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Governor altered policy address, says Kerala CM

Pinarayi Vijayan says Governor made changes to speech prepared by government in Assembly; only the Cabinet-approved version will prevail in keeping with constitutional practice, he adds

Tiki Rajvi
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Legislative Assembly saw extraordinary scenes on Tuesday after Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar had made changes to the policy speech prepared by the State government while delivering the customary address at the start of the first session of the New Year.

Back in the Assembly after seeing off the Governor, Mr. Vijayan said Mr. Arlekar had made changes to paragraphs 12, 15 and 16 of the Cabinet-approved text of the speech. While certain sections were omitted, some additions were made elsewhere, he said.

He said the Cabinet-ap-



Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan welcoming Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar to the Assembly on Tuesday. A. JAYAMOHAN

proved version would prevail in keeping with the constitutional practice and legislative precedent in Kerala. "Since the Governor presents the policy of the State government in the House, paragraphs 12, 15 and 16 as approved by the Cabinet will prevail," the Chief Minister said.

Mr. Vijayan urged Speaker A.N. Shamseer to approve the speech ratified by the Cabinet as the official version of the address. The English and Malayalam copies of the policy address distributed to the MLAs and the press remained the versions approved by the Cabinet.

There was no official response from the Governor's office despite repeated efforts.

In the approved text, paragraph 12 read: "Despite these social and institutional achievements, Kerala continues to face severe fiscal stress arising from a series of adverse Union Government actions that undermine the constitutional principles of fiscal federalism." However, in the speech delivered by the Governor, the paragraph read: "Despite these social and institutional achievements, Kerala continues to face severe fiscal stress arising from curtailment of advances."

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SCRIPTED ACT: CONG.

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T.N. Governor refuses to read customary address in Assembly

Dennis S. Jesudasan
N. Sai Charan
CHENNAI



Governor R.N. Ravi being accorded a Guard of Honour before the session. PTI

In what has now become a familiar scene, Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi declined to read out his customary address prepared by the State government on the floor of the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday, and walked out of the House.

Shortly after his exit, the Lok Bhavan issued a statement saying that Mr. Ravi had declined to read the address as it contained "numerous unsubstantiated claims and misleading statements". Besides, several crucial issues troubling the people were ignored and the Governor's microphone "was repeatedly switched off and he was not allowed to speak", it said.

Disapproving of Mr. Ravi's action, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin moved a resolution urging the Assembly to take on record only the

approved Governor's Address. The House adopted the resolution unanimously. Mr. Stalin announced that the DMK would take steps for a Constitution amendment to do away with the practice of commencing the first Assembly session of the year with the Governor's address.

During the remainder of the session, a debate will be held on the Motion of Thanks to the Governor for his Address to the House.

On Tuesday morning, soon after the Governor

CONTINUED ON

was escorted in, all members stood for the singing of the *Tamil Thaai Vaazhthu*, the State anthem.

Governor's digressions

While others settled in their seats after the song, the Governor initially kept standing, as the tablet placed in front of him displayed the text of the prepared address, to help him read from. He later took his seat.

The Governor began by extending New Year wishes to the members but then went on to digress from the prepared address. Speaker M. Appavu, seated next to him, stood up and requested the Governor to read out the speech given to him by following the procedure. Realising that the Governor had ignored his request, the Speaker continued to plead with him to read out the prepared speech.

During the remainder of the session, a debate will be held on the Motion of Thanks to the Governor for his Address to the House.

On Tuesday morning, soon after the Governor

IN BRIEF



Two dead in mob violence over road accident in Assam

GUWAHATI

Mob violence over a road accident on Monday night claimed two lives in western Assam's Kokrajhar district, plunging a strategic area into chaos and threatening to reopen old wounds. » Page 12

Drowning of Noida techie: CEO of real estate firm nabbed

NEW DELHI

The Uttar Pradesh police on Tuesday arrested the CEO of a real estate firm, MZ Witztown Planners, in connection with the death of Yuvraj Mehta. The 27-year-old man drowned after his car fell into a water-filled pit in Greater Noida. » Page 2

OPPORTUNITIES » PAGE 7

Connecting path



Vibrant scene: People on the revamped Amira Kadal Bridge across the Jhelum river in Srinagar on Tuesday. The pedestrian bridge has been redeveloped under the Srinagar Smart City Project. IMRAN NISSAR

No compromise on Mumbai mayor's post, say BJP leaders

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
MUMBAI

Ahead of a meeting between leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Shiv Sena in New Delhi on Tuesday evening to discuss the formation of various committees of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, a BJP leader said the party will not compromise on the mayoral position. "We have the numbers. There is no question of a compromise on the mayoral position. But the party will also consider the [Shiv Sena's] demands," the leader said.

DETAILS ON

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M.P. govt. constitutes panel to probe Indore water contamination tragedy

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh government has formed a high-level investigation committee to probe the diarrhoea outbreak in Indore's Bhagirathpura area, which was caused by contaminated drinking water supplied by the Indore Municipal Corporation and has claimed several lives so far. The panel has been asked to submit its findings and recommendations within a month.

The tragedy came to light on December 29 last year and has impacted more than 3,000 people since. While the official death toll of the tragedy stands at seven, an audit

While the official death toll is seven, an audit by govt. doctors has pegged the figure at 15

report of government doctors has pegged the death toll at 15, even as local reports have mentioned at least 24 deaths, including one last week. Indore Chief Medical and Health Officer Madhav Prasad Hasani told *The Hindu* that 11 people are still hospitalised, five of them in the ICU.

The panel will be chaired by Additional Chief Secretary (General Administration Department) Sanjay Kumar Shukla, with Principal Secretary (Public

Health Engineering) P. Narahari and Commissioner (Directorate of Urban Administration and Development) Sanket Bhodhe as members. Indore Divisional Commissioner Sudam Khade will serve as member-secretary.

Fixing accountability

"The committee will examine the actual causes and relevant facts of the incident and analyse the administrative, technical, and management shortcomings," read a release by the government.

It added that the panel will also determine the accountability of the officers responsible.

"It will also provide necessary suggestions to pre-

vent the recurrence of such incidents in the future, and may also include other matters deemed necessary or incidental to the investigation," the statement read. It added, "The committee will obtain necessary records, reports, and information from the concerned departments and also conduct site inspections if required."

The Congress has been on the offensive against the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party government in the State over the issue. On January 17, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi visited Bhagirathpura and met the affected residents and families of those who died over the past month.

It added that the panel will also determine the accountability of the officers responsible.

"It will also provide necessary suggestions to pre-

Police book JMI prof. for 'casteist slurs', staffer's assault

Alisha Dutta
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police on Tuesday booked an Associate Professor of Jamia Millia Islamia under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) (Prevention of Atrocities) Act for allegedly hurling "casteist slurs" and assaulting a university employee, an officer said.

"An FIR on the complaint of Ramphul Meena against the professor under Section 3(i) (r) SC/ST Act 1989 (intentionally insulting or intimidating a SC/ST person) and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Section 115(2) (voluntarily causing hurt) has been registered at Jamia Nagar police station and an investigation has been taken up," the officer said.

According to the complainant, the professor had allegedly physically assaulted him and hurled casteist slurs on two occasions since January 13.

MCD to fix 1,000 km of damaged roads to curb dust pollution

Suruchi Kumari
NEW DELHI



The repair work will prioritise smaller roads. FILE PHOTO

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has received approval under the Chief Minister Development Fund to repair nearly 1,000 kilometres of roads across the city over the next year, a senior official said on Tuesday.

The move follows a large-scale assessment of road conditions conducted by the civic body amid repeated complaints over deteriorating roads and rising dust pollution. Officials said the exercise was triggered after concerns were raised by Ministers and the Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM), which linked damaged roads to increased dust emissions.

"We assessed over 1,500 kilometres of roads over the past few months following several complaints

about poor roads and dust pollution. Based on this assessment, a proposal to repair 1,000 kilometres of roads was prepared and sent to the Urban Development Department of the Delhi government for approval and budgetary sanction," a senior MCD official said. All roads in Delhi that are 60 feet wide or less fall under the MCD's jurisdiction, covering a network of nearly 12,700 kilometres. Officials said the repair work will prioritise smaller roads that generate higher levels of dust.

CEO of real estate firm arrested amid outrage over Noida techie's drowning

SIT team to submit report within five days; eyewitnesses claim that despite repeated pleas, police and rescue teams arrived late and failed to act; 'culture of greed' and disrespect towards other living beings being propagated in India: Rahul Gandhi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Uttar Pradesh police on Tuesday arrested the CEO of real estate firm MZ Wiztown Planners in connection with the death of Yuvraj Mehta, a 27-year-old software engineer who drowned after his car plunged into a water-filled pit at Sector 150 in Greater Noida.

The arrest of Abhay Singh comes a day after U.P. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath ordered a probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to examine the circumstances leading to the death. The three-member SIT, headed by Additional Director General (Meerut) Bhanu Bhaskar, visited the site on Tuesday and said it would submit its report within five days. Meerut Divisional Commissioner Hrishikesh Bhaskar



Mangled wreckage: NDRF teams retrieved the car from the water-filled pit in Sector 150 of Greater Noida on Tuesday. ANI

and Public Works Department Chief Engineer Ajay Verma are the other members. The deceased's father, Rajkumar Mehta, had filed a police complaint on Sunday alleging negligence by authorities and construction agencies. Based on the complaint, an FIR was registered against senior offi-

cials of the real estate firms MZ Wiztown Planners and Lotus Greens. The case has triggered outrage and raised questions about the absence of safety barricades, poor visibility measures, and the alleged delay in rescue operations. Eyewitnesses claimed that despite repeated pleas for help, the police and rescue

teams reached the spot late and failed to act promptly.

