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Bandh a success, say farmers; SC to take up case today

Dallewal, on a fast unto death, urges Centre to pay heed to their demands that include the implementation of a legalised minimum support price

A.M. Jigeesh
NEW DELHI

Protesting farmers said the Punjab bandh called by them on Monday was a massive success and people across the State supported the protest.

Farmers' organisations said the success of the bandh proved that the public was in solidarity with Jagjit Singh Dallewal, 70, who has been on a fast unto death demanding implementation of the M.S. Swaminathan formula for a legalised minimum support price (MSP) for crops, farm loan waiver and withdrawal of cases imposed against farmers during the protest along Delhi bor-



Farmers raise slogans as they block the Golden Gate Highway in Amritsar during the Punjab bandh on Monday. ANI

ders against the farm laws.

The protest also saw the thin line of difference between the Samyukt Kisan Morcha and the Samyuk Kisan Morcha (non-political) narrowing down as members of both the um-

brella groups worked together on the ground in favour of the bandh.

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STANDING BY DALLEWAL
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ISRO's docking mission on; spacecraft reach right orbit

Hemanth C.S.
SRIHARIKOTA

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) mission on Monday.

The PSLV C60 rocket carrying two small satellites, SDX01 (Chaser) and SDX02 (Target), along with 24 payloads, lifted off from the first launchpad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota at 10 p.m. About 15 minutes after lift-off, the two small spacecraft weighing about 220 kg each were launched into a 475-km circular orbit as intended.

"The rocket has placed the satellites in the right orbit which is into a 475-km circular orbit. The spacecraft's solar panels have been deployed successfully. The two SpaDeX satellites have moved one behind another so over a period of time it will pick



Lift off: The PSLV-C60 mission lifting off from the spaceport in Sriharikota on Monday night. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

up further distance; the distance will increase by 20 km over the next few days and then the rendezvous and docking process will start. The docking process can happen in another one week; the nominal time will be approximately January 7," said ISRO Chairman S Somanath.

With the SpaDeX mission, the ISRO aims to exhibit technologies needed for spacecraft rendezvous, docking, and undocking

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RETROFITTING SUBMARINES
Centre to spend ₹2,800 crore on modules, torpedoes

NEWS » PAGE 12



MANMOHAN'S FUNERAL
Ensured privacy of his family at rites: Congress

NEWS » PAGE 11



THUMPING WIN
Australia crushes India in fourth Test

SPORT » PAGE 15

The looking glass



Play of light: A laser light show on Monday marked the inauguration of a glass bridge constructed between the Vivekananda rock memorial and Thiruvalluvar statue in Kanniyakumari at a cost of ₹37 crore. A. SHAIKMOHIDEEN

Private Members' Bills get short shrift in both Houses of Parliament

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

During the five-year term of the 17th Lok Sabha that ended in 2024, only 9.08 hours were spent on Private Members' Bills, while the Rajya Sabha spent 27.01 hours on them during the period, shows an analysis by PRS Legislative Research, an independent research body.

The Lower House spent 16.43 hours and the Upper House 20.78 hours on Private Members' Resolution.

In the two sessions of the 18th Lok Sabha, 0.15 hours was spent on such Bills, while the Rajya Sabha spent 0.62 hours. The Lower House spent 1.98 hours



Since 1970, Parliament has not passed any Private Members' Bill. PTI

on resolutions and the Upper House 2.09 hours.

The resolutions are declarations on which the House votes, while the Bills refer to proposed legislation. These are the only instruments available for

MPs' individual expression without being bound by their party's diktat.

They serve as an important medium for political messaging. For example in 1966, after the sudden death of then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shashtri, the Congress chose Indira Gandhi to replace him. H.V. Kamath, then an MP from the Praja Socialist Party, moved a Private Members' Bill to amend the Constitution to allow only Lok Sabha members to be eligible for the post of Prime Minister. Indira Gandhi was a member of the Rajya Sabha at the time.

The time spent on such Bills for the entire tenure of

the Lok Sabha is a minuscule fraction of the total hours both Houses sit in a single session. Till date, only 14 Private Members' Bills have been passed and received assent. None have been passed in both Houses since 1970.

Jairam Ramesh, Chief Whip of the Congress in the Rajya Sabha, said an all-round indifference is responsible for the decline of this parliamentary tool. "Nobody takes it seriously. Very often I have found even the members whose Bills have been listed in the schedule do not show up," he said.

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IN BRIEF

Dissolution of 9 districts sparks stir in Rajasthan

JAIPUR

Protests have erupted at several places in Rajasthan over the BJP government's decision to dissolve nine of the 17 districts created during the previous Congress regime. Protests were organised in most of the districts that were abolished. » Page 4

Opposition flays Nitesh Rane's remark on Kerala

MUMBAI

A day after Maharashtra Minister Nitesh Rane made remarks on Kerala, describing the State as "mini-Pakistan", Opposition leaders on Monday demanded a clarification from the leader. » Page 11

Kejriwal promises ₹18,000 per month for priests, granthis if AAP is re-elected

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi CM Atishi, and party leader Saurabh Bharadwaj at a press conference on Monday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

first time in India. I hope BJP and Congress will do it in their own States," Mr. Kejriwal said at a press conference, adding that AAP will start registration for the scheme from Tuesday.

The BJP claimed that Mr. Kejriwal was "forced" to announce the scheme due to protests by its Delhi unit

and its 'Pujari Prakosh' over the past two years demanding salary for priests and granthis.

Political storm likely This promise is also expected to run into a political storm as Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena has already ordered Delhi Pol-

ice to take action against private persons gathering personal details of women in the name of Mahila Samman Yojana, another poll promise by Mr. Kejriwal.

Addressing mediapersons, the AAP chief said: "I will go to the Hanuman Mandir in Connaught Place and register the priests there. Our MLAs, candidates, and workers will be registering priests at all temples and gurdwaras from tomorrow."

'Don't stop scheme' Mr. Kejriwal also requested the BJP not to stop this scheme like "you tried to stop the Mahila Samman Yojana and the Sanjeevani Yojana". "Harassing or opposing this initiative would be a grave sin," he said.

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter dies at 100

Associated Press
ATLANTA



JIMMY CARTER
(1924 - 2024)

Jimmy Carter, the peanut farmer who won the presidency in the wake of the Watergate scandal and Vietnam War, endured humbling defeat after one tumultuous term and then redefined life after the White House as a global humanitarian, died on Sunday. He was 100 years old.

The longest-lived American President died roughly 22 months after entering hospice care, at his home in the small town of Plains, Georgia, where he and his wife, Rosalynn, who died at 96 in November 2023, spent most of their lives, the Carter Center said.

"Our founder, former

mourned Carter's death, saying the world lost an "extraordinary leader, statesman and humanitarian" and he lost a dear friend. Mr. Biden cited Carter's work to eradicate disease, forge peace, advance civil and human rights, promote free and fair elections and house the homeless as an example for others.

"To all of the young people in this nation and for anyone in search of what it means to live a life of purpose and meaning – the good life – study Jimmy Carter, a man of principle, faith, and humility," Mr. Biden said in a statement.

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Puri, Kejriwal trade barbs over Rohingya settlement in Delhi

Ex-CM 'played with national security' by helping settle illegal immigrants: Union Minister; Puri facilitated their settlement, must be arrested: AAP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



BJP leader and Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Monday targeted Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, accusing him of "playing with national security" by helping Rohingya refugees settle in the Capital.

Mr. Puri – who is the Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas – also accused AAP legislators of extending monetary assistance to the refugees and getting their voter ID cards made.

The BJP leader's comments drew a sharp response from Mr. Kejriwal, who demanded his arrest, alleging that it was instead Mr. Puri who facilitated the settlement of Rohingya in the Capital.

"He has all the data on the places he has made the Rohingya infiltrators settle in Delhi. He had even tweeted about it," Mr. Kejriwal told reporters.

Political backlash

The allegations came amid a political backlash between the BJP – which rules at the Centre – and Delhi's ruling AAP over the settlement of "illegal" immigrants in the national capital.

The BJP, which is also



Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri denied AAP's allegation that he had decided to relocate Rohingya in Bakkawala. FILE PHOTO

Delhi's main Opposition party, has accused AAP of facilitating the settlement of illegal immigrants to get their votes in the upcoming Assembly election.

The BJP levelled the allegation after AAP claimed that the Opposition party had been conspiring to omit the names of its supporters from voter lists to win the poll due in February.

Hitting back, the Kejriwal-led party had dug up an over two-year-old social media post of Mr. Puri announcing a "decision to relocate" Rohingya to the flats constructed for those from economically weaker sections in the city's Bakkarwala area.

Mr. Puri had made the remarks in August 2022, when he was the Union Urban Development Minister. Chief Minister Atishi had also written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah,

alleging that the Centre "settled a large number of illegal Rohingya" in Delhi and questioned how the Muslim refugees from Myanmar reached here after crossing multiple States without getting detected.

'Shameless lies'

Responding to AAP's accusations, the Minister said no Rohingya has been given any flat by the Centre. He said the clarification of his social media post was issued the same day by him and the Home Ministry.

"It [clarification] is in the public domain. Still the lies are being spread shamelessly," said Mr. Puri.

In response, Mr. Kejriwal accused the BJP of indulging in theatrics.

"Why are they working so hard to enact a drama? Hardeep Puri and Amit Shah have all the data of Rohingya settled in Delhi," said the AAP chief.

L-G to Atishi: Kejriwal calling you a 'temporary CM' is insult to President

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena on Monday wrote to Chief Minister Atishi terming as "objectionable" a purported remark made by Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener and former Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal a few days ago – about Ms. Atishi being a "temporary CM".

He accused the AAP chief of showing "a reprehensible disregard of the democratic spirit and values enshrined in the Constitution drafted by Baba Saheb Ambedkar" and said that it was "not only an insult to you, but also an insult to your employer – Her Excellency the President of India (Droupadi Murmu) and to me as her representative".

'Let go of petty politics'

In response, Ms. Atishi wrote back: "It is disheartening to note that your letter focuses on criticism rather than constructive cooperation."

"I urge you to let go of such petty politics and instead focus on fostering collaboration and enabling the government to fulfil its promises to the people," she added.

Mr. Saxena told the CM that Mr. Kejriwal's accusation last week about the BJP-led Centre "hatching a conspiracy" to arrest her in a Transport Department-related case is "not only untrue, such statements also indicate that you are unaware of the activities of the departments



L-G V.K. Saxena. FILE PHOTO

working under you".

The L-G said the AAP chief has been "making unauthorised announcements about schemes for women and senior citizens", referring to the two schemes announced by Delhi's ruling party in the run-up to the Assembly poll due in February next year: monthly aid for women under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana and free treatment for senior citizens under the Sanjeevani Yojana.

Shortly after AAP's announcement, the Delhi government's Women and Child Development Department and Health Department issued separate public notices stating that no such schemes exist and people "should not entertain such promises", which may lead to cyber or banking "frauds".

Referring to the notices, Mr. Saxena said, "This was an unprecedented development and must have been unsettling for you."

In her response, Ms. Atishi accused the L-G of working as BJP's "proxy" and stopping the Mahila Samman Yojana.

NHRC flags presence of minors in poll drives of AAP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The newly appointed member of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Priyank Kanoongo, on Monday wrote a letter to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), Rajiv Kumar, flagging the participation of children in the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) political campaigns.

Mr. Kanoongo said that the NHRC has come across a video, shared by AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on X, in which children were "directly involved" in campaigning activities for the party.

He stated that while the Model Code of Conduct for the upcoming Assembly election is yet to come into force, participation of children in poll drives violates the guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India (EC) and contravenes Section 75 of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 (moderate) on December 28. Officials attributed the improvement to consistent winds and record-breaking rain. PTI

IN BRIEF



Sisodia seeks crowdfunding for his election campaign

Senior AAP leader and the party's candidate from Jangpura, Manish Sisodia, on Monday launched a crowdfunding platform to finance his election campaign. "To contest the election, I need funds. For the past decade, I have worked towards transforming Delhi's schools. I have dedicated myself to the welfare of Delhi's people without ever saving money for personal gains," he said while addressing a press conference.

Delhi logs best December air since the start of AQI system

Delhi has recorded its cleanest December air since the introduction of the air quality index (AQI) system in 2015. As per data from the Central Pollution Control Board, the Capital logged an average AQI of 294 ('poor') this month, while the lowest recorded AQI was 139 (moderate) on December 28. Officials attributed the improvement to consistent winds and record-breaking rain. PTI

Will take action against employees of buses that don't halt for women commuters: CM

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

designated stops.

The CM also asked women to click pictures of such buses and upload them on social media for action against errant drivers and conductors.

The Delhi government provides free rides for women commuters through its pink ticket scheme. Ms. Atishi said.



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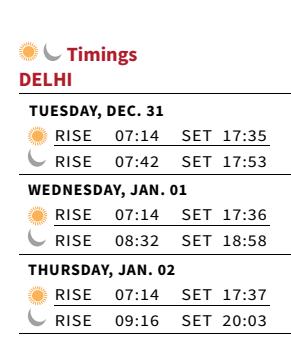
Treated over 30,000 cases under PM-JAY: AIIMS Director

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

AIIMS Delhi has treated over 30,000 patients under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) to date and created over eight lakh Ayushman Bharat cards, the institute's Director, Dr. M. Srinivas, said on Monday.

While the Delhi government is yet to implement PM-JAY in the city, the Centre-run institute allows patients to avail of the insurance scheme, which offers annual coverage of up to ₹5 lakh per family.

Addressing a press conference, Dr. Srinivas said there is a plan to open a new critical care block and that beds in the emergency ward will be doubled by the end of next year.



Delhi Weather max min

Delhi City 15 10
Safdarjung 15 10
Palam 13 09

Delhi Palam Today 17°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be cold. Day will be cool with moderate cold winds. Night also will be cold and uneasy.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow 18°C Morning will be cold. Day will be slightly cool with moderate cold winds. Night will be cold. Dry weather to prevail.

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THE HINDU
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Jungle Lodges and Resorts Limited, invites for Selection of a Hotel Operator to Operate and Maintain Hotel Lalitha Mahal Palace Hotel, Mysuru District. The details of the tender document are available on the website: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. The last date for receipt of tender document (through e-Procurement Portal) is 31.01.2025, 17.00 hours and EMD amount of Rs.25,00,000/-.

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No.TPT(B)-12034/12/2022(Part-1), dated Itanagar, the 20th Dec, 2024

O R D E R

In continuation of Transport Department's Public Notice Vide No. TPT(B)-12034/12/2022(Part-1), dated 30-09-2024 (Invitation of Application for Setting up Registered Vehicle Scapping Facility (RVSF) in Arunachal Pradesh) the Government of Arunachal Pradesh is pleased to extend the submission of application by interested parties by further period of 60 (sixty) days, w.e.f. date of issue of this order.

sd/-
(Vivek Pandey), IAS
Commissioner (Transport)
Government of Arunachal Pradesh
Itanagar.

DIPR/ARN/0006/24

IN BRIEF



Suvendu posts pictures of 'illegal' Bangladeshis in Bengal

Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly Suvendu Adhikari alleged that some Bangladeshi nationals are illegally residing in the State and urged the Home Minister and the National Investigation Agency to take action. He also posted pictures of the alleged suspects on social media and called for the implementation of the NRC in the State. He also posted the names, location, and occupation of three persons on X and demanded action. The BJP leader claimed that the State is a hub of illegal immigrants who blend into the general population.

SP team visits Sambhal, gives ₹5 lakh each to kin of victims

A Samajwadi Party (SP) delegation on Monday visited Sambhal and distributed cheques of ₹5 lakh each to the families of those killed in the November 24 violence in the district during a court-ordered survey of a mosque. The cheques were distributed by Leader of the Opposition Mata Prasad Pandey, who led the SP delegation, at the PWD guest house. He also interacted with the victims' families. Speaking to reporters, Mr. Pandey alleged that the police were harassing Muslims and that the State government has no sympathy for them. "They do not have goodwill in their hearts, they are creating tension between Hindus and Muslims," the SP leader said. PTI

Protests rock Rajasthan over dissolution of nine newly created districts

Markets remain closed; demonstrations held in most of the districts abolished on December 28 after Cabinet meeting of BJP government; Oppn. Congress announces agitation from January 1

Mohammed Iqbal

JAIPUR

Protests have erupted at several places in Rajasthan over the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government's decision to dissolve nine of the 17 districts created during the previous Congress regime. Markets remained closed and demonstrations were organised in most of the districts abolished on December 28, with warnings of prolonged agitations.

The nine districts dissolved by a decision taken at the State Cabinet meeting here are Anupgarh, Dudu, Gangapur City, Jaipur Rural, Jodhpur Rural, Kekri, Neem Ka Thana, Sanchore, and Shahpura. The State will now have 41 districts. The BJP government has also annulled three new divisions that were carved out in 2023, reducing their number to seven.

A 'mahapadav (sit-in)' was held outside the Collectorate building in San-



A protest led by Cong. MLA Suresh Modi (centre) at Neem Ka Thana on Monday against dissolution of nine districts. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

chore on Monday under the leadership of former Minister and Congress leader Sukhram Bishnoi, who said there was strong resentment among the people. The markets in the town were closed on the call of the Vyapar Mandal.

Several organisations staged protests against the State government's decision in Shahpura and submitted a memorandum to the Sub-Divisional Officer

with the demand for the district's restoration.

Representatives of local citizens' groups organised a similar protest meeting outside the Collectorate in Anupgarh.

In Neem Ka Thana, a group led by Congress MLA Suresh Modi submitted a memorandum to the Collector demanding the district's immediate restoration. Mr. Modi said the BJP government had abol-

ished the district "out of revenge" because the voters in Sikar and Neem Ka Thana had defeated the ruling party in the 2023 Assembly election.

A "head shaving protest" planned by the Zila Bachao Sangharsh Samiti in Kekri was postponed following police intervention. The group's convenor, Ramavtar Singh, and Congress leader Raghu Sharma, who earlier represented Kekri in the Assembly, said the BJP had hurt the sentiments of people and pushed the region to backwardness by taking away Kekri's district status.

Highway blocked

The Bikaner-Sriganganagar national highway was blocked for some time on Sunday in protest against the abolition of Anupgarh district. The Opposition Congress has strongly condemned the decision and announced that it will launch a massive agitation on the issue in the State from January 1.



Sheikh Abdullah

of Dogra king Maharaja Hari Singh on September 23 and Accession Day on October 26 as holidays.

'Will restore them'

"While we had hoped for the inclusion of holidays commemorating leaders like Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and the martyrs of July 13, their absence does not diminish their significance or our legacy. These holidays will be restored one day," NC leader Tanvir Sadiq said.

Another proposal to include July 13, 1931, which saw an uprising against the Dogra monarchy, was also not approved. Prior to the downgrading of J&K to a UT in 2019, July 13 was observed as 'Martyrs' Day' to commemorate the killing of at least 22 civilians by security personnel of the Dogra king during an uprising.

The

Opposition Peoples Democratic Party also expressed shock over the exclusion of 'Martyrs' Day' from the list. "The decision is a betrayal of the aspirations of the people who had voted en masse for the NC in the hope of better representation of their sentiments," said party general secretary Mohammad Khurshid Alam.

Stalker sentenced to death for pushing college student in front of train in Tamil Nadu

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Mahila Court at Allukkai in Chennai on Monday awarded the death penalty to D. Sathish for murdering college student M. Sathy by pushing her in front of a train at St. Thomas Mount on October 13, 2022.

On December 28, the court had found Sathish guilty of the murder and convicted him under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code, and Section 4 of the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Harassment of Women Act, 1998.

The judge said in the order that given the gravity of the crime, Sathish was awarded the death penalty. The court also fined him ₹25,000, in addition to three years of imprisonment, along with a fine of ₹10,000 under the Prohibition of Harassment of Wo-



M. Sathy

men Act.

The judge said ₹25,000 should be paid as compensation to the sister of the victim out of the total fine of ₹35,000. The judge also said ₹10 lakh should be paid to the family from the Tamil Nadu government's compensation fund.

The judge ordered that the case documents be sent to the Madras High Court for confirmation of the verdict.

The police said Sathish

Court said ₹10 lakh should be paid to the victim's family from the State government's compensation fund

and Sathy were living at the police quarters at Alandur. Sathish, the son of a retired special sub-inspector, stalked Sathy, daughter of woman head constable, Ramalakshmi, of the Adamabakkam station.

Arrested from hideout

Sathish, who committed the murder in a fit of rage, was arrested from a hideout at Thoraiapakkam.

The team also called on the Home Secretary, Director General of Police, and Commissioner of the Greater Chennai Police to review the progress of the investigation. It interacted with the special investiga-

NCW begins probe into T.N. sexual assault; Vijay submits petition for women's safety to Governor

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A two-member fact-finding committee of the National Commission for Women (NCW) arrived in Chennai from New Delhi on Monday to investigate the sexual assault on a 19-year-old engineering student on the Anna University campus on December 23.

