varun, however, aptly attributed the unlucky stat to the fickle nature of the shortest format.

"I can't complain because that's the nature of the game. Even when I don't take five wickets, we might end up losing. My job is to keep focusing on what I can do and only that is in my control," Varun said in the post-match press conference after England's 26-run win at the Niranjan Shah Stadium on Tuesday.



Sanguine: Varun put the unlucky stat regarding his five-fors down to the fickle nature of the shortest format. VIJAY SONEJI

Varun's reply to a question on the Indian batters' slam-bang approach not coming off also focused on the part-and-parcel theme.

"The last match went close. We could have ended up losing that and we could have won this one. T20 is supposed to be aggressive. You can't complain much as it is a very result-oriented game. This is the brand of cricket that the Indian team wants to play and we are doing it well."

Varun also gave a huge vote of confidence for Ravi Bishnoi, who had a difficult outing (one for 46) on Tuesday.

"Bishnoi is a top-class bowler. I went for 38 runs in the last match (in Chennai) and he conceded just

27. No one can be judged with just one game... I can write and give you that Bishnoi will make a great comeback in the next match," Varun emphasised.

The Tamil Nadu spinner has been vocal about the effort he put in to create a menacing weapon out of his over-spin deliveries. He underlined he won't go cold on his endeavour, especially now that he is on a hot streak.

"The work doesn't stop because consistency needs constant work. As in, even if I can bowl a stock ball, I need to keep working on it and keep pushing it."

"I need to get nine-on-ten consistency, and that work is always going to be there".

Khawaja and Smith flay Lanka attack

Agence France-Presse
GALLE

Steve Smith stood unbeaten on 104 after crossing 10,000 Test runs and helped Australia pummel Sri Lanka alongside fellow centurion Usman Khawaja on day one of the opening Test on Wednesday.

Australia reached 330 for two in 81.1 overs when rain stopped play for the day after the tourists elected to bat first. Khawaja, on 147, and skipper Smith put on an unbeaten stand of 195 to thwart the opposition attack in two wicket-less afternoon sessions.

Milestone man Smith got three runs off spinner Nishan Peiris to reach his third ton in four matches.

Smith took the crease in the first session with 9,999 runs and calmly nudged his very first delivery to mid-on for a single off Prabath Jayasuriya. He became the 15th batsman to 10,000 Test runs and only the fourth Australian to achieve the feat after Allan Border, Steve Waugh and Ricky Ponting.

Smith survived a reprieve when Jayasuriya grinded a sharp return catch.

The scores: Australia 330/2 in 81.1 overs (Khawaja 147 batting, Smith 104 batting, Head 57) vs Sri Lanka. **Toss:** Australia.

Ramita, Vijayveer and Anish impress in qualification competition

NATIONAL GAMES

Stan Rayan
DEHRADUN

Vidarsa K. Vinod must have rubbed her eyes a few times when she looked at the women's 10m air rifle qualification round scoreboard midway through the series at the 38th National Games shooting competition which began at the new Trishul Range here on Wednesday.

Despite having two Olympians in the fray, in Ramita Jindal and Elavenil Varalarivu, the Kerala girl led the qualification event for some time. But as the series wore on, Haryana's Ramita showed her class and finished on top with a very impressive 634.9 points. Vidarsa, in fourth place (633.0), and Gujarat's Elavenil (631.9) were among those who also made the eight-woman final.

Meanwhile in the men's 25m rapid fire pistol event, Olympians Vijayveer Singh (Punjab, 587) and Anish Bhanwala (Haryana, 582) took the top two spots in qualification competi-



In the limelight: Susan Florentina, centre, was instrumental in Kerala's win over Uttar Pradesh. STAN RAYAN

The results: **Basketball**
(league): Men: Punjab 106 (Kanwar Gurba Singh 32) bt MP 72 (Prakash Mishra 20, Rakesh Kumar Sharma 20); Karnataka 100 (B.K. Anil Kumar 20) bt Uttarakhand 59 (Vaibhav 31); Delhi 94 (Prince Tyagi 30, Arvinder Singh 20, Joginder Singh 17) bt Rajasthan 75 (Mohammed Ishan 25).
Women: Kerala 76 (R. Sreekala 12, Susan Florentina 11) bt UP 37 (Poonam Chaturvedi 18); Karnataka 71 (Sanjana Ramesh 22, T. Mohanbalaji 18) bt Delhi 59 (Preeti Kumari 24).



Rich haul: Karnataka swimmer Dhini Dhesinghu finished the day with three golds. FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

Dhini Dhesinghu dazzling in breaking women's 200m freestyle mark

Sports Bureau
HALDWANI

Olympian Dhini Dhesinghu broke the women's 200m freestyle meet record on the opening day of the National Games swimming competition here on Wednesday.

The 15-year-old from Karnataka finished the day with three golds, including one in the women's 4x100m freestyle relay.