Lack of accountability'

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, shared a video related to the incident on X, accusing authorities of systemic indifference and "lack of accountability". He said a "culture of greed" and disrespect towards other living beings is being propagated in India. "The air we breathe, the water we are forced to drink, and the crumbling infrastructure around us are the consequences of this creed. Yuvraj Mehta's death is a direct consequence of this culture. How we react to his death, how we react to the pain and suffering of other people is going to determine the type of society we become," he said.

BJP leader and Gautam Buddha Nagar MP Mahesh

Sharma expressed grief over the death, calling it deeply concerning that a life could not be saved despite multiple agencies being in place. Several political figures have also questioned the absence of action against the District Magistrate of Noida, under whose jurisdiction the State Disaster Response Force and the District Disaster Management Authority operate.

The U.P. government removed Lokesh M. as the CEO of the Noida Authority and Managing Director of the Noida Metro Rail Corporation on Monday. A truck had fallen into the same pit last year, but no fatalities were reported. Meanwhile, Lotus Greens has denied responsibility, saying the plot was transferred to the Grihapravesh Group in 2019-20 with the Noida Authority's approval.

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Valedictory Address

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Yogi Adityanath
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

Harivansh
Hon'ble Deputy Chairman,
Rajya Sabha

Kunwar Manvendra Singh
Hon'ble Chairman, Legislative Council,
Uttar Pradesh

Satish Mahana
Hon'ble Speaker, Legislative Assembly,
Uttar Pradesh

→ and →

Closing Ceremony

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Venue: Legislative Assembly Premises, Lucknow

Ban on entry of trucks lifted as air quality improves marginally in city

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



GRAP IV restrictions were revoked on Tuesday.
SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) revoked the ban on entry of trucks in Delhi and other measures that were part of the Stage IV of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) as air quality marginally improved to the 'very poor' category on Tuesday.

But all actions under Stage I, II, and III of GRAP, including a ban on construction and demolition activities and a ban on plying of BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel four-wheeler vehicles in Delhi and in the districts of Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar, among others, will continue, as per an official order.

Schools in Delhi will continue to conduct classes up to grade 5 in hybrid mode - both online and physical classes -

SC sets aside HC order for CBI probe into Ambience Mall

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday set aside a Punjab and Haryana High Court order directing a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the construction of Ambience Mall in Gurugram on the land originally allocated for a group housing project.

The court held that the High Court's July 10, 2020, direction was "ex facie erroneous".

A Bench comprising Justice J.B. Pardiwala and Justice San-

deep Mehta, however, clarified that its ruling would not affect proceedings pending before the High Court on other related issues.

"We are of the firm view that the High Court has proceeded on a totally erroneous assumption that the residential colony was required to be developed over the entire 18.98 acres and not 10.98 acres. The above conclusion drawn is *ex facie* erroneous in the face of the contract executed between the parties and the approved layout plan," the Bench said.

Outrage over 'extortion' of school players in Manipur

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

The alleged extortion of school players of a State-level team from Rajasthan, who were visiting Manipur to participate in the 69th National School Games last week, has sparked outrage here. An armed group allegedly held the contingent hostage at gunpoint and robbed them on January 13 in the Northeastern State.

A 52-member team of boys and girls from Rajasthan, which participated in a national-level Wushu martial art event, was travelling in a bus from Dimapur in Nagaland to Manipur's capital Imphal. The parents of the school players have submitted a complaint to Education Minister Madan Dilawar, demanding strict action.

While the Manipur government has reportedly launched an inquiry into the matter, Congress leader Ashok Gehlot on Tuesday expressed concern over the incident and described it as "extremely distressing and worrying".

No compromise on Mumbai mayor's post, say BJP leaders

Mayor must be from the larger party: Chandrakant Patil ahead of BJP-Sena meet in Capital over composition of key BMC panels; Sena corporators have left Bandra hotel, says party functionary

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
MUMBAI

A head of a meeting between leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Shiv Sena in New Delhi on Tuesday evening to discuss the formation of various committees of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), a BJP leader said the party will not compromise on the mayoral position. "We have the numbers. There is no question of a compromise on the mayoral position. But the party will also see what the [Shiv Sena's] demands are. The BJP will stand with [Shiv Sena chief and Deputy Chief Minister] Eknath Shinde," the leader said.

Maharashtra's Higher and Technical Education Minister Chandrakant Patil echoed a similar sentiment: "[Chief Minister] Devendra Fadnavis will decide who will be the mayor. Logically, the mayor should be from the larger



Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis with Shiv Sena chief and Deputy CM Eknath Shinde at a campaign event. FILE PHOTO

party, which is the BJP."

The BJP bagged the most seats — 89 of a total of 227 — in the BMC while the Shiv Sena won 29 seats.

'Mahayuti mayor'

BJP Mumbai president Ameet Satam said in Delhi on Tuesday, "There is no question of a compromise [regarding the mayor's post]. Whether it'll be from the BJP or the Shiv Sena is not important. A Mahayuti corporator will be the mayor of Mumbai. We have four more seats than the

magic figure in the BMC."

Speaking to *The Hindu* from New Delhi, Shiv Sena leader Rahul Shewale said, "We are going to sit together to discuss functional and technical issues like group registration, the appointment of group leaders, and technical details." He said that three leaders, including him, Mr. Satam, and Cabinet Minister Ashish Shelar of the BJP, will be part of the meeting.

A Shiv Sena leader said they expect a share in the mayoral term and in key

positions on BMC panels.

The lottery to determine the reservation categories for the mayors of all 29 municipal corporations will be held on January 22.

'Insult to Maharashtra'

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut criticised the Shinde Sena over the talks in Delhi. "Shinde's leaders will have to sit at the feet of [Union Minister and senior BJP leader] Amit Shah to decide who the mayor of Mumbai will be. This is an insult to Maharashtra," Mr. Raut said.

The 29 Shiv Sena corporators, whom Mr. Shinde had moved to a five-star hotel in Bandra following the announcement of the BMC poll results on January 16, have left the hotel, a party functionary said on Tuesday. The Shiv Sena chief's move was seen as a bid to keep his flock safe from poaching attempts ahead of the key mayoral discussions.

(With inputs from PTI)

Punjab Cong. gets in 'damage control' mode after Channi flags representation

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH



Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, FILE PHOTO

Days after Congress leader and former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi called for greater Dalit representation in the party — which had brought the internal party discord into public view — the State unit on Tuesday moved into 'damage control' mode.

Denying that there was any factionalism, State Congress president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring said the party does not practise caste or communal politics, even as he asserted that there may be some "minor differences" among the leaders.

'No division of people'
Talking to mediapersons here, he said, "Unlike the BJP, the Congress does not believe in polarising and dividing people in the name of caste or religion. Punjab in particular never believed in caste or sectarian divisions."

Recently, speaking during a meeting of the party's SC wing, Mr. Channi, the Jalandhar MP, had said, "In Punjab, if you accept that there is a 35-38% population of Dalits, then why are we not getting representation? Where do we go? Where will these people go?"

Responding to a question on factionalism in the Punjab Congress, Mr. Warring said the party was "completely united" in the

State. He added, "Maybe there are some minor differences among the leaders, which are part of every organisation and even a family. But tell me where our leaders have worked against each other or against the party."

Mr. Warring said even though there are 34 Assembly seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes in Punjab, in case there are more deserving candidates from the SC community, they can still be accommodated.

He refused to comment on Mr. Channi's remarks but said, "Mr. Channi was made the Chief Minister after the removal of upper caste CM Amarinder Singh, and earlier, he was made the CLP leader after the removal of upper caste leader Sunil Jakhar. He was picked as CM in 2021 when no party MLA had supported him. Despite that, every leader and legislator welcomed the party's decision."

SC: 'printing of *Punjab Kesari* shall continue'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Observing that "newspapers cannot be stopped", the Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the Punjab government and its pollution control board not to take any coercive steps against the publication of the *Punjab Kesari* newspaper in the State.

The top court took up the plea of the newspaper group on an urgent basis upon oral mentioning, and ordered that the printing presses of the Hindi daily shall continue to function uninterruptedly, notwithstanding the Punjab State Pollution Control Board's decision to snap power supply due to alleged violations.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Justice Jaymalya Bagchi and Justice Vipul Panicholi said its interim order

will remain effective for one week even after the pronouncement of verdict by the Punjab and Haryana High Court on a petition filed by the newspaper group challenging the State's actions. "However, status quo shall be maintained with respect to the other commercial establishments," the Bench ordered after a brief hearing.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for the newspaper group, described the situation as an "extraordinary matter", alleging a campaign of harassment following the publication of articles critical of the Punjab government.

"It is alright. Newspapers cannot be stopped," the CJI said.

Cannot shut madrasa for non-recognition, says Allahabad HC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Allahabad High Court recently ordered the Uttar Pradesh government to reopen a sealed madrasa in Shravasti district, ruling that the lack of recognition by the State board was not a valid ground to prevent the

institute from functioning.

In his order on January 16, Justice Subhash Vidyarthi noted that the State's counsel, who opposed the unsealing, could not dispute the fact that no legal provision exists to allow the shutting of an education institute for not being recognised by the Uttar Pradesh

Board of Madarsa Education. The Additional Chief Standing Counsel, however, argued that an unrecognised madrasa may create "unwarranted complications" for students, as they would not be entitled to claim benefits based on qualifications obtained

there.

