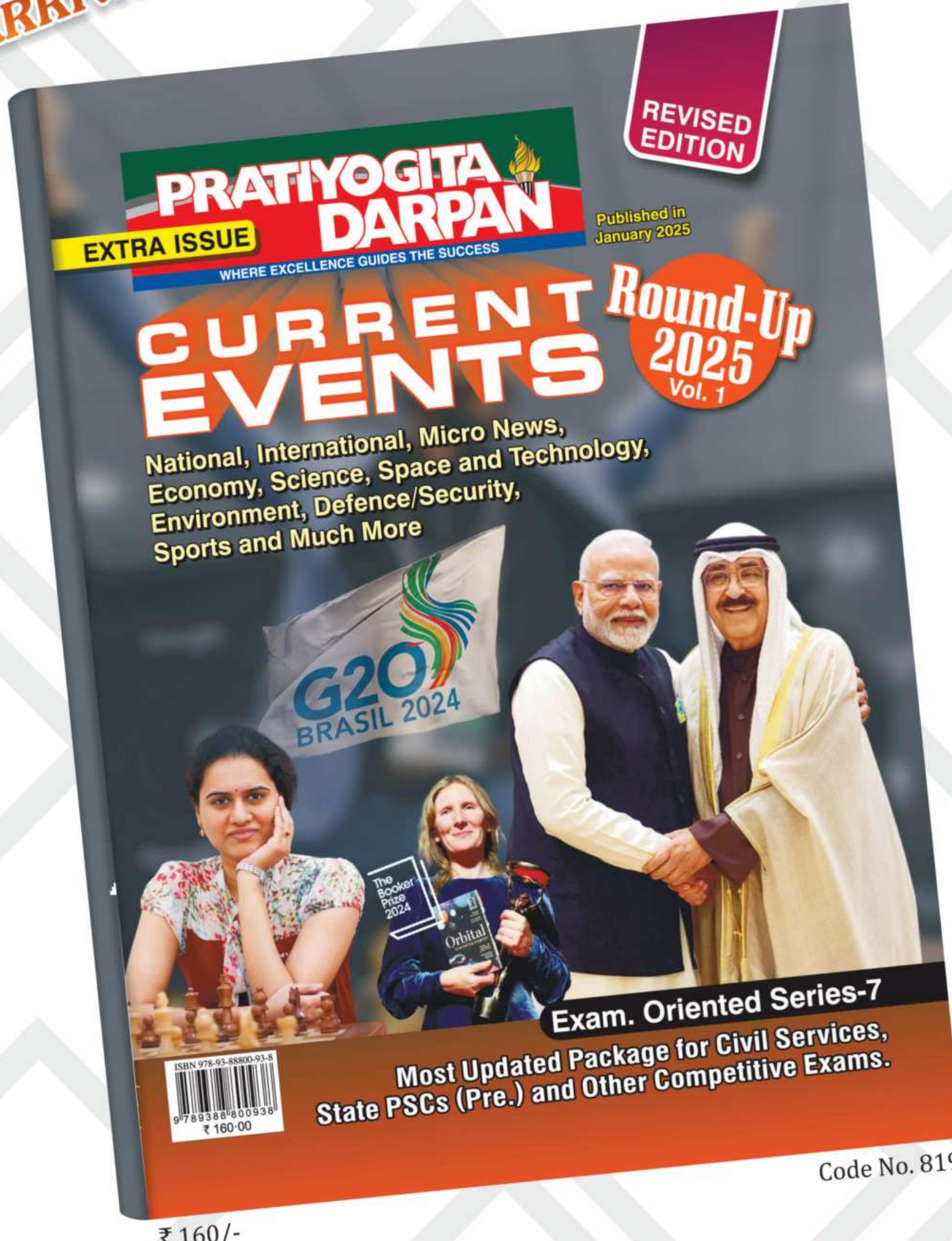


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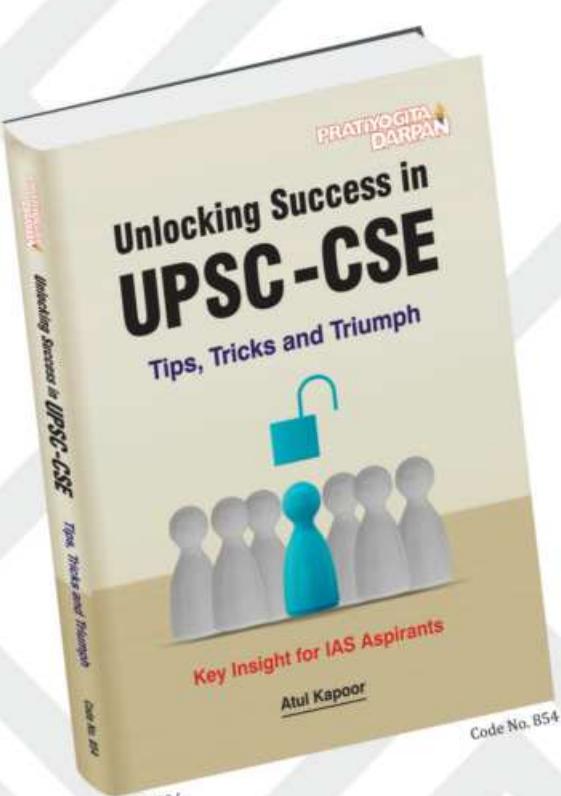
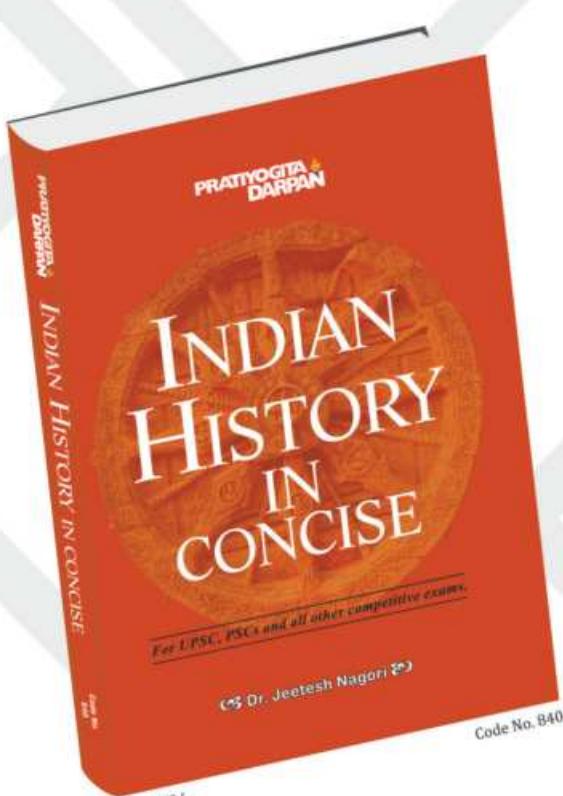


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NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed item rate tender are hereby invited on PWD form 6 & 8 by the Assistant Engineer, Jal Shakti Sub-Division Dalash on behalf of the Governor of H.P. for the following works from the approved and eligible contractor/firm enlisted in H.P. Jal Shakti Vibhag in the appropriate class so as to reach in this office on or before 30.01.2025 up to 12:00P.M and will be opened on the same day at 12:30 P.M. in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representatives. The tender form can be had from this office against cash payment (non-refundable) on any working day up to 29.01.2025 till 03:00 P.M. The tender should accompany the earnest money in the shape of National Saving Certificate/Time Deposit Account/FDRs in any of the post office/Nationalized Bank duly pledged in favour of the Assistant Engineer, JSV Sub-Division Dalash.

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost	Earliest Money	Time limit	Cost of Form
1.	PLWSS Nishani Kuikod, Degerh, Togi Garhara etc. in Anni Block Distt Kullu (H.P) (SH:- Laying, Jointing and testing of GI pipe 15 mm dia = 1500 Rmt. and 32 mm dia = 500Rmt. Shamshain Ghat and village Lower Dhair). JMM	172007	3440/-	2 Months	500/-
2.	Restoration of Rain damages in WSS Soiher Beungal in Anni Block Distt. Kullu (H.P.) (SH:- C/o PCC Retaining wall at RD 0 to 10 = 10 mtrs	187293	3746/-	2 Months	500/-
3.	A/R & M/O WSS Dalash Phase-II in GP Dalash in Anni Block Distt. Kullu (H.P.) (SH:- Spot welding of G.I. Pipe 100 mm dia, 80 mm dia and 65 mm dia at different location.)	110191	2204/-	2 Months	500/-
4.	Restoration and Repair of WSS to Kalha village in GP Bakhnaw in Anni Block Distt. Kullu (H.P.) (SH-C/o Crate wire for protection of Intake Chamber and diversion of water source (Kandi Nallah) to Intake Chamber). NDF/2023/988.	142182	2844/-	2 Months	500/-
5.	Restoration and Repair of WSS to Gad Deem in GP Bakhnaw in Anni Block Distt. Kullu (H.P.) (SH-C/o Crate wire for protection of Intake Chamber and diversion of water source (Gadaghart Nallah) Intake Chamber). NDF/2023/987.	177708	3554/-	2 Months	500/-
6.	Restoration of Rain damages to WSS to NC/PC Hab. of CV Franali Dingidhar & Beungal in Anni Block Distt. Kullu (H.P.) (SH:- Laying Jointing and Testing of G.I. pipe 100 mm dia (MC) = 200 Rmt, with butt welding Near Bahu and Spot welding 100 mm dia & 80 mm dia at Various location.)	160606	3212/-	2 Months	500/-
7.	Restoration of Rain damages of WSS to Khadog and Snetha village in GP Dalash in Anni Block Distt. Kullu (H.P.) (SH- C/o Water Storge Tank 20000 ltrs. At Khadogdhara). NDF/2023/994	199780	3996/-	2 Months	500/-
8.	Restoration of Rain Damages of WSS to Galog Ganchua village in GP Beungal Anni Block Distt. Kullu (SH- C/o RCC Channel from water source to intake chamber at Gadaghrt and Crate wire for diversion). NDF/2023/989.	185842	3717/-	4 Months	500/-
9.	Restoration of Rain Damages of Water Supply Scheme to Kandaga village in GP Beungal in Anni Block Distt. Kullu (SH- Laying Jointing and Testing of G.I. pipe 15 mm dia= 300 Rmt., Jackling of Storage tank and Retaining wall in front of Tank at Gad (Kandaga)). NDF/2023/990	165842	3317/-	2 Months	500/-
10.	Restoration of Rain damages of FIS Rathoh Kuhal in Anni Distt. Kullu (H.P.) (SH:- Removal of Debries & Slips and cutting of bushes, uproots and various Rds.).	129669	2593/-	2 Months	500/-
11.	Restoration of Rain Damages of WSS to Kashta village in Anni Block Distt. Kullu (SH- C/o Intake Chamber = 3 Nos, C/o Retaining wall and crate wire work at source).	199666	3993/-	2 Months	500/-

Terms and Conditions.

- The Earnest money or certificate of exemption of Earnest Money. Shall be attached with the tender documents.
- Certificate of registration with Jal Shakti Vibhag in appropriate class and latest renewal thereof.
- Copy of PAN card, GST registration and latest annual Income tax return thereof.
- The contractor shall submit EPF/ESIS registration in case the same is not available at the time of tender it should be submitted before commencement of any work awarded to him/her failing which no work will be awarded.
- The firms/contractors have to submit the affidavit specifying that the benefit availed under earnest money exemption has not been exhausted so far, any wrong submission in the matter will directly lead to cancellation of bid. In case the bidder fails to submit the required affidavit then he has to submit the earnest money.
- Conditional tenders and the tenders received without earnest money will outrightly be rejected.
- The contractors/firms are required to quote the rate of each item in words as well as in figures failing which Executive Engineer reserves the right to accept/rejects any overall tender.
- The undersigned reserves the right to reject/accept any or all tenders without assigning any reason.
- The date of sale/recipt and opening of tender shall be considered as next day if holiday happens on above specified date.
- The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 120 days from the date of opening of tender.

Assistant Engineer
Jal Shakti Division, Dalash
District Kullu (H.P.)

HP / 4668/24-25

HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

No. AE-JSDD-NIT-Tender/2024-25 322-347 Dated: 21.01.2025



PUNE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Health Department
Tender Cell Department
Extend Tender Advertisement



Sr. No.	Particulars	Date
1	Tender Form Sale Period	22/01/2025
2	Tender Form Receiving Period	22/01/2025
3	Bid Submission End Date	30/01/2025
4	Tender Opening Date	31/01/2025

Tender No.	Department Name	Name of Work	Tender Fees	B1/B2	EMD Amt.	Period of work	Contact Person Mobile No.
PMC / Health / CMS /-- 2024-25	Health	Purchase of Medicines (Bulk) for Pune Municipal Corporation's all Hospitals, Dispensaries and Maternity Homes	29679/-	B-2	-	24 months	Rahul Namdev Wadgaye 9881190696

Advt No. 3/1282
Date : 22/1/25

Sd/-
Dr. Sanjeev Wavare
Asst. Medical Officer of Health
Pune Municipal Corporation

Sd/-
Dr. Nina Borade
Medical Officer of Health
Pune Municipal Corporation

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(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)

49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khanija Bhavan Race Course Road
Bengaluru - 560 001. Phone No. 080-22265383 website : www.kiadb.in

No.IADB/ENGG/Outsource/ETND-EP-16/801/2024-25 Date: 22.01.2025

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

KIADB is inviting Request For Proposals (RFP) under two cover systems for providing manpower and security services on outsource for Executive Engineer & SLAO of KIADB Tumakuru as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic Procurement from eligible Bidders registered in State / Central Labour Department who have got adequate financial resources, state of the art technology, technical man power & sufficient past experience for the following service as per the schedule given below

Name of the Work : Providing Manpower and Security Services on Outsource basis to the Jurisdiction of Executive Engineer & SLAO of KIADB, Tumukuru Zone. (2nd Call).

The last date and time of receipt of tender is : **03.02.2025 upto 4.30 pm.**

Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the E-Procurement Portal

<https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>.

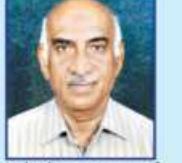
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WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Vaishnav takes part in series of meetings

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HIGH AND ARBITRARY:

MPs flag user development fee charged by airports

NEWS » PAGE 11



IN CRUISE MODE

Swiatek and Sinner enter the semifinals

SPORT » PAGE 15

13 killed as train runs over passengers amid fire scare

Karnataka Express runs over passengers who jumped out of the Lucknow-Mumbai Pushpak Express; Maharashtra govt. announces an ex gratia of ₹5 lakh each for families of the deceased

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

At least 13 people were killed when they jumped down from their train following rumours of a fire and were hit by another train speeding down the adjacent track in Jalgaon district of Maharashtra on Wednesday evening.

The deceased include four women and nine men, Vijay Gaikwad, medical superintendent, Government Medical College and Hospital, Jalgaon, said.

At least 10 persons have been injured. Three of the injured have been admitted to hospitals in nearby Pachora, while the bodies of the dead have been sent to the Jalgaon Government Medical College for post-mortem examination.



Tragic loss: Injured passengers being moved from the accident site in Maharashtra's Jalgaon on Wednesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Maharashtra government has announced an ex gratia of ₹5 lakh each for the families of the deceased.

The accident occurred when sparks and smoke in one of the coaches of the Lucknow-Mumbai Pushpak Express triggered panic, leading to someone pulling the train's emer-

gency chain around 5 p.m., according to Central Railways spokesperson Swapnil Nila.

The Pushpak Express came to a halt between the Maheji and Pardhade stations, about 400 km from Mumbai.

Some passengers, fearing a fire, jumped out onto the tracks and were run over

by the Karnataka Express travelling from Bengaluru to Delhi.

Railway officials and the police told *The Hindu* that the sparks and smoke in the general coach likely stemmed from a "hot axle" or "brake-binding". Mr. Nila told presspersons that an accident relief train was dispatched from Bhusaval.

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav expressed grief over the incident and directed proper treatment for all the injured.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray called for better safety measures,

while Congress leaders Nana Patole and Vijay Wadettiwar criticised the government's handling of railway safety.

CONTINUED ON

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CHANGED DYNAMICS

» PAGE 6

Marco Rubio calls for talks on migration as he meets Jaishankar

Suhasini Haidar

NEW DELHI



The U.S. wants to address the issue of illegal migration with India, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio told External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar during their meeting in Washington. The bilateral meeting was Mr. Rubio's first with any foreign dignitary after taking charge of the U.S. State Department on Tuesday.

The comments on immigration issues came a day after U.S. President Donald Trump issued an Executive Order cancelling 'citizenship by birthright' and cracking down on illegal immigrants.

A readout issued by the U.S. State Department on Wednesday said the two leaders had discussed a "wide range of issues" including "critical and emerging technologies, defence cooperation, energy,

and on advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific region". "Secretary Rubio also emphasised the Trump Administration's desire to work with India to advance economic ties and address concerns related to irregular migration," it said.

Mr. Jaishankar, who posted photographs of the meeting on social media, did not refer to the conversation on "irregular migration".

CONTINUED ON

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CHANGED DYNAMICS

» PAGE 6

14 killed in two accidents in Karnataka

The Hindu Bureau

HUBBALLI

Fourteen persons were killed and 29 injured in two road accidents in two districts of Karnataka on Tuesday night and in the early hours of Wednesday.

Ten persons were killed and 19 injured when a truck laden with vegetables and fruits overturned in the Arabail ghat region near Yellapur in Uttara Kannada district on Wednesday.

FULL REPORT ON

» PAGE 5



Strong impact: A crane lifts the truck that overturned in Yellapur on Wednesday, killing 10 persons. PTI

Now, CBI seeks death sentence for convict in R.G. Kar murder case

Devesh K. Pandey

Shiv Sahay Singh

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Wednesday filed an appeal before the Calcutta High Court seeking enhancement of life imprisonment to death penalty for the convict in the rape-murder of a doctor at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata.

Earlier in the day, the CBI, through Deputy Solicitor-General Rajdeep Majumdar, opposed the West Bengal government's petition seeking enhancement of punishment for the convict, Sanjay Roy, a former civic police volunteer.

The State's Advocate-General, Kishore Dutta, had on Tuesday approached the Division Bench of Justices Debangshu Basak and Md. Shabbar Rashidi stating that the life sentence to the convict was inadequate and sought



Members of civil society protest seeking justice for the doctor who was raped and murdered at the R.G. Kar Medical College. FILE PHOTO

The Deputy Solicitor-General opposed the State's government plea before the same Division Bench on Wednesday maintaining that the West Bengal government did not have the right to appeal the trial court order on the ground of inadequacy. Mr. Majumdar said the CBI had prayed for awarding capital punishment to Roy before the trial court.

Hearing on Jan. 27

The Division Bench said it would hear the CBI, the victim's family, and the convict through their la-

Excavation begins of ancient well near Sambhal mosque

The Hindu Bureau

LUCKNOW

The Sambhal district administration in Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday started excavating an ancient well found under alleged illegal encroachment near the Shahi Jama Masjid.

The administration said the excavation was initiated following complaints from locals that the well had been illegally covered up. The well, located about 50 metres from the mosque, is considered one of the 19 ancient wells in the region. Over time, the well was covered and its original form altered, according to residents.

"Preliminary investigation suggests the well was encroached upon and covered. We are excavating it to restore it," said Shirish Chandra, Assistant Superintendent of Police.

The administration's initiative is being seen as a

step towards clearing encroachments on ancient structures in Sambhal.

The excavation comes following the Supreme Court's order on January 10 directing that status quo be maintained with respect to a well located near the entrance of the Shahi Jama Masjid. The court directed private respondents and local authorities to file counter-affidavits and status reports within two weeks. It has posted the case on February 25.

Tense situation

Sambhal has been tense since a local court ordered a survey of the mosque following claims that a temple previously stood at the site. Violence erupted on November 24 last year as protesters gathered near the mosque and clashed with U.P. Police personnel, leading to stone pelting and arson. Five people died in the incident.

SC divided over Tahir Hussain's interim bail plea to canvass for, contest Delhi Assembly election

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday delivered a split verdict on a plea for interim bail by AIMIM candidate Tahir Hussain to campaign and contest in the Delhi Assembly poll.

A Bench of Justices Panjab Kital and Ahsanuddin Amanullah did not see eye-to-eye on the question whether a candidate, who was also an undertrial, could be granted interim bail to canvass for votes and contest in elections.

The two judges wrote separate opinions disagreeing with each other and finally referred the case to the Chief Justice of India to constitute a larger Bench. Justice Mital wrote canvassing for votes was neither a fundamental right under the Constitution nor a right recognised under any statute. The judge said contesting elec-



Tahir Hussain

tions was not a fundamental right.

He said granting bail to Hussain, an accused in the murder of an Intelligence Bureau officer during the 2020 Delhi riots, would "open the floodgates" for every other undertrial to seek the same remedy on the ground. "And elections in India happen all round the year... To allow interim bail to canvass for or contest in elections will open a Pandora's box," Justice Mital cautioned.

Cite Kejriwal case

The hearing saw both the Bench and lawyers refer to how the Supreme Court, in

May last year, allowed then Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal interim bail to campaign for his party in the Lok Sabha election.

"Speaking for myself, this cannot be permitted," Justice Mital observed, dismissing the plea.

Justice Amanullah observed that Hussain was in custody as an undertrial since March 2020. "The allegations against him are grave and reprehensible, but they are just – allegations. Magnitude of an offence by itself cannot be used to deny bail," Justice Amanullah pointed out, allowing interim bail.

Justice Amanullah said the Delhi High Court had allowed Hussain to file his nominations for the Assembly poll. Having been permitted to do so, he must contest the election.

Justice Mital questioned how Hussain could "nurture" Mustafabad constituency in 10-15 days.

DELHI ELECTION

Timings		
DELHI		
THURSDAY, JAN. 23		
RISE 07:13	SET 17:53	
RISE 01:37	SET 12:22	
FRIDAY, JAN. 24		
RISE 07:13	SET 17:54	
RISE 02:34	SET 13:00	
SATURDAY, JAN. 25		
RISE 07:13	SET 17:55	
RISE 03:33	SET 13:45	

Delhi Weather		
max	min	
Delhi City	25	09
Safdarjung	25	09
Palam	22	09

Delhi Palam Today		
21°C	Morning will be slight cold with shallow fog and mist.	
Chances of light rain and thundershower at few places.		

Delhi Palam Tomorrow		
22°C	The weather will be dry. Morning will be cold with shallow fog and mist. Day will be pleasant. Night also will be cold and hazy.	

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Rahul Gandhi skips poll rally; he is not well, has been advised rest: Cong.

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi who was scheduled to address a rally in Sadar Bazar Assembly constituency on Wednesday was unable to attend as he was unwell, said the party.

Missed again

Delhi Congress chief Devenender Yadav said that Mr. Gandhi "has been advised by his doctors not to attend the rally and stress his voice as he has not been keeping well".

This is the second scheduled public appearance that Mr. Gandhi has cancelled due to poor health. The former Congress chief was touted to participate in 'Delhi Nyay Yatra', the party's month-long foot march held last year across the 70 Assembly seats of the city, but did not attend it.

Anil Bharadwaj, a former MLA and the party's candidate from Sadar Bazar, said, "Mr. Gandhi was slated to talk about our fight for the betterment of the Dalits, minorities, and other sections of society."

Cong., BJP attack Delhi govt. over CAG reports; they are poll allies: AAP

CAG flagged 'scam' in health care, claims Maken; will make public reports by the watchdog Sachdeva; Cong. echoing claims made in BJP office: AAP

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Congress and BJP on Wednesday cornered the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government for not tabling 14 Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports in the Assembly. The Congress accused AAP of "trying to conceal corruption" while the BJP alleged that the Delhi government "is violating constitutional systems to hide the truth".

In response, AAP said, "The Congress appears to function as the BJP's auxiliaries, merely echoing allegations crafted in the BJP headquarters against AAP." In a statement, the ruling party in Delhi said the Congress had "turned a blind eye" to CAG reports "exposing rampant corruption" in BJP-ruled States. "The Congress and the BJP should officially declare that they are contesting the election in an alliance against AAP," it added.

Addressing a press con-



Crowd waiting at Sadar Bazar on Wednesday, where Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was to address a rally. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

ference in the Capital, Congress leader Ajay Maken quoted a purported CAG report on the health sector in Delhi, alleging that the AAP government committed a scam of ₹382 crore in the healthcare sector.

He added that AAP used to level allegations of graft against the Sheila Dikshit-led Congress government, which was in power in the Capital till 2013, on the basis of CAG reports and is now itself shying away from

sharing reports by the public finance watchdog due to the "financial irregularities" pointed out against its government in Delhi.

The BJP also weighed in on the issue, with its Delhi unit chief Virendra Sachdeva saying, "We will win the Delhi election and, on the first working day of the Assembly, make the CAG reports public and hold the AAP government accountable for looting the public of Delhi."

Parvesh files defamation suit against Kejriwal; AAP chief dubs ex-MP 'divisive'

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

BJP's New Delhi candidate Parvesh Sahib Singh on Wednesday filed a ₹50-crore defamation suit each against AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann for making "misleading statements" about him terming people from Punjab a "threat" to the country in speeches made earlier in the day.

The former MP said, "I don't need to mention what my family and I have done for the Sikh community."

He accused the AAP leaders of "lying due to frustration over their imminent defeat" in the upcoming poll.

In response, Mr. Kejri-

wal said in a post on X, "Does the BJP consider all Punjabis terrorists and traitors? We strongly oppose such divisive statements. We demand that [senior BJP leader and Union Home Minister] Amit Shah apologise for these comments to the entire nation, and specifically to the Punjabi community."

The BJP candidate had earlier alleged that "thousands of cars from Punjab, carrying AAP Ministers, legislators and even the CM," had come to Delhi over the past few days to campaign for the ruling AAP ahead of the Assembly poll.

"I don't have a problem with their campaign, but they are influencing voters by distributing CCTV cameras, liquor, and money," he claimed.



BJP candidate from Krishna Nagar Assembly constituency, Anil Goyal, campaigning with supporters on Wednesday. PTI

Kuldeep Kumar banks on development to retain Kondli

Alisha Dutta

NEW DELHI

From being a volunteer of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to rising to the very top of the party ranks, Kuldeep Kumar, the sitting MLA from east Delhi's Kondli, who is seeking re-election from the seat, has come a long way.

The 35-year-old legislator's political journey began 12 years ago as a volunteer distributing pamphlets in the Anna Hazare-led India Against Corruption movement, which was carried forward by Arvind Kejriwal to float AAP on November 26, 2012.

Mr. Kumar, who hails from the Scheduled Caste community, quickly rose through the ranks, becoming Delhi's youngest councillor at 27 after winning



The sitting MLA from Kondli during a protest. FILE PHOTO

with renewed energy, using e-rickshaws with cutouts of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to appeal for votes.

Humble beginnings

Born to a migrant worker father from Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, who worked as a sanitation worker and a homemaker mother, Mr. Kumar says he understands the plight of those residing in the jhuggis of his constituency.

"Born and raised in a 200-sq-ft house in Mandawali, I have closely seen the struggles of my community in accessing quality education. However, with AAP coming to power, things have changed. People from even the most underprivileged communities now have opportunities to attend school," he says.

While he aspired to be

seen as a "mass leader" during the Lok Sabha poll, he is now openly embracing his identity as a prominent Dalit face of the party.

Politics of Ambedkar

The MLA counters the allegations from two former Ministers who recently left the party claiming that it doesn't support backward classes. He asserts that since AAP came to power, it has become easier to practise the politics of Ambedkar, who championed social justice and equality for marginalised communities.

"Earlier, government officials were afraid of putting up photographs of Babasaheb on their office

desks or walls; but since AAP has come to power, Kejriwal has made it mandatory for every government office to have Babasaheb's photograph," said Mr. Kumar. He adds that the party has not shied away from upholding the beliefs of Babasaheb and even named schools after him.

He is now taking his campaign to the doorsteps of his constituents, vowing to deliver on Mr. Kejriwal's promises. He has also made two more commitments: "I have promised the people of Kondli that I will get rid of the Ghazipur garbage mound and bring metro connectivity to this part of the city."