The team, comprising NCW member Mamta Kumari and former Maharashtra DGP Praveen Dixit, visited the university and interacted with its authorities and the survivor and her family. As there is no Vice-Chancellor at present, the team met the member-secretary of the university's core committee.

The team also called on the Home Secretary, Director General of Police, and Commissioner of the Greater Chennai Police to review the progress of the investigation. It interacted with the special investiga-



Flagging concerns: Actor and TVK leader Vijay submitting a petition to Governor R.N. Ravi in Chennai on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tion team (SIT) of three women IPS officers, constituted by the Madras High Court, and held discussions with the Investigating Officer and the Assistant Commissioner of Police.

Based on a complaint filed by the survivor, the Kotturpuram all-woman police had arrested the accused, Gnanasekaran, on December 25. The SIT will begin its probe soon.

The NCW team also visited Governor R.N. Ravi at Raj Bhavan and held dis-

cussions with him. Later, Ms. Kumari issued a statement that the probe would be carried forward to Tuesday for seeking more information from other departments of the university.

First meeting

Actor and Tamilaga Vettai Kazhagam (TVK) president Vijay on Monday called on the Governor at Raj Bhavan and submitted a petition. "We met the Governor and submitted a petition for ensuring the

safety of women," TVK general secretary N. Anand said. This is Mr. Vijay's first meeting with the Governor after entering politics.

"Tamilaga Vettai Kazhagam president Thiru C. Joseph Vijay met the Governor and presented Memorandum seeking Governor's intervention on severely deteriorating Law and Order situation in State and serious threat to Women safety, with the incident of sexual assault at Anna University Campus being the latest demonstration of situation [sic]," Raj Bhavan said in a post on X.

BJP welcomes move

In a post on X, BJP State president K. Annamalai welcomed Mr. Vijay's meeting with the Governor. "Today, we welcome the fact that the president of Tamilaga Vettai Kazhagam, Brother Mr. Vijay, also met and spoke to the Honourable Governor about the lack of security

for women under the DMK regime," he said.

Palaniswami criticised
Meanwhile, Minister for Higher Education Govt. Chezhiaan alleged that former Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami's statement on the sexual assault would only dissuade women from filing police complaints against perpetrators of crimes.

"Women were afraid of visiting police stations to file complaints, and the Dravidian Model government changed that trend. Mr. Palaniswami's statement would only dissuade women from filing complaints," he said.

Following the leak of the FIR in the case on social media, Mr. Palaniswami had asked how affected persons would henceforth come forward to file sexual harassment complaints. "No one will do so as long as this government is in power," he had said.

Politicians begin a blame game while agitating BPSC exam candidates dig in their heels

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Protests over the demand seeking cancellation of the 70th Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) Combined (Preliminary) Competitive Examination over alleged paper leak have now assumed a political hue with parties taking up the issue and charging each other with instigating and misleading the protesters.

While 3.28 lakh candidates had appeared at 912 centres across the State for the exam on December 13, hundreds of candidates boycotted the test at one of the exam centres in Patna alleging that question papers were leaked.

The BPSC refuted this while ordering a re-examination on January 4 for the candidates at the centre where paper leak allegations emanated from.

For the past 13 days, thousands of candidates have been sitting in protest in the Gardanibagh area of Patna demanding a re-examination for all. On Sunday, they were lathi-charged by the police. Jan Suraj party founder Prashant Kishor had briefly participated in the stir before police action ensued. An FIR was subsequently lodged against Mr. Kishor and 21 others at the Gandhi Maidan police station for "provoking" the students.

Meeting with Chief Secy. Amid the flux, Bihar Governor R.V. Arlekar on Monday called BPSC Chairperson Parmar Ravi Manubhai to Raj Bhavan to discuss the issue. State Chief Secretary Amrit Lal Meena also met a 10-member delegation of students to hear their demands.

State Education Minister



Students stop a train during a protest over the BPSC exam 'paper leak' in Bihar's Arrah on Monday. PTI

the government has not reached any decision as Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is out of Patna. "The Chief Secretary listened to us patiently and assured that a decision would be taken soon. However, our satyagraha will continue at Gardanibagh," said Satyam, a resident of Nalanda district.

Subhash Kumar, who

was also part of the delegation, said they have requested the Chief Secretary to withdraw the FIR lodged against the candidates.

He said the delegation contended that the candidates at the Bapu Pariksha Parivar, where the leak allegations cropped up, have an advantage as they will get another attempt to make it

Gandhi Maidan and lead a protest march towards the CM's house?" Mr. Yadav said.

JD(U) State president Umesh Singh Kushwaha in turn accused the RJD of misleading BPSC candidates. "The Opposition is spreading lies and looking for political opportunities in the BPSC candidates' protest," he said.

Lok Janshakti Party (Raj Vilas) president and Union Minister Chirag Paswan, a constituent of the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA), posted a message on X claiming that he spoke to the CM after which the Chief Secretary met the student delegation.

Kharge hits out
Meanwhile in New Delhi, the Congress on Monday alleged that the police action on candidates in Patna was carried out to "hide paper

leak and rigging". Party chief Mallikarjun Kharge accused the BJP of spreading a "web of paper leak mafia" across the country, ruining the future of the youth.

In a post on X, Mr. Kharge claimed that there have been more than 70 paper leaks in the past seven years. "When rigging is detected, the BJP shamelessly denies or tries to silence the youth by lathi-charging them," he alleged.

"The attempt to break the morale of the youth by using dictatorship against them is extremely shameful and condemnable."

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, in a post on X, said the "double-engine" BJP government in Bihar has become a symbol of "double atrocities" on youth.

(With inputs from The Hindu Bureau in New Delhi)

On visit to Sandeshkhali, Mamata says people were misled with money

The Hindu Bureau



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee giving a student credit card to a beneficiary in Sandeshkhali on Monday. ANI

On her maiden visit to Sandeshkhali since protests over allegations of land grabbing and sexual harassment erupted at the island almost a year ago, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said that the people had been misled with offers of money.

"I know that a big game was behind the protests, and money was offered. Later, you realised that the entire matter was a lie. The truth eventually comes out. Let bygones be bygones. I want to forget it all. I want the men and women of Sandeshkhali to prosper," Ms. Banerjee said, addressing a gathering at the Rishi Aurobindo Mission ground in Sandeshkhali.

Protests against local Trinamool Congress leaders that erupted in February 2024 eventually subsided, and despite the Bharatiya Janata Party building its Lok Sabha election campaign around the protests, the Trinamool was able to hold its political ground.

"Do not fall in the trap of evil people, and women, please do not go if anyone summons you. If you want a government scheme then the government will come to you through the Duare Sarkar scheme," Ms. Banerjee said.

Alongside allegations of land grab, the women of Sandeshkhali had at the height of the protests alleged that local Trinamool leaders led by Sheikh Shahjahan would call them to the local party office and harass them. Several persons, including Mr. Shahjahan, are lodged in prison on the basis of the complaint made by the locals, including women.

Inaugurates schemes

The Chief Minister, who inaugurated several schemes, repeatedly told people to not pay any money for getting the benefits of the State government's welfare schemes.

Kerala MLA stable after fall but still on life support

The Hindu Bureau

KOCHI

The condition of Congress legislator Uma Thomas, who sustained severe injuries to the head and lungs after she fell from a gallery at the Jawaharlal Nehru International Stadium in Kochi on Sunday, remains stable though she continued to be on ventilator support, the hospital authorities said on Monday.

A medical bulletin issued by the Renai Medicity Hospital stated that a CT scan of the head conducted on Monday revealed that her brain injury has not improved.

Though the internal bleeding in the lungs has not aggravated, the pulmonary contusion following the fall has not improved. She will remain on ventilator support for a few days, despite her vitals being stable in view of the lung contusion. The antibiotic treatment to reduce the lung infection is continuing.

Speaking about the incident in a media interaction at the JSP camp office on Monday, Mr. Pawan Kalyan said: "The stampede, resulting in Revathi's death and the child's hospitalisation, was quite unfortunate. The entire team could have visited the victim's family immediately after the incident, or on the next day, empathised with them and stood by

Stampede issue could have been handled better: Pawan Kalyan

Appaji Reddem

MANGALAGIRI (AMARAVATI)



Andhra Pradesh Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan addressing the media at the JSP office at Mangalagiri of Guntur district on Monday. THE HINDU

them. Instead, Allu Arjun was singled out and was expected to take the entire blame and responsibility, which was not fair. The series of developments and improper response blew the issue out of proportion."

'Law same for all'
Referring to the first-of-its-kind arrest of Allu Arjun and prompt action by the Revanth Reddy government in Telangana, Mr. Pawan Kalyan said, "That is Revanth Reddy. He was just following the developments and responding within the legal framework. Law is the same for all, nobody is an exception. It cannot be seen as a vindictive act as the same movie was allowed to go for benefit shows with enhanced ticket prices that fetched huge collections in Telangana."

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Wayanad landslides a 'disaster of severe nature', says Centre

Union govt. reiterates stance in letter to Kerala on Monday; the letter, however, does not have any mention of the financial aid sought by Kerala

The Hindu Bureau

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Centre has reiterated that the Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) considers the Meppadi landslides in Wayanad to be a "disaster of severe nature for all practical purposes".

The IMCT had adopted this view given the "intensity and magnitude" of the July 30 landslides, the Union Home Affairs Ministry said in a Monday letter to Tinku Biswal, Principal Secretary, Revenue and Disaster Management, Kerala.

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai, replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha on November 27, had already pointed out that the IMCT considered the Wayanad disaster to be one of "severe nature". Kerala



Big destruction: The Army constructing a Bailey bridge at Chooralmala in Wayanad after the landslide in July. PTI

has been urging the Centre to declare the Wayanad landslides a "national calamity". According to Mr. Rai's reply, the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and the NDRF guidelines do not provide for declaring any natural calamity as a "national calamity". However, the calamity in Wayanad has been adjudged to be of "severe nature" by the IMCT.

The letter does not have any mention of the financial assistance. But it says that in the event of a disaster of severe nature, financial assistance towards notified natural disasters is met from the SDRF "already placed at their disposal, which is further supplemented from the NDRF in accordance with established procedure".

On its wish list for Union Budget 2025-26, Kerala has sought a ₹2,000-crore rehabilitation package for Wayanad.

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Currency concerns

The rupee's rapid stumble poses a fresh challenge for the economy

It has been a tumultuous time for the Indian rupee even as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been actively stepping into the foreign exchange market to stem its free fall in pursuit of what it calls an 'orderly' exchange movement. The rupee had hit an all-time low of 85 to the U.S. dollar on December 19. Last Friday, it came precariously close to the 86-mark before a late intervention by the central bank pulled it back to 85.53. A confluence of factors at work have hurt the rupee in recent times, including the sustained outflows of foreign portfolio investments from securities markets after key indices peaked in late September. Overstretched stock valuations, a demotivating corporate performance in the July-September quarter, and China's economic stimulus, nudged emerging market portfolios from Mumbai to Beijing. The Donald Trump factor added a fresh headwind with the dollar strengthening since his U.S. presidential electoral victory, and emerging market currencies were further rattled by his warning of a 100% tariff on BRICS nations for a common currency plan to challenge the dominance of the U.S. dollar in global trade.

Even before fears about Mr. Trump's generally protectionist stance on trade matters materialise, India's goods trade story is sputtering. Record trade deficits and import bills are going to show up in this quarter's current account deficit, which is expected to double from around 1.2% of GDP in the second quarter. Services trade is still throwing up a surplus but the uncertainty around the H-1B visa regime will be a key monitorable, despite Mr. Trump's latest soothing comments on the system. The previous RBI Governor, Shaktikanta Das, did well to forthrightly dismiss the BRICS currency as just an idea in the air, and stress that India has no de-dollarisation agenda. The government must also issue an unequivocal statement to this effect in public fora and in diplomatic parleys to put the issue to rest. It is true that the currencies of other emerging markets have taken a bigger hit and a falling rupee bodes well for exporters, but India also needs to worry about importing inflation, especially on inelastic items such as edible oil and crude petroleum. Moreover, foreign investment flows are uncertain as is the U.S. monetary policy outlook for 2025. There is also a limit to the extent the central bank can deploy forex reserves to manage the rupee's trajectory, and the Finance Ministry has conceded that recent exchange rate movements cramp the freedom for monetary policymakers. India's present economic woes are linked to domestic drivers such as faltering consumption and reluctant investments. With the rupee coming under pressure, the country's external resilience could be tested as well in 2025, and policymakers must gear up to manage this new risk.

Queen's Gambit

Koneru Humpy must try to repeat her success in the classical format

There was almost a sense of inevitability to the World rapid chess championship that concluded in New York on Sunday (India time). Given the astonishing year that India has had in chess, it was as if there had to be an Indian champion, and Koneru Humpy ensured there was one. The 37-year-old from Vijayawada won the women's World rapid championship after defeating Indonesia's Irene Sukandar in the final round. This is the second World rapid title for Humpy, which she won first in 2019. This is even more remarkable as she had been seeded 10th and had to face several younger rivals. Chess is getting younger and younger. D. Gukesh proved it just a fortnight ago in Singapore, when he became the youngest world champion in history at 18. Gukesh's victory came in the classical variety of chess, while Humpy's was in a format of much shorter time control. The fact that it has not been her favourite format – which remains classical – makes her success even more special. Ironically, she has never won the classical World championship, though she has come close in the past. The latest triumph should inspire her to mount another challenge for the trophy that matters the most.

Humpy's success is only the latest reminder about India's stature as the superpower in international chess. In September this year, India's men's and women's teams emerged as champions at the Chess Olympiad, in which just about every country took part. Only the former Soviet Union and China have claimed a twin gold at the Olympiad before. India is now to world chess what the Soviet Union was for decades. The country may still have to go a long way before it could rival the popularity that chess enjoyed in the USSR during its golden days but India is churning out world beaters with remarkable consistency. An active chess federation despite the internal quibbles, a familiar tale for Indian sport, huge parental support, increasing interest from the corporate sector and the availability of Grandmasters as coaches across the country have all contributed to the Indian chess revolution, which was begun by five-time World champion Viswanathan Anand. But for India to retain its position as the global giant in the mind game, more has to be done. Except for a few States such as Tamil Nadu, chess still does not get the recognition it deserves. Recently, Tania Sachdev, a member of the victorious Indian women's team at the Olympiad, had to go public about the lack of support for chess from the Delhi government.

The Sheikh Hasina extradition demand, India's options

Months after ousted Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled to New Delhi seeking exile during anti-government protests in August 2024, Bangladesh, on December 23, 2024, formally asked India to extradite her for "judicial process". Dhaka sent a *note verbale* to India's External Affairs Ministry on the same day, with the Press Secretary to Bangladesh's Chief Adviser saying, "We want our relations with India to be based on fairness, equality and dignity", ahead of India's Foreign Secretary's visit to Bangladesh with the hope of rekindling constructive relations between the two countries.

Ms. Hasina was declared an absconder for not surrendering after leaving Dhaka on August 5, 2024. A first information report was filed on August 13, 2024 against her and other former associates. She has been charged with conspiracy to eliminate the students involved in protests, and the mistreatment and the killing of hundreds of the protesters, which are labelled as genocide and crimes against humanity. The state machinery is working to collect credible and probative facts for the prosecution to make a strong and winnable case against her. The Dhaka-based International Crimes Tribunal on October 17 issued arrest warrants for Ms. Hasina and 45 others including former Cabinet ministers, advisers and military and civil officials. On November 18, the Tribunal gave the investigation authority a month's time, with the date of December 17, 2024 for them to wrap up the investigation. A charge sheet will be filed soon.

Trial in absentia

In common law jurisdictions, a trial cannot commence in absentia of an accused. To commence this trial, Ms. Hasina must be present before the court and participate either physically or virtually.

As an alternative to this, in some jurisdictions, a lawyer can be presumed to have constructive presence, but it is still contentious in common law jurisdictions. However, Section 339 B of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 of Bangladesh says that an accused person can be tried in their absence. Regarding a hearing in absence of an accused, the International Criminal Court (ICC) also has a recent precedent, when on October 29, 2024, its Pre-Trial Chamber III issued a decision to hold a confirmation of charges hearing for suspect Joseph Kony in his absence. Kony, suspected of 36 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity in northern Uganda, was absconding for 19 years.

As a matter of fact, Bangladesh appears to be an apt place for trial, as alleged acts have been committed there along with the presence of evidence and victims. While Bangladesh has asked India to extradite Ms. Hasina via a diplomatic channel, the Indian government has not yet commented on this. Although there is an obligation on the state under customary

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international law under the *aut dedere aut judicare* principle to "either extradite or prosecute" any accused facing a grave international crime such as genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, enforced disappearance or torture, India is not obliged to extradite Ms. Hasina to Bangladesh.

India's potential defences

India has neither aided, abetted, solicited nor is complicit in the alleged crimes of Ms. Hasina. In 2013, India concluded a bilateral extradition treaty with Bangladesh. It has the Indian Extradition Act 1962, which authoritatively provides a framework for the extradition of nationals and non-nationals. In this case, Bangladesh is the requesting state and India is the requested state. The requested state can take two defences, which bar the claim of Bangladesh to get an extradition. First, India can argue that Ms. Hasina has committed political offences, which are a legitimate ground to reject such a proposal. However, this argument does not look plausible. At least, *prima facie* there will be no takers to say that the acts of Ms. Hasina appear to be a political offence. Long before her ouster there were reports by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and many other organisations that her regime was involved in state-sponsored violence against the civilian population such as torture, enforced disappearance, persecution and other inhuman acts of high gravity. Therefore, at least, whether she has committed such crimes or not can only be decided by a fair trial.

Second, common law follows the rule of non-inquiry. It means that, traditionally, extradition is the executive's discretion, and the person concerned cannot seek intervention of the municipal court. However, this practice does not have much support now. Nevertheless, Ms. Hasina, though not an Indian citizen, is still protected by Articles 20 and 21 of the Indian Constitution. In *National Human Rights Commission vs State Of Arunachal Pradesh & Anr.* (1996), the Supreme Court of India ruled that even a non-citizen is entitled to get protection of Article 21 as it uses the term 'person'. Based on the current situation and the past record of Bangladesh on torture and prison conditions, the Court would have reasonable basis to protect Ms. Hasina and bar the Indian government from extraditing her to Bangladesh.

There is, however, a way ahead. The Indian government can allow an in-house arrest of Ms. Hasina in India in the same condition she is staying in and ensure that she participates in her trial through video conferencing with a lawyer of her choice physically present before a Bangladeshi court. After this, India can assure Bangladesh that it will fully cooperate in the investigation and evidence gathering.

Bangladesh authorities must have access to Ms. Hasina with prior notice. In case the judgment is against her, then too, based on the sentencing

agreement, she can undergo her sentencing in India. This measure shows *bona fide* intent on behalf of India and demonstrates compliance with Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, while safeguarding the risk to and the concerns of the accused.

Ms. Hasina is no longer in power and considering her old age and infirmity, any extraneous treatment is not justifiable for her well-being. She has the right to human rights. This can be achieved through reason and a far-sighted approach. Polemics and emotional arguments can have long-time and serious consequences for India-Bangladesh ties. Bangladesh must understand that Ms. Hasina's trial is important and that she must not be available to face the brunt of vengeance. At the same time, India needs to make room for Bangladesh state agencies to operate and conduct her trial successfully. If this works out, it will show to the international community, a collaborative approach to fair trial as well.

ICC's jurisdiction, alternative solution

Bangladesh is the 11th state party to the Rome Statute of the ICC. This could be a matter before the ICC, based on Articles 5, 11 and 12 of the Rome Statute, and for fulfilling the ICC's criteria of jurisdictions, i.e., material, personal, territorial, and temporal, as follows: being a 'crimes against humanity', it passes the threshold of gravity (material); it is committed by a citizen of a state party (personal); committed in the territory of Bangladesh (territorial); and occurred after 2002 (temporal). The ICC is a court of last resort, and it must supplement, rather than supplant, national jurisdiction. Its jurisdiction is based on the principle of complementarity, as per Article 17. As Bangladesh has started this trial at the domestic level, the ICC has no reason to intervene.

However, Article 53 of the Rome Statute, when read with Article 17, shows that if an accused's rights are in danger, and if proceedings are not conducted independently and impartially, and are conducted in a manner which, in the circumstances, is inconsistent with an intent to bring the person concerned to justice, then there is reasonable ground to believe that the interests of the accused are in grave danger. Ms. Hasina will not be able to get her rights of impartial and independent judicial authority under Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) read with Article 21(3) of the Rome Statute. In that case, the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC (OTP), under Article 15, can start a preliminary examination. Therefore, as an alternative to the first suggestion, it can be possible that under Article 14 of the Rome Statute, Bangladesh can refer this matter to the ICC, or under Article 15 there can be a *proprio motu* preliminary examination by the OTP. Ms. Hasina can surrender to the ICC with an assurance that she must not be extradited to Bangladesh.