The court pronounced the order based on a plea by the management committee of Madarsa Ahle Sunnat Imam Ahmad Raza against the closure order passed by the District Minority Welfare Officer, Shravasti. The High Court quashed the district offic-

er's order while noting that the madrasa won't be entitled to State funds till it is recognised. It added that the State board will not be obliged to permit students from the madrasa to participate in its exams, and the students will not be entitled to benefits from the State government.

Murder witness shootout case: Rachna's daughters fear for lives; police protection to continue

Shrimansi Kaushik
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police will keep providing security to Rachna Yadav's daughters, who fear they could be the "next targets" of those accused of killing their parents.

"Delhi Police takes witness protection seriously, and Rachna's daughters will continue to receive protection from the police until all the accused are arrested," Vijay Singh, Joint Commissioner of Police (Northern Range), said on Tuesday.

Rachna, 52, was shot dead near her home in Shalimar Bagh on January 10. She was the key witness in the 2023 shooting of her husband, Bijender Yadav, in Bhalswa village, Jahanpur. Police have arrested Bharat Yadav, who is accused of planning Rachna's murder, along with Nikhil and Sumit. Mr. Bharat Yadav is also a co-accused in Bijender's murder case.

"I am grateful that the accused in our parents' murder cases have been held. However, we are scared that the accused's associates might come for us," Rachna's elder daughter



Police said with the help of AI and CCTV footage, the suspects, who escaped on a motorcycle, were identified. FILE PHOTO

er told *The Hindu*.

Key witness
According to the police, Mr. Bharat Yadav had allegedly conspired to kill Rachna as she was the key prosecution witness and was actively pursuing the trial against him. "She was scheduled to depose in court shortly, and her testimony was likely to seal the fate of Bharat in the Bijender murder case," said Ravindra Singh Yadav, Special Commissioner of Police (Law & Order).

Police said all three accused have confessed to the crime. "A few other persons have also been detained and are being interrogated. A probe is under way to uncover the additional links in the case," the officer said.

With the help of AI and CCTV footage, the police identified the suspects who escaped on a motorcycle. "We conducted multiple raids across several States and got hold of Mr. Bharat and Mr. Nikhil from a hut in a forested area of Kathiawar, Gujarat," the officer said.

Mr. Sumit was caught in Haryana. The officer said Mr. Nik-

hil allegedly shot her while Mr. Sumit rode pillion on the motorcycle used in the crime.

Police said all three accused have confessed to the crime. "A few other persons have also been detained and are being interrogated. A probe is under way to uncover the additional links in the case," the officer said.

Apprehensive of being watched, the student hurriedly moved out of the washroom only to be intercepted by the officer, the police added.

The teenager was produced before the school principal, who handed him over to the police.

Student held for carrying pistol to a Delhi school

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

An 18-year-old student was arrested from a Rohini school after the management caught him possessing a country-made pistol and 10 live cartridges, the police said on Tuesday.

A first information report was registered under Section 25 of the Arms Act. The teenager was produced before the juvenile court in Rohini, which granted two-day police remand.

"Upon questioning, the student revealed that he was carrying a weapon due to personal enmity with another student," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) Rajeev Ranjan.

During inspection, the estate officer observed the student attempting to conceal an object in the second-floor washroom on Monday, the police said.

Apprehensive of being watched, the student hurriedly moved out of the washroom only to be intercepted by the officer, the police added.

The teenager was produced before the school principal, who handed him over to the police.

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IN BRIEF



Valley incomplete without Kashmiri Pandits: Mehbooba

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday said in Jammu that Kashmir is incomplete without Kashmiri Pandits and people of the Valley are eagerly awaiting their return. The former Chief Minister also suggested that reservation of two Assembly seats for Kashmiri Pandits would be preferable. She was responding to a question about Kashmiri Pandits, who completed 36 years in exile on January 19. The PDP chief said she had recently met Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and conveyed to him that instead of nominating two members of the community to the Assembly, those seats should be reserved for them. PTI

Turkman Gate violence: court grants bail to one accused

A Delhi court on Tuesday granted bail to one of the accused in the stone-pelting incident during a demolition exercise near Faiz-e-Ehli mosque in Turkman Gate early this month. Additional Sessions Judge Joginder Prakash Nahar granted bail to Ubedullah, a street vendor, on a bond of ₹25,000 with one surety of the like amount. The prosecution largely relied on CCTV footage and the disclosure of a co-accused, alleging that Ubedullah was part of a violent crowd that obstructed police, indulged in stone-pelting and caused damage to public property. PTI

Five arrested in Rajasthan for large-scale exam irregularities; senior official among accused

Mohammed Iqbal

JAIPUR
The Special Operations Group (SOG) of Rajasthan police on Tuesday arrested five persons, including the technical head of the Staff Selection Board, on charges of fraud and irregularities in three recruitment examinations conducted in 2019. The accused had allegedly manipulated the optical mark recognition (OMR) sheets in the exams.

9.40 lakh candidates

The exams were held for the recruitment of supervisors (women's empowerment), laboratory assistants, and agriculture supervisors. A total of 3,212 posts were advertised under the exams, for which over 9.40 lakh candidates had applied.

Additional Director General, SOG, Vishal Ban-

Accused allegedly manipulated the OMR sheets used in the examinations

sal, said here that the confidential work of scanning OMR sheets and data processing was outsourced to a Delhi-based firm.

"The accused tampered with the data stored in computer systems after the scanning process to inflate the marks of some ineligible candidates, helping them clear the exams and get selected," Mr. Bansal said.

The discrepancies between actual marks and final results were detected on re-scanning of the original OMR sheets. The scanned OMR sheets were digitally altered using image-editing software to mark correct answers,

leading to a disproportionate increase in the marks scored by some candidates.

The accused include Sanjay Mathur, the then Deputy Director and system programmer of the Staff Selection Board, who was also technical in-charge of the examination process. The other arrested accused were identified as Shadan Khan, Vinod Kumar Gaur, Poonam Mathur, and Praveen Gangwal, a programmer with the Board.

Received large sums

Mr. Bansal said the accused had received large sums of money for manipulating the results. They have been booked under various sections of Indian Penal Code, Rajasthan Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, and the Information Technology Act.

Oppn. parties criticise Maharashtra govt. over notification in Gujarati

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI

A notification in Gujarati by the district administration in Maharashtra's Palghar has triggered a row, with the Congress claiming the language will soon be imposed in the State and Shiv Sena (UBT) dubbing it a serious issue. The Palghar Collector issued the order in view of a mohra organised by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in the district on January 19 and 20, during which vehicular movement on parts of the highway was prohibited as a precautionary measure.

According to reports, the order was translated into Gujarati for the convenience of motorists from Gujarat and was displayed in border villages, including areas near Achchad. Officials clarified that there was no intention whatsoever to undermine

or disrespect Marathi, as the original notification prohibiting vehicular movement on the highway was issued in the language.

Speaking to reporters in Nagpur, Congress leader Vijay Wadettiwar criticised the State government over the Gujarati notification. "This is just the beginning, Gujarati is being imposed starting from Palghar. If the BJP gets the Mumbai mayor's post, it will be clear on whose instructions the city will run," he said.

Clarification sought

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut demanded a clarification from Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis about the issue. "All parties have to think seriously about it. Is Palghar a part of Maharashtra or has it been attached to the neighbouring State under the pretext of the bullet train or Vadhvan port?" he said.

HC quashes FIR against BJP leader, terms Udhayanidhi's Sanatana remark 'hate speech'

The Hindu Bureau

MADRASAI

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Tuesday quashed the FIR registered in 2023 by the Tiruchi city police against BJP leader Amit Malviya for "distorting the comments" of Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin on *Sanatana Dharma*. Justice S. Srimathy went on to state that what Mr. Udhayanidhi had said amounted to "hate speech".

"To consider the issue (at hand), the alleged speech of the Minister ought to be seen, wherein he said that *Sanatana Dharma* should not be resisted or opposed, but has to be abolished/eradicated. In Tamil, it is stated not as *Sanatana ethirippu* (opposing *Sanatana*), but *Sanatana ozhippu* (eradicating *Sanatana*)," stated the judge.



"The entire case is on the word *ozhippu*, which is crucial. The word 'abolish' would indicate that some existing thing should not be there. If it is applied to the present case, if *Sanatana Dharma* should not be there, then the people following *Sanatana Dharma* should not be there. If a group of people following *Sanatana Dharma* should not be there, then the appropriate word is 'genocide'. If *Sanatana Dharma* is a religion, then it is 'Religious Genocide'. It also means to erad-

icate the people by following any method with diverse attacks on ecocide, facticide, culticide (cultural genocide). Therefore, the Tamil phrase *Sanatana ozhippu* would clearly mean genocide or culticide. In such circumstances, the post of the petitioner questioning the Minister's speech would not amount to hate speech," she added.

'Crime not committed'
The judge added that when a hate speech had been delivered by the Minister, the petitioner opposing it could not be considered to have committed a crime.

The petitioner had questioned whether the Minister meant genocide of 80% of the population, the judge noted.

Justice Srimathy added that the petitioner had only defended *Sanatana Dharma* from hate speech.

From 'flexible' to fearful: women gig workers hemmed in by new rules

Ashna Butani

NEW DELHI

Women gig workers employed on service platforms say the promise of "flexibility" is collapsing amid new rules, constant surveillance, and a growing sense of insecurity.

"I always used to think this job was good for me; I have covered my children's education because of it. But recent policy changes have left us mentally and physically exhausted," said Manisha (name changed), a Delhi-based Urban Company (UC) worker. Amid ongoing protests by gig workers' unions across the country, women providing spa, massage, beauty, home service, and cleaning work say they are battling their own set of challenges. What was promoted as a "flexible" way to earn has become in-

creasingly rigid.