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ई-निवादा आमत्रण सूचना

श्रुति-पत्र

ई० निवादा सं०-२८ / भाष्य० मधुबनी-१०-२५३८-२०२५ (BCD)-२०२५ (कार्यालय निवादा अधिकारी जिलान्वर्गत विभिन्न जगहों पर पंचायत सरकार भवनों का निर्माण कार्या) में अपरिहार्य कारण वशनिन्वत संशोधन किया जाता है:-

क्र०	पूर्व तिथि	विस्तारित तिथि	पुनः
01	31/01/2024 के 3:00 बजे अप० तक।	25/01/2025 के 3:00 बजे अप० तक।	05/02/2025 के 3:00 बजे अप० तक।
02	02/01/2025 के 3:30 बजे अप०।	27/01/2025 के 3:30 बजे अप०।	07/02/2025 के 3:30 बजे अप०।
03	09/01/2025 के 3:00 बजे अप०।	04/02/2025 के 3:00 बजे अप०।	13/02/2025 के 3:00 बजे अप०।
04	दिनांक 13.01.2025 को 12:30 बजे अप० अधीकारी अधिकारी, भवन अधिकारी, दस्तगा का कार्यालय एवं दिनांक 20.12.2024 को 12:30 बजे अप० मूल्य अधिकारी, उत्तर उमायाग, भवन निर्माण विभाग, पटना का कार्यालय।	दिनांक 13.01.2025 को 12:30 बजे अप० अधीकारी अधिकारी, भवन अधिकारी, दस्तगा का कार्यालय एवं दिनांक 16.01.2025 को 12:30 बजे अप० मूल्य अधिकारी, उत्तर उमायाग, भवन निर्माण विभाग, पटना का कार्यालय।	दिनांक 27.01.2025 को 12:30 बजे अप० अधीकारी अधिकारी, भवन अधिकारी, दस्तगा का कार्यालय एवं दिनांक 30.01.2025 को 12:30 बजे अप० मूल्य अधिकारी, उत्तर उमायाग, भवन निर्माण विभाग, पटना का कार्यालय।
05	अग्रम की राशि का बैंक गारंटी (BG) -पूर्ण प्रति जमा करने की तिथि एवं समय	दिनांक 02.01.2025 को 3:00 बजे अप० अधीकारी अधिकारी, भवन अधिकारी, दस्तगा का कार्यालय एवं दिनांक 10.01.2025 को 3:00 बजे अप० मूल्य अधिकारी, उत्तर उमायाग, भवन निर्माण विभाग, पटना का कार्यालय।	दिनांक 07.02.2025 को 3:00 बजे अप० अधीकारी अधिकारी, भवन अधिकारी, दस्तगा का कार्यालय एवं दिनांक 15.02.2025 क

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Shri Samrat Choudhary
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar

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Aditile Sumariwalla (Vice President, World Athletics)
Kalyan Choubey (President, All India Football Federation and Joint-Secretary, Indian Olympic Association)
Shiva Keshavan (Head - Scholarships, Olympics Sports at Reliance Foundation & India's Deputy Chef-de-Mission at the Paris Olympics)
Kunal (Joint Secretary - Sports Development, Government of India)

Accelerating sports development in Bihar
B. Rajender (Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Sports, Government of Bihar)
Ravendran Sankaran (Director General & CEO, Bihar State Sports Authority)

Unlocking athlete potential through sports science and data
Dr. G. Kishore (Principal of Laxmibai College of Physical Education & Director, SAI-Kerala)
Dr. Pralay Majumdar (Sr. Advisor, Centre of Excellence in Sports Science and Analytics, IIT Madras)
Harendra Singh (Head coach, Indian women's hockey team)

Bihar championing India's e-sports revolution
Rohit Potphode (President, Esports & Gaming Partnerships, JetSynthesys)
Akshat Rathore (Co-Founder, NODWIN Gaming)
Abhishek Issar (Founder, UNIV Sportatech and Co-Founder, Federation of Esports India)

Breaking barriers - Tackling challenges in grassroots sports
Sanjiv Kumar (Founder, Takshila Educational Society and Pro Vice-Chairman, Delhi Public School)
Rishikesh Joshi (Co-founder and CEO, Sports for All)
Jatin Paranjpe (Founder and CEO, Khelo More)
Anil Kumar (Managing Director, Great SportsTech)

Empowering the Game - Unleashing women's potential in sports
Dr. Deepa Malik (Paralympic medalist & South Asia Sub Region Representative, Asian Paralympic Committee)
Mihira Khopkar (Sports Nutritionist, Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine Department, Sir HN Reliance Foundation Hospital)
Aditi Mutatkar (Program Head, Athlete and Women Initiatives, Simply Sport Foundation)

Chasing a Medal - The grit behind the glory
Vijender Singh (2008 Olympic bronze medalist, boxing)
Sharad Kumar (2020 and 2024 Olympic medalist, para high jump)

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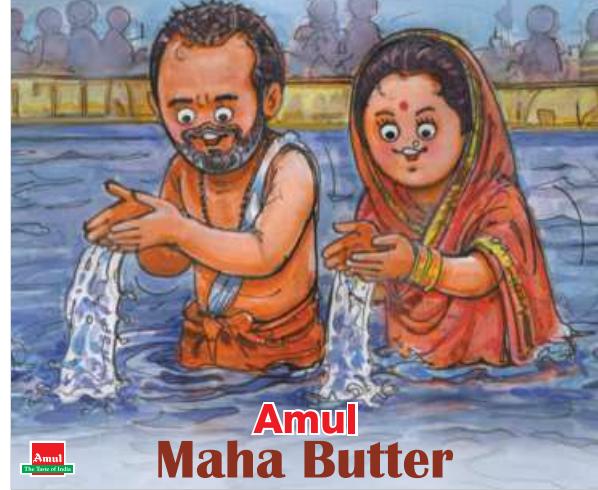
Our budget will reflect inclusivity: Rajasthan CM

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

budget would reflect inclusivity.

Rural development, women's empowerment, public welfare schemes, economic development framework, and social security programmes were some of the subjects which were discussed. Mr. Sharma said voluntary groups could make a deep impact on society and make meaningful suggestions.

Utsav aur utsaah ka Sangam



daCunha/AB/1003

U.P. Cabinet meets at Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj; key policies, projects approved

Mayank Kumar

LUCKNOW



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath holding a Cabinet meeting at Sangam in Prayagraj on Wednesday. ANI

The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet met at the Maha Kumbh Mela area in Prayagraj on Wednesday, making several key decisions regarding development projects and policy changes aimed at boosting the State's growth.

The Cabinet also decided to revamp aerospace and defence policies by including new incentives to attract significant investments into the sector.

The Cabinet also approved major connectivity projects, including granting in principle approval for the 320-km-long Vindhya Expressway and the 100-km-long Vindhya-Purnanchal Link Expressway.

"These expressways will drive the region's social and economic development, complementing the State's existing connectivity network across Pas-

chimanchal, Madhya-chal, Purvanchal, and Bundelkhand," Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said.

A new 320-km expressway will be built linking Prayagraj, Mirzapur, Varanasi, Chandauli, and Sombhadra. Starting from the Ganga Expressway in Prayagraj and ending at NH 39 in Sonbhadra, it will provide direct connectivity between the Ganga and Vindhya Expressways, while enhancing links to neighbouring States like Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh," a

statement by the State government reads.

Later, Mr. Adityanath, along with his Cabinet colleagues, took a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam.

"Mahakumbh-2025, the festival of unity, equality and harmony; a festival of Indianness and humanity. May Maa Ganga, Maa Yamuna and Maa Saraswati bring welfare to all," the CM wrote on X.

Reacting to the Cabinet meeting at Maha Kumbh, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said it is not an appropriate venue for political activities.

Mirwaiz-led team to meet panel on Waqf Bill in Delhi

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Kashmir's chief cleric and Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq will meet Jagdamika Pal, chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, after the Union Ministry of Home Affairs gave its nod to the meeting.

The Mirwaiz told *The Hindu* that the meeting had been fixed for the morning of Friday (January 17, 2025) at the residence of Mr. Pal. "We were hoping that the JPC would visit Kashmir for feedback but it did not happen. We intend to apprise the viewpoint of Muslims from J&K and Ladakh. We have the backing of the organisations of Leh and Kargil as well," he said.

"We have serious concerns about the Bill and will apprise the JPC about them. Several provisions have far-reaching implications," he added.

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IN BRIEF



AIP moves Delhi High Court for MP Engineer Rashid's bail

The Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) on Wednesday moved the Delhi High Court to secure bail for its incarcerated leader and Member of Parliament Sheikh Rashid, 57, widely known as Engineer Rashid. "The bail application for Mr. Rashid has been filed and is listed for hearing in the Delhi High Court on January 23. This step is part of our unwavering efforts to ensure justice for our leader, whose prolonged detention raises serious concerns about fairness and due process," Inam Un Nabi, chief spokesperson of the AIP, said in Srinagar. Mr. Rashid won the Baramulla seat in the 2024 Lok Sabha poll.

Unnao rape case: Delhi HC grants interim bail to Sengar

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday granted interim bail to expelled BJP leader Kuldeep Singh Sengar on medical grounds in the 2017 Unnao rape case. A Bench of Justices Navin Chawla and Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar said Sengar, who is serving life term in the case, would be released on January 23 to undergo a cataract surgery at AIIMS the following day. The Bench directed the accused to surrender not later than January 27 once he is discharged from the hospital. It also clarified that if the surgery did not take place on January 24, then Sengar should surrender the same evening. PTI

Crime scene recreated at Saif's flat, actor meets auto driver who rushed him to hospital



Actor Saif Ali Khan with autorickshaw driver Bhajan Singh Rana at Lilavati Hospital in Mumbai before getting discharged. PTI

Shehzad allegedly discarded while fleeing. Shehzad, who had illegally entered India under the alias Vijay Das, was apprehended on Sunday from Thane.

Recording of statement

Police are expected to record Mr. Khan's statement regarding the events in the early hours of January 16, when the accused reportedly broke into the house with the intention of committing robbery," Mr. Rana said.

Abhinay Deshpande

MUMBAI

The Mumbai police, investigating the attack on Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan, reportedly recreated the crime scene at his Bandra flat in Satguru Sharan building on Tuesday night.

Investigators reportedly found multiple fingerprints belonging to the accused, Mohammed Shariful Islam Shehzad, a Bangladeshi national, at the actor's home. The fingerprints, discovered on the staircase, toilet door, and the door handle of Mr. Khan's younger son Jeth's room, are expected to serve as critical evidence in the case.

The reconstruction revealed that the accused entered the premises by scaling the compound wall. Police have also recovered a broken knife from a water body in Thane, which

Parbhani protester's custodial death: hundreds join march seeking justice



The march reached Jalna on Wednesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

he had come to Parbhani to appear for law exams.

According to one of the organisers, the rally, which kicked off on January 17, will move towards Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district and culminate in Mumbai on February 18.

The demonstrators plan to meet Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

"Every day, thousands

Snehal Mutha

MUMBAI

A massive rally seeking justice for Somnath Suryawanshi, who died in judicial custody in the aftermath of violence in Maharashtra's Parbhani district, on Wednesday reached Watur village in Partur taluka in Jalna district, with hundreds of people joining it en route to Mumbai.

Somnath, a 35-year-old aspiring lawyer from Pune, was arrested in one of the seven cases registered for rioting and arson in Parbhani on December 11 last year during protests over the desecration of a replica of the Constitution. He died in judicial custody on December 15.

Preliminary reports said

ised the replica of the Constitution, fast-track trials in the case of Santosh Deshmukh [the sarpanch of Beed district's Massajog village, who was abducted, tortured, and murdered on December 9, 2024], and withdrawal of false cases against the protesters," he said.

Other demands by the protesters include the seizure of CCTV footage from the Parbhani police station, investigation into the organisers of the Sakal Hindu Samaj Morcha, construction of a memorial for Suryawanshi, and compensation and government employment for the families of Suryawanshi and Vijay Wakode, an Ambedkarite leader who died of cardiac arrest after the incident.

Top court issues notice to M.P. govt. over 'suspicious' death of Dalit girl, two family members

Mehul Malpani

The Supreme Court on Wednesday issued a notice to the Madhya Pradesh government seeking its response on a petition that has demanded a CBI or SIT investigation into the death of a 20-year-old Dalit woman and alleged murders of her brother and uncle in Sagar district.

A Bench of Justices J.K. Maheshwari and Aravind Kumar, hearing a petition filed by Anjana Ahirwar's mother on Wednesday, also sought the State government's response to her demands of moving the investigation out of Madhya Pradesh and police

Anjana's death in May 2024 created an uproar with the Oppn. targeting the BJP govt.

protection for her family.

Anjana, a resident of Sagar's Khurai town, had died in May 2024 after she allegedly fell from an ambulance that was carrying the body of her uncle, who had been allegedly thrashed to death just days ago. Her 18-year-old brother had been allegedly murdered by a group of men after he did not reportedly agree to "settle" a 2019 case of molestation filed against them by Anjana.

Their mother was also allegedly stripped and beaten in August 2023.

The uncle who died in May last year was also a witness in the 2023 murder of Anjana's brother.

Anjana's death had created a massive uproar with Congress and other Opposition parties targeting the BJP government over atrocities against Dalits and Chief Minister Mohan Yadav visiting the family and assuring justice.

While the Sagar police have ruled out any foul play in Anjana's death, the family has rejected the police claims. The police have also arrested several men in connection with the two alleged murders.

2 arrested for parading four women on theft suspicion

Press Trust of India

LUDHIANA

A woman and her three daughters were paraded with their faces blackened and placards around their necks that read: "I am a thief" in the industrial area of the Bahadurk road in Punjab's Ludhiana, the police said on Wednesday. The women were "punished" over the suspicion that they stole garments from a factory where they worked, said an officer. A case has been registered against the factory owner, its manager, and another man who videographed the incident.

Two of them, including the owner of the hosiery factory, have been arrested, the police said.

SC lambasts Assam govt. over detention centres, summons Chief Secy.

Apex court says the affidavit submitted by the State govt. was 'defective' for not giving reasons for detaining 270 foreign nationals at Matia transit camp and steps taken for their deportation

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

Calling it a "defective" affidavit, the Supreme Court on Wednesday slammed the Assam government for not giving in its reply reasons for detaining 270 foreigners at the Matia transit camp.

A Bench of Justices Abhay S. Oka and Nongmeikapam Kotiswar Singh directed the Assam Chief Secretary to remain present through videoconferencing on the next date of hearing.

The top court said it granted six weeks' time to the State government on December 9 to file the affidavit and expected it to give reasons for detaining 270 foreign nationals in the transit camp besides details on the steps taken for their deportation.

"The affidavit does not give any justification for detaining...steps taken to deport are not set out. This is gross violation of orders of this court. We direct the



Chief Secretary to remain present through videoconferencing and explain the non-compliance," the Bench said.

The counsel appearing for the State government submitted that persons were detained only after they were declared foreigners by the foreigners' tribunals and explained the mechanism of deportation of illegal migrants.

The top court sought to know why detentions were continuing without the deportation process even being initiated.

The court expressed displeasure after the Assam government counsel said the affidavit was confidential and should remain sealed.

'What is confidential?'
"This shows that the State does not want to come clean. Tell us what is confidential in the affidavit?" the Bench said.

The lawyer said the affidavit contained the ad-

dresses of foreigners and the details could go to the media.

"Assam counsel states that affidavit filed should be kept in sealed envelope, as contents thereof are confidential. Though we are directing that it be kept in sealed envelope, prima facie we disagree with the counsel that there is something confidential about the contents," the Bench said.

The top court had directed Assam State Legal Services Authority to conduct surprise visits at the Matia transit camp for foreigners to check the facility's hygiene and food quality.

The Bench was hearing a plea concerning the deportation of persons declared foreigners and facilities at the detention centres in Assam.

While hearing the matter on May 16 last year, the apex court observed that the Centre must take immediate steps for deporting 17 foreigners at the detention centre in Matia.

List welfare schemes that govt. is 'wasting' money on: T.N. CM to AIADMK leader

The Hindu Bureau

SIVAGANGA



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Wednesday asked AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami to list the welfare schemes and projects that he had accused the government of wasting money on.

"We want to know whether it is the *Kalaigalar Mahalir Urimai Thittam* or the breakfast scheme. On which scheme is money being wasted?..." Mr. Stalin said at a government event in Sivaganga.

Seeking clarification from the AIADMK leader on his remark that the DMK had not fulfilled its promises since assuming office, Mr. Stalin said of the 505 promises made by his party during the 2021 Assembly election, 389 had been fulfilled.

He said while the AIADMK was keen on talking about the DMK's unfulfilled promises, it should remember that in the last 10 years of its rule, it could only make Tamil Nadu a revenue-deficit state.

Tamil Nadu, he said, was in a sorry state even as

"All families where deaths have occurred shall be designated as Containment Zone 1, and their houses will be sealed with entry restricted for all individuals, including their family members, unless otherwise authorised by designated officials," the official order reads.

Continuous monitoring

Containment Zone 2 will include all families identified as close contacts of affected individuals, while the third zone encompasses all households in Badhal village. "Staff will be deployed to ensure continuous monitoring of food consumption," it added.

In a late development, the Deputy Commissioner, Rajouri, has ordered immediate relocation of close contacts and high-risk contacts of affected families from Badhal Village to the Nursing College and Government Medical College in Rajouri.



A patient from the Badhal village being taken to a hospital on Wednesday amid deaths of at least 17 people from the hamlet. PTI

Earlier tests conducted on affected individuals returned negative for any bacterial or viral infections. However, with more people falling ill, the mystery has deepened. One affected person has been transferred to PGIMER, Chandigarh. Three additional local persons who reported sick were taken to a hospital in Jammu city on Wednesday. Badhal is a hilly village about 55 km from Rajouri's headquarters and 145 km from Jammu city.

Badhal village has experienced multiple waves of deaths since December 7 last year, resulting in 17 fatalities, including 13 children and a pregnant woman. Various local and national testing agencies have ruled out the spread of any disease so far. Most patients, according to officials, have reported high fever, body aches, vomiting, and unconsciousness.

"Involvement of the brain and damage to the nervous system are common among those who have died so far. Recovery becomes challenging for patients whose brains are

affected," Dr. Amarjeet Singh Bhatia, principal of the Government Medical College, Rajouri, said.

A police-led Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted by the J&K government, along with a multi-disciplinary team from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), is investigating these deaths "from multiple angles", officials said.

The government has already prohibited local people from drawing water from a local spring and banned community feasting until the investigation concludes.

In the latest order on Wednesday, the District Magistrate of Rajouri imposed Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNS) to establish containment strategies and surveillance measures for affected families and close contacts in the village, which is home to around 3,800 residents.

The government has already prohibited local people from drawing water from a local spring and banned community feasting until the investigation concludes.

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Their mother was also allegedly stripped and beaten in August 2023.

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While the Sagar police have ruled out any foul play in Anjana's death, the family has rejected the police claims. The police have also arrested several men in connection with the two alleged murders.

CAG report on PPE kit deal will not have bearing in Lok Ayukta case

K.S. Sudhi
KOCHI

Though the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report that the Kerala government paid an exorbitant price for the purchase of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) during the pandemic has created a political stir in the State, it is unlikely to leave any legal bearing on the case pending before the Lok Ayukta.

The scope for judicial interference following the CAG report is very limited as the report has to be considered by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the State Assembly, which can reject or accept it. The State Legislature can recommend to the government to act on the findings of the PAC. The Kerala High Court and the Supreme Court have pointed out that it would be inappropriate for the courts to interfere with the proceedings pending before the State Legislature, pointed out judicial sources.

Moreover, the report prepared as part of the regular audit process is of no evidentiary value before a court of law. Though the views of the State government would be sought in the report, the individuals against whom the imputations are made are not heard before finalising it.

Meanwhile, it may take some time for the Lok Ayukta to take up the case that was filed in 2022, sources indicated.

14 die in separate road accidents in Karnataka

Ten killed when their truck overturned and fell into a five-feet-deep trench in Yellapur; four killed when their multi-utility vehicle overturned near Sindhanur; 29 injured in the accidents

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

Fourteen persons died and 29 were injured in separate road accidents in two districts of Karnataka on Tuesday night and in the early hours of Wednesday.

Ten persons were killed and 19 suffered injuries when a truck laden with vegetables and fruits overturned and fell into a five-feet-deep trench in Arabail ghat region near Yellapur in Uttara Kannada district on Wednesday.

In the other accident, near Sindhanur of Raichur district late on Tuesday night, four persons, including three students of the Sanskrit Vidyapeetha at Mantralayam in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, were killed on the spot and 10 were injured when their multi-utility vehicle overturned.

The drivers losing control of the vehicles is said to have been the reason for the accidents.

The accident in Uttara Kannada left the whole town of Savanur in Haveri in mourning as 10 families have lost their breadwinners and 19 families are praying for the early recovery of their kin admitted to different hospitals. All of them were vegetable and fruit vendors who were going to the Kumta weekly market.

While one of the deceased was married four



Big loss: Family members of a Yellapur accident victim mourning in Haveri on Wednesday. PTI

months ago, the wife of another deceased is four months pregnant.

Soon after news of the accident broke, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah posted a message on X expressing shock and grief over the accident and announced compensation to the families.

In a message on X, former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, MP, too expressed shock and grief over the accident and urged the government to give suitable compensation to the affected families.

Later in the day, Deputy Commissioner of Uttara Kannada, Laxmipriya, handed over cheques for ₹3 lakh each to the family members of the deceased in the presence of MLAs Shivaram Hebbar and Yasir Ahmed Khan Pathan.

According to Superin-

tendent of Police, Narayan, who visited the spot, the accident occurred around 4:30 a.m. when the driver lost control of the vehicle, resulting in the truck overturning and falling into the trench. Consequently people were caught underneath.

The police used a crane to lift the truck to pull out the people. By that time nine were dead and another passed away on the way to hospital, Mr. Narayan said.

Of the 19 injured persons, seven are recuperating at KMCR Hospital in Hubballi and 12 at government hospital at Yellapur and they are said to be out of danger.

3 students among dead

In the accident near Sindhanur, three among the killed were students of

Sanskrit Vidyapeetha in Mantralayam. They were identified as Sujayendra, 22, Hayavadana, 18, Abhilash, 18, and the driver of the vehicle, Shiva, 24.

Nine of the injured were admitted to the local civil hospital and Jayasimha, who suffered major injuries, was referred to a private hospital in Raichur and his condition continues to be critical.

All the dead and injured were travelling to Anegundi in Koppal district from Mantralayam to take part in the three-day 'Aradhana' of Saint Narahari Tirtha.

In a video release, the Peethadhipathi of Sri Raghavendra Temple in Mantralayam, Subhudendra Tirtha, expressed his deepest condolences.

A case has been registered at Sindhanur Traffic police station.

I-T officials search office of *Pushpa 2* director in Hyderabad

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Income Tax officials reportedly carried out a search at the office of Sukumar, the director of the film *Pushpa 2: The Rule*, at Banjara Hills in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

The search is expected to continue at other properties related to the director and other members of Mythri Movie Makers.

This follows a series of searches conducted at the properties related to *Pushpa 2* and *Game Changer* producers, including Telangana Film Federation Development Corporation (TGFDC) chairman V. Venkata Ramana Reddy, popularly known as Dil Raju, on Tuesday.

The raids that began on Tuesday in the upscale Jubilee Hills at Dil Raju's residence, are expected to continue for two more days.

This comes against the backdrop of massive budgets and box office collections associated with the recent Sankranti releases by Dil Raju. The movies include *Pushpa 2* and major films lined up for the two producers.

While Dil Raju's wife Tejaswini on Tuesday said the IT officials were conducting 'routine checks', the I-T Department is yet to issue a formal statement regarding the raids. On Tuesday official sources said the searches were carried out with regard to the charges of tax evasion.

Burials must be held only in designated graveyards for each faith: Supreme Court

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Noting that burials must be held only in areas designated for each faith, the Supreme Court on Wednesday found an affidavit filed by the Chhattisgarh government about a "designated" graveyard for Christians "very vague". This was part of an effort to resolve a stand-off between the State and the family of a senior citizen who died on January 7 over his burial place.

A Bench of Justice B.V. Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma, while reserving the case for orders, asked the State government to file a fresh affidavit detailing the extent and location of the designated graveyard and whether it was used by Christians across four neighbouring villages in Bastar district.

Justice Nagarathna voiced urgency, saying the body had been in the mortuary since January 7, awaiting an immediate resolution. Both judges remarked that the body must be buried in a graveyard designated exclusively for Christians.

"If there is a designated area, you can bury him there... This should be an exclusive Christian graveyard where they will not be disturbed," Justice Nagarathna said.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for Chhattisgarh, submitted the graveyard



was for the exclusive use of Christians across four villages, and added that the State was willing to put up a sign board to that effect.

Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, appearing for the family, said they wanted him buried in their native village of Chhindawada, in a specified area where his ancestors had been laid to rest.

Mr. Gonsalves said he had no information about the "so-called" designated graveyard referred to by the State government.

"This is hostile, patent discrimination to the dead with a future signal to the living... Denial of burial is an atrocity," Mr. Gonsalves objected.

Justice Sharma said the case was not about "denial of burial" but about burial in the designated area.

In his petition, Ramesh Baghel, son of the deceased pastor Subhas Baghel, said the family and ancestors have been residing at Chhindawada, and emphasised his father's wish to be buried next to family members in their village graveyard.

Video of Kerala student threatening teachers goes viral

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Palakkad and Malappuram Regional Deputy Director (RDD) has sent a report to the Director of General Education (DGE) along with an explanation from the Principal of a higher secondary school in Palakkad after a video of a student threatening teachers after his mobile phone was confiscated went viral on social media.

Minister for General Education V. Sivankutty has directed the DGE to look into the incident and submit a report.

As mobile phones are not allowed in school, the Plus One student's phone was taken away and handed over to the Principal.

In a first, a tribal king from Kerala to attend Republic Day parade in Delhi

Sandeep Vellaram
IDUKKI

The student then issued dire threats to teachers in the Principal's room. This was captured on video and went viral on social media.

The RDD said such behaviour from students was not really uncommon owing to increasing mobile phone use and social media addiction. Teachers should not see it simply as misbehaviour. What the student said was not as important as how the video got published, he said.

The Principal said he had initially wanted to show the video to the student once he calmed down. The student had expressed readiness to apologise. The school too wanted to see him change and would provide him counselling.

According to officials, this will be the first time a tribal king will attend the Republic Day parade in Delhi. The SC Development Department will meet the travel expenses of Mr. Rajamannan and his



Minister O.R. Kelu handing over the Republic Day invitation to king of Mannan tribal community at Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday.

wife, Binumol.

During the visit, the couple will meet the President and other prominent leaders. He will also visit Agra and other historically important places in the capital. They will be returning to Kerala on February 2.

According to officials, the Centre demanded the

participation of persons from the tribal community of the State for the Republic Day parade. The SC Development Department then decided to send the couple as representatives of the community.

"The government's decision is an honour to the Mannan community," said

the official.

On Tuesday, Mr. Rajamannan and Ms. Binumol

visited the State Assembly,

and was received by Mr. Kelu. Devikulam MLA A. Raja accompanied them.

48 settlements

The Mannan community is mainly settled in the buffer zone area of the Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary at Kozhimala, the hub of the tribe with 48 settlements ruled by a king, the only such community in southern India.

The king is an integral part of the traditional functions and festivities of the community.

He will wear a turban or headgear and special dress on such occasions and will be assisted by two Ministers and soldiers during the functions.

Karnataka to build ₹200-cr. centre for pilgrims in Tirumala

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Ahole Block, comprising 132 non-AC rooms, was inaugurated on January 20 by Mr. Reddy. Each room is priced at ₹1,350 per 24-hour period (excluding GST), providing well-equipped lodging for pilgrims. Additionally, Block 2, also known as the Hampi Block, featuring 110 AC rooms, is already operational and catering to devotees.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Muzrai Minister Ramalinga Reddy said the project aims to enhance facilities for devotees visiting the temple. "The initiative includes three accommodation blocks, a state-of-the-art marriage hall, and upgrades to the existing Karnatakam State Choultry," he said.

"The accommodation is designed to offer comfort and accessibility with bookings made available online and offline through the Karnataka Religious Endowment Department's accommodation website karnatakatempleaccommodation.com. Currently, 60% of rooms are allocated online," Mr. Reddy said.

In continued pitch for investments, A.P. Chief Minister meets Bill Gates in Davos

G.V. Subba Rao
VIJAYAWADA

On the third day of his visit to Davos for the World Economic Forum (WEF) summit, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday held talks with the heads of leading companies to attract investments to the State.

Mr. Naidu met Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, in Davos. During the meeting, they discussed key topics such as establishment of an AI University and a Centre of Excellence for Health, and making Andhra Pradesh the gateway to South India.



Selling point: Andhra Pradesh CM N. Chandrababu Naidu and IT Minister N. Lokesh with Microsoft founder Bill Gates in Davos. PTI

In another meeting, Mr. Naidu urged Google Cloud CEO Thomas Kurian to explore the possibility of setting up a design centre in Visakhapatnam, where Google was developing its chips for servers. He sought establishment of a manufacturing unit in Andhra Pradesh to integrate Google Cloud's server sup-

ply chain. Additionally, the Chief Minister suggested that Andhra Pradesh be made the central hub for server maintenance services, and assured Mr. Kurian of the government's full cooperation.

Recently, Google had signed an MoU with the State government to set up its Data City in Visakhapatnam. Google had also signed agreements with the government to develop the use of artificial intelligence and enhance skill development opportunities for the State's youth.

Mr. Naidu also held talks with Petronas president and Group CEO Muhammad Taufik.

Hyderabad the place for investments, has world's best mobility options: Revanth

R. Ravikanth Reddy
HYDERABAD

Projecting Hyderabad as the city with the world's best mobility options and also an environment-friendly set-up, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy urged business leaders to invest in Hyderabad to make it the fastest growing city in the world.

Speaking at the CII-HMC round-table session on "Reimagining Urban Mobility: Trends, Innovations and Opportunities" at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, the Chief Minister said that if one wanted to predict the future of any city over the



Business ideas: Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and officials with Unilever CEO Hein Schumacher in Davos.

next 10, 20, 30 or 50 years, cities where costs and time to move people and goods were low would win in the long term.

Mr. Reddy said urban

mobility was the foundation for cities' growth and future. The growth of nations depended on the growth of cities, he said, adding that urban mobility

along with sustainability and environmental factors, would decide the future of mankind.

Pushing for investments, the Chief Minister said that Hyderabad, with a population of over 12 million, was the fastest growing city and would have the best urban mobility facility in the country.

Electric vehicles are a big focus for the State government, he said, reminding the zero registration charges introduced by the Telangana government on all electric vehicles. With this initiative, Telangana has the highest growth of sales in EVs in the country, he said.



