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> 6 LPA

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2024 - BATCH TOP RECRUITERS



COLLEGE ENTRANCE



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ACADEMIC BLOCK - I



ACADEMIC BLOCK - II



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BOYS HOSTEL



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GOOGLE WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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AIR 2 CE HARSHIT PANDEY	AIR 2 EE SATYAM CHANDRAKANT	AIR 2 ME RAJESH KASANIYA	AIR 3 CE LAXMIKANT
AIR 3 E&T UNNATI CHANSORIA	AIR 3 EE PRIYANSHU MUDGAL	AIR 3 ME GOLLANGI SATEESH	AIR 4 CE MADHAN KUMAR
AIR 4 EST RAJIV RANJAN MISHRA	AIR 4 ME AJINKYA DAGDU	AIR 5 CE AMAN PRATAP SINGH	AIR 5 EST PARAG SAROHA
AIR 5 EE MAYANK KUMAR S	AIR 5 ME BANKURU NAVEEN	AIR 6 CE SANCHIT GOEL	AIR 6 EST CHANDRIKA GADGIL
AIR 6 EE RITVIK KOK	AIR 6 ME CHANDAN JOSHI	AIR 7 EST DEBARGHYA CH	AIR 7 EE MANTHON SHARMA
AIR 7 ME DINESH KUMAR S	AIR 7 EE VIDHU SHREE	AIR 8 EE MAYANK JAIMAN	AIR 8 ME SHAILENDRA SINGH
AIR 9 E&T T PIYUSH DAYANAND	AIR 9 CE ANKIT MEENA	AIR 9 EE ANMOL SINGH	AIR 9 ME KRISHNA KUMAR D
AIR 10 CE RAJESH BADGU	AIR 10 E&T RAJVARDHAN S	AIR 10 ME AKSHAY VIDHATE	
TOTAL 35 SELECTIONS IN TOP 10 CE: 08 ME: 10 EE: 08 E&T: 09			

*The above selections are from our Classroom Coaching, Online Live Classes, Postal Coaching, Test Series & Interview Guidance Programme

Classroom Coaching

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ESE | GATE | PSUs - 2026

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- 24th January, 2025
- 23rd February, 2025

GENCO/TRANSCO/ DISCOMs

26th Dec 2024

TGPSC/APPSC - AEE (CIVIL)

27th Dec 2024

SSC-JE / RRB-JE (CIVIL)

25th Jan 2025

Online Live Batches

Regular Batches for

ESE | GATE | PSUs - 2026

24th Jan 2025 – 23rd Feb 2025

GENCO/TRANSCO/ DISCOMs

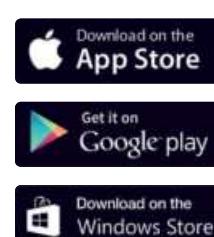
26th Dec 2024

TGPSC/APPSC - AEE (CIVIL)

27th Dec 2024

SSC-JE / RRB-JE (CIVIL)

25th Jan 2025



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16 January | 6 PM

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Weekend Batch (Sat & Sun)

14 December | 4 PM

Weekday Batch (Mon to Fri)

16 December | 4 PM



WORLD » PAGE 16

DATA POINT

China is world's largest debt collector

Plays major role in rise in debt in many countries

OPINION » PAGE 9



75 YEARS OF CONSTITUTION

Congress altered fundamental provisions

NEWS » PAGE 13

Two Bills on simultaneous elections rock Parliament

Opposition terms legislation an assault on basic structure of Constitution; Law Minister says no change to powers enjoyed by the States, agrees to send Bills to Joint Parliamentary Committee

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

Two Bills seeking to implement simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies were introduced in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday by Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal after an intense debate during which Opposition members asserted that the legislation were "anti-federal" and went against the basic structure of the Constitution.

The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill was introduced in the House by Mr. Meghwal after a 90-minute debate, followed by a division of votes as Opposition members insisted on it. While 263 members voted in favour of introducing the Bill, 198 opposed it.



Arjun Ram Meghwal introduces the two Bills in the Lok Sabha during the Winter Session of Parliament. ANI

The Law Minister also introduced the Union Territories Amendment Bill, which seeks to align elections in the Union Territories of Puducherry, Delhi, and Jammu and Kashmir with the Lok Sabha election.

Responding to the debate, Mr. Meghwal said the

legislation did not tamper with the basic structure of the Constitution," Mr. Meghwal said, before agreeing to move a resolution to send the Bills to a Joint Parliamentary Committee.

Leading the Opposition's charge was Congress member Manish Tewari, who called the move an "assault on the basic structure of the Constitution and beyond the legislative competence of this House". "How is it possible under our constitutional scheme that the tenures of State legislatures can be made subject to the tenure of the national legislature... Under the constitutional scheme, the States are separate and equal constituents," he said.

"There will be no tam-

pering with the basic structure of the Constitution," Mr. Meghwal said, before agreeing to move a resolution to send the Bills to a Joint Parliamentary Committee.

According to a report accessed by *The Hindu*, chargesheets pertaining to rape, sexual offences against women, arson, loot, murder, and other heinous acts have been filed only in 192 cases.

The SITs, constituted in August 2023 by drawing police officers from across the country, had till November 20 arrested 384 persons, identified 742 suspects, and examined 11,901 witnesses. As many as 574 accused persons have been charged so far.

The SITs also seized 501 weapons looted from pol-

Manipur SITs filed chargesheet in just 6% of 3,023 cases

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Nineteen months after ethnic violence erupted in Manipur, the 42 special investigation teams (SIT) constituted by the Supreme Court have filed chargesheets in only 6% of the 3,023 registered cases.

The trial is yet to begin in the case of sexual assault of two Kuki-Zo women, who were paraded naked by a mob on May 4, 2023, though the Central Bureau of Investigation filed a chargesheet against six accused in October 2023.

The 42 SITs were investigating 126 cases of murder and nine of sexual crimes against women.

ice armouries in the State and 13,464 ammunition.

It was not clear if trial had begun in the cases.

The trial is yet to begin in the case of sexual assault of two Kuki-Zo women, who were paraded naked by a mob on May 4, 2023, though the Central Bureau of Investigation filed a chargesheet against six accused in October 2023.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

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IN BRIEF



L-G upset over stagnant waste at landfill sites; work on: AAP

Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena has expressed "disappointment" at the stagnant solid waste at the city's landfills, Raj Niwas said on Tuesday. It added that Mr. Saxena had a day earlier visited the Okhla landfill after receiving complaints from residents and traders about waste lying unattended in the area. In response, AAP, which is in power in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, said the BJP did nothing during its 15-year tenure at the helm of the civic body. "We have reduced 80% of the legacy waste at the Bhalswa landfill site in just two years, and work at the Okhla landfill is progressing at a rapid pace," read a statement by the party. PTI

Job ad barring South Indians from applying sparks outrage

Under fire for a job posting on LinkedIn stating that "South Indian candidates are not eligible" for the position, Mounree Consulting Services on Tuesday said it was a case of "miscommunication". Parul Sharma, managing director of the Gurugram-based firm, said the company's account on the networking site may have been "hacked". The entry-level position for a data analyst also required the applicants to be "fluent in Hindi". Ms. Sharma said the issue was brought to her notice by the students of Indian Institute of Technology Madras. The advertisement had been deleted, she added.

With BJP yet to announce candidates for Assembly poll, posters of ticket hopefuls crop up across city

Satvika Mahajan
NEW DELHI

With the Aam Aadmi Party having declared its candidates on all Assembly constituencies and the Congress on 21 of the 70 seats, all eyes are now on the BJP, which has not announced the name of a single nominee yet. Amid speculations over ticket distribution by Delhi's main Opposition party, prospective candidates have started putting up posters of themselves hoping to draw the party leadership's attention.

The posters, which have come up in areas including



The posters have come up in several areas, including Lodhi Colony, Hazrat Nizamuddin, Kalkaji, and Bawana. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Lodhi Colony, Hazrat Nizamuddin, Kalkaji, Greater Kailash, and Bawana, bear photos of the ticket hopefuls against the backdrop of BJP's national leaders – Prime Minister Narendra

Modi, Union Minister Amit Shah, and party president J.P. Nadda – and leaders of its Delhi unit, such as election in-charge Baijayant Panda and city chief Virenra Sachdeva.

Commenting on the issue, a senior BJP leader said, "Neither does the party discourage this activity nor does it endorse it."

While the posters may not reveal a lot about the ground reality, they hint at the factionalism within the party, given how different faces appear in the backdrop, often within the same constituency.

'No delay'
Talking about the ticket distribution process, a sitting MP from Delhi who did not wish to be named said, "Our announcement in this regard has not been

delayed. The party always announces candidates after the elections are formally notified."

The Lok Sabha member added, "As a national party, we have a lengthy process to ascertain who gets the ticket. It starts with the local office-bearers passing their feedback to the State's election committee, which then adds its own observations and forwards it to the parliamentary board, which takes the final call on ticket distribution."

The party last held the reins of the national capital in 1998.

Delhi remains India's most polluted city for second day in a row



The city is likely to breathe severely polluted air on Wednesday also due to a significant drop in wind speed. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

For the second day on the trot, Delhi fared the worst in terms of air quality in the country with pollution continuing to soar.

The city's air quality index reading at 4 p.m. on Tuesday was 433, which falls in the 'severe' category.

The concentration of hazardous particulate matter was found to be over 16 times the permissible limit prescribed by the World Health Organization.

The Central government's Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi said the city is likely to continue breathing 'severe' category air on Wednesday due to a significant drop in wind speed.

"Severe-level air pollution affects healthy people and seriously impacts those with existing diseases," stated the Central Pollution Control Board.

After nearly a fortnight of relief from hazardous levels of pollution, the national capital's air quality nosedived on Monday, following which the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas re-imposed the most stringent curbs.

This included ordering schools to shift to the hybrid mode of teaching, except for Classes 10 and 12, in the national capital and four neighbouring districts – Haryana's Gurugram, Faridabad, and Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar.

Congress gets battle-ready, sets up 'war room' to aid candidates

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

room' will extend strategic support to the contestants.

'Strategic support'

"All relevant documents for every constituency will be provided to the candidates to help them fully understand the profile of their respective constituencies," Mr. Yadav said.

The party in-charge for Delhi, Qazi Mohammad Nizamuddin, said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and party president Mallikarjun Kharge have named competent and experienced candidates in the first list, and those selected

should make the most of the opportunity. "Though times are difficult, a Congress win will greatly bolster the party," he said.

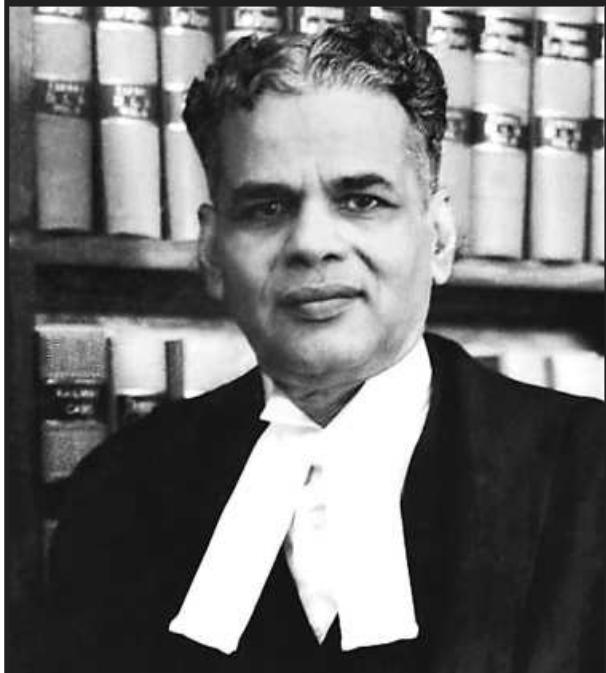
The Congress has fielded Mr. Yadav from Badli while former MP Sandeep Dikshit has been named the party's candidate from New Delhi, a constituency held by AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal. Other notable names in the first list include Haroon Yusuf from Ballimaran and Abhishek Dutt from Kasturba Nagar.

The party failed to win a single seat in the last two Assembly elections in Delhi, where it has been in power for 15 years.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

BIRTH CENTENARY

BIRTH CENTENARY REMEMBRANCE



Justice E. S. Venkataramiah

(18.12.1924 to 25.09.1997)

Former Chief Justice of India

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

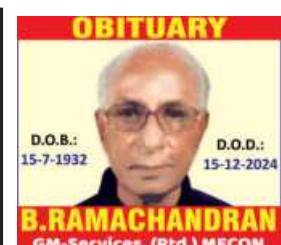
- H.W. Longfellow

Fondly Remembered by:

Justice B. V. Nagarathna, Sri. B. N. Gopala Krishna,
Nayanatara B. G. & Prerana B. G.

DEATH

SD BALA, CA and Retired DGM SBI.
Passed away suddenly and peacefully at 82 on 14 December 2024 at home in Coimbatore. Devi, Sruti, Anand (9940156512)



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No.GSD/Scrap/Auction Programme/04/2024-25 Date: 13.12.2024

AUCTION PROGRAMME NOTICE NO.GSD/BLW/SCRAP/04/2024-25

Following is the schedule of e-auction to be held in the month of January, February & March 2025 for sale of scrap under the jurisdictions of GSD/BLW, Varanasi. Types of Auction : e-auction from (10:30 Hrs), Depot : GSD/BLW/Varanasi.

e-auction Date of January - 2025 : 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th, -

e-auction Date of February - 2025 : 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th, -

e-auction Date of March - 2025 : 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th, -

You are requested to actively participate in the above scheduled e-auction. For details please visit IREPS website at www.reps.gov.in. By CMMI/Depot PRO/BLW/S-69 Material Management Department, BLW/Varanasi

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No: Adm-2(3)/Rec./Cont./AIIMS-BPL/CL/PSY/2024/1444 Date: 17/12/2024

WALK-IN-INTERVIEW FOR ENGAGEMENT OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS AT AIIMS, BHOPAL ON CONTRACTUAL BASIS

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhopal will hold a walk-in interview for engagement of TWO (02) CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS on a fixed monthly remuneration on purely contractual basis on 24/12/2024.

For details of essential eligibility criteria, terms and conditions of engagement and reporting time for walk-in-interview etc. AIIMS Bhopal website www.aiimsbhopal.edu.in may be visited. The interested candidates fulfilling the eligibility criteria may come for document verification along with the duly filled application form in the prescribed format and with all documents in support of their eligibility (in original) and one set of self-attested photocopies, application fee etc. on 23/12/2024 at 09:00 AM positively.

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AIIMS, Bhopal

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Key Dates:-

- Published online on dated 18.12.2024
- Start date & time of bid submission: 18.12.2024 (from 11.00 AM)
- End date & time of bid submission: 31.12.2024 (upto 12:00 Noon)
- Date & Time of opening of Techno Comm. bid: 02.01.2025 (at 11.30 AM)

Chief Engineer (MM), HPSEB Ltd., Viduy Bhawan, Shimla-171004

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Students clash over R.G. Kar issue outside Bengal college

Press Trust of India
KOLKATA

Members of the student wings of the Trinamool Congress and CPI(M) clashed on Tuesday over the R.G. Kar issue outside Barasat College in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district.

According to the police, the clashes broke out when the SFI tried to hold a protest demanding justice for the R.G. Kar victim while an examination was on.

Timings
DELHI

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 18
RISE 07:09 SET 17:28
RISE 20:28 SET 09:51
THURSDAY, DEC. 19
RISE 07:09 SET 17:29
RISE 21:30 SET 10:30
FRIDAY, DEC. 20
RISE 07:10 SET 17:29
RISE 22:27 SET 11:04

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	24	06
Safdarjung	24	06
Palam	21	07

Delhi Palam Today
22°C Cold wave is likely in pockets. Moderate to Shallow fog will occur in cold morning. Day will be pleasant with cool breeze.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
21°C Morning will be cold with moderate to shallow fog. Day will be pleasant with cool breeze. Night also will be cold and hazy.

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Mamata launches housing scheme for rural poor in Bengal

CM says her govt. was yet to receive ₹24,000 crore from the Centre for various schemes but that will not stop her from extending benefits

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched the "Banglar Bari" scheme on Tuesday to provide houses for the rural poor in the State.

Ms. Banerjee released the funds to 42 beneficiaries across 21 districts and said over 12 lakh beneficiaries in the State are eligible for the first instalment.

The launch of the scheme assumes significance as Ms. Banerjee had announced it ahead of the Lok Sabha polls and said if the Centre does not release funds for PM Awas Yojana, then her government would go ahead with its own scheme.

Mamata Banerjee hands over the certificate to a beneficiary of the new scheme. ANI

Under the scheme, a sum of ₹1.20 lakh will be given to a family for constructing a house, with ₹60,000 as the first instalment. However, beneficiaries in some areas of Jangalmahal and Darjeeling hills would get ₹1.30 lakh.

Speaking at the launch,

Ms. Banerjee said that an additional 18 lakh people will benefit from the scheme in 2025. "We are yet to receive ₹24,000 crore from the Centre. But I had said that we are not asking for any alms. If the Centre does not release the funds then we will launch our own scheme," she added.

Ms. Banerjee also said that the Centre had not released funds for MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employee Act), and the State government has started its own scheme to give employment for 50 days under the scheme. Funds under MGNREGA have been on hold on the grounds of "corruption in the scheme".

Delhi schools get hoax bomb threat

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

At least 10 Delhi schools received hoax bomb threats through e-mail on Tuesday, the fifth such instance in the Capital since December 9, according to the police.

On Monday, around 20 schools, including DPS R.K. Puram, had received email threats.

Police sources told *The*

Hindu that Pitampura's Crescent Public School and Safdarjung's Ambience Public School received threat e-mails around 7:30 a.m. while The Indian School in south Delhi received an e-mail around 9 a.m.

Among the other institutions, Dilshad Garden's Dilshad Public School received the hoax bomb threat at 1 p.m.

The Indian School said nothing suspicious was found on their premises,

after which the threat was declared a hoax, the sources confirmed.

"The entire school premises was thoroughly scanned by the bomb squad. Everything is clear and safe. We shall be functioning normally from tomorrow," Ambience Public School said in a notice pasted on the school board.

The Indian School said all were safely evacuated.

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IN BRIEF



Diljit's social media videos win the hearts of Kashmiris

A series of social media videos by actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh filmed at key locations, capturing the mood of the place and the innocence of locals, won the hearts of netizens in Kashmir on Tuesday. The new-age Bollywood icon, with 24.8 million Instagram followers, was seen swirling at the shrine of saint Mir Syed Ali Hamdani, mingling with devotees and paying obeisance. The actor also shot videos against the frost layer on the Dal Lake, and drinking a saffron-based beverage, *kehwa*. All this was set to soulful music from a local instrument, the *rabab*. The actor named the video series '*Heaven on Earth*'.

Sunil Pal kidnap case: police set reward for five accused

Police in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut have announced a reward of ₹25,000 on each of the five absconding accused in the case of kidnap of stand-up comedian and actor Sunil Pal, an officer said on Tuesday. Senior Superintendent of Police Vipin Tada said that the absconding individuals are Lavi Pal alias Sushant alias Himanshu, Akash alias Gola alias Deependra, Shiva, Ankit alias Pahadi, and Shubham. "All five have been declared wanted, and efforts are underway with continuous police raids to trace and arrest them. Notably, Arjun Karnwal was earlier arrested by the Meerut police following an encounter in connection with the case," Mr. Tada said. PTI

BJD MP rejects defection rumours, says all 7 MPs with party 'till their last breath'

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR



Making a point: Biju Janata Dal Rajya Sabha MP Sasmit Patra addresses a press conference in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) on Tuesday firmly asserted that its Parliamentary Party remains united, dismissing speculation about further defections from its ranks as the product of 'yellow journalism' propagated by vested interests in the State.

"There are several vested groups that do not want the BJD to advocate more strongly for Odisha's interests. We remain committed to raising Odisha's concerns in New Delhi. The BJD government in Odisha is unsettled by our voice," said Rajya Sabha MP Sasmit Patra at a press conference in New Delhi flanked by six other BJD MPs of the Upper House.

Two defections

The BJD had nine Rajya Sabha members, while Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav was the sole

SIT: officer suspended over death of Badlapur assault case accused

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) informed the Bombay High Court on Tuesday that the investigation into the Badlapur sexual assault case is complete and a senior police officer has been suspended for dereliction of duty.

Representing the SIT, Public Prosecutor Hiten Venegaoorkar submitted before the Division Bench of Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and Prithviraj Chavan that after the departmental inquiry was conducted, a senior police inspector of Badlapur police station was suspended, and her two-year increment was also

withheld.

The Bench was hearing a suo motu PIL after the prime accused, Akshay Shinde, was killed in an encounter while in police custody on September 24. He was accused of sexually assaulting two minor schoolgirls.

Panel on child safety

The Bench had ordered the formation of a panel of experts to examine the safety of children in schools. Earlier this month on December 2, the High Court had criticised the State Criminal Investigation Department for taking too long to probe the encounter case and directed the investigating team to submit a report.

SC rejects T.N. plea against CBI probe into illicit liquor deaths

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed Tamil Nadu's challenge to a Madras High Court decision transferring the investigation into the Kallakurichi hooch tragedy to the CBI.

A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan asked Tamil Nadu what was the harm if the probe was done by a Central agency.

Advocates Balaji Srinivasan and G.S. Mani had appeared in caveat in the case.

