





## Goldy Brar aide claims responsibility for bomb attacks outside club in Gurugram

**The Hindu Bureau**  
GURUGRAM

Two days after a man allegedly belonging to Goldy Brar gang hurled crude bombs outside a club in Gurugram's Sector 29, a post on the social media account purportedly belonging to Rohit Godara Kapurisar, a wanted criminal, has claimed responsibility for the attack saying "it was just a small demo to open the ears".

### Post in Hindi

"Ram Ram, Jai Shri Ram to all brothers. I am Rohit Godara Bikander Goldy Brar. The bomb attack in Chandigarh a few days ago and the two bomb attacks outside two clubs in Gurugram's Sector 29 were got done by us," read the post in Hindi, adding "the gamblers, boozies, hawala traders and dance clubs earning crores of rupees daily will have to pay tax".

With hashtags Lawrence Bishnoi Group, Gogi Maan Group and Kala Rana, the post said the attacks were just a "small demo". "We can do a bigger explosion... We do what we say. Those who suck the blood of the poor and earn crores by illegal means by evading tax they all will have to make payment," the post read.

Repeated calls to Gurugram Police Commissioner and Crime Branch officers to seek their reaction went unanswered.

# Delhi govt. rolls out plan to give ₹2,100 monthly aid to women

Registration to begin today but first instalment could be credited to accounts only after Assembly poll due to election code, says Kejriwal; a ploy to mislead, AAP chief already missed earlier deadline set by him: BJP

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday announced the rollout of the Delhi government's Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman Yojana and said the monthly stipend for women aged 18 and above under the plan has been hiked to ₹2,100 from ₹1,000 proposed earlier.

However, Mr. Kejriwal said though the registration for it would begin on Friday, its first instalment could be credited into the beneficiaries' bank accounts only after the Delhi Assembly poll in February as the model code of conduct is likely to come into effect soon.

The BJP, which is Delhi's main Opposition party, termed the announcement a "ploy to mislead women", with its Delhi unit chief Narendra Sachdeva saying the AAP government had allocated ₹2,000 crore for it



AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal announcing the launch of Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman Yojana at a party programme in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

sed the September deadline set by Mr. Kejriwal for the scheme's implementation while canvassing for the Lok Sabha poll earlier this year.

The scheme was announced by the AAP government during the tabling of its budget for 2024-25 when Mr. Kejriwal was the Chief Minister. The AAP government had

and the scheme was likely to benefit around 45 lakh women, a significant number that AAP hopes will help secure another term in the poll.

Addressing party workers at the AAP headquarters, Mr. Kejriwal said the scheme's implementation was delayed as he was arrested in a "fake case" linked to the now-scraped Delhi excise policy

for 2021-22.

Mr. Kejriwal had quit as the Delhi CM in September after the Supreme Court granted him a conditional bail, barring him from visiting his office and signing official files unless it was necessary to seek approval from the Lieutenant-Governor.

"After I came back, I, along with CM Atishi, have been working to implement this scheme," he said.

### 'Burden on exchequer'

Meanwhile, in a Cabinet note accessed by *The Hindu*, the Finance Department had expressed concerns over the roll-out of the plan, saying it would impose "heavy burden" on the exchequer and may push the State's budget into deficit.

However, in the same document, Ms. Atishi disagreed with the comment, stating this scheme is crucial to support the women of Delhi.

## Taxi driver injured in Rajasthan CM convoy's mishap dies; probe on

**The Hindu Bureau**  
JAIPUR

cade, while another escort car hit the road divider. Several cars in the convoy collided with each other in the mishap.

Mr. Kumar had a resident identity card of the United Arab Emirates, where he was working as a driver. ASI Surendra Singh was hit by the vehicle and was tossed several feet high in the air. He sustained injuries on his head and died in the evening. Five other persons, including ACP Amir Hasan, are being treated for their injuries.

The police have launched a probe into the security breach. While a detailed report would be submitted soon to the State government, Pradesh Congress Committee president Govind Singh Dotasra demanded a high-level investigation into the accident which had raised serious concerns about the security protocols followed for the CM's convoy.

## 8 migrant workers stripped, paraded for 'misbehaving' with woman in Odisha

**Press Trust of India**  
ROURKELA

Eight Bengali-speaking migrant workers were on Thursday reportedly stripped and paraded on a road with their hands tied for allegedly attempting to outrage the modesty of a local woman in Odisha's Sundergarh town, police said.

The police said local residents thrashed and paraded the workers between 8.30 a.m. and 9 a.m. The victims hail from West Bengal's Murshidabad district and were working as masons in the town.

"We have registered two cases: one against 10 persons for stripping, thrashing, and parading the workers, and another

based on the woman's complaint against one of the workers," DIG Rourkela Brijesh Rai said.

In her complaint, the woman claimed that one of the workers attempted to outrage her modesty on Wednesday. When news of the incident spread, local residents attacked the house where the workers were staying, police said.

## W.B. school job: SC to decide if it will take up selection process or specific cases

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said it would consider whether to cancel the entire selection process to invalidate the appointment of 25,753 teachers and non-teaching staff in government aided schools in West Bengal or decide specific cases of wrongful employment.

A Bench, comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice

Sanjay Kumar, which is seized of 118 petitions on the issue, said it could not hear them due to paucity of time.

The Bench listed the pleas for December 19.

The CJI said the hearing would be narrowed down to consider whether to cancel the entire selection process, or be confined to hear specific ones where persons were employed wrongfully, adding the issue should not be complicated.

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## IN BRIEF



## Ahead of PM's visit, U.P. CM reviews Kumbh preparations

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Prayagraj visit on December 13, Uttar Pradesh's Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday reviewed the preparations for Maha Kumbh Mela. In line with the CM's vision, special arrangements are being made to enhance the safety and comfort of female devotees during the grand event, an official statement said. Organised every 12 years, the Maha Kumbh will be held from January 13 to February 26 in Prayagraj. Over 40 crore people are expected to attend the mela, making it a record-breaking event. PTI

## Boy brought out of borewell in Rajasthan, declared dead

Aryan, 5, who fell into a 150-feet deep borewell in Rajasthan's Dausa on Monday, was brought out on Wednesday night after a 56-hour-long operation. However, he was declared dead at a hospital on Thursday. "The child's post-mortem was done and the body was handed over to the family," police officer Yashwant Meena said. The hole was dug three years ago but it could never be put to use and the work never finished. An officer involved in the rescue operation said first, an attempt was made to pull the boy out by throwing a rope but it was unsuccessful. Then, a pit was dug parallel to the borewell hole to reach the boy, but that failed too. PTI

## RTI award for Kerala for exemplary performance

## The Hindu Bureau

KOCHI

Kerala has been recognised as a leader in transparency, public accountability and dissemination of information, Chief Information Commissioner Hirala Samariya said.

Speaking at the National RTI Award ceremony, where Kerala's State Information Commissioner A. A. Hakkim was presented with the award, Mr. Samariya lauded Kerala as a model State for its "exemplary performance in resolving RTI petitions efficiently and effectively."

**'Proactive promotion'**  
He said that the State's achievements in implementing social-welfare schemes, like providing pensions, and its proactive promotion of the RTI Act among the public, were laudable.

## Delhi Police identifies 32 Bangladesh nationals living 'illegally' during special drive

## The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI



There are possibilities of sending the illegal immigrants to the detention centres after the completion of the due legal process

DELHI POLICE OFFICER

Residents against using fake ID cards and the drive is strictly focused on identifying unauthorised intruders. Strict action will be taken against those found residing illegally," Mr. Gautam added.

Police teams also visited slum areas in south-east Delhi's Kalindi Kunj, Shahnur Bagh, and Jamia Nagar and held a door-to-door verification of the voter and Aadhaar cards of suspected Bangladeshi immigrants, the sources said.

"During the operation, the documents of 32 individuals were collected by the officers for further verification. The officers warned

A senior police officer said a record of the inspection was being maintained and would be sent to the Foreigners Regional Registration Office to conduct a proper investigation.

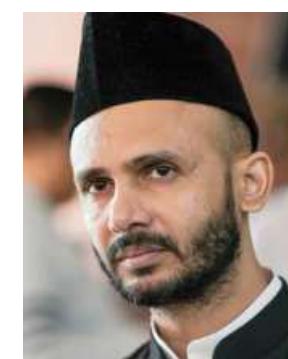
There are possibilities of sending the illegal immigrants to the detention centres after the completion of the due legal process, the officer said. "Besides identifications, we are also checking the police records to know if any suspect was involved in criminal activity," the officer added.

Last week, a delegation of Ulemas and Muslim leaders from Dargah Hazrat Nizamuddin met Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena and expressed concern over the attacks on minorities in Bangladesh and demanded stringent action against infiltrators residing in the national capital.

## Opposition accuses U.P. govt. of targeting Sambhal MP after norms violation notice

## Mayank Kumar

LUCKNOW



Sambhal MP Zia Ur Rahman Barq. FILE PHOTO

The Opposition in Uttar Pradesh has accused the State government of deliberately targeting local Samajwadi Party (SP) MP Zia Ur Rahman Barq after the Sambhal administration issued a notice to him over constructing a house allegedly without getting requisite maps approved.

Earlier last month, Mr. Barq was named in an FIR for 'instigating' violence during the court-ordered survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal.

**'Selective targeting'**  
While the administration said the house was built in violation of rules and hence the MP was issued the notice under the Uttar Pradesh (Regulation of Building Operations) Act, 1958, Opposition parties alleged that the action smacked of selective targeting.

terrorising common people and strengthening the narrative that minorities are second-class citizens.

"This action is basically to send a signal to terrorise minorities - that if an MP can face action, what will happen to common people?" said Shah Nawaz Alam, Congress national secretary.

The notice to the local MP follows demolition of houses in the area by the Uttar Pradesh Electricity Department allegedly on encroached land. "Similar notices have been issued to others in the area as well. Further action may be taken if the violation is not addressed," said an official of the local administration.

Sambhal has remained on edge since November 19 after a local court ordered a survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid, a 500-year-old mosque.

The petitioners on the Hindu side claimed the

mosque was built after the demolition of a Hindu temple during the Mughal period.

Violence took place on November 24 during the second survey as protesters gathered near the mosque and clashed with U.P. police personnel, leading to heavy stone pelting and alleged gunshots being fired.

## FIR against locals

Police on Thursday said an FIR has been registered against some Turk community members in connection with the November 24 violence at Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal has been transferred from Moradabad to Sambhal, police said on Thursday.

The case was registered against "unidentified people" from the community under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sahita, said Sambhal Kotwali Station House Officer Anuj Kumar Tomar.

## Students complain of exposure to fumes in Ratnagiri, hospitalised

## The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

Over 50 students from Jagad Vidya Mandir school in the coastal district of Maharashtra's Ratnagiri complained on Thursday of experiencing extreme eye irritation due to release of fumes in the air from a nearby power plant and had to be admitted to nearby hospitals.

While police said the tank was in JSW Energy's Jagad Port LPG facility, the company said no such incident took place on their premises. The distance between the school and the power plant is about 2 km.

In a response filed with the Bombay Stock Exchange and National Stock

## Schoolchildren are stable and likely to be discharged on Friday, say police

Exchange as part of disclosure norms for listed entities, JSW officials in their clarification on media reports on the incident said, "JSW Energy would like to clarify that its thermal plant at Ratnagiri does not have any gas storage facility and is not involved in the recent incident of gas release as reported in the media."

A police officer with the Ratnagiri Control Room said the health of the schoolchildren is stable and they are likely to be discharged on Friday.

## Haryana to conduct elections to 34 municipal bodies in two phases, announces State CEC

## The Hindu Bureau

GURUGRAM

Haryana State Election Commissioner (CEC) Dhanpat Singh on Thursday said the election to 34 municipal bodies, including eight municipal corporations, would be conducted in two phases early next year.

Of the 34 municipal bodies, the election to 27 would be conducted before February 4, in adherence to the Punjab and Haryana High Court order on December 4, Mr. Singh, a retired IAS officer, told *The Hindu* over phone.

"The election schedule for three municipal corporations of Gurugram, Faridabad and Manesar, besides three municipal committees of Sirsa, Ambala Sadar and Pataudi-Jatoli would most likely be announced in the second week of January after the publication of final voters list on January 6," said Mr. Singh. He added that the elections to Faridabad and Gurgaon municipal corporations were due since 2022, while the election to Manesar Municipal Corporation would be held for the first time.

**Mayoral polls**  
Simultaneous by-election would be held for mayors to Sonipat and Ambala municipal corporations. The two posts fell vacant

after Sonipat mayor Nikhil Madaan and Ambala Mayor Shakti Rani were elected to the Haryana Legislative Assembly in the recently concluded poll. While Mr. Madaan was elected from Sonipat, Ms. Rani won from Kalka. Both had contested on the BJP symbol.

Mr. Singh said the election to the remaining seven municipal bodies, including five municipal corporations of Hisar, Rohtak, Panipat, Karnal and Yamuna Nagar, would be held in the second phase. He said that the delimitation process for the wards for these municipal bodies was yet to be completed causing the delay in holding polls.

## Bengaluru techie death: in-laws flee Jaunpur home; no contact from Karnataka, say U.P. police

## Press Trust of India

JAUNPUR

The mother-in-law and the brother-in-law of a techie, who was found dead in Bengaluru, fled their home in Jaunpur on Thursday, even as Uttar Pradesh Police said it was yet to receive any official communication from Karnataka.

The 34-year-old techie ended his life on Monday in Bengaluru, alleging harassment at the hands of his estranged wife and her family. A case of abetment to suicide was registered against his wife, her mother, father and uncle.

Around 1 a.m. on Thursday, the mother-in-law and her son left their home in

## Had no orders to prevent the accused from leaving their home, say police

the Khowa Mandi area here on a motorcycle and have since not returned, a police officer said.

Purported video clips on social media also showed them leaving their home around midnight.

"We are yet to receive any official communication from the Bengaluru Police over this case," Jaunpur Superintendent of Police Ajaypal Sharma said.

He said there was a routine-level of police deployment in the Khowa Mandi area as required for law

and order maintenance.

Kotwali police station in-charge Mithilesh Mishra said police had no orders to prevent them from leaving their home, or place them under house arrest.

## Harassment case

While her family lives in Jaunpur, the techie's wife stays in Delhi with her son and works there, according to her relatives. She got married in April 2019 and in 2022 she lodged an FIR against her husband and in-laws, accusing them of dowry harassment.

*Those in distress may contact Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health suicide prevention helpline: 011-40769002.*



O. Panneerselvam

## Former T.N. CM hits out at govt. over CAG reports

## The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

Former Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam on Thursday criticised the DMK government over reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India that were tabled in the Assembly recently.

**'Issues addressed'**  
Rahul Nadh, the member secretary of TNSCZMA and Director of the Department of Environment, told *The Hindu* that many issues highlighted in the CAG report had been addressed over the past six months. While surveillance remained a challenge, efforts were underway to improve monitoring through satellite images. The local CZMP maps are nearly complete. Several violations, including construction of beach houses on the

coast, had escaped detection. The report also flagged the lack of local community representatives in District-level Coastal Authority, despite being mandated under the notification.

In response, the government said that it had issued instructions to address these issues, and began reconstituting the DCZMAS. However, the audit deemed the government's explanations unsatisfactory, and called for stricter adherence to the CRZ provisions and better use of technology to identify and penalise violations.

## 'Inefficient regime'

In a statement, he said the reports had highlighted the increasing fiscal stress and losses incurred by public sector undertakings in the State.

If this was the situation, despite increasing property and vehicle tax, electricity tariff, stamp duty and registration charges, it could only mean that the government was inefficient, he added.

"The only solution to this is a change in government," he said.



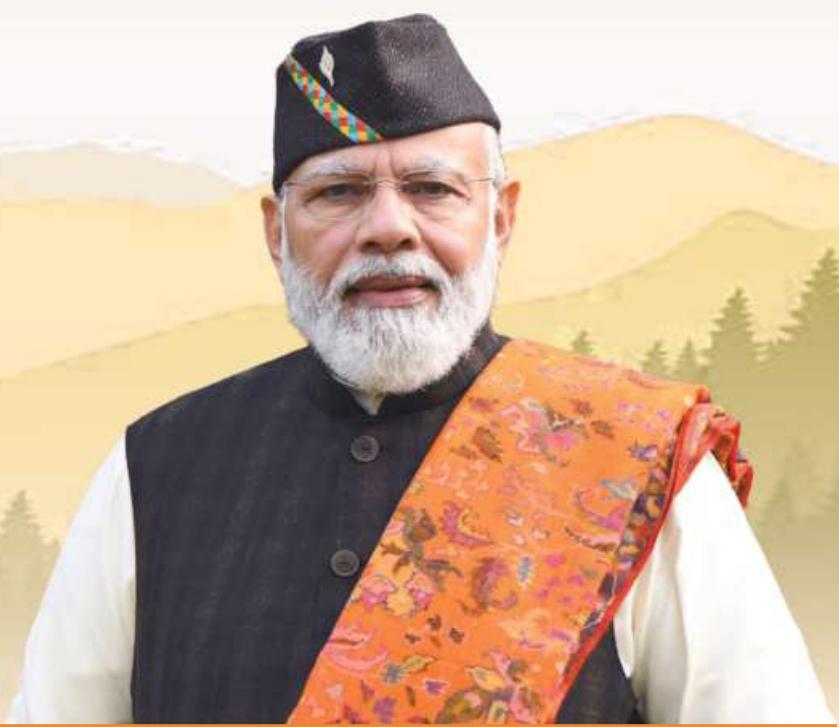
“Under the guidance of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Uttarakhand is progressing steadily on the path of development. The state government is taking necessary steps to encourage tourists to visit not only for tourism but also to experience the holy shrines. This will allow tourists to enjoy the spiritual and touristic experiences, especially during the winter season.”

**Pushkar Singh Dhami**  
Chief Minister, Uttarakhand

## Viksit Bharat, Sashakt Uttarakhand



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**Narendra Modi**  
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## Devbhoomi Uttarakhand

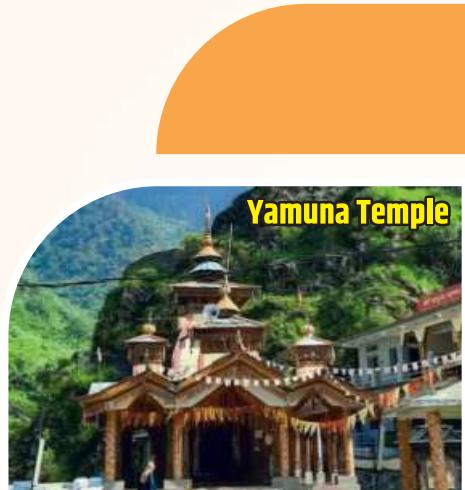
# WINTER YATRA



1

Shri Yamunotri Dham's winter stay  
**Yamuna Temple**  
Kharsali (Uttarkashi)

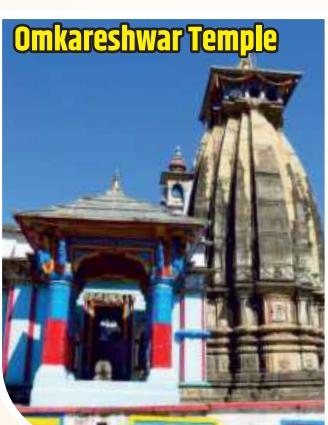
Yamunotri, the first stop of the Char Dham Yatra, is home to the Yamuna Temple. When the temple closes for the winter, the idol of Goddess Yamuna is brought to Kharsali, where she resides for the winter months, and during the winter sojourn, Maa Yamuna is worshipped in Kharsali. Here, the temple of Lord Shani Dev Ji, the brother of Yamuna Ji, is also located.



3

Shri Kedarnath Dham's winter stay  
**Omkareshwar Temple**  
Ukhimath (Rudraprayag)

The Omkareshwar Temple in Ukhimath serves as the winter home of Lord Kedarnath. During the winter months, the idol of Lord Kedarnath is brought from Kedarnath and worshiped at this temple.



2

Shri Gangotri Dham's winter stay  
**Ganga Temple**  
Mukhimath, Mukhba (Uttarkashi)

The Ganga Temple in Mukhimath, Mukhba serves as the winter abode of Goddess Ganga. When the Gangotri Temple closes for winter, the idol of Goddess Ganga is brought from Gangotri to Mukba for winter worship.

4

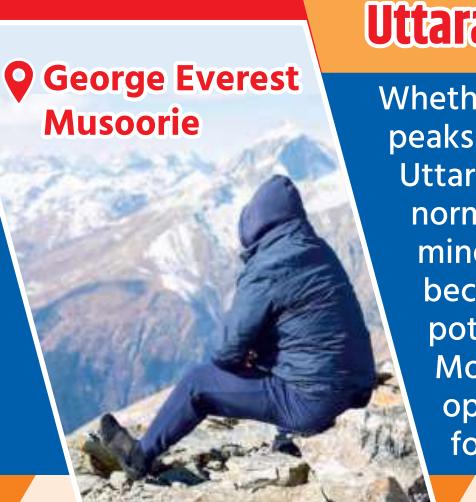
Shri Badrinath Dham's winter stay  
**Yogdhyana Badri Temple**  
Pandukeshwar (Chamoli)

When the Badrinath Temple closes for winter, the idol of Lord Badri Vishal is worshiped at the Yogdhyana Badri Temple in Pandukeshwar. The idols of Uddhav Ji & Kuber Ji are also brought to this temple for winter worship. Additionally, Adi Guru Shankaracharya's idol is placed at the Narsingh Temple in Joshimath for the winter.

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**THE HINDU**  
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**TRIVIA QUIZ**

**DAY 13**

1. In May 2024, the Air India Express cabin crew went on strike, leading to the cancellation of around 170 flights. The strike was sparked by the dismissal of 25 employees accused of participating in a coordinated "\_\_\_\_\_ protest.

2. Which film recently surpassed Rajinikanth's "2.0" as the highest-grossing Kollywood film in China?

3. India's first center for research on conserving the endangered Gangetic river dolphin, the National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC), was set up in March 2024. In which city is it located?

**Scan QR code or visit [newsth.live/RTQPA](http://newsth.live/RTQPA) take the quiz. Top 3 winners\* every day win gift vouchers.**

**Answer to yesterday's quiz:**  
1. Andhra Pradesh  
2. Odisha  
3. Constitution

**Yesterday's Winners:**  
1. Rajeev Kumar, Noida | 2. Swapna Kandikuppa, Bangalore | 3. Srividhya.S.K, Neyveli

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RISE 07:05	SET 17:26
RISE 15:27	SET 04:42
SATURDAY, DEC. 14	
RISE 07:06	SET 17:27
RISE 16:17	SET 05:53
SUNDAY, DEC. 15	
RISE 07:07	SET 17:27
RISE 17:15	SET 07:03

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Delhi City	22	04
Safdarjung	22	04
Palam	20	06

**Delhi Palam Today**  
22°C The weather will be dry. Shallow Fog and mist will occur in cold morning. Day will be pleasant with light cool winds. Night will be cold.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
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**INSTITUTE ON MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION (IMAGE)**  
(AN AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA )  
Sripur, BHUBANESWAR-751003, Odisha  
Ph. - (0674) 2562151, Fax-2561879, E-mail: [imagebbsr@rediffmail.com](mailto:imagebbsr@rediffmail.com)

**No.5783 / IMAGE, CORRIGENDUM Dated: 11.12.2024**

**With reference to the RFP No-4516 dtd.07.10.2024 for selection of Agency for establishment of project management unit (PMU) under Rashtriya Krishi Vikash Yojana - (Cafeteria) scheme at DA&FE(O)**

The details of information relating to the important Revised dates with reference to the RFP No-4516 dtd.07.10.2024 can be downloaded from <https://agri.odisha.gov.in/> www.tendersodisha.gov.in from dtd.12.12.2024.

**Director, IMAGE**  
OIPR-01408/110172425

**जल संसाधन विभाग**  
कार्यपालक अधिकारी का कार्यालय  
बाह्य नियंत्रण प्रांगण-1, इंद्राजालुर  
अल्पकालीन निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या - 01SBD/2024-25  
(राष्ट्रीय/राजकीय स्पष्टि)  
(केवल ई-टेन्डर पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाईट [www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in](http://eproc2.bihar.gov.in) पर)  
सुन्दर पत्र

इस कार्यालय के पात्रांक 556 दिनांक 09.05.2024 द्वारा आमंत्रित अल्पकालीन निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या 01SBD / 2024-25 जिसका P.R. No 000687 (WRD) 2024-25 एवं Tender ID 61108 है तथा जो विभिन्न समाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशित हुए हैं, की वैद्यता अवधि 120 दिन वर्तीत हो जाने के कारण रद्द किया जाता है।  
उक्त सूचना [state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar](http://state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar) पर भी देखी जा सकती है। बाह्य नियंत्रण प्रांगण-1, इंद्राजालुर PR-014645 (WRD) 2024-25  
नशो से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार

**Department of public health and medical education (Govt. of Madhya Pradesh)**  
Office : 6th floor, Satpura Bhawan,  
Madhya Pradesh INDIA-462004  
Tel: 0755-2551711, Fax: 0755-2578844  
Website: [www.medicaleducation.mp.gov.in](http://www.medicaleducation.mp.gov.in),  
email:dme12001@yahoo.com

No. 885/2/YoVII/PPP/DME/2024 Bhopal, Dated 09 Dec, 24

**Notice**

**Subject : Request for Proposal for setting up to Medical College and Upgradation of District Hospital in Madhya Pradesh.**

Reference tender numbers as below:

1- Katni - Tender ID 2024\_DHS\_357952\_1  
2- Morena - Tender ID 2024\_DHS\_357952\_9  
3- Panna- Tender ID 2024\_DHS\_357952\_10  
4- Bhind- Tender ID 2024\_DHS\_357952\_4  
5- Ashok nagar- Tender ID 2024\_DHS\_363384\_1  
6- Guna - Tender ID 2024\_DHS\_363392\_1  
7- Dhar - Tender ID 2024\_DHS\_357952\_5  
8- Sidhi - Tender ID 2024\_DHS 357952\_1  
9- Betul- Tender ID 2024\_DHS 357952\_3  
10- Khargone- Tender ID 2024\_DHS 357952\_8  
11- Tikamgarh - Tender ID 2024\_DHS 357952\_6  
12- Balaghat- Tender ID 2024\_DHS 357952\_2

**Last Date of bid submission is extended till 8th Jan 2025, 5:30PM**

(Dr. Himanshu Jayswar)  
Dy. Director (Projects)

Department of Public Health and Medical Education  
Govt. of Madhya Pradesh

G20132/24

**जल संसाधन विभाग**  
कार्यपालक अधिकारी का कार्यालय  
सिंचाई प्रमणदल, वथनाहा (अस्सिया)  
अल्पकालीन पुनर्निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या- 05SSB/2024-25  
(राष्ट्रीय/राजकीय स्पष्टि)  
(केवल ई- निविदा पद्धति के अनुसार [www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in](http://eproc2.bihar.gov.in))

1. कार्य का विवरण -

क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	प्राकलित राशि (लाख रु. में)	अप्राप्ति की राशि (लाख रु. में)	परिवर्याप वित्त वित्त (लाख रु. में)	बेट्टीन को देय वित्त (सिंचाई प्रमणदल के लिए लाइन में सूचित)	कार्य समाप्ति की तिथि
संख्या	कार्य का नाम	प्राकलित राशि (लाख रु. में)	अप्राप्ति की राशि (लाख रु. में)	परिवर्याप वित्त वित्त (लाख रु. में)	बेट्टीन को देय वित्त (सिंचाई प्रमणदल के लिए लाइन में सूचित)	कार्य समाप्ति की तिथि
1	पूर्णिंगी गांवा नहर के विन्दू 118.00, विन्दू 139.00, विन्दू 164.00 पर सतीशपुर हृष्टम पाईडी सीबीटी सूचना तथा विन्दू 129.00, 140.00 एवं 167.00 पर एकआर/सीआर का पुनर्स्थापन कार्य।	939.83	18.723	10,000.00	5900.00	दिसम्बर 2024

2. विवरण दाता का नाम एवं घरता :-

कार्यपालक अधिकारी, सिंचाई प्रमणदल, वथनाहा, जिला-अस्सिया, पिन-854316  
Email id -irrigationdivisionbathnaha@gmail.com  
मोबाइल नं-7463889214

3. निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना निर्गत करने की तिथि :- दिनांक 09.12.2024

4. निविदा कागजात डाउनलोड /अपलोड करने की तिथि :- दिनांक 18.12.2024 से 21.12.2024 के अपराह्न 3 बजे तक।

5. प्री-बीड मार्टिंग का समय, स्थान एवं तिथि :- दिनांक 19.12.2024 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 AM बजे से पुर्य अमियांग, सिंचाई प्रमणदल, वथनाहा के कार्यालय में।

6. तकनीकी बीड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय :- दिनांक 21.12.2024 को अपराह्न 3.30 PM बजे केवल वेबसाईट [www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in](http://eproc2.bihar.gov.in) पर।

7. वित्तीय बीड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय :- दिनांक 21.12.2024 को अपराह्न 3.30 PM बजे केवल वेबसाईट [www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in](http://eproc2.bihar.gov.in) पर।

8. निविदा की वैद्यता की अवधि :- 120 दिन।

9. निविदा जारी की जा सकती है :- [state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar/www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in](http://state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar/www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in) पर।

10. निविदा को बदला करने की तिथि :- 2024-25

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67. निविदा को



Hema panel:  
SC nod to hear  
women who  
do not want  
prosecution

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to hear two women who have urged protection from being compelled to participate in a prosecution linked to the Justice Hema Committee report on sexual harassment and abuse in the Malayalam film industry.