Changed dynamics

India must chart a new transactional course with Trump administration

The first 48 hours of U.S. President Donald Trump's second term have been proof of the radical shifts he plans over four years, with the overarching theme of putting "America First". While the strengthening of India-U.S. ties during his first term should give those in New Delhi attempting to strategise for this term some comfort, his moves now make it clear that it will be necessary to expect the unexpected as well. The slew of Executive Orders changes U.S. policy on energy, the environment and climate change, trade and global taxes, citizenship routes, health, border control and immigration. But the new administration has shown it is keen to engage India: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, who was invited along with other Quad Foreign Ministers at the inaugural ceremony, was the first Foreign Minister to hold a one-on-one bilateral meeting with new U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio. The readout of their meeting and the Quad Foreign Ministers' joint statement make it clear that the two sides are on the same page on the Indo-Pacific partnership, concerns over Chinese actions, critical and emerging technology cooperation, strategic and defence ties. Yet, some Trump-Rubio pronouncements have set alarm bells ringing, notably on trade, immigration and the cancellation of citizenship by birth. On trade, India has escaped being named in the first round of tariff announcements, but Mr. Trump's comments on a "100% tariff" against all members of the BRICS emerging economies grouping raised the suspense and a possible market reaction. In his first term, he had withdrawn India's GSP status affecting Indian exporters. On immigration, he has announced a "border emergency", authorised a crackdown on illegal and undocumented migrants, and plans to crush the hopes of H-1B visa holders and other Indians working there, by cancelling the automatic path to citizenship for any children born to them in the U.S. With 7,25,000 undocumented Indians, any action to deport them in large numbers, beginning with about 18,000-20,000 on the Immigration "final list for removal", will be a major crisis for India.

In this context, Mr. Rubio's statement in talks with Mr. Jaishankar that they must address the "irregular migration" should be taken seriously. So too should Mr. Trump's pronouncements insisting on investments in the U.S., hiring in the U.S., and the buying of U.S. energy. The new administration's geopolitical outlook appears to be set on devaluing the multilateral world order, withdrawing from U.S. commitments of support to WHO, the WTO, and the UN, and putting NATO allies on notice. Given the signs, New Delhi must be prepared for a U.S. administration that will not be particularly sensitive to India's concerns or be a willing partner in India's growth unless it sees a benefit for itself, and instead chart a more transactional course, while moving to limit the damage from any adverse actions of the Trump era.

An exit of bluster

The rest of the world must reassess the US's role in fighting climate change

President Donald Trump has fired his henchmen at multilateralism by signing into decree the United States' withdrawal from the 2015 Paris Agreement. This sets records that are in a class of their own. The U.S. is the only country to have withdrawn thrice from a climate agreement – beginning with George W. Bush's withdrawal, in 2001, from the Kyoto Protocol. Mr. Trump, of course, sets a new low by being the only President to withdraw from a climate agreement twice. In the run-up to the decree, there is a pall of gloom in the climate world over what the U.S.'s latest exit might mean, particularly when the globe has finished its first full calendar year above the 1.5°C Celsius mark.

The U.S. is the second largest emitter of greenhouse gases. By virtue of being the most powerful economy, it has arrogated to itself the mantle of 'global leadership' in addressing climate change. But now that the leader has had the spottiest track record of keeping to the terms of a significant agreement – one, whose rule book the U.S. played a major role in compiling – perhaps it is time for the rest of the world to reassess America's role in addressing climate change. Under both Republican and Democratic governments, U.S. domestic policy on greenhouse gas emissions has been subservient to business interests. Oil and gas production increased under the Biden administration. The U.S. remains the world's largest crude oil producer, achieving record production in 2023. The country is also the world's largest producer of gas and, in 2022, became the world's largest exporter for liquefied natural gas (LNG). Mr. Trump has only committed to add on to this already substantial base. The U.S. is critically short of achieving its target of greenhouse gas emissions. As of 2022, the U.S. has achieved only about one-third of its 2030 emissions reduction target. In the last weeks of his Presidency, Mr. Biden increased the U.S.'s emission-reduction commitments to 61%-66% of 2005 levels by 2035. This too, calculations suggest, will be insufficient to meet a 1.5°C target. Private capital propping up renewable energy has grown exponentially since Mr. Bush, and is now too substantial for Mr. Trump and his financial backers to ignore. While it will take a year for the exit to be formalised, it is likely that the U.S.'s behind-the-scenes engagement – especially at the next climate meet (COP 30) in Brazil in November 2025 – will continue. The politics of Mr. Trump suggests that he is not averse to running with the hare and hunting with the hounds.

Over 70 years ago, Ian Fleming created the fictional character of a secret service agent called James Bond, code named 007, who had the licence to kill. On September 1, 1983, a Korean Airlines jet, flight 007, on a scheduled flight from New York to Seoul via Anchorage, was shot down by a Russian Air Force Sukhoi fighter plane when the Korean flight had deviated from its flight path due to a navigational error. All 246 passengers and 23 crew were killed. One of the passengers was the daughter of Hans Ephraimson-Abt, who began an organisation to aid the victims of air accidents. His initiative resulted in a big push at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to publish rules regarding conflict risk. But this was shot down by Russia and its allies in ICAO.

Cases of misidentification

On July 3, 1988, an Iran Air plane, flight 655, was shot down by a United States Navy warship, USS *Vincennes*, over the Strait of Hormuz. All 290 passengers were killed when the ship's missile brought down the plane which was misidentified to be a fighter plane. During the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88), U.S. patrolling required civilian aircraft to transmit the Identification Friend or Foe mode code. Apparently, the warship crew identified the Iranian aircraft to be a fighter and orders were issued to shoot it down.

On November 22, 2003, a DHL Cargo plane took off from Baghdad for Bahrain. As the flight was making a rapid climb out, a surface-to-air missile launched by terrorists struck the left wing between the engine and the wing tip. The crew lost all hydraulics and because the fuel tank was full, there were no fuel vapours to explode in the exposed fuel tank. The crew controlled the flight using only differential engine thrust and managed to carry out a safe landing, displaying exceptional skill. This writer had the privilege of attending a special presentation by the crew at the Flight Safety Foundation IASS 2004 seminar at Shanghai, China.

On February 27, 2019, just after Balakot, when fighter planes of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Pakistan Air Force were engaged in a dogfight, an IAF Mi-17 helicopter was shot down by a surface-to-air missile of the IAF's air defence system. Six personnel lost their lives in what was a serious error. Here again, the helicopter was wrongly identified as a foe.



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On July 17, 2014, a Malaysia Airlines flight, MH17, from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur with 283 passengers and 15 crew, was shot down by Russian-backed forces with a surface-to-air missile while flying over eastern Ukraine.

All these examples highlight the issue of misidentification.

Post September 11, 2001, there are specific procedures to be followed in the event of track deviation due to weather, or a failure of navigation signals. Specific radio procedures are implemented for crew to comply with, else air force fighter jets may shoot down a civilian aircraft if perceived to be flying in a suspicious manner. On February 16, 2017, an Indian airline flight, Jet Airways flight 9W 118, with 330 passengers and 15 crew members, from Mumbai to London, was cruising at 36,000 feet. It flew over a few flight information regions without maintaining radio contact with the air traffic control of the region. The plane had not deviated from its assigned track. When it entered German airspace north of Cologne, the German Air Force deployed two of its Eurofighter Typhoons to intercept the Indian plane. Had the Jet Airways crew not responded to the Germans on an emergency frequency, they could have been shot down.

India's safety regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), did a cover up terming it as a malfunction of the aircraft's communication system. If it was really a communication failure, the aircraft crew should have been using the necessary transponder code and ground stations would have known that it was an aircraft facing communication failure. Fighter jets would not have been deployed to intercept it.

Conflict zones, their dangers

The case of an Azerbaijani airliner, while on a flight from Baku in Azerbaijan to Grozny, in Russia, on December 25, 2024, but which crashed near the Kazakhstan city of Aktau after being diverted, has been the result of another event where a Russian anti-aircraft defence system may have caused the loss of lives. Of the 67 passengers on board, there were some survivors. For a state to get away with it by just saying 'sorry' does not bring back the precious lives lost. The aircraft had veered from its scheduled route due to fog. There is also the issue of GPS spoofing and false signals

or a loss of signals that affect navigation.

More than 500 people have lost their lives due to civil airlines being shot down. With growing wars and conflicts, flying over or near conflict zones is becoming dangerous, especially when there are countries which do not respect international borders and there are rogue elements who cause trouble by interfering with GPS signals.

The Indian regulator's silence

This brings the focus on a serious issue. Do airlines in India have comprehensive training in place for pilots to recognise jammed signals and do the airlines have standard operating procedures in place for taking over the navigation with alternate methods? There are reports of GPS errors or failures in the airspace over Pakistan, Afghanistan and Myanmar. With a rapid expansion of flights and with large numbers of aircraft being inducted, do airlines in India have enough experienced pilots? For example, Air India operates many of its non-stop flights to the west coast of the United States on routes that are avoided by American carriers. There are also reports of some leased aircraft with Air India not being equipped for extended flights over mountainous terrain. We hear nothing from the DGCA on what preventive measures it is taking in these cases.

We have had three passenger aircraft shot down by the Russians or Russian-linked agents. We have had the U.S. Navy shooting down a passenger airliner. We have had a cargo aircraft shot by a terrorist group with missiles supplied by either Russia or the U.S. as conflicts in West Asia have involved one or the other super power aiding sides in the conflicts. The large-scale use of arms and defence forces using missiles to shoot down flights make the skies really unsafe for passenger aircraft while flying over conflict regions. There is another danger. Skill levels have dropped as there is now rapid training which has resulted in degraded monitoring to assess pilot proficiency. The world has to wake up and take cognisance of this new danger. Indian aviation may be expanding rapidly but, at the same time, there is no urgency or compulsion to ensure the quality of pilots' flying skills. As James Reason's Swiss cheese theory explains, the holes in the cheese are lining up.

Do we act now or let another disaster pass?

China's moves must recast India's critical minerals push

On January 2, 2025, China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) expanded its export control list by including 28 entities from the United States, effectively restricting their access to a swath of items classified under dual-use export controls. At the core of these restrictions lies minerals and rare and refined materials that are vital for high-technology applications such as in aerospace, semiconductors, batteries, and advanced electronics. Beijing's list encompasses tungsten, gallium, magnesium, beryllium, hafnium, lithium-6 (isotope), and others – minerals with uses ranging from chip production to speciality alloys.

This is not the first time that China has weaponised the exports of its critical minerals. And it is an approach that is strategic and calculated. Beijing primarily targets minerals that are deemed to be critical by western nations and their allies, especially those essential for semiconductors, batteries, and high-tech manufacturing. However, China carefully balances these decisions against two constraining factors: it avoids controlling minerals which are heavily dependent on western raw material imports. And it refrains from actions that could disrupt its domestic industrial enterprises or export-dependent sectors. This strategic calculus was evident in China's rare earth minerals embargo against Japan in 2010, its recent restrictions on antimony, gallium, and germanium exports, and its ban, in December 2023, on rare earth extraction and processing technologies.

The situation in India

Meanwhile, policymakers in the United States and elsewhere are becoming increasingly concerned. These developments underscore a larger trend: the competition for critical minerals has become a fulcrum of international economic diplomacy. For nations such as India, these events are also a wake-up call – to improve domestic mineral exploration and production capacity.

India's push for critical minerals development



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India's critical minerals development plans face challenges; a way out may be to adopt the semiconductor fabrication model

has faced stubborn challenges. In 2023, lithium deposits that were found in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district made headlines, hinting at a game-changer moment for India's energy transition. However, a little over a year later, the story remains lacklustre: no company has shown interest in bidding for these resources, and the block remains in limbo. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident. Government data show that only 48% (24 out of 49) of the mineral blocks available for auction in recent years have been auctioned.

This lack of market enthusiasm cannot be pinned entirely on government negligence. Over the last three years, the Union government has introduced measures to spur activity in critical minerals. The Ministry of Mines identified 30 critical minerals that are deemed essential for national security. And before that, the Union government set up a designated body, Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL), which has been tasked with obtaining overseas investments in critical minerals such as lithium and cobalt. Parliament passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023, lifting restrictive classifications on some rare earth elements that used to be considered 'atomic minerals'. These reforms theoretically opened the door for greater private-sector investment and technology sharing.

Reforms and results

A key highlight of the 2023 amendments is the introduction of an 'exploration license', devised to attract specialised resource exploration agencies, including foreign companies, to survey potentially rich but geologically challenging deposits. Instead of having to commit to a full-scale mining operation that can take over a decade or more to turn profitable, these exploratory firms can now participate in reconnaissance and prospecting alone. The law also promises to reimburse 50% of the exploration expenditure once mining begins, aiming to de-risk early-stage operations.

Despite these promising reforms, the results have been tepid. Only a handful of exploration

licences for minerals such as lithium, rare earth elements, and graphite have been cleared, and those mostly went to Indian public sector firms. Foreign participation is sparse, and further downstream, mining license auctions for critical minerals have largely stalled.

One explanation is that India's resource classification system is outdated, leaving miners unsure about the commercial viability of mineral blocks. Exploration levels – often categorised under international norms as G1, G2, G3, or G4 – require progressively detailed geological data on ore grade and quantity. Many auctioned blocks in India have yet to reach advanced exploration status, making them riskier to prospective bidders. That said, a more puzzling factor is the low demand for exploration licences themselves – an option that should, in principle, help de-risk investments but evidently has not had the intended effect.

Fiscal incentives may be essential

This brings us to the essential role of high-quality data. Exploration is at the heart of mitigating 'information asymmetry', where potential buyers (mining companies) and the seller (government) do not share a clear view of the resource's true value. Without robust geological surveys, many bidders discount their offers or abstain entirely. The result is suboptimal auctions, with some potentially valuable blocks simply overlooked.

A possible remedy is to offer larger upfront fiscal incentives during the exploration phase. In other words, the solution might be to approach critical minerals extraction as a semiconductor fabrication project. In chip manufacturing

– another sector with enormous upfront costs and slow returns – India has taken an aggressive approach, pledging direct capital support early in the construction phase. A similar model could work for critical minerals, offsetting immediate exploration costs instead of reimbursing them only after production begins. Upfront capital support for exploration would resolve a market failure and help unlock value many times over in downstream mining, exploration, sales, and exports.

Cow urine

A letter writer has shed light on the ludicrous line that cow urine is a panacea for diseases ('Letters to The Editor', January 22). Let us hope that tomorrow some other person does not come up with a finding that cow dung can be consumed by humans! One appreciates the fact that the expert has highlighted the dangers of consuming cow's urine.

K. Narayanan Namboodiri, Bengaluru

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hits the ground running

It seems to be shock after shock. U.S. President Donald Trump's flurry of executive orders are bound to have several countries on tenterhooks ("Trump declares end to U.S. citizenship by birth", January 22). It is indisputable that Mr. Trump has every right to take whatever action he deems fit and necessary to safeguard his country's interests. However, his order to grant pardon, commuting the prison sentences and

nullifying multiple criminal cases that relate to the riots of January 6, 2021, is totally unacceptable and outrageous. If the judiciary professes fairness, it must act.

V. Johan Dhanakumar, Chennai

Raising walls of tariff and also walls against immigration could come back to haunt Mr. Trump. China has been massively setting up manufacturing plants in Mexico, which looks to the huge employment potential

therein and, in the process, upgrade its economy. By the same token, the U.S. would lose cheap Mexican labour that had, hitherto, kept local wages low. Canada could follow where the immigration policies of Mr. Trump would induce technical talent to move from the U.S. into its welcoming arms. Worse, Mr. Trump might have allowed Chinese influence to flow right across the U.S.'s borders, north and south. The standing of nations is sustained more by deep

statesmanship than popular messaging.

R. Narayanan, Navi Mumbai

Mr. Trump's dramatic return and the cascade of executive orders have set the stage for what promises to be a turbulent era in (American) politics. These actions are reflective of a leader intent on reshaping his nation with a vision that may well ripple across the globe with profound consequences.

What may be the beginning of a golden era for America

may be cause for worry for the rest of the world.

Gregory Fernandes, Mumbai

With America's second exit from the Paris climate agreement, the world faces greater danger. Given the fact that the current emission-cut commitments of countries do not match the Paris pact's goals, there must be global resolve to ensure that mitigation ambitions are still met.

M. Jeyaram, Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

The oligarchy we see today

In his farewell remarks as U.S. President, Joe Biden warned that an oligarchy was taking shape and threatening American democracy. Similar to Dwight Eisenhower's cautionary warning in 1961 about the "military-industrial complex", Mr. Biden highlighted a "tech industrial complex". He said that a new Gilded Age of "robber barons" was in danger of eroding hard-won freedoms.

As *The Guardian* noted in its editorial, U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt "undermined the 'malefactors of wealth' by trust-busting, creating regulatory agencies and putting land off limits to commercial exploitation." Today, the question of who will rule the U.S. – the people or the new aristocrats – may ultimately be at stake, it said.

Everywhere, political and economic power are intertwined. However, the connection can occasionally turn bleak and dangerous. There are 13 billionaires in U.S. President Donald Trump's cabinet. Elon Musk, the first individual with a net worth of over \$400 billion, asked voters to brace for "temporary hardship" as his Department of Government Efficiency will reduce public spending. Mr. Musk invested \$200 million in Mr. Trump's election campaign. "Oilarchs" are already benefiting from their support for the fossil fuel-friendly President. At Mr. Trump's inauguration, among others, Amazon's Jeff Bezos, Apple's Tim Cook, and Meta's Mark Zuckerberg were present. Some of their businesses have significant contracts with the federal government.

Oligarchy across the ages
The Greek philosopher Aristotle coined the word oligarchy to contrast the ruling of a wealthy few "for corrupt and unjust purposes" with that of the aristocracy, or elite upper class. Oligarchs usually acquire power by financial means, such as making large donations to

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politicians who then govern in ways that the oligarchs specify. But oligarchs can also become powerful because of their social standing, notoriety, education, military, religious, or political ties.

Political scientist Jeffrey A. Winters outlined the historical commonality of oligarchs in his 2011 book *Oligarchy*. How oligarchs respond to the threats they face, including how directly involved they are in supplying the coercion underlying all property claims, whether individually or collectively, all influence their pursuit of wealth defence, he said.

Nonetheless, there have been significant shifts in the nature of oligarchy across the ages. The U.S. media had likened Michael Bloomberg to the Roman oligarch Marcus Licinius Crassus as Mr. Bloomberg was vying for a third term as mayor of New York in 2009. But while for oligarchs such as Crassus, becoming consul was one of the most crucial political moves favouring their fundamental oligarchic interests, for contemporary oligarchs, using private funds to purchase public office is motivated more by vanity than by oligarchic survival.

An oligarchy is only "evil" if and when oligarchs violate the rule of law, remove the checks and balances on their own power, and prioritise their own interests over those of the people, as noted by Aristotle and Robert Michels. This is what happened historically. The Philippines is said to be an oligarchy because of its colonial past and powerful families. China defines itself as a communist 'People's Republic', but some have referred to it as an oligarchy, as a small number of people have held all the power for several decades. More recently, the term has been used to refer to affluent, powerful, and well-connected Russian businessmen. But in 2022, U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders noted, "Of course the oligarchs run Russia. But guess what? Oligarchs run the United States as well."

What is the nature of oligarchy then? In his 2017 book, *American*

In today's increasingly unequal world, empowered by tech marvels such as Artificial Intelligence, economic power invariably gets concentrated in a few hands

Oligarchy: The Permanent Political Class, historian Ron Formisano wrote about the emergence of a permanent political class on a scale never seen in American history. Rising inequality is a result of its corruption, nepotism, and self-dealing. In addition to politicians, Formisano explores the activities of lobbyists, consultants, appointed bureaucrats, pollsters, celebrity journalists, and billionaires working behind the scenes.

Economist Simon Johnson, however, perceived that the emergence of an American financial aristocracy gained traction during the 2008 financial crisis. In 2015, former President Jimmy Carter described the U.S. as an "oligarchy with unlimited political bribery," as the *Citizens United v. FEC* Supreme Court ruling in 2010 lifted restrictions on political campaign donations.

Is oligarchy confined to a select few countries? As Mr. Sanders said, "...All over the world, we're seeing a small number of incredibly wealthy people running things in their favour." It would be unjust to blame only Mr. Trump for encouraging oligarchy. Several billionaires contributed to Mr. Biden's re-election campaign too.

Democracy and oligarchy
Can democracy fight against oligarchy? Despite Aristotle's assertion in his book, *Politics*, that "democracy is safer and more free from civil strife than oligarchy," the German sociologist Robert Michels' early 20th-century "iron law of oligarchy" contends that democracy is an oxymoron because it will inevitably turn into an oligarchy due to the necessity to divide labour.

More than 200 years ago, U.S. President John Adams had expressed fear about the 'power elite'. In today's increasingly unequal world, empowered by tech marvels such as Artificial Intelligence, economic power invariably gets concentrated in a few hands. This may lead to intense oligarchy.

Playing the Punjab card in Delhi

The AAP is hoping to fight anti-incumbency by riding on its achievements in Punjab

STATE OF PLAY

Vikas Vasudeva
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diate first aid, among other achievements in Punjab.

Delhi is going to the polls on February 5. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is trying hard to fight anti-incumbency and retain power by "showcasing" Punjab, the only full-fledged State where it holds sway.

A battery of ministers, legislators, and AAP leaders, including Punjab's Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, have been campaigning in Delhi over the last few weeks to project the Punjab government's work, in the run up to the Assembly polls.

The AAP came to power in Punjab by winning 92 of the 117 Assembly seats in 2022.

However, in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, out of the 13 parliamentary constituencies it contested, it won only three.

This disappointing electoral performance was a major blow to the party. In the recent Assembly bypolls, the AAP won three constituencies – Gidderbaha, Dera Baba Nanak, and Chabbewal, but it failed to retain its stronghold seat of Barnala in Sangrur, which is the home district of Mr. Mann.

As the AAP is close to completing three years in power in Punjab, its leaders have gone to Delhi to project the party's achievements. AAP leaders have boasted in Delhi about giving 300 units of free electricity per month to households, establishing Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinics, providing nearly 50,000 jobs, ensuring transparency in the functioning of the government, working towards reducing road accident fatalities in 2024 by deploying the Sadak Suraksha Force, who provide imme-

diate first aid, among other achievements in Punjab.

However, this is a gamble.

The Opposition parties – the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress – are cornering the AAP in Delhi over its "failures" and unfulfilled promises in Punjab. Not just parties, but also a section of government employees and pensioners from Punjab as well as farmers have been accusing the AAP of abandoning its pre-poll promises.

In the course of campaigning for the 2022 Punjab Assembly elections, AAP leaders, including Mr. Mann, had publicly favoured the procurement of 22 crops at the minimum support price (MSP) and assured government purchase after coming to power. However, they later took a U-turn.

The AAP had also promised to provide financial assistance of ₹1,000 to all women aged 18 years and above, which remains unfulfilled.

It had also pledged to wipe out the drug menace from Punjab within four months of government formation; this continues to be a distant dream.

Apart from this, the AAP seized power in Punjab riding on an anti-corruption plank.

But it appears to be on the defensive now on the same issue,

as many of its leaders are fac-

ing a barrage of corruption charges.

Several government em-

ployees and pensioners are al-

so annoyed with the AAP for

not fulfilling its pre-poll promise of restoring the Old Pension Scheme. They have said that they will mobilise people so that the AAP is not voted back to power in Delhi.

After coming to power in Punjab, the party has, on the basis of its governance model, sought votes during Assembly elections in States such as Gujarat, Goa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan, but its electoral performance in all these States has been poor. In Delhi, there is a sense that the electoral benefits could be limited as Delhi mostly comprises urban constituencies in comparison to Punjab, which is an agrarian State with largely rural constituencies.

Even as the Delhi Assembly elections have occupied centre stage, the mayoral elections in the Union Territory of Chandigarh are slated to be held on January 30. The Congress and the AAP are contesting jointly against the BJP. This is unlike in Delhi, where the Congress and AAP are fighting the polls separately. This may give political ammunition to the BJP, which has also joined hands with the Lok Janshakti Party and the Janata Dal (United), to target both the Congress and the AAP in Delhi.

Over the years, the AAP claims it is different from the "traditional parties" and has time and again sought a chance to form the government in States by playing this card. However, now the party, which is in power in two States, will be assessed on its performance. The Delhi Assembly elections are a crucial test for the AAP, which has been fighting several setbacks in the national capital. The implications of these election results would surely be seen in Punjab as well, whether the party wins or loses.

Jio leads in 12 telecom circles, Airtel dominates in nine

Vodafone Idea continues to lead in Kerala, despite its market share shrinking rapidly in recent years

DATA POINT

Nitika Francis
Vignesh Radhakrishnan

Reliance Jio leads the wireless subscriber market in 12 of India's 22 telecom circles, while Airtel dominates nine. This leaves Vodafone Idea as the leader in just one circle – Kerala.

In the north-eastern and Jammu and Kashmir circles, Airtel leads the market, with around half of the subscribers choosing the provider. In Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, and Himachal Pradesh, Airtel leads with a market share of 40-50%, while in Tamil Nadu and Punjab, it leads with a share of less than 40%.

In Madhya Pradesh, Reliance Jio has a wireless subscriber market share which is close to 55%. In Kolkata, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, West Bengal, and Rajasthan, Reliance Jio leads with a market share of 40-50%, while in Uttar Pradesh (East and West), Mumbai, Delhi and Haryana, it leads with a share of less than 40%.

With a market share of 32%, Vodafone Idea is leading in Kerala. However, its market share in the State has sharply declined from the nearly 54% it had in 2015.

Kerala is the most fragmented market with all the four players – Jio, Airtel, Vodafone Idea and BSNL – holding over 20% of the wireless subscribers each. In fact, it is the only State where the State provider crossed the 20% mark.

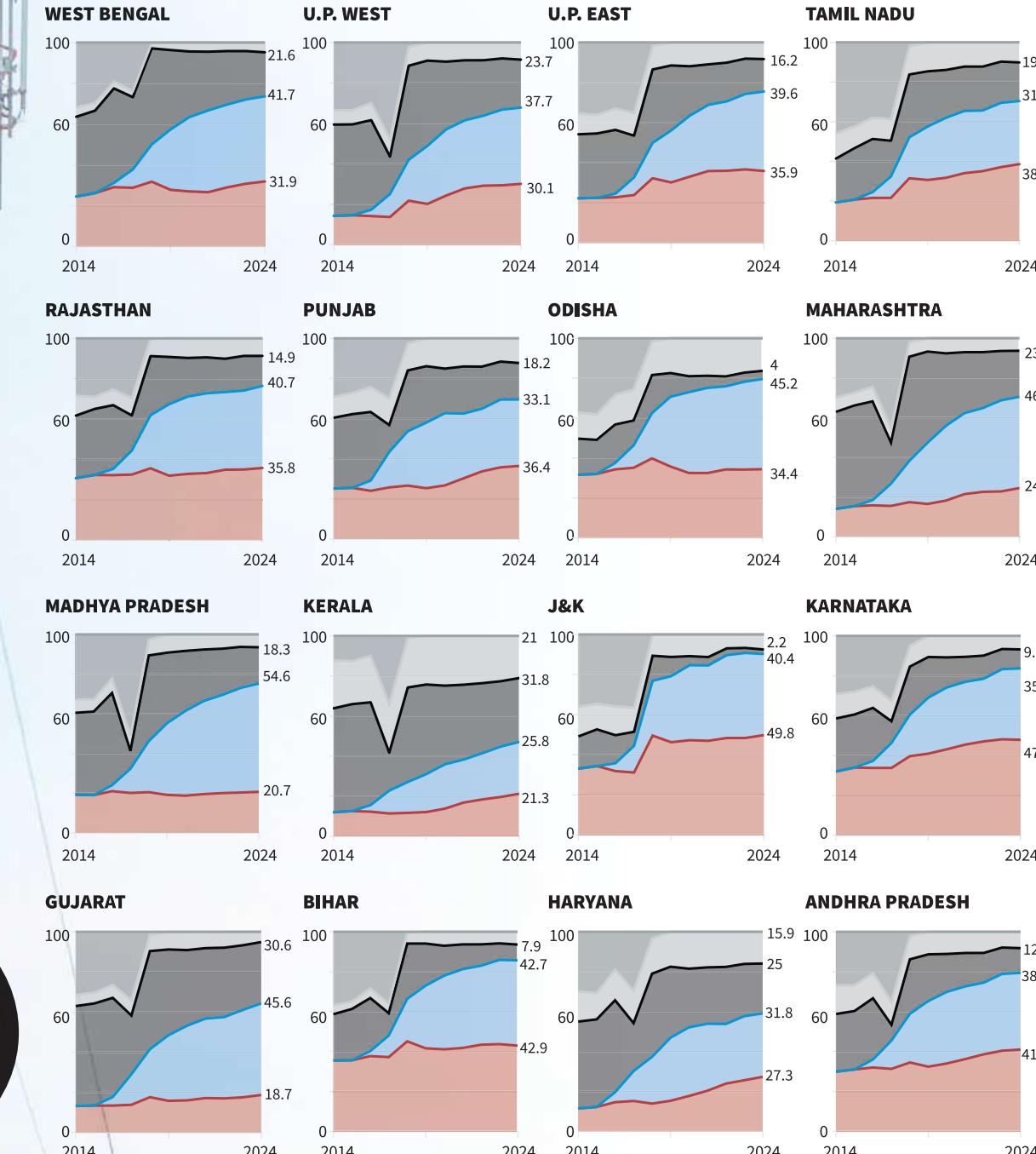
Over the years, the market shares of Vodafone Idea and BSNL have declined sharply from their respective peaks across most States, creating a duopoly in recent years. In contrast, Jio and Airtel have reached their peak market share across most States, with very few exceptions.