Meanwhile, Srihari Nataraj defeated fellow-Olympian Sajan Prakash to take the men's 200m freestyle gold, while the latter took the bronze.

Sajan, who was returning after a six-month break following the Olympics, finished with another bronze in the 100m butterfly, where Tamil Nadu's

Benediction Rohit won the gold.

The results (finals): Men:
200m free: 1. Srihari Nataraj (Kar) 1:50.57s, 2. Aneesh Gowda (Kar) 1:52.42, 3. Sajan Prakash (Kar) 1:53.73. **100m butterfly:** 1. Benediction Rohit (TN) 53.89s, 2. Mihir Ambre (Mah) 54.24, 3. Sajan Prakash (Kar) 54.52. **4x100m freestyle relay:** 1. Karnataka (Akash Mani, Chinatana Shetty, Aneesh Gowda, Srihari Nataraj) 3:26.26s, 2. Tamil Nadu (23.92), 3. Gujarat (3:32.23).
Women: **200m free:** 1. Dhini Dhesinghu (Kar) 2:03.24s MR, OR 2:07.08; 2. Bhavya Sachdeva (Del) 2:08.68, 3. Aditi Satish Hegde (Mah) 2:09.74. **100m butterfly:** 1. Dhini Dhesinghu (Kar) 1:03.62s, 2. Naisha Shetty (Kar) 1:04.81, 3. Srithika Upadhyaya (Odi) 1:05.20. **4x100m freestyle:** 1. Karnataka (Nina Venkatesh, Shalini Dixit, Latisha Mandana, Dhini Dhesinghu) 4:01.58s, 2. Maharashtra (4:02.17), 3. Tamil Nadu (4:08.81).

Unknown and unfancied but no underdogs: Togo hopes to sustain momentum

Uthra Ganeshan

NEW DELHI

When India's opponent for its next Davis Cup fixture was announced, many would have struggled to place the tiny nation of Togo on the world map, leave alone its chances against the home team. Watching its players train at the R.K. Khanna Stadium here, however, makes it clear the Indians may have a fight on their hands.

Captain Rohit Rajpal admits to it and his Togolese counterpart Ali Agnamba hopes for it. At stake is a place in the World Group 1, something the Indians keep flitting in and out of and the Togolese have never reached. Still, coming in on the back of a remarkable run of 10 wins in 11 ties gives the visitors momentum.

"Yes and no. I think every match is different, every country you play has different types of challenges. The good thing for us right now is that we are united as a team and we are playing together. We are excited to be playing against India and we know the home crowd is going to be behind them but we under-



Let's do it: Togo will look to make an impression when it takes on India. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

are at the moment and they've beaten Indonesia, Latvia, these are good teams – and we don't have much information on them.

Normally we have the data and we are much more confident. But now we're going to spend a lot of time watching them, make notes and take it from there," Rajpal admitted, keenly observing the Togo training while the Indian players took a short lunch break.

World No. 73 Togo's last match was against Latvia, ranked 27 places higher, and won 4-0. India is further up, at 38.

IN BRIEF



Bell, oldest living Olympic athletics gold medallist dead

American long jump great Greg Bell, who had been the oldest living Olympic gold medallist in athletics, has died at the age of 94. At the 1956 Olympic Games, a 26-year-old Bell jumped 7.83m in challenging conditions to win by 15cm ahead of his compatriot John Bennett.

Jaya Kapoor beats Saiyette Varadkar

Jaya Kapoor beat fourth seed Saiyette Varadkar 7-5, 6-2 in the girls' pre-quarterfinals of the ITF junior tennis tournament at the Indore Tennis Club, Indore, on Wednesday.

The results (pre-quarterfinals): Boys: Samarth Sahita bt Saurish Modi 6-2, 6-3; Vishal Vasudev bt Kanishk Khathuria 7-5, 6-4; Shivtej Shirfuli bt Shaurya Swarup 6-1, 6-2; Aditya Mor bt Aun Thakkar 6-3, 6-3; Dev Patel bt Yashwin Dahiya 4-6, 6-3, 6-2; Aashrava Mehra bt Vivaan Bidasaria 6-4, 6-2; Daksh Kukreti bt Adhiraj Thakkar 6-3, 6-3; Praneel Sharma bt Tanush Ghildyal 7-5, 6-3.

Girls: Diya Ramesh bt Aahan 6-2, 6-4; Pehal Kharadkar bt Anvi Punaganti 6-4, 7-6(5); Saina Vaidya bt Aahida Singh 7-6(3), 6-4; Parthiksha Mundhe bt Nandini Kansal 6-1, 6-0; Prachi Malik bt Sejal Bhutada 6-4, 6-3; Jaya Kapoor bt Saiyette Varadkar 7-5, 6-2; Aakruti Sonkusare bt Aanya Choubey 6-2, 6-2; Harshini Nagaraj bt Deepshika Vinayagamurthy 6-3, 6-3.