The tragedy had claimed 68 lives. The High Court had passed the order in November after expressing disappointment over the State government's al-

leged failure to take stern action against the police and other officials concerned.

The High Court had taken note that though the then Kallakurichi Superintendent of Police, Samay Singh Meena, was suspended on June 19, the suspension order was revoked quickly, and he was reinstated as Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Tambaram Commissionerate, on July 24.

No severe action

Expressing anguish over non-initiation of severe action against officials who were either hand-in-glove with the sellers of spurious liquor or had failed to prevent the sale from happening right under their nose,

the Bench had said: "All these aspects cumulatively make this court think that there may not be a fair and impartial investigation by the Crime Branch-Criminal Investigation Department."

Habitual offender

The judges pointed out that the prime accused, Kannukutty, alias Govindaraj, was a habitual offender who had been booked in a total of 17 prohibition cases between 2009 and 2023, and convicted in 9 cases. Yet, his continued indulgence in the crime "makes us believe that there is merit and substance in the stand of the writ petitioners that Govindaraj has an unholy nexus with the police officials," they had added.

Jharkhand HC holds publication of CGL examination results

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Jharkhand High Court on Tuesday put a stay on the final results of JSSC on September 21 and 22. The plea demanded that the examination should be cancelled and the matter be investigated by the CBI.

The High Court directed the State government to register an FIR on the complaint lodged regarding the leak of JSSC-CGL exam paper and submit a report after investigation.

The next hearing of the case is on January 22.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice M.S. Ratna Sri Ramachandra Rao and Justice Deepak Roshan heard the petition in the alleged

BJP leaders call on Bangladeshi lawyer of jailed Hindu monk

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA



A delegation of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders on Tuesday called on Bangladeshi lawyer Rabindra Ghosh, who has been defending the jailed Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das in court. The meeting, in which Kartick Mahajar of Bharat Sevashram Sangha was also present, took place at the residence of Mr. Ghosh's son in Barrackpore town of North 24 Parganas district in West Bengal.

Mr. Ghosh, 75, recently arrived from Bangladesh in Barrackpore for medical treatment.

Mr. Modi said the Central government is constantly trying to improve the economic condition of villages and focusing on promoting every means of earning there.

Schemes for women

Talking about women empowerment, he said 10 crore women, including lakhs from Rajasthan, joined Self-Help Groups in the last decade. He also highlighted the government's women-specific programmes such as the Lakhpati Didi scheme, Namo Drone Didi Scheme and Bima Sakhi Scheme.

Mr. Das, a spokesperson for the Bangladesh Sammilita Sananati Jagran Jote and one-time member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in Bangladesh, was arrested on charge of sedition in Dhaka on November 25 and has since been behind bars.

The delegation comprising BJP leaders Arjun Singh and Kaustav Bagchi lauded Mr. Ghosh for defending the rights of Hindu minorities in Bangladesh. The lawyer said he will represent the monk when his case comes up for hearing be-



Devotees pray at reopened Bhasma Shankar temple in Sambhal on Tuesday. PTI

Prayers offered to discovered Hanuman idol in Sambhal

Press Trust of India
SAMBALH

Mahila Samvad Yatra put off, Nitish Kumar to embark on Pragati Yatra from Dec. 23



Nitish Kumar, who alleged that the longest-serving Chief Minister was showing signs of "mental instability" and has changed the name of the same *yatra* several times in a fortnight.

The Pragati Yatra will cover the districts of East Champaran, Sitamarhi, Sheohar and Muzaffarpur before its "first leg" concludes on December 28 at Vaishali, officials said. Mr. Kumar, who will be running for his fifth term in office in the upcoming Assembly poll, will hold review meetings in the respective districts, officials added.

Renaming yatra

Tuesday's announcement evoked sharp reactions from Leader of the Opposition in Bihar Assembly Tejaswi Yadav, who alleged that the longest-serving Chief Minister was showing signs of "mental instability" and has changed the name of the same *yatra* several times in a fortnight.

"Due to his habit, character, conduct and fickleness, Nitish Kumarji has changed the name of the same *yatra* several times in a fortnight. First, it was Mahila Samvad... now Pragati Yatra. This shows how mentally disturbed and unstable he has become," the former Deputy Chief Minister said.

(With inputs from PTI)

Devotees thronged the Khaggu Sarai area here on Tuesday to offer prayers to a Lord Hanuman idol that was discovered in the Bhasma Shankar temple, reopened last week after being shut for 46 years.

The temple was cleaned around 4 a.m. A 'cholaa' (cloth meant for gods and goddesses) was offered to Lord Hanuman and the Hanuman Chalisa recited," said the temple's priest Shashikant Shukla.

The Shri Kartik Mahadev Temple (Bhasma Shankar temple) was reopened on December 13 after remaining locked since 1978. The temple also has a well nearby.

Smart meter
Meanwhile, amid heavy security arrangements, a smart electricity meter was installed at the residence of Sambhal Lok Sabha MP Zia Ur Rehman Barq on Tuesday, officials said.

SDO-1 of Sambhal Santosh Tripathi on Tuesday said the team (of electricity department) was there to install a smart meter at the MP's residence in Deepasari locality.

The earlier meter is being replaced with a smart meter, he said.

The Sambhal MP's father, Mamluk Ur Rahman Barq, told reporters that the (smart) meter is being installed and there is nothing new in it. The new meter is replacing the old, he added.

Telangana HC strikes down new rules for PG medical course

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Tuesday struck down the rules, recently amended by State government, relating to 'local status' of candidates for admissions into post-graduate medical course.

A Bench of Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice J. Srinivas Rao ruled that candidates who completed MBBS/BAMS/BHMS from Telangana or 'local area' as defined in the Presidential Order-1974 are entitled to participate in counselling for admission into PG medical courses for academic year 2024-25. The Bench delivered the judgment disposing of a batch of nearly 100 writ petitions challenging the medical PG course admission rules amended by State government on October 28.

Before amendment, candidates who secured medical degrees from educational institutions situated in 'local area' under the Andhra Pradesh Educational Institutions (Regulation of Admission) Order-1974 were eligible to be treated as local candidates.

SC orders status quo till next hearing in church dispute case

Court to hear the case on Jan. 29 and 30; seeks details from Kerala govt. about number of people and churches under Jacobite, Orthodox factions

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



The Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered to maintain status quo in a dispute between the Jacobite and the Orthodox factions in the Malankara Church ahead of Christmas, while agreeing to hear the case in detail on two consecutive days during January 2025.

A Bench headed by Justice Surya Kant decided to maintain the present state of affairs after both factions expressed, directly and indirectly, their difficulty in complying with a December 3 order.

On December 3, the Bench had directed the Jacobite faction to hand over the administration of six churches in Ernakulam and Palakkad districts to the Orthodox in compliance with the court's judgments and the 1934 constitution of the Church.

Senior advocate C.U. Singh, appearing for the Orthodox faction, said an

Details sought

Meanwhile, the court directed the Kerala government to place on record the details of the Orthodox Christian population; the number and details of churches under the complete administrative control of either the Orthodox faction or the Jacobites; the list of these churches of

Status quo as it exists now should continue... Lives, property, law and order, peace are all very important factors of a society governed by the rule of law

SUPREME COURT BENCH

which the management was in dispute; the current status of their administration; and the parish registers.

The court urged both groups to maintain peace and harmony. It asked the State to persuade the groups to keep the peace. "Status quo as it exists now should continue... Lives, property, law and order, peace are all very important factors of a society governed by the rule of law," Justice Kant said.

The court said the status quo would prevail till the next date of hearing on January 29 and 30.

Pune police allow AIMIM to celebrate birth anniversary of Tipu Sultan, Abdul Kalam

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Pune police informed the Bombay High Court on Tuesday that All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) has been granted permission to carry out a procession on December 24 to commemorate the Constitution Day and celebrate the birth anniversaries of Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad and Tipu Sultan

in Baramati.

This comes after the AIMIM's Pune city president, Faiyaz Shaikh, moved the High Court against the denial of permission for the proposed rally.

Notice not quashed

A Division Bench of Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and Prithviraj Chavan also refused to quash a notice stating that the procession should not stop near any

religious place, specifically a temple.

However, the Bench criticised the city police for citing law and order situation for the denial. "What is this law-and-order situation that may arise in every case? It is your domain to ensure no untoward incident happens during an event," it noted.

Representing the petitioner, advocate Tapan Thatte submitted to the

High Court that even though the police had granted permission to take out the rally, his client was compelled to seek permission from the Municipal Council of Baramati to display banners and arches.

The Bench noted, "If the law mandates that a particular permission is mandated for any such processions, it needs to be followed. We cannot make an exception."

Allow foreign airlines access to Kannur airport, says group

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

A small group of people from Kannur in Kerala, comprising hoteliers, tour operators and architects, sat in protest at the Jantar Mantar here on Tuesday to press for their demand to grant 'point of call' (POC) status for Kannur airport, which would allow international airlines to provide direct flights to it.

The group said they had met Union Minister Rammohan Naidu and presented their memorandum seeking POC status for Kannur airport. "Indian airlines have a 'monopoly' at the Kannur airport, but

they are not strong enough to deploy more aircraft and increase flights. On some days, a flight from Kannur to Dubai could cost you up to ₹30,000, whereas from Kozhikode, which is only 100 km away and is served by international airlines, the fare will be one-third this cost," Rasid Kunhi Paral, a tour operator, said.

Centre's stand
Though several cities are demanding POC status for their airports, the Centre has maintained that it needs to safeguard the interests of Indian airlines so that international airlines do not take away passenger traffic.

Temple bodies challenge HC directive on use of elephants

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Thiruvambady and Paramekkavu devaswoms have appealed the Supreme Court against the Kerala High Court's finding that the use of elephants at temple festivals like the centuries-old Thrissur Pooram is not an "essential religious practice". The devaswoms, which are the major hosts of Thrissur Pooram, also challenged a High Court directive specifying the ex-

act distance at which elephants should be positioned from each other.

The temple trusts took particular objection to the High Court's comparison of the elephants at the Thrissur Pooram with the Holocaust victims.

The devaswoms said the High Court orders in November had banked on the top court's Sabarimala judgment to conclude that parading elephants in temple festivals was not an essential religious practice.

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EMPLOYMENT NOTIFICATION No: CMRL/HR/CON/14/2024 dated 18-12-2024.

CMRL invites applications from qualified & experienced personnel for appointment of under mentioned posts on contract / deputation basis:-

Post Code	Name of the Post	Type of Employment	No. of Post	Consolidated Pay (Per Month)	Min. Exp. (Yrs)	Max. Age (Yrs)
1	Director (S & O)	Contract / Deputation	1	Refer detailed Employment Notification No.CMRL-HR-CON-DEP-15-2024 dated 18-12-2024 for pay and other terms & conditions of employment		
2	AGM (Legal)	Contract	1	Rs.1,60,000/-	17	47
JGM (Legal)				Rs.1,45,000/-	15	43
3	JGM (Arch)	Contract	1	Rs.1,25,000/-	13	40
DGM (Arch)				Rs.85,000/-	7	38
4	Manager (Design)		1			

Note:

- The detailed employment notification will be published in CMRL website vide URL: <https://chennaimetrorail.org> on or before 20-12-2024.
- Salary is negotiable for deserving candidates.
- Last date for receipt of application is 20-01-2025.

DIPR/1258/Display/2024

ED conducts searches in 3 cities in Magicwin case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has conducted searches in Delhi, Mumbai, and

Pune in connection with the 'Magicwin' case involving illegal broadcasting of cricket Men's T20 World Cup matches and various online betting activities.

Bank funds of about ₹30 lakh were frozen. The agency is conducting investigations into the money laundering angle based on an FIR registered by the Cyber

Crime Police (Ahmedabad) against Magicwin. Magicwin is a betting website disguised as gaming and it is "actually owned by Pakistani nationals", as alleged.

ENTERPRISE CONNECT

ALLEN Online partners with MS Dhoni to inspire students through his journey of success



DSEU Mayur Vihar Campus Hosts 1st FILMate Awards 2024



A Business Initiative

16 stalled projects of Supertech Ltd across four states: Uttar Pradesh(12), Uttarakhand(1), Haryana(2), and Karnataka(1) as Project Management Consultancy (PMC). This assignment, directed by the Hon'ble National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), NBCC will undertake this responsibility as PMC for the completion of the projects, without any financial liability. These 16 projects encompass close to 50,000 housing units, with an estimated construction cost of ₹9,445 crore including 3% for statutory fee, charges and any other contingencies. The company has been granted 8% PMC fee, which includes 1% marketing fee, reflecting its responsibility in managing and promoting these projects effectively.

UPSIDA Launches India's First E-Market for 50,000 Industries

The Uttar Pradesh Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA), under CM Yogi Adityanath's leadership, has launched India's first e-marketplace for 50,000 industrial units across 155 areas in the state. This platform aims to boost intra-state trade, reduce logistics costs by ₹20,000 crore annually, and enhance GST revenue by 7-10%.

The initiative will connect raw material suppliers, manufacturers, and sellers digitally, fostering efficiency, transparency, and job creation. CEO Sh. Mayur Maheshwari called it a "landmark step" toward making Uttar Pradesh a global manufacturing hub under the 'Make in UP' vision.

THDCIL and REC sign MoU for Development of High-Performance Water Sports Academy at Koteshwar

THDC India Limited and REC Limited signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for financial collaboration of ₹4 crore to develop an Olympic-size pool at Koteshwar High-Performance Water Sports Academy, Uttarakhand. This significant collaboration underscores THDCIL's commitment to promoting world-class sports infrastructure in India. The MoU was signed in the esteemed presence of Sh. Vivek Kumar Dewangan, CMD, REC, Sh. Shallinder Singh, Director (Personnel), THDCIL and Sh. Harsh Bawaja, Director (Finance), REC.

Shri R.K. Vishnoi, Chairman and Managing Director, THDC India Limited, conveyed his heartfelt wishes on the signing of this groundbreaking Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with REC Limited. Sh. Vishnoi added that "through our CSR activities we are equally focused on contribution to the overall socio-economic development of the nation. Shri Shallinder Singh, Director (Personnel), THDCIL, emphasized that the "This collaboration with REC is another step towards setting new benchmarks in Corporate Social Responsibility and community engagement. The Olympic-size pool aims to create world-class sports infrastructure that will not only cater to national talent but also prepare athletes for international-level competitions."

Allen Students bags 4 gold medals in IJSO

Allen Career Institute Pvt Ltd students have once again brought laurels to the country. Allen's 4 classroom students have won a Gold Medal each in the 21st International Junior Science Olympiad (IJSO). The Indian contingent has won 6 gold medals, out of which 4 students are from Allen. 57 countries participated in IJSO. This year, with six gold medals, India has also been declared the country winner i.e. World Topper. Allen's 4 classroom students have won gold medals in the 21st IJSO held in Romania from 2 to 11 December. These include Harshit Singla, Jahnish Jignesh Shah, Manas Goyal and Praaneet Mathur. Since 2015 till now, Allen students have won 38 gold and 5 silver medals in the International Junior Science Olympiad. IJSO has won two gold and one silver medal in 2014-15, four gold and two silver medals in 2016-17, four gold and one silver medal in 2017-18, six gold medals in 2018-19, four gold medals in 2020-21, five gold and one silver medal in 2021-22 and five gold and one silver medal in 2022-23 and four gold medals in 2023-24. IJSO exam is conducted in five stages. After the first phase of NSEJS, 51 students of Allen were selected for the second phase of INJSO. 31 students were selected for the third phase of OSCSC. After this, a six-member team was announced to represent India in the IJSO final, out of which four students were from Allen.

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Notice Inviting E-Tender

E-tenders in two bid system (techno-commercial and financial bid) are invited for the Laying down of Networking Cable and providing surveillance around the hostel and campus. Dr.RPGMC, Kangra at Tanda. The detailed tender document can be viewed and downloaded from website: <https://www.hptenders.gov.in> from 17/12/2024 to 07/01/2025 upto 1.00 P.M Both techno-commercial and financial bid must be submitted online from 26/12/2024 to 07/01/2025 upto 1.00 P.M. In addition, techno-commercial bid duly signed & stamped alongwith EMD and tender fee must be submitted in physical form in the office of the undersigned on or before 07/01/2025 upto 1.00P.M. Tenders without EMD/tender fee and techno-commercial bid in physical form shall be rejected straightway. The tender will be opened on 07/01/2025 at 3.00P.M. The bidders are advised to visit the aforesaid website regularly for any corrigendum, modifications and clarifications in respect of this tender. The Principal, Dr.RPGMC, Kangra at Tanda reserves all the rights to accept/reject any or all the tender offers without assigning reason.

Principal
Dr.R.P.Govt.Medical College
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SR. NO.	NAME OF BOARD/ CORP/AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE/ CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD/CORP/ AUTH		NODAL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
					FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in		
1	UHBVN	ARMED CABLE OF SIZE 2X210 SQ. MM AS PER NIGA'S TECH. SPECIFICATION NO-CSC-193/NIDH/ UH/P&D/2021-22 AND AS PER RELEVANT IS ALONGWITH ITS IMPLEMENTATION	16.12.2024 06.01.2025	EMD 2 LACS	www.uhbvn.org.in	TENDER NO-03/ XEN/P-III-MM/QH/ II/2/24 dated 16.12.2024	9517702223 cemm@uhbvvn.org.in

SAMVAD - 13/2025/40/31117/I/1997

THE HINDU REWIND 2024 TRIVIA QUIZ

- In October 2024, Mattel released a special edition Barbie doll with golden earrings reflecting radiance and festivity. For which Indian festival was it launched?
- The _____ was a first-of-its-kind initiative by the Indian government to honor and recognize the contributions of digital content creators across various platforms. What word has been blanked out?
- As of December 1, 2024, which company launched India's largest IPO of the year?

Scan QR code or
visit newsth.live/RTQPA
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Answer to yesterday's quiz:
1. Yuvendra Chahal
2. On-Realisation-Settlement
Cheque Truncation System (CTS)
3. 55th ISRO Foundation day

Yesterday's Winners:

1. Shruti Jain, Bengaluru | 2. Moin Basha, Chennai | 3. Krishna.K, Hyderabad

Himachal Pradesh Public Works Department

E-Procurement Notice INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer, HPPWD Division Haroli Distt.Una H.P. on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the online bids of percentage rate, in electronic tendering system, in 2 cover system for the under mentioned works from the eligible and approved contractors/Firms registered with HPPWD Department.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimate Cost	EMD Through One lime	Time Limit	Cost of tender Through Online	Eligible class of contractor	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1.	Restoration of rain damages on link road to village Kuthar Beet from Una Jaijon Road Km 0/00 to 2/500 (SH: P/L GSB, WMM, B.M.B.C. thermoplastic, cate eye RD 0/00 to 0/750, 1/400 to 1/600, 1/190 to 2/200, P/L paver block at RD 1/300 to 1/350, C/O CC pavement at RD 0/800 to 0/900, V-shape drain at RD 0/600 to 0/700) Tehsil Haroli Distt. Una (HP)	95,66,915/-	1,91,500/-	Six months	2000/-	Class-C & B	

- Date of release of invitation for bids Through e-procurement: **20.12.2024**.
- Cost of Bid form:** - As per detail in Column No.6 in form through online in favor of Executive Engineer, HPPWD Haroli Distt.Una (HP) payable at Haroli.
- Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission:** -The Bid Document is available online and bid should be submitted online on website <http://hptenders.gov.in>. Bidder would be required to register on the website which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). "Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the same from the website <http://hptenders.gov.in>. Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use to same in this tender.
- Key Dates:**

1 Date of Online Publication	20.12.2024 (10.00 AM)
2 Document Download Start and End Date	20.12.2024 (10.30 AM up to 27.12.2024 (11.00 AM)
3 Bid Submission Start and End Date	20.12.2024 (10.30 AM up to 27.12.2024 (11.00 AM)
4 Physical Submission of Required Original Documents/Profile.	27.12.2024 up to 11.30 AM
5 Date of technical Bid opening, Evaluation of Technical Bid followed by Opening of Financial Bid.	27.12.2024 (12.30 PM)
- TENDER DETAILS:-**
The Tender Document Shall be uploaded online in 2 Cover:
 - a. Cover 1: shall contain scanned copies of all "Technical Document /Eligibility Information".
 - b. Cover2: shall contain "BOQ/Financial Bid", where contractor will Quote his offer for each item.
- Submission of Original Document:** The bidders are required to submit required Technical Document in Executive Engineer, HPPWD Division Haroli Distt. Una (HP) as specified in key dates Sr. 4 on Tender Opening Date, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive.
- BID OPENING DETAILS:** The bids shall be opened on **27.12.2024 at 12.30 PM** in the Office of Executive Engineer Division, HP-PWD Division Haroli Distt.Una(HP) by the authorized officer. In their interest the tenderer is advised to be present along with original documents at the time of opening of tenders. If the Office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue. The date for opening of financial bids will be intimated separately after evaluation of technical bids.
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 75 days after the deadline date for bid submission.
- Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even through the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates. The Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the Bidder. It is the bidder's responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

NOTE: -The bidders are requested to submit their bid as per notification issued by the Principal Secretary (PW) to the Govt. of H.P. vide No. PBW(B)A (3)1/2020 dated 22.07.2020 & Govt. of HP vide No. PBW(B)A (3)1/2020 dated 07.10.2021 & E-in-C HPPWD Shimla-2 letter No.PW/CTR/32-20 -Genl. Inst. CPWD/2020-37996-38095 dated 13.03.2023. The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the departmental website: [www.hptenders.gov.in](http://hptenders.gov.in)

Executive Engineer,
HPPWD Division Haroli
Distt.Una (HP) Pin Code-177220
Telephone: 01975-294822

Email Id: ee-haroli-hp@hp.gov.in

On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh

HP / 3951/24-25

**DR.RAJENDRA PRASAD GOVT MEDICAL COLLEGE,
KANGRA AT TANDA (H.P.)**
E-mail : principal@rpgmc.ac.in
Telephone No. = 01892-267115
Website: <https://www.hptenders.gov.in>
No.HFW-H(DRPGMC)-e-tender-18478 Dated : 12.12.2024

Notice Inviting E-Tender

E-tenders in two bid system (techno-commercial and financial bid) are invited for the Laying down of Networking Cable and providing surveillance around the hostel and campus. Dr.RPGMC, Kangra at Tanda. The detailed tender document can be viewed and downloaded from website: <https://www.hptenders.gov.in> from 17/12/2024 to 07/01/2025 upto 1.00 P.M Both techno-commercial and financial bid must be submitted online from 26/12/2024 to 07/01/2025 upto 1.00 P.M. In addition, techno-commercial bid duly signed & stamped alongwith EMD and tender fee must be submitted in physical form in the office of the undersigned on or before 07/01/2025 upto 1.00P.M. Tenders without EMD/tender fee and techno-commercial bid in physical form shall be rejected straightway. The tender will be opened on 07/01/2025 at 3.00P.M. The bidders are advised to visit the aforesaid website regularly for any corrigendum, modifications and clarifications in respect of this tender. The Principal, Dr.RPGMC, Kangra at Tanda reserves all the rights to accept/reject any or all the tender offers without assigning reason.