The graphic shows the wireless subscriber market share in the last decade – 2014 to 2024 – across select telecom circles.

Wireless subscriber market share

The charts are based on data sourced from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

Airtel Reliance Jio Vodafone Idea BSNL/MTNL Others



The graphic shows the wireless subscriber market share in the last decade – 2014 to 2024 – across select telecom circles

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 23, 1975

China extends ping-pong diplomacy to India

New Delhi, Jan. 22: China is sending a 62-member contingent headed by a Vice-Minister for the 33rd world table tennis championship that opens in Calcutta on February 6 with all the overtones of ping-pong diplomacy combining politics with sport.

Though the number of Chinese players participating in the tournament will be only 24, the delegation will include officials, pressmen, cameramen, doctors, interpreters, security personnel and communications men.

The Chinese team will be the guests of the Indian Table Tennis Federation, but the expenses will probably be borne by the Ministry of Education. The political aspects of the visit will be looked after by the Ministry of External Affairs from Delhi. The West Bengal Chief Minister, Mr. Siddhartha Shankar Ray, who is closely associated with the tournament, will provide the necessary liaison for handling the diplomatic assets of it.

The Chinese participation in this world table tennis championship in Calcutta has come to acquire importance because Peking has practised the art of ping-pong diplomacy with considerable success for improving its relations with the U.S. and Japan, besides establishing closer links with a number of other nations. India, too, fell in line with this innovation, when it accepted the Chinese invitation a couple of years back to participate in the Afro-Asian Latin American tournament.

Like Mao's celebrated smile, the little ping-pong ball failed to end the prevailing stalemate since meanwhile other events had further complicated the Sino-Indian situation. But it at least left the door open for minimal sporting exchanges despite the continued freeze on the political front.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 23, 1925

New cables in the Pacific

Leafeld (Oxford), Mid. Jan 22: The Pacific Cable Board is now ready to proceed with the laying of a second cable from Vancouver to Fiji. This will complete the duplication of cable from Canada to Australia and New Zealand as section south of Fiji was doubled last year. The length of the new Northern Section is 5,796 nautical miles. 3,625 nautical miles of cable will be laid between Vancouver and Fanning Island and 2,171 nautical miles between Fanning Island and Suva, Fiji.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The rise in India's hiring activity in December 2024

31 In per cent year-on-year. Consumer electronics, manufacturing, and construction and engineering were leading the charge with 60%, 57%, and 57% year-on-year, respectively. Meanwhile, AI jobs in India surged 42% over the past two years reaching 2,53,000 positions. PTI

Number of trains to run for Maha Kumbh on Mauni Amavasya

150 The Prayagraj Railway Division has rolled out extensive plans to run special fair trains to accommodate the large influx of devotees expected on Mauni Amavasya. These special trains will be operated from all nine stations in Prayagraj, ensuring smooth travel. PTI

The Minimum Support Price (MSP) for raw jute in 2025-26

5,650 In ₹ per quintal. The Union Cabinet approved the MSP for raw jute for 2025-26. This is an increase of 6% or ₹315 over the previous MSP. The new MSP ensures a return of 66.8% over all-India weighted average cost of production. PTI

Number of people who fled the Sudan war to South Sudan

1 in million. The UN said the figures illustrated the scale of the unfolding humanitarian crisis. Tens of thousands have been killed and more than 12 million have been forced from their homes since conflict erupted between Sudan's army and a rival paramilitary group in April 2023. AFP

Number of people killed in the Indonesian landslide

19 Hundreds of rescuers were searching through thick mud and debris to find survivors. Intense rainfall in a mountainous area near the Pekalongan city in Central Java province sparked the landslide on Monday, collapsing bridges and burying houses. AFP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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What is U.S.'s new rule for exporting AI chips?

What is the main objective behind one of the last orders of the Biden administration? How will the tiered framework for licensing and exporting Artificial Intelligence chips work? How has the tech industry responded to the move? Will it affect India?

EXPLAINER

Saptaparno Ghosh

The story so far: With an objective to advance increased control over circulation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) chips and technology, the U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) introduced a tiered framework for licensing and exports. It held the regulations were in tandem with "national security and foreign policy interests". Further, it would help "cultivate a secure and trusted technology ecosystem for the responsible use and diffusion of AI".

What technology are we discussing? Broadly, the regulation concerns advanced computing chips and certain closed AI model weights. AI models are software programs that comprise a series of mathematical operations. When data is entered into the program, it executes those operations on the entered data (provided by the user) to produce outputs which could be information, analysis or media. It is the design of these operations and their arrangement, known as the model architecture, that determines the nature and quality of the output.

What do the regulations propose? The new regulations update existing rules for export, re-export and transfers (in-country) by segregating countries into three tiers – each harbouring different rules for licensing and authorisation. The first of these tiers entail no restrictions for the export, re-export or transfer of advanced computing chips to 18 U.S. allies and partners, including Australia, Belgium, Canada, South Korea, U.K. and Japan, among others. The second tier introduces caps on volume and exemptions based on specifications alongside mandatory authorisation and licensing. It holds that transactions that could contribute to the development of



GETTY IMAGES

advanced AI models would require a Validated End User (VEU) authorisation. Those that do not contribute to the development of advanced AI models, such as chips with a collective computation power of roughly 1,700 advanced GPUs, would not need an authorisation. China and India together have been categorised under this sub-head. The third tier includes arms-embargoed countries, such as North Korea, Iraq, Iran and Russia, among others. These countries will have no access to the technology.

Why has access been curtailed? One of the main objectives has been to ensure that the technology (or equipment) do not reach the 'countries of concern' or U.S. adversaries. Furthermore, as detailed in the Federal Register, it strives to ensure that model

weights are stored outside the U.S. "only under stringent security conditions" and that the large clusters of advanced integrated circuits (ICs) necessary to train those models are "built in destinations that pose comparatively low risks of diversion or misuse". The BIS determined that adversaries could potentially use the advanced AI systems to improve speed and accuracy of their military decision making, planning and logistics. BIS also observed that access to systems could potentially lower the barrier for non-experts to develop weapons of mass destruction, support offensive cyber operations and assist in human rights violations (such as through mass surveillance). Separately, it is essential to note that the BIS placed concerns about Chinese companies utilising "foreign subsidiaries in a range of uncontrolled destinations to buy ICs".

What are the concerns?

The primary concern relates to the threat to U.S. global competitiveness in the realm. Ned Finkle, Vice President of Govt Affairs at NVIDIA – among the largest chip makers globally, wrote in a blogpost that it would undermine the innovation that has kept the U.S. ahead. Mr. Finkle argued that the rules would do nothing to enhance U.S. security. "The new rules would control technology worldwide, including technology that is already widely available in mainstream gaming PCs and consumer hardware."

Ken Glueck, Executive Vice President at Oracle, wrote in December 2024, that the rules assumed there were no other non-U.S. suppliers to procure GPU technology from. Explaining the aspect about competitiveness, the Oracle executive stated that by adding "more chips to the problem, you can keep playing the game". "If your alternate supplier has less performance, you can achieve parity by just adding more GPUs for the task. Enter Huawei and Tencent. Do it a cheaper price. Enter the CCP. And deploy it globally, enter Alibaba," he explained. The rules have been introduced less than a week before President-elect Donald Trump's return to the White House. The tech industry have pinned their hopes on the incoming administration to withdraw the framework.

Do these rules impact India?

According to Pranay Kotasthane, Chairperson at High Tech Geopolitics Programme at Takshashila Institution, big Indian data centres wanting to deploy advanced AI chips might need to apply for the VEU authorisation to speed things up. He observed that Indian companies acquiring the VEU authorisation can utilise the exported items for civilian and military purposes except for nuclear-end uses. "All in all, it does not seem to be a big deal. The bigger story is that India is not in the trusted allies and partners category, probably because of the leakages of chips to Russia," he said.

THE GIST

▼ The new regulations update existing rules for export, re-export and transfers (in-country) by segregating countries into three tiers – each harbouring different rules for licensing and authorisation.

▼ The primary concern relates to the threat to U.S. global competitiveness in the realm. Ned Finkle, Vice President of Govt Affairs at NVIDIA, wrote in a blogpost that it would undermine the innovation that has kept the U.S. ahead.

▼ The tech industry have pinned their hopes on the incoming administration to withdraw the framework.

Is the government encouraging 'crossopathy'?

Why did the Maharashtra Food and Drugs Administration issue a directive allowing homeopathic practitioners to prescribe allopathic medicines?

Zubeda Hamid

The story so far:

The Maharashtra Food and Drugs Administration has, in a recent directive, allowed homeopathic practitioners, who have completed a certificate course in modern pharmacology, to prescribe allopathic medications.

Why is it being challenged?

In 2017, the Maharashtra Medical Education and Drug Department had issued a notification allowing homeopathic practitioners to practise modern medicine. As per this notification, doctors who had obtained the Licentiate of the Court of Examiners of Homeopathy degree from 1951-1982 (the degree was abolished in 1982), and were registered with the Maharashtra Medical Council, were allowed to practise

modern medicine. This directive was challenged in the Bombay High Court by the Indian Medical Association (IMA). The High Court issued a stay, with the Bench questioning the risk that could be posed to patients if these doctors were allowed to practise allopathy.

IMA Maharashtra president Santosh Kadam said it was unclear why the Maharashtra FDA had now issued this directive. He said that even the central body for homeopathy had no provision to allow its practitioners to practise another stream of medicine and that 'crossopathy' was banned by the Supreme Court. Following the Bombay High Court stay, homeopathic practitioners were not allowed to prescribe allopathic medication, until the final decision of the court came in, he said.

Former secretary of the IMA, Maharashtra, Parthiv Sanghvi, pointed out that the issue has been portrayed as

the Maharashtra government allowing homeopathic practitioners to practise modern medicine – which is not the case, as this has already been stayed by the High Court. "This was a direction to chemists to entertain allopathic prescriptions of homeopathic practitioners. But who has given the FDA the authority to issue such a directive, in light of the fact that court has stayed the order allowing homeopathic practitioners to practise modern medicine," he asked.

What is SC's stance on 'crossopathy'? In 1996, in *Poonam Verma versus Ashwin Patel and Others*, which involved a homeopath treating a patient with allopathic medications and the patient subsequently dying, the Supreme Court held the homeopath liable for negligence as he had prescribed medications that he was not qualified to. A 2015 research paper by Suresh Bada Math et al states:

"Across judgments, the judiciary has held that cross-system practice is a form of medical negligence; however, it is permitted only in those states where the concerned governments have authorised it by a general or special order."

Is there a shortage of doctors?

The Central government has been promoting AYUSH medicine for some years now, with a push being given to integrative/integrated medicine. The rationale, in general, has been that India has a shortage of doctors, particularly in rural areas, and that the AYUSH cadre of practitioners can help fill in these gaps.

As per a Parliament statement in February 2024, there are 13,08,009 allopathic doctors registered with the State medical councils and the National Medical Commission as on June 2022, and 5.65 lakh AYUSH doctors. The shortage of specialists is dire – the Health Dynamics of India 2022-23 report reveals a nearly 80% shortage of specialist doctors in community health centres across rural India. Public health specialist Soham Bhaduri pointed out that while there is evidence that mid-level providers can provide care of comparable quality to that of medical doctors, their orderly integration into the system is crucial. "Allowing just any cadre of alternative medical practitioners to assume roles and functions that are meant for medical doctors is a recipe for anarchy."

THE GIST

▼ In 2017, the Maharashtra Medical Education and Drug Department had issued a notification allowing homeopathic practitioners to practise modern medicine. This directive was challenged in the Bombay High Court by the Indian Medical Association.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY



Guiding light: An illuminated installation of Mahatma Gandhi in Belagavi, Karnataka, on December 26, 2024. PTI



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian
S. Upendran

"So the first rule is that we should prefer the familiar word to the far-fetched."

"Why?"

"So that others can understand what is said without any difficulty. If you write 'Apropos of the recent plague, I feel...', the reader would worry about the meaning of 'apropos'."

"What does it mean?"

"It means 'with reference to, concerning'. Why not say 'concerning the recent plague, I feel...'"

"So you say that using big words is of no avail."

"It is not advisable to use difficult words. Why use 'no avail' when you can say 'not useful, not effective'? Some don't say that they would take leave. They say they would like to avail themselves of leave for two days. Also please remember that it is 'avail oneself of something'. It is not 'avail of something'. He availed himself of the opportunity to go abroad. Sometimes when you don't understand a difficult word, you may respond in an unexpected way. When A said to B that B was being laconic, B slapped A. B thought that the word 'laconic' was a term of insult. A was taken aback and asked B why he had slapped him. B said he wouldn't take insults. A had to tell B that he had not insulted him and gave him the meaning of the word."

"What's the meaning of the word?"

"'Laconic' means 'concise, precise in speech or writing'. Calvin Coolidge was one of the Presidents of America. He was noted for his laconic replies. When somebody said to Coolidge that he had taken a bet with another that he would get at least three words out of the President, Coolidge said, 'you lose'. It was he who said that the business of America is Business!"

"So, I should use familiar words."

"Yes. A plumber in America wrote to the Bureau of Standards saying that he found hydrochloric acid good for cleaning up clogged drains. The Bureau replied: 'The efficacy of hydrochloric acid is indisputable, but the corrosive residue is incompatible with metallic permanence.' The plumber replied that he was happy that the Bureau agreed with him. The Bureau wrote back: 'We cannot assume responsibility for the production of toxic and noxious residues with hydrochloric acid and suggest that you use an alternative procedure.' The plumber again replied that he was glad that the Board agreed with him. In despair, the Board screamed back: 'Don't use hydrochloric acid. It eats hell out of pipes.' The plumber got the message! The plumber couldn't understand the earlier language of the Bureau. Words like indisputable, residue, incompatible, noxious were difficult words for him. The Bureau used simple language finally to make the plumber understand their view."

"I understand."

"Once Dr. Johnson was explaining something to a friend. His friend said, 'Dr. Johnson, don't understand.' Dr. Johnson said, 'Sir, I can only provide you with arguments, not understanding'."

Published in The Hindu on October 25, 1994.

Gandhi and reflections on the idea of India, past and present

Two writers engage with Gandhi and his fertile world of ideas and actions to understand the forces that have shaped contemporary India. Both Krishna Kumar and Vivek Dhareshwar reveal to readers how Gandhi offers rich conceptual resources to reflect on the present

Shashikala Srinivasan

How did we come to be where we are today? What kind of forces have shaped us and brought us to our current moment in history? Two recent books, both published in 2024, are an attempt to answer precisely these questions. Despite being vastly different forms of engagement, Gandhi and his fertile world of actions and ideas is central to both.

The first book is *Thank You, Gandhi*, a labour of love, by the well-known educationist and thinker, Krishna Kumar. Though referred to as a novel, the book defies easy generic classification and is an innovative blend of fiction and non-fiction. It is a unique exploration of Gandhi's thoughts and the challenges of keeping his legacy alive in the current political landscape.

The story is largely told through the eyes of the central character Munna, or Viresh Pratap Singh, a brooding, thoughtful IAS officer and the narrator K's childhood friend. Before falling victim to COVID, Munna sends his unfinished manuscript to K and urges him to complete it and present it to a larger audience. Using this fictional device of reconstructing his friend's manuscript, Kumar gives us an evocative portrayal of the events of the last few decades and their disturbing, psychological impact on a generation brought up on the vision of India as dreamt by Gandhi, Nehru and others, an India that was "a modern yet kind, considerate nation." The author vividly portrays Munna's tragic descent into despair and desperation as he sees the more expansive idea of India that he is brought up on slowly collapse with the

rise of the new dispensation. It is during these moments of darkness that Munna engages with Gandhi, walking alongside the philosopher-saint, in dialogue with him.

Thinking with, and against, Gandhi
A powerful socio-political commentary, the author captures the transformation of Bhopal from being a vibrant, plural culture to a discordant, divisive one. The Union Carbide tragedy of December 1984 that killed innumerable people in one night, the festering effect of Partition, the growth of Hindu nationalism and other significant shifts and events of the last few decades are delineated in a layered, compelling narrative. These are interwoven with Munna's engagement with Gandhi's rich idea of Hinduism, his guarded view of science, his notion of truth as a symbol for "the ingredients of morality" and not as mere "fidelity to facts" and his complex ideas on non-violence, swaraj and satyagraha. Sometimes thinking along with Gandhi and sometimes against him, grappling with some of his "quixotic" ideas in Hind Swaraj, these sections, where the past deftly merges with the present, make a fascinating read.

In a moment of acute self-reflexivity, Munna even asks Gandhi whether it was "all right to hate" those in power. Gandhi responds by asking him to instead "hate the system" and urges Munna to think about why truth for him had to be clubbed with non-violence. It is here that Munna seems to grasp that there is something inherent in modern politics that produces excessive identities and hatred. In one of his thoughtful musings, Munna recognises that Hindu nationalism

is a child of colonialism. However, that Hindu nationalism is produced by secularism, escapes him.

Therapeutic engagement

In effect, engaging with Gandhi, for Munna, becomes almost therapeutic, a process of healing and preserving himself, and a way to continue to serve the world in the way he knows best. The narrative ends on a poignant note where K longs for Munna to hear him say "India is a great teacher, my friend, and it never fails to teach whoever tries to bend it." It is in Gandhi, the philosopher-healer, who virtually becomes the embodiment of India, that we have a reminder of India's distinctness and its plural ethos.

Gandhi is also central to our second book, Vivek Dhareshwar's *Sites of Learning and Practical Knowledge: Against Normativity*. A demanding but rewarding read, the book is a tenacious, philosophical enterprise that focuses on the loss of concepts and the destruction of a practical form of life caused by the "experience-occluding structures" of colonialism that persist till today.

Ethical learning

While not exhausted by Gandhi, Gandhi is vital to the book in illuminating the notion of a practical form of life and the idea of ethical learning that is salient to the book's argument. Describing India as a practical form of life that nourishes inquiry into living through various practices, making it possible "to discover experiential truth," the author argues that these varied, rich practices are destroyed by the secularised, moral norms of Western civilisation, brought in by colonialism.

It is precisely these modes of practical learning that enable one to attend to "how to live well" by reflecting on experience that Gandhi aims to restore. It is thus not surprising that it is through Gandhi that practical or experiential knowledge finds the most obvious expression in anti-colonial struggles and he is able to turn an elite freedom struggle into a mass movement.

One can make better sense now of Gandhi's criticism of modern medicine, economics, lawyers, history and representative democracy. Gandhi instead attempts to reconstruct several practical domains in an integrated way as alternative "sites of learning" – the sphere of health and dietetics, erotic, civic conduct and others – all of which are meant to nurture the "practices of the self."

Contrasting religion as inquiry with religion as identity, a distinction informing Gandhi's reflections on religion, the author shows what we take to be Hinduism are "traditions of reflecting on experience." It is immersion in these traditions that "allow Gandhi to diagnose and resist experience-occluding structures in different domains."

Despite their different formulations and diagnoses of our current predicament, both Krishna Kumar and Vivek Dhareshwar reveal to us how Gandhi and his world of ideas offer us rich conceptual resources to reflect on our present and invite us to engage with the question of how we came to be where we are as a society.

*Dr. Shashikala Srinivasan is an independent scholar and author of *Liberal Education and Its Discontents: The Crisis in the Indian University**

THE DAILY QUIZ

U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order cancelling the provision of "citizenship by birth". Here is a quiz on citizenship laws from across the world

Sindhu Nagaraj

QUESTION 1

This country grants citizenship only under exceptional circumstances. It is not based on blood or soil, and it is granted and revoked based on work and residence. If one is a cardinal residing in the country, or due to employment within the church, citizenship is granted. Name the country.

QUESTION 2

Citizenship of the Mercosur is granted to eligible citizens of which bloc? Which are the countries part of the bloc?

QUESTION 3

These citizens are the members of this international association of 56

member states. A vast majority of them are former territories of the British Empire from which it developed. In addition to voting and residency rights, many receive consular assistance from member countries. What is the group called?

QUESTION 4

This form of citizenship exists within a smaller administrative unit, like a state or province, within a nation, granting residents certain rights and participation in local governance, distinct from their national citizenship at the country level. An example of this is Åland, a small region within Finland. What is this citizenship called?

QUESTION 5

Nationality law can be broadly categorised into three principles. What are they?



Visual question:

In this image, the protest is related to which country?

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. This officer was one of the founding members of the All India Democratic Women's Association. **Ans: Capt. Lakshmi Sahgal**

2. The three INA officers who were court-martialled by the British. **Ans: Col. Prem Sahgal, Col. Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon, Major-General Shah Nawaz Khan**

3. Name the person who represented the three INA officers in the Red Fort trial. **Ans: Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru**

4. This former British Army officer was captured by Japanese troops in World War II in the Malayan campaign and later on, founded the INA. **Ans: Gen. Mohan Singh**

5. This officer served as Governor of Andaman Islands during the Azad Hind Fauj's occupation. **Ans: Major General AD Loganathan**

Visual: Identify this INA veteran. **Ans: John Thivy**

Early Birds: Viswanatha Rao Batchu | Sumana Dutta | C. Saravanan | Barnali Biswas | Piyali Tuli

Word of the day

Parley:

a series of wagers in which the winnings from one wager is used as a stake for the subsequent wagers; place a bet on

Synonyms: double up

Usage: She hoped to parley her football skills into a college scholarship.

Pronunciation: newsthr.live/parlaypro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /pa:let/

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

From Page One

13 killed as train runs over passengers

"The tragic loss of lives in a very unfortunate incident near Pachora in Jalgaon district is deeply distressing. I pay my heartfelt tributes to them," Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said in a video message from Davos in Switzerland. "Emergency equipment like glass cutters, floodlights etc. have been kept ready. We are monitoring the entire situation and all necessary assistance is being provided immediately. I am in touch with the district administration." He promised that the State government would provide for medical attention for the injured. Union Minister Raksha Khadse suggested that the toll could be higher.

Maharashtra Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan also expressed his condolences. "Extremely saddened to know about the unfortunate death of some passengers after they were hit by another train near Jalgaon. Convey my condolences to the next of kin of those who lost their lives. Wishing a speedy recovery to the injured," he said.

Rubio seeks talks on migration with India

The Minister said the meeting reviewed the "extensive bilateral partnership, of which Mr. Rubio has been a strong advocate", adding that they had shared views on regional and global issues.

"[I] look forward to closely working with him to advance our strategic cooperation", he added.

There are an estimated 7.25 lakh undocumented Indians in the U.S. among 1.4 million in total, according to the U.S. Immigration agency ICE, of which nearly 18,000 are on a list for "final removal" or deportations.

India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) did not respond to requests for a comment on Mr. Rubio's demand, nor did it respond to reports that India has agreed to cooperate in the deportation of the 18,000 Indians on the list.

The revocation of 'citizenship by birth', which is due to be implemented within 30 days if not annulled by U.S. courts, would affect hundreds of thousands of Indians working in the U.S. on H1-B and other temporary visas and hoping to raise families there.

Tax on BRICS

Neither side referred to Mr. Trump's other statement while issuing the Executive Orders, that he would levy a "100% tax" on members of the BRICS grouping of emerging economies, if they sought to sideline the U.S. dollar in trading.

Earlier, Mr. Jaishankar attended the Quad meeting along with Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Koshiishi, which was Mr. Rubio's first foreign policy engagement after meeting State Department employees. A joint statement issued by the four Ministers said that they "strongly opposed any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion", a message believed to be aimed at China's actions in the region.

The next Quad Summit is due to be held in India, which was not able to host the Summit in 2024 as the then-U.S. President Joe Biden was unavailable.

Mr. Jaishankar said that it was "significant that the Quad FMM took place within hours of the inauguration of the Trump Administration". "This underlines the priority it has in the foreign policy of its member states," he wrote on X.

Dallewal shifted to makeshift hospital, Punjab informs SC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday recorded a submission by the Punjab government that farmers' leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal has accepted medical aid and shifted to a makeshift hospital 50 metres from the protest site at Khanauri after meeting with a high-level delegation from the Union government.

Terming the development "positive", a Bench headed by Justice Surya Kant also took on record Punjab Advocate-General Gurinder Singh's submission that farmers have agreed to meet for talks with the Centre and other authorities scheduled for February 14 in Chandigarh.

Mr. Singh said over 110 other farmers' leaders, also on hunger strike along with Mr. Dallewal, have broken their fast.

The Bench advised Mr. Dallewal to reach Chandigarh two days before the scheduled talks and consult specialist doctors at the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and



The Bench advised the farmers' leader to consult specialist doctors before talks with the Centre scheduled for February 14. ANI

Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh to effectively participate in the meeting.

Action in abeyance

The court ordered the contempt action against the Chief Secretary and the Director-General of Police of Punjab to be kept in abeyance and dispensed with their personal appearance through video conferencing. The contempt action was initiated following their inability to convince Mr. Dallewal to access medical aid despite repeated orders from the court.

The court listed the case again for February-end.

"We hope stakeholders

JD(U)'s lone MLA withdraws support to govt. in Manipur

Reacting swiftly, the party removed its Manipur State president for 'indiscipline' and once again pledged its support for the BJP-led NDA; Congress criticised JD(U)'s actions and questioned whether this indicated a broader political shift within NDA

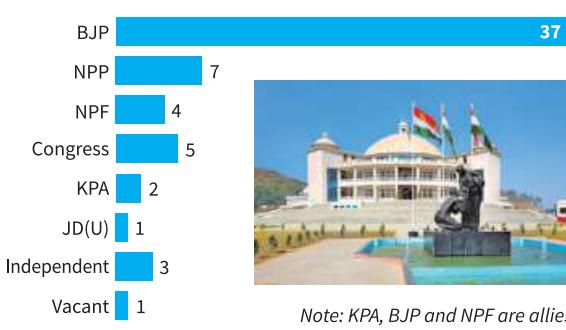
**Rahul Karmakar
Amarnath Tewary**
GUWAHATI/PATNA

The Janata Dal-United (JD-U) withdrew support to the Nongthombam Biren Singh-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Manipur on Wednesday. However, reacting swiftly, the party removed its Manipur State president for "indiscipline" and once again pledged its support for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), stating that the party would continue to remain with the BJP government in Manipur.

Mohammad Abdul Nasir, who represents the Jiribam Assembly constituency, is the lone MLA of the Nitish Kumar-led party. The development comes two months after the National People's Party (NPP)

No threat

JD(U) MLA's decision is unlikely to threaten the BJP, which has 37 MLAs in the 60-member House



Note: KPA, BJP and NPF are allies

walked out of the government with its six legislators. The decision of the JD (U), however, is unlikely to threaten the BJP, which has 37 MLAs in the 60-member House, though seven of them belong to the Kuki-Zo community have stayed aloof since ethnic conflict broke out in May 2023.

The BJP also enjoys the support of the Naga People's Front (NPF), which has four MLAs following the death a few days ago of N. Kayisii.

In a letter to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla on Wednesday, State party president Kshetrimayum Biren Singh said the JD(U) no longer supports the BJP-led

Manipur government and its lone MLA "shall be treated as an Opposition MLA in the House". The JD (U) had won six seats in the 2022 Assembly election but five of its MLAs joined the BJP later. "The trial of the five MLAs is pending under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution of India before the Speaker's Tribunal," the State JD(U) president said.

The party's national spokesperson Rajiv Ranjan Prasad called the reports on the issue "misleading and baseless". "The president of the Manipur unit of the party has been relieved of his post. We have supported the NDA and our support to the NDA government in Manipur will continue even in future."

Mr. Prasad said the Manipur unit did not consult the central leadership of the party. "He [the Mani-

pur JD(U) chief] had written the letter on his own. This is an act of blatant indiscipline," Mr. Prasad said. "We are with the NDA and the State unit will continue to serve the people of Manipur towards the development of the State," he added.

Meanwhile, the Congress took the opportunity to take potshots at the growing differences between the BJP and JD(U). "Today, JD(U) withdrew support to the BJP Government in Manipur. Yesterday, JD(U) opposed the new UGC Rules which have been announced by the Modi Government to control top appointments to all universities. Is this heralding political climate change?" Congress general secretary (communication) Jairam Ramesh wrote in a post on social media platform X.

Stay extended on defamation case against Tharoor

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday extended the stay on criminal defamation proceedings against Congress MP Shashi Tharoor for the "scorpion sitting on a Shivling" remark about Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A Bench headed by Justice Hrishikesh Roy adjourned the case after counsel for the complainant sought more time to file his counter-affidavit.

When counsel for Mr. Tharoor objected that there had been repeated requests for adjournments, Justice Roy responded that there was already a stay order in place since September 2024.

In a previous hearing, the court had orally asked whether the metaphor suggested "invincibility" and could be considered derogatory. The case is based on a complaint filed by BJP leader Rajiv Babbar in November 2018.

Nobody can dictate terms to elected J&K govt.: Farooq

The Hindu Bureau
JAMMU

National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah on Wednesday said nobody can dictate terms to the elected J&K government.

"The J&K government will function as it wants. Nobody can dictate terms to the government. It has been formed to provide succour to people of J&K," Mr. Abdullah said in a press conference in Jammu. He was replying to a question on the criticism by a Congress leader.

On Article 370, Mr. Abdullah said the Dogra maharaja introduced special provisions to safeguard land of Dogras in the past.