Appearing before a Bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath, senior advocate Siddharth Dave, who termed his two women clients as "victims", said the State could go ahead, register cases and prosecute the perpetrators, but they wanted no part in it.

Justice Nath questioned Mr. Dave's line of arguments, asking whether a witness had any discretion to not cooperate with an investigation of a crime. "... How can you say that once a case is registered, you will not cooperate in the probe?" he asked.

Mr. Dave said the FIRs were registered on the basis of the High Court orders and not on the basis of any complaint filed by the women with the police or any investigating agency. The women had made their statements confidentially to the Justice Hema Committee years ago. "We want some amount of privacy now. We do not want our statements to come out. We cannot be compelled," Mr. Dave insisted.

The court listed the case on December 19.

# Four schoolgirls crushed under truck in Palakkad

The tragedy struck when the students were heading home after exam; people protest against unscientific road construction and claim the site has witnessed over 50 accidents in two years

**The Hindu Bureau**

PALAKKAD

**F**our Class 8 students of the Government Higher Secondary School, Karimba, were killed by a cement-laden truck that overturned at the Panayampadam curve, near Kalladikode in Kerala, on National Highway 966 on Thursday evening.

The tragedy struck around 4.15 p.m. when the girls were heading home after attending mid-term examination.

The truck lost control at the curve, careened off the road, and flipped over after hitting a tree and destroying a compound wall. The five-member student



**Fatal crash:** The lorry involved in the accident at Kalladikode in Palakkad, on Thursday. K.K. MUSTAFAH

group was caught under the overturned lorry.

One of them escaped with injuries, while four were fatally crushed under the lorry. Though they were rushed to nearby hospitals, they were declared

dead on arrival. The victims were identified as Irfana, Midha, Ridha, and Aysha. The accident site witnessed heart-wrenching scenes as the crushed bodies of the victims were pulled out from under the

lorry in front of parents. Furious at the tragedy, local people blocked the highway and protested against the unscientific road construction. They alleged that the site had witnessed over 50 accidents since the expanded highway was opened a couple of years ago.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan expressed grief over the tragedy. He said the reasons that led to the accident would be examined and action would be initiated.

Transport Minister K.B. Ganesh Kumar said the Motor Vehicle Department had not got any complaints about the frequent accidents at the curve.

# Police taking tribal farmer to hospital in handcuffs triggers row in Telangana

**The Hindu Bureau**

HYDERABAD



A video shows farmer Hirya Naik handcuffed and chained while being taken to a hospital in Sangareddy.

reddy district jail along with several other farmers who took part in the attack.

A video showing a handcuffed and chained Naik being taken to a government hospital in Sangareddy.

dy was aired by some local TV channels. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy directed senior officials to conduct an inquiry and submit a report soon. He said his government would not tolerate such incidents.

The BRS said the incident was "inhuman and heinous". By treating him as if he was a "caged animal", the authorities violated his constitutional rights, BRS leader K.T. Rama Rao said.

Panchamasali issue rocks both Houses in Karnataka amid flare-ups

**The Hindu Bureau**

BELAGAVI

There was pandemonium in both Houses of the Karnataka legislature on Thursday as the BJP demanded an inquiry into the lathi-charge on protesters seeking reclassification of reservation for the Panchamasali-Lingayat sect, in front of the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha.

The government, however, refused to budge on the issue, resulting in a walkout by BJP members in the Assembly.

In a charged debate on the issue, BJP leaders alleged that protocol had been violated, and blamed the police for "high handedness" to disperse the crowd.

Home Minister G. Parameshwara announced that there was no need for an inquiry, and no action would be initiated against any police officials.

"We have video proof to show who threw stones and footwear. All evidence is before us. No official went beyond their brief. I do not think any officer is wrong. Whoever violates law, we deal with them with strict action," the Home Minister said.

In Legislative Council, Opposition members, who sought more time for discussion on the issue, resorted to protest, forcing adjournment of the House. They withdrew their stir after Chairman Basavaraj Horatti said that he would allow the debate on Friday.

# No connection with 'co-conspirators', Sharjeel tells court

**Press Trust of India**

NEW DELHI



Delhi riots case accused Sharjeel Imam. FILE PHOTO

before the Bench, also comprising Justice Shalinder Kaur.

"There is no call for violence in any of my speeches. There are repeated calls for non-violence," he emphasised.

It was also said that Mr. Imam had raised the protest site at Shaheen Bagh, which remained non-violent throughout, and "distanted" himself from the site in January, fearing violence.

**'Bid to implicate him'**

Mr. Imam's counsel further said his client had left Delhi in the middle of January 2020 and was already in custody after his arrest by the Delhi Police on January 28 in connection with another FIR when the February 2020 meeting of

the co-accused persons took place to "change the nature of protests" on account of the visit of then U.S. President Donald Trump. Violence broke out later that month.

Mr. Imam's arrest in the case on August 25, 2020, the lawyer said, was based only on belated witness statements recorded to implicate him.

## IN BRIEF



### Court directive flouted during Dileep's Sabarimala visit: HC

Observing that the Kerala High Court directive to ensure uninterrupted movement of pilgrims in front of the Sopanam of the Sabarimala Sannidhanam was openly flouted during the visit of actor Dileep on December 5, a Division Bench on Thursday directed the Travancore Devaswom Board and the Chief Police Coordinator to take necessary steps to ensure that no pilgrims are permitted to stand in front of the Sopanam for long as in the case of the actor blocking darshan of other pilgrims. It noted that till the actor left the Sopanam, no pilgrim standing in the first row was permitted to move forward.

### Former A.P. Minister quits YSRCP; cites personal reasons

In a jolt to the YSR Congress Party, former Minister Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao resigned from the party on Thursday. Mr. Srinivas had distanced himself from the party after losing the election in June. He had served as Minister for Tourism, Culture and Youth Advancement in the Jagan Mohan Reddy Cabinet. He was dropped from the Cabinet in the reshuffle effected in April 2022. In a letter addressed to party president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, the former MLA cited personal reasons for his resignation.

### Survivor in actor rape case seeks open court hearing

The survivor in the actor rape case in Kerala has moved the court seeking to hold the hearing in the case in open court as she felt that her identity and the fact that she was sexually assaulted was "well-known to every member of this society". The petition came up on the day the trial court began the final hearing in the case. The trial is being held in camera, as mandated by the law. The prosecution case is that the actor was abducted and raped by the accused in a moving car on February 17, 2017.

# No power to monitor quota execution by other Ministries, departments: DoPT

**Abhinav Lakshman**

NEW DELHI

The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has clarified that it had no "power of superintendence" over other Ministries and departments to monitor the implementation of the reservation policy for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, and the Other Backward Classes.

The stand of the DoPT, which comes under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, was made clear in an action-taken report tabled in Parliament on December 6 by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Welfare

of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. This comes within weeks of the DoPT dropping data on reservation across Central Ministries and departments in its latest annual report - a first in at least two decades.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi holds charge of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

**Surprise checks**  
The report discusses the action taken by the government on issues raised by the House panel in its 25th report on the Ministry's role in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of the reservation policy.

On the panel's recommendation that it should conduct random surprise roster-checking, the DoPT has cited the Transaction of Business Rules and Allocation of Business Rules to say, "All departments/Ministries are equal, and the DoPT has no power of superintendence over other Ministries to monitor the implementation of reservation policy."

It added that "keeping in view the large structure of the government", it may not be possible for any single authority to monitor implementation of reservation throughout. And so, liaison officers had been mandated for the purpose, it said.

In its comments, the

parliamentary committee, headed by BJP MP Faggan Singh Kulaste, expressed dissatisfaction at the "self-satisfied stance taken by the Ministry/DoPT". In the section on liaison officers, the committee tore into the "claim of the DoPT that they are well-trained and efficient enough to watch over implementation of reservation policy".

**'Unable to respond'**  
It said its interactions with these officers across organisations, Ministries and departments had shown that they were "not able to respond to simple queries with respect to vacancies for SCs/STs, status of reservation rosters, lapses, if any, etc."

# Assembly debates Shivakumar's 'kick the door' remark

**The Hindu Bureau**

BELAGAVI



Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar's remarks that the Ministerial post did not come to him on a platter even in the Cabinet of S.M. Krishna, though he was his trusted lieutenant and that he got the post by "kicking the door", paved the way for a speculative debate in the Legislative Assembly on Thursday with the Opposition asking him when he is going to "kick the door" now to become the CM.

Responding to this, Mr. Shivakumar said, "If I tell you what my astrologer

has told me, you will be shocked. Over 30 MLAs from the BJP may switch political sides." To this, Leader of the Opposition R. Ashok remarked, "It could be an indication that you may join the BJP and they would be supporting you."

# New sports utility vehicle catches fire during high-speed stunt in Kerala's Kasaragod

**The Hindu Bureau**

KASARAGOD

A brand new sports utility vehicle caught fire and was completely destroyed during a high-speed stunt session at a ground in Kumbala Pachambala in Kasaragod on Thursday.

The incident occurred when a group of youth were practising stunts for creating social media reels. None was injured.

The vehicle, reportedly purchased by a woman from Hosankadi, was being driven recklessly around the playground when smoke began to rise from the bonnet. Within moments, the vehicle caught



A brand new sports utility vehicle that caught fire at a ground in Kasaragod on Thursday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

fire. Firefighters rushed to the scene and extinguished the blaze, but the vehicle was completely destroyed. According to Kumbala

Station House Officer K.P. Vinod Kumar, no complaint has been filed yet, but investigation is under way.

# Immigrant worker from Kuwait confesses to killing daughter's 'molester' in A.P.

**K. Umashanker**

RAJAMPETA

An immigrant worker from Kuwait visited Annamaya district in Andhra Pradesh on Saturday allegedly to kill a 59-year-old physically challenged man accused of molesting his daughter.

The immigrant worker was from Kothamangampeta village. The police got to know about the crime after he released a video message on a social media platform, taking responsibility for the murder.

In the video, he said he had committed the crime as the police did not take action on the complaint filed by the girl's mother.

**The police came to know about the crime after the accused released a video message on social media**

Investigation revealed that the accused, along with his wife, had left for Kuwait, leaving behind their 12-year-old daughter under the care of his wife's younger sister and her husband, whose father allegedly molested the girl.

After the girl narrated the incident to her mother in Kuwait, the latter rushed to the village and questioned her sister about the

same and filed a complaint with the police.

**Police issue warning**  
The police later issued a warning to the molester. Irked over the development, the girl's father visited the village and killed the accused with an iron rod, and left for Kuwait.

The police, who rushed to the scene of crime, found no clues, and registered it as a "suspicious death".

On Wednesday night, the accused released a video message from Kuwait taking responsibility for the murder. He also stated that he would surrender to the police.

## Soren govt. steps in to help 47 workers stuck in Cameroon

**Amit Bhelari**

PATNA

A group of 47 migrant workers from Jharkhand, who are allegedly trapped in Cameroon, have received partial payment of their wages after an intervention by Chief Minister Hemant Soren.



Hemant Soren had intervened in July 2024 to help 27 workers return safely. HEMANT SOREN-X

Taking note of a complaint that the workers had not been paid for three months, the CM also directed Labour Commissioner Sanjeev Kumar Basera to register an FIR against the employers and middlemen who sent them to the central African country in a fraudulent manner.

The FIR says that the workers were sent to Cameroon without registering them as migrant labourers under the Inter-State Migrant Workers (Regulation of Employment and Service Conditions) Act, 1979, and without obtaining the requisite license.

The workers, employed by M/S Transrail Lighting Limited in Cameroon, went to the African nation in August 2024. They have complained that their salary is pending for three

months, and have sought help to return to India.

Mr. Soren directed the State Migrant Control Room to take immediate action, after which it contacted the workers and the company. Transrail Lighting then said that the workers have been paid \$100 per month, and that the balance amount will be transferred to their Indian accounts.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Jharkhand Joint Labour Commissioner Rajesh Prasad said, "The workers have confirmed payment and we have asked the company to submit a copy of the contract, salary payment information and other documents."

In July 2024, Mr. Soren had intervened to ensure that 27 workers stranded in Cameroon returned safely.

## Congress declares first list of 21 candidates for Delhi poll

Sandeep Dikshit in fray from New Delhi, Devender Yadav from Badli; BJP dares Congress to contest alone and not 'run away' from fight at the last minute by forging alliance with AAP

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday released its first list of 21 candidates for the Delhi Assembly election due in February next year.

While Delhi Congress chief Devender Yadav has been named the party's candidate from Badli, former Lok Sabha member and son of three-time Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, Sandeep Dikshit, has been fielded from New Delhi – a constituency currently represented by Aam Aadmi Party national convener and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

The names were finalized in a meeting of the party's Central Election Committee at the All India Congress headquarters. It was attended by Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, senior leader and former party president Rahul Gandhi, party general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal, and Mr. Yadav, among others.



**Poll position:** Congress CEC meeting under way at the AICC headquarters in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

Former Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar will be in the fray from Patparganj while former Minister Haroon Yusuf has been fielded from Ballimaran.

### Others in fray

Among others, former Lok Sabha MP Jai Prakash Agarwal's son Mudit Agarwal will fight the poll from Chandni Chowk, Aruna Kumari from Narela, Abhishek Dutt from Kasturba Nagar, and Ragini Nayak from Wazirpur.

Speaking after the meeting, Mr. Yadav said the list is a mix of experienced leaders and new faces. "Every section of so-

cieties has found representation in this list as it includes names of women and young candidates. We have come up with this list after discussions with all stakeholders," Mr. Yadav said, adding that the second list will be released soon. Many senior leaders, he said, will be contesting the upcoming election to revive the party's fortunes in the Capital, where it has not been able to win a single seat in the Assembly poll since 2015. It was voted out in 2013 after being in power from 1998 to 2013 under the leadership of Sheila Dikshit.

The list was declared

amid speculation of a possible tie-up between the Congress and its INDIA bloc partner Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). However, the Delhi Congress leadership and AAP have repeatedly said there will be no such alliance between the two parties in the Delhi poll. AAP has already released two lists of candidates for the election. The BJP, however, is yet to release any list.

**'Nothing unexpected'** Following the announcement by the Congress, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said there was nothing unexpected in the list of candidates. "The experience of the 2013 Assembly poll and the Lok Sabha election held earlier this year shows that the Congress joins hands with AAP at the last minute. We hope the Congress will contest the election and won't run away by forming an alliance with AAP," he said.

The Congress and AAP had fought the Lok Sabha poll in a 4-3 seat arrangement in Delhi.

## Ensure transparency in voter list revision, EC tells its Delhi officials

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday told its poll officials in Delhi to ensure the revision of electoral rolls as per statutory provisions, and with the involvement of political parties, to ensure "fullest transparency" in the process, according to sources.

The direction was issued at a meeting with Delhi poll officials, a day after a delegation of the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) met Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar, urging him to "safeguard the integrity of the electoral process" by disallowing further deletion of voters ahead of the Delhi Assembly poll.

AAP has been raising the issue for quite some time, with its leaders alleging that names of voters are being deleted from electoral rolls in the party strongholds at the "behest of the BJP", a charge denied by the Delhi's main Opposition party.

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<b>Two cover System (Only through GoK KPP Portal)</b>		
The Executive Engineer, Pulikeshinagar Division, BBMP invites tenders from eligible contractors registered in BBMP or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES / National Highway or any State Govt. Organisations for the following works.		
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1	Additional Works to Anganwadi centre in Ashoknagar in Ward No. 70 (Old Ward No. 31) Kushalnagar (Block No. 26-2) (ST Category Works)	100.00 75,000/-
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**Calendar of Events:** (1) Tender documents may be downloaded from KPP Portal <https://kpp.karnataka.gov.in> from 18.12.2024, 16.00 hrs. (2) Date of Pre-bid Meeting at the above office : 21.12.2024 at 15.00 hrs. (3) Last date for submission of tenders: on or before 30.12.2024, 16.00 hrs. (4) Date of opening of Technical bids: 31.12.2024 at 16.30 hrs. if possible or next working day. Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours or from KPP Portal <https://kpp.karnataka.gov.in>

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# SPOTLIGHT



Patiala House Courts in New Delhi. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

# The knotty promise of SECTION 69

As India enforces the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the new set of criminal laws that replace the Indian Penal Code, Section 69 faces questioning from legal eyes for its gender bias, potential misuse, and implications on modern relationships, finds Soibam Rocky Singh

**O**n July 31, a 25-year-old woman from Ramgarh, Jharkhand, filed an FIR accusing a man of engaging in a sexual relationship with her under the pretence of marriage. The woman claimed in her FIR that the man, 26, who she had known from college, had come home on multiple occasions and expressed the wish to marry her. In one instance, he allegedly told her mother explicitly not to consider any marriage proposals for her, as he intended to marry her himself.

The woman stated in her first information report (FIR) that she was introduced to his mother, who allegedly supported their union. She claimed that the man and his mother "backtracked on their commitments". She was therefore filing a case under Section 69 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the new set of criminal laws that replaces the colonial-era Indian Penal Code (IPC). While the trial is still pending, the man was granted bail by a local court in October.

Section 69 of the BNS, criminalises "sexual intercourse by employing deceitful means" and cites the "promise to marry...a woman without any intention of fulfilling the same", as grounds for imprisonment up to 10 years and the possibility of a fine. While it is not treated as rape, it is considered "inducement" and also applies to "false promise of employment or promotion, or marrying by suppressing identity".

There are several cases in court that use Section 69 in their FIRs, opening the doors to public and legal discourse around it. Before the BNS came into being, up to 40% of all rape case allegations pertained to 'friend', 'live in partners on pretext of marriage', and 'separated husband', going by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data between 2016 and 2022.

On December 5, the Gauhati High Court granted bail to a man after he was arrested when a woman claimed that she and the man had been in a relationship for nine years, during which period, they engaged in physical relationship regularly. The man also allegedly promised her to marry. However, she found out that he had become engaged to another women. When she asked for an explanation, the man allegedly cited parental pressure to marry the woman.

"It is a settled position of law that a simple promise to marry without anything more does not give rise to the concept of misconception of fact. Therefore, under the given circumstances, the petitioner does not deserve to be detained in custody," the High Court said.

#### Based on the past

Prior to the enactment of the BNS, such cases were

registered under Section 376(2)(n) (commits rape repeatedly on the same woman) along with Section 90 (consent known to be given under fear or misconception), says Advocate K.S. Nanda, who represented the accused man in Jharkhand. Effectively, the two IPC Sections now form the base of Section 69.

Ravi Kant, advocate and country head of the Access to Justice Project, an international non-profit offering pro bono services, explains the difference between the previous law under IPC and the new provision in the BNS. "This is a new offence because they have used words such as 'deceitful means', 'inducement', 'false promise'. This is not rape," he clarifies.

Section 69 comes within Chapter 5 of the BNS: 'Offences Against Woman and Child', under "sexual offences". The need for this Section, says Kant, was "because such cases were reported a lot in the courts during the IPC time".

Another difference is that earlier, if a relationship lasted several years, and the woman claimed she was cheated on the pretext of marriage, the court typically dismissed such cases, he says. "It was reasoned that a long-term relationship implied mutual consent and understanding, making fraud difficult to substantiate." Now, even if the relationship is consensual, it is treated as an offence because it is taken as a false promise or a deception.

#### Gender biased

Deepika Narayan Bhardwaj, a journalist, filmmaker, and activist, calls the new law "inherently gender biased and discriminatory" with the law suggesting that women do not have agency in decisions around sexual matters. On January 10 this year, she had started an online petition on Change.org to repeal Section 69 of the BNS, which has since garnered over 60,000 signatures.

Her contention in the petition is that "a consensual sexual relationship made on promise of marriage will be a crime only if a man reneges from it and not a woman".

The petition also talks about the power equation, where "the law presumes a woman cannot be in position of power to induce a man into sex by false promise of job or promotion". She called the law "extremely regressive" and also said it "completely discards the concept of will and consent" around sexual matters.

Since Section 69 is a recent addition, Bhardwaj uses past data recorded under Section 376 (rape) for context and comparison. Until 2015, the NCRB that compiles a yearly compendium of crimes across India in 'Offenders Relation to Victims'

of Rape' category under the 'Crime Against Women' chapter, the relationship between the accused and the survivor in rape cases was broadly categorised as a 'family member', 'neighbour', or 'stranger'. However, the growing number of cases involving 'false promises of marriage' led the NCRB to refine its classifications.

In 2016, specific subcategories were introduced under the 'Offenders Relation to Victims of Rape', including 'friend', 'live in partners on pretext of marriage', and 'separated husband'.

NCRB data further reveals that the average conviction rate for all rape cases between 2016 and 2022 stood at 29.71%. However, the data does not include a sub-classification of conviction rates under the 'Offenders Relation to Victims of Rape' category. This makes it challenging to determine conviction trends specific to cases involving false promises of marriage or similar allegations.

#### Parliamentary report

The report no. 246 of the Rajya Sabha on the BNS, released by the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs on November 12 last year, six months before the

BNS came into force, had cautioned against reinforcing gender stereotypes.

According to the report, it was difficult to prove whether a promise to marry had actually been made. It also said "intentions can change over time", alluding to the very nature of relationships.

The report stated that "criminalising a promise to marry" can intrude into an individual's right to privacy and autonomy. It said that "defining what constitutes a legally binding promise to marry can be vague and open to interpretation", which could lead to "inconsistencies in enforcement and judgments". Also, a verbal intention to marry could be a challenge when it came to evidence collection.

#### Differing court views

On November 26, the Supreme Court flagged a "worrying trend" of criminalising long-term consensual relationships after they turn sour. "If criminality is to be attached to such prolonged physical relationship at a very belated stage, it can lead to serious consequences," the Bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and N. Kotiswar Singh said, while quashing an FIR against a man accused of rape by a woman who was in a relationship with him for over nine years, by her own account.

In another judgment, the Gujarat High Court on September 19 commented: "In every case where a man fails to marry a woman despite a promise made to her, [he] cannot be held guilty for committing the offence of rape."

The High Court's ruling came while quashing a February 2019 FIR for rape filed against a man, who had entered into a physical relationship with

a woman on the promise of marriage. Cases registered before the BNS came into force are being tried on the old IPC. The woman in her FIR complaint alleged that she got pregnant and when she informed the man, he reneged on his promise.

During the pendency of the trial, a baby boy was born. However, when the DNA samples of the accused and the child were tested, it was proven that the accused was not the biological father. Meanwhile, the woman got married to another person and didn't show up for the court proceeding again.

"He can only be held guilty if it is proved that the promise to marry was given with no intention to honour it and also that was the only reason due to which the woman agreed to have a sexual relationship," the High Court said, adding that "cases of consensual sexual relationship being later converted into allegations of rape are rapidly increasing".

On the other hand, in a separate case, the Kerla High Court in October declined to quash the criminal proceedings against a priest accused of raping a woman after promising to marry her. Dismissing the plea of the priest, the High Court observed that prima facie, the allegations warranted a trial, and that there was no reason to close the proceedings earlier.

Supporting the new law, advocate Gaurav Dadeja, Partner at law firm Phoenix Legal, in Delhi, says, "Section 69 of the BNS addresses the gaps and ambiguities in the previous law concerning sexual intercourse obtained under false pretences such as promises of marriage or other deceitful means."

"The definition of rape revolves around the 'consent' of the woman, and courts have consistently held that sexual intercourse based on a false promise of marriage, where there was no genuine intent from the outset, falls within the scope of rape. By introducing Section 69, the BNS explicitly criminalises such acts and provides clear punishment for them," he explains.

The law is protective to women who operate in a male-dominated, patriarchal society, where marriage for women is often seen as a way of attaining personhood. Many women are consistently told in their childhood years that they belong in another home – that of their husband's and in-laws'.

Dadeja says the law broadens the legal framework by introducing the concept of sexual intercourse through deceitful means. "Moreover, it acknowledges that coercion is not limited to physical force, but can also be psychological or emotional – an aspect not explicitly addressed under the earlier law," he says.

#### PIL in Kerala HC

In September, a public interest litigation (PIL) was filed before the Kerala High Court challenging the constitutional validity of Section 69 of the BNS. The plea by a lawyer practising in the courts of Kerala contended that "the Section is derogatory and misogynistic to the extent that it views women as naive, gullible and incapable of making decisions pertaining to their life". The plea also contends that the Section would lead to "serious issues for people who are in live-in relationships and people in relationships in the nature of marriage".

"By omitting to include the LGBTQ community, it is violative of the equal protection clause. Further, it penalises a very basic human emotion, the right to have sexual union, a facet protected Under Article 21 of the Constitution," the plea stated. The High Court sought a response from the Central government on the issue.



This is a new offence because they have used words such as 'deceitful means', 'inducement', 'false promise'. This is not rape

RAVI KANT  
Advocate and  
country head,  
Access to Justice  
Project



The law presumes a woman cannot be in position of power to induce a man into sex by false promise of job or promotion

DEEPIKA NARAYAN  
BHARDWAJ  
Journalist, filmmaker, and activist



# Raj rules the heart

**As the centenary** celebrations of Raj Kapoor begin, a look at the music and motifs that define his cinema

Anuj Kumar  
anuj.kumar@thehindu.co.in

In the cusp of celebrating Raj Kapoor's centenary year, while much is being written about the man, his creative process remains unexplored. In his landscape, melodic strands of sound preceded the mise-en-scene. For him, the entire film was like an opera, where the plot pivoted around music. Instead of technical jiggery, he would tie the whole experience to one *sur* (pitch/tone) and establish a rhythmic bond with the audience.

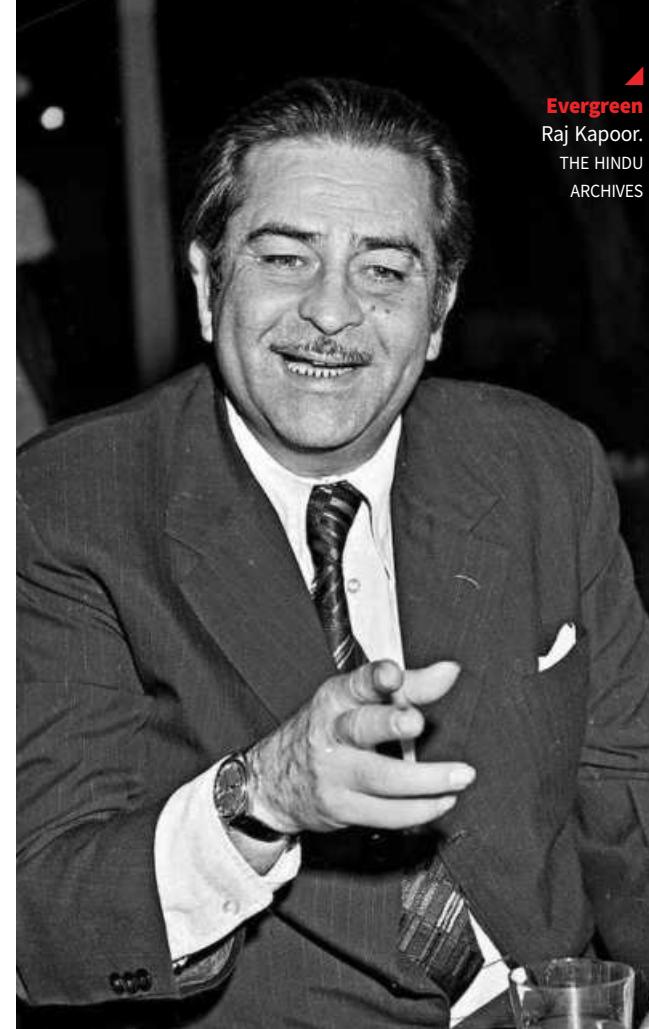
Film critic Jaiprakash Choukse, who was close to the Kapoor family, narrates an incident in his book on the filmmaker's creative process. After *Jaagte Raho* (1956) tanked at the box office and Nargis moved on in her life, RK Films was going through a rough phase. In such times, when Raj Kapoor decided to mount *Jis Desh Main Ganga Behti Hai* (1960), his trusted collaborators Shankar-Jaikishan, Shailendra, and Mukesh were shocked that even in this low phase, he had picked the story of dacoit reform which had little

scope for melody. But Raj narrated the story with 11 song situations. When dacoits ask the protagonist Raju to introduce himself, he breaks into 'Mera naam Raju', laced with everyday yet unique sounds that define his village.

