

*apno ka bank*

 RBL BANK

*Congratulations*

WORLD CHESS  
**CHAMPION**  
— D GUKE SH —

Visit: [www.rblbank.com](http://www.rblbank.com) | Call us on: +91 22 6115 6300 | Contact your nearest branch for more details

# GET THE WINNING EDGE

**7.5**  
%<sup>^</sup>  
p.a.

ON SAVINGS ACCOUNT  
FROM RBL BANK

**8.5**  
%<sup>\*</sup>  
p.a.

FOR SENIOR CITIZENS  
FIXED DEPOSITS



25+ Free  
Banking Services<sup>#</sup>



Upto 20% exclusive  
discount on lockers<sup>#</sup>



Free NEFT, RTGS &  
IMPS transactions<sup>#</sup>



Free  
Debit Card<sup>#</sup>

## Higher Interest Rates

**8.75%\* p.a.** for Super Senior Citizens Fixed Deposits

**8%\* p.a.** for Regular & NRE/NRO Fixed Deposits

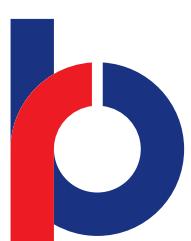


Scan QR code to open  
Digital Savings Account



Scan QR code to open  
an Online Fixed Deposit

*apno ka bank*



**RBL BANK**

Visit: [www.rblbank.com](http://www.rblbank.com) | Call us on: +91 22 6115 6300 | Contact your nearest branch for more details

<sup>^</sup>Applicable on Savings balances above INR 25 Lakhs and upto INR 3 Crs. \*For 500 days tenor | Value < INR 3 Crs | Senior Citizen (60 yrs to less than 80 yrs) | Super Senior Citizen (80 yrs and above).

#Applicable on RISE Savings Account. Terms & Conditions apply.



**EPFO PENSION**  
Panel calls for raising minimum amount

NEWS » PAGE 13

**NEHRU LETTERS ROW**  
**BJP demands Cong. return historical documents'**

NEWS » PAGE 13



**GERMAN GOVT. COLLAPSES**  
Chancellor Olaf Scholz loses confidence vote

WORLD » PAGE 16

**'MISSION 100% ELECTRIFICATION'**  
**The hidden cost of greenwashing Indian Railways**

*The project is about chasing a mirage*

EDITORIAL » PAGE 8



**CHAMPION RETURNS**  
Gukesh arrives home to a rousing welcome

SPORT » PAGE 18

## Zakir Hussain, who beat a syncretic rhythm, no more

**Anuj Kumar**  
NEW DELHI

The tabla fell silent as Ustad Zakir Hussain (1952-2024), one of India's greatest cultural ambassadors, passed away on Monday after a brief illness in a San Francisco hospital.

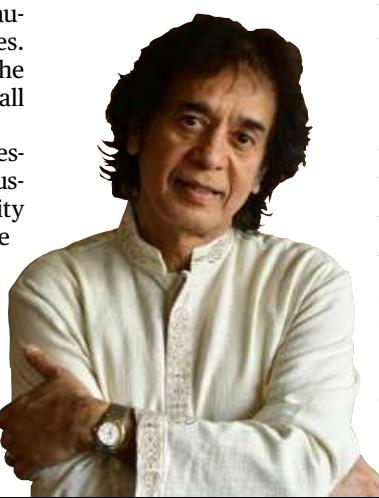
A gentle virtuoso who transformed the modest instrument into a robust voice for universal peace and humanity, Hussain was known for incredible speed, dexterity, and creativity, mesmerising audiences across cultures. This made him one of the greatest musicians of all time.

As the son of tabla maestro Ustad Alla Rakha, Hussain had a natural affinity towards the thump of the instrument and the composite culture. Having grown up singing devotional hymns to Mother Saraswati, reciting verses of the Koran, and hymns of

the Bible as a daily ritual in his Mahim home in Mumbai, Hussain embodied India's syncretic soul.

In a statement, the family of Hussain, 73, confirmed that one of the world's most transcendent musicians passed away from idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, a lung disease.

He had been hospitalised over two weeks ago. "His prolific work as a teacher, mentor, and educator has left an indelible mark on countless musicians. He



**TRIBUTES**  
» PAGE 14

The untimely demise sent shock waves across the world. Describing the four-time Grammy Award winner as a "true genius", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Hussain revolutionised the world of Indian classical music.

"He also brought the tabla to the global stage, captivating millions with his unparalleled rhythm," the PM wrote on X.

The Padma Vibhushan winner is survived by his wife and Kathak exponent, Antonia Minnecola, daughters, Anisa and Isabella Qureshi, his brothers and tabla players, Taufiq and Fazal Qureshi, and his sister, Khurshid Aulia.

## Modi, Dissanayake take up regional security issues

Sri Lankan President says he will not allow his country's territory to be used to target India; New Delhi converts project loans to grants, agrees to expedite energy, digital cooperation

**Suhasini Haider**  
NEW DELHI

Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake said here on Monday that he would not allow his country's territory to be used against India.

"I assured the Indian leader that Sri Lanka will not permit its territory to be used in any manner inimical to the security of India as well as towards regional stability," Mr. Dissanayake said, speaking to the media along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House, the official meeting venue.

India promised Mr. Dissanayake, who is on his maiden visit to New Delhi after sweeping presidential and parliamentary elections, to continue its grants assistance to Sri Lanka and



Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake with Narendra Modi at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

help it tide over its economic problems.

The two leaders said they discussed a number of issues, including regional security, digital infrastructure, connectivity and

Kankesanthurai port, and extended a \$20.66 million grant to settle payment for projects already completed, which had originally been signed under a 'Letter of Credit' or loan. The two countries agreed to continue their partnership on energy projects, including connecting to a common grid, an India-Sri Lanka "multi-product pipeline" with UAE support, LNG supplies, and completing the Sampur coal power project.

Briefing the media, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri indicated the statement by the Sri Lankan President could have a bearing on Sri Lanka's clearance for foreign vessels, particularly Chinese ships.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 12

## IN BRIEF



**Stricter pollution curbs back as air quality dips**

**NEW DELHI**  
The Central panel tasked with improving air quality in the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) on Monday once again invoked Stage-IV restrictions under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) as pollution levels soared sharply. » Page 2

**Merchandise exports touch 25-month low**

**NEW DELHI**  
India's merchandise exports fell 4.83% in November to a 25-month low of \$32.11 billion even as the import bill jumped 27% to a fresh all-time high of almost \$70 billion, putting October's record tally of \$66.34 billion in the shade by a wide margin. » Page 12

You need to scan QR Codes for sending money. Not for receiving it.



Be cautious. Be safe.

- Do not scan QR Codes or click links received from unknown sources
- Entering PIN/OTP is not required to receive money



Issued in public interest by

**भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक**  
**RESERVE BANK OF INDIA**  
www.rbi.org.in





AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal with Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav in Delhi on Monday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

## City unsafe for women: AAP; act against Bibhav: BJP

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Stepping up the attack against the BJP-led Centre over Delhi's law and order, AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Monday alleged that the city is turning unsafe for women as they are increasingly "facing harassment" on buses, metros, and city roads. Addressing an event on the 12th anniversary of the Nirbhaya rape case, he alleged that due to the "spike in crime", women "fear to step out of their homes".

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav was also present at the event.

Mr. Kejriwal's remarks come amid efforts by AAP to corner the BJP over law and order ahead of the Assembly poll election in February next year, and win over women voters.

In response, Delhi unit chief Virendra Sachdeva saying, "Kejriwal could have demonstrated his commitment to justice by taking action against his colleague Bibhav Kumar," who is accused of assaulting Rajya Sabha member Swati Maliwal at the CM House in May this year.



A thick layer of smog engulfed Delhi as pollution soared due to calm winds that prevented dispersal of pollutants. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

(poor) a day earlier.

The AQI is a measurement of air pollution on a scale of 0-500. An AQI reading between 201 and 300 termed 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', 401 and 450 'severe', and 451 and 500 'severe plus'.

The restrictions under Stage IV will come into effect when the respective State governments issue orders to implement them. Actions imposed under Stage I, II and III will also continue.

The fresh order came as Delhi's overall 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) reading touched 401 (severe) at 10 p.m. on Monday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data.

Earlier in the day, the AQI reading had scaled up to 379 (very poor) at 4 p.m. on Monday, up from 294

na's Gurugram and Faridabad, and Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar.

The CAQM said the rest of the NCR may also consider imposing the same curbs.

Excluding Delhi, the NCR region has 24 districts.

The CAQM also banned the entry of trucks into Delhi, except for the ones providing essential services. All LNG, CNG, electric, BS-VI diesel trucks are exempted from the ban.

The panel recommended State and Central governments to consider extending work-from-home facility to some of their employees.

Earlier in the day, it imposed stricter curbs on construction and demolition activities in the entire Delhi-NCR.

tion activities in the entire Delhi-NCR.

### Restrictions on vehicles

Similarly, the panel banned the plying of BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel four-wheelers in the Capital and the four adjoining districts, except those providing essential commodities or services.

"Persons with Disabilities shall be permitted to ply BS-III petrol/ BS-IV diesel LMVs, provided that these are specifically adopted for them and are run only for their personal use," the CAQM said in a statement.

The CAQM has also announced that the respective governments should stagger timings for public offices and municipal bodies in Delhi and the neighbouring four districts.

"State governments may take a decision to stagger timings for public offices and municipal bodies in other areas of the NCR," the CAQM said.

**'Pollution to stay high'**

Meanwhile, the Central government's Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi said the air quality is likely to be in the 'severe' category on Tuesday.

The Central agency has predicted 'very poor' category air for the subsequent two days.

## Immediately hold special Assembly session to table CAG reports: L-G to govt.

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has asked Chief Minister Atishi to immediately convene a special session of the Delhi Assembly to table 14 Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports related to several policy initiatives, Raj Niwas sources said on Monday.



Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena. PTI

nancial and administrative health of the government in a democratic set-up".

Expressing displeasure over the delay in tabling the reports, the L-G said the government had "failed to discharge its constitutional obligation and deprived the Legislative Assembly from discharging its core duty of exercising legislative control over the executive".

During a hearing on Monday, the L-G's counsel told the High Court that Mr. Saxena had given approval to tabling reports pertaining to liquor duty, pollution, and finance in the Assembly.

The counsel said that since the Winter Session of the Assembly had been adjourned sine die on December 4, the Speaker had the "prerogative to recall" the session.

## 415 criminals held in 15 days, says Delhi Police

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Monday said that it has arrested 415 wanted criminals, including 81 proclaimed offenders, under 'Operation Crackdown' in the North West district between December 1 and 15. As part of the drive, the police have also identified and deactivated the social media accounts of 67 juveniles, which were found to be "glorifying" crime, an officer said.

## JNUSU holds 'referendum' on PhD exam

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The JNU Students' Union (JNUSU) on Monday held a "referendum" to determine if students would prefer an internal test over NET scores for PhD admissions at the university. Earlier this year, JNU said it would accept NET scores instead of its own test, prompting protests.

**Inauguration of a  
NEW SCHOOL BLOCK**

Government Girls Senior Secondary School, Mukundpur, Delhi



TO BENEFIT MORE THAN 1000 CHILDREN OF BURARI AREA IN NORTH DELHI





**Highlights**

- Classrooms equipped with modern furniture
- State of the art Laboratories
- Computer Lab
- Activity room

Inauguration Ceremony
Chief Guest



Atishi, Chief Minister, Delhi

Tuesday, 17th December 2024

DIP/ShabdarathDisplay/005/24-25



**KIND ATTENTION**

**RESIDENT WELFARE ASSOCIATIONS/ BUILDERS/ PROJECT PROPONENTS/ NGOs/ CITIZENS**

**AVOID OPEN BURNING**

**AVOID AIR POLLUTION**

**PROVIDE ELECTRIC HEATERS AND WARM CLOTHING TO SECURITY AND OTHER STAFF**




✓ **Avoid open burning of biomass & solid waste**

✓ **Do not use coal and wood for heating purpose**

**LET'S PROTECT OUR AIR TOGETHER !**

**Delhi Pollution Control Committee**  
<https://dpcc.delhigovt.nic.in>

Scan QR code to Download Green Delhi App



Scribe Patricia Mukhim among 10 awarded for peace building

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The 'Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace' on Monday feted 10 peace builders working with women for their efforts to forge peace in areas of protracted conflict across South Asia. The ceremony was held at the India International Centre.

Journalist Patricia Mukhim, Editor, *The Shillong Times*, was honoured with the Saahas Shrestha: Sher of Courage award.

Timings  
DELHI

TUESDAY, DEC. 17
RISE 07:08 SET 17:28
RISE 19:24 SET 09:04
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 18
RISE 07:09 SET 17:28
RISE 20:28 SET 09:51
THURSDAY, DEC. 19
RISE 07:09 SET 17:29
RISE 21:30 SET 10:30

Delhi Weather max min  
Delhi City 24 04  
Safdarjung 24 04  
Palam 20 06

Delhi Palam Today  
21°C The dry weather is likely in pockets. Moderate to shallow fog will occur in very cold morning. Day will be pleasant.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow  
20°C Morning will be very cold with moderate to shallow fog. Day will be pleasant with cool breeze. Night also will be cold and hazy.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2024  
All rights reserved.

THE HINDU  
DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the truth of any statement before responding to any published in this newspaper. THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publishers and Proprietors of this newspaper do not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In case of any claim or damage, Employees of this newspaper/company shall be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claim and/or damages for advertisement in this newspaper.

## Parbhani unrest: man in custody died of 'shock due to injuries'

Snehal Mutha  
MUMBAI

"Shock due to multiple injuries" may have caused the death of a man who died in judicial custody in Parbhani district on Sunday, according to a provisional post-mortem report.

Somnath Suryawanshi, 35, was among more than 50 people arrested in connection with the December 11 violent protests following the vandalism of a glass-enclosed replica of the Constitution near Babasaheb Ambedkar's statue outside the Parbhani railway station.

Officials said Suryawanshi died at 6.49 a.m. on Sunday at a State-run hospital after he complained of chest pain while he was lodged in the Parbhani District Central Prison. Suryawanshi died due to shock following multiple injuries, the officials said on Monday, quoting the provisional post-mortem report. They added that an in-camera post-mortem was conducted by a panel of six doctors.

Suryawanshi, a resident of Pune, was in Parbhani to appear for a law examination, according to his brother Premnatha. "He had no role in the violence that broke out during the protests of December 11. If you look at the videos, he was seen carrying a book and recording the incident," his lawyer Pawan Jondhale told *The Hindu*.

While the police said they took Suryawanshi to hospital after he complained of chest pain, activists claimed that the arrested people were manhandled by the police.

Demand for justice

Several Dalit outfits staged protests against the "custodial" death and demanded justice. A magisterial inquiry has been constituted into the allegations of Suryawanshi's death, officials said.

Meghana Bordikar, the BJP MLA from Jintur in Parbhani, described the incident as unfortunate but defended the police action. "The police are handling the matter appropriately," she said.

(With inputs from PTI)

# 'One nation, one poll Bill threatens to alter India's polity forever'

Sharing an article published in *The Hindu*, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin urges democratic forces to unite, fight against the legislation

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

**S**tating that the BJP lacked the majority to pass the critical legislation for 'One Nation, One Election (ONOE)', Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK president M.K. Stalin on Monday urged democratic forces to unite and fight tooth and nail against this "abomination imposed in the garb of electoral reform" to save India, its diversity, and the Constitution.

In a social media post, Mr. Stalin shared an article titled, 'Why simultaneous elections are impractical and complicated', published in *The Hindu*.

Ulterior motive

The Union government sought to push the legislation with an "ulterior mo-



T.N. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin

Will remove checks

"The proposed Bill, if passed and implemented, will remove the legal checks and balances put in place in the form of periodic elections by the framers of our great Constitution to prevent the

country from slipping into anarchy and totalitarianism. Also, State elections would lose their political significance and regional sentiments and diversity would be destroyed," Mr. Stalin added.

The Chief Minister said the legislation threatened to "alter India's polity forever".

Though the BJP lacked the majority to pass the Bill, a brazen attempt is being made to settle scores and deflect attention from the BJP's failure to address core issues affecting the country's progress", he said.

The INDIA bloc would resist this "anti-federal and impractical" move as it would "push the country into the perils of unitary form of governance, killing its diversity and democracy in the process", he said.

## 'Upset over exclusion from new Cabinet; will decide future course'

Press Trust of India  
NAGPUR

Senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Chhagan Bhujbal on Monday expressed his disappointment at not being included in the new Mahayuti government, and said he would decide his future course after talking to people from his constituency.

Mr. Bhujbal, a prominent OBC leader, claimed he had been excluded from the Cabinet because he took on activist Manoj Jarange-Patil, who has been demanding reservation for the Maratha community in jobs and education.

Thirty-nine legislators from the Mahayuti allies, the BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP, were sworn in on Sunday in the first Cabinet expansion of the Devendra Fadnavis-led government. Ten former Ministers were dropped, and 16 new faces have been introduced.

Former Ministers Mr. Bhujbal and Dilip Walse Patil of the NCP, and Sudhir



Chhagan Bhujbal. FILE PHOTO

Mungantiwar and Vijaykumar Gavit of the BJP were some prominent leaders who didn't make it. Shiv Sena leader Vijay Shivtare, also ignored in the Cabinet expansion, said he would not take up a ministerial post even if offered after two and a half years.

Another Cabinet aspirant, Shiv Sena MLA from Bhandara, Narendra Bhonekar, quit all party posts – deputy leader and coordinator for eastern Vidarbha – after being overlooked.

Mr. Bhujbal said, "Ministerial berths come and go, but I cannot be finished off." Meanwhile, Congress leader Bhai Jagtap said the performance audit of the Ministers has no meaning. "The duration cannot be a parameter for it."

## SC seeks govt. response on PIL for chemical castration

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

cused of committing heinous crimes against women till trial commences.

A Bench headed by Justice Surya Kant directed the petition filed by the Supreme Court Women Lawyers' Association, represented by senior advocate Mahalakshmi Pavani, to be served on the Attorney General of India R. Venkat-

aramani, whose assistance has been sought by the court.

Ms. Pavani said it had been 12 years since the brutal gang rape and murder of Nirbhaya, yet women do not feel safe. She referred to the R.G. Kar case and urged the court to frame India safety guidelines for women.

Justice Kant said suggestions such as chemical castration were "radical". The Bench said crimes against women continue not because of lack of laws but due to poor enforcement.

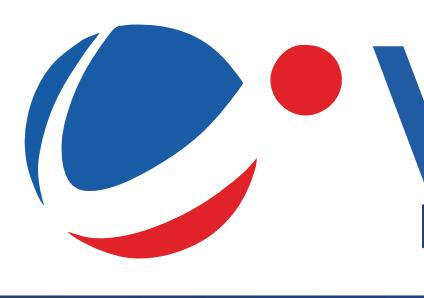
The petition asked the court to direct the Law Commission of India to examine the introduction of a law which provides

chemical castration as a punishment to all convicts for sexual offences against women and children, and permanent castration for convicts sentenced to imprisonment for life and death penalty".

The petition proposed expedited hearing of cases involving serious crimes by fast-track courts.

### APPOINTMENT

V.O.Chidambaranar Port Authority General Administration Department Tuticorin		
No:GAD-ESTIOESTC/2/2023-GADSrDS (4504)/D.3477		Date:16.12.2024
V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority invites applications for the following through Deputation Basis from other Government / Semi Government / Public Sector Undertaking / Autonomous Body:		
S.I.No.	Class	Name of the post
1.	Class - I	Senior Deputy Chief Accounts Officer
		80,000-2,20,000
For details regarding experience, educational qualifications, etc., visit VOC Port's website at <a href="http://www.vocport.gov.in">www.vocport.gov.in</a> (careers). Last date for the receipt of applications is 30.01.2025.		
sd/- 16.12.2024 SECRETARY (I/C)		



79 in TOP 100 selections in CSE 2023 from various programs of **VisionIAS**

## GENERAL STUDIES FOUNDATION COURSE 2026 & 2027 PRELIMS CUM MAINS

Innovative Classroom Program

Pre Foundation Classes are also Available



Scan to Know More & REGISTER  
connect with our Expert  
8468022022

KAROL BAGH, DELHI

17 DEC, 9 AM | 29 NOV, 5 PM

ENGLISH MEDIUM

AHMEDABAD  
4 JANUARY

BHOPAL  
5 DECEMBER

BENGALURU  
5 DECEMBER

HYDERABAD  
9 DECEMBER

JAIPUR  
16 DECEMBER

JODHPUR  
3 DECEMBER

LUCKNOW  
5 DECEMBER

PUNE  
20 JANUARY

13 DEC, 8 AM | 23 DEC, 11 AM

जयपुर  
16 DECEMBER

जोधपुर  
3 DECEMBER

प्रवेश प्रारम्भ  
शोपाल | लखनऊ



English & हिन्दी Medium

Congratulations to all UPSC Mains 2024 Qualified Students!

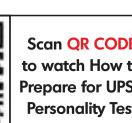
## PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATION - 2024

ADMISSION OPEN

FEATURES OF THE PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM	
Pre-DAF & DAF Sessions:	Expert assistance on filling DAF and expected question analysis.
Elocution Training:	Enhance communication, voice modulation, and public speaking.
Personalized Mentorship:	One-on-one guidance for strengths and improvement.
Mock Interviews:	Two rounds with faculty, ex-bureaucrats, and educationists, with detailed feedback.
Current Affairs:	Analytical sessions on interview-relevant topics.
Toppers & Bureaucrats Interaction:	Q&A sessions for interview insights and motivation.
Tech Support:	Mock interview recordings and flexible session scheduling.

For queries regarding DAF Analysis and Mock Interview, Contact at

7042413505, 9354559299  
interview@visionias.in



KAROL BAGH

GMMR 33, Pusa Road, Near Karol Bagh Metro Station, Opposite Pillar No. 113, Delhi – 110005

MUKHERJEE NAGAR

Vision IAS Classroom, Test centre & Enquiry office, metro gate no 2, above GTB Nagar Metro Station, Delhi – 110009

+91 8468022022, +91 9019066066

www.visionias.in

OUR CENTERS : AHMEDABAD | BENGALURU | BHOPAL | CHANDIGARH | GUWAHATI | HYDERABAD | JAIPUR | JODHPUR | LUCKNOW | PRAYAGRAJ | PUNE | RANCHI

## IN BRIEF



## NHRC notice to Rajasthan for wrong blood transfusion

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Monday issued a notice to the Rajasthan government in a case of a 10-year-old boy being transfused with the wrong blood type while undergoing treatment at the J.K. Lon Hospital in Jaipur. His condition is reported to be critical. The boy was allegedly transfused two different types of blood on December 5 and 7, 2024. "Any kind of negligence by doctors or medical professionals can cause irreversible loss to the patients," a communiqué from the NHRC said. The commission also pointed to recent incidents of medical negligence at the same hospital.

## Farmer leader's condition worsens due to indefinite fast

Doctors checking on Punjab farmer leader Jagit Singh Dallewal, whose hunger strike entered its 21st day on Monday, have recommended immediate hospitalisation due to his deteriorating health. However, he has refused to receive any medical treatment. The 70-year-old leader, a cancer patient, has been on a fast-unto-death at the Kharau border between Punjab and Haryana to press the Centre to accept the agitating farmers' demands, including a legal guarantee on MSP of crops. "Mr. Dallewal has turned so weak that he can't stand on his own, said a doctor. PTI

Bangladeshi fighters from 1971 war recall India's support

## Moyurie Som

KOLKATA

The 53rd Vijay Diwas celebrations were observed at Fort William in Kolkata, the headquarters of Eastern Command, on Monday. A nine-member delegation from Bangladesh was present for the function. This, even as tensions prevail in relations with Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh delegation comprised eight *mukti joddhas* and one serving Brigadier General of the Bangladesh Army, Mohammed Aminur Rahman. The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Eastern Command, Lt. General Ram Chandra Tewari, was the senior most Indian Army officer.

Members of the Bangladesh delegation recounted their memories of the Bangladesh War of Liberation in 1971 and the role of the Indian Army and its leadership. Major General (Retd.) Abdus Salam Chaudhary was 17 years old when he started fighting the Liberation War as a *mukti jodha* in Sylhet. "All I had was ammunition and ammunition to fight the war," he said.

**India 'stood beside us'** The *mukti jodha* recounted how "Indira Gandhi stood beside us, how India stood beside us."

"They gave all kinds of support, training, food, everything. That's how our relations were founded, and they are continuing. That's why we come every year for Vijay Diwas. Personally, I visit India at least once a year for various reasons. We have friends, relatives, doctors to meet. That way, our relationship is unique," he said.

Lieutenant Colonel (Retd.) Quazi Sajjad Ali Zahir said that the political situation unfolding in Bangladesh is temporary. "We have to wait and see how it improves. Anything that helps in the betterment of people would be appreciated," the *mukti jodha* said.

# Nirmala, Kharge face off in RS over violations of Constitutional norms

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman alleges that several constitutional amendments were brought in to protect the 'family dynasty', says freedom of expression also faced challenges; Cong. president questions RSS's commitment to the Constitution

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Initiating a discussion on the "Glorious journey of 75 years of the Constitution of India" in the Rajya Sabha on Monday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman listed the occasions when the Congress regimes in the past flouted constitutional norms. Opposition leader Mallikarjun Kharge countered her by saying the BJP was spreading lies to malign former Prime Ministers and Congress leaders who participated in the freedom movement.

The Minister said the regimes led by former Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi tried to copy the socialist structure practised by the erstwhile Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and by the time reforms were initiated in the early 1990s, the economy was damaged.

She alleged that several Constitution amendments were brought in to protect the "family dynasty".

"The alteration of the Preamble to include 'So-



Nirmala Sitharaman and Mallikarjun Kharge. ANI

cialist and Secular' highlights the disrespect and disregard the Congress has for constitutional processes, principles and institutions. The amendments were not about strengthening democracy but for protecting those in power... again, the process is used for strengthening the family," she said.

**Shah Bano case**

She termed the decision of the Rajiv Gandhi government to nullify a Supreme Court verdict in the *Shah Bano* case and the delay in passing the Women's Reservation Bill anti-women steps to save power. "Rajiv Gandhi had 426 members in the Lok Sabha and 159 members in the Rajya Sab-

ha. They did not have the conviction to pass the Women's Reservation Bill at that time."

"Very clearly, they have always been anti-women. Shah Bano case is a very clear example," Ms. Sitharaman said.

