

HAPPY
New Year
2025

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Biren expresses 'regret' for violence in Manipur

The Chief Minister apologises for lives lost and people displaced, hopes for peace in 2025; Congress demands a similar apology from PM, says he and Shah should also take responsibility

The Hindu Bureau

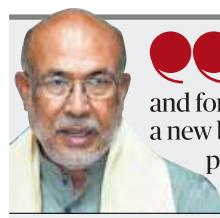
GUWAHATI/NEW DELHI

Manipur Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren Singh has apologised to the people of the State for the loss of hundreds of lives during the past 20 months of ethnic violence.

On New Year's Eve, he expressed the hope that 2025 would usher in peace and normalcy in Manipur.

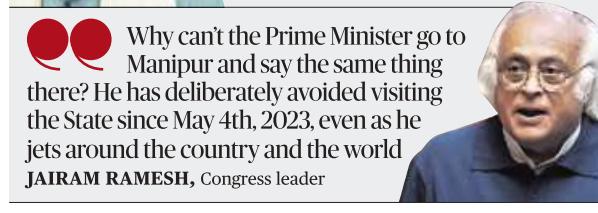
"I want to say sorry to the people of the State for what happened since May 3 last year [2023]. Many people lost their loved ones, many left their homes. I really feel regret and would like to apologise to all natives," he told journalists in the State's capital Imphal on Tuesday.

Mr. Singh said the past three or four months had



Whatever happened has happened. We have to forgive and forget the past mistakes and make a new beginning for a peaceful and prosperous Manipur.

N. BIREN SINGH, Chief Minister



Why can't the Prime Minister go to Manipur and say the same thing there? He has deliberately avoided visiting the State since May 4th, 2023, even as he jets around the country and the world.

JAIRAM RAMESH, Congress leader

witnessed some progress towards peace. "Whatever happened has happened. We have to forgive and forget the past mistakes and make a new beginning for a peaceful and prosperous Manipur," he said, adding that the "34, 35 recognised tribes" should live together in the future.

Reacting to the apology,

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh asked why Prime Minister Narendra Modi had not made a similar statement, or found time to visit the conflict-ridden State.

In a post on X, he said the Prime Minister and Home Minister Amit Shah also had to "bear responsibility". "Why can't the Prime Minister go to Mani-

pur and say the same thing there? He has deliberately avoided visiting the State since May 4th, 2023, even as he jets around the country and the world," he said. "The people of Manipur simply cannot understand this neglect."

Kuki women injured

Even as the Chief Minister appealed for peace, several Kuki women were injured allegedly when the Central armed police forces dispersed protesters at Saibol village in Kangpokpi district. The women reportedly resisted the "forcible occupation of community bunkers" by the security personnel.

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STATISTICS OF VIOLENCE

» PAGE 12

Court gives Punjab three more days on farm protests

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

The Punjab government informed the Supreme Court on Tuesday that protesting farmers had written to the Centre saying their leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who has been on a hunger strike for 35 days, will seek medical help only if the Centre invited them for talks.

Mr. Dallewal has been on a hunger strike at Khanauli on the Punjab-Haryana boundary since November 26 to press the Centre to accept their demands, including a legal guarantee for minimum support price for crops.

The State's Advocate-General, Gurinder Singh, explained that efforts to hospitalise Mr. Dallewal was thwarted by the farmers' bandh on Monday. He said Punjab had decided to hold its hand after the farmers' letter to the Centre proposing talks,



The Punjab government told the court that its efforts to hospitalise Jagjit Singh Dallewal was thwarted by the bandh on Monday. PTI

which may also spell the end of Mr. Dallewal's fast.

The Vacation Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Sudhanshu Dhulia refused to comment on "behind-the-scenes" negotiations between the farmers and the Centre. "We will not comment on anything about negotiations or the law-and-order situation. If something happens which is acceptable to the farmers and all stakeholders, we will be happy," Justice Kant said.

The court allowed a re-

IN BRIEF

NCP leader's aide surrenders in Beed murder case

MUMBAI

Walmik Karad, a close aide of Maharashtra Minister and NCP leader Dhananjay Munde, surrendered on Tuesday in connection with a case linked to the murder of a village sarpanch in Beed. » Page 13

OPPORTUNITIES » PAGE 5

THE HINDU
WISHES ITS READERS
A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR



Kerala CM supports Math's call to end regressive practice

The Hindu Bureau

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday said the Sivagiri Math had broadcast a powerful social reformist message by suggesting that devotees abandon the regressive practice of removing shirts before entering temples.

Inaugurating the 92nd Sivagiri pilgrimage at Varakala, near here, the CM said Math president Swami Sachithananda had said that the practice was anachronistic and out of tune with modern progressive values. "His words echoed the reformist thought, life and message

CONTINUED ON

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Sun sets over 2024



Coming to a close: A plane flies past the last sunset of the year in Pulwama, south Kashmir on Monday. IMRAN NISSAR

Yemen death sentence for Kerala woman: India adopting a cautious route in conflict-hit Sanaa

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

and capable of influencing all important institutions of the country located in Sanaa, making the case unique.

'Exploring options'

Earlier, the official spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal, had said the Ministry of External Affairs was aware that Ms. Nimisha's family was "exploring relevant options".

Apart from its internal political breakdown, Yemen's major cities, including Sanaa, are being bombed by Israeli, U.S. and U.K. fighter jets that are targeting the Houthis, which is complicating the case.

"The government is extending all possible help in the matter," said Mr. Jais-



QQ

Ministry of External Affairs was aware that the family of Ms. Nimisha was exploring relevant options.

RANDHIR JAISWAL
Spokesperson

local person, Ms. Nimisha allegedly administered sedatives to Talal to retrieve her travel documents which led to his death.

Following the death of Talal, she, along with another Yemeni national, reportedly dismembered the body and disposed it, prompting local authorities to arrest Ms. Nimisha.

The 2018 death sentence to Ms. Nimisha was confirmed by Yemeni President Rashad Al Alimi on Monday which has brought to light the complicated nature of the case.

Blood money

Some sources indicated that negotiation is currently under way to reach a settlement through blood money, a standard procedure within the Yemeni legal system.

However, they pointed out significant uncertainty in the case that comes from within the Yemeni state structure, with the Houthis being in control on the ground and in active conflict with major Western powers.

BPSC exam: Oppn. decries lathi charge on students

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

Opposition party leaders, including those from the Congress and the Left, on Tuesday, led a protest towards Raj Bhavan in support of candidates demanding that the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) exam be conducted again following an alleged paper leak.

However, the State's main Opposition party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, was not part of the protest.

The legislators slammed the Bihar government for the lathi charge on the agitating students on Sunday.

DETAILS
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Q4 CONDITIONS
Status quo on rates for small savings

BUSINESS » PAGE 15



REIGNING SUPREME
Bengal regains the Santosh Trophy

SPORT » PAGE 17

विद्वान् सरकार
कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
लघु सिंचाई प्रमंडल, नवादा।
निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना सं० SBD-01/2024-25 का शुद्धि पत्र
शुद्धि पत्र

एतत् द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है, कि इस कार्यालय का पात्रांक 1849 दिनांक 20.12.2024 के द्वारा आमंत्रित निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना सं० SBD-01/2024-25 शुद्धि पत्र जिसका सूचना एवं जनसंरक्षण विभाग का PR. No. 15504 (MWRD) 2024-25 है, निविदा से संबंधित विधियों में अपरिहार्य कारणण निम्न प्रकार से पुनः संशोधित किया जाता है।

क्र. सं०	विषय	पूर्व संशोधित तिथि एवं समय	संशोधित तिथि एवं समय
03	परिमाण विपरीत प्राप्त करने की तिथि एवं समय	दिनांक—16.12.2024 से 30.12.2024 तक	दिनांक—03.01.2025 के अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक
05	निविदा अपलोड करने के दिनांक—30.12.2024 के अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक	दिनांक—03.01.2025 के अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक	
06	तकनीकी निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय	दिनांक—01.01.2025 के पूर्वाह्न 10:00 बजे से संशोधित प्रमंडलीय कार्यालय में।	दिनांक—07.01.2025 के पूर्वाह्न 10:00 बजे संशोधित प्रमंडलीय कार्यालय में।

शेष सभी शर्तें यथावत् रहेगा।

PR-1588 (M W R D) 2024-25 कार्यपालक अभियंता, लघु सिंचाई प्रमंडल, नवादा।

CHENNAI METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
NOTICE INVITING TENDER THROUGH E-TENDER NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

e-bids are invited from the eligible bidders for the following works as per the procedure of CMWSB under two cover system conforming to the Tamil Nadu Transparency in Tenders Act, 1998 and Rules 2000.

Comprehensive Operation and Maintenance of Water Distribution Stations, Sewage Pumping Stations and Sewer System using machineries on the following locations for 3 years.

Sl. No.	Areas and Tender No.	Bid Security	Prebid meeting Date	e-Bid Submission closing Date	e-Bid Opening Date
1.	Package - I - Area I, II and III, CNT/WSS/SEW/NCB/MWB/3649/2024-25	Rs.18.77 lakhs			
2.	Package - II - Area IV, V and VI, CNT/WSS/SEW/NCB/MWB/3647/2024-25	Rs.27.66 lakhs	20.01.2025 at 11.30 a.m.	05.02.2025 upto 3.00 p.m.	06.02.2025 after 3.30 p.m.
3.	Package - III - Area VII, VIII and IX, CNT/WSS/SEW/NCB/MWB/3648/2024-25	Rs.35.55 lakhs			
4.	Package - IV - Area X, XI and XII, CNT/WSS/SEW/NCB/MWB/3649/2024-25	Rs.28.23 lakhs			
5.	Package - V - Area XIII, XIV and XV, CNT/WSS/SEW/NCB/MWB/3650/2024-25	Rs.25.99 lakhs			
6.	EMD by online transfer only through tender Portal. The tenderer shall submit scanned copy of online transaction statement towards EMD as part of Tender document.				
7.	Availability of tender documents and e-bid submission is permitted through tender portal / website: www.intenders.gov.in For all other details refer tender schedule in the website from 02.01.2025.				

DIPR/5729/Tender/2024 CE(P)-III/SE(C&M)(II/c)

जल संसाधन विभाग
कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
बाड़ नियंत्रण प्रमंडल, दलिलिंगशर्य (समतीतपुर)
अल्पकालीन निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या – 02SB0/2024-25
(सार्वजनिक सर्वदा)
(केवल ई-टेंडर प्रदाति के अनुसार वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

1. कार्य का विवरण —

क्र. सं०	कार्य का नाम	प्रकलिपिता राशि (लाख रु. म)	अधिकारी का नाम	परियाग विषय का नूत्र (अप्रतिक्रियापूर्ण आवश्यकता के बारे में नुस्खे/मॉडेल में मुद्रित)	बेल्टोन को देय वीरा प्रोत्साहन की अप्रतिक्रिया की अवधि	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि
01	यंगा नदी के बारे में और अवश्यत चौंदपुर धर्मन स्टेल्पर डीवेल के 37.612 किमी से 38.648 किमी के बारे में नियंत्रण कार्य (एजेंडा सं० 220 / 236 / 2025)	836.99	16,74,000.00	10,00,000	5,900.00	15.05.2025
02	यंगा नदी के बारे में और अवश्यत चौंदपुर धर्मन स्टेल्पर डीवेल के 40.691 किमी से 41.341 किमी के बारे में नियंत्रण कार्य (एजेंडा सं० 220 / 240 / 2025)	961.62	19,23,300.00	10,00,000	5,900.00	15.05.2025
03	यंगा नदी के बारे में और अवश्यत चौंदपुर धर्मन स्टेल्पर डीवेल के 41.341 किमी से 42.041 किमी के बारे में नियंत्रण कार्य (एजेंडा सं० 220 / 241 / 2025)	1047.93	20,48,000.00	10,00,000	5,900.00	15.05.2025
04	यंगा नदी के बारे में और अवश्यत हायपीपूर-नावियपूर तरवें के किमी 58.81 से किमी 61.01 तक काटवा नियंत्रण कार्य (एजेंडा सं० 220 / 240 / 2025)	961.01	19,22,100.00	10,00,000	5,900.00	15.05.2025
05	यंगा नदी के बारे में और अवश्यत हायपीपूर-नावियपूर तरवें के किमी 61.01 से किमी 63.86 तक काटवा नियंत्रण कार्य (एजेंडा सं० 220 / 247 / 2025)	1144.49	21,44,500.00	10,00,000	5,900.00	15.05.2025
06	यंगा नदी के बारे में और अवश्यत हायपीपूर-नावियपूर तरवें के किमी 63.86 से किमी 66.50 तक काटवा नियंत्रण कार्य (एजेंडा सं० 220 / 248 / 2025)	1114.02	21,14,100.00	10,00,000	5,900.00	15.05.2025
07	यंगा नदी के बारे में और अवश्यत हायपीपूर-नावियपूर तरवें के किमी 64.61 पर काटवा नियंत्रण कार्य (एजेंडा सं० 220 / 249 / 2025)	498.58	9,97,200.00	10,00,000	5,900.00	15.05.2025
08	बदान नदी के बारे मारे में ग्राम अदलपुर के निकट 700 मी. में काटवा नियंत्रण कार्य (एजेंडा सं० 220 / 253 / 2025)	365.38	7,30,800.00	10,00,000	5,900.00	15.05.2025
09	बाया नदी के बारे मारे में ग्राम अदलपुर के निकट 700 मी. में काटवा नियंत्रण कार्य (एजेंडा सं० 220 / 252 / 2025)	290.27	5,80,600.00	10,00,000	3,540.00	15.05.2025
10	बाया नदी के बारे मारे में ग्राम अदलपुर के निकट 700 मी. में अवश्यत चिनारे ग्राम-करपाराना बदुली के बारे में अवश्यत चिनारे ग्राम-करपाराना सुखानाम कार्य (एजेंडा सं० 222 / 22 / 2025)	356.14	7,12,300.00	10,00,000	5,900.00	15.05.2025
11	बाया नदी के बारे में ग्राम अदलपुर के निकट 700 मी. में अवश्यत चिनारे ग्राम-करपाराना सुखानाम कार्य (एजेंडा सं० 222 / 13 / 2025)	228.52	4,57,100.00	10,00,000	3,540.00	15.05.2025
12	बाया नदी के बारे में ग्राम अदलपुर के किमी 26.487 से किमी 26.572 तक ग्राम-करपारा के निकट पकड़ा सुखानाम कार्य (एजेंडा सं० 222 / 14 / 2025)	210.21	4,20,500.00	10,00,000	3,540.00	15.05.2025

Will sue Atishi, Sanjay Singh over BJP bribery allegations: Dikshit

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

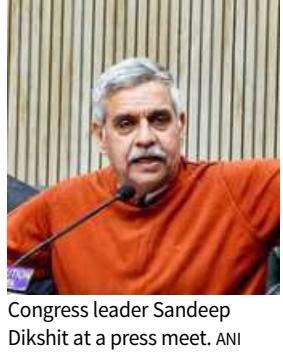
Senior Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit on Tuesday said he would file a defamation case against Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders Atishi and Sanjay Singh over allegations of taking money from the BJP.

"A few days ago, (Chief Minister) Atishi said we are taking money from the BJP. After this press conference, I will file a criminal and civil defamation case against her and (AAP Rajya Sabha member) Sanjay Singh. I will ask for ₹10 crore and out of that money, I will donate ₹5 crore to Yamuna cleaning and the remaining half to clean the polluted air in Delhi," he said.

Mr. Dikshit, contesting the upcoming Delhi Assembly election from the New Delhi seat against AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, claimed the latter was "yet to show proof of corruption".

Reacting to the allegations, AAP in a statement alleged,

"Mr. Dikshit is peddling the BJP's narrative, which is why he turns a blind eye to (BJP leader) Parvesh Verma (sic) openly distributing black money in a cash-for-votes".



Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit at a press meet. ANI

AAP starts drive to enrol temple priests, gurdwara granthis for poll scheme

Kejriwal visits temple, Atishi goes to gurdwara; why isn't govt. giving the honorariums right away, asks BJP; Cong. accuses AAP, BJP of dividing people along religious lines

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), led by national convener Arvind Kejriwal and Chief Minister Atishi, started the registration drive under its Pujari Granthi Samman Yojana on Tuesday. While Mr. Kejriwal paid a visit to a temple near the Kashmere Gate bus terminal, Ms. Atishi went to a gurdwara in Karol Bagh.

Under the scheme, announced a day earlier, AAP has promised to give ₹8,000 per month as honorarium to priests in temples and granthis of gurdwaras if it wins the Assembly election due in February this year.

Reacting to the allegations, AAP in a statement alleged, "Mr. Dikshit is peddling the BJP's narrative, which is why he turns a blind eye to (BJP leader) Parvesh Verma (sic) openly distributing black money in a cash-for-votes".

Mr. Dikshit, contesting the upcoming Delhi Assembly election from the New Delhi seat against AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, claimed the latter was "yet to show proof of corruption".

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Attacking Delhi's ruling party, the BJP wondered why the Delhi government had not already started disbursing the promised amount as the Model Code of Conduct is yet to kick in. In the Congress said AAP has been announcing new schemes every day to "mislead the public".

The scheme has not been passed by the Delhi Cabinet. It is the third such promise AAP made in December. The other two are monthly aid for women under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana and free treatment for senior citizens under the Sanjeevani Yojana.

The scheme has not been passed by the Delhi Cabinet. It is the third such promise AAP made in December. The other two are monthly aid for women under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana and free treatment for senior citizens under the Sanjeevani Yojana.

Change of plans

While announcing the scheme on Monday, Mr. Kejriwal said he would start the registration drive at Hanuman Mandir in Connaught Place. However, the



AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal with wife Sunita Kejriwal at a temple in central Delhi on Tuesday. ANI

venue was shifted amid protests by a group of priests demanding clarification from the former CM on why "the government provided no financial support in the last 10 years".

In a post on X in Hindi, Mr. Kejriwal said, "Since the announcement of the scheme, BJP leaders have been hurling abuses at me. My question to them is: will abusing me benefit the nation? Your party governs 20 States, including Gujarat where you've ruled for 30 years. Why haven't you honoured pujaris and granthis yet?"

Senior AAP leader and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh said the "BJP has been rattled" since the announcement of the scheme. "If they have any respect for pujaris and granthis, let them implement such a scheme in their States," he said.

New Delhi MP Bansuri Swaraj accused AAP of "relying on election gimmicks and deceit" to engage with the public.

"Unpaid salaries"

"While Kejriwal is making poll promises for priests, the imams have been protesting for the past 17 months for their unpaid salaries," said Ms. Bansuri.

Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva alleged that AAP's campaign "has been built on lies, deceit, and manipulation". Devender Yadav, the president of Congress's Delhi unit, said, "Kejriwal has been announcing new schemes every day to mislead the public even as he remains silent on the promises made over the past 10 years, which remain unfulfilled."

"All religions are there in India. However, AAP and the BJP have been dividing people along religious lines," alleged Mr. Yadav.

KIND ATTENTION
RESIDENT WELFARE ASSOCIATIONS/ BUILDERS/ PROJECT PROPONENTS/CITIZENS/NGOs

PROVIDE ELECTRIC HEATERS AND WARM CLOTHING TO SECURITY AND OTHER STAFF

AVOID OPEN BURNING AND AIR POLLUTION

Citizens are requested to:
Avoid open burning of biomass & solid waste
Do not use coal and wood for heating purpose

LET'S PROTECT OUR AIR TOGETHER !

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

Scanning QR code to Download Green Delhi App

QR code

IN BRIEF



Nitish meets outgoing Bihar Governor, Governor-designate

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar met Governor-designate Arif Mohammad Khan and outgoing Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar at the Raj Bhavan here on Tuesday. Mr. Khan is expected to take charge on January 2. "It was a courtesy meeting between the Chief Minister, Governor-designate and the outgoing Governor," a statement by the Chief Minister's Office said. Mr. Khan, who arrived in Patna on Monday, said at the airport that he would try to discharge his duties in accordance with the glorious tradition of the State. "I know the glorious history of Bihar. I will try to discharge my duties in accordance with the tradition of the State," he had said. PTI

Haryana Governor, CM, BJP chief pay tributes to Chautala

Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya, Chief Minister Nayab Saini, Union Minister and BJP chief J.P. Nadda, Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Badal and others on Tuesday paid tributes to INLD patriarch O.P. Chautala, who passed away recently. At a condolence meeting in Chaudhary Sahib Ram Stadium in Chautala village, condolence messages to the Chautala family sent by President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were also read out. O.P. Chautala, 89, who was a five-time Chief Minister, passed away in Gurugram on December 20. PTI

Karnataka govt. staff body urges CM to implement OPS

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Newly elected office-bearers of the Karnataka State Government Employees' Association (KSGEA), led by its president C.S. Shadakshari, urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday to take steps for implementation of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) for government employees.

It has urged Mr. Siddaramaiah to get a report from a committee headed by the Additional Chief Secretary, which has been looking into the matter, on the implementation of the OPS.

In Karnataka, about 2.78 lakh employees who joined work after April 1, 2006, are under the NPS (New Pension System), besides a large number of those working in government-aided institutions, autonomous bodies, boards and



Office-bearers of the Karnataka State Government Employees Association call on Siddaramaiah on Tuesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The association also urged the CM to implement the cashless Karnataka Rajya Arogya Sanjeevini Yojana

corporations. They are seeking a rollback to the OPS. Several States, including Rajasthan, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, and Hima-

chal Pradesh, have exited NPS and returned to OPS. The Congress had promised to look into the rolling back of NPS to OPS ahead of the Assembly election in 2023.

The KSGEA also urged Mr. Siddaramaiah to implement cashless Karnataka Rajya Arogya Sanjeevini Yojana, a health insurance scheme for government employees.

Kanjhawala hit-and-drag: victim's mother awaits justice as case still at trial stage

Samridhi Tewari
NEW DELHI

It will be two years on Wednesday when a 20-year-old woman was hit and dragged to death by a speeding car in north-west Delhi's Kanjhawala.

Sitting in a one-room house in Mangolpuri, Rekha Devi, the mother of the deceased, Anjali, asks how many more years she has to wait for justice.

Of the seven accused arrested by the police, six are out on bail, and the case is at the trial stage.

'2 years and counting'
"All the accused [except one] are out on bail. It has been two years, and I am still running around the court seeking justice for my daughter," said Ms. Devi, a single mother.

Four occupants of the car – Amit Khanna, Krishan, Mithun, and Manoj Mittal – were arrested and slapped with murder



A road in Kanjhawala at night. A resident said shops in the area shut by 8 p.m. and 'rarely anyone steps out at night'; Rekha, the deceased's mother, says she has no income source and the compensation awarded to her is depleting fast. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP/ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

charges. The other accused, Deepak Khanna, Ankush Khanna and Ashutosh Bharadwaj, were arrested under Sections 201 (destruction of evidence) and 212 (harbouring offender) of the Indian Penal Code.

Amit, the key accused,

is behind bars; according to the prosecutors, he was driving the car.

A police officer told *The Hindu* that the trial in the case began in July 2024.

"Currently, statements of eyewitnesses are being recorded. So far, 10-12 statements, primarily of

doctors who conducted the post-mortem, have been recorded," the officer said.

The police had filed an 800-page chargesheet against the suspects.

The next hearing is scheduled for January 8, the officer added.



Rekha, the deceased's mother, sits on a bed. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP/ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

According to the police, after being hit, Anjali got struck in the car chassis and was dragged for over 12 km from Sultanpuri to Kanjhawala in the early hours of January 1, 2023.

The gruesome incident sent shock waves across the country and sparked

protests, with many wondering how such an incident could happen on a day when the police presence was significantly high. It also raised concerns about the dark spots in the city, as the stretch where the fatal accident occurred was poorly lit.

The Hindu revisited the stretch just days before the New Year. Though the area looked deserted at night, it had street lights and police posts.

When contacted, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) Amit Goel said, "More personnel will be deployed on the stretch to prevent untoward incidents."

However, the horror of the incident still haunts the area residents. "This area is a *dehat* (village). There is no colony or market except a few shops which shut by 8 p.m. Rarely anyone steps out at night," said a shopkeeper who did not wish to be named.

With no source of income, her cost-intensive medical treatment, and three teenage children to feed, Ms. Devi is worried about her family's survival as the ₹10 lakh compensation by the Delhi government following the death of Anjali is depleting fast.

"Doctors told me my heart is pumping less than 60%. I have to take medication that costs nearly ₹25,000 every month," she said.

This is despite the Delhi government fully funding her dialysis, said Ms. Devi, who also suffers from a kidney ailment.

"I thought the compensation would help me raise my children and pay for their education. But it [money] is all going out to meet our daily expenses," said Ms. Devi, whose three children study in government schools.

The single mother said the Delhi government had not kept its promises to her

of bearing the cost of her children's education at a private school and providing her with a job.

"That never happened. They [children] are still enrolled in government schools and take private tuition. I cannot crush their dreams," she said.

When reached for comment, the Delhi government did not offer a response.

'Still not over her death'
Ms. Devi said Anjali bought everything in their one-room house. "She was our sole breadwinner."