States and the danger of poorly manufactured drugs

Over the last few years, there have been a number of incidents across India involving not of standard quality (NSQ) drugs, the most recent being the deaths of five young mothers in Ballari district, Karnataka, allegedly due to contaminated drugs manufactured by a pharmaceutical company in West Bengal.

Due to the unique nature of India's Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, the pharmaceutical company located in West Bengal can sell its drugs in all States across the country, despite being licensed and inspected only by drug inspectors in the State where its manufacturing facility is located. Since each State is responsible for licensing and inspecting pharmaceutical manufacturing units located within its territory, it means that there is little that States such as Karnataka can do to stop poorly manufactured drugs from other States flooding their pharmacies. Data supports this assertion. Out of the 894 samples randomly tested by our State drug laboratories over the last three years, an overwhelming 601 samples that failed testing were from manufacturers located in States other than Karnataka.

Information sharing is a way out

The only regulatory tool at the disposal of my department to deal with these NSQ drugs manufactured outside Karnataka is to prosecute the pharmaceutical company. But criminal prosecutions take a very long time. During the pendency of the trial, there is nothing that we in Karnataka can do to stop the pharmaceutical company from continuing to manufacture and sell its drugs within Karnataka. As in the law, only the drug inspectors in the home States of these pharmaceutical companies can take steps to cancel or suspend their manufacturing licences. Given this reality of drug regulatory laws in India, it is imperative that we think of solutions to improve the situation urgently.

A simple and cost-effective measure, which



Dinesh Gundu Rao
Health Minister, Karnataka

The Union government must help States to improve drug quality

Join FREE WhatsApp Channel <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6RGJOKH6oBd0f> may help improve the quality of drugs across the country, to promote greater information sharing between the drug control departments of State governments and various public procurement agencies. Currently, there is no way for drug inspectors of the Karnataka Drugs Control Department or the Karnataka State Medical Supplies Corporation Ltd. (KSMSC) to verify the antecedents of pharmaceutical manufacturers located outside our State. For example, it would be of great help if all central and State drug testing laboratories made available their test results in a centralised database. This would enable a drug inspector or a procurement official in Karnataka or any other State to track the number of times a pharmaceutical company's drugs have failed testing across the country in any government laboratory. It will become easier for drug inspectors to adopt a risk-based approach while making enforcement and procurement decisions.

Have a centralised database

Similarly, it would be very helpful if all State drug inspectors made available inspection reports and licensing information for all manufacturers in their respective States in one centralised database. By making available this information in a single database, it will become easier for procurement agencies such as the KSMSC to verify the antecedents of pharmaceutical companies before purchasing drugs from them and avoid scenarios such as the recent scandal in Maharashtra where dubious suppliers sold spurious antibiotics to a public hospital. Such a database will also help procurement officers to understand the quality of inspections across States and prioritise manufacturers from States with a reputation for conducting more rigorous inspections of their manufacturing units. In the absence of such a verifiable database, most procurement agencies have to just take the word of pharmaceutical companies submitting tenders. The KSMSC does not have an independent way

to validate the claims of pharmaceutical companies located outside Karnataka when making public procurement decisions. This impacts public health.

Apart from inspection and test reports, it would also help if the Union Ministry of Health could create a central register which records all pharmaceutical manufacturers blacklisted by different procurement agencies for supplying NSQ drugs. This would be very helpful in weeding out the bad players from the market and improving the quality of drugs available in public hospitals.

Most tenders require pharmaceutical companies to disclose if they have been blacklisted by any entity. But, currently, there is no way for procurement officers to verify the authenticity of this information independently.

States and legal powers

A third simple reform is to equip individual States with the legal powers to block manufacturers from outside the State to continue selling drugs within their State, while they are under investigation for the sale of drugs that may have caused deaths or other serious adverse events to patients within the State. State drug controllers should have the power to bar pharmaceutical manufacturers, located out of State, from selling their drugs within their State until the manufacturer is able to demonstrate that it has rectified the problems that led to the manufacture of NSQ drugs.

However, since the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 is central legislation, there is little that an individual State such as Karnataka can do to amend the law or its enforcement in other states. The initiative for legislative reform must come from the Union Health Ministry. Karnataka will be happy to support any reforms that will help improve the quality of drugs in Karnataka and across the country.

I will shortly write a letter to the Union Health Minister, J.P. Nadda, to address this critical issue.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mammooh Singh

Dr. Manmohan Singh, as Prime Minister, is a study in contrast to his successor. Dr. Singh never used vituperative language against political opponents and was civil and graceful in all his interventions in Parliament.

He addressed press conferences at regular intervals, where he was willing to face inconvenient questions. Above all, he was a true democrat with an absolute commitment to secularism and inclusiveness. He was indeed a sterling example of

what a Prime Minister in a democratic country should be like.

Manohar Alembath,

Kannur, Kerala

Ever alive in the hearts of all Indians, the political class must note that Dr. Manmohan Singh does not

need a memorial at all. He has etched his name in the minds and the hearts of the people with his

statesmanship, non-political nature, kindness,

constructive work and

implementation of various

welfare measures and

economic reforms. The

blame games, mudslinging and slanders can end.

P.V. Madhu Nirviti,

Secunderabad

Jimmy Carter

The year 2024 has

witnessed the departure of

many towering figures who

have shaped the world. The

former President of the United States, Jimmy Carter, is one such leader. In a world engulfed in crises, revisiting Carter's leadership and legacy offers invaluable lessons for contemporary global leaders.

Suhbramshu Roy,

Patna, Bihar

UPI duopoly's rise and market vulnerabilities

The rise of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in the eight years since its launch has been meteoric, with the UPI ecosystem now accounting for nearly eight in every 10 digital transactions in India, with a value of over ₹20.60 lakh crore in August of this year alone.

This success, however, is no small feat for a country like India, which is characterised by low digital literacy and a historic reliance on cash, and is deeply reflective of the critical role UPI has played in fostering public trust in digital payments.

UPI's continued success will heavily depend on whether its ecosystem can maintain and build upon such public trust, which will, in turn, depend on the ecosystem's performance on metrics such as resilience, reliability, and openness to innovation. This is particularly important as UPI's penetration remains at 30% of the population, which is impressive for a new payments technology, but shows how much of India remains to be brought into the digital payments fold. Achieving this will require substantially new innovations in everything from service offerings to app design and the overall product base of the UPI ecosystem to make it relevant for the remaining 70% of the country.

A major hindrance is the extreme market concentration of two Third Party App Providers (TPAPs) in the UPI network – PhonePe and Google Pay. Together, they control over 85% of the total market share, whereas the next biggest player, Paytm, controls merely 7.2%.

Major risks

The emergence of a duopoly, especially a foreign-owned one, at a relatively early stage in the UPI ecosystem creates three major risks. The first is the increased systemic vulnerability. High market concentration in the payments space can lead to single points of failure, where any



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sudden stoppage or break in services can have ripple effects across the entire financial structure. Given that nearly eight out of 10 transactions carried out via UPI in a month take place on either PhonePe or GooglePay, these two apps have effectively become such single points of failure. For a system as critical as UPI to remain robust, it is essential to develop failsafes and backup mechanisms to ensure the system continues to function smoothly.

Second, there is the risk of decreased competition and innovation in the payments and financial ecosystem. By consolidating a disproportionately large share of the market and user base, the two dominant TPAPs benefit from a scale that creates high barriers to entry for smaller and newer market participants. Given that all service providers in the UPI network are subject to a zero-charge framework for users, they primarily compete to achieve user scale, which they then leverage for commercial purposes by cross-selling other financial products.

The widespread scale of operations and user base that the two foreign-owned TPAPs have consolidated creates an inherently uncompetitive market. The lack of competition also disincentivises investment in new innovations, as the existing dominant players need not do anything more to maintain their current positions.

Third is the risk of foreign dominance. Both TPAPs in the duopoly are foreign-owned – PhonePe by Walmart and GPay by Google. No Indian TPAP or service provider can realistically hope to compete against the dominant TPAPs without billions of dollars in funding. Further, this foreign ownership creates multiple potentially new lines of failure, including data protection and backdoor access to sensitive information of Indian citizens, many of which Indian regulators might not even be aware of. It is therefore prudent policy to encourage the development of

Indian TPAPs, which can strengthen the UPI ecosystem by providing a counterbalance to the current dominant platforms. This is not an argument against having foreign-owned UPI players or service providers, but rather a call to create a more level playing field for Indian apps and developers.

While the existing duopoly has been repeatedly flagged for its associated risks by regulators and parliamentarians alike, it remains to be substantially addressed. In 2020, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) issued a circular instructing all TPAPs to cap their market share at 30% of the total volume of transactions processed via UPI during the previous quarter and imposed an upper limit of two years for implementation. However, the NPCI subsequently extended this deadline. Four years later, the two TPAPs in question are no worse for the wear, with PhonePe alone accounting for 48.36% and Google Pay for 37.3% of market share in volume, as of August 2024. It is now being reported that such delays could continue beyond this year.

To further add to the troubles of Indian developers, recent reports suggest that the NPCI may potentially increase the market share cap from 30% to 40%. However, every subsequent extension given by the NPCI, with any potential increase in the market share cap, will only allow the dominant TPAPs to consolidate their hold.

Under the right conditions and with the right incentives, the UPI ecosystem has every potential to offer smaller market participants a level playing field where they can innovate and compete with larger established players. As UPI enters its next phase of growth in both reach and innovation, the implementation of a market cap is a key step in insulating the ecosystem from such risks that stand to substantially erode public trust and future transformational capabilities.

Under the right conditions and with the right incentives, the UPI ecosystem has every potential to offer smaller market participants a level playing field

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Women electors turned out more than men in LS polls

Out-migration could possibly explain the anomaly of lower male turnout in States like Bihar in the 2024 polls

DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan
Srinivasan Ramani

The Election Commission (EC) has released granular data for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections recently. As **Chart 1** shows, the gap between male and female turnouts was narrowing in recent elections, before female electors' turnout surpassed that of men in the 2019 and now, the 2024 elections. The difference between the turnout increased from 0.16 to 0.23 points from the 2019 to the 2024 elections.

Chart 2 shows that in 15 out of the 28 major States and U.T.s, female turnout surpassed that of men, while in the rest, it was the opposite. The gender difference in turnout was highest in Bihar, even as the overall turnout was relatively low. Bihar apart, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand also experienced higher female turnout relative to males. Among States with high turnout, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, and West Bengal had higher female turnout compared to males. In States with moderate turnout, Odisha, Kerala, and Himachal Pradesh had a similar gender divide in turnout.

The situation was the opposite in States like Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh among others where female voters were outnumbered by male voters as there were more registered male electors than women.

What could explain the drastic difference in female and male voting in States like Bihar and Jharkhand? The reasons could be political factors (which motivate more women to vote) or structural factors such as the migration of male workers to other States and their inability to return to their home States to vote despite being registered as voters there.

The situation was the opposite in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Jammu & Kashmir, and Rajasthan, where overall turnout was lower relative to the rest of the country, and male turnout surpassed that of females. In States with moderate turnout, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, and Karnataka had higher turnout among men. In others, the gender difference in turnout was not that high.

Looking at turnouts alone would paint an incomplete picture. We need to see female turnout relative to the electorate. If a State has a skewed electorate with higher composition of men, a relatively higher turnout among women could still mean that men turned out more because of the

latter's higher electorate numbers.

Chart 3 plots the ratio of female to male electors (eligible voters) against the ratio of female to male voters (absolute numbers of those who turned out). Bihar stands out among States that had a higher female-to-male (voters) ratio despite having a lower female-to-male electorate ratio. This means that in Bihar, more women turned out to vote than men in absolute numbers even though there were more registered male electors than women. Jharkhand and Himachal Pradesh also come under this category but the difference between these ratios is less stark compared to Bihar.

In States like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh, more women were eligible to vote compared to men and more women turned out to vote as well.

The situation was the opposite in States like Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh among others where female voters were outnumbered by male voters as there were more registered male electors than women.

What could explain the drastic difference in female and male voting in States like Bihar and Jharkhand? The reasons could be political factors (which motivate more women to vote) or structural factors such as the migration of male workers to other States and their inability to return to their home States to vote despite being registered as voters there.

Table 4 looks at the top 10 common sources and destinations of migrant workers who used unreserved tickets to travel to other States in 2023. Note how Bihar features in four entries among the top 10 sources and the fact that there are two States/U.T. destinations for Bihar's migrants which are not neighbouring States/U.T.s.

Out-migration seems a possible reason for lower male turnout in States like Bihar. Establishing this fact might require more granular data processing beyond the scope of this article.

Making her presence felt

The data for the charts were sourced from the Election Commission and the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)

Chart 1: The chart shows the difference between female and male voter turnouts across Lok Sabha polls in % points

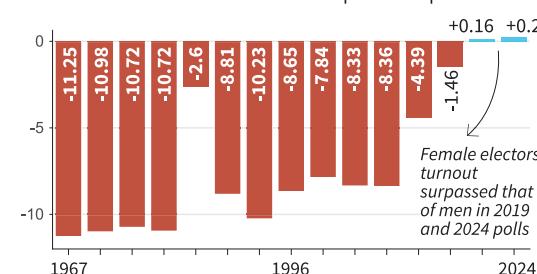
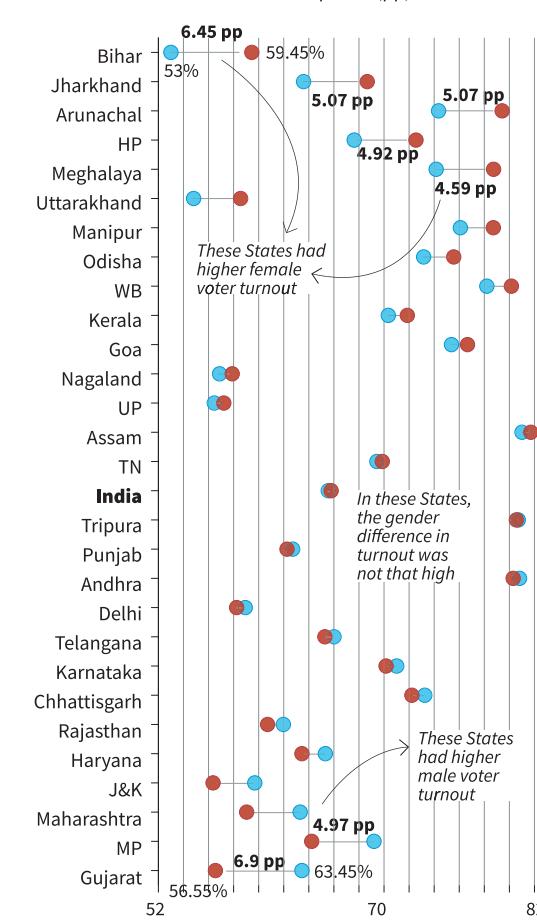


Chart 2: The chart shows the male (●) and female voter turnout in %. If the ● is to the right, female voter turnout was higher and vice-versa. The bigger the gap between circles, the higher the gender difference in turnout. Difference is denoted in % points (pp)



Getting inked: Female voters in Karakat in Bihar after voting in the Lok Sabha polls

Chart 3: The ratio of female to male electors (eligible voters, X axis) against the ratio of female to male voters (absolute numbers of those who turned out, Y axis)

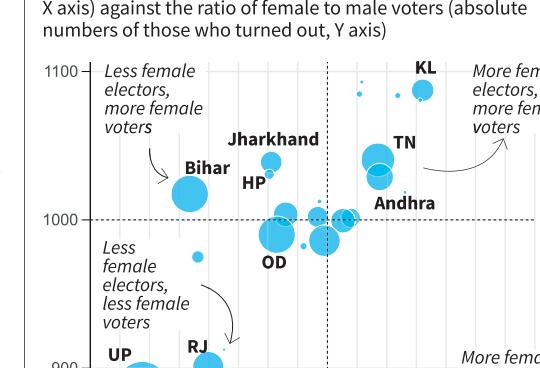


Table 4: The top 10 common sources and destinations of migrant workers who used unreserved tickets to travel to other States in 2023

Sources	Destinations
UP	Delhi
Gujarat	Maharashtra
Telangana	Andhra
Bihar	Delhi
Bihar	WB
UP	Maharashtra
Bihar	Maharashtra
Andhra	Karnataka
Jharkhand	Bihar

Table 5: The table shows the five seats in which the difference between the female and male turnout was the most and the five seats in which it was the least

State	Seat	Male %	Female %	Difference
Jharkhand	Kodarma	54.02	70.01	+15.99
West Bengal	Jangipur	68.75	82.75	+14
Bihar	Supaul	56.94	70.56	+13.62
Bihar	Madhubani	46.58	60.07	+13.49
Bihar	Jhanjharpur	48.08	61.38	+13.3
All India		65.55	65.78	+0.23
Gujarat	Rajkot	64.49	54.5	-9.99
J&K	Srinagar	43.71	33.22	-10.49
Gujarat	Kheda	63.34	52.61	-10.73
Gujarat	Jamnagar	62.97	52.02	-10.95
Gujarat	Porbandar	57.14	46.1	-11.04

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Share of claims disallowed by health insurers in FY24

12.9 In per cent. Health insurers disallowed claims worth ₹15,100 crore or 12.9% of the total claims filed during the 2023-24 fiscal. Of the total ₹1.17 lakh crore claims under health insurance, only ₹83,493.17 crore was paid during the year ending March 2024. PTI

Personnel deployed for New Year parties in Bengaluru

11,830 Arrangements have been made by the Bengaluru Police for the upcoming New Year celebrations in the city, with tight security deployment in areas with heavy footfall to ensure public safety and the smooth flow of traffic. PTI

Number of cadets to participate in the NCC Republic Day Camp

2,361 A total of 2,361 NCC cadets from across the country are taking part in a month-long Republic Day camp which began at Delhi Cantonment on Monday. The annual event will also witness participation of 917 girl cadets, the largest so far. PTI

Death toll in fights between Kurdish and Turkey-backed groups

31 A Syria war monitor said 31 combatants had been killed since Sunday in ongoing battles between Turkey-backed groups and Kurdish-led forces. Swathes of northern Syria are controlled by a Kurdish-led administration whose army helped defeat the Islamic State in Syria in 2019. AFP

The increase in Spanish inflation in the month of December

2.8 In per cent. Spanish inflation in December climbed to its highest level since July and drifted further from the eurozone target as fuel prices rose, preliminary official data showed on Monday. AFP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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On India's obligations towards the Rohingya

What has a recent report by The Azadi Project and Refugees International said about India's refugee policy for the Rohingya people? How many Rohingya refugees reside in India? What does the 1951 Refugee Convention state? Does India have a domestic refugee law?

EXPLAINER

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

A recent study examining the plight of Rohingya refugees detained in India, conducted jointly by The Azadi Project and Refugees International has highlighted "gross violations of constitutional and human rights" and criticised India's "failure to uphold its obligations under international human rights treaties." Based on interviews with detainees, their families, and legal representatives, the report reveals that "a significant number of Rohingya refugees continue to be incarcerated even after serving their prescribed sentences."

How are Rohingya refugees protected under international law?

The Rohingya people of Myanmar constitute the world's largest stateless population, estimated to number approximately 2.8 million. Denied citizenship and subjected to decades of persecution by Myanmar's authorities, majority of the Rohingya have been compelled to flee their homeland due to genocidal violence. At present, they are dispersed across multiple countries. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), nearly 22,500 Rohingya refugees currently reside in India.

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol enshrine the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits States from expelling individuals under their jurisdiction when substantial evidence suggests they would face persecution, torture, or other severe human rights violations upon return. This principle is a cornerstone of human rights, humanitarian, and refugee law. Moreover, its status as customary international law imposes binding obligations on states regardless of formal assent. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has reiterated that "the principle is characterised by its absolute nature without any exception".

Additionally, in a 2007 advisory opinion, the UNHCR affirmed that non-refoulement constitutes customary law and is binding on all states, including those not parties to the Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol.

What is India's stand?

As India is neither a signatory to the Refugee Convention nor a party to key international instruments, such as the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, it maintains that it bears no legal obligation to provide asylum or adhere to the principle of non-refoulement. India continues to detain Rohingya refugees under archaic domestic legal frameworks, notably the Foreigners Act, 1946, and the Passport Act, 1967. These legislations confer sweeping executive powers to regulate the presence of foreigners and enable authorities to categorise Rohingya refugees as "illegal migrants."

In response to a public interest litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court seeking the release of detained Rohingya refugees, the Centre clarified in March that while they are entitled to the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution, they do not possess the right to reside or settle in India. In 2021, the top court in *Mohammad Salimullah and Anr. versus Union of India*, rejected a plea to prevent

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Destitute living: A general view of Rohingya camps area near Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi on December 12. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

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the deportation of 170 Rohingya refugees detained in Srinagar accepting the Centre's national security concerns.

In October 2024, the Delhi High Court dismissed a PIL seeking directions to the authorities to admit Rohingya refugee children in local schools. The court noted that the matter involved international implications and required a policy decision to be taken by the government.