The Finance Minister said the freedom of expression also faced challenges during the Congress regimes, citing the arrests of cultural icons Majrooh Sultanpuri and actor Balraj Sahni in 1949, the ban on Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and the alleged banning of the film *Kissa Kursi Ka*.

Mr. Kharge, on the other hand, alleged that the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were spreading

lies about former Prime Ministers. Mentioning the BJP's claim that Nehru sent a letter to the Chief Ministers against reservation, he said the letter was on the demand for a constitutional amendment on a Supreme Court verdict that rejected the Madras government's decision on reservation and to stop communal propaganda.

"Sardar Patel, in a letter on July 3, 1950, had suggested to Nehru that constitutional amendment was the only remedy for this problem. Therefore, Nehru wrote a letter to Chief Ministers. This has been mentioned in Prime Minister's speech after twisting facts to defame Nehru for which he should apologise to the nation. This is my demand," he said. Mr. Kharge added:

"If you twist the facts before the nation and attempt to defame him, then you should apologise in this House and other House and before people of this country."

Mr. Kharge said Mr. Modi lived either in the past or imaginary world. "It seems that 'present' is not in his dictionary. It is better if he

can tell us in 11 years how he has strengthened the Constitution and democracy," the Congress President said, and warned that the "bhakti" of Mr. Modi was taking the country towards dictatorship.

Mr. Kharge questioned the RSS's commitment to the Constitution and said the Tricolour was unfurled at the RSS headquarters only after a direction by a court.

"In 1949, the entire country knew that RSS leaders opposed the Constitution because it was not based on *Manusmriti*. RSS mouthpiece *Organiser* in the edition of November 30, 1949 had written about it," he said.

**Devolution of funds**

DMK floor leader Tiruchi Siva accused the Union government of undermining the federal structure of the country. He said while there was no explicit term for federalism in the Preamble of the Constitution, the first line says "Bharat, that is India, is a union of States".

**SOUND AND FURY**  
» PAGE 8

ULFA(I) man arrested for planting IEDs during I-Day

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday arrested an alleged operative of the banned terrorist outfit, ULFA (I), on the charge of planting improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Guwahati during the Independence Day celebrations this year.

"NIA teams, with the active support of Assam Police, carried out searches at the house of Jahnu Baruah alias Arnab Axom in Dibrugarh.. in the early hours of this morning... he was summoned to the local police establishment for further examination," said the agency.

The accused, during preliminary investigation, confessed to his involvement in planting four of the 11 IEDs that were seized by the State police. The IEDs were planted as part of a protest and the Independence Day boycott call given by ULFA (I) chief Pares Baruah. Through a video clip, he had allegedly warned of dire consequences for disobeying the instructions.

Based on the findings, the agency arrested Mr. Baruah who was under surveillance for the past several weeks.

## U.P. CM targets Oppn. on Sambhal, says they ignored violence against Hindus

**Mayank Kumar**

LUCKNOW

The opening day of the Uttar Pradesh legislature's winter session on Monday witnessed stormy scenes over the recent violence in Sambhal and Bahraich.

Insisting that the traditions of Ram, Krishna, and Buddha will endure in India, not those of Babur and Aurangzeb, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath targeted the Opposition parties, alleging that they were in power for over six decades but turned a blind eye to violence against Hindus in Sambhal.

"Sambhal has a history of communal riots since 1947. Riots took place in 1947, and 1948 with significant violence in 1978, when 184 Hindus were burned alive... a total of 209 Hindus lost their lives in Sambhal since 1947," claimed the



Samajwadi Party MLAs protest against Sambhal violence on the Assembly premises in Lucknow on Monday. SANDEEP SAXENA

U.P. CM.

On the violence in Sambhal on November 24 over the survey of a Mughal-era Shahi Jama Masjid in which at least four persons were killed, Mr. Adityanath said a historical divide exists between Turks and Pathans in the town.

"I assure the Assembly that anyone involved in disrupting peace, stone pelting will be strictly dealt with," he said.

Samajwadi Party MLAs protested in the Assembly

rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 2017 till now, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.

Rejecting the Opposition's charge of an increase in communal tension in Uttar Pradesh, the CM cited the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). "As per NCRB data, from 23 to 2000, U.P. saw a decrease of 97% to 99% in communal riots," he said.



श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी  
माननीय प्रधानमंत्री



श्री भजनलाल शर्मा  
माननीय मुख्यमंत्री



## आपणो अग्रणी राजस्थान राजस्थान में वर्तमान सरकार के एक वर्ष पूर्ण होने पर राज्य स्तरीय समारोह

मुख्य अतिथि  
**श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी**  
माननीय प्रधानमंत्री

गरिमामय उपस्थिति  
**श्री सी.आर. पाटिल**  
माननीय मंत्री  
जल शक्ति मंत्रालय

**डॉ. मोहन यादव**  
माननीय मुख्यमंत्री  
मध्य प्रदेश

**श्री भजनलाल शर्मा**  
माननीय मुख्यमंत्री  
राजस्थान

### संशोधित पार्वती-कालीसिंध-चम्बल लिंक परियोजना हेतु एमओए

### राजस्थान में 1 लाख करोड़ रुपये से अधिक के विकास कार्यों का मार्ग प्रशस्त

#### शिलान्वास

रामगढ़ एवं महलपुर बैराज, चम्बल नदी पर एकवाडकट नवनेरा बैराज से बीसलपुर एवं ईसरदा तक जल अपवर्तन तंत्र चम्बल-धौलपुर-भरतपुर पेयजल योजना में कार्य पूगल में 4000 मेगावाट के तीन सोलर पार्क 6 विद्युत सब-स्टेशन एवं प्रसारण तंत्र सरकारी भवनों पर रूफटॉप सोलर प्लांट्स जयपुर-सवाई माधोपुर, अजमेर-चंदेरिया एवं लूनी- भीलड़ी रेल मार्ग का दोहरीकरण

#### लोकार्पण

कालीसिंध नदी पर नवनेरा बैराज दिल्ली-वडोदरा-मुंबई 8 लेन ग्रीन फिल्ड एक्सप्रेसवे (पैकेज 12) जामनगर-अमृतसर-कटरा इकोनॉमिक कॉरिडोर (पैकेज 8) 4 लेन जोधपुर-रिंग रोड के डांगियावास से जाजीवाल रोड सेक्षन भीलड़ी- जोधपुर-रतनगढ़ रेल मार्ग का विद्युतीकरण स्मार्ट एनर्जी ट्रांसमिशन एवं एसेट मैनेजमेंट सिस्टम फतेहगढ़-भड़ला, भड़ला-सीकर, सीकर-अलीगढ़ ट्रांसमिशन लाइन व रिएक्टर्स

दिनांक- 17 दिसम्बर, 2024 | समय- प्रातः 11:00 बजे | स्थान- ग्राम दादिया, वाटिका रोड, जयपुर

निभाई जिम्मेदारी, हर घर खुशहाली

सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, राजस्थान सरकार

Karnataka's reply sought on Jai Shri Ram' slogans inside mosque

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday sought a response from the Karnataka government on an appeal questioning the State High Court's 'peculiar' finding that shouting 'Jai Shri Ram' in a mosque hardly outrages religious feelings.

A Bench headed by Justice Pankaj Mital was hearing a petition filed by Haydar Ali, represented by senior advocate Devadatt Kamat, against the High Court decision to quash the criminal proceedings against two men who trespassed into the Badriya Juma Masjid and shouted the slogan 'Jai Shri Ram' before fleeing the scene.

The appeal notes that the High Court had ignored the fact that "such utterances were made by the accused persons by trespassing into the mosque compound/premises along with threatening the Muslim community".

## A.P. govt. approves works worth ₹24,276 crore in Amaravati

Assembly and HC buildings will be built at a total cost of ₹1,814 crore; ₹4,688 crore will be spent on construction of five towers, says Minister

**The Hindu Bureau**

VIJAYAWADA



N. Chandrababu Naidu speaking to Minister P. Narayana and other officials during a meeting on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Monday approved the construction of the Legislative Assembly and High Court buildings, five iconic towers, and trunk and lay LPS (Land Pooling Scheme) roads at a total cost of ₹24,276 crore.

The Assembly and High Court buildings have been planned on 103 acres and 42 acres in Amaravati at a cost of ₹765 crore and ₹1,049 crore, respectively. They would cost ₹1,814 crore in total.

Briefing the media about the decisions taken in the APCRDA meeting, Municipal Administration

Minister P. Narayana said that the Legislative Assembly building would be a 250-metre-high tower with a built-up area of 11.22 lakh sq.ft. People would be allowed to climb the tower and enjoy a view of the capital city when the Legislature is not in session. The High Court building will be a 55 metre-high eight-storey structure, with a built-up area of 20.32 lakh sq.ft., the Minister said.

## Carrying gold from Gulf a typical Kerala problem, says Supreme Court

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday termed the bringing of gold from Gulf countries to Kerala a "typical problem", probably unique to the State.

A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan was hearing a petition filed by the Union government against a Kerala High Court decision of April 2024, which upset a detention order under the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974 (COFEPOSA), passed on a man caught travelling back to Kerala with a few lakhs worth of dirhams.

Siraj had been detained under Section 3(l) of the



The Bench said it seemed to be a common feature in Kerala to carry back gold from the UAE.

COFEPOSA. The provision authorises the Centre or the State governments to detain people suspected of smuggling goods; aiding the smuggling of goods; transporting, concealing, or keeping smuggled goods; dealing in smuggled goods; and harbouring people involved in smuggling

goods. Detention order could be passed if the government had reason to believe that the suspect would act in a manner which would harm the conservation or increase of foreign exchange.

**Got relief from HC**

The court's oral observations were triggered after Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the government, said there was a previous case of gold smuggling against the man, Siraj. The High Court had given the man relief in April on the basis of a petition filed by his wife Shafina Siraj.

"This is a typical problem relating to Kerala...

## Question paper leak: Kerala forms inquiry panel

**The Hindu Bureau**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The General Education Department has constituted a high-level inquiry committee into the leak of question papers for the half-yearly examinations on YouTube channels.

General Education Minister V. Sivakutty, who convened a meeting of senior officials to address the matter on Monday, announced that a committee led by the Director of General Education (DGE) Shanavas S. will probe the leak. The panel will comprise M.I. Meenambika, Additional Secretary, General Education; Shibu, Additional Director (General); Gireesh Cholayil, Joint Commissioner of Paraksha Bhavan; Shajitha S., Joint Director (Academic) of Higher Secondary Education; and Dhanya, Deputy Director, Quality Improvement Programme. The committee is expected to probe the matter in detail and submit a report within a month.

Addressing a press conference, Mr. Sivakutty emphasised that necessary corrective measures will be adopted to prevent similar leaks, if any shortcomings are identified.



Priyank Kharge rejected the report, he pointed out.

**Upalokayukta report**

Mr. Vijayendra demanded that the CBI probe should also cover the Upalokayukta's report. The government should also hand over the enquiry into irregularities in the allotment of sites by MUDA to the Chief Minister's wife to the CBI, he demanded.

He termed the allegation against him as a continuation of a conspiracy to politically finish off his father.

While Mr. Kharge maintained that he had only referred to media reports on the allegation, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda accused Mr. Vijayendra of indulging in a political speech rather than clarifying on the allegation.

Pointing out that Mr. Vijayendra had been given a time slot that was dedicated to a debate on North Karnataka issues, Mr. Byre Gowda urged him to confine his remarks to the clarification only.

**FOR SALE**  
**LUTYENS - DELHI**  
**TOP LOCATION**  
**LAND AREA 19,000 Sq.Yards**  
**Built-up 20,000 Sq.Feet**  
**ASHEESH KHANNA**  
**9818243331**

## Govt. ready to answer any query by Opposition in Assembly: Fadnavis

**Abhinay Deshpande**

MUMBAI

The Devendra Fadnavis-led Maharashtra government on Monday tabled supplementary demands of ₹33,788.40 crore during the first day of the Winter Session of the Assembly in Nagpur.

The allocation includes ₹1,400 crore for the 'Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin' scheme, which aims to empower women through financial assistance.



CM Devendra Fadnavis at the Vidhan Bhawan in Nagpur on Monday, the first day of the Assembly's Winter Session. PTI

wance to ₹2,100, to be incorporated in future budgets.

Among other key provisions, ₹36 crore has been earmarked for rebuilding the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue at Rajkot Fort in Sindhudurg. Further allocations include ₹1,204 crore for loans to sugar cooperative factories and ₹3,050 crore under the 'Mukhyamantri Baliraja' scheme to provide free electricity to farmers with agricultural pumps up to 7.5 horsepower.

The session commenced with protests by the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) leaders on the steps of the Vidhan Bhawan opposing the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

Led by Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council Ambadas Danve, the demonstrators raised slogans "EVM Hatao Desh Bachao" (Remove EVMs, Save the Nation) and "EVM Hatao Democracy Bachao" (Remove EVMs, Save Democracy).

Mr. Danve was joined by Congress leaders Vijay Wadettiwar, Nitin Raut, Bhai Jagtap; Shiv Sena (UBT) leaders Bhaskar Jadhav and Sachin Ahir; and NCP (Sharad Pawar) MLA Jitendra Awhad. They alleged that the EVMs threatened democratic integrity and demanded a return to ballot paper voting.

Bhai Jagtap claimed that EVMs meant "Every Vote for Mahayuti".

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**P.W.R.D.: BOKAKHAT & DERGAON**  
**TERRITORIAL ROAD DIVISION, BOKAKHAT.**

No. FDR-03/TB/BDTRD/2024-25/ 3482

**PRESS NOTICE RE-INVITING TENDER**

The Executive Engineer, PWRD, Bokakhat & Dergaon Territorial Road Division, Bokakhat on behalf of Governor of Assam invites Bids for 6(Six) nos of packages amounting to **Rs.249.971 Lacs** (approx.) for Bokakhat LAC and **Rs.250.000 Lacs** (approx.) for Dergaon LAC for the works under **SOPD(G)** for the year **2024-25** from the approved & eligible Contractors/Farms registered with PWRD, Assam.

Details along with packages under each LAC may be seen from **16.11.2024** at website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in). Amendment / Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWRD, Assam website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in).

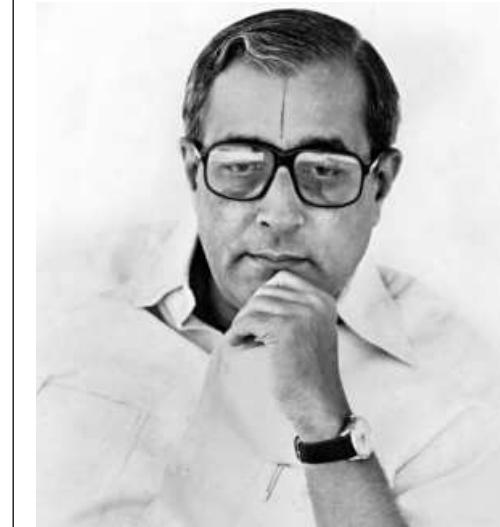
Schemes are not yet sanctioned by the competent authority. In the event of non-sanction of the schemes, the bids may be cancelled and no claim what so ever on this account shall be entertained from the bidders.

**Note:** NIT Value is inclusive of GST (12%), Labour Cess (1%), etc.

**Executive Engineer, PWRD,**  
**Bokakhat & Dergaon T.R.Division.**  
**Janasanyog /C/5155/ 24/14-Dec-24**  
**Bokakhat**

**OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE**

**BIRTH CENTENARY**



**G. Kasturi**

17-12-1924 — 21-09-2012

**DEATH**



**NRK Gnanananda Giri**

30 October 1976 - 14 December 2024

**Agsar Pvt Ltd.**

With heavy hearts, we mourn the unexpected passing of our beloved Executive Director, N. R. K. Gnanananda Giri of Agsar Paints Private Limited, who left us on the evening of December 14, 2024, at 8:30 PM.

A devoted follower of revered spiritual guides—Sadguru Sri Gnanananda Giri of Tapovanam, Yogi Ramsuratkumar of Tiruvannamalai, Annai Mayamma Devi of Kanniyakumari, and Guruji Sri Sri Muralidhara Swamiji—his life was a testament to unwavering faith and dedication.

In this time of sorrow, we humbly seek the blessings of our esteemed Swamijis, finding solace and strength in their divine grace.

## Karnataka Minister wants probe into graft charge against BJP chief over Waqf report

**The Hindu Bureau**

BELAGAVI

Upping the ante on an allegation that Karnataka BJP chief B.Y. Vijayendra had tried to offer ₹150 crore to former State Minorities Commission Chairman Anwar Manippady to hush up his report on encroachment of Waqf assets, State Minister Priyank Kharge on Monday said he would approach Home Minister G. Parameshwara seeking a probe. Mr. Vijayendra countered the demand by seeking a CBI probe.

At a press conference in Belagavi, the Minister played a few video clips in which Mr. Manippady is seen making allegations against Mr. Vijayendra.

"We must know why and on whose behalf Mr. Vijayendra offered the bribe to hush up the report. Also, why did the BJP leaders not act though Mr. Manippady wrote letters in this regard to the party's top leaders?" he questioned. "Let our agencies conduct a preliminary inquiry into such allegations," he said.

Pointing out that former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa had ordered an inquiry by the Upalokayukta on the basis of Mr. Manippady's report, he said the Upalokayukta submitted the report in 2016 during Congress regime. The State Cabinet had then





## Sound and fury

The Constitution might be a unifier, but the debate exposed polarisation

**T**he parliamentary debate on the Constitution turned out to be yet another occasion of intense diatribe between the ruling alliance and the Opposition. While both sides agreed on the supremacy of the Constitution, now in its 75th year, each accused the other of undermining it. The debate could have been an opportunity to explore a new common ground for a sharply polarised polity, but, unfortunately, that is not how it played out. Speakers from parties in power, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Opposition speakers led by the Leader of Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, railed against their political opponents and used the Constitution as a facade for their partisan politics. Mr. Gandhi views the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Mr. Modi as disloyal to the Constitution, and sought to connect it all to the Hindutva ideology. Mr. Modi singled out Mr. Gandhi's family, starting from his great-grandfather and the first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, for a no-holds-barred attack – that it has undermined the Constitution through acts of omission and commission. Both sides used facts selectively and the statements of past actors to exaggerate the point that their opponents did more harm to the Constitution than they themselves. Such an approach may work as a propaganda strategy but can do little in terms of constructive engagement on the question.

The Constitution, understood as a living document, provides the foundation and the framework for a fairer social, political and economic order for the country. Constitutionalism is an evolving project, and any discussion on it must account for this dynamism. History is a good teacher, but litigating the past endlessly is not a helpful learning technique. There have been many dark moments in the 75-year history of the Constitution, including the imposition of Emergency, but the brighter and bigger picture is that it still offers the strongest possible ethos for a secular, pluralist and progressive nation. The BJP and the Congress calling each other names is akin to the pot calling the kettle black. Both sides say they are for strengthening the unity of the country, but accuse each other of dividing the country. What emerges from the debate is that there is a lot of blame to go around; what were missing were introspection and self-reflection. Mr. Modi is right in saying that the Constitution is a unifier of the nation, and cited his government's push for a uniform civil code as an example of the commitment to advancing this unity. Uneven demographic and economic trends will require close and unified attention by the political class in the decades ahead to reimagine the constitutional scheme. Sadly, little time was spent on these questions.

## Costly gambles

Emmanuel Macron is driving France into one crisis after another

**W**hen France's President, Emmanuel Macron, called a snap legislative election in June, he had two political objectives: secure a new mandate for his centrist coalition and arrest the surge of the far-right National Rally, which had just finished first in the European elections. But what he got was a hung parliament with the left-wing New Popular Front (NPF) emerging as the largest bloc. And what he did was to pick Michel Barnier, a conservative leader of the Republican Party, which had finished fourth in the elections, to form the government. It was a disaster foretold. The government collapsed within three months, leaving France without a budget for 2025. And now, as if he learnt nothing from his gambles, Mr. Macron has appointed François Bayrou, leader of the Democratic Movement party, which has just 33 seats in the 577-member National Assembly, as the next Prime Minister. Even if Mr. Macron's coalition, Ensemble, which finished second in the elections, and the Republicans come together, they do not have a majority (289 seats) to pass bills in Parliament. The Socialist Party, which is part of the left-wing alliance, has already said it will not join the new government. This would mean that Mr. Bayrou's government would be at the mercy of Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally, as Mr. Barnier's government was, for survival.

With rising unemployment and falling domestic consumption, France needs urgent policy interventions. It has seen a jump in fiscal deficit, to 6.1% of GDP, worse than Greece, Spain and Italy, the Eurozone countries hit hard by the 2008-09 debt crisis. France's debt has also ballooned to €3.2 trillion, more than 112% of its GDP. What makes the crisis worse is the absence of a stable government. Mr. Bayrou's immediate task is to get an emergency budget passed in Parliament so that essential services run. But this will entail painful negotiations with the far-right, which is opposed to any more cuts in social spending. This takes the political and economic situation back to square one. Part of the problem is Mr. Macron's refusal to accept shifting political dynamics. An anti-establishment constituency is gaining strength from economic agonies. While the far-right and the left are trying to mobilise the working population from different political platforms, Mr. Macron is trying to preserve the status quo (misusing his presidential powers. By appointing unpopular leaders who lack a clear mandate as Prime Ministers, he is prolonging the crisis. If he was serious about 'institutional stability', a favourite Macronist mantra, he should have sought to build a coalition with the largest bloc, the Left, and helped them rule based on a consensus-driven political and economic programme.

# The hidden cost of greenwashing the Indian Railways

**A**ccording to a recent report published in this daily, RITES Ltd., the consultancy arm of the Indian Railways, has won two contracts for the repurposing of six broad gauge diesel electric locomotives for export to some African railways. These locomotives will be converted for use on railways that use the Cape Gauge of 1,067 mm as against the 1,676 mm used on the broad gauge of the Indian Railways. While the Indian Railways, in collaboration with its consultancy public sector undertakings such as RITES and IRCON, has exported locomotives to countries in Asia and Africa in the past, this is probably for the first time that second-hand (used) locomotives are proposed to be exported after "gauge conversion". While there is no doubt that this is a commendable effort in re-engineering that involves virtually rebuilding the locomotives on a narrower platform, the story that lies hidden is a sordid saga of the humongous wasting of costly assets and profligacy unmatched in the annals of railways anywhere in the world, in pursuit of a wholly fictitious goal.

**RTI data and policy justification**  
The report mentions "soon to be redundant diesel locomotives". The fact is that even as far back as March 31, 2023, according to information obtained by this writer under the Right to Information (RTI) Act more than a year ago, there were 585 diesel locomotives stabled (kept idling/stored) in various locations across the Indian Railways' network due to electrification. Further over 60% of those locomotives had a residual life of more than 15 years. Today, the figure is reported to be about 760 locomotives. How and why did the Indian Railways end up in a situation where hundreds of diesel electric locomotives in good working order with years of service still left in them became redundant? The answer lies with the policy of the government to electrify the entire broad gauge network of Indian Railways in mission mode, at a frenetic pace.

Railway electrification in India has long ago transcended mundane considerations such as economic and financial viability and joined the pantheon of universal desiderata such as world peace and universal brotherhood (*Vasudeiva Kutumbakam*). Today, railway electrification is generally justified broadly on two grounds: a saving of foreign exchange by reducing the import of crude oil and reducing environmental pollution, and, as a corollary of the second point, the adaptability to switch over to renewable sources of energy such as solar and wind. In fact in an official pamphlet issued by the Ministry of Railways in February 2021, entitled 'Mission 100% Electrification - Moving Towards net zero carbon



**K. Balakesari**  
formerly of the Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineers, was Member Staff, Railway Board

emission', the objectives of the mission have been spelt out thus: to provide environment friendly, green and clean mode of transport to the people; and to unleash its potential to use of renewable energy, especially solar, by making use of the huge land parcel available along the railway tracks.

Let us examine these justifications in greater detail. The benefit of saving in foreign exchange is true in absolute terms. But viewed in the context of the total consumption of high speed diesel (HSD) oil in the country, the consumption for railway traction is minuscule. According to a study conducted by AC Nielsen and published by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (January 2014), when electrification of the Indian Railways was proceeding at a sedate "conventional" pace, 70% of total diesel oil consumption in the country was by the transport sector. Out of this, the share of the Railways was just 3.24%. In comparison, trucks consumed 28% and agricultural sector consumed 13.2%. The share of the Railways reduced further to about 2% in 2021-22. So, 100% rail electrification will eliminate one of the smallest segments of diesel consumption, leaving the elephants in the room to roam free.

**Truth about environmental considerations**  
The claim of environmental benefits is even more untenable in the Indian context. Consider the following facts. Electricity is a secondary source of energy, except when generated by lightning. It needs to be generated by expending a primary source of energy from fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas, nuclear energy or the kinetic energy of water stored at a height (as in hydroelectric projects), or through solar or wind power.

What is the situation in India? Nearly 50% of the electricity generated today in the country is through coal-fired thermal plants and the Indian Railways plays a crucial role in transporting the coal from the pit heads to the thermal power plants. In fact, nearly 50% of the Railways' total freight earnings of about ₹1.7 lakh crore in 2023-24 (revised estimates) was generated by transporting coal for various purposes of which 80%, i.e., 40% of total freight earnings was generated only by transporting coal to thermal generating plants.

Replacing diesel locomotives with electric locomotives will only result in electric locomotives powered by electricity – about 50% of which is generated by burning coal – being used to move more coal to coal-fired thermal plants to generate more electricity, to transport more coal. Coal is considered the dirtiest fuel, environmentally, on the planet. A complete

switchover by the Indian Railways to electric traction merely shifts the pollution caused by diesel locomotives near the railway tracks to the source of power generation in a more concentrated form, ultimately polluting the same atmosphere. Unless and until about 80% of the total electricity generated in the country comes from non-fossil fuels – and that day seems far off – any claim of 100% electrification of the Indian Railways, making it a "Green Railway", is in the realm of fantasy. Incidentally, before that situation becomes a reality, the Railways will have to find alternative commodities to coal – which, today, is the single highest freight earner – to avoid a financial meltdown.

This article is not intended to reopen the time-worn debate of electric traction versus diesel traction. The issue is about chasing a mirage of converting the Indian Railways into a "green railway", and, in the process, rendering a large number of serviceable diesel locomotives redundant. If all the locomotives already stabled are lined up today end to end, they will stretch for a length of almost 16 kilometres, a majority of them heading prematurely to the scrapyard.