Since Anjali's death, the family has not cooked her favourite dish – chicken curry and rice. "I don't think we can ever move on. Even today, when my children go to sleep, they tell me that things would have been different had Anjali not left the house that day. That day completely changed our lives," Ms. Devi added.

Govt. will ensure speedy justice for Anna varsity student, says T.N. Minister

Two-member NCW fact-finding panel wraps up visit, assails DMK govt. for letting a 'criminal' roam; three-member SIT formed on the orders of the Madras High Court begins probe into case

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Law Minister S. Regupathy on Tuesday said the DMK government would get justice for the Anna University student who was sexually assaulted last week in a speedy manner, just as it ensured punishment for Sathish, the accused in the murder of college student M. Sathyu in October 2022.

"The Dravidian model government completed the inquiry and succeeded in getting capital punishment for Sathish within two years. The police and judiciary will ensure justice for the Anna university student," he said in a statement.

He said former Chief Minister and AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami was not able to digest the fact that women were coming forward to file complaints over crimes perpetrated against them. The Minister said people know the transparent man-



ner with which the State government had acted on the issue.

Responding to the AIADMK leader's question as to why the government failed to monitor a history-sheeter like Gnansekaran, who has been accused of sexually assaulting the student, Mr. Regupathy said he was involved in criminal activities between 2014 and 2019 when the State was ruled by the government led by Mr. Palaniswami. "It [the AIADMK government] had filed only a theft case against a sex criminal. Had

it taken action, the present incident would not have taken place," he charged.

Meanwhile, the two-member fact-finding committee of the National Commission for Women (NCW) left for New Delhi on Tuesday after a two-day visit to the city in connection with the sexual assault on the student. The members of the committee - NCW member Mamta Kumari and former Maharashtra DGP Praveen Dixit - had arrived in the city on Monday.

While leaving, Ms. Kumari and Mr. Dixit blamed

the State government for allowing Gnansekaran to roam freely on the university campus.

During its visit to university, the team interacted with authorities, the complainant and her family members. They also inspected the crime scene. Later, the team members went to Raj Bhavan and met Governor R.N. Ravi.

Stringent action sought

A group of women advocates led by K.M. Nalinirhee submitted a representation to the NCW demanding stringent action against the accused and steps to protect students on the campus. The team would be submitting a report to NCW Chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar.

The three-member all-women Special Investigation Team (SIT), formed on the orders of the Madras High Court, began its probe into the sexual assault and leak of the First Information Report in the case, officials said.

Atishi, Delhi L-G spar over 'demolition' of religious structures

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Centre-appointed Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena engaged in a war of words on Tuesday after Chief Minister Atishi alleged that several religious places in Delhi had been put on a purported list of structures to be demolished.

In a letter to Mr. Saxena, the CM alleged that a Delhi government committee had, with his approval, decided to raze several places of worship in the city and that such a move would hurt the sentiments of various communities.

"As you can see, the list includes many temples and Buddhist places of worship that are revered by the Dalit community," she wrote and urged him to halt the purported drive. In response, the L-G office denied Ms. Atishi's claim and accused her of "playing cheap politics".

"Neither are any temples, mosques, churches or any other places of worship being broken/demolished, nor has any file to this effect come [to Mr. Saxena]," read a statement by Raj Niwas.

It added that the allega-



Chief Minister Atishi at an event in the Capital on Tuesday. ANI

tions were part of a ploy to divert attention from the "failures" of the current CM and those of "her predecessor [AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal]."

Religious committee
In her letter to the L-G, Ms. Atishi named six temples and statues that are on the purported list. "On behalf of the people of Delhi, I would like to request you not to demolish any of these temples and places of worship," she said.

The Religious Committee, which falls under Delhi's Home Department and is headed by its administrative head, recommends the removal of unauthorised religious structures. The panel sends its suggestions to the L-G for approval.

Patnaik targets Odisha govt. over crop loss compensation

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

affected the paddy harvest across the State, with waterlogged fields making it impossible for farmers to deploy harvesting machines.

After meeting farmers in his home district of Ganjam on Monday, Mr. Patnaik toured the districts of Cuttack, Puri, Jagatsinghpur, and Kendrapara. In a statement, the Biju Janata Dal said farmers told the former CM that the crisis could have been avoided had the government had provided advanced weather forecasts.

Chief Minister Mohan Majhi also visited Ganjam and Nayagarh to get first-hand information about the crop loss and directed that the loss assessment be completed immediately.

If you are in distress, please call Kiran (1800-599-0019) or Aasha (9820466726) helpline.

+

In Sarana village of Jagatsinghpur, a farmer reportedly took the extreme step on Monday allegedly distressed over the bleak prospects of salvaging his ready-to-harvest paddy. The death toll has risen to seven since last week.

Chief Minister Mohan Majhi also visited Ganjam and Nayagarh to get first-hand information about the crop loss and directed that the loss assessment be completed immediately.

If you are in distress, please call Kiran (1800-599-0019) or Aasha (9820466726) helpline.

According to the State Agriculture Department, crop damage assessments are being conducted at a frenetic pace with the government acknowledging the distressing situation. Two spells of rain have severely

affected the paddy harvest across the State, with waterlogged fields making it impossible for farmers to deploy harvesting machines.

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Reports of farmer deaths, including suicides and heart attacks, have been reported from Kendrapara, Ganjam, Jajpur, and Jagatsinghpur districts due to crop losses caused by unseasonal rain between December 20 and 28.

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Protests against abolition of districts continue in Rajasthan

Press Trust of India

JAIPUR

Protests against the Rajasthan government's decision to abolish nine newly created districts continued for a third day on Tuesday, with the protesters in one district launching a hunger strike while those in another announcing an indefinite shutdown.

The State government had on December 28 decided to abolish nine of the 17 districts created by the previous Congress dispensation.

Three new divisions – Pali, Banswara and Sikar – were also dissolved.

The State will now have seven divisions and 41 districts. Some people in Neem Ka Thana district

have started a hunger strike.

In Anupgarh, an indefinite shutdown has been announced against the government's move.

Agitators under the 'Jila Bachao Samiti' banner held a sit-in and burned tires outside the Neem Ka Thana Collector's office, demanding reinstatement of its district status.

Mumbai hoarding collapse key accused nabbed from Lucknow

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI

Mumbai police have arrested a key accused in the Ghatkopar hoarding collapse case from Uttar Pradesh's capital Lucknow, officials said on Tuesday. The accused, businessman Arshad Khan, was on the run for the last seven months, an official said.

As many as 17 persons were killed after the illegal

hoarding crashed on a petrol pump in Ghatkopar area on May 13.

During the investigation, it came to light that Ego Media Private Limited, which installed the hoarding, had transferred ₹82 lakh to the bank accounts of some people linked to Arshad Khan, the official said. Mr. Khan was a business associate of the wife of former GRP Commissioner Quaiser Khalid, he said.

Mr. Bhargava's demand

Reconsider plan to dispose toxic waste in Pithampur: Indore Mayor

Press Trust of India

INDORE

Indore Mayor Pushyamitra Bhargava on Tuesday demanded to reconsider the plan to shift 337 tonnes of toxic waste from the now-defunct Union Carbide factory in Bhopal for dumping it in Pithampur in Dhar district.

The toxic waste will be moved to an incineration site in Pithampur, with a population of 1.75 lakh,



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No. RCIL/2024/P&A/44/60

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- Deputy Manager/Technical (E-1 Level) (3 vacancies): CTC (approx.) - Rs.12 Lakh + annual Performance Related Pay (Minimum Educational Qualification & Experience: B.E./ B.Tech./ B.Sc. (Engg) in Electronics & Telecom; or Telecom; or Computer Science; or Computer & Communication; or Information Technology; or Electrical; or Electronics; or any other combination of Engineering branches, where Electronics is one of the branches, like, Electronics & Instrumentation; or M.Sc. (Electronics); or MCA; or equivalent and 5 yrs experience in areas given in the detailed vacancy notice)

Opening date of online registration of application is 28.12.2024. The last date for online registration of application is 27.01.2025. The detailed notice and application form for the above vacancy notice may be accessed on RailTel's website [https://www.railtel.in/careers.html](http://www.railtel.in/careers.html) under 'current job openings' section.

Pr. Executive Director/HR

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क्र.	पूर्ण तीव्रिया	संशोधित तीव्रिया	
01	निविदा को सिस्टम पर अपलोड करने की तीव्रिया	09 / 12 / 2024	04 / 01 / 2025
02	निविदा कार्यपालक प्राप्त करने का (जारीनकाल बढ़ावा/जमा करने (अपलोड करने) की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	31 / 12 / 2024 के 3:00 बजे अप० तक।	25 / 01 / 2025 के 3:00 बजे अप० तक।
03	टेक्नीकी बोड खोलने की तीव्रिया एवं समय	02 / 01 / 2025 के 3:30 बजे अप० ।	27 / 01 / 2025 के 3:30 बजे अप० ।
04	विशेष बोड खोलने की तीव्रिया एवं समय	09 / 01 / 2025 के 3:00 बजे अप० ।	04 / 02 / 2025 के 3:00 बजे अप० ।
05	प्रि बोर्ड निटिंग की तीव्रिया समय एवं स्थान	दिनांक 17.12.2024 को 12:30 बजे अप० आधीकारण अधिकारी, भवन अंचल, दरभंगा का कार्यालय एवं दिनांक 20.12.2024 को 12:30 बजे अप० मुख्य अधिकारी, उत्तर उपमण्ड, मधुबनी / अधीकारण अधिकारी, भवन अंचल, दरभंगा / मधुबनी अधिकारी उत्तर उपमण्ड, भवन निर्माण	दिनांक 13.01.2025 को 12:30 बजे अप० आधीकारण अधिकारी, भवन अंचल, दरभंगा का कार्यालय एवं दिनांक 16.01.2025 को 12:30 बजे अप० मुख्य अधिकारी, उत्तर उपमण्ड, मधुबनी / अधीकारण अधिकारी, भवन अंचल, दरभंगा / मधुबनी अधिकारी उत्तर उपमण्ड, भवन निर्माण
06	अश्वघन की राशि का बैंक गार्डी (BG) मूल प्रति जमा करने की तीव्रिया समय एवं स्थान	दिनांक 02.01.2025 को 3:00 बजे अप० तक कार्यपालक अधिकारी, भवन प्रमंडल, मधुबनी / अधीकारण अधिकारी, भवन अंचल, दरभंगा / मधुबनी अधिकारी उत्तर उपमण्ड, मधुबनी	दिनांक 27.01.2025 को 3:00 बजे अप० तक कार्यपालक अधिकारी, भवन प्रमंडल, मधुबनी / अधीकारण अधिकारी, भवन अंचल, दरभंगा / मधुबनी अधिकारी उत्तर उपमण्ड, भवन निर्माण

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Court stays probe against journalists of Kerala daily

The Hindu Bureau

KOCHI

The Kerala High Court has stayed for two weeks the proceedings on a notice issued by the Crime Branch to the chief editor and a correspondent of the *Madhyamam* daily to reveal the source of a news report related to details of PSC applicants being accessed on the dark web, and produce the correspondent's mobile phone for inspection.

The interim order comes on a petition filed by O. Abdurahman, the daily's chief editor. The court sought instructions from the State on the petition and posted the case on January 16.

Aniru Ashokan, the daily's correspondent who authored the news article, had appeared before the investigation team on December 21 in response to an earlier notice. The Crime Branch issued another notice directing him to surrender his mobile phone for investigation.

Wayanad disaster: CM to hold meet on rehabilitation work

Revenue Minister says delay by Centre in declaring landslides a disaster of extreme severity has robbed State of chance to seek funds from external agencies; no promise on special aid, he adds

The Hindu Bureau

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will on Wednesday convene a meeting of donors who have shown interest in contributing to the efforts for the rehabilitation of the victims of the landslides that devastated Wayanad on July 30, 2024.

Entities or individuals who have volunteered to build 100 houses each at the model townships proposed to be built on Harrisons Malayalam Estate



Workers involved in a rescue operation after the landslides in Chooralmala in Wayanad district in July 2024. PTI

(65.41 hectares) in Nedumbalala and Elstone Estate (78.73 hectares) near the Kalpetta bypass will take

part in the meeting.

Meanwhile, Revenue Minister K. Rajan said here on Tuesday that the inordinate delay by the Centre in declaring the landslides a disaster of extreme severity 154 days after the natural disaster wiped out two villages might have robbed the State of a chance at seeking relief funds from external agencies.

"After repeated requests from the State that the Centre has deigned to declare the disaster as one of extreme severity. This is just one of the three re-

quests the State had made to the Centre immediately after the disaster and has now been accepted in principle," the Minister said.

"The Centre is yet to approve the request for a preliminary aid of ₹1,202 crore or the money the State had sought as the first lot. Kerala had sent the report on November 13," Mr. Rajan said. The government will expedite land acquisition for the rehabilitation of victims, he said. "However, the Centre is yet to clarify on the allocation of a special package," he said.

Police name YSRCP leader Perni Nani in PDS rice scam case

The Hindu Bureau

AMARAVATI



Perni Venkataramaiah

The Andhra Pradesh Police have named senior YSRCP leader and former Minister Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani) in the alleged PDS rice scam case, in which his wife, P. Jayasudha, is the first accused.

Bandar sub-divisional police officer Mohammad Abdul Subhan said on Tuesday that Mr. Nani, following inclusion of his name in the case, approached the High Court of Andhra Pradesh and obtained anticipatory bail. "The court has directed the police not to arrest Mr. Nani till January 6," Mr. Abdul Subhan said.

Ms. Jayasudha was charged with being responsible for diversion of rice meant for public distribution. The irregularities had been unearthed following searches conducted by the officials recently on the rice godown owned by Mr. Nani's family.

Ms. Jayasudha, too, had obtained anticipatory bail in the case recently.

'Mini-Pakistan' remark of BJP leader Rane draws flak in Kerala

The Hindu Bureau

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

BJP leader and Maharashtra Minister Nitesh Rane has drawn flak from Kerala's ruling front and the Opposition for purportedly referring to the State as a "mini-Pakistan".

In a tersely worded statement on Tuesday, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan denounced Mr. Rane's words as "extremely galling and inflammatory". His remarks reflected the Sangh Parivar's strategy of dividing people on communal lines in regions with scarce political in-

fluence. The Sangh Parivar demonised people and regions where its ideology had no traction.

CPI leader Binoy Viswam said that the Maharashtra government should oust Mr. Rane from the Cabinet for "spewing communal venom." Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Assembly V.D. Sathesan said Mr. Rane had merely parroted CPI(M) leader A. Vijayaraghavan's statement that radical Islamist had crafted the Congress's back-to-back victories in the Wayanad constituency. The BJP and CPI(M) toed the same political line.

5-year master plan for mineral exploration in Rajasthan soon

The Hindu Bureau

JAIPUR

A five-year master plan for mineral exploration will be formulated shortly in Rajasthan to speed up the work to find out the rich mineral wealth and assess the deposits, quality and availability of minerals.

The initiative is also expected to facilitate fast auctioning of major mineral blocks.

Principal Secretary (Mines & Geology) T. Ravikanth said here on Tuesday that Rajasthan had already occupied the top position in the auction of major mineral blocks dur-

ing the last one year. The master plan would help devise a comprehensive and long-term strategy for future development of the mineral sector and outline the key steps and goals for the work, he said.

Mr. Ravikanth addressed a meeting of the executive committee of Rajasthan State Mineral Exploration Trust (RSMET) at Khanij Bhawan here.

He said the RSMET would prepare the master plan with the emphasis on generating employment opportunities and enhancing revenue earnings in the sector.

The Bid price may vary at the time of detail tendering for which no claim will be admissible.

The Work will be allotted only after receiving Government approval.

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	17	10
Safdarjung	17	10
Palam	15	08

Delhi Palam Today
15°C The weather will be dry. The cold day like conditions are possible. Sky conditions will be obscured due to fog layer.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
15°C The weather will be dry and uneasy. The cold day like conditions to continue. Night will be cold and uneasy.

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RISE 09:16 SET 20:03
FRIDAY, JAN. 03
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Himachal Pradesh Public Works Department, Mandi-175015
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INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
The Executive Engineer, B&R Division, HP.PWD, Jodhpur Nagar on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invited the online bids on percentage rate, in electronic tendering system, in 2 cover system for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved contractors/firms registered with HP.PWD department for the works as detailed in table.
Sr. No. 1 Name of work: Construction of 19.75 mt. Span RCC T-Beam bridge over Sukhad Khad at Km. 0/105 between Sukhar & Sarholi village **Sub Head:** Construction of Sub structure, Superstructure and both side approaches.
Estimated cost (in lac) :- Rs. 1,66,79,633/- **Starting Date of downloading Bid :-** 01.01.2025, **Earnest Money (in lac) :-** Rs. 3,33,900/- **Eligible class of contractor:-** Class "C", **Deadline for submission of Bid:-** 09.01.2025, **Date of opening of bid:-** 10.01.2025.
The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in.

**Executive Engineer,
B&R Division HP.PWD,
Jodhpur Nagar**
District Mandi (HP) on behalf of
Governor of (H.P.) 0190822033

HP / 4184/24-25

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, रोन्ही
पत्रांक:- **आवश्यक सूचना** दिनांक-

एतद् द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि इस कार्यालय द्वारा ई-निविदा संख्या-22/2024-25/RWD/EE/RANCHI, PR No.-340599 Rural Work Department(24-25):D द्वारा देनिक समाचार पत्र में प्रकाशित हुआ था। जिसे अपरिहार्य कारणवश रद्द किया जाता है। पुनः निविदा शीघ्र आमंत्रित की जाएगी।

कार्यपालक अभियंता
ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग
कार्य प्रमण्डल, रोन्ही

PR 343338 REO(24-25).D

लोक आयुष्मान तथा उप लोक आयुष्मान उत्तर प्रदेश



कार्यपालक प्रदेश को भूषणाचार/भूषणाचारन मुक्त भूषणाचार
बहाने हेतु जनता से अपील

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पता:- दी०१००-०५-१, विभूति खण्ड, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ-226010 अथवा पोर्ट बाक्स

नंबर-172, जी०१००५०, लखनऊ, फैक्स नं० : (०५२२) २३०६७१७, २३०६१६० (पी०१०० एस्स),

फोन नं० : (०५२२) २३०६७१७, २३०६१६० (पी०१०० एस्स),

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सचिव, लोक आयुष्मान, उत्तर प्रदेश, लखनऊ

Himachal Pradesh Public Works Department Corrigendum.

The e-tender invited by the Executive Engineer Jawali Division HP.PWD Jawali vide office letter No. PWJ/AB/PMGSY/Tender/2024-794 dated 04.12.2024 and published News in Paper Punjab Kesari on dated 08.12.2024 vide advertisement No. 3751/07.12.24, & revised key published News in Paper Punjab Kesari on dated 21.12.2024 vide advertisement No. 4056/21.12.24 respectively. The NIT is hereby changed due to administrative/technical reason. The necessary correction of the uploading of NIT will be as under:-

S. No.	Division	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs.)	Earnest money (Rs.)	Time allowed for completion (Months)	Cost of documents (Rs.)	Class of contractor/Firms	Location/Office where e-tenders will be opened	Date and time of opening of Tenders
1.	Jawali	Construction of Rajiv Gandhi Govt. Model Day Boarding School at Thanger/Jawali in District Kangra (HP). (SH:- Constructoin of Building portion (Ground floor) including Water Supply & Sanitary Installation and Septic Tank).	45308069/-	907000/-	Eighteen Months	5000/-	Class-B & A	Jawali Division, HPPWD Jawali	08/01/2025 at 13:00
Instead of									
S. No. Division Name of Work Estimated cost (Rs.) Earnest money (Rs.) Time allowed for completion (Months) Cost of documents (Rs.) Class of contractor/Firms Location/Office where e-tenders will be opened Date and time of opening of Tenders									
1.	Jawali	Construction of Rajiv Gandhi Govt. Model Day Boarding School at Thanger/Jawali in District Kangra (HP). (SH:- Constructoin of Building portion (Ground floor) including Water Supply & Sanitary Installation and Septic Tank).	44698496/-	894000/-	Eighteen Months	5000/-	Class-B & A	Jawali Division, HPPWD Jawali	27/12/2024 at 13:00
HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPARK									
HP / 4177/24-25									

"OFFICE ORDER"

The e-tender for the work "Construction of Jaunaji to Daryang Bukharong road km 0/0 to 5/00 in District Solan HP (SH: Improvement passing places, R/wall, CD works, GSB, WBM-II, WBM-III, tarring work, interlocking paver block, side drain and parapets," amounting to Rs. 6,32,06,183/- was invited vide this office letter No.PW.SD.CB-Tender/2024-25-8572-81 dated: 21.11.2024 and further published in Giri Raj weekly. The key dates for downloading the bid vide corrigendum No. 9854-64 dated 19.12.2024 was 01.01.2025 at 16:00 Hrs and the deadline for submission of bid was 13.01.2025 at 11:30.

But, due to some technically/administrative reasons the aforesaid tender is hereby cancelled and recalled.

Executive Engineer, Solan B & R Division, HPPWD, Solan. No.SD/CB/Tender/ Office Order/ 2024-25-10202-06 Dated: - 30.12.2024

HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPARK

HP / 4173/24-25

Himachal Pradesh Public Works Department

Notice Inviting Tender

The Executive Engineer, Chenab Valley Division HPPWD Udaipur on behalf of the Governor of Himachal invites the offline tender i.e. on percentage rates for the following works from the eligible Contractors/Firms registered with HPPWD department, so as to reach in the office as per time schedule given below:-

1. Date of receipt of application for tender form	08.01.2025 upto 2:00 PM
2. Date of issue/sale of tender form	08.01.2025 upto 5:00 PM
3. Date of receipt of tender	09.01.2025 upto 10:30 AM
4. Date of opening of tender	09.01.2025 upto 11:30 AM

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated cost	Earnest Money	Time Limit	Cost of Form
1.	Restoration of rain damages on link road to Khetel Sarang Jung Bar Km. 0/00 to 2/800 (SH:- Hiring of J.C.B/Excavator cum loader for removal of Snow/Landslide at various Rd's 0/00 to 2/800). (SDF/2024/159) Part-I	67,500/-	1350/-	Three months	350/-
2.	Restoration of rain damages on link road to Khetel Sarang Jung Bar Km. 0/00 to 2/800 (SH:- Hiring of J.C.B/Excavator cum loader for removal of Snow/Landslide at various Rd's 0/00 to 2/800). (SDF/2024/159) Part-II	67,500/-	1350/-	Three months	350/-
3.	Restoration of rain damages on link road to Khetel Sarang Jung Bar Km. 0/00 to 2/800 (SH:- Hiring of J.C.B/Excavator cum loader for removal of Snow/Landslide at various Rd's 0/00 to 2/800). (SDF/2024/159) Part-III	67,500/-	1350/-	Three months	350/-
4.	Restoration of rain damages on link road to Tindi Bhujund Km. 0/00 to 8/915. (SH:- Hiring of J.C.B/Excavator cum loader for removal of Snow/Landslide at various Rd's 6/00 to 8/915). (SDF/2024/161) Part-I	70,500/-	1410/-	Three months	350/-
5.	Restoration of rain damages on link road to Tindi Bhujund Km. 0/00 to 8/915. (SH:- Hiring of J.C.B/Excavator cum loader for removal of Snow/Landslide at various Rd's 6/00 to 8/915). (SDF/2024/161) Part-II	70,500/-	1410/-	Three months	350/-
6.	Restoration of rain damages on link road to Tindi Bhujund Km. 0/00 to 8/915. (SH:- Hiring of J.C.B/Excavator cum loader for removal of Snow/Landslide at various Rd's 6/00 to 8/915). (SDF/2024/161) Part-III	70,500/-	1410/-	Three months	350/-
7.	Restoration of rain damages on link road from Khruti Nullah Dhawansha bypass Telungwya Km. 0/00 to 3/500 (SH:- Hiring of J.C.B/Excavator cum loader for removal of Snow/Landslide at various Rd's 0/00 to 3/500). (SDF/2024/165) Part-I	84,000/-	1680/-	Three months	350/-
8.	Restoration of rain damages on link road from Khruti Nullah Dhawansha bypass Telungwya Km. 0/00 to 3/500 (SH:- Hiring of J.C.B/Excavator cum loader for removal of Snow/Landslide at various Rd's 0/00 to 3/500). (SDF/2024/165) Part-II	84,000/-	1680/-	Three months	350/-
9.	Restoration of rain damages on link road from Baar to Tayal Km. 0/00 to 1/300. (SH:- Hiring of J.C.B/Excavator cum loader for removal of Snow/Landslide at various Rd's 0/00 to 1/300). (SDF/2024/156)	93,000/-	1860/-	Three months	350/-
10.	Restoration of rain damages on link road from Singri to Tayal Km. 0/00 to 1/300. (SH:- Hiring of J.C.B/Excavator cum loader for removal of Snow/Landslide at various Rd's 0/00 to 1/300). (SDF/2024/157)	93,000/-			



Learning lessons

Flight crew all over the world need better training for rare emergencies

The grim footage of a Boeing 737-800 sliding across the runway at Muan airport, ending as a fireball extinguishing 179 lives, will forever be a reminder of an air crash that holds important lessons for everyone from airport authorities to aviation regulators to airline pilots. Jeju Air flight 7C2216, on a scheduled flight from Thailand's Suvarnabhumi airport, was on approach to Muan international airport in South Korea's southwestern corner after air traffic control cleared its landing on the single runway. There was also a caution of bird activity. The airfield's environs – an oceanic setting, with also some wetland – are known to host a variety of avian life. The airport uses non-lethal and lethal bird scare techniques during operating hours. From that point on, the aircraft transitioned from what seemed a stable approach to a phase of multiple issues, with "mayday, mayday, mayday, bird hit" being one such call by the crew who were in apparent distress. The go around and subsequent landing have led aviation experts to raise questions about the responses by the crew and also that of air traffic control. The touchdown, with the landing gear up, had the crippled craft hurtling on its fuselage and engines, and impacting a concrete structure at the runway end housing crucial ground-based landing aids. In focus is the 'unusual concrete wall', which the Korean authorities have said is 'found in other airports in Korea', and was built according to the country's code. Whether this follows ICAO's Annex 14 (Standards - Aerodrome) will need investigation. Some accident investigators have called this the key factor that trumped operational safety, overwhelming the 'flapless gearless' landing.