Principal
Dr.R.P.Govt.Medical College
Kangra at Tanda (H.P.).
HP / 3928/24-25

01894-230566 e-mail : hp-kan3@nic.in HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT “CORRIGENDUM”							
The on-line tender for the following works invited vide this office N.I.T. No.PWS/SEV/WS-VINABARD/RIDF-XXX/2024/9759-70 dated 06.12.2024 & published in GIRIRAJ weekly on dated 08.12.2024 to 09.12.2024 and others news papers vide release Order No. 3761/2024-25 is hereby postponed due to technical reasons as under:-							
Now bidding documents can be viewed from the website https://hptenders.gov.in and can be downloaded from the website https://hptenders.gov.in on 10:00 a.m. on 18.12.2024 to 5:00 PM on 27.12.2024. The technical and financial bids can be deposited in electronic format on the website https://hptenders.gov.in from 10:00 a.m. 18.12.2024 to 5:00 PM on 27.12.2024. The technical bids received will be opened on 28.12.2024 at 11:00 A.M.							
The complete bidding process will be online. The undersigned has right to extend or cancel the bids without declaring any reasons thereof.							
Sr. Division Name of work. Estimated Cost (in lacs) Starting date for downloading bid Earnest Money (in lacs) Deadline for submission of bid							
1. Shahpur	Construction of Link road from Laleta to Banu Mahaved, Dhanot Km. 0/00 to 6/185 i.e. 40.00 mtr. span bridge over Chambi Khad. (SH- Formation cutting passing places, R/Walls, CD work, WBM-II, WBM-III, tarring work side drain and parapets, including C/o 40.00 mtr span bridge) i.e. five year routine maintenance after completion of work under NABARD RIDF-XXX.	952.62	18.12.2024 10.00 A.M.	19.06	27.12.2024 (5.00 P.M.)		
2. Tanda	Construction of Rangehar Sadoon	828.39	18.12.2024 10.00 A.M.	16.57	27.12.2024 (5.00 P.M.)		
Other terms and conditions of the N.I.T. will remain the same and unchanged.							
Superintendent Engineer, 5 th Circle, HPPWD., Palampur Pin No. 176061 (On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh) Endst.No.SEV/WS-VI/NABARD/RIDF-XXX/2024-25 Dated:- HP / 3933/24-25							

विहार सरकार

योजना एवं विकास विभाग

कार्यपालक अधिकारी का कार्यालय

स्थानीय क्षेत्र अभियंगन संघरण, कार्य प्रमण्डल-01, मधुबनी

निविदा आमत्रंग सूचना संख्या-15 ई-निविदा वर्ष : 2024-25

(केवल ई-टेन्डर पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

1. कार्यालय विवरणीय शोध का नाम :—शिक्षा विभाग ।

- प्राक्षिलित राशि (रुपये में) अधिकारी की राशि (रुपये में) परिमाण



श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी
माननीय प्रधानमंत्री



श्री भजनलाल शर्मा
माननीय मुख्यमंत्री

संशोधित पार्वती-कालीसिंध-चम्बल लिंक परियोजना हेतु एमओए एवं राजस्थान में 1 लाख करोड़ रुपये से अधिक के विकास कार्यों का मार्ग प्रशस्त करने पर

श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी
माननीय प्रधानमंत्री जी
का



राजस्थान सरकार

राजस्थान की 8 करोड़ देवतुल्य जनता की तरफ से
कोटि कोटि धन्यवाद एवं आभार

भजनलाल शर्मा
मुख्यमंत्री, राजस्थान

सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, राजस्थान सरकार



Trade shocker

November's low tally scuppers expectations of goods exports recovery

This October's foreign trade numbers had offered a sliver of hope for India's generally weak export story over the past couple of years, as goods exports grew at a 28-month high pace of 17.2%. Any prospects of a sustained turnaround with better global demand for this Christmas season, have, however, come undone with November's trade estimates released on Monday. In a double whammy of sorts, not only did the value of outbound shipments sink to the lowest in a little over two years at just \$32.1 billion but the import bill also hit record high of \$70 billion, rising 27% year-on-year which is the fastest uptick in more than two years as well. Relative to October, goods exports were 18.1% lower. Three of the last four months have now clocked record-breaking import bills, with \$64.3 billion in August and \$66.3 billion in October. As in August, November's import bill spike was led by gold imports that jumped 331.5% from last November to a whopping \$14.9 billion. Overall gold imports are now up 49% this year, and while higher prices and seasonal spikes for the festive and wedding season explain some of the uptick, this warrants some examination, especially as exports of gems and jewellery are sputtering, including in the employment-intensive businesses such as diamond polishing and gold ornaments. Gems and jewelry exports are down 10.2% between April and November, while imports have widened over 30%, with November seeing a record high deficit of \$14.4 billion in the segment.

The overall gap in merchandise trade also expanded to a fresh high of \$37.8 billion in November, perhaps the first time that the deficit is higher than the export tally. Apart from precious metals, petroleum also played a key part in this widening, with exports halving to \$3.7 billion while imports rose 7.9% to \$16.1 billion. Officials have sought to downplay concerns by linking the export slump to lower oil prices, but the same should also hold true for imports. It may well be that the discount gains on Russian oil India had capitalised on to ramp up its exports, are fading, and domestic demand is stronger than before, but economists are a tad puzzled at this phenomenon of recent months. The Commerce Ministry top brass has often argued that rising import bills are not a worry because India is growing faster than the world, much of the imports are directly correlated to, or are inputs for exported goods, and non-oil exports that are rising should remain the focus. But oil and jewellery remain among India's top tradables, and policymakers must glean a better sense of the dynamics behind this tumult, even if they are unfazed by the expanding trade deficit.

More of the same

India and Sri Lanka need to go beyond stated positions to take ties forward

Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's visit to India, also his first overseas trip in keeping with tradition, marks a continuity in India-Sri Lanka bilateral relations. The joint statement, after his meet with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, covered aspects similar to the one subsequent to the visit of his predecessor, Ranil Wickremesinghe, in 2023. Mr. Dissanayake's assurance that Sri Lanka will not permit its territory to be used in any manner inimical to India's security and regional stability, on the face of it, appears to be a reiteration of Colombo's long-standing position, but it was significant in view of a perception that Mr. Dissanayake's Jathana Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) is a Left-leaning pro-China party. India viewed his observation as one that could have a bearing on the clearance for Chinese ships visiting Sri Lanka in the light of the Wickremesinghe government's one-year moratorium (after India's concerns) on all "foreign research vessels" visits ending next month. In the last 10 years or so, the frequent presence of Chinese ships became the main irritant in bilateral ties. It remains to be seen how far the dispensation will be sensitive to India's concerns – the Wickremesinghe's regime took a stand about six months ago that it "cannot only block China".

That the statements of the two leaders or the joint statement did not touch upon the status of projects by the Adani Group was expected. The joint statement talked of India's commitment to help Sri Lanka in areas such as agriculture and the digital economy. The proposal to have a joint working group on agriculture is a welcome development. There was a mention of the proposed Economic and Technological Cooperation Agreement – 14 rounds of negotiations have been held so far. On the fisheries dispute, the two sides apparently stuck to their stated positions but Colombo should help facilitate an early meeting between the fishermen's associations in both countries. More importantly, there seems to be a nuanced shift, going by the English version of Mr. Modi's statement at the joint press conference. There is no reference to the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, which envisages a measure of autonomy to Provincial Councils, despite Mr. Modi covering matters such as reconciliation, the need for Sri Lanka fulfilling its commitments towards "fully implementing" its Constitution and conducting Provincial Council polls. The JVP ran a virulent campaign against the Amendment, an outcome of the 1987 India-Sri Lanka Accord. As the coalition that Mr. Dissanayake heads secured a massive mandate across the country in the November 14 parliamentary election, he is in a comfortable position to show a new direction to ties with India. It is an opportunity for both countries to resolve their differences.

The legal gaps in India's unregulated AI surveillance

In 2019, the Indian government made headlines by announcing its intention to create the world's largest facial recognition system for policing. Over the next five years, this ambition has materialised with Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered surveillance systems being deployed across railway stations and the Delhi Police preparing to use AI for crime patrols. The latest plans include launching 50 AI-powered satellites, further intensifying India's surveillance infrastructure.

While technological integration in law enforcement is commendable, it raises substantial legal and constitutional concerns. The use of AI for surveillance has global parallels, often resulting in "dragnet surveillance", a term that refers to indiscriminate data collection beyond just suspects or criminals. As observed with Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) in the United States, even well-intended surveillance laws can result in overreach, infringing on citizens' rights.

This article explores the legal frameworks, gaps, and concerns surrounding AI surveillance in India and how they intersect with constitutional rights, particularly the right to privacy.

The Telangana Police data breach earlier this year revealed deep-rooted concerns about the data collection practices of Indian law enforcement agencies. According to reports, Hyderabad police had access to databases from social welfare schemes, including "Samagra Vedika", raising questions about the scope of data being collected and the lack of transparency regarding its use.

Lack of proportional safeguards

While data-driven governance offers solutions for public welfare and crime prevention, these practices must be measured against the individual's right to privacy, as guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution. The Supreme Court of India, in *K.S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India* (2017), recognised privacy as a fundamental right, extending its scope to "informational privacy". The judgment emphasised that the era of "ubiquitous dataveillance" brings challenges that must be addressed through robust legal frameworks. However, the extent of surveillance infrastructure in India currently lacks proportional safeguards, leading to legitimate concerns about the implications of AI-driven data collection.

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA), passed in 2023, was meant to provide a framework for managing consent and ensuring accountability for data privacy in India. However, the law has been heavily criticised for broad exemptions that grant the government unchecked power to process personal data.

For instance, Section 7(g) of the DPDPA waives

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the need for consent when processing data for medical treatment during an epidemic. Section 7(i) further exempts the government from consent requirements for processing data related to employment, a particularly concerning clause given that the government is India's largest employer. These exemptions raise red flags about the potential for misuse, especially when applied to AI-powered surveillance technologies that operate on vast quantities of personal data.

Moreover, the DPDPA introduces obligations for citizens that could further exacerbate privacy concerns. Section 15(c) mandates that citizens not to suppress any material information when submitting personal data. This provision, while intended to ensure data accuracy, could lead to punitive measures for something as simple as an outdated address or technical error in data collection systems.

In short, the DPDPA places heightened scrutiny on individual data while offering the government broad leeway in its use and collection. Given the profound implications of AI technologies in processing sensitive personal information, the legal framework appears unbalanced, skewed in favour of state surveillance over individual rights.

The approach in the West

India is not alone in grappling with AI and its impact on civil liberties. The European Union (EU) has enacted regulations that could serve as a useful guide for India. The EU's Artificial Intelligence Act takes a risk-based approach to AI activities, categorising them into unacceptable, high, transparency, and minimal risk levels. Unacceptable risk activities, such as real-time remote biometric identification for law enforcement, are prohibited under EU law unless exceptions apply, such as searching for victims of serious crimes or responding to imminent threats. In stark contrast, India has begun deploying AI-powered facial recognition technology and CCTV surveillance in public spaces with little to no legislative debate or risk assessment. For example, Delhi and Hyderabad have integrated AI into policing without any publicly available guidelines on how data is collected, processed, or stored, or how potential abuses of the technology will be prevented.

As of now, AI remains largely unregulated in India. In 2022, the government promised that AI technologies would be regulated under the upcoming Digital India Act, but draft legislation has yet to materialise. This regulatory void leaves citizens vulnerable to the risks associated with AI-powered surveillance, including the infringement of privacy, discrimination, and data breaches.

Countries such as the United States and members of the European Union have already begun to legislate on the use of AI in public

systems, with clear categorisations and restrictions for technologies that could pose a significant threat to civil liberties. The absence of a similar legal framework in India is troubling, especially given the government's ambitious plans to expand surveillance capabilities.

At its core, the debate over AI surveillance in India touches on fundamental constitutional questions. The right to privacy, as enshrined in Article 21, and the principle of proportionality, as outlined in the *Puttaswamy* judgment, demand that any intrusion into personal data be backed by law, pursue legitimate aims, and be proportionate to the goal pursued. However, the existing surveillance framework, bolstered by AI technologies, appears to stretch these principles to their limits.

Address the impact on civil liberties

It is not the use of AI in governance itself that is problematic, but rather its unchecked application without sufficient safeguards. A comprehensive regulatory framework that addresses AI's implications for civil liberties is urgently needed.

It would help protect public interest in consonance with the 'Right to Privacy' if such a framework includes provisions for transparent data collection practices, where it is publicly disclosed, what data is being collected, for what purpose, and how long it will be stored. Furthermore, the framework must ensure consent gathering mechanisms have narrow and specific exemptions for processing data with independent and effective judicial oversight. This will not only ensure transparency in consent gathering but also safeguard the constitutionality of such applications of AI-based data processing. In this context, India could benefit from adopting a risk-based regulatory approach, such as the EU's, which categorises AI activities based on the risks they pose to citizens' rights.

India is at a crucial juncture in deploying AI-powered surveillance. While integrating advanced technologies in law enforcement and governance offers immense potential, it must be balanced against citizens' constitutional rights. Policy decisions that embed privacy measures into infrastructure before deployment, with inherent safeguards in surveillance protocols, are vital. Consent mechanisms, transparency reports, and judicial oversight at relevant stages of data collection and management can avoid costly retrofits and retraining.

Though the DPDP Act addresses some issues, criticisms persist, and the long-awaited DPDP Rules remain unnotified. To mitigate risks from AI-driven surveillance, regulating "high-risk activities" through restrictions on digital personal data processing and transparent auditor oversight of data sharing is crucial. A proactive regulatory approach will ensure AI serves public interest without compromising civil liberties.

There needs to be a comprehensive regulatory framework that addresses AI's implications for civil liberties

Stuck in the classroom – students, teachers, NEP 2020

Indian students in Higher Education (HE) are spending considerably more time in the classroom than their European (EU) and North American counterparts. Yet, they remain at risk of being relatively undereducated. There are primarily two reasons: higher proportion of teaching time in course credits and higher number of courses a semester under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

A contrast and the academic impact

An average student in a university in the EU or North America takes approximately four courses a semester with a maximum of three hours of lectures a course a week. This brings the total classroom time to a maximum of 12 hours a week. On the other hand, Indian students enrolled in the new four-year undergraduate programmes in Indian universities must take five courses a semester with four hours of lectures a course a week. This amounts to 20 hours of classroom time a week. These extra eight hours in the classroom do not leave much time for essential academic activities outside the classroom such as self-study, reading, or working on assignments, most likely leading to exhaustion and reduced learning.

A casualty of this increased classroom time is the number of assessments that are actually feasible in a course. In the earlier version of the choice-based credit system in the three-year undergraduate programme, where students took only four courses a semester, there was relatively more scope for continuous assessment. Now, with increased classroom time, students find it difficult to work on anything more than two assessments a course. This could impact the diversity of assessments, privileging multiple choice questions-based assessments that are easily graded via phone apps over assessments such as a term paper or a reflective essay that



Parag Waknis
Dean, International Affairs and Associate Professor of Economics at Ambedkar University Delhi

Increased classroom time runs the risk of students becoming passive recipients, affecting the vision of the NEP 2020

requires more time and effort from students.

Thus, increased classroom time risks incentivising rote learning and perpetuating the school dynamics where teachers are owners of knowledge and students are passive recipients. At least at the university level, students need to be pushed to own their learning. This is possible only if they are allowed time to reflect, plan, and execute their learning, explore learning outside the classroom individually and with peers scaffolded by assignments such as reflective essays, group projects, and cross-disciplinary problem solving.

The subject of continuous assessment

Addressing this reduction in the number of possible assessments is important because NEP 2020 lays emphasis on continuous assessment. In this system, the final grade can be aggregated from three or four assessment components spread over the semester. Such a system provides an opportunity to design a mix of low and high stakes assessments, incentivising continuous effort and learning, rather than cramming up before one or two examinations. Continuous assessment allows considerable flexibility for faculty to tailor assessment frequency and type to meet the learning outcomes of their courses. It is also a way to receive continuous feedback for faculty to adjust teaching strategy and for the students to adjust self-study strategies.

The increased classroom time impacts the quality of teaching as well. The extra eight-hour a week in the classroom for Indian teachers eats into the time available for research, course revisions, development of new courses, and cross-disciplinary collaborations. This negatively affects the quality and currentness of teaching. The classroom time of two to three hours a course a week in the EU and North American universities, with a total teaching load of two to

three courses a semester brings the average weekly classroom teaching load of a typical university teacher in these countries to nine hours. In contrast to this, an average Indian faculty is expected to teach 14-16 hours a week, with time spent in the classroom varying from eight-16 hours depending on how flexible the institutional administration is in interpreting University Grants Commission guidelines.

The centres of learning

Teaching a course as per the vision of the NEP 2020 includes designing the course, selection of reading materials, development and administration of assessments, as well as grading. This is in complete contrast to the earlier model where teachers were responsible mostly for classroom lectures with assessment and grading taken care of centrally by the affiliating university. The elite central universities, Indian Institutes of Technology, and the Indian Institutes of Management could be an exception to this with possibly fewer than eight hours a week in classroom teaching a faculty along with substantially higher resources. But it is important to note that the bulk of teaching and learning in India happens in public universities and colleges, and not in these elite institutions.

Thus, to realise the vision of the NEP 2020 fully, a serious reconsideration of the number of courses and classroom time a course in the new four-year undergraduate programmes across India is necessary. Doing so will improve the teaching and learning outcomes for Indian students putting them on a par with their global counterparts. It will also get students out of the habit of rote learning, improve their self-learning skills, and ensure their readiness for further higher-level educational pursuits.

Inputs by Devayani Tirthali, an educational researcher

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Business in Upper House

Eminent personalities and educationists in public life are among those Members who occupy the seats in the Rajya Sabha. But even the proceedings in this House are dismal. Of late, one is witness to uproarious scenes and frequent violations of constitutional values, so much so that its democratic functioning is flouted with ease and without compunction. It is

time that the Members of the Upper House also realise that they are accountable and engage in constructive debate.

N. Visveswaran,
Chennai

Another angle
As a regular train traveller, I would like to raise another very visible, yet blatantly ignored, fallout of the electrification of certain railway lines: the mindless

destruction of greenery that was the hallmark of certain stations (Editorial page, "The hidden cost of greenwashing the Indian Railways", December 17).

With deep pain, I highlight the total desecration of the enchanting tree-lined railway stations on the Shoranur-Nilambur railway route in Kerala, in 2024, in the name of electrification. As a septuagenarian, whose mother hailed from a village

near Cherukara railway station, I have always chosen to travel on this route quite regularly on my visits from the Himalayan Arunachal. All these stations had century-old trees (Several YouTube vloggers had showered praise on these scenic stations). But,

in February 2024, I received the shock of my life to find the total destruction of every single tree on the platforms of the stations

between Shoranur and Cherukara. I learnt that all this was for electrification. It was even more distressing to have this happen in a State that won worldwide appreciation for saving the Silent Valley forests in the 1970s. Such trees are national wealth but the Railway authorities or their mindless contractors think otherwise.

Sathyanaarayanan Mundayoor,
Lohit, Arunachal Pradesh

Ustad Zakir Hussain

The reports (Inside pages, December 17), on tabla maestro Zakir Hussain, brought out almost every aspect of his great life. Readers must be reminded about how he composed music for the Malayalam classic, *Vanaprastham*.