**'Disaster management, strategic purposes'**  
Mission 100% electrification of the Railways will also result in a dichotomy in the near term. The Indian Railways today has more than 4,000 diesel locomotives. With the impending 100% electrification of the system, all of them will not become redundant overnight. According to a recent news report in a reputed financial daily, quoting a senior official, 2,500 diesel locomotives are proposed to be retained by the Railways for "disaster management and strategic purposes". It is beyond comprehension what disaster will require such a large number of diesel locomotives to be set aside, unless this is a ruse to avoid sending locomotives with considerable residual service life prematurely to the scrapyard. Further, it is reported that another nearly 1,000 locomotives will continue in service for the next few years to meet traffic commitments. In other words, a 100% electrified "green" railway will continue to use about 3,500 "dirty diesels" in the foreseeable future, financially sustained to a large extent by transporting a not-so-green commodity: King Coal. That raises the question: what was the ultimate purpose of the tearing hurry to electrify 100%?

The Indian Railways' Mission 100% electrification is a sterling example of what happens when headline-grabbing slogans promoting vanity projects substitute for well-thought out policies, finally resulting in colossal wastage of tax-payers' money.

But does anyone care?

## Levy a higher GST rate on tobacco, sugared beverages

**O**ver the past seven years, since the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), there have been no significant increases in GST rates on harmful products such as tobacco and sugar-sweetened beverages, except for two minor hikes in National Calamity Contingent Duties (NCCD) on tobacco. This has made these products more affordable, undermining efforts to curb their consumption. In this context, the proposal by the Group of Ministers (GoM) to raise the highest GST tier on tobacco and sugar-sweetened beverages from 28% to 35% is a welcome step. However, further tax reforms are essential to effectively tackle the public health and fiscal challenges associated with these products.

**Impact of proposed GST rate hike**  
India is the second-largest consumer of tobacco globally, with 28.6% of adults above 15 years and 8.5% of students aged 13 to 15 years using tobacco in some form. Tobacco is a leading risk factor for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and causes over 3,500 daily deaths in India. In 2017, the annual economic burden of tobacco use and second-hand smoke was estimated at ₹2,340 billion, or 1.4% of GDP – far exceeding the ₹538 billion collected annually in tobacco tax revenue.

The proposed GST hike to 35% is expected to reduce tobacco consumption and boost tax revenues. Preliminary estimates suggest the 35% rate would lead to a 5.5% price increase, a 5% drop in consumption, and an 18.6% revenue rise for beedis. For cigarettes, prices would increase by 3.9%, consumption decline by 1.3%, and revenue grow by 6.4%. Smokeless tobacco prices would rise by 3%, consumption drop by 2.7%, and revenue increase by 1.9%. Overall, this could generate an additional ₹43 billion annually, provided the industry does not "over-shift" the tax burden, which can result in excess profits at



**Rijo M. John**  
a health economist and professor at the Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Kochi, Kerala

the expense of government revenue and public health.

The GoM's recommendation to raise GST rates to 35% is a positive step but falls short of the 40% peak rate allowed under GST law. A 40% rate would have a greater impact, leading to sharper price increases, larger consumption reductions, and an additional ₹72 billion in revenue. It would also lower the risk of the industry over-shifting the tax burden. Currently, the tax burden on tobacco products is uneven, with taxes accounting for only 22% of the retail price of beedis, while it accounts for 49.5% for cigarettes and 64% for smokeless tobacco. The 35% GST rate would narrow this gap slightly, raising their respective tax shares to 26%, 51%, and 65%, but a 40% rate could reduce this disparity further. The World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), to which India is a signatory, recommends that all tobacco products be taxed comparably to prevent substitution between them.

Concerns from the tobacco industry about increased illicit trade due to higher taxes are unfounded. Evidence, including from India, shows that tax hikes have minimal impact on illicit trade. Instead, factors such as tax administration quality, regulatory frameworks, government commitment, governance strength, social acceptance, and informal distribution networks play a far more significant role in determining the scale of illicit markets.

**Balancing GST and excise taxes**  
Another key issue is the reliance on GST, a purely *ad valorem* tax, to regulate tobacco consumption. *Ad valorem* taxes are less effective than specific excise taxes in curbing tobacco use as they are tied to product prices, which the industry can manipulate. Since the introduction of GST, the share of excise taxes in total tobacco taxation has

declined, reducing the tax system's effectiveness in discouraging tobacco use. Many countries with GST or value-added tax (VAT) supplement these with specific excise duties on harmful products such as tobacco. India should consider raising excise taxes alongside the GST revision for a stronger and more comprehensive taxation framework.

While much of the public discourse has focused on tobacco, the proposed GST hike on sugar-sweetened beverages is equally significant. Excessive consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages is a major contributor to obesity, diabetes, and other NCDs. Increasing the GST rate to 35% could discourage consumption and align with India's broader public health goals. However, the government should also consider introducing additional health-focused levies, such as a specific excise tax on sugar-sweetened beverages, to further strengthen the tax framework.

### Key considerations for GST Council

As the GST Council considers the GoM's recommendations, it should use this opportunity to reform the taxation of harmful products. Raising GST rates to 40% for tobacco and sugar-sweetened beverages would enhance public health benefits while aligning with the peak rate under GST law. Pairing this with higher excise taxes would create a mixed tax structure, proven more effective at reducing consumption than relying predominantly on *ad valorem* taxes. Reducing the discrepancy in tax burden between beedis, cigarettes, and smokeless tobacco is also crucial to discourage substitution and follow global best practices. These steps could significantly reduce the health and economic impacts of tobacco and sugar-sweetened beverages while generating vital revenue for development.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Debate in Parliament

A media article has highlighted how politicians in particular keep repeating the same thing over and over again. This is very true of Indian politicians. One is unable to understand what useful purpose is served by harping on the Emergency-era all the time, regardless of its relevance to current issues and legislative proposals. Those at the helm of affairs may rest assured that the Emergency is deeply etched in the collective memory of

the nation, which will ensure that the people of India will never let anyone dare to attempt it again.

**M. Jameel Ahmed,**  
Mysuru

**The picture of victory**  
The replacement of the photo/painting in the Indian Army Chief's lounge, which commemorated Pakistan's surrender to India in the 1971 war, with another painting depicting mythology and modern themes, is deeply disturbing. The 1971 victory

symbolises the valour of the armed forces and the strategic leadership which led to the liberation of Bangladesh. The reason behind the replacement of the painting is obvious to all those who follow the politics of the day. The armed forces belong to the nation and not to any government or party.

Diminishing the historic achievements of the armed forces for political convenience is an insult.

**Kurian Mathew,**  
Kochi, Kerala

#### Ustad Zakir Hussain

The passing of tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain marks the end of an era. For a country that faces threats to its diversity, the legendary artist was a shining example who demonstrated the fact that music is that divine and powerful unifier which transcends all such man-made barriers, bringing together mankind under one umbrella. The catch word coined by him, 'Wah Taj', in the advertisement featuring

him in the late 1980s will also be etched in the minds of his admirers.

**B. Suresh Kumar,**  
Coimbatore

Ustad Zakir Hussain mesmerised when he played the tabla. His passing will leave a huge void in the world of culture.

**Sudhir G. Kangutkar,**  
Vangani, Thane, Maharashtra

**No nawab-era cricket this**  
The franchisees of the IPL possess a lot more ken in picking their teams and

assessing the performance and the potential of Indian cricketers than our official selectors. The ongoing Test with Australia is not going too well and the "creamy" lot of players consistently out of form ought to have been benched. Our cricket board is affluent enough to have flown out replacements from its enviable talent pool. The era of cricket as a game of the lords out for a sun tan, has long gone.

**R. Narayanan,**  
Navi Mumbai

# Green hydrogen and the financing challenge

**A**s India charts its path to net-zero emissions by 2070, green hydrogen offers a crucial pathway to decarbonise its industrial sectors. India's ambitious target of producing 5 million metric tonnes (MMT) of green hydrogen annually by 2030 signals its bid to establish early leadership in this emerging sector. However, the daunting economics of financing these projects threatens to derail India's green hydrogen ambition.

Based on a recent analysis by BloombergNEF, India is on track to meet only 10% of its stated goal. The sluggish progress is attributable to the substantial disparity between green hydrogen production costs (\$5.30-\$6.70 per kg) and traditional grey/blue production costs (\$1.9-\$2.4 per kg). This wide price differential makes it challenging to drive domestic offtake and attract private investment. It also creates a classic market deadlock – green hydrogen costs can only decrease with scaled production, but scaling requires viable economics.

## The barriers

The economics of green hydrogen production hinge on two factors – the levelised cost of electricity (LCOE) and electrolyzer costs, both driven by the cost of capital. In emerging markets like India, perceived higher risks push up borrowing costs, leading to a high weighted average cost of capital (WACC). As investment costs make up 50-80% of LCOE in renewable energy projects, WACC significantly impacts overall costs.

Studies show that an increase in WACC from 10% to 20% can trigger up to a 73% surge in the levelised cost of hydrogen, even when all other production factors remain constant. Add to this the current high costs of electrolyzers, ranging from \$500-\$1,400/kW for alkaline and \$1,100-\$1,800/kW for proton exchange membrane systems, and the financial viability becomes even more challenging.

The global perspective on investments reflects these

**Amarendu Nandy**

Assistant Professor (Economics) at the Indian Institute of Management Ranchi. Views are personal

**Malvika Awasthy**

Green Energy Professional at ReNew. Views are personal

barriers. By May 2024, only 27.6% of the 1,572 announced large-scale clean hydrogen projects valued at \$370 billion had reached final investment decisions. This disparity between plans and financial commitments indicates that the market's structural barriers extend beyond technological readiness. India needs to adopt innovative financing mechanisms and policy frameworks to effectively de-risk investments and attract capital to scale its green hydrogen sector.

On the policy front, several countries are showing the way. The U.K.'s Low Carbon Hydrogen Standard Certification provides a model for building market confidence. Similarly, strategic hydrogen hubs in the U.S., Japan, and Australia reflect a shift from traditional industrial development approaches – rather than letting infrastructure follow demand, these nations are fostering integrated ecosystems where infrastructure, production, innovation, and consumption co-evolve. Adapting this approach, with localised industrial clusters linked to renewable energy sources, could create self-sustaining hydrogen corridors in India that attract investment.

## How to de-risk investments

On financing, India needs a multi-pronged approach to de-risk investments. First, the government must implement a comprehensive policy framework that extends beyond production incentives to address fundamental financing barriers. This includes establishing long-term hydrogen purchase agreements and partial loan guarantees to reduce investor uncertainty. It should also create "regulatory sandboxes" that allow for rapid experimentation with novel business models while maintaining safety standards, similar to how fintech innovation was accelerated in India.

Second, India's financial sector must move beyond traditional project finance paradigms designed for conventional energy

infrastructure. Indian banks and financial institutions must develop products that address hydrogen's distinctive challenges – long development timelines, uncertain demand, and complex value chains. While blended finance and green bonds provide initial momentum, the sector requires innovative approaches like modular project financing that lets facilities scale in phases, reducing initial capital requirements. "Anchor-plus" financing models could help, where a creditworthy industrial anchor customer underwrites the base capacity while additional capacity is financed using flexible instruments as market demand grows. Equipment-leasing structures could transform electrolyzer investments from prohibitive upfront costs into manageable operational expenses, following the successful model of solar and wind sectors.

Third, India's international collaboration must move beyond aspirational agreements to tackle practical market-making challenges. Establishing standardised carbon intensity and hydrogen origin certification can facilitate exports and bolster trust in India's hydrogen supply chain. Key trade corridors, such as the Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain Project between Australia and Japan, show how cross-border partnerships can provide the demand certainty needed for large-scale investments.

In the next few years, early projects in industrial hubs such as Odisha, Maharashtra, and Gujarat that demonstrate viable business models will shape how the sector develops in India. The green hydrogen projects must integrate financial structuring from the outset. The focus must be on delivering hydrogen at prices that suit key industries.

India's success in green hydrogen will depend on leveraging its abundant renewable resources through efficient project execution, access to low-cost capital, and strategic investments

India's success in green hydrogen will depend on leveraging its abundant renewable resources through efficient project execution, access to low-cost capital, and strategic investments

# Panchamasalis back to square one

Caught in a legal tangle, this reservation demand defies easy resolution

## STATE OF PLAY

**Girish Pattanashetti**

[girish.s@thehindu.co.in](http://girish.s@thehindu.co.in)

Last week, Lingayat-Panchamasali activists protested before the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi of north Karnataka, where the winter session of the legislature was being held. The protest demanding the community's inclusion under the 2-A category of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) reservation list turned violent. But this is no new protest; it is a three-decade-old demand yet there is no sign of resolution.

The demand received a fillip under the seer of the Lingayat Panchamasali Peeth, Sri Basava Jaya Murtunjaya Swami, who was earlier actively involved in the movement for independent religion status for Lingayat faith. The movement has seen several highs and lows owing to the vacillating positions of community leaders and politicians.

The seer led a massive padyatra from Koodalasangama, an important centre of pilgrimage for Lingayats, to Bengaluru during the previous BJP regime and almost brought the government to its knees. Fully aware of the complexities involved in reclassification but not willing to invite the wrath of the dominant Lingayat-Panchamasali community, the government, led by Basavaraj Bommai, cleverly came out with a strategy to hit two birds with one stone.

Instead of stirring a hornet's nest by tampering with the 2-A category, it carved out two more categories – 2-C and 2-D – to appease Panchamasalis and also the Vokkaligas who were demanding a greater share in the reservation pie at the time. And to capture the



Hindutva vote bank just before the 2023 Assembly elections, the government also sought to scrap the 4% reservation given to Muslims under the 2-B category and redistribute it between these two communities. The two dominant communities were divided on accepting the proposal.

At the same time, in response to a petition in the Supreme Court, the then BJP government filed an affidavit that it will not implement the order on the new reservation categories.

Months after the Congress government came to power in 2023, the Panchamasali resumed the agitation. This became violent in Belagavi and resulted in lathi charge. Considering the sensitivity of the issue, the government has been cautious in its reply on the demand, and even allowed its own minister and legislators to be part of the protest.

In his carefully worded reply in the Karnataka Legislative Council, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah pointed out that he was not against the demand. "Let me make it clear. I will not use the word demand, but the 'insistence' is against the Constitution," he said, and went into the details of the legal wrangle.

There are three major legal hurdles for the Panchamasali demand. The first one is a PIL writ petition filed by Raghavendra D.G. against the State of Karnataka and Others. The

then Secretary of Backward Classes filed an affidavit in this petition before the Karnataka High Court, stating that the government would not alter the existing composition of the 2-A category either by addition or by deletion of any caste.

The second hurdle is the compliance/undertaking affidavit filed by the Karnataka government in the Supreme Court in March 2023 that any changes in the 2-A category or any addition or deletion will not be implemented without further approval of the Court.

The third is the interim report of the Backward Classes Commission of Karnataka, which recommended against any change in the composition of 2-A and abolition of 2-B.

These aside, the 102 communities that are currently in the 2-A category are opposed to the idea of a bigger and stronger community joining the group and shrinking their share.

The next ideal course of action for the Lingayat-Panchamasali community is to approach the Permanent Backward Classes Commission with their demand for inclusion in the 2-A category. The Chief Minister has been saying that any such demand on reservation should be routed through the Commission, which is mandated under a provision of Article 340 of the Constitution.

Meanwhile, Panchamasali community leaders, including the seer, have chalked out protest plans to exert pressure. The Opposition BJP has raised a ruckus in the House on the lathi charge. Although the BJP has been caught on the wrong foot on the issue, particularly because of the affidavits, it does not want to lose the chance of putting the government on the mat.

# Lack of good jobs push young J&K women back to the fields

J&K's urban female unemployment rate of 53.6% is the highest in the country by a wide margin

## DATA POINT

**Samreen Wani**  
**Amitha Reji George**

Over 50% of young urban women who are searching for jobs in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) are not finding any. Among those who are finding jobs, an increasing number of women are being pushed out of the service sector and into agriculture. This indicates distressed employment.

J&K's urban female unemployment rate (youth aged 15-29) of 53.6% in the July-September quarter this year was the highest in the country by a wide margin. This was more than 30 percentage points higher than the national average in this category (21%).

However, the Union Territory's female urban labour force participation rate (LFPR) among youth aged 15-29 at 30.2% was second only to Himachal Pradesh (34.9%) in the same quarter. Here, J&K's figure were more than 8 points higher than India's average (21.9%).

Simply put, a significant share of urban women in the UT are persistently searching for jobs but over half of them are unable to find any over an extended period.

This trend is not new. The region's female urban unemployment rate and urban LFPR have remained higher than most States since 2018.

Mariam, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Kashmir, explains that high rates of female unemployment would push women to take up low-wage jobs with high levels of precarity, leading to distress-driven creation of low quality jobs.

"Women are actively looking for jobs in J&K and are desperate to have them but there are no jobs in the region. It's a case of structural unemployment. There is a huge mismatch between the skills of the people looking for jobs, the demand of the labour market, and government policies".

Drawing from her field work Mariam adds, "In Budgam (a district in Kashmir) and Srinagar, women in the handicrafts sector work for ₹50-100 a day. Students with a PhD degree are working for ₹15,000-20,000 a month."

Anamitra Roy Chowdhury, Assistant Professor, Centre for Informal Sector and Labour Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, says if the LFPR is increasing quarter to quarter but the actual employment is not increasing at the same pace, the gap between labour supply and demand is going to increase, which is a serious problem.

"It means that you are unable to provide any job regardless of quality. Unlike developed economies, we do not have fall back options like unemployment insurance. So, what could happen in the next few quarters is these women become 'discouraged workers' and leave the labour market. That will be a tragedy."

Chart 1 shows the urban LFPR for women aged 15-29 years in J&K compared with the all-India average.

The urban LFPR in the latest quarter for young J&K women – 30.2% – is the third highest for the UT in the last six years. Notably, the urban LFPR of young women in J&K has remained about 10 points higher than the national average across most months.

Chart 2 shows the urban unemployment rate for women aged 15-29 years in J&K compared with the all-India average.

In general, post-pandemic, the unemployment rate among young urban women has remained above 50%, dipping below this level only in a few months. Moreover, the unemployment rate of young urban women in J&K has remained about 30 points higher than the national average across most months.

The lack of employment opportunities, along with jobs in the services and manufacturing sectors that either do not match their skill set or fail to offer sustainable wages, is driving women in J&K back into agriculture.

Chart 3 shows the distribution of the urban female workforce in the J&K across three major sectors. The share of urban women employed in agriculture has more than doubled from 13.2% in July-September 2018 to 27.6% in the same quarter in 2024. The share of urban women in the service sector shrunk from 61.7% to 47.6% in the same period. Even the share of women working in the manufacturing/construction sector declined marginally.

"This data strengthens the argument that this is distress-related employment, indicating reversal of structural change, and can be better described as feminisation of agrarian distress. In every developing economy, people move out of agriculture to other sectors but if the reverse is happening here, it is a clear sign of distress in the economy," adds Mariam.

The government has introduced a host of schemes such as Hausla, Umeed, and Tejaswini to provide financial assistance to address this issue of unemployment in the region, predominantly for women.

However, Mariam is sceptical about the efficacy of these schemes to boost female entrepreneurship and employment. She says the success rate of startups is limited and access to bank loans and financial assistance is subject to the right political network which often is not easy.

"Public sector employment in J&K is one of the highest in the country, underscoring the lack of a well-developed private sector and indicating limited success of industrialisation in the region since decades. To think that startups and self-employment are suddenly going to solve the long-standing employment crisis in the region is too simple a solution," she says.

Instead, Mariam believes that the government needs to come up with "policies that trigger self-sustained agglomeration economies" in the region to address persistent high rates of unemployment.

## In search of jobs

Data for the charts were sourced from the Periodic Labour Force Surveys' Quarterly Bulletins



Chart 1: The chart shows the urban LFPR for women aged 15-29 years in J&K compared with the all-India average (current weekly status). All figures in %

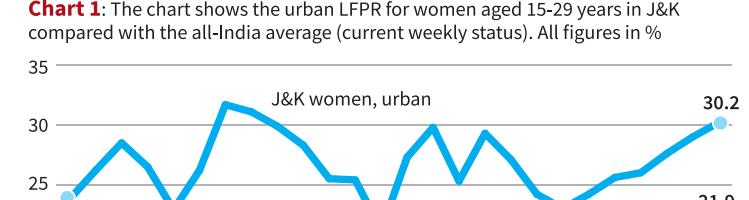
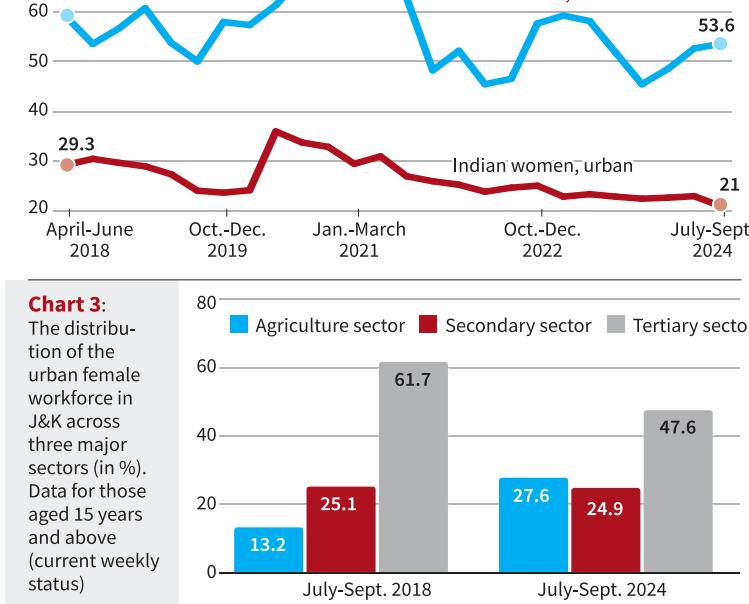


Chart 2: The urban unemployment rate for women aged 15-29 years in J&K compared with the all-India average (current weekly status). All figures in %



Chart 3: The distribution of the urban female workforce in J&K across three major sectors (in %). Data for those aged 15 years and above (current weekly status)



AMITHA REJI GEORGE IS INTERNING WITH THE HINDU DATA TEAM

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

**The Hindu**

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 17, 1974

## Speaker disallows privilege motion against L.N. Mishra

New Delhi, Dec. 16: The Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Mr. G.S. Dhillon, to-day ruled that the Railway Minister, Mr. L.N. Mishra, had not committed any breach of privilege of the House in his statements on the import licences case and refused to give consent to the Opposition motion.

He held there was no case to suggest that Mr. Mishra had misled the House.

As soon as the Speaker announced his verdict, several Opposition members sprang up from their seats protesting in chorus, virtually challenging the Chair's conclusions.

When the Speaker refused to allow any debate or points of order on the subject which he had closed, the Opposition members, barring the CPI and DMK,

# Text & Context

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

**Coal India Ltd's expenditure on solar projects**

**1,209** in ₹ crore. Coal India Ltd. (CIL) has a plan to achieve 3,000 MW solar project capacity by 2027-28 which consists of 211.59 MW in the current fiscal, 697.85 MW in FY26, 1,235 MW in FY27 and 785 MW in FY28, said Coal and Mines Minister G. Kishan Reddy. PTI

**Madhya Pradesh's wheat production declines over 5 years**

**43** in lakh tonnes. Madhya Pradesh has seen a decline in wheat crop production in the past five years from 371.98 lakh tonnes in FY 2019-20 to 328.96 lakh tonnes in FY 2023-24, the Assembly was told. This was stated in a reply submitted by Agriculture Minister Aidal Singh Kansana. PTI

**Norway's donation to the Ukraine navy to deter Russian forces**

**240** in \$ million. Norway will provide 2.7 billion kroner to strengthen the Ukrainian navy to help it deter Russian forces in the Black Sea, the Norwegian government said. As per the government, 100 million kroner had previously been earmarked for maritime training. AFP

**Capex requirement to meet EV charging demand by 2030**

**16,000** in ₹ crore. India needs capital expenditure to the tune of ₹16,000 crore to meet the country's public charging demand for Electric Vehicles (EVs) and achieve the mission of over 30% electrification by 2030. PTI

**Cost of a production unit for Taiwan company in T.N.**

**1,500** in ₹ crore. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin laid the foundation stone for the Taiwanese footwear manufacturing plant at the SIPCOT Industrial Estate at Panapakkam in Ranipet district. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

Follow us  [facebook.com/thehindu](https://facebook.com/thehindu)  [twitter.com/the\\_hindu](https://twitter.com/the_hindu)  [instagram.com/the\\_hindu](https://instagram.com/the_hindu)

## How does La Niña affect India's climate?

How do the La Niña and El Niño influence global atmospheric circulation and weather patterns? What is a Triple Dip La Niña? If a La Niña was to form now, how would it affect the current Indian winters and subsequent summers and monsoons as well?

### EXPLAINER

**Mohammad Rafiuddin  
Shikhar Tiwari  
Rishikesh P.**

#### The story so far:

**W**hile the La Niña was expected to emerge by July this year, it is yet to. The India Meteorological Department now expects a La Niña to set in by late 2024 or early 2025, plus a milder winter due to this delay.

#### What is La Niña?

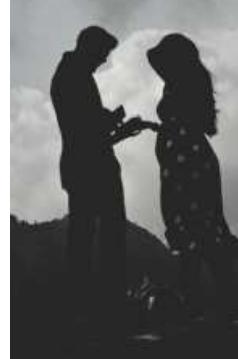
La Niña, a phase of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), occurs when the region of the Pacific Ocean between Indonesia and South America is cooler than usual. Its counterpart, El Niño, represents a warming of the same region. These two phases significantly influence global atmospheric circulation and weather patterns. During La Niña years, India receives normal or above-normal rainfall during the monsoon season. Yet the same phenomenon causes droughts in Africa and intensifies hurricanes over the Atlantic Ocean. Conversely, the El Niño brings extreme summers and droughts in India while increasing rainfall in the southern U.S.

This decade began with three consecutive La Niña events (2020-2022), a rare occurrence known as Triple Dip La Niña, followed by an El Niño in 2023. Climate change may increase the frequency and intensity of both La Niña and El Niño events, as rising sea and land temperatures disrupt the Pacific's balance. This could also amplify extreme La Niña events, which generally lead to harsh winters in India.