What are India's international obligations?

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which India is a party, implicitly obligates member states under Article 7 to refrain from refouling individuals to places where they may face torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. The UN Human Rights Committee has unequivocally affirmed this interpretation. Similarly, the principle of non-refoulement is enshrined in other significant international instruments, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, both of which India has ratified.

Further, the Convention Against Torture makes an express mention of non-refoulement under Article 3. While India's position as a signatory but not a ratifier renders its provisions non-binding, any deviation from the

convention's principles would compromise the commitment India demonstrated by signing the treaty.

Although India lacks a domestic refugee law, the Supreme Court in landmark rulings such as *Vishaka & Ors. versus State of Rajasthan* (1997) and *National Legal Services Authority versus Union of India* (2014), has affirmed that in the absence of domestic legislation on a matter, international conventions and norms must be applied by municipal courts to ensure the dignity of human life. Additionally, Article 51(c) of the Constitution mandates that the state must strive to promote respect for international law and treaty obligations.

Several High Courts in India have also interpreted the principle of non-refoulement as integral to Article 21 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to life and personal liberty. Notable examples include the Gujarat High Court's decision in *Ktaer Abbas Habib Al Qutaifi versus Union of India* (1998) and the Delhi High Court's ruling in *Dongh Lian Kham versus Union of India* (2015), both of which involved refugees from different countries seeking protection from deportation.

What are the existing concerns?

The absence of a standardised refugee policy has led to the disparate treatment of different refugee populations, driven

by India's shifting geopolitical and diplomatic interests. While groups such as the Tibetans, Sri Lankans, and Afghans are granted refugee certificates or long-term visas by the government, most Rohingya refugees – despite being registered with the UNHCR – often face arbitrary detention and criminal imprisonment. Further, the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, excludes persecuted Muslim minorities, such as the Rohingya, from its ambit.

The lack of legal representation and aid for detained Rohingya refugees also poses a severe concern. The report by Azadi Project and Refugees International highlights that civil society organisations working on behalf of Rohingya refugees in India are starved of funding as most Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act licences that allow for the receipt of foreign funding have been revoked. This has made lawyers reluctant to take on cases involving the Rohingya, fearing potential repercussions.

Moreover, detention centres housing Rohingya refugees, including pregnant women and children, are plagued by dehumanising living conditions. In light of the appalling conditions at the Matia Transit Camp, the Supreme Court in October, directed the Assam State Legal Services to conduct surprise visits and evaluate the conditions in which the refugees are living.

THE GIST

A recent study examining the plight of Rohingya refugees detained in India, conducted jointly by The Azadi Project and Refugees International has highlighted "gross violations of constitutional and human rights" and criticised India's "failure to uphold its obligations under international human rights treaties."

As India is neither a signatory to the Refugee Convention nor a party to key international instruments, it maintains that it bears no legal obligation to provide asylum or adhere to the principle of non-refoulement.

The report highlights that civil society organisations working on behalf of Rohingya refugees in India are starved of funding as most Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act licences that allow for the receipt of foreign funding have been revoked.

BUILDING BLOCKS

ISTOCKPHOTO

Understanding the physics behind cooking a tadka

In most Indian curry preparations, the tadka is the first step: in a bit of heated oil, the cook puts either cumin (jeera) or mustard seeds. After a series of sharp chirps sound, the cook proceeds to add the vegetables and launch into the preparation

Adhip Agarwala

Cooking is often called an art, and just like art can be incomprehensible at times, so can exotic cooking be inedible. But that just says more about the audience (or the designated eater) than the painter (or the cook).

At least, this is what I told myself when, a few years ago, I had invited a few friends over and made a vegetable curry that they simply refused to eat.

They said a curry couldn't really be a curry if its tadka had been cooked in water rather than in oil. In my defence, I had realised quite late that I'd run out of oil in my kitchen. There was nothing other than water around and I'd chopped the vegetables as well.

I was vociferous that water was healthier than oil for the body but eventually I had to concede: my curry wasn't the curry. But I remain curious, too. Why does one have to use oil to cook the tadka?

Oil and water

In most Indian curry preparations, the tadka is the first step: in a bit of heated oil, the cook puts either cumin (jeera) or mustard seeds. A series of sharp chirps sound, the cook proceeds to add the vegetables and launch into the preparation. In these first few seconds, the flavours of the aromatic seeds seep into the food.

Now, oil and ghee are funny liquids. When you spill some oil, it moves quite slowly, unlike water, which instead moves

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faster. Place a few drops of oil in a cup of water and it floats. This is unusual: honey or even dishwasher liquid move slowly on a surface but they are also denser than water. How can oil be both sluggish and lighter? The answer lies with oil's molecules. Oil is made of long chains of large molecules that spiral and stick to each other – not unlike a bunch of noodles or earphone wires. That makes oil a sluggish mover and also hard to separate. These noodle-like molecules of oil render it another important property: a high boiling point.

The boiling point of oil

The boiling point of any liquid is the temperature at which the liquid becomes gas. It's a common sight when we heat water on the stove: even on a high flame, a pot of water takes some time to turn to vapour. Water (at room temperature and pressure) has a boiling point of around 100°C.

So you need to supply enough heat to the water to increase its temperature to 100°C. Once you do, any extra heat will convert the liquid to gas.

Alcohol-based liquids like nail-polish removers have lower boiling points and quickly vapourise. If you rub some hand-sanitiser on your palm, for example, it will dry up in less time than it takes for you to read this sentence. Room-temperature gases such as nitrogen and oxygen have very low boiling points – much lower than 0°C – so we (fortunately) always have them as a gas, even during a harsh winter.

The reason different things have

different boiling points is because they have different molecular structures. Liquids whose molecules are easy to separate from each other have lower boiling points while those whose molecules are tightly bound to each other have higher boiling points.

Oils have large, complicated molecules that wind around each other and thus they have high boiling points. For example, mustard oil boils at about 150°C and ghee at about 250°C. So even as you heat a bit of oil in your pan, it hangs around for longer than water does before starting to disappear.

Which brings us to the more important question: why do we want to cook seeds with such heat?

Aroma blasts

An equally important question is why we like to have cumin seeds in our foods. Cumin as well as mustard seeds have aromatic compounds.

Think of them as tiny, hollow spheres with some powder inside. The way to get these powders out efficiently is to blow them up. Thus, you toss the seeds into hot oil. The air inside the seed is heated and expands. When the pressure is too much, the seeds' shells burst open, ejecting their contents. It's like when you pump a balloon too much and it rips apart in a bang. In the process, the seed bursts shoot sound waves through the air that you hear as the crisp chirps.

The same thing happens when you fry a puri. As soon as you put an uncooked puri into the oil, the water and air inside expand, turning it into a ball filled with

vapour. Sometimes the vapour can crack the wheat open and escape.

Back to the tadka: the seeds can be blown open only if the tiny air inside expands quickly. If it expands slowly, it will also just leak from a pore and the seed won't pop. So you need a liquid that can get hot enough as well as remain hot. Oils are better to cook tadka than water for this reason. They can get hot enough and sustain the heat for longer.

If you use water like I did, the seeds won't pop. Perhaps you can try it at home under careful supervision. Boil a cup of water and toss in some cumin or mustard seeds. Try as you will, you won't hear any popping sounds. The seeds will just float on the water.

The real taste of your daily dal tadka has to do with the physics of oil molecules and seed explosions.

Tadka as art

Since my friends refused to imbibe my curry, I have made sure my kitchen is always well-stocked with oil, but even then getting the tadka just right is hard.

If you're wondering why molecules of oil behave the way they do or what decides whether the surface of a seed will crack open, you should consider taking a physics course here at IIT Kanpur where some of us teach.

But if you want to learn the actual physics of tadka, carefully observe the artist, the cook, as they perform the tadka next. The real beauty of science is hidden in this art.

Adhip Agarwala is an assistant professor of physics at IIT Kanpur.

THE DAILY QUIZ

In a tragic incident on December 29, a Jeju Air plane crash-landed in Muan killing 179 people on-board. A quiz on aviation accidents around the world

Vighnesh P. Venkitesh

QUESTION 1

In 2014, a Malaysian Airlines flight disappeared off the radar and is yet to be found, while another was shot down over Ukraine. Name the flights.

QUESTION 2

An English football club lost eight of its players to an aviation accident in Munich in 1958. In a similar incident, 19 players of a Brazilian football club lost their lives in an accident in 2016. Name the clubs.

QUESTION 3

International airports in

Mangaluru and Kozhikode share a feature which played a part in two accidents which happened in these airports, in 2010 and 2020 respectively. What is the similar feature?

QUESTION 4

Where did Saudi Arabian Airlines flight 763 collide mid-air with Kazakhstan Airlines flight 1907 in the deadliest mid-air collision in aviation history?

QUESTION 5

Name the pilot who managed to save all lives on board after his aircraft experienced engine failure after striking a flock of birds.



Visual question:

Name this airport which is notorious for its tricky runway and crosswinds. An aircraft with 19 passengers crashed here after take-off in July this year, leaving only one survivor. AP

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The reason Koneru Ashok and Latha changed Humpy's name from Hampi. **Ans: They derived the name from 'champion' and changed it to the present spelling to sound more Russian!**

2. Humpy won the girls' under-10 title in 1997 in this city. **Ans: Cannes**

3. In 2002, she became the youngest woman ever to become a Grandmaster by breaking this person's record. **Ans: Judit Polgar**

4. Humpy finished as runner-up in the Women's World Chess Championship to this person. **Ans: Hou Yifan**

5. Humpy won this civilian award in 2007. **Ans: Padma Shri**

6. Humpy won her first World Rapid title in this city and this year. **Ans: Moscow in 2019**

Visual: The gold medal Humpy is showing off. **Ans: The Asian Games Gold medal won in Doha in 2006**

Early Birds: Tamal Biswas| Tito Shiladitya|

ViswanadhaRao Batchu| Amit Saxena| Rajmohan Velayudhan



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian
S. Upendran

"You are unusually quiet today. What's eating you?"

"Eating me? Good heavens! Is there a pimple on my face? Do you think it could be that flesh eating bacteria? What if..."

"Relax! Relax! 'What's eating you' is a slang expression meaning 'what's bothering you'?"

"Is that all? You had me worried for a minute."

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to scare you. Here's an example of how you use the expression in a sentence. Kamala has been very moody lately. I wonder what's eating her."

"Probably nothing. She's being her usual grouchy self."

"The 'ou' in g.. r.o.u..c.h.y is pronounced like the 'ow' in words like 'now', 'how' and 'cow'. The stress is on the first syllable."

"So. it's grouchy. I think I've got that. Anyway, for the time being, I think we should ban people from using the expression 'What's eating you?', what with flesh eating bacteria making headlines, it might scare a lot of people."

"Well, in that case, we might have to stop using another expression."

"What is that?"

"Guess."

"Hmm.. let me see. What's bothering you? What's eating you? What's...what's...bugging you?"

"Exactly. We have so many bugs going around these days."

"That's true. But it would be absurd if we went around..."

"...Why do you always say 'abzurd'? The 's' in 'abzurd' is pronounced like the 's' in words like 'sit', 'sun', and 'soon'. The 'a' is pronounced like the 'a' in 'China' and the stress is on the second syllable."

"So it's abSURD. AbSURD."

"Correct. Now compare this..."

"Oh good. I'm glad you brought that up."

"Brought what up?"

"The word 'compare'. What exactly is the difference between 'compare' and 'contrast'?"

"Let me see. When you compare two things, what you're doing is looking for both similarities and differences between them. It's always interesting to compare great writers of different generations."

"But don't you do the same thing when you contrast two things?"

"No, when you 'contrast' two things, you look for the differences between them. Not the similarities."

"So, 'contrast' points out only the differences."

"That's right. A survey contrasts the eating habits of vegetarians with those of non-vegetarians."

"And what were the findings?"

"Read the survey and find out."

Published in *The Hindu* on July 26, 1994.

Word of the day

Expedient:

a means to an end not necessarily a principled or ethical one; serving to promote your interest; appropriate to a purpose; practical

Usage: *In the circumstances, it was expedient to express loyalty.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/expedientpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ɪk'spi:dɪ.ənt/

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

From Page One**Bandh in Punjab is a success, say farmers**

The Supreme Court is hearing the matter again on Tuesday with inputs from the expert committee headed by former Punjab and Haryana High Court judge Justice Nawab Singh, appointed by the court to find a solution to the protests.

Mr. Dallewal, in a brief video message, thanked the State's people for making the bandh a "success". He urged the Centre to pay heed to their demands.

Reports suggest the State witnessed a complete shutdown during the nine-hour bandh. The Railways said in a statement that the Firozpur-Hanumangarh train was cancelled and five trains were regulated. Other modes of public transportation, such as buses, taxis and autorickshaws, stayed off the roads.

Baldev Singh Sirsa, Bhartiya Kisan Union (Sirsa) president and leader of SKM(NP), who has been on protest with Mr. Dallewal, said the solidarity for Mr. Dallewal was the reason for the success of the bandh. "All sections of the society – teachers, advocates, street vendors, government employees and agriculture workers – supported our bandh," he said. Public transport workers refused the police's direction to go to the protest sites so that farmers could be arrested. Mr. Sirsa urged the governments at the States and at the Centre to implement the promises made to farmers.

All India Kisan Sabha Punjab secretary and SKM leader Major Singh Punnawal said the solidarity shown to Mr. Dallewal by the people was an indication to the Centre that it should be ready for negotiations. "Why has the Centre not called a meeting of protesting farmers yet? Why do they play with the life of Mr. Dallewal?" Mr. Punnawal said.

The draft agriculture policy of the Punjab government had recommended establishment of a State Agricultural Costs and Prices Commission. (With PTI inputs)

ISRO's docking mission successfully launched

ISRO said that the demonstrated precision of the PSLV vehicle would be utilised to give a small relative velocity between the Target and Chaser spacecraft at the time of separation from the launch vehicle. "This incremental velocity will allow the Target spacecraft to build a 10-20 km inter-satellite separation with respect to the Chaser within a day. At this point, the relative velocity between the Target will be compensated using the propulsion system of the Target spacecraft," ISRO said.

ISRO added that at the end of this drift arrest manoeuvre, Target and Chaser will be in the same orbit with identical velocity but separated by about 20 km, known as Far Rendezvous.

"With a similar strategy of introducing and then compensating for a small relative velocity between the two spacecraft, the Chaser will approach the Target with progressively reduced inter-satellite distances of 5 km, 1.5 km, 500 m, 225 m, 15 m, and 3 m, ultimately leading to the docking of the two spacecraft," it added.

UR Rao Satellite Centre Director M. Sanakaran said the docking is expected between January 7 and 10.

Private Members' Bills get short shrift

One of the reasons, Mr. Ramesh said, is that these Bills are scheduled for Friday afternoons, when members are in a hurry to return to their constituencies for the weekend. He has proposed that for Private Members' business to survive, it should be scheduled midweek on Wednesday.

With a narrowing window available for Private Members' business, it takes years for legislation moved by members to come up for discussion. Lok Sabha member and senior Congress leader Manish Tewari said that three of his Bills, including one to amend the anti-defection law to free MPs from the respective party position in all instances other than no-confidence motions, adjournment motions, and financial Bills that impact the stability of government, have been pending for over 15 years. "I had moved these Bills in the 15th Lok Sabha and they have not come up for discussion since. Curtailing the Private Members' Bill is equal to strangling the voice of parliamentarians," Mr. Tewari said.

Jimmy Carter, ex-U.S. President, dies at 100

Businessman, Navy officer, evangelist, politician, negotiator, author, woodworker, citizen of the world – Carter forged a path that still challenges political assumptions and stands out among the 45 men who reached the nation's highest office. The 39th president leveraged his ambition with a keen intellect, deep religious faith and prodigious work ethic, conducting diplomatic missions into his 80s and building houses for the poor well into his 90s.

"My faith demands – this is not optional – my faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I am, whenever I can, for as long as I can, with whatever I have to try to make a difference," Carter once said.

'Demographic data to stop influx from Myanmar'

Home Ministry says Northeast is 'walking on the path of peace and prosperity'; lauds crackdown on left-wing extremism; says a whole-of-the-govt. approach will end drug menace in country

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry said on Monday that demographic data along the Myanmar border, especially in Nagaland, Mizoram, and Manipur, should be mapped to help in fencing of the international border and stopping infiltration.

In its year-end review for 2024, the Ministry reiterated that the Ministry has decided to scrap the Free Movement Regime (FMR) between India and Myanmar to ensure the internal security of the country and maintain the demographic structure of India's northeastern States bordering Myanmar.

Though the Ministry said that the FMR was being suspended, on December 6 it finalised fresh protocol to regulate the movement of people living within 10 km, reduced from earlier 16 km territorial limit, on either side of the largely unfenced international border, indicating that FMR continues.

The Hindu reported on December 25 that the not-



Keeping an eye: Army personnel oversee the Kabaw valley along Myanmar-Manipur border. FILE PHOTO

ification ending the FMR, which involves a bilateral agreement with Myanmar, is yet to be notified by the Ministry of External Affairs, the nodal Ministry. Myanmar shares 1,643 km of largely unfenced border with Arunachal Pradesh (520 km), Nagaland (215 km), Manipur (398 km) and Mizoram (510 km).

The year-end report by the Home Ministry said that "the Modi government has taken the path of building bridges of unity in the Northeast in a bid to usher in an era of peace with unprecedented success" and "the Northeast is walking on the path of peace and prosperity."

It said there is a need for extensive mapping for mineral, oil and coal re-

serves in the Northeastern States, which will financially benefit from the royalty received for these minerals.

It added that in 2024, the security forces achieved exemplary success in curbing left-wing extremism, "eliminating 287 Naxalites and arresting as many as 992." Among those killed, at least 14 belonged to the highest decision-making body of the Communist Party of India-Maoists. It said that Home Minister Amit Shah has resolved to end the menace of left-wing extremism before March 31, 2026. It also said that in three months, the Union government and Chhattisgarh government will bring a comprehensive scheme for the overall

development of people affected by LWE.

The Ministry is heading with a whole-of-the-government approach in its mission to weed out the menace of drugs and the perpetrators of the crime, the report said.

In a joint operation carried out by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), the Indian Navy, and the Gujarat Police, a consignment of 3,132 kg of drugs was seized. Security agencies busted an international drug trafficking cartel and seized over 700 kg of contraband methamphetamine in Gujarat. NCB confiscated 82.53 kg of high-grade cocaine in New Delhi. The massive drug consignment worth approximately ₹900 crore was tracked down by a bottom-to-top approach after drugs were seized from a courier center in Delhi. "The agencies also seized 4,134 kg narcotics in the year 2024 from the deep seas," it said.

The Ministry has set the target to dispose of seized drugs as a stern message to the narcotics cartel. In 2024, the agencies under the Ministry destroyed 1,17,284 kg of narcotics.



Atar Singh shows a picture of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

time after his visit.

The villagers remember how massive security deployment had shrouded the village two days before Carter's visit.

Lala Ram, 71, said, "Villagers were asked to stay indoors for hours before his visit." Some others recall that how Carter walked every corner of the village and even visited the newly inaugurated Gobar Gas plant without making any fuss about it, and how it made them feel respected.

"More than 5,000 people from neighbouring villages had come to see the President; it upgraded our status as a village of importance, and we have kept it close to us since then. Carter, despite never visiting again, made sure to always reply to our letters back to the village for a long

Carterpuri recalls visit by former U.S. President in 1978

Satvika Mahajan
NEW DELHI

When Atar Singh, a 71-year-old resident of Carterpuri in Haryana, heard the news of the demise of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, it reminded him of his elder brother Kartar Singh who passed away about two months ago. The two had met the U.S. President about 46 years ago in 1978 when Carter had visited India during the term of then Prime Minister Moraji Desai.

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The villagers since then have declared January 3 a holiday and have celebrated every pivotal moment in his life. They are now mourning Carter.

Mr. Singh says, "My brother Kartar Singh, who was the village postmaster had made a file with pictures of the visit and every article written about the trip. I will continue the tradition for him."

Carter's office continued to write letters back to the village for a long

ing that the underlying question was about India's place in the larger nuclear order of which the U.S. was the primary custodian".

Both sides brushed aside the comments, but it was clear that the talks on the nuclear issue were unsuccessful amidst a visit otherwise quite productive on issues such as space cooperation and agricultural aid. Summarising the visit, then-U.S. Ambassador Robert Goheen wrote in a cable dated January 5, 1978 that the "determination of Prime Minister Desai and his colleagues not to allow the disclosure of the President's conversation with the Secretary on the nuclear question to sour the atmosphere is a testimonial to the goodwill that prevailed," but acknowledged that Indian newspaper commentary had focused on "differences in the nuclear field".

In a "hot mic" moment during a recess in talks between the two leaders, Carter inadvertently spoke to U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance near television microphones that broadcast him speaking of disagreements during the negotiations, and referring to Desai as "pretty adamant" on the nuclear issue, The Hindu reported at the time.