V.J. Sreekumar,
Coimbatore

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

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Underweight children registered in M.P.'s Anganwadi centres

5.41 in lakh. The State government informed the legislative Assembly that at least 5.41 lakh underweight children were enrolled at Anganwadi centres in Madhya Pradesh this year, with Dhar district having the highest number. 35,950 children were registered in Dhar. PTI

Septic tank workers belonging to the SC category

67 In per cent. According to official data, over 67% of sewer and septic tank workers (SSWs) in India belong to the Scheduled Castes category. Union Minister of State Ramdas Athawale said that out of 54,574 validated sewer and septic tank workers, 37,060 are from the SC category. PTI

The death toll due to Cyclone Chido in Mozambique

34 At least 34 people have been killed by Cyclone Chido in Mozambique since it made landfall there, the UN humanitarian agency OCHA said on Tuesday, citing figures from the southern African country's disaster agency. The French island of Mayotte bore the brunt of the storm. REUTERS

Uttar Pradesh government's second supplementary Budget

17,865 In ₹ crore. The Uttar Pradesh government presented the second supplementary Budget for FY2024-25, amounting to ₹17,865 crore. The Budget was tabled on the second day of the winter session of the State Assembly. PTI

Magnitude of the earthquake recorded in Vanuatu

7.3 An earthquake with a 7.3 magnitude struck just off the coast of Vanuatu on Tuesday, causing widespread destruction in the South Pacific island as the injured began arriving at a hospital and unconfirmed reports of casualties emerged. AP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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The Constitution on minority rights

The preservation of diversity is the rationale behind minority rights in the Indian Constitution. On Minority Rights Day, it is essential to remember Franklin Roosevelt's words, 'no democracy can long survive which does not accept as fundamental to its very existence the recognition of the rights of minorities'.

LETTER & SPIRIT

Faizan Mustafa

The debate on minority rights should be lifted from its current framework of communalism versus secularism and placed in the theoretical field of democracy and substantive equality. Recognising the importance of minority rights, the UN General Assembly adopted a declaration on the 'Rights of Persons Belonging to National, or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities' on December 18, 1992. This date is celebrated as Minority Rights Day all over the world. Minority rights are essential in a democratic polity because as Franklin Roosevelt reminds us "no democracy can long survive which does not accept as fundamental to its very existence the recognition of the rights of minorities".

Origin of minority rights

Article 19 of the Austrian Constitutional Law (1867) acknowledged that ethnic minorities have an absolute right to maintain and develop their nationality and languages. Similar provisions were found in Hungary's Act XLIV of 1868, and in the Constitution of the Swiss Confederation of 1874, which granted the three languages of the country equal rights in civil services, legislation and in courts. The provisions of the peace treaties after the First World War, focused particularly on the status of minorities. Minority protections were codified in the five treaties negotiated between the allied and associated powers on the one hand, and Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Greece and Yugoslavia on the other. Special provisions for minorities were incorporated in the peace treaties with Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary and Turkey, while Albania, Finland and Iraq declared that they would protect their minorities. Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights gives every individual a right to community – that is the right to enjoy their own culture and to participate in cultural forums, associations etc.

Debate in the Constituent Assembly The framers of the Constitution showed profound sensitivity to the needs of minorities. Pandit G.B. Pant, moving the resolution to set up an Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights and the Rights of Minorities, explicitly stated that the "satisfactory solution of questions pertaining to minorities will ensure the health, vitality and strength of the free State of India... now it is necessary that a new chapter should start and we should all realise our responsibility. Unless the minorities are fully satisfied, we cannot make progress; we cannot even maintain peace in an undisturbed manner." The committee headed by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel examined the issue of minority rights and accordingly Articles 25 to 30 were enacted in our Constitution. The underlying argument in these Articles is that individualistic universal rights are not of much use in a heterogeneous country such as India, and that one needs to have discussions on the basis of multiculturalism, difference, and the rights of minorities that mark contemporary political theory.

Rationale behind minority rights The preservation of diversity is the rationale behind minority rights in the Indian Constitution. In fact, individualistic rights under Articles 14-18 (equality), 19 (free speech) and 25 (freedom of religion) are not enough for



Nation for all: A woman holds up a poster during a protest against the CAA during Republic Day at Shaheen Bagh, in New Delhi in 2020. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

the conservation of language, script or culture which comes under Article 29. One may not be individually unjustly treated but it hurts if the group to which one belongs is subjected to ridicule or denied any value. This also undermines an individual's right to dignity. An individual's right to culture holds little meaning or significance, unless the community of which a person is a member of, or is identified with, is accorded the right to exist in a viable form. It requires not only the presence of a group that shares a common culture but a conducive environment in which such cultures can flourish. Thus, under Article 30 both religious and linguistic minorities are allowed to establish and administer institutions of their choice so that such a space is created in these institutions.

Recently, a seven judge Bench in *Aligarh Muslim University* (2024) in unequivocal terms described Article 30 as a 'facet of equality and non-discrimination'. A nine judge Bench in *St. Xavier's College Society* (1974) too had observed that "the whole object of conferring the right on minorities under Article 30 is to ensure that there will be equality between the majority and the minority. If the minorities do not have such special protection, they will be denied equality." In *Keshavanda Bharati* (1973), rights under Article 30 were held to be part of the basic structure which even Parliament cannot change through a constitutional amendment.

What are minority rights? Interestingly, though the term 'minority' has been used in four places in the Constitution no definition of the term 'minority' has been given. The Supreme Court has consistently held that minorities are to be defined at the level of the State. Since Hindus are a religious minority in Punjab, Kashmir and in the northeastern States, they too are entitled to minority rights. There are hundreds of Hindu minority institutions in India.

Article 29(1) lays down that 'any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct

language script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same'. This provision signifies two vital dimensions. First, it concedes that different groups do have different cultures and that all people may not have just one culture. Since these linguistic and religious cultures are valuable for their members, they need to be given explicit rights to conserve their own culture especially since such minority cultures can face disadvantages in a majoritarian society. Secondly, the right to culture is an individualistic right, that is, individuals have been given the right to preserve their distinctive culture.

Article 30 guarantees that all religious and linguistic minorities shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of 'their choice'. In the *re Kerala Education Bill* (1957), the Supreme Court said that the dominant word in Article 30 is 'choice' and minorities can expand their choice as much as they want. The court also said that the term 'educational institution' includes universities. The courts have also been consistent in extending protection under Article 30 to pre-Constitution institutions in cases like *S.K. Patro* (1969), *St. Stephens* (1992) and *Azeem Basha* (1967). In the latest judgment of *Aligarh Muslim University* (2024), the majority has held that even an institution of national importance can claim minority character.

Additionally, Article 350 A provides for instruction in the primary stages of education in the mother tongue, and Article 350 B for the appointment of a special officer for linguistic minorities. Their religion based personal laws have also been constitutionally protected, for example, the customary law of Nagas. There is no religious qualification attached to the holding of high constitutional positions. There is also a National Commission for Minorities and a National Commission For Minority Educational Institutions to deal with the problems of minorities.

Defining a minority The 11 judge Bench in the *T.M.A. Pai Foundation* (2002) case had left

unanswered the question of the indicia of minority institutions. Former Chief Justice Dr D.Y. Chandrachud in a historic judgment in the *Aligarh Muslim University* (2024) case has now laid down the indicia.

Interestingly, on the issue of indicia there was broad agreement amongst the seven judges. They all preferred holistic, broad and flexible yardsticks such as ideation – looking at the genesis or ideation or brain behind the idea. Moreover, the person taking the initiative must belong to the minority community. His intent must be to found an institution 'predominantly for the minority community' and other factors to be considered would be the collection of funds, getting land, construction of buildings and governmental approvals. It is not necessary that the administration must be vested within the minorities themselves. Right to administer is the consequence of establishment.

Though there is no right to get governmental aid, Article 30(2) explicitly says that the State cannot discriminate against a minority institution while granting aid. In the *re Kerala Education Bill* (1957) case, Chief Justice S.R. Das held that the State cannot impose such 'onerous' conditions either in granting aid or in giving affiliation to minority institutions that require surrendering the minority character of their institutions.

Furthermore, the Supreme Court has consistently maintained that minorities have no right to maladminister their institutions, and that the government can come up with reasonable regulations to insist on proper safeguards against maladministration, to maintain fair standards of teaching, and to ensure "excellence of the institutions." In *St. Xaviers* (1974), the top court explicitly observed that "under the guise of exclusive right of management, minorities cannot decline to follow the general pattern. In fact, they may be compelled to keep in step with others."

Faizan Mustafa is a constitutional law expert and Vice-Chancellor of Chanakya National Law University, Patna.

THE GIST

▼ Recognising the importance of minority rights, the UN General Assembly adopted a declaration on the 'Rights of Persons Belonging to National, or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities' on December 18, 1992.

▼ Article 29(1) lays down that 'any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same'.

▼ One may not be individually unjustly treated but it hurts if the group to which one belongs is subjected to ridicule or denied any value. This also undermines an individual's right to dignity.

LOKNITI-CSDS



Fully secure: EVMs and VVPATs kept in a storage room ahead of the vote counting for the Maharashtra Assembly elections, at a polling counting centre, in Akola on November 23. ANI

Are Congress's EVM allegations a legitimate concern or a strategic diversion?

It is important to note that the trust in Electronic Voting Machines has remained relatively steady over the past five years. In 2019, the then NES study indicated that over half the voters placed high trust in the machines, with nearly a quarter expressing moderate trust.

Devesh Kumar
Sanjay Kumar

After the Maharashtra Assembly elections, the echoes of alleged Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) manipulation have once again reverberated through political spaces, particularly from the Congress party and its allies. This narrative of doubt had begun soon after Congress's unexpected loss in Haryana, bringing the EVMs under scrutiny.

The Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's strong demand to reintroduce ballot papers by replacing the EVM highlights a recurring scepticism about the established electoral process. While such concerns warrant attention, it is equally vital to evaluate the degree of public trust in EVMs and probe why such claims persistently surface.

Public confidence in EVMs

If EVMs were indeed vulnerable to manipulation, public opinion—the cornerstone of any democracy—would reflect such apprehensions.

Understanding how much people trust EVMs provides crucial insights into whether voters feel their democratic rights are compromised. The National Election Study (NES) conducted by the Lokniti-CSDS earlier this year sheds light on this issue. In a survey across 21 States, the study revealed that a significant majority of voters expressed confidence in EVMs. Nearly one-third (31%) reported trusting the machines "a lot," while another two-fifths (43%) said they "somewhat" trusted them. This cumulative trust—approximately three-quarters of voters—indicates a strong vote of confidence in the EVM technology.

However, distrust lingers among a notable minority. Around one fifth (17%)

Trust in the machine

If EVMs were indeed vulnerable to manipulation, public opinion—the cornerstone of any democracy—would reflect such apprehensions. Understanding how much people trust EVMs provides crucial insights into whether voters feel their democratic rights are compromised.

Table 1: Over two-thirds indicated trust in EVMs in the last two Lok Sabha elections (2024 & 2019)

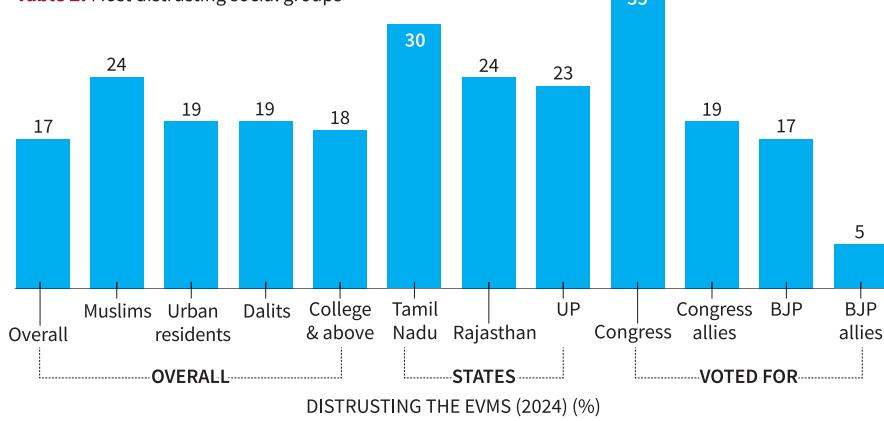
Trust in EVMs	National Election Study 2024	National Election Study 2019
A lot of trust	31	52
Some trust*	43	26
Not much	-	8
No trust at all**	17	6

Note: The rest did not respond.

*Used as some trust in 2024 and somewhat in 2019 National election study.

**Used as No trust at all in 2024 and not at all in 2019 National election study

Table 2: Most distrustful social groups



of respondents stated they did not trust EVMs at all, a figure that merits attention. This scepticism was particularly pronounced among urban voters (19%), individuals with college degrees (18%), and marginalised groups such as Dalits (19%) and Muslims (23%). Furthermore, distrust peaked in some States as compared to others. This scepticism was observed the highest in Tamil Nadu (30%), Rajasthan (24%), and Uttar Pradesh (23%). These findings indicate the need for a focused electoral outreach, and confidence-building measures by the

Election Commission of India. It is also important to note that the trust in EVMs has remained relatively steady over the past five years. In 2019, the then NES study indicated that over half the voters placed high trust in the machines, with nearly a quarter expressing moderate trust. While these proportions remain largely consistent in 2024, the share of those who distrust EVMs has risen slightly, from 14% in 2019 to 17% in 2024. This shift coincides with Congress's sustained narrative questioning EVMs, which seems to

resonate among its voter base. Among those expressing distrust, nearly one-third voted for Congress (35%) and another one-fifth (19%) voted for its allies (Table 1 & 2). This pattern suggests that EVM scepticism has become a political tool—a strategic plank for Opposition parties rather than a pressing concern for the Election Commission of India to resolve.

Broader implications

While Congress is entitled to question its electoral setbacks, as the principal Opposition party, it bears a greater responsibility to present credible alternatives to voters. Relying on EVM-related conspiracy theories as a "primary" critique of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party not only undermines the integrity of democratic institutions but risks alienating voters seeking substantive changes in their lives and policy solutions. For instance, alleging that the BJP "allowed" the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) to win in Jharkhand reflects a narrative that can not only be implausible but is also mean-spirited.

Instead of fixating on claims that have not yet been verified by the Election Commission of India, Congress must confront a larger question. Is the party genuinely offering a compelling vision for India, or is it merely evading the need for introspection by blaming its defeats on external factors? To make a strong comeback the party must craft a distinctive agenda capable of countering the BJP's ideological narrative that runs at a mega scale. Resorting to allegations of EVM manipulation without real-time, verifiable evidence risks eroding public confidence in India's electoral process.

Devesh Kumar is a researcher with Lokniti-CSDS. **Sanjay Kumar** is a professor with CSDS and a political commentator. Views expressed are personal.

THE DAILY QUIZ

A quiz on the various events that happened on this day throughout history

Sindhur Nagaraj

QUESTION 1

On this day in 1865, by proclamation of the U.S. Secretary of State, the _____ amendment to the Constitution, outlawing slavery, officially entered into force, having been ratified by the requisite States on December 6. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 2

This Swiss-born German artist was born on this day in 1879. His highly individual style was influenced by movements in art that included expressionism, cubism, and surrealism. He was a natural draftsman who experimented with and eventually deeply explored colour theory, writing about it extensively. Identify the artist.

QUESTION 3

An important milestone became a part of

the U.S. history on this day, involving President-elect Donald Trump. What was it?

QUESTION 4

This TV special, an adaptation of Dr. Seuss's classic children's book, aired for the first time on this day, in 1996, and became a holiday staple. Name the special.

QUESTION 5

Two Hollywood celebrities, who, although have never worked together in the same film, were born on this day, one in 1963 and the other in 1946. If the former is known for his portrayal of unconventional characters, the latter enjoyed great commercial success with movies *Jaws* and *Schindler's List*. Name them.

QUESTION 6

A British guitarist of the rock band the Rolling Stones was born on this day. Name him.



Visual question:

Identify this Czech writer and later, President, who died on this day in 2011.

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The only major American sport team that is community-owned. **Ans: Green Bay Packers**

2. The club playing in English league Two that was founded in 2002 by supporters of another club.

Ans: AFC Wimbledon

3. This country legally requires teams to give '50%+1' voting rights to its fans in order to compete in top domestic leagues. **Ans: Germany**

4. Name the only fan-owned professional football club currently existing in India. **Ans: Trivandrum FC**

5. Name the four Spanish first division clubs that have resisted legal restructuring remaining under the control of its fans or socios. **Ans: Real Madrid FC, FC Barcelona, Athletic Bilbao, and CA Osasuna**

6. Visual: Fans of this community-owned English club displayed this banner. **Ans: FC United of Manchester**

Early Birds: K.N. Viswanathan| Parimal Das| Arun Kumar Singh| Mohan Lal Patel| Tito Shiladitya

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian
S. Upendran

"How was the party last night?"

"We had a good time till Suresh started throwing bones into the bonfire."

"Why did he do that?"

"He said he wanted to make a 'bonfire'."

"A bonfire! How interesting! Do you know that the word 'bonfire' was originally 'bonefire'?"

"Really? Why would anyone want to throw bones into a fire?"

"I'll tell you. The first syllable of 'bonefire' is actually from the middle English word 'bane' meaning 'bone'."

"O.K. But it still doesn't answer my question."

"Patience! Patience!! You see, during the middle ages, the plague used to occur regularly in Europe."

"The plague? You mean the disease that killed hundreds of people."

"Not hundreds, but thousands and thousands of people. In order to prevent the disease from spreading, what people used to do was to throw the dead bodies into a fire."

"You mean they used to burn them?"

"Exactly. Big fires were made and the bodies were thrown into them. And these fires were called 'bonfires'."

"How terrible! So to begin with, the word 'bonfire' was not associated with anything pleasant."

"Definitely not. And it was to forget this unpleasant association with the word that over the years it was slowly changed from 'bonefire' to 'bonfire'. Now 'bonfire' means a large fire made outdoors for burning rubbish or as a celebration."

"Thank goodness for that. No one can refute that sitting around a bonfire is an enjoyable experience these days."

"Refute? You mean 'deny', don't you?"

"Is there a difference between the two?"

"There most certainly is. When you 'deny' something, all that you're doing is asserting that what has been said is not true. For example, I can accuse you of stealing my watch. If you deny it, you would merely be making a statement that you didn't steal it."

"So it would be my word against yours."

"Exactly. But if on the other hand, you refute it, you provide evidence to disprove what I have said. Your evidence will prove that my accusation is false and groundless."

"I see. So you cannot use the word 'refute' without any evidence. You've made the distinction between the two words very clear. I can't deny that!"

"Thank you very much."

Published in The Hindu on June 7, 1994.

Word of the day

Vocational:

of or relating to a vocation or occupation; especially providing or undergoing training in special skills

Synonyms: career, calling

Usage: A key part of our campaign was to emphasise the importance of vocational education.

Pronunciation:

newsth.live/vocationalpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /vəʊ'keɪ.jən.al/

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

From Page One

Bills on simultaneous polls rock Parliament

Home Minister Amit Shah informed the House that when the two Bills were being approved by the Union Cabinet, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had favoured referring them to a Joint Parliamentary Committee for wider deliberations at every level.

"Detailed discussions can take place in the JPC. The report of the JPC will be approved by the Cabinet. Then again, there will be a discussion on this in the House," he said.

The Opposition leaders argued that the constitutional amendment would make the State legislatures "subordinate" to Parliament and, therefore, would undermine the mandate of the people of a State.

"The State government is not subordinate to the Central government or Parliament. The Bills take away the autonomy of the State Assembly. It is not an election reform but just the fulfilment of one gentleman's desire and dream," Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee said.

Making a powerful intervention, the Congress's deputy leader of the House, Gaurav Gogoi, argued that the Bills give "excessive powers" to the Election Commission, whose role and powers have been circumscribed in the Constitution.

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leader T.R. Baalu said, "The electors have the right to elect the government for five years and this right cannot be curtailed with simultaneous elections."

Mr. Baalu, Mr. Gogoi, and Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) member Supriya Sule favoured referring the Bills to a parliamentary committee, if they could not be withdrawn.

Samajwadi Party member Dharmendra Yadav said the move would take away the plurality and diversity of the States, while All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) leader Asaduddin Owaisi claimed that the Bills would "finish off regional parties". "The Bills indirectly seek to introduce Presidential form of democracy," Mr. Owaisi said.

There was also a heated debate over Speaker Om Birla allowing members of the Treasury Benches – the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the Shiv Sena (Shinde) – to speak on the Bills.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said the Speaker had given a ruling to allow floor leaders of all parties to speak on the introduction of the Bills. "You alone do not represent Parliament, every political party has a representation here," Mr. Rijiju said.

The TDP and the Shiv Sena, both BJP allies, extended "unwavering support" for the Bills.

Congress MPs Manickam Tagore and Shashi Tharoor cited the division of votes to point out the political challenge for the government.

"My view is that this entire thing is a folly. In any case, the votes today have demonstrated that the BJP does not have the two-thirds majority required to pass a constitutional amendment," Mr. Tharoor said.

While a simple majority is required to introduce a Bill to amend the Constitution, its passage requires two-thirds majority. So, of the 461 MPs present on Tuesday, the government would have required more than 307 MPs voting in its favour. "If there would have been a voting on these Bills today, the Bills would not have passed..." Mr. Tagore added.

This is the first time that the electronic voting system was used in the new Parliament.