In another popular song from the film, 'Hum bhi hain, tum bhi ho, dono hain aamne samne', the dreaded dacoit (played by Pran) says, 'Hai aag hamare seene mein, hum aag se khelte aaye hain' to express his emotional turmoil.

Jabbar Patel, a parallel cinema and theatre stalwart, who used music in his works effectively, remembers Raj's taking of 'Hawa main udta jaaye mera laal dupatta malma ka' (*Barsaat*, 1949) was so beautiful in the black and white film that he made us believe that the dupatta floating down was indeed red in colour.

It was with *Barsaat*'s iconic pose, in which he holds a besotted Nargis in one hand and a violin in the other, that Raj declared that he wanted the audience to feel the romance rather than just see it. This



**Raj Kapoor wanted the audience to feel the romance rather than just see it**

provided a measured deviation from the tragic *Devadas* prototype of the Hindi film hero and the rakish charm of Dev Anand.

It comes through in *Shree 420*, where he roots the romantic anthem 'Pyar Hua Iqrar Hua' on a public road created inside the RK Studios. Under the symbolic roof of an umbrella, after the frank admission of love and commitment, the hero asks his beloved *pyar se phir kyoon darta hai dil*., a dilemma that continues to ring a bell, particularly in Indian society. When the heroine responds with *kehta hai dil rasta mushkil, maloom nahin hai kahan manzil*, we realise the road and rain are metaphors for the obstacles

ahead, but the two are determined to take the journey.

Shivendra Singh Dungarpur whose Film Heritage Foundation has restored 10 films of the filmmaker that are part of a grand retrospective of Raj Kapoor's films between December 13 and December 15 being organised in collaboration with NFDC-NFAI, PVR INOX and Cinepolis in multiple cities finds *Shree 420* his most accomplished work in terms of his music and craft. 'Raj Kapoor breathed cinema. *Shree 420* is not just the story of the tramp, it brings alive the growth of city life during Nehruvian times.'

Years later, inspired by a segment in *Ramcharitmanas* where a boatman tells lord Rama that people are soiling his Ganga by washing off their sins in her waters, Raj recorded all the songs of *Ram Teri Ganga Mai* (1985) even before the screenplay was complete. At a wedding in Delhi, Raj heard Ravindra Jain sing a song where he delineated the difference in the love of

Radha and Meera for lord Krishna. He turned it into the base of his story. No wonder music composer Pyarelal once said that Raj Kapoor would have been a brilliant music composer had he chosen to become one.

Starting with *Awaara*, the duality of society was a running theme in his films. Director Lekh Tandon, who grew up alongside Raj under the care of Prithviraj Kapoor, once told this journalist – "In Nehruvian India, he made the country sing 'Awaara hoon' where two bars of music follow the words. One cannot hum the song without humming the two bars of music."

#### Contextualising songs

Rahul Rawail who assisted Raj in *Bobby* and *Prem Rog* says the filmmaker would never make a song emerge as an extraneous detail. "For him, the song must have a context in the story. In *Bobby*, 'Ghe ghe ghe ghe re sahiba' seamlessly segues into 'Na chahun sona chandi, na mangun heera moti', melodically expressing the points of view of two different characters.

With a hand on the public's pulse, Raj believed that the sign of a song's popularity was when it featured in the playlist of traditional wedding bands. He would convey to the composers that bands only picked those songs where even the player of a minor instrument had a role.

It is said that Raj would forget a face but not a tune. The tune of 'Jeena yahan marna yahan' (*Mera Naam Joker*, 1970) struck him when he was returning from a party in Romania in the 1950s. The tune of 'Jaane kahan gaye woh din' could be heard in the background score of his films in the 1950s. Songs like 'Jhoot bole kauwa kaate' and 'Sun sahiba sun' were his creations. "Much before he found suitable situations for these songs, Raj saab used to hum them," says Rawail.

**The RK retrospective begins at PVR INOX and Cinepolis multiplexes on December 13**

## STEP OUT

### Contrasting styles

Conceived by art historian and author B N Goswamy, an exhibition titled Father & Son – An Artistic Lineage showcases the art of Bireswar Sen (1897-1974) and Sureshwar Sen (1923-1980). It presents the contrasting painting styles present in a single lineage of two different artists who have striking generational shift in approach and style.



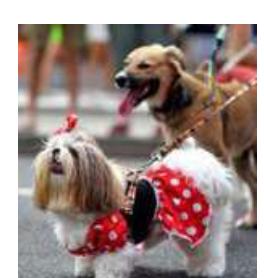
### Annual celebration

Thematic bharatanatyam presentation Dasavataram to celebrate 35th anniversary of Bhavanis Prasannalya At Karthayin Auditorium, Mayur Vihar Phase I; On December 15; 4.15pm



### Dog carnival

Pet Fed, one of the biggest pet festivals in the country, is celebrating its 10th anniversary with exciting activities, workshops, 100 stalls and opportunities to strengthen the bond between humans and pets. At NSIC Grounds, Okhla; On December 14 and 15; 10am onwards; Entry ticket Rs.699; Festival schedule available on www.petfed.org



### A visual journey

Chawla Art Gallery in collaboration with Delhi Art Society and Calcutta Sculptors is putting together one-of-a-kind exhibition exclusively dedicated to sculptures by artists including Neeraj Gupta, Tapas Sarkar, Narayan Lakshman, Debabrata De and others. Curated by Nanak Ganguly, The Forces of Imagination showcases transformative creations in bronze, marble, steel, aluminium and wood. At Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road; December 19 to 31; 11am to 7pm



### Soma Basu

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In less than a decade, the Jashn-e-Rekhta, a celebration of the spirit and exuberance of Urdu language, literature and culture has grown to be one of the biggest Urdu festivals. Its ninth edition is back in the capital this weekend (December 13 to 15), showcasing more than 200 artistes and 40-plus sessions of poetry recitations, mushaira, storytelling, theatre, interactive discussions and celebrity conversations, masterclasses and workshops, musical performances featuring ghazals, qawwali and Sufi music.

An annual flagship event of the non-profit Rekhta Foundation, dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Urdu language and culture, the festival was launched in 2015.

Over the years, it has revived interest in Urdu, as

## Celebrating Urdu

The three-day festival Jashn-e-Rekhta, starting today, is an artistic celebration of Urdu's beauty across diverse art forms



evidenced by the festival growing bigger and more spectacular. "Jashn-e-Rekhta has become a crowd-puller in Delhi's cultural bill," says Sanjiv Saraf, founder, Rekhta Foundation. "People from all backgrounds and across the country join this celebration," he adds.

**A new format**  
Jashn-e-Rekhta 2024 has been curated in a new format to promote varied nuances of the Urdu language. The three-day event is divided into seven categories: the cultural extravaganza Mehfil Khana; Dayaar-e-Izahaar comprising expressions of art forms; Bazm-e-Sukhan filled with poetry and literature; Aiwan-e-Zaiqa a food festival; the Rekhta book bazaar featuring Urdu, Hindi and English books; Rekhta pavilion featuring technology, literature and culture; and Rekhta Bazaar for merchandise, handicrafts, artefacts, décor, and more.

Visitors can immerse themselves in the inaugural Sufi evening with Kailash Kher and Kailasa at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Friday evening.

The performances to follow celebrate eminent lyricists from Urdu. It includes a special musical journey of ghazals, Shaam-e-ghazal. Playback singer Papon will present ghazals in a new avatar blending traditional Urdu music with contemporary styles and breathe new life into timeless compositions.

Javed Akhtar will create an experience of nostalgia, emotions and melody with stories behind his songs in Main Koi Aisa Geet Gaon with actor and TV host, Meiyang Chang. A Sufi symphony by Kavita Seth and Sahr Kahan Ho Tum based on the life, poetry and songs of lyricist/poet



Jamia Millia Islamia are also slated to participate in the festival. A key highlight is the grand finale of Rekhta Baitbaazi, a national competition celebrating Urdu tradition, which is currently being conducted at universities across the country.

Jashn-e-Rekhta made its international debut in London in 2023 and expanded to Dubai earlier this year. "It has grown in global stature," says Huma Khalil, trustee and creative director, Rekhta Foundation, "This year, we moved the festival to a much larger venue in Delhi for the comfort of visitors in a pulsating art-friendly environment," she adds.

**At Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium Gate No. 1; December 13 to 15. For details, [jashnerekhta.org](http://jashnerekhta.org). For passes, [jashnerekhta.org/get-tickets](http://jashnerekhta.org/get-tickets)**

# The iconic shikara, a click away

**Uber Shikaras in Srinagar will enable convenient access to serene experiences while boosting local tourism**

### Peerzada Ashiq

peerzada.ashiq@thehindu.co.in

While in Kashmir, one can now book an Uber Shikara, Kashmir's signature attraction. The shikaras (small boats bedecked with colourful upholstery) are Uber's first water transport service in India.

An Uber Shikara ride can be booked for one hour. It can be booked 12 hours and up to 15 days in advance. Each Uber Shikara allows four passengers.

Shikaras shot to fame with 1970s Bollywood movies such as Shammi Kapoor's *Kashmir Ki Kali* and Shashi Kapoor's *Jab Jab Phool Khile*. Iconic songs from these movies were filmed on shikaras making them a sought-after dream ride for honeymooners during their stay in Kashmir.

### Identity of Srinagar

"Shikaras are the identity of Srinagar and have been supporting livelihoods for generations. It is a service that integrates modern convenience with traditional identity while conserving employment," says Anuj Malhotra, general manager, Planning, Srinagar Smart City. "It provides people with a choice between road and water transport," he adds.

As per the official plan, the Uber Shikaras will use the traditional causeways to cover the lake's basins, the Nehru Park basin, Nishat basin, Hazratbal basin, Nigeen basin and the Barati Nambal basin. Officials say the pre-booking of shikara rides through the Uber app will help tourists access hassle-free rides on the Dal Lake in Srinagar during the upcoming busy holiday season.

Under the Smart City project, multiple new stopping points have been restored by the Government, especially around the Mughal gardens in



**Shikara online** Uber rolls out India's first water transport service on Dal Lake in Srinagar with shikara bookings on its app. IMRAN NISSAR

the city. From the point of view of the Dal lake's health, these boats could aerate the lake better, especially in areas that are choked now. "Shikaras help circulate waters for more oxygen mixing. It helps improve water ecology," says Malhotra.

"At Uber, we are always looking to make mobility magical and effortless. Uber Shikara is our attempt to blend technology and tradition to give a seamless experience to the shikara traveller. Apart from the tourists' experience, it will also help to enhance accessibility and uplift tourism in the breathtaking landscape of Kashmir," says Prabhjeet Singh, president, Uber India & South Asia.

### Beauty of Dal lake

Spread over 18 square kilometers, the Dal lake's bewitching beauty has fascinated locals as well as outsiders for centuries now. It has a shore line of 15.5 kilometres, offering access to different localities, including the Hazratbal Shrine and the Mughal-era gardens like Nishat and Shalimar.

Praising the initiative, J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said the service is a testament to the creative ways technology can enhance our cultural heritage. "It will provide visitors a seamless way to experience the timeless charm of shikara rides, a hallmark of J&K's beauty."

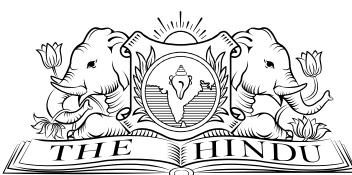


Sahir Ludhianvi whose words capture the essence of love, resistance and social change are some of the other highlights.

Besides the soulful music, Rekhta mushaira will raise a toast to Delhi's poets and the capital's rich poetic legacy. Pernia Qureshi will combine the vibrance and grace of Kuchipudi with Sufi compositions and mysticism in Ishq-e-Ibadat-Tak.

Other key personalities including singer Nisschall Zaveri, poet Popular Meeruthi, the Ali brothers, and Professor Ghazanfar Ali from





## A legend, made

Gukesh is first among a cohort of young Indian chess geniuses to reach pinnacle

**E**ighteen-year-old D. Gukesh has made history by becoming the 18th world chess champion, which will make him the youngest to do so and emulating the doyen of Indian chess, Viswanathan Anand, the only other Indian to achieve the honour. Gukesh managed his feat after a blunder made by the reigning world champion, Ding Liren of China, on the 55th move, Rf2, in the 14th and final classical game of the match. The game was headed towards a draw, but with Gukesh pressing for any advantage in a rook-bishop-pawn endgame and having an extra pawn, it took just one misstep for Ding to lose his crown. Ding was in poor form prior to the match but the Chinese GM proved his mettle by winning the first game, setting up a strong contest. Gukesh won Game 4 to tie the match and after a series of draws, Gukesh played an enterprising Game 11 to take the lead; Ding fought back brilliantly to tie the match again with a strong win in Game 12. The strategies of both players were evident. Gukesh played strong openings and exhibited tenacity in trying to gain advantages in near equal positions as the games progressed. Ding's plan seemed to be to secure a stalemate in the classical games and to drag the match into the shorter rapid and if need be, blitz formats, and to use his strength in terms of experience. Sticking to his strategy of pushing through equal positions, Gukesh had the last laugh.

The Chennai-born Grandmaster's mental toughness and wisdom beyond his age have been his calling card. His steady rise was due to his dedication and his accelerated path to glory was helped by the work done by his seconds – Gukesh revealed their names only after the match – besides the mentoring by GM Anand's West-Bridge Anand Chess Academy. His versatile game, built on an innate ability to calculate moves deeply on the board, kept him in good stead against his more experienced opponent. The surge of young Indian talent to the top echelons of world chess in recent years – compatriot GMs Arjun Erigaisi and R. Praggnanandhaa are in the top 15 along with Gukesh – raised expectations of another Indian world champion in chess. The youngsters have pushed each other to do their best. Gukesh won a strong Candidates tournament to emerge as Ding's challenger and his prowess was evident following his individual gold winning performances in the Chennai and Budapest Chess Olympiads, the latter being India's first gold in the team event. His next frontier would be to reach the heights scaled by the world's strongest chess player, Magnus Carlsen. Gukesh becoming the world champion would also motivate his Indian compatriots and will add a fillip to the growth of modern chess as a sport and vocation in the country of its birth.

## Price worries

The inflation trajectory suggests a rate cut may remain elusive for some time

**F**rom a 14-month high of 6.2% in October, consumer price inflation moderated to 5.5% last month. Much of this minor respite stems from a decline in the inflation rate of some food items. For vegetables, it cooled from a 57-month peak of 42.2% to just under 30%, while foodgrain prices rose at the slowest pace in 28 months, and pulses cooled to just over 5% after a prolonged spell of double-digit spikes. Despite these pockets of relief, overall food inflation remained sharp at over 9% for the third straight month, with edible oil prices firming up 13.3%, the highest in 30 months as a global price spike has coincided with an import duty hike by the Centre. It is no surprise coconut oil prices are up over 42%, even as items such as garlic (85.1%), potato (66.7%), cauliflower and cabbage (well over 40%), are pinching consumers. While recent conversations about the economy have focused on decelerating urban demand, the price rise trend is hitting rural consumers harder with close to 6% inflation in November as well as higher food prices.

Despite assertions by the government that food prices are volatile and should be ignored for monetary policy purposes when growth is stumbling, higher spends on meals are spilling into other items' prices. Manufacturing and services firms have reported intensifying cost pressures last month compelling them to hike prices at the highest pace in 12 years. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which had originally estimated October-December inflation to average 4.8%, raised it to 5.7% at its monetary policy review last week. This implies inflation this month – which will be the last data before the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meets next – could still be high at 5.4%. This would be well above the central bank's median target of 4% – the MPC now expects average inflation to attain that level only by the second quarter of 2025-26. The government, whose clamour for an interest rate cut was ignored by the MPC last week, may be hoping its new appointee at the helm of Mint Street, another Finance Ministry insider, may oblige with more urgent and bigger rate cuts to support growth. While some assert a rate cut in February's MPC meet is virtually cemented, going by current trends, the data may not back such a move as growth might recover a bit and inflation may cool a tad more, thus diminishing any urgency. That the Centre would have presented its Budget 2025-26 by the next MPC meet, may help the rate cut case going forward, if it demonstrates fiscal prudence and steps to ease citizens' living costs.

# Pakistan at the UNSC, the points of its compass

**I**n January 1, 2025, Pakistan enters the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as an elected non-permanent member for a two-year term – its eighth.

Pakistan's entry is significant in that, effectively, half of the 10 elected members of UNSC will be from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Those elected for 2025-26 were Denmark, Greece, Pakistan, Panama and Somalia. They will replace Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique and Switzerland as their terms end on December 31. The new members will join Algeria, Guyana, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone and Slovenia, who are existing non-permanent members.

Afghanistan will be a natural focus with Pakistan sure to use its Council stint to repair its frosty relations with the Taliban. In this, it has Russia and China to readily assist it in the diplomatic rehabilitation of the Taliban. With the OIC countries, one hopes that the Council gets all the support it needs for a ceasefire in Gaza to salvage from the rubble whatever is left of the Palestinian cause and stabilise the region. Peacekeeping is another of Pakistan's stated priorities given its role as a major troop contributing country for UN peacekeeping. However, Pakistan's default mode will be to focus on India.

### What India should expect

India-Pakistan relations are still strained. Even if one assumes that some backchannels are busy working the lines, it is a given that enhanced bilateral cooperation does not necessarily result in enhanced multilateral cooperation, especially in the UN. This is true not just of Pakistan but also of countries India considers as "close friends", even in the Global South. For example, some OIC countries with which India has very close bilateral relations, line up behind Pakistani drafts in the UN which have anti-India language. They even argue – ingeniously – that the offensive language is not aimed at India. Fortunately, there is help usually from unexpected friends in such groups, enabling India to tide over the issues successfully.

To state the obvious, India should be prepared for Pakistan's anti-India initiatives in the UNSC. There was a brief period in 2012 when there was some synergy between the Missions of both countries in the UN when both nations were in the Council, but that was an aberration. Pakistan is back to its multilateral default mode of being anti-India. And in this, it now has a more assertive "iron brother" in China offering it an "all-weather friendship". Pakistan's first stated priority is to "combat terrorism", which it hopes will absolve it of the tag of "terrorist state". It will also try – as it



**T.S. Tirumurti**  
was Permanent Representative/Ambassador of India to the United Nations, New York (2021-22) and President of United Nations Security Council for August 2021

always does – to slip that tag onto India. The list of Pakistan-based and Pakistani terrorist organisations associated with the ISIL (Daesh) and al-Qaeda under UNSC Resolution 1267 mandated sanctions, including the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and the Jaish-e-Mohammed, is long and instructive. In retaliation, Pakistan has presented several "dossiers" to the UN Secretary General, that have fancy claims of Indian terrorist attacks on Pakistan – anything to keep the anti-India pot boiling.

After its stint in the UNSC in 2021-22, India's proposal (with the United States as co-signatory) to list Pakistani terrorist Abdul Rehman Makki, deputy leader of the LeT, under the 1267 sanctions regime was approved by the UNSC – including of course by China – making this the first listing (with India as a proposer) for terrorist acts in Jammu and Kashmir. It was a blow to Pakistan, which must be waiting to avenge.

However, even proposals under 1267 sanctions are given a religious colour by Pakistan. It made desperate attempts, with trumped up charges, to list four Indian Hindus as terrorists, with the intention of getting at least one Hindu listed. The Council rejected every one of Pakistan's requests – not once but twice – thanks to the U.S. and other western countries. Member-states have seen through Pakistan's game.

### On Kashmir

Its next, and most obvious, stated priority will be Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Pakistan pushed for discussions on J&K in the Council through its "friends" when India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution. Two closed "consultations" were held in the UNSC, with China acting as the cat's-paw. But nothing happened. At least four of the five permanent members (P-5) have little appetite for this issue. When a Pakistani journalist in New York asked this writer – when India entered the UNSC in January 2021 – about the "unfinished" business of Article 370, the reply he got was this: that the only "unfinished" business was the return of PoK to India.

With elections having been conducted and a popular government in place in J&K, Pakistan would find it hard to make an issue. China, which, incidentally, occupies a part of PoK after Pakistan ceded it to them, will only be too happy to keep the pot boiling. The Pakistani Ambassador to the UN made a case in the media on how the recent decision by the International Court of Justice decision on Palestine applies to J&K. One cannot stop Pakistan from trying to do what it wants as its presence in the UNSC will give it the lever to call for discussions on J&K. India is aware that the P-5 usually does not like to prevent

discussions, but decides whether it should be open or closed and whether there should be an outcome.

### The use of Islamophobia

Pakistan has used Islamophobia as a weapon to dilute the fight against terrorism and, going by its recent attempts, to target India. When the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GTS) was discussed in 2021, and again in 2023, Pakistan, supported by the OIC, sought to introduce Islamophobia as a 'justification' for terrorism. India stood alone and had the reference removed. But when India left the Council at the end of 2022, the United Arab Emirates and others inserted, *inter alia*, Islamophobia into the UNSC Presidential statement for the first time in February 2023. In March 2024, the U.S., China and Russia voted in the UN General Assembly in support of an OIC resolution to appoint a UN Special Envoy for Combating Islamophobia. With the right wing on the rise in the West, one has not heard the last on this subject in the Council with the OIC countries.

Early this year, Pakistan raised the issue of the bilateral India-Pakistan Indus Waters Treaty in the Council, which is a purely bilateral agreement with its mechanism to resolve disputes. This is a misuse of the UNSC with the only benefit of catering to a domestic audience.

During its stint between 2021-22, India played a robust and positive role in strengthening international peace and security. While many UNSC members misuse "Arria formula" meetings (a dispensation where any UNSC member can circumvent the Council and hold informal meetings on any issue), India avoided doing this and stuck to its priorities in the Council. Pakistan will have no such compunctions.

It is unfortunate that Pakistan ignores the many multilateral synergies between India and Pakistan to work together on UN issues. Both countries have similar interests: in UN peacekeeping, as they are large troop-contributing countries; in combating climate change, as they face severe climate change-induced floods and natural disasters; in achieving Sustainable Development Goals 2030; in focusing on the debt burden of the Global South; or in reforming multilateral financial institutions. Sometimes even functional contacts with Indian diplomats are frowned upon by its Mission.

Pakistan's internal political churning, economic collapse and misplaced priorities have prevented it from strengthening multilateralism and the UN in a world wrecked by conflicts.

While its term will be high on rhetoric against India, it is difficult to see how UN member-states will be persuaded to play its game.

# The missing spotlight on urban local government polls

**U**rban local governments (ULGs) function as units of decentralised local self-governance, and are responsible for delivering civic services at the first mile, ensuring quality of life for citizens. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) was introduced in 1992 to codify this role of ULGs. Over 30 years later, the objectives of this landmark amendment are yet to be realised. The ongoing discourse on simultaneous elections, popularly known as One Nation One Election (ONOE), is a unique opportunity to spotlight a basic requirement of local democracy, i.e., elections to ULGs – a consideration that has generally been absent in deliberations on the ONOE.

### 'State subjects' as reasoning

The 79th report of the Parliament Standing Committee on Law and Justice on the 'Feasibility of Simultaneous Elections,' submitted in 2015, while advocating simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, was silent on elections to ULGs. A discussion paper (2017) by the NITI Aayog, on 'Analysis of Simultaneous Elections', kept ULGs out of its purview, arguing that the third-tier institutions are State subjects and that the sheer number of such institutions across the country makes it "impractical, and possibly impossible, to synchronise elections". Similar reasoning is put forward in the 2018 draft report of the Law Commission of India on simultaneous elections. But in a refreshing departure, the High Level Committee (HLC) constituted by the Government of India to provide a road map for implementation of simultaneous elections, deliberated on local body elections and recommended synchronising them within 100 days of simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.

India has over 4,800 ULGs that oversee nearly 40% of the population, a figure which is estimated to cross 50% by 2050. Cities are the backbone of the country's economy, contributing over 60% to India's GDP. Well-governed cities



**Santosh Nargund**  
Head, Participatory Governance at the Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy



**Maansi Verma**  
Manager, Policy Engagement at the Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy

The ongoing discourse on simultaneous elections, or ONOE, is the right opportunity for change

accelerate economic growth, and promote social and cultural well-being. Thus, ensuring regular elections to install democratically-elected governments in our cities every five years ought to be a matter of mainstream political discourse and policy formulation. The HLC report, which was accepted by the Union government in September 2024, touched upon the procedure of elections to local governments and is a good start in this direction. However, deeper analysis is necessary to understand and address the current state of affairs of elections to ULGs.

### Uncertainty and delays in elections

It may come as a surprise to many that despite the constitutional mandate of holding elections to municipalities every five years, elections are routinely delayed across thousands of ULGs – sometimes by several years. According to the Compendium of Performance Audits on the Implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 (published by the Comptroller and Auditor General, or CAG of India in November 2024), elections were delayed in over 60% of ULGs across India. Such ULGs are directly governed by State governments, violating the principle of decentralisation as envisaged in the Constitution. This also adversely impacts accountability as citizens lack representation and have limited avenues for airing their grievances and development needs. Elections that are held on time are the *sine qua non* for democracy – not just for Parliament and the State legislatures but also for every municipality in the country.

Holding elections to ULGs is not enough. After the results are announced, the elected councils have to be operationalised with State governments calling for their first meeting to enable elections to the offices of mayors/chairpersons and standing committees. A study undertaken by Janaagraha found that there was a delay by 11 months on average in the formation of councils after the declaration of election results of the municipal corporations in

Karnataka. In effect, ULGs continue to function under the administrative control of State governments. This defeats the electoral mandate given by the people, making elected city councillors powerless to attend to the development needs of their electorate.

### Disempowered State Election Commissions

Another important issue is the disempowerment of the State Election Commissions (SECs), which are constitutional bodies responsible for supervising and conducting ULG elections. The CAG report notes that only four out of the 15 States assessed have empowered their SECs to carry out ward delimitation. The report further notes that elections to ULGs were delayed due to a delay in ward delimitation by State governments or because of court cases regarding reservations. Given the high political ramifications of ward delimitation and reservation exercises, it is necessary that these functions are carried out by independent authorities such as the SECs.

A holistic analysis of the challenges in conducting elections to ULGs promptly is important in the ongoing national discourse on the synchronisation of elections. There is an urgent need to build on the beginning made by the HLC to effect the reforms necessary in ULG elections.

The Government of India has proposed setting up an implementation group to prepare a plan of action that would execute the HLC's recommendations. The government has also expressed its intent to have consultations across the country on this topic. It is hoped and expected that the agenda for reforms to ensure regular and scheduled elections to ULGs will feature in these dialogues and that the Union and State governments will come together to make local democracy in our cities operational and vibrant.

*The views expressed are personal*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Parliament and business

The proposal to move a no-trust vote against the Chairperson of the Upper House and the Vice-President of India has some merit. The Chairperson has been seen to be completely partial to the ruling party on several occasions – as can be visually seen from the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha on a daily basis by

any discerning viewer. People can judge what they see.

**V. Padmanabhan,**  
Bengaluru

If the Opposition has decided to act against the Rajya Sabha Chairman, it could be only because the parties concerned have reached the end of their tether. For any independent observer, it was evident that

the Chairperson has been adopting a 'more loyal than the king attitude' when it came to discussions on issues which were inconvenient or not to the liking of the ruling dispensation.