NorthEast United breezes past Hyderabad at home

NorthEast United FC completed the league double over Hyderabad FC with a 4-1 victory in their ISL match in Guwahati on Wednesday.

The result: NEUFC 4 (Fernandez 17, Ajaraei 45, Akhtar 79, Bemammer 89) bt HFC 1 (Manoj 70).

Super sub Dias fires Dempo to victory over Delhi

Substitute Nestor Dias emerged Dempo Sports Club's hero, scoring the only goal of the match in the 83rd minute to lead his side to a 1-0 victory over Delhi FC in the I-League here on Wednesday.

LIVE TELECAST

Ranji Trophy: JioCinema, 9.30 a.m.

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



Triumphant: Delhi State carrom champions Rashmi, left, and Naved with the AICF secretary-general Bharti Narayan. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Rashmi and Mohd. Naved emerge Delhi carrom champions

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

Rashmi Kumari and Mohd. Naved emerged as the women's and men's champions in the Delhi State carrom championship at the Thyagaraj Sports Complex on Wednesday.

The secretary-general of the All India Carrom Federation (AICF), Bharti Narayan, presented the trophies.

The results: Men: Final: Mohd. Naved bt Adil 24-10, 25-11.

Third place: Mohd. Sumer bt Mohd. Abrar 25-0, 25-0.

Semifinals: Naved bt Abrar 14-20, 11-6, 24-12; Adil bt Sumer 17-12, 25-11.

Women: Final: Rashmi Kumari bt Debajani Tamuly 25-2, 12-8.

Third place: Pratibha Shukla bt Jyoti 21-13, 21-7.

Semifinals: Rashmi bt Jyoti 25-0, 25-1; Debajani bt Pratibha Shukla 25-7, 25-5.

Knockout spots up for grabs

With the final round of Ranji league matches set to be played from Thursday (January 30), a look at the points table:

ELITE: GROUP A

	M	W	L	D	NR	Bonus Pts	Total Pts	Quotient
J & K	6	4	0	2	0	1	29	1.598
Baroda	6	4	1	1	0	2	27	1.301
Mumbai	6	3	2	1	0	1	22	1.397
Odisha	6	2	2	1	1	1	17	0.758
Services	6	2	3	1	0	1	16	0.753
Maharashtra	6	2	3	1	0	1	14	1.078
Tripura	6	1	1	3	1	1	13	1.282
Meghalaya	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0.411

Baroda vs J & K (Vadodara), Maharashtra vs Tripura (Solapur), Mumbai vs Meghalaya (Mumbai), Odisha vs Services (Cuttack).

GROUP B

	M	W	L	D	NR	Bonus Pts	Total Pts	Quotient
Vidarbha	6	5	0	1	0	1	34	1.570
Gujarat	6	3	0	3	0	1	26	1.062
Himachal	6	3	3	0	0	3	21	1.129
Hyderabad	6	2	2	2	0	2	16	1.300
Rajasthan	6	1	1	4	0	0	16	1.086
Uttarakhand	6	1	3	2	0	0	10	0.591
Andhra	6	0	3	3	0	0	7	0.877
Pondicherry	6	0	3	3	0	0	3	0.725

Gujarat vs Himachal (Ahmedabad), Andhra vs Rajasthan (Vizianagaram), Pondicherry vs Uttarakhand (Puducherry), Vidarbha vs Hyderabad (Nagpur).

GROUP C



* In case of points being equal, the number of bonus points earned, outright wins and quotient become the tie-breakers in that order

GROUP C

	M	W	L	D	NR	Bonus Pts	Total Pts	Quotient
Haryana	6	3	0	3	0	1	26	1.225
Kerala	6	2	0	4	0	1	21	1.580
Karnataka	6	2	0	4	0	1	19	1.294
Bengal	6	1	1	3	1	0	14	1.055
Uttar Pradesh	6	1	1	4	0	1	13	1.049
Madhya Pradesh	6	1	1	4	0	1	11	1.114
Punjab	6	1	3	2	0	1	11	0.897
Bihar	6	0	5	0	1	0	1	0.344

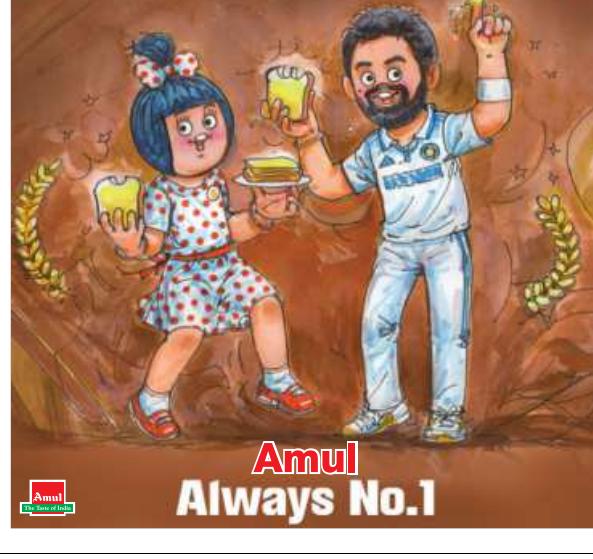
Karnataka vs Haryana (Bengaluru), Bengal vs Punjab (Kolkata), Kerala vs Bihar (Thiruvananthapuram), MP vs UP (Indore).