Congress MP Manish Tewari speaks in the Lok Sabha in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

SITs filed chargesheets in just 6% of 3,023 cases

The case was registered and transferred to the CBI in July 2023, more than two months after the incident took place as a video of the women being paraded naked went viral.

The trial is yet to begin as directions are awaited from the Supreme Court, a lawyer who is monitoring the cases said on condition of anonymity.

Six groups

Per the directions of the Supreme Court, the SITs were divided into six groups – one group for cases of murder and heinous crime; one for rape and sexual offences against women; and four for cases of arson, looting, and other crimes.

The districts of Imphal East, Imphal West, Kakching, Bishnupur, Churachandpur, and Kangpokpi had six SITs each, while Thoubal and Tengnoupal had three each.

The report stated that the 42 SITs were investigating 126 cases of murder, nine cases of sexual crimes against women, and 2,888 cases of loot, arson, and other property crimes.

More than 4,500 weapons were looted from police armouries in Manipur after ethnic violence erupted between the tribal Kuki-Zo people and the majority Meitei community on May 3, 2023. Till now, around 1,800 weapons have been recovered or surrendered by civilians.

After India, Dissanayake to visit China

Minister Vijitha Herath indicates that the govt. will continue to seek support from both Delhi and Beijing; he says rebuilding the economy is biggest priority as he calls for more tourism; Colombo will issue gazette notification making visas free of charge for nationals of 39 countries including India

Suhasini Haidar
Meera Srinivasan
NEW DELHI/COLOMBO

After his trip to India, Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake will visit China next month, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath said on Tuesday, adding that the newly elected government wants "win-win" ties with all countries.

A day after Mr. Dissanayake's talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, where the President said he would ensure that Sri Lankan territory is not "used in any manner inimical to the security of India as well as towards regional stability", Mr. Herath reaffirmed the commitment.

On Tuesday, Mr. Dissanayake travelled to Bodh Gaya to offer prayers, and returned to Colombo.

Ties with N. Korea

"As a new government, we hope to have a good relationship with China also, as well as India. And also with other countries like U.S., Russia, Cuba and North Korea..." Mr. Herath told an audience at an event or-



Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake at Mahabodhi Temple in Gaya on Tuesday. ANI

ganised by the India Foundation in Delhi.

"After this first visit to India, our next visit is to China next month," he said, indicating that the government would continue to seek support from both Delhi and Beijing, even as Mr. Dissanayake has clearly prioritised the Indian visit first.

On a visit to Jaffna last month, Chinese Ambassador to Sri Lanka Qi Zhen-

hong said that China "welcomed" Mr. Dissanayake's visit to India as it was a "close neighbour" to Sri Lanka, adding that the visit by Mr. Dissanayake to Beijing would "enhance [China-Lanka] traditional friendship, promote bilateral economic cooperation, and bring more benefits to our peoples".

Responding to questions in Delhi, Mr. Herath said that Sri Lanka's first

rism industry had been dealt three successive blows – the Easter Sunday terror attacks in 2019, COVID pandemic in 2020-21, and the economic crisis and debt default in 2022.

He announced that the Dissanayake government would soon issue a gazette notification making visas free of charge for nationals of 39 countries including India, and called for India to reciprocate the measure, and to increase tourism in both countries.

Foreign vessels

Responding to questions at the event, Mr. Herath gave no clear indication on whether Sri Lanka would continue to allow foreign research vessels, particularly Chinese ships, to berth at Sri Lankan ports after a year's moratorium on all such research expeditions ends on December 31. The Sri Lankan Foreign Minister said instead that there was a need to build a "national policy" on the issue, and that a committee had been set up to look into it. India has consistently objected to Chinese vessels on research visits to Sri Lankan ports, as it says the

ships have a "dual purpose" to also collect sensitive, strategic data in the Indian Ocean, a charge Beijing has denied.

After the Modi-Dissanayake talks on Monday, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said that India had offered its own capacities and training to Sri Lanka to circumvent the need for other foreign vessels.

To a question from *The Hindu* after the event, Mr. Herath said that the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna government would "consider" the situation of Sri Lankan refugees living in India. Many of the refugees fled violence in the 1980s, are ineligible for citizenship in India and are unsure of their future in Sri Lanka. He said that while there were procedures in place for their repatriation, not all of them wish to return to the island nation.

According to the India-based Organisation for Tamil Refugees' Rehabilitation, there are approximately 57,000 displaced persons living in 104 camps in Tamil Nadu, while about 34,000 others are settled in various cities in the State, outside the camps.

Doval in Beijing today to attend India-China Special Representatives' talks

Press Trust of India
BEIJING



National Security Adviser Ajit Doval arrived here on Tuesday to take part in the India-China Special Representatives' talks to be held on Wednesday aimed at restoring the bilateral ties stalled for over four years due to the military stand-off in eastern Ladakh.

Mr. Doval will hold the 23rd round of the talks with his Chinese counterpart and Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, and is expected to discuss a range of issues to rebuild the bilateral ties following the October 21 agreement of disengagement and patrolling in eastern Ladakh between the two countries.

Ahead of crucial talks, China on Tuesday said that it is ready to honour commitments based on the common understandings reached between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping during their meeting at Kazan in Russia on the sidelines of the BRICS summit on October 24.

"China stands ready to work with India to deliver on important common understandings reached between our two leaders, enhance mutual trust and confidence through dialogue and communication, honour our commitments and promote our bilateral relations to go back to the sound and steady growth," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a media briefing when asked about SR talks.

On Monday, the External Affairs Ministry said, "The two SRs will discuss the management of peace and tranquillity in the border areas and explore a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the boundary question."

SC Collegium meets Justice Yadav over VHP remarks

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Collegium on Tuesday met Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav of the Allahabad High Court whose reported comments at a VHP event triggered Opposition MPs to move an impeachment motion in the Rajya Sabha.

The meeting may have been an opportunity for Justice Yadav to interact with the collegium about the media reports which quoted his alleged comments at the event.

The court issued a statement on December 10 that it had taken note of the news reports about the communally charged comments made by Justice Yadav at the VHP event on December 8.

Report flags India's violation of rights of Rohingya detainees



Left: J&K police personnel conduct a search at a Rohingya settlement in Jammu.

to schooling and "older people with age-related mobility issues are left at the mercy of fellow detainees for food and toilet access."

The report also flags chronic hunger, unpalatable food, poor nutrition, poor sanitation, and lack of ventilation leading to severe mental and physical ailments, including temporary paralysis. It details how men and women were segregated, spouses were not allowed time together, and older children were forcibly separated from their parents in violation of UNHCR guidelines.

The report estimates that there are 676 Rohingya immigrants in India, of which 608 have no ongoing court cases or sentences pending. About 50% of the detainees are women and children.

The report recommends that "rather than revictimising a population that has survived genocide," the Indian government should "provide dignified refuge, starting with immediately releasing the most vulnerable Rohingya detainees and ending the arbitrary detention of more Rohingya."

The report states that over the longer term, "India should clarify the legal status of Rohingya, revise the Foreigners Act of 1946, and ensure that its policies toward refugees are in line with international standards."

Starlink devices seized in Manipur; Musk denies report

Vijaita Singh
Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

In a first, Starlink devices were seized in Imphal East on December 13 during a search by security forces.

The Starlink satellite antenna and router were abandoned by armed miscreants when the security forces conducted searches in the Keirao Khunou area, a police official said.

The device had "RPF/PLA" scribbled on it. The abbreviation stands for Peoples' Liberation Army and its political wing, the Revolutionary Peoples' Front (RPF), a Meitei extremist group banned by the Union Home Ministry. It operates from Myanmar. The group advocates secession of Manipur.

The recovery has sent alarm bells among the security agencies as the equipment which provides satellite-based high-speed Internet circumventing the Indian network has for the

first time been found in the State affected by ethnic violence since May 2023.

After the pictures of the seized equipment went viral, SpaceX founder and CEO Elon Musk said in a post on X: "This is false. Starlink satellite beams are turned off over India." SpaceX beams were "never on" for India, Mr. Musk said in a subsequent post.

Earlier, on November 23, the Andaman and Nicobar police and the Coast Guard apprehended six alleged smugglers from Myanmar who used a Starlink device to navigate the sea while transporting 6,000 kg of methamphetamine, estimated at ₹36,000 crore, in a fishing trawler.

A defence source said that the device has been handed over to the police. A government source said it could not be said conclusively if the device was used for communication, and investigations were under way.

The session will be moderated by Soma Basu, Se-

Webinar on excelling in UPSC interview to be held on Dec. 22

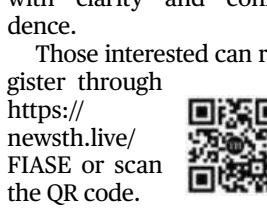
The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

ior Deputy Editor at *The Hindu*.

The webinar is specifically designed for candidates who have cleared the Civil Services (Main) Examination and are preparing for the interview.

It will focus on key areas such as understanding the mindset of the interview panel, enhancing communication skills, body language, and approaching situation-based questions with clarity and confidence.

Those interested can register through newsth.live/ FIASE or scan the QR code.



I am Kannian aged 47 years old is advised to undergo Complex Risk Open Heart Surgery in Chennai. The total expenditure is Rs.10,00,000/- I work 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 ChD.DINEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No. 60182010063210, 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, Cordial Apartments, O.No.29, Pycroft Garden Lane, Chennai-600006, Ph: 044-42137401 / 2823524 / 7338978027. E Mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com. Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org.

APPEAL

I am Kannian aged 47 years old is advised to undergo Complex Risk Open Heart Surgery in Chennai. The total expenditure is Rs.10,00,000/- I work 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 ChD.DINEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No. 60182010063210, IFSC No. CNRB0016018) favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is exempted under 80G IT.

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Kannian

BJP may send notices to MPs absent during LS voting

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday indicated that it would ask several of its Lok Sabha members why they were absent when voting for the introduction of the simultaneous election Bills was under way in the House.

Party sources, however, said a few Union Ministers and some MPs had official engagements. After a three-line whip had been issued ahead of the introduction of the Bills, they had informed the party floor managers that they would be absent.

While a Bill's introduction requires only a simple majority, a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting is required to ensure passage when the Bills are tabled after a Joint Parliamentary Committee goes into it.

As expected, when the Opposition demanded a division on the introduction of the Bills, 269 voted in its favour and 198 opposed it.

Senior BJP leaders are now looking into the absence of its MPs at the time of voting, sources said.

This is not the first time that MPs have gone missing before voting on Bills. In the past, absenteeism had been an issue, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had pulled up MPs at a customary meeting of the parliamentary party during sessions.

Cong. viewed Constitution as a private fiefdom: Shah

Home Minister launches an all-out attack on the Congress, while speaking at the conclusion of the 31-hour debate on the 'Glorious journey of 75 years of the Constitution of India' in Rajya Sabha

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Volley of charges: Amit Shah speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Winter Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

Comparing and contrasting the Constitution amendments brought by the governments led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and those steered by the Congress, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Tuesday that the Congress had altered fundamental constitutional provisions for political gain, while the BJP focused on empowering citizens.

Mr. Shah was replying to the 31-hour debate on "Glorious journey of 75 years of the Constitution of India" in the Upper House in which 80 members participated.

Calling the Congress "anti-reservation", the Home Minister said the only reason the party wanted an increase in the 50% ceiling was to provide reservation on religious lines.

The Minister accused the Congress of "finding fault" with EVMs after losing elections. Mr. Shah flayed the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, for his remarks on V.D. Savarkar.

Accusing the Opposition of peddling a wrong narrative targeting electoral gains during the 2024 Lok Sabha election, Mr. Shah said, "The 54-year-old

leader who calls himself 'yuvा' keeps roaming around with the Constitution claiming that we would change the Constitution. I want to tell that the provision to amend the Constitution is with the Constitution."

The Constitution is not an immutable document, and Article 368 enables bringing in amendments. "BJP has ruled for 16 years, and we made 22 amendments to the Constitution. Congress ruled for 55 years and made 77 changes," Mr. Shah said. He listed out four amendments brought by governments led by each of the two parties.

"The First Amendment was made on June 18, 1951. After the formation of the Constitution, Congress did not have enough patience even to wait for the Lok Sabha elections. Article

19A was added to curtail the freedom of speech and Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister at that time," Mr. Shah said. Next, he listed the 24th Amendment by the Indira Gandhi government. This, Mr. Shah said, was to restrict the fundamental rights of the citizens.

In comparison, he listed out amendments brought by the Narendra Modi government to introduce the GST, granting constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes, 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections in education and government jobs, and restoring the power of State governments to identify Socially and Educationally Backward Classes.

"The Congress considered the Constitution a private fiefdom of one fa-

mily and deceived Parliament," Mr. Shah said. He spent several minutes giving an account of the welfare schemes of the BJP government in the previous two terms.

The Home Minister said the Congress repeatedly blocked efforts to bring in reservation for Other Backward Classes. "Twice under the Congress governments, reservation was extended on religious lines. This is unconstitutional," Mr. Shah said to loud protests from the Opposition benches.

The Congress emphatically opposed Mr. Shah's comments, with party's chief whip Jairam Ramesh intervening saying that the Congress has never extended reservation on religious lines.

Mr. Shah said the fabric of the Constitution is "secular" and it therefore supported a "Common Civil Code".

"Why did the Uniform Civil Code not come? It didn't come because first

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru brought Muslim Personal Law.

I want to ask Congress, in a secular country shouldn't there be one law for all religions?" He said that all BJP-led State governments will bring the UCC on the lines of the law cleared by Uttarakhand Assembly.



Rapid fire: Mallikarjun Kharge, Jairam Ramesh and other leaders during the Constitution debate in the House on Tuesday. PTI

Stop blaming Nehru, focus on addressing present problems, says Opposition

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Opposition in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday targeted the Centre over violations of constitutional principles in the past 10 years while participating in the debate on the 75 years of the Constitution.

They urged the Narendra Modi government to stop blaming Jawaharlal Nehru and focus on addressing the present problems of people.

Congress MP Syed Nasir Hussain said the BJP members were worried about adding Socialism in the Preamble to the Constitution because they are against an equal society.

He said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman spoke in detail about socialism, and said the BJP did not accept the concept of socialistic pattern of society. He added that the demand to remove socialism from the Preamble comes out of a "Manuvadi" mindset.

"Why did the Uniform Civil Code not come? It didn't come because first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru brought Muslim Personal Law. I want to ask Congress, in a secular country shouldn't there be one law for all religions?" He said that all BJP-led State governments will bring the UCC on the lines of the electoral bonds issue.

Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha leader Derek O'Brien said that the Con-

stitution was more than a book in the library, it was a living and breathing document of the streets. "See your arrogance on a day when we are debating the Constitution of India, your hubris makes you bring a Bill on Constitution at 12 noon," Mr. O'Brien said. The Opposition, he said, will not allow Parliament to be reduced to an RSS shakha (branch).

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said if the BJP had succeeded in getting

400-plus seats in the election, Parliament would have been debating on changes to be made to it.

John Brittas of the CPI (M) asked the Centre to form a Nehru Ministry to put the entire blame of administrative failure on the first Prime Minister.

RJD MP Manoj Kumar Jha said Jawaharlal Nehru will remain as a symbol of parliamentary democracy against authoritarianism despite the BJP's attempts to malign him.

their efforts," the panel said, recommending the Centre to declare a road map for implementation of MSP as a legal guarantee at the earliest.

Predicting that such a measure will be a game changer, the panel said a legally binding MSP system could play a crucial role in reducing farmer suicides in India by providing financial stability, protecting against market volatility, alleviating debt burdens, and improving overall mental health among farmers.

Committee recommends statutory MSP, says it can help end suicides by farmers

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Echoing the long-standing demand of farmers' organisations, the Standing Committee of Parliament on Agriculture, headed by Congress leader and former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, has recommended legally guaranteed minimum support price (MSP) for crops.

The panel, in a report tabled in Parliament on Tuesday, said such a policy step will address the issue of farmers' suicides. The

panel asked the Centre to increase the amount given to farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme to ₹12,000 a year from the ₹6,000 given at present. Such seasonal incentives may be extended to tenant farmers and farm labourers, it said.

The panel noted that the MSP remains a focal point in the dialogue surrounding agricultural reform and farmers' welfare.

"Implementing a legally binding MSP in India is essential not only for safeguarding farmers' livelihoods but also for

The panel asked the Centre to increase the amount given to farmers to ₹12,000 a year from ₹6,000 given at present

promoting rural economic growth and enhancing national food security. The benefits and advantages of implementation of MSP as legal guarantee far outweigh its challenges," the panel said in its report.

The panel said legalised MSP would stimulate eco-

nomic activity in the farming areas, benefiting local businesses and economies. "With assured income through MSP, farmers are more likely to invest in their agricultural practices, leading to increased productivity and sustainability in farming. This investment can also contribute to long-term food security for the nation," the report said.

"Consistent income allows farmers to plan better and maintain production without the fear of market fluctuations undermining

MGNREGS wages do not match rising cost of living: House panel

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

A parliamentary panel has made a strong case for increasing wages of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) workers, finding the current payment not in "consonance with the rising cost of living".

The committee tabled its report on Tuesday in both Houses of Parliament after a study of the wages paid under the scheme since 2008, and urged the government to link it with

an index commensurate with national inflation.

The Rural Development Ministry, in its submission to the panel, said people took up MGNREGS works as a "last resort" and fall-back option. But the panel noted that wages of such "nominal nature", along with delayed payment, "only discourage them [workers] and propel them to migrate and seek work in areas giving better remuneration".

In the financial year 2024-25, the average MGNREGS wage increased across India by ₹28 a day.

In absolute terms, Haryana pays the maximum daily wage of ₹374. Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland pays the lowest of ₹234.

The panel noted with dismay that since the inception of the MGNREGS, the base rate for fixation of wages has been unrevised. The Government of India notifies the wage rate using the Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labour, and by keeping the wage rates thus obtained on April 1, 2019 or ₹100, whichever is more, as the base for indexation for the States.

The panel, in a report tabled in Parliament on Tuesday, said such a policy step will address the issue of farmers' suicides. The

panel asked the Centre to increase the amount given to farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme to ₹12,000 a year from the ₹6,000 given at present. Such seasonal incentives may be extended to tenant farmers and farm labourers, it said.

Mr. Srinivas Reddy said he signed off after being assured by a senior official at his department, whom he did not identify, that the contracting party was SECI. He said he had "no idea what the supplier was Adani".

The next day, the Cabinet approved the deal "in principle," according to minutes from the Cabinet meeting, allowing the regulatory process to be fast-tracked. On October 21, the Andhra Pradesh Power Coordination Committee – which had been tasked with studying the deal after the preliminary approval – filed a report recommending the deal.

Seven days later, the Andhra Pradesh Cabinet officially committed to procuring 7,000 megawatts from SECI. For most of September 15, 2021 then-Energy Minis-



Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

In doing so, it overrode advice from officials at the Finance and Energy departments that the contract did not represent good value.

On October 28 – the same day as the Cabinet meeting that approved the deal but before the green-light was given – the Finance Department made a submission to the Cabinet stating there was an industry trend of falling solar prices and that future agreements would likely be cheaper, according to Cabinet minutes.

The Treasury also questioned the duration of the 25-year contract, especially since supply was scheduled to start only in 2024, according to the minutes.

The records of the Cabinet deliberations do not document any discussion about the Finance and Energy departments' concerns beyond a statement in the minutes that the Cabinet was "duly overriding the finance minister".

Andhra Pradesh will pay ₹2.49 per kWh when the solar power comes online, according to the deal.

राजस्थान युवा बोर्ड
(युवा मानने एवं खेल विभाग, राजस्थान सरकार)
सावाई मानसीह रस्टेडियम, प्रधान मंत्री रोड, जगपुर तल, जगपुर देलीफॉर्म्स 0141-2741489

क्रमांक: प.1(19)एप्र०/2024/12469396 तिथि: 26.12.2024

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा संख्या 03/2024-25

राजस्थान युवा बोर्ड की जारी किया जाकर सभी संस्थानों द्वारा योग्यता प्राप्ति के अंतर्कालीन ई-निविदा संख्या 03/2024-25 दिनांक 26.12.2024 को दोपहर 1.00 बजे तक अंगठीत की जाती है।

निविदा से संबंधित पूर्ण विवरण युवा बोर्ड की वेबसाइट www.youthboard.rajasthan.gov.in एवं लोक उपायपाठी [www.sppr.raj.nic.in](http://sppr.raj.nic.in) व एप्रोक्रेशन पोर्टल <http://eproc.raj.nic.in> पर देखा जा सकता है।

NIB Code RYB2425WLB0322
UBN-RYB2425SLB00003
राजस्थान सरकार/सी 24/9227

सदस्य संघिन

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
(Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)

Corporate Identity Number U4109PB2010SGC033813

Website : www.pspcl.in Mobile No. 96461-10914

E-Tender Enq. No. 7635/P-1/EMP. 12877 dated 16.12.2024.

Dy. Chief Engineer/ Headquarter (Procurement Cell-1) GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites E-Tender ID No. 2024_131522_1 for procuring two numbers multipurpose fire tenders with TATA Motors make chassis from fabricator for fire fighting services at GGSSTP Rupnagar. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 16.12.2024 from 05:00 PM onwards.

Note :- Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

76155/12/3728/2023/40036

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE

Office of the Executive Engineer, Shanthinagara Division, 9th Floor, P.U. Building, M.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 001.