The accident, South Korea's worst in decades, comes amidst a political crisis. However, the new acting President, Choi Sang-mok, seems to be steering the response with a task force in place and the authorities having been instructed to review aviation operations and inspect airline fleets. The Ministry of Transport's highlighting of several issues would need a thorough probe, especially with representatives from the U.S.'s NTSB, the FAA, and the aircraft manufacturer, Boeing, on board. Boeing will again find the spotlight back on its workhorse, the 737. While the accident is the first for Jeju Air, a popular 41-jet budget airline, air safety in South Korea is generally considered to be of industry best practice. Every accident has its lessons, and for India too, with air travel on the rise, there must be a thorough review of every aspect of crew training as well as of runway safety at its 157 operational airports.

Stay out

Any external interference in Georgia will entail great harm

The inauguration of Mikheil Kavlashvili, a former football player, as the President of Georgia, could deepen the political crisis in the Caucasian country which has seen back-to-back street protests and crackdowns. Mr. Kavlashvili, a conservative leader and a critic of the West, was opposed by the country's opposition and his predecessor Salome Zourabichvili. Ms. Zourabichvili, who had said earlier that "there would be no inauguration" of Mr. Kavashvili, announced her leaving office "voluntarily", slamming his swearing in as "a parody". She later joined opposition protests outside Parliament. The latest spell of the crisis goes back to the October legislative elections. The ruling conservative Georgian Dream party, with a foreign policy that was sceptical of the West and a call for stronger ties with Russia and China, won. The opposition, which said the elections were fraudulent, demanded a re-election, but the Georgian Dream went ahead with government formation. Among those who denounced the legitimacy of the elections was the pro-western Ms. Zourabichvili. A sitting President's support for anti-government protests challenging the veracity of the polls was a testimony to the deep political divisions. But undeterred, the ruling party picked Mr. Kavashvili as President under a new system of electoral college, consisting of lawmakers from Parliament and other regional and local assemblies.

The crisis in Georgia looks like a political tug of war between a ruling party and its opponents. But the actual situation is more complicated. Georgia, a former Soviet Republic, is strategically important, sharing a border with Russia. In 2008, months after it was promised NATO membership, Russia invaded it in the name of defending two breakaway regions. Leaders in Tbilisi have generally been pro-western. But this trend changed with the rise of Georgian Dream, founded in 2012 by billionaire businessman Bidzina Ivanishvili. Tbilisi's rapprochement with Moscow was not received well in western capitals. When allegations of election fraud emerged, the West immediately backed the opposition. In November, amid tensions with the West, the Georgian government suspended talks to join the EU until 2028, triggering more street protests, reminiscent of the 2014 pro-western Maidan protests in Ukraine. Last week, the U.S. imposed sanctions on Mr. Ivanishvili. Georgia's rulers say the West is pushing the country into a conflict with Russia which they do not want. They also point out that the country's Constitutional Court has rejected a lawsuit filed by Ms. Zourabichvili, seeking the annulment of the election results. Georgia's politicians should resolve the differences among themselves. They should be mindful of the tragedy of Ukraine and seek common ground in bringing the political crisis to an end. The best external players can do is to stay out of Georgia's politics.

2024 – the politics of singularity and beyond

The year 2024 began with the inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, which was a culmination, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said at the event, of a long anticipation. "We have waited for 500 years," he said. As 2025 begins, we see the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat facing resistance from co-travellers of the Sangh Parivar for emphasising the singularity of Ayodhya for Hindutva. "The Ram temple was a matter of faith and Hindus felt that it should be built... Raising issues about some new sites out of hate and enmity is unacceptable," Mr. Bhagwat had said on December 20, 2024, responding to several claims over more religious places. Many allies of the Parivar questioned this premise soon after, and asserted that a reclamation of all alienated Hindu sites was non-negotiable. What we are witnessing is a conflict between the Sangh Parivar's desire to stabilise itself as the natural platform of governance and the power of the politics it created which is increasingly not in its control. It is the politics of anticipation, which ignores culmination.

Parties that and leaders who mobilise people to question the existing order through civil disobedience, and even sabotage, want order, discipline and hierarchy as soon as the set goal is achieved. The founding leaders of the Republic said, as soon as Independence was won, that there would be no place for civil disobedience any more. But then, new political ideas and new political entrepreneurship come into play, and new movements take shape.

On anticipation

Looking forward is a more evocative act for the human mind than looking back, psychological experiments reported in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology* suggest. People relate more intensely to emotional events that are expected in the future than those that happened in the past. Anticipation of something – it could even be a negative thing – is more engaging than retrospection about a past event. But for the human bias for anticipation in comparison with retrospection, there would be no yearning for progress, and there would be no politics or religion. It is anticipation that drives political and religious action (for instance, Christians wait for the second coming of Jesus), and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has used this psychology to the maximum benefit. *Ram Lalla Ayenge, Bhavya Mandir Banayenge* (roughly translated as, Infant Ram will arrive, the majestic temple will be built) was the slogan of the Ayodhya movement; the slogan that catapulted it as the dominant party in 2014 was 'Achhey Din Aaney Waley Hain - Good days are arriving'. Anticipation is set against the backdrop of retrospection in political campaigns



Varghese K.
George

Join FREE Whatsapp Channel <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6RGJOKH6oBd0F> – what is coming is to reclaim, avenge or/and change the past. The intense emotional energy of the masses behind the Ayodhya agitation was built on an extraordinary anticipation-retrospection frame. The arc of time it proposed to cover was five centuries into the past and a millennium into the future, in contrast with the five-year terms of governments.

Speaking at the inauguration of the temple, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it was the beginning of an epoch of 1,000 years.

Claim of singularity, election results

The temple inauguration was suggested as a moment of singularity of space, time and community. "The temple has been built where we had resolved to build it," Yogi Adityanath said, alluding to another slogan that had animated its supporters since the 1980s – "*mandir wahan banayenge*". This meant the temple would be built at the exact spot believed to be the birthplace of Lord Rama, replacing a masjid that stood there. Ayodhya was to be the Hindu nation what Mecca is to Muslims, and Jerusalem is to the Jews and Christians. "All roads lead to Ayodhya," said Yogi Adityanath. "All minds are united in the thought of Sri Ram." Now that its political power is consolidated, the RSS possibly wants to bring the revolution to an end, and establish order. "There is no need to look for a *shivling* in every mosque," Mr. Bhagwat had already said in 2022.

But this claim of singularity was challenged, during the 2024 general election by a new anticipation that swelled among the subaltern caste groups. The fear that the BJP might use any massive parliamentary majority to roll back the reservation policy of the country by amending the Constitution spread like wildfire in the heartland of Hindutva, and stopped the BJP short of a majority in the Lok Sabha. The retrospective component in this context is the history of caste oppression. A temple was meant to unite all minds, but the fear of reclamation of the old social order through an end to reservation drove many subaltern voters away from the party.

Though the BJP tripped on the caste quota question in the general election, it remained largely in control of the narrative in 2024. The party's expansive anticipation-retrospection plane that spans centuries, allows it to sidestep the 'promise vs performance' paradigm that traps incumbents between two consecutive elections. All Opposition parties are caught in an extremely unfavourable anticipation-retrospection frame – for instance, a plurality of voters in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar appear to be fearful of the return of the Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal, respectively. Looking forward, and looking back far enough, the voters could be inclined towards the BJP than its opponents, and this is

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particularly true for the Congress. Though the party has been out of power for 10 years in Delhi and more in States such as Gujarat, it is still bearing the burden of its earlier decades in power. Its retrospective political capital, as the party of the freedom struggle, has long been exhausted, and its call for a national caste census has created an intense anticipation among the target group. In the retrospective frame for the Congress, voters see the Emergency, the 1962 war with China, and the dynasty, but not the agricultural revolution or the communication revolution. Though 2024 was a bad year for incumbents worldwide, the BJP and Mr. Modi fared quite well. Anti-incumbency is stronger against the Opposition parties, it appears. The BJP won a third consecutive term at the Centre, but with reduced strength, and it has managed to stay in power in the two crucial States of Maharashtra and Haryana, in the recent Assembly elections.

Parties and their challenges

The capacity of the RSS/BJP to sketch out a retrospection-anticipation plane comes from a willingness to constantly introspect. The BJP recovered from the setback in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra in the general election and launched a new campaign of Hindu unity – '*batenge to katenge*, i.e., divided (along caste lines), you will be slaughtered', and '*ek hei to safe hei*, i.e., you are safe when you are united'. It went on an overdrive to reassure the OBC/Dalit voters that reservation would never cease. Meanwhile, its opponents lulled themselves in triumphalism and complacency after the general election and failed to interpret the results correctly in order to build on them. The party that won the 2024 elections went back to its constituents in panic mode; and the ones that lost went into a prolonged season of self-congratulation. The setback to the BJP in the general election, in hindsight, was more an irritant in the long arc of Hindutva than a rupture.

But that does not mean the BJP can take its popularity or success for granted. Hinduism, unlike monotheistic religions, promotes multiplicity and circularity and has an innate resistance to singularity – of faith, leader or even god. For the Sangh Parivar, the challenge at the beginning of 2025 – which is also the 100th year of the RSS – lies in taming the mutinous anticipation among its supporters who are searching for new sites to project it; and the anxiety among the subaltern social groups about its long-term plans for oneness. For the Congress, the challenge is to build a politics of anticipation, and shift the retrospection frame of the public to a favourable angle.

varghese.g@thehindu.co.in

The RSS does not want any more mandir-masjid disputes; however, the politics of anticipation is now autonomous

COP29, climate finance and its optical illusion



Anwar Sadat

teaches international environmental law at the Indian Society of International Law

Finance has been a major point of climate change negotiation since the launching of the United Nations-led climate change negotiations in 1991, producing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 1992. Article 4 (7) of the UNFCCC clearly says "that the extent to which the developing country Party will be fulfilling their climate action commitments is contingent on how much finance and technology they get from developed country Parties".

The Paris Agreement retains, in Article 9(i), the provision relating to finance, binding the developed countries to mobilise finance for the developing countries. The sixth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has described finance, capacity-building and a transfer of technology as critical enablers of climate action in developing countries in the backdrop of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions responsible for 1.1° Celsius of warming (above what it was in 1850-1900) in 2011-20.

Falling short

In pursuance of their responsibility, the developed countries agreed in 2009 that they would collectively mobilise \$100 billion a year by 2020. The \$100 billion mark, met by the developed countries only in 2022, does not match the growing needs of climate finance corresponding to the developing countries' nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

Second, the mark has been considered in many reports to be well-short of estimated finance to fund the actions needed across different sectors to keep the average global temperature rise within 1.5° Celsius by the end of this century. The 29th Conference of the Parties (COP 29) meeting at Baku, Azerbaijan, in November 2024, was meant for the Parties to the Paris Agreement to have a New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG), replacing a \$100 billion floor and laying a new floor taking into account the needs and the

The scale and the quality of climate finance need to be raised, with sincere efforts being made to have a coherent climate finance architecture in place

priorities of developing countries to tackle the climate crisis.

In response to persistent demand by all the major negotiating groups belonging to the developing south that the developed north mobilise \$1.3 trillion by 2030, the developed north agreed to release only \$300 billion per year by 2035. The \$300 billion mark ignores the estimation by the UNFCCC's Standing Committee on Finance (SFC) relating to the annual financial needs of developing countries, which it derived from their NDCs. As in the SFC's estimation, the financial needs stand at between \$455 billion-\$584 billion. Even these figures cover around half of the 5,760 costed and non-costed needs identified by 98 developing countries in their NDCs (Third Report of the Independent High-level Expert Group on Climate Finance, November 22, 2024).

The decision on the NCQG makes reference to the financial needs of those particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change such as the least developed countries (LDC) and small island developing states (SIDS). But the NCQG does not make minimum allocation floors for the LDCs and SIDS.

During the meeting, the Alliance of Small Island States demanded the allocation of \$39 billion for SIDS while the LDC demanded at least \$220 billion for them. It appears that the first-ever Global Stocktake (GST) in consonance with the Paris Agreement in 2023 also failed in influencing the cause of loss and damage concern in the NCQG. In the GST estimation, economic costs are estimated to reach \$447 billion-\$894 billion per year by 2030.

India and the NCQG

India's perspective on the delivery of climate finance from the developed north to the developing south is derived from equity frame expressed in the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capability. It is notable that India joined the Montreal Protocol to protect the ozone layer from

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further depletion, which led to setting up of a multilateral fund of \$240 million, including an additional \$80 million for use in India, China and other eligible low-income Parties. During COP29, India specified that the new floor should mobilise \$1.3 trillion by 2030, of which at least \$600 billion should come in the form of grants and concessional resources. On other major agenda items, mitigation work programme, just transition work programme and GST, India's representative called for an adequate provisioning of finance and other means of implementation to fulfil them. India's submission of NDC next year is contingent on a decision relating to finance (Earth Negotiations Bulletin–, November 22, 2024).

India has expressed its extreme disappointment on the adoption of the NCQG in its present form, shape – which was without its consultation. It made serious objections against the COP29 presidency and the Secretariat in the way it was finalised – which is at the expense of trust, collaboration and in contravention of the UNFCCC's norm, on an issue which is a creation of the developed north but which affects developing countries more. India outrightly rejected the NCQG. It also added that this NCQG expects the developing world to mobilise resources. In India's view, the paltry sum will influence the ambition and the implementation of its NDC.

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What the developed north must do

The pith and substance of the Paris Agreement are the NDCs. In expecting the developing south to bring out more ambitious NDCs relating to the mitigation of greenhouse gases and implementing the same effectively, it is equally important on the part of the developed north to raise their scale and quality of climate finance and also make sincere efforts in putting in place a coherent climate finance architecture.

This will ensure adequate, directly accessible and affordable climate finance to the developing countries.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mannmohan Singh

A truly fitting tribute to former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh would involve both the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress setting aside their differences to honour his legacy. Dr. Singh, a paragon of statesmanship, and known for his calm demeanour and unwavering

commitment to the nation, deserves commemoration that reflects his stature. A powerful demonstration of respect would be for each politician who has publicly lauded Dr. Singh to pledge to emulate one of his admirable qualities in their own service to the country.

V. Nagarajan,
Chennai

During my years in college, I had the privilege of participating in the Model United Nations, where I often played the part of Dr. Singh. While researching his life and work, I was deeply inspired by his humility, wisdom and statesmanship. Dr. Singh is a shining example of how education can be a transformative tool

– not only for individuals but also for society as a whole. He stands as a testament to the power of knowledge and character in shaping history. I am confident that history will remember him with the kindness and the respect that he truly deserves.

Harmanbeer Singh Waraich,
Ludhiana, Punjab

The passing of Dr. Singh ends an extraordinary chapter in India's political and economic narrative. As a statesman par excellence, he leaves behind a legacy that transcends politics and economics, embodying the value of humility, integrity and dedication to the nation. His life and career were marked by his unwavering dedication to public service, his profound economic acumen, and his humble demeanour. History will judge him kindly, for he exemplified the best of India's spirit.

R. Sivakumar,
Chennai

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

The geopolitics of platform-publisher tussles

Last month, *The Australia Today*'s coverage of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit was discussed less for its substance and more for being inaccessible on Facebook in Canada. Coming on the back of diplomatic tensions between India and Canada, were Mr. Jaishankar's interview and joint press conference, covered in *The Australia Today*, inaccessible in Canada due to a nudge by the Trudeau government? Or was it part of Meta's strategy to block news on social media platforms in Canada?

Some argue that this is a casualty of Canada's approach to mitigate asymmetries between all-pervasive platforms, such as Facebook and Google, and news publishers, such as *The Australia Today*. The blackout has less to do with the politics of foreign policy and more to do with the politics of Meta's corporate strategy. Mostly, it has to do with the geopolitical ramifications of developments in Canada's media policy.

Let's start with the actors involved. Platforms facilitate publishers to reach a very large audience, and publishers offer platforms a stream of content to incessantly engage users. In this seemingly symbiotic relationship, only platforms know the true popularity of the news distributed to their users and therefore, the incremental advertising revenues trickling in from the content produced by publishers. Platforms are also known to change the metrics to gauge popularity and audience preference. These problems raise questions about transparency, accountability, and parity in the dealings between platforms and publishers.

Governing frenemies
In June 2023, Canada devised a bargaining framework for platforms to duly remunerate news outlets. The resultant Online News Act (ONA) sought to protect publishers from losing income that is justifiably due to them from Meta and Alphabet. These platforms are legally obliged to fashion commercial agreements



Vibodh Parthasarathi

teaches media policy at the Centre for Culture, Media and Governance, Jamia Millia Islamia

Join FREE Telegram Channel <https://t.me/+Bu7senHpQdhlODg1> with one or a group of publishers. If either party disagrees, a bargaining process ensues with the involvement of a mediator. If no agreement is arrived at despite this, each party can propose a final offer, and an arbitration panel is empowered to choose which offer becomes binding.

Canada was the second country to move on this matter, after the Australian initiative of 2021, known as the 'Bargaining Code'. While concerns over the financial health of local news websites led to the enactment of the ONA, the Bargaining Code has been criticised for legitimising a mechanism that safeguards the interests of giants in the news business. After initial opposition, Meta and Google negotiated deals with many, but not all, Australian news outlets.

In Canada, Google complied with the ONA by agreeing to pay publishers and journalist associations. Meta adopted a contrary route: from August 2023, it foreclosed news offerings on its platforms, Facebook and Instagram, in Canada. However, web pages of journalists can still be accessed on both platforms.

Since the ONA does not define a news website, Meta decides which is a news site and which is an opinion or community site. For instance, *Baaz*, a Canada-based news outlet catering to the Punjabi and Sikh diaspora, was inaccessible for a while on Facebook and Instagram. After it switched to Substack, a subscription-based platform, and rechristened defined itself a 'community page', *Baaz* became visible on both platforms.

Interrupting global flows
Following the uproar over Mr. Jaishankar's interview, Meta maintained that it blocks news in Canada, irrespective of its geographical origins. However, the editor of *The Australia Today* pointed out that prior to the interview, the content of the site was visible, suggesting that Meta restricted the site around the time the interview was posted. Such experiences render Meta

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vulnerable to criticism of selective compliance with the ONA.

The unavailability of the Jaishankar interview on Facebook in Canada also uncorks the geopolitical ramifications of national media policy. Regulations in Australia, Canada, and Indonesia have tackled the imbalances between platforms and publishers, as seen in their respective news markets. Consequently, they vary in normative considerations, policy priorities, and institutional design. Recently, Australia disincentivised platforms which refrain from, or do not renew, agreements with publishers. Its News Bargaining Incentive (NBI) policy proposes to penalise platforms harvesting revenue of \$250 million and more and failing to finalise agreements. This is to ensure, *inter alia*, that Meta does not replay its Canadian strategy in Australia, since earlier this year, it had announced plans to discontinue paying news outlets there. What is interesting is that the NBI also incentivises platforms by offsetting payments to publishers against some of their fiscal liabilities in Australia.

How is India tackling publisher-platform asymmetries? Since 2022, the Competition Commission has been inquiring into the conduct of platforms, following pleas by news associations. We don't know if their efforts factor in geopolitical dimensions of the matter. If the policy paralysis continues, India's news outlets will continue to be devoid of fair shares of online advertising revenues, and vulnerable to the whims of the Alphabet-Meta duopoly.

Meanwhile, structural censorship, seen in the Jaishankar interview case, could recur. It will proliferate if Meta replicates its Canadian strategy in the U.K., South Africa, and Germany, where fair compensation regulations are being evolved. If so, interviews by Indian Ministers to news outlets in those countries will be inaccessible on Meta's platforms there. Therefore, policy pundits must weigh in urgently on fair compensation.

If our current policy paralysis continues, India's news outlets will continue to be devoid of fair shares of online advertising revenues, and vulnerable to the whims of Alphabet and Meta

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India among 25 nations with high religious restrictions

Pakistan, France, Israel, Nigeria, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Maldives were also part of that list

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

In an index measuring religion-related hostilities for 2022, India scored the highest among 198 nations, according to a report recently published by the Pew Research Center. A higher score on the social hostilities index (SHI) indicates greater levels of religion-related harassment, mob violence, terrorism, militant activity, and conflicts over religious conversions or the use of religious symbols and attire. India scored 9.3 on a scale of 10 on the SHI. Scores above 7.2 are considered 'very high'.

The report also assessed countries based on the government's restrictions on religion, using the government restrictions index (GRI). The GRI measures laws, policies, and actions that regulate or limit religious beliefs and practices. These include policies banning particular beliefs or practices, the unequal granting of benefits to certain religious groups, and bureaucratic rules requiring religious groups to register to access benefits. India had a 'high' GRI score of 6.4 out of 10 in 2022. Scores above 6.6 are classified as 'very high'.

Chart 1 plots the GRI (horizontal axis) and SHI (vertical axis) scores of 198 countries for 2022. The higher a country is on the chart, the more it experiences religion-related hostilities by non-government players. The farther to the right, the more government restrictions there are on religions.

Only 12% (25 countries) had 'high' or 'very high' GRI scores and SHI scores in 2022: India, Nigeria, Syria, Pakistan, Iraq, Egypt, Afghanistan, Israel, Libya, Palestinian territories, Ukraine, Bangladesh, France, Jordan, Iran, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Tunisia, Indonesia, Yemen, Laos, Nepal, Algeria, Maldives, and Armenia. In about

62% of the countries, including Canada and South Korea, the GRI and SHI scores were 'low' or 'moderate'. In 16% of the countries, the GRI was 'very high' or 'high', but the SHI was 'low' or 'moderate'; these include Cuba and China. In 10% of countries, the GRI was 'low' or 'moderate', but the SHI was 'high' or 'very high'. These include Brazil and the Philippines.

The number of countries with 'high' or 'very high' GHI scores rose to 59 (30% of 198 countries) in 2022 from 55 in 2021 (Chart 2). In 2007, when the index was started, only 40 nations (20%) had 'high' or 'very high' scores.

The number of countries with 'high' or 'very high' SHI scores rose to 45 (23% of all countries analysed) in 2022 from 43 countries in 2021 (Chart 3). In 2012, 65 countries had 'high' or 'very high' scores – the highest share (33%).

Harassment by governments – a broad measure encompassing verbal and physical pressure by authorities on religious groups – was among the most prevalent types of restrictions in 2022. It was reported in 186 of the 198 countries and territories studied (94%).

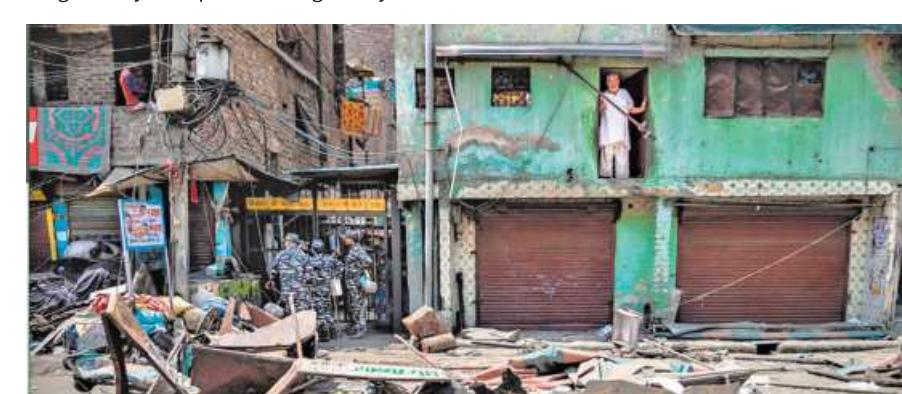
Government interference in worship was also widespread in 2022 and was reported in 170 countries and territories (86%). This includes policies and actions that disrupt religious activities, such as withholding permission to worship or denying access to places of worship. It also covers restrictions on religious practices and rituals not directly tied to worship, such as burial practices.

Chart 4 shows the number of countries where there was government harassment of religious groups and government interference in worship.

The report said that government restrictions and social hostilities often align closely, i.e., the lower the score on one index, the lower the score on the other too generally, and vice-versa.