Ms. Manisha says the company has recently introduced mandatory "peak hour" requirements. Workers now receive requests during specific time blocks, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., and cannot switch off the app during these hours without penalty. "Some of us are having to choose between work and dropping our children to school," she said.

'We're being watched'
Shanti (name changed), another UC worker based in Delhi, says that workers can face automatic ID blocks if they cancel more than three jobs in a month. She notes that "bundle booking", where customers book multiple services at once, means deeper discounts for clients but reduces workers' earnings.



Seema, GIPSWU president, said women workers across the gig economy face distinct vulnerabilities. ASHNA BUTANI

Even during off-hours, Ms. Shanti says she cannot escape the company's monitoring systems. When she turns off her location, her phone begins buzzing within seconds, prompting her to turn it back on. "We feel like we're being watched all the time. If anyone takes offline work, their IDs will instantly be blocked. I don't take offline work, so I'm not scared," she said.

Ongoing struggle
The Gig and Platform Service Workers Union (GIPSWU), a women-led union, submitted memorandums to the UC management in Jaipur on January 7. Their demands include removing the peak-hour system, restrictive cancellation rules, and the bundle-

booking model. The union also wrote to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on January 12, seeking intervention on ID blocking and bundle-booking practices. The Hindu contacted UC with detailed queries but did not receive a response till the time of going to press. Around 150-200 workers in Jaipur have kept their apps switched off since January 8. The union says workers across India will follow suit on January 26 and February 3 as a sign of protest.

Seema, a former UC worker and now GIPSWU president, said women workers across the gig economy, whether with UC, Amazon, or Flipkart, face distinct vulnerabilities. "Male clients sometimes book services pretending to be female. And when women are on long shifts during their period, there

are no toilets," she said.

Blocked IDs

Ms. Manisha says any minor disagreement with a customer can trigger a strike. "We have to agree with clients, no matter how they treat us. Otherwise, we are the ones who suffer," she said. Ms. Shanti recalls being expected to travel from central Delhi to Greater Noida in just 15 minutes. When she took leave for a family wedding, the first in years, she received no job requests for days, which she believed was a form of punishment. Neha (name changed), a former worker whose ID was blocked after she attended protests in 2023, has been off the app for four years. "Earlier, we thought flexible work was a big benefit. Now, with constant surveillance and pressure, I never want to go back," she said.

Haryana govt. allows kirpan, mangalsutra during examinations

Press Trust of India

CHANDIGARH

The Haryana government on Tuesday allowed students to carry *kirpan* and wear *mangalsutra*, under strict guidelines, during examinations conducted by various agencies across the State.

Strict guidelines
Such candidates have been advised to report to the examination centre at least one hour before the scheduled time.

The notification further states that married women candidates wearing *mangalsutra* will also be allowed to wear it during examinations, an official statement said. They are also required to report to the examination centre at least 30 minutes before the scheduled time.

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Obscene video goes viral, Karnataka DGP suspended by govt.

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU



Hours after a purported video showing Karnataka Director-General of Police (Civil Rights Enforcement) K. Ramachandra Rao in a compromising position with a woman went viral on social media, the State government suspended him.

Two audio clips were also released online, in which Mr. Rao was purportedly heard chatting with a woman.

'Unbecoming conduct'
An order issued late on Monday said Mr. Rao had acted in an obscene manner, unbecoming of a government servant and had caused embarrassment to the government.

The order cited prima facie violation of Rule 3 of the All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968. The suspension was enforced under Rule 3(I)(a) of the All India Service (Discipline & Appeal) Rules, 1969, pending inquiry. Mr. Rao has been barred from leaving headquarters without prior approval and will receive subsistence allowance as per rules.

He is the stepfather of Kannada actress Ranya Rao who was arrested last year for smuggling gold.
(With inputs from PTI)

Congress calls Governor-CM controversy in Kerala a 'scripted act'

The Hindu Bureau

KANNUR

All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary and MP K.C. Venugopal on Tuesday alleged that the controversy over Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar omitting portions of the policy address, later read out by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, was an electoral theatrics staged jointly by the Governor and the Chief Minister.

Speaking to the media in Kannur, Mr. Venugopal said the episode appeared to be a scripted act in which space was deliberately created for the Governor to delete portions, while simultaneously giving the Chief Minister an opportunity to respond theatrically.

ED conducts searches in 3 States in Sabarimala gold theft case

Central agency searches 21 locations to unearth money trail after court-appointed SIT points to a 'deep-rooted criminal conspiracy' among Devaswom Board officials, intermediaries and jewellers to misappropriate temple gold; 13 held so far

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), pursuing a money laundering trail in the Sabarimala gold theft case, searched 21 premises across Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu on Tuesday.

The ED investigation under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 stems from multiple FIRs registered by a Kerala High Court-appointed special investigation team (SIT) that point to a deep-rooted criminal conspiracy involving officials of the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) that manages the Ayyappa temple, private individ-



Officials and security personnel outside the TDB headquarters in Thiruvananthapuram during the ED search. A. JAYAMOHAN

duals, intermediaries, and jewellers, to misappropriate gold-plated moulds over stone carvings, sculptures, and doorway panels of the sanctum sanctorum

The premises included the headquarters of the

TDB in Thiruvananthapuram, as well as the residence of former TDB president and CPI(M) leader A. Padmakumar in Pathanamthitta.

ED officials, escorted by armed paramilitary per-

SIT carries out inspection at Ayyappa temple

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala High Court-appointed special investigation team (SIT) probing the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple gold theft case carried out a forensic probe at the temple on Tuesday.

SIT chief investigating officer S. Sasidharan led the team to the Sannidhanam.

utive officer Murari Babu in Kottayam.

The officials said the ED simultaneously searched the residence and office of Pankaj Bhandari, owner of Smart Creations, a metal works unit, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, and private premises, including jeweller Govardhan's shop, at Ballari in Karnataka. The ED's zonal office in Kochi spearheaded the operation.

The officials said the raids focussed on seizing documents, digital records, details of benami operations, currency, gold, and other valuables to verify whether the accused had laundered the allegedly acquired wealth.

The SIT has so far arraigned 13 persons as accused in the cases.

Father's liver gives new lease of life to Uzbek infant

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

months of age, he was misdiagnosed with biliary atresia, a condition that blocks the normal flow of bile from the liver, and underwent a Kasai procedure - a surgery performed in infancy to help restore bile flow from the liver. His condition continued to worsen. He suffered from persistent jaundice, severe itching, poor weight gain, delayed growth, and pale stools, all indicating progressive liver failure.

At the hospital, a detailed assessment of the child confirmed Alagille syndrome, a rare inherited condition that can affect multiple organs, including the liver and heart.

"After a successful transplant at the hospital, the child with complex conditions now has a chance at a healthier future," Mr. Srivastava added.

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
BATCH No. 42/25 Dated: 16.01.26
For and on behalf of the President of India, the Principal Chief Materials Manager, East Central Railway invites e-tenders for supply of the following items.

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Quantity	Due Date	Due Time
1	03250277	IOH Kit for ELGI compressor TRC 1000MN ELGI	61 Set	09.02.26	14:00
2	03253589	Completely Assembled Temperature Sensor for 3-Phase Tractor Motor Type	335 Nos	09.02.26	14:00
3	03253551	Yaw Damper for WAG-9 Loco	310 Nos	16.02.26	14:00

Note: All the above-mentioned tenders are e-tenders and all tenderers are requested to submit their bids online through the IREPS website at www.ireps.gov.in. All corrigendum to above-mentioned tenders shall also be published online in IREPS website only. For more details regarding the above-mentioned tenders and other supply tenders please visit IREPS website.
PR/1652/HQ/Store/T/25-26/48 Assistant Materials Manager (HQ), Hajipur