"While the U.S. Presidential outreach was well-meant, it was clear that on the nuclear issue there remained a substantial gap between what the U.S.

wanted India to do on non-proliferation, and the safeguards India was willing to submit to," said former Ambassador to Russia and disarmament expert at the Ministry of External Affairs Venkatesh Verma, explain-

Carter's connection to India was personal and political

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter had an intense relationship with India, both at a personal level and over the original "Indo-U.S. nuclear deal" for the Tarapur Atomic Power Station that even threatened to derail his mega vi-

bers of the Cabinet but also by President Neelam Sanjiva Reddy himself, a rare gesture.

'Great humanist' Welcoming him at the airport, Reddy called Carter a "great humanist", and referred to Carter's mother Lillian Carter's "selfless service" in Maharashtra as a member of the U.S. Peace Corps in the 1960s.

Carter, clearly delighted by the reference, the reception and the crowds who lined the streets, attended a public rally with Desai at the Ramlila Maidan. He said the connection with India was a deeply personal one because of his mother's love for "this nation and its people".

In Parliament, he received a standing ovation as he drew parallels between the fight for democracy in India against the Emergency that had ended two years before, and the



Key moment: U.S. President Jimmy Carter speaks at the Central Hall of Parliament on January 2, 1978. FILE PHOTO

U.S. protests against the Watergate Scandal that had ousted his predecessor Richard Nixon.

However, the bonhomie during the visit was dimmed somewhat by U.S. expectations of the Indian government at the time. Ahead of his arrival, Carter had said in an interview, "We go to India, the biggest democracy in the world, one that in recent years has turned perhaps excessively toward the Soviet Union but under the leadership of Prime Minister Desai is moving back towards the

U.S. and assuming a good role of, I would say, neutrality." His statement had left some feathers ruffled.

Nuclear issues

It was also clear that during talks with Desai, Carter intended to nudge India towards the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), given the U.S. anger over India's nuclear tests in 1974, and to use India's requirement for nuclear fuel at the Tarapur Atomic Power Station as leverage.

Moraji Desai, an avowed Gandhian who was

against the atomic bomb, nonetheless refused to budge on nuclear sovereignty issues.

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After attack, security forces raze four bunkers in Manipur

Press Trust of India
IMPHAL

Security forces have destroyed four bunkers of gunmen in Manipur's Imphal East and Kangpokpi districts and occupied three others following gunfights last week, the police said on Monday.

"The bunkers were destroyed after massive operations were conducted in the past two days in several areas bordering Thammapokpi and Sanasabi villages where gunfights took place after adjoining hills-based gunmen launched attacks on the low-lying vil-

lages," the police statement said.

Furthermore, a team of Army, BSF and CRPF occupied the dominating areas in Uyok Ching in Kangpokpi district.

"All armed miscreants involved in recent firing incidents at Thammapokpi and Sanasabi have been flushed out. Four illegal bunkers have been destroyed while three other bunkers have been occu-

pied by security forces both in the valley and dominating hill areas," the statement said.

Armed gunmen from adjoining hills in Kangpokpi district launched multiple attacks on low-lying Thammapokpi and Sanasabi villages, resulting in gunfight with security forces and village volunteers.

More than 250 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo groups in Manipur since May last year.

Naruvi Hospitals, The Hindu to present webinar on osteoporosis management

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI



Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore, in collaboration with The Hindu, has launched a nationwide public interest initiative – "Healthy India, Happy India" – aimed at fostering awareness, prevention of disease, and wellness across India.

As part of this initiative, a 15-part webinar series will cover a range of health topics, featuring distinguished medical experts and highlighting the importance of proactive healthcare to improve quality of life.

The second webinar in the series, titled "Osteoporosis: what a common man needs to know", is scheduled from 11.30 a.m. on January 5. The session will provide

valuable insights into osteoporosis, its prevention, and management.

An e-certificate of participation will be issued to all attendees.

To register, please visit newsth.live/HIIHUE or scan the QR code.

The expert panel for this session will include M.S. Seshadri, senior consultant, physician and endocrinologist at Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore, who will discuss strategies to reduce

the risk of osteoporosis, and the inclusion of calcium and vitamin D nutrition as part of primary prevention.

Sai Krishna Chaitanya P., consultant endocrinologist at Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education & Research, Chennai, will provide an overview of osteoporosis, including who should be tested and what tests are necessary.

Shri Ram Mahadevan, head of department and professor of endocrinology at Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education & Research, Chennai, will focus on preventing osteoporotic fractures through secondary prevention.

The session will be moderated by Geetha Sri-Srinath, reporter at The Hindu.



Conflict zone: CRPF personnel at the inter-State checkpost in Gamgipha, after the violence in parts of Manipur. FILE PHOTO



Unconventional methods like AI-based warfare a big challenge, says Rajnath

Press Trust of India

MHOW (M.P.)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Monday that unconventional methods like Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based warfare and cyber attacks pose a big challenge.

Addressing officers at the Army War College in Mhow Cantonment in Madhya Pradesh, Singh said India's defence exports have crossed a record ₹21,000 crore from ₹2,000 crore a decade ago. He said a target has been set to achieve defence exports of ₹50,000 crore by 2029.

"Unconventional methods like information warfare, AI-based warfare, proxy warfare, electromagnetic warfare, space warfare, and cyber-attacks are posing a big challenge," Mr. Singh said.

He stressed the need for the military to be well trained and equipped to fight off such attacks and lauded training centres in Mhow for their valuable



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh pays tributes at the Infantry Memorial at Mhow in Indore on Monday. MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, GOVERNMENT

contributions.

Mr. Singh said mastering frontier technologies is the need of the hour in the constantly evolving times, noting that military training centres are playing a crucial role in equipping and readying soldiers to deal with future challenges. "Our defence exports, which were around ₹2,000 crore a decade ago, have crossed the record figure of ₹21,000 crore today. We have set an export target of ₹50,000 crore by 2029," Mr. Singh said.

He said 'made-in-India'

equipment is being exported to other countries.

Mr. Singh commended the training centres for constantly improving their training curriculum as per changing times, and striving to make the personnel fighting fit for every kind of challenge.

Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi and other senior officials of the Army were present on the occasion.

Mr. Singh laid a wreath and paid homage to bravehearts at the Infantry Memorial.

Cong. says it ensured privacy of Manmohan family at rites

Party leaders stayed away from ceremony for immersion of his ashes out of deference to the privacy of family members, it says after BJP alleges it did not have courtesy to accompany them

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday said party leaders did not attend the ceremony to immerse the ashes of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in the Yamuna to ensure the privacy of his family.

The response followed the Bharatiya Janata Party's charge that the Congress politicised Dr. Singh's death, but did not have the courtesy to accompany the family for the ceremony.

Pawan Khera, chairman of the party's media and publicity department, said the senior leaders did not attend the ceremony "out of our deference to the privacy of the family".

In a statement, he said that after the cremation, Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi and general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra met the family at their



Mourning a leader: The family of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh before the ceremony in New Delhi on Sunday. ANI

residence here.

"After discussing with them, it was felt that since the family did not get any privacy at the time of the cremation and some extended family members could not reach the pyre site, it would be appropriate to give them some privacy for the 'Phool Churnana' and the immersion of the ashes which is an

emotionally painful and difficult ceremony for close family members," Mr. Khera said.

Family present

The ashes of Dr. Singh were immersed in the Yamuna near the Majnu ka Tila Gurdwara by his family members following Sikh rituals. The ashes were collected from the Nigam-

bohra Ghat on Sunday morning and taken to the Asth Ghat on the Yamuna bank near the gurdwara.

Dr. Singh's wife, Gursharan, Kaur and their daughters, Upinder Singh, Daman Singh, and Amrit Singh, were present at the immersion site along with relatives. Since his passing, there has been constant sparring between the Congress and the BJP over the site of the last rites and the setting up of a memorial to the former Prime Minister.

The Congress alleged the BJP government had "insulted" the former Prime Minister by not allowing his funeral at a place where a memorial can be built, while the BJP accused the Congress of disrespecting Dr. Singh while he was in office.

Dr. Singh passed away at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences here on December 26 from age-related medical complications. He was 92.

Will file case against BJP leaders, says Sanjay Singh

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party leader Sanjay Singh said that he would file defamation cases against BJP leaders Amit Malviya and Manoj Tiwari for spreading falsehoods to defame his family and targeting the Purvanchali community in Delhi.

Addressing a press conference, Mr. Singh said that he would file a defamation case against both of them.

"Amit Malviya and Manoj Tiwari will have to face justice for the lies they have spread and the way they have insulted me and my family, including my wife," he said.

Mr. Singh said that he had informed the media on Sunday that the BJP was trying to delete his wife's name from the voter list of the New Delhi Assembly constituency. "After that, the BJP's 'cell of lies' became active, bombing the public with falsehoods. In this entire affair, one of our honourable MPs, Manoj Tiwari, has also joined in," he said.

Opposition flays Nitesh Rane's remark on Kerala

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

A day after Maharashtra Minister Nitesh Rane made remarks on Kerala, describing the State as a "mini-Pakistan", Opposition leaders on Monday demanded a clarification from the leader.

Maharashtra Congress spokesperson Atul Londhe asked whether a person with such behaviour was eligible to sit in a ministerial post. "At the time of oath-ceremony, Nitesh Rane had sworn in to keep the unity and integrity of the country intact, but he is doing otherwise. Mr. Rane is calling Kerala a 'mini-Pakistan' and voters 'terrorists'. After such a remark, does he still hold the right to remain in the Cabinet? Prime Minister and Maharashtra Chief Minister should clarify their stand on the statement."

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Anand Dubey said that the BJP leaders were not able to digest Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's win. He said that it was unfortunate to hear such a statement from someone in a ministerial post.

कोल इंडिया लिमिटेड
(एक महाराष्ट्र कंपनी)
"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of Coal India Ltd www.coalindia.com / respective Subsidiary Company, CIL e-procurement portal <https://coalindiatenders.nic.in> and Central Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in>. In addition, procurement is also done through G E M portal <https://gem.gov.in>".

Plea filed in M.P. High Court to halt transfer of Union Carbide waste to Pithampur area

Mehul Malpani
Bhopal



Removal of waste: Labourers entering the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal on Sunday. A.M. FARUQUI

A petition was filed in the Madhya Pradesh High Court on Monday demanding a stay on the government's plans to move the toxic waste from the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal to Pithampur industrial area near Indore for incineration.

The petition, filed by a group of Indore-based doctors in the Indore Bench of the High Court, comes at a time when the State government has begun packing and loading of 337 tonnes of toxic waste lying on the Union Carbide factory premises for 40 years.

The waste is expected to be moved to Pithampur any day now as the government plans to submit an affidavit in the High Court on January 3.

The two other petitioners are Dr. S. S. Nayyar and Dr. Vinita Kothari.

The doctors have sought an urgent hearing into the

matter as they claim that the disposal and incineration of the toxic waste in Pithampur is harmful for the residents of Pithampur as well as those in Indore, which is about 35 km from the industrial town.

The petition has claimed that various doctors, experts and researchers have pointed out that

the disposal of the waste in Pithampur "might increase the cancer as well as breathing related issues" in Indore and Pithampur.

Noting that the incineration plant is located near the Gambhir river, a source of water for the Yashwant Sagar Dam which supplies drinking water to at least 40% of Indore, the petition feared the possibilities of the dam getting polluted due to the waste disposal.

"Further, it is essential to mention here that due to the ongoing disposal activities in the plant of the Ramky Enviro Engineers Limited (parent company of Pithampur Industrial Waste Management Pvt. Ltd, as claimed in the petition) situated in the Pithampur, in Village Tarapur, not only the soil and water of the Tarapur village is polluted but also of the ad-

Cong. slams M.P. govt. over Dalit man's death

The Hindu Bureau
BHOPAL

platform X, Mr. Gandhi wrote, "Due to the Manuvadi thinking of BJP, such incidents are happening one after another in the States ruled by them – this is not possible without the support of the government."

Ms. Vadra took to X and alleged that the "insult of Babasaheb Ambedkar and oppression on weaker sections is the basic mantra of BJP's rule".

Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Monday slammed the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh over the death of a Dalit man inside a police station in Dewas district, and said the incident was "not possible without the government's support".

In a post on social media

Rajasthan Real Estate Regulatory Authority
2nd & 3rd Floor, RSC Wing, Udyog Bhawan, Tilak Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur-302005
Phone No.: 0141-2851900 Website: <http://rera.rajasthan.gov.in>
F.I.(360) /RAJ/RERA/F Audit /2024/454 Dated: 30.12.2024
Rajasthan Real Estate Regulatory Authority invites proposal through Request for Proposal (RFP) from prospective bidders for engagement of forensic auditor for a period of two years. RFP is available on e-procurement portal website <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, www.sppr.rajasthan.gov.in and <https://rera.rajasthan.gov.in>, from dated 01.01.2025. Last date and time of submission of RFP is 07.01.2025 at 02:00 PM. Detail terms and conditions can be seen at the above websites.
Raj.Samwad/C/24/9723 Registrar

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, (Traffic Engineering Cell)
Ground Floor, Annexe Building-3 (Opp. Dr. Rajkumar Glass House), N.R. Square, Bangalore-560002

No.EE/TEC/PR/610/2022-23 Date:26.12.2024

CORRIGENDUM-1

Sub: Corrigendum of Tender Notification No. EE/TEC/TEND/09/2024-25 Dtd: 20.12.2024 Due to Technical Reasons, in this tender notification time schedule is modified & the revised time schedule is as follows:

Calendar events: 1) Date of Pre-bid Meeting: 31.12.2024 @ 16.30 hrs. 2) Last date for submission of Tenders: 03.01.2025 up to 16.00 hrs. 3) Date of opening of Technical Bid: 04.01.2025 at 16.30 hrs. Except for the above said changes there is no change in any of the Terms and Conditions of Tender Notification.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer (TEC).

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF WIND ENERGY
(An Autonomous R&D Institution under Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India)
Velachery-Tambaram High Road, Pallikaranai, Chennai-600100, Tamil Nadu, INDIA. Tel: +91-44-22463982/83/84

RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATION No.03/2024

National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE) is the technical arm of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Govt. of India established to serve as a technical focal point for orderly development of Wind Power Deployment. This Institute proposes to recruit the following posts purely on contract basis.

Sl. No.	Details	Post Code	No. of positions
1	Project Engineer Grade I	S&R-01	2 Nos.
2	Project Engineer Grade I	TES-02	2 Nos.
3	Project Consultant	TES-03	1 No
4	Project Staff-Technical	TES-04	1 No
5	Project Coordinator-Level I	SDT-05	1 No
6	Project Coordinator- Level II	SDT-06	1 No
7	Project Engineer Grade I	C&T-07	2 Nos.
8	Project Engineer Grade I	C&T-08	1 No
9	Project Engineer Grade II	OWD-09	1 No
10	Project Engineer Grade II	OWD-10	1 No
11	Project Engineer Grade II	WRA-11	4 Nos.

Details of essential qualification, experience, age limit, consolidated remuneration, the last date of receipt of applications and other terms & conditions are available in the website: <https://niwe.res.in/careers.php>.

Additional Director
(Finance & Administration)

THE HUTTI GOLD MINES COMPANY LIMITED

(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)

Hutti-584115, Raichur Dist, Karnataka State, Tele: 08537-275463, 276339,

e-mail: material276339@gmail.com Website: www.huttigold.karnataka.gov.in

TENDER NOTIFICATION No. 21/24-25 Dt: 31.12.2024

(Through KPP Portal only)

Tender is invited by "The Senior Manager (Materials)" for sale of Bullion as detailed below.

Sl. No.	Description	EMD in Rs.
1	Sale of Bullion (Dore Bars). HGML/2024-25/SE0037	15,00,00/-

Calendar of events: (1) Pre-Bid Meeting (Zoom): 06.01.2025 at 10.30 A.M. (2) Last date for receipt of Tender: 10.01.2025 at 4.00 P.M. (3) Opening of Technical Bid on: 13.01.2025 at 10.00 A.M. For further details interested bidders are advised to logon to website <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> or contact the office of undersigned during working hours. For participating in the above tender bidder needs to be registered in KPPP portal.

Sd/- Senior Manager (Materials)

"LEADING GOLD PRODUCER IN INDIA"

KALYANA KARNATAKA ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION

Stores & Purchase Department, Central Offices, Sarige Sadana, Main Road,

Kalaburagi-585102. Tel. & Fax No. 08472-260502, Mobile No.77606 86172 (COS&P), 77609 92029 (S.O.)

No. KKT/CO/COSP/ 10/2024-25 Dated: 30.12.2024

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IN BRIEF



U.P. to use AI cameras, RFID wristbands to track pilgrims

The Uttar Pradesh government has planned to use Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled cameras, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) wristbands and mobile app tracking to track the headcount of pilgrims at the upcoming Mahakumbh starting in Prayagraj on January 13. (The photo shows ongoing preparations for the event.) The government expects footfall of approximately 450 million devotees at the religious carnival, which is recognised by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in which a largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims take a dip in a sacred river. The Mahakumbh will continue for 45 days.

Banks to provide beneficiary account name look-up facility

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to develop a facility to allow customers using online fund transfer systems, Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) and National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT), to verify the name of the bank account to which money is being transferred before initiating the transaction to avoid mistakes and prevent frauds. All banks that are direct members or sub-members of RTGS System and NEFT System are advised to offer this facility by April 1, 2025, the RBI said in a circular on Monday. It also said the facility has to be made available to customers without any charge. PTI

Army installs Shivaji statue on Pangong Lake bank; Ladakh councillor, others question its relevance

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

The councillor of Chushul in Ladakh has questioned the relevance of a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj that was installed by the Indian Army on the banks of the Pangong Tso (lake) in eastern Ladakh, a point also raised by several veterans on social media.

The incident comes shortly after the controversy over the removal of an iconic painting from the Army chief's lounge earlier this month.

According to defence sources, the statue is within the location of a Maratha unit. It was built with voluntary contributions from serving and retired personnel of the unit.

"As a local resident, I must voice my concerns about the Shivaji statue at Pangong. It was erected without local input, and I question its relevance to



Maratha icon: Army personnel standing next to the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji on the bank of the Pangong Lake. PTI

our unique environment and wildlife. Let's prioritize projects that truly reflect and respect our community and nature," Konchok Stanzin, councillor of Chushul, said on X.

Towering symbol
On December 26, the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was inaugurated on the banks of Pangong Lake at an altitude of

whose legacy remains a source of inspiration for generations," it added.

Questioning the relevance of Shivaji at Pangong Lake, several veterans and others noted that Zorawar Singh would have been a more appropriate choice. However, defence sources said infantry units have a long tradition of placing unit-related icons within their premises to motivate soldiers.

"There are the statues (or laws) of war, but of late our armed forces are studying the 'statues of war...', Major-General Birinder Dhanoa (retd) said in a post on X. He questioned, "Why was a unit and 'colonel of the regiment' affair publicised on social media? Are all fixed class units erecting statues across the Corps Z (zone) that are in keeping with their ancestral satraps? If not then social media isn't the place for a one-off."

Another veteran Colonel Sanjay Pande observed that Zorawar Singh went through Pangong Tso to Khurnak Fort, established posts right up to Mansarovar. "He died fighting in Tibet. Leh Fort is called Zorawar Fort...Zorawar Singh fought wars 180 years back, weather was as found today. He deserves to be there."

Sajjad Kargili, a political activist, said on X that there was no cultural or historical relevance of Shivaji in Ladakh. "While we respect his legacy, imposing such cultural symbols here is misplaced. We would appreciate the installation of statues honoring local historical figures like Khree Sultan Cho or Ali Sher Khan Anchen and Seenge Namgyal. However, even these should not be placed in environmentally sensitive areas like Pangong, which require careful preservation," he said.

The first contract is for the construction of the air independent propulsion module (AIP) developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), and its integration aboard. The second contract is for the integration of the electronic heavyweight torpedo being developed by the DRDO.

The contract for construction of AIP Plug and its integration was inked with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, Mumbai, [which is] worth around ₹1,990 crore, while the contract for integration of EHWT, being developed by DRDO, was signed with Naval Group, France at an approx. cost of ₹877 crore," a

Behaviour that causes mental pain to spouse ground for divorce: SC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

ven the man divorce. She challenged the decree in the Supreme Court.

Upholding the High Court decision, the Bench agreed that "sustained emotional torment and loss of trust in the marital relationship constitutes cruelty". The court said cruelty included actions of a spouse which were not just isolated incidents but formed a pattern of behaviour that made cohabitation impossible. Sustained and deliberate acts of cruelty make it unreasonable to expect a spouse to continue living with the other, Justice Nath noted.

"Cruelty also encompasses actions that inflict mental pain and suffering that creates a reasonable apprehension of harm or injury to an aggrieved spouse from the conduct of the other spouse so as to make it impossible for them to stay together," Justice Nath explained.