Shades of intolerance

The data for the charts were sourced from the Pew Research Center's report titled "Government restrictions on religion stayed at peak levels globally in 2022"



Aftermath: A Muslim man watches from his house after a shop was demolished in communal violence during a Hindu religious procession in New Delhi's Jahangirpuri on April 20, 2022

Chart 1: The GRI (horizontal axis) and SHI (vertical axis) scores of 198 countries for the year 2022. The higher a country is on the chart, the more the religion-related hostilities by non-government players

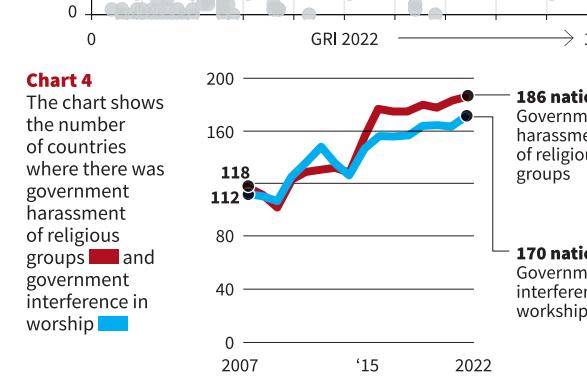
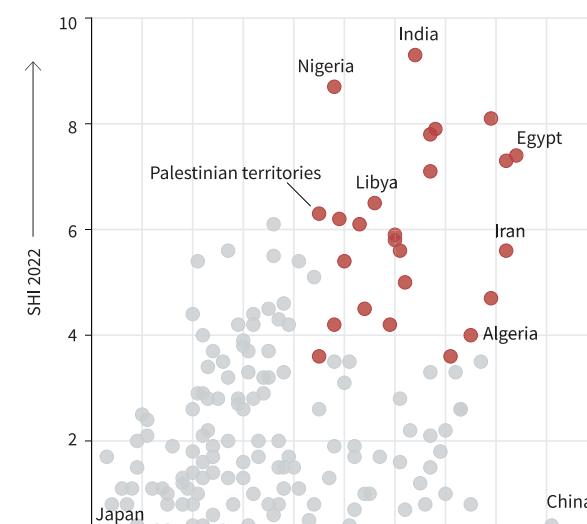


Chart 2: The share and number of countries (in bold) with high or very high GRI score over the years

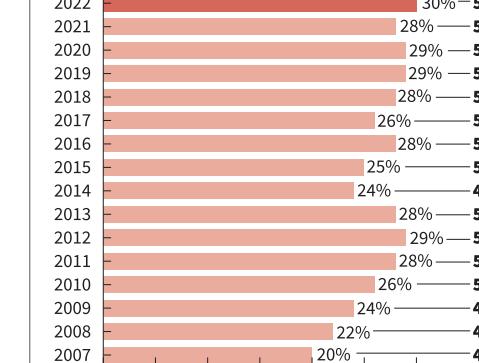
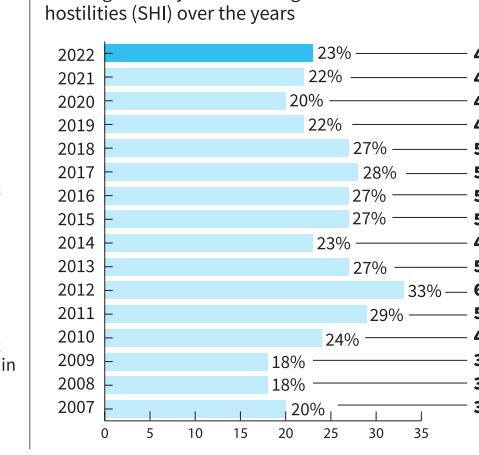


Chart 3: The share and number of countries (in bold) with high or very high levels of religion-related hostilities (SHI) over the years



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 1, 1975

India and Portugal end two decades of confrontation

New Delhi, Dec. 31: The treaty signed by India and Portugal to-day has, in the words of the two Foreign Ministers who put their signatures to this historic document, buried two decades of confrontation and established the basis for friendly co-operation between them.

The first article of the treaty says, "Portugal acknowledges that the territories of Goa, Daman, Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli have already become parts of India, and hereby recognises the full sovereignty of India with effect from the dates when they became parts of India under the Constitution of India."

An official announcement was made simultaneously about the resumption of diplomatic relations at the Embassy level between the two countries with effect from 16:00 hours IST to-day. The two countries decided to dispense with the formality of waiting for the ratification of the treaty for beginning this new and happier chapter in their relations.

The two countries have further agreed under this treaty to settle through bilateral negotiations all outstanding questions concerning property, assets or claims of their respective citizens, and matters relating to the property and assets of either side in the territories of the other State.

The treaty provides for a similar settlement of the rights and claims of Indian citizens and other persons who returned to India from territories under Portuguese administration in regard to the properties and assets left behind by them.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FROM THE DECEMBER 31, 1924 AS THERE WAS NO ISSUE ON JANUARY 1, 1925

Communists arrested

Bukharest, Dec. 28: Following the recent arrests of Communists (see cable of Dec. 23rd) the police have captured documents showing the existence of three organisations supported by the Soviet Government together with complete proofs of their relations with similar organisations in Moscow, Vienna, Berlin, Sofia and Athens. 230 out of 430 persons arrested are being held for trial and remaining 200 are being deported.

The pulls and pushes in J&K

Despite the LG's posturing, Omar Abdullah is seeking to reconcile with Delhi



Mahajan, a J&K Administrative Service officer, as director of tourism was not accepted by the Chief Minister's Office. Such tit-for-tats have become the new normal in a region that requires a delicate handling of situations, given the sense of alienation on the ground. The friction may also cast a shadow on the people's growing faith in the electoral process.

With the LG also invoking Article 311 to terminate two government employees for "anti-national" activities, the space for Mr. Abdullah has been squeezed further. In fact, his party had promised to review such cases in its manifesto. Raids against suspects from the National Investigation Agency and the J&K Police spreading "malicious, seditious propaganda" have also gained pace. The LG controls law and order in J&K.

Facing a formidable LG, who is resetting the rules of both governance and politics in J&K, Chief Minister Abdullah is repositioning himself. He has sought to tread the path of reconciliation between Srinagar and New Delhi. Mr. Abdullah has met the top leadership of the BJP, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and pleaded the case for full Statehood for J&K.

Recently, he said that the Congress will have to justify its leadership role in the INDIA bloc, instead of "taking it for granted". He also dismissed the Congress's objections to electronic voting machines, arguing that the party's stance on the issue is inconsistent. He also praised the Central Vista project in the capital.

These remarks reflect Mr. Abdullah's attempt to position himself as a rational and pragmatic politician who is ready to engage with New Delhi.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

India's fiscal deficit from April to November

8.47 In trillion rupees. The country's fiscal deficit for April-November was 52.5% of the estimate for the financial year. Total government expenditure for the period was 27.41 trillion rupees. Net tax receipts for the first eight months of the FY were at 56% of the annual target. PTI

Number of Indian startups with at least one woman director

73,000 The Indian startup ecosystem experienced a rollercoaster ride in 2024, with a slight decline in funding activity and a shift in investor sentiment, alongside a silver lining with several startups achieving unicorn status. PTI

Monthly honorarium under Pujari Granthi Samman Yojana

18,000 In ₹. A group of priests staged a protest outside the Pracheen Hanuman Mandir in Connaught Place and demanded that Arvind Kejriwal should clarify why no financial support was provided in the last 10 years. PTI

The area advanced by Russian forces in Ukraine

3,985 In square kilometres. Russia advanced by 3,985 square kilometres in Ukraine in 2024, seven times more than in 2023. Much of their gains came in autumn, as they took 610 sq kms in October and 725 sq kms in November. AFP

The applications disposed of during government campaign

3 In crore. Nearly three crore service delivery applications were disposed of during the Prashasan Gaon ki Ore campaign aimed at further ensuring ease of governance mainly at the grassroots level. The campaign was conducted in 700+ districts across India. PTI

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The nature of dissent in the Indian judiciary

The dissents of the U.S. Supreme Court are largely based on the political inclination of judges, who are direct appointees of the President, confirmed by the Senate. Indian judicial dissents have, however, varied from political, to social to purely intellectual disagreements

LETTER & SPIRIT

Shivani Vij

Dissent is an important facet of a true democracy. While this is true for citizens in the republic, or parliamentarians in the legislature, it is also true for judges of a constitutional court. India and the U.S. are two strong democracies with opinionated judiciaries. Though dissents in the Indian Supreme Court (SC) are as powerful as the U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS), their reasons differ.

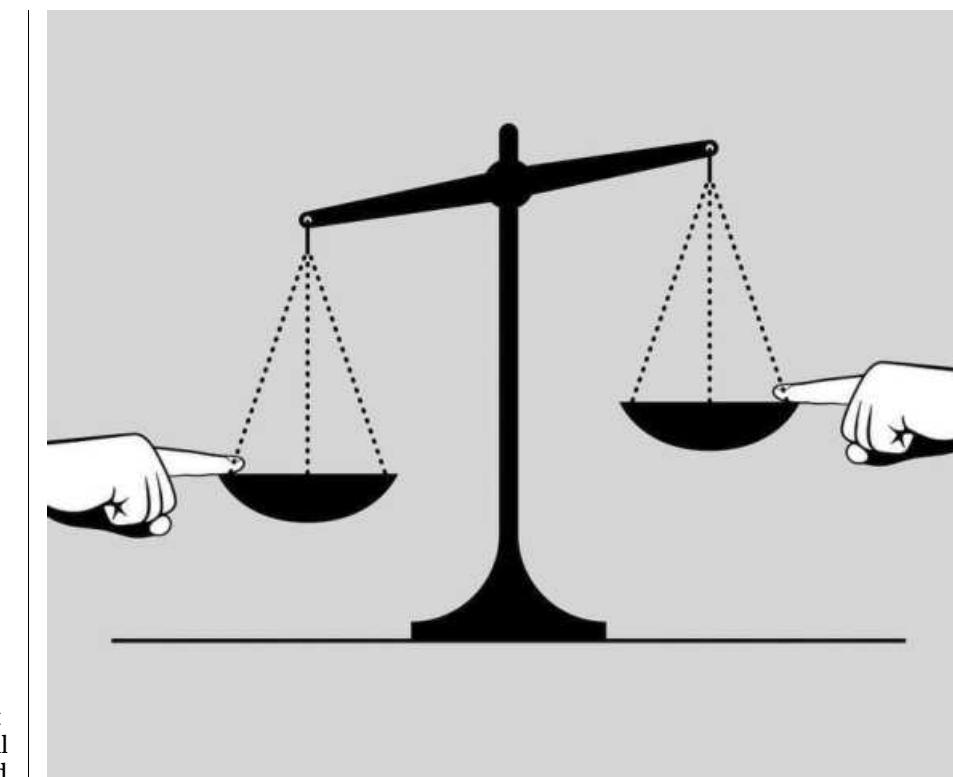
The dissents of SCOTUS are largely based on the political inclination of judges, who are direct appointees of the President, confirmed by the Senate. Justice Stephen Breyer, for instance, an appointee by the Democrats, has shown himself to be pro-affirmative action, pro-abortion and against capital punishment. His dissent in *Glossip versus Gross* (2015) held that capital punishment violated the Eighth Amendment of the Bill of Rights, which prevented inhumane and degrading punishment. Justice Samuel Alito, on the other hand, a Republican appointee, is both anti-abortion and anti-gay rights. His dissent in *Obergefell versus Hodges* (2015) reasoned that the Constitution did not address the right to marry of same-sex couples and therefore, the courts could not grant it.

Indian judicial dissents have, however, varied from political, to social to purely intellectual disagreements.

Political dissent

Unlike the U.S., Indian judges are not appointees of the ruling party and are selected through a collegium of senior judges. Their decisions do not have a similar political undertone and may or may not associate with the view of the ruling party that was in power when they were appointed.

In the case of *ADM Jabalpur* (1976), four out of five judges held that the enforcement of fundamental rights,



Join FREE Whatsapp Channel <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6RGJOKH6oBd0F> including Article 21, remained suspended during the national emergency under Article 359. The majority judgment was the politically sound one at the time.

Justice H.R. Khanna, however, withheld the political pressure of the time, dissented and reasoned that if Article 21 remained suspended, there would be no recourse to deprivation of life and liberty, albeit in emergency. His resolve to keep 'rights' intact amidst a turbulent India, strengthened his voice on the Bench and also became the law later by a constitutional amendment to Article 359.

Another example of this could be found in the *P.V. Narasimha Rao* (1998) case, where the question was if accepting bribes for voting in Parliament was covered under parliamentary privilege, and whether it enjoyed immunity from prosecution. The majority said yes, but Justices S.C. Agarwal and A.S. Anand

dissented. The majority view reflected the political atmosphere at the time and was favourable to the ruling Congress party. However, the dissent endured and later became the view of the court in *Sita Soren* (2023), where the SC overruled such an expanded view of immunity.

Dissent which is social

A dissent could also reflect a different social understanding or implication of a legal issue. In *Shayara Bano* (2017), the SC dealt with the constitutionality of the 'triple talaq' as a form of divorce among the Sunnis in Islam. Justices J.S. Khehar and Abdul Nazeer dissented with the majority, which struck down triple talaq for violating the rights of life of Muslim women. The two judges reasoned that the triple talaq was an integral part of the Sunni personal law and not violative of constitutional rights. Further, it was not

for the courts to determine its constitutionality, since it is only the legislature that can intervene in socially unacceptable practices in different religions.

The decision in *Aishat Shifa* (2022) also displayed a discordant understanding of religion. This case did not have a dissent but had two separate opinions. The question was whether the State could prohibit Muslim girls from wearing a hijab to school by enforcing a universal dress code. Justice Hemant Gupta was of the view that secularism permitted the State to do so since religion was a private affair, which had no space in classrooms of a State-run school. Justice Dhulia, on the other hand, disagreed and considered 'diversity', 'plurality' and 'tolerance' as values underpinning the Constitution. This disagreement stemmed from different understandings of secularism.

Intellectual critique

A dissent could also be plainly intellectual, like that of Justice B.V. Nagarathna in *Lalita Prasad Vaish* (2024), the industrial alcohol case. Here nine judges of the SC determined whether States have the legislative competence to tax 'industrial alcohol', or does only the Centre have the authority. Disagreeing with eight judges, Justice Nagarathna said that States could not tax industrial alcohol. The disagreement was on the interpretation of the term 'intoxicating liquor' under Entry 8 of List 2 in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. The majority believed that this legislative entry was broad enough to include liquor unfit for human consumption, and therefore industrial alcohol. States could therefore tax it. This reasoning did not sit well with Justice Nagarathna, who opined that industrial alcohol is used for manufacturing purposes and cannot be subsumed within 'intoxicating liquor', which is liquor for human consumption. The difference of opinion was solely on the interpretation of the text of the Constitution – an intellectual one. *Shivani Vij* is a lawyer practising in Delhi.

THE GIST

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Are former Prime Ministers mandated memorials?

What was the Congress party's demand with respect to the funeral and memorial of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh? Is there any rule regarding memorials for former PMs?

Vijaita Singh

The story so far:

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh passed away on December 26. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) declared seven days of State mourning and announced a state funeral for the dignitary. Mr. Singh was cremated at the Nigambodh Ghat in central Delhi, a first for any former PM. The Congress party said it was an "insult" that a separate place was not allocated by the government for the funeral of the former PM. The Congress party demanded that a memorial be built at the designated place where the cremation took place.

Is there a rule related to memorials? While guidelines exist for State funerals, there is no specific rule or government order regarding allocation of space for

memorials for former PMs. According to constitutional expert P.D.T Achary, there was a departure in the case of Mr. Singh. "As far as I know, there is no such rule. The convention is that former PMs have been cremated at designated places and in this case there is a departure. They cremated him at a place where anybody can be cremated even a common man. In our country though everyone is equal before the law, in society, a former PM has a status and especially a person like Manmohan Singh who was also globally respected," Mr. Achary said.

What has been the trend in the past? Except PM Vishwanath Pratap Singh, all other former PMs have memorials dedicated to them, majorly in Delhi and other parts of the country.

P. V. Narasimha Rao got a memorial in his name at Ekta Sthal in Delhi in 2015, 10 years after his death in 2004. In Delhi, the

Samadhi of Jawaharlal Nehru is known as Shanti Vana, Lal Bahadur Shastri's memorial is known as Vijay Ghat, that of Charan Singh's is Kisan Ghat, Indira Gandhi's memorial is at Shakti Sthal, and Rajiv Gandhi's memorial is known as Vir Bhumi. In 2013, due to paucity of space, the Congress government decided that all memorials will be built at Smriti Sthal.

Who maintains the memorials?

According to a reply furnished by the Culture Ministry on December 11, 2012 in Lok Sabha, the memorials of various personalities are maintained by the respective State Governments and local municipalities. "However, the Central Government through the Ministry of Urban Development is looking after the upkeep and maintenance of the Samadhis adjacent to Rajghat, New Delhi, Morarji Desai's Samadhi at Abhay Ghat at Ahmedabad and the Rajiv Gandhi

Memorial at Sriperumbudur (Tamil Nadu)," the reply stated.

What is the Congress's demand?

On December 27, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting the Union Government to identify a designated place where the last rites of the departed leader could be held and a memorial built thereafter. Despite the request, the cremation was held at Nigambodh Ghat on December 28.

Following an uproar, the MHA released a press statement on December 27 at 11.45 pm. It stated that the government received a request to allocate space for a memorial for the former Prime Minister. "Immediately after the Cabinet meeting, Home Minister Amit Shah communicated to Congress President Kharge and the family of Late Dr Manmohan Singh that the Government will allocate space for the memorial. In the meanwhile cremation and other formalities can happen because a Trust has to be formed and space has to be allocated to it," the statement said. Till December 30, the memorial for Mr. Singh had not been announced. Atal Bihari Vajpayee who passed on August 16, 2018 was cremated at Smriti Sthal, and a memorial came up at the same place within 45 days. The memorial was funded by the "Atal Smriti Nyas Society". It was built at a total cost of ₹10.51 crore which was borne entirely by the society.

THE GIST

While guidelines exist for State funerals, there is no specific rule or government order regarding allocation of space for memorials for former PMs.

On December 27, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting the Union Government to identify a designated place where the last rites of the departed leader could be held and a memorial built thereafter.

According to a reply furnished by the Culture Ministry on December 11, 2012 in Lok Sabha, the memorials of various personalities are maintained by the respective State Governments and local municipalities.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



The Tricolour at the Hyderabad House in Delhi. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

India must protect and preserve its hard-won freedoms

The Tricolour must remind us of the composite culture which makes us a great democracy. We must resolve to never let our freedoms be robbed by authoritarian arrogance or allow fomented hatred to undermine the unity of the Indian people. That is the best tribute we can pay to our flag

Manmohan Singh

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh passed away at the age of 92 on December 26. In this article, dated August 15, 2022, Mr. Singh warns Indian citizens to hold as precious the unity, freedom and diversity which makes India a truly unique democracy.

The world's largest democracy is soon to become the most populous country on earth. Therefore, the celebration of 75 years of Independence brings a special responsibility to set global standards in the protection and the promotion of individual and collective freedoms. While every Indian will proudly salute the flag as it flies high, the Tricolour must also remind us of the composite culture which makes us a uniquely great democracy in the world. On this historic occasion, we must resolve to never let our freedoms be robbed by authoritarian arrogance or allow fomented hatred to undermine the unity of the Indian people. That is the best tribute we can pay to our flag.

A unity that is precious
India emerged from the chokehold of colonial rule to build a nation from a wide scatter of British-ruled territories and princely States. This unity did not magically materialise overnight. It was the freedom struggle, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and led by the Indian National Congress, which united Indians across the land to seek an end to foreign rule. This movement united Indians across multiple identities of language, religion, caste, gender and social status. That unity is precious to India and should not be frittered away through communally divisive, linguistically chauvinist, callously casteist and gender insensitive campaigns that will fragment the Indian identity. Such ploys may pay temporary political dividends, by setting Indians against Indians, but they will create craters on

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India's path to progress as a great nation.

We were robbed of our riches by colonial rule and began our life after Independence as a poor developing country. We rose from that level to become one of the world's leading economies, whose growth is essential to the stability of the global economy. The policy of economic liberalisation, initiated in 1991, had a galvanising effect on our economic growth. At the same time, poverty reduction and the bridging of economic inequalities became a cardinal principle of public policy. As we pursue the path of inclusive economic growth, we should not permit only a select few among India's business leaders to reap the benefits of prosperity while income gaps keep widening.

Flag divisive politics

Jobless growth is not a safe bet for any economy. Unemployment not only does not permit the optimal use of our human resources but also creates the breeding ground for social discord and divisive politics. As we move ahead towards the next 25 years of independent India, we must aim to optimally utilise the demographic dividend of a young population through education, skilling, suitable employment and support to young entrepreneurs and innovators. This requires easy mobility across the country for education and employment. Communal and linguistic barriers will hinder such mobility and adversely impact growth. Captains of Indian industry must recognise this danger and raise their voice for national unity, not remain mute spectators when divisive politics are posing a threat to the economy.

Uphold scientific tradition

India adopted excellence in science as a path to progress since the early years of Independence. The national science policy was forward looking. Great institutions of scientific learning and

research were established. India's various institutes of technology have won world renown, with many of their graduates leading global enterprises of repute. Our space, oceanography and nuclear programmes have placed us in a select group of nations whose scientific prowess and technological excellence are respectfully acknowledged by the whole world. It would be unfortunate if our scientific institutions, universities and research bodies are undermined through the induction of sub-optimal leadership, whose given mandate is to pursue cultural revivalism at the cost of academic integrity. India has had a proud scientific tradition since ancient times, but that should not become the camouflage for pseudo-science that brings discredit to our scientific community.

In the comity of nations, India won respect for adopting principled positions, opposing colonial rule, leading the Non-Aligned Movement when two power blocs were seeking global domination, espousing human rights and promoting the cause of peace. Our relations with most of our neighbours were cordial. Even when we had conflicts with some, we tried to build bridges of understanding to enable peaceful co-existence. We need to maintain these positions, even as the world witnesses new conflicts and alliances. It is essential for us to be regarded as a reliable and respected friend in most countries of the world, but especially in South Asia. We should not let our foreign policy wobble through dependence on personalised gestures for the camera but follow clear-headed initiatives through wise leadership supported by able diplomats.

Well-being of the young

India must focus on enhancing the health, education and skilling of young persons. The recent National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) reminds us that stunting, under-nourishment and anaemia continue to afflict a large percentage of

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our children and women in the reproductive age group. We need to ensure that the nutrition-specific programmes deliver, even as we advance nutrition-sensitive policies in other sectors, especially water and sanitation.

COVID-19 revealed several weaknesses in our health system. From disease surveillance to provision of health care, we need to strengthen the capacity of health services. There are marked differences in the capacity and performance of health systems across different States. It is essential that States invest more in health and also that centrally sponsored programmes aim to provide greater support to States whose health indicators are lagging. Providing needed health services to all persons, with adequate financial protection, must be the goal of universal health coverage. We must achieve this uniformly across the whole country.

For the citizen to ponder over

As a young boy of 14, I experienced both the exhilaration of newly gained independence as well as the painful tragedies that marred the country's partition. I hoped that India would grow strong as a nation without ever again having to experience such discord. Today, I am proud of what India has achieved and am optimistic about the future of this great nation. However, I am also worried about the sectarian slogans and communal slurs that are vitiating social harmony and dividing the people. Alongside, there is also a weakening of institutions which must safeguard democratic freedoms, uphold norms of good governance and shield electoral politics from the onslaught of money power and co-opted state agencies. It is for the citizens of India to protect and preserve the hard won gains of our freedom. Let each one of us reflect on that duty as we raise and salute our flag.

Dr. Manmohan Singh was Prime Minister of India from 2004 to 2014.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Happy New Year to all our readers! A quiz on calenders which are/were used in India

Serish Nanisetti

headed the committee?

QUESTION 1

According to India's national calendar, used for all Indian gazette notifications and official communications of the government of India, which is the first day of the year?

QUESTION 2
Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru set up the Calendar Reform Committee under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research to devise a national calendar in 1952. Who

QUESTION 3

How many different calendars did the committee examine before selecting Vikram Samvat as the standard for the national calendar?

QUESTION 4

Which Iranian poet and philosopher was also an astrologer, and devised the rules for the leap year?

QUESTION 5

The unified 'National Calendar' (the Saka Calendar) was adopted for use with effect from March 21, 1956 A.D., that is, 1 Chaitra 1878 Saka. What does Saka refer to?



Visual question:

An Indian crime caper is roughly based on this American movie and stars Shah Rukh Khan.