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 02/2026 Date: 19.01.2026
E-TENDER NOTICE
Sr. DSTE/North Central Railway, Agra acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites "Open Tender" through Online only (E-Tendering) for the following work:
S.N.: 01 E-Tender NO: AGRA-ST-2026-07 Approx. Cost of work: Rs. 3,44,92,651.20
Name of work: Comprehensive AMC of Elyde supplied Hitachi Rail GTS Deutschland Make MSDAC installed in the HDL, KSV & SHLK Station in MTJ-PWL section, NJPC in IDH-BKI section and AF, JAB station in AF-TDL section of Agra Division for 36 months.
S.N.: 02 E-Tender NO: AGRA-ST-2026-08 Approx. Cost of work: Rs. 78,73,630.20
Name of work: Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (CAMC) Multi Section Digital Axle Counter (MSDAC) of M/s Medha make for a period of 36 Months installed at Kuberupur Station of Agra division.
S.N.: 03 E-Tender NO: AGRA-ST-2026-09 Approx. Cost of work: Rs. 3,81,33,508.80
Name of work: Annual maintenance contract of Electronic interlocking (E.I.) System of Kyosan Make at 05 Stations, BFP, FAR, RNKA, KXM, BAD Goods Yard (AGC - MTJ Section) and 02 Stations, BARS, GZKA, (MTJ-AWR Section), 01 Station KBP (AF-TDL) for a period of Two years in Agra division.
S.N.: 04 E-Tender NO: AGRA-ST-2026-10 Approx. Cost of work: Rs. 3,20,83,908.48
Name of work: Comprehensive Annual maintenance Contract of Frauscher Make Multi Section Digital Axle Counters AGC-BHA, BHA-JJ, JJ-MIA, MIA-DHO (AGC-DHO Section) of Agra Division for a period of three years.
Tender closing date:- 09.02.2026, For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railway Website www.ireps.gov.in. Bidders will be able to submit their original / revised bids through web portal www.ireps.gov.in up to 15:00 hrs on above mentioned date. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.
143/26 (D)
North central railways @CPNRNCR www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY
No.Med/AGC/Recog/pathology/2026 Date: 19.01.2026
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
ADVERTISEMENT FOR OUTSOURCING THE PATHOLOGY INVESTIGATIONS FOR RAILWAY BENEFICIARIES OF AGRA DIVISION (NCR) ON BILL PAYMENT BASIS.
Chief Medical Superintendent, Divisional Railway Hospital, Agra inviting applications from district administration approved, qualified and running Diagnostic centers/PSU diagnostic centers or charitable diagnostic centers for outsourcing the investigations of pathology. Willing diagnostic centers need to apply within 15 (Fifteen) days of publication of this advertisement.
Following conditions are mandatory:-
(1) The diagnostic center should be a well-equipped diagnostic center (Registered with Chief Medical Officer/District Agra). (2) The rates of above investigations should be based on prevailing CGSH (Non-NABL) rates for the city Agra or diagnostic center rates (which-ever is lower) which will be applicable for complete two years & effective from date of approval of the agreement. (3) Railway patients will be referred to you with a proper reference letter from Divisional Railway Hospital Agra signed by authorised Medical Officer & counter signed by CMS/Agra. (4) No payment will be charged from Railway Beneficiaries, duty referred by authorised Medical Officer. (5) The mode of payment will be done on bill system based on prevailing CGSH (Non NABL) rates for the city Agra or diagnostic center rates (which-ever is lower). (6) All the disputes or differences will be resolved by Arbitrator deputed by G.M./NCR/PRYJ, the Arbitration Act (26) of 1996 will be applicable for this, if disagreed with the decision of the Arbitrator then appeal disagreeing upon the matter can be taken to Agra District Court. (7) All documents containing copy of registration certificate, experience proving documents & diagnostic center rates, with signature of the authority of diagnostic center on every page should be submitted in the office of the Chief Medical Superintendent, Divisional Railway Hospital, Agra Cantt. (U.P.) 282001 during office hours from 08:30 AM to 03:00 PM on all working days. (On Saturday from 08:00 AM to 01:00 PM) (8) Nearest diagnostic center will be given priority. (Note: Those who will provide all the services related to pathology investigations can only apply)
141/26 (MG)
North central railways @CPNRNCR www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

PM VISHWAKARMA HAAT 2026

From 18th to 31st January 2026 | 10:30 AM to 10:00 PM

Dilli Haat, INA, New Delhi

Handcrafted products' display by Vishwakarma Artisans & Craftspeople from across India

• Traditional Crafts • Live demonstrations • Cultural experiences

Shri Jitan Ram Manjhi
Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

Sushri Shobha Karandlaje
Minister of State for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

Journey of PM Vishwakarma so far

- 30 Lakh Vishwakarmas successfully registered
- 23 Lakh+ Vishwakarmas skill trained
- Loan worth ₹ 4,600+ crore approved to 5.3 lakh+ Vishwakarmas
- 12 lakh toolkits delivered
- Training for packaging, branding and support for market linkage and Digital Transactions

DILLI HAAT - INA

CBC 25113/13/0108/2526

**Government of Tamil Nadu
HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT**

Chennai Construction and Maintenance Circle

TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No.64/2025-2026/HDO/Dated :20 .01.2026

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu Percentage tender through online only are invited upto 07/02/2026 at 11.00 AM by the Superintending Engineer (H), C&M, Chennai Circle for the works under CRIDP 2025-26 pertaining to Chennai City Roads Division-I (H) C&M, CRIDP 2026-27 (Advance Sanction) pertaining to Thiruvallur (H) C&M Division and Deposit Work from Temple Fund pertaining to Thiruvallur (H) C&M Division.

Details of works, approximate value of works, EMD, availability of tender documents and all other details will be available from 22/01/2026 onwards in the Government website <https://nttenders.gov.in>. If any Changes/Corrections in the tender, it will be published in the above Government website only.

Superintending Engineer(H)
C&M, Chennai Circle.

DIPR/346/TENDER/2026

ODISHA MINING CORPORATION LIMITED
OMC House, Bhubaneswar-751001, Odisha
CIN: U31100OR1956GSC000313, www.omcltd.in



ODISHA MINING
CORPORATION LTD.
Mining Happiness

Advt. No. 93/OMC RECRUITMENT OF EXECUTIVES IN OMC LTD. Date: 20.01.2026

Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC), a Gold category and one of the largest State PSUs in Mining Sector in the Country, undertakes exploration, mining and trading of iron, chrome, limestone & bauxite ores. Inspired by the vision to emerge as the market leader and to play a catalytic role in the growth of industrialization, OMC caters to the requirements of mineral based industries. The Corporation has achieved an annual turnover of Rs.23,633 crores in the FY 2024 -25.

The Corporation invites application from dynamic & competent professionals who are ready to accept challenge to work in a diversified company in a sustainable manner. The Corporation intends to fill up the following regular posts, for which applications are invited from interested candidates THROUGH ONLINE APPLICATION MODE:

VACANCY

SL No.	Name of the Post	Scale of Pay (in Rs.) (Level)	Initial Basic Pay (in Rs.) (Cell)	Total Posts	Age as on 11.02.2026
1.	General Manager (Geology), E-7 Grade	1,27,100/- to 2,16,300/- (Level-16)	1,38,800/- (Cell-4)	01	Not above 55 years
2.	Addl. General Manager (Sales & Marketing), E-6 grade	1,23,100/- to 2,15,900/- (Level-15)	1,23,100/- (Cell-1)	01	Not above 50 years
3.	Dy. General Manager (Sales & Marketing), E-5 grade	78,800/- to 2,09,200/- (Level-14)	1,05,900/- (Cell-11)	02	Not above 44 years
4.	Dy. General Manager (Legal), E-5 grade	78,800/- to 2,09,200/- (Level-14)	1,05,900/- (Cell-11)	01	Not above 50 years
5.	Senior Manager (Business Excellence), E-4 grade	67,700/- to 2,08,700/- (Level-13)	91,100/- (Cell-11)	01	Not above 40 years

- Interested candidates are advised to go through the detailed term & conditions of this advertisement available in OMC website (<https://omcltd.in/en/people/career/employment-opportunities>).
- Candidates can apply in the link (<https://career.odishamining.in/login>) which shall be made go-live from 02.00 P.M. of 21.01.2026 till 11.59 P.M. of 11.02.2026. No other mode of application shall be entertained.
- OMC Management reserves the right to cancel, amend or alter the above advertisement without assigning any reason thereof.
- Candidates requested to visit Corporation website (<https://omcltd.in/en/people/career/employment-opportunities>) at regular intervals for any notification, news, updates etc. relating to this recruitment.

Important Dates	
Starting Date for Online Registration of Application	21.01.2026 at 02:00 P.M.
Last Date of submission of Online Application	11.02.2026 at 11:59 P.M.
CAD-3072:	

Sd/- Executive Director (P&A)

TAMILNADU MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD.
No.417, Pantheon Road, Egmore, Chennai-600008.
Phone:28191890/28190259; Fax: 044 - 28190636

Sl. No.	Online Tender no with qty/ Document Cost	Sale Period	Pre bid	Submission	Opening
1	E1456/FAB/NHM/TNMSC/ENGG/2025, Dt:13.01.2026-Fabrication Work for Vehicle -Women Wellness on wheels (37)- Rs.5,725/-	21.01.2026 to 05.02.2026	28.01.2026 11.00 AM	06.02.2026 11.00 AM	06.02.2026 12.00 Noon
2	E1457/AMMO/RC/NHM/TNMSC/ENGG/2025, Dt:13.01.2026 - 2D Digital Mammography Machine (37)-Rs.5,725/-	21.01.2026 to 05.02.2026	28.01.2026 11.30 AM	06.02.2026 11.00 AM	06.02.2026 12.00 Noon
3	E1458/SCOPE/DME/TNMSC/ENGG/2025 Dt:13.01.2026 - Integrated Difficult Airway Scope System (1)-Rs.2,290/-	22.01.2026 to 09.02.2026	29.01.2026 11.00 AM	10.02.2026 11.00 AM	10.02.2026 12.00 Noon
4	E1459/WARMER/RC/TNMSC/ENGG/2025 Dt:13.01.2026 - Radiant Warmer- Low end (686)-Rs.5,725/-	22.01.2026 to 09.02.2026	29.01.2026 11.30 AM	10.02.2026 11.00 AM	10.02.2026 12.00 Noon
5	E1460/EYE/RC/TNMSC/ENGG/2025, Dt:13.01.2026 - Streak Retinoscope (28)- Rs.2,290/-	22.01.2026 to 09.02.2026	29.01.2026 12.00 Noon	10.02.2026 11.00 AM	10.02.2026 12.00 Noon
6	E1461/CEN/RC/TNMSC/ENGG/2025, Dt:13.01.2026 - Refrigerated Centrifuge (13)-Rs.5,725/-	23.01.2026 to 10.02.2026	30.01.2026 11.30 AM	11.02.2026 11.00 AM	11.02.2026 12.00 Noon
7	E1462/LCMS/DMC SMC/ TNMSC/ ENGG/2025, Dt:13.01.2026 - Nano Liquid Chromatography couple to Mass spectrometry HRMS (1)-Rs.5,725/-	23.01.2026 to 10.02.2026	30.01.2026 12.00 Noon	11.02.2026 11.00 AM	11.02.2026 12.00 Noon

For details visit www.tntenders.gov.in and TNMSC website www.tnmsc.tn.gov.in

DIPR/331/TENDER/2026

GENERAL MANAGER (EQUIPMENT)

YAMUNA EXPRESSWAY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
First Floor, Commercial Complex, P-2, Sector Omega 1, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201308
Toll Free No. 18001808296, Website: www.yamunaexpresswayauthority.com

Reference Number: YEA/GH/Proj/2026/459 Dated: 19.01.2026

**Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of
Consultant for Preparation of Service Master Plan
as per Master Plan 2041 in YEIDA**

Detailed RFP document is available on the E-Procurement Portal of Government of UP [<https://etender.up.nic.in/>] from 22/01/2026. The authority seeks Selection of Consultant for Preparation of Service Master Plan as per Master Plan 2041 in YEIDA.