No.:EE/SN/TEND/18/2024 Date:17.12.2024

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)

(Through KPP Portal only) (Two Cover System)

The Executive Engineer, Shanthinagara Division invites tenders from eligible Tenderers for the works detailed in the table below:

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1	Providing Security Guards to BBMP Schools and Colleges of East Zone on Outsourced basis. Approx. Value of work: Rs. 479.99 Lakhs. EMD: Rs. 7,19,987/-

1)

IN BRIEF



Taiwanese laptop maker MSI starts production at Chennai

Taiwanese laptop maker MSI announced the commencement of its manufacturing operations in India with its first facility in Chennai. In line with the objective of "Make in India," MSI will unveil locally-made versions of two laptop models – the MSI Modern 14 and MSI Thin 15, a statement said. To enhance the accessibility of products, MSI is raising number of touchpoints, including more laptop brand stores and availability at Croma and Reliance Retail. PTI

Granules gets U.S. FDA nod for copy of Takeda's ADHD drug

Granules India has received U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval for Lisdexamphetamine Dimesylate chewable tablets, its generic version of Takeda Pharmaceuticals' central nervous system stimulant Vyvanse chewable tablets indicated for the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and moderate to severe binge eating disorder. Lisdexamphetamine Dimesylate chewable tablets currently figure in the FDA Drug Shortages List.

CBDT unveils campaign on ITR-AIS mismatch

The Income Tax department said it is sending SMS and emails to taxpayers and non-filers where it identified mismatch in transactions between Annual Information Statement (AIS) and income disclosed in Income Tax Returns (ITRs) for the financial years 2023-24 and 2021-22. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said it has started an electronic campaign. PTI

Sensex slides 1.3% on export plunge, Fed's rate review

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

India's key benchmark indices tumbled around 1.3% on Tuesday, thanks to weak sentiment after merchandise exports hit a 25-month low in November, and a renewed selling spree from foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) ahead of the U.S. Federal Reserve's monetary policy review on Wednesday.

The S&P BSE Sensex fell 1,064 points to 80,684 points led by BhartiAirtel (2.83%), IndusInd Bank (2.46%), JSW Steel (2.40%), TCS (2.07%) and Asian Paints (1.94%). All the 30 stocks in the index ended in the red. The NSE Nifty index fell 332 points, or 1.35%, to 24,336 points.

'About 20% of AIF money used to circumvent laws'

Ashokamithran T.

MUMBAI

About 20% of investments in Alternative Investment Funds (AIF) has been used to circumvent financial-regulations, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) whole-time member Ananth Narayan asserted on Tuesday.

"One of the challenges we had with a light-touch regulation framework is that we have seen cases of funds being structured to supplement existing financial sector regulations," he said. "So, of the ₹5 lakh crore of actual drawdown, around ₹1 lakh crore of investment has been questionable in terms of the regulatory intent behind



Ananth Narayan

those investments," he said at a national summit on AIFs organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry or CII.

AIFs are often used by high net-worth individuals to invest in start-ups, infrastructure funds and other complex high-return, high-risk investment avenues to grow their wealth.



Late start of crushing dents sugar production.

The Hindu Bureau

COIMBATORE

Sugar production during the current season that started on October 1 stood at 61.39 lakh tonne till December 15 against 74.05 lakh tonne a year earlier, according to ISMA.

The Indian Sugar and Bio Energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA) said that 477 factories were operating now, compared with 496 last year.

"This year, sugar factories in Karnataka started late by about 7-12 days while in another major State, Maharashtra, mills started late by 15-20 days, compared with last year. However, the number of operating factories and the corresponding crush rate is picking up at a faster rate," ISMA said.

Sugar diversion towards ethanol is estimated to be higher at about 40 lakh tonne compared with 21.5 lakh tonne last year.

In UP, 117 factories crushed 23.04 lakh tonne, almost 1 lakh tonne higher than last year. In Maharashtra, 183 were in operation against 191 last year.

Migrant workers were not available for cane crushing in Maharashtra due to polls. In Karnataka, fields were wet due to late rains and mills started crushing only by November 8.

RBI lifts restrictions on ECL Finance and Edelweiss ARC

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will have decided to lift the restrictions placed on ECL Finance Ltd. and Edelweiss Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd. (ARC) with immediate effect.

The RBI had, on May 29, imposed business restrictions on the two Edelweiss Group entities.

ECL was asked to cease and desist from undertaking structured transactions in respect of wholesale exposures other than repayment, and/or account closure, during the normal course of business.

Blackstone JV Ventive Hospitality unveils IPO

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

Ventive Hospitality Ltd. (Formerly ICC Realty (India) Private Ltd.) will enter the capital market with an Initial Public Offer (IPO) in the price band of ₹610 to ₹643 per equity share with a face value of ₹1 each.

The IPO at the upper price band will fetch ₹1,600 crore. The issue will open on December 20 and close December 24.

The firm is a joint venture (JV) between U.S.-based Blackstone Group and Panchshil Realty. Panchshil Realty holds 60% stake with Blackstone owning the balance.

Finance Minister asserts Q2 growth 'blip' is temporary

Nirmala Sitharaman exudes confidence about 'healthy growth' in the coming quarters, and food inflation easing as the Kharif crop is estimated to be higher and the Centre is building buffers

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday dismissed concerns about a cyclical growth slowdown and a generalised downturn in India's manufacturing sector, terming the disappointing 5.4% second quarter growth numbers as a 'temporary blip' caused by a multitude of factors, including the conduct of the general elections and the alignment of the festival calendar in this year compared to 2023-24.

Responding to the debate in the Lok Sabha on the first batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants for 2024-25, that entail a net cash outgo of ₹44,182.87 crore, she also asserted that the Union Government remains committed to better management of food inflation, where prices of some food products are volatile owing to weather vagaries.

The Minister said she is optimistic about further 'softening of food inflation pressures' in light of an expected increase in kharif foodgrain output as per the first advance estimates of farm output in 2024-25, even as the government is making efforts to build buffers for key food items such as cereals and pulses.

She also pointed to the Centre's efforts to provide



All is well: The FM said India's core inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, is at a decadal low. SANSAD TV

essentials like dal and atta at an affordable price, and distributing onions, rice, tur dal, wheat flour, gram at subsidised prices.

Arguing the NDA's record had been better on inflation management in the past 25 years than the UPA's decade in office between 2004 and 2014, the FM said that core inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, is at a decadal low.

Noting India's real growth rate in this year was 6.7% and 5.4% in the first and second quarters (Q1 and Q2) of 2024-25, she conceded the Q2 rate is lower than was expected.

The second quarter has been a challenging one for India and most economies in the world. In the last three years, India's GDP growth rate has averaged 8.3%. This is outstanding, I don't want to

judge myself or the Ministry, but you can compare it with the world. India has been the fastest growing major economy of the world and the credit goes to the people of India... and the leadership that puts policy upfront and responds to people and their aspirations," she said.

"Out of the 12 quarters in the previous three years, GDP growth rate was lower than 5.4% in two quarters - Q4 of 2021-22, and Q3 of 2022-23. So, it is important to understand that this drop happened in just two of the last 12 quarters. Let us not pick one number and predict the future, there has been a sustained growth..." she pointed out.

She also said the regular Union Budget was passed in the middle of August 2024, so effectively, the implementation of new projects started after that,

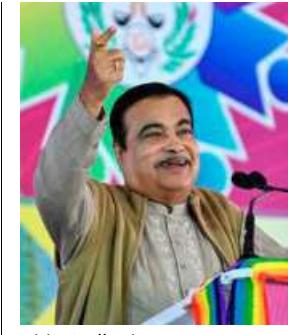
which is no different from earlier years when Parliamentary polls were held

"The government believes the trend in Q2 is only a temporary blip and the economy will see healthy growth in the next quarters. Also, a generalised slowdown in manufacturing is not expected as it is restricted to few sections only," she underlined, calling for the 'blip' to be understood in the broader context.

Calendar effects

"Out of 23 manufacturing sectors in the IIP, about half of them remain strong even now, so we need to put this in context. Capital expenditure of the Union government has grown by 6.4% between July and October 2024, so I am very optimistic about improved performance going forward," she averred.

She also cited the differences in alignments of festivities between last year's September and October months and the current year, that created a "modest downward bias" because there were 15 days when people do not spend and it came very close to Dussehra when people spend. "So, that quarter got affected by a good spending fortnight and a not-so-good spending fortnight both occurring in that quarter itself," the Minister explained.



Nitin Gadkari

Deploy Made in India machinery to reduce infra project costs'

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari urged infrastructure industry stakeholders to adopt 'Made in India' machinery that would help reduce project costs.

The Union Minister for Road, Transport and Highways made these remarks on Tuesday at Assocham's annual infrastructure conference. There are many under-construction tunnel projects in India.

"We should have... good technology. But at the same time, we have to reduce the cost. And for that reason, my request to all of you is that how it is possible for us, to have Made in India machinery, which is our dream and which is the mission for all of us," Mr. Gadkari said.

Project costs should be reduced without compromising on quality, as bridge and tunnel projects were very crucial, he said. The minister revealed that 55% work on the Zojila tunnel project was complete.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	80,694	-1.30
US Dollar	84.91	0.00
Gold	79,300	1.21
Brent oil	72.70	-1.58

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2487.60	-24.80
Adani Ports	1231.90	-11.25
Apollo Hosp	7218.75	-40.45
Asian Paints	2356.00	-46.25
Axis Bank	1136.25	-14.65
Bajaj Auto	8895.00	-103.35
Bajaj Finserv	1643.15	-30.50
Bajaj Finance	7152.60	-55.60
Bharti Elec.	310.60	-5.60
Bharti Airtel	1615.30	-47.25
BPCL	293.00	-4.95
Britannia Ind.	4776.75	-69.75
Cipla	1450.85	2.40
Coal India	402.90	-7.55
Dr Reddy's Lab	1247.65	-22.30
Eicher Motors	4742.65	-95.85
Grasim Ind.	2599.70	-85.45
HCL Tech	1950.60	-3.80
HDFC Bank	1833.25	-31.95
HDFC Life	626.75	-8.20
Hero MotoCorp	4415.10	-123.90
Hindalco	639.45	-14.05
Hindustan Unilever	2363.25	-2.90
ICICI Bank	1333.75	-12.35
IndusInd Bank	975.65	-23.70
Infosys	1976.60	-3.45
JSW Steel	966.85	-23.50
Kotak Bank	1784.05	-20.40
L&T	3807.20	-70.65
M&M	3041.50	-43.35
Maruti Suzuki	1110.85	-168.45
NestleIndia	2202.95	-35.80
NTPC	3409.05	-3.85
ONGC	247.40	-4.40
PowerGrid Corp	329.80	-5.20
Reliance Ind.	1245.30	-23.00
SBI Life	1409.70	-11.95
State Bank	855.00	-10.40
Shriram Finance	2976.90	-160.55
Tata Pharma	1789.05	-20.75
TataConsumerProduct	904.90	-15.45
Tata Motors	779.75	-5.05
Tata Steel	145.68	-2.11
TCS	4328.50	-86.70
Tech Mahindra	1770.75	-4.80
Titan	3406.10	-32.10
Trent Ltd.	6941.65	-58.70
UltraTech Cement	11774.95	-167.55
Wipro	308.85	-0.35

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on December 17

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	84.70	85.02
Euro	88.80	89

WELLINGTON

Magnitude 7.3 earthquake causes widespread damage in Vanuatu



A powerful magnitude 7.3 earthquake struck just off the coast of Vanuatu on Tuesday, causing widespread destruction in the South Pacific island nation as the injured began arriving at a hospital and unconfirmed reports of casualties emerged. A tsunami warning was called off less than two hours after the quake. AFP

WASHINGTON

15-year-old girl kills teacher and student at a school in Wisconsin



A 15-year-old girl was identified by the police as the assailant who opened fire on Monday at a school in the U.S. State of Wisconsin, where a fellow student and teacher were killed and the suspected shooter was found dead. Seven were wounded at the Abundant Life Christian School, a private Christian school with 400 students. AFP

BEIJING

China and U.S. can achieve 'great things': Foreign Minister Wang Yi



China's Foreign Minister said on Tuesday that Beijing and Washington can achieve "many great things" if they work together, ahead of next month's inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump. But top diplomat Wang Yi also warned against what he called the U.S.'s "crude interference" on the issue of Taiwan. AFP

MOSCOW

Russian MPs approve Bill that can remove Taliban's terrorist tag



The Lower House of Russia's parliament on Tuesday approved a Bill that would set the stage for Moscow to remove the designation of the Taliban in Afghanistan as a terrorist group. The legislation still needs to be approved by the Upper House and signed by President Vladimir Putin to become law. AFP

Senior Russian General killed in Moscow blast

Lt. Gen. Igor Kirillov, the chief of the military's nuclear, biological and chemical protection forces, was killed by a bomb hidden in a scooter outside his apartment building in Moscow as he was leaving for office; he was accused by Ukraine of directing the use of banned chemical weapons

Associated Press

A senior Russian General was killed on Tuesday by a bomb hidden in a scooter outside his apartment building in Moscow, a day after Ukraine's security service levelled criminal charges against him. A Ukrainian official said the service carried out the attack.

Lt. Gen. Igor Kirillov, the chief of the military's nuclear, biological and chemical protection forces, was killed as he left for his office. Mr. Kirillov's assistant also died in the attack.

Mr. Kirillov, 54, was under sanctions from several countries, including the U.K. and Canada, for his actions in Moscow's war in

Ukraine. On Monday, Ukraine's Security Service, or SBU, opened a criminal investigation against him, accusing him of directing the use of banned chemical weapons.

An official with the SBU said the agency was behind the attack. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to release the information, described Mr. Kirillov as a "war criminal and an entirely legitimate target."

The SBU has said it recorded more than 4,800 occasions when Russia used chemical weapons on the battlefield since its full-scale invasion in February 2022. In May, the U.S. State Department said that it



Controversial figure: Lt. Gen. Igor Kirillov was under sanctions from several countries for his actions in Moscow's war in Ukraine. AP

had recorded the use of chloropicrin, a poison gas first deployed in First World War, against Ukrainian troops.

Russia has denied using any chemical weapons in Ukraine and, in turn, has accused Kyiv of using toxic agents in combat.

Mr. Kirillov, who took his current job in 2017, was one of the most high-profile figures to level those accusations. He held numerous briefings to accuse the

Ukrainian military of using toxic agents and planning to launch attacks with radioactive substances — claims that Ukraine and its Western allies rejected as propaganda.

The bomb used in Tuesday's attack was triggered remotely, according to Russian news reports.

The SBU official provided footage that they said was of the bombing. It shows two men leaving a building shortly before a blast fills the frame.

Russia's top state investigative agency said it's investigating Kirillov's death as a case of terrorism, and officials in Moscow vowed to punish Ukraine.

Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of Russia's Se-

curity Council chaired by President Vladimir Putin, described the attack as an attempt by Kyiv to distract public attention away from its military failures and vowed that its "senior military-political leadership will face inevitable retribution."

Advantage Russia
Over the past year, Russia has been on the front foot in the war in Ukraine, grinding deeper into the eastern region of Donetsk region despite heavy losses.

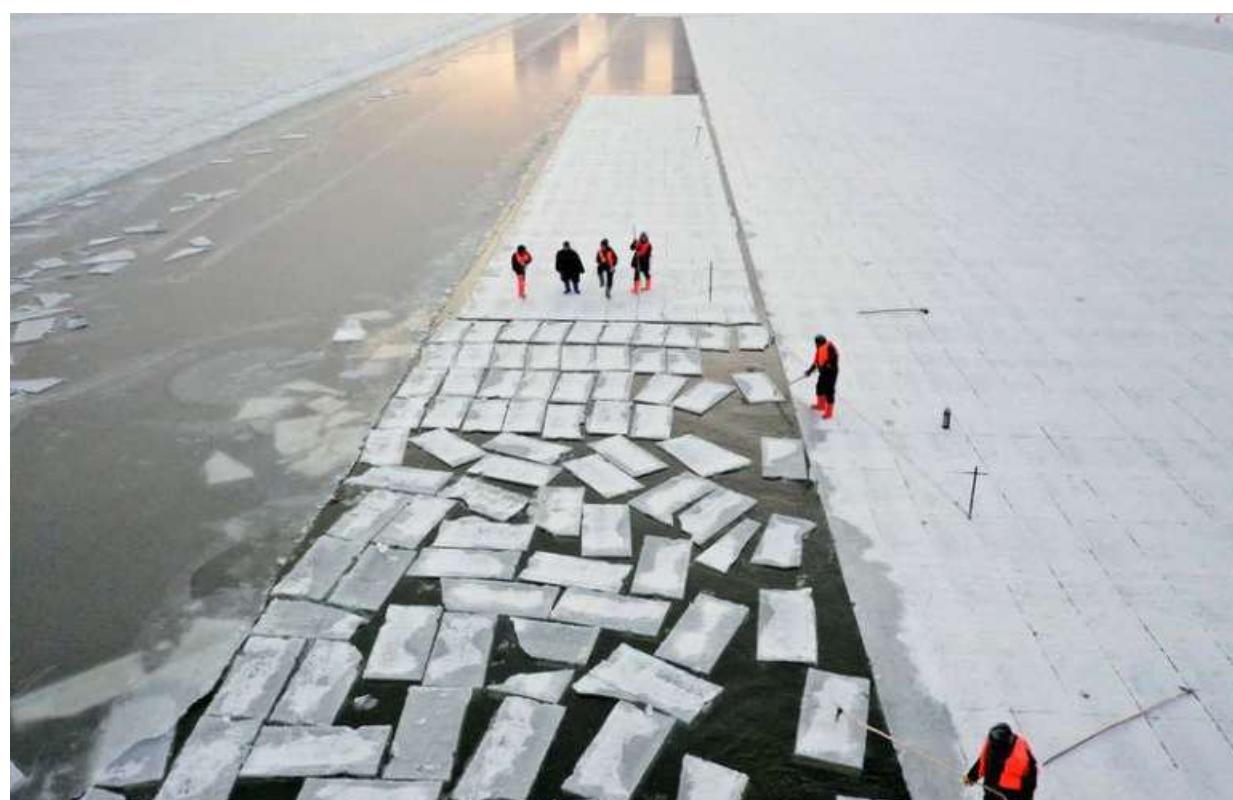
Ukraine tried to change the dynamic with an incursion into Russia's Kursk region, but it has continued to slowly lose ground on its own territory.

tion to £35 million in emergency funding for Ukraine.

"These sanctions will add further pressure to Putin's stalling war economy, just as we strengthen Ukraine's hand with new funding for emergency support to meet its humanitarian needs and for vital repairs to the energy system, to help Ukrainians living through the third winter of Russia's illegal full-scale invasion," U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer said.

On Monday, 12 European countries had agreed to "disrupt and deter" Russia's "shadow fleet" ahead of a leader-level meeting of the 10-nation Joint Expeditionary Force in Tallinn, Estonia, on Tuesday.

'Ice-breaking' session



Workers harvest ice from the frozen Songhua river on Tuesday in preparation for the annual Harbin Ice and Snow World festival held in Harbin in China's northeastern Heilongjiang province. The festival runs from late December to late February. AFP

Nations open embassies, engage with Syria's new rulers after Assad's ouster

Agence France-Presse

DAMASCUS

Syria's new rulers stepped up engagement on Tuesday with countries that deemed ousted President Bashar al-Assad a pariah, with the French flag raised at the embassy for the first time in over a decade.

Mr. Assad fled Syria just over a week ago, as his forces abandoned tanks and other equipment in the face of a lightning offensive spearheaded by the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS).



A Syrian woman with a scarf in colours of 'revolutionary' Syrian flag takes a selfie with her friends in Damascus on Tuesday. AP

toric and pledged to protect the country's religious minorities.

The EU will reopen its mission in Syria following "constructive" talks with its new leadership, the bloc's foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said, describing

with Syria's new leaders.

France, an early backer of the uprising, sent a delegation to Damascus on Tuesday, with special envoy Jean-Francois Guillaumet saying his country was preparing to stand with Syrians during the transitional period.

Satisfied UN
After meeting Syria's new leaders, the United Nations humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher said on Tuesday he was "encouraged", and that there was a "basis for ambitious scaling-up of vital humanitarian support".

German diplomats were also in Damascus on Tuesday, while Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said her country was ready to engage with the new leadership.

Will keep control over Gaza after war, says Katz

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz said on Tuesday that his country's forces would be free to act in the Gaza Strip even after its war with Hamas ends.

"After eliminating Hamas's military and governmental capabilities in Gaza, Israel would have security control over Gaza with complete freedom of action" for the Israeli military, Mr. Katz said in a post on X, noting that it was his own "position".

Mr. Katz said that Israel's future control over Gaza should be "exactly like in Judea and Samaria", the biblical names for the West Bank which Israel has occupied since 1967 and where its forces conduct frequent raids.

The question of Gaza's post-war governance has remained unresolved, more than a year since Israel vowed to crush Hamas in retaliation for its October 7, 2023 attack.

Predecessor's stand

Mr. Katz's predecessor Yoav Gallant had voiced firm opposition to any prolonged Israeli control of Gaza, from which Israel withdrew troops and settlers in 2005 after decades of direct rule.

In May, then as Defence Minister, Mr. Gallant said that he would "not agree to the establishment of an Israeli military administration in Gaza". "Israel must not have civilian control over the Gaza Strip," Mr. Gallant said at the time, urging Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to devise a post-war plan for the territory. Mr. Netanyahu sacked Mr. Gallant in November, citing disagreements over war policies.