GROUP D

	M	W	L	D	NR	Bonus Pts	Total Pts	Quotient
Tamil Nadu	6	3	0	3	0	2	25	1.823
Chandigarh	6	3	3	0	0	1	19	0.959
Saurashtra	6	2	2	2	0	2	18	1.113
Railways	6	2	1	3	0	0	17	0.921
Delhi	6	1	2	3	0	1	14	0.756
Jharkhand	6	1	1	4	0	0	14	0.907
Chhattisgarh	6	0	1	5	0	0	11	1.151
Assam	6	0	2	4	0	0	6	0.670

Saurashtra vs Assam (Rajkot), Delhi vs Railways (Delhi), Chhattisgarh vs Chandigarh (Raipur), Jharkhand vs Tamil Nadu (Jamshedpur).

Bumeroh Uno!



Elahi, Sultan and Tondaiman top trap

Sports Bureau

ven others with the same score.

Preeti Rajak of the Army topped the women's trap qualification with 119. She was followed by Pragati Dubey (118), Neeru (117), Kirti Gupta (115), Sabreera Haris and Olympian Rajeshwari Kumari with 114, into the final.

Arjun, Lakshay Sheoran and Arshad Khan shot 120 and won the shoot off to make the final, ahead of Akash Saharan who also shot 120. The seasoned Zoravar Singh Sandhu shot 119 and missed the final by one point. And so did se-

The finals will be held on Thursday, along with the finals for the juniors.

Srikanth advances to the second round

Press Trust of India

Hong Kong's Jason Gunawan.

Former World No. 1 K. Srikanth entered the second round of the Thailand Masters BWF Super 300 event with a straight-game win over his opponent here on Wednesday.

Srikanth defeated Israel's Danii Dubovenko 21-13, 21-18 in the men's singles opening round.

This is the Indian shuttler's second straight win over Dubovenko.

Srikanth will next face

Gukesh beats Mendonca, jumps into sole lead

CHESS

Press Trust of India

Wijk aan Zee

World champion D. Gukesh crashed through the defences of compatriot Leon Luke Mendonca in the ninth round to jump into sole lead at the Tata Steel Master here.

On a day when R. Pragganandha lost his first game against Dutch GM Anish Giri, veteran P. Harikrishna also found himself under the spotlight, falling to Russian-turned-Slovenian Vladimir Fedoseev.

With the win, Gukesh took his tally to 6.5 points out of a possible nine and is half a point ahead of Uzbek Nodirbek Abdusattorov and Fedoseev, who are both on six points.

The results (ninth round): Masters: Anish Giri (Ned, 4.5) beat Pragganandha (Ind, 5.5); Gukesh (Ind, 6.5) beat Leon Luke Mendonca (Ind, 2.5); Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo, 6) beat P.

Jorden van Foreest (Ned, 3.5) drew with Max Warmerdam (Ned, 3.5); Wei Yi (Chn, 5) drew with Arjun Erigaisi (Ind, 2.5); Alexey Sarana (Srb, 5) drew with Vincent Keymer (Ger, 3.5).

Fabiano Caruana (USA, 5) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 6).

Madison Keys – a Grand Slam champion 15 years in the making

The American was marked out for success in her early teens but it is only now, on the cusp of turning 30, that she has realised her potential. A smiling assassin – a toothy one at that – she overcame five seeded players, including one, two and seven, to regain her career-high ranking of World No. 7 she first set in October 2016



GETTY IMAGES & REUTERS

Anirudh Velamuri

At the end of the second set in the women's singles final in Melbourne last week, there was a feeling of *deja vu* – for Madison Keys and everyone watching the action unfold. The American won the first set before Aryna Sabalenka rose to the occasion and took the match into a decider.

Fourteen months earlier, on home soil at the US Open, Keys went from almost schoolboy Sabalenka to suffering one of the biggest defeats of her career when the World No. 1 put behind a first-set bagel to win their semifinal clash.

At the press conference later, Keys fought back tears and tried to look at her performance optimistically. "Right now it sucks. But I just think being able to take this and turn it to a positive is really possible," she had remarked.

When the American returned to training after that, she realised the need to make changes. "If you are going to rip things apart, you might as well rip everything apart, right?" she told *wtatennis.com*.

Terrific teen

Keys made a mark early in her career, a little too early by most standards. A product of the Evert Tennis Academy in Florida, she turned professional on her 14th birthday and made her WTA Tour debut at the Ponte Vedra Beach Championships in 2009.