**Will a La Niña emerge this winter?** 2024 is different; the La Niña has not emerged as expected. Historically, the La Niña has usually formed during the monsoon or the pre-monsoon period, and it has formed only twice between

### Weather fluctuations

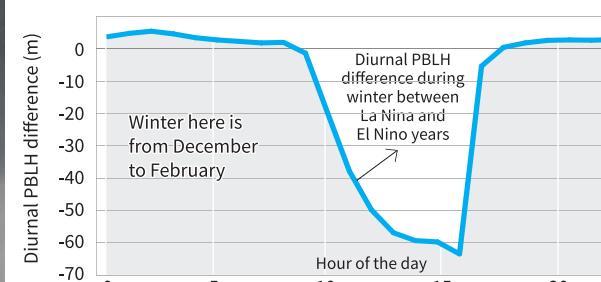
La Niña, a phase of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), occurs when the region of the Pacific Ocean between Indonesia and South America is cooler than usual. Its counterpart, El Niño, represents a warming of the same region.



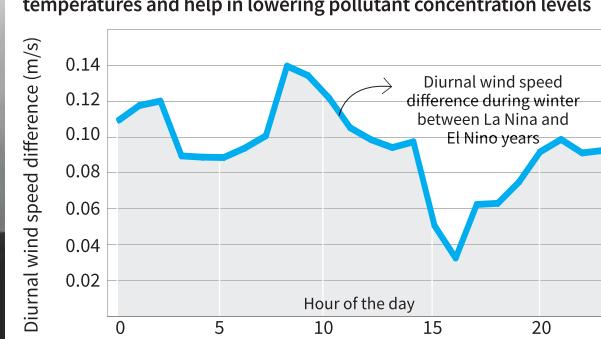
October and December since 1950. Global forecasts had also predicted its emergence this monsoon. But in December, there remains only a 57% chance of it forming in 2024. It will be weak if it still does but it could affect global weather.

The onset of La Niña or El Niño can be declared on the basis of many indices. For instance, the oceanic Niño index (ONI) compares the three-month average sea surface temperatures in the East-Central Tropical Pacific with the 30-year average. When the difference between the two is 0.5°C or higher, it is an El Niño, and when it is -0.5°C or lower, it is a La Niña. Currently, it is around -0.3°C. To be classified as a full-fledged La Niña or El Niño, ONI values need to exceed the thresholds at least five times

**FIGURE 1:** Planetary Boundary Layer Height (PBLH) is slightly lower during La Niña. But the difference is only noticeable during daytime. This could lead to more trapping of pollutants near the surface



**FIGURE 2:** Wind speed is higher throughout the day during La Niña compared with El Niño. This could counter the impact of lower temperatures and help in lowering pollutant concentration levels



consecutively.

#### What is the meteorology?

Cities in southern India like Bengaluru and Hyderabad are experiencing a colder than usual winter this year, while north India is witnessing a delayed winter with above-normal temperatures. Some reports have linked the southern chill to a La Niña, but the current ONI values suggest otherwise. Had a La Niña developed already, north India would likely be experiencing a colder winter than usual.

An analysis of meteorological data over 35 years by researchers at the Council on Energy Environment and Water, New Delhi, has revealed that while La Niña winters feature colder nights compared to El Niño, daytime temperatures tend to be

higher. Meteorological parameters like wind speed and planetary boundary layer height (PBLH) – the lowest atmospheric layer directly influenced by land-atmosphere interactions – also vary during ENSO phases, affecting air quality.

The team found the average wind speed is higher throughout the day during La Niña winters. Faster winds help reduce air pollution by transporting pollutants away. They also found that the average PBLH is slightly lower during La Niña winters. If a La Niña sets in, lower temperatures in north India may lead people to burn more biomass for heating, worsening air pollution. A lower PBLH could also trap more pollutants near the ground. But higher wind speeds could disperse the pollutants, potentially leading to better air quality.

**What about La Niña and monsoons?** El Niño summers are relatively harsher, as was the case in April this year, when India experienced intense, record-breaking heat waves. If a La Niña arrives and persists into the summer of 2025, it may offer relief from high heat. Additionally, an El Niño often disrupts monsoons, with India historically receiving below-average rainfall during at least half of all El Niño years since 1871. But the same figures also indicate evolving patterns since 1980.

Both north and south India, for instance, have received less rainfall during more intense El Niño events while central India has been barely affected. A La Niña, on the other hand, promotes robust monsoons as evidenced by the "normal" or "above-normal" rainfall in the La Niña years of 2020, 2021, and 2022. There were "below normal" rains in the El Niño year of 2023.

Thus it would be a welcome development if a La Niña forms now or early next year and continues until the monsoon season.

*Mohammad Rafiuddin is programme associate, and Shikhar Tiwari and Rishikesh P are consultants – all at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW).*

### THE GIST

During La Niña years, India receives normal or above-normal rainfall during the monsoon season. Yet the same phenomenon causes droughts in Africa and intensifies hurricanes over the Atlantic Ocean.

An analysis of meteorological data over 35 years by researchers at the Council on Energy Environment and Water, New Delhi, has revealed that while La Niña winters feature colder nights compared to El Niño, daytime temperatures tend to be higher.

El Niño summers are relatively harsher, as was the case in April this year, when India experienced intense, record-breaking heat waves. If a La Niña arrives and persists into the summer of 2025, it may offer relief from high heat.

## What is the procedure for removing judges?

Why have some Rajya Sabha members called for the removal of Allahabad High Court Judge, Justice Yadav?

### Rangarajan. R

#### The story so far:

**F**ifty-five MPs of the Rajya Sabha have submitted a motion, for removing Allahabad High Court Judge, Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, to Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

#### What is the procedure for removal?

Articles 124 and 217 of the Constitution provide that a judge of the Supreme Court/High Court shall be removed by the President, on the grounds of 'proved misbehaviour' or 'incapacity' after a motion is passed in each House of Parliament by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two thirds of the members of that House present and voting (special majority) in the same session. The Constitution does not define the terms 'proved misbehaviour' or 'incapacity'. The Supreme Court has

opined in various cases that wilful misconduct in office, corruption, lack of integrity or any other offence involving moral turpitude would constitute misbehaviour. Incapacity here means a medical condition that may include physical or mental incapacity.

The detailed procedure for removal is provided in the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968. It stipulates that a notice of motion for removal should be signed by not less than 50 members in the Rajya Sabha and 100 members in the Lok Sabha. The Chairman or Speaker may after due consideration and consultation admit or refuse to admit the motion. If admitted, a three-member committee will be constituted consisting of Supreme Court/High Court judges and a distinguished jurist. If the Committee, after investigation, absolves the judge of any misbehaviour or incapacity, the motion pending shall not be proceeded with. If found guilty of misbehaviour or

suffering from incapacity, the committee report will be taken up in the Houses of Parliament which would then need to pass the motion with special majority.

#### What is the current issue?

Justice Yadav made communally-charged remarks while speaking at an event organised by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. He is reported to have said the country would be run according to the wishes of the majority. The 'Reinstatement of Values of Judicial Life' adopted by the Supreme Court in 1997, and followed by all the High Courts, mandates that behaviour and conduct of members of the higher judiciary must reaffirm people's faith in the impartiality of the judiciary. The judges should not commit any act of omission or commission that is unbecoming of the high office they occupy. Notably, though the Judges (Inquiry) Bill, 2006 was not passed by the Parliament, it defined 'misbehaviour' to

include violation of code of conduct for the judges. This bill proposed imposition of 'minor measures,' like issuing warnings, public or private censure, withdrawal of judicial work for a limited time etc., for misconduct that does not warrant removal.

#### What is required?

The Blackstone's ratio in criminal jurisprudence that 'it is better that ten guilty persons escape than that one innocent suffer' can be applied even when it comes to the removal of judges. The stringent process with the requirement of special majority in both houses has resulted in the non-removal of judges even after having been found guilty of misbehaviour by the inquiry committee. This is nevertheless essential to protect the independence of judges while discharging their duties. The Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, against whom himself a notice of motion for removal has been submitted, is unlikely to admit the present motion. The Supreme Court has issued a notice seeking details of the controversial speech made by Justice Yadav. The Judge is likely to appear before the Supreme Court Collegium to explain his stand. It is cardinal that Judges display behaviour that behoves the high constitutional office they hold.

*Rangarajan R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Polity Simplified'. Views expressed are personal.*

### THE GIST

Articles 124 and 217 of the Constitution provide that a judge of the Supreme Court/High Court shall be removed by the President, on the grounds of 'proved misbehaviour' or 'incapacity' after a motion is passed in each House of Parliament.

Justice Yadav made communally-charged remarks while speaking at an event organised by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

The stringent process with the requirement of special majority in both houses has resulted in the non-removal of judges even after having been found guilty of misbehaviour by the inquiry committee.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

# Why the legacy of Jawaharlal Nehru endures even now

The belittling of Nehru is odd, because the standing of the current Prime Minister is not validated by writing out a previous PM from the annals of history. The future will judge both leaders on their own merit

**Neera Chandhoke**

*At the end of a two-day debate on the Indian Constitution in Parliament, Prime Minister Narendra Modi critiqued previous Congress governments stating that former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru started the "subversion" of the Constitution with his amendment to the fundamental right to expression. The External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, in another venue, similarly critiqued Nehru saying that the current government was trying to correct the 'Nehru foreign policy'. This article, dated December 4, 2021, by Neera Chandhoke tries to explain why Nehru is more important than ever now.*

A n otherwise ordinary 'first' speech given by India's fourteenth President, Ram Nath Kovind, would have gone unremarked, except for one notable omission. The name of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, arguably the foremost leader of the freedom struggle, and India's first Prime Minister, was spectacularly missing from the inventory of prominent Indians listed by the President. Though the government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has gone to extraordinary lengths to eliminate references to the architect of democratic India, we expect the head of state to stand above partisan party politics. There is cause for disappointment.

A few days after Mr. Kovind's speech, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) published a largish booklet to celebrate the birth centenary of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya. In the section on great leaders of India, 'Mahapurush', the names of Nehru as well as Mahatma Gandhi are conspicuous by their absence. Almost 10 lakh senior school students in Uttar Pradesh are forced to study the booklet, appear for an exam, and be rewarded if they perform well. Many of the 'great men' listed in the booklet have never taken part in the freedom struggle, and never been jailed for combating colonialism, unlike Nehru and the Mahatma. But their names occupy pride of place in oral and written histories authored by the BJP. Leaders who fought for Independence are simply written off.

#### The historical perspective

The belittling of Pandit Nehru is odd, because the standing of the current Prime Minister is not validated by writing out a previous Prime Minister from the annals of history. The future will judge both leaders on their own merit, their success or their failure in managing a complex and plural society, their credentials as democrats, and their political, economic, and strategic visions. Both have a place in modern India. What that place is, will be decided by history. The current dispensation should take the art of history writing seriously and not reduce it to pamphleteering. History is important for collective self-understanding, because it enables us to understand where we have come from, and how we got from 'there' to 'here'. Without competent histories that allow us to understand our collective past and present, and help us generate visions for the future, entire generations will lose their bearings.

What the philosopher Jürgen Habermas calls the 'public use of history'



**In remembrance:** School students pay homage to former Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on his 135th birth anniversary, in Kolkata on November 14. ANI

should be, for this reason, subjected to strong evaluations. Since the craft has a bearing on the human condition, we ought to distinguish between histories that inspire a democratic, critical sensibility to contain and challenge authoritarianism, from those that feed appetites for absolute power. History, of course, must narrate tales of tyrants and despots, so that we take care not to repeat the errors of the past. But it must also chronicle tales of the triumph of the human spirit, and inspire us to struggle against totalitarianism and suppression of individual freedom.

For the ruling class, history should be important, because it reminds them that absolute power, often won at the expense of human freedom, does not endure. Unexpected moments arise in the life of a society when its members clamour for change, when existing gods are brought down, and new ones erected in their place, condemned to wait for their own

downfall. All of us should be wary of changing tides of fortune.

Fortune, wrote the 16th century political theorist of Florence, Niccolò Machiavelli, is unpredictable and inexplicable. She is an active sharer in man's making of history, she produces the unforeseen, and she will never be dominated, but will dominate men. That is why Machiavelli advised the Prince of Florence to study history. The public role of history is to remind rulers that fortune is fickle. After all, Nehru, who once led India to freedom, is vilified in his own country by the benighted cyberspace industry. This is short-sighted, because to unremember the man is to forget that there is an alternative to narrow and energy-consuming nationalism.

Despite all attempts, Nehru continues to be remembered by many for his contribution to the institutionalisation of democracy, establishing institutions of excellence, and his conviction that

poverty and inequality in India cannot be tackled by the market. There is, however, more to a good society: solidarity with struggling people within and outside the country.

Nehru, as one of the most distinguished leaders of Third World solidarity, reached out to the rest of the colonised world, and forged a joint front against colonialism and a reinvented imperialism. He was, by temperament and experience, a cosmopolitan. His frequent visits to Europe, his deep familiarity with the past, and his understanding of the contemporary ideologies of the day, from liberalism to Fabian socialism, to communist internationalism, had convinced him that the future of India was incomplete without the liberation of other colonies.

#### Role of intellectual journeys

Nehru's commitment to the independence of the Third World had been shaped by intellectual journeys through history, as well as participation in a number of international conferences such as the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities in Brussels in 1927. He played a prominent role in the 1955 Bandung Conference, which set the stage for the emergence of a new bloc, and a new ideology in global affairs. Representatives of 29 countries from the global South, comprising well over a billion people, met to consider and debate on how they could help each other to neutralise the harmful effects of colonialism, and bring economic and social well-being to their people. Towering over leaders who had won their political spurs by piloting their countries to independence were Nehru, Kwame Nkrumah, the Prime Minister of Ghana, Gamal Abdel Nasser, the President of Egypt, Zhou Enlai, the Premier of China, and Ho Chi Minh, the Prime Minister of Vietnam. The agenda included every topic over which the colonised and the newly decolonised world had agonised for decades – religion, colonialism, sovereignty, and world peace. The Bandung meeting sparked off reflections on the distinct attractions of non-alignment, and of the strengths that a movement of the non-aligned could acquire in global forums.

#### A deep cosmopolitanism

Interestingly, if one strand of anti-colonial nationalism focussed on the idea and the imaginaries of the nation, the second moved away from processes of closed identity formation towards other ways of being in the world. Nehru's cosmopolitanism acknowledged that our political identities are forged in and through conversations not only with people who are like us, but people who belong to other cultures, other countries, other societies, and other traditions, but who are like us in many ways.

Contemporary history has not treated this statesman kindly. This is a great pity because today's generation might know what globalisation is, but not what cosmopolitanism is about. Even as our society globalises at a frenetic pace, it has turned inwards and become claustrophobic. History must remember Nehru, he taught us to look outwards, to express solidarity, and to become, in the process, cosmopolitans. We must remember him because we have lost out on something that is rather important, teaching our children that our imaginations and our energies should be harnessed to the cause of the oppressed over the world, that closed-in societies lead to stagnation if not to certain death, and that such societies circumscribe imaginings and truncate visions.

We have, perhaps, become lesser human beings.

**Neera Chandhoke is a former Professor of Political Science, Delhi University**



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

## Know your English

**K. Subrahmanian  
S. Upendran**

"Do you know that a skunk has escaped from the zoo?"

"Yes, I read about it."

"The zoo authorities have been trying to find it for three days now. I wonder where it's hiding?"

"Probably in Chicago!"

"Chicago! You mean that city in America?"

"Yes."

"What makes you think the skunk has gone to Chicago?"

"Because the word 'Chicago' means 'Skunktown'."

"Skunktown! You're joking, right?"

"No, I'm quite serious. 'Chicago' is an American Indian word meaning 'place of bad smell', 'place of skunk smells' or 'skunktown'."

"I just don't believe this. Why would anybody name their city 'Skunktown'?"

"Don't ask me, I just ..."

"... I would forbid anyone from calling the place ..."

"... You cannot 'forbid' someone 'from doing something'."

"You mean it's wrong to say 'I forbid you from going out'?"

"Yes, it's wrong. You should say 'I forbid you to go out'. The word 'forbid' takes 'to'."

"I see. I forbid you to sing that song. Is that O.K.?"

"Sounds fine."

"Good. So 'forbid' is followed by 'to'. But there's another word which also means 'not allow', but is followed by 'from'."

"The word you're thinking of is 'prohibit'."

"Yes, that's right. PROhibit."

"It's not PROhibit, but proHbit. The stress is on the second syllable. The word prohibit is usually followed by the word 'from'. For example, in my company employees are prohibited from smoking."

"In some countries, people are prohibited from smoking in public places."

"I wish they would introduce such a law in our country as well. Well, I'd like to get back to work. There are oodles of things to do."

"Oodles? What does it mean?"

"It means 'a great amount, lots'. This morning, I ate toast with oodles of butter."

"I had oodles of idlis this morning."

"Good for you. I have ..."

"Oodles. Oodles. Sounds like noodles, doesn't it?"

"Yes, it rhymes with noodles. Now, if you don't mind, I'd like to have my lunch and start on my work."

"Give me two minutes and I'll have oodles of noodles ready. Ha! Ha!"

*Published in The Hindu on May 31, 1994.*

## THE DAILY QUIZ

Fandoms are a big part of any sport. A quiz on fan-owned sport clubs around the world

**Vighnesh P. Venkitesh**

#### QUESTION 1

Name the only major American sport team that is community-owned?

#### QUESTION 2

Name the club playing in English league Two that was founded in 2002 by supporters of another club which chose to relocate from its hometown?

#### QUESTION 3

Which country legally requires teams to give '50%+1' voting rights to its fans in order to compete in top domestic leagues?

#### QUESTION 4

Name the only fan-owned professional football club currently existing in India?

#### QUESTION 5

Name the four Spanish first division clubs that have resisted legal restructuring to 'Public limited sports companies' (SAD), remaining under the control of its fans or socios?



#### Visual question:

Fans of which community-owned English club displayed this banner referring to a former chief executive of a premier league club? The former was formed after the takeover of the latter by an American businessman. AP

#### Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:

1. The name of the offensive operation launched by the Indian Navy on Karachi during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971. **Ans: Operation Trident**

2. The number of days the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War lasted. **Ans: 13 days**

3. The Chief of Army Staff for India during the 1971 War. **Ans: General Sam Manekshaw**

4. The codename assigned for the pre-emptive strikes carried out by the PAF on the forward airbases and radar installations of the IAF on December 3, 1971. **Ans: Operation Chengiz Khan**

5. The name of the Pakistani naval submarine sunk by India in the 1971 War. **Ans: P.N.S Ghazi**

6. The only member of the Indian Air Force to be honoured with the Param Vir Chakra posthumously for his action in the 1971 war. **Ans: Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon PVC**

7. This man commanded the guerrilla resistance movement called Mukti Bahini during the 1971 war. **Ans: General Muhammad Osmani**

Visual: This Pakistan General signed the Instrument of Surrender. **Ans: Lieutenant General A.A.K. Niazi**

Early Birds: K.N. Viswanathan| C. Saravanan| Sonali Das| Dodo Jayaditya| Tamal Biswas

## Word of the day

**Drub:**

beat thoroughly and conclusively in a competition or fight

**Synonyms:** bat, clobber, lick, thrash

**Usage:** The small family drama was drubbed by critics.

**Pronunciation:** newsth.live/drubpro

**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /dʒəb/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to [letters@thehindu.co.in](mailto:letters@thehindu.co.in) with the subject 'Text & Context'

**From Page One****Modi, Dissanayake take up security issues**

India has often raised concern Chinese ships berthing in Sri Lankan ports. In January, Sri Lanka will complete its one-year moratorium on all foreign research vessels docking in its ports.

"We did highlight the role that India could play in a number of activities related to maritime security, maritime research, etc., Mr. Misri said indicating India could offer to conduct research for Sri Lanka. "We pointed to the importance and sensitivity of our security interests in this area," he added.

The statements did not, however, indicate any progress on discussing the issues surrounding projects by the Adani Group, that are under review in Sri Lanka and have faced further pushback after indictments by U.S. investigators against the company. While the Adani bid to develop a terminal at Colombo Port is now expected to go ahead with internal funding rather than U.S. agency DFC's funding, the Dissanayake government has said it may put a hold on a 500 MW wind power project in the northeastern regions of Mannar and Pooneryn. Significantly, despite the company's considerable stakes in Sri Lanka, no Adani company representative was listed amongst participants at the "India-Sri Lanka Business Forum", held by business chambers CII, FICCI and Assocham in Delhi on Monday.

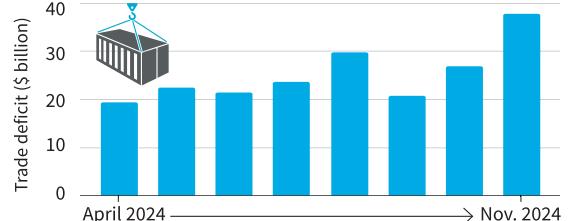
In addition, Delhi and Colombo didn't appear to find common ground on the contentious issue of fishermen, although they spoke of the need for dealing with Indian fishermen, whom Sri Lanka accuses of trespassing into its waters, in a "humanitarian manner". Mr. Dissanayake also called on India to curtail the use of "bottom trawlers" that deplete marine resources.

Mr. Modi also said he had discussed the issue of Tamil reconciliation. "President Dissanayake apprised me of his inclusive perspective," said Mr. Modi adding that India hopes the Sri Lankan government shall fulfil the aspirations of the Tamil people, and "fulfil their commitment towards fully implementing the Constitution of Sri Lanka and conducting the Provincial Council Elections".

Discussing cooperation on the international stage, Mr. Dissanayake said that he had requested India to support Sri Lanka's bid to join the extended BRICS grouping of emerging economies and for India's intervention on the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (UNCLOS) for the establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond Exclusive Economic Zone, that Sri Lanka has asked for.

**Merchandise exports plummet 4.83%, touch 25-month low****Widening gap**

The trade deficit soared to a record high of \$37.84 billion in November, reflecting a 77.5% spike year-on-year

**Vikas Dhoot**  
NEW DELHI

India's merchandise exports fell 4.83% in November to a 25-month low of \$32.11 billion even as the import bill jumped 27% to a fresh all-time high of almost \$70 billion, putting October's record tally of \$66.34 billion in the shade by a wide margin.

Trade deficit soared to a fresh all-time high of \$37.84 billion, reflecting a 77.5% spike over the deficit recorded in November 2023, as Ministry of Commerce and Industry data. This is the third time in four months that India's import bill has hit a record high, and the trade deficit has reached significant levels. In August, imports had hit \$64.34 billion, a record at the time.

Gold imports fuelled the import spike as they hit a fresh peak of \$14.9 billion, beating the previous high of \$10.1 billion recorded this August.

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said the import bill surge shows India's economy is growing faster than the world, and attributed the dip in merchandise exports to an "unprecedented" fall in prices of petroleum products which have affected India's oil exports. "Non-petroleum ex-

ports have grown at a comfortable pace and that is what we should be looking at," he said. Non-petroleum products exports were up 7.8% in November to touch \$28.4 billion, while they have risen 7.4% between April and November this year to reach \$239.7 billion. November's export performance comes after a surprise 17.25% spike in October.

Petroleum exports in November dropped about 49%, but officials said that petroleum products' export volumes had grown 9.6% between April and October, so the dip in export values is linked to the decline in oil prices alone. Non-petroleum and services exports are going to sustain in the coming months and will surpass the \$800 billion export tally in 2024-25, Mr. Barthwal said.

Services exports, he noted, had hit an all-time high of \$34.3 billion in October, and the Ministry reckoned they may have surged further to a record \$35.7 billion in November. ICRD chief economist Aditi Nayar expressed concern at the deficit surging to \$37.8 billion in November as compared to the average of \$23.5 billion between April and October and said the high gold imports were likely driven by festive and wedding-season demand.

**Shah meets families affected by Naxal violence in Bastar**

Statues will be installed to honour personnel who lost lives in Naxal attacks, Home Minister says; he also expresses support for the families

**Shubhamoy Sikdar**  
RAIPUR

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday met the families of security personnel killed in Naxal attacks and civilians affected by the Naxal violence in Bastar.

He held these meetings on the second day of his visit to the conflict-affected Bastar region of Chhattisgarh. Expressing support for the families, he spoke about new initiatives such as a special window for addressing their grievances. To honour the memory of the personnel who lost their lives, the Chhattisgarh government would install statues in their villages, preserving their legacy for future generations, he announced.

Mr. Shah appreciated the Chhattisgarh government's initiative to dedicate one day every week at the Inspector-General's Office to address the grievances of the families of



Reaching out: Amit Shah, with CM Vishnu Deo Sai, interacts with residents of Naxal-affected villages in Bijapur on Monday. PTI

the deceased security personnel. He suggested that District Collectors also participate in this initiative, ensuring a more comprehensive support system. "While nothing can truly lessen the pain of losing a loved one, we aim to create mechanisms to alleviate your suffering," he added.

While interacting with the families, Mr. Shah said, "The pain of losing your loved ones cannot be diminished, but we stand firmly with you. The Chhattisgarh government

is making efforts to preserve the memories to ensure their sacrifices remain eternal."

Elaborating on the overall approach of the State and the Union governments going ahead, Mr. Shah said: "Our efforts are focused on three fronts: encouraging Maoist rebels to surrender, arresting those involved in violence, and responding firmly to those threatening lives. Those who choose violence are being dealt with in their own language."

**Centre cautions OTT platforms against glorifying drugs****The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Information & Broadcasting Ministry has issued an advisory cautioning OTT platforms against streaming content inadverently promoting, glamorising, or glorifying the use of drugs, stating that any violation of the related guidelines might result in further regulatory scrutiny.

The Ministry said the Code of Ethics for OTT platforms provides that a publisher shall not transmit, publish, or exhibit any content prohibited under any law for the time being in force or by any court of competent jurisdiction. It

issued specific instructions in the interest of safeguarding the general public, especially the youth.

The OTT platforms streaming content in India have been advised that films or serials that as a whole portray misuse of psychotropic substances, liquor, smoking, and tobacco would qualify for a higher age-based category of classification.

The portrayal of potentially dangerous behaviour that is likely to incite the commission of any offence, including the infliction of self-harm, and that children and young people may potentially copy, shall receive a higher classification.

**11 Indians found dead at restaurant in Georgia resort****Press Trust of India**  
TBILISI

Eleven Indian nationals were found dead at a restaurant in Georgia's mountain resort of Gudauri, the Indian mission here said on Monday.