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

1. In 2014, this Malaysian Airlines flight disappeared and this one was shot down over Ukraine. **Ans: MH370 and MH17**

2. This football club lost eight players to an aviation accident in 1958. This Brazilian football club lost 19 players in 2016. **Ans: Manchester United; and Chapecoense**

3. The feature shared between Mangaluru and Kozhikode airports which played a part in two accidents. **Ans: 'Table-top' runways**

4. The location where Saudi Arabian Airlines flight 763 collided mid-air with Kazakhstan Airlines flight 1907. **Ans: Charkhi Dadri in Haryana**

5. The pilot who managed to save all lives on board after his aircraft experienced engine failure. **Ans: Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger**

Visual: Name this airport. **Ans: Tribhuvan Airport, Kathmandu**

Early Birds: Dodi Jayaditya Rajmohan Velayudhan| Viswanadha Rao Batchu| Jagrati Shukla| M. Suresh Kumar



ABSTRACT

How corruption spurred growth in China

Prashanth Perumal

Widespread corruption is often seen by economists as a major reason why many countries remain poor. But some have argued that not all corruption is bad. One among these is Singaporean political economist Yuen Yuen Ang who is known for her 2020 book *China's Gilded Age: The Paradox of Economic Boom and Vast Corruption*. Ms. Ang argues that corruption can be good or bad for economic growth depending on the reason why bribes are paid. If bribes are paid just as a form of extortion where the person paying the bribe gains nothing in return for the bribe that he or she pays, this can act as a drag on economic growth. Ms. Ang classifies this form of corruption as petty theft or grand theft depending on the scale at which it happens. Such theft hinders growth.

Corruption can be good

On the other hand, if bribes are paid to gain access to rights or resources that are under the control of the elite or non-elites, this can lead to faster economic growth at least in the short run. This is because, in many cases, bureaucratic rules and other barriers restrict free access to resources and the freedom to exchange resources, and in such cases corruption can help ease access and promote economic freedom, thus boosting economic growth. Ms. Ang calls this form of corruption as speed money or access money. It should be noted that while this form of corruption can "grease the wheels" of the economy, such growth is likely to be far from ideal. For example, since not everybody may be capable enough to influence government officials with bribes, we are likely to see the rise of a few large business groups, causing greater economic inequality. A system where there is the opportunity for free entry without the need to bribe public officials will lead to more rapid economic growth that is also more equitable. Ms. Ang argues that China managed to witness rapid economic growth despite vast corruption because most corruption in the country was in the form of access money rather than petty or grand theft.

In a recent paper named "A political economy analysis of recent growth slowdown in West Bengal," Debajit Jha, Jagadish Prasad Sahu and Parinita Singh use Ms. Ang's classification of corruption to explain the economic slowdown in West Bengal. The authors state that West Bengal's growth rate began to slow down after the Trinamool Congress came to power in 2011, with the average growth rate becoming lower than the national average. Most of this growth slowdown, they argue, has been due to the underperformance of the large non-farm sector (manufacturing and construction) which constitutes about 80% of the State's GDP and has been plagued by petty theft by the 'syndicate raj' run by the ruling Trinamool Congress. The farm sector, in contrast, has done relatively better as the corruption in this sector is in the form of access money that helps economic growth in the short term.

Word of the day

Condone:

excuse, overlook, or make allowances for; be lenient with

Synonym:

excuse

Usage:

We should not be seen as condoning violence.

Pronunciation:

newsthrive.com/condonepro

International Phonetic Alphabet:

/kən'doun/

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

From Page One**Biren expresses 'regret' for violence in Manipur**

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum said more than 30 women were injured during the "peaceful protest".

It asked the security personnel to cease their "intrusive operations" immediately and let the people celebrate the New Year in peace.

"The government must stop being biased and take concrete steps to prevent such incidents and ensure that those responsible for the violence are held accountable," the tribal organisation said in a statement.

The Chief Minister said that more than 200 people had died in the conflict between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities since the violence broke out in May 2023, while 12,247 first information reports were registered and 625 accused arrested. He felt that the recovery of 5,600 arms and 35,000 rounds of ammunition during this period pointed to "good progress" in tackling the issue.

"The Centre provided enough security personnel and funds to help the displaced families. Altogether 7,549 people of 2,058 families have been resettled," he said.

Speaking to presspersons, Mr. Ramesh said, "It has taken 19 months for the Chief Minister to say what he has said today. And it's not enough. The real issue is not what the Chief Minister says or doesn't say. For 19 months, the Prime Minister has not spoken. He has travelled all over the country, he has travelled all over the world, but he has not found time to go to Manipur. That's the issue."

SC gives Punjab 3 more days to shift Dallewal

"Taking into consideration the totality of the circumstances and in the interest of justice, we are inclined to accept the request for more time for compliance of the court's directions," the court recorded in its order.

"We had our intervenors and negotiators go there. They talked to them. We did make efforts for compliance. We had even mobilised 7,000 personnel right next to the site... but the bandh was total. There were blocks all over Punjab. No traffic movement. We were hindered," the Advocate-General briefed the court.

On December 28, the Punjab government apprehended that a "forcible evacuation" of Mr. Dallewal to a hospital would lead to "collateral damage" to both the State police and the agitating farmers.

In the last hearing, Mr. Singh had said that over 3,000 people had converged at the protest site where Mr. Dallewal was on hunger strike, apparently to resist any move to evacuate him.

Aware of the deepening crisis, the court had in the previous hearing remarked that "one word from the Centre may defuse the situation" as "time was running out for the gentleman (Dallewal)". Mr. Dallewal had also written to the Prime Minister, saying he would end his fast only if the Centre engaged with the farmers.

Justice Dhulia had asked if the Centre could do anything to defuse the stalemate with the farmers over the MSP law.

CM backs Math's call to end regressive practice

"Sivagiri has historically led reformist social movements," he said.

Mr. Vijayan slammed attempts to cast the Guru as a proponent of *Sanatana Dharma*. The Guru challenged the *Sanatana* and *Varnashrama Dharma* concept that individuals born into a particular caste or social class could pursue only the traditional occupation practised by their ancestors.

The social order defined by the two ancient creeds denied those at the lower strata of the caste-based society the opportunity for upward social mobility and self-advancement.

The Chief Minister said *Sanatana Dharma* preached universal welfare, with the cynical rider that "only the well-being of cows and Brahmins would ensure the world's happiness".

BJP leader and former Union Minister V. Muraleedharan accused Mr. Vijayan of insulting *Sanatana Dharma* at the philosophy's heartland in the Sivagiri Math. Mr. Vijayan had followed upon Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin's attack on Hindu dharma.

The BJP leader dared Mr. Vijayan to disparage other religious beliefs similarly. He said Hindus faced trying times under Mr. Vijayan's government.

In his speech, Mr. Vijayan said the attempt to portray the Guru as a champion of *Sanatana Dharma* ran counter to the renaissance leader's humanist message.

The Guru challenged the tenets of *Sanatana Dharma*, he noted. He said *Sanatana Dharma* "celebrated monocracy, feted the oppressive dominance of the Brahminical pecking order and advanced the social and economic hierarchy based on a rigid caste-based public order". "The 18th-century king of the erstwhile princely State of Travancore, Marthanda Varma, ruled in the name of *Sanatana Dharma*," he said.

Mr. Vijayan said the *Mahabharata* was ambiguous about the principle of universal justice as advanced by *Sanatana Dharma*. At the epic's end, "righteous Yudhishthira and morally wrong Duryodhana" gain a place in heaven, he said.

Sree Narayana Guru harshly questioned the text's ambivalence about the concept of justice," Mr. Vijayan said.

Manipur accounts for 77% of Northeast violence cases

State recorded 137 incidents in 2022, which rose to 187 in 2023 and 203 till November-end in 2024, according to Home Ministry; counter-insurgency operations led to 33 insurgent deaths in 2023

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Manipur accounted for 77% of violent incidents that took place in northeastern India in 2023, according to the Union Home Ministry's annual report for 2023-24.

There were 243 violent incidents reported in the Northeast in 2023, of which 187 were in Manipur. The Union government released ₹247.26 crore to Manipur in 2023 to operate relief camps and rehabilitate people affected by the State's "law and order crisis".

The Home Ministry report, published on Monday, said that the rise in incidents of violence in Manipur was due to the prevailing ethnic strife between Meitei and Kuki communities, and the resultant increase in casualties among civilians and security personnel in comparison to 2022.

Rising violence
In comparison to the 187 incidents reported in 2023, which resulted in the deaths of 35 civilians and seven security personnel, there were 137 insurgency-related incidents registered in the State in 2022,



Unresolved conflict: The police firing tear gas shells at protesters in Imphal in July 2023. FILE PHOTO

in which five civilians and one security force personnel lost their lives. According to the Ministry's data for 2024, until November 30, 203 incidents of violence had been reported, which led to three security personnel and 28 civilians being killed.

The counterinsurgency operations in 2023 also resulted in 33 insurgents being killed, while 184 insurgents were arrested and 49 weapons recovered. Another 80 members of insurgent outfits surrendered with 31 weapons, the report said.

On November 29, 2023,

the Ministry and the Manipur government signed a peace agreement with one of the factions of the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), the oldest armed Valley-based Meitei insurgent group. The group advocates for secession of Manipur and largely operates from Myanmar.

Central deployment
Since ethnic violence erupted in the State on May 3, 2023, more than 250 people have been killed. In just the first three months, between May 3 and July 30, 2023, as many as 3,023 first information

reports (FIR) pertaining to rape, sexual offences against women, murder, loot, and arson were registered in the State.

Though the issue of violence primarily relates to the maintenance of public order which is under the domain of the State, the Union government took a series of immediate and sustained actions to handle the situation, it said.

On June 4, 2023, the Union government appointed a Commission of Inquiry headed by a retired High Court Justice, to inquire into the causes and spread of the violence.

Power outage at Delhi data centre disrupts IRCTC, govt. websites

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Several government websites went down on Tuesday following a power outage at the National Informatics Centre's (NIC) data centre in Shastri Park in northeast Delhi, sources said. While the outage was resolved, the websites continued to be down until 7.30 p.m.

A day ahead of the New Year, the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) website was down, disrupting last-minute attempts by travellers to purchase tatkal tickets for trains departing on January 1.

The IRCTC site was not accessible during the tatkal booking period the day after Christmas as well due to "a technical issue in the Next Generation E-ticketing system from 10:01 to 10:40 am and 10:51 am to 11:23 am". Officials were not immediately available to comment on the rail booking site's outage on Tuesday.

The government sites that went down in the evening include those of the Department of Telecommunications, the External Affairs Ministry, the Press Information Bureau, the Health and Family Welfare Ministry, and the Labour Ministry.

Training for the big day



Warming up: Navy personnel rehearsing for the Republic Day Parade at Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

IPS officer Vitul Kumar to lead CRPF as Acting chief

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Central Reserve Police Force Director-General Anil Dayal Singh retired on Tuesday, passing the leadership to senior IPS officer Vitul Kumar who will serve as the Acting chief until a permanent appointment is made.

Mr. Singh, an IPS officer of 1988 batch from Manipur cadre, led the CRPF during a critical year in which the world's largest paramilitary force made significant strides in the government's campaign to combat Naxalism.

Under his leadership, the CRPF established over three dozen forward operating bases in areas affected by left-wing extremism and introduced four new battalions, adding more than 4,000 personnel dedicated to anti-Naxal operations in Chhattisgarh.

In the last few years, the Quad has rolled out a number of initiatives addressing

Quad members vow to work vigorously towards a free, open, and stable Indo-Pacific

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India and other Quad member-nations on Tuesday reaffirmed the grouping's steadfast commitment to work towards a free, open, and peaceful Indo-Pacific amid China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the region.

Foreign Ministers of the member nations of the grouping made the pledge in a joint statement commemorating the 20th anniversary of "Quad cooperation".

India, the U.S., Australia and Japan came together 20 years ago to extend assistance in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, and that coalition subsequently took the form of the Quad.

In the last few years, the Quad would work together in responding to the future needs of the Indo-Pacific.

QQ
We reaffirm our unwavering support for ASEAN's centrality and unity as well as mainstreaming and implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific

QUAD FOREIGN MINISTERS
In a statement

ing some of the most pressing needs and challenges of the Indo-Pacific region, including in areas of maritime security, infrastructure and connectivity.

India is scheduled to host the next Quad Summit likely in the second half of 2025.

The Foreign Ministers of the four nations said the Quad would work together in responding to the future needs of the Indo-Pacific.

"As four partners, we share a vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific that is peaceful, stable and prosperous, underpinned by effective regional institutions," the joint statement said.

The Quad Foreign Ministers also talked about the centrality of 10-nation grouping Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the Indo-Pacific.

"We reaffirm our unwavering support for ASEAN's centrality and unity as well as mainstreaming and implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific," the Ministers said.

"We respect Pacific-led regional architecture, foremost the Pacific Islands Forum. We are also steadfast in our support for the Indian Ocean Rim Association, the region's premier organisation," they said.

Nigerians top list of deported in 2023-24: Home Ministry data

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The highest number of foreigners deported from India were from Nigeria, followed by Bangladesh and Uganda, the Union Home Ministry said in its annual report for 2023-24.

A total of 2,331 foreigners were deported by the Foreigners Regional Registration Officers (FRROs) from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024. Of these, 1,470 people belonged to Nigeria, 411 people were from Bangladesh and 78 belonged to Uganda. The FRRO maintains the records of foreigners who enter India on valid documents. The deportation can be for overstaying the visa and flouting visa conditions among others.

During the same period, 1,112 Long-Term Visas (LTVs) were granted by the Home Ministry for minority communities from Pakistan.



During the period, 1,112 Long-Term Visas were granted to those from minority communities from Pakistan.

in nine States to grant citizenship to foreigners under the provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955. "Out of this, 1,278 were granted by registration under Section 5 and 421 were granted by naturalisation under Section 6 of the Citizenship Act, 1955," the report said.

During the same period, 1,112 Long-Term Visas (LTVs) were granted by the Home Ministry for minority communities from Pakistan. LTVs, ranging from a year to five years, are precursors to citizenship.

Since 2019, all citizenship applications are being processed online and between April 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024, a total of 1,699 citizenship certificates have been granted by the Union as well as State governments. The Home Ministry has delegated powers to State government officials in 31 districts

Odisha police nab two fraudsters with many cases across country

The Hindu Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Police have apprehended K. Satish Kumar from Chennai and C.M. Harish from Kozhikode, both notorious tricksters with multiple criminal cases pending against them in different States.

The police said the two duped the scientist claiming that illegal bank accounts were opened using his Aadhaar and that these were used for money laundering during elections.

fake identity of officers of the Mumbai Crime Branch.

Out of the total ₹1.06 crore that was cheated, ₹68 lakh was transferred to the bank account of Satish Kumar and ₹30 lakh to that of Harish.

The police said the two duped the scientist claiming that illegal bank accounts were opened using his Aadhaar and that these were used for money laundering during elections.

APPEAL

I am Fairoja, aged 27 years old am advised to undergo Complex Medical Open Heart Surgery at The Madras Medical Open Hospital, Chennai. The total expenditure is Rs.4,14,000/- My husband works as a Driver, and I cannot afford this huge cost. Please help me to undergo the surgery and lead a healthy life. The donations sent through C.H.D./NET Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/c No. 60182010063310, IFSC No: CNRB0016018) favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is exempted under 80G IT.

All correspondence is done through WWS, Regd Public Charitable Trust, Flat No. GF 1, Cordel Apartments, O.No.13, N.No. 29, Pycroft Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401/ 28235324/ 7338978027/ 31523781.

E-mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com.

Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org.

Fairoja

Jaishankar in Doha for talks, to prepare for Qatari Emir's visit

The Emir will visit India in February; External Affairs Minister's third visit in six months raises hopes for return of former Naval officer, delayed by nearly a year; New Delhi is also looking to boost ties with several countries in the West Asian region

Suhasini Haidar

NEW DELHI



Outreach efforts: Jaishankar is likely to meet Qatar PM Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani. FILE PHOTO

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is in Doha for a three-day visit over the New Year for a series of bilateral meetings, as well as to prepare for a visit by Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to India, expected next month, sources told *The Hindu*.

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Qatar last February, he had met and invited Sheikh Al Thani to India. The Emir's visit is part of New Delhi's recent broader outreach to the Gulf region, as Israel's bombardment of Gaza continues, with the effects of the West Asian crisis now spreading to Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen.

Mr. Jaishankar was due to meet the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al

Thani in Doha, and to discuss "political, trade, investment, energy, security, cultural, and people-to-people" ties as well as "regional and international issues of mutual interest", the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement before his departure. Mr. Jaishankar's visit to Qatar, his third in six months, has raised hopes for the return of the eighth former Naval officer con-

victed of spying in 2023, who has been detained in Doha while others on death row along with him were pardoned. The decision to drop the death penalty against all eight men was taken at the end of December 2023, but while seven men were released and returned to India in February 2024, Commander Purnendu Tiwari (retired) has been held back under a travel ban.

The MEA has said that the former Naval officer, who was also decorated with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, is required to complete certain "formalities" in the Qatari legal system. According to officials, the pending requirements pertain to financial charges against the Dahra Global company where Mr. Tiwari was Managing Director and the other seven former naval personnel were employed.

However, Mr. Tiwari's family has rejected any charges of wrongdoing, pleading to the Prime Minister to "intervene" and facilitate his return.

Wooing West Asia

Among a number of bilateral visits meant to shore up India's ties with the troubled region, Mr. Modi has travelled to Kuwait while Mr. Jaishankar visited Bahrain, and twice travelled to Qatar in Decem-

ber. After the proposed visit of the Qatari Emir to India, expected in the first or second week of February, Mr. Jaishankar is expected to travel to Oman. The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud also visited Delhi in the last few months.

In addition, New Delhi will receive Iranian Vice Minister for External Affairs Takht Ravanchi on January 2 as its first high-level diplomatic visitor in 2025. The visit from the new Iranian government is significant, given its growing tensions with Israel, as well as the imminent inauguration of incoming U.S. President Donald Trump later in January. Mr. Trump is expected to take a tougher line on Iran, and to step up sanctions, which will affect India as well.

Cong. chief says deprived classes bearing the brunt of *Manuvaad* under BJP

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI



Mallikarjun Kharge

The Bharatiya Janata Party government at the Centre and those in the States have a mindset against the deprived sections of society, who are bearing the brunt of *Manuvaad*, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said on Tuesday.

Mr. Kharge, in a post on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), alleged that Union Home Minister Amit Shah had insulted B.R. Ambedkar in Parliament and the same 'vanchit virodh' (against the deprived communities) mindset was prevalent in the BJP-ruled States.

The Congress chief cited incidents in which persons from the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes were targeted.

In the past two days, he said, a Dalit youth was murdered in police custody at Dewas in Madhya Pradesh and at Balasore in Odisha, tribal women were

nant woman has to travel 100 km in search of an ICU and dies. In Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, three Dalit families are forced to migrate because of caste-based attacks on them and the police remains silent," Mr. Kharge said. "It is well known that atrocities are being committed against Dalits, tribals, backward and minority communities under the 'anti-constitutional rule' of the Modi government. Those who are poor and deprived are suffering the brunt of *Manuvaad*," he said.

Mr. Kharge said a crime was committed every hour against Dalit-tribal women and children, and as per the National Crime Records Bureau, the figure had doubled since 2014. "The Congress will not allow the constitutional rights of 140 crore Indians to be violated and will oppose the anti-constitutional thinking of the BJP-RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh]," he said.

Congress, Left protest against police lathi charge on students in Patna

The Hindu Bureau

PATNA



Show of support: Congress and Left supporters during a protest against lathi charge on job aspirants in Patna on Tuesday. ANI

Congress and Left MLAs on Tuesday took out a protest march to the Raj Bhavan here in support of candidates who are demanding reconduct of the 70th Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) Combined (Preliminary) Competitive Examination (CCE) following an alleged paper leak. The State's main Opposition party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), was not part of the protest.

They scuffled with the police while trying to remove barricades on their way to the Raj Bhavan. Congress Legislative Party leader Shakeel Ahmad Khan and Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) legislative party leader Mehboob Alam led the

March. The MLAs slammed the Bihar government for the lathi charge on the students on Sunday and termed their demands "genuine".

Demands submitted
With the newly appointed Governor Mohammad Arif Khan not sworn in, a delegation of the MLAs met the Principal Secretary to the Governor, Robert L. Chongthu, and submitted a memorandum. Their demands included re-examination, action against officers who lathi-charged students, withdrawal of FIRs against students, compensation for the fami-

ly of Sonu Yadav – a BPSC candidate who died by suicide due to the alleged paper leak – and an impartial inquiry into the leak. Mr. Chongthu said he would forward the demands to the Governor.

Criticising the police action during the march, Mr. Alam said, "Nitish Kumar is competing with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The students and youth of Bihar will not tolerate any more dictatorship of the Bharatiya Janata Party and Janata Dal (United) government."

Mr. Khan said, "There is lawlessness in the State and the government has become undemocratic".

The ruling dispensation has alleged that the Opposition was politicising the situation and misleading students.

IMD predicts fresh spell of snowfall, as cold wave intensifies across J&K

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI



Biting cold: A man walking in a snow-covered paddy field in Pulwama district of south Kashmir on Tuesday. IMRAN NISSAR

Cold wave conditions intensified across Kashmir on Tuesday, with the IMD predicting fresh spells of light to moderate snowfall in the Valley during the week, while large swathes of Uttar Pradesh witnessed maximum temperatures dipping by more than 5 degrees Celsius.

Parts of Rajasthan experienced intense chill as neighbouring Haryana, and Punjab continued to witness biting cold conditions.

Gulmarg, a tourist resort town in north Kash-

mir, recorded a low of minus 11.5 degrees Celsius, the IMD office said. Pahalgam, the base camp for the annual Amarnath Yatra in south Kashmir, registered a minimum temperature of minus 8.4 degrees Celsius.

In Srinagar, the mercury dipped to minus 3.5 de-

grees Celsius. Qazigund – the gateway town to Kashmir – logged a minimum temperature of minus 7.5 degrees Celsius. In south Kashmir, Kokernag recorded a minimum temperature of minus 5.6 degrees Celsius.

"A feeble western disturbance is likely to hit Kashmir on January 1-2. There is a possibility of light snow at scattered places. A moderate to strong western disturbance is likely to affect from January 3-6. There is a chance of snow at most places with peak activity on January 4-6," the IMD said.

Will set up inquiry panel: Suvendu in Sandeshkhali

Man surrenders in case related to sarpanch's murder

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

Before surrender, accused shares a video on social media claiming he has been falsely framed in the case

been absconding. He is one of the four accused in the case who has been charged in the extortion case linked to the murder of a village sarpanch.

Before turning himself in around noon, Mr. Karad shared a video on social media claiming he has been falsely framed in the case. In the video, Mr. Karad said: "I am surrender-

ing before the State CID headquarters in Pune today in a false case filed against me in Kajip police station of Beed district. While I surrender, the real culprits of Santosh Deshmukh's murder are still out, they should be severely punished and sentenced to death. My name is being dragged into this case falsely for political vendetta."

The Opposition said Mr. Karad's surrender before the CID within hours of the family's statement raised eyebrows, and it has accused the ruling government of staging the entire incident.

RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LTD.
O/o SE (TD-II), 505, Dreamax Plaza, Jaipur, Email: ce.td@rvun.com
E-TENDER NOTICE: TN-36(RVU2425GLOB01740)
Online tenders are invited for Procurement of Caustic Soda Lyre required for CTPP Chhabra CSCTPP Chhabra, KSTPS, Kota, KaTPP Jhalawar, DCCP Dholpur, RGTP Ramgarh SSTPS Suratgarh, SSCSPTT Suratgarh Power Plants of RVUN as per specification. Tender details are available on websites <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> (for e-tender), www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvun & www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in. Raj.Samwad/C/24/9702 RVUN/PR-4123 Superintending Engineer (TD-II)

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
O/o The Superintending Engineer (Projects-WZ), GHMC, Hyderabad
Description: 1. The EPC work tenders invited vide Tender Notice No.09/SE (P-WZ)/GHMC/2024-25 Dated: 21-12-2024, (Note No's. 1, 2 & 3) held cancelled. **Address of the officer concerned:** Sri. G. Sree Lakshmi, SE(P-WZ) Superintending Engineer (Projects-WZ), Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, Tank Bund Road, Hyderabad. Further details can be seen at 'e' Procurement <https://tender.telangana.gov.in>.

DIPR R.O.No.8521-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2024-25 Dt: 31.12.2024

PUDUCHERRY INDUSTRIAL PROMOTION DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Govt. Of Puducherry Under taking)
No.60, Romain Rolland Street, Puducherry - 605 001
Tel. No. 0413-2335116, Fax No. 0413-2336842 Website:[info@ipidc.in](http://ipidc.in)

No. 7164/PIPDIC/SP/2022/RAMP/3 Date:30.12.2024

Request for proposal

Proposals are invited from reputed/experienced firms/companies/agencies for Selection of a State Programme Implementation Unit (SPIU) for Implementation and Monitoring of

"Strategic Investment Plan" under Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Programme in the U.T. of Puducherry.

Details can be obtained from website www.pudutenders.gov.in.

Last date for submission of proposal - 17.01.2025 by 4:00 P.M.

Puducherry, Date:30.12.2024

No.414/DIP/AD(Press)/2024-25

Managing Director PIPDIC

LOOK OUT NOTICE

Above Photos of Mrs Amritra. Age 25, W/O Sachu, Deekshith Age 3, S/o Sachu, Manus Bhavanam, Kadathoor Muri, Thazhava Village, Kollam (Dist.) Kerala State has been missing from her home since 11.06.2024. In this Connection a Case in Crime No.994/2024 U/S 57(1)(A) Of KP Act was registered at Karunagappally Police Station.