Interested Applicants are required to submit proposal online on the E-procurement website on or before 12/02/2026, 1700 hrs (IST). In case of any queries, the Bidders are invited to contact on the following email id: gmpj@yamunaexpresswayauthority.com

GM, Project

Mahatma Gandhi Sushan: Yamuna Expressway and Other Civil Works including Construction of New Roads, Bridges, Flyovers, Interchanges, Overbridges, Underpasses, etc. in the State of Uttar Pradesh.

Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

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Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

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Concerned over violence in Murshidabad, HC directs administration, police to maintain peace

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Expressing concern over repeated incidents of violence and unrest in West Bengal's Murshidabad district, the Calcutta High Court on Tuesday directed the police and the State administration to ensure that peace was maintained

there.

The order came in relation to two public interest litigations (PILs) that were filed last week – one by the Leader of the Opposition in

the West Bengal Assembly Suvendu Adhikari, and another by a local resident of Beldanga.

The court also directed the Superintendent of Pol-

ice and the District Magis-trate of Murshidabad to take necessary action to stop any further violence.

Violence erupted at Bel-danga in Murshidabad on

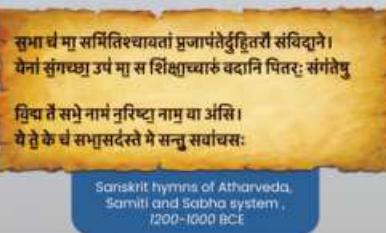
January 16 over the death of a migrant worker, who hailed from the area, in Jharkhand. A large number of people took to the streets by blocking railway

tracks and a national high-way for several hours. At least 12 persons were injured and around 30 were arrested for inciting violence. Several media per-

sons were also attacked and injured. Trinamool Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party leaders blamed and took digs at each other for the violence.



Election Commission of India



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'Har Ek Kaam Desh Ke Naam'



Augean mess

The ECI aims to clean the rolls but it is scrubbing off genuine voters

With the Election Commission of India (ECI)'s Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process in its claims and corrections phase, it is prudent to ask, yet again, whether the entire process to "clean the electoral rolls" has become a dragnet affecting genuine electors across 12 States. On Monday, the Supreme Court of India issued fresh directions to the ECI to "ease the strain and stress" of millions of electors facing verification notices in West Bengal. Complaints of genuine electors having to run from pillar to post after being sent notices — many are flawed due to errors in the 2002 list used by the ECI for "mapping" or due to glitches in ad hoc software — have forced petitioners to raise questions. As seen during the SIR in Bihar, the Court has again had to issue guidelines to ease the process. In the case of Bihar, the Court's order for Aadhaar to be used as the twelfth identity document provided succour to millions, yet the final electorate numbers showed an egregious anomaly — the deletion of more women electors than men, suggesting that the process was flawed to begin with. This was confirmed in *The Hindu*'s analyses of the deleted electors' lists in Bihar, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal which had shown anomalies that merited further investigation but did not get the ECI's response.

In Tamil Nadu, the deletion process has been so aggressive in many booths that the sum of electors who voted in the 2024 general election and names deleted during the SIR reportedly exceeds the total number of electors originally on the rolls. This suggests that genuine electors who voted in 2024 have also been deleted. Furthermore, the process of deduplicating names has, in many cases, resulted in the deletion of electors' names entirely. While the claims and corrections phase is witnessing lakhs of electors trying to re-enter the rolls, the ECI's insistence on their registering as fresh electors (using Form 6) is illogical and prevents an audit of how many genuine electors were wrongly removed in the first place. Then there is the incomprehensible mismatch in Uttar Pradesh. The State Election Commission, while preparing rolls for rural body polls, found that its count of the rural electorate alone exceeds the ECI's count for the entire State in the draft rolls. By not deciding on the constitutionality of this aggressive self-enumeration early on, the Court is now left managing the fallout of a process that has turned the simple act of maintaining an electoral list into one posing a threat to universal adult franchise. The question is no longer just about "cleaning the rolls" but also on whether genuine voters are being scrubbed off.

Bridging the Gulf

India must tread cautiously as it negotiates defence ties with Gulf nations

The nearly two-hour visit of UAE President and Ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MbZ) to Delhi on Monday, with only one meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, ended with a number of far-reaching outcomes. The UAE is India's third-largest trading partner, its second biggest export destination, seventh biggest foreign investor, and concluded its first bilateral trade agreement with India in 2022. The agreements on Monday focused on the economic partnership — a commitment to double bilateral trade to \$200 billion, an LNG deal for \$3 billion and UAE investment in Gujarat. However, the major announcement was the intention to conclude a framework agreement for an India-UAE "Strategic Defence partnership", the first of its kind. Details are still to be revealed. However, it is clear that West Asia and South Asia will be watching closely given the complicated security environment in both regions. MbZ's sudden India visit came amidst heightened tensions between the UAE and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Both countries were once a part of the same military coalition against the Houthi uprising in 2014. Their power tussle has also intensified over forces in Sudan, and the lack of communication between MbZ and Saudi leader Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS) is now being called the Gulf region's new "cold war". In addition, protests in Iran and the U.S.'s threats to intervene as well as the tenuous Gaza ceasefire and U.S. President Donald Trump's plans for a Board of Peace have led to concerns about internal and external instability. Israel's bombing in Qatar in September 2025, that led the Saudi government to rush a "mutual defence pact" with Pakistan, and reported negotiations of including Türkiye in the pact, portend a more complex and unstable region, with repercussions for India.

The announcement of the UAE-India negotiations for a defence agreement is being read by some as a possible military front to counter other regional alignments. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri attempted to downplay concerns, holding that the treaty was not about India's involvement in "a hypothetical future scenario in the region". Even so, the government must keep in mind ties not only with the UAE but also other important Gulf region countries, where nearly 10 million Indians reside. The GCC-area is a major energy source, especially as U.S. and EU sanctions have curtailed all of India's other important sources. India's cross-regional connectivity plans through Iran's Chabahar port, the International North-South Transport Corridor and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor have been imperilled due to all the tensions as their future depends on cooperation with all players there. With important relationships in the region, and so many faultlines within it, India has little option but to tread lightly.

The 'Donroe doctrine', a broken international order

The new year began with a stark reminder that the over 200-year-old 'Monroe Doctrine' is not merely alive but has been given a fresh dimension, in keeping with the personality of United States President Donald Trump. In a swift operation as 2026 unfolded, U.S. airborne troops abducted Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife and incarcerated them in the U.S. on charges of undermining the security of the U.S. This action is being sanctified as the new 'Donroe Doctrine'.

Actions under the Trump administration
Protests worldwide against the U.S.'s action in violating the sovereignty of Venezuela have, however, been rather muted. This seems to convey the belief that the post-1945 international order is dead, and what exists now is a 'free for all' in the global commons. Voices are also being heard 'sotto voce', that the latest action by the U.S. might well become a prelude for similar actions by nations such as China and Russia to lay claim to countries and regions falling within their zone of influence — China's claim to Taiwan being one.

The action carried out has been characterised by Mr Trump himself as a modern version of the (1823) Monroe Doctrine, *viz.*, that the U.S. is the sole guarantor of security in the Western Hemisphere and would not brook any interference by powers outside the Hemisphere. A careful reading of President Trump's latest U.S. National Security Strategy, or NSS (November 2025) — which unequivocally states that after years of neglect, the U.S. expects to reassert its pre-eminence in the Western Hemisphere, denying non-Hemispheric competitors the ability to position forces or threaten U.S. vital assets in the Hemisphere — would suggest that the Venezuelan operation was a carefully thought-through manoeuvre, and an updated 21st century version of 'US shock and awe' tactics. There is even an implicit threat of actions similar to Venezuela against Cuba, Colombia and Mexico. There is again an implicit reference to taking control of Greenland which is viewed by the U.S. as a security necessity.

From a U.S. perspective, it would seem that 2026 could see significant changes in different regions of the globe. Europe, for instance, which has come in for sharp criticism in the NSS document, has been excoriated on the ground that it had lost most, if not all, its sheen, alongside the suggestion that the U.S. could help Europe regain its former greatness if it backed patriotic European parties and 'genuine democracy'. The NSS document wants Europe to assume 'primary responsibility for its own defence', alongside a veiled reference to achieving strategic stability with Russia.

Going beyond Mr. Trump's NSS, realistically speaking, it would seem that the conflict in Ukraine, which appears stalemated at present, could move toward resolution, but which could



M.K. Narayanan
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be unsatisfactory to both sets of antagonists. The alternative, according to U.S. policymakers, appears to be that otherwise, it could lead to further escalation, alongside fears that it would engulf more regions of Europe.