Georgia's Ministry of Internal Affairs said the initial inspection found no signs of injury or violence. All victims died from carbon monoxide poisoning, local media reported, citing police.

Ministry, in a statement, said 11 victims were foreigners while one victim was a citizen. It added that the bodies of all victims, employees in the same Indian restaurant, were found in bedrooms on the second floor of the facility.

The police started an investigation under Article 116 of the Criminal Code of Georgia, which implies negligent manslaughter. According to the preliminary investigation, a power generator was placed in an indoor area, a closed space near the bedrooms, which was turned on, probably after the power supply was turned off on Friday night.

A forensic medical examination has also been appointed to determine the "exact cause of death".

Investigative actions are "actively" being carried out, with forensic-criminologists working on the spot, and interviews of persons related to the case are being conducted.

Activists move SC over U.P. *Dharam Sansad's* ads

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Senior bureaucrats and activists on Monday urgently moved the Supreme Court seeking contempt action against the Ghaziabad district administration and the Uttar Pradesh police for allowing a *Dharam Sansad* of which advertisements sport communal remarks.

Appearing before a Bench, advocates Prashant Bhushan and Cheryl d'Souza said the lapse on the part of the district administration and the State police amounted to a "wilful and deliberate contempt of the orders of the Supreme Court wherein it had directed all appropriate authorities to take *suo motu* action against those who indulge in communal activities and hate speeches".

"This is in view of the *Dharam Sansad* which is being organised between December 17 and December 21 at Ghaziabad by Yati Narasinghanand Foundation," the petitioners said.

Chief Justice Khanna said the plea would be listed in due course, and there already were orders from the Supreme Court in this regard.

**Like all conflicts, the Ukraine war will end in negotiation: Moldova Minister****Kallop Bhattacherjee**  
NEW DELHI

Wars usually end on negotiating tables and the war in Ukraine will also end through negotiations, said the Foreign Minister of Moldova Mihail Popsoi on Monday.

Speaking to *The Hindu* exclusively, Mr. Popsoi called out Russia for stationing troops in the Transnistria region of Moldova and said his country has diversified its energy choices and is getting ready to join the European Union. He expressed hope that the intractable positions of Ukraine and Russia will make way for more nuanced and flexible positions and a way out from the territorial logjam will emerge soon.



Mihail Popsoi

"Now of course there is a lot of acrimony that have occurred and in this condition, it is difficult to sit on the same table with an adversary that has imposed so much suffering on you and your society. But all wars end at a negotiating table and I think all parties understand that," said Mr. Popsoi, adding, "eventually it will happen."

Mr. Popsoi said the loss of human lives in the Ukrainian war front is "truly unimaginable" and argued for an end to the conflict in "not too distant future."

In June, when Switzerland organised a peace summit for the war in Ukraine, it drew a strong reaction from Russia which refused to recognise the meeting as legitimate as Moscow reportedly perceived that the conference was favouring Ukraine.

Such failed attempts highlighted the difficulties involved in bringing the two sides to the negotiating table. "We understand that a decision to solve the conflict will be difficult. Peace is something we all need because it will have important positive ramifications for everyone and whatever leverage we can use to contribute to course they will be very welcome," said Mr. Popsoi, urging major stakeholders in the international order to come forward to solve the conflict.

ket and moved away from Russian energy. "The Republic of Moldova has diversified its energy supply.

It has been very difficult but for us it was an existential threat," said Mr. Popsoi explaining how Moldova has calibrated its relationship with Russia in the backdrop of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

"We understand that a decision to solve the conflict will be difficult. Peace is something we all need because it will have important positive ramifications for everyone and whatever leverage we can use to contribute to course they will be very welcome," said Mr. Popsoi, urging major stakeholders in the international order to come forward to solve the conflict.

**In interim order, SC says T.M. Krishna should not be recognised as recipient of M.S. Subbulakshmi award****The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday, in an interim order, directed that Carnatic vocalist T.M. Krishna "should not be recognised" as a recipient of the *The Hindu Sangita Kalanidhi* M.S. Subbulakshmi Award.

A Bench of Justices Krishneshwar Roy and S.V.N. Bhatti, hearing a petition filed by Bengaluru resident V. Shrinivasan, who claimed to be a grandson of the late M.S. Subbulakshmi, restrained Mr. Krishna "from projecting himself as a recipient of this award".

The top court's order came a day after Mr. Krishna was conferred the award instituted by *The Hindu* at the Music Academy at the inauguration of its 98th annual Conference and Concerts in Chennai. "Somebody made bad comments about Bapu Matma Gandhi... will it not offend constitutional values to confer an award in his name to that person? This individual makes a comment against the Bharat Ratna awardee that she is the 'greatest hoax'..." Mr. Venkataraman submitted.



T.M. Krishna

Mr. Venkataraman said there was also a High Court order of injunction operating against the Music Academy, which the organisation had breached by conferring the award on Mr. Krishna.

Appearing for the respondents including the Music Academy, THG Publishing Private Limited, *The Hindu*, and Mr. Krishna, senior advocates C.S. Vaidyanathan and Gopal Sankaranarayanan, and advocate Suhrit Parthasarathy vehemently denied that the Carnatic vocalist had ever termed the Bharat Ratna awardee the "great-

est hoax". "It has been my consistent stand that nowhere do I describe the late great M.S. Subbulakshmi as the 'greatest hoax'. To the contrary, what I say in the articles is that many others have described her as thus. The article is an effort to bust that myth," Mr. Parthasarathy argued.

Taking note of the opposing views, Justice Roy, dictating his order, noted that "while the write-ups and comments of Mr. Krishna are his way of conveying his respect for the singer, the plaintiff-petitioner (Shrinivasan) certainly feels that words used by Mr. Krishna, to say the least, were not in good taste".

"The court is mindful of the respect and honour M.S. Subbulakshmi commands over music lovers across all spectrums. She is one of the most distinguished singers. Although she passed away in December 2004, her mellifluous voice continues to bring great joy to her fans," Justice Roy observed.

Justice Roy said it was "definitely within the power and the prerogative" of the executive committee of the Music Academy to select the awardee, but "till we are clear that Mr. Krishna did not mean anything when he got the articles published, he is not supposed to have the award in the name of the person he is supposed to have disrespected". Justice Bhatti added that the Carnatic vocalist had in the past chosen to justify his alleged comments and articles instead of retracting them.

Justice Bhatti asked Mr. Vaidyanathan, appearing for the Music Academy, whether his client had appealed against an interim injunction issued by the High Court or whether the appeal was restricted to the question of maintainability of the plaint under Order 7 Rule 11 of the Civil Procedure Code.

Jaunpur court refuses to order survey of mosque

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

A court in Jaunpur district of Uttar Pradesh on Monday refused to order a survey of 14th Century Atala Mosque in view of the Supreme Court's interim order that barred the registration of fresh suits against the Places of Worship Act and stopped the lower courts to pass any interim or final order pertaining to surveys of any place of worship.

Civil Judge (JD) City Jaunpur, Sudha Sharma refused to pass any orders on the plea filed by a right-wing organisation, Swaraj Vahini Association, that claimed that the Atala mosque was originally a temple of goddess 'Atala'. The plea said this temple was demolished in the 13th century, after Feroz Tughlaq invaded India. It sought an Amin survey of the disputed property so that its real character could be found.

## Centre 'single-handedly' working to help the Adani Group, says Congress

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday accused the Union government of "single-handedly" working only to help the Adani Group and questioned as to what specific actions had been undertaken by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to investigate alleged violations of stock manipulation and fraud by the industrial group.

Participating in a discussion on the Supplementary Demand for Grants in the Lok Sabha, Congress general secretary K.C. Venugopal said: "This Government is of Adani, by Adani and for Adani. That is the whole story of this scandal. The reports in the public domain have highlighted the Adani Group for stock manipulation and accounting fraud."

In a strong rebuttal, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said that the person who was being referred to again and again by the Congress MP was not made a crorepati by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"The person you are talking about again and again, Modi ji did not make him a crorepati, you made him a crorepati. We made unicorns... These port and airports have been given by you, don't defame us,"



**Lashing out:** Congress MP K.C. Venugopal speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Winter Session of Parliament on Monday. PTI

Mr. Rijiju said.

Opening the debate from the Opposition side, Mr. Venugopal said: "According to the latest report, there is an Adani port/terminal every 500 km along the country's 7,516-km-long coastline. The company runs seven airports in the country."

### 'Greatest irony'

Levelling conflict of interest allegations against SEBI Chairperson Madhavi Buch, Mr. Venugopal said between 2017 and 2024, she allegedly received over ₹6.4 crore from ICICI bank while serving as a SEBI official regulating that bank. "This was five times her salary from SEBI, presenting a blatant conflict of interest," he said.

He said that the SEBI Chairperson had personal stakes in offshore entities used in the Adani money scandal. "How can we investigate a scandal which

she is part of? This is the greatest irony in this scandal."

The Congress MP questioned whether Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was going to have a Joint Parliamentary Committee inquiry into all these charges.

He said that inaction on the part of the government undermined its claims of transparency and commitment to investor confidence.

Another Congress MP Manish Tewari said that the economy was running on the back of government capital expenditure. He cited figures to further say that economic parameters have declined in the Modi regime, compared to the UPA regime.

Trinamool Congress member Sougata Ray said the government was caught in a "pincer movement" of whether to push growth or control inflation.

**T**he Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday demanded that a huge collection of letters of Jawaharlal Nehru be returned from the residence of former Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

The letters, written by India's first Prime Minister to eminent persons, were shifted from the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in 2008. The facility was renamed the Prime Ministers' Museum and Library (PMML) last year.

### 'Historical documents'

At a press conference, BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra, MP, questioned the decision to send important letters, containing "Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru's correspondence with Lady Mountbatten, Babu Jagjivan Ram, and Jayaprakash Narayan, to Sonia Gandhi's residence", stating that those were not mere letters, but historical documents.

He said the nation had the right to know the content of the discussions.

Mr. Patra said at a PMML committee meeting in February that the issue was brought into the public domain for the first time.

"It was revealed that

## BJP demands return of Jawaharlal Nehru letters

The letters were donated to the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in 1971; Sambit Patra says that on May 5, 2008, 51 cartons of documents were taken away to Sonia Gandhi's residence

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI



**Reference point:** The Prime Ministers' Museum and Library on the Teen Murti Bhavan premises in New Delhi. FILE PHOTO

dri, a member of the Prime Minister Museum Memorial Library, to Leader of the Opposition [in the Lok Sabha] Rahul Gandhi. The letter stated that 51 cartons containing letters from Jawaharlal Nehru were with UPA's former chairperson Sonia Gandhi, and requested assistance in bringing back this national heritage," he said.

It is both surprising and saddening that instead of being digitised and scanned for public access as planned in 2010, Sonia Gandhi took possession of these letters before the digitisation process could begin.

Newspapers have named that those correspondences included letters between Nehru and Edwina Mountbatten, letters between Nehru and *Lok Nayak* Jayaprakash Narayan, who led a strong movement against India's darkest chapter the 'Emergency', and correspondence between Nehru and Jagjivan Ram," Mr. Patra said, adding that the two serious issues involved were "the sense of entitlement by the first family, believing that it was their property to reclaim at will, and second, the content of these letters."

"

The documents are not personal property... they are part of India's national heritage. Therefore, the PMML committee decided to seek a legal opinion... after seeking legal opinion, a letter was written in December by Ahmedabad-based historian Rizwan Qa-

during Jawaharlal Nehru's time, when emails and mobile phones did not exist, communication took place through traditional correspondence. The letters of Jawaharlal Nehru were donated to the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in 1971. They were later reviewed in 2008 by M.V. Rajan, representative of the then UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, who studied Nehru's letters and identified several important ones," he said.

The BJP leader said that on May 5, 2008, with approval from the then Director of the Nehru Memorial Library, a large number of significant documents, including correspondence between the first Prime Minister and various prominent figures, were packed into 51 cartons and taken away to Ms. Gandhi's residence by Mr. Rajan.

"Newspapers have named that those correspondences included letters between Nehru and Edwina Mountbatten, letters between Nehru and *Lok Nayak* Jayaprakash Narayan, who led a strong movement against India's darkest chapter the 'Emergency', and correspondence between Nehru and Jagjivan Ram," Mr. Patra said, adding that the two serious issues involved were "the sense of entitlement by the first family, believing that it was their property to reclaim at will, and second, the content of these letters."

Mr. Patra had earlier raised the issue in the Lok Sabha during Question Hour but Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat declined to answer, saying his query was unrelated to the written question submitted in advance.

## Labour committee asks Centre to increase minimum PF pension

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI



Under EPS, Centre contributes 1.16% of wages with a ceiling of ₹15,000 a month.

said. "Notwithstanding the financial implications involved, the committee desire the Ministry/EPFO to take up this significant task sympathetically with a sense of urgency in the larger interest of the effected pensioners and their family members so as to arrive at an amicable solution," the report added.

Under the EPS, the Union government contributes 1.16% of wages with a wage ceiling of ₹15,000 a month. A grant-in-aid is also given to reimburse the difference of amount between minimum pension of ₹1,000 and actual member pension.

"During 2023-24, the total number of pensioners getting minimum pension

of ₹1,000 a month was 20,64,805 and the total grant-in-aid for providing minimum pension of ₹1,000 a month from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 was ₹957.55 crore," the panel noted.

Noting that the four Labour Codes are yet to be implemented, the report said: "Considering the fact that for carrying out the provisions of the Codes, it is a statutory obligation on the States/UTs to prepare the Rules, the Committee impress upon the Ministry to further intensify their efforts and vigorously pursue the matter with all States/UTs in a time bound manner so as to ensure that the four Labour Codes are implemented," the report said.

Under the EPS, the Union government contributes 1.16% of wages with a wage ceiling of ₹15,000 a month. A grant-in-aid is also given to reimburse the difference of amount between minimum pension of ₹1,000 and actual member pension.

"During 2023-24, the total number of pensioners getting minimum pension

## Honouring the bravehearts



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh pays homage at the National War Memorial on the occasion of Vijay Divas, marking India's victory in the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, in New Delhi on Monday. Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Anil Chauhan, Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Manoj Pande, Vice-Chief of the Navy Vice-Admiral Krishna Swaminathan and IAF chief Air Marshal A.P. Singh are seen. PTI

## Coimbatore serial blast mastermind S.A. Basha dead

**The Hindu Bureau**

COIMBATORE



S.A. Basha

leave. The police have planned to deploy over 1,500 personnel in the city on Tuesday in view of the funeral procession.

The outfit founded by Basha, Al-Umma, had its presence in the western and southern districts of Tamil Nadu, especially Coimbatore, Dindigul, Madurai, and Tirunelveli.

Inspired by his leadership, other members such as Imam Ali and Hyder Ali took forward the Al-Umma ideology and enrolled many youth into the organisation.

According to police sources, Basha in his early days was a firewood commission agent.

He entered the real estate business with one Abdul Hameed. During the Babri Masjid demolition, several cases were filed against him.

Meanwhile, the Coimbatore City Police stepped up vigilance and recalled police officers who were on

## Amid criticism, Army moves iconic 1971 painting to Manekshaw Centre

**Dinakar Peri**

NEW DELHI

Amid mounting criticism, the Indian Army installed the iconic painting of the surrender of Pakistan in 1971 at its Manekshaw convention centre on Monday after removing it from the Army chief's lounge recently. The development coincided with Vijay Divas, which marks India's historic victory in the Bangladesh Liberation War.

"On the occasion of Vijay Diwas, General Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of the Army Staff along with the President Army Wives Welfare Association, Mrs Sunita Dwivedi, installed the iconic 1971 surrender painting to its 'most befitting' place, The Manekshaw Centre, named after the Architect and the Hero of



Congress workers protest against the removal of a photograph of the surrender of Pakistan in 1971 in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

manity for all, the Army added, "Its placement at the Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi will benefit a large audience due to substantial footfall of diverse audience and dignitaries from India and abroad at this venue."

Stating that the painting was a testament to one of the greatest military victories of the Indian armed forces and India's commitment to justice and hu-

instrument of surrender by Pakistan in Dhaka, which ended the Liberation War of 1971 and led to the creation of an independent Bangladesh, earlier adorned the Army chief's lounge in South Block, where he meets with visiting dignitaries and guests.

It was replaced by 'Karam Kshetra-Field of Deeds', painted by Lt. Col. Thomas Jacob of 28 Madras Regiment, which features a backdrop of snow-capped mountains, the Pangong Tso lake in eastern Ladakh on the right, the Garuda and Lord Krishna's chariot on the left, and Chanakya and modern equipment such as tanks, all terrain vehicles, infantry vehicles, patrol boats, indigenous Light Combat Helicopters and Apache attack helicopters at the centre.

As reported by *The Hindu*, The iconic painting depicting the signing of the

Simultaneous polls Bill may be introduced in LS today

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

The Union government is all set to introduce a Constitution Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday to put in place a mechanism to implement simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies.

Though the Bill is likely to be referred to a Joint Committee of Parliament after being introduced in the Lok Sabha, the BJP and its allies have issued a three-line whip, asking its members to be present in the House.

Several opposition members have given notices to the Lok Sabha Speaker, opposing the introduction of the Bill on grounds of legislative competence.



Zakir Hussain, Shankar Mahadevan, V. Selvaganesh, and Ganesh Rajagopalan at the Grammy Awards in February. PTI

## His tabla sang like no voice before

### TRIBUTE

Anantha R. Krishnan

**T**here is no single day I dreaded more in my life than today. The news of the demise of Ustad Zakir Hussain, or Z Ji, as I and many others refer to him, is not only shocking but also creates a humongous vacuum which leaves the entire music community strangled, with many fans and admirers surely despondent. As someone who looked up to him as an idol, then teacher, and most recently a friendly guide, I still do not understand his absence.

I had come to take it for granted that Z Ji was to be a permanent fixture in music, always amongst us in the iconic and charismatic physical form. The mere thought of those russet-coloured locks, the beautiful hands, and the conversational naughtiness is almost a daily vitamin for me and many who were fortunate to interact with him.

Musically, it is difficult to find another person who made the entire music fabric of the world come together with purposeful amalgamation. It was Z Ji and his tabla that made connections and bridges where one thought they did not previously exist. It is said the perfect instrument between the heart and the mind is voice, but his tabla sang like no voice before. The dimensions of exploration of what a tabla can do has been defined by his personal creativity. From bluegrass to electronic and orchestral concertos, and without question Indian music, the Z Ji tabla sound was a natural embodiment of the most heightened aesthetics, erudition, and playful virtuosity.

As a teenager growing up in New Jersey, I first saw him perform at Wesleyan University with Pandit Birju Maharaj in 1997 and then at the Town Hall in New York, where he performed a double header with Pandit Jasraj and Sri M. Balamurali Krishna. These two live experiences changed me profoundly, and suddenly the desire to learn the tabla became uncontrollable.

As a teacher he showed the greatest respect for what had come before: the elders, the repertoire, the protocols. At the same time, a thorough creative rationalist, he swiftly batted away blatant kowtow ideologies and discriminations. As a performer, his vision of music was at all costs an uncompromising preciousness that lived in improvisational moments. When Z Ji was on stage, an audience of 2,000 thought he was playing personally for each person.

As I write this, the pain is slowly setting in that he is, in fact, gone. However, there is an incredible treasure trove of values he has left behind for me and many others to ponder, decode, and eventually inculcate. For all the success that found him, he wore it so easily and plainly. He always kept mentioning the best place to be is that of a student, always learning and seeking from the fire of knowledge.

The greatest loss, I think, even beyond all of the Himalayan music he has made, is the unlimited humanity he personified. He gave himself willingly to every single fan, every musician, organiser, and so on. I take his humanity to be his greatest legacy, which is also the most difficult to emulate. He was the true embodiment of the phrase, "It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice."

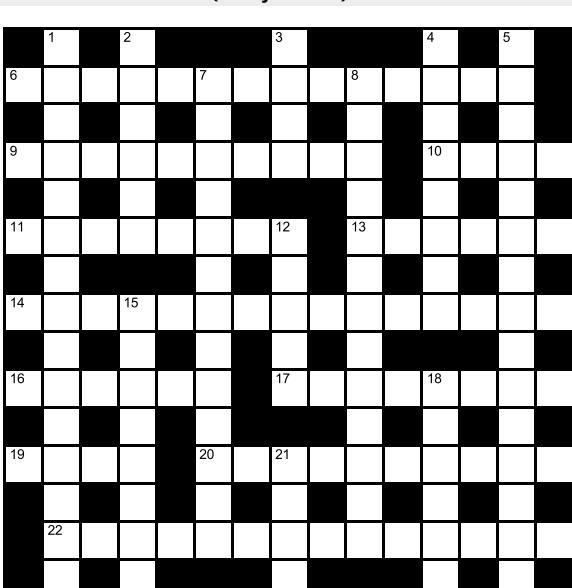
(The author is a percussionist)

## TH CROSSWORD

14358

(set by Vidwan)

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



### Across

- 6 Jack, we ridicule via devious intervention by courts! (8,6)
- 9 Aluminium sheet? That is church wall decoration! (10)
- 10 Cold or morbid aliveness basically (4)
- 11 Master of line and length, Old Rook, bowled at the last (8)

# Tabla as muse, the maestro executed complex rhythms, intricate patterns

Music was an endless journey for Zakir Hussain, whose humility did not diminish with fame and whose curiosity did not wane with age; he took his father's legacy to the next level by adding a touch of showmanship and expanded the riches he inherited from the Punjab gharana

Anuj Kumar  
NEW DELHI

**A** global citizen rooted in Indian ethos, Ustad Zakir Hussain blazed a trail when he carved evocative stories out of the percussive sound of the humble drum set, creating music to bind a fractious world in harmony. His conversational style buzzed with a spark of spontaneity. Natural flow defined his music and personality.

Hussain would impress the purists, enthrall the seekers of world music, and handhold the fans of cinematic music into his creative ecstasy with equal felicity.

Like his free-flowing hairstyle, the versatile artist would execute complex rhythms, intricate patterns, and nuanced dynamics and move on to items such as the sound of traffic signals and deer walk without a pause. In tune with technology, he experimented with frequencies to highlight the subtle shades of the instrument to establish that tabla is not just a rhythmic instrument but also has a distinct melodic quality.

Hussain befriended the tabla at the age of three, and by the time he hit teenage, the instrument had become his muse for life and perhaps an extension of his personality. It came through in his stage performances when his demeanour switched between that of a devotional artist and a rock musician. He took the legacy of his father Ustad Alla Rakha to the next level by adding a touch of showmanship and expanding the riches he inherited from the Punjab gharana.

**Exploring new shores**  
A child prodigy, Hussain was not regimented by his teacher-father. He was allowed to develop wings and explore new shores. By 19, he was teaching at the University of Washington before joining Ustad Ali Akbar Khan's music college in San Francisco where he met his soulmate, Antonia Minnecola. Another fortuitous meeting in New York led to a lifelong bond with the iconic English guitarist John McLaughlin. Their friendship led to the formation of the Shakti band in 1973. They blended Hindustani



### As a child prodigy, Hussain was not regimented by his teacher-father

and Carnatic classical music with Western jazz influences. Hussain accompanied his father's contemporaries Pandit Raavi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan and shared a special bond with santoor maestro Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma, flautist Hari Prasad Chaurasia, and sarangi stalwart Ustad Sultan Khan. Their *jugalbandis* would start as melodic banter and then turn meditative.

Fusion was never exotic for Hussain as he had grown up listening to stories of how Amir Khusrau blended the Indian traditions of Dhrupad and Haveli sangeet with Sufi Qaul to create Khayal.

Hussain had his brush with film music when he played tabla for Laxmikant Pyarelal's maiden venture *Parasmani*.

Later, he composed music for Ismail Mer-

chant's films including *Muhibat*, Aparna Sen's *Mr. And Mrs. Iyer*, Rahul Dholakia's *Parzania*, and Nandita Das's *Manto*. The meaningful sound of his tabla lent layers to storytelling in international productions like Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* and recently Dev Patel's *Monkey Man*.

However, it was a television commercial that made him a household figure in the late 1980s when he brought classical music to the mainstream by promoting a tea brand by playing tabla at the Taj Mahal. The combination of "Wah Taj!" and young Mr. Hussain's curly locks and charming smile accompanied by the resonance of his playing ensured brand immortality.

Fame did not diminish his humility and age didn't wane his curiosity. Music was an endless journey for him. Every time someone would toss the word perfection, he would riposte, "I haven't played good enough to quit."

## Great loss to the world of music, says President

The Hindu Bureau  
MUMBAI



Condolences poured in from different sections of society after the death of tabla maestro Zakir Hussain in the U.S. on Monday. Political leaders, industrialists, artists, and sportspersons took to the social media platform X to convey their tributes.

President Droupadi Murmu said the passing of Hussain was a "great loss" to the world of music. She conveyed her deepest condolences to his family members and countless admirers.

"He was known for his extraordinary creativity and inventiveness. He mesmerised generations of music lovers across the world. He was a bridge between the musical traditions of India and the West.

ralled rhythm. Through this, he seamlessly blended Indian classical traditions with global music, thus becoming an icon of cultural unity.

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi posted, "The news of the demise of the great tabla player Ustad Zakir Hussain ji is extremely sad. My condolences are with his family and fans in this hour of grief. Ustad Zakir Hussain ji has left behind such a legacy of his art, which will always remain alive in our memories."

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said India and the world had lost a musical genius, and a cultural ambassador who bridged borders and generations with his mesmerising rhythms.

(With PTI inputs)

## FAITH

### The best devotees

**Adiyargal** is a Tamil word that denotes those who consider themselves servitors of the Supreme One – Lord Narayana. In the Vedas, we find pious sages like Vasishtha and Viswamitra. In the Itihasas, we come across Guha, Hanuman and Vibhishana, whose devotion to Rama was legendary. But the best bhaktas of Lord Narayana were undoubtedly the **Azhvars**, said V.S. Karunakarachariar in a discourse. Commentator Periya Vachan Pillai says that in terms of bhakti, we are like a speck of dust, when compared to the sages. In turn, the sages are like a speck of dust when compared to the **Azhvars**.