**C.G. Kuriakose,**  
Kothamangalam, Kerala

The development is a new sign of degrading political dialogue and the lack of

minimal cooperation in Indian politics. The invocation by some politicians of conspiracy theories is also concerning. Ironically, the use of the popular term, 'deep state', is being seen in the prevalent rhetoric. It is important for all involved to abandon hearsay and focus on pressing issues that concern Indians. Given the mountain of work to be tackled, the

government and the Opposition must work hand in hand to justify the faith the electorate has placed in them.

**Ananya Mishra,**  
Bhilai, Chhattisgarh

It is unfortunate that the ruling BJP and the Opposition parties in our country do not view each other as ideological opponents but as real-time

enemies. This has led to the situation where they do not engage in fair and useful debate in both the Houses of Parliament. The unfortunate developments are a blot on the functioning of the world's largest democracy.

**Gopalaswamy J.,**  
Chennai

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

# Should the executive have the power to pardon?

PARLEY



Sanjay Hegde

Senior advocate based in Delhi



Alok Prasanna Kumar

Co-founder and Karnataka lead of Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy

**Should the executive power of clemency rest with the legislature to avert misuse?**

United States President Joe Biden's recent decision to pardon his son Hunter Biden for any federal crimes he committed or may have committed between January 1, 2014, and December 1, 2024 has brought renewed focus on the expansive clemency powers granted to the President by the U.S. Constitution. The President's volte-face has provoked strong condemnation from both Republicans and Democrats. Should the executive possess clemency powers? Sanjay Hegde and Alok Prasanna Kumar discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Aaratrika Bhaumik. Edited excerpts:

**Should the executive power of clemency rest with the legislature to avert misuse?**

**Sanjay Hegde:** Vesting clemency powers in the legislature could prove equally susceptible to corruption and majority rule. Historically, the power to pardon originated from the British monarchy as an attribute of sovereignty, enabling the king to absolve any wrongdoing. Even today, the Constitution acknowledges scenarios where it is imperative to trust a high officeholder to judiciously exercise such discretionary authority when required.

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** I agree. During the debates on the U.S. Constitution, Alexander Hamilton, the first Secretary of the Treasury, acknowledged that the exercise of clemency is inherently political and cannot be reduced to a purely legal process. He argued that this power should be vested in a single constitutional officeholder, instead of being subjected to the whims of collective discretion. He also pointed out that the power of pardon introduced an element of mercy, which he believed was necessary to temper the rigours of the criminal justice system. He saw it as a means for true justice to prevail in cases where the law could not account for circumstances or moral factors beyond the scope of judicial proceedings.

**Should an independent clemency commission replace the existing system to ensure more objective and informed decision-making?**

**APK:** Even if an independent clemency commission were established, its advice would not be binding on the President. While the President may seek a range of information to make a reasoned decision, as former President Harry Truman famously stated, "the buck stops here." Transparency is important, and in today's age of social media and a free press, the public



U.S. President Joe Biden with his son Hunter Biden at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Illinois. REUTERS

will likely be aware of the reasons behind a presidential decision. However, that does not guarantee that every decision will be immediately acceptable to the public at large.

**SH:** The public doesn't always agree with clemency decisions. One of the most notable examples is when U.S. President Gerald Ford pardoned his predecessor, Richard Nixon. He believed that the country had endured enough during the Watergate scandal and that the matter should be put to rest, as Nixon had already been punished by losing the presidency. He felt that a criminal trial would only prolong the nation's agony. At the time, special prosecutor Leon Jaworski chose not to challenge this decision.

In contrast, the clemency system in India has not been widely abused. Former Presidents such as A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and Pratibha Patil have only sat on files, exercising a pocket veto whenever they disagreed with government advice. The pardon jurisdiction for non-capital offences has rarely been exercised.

**Would expanding the scope of judicial review over executive clemency decisions prevent potential overreach or misuse?**

**SH:** I don't think the U.S. will ever adopt such a system. President-elect Donald Trump has expressed an inclination to pardon rioters involved in the January 6, 2021, Capitol attack. There are also speculations that President Biden may pre-emptively pardon several individuals before he demits office. I doubt the judiciary will step in to second-guess the President's authority in these matters.

In India, both the President and the Governor



When it comes to clemency, defining what constitutes abuse or misuse is challenging, especially when the power itself is not clearly defined. For example, in 20 years, one might argue that granting clemency to Hunter Biden was one of Joe Biden's best decisions. We lack the foresight to deem such decisions egregiously wrong at this moment.

ALOK KUMAR PRASANNA

act on the aid and advice of the Cabinet. In fact, the Supreme Court in *Epuru Sudhakar v. State of Andhra Pradesh* (2006) affirmed that a Governor's grant of pardon could be challenged in court if it was found to be mala fide or based on irrelevant considerations.

**APK:** I don't believe that clemency decisions can be judicially reviewable. The concept of mercy is inherently subjective, and there cannot be one inalienable understanding of it. We also have to understand that constitutional functionaries inevitably bring their personal biases to bear on these decisions. While courts, as seen in India, may intervene in instances of procedural violations, there are no definitive legal benchmarks to determine what constitutes an appropriate exercise of clemency. Ultimately, it is unreasonable to assert that mercy should have one fixed meaning under the Constitution, or that clemency should be confined to a specific category of political cases.

**Should U.S. Congress play a greater role in the process? For instance, the Protecting Our Democracy Act, reintroduced in Congress last year, mandates the White House disclose all materials the President relies on when exercising clemency powers.**

**SH:** Even if Congress were to pass a law, it could only serve to guide the process. Clemency powers are unique – they speak to the inherent humanity shared by both the one who grants mercy and the one who receives it. There may be cases where a penalty has been imposed and the legal process is complete, yet new evidence emerges that calls for reconsideration. It is impossible to legislate strict standards, especially since they would never be binding. We have seen this discretionary authority play out when President Andrew Johnson pardoned Dr. Samuel Alexander Mudd, the physician who treated John Wilkes Booth's broken leg after he assassinated Abraham Lincoln.

**APK:** No law can entirely prevent its misuse. If

someone in a position of authority is determined to break the law, there is little the law itself can do to stop them. While mechanisms can be put in place to ensure that such actions have stringent repercussions, total prevention is impossible to attain. For instance, we see police officers routinely abuse their powers of arrest.

When it comes to clemency, defining what constitutes abuse or misuse is challenging, especially when the power itself is not clearly defined. For example, in 20 years, one might argue that granting clemency to Hunter Biden was one of the best decisions made by Joe Biden. We lack the foresight to deem such decisions egregiously wrong at this moment.

**What reforms are necessary in India's clemency process, and what lessons can be drawn from the Hunter Biden case?**

**SH:** Given the nature of the power, one can at best have guidelines. However, ultimately executive discretion has to be trusted. We have seen our former Presidents exhibit varied views regarding the death penalty. One can also see how gubernatorial discretion played out in the release of A.G. Perarivalan, one of the convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. The Governor obstructed his release despite the Tamil Nadu government's recommendation. Ultimately, the Supreme Court had to intervene and order his release. The use of clemency powers in the case also signified the closing of a long and painful chapter. While public curiosity may lead to second-guessing these decisions, it is often not in the greater public interest to do so.

**APK:** I believe comprehensive reforms are needed in the system of release of convicts. The Supreme Court is already cognisant of a batch of petitions on this issue. We need to prioritise reformatory justice. Reformation is only achievable when individuals are given the assurance that, through good behaviour and genuine repentance, they may earn an early release – serving, for instance, seven years instead of 14. While these convicts have been incarcerated for legitimate reasons, the state must focus on their rehabilitation, as some of them have the potential to become valuable members of society. We should expedite processes like parole and remission, ensuring mercy extends beyond just death penalty cases.



To listen to the full interview  
Scan the code or go to the link  
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NOTEBOOK

## The difficulty of documenting a tragedy

It is difficult to say whether the sense of detachment that photojournalists acquire over the years is real or not

Thulasi Kakkat

A photojournalist reacts to an accident or a calamity much like an emergency worker. But since most of us have no training in saving lives, or rescuing people, what really drives us to reach these places like first responders? To see fellow human beings lying trapped under debris, waiting to be rescued or worse, needs a mental makeup of a different kind, especially since we cannot do much apart from recording it on camera.

At the site of a disaster, a photojournalist is expected to truthfully and objectively convey reality. It is generally accepted that there is no moral responsibility to interfere with the events that are unfolding in front of the lens. While looking into the face of a tragedy, we are there to tell the story in a single frame. However, every photojournalist would agree that there have been instances where they have grappled with the dilemma of what is right and wrong.

For instance, not too long ago, there was an accident in Kerala. Three migrant labourers, who were widening the gutter on the side of the road, were seriously injured when the concrete wall of the building nearby collapsed on them. One of them succumbed to injuries and the other two were extricated from the rubble after hours of hard work by rescue personnel.

A few days after the incident, a photojournalist said something to me with a hint of remorse. While news channels were showing visuals of the tragedy, he was still half an hour away from the accident site. He wanted to rush there to get the image of the workers caught under the debris. It was only after he clicked the photo that he saw the agony in the eyes of the injured. While he had rushed there to merely do his job, he regretted that his first thought was to get a "good" picture as soon as possible. He said he then prayed that the workers would be taken to safety as soon as possible.

thulasidas.pv@thehindu.co.in

## PICTURE OF THE WEEK

### The end of an era



People walk on a dirt road leading to the notorious Saydnaya prison, synonymous with the worst atrocities of ousted Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's rule, such as arbitrary detention and torture. People in Damascus gathered on December 9 to celebrate day after Assad fled, even as Islamist-led rebels swept into the capital. AFP

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 13, 1974

### Criteria for opening new post offices

New Delhi, Dec. 12: The Union Minister of Communications, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, told Mr. P.R. Shenoy in the Lok Sabha yesterday that profit was not the main criterion for opening new post office. But for opening public call offices, profit is one of the criteria but not the main one. So far as rural areas were concerned, a new post office in a

normal area should earn at least 25 per cent of the cost as income, 10 per cent of cost in hilly area and 15 per cent in other very backward areas. In urban areas the income from the new post office should be at least equal to the cost of the post office.

In rural areas, new post offices are opened at a distance of 4.8 kms from an existing post office and for villages with gram panchayat, schools and NES blocks, the distance from the nearest post office is reduced to 3.2 kms. A loss upto Rs. 500 per annum is borne by the Government in rural areas if the population to be served is less than 2,000 and upto Rs. 750 per annum for a population of 2,000 or more.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DECEMBER 13, 1924

### Vaikom Satyagraha

Cochin, Dec. 11: The Satyagrahis are picketing at the four barricades as usual. Mr. Vinobha of the Wardha Satyagraha Ashram met by appointment the Vaikom opposition leaders at the residence of Mr. Indanthirthi Nambyathiri and discussed with them the situation. He was accompanied by Mr. T.R. Krishnaswamy Iyer, Manager of the Ashram; and the prominent opposition leaders included Mr. Indanthirthi Nambyathiri, Mr. M.K. Raman Pillai, Mr. Vadakkumkoor Valia Rajah and Venkatrama Iyer.

# Text & Context

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

### Number of sentences commuted by Joe Biden

**1500** President Joe Biden is commuting the sentences of roughly 1,500 people who were released from prison and placed on home confinement during the coronavirus pandemic and is pardoning 39 Americans convicted of non-violent crimes. AFP

### Naxalites killed in encounters this year in the Bastar division

**215** Seven Naxalites including two women were killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district on Thursday, a senior police official said. With this incident, at least 215 Naxalites have been killed this year in the Bastar division of the State, as per the police. PTI

### U.S. producer inflation shows biggest year-on-year increase

**0.40** in per cent. U.S. producer inflation climbed in November, data showed Thursday, logging its biggest year-on-year increase since February 2023. The producer price index came in at 0.4% last month, seasonally adjusted, the Labour Department said. PTI

### Number of casualties as migrant boat sinks off Tunisia

**9** Tunisia's coastguard has recovered the bodies of nine migrants while six others are still missing after their boat sank off the Tunisian coast, a judicial official said on Thursday, in the latest boat disaster in the Mediterranean. The coastguard has so far rescued 27 people who were on the boat. PTI

### Fatalities in the Manipur conflict since May 2023

**250** A Delhi-based Meitei organisation urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ban all Kuki militant groups in Manipur and to stop alleged appeasement of the Kukis under the name of 'Suspension of Operations' (SoO). PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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# Beijing's war against air pollution

Beijing in 2015 had pollution levels similar to those in Delhi today. However, through coordinated effort over several years, Beijing reduced its pollution by one-third between 2013 and 2017; by learning from Beijing's approach, Delhi can implement effective strategies to tackle its air pollution problem

## EXPLAINER

Rohit Azad  
Shouvik Chakraborty

**B**eijing, with a yearly average air quality index (AQI) of 144, was as polluted in 2015 as Delhi is today (Delhi's average is 155 for 2024). But in the interim, Beijing has managed to cut its pollution level by one-third with the most significant fall spanning between 2013 and 2017 (Chart 1). To be sure, Beijing's pollution control programme dates back to 1998 which laid the foundation for this aggressive last phase of the programme, which was termed a "war against air pollution".

### Why discuss Beijing in the context of Delhi?

Beijing is the capital of an emerging economy, as is Delhi. So, if Beijing could manage what it did at its stage of development, Delhi could and needs to, as well.

There are many similarities between Beijing in 2013 and Delhi today. Chart 2 compares the sources of pollution for the two cities.

For Delhi, we have used the winter months' data because that is the most updated emission inventory available. Moreover, much like Beijing, the regional contribution to pollutants by neighbouring areas/States of the national capital region (NCR) is also high, especially during the winter months. While local emissions need to be controlled, without a concerted collective effort by the entire NCR region, just as Beijing achieved, it would be difficult to win this battle against air pollution.

### What did Beijing do?

With rapid economic growth in Beijing, the ambient concentration of pollutants increased rapidly by the late 1990s. By 2017, Beijing's energy consumption had grown by 74% compared to 1998. Unfortunately, a rapid increase in urbanisation and energy consumption meant higher emissions of pollutants. Things were particularly made worse because the heating in Beijing's residential properties was heavily coal-dependent.

Beijing's 20-year anti-pollution programme can be divided into three phases – 1998-2008, 2009-12, 2013-17. One common theme that ran through the entire effort was not shock-and-awe but a careful and slowly built-up plan with people's participation, which was run autonomously by the local government of Beijing.

Sources of pollution in Beijing were broadly identified as energy structures and coal combustion (contributing 22% to PM2.5), transportation structures (31%), and construction and industrial structures (33%).

For the first source, three steps were taken – ultra-low-emission renovation and clean energy alternatives in power plants, renovation of coal-fired boilers, and elimination of civil bulk coal consumption used for residential heating.

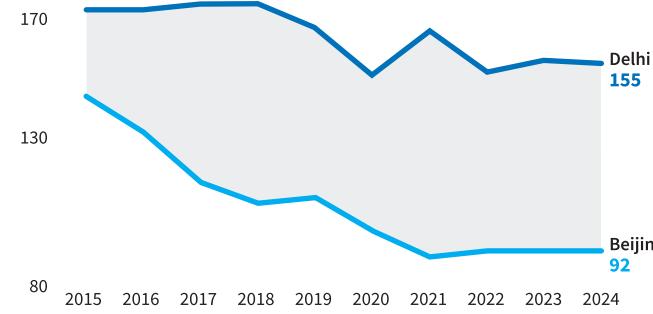
For transportation infrastructure, the government first retrofitted cars and public service vehicles with diesel particulate filters (DPF) and gradually tightened emission standards. Then it went for scrapping, through subsidies instead of decree, of 'yellow-labeled' vehicles (heavy pollutant-emitting vehicles). Subway and bus infrastructure was overhauled and expanded at a rapid rate, along with optimising the urban layout.

As for the industrial and construction activities, tightening environmental requirements, intensifying end-of-pipe

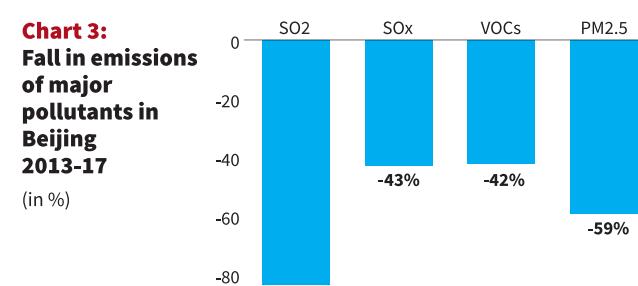
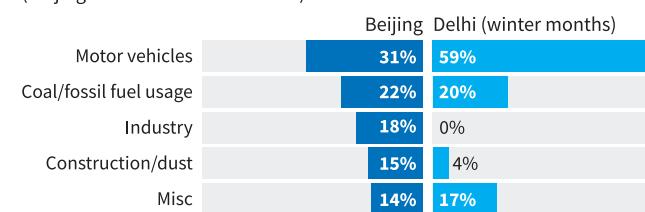
## Turning the tide on pollution

Beijing's battle against air pollution provides a useful framework for Delhi. With improved transportation, stricter regulations, and regional collaboration, Delhi can follow a similar path to cleaner air

**Chart 1: AQI in Beijing vs Delhi 2014-24**  
(Yearly average)



**Chart 2: PM2.5 source apportionment for Beijing and Delhi**  
(Beijing in 2013 and Delhi in 2023)



(EOP) treatment, eliminating obsolete industrial capacity, creating a green construction management model, efficient washing facilities, and implementing video monitoring with penal action against violators of construction sites were some of the steps taken.

The last leg of the plan (2013-17) especially focused on the need for regional cooperation, with five adjoining provinces around Beijing coming together to chalk out a collective plan for reducing ambient pollution in the region. This cooperation had a remarkable effect in reducing the level of pollution.

**What did Beijing achieve? And how?** As a result of this meticulously planned strategy at multiple levels, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and PM2.5, the four major pollutants targeted under the policy, fell by 83%, 43%, 42% and 59% respectively between 2013-17 (Chart 3). Since most activities produce multiple pollutants, albeit to differing degrees, targeting a source meant reducing all the associated pollutants.

Chart 4 shows how by targeting each source, multiple pollutants were controlled.

The single most important factor in Beijing achieving its goal, apart from planning to the last detail, was the financial investment that the government committed to.

Chart 5 shows a whopping six-time jump in investment within just four years. All the steps enumerated above required heavy investment and the government did not shy away from making and fulfilling those commitments.

### What can Delhi learn from the Beijing experience?

There are ideas galore on controlling pollution, and Beijing is a perfect example to learn from. We list some here, there are more.

Firstly, since private transport is the biggest contributor to local pollution, an efficient and comfortable bus-metro integrated transport system needs to be in place. Delhi's DTC bus fleet is not only old but also grossly inadequate for a population of this city's size. The metro is an excellent means of transport but is quite expensive, with almost zero last-mile connectivity provided by the State. Old vehicles need to be scrapped through a well-thought-out subsidy-for-scrappage programme, instead of banning them. Exclusive cycling and walking lanes should be built throughout the city. Other ideas, such as cross-subsidisation through affordable public transport and expensive private transport (cars and motorcycles) using congestion or high parking charges, as well as separate fuel costs for the two modes of transport, could be experimented with. An urban layout is needed where places of work and residence are brought closer, alleviating the need for long-distance travel.

Secondly, Delhi's electricity is still supplied primarily through coal-fired plants. The energy system needs a serious overhaul both from the sides of supply and demand. Subsidising solar roof tops and connecting it to the grid with electricity bill discounts could be one such step in this regard.

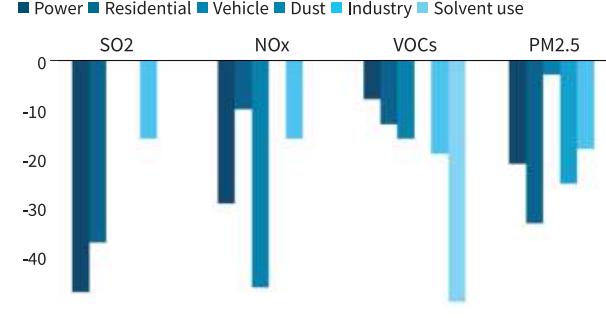
Thirdly, much like the Beijing plan, Delhi needs to coordinate with neighbouring regions, instead of being at



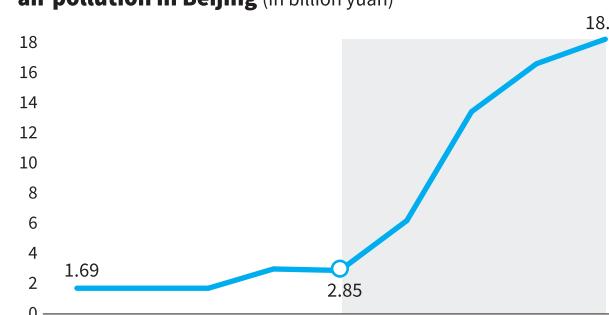
Pedestrians walk along the Kartavya Path engulfed in thick smog, near India Gate, in New Delhi, on November 18. AFP

**Chart 4: Measure-specific fall in pollutants in Beijing**

Contribution of each measure in fall of air pollutants between 2013-17 (in %)



**Chart 5: Financial investment to control air pollution in Beijing** (in billion yuan)



## THE GIST

Beijing's approach to air pollution involved a long-term, coordinated effort with a focus on regional cooperation and comprehensive policies across multiple sectors.

Key measures included improving transportation infrastructure, retrofitting vehicles, scrapping old vehicles, and enhancing industrial regulations.

Delhi can adopt similar strategies, focusing on integrated transport systems, regional collaboration, and stricter emission controls to combat its pollution crisis.

## IN THE LIMELIGHT

# Plague of tiring sequels, buzzkill cliffhangers, and half-films

In franchising projects for better monetisation, pan-Indian films are depriving audiences of the satisfaction of a complete product; big-star filmmaking is now plagued by a lack of know-how in building IPs for the long run

**Bhuvanesh Chandar**

**A** two-film-strong, 340-minute-long cat-and-mouse game, comes to an end in director Sukumar's *Pushpa 2: The Rule*. A climactic scene ambiguously ends the arc, urging audiences to ready themselves to leave, only to be compelled back to their seats for 40 more minutes. The extended climax of the Allu Arjun-starrer meant as a segue to a third *Pushpa* film, is an excruciatingly tedious episode that leaves you with a poor aftertaste – it is a cold shower moment in this otherwise 'wildfire' of a film.

This is a new fad picked up by commercial filmmakers of the pan-India movement – franchising for better monetisation or to secure a working formula for the future. Most big-ticket films these days either end with a cliffhanger, depriving audiences of the satisfaction of a complete product, or add a surprise climactic cameo to end on a high note and make way for a sequel. Suriya's *Kangava* was undoubtedly an untested attempt in Tamil, but the makers were quick to jump on this bandwagon, with a surprise cameo by Karthi and a hook to keep us waiting for the second part. With the disastrous reception at the box office, would a *Kangava* sequel materialise?

#### One story, two films

Amid an avalanche of sequels, a deeper issue plaguing big-star filmmaking in India – ironically popularised by *Pushpa: The Rise* – is the trend of splitting the story of one film into two, to justify a sequel. Remember when we used to insert a DVD for each half of a film? Now, each of those halves is extended, with songs and action sequences, to become a film on its own.

In Upendra's *KGF*-mimic *Kabzaa*, writer-director R. Chandru's interconnected narrative arcs tell the story of how an Air Force pilot gets into the crosshairs of a gangster as well as a powerful *maharaja*. The writer takes ample time to set up the world and its characters, introduces a conflict late, and just as they culminate into a nail-biting moment, ends with a surprise cameo by Shivarajkumar and Sudeep Kichcha.

One might blame S.S. Rajamouli's 'Why Kattappa killed Baahubali' shick for this trend but there is a distinction between endeavours written and conceived as two-film projects – like *Sapta Saagaradaache Ello or Ponniyin Selvan or Salaar* – and films originally planned as one, split unnecessarily for purely commercial reasons. In *Ponniyin Selvan*, the concerns were whether the length of two films was enough to fit in Kalki's story. With *Devara*, however, it has become apparent that the formula is not working; Koratala Siva uses a climax similar to Kattappa-Baahubali, but if you are wondering why it did not stick, the answer lies in how overstretched the film's narrative feels. Given *Pushpa*'s USP lies in its exaggerated staging and larger-than-life language, one can argue that Sukumar had to give more space to his sandalwood kingpin hero. Even if so, a few other cases allow no space for any reasoning.

Shankar's *Indian 2* feels like a blatant attempt at monetising half a story. The film follows Senapathy's return, triggered by four YouTubers who expose their corrupt parents under his guidance. We



**Sequel spiral:** A still from *Pushpa 2: The Rule*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

get four scenes each to establish the families, four to mark their fallout, a killing spree with little explanation, and a bizarre #GoBackIndian scene. The climax features a prolonged 30-minute chase sequence, ending with a cliffhanger promising more in a third instalment. Added for garnish are unnecessary songs and action set pieces. At 160 minutes, the film could have easily been trimmed to 90 minutes, raising the question: why must we pay full price for an incomplete narrative?

#### Securing an idea for future

Audiences now hold their breath towards the end of a big-ticket film, wishing it to be a contentful standalone feature. If cliffhangers have become a buzzkill, surprise cameos in the climax are no longer surprising. One wonders if such an endeavour is worth taking the risk, should the first film flop at the box office. Like in the case of *Kabzaa* or *Kangava*, the cameos might have garnered some applause in theatres or some momentary propulsion at the box office, but what happens to these new characters when the sequels are dropped? A film that needs a star cameo or a cliffhanger to get audiences back to its world exposes itself as an inferior product.

Securing an idea for the future drives a filmmaker like Venkat Prabhu to end *The Greatest of All Time* with a contrived,

genre-bending twist and a sequel announcement, knowing fully that it may never pan out given Vijay's decision to retire from movies. Take cues from Prashanth Neel on securing a sequel. *KGF 2* ends with Rocky sinking into the depths of the ocean, but not without hinting at *KGF 3*. There are no gimmicks – and Rocky is gone for good – and the *KGF* films boast enough lore to justify bandwidth. Neel, refraining from hacking a story for the sake of it, takes a leaf out of the story we thought we knew everything about and makes it a prequel.

In the case of star cameos, Lokesh Kanagaraj's *Vikram*, starring Kamal Haasan, deserves all praise. The bold Suriya's spectacular cameo as Rolex had on the audiences led many other creators to emulate the same. Through Santhanam's fear of this mysterious figure, one could feel the shadow of Rolex throughout *Vikram*, naturally setting up his entry.

However, one cannot say the same for how Lokesh handled Haasan's cameo in the climax of Vijay's *Leo*. Despite peppering the second half with moments from Vikram's world, the cameo seemed contrived and forgettable.

The climatic seques to a sequel, like the one in *Pushpa 2: The Rule*, also point at a lack of confidence from the filmmakers. Wouldn't the audiences throng the screens if they knew Pushpa Raj was

an inferior product.

Securing an idea for the future drives a filmmaker like Venkat Prabhu to end *The Greatest of All Time* with a contrived,

returning with his beard-swiping swag? A surprise announcement adds mystery to how the film would take the story forward. Remember the frenzy when Ridley Scott announced *Gladiator 2*? Or when you knew Sunny Deol was returning to *Gadar*?

#### How to cash in on past glory?

Scott's sequel is a great showcase of how you can cash in on past glory, a knack many modern greats lack. Eyebrows were raised when Scott announced *Gladiator 2*. It was not that the filmmaker had lost his game; the question was on the story a *Gladiator* sequel would take. The film might have fallen short, but the attempt to birth a fresh story on Maximus Decimus Meridius' son was genuine and well-received.

Could one, however, say the same about *Indian 2*? Interestingly, one does not have to look beyond Tamil cinema to take inspiration. Just last year, Karthik Subbaraj silenced naysayers with his compelling *Jigarthanda Double X*, which stood out from 2014's *Jigarthanda* in tone and treatment while also ensuring it stays true to the theme.

The issues with this trend also point to a lack of know-how among commercial southern Indian filmmakers in building their Intellectual Properties (IPs) into long-term assets – a major reason for insincere attempts at cashing in on established IPs. Hollywood's mantra of IP building can be loosely credited to two well-known strategies: a) tapping into other formats and mediums, and b) quality merchandising of movie IPs.