Myanmar rebels recapture headquarters after 30 years

Agence France-Presse

BANGKOK

A Myanmar ethnic rebel group said on Tuesday it had recaptured its headquarters from the Myanmar military, almost 30 years after it was forced out.

Karen National Union (KNU) fighters had seized Manerplaw on the Thai border following days of fighting, KNU leader Saw Thamain Tun said.

For years Manerplaw

Karen National Union fighters seized
Manerplaw on the Thai border after days of fighting

was the headquarters of the KNU's decades-long armed struggle for rights for the Karen minority and home to other dissident politicians opposing Myanmar's then-junta.

Following a split within the Christian-majority

KNU, the junta and a breakaway Buddhist faction captured the base in 1995, sending thousands fleeing into Thailand.

After the fall of Manerplaw, the junta renamed the area Kayin State and put the Democratic Karen Buddhist Organization, an allied armed group, in charge of it.

Manerplaw "was a historical place for the Karen", said Saw Thamain Tun, with around 100 of its soldiers buried there.

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Ph.: 0141-2740170 E-Mail: ace1.jpr.phed@rajasthan.gov.in			
No- ACE(1)/PHED/Ar.Kotputli-Behrod/2024-25/ Date-			
On behalf of the Governor of Rajasthan NIT No. 01-09/2024-25 online tender is hereby invited from eligible bidders for "Work of construction of Sources, rising main pipelines, internal village distribution pipeline and FHTC, CWR/GLR/OHSR, pump house including one year Defect liability period of 9 Schemes under JJM in the jurisdiction of PHED Division Behrod" Interested bidders may participate upto 06.00 PM on dated 08.01.2025 as per criteria mentioned in the detailed NIT/Tender document available on website https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in & http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in Tenders are to be submitted online in electronic format on website https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in as per prescribed schedule. (NIB CODE- PHE2425A329)			
NIT No.	Particular	Est. Cost (Rs in Lacs)	UBN No.
01/2024-25	Construction and commissioning of TW Rising and distribution pipeline OHSR CWR FHTC works under JJM village Shahpur under PS Bansur with 1 year defect liability period	260.90	PHE2425WSOB06926
02/2024-25	Construction and commissioning of TW Rising and distribution pipeline OHSR CWR FHTC works under JJM village Gadoj under PS Behror with 1 year defect liability period	276.33	PHE2425WSOB06927
03/2024-25	Construction and commissioning of TW Rising and distribution pipeline OHSR CWR FHTC works under JJM village Kohra under PS Behror with 1 year defect liability period	290.29	PHE2425WSOB06928
04/2024-25	Construction and commissioning of TW Rising and distribution pipeline OHSR CWR FHTC works under JJM village Khundroth under PS Neemrana with 1 year defect liability period	397.69	PHE2425WSOB06929
05/2024-25	Construction and commissioning of TW Rising and distribution pipeline OHSR CWR FHTC works under JJM village Shahjahanpur under PS Neemrana with 1 year defect liability period	463.1	PHE2425WSOB06931
06/2024-25	Construction and commissioning of TW Rising and distribution pipeline GLSR CWR FHTC works under JJM village Dahami under PS Behror with 1 year defect liability period	369.71	PHE2425WSOB06933
07/2024-25	Construction and commissioning of TW Rising and distribution pipeline OHSR CWR FHTC works under JJM village Doghera under PS Behror with 1 year defect liability period	277.40	PHE2425WSOB06934
08/2024-25	Construction and commissioning of TW Rising and distribution pipeline OHSR CWR FHTC works under JJM village Khor-Banesinghpura under PS Behror with 1 year defect liability period	340.39	PHE2425WSOB06937
09/2024-25	Construction and commissioning of TW Rising and distribution pipeline OHSR CWR FHTC works under JJM village ANANTPURANIBHOR-LAKSHIWAS under PS Behror with 1 year defect liability period	505.34	PHE2425WLOB06938

ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER PHED REGION-I JAIPUR

DIPR/C/12954/2024

BIG BLOW

Hazlewood set to miss rest of Border-Gavaskar Trophy



Australia had to cope with a depleted bowling attack following Josh Hazlewood's latest injury in the third Test in Brisbane on Tuesday. The speedster suffered a right calf strain and according to a Cricket Australia press release, 'he will miss the rest of the current Test.' He is likely to miss the remainder of the Test series.'

FINGERS CROSSED

Rain likely to have a big say on the final day at the Gabba



Australia's Bureau of Meteorology has said that there is a "high chance of showers" on the last day of the third Test between Australia and India at the Gabba. "High chance of showers, most likely late in the morning and afternoon. There's also a chance of a thunderstorm, possibly severe," it said.

PERFECT FAREWELL

Southee finishes on a high as New Zealand posts huge win



New Zealand tore through England's batting on Tuesday to crush the visitor by 423 runs in the third Test and send Tim Southee into retirement on a triumphant note at Seddon Park in Hamilton. **The scores:** New Zealand 347 & 453 bt England 143 & 234 in 46.2 overs (Bethell 76, Root 54, Santner 4/85); **PoM:** Santner; **PoS:** Brook.

IN THE HUNT

Yoddhas stun Steelers, stay in playoffs race; Pink Panthers win



Bhavani Rajput scored 11 points to help UP Yoddhas beat table topper Haryana Steelers 31-24 in a PKL match in Pune on Tuesday to keep its play-off hopes alive. With the win, Yoddhas moved to third spot in the table. In the other match of the day, Jaipur Pink Panthers defeated Bengaluru Bulls 35-26.

Brave Bumrah and Akash help India live to fight another day

The duo, with the visitors struggling at 213 for nine and needing 246 to avoid the follow-on, takes the team to 252 for nine at close; Rahul makes the most of a dropped catch to score 84; Jadeja rises to the occasion with a crucial half-century

INDIA IN AUS

K.C. Vijaya Kumar

BRISBANE

Indian cricket's seemingly eternal fan Sudhir Gautam blew his conch and waved the national flag. Out in the middle, the tail wagged furiously and it was more than enough for Rohit Sharma's men to keep their heads afloat in the third Test.

After K.L. Rahul (84) and Ravindra Jadeja (77) lent spine, it was the turn of Jasprit Bumrah and Akash Deep to help India avoid the follow-on during a grim Tuesday of rains and runs. At the fourth day's close here at the Gabba, India scored 252 for nine in its unfinished first innings while trailing Australia's 445. And a 193-run deficit still remains.

Needing 246 to avoid the ignominy of batting again, the visitors were struggling at 213 for nine. While the rest were losing their nerve, Bumrah and Akash stayed calm. Singles were stolen, gaps were milked, the odd four was hit and as Pat Cummins kept swapping between bouncers and deliveries hovering around off-stump, India's number 10 and 11 batters refused to budge.

Fittingly Akash got those crucial avoid-the-follow-on runs and he thumped his chest. Soon bad light intervened and it fitted into the template of this contest split between rugged cricket and damp climate.

Earlier, it was a morning of glorious sunshine, moist leaves and wild mush-



Turning it around: Rahul and Jadeja's knocks rescued India from a precarious position. AP

rooms on wet tree barks.

Resuming at the overnight 51 for four, India leant on Rahul and Rohit. The former suffered an instant scare as he edged the day's first delivery but Steve Smith fumbled at second slip as Cummins lapsed into despair.

Meanwhile, Rohit nudged a single off Mitchell Starc, and Rahul drove with class. Rohit too drove Cummins but the latter

scalped the former with one that landed in the corridor of doubt. Rohit played just enough for Alex Carey to warm his gloves.

In dire straits

At 74 for five, Jadeja walked in and drew strength from Rahul. After a sliced four off Starc and with a 50 behind his name, the opener, easily the best Indian batter so far in this Border-Gavaskar Trophy series, re-

mained the anchor. Meanwhile, Australia had to deal with Josh Hazlewood's absence as the seamer left to check on a niggle.

A drizzle soon ensued and on resumption, Jadeja swept Nathan Lyon, straight-drove Cummins and Rahul found his runs down the leg-side. Just as the 67-run sixth-wicket partnership seemed to find more ballast, Rahul (84) in

SCOREBOARD**AUSTRALIA — 1ST INNINGS**

445 in 17.1 overs
INDIA — 1ST INNINGS
Yashasvi Jaiswal c Marsh b Starc 4 (2b, 1x4), K.L. Rahul c Smith b Lyon 84 (139b, 8x4), Shubman Gill c Marsh b Starc 1 (3b), Virat Kohli c Carey b Hazlewood 3 (16b), Rishabh Pant c Carey b Cummins 9 (12b), Rohit Sharma c Carey b Cummins 10 (27b, 2x4), Ravindra Jadeja c Marsh b Cummins 77 (123b, 7x4, 1x6), Nitish Kumar b Cummins 16 (61b, 1x4), Mohammed Siraj c Carey b Starc 1 (11b), Jasprit Bumrah (batting) 27 (31b, 1x6), Akash Deep (batting) 27 (31b, 2x4, 1x6); Extras (b-4, lb-2, nb-3, w-1); 10; Total (for nine wkts. in 74.5 overs): 252.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-4 (Jaiswal, 0.2 overs), 2-6 (Gill, 2.1), 3-22 (Kohli, 7.2), 4-44 (Pant, 13.5), 5-74 (Rohit, 23.3), 6-141 (Rahul, 42.3), 7-194 (Nitish, 59.5), 8-201 (Siraj, 62.6), 9-213 (Jadeja, 65.6).

AUSTRALIA BOWLING

Starc 24-3-83-3, Hazlewood 6-2-22-1, Cummins 20.5-2-80-4, Lyon 21-0-54-1, Head 1-0-1-0, Marsh 2-0-6-0.

trying to cut, ended up guiding Lyon to a diving Smith at first slip.

After a lunch-cum-rain break, Jadeja and Nitish Kumar stayed together. Jadeja got to his 50 and twirled his bat like a sword. Jadeja and a patient Nitish stitched 53 runs for the seventh wicket before the latter edged a Cummins delivery onto his stumps.

Soon, Mohammed Siraj fell to Starc and Jadeja succumbed to the short-ball trap set by Cummins. The southpaw hooked straight to Mitchell Marsh and India was down for the count but Bumrah and Akash had self-belief, and now a gripping fifth day awaits despite the expected dark clouds.

Rahul delighted to see Indian tail wag



Gritty stand: Akash and Bumrah frustrated the Aussies with an unbroken last-wicket partnership. AP

K.C. Vijaya Kumar

BRISBANE

Like slurping a *gadbad* ice cream at his hometown Mangaluru, K.L. Rahul seems to have taken a liking for Australia's bowlers. His 84 during India's reply to Australia's 445 in the third Test, was a fine innings, and the opener found more joy in the runs that Ravindra Jadeja and the last-wicket pair of Jasprit Bumrah and Akash Deep scored at the Gabba here on Tuesday.

Speaking to the media, Rahul said: "It's very good to see the lower-order scoring runs. Their (Bumrah and Akash) little partnership and avoiding the follow-on makes a huge difference, especially knowing that there's a bit of rain around and so much of the game has already been lost to rain."

"In the last half an hour, it was not just the runs that they got but also the heart that they showed to keep

Vettori says Bumrah and Akash hurt Aussie plans

K.C. Vijaya Kumar

BRISBANE

Australia's assistant coach Daniel Vettori asserted that enforcing the follow-on was always on the agenda. While talking to the media at the Gabba here on Tuesday, Vettori said: "The only way to force this game (third Test) was to enforce a follow-on. There was a desperation to get that final wicket and we thought we had a really good chance when (Ravindra) Jadeja was dismissed, but it was a real fighting partnership from (Jasprit) Bumrah and Akash (Deep)."

Asked if India's rear-guard action surprised the Aussies, Vettori was quick to deny. "Any batter on any given day can step up and deliver. If you look at their averages, you might think there's not much there. But Bumrah has proven that he can put on partnerships, can attack and can defend. I think Akash is better than a number 11."

Dealing with an injury crisis related to Josh Hazlewood, Vettori explained: "He is pretty despondent. Obviously he fell this morning in warm-ups. It's just unfortunate for him to come back after another injury from the first Test and then to pick up a calf injury here. I think the weather allowed us to operate in terms of the breaks, it allowed Mitch (Starc) and Pat (Cummins) to be able to come back on multiple occasions, whereas if we had played out the full 90 overs, it would have been tougher."

Vettori felt that first innings runs were crucial considering the weather. "The first innings runs were going to be vital as you don't want to plan for the weather. Unfortunately, the amount of time lost has made it difficult."

Matthews does the star turn as WI draws level

Shayan Acharya

NAVI MUMBAI

It's not for nothing that Hayley Matthews is rated so high. The West Indies captain led from the front (85 n.o., 47b, 17x4) as the team cruised to a nine-wicket win against India and drew level in the three-match T20I series at the DY Patil Stadium on Tuesday.

Moving on from the defeat in the series opener, the West Indies batters put up a spirited show and chased down India's tricky total of 159 for nine without much sweat.

With the dew settling in, the Indian bowlers struggled to find breakthroughs. Making the most of the reprieves, Matthews and Qiana Joseph forged an opening stand of 66 to set the tone.

With Harmanpreet Kaur missing out due to a dodgy knee, stand-in captain Smriti Mandhana explored every possible bowling option, but nothing clicked as Matthews looked at ease en route her 15th fifty in T20Is.

She played second fiddle when Joseph went on the rampage, hammering three fours and a six in Titas Sadhu's opening over.

Switching gears

Matthews flexed her muscles soon, tearing apart Renuka Singh and taking the team to 65 in the PowerPlay.

Even though Saima Thakor claimed her maiden wicket in T20Is by sending back Joseph shortly after the PowerPlay, Matthews forged an unbeaten 94-run partnership with She-

maine Campbell (29 n.o., 26b, 4x4).

West Indies again opted to field. And the move paid off this time as it managed to reduce the hosts to 48 for three by the ninth over.

Even though Smriti cashed in on the three dropped catches to score 62 off 41 deliveries, the other top-order batters let India down. Uma Chetry, Jeemimah Rodrigues and debutant Raghvi Bist failed to get going.

Richa Ghosh's 17-ball-32 took the team close to the 160-mark but that proved inadequate once Matthews took strike.

The scores: India 159/9 in 20 overs (Smriti 62, Richa 32; Henry 2/37, Dottin 2/14, Matthews 2/36) lost to West Indies 160/1 in 15.4 overs (Matthews 85 n.o., Joseph 38).

Toss: WI; **PoM:** Matthews.



On fire: Matthews' unbeaten 85 made it a stroll in the park for the West Indies. EMMANUEL YOGINI

Vinicius and Bonmati win the FIFA Best awards

Agence France-Presse

DOHA

Real Madrid attacker Vinicius Junior won the FIFA Best men's Player-of-the-Year award at a ceremony here on Tuesday, while Barcelona midfielder Aitana Bonmati picked up the women's prize for the second time.

The award comes two months after 24-year-old Vinicius was second in the Ballon d'Or, with Real electing to snub the ceremony when it found out beforehand that Manchester City midfielder Rodri was set to win the trophy.

But the Brazilian was, this time, on hand to collect the prize in person as



Say cheese! Vinicius and Bonmati with their coveted prizes. FIFA

he was in Qatar with his club ahead of its Intercontinental Cup final clash with Mexico's Pachuca on Wednesday.

The Best:
Men's Player: Vinicius Jr;
Women's Player: Aitana Bonmati; **Men's Coach:** Carlo Ancelotti; **Women's Coach:** Emma Hayes; **Men's Goalkeeper:** Emiliano Martinez; **Women's Goalkeeper:** Alyssa Naeher; **Puskas Award:** Alejandro Garnacho; **Marta Award:** Marta; **FIFA Fair Play Award:** Marta; **FIFA Fan Award:** Thiago Maia; **FIFA Fan Award:** Guilherme Gandra Moura.



Say cheese! Vinicius and Bonmati with their coveted prizes. FIFA

IN BRIEF



Una's late stunner rescues Bournemouth

Bournemouth's Enes Una provided a dramatic climax to his side's 1-1 draw with West Ham on Monday as the Turkey forward's superb late free-kick cancelled out Lucas Paqueta's penalty.

The results: Premier League: Bournemouth 1 (Una 90) drew with West Ham 1 (Paqueta 87-pen).

Serie A: Lazio 0 lost to Inter 6 (Calhanoglu 41-pen, Dimarco 45, Barella 51, Dumfries 53, Carlos Augusto 77, Thuram 90).

India outplays Singapore in IC Rod Laver junior challenge

The Indian team proved too strong for host Singapore as it registered a 6-0 victory in a league match of the Asia-Oceania IC Rod Laver junior challenge on Tuesday. India will next play Japan in the last league match on Thursday, in the three-team competition. India, spearheaded by Manas Dhama, and supported by Rushil Khosla, Sohini Mohanty and Asmi Adkar, had emerged the IC world wide champion last year.

The results (league): India bt Singapore 6-0 (Aradhya Kshiti bt Martin Foo 6-0, 6-1; Sohini Mohanty bt Niyati Bhandari 6-0, 6-2; Samarth Sahita bt Utaya Izumi 6-0, 6-0; Rishitha Basireddy bt Joy Shania Lee 6-1, 6-2; Aradhya & Samarth bt Martin & Utaya 6-2, 6-2; Sohini & Rishitha bt Niyati & Joy 6-0, 6-2).

First Zimbabwe-Afghanistan ODI called off due to rain

The first ODI between Zimbabwe and Afghanistan in Harare on Tuesday was called off due to rain after the hosts made 44 for five in 9.2 overs. When play started, the game was reduced to a 28-over contest. However, less than one hour later, rain forced the match to be called off.

Mukund and Ishaque put Indian Navy in final

Ishaque Eqbal and S Mukund put Indian Navy in the final with a 2-0 win over Army Green in the 76th i-Services tennis championship at the DLTA Complex in New Delhi on Tuesday. Sriram Balaji and Rishabh Agarwal won it for Army Red in the other semifinal against Air Force.

The results: Team (semifinals): Indian Navy bt Army Green 2-0 (Ishaque Eqbal bt Vikrant Dahlia 6-0, 6-0; S Mukund bt Manish Ganesh 6-2, 6-0).

Army Red bt Indian Air Force 2-0 (Sriram Balaji bt Sunil Kumar 6-2, 6-0; Rishabh Agarwal bt Ajay Malik 6-3, 6-3).

LIVE TELECAST

PKL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 8 p.m.

LaLiga: gxr.world, 2 a.m. (Thursday)

SNAPSHOTS

Anthony edges out Anirban in the pre-quarterfinals

BENGALURU: PSPB's Anthony Amalraj edged out eighth-seed Anirban Ghosh (RSPB) 11-7, 11-7, 9-11, 7-11, 11-8 in the men's pre-quarterfinal of the UTT National Ranking table tennis championship at the Sree Kanteerava Indoor Stadium here on Tuesday.

In the women's pre-quarterfinal, fourth-seed Yashaswini Ghorpade survived a scare against Tamil Nadu's Selenadeepthi Selvakumar before prevailing 9-11, 5-11, 11-5, 11-8, 11-5.

The results: Pre-quarterfinals: Men: Harmeet Desai (PSPB) bt H. Jetho (Mir) 7-11, 11-5, 11-13, 11-6; Anthony Amalraj (PSPB) bt Anirban Ghosh (RSPB) 11-7, 11-7, 9-11, 7-11; Snehit (AAJ) 11-5, 11-8, 11-4; Manav Thakkar (PSPB) bt Priyanuj Bhattacharyya (Asm) 11-6, 11-9, 11-8.

Pavan Jain (Del) bt Jash Modi (Mah) 12-10, 7-11, 11-8; Akash Pal (RSPB) bt Raegan Albuquerque (AAJ) 10-12, 11-8, 15-13, 11-8; Ronit Bhanja (RSPB) bt Siddhesh Pande (CRSB) 9-11, 11-4, 11-9, 11-6; Ankur Bhattacharjee (PSPB) bt Preyesh Raja Suresh (TN) 11-9, 11-8, 11-9.

Women: Nithyashree Mani (TN) bt Syndrella Das (WB) 11-7, 8-11, 11-8, 11-7; Reeth Rishya (PSPB) bt

Kaushani Nath (RSPB) 11-6, 12-10, 11-7; Madhurika Patkar (PSPB) bt Pritha Vartikar (Mah) 14-12, 14-12, 11-5; Yashaswini Ghorpade (PSPB) bt Selendadeepthi Selvakumar (TN) 9-11, 5-11, 11-5, 11-8, 11-5.

Swastika Ghosh (AAJ) bt Takeme Sarkar (RSPB) 11-7, 7-11, 11-4, 11-4; Taneesha Koteka (Mah) bt Yashini Shivashankar (IAA) 11-7, 13-15, 12-10, 11-7; Nikhat Banu (RBI) bt Divya Deshpande (PSPB) 7-11, 11-6, 11-5, 8-11, 11-9; Poymantare Baisya (RSPB) bt Mouma Das (PSPB) 11-8, 10-12, 11-13, 11-6, 11-8.

Sarthak to take on Aarjun in the quarterfinals

GURGRAM: Third seed Sarthak Suden overcame stiff resistance from Amandeep Singh Baha 6-4, 7-6(3) in the pre-quarterfinals of the seventh Rajesh Patel memorial ₹100,000 AITA men's ranking tennis tournament at the Tennis Vidyalaya, Sector-61, on Tuesday. In the quarterfinals, Sarthak will play Aarjun Pandit.