There, aged 14 years and 48 days, she beat the then World No. 81 Alla Kudryavtseva in straight sets to become the youngest player since Martina Hingis in 1994 to win a Tour-level match. A few weeks later, she had the attention of the tennis world when she beat reigning Wimbledon champion Serena Williams at the World Team Tennis.

Keys continued to earn her bread on the ITF circuit, with the odd wildcard opportunity to compete in Tour-level events. On her Grand Slam debut as a 16-year-old at the US Open in 2011, she beat Jill Craybas before bowing out in the second round.

The Illinois native broke into the top-100 before she turned 18 and soon made her way into the top-50. In early 2015, Keys became the talk of the town at the Australian Open when she beat the likes of Petra Kvitova and Venus Williams.

Despite dealing with a left thigh injury, she gave Serena a run for her money before exiting in the semifinals. After the match, Serena acknowledged the grit in her younger compatriot.

"She pushed me hard the first set and I

had to dig deep mentally to get through that," the legendary American remarked. "She came up with some great shots. I could have done a little more and been more aggressive. But that's a great sign that she played so well when she was down and didn't give up."

Injuries and heartbreak
After the highs of Melbourne in 2015, Keys' career began to be troubled by injuries. That year, four different injuries (shoulder, adductor, forearm and wrist) saw her withdraw or retire from nine different tournaments.

She did her best to recover in the off-season, hiring Jesse Levine – former American-Canadian pro – as her new coach, replacing former World No. 1 Lindsay Davenport. But her fortunes did not improve. She re-injured her left adductor at the Australian Open and walked off the court in tears. She would be sidelined until Indian Wells.

Over the years, this became a theme in Keys' career. Just when she showed signs of consistency and started going deep in tournaments, an injury would come by and pause her progress.

And when she finally overcame all obstacles to reach her first Major final at the 2017 US Open, she froze under pressure as Sloane Stephens steamrolled her to clinch the title in just one hour of play.

Multiple surgeries might have left scar tissues on Keys' wrist, but the manner of the defeat inflicted scars that were not just physical but also harder to deal with mentally.

Of reflection and rectification
Earlier this year, Keys recalled her 2017 US Open final defeat and acknowledged that she had let the occasion get to her.

"I was so consumed with being nervous [about] the moment and the opportunity and all of that, that I never really gave myself a chance to actually play. The big thing for me has been knowing that there are going to be a lot of moments where I'm uncomfortable in the match," she admitted at a press conference.

"It's going to be stressful. You have thousands of people watching you. You might not be playing your best tennis. But instead of trying to shy away from that [I am trying to view it as] 'Okay, that's the

situation, and you can also play tennis through that.'

So how did Keys tackle the fear of her career entering the final decade without a title on the sport's biggest stages?

"Lots of therapy... I bought into it. To really start digging in on how I felt about myself and really being honest with myself about it. It was hard because I didn't want to be the person that felt like I was really struggling, but I was starting to really struggle with it," she recently admitted.

Embracing change

While the hallmark of Keys' game has been her clean ball-striking, it was no longer an aspect that made her stand out on the women's circuit. At a career crossroads, she decided to take the risk of reworking her entire game – not in pursuit of some elusive treasure but to prolong and enjoy her final years on the Tour.

"It just got to the point where it was, like, 'Okay, if I really want to stay competitive, I have to do something different, because my body is breaking down a little bit more.' I felt like everyone is catching up [ball] speed-wise. I can't just hit people off the court every single match anymore," she said after her first-round win against Ann Li at the 2025 Australian Open.

Keys, soon to be 30, made two big changes recently. The first was to end her life-long relationship with Wilson and switch to Yonex racquets. While she had been loyal to Wilson since her formative years at the Evert Academy, it was also taking a toll on her wrist.

Besides switching to the Japanese brand, she also traded natural gut strings for a mix of natural gut and synthetic strings. Serena did the same in 2012, and the result was a career-best 30-match win streak, three Grand Slam titles and her first Olympic singles gold medal.

The other big change she made was to alter her serve motion, and the results have been splendid. Excluding her semifinal against Iga Swiatek, she won at least 70% of the points on her first serve in all matches at Melbourne Park.

When Sabalenka took the Australian Open final into the third set, the all-new self-confident Keys refused to panic. She stayed the course while her seasoned opponent, a two-time defending champion, began to show signs of crumbling under pressure. And with her 29th and final winner on the night, Keys finally achieved what many had expected her to very early in her career.

It was, after all, never a matter of if, just when.