The court was hearing the prolonged legal battle between a couple, both engineers with a child, who have lived separately for years. The man has sought divorce on the ground that his estranged wife's conduct, including leaving the matrimonial home and filing criminal complaints against him, amounted to mental cruelty. He said her behaviour had not only strained their relationship but also caused significant damage to his reputation and peace of mind. The Madras High Court had gi-

ven the man divorce. She challenged the decree in the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court has in a judgment held that patterns of behaviour which cause immense emotional distress to a spouse amount to mental cruelty and is a ground for divorce. A Bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath said cruelty was not limited to inflicting physical pain to a spouse.

"Cruelty also encompasses actions that inflict mental pain and suffering that creates a reasonable apprehension of harm or injury to an aggrieved spouse from the conduct of the other spouse so as to make it impossible for them to stay together," Justice Nath noted.

"Marriage is a relationship built on mutual trust, companionship, and shared experiences. When these essential elements are missing for an extended period, the marital bond becomes a mere legal formality devoid of any substance..." he said.

The court directed the man to pay his wife a permanent alimony of ₹50 lakh. Justice Nath dismissed the argument that the wife earned well, noting that financial independence cannot be a reason to deny her maintenance post-divorce if it was necessary to secure her dignity, social standing, and financial stability.

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Centre inks contracts for AIP, torpedoes for submarines

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Defence Ministry on Monday signed two contracts related to Scorpene-class submarines worth ₹2,867 crore.

The first contract is for

the construction of the air independent propulsion module (AIP) developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), and its integration aboard. The second contract is for the integration of the electronic heavyweight torpedo being developed by the DRDO.

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Waiting on: An indigenously developed AIP module, after delays, is awaiting fitment on Scorpene submarines. FILE PHOTO

Defence Ministry statement said.

An indigenously developed AIP module, after delays, is awaiting fitment on Scorpene submarines. Towards this, the DRDO has already entered into an agreement with the France-based Naval Group, the original manufacturer of Scorpene.

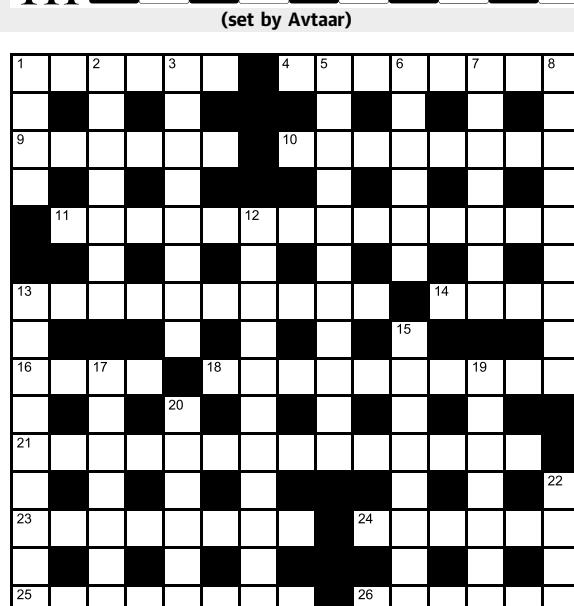
The submarines have been operating without a dedicated, modern heavyweight torpedo so far, as the torpedoes meant to be

procured from the company were embroiled in a corruption scandal.

marines, and would generate employment of nearly three lakh man days, the Ministry said. The integration of the EHWT would be a collaborative effort between the Indian Navy, the DRDO, and the Naval Group, the statement added.

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procured from the company were embroiled in a corruption scandal.

TH CROSSWORD + 14370
(set by Avtaar)

Across

- Recent communication about a missing Earl (6)
- Agitated swimmer eating constantly (8)
- Soccer balls near goalpost's end grabbed by linesman from back (6)
- Difficulty in speech ... and I capitulate (8)
- Things are stirring in images of that old European complex (3,4,2,5)

- To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>
- SCAN TO PLAY
- 13 Practical test that is included by banks for financial director ahead of court proceeding (5,5)
14 Check by spinning top of tuner on TV (4)
16 Unevenly rough, dry part of Germany (4)
18 Spies taken in by extremely bright discharged emigrants who frequent upper-class dos (10)
21 A mantis flirting with sinister marsupial (9,5)
23 Most of our experiment covers onset of Venus' eclipse (8)
24 Bird sighted at first on trek across river (6)
25 Nocturnal habits? (8)
26 "Dash" in special font (6)
- Down
1 Pick up fight after changing sides (4)
2 Old children cutting, say, palm and foot (7)
3 Nuclei of cells modified in degrees after removing electron (8)
5 In the morning, Avtaar visits former kingdom for investigation (11)
6 Get close to target and rip top off (6)
7 Go down supporting popular Conservative ring (7)
8 Condition is almost pathetic after treatment (9)
12 Likeness of, say, ruler with gold skirt reflecting on casing of gemstone (6,5)
13 Eldest brother is new head of family after he goes abroad (5-4)
15 Cool to follow book with cryptic clue of top quality (4-4)
17 Touch of titanium and silver below pot# (7)
19 Stability's in doubt - possibly stay away, after leaving son in capital (7)
20 Cryptically, it's savage (6)
22 Superman's well-known place in England (4)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Service to God, devotees

Parents will love and affectionately care for their children however they may be. Even for a crow, her chick is golden. The sweet strains from the pipe and *yazh* (an ancient stringed instrument) cannot stand compared to the sweetness of the rare music in children's prattle of soft and melodic word flow (*kuzhal inidhu yazh inidhu* – kural 66). Thanneerpalli Sri. Krishnan Swamy said in a discourse that we are all God's children, and He is ever willing to extend His blessings.

Lord Krishna says there are four types of people: the distressed, the seekers of knowledge, the wealth seekers, and the men of knowledge (*chaturvidhi: bhajante* – chapter 7-sloka 16). Of all kinds of men, those who pray with sincere devotion and seek nothing in return except rendering service to Him are called the true devotees. It is good to render poojas to Lord Vishnu, and it is still better to extend service to the Lord's devotees, which makes Him merrier. Those who pray with the sole aim of attaining liberation are known as jnanis. Lord says He is very dear to such jnanis.

In the eighth pasuram of Tiruppavai, Andal emphasises unique concepts. She wakes up her friends to worship Lord Narayana, the chief of all celestials. To live happily here and attain the ultimate moksha hereafter, enjoying the divine bliss in the realm of His world permanently, people should serve God and His devotees. It is said that when people go to various places of worship, it is better to go with the devotees of God (*bhagavathas*), through whom the Lord is very pleased. Sri Andal has exhibited this through her own conduct to set an example for us.

INBRIEF



Health insurers disallowed ₹15,100-crore claims in FY24

Health insurers disallowed ₹15,100 crore worth claims, or 12.9% of the total claims filed during fiscal 2023-24, according to data released by regulator IRDAI. Of the total ₹1.17 lakh crore claims under health insurance of general as well as standalone health insurers, only ₹83,493.17 crore, or 71.29% were paid during the year ended March 2024. Further, insurers repudiated claims worth ₹10,937.18 crore (9.34%) while outstanding claims totalled ₹7,584.57 crore (6.48%). PTI

Carraro India shares settle at almost 10% discount

Shares of Carraro India Ltd. ended almost 10% lower in market debut trade against the issue price of ₹704 on Monday. The stock got listed at ₹660, a discount of 6.25% from the issue price on the BSE. During the day, it declined 10.32% to ₹631.30. Shares of the firm ended at ₹636.30, down 9.61%. On the NSE, the stock made its market debut at ₹651, lower by 7.52%. It ended at ₹636.20, lower by 9.63%. The initial public offering had a price band of ₹668-704 a share. PTI

Singapore's DBS names Rajat Verma as DBS Bank India CEO

Singapore's DBS Group said it has appointed Rajat Verma as CEO of DBS Bank India succeeding Surojit Shome, who would retire in February. Mr. Verma, currently the head of institutional banking group at DBS Bank India, has been appointed in line with the approval, accorded by the RBI, DBS said. Before joining DBS, Mr. Verma spent more than 26 years at HSBC, where he headed commercial banking in India, as per his LinkedIn profile. REUTERS

Reliance seeks \$3.5/barrel premium for oil from KG block

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Reliance Industries Ltd. is seeking a premium of at least \$3.5 per barrel over an international benchmark for the crude oil it produces at the eastern offshore KG-D6 block, according to the tender the firm put out on Monday.

Reliance and its partner BP of the U.K. sought bids from domestic refiners for sale of 17,600 barrels (2,800 kilolitre) of crude oil every month from April 2025 to February 2026.

The crude oil has been priced at daily average price of Nigerian Bonny Light grade of crude oil plus \$1.5 per barrel quality premium. Bidders have to quote a premium over this price, the tender docu-



ment said.

Bonny Light last traded for \$73.5 per barrel. On top of this, \$1.5 per barrel is added as a composite premium "reflecting quality differential," it said, adding interested buyers are required to a "biddable premium, up to one decimal place and greater than \$2 per barrel".

The sale period can be

extended by three months to one year on the same terms and conditions, including pricing formula.

Oil, which is turned into fuels like petrol and diesel when processed at refineries, will be delivered by the sellers at Gadimoga in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh.

Reliance holds 66.67% interest in the predominantly gas-rich KG-DWN-98/3 block (KG-D6) in the Bay of Bengal. BP Exploration (Alpha) Ltd. holds the balance 33.33%.

The two produce about 30 million standard cubic metre per day of gas from the block. A small quantity of crude oil is also produced, for which they have now sought bids. Bids are due on January 24, 2025, the document said.

Indian firms' fundraising through corporate bonds hit a record high in 2024, aided by declining yields and stronger appetite for long-term notes, and investors expect issuances to remain robust in 2025.

Indian firms raised \$124.81 billion through the sale of bonds till December 27, a 9% jump over 2023, as per data from information provider Prime Database.

Fundraising has seen a boost with corporates seeing a need to diversify, and bank lending seeing some moderation with slower deposit growth," said Vinay Pai, head of fixed income at Equiris.

Indian firms raise record funds through bonds in 2024

Reuters
MUMBAI

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Kothari to open 100 exclusive stores of French fashion brand Kicker

N. Anand
CHENNAI

Kothari Industrial Corporation Ltd. (KICL) plans to open 100 exclusive fashion stores and 700 retail counters of French brand Kickers' fashion stores in India and eight other countries in the next two years, a top official said.

"We wanted the first Kickers fashion store to be located in Chennai and we did that. This will be followed by opening another nine stores by March in Qatar, Chennai, Hyderabad, Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai," KICL vice-chairman and MD J. Rafiq Ahmed told The Hindu.



Ramping up: Rafiq Ahmed and Consul General of France in Puducherry & Chennai Etienne Rolland-Piegu. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"Altogether, this would entail an investment of ₹500 crore. We are a zero-debt firm so raising funds will not be an issue. The Qatar-based royal family

group, has signed a 30-year licensing and distribution agreement with Royer Group of France for the Kickers brand in India. It would also export the products to Qatar, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Bangladesh.

"While most of the Indian firms have contractual obligation with the foreign brands to produce and export them back, ours is slightly a different model. Here, we are going to manufacture, distribute and retail these international products in Indian rupees. It will be much cheaper than imported products," he added.

firm FJ Global and Investment has committed to make huge investments," he said.

The city-based firm, a part of the D.C. Kothari

group, has signed a 30-year licensing and distribution agreement with Royer Group of France for the Kickers brand in India. It would also export the products to Qatar, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Bangladesh.

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platforms in energy & utility, transport & logistics and other adjacencies in primary industry," it said.

"In consideration of the above, AEL's board of directors has adopted a resolution noting the resignation of ACL's nominee directors from the board of Adani Wilmar. The parties have agreed to take further steps for change of name of Adani Wilmar Ltd," the statement added.

With this exit, AEL said it will raise over \$2 billion from the overall transaction. "AEL will use the proceeds from the sale to turbocharge its investments in the core infrastructure

these two legs, AEL would completely exit its 44% holding in Adani Wilmar," AEL said in a statement.

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The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

While stronger capital buffers boosted the soundness dimension of banks, declining NPAs and improved provisioning bolstered asset quality.

"Despite improvement in return on assets and earnings before provisions and taxes, profitability was

weighed down by a sequential decline in the net interest margin abetted by shift of deposits to higher interest rate buckets," the banking regulator said.

The resilience of the domestic banking system was bolstered by robust capital buffers, strong earnings and sustained improvement in asset quality.

Stating that growth in bank loans and deposits moderated during H1, the RBI said banks' deposit profile has been changing, with a decline in the share of low-cost CASA deposits in favour of term deposits, especially for higher interest rate buckets.

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The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Slash excise duties on fuel products and pare income tax rates to spur consumption,

push employment creation and women's participation in the work force, were some of the top ideas Indian industry presented at a consultation for the Union Budget of 2025-26 chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday.

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry recommended that the Government consider a special tax exemption up

to a defined limit for working women for expenses incurred on childcare for children up to the age of five years.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) called for reducing the excise duty on fuel to reduce overall inflation and boost disposable incomes, along with a cut in marginal tax rates for personal income up to ₹20 lakh a year to trigger the virtuous cycle of consumption, which can boost growth and tax revenues.

The industry body also suggested rationalising the food subsidy bill by plugging leakages in the public distribution system.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	MONDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	78,248	-0.57
US Dollar	85.52	0.00
Gold	79,350	0.00
Brent oil	74.42	0.00

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2592.35	+182.40
Adani Ports.	1218.50	-12.20
Apollo Hosp.	7314.25	+67.95
Asian Paints	2288.25	+16.85
Axis Bank	1069.95	-7.50
Bajaj Auto	8779.90	-148.40
Bajaj Finance	6888.25	-19.50
Bharat Elec.	284.90	-7.15
Bharti Airtel	1586.90	-12.95
BPCL	1293.30	-0.25
Britannia Ind.	4799.45	30.15
Cipla	1521.40	+14.80
Coal India	377.90	-2.60
Dr Reddys Lab.	1376.90	-12.55
Eicher Motors	4855.80	-21.10
Grimas Ind.	2443.50	-36.80
HCL Tech	1928.95	+36.95
HDFC Bank	1777.90	-20.35
HDFC Life	617.40	-4.50
Hero MotoCorp	4187.60	-50.35
Hindalco	601.10	-16.30
Hind Unilever	2343.50	2.25
ICICI Bank	1294.65	-12.90
IndusInd Bank	963.50	-10.10
Infosys	1906.00	-10.75
ITC	477.00	-1.60
JSW Steel	898.95	-14.35
Kotak Bank	1740.70	-19.20
L&T	3578.95	-29.15
M&M	3002.90	-46.55
Maruti Suzuki	1078.95	-142.10
NestleIndia	2159.90	-5.70
NTPC	331.40	-3.60
ONGC	232.65	-4.25
PowerGrid Corp	307.55	-1.85
Reliance Ind.	1210.70	-10.35
SBI Life	1403.85	-1.45
State Bank	788.30	-11.35
Shriram Finance	2919.00	20.10
Sun Pharma	1883.90	22

PARIS

Gisèle Pelicot's ex-husband not to appeal his 20-year jail sentence



The former husband of Gisèle Pelicot will not appeal his 20-year prison sentence for drugging and raping her and allowing dozens of other men to also rape her while she was unconscious, his lawyer said on Monday. Dominique Pelicot wants to spare his ex-wife the ordeal of another trial, the lawyer said in an interview. AP

GENEVA

Five years on, WHO urges China to share data on COVID-19 origins



The WHO implored China to share data and access to understand how COVID-19 began, five years on from the start of the pandemic that upended the planet. "We continue to call on China to share data and access so we can understand the origins of COVID-19. This is a moral and scientific imperative," the WHO said. AFP

NEW YORK

Trump loses appeal against Jean Carroll defamation verdict



A federal appeals court upheld a \$5 million verdict that E. Jean Carroll won against Donald Trump when a jury found the U.S. president-elect liable for sexually abusing and defaming the former magazine columnist. The decision was issued by a three-judge panel of the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan. REUTERS

GENEVA

WHO seeks the release of Gaza hospital director by Israel



The WHO chief called for the immediate release of Hossam Abu Safiyeh, director of Gaza's Kamal Adwan Hospital, who is being held by Israel's military following a raid on the facility. The assault on Kamal Adwan in Beit Lahia left northern Gaza's last major health facility out of service and emptied of patients, the WHO said. AFP

Three foreign policy choices that shaped Carter presidency

The 39th President of the United States completed the diplomatic normalisation process with China, launched the policy of supporting the Afghan Mujahideen against the communist government in Kabul and its Soviet backers and brokered the Camp David agreement between Egypt and Israel, which also called for the establishment of Palestinian self-rule in occupied territories

NEWS ANALYSIS**Stanly Johny**

When Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the U.S., exited the White House in 1981, he was largely written off as an inconsequential leader. The U.S. economy was stagnant. Inflation and unemployment were stubbornly high. In 1979, the Shah of Iran, an American ally, was overthrown by a popular revolution. An Iranian mob seized the U.S. embassy and took 52 Americans hostage. A commando operation aimed at rescuing the hostages turned out to be a disaster in the Iranian deserts. In 1978, communists took over Kabul. A

year later, the Soviets sent troops to Afghanistan. Carter, a Democrat, sought re-election in 1980 with the image of a weak President. And he was easily defeated by Republican Ronald Reagan.

China strategy
However, Carter, who died on Sunday aged 100, lived long enough to see historians taking a kinder view of his legacy. From his energy policies to his emphasis on human rights, many today laud him as a visionary. While the debate over his legacy continues, it's not difficult to see that at least three foreign policy decisions he made continued to define his record in the White House and set a new direction for American foreign policy.

One, Mr. Carter seized the momentum created by Richard Nixon's diplomatic breakthrough with communist China and took quick steps to complete the normalisation process. One of the sticking points was the status of Taiwan. The Carter administration agreed to pull back American military presence from Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait, cut diplomatic ties with Taipei and establish full diplomatic relations with Beijing. However, Washington insisted that it would continue to maintain defence and commercial ties with Taiwan. The normalisation agreement was announced in December 1978 by Carter and China's leader Deng Xiaoping. The rapprochement Nixon initiated was institutionalised by Jimmy Carter.

Afghanistan situation
When the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDDA) captured power in Kabul in 1978, the Americans remained helpless spectators. But when Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev decided to send troops to Afghanistan, the U.S. saw it as an opportunity. It was President Carter who launched the policy of supporting the Afghan Mujahideen against the communist government in Kabul and its Soviet backers. His

National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski travelled to Pakistan, met the Afghan refugees and the Afghan Mujahideen and promised American support.

The American policy was to fund and train the Afghan tribal warlords, with help from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, in their fight against communism. Reagan would embrace this policy with open hands in later years. Ten years after its military intervention, the Soviets were forced to withdraw from Afghanistan by February 1989. The American policy, critics would argue, had played a role in the destruction of Afghanistan and the rise of the Taliban in 1996. But what Washington wanted was to defeat the Soviets in Afghanistan

and they achieved it in 1989.

Carter's most profound achievement was perhaps the Camp David Accords of 1978. The agreements, signed between Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, was a signature moment in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In October 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack against Israel. Israel had captured Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and Syria's Golan Heights, along with Palestinian West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, in the 1967 war. The attack remained a shock in Israel's psyche.

West Asia's peace

Mr. Carter sensed an opportunity for peace between Egypt and Israel and pushed for it. He also said he could not ignore the plight of the Palestinians. Egypt wanted Sinai back and Israel to recognise Palestinian sovereignty. Begin initially resisted the pressure tactics of Egypt and the U.S., but finally gave in. As part of the agreement, Israel agreed to return Sinai back to Egypt and establish a self-rule administration in the occupied Palestinian territories. In return Egypt became the first Arab country to recognise the state of Israel. The Framework for Peace in the Middle East agreement, which promised Palestinian self rule, was the foundation on which the Oslo Accords of the 1990s and the promise of the two-state solution were built.

South Korea to inspect Boeing aircraft

Seoul officials seek warrant to detain impeached President



Yoon Suk Yeol

nounced the detention attempt and filed a challenge with the same court, arguing that the warrant request was invalid. He also claimed the anti-corruption agency lacked the legal authority to investigate rebellion charges.

The warrant request came after Mr. Yoon dodged several requests to appear for questioning and also blocked searches of his offices.

Russia has promised to act on plane crash: Baku

Agence France-Presse

BAKU

Azerbaijan said on Monday that Moscow had promised to punish those responsible for the downing of an Azerbaijan Airlines plane that Baku says was shot at by Russian air defences.

The AZAL Embraer 190 jet crash-landed in Kazakhstan on December 25, killing 38 of the 67 people on board.

Azerbaijan's prosecutor general reported on Monday that the head of Russia's Investigative Committee had told Baku: "Intensive measures are being carried out to identify the guilty people and bring them to criminal responsibility."

Russia has opened a criminal enquiry into the incident.

Taliban to close all NGOs employing Afghan women

Associated Press

Taliban intend to curtail activities of women in institutions not under their control

The government was once again ordering the stoppage of all work by women in institutions not controlled by the Taliban, according to the letter.