Verses of the **Azhvars** in praise of the Lord are compiled under the title *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*. But why are the **Azhvars** superior to rishis? The **Azhvars** had no worldly attachments. Their focus was always Lord Narayana. But the sages were not of the same mettle. They were not beyond desires. When Vasishtha's son Sakthi was eaten by a demon, the sage was so anguished that he tried to commit suicide. The **Azhvars** had no such attachments. They did not approach the Lord with any requests. All they wanted was to continue to worship Him and serve Him. No wonder then that they are considered special, more significant than even the sages of yore. The word 'Azhvar' shows that they were steeped (*Azhndu* in Tamil) in Vishnu bhakti. Sarangapani, the deity of the temple in Kumbakonam, is also known as Aravamuda Azhvan. The Lord here is steeped in the verses of the **Azhvars**, and hence the name **Azhvan**. Even here one notices that He is not called **Azhvar**, because that is reserved for the 12 **Azhvars**. No one else can be called **Azhvar**.

## SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

## IN BRIEF



## Consumer cutback puts Tata's Starbucks JV under pressure

Tata Consumer Products will push back plans for some new Starbucks store openings until later in its schedule as fewer customers are walking into its cafes in India, its top boss said. "We will calibrate for the short term – maybe instead of opening 100, we will open 80 now," Tata Consumer CEO Sunil D'Souza told Reuters. City dwellers are cutting spending on everything from cookies to fast food as persistently high inflation squeezes middle-class budgets. REUTERS

## 'No timeline on norms for virtual digital assets industry'

There is no timeline for unveiling comprehensive regulatory guidelines for the Virtual Digital Assets (VDA) industry, Parliament was informed on Monday. VDAs are by definition borderless and need international collaborations to prevent regulatory arbitrage. Hence, any comprehensive regulatory framework can be effective only with significant international collaboration on evaluation of risks and benefits, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said. PTI

## 'DGII identified 642 online gaming firms for investigation'

As many as 642 offshore entities offering online money gaming have been identified till date for investigation on potential tax evasion by the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGII), Parliament was informed. The entities, found non-responsive and non-cooperative during the investigation, have been informed to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to block their websites and URLs as per provisions of Section 14A(3) of the IGST Act, 2017. PTI

## + 'Switzerland nixing MFN status won't affect EFTA deal'

**Vikas Dhoot**  
NEW DELHI



Sunil Barthwal  
the EFTA," Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said in response to a query from *The Hindu*.

India's top trade official said on Monday that Switzerland's decision to suspend the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) treatment for India under the two countries' double-taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA) from January 1, shall not affect the free trade agreement recently reached between the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) nations and India.

"So far as the double tax avoidance agreement, that is under the Department of Revenue... but from the EFTA perspective, it is not going to have any impact on whatever commitments have been undertaken in

## In a first, all-woman shift starts at Tata Steel's iron ore mine

**Lalatendu Mishra**  
MUMBAI



Tata Steel Ltd. said it operationalised an all-woman shift at its Noamundi Iron Mine starting Monday reinforcing its commitment to women's empowerment.

"This initiative, India's first, underscores the company's unwavering commitment to creating an equitable workplace and empowering women in traditionally male-dominated industries," the company said in a statement.

This shift will comprise women employees for all the mining activities of the shift, including heavy earth moving machinery (HEMM), shovel, loader, drill, dozer operators and

## Wholesale food inflation eased in Nov.

Overall inflation in wholesale prices cooled to a three-month low of 1.9% last month but manufactured products see higher price rise of 2% while edible oils prices heat up; 'build-up of input cost pressures may hit industry's profit margins' in Q3 too

**Vikas Dhoot**  
NEW DELHI

India's wholesale prices rose at a three-month low pace of 1.89% in November, easing from October's 2.4% uptick with food price inflation decelerating to 8.9% from a 25-month high of 11.6% in the previous month, even as manufactured products' inflation accelerated to 2%.

Inflation in primary articles eased to 5.5% from 8.1% in October, while fuel and power remained in deflation zone, with prices falling 5.83% year-on-year.

Vegetable inflation that had soared over 63% in Oc-



**Silver lining:** Vegetable inflation that had soared over 63% in October, more than halved to 28.6%. KAMAL NARANG

tober, more than halved to 28.6%, but potato prices rose at an alarming 82.8%, up from a little over 78% in the previous two months.

Onion inflation, which halved from 78.8% in Sep-

tember to 39.25% in October, fell dramatically to a mere 2.85% in November.

The Commerce and Industry Ministry attributed November's wholesale price inflation (WPI) pace

to rise in prices of food articles, food products, other manufacturing, textiles, machinery & equipment.

Food products' inflation hardened to 9.5% in November from 7.8% in October, while edible oils and fats' prices surged 28% from 20.2%. The price rise in fruits and pulses decelerated to 8.4% and 6%, respectively, but some other food items continued to see persistently higher inflation, including wheat (8.4%) and paddy (7.6%).

On a sequential basis, the Wholesale Price Index slid just 0.06%, led by a 1.2% fall in primary articles and 0.45% dip in the Food

Index. In contrast, fuel and power prices rose 1.2%, while manufactured products were 0.4% pricier.

Among manufactured products, groups showing month-over-month rise in prices were food products, furniture, non-metallic mineral products, pharmaceuticals, medicinal chemical and botanical products and electrical equipment.

Acute Ratings and Research chief economist Suman Chowdhury said though manufactured products inflation was still mild, it showed a build-up of input cost pressures that may hit the industry's profit margins.

## CAG raps ONGC and NHAI, among 16 public sector entities

**Vikas Dhoot**  
NEW DELHI

bled in Parliament on Monday, pertains to what it termed an 'imprudent decision' by ONGC to acquire a 70% participating interest in a gas block despite a wasteful expenditure of ₹557.6 crore as well as a failure to recover the partner contractor's share of ₹132.9 crore, on ONGC's part.

The CAG also rapped the NHAI for lapses worth almost ₹445 crore, including a case of extended undue benefit of ₹203.1 crore to contractors in highway projects in Maharashtra.

## MARKETS

## MARKET WATCH

	MONDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	81,749	-0.47
US Dollar	84.91	-0.12
Gold	78,350	-1.44
Brent oil	73.87	-

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2512.40	-15.15
Adani Ports	1243.15	-16.80
Apollo Hosp.	7259.20	-0.25
Asian Paints	2402.25	-5.40
Axis Bank	1150.90	-2.75
Bajaj Auto	8989.35	-23.05
Bajaj FinServ	1673.65	-6.05
Bajaj Finance	7208.40	-25.60
Bharat Elec.	316.20	0.55
Bharti Airtel	1662.55	-19.20
BPCL	297.95	-3.75
Britannia Ind.	4846.50	-3.60
Cipla	1448.45	1.15
Coal India	410.45	0.15
D Dr Reddys Lab.	1269.95	-23.60
Eicher Motors	4838.50	-12.60
Giasin Ind.	2685.15	-7.55
HCL Tech	1954.40	-14.40
HDPE Bank	1865.20	-6.55
HDPE Life	634.50	-2.40
Hero MotoCorp	4539.00	-36.45
Hindalco	653.50	-8.60
Hind Unilever	2366.15	-23.95
ICICI Bank	1346.10	1.20
IndusInd Bank	999.35	-12.70
Infosys	1980.05	-19.65
ITC	470.10	0.10
JSW Steel	990.35	-9.50
Kotak Bank	1804.45	-1.20
L&T	3877.85	-9.15
M&M	3084.85	3.45
Maruti Suzuki	11277.00	4.45
NestleIndia	2238.75	-14.75
NTPC	352.90	-4.25
ONGC	251.80	-2.45
PowerGrid Corp.	335.00	1.15
Reliance Ind.	1268.30	-4.55
SBI Life	1421.65	-7.15
State Bank.	860.95	-6.60
Shriram Finance	3137.45	-25.10
Ltd.	1809.80	-3.65
Tata Consumer Product	920.35	-9.35
Tata Motors	784.80	-5.50
Tata Steel	147.79	-1.16
TCS	4415.20	-58.70
Tech Mahindra	1775.55	-20.85
Titan	3438.20	-70.65
Trent Ltd.	7000.35	0.10
UltraTech Cement	1194.20	-141.40
Wipro	309.20	-0.75

## EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	84.66	84.98
Euro	88.81	89.15
British Pound	107.05	107.46
Japanese Yen (100)	55.03	55.24
Chinese Yuan	11.62	11.67
Swiss Franc	94.89	95.26
Singapore Dollar	62.71	62.96
Canadian Dollar	59.44	59.69
Malaysian Ringgit	19.02	19.10
Australian Dollar	53.77	53.97

Source: Indian Bank

## NATIONAL BOARD OF EXAMINATIONS IN MEDICAL SCIENCES

(Autonomous body of the Mo. Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)

NAMS Building, Medical Enclave, Ansari Nagar,

New Delhi – 110029

## DrNB FINAL THEORY EXAMINATION – JANUARY 2025

## NOTICE

National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) shall conduct the next DrNB Final Theory Examinations on 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

Please refer to the Information Bulletin at NBEMS website <https://natboard.edu.in> for eligibility criteria, fee structure, scheme of examination and other details

The online applications are being invited from 7<sup>th</sup> December 2024 to 27<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at NBEMS website <https://natboard.edu.in>

• Helpline Portal on applicant login page

Candidate Care Support: +91-7996165333

• Communication Web Portal on NBEMS Website

## National Games Secretariat Department of Sports (Govt. of Uttarakhand) Maharana Pratap Sports College, Thano Road, Raipur, Dehradun-248008

Date- 14/12/2024

RFP References- 49/2024, 50/2024

## Notice Inviting Tender

The National Games Secretariat Department of Sports, Uttarakhand on behalf of the Governor of Uttarakhand invites bids from reputed and experienced firm/agencies/companies for:

Sr. No.	RFP	Bid Security	Reference No.
1.	Procurement (Supply & Installation) of Yogasana, Mallakhamb, Volleyball and Goff equipment for 38th National Games, Uttarakhand	INR 6,50,000	49,2024
2.	Procurement (Supply & Installation) of Cycling equipment for 38th National Games, Uttarakhand	INR 8,00,000	50/2024

## Schedule of bidding process:

Sr. No.	Activity Description	Date
1.	Issue of RFP	14.12.2024
2.	Starting date for submission of Bids	19.12.2024 @ 15:00Hrs
3.	Last date of submission of queries	17.12.2024 @ 12:00Hrs
4.	Last Date for Submission of Bids	27.12.2024 @ 12:00Hrs
5.		

**DAMASCUS**

Syria must have a 'credible and inclusive' transition, UN tells Jolani



The UN told the leader of the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham group which toppled Bashar al-Assad that Syria must have a "credible and inclusive" transition. The UN special envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen who arrived in Damascus on Sunday met Abu Mohammed al-Jolani. He also met interim Prime Minister Mohammed al-Bashir. AFP

**OTTAWA**

Canada Deputy PM Freeland quits in tariff rift with Justin Trudeau



Canada Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland quit in a surprise move after disagreeing with Justin Trudeau over U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's tariff threats. She also stepped down as Finance Minister, and her resignation marked the first open dissent against Prime Minister Trudeau from within his Cabinet. AFP

**GAZA**

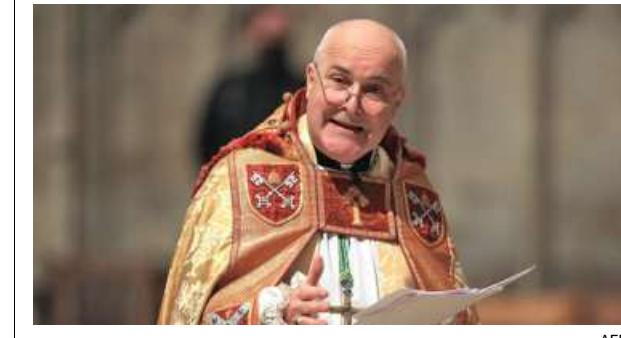
Israeli strikes in Gaza kill at least 10 persons including a family of four



An Israeli strike killed at least 10 persons, including a family of four, in Gaza City overnight as Israel pursues its 14-month war against Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian medics said on Monday. The strike that transpired late on Sunday hit a house in Gaza City's eastern Shijaiyah neighbourhood. AP

**LONDON**

Anglican Church Bishop faces calls to quit after new sex abuse scandal



A senior U.K. bishop, who was set to take over temporarily as leader of the world's Anglicans after a sex abuse scandal, faced calls to quit on Monday over his own handling of another case. Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell was hit by allegations of mishandling a sexual abuse case during his time as the Bishop of Chelmsford. AFP

## Bangladesh elections likely between late 2025 and early 2026, says Yunus

The schedule of the election would be decided based on the reforms to be undertaken, says the Chief Adviser; he adds that the interim government has 'successfully restored confidence among donor agencies' for future economic partnerships

**Rabiul Alam**  
DHAKA

**B**angladesh national elections could be held between late 2025 and early 2026, depending on the extent of reforms implemented, said Muhammad Yunus, Chief Adviser of the interim government.

Mr. Yunus made this statement during his address to the nation on Monday morning, marking the first Victory Day following the July-August protests in Bangladesh that ended the 16 year rule of Sheikh Hasina.

"I have repeatedly called for the completion of major reforms before holding the elections. However, if political consent-



New start: People holding the national flag march along the street to celebrate the 53rd Victory Day in Dhaka on Monday. AFP

sus requires us to conduct elections based on only a few key reforms and ensuring a flawless voter list, then elections could take place by late 2025. On the other hand, if we include additional reforms recom-

mended by the Electoral Reforms Commission and supported by national consensus, it may require an additional six months," said Mr. Yunus. "In summary, elections are likely to occur between late 2025

and the first half of 2026."

Mr. Yunus further mentioned a recent meeting with 19 ambassadors of the EU. "A few days ago, I held a meeting with 19 ambassadors from the European Union. For the first time, nearly all EU ambassadors gathered together in Dhaka to meet with the government."

"This is a historic event, as most of these embassies are based in Delhi, and many of the ambassadors had never visited Dhaka before. They came together to send a clear message that the European Union stands ready to offer Bangladesh their fullest support and cooperation," he added.

Mr. Yunus said he briefed the diplomats on

the government's reform initiatives. "I briefed the EU diplomats on the democratic process for elections. They extended their full support and assured us of maximum cooperation."

On Bangladesh's economic progress, he said, "The interim government has successfully restored confidence among donor agencies, including the World Bank, regarding the future of our economy. They are now engaging with renewed enthusiasm and interest to establish new financial partnerships with us. Both domestically and internationally, confidence in the economy is returning."

Rabiul Alam is a freelance journalist based in Dhaka

## Germany set for snap polls as Olaf Scholz govt. collapses

**Associated Press**  
BERLIN

Chancellor Olaf Scholz lost a confidence vote in the German parliament on Monday, putting the European Union's most populous member and biggest economy on course to hold an early election in February.

Mr. Scholz won the support of 207 lawmakers in the 733-seat lower house, or Bundestag, while 394 voted against him and 116 abstained. That left him far short of the majority of 367 needed to win.

Mr. Scholz leads a minority government after his unpopular and notoriously rancorous three-party coalition collapsed on November 6 when he fired his Finance Minister in a dispute over how to revitalise Germany's stagnant economy. Leaders of several major parties then



Early exit: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz at the lower house of parliament, Bundestag, in Berlin on Monday. REUTERS

agreed that a parliamentary election should be held on February 23, seven months earlier than originally planned.

The confidence vote was needed because post-Second World War Germany's constitution does not allow the Bundestag to dissolve itself. Now President Frank-Walter Steinmeier has to decide whether to dissolve parliament and call an election.

**60 days to polls**

Mr. Steinmeier has 21 days to make that decision – and, because of the planned timing of the election, is expected to do so after Christmas. Once parliament is dissolved, the election must be held within 60 days.

## Many feared dead in French territory Mayotte after cyclone

**Agence France-Presse**  
SAINT-DENIS DE LA REUNION

Rescuers raced against time on Monday to reach survivors and supply urgent aid after the devastating cyclone Chido ripped through the French Indian Ocean territory of Mayotte, destroying homes across the islands, with hundreds feared dead.

Images from Mayotte, which like other French overseas territories is an integral part of France and ruled from Paris, showed homes reduced to piles of rubble.

The crisis, which erupted at the weekend the day after President Emmanuel Macron appointed François Bayrou as the sixth Prime Minister of his mandate, poses a major challenge for a government still only operating in a caretaker capacity.

**Clinics in tatters**  
The cyclone left health services in tatters, with the main hospital extremely damaged and health centres knocked out of operation, Health Minister Geneviève Darrieussecq told broadcaster France 2.



French gendarmes and locals clear a road blocked by a tree after Cyclone Chido hit the French Indian Ocean territory of Mayotte. AFP

**'Catch them young'**

A health worker administers polio vaccine to a child in a slum area in Lahore on Monday. Pakistan began its last nationwide vaccination campaign for the year to protect 45 million children from polio. The country has so far reported 63 cases since January. AP

## Assad breaks silence, says Syria in hands of 'terrorists'

**Agence France-Presse**  
DAMASCUS

Ousted President Bashar al-Assad broke his silence on Monday after fleeing Syria, saying in a statement that he only left once Damascus had fallen and denounced the country's new leaders as "terrorists".

Mr. Assad fled to Russia just over a week ago, as a lightning offensive spearheaded by the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) wrested from his control city after city until the militants reached the Syrian capital.

Long before the emergence of HTS and jihadist groups in the Syrian war, however, Mr. Assad consistently branded his oppo-



nents, including non-violent protesters, as "terrorists".

**'Unplanned departure'**

"My departure from Syria was neither planned nor did it occur during the final hours of the battles," said a statement on the ousted presidency's Telegram

channel. Mr. Assad was propped up through the war by Russia and Iran.

**'Moscow's request'**

"Moscow requested... an immediate evacuation to Russia on the evening of Sunday December 8" after he moved that day to Latakia, where Russia operates a naval base, the statement said.

"When the state falls into the hands of terrorism and the ability to make a meaningful contribution is lost, any position becomes void of purpose," added the statement, released in English.

Mr. Assad's fall sparked rejoicing in Syria and around the world after five decades of rule by his clan.

**Directorate of Ports & Inland Water Transport**

Fortune Tower, Ground Floor, Zone-A,  
Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar.

Phone-0674-2300885, Email: - portsniwt.od@nic.in

**"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE**

01.	Name of the work	: Improvement of Passenger Jetty at Mahensha in Chilika Lake under Krishnaprasad Block of Puri District, Odisha.
02.	Bid Identification No.	: DPWT-09/2024-25
03.	No. of Covers	: Double
04.	Approximate Value of Work	: Rs.13.50 Crore
05.	Tender Paper Cost	: Rs.10,000.00
06.	Period of Completion	: 18 (Eighteen) Months
07.	Date & Time of availability of Bid Document in the Portal.	: 17.12.2024 to 02.01.2025 up to 05.00 P.M.
08.	Date & Time of submission of Bid Document in the portal	: 17.12.2024 to 02.01.2025 up to 05.00 P.M.
09.	Date & Time of Bid Clarification	: 17.12.2024 to 23.12.2024 up to 03.00 P.M.
10.	Date & Time of Pre-Bid meeting	: 24.12.2024 at 03.30 P.M.
11.	Last Date / Time for receipt of Bids in the portal.	: 02.01.2025 up to 0500 P.M.
12.	Class of Contractor	: 'A' & 'Special' Class Contractor
13.	Date & Time of Opening of Technical Bid (Cover-I)	: 03.01.2025 at 11.30 A.M.
14.	Name and Address of Officer Inviting Tender (O.I.T)	: Director, Ports & Inland Water Transport, Fortune Tower, Ground Floor, Zone-A, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, Pin-751023. Phone-0674-2390355, Fax-2396885, e-Mail- portsniwt.od@nic.in

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.

The Addendum / Corrigendum if any will be hosted in the website only.

Director, Ports & IWT, Odisha

OIPR-38035/11/0012/2425

JJ-34:

M ND-NDE

**WORDS OF WISDOM**

Kohli needs to look at Tendulkar's 241 to regain touch: Gavaskar



Sunil Gavaskar urged Virat Kohli to draw inspiration from Sachin Tendulkar's 241 against Australia in Sydney in 2004 and refrain from playing cover drive. "He (Kohli) only needs to look at his hero. The way in which he (Tendulkar) had kept his patience and control on his off-side game, scoring those 241 runs at Sydney," said Gavaskar.

**RELISHING THE CHALLENGE**

Enjoying bowling on different wickets Down Under: Bumrah



GETTY IMAGES

India's pace ace Jasprit Bumrah said he has enjoyed the challenge of bowling on different pitches in Australia. "I always find different challenges very interesting. Because in the Test match that we played in Perth, the wicket was different. (At) Adelaide (with the pink ball) was different," he said in Brisbane on Monday.

**TOUGH JOB**

Fielding at gully is probably when I feel most nervous, says Marsh



REUTERS

Australia's Mitchell Marsh conceded that fielding at gully makes him the "most nervous", particularly because of Cameron Green's excellent reputation. "Since I've come back into the Test team, fielding at gully is probably when I feel most nervous because Green is likely to go down as one of the best ever," Marsh said.

**DAMP AFFAIR**

Rain expected to play spoilsport on final two days of Gabba Test



The Bureau of Meteorology of Australia has reported that there are 90% chances of rain on the last two days of the Brisbane Test. The Bureau of Meteorology website also reported that on Tuesday there will be possible rainfall of 5 to 30 mm whereas on the other hand, the possibility of rain is 2 to 25 mm on Wednesday.

# Advantage Australia as India batters fluff their lines again

The hosts' bowlers strike at regular intervals, leave the visitors in disarray at 51 for four at close on day three; Jaiswal and Gill prised out early by Starc before Hazlewood nails Kohli and Cummins snare Pant; Carey's knock of 70 carries team to 445

**INDIA IN AUS**

**K.C. Vijaya Kumar**

BRISBANE

Extremely fickle weather and indomitable Australian consistency were both on view on a Monday dedicated to umbrellas, frequent intermissions and warm cups of coffee. The third Test's tipping point is surely headed the host's way here at the Gabba.

At a rain-induced close on the third day, trailing Australia's first innings score of 445, India replied with 51 for four. With the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series level at 1-1, Australia would fancy its chances of moving ahead even if the weather is expected to be whimsical over the next two days. Meanwhile, the visitors have to deal with the current deficit of 394 runs.

Rohit Sharma's men had to deal with a damp start to begin with as it rained briefly. Once the skies cleared, there was more agony lying in store as Yashasvi Jaiswal after edging a four through slips, picked the fielder at short mid-wicket while redirecting a Mitchell Starc delivery.

The pavilion-bound rush had commenced and Shubman Gill, itchy hands outside the off-stump, found Mitchell Marsh pluck an airborne stunner in the close-in cordon. Starc had caused another breach and in this series, the left-arm seamer has been India's clear and present danger.



Key scalp: Cummins sent back the dangerous Pant. AFP

Much was expected from Virat Kohli as he had the pedigree and once upon a time, he could walk on water especially if he was Down Under. To add to the lore, he had a hundred in the first Test at Perth. The veteran, though, awkwardly fended at a short ball from Starc, and smiled wryly.

Against Josh Hazlewood, Kohli thrust his front foot out and chased a delivery that should have been ideally left. The ball thudded into Alex Carey's gloves and India was struggling at 22 for three. Rishabh Pant walked in, the rain returned and the

players rushed to the warm confines of the dressing room and an early lunch was taken.

On resumption, Pant, going against his second-nature and trying to be obdurate, edged Pat Cummins. At 44 for four, India was in a shambles while hope rested on the cover-drives that K.L. Rahul essayed. Through multiple rain-breaks, the opener stood firm with Rohit for company.

**Carey on the charge**  
Earlier in a morning caught between the sun and the odd drizzle, Australia dismissed the specu-

lations about an overnight declaration and resumed at the overnight 405 for seven.

The intent was clear: grind the visitors into the dust and score psychological brownie points.

Starc used the long-handle to good effect, hoisting a six off Ravindra Jadeja and clouting a four off Jasprit Bumrah.

The Indian spearhead had his revenge soon and as Starc edged and left, Carey was still at his merry best, dancing down and slamming a six off Akash Deep.

However, the tail wilted soon and it was fair that

**SCOREBOARD**

**AUSTRALIA – 1ST INNINGS**

Usman Khawaja c Pant b Bumrah 21 (54b, 3x4), Nathan McSweeney c Kohli b Bumrah 9 (49b, 1x4), Marnus Labuschagne c Kohli b Nitish 12 (55b), Steve Smith c Rohit b Bumrah 101 (190b, 12x4), Travis Head c Pant b Bumrah 152 (160b, 18x4), Mitchell Marsh c Kohli b Bumrah 5 (16b), Alex Carey c Gill b Akash 70 (88b, 7x4, 2x6), Pat Cummins c Pant b Siraj 20 (33b, 1x4), Mitchell Starc c Pant b Bumrah 18 (30b, 1x4, 1x6), Nathan Lyon c Siraj 2 (30b), Josh Hazlewood (not out) 0 (3b); Extras (lb-17, nb-5, w-13), Total (in 117.1 overs): 445.

**FALL OF WICKETS**

1-31 (Khawaja, 16.1 overs), 2-38 (McSweeney, 18.3), 3-75 (Labuschagne, 33.2), 4-316 (Smith, 82.6), 5-326 (Marsh, 86.2), 6-327 (Head, 86.5), 7-385 (Cummins, 97.5), 8-423 (Starc, 105.6), 9-445 (Lyon, 116.3).

**INDIA BOWLING**

Bumrah 28-9-76-6, Siraj 23.2-5-97-2, Akash 29.5-5-95-1, Nitish 13-1-65-1, Jadeja 23-2-95-0.

**INDIA – 1ST INNINGS**

Yashasvi Jaiswal c Marsh b Starc 4 (1b, 1x4), K.L. Rahul (batting) 33 (64b, 4x4), Shubman Gill c Marsh b Starc 1 (3b), Virat Kohli c Carey b Hazlewood 3 (16b), Rishabh Pant c Carey b Cummins 9 (12b), Rohit Sharma (batting) 0 (6b); Extras (nb-1); Total (for four wkts. in 17 overs): 51.

**FALL OF WICKETS**

1-4 (Jaiswal, 0.2), 2-6 (Gill, 2.1), 3-22 (Kohli, 7.2), 4-44 (Pant, 13.5).

**AUSTRALIA BOWLING**

Starc 8-1-25-2, Hazlewood 5-2-17-1, Cummins 2-0-7-1, Lyon 1-0-1, Head 1-0-1.

# Our bowling unit is in transition, says Bumrah

**K.C. Vijaya Kumar**

BRISBANE

Jasprit Bumrah may be this precise destroyer out on the turf, but away from it, he does have a sense of humour. As he faced the media at the Gabba here on Monday, he was asked about his assessment of the Indian batting with a caveat about probably him not being the ideal judge.