Criticising the Opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP), Mr. Abdullah said, "The PDP is the one responsible for the revocation of Article 370.

Eyewitnesses recall moments of horror

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Eyewitnesses struggled to recount the horror when a train ran over several passengers who rushed out of the Lucknow-Mumbai Pushpak Express following rumours of a fire on Wednesday evening.

At least 12 people lost their lives and 10 were injured.

"It was a horrible scene when I reached there. The body parts of the deceased were scattered all over the place. We called for ambulances. The mortal remains of the deceased were gathered and were sent to hospital. The injured were rushed to nearby hospitals, and are reportedly out of danger. We are taking care of their relatives. The Chief Minister is in constant touch with me," said Maharashtra Minister Girish Mahajan, who reached the spot some time after the accident.

Asked about the cause of



Blood on tracks: People gather at the site where several passengers of a train were run over by another train on the adjacent tracks in Jalgaon district of north Maharashtra on Wednesday. PTI

the panic, he said, "There was no fire, but a rumour spread about it. Someone pulled the chain. Over 200 people deboarded the train because of it. A bigger tragedy was avoided," he told *The Hindu* from Pachora.

A passenger from Lucknow said panic ensued when an onboard vendor

shouted that the train was on fire. "Some passengers immediately pulled the alarm chain, bringing the train to a halt. As soon as it stopped, people began disembarking and running in fear. Tragically, a train on the adjacent track struck those who had stepped down," he said.

"Only about 40 passengers from three coaches near the engine disembarked. It's terrifying to think what could have happened if more passengers had done the same," the witness said.

Another passenger alleged that amid the chaos, personal belongings, in-

cluding bags and phones, were found missing when they briefly reentered the train to collect their items.

Missing items

"We got down as soon as the train stopped. Later, when we went back to collect our belongings, we found the bags and mobile phones were missing," he said.

"A few passengers sitting at the doors mistakenly believed the train was on fire and jumped off, landing on the tracks of an oncoming train from the opposite direction, the Karnataka Express, as per the initial enquiry," Jalgaon Superintendent Of Police Maheshwar Reddy told *The Hindu*.

Leaders across political lines expressed grief.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray called for better safety measures. Congress leaders Nana Patole and Vijay Wadettiwar criticised the government's handling of railway safety.

Dallewal shifted to makeshift hospital, Punjab informs SC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday recorded a submission by the Punjab government that farmers' leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal has accepted medical aid and shifted to a makeshift hospital 50 metres from the protest site at Khanauri after meeting with a high-level delegation from the Union government.

Terming the development "positive", a Bench headed by Justice Surya Kant also took on record Punjab Advocate-General Gurinder Singh's submission that farmers have agreed to meet for talks with the Centre and other authorities scheduled for February 14 in Chandigarh.

Mr. Singh said over 110 other farmers' leaders, also on hunger strike along with Mr. Dallewal, have broken their fast.

The Bench advised Mr. Dallewal to reach Chandigarh two days before the scheduled talks and consult specialist doctors at the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and

NIA on lookout for BKI suspects in Chandigarh grenade attack case

Devesh K Pandey
NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday searched multiple locations linked to the banned terror outfit Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) across three States and a Union Territory, in connection with the Chandigarh grenade attack case.

U.S.-based terrorist

The operation covered various locations in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Chandigarh. "The searches were conducted on the premises of suspects linked to U.S.-based terrorist Harpreet Singh aka Happy Passian in the Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Bathinda, and Ferozepur districts of Punjab, Lakhimpur Kheri district in U.P., Rudrapur district in Uttarakhand, and in Chandigarh," the NIA said. On September 9, 2024, Rohan Masih and Vishal Masih allegedly hurled a hand grenade at a house in

Union Minister Vaishnaw takes part in series of meetings at WEF 2025

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw took part in a series of strategic meetings in Switzerland, underscoring India's commitment to fostering international collaboration and embracing innovative technologies in the railway sector. He also made a presentation on the Indian semiconductor ecosystem.

Before heading for the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2025 in Davos, Mr. Vaishnaw on Tuesday held several meetings. He said: "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has always guided us to benchmark our efforts to the global bests. Today's visit is also in this direction. There is a lot of interest around the world in 'Made in India' products."

A presentation showcasing the latest advancements in infrastructure diagnostics was held by the Swiss Federal Railways. Mr. Vaishnaw engaged with



Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw visits the coach manufacturing plant of Stadler Rail in Switzerland on Wednesday. PTI

Swiss experts to understand the technologies that can bolster operational efficiency and safety within the Indian Railways system. It was followed by a meeting with leading railway sector small and medium enterprises, including Rhomberg Sersa Ag, Selectron, Ucentrics, Autech, and nu Glass.

Semiconductor push
The Union Minister made a presentation on the Indian semiconductor ecosystem to Arvind Krishna, an Indian-American business executive and the chairman and chief executive officer of IBM.



The Bench advised the farmers' leader to consult specialist doctors before talks with the Centre scheduled for February 14. ANI

Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh to effectively participate in the meeting.

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"We hope stakeholders

Ensure victory for BJP in Delhi poll, Modi urges party workers

PM lists 'failures' of AAP-led Delhi govt. in past 10 years; addressing cadre under 'Mera Booth Sabse Majboor' programme, he asks them to expose the lies of AAP, adding that the promises of the ruling party and the Congress were unbelievable

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday asked Bharatiya Janata Party workers to ensure that every booth got a record number of votes for the party and that the Aam Aadmi Party was defeated in the Delhi Assembly election.

He was addressing the Delhi BJP cadre in an interactive webcast under the "Mera Booth Sabse Majboor" programme.

The Prime Minister listed the "failures" of the AAP-led Delhi government in the past 10 years, as well as the "achievements" of the BJP-led Union government. He said all the existing schemes in the capital would be implemented.

Mr. Modi said: "The strength of the organisation in Delhi is that there are three generations of workers at every booth. This power will give the



Boosting morale: Prime Minister Narendra Modi told BJP workers that their hard work at the booths during the upcoming Delhi Assembly election will bring success to the party. FILE PHOTO

BJP a huge victory. Your hard work at the booth is going to be a huge win. The workers of the country have been learning by watching the workers of Delhi. The victory will break all the polling records this time."

The Delhi polls are slated for February 5 and the results will be declared on February 8. The BJP is

making attempts to defeat the ruling AAP to form a government in the capital after nearly 28 years. Mr. Modi asked party workers to expose the lies of the AAP. Delhi must be freed from the disaster party.

He said the AAP was making new announcements every day because it knew that it would be defeated in the polls.

He said the people of Delhi remembered the deceptions of the AAP; the party built "Sheesh Mahal" and ate poor people's money, and committed scams with no shame.

Purvanchal voters
Appealing to voters from Purvanchal, the Prime Minister said the AAP was full of hatred for them, and

Purvanchalis were driven out of Delhi during COVID-19. And even during the Chhath Puja, visuals of the Yamuna in Delhi sent shockwaves to the country, he said.

After a BJP worker spoke about water shortage, Mr. Modi said, "Alcohol is available in Delhi but not water."

Mr. Modi, while interacting with a woman party worker, said the promises that the AAP and the Congress were making were unbelievable.

The Prime Minister said: "The youth of Delhi are extremely troubled, and they will only give their vote to the NDA government this time. They are tired of the lies of AAP-da, and know if BJP comes to power, BJP will bring great changes, make Delhi a start-up hub."

"The BJP will ensure that it will fix all the government schools in Delhi which is why we have promised KG-to-PG education in our Sankalp Patra," he added.

He made seven demands from the Centre, including allotting 10% of the Budget each to education and health.

Centre must announce benefits for middle class in Budget, says AAP chief

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday said the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Union government must dedicate the upcoming Budget to the middle class.

The former CM said that the promises made by AAP ahead of the February 5 Assembly election in Delhi, such as monthly aid for women under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana and free treatment for senior citizens under the Sanjeevani Yojana, will also help the middle class.

Mr. Kejriwal said the Delhi government had extended various benefits to the middle class in healthcare and education, among other sectors, and asked the Centre to do the same.

He added, "The middle class pays billions in taxes, but what does it get in return? Nothing. The Indian middle class has become just an ATM for the Centre."



AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal with Delhi CM Atishi at a press conference in New Delhi on Wednesday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHKAR

"The relationship between the Central government and the middle class is quite peculiar. These people do nothing for the middle class, but whenever the government needs something, they target the middle class and impose taxes on them," Mr. Kejriwal said at a press conference.

He added, "The middle class pays billions in taxes, but what does it get in return? Nothing. The Indian middle class has become just an ATM for the Centre."

The AAP national convener also demanded that the Centre stop levying taxes on health insurance and essential items, and raise the tax-free income ceiling to ₹10 lakh.

For senior citizens, there should be strong retirement and pension plans and free healthcare at private and government hospitals across the country. I also demand that the

Centre resume providing 50% concession for senior citizens in railway fare," he added.

Mr. Kejriwal urged people from the middle class to voice their concerns on the portal – middleclass-manifesto.com.

Need more time to propose amendments to Waqf Bill: Opposition to panel Chair

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Joint Parliamentary Committee examining the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 has completed its tour to meet stakeholders in various parts of the country, and is now being called to Delhi for a meeting on Friday and Saturday to discuss amendments to the legislation.

Opposition MPs have demanded a postponement to allow them more time to propose the amendments, asking why the committee's Bharatiya Janata Party leadership was in such a hurry to wrap up the deliberations.

Representing the Opposition's concerns, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam MP A. Raja shot off a letter to the committee's chair and BJP MP, Jagdambika Pal, pointing out that panel members ended their tour to meet stakeholders in Patna, Kolkata and Lucknow only on Tuesday.

"It is very strange that the next dates for sitting of JPC were hurriedly announced without any for-



DMK MP A. Raja and other Opposition members on the Waqf panel leaving to meet Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. FILE PHOTO

mal discussion when the JPC was already on tour," Mr. Raja noted.

Even during the panel's meeting in Lucknow, Mr. Raja said, the members had pointed out that the next proposed meeting on January 24 and 25 was not practical, since the MPs also have commitments in their own constituencies.

'No time'
The schedule leaves little time to gather evidence and go through the deliberations that took place over the several meetings in Delhi and other States. The questions asked during the meetings in Patna, Kolkata and Lucknow only on Tuesday.

"It is very strange that the next dates for sitting of JPC were hurriedly announced without any for-

MPs concerned over high and 'arbitrary' user development fee charged by airports

Sobhana K. Nair Jagruti Chandra

NEW DELHI

Slamming the "arbitrary" user development fee (UDF) charged by several airport operators across the country, Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Wednesday directed the Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) to give a detailed reply in writing, within 15 days on the criteria used to calculate it, the total revenue earned and the corresponding amenities and infrastructure made for the passengers using this revenue.

In the first PAC meeting headed by Congress leader K.C. Venugopal on the subject "Levy and regulation



Fee issue: Airlines collect the UDF from passengers and pass on to the airport operator. FILE PHOTO

of fees, tariffs, user charges etc. on public infrastructure and other public utilities", members pulled up the Directorate General of Civil Aviation for showing laxity in tariff regulation.

The UDF is levied on passengers and is part of the airline ticket fare. The fee is collected by the air-

line and passed on to the airport operator. According to sources, the members across party lines raised the issue of high UDF especially in the context of increasing number of airports being operated by private entities.

"The oral replies by the AERA representatives were less than convincing," a member said.

Questions were also raised on whether the 2008 legislation that established the AERA has outlived its utility and whether it needs to be suitably amended. The AERA has been asked to submit a reply to this too.

Fee raised in June

In June last year, the AERA

raised the UDF for the Adani-controlled Thiruvananthapuram airport by 50%, from ₹506 to ₹770, for departing domestic travellers, with further annual hikes.

It, according to sources, pulled up the DGCA. "To shrug off responsibility claiming that the fares are regulated by the market will not do," an Opposition member said.

The Hindu reported on



भारतीय वनिकी अनुसंधान एवं शिक्षा परिषद्
(परिवर्तन, वन एवं जलवाया परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार का एक राज्यात्मक निकाय)

INDIAN COUNCIL OF FORESTRY RESEARCH & EDUCATION
(An Autonomous Body of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India)

पो.बॉल ०३०० - न्यू फॉरेस्ट, देहरादून - २४८००६ (उत्तराखण्ड)

P.O. New Forest, Dehra Dun - 248006 (Uttarakhand)

तिथि: विश्वास शुभ्राता

विज्ञप्ति संख्या 32-8 / 2024-भा.वा.शि.प. (उमा०१००००-अनु)

DATE EXTENSION NOTICE

Advt. No. 09/DDG(Res) & Dir-IWST/AFR/HRFI/2024-ICFRE

भारतीय वनिकी अनुसंधान एवं शिक्षा परिषद् देहरादून के अन्तर्गत निम्न पदों को प्रतिनियुक्ति के आधार पर भरने हेतु आवेदन आमंत्रित किए गए थे।

1. उत्तमहानिरेक (अनुसंधान), भा.वा.शि.प., देहरादून - ७ वेतन आयोग के वेतन स्तर 15 के वेतनमान में

2. निदेशक, शुष्क वन अनुसंधान संस्थान, जोधपुर - ७ वेतन आयोग के वेतन स्तर 14 के वेतनमान में

3. निदेशक, हिमालयन वन अनुसंधान संस्थान, शिमला - ७ वेतन आयोग के वेतन स्तर 14 के वेतनमान में

इसे विज्ञापन के अनुसार आवेदन जमा करने की अनिम्न तिथि जो दि. 11.03.2024 तक थी को 10.02.2025 तक विस्तारित किया जाता है। अन्य निम्न व शर्तें पूर्ण में प्रकाशित विज्ञापन के अनुसार रहेंगी। उपरोक्त पद वह हेतु इच्छुक अर्थ्या भूमानांशिरण की वेबसाइट <http://www.icfre.org> में दिये गये विस्तर विज्ञापन के अनुसार आवेदन कर सकते हैं।

Applications were invited for filling up of following post(s) on deputation basis at Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, Dehradun.

1. Deputy Director General (Research), ICFRE (HQ), Dehradun - Pay Level 15 of 7th CPC Pay Matrix

2. Director, Institute of Wood Science and Technology, Bengaluru - Pay Level 15 of 7th CPC Pay Matrix

3. Director, Arid Forest Research Institute, Jodhpur - Pay Level 15 of 7th CPC Pay Matrix

4. Director, Himalayan Forest Research Institute, Shimla - Pay Level 14 of 7th CPC Pay Matrix

As per the advertisement the last date for receipt of application which was 11.03.2024 has now been extended till 10.02.2025.

The interested candidates may apply for the aforesaid post as per detailed advertisement available on ICFRE website <http://www.icfre.org>

सचिव, मानवांशिरण

Secretary, ICFRE

CM YK

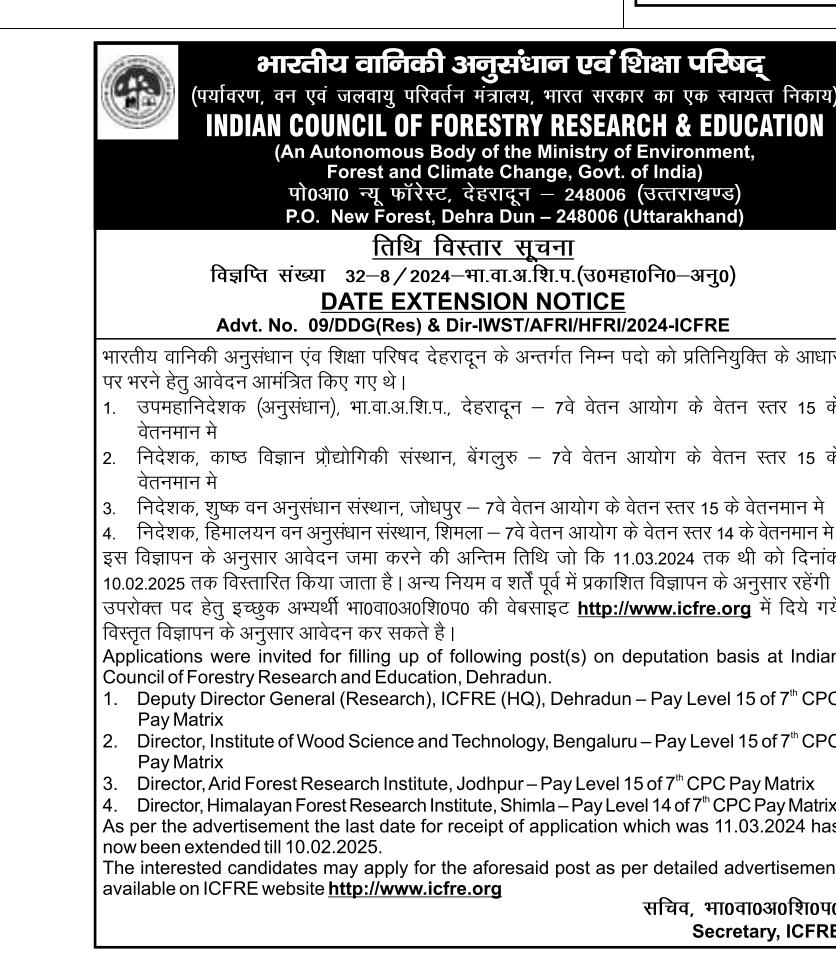
GDP growth figures sign of slowdown, says Congress

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The "disappointing" growth numbers of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the second quarter are not a blip but a clear indication of a slowdown in the economy, the Congress said on Wednesday.

Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh, citing an article in a newspaper, posted on X that the fallout of limited job creation and muted wage growth can be seen in the greater recourse to debt. He said the government was trying to pass the buck on to the RBI's interest rate regime.



TOURISM CORPORATION OF GUJARAT LIMITED (TCGL)

(A Government of Gujarat undertaking,
Udyog Bhavan, Block No. 16, 4th Floor,
Sector - 11, Gandhinagar - 382 011
Website: <http://www.gujartourism.com>

Expression of Interest (EoI) for Website and Mobile Application

Development of TOURISM CORPORATION OF GUJARAT LIMITED (TCGL).

Gujarat Tourism invites Expressions of Interest (EoI) from experienced and innovative IT firms for the development of a new website and mobile application. The project aims to enhance the digital presence and user experience for tourists exploring Gujarat.

EoI documents shall be available and download from the websites:

<http://www.gujartourism.com> from 23/01/2025 onwards.

The last date for submission of the (EoI) for Website and Mobile Application Development (physical only) is 04/02/2025 up to 3:00 PM in a sealed covered,

addressed to below:-

General manager (Finance/IT),

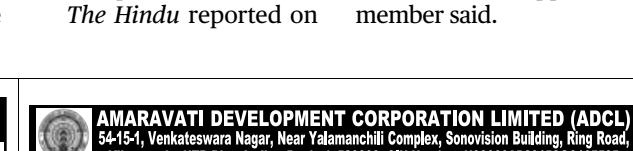
Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited,

Udyog Bhavan, Block No. 16,

4th Floor, Sector-11, Gandhinagar - 382 011

Managing Director

CM YK



NIT No. : 210/ADCLIPD/2025 Dated: 22.01.2025

Request for

IN BRIEF



Junior doctors withdraw 'cease work' in Midnapore

Protesting junior doctors at Midnapore Medical College and Hospital in West Bengal late on Tuesday night withdrew their 'cease work' over the suspension of doctors in a case involving expired saline. A suspended doctor has also moved the Calcutta High Court demanding protection from police action. The developments came after 12 doctors, including six junior doctors, in the hospital were suspended after alleged "medical negligence" over expired Ringer Lactate fluid administered to them, which led to a woman's death post-childbirth and four post-partum mothers falling critically ill on January 9.

Electoral bonds: plea seeks review of top court's order

A petition filed in the Supreme Court on Wednesday sought a review of its order passed in August 2024 dismissing pleas for confiscation of ₹16,518 crore received by political parties under the 2018 electoral bonds scheme. The top court, on August 2 last year, rejected a batch of pleas including the one filed by Khem Singh Bhati, who filed the review, seeking a court-monitored probe into the scheme and observed that it could not order a roving inquiry. The review petition, filed through advocate Jayesh K. Unnikrishnan and settled by senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, sought a recall of the judgment that dismissed a previous petition seeking confiscation of funds received under the scheme. PTI

Two buildings in Kolkata tilting against each other

Two multi-storey buildings in Kolkata's Tangra area have been found tilting precariously against each other, leading to panic among residents. Located on Christopher Road in Ward 58 of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, one of the two buildings houses residents, while the adjoining building – six-storey tall – is under construction. Sources in the civic body said it is likely that the residential building will be demolished first, and residents will be asked to vacate their homes soon given the risk it poses. Till now, no fatalities or losses have been reported from the site.

Man found dead after alleging harassment by wife and kin

A 28-year-old man in Madhya Pradesh's Indore killed himself after accusing his estranged wife and her family of harassment, the police said on Wednesday. The deceased had also requested the government to amend the laws on marital disputes, the police said on Wednesday. According to the police, Nitin Padiyar, a resident of Yadavanagar, was found dead in his house on Monday night. A note was recovered from the spot which named his wife and members of her family. He got married in 2019. Indore Zone 3 Deputy Commissioner of Police Hansraj Singh said the police were analysing the note. (AASRA suicide prevention helpline number: 91-9820466726)

Flagship scheme for girl child has helped defeat bias: Modi

Districts with historically low child sex ratios have reported significant improvement, awareness campaigns have instilled a deeper sense of the importance of gender equality, says Prime Minister

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Asserting that the *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* (Save and educate the girl child) campaign had helped overcome gender bias, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said districts with historically low child sex ratios had shown remarkable improvement since the campaign was launched a decade ago.

The scheme, launched by the Prime Minister at Panipat in Haryana on January 22, 2015, addresses the declining child sex ratio (CSR) and related issues of women empowerment. It is a tri-ministerial effort of the Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare, and Education.

The key elements of the scheme include enforcement of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, a nationwide awareness and advocacy campaign, and multi-sectoral action in select 100 districts (low CSR) in the first phase.

"Thanks to the dedicated efforts of the people and various community



The scheme was launched in 2015 to address the declining child sex ratio and related issues of women empowerment. FILE PHOTO

service organisations, *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* has achieved remarkable milestones," Mr. Modi said in a post on X.

"Districts with historically low child sex ratios have reported significant improvement, and awareness campaigns have instilled a deeper sense of the importance of gender equality," he said.

"I compliment all stakeholders who have made this movement vibrant at the grassroots level. Let us continue to protect the rights of our daughters, ensure their education and

create a society where they can thrive without any discrimination," Mr. Modi added.

Rise in enrolment: Shah Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the campaign had given a new dimension to the rights, education, and respect of daughters in the country.

"Today, there has been an increase in the enrolment rate of girls in schools and an unprecedented improvement in the sex ratio. Today daughters are increasing the country's prestige by playing a lead-

ing role in every field," Mr. Shah said on X.

At a special event to mark the 10th anniversary of the programme in the national capital, Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda underscored the progress made in critical sectors such as health and education.

"The success of *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme is evident in the substantial improvements in child sex ratio, institutional deliveries, and access to healthcare services for girls. The Government of India is committed to ensuring that every girl child receives the care and opportunities she deserves to grow into a leader of tomorrow," he said.

The national sex ratio at birth has improved from 918 in 2014-15 to 930 in 2023-24.

The gross enrolment ratio of girls at the secondary level has risen from 75.51% to 78%, and institutional deliveries have surged from 61% to 97.3%. Additionally, first-trimester antenatal care registrations have increased from 61% to 80.5%, according to an official statement released after the event.

Kharge questions BJP about crimes against women

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



As the Centre's flagship programme *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* completed a decade on Wednesday, the Congress asked why the BJP had adopted a policy to "save the criminals" instead.

"Ten years of *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao*, our three questions to Modiji – Why did the BJP adopt the policy of 'save the criminals' instead of 'save the daughters'? When will the women of Manipur get justice? Whether it is the Dalit daughter of Hathras or the daughter of Unnao, or our champion female wrestler, why has the BJP always protected criminals?" Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said in a post on X.

Mr. Kharge asked why were 43 crimes against women recorded in India every hour. "Every day, 22 crimes are registered against women and children of the most vulnerable Dalit-tribal class of our country. Modiji has spoken about women's safety many times in his speeches from the Red Fort, but why is there a difference between his words and actions?" he said.

Until 2019, almost 80%

EPFO added 8.74 lakh new members in November

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation enrolled around 8.74 lakh new members last November, registering an 18.8% rise from the figure in the corresponding period in 2023, the Union Labour Ministry said on Wednesday. On a monthly basis, new members rose by 16.58% over the October number.

"This surge in new memberships can be attributed to growing employment opportunities, increased awareness of employee benefits, and EPFO's successful outreach programmes," the Ministry said in a release. The net addition of members was 14.63 lakh, an increase of 9.07% from the October figure and 4.88% from that of November.

Centre announces hike in MSP for jute by ₹315 a quintal

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has fixed the minimum support price (MSP) of raw jute for the 2025-26 marketing season at ₹5,650 a quintal, an increase of ₹315 over the price in 2024-25.

Announcing the decision at a press conference here on Wednesday, Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said the new MSP will ensure a return of 66.8% over the average cost of production and will benefit jute growers.

"The approved MSP of raw jute for marketing season 2025-26 is in line with the principle of fixing MSP at a level of at least 1.5 times all India weighted average cost of production as announced by the Government in the Budget 2018-19," the Centre said in a re-

lease. "Government of India has increased MSP of raw jute from ₹2,400 per quintal in 2014-15 to ₹5,650 per quintal in 2025-26, registering an increase of ₹3,250 per quintal (2.35 times)," the press release added.

The government added that it paid ₹1,300 crore to jute growers between 2014-15 and 2024-25 for the MSP, while it was ₹441 crore during the 2004-05 to 2013-14 period.

"The livelihood of 40 lakh farm families directly or indirectly depends on jute industry. About four lakh workers get direct employment in jute mills and trade in jute. Last year, jute was procured from 1.7 lakh farmers," the Centre said.

The Jute Corporation of India (JCI) will continue as the Union government's nodal agency to undertake price support operations.

National Health Mission has curbed several public health concerns, says Centre's report

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

The National Health Mission (NHM) has significantly contributed to improving India's public health, including lowering of the maternal mortality ratio, incidence of tuberculosis (TB), and sickle cell anaemia.

It has also contributed to expanding human resources in the field while fostering an integrated response to health emergencies, the Union government said on Wednesday in its assessment report (2021-24) presented to the Union Cabinet.

Listing out key achievements of the NNM in the past three years, the Centre noted that there had been a significant increase in human resources within the healthcare sec-

tor. "In FY 2021-22, NNM facilitated the engagement of 2.69 lakh additional healthcare workers, including general duty medical officers, specialists, staff nurses, AYUSH doctors, allied healthcare workers, and public health managers. Additionally, 90,740 community health officers (CHOs) were engaged. This number grew in subsequent years, with 4.21 lakh additional healthcare professionals engaged in FY 2022-23, including 1.29 lakh CHOs, and 5.23 lakh workers engaged in FY 2023-24, which includ-

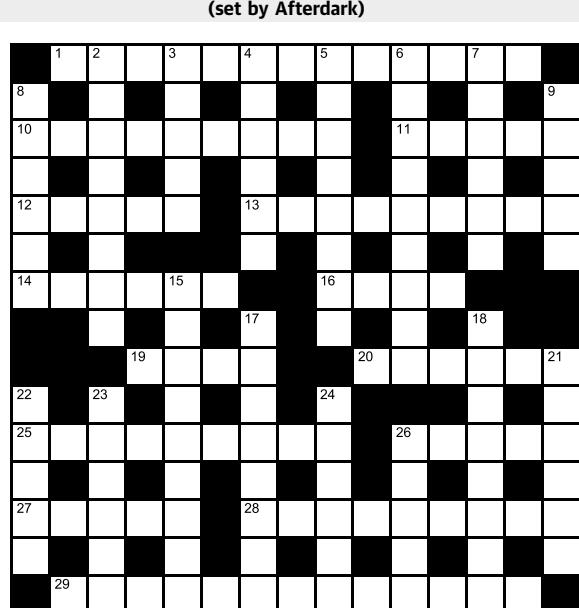
ed 1.38 lakh CHOs," the report stated.

It further noted that under NNM, the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) has declined by 83% since 1990, which is higher than the global decline of 45%.

Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) has fallen from 39 per 1,000 live births in 2014 to 28 in 2020.

Moreover, the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) decreased from 2.3 in 2015 to 2.0 in 2020, according to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5). These improvements indicate that India is on track to meet its U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets for maternal, child, and infant mortality well ahead of 2030.

The NNM has also been instrumental in the elimination and control of various diseases, including the incidence of TB.