THE GIST

In 1994, aged 14 years and 48 days, Keys became the youngest player since Hingis to win a Tour-level match

The Illinois native broke into the top-100 before she turned 18 and soon made her way into the top-50

In early 2015, Keys became the talk of the town at the Australian Open when she beat the likes of Kvitova and Venus, before her career began to be troubled by injuries

She reached her first Major final at the 2017 US Open, but froze under pressure as Sloane Stephens steamrolled her to clinch the title

The (nearly) 30-year-old, made two big changes recently – she switched from Wilson to Yonex racquets, and altered her serve motion



SCIENCE

Retinal diseases: RNA therapeutics show promise but is India ready?

There is currently no large cohort study in India, i.e. involving at least 500 patients, to describe the mutation spectrum of IRDs; such extensive studies are vital for researchers to identify the most common genetic defects that can subsequently be targeted using precision medicine

Sandeep Sarma Asodu

Vision is crucial to navigate the world, connect with others, and perform everyday tasks. It helps us perceive colours, shapes, and movement, which are essential to learn, work, and keep safe.

According to the World Health Organisation, more than 2.2 billion people worldwide experience some form of vision impairment. The causes range from cataracts and diabetic retinopathy to glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration, and inherited retinal diseases (IRDs).

IRDs are genetic conditions that lead to progressive vision loss, often resulting in blindness. These diseases stem from mutations in more than 300 genes responsible for the function of the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye.

While some individuals may lose their sight shortly after birth, others experience gradual deterioration over time. In many cases, early intervention could slow down or even prevent the progression of blindness.

An estimated 5.5 million people suffer from IRDs around the world, with a prevalence rate of one in 3,450. However, the situation is more critical in India. Studies have revealed significantly higher prevalence, with one in 372 individuals in rural South India, one in 930 in urban South India, and one in 750 in rural Central India affected by these conditions.

A treatment breakthrough

In 2017, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) made a historic move by approving the first gene therapy for blindness caused by mutations in the *RPE65* gene.

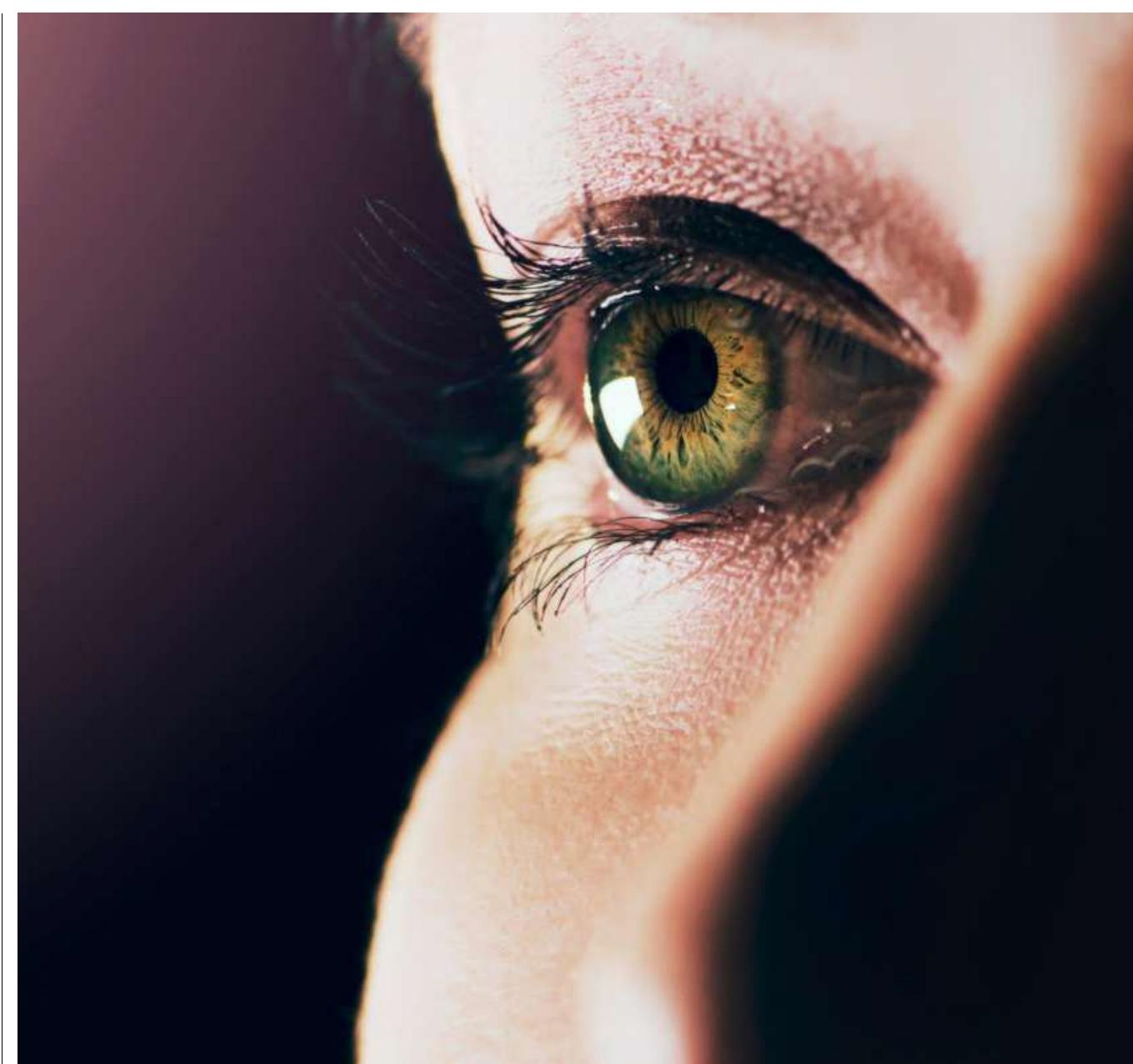
This approval sparked hope for patients with other genetic causes of blindness. Currently, more than 50 clinical trials are exploring gene therapy as an option to treat various inherited eye disorders.