The spearhead's riposte was instantaneous: "It's interesting that you are questioning my batting ability. You should Google and see who has got the most number of runs in a Test (Bumrah was part of a 35-run heist off a Stuart Broad over at Birmingham in 2022).

"Jokes apart, that's another story. We don't as a team point fingers at each other.

"We as a team are going through a transition, a lot of new players are coming here (Australia) and it's not the easiest place to play cricket."

About the bowling attack, Bumrah added: "As a bowling unit, we are in transition. So, it's my job to



Pat from the skipper: Bumrah came up with a lion-hearted performance and finished with a six-for. AFP

help others. I have played a little more than them. So, I am trying to help them. But again, everyone will learn through it and get better. This is the journey that every team will go through."

Specifically probed about Mohammed Siraj, Bumrah had his report-card: "When we were at Perth and in the last game (at Adelaide), he looked in very good spirits. He was bowling well and has

picked up a few wickets. In this Test, we have to give him credit as he had a little niggle but still kept bowling because he knew if he goes inside, then the team will be under pressure. He has a great attitude and a fighter's spirit."

Looking ahead, the speedster hoped that there would be a good batting partnership as India attempts to stay afloat against Australia in the third Test.

# Marsh doffs hat to Aussie bowlers

**K.C. Vijaya Kumar**

BRISBANE

The ball seemed to be chasing Mitchell Marsh at the Gabba here on Monday, and he was more than happy.

Asked about his favourite among the two catches he pouched, the Australian all-rounder said: "Probably the gully one (Shubman Gill). I like fielding there,

but yes, even the one earlier (Yashasvi Jaiswal) was Akash, who bowled without any luck through this Test, finally prised out Carey (70). By then the host added 40 runs while losing the last three wickets, and India was left staring at a mountain too steep to climb.

Marsh was happy with Virat Kohli's dismissal: "He is a big wicket and he is one of the greatest players ever, so it's just about being diligent and trying to execute our plans.

"I guess it's always nice to see the back of one of the game's greats. We bowed really well."

"We have some great bowlers and they are always attacking, and looking to take wickets all the time," said Marsh.

# Gritty Leganes shocks stumbling Barcelona

**Agencies**

BARCELONA

LaLiga leader Barcelona stumbled 0-1 at home against Leganes on Sunday as it suffered another blow in the Spanish title race. Sergio Gonzalez headed home from a corner after four minutes for the visiting minnows and the Catalans missed a host of presentable chances as they failed to mount a comeback.

Chelsea boss Enzo Maresca said the chaotic end to his side's 2-1 win over Brentford exemplified why it is not yet ready to compete for the Premier League title.

Pep Guardiola declared himself "not good enough" as Manchester City's season sunk to a new low after



Struggling: Barcelona has lost three of its last six league games. AP

a 1-2 defeat to Manchester United. "I'm the boss, I'm the manager and I'm not good enough. It's as simple as that," Guardiola said.

**Important results:**

**Premier League:** Chelsea 2 (Cucurella 43, Jackson 80) bt

Brentford 1 (Mbeumo 90); Southampton 0 lost to Tottenham 5 (Maddison 1, 45+4, Son 12, Kulusevski 14, Sarr 25).

**LaLiga:** Barcelona 0 lost to Leganes 1 (Gonzalez 4).

**Serie A:** Como 2 (Gabrielloni 90+3, Paz 90+7) bt Roma 0; AC Milan 0 drew with Genoa 0.

# Women in Blue look to iron out the flaws in fielding against West Indies in second T20I

**Shayan Acharya**

NAVI MUMBAI

Questions remain over Harmanpreet Kaur's fitness as India gears up to face the West Indies in the second T20I at the DY Patil Stadium on Tuesday and take an unassailable lead in the three-match series.

The captain was off the field for a large part of the second innings after battoning for a while as the Women in Blue registered a comfortable 49-run win in the series opener.

The team management did not specify the reason behind her absence, but Titus Sadhu said "the medical team is looking into it" and expected her to be fine soon. During her 14-minute stay at the crease, Harmanpreet struggled to middle

the ball before hitting a boundary at the fag end. While hoping for Harmanpreet to be fit despite a

short turnaround time, India also needs to iron out its flaws in fielding. Despite some fine bowling perfor-

mances by the young Titus and the seasoned Deepti Sharma, sloppy fielding let India down on a few occasions.

Shrugging off the disappointments of the Australia tour, where they lost the ODI series 0-3, the Indian batters - led by Smriti Mandhana and Jemimah Rodrigues - put up a brave fight against the West Indies bowlers, who were all over the place. And going forward, it will be important for the Indian batters to keep the momentum going and ensure that it doesn't fumble in crunch situations.

Unlike India, West Indies had nearly ten days to acclimatise to the conditions, but even then, none of its batters - barring Deandra Dottin and Qiana

Joseph - could deliver. As West Indies head coach Shane Deitz said, the players need to move on from the defeat and 'put a much better performance in the next game'.

**The teams (from):**  
**India:** Harmanpreet Kaur (Capt.), Smriti Mandhana, Nandini Kashyap, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh, Uma Chetry, Deepti Sharma, Sajeevan Sajana, Raghvi Bist, Renuka Thakur, Priya Mishra, Titas Sadhu, Saima Thakor, Minnu Mani, Radha Yadav.  
**West Indies:** Hayley Matthews (Capt.), Shemaine Campbell, Aaliyah Alleyne, Shamilia Connell, Nerissa Crafton, Deandra Dottin, Afy Fletcher, Shabika Gajnabi, Chinelle Henry, Zaida James, Qiana Joseph, Mandy Mangru, Ashmini Munisar, Karishma Ramcharack, Rashada Williams.

**Match starts at 7 p.m.**

M ND-NDE

## IN BRIEF



## Williamson makes merry as NZ sets England huge target

Kane Williamson made 156 as New Zealand amassed a lead of 657 runs before the England openers were dismissed to leave the host in a commanding position at the end of the third day of the third Test in Hamilton on Monday. Williamson's 33rd Test century was his seventh at Seddon Park and his fifth in consecutive Tests on a home ground on which he averages more than 100. NZ was dismissed for 453 after leading by 204 in the first innings and in five overs before stumps England slumped to 18 for two.

**The scores:** New Zealand 347 and 453 in 101.4 overs (Williamson 156, Mitchell 60) vs England 143 and 18/2 in 5 overs.

## Bangladesh survives Powell scare, ekes out nervy win

Bangladesh opened its three-match T20I series against West Indies with a tight seven-run win at Kingstown on Sunday.

**The scores:** Bangladesh 147/6 in 20 overs (Sarkar 43) bt West Indies 140 in 19.5 overs (Powell 60; Mahedi 4/13); **Toss:** Bangladesh; **PoM:** Mahedi.



## Dabang outclass Warriorz, secure spot in the playoffs

Dabang Delhi defeated Bengal Warriorz 47-25 in Pune on Monday to seal its place in the PKL 11 playoffs. Dabang Delhi became the second team to seal a place in the top six. Patna Pirates got the better of Puneri Paltan 37-32 in the other match of the day.

## Team Asia comprising Ma and Manika clinches Waldner Cup

India's table tennis star Manika Batra was part of a star-studded Team Asia that outplayed Team World in the inaugural Waldner Cup in Oslo on Sunday. Team Asia consisted of legend Ma Long of China, Olympic gold medallist Chen Meng, Shin Yubin of South Korea and Kirill Gerassimenko of Kazakhstan, besides Manika. Team Asia thrashed Team World 14-0. Team World had the likes of Truls Moregardh, Dimitrij Ovtcharov, Hugo Calderano, Adriana Diaz and Bernadette Szocs. Waldner Cup was an invitational event organised by the Norwegian Table Tennis Association.

## Riya Shirish strikes gold in women's sports pistol

## SHOOTING

## Kamesh Srinivasan

NEW DELHI

Riya Shirish overcame bouts of nerves as well as a strong field to emerge champion in women's 25-metre sports pistol event in the 67th National shooting championship at the Dr. Karni Singh Range, Tughlakabad, on Monday.

The 18-year-old, a trainee of coach Akshay Ashtaputre in Pune, won the shoot-off 5-2 against qualification topper Simranpreet Kaur Brar (584) for the gold. The two had tied 2-2 in the first shoot-off after scoring identical 31 out of 50 in the final.

"It is a mental game, and I am happy with the way I shot in the final," said Riya, who wound up the final with 14 out of 15 in the last three series of five shots, to bridge a five-point deficit against Simranpreet.



All smiles: Simranpreet Kaur Brar, champion Riya Shirish and Rahi Sarnobat, the sports pistol medallists. KAMESH SRINIVASAN

T.S. Divya, recovering from a knee injury, placed fourth ahead of Neeraj Kaur, while Olympians Heema Sidhu and Annu Raj Singh placed sixth and eighth respectively in the final that witnessed a series of shoot-offs.

Simranpreet was so well settled with her rhythm that she won the junior final thereafter, beating Payal 5-2 in the shoot-off after the two were tied at 34. Riya did well to stay focused after the euphoria of women's gold, and won

**The results:**  
**31 sports pistol: Women:** 1. Riya Shirish (31.5) (576); 2. Simranpreet Kaur Brar 31(2) 584; 3. Rahi Sarnobat 25 (581).  
**Juniors:** 1. Simranpreet Kaur Brar 34(5) 584; 2. Payal 34(2) 573; 3. Riya Shirish 30 (576).

## Gukesh set to face Carlsen at Norway Chess

## Sports Bureau

World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen may not be keen to have a match – a series of games – with the recently crowned World champion D. Gukesh, but the two will come face to face at the Norwegian's home. The two are playing at the Norway Chess tournament beginning on May 26.

It is one of the strongest chess tournaments in the world. The highlight would be the battle between Carlsen, a five-time World champion, and Gukesh.

Arjun Erigaisi, the World No. 4, and China's Wei Yi, the World No. 9 are also in the field for the six-player round-robin tournament being held in Stavanger.

"I'm excited to face the strongest players in the world again in Norway and also the Armageddon will be fun," Gukesh said. "I'll prepare as I usually do and try to be the best version of myself in every way."

## Prithvi needs to get his work ethic right: Mumbai skipper Shreyas

## Ashwin Achal

BENGALURU

Mumbai captain Shreyas Iyer stated that his teammate Prithvi Shaw needs to "improve his work ethic". Shaw has faced criticism in recent times over fitness concerns, and there are fears that he is wasting his natural talent.

Shaw, unsigned in the 2025 IPL auctions, would have liked to respond with big runs in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT) here, but it was not to be. Barring a 49 against Vidarbha in the quarterfinal, the opener struggled to make a mark.

"I think Prithvi is a gifted player. The amount of talent he possesses, no one else has it. It is just that he needs to improve his work ethic. He needs to get his work ethics right," Gukesh said. "If he does that, sky is the limit for him," Shreyas said, after leading Mumbai to the SMAT title here on Sunday.



Prithvi is a gifted player. The amount of talent he possesses, no one else has it

SHREYAS

There is no room for mollycoddling in the world of professional sport, Shreyas said. "I cannot force him (to change his ways). He has played so much cricket. Everyone has given him inputs. At the end of the day, it's his job to figure out things for himself. We can't babysit anyone, right? Every professional playing at this level needs to know what they should be doing. He has also done it in the past. He has to focus. He has to sit back, put a thinking cap on, and figure it out himself. He will get the answers by himself. No one can force him to do anything," Shreyas said.



Method: Shreyas said Prithvi should put his thinking cap on and figure out the way forward. K. MURALI KUMAR



On top of the world: Gukesh had special words of appreciation for his coach Gajewski and mental conditioning coach Upton. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

try is of him and his historic feat.

When asked about the scepticism directed at the win, with people suggest-

ing that Ding Liren deliberately blundered and lost in the last game, he said: "To anyone who understands high-level sports, it's clear

that if you play 13 games at a high level, in high intensity, having prepared for six months, and you come for the last game at a World

Championship, you are pretty much dead at that point. We are basically two dead people playing chess. Mistakes happen in those moments."

Speaking about his team for the World Championship match, he had a special mention for Grzegorz Gajewski and mental conditioning coach Paddy Upton.

"Gajewski has been a huge support for the past two years. He has been my chess trainer. He has done a lot for me. Paddy has made sure that I am emotionally, physically, and mentally prepared for this huge challenge. I would like to thank them both.

"Paddy has been a very important part of my team. After I won the candidates, My sponsor WestBridge immediately got in touch with Paddy for mental training. We started working in preparation for the World Championship. I've

learnt a lot of things and I enjoyed all the conversations that I had with him.

"In the World Championship it's not only about chess, but there are a lot of other things as well. Paddy has had experience with high-level sports and high-level performance in different sports. For me, the conversations that we had and the suggestions that he has given me for this match and for me as a person to develop myself has been very important, for sure.

"I would like to give a lot of credit to Paddy. For example, I lost game one and game twelve, two very important games, and it's very tough to handle that in those moments. His teachings have really helped me overcome those moments."

Gukesh also revealed that he won't participate in the upcoming FIDE World rapid and blitz chess championships in New York.

## Delighted that the 'let-us-do-whatever-it-takes' attitude paid off, says Singhal

## P.K. Ajith Kumar

SINGAPORE



All in: Singhal, who got Upton (left) on board as Gukesh's mental coach, said the 18-year-old reminded the South African of Rahul Dravid. FIDE

up talking about potential some kind of sports psychologist angle."

He made enquiries and found that Paddy Upton was the best in business.

"But Paddy said he had never done chess," says Singhal. "I asked Paddy to call up Gukesh and see how he feels. He told me the boy reminded him of Rahul Dravid."

The preparation for the World championship had been going for some six months.

"There were training camps with all those seconds in Europe and it had to be done in secrecy," says Singhal.

"I got my office to organise those camps."

Singhal is delighted that all the efforts have paid off

# Abhishek and Parneet top the compound ranking rounds

The former equals his National record of 714 while the latter, a member of the world champion women's team in 2023, shoots 707

## ARCHERY

**Y.B. Sarangi**  
JAMSHEDPUR

**A**bhishek Verma and Parneet Kaur shot well in perfect conditions to top the compound men's and women's individual ranking rounds on the opening day of the National archery championships at the Gopal Maidan here on Monday.

Abhishek equalled his National record of 714, while Parneet, a member of the world champion women's team in 2023, shot 707. The women's record of 709 is held by V. Jyothi Surekha.

Parneet pipped Madhura Dhamangaonkar with more Xs (29-24) after the two were tied on scores (707) and Xs+10s (59).

At the halfway stage after shooting 36 arrows, Parneet was third with 353 points, while Madhura led the pack with 355.

"I got some time this year to work on my game and gained strength. My shooting was good today, especially in the second segment and I got into a nice rhythm," said Parneet.

Madhura aggregated her best score.

Individual world champion Aditi Swami claimed the eighth spot with 695 points.



In full flow: Abhishek, who switched to a new bow two months ago, adapted well. R.RAGU



Scraping through: Parneet pipped Madhura with more Xs after the two were tied on scores and Xs+10s. R.RAGU

## The results (ranking round):

## Compound: Individual: Men: 1.

Abhishek Verma (Del) 714, 2.

Kunder Venkatadri (SSCB) 710,

3. Prathamesh Fuge (Mah) 707.

Women: 1. Parneet Kaur (Pun)

707, 2. Madhura Dhamangaonkar

(Mah) 707, 3. Jasveer Kaur (RSPB)

703.

Team: Men: 1. Services (2121), 2.

Delhi (2115), 3. Maharashtra

(2111).

Women: 1. Punjab (2098), 2.

Maharashtra (2096), 3. RSPB

(2081).

Rohan Jaitley set to continue as DDCA president

Sports Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Rohan Jaitley is set to return for another term as president of the Delhi & District Cricket Association after a seemingly comfortable victory over former India cricketer Kirti Azad in the battle for the top position.

Rohan, the son of the late Arun Jaitley, was elected unopposed to the post of DDCA president in October 2020. He was then re-elected a year later after defeating advocate Vikas Singh by a massive margin. With Azad, a member of the 1983 World Cup-winning team and a Trinamool Congress MP, challenging Rohan this time, the 35-year-old was facing sterner competition in his bid to continue leading the association.

While the final results were yet to be declared at the time of going to the press, Rohan had 1239 votes in comparison to Azad's 610 after the counting of 1900 votes had been completed.

The total number of votes polled in the election was 2463.

## Closest battle

The closest battle turned out to be for the post of secretary. It was a three-way fight between Ashok Sharma (part of Rohan's faction), Sanjay Bhardwaj (in Azad's group), and Vinod Tihara. Sharma had 688 votes while Tihara was second with 606 votes.

# Hockey India announces cash reward for Indian junior women's team

**Press Trust of India**  
MUSCAT

Hockey India (HI) on Sunday announced a reward of ₹2 lakh for every player and ₹1 lakh for each support staff member as a gesture after the women's team clinched its second consecutive Junior Asia Cup title here.

"Hockey India, on the occasion, announced a reward of ₹2 lakh for each player and ₹1 lakh to each support staff as gesture for everyone's effort and winning the championship," the national federation said in a release.



On a high: The Indian team celebrates on the podium after besting China in the penalty shootout.

# Magnum obliges in the Sweet Girl Plate; good outing for D' Silva, Netto and Vivek

## RACING

HYDERABAD: Trainer A. Imran Khan's Magnum, ridden by Akash Kumar, won the Sweet Girl Plate, the main event of Monday's (Dec. 16) races.

The winner is owned by Mr. Syed Mohiuddin Mufeed. Trainers L. D' Silva and D. Netto scored a treble each while jockey Vivek G rode three winners of the day.

1. STEP ASIDE PLATE (DIV. I (1,100m)) BEVERLEY (Vivek G) 1, Dubai Touch (R.S. Bhati) 2, Mystical Dawn (Ashad Asbar) 3 and Turiya (Abhay Singh) 4. Neck, 1 and Neck, Im. 6,18s. ₹76 (w), 21 and 20 and 17 (p). SHP: 79, THP: 44, SHW: 70, FP: 1,034, Q: 336, Tanala: 3,293. Favourite: Cypress. Owners: Mr. Vazhaparmbil John Joseph, Mr. Syed Nawaz Hussain, Mr. Bharat Venkat Epar & Mr. Imran Isa Sayeed. Trainer: A. Imran Khan.

4. NEXT MOVE PLATE (DIV. I (1,100m)): N R I DHEERA (Kuldeep Singh Sr.) 1, Muaser (P. Ajeeeth K) 2, American Flame (H.M. Akshay) 3 and Inderhanush (Shivansh) 4.

Not run: Starwalt, 1-1/2, 3/4 and 1-

1/2, Im. 5,31s. ₹152 (w), 36, 11 and 27 (p). SHP: 43, THP: 52, SHW: 72 and 20, FP: 529, Q: 105, Tanala: 1,901. Favourite: Magnum. Owner: Mr. Syed Mohiuddin Mufeed. Trainer: L. D' Silva.

7. HUSSAIN SAGAR CUP (DIV. I (1,400m)): FIRST LADY (Santosh Raj N R) 1, Vital Sign (B.R. Kumar) 2, Sargent (H.M. Akshay) 3 and Hoping Star (Mohit) 4. 3, 1/2 and 1/2, Im. 25,35s. ₹152 (w), 36, 11 and 27 (p). SHP: 43, THP: 52, SHW: 72 and 20, FP: 529, Q: 105, Tanala: 1,901. Favourite: Vital Sign. Owners: Mr. G. Krishnamohan Rao, Mr. Prabhakar Chowdary Tirupurani & Mrs. T. Rohini. Trainer: D. Netto.

5. ZOOM ZOOM PLATE (1,200m): CALISTOGA (Vivek G) 1, Torchbearer (Ashad Asbar) 2, High

and Neck, Im. 26,08s. ₹40 (w), 10, 16 and 11 (p). SHP: 34, THP: 131, SHW: 19 and 19, FP: 169, Q: 156, Tanala: 3,396. Favourite: Black Dust. Owners: Mr. Ashok Kumar Gupta & Mr. Rafaat Hussain. Trainer: R.H. Sequeira.

3. STEP ASIDE PLATE (DIV. II (1,100m)) GACHCHHATU (P. Sai Kumar) 1, Pacific Heights (Vivek G) 2, Arizona Sun (Akshay K) 3 and Timeless Elegance (Md. Ismail) 4.

2-1/2, 7 and 4-1/4, Im. 5,83s. ₹93 (w), 17, 10 and 13 (p). SHP: 33, THP: 47, SHW: 23 and 14, FP: 311, Q: 109, Tanala: 1,043. Favourite: Pacific Heights. Owners: Mr. Varaprasad Reddy, Mr. N. Shyam Sunder & Mr. D.N. Kempegowda. Trainer: N. Rawal.

2. HUSSAIN SAGAR CUP (DIV. II (1,400m)): EMPERORS CHARM (A. Prakash) 1, Quality Warrior (Afroz K) 2, Black Dust (P. Sai K) 3 and London Bell (R.S. Jodha) 4. Not run: Caraxes, 2-3/4, 2-1/4 and Neck, Im. 26,08s. ₹40 (w), 10, 16 and 11 (p). SHP: 60, THP: 34, SHW: 17 and 86, FP: 89, Q: 82, Tanala: 146. Favourite: N R I Dheera. Owner: Mr. Ravinder Reddy Male. Trainer: D. Netto.

8. WANAPARTHI CUP (1,400m): WINNING ATTITUDE (Vivek G) 1,

True Icon (P. Ajeeeth K) 2, Park Lane (Md. Ismail) 3 and Miss Marvelous (Afroz K) 4. 2-1/2, Head and 1-1/4, Im. 24,90s. ₹47 (w), 21, 28 and 18 (p). SHP: 74, THP: 64, SHW: 43 and 51, FP: 565, Q: 255, Tanala: 1,570. Favourite: N R I Ultrapower. Owner: Mr. Syed Mohiuddin Mufeed. Trainer: L. D' Silva.

9. NEXT MOVE PLATE (DIV. II (1,100m)): N R I SKYPOWER (Sandost Raj N R) 1, Dali's Champion (Kuldeep Sr.) 2, Exponent (Naresh) 3 and Sucker Punch (P. Ajeeeth K) 4. Not run: Cosmic, D Battle and Blue Pantheress. Short Head, 10-1/4 and 1-1/4, Im. 6,99s. ₹23 (w), 20, 10 and 21 (p). SHP: 19, THP: 32, SHW: 110 and 10, FP: 41, Q: 16, Tanala: 103. Favourite: Dali's Champion. Owner: Mr. Ravinder Reddy Male. Trainer: D. Netto.

Jackpot: (i) 70%: ₹34,517 (2 tkts.) & 30%: 2,465 (12 tkts.); (ii) 70%: 14,668 (7 tkts.) & 30%: 2,226 (48 tkts.).

Mini Jackpot: (i) 1,246 (31 tkts.), (ii) 4,384 (11 tkts.).

Treble: (i) 4,108 (3 tkts.), (ii) 76 (230 tkts.), (iii) 2,024 (11 tkts.).

## HYDERABAD: Trainer A. Imran Khan's Magnum, ridden by Akash Kumar, won the Sweet Girl Plate, the main event of Monday's (Dec. 16) races.

The winner is owned by Mr. Syed Mohiuddin Mufeed. Trainers L. D' Silva and D. Netto scored a treble each while jockey Vivek G rode three winners of the day.

1. STEP ASIDE PLATE (DIV. I (1,100m)): GACHCHHATU (P. Sai Kumar) 1, Pacific Heights (Vivek G) 2, Arizona Sun (Akshay K) 3 and Timeless Elegance (Md. Ismail) 4.

2-1/2, 7 and 4-1/4, Im. 5,83s. ₹93 (w), 17, 10 and 13 (p). SHP: 33, THP: 47, SHW: 23 and 14, FP: 311, Q: 109, Tanala: 1,043. Favourite: Pacific Heights. Owners: Mr. Varaprasad Reddy, Mr. N. Shyam Sunder & Mr. D.N. Kempegowda. Trainer: N. Rawal.

2. HUSSAIN SAGAR CUP (DIV. II (1,400m)): EMPERORS CHARM (A. Prakash) 1, Quality Warrior (Afroz K) 2, Black Dust (P. Sai K) 3 and Neck, Im. 26,08s. ₹40 (w), 10, 16 and 11 (p). SHP: 60, THP: 34, SHW: 17 and 86, FP: 89, Q: 82, Tanala: 146. Favourite: N R I Dheera. Owner: Mr. Ravinder Reddy Male. Trainer: D. Netto.

8. WANAPARTHI CUP (1,400m): WINNING ATTITUDE (Vivek G) 1,

Heels (Gaurav) 3 and First Class (Mukesh) 4. 2-3/4, 2-3/4 and 2, Im. 10,70s. ₹39 (w), 26,10 and 15 (p). SHP: 48, THP: 43, SHW: 22 and 13, FP: 101, Q: 76, Tanala: 695. Favourite: Ariette. Owners: Mr. M. Ramakrishna Reddy, Mr. Bharat Venkat Epar & Mrs. Rajini Meka. Trainer: L. D' Silva.

9. NEXT MOVE PLATE (DIV. II (1,100m)): N R I SKYPOWER (Sandost Raj N R) 1, Dali's Champion (Kuldeep Sr.) 2, Exponent (Naresh) 3 and Sucker Punch (P. Ajeeeth K) 4. Not run: Cosmic, D Battle and Blue Pantheress. Short Head, 10-1/4 and 1-1/4, Im. 6,99s. ₹23 (w), 20, 10 and 21 (p). SHP: 19, THP: 32, SHW: 110 and 10, FP: 41, Q: 16, Tanala: 103. Favourite: Dali's Champion. Owner: Mr. Ravinder Reddy Male. Trainer: D. Netto.

Jackpot: (i) 70%: ₹34,517 (2 tkts.) & 30%: 2,465 (12 tkts.); (ii) 70%: 14,668 (7 tkts.) & 30%: 2,226 (48 tkts.).

Mini Jackpot: (i) 1,246 (31 tkts.), (ii) 4,384 (11 tkts.).

Treble: (i) 4,108 (3 tkts.), (ii) 76 (230 tkts.), (iii) 2,024 (11 tkts.).

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to accept/reject any tender/application without assigning any reason.

Executive Engineer  
Shimla Division No-II, HPPWD Shimla-3.

HP/3914/24-25

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer, Shimla Division No-II, HPPWD, Shimla-3 on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the percentage rate bids, in electronic tendering system, from the eligible class of contractors registered with HP.PWD, for the work as detailed in the table.