The situation closer to India

The situation in West Asia, it would seem, is beginning to resemble the proverbial curate's egg, good in parts. Israel's pogrom has come to an end for the present, but peace in the regime remains highly elusive. The situation in Gaza, in particular, remains highly sensitive and violence seems for the most part just round the corner.

Meantime, the growing violence and unrest that have engulfed Iraq and the Khamenei regime is acting as a catalyst for a fresh round of conflict in and across the region. Iran is witnessing widespread internal violence, and the declared that it is "fighting on four fronts, *viz.*, an economic war, a psychological war, military war against the US and Israel, and a war on terrorism". The West has responded with warnings of imposing additional sanctions on Iran. Implicit in all this, is that both Israel and the U.S. see an opportunity to complete the unfinished conflict of 2025, and ensure that it reaches a 'satisfactory conclusion' in undermining the Khamenei regime in Iran.

Northwest Asia, specially Afghanistan, is meanwhile, set to confront more troubles this year. The Tehreek-e-Taliban and other Afghan terrorist groups appear, of late, to have gained a fresh lease of life, and this spells problems for Pakistan as well. The Afghanistan-Pakistan border will, hence, continue to remain troubled during much of this year. So, 2026 is again, not likely to be a good year for democracy in Pakistan, with the military taking firm control of the country's affairs and Field Marshal Asim Munir eclipsing the importance of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, striking another blow to the country's democratic trajectory. However, Pakistan does appear to have gained a fresh lease of life, with the U.S. embracing it as an ally, promising a fresh tranche of state-of-the-art weapons, and in some ways being perceived as 'the most favoured nation of the US' in this part of the world. Meantime, uncertainty about the future of democracy will continue to prevail in the highly troubled state of Bangladesh, notwithstanding the promise of fresh elections and restoration of an elected government.

For China, 2025 seemed like a good year. While China-U.S. rivalry appeared to intensify, Beijing successfully withstood the tariff barrage unleashed by Mr. Trump, and even seemed to turn it to its advantage. China raised the value of its manufacturing and also demonstrated its hold over global supply chains.

China's restrictions on rare earth exports in the tussle with the U.S., seemed to enhance its ability to not only withstand U.S. pressures but also to convert the situation in its favour. While there were few opportunities for a trial of

strength in the Pacific, China's growing presence in Southeast Asia is adding to China's importance in Asian and world affairs. It is increasingly becoming apparent as well that the Eastern Pacific is no longer a U.S. bailiwick. China's presence in the Indian Ocean is also growing and represents not only a major threat to nations bordering the Indian Ocean but, more importantly, also a challenge to U.S. supremacy here.

Notes for New Delhi

As 2026 progresses, India appears to stand at the crossroads, unsure as to where it stands. There has been no letup in Mr. Trump's tirade against India for continuing to import subsidised Russian oil, notwithstanding the fact that India is inclined to side with the U.S. on most matters. An implicit coldness in India-U.S. relations seems to be affecting India's relations with many other countries, resulting in New Delhi's relative isolation when it comes to conflict zones such as West Asia. Mr. Trump's public endorsement of Field Marshal Munir and the lifting of restrictions on arms supplies to Pakistan is also not helping. Despite this, there have been some positive developments with regard to an expansion of India-U.S. cooperation in some areas. Several mini-lateral initiatives, such as the I2U2 (India, Israel, the U.S., the UAE) and the India-Middle East-European Economic Corridor appear to be progressing.

As of now, Washington's foreign policy calculus and Beijing's disinterested approach to India are putting India at a disadvantage in political and economic terms, especially the latter. China's tactical advantage in trade and tariff disputes leaves little room or scope for India to hedge against U.S. threats to further raise tariffs on trade, thus aggravating current anxieties. For India, there is again little room for comfort in the fact that China's economic growth has not picked up of late, or that its domestic consumption remains stagnant. All this is notwithstanding an improvement in India-China ties following the Tianjin meeting of Prime Minister Modi and President Xi Jinping in 2025. A further stabilisation of India-China ties does not, however, appear likely in 2026.

Overall, 2026 may not have any great prospects for India. It may not, however, face any major terror attack during the year, but terrorism will remain an ever-present reality. West Asia having just undergone a sustained military campaign by Israel may be spared major terror attacks, but the upheaval in Iran and the attempt by Israel and the U.S. to wade into troubled waters could instigate some terror attacks. The Islamic State and Al Qaeda seem better positioned in Africa as of now, but this is no reason to let one's guard down, as, overall, more attacks by insurgent and terrorist entities can be anticipated in Asia, West Asia and Africa. Terrorism could, hence, be regarded as a critical national security threat during 2026.

It is a mixed bag as far as the global outlook for 2026 is concerned, marked by an updated version of the U.S.'s 'shock and awe' tactics

The EV boom is accelerating a copper crunch



Vipin Benny
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The global shift toward electric vehicles (EVs) is widely celebrated as a technological breakthrough and a vital step toward a greener future. However, there also lies a growing and underappreciated challenge: an impending copper crunch. Copper is indispensable for electrification and forms the backbone of EV batteries, motors, wiring, charging infrastructure, and power grids. As EV adoption accelerates, copper demand has entered a phase of exponential growth that many policymakers and markets have underestimated. Over the past decade, EVs have moved from a niche product to the fastest-growing segment of the global automotive industry, with profound consequences for the global commodity systems.

Between 2015 and 2025, global EV sales rose from approximately 0.55 million units to an estimated 20 million units, while associated copper consumption surged from roughly 27.5 thousand tonnes to over 1.28 million tons, showing copper to be the hidden backbone of the EV revolution. However, supply growth has lagged due to decades of underinvestment, declining ore grades, and the 10-15 year development cycle for new mines. Consequently, a structural supply deficit could emerge as early as 2026, reshaping global trade, intensifying geopolitical competition and influencing the cost and the pace of EV adoption. Therefore, the EV transition must be understood not only as a technological shift but also as a resource-intensive transformation constrained by metals as much as by markets.

In near perfect lockstep

One of the most striking features of the electric vehicle (EV) transition is the near one-to-one relationship between EV sales growth and copper demand, as reflected in elasticity estimates.

Between 2016 and 2024, the copper demand elasticity with respect to EV sales mostly exceeded 1.0, indicating that copper

consumption increased faster than EV adoption despite sustained efforts to reduce metal intensity. During this period, EV-related copper demand surged from approximately 39,000 tonnes in 2016 to over 1.1 million tonnes in 2024, while global EV sales expanded from approximately 0.75 million units to around 17 million units. The linkage was especially pronounced in 2019, when elasticity peaked at 1.76, signalling a sharp rise in copper use per vehicle — driven by larger battery packs, increased power electronics and rapid charging infrastructure expansion. Although elasticity is projected to ease to approximately 0.90 by 2025, as efficiency gains emerge, the absolute copper demand will continue to rise owing to the scale of EV deployment. With EVs requiring four to five times more copper than internal combustion vehicles and no viable large-scale substitutes available, this synchrony underscores the persistent structural demand pressure. Ultimately, this copper-intensive trajectory, more than battery technology alone, will shape the pace of global electrification.

A global copper deficit phase

While copper demand is rising sharply, global supply has begun to plateau, creating a widening gap often described as a "jaw-opening deficit". Declining ore grades at existing mines, decade-long development timelines for new projects, and environmental opposition in major producing regions such as Chile, Peru and the United States constrain supply growth. In 2024, global supply is expected to exceed demand by approximately 0.3 million tonnes, but by 2026, demand is projected to reach 30 million tonnes, while supply lags at around 28 million tonnes.

This gap is expected to widen to 4.5 million tons by 2028 and nearly 8 million tons by 2030, equivalent to the output of the world's 10 largest copper mines combined. Such shortages could increase EV costs, delay the development of

With demand threatening to outpace supply, there need to be bold actions in recycling and technological innovation

charging infrastructure, and strain decarbonisation targets. As electrification accelerates, copper scarcity may become the main bottleneck unless mining, recycling and material innovation are rapidly scaled up.

A reshaping of global market dynamics

The geography of EV-driven copper consumption signals a major shift in the global power balance, with China emerging as the dominant force in electric vehicle adoption and copper usage. China's EV-related copper demand surged from about 78,000 tonnes in 2020 to nearly 6.78,000 tonnes in 2024 and is projected to reach around 7.80,000 tonnes by 2025, accounting for almost 60% of global EV-based copper consumption. This dominance is driven not only by strong EV sales but also by China's control of over 70% of global battery cell production and its deeply integrated supply chain.

By 2025, EV-related copper demand is expected to reach approximately 210,000 tonnes in the European Union and 114,000 tonnes in the U.S., while India remains modest at roughly 7,200 tonnes. This asymmetry provides China with a structural advantage in terms of pricing power, long-term supply contracts, and strategic leverage over copper-rich regions. As copper becomes central to energy transition, securing access will rival battery technology as a global priority.

The EV revolution is not only reshaping transportation but also the global metals economy. Copper has emerged as a vital artery of electrification, and the world is rapidly approaching a moment when demand outpaces supply in ways that are unprecedented in modern industrial history. Policymakers, investors and environmental planners must recognise that the energy transition is inseparable from resource strategy. Without bold actions on copper supply, recycling, and technological innovation, the pace of electrification will be dictated by geology rather than ambition.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The SIR exercise

The front page report, "SC flags 'stress and strain' by SIR to Bengal's people" (January 20), reminded me of my experience in Chennai some years ago. The enumerator had noted my age as 55 years and my father's as 65. My daughter's

name was misspelt. When I pointed all these out to the person sitting before the computer, he said I could go to the tahsildar's office for corrections. The mistakes remained uncorrected. When it was time to vote, the election officer in the booth understood my

predicament and allowed all three of us to vote. The Election Commission of India must be more serious in dealing with voters.