Hollywood studios like Marvel and Warner Bros. have long tapped into longer and shorter formats to produce spin-offs and mediums like comic books, novels and animation to immortalise their characters in the minds of the audiences. This is why a fan will buy an Iron Man mask or a *Stranger Things*-themed t-shirt even after decades; collectables have always been a potent market for takers. In recent years, every film has come up with a fandom-targeted website that allows users to spend more hours pondering the world of the film. The value of iconography and merchandising only increases in a world of transient intangible media. Just last year, the 'Barbenheimer' phenomenon led to an ocean of merchandise, underscoring the importance of tangible memorabilia. Popcorn buckets are still trending in the U.S.

How many of these pan-Indian films managed to sell quality memorabilia? For all the flashy clothes and accessories Pushpa Raj wears, the makers could have focused on making some noteworthy memorabilia.

Pan-Indian films particularly focus on transient results in this amnesic world, creating an impact that only another sequel film could reignite. Strengthening IPs secures ideas for the future, lets the creator tap into the nostalgia of the audiences, and brings in additional business.

Making a successful sequel is nothing unheard of in India. Bollywood has its fair share of *Bhool Bhulaiyas*, *Gadars*, *Golmaals* and *Housefulls*. Malayalam cinema has tasted success with the *CBI* series, the *Aadu* franchise, the *Drishyam* films, and the *Harihar Nagar* films. While the *Dandupalyam* films and sequels to *Gaalipata*, *Mufti*, and *Love Mocktail* worked well in Kannada, audiences are glued to catch the *Kantara* sequel. Despite their flaws, *DJ Tilli* and *Yatra 2* were received well in Telugu, while *HIT* seems to be a fan-favourite. Tamil creators can learn enough from many debacles (*Saamy Square*, *Maari 2*, *Sandakozhi 2*, *Pichaikaran 2*, *Velailla Pattadharai 2*, and so on) and success stories (*Chennai 28 II*, the *Singam* series, *Aranmanai 4*).

Perhaps now is the time to outgrow sequels, half-films, and climactic cameos. The big picture needs strategy, not gimmicks. Forced franchising is neither flower nor fire.



#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

## Know your English

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

"There you go again. You always do it. You always point my mistakes."

"It's not 'point my mistakes,' but 'point out my mistakes.'"

"You see, you're doing it again. Why do you always point my mistakes, I mean, point out my mistakes?"

"I thought you wanted to improve your English."

"I do. But you always...."

"Look, let's not get into an argument. What was it you wanted to tell me?"

"I read somewhere that one of our scientists has discovered a new machine."

"Discovered a new machine! You mean 'invented,' don't you?"

"Not again. 'Discovered' or 'invented,' what difference does it make?"

"It makes a big difference. When you 'invent' something, you're creating or making something new, something which didn't exist before. For example, Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone."

"Yes, I know that. And Edison invented the electric bulb."

"That's right. Before Edison invented it, there was no such thing as the electric bulb. So when you say you've invented something, what you're claiming is that you've created something new."

"That seems clear enough. What about 'discover'?"

"When you say you've 'discovered' something, you mean you've found something that was already there."

"What do you mean by that?"

"For example, it's possible for you to discover a pirate's hidden treasure."

"That would be wonderful."

"Yes, it would indeed. By discovering the treasure, all that you've done is to find the jewels that the pirates had hidden. You have not created anything new, you understand?"

"I think I'm beginning to. Could you give me another example?"

"Sure. Sir Isaac Newton, for example, discovered the laws of gravitation. He didn't invent them, but merely discovered them."

"So when scientists find a new star in the solar system, they say they have 'discovered' a new star, not 'invented' it."

"Correct again. That's because they have not created the star, but only found it."

"Well, I think I've understood the difference between 'discover' and 'invent.'"

"That's good. And I..."

"...guess what I discovered recently?"

"Pirate's treasure!"

"No. I've discovered that our friend Urmila is a terrible cook."

"Some discovery! I knew that ages ago. If you're going to eat anything she makes, you need a cast-iron stomach."

"Cast-iron stomach! What's that?"

"It's a very strong stomach that can withstand bad food or anything nauseating. If you don't have a cast-iron stomach, it's very difficult to be a traveling salesman."

"That's true. They are well-known for their cast-iron stomachs."

"In that case, I think Urmila should marry a traveling salesman!"

*Published in The Hindu on May 24, 1994*

## Word of the day

### Duress:

compulsory force or threat

### Synonyms:

pressure, intimidation, coercion

### Usage:

*Under duress, she signed the contract.*

### Pronunciation:

*newsth.live/duresspro*

### International Phonetic Alphabet:

*/dju'res/*

## THE DAILY QUIZ

### A quiz on noted film personality Raj Kapoor on his birth centenary

**V. V. Ramanan**

#### QUESTION 1

What was the original given name of Raj Kapoor and the name of his two brothers who were also noted actors?

#### QUESTION 2

Name the 1935 film where he debuted as a child artist and in which film did he get his break for the lead role opposite Madhubala?

#### QUESTION 3

What was the first film under the R.K. Films banner and from where did it get its logo?

#### QUESTION 4

Which iconic duo, synonymous with Raj Kapoor's

films, made their debut in the 1949 flick *Barsaat*?

#### QUESTION 5

For which prestigious international awards were *Awara* and *Boot Polish* nominated?

#### QUESTION 6

On which film was Raj Kapoor working at the time of his passing, and which was later completed by his sons?

#### QUESTION 7

Which Hrishikesh Mukherjee classic is dedicated to Raj Kapoor?

#### QUESTION 8

Which film had Raj Kapoor, his father Prithviraj, and eldest son Randhir?



**Visual Question:**

Name the person Raj Kapoor is hugging in this picture.

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

1. Who designed the transmission system and received the first signal? **Ans: Guglielmo Marconi**

2. Name the source and destination of the transmission. **Ans: Cornwall, England, to Newfoundland, Canada**

3. What was the transmitted message? **Ans: The letter S in Morse code.**

4. What did detractors believe would happen during the experiment? **Ans: Earth's curvature would disrupt the transmission**

5. Name the device invented by Edouard Branly that helped in transmitting long-range signals. **Ans: Coherer**

Visual: Name this German scientist who shared the Nobel Prize in Physics with answer to question 1 for his contributions to wireless communication. **Ans: Ferdinand Braun**

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

**From Page One****Gukesh is youngest world chess champ**

Gukesh is also only the 18th world champion in history, which dates back to 1886. That there have been only 17 undisputed World champions before him puts into perspective the enormity of the achievement.

His campaign had begun on the wrong foot, though. He lost the first game, despite having white pieces (considered slightly advantageous usually). The second game was drawn, and Gukesh won the third to equalise the match at 1.5-1.5.

All the following seven games were drawn. Then Gukesh won the 11th game to take the lead for the first time in the match, but Ding struck back immediately to draw level. That meant the match would go to the bitter end, contrary to the expectations of most top players, who had tipped Gukesh as the clear favourite, based on current form.

By virtue of being the champion, Ding, who defeated Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi in last year's World title match, had booked his flight ticket to Singapore. Gukesh qualified for the World championship by winning the qualifying tournament – the Candidates, which was held earlier this year in Toronto.

There were two other Indians in the Candidates (R. Pragganandhaa and Vidit Gujrathi), as well as two in the Women's event (Koneru Humpy and R. Vaishali). After that, Gukesh went on to play a major role in India's stunning twin triumph at the Chess Olympiad in Budapest.

India's men's and women's teams won the team gold. Only two other countries had done it before – the erstwhile Soviet Union and China.

Gukesh played on the top-board (where every country would usually field its best player) and won the individual gold.

**SC halts new suits on claims over mosques**

"When the Supreme Court is examining the matter, will it be just and fair for other courts to pass orders? Is it not proper for them to stay their hands? We are looking at the legality, contours, and ambit of the 1991 Act," Chief Justice Khanna said. When the interruptions continued, the Chief Justice Khanna firmly said, "Whatever order we have to pass, we will pass," adding that the Bench could even retire to chambers to pronounce its order. The next hearing in the case is on February 17.

Of the 18 pending cases, the Chief Justice noted that the top court itself was dealing with appeals against orders passed by local courts at Varanasi and Mathura in Uttar Pradesh to survey the premises of the Gyanvapi and Shahi Eidgah mosques, respectively.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Union government, said that third parties cannot seek a stay of civil suit proceedings. The Centre was given four weeks to file its counter-affidavit in the case, which it has not done for the past four years. Senior advocate Vijay Hansaria argued that civil suits cannot be stayed while entertaining writ petitions concerning the Places of Worship Act.

"These writ petitions [challenging the 1991 Act] had brought up the matter of the civil suits. Notice was already issued in these petitions. Secondly, other writ petitions [by minority organisations and parties] have raised the issue of enforcing the 1991 Act against these civil suits. They have called for injunction," Chief Justice Khanna responded.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, for the petitioners, sought a reference to a five-judge Bench.

**Cabinet approves Bills on simultaneous polls**

Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh, in an X post, reiterated the party's opposition to simultaneous polls and shared Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's letter to the Kovind panel. "There is no place for the concept of simultaneous elections in a country that has adopted parliamentary system of government. Such forms of simultaneous elections that are being floated by the government go against the guarantees of federalism contained in the Constitution".

The second Bill on simultaneous elections pertains to aligning the terms of the Legislative Assemblies of three Union Territories – Puducherry, Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir – with other Legislative Assemblies and the Lok Sabha, as proposed in the Constitution amendment Bill.

**Six killed in massive fire in T.N. hospital**

Several people were rescued by the Fire and Rescue Services personnel. The total number of casualties is yet to be ascertained at the time of filing this report at 11 p.m.

Minister for Rural Development I. Periyasamy, Minister for Food and Civil Supplies R. Sakkarapani, former Minister Dindigul C. Sreenivasan, Dindigul Collector M.N. Poongodi, Dindigul Superintendent of Police A. Pradeep and Palani MLA I.P. Senthil Kumar rushed to the spot. Vedasandur MLA Gandhirajan and former MLA Paramasivam also visited the spot.

Addressing mediapersons, Ms. Poongodi said the fire broke out around 9.45 p.m. "The rescue operations at City Hospital have been completed. We are yet to ascertain the cause of the fire accident," the Collector said.

**Debate on Constitution to kick off in LS today**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha will on Friday begin a two-day debate on the Constitution to mark the beginning of the 75th year of its adoption in the country.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to reply to the debate on Saturday.

Congress leader and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is likely to make her maiden speech in the Lok Sabha during the debate.

Sources said Ms. Vadra will be the first speaker from the Opposition benches.

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi will be one of the key speakers but it is not clear when he would make his intervention.

The Rajya Sabha will hold the debate on Monday and Tuesday. Mr. Modi is expected to reply to it on Tuesday.

The debate on the Constitution has been the key demand of the opposition for the Winter Session of Parliament.

Both the Congress and the BJP have issued three-line whips to all their members to be present in the House on Friday and Saturday.

(With inputs from PTI)

**Security forces kill seven Maoists in Chhattisgarh encounter, recover arms**

**Shubhomoy Sikdar**  
RAIPUR

Seven Maoists, including two women cadre, were killed in a gun battle with security forces in the Abujhmad forests along the Dantewada-Narayanpur boundary in Chhattisgarh on Thursday, the police said.

The encounter began around 3 a.m. and continued for a few hours. Around 7 p.m., the police updated that seven bodies of Maoists had been recovered and the search operation was on.

The operation was carried out by personnel from the District Reserve Guard from Kondagaon, Bastar, Narayanpur and Dantewada, along with the State's Special Task Force (STF) and Central Reserve Police

**Centre committed to protecting country's heritage: Shekhawat**

India is making 'transformative strides' in tourism, says Culture Minister, slamming those who have a problem with pace and scale of development

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of the controversy over contesting claims on heritage sites of a religious nature, Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Thursday said the government was committed to protecting the country's heritage.

Addressing a press conference here, Mr. Shekhawat said there were people who had a problem with the pace and scale of India's development.

The government was committed to exposing such people as well as preserving the country's heritage for the coming generations, Mr. Shekhawat said.

The Minister said the Kumbh Mela, to be held from next month, would be showcased as a confluence of cultures from across the country and nearly 45 crore people would be visiting the mega fair.

"The Maha Kumbh being organised at Prayagraj from January 13 to February 26, 2025 will showcase the rich, spiritual and cul-



**Mega festival:** Preparations under way for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Prayagraj ahead of the Maha Kumbh Mela. ANI

tural heritage of our country to the world," he said.

He also spoke about the "transformative strides" in tourism, detailing infrastructure developments, global promotional campaigns, and projects aimed at enhancing India's cultural and tourism landscape. He said intensified efforts were being made to make tourism an integral part of building a *Viksit Bharat*.

A total of 76.17 million jobs had been created in the tourism sector. The 'Paryatan Mitra' & 'Paryati Didi' programmes had been launched. Foreign exchange earnings were esti-

mated to be \$28.07 billion, marking a 42.53% increase compared with 2014. He said domestic tourist numbers had seen a remarkable increase of 95.64%. India's ranking in the global travel and tourism development index had improved to 39 from 65.

Over ₹6,800 crore had been spent on destination development projects. Projects worth ₹3,295.76 crore had been approved for development of lesser-known tourism sites.

The e-tourist visa facility had proven to be very beneficial for the visitors, the Minister said.

**Many fake narratives on privatisation, says Railway Minister**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Responding to a debate on the Railways (Amendment) Bill 2024 in the Lok Sabha, Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has said that a fake narrative is being created that the passing of the draft legislation will pave the way for privatisation.

"I sincerely urge the House to not create any fake narratives in this regard," Mr. Vaishnaw said on Wednesday.

Mr. Vaishnaw added that there was a need to de-politicise the sectors of defence and Railways, as they form the backbone of the country.

The Minister said that 31,000 km of railway track had been laid since 2014 and electrification along the tracks completed through public investment. 1,300 railway stations are being redeveloped, nearly 37,000 LHB coaches have been made by the government for 140 crore Indians," he said.

He added that after demands from several MPs to introduce general coaches, the Railways was initiating a drive to manufacture 12,000 general coaches.

"900 general coaches have been added in the current financial year, and work on rolling out 10,000 coaches



**Project to connect Kashmir with Kanniyakumari to be ready in four months**

is on track," Mr. Vaishnaw said.

Mr. Vaishnaw said the "dream project" to connect Kashmir to Kanniyakumari via rail network would soon be a reality. The project involves running a Vande Bharat train until Srinagar. Currently, the rail connectivity is till Jammu. "The project is almost ready, and testing and safety certification work is on currently. In the next four months, we will see trains running along the network," Mr. Vaishnaw said.

The Vande Bharat train will run atop the Chenab Bridge, at a height of 359 metres, which is 35 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower in France, he added.

**Rahul meets 2020 Hathras victim's kin, promises fight with all might for justice**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
LUCKNOW

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Thursday reached Hathras in Uttar Pradesh to meet the family of a Dalit woman who died allegedly after being gang-raped in September 2020.

"Today, I went to Hathras and met the victim's family. The whole family still lives in fear. They are being treated like criminals. They cannot move freely – they are kept under surveillance of guns and cameras at all times. The promises made to them by the BJP government have not been fulfilled till date. Neither have they been given a government job nor has the promise of shifting them to some other place been fulfilled," Mr. Gandhi



Congress MP Rahul Gandhi reaches Bholgarhi village to meet the family members of a gang-rape victim in Hathras on Thursday. PTI

posted on X.

"But we will not let this family be forced to live in this condition. We will fight with all our might to get them justice," he said.

The 19-year-old Dalit girl was gang-raped by the accused hailing from dominant caste groups on September 14, 2020.

She died on September 29 in New Delhi during

treatment. The victim was cremated in the early hours of October 30, with her family alleging the local police had forced them to conduct the last rites of the night.

In February 2023, an SC/ST court acquitted three out of the four accused and convicted one for culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

**Lok Sabha passes Bill to amend the Disaster Management Act of 2005**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Thursday passed a Bill to strengthen the working of national and State disaster management authorities, with the Centre stressing that the legislation will help State governments deal with disasters better.

The House cleared the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024 by a voice vote. Several amendments moved by the Opposition members were negated.

Pointing out that State governments had flagged several difficulties in implementing the Disaster Management Act of 2005, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said the new Bill would



The new Bill seeks to bring clarity and convergence among stakeholders in the field of disaster management. THULASI KAKKAT

not only overcome them but also strengthen the disaster management system.

The Bill seeks to bring clarity and convergence among stakeholders working in the field of disaster management.

"When a disaster hits, it hits the country as a

Trinamool Congress alleged that the Modi government was not able to manage the pandemic properly and a large number of people died. He said, "This Bill creates a plethora of organisations and has added a number of English terms".

Captain Viriato Fernandes of the Congress said that while the members were talking about following a holistic approach to deal with disasters, the Bill seemed to have gone against that approach.

Another Congress member, G.K. Padavi, pointed out that climate change had not been included in the Bill and the word "compensation" had been replaced with "relief". "It (promotes) over centralisation," Mr. Padavi said.

**India votes in favour of ceasefire in Gaza**

**Press Trust of India**  
UNITED NATIONS

India on Wednesday voted in favour of a UN General Assembly resolution that demanded an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and reiterated the demand for unconditional release of all hostages.

India was among the 158 nations that voted in favour of the resolution.



**APPEAL**  
Baby Shreyan Das, 4 years old son of Sanjay Das, is admitted at Mazumdar Shaw Medical Center and is diagnosed with Thalassemia Major. Only curative treatment is Bone Marrow Transplant. The estimated cost is approximately Rs. 25,00,000/- Kindly send donation however small by Cheque/D.D./O

Fundraising account No. 20000913487, State Bank of India, R.A.Puram, IFSC CODE: SBIN001655. You can also donate through Google pay No. 9884607377, UPI ID: savepoorlives@ksbi. Donation to save Poor Lives is exempted under 80G of I.T.

SAVE POOR LIVES REGISTERED PUBLIC CHARITABLE TRUST, Flat No A1, Ceeiros Garden, Ground floor, Old No. 76 Kamraj Salai, Raja Annamalaiapuram, Chennai - 600028. Contact No. 044-2044165 & 044-35691848, Mobile: 9884607377 Email: savepoorlives@gmail.com Our website: www.savepoorlives.com

# Will take time to bring permanent solution to Manipur crisis: CM

Biren says State govt. has requested Centre to withdraw AFSPA; reminds about the role played by Manipuri women in revolting against the British

## Press Trust of India

**M**anipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on Thursday said the Centre and the State governments are making all efforts to bring a permanent solution to the ongoing crisis in the State, but suggested that it could take time due to the fragile nature of the situation.

Speaking at a programme to commemorate Nupi Lan, Mr. Singh said, "The State and Central governments have been putting all efforts to bring a permanent solution. However, bringing a solution would take time as the situation had become chronic and fragile."

Regarding the re-imposition of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in six police station areas, Mr. Singh said, "The State government had requested the Centre to review and withdraw AFSPA from the said police stations" and sought cooperation and support from the public in the government's effort to restore peace and tranquility in the State.

## Women's role

The CM said Nupi Lan Nu-mit is observed annually to remember the role played by Manipuri women in 1904 and 1939, revolting against the injustice of British colonialism.



Manipur CM N. Biren Singh pays tribute to the departed women freedom fighters at the Nupee Lal Memorial complex in Imphal. PTI

International events have showcased the uniqueness of our culture across the world."

He informed that "the State government, acknowledging the hard work and commitment of women, had introduced certain women welfare schemes, including Ima Nongthangleima Yaipha Tengbang Scheme, providing financial assistance of ₹500 per month to unemployed women who are above the age of 40 years."

Later, replying to media queries on the treatment of Myanmar refugees, Mr. Singh said, "Those who are criticising should come here and see the ground realities. There are no differences. Refugees are being treated under the guidelines of the United Nations and the supervision of the Government of India and the Government of Manipur. Equal treatment is being given."

In his inaugural address, Mr. Stalin highlighted the

# Stalin, Pinarayi inaugurate renovated Periyar memorial in Kerala's Vaikom

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KOTTAYAM

The strong political solidarity between the governments of Kerala and Tamil Nadu was on full display as Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his Tamil Nadu counterpart, M.K. Stalin, came together at Vaikom in Kottayam district of Kerala on Thursday to inaugurate the renovated memorial to Tamil reformist leader E.V. Ramasamy Naicker, fondly known as Thanthai Periyar.

Mr. Stalin inaugurated the renovated memorial, while Mr. Vijayan presided over a public function organised to mark the occasion. K. Veeramani, president of the Dravidar Kazhagam, was the chief guest.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Vijayan emphasised the importance of cooperation between the two States, describing it as a true example of cooperative federalism.

He called for the expansion of this collaboration, especially at a time when the States face "increasing encroachments on their rights, including fiscal autonomy".

## 'Across borders'

"In the Vaikom Satyagraha, we witnessed coexistence and cooperation across borders. Kerala and Tamil Nadu continue to embody that spirit. If Periyar stood for the self-respect of individuals, today's times demand that States stand up for their self-respect," Mr. Vijayan said.

In his inaugural address, Mr. Stalin highlighted the



Grand launch: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and other leaders pay tribute to a portrait of Periyar, at Vaikom in Kottayam district on Thursday. PTI

**Vaikom was genesis of numerous social reform movements in India, says Tamil Nadu Chief Minister**

historic significance of the Vaikom Satyagraha, describing it as the genesis of numerous social reform movements in India. "Vaikom was not just an isolated victory; it marked the beginning of greater victories. Let us remain steadfast in our efforts to achieve continuous success in all spheres. Whatever obstacles come our way, we will overcome them. An egalitarian society will be established at all costs," he said.

Mr. Stalin said modern developments had not been able to remove discrimination in society completely and only a change of heart among the people would help attain an egalitarian society.

A change of heart among the people [against discrimination] is neces-

sary. Not everything could be controlled by legislation. People should work towards an egalitarian society and that rationalist and scientific thinking should grow," he said.

**Shared vision**

Mr. Stalin reiterated Tamil Nadu and Kerala's shared vision of creating an egalitarian society, adding that their cooperation would persist in the years to come.

As part of the ceremony,

Kannada writer and Vai-

kom Award winner Deva-

nur Mahadeva was ho-

Ajit and other leaders of the NCP call on Sharad Pawar in New Delhi

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MUMBAI

Nationalist Congress Party leader and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar called on his uncle and Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) leader, Sharad Pawar, on his 84th birthday in New Delhi on Thursday.

He was accompanied by his wife and Rajya Sabha member, Sunetra Pawar, and NCP leaders Praful Patel, Sunil Tatkare and Chhagan Bhujbal. They were greeted by Supriya Sule, MP. "There are family relations beyond politics. I came to seek the darshan of Saheb and kaki [Sharad's wife Pratibha Pawar]. It is Saheb's birthday today, and kaki's birthday tomorrow. So we came to wish them. We had a general discussion about several things. He asked about the Parbhani violence, about the Cabinet expansion. I came to seek the darshan of Saheb and kaki [Sharad's wife Pratibha Pawar]. It is Saheb's birthday today, and kaki's birthday tomorrow. So we came to wish them. We had a general discussion about several things. He asked about the Parbhani violence, about the Cabinet expansion. I came to seek the darshan of Saheb and kaki [Sharad's wife Pratibha Pawar]. It is Saheb's birthday today, and kaki's birthday tomorrow. So we came to wish them. We had a general discussion about several things. 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## IN BRIEF



## PM to lay foundation stone of Ken-Betwa river linking work

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of the Ken-Betwa river linking project in Madhya Pradesh on December 25, the birth anniversary of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee, said Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Thursday. Mr. Yadav was speaking to reporters on the completion of one year of his government in the State. The project to link the Ken and Betwa rivers will benefit Chhattarpur, Panna, Tikamgarh, Niwadi, Damoh, Shivpuri, Datia, Raisen, Vidisha and Sagar districts of the State, he said. It will provide water for irrigation in the Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh and in Uttar Pradesh. PTI

## NIA arrests Trinamool worker in BJP leader murder case

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday arrested another Trinamool Congress worker in the 2023 murder of BJP leader Bijoy Krishna Bhuiyan at Moyna in West Bengal. Ahead of panchayat elections in May last year, Bhuiyan's body was recovered from a hospital around 20 km from Moyna, hours after he was allegedly abducted by a mob. He was the BJP's booth president at Moyna. The NIA arrested one Suvendu Bhowmick from a village in Moyna in connection with Bhuiyan's murder and brought him to Kolkata. Bhuiyan's family had alleged that Mr. Bhowmick was involved in the murder. The NIA conducted search operations in Goramahal and adjacent areas of Moyna as part of probe in the murder case earlier this year.

Is celebrating Tipu Jayanti banned, asks Bombay HC

## The Hindu Bureau

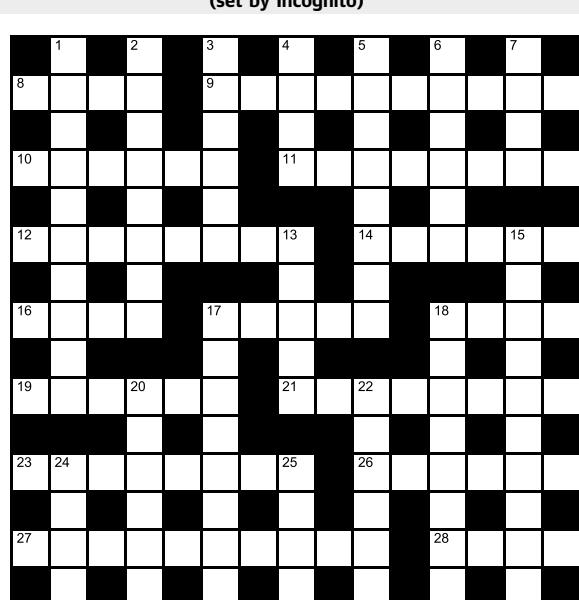
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Thursday questioned the Maharashtra government's move to restrict the birth anniversary celebrations of Tipu Sultan. A Division Bench of Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and Shrivikumar G. Dige asked, "Is there a ban to celebrate the birth anniversary of Tipu Sultan?"

The petition, filed by the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul-Muslimeen's Pune city president, said that initially the party sought permission to take out a procession on the birth anniversaries of Tipu Sultan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad along with Constitution Day, but it was denied by the Pune Rural Police.

TH CROSSWORD + 14355  
(set by Incognito)

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



## Across

- 8 Wild fire is common occurrence (4)
- 9 Simple men take a bit of trouble to create tools (10)
- 10 Hardship from gold contract (6)
- 11 Confidential remark in play from behind scene on stage, "Reserve" (3-5)
- 12 Told letter by letter, "S-L-E-P-T" (5,3)

## Bangladesh team likely to attend Vijay Divas event

**Moyurie Som**  
KOLKATA

Indian Army sources said on Thursday that a delegation from Bangladesh was likely to attend the Vijay Divas celebrations at the Eastern Command headquarters here on December 16.

The day marks India's historic victory over Pakistani forces in the 1971 Liberation War and the consequent formation of Bangladesh from erstwhile East Pakistan.

## Veterans to participate

Defence sources said the Bangladeshi delegation might include *muktijoddhas* (Bangladeshi freedom fighters) who were part of East Pakistan's freedom struggle in 1971.

This news follows high-level talks between Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and Chief Adviser of Bangladesh Muhammad Yunus, Bangladeshi Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hosseini, and Foreign Secretary Mohammad Jashim Uddin in Dhaka on Monday.

Mr. Misri's visit came two weeks after the Dhaka Metropolitan Police had arrested Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das in a sedition case, which led to a sociopolitical turmoil on both sides of the Bengal border.

## Consumer inflation eases slightly to 5.5% in November

Inflation remains high in rural India, but eases in cities; vegetables inflation eases from 42% in October to 29%; pulses inflation drops to a two-year low; oils and fats inflation shoots up 13%

**Vikas Dhoot**  
NEW DELHI

India's retail inflation cooled slightly to 5.5% in November from a 14-month high of 6.2% in October, but remained significantly elevated for rural consumers at 5.95%, while dropping to 4.8% for their urban counterparts.

Food inflation, which has been a bugbear for hopes of an interest rate cut, also eased a tad from October's 15-month peak of 10.9% to 9.04% in November. Rural consumers experienced a slightly higher uptick of 9.1% while urban consumers saw an 8.74% gain in prices.