STATION OFFICER, KARUNAGAPPALLY : 9497987035, SI OF POLICE, KARUNAGAPPALLY : 9497358853, KARUNAGAPPALLY POLICE STATION: 047602620233 (F2/592/2024/I&PRD)

INDIRA GANDHI INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
(A Super Speciality Autonomous Institute Of Govt. Of Bihar)
IGIMS Medical College, IGIMS Nursing College
Sheikhupura, Patna-14, EPBX:0612-2297099/2297631, Website: www.igims.org

E-Tender Notice

E-tendering mode only on website www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in

E-Tender Notice No.: 20/2024-2025/Bio-Medical Equipment/IGIMS/Store

Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Patna invites bids from eligible and qualified manufacturers or their authorized distributors / agents for Supply, Installation and commissioning of various equipments for the department of Neurosurgery, Pulmonary Medicine, Orthopaedics, ENT, Neurology and CTVS.

The last date & time for submission/ uploading of complete tender document at www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in is 28/01/2025 up to 17:00 hours.

Details of specification of equipment's, terms and conditions can be seen and downloaded from Institute Website: www.igims.org & www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in

The undersigned reserves the right to accept/ reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason. Prospective bidders are advised to regularly visit www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in and www.igims.org for Corrigendum / amendments etc., if any. It will be notified on these portals only and no separate advertisement will be made.

Director, IGIMS, Patna

GUJARAT URJA VIKAS NIGAM LIMITED
CIN U40109GJ2004SGC045195
ISO 9001:2015 Certified Company
Sardar Patel Vidhyut Bhawan, Racecourse, Vadodara 390007
PBX: (0265) 2310582-86, www.guvnl.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Limited (GUVNL) a Govt. of Gujarat Undertaking hereby invites e-tender for purchase of 600-800 MW RTC power and 500 MW in Peak hours for the period from **01.03.2025 to 30.06.2025** as per Ministry of Power (MoP), Govt. of India Guidelines dated **30.03.2016** read with amendment to the guideline notified on **21.02.2022**. RFP is available at www.mstccommerce.com from **31.12.2024**. Bid has to be submitted online through DEEP Portal of MoP. All terms and conditions shall be as per RFP.
Date: 31st December 2024

Chief Finance Manager (Power Trading)

DELHI TRANSCO LIMITED
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

Delhi Transco Ltd (A Government of NCT of Delhi Undertaking) invites online tender, for the following work:

Tender No.T24R202414 : Design, Engineering , Supply, Laying, Jointing, Testing and Commissioning of 220kV D/C 1X1200sq.mm. U/G XLPE Cable from 220KV Dev Nagar substation to 220KV Subzimandi substation on turnkey Basis.

For complete details of the tender please visit following websites :-

<https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in> (Tender ID No. 2024_DTL_267515_1) website www.dtl.gov.in with Unique No. DTL-9455-30125.

Last date for bid submission: 17.02.2025 at 1:30 PM.

All Corrigendum/Addendum/ Amendments/Date of Extension/ Clarifications, if any, to the above e-tenders would appear only on the above mentioned websites.

IN BRIEF



Kumbh Mela: QR code jackets to help access ticketing app

In the run-up to the Kumbh Mela 2025, the Railways has introduced jackets with QR scanners for volunteers in a bid to digitise ticket bookings for passengers. "During the Mahakumbh, North Central Railway officials from Prayagraj division will be deployed on special duty donning a fluorescent green jacket embedded with a QR code at the back. Devotees can scan the QR code and download a mobile app – Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) – which will help them book tickets without having to wait in queues," the railway officials said. This is over and above 560 ticketing counters that will be capable of doling out 10 lakh tickets daily.

'Spurious' drugs worth nearly ₹6.6 crore seized in Kolkata

A large quantity of suspected spurious anti-cancer, anti-diabetic, and other drugs has been seized from Kolkata. The total market value of the drugs seized is estimated at approximately ₹6.6 crore. The seizure follows a joint investigation conducted by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), East Zone, and the Drugs Control Directorate, West Bengal, on a wholesale premises in Kolkata. The raid was carried out at the firm Care and Cure For You in Kolkata, according to the release issued by the Health Ministry on Tuesday.

Amit Patra takes additional charge as Director of IIT-KGP

Amit Patra, who is currently serving as the Director of Indian Institute of Technology, BHU (IIT-BHU), took over the additional charge as the Director of IIT-Kharagpur (IIT-KGP) on Tuesday, until the regular incumbent takes over. He took over charge from Virendra Kumar Tewari, Outgoing Director, IIT-KGP, who was a Professor in the institute's Department of Agricultural and Food Engineering. The IIT-KGP, set up in 1951, is one of the oldest IITs. Professor Patra is an alumnus of the institute. He completed his B.Tech., M.Tech. and Ph.D. from the IIT in 1984, 1986, and 1990, respectively. He had joined the institute as a faculty member at the Department of Electrical Engineering in 1987.

Cong. seeks immediate release of detained leaders in J&K

The Congress party on Tuesday criticised the authorities for adopting "repressive measures" to handle the protests in Katra, the base camp of Mata Vaishno Devi, and sought the immediate intervention of the Lieutenant-Governor to secure the release of detained leaders. The party emphasised the need to create a conducive atmosphere for dialogue. The Congress said that this step was crucial if the authorities were sincere about finding an amicable solution to the ongoing crisis. People have been agitating against the proposed Vaishno Devi ropeway project. J&K Pradesh Congress Committee president Tariq Hameed Karra criticised the administration for showing "unnecessary haste and repression".

Tiger leaves Kolkata zoo for Simlipal reserve in Odisha

The wild cat had kept the forest officials of West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha on their toes for three weeks; after capture, it is being safely returned along a special route without stoppages

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Tiger Zeenat, who had evaded all attempts at capture for almost three weeks since straying from Odisha, was finally on the way back from Kolkata to Simlipal on Tuesday. The tiger was captured in West Bengal on Sunday and is being returned after the paperwork was processed for the return.

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) had asked for its safe return to Odisha and sought its immediate release.

The tiger's long journey between three States of West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha had kept forest officials on their toes. It had entered West Bengal on December 19 and had travelled across three districts in south Bengal after multiple attempts at capture failed.

After capture, Zeenat was kept at the Alipore zoo, which is the biggest zoological park in West Bengal. A day after being tranquillised and caught, its vital signs were reportedly stable.



The National Tiger Conservation Authority had sought Zeenat's immediate return to Odisha. WEST BENGAL FOREST DEPARTMENT

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Gobind Sagar Bhardwaj, member secretary of the NTCA, said, "Her return process is under way, she will travel to Simlipal. She will be transported with proper security, and full protocol." A green corridor, a special route without stoppages, is being facilitated for the transport of the tiger. Zeenat had been relocated to Simlipal from Tadoba in Maharashtra to improve Odisha's tiger

population.

In the final hours before Zeenat was tranquillised, the situation was tense for 58-year-old Mrityunjay Biswas, Deputy Ranger of Sundarban Tiger Reserve, who had travelled with his team of four to help in capturing Zeenat.

With over 42 years of experience in tracking and capturing tigers, Mr. Biswas had been worried that Zeenat might meet the fate of a tiger that was brutally killed by villagers in 2018 in Jhargram district in south Bengal. In that case, it had been harder to track and capture the tiger because it was between elephant corridors.

Mr. Biswas, who has caught over 32 tigers in his life, and his team were roped in after multiple attempts to catch Zeenat failed. Zeenat had woken up within five minutes of being put in the van, said Mr. Biswas, relieved that both his team and the tiger were safe.

Bengal Special Task Force arrests two 'members' of Bangladeshi terror group

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

Two others who are suspected to be ABT members were held from the same district in December

The West Bengal Special Task Force (STF) arrested two persons suspected to belong to the Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), a militant group in Bangladesh, from Nowda in Murshidabad district on Monday.

This follows the recent arrest of two others suspected to be ABT members from the same district on December 18, along with nine others who were apprehended in other States.

According to the West Bengal Police, the ABT is a splinter group of the Bangladesh-based terrorist organisation Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen.

Police sources said the two suspected members arrested on Monday – 24-year-old Sajibul Islam and 26-year-old Mustakim

Mandal – are residents of Nowda's Durlabhpur village and Bhola village, respectively.

Mr. Islam, according to the police, is a cousin of Saad Radi, a Bangladeshi national who was arrested from Kerala in a coordinated inter-State police operation earlier this month. Mr. Mondal is believed to be Mr. Radi's friend.

West Bengal STF officials had said earlier that Mr. Radi was sent from Bangladesh to India by a close associate of the ABT chief to influence Indian youth, conduct recruit-

ment activities, and build sleeper cells. Mr. Radi was allegedly involved in setting up sleeper cells in Kerala, West Bengal, and Assam.

Mr. Islam and Mr. Mondal, Mr. Radi's alleged associates, were employed as contractual labourers and glassworkers.

They have been charged

with complaints of sheltering militants and being involved in terrorist activities.

"After Radi's arrest, we kept a close watch on the movement of his relatives and associates in Murshidabad," police sources said.

The police have sought custody of Mr. Islam and Mr. Mondal. They might be taken to a different State on transit remand as well, police sources said.

"Before we send anyone for deportation, we are sending teams to their self-

Delhi police to visit Assam, Bengal to verify documents of suspected Bangladeshis

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Continuing its action against "illegal" Bangladeshi immigrants in the capital, the Delhi Police sent multiple teams to Assam and West Bengal to verify documents of individuals whose nationalities they are doubtful of.

The move comes after the Delhi Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) ordered an intensive drive against "illegal" Bangladeshi immigrants living in Delhi on December 11, and directed the Chief Secretary and the police chief to launch a two-month special drive to identify and take strict action against such persons.

"Before we send anyone for deportation, we are sending teams to their self-

10 payloads of ISRO's POEM-4 module deployed successfully

Hemanth C.S.
SRIHARIKOTA

The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) on Tuesday said that it had facilitated the successful establishment and operationalisation of 10 hosted payloads from non-government entities (NGEs) on board the POEM-4 module of the PSLV-C60/SpaDeX mission.



ISRO's SPADEX Mission successfully lifted off from Sriharikota on Monday.

making this platform accessible, we are reducing entry barriers and enabling a wider range of entities to contribute to the space sector," Pawan Goenka, Chairman, IN-SPACe, said.

"At IN-SPACe, our role is to create opportunities for such collaborations and ensure that India's private sector can grow alongside advancements in space technology. Missions like these will be instrumental in capacity building by enabling NGEs to get their payloads space qualified, thus augmenting their future satellite launch missions," he added.

In total, 24 PS4-Orbital Experiment Module payloads were deployed on board the PSLV-C60 SpaDeX mission to support a wide array of scientific and technological endeavours.

ple police teams had been formed in each district to visit JJ colonies, labour chowks and unauthorised colonies to identify houses where migrant workers live. "We have made lists of such slums and unauthorised colonies where a large number of residents are migrants. Whoever seems doubtful is interrogated further and their documents verified," said the officer.

On Tuesday, another person was arrested from Delhi's Sarojini Nagar area, who allegedly did not possess documents to prove his Indian citizenship.

As of now, the police have screened close to 5,000 people and have sent over 30 people for deportation to the Foreigners Regional Registration Office.

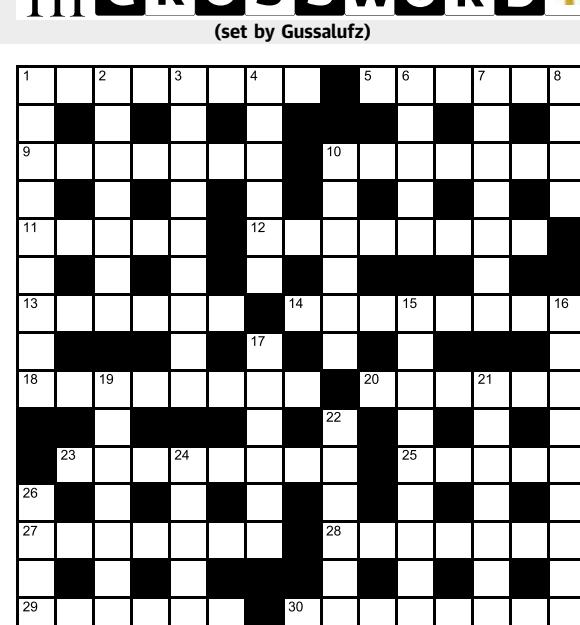
FAITH

Brahma's altar protected

A person with true bhakti is able to visualise Lord Narayana. What is this true bhakti? It is not contractual bhakti, where we offer a quid pro quo to the Lord, if some wish of ours is fulfilled. True bhakti remains the same whether we face problems, or whether we have successes in life. Suppose you make a hole in the bottom of a vessel and pour oil into it. The oil exits through the hole in a regular stream. Genuine bhakti is like that. It is a steady stream of devotion to God, said V.S. Karunakarachari in a discourse. Brahma, because of his bhakti, could visualise Vishnu. But once Brahma could not bring before his eyes the image of Vishnu, and became sorrowful. Vedanta Desika says Brahma was like a child crying for the moon.

Then an *asareeri* said to Brahma that he must do a hundred *asvamedha* yagas. If this were not possible, then he could do one *yaga* in Satyavrata Kshetra, that is Kanchi. Brahma came to Kanchi and began his penance. The rule is that the wife of the man performing the *yaga* must be with him. But Sarasvati had left Brahma because of a quarrel. So Brahma began the *yaga* with his other two wives – Gayatri and Savitri. When Sarasvati came to know of this, she was enraged, and took the form of a river and flowed towards Brahma's Vedic altar to destroy it. The fast moving river was called Vegavathi. Vishnu then reclined in her path, and served as a dam. Sarasvati was pacified and went back to Brahma. Because Vishnu served as a dam to the river, he is known as Vegavathi Sethu in this *kshetra*. In Tamil, the name was *Vegavathi anai*, which got shortened to *Vega anai*, and then became *Vekha anai*, which further became *Vekha*. So the *kshetra* became Thiruvekha.

TH CROSSWORD + 14371



- To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>
- SCAN TO PLAY**
- 1 King's chasing speculation largely implicating wife for everything (3,5)
13 According to Gussalufz, love died. (6)
14 Performer returns with cape in a desire to advance (8)
18 Commercial-free additional broadcast expansion (8)
20 Afraid to leave following reprimand (6)
23 Regularly find details, issues to think of (8)
25 Wow, Shakespearian tragedy after overtime! (5)
27 Spread a falsehood about page's daughter (7)
28 Forest ranger has rum (7)
29 Old puzzle lying around? Save the last third for flight (6)
30 Peasants polished poetic pieces (8)
- Down**
- Lacking cultivation? Produce dramatically after adding nitrogen and phosphorus (9)
 - More splendid runs after score crosses a large number (7)
 - Discover fruit and nut bar wrapper on abandoned route (6,3)
 - Substitute teacher's at Zoom gathering (6)
 - Pregnancy test? No, I am irregular (5)
 - After scrubbing soy meal, corroded key unlocks joint (7)
 - Revolution of planet overlooking southern area (4)
 - Divorce of uncle averted (6)
 - Dilapidated pad carrying dire threat? (9)
 - Rotten man stole small young fish (9)
 - Impersonated policeman, covering makeshift bomb (6)
 - Happened before Pluto crashed over the middle of Sweden? (3,2,2)
 - Cats loudly turning gaga (7)
 - Compose a sonnet describing spring, perhaps (6)
 - One gets to finish university later (5)
 - Meet in coffee house, exchanging bits from classified files (4)

SUDOKU



Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

IN BRIEF



Thomas Cook (India) faces cyberattack on IT infra

Travel services provider Thomas Cook (India) Ltd on Tuesday said there has been a cyber attack on its IT infrastructure and is working with security experts to support its investigation and take remedial action. In a regulatory filing to stock exchanges, the company stated: "Immediately upon becoming aware of the incident, we have taken the necessary steps to investigate and respond to the incident, including shutting down the affected systems."

Anthem Biosciences files papers for ₹3,395-crore IPO

Indian contract drugmaker Anthem Biosciences filed for a ₹3,395-crore (\$397 million) initial public offering (IPO), draft papers showed on Tuesday, at the fag end of what has been a red-hot year for companies listing on the stock market. Anthem, whose services include early-stage drug discovery and drug efficacy testing, said private equity firm True North and drugmaker DavosPharma are among investors who will sell shares in the IPO.

REUTERS

Indo Farm IPO subscribed six times in hours of bids opening

The initial public offer of Indo Farm Equipment Ltd got subscribed almost six times within hours of opening for bidding on Tuesday. The initial share sale received bids for 5,00,12,580 shares, as against 84,70,000 shares on offer, translating into 5.90 times subscription, as per NSE data till 11:57 hours. The retail individual investors' part fetched 8.54 times subscription, while the category for non-institutional investors got subscribed 7.61 times.

PTI

WhatsApp Pay can now extend UPI to all India users

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) said has removed the UPI user onboarding limit for WhatsApp Pay [third party app provider (TPA)], with immediate effect.

With this, WhatsApp Pay can now extend UPI services to its entire user base in India, NPCI said.

Phased expansion

Previously, NPCI had permitted WhatsApp Pay to expand its UPI user base in a phased manner.

WhatsApp Pay will have to continue to comply with all existing UPI guidelines applicable to existing third party app providers, NPCI said in a statement.

Small savings rates stay unchanged for January-March 2025

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The PPF rate will remain unchanged at 7.1%, a level it has been kept at since April 2020

The Centre on Tuesday decided to maintain status quo on the returns payable on small savings schemes for the January to March 2025 quarter, making it the fourth successive quarter that these rates have remained unchanged.

The interest rates on small savings schemes such as the Public Provident Fund (PPF) and National Savings Certificate (NSC) are reset each quarter as per a formula linked to the yields on government securities of similar maturities.

The government had raised the interest rates on most small savings

schemes through a series of hikes announced since the third quarter of 2022-23, cumulatively increasing the rates in the range of 70-250 basis points (bps). One basis point equals 0.01%.

The return on Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme, which is also tax-free like the PPF, was raised to 8.2% at the beginning of this year.

"Our vision is it should be 10 lakh businesses by FY28," he said. "Our vision is also to achieve \$100 billion in transactions by 2028," he added.

laws and company law," it further said.

"The company is not bound by the said DFS nor does the DFS have any impact on the company or create any restriction or liability on the company," it said, adding the company was seeking legal counsel to challenge SEBI's decision by filing appropriate legal proceedings.

Court cases

Kirloskar brothers Sanjay Kirloskar, CMD of pump manufacturer Kirloskar Brothers Ltd. (KBL) on one hand, and his brothers Atul Kirloskar and Rahul Kirloskar, who are leading

Injunction eyes \$100 bn transactions by 2028

Lalatendu Mishra

MUMBAI

Injunction Services Ltd, a joint venture between Tata Steel and SAIL, is planning to foray into the European market in 2025 apart from strengthening its base in the U.S., MD & CEO Vinaya Varma told *The Hindu*.

Today, about three lakh businesses are transacting on the injunction platform and the company is largely focused in India, Middle East, Africa, and U.K.

"Our vision is it should be 10 lakh businesses by FY28," he said. "Our vision is also to achieve \$100 billion in transactions by 2028," he added.

Kirloskar Oil Engine locks horns with SEBI on family settlement deed

Lalatendu Mishra

MUMBAI

In a new twist to the Kirloskar family dispute case, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has, vide a letter dated December 30, asked Kirloskar Oil Engines Ltd. to disclose the deed of family settlement (DFS) dated September 11, 2009, entered into among the members of the Kirloskar family in their personal capacity, under the SEBI LODR (listing obligations and disclosure requirements) regulations.

This was informed by Kirloskar Oil Engine in a filing with the exchanges.

The family dispute dates back to 2016 over a non-compete clause allegedly violated by KOEL

"The question of whether the DFS is binding on the company is pending before the Civil Court since 2018, and despite this SEBI has opined on matters that are sub-judice," the company said in the filing.

Further, SEBI's decision not only contains factual inaccuracies but is in complete ignorance of *inter alia* settled principles of contract law, corporate

a group of companies including Kirloskar Oil Engine, on the other, have been fighting court cases over the validity of a DFS.

The family dispute dates back to 2016 over a non-compete clause allegedly violated by Kirloskar Oil Engines Ltd. (KOEL) when they entered the pump's business which was the forte of KBL.

On September 11, 2009, a DFS was entered into which gave the ownership, management, and control of each branch of the Kirloskar family business to the parties specified in the settlement, according to court filings.

Six of eight infrastructure industries record a year-on-year rise, but six see a sequential decline in output levels; October's growth raised to 3.7%

Vikas Dhoot

NEW DELHI

Output in India's eight core infrastructure sectors that constitute about 40% of overall industrial production, grew at a four-month high pace of 4.3% in November, led by a 13% surge in cement, marking the sharpest rise in the key construction input's production in well over a year.

On a sequential basis, however, the Index of Core Industries (ICI) was down 3.3% from October levels to 156.8, with six of eight sectors recording a decline in production. Refinery products and coal were the only segments to see a rise in absolute output levels, hitting a four- and eight-month high, respectively.

The Commerce and Industry Ministry also revised upwards October's growth number for core sectors from 3.1% estimated earlier, to 3.7%. On a year-on-year basis, crude oil (-2.1%) and natural gas (-1.9%) output stayed in contractionary territory for the seventh and fifth month, respectively.

However, the extent of contraction was at a six-month low for crude oil, and a three-month high for natural gas.

Electricity generation rose 3.8% from last November levels, but was a sharp



Binding growth: Cement output has surged 13% in November, marking the sharpest rise in production in over a year. THE HINDU

12.9% below October's levels and in fact, was the weakest output recorded since December 2023. Steel output was up 4.8% from a year ago, but was 4.7% under October's levels. Fertiliser output expanded 2%, while refinery products were up 2.9% and coal production rose 7.5%.

Despite the double-digit growth in November, cement output was actually 5.5% lower than October and stood at a four-month low. "The cumulative growth rate of ICI during April to November, 2024-25 is 4.2% as compared to the corresponding period of last year," the Ministry said. Over the same period in 2023-24, the ICI has grown 8.7%.

The Ministry also revised the Index of Eight Core Industries for August to a 1.5% decline, as opposed to the 1.6% dip estimated as of last month and

the 1.8% decline originally estimated. August had marked the first contraction in core sectors' output in three and a half years.

"There has been a pick-up in infra activity as seen in government spending more on capex last month. Construction of homes also showed momentum, reflected in steady growth in steel and cement. We may expect the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) to grow around 4.5%-5% in November, with the festive demand," the Finance Ministry said in a statement, citing data released by the Controller General of Accounts.

Aditi Nayar, ICRA chief economist, said the core sector numbers partly reflect the fading impact of heavy rainfall in previous months. The sharp cement output growth helped, but came on a low base. "Looking ahead, we expect the IIP to grow by 5%-7% in November," she reckoned.

Capex recovers in November, fiscal gap at 52.5% of BE

Vikas Dhoot

NEW DELHI

The Union Government's fiscal deficit stood at about ₹8.5 lakh crore or 52.5% of the 2024-25 Budget Estimate at the end of November, up from 46.5% a month ago. The fiscal gap was 6.6% below the April to November 2023 figures.

The Centre's capital expenditure grew 21% in November after a weak trajectory between April and October, but the full year's ₹11.11 lakh crore target may be difficult to attain, analysts believed.

"Total expenditure incurred by the Government of India (GoI) is ₹27,41,002 crore or 56.9% of the Budget estimate 2024-25, of which ₹22,27,502 crore is on Revenue account, and ₹5,13,500 crore is on Capital account," the Finance Ministry said in a statement, citing data released by the Controller General of Accounts.

Revenue expenditure was up 7.8%, while capital spending was 12.3% lower than a year ago.

"The GoI's capex needs to expand by 65% year-on-year between December and March 2025, requiring a monthly run rate of ₹1.5 lakh crore to meet the Budget Estimate (BE), which appears increasingly daunting. We are apprehensive that the capex target will be missed by a margin of at least ₹1 lakh crore to ₹1.5 lakh crore," said Aditi Nayar, chief economist at rating firm ICRA.

GoI capex has to rise 65% from last year through Dec.-March, and hit ₹1.5 lakh cr. a month to meet target

On the receipts front, the Centre had met 59.1% of its BE for the year with inflows of over ₹18.94 lakh crore, with a little over ₹14.43 lakh crore coming as tax revenue.

"While corporate tax collections have been tepid, falling by 1% in April-November, income tax collections have expanded by 24%, although these trends may have been partly distorted by the timing of refunds. Unless large refunds are released in the latter part of the fiscal, income tax inflows may surpass the BE of ₹1.5 lakh crore, while corporation tax inflows may print in line or slightly lower than the target," Ms. Nayar reckoned.

The anticipated miss on the capex front would offset any shortfall on account of disinvestment and taxes, as well as the impact of the recent supplementary demand for grants, the ICRA economist said, estimating the full-year deficit to end up slightly lower than the 4.9% of GDP target for the year.