TH CROSSWORD + 14389
(set by Afterdark)

13 Hector altering square shapes (9)

14 Sister-in-law cut deeply by a metal (6)

16 Placed face on the other side (4)

19 Satisfactory show (4)

20 Hold stranger in shower (6)

25 Eva's talk about power was dry (9)

26 Joker working in train (5)

27 Zepto trading bear and another animal (5)

28 Explain 38% discount in interest given before time (9)

29 Somehow I termed people to have willpower (13)

Down

2 To work on sum, learn numbers (8)

3 If it is taken out tequila and distilled, it will be the same (5)

4 Deny scandal at New England (6)

5 Lit with beer and bit of rum, lousy, awful (8)

6 Unpleasant attack (9)

7 Investors giving answer across backstage (6)

8 Outside of CIT, chemistry is delivered as songs (6)

9 A nomad, fraud, heartless scally (5)

15 Lifting beer, boater is forced to be careful (9)

17 Creature on paper is moving at the corner (8)

18 Jumper is made by knitting angora in fine retreat (8)

21 At this age, one's head is inside, take it (5)

22 Look, a zebra's head is inside, take it (5)

23 Rock children's game (6)

24 Lost to Dube at England, not entirely (6)

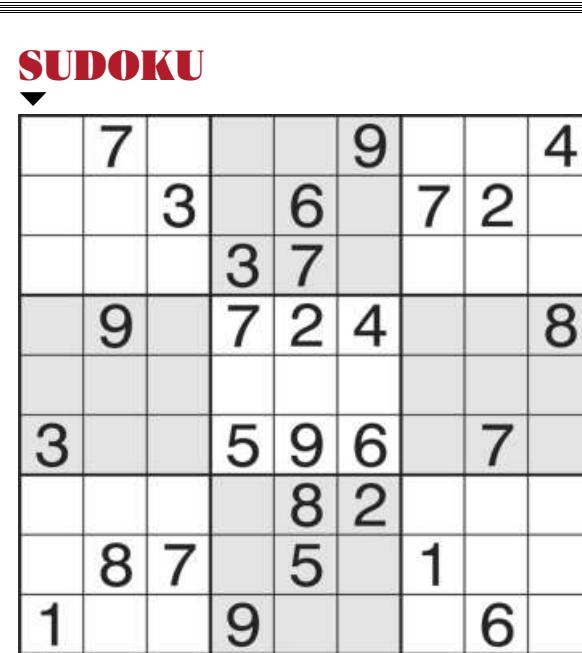
26 Fabric editor discarded was the most inferior (5)

SCAN TO PLAY



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SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

A	A	P	F	O	P	S	H
S	U	R	E	L	F	I	T
S	R	E	A	C	T	E	N
D	R	I	N	K	U	P	E
R	E	S	C	H	E	A	T
E	C	P	R	A	T	E	N
S	P	A	R	E	T	E	N
P	R	E	T	E	I	E	N
T	R	E	M	O	L	E	N

Solution to previous puzzle

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

FAITH

Yashodha, the torchbearer

Tiruppavai, Andal's composition, is a concise version of the Vedas and shows devotees the way to attain Krishna's feet, said Damal Perundevi.

The first few verses exemplify the five forms (*nilais*) of the Supreme. The first speaks of Narayana (para tata), the second of vyuha; the third verse, *Ongi ulagalandha*, on Tiruvikrama is a reflection of vibhava state; in *Azhi mazhai Kanna*, Andal is referring to the antaryami state of the Lord. In the verse, *Mayanai mannu vada Madurai*, she is referring to archa state, referencing Mathura as his abode. Andal repeatedly reinforces the importance of na-masankirtan and surrender, invoking devotees to take the bhakti highway to reach Krishna's feet.

Why does Andal wake up Nandagopala, Yashodha and Balarama? She does so in order to highlight the lofty, virtuous and disciplined characteristics of the three, aspects that everyone can develop and nurture. In "*Ambarame, thamere, sore, aramseyum empuruman Nandagopala*", Andal says one cannot come across a more charitable person than Nandagopala. Krishna chose Vasudeva and Devaki as His birth parents, but opted to be raised by Nandagopala and Yashodha. '*Kombanarkkellam kozhundhey, kula vilakke'*, sings Andal, of Yashodha. She is hailed as the torchbearer because she pointed everyone in the direction of Krishna. Narayana Bhattatri says Yashodha had the supreme fortune to cuddle Krishna on her lap, feed Him, sing lullabies, etc. Above all, He allowed Yashodha to bind Him. She is *Jagati Punyavanta jitaaha*, the most fortunate one on earth who was virtuous, having mastered all virtues.

IN BRIEF



BPCL's Q3 consolidated net profit rises 20% to ₹3,806 cr.

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL) reported a 20% growth in consolidated net profit to ₹3,806 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2024, compared with ₹3,181 crore in the year-earlier period. Revenue from operations during the quarter, however, decreased to ₹1,27,551 crore from ₹1,29,985 crore in the year earlier. The BPCL board has also declared an interim dividend of ₹5 per equity share of a face value ₹10 each.

Reliance Consumer Products Ltd. acquires SIL Foods

Reliance Consumer Products Ltd. (RCPL) announced the acquisition of Mumbai-based SIL Foods for an undisclosed sum. The acquisition was part of RCPL's broader strategy to reinvigorate and modernise India's most beloved heritage brands, it said. Ajay Mariwala, SIL Foods' managing director said RCPL will infuse new life into the brand by expanding its reach. The firm produces fruit jams, soups, chutney, sauces, ginger garlic paste, and other products.

SEBI floats consultation paper on sachetisation of MFs

To increase the reach and facilitate participation from low-income groups in mutual funds, SEBI on Wednesday floated a consultation paper on 'sachetisation' of mutual funds (MFs). It proposed a sachetised mutual fund product – small ticket systematic investment plan (SIP) of ₹250. Further, small ticket SIPs can be offered in any scheme except for debt schemes, sectoral and thematic schemes, small-cap and mid-cap schemes under equity schemes category. PTI

Ashwini Vaishnaw steers Davos parleys

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



NEW DELHI: Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has participated in a series of strategic meetings in Switzerland, underscoring India's commitment to fostering international collaboration and embracing innovative technologies in the railway sector, and also made a presentation on the Indian semiconductor ecosystem.

Before heading for the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2025 in Davos, Mr. Vaishnaw on Tuesday held several meetings. Speaking on the occasion, he said: "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has always guided us to benchmark our efforts to the global bests. Today's visit is also in this direction. There is a lot of interest around the world for made in India products".

A presentation showcasing latest advancements in infrastructure diagnostics was held by the Swiss Federal Railways. Mr. Vaishnaw also engaged with Swiss experts to understand the cutting-edge technologies that can bolster operational efficiency and safety within the Indian Railways system.

This was followed by a meeting with leading railway sector "Small and Medium Enterprises", including Rhomberg Sersa Ag, Selectron, Ucentrics, Autotech, and nu Glass.

Another key meeting was with Stadler Rail Management and a visit to their state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in St. Margrethen. Stadler Rail's expertise in producing double-decker multiple-unit trains.

Mr. Vaishnaw also attended the opening dinner hosted by the Board of

Tax avoidance treaties: India sets new norms for claiming benefits

The Central Board of Direct Taxes has issued fresh guidelines for applying the Principal Purpose Test (PPT) provisions under Double Tax Avoidance Agreements or DTAAs; deals with Cyprus, Mauritius and Singapore to remain outside for now

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Income Tax department has come out with a fresh guidance note on applicability of Principal Purpose Test (PPT) for claiming tax treaty benefits, which will apply prospectively.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) in its guidance note on PPT also clarified the grandfathering provisions under the India-Cyprus Double Tax Avoidance Agreement (DTAA), and the similar pacts with Mauritius and



Singapore would stay outside the purview of the new PPT provisions. India has made certain treaty-specific bilateral commitments in the form of grandfathering provisions in the

DTAAs signed with these three nations.

"These commitments, as reflected in the bilaterally agreed object and purpose of such grandfathering provisions, are not intended to interact with the PPT provision as such," the CBDT said.

The grandfathering provision in the treaties would be governed by the specific provisions specified in the respective DTAAs.

Deloitte India partner, Rohinton Sidhwani said the circular clarifies various aspects for interpreting the PPT that now featured in

most Indian tax DTAAs.

Crucially, it establishes the primacy of the grandfathering article featuring in some treaties, namely Cyprus, Mauritius and Singapore. The circular protects such treaty-specific bilateral commitments and carves them out of the purview of the PPT provisions.

"This was a grey area when the new protocol was made public for the India Mauritius treaty. With this clarification, there is a likelihood that the protocol would be notified and go into effect in the coming financial year beginning

April 1, 2025," he said.

Nangia Andersen LLP partner Vishwas Panjwani said as per the note, PPT provisions shall apply prospectively and would also not be applicable in cases where India has entered into treaty-specific bilateral commitments in the form of grandfathering.

"The guidelines nudge tax authorities to refer to BEPS Action Plan 6 as well as UN Model Tax Convention for supplementary source of guidance while deciding on invocation and application of PPT provisions," Mr. Panjwani added.

HDFC Bank's Q3 net profit rises 2% to ₹16,736 crore

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

HDFC Bank Ltd. reported a 2% growth in net profit for the third-quarter ended December 31, 2024, compared with ₹16,373 crore in the year-ago period.

Profit after tax, adjusted for trading and mark to market gains, prior year one-off provisions, and prior year tax credits, grew 13.6% over the quarter ended December 31, 2023, the private sector lender said.

Demand sign: HUL volumes up 2% in Q3

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) major Hindustan Unilever Ltd. (HUL) reported a 19% growth in standalone net profit to ₹2,984 crore for the quarter ended December 31, 2024, compared with ₹2,509 crore in the year-earlier period.

The increase in profit was on account of the profit from the divestment of the Pureit business, while profit after tax before exceptional items was flat.

Turnover grew 2% at ₹45,680 crore driven by a 2% underlying volume



growth (UVG).

"FMCG demand trends remained subdued with continued moderation in urban growth, while rural sustained its gradual recovery. In this operating context, we delivered competitive growth by driving unmissable brand superiority, investing behind brands and capabilities

whilst maintaining healthy margins," CEO and MD Rohit Jawa said.

During the quarter, the company's Home Care business witnessed an underlying sales growth (USG) of 6%, led by high-single digit UVG in fabric wash and household care.

The Beauty & Wellbeing segment reported a 1% growth, while UVG saw a low-single digit decline.

The Personal Care segment witnessed 4% decline with mid-single digit volume decline. The Foods business had a flat USG with mid-single digit price growth offset by decline in volumes. Revenue from

the ice cream business remained flat year on year.

The Board of Directors of the company approved a scheme of arrangement between HUL and its wholly owned subsidiary Kwality Wall's (India) Ltd. to demerge HUL's ice cream business into KWIL. The company also announced that it had signed a definitive agreement to acquire premium beauty brand Minimalist from Uprising Science Private Ltd. for ₹2,670 crore.

The board also approved the acquisition of the palm undertaking of Vishwatej Oil Industries for an unspecified amount.

H-1Bs fill critical skills gap in U.S.: Nasscom

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI



Nasscom on Wednesday said H-1B visas have nothing to do with immigration issues and instead fill critical skills gap in the U.S., as the apex industry body asserted technology will be the "lynchpin" of U.S. economic growth, triggering continued need for 'win-win partnerships' between companies on both sides.

Nasscom vice-president Shivendra Singh slammed the 'myth' that H-1B workers were cheap labour, replace American workers, or depress U.S. salaries, and sought to assuage concerns around any adverse impact of President Donald Trump's latest moves and orders on flow of Indian tech professionals to the U.S.

Mr. Singh told PTI Nasscom does not have any reason to be less optimistic about Indian IT industry's growth story, given India and Indian talent have a very important role in the growth of the U.S. economy.

He expressed optimism that the developments in the U.S. would not cloud the outlook for the Indian IT industry.

Nasscom's comments assume significance given the growing unease around Mr. Trump's policies and the impact it could have on export-led \$250 billion Indian IT industry, which derives the biggest chunk of its revenue from the U.S. market.

President Trump began his second term with a spate of executive orders on Tuesday and moved quickly to end a decades-old immigration policy of birthright citizenship – that is automatic citizenship for children born in the U.S. to non-citizen pa-

rents. Many believe, and worry this could potentially impact children born in the U.S. to H-1B visa holders as well as other categories like green card holders and those on temporary visas.

De-dollarisation threat
Mr. Trump repeated his warning he will impose 100% tariffs on BRICS countries, of which India is a part, if they take any step to replace the U.S. dollar.

Asked how the revoking of birthright citizenship would impact H-1B holders, Mr. Singh expressed his empathy for those likely to be affected but emphasised that immigration policies are the absolute prerogative of a nation.

"I empathise...on challenges it may bring to those who have children during their tenure in the U.S...but immigration is absolute autonomy of a country - in this case the U.S.," he said.

He stressed H-1B visas were nowhere linked to immigration debate or issue as it is a non-immigrant visa. Mr. Singh drew attention to Indian IT industry's hiring efforts in the U.S.

"Our companies have invested \$1.1 billion in the U.S. for local upskilling, and we are working with 2,55,000 employees who have been upskilled and 2.9 million students have been positively impacted.

Not Just in Your Head: How Mental Health Affects the Body

Since his 20s, Rohan had led a moderately active lifestyle, avoided excessive junk food, and had no major health complaints. One would assume he was healthy. However, the persistent stress over a decade from his high-pressure job had taken a toll on him by his 30s, manifesting in ways he hadn't anticipated. Over time, Rohan developed symptoms like frequent headaches, difficulty sleeping, and constant fatigue.

Stress as a Trigger for NCDs

Rohan's most recent health check revealed unexpected results: elevated blood sugar levels, borderline high cholesterol, and slightly raised blood pressure – all early signs of metabolic syndrome. These findings mirrored the silent havoc chronic stress was wreaking on his body.

In India, mental health disorders are a pressing concern, with the World Health Organization estimating a burden of 2,443 disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) per 1,00,000 population. Furthermore, a 2022 survey* revealed that 59% of Indian employees reported experiencing depression, highlighting the pervasive impact of mental health issues in the workplace.

Good health rests on five pillars: balanced nutrition, regular exercise, quality sleep, effective stress management, and mental well-being. Neglecting even one can increase your risk of NCDs.

Dr Lakshmi Venkatraman
Psychiatrist,
Apollo Medical Centre, Kotturupuram, Chennai

Here's a lesser-known truth: Chronic stress and anxiety double the risk of hypertension, cardiovascular disease and diabetes by elevating cortisol (a stress hormone) levels in the body. While cortisol is necessary for normal bodily functions like regulating blood sugars and blood pressure, an excess of it disrupts metabolism, increasing abdominal fat and raising the risk of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

A Comprehensive Approach to Wellness

Traditionally, conversations about being healthy have revolved around nutrition and exercise. While crucial, these are just two of the five pillars of good health. The others – sleep, stress management, and mental health – are equally vital.

Rohan's case underscores the importance of integrating mental health screening into preventive

care. Stress and mental health disorders do not merely affect the mind; they have profound physiological consequences. Anxiety can lead to increased heart rate and blood pressure, while sleep disturbances exacerbate metabolic and cardiovascular risks. Chronic mental stress also weakens the immune system, making the body more susceptible to illnesses.

Integrating Mental Health Screening

To effectively address these risks, preventive health screenings must include mental health evaluations alongside physical assessments and tests. Tools like the PHQ-9 (to assess for depression) and GAD-7 (to assess for anxiety) provide valuable insights into an individual's mental state, enabling early interventions. Similarly, the STOP-BANG questionnaire to screen for sleep apnoea is crucial to identify this sleep disorder that can also increase the risk of NCDs. By identifying and managing stress, anxiety, and sleep disorders early, healthcare providers can help prevent the progression of NCDs and mitigate their impact.

Redefining Preventive Healthcare

True preventive healthcare focuses on enhancing the quality of life by addressing all aspects of health. Mental health, stress, and sleep are integral components of overall health and well-being. A holistic approach that evaluates the interconnectedness of the mind and body enables individuals to better manage their health and reduce the risks of chronic conditions.

Preventive care is not just about living longer but about living better. By integrating mental health and sleep assessments into routine screenings, healthcare providers can offer a comprehensive approach to wellness, ensuring that individuals lead healthier and fulfilling lives.

Source:

*Common mental health symptoms among employees in India 2022, A. Minhas (2023)

Sincerely,
Your Doctor

In association with THE HINDU

A preventive healthcare initiative by Apollo ProHealth and The Hindu

Have questions for our doctors? WhatsApp us at 89392 83283 or email us at sincerelyyourdoctor@thehindu.co.in

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

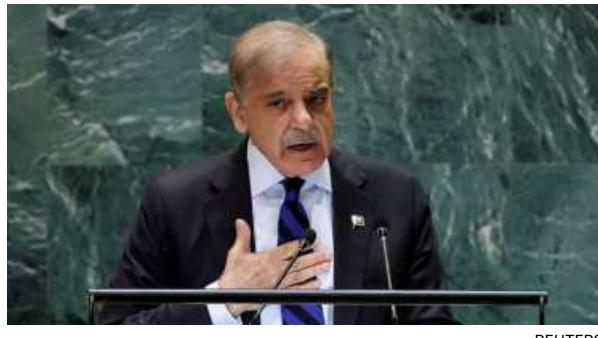
	WEDNESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	76,405	0.75
US Dollar	86.35	0.26
Gold	82,730	0.76
Brent oil	79.36	-0.17

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2376.55	-7.75
Adani Ports.	1102.25	-3.95
Apollo Hosp.	6892.90	-26.25
Asian Paints	2262.10	1.75
Axis Bank	959.30	-10.90
Bajaj Auto	8460.85	-7.70
Bajaj Finserv	1743.30	26.20
Bajaj Finance	7397.15	105.50
Bharti Elect.	270.35	-8.65
Bharti Airtel	1631.75	5.60
BPCL	277.60	-2.60
Britannia Ind.	4956.70	52.85
Cipla	1439.40	-11.40
Coal India	379.20	-2.35
Dr Reddys Lab.	1296.25	8.10
Eicher Motors	5009.70	39.75
Grasim Ind.	2388.15	20.65
HCL Tech	1827.70	

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan will continue to 'extend support' to people of Kashmir: PM



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that Pakistan would continue to "extend political, moral and diplomatic support to the people of Kashmir till they achieve the right to self-determination as per UN resolutions". He made the remarks while addressing an event in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. PTI

DHAKA

Bangladesh court acquits Khaleda Zia in 10 year-old sabotage case



A court in Bangladesh acquitted BNP Chairperson and former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on Wednesday in a sabotage case filed in the southeastern Cumilla district 10 years ago. The court observed that the case was filed on political grounds and harassment. Last week, Ms. Zia was acquitted in the Orphanage Trust graft case. PTI

TAIPEI

China's Navy gets new-generation frigate to counter U.S. and others



China's Navy commissioned a new-generation frigate to counter the U.S. and other regional powers, saying the ship will "play a vital role in enhancing the overall combat effectiveness" of its forces. The first Type 054B frigate, christened the Luohu, was commissioned on Wednesday in Qingdao, a port city in northern China. AP

JENIN

Ten killed as Israel presses on with its raid in the occupied West Bank



Gunfire and explosions rocked the occupied West Bank's Jenin area on Wednesday, as Israel pressed on for a second day with a raid. The operation, launched just days after fighting halted in Gaza, left 10 Palestinians dead. 20 people from villages around Jenin have been detained since the operation began on Tuesday. AP

Trump slams bishop who batted for minorities

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday demanded an apology from the Episcopal bishop of Washington after she made a direct appeal to him during a prayer service to have mercy on the LGBTQ+ community and migrant workers who are in the U.S. illegally.

Referencing Mr. Trump's belief that he was saved by God from assassination, the Right Rev. Mariann Budde said, "You have felt the providential hand of a loving God. In the name of our God, I ask you to have mercy upon the people in our country who are scared now."

After he returned to the White House, Mr. Trump said, "I didn't think it was a good service" and "they could do much better." But later, in an overnight post on his social media site, he sharply criticised the "so-called Bishop" as a "Radical Left hard line Trump hater."

"She brought her church into the World of politics in a very ungracious way. She was nasty in tone," said Mr. Trump, a Republican, adding that Ms. Budde did not mention that some migrants have come to the U.S. and killed people.

"Apart from her inappropriate statements, the service was uninspiring. She is not very good at her job!" Mr. Trump said. "She and her church owe the public an apology!"

Mr. Trump has already issued executive orders rolling back transgender rights and toughening immigration policies.

Trump warns of tariffs against EU and 10% rate on China by February

"They treat us very, very badly. So they are going to be in for tariffs," says the U.S. President about the EU; Trump's charges against Beijing include that of sending fentanyl to Mexico and Canada; China says there are no winners in a trade war

Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump pledged on Tuesday to hit the European Union with tariffs, adding that a 10% duty on Chinese imports could also come as soon as February 1.

Mr. Trump, who was speaking to reporters at the White House a day after being sworn in, cited the need to rectify the EU's trade imbalances with the United States while taking aim once again at Beijing over fentanyl trafficking.

"They treat us very, very badly. So they're going to



Shock factor: Donald Trump has issued a slew of orders since assuming office as the U.S. President on Monday. AP

be in for tariffs," Mr. Trump said of the EU. "You can't get fairness unless you do that."

A day earlier, Mr. Trump

accused the bloc of not importing enough American products, saying he would "straighten that out" by imposing duties or by seeking

more oil and gas purchases. Regarding China, Mr. Trump on Tuesday reiterated his threat to impose a 10% tariff, saying it was "based on the fact that they are sending fentanyl to Mexico and Canada."

When asked how soon these tariffs could be enacted, he added: "Probably February 1st is the date we're looking at."

This was the same date he earlier said he could impose 25% tariffs on Canada and Mexico, accusing them of failing to stop illegal immigration and fentanyl trafficking into the United States.

Beijing on Wednesday

vowed to defend its "national interests" in response to Mr. Trump's threats. "We have always believed that there are no winners in a trade war or a tariff war," foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said.

Ready to defend
The EU's economy commissioner also vowed this week that the bloc stands ready to defend its interests.

Speaking at an annual meeting of global elites in Davos EU chief Ursula von der Leyen declared that Europe was ready to negotiate with Mr. Trump.

Trump tells Putin to make Ukraine deal 'now' or face tariffs

Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump told his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Wednesday to make a deal to end the grinding Ukraine war "now" or face tariff hikes and more sanctions.

"If we don't make a 'deal,' and soon, I have no other choice but to put high levels of Taxes, Tariffs, and Sanctions on anything being sold by Russia to the United States, and various other participating countries," Mr. Trump said on his Truth Social network.

Mr. Trump said he was "not looking to hurt Russia" and "always had a very



good relationship with President Putin," a leader for whom he has expressed admiration in the past.

"All of that being said, I'm going to do Russia, whose Economy is failing, and President Putin, a very big FAVOR. Settle now, and STOP this ridiculous War! IT'S ONLY GOING TO GET WORSE."

Prince Harry receives 'full' apology from Murdoch's tabloids

Press Trust of India

LONDON
ists and private investigators between 1996-2011.

Britain's Prince Harry on Wednesday settled his legal case against Rupert Murdoch's News Group Newspapers (NGN), publishers of *The Sun* newspaper, which offered a rare "full and unequivocal" apology to the now U.S.-based Duke of Sussex and agreed to pay "substantial damages".

Harry, the younger son of King Charles III, had brought legal action against NGN over allegations of unlawful information gathering by journal-

Diversity programmes shut, staff placed on leave in U.S.

Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt confirmed that U.S. federal employees working in diversity offices must be put on paid leave by Wednesday evening as the new administration of Donald Trump has ordered the programmes shut.

"Send a notification to all employees of DEIA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility) offices that they are being placed on paid administrative leave effective immediately as the agency takes steps to close/end all DEIA initiatives, offices and pro-

During his campaign, Trump had alleged that the DEI policies discriminated against white people

gram," said a U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) memo posted on social media platform X.

"This is another win for Americans of all races, religions, and creeds. Promises made, promises kept."

While campaigning, Mr. Trump had vilified diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies in the federal government and corporate world, saying they discriminated against white people – men in particular.

Panama complains to UN about Trump's threat, starts audit

Agence France-Presse

PANAMA CITY

Panama has complained to the United Nations over U.S. President Donald Trump's "worrying" threat to seize the Panama Canal, even as it launched an audit of the Hong Kong-linked operator of two ports on the interoceanic waterway.

Panama's President Jose Raul Mulino hit back that the canal was not a gift from the U.S. during a panel at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Asked on Wednesday about the spat, Beijing denied it had ever "interfered" in the canal.

PSPB men and RSPB women triumph

NATIONAL TT

Amol Karhadkar

SURAT

Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) and Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) won the team championships of the 86th senior National table tennis here on Wednesday.

PSPB men survived a big scare from RSPB before extending their unbeaten title run to 23 editions, while the Railways women – riding high on Sutirtha Mukherjee's exploits – regained the title after five years by scraping past the fancied PSPB. Both finals ended with identical scores of 3-2.

Sutirtha started the final by overcoming the in-form Yashaswini Ghorpade in straight games and ended



Triumphant: The victorious RSPB squad. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

it by defeating arch-rival T. Reeth Rishya in a tense five-game encounter. Railways head coach Anindita Chakraborty took a calculated risk by pitting Kaushani Nath as the third player and she delivered by beating Pritha Vartikar.

When local boy Harmeet Desai was stunned by Anirban Ghosh, Railways sensed its biggest chance of halting PSPB's caravan. However, Manav Thakkar – the other local boy in PSPB – started the comeback by blocking Jeet Chandra out of the game.

Ankur then overcame Anirban in a high-voltage match before Harmeet made short work of Akash in the decider.

The results: Team final: Men: PSPB bt RSPB 3-2 (Ankur Bhattacharjee lost to Akash Pal 11-13, 11-5, 6-11, 11-9, 4-11; Harmeet Desai lost to Anirban Ghosh 11-4, 11-7, 10-12, 9-11, 9-11; Manav Thakkar bt Jeet Chandra 16-14, 11-7, 6-11, 10-12, 11-6; Ankur bt Anirban 11-7, 11-9, 9-11, 11-9; Harmeet bt Akash 11-5, 11-4, 11-9).

Women: RSPB bt PSPB 3-2 (Sutirtha Mukherjee bt Yashaswini Ghorpade 11-6, 11-4, 11-3; Anirban Ghosh 11-7, 11-11, 8-11; Kaushani Nath bt Pritha Vartikar 9-11, 6-11, 11-5, 12-10, 11-6; Anusha lost to Yashaswini 10-12, 7-11, 8-11; Sutirtha bt Reeth 11-9, 11-7, 4-11, 4-11, 11-9).

The men's final saw PSPB starting shakily. With G. Sathiyan waking up with a sore knee, it was up to

Sport

Barca stages a remarkable comeback at Benfica

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Agence France-Presse

PARIS

Liverpool beat Lille 2-1 on Tuesday to maintain its perfect record in this season's Champions League and clinch qualification for the last 16, while Barcelona produced a stunning comeback to beat Benfica 5-4 in a classic to secure its own place.

The Liverpool side is the only team with a maximum 21 points from seven matches in this new, expanded Champions League and it now knows it will skip next month's play-offs and head straight to the last 16 in March.

The biggest drama on the night, however, came in the rain in Lisbon, where Barcelona trailed



Tumultuous celebrations: Raphinha is mobbed by teammates after scoring Barcelona's winner. AP

4-2 with 12 minutes of the 90 remaining, but somehow recovered to win 5-4.

Greek striker Vangelis Pavlidis scored a hat-trick in the first half-hour for Benfica, including a penalty, while Robert Lewandowski netted from the spot for Barca, which was 3-1 down at the interval.

Raphinha pulled it back to 3-2 when a clearance by the goalkeeper ricocheted

back off the Brazilian's head and in, but a Ronald Araujo own goal midway through the second half appeared to have secured the win for the Portuguese side.

However, another Lewandowski penalty on 78 minutes gave Barcelona renewed hope, and Eric Garcia headed in the equaliser on 86 minutes, before Raphinha ran away to settle

The Catalans are second with six wins out of seven, and will finish in the top eight to go straight to the last 16. Benfica, with 10 points, must still sweat to reach the play-off round.

The results: Atalanta 5 (Retegui 12, Pasalic 58, De Ketelaere 63, Lookman 90, Bresciani 90+5) bt Sturm Graz 0; Monaco 3 (Singo 8) bt Aston Villa 0; Slovan Bratislava 1 (Metsoko 85) lost to Stuttgart 3 (Leweling 11, 36, Rieder 87); Club Brugge 0 drew with Juventus 0; Atletico Madrid 2 (Alvarez 52, 90) bt Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Hincapie 45+1); Benfica 4 (Pavlidis 2, 22, 30+pen, Araujo 68+og) lost to Barcelona 5 (Lewandowski 13, pen, 78, pen, Raphinha 64, 90+6, Garcia 87); Liverpool 2 (Salah 34, Elliott 67) bt Lille 1 (David 21); Bologna 2 (Dallina 71, Iling-Junior 72) bt Borussia Dortmund 1 (Girassy 15+pen); Red Star Belgrade 2 (Ndjaye 71, Djiga 77) lost to PSV Eindhoven 3 (de Jong 17, 24, Flamingo 43).

LEADER

Arshdeep becomes India's highest wicket-taker in T20Is



Left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh (97 scalps) became India's top wicket-taker in T20Is when he dismissed England's Ben Duckett in the opening game in Kolkata on Wednesday. He surpassed Yuzvendra Chahal's tally of 96 victims. Arshdeep achieved the milestone in his 61st match, 19 games lesser than Chahal.

AT THE HELM

Bumrah and Jadeja continue to top Test rankings



India's Jasprit Bumrah continued to remain the No. 1 Test bowler, while Ravindra Jadeja maintained his top spot in the all-rounders' category, in the latest ICC rankings released on Wednesday. Bumrah is currently on a career-best points tally of 908. Pat Cummins (841) and Kagiso Rabada (837) are placed second and third.