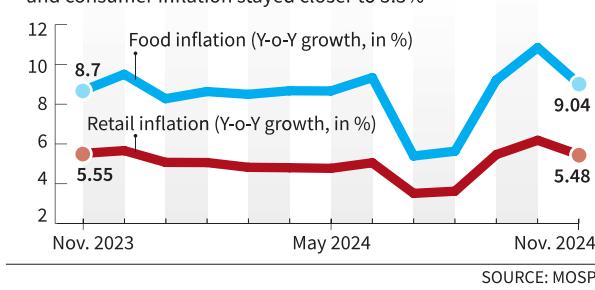
This marks the third straight month of food inflation staying above the 9% mark, and overall consumer price rise of over 5%.

**Vegetable prices ease**  
Vegetables inflation eased from a 57-month high of 42.2% in October to 29.33%. However, oils and fats inflation shot up 13.3%, the highest pace in two-and-a-half years, and significantly over the 9.5% rise in the previous month and the mere 2.5% inflation in September.

"The decline in inflation

## A mild respite

For the third straight month, food prices surged by over 9%, and consumer inflation stayed closer to 5.5%.



in November 2024 is mainly due to decline in inflation in 'food & beverages' group," the National Statistics Office (NSO) said, pointing to a significant drop in price rise observed in vegetables, pulses, sugar, fruits, eggs, milk, spices, transport, communication, and personal care and effects. But these moderations were only marginal in some cases.

On the other hand, the highest inflation at an all-India level in November was recorded in garlic (85.14%), potato (66.65%), cauliflower (47.7%), cabbage (43.58%), and coconut oil (42.13%). On a month-on-month basis, the Consumer Price Index was 0.15% lower than October and the Food Price Index was down 0.6%, with urban consumers experiencing greater relief.

Fruits inflation eased only marginally from 8.4% in October to 7.7% in November. Pulses inflation dropped to 5.4%, the lowest in at least two years, and cereals inflation stood at 6.9%. Personal care and effects inflation remained elevated at 10.4%, though it was a tad lower than the 11% surge recorded in October.

## Spike in six States

Six of the 22 States (including the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir), for which the NSO calculates monthly inflation rates, observed a price rise of over 6% – the upper limit of the Central bank's inflation target – in November. These are Chhattisgarh (8.4%), Bihar

(7.55%), Odisha (6.8%), Uttar Pradesh (6.6%), Kerala (6.3%), and Madhya Pradesh (6.05%).

Delhi recorded the lowest inflation of 2.65%, and was the only State to record a price rise below the Reserve Bank of India's median inflation target of 4%.

November marked the onset of correction in vegetables prices, led by tomatoes and other seasonal winter vegetables, and the food price shock is now dissipating. This trend that is likely to continue over the next two to four months, QuantEco Research economists Shubhada Rao, Vivek Kumar and Yuvika Singhal said in a note.

"However, for annualised inflation to ease, we need to see a combination of four conditions transpiring – tomato prices have room to correct further; winter vegetable price correction needs to exceed seasonal trends; oils & fats inflation has a very strong persistence owing to second-order impact which needs to dissipate; and last but not the least, robust Rabi crop should bring down cereal inflation, especially for wheat," they underlined.



## India confers honorary rank on Nepal Army chief

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu conferred the honorary rank of 'General of Indian Army' on Nepal's Army chief General Ashok Raj Sigdel at a ceremony here on Thursday.

The honour was given to him for his commendable military prowess and immeasurable contribution to further fostering Nepal's long and friendly association with India, according to a statement issued by the President's office.

There has been a tradition set by Nepal and India since 1950 of conferring the title of Honorary General on the Army chief of each other.

Nepal's President Ramchandra Paudel last month conferred the honorary rank on Indian Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi at a special ceremony – also known as Sheetal Niwas – in Kathmandu.

## Jharkhand HC stays law on 75% reservation for locals in private jobs



Act has created a clear division between candidates from the State and those from outside Jharkhand."

He said the implementation of the Act was against the principles of the Constitution which guaranteed equality in employment.

The lawyer argued, "The State government cannot direct private companies to give employment only to people of a certain category."

The court was told that the Haryana government had also implemented a similar law, which had been struck down by the Punjab-Haryana High Court.

After hearing the petitioner's argument, the Division Bench said a decision had already come from the Punjab and Haryana Court in a similar case and stayed the law.

The law has been in force in the State from 2021.

## JMM slams BJP

Reacting to the court's order, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha MLA Samir Mohanty accused the BJP of being behind the appeal.

"The BJP is behind it so that our government cannot recruit our people in private sector. These people are in the habit of putting obstacles so that Hemant Soren cannot deliver development in the State," Mr. Mohanty told reporters on the last day of the special session of the Jharkhand Assembly.

Former Chief Minister and BJP MLA Champai Soren said, "Let's see what kind of reply the State government is giving in the High Court, then only I will comment on it."

## Delhi court acquits former Coal Secretary and five others in coal scam case

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Wednesday acquitted six persons, including former Coal Secretary and two other public servants, in a case of an alleged scam in allocation of two coal blocks in Odisha in 2012 investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Special judge Sanjay Bansal of the Rouse Avenue court ruled that the Central agency failed to prove the charges framed against the accused, including former Secretary of the Union Ministry of Coal H.C. Gupta and two senior officials, K.S. Krophla and K.C. Samria. They were absolved of charges under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and the Indian Penal Code.

The court acquitted the company NPPL and its managing director, Y. Harish Chandra Prasad, and chairman P. Trivikrama Prasad.

the company, no question arises for existence of any conspiracy. It is held that prosecution has failed to prove any conspiracy," the court noted in its acquittal order.

## Lack of scrutiny

The CBI alleged that the NPPL had obtained coal blocks at Rampuria, Dipside and Rampuria in Odisha by making fraudulent misrepresentations about its net worth and land, which are important criteria to qualify for the coal block allocation.

"...When the application has been found to be complete, when the applicant company NPPL has been found to be eligible company and when no misrepresentations were made by

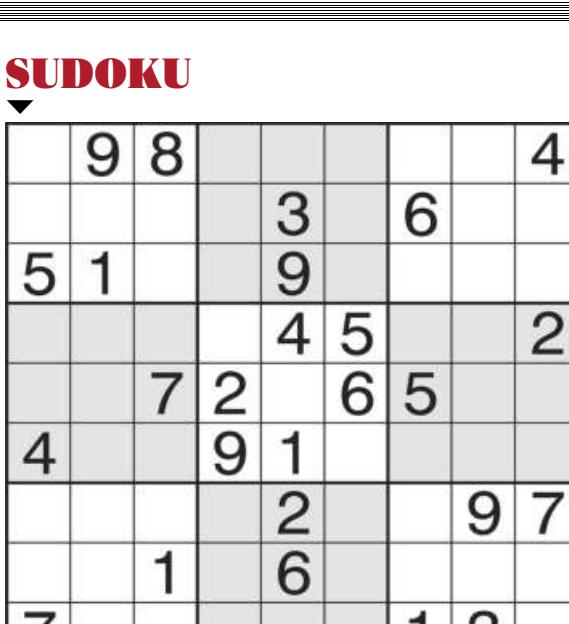
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Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and the Indian Penal Code.

The court acquitted the company NPPL and its managing director, Y. Harish Chandra Prasad, and chairman P. Trivikrama Prasad. The two were booked for offences under the two laws.

It was alleged that the officials of the Coal Ministry did not scrutinise company's application and hence facilitated it in getting undue advantage in allocation of the coal blocks.

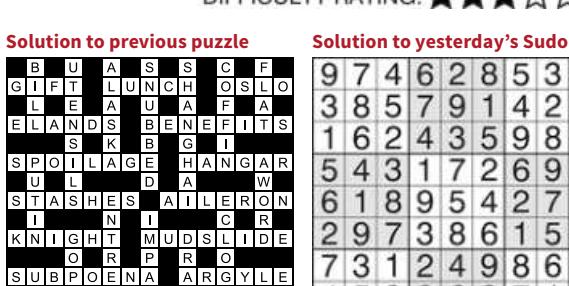
## SUDOKU



No SS6968 Distribution www.knightfeathers.com

Solution to previous puzzle

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



## FAITH

## Nammazhwar's exaltation

Scriptures say that God is formless, pure, blemishless and eternal. However, He takes various forms for the sake of human beings. He is still unsatisfied, as many have not enjoyed or experienced His divine ecstasy. So, He chose to send His messengers as acharyas, apostles, saints and seers. Lord Krishna proclaims that Sruthi and Smruti are His dictates and commands. Although they are exhaustive and elaborate, Azhwars and acharyas condense them and give them in a nutshell. The work *Thiruvaimozhi* by Nammazhwar contains the essence of Vedas and Upanishads and is considered nectar.

Velukkudi Sri Krishnan Swamy said in a discourse that anyone can surrender to God to fulfil any desire or objective. Draupathi surrendered to be saved from being humiliated by the wicked Duryodhana, and the elephant Gajendra surrendered to render service to God. The apostle Nammazhwar surrendered to derive moksha. The two essential things needed for attaining moksha are to restrain from worldly activities and to show deep love and affection towards God. Nammazhwar wondered why moksha was delayed, though he observed the two requisites. When a house is caught on fire, its neighbours become restive. Nammazhwar says he was like the neighbour caught amid the people surrounded by the fire of worldly mundanes. The apostle asks whether God wanted him to suffer as it is challenging to get out of delusions. He says further that he needs more patience and asks why there is a delay. God only knows what to give when, how, and to whom. It was God's cherished desire to guide the people through the apostle.

## IN BRIEF



## TransUnion CIBIL names Bhavesh Jain as MD &amp; CEO

TransUnion CIBIL, which is into insights and information, has appointed Bhavesh Jain as MD and CEO. He will replace Rajesh Kumar who resigned after a five-year stint. Mr. Jain has been promoted from the position of chief revenue officer. He had previously worked at Thompson Reuters, Citi and Kone. "Bhavesh is an accomplished leader with passion for helping India's economy continue to grow," said Todd Skinner, president, TransUnion International.

## On day 2, Vishal Mega Mart IPO subscribed 1.53 times

The ₹8,000-crore initial share sale of supermarket chain Vishal Mega Mart got fully subscribed on the second day of bidding on Thursday, ending with 1.53 times subscription. The initial public offer (IPO) got bids for 1,15,74,96,150 shares against 75,67,56,757 shares on offer, according to NSE data. The portion for non-institutional investors attracted 3.80 times subscription while the share of retail individual investors got subscribed 1.16 times. PTI

## HDFC Bank gets a SEBI warning communiqué

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has sent an administrative letter of warning to HDFC Bank on non-compliance with provisions relating to merchant bankers, insider trading and disclosure compliance, as per a filing. The bank said the letter relates to observations during periodic inspection of investment banking activities, thereby claiming non-compliance with some provisions of the SEBI (Merchant Bankers) Regulations. These were minor, technical violations, said sources.

## Samsung accuses CCI of detaining employees, seizing data unlawfully

Reuters  
NEW DELHI

Samsung has accused India's competition watchdog of unlawfully detaining its employees and seizing data in a raid carried out in connection with an antitrust investigation on Amazon and Walmart's Flipkart, according to a legal filing.

Samsung is embroiled in the Competition Commission of India's (CCI) investigation that in August concluded that the South Korean giant and other smartphone companies broke anti-trust laws by colluding with Amazon and Flipkart to exclusively launch products online.

Samsung's October 11 filing in the High Court in Chandigarh seeks to quash the investigation findings related to conduct of the company, arguing the CCI had illegally seized material from its employees during a 2022 raid at one of Amazon's vendors. Three Samsung employees were present in the vicinity of the search when the watchdog's officials detained them, seized their phones and copied all the confidential and privileged data, the company said in its 32-page filing, which hasn't been made public.

"The entire search exercise undertaken... is patently illegal and any material collected thereunder should not be relied upon and should be promptly returned," the Indian unit of South Korea's Samsung Electronics wrote. The CCI "should be prohibited from using or relying upon

## CEA seeks a fix for mental health crisis afflicting the young

**India's demographic dividend:** V. Anantha Nageswaran flags worries about a 'whole generation' of anxious and depressed youth

Vikas Dhoot  
NEW DELHI

**C**hief Economic Adviser (CEA) V. Anantha Nageswaran sought to draw attention to the mental health crisis among India's youth and called for collective action to ensure that not only does the country create jobs and address skill gaps for the young, but also ensure their physical as well as mental well-being.

While listing out some of the priority areas in the economy that need attention such as generating productive employment, tapping the full potential of the agricultural sector, enhancing manufacturing and micro, small and medium enterprises, he said, "There is on thing that I have not included here."

"The focus should also be on the mental health of India's demographic dividend, the prevalence of massive screen time, sedentary habits and ultra-processed food consumption is making a whole generation anxious, depressed and prone to suicidal thoughts," he said at a Confederation of Indian Industry event held here.

"It is not just a government responsibility, but the responsibility of society and the private sector as well. If India is to reap the demographic dividend, In-



**Open mind:** The CEA said the government is not ruling out that many factors may have caused the second quarter growth blip. PTI

dians should not only be physically healthy, but also be mentally healthy," the CEA underlined.

Deregulation, energy security, balanced rural-urban development and making the 'Made in India' label synonymous with high quality through innovations, research and development and quality consciousness, were some of the other essentials Mr. Nageswaran prescribed for the economy.

## Growth slowdown

Referring to the slide in the GDP growth to a seven-quarter low of 5.4% in the July-September quarter, the CEA, who had earlier termed the slump as a 'one-off' blip, said there could have been a number of factors at work and the government is not "necessarily ruling them out".

"It is not that we think that the second quarter slowdown is purely a data artefact, and as more data comes in, it will automatically be upgraded. Numbers could be revised higher, or, for that matter, it could be a simple seasonal factor because of rains or some religious observance in September, etc." he said.

"It could also be something more fundamental as the ability of the State to spend what is budgeted and also what is going on post-COVID in the private sector, in terms of hiring and compensation, etc.

"But nonetheless, I think, the fact remains that we will be on track to achieve the kind of growth numbers we had penciled in the Economic Survey in July, somewhere between 6.5% and 7% for the whole financial year," he said.

## Oct. industrial output scales 4-month high

Vikas Dhoot  
NEW DELHI

India's industrial output grew at a three-month high pace of 3.5% in October, from 3.1% in September, with factories leading the uptick again with a 4.1% rise, while mining and electricity growth remained anaemic at 0.9% and 2%, respectively.

In absolute terms, output levels were at a four-month high in October, with the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) at 149.9, 2.2% over September.

Base effects had some role to play in the relatively mild growth in October as the IIP rose 11.9% in the same month of 2023. For instance, tepid mining growth came on the path of a 13.1% rise in October 2023 but reflected highest output in four months.

On the basis of end-use, consumer durables led the way for the second straight month, rising 5.9% in October after a 6.5% growth in September, likely linked to factories pushing out products for the festive season. However, durables production in October was 2.2% lower than in the month of September.

Consumer non-durables also grew 2.7% relative to a 9.7% uptick last October, marking the best growth in six months. Apart from non-durables, three other end-use segments showed a mild improvement in growth – primary goods (up 2.6%), intermediate goods (3.7%), and infrastructure goods, which rose at a three-month high of 4%. Capital goods' output growth slowed to 3.1%, and



production was 6.2% below September levels.

Moreover, 18 of the 23 manufacturing segments recorded a growth in output, the same as September, with five sectors recording a double-digit growth, including electrical equipment (33.1%), furniture (27.7%), and other transport equipment (17.4%). The number of segments with higher year-on-year output were just 12 in August, when the IIP had contracted fractionally.

## Encouraging sign

"The improvement in growth of consumer goods output despite high inflation in October is quite an encouraging sign for consumption demand in the economy," said Paras Jaiswal, senior economic analyst at India Ratings and Research. He reckoned that the IIP may rise 4.5% in November.

Overall industrial output growth stays muted compared with 2023-24, when it rose 7% in the first seven months of the year. Between April and October this year, industrial production is up 4%, with manufacturing rising 3.8%.

## MARKETS

## MARKET WATCH

	THURSDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	81,290	-0.29
US Dollar	84.88	-0.05
Gold	80,900	0.62
Brent oil	72.77	-0.35

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2504.10	+46.85
Adani Ports	1244.00	+10.20
Apollo Hosp.	7227.10	-113.70
Asian Paints	2389.55	-27.75
Axis Bank	1145.65	-1.60
Bajaj Auto	8963.25	-106.60
Bajaj Finserv	1679.30	-7.20
Bajaj Finance	7125.80	+10.70
Bharat Elec.	312.95	-1.15
Bharti Airtel	1610.55	-24.55
BPCL	302.15	-5.30
Britannia Ind.	4828.35	-61.15
Cipla	1445.40	-8.70
Coal India	409.10	-7.85
Dr Reddy's Lab.	1245.40	+6.85
Eicher Motors	4807.65	+5.70
Grafixsoft	2660.05	-10.70
HCL Tech	1936.20	+5.30
HDLC Bank	1859.25	-3.85
HDLC Life	626.55	-8.10
Hero MotoCorp	4556.70	-93.70
Hindalco	668.70	-1.80
Hind Unilever	2344.70	-56.40
ICICI Bank	1329.25	1.75
IndusInd Bank	997.95	13.10
Infosys	1987.00	12.85
ITC	460.60	-4.65
JSW Steel	1005.80	5.60
Kotak Bank	1768.70	-26.00
L&T	3859.90	-56.85
M&M	3067.45	-4.60
Maurti Suzuki	11167.40	-110.35
NestleIndia	2224.05	-17.00
NTPC	355.60	-9.90
ONGC	254.05	-2.55
PowerGrid Corp	329.20	1.65
Reliance Ind.	1262.90	-15.30
SBI	1432.50	-23.65
State Bank.	853.70	-0.10
Shriram Finance Ltd.	3248.10	-0.15
Sun Pharma	1805.45	-8.55
Tata Consumer Product	921.25	-13.80
Tata Motors	786.35	-12.75
Tata Steel	150.78	0.18
TCS	4454.95	27.50
Tech Mahindra	1789.60	-26.80
Titan	3445.75	-27.35
Trent Ltd.	7012.50	-50.80
UltraTech Cement	11856.95	-41.55
Wipro	309.10	0.10

## EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on December 12

	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	84.66	84.98
Euro	88.88	89.22
British Pound	107.84	108.25
Japanese Yen (100)	55.58	55.80
Chinese Yuan	11.65	11.70
Swiss Franc	95.48	95.85
Singapore Dollar	62.97	63.21
Canadian Dollar	59.84	60.06
Malaysian Ringgit	19.07	19.16
Australian Dollar	54.19	54.40

Source: Indian Bank

## Track cases in NCLT, NARCL to minimise delays, FinMin tells banks

Press Trust of India  
NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Thursday asked banks to closely monitor cases in NARCL and NCLT to minimise procedural delays

and adjournments so that bad loan resolution matters are expedited.

An integrated portal is being developed by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs for seamless information flow to banks on the Na-

tional Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) cases, the finance ministry said in a statement. The decision was taken in a review meeting chaired by Department of Financial Services Secretary M. Nagaraj

ju to address key operational challenges and enhance the efficiency of resolution mechanisms through the National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited (NARCL) and NCLT. The discussion on

cases at NARCL centred on expediting timelines for the resolution of accounts.

The Secretary underscored NARCL's pivotal role as a specialised entity designed to accelerate the resolution of large-value

stressed assets, thereby, strengthening the financial ecosystem, it said.

During the meeting, it was informed that NARCL had so far acquired 22 accounts with an exposure of ₹95,711 crore.

## Samsung obtained an injunction from the High Court that has put on hold the CCI proceedings

the data and information unlawfully collected," it added.

Samsung and the CCI did not respond to Reuters queries. Samsung has obtained an injunction from the High Court that has put on hold the CCI proceedings, but the court has not yet ruled on its requests to return the data seized and to not allow the commission to rely on it.

The CCI investigation had found that Amazon and Flipkart both breached competition laws by favouring select sellers on their platforms. Amazon and Flipkart have repeatedly denied wrongdoing, even as brick-and-mortar retailers continue to complain about their deep discounting and other practices.

In its court filing Samsung also asserted that it was wrongly found to have breached competition laws in collusion with Amazon and Flipkart, even though it had been cooperating with the watchdog and providing information only as a third-party in the case.

## Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation Limited, Jaipur

D-Block, Swasthya Bhawan, C-Scheme, Jaipur - 302005

Ph. No. 0141-222887, Fax No. 0141-222805 E-mail : gdmprmsc@jail.nic.in

No. F-8/PRMSC/EPM/M-4/NIB-870/2024-25/537 Dated: 10.12.2024

## NOTICE INVITING BID

Bid for item Maternity Cot are invited from interested bidders upto Date: 02-01-2025

**NEW YORK**

Trump named Time magazine's 'Person of the Year' for second time



Time magazine named Donald Trump its "Person of the Year" for the second time, recognising his historic political comeback and influence. The magazine highlighted his role in reshaping the American presidency and driving a significant political realignment, marking a notable moment in contemporary politics. AP

**MOGADISHU**

Somali federal forces retreat from Jubaland positions after clashes



Somali federal troops have retreated from the southern Jubaland region following clashes with regional forces led by Ahmed Madobe. The fighting, which occurred in Ras Kamboni, escalated tensions over a disputed election, with Jubaland officials claiming they regained control of the town. AFP

**GAZA STRIP**

Gaza rescuers say Israel killed 33, including 12 guards, in air strikes



Gaza's civil defence agency reported that Israeli air strikes on Thursday killed at least 33 people, including 12 guards securing aid trucks in southern parts of the Palestinian territory. The latest bloodshed came just hours after the UN General Assembly called for an immediate ceasefire in the devastated territory. AFP

**SOFIA**

EU states agree to full Schengen accession for Bulgaria, Romania



EU states on Thursday cleared Bulgaria and Romania to become full members of the borderless Schengen zone from the start of next year, officials said, following a 13-year wait for the two eastern European nations. Created in 1985, the Schengen zone currently comprises 29 members. AFP

# S. Korea President Yoon defends martial law, vows to 'fight to end'

Main Opposition Democratic Party criticised the President's televised speech as 'extreme delusion' and submitted a new impeachment motion against him; authorities are investigating if Yoon and others committed rebellion or abuse of power

**Associated Press**  
SEOUL

**S**outh Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol defended his martial law decree as an act of governance and denied rebellion charges, vowing on Thursday to "fight to the end" in response to attempts to impeach him and intensifying investigations into last week's dramatic move.

The main Opposition Democratic Party quickly slammed Mr. Yoon's speech as "an expression of extreme delusion" and "false propaganda". Later on Thursday, it and other Opposition parties submitted a new impeachment



Civic uproar: Demonstrators take part in a protest calling for the ouster of Yoon Suk Yeol outside City Hall in Seoul on Thursday. AFP

motion against Mr. Yoon for a floor vote this weekend.

The Opposition-controlled Parliament also passed motions on Thursday to impeach and suspend

Mr. Yoon's police chief and Justice Minister over the imposition of martial law, escalating the pressure on Mr. Yoon's embattled government.

Mr. Yoon's short-lived

December 3 martial law declaration has generated political chaos and large protests calling for his ouster.

The decree brought hundreds of armed troops who attempted to encircle Parliament and raid the election commission, though no major violence or injuries occurred. Martial law lasted only six hours as Mr. Yoon was forced to lift it after the National Assembly unanimously voted it down.

In a televised speech on Thursday, Mr. Yoon, a conservative, said he enacted martial law as a warning to the liberal Democratic Party. He called the party "a monster" and "anti-state

forces" that he said tried to use its legislative muscle to impeach top officials, undermined the government's Budget Bill for next year and sympathised with North Korea.

Kim Min-seok, head of a Democratic Party task force, dismissed Mr. Yoon's statement as "an expression of extreme delusion" and "a declaration of war against the people".

The country's law enforcement authorities are investigating whether Mr. Yoon and others involved in imposing martial law committed rebellion, abuse of power and other crimes. A conviction for rebellion carries a maximum penalty of death.

# Media groups slam Israel over 'journalist massacre'

**Agence France-Presse**  
PARIS

Israel has been accused of carrying out a "massacre" of journalists in Gaza in two separate reports from media freedom organisations this week that analysed the deaths of reporters worldwide this year.

According to calculations from Paris-based Reporters Without Borders (RSF) published on Thursday, the Israeli Army killed 18 journalists as they were working this year – 16 in Gaza and two in Lebanon – around a third of the total worldwide of 54.

"Palestine is the most dangerous country for journalists, recording a higher death toll than any other country over the past five years," RSF said in its annual report, which covers data up to December 1.



RSF described the number of killings as 'an unprecedented massacre'. AFP

The organisation has filed four complaints with the International Criminal Court (ICC) for "war crimes committed against journalists by the Israeli Army".

It said that in total "more than 145" journalists had been killed by the Israeli Army in Gaza since the start of the war there in October 2023, with 35 of them working at the time of their deaths.

RSF described the num-

ber of killings as "an unprecedented massacre".

With foreign reporters prevented from entering the territory and local reporters being deliberately targeted, Gaza was "a place where journalism itself is threatened with extinction", RSF said.

In a separate report published on Tuesday, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) said that 104 journalists were killed worldwide in 2024, with more than half of them in Gaza.

The IFJ and RSF figures vary because of different methodologies used to calculate the tolls, but the IFJ used similar language to condemn Israel's military.

Israel denies that it intentionally harms journalists, but admits that some have been killed in air strikes on military targets.

# Iran Guards say to act on new 'realities' in post-Assad Syria

**Agence France-Presse**  
TEHRAN

The head of Iran's Revolutionary Guards said the country has to live with the new "realities" of Syria after the ouster of Tehran-backed President Bashar al-Assad, state media reported on Thursday.

Regarding Syria, Iran "was really trying day and night to help in whatever way it could; we have to live with the realities of Syria; we look at them and act based on them," Hossein Salami said, quoted by the official IRNA news agency.

"Strategies must change according to the circumstances; we cannot solve numerous global and regional issues with stagnation and employing the same tactics," he added.

Iran has been a strong ally of the Assad family, whose decades-long rule of Syria ended on the weekend when a whirlwind rebel offensive took the capital Damascus.

Mr. Assad had long played a strategic role in Iran's anti-Israel "axis of resistance", particularly in facilitating the supply of weapons to Tehran's ally Hezbollah in Lebanon.

## Community despair



Residents walking across a market reopened after sectarian clashes in Parachinar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan. Thousands of people are stranded without food in parts of remote Kurram district as the government struggles to end the Sunni-Shia conflict. AFP

# Taiwan detects 16 Chinese warships around the island

**Agence France-Presse**  
TAIPEI

Taiwan said on Thursday it detected 16 Chinese warships in waters around the island, one of the highest numbers this year, as Beijing intensifies military pressure on Taipei.

The Navy vessels, along with 34 Chinese aircraft, were spotted near Taiwan in the 24 hours to 6.00 a.m. on Thursday, according to the Defence Ministry's daily tally.

Around 90 Chinese warships and coast guard vessels have been involved in the exercises that include

simulating attacks on foreign ships and practising blockading sea routes, a Taiwan security official said on Wednesday.

There has been no announcement by Beijing's Army or Chinese state media about increased military activity in the East China Sea, Taiwan Strait, South China Sea or Western Pacific Ocean.

The sea drills were "significantly larger" than Beijing's maritime response to then-United States House speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei in 2022, which were the largest-ever war games till then.

# Bottom trawling by Indian fishermen must stop: Sri Lanka's Fisheries Minister

**Meera Srinivasan**  
COLOMBO

The enduring fisheries conflict in the Palk Bay – which impacts fisher folk of northern Sri Lanka and daily wage fishermen of Tamil Nadu – can be decisively resolved only if the Indian side stops using the destructive bottom-trawling method, according to Sri Lanka's Minister of Fisheries Ramalingam Chandrasekar.

The fisheries conflict has remained a key diplomatic issue between India and Sri Lanka for many years. It is likely to be discussed during President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's scheduled visit to India next week.

"People from all ethnic groups and geographic regions, including the north, east, and hill country, voted for us [National People's

Power alliance], giving us a big mandate in the recently held elections. We have a responsibility to address their concerns," said Mr. Chandrasekar, who represents the northern Jaffna district in parliament. "The long-persisting problem of bottom trawlers used by Indian fishermen, originating from Tamil Nadu, has been the chief concern of our northern fishing communities," he told *The Hindu* on Wednesday at the Ministry of Fisheries.