Between April and November this year, net tax revenues have grown just 0.5%, while non-tax revenues have risen around 50%, boosted by a hefty dividend from the Reserve Bank of India, ICRA noted.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	78,139	-0.14
US Dollar	85.64	-0.14
Gold	78,950	-0.50
Brent oil	74.63	0.28

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2528.65	-63.70
Adani Ports	1231.10	12.60
Apollo Hosp	7296.35	-17.90
Asian Paints	2281.35	-6.90
Axis Bank	1064.70	-5.25
Bajaj Auto	8798.60	-18.70
Bajaj Finance	6823.00	-65.25
Bharat Elec	293.15	8.25
Bharti Airtel	1587.75	0.85
BPCL	292.45	-0.85
Britannia Ind	4762.75	-36.70
Cipla	1529.75	7.60
Coal India	384.15	6.25
Dr Reddy's Lab	1388.50	11.60
Eicher Motors	4821.90	-33.90
Grasim Ind	2442.70	-0.80
HCL Tech	1917.40	-11.55
HDFC Bank	1772.85	-5.05
HDFC Life	617.05	-0.35
Hero MotoCorp	4160.60	-27.00
Hindalco	602.45	1.35
Hind Unilever	2326.85	-16.65
ICICI Bank	1281.65	-13.00
IndusInd Bank	960.15	-3.35
Infosys	1880.00	-26.00
ITC	483.65	6.65
JSW Steel	901.50	2.55
Kotak Bank	1786.05	45.35
L&T	3607.65	28.70
M&M	3007.10	4.20
Maruti Suzuki	1058.40	59.45
NestleIndia	2170.05	10.15
NTPC	333.35	1.95
ONGC	239.25	6.60
PowerGrid Corp	308.70	1.15
Reliance Ind	1215.45	4.75
SBI Life	1390.40	-13.45
State Bank	794.95	6.65
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2889.15	-29.85
Sun Pharma	1886.35	2.45
TataConsumerProduct	914.70	11.20
Tata Motors	740.15	6.50
Tata Steel	138.05	1.17
TCS	4094.80	-64.00
Tech Mahindra	1706.20	-34.65
Titan	3253.15	-4.20
Trent Ltd.	7123.35	169.00
UltraTech Cement	11426.35	138.00
Wipro	301.85	-1.85

EXCHANGE RATES

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

RARE HONOUR

Bumrah named captain of Cricket Australia's Test team of the year



Cricket Australia named Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah as the captain of its Test team of the year, which also features Yashasvi Jaiswal. The others include Alex Carey, Josh Hazlewood, Ben Duckett, Joe Root and Harry Brook, Rachin Ravindra and Matt Henry, Kamindu Mendis and Keshav Maharaj.

UPSET WIN

Ipswich stuns Chelsea for first home win this season



Relegation-threatened Ipswich beat Chelsea 2-0 on Monday to win at home for the first time in the Premier League this season while Aston Villa and Brighton drew 2-2. **The results:** Aston Villa 2 (Watkins 36-pen, Rogers 47) drew with Brighton 2 (Adingra 12, Lamprey 81); Ipswich 2 (Delap 12-pen, Hutchinson 53) bt Chelsea 0.

ECSTASY & AGONY

Isak continues dream run as Newcastle pile misery on United



Alexander Isak scored for the sixth straight Premier League game as Newcastle beat Manchester United 2-0 at Old Trafford on Monday to condemn Ruben Amorim's side to its worst home run in the top tier since the 1970s. **The result:** Manchester United 0 lost to Newcastle 2 (Isak 4, Joelinton 19).

PHENOMENAL FEAT

Belgian ultra-runner Dosogne ran a marathon every day last year



Ultra-runner Hilde Dosogne ran a marathon every day in 2024, covering 15,444 km and raising €60,000 for breast cancer research. The 55-year-old Belgian, who overcame injuries, illness, and mental strain during the course of her feat, is aiming to become the first woman to be officially recognised by Guinness for this achievement.

India's willow-wielders have to find a way through

Rohit and Kohli need to perform in Sydney; past tours of Australia have forced a closure to pedigree Indian stars; Pant has to strike a balance between his cavalier approach and team's prospects

INDIA IN AUS

K.C. Vijaya Kumar

SYDNEY

Late on Monday, the light dimmed on the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). Seagulls descended on the turf, cleaning staff were busy removing the waste that a massive sporting contest tends to generate, and Australian cricketers lingered around, savouring their 184-run triumph against India in the fourth Test.

Marnus Labuschagne lay sprawled on the grass while a child scampered around him. There was laughter and giggles. If it was rainbow and sunshine for Pat Cummins and his men, there was sadness trailing the Indian unit. On

two previous tours, the Border-Gavaskar Trophy was secured. This time around, the visitors are trailing 1-2, and hoping to draw level in the final Test commencing at Sydney on Friday.

Australia remains a tough opponent in its backyard, and this was evident on the concluding day of the fourth Test. India was cruising at 121 for three, and this after a middle session in which Yashasvi Jaiswal and Rishabh Pant stabilised the second innings.

Suddenly, violating his own self-imposed restraint against the previous 103 deliveries he faced, Pant launched a lofted shot off Travis Head and the ball just found an alert Mitchell Marsh near the ropes. It was the game's tipping

point. From 121 for four, India slid to 155 all out.

The beauty of Test cricket is that it also offers space for a stalemate. However, in these frenetic times of winning at all costs, a draw is seen as an aberration. But a draw was indeed possible for India and that hinged on Jaiswal and Pant stretching their fourth-wicket partnership. It was not to be. An old truism is that batters who are set to cash in.

When Kapil got the axe
In 1984, following rush-of-blood shots by Kapil Dev and Sandeep Patil against England at Delhi, the selectors wielded the axe. It was obviously an extreme measure and one that will not find an echo in these days of letting a player reveal his

natural vibe. Still, Pant has to find a method in his madness.

If youngsters like Jaiswal and Pant did the hard yards but slipped at the final hurdle, the middling performance of veterans like skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli derailed the team. In the past, a tour of Australia has forced a closure to pedigree Indian stars. Dilip Vengsarkar felt this effect after the 1991-92 tour. It was the same for Rahul Dravid and V.V.S. Laxman following their 2011-12 visit.

Down Under, either legacies are built or retirements get hastened. After a long gap, Kohli had a hundred in the first Test at Perth while Rohit's last came against England at Dharamsala in March last year. Their drought in Tests often gets camouflaged through their flamboyance in limited overs cricket. Having bowed out of T20Is, while still being in the mix for Tests and ODIs, the captain and his predecessor need to perform.

Sadly, the efforts of Jasprit Bumrah, Nitish Kumar Reddy and Washington Sundar in the fourth Test went in vain. It is time the batting clicks. K.L. Rahul has been an exception but he too could not prosper at the MCG. Runs on the board is a non-negotiable requirement and India's willow-wielders have to respect that. There may be speculation about the selectors' cold-tap on the shoulder, but for now Sydney awaits.



Turning point: Pant's attempted big shot off Head cost India dearly in the Melbourne Test. AP

Vaishali advances to World blitz quarterfinals

Sports Bureau

R. Vaishali moved into the quarterfinals of the women's World blitz chess championship in New York, topping the league stage. She was the only Indian to make it to knockout rounds.

Vaishali did that in style, as she topped the 108-player field by one full point. She finished with 9.5 points, one more than top seed Lei Tingjie of China.

Vaishali, seeded 21st, will take on Zhu Jiner in the quarterfinals. Koneru Humpy was unlucky to miss out, as she finished ninth: only the top eight progressed.

Among the other Indian women, Divya Deshmukh and Vantika Agrawal finished 18th and 19th respectively while D. Harika was 22nd. It was a disappoint-



make the knockout were the top seed Magnus Carlsen, fresh from his jeans controversy, Fabiano Caruana, Alireza Firouzja and Ian Nepomniachtchi, who was ranked first when the tie-breaks were applied.

Indians' standings: Open: R. Pragnanandhaa (8.5 points) 23rd spot; Raunak Sadhwani (8) 46; Arjun Erigaisi (7) 64; Aravindh Chithambaram (7) 68; V. Pranav (7) 67. Women: R. Vaishali (9.5) 1; Koneru Humpy (8) 9; Divya Deshmukh (7) 18; Vantika Agrawal (7) 19; D. Harika (7) 22.

The Qualifiers: Open: 1-8; Ian Nepomniachtchi, Volodar Murzin (both FIDE); Fabiano Caruana, Hans Niemann Moke, Wesley So (all USA); Magnus Carlsen (Nor); Duda Jan-Krysztof (Pol); Alireza Firouzja (Fra).

Women 1-8: R. Vaishali (Ind); Lei Tingjie, Wenjun Ju, Zhu Jiner (all Chin); Kateryna Lagno, Valentina Gutina (Both FIDE); Carissa Yip (USA) Bibisara Assaubayeva (Kaz).

ing show by the Indians in the open event. The best placed among them was R. Pragnanandhaa, Vaishali's younger brother who was placed 23rd. The highest-seeded Indian, Arjun Erigaisi, ended up in the 64th position.

The open event was a fiercely contested affair in the league stage, as 10

players tied for the first spot, scoring 9.5 points each. Among the eight to

AUSTRALIAN OPEN
January 12-26
Melbourne

ICC CHAMPIONS TROPHY
February 19-March 9
Pakistan and UAE

WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS TOKYO 2025
September 13-21
Tokyo

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2025

- 2025 Dakar Rally | **January 3-17** | Saudi Arabia
- India Open Badminton | **January 14-19** | New Delhi
- ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup | **January 18-February 2** | Malaysia
- Super Bowl LIX | **February 9** | New Orleans, Louisiana (USA)
- Women's Premier League | **February-March**
- Formula One season opener – Australian GP | **March 16** | Melbourne
- All England Open Badminton | **March 11-16** | Birmingham
- Masters Tournament | **April 10-13** | Augusta, USA
- PGA Championship | **May 15-18** | Charlotte, USA
- French Open | **May 25-June 8** | Paris
- UEFA Champions League final | **May 31** | Allianz Arena, Munich
- World Test Championship final | **June 11-15** | London
- US Open (golf) | **June 12-15** | Pennsylvania, USA
- India's Test tour of England | **June 20-August 4**
- Tour de France | **July 5-27**
- The Open (golf) | **July 13-20** | Royal Portrush Golf Club, Northern Ireland
- US Open (tennis) | **August 25-September 7** | New York City
- WTA Finals | **November 1-8** | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- ATP Finals | **November 9-16** | Turin, Italy
- Davis Cup Finals | **November 18-23** | Bologna, Italy
- Billie Jean King Cup | **November**
- Badminton World Tour Finals | **December 10-14** | Hangzhou, China
- FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup | **December** | India

WIMBLEDON | **June 30-July 13** | London

ICC WOMEN'S ODI WORLD CUP | **August-September** | India

Bengal regains the Santosh Trophy

Sports Bureau
HYDERABAD

West Bengal re-asserted its supremacy in the Santosh Trophy national football championship, clinching the title for a record 33rd time with a 1-0 win over Kerala in the final of the 78th edition at the GMC Balayogi Stadium here on Tuesday.

The match-winner came through Robi Hansda in added time of the second-half

when he picked up a header from Aditya Thapa into the box and slotted the ball in from close range.

Robi Hansda bagged the Tulasidas Balaram award for player-of-the-final and also the Peter Thangaraj award for player-of-the-championship.

Both the awards carried a cash prize of ₹1 lakh each were given by the Telangana State Government.

The result: Final: West Bengal 1 (Robi Hansda 90+4) bt Kerala 0.



Staggering! Bengal won its 33rd title. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Hyderabad Toofans opens account with shootout win over Delhi Pipers



Delighted bunch: Hyderabad Toofans players celebrate a strike. M. VEDHAN

HIL**Uthra Ganeshan**
OURKELA

Two goals in a space of one minute capitalising on defensive blunders by Delhi S.P. Pipers and holding nerve in a tense sudden death helped Hyderabad Toofans get its first point after the teams were tied 2-2 at the end of regulation time in the Hockey India League at the Birsu Munda Stadium here on Tuesday.

Contrasting
Between two teams that played contrastingly different styles, the strong defensive and counter-attack-

ing play of Hyderabad appeared to have the upper hand against a Delhi team that seems to be lacking firepower up front but continue to play attacking hockey, relying on its youngsters Dilraj Singh and Aditya Lalage with Shamsher Singh and Rajkumar Pal bringing in the experience.

Gameplan
But with Gonzalo Peillat in its ranks, Hyderabad's priorities were always clear - get into the circle, earn penalty corners. It got seven of those but could only convert two - both earned within 60 seconds of each other in the 10th minute and slammed

playing back deeper, managed to hold the Delhi forwards before Corey Weyer's precise diagonal pass bisected the field to Jake Whetton who put Dilraj through and the youngster lifted into the net in the 20th minute to pull one back.

Rennie to the rescue
The game picked up tempo post the break with the teams exchanging control and possession but neither could make their chances count in by Peillat and Amandeep Lakra respectively - to go up 2-0 early on.

To Delhi's credit, it did not go into panic mode. Although both the PCs conceded were due to defensive lapses, the team took the opportunity at the first time-out to recover and regroup, gradually pushing forward from both flanks to put pressure on the Hyderabad defence.

Peillat, Devinder Walimiki and Zachary Wallace, playing back deeper, managed to hold the Delhi forwards before Corey Weyer's precise diagonal pass bisected the field to Jake Whetton who put Dilraj through and the youngster lifted into the net in the 20th minute to pull one back.

minute. Two PCs in the dying minutes of the game for Hyderabad went waste as well as teams entered the shootout.

Dixon denies Yamasaki
Having won its previous outing in shootout, Delhi would have fancied its chances but with the scores tied 4-4, it came down to Wallace and Koji Yamasaki respectively but while the Englishman was on target, Yamasaki was denied by Dominic Dixon.

The result:
Hyderabad Toofans 2 (Amandeep Lakra 10, Gonzalo Peillat 11) drew with DSGP 2 (Dilraj Singh 20, Gareth Furlong 49). Toofans won 5-4 via shootout.

IN BRIEF



Mhatre becomes youngest to score 150 in List A cricket

Mumbai's Ayush Mhatre set a new world record for the youngest player to score 150 in List A cricket during the Vijay Hazare Trophy match against Nagaland at Ahmedabad on Tuesday. At 17 years and 168 days, Mhatre broke the previous record set by Yashasvi Jaiswal (17 years and 291 days, Mumbai vs. Jharkhand, 2019).

Struggling Plymouth sacks coach Rooney

Wayne Rooney was fired as Plymouth Argyle coach on Tuesday after just seven months in charge of the struggling Championship team. The 39-year-old former England and Manchester United striker was hired in May and departs with Plymouth last in the English second tier with four wins in 23 games this season. His final game was a 2-0 loss to Oxford United on Sunday.

Parikshit-Dhakshinwar pair stuns Agafonov and Lomakin

Parikshit Somani combined with Dhakshinwar Suresh to knock out the top seeds Egor Agafonov and Grigoriy Lomakin 6-3, 6-4 in the doubles pre-quarterfinals of the \$25,000 ITF men's tennis tournament at the Indore Tennis Club on Tuesday. The singles first round will start on Wednesday, and Dhakshinwar will play Lomakin in the first round.

The results: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Parikshit Somani & Dhakshinwar Suresh bt Egor Agafonov & Grigoriy Lomakin (Kaz) 6-3, 6-4; Yuichiro Inui (Jpn) & Sidharth Rawat bt Raghu Jaisinghani & Madhwin Kamath 6-1, 6-4; Sai Kartee Reddy & Eric Vanshelboim (Ukr) bt Nitin Kumar Sinha & Manish Sureshkumar 6-4, 6-4; Chirag Duhan & Dev Javia bt Arthav Neema & Yash Yadav 6-2, 6-2; Sergey Fomin (Uzb) & Maxim Zhukov bt Siddhant Banthia & Vishnu Vardhan 6-0 (retired); Ishaque Eqbal & Aryan Shah bt Florent Bax (Fra) & Vladislav Orlov (Ukr) 6-3, 6-4; Yuri Dzhavakian (Ukr) & Aryan Lakshman bt Yash Chaurasia & Jagmeet Singh 3-6, 7-6(4), 10-8; Mathys Erhard (Fra) & Alastair Gray (GBR) bt S.D. Prajwal Dev & Adil Kalyanpur 6-4, 3-6, [10-6].

LIVE TELECAST

Hockey: HIL, DD Sports, Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 3 (SD & HD) & LIV, 8.15 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 11 p.m.
New Zealand vs Sri Lanka: 3rd T20I, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, Prime Video, 5.45 a.m. (Thursday)

van Doren, Alexander Hendricxx set their sights on winning HIL



HOCKEY

Uthra Ganesan
ROURKELA

They got together playing for the national youth side, got into the Belgium team at the same time and have been around for more than a decade. It's no surprise that Arthur van Doren and Alexander Hendricxx can complete each other's sentences as smoothly as they exchange the ball on field, manning the Belgian defence.

The understanding and comfort they share has played a big role in Belgium's dominance in world hockey over the years and now, as teammates at Vedanta Kalinga Lancers at the Hockey India League, the duo is keen to add the league title to an already full trophy cabinet.

"The HIL," they laugh in unison when asked if there is anything that's still missing. "At this point, I think we have been lucky to win all tournaments in international hockey once. Obviously we would love to win them again but I was here in 2017 (with UP Wizards) so it would be good to win this too," van Doren said *The Hindu*.

Hendricxx, coming for the first time, agreed.

Ton-up Solanki stars in Baroda's win

Teen sensation Suryavanshi's swashbuckling 71 goes in vain for Bihar; left-arm spinner Rathva claims four for 28 for the victor

HAZARE TROPHY

V.V. Subrahmanyam
HYDERABAD

Vishnu Solanki's brilliant century (109, 102b, 12x4, 2x6) fashioned Baroda's 36-run win over Bihar and kept the team in the hunt in the Vijay Hazare Trophy one-day championship at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium here on Tuesday.

Put in to bat, Baroda was in a spot of bother at 88 for four in 21 overs.

Openers Shashwat Rawat (24) and Ninad Rathva (seven) as well as Atit Sheth (36, 39b, 4x4) and captain Krunal Pandya (eight) back in the pavilion in the wake of a disciplined bowling performance led by pacer Amod Yadav who eventually finished with 4/38.

Wicketkeeper-batter Solanki's impressive knock also saw him hit a six to reach his 50 and celebrate that with two beautifully timed fours in one over off leg-spinner Himanshu Singh. And, he celebrated his century with the now-



Vital knock: Solanki's 109 contained 12 fours and a couple of sixes.

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

familiar 'Pushpa' style. Southpaw Shivalik Sharma's handy contribution (39, 46b, 3x4) was the other major factor which helped Baroda post a challenging total of 277 before being bowled out in 49 overs.

The genius of the 13-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi (71, 42b, 8x4, 4x6) was on full display in the chase. With an age-defying range of strokes and most of his sixes clearing the boundary by a distance, Suryavanshi threatened to take the game away before he fell to the guiles of the ex-

perienced left-arm spinner Krunal as he went for another big heave and was caught brilliantly, via a relay effort, by Shivalik near the mid-wicket fence in the 13th over as Bihar slipped to 100/2.

Barring captain Sakibul Gani (43, 82b, 2x4) and a belligerent Bipin Saurabh (40, 42b, 2x4, 3x6), the rest of the Baroda batters clearly struggled once the run-flow was choked, forcing them to play poor strokes. Left-arm spinner Rathva finished with an impressive four-wicket haul (4/28).

VIJAY HAZARE FIFTH-ROUND SCORES



Abhishek Sharma scored 170 in Punjab's win over Saurashtra. FILE PHOTO: VIJAY SONEJI

Group-A: Jaipur: Goa 182 in 29.2 overs (Ishaan Gadekar 55, Mukhtar Hussain 3/22, Avinov Choudhury 4/28) bt Assam 173/8 in 30 overs (Sumit Ghadigaonkar 50). **Toss:** Assam; **Points:** Goa 4(12), Assam 0(4).

Odisha 162 in 24.5 overs (Abhishek Raut 40, Anukul Roy 3/19, Supriyo Chakraborty 3/23) lost to Jharkhand 164/3 in 22.3 overs (Utkarsh Singh 91 n.o.).

Toss: Jharkhand; **Points:**

Jharkhand 4(12), Odisha 0(8).

Uttarakhand 178/9 in 31 overs (Kunal Chanda 70, Anshul Kamboj 4/22) lost to Haryana 181/8 in 30 overs (Nishant Sindhu 46). **Toss:** Haryana; **Points:**

Haryana 4(16), Uttarakhand 0(8).

Manipur 95 in 26.4 overs (Hemang Patel 5/22) lost to Gujarat 96/2 in 12.3 overs (Aarya Dasai 57 n.o.). **Toss:** Gujarat; **Points:** Gujarat 4(20), Manipur 0(0).

Group-B: Mumbai: Meghalaya 223 in 48.2 overs (Nishanta Chakraborty 101, Arpit Bhatewara 66, Y. Sandee 5/28) lost to Andhra 228/0 in 29.3 overs (Srikar Bharat 107 n.o., Ashwin Hebbar 108 n.o.). **Toss:** Andhra; **Points:** Andhra 4(16), Meghalaya 0(0).

Sikkim 234/8 in 50 overs (Parth Palawat 64, Ankur Dabholkar 40, Pradeep Dadhe 3/45) lost to Maharashtra 238/2 in 34 overs (Om Bhosale 94 n.o., Siddhesh Veer 64, Nikhil Naik 46 n.o.). **Toss:**

Maharashtra; **Points:** Maharashtra 4(20), Sikkim 0(0).

Group-C: Ahmedabad: Pondicherry 372/9 in 50 overs (Neyan Shyam Kangayan 106, Jashwanth Shreeram 76, Sidak Singh 46, Ankit Sharma 42, Nabam Abo 3/65, Nabam Jos 4/59) bt Arunachal Pradesh 181 in 47.4 overs (Aman Khan 6/30). **Toss:** Arunachal Pradesh; **Points:** Pondicherry 4(12), AP 0(0).

Karnataka 320/8 in 50 overs (Mayank Agarwal 124, R. Smaran 83, C.V. Milind 3/66) lost to Hyderabad 322/7 in 49.4 overs (Tilak Varma 99, A. Varun Gowd 109 n.o.). **Toss:** Karnataka; **Points:** Hyderabad 4(12), Karnataka 0(16).

Punjab 424/5 in 50 overs (Abhishek Sharma 170, Prabhhsimran Singh 125, Anmol Malhotra 48 n.o., Sanvir Singh 40 n.o., Pranav Karia 4/59) bt Saurashtra 367 in 50 overs (Harvik Desai 59, Arpit Vasavada 104, Jaydev Unadkat 48, Sanvir Singh 3/37). **Toss:** Saurashtra; **Points:** Punjab 4(16), Saurashtra 0(12).

Mumbai 403/7 in 50 overs (Angkrish Raghuvaran 56, Ayush Mhatre 181, Shardul Thakur 73, Dip Borah 3/87) bt Nagaland 214/9 in 50 overs (Sedezhalie

Rupero 53, J. Suchith 104, Shardul Thakur 3/17). **Toss:** Nagaland; **Points:** Mumbai 4(12), Nagaland 0(0).

Group-D: Vizianagaram: Jammu & Kashmir 377/6 in 50 overs (Vivrant Sharma 57, Shubham Khajuria 60, Abdul Samad 112, Lone Nasir 72) bt Mizoram 209 in 42.2 overs (Agni Chopra 75, Abid Mushtaq 5/36). **Toss:** Mizoram; **Points:** J&K 4(6), Mizoram 0(2).

Chandigarh 271 in 49.3 overs (Manan Vohra 44, Shivam Bhamori 63, Shivam Mavi 4/45) lost to Uttar Pradesh 275/6 in 46.5 overs (Abhishek Goswami 50, Aryan Juyal 116). **Toss:** UP; **Points:** UP 4(14), Chandigarh 0(6).

Visakhapatnam: Tamil Nadu 256 in 48.4 overs (Tushar Raheja 75, Andre Siddarth 40, S. Mohamed Ali 48, Darshan Nalkande 6/55) lost to Vidarbha 257/4 in 43.5 overs (Karun Nair 111 n.o.). **Toss:** Vidarbha; **Points:** Vidarbha 4(16), TN 0(10).

Group-E: Hyderabad: Baroda 277 in 49 overs (Vishnu Solanki 109, Amod Yadav 4/38) bt Bihar 241/9 in 50 overs (Vaibhav Suryavanshi 71, Sakibul Gani 43, Bipin Saurabh 40, Ninad Rathva 4/28). **Toss:** Baroda 4(12), Bihar 0(4).

Bengal 206/9 in 50 overs (Pradipta Pramanik 74, MD Nidheesh 3/46) bt Kerala 182 in 46.5 overs (Salman Nizar 49, Sayan Ghosh 5/33). **Toss:** Kerala; **Points:** Bengal 4(14), Kerala 0(2). Delhi 306/6 in 50 overs (Arpit Rana 41, Sanat Sangwan 54, Tejasvi Dahiya 114, Sumit Mathur 47 n.o.) bt Tripura 242 in 49.2 overs (Sridam Paul 64, Mandip Singh 46, Bikramjeet Debnath 45, Ishant Sharma 3/5, Prince Yadav 4/53). **Toss:** Tripura; **Points:** Delhi 4(12), Tripura 0(6).