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost	Starting date of downloading Bid	EMD	Cost of Tender	Time Allowed for submission of Bid.
1.	Const- -uction	Rs. 27868143.00	16-12-2024	Rs. 557370.00	5000.00	Eighteen Months
2.	Constr- -uction of	Rs. 4036411.00	16-12-2024	Rs. 80730.00	2000.00	Three Months

of Govt. accommodation for Horticulture Department at Navhar Shimla-171002.

(SH:- Construction of type-II quarters-8 No. in block -1 & block -2).

Main Gate and approach road to College Campus at RKVM, Shimla. (SH:- Dismantling work, CC. 1:2:4, CC.1:3:6 and CC. 1:1:5.3, steel work in gate and railing etc.).

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to accept/reject any tender/application without assigning any reason.

Executive Engineer  
Shimla Division No-II, HPPWD Shimla-3.

HP/3914/24-25

## B.I.T. SINDRI P.O.-SINDRI INSTITUTE DIST: DHANBAD (JHARKHAND) PIN: 828123

## INBRIEF



## Top seed Sutirtha retires owing to illness in opening round

Defending champion and top seed Sutirtha Mukherjee had to retire owing to illness in the opening round of the women's singles main draw at the UTT National-ranking table tennis championships in Bengaluru on Monday. Sutirtha lost the first game to Maharashtra's rising star Divyanshi Bowmick 7-11 before conceding the round-of-64 tie. Second seed Poymantee Baisya, in pic., faced a tough challenge from West Bengal qualifier Nandini Saha before winning 11-6, 4-11, 11-8, 7-11, 11-9.

## Real's Mbappe fit for Intercontinental Cup final

Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe has returned after a thigh injury and will travel to Doha for this week's Intercontinental Cup final.

## Bengaluru 10th day races advanced from Dec. 21 to 20

The Stewards of the Bangalore Turf Club have decided to advance the 10th races scheduled to be run on Dec. 21 (Saturday) to Dec. 20 (Friday).

## LIVE TELECAST

**Zimbabwe vs Afghanistan:** 1st ODI, FanCode, 1 p.m.  
**South Africa vs Pakistan:** 1st ODI, JioCinema, 5.30 p.m.  
**India Women vs West Indies Women:** 2nd T20I, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 7 p.m.  
**ISL:** Sports 18-3 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.  
**PKL:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 8 p.m.  
**Australia vs India:** 3rd Test, day 5, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 5.20 a.m. (Wednesday)  
**West Indies vs Bangladesh:** 2nd T20I, FanCode, 5.30 a.m. (Wednesday)



**On target:** Services players celebrate a strike against Jammu & Kashmir. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## West Bengal cruises past host Telangana

Shrestha nets two in the 3-0 win to keep the former on top of the table; holder Services notches up a victory over bottom-placed J & K

## SANTOSH TROPHY

Sports Bureau  
HYDERABAD

**W**est Bengal and defending champions Services recorded emphatic wins in the Santosh Trophy National football championship here on Monday.

West Bengal maintained its position at the top of points table by outplaying Telangana 3-0, while Services notched up an equally comfortable 4-0 win over Jammu & Kashmir.

Jammu & Kashmir remains at the bottom with no points from two games.

Telangana is currently in the fifth spot with a point from the draw against Rajasthan on the opening day.

For home team Telangana, it was a disappointing show despite keeping the rival forwardline at bay for the first 39 minutes before Robi Hansda took advantage of a botched clearance inside the box and found the target with a brilliant effort. His eighth goal of the championship helped him overtake Tamil Nadu's K. Lijo and become the top-scorer.

Soon, Narohari Shrestha scored the second goal with a fine header at the stroke of half-time. Shrestha continued his fine scoring form, netting his third of the final round and the team's third of the game in the 56th minute.

Receiving a through ball from Rabibul Mandi at the edge of the box, Shrestha swiftly turned and side-footed it into the bottom-right corner.

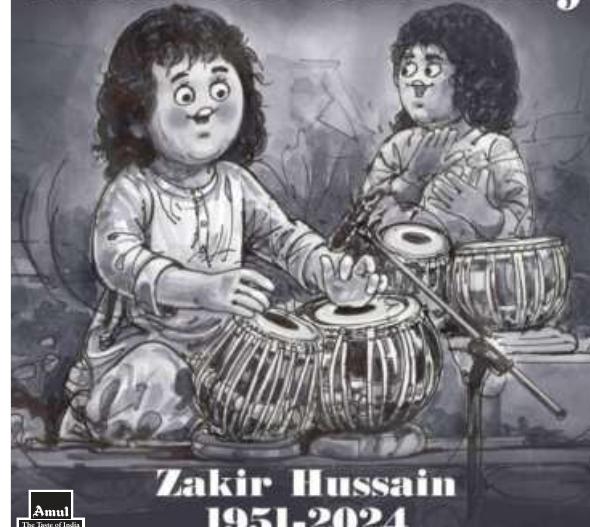
**The results:** West Bengal 3 (Robi Hansda 39, Narohari Shrestha 45+3, 56) bt Telangana 0. Services 4 (Lethaolen Khongsa 11, V.G. Sreyas 26, Rahul Ramakrishnan 53, Thingnam Bidyasagar Singh 54) bt Jammu & Kashmir 0; Manipur 2 (Ningombam Kabiraj Singh 5, Leimajam Sangkar Singh 23) bt Rajasthan 1 (Lairelakkapam Dhananjay Singh 38-og).

## Southampton fires manager Russell Martin

Associated Press  
SOUTHAMPTON

Southampton fired manager Russell Martin late on Sunday after the Premier League's last-placed team was thrashed 5-0 by Tottenham. Southampton is nine points adrift of safety. "We can confirm that we have parted ways with Russell Martin," the club said in a statement.

## Taal ke Sartaaj



**Zakir Hussain**  
1951-2024

diaCunha/AB/996

## Indian team confident of faring well

## TENNIS

Sports Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Indian team exuded confidence of faring well in the IC Asia-Oceania Rod Laver Junior Challenge under-16 tennis event scheduled to be staged at the Winchester Arena in Singapore from Dec. 17 to 19.

India had not only qualified from the region the last time, but also won the world-wide final in the USA, receiving the trophy from Rod Laver, the Australian legend who had won all the four Grand Slams in the same year, twice in his career.

"This time, we don't have Manas Dhamne. But we have a very good team in Samarth Sahita, Aradhya Kshiti, Rishitha Basireddy and Sohini Mohanty," said the captain of the team, Vikram Anand.



**High hopes:** The Indian team will aim to perform well in the Asia-Oceania Rod Laver Junior Challenge. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Vikram was happy that Sohini who was part of the champion team last time, could make the team this time as well. "The format has two boys singles, two girls singles, one boys doubles and one girls doubles.

If it is a tie, then there will be a mixed doubles match to decide the winner. So, the experience of Sohini and her knowledge of the format would be very useful for the team."

With all the players ex-

cept Aradhya Kshiti being busy playing lots of matches in the ITF junior circuit in recent weeks, the captain was happy that they would all be match sharp.

India will be playing host Singapore on Tuesday. The next match will be Singapore against Japan on Wednesday. India will take on Japan on Thursday. The best team after the three matches will make it to the world-wide final in Spain next year.

**Jaquar**

WATER HEATERS

For a good bath experience,  
get water heaters only from the

*Bath Expert*

Trust the bath experts  
for the right  
capacity suggestion  
and be assured of a  
good bathing experience.



CRES



Scan to locate  
nearest Jaquar  
Authorised Dealer

7 Year Warranty (On tank) | Free Installation (In select cities)  
Purchase Assistance: 1800-120-332222 (toll free) | jaquar.com

Domestic & Commercial  
Water Heater Solutions upto 10,000 litres

# Needed: immediate relief for Team India's nagging 'Head'ache

The swashbuckling southpaw has hurt his favourite opposition a lot recently, leaving mental scars most importantly in marquee ICC finals; the Indian bowlers need to come up with a strategy to counter him in order to stay alive in the series as he seems unstoppable at the moment



AFP

R. Kaushik

**W**hat must it feel like to be Travis Head right now? To be sitting on two big centuries from as many Tests, knowing that at least two more innings remain against his favourite opposition? To be aware that he has got into their heads and under their skin, he has thrown them off their equilibrium, that he has repeatedly looked them in the eye and forced them to blink each time?

What must it feel like to be Travis Head right now, secure in the knowledge that his top-order batters leave ego inside the dressing room and walk out armed with smarts? That they aren't trying to bash Jasprit Bumrah out of the attack but tire him out selflessly so that the pretty stroke-makers that come a little lower down can have a ball?

Pretty nice, one suspects.

To say that Head has been the difference between Australia and India in this Test series so far might appear unfair to Bumrah, India's indefatigable champion who has single-handedly pushed the opposition into a corner. But Bumrah has by and large ploughed a lone furrow, at once the shock and the stock bowler. Head, on the other hand, has received pockets of support at various times from other quarters, which has allowed him to do his thing without compunction, without taking a backward step.

This Travis Head, he wasn't always this consistent, you know? Many might argue that he still isn't, but you won't find any Indians in that list of 'many'. For a year and a half now, in England and India and now in Australia, he has toyed and teased and tormented and deflated India's bowlers, their fielders, their batters, their millions of fans. He has done so with flair and panache, with unfettered aggression and supreme self-belief and confidence. He has done so on his own attacking terms, effortlessly grabbing the momentum, snatching the initiative and transferring the balance of power from the time he strides purposefully towards the batting crease.

## First taste

India's first taste of the Head mayhem came at The Oval in June last year, in the final of the World Test Championship. They had had a first look at him in Adelaide in December 2018 when Head

made a counter-attacking 72 in the first Test, but that was about all as his bat went subsequently cold in that series. They were perhaps not all that prepared for his brazen counter-punching in the English capital when, from 76 for three, he rescued Australia with the impregnable Steve Smith for company.

Smith is the kind of batter who is happy to play second fiddle, to sail in his partner's wake even though he has a bushel of runs, a magnificent array of centuries, an average to marvel at and envy. When he receives a partner in the Head mould, unafraid to dictate terms, he views it as a blessing because he can just sail in his wake. At The Oval, while Head danced and punched and swayed occasionally but seldom ducked, Smith went about his business without fuss. Runs came at both ends, in a torrent when Head was on strike and at a slightly more stately pace with Smith fronting up. By the time India eventually broke through, the game had gotten away from them. Spectacularly quickly. Head and Smith put on 285 for the fourth wicket, the former lashing a punishing 163 off 174. Quintessential Head, we say now, but we didn't know it then, did we?

Until the doomed final of the 50-over World Cup in Ahmedabad on November 19. India were the team of the competition, majestic and all-conquering, not so much working their way through the draw as sweeping to the top. They were entertaining, they were exciting, they were exceptional. Australia were their first victims, in Chennai on October 8. They also would be their first conquerors on the night that mattered. Thanks to...? Travis Head, of course.

India's 240 wasn't flashy. It was runs on the board, true, but hardly threatening, hardly the total that allowed Rohit Sharma to strike the balance between attack and defence. Australia wobbled, at 47 for three, when Bumrah and Mohammed Shami struck in tandem but that was as good as it got for them. Head pummelled them, silencing the massive gathering at the Narendra Modi Stadium, going after the Indians with such gusto that you wondered if his onslaught wasn't personal. With scarcely a wave of his bat, he despatched the ball deep into and beyond the sprawling outfield, pulling his team to within one stroke of the title when he finally relented, falling for 137 in 120. Twice in two finals, in the space of

five months, Head had left India heartbroken, their aspirations of securing a first ICC title in a decade left in a pile of unspeakable disappointment.

When India arrived in Australia nearly five weeks back for their first five-Test series down under since 1991-92, it's impossible that they hadn't planned for Head. After all, the left-hander's batting is singularly uncomplicated. The offside is his playground; it's not that he has no strokes on the other side of the pitch, but to himself, he'd rather keep picking the bowlers away on the off, mainly off the back-foot square but also through covers and to third man with deft ramps that contrast sharply with crunching cuts when he doesn't hold back.

He loves shortness in length. Width too, needless to say, but the length more than the line is his ally because he loves to stay leg-side of the ball and therefore makes his own room. There are no genuine chinks visible, but there must be, because otherwise he would be picking off bowlers of all teams, right? India, though, haven't been able to find a way through the Head mania. It needed a magic ball from Harshit Rana on debut to consign him to a single-digit score in the first innings of the series, in Perth. Since then, he has been on a mission to make up for that cheap dismissal.

Three further outings have brought him 89 off 101 balls, 140 off 141 balls and now 152 off 160 deliveries in the first innings in Brisbane. They speak to total dominance; the helplessness of the bowlers can be well imagined, because the margin for error is so minimal. Oftentimes, bowlers don't even think wicket when they run into bowl; it's as if their first objective is to keep him quiet and they have singularly failed in that regard, which has further contributed to their frustration and played right into Head's hands.

## What makes him special?

So, what is it that makes Head so special? "The way he's able to put the bowlers under pressure from the outset is quite incredible," Smith, who shed a lean trot with a hundred of his own at the Gabba on Sunday, gushed after their 241-run partnership. "He's got an unbelievable eye. The areas in which he scores, it's tough to put fielders in those positions, in a way. You saw them put the deep point out but he finds ways to hit it past him. He's batting beautifully. He's confident."

## THE GIST

Head has toyed, teased, tormented and deflated India's bowlers, their fielders, their batters, their millions of fans

When India arrived in Australia nearly five weeks back for their first five-Test series down under since 1991-92, it's impossible that they hadn't planned for the left-hander

Head has benefited from the likes of Khawaja, McSweeney and Labuschagne batting enough balls for him to not have to come out when Bumrah is fresh or the ball is still relatively new and therefore holds the potential for lateral movement. But what he has done thereafter is entirely on him. You can sense the buzz in the stands when he takes guard, you can also sense a certain dread in the Indians - perhaps imagined, but you don't need an active imagination to believe so, right? - because in some ways, Head is like a revolving door and no one quite knows what is going to come out.

Cool for Smith, cool for the Aussies in the dressing room and out in the stands, but definitely uncool for the Indians. True, Head has benefited from the likes of Usman Khawaja, Nathan McSweeney and Marnus Labuschagne batting enough balls for him to not have to come out when Bumrah is fresh or the ball is still relatively new and therefore holds the potential for lateral movement. But what he has done thereafter is entirely on him. You can sense the buzz in the stands when he takes guard, you can also sense a certain dread in the Indians - perhaps imagined, but you don't need an active imagination to believe so, right? - because in some ways, Head is like a revolving door and no one quite knows what is going to come out.

Head is neither invincible nor unconquerable, and India can't expect Bumrah alone to keep doing the damage all the time. Like all batters, he is vulnerable outside off so long as the length is ideal. One of the keys to getting the very best out, or the one-time very best, which is what Virat Kohli is fast resembling, is to stay patient, keep hitting the right areas and wait for the inevitable mistake. Head hates being kept quiet for any period of time, so prudence dictates that bringing his scoring to a standstill will eventually bring rewards. But India haven't showcased the discipline to keep plugging away, and once Head has got away to a start, damage control has been impossible to implement.

In Melbourne and Sydney over the next three weeks, India must not only come up with solid plans but also ensure that the implementation of those plans is spot-on. There is no point poring over videos and sitting on numerous bowling meetings alongside bowling coach Morne Morkel if the gap between planning and execution is vast. In the past, India have had trouble with specific batters from the opposition - Zaheer Abbas and Javed Miandad, Graham Gooch and Joe Root, Viv Richards and Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Ricky Ponting and Matthew Hayden and Smith himself, Hashim Amla and Jacques Kallis... Add Travis Head to that list, already.

# SCIENCE

# New chemical pathway worsens quality of air in harsh winters

Shahzad Gani, of the Centre for Atmospheric Sciences in IIT Delhi, said the new study indexes a 'major shift' in our understanding of how the formation of secondary aerosols like hydroxymethanesulphonate 'can happen in fine particles even in extremely cold, dark conditions'

Sayantan Datta

In winter, the temperature in Dras in Ladakh drops to -20°C, making it the coldest place in India. On the other side of the world, Fairbanks, the capital city of Alaska, holds a similar record in the U.S., its temperature hovering around -22.4°C in winter. But the two cities have drastically different air quality. Unlike Dras, where the air is remarkably healthy, Fairbanks is among the U.S.'s worst-performing cities. One estimate ranked it tenth in a list of the country's most air-polluted cities. Another ranked it first for particle pollution.

Particle pollution, also called 'particulate matter' (PM), is a mix of solid particles and liquid droplets suspended in the air. PM can be classified into two broad categories: PM<sub>0.25</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>. PM<sub>0.25</sub> refers to particles whose diameter ranges between 2.5 and 10 micrometres (μm, equal to one millionth of a metre), and PM<sub>2.5</sub> refers to particles that are less than 2.5 μm in diameter.

PM<sub>2.5</sub> particles are also called ultrafine particles. They are considered to be particularly dangerous: they enter the lungs through the nose and throat; once in, they reduce lung function, aggravate asthma, and – for people with lung or heart disease – pave the way for premature death.

## Pollution and temperature

In 2009, authorities from the Division of Air Quality in Alaska declared Fairbanks to be a "PM<sub>2.5</sub> nonattainment area": that is, the amount of PM<sub>2.5</sub> in the city exceeded the limit of 35 μg per cubic metre of air. The main sources of these pollutants were identified to be emissions from wood stoves, the burning of distillate fuel oil, industrial sources, and automobiles, all of which also emit a large amount of sulphur dioxide.

To bring PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels below the permissible limits, the Division in a 2022 directive banned the use of fuel with sulphur concentrations exceeding 1,000 parts per million in Fairbanks. Now, a study led by researchers from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Georgia Institute of Technology, both in the U.S., has found that the ban may not be entirely effective because the chemistry of PM<sub>2.5</sub> particles changes in cold weather.

In their study, published in the journal *Science Advances* on September 4, the researchers found that lower sulphate concentrations in the air combined with low temperatures (around -35 °C) made the PM particles less acidic. This in turn increased the production of hydroxymethanesulphonate – another component of PM<sub>2.5</sub> – in the air.

Rodney J. Weber, a professor at the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, Georgia Institute of Technology, and one of the corresponding authors of the study, told this reporter that the study's findings have implications for the "effectiveness of emission controls to reduce pollution levels."

## Aerosol chemistry

In a 2022 study, James Campbell, the lead author of the current study and a doctoral scholar at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, showed that a large amount of hydroxymethanesulphonate



An aerial view of the smog-covered city of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in January 2023. COLLAB MEDIA

formed during winters in Fairbanks when formaldehyde and sulphur dioxide reacted in the presence of liquid water.

Campbell's finding was surprising because hydroxymethanesulphonate formation has been traditionally thought to occur in clouds and fog, not in aerosols, because the former have more liquid water.

Hydroxymethanesulphonate formation also requires more acidic conditions, whereas the sulphite ions (SO<sub>3</sub><sup>2-</sup>) required for its formation are present in adequate amounts only when the air is less acidic. The higher density of water droplets in clouds and fog absorbs more water-soluble gases, rendering them less acidic than most aerosols, the authors wrote in their paper.

What, then, explained the formation of large amounts of hydroxymethanesulphonate particles in Fairbanks during the winter?

To investigate, the researchers combined measurements obtained previously from the Alaskan Layered Pollution and Chemical Analysis (ALPACA) project with thermodynamic modelling. For the latter, they used computational models to calculate the amount of various ions and gases in aerosol particles in a given air mass.

At very low temperatures, water typically freezes to ice. But sometimes, in a process called supercooling, the temperature of a liquid can drop well below its freezing point without it turning solid.

The researchers wrote in their paper that aerosol particles exist in a supercooled state during Fairbanks winters. As a result, they contain liquid water, which allows hydroxymethanesulphonate to form within these particles. The researchers also reported that the acidity of aerosol

Since Fairbanks sees very low temperatures, fewer ammonium ions jump to the gaseous state. As concentration of ammonium ions in the aerosol builds, its acidity falls, making it ideal for hydroxymethanesulphonate production

particles in Fairbanks changes rapidly during the winter from low to high, making the conditions more favourable for the formation of hydroxymethanesulphonate.

The rapid shift in the acidity of PM<sub>2.5</sub> in many places is largely the handiwork of the relative concentration of two ions: sulphate (SO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>) and ammonium (NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>). Sulphate ions increase the acidity of aerosol particles while the latter, a base, neutralise the acidity.

Two ammonium ions are required to neutralise the acidity contributed by each sulphate ion.

If there were to be an equal number of sulphate and ammonium ions in an aerosol particle, it would be more acidic. But since the 2022 ban on high-sulphur fuel in Fairbanks, the concentration of ammonium ions in PM<sub>2.5</sub> particles increased relative to that of sulphate ions. This lowered the acidity.

Further, ammonium in aerosols can exist in its gaseous form, ammonia, and in its ionic form dissolved in the liquid water in the aerosol. In normal conditions, the two forms exist in equilibrium, where the rates of conversion of ammonium to ammonia and ammonia to ammonium are equal.

But since Fairbanks's winters register very low temperatures, fewer ammonium ions are able to jump to the gaseous state. And as the concentration of ammonium

ions within the aerosol particle builds up, its acidity drops further, making it a fertile site for hydroxymethanesulphonate production.

## Relevance to the Global South

According to Prof. Weber, the Georgia Tech atmospheric scientist, the study's results are "broadly applicable to cold regions but also provide new insights into aerosol thermodynamics."

Shahzad Gani, an assistant professor at the Centre for Atmospheric Sciences in IIT Delhi, told this reporter the study indexes a "major shift" in our understanding of how "secondary aerosol formation can happen in fine particles even in extremely cold, dark conditions." Secondary aerosol refers to molecules like hydroxymethanesulphonate that are formed from parent molecules in chemical reactions.

"These findings have important implications for understanding how air quality-relevant aerosols form in extremely cold urban and industrial regions," he added.

At the same time, he clarified the study's relevance to "many areas of the Global South is limited, except for some high-altitude regions like the Andes or Himalayas." He said he is looking forward to future research in other cold regions that could help validate the findings of the study and expand its implications to the Global South.

Meanwhile, he added, the study compels scientists to confront how temperature changes might affect chemical pathways related to air quality and climate, especially in a world that is being rapidly reshaped by global warming.

(Sayantan Datta is a science journalist and a faculty member at Krea University. (dattasyantan95@gmail.com))

## THE SCIENCE QUIZ

### It's a bird! It's a plane! It's a... UFO?

Vasudevan Mukunth

#### QUESTION 1

Fifty-five years ago on this day, the US Air Force concluded its 17-year investigation into unidentified flying objects (UFOs) and the threat they posed to national security. What was the codename of this exercise?

#### QUESTION 2

On December 13, Larry Hogan, the governor of Maryland State in the USA, posted a video on a social media platform that he claimed was evidence of three drones flying in a straight line. But astronomers quickly pointed out the lights were stars in which famous constellation?

#### QUESTION 3

During World War II, Allied and Axis pilots of fighter jets reported orbs of

bright light in the sky that seemed to fly quickly and often disappear without a trace. Scientists later attributed the phenomenon to unusual electrical discharges between the jets' wings and the air. What did the pilots call these orbs? Hint: It's also the name of a popular rock band.

#### QUESTION 4

When air flows around an object containing a high voltage, a light-emitting plasma surrounds the object, sometimes with a buzzing sound. What's the colloquial name for this phenomenon? Sailors of the pre-modern era have reported sensing these lights and sounds above their ships' masts.

#### QUESTION 5

Name the controversial Harvard University scientist who launched Project Galileo in 2021 to investigate



Visual: This photo taken in North Dakota in 2009 shows a sun pillar in the centre flanked by two \_\_\_\_\_, an atmospheric phenomenon sometimes confused with UFOs. Fill in the blanks. CREDIT: PUBLIC DOMAIN



Residents transport drinking water from Humata to the Paraizinho community along the Madeira river, a tributary of the Amazon, during a dry spell in Amazonas state, Brazil. AP

## UN talks on drought deal in Saudi fail to produce pact

Agence France Presse

Negotiators failed to produce an agreement on how to respond to drought at Saudi-hosted UN talks, participants have said, falling short of a hoped-for binding protocol addressing the scourge.

The 12-day meeting of parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), known as COP16, concluded early on Saturday morning, a day later than scheduled, as parties tried to finalise a deal.

Prior to the talks, UNCCD Executive Secretary Ibrahim Thiaw said the world expected negotiators to "adopt a bold decision that can help turn the tide on the most pervasive and the most disruptive environmental disaster: drought."

But addressing the plenary session before dawn, Thiaw acknowledged that "parties need more time to agree on the best way forward."

A press release on Saturday said the parties – 196 countries and the European Union – had "made significant progress in laying the groundwork for a future global drought regime, which they intend to complete at COP17 in Mongolia in 2026."

The Riyadh talks came after the partial failure of biodiversity talks in Colombia, the failure to reach a UN deal on plastic pollution in South Korea, and a climate finance deal that disappointed developing nations at COP29 in Azerbaijan.

Droughts "fuelled by human destruction of the environment" cost the world more than \$300 billion each year, the UN said in a report published on December 3, the second day of the talks

**Developed nations seek a framework that does not commit them to a course of action, something nations most affected by droughts find is an unsatisfactory solution**

in Riyadh.

Droughts are projected to affect 75% of the world's population by 2050, it said.

A delegate at COP16 from a country in Africa, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss private deliberations, said African nations had hoped the talks would produce a binding protocol on drought.

That would ensure "every government will be held responsible" for devising stronger preparation and response plans, the delegate said.

"It's the first time I've seen Africa so united, with a strong united front, with respect to the drought protocol."

Two other COP16 participants, also requesting anonymity, said developed countries did not want a binding protocol and instead were pushing for a "framework," which African countries deemed inadequate.

Indigenous groups also wanted a protocol to better monitor progress and develop response plans, said Praveena Sridhar, chief technical officer for Save Soil, a global campaign backed by UN agencies.

Yet the absence of a protocol from COP16 "shouldn't delay progress," as national governments can still allocate "budgets and subsidies to financially support farmers in adopting sustainable soil and land management."

Ahead of the Riyadh talks, the UNCCD said 1.5 billion ha of land must be restored by the decade's end and that at least \$2.6 trillion in global investments was needed.

The first week saw pledges of more than \$12 billion from national and regional institutions and the Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership, which is meant to mobilise public and private money to help at-risk countries.

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to science@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Daily page'