Solving the Indo-Lanka fisheries conflict is part of the NPP government's comprehensive plans to enhance Sri Lanka's fish production using modern technology and sustainable methods, he said. The country's per capita fish consumption, which was 17.2 kg in 2017, has now declined to 11.07 kg, reflecting a reduction in people's

protein intake, according to the NPP's pre-poll manifesto. Malnutrition has come under sharp focus, especially after the country's painful economic crash in 2022. "We need to enhance seafood production to ensure people have access to nutrition. To do all that, we need our sea and our marine biodiversity to be protected," Mr. Chandrasekar said.

**Destructive method**  
The fisheries conflict in the Palk Bay is largely over competing livelihoods amid a fast-depleting catch. While a bilaterally agreed, imaginary maritime boundary line demarcates territorial waters of the neighbours, northern Sri Lankan fishermen from different coastal states, including Tamil Nadu, have used the practice that has boosted India's seafood exports and yield-

who are among the worst affected in the island's protracted civil war that ended in 2009. Fifteen years since, they have been unable to rebuild their livelihoods, primarily because of the damaging effects of bottom-trawling by Indian fishermen.

Sri Lanka banned the practice in 2017 and imposed stiff fines on foreign vessels in 2018. Despite the moves, and the ceaseless appeals from their northern Sri Lankan counterparts, Tamil Nadu fishermen are yet to give up the destructive practice.

On Wednesday, Indian High Commissioner Santosh Jha called on the Minister at his office and "stressed for a humanitarian & constructive approach in addressing the fishermen issue. Requested early release of fishermen in custody," the High Commission posted on X. Sri Lanka greatly valued India's critical and timely assistance during the economic crisis of 2022, and President Dissanayake's government appreciates the importance of the country's India ties, the Sri Lankan Minister noted. "India is not only Sri Lanka's close neighbour and important development partner, but a country that

shares historic and cultural ties... Our grandparents and great grandparents hailed from India," said Mr. Chandrasekar, who is from Sri Lanka's Malaiyaha [hill country] Tamil community, brought down by the British two centuries ago to work in Sri Lanka's plantations. "Many of us still have familial links in Tamil Nadu," he said, urging the people and governments of India and Tamil Nadu to see the "larger picture" in the fisheries problem.

"There is a tendency to view the fisheries conflict as one between Tamil Nadu fishermen and the Sri Lankan Navy... but they must understand that bottom-trawling has severely affected the livelihoods of Tamil fishermen in northern Sri Lanka, who have suffered huge losses during the war," he said.



Sri Lanka's Minister of Fisheries Ramalingam Chandrasekar at his office in Colombo on Wednesday. MEERA SRINIVASAN



# After the World title, the aim is now to dominate the sport: Gukesh's mentor

Vishnu Prasanna hails triumph, says chess is going to be huge in India; R.B. Ramesh congratulates the champion, appreciates fight put up by Ding

**S. Prasanna Venkatesan**  
CHENNAI

**G**ukesh's mentor and former coach, GM Vishnu Prasanna, said he was indescribably happy that his ward has achieved their primary goal at just eighteen years of age!

Speaking over phone on Thursday after Gukesh won the World title, he said: "Incredible! I mean I was not expecting the match to end this way. I'm just very happy! Can't even describe it!"

He had actually taken his eyes off the last game, when his excited wife alerted him of Gukesh's imminent win.

"My wife was more excited and she was jumping! She was the one who told me. I had stopped watching the game. She was like, 'The (evaluation) bar is moving,' and so on."

Talking about the match in general, he said: "The games where Gukesh refused a draw and just kept playing, those were what showed a lot of character. I



Moment etched in history: Gukesh dethrones Ding and realises his dream of becoming a World champion. FIDE

think it was a very difficult match. There was no way to say which way it would go.

"I thought tie-breaks were even, actually. Because, he (Gukesh) is also training in shorter formats

and so on. He could always surprise people. I mean 60-40 or whatever the numbers (odds) were, these don't matter in a match.

"It's all about nerves and energy and stuff like

that. It's not so easily measurable. I thought he was becoming stronger in rapid and blitz games."

Speaking about the road ahead for them, now that the primary goal has been achieved, Prasanna said:

"To dominate the sport, is the aim now. To become the No. 1 in the ratings, for sure. Even though he's won the match, I would not say he has shown so much difference between him and Ding or so many

other players. To show that difference like Magnus (Carlsen), is a goal."

Asked what Gukesh's win meant for Indian chess, he said: "It (chess) is going to be a huge sport in India, I hope. I'm sure the title will stay in India for a while."

"Hopefully, with Gukesh, but you will see a lot of Indians winning a lot of things. So, I'm sure that more people would be engaged with the sport and there will be more heroes in chess."

R.B. Ramesh, who had favoured Gukesh and predicted that the match wouldn't last the entire set of games, had a word of praise for Ding.

**Psychological demons**  
"It was nice to see that Ding managed to overcome his psychological demons. He put up a very good fight, and only to see that everything crumbled in just one move!"

"Full appreciation for Ding as well for a great fight despite his psychological condition".

Gukesh showed his amazing skills: Humpy

**V.V. Subrahmanyam**  
HYDERABAD



Gukesh's father hugs the king.  
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

dia," she said.

GM D. Harika, also a member of the gold-medal winning Olympiad women's team, said to see the final moments was really beautiful and should be etched in memory forever.

"The way Gukesh came back strongly after losing the first game was a reminder of his amazing skills and the ability to hit back.

"I think today's game was all about nervous breakdown. It was a basic end-game which anyone could have drawn but somehow Ding struggled and blundered," Humpy said.

"Gukesh setting the record to be the youngest world champion is something really special for the entire chess fraternity of India," Harika said.

"Once he reached the World championship finals, it was only a question of time before he won the title," she said.

"I know Gukesh's father and the kind of effort and hard work, sacrifices they made to see him reach this level. Really feel happy for them," Harika said.

## Gukesh's 14 milestone journey to the summit



Rewind time: Snapshots of the World Championship match between Gukesh and Ding from Game 1 to 14. The Indian had lost the first before battling back to dethrone the Chinese. FIDE

## Team India sweats it out in the lead-up to the Brisbane Test; batters train in top gear

**INDIA IN AUS**

**K.C. Vijaya Kumar**  
BRISBANE

Flecks of bright yellow, chocolate brown and mild blue were the colour tones of the spectator chairs in the stands, and out in the middle, it was a green expanse with the pitch too adding its bit with a lighter shade. The Gabba bathed in sunlight is a pretty sight and it was here in January, 2021, that Rishabh Pant (89 n.o.) anchored a stunning chase as India defeated Australia and retained the Border-Gavaskar Trophy 2-1.

Pant, Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Mohammed Siraj and Washington Sundar, part of the current squad, played that game together, while the then coach, Ravi Shastri, is back Down Under as a commentator and columnist. Ob-



Taking aim: India will look up to Kohli the batter at the Gabba.  
GETTY IMAGES

viously, there was hope in the air when Rohit's men got into a huddle under deep blue skies here on Thursday morning.

Coach Gautam Gambhir spoke briefly and then an animated Virat Kohli held centre-stage. Perhaps it was a call to arms, maybe a stress on the 'we', or an emphasis on brotherly solidarity as he tapped the players on either side and

dragged his kitbag to the nets arena, it was a clue for others to follow suit.

### Batters at work

Rahul, Gill, Kohli, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rohit, Pant and Washington, were all part of the initial set of batters, fine-tuning their craft. As Kohli buckled down with his bat, he saw Rohit waiting in the sidelines and then the two took turns to bat for a while. A lot would hinge on these two senior batters, especially with the third Test scheduled to commence here on Saturday.

Sourav Ganguly's 144 here in 2003 was the classic skipper's knock and it set the tone for India in that series. Ideally, Rohit too should reclaim his mojo and dish out a special innings. While the batters sweated, Jasprit Bumrah played the statesman, often chatting with his fellow pacers, cracking the odd

wisecrack and when it was time, he landed thunderbolts and tested his batting colleagues.

As shots were played and leaves outside the off-stump finessed, a few edges and some awkward reactions were on view too. Maybe the bowlers were asked to be at full tilt and some of them were guilty of overstepping. No-balls in nets might flare up as a bad habit in Tests and in the current series, India has added 22 to the extras component. Level at 1-1, every vulnerability may get exacerbated over the next few weeks.

Meanwhile, chief selector Ajit Agarkar held a ball, rubbed some sweat on it, felt the seam and juggled a bit. Perhaps it was muscle-memory at work for the former pacer. Hopefully, India too would glean some optimism from the past, specifically the 2021 outing.

## We are focusing on this week, not the past: Marsh

**K.C. Vijaya Kumar**  
BRISBANE

Look ahead, was the hint that Mitchell Marsh offered while talking to the media at the Gabba here on Thursday afternoon. Asked about India's victory here in the 2021 Test, the all-rounder was quick to react: "The biggest thing for us is about just focusing on this week and not what's happened in the past. The way we bounced back after Perth was an example of that. We are focussed on playing our style and hopefully going 2-1 up in the series."

Asked about countering Jasprit Bumrah, Marsh said: "He is probably the best bowler in the world. It is just about getting up for that challenge, it is a big series. You want to take on the best in the world. That is certainly my mentality."

Reminded about his dismissal to R. Ashwin at Adelaide in which the replays



Our style: Marsh says the Aussies will play it their way in the Brisbane challenge. AP

made it obvious that there was no edge, an embarrassed Marsh admitted: "I thought I hit it and so I walked off. When I got to the change-rooms, they asked if I hit it and I said 'yeah I smashed it'. And then the replay came up and my head went into the hands and a minute later everyone else was laughing at me."

About his bowling,

Marsh replied: "I haven't had to bowl too much so far but my body is feeling really good. I had a sore back. But right now it's feeling as good as it has ever felt."

Marsh also backed Steve Smith, Usman Khawaja and Josh Hazlewood. "Josh will do everything he can to get up for this game," he said, adding that Smith is one of 'Australia's best' while Khawaja is a 'local hero'.

# Shah meets officials of 2032 Brisbane organising committee

Very exciting time ahead for cricket's involvement in the Olympics movement, says the International Cricket Council chairman



Shah with the organising committee chief Cindy Hook, second from left, and others on Thursday.

## Press Trust of India BRISBANE

**J**ay Shah, who took charge as the ICC chairman earlier this month, met with top officials of the 2032 Brisbane Olympics organising committee on Thursday to discuss the sport's potential inclusion in the Summer Games.

**Return**  
Cricket will make a return to the Olympics after 128 years when it will be played in the 2028 Los Angeles Games.

Among his immediate priorities is to find a solution to the hosting of Champions Trophy in February-March

The sport is not yet confirmed for the 2032 edition of the Games n Brisbane.

"Very exciting time ahead for cricket's involvement in the Olympics movement – a meeting with the @Brisbane 2032 organizing committee in Brisbane, Australia today," Shah posted on X with visuals of the meeting.

The meeting was attended by Brisbane 2032 organ-

ising committee chief Cindy Hook and Cricket Australia CEO Nick Hockley.

Shah is expected to watch the action of the third Test between India and Australia, starting on Saturday.

Among his immediate priorities is to find a solution to the hosting of Champions Trophy in February-March.

A hybrid model has been agreed by all stakeholders but no announcement has been made yet, fuelling speculations over the future of the event.

## Treesa-Gayatri pair keeps semifinal hopes alive

### Press Trust of India HANGZHOU

The Indian women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand defeated the Malaysian combination of Pearly Tan and Thi-naah Muralitharan 21-19, 21-19 in 46 minutes in their second Group A tie and keep alive its semifinal hopes at the BWF World Tour Finals on Thursday.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Indians had lost to World No.1 Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Ning of China 20-22, 22-20, 21-14 in their opening group match.

The Indians are currently placed second behind the Chinese and will need to win against the Japanese pairing of Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida on Friday to book their semifinal berth.

## Dabang Delhi gets over the line against Telugu Titans

### Press Trust of India PUNE

Dabang Delhi KC clinched a 33-27 victory over Telugu Titans and moved up to second in the Pro Kabaddi League here on Thursday.

Despite the loss, the Titans are still in the hunt for the playoffs while Gujarat Giants was officially eliminated from the playoff race.

## 'More excited to play under Dravid than IPL'

### Press Trust of India NEW DELHI

Teen sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi is not as excited at the prospect of becoming the youngest ever to play in the IPL as he is at being coached by the legendary Rahul Dravid at Rajasthan Royals.

The 13-year-old Vaibhav became the youngest cricketer ever to be bought at an IPL auction last month when he was acquired by Rajasthan Royals who will be coached by Dravid.

"I am really glad that I am getting a chance to play in the IPL. I am excited to play under Rahul Dravid sir, more than playing in the IPL, I am happy to play under him."

"I have no strategy as



Ready for the big stage:

Vaibhav says he will just play the way he does in the IPL. AP

such for the IPL, I will just play the way I do."

Suryavanshi also believed the Indian team did

not do badly in the recently-held U-19 Asia Cup despite failing to reclaim the title following its loss to Bangladesh in the final.

### Batting collapse

He said the batting collapse India suffered in the summit clash on December 8 could have happened to any team.

Chasing 199, India were bundled out for 139 in 35.2 overs to lose the final by 59 runs in Dubai.

"I wouldn't say that we didn't do well in the tournament, there are days when the team batting faces a collapse."

"That's what happened in the final with us," said the 13-year-old who emerged as a star in the tournament with two half-centuries.

"We are determined to do better in future tournaments," he told PTI Videos.

India is the most successful team in the tournament's history with eight titles, with the last one coming in 2021.

### State support

The cricketer from Bihar is happy that he has been supported well by his state.

"The Bihar Cricket Association helped me a lot throughout my journey. Our president Rakesh sir helped me a lot and I want to thank them all."

"The Bihar CM also wished me luck and blessed me for all my future endeavours."

"Going ahead in life, I want to represent India at the senior level in cricket."

## Ajeetesh Sandhu stays put in the lead

### GOLF

### Sports Bureau NEW DELHI

Ajeetesh Sandhu stayed in the lead with the second best card of 3-under 69 on the third day of the ₹2 crore Vishwa Samudra Open golf championship at the Delhi Golf Club on Thursday.

The Chandigarh pro was in a spot of trouble in the front nine, which included an unplayable ball in the bushes in the ninth hole, but recovered remarkably well in the back nine to take his overall score to 11-under 205.

Ajeetesh was two shots ahead of Jamal Hossain of



Ajeetesh Sandhu.

"I played steady. There were a few blips in the middle, but I am glad that I finished well. If you hit good shots on the last few holes at DGC, there are quite a few scoring opportunities. I was able to do that," said Ajeetesh.

M. Dharma (4-under 212), Rashid Khan and Yuvraj Sandhu (3-under 213) apart from Honey Baisoya and Arjun Puri (1-under 215) were the only others to be under par on the tricky course.

Coping with the tough swings in fortune, some of the champion golfers like Mukesh Kumar, S.S.P. Chawrasia (75, 68, 73), Sharank Das (74, 70, 72), Rahil Gangjee (4, 71, 71), Udayan Mane (73, 71, 72) 216; 14T K. Prabagaran (72, 71, 74), M.S. Yashas Chandra (70, 73, 74) 217; 16. Ravi Kumar (69, 75, 74) 218.

for a better finish on the final day.

OVERNIGHT second, Manish Thakran fell to the joint-23rd position following a 9-over 81 on the third day. From being 5-under at the halfway stage, he slipped to 4-over 220.

**The leading scores:** 1. Ajeetesh Sandhu (69, 67, 69) 205; 2. Jamal Hossain (Ban) (67, 73, 67) 207; 3. M Dharma (69, 72, 71) 212; 4T. Rashid Khan (70, 71, 72), Yuvraj Sandhu (71, 71, 71) 213; 6T. Honey Baisoya (70, 75, 70), Arjun Puri (72, 70, 73) 215; 8T. Om Prakash Chouhan (75, 68, 73), Mukesh Kumar (71, 72, 73), S.S.P. Chawrasia (75, 68, 73), Sharank Das (74, 70, 72), Rahil Gangjee (4, 71, 71), Udayan Mane (73, 71, 72) 216; 14T K. Prabagaran (72, 71, 74), M.S. Yashas Chandra (70, 73, 74) 217; 16. Ravi Kumar (69, 75, 74) 218.

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH SAMAGRA SHIKSHA, AMARAVATI.**

Tenders are invited through e-procurement platform for supply of Student Kit items under "Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Vidyarthi Mitra" (SRKVM-1) vide Tender Notice NIT No. 01 to 27/2024-25, dt. 12/12/2024 in Samagra Shiksha, Amaravati Patamatam, Vijayawada for 27 unit works in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Tenders Downloading Starts from : **16.12.2024 after 10.30 AM**

Last date for receipt of Tenders : **30.12.2024 up to 05.00 PM**

Note: Further details can be viewed at <https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in> or contact 0866 2428599.

Sd/- B. Srivinasa Rao, I.A.S.,  
DIPR No: 3384PP/CL, Dt:12/12/2024 State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha, Andhra Pradesh.

**BANARAS LOCOMOTIVE WORKS, VARANASI - 221004**

"EMANELMENT OF ADVERTISING AGENCIES"

No.-PR/69/AA/Part-III/24 Date: 11.12.2024

Applications are invited from experienced and reputed Advertising Agencies fully accredited to Indian Newspaper Society (INS) for empanelment with Banaras Locomotive Works, Varanasi for release of Advertisements, Tender Notices, Auction Notices etc. in Newspapers. Application form can be downloaded from BLW's website: [www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in) from 12.12.2024 to 03.01.2025. Application must reach the Public Relation Office (PRO), Administrative Building, Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW), Varanasi-221004 by 13:00 hrs on 03.01.2025 and those tender will open on the same day 03.01.2025 on 15:30 hrs. This information is also available on BLW's website: [www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in). Chief Public Relations Officer, BLW

f @ /blwvaranasi Website- [blw.indianrailways.gov.in](http://blw.indianrailways.gov.in)

**BENGALURU METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT CORPORATION**

Central Offices: K.H. Road, Shantinagar, Bengaluru-560 027.  
No: BMTC/CO/COSP/TENDER/11/2024-25 Date: 10.12.2024

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

BMTC Invites Tender for Procurement of the following Goods & Services through KPP portal:

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Description	Tender Value (approx Rs. in Crores)	Last date for bid submission in KPP portal
<b>Regular Tender</b>				
1	BMTC/2024-25/IND0140	Procurement of Automotive Bulbs	0.17	31.12.2024
2	BMTC/2024-25/IND0141	Procurement of Metal Paste, Petroleum Jelly & Araldite	0.32	31.12.2024
3	BMTC/2024-25/IND0142	Procurement of Photocopier Paper A4 Size 80GSM	0.30	31.12.2024
4	BMTC/2024-25/IND0143	Procurement of Cotton Waste and Banian Waste	0.34	31.12.2024
5	BMTC/2024-25/IND0144	Procurement of Expandable Vinyl Coated fabric & Velvo Seal Fabric	1.90	13.01.2025
6	BMTC/2024-25/IND0145	Procurement of ERW GI Square Tubes and Round Pipes	0.46	02.01.2025
7	BMTC/2024-25/IND0146	Procurement of Tie Rod, Drag Link Repair Kit	0.72	02.01.2025
8	BMTC/2024-25/IND0147	Procurement of Desktop Computers	0.34	02.01.2025
9	BMTC/2024-25/IND0148	Procurement of Thin Wall Bearing	0.28	02.01.2025
10	BMTC/2024-25/IND0149	Procurement of Rubber Glazing of Different Sizes	0.09	02.01.2025
11	BMTC/2024-25/IND0150	Procurement of Piston Assembly & Ring Sets	0.89	02.01.2025
12	BMTC/2024-25/IND0151	Procurement of Fan Belts	0.17	02.01.2025
13	BMTC/2024-25/IND0152	Procurement of Wiper Motor, Arms, Blades,	0.90	02.01.2025

**Corrigendum: The last date & time for submission of tender in KPP-portal is extended as under.**

Sr. No.	EOI Scope	EOI submission start date and time	EOI submission end date and time	Official Website	Contact details
1.	Lifting of pond ash & from, RGTPP, Khed, Hesar.	12.12.2024 & 10:00hrs	23.12.2024 & 17:00 hrs	<a href="https://hpgr.org.in">https://hpgr.org.in</a>	Er. Tinku Goyal, XEN/CMD-II, 8222820043

Further any addendum/corrigendum in respect of change in calendar of events, specification, other tender terms and conditions etc. will be uploaded/published through kpp-portal.

**Note:** Interested Suppliers need to register in the e-procurement portal. For further information log in to <https://kpp.karnataka.gov.in> in case of further assistance, contact e-procurement cell phone No:080-22230960, 080-22234115. Interested suppliers may also contact e-procurement for training on bid submission. Mail to support@eprochelpdesk.com for further information required.

Sd/- CONTROLLER OF STORES AND PURCHASES (Tender Inviting Authority)

CM YK

Further any addendum/corrigendum in respect of change in calendar of events, specification, other tender terms and conditions etc. will be uploaded/published through kpp-portal.

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## IN BRIEF



## Juve deepens Man City crisis, Barca into knockouts

Manchester City's crisis continued with a 2-0 defeat away to Juventus in the Champions League on Wednesday, while Pep Guardiola's old club Barcelona beat Borussia Dortmund to clinch a spot in the knockout stage of Europe's elite club competition. Arsenal, AC Milan, Atletico Madrid, Lille, Feyenoord and Stuttgart were also victorious, but City's latest loss in a miserable run will dominate the headlines.

**The results:** Atletico Madrid 3 (Alvarez 16, Griezmann 42, 57) bt Slovan Bratislava 1 (Strelec 51-pen); Lille 3 (Sahaoui 37, Bakker 45+2, Haraldsson 81) bt Sturm Graz 2 (Kiteishvili 45+, Biereth 47); AC Milan 2 (Leao 42, Abraham 87) bt Red Star Belgrade 1 (Radonjic 67); Arsenal 3 (Saka 34, 78, Havertz 88) bt Monaco 0; Benfica 0 drew with Bologna 0; Borussia Dortmund 2 (Guirassy 60-pen, 78) lost to Barcelona 3 (Raphinha 53, Torres 75, 85); Feyenoord 4 (Trauner 8, Paixao 10, Moussa 30, Gimenez 63) bt Sparta Prague 2 (Rahmani 43, Beelen 79-og); Juventus 2 (Vlahovic 53, McKennie 75) bt Manchester City 0; Stuttgart 5 (Stiller 25, Millot 53, Fuehrich 61, Vagnoman 66, Keitel 76) bt Young Boys 1 (Lakomy 6).

## India bows out of World squash team championships

The Indian men's and women's team lost 2-0 to France and USA respectively in the quarterfinals of World squash team in Hong Kong on Thursday.

**The results:** **Quarterfinals:** Men: Sebastian Bonmalais (Fra) bt Veer Chotra 13-11, 11-7, 11-7; Victor Crouin (Fra) bt Abhay Singh 11-7, 11-4, 11-4. Women: Caroline Fouts (USA) bt Nirupama Dubey 11-1, 11-5, 11-4; Amanda Sobhy (USA) bt Anahat Singh 12-10, 11-4, 11-3.



## Nortje set to miss SA's T20I, ODI series against Pakistan

South African seamer Anrich Nortje has been ruled out of the remaining two T20Is and the three-match ODI series against Pakistan after sustaining a toe injury ahead of the second T20I at Centurion on Friday. Dayyaan Galiem has been named as Nortje's replacement.

## LIVE TELECAST

**SMAT:** semifinals, JioCinema, 11 a.m. & 4.30 p.m.  
**Zimbabwe vs Afghanistan:** 2nd T20I, FanCode, 5 p.m.  
**ISL:** Sports 18-3 & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.  
**PKL:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 8 p.m.  
**South Africa vs Pakistan:** 2nd T20I, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 9.30 p.m.  
**Bundesliga:** Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 1 a.m. (Saturday)  
**Serie A:** gxr.world, 1.15 a.m. (Saturday)  
**LaLiga:** gxr.world, 1.30 a.m. (Saturday)  
**New Zealand vs England:** 3rd Test, day 1, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 3.30 a.m. (Saturday)  
**Australia vs India:** 3rd Test, day 1, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 5.50 a.m. (Saturday)

## High Performance Centre for badminton inaugurated in Bhubaneswar

## K. Keerthivasan

BHUBANESWAR

An impressive shuttlecock-inspired design of the High-Performance Centre inside the Kalinga Stadium Complex here catches one's eyes as you walk past the Aquatic Centre.

Named 'Shuttle by Dalmia Bharat', the Dalmia Bharat-Gopichand High Performance Centre for badminton here was the cynosure of attention on Thursday evening when it was inaugurated by Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Himanta Biswa Sharma, the Assam Chief Minister and also the president of Badminton Association of India.

The centre, a three-way



**Grand beginning:** The dignitaries in front of the High Performance Centre.

collaboration between the Odisha Government, Pullela Gopichand Foundation and the Dalmia Bharat

# Baroda faces Mumbai in a clash of heavyweights in the semifinals

Shreyas and Suryakumar line up against Krunal and Co; Delhi and Madhya Pradesh to battle it out for a spot in the title clash

## MUSHTAQ ALI TROPHY

**Ashwin Achal**  
BENGALURU

**B**aroda takes on Mumbai in a heavyweight Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy semifinal clash at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Friday.

Baroda's Hardik Pandya and Krunal Pandya will face a star-studded Mumbai line-up, which boasts of pure batting match-winners in Prithvi Shaw, Ajinkya Rahane, captain Shreyas Iyer and Suryakumar Yadav. In Shivam Dube and Suryansh Shegde, Mumbai also has two quality finishers.

The Baroda bowling line-up has been on song in

this tournament, and is expected to test the Mumbai batters. Right-arm pacer Atit Sheth and left-arm seamer Lukman Meriwala have 13 and 12 tournaments wickets respectively, while left-arm spinner Krunal has tightened the screws with miserly spells.

Baroda will hope that the Pandya brothers come good with the bat. Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik, who has recorded two fifties, is the danger man. Krunal, however, has not been among the runs.

In the second semifinal, Delhi faces Madhya Pradesh in a battle of equals. The Delhi top-order of Priyansh Arya, Yash Dhull and captain Ayush Badoni has found form, providing the best platform for the likes of Anuj Rawat and Himmat

Singh to apply the finishing touches.

Rawat found his groove on Wednesday, smacking an unbeaten 33-ball 73 to dismantle Uttar Pradesh.

Madhya Pradesh's Rajat Patidar is the batting mainstay, with three fifties at an average of 40.14. Harpreet Singh and Subhranshu Senapati can hold fort, while skipper Venkatesh Iyer contributes with bat and ball.

Rain, meanwhile, could interrupt proceedings. While the games are unlikely to be completely washed out, there could be a reduction in overs.

**Semifinal line-up (at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium):**  
Baroda vs Mumbai (11 a.m.);  
Delhi vs Madhya Pradesh (4.30 p.m.).



**In focus:** Hardik will hold the key when Baroda takes on a formidable Mumbai. PTI

## Odisha fights back to beat 10-man East Bengal

## ISL

**Amitabha Das Sharma**  
KOLKATA

Odisha FC recovered from a goal deficit to beat a 10-man East Bengal FC 2-1 in a match week 12 encounter of the ISL at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata here on Thursday. The opening half was evenly contested though East Bengal seemed to be better in attack and made quite a few incursions in the Odisha box.

Turning out without its injured striker Dimitrios Diamantakos and attacking



**Making it count:** Odisha's Boumous, who scored the eventual winner, in action against East Bengal. DEBASISH BHADURI

midfielder Saul Crespo, East Bengal saw its finishing suffer as Cleiton Silva and Nandhakumar Sekar struggled to find the right touch inside the box.

The East Bengal defence did its job well in keeping the attacking duo of Diego Mauricio and Hugo Boumous outside the striking range.

The advantage tilted Odisha's way in the 42nd minute thanks to a dubious referring decision that saw the ejection of the East Bengal midfielder Jeakson Singh.

## Play acting

The replays showed the East Bengal player was wrongly penalised as referee Tejas Nagvenkar failed to detect Odisha forward Mauricio's play-acting who fell down after hitting the outstretched hand of Jeackson.

East Bengal coach Oscar Bruzon pointed out the wrong referring decision as one of the reasons behind his team's defeat after the match.

Despite that setback East Bengal found the lead in the 52nd minute when its defender Lalchungnunga struck following a corner.

East Bengal's joy was short lived as Jerry Mawihmingthanga found the equaliser for Odisha in the 54th minute. In the 80th minute Boumous buried a left-footed punch into the East Bengal net to secure full points for Odisha.