"In case of lack of cooperation, all activities of that institution will be canceled and the activity license of that institution, granted by the ministry, will also be canceled." It's the Taliban's

latest attempt to control or intervene in NGO activity.

Earlier this month, the UN Security Council heard that an increasing proportion of women Afghan humanitarian workers were prevented from doing their work even though relief work remains essential.

The Taliban deny they are stopping aid agencies from carrying out their work or interfering with their activities.

They have already barred women from many jobs and most public spaces, and also excluded them from education beyond sixth grade.

भारत सरकार आंतरिक्ष विभाग राष्ट्रीय सूर्य संवेदन केंद्र हैदराबाद - 500 037, तेलंगाना भारत टेलीफोन: +91-40-23884173 / 74 फैक्स: +91-40-23884179				Government of India Department of Space National Remote Sensing Centre Balanagar, Hyderabad - 500 037, Telangana, India Telephone: +91-40-23884173 / 74 Fax: +91-40-23884179	
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निर्माण एवं अनुकूल समूह / CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE GROUP

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निर्माण एवं

FERVOUR

Boxing Day Test sets record for total attendance Down Under



GETTY IMAGES

The total attendance of 3,73,691 recorded during the fourth Test at the MCG is the highest ever for a Test in Australia, surpassing the 3,50,534 from 1937 featuring Don Bradman's Australia and England in a six-day Test. The 74,362 turnout on Monday was also the highest final day attendance ever in Australia.

MUST-WIN SITUATION

India's WTC final qualification hopes hang by a thread



AP

India may have lost the Boxing Day contest, but Rohit Sharma's men are still in with a chance to qualify for the World Test Championship final. To make it to the final, India must win the last Test against Australia at Sydney and then hope for a positive result for Sri Lanka (or a 0-0 draw) when Australia tours the island nation.

BLUNT ASSESSMENT

Gavaskar blames top-order for Melbourne debacle



AFP

Sunil Gavaskar on Monday lashed out at the senior players for letting the team down and blamed the Indian top-order for losing the Boxing Day Test against Australia. "It is the top-order which has to contribute. The seniors have not really made the contribution that they should have," said Gavaskar.

SERIES SEALED

New Zealand makes short work of Sri Lanka in the second T20I



AFP

Jacob Duffy (in pic) and Mitchell Hay shone as New Zealand beat Sri Lanka in the second T20I to wrap up the series with a game to spare in Mount Maunganui on Monday. **The scores:** New Zealand 186/5 in 20 overs (Chapman 42, Hay 41 n.o., Robinson 41) bt Sri Lanka 141 in 19.1 overs (Kusal Perera 48, Duffy 4/15); **Toss:** Sri Lanka; **PoM:** Hay.

Senior batters come a cropper as India capitulates on final day

Jaiswal wages a lone battle before Pant's dismissal by Head triggers a sensational collapse; Australia wins by a thumping 184-run margin to go 2-1 up, needs just a draw in Sydney to regain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy

INDIA IN AUS

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
MELBOURNE

Eight men around the bat, a Test on the line, and a fifth day climax. A frenzied Melbourne Cricket Ground witnessed all this and more on a Monday that gifted a sporting high to Pat Cummins and his men, who defeated India by 184 runs in the fourth Test.

Australia leads the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series at 2-1 with the fifth and final Test scheduled at Sydney from Friday.

After the host finished the second innings at 234, India was left with a target of 340 from 92 overs. The way the visitor batted, hope shimmered initially, then it became a practical expectation of a draw and finally the reality of defeat left Rohit Sharma's men deflated. Yashasvi Jaiswal (84) offered some resistance while India mustered 155 in the second innings.

The pursuit commenced on a sedate note. Mitchell Starc and Cummins steamed in from either end and Jaiswal and Rohit stood their ground. Jaiswal on-drove Starc and when Rohit clipped his maiden single, the fans applauded.

Rohit seemed intent on being the anchor but off the 40th delivery he faced from his rival counterpart, he tried to force one towards the on-side. Cummins did enough to graze the leading edge and the catch flew to Mitchell Marsh. Next man K.L. Rahul perished in the same over as Cummins played the pied-piper outside the off-stump.

Virat Kohli bided his time and then leant into a drive off Starc's angled delivery. It was more a quest



Final nail in the coffin: Lyon and teammates appeal successfully for a leg-before decision against last-man Siraj. ANI

SCOREBOARD**AUSTRALIA — 1ST INNINGS**

474 in 122.4 overs

INDIA — 1ST INNINGS

369 in 119.3 overs

AUSTRALIA — 2ND INNINGS

Sam Konstas b Bumrah 8 (18b, 1x4), Usman Khawaja b Siraj 21 (65b, 2x4), Marnus Labuschagne lbw b Siraj 70 (139b, 3x4), Steve Smith c Pant b Siraj 13 (41b, 1x4), Travis Head c Nitish Bumrah 1 (2b), Mitchell Marsh c Pant b Bumrah 0 (4b), Alex Carey b Bumrah 2 (7b), Pat Cummins c Rohit b Jadeja 41 (90b, 4x4), Mitchell Starc run out 5 (13b), Nathan Lyon b Bumrah 45 (55b,

FALL OF WICKETS

1-20 (Konstas, 6.3 overs), 2-43 (Khawaja, 18.5), 3-80 (Smith, 32.3), 4-85 (Head, 33.2), 5-85 (Marsh, 33.6), 6-91 (Carey, 35.6), 7-148 (Labuschagne, 55.1), 8-156 (Starc, 58.1), 9-173 (Cummins, 64.1).

INDIA BOWLING

Bumrah 24.4-7-57-5, Akash 17-4-53-0, Siraj 23-4-70-3, Jadeja 14-2-33-1, Nitish 1-0-4-0, Washington 4-0-7-0.

INDIA — 2ND INNINGS

Yashasvi Jaiswal c Carey b

CUMMINS 84 (208b, 8x4), ROHIT SHARMA C MARSH B CUMMINS 9 (40b), K.L. RAHUL C KHAWAJA B CUMMINS 0 (5b), VIRAT KOHLI C KHAWAJA B STARC 5 (29b), RISHABH PANT C MARSH B HEAD 30 (104b, 2x4), RAVINDRA JADEJA C CAREY B BOLAND 2 (14b), NITISH KUMAR C SMITH B LYON 1 (5b), WASHINGTON SUNDER (NOT OUT) 5 (45b), AKASH DEEP C HEAD B BOLAND 7 (17b, 1x4), JASPRIT BUMRAH C SMITH B BOLAND 0 (8b), MOHAMMED SIRAJ LBW B LYON 0 (2b); EXTRAS (B-5, LB-5, NB-2): 12; TOTAL (IN 79.1 OVERS): 155.**FALL OF WICKETS**

1-25 (Rohit, 16.1), 2-25 (Rahul, 16.6), 3-33 (Kohli, 26.1), 4-121 (Pant, 58.4), 5-127 (Jadeja, 62.2), 6-130 (Nitish, 63.2), 7-140 (Jaiswal, 70.5), 8-150 (Akash, 76.1), 9-154 (Bumrah, 78.3).

AUSTRALIA BOWLING

Starc 16-8-25-1, Cummins 18-5-28-3, Boland 16-7-39-3, Marsh 3-2-2-0, Lyon 20.1-6-37-2, Head 5-0-14-1, Labuschagne 1-1-0-0.

Australia wins by 184 runs, leads five-match series 2-1.

Player-of-the-Match: Cummins.
Fifth Test: January 3 to 7, Sydney.

Match starts at 5 a.m. IST

Lyon found the edge of Nitish Kumar Reddy's bat. India 130 for six and in a shambles.

With Washington Sundar for company, Jaiswal had to rebuild again. However, when Cummins bounced, Jaiswal tried to pull and as the ball sailed into Alex Carey's gloves, the Australians went up in appeal.

Overturned, they sought the review and third umpire Sharfuddoula Saikat with his bounce and

Saikat declared the batter out, on the basis of a minor deflection while the snickometer did not pick any sound. Soon, Akash Deep was adjudged caught and the tail withered away.

Earlier, in the morning, India needed just 10 deliveries to end the Australian second innings. Jasprit Bumrah castled Lyon, gained another five-for, and India stared at a target that remained beyond reach.

Rohit, Cummins put an end to row over Jaiswal's dismissal

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
MELBOURNE

The fourth Test's final hour was a distillation of the very best of cricket's longest format. In that session of joy and trauma, Yashasvi Jaiswal's dismissal triggered a debate.

Having attempted to pull a bouncer from Pat Cummins, the ensuing visuals were of the Indian opener's swivelling bat and the Australians going up in appeal for a caught behind. Staring at a negative verdict, they sought a review and third umpire Sharfuddoula Saikat went



Oh, no! Disappointment writ large on Jaiswal's face after being given out by the third umpire. AP

by the visual evidence of a deflection and adjudged the batter out while the snickometer remained silent.

A majority of the audience, clad in the blue

and shade, were aghast, and cries of 'cheating, cheating' rang out aloud. Once the game ended with Cummins and his men finishing on the winning side, both the Australian skipper and

more often than not, we are the ones falling on the wrong side."

Speaking to the media, Rohit said: "Look, really I don't know what to make of that because the technology didn't show anything. But with the naked eye, it seemed that he did touch something. I don't know how the umpires want to use the technology. But in all fairness, I think it (bat) did touch the ball but again look, it's about the technology which we all know is not 100 per cent. We don't want to really look too much into that. Just that

Later, Cummins explained: "Oh look I think it was just clear that he hit it, heard a noise, saw a deviation, so it was absolutely certain that he hit it. As soon as we referred it you could see him drop his head and basically acknowledge that he hit it. On the screen you can see he hit it. Ultra-edge, I don't think anyone has complete confidence in, and didn't really show much but fortunately there's enough other evidence to show it was clearly out."

The speedster also praised debutant Sam Konstas: "He has that no-fear mindset, revs up the crowd and doesn't shy away from any contest."

Melbourne win right at the top: Cummins

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
MELBOURNE

Bagging crucial wickets and delivering critical runs, Pat Cummins has been in the thick of things. After winning the fourth Test against India, the Australian captain was all smiles during a chat with the media. a

"I reckon this (victory) is right at the top. Yeah, Edgbaston (2023) was pretty special and I reckon this is pretty much on par," Cummins said while reflecting on the latest triumph.

Asked about how he manages to contribute both as a batter and bowler, Cummins quickly deflected the attention: "One of the things I love about our group is that there are so many people who want to be the match-winner. Today (Mitchell) Starc, (Nathan) Lyon, (Scott) Boland and myself, were pumped for the day. Same with the batting group. We love playing at home, we love Tests and this was one of the bigger ones."

Tactics

Talking about the strategy for the final day, Cummins explained: "Felt we needed at least 300. We got 90-odd overs, and that gave us 12 overs potentially with the second new ball. We had a good first session and it kind of took the win out of the equation for them. We could really go in for the attack."

The speedster also praised debutant Sam Konstas: "He has that no-fear mindset, revs up the crowd and doesn't shy away from any contest."



Having a ball: Russell, second from right, celebrates with teammates after netting one of his goals. M. VEDHAN

Rudras rally to edge past Kalinga Lancers

HIL

Uthra Ganeshan
ROURKELA

The promised winter nip finally made an appearance, the crowds packed in the warmth on a working evening but neither could help as Vedanta Kalinga Lancers, technically the home side and the sole survivor from the previous edition, finished 1-3 on the losing side to UP Rudras in the Hockey India League here on Monday.

The game though was much closer than the result indicates with the teams matched for large parts in every department. Kalinga started strongly and earned several chances early on. The juniors in the attack - Angad Bir Singh, Boby Singh Dhami and Dilpreet Singh - impressed with both their passing and sense of positioning but the lack of experience did them in.

Kalinga still managed to go ahead when an unmarked Spaniard Enrique Gonzalez was put through by Dhami in the 13th minute.

Russell continued to fend off the attacks but UP by now had the momentum and four minutes later, Chirmako put it in front. With Kalinga taking in the last couple of minutes, Russell managed one more eight seconds from time to seal the deal.

The result: UP Rudras 3 (Russell 45, 60, Chirmako 49) bt Vedanta Kalinga Lancers 1 (Gonzalez 13).

INBRIEF



Carlsen to play in World Blitz championship

Magnus Carlsen has decided to play in the World Blitz championship following FIDE's decision to allow players to compete in jeans, a couple of days after disqualifying him from the Rapid event for refusing to change into formal trousers.

Ajaraie nets a brace as NEUFC beats Mumbai

NorthEast United (NEUFC) rode on Alaaeddine Ajaraie's twin strikes to defeat Mumbai City FC 3-0 in the ISL in Mumbai on Monday.

The result: Mumbai City 0 lost to NEUFC 3 (Ajaraie 1, 83, Nickson 86).

Merciless Liverpool shoots five past West Ham

Liverpool moved a step closer to record-equalling 20th English top-flight title as a 5-0 thrashing of West Ham opened up an eight-point lead at the top of the Premier League.

Top results: Premier League: West Ham 0 lost to Liverpool 5 (Diaz 30, Gakpo 40, Salah 44, Alexander-Arnold 54, Jota 84). Serie A: Juventus 2 (Thuram 20, 48) drew with Fiorentina 2 (Kean 38, Sottil 87); AC Milan 1 (Reijnders 16) drew with Roma 1 (Dybala 23).

Honours even between Zimbabwe and Afghanistan

Hashmatullah Shahidi and Brian Bennett starred as the first Test was drawn after a rain-shortened final day in Bulawayo on Monday.

The scores: Zimbabwe 586 & 142/4 in 34 overs (Ben Curran 41) drew with Afghanistan 699 in 197 overs (Shahidi 246, Rahmat 234, Bennett 5/95).

LIVE TELECAST

Hockey: HIL, DD Sports, Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 3 & LIV, 8.15 p.m.

VIJAY HAZARE TROPHY: FIFTH-ROUND FIXTURES

Group-A: Jaipur: Gujarat vs Manipur, Assam vs Goa, Jharkhand vs Odisha, Haryana vs Uttarakhand.

B: Mumbai: Maharashtra vs Sikkim, Andhra vs Meghalaya.

Navi Mumbai: Himachal Pradesh vs Railways, Rajasthan vs Services.

C: Ahmedabad: Mumbai vs Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh vs Pondicherry, Punjab vs Saurashtra, Hyderabad vs Karnataka.

D: Vizianagaram: Jammu & Kashmir vs Mizoram, Chandigarh vs Uttar Pradesh.

Visakhapatnam: Tamil Nadu vs Vidarbha.

E: Hyderabad: Bengal vs Kerala, Delhi vs Tripura, Baroda vs Bihar.

Group D matches start at 8.45 a.m. Rest of the games begin at 9 a.m.

Adarsh wins standard pistol gold

NATL. SHOOTING

Sports Bureau

Adarsh Singh was in top form in clinching the men's 25-metre standard pistol gold with a seven-point margin over Udhayveer Sidhu, Omkar Singh and Olympian Gurpreet Singh in the 67th National shooting championship at the Dr. Karni Singh Range, Tughlakabad.

Udhayveer and Omkar won the silver and bronze respectively after pipping Gurpreet on the better count of inter-10s.

The medals are decided on qualification scores, as the non-Olympic events do not feature the finals.

India downs Maldives 14-0 in women's football friendly

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

India crushed Maldives 14-0 in an international women's football friendly at the Padukone-David Centre for Sports Excellence here on Monday.

India's newly-appointed Swedish coach, Joakim Alexandersson, handed duties to eight players.

Seasoned campaigner Pyari Xaxa and debutant Lynda Kom Serto scored three and four goals respectively. Neha and Kajol D'Souza scored two each, while Sangita Basfore, Sorkhaibam Ranjana Chanu and Rimpaa Haldar accounted for one goal each.



Serto found the target four times. AIFF MEDIA

each other again at the same venue on Thursday.

The result: India 14 (Pyari Xaxa 7, 18, 15, Lynda Kom Serto 12, 21, 29, 52, Neha 16, 45, Kajol D'Souza 59, 66, Sangita Basfore 51, Sorkhaibam Ranjana Chanu 54, Rimpaa Haldar 62) bt Maldives 0.

The two teams will face

each other again at the same venue on Thursday.

Classical format my favourite: Gukesh

World champion hints at practising more for rapid and blitz also; looks forward to playing his 'seconds' Keymer and Harikrishna at Wijk aan Zee

CHESS

P.K. Ajith Kumar

After his historic triumph at the World Championship in Singapore a fortnight ago, D. Gukesh is looking forward to his next event. The Tata Steel tournament at Wijk aan Zee in the Netherlands, starting on January 17, will present an interesting challenge for him – he will face off with two men that had helped him win the World title.

Vincent Keymer and P. Harikrishna are part of the strong line-up in the tournament. So how would it be playing against his 'seconds' who helped him become the youngest World champion?

"Tata Steel is a very important tournament in the chess calendar that I always look forward to, and as usual I will try to give my best effort," Gukesh told *The Hindu*.

"Every player is super strong in the field and will be competitive and most of them are good friends off the board. But over the board they are all my rivals and the same applies to Vincent and Hari. We will fight hard on board and have fun off it!"

Great lesson

Looking back at the World championship, he said the win in the third game, which came after the setback, will remain a cherished memory.



Memorable: Gukesh cherishes his Game 3 win at the Worlds and Move 22 in the 13th Game against Ding. FIDE



My favourite World championship match is the one between Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky in 1972

"But then I let go of the lead in the match with a loss in the 12th Game. That triggered extreme emotions and tested my self-belief and composure. I hope it is a great lesson for me in the future."

If he were to pick one move from the ones he made in all those 14 games, which could that be? "I was quite happy about 22. Bf4 in Game 13," he said.

That was indeed an excellent move, and he went on to have a potentially winning position in that

game, which, however, ended in a draw. Gukesh then won Game 14, to bring the crown back to India, which had been his dream after watching Viswanathan Anand, now his mentor, losing the World crown to Carlsen in 2013.

Anand is one of his favourite World champions. "Bobby Fischer and Magnus Carlsen are the others," he said. "And my favourite World championship match is the one between Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky in 1972."

Gukesh wants to focus on all formats, including rapid and blitz.

"But classical will always be my favourite, though I would love to practise more for rapid and blitz events than before," he said.

Bengal takes on Kerala in high-stakes summit clash

SANTOSH TROPHY

Sports Bureau
HYDERABAD

Thirty-two time champion West Bengal takes on seven-time champion Kerala in the final of the Santosh Trophy National football championship at the GMC Balayogi Stadium here on Tuesday.

It will be the 47th final appearance for Bengal while Kerala is in the summit clash for the 16th time. Both the teams have won nine of the 10 matches played in this edition while drawing one each.

Bengal has a 15-9 head-to-head record over Kerala with eight games ending in draws in the championship history.

"Unless we win the trophy, it all counts for nothing," Bengal head coach Sanjoy Sen said ahead of the final.

"Santosh Trophy is a much bigger tournament



Big prize: Rival captains and coaches pose with the symbol of supremacy in National football. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ing the charts.

Bengal on the other hand has netted 27 goals. Bengal has been dependent mainly on Robi Hansda (11) and Naro Hari Shrestha (seven).

Interestingly, there are six players in the Kerala side, including Muhammad Ajmal (nine), Naseeb Rahman (eight) and E. Sajeesh (five) lead-

The final kicks off at 7.30 pm. It will be streamed live on ssn.co and telecast live on DD Sports.

TENNIS ROUND-UP

Ramkumar seeded No. 2 for Indore ITF tournament

Second seed Ramkumar Ramanathan is the sole Indian player to be seeded in a strong field in the \$25,000 ITF men's tennis tournament to be played in Indore from Tuesday. With four Challenger tournaments scheduled across the country soon, the ITF men's events to be played in Bhopal and

Chennai, after the event here, would serve as a good preparation for all the players who thrive in the Indian conditions.

The 48-player qualifying draw has been a good field for the Indians to fight with eight foreigners for the qualifying slots.

The seedings: 1. Mathys Erhard (Fra), 2. Ramkumar Ramanathan, 3. Oliver Crawford (GBr), 4. Florent Bax (Fra), 5. Yurii Dzhavakian (Ukr), 6. Eric Vanshelboim (Ukr), 7. Dominik

Palan (Cze), 8. Egor Agafonov.

Yuki and Olivetti make it to Hong Kong ATP quarterfinals

Yuki Bhambri and Albano Olivetti of France defeated Constantin Frantzen and Hendrik Jebens of Germany 6-3, 5-7, [10-5] in the doubles pre-quarterfinals of the \$766,290 ATP tennis tournament in Hong Kong on Monday.

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Earning the right to dream, having the might to deliver

From local tournaments to international assignments, Manpreet Singh's nerves of steel have often single-handedly carried his teams to glory; they came to the fore again as he led Haryana Steelers to its maiden title triumph in the Pro Kabaddi League

Lavanya L

Haryana Steelers coach Manpreet Singh is many things. He is competitive, loud, passionate and boisterous. As a lifelong student of the game of kabaddi, he believes in destiny's role to succeed in the sport but superstition is not something he associates himself with.