In India, however, awareness among clinicians about the availability and potential of *RPE65* gene therapy remains limited. While gene therapy has proven revolutionary, it is not yet a universal solution for all genetic eye diseases. This is where RNA-based therapies are poised to make a significant impact.

RNA-based precision therapeutics are emerging as a game-changer for genetic disorders, including IRDs. Unlike DNA or genome-editing therapies, RNA-based therapies offer a safer alternative as they make temporary changes that don't carry over to future generations, reducing the risk of unintended long-term effects.

Recent advancements have introduced RNA-based therapies like antisense oligonucleotides (ASOs), which have already been used successfully to treat diseases such as spinal muscular atrophy and Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Medical researchers are now exploring ASO therapy for retinal conditions like Stargardt disease, Leber congenital amaurosis, and retinitis pigmentosa.

Beyond ASOs, researchers are also developing more advanced RNA-based options to address IRDs. One promising approach involves RNA-editing with ADAR enzymes, which can correct specific genetic mutations at the RNA level. This method has the potential to restore protein production in retinal cells without altering the underlying DNA, offering a new way to treat retinal degenerative



Visual trouble: An estimated 5.5 million people suffer from IRDs around the world, with a prevalence rate of one in 3,450. GETTY IMAGES

diseases caused by single-point mutations.

Another innovative strategy is the use of suppressor tRNAs to bypass stop-codon mutations, which can prematurely halt protein synthesis in retinal cells. By enabling the production of full-length proteins, this approach could help restore proper retinal function in IRD patients, where stop-codon mutations disrupt vital protein production.

Another potential small molecule RNA-based therapy is PTC124, also known as ataluren, which is already being used to treat patients with cystic fibrosis and Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Recently, clinical trials have begun to investigate its use in treating a rare developmental eye disease called aniridia.

Taken together, these options offer a more targeted, personalised treatment approach that could halt the progression of IRDs and improve patient outcomes with greater precision.

India and precision therapeutics
Precision medicine is an approach that tailors treatments to an individual's genetic makeup, lifestyle, and other factors, offering a more targeted alternative to the one-size-fits-all approach of traditional options.

For rare diseases like IRDs, understanding the genetic mutations prevalent in a population is essential for researchers to develop effective RNA-based therapies. Although researchers have linked more than 300 genes to IRDs, research in India has yet to

IRDs are genetic conditions that lead to progressive vision loss, often resulting in blindness. These diseases stem from mutations in more than 300 genes responsible for the function of the retina, the light-sensitive tissue present at the back of the eye

fully map the genetic mutations responsible for these conditions in the local population.

In fact, there is currently no large cohort study in India (i.e. involving at least 500 patients) to describe the mutation spectrum of IRDs. Such extensive studies are vital for researchers to identify the most common genetic defects that can subsequently be targeted using precision medicine.

For example, the *ABCA4* gene is commonly mutated in IRD patients worldwide and is a popular therapeutic target. However, we lack a clear understanding of whether it is just as prevalent in Indian populations and/or whether some other mutation is expressed more often in certain ethnic groups.

India's large size and diverse population add another layer to this challenge.

Genetic mutations can vary significantly across different communities, making it difficult to identify common mutations. Accurately

mapping these mutations necessitates extensive, resource-intensive research across various subgroups.

Additionally, there are several barriers, including a lack of awareness of the genetic basis of IRDs among the people at large and healthcare providers alike, limited availability of genetic counselling services, insufficient research funding, and restricted access to diagnostic infrastructure in rural areas.

Thus, to fully unlock the potential of RNA-based therapeutics, India must prioritise genetic research with a particular emphasis on understanding the mutation profiles of people with IRDs, in collaboration with local research institutions and healthcare providers.

A notable example of such a collaboration is a June 2024 study by researchers from the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, New Delhi, and the L.V. Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad. The teams' findings led to the development of a precision therapy for a specific form of IRD.