Sport**GUNNING FOR GLORY**

Moving into the semifinals is great, will push for more: Swiatek



The No. 2-seeded Iga Swiatek said she will push for her first title at Melbourne Park after her 6-1, 6-2 win over No. 8 seed Emma Navarro in the quarterfinals on Wednesday. "I'm really happy with the tournament overall. Being in the semis is great. I'll push for more," she said.

LOUD AND CLEAR

Navarro urges rule change following double-bounce furore



Emma Navarro called for a change in the rules on Wednesday after being unable to challenge a double bounce against her as Iga Swiatek moved into the Australian Open semifinals. "I think it should be allowed to see after the point even if you play. "I thought this is like the umpire's kind of job to call it."

Varun and Abhishek revel at the Eden

India's bowlers – led by the wily tweaker – restrict England to 132 before the opener's blistering knock takes the Men in Blue past the finish line with plenty to spare; Buttler's 68 the only positive for the visitor; Shami's international comeback gets delayed as Suryakumar opts to field three spinners

ENGLAND IN INDIA**Y.B. Sarangi**
KOLKATA

Varun Chakaravarthy wove his spin magic at the Eden Gardens – his IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders' backyard – and opener Abhishek Sharma cracked a blistering half-century as India thrashed England by seven wickets in the first of the five-match T20I series here on Wednesday.

After restricting the visitor to a modest 132, the host rushed to the target in 12.5 overs, much to the joy of a packed house.

India was off to a rolicking start, plundering 63 in the PowerPlay despite losing two wickets to Jofra Archer in the fifth over.

Sanju Samson (26), who utilised his gift of timing to hammer 22 off Gus Atkinson's first over, provided the ignition before ill-timing a pull. Skipper Suryakumar Yadav miscued one to the leg side.

The two blows could not deter Abhishek (79, 34b, 5x4, 8x6), who treated Mark Wood with disdain – hammering successive sixes over fine-leg and third-man and a straight four in the sixth over.

The southpaw used his feet well against spinner Adil Rashid. He hoisted Rashid over mid-wicket and long-on and Jamie Overton over fine-leg as he completed his half-century in just 20 deliveries. He fell



No clue: England's Buttler is bamboozled by a Varun special. R.V. MOORTHY

to Rashid when the target was in sight.

Earlier, Mohammed Shami's wait to return to international cricket got longer as Suryakumar chose to field three spinners amid speculation split over the pacer's form and fitness, and India's tactics.

With plenty of dew on the field and the prospect of the pitch playing slow and the ball skidding, India opted to field.

Arshdeep Singh extracted impressive seam movement and bowled in good areas to strike in quick succession. The third delivery of the match surprised Phil Salt even before he could open his account. Salt's leading edge went miles up in the air before Samson

calmly accepted the catch. In Arshdeep's next over, Ben Duckett, looking to play on the onside, only managed to get a leading edge.

Rinku Singh, posted at cover, ran back to take a spectacular high catch and help Arshdeep become the country's top wicket-taker in T20Is, overtaking Yuzvendra Chahal's tally of 96 scalps.

Unperturbed, captain Jos Buttler (68, 44b, 8x4, 2x6) batted aggressively, choosing Hardik Pandya for special treatment, as he added 48 quick runs with Harry Brook.

Varun (three for 23) displayed his control over flight and spin to scalp two in his second over. Brook,

who had problems in reading the spinner, played for the turn but inside-edged one onto his pads and the stumps. Liam Livingstone was also bowled in a similar fashion.

Hardik removed Jacob Bethell and Axar Patel claimed the wickets of Overton and Atkinson in consecutive overs. The wicketless Ravi Bishnoi kept it tight to apply more pressure.

The one-man show of Buttler – who showcased his range of shots and placement skills on both sides – ended as he pulled Varun to Nitish Reddy in the 17th over.

All this proved inconsequential once Abhishek took over.

SCOREBOARD**ENGLAND**

Phil Salt c Samson b Arshdeep 0 (3b), Ben Duckett c Rinku b Arshdeep 4 (b, 1x4), Jos Buttler c Nitish b Varun 68 (44b, 8x4, 2x6), Harry Brook b Varun 17 (14b, 2x4, 1x6), Liam Livingstone b Varun 0 (2b), Jacob Bethell c Abhishek b Hardik 7 (14b), Jamie Overton c Nitish b Axar 2 (4b), Gus Atkinson st. Samson b Axar 2 (13b), Jofra Archer c Suryakumar b Hardik 12 (10b, 1x4), Adil Rashid (not out) 8 (11b, 1x4), Mark Wood run out 1 (1b); Extras (b-5, lb-1, w-5); Total (in 20 overs): 132.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-0 (Salt, 0.3 overs), 2-17 (Duckett, 2.5), 3-65 (Brook, 7.3), 4-65 (Livingstone, 7.5), 5-83 (Bethell, 11.5), 6-95 (Overton, 13.3), 7-103 (Atkinson, 15.6), 8-109 (Buttler, 16.2), 9-130 (Archer, 19.4).

INDIA BOWLING

Arshdeep 4-0-17-2, Hardik 4-0-42-2, Varun 4-0-23-3, Axar 4-1-22-2, Bishnoi 4-0-22-0.

INDIA

Sanju Samson c Atkinson b Archer 26 (20b, 4x4, 1x6), Abhishek Sharma c Brook b Rashid 79 (34b, 5x4, 8x6), Suryakumar Yadav c Salt b Archer 0 (3b), Tilak Varma (not out) 19 (16b, 3x4), Hardik Pandya (not out) 3 (4b); Extras (b-4, lb-1, w-1); Total (for three wkts. in 12.5 overs): 133.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-41 (Samson, 4.2), 2-41 (Suryakumar, 4.5), 3-125 (Abhishek, 11.5).

ENGLAND BOWLING

Archer 4-0-21-2, Atkinson 2-0-38-0, Wood 2.5-0-25-0, Rashid 2-0-27-1, Overton 1-0-10-0, Livingstone 1-0-7-0.

Toss: India; **PoM:** Varun.

India won by seven wickets with 43 balls remaining to lead five-match series 1-0.

Second T20I: January 25, Chennai, 7 p.m.

India will comply with ICC's jersey guidelines'

Devajit Saikia, the BCCI secretary, told Sportstar.

The newly appointed secretary also indicated that the Board did not put forward any requests to the ICC regarding removing the name of the host country from its jersey.

"There were no such things and we will absolutely follow the ICC rules," Saikia added.

He also stated that there has not been any decision on whether India captain Rohit Sharma would travel to Lahore for the captains' photo-shoot before the event.

Tigers and Soorma make it a day to forget for Pipers

HIL**Santadeep Devy**
RANCHI

It wasn't a great day for Delhi SG Pipers at the Manrang Gomke Jaipal Singh Stadium here on Wednesday as both the women's and men's teams lost in the Hockey India League.

Following an uneventful first quarter in the women's match, Deepika almost found the breakthrough in the 18th minute after Udit's clearance handed the Pipers their first penalty corner. The Indian forward, looking for a deflection off the stick of Elizabeth Neal, found Jennifer Rizzo's right kicker instead.

But it was Tigers' Kathryn Mullan who sounded the boards against the passage of play with an audacious swipe from the top of the circle to beat Solanki Bansari. It became 2-0 as the Irishwoman featured on the scoresheet again.

was a team effort this time as an exceptional run by Vandana Kataria ended with Lalremtsiami deftly moving along the baseline before providing an assist.

In the men's fixture, JSW Soorma Hockey Club conveyed a clear message with a 2-3 formation.

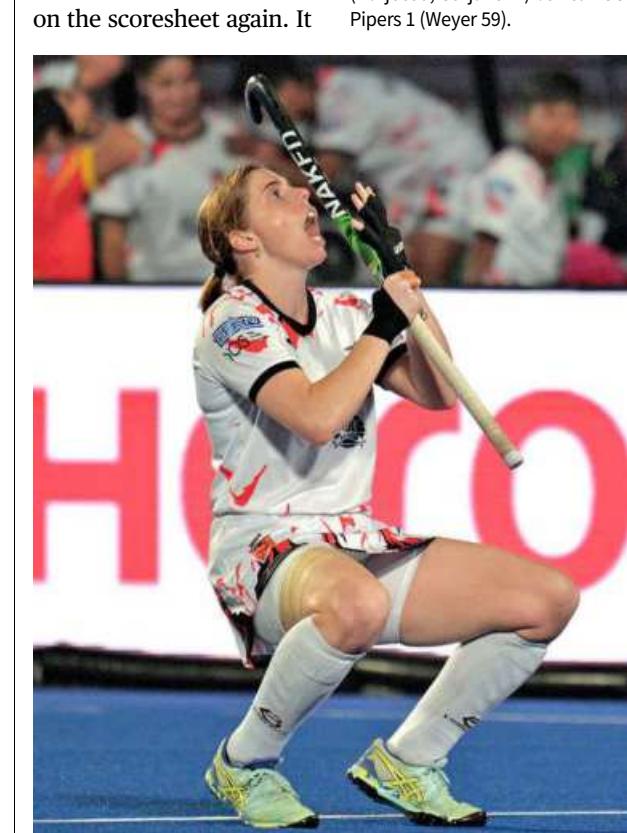
Harjeet Singh was right on the money when he blindsided Pawan to score his first goal of the edition.

Poor defending by the inexperienced Pipers saw Gurjant Singh size up the keeper before slamming the ball home right after resumption in the second quarter.

The ploy to replace Pipers custodian Benjamin Rennie with a field player worked as Corey Weyer pulled one back in the dying moments. But it was too late.

The results: Women: Shachi Rath Bengal Tigers 2 (Mullan 21 & 33) bt Delhi SG Pipers 0.

Men: JSW Soorma Hockey Club 2 (Harjeet 9, Gurjant 17) bt Delhi SG Pipers 1 (Weyer 59).



Sinner sets up a semifinal with Shelton; Swiatek to face Keys

Day 11 in numbers

1 Sinner is the first Italian to reach multiple Australian Open men's singles semifinals

2 Shelton is only the second left-hander (after Nadal) to make the last four of both hard court Slams since 1988

5 Sinner has equalled Pietrangeli's Italian record of most Major semifinal appearances

Thursday's schedule: SEMIFINALS

1-Sabalenka vs Badsova
2-Swiatek vs Keys

10 Keys has matched her career-best win streak (she won 10 on the trot in early 2022)

14 Only three players (Sharapova - 9 in 2013, Seles - 12 in 1991, and Graf - 13 in 1989) have dropped fewer games than Swiatek (14) en route to the Australian Open semifinals since the tournament moved to 128-player draws

20 Sinner has pulled level with Federer and Nadal for fewest matches (24) for 20 singles wins at Melbourne Park

23 Sinner is the youngest woman to qualify for seven Slam semifinals since Sharapova at the 2006 US Open
232 the joint-fastest serve (with Perricard) in Melbourne this year

AUSTRALIAN OPEN**Agence France-Presse**
MELBOURNE

Defending champion Janik Sinner raced into the Australian Open semifinals on Wednesday in impulsive fashion after Iga Swiatek was equally ruthless to close on a first Melbourne crown.

Italian World No. 1 Sinner swept aside an outclassed home hope Alex de Minaur 6-3, 6-2, 6-1 to silence the Rod Laver Arena and set up a meeting with 21st seed Ben Shelton.

The 22-year-old American Shelton booked his place in the last four for the first time with a battling 6-4, 7-5, 4-6, 7-6(4) win over unseeded Italian Lorenzo Sonego.

Awesome
Sinner, who had dizzy spells on Monday, was back to his brilliant best against eighth seed De Minaur, who has never beaten Sinner in 10 matches. De Minaur admitted he

THE RESULTS**Quarterfinals: Men:**

1-Sinner (Ita) bt 8-De Minaur (Aus) 6-3,

6-2, 6-1; 21-Shelton (USA) bt

Sonego (Ita) 6-4, 7-5, 4-6, 7-6(4).

Women:

19-Keys (USA) bt

28-Svitolina (Ukr) 3-6, 6-3, 6-4;

2-Swiatek (Pol) bt 8-Navarro (USA) 6-1, 6-2.

had no answers on the night, saying: "He was bloody good tonight."

Left-hander Shelton put in an all-action display to match his best performance at a Major, having reached the US Open semifinals in 2023.

Shelton unleashed the joint-fastest serve of the tournament, a monster ace clocked at 232kph (144mph), and afterwards turned his fire on the post-match televised interviews that the winners do on court.

"I feel like broadcasters should be helping us grow our sport and help these athletes who just won matches on the biggest stage to enjoy one of their biggest moments," he said. He labelled some of the

interviews "embarrassing" and "disrespectful". Five-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek edged closer to a first Australian Open women's singles crown with an emphatic 6-1, 6-2 victory over American eighth seed Emma Navarro on a gusty Rod Laver Arena. The 23-year-old World No. 2, who is building up a head of steam, plays American 19th seed Madison Keys in the semifinals, which both take place on Thursday.

Keys stormed back from a set down to beat Ukraine's Elina Svitolina 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 and move into the last four at Melbourne Park for the third time, 10 years after her first.

Swiatek looks ominous. She has yet to lose a set and has dropped only 14 games in her five matches.

Swiatek enjoyed a moment of good fortune at 2-2 in the second set against Navarro.

Keys, who will be 30 next month, is on a 10-match unbeaten streak after lifting the Adelaide title.

The big roar: Mullan's double won it for Bengal Tigers.

SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

IN BRIEF



Hamilton delights Ferrari faithful at team's test circuit

Lewis Hamilton drove a Ferrari Formula One car for the first time on Wednesday after the seven-time world champion took to the track at the team's test circuit in front of delighted fans. On a foggy morning at the Fiorano test track near Ferrari's Maranello base in northern Italy, Hamilton shot out in a test car wearing the classic red overalls and a distinctive yellow helmet. Groups of Ferrari's passionate fans watched on in the wet weather from a bridge overlooking the track as Hamilton zipped round it.

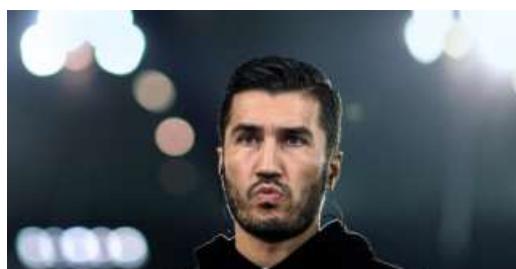
Sindhu crashes out in the opening round

Vietnam's Thuy Linh Nguyen beat P.V. Sindhu 22-20, 21-12 in the first round of Indonesia Masters badminton in Jakarta on Wednesday. However, Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila progressed to mixed doubles second round even as many Indians crashed out in opening round.

The results (first round): Men: Shi Yu Qi (Chn) bt Ayush Shetty 21-19, 21-19; Jeon Heoek-jin (Kor) bt Kiran George 21-12, 21-10; Kodai Naraoka (Jpn) bt Priyanshu Rajawat 21-14, 13-21, 21-18. **Women:** Thuy Linh Nguyen (Vie) bt P.V. Sindhu 22-20, 21-12; Tomoka Miyazaki (Jpn) bt Rakshitha Sree Santhosh Ramraj 21-17, 21-19; Ratchanok Intanon (Ina) bt Tanya Hemanth 21-14, 21-11. **Mixed doubles:** Tanisha Crasto & Dhruv Kapila bt Adnan Maulana & Indah Cahya Sari Jamil (Ina) 21-18, 21-14; Gregory Mairs & Jenny Mairs (Eng) bt Rohan Kapoor & Ruthvika Shivani Gadde 21-9, 21-13.

Extra race day in Hyderabad on January 28

The Stewards of the Hyderabad Race Club (HRC), have resolved to frame an extra race day on Tuesday, January 28. The prospectus for the above extra race day will be published separately.



Borussia Dortmund sacks struggling coach Sahin

Borussia Dortmund has fired struggling head coach Nuri Sahin after Tuesday's 2-1 Champions League loss at Bologna, saying on Wednesday it had "lost faith" in the young manager. Finalists in the competition last season, Tuesday's Champions League loss was the fourth in a row for Dortmund in all competitions.

Rathi shocks Yilmaz in the boys' pre-quarterfinal

Unseeded Arjun Rathi of India stunned thirdseed Kerem Yilmaz of Turkey 3-6, 7-5, 6-4 in a boys' pre-quarterfinal of the Central Excise & CGST ITF junior (J200) tennis tournament in Kolkata on Wednesday. Rathi will meet Hyeon Seok Seo of Korea in quarterfinals on Thursday.

RANJI SCHEDULE — SIXTH ROUND

Elite: Group A: Meghalaya vs Odisha (Shillong), Tripura vs Services (Agartala), Maharashtra vs Baroda (Nashik), Mumbai vs Jammu & Kashmir (Mumbai).

Group B: Gujarat vs Uttarakhand (Ahmedabad), Hyderabad vs Himachal Pradesh (Hyderabad), Pondicherry vs Andhra (Puducherry), Rajasthan vs Vidarbha (Jaipur).

Group C: Bengal vs Haryana (Kalyan), Bihar vs Uttar Pradesh (Patna), Karnataka vs Punjab (Bengaluru), Kerala vs Madhya Pradesh (Thiruvananthapuram).

Group D: Assam vs Railways (Guwahati), Jharkhand vs Chhattisgarh (Jamshedpur), Tamil Nadu vs Chandigarh (Salem), Saurashtra vs Delhi (Rajkot).

Plate: Final: Nagaland vs Goa (Sovim).

LIVE TELECAST

Badminton: Indonesia Open, Sports 18-3 & Hotstar, 7.30 a.m. **Women's U-19 T20 WC:** Hotstar, 8 a.m. & India vs Sri Lanka, 12 p.m.

Ranji Trophy: JioCinema, 9.30 a.m.

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

Hockey: HIL (Women), DD Sports, Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 3 (SD & HD) & LIV, 6.15 p.m.; Men, DD Sports, Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 3 (SD & HD) & LIV, 8 p.m.

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

Europa League: Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 3, 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 11.30 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Friday)

Sport

Jadeja, Pant take centre-stage as Saurashtra hosts Delhi

The home team, currently reeling at fifth in Group D, needs outright wins to stay in the race for the knockouts; spin expected to play a major part in the game

RANJI TROPHY

Vivek Krishnan

RAJKOT

“Idhar hi daalte rehna (Keep bowling at this spot.)

Rishabh Pant's chirpy voice could be heard aloud at the practice facility inside the Niranjan Shah Stadium as he went about instructing Delhi's spinners on the ideal length to target during a net session on a balmy Wednesday morning.

Not far away from the Delhi nets where Pant was batting, Ravindra Jadeja, in a black t-shirt and trousers because his training kit hadn't arrived, was probing as usual while bowling to the Saurashtra batters.

Among those facing Jadeja was Cheteshwar Pujara, whose most striking association with Pant was when India pulled off a heist in Brisbane in 2021.

You would have to cast your memory back to the



Jadeja. VIJAY SONEJI

distant past to remember a round of matches in the Ranji Trophy when it was graced with as much star power.

But following the BCCI's advisory that India players must participate in domestic cricket when available, most of the top stars will turn out for their State teams in the matches beginning on Thursday.

Here in Rajkot, Jadeja and Pant, who were part of India's Test series in Aus-



Back to the roots: Pant hasn't played a Ranji game since leading Delhi in the final of the 2017/18 season. VIJAY SONEJI

tralia, will be in opposite camps as Saurashtra takes on Delhi in a Group-D battle.

Though Pant didn't look at his fluent best against the tweakers, he was in an upbeat mood right through. After completing his batting stint, he went on to have a chat with Arpit Rana and Sanat Sangwan,

seemingly passing on batting tips that these youngsters will hold onto dearly.

Pant hasn't played a

Ranji game since leading Delhi in the final of the 2017/18 season against Vidarbha. It goes without saying that he will be crucial for the visitor in this fixture, more so given his prowess against spin on a surface that is expected to turn from day one.

Saurashtra, which is fifth in the group, needs outright wins in its remaining two games in Rajkot to have a shot at the knockouts. Delhi is third.

Bengaluru implodes to hand Odisha victory

ISL

N. Sudarshan

BENGALURU

A 10-man Bengaluru FC blew a 2-0 lead to lose 2-3 to Odisha FC in the Indian Super League at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on Wednesday.

Diego Mauricio planted two powerful penalties before Jerry Mawihmingthanga bundled in the ball from close range early in the second half to seal the tie.

While BFC remains third (28 points, 17 matches), the result comes at an inopportune time, extending Gerard Zaragoza's winless run to four games and severely hampering his aim of securing a top-two finish and making the semifinals directly.



Happy bunch: Odisha players celebrate an improbable win over the high-flying BFC. K. MURALI KUMAR

Full-back Naorem Roshan had a torrid time, guilty of the backpass that led to Odisha's opener and then handling the ball inside the area to pave the way for the second.

But for nearly half an hour, a victory for Sergio Lobera's men seemed improbable. In the 10th minute, Edgar Mendez con-

trolled an aerial ball superbly before slotting it home.

Evergreen Chhetri
Soon after, the evergreen Sunil Chhetri hoodwinked four defenders and bulged the net with aplomb.

However, minutes before the half-hour mark, Roshan's reverse ball was

pursued by Mauricio, and defender Aleksandar Jovanovic pulled the Brazilian down to thwart the chance.

Referee Pratik Mondal blew the whistle for a penalty and sent the Australian off. The visitor's equaliser followed soon, as the attack-minded Odisha piled on the pressure.

After the break, Chhetri & Co. came out a minute or two before their opponents in what appeared like a statement of intent. But it was Odisha that dealt the decisive blow before closing down the contest in expert fashion to climb up to sixth (24 points, 17 matches).

The result: Bengaluru FC 2 (Mendez 10, Chhetri 13) lost to Odisha FC 3 (Mauricio 29, 38, Mawihmingthanga 50).

Praggnanandhaa moves into sole lead

CHESS

Press Trust of India

WIJK AAN ZEE

Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa crashed through the defence of fellow Indian Leon Luke Mendonca to jump into sole lead after the fourth round of the Tata Steel Masters chess tournament here.

Praggnanandhaa found the fire to score his third win on the trot after 46 moves. Gukesh played true to his instinct but could not get past Alexey Sarana.

P. Harikrishna defeated Max Warmerdam of Holland.

Arjun Erigaisi went down to Vladimir Fedoseev, the Russian who now plays for Slovenia. It was another bad day in office for Arjun as his tactical ability surrendered before his opponent's prophylactic thinking.

In the Challengers' sec-

tion, R. Vaishali made a comeback at the expense of Nodirbek Yakubboev of Uzbekistan and Divya Deshmukh scored an exemplary victory over Ediz Gurel of Turkey.

The results:

Fourth round: Masters:

Harikrishna (2.5) bt Max Warmerdam (1); Arjun Erigaisi lost to Vladimir Fedoseev (2.5); Fabiano Caruana (2.5) drew with Anish Giri (1.5).

R. Praggnanandhaa (2.5) bt Leon Luke Mendonca (0.5); Wei Yi (2) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (3); Vincent Keymer (2.5) drew with Jorden van Foreest (1.5); Alexey Sarana (2) drew with D. Gukev (2.5).

Challengers: Divya Deshmukh (1.5) bt Ediz Gurel (2); Nodirbek Yakubboev (1.5) lost to R. Vaishali (2.5); Svane Frederik (2) drew with Nodirbek Kazybek (2); Miaoyi Lu (3) drew with Irina Bulmaga (0.5).

Nguyen Thai Dai Vam (3) drew with Aydin Suleymani (2); Arthur Pijpers (1) drew with Erwin Lam (3); Oro Faustino (1) bt Benjamin Bok (1.5).

India prepares for tie against Togo

DAVIS CUP

Sports Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Davis Cup World Group play-off tie against Togo to be played on the hard courts at the DLTA Complex on February 1 and 2 may not be that much of a challenge for the host, but Indian tennis is looking to capitalise on the event to strengthen its roots.

To that extent, three bright youngsters Aryan Shah, Chirag Duhan and Yuvan Nandal, have been added to the training squad and will start the preparation at the venue on Thursday with coach Ashutosh Singh.

“We will utilise the home advantage and home support,” said the captain of the team, Rohit Rajpal.

Karan and Ramkumar are expected to start training with the three youngsters from Thursday, while Mukund, Balaji and Rithvik are expected to join the squad in the next few days.

Lakshya, Sindhu to lead Indian teams at Asia mixed team c'ships



Lakshya and Sindhu. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Association of India said in a release.

The strong Indian team will also have star doubles players Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty. The women's doubles pairing could be either Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly or Ashwini Ponnappa and Tanisha Crasto.

Tanisha will also pair up with Dhruv Kapila in mixed doubles while Sathish Kumar K. and Adya Variyath will be the second combination.

The squad: Men: Lakshya Sen, H.S. Prannoy, R. Satwiksairaj, Chirag Shetty, Dhruv Kapila, M.R. Arjun, K. Sathish Kumar. Women: P.V. Sindhu, Malvika Bansod, Gayatri Gopichand, Treesa Jolly, Ashwini Ponnappa, Tanisha Crasto and Adya Variyath.

Haaland 'confident' over outcome of Man City charges after signing new deal

FOOTBALL

Agence France-Presse

PARIS

Erling Haaland said on Tuesday that he needed no reassurances from Manchester City over the outcome of a major disciplinary case hanging over the club before signing a new record deal to stay at the Etihad Stadium until 2034.

“No, I haven't thought of that or anything. I am confident that the club knows what it is doing and I really don't think I should speak too much about this,” Haaland said.

The Premier League champion is awaiting the verdict following a hearing related to 115 alleged breaches of financial rules.

City strongly denies any wrongdoing, but faces severe sanctions if found guilty, including potentially being relegated from the top flight of English football.

It stands accused of 80 breaches of financial rules between 2009 and 2018, plus a further 35 of failing to cooperate with a Pre-



No worry: Haaland says he needs no reassurance from City over the outcome of a major disciplinary case hanging over the club. AFP

“I think it is a really good sign. Of course it is a bit unusual, it is not normal and that is also something I like. It felt good for both parties and in the end it was an easy choice,” Haaland said of the new deal, which will take him up to the age of 34. “I am super happy with my choice and I am looking forward to spending many years in Manchester and that is really it.”

HFC needs to address defensive shortcomings

Sports Bureau

Bottom-placed Hyderabad FC will take on fourth-placed Jamshedpur FC in the Indian Super League (ISL) at the G.M.C. Balayogi Athletic Stadium here on Thursday.

Former champion Hyderabad has 10 points from 16 matches while Jamshedpur has 28 from 15 games.

The two teams have played 11 matches with Jamshedpur winning six, four ending in a draw and Hyderabad winning one contest.

If it wins, Jamshedpur will displace second-placed FC Goa (30), but the main area of concern for the team will be a vulnerable defence against long-range strikes.

Jordan Murray top-scored for Jamshedpur with five strikes while Javi Hernandez and Javier Siverio have netted four times each.

On the other hand, Hyderabad needs to address its defensive shortcomings, having conceded multiple goals in three of the last four meetings with Jamshedpur.

Shubhankar excited to play International Series at home

The Indian pro says he has made equipment changes but not much to his game and is working on the basics and trying to solidify them; feels that at the DLF it is not about hitting it long

GOLF

Kamesh Srinivasan

NEW DELHI

Shubhankar Sharma is one of the bright young golfers in the country, and the 28-year-old Olympian is excited about participating in the \$2 million International Series event to be played at the DLF Golf and Country Club from January 30.

Speaking to the media online after a practice session at the \$2.5M Ras Al Khaimah championship in UAE, Shubhankar said that he was "looking forward to coming and play in front of home fans" in a star-studded field.

"This is my second tournament after Dubai last week. There is no better preparation than competing in tournaments. It is amazing to see Indian golf grow to this level that we will have stars like Bryson DeChambeau, Joaquin Niemann, Anirban Lahiri and many more in an event at home."

"I remember watching Vijay Singh and Adam Scott as a youngster. Indian Open is huge, but this field is stronger," said Shubhankar, who turned professional a teenager in 2013.

"I played the International Series last season in Riyadh. The competition level was amazing," he said.

Conceding that he would not be able to match long-hitters any time soon,



Targeting success: Shubhankar, a two-time champion on the European circuit, says his goal is to do well in Gurugram and win the title. GETTY IMAGES

Shubhankar pointed out that the DLF in Gurugram was not a "bomber's course".

"At the DLF, it is not about hitting it long. Strategising is important," he said, suggesting that sharpening the short game and understanding the course was the key to excel.

The Chandigarh golfer, who lives close to the DLF course in Gurugram for the last few years, said that he was very happy to be playing

ing in front of friends and family, as it worked in his favour.

A two time champion on the European circuit, Shubhankar had made 24 cuts out of 30 events last year. He said that the goal was to do well on Sunday afternoon and win the title.

"The quality of golf is quite high. But I have been making mistakes and losing momentum. I have made some equipment changes, and have newer

model irons of the same brand.

"There is not much to change in the game. I am working on the basics and trying to solidify them," he said.

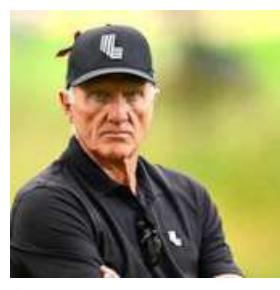
Quite used to competing in cold conditions in Europe, Shubhankar said that the winter chill during the event in Gurugram would not be much of a challenge, even though the course itself could be playing a bit different.

Will win debate on LIV Golf with Woods, McIlroy: Norman

Associated Press

Greg Norman says he would win a debate with Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy on how Saudi-funded LIV Golf has helped them financially.