Top seed Parth Aggarwal, second ranked Bushan Haobam, Deep Munim, Bhicky Sagolshem, Samuel Jones and Mayank Sharma were the others making the last-eight stage.

The results: Pre-quarterfinals:

Parth Aggarwal bt Arnav Harsh 6-1, 6-1; Deep Munim bt Aryan Vij 6-3, 6-1; Aarjun Pandit bt Shivam Devaram 6-3, 6-3; Sarthak Suden bt Amandeep Singh Baha 6-4, 7-6(3); Bhicky Sagolshem bt Aditya Tinjani 6-4, 7-6(5); Samuel Jones bt Krishan Hoda 6-3, 6-3; Mayank Sharma bt Udit Gogoi 6-2, 7-5; Bushan Haobam bt Mayank Yadav 6-3, 6-2.

Free entry for HIL matches

NEW DELHI: Hockey India (HIL) on Tuesday announced free entry for fans for both the men's and women's matches of the Hockey India League (HIL) to be played in Rourkela and Ranchi. The eight-team men's HIL will start on December 28 in Rourkela and will conclude on February 1, 2025. The women's edition comprising four teams will be held in Ranchi from Jan. 12 to 26, 2025.

Additionally, HIL said select matches of both men's and women's categories will be held at alternate venues to "expand the league's reach". "By foregoing revenue from ticket sales, HIL aims to build a stronger connection between the sport and its passionate supporters," HIL said in a media release.

Sport

Neeraj eclipses TarunDeep; Ankita leads Jharkhand from the front

The star Olympian pair of Deepika and Atanu sizzles as Petroleum Sports Promotion Board books a place in the mixed team final

NATIONAL ARCHERY

Y.B. Sarangi
JAMSHPEDPUR

Policeman Neeraj Chauhan accumulated 692 points to break TarunDeep Rai's record of 687 and topped the recurve men's ranking round in the National archery championships at the Gopal Maidan here on Tuesday.

In the women's section, Olympian Ankita Bhakat took the number one spot with 667 points before leading host Jharkhand to the women's team title clash.

Neeraj, experiencing a revival of his career after tweaking his training schedule, shot with confidence



On point: Neeraj and Ankita topped the recurve men's and women's ranking rounds respectively. R. RAGU

to lead at the halfway stage before securing an overall lead. He was consistent in both segments, garnering 345 and 347 points.

"In the morning, I had a feeling that something special would happen today. Looking forward to carrying forward my form," said Neeraj.

Ankita, going through rehab for a shoulder issue, fell three short of her personal best. Later, the southpaw shot with accuracy to guide the Jharkhand side – also comprising Komalika Bari and Tamanna Verma – to overcome a strong challenge from Maharashtra and re-

gister a 5-3 victory in the semifinals.

The star Olympian pair of Deepika Kumari and Atanu Das, representing Petroleum Sports Promotion Board, went past West Bengal 6-2, Andhra Pradesh 5-3 and Madhya Pradesh 6-2 to book a place in the mixed team final.

The results: Recurve: Ranking round: Individual: Men: 1. Neeraj Chauhan (AIP) 692, 2. B. Dhiraj (SSCB) 679, 3. Atanu Das (PSPB) 677; Women:

1. Ankita Bhakat (Jha) 667, 2. Simranjeet Kaur (Pun) 666, 3. Deepika Kumari (PSPB) 660; Team: Men: 1. All India Police 2022, 2. SSCB 2011, 3. Haryana 1974; Women: 1. Jharkhand 1945, 2. Railways 1933, 3. Madhya

Pradesh 1921; Mixed: 1. AIP 1340, 2. PSPB 1337, 3. Jharkhand 1333.

Elimination: Team: Semifinals: Men: Railways bt Rajasthan 5-4 (29-28), Haryana bt Services 6-0. Women: Jharkhand bt Maharashtra 5-3, Madhya Pradesh bt Railways 5-4 (shoot-off 25-23). Mixed: Punjab bt Maharashtra 5-3, PSPB bt Madhya Pradesh 6-2.

DDCA will address selection problems, says Jaitley

Sports Bureau

NEW DELHI



Rohan Jaitley. ANI

Insinuations regarding the interference of administrators in the selection of players have long swirled around cricket in Delhi. This season, too, the naming of 84 probables for the Ranji Trophy and a 24-member squad for the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy prompted scrutiny about the ways of the Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA).

In a media interaction on Tuesday after being re-elected as president of the DDCA, Rohan Jaitley, who defeated former India cricketer Kirti Azad for the top post, was questioned on the familiar complaints regarding selection.

"Regarding the issues related to selection that are raised, we are always there to address it. As administrators, our role in the selection process is very limited. From the time that Lodha reforms have come in, there is a Cricket Advi-

sory Committee (CAC) that oversees it," the 35-year-old, who has been heading the state association since October 2020, said.

"In the last two weeks, the team performed in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. If there are problems, we will be addressing them. After the results, we have already raised questions on the size of the squad with the CAC. We will make sure checks and balances are brought about."

Among his plans for the new term is to have a swanky clubhouse at the Arun Jaitley Stadium. Making the venue accessible for differently-abled people, said

"We are already in talks for a new parcel of land. If we are successful in that, we will hopefully have a new international stadium in the city. That will have exceptional arrangements and infrastructure," he said.

DDCA office-bearers:

President: Rohan Jaitley,

Vice-President: Shikha Kumar,

Secretary: Ashok Sharma,

Treasurer: Harish Singla, **Joint Secretary:** Amit Grover.

Sports Minister supports Fit India movement by cycling

Sports Bureau

NEW DELHI



Union Sports Minister Mandaviya leads cyclists as part of Fit India Movement in Delhi on Tuesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

but all across the country," the Sports Minister announced.

The launch was spread across 1000 locations through the country on Tuesday, as part of the Fit India Movement, and done in collaboration with the Cycling Federation of India (CFI), My Bharat, and various other organisations, apart from the many centres of the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and

Khelo India.

Some prominent athletes like Sumit Antil, Navdeep, Deepthi Jeevanji, the former Indian women's hockey captain Rani Rampal, and Tajinder Singh Toor, joined from Rohtak, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru etc.

"This is a major way for youth and old to stay fit and contribute to the environment," said world champion Nitu Ghanghas.

East Bengal turns the tables on Punjab



Clutch: A spirited second-half effort sealed the deal for East Bengal. DEBASISH BHADURI

ISL

Amitabha Das Sharma

KOLKATA

East Bengal overturned a two-goal deficit to down Punjab FC 4-2 in the ISL at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Tuesday.

Punjab, dominant in the opening half, scored twice from its international attackers Asmir Suljic and Pulga Vidal. EBFC made a remarkable return after the break as its Jordanian defender Hijazi Maher pulled one back within 90 seconds of the resumption before P.V. Vishnu, Suresh Meitei (own goal) and David Hmar found the target to com-

plete the Kolkata outfit's impressive win.

Punjab was reduced to 10 men in the 64th minute when defender K. Lhungdim was ejected following his second booking of the match and EBFC made the most of the advantage to secure its third win of the tournament.

The win took East Bengal's tally to 10 points from 11 matches but it remained in the 11th spot.

Punjab's hope of climbing to the third spot was nullified as it remained in fifth with 18 points from 11 matches.

The result: East Bengal FC 4

(Maher 46, Vishnu 54, Meitei 60-og, Hmar 67) bt Punjab FC 2 (Suljic 21, Vidal 39).

As many as 450 players have registered and will be vying for a total prize money of ₹50 lakh.

The capital side got off to a swift start, gaining the lead in the seventh minute

Badminton Nationals from today

N. Sudarshan

BENGALURU

Nearly a dozen years after last making a pit stop in the Garden City, the Senior National Badminton Championship will return to Bengaluru for its latest edition starting Wednesday.

The cream of India's second-rung talent will be in action in the seven-day long event.

The likes of defending champion Anmol Kharb, Isharani Baruah and Tanvi Sharma – all three of whom helped India qualify for the Uber Cup – are set to play while the men's roster has last year's winner Chirag Sen, Ayush Shetty, Mithun Manjunath and Sai Prateek among notable names. Interestingly, Ayush, Mithun and Sai Prateek are from Karnataka but will turn out for the Railways. The fancied Karnataka women's doubles pairing of Shikha Gautam and Ashwini Bhat will be keenly watched.

Odisha haulied itself up from the bottom to the third spot after beating Goa 2-0.

Odisha maintained its position with six points from two matches whereas Odisha hauled itself up from the bottom to the third spot after beating Goa 2-0.

<p

Mumbai's SMAT triumph – the coming together of youth, exuberance and experience

This trophy is important. All the youngsters showcased their talent – it is simply phenomenal. You can see their character both in the dressing room and on the field. They are fearless in their approach and this is the kind of players we need to back, says skipper Shreyas



K. MURALI KUMAR

Ashwin Achal

BENGALURU

The Mumbai team for the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT) was packed with match-winners, with no less than six India internationals in the XI. All that was needed was good guidance and mature leadership – traits that skipper Shreyas Iyer displayed in plenty.

Shreyas was calm on the field, and with bat in hand, was a reliable presence in the middle-order. He was happy to allow his more flamboyant teammates like Ajinkya Rahane and Suryakumar Yadav take centre stage, but when the situation demanded it, Shreyas did not hesitate to clear the boundary ropes.

All pieces of the puzzle fell in place during the course of the tournament, leading Mumbai to claim its second SMAT title.

Lauds bowlers

While the batting line-up was filled with experienced stars, the Mumbai bowling unit - barring pacer Shardul Thakur - was fairly fresh. The success of the bowling attack pleased Shreyas no end.

"It helps the captain when you have such experienced players in your team. But if you see our bowling line-up, there are hardly any India players. The bowlers struggled a bit right from the opening match, but the way they showed their skills in the last two games was superb. They stepped up at the right time when the team needed them. They did very well to concede only around 170 in the final. This was a great effort, because we know that the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium pitch tends to get more batting-friendly as the match goes on. When the lights come on, it is easy for the batters," Shreyas said.

In both the semifinal and final, Shreyas won the toss and elected to field first. He was well served by the likes of spinners Tanush Kotian and Atharva Ankolekar and all-rounder Suryansh Shedge, who managed to restrict the opposition to sub-par scores.

A strong Baroda, with Hardik Pandya and Krunal Pandya in its ranks, could manage only 158 for seven in the semifinal. Mumbai made short work of the target, riding on a magnificent 98 from Rahane.

The bowlers performed well under pressure once again in the final, restricting Madhya Pradesh to a manageable 174 for eight. It only took 17.5 overs for Mumbai to coast home.

"Everyone contributed towards this success. Every player made it count at the right time, which was important. Hopefully, we can keep building this momentum in the Vijay Hazare Trophy and Ranji Trophy," Shreyas said.

There is no better feeling than that winning feeling, Shreyas added. "This trophy is important. All the youngsters showcased their talent – it is simply phenomenal. You can see their character both in the dressing room and on the field. They are fearless in their approach, and this is the kind of players we need to back. For me personally, I just want to win each and every game," Shreyas said.

Among Mumbai's standout performers was opener Rahane. The 36-year-old finished as the highest run-scorer of the tournament, and won the Player-of-the-Series award. Rahane was destructive in the PowerPlay, showcasing a new found penchant for attacking stroke-play.

Ultimate team man

Shreyas termed Rahane as the ultimate team man who will go that extra mile to contribute to the bigger cause.

"Rahane is the sort of a character who will give 110% for the team. He will step up at the right time on any given occasion. He actually started the tournament batting at number four. We had two openers (Angkrish Raghuvanshi and Prithvi Shaw), so he sacrificed his position. After Suryakumar Yadav came into the tournament, Rahane became the opener.

He is a fantastic team man, and hopefully he carries forward the same momentum in the upcoming games as well. Salute to him – the way he approached each and every game," Shreyas said.

The emergence of Shedge, meanwhile, augurs well for the future of Mumbai cricket. All of 21, Shedge displayed maturity well beyond his age to don the role of finisher with aplomb. His talent and temperament was underlined in the final, when he blasted an unbeaten 15-ball 36 to claim the Player-of-the-Match award. Shedge is also a handy medium-pacer with the knack of grabbing crucial middle-over wickets.

Shreyas was full of praise for the young Shedge. "He is a phenomenal athlete. You see him running around, bowling crucial overs, and taking the field on long-on. He's that kind of a player who is always there for the team, no matter what the situation. He goes full throttle, and he is hell bent towards achieving success. That is what fascinates me about him. The quick twos he took while batting – not everyone can do that."

"Everyone comes in and hits sixes and fours, but running quicks twos means you are putting 110 percent effort for the team," Shreyas said.

Shreyas and Shedge will reunite in IPL 2025, with both players signed by Punjab Kings. Shreyas stated that while it is too early to assign a role for Shedge at Punjab Kings, the all-rounder has all the right qualities to succeed.

"I really love his work ethic. He is

someone who puts in the hard yards. Even after the game, he goes to train, and this reflects in his athletic ability. I feel all these small things matter a lot when you are selecting a player in your team. He has stepped up at the right time, and he has shown that he is worth playing at that level," Shreyas said.

Staying in the now

On a personal note, Shreyas is keen to stay in the present and relish this successful SMAT campaign.

"I believe in staying in the present. Right now I just want to go and enjoy this trophy win with my teammates, friends and family. I am not thinking about what to plan ahead. I would like to get some applause from my friends about this success. I will cherish it. And after that we will see what comes next," Shreyas said.

The M. Chinnaswamy Stadium wore a festive look during the summit clash, with a massive number of spectators packing the venue. The sheer numbers took Shreyas by surprise.

"Whenever we play at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, the crowds are electrifying. The way they came in huge numbers today – it was out of the world. I was not expecting it. I saw one stand fully packed at the start of the match."

"But later on, once the match picked up pace, the numbers increased and it went bonkers. We know how much the people of Bengaluru love their RCB players, but I'm happy that they supported us as well," Shreyas said.

THE GIST

▼ Shreyas was calm on the field, and with bat in hand, was a reliable presence in the middle-order

▼ Rahane is the sort of a character who will give 110% for the team and will step up at the right time on any given occasion, felt the Mumbai captain

▼ Shreyas was all praise for the young Shedge, calling him "a phenomenal athlete" and "the kind of player who is always there for the team"



SCIENCE

Private aviation is releasing more than its 'fair share' of emissions

Scientists analysed flight data from the ADS-B Exchange platform and focused on five recent global events which were accompanied by international travel. They found some 47% of all these flights were for distances shorter than 500km and around 19% were in fact for distances shorter than 200km. About 5% spanned less than 50km

Monika Mondal

If the aviation sector were a country, it would be among the world's top 10 greenhouse gas-emitting nations. Air travel is one of the most polluting modes of travel for its relatively higher carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions and the effects of vapour trails and gases it deposits in the atmosphere.

But even within air travel, private jets and chartered planes have a higher carbon footprint per passenger. According to a 2021 report of the European Federation for Transport and Environment, private jets are five- to 14-times more polluting per passenger than commercial flights and 50-times more than trains.

A recent study in *Nature* reported emissions increased by 46% between 2019 and 2023, especially thanks to private aviation. The number of aircraft increased from 25,993 in December 2023 to 26,454 in February 2024 and is expected to grow further. According to the paper, "Private aviation contributed at least... about 3.6 tonnes of CO₂ per flight."

More millionaires in India

As of March 2024, 112 private planes were registered in India. According to the paper, India has very few aircraft per lakh population (0.01) compared to Malta (46.51), the U.S. (5.45), Switzerland (3.76), the U.K. (0.78), Brazil (0.43), France (0.36), and Russia (0.1). China has a comparable 0.02.

"But India is actually among the top 20 countries in terms of private aircraft ownership and the highest among low-middle-income countries," Ramya Natarajan, a research scientist at the Centre for Study of Science, Technology, and Policy (CSTEP), a think-tank in Bengaluru, said. "This isn't surprising because India, while still a developing country, has the third highest number of billionaires in the world and also has a rapidly growing millionaire population."

Despite nascent efforts to decarbonise the aviation industry, solutions like sustainable aviation fuels (SAFs), hydrogen, and electrification haven't been easy to implement at a large scale.

Private flight usage

In the study, researchers from institutes in Sweden, Germany, and Denmark analysed flight data from the ADS-B Exchange platform and focused on five recent global events accompanied by international travel.

These events were the World Economic Forum in Switzerland; the Super Bowl in the U.S.; the COP28 climate talks in the U.A.E.; the Cannes Film Festival in



As of March 2024, 112 private planes were registered in India. Representative photo. CHRIS LEIPELT

France; and the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. In many cases, the researchers found the same aircraft units were used for these events.

Some 47% of all these flights were for distances shorter than 500km. Around 19% were in fact for distances shorter than 200km; many of them were actually empty or used to deliver goods. About 5% of the flights spanned less than 50km – a distance otherwise easily covered by road or rail.

The study also reported that the use of private aircraft for leisure destinations like Ibiza in Spain and Nice in France peaked in June-August, which is summer in the northern hemisphere, and especially over the weekends.

Around 69% of private aviation was concentrated in the U.S.

The researchers also estimated that another 8,500 jets will be delivered to private parties in the next 10 years, although how many will end up in India is unknown. "How many additional private flights might be added every year as India becomes a wealthier, developed country? Can India afford to take the U.S. route? What would the overall impact of such lifestyle choices be?" Natarajan asked.

Air travel and India's emissions

In the last decade, the Indian government launched the policies 'Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik' (UDAN) to enhance rural connectivity and 'Nextgen Airports for



In India, the alcohol-to-jet pathway seems most likely in the medium term. However, planning is needed to avoid negative land-use change and groundwater implications. Demand for SAF should not incentivise sugarcane or maize.

Bharat Nirman (NABH) to increase airport capacity by more than five times.

Indian airplane operators have also been testing low-carbon fuels. In 2018, for example, SpiceJet operated a flight from Uttarakhand to New Delhi on aviation fuel blended with oil from seeds of the jatropha plant, to the tune of 25% by volume. In 2023, Air Asia flew a flight from Pune to New Delhi powered by SAF blended with aviation turbine fuel (ATF) based on indigenous feedstock and supplied by the Indian Oil Corporation, Ltd. But these attempts have not translated into the commercialisation of SAF due to its limited availability and efficiency. According to one April 2024 estimate, it also costs "at least 120%" more than conventional jet fuel for reducing emissions by at least 27%.

Apart from SAFs, both experts and lawmakers have discussed hydrogen and electrification as possible alternatives to kerosene, which is used in aviation for its

high energy density. Hydrogen packs three-times more energy in the same mass but handling it is a nightmare. Engineers will need to redesign, remodel, and restructure aircraft bodies as well as the fuel storage, transportation, and fuelling facilities at airports to use hydrogen-based fuels in aviation. Likewise, electrification is currently a poor solution due to issues of battery weight, flight stability, and its dependency on other economies for its raw materials, industry experts have said.

"In India, the alcohol-to-jet pathway seems most likely in the medium term, given that we already have a good ethanol production supply chain," Natarajan said. "However, this should be carefully planned to avoid negative land-use change and groundwater implications. A demand for SAF should not incentivise increased cultivation of sugarcane or maize. Instead, only surplus sugar should be used."

However, Natarajan added, the work of her and her peers at CSTEP suggests there is hope. "If by the year 2050, only surplus sugar is converted to ethanol and ethanol is fully used to make aviation fuel, instead of blending with petrol as we do currently, then we can meet almost 15-20% of the aviation fuel demand of 2050," she said.

(Monika Mondal is a freelance science and environment journalist.
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THE GIST

▼ Private jets are five to 14 times more polluting than commercial flights and 50 times more than trains. *Nature* reports emissions increased by 46% because of private aviation

▼ India is among the top 20 countries in terms of private aircraft ownership. India though a developing country has the third highest number of billionaires and a rapidly growing millionaire population

▼ Hydrogen and electrification are being discussed as alternatives to kerosene. Hydrogen packs three times more energy but handling is a nightmare. Electrification is beset by issues like weight, flight stability, and raw materials

BIG SHOT



Jesús Alvarado of the Pilaris Marino Foundation holds a structure with tiny coral pieces to create a coral farm in a project with Venezuela's government to repopulate reefs and diminish the effects of global warming, in Santo Domingo, Venezuela. REUTERS

QUESTION CORNER

Keypad protocol for numbers



Q: Why are the rows on a calculator or number keypad arranged with the lowest numbers at the bottom when we normally read from top to bottom? And why are phone keypads arranged with the lowest numbers at the top?

A: Mechanical adding machines, based on rotating wheels, always have the '0' button adjacent to the '!' button.

By convention, most old adding machines had the numbers increasing in value from the bottom and this may be a hangover from when the machines had levers on the wheels rather than buttons. When the numbers were put onto a pad arranged as a three by three grid with one left over, the order of the numbers, as far as possible, kept the same, according to a report in *New Scientist*.

On a rotary telephone dial the '0' comes adjacent to the '9' because a '0' in the telephone number is signalled by ten pulses on the line.

When telephones acquired push buttons in a grid, the ordering of the buttons was carried over from the old



Representative image of a digital calculator. DOSTON NABOTOV

telephone dial.

- The Hindu Bureau

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to science@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Daily page'