Expanding partnerships between global and local pharmaceutical companies, as well as research institutes, will also make these treatments more accessible to Indian patients. Raising awareness among clinicians and researchers about advances in RNA therapies will likewise be crucial to ensure they are implemented effectively. Sandeep Sharma Asodu is a postdoctoral fellow at Hadassah Medical School, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. (sandeepsarma.asodu@mail.huji.ac.il)

Please send in your answers to science@thehindu.co.in

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Happy birthday, world's first 'escaped' computer virus

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

On January 30, 1982, computer programmer Richard Skrenta wrote the world's first computer virus that 'escaped' to other networks. Among other things, the virus would display a poem about itself every 50th time a programme containing it was run. Name the virus.

QUESTION 2

What was the first virus of the original IBM Personal Computer called? Released on January 19, 1986, it was the brainchild of Amjad Farooq Alvi and Basit Farooq Alvi, who lived in Lahore, Pakistan, at the time.

QUESTION 3

What is the name for computer code that

mutates its algorithm everytime it is run, but such that every mutation keeps the algorithm's function intact? This ability challenged virus scanners when it first emerged.

QUESTION 4

Following on from Q3, some viruses are also able to completely rewrite their own code to alter rather than preserve its function and thus infect new targets. What is such code called?

QUESTION 5

Name the computer worm believed to have been created in 2005 and discovered in 2010, and which has been blamed for significantly disrupting Iran's nuclear programme by damaging the centrifuges.



Visual question: Name this Hungarian and American scientist who, in a 1949 lecture, broached the idea of self-replicating computer programs, which viruses later came to be. LANL

Answers to January 28 quiz:

- Neologism from Latin for 'solace' and Greek for 'suffering' – **Ans: Solastalgia**
 - Public transport hyped up to be futuristic – **Ans: Gadgetbahn**
 - When conservation leads to extinction – **Ans: Conservation-induced extinction**
 - City-dwelling species' adaptation to urban development – **Ans: Synurbization**
 - Meaning of third-hand smoke – **Ans: Smoke lingering after a cigarette is put out**
- Visual: John Ruskin

First contact

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Scientists and students during fieldwork at Bonebed 10 in Dinosaur Provincial Park in Alberta, Canada. FILE PHOTO

A Cretaceous drama of croc against flying reptile

Reuters

About 76 million years ago, a juvenile of one of the largest flying creatures in the earth's history, called Cryodrakon boreas, walked along a riverbank on a lush coastal plain and lowered its toothless beak to take a drink, unaware of danger lurking at the water's edge. Suddenly, a large croc surged out of the water in an ambush and sank its teeth into the Cryodrakon's neck.

That was life, and death, in the Cretaceous Period in the Canadian province of Alberta. Scientists have unearthed in the badlands of Alberta's Dinosaur Provincial Park the fossilised neck bone of a young Cryodrakon, a type of flying reptile called a pterosaur, that may have died in just such a scenario.

The fossil, examined under a microscope and with micro-CT scans, has a conical puncture 4 mm wide that appears to be the bite mark of a crocodilian that either preyed on the Cryodrakon while alive or scavenged its body after death.

Adults of this pterosaur had wingspans of about 10 metres and stood as tall as a giraffe. The juvenile's wingspan was about 2 metres. The elongated neck bone, about two-thirds complete, is 8 mm long. The bone is thin. Much of its outer wall is less than a credit card in thickness.

"Most crocodilians feed at the surface of the water and are ambush predators, and many pterosaur species are thought to be tied to the water as well. Given this,

Scientists have unearthed in the badlands of Alberta's Dinosaur Provincial Park the fossilised neck bone of a young Cryodrakon, that may have died in an ambush by a croc

if it was predation, it likely happened as an ambush at the water surface," said paleontologist Caleb Brown of the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology in Alberta, lead author of the study published this week in the Journal of Paleontology. "There are several reasons why a pterosaur would be at the water surface, including drinking and hunting for food itself," Brown added.

Modern crocs are both active predators and scavengers. "There is no sign of healing, so the wound either happened at the time of death during an attack or after the animal was already dead," said ecologist and study co-author Brian Pickles of the University of Reading in England.

Cryodrakon rivaled Quetzalcoatlus, which also inhabited North America at the time, as the largest of the pterosaurs, which were cousins of the dinosaurs. Both had heads with large toothless beaks, long necks, and short tails.

"They were carnivorous, but researchers have disagreed as to their feeding strategy, with suggestions from carion-feeding scavengers to aquatic probbers to heron-like terrestrial stalkers," Brown said. The researchers noted that the puncture mark does not match the shape of the teeth of dinosaur predators in this region at the time, such as the Tyrannosaurus relatives Gorgosaurus and Daspletosaurus. Instead, it matched the shape of a croc's tooth.

Crocodilians living in this ecosystem included Leidyosuchus, around 3.5 metres long, and the smaller Albertochamps. The semi-aquatic superficially croc-like Champsosaurus also was present.

For feedback and suggestions
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