**The result:** East Bengal 1 (Lalchungnunga 52) lost to Odisha FC 1 (Jerry Mawihmingthanga 54, Hugo Boumous 80).

## Manush and Diya take home the titles

## Sports Bureau

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Manush Shah of RBI denied Ankur Bhattacharjee a double as he claimed his maiden senior title in the UTT National-ranking table tennis tournament on Thursday. Manush overcame a spirited challenge from Ankur II-2, 4-11, 11-7, 8-11, 11-8, 11-11 in men's final.

RBI's Diya Chitale came back from behind to down Swastika Ghosh (AAI) 8-11, 11-5, 11-11, 11-8, 11-11 in the women's final.

**The results:** Men: Final: Manush Shah (RBI) bt Ankur Bhattacharjee (PSPB) 11-2, 4-11, 11-7, 8-11, 11-8, 11-11. Semifinals: Ankur bt Akash Pal (RSPB) 11-5, 11-8, 5-11, 11-8, 11-8; Manush bt Manav Thakkar (PSPB) 10-12, 11-7, 13-10, 8-11, 6-11, 11-7, 11-7.

**Women: Final:** Diya Chitale (RBI) bt Swastika Ghosh (AAI) 8-11, 11-5, 11-8, 11-8, 11-7.

**Semifinals:** Diya Chitale (RBI) bt Sunita Mukherjee (RSBP) 12-10, 3-11, 6-11, 11-4, 8-11, 14-12, 12-10, 11-6. Girls: Final:

Syndrella Das (Ananya) bt Ananya Chande (Mah) 11-8, 13-11, 11-5, 8-11, 9-11, 11-4; **Seminifinals:** Syndrella Das (Ananya) bt Pritha Vartikar (Mah) 10-12, 11-1, 11-7, 12-10; Ananya bt Ananya Muralidharan (TN) 14-12, 11-5, 14-12.

## Invest in cultivating new blood, says Sol Campbell

## FOOTBALL

**Sports Bureau**  
KOLKATA

Investment in grassroots to "cultivate new blood" is the development path that a country like India should adopt to see success in football, feels former England icon Sol Campbell.

"I think if India can find

a good balance between getting investments and a good grassroots programme, the sport will grow," Campbell, who is in the city as the international ambassador of Tata Steel World 25K run, said during

a media interaction on Thursday. "Any country looking to develop the game needs a little bit of sustainable money in there, you need the money to attract the players (to the clubs) and then have the funds to go into the grassroots to cultivate the new blood, new quality players. If you haven't got a system, you don't know what you've got."

"One one side you have

got what Saudi Arabia is doing. They are pumping in money, they are getting

the players in, but in the

end they still have to start

doing the grassroots and

start building that system.

"You may well end up like the American league (MLS) back when Pele and all the big names of the time were playing. In the end it will become top heavy and then all of a sudden you find there is no foundation," Campbell said.

"I want to help India find out what talent they have got in the country, because I don't think that people know exactly what you've got here. I think it is all about getting a culture and continuing the culture."

"Let's get certain cities and the right people in the right positions to create the academy," he added.



**Soaking it in:** Sol Campbell juggles a football during a visit to the Victoria Memorial in Kolkata. PTI

for young players.

Speaking at the function, Pullela Gopichand, chief National badminton coach said the centre is not just made of brick and mortar.

## Aspiration

"This is not just a beautiful building. It's an aspiration for a lot of young players. The thousands of players who are playing the sport, it remains a symbol of a badminton court or a shuttlecock in building a champion for the future."

Puneet Dalmia, managing director and CEO of Dalmia by Bharat Ltd., said the academy will train 50 players (36 boys and 14 girls) in a holistic manner which will focus on mental

toughness, inner calmness and physical fitness.

"If India wins the bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games, we are confident that one player from our centre will win a medal," he added.

Among those in attendance were Indian doubles badminton stars Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, P. Kashyap, Gautam Dalmia, MD of Dalmia by Bharat Ltd., Suryabansi Suraj, Sports Minister, Government of Odisha, and Bhaskar Jothi Sharma, principal secretary of Sports Department, Government of Odisha.

*(The writer was in Bhubaneswar on the invitation of Dalmia by Bharat)*

**BENGALURU:** Bourbonaire and Positano may fight out the finish of the Bangalore 2000 Guineas (L.G.'s Script 8) Shreyas S 59, 5. Days Date (2) Arvind K 58.5, 7. Capri Girl (10) Angad 8. Domina (13) Srinath 58, 9. Tropical Mist (11) Laxman S 58, 10. Elveden (6) Saddam H 57.5, 11. Feel of Hope (9) R. Pradeep 57.5, 12. Joyful Spirit (3) A. Ramu 57 and 13. Glaze (12) M. Rajesh K 55.5.

**1. MARTHA, 2. DOMINA, 3. DAYS DATE**

**4. B.B.M.P. CUP (DIV. I, 1,200m), rated 20 to 45, 5-y-o & over, 2-30; 1. Extraordinary (7) A. Ramu 62, 2. Star Comet (8) Rayan 57.5, 3. Ultimate Striker (3) K. Sridharaju 57, 4. Spirit Dancer (5) P. Siddaraju 57, 5. The Golden Dream (1) R. Pradeep 56.5, 6. Mega Success (4) Jagadeesh 55.5, 7. Infinite Spirit (4) Likith Appu 54.5, 8. Ice Storm (2) M. Rajesh K 52.5 and 6. Lona 5. Sacred Creator (6) Angad 51.5.**

**1. STAR COMET, 2. MEGA SUCCESS, 3. GOLDEN DREAM**

**5. BANGALORE 2000 GUINEAS (1,600m), 3-y-o only, (Terms), 4-00: 1. Bourbonaire (9) Suraj 57, 2. Don Carlos (4) Trevor 57, 3. La Mcarine (3) L.A. Rozario 58, 4. Mandarine (1) Antony 57, 4. Manchurian (2) Arshad 51, 5. Desirous (1) Trevor 57, 6. Tesorino (5) Trevor 55.5, 7. Eastern Gold (6) Laxman S 54.**

**1. RIEKO, 2. LOCKHEEDE, 3. PRICELESS PRINCE**

**7. B.B.M.P. CUP (DIV. II, 1,200m), rated 40 to 65, 3-y-o only, (Terms), 4-00: 1. Art Gallery (7) Antony 60, 2. Bharat (3) Vivek 58, 3. Lauterbrunnen (1) Angad 57, 4. R.I Touch (4) Trevor 57, 5. Instructor (4) R. Pradeep 55.5, 6. Tesorino (5) Trevor 55.5**

# Fire and ice – decoding the flashpoints of a spiced-up rivalry

The exchanges in the contests between Australia and India are a hidden sub-plot that bring out the best in both teams elevating the quality; the hosts having drawn level will be keen at gaining a psychological edge from the Head-Siraj episode as they seek to avenge the losses on the previous two occasions



GETTY IMAGES

## R. Kaushik

To call this rivalry prickly will be an understatement. Even when the teams weren't entirely competitive against each other away from home - Australia didn't win a Test series in India for close to 35 years between the early 1970s and the mid-2000s and India had to wait 71 years to secure their maiden series triumph down under - there was plenty of needle and edge.

The Sunil Gavaskar walkout that wasn't at the MCG in 1980-81 readily springs to mind; as the little master has clarified more than once, it wasn't so much the umpiring decision as what was said by one of the Australians when he was walking off after being adjudged leg before that incensed him.

Tim Zoehrer versus Chandrakant Pandit in the tied Test in Chennai in 1986, the normally unflappable Rahul Dravid having a go at Michael Slater in Mumbai in 2000, Matthew Hayden inviting Ishant Sharma to the boxing ring during India's fractious tour in 2007-08 and Zaheer Khan lashing out at Brad Haddin in Bengaluru in 2008 are all fresh in memory, as also current head coach's shoulder charge of Shane Watson in Delhi in the same series which earned him a one-Test suspension and heralded the Test debut of M Vijay.

Mitchell Johnson poking the Virat Kohli beast in Adelaide in 2014, a costly mistake that was rewarded by the man who started the series as stand-in skipper and ended it as captain in his own right with four hundreds in as many Tests, and Tim Paine's constant and eventually expensive chirping during both the 2018-19 and 2020-21 series are as infamous as Steve Smith's brainfade in Bengaluru in 2017, when he looked towards the dressing room for clues on whether to opt for a review and Glenn Maxwell mocking the shoulder injury that kept Kohli out of the decider on that same tour in Dharamshala.

## Biggest of them all

But there are no prizes for guessing what will remain the biggest controversy in Australia-India face-offs. Andrew Symonds accusing Harbhajan Singh of racist abuse, finding favour with match referee Mike Procter who banned the Indian for three Tests and appeals commissioner Justice John Hansen throwing out the ban in the first month of 2008 didn't just make for drama and

spice of the kind one hopes is never repeated on a cricket field, it also threatened to ruin relations between the two countries, much like Bodyline had between England and Australia in 1932-33.

Symonds had made tenuous references to similar verbal attacks by the off-spinner on Australia's tour of India in 2007. The Indians vehemently denied that charge, but when Matthew Hayden told Harbhajan something along the likes of 'You've done it again' in Sydney, things moved at breakneck speed and the potential for damage was immense once the wheels of officiandom began to spin furiously. The Indians closed ranks behind the off-spinner, who had tormented Australia with 32 wickets in three Tests in the absence of Anil Kumble in the epochal series of 2001.

Kumble, now the captain of the Test squad, brought all his tact and diplomacy into play, saying all the right things without appearing confrontational, but making his point firmly and unequivocally. India lost the 'Monkeygate' Test in Sydney with less than five minutes left on the clock after Michael Clarke picked up the last three wickets in one over. India had been at the receiving end of numerous umpiring howlers, primarily from Steve Bucknor. If it was due to incompetence, it was incompetence of the worst, most unprecedented nature. Watching helplessly from the non-striker's end as wickets tumbled around him, India's captain waited for the Aussies' prolonged and animated celebrations to die down so that he could congratulate the winners, then came to the press conference and where he conducted himself with great dignity and signed off with the parting shot, "Only one team was playing in the spirit of the game."

Later on that tour, during the triangular series, Hayden called Harbhajan an 'obnoxious little weed'. One wondered whether, not when, this dust would settle. Of course, that magical entity called the Indian Premier League helped cool things down, Harbhajan sharing a dressing room with his two chief tormentors, Hayden and the late Symonds.

## Million-dollar question

Sport needs some spice, some drama. It involves emotion and passion, and therefore these emotions and passions sometimes express themselves. To what extent they are allowed to do so is the

million-dollar question. There is nothing wrong in having a word or three; these are grown-ups playing to win, at most costs, so to expect choir-boy behaviour will be naïve. So long as verbal exchanges are borderline civil, at worst, and don't transgress the amorphous line that can't be crossed, it's fine. No one wants to see automatons and robots and you'd expect players and their captains to know what can be done and what must not be. That lends colour and atmosphere too. Some of the greatest sledges in the history of the sport have attained that status not because they have been abusive but because of the sharpness of wit, the presence of mind in the heat of the battle, to fire a barb devoid of malice, but with the power to drive the point home.

Like Shane Warne vs Daryll Cullinan, for example. It's no secret that the great leg-spinner repeatedly had the South African's number, even sending him to a sports psychologist to rid him of the Warne demons prior to their tour of Australia in 1997-98. On the next tour, four years later, when Cullinan came out to bat, Warne lipped from the slip cordon, "Now Daryll, don't you dare get out, I've been waiting four years for this opportunity to you again."

To which Cullinan deadpanned instantaneously, "It looks like you've spent it eating too."

Warne, ever the sport, acknowledged the repartee though that didn't stop him tormenting Cullinan with the ball. Wouldn't the folklore of cricket be poorer without this exchange?

Much of the spoken word otherwise, however, is characterised by expletives and cuss words, and India vs Australia is no different.

As recently as last weekend, Travis Head and Mohammed Siraj got into a verbal pow-wow in Adelaide, the latest episode in the multi-layered history of India-Australia show-downs. Head was on to a good thing at his home venue, the Adelaide Oval, Siraj was chomping at the bit with the second new pink ball in his hands. By the time India took the new ball, Head was well past his hundred and positively buzzing. He smashed Siraj for a four, then took a good delivery homing in on his stumps and whip-deposited it over deep backward square-leg for the most extraordinary of sixes. Till the ball made contact with the left-hander's bat, it had the potential to end up with a 'W'. Disdainfully, with no regard for reputation or quality, Head dismissed it from his presence. If Siraj didn't feel

insulted, he should have. Fact - he did.

Siraj scattered Head's stumps next ball, then gave him the kind of going-away gift fast bowlers reserve for pesky batters. In some ways, it's a backhanded compliment, a grudging concession which might mean, 'Hey, you're not so bad after all'. Not everyone sees it that way. Head most certainly didn't. He reacted, mouthed off, used words that he said later he was ashamed. You didn't need to be an expert in lip-reading to figure out what he said to Siraj. One isn't sure what Siraj had said in the first place to provoke Head's extraordinary tirade but Head's reaction was enough to rile up the fans, for Siraj to be subjected to boos and screams of an Adelaide Oval crowd that suddenly found that it was as much fun to have a go at a player from the opposition as it was to applaud its own heroes.

At the end of it all, Siraj was fined 20% of his match fee, Head let off with a 'severe reprimand' and both attracted a penalty of one demerit point each. This, however, could only be the beginning of the story. It will be no surprise if Siraj is singled out by spectators in Brisbane, the venue of the third Test, at the 'G' (as the Melbourne Cricket Ground is called) and in Sydney over the next four weeks when the series winds towards its denouement.

Fiercely proud as they are, Australia's cricketers and their loyal supporters - which includes a media that went from questioning to carping within three days, once victory was secured in Adelaide - haven't taken kindly to being vanquished for two series on the trot in their own backyard. In 2018-19, they sought refuge in the fact that David Warner and Smith were suspended due to their culpability in Sandpapergate but there was no such respite two years later, when with less half the XI that started the first Test in Adelaide, India completed a miraculous comeback at the Gabba in Brisbane. Australia have forever looked for an edge, any edge, that would serve their common purpose, which now is to avenge the defeats of the last two series here.

Flat and listless and bereft of drive and ambition in Perth when they were humiliated by 295 runs, the Australia of old has resurfaced, snarling and sniping and somehow clambering on the moral high horse when none exists. The transformation in the team hasn't been lost on the public. These next four weeks, they should be interesting. And maybe that will be the understatement to beat all understatements.

## THE GIST

As recently as last weekend, Head and Siraj got into a verbal pow-wow in Adelaide, the latest episode in the multi-layered history of India-Australia show-downs

No prizes for guessing what will remain the biggest controversy in the face-offs: Symonds accusing Harbhajan of racist abuse

## SCIENCE

# What is Disease X and why the world should prepare for it

COVID-19 is regarded as the first instance of a real Disease X. When SARS-CoV-2 emerged as an unknown pathogen causing a global pandemic, it exemplified the scenario that Disease X was meant to represent – an unpredictable, novel threat requiring rapid global response and adaptation.

C. Aravinda

#### The story so far

The recent outbreak reported in the first week of December 2024 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has claimed over 400 lives and remains unclassified, has raised concerns that it could be an instance of Disease X. This unsettling event has reignited discussions about Disease X. Disease X is not an actual but a hypothetical disease. The World Health Organization (WHO) coined the term in 2018 to describe an unknown pathogen that could potentially unleash a devastating epidemic or pandemic. It was conceptualised by the WHO to prepare for future outbreaks that are difficult to predict or identify. While investigations continue to determine the cause in Congo, the outbreak underscores the importance of Disease X.

#### WHO's priority list of pathogens?

COVID-19 is widely regarded as the first instance of a real Disease X after the WHO introduced the concept in 2018. When SARS-CoV-2 emerged as an unknown pathogen causing a global pandemic, it exemplified the scenario that Disease X was meant to represent – an unpredictable, novel threat requiring rapid global response and adaptation. The concept of Disease X traces its origins in the aftermath of the West African Ebola epidemic of 2014–2016, which resulted in over 11,000 deaths and revealed significant gaps in global epidemic preparedness. After the outbreak, the WHO brought together scientists and public health experts to address how future outbreaks of similar scale could be prevented.

The WHO's priority list of pathogens is a strategic tool published in 2018 that is designed to focus global attention and resources on the most serious infectious disease threats. This list identifies diseases that have epidemic or pandemic potential for which there are insufficient or no medical countermeasures such as vaccines or treatments. The need for such a list arises from the urgency to guide research and development, allocate funding, and enhance preparedness. It helps policymakers, researchers, and health organisations prioritise efforts toward controlling the diseases. The current list (not exhaustive) includes Ebola virus disease, Marburg virus disease, Lassa fever, Nipah virus, Rift Valley fever, Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever, Zika virus, and Disease X. Each of these pathogens has been flagged due to factors like high mortality rates, potential for rapid spread, and the lack of adequate preventive or therapeutic options.

#### What is Disease X?

Disease X is not a specific illness but a placeholder for an unpredictable and



Swab samples being taken for a COVID-19 test. File THE HINDU

as-yet-undiscovered pathogen capable of sparking a global health crisis. The WHO included it in the Blueprint for Priority Diseases in 2018 to focus on the risks of emerging diseases that science has yet to encounter. The term sits at the intersection of two categories (among four) popularised by Donald Rumsfeld's matrix: "known unknowns" (threats we are aware of but cannot fully understand) and "unknown unknowns" (threats we are not aware of and understand). Disease X embodies both, as it acknowledges the likelihood of a future pandemic without specifying when, where, or how it might arise.

The potential culprits behind Disease X are varied. It originates from Pathogen X, which could be a virus, a bacterium, a parasite, fungi, helminths, or even a prion – a misfolded protein capable of causing severe neurological diseases. Historical data supports this uncertainty. Since 1940 (from where authentic records are available), researchers have identified more than 300 emerging infectious diseases, about 70% of which have zoonotic origins, meaning they are transmitted from animals to humans. This process, known as zoonotic spillover, is often linked to human encroachment on wildlife habitats, deforestation, and the intensification of agriculture. Meanwhile, the growing risks of antimicrobial resistance, bioterrorism, and accidental lab leaks add further layers of unpredictability.

#### Patterns in emerging diseases

While the exact nature of Disease X remains unknown, epidemiological patterns provide critical insights into how new diseases emerge and spread. The emergence of viruses such as HIV, SARS, MERS, and Ebola was closely linked to ecological disruptions caused by human activity. Deforestation, urbanisation, and climate change have pushed humans and wildlife into closer contact, increasing the

#### The interconnectedness of our world makes it easier for localised outbreaks to escalate into pandemics. While epidemiology cannot predict the exact moment or source of Disease X, it can help identify high-risk regions and behaviours

likelihood of pathogen transmission. Epidemiologists estimate that over 1.7 million undiscovered viruses exist in wildlife, with hundreds of thousands potentially capable of infecting humans. The frequency of novel outbreaks has also increased significantly since the mid-20th century, reflecting a combination of environmental, demographic, and global factors.

Regions with high biodiversity and inadequate healthcare systems, like the Congo Basin, are particularly vulnerable. The interconnectedness of our world, with frequent international travel and trade, makes it easier for localised outbreaks to escalate into pandemics, as seen with COVID-19. While epidemiology cannot predict the exact moment or source of Disease X, it can help identify high-risk regions and behaviours that increase the likelihood of its emergence.

#### Challenges of predicting Disease X

Forecasting the next Disease X is daunting, as its emergence depends on numerous unpredictable factors. Zoonotic diseases are the most likely source, given their history of driving major epidemics. However, other scenarios, such as pathogens mutating to evade treatment, laboratory mishaps, or deliberate biological attacks, cannot be ruled out. Climate change is also reshaping disease transmission dynamics, expanding the range of vector-borne illnesses like malaria and dengue fever while pushing pathogens to adapt to new

hosts and environments.

The sheer number of potential pathogens adds to the complexity. Scientists estimate that only a fraction of viruses capable of infecting humans have been identified, leaving a vast pool of unknown threats. Genomic sequencing and artificial intelligence are beginning to play an important role in narrowing this vast field of possibilities, but even with these tools, predicting the exact origin, timing, and behaviour of Disease X remains out of reach. What is certain, however, is that the conditions that gave rise to pandemics like COVID-19 and SARS continue to exist, making the emergence of Disease X a question of when, not if.

At the heart of preparation is the need for robust surveillance systems to detect new outbreaks early. Advances in genomic sequencing, artificial intelligence, and real-time data sharing are essential tools for developing diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines. Strengthening healthcare infrastructure, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, is also crucial. Organisations like the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) are now investing in "prototype pathogen" platforms that can be adapted to target unknown diseases within 100 days of their identification.

#### Need for global collaboration

Fighting Disease X will require an unprecedented level of international cooperation. The WHO's ongoing efforts, such as its list of priority pathogens and the proposed Pandemic Treaty, aim to foster a unified global response to health emergencies. These initiatives recognise that pandemics do not respect borders and that fragmented efforts will be insufficient to counter a threat as elusive as Disease X. Governments must work together to share data, pool resources, and ensure equitable access to diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines.

The outbreak in the DRC serves as a sobering reminder of the risks the world faces. Disease X is no longer a distant hypothetical but an urgent call to action. By strengthening public health systems, investing in research and innovation, and fostering global solidarity, the world can prepare for the unpredictable and safeguard future generations from the devastating consequences of the next pandemic. Frameworks like the Nagoya Protocol, which ensure equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources, could be expanded to include biological materials like pathogens. It would promote global collaboration, ensuring fair access to research and medical countermeasures during outbreaks. A novel disease anywhere is a threat to everyone.

(Dr. C. Aravinda is an academic and public health physician. The views expressed are personal. aravindaa@imslj10@hotmail.com)



A dengue prevention camp in Chennai. FILE PHOTO

## Tackling the challenge of seasonal illnesses

Serena Josephine M.

In October 2024, Tamil Nadu's State Public Health Laboratory (SPHL) took a closer look at cases of fever caused by respiratory viruses. An analysis of 326 respiratory samples from patients with influenza-like illness (ILI) across 38 districts found that 75.4% of respiratory illnesses in children and adults were caused by Influenza A and B viruses. Respiratory Syncytial Virus A and B were also commonly detected among patients with ILI.

Every year, seasonal illnesses keep doctors and public health authorities busy. But certain disease patterns have become clearer. "We have observed some obvious patterns. One is in vector-borne diseases that have a very specific trend. It starts after August and goes up to January. This has been the trend for the last three years. There may be a small rise from one year to another, but the trend is continuing. The increases may be due to erratic rainfall or more rains," T. S. Selvavinayagam, Director of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, said.

Next are acute diarrhoeal diseases, occurring in and around May. "Cases peak from April to June. We have some clusters

**An analysis of 326 respiratory samples from patients with influenza-like illness across 38 districts found that 75.4% of respiratory illnesses were caused by Influenza A and B viruses. Respiratory Syncytial Virus A and B were also commonly detected**

as well due to local water issues," he said. "Airborne diseases – respiratory infections – rise during the winter season. There is a small rise in seasonal flu in March too. But otherwise, cases are seen throughout the year," Dr. Selvavinayagam added. This year, mumps was a cause for concern.

There has been a steady flow of patients with fever to hospitals over the last few months. Suresh Kumar, consultant, infectious diseases, Apollo Hospitals, said cases of H1N1 and H3N2 were common. "We are seeing more cases of chikungunya. Cases have been surfacing over the last three to four months and have picked up in the last few weeks. Fever cases started to rise following rains in November," he said. A lot of patients who had flu and cold were experiencing lack of taste and loss of appetite, he said.

Janani Sankar, medical director, Kanchi Kamakoti CHILD'S Trust Hospital, said: "We saw several cases of mycoplasma infections over the last month. This does not respond to commonly prescribed antibiotics. These infections are a cause for concern this season," she said.



A fever surveillance camp. FILE PHOTO

## Sweetened drinks 'increase risk of cardiovascular diseases'

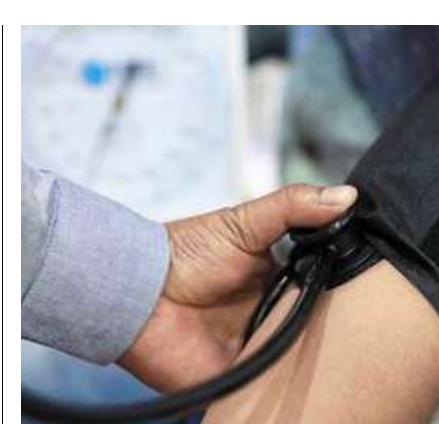
R. Sujatha

A large-scale study in Sweden has suggested that consuming sweetened drinks significantly increases the risk of serious cardiovascular disease. An occasional treat is acceptable, though, the study has added.

Researchers studying the effects of the consumption of different types of sugar on health risks have found that generally higher sugar intake raises the risk of certain cardiovascular diseases. Sugary drinks in particular carry higher risks. Extremely low sugar consumption is also associated with poorer cardiovascular health. The study indicated that the lowest risks of cardiovascular diseases were found among people who ate occasional treats. The scientists advocate avoiding fizzy drinks, since such beverages have excessive added sugar that can increase the risk of stroke or aneurysm, heart failure, and atrial fibrillation.

#### Source of the sugar

"The most striking finding from our study is the divergent relationship between different sources of added sugar and cardiovascular disease risk," said Suzanne Janz, PhD candidate at Lund University and corresponding author of the article in *Frontiers in Public Health*. "This surprising contrast highlights the importance of considering not just the amount of sugar consumed, but its source and context," Ms. Janz said.



The lowest risks of cardiovascular diseases were found among people who ate occasional treats. GETTY IMAGES

research found that during the study period, 25,739 participants were diagnosed with a cardiovascular disease.

#### Sweet drinks increase risk

The data helped to break down how the different types of sugar intake affect the risk of different cardiovascular diseases. The analysis showed that consuming more sweetened drinks significantly increased the risk of ischaemic stroke, heart failure, atrial fibrillation, and abdominal aortic aneurysm.

"Liquid sugars found in sweetened beverages make you feel less full, potentially leading to overconsumption," Ms. Janz said.

Different cardiovascular diseases were affected differently by increased sugar intake, possibly because consuming additional sugar affected participants' individual risk profiles differently. Increased sugar in general raised the risk of ischaemic stroke and abdominal aortic aneurysm, as well as increasing the risk of heart failure in participants with a normal BMI. However, the highest risks of a negative health outcome arose in the lowest intake category for treats.

Occasional treats were associated with better outcomes than no treats at all.

#### Low intake not beneficial

"While our observational study cannot establish causation, these findings suggest that extremely low sugar intake may not be necessary or beneficial for cardiovascular health," she added.

In India, the study resonates with our food habits, which include a large consumption of sweets and carbohydrates. "Carbohydrates are not inherently harmful. One should pay attention to the type and the amount consumed, which can increase the risk of heart disease," said G. Sengottuvelu, clinical lead, Structural Heart Disease Programme at Apollo Hospitals.

"Excess carbohydrates in the form of sugars and refined carbs may be more harmful than dietary fats. Added sugars, sugary beverages, or processed foods can contribute to obesity and metabolic syndrome, which is linked with insulin resistance, high triglycerides, and low HDL (good cholesterol)," he added.

They are associated with increased visceral fat deposition and accelerated atherosclerosis. Insulin resistance causes systemic inflammation with progression of plaque formation, the specialist explained.

Government Omandur Multi Super Speciality Hospital dietician Meenakshi Bajaj said though the Indian dietary guidelines limit added sugars to 10% of the daily energy requirement, some dieticians recommend stricter restrictions given Indians' disposition to metabolic diseases. "Traditional Indian sweets contain not just sugars but also nuts, milk, seeds, trans fats, and saturated fats that prevent overconsumption, but this is not so with sugar-sweetened beverages. They could be replaced with herb infused water, tender coconuts, and fresh unsweetened home-made juices," she added.

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The scientists collected data from two other studies: the Swedish Mammography Cohort and the Cohort of Swedish Men, which included diet questionnaires administered in 1997 and 2009, allowing for monitoring participants' diets over time.

They looked at three classes of sugar consumption – toppings such as honey, a pastry as a treat, or sweetened beverages such as fizzy drinks – and seven cardiovascular diseases: two different types of stroke, heart attacks, heart failure, aortic aneurysms, atrial fibrillation, and aortic stenosis.

The participants were monitored until they died, were diagnosed with one of the cardiovascular diseases, or reached the end of the follow-up period in 2019. The