That said, when you make three finals and don't have a trophy, a little blind faith can be comforting.

"Someone told my wife that the more gold I wear, the more golden trophies I'll get. So I took all the gold I could find in my house and wore it to ensure that that side is also sorted," Manpreet told *The Hindu* ahead of the playoffs of the Pro Kabaddi League's 11th season.

True to belief, the former India all-rounder has been blinged out this season. He sported a massive gold-plated watch on one hand and a golden kada (a thick metal bangle worn by Sikhs) on the other, along with a few chunky rings. The most defining addition is the gleaming golden chain around his neck.

As it stands, the prayers have paid off..

The Steelers topped the league phase with 84 points in 22 games. There were no draws in Haryana's ledger this season and the well-oiled machine finished the preliminary stages with an astounding points difference of 112. Their dominance earned them a direct spot in the semifinal - the top two take one spot in each semifinal - where they snuck past UP Yoddhas with a close 28-25 victory.

That Yoddhas contest made the big man sweat. The game fluctuated wildly until the dying minutes of the game. Manpreet, down with a cold and fever, was uncharacteristically quiet throughout the game, but those last few minutes spiked his blood pressure too. However, all was well as Haryana set up a final clash with Patna Pirates, Manpreet's former franchise with whom he won this league as a player.

But Manpreet is used to obstacles. If you had left it to his family, Manpreet the kabaddi player would have never taken shape and a man worth 12 international gold medals for the nation would have potentially been a farmer or a contractor.

Kabaddi's nasha

"I didn't get the privilege of playing this game easily. I had to fight a lot to earn the right to play it. My family did not support me at all early on. My grandfather, Sardar Karnail Singh, was not just the all-powerful patriarch of my family but was also a revered figure in the community. He did not want me to play kabaddi," Manpreet recalled.

"My father had five brothers and I was the youngest of the 19 kids in the house... nine boys and the rest were girls. If it was only my father, I would have still been able to convince him but my uncles and aunts all thought that if their kids had to partake in duties in the house and work on the fields, why should I be excused? I wanted to play but they all stopped me. They were worried if I would injure myself and add to the family's load too," he said.

"To be fair to them, something like that did happen. When I was in class six, I used to be a corner defender. Someone kicked me once under my chin and I broke a few teeth and that was it for my family. It had to be a matter of stealth from there," Manpreet added.

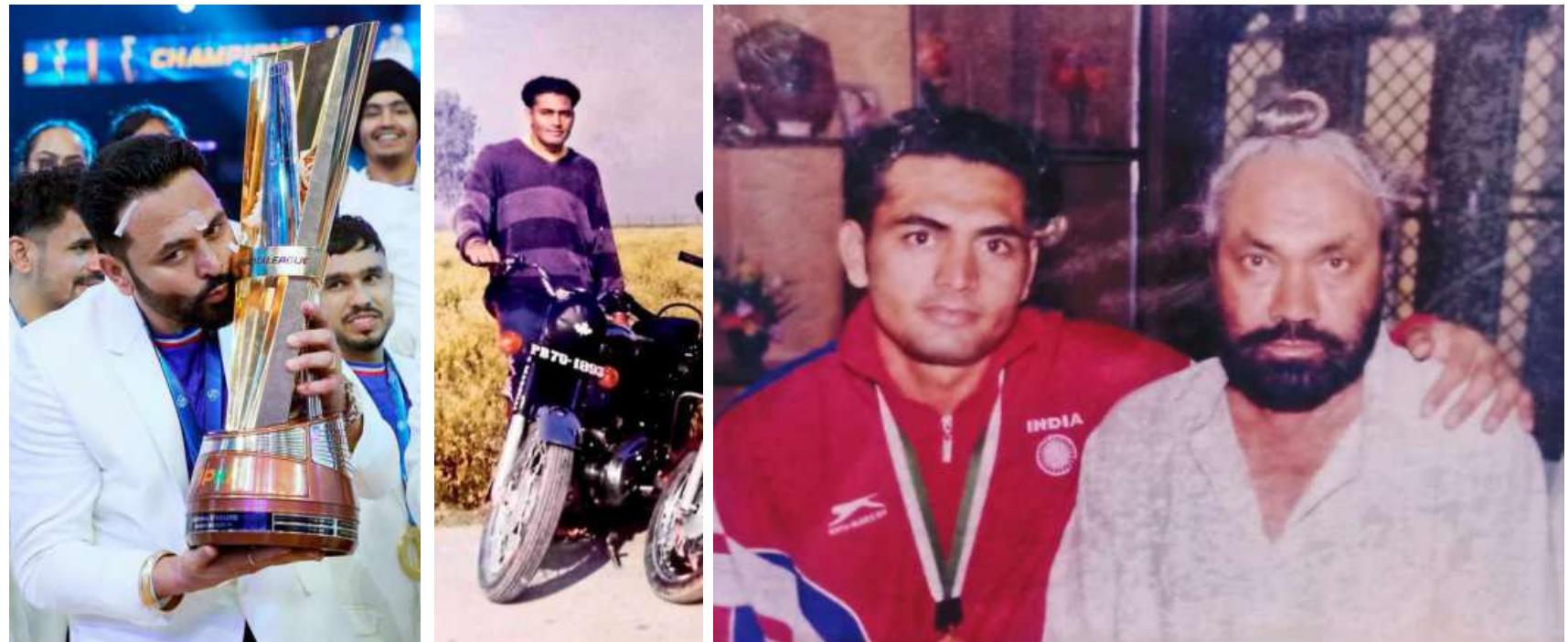
He was a healthy Sardar kid with his hair in the top knot. His hair would invariably catch soil when he played kabaddi and it didn't take long for folks at home to find out what he'd been up to. Eventually, his friend made a risky suggestion, goading him to cut off his long locks. Manpreet's desperation to play made him do it and all hell broke loose.

"I got a thrashing of a lifetime for that and for about 15-20 days, my family didn't give me proper food. That time passed with a lot of difficulty. But *nasha tha mera kabaddi ka* (I was addicted to kabaddi)," Manpreet said.

An elder in the neighbourhood admonished his grandfather for the resistance, asking him to actually go see Manpreet play to understand how good he was.

"One day, he came to watch me play secretly at a local tournament. I did well that day and my grandfather eventually sent for me. When I saw him sitting there in the gathering, I thought, 'That's it, there ends my dream.' My entire body began shaking in fear."

"I didn't get a beating though. He took out 100 rupees from his wallet, a big amount at the time, and handed it to me.



I cannot tell you how happy that made me. He then found a good coach in Patiala, Sardar Sher Singh, and left me in his care saying, 'Let him play.' I never turned back from there. Dadaji was Hitler. His word was law and my journey began there," he said.

Special place
Naturally then, the big ambition was to be picked for the Indian team. Manpreet's grandfather put a price on it, asking his grandson what he could give him if he managed to break through.

A then 17-year-old Manpreet promptly replied, "Bullet motorcycle." Barely a few years later, Manpreet earned that India blazer and in came a classic black 350.

"Till date, I have that bike with me, and it's in great condition. Only I am allowed to ride that bike, I don't let anyone near it. I think I've won about 10-12 Bullets in my career. The others have all been gifted away to friends, relatives, nephews, nieces...but that one from my grandfather is still there," he said.

Manpreet represented India for close to a decade, finishing with 12 international gold medals. In the Pro Kabaddi League, he led a young Patna Pirates outfit to its maiden title in the third edition. That stint was a daunting one as Manpreet had to lose over 47 kilos to make the cut and be competitive in the league.

Stories of Manpreet's issues with weight are well known, particularly famous is the one where he lost 10 kg in a single night to make weight in a quadrangular tournament in 2006.

He never questioned any of it. After all, the right to play this game didn't come easily. After his time as a player, he began his coaching journey with Gujarat Fortunegiants which was then renamed

Today, the sport has become very different and it's hard for a coach to balance the pressures of it all. It's become fast. If you want to drive a Ferrari, you need a driver who can actually handle the speed of the car

Gujarat Giants. He took the franchise to the final in his first two seasons and the playoff in the third. His fourth year with the side saw it finish outside the knockout bracket. He soon moved to the Steelers in 2022. After a league stage finish in that season, he has led Haryana to two summit clashes with a young, unheralded core and barely any star presence.

But Manpreet did have an ace up his sleeve – his star all-rounder Mohammadreza Shadlouli Chiyaneh, who won the league with Puneri Paltan last year beating the Steelers in the final. The Iranian has earned a fan following courtesy his swagger, mat presence and jaw-dropping skills, besides some very funky hairdos over the seasons.

Manpreet sees a bit of himself in Shadlouli.

"The kabaddi that we want to see today...he is a superior product of it. Back in the day, I was a lot like him, I was perhaps a bit more aggressive. I used to bring in a lot of style to my game...be it hairstyles, the clothes I wore or what I pulled off on the mat," he said.

"John Abraham, M.S. Dhoni came later, in 1999 to 2004 I had long hair till my shoulder for a while. When I played local tournaments in Mumbai, people would call me Bobby (in reference to actor Bobby Deol). I can see all that energy and

I learnt everything I know about coaching because of E Prasad Rao sir. I played quite well under him. But I've never heard 'Manpreet, bohot acche.' He was always strict. Even if I took 20 points in a game, he'd say 'You can do much better'

spunk in Shadlouli. Whether the match is headed for a victory or defeat, his energy never diminishes," he added.

Encouragement

Manpreet has come to be associated with a coaching philosophy built on encouragement. It was not uncommon to hear, "Tu mera sher hai beta. Darr mat (You're my tiger, don't be afraid)" blaring from the Haryana bench in tense situations. No one believed in the boys more than the coach. A disciplinarian on the training mat, Manpreet contrasted that by going to great lengths to be his players' friend.

"They are not slaves, they are players and that respect and line is challenging to maintain, but it must be," Manpreet explained.

Days before the final, he dressed up as Santa Claus for Christmas and gave the squad a good laugh as he went around distributing brand new phones to the members. A number of players then began putting on record that they had promised their Santa the PKL trophy.

On Sunday, Manpreet's prayers were heard. He came to the Balewadi Stadium without much of a voice, still under the pump with fever and cold. A usually loud Manpreet couldn't turn up the volume. But his cubs did all the roaring.

THE GIST

▼
Manpreet Singh has won every single tournament there is to win as a player in the kabaddi ecosystem and had his sights set on the PKL trophy as the one honour remaining in his resume. On Sunday and on the fourth try, Manpreet fulfilled his dream

▼
His team, Haryana Steelers, beat Patna Pirates (a franchise he won the PKL with as a player) in the final of the 11th season

▼
As a child, Manpreet was forbidden from playing the sport by his grandfather. It took some time and help from the community to come around and support his dreams

▼
Manpreet's most cherished possession is a Bullet motorcycle his grandfather bought him when he got the India team call-up

SCIENCE

Grave new world: human-induced loss of elders threatens various species

Climate extremes and habitat destruction caused by human activity can hasten the loss of elders in a species and disrupt the stability of populations. Ecologists have documented a cascade of consequences moving through the population when elders disappear, altering structures and behaviour

Rupsy Khurana

As people age, they accrue richer experiences, and their wisdom deepens. So do animals. From elephant matriarchs to shark grandmothers, the elders of the animal kingdom carry a treasure trove of knowledge, having guided, and still guiding, their families through the uncertainties of life in the wild.

The earth's life forms are very diverse and unsparingly complex. No two species age the same. Yet there is also a growing body of evidence that older, wiser individuals are crucial in similar ways to many species.

"Because of the diversity in animal social systems, the important position that older individuals often occupy can be for a variety of reasons, but often involves them either being particularly dominant individuals who stabilise the social hierarchy in some way through their presence or by acting as repositories of information that they've acquired over their lifetime – which can be particularly important when times get tough," Josh Firth, an associate professor at the University of Leeds, said.

"There are a range of potential benefits of older individuals across different types of animals. They are not the same for all species," Keller Kopf, a senior lecturer in ecology at Charles Darwin University, Australia, added.

Without these elders, fish may never find their spawning grounds, and birds would get waylaid as they flew across continents.

Ageing in the wild

A review published in *Science* on November 21 suggested that the worldwide loss of old individuals due to shrinking habitats, hunting, climate change, and other human-caused disturbances can be particularly detrimental to long-lived species.

According to the researchers, protecting a species' elders is important for all its members to be able to pass on their cultures and what they know about adapting to changing weather to their future generations, and to help buffer them against human disturbances.

While this may go for both short- and long-lived species – the mayfly lives for a day, whereas the Antarctic glass sponge can live for millennia – the focus on long-lived species in particular is partly because of data.

"Evidence for the contributions of older individuals in short-lived species is limited," Kopf, the lead author of the study, said.

Scientists have been studying ageing for decades, but most of their research has focused on the negative effects of biological ageing on human health. Only recently have they been looking at the benefits of ageing in wild populations.

"Research on the benefits of old individuals has been happening in different disciplines in silos," Kopf said.

What old means

He and his team analysed more than 9,800 peer-reviewed studies from 1900 to 2023, investigating the roles of elderly individuals in several species. These roles included knowledge transmission, assisted parental care, nutrient cycling,



A herd of elephants follows its leader in Tarangire National Park, Tanzania.. MAXIM MEDVEDEV

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and coping with extreme weather.

"Until now, no study has pulled together data across different taxonomic groups to highlight the range of potential benefits of growing old," according to Kopf.

Before the team could analyse the data, it had to agree on what "old" meant. A three-year-old mouse could be considered old, whereas a 30-year-old elephant could be considered young, Kopf said. But the lack of data on short-lived species limited the researchers' options to two groups: long-lived mammals and birds (which are often social species that invest significant time and effort in parenting their offspring) and cold-blooded animals (like fish and reptiles, which continue to grow throughout their lifespan).

"Traits such as social behaviour, migration, parental care, and increased reproductive output make older individuals in moderate to long-lived species essential for their ecology and therefore conservation," Kopf said.

"However, this importance exists on a continuum and is not a binary."

Of elephants and orcas

Climate extremes and habitat destruction caused by human activity can hasten the loss of elders in a species and disrupt the stability of populations. Ecologists have documented a cascade of consequences moving through the population when the elders disappear, altering social structures and behaviour.

For example, young elephants of both sexes depend on help from the matriarch, the oldest female and often the largest. One 2011 study of African elephants in the wild found that when they were played recordings of lions roaring, a herd's members would create a defensive formation. Groups led by matriarchs more than 60 years old gathered faster and confronted the threatening calls with more aggression.

"If older individuals are removed from

the wild, by capture or unnatural death, younger ones struggle to survive without their knowledge," Anindya Sinha, a professor at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru, said. "Because they are directionless, there might be an increased risk of negative interactions with humans."

"Our work on Asian elephants in Bandipur and Nagarhole National Parks in Karnataka shows that females in herds [with calves] and fewer experienced individuals exhibited high levels of stress hormone," Sanjeeta Sharma Pokhreal, an assistant professor at Kyoto University in Japan, said. A 2018 study she co-authored suggested that the higher stress could be due to lack of help with parental care, the high energy demands of vigilance, and the responsibility of protecting calves from predators.

Studies have also found that older female orcas (*Orcinus orca*) undergo menopause. According to experts, one compelling explanation for this phenomenon is called the grandmother hypothesis. Grandmother orcas stop being able to reproduce so they can help their daughters care for calves, protect them from predators, and guide them to the best feeding grounds.

A new conservation paradigm

Because of the great benefits of protecting the older members of a species, the researchers have advanced a new paradigm called longevity conservation.

"Biodiversity conservation and threatened species policies should protect age structure," Kopf wrote in *The Conversation*. "This is particularly important in long-lived species that produce more offspring with age, or where migration, social networks, and cultural transmission of knowledge are required for survival."

For example, in fish and reptiles, the older individuals lay more eggs and give birth to offspring better equipped to

survive environmental fluctuations. So Kopf advocates age and size-based fisheries, management strategies that better protect older individuals.

But significant challenges arise when the longevity conservation paradigm comes in contact with ground realities, such as in India. More than 700 marine fish species are caught every year along both coasts of the country, with fishing vessels targeting multiple species simultaneously. How experts can implement a management strategy that protects individuals while allowing uninterrupted harvesting is unclear.

"Protecting larger, older fish is important for conservation, but in a multi-species fishery like India, it's extremely challenging," Mayuresh Gangal, a research affiliate at the Nature Conservation Foundation, said. "Different species vary in size as they age, and their life histories differ significantly. On top of that, the fishing gear cannot be very target-specific in multi-species fisheries. It is difficult to tailor gear to target specific species or sizes effectively."

Kopf also wrote in *The Conversation* that the "loss of old individuals is not yet recognised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature as a means of listing threatened species."

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Protecting a species' elders is important for all its members to be able to pass on their cultures and what they know about adapting to changing weather to their future generations and to help buffer them against human disturbances

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A 2018 artist's concept shows the Parker Solar Probe flying into the sun's outer atmosphere on a mission to help scientists learn more about the star. NASA/JOHNS HOPKINS APL/STEVE GRIBBEN

NASA probe flies closer to the sun than any spacecraft

Agence France Presse

NASA's pioneering Parker Solar Probe made history on December 24 when it flew closer to the sun than any other spacecraft, with its heat shield exposed to scorching temperatures topping 930 degrees Celsius.

Launched in August 2018, the spaceship is on a seven-year mission to deepen scientific understanding of our star and help forecast space-weather events that can affect life on the earth.

Tuesday's historic flyby should have occurred at precisely 5:23 am IST (153 GMT), although mission scientists will have to wait for confirmation until December 28 as they lose contact with the craft for several days due to its proximity to the sun.

"Right now, the Parker Solar Probe is flying closer to a star than anything has ever been before," at 6.1 million kilometres away, NASA official Nicky Fox said in a video on social media on the morning of December 24.

"It is just a total 'yay, we did it' moment."

If the distance between the earth and the sun is the equivalent to the length of an American football field, the spacecraft should have been about four metres from the end zone at the moment of closest approach, a point that scientists call perihelion.

"This is one example of NASA's bold missions, doing something that no one else has ever done before to answer long-standing questions about our

Launched in 2018, the spaceship is on a seven-year mission to deepen scientific understanding of our star and help forecast space-weather events that can affect life on the earth

universe," Parker Solar Probe programme scientist Arik Posner said in a statement on December 30.

"We can't wait to receive that first status update from the spacecraft and start receiving the science data in the coming weeks."

So effective is the heat shield that the probe's internal instruments remained near room temperature – around 29 degrees Celsius -- as it explored the sun's outer atmosphere, called the corona.

The Parker Solar Probe will also be moving at a blistering pace of around 690,000 km/hr, fast enough to fly from New Delhi to Chennai in around 10 seconds.

"Parker will truly be returning data from uncharted territory," said Nick Pinkine, mission operations manager at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory (APL) in Laurel, Maryland.

"We're excited to hear back from the spacecraft when it swings back around the sun."

By venturing into these extreme conditions, the Parker probe has been helping scientists tackle some of the sun's biggest mysteries: how solar wind originates, why the corona is hotter than the surface below, and how coronal mass ejections – massive clouds of plasma that hurl through space – are formed.

The Christmas Eve flyby was the first of three record-setting close passes. The next two are set to occur on March 22 and June 19, 2025, and both are expected to bring the probe back to a similarly close distance from the sun.

After its launch in 2018, the probe has been gradually circling closer towards the sun, using flybys of Venus to gravitationally pull it into a tighter orbit.

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Of words that begin with 'cell'

Vasudevan Mukund

QUESTION 1

The shortest word that contains the letters 'cell' is the word 'cell' itself. This relationship between entities described as "every set is a subset of itself" (except an empty set), is present in many areas of mathematics and is often called the _____ property. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 2

Plastic pollution is one of the major global crises of the 21st century. Scientists have found plastic pollutants almost everywhere they've looked on the planet, including inside human bodies. This said, the most abundant polymer on the earth is still X. Name X.

QUESTION 3

Y is an important type of just-in-time manufacturing. A Y facility is capable of rapidly manufacturing products, being

rapidly adaptable to manufacturing a variety of products, and minimising waste. Name Y.

Answers to December 19 quiz:

1. Fellow for whom a unit of measuring vacuum is named – **Ans: Evangelista Torricelli**
2. Vacuum in light bulbs prevents this chemical reaction – **Ans: Oxidation**
3. First variant of this item had a heated cathode – **Ans: Diode**
4. Fleeting particles in the vacuum of space – **Ans: Virtual particles**
5. Second most abundant particles in the universe – **Ans: Neutrinos**

Visual: **Magdeburg hemispheres**
First contact: K.N. Viswanathan | Ankurjyoti Hatimuria | Chandan Kumar Singha | Prajjwal Pawar | Joe V.R.

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



Visual: This is a close-up view of a modern cello. Name the direct ancestor to this instrument, invented in the early 16th century.

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