Woods and McIlroy were both critical of Norman's combative tone when LIV Golf launched in 2022, backed by the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia that offered enormous bonus money for players to defect to the rival league. Both players said there could be no unification with Norman still involved.



Greg Norman. FILE PHOTO

to the Player Impact Program.

"I would love them to recognise the fact that – like Tiger with his PIP money – that only came because of LIV, right?" Norman said. "So Tiger benefited from that. Rory's definitely benefited from that. I would love to sit down and talk to them about it, no question about it. Because I'm not a judgmental person and you only learn the facts and truth when you hear the other side of it. "But, yes, would I like to sit down with them? And you know what? I'd win the debate."

Hamza and Mairaj shoot into the lead

Sports Bureau

Mohd. Hamza Sheikh and Olympian Mairaj Ahmad Khan led with 49 out of 50 after two rounds of skeet in the third Digvijay Singh shotgun championship at the Madhya Pradesh Academy in Bhopal on Wednesday.

In the women's section, Olympian Raiza Dhillon led with 48, following rounds of 25 and 23.

Three more rounds will be shot over the next two days, with the top-6 making the finals after 125 birds in qualification.

There's a buzz around the HIL, says FIH Academy Educator Marriott

HOCKEY

Y.B. Sarangi
ROURKELA

After conducting three International Hockey Federation (FIH) Level-2 courses alongside the Hockey India League (HIL) at the Birsa Munda Stadium here, FIH Academy Educator Chris Marriott said the league served as an excellent platform providing scope for practical demonstration.

As Hockey India (HI) chose to invite an FIH Educator to conduct courses for Indian coaches, Marriott and three others, National women's team coach Harendra Singh, former international Vikram Kanth and Oil and Natural Gas



FIH educators Marriott and Rajdeep. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Corporation (ONGC) coach Rajdeep Singh, imparted training to 54 coaches – including former internationals P.R. Sreejesh, Bharat Chettiri and Poonam Rani.

"We've used the matches that have been going on in the evenings as learning opportunities. They've had some tasks to do around watching matches,

presenting information back to us about what they've seen.

"So developing their understanding of the game, but also their ability to analyse information, make sense of it and then present it back," said Marriott.

According to Marriott, the educators gave the participating coaches them "lots to go away and think about" and two-time Olympic bronze medalist goalkeeper Sreejesh, currently coaching the National junior side, said there was so much that he could take away even though he's coaching at a high level.

"Everyone was with the feedback that it was a great learning," said Marriott.

ACES SPORTS QUIZ

1. Indian badminton star PV Sindhu ended her title drought at the 2024 Syed Modi International Badminton Tournament in Lucknow. When was her last BWF World Tour title before this?
2. At the 2024 Paris Olympics, Manu Bhaker and Sarabjeet Singh won a bronze medal in the 10m air pistol mixed team event by defeating which country's team with a score of 16-10?
3. Who was the only Indian to be chosen as a pre-draft pick in Women's Big Bash League 2024?

Scan the QR code or visit sstar.news/SSA2025AQ to take part in the quiz and vote for your favourite stars. Top 3 winners every day will win exciting gift vouchers*.

Answer to yesterday's quiz:

1. Silver
2. Fourth
3. Lakshya Sen

Yesterday's Winners:

1. Vennela Agireddi, Visakhapatnam
2. B.Amulya Sai Rao, Hyderabad
3. Mahesh Chawla, Chennai

Amul
SPORTSTAR
ACES
2025
INDIA TRIUMPHS
#SSaces2025

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
TAMIL NADU FOREST DEPARTMENT
Thanjavur Forest Division, Pillaiyarpatti Forest Campus,
Trichy Main Road, Thanjavur - 613 403.

Invitation for Bids No: IN – TNSHORE – 435341 – CW – RFB

Project Title: Tamil Nadu: Strengthening Coastal Resilience and the Economy Project (TN-SHORE) [Project ID No. P180932].

Contract Title: Construction of International Dugong Conservation Centre at Manora, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu

The District Forest Officer, Thanjavur Forest Division on behalf of Tamil Nadu Forest Department ("the Employer") invites bids from eligible bidders for the work named above. Bids are invited under Open Competitive Bidding (OCB) - National Open Competitive Procurement. Detailed Notice of Invitation for Bids (IFB) and the Bid document for above work would be available at www.tntenders.gov.in starting from 24.01.2025 at 11.00 hours. Deadline for bid submission is 15:00 hours on 07.02.2025. All required information are provided in the bid document.

1. Offline Pre-bid Meeting will be held at 11:00 hours on 28.01.2025. All the prospective bidders are advised to participate in the Pre-bid meeting.
2. Any addendum, clarification to the bidder's queries and corrigendum etc. will be published on the www.tntenders.gov.in website and will not be published in Newspapers.
3. Bidders may contact District Forest Officer, Thanjavur Forest Division for any other information on bidding process.

District Forest Officer,
Thanjavur Forest Division

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE					
SR. NO.	NAME OF BOARD/ CORP/ AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT /END (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP/AUTH
1	UHBVN	TRUCK MOUNTED MULTIFUNCTION MACHINE (CRANE PER NICAM'S TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION,) FOR UHBVN.	21.01.2025 10.02.2025	4.07 CRORES	www.hbvn.org.in TENDER NO-04/ UH/IMMXEN/ MM QII/2125 dt. 21.01.2025 2025_HBC_424997_1
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in					
SAMVAD-13/2025/40/31965/I/199/7					

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT E-Procurement Notice INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)-

The Executive Engineer, Bhoranj Division HP-PWD, Bhoranj on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the Item rate/ Percentage rate bids, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the work as per detail given below:-

Sr.No. 1
Name of Work:- Seismic Vulnerability Assessment & Retrofit of Health / lifelines Building in Himachal Government Senior Sec. School Bherai Unit-Hamirpur (HP).
Estimated cost (In Rs.)-> 43,50,575.00, Earnest Money (In Rs.) -> 87000.00, Cost of Tender- 2000.00, Starting date for downloading Bid:- 27-01-2025, Deadline for submission of Bid:-02-02-2025.

The bidders are advised to note all details of tenders, changes, if any i.e. date, amount etc. from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in.

- If opening day is a holiday, the tenders shall be opened on next working day at the same time.
- The officer inviting tender shall not be held liable for any delay due to system failure beyond its control. It is the bidder's responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

For details log on to website <https://hptenders.gov.in>. Executive Engineer, Bhoranj Division, HPPWD Bhoranj, Pin Code 176045 Tel. No. 01972-266099 e-mail : epwd-bhoranj-hp@gov.in For and on behalf of Governor of HP.

HP / 4667/24-25 HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer Bilaspur Division No.2, HP-PWD, Bilaspur on behalf of Governor of H.P re-invites the percentage rate bids, in electronic tendering system, from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the work as detailed in the table.

Sr.No. 1
Name of Work:- Periodical Maintenance on CMM/H-205 (Old NH-21) 860/0 to 1270/0 SH-Providing and laying 50mm thick dense graded Bitumen Macadam and 30mm thick Bitumen concrete Providing and marking of center line, edge line, Zebra crossing in Km.100/310 to 114/121/50 and 118/370 to 121/973).
Estimated cost:-Rs.19,19,500/- Cost of tender form:- Rs.5000/- Deadline for submission of Bid:-01.02.2025, Time Period:- Six Months.

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in.

Executive Engineer Bilaspur Divn.No.2, HP-PWD, Bilaspur Tel: 01978-222551 e-mail : ee-bil2-hp@gov.in

On behalf of Governor of Himachal Prades HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

HP / 4666/24-25

The DEMON KINGDOM
was OVERTHROWN with
“YUVAGALAM” combined with
grandfather's perseverance and
father's political acumen,
Achieved above ONE CRORE
membership in TDP FAMILY
and have GIFTED
Sri 'Rama' Chandra Rajyam to
PEOPLE OF ANDHRA PRADESH.



With lots of love..
Atluri Narayana Rao
Convener, NTR Literature Committee,
Hon'ble President, AP Sadhu Parishad.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY BOSS



'You will see the whole range of emotions: passion, intensity, love, and that is Dortmund'

Managing director Carsten Cramer breaks down BVB's football philosophy and expresses interest in the club starting a project in 'crazy country' India

Amitabha Das Sharma

As one walks into the Signal Iduna Park in downtown Dortmund on a match day, they are certain to be greeted by the thunderous chorus of ardent fans singing one of football's most notable anthems – You'll Never Walk Alone. With around 81,000 supporters in Germany's largest stadium lending their voices to the iconic song, it creates a fantastic prelude to the duel that is about to unfold on the pitch.

The home of Borussia Dortmund (BVB), in one of the largest cities in Germany's industrially rich Ruhr Valley, is truly a sight to behold. The club's supporters, known as the Yellow Army, create an atmosphere that drives Dortmund players to always give their best on the pitch. It is one of the largest attendances among the European leagues (third-largest after Barcelona's Camp Nou and Real Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu Stadium) and serves as a great advertisement of the passion and emotion that the sport generates in Deutschland.

One needs to be part of the process to experience the frenzy that football can generate truly. Bundesliga prides itself on being the stimulus in bringing out the kind of excitement and drama on the football pitch that is unmatched across the 'Big Five' leagues. The intense rivalry among the 18 teams in the Bundesliga stems from strong regional affiliations of fans.

"Over the last five seasons, we have had more than three goals a game, which is better than any of our rivals. The Bundesliga is full of excitement and drama. You will have seen that last year in the amazing season of Bayer Leverkusen," says Tom Julian, manager international PR of Bundesliga, while hosting a group of journalists from the Asia Pacific (APRC) region.

The statement worked like a prophecy when Dortmund hosted defending champion Bayer



Leverkusen in their mid-season clash at the Signal Iduna Park on a snowy evening when the temperature dipped below freezing point. The match took place after several days of preparation by the groundsmen, who worked overtime to keep the grass fresh using special lights and heating equipment.

When the match got underway, the home side was in for a shock as Leverkusen found the opening goal within 26 seconds after the kick-off. The visitor then doubled the lead by the eighth minute.

Instead of falling silent in disbelief, the Yellow Army grew even more vocal and kept cheering for the home side to hit

back. However, Leverkusen rode on its good form to win the intense five-goal contest by the tightest of margins. Despite the result, it seemed like a football fiesta all along with the fans enjoying every moment of the contest.

"We are not obligated to win. We have to try hard for 90 minutes. That's a typical Dortmund approach about how to enjoy football. You will see the whole range of emotions: passion, intensity, love, and that is Dortmund and hopefully you will agree after tonight's game as well," said Carsten Cramer, the managing director of Borussia Dortmund.

Borussia Dortmund has one of the largest fan bases in the world but even the fans know how the club works. That is about getting the young players, the rookie players, and making them superstars," Cramer said, delving deeper into the process of the club's management philosophy.

"Dortmund is not the biggest city in Germany, it is not even a wealthy city and we are competing with clubs from London, Milan, Madrid, Barcelona, and Paris, those are big cities with big clubs. That provokes us to deliver day by day with our own creative approaches," Cramer said while insisting on the limitations of

being a public club that is run by its members.

"We will never buy and hire a superstar but we will develop the young players and will enjoy seeing the likes of Erling Haaland playing for Manchester City. Of course, we would like to keep them as long as possible. As we are not owned by the Government or by any investor, we want to spend the Euros that we earn as wisely as possible. Our business philosophy is that you, at some certain point, will have to transfer some of the players," the Dortmund MD stressed on the club's well-developed academy that produced a line of stars over the years.

The club is trying to draw international partners and sponsors and also has India on its radar. "We do have the dream (of initiating a project in India) and from our perspective, India is a crazy country. People seem to be crazily interested in sports. Maybe cricket is still your main sport but whenever someone has represented us in India, everyone feels fixed and attracted and we are considering how to do it," Carsten said, signing off.

(The writer was in Dortmund to experience "Football As It's Meant To Be" organised by Bundesliga International and Sony Sports Network, the official broadcaster for Bundesliga in India).

'In any decision we take, we ask what is important for the fan and what does the fan expect'

Amitabha Das Sharma

A fan's love for the club is the Holy Grail of German football. This resonates in the philosophy of public participation, which serves as the guiding factor for the country's top football league, the Bundesliga.

Unlike the sweeping corporatization of football across Europe and beyond, the Bundesliga presents a contrasting picture with its '50+1' ownership rule. (The rule refers to the need for members of a club to hold 50 percent, plus one more vote, of voting rights - i.e. a majority)

"We put the fans at the centre. In any decision we take, we ask what is important for the fan and what does the fan expect from the club. We are a club that wants to be very familiar. Our training sessions are public," insists Markus Aretz (in pic), Borussia Monchengladbach's managing director. This in essence is the guiding principle of the Bundesliga which the clubs are putting in practice.

"That's a philosophy which is very important for us. When a new coach comes to our club, we always tell him one thing you have to learn, training is public. Maybe there's one per week that's not public because coaches always want to do something secretly, but the rest of the training sessions are public," insists Aretz. "So there's always our members and fans watching the training. We always have families that come



and spend two, three or four days here at Borussia Park, stay at our hotel, go to the training, go to the restaurant, go to the fan shop, and make a stadium tour. That's very important for us."

Business model

Aretz is very clear about how the club wants its more than 100 thousand members to be

involved. The 50+1 rule, which was implemented in 1998, has prompted the German clubs to put the members at the centre while formulating different business models to finance their strategies.

"It is about football culture. It is even approved by the likes of ESPN and Sky, who say what you bring over or what you distribute

is by far the biggest and the best football culture in the world," said Peer Naubert, Bundesliga's international chief marketing officer. "Because we have the highest number of average stadium spectators per game, we are obviously by far the loudest, by far the most colourful league. And then we also have the 50+1 rule, making the club here very,

involved. The 50+1 rule, which was implemented in 1998, has prompted the German clubs to put the members at the centre while formulating different business models to finance their strategies.

"It is about football culture. It is even approved by the likes of ESPN and Sky, who say what you bring over or what you distribute

very unique compared to the other leagues," he added while pointing out how individuals or corporate investors are trying to overlook the fans' interest in trying to maximize profit.

"The most important pillar of the club is sporting success, but what is also very important for us is that we work with economic efficiency. We only spend the money that we earned before. We don't take any risks. That's a very old strategy, goes back to the 1960s and 70s when the club became famous and that is how we run the board nowadays," Aretz elaborates on how his club implements the rule.

"The members own the club and the club owns the company where the commercial football business is done. That's a very simple structure and we take all the decisions keeping fans at the centre," he added.

Aretz then explained the unique selling point, saying, "This area, what we call the Borussia Park, is 311,000 square meters. Everything is situated here, all the facilities including the stadium, the hotel, the merchandising, the medical centre, and the training pitches for the youth teams. This is something very unique in the Bundesliga."

Building connections

Given its solid foundations, the 124-year-old club is in the process of expanding its global footprint, which is mostly about developing overseas partnerships and

establishing its brand image. "Borussia Monchengladbach is not an average club. We are very well positioned and we have a very good brand properly positioned in the German market, and also in the international market," said Philipp Havermann, Monchengladbach's head of internationalization and brand partnership.

Footprints

The club has footprints in Switzerland, Luxembourg, Colombia, Brazil, Japan, China, Indonesia, and Singapore, Havermann informed.

"Our positioning in foreign markets is passionate football. In foreign markets, it is German football development since 1900, the Borussia way."

"We bring football as education to children through Borussia academy, it may be in the form of football camps or through assistance in creating academies," he said while insisting on developing territorial partnerships that bring profit to the club.

Will their internationalization drive bring Borussia Monchengladbach to the Indian shores? "Of course, the Indian market is prospering. It is developing and we know the importance of the Indian market for the future, for us and also for Bundesliga. But right now, for us, it is better to focus on the markets we have already tackled," Havermann said.

SCIENCE

Space telescopes stumble on rule-breaking black hole

LID-568 is a low-mass supermassive black hole that existed just 1.5 billion years after the Big Bang. An analysis of its effects on its neighbourhood has indicated that it was feeding on a surrounding cloud of matter at almost 40 times greater than what astrophysicists thought was the upper limit.

Shreejaya Karantha

An international team of researchers using NASA's James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) and the Chandra X-ray Observatory has discovered a bizarre black hole that may provide insights into the genesis and growth of supermassive black holes.

Supermassive black holes are among the most common types of black holes in the universe. Most galaxies contain a supermassive black hole at their centres. These black holes have masses ranging from millions to billions of times that of the sun. The supermassive black hole Sagittarius A*, located at the center of the Milky Way galaxy, has a mass of approximately 4.3 million solar masses.

However, scientists are not yet fully certain how these giants grow to become so big.

Beyond the upper limit

The newfound black hole, designated LID-568, is a low-mass supermassive black hole that existed just 1.5 billion years after the Big Bang. If the universe were a human, it could be said to be around eight years old at this time.

A detailed analysis of its effects on its neighbourhood indicated that the black hole was feeding on a surrounding cloud of matter at an exceptional rate – almost 40 times greater than what astrophysicists thought was the upper limit.

The study was led by International Gemini Observatory/NSF NOIRLab astronomer Hyewon Suh, and the results were published in the journal *Nature Astronomy* in November 2024.

"We first identified this unusual object through Chandra X-ray observations, as it was exceptionally bright in X-rays but completely invisible in the deepest optical and near-infrared observations, even with the Hubble Space Telescope," Suh, the lead researcher, said.

"Because it was only detected in X-rays, we couldn't determine its nature. With JWST's unparalleled sensitivity in the infrared, we were finally able to uncover this exotic object, highlighting the complementary power of these observatories," she added.

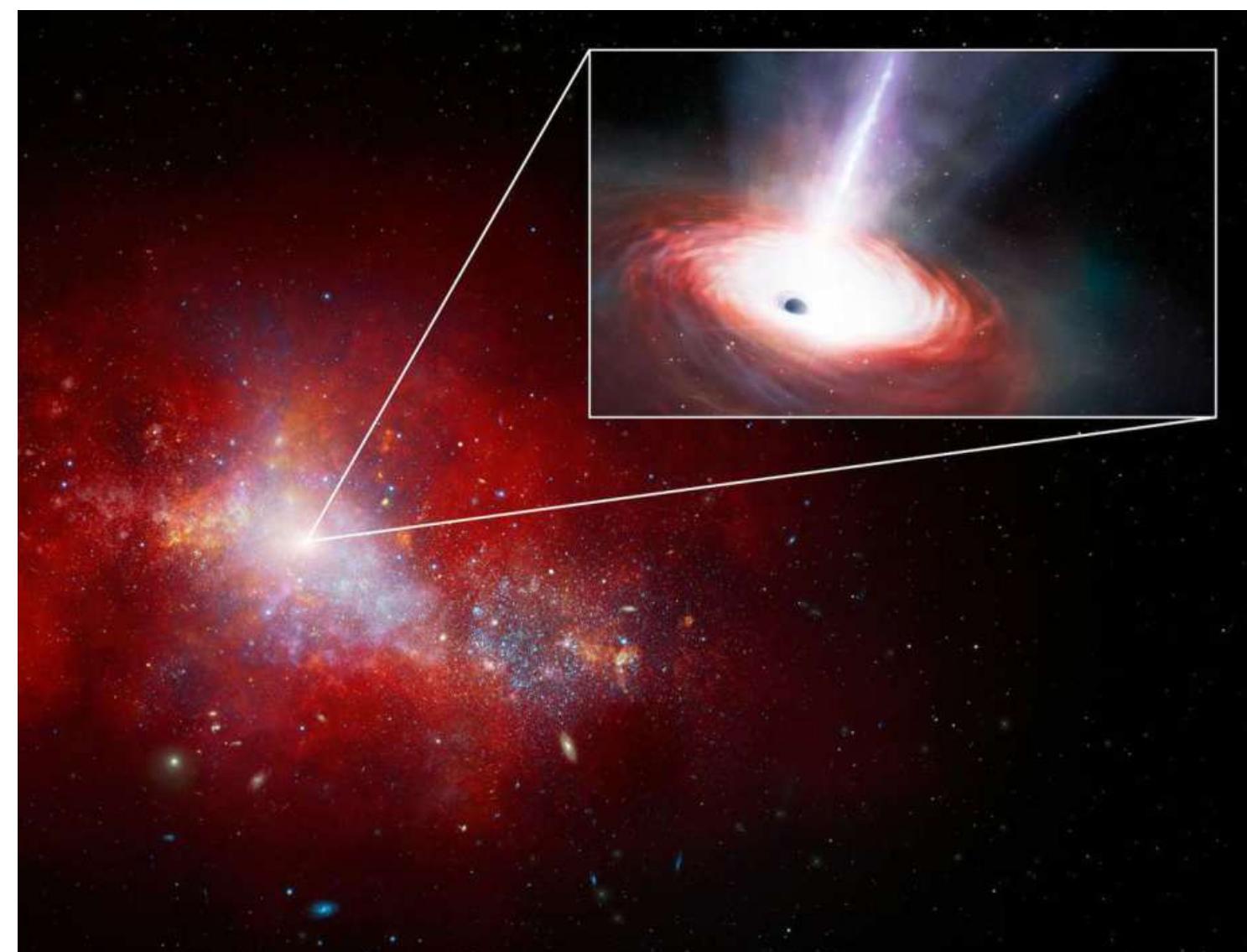
A class apart

The rate at which a black hole feeds on matter is governed by what astronomers call the Eddington limit. This limit – named after the English astronomer Arthur Stanley Eddington because he worked it out first – is also related to how brightly a black hole can shine.

Nothing can escape a black hole, of course. But when a black hole pulls surrounding matter towards itself, the infalling material becomes compressed, heats up, and emits radiation, especially X-rays.

The concept behind the Eddington limit is straightforward: as matter collects around the black hole and gets packed into the disc, it heats up and emits radiation that generates an outward pressure capable of counteracting the gravitational pull of the black hole. When this radiation pressure balances the force of gravity, the black hole will stop accreting the matter. Ergo, there is a limit on how brightly the black hole can shine.

If this limit is crossed, the scenario is called a super-Eddington accretion. This



An artist's concept of a red, early-universe dwarf galaxy that hosts the black hole LID-568 at its centre. While short-lived, this black hole's 'feast' could help astronomers explain how supermassive black holes grew so quickly in the early universe. NOIRLAB/NSF/AURA/J. DA SILVA/M. ZAMANI

is the category in which LID-568 lies.

Suh said that they measured the total light coming from the black hole and its mass using observations from Chandra and JWST's Near-Infrared Spectrograph instrument, which revealed the exceptional accretion behavior of LID-568.

Experts have hypothesised that super-Eddington black holes can exist. They have even found a few. But LID-568 has defied their expectation in two ways. First, it's much, much farther away. The most distant of these other black holes is "only" around 2.3 billion light years from earth. Second, while the known rule-breakers exceeded the Eddington limit by a factor of two or three, LID-568 has done so by a factor of roughly 40, according to Suh.

Super-Eddington episodes in black holes are expected to be short-lived, so it is also remarkable that researchers captured LID-568 in action.

Making sense of the oddball

The existence of supermassive black holes that are millions or even billions of times more massive than our sun poses a challenge to current models of black hole formation and growth. Scientists have confirmed that such black holes reside at the centres of many galaxies that should have formed when the universe was less than a billion years old. However, they can't explain how these objects came to be when the universe was so young, when there shouldn't have been enough matter for them to form.

According to some traditional models, Suh said, "supermassive black holes are thought to form from the death of the first star, i.e., light seeds with 10-100 times the mass of the sun, and/or through the direct collapse of primordial gas clouds, such as heavy seeds with 1,000-100,000 times the mass of the sun."

"However, these models lack direct observational confirmation and require sustained, continuous accretion of large amounts of matter over several hundred million years to account for the most extreme supermassive black holes observed in the early universe, which is likely difficult," she added.

The discovery of LID-568 is crucial because it suggests that large black holes could have put on a significant fraction of their weight during short-lived episodes of rapid feeding. If true, this mechanism would do away with black holes having to feed on large quantities of matter for a very long time and offer "a convincing explanation for how supermassive black holes could form so quickly, regardless of their initial seed mass," whether heavy or light.

Chasing more black holes

Suh also said there are several theories to explain how black holes can exceed the Eddington limit, including geometrically thick accretion discs, powerful black hole jets, and black-hole mergers. However, she said that her team still doesn't fully understand the exact mechanism that allowed LID-568 to feed so fast and that follow-up observations with JWST will be

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crucial to admitting or eliminating other hypotheses.

The researchers also found that the galaxy where LID-568 resided wasn't producing many new stars – the result of the black supermassive hole driving powerful streams of material outward from the centre, called outflows. These outflows could be preventing matter from accumulating in enough quantities to form stars.

To confirm this idea as well as to inform it with more data, Suh said she and her team are planning to examine similar galaxies and examine their outflows, especially those driven by very large black fast-snacking holes.

The research team is also planning to find out how long a black hole can accrue matter at a super-Eddington rate as well as what percentage of all black holes do so.

(Shreejaya Karantha is a freelance science writer and a content writer and research specialist at The Secrets of The Universe. shreejayakaranta@gmail.com)

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

The psychology of colours

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

In a person with X, stimulating one sensory pathway, like smelling petrol, evokes a response from a different pathway, like seeing a blue square. For example, people with chromesthesia, a form of X, see colours when they hear sounds. Name X.

QUESTION 2

Y is an unusual feature where a person might see colours in an image that aren't really there, i.e. a disagreement between perception and sensation. It happens when the viewer doesn't know where the source of light in an image is. Name Y.

QUESTION 3

The Kruithof curve shows colours on a graph that are pleasing to the eye. The graph is a plot between _____ on one axis and colour temperature on the other. Colours towards the plot's centre are said to resemble those from natural sources. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 4

Physical objects don't have Z but they're known to exist in a theoretical sense thanks to the mathematics used to describe all colours. One theory to explain the "invisibility" of Z is called the opponent process. What is Z referring to?

QUESTION 5

Sometimes when you expose your eyes to a particular image for more than a short duration, then take it away, your eyes continue to see the image. When

this happens in the form of a disorder, it's called palinopsia. When it happens due to natural conditions, what is it called?

Answers to January 21 quiz:

- Path of an object through spacetime – **Ans: World line**
- Device capable of sending receiving signals before they're sent – **Ans: Tachyonic antitelephone**
- Physicist who won a Nobel Prize for 1988 experiment – **Ans: Anton Zeilinger**
- Paradox examining free will in a universe with time travel – **Ans: Newcomb's paradox**
- Hugh Everett's interpretation of quantum physics – **Ans: Many-worlds interpretation**

Visual: DeLorean
First contact: ViswanadhaRao Batchu | K.N. Viswanathan | Anmol Agrawal | Sahil Agrawal | Kanad Saha

Please send in your answers to science@thehindu.co.in



Visual: A common test to check for colour vision deficiency, colloquially called colour blindness, is called the _____ test. Fill in the blank with the name of the person (shown) who invented it. CREDIT: WELLCOME IMAGES (CC BY 4.0)



The Wuhan Institute of Virology in Hubei province, China, during a visit by a WHO team tasked with investigating the origins of COVID-19 in February 2021. REUTERS

Wuhan keen to shake off pandemic label after five years

Agence France Presse

Built in just days as COVID-19 cases spiked in Wuhan in early 2020, the Huoshenshan Hospital was once celebrated as a symbol of the Chinese city's fight against the virus that first emerged there.

The hospital now stands empty, hidden behind more recently built walls – faded like most traces of the pandemic as locals move on and officials discourage discussion of it.

On January 23, 2020, with the then-unknown virus spreading, Wuhan sealed itself off for 76 days, ushering in China's zero-COVID era of strict travel and health controls and foreshadowing the global disruption yet to come.

Today, the city's bustling shopping districts and gridlocked traffic are a far cry from the empty streets and crammed emergency rooms that marked the world's first COVID lockdown.

"People are moving forward; these memories are getting fuzzier and fuzzier," Jack He, a 20-year-old university student and Wuhan local, said.

At the former site of the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, where scientists believe the virus may have crossed over from animals to humans, a light blue wall has been built to shield the market's closed stalls from view.

When AFP visited, workers were putting up Chinese New Year decorations on the windows of the market's second floor, where a warren of opticians' shops still operates.

There is nothing to mark the location's significance – in fact, there are no major memorials to the lives lost to the virus anywhere in the city.

Official commemorations of Wuhan's lockdown ordeal focus on the heroism of **Wuhan has shunned celebration of any reminders of the pandemic, and people are reluctant to get drawn into conversations about the past**

doctors and the efficiency with which the city responded to the outbreak, despite international criticism of the local government's censorship of early cases in December 2019.

The market's old produce stalls have been moved to a new development outside the city centre, where it was clear the city was still on edge about its reputation as the cradle of the pandemic.

Over a dozen vendors at the aptly named New Huanan Seafood Market refused to speak about the market's past.

The owner of one stall told AFP on condition of anonymity that "business here is not what it was before."

One of the few remaining public commemorations of the lockdown is next door to the abandoned Huoshenshan Hospital, an unassuming petrol station that doubles as an "anti-pandemic educational base."

One wall of the station was dedicated to a timeline of the lockdown, complete with discoloured photographs of President Xi Jinping visiting Wuhan in March 2020.

An employee said a small building behind the facility's convenience store housed another exhibit, but it was only open "when leaders come to visit."

But days before the fifth anniversary of the lockdown, those memories seemed far away, the city now a hive of activity.

Chen Ziyi, a 40-year-old Wuhan local, said she believed the city's increased prominence has actually had a positive impact, with more tourists visiting.

"Now everyone pays more attention to Wuhan," she said. "They say Wuhan is the city of heroes."

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