Deepti leaps to fifth among ODI bowlers



CRICKET

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DUBAI

India off-spinner Deepthi Sharma climbed a spot to enter the top five in the latest ICC women's ODI ranking for bowlers following her match-winning performances in the recently-concluded series against the West Indies at home.

Deepti, who is fifth now, has 665 rating points and is marginally behind fourth-placed South Africa's Marianné Kapp (677 rating points).

The 27-year-old made

headlines, taking eight wickets in two matches, including six for 31 in the last game as India completed a clean sweep in the three-match series in Vadodara.

Among batters, Jemimah Rodrigues (537 rating points) is closing in on a top-20 as she has jumped four spots to 22nd thanks to scores of 29 and 52 during the series.

Richa moves up

The big-hitting Richa Ghosh (13 not out and 23 not out) has moved seven spots to 41st (448 rating points), with Chinelle Henry's half-century in the third ODI leading to a 21-

spot leap to 65th (349 rating points).

However, charismatic India opener Smriti Mandhana (720 rating points), who scored two half-centuries in the series, has dropped one place to third and trails South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt (773) and Chamari Athapaththu (733).

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur has dropped three places to 13th.

Hayley Matthews' seventh ODI century in Vadodara has helped the West Indies opener climb six places to seventh in the ICC Women's Batting Rankings (733).

The 27-year-old made

the headlines, taking eight wickets in two matches, including six for 31 in the last game as India completed a clean sweep in the three-match series in Vadodara.

Kyrgios lost on his return from injury.

Former world No. 1 Djokovic, who is chasing a record 25th Grand Slam crown in January in Melbourne, eased to a 6-3, 6-3 victory over wildcard Rini Hijikata.

The 37-year-old Serb broke Hijikata once in the first set and twice in the second for a comfortable 74-minute win.

Djokovic, now ranked seven in the world, was all business against the young Australian and always looked in control as he set up a second-round clash with fellow veteran Gael Monfils.

"To start the new season with a win is obviously very important," said Djokovic, who is pursuing an unprecedented 11th Australian Open title.

"But Hijikata was really good tonight and he made me work for it."

Australian firebrand Kyrgios lost in three tight

sets in his first singles match since June, 2023.

"He did some good things, he played with confidence."

The Frenchman, who has risen from 205 in the world at the start of 2024 to his current ranking of 31, fired down 36 aces.

Women's world No. 1 Sabalenka kickstarted her bid to win the Australian Open for a third consecutive time with a straight-forward win after a sluggish start.

The Belarusian appeared bothered by the high humidity on Pat Rafter Arena in Brisbane, particularly during an error-strewn first set against Reanna Zarazua.

Kyrgios played and won in the doubles with Djokovic on Monday.

"Playing Nick here wasn't a good match-up for me," the 21-year-old Perrićard said, asked about playing Kyrgios in front of

his home crowd.

"He did some good things, he played with confidence."

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Smith still shows the hunger to remodel his beloved art

His trigger movements are seldom the same in two successive Tests, if not successive innings, and he loves to mix things up for various well thought out reasons; the 35-year-old has 'found his hands again' and has already scored two sensational centuries in the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy

R. Kaushik

Even those with only a cursory interest in Steve Smith's international career will be aware that he started his days in Test cricket as a leg-spinner, more than 14 and a half years ago against Pakistan at Lord's. That he batted at No. 8 and No. 9 respectively on his Test debut, and didn't move up into the top half of the batting order until March 2013, by which time he had played for Australia for close to three years.

The right-hander's first foray in the top six netted him 92, against India in Mohali. That cemented his position as a specialist batter who occasionally bowled leg-spin. So occasionally, that in the last five years since he returned from a long ban following his involvement in Sandpapergate in South Africa in early 2018, he's bowled only 20.5 overs for two wickets in the five-day game.

Smith's status as among the three or four most pre-eminent batters of his generation is well established. Full of quirks and unique mannerisms that coaches across the world urge their wards to steer clear of copying, he has found his own happy medium through which he makes runs. Not attractive runs - seldom attractive runs, actually - but effective, match-saving, match-turning runs. He is a mere 38 short of completing 10,000 runs in Test cricket, boasts 34 centuries, including two in the last fortnight against India, and averages a smashing 56.28, the mark of an all-time great, no matter in which era he plies his wares.

Quintessential

Of all things quintessential Smith, eccentric movements and elaborate leaves included, the most crucial element to his batting are his hands. That might sound silly, considering that without 'hands', batters can't bat. But Smith's hands are the stuff of folklore. When he says he has found his hands, oppositions beware. It loosely translates to, 'I am feeling good about the feel of the bat in my hands, here I come'.

When Smith has claimed to have found his hands, the runs come automatically. And in a torrent. Before the 2017-18 Ashes when he spoke about re-finding his hands, his average was an astonishing 137.40. Prior to that, in 2015-16, he boasted averages of 214 and 131 in successive series on rediscovering his hands. So, when Pat Cummins pronounced in Perth, ahead of the first Test against India, that Smith's hands too had come with him to the Western Australian capital, there was good reason for the Indians to start wondering what carnage lay in store.

To their good fortune, while the hands came to Perth, the runs did not. Not to Perth, nor to the Adelaide Oval, the venue of the pink-ball Test. His scores in the first three innings were 0 (trapped leg before, first ball, by Jasprit Bumrah), 17 and 2. The famous hands, eh? Where were they?

Very much with Smith, as it turned out. Even when the runs weren't coming - and one of those dismissals was caught down leg, one of the unluckiest ways for a batter to be dismissed - Smith didn't fret or fume. He wasn't anxious, he wasn't seized of the need to lay bat on ball, to spend long hours wondering when the big one was coming. After all, at the end of the Adelaide Test, he had gone 18 months and 24 innings without a hundred. For a serial century-maker, that wasn't just unusual, it was unprecedented.

But Smith was insistent that he was happy with his batting. With how he was hitting the ball in the nets. He was adamant that there was nothing to worry about, that it was only a matter of time before the big runs came. Not that anyone in the Australian camp was worrying. They knew from experience that if Smith said he was feeling good about his batting, that was it. Tomorrow, if not today.

That tomorrow came at the Gabba in Brisbane when he ticked over beautifully after a terribly scratchy start when Akash Deep could have had his number at least a dozen times. There were numerous plays and misses as Smith drove optimistically and only connected with thin air. The uninitiated might have wondered what this slight figure was doing with a bat when all he was doing was missing the ball. Then, something clicked and the Smith of old, dangerous and fluid, resurfaced dramatically.

With Travis Head for company, Smith went about systematically dismantling India's best. From 75 for three, the two added 241 for the fourth wicket to bat India out of the game. The left-handed Head was brutal, punishing, his willow



AFP



AFP

cutting scything arcs; the right-handed Smith was more stately if not anymore orthodox. But gradually, you could see the timing returning, the fluency of his jerky movements making its presence felt, the bat making a sweet sound as the ball pinged off of it, the feet moving freely without the stutters and stumbles and multiple trigger movements that are the clearest giveaways that Smith is not firing on all cylinders.

Smith came to Brisbane with a completely different batting set-up - the back and across movement was so pronounced that he ended up almost outside his off-stump, unafraid to expose his leg-stump though bowlers have started to target that sometimes open piece of real estate more and more frequently - and unsuccessfully - in the recent past. The left leg opened up just a little so that he didn't end up playing around the front pad, so that he could access areas on both sides of the pitch. It seemed knee jerk, a panic reaction to the three low scores in the first two Tests, but that was far from the case.

This new set-up was a part of the larger

plan, a plan that he took only a few days to put into practice. Smith's trigger movements are seldom the same in two successive Tests, if not successive innings, and he loves to mix things up for various well thought out reasons.

"I've changed my set-up pretty much every game I've played for the last 15 years, it's nothing new to me," he agrees. "I try to adapt, figure out the best way to play for each surface that I'm facing. Clearly, this one (at the Gabba) was a pretty bouncy track, so I was batting out of my crease a little bit to get at the bowler, going across my stumps, and leaving my left leg a little bit open. Perhaps when I've been doing my double trigger, I was getting my left leg a little bit closed and those balls that are skidding, I've struggled to get my bat down in time. But today, my movements were good today. I felt like I was moving into the ball nicely."

One of the tangible issues a professional sportsperson grapples with is advancing age. Sometimes, that might have nothing to do with performances, but age does come into play when one

embarks on making these subtle but significant changes.

Ask Smith if 35 makes it a little more difficult to usher in adjustments and he remarks, "Not really harder. I've been doing it for so long. If I want to change a few different things, it doesn't take me long to do it. Sometimes, I do it in the middle of an innings. That's part of adapting to situations and scenarios that are put in front of you and having the confidence to do it. I've played for a long time and I know what I'm trying to do out there most of the times."

It is this honest self-assessment and self-realisation that has pretty much insulated Smith from the undulating highs and lows that some of his peers, the other members of the Fab Four, haven't been able to avoid. Smith was bracketed in that exclusive club with Joe Root, Kane Williamson and Virat Kohli and while he didn't exhibit the same flair as the other three, few are more blood-minded or committed to the cause of scoring runs than the former Australian captain whose career was blighted by what happened in Cape Town more than six and a half years back.

That, after having served out his penance which included a ban from Cricket Australia in the immediacy of the ball-tampering saga of 2018, Smith is now officially the vice-captain of the Test side and has led when Cummins has been unavailable speaks to the high esteem in which he is held not just by his teammates but the powers that be in CA.

Calling cards

One of Smith's calling cards, apart from his strange and impossible-to-ape movements with the bat in hand, is his integrity, which is why his role in the events that unfolded in Cape Town was so hard to comprehend, much less fathom. At a tearful press conference not like the one addressed by Kim Hughes when he resigned from captaincy after another loss in a home Test to West Indies in 1984, Smith owned up his culpability and powerfully bared a human side that touched a chord in even those who categorically castigated him for having brought the game, and Australia's fair name, into disrepute.

Smith's biggest victory was in his seamless reintegration with his colleagues, which has then mushroomed into a return to a leadership position. In any case, Smith belongs to the school that doesn't believe that leadership is defined by the suffix against one's name. Whether he was entrusted with official responsibility or not, Smith was always going to put his hand up as a leader with an all too human, relatable nature. He is now back, purring and ticking over beautifully after a rare lean patch, and is therefore all the more dangerous because of that.

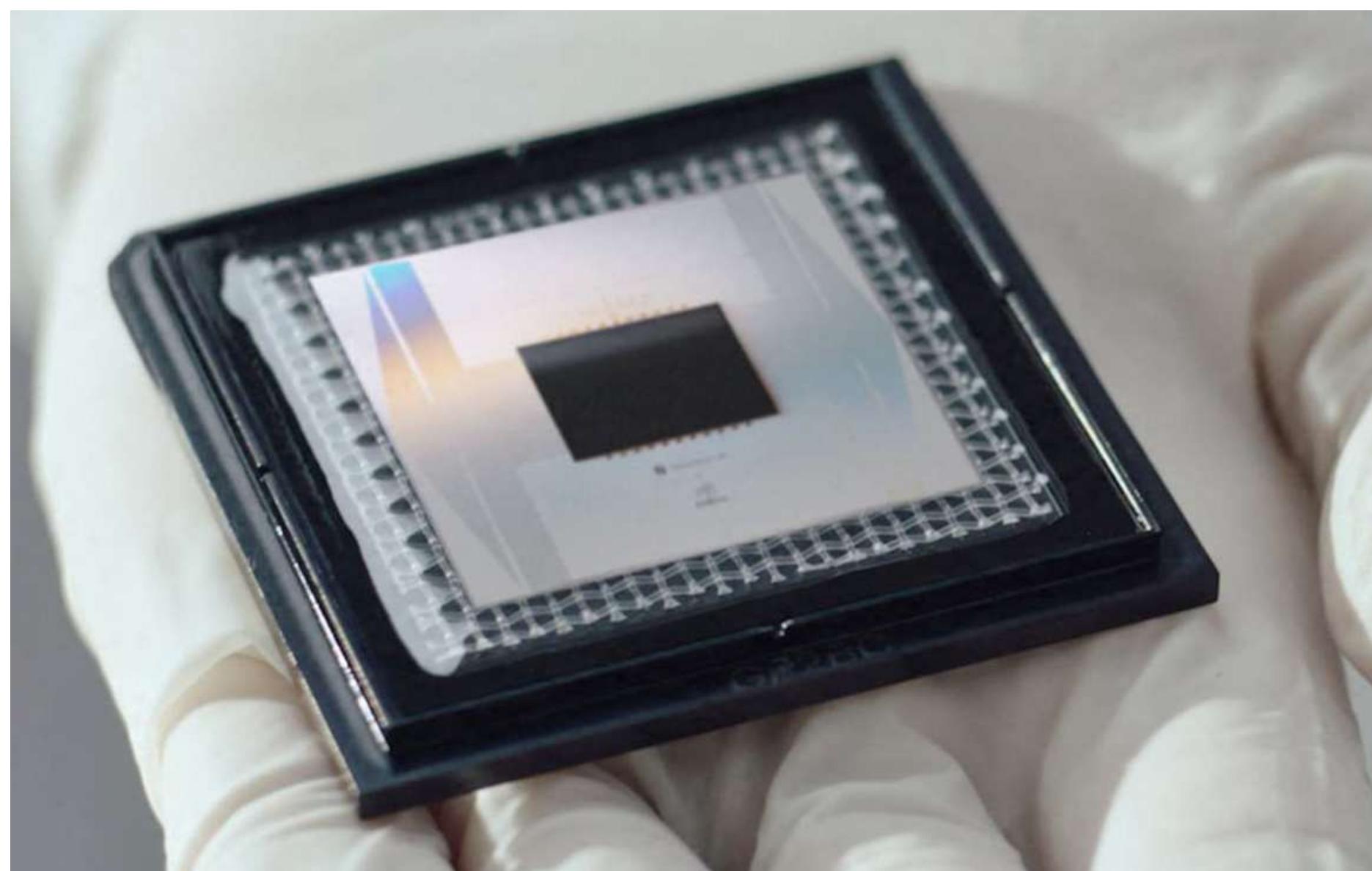
THE GIST

▼ Smith's status as among the three or four most pre-eminent batters of his generation is well established

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SCIENCE



Google Quantum AI's Willow chip. GOOGLE/REUTERS

Willow is a small chip for Google but a quantum leap for computing

A major impediment to realising quantum computers is the fragility of quantum states. Qubits collapse at the slightest disturbance. This limits the amount of time for which qubits can hold information, how error-free a quantum computer can keep its calculations, and how well it can be scaled.

S. Srinivasan

Google recently unveiled its latest quantum processor, named 'Willow'. The research team that built it also tested it, and the results were published in *Nature*.

They created a great level of buzz about the realisability of quantum computers that could tackle many practical problems.

The results also kicked up intriguing debates about explaining the power of quantum information processing and how they could solve problems that even the most powerful classical computers struggle with.

Bit versus qubit

Computers process information stored in an array of 0s and 1s. In classical computers, some physical system with two possible states is used to represent these 0s and 1s. These physical systems are called bits. A common example is an electric circuit that allows two levels of voltage, one called 0 and the other called 1. A classical computer is a collection of bits together, and the information flowing in and out of bits is controlled and manipulated by physical operations called gate operations. For example, an 'AND' gate accepts two inputs, each either 0 or 1, and outputs 1 if both inputs are 1 and 0 for any other combination of inputs.

A quantum bit, or qubit, has two distinct states representing 0 and 1. More importantly, a qubit can be in states that are also combinations of 0 and 1. This feature is called quantum superposition. Classical bits can't do this. Because of this ability, each qubit needs two distinct numbers to represent the contributions of 0 and 1 respectively, in the qubit's state. If we have two bits, we need two numbers, one for each bit, to represent the state of the collection. With two quantum bits, we need four numbers to represent the state. For 10 bits, we need 10 numbers to represent the state of the collection. For ten qubits, we need 2^{10} (1,024) numbers.

This exponential growth in the information required to represent qubits' states and the superposition of states are the major reasons why quantum computers could be more efficient and powerful than classical computers. Like a classical computer, a quantum computer is also a collection of qubits and a host of physical operations called quantum gates that change the states of qubits to perform calculations.

Difficult to isolate

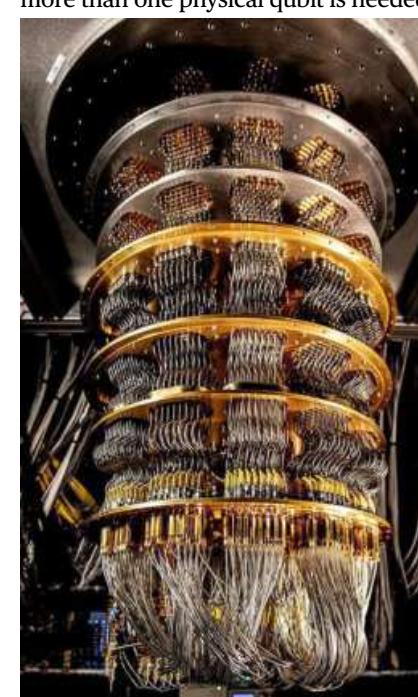
A major impediment to realising quantum computers is the fragile nature of quantum states. Specifically, while classical bits are robust and long-lasting, qubits are fragile and collapse quickly at the slightest disturbance. This in turn limits the amount of time for which qubits can hold information, how errors-free the quantum computer can keep its calculations, and how well it can be scaled.

computer can be scaled.

It is difficult to isolate a physical gadget to avoid perturbations due to external noise. Therefore, computations are prone to errors. For example, when a bit is expected to represent 0, there is a small chance it may be in the state representing 1. This is called the bit flip error. Methods to identify and fix these errors are called error-correction protocols.

A single 0 is represented by three bits in the state 000 (corresponding to each bit in the state 0). If there is a bit-flip error, the resulting state could be 100, 010, or 001 (depending on whether the first, second, or third bit is flipped). Similarly, 1 is represented as 111. If we need to encode 01 as the basic information, its true representation is 000111. Looking at the concatenated sequence in groups of three bits, the occurrence of 100, 010, 001, 011, 101, or 110, will mean an error has crept in. When three physical bits represent one logical digit, it is easy to figure out which bit has flipped and correct it suitably before the next step in the computation.

Similarly, one way to mitigate the effect of errors in a quantum computer is to correct them using additional qubits that keep track of errors creeping in during computations. This is a logical answer to the error problem; it is, however, unsuitable for qubits in superposed states. Creating exact copies of unknown superposed states is prohibited by the no-cloning theorem of quantum physics. On the other hand, error correction often requires redundancy, i.e., providing more qubits than what is needed to encode information. This makes it clear that more than one physical qubit is needed



A cryostat refrigerator for cooling quantum computing chips at Google's Quantum AI lab in Santa Barbara, California. VIA REUTERS

to represent a single logical qubit. (Qubits also have another type of error called phase flip error, which presents similar challenges to error correction.)

One effective method to detect and correct errors in a quantum computer without also violating the no-cloning theorem is called surface code. Here, engineers arrange an array of qubits on a grid. The qubits are grouped into two categories, namely data qubits and measurement qubits. While the error in data qubits is what we wish to identify and correct, any attempt to measure them will force them out of superposition, and whatever information they encode will be lost.

To avoid this, the surface code method provides the set of measurement qubits. These qubits are entangled with data qubits through suitable gate operations. (If two qubits are entangled, any measurement of one particle will instantaneously cause the other particle to lose its superposition state.) In this setup, the presence of errors in the data qubits is inferred by making suitable measurements of the measurement qubits while using the gates to prevent the data qubits from being affected, and thus correcting inconsistencies in data qubits.

The error rate

According to Google, its new quantum processor, Willow, has significantly better error correction and is thus significantly faster than other quantum computers, not to mention classical computers as well. The researchers who developed it tested it by using it to solve a computationally hard problem.

Willow houses 105 physical qubits and operates at temperatures close to the theoretically possible lowest temperature (0 K, -273.15°C). Nearly half of these are data qubits, and the remaining are measurement qubits. The superconducting qubits are not strictly two-state systems. When performing gate operations, the physical system can get excited or 'leak' to states other than 0 and 1. These excited states can subsequently interfere with the computations and introduce errors. So a few qubits – i.e. the measurement qubits – are reserved to correct such leakage errors.

Coherence time is the duration over which an intended state (typically, superpositions) of a qubit can survive without being changed due to interactions with the environment or with other parts of the computer. The coherence time of data qubits on Willow is about 100 microseconds, which is more than the coherence time of the physical qubits. This is a consequence of the error correction protocols used. This in itself is an interesting result because it means the information-holding time can be improved by external manoeuvring.

The next milestone for researchers to achieve is to lower the error rate – calculated as the ratio of the number of qubit errors to the number of gate

operations – as they build ever-larger quantum computers with more physical qubits and more error correction operations. Google alone has progressed from 3-by-3 to 5-by-5 to 7-by-7 arrays of data qubits, and the error rate has decreased by more than half in each step.

What one expects for a collection of qubits on a circuit is that the error rate either remains the same or increases as the number of qubits is increased. That the error rate becomes smaller as more qubits are added is the below-the-threshold capability of Willow's architecture and operation. This is vital to achieving quantum processors with enough qubits that perform almost error-free computations of problems of practical relevance – the ultimate goal.

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No dead ends

The particular computationally difficult task with which Google tested Willow is called random circuit sampling (RCS). In the RCS task, Willow has to calculate the probability of occurrence of possible strings of 0s and 1s in the output when the quantum gates that act on the qubits are chosen randomly. If there is no noise, RCS is a computationally hard task, meaning that the number of calculations required to make the prediction increases exponentially with the input size.

Willow completed the RCS task for random gate operations realisable on Willow in a few minutes. The researchers estimated that the same task on the most powerful classical computer available today would take 10 septillion years (i.e., 1 followed by 24 zeroes). To compare, the universe's age in years is approximately 1 followed by 10 zeroes. It is plausible that classical computers running better algorithms may eventually match Willow's feat, although researchers are not aware of such improvements today.

Researchers are still a long way away from realising quantum processors of reasonable size to be useful in practical contexts. This said, it's only natural that Willow created the sort of buzz that it did: it has shown that the major issues in realising a reliable quantum computer can be addressed and surmounted, that they are not dead ends. The work of the Google team provides hope that quantum computers may soon help us unravel nature's mysteries and also solve computationally difficult problems in drug design, materials science, climate modelling, and optimisation, among others – all with deep societal impact.

(S. Srinivasan is a professor of physics at Krea University.
sivakumar.srinivasan@krea.edu.in)



A Brazilian security officer during an operation to combat illegal mining in the Amazon. REUTERS

Amazon caps brutal year of fires, drought

Associated Press

2024 was a brutal year for the Amazon rainforest, with rampant wildfires and extreme drought ravaging large parts of a biome that's a critical counterweight to climate change.

A warming climate fed drought that in turn fed the worst year for fires since 2005. And those fires contributed to deforestation, with authorities suspecting some fires were set to more easily clear land to run cattle.

The Amazon is twice the size of India and sprawls across eight countries and one territory, storing vast amounts of carbon dioxide that would otherwise warm the planet.

It has about 20% of the world's freshwater and astounding biodiversity, including 16,000 known tree species. But governments have historically viewed it as an area to be exploited, with little regard for sustainability or the rights of its Indigenous peoples.

"The fires and drought experienced in 2024 across the Amazon rainforest could be ominous indicators that we are reaching the long-feared ecological tipping point," said Andrew Miller, advocacy director at Amazon Watch, an organisation that works to protect the rainforest.

There were some bright spots. Forest loss in Brazil's Amazon, home to the largest swath of this rainforest, dropped 30.6% compared to the previous year, the lowest level of destruction in nine years.

The improvement under leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva contrasted with deforestation that hit a 15-year high under Lula's predecessor, far-right leader Jair Bolsonaro, who prioritised agribusiness expansion and weakened environmental agencies.

In July, Colombia reported historic lows in deforestation in 2023. The country's environment minister warned that 2024's figures may not be as promising as a significant rise in

The Amazon has about 20% of the world's freshwater and astounding biodiversity, including 16,000 known tree species. But governments have historically viewed it as an area to be exploited

deforestation had already been recorded by July due to dry weather caused by El Niño, a weather phenomenon that warms the central Pacific. Illegal economies continue to drive deforestation in the Andean nation.

"It's impossible to overlook the threat posed by organised crime and the economies they control to Amazon conservation," said Bram Ebus, a consultant for Crisis Group in Latin America. "Illegal gold mining is expanding rapidly, driven by soaring global prices, and the revenues of illicit economies often surpass state budgets allocated to combat them."

In Brazil, swaths of the rainforest were draped in smoke in August from fires raging across the Amazon, Cerrado savannah, Pantanal wetland, and the state of São Paulo. Fires are traditionally used for deforestation and to manage pastures, and those human-made blazes were largely responsible for igniting the wildfires.

For a second year, the Amazon River fell to desperate lows, leading some countries to declare a state of emergency. In Brazil, one of the Amazon River's main tributaries dropped to its lowest level ever recorded.

It was the worst year for Amazon fires since 2005, according to nonprofit Rainforest Foundation U.S. Between January and October, 15.1 million hectares of Brazil's Amazon burned. Bolivia had a record number of fires in the first 10 months of the year.



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