S.V. Venkatakrishnan,
Singapore

Recruitment, test
Many aspirants who wrote

the examination on December 27, 2025, conducted by the Tamil Nadu Teachers Recruitment Board (TRB) for the post of Assistant Professor/College recruitment (2,708 posts), believe that the descriptive component, especially the essay section, leaves them

vulnerable. The allocation of 50 marks for a single essay raises serious concerns, as it has the potential to significantly alter the overall score of a candidate. There are worries that there could be foul play as bribery and favouritism are

said to have been a factor in the interview selection process in previous TRB recruitments.

Swetha T.,
Chennai

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

Enhancing China-India youth ties

The youth are the most active, dynamic, and promising force in all countries, especially in China and India. Both President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have attached great importance to the role of Gen Z and Gen Alpha in developing our countries and reaching centenary goals. Bilaterally and internationally, mutual understanding and friendly exchanges of the youth play a vital role in the healthy development of ties.

The Chinese youth

In China, young people have long been the vanguard in pursuing national dreams. In the past century of upheavals and changes, China's youth have remained a staunch force in contributing to the country and serving the people. Today, young people enjoy better living and development conditions given China's high-quality growth. In 2023, China's nine-year compulsory education achieved a consolidation rate of 95.7%; in 2024, its university enrolment rate reached 60.8%, with around 40% of the students enrolled in STEM programmes. During the 14th Five-Year period, millions of people received online college education, and over 50% of young workers have taken vocational training. Between 1978 and 2024, around 7.43 million Chinese students completed their studies abroad; of them, more than 6.44 million had returned to China.

Unlike the pre-1990s binary of 'farmers' and 'workers', young people in China today have diverse career choices. The service industry has increasingly attracted young workers, accounting for nearly half of the total employment in recent years. Rapid science and technology innovation and social transformation have turned high-tech sectors, non-public entities, and new social organisations into the main channels for employment. Young



Qin Jie
Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Mumbai

Mutual understanding and friendly exchanges of the youth play a vital role in the healthy development of ties

people are increasingly engaged in the digital economy and IT-based business and platforms, such as e-sports players, live-streaming hosts, and web writers. Liang Wenfeng, from Gen Z, led his young team to found the quantitative hedge fund High-Flyer and the open AI model DeepSeek. China's space station, Tiangong, hosts young crews of astronauts in their 30s and 40s. In creative industries such as culture, sports, and entertainment, young people account for more than half the workforce, and are at the helm of many unicorn and gazelle companies. The youth have also played a significant role in China's strategic projects, transporting electricity from western to eastern regions, diverting water from the south to the north, and constructing milestone facilities such as deep-sea submersibles, quantum science satellite, and the lunar and Mars probes.

China's youth uphold the belief that the world is a community with a shared future. As China's opening-up policy grows in both depth and scope, its youth are actively embracing the world, drawing inspiration from the achievements of other civilisations, and pursuing greater integration with the rest of the world. They are more confident and self-reliant in studying, working, and travelling abroad.

China and India have the world's largest youth populations. We have not only the largest number of students on campus, but also the highest numbers of students studying abroad. Over the years, our young leaders in business and trade have played a key role in strengthening economic and trade ties. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese and Indian youth were engaged in frequent exchanges in fields such as education, culture, arts, sports, and the media under various cultural and people-to-people exchange mechanisms. In November 2025, the Chinese Consulate General in Mumbai held photo exhibitions on the Indian

Youth Delegation's 2024 Visit to China at St. Xavier's College and Somaiya Vidyavihar University. Themed 'Beyond borders, between hearts', the photos retold the stories of young Indians in China, especially focusing on their interactions with Chinese peers. These events have drawn the attention of thousands of students.

Development of ties

We have already seen many strong and positive signals. The successful Kazan and Tianjin meetings between President Xi and Prime Minister Modi in 2024 and 2025 have led to a steady and continuous improvement in ties. In the first nine months of 2025, China-India bilateral trade grew 11.95% year-on-year to \$104 billion, and in November, India's export of goods to China increased 90% year-on-year to \$2.2 billion, making China the third largest export destination for Indian goods. China resumed the pilgrimage for the Indian people to the sacred Mount Gang Renpoche and Lake Mapam Yum Tso in Xizang's Ngari Prefecture and India resumed tourist visa issuance to Chinese citizens. Several direct flights between the Chinese mainland and India have been resumed, and in 2026 we are seeing more flight lines. China's famous pianist, Lang Lang, performed in India recently, enhancing cultural exchanges between Chinese and Indian artists.

More than 100 years ago, the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore told Indian parents, "Don't limit a child to your own learning, for he was born in another time."

In China, Chairman Mao said to the youth in 1957, "The world is yours, as well as ours, but in the final sense, it is yours. You young people, full of vigour and vitality, are in the bloom of life, like the sun at eight or nine in the morning." In pursuing the modernisation dreams of our two countries, we are glad to see more fruitful exchanges between our young generations.

To compete with China, India may need China

With India set to scrap curbs on Chinese FDI, will China want to invest in India?

DATA POINT

Nitika Francis

The Ministry of Finance is set to scrap curbs on Chinese firms bidding for government contracts, which were introduced in 2020. The curbs were imposed following a deadly clash between the countries' troops in the Galwan Valley. They required Chinese bidders to register with an Indian government committee and obtain political and security clearances. According to Reuters, this resulted in China losing out on contracts worth \$700-750 billion.

Notably, even during periods when India had a more favourable stance, direct Chinese investment remained low. China directly contributed less than 1% of India FDI equity inflows from 2000 to 2021 (Chart 1), showing that recent curbs only add pressure.

However, China's cumulative (direct and indirect) FDI inflows before 2020 into India are difficult to calculate as they were mostly routed through tax havens, according to Santosh Pai, Partner at Denton's Link Legal and Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies. "Chinese investments almost never go directly into a country," he told *The Hindu*.

These means of investments were wholly altered when the Indian government issued 'Press Note 3' in April 2020, which specifically stated that an entity of a country, which shares a land border with India, or where the beneficial owner is a citizen of any such country, requires mandatory approval from the Government of India before for an investment can be executed. Pai estimated that this dented any indirect investments that Chinese companies had slanted for India.

A few years after this policy amendment, India's Ministry of Finance, in its annual Economic Survey for 2023-24, suggested that in-

creased FDI inflows from China can help increase India's global supply chain participation and push exports. The Ministry took note of the U.S.'s shift away from sourcing imports directly from China. The U.S.'s total trade with China reduced in 2023 and remained stagnant in 2024 (Chart 2A). The European Union also saw a similar dip in trade with China in 2023 (Chart 2B).

The Survey stated that FDI from China could boost India's exports to the U.S., "similar to how East Asian economies did in the past." Pai elaborated on India's change of heart. "Due to China's dominance in most markets, India cannot attract global supply chains which want to diversify from China without including Chinese companies in the mix," he said.

India has proven to be a ready alternative for the U.S. to replace China in at least one of the major items. Due to its dominance in the manufacturing of components, China made up more than 60% of the U.S.'s imports of smartphones in 2016. However, 10 years later, China's share has dwindled to about 22% of the U.S.'s smartphone imports, majorly due to higher tariffs (Chart 3A). Meanwhile, countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, and India have shown upturns in their shares of U.S.'s smartphone imports (Chart 3B). However, the possibility of replicating this success, without China's help, in other items as well is slim as of now.

While China's FDI stock (or cumulative FDI inflows) to most of its staple investment destinations have increased over the years, its stock with India has declined over the past decade. Table 4 shows that when Chinese FDI stock is ranked, India fell by 19 ranks between 2014 and 2024.

Pai stated that although China was eager to invest in Indian companies, the curbs that were set in 2020 may have projected an unpredictable environment for investment.

Pragmatism over protectionism

The data were sourced from DPIIT, UN Comtrade, Eurostat, U.S. Census and China's Ministry of Commerce



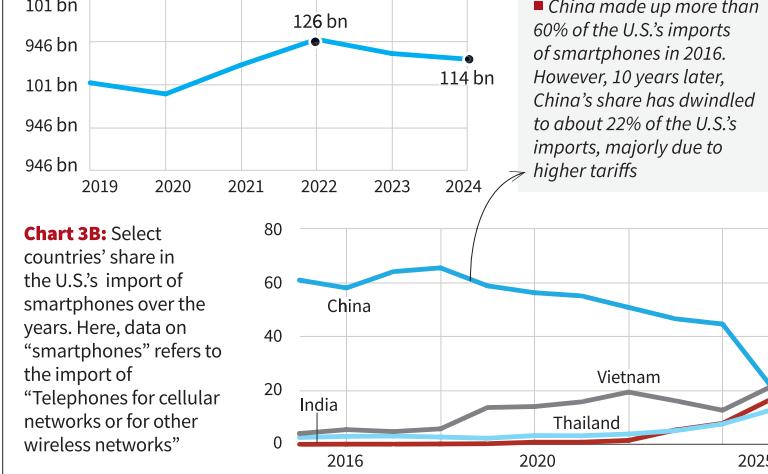
Chart 2A: The U.S.'s total trade (sum of imports and exports) with China over the years (in \$ bn = billion)



Chart 2B: The European Union's total trade (sum of imports and exports) with China over the years (in \$)



Chart 1: China's share and rank in India's total Foreign Direct Investment equity inflows from 2000 to 2025 (till September 2025)



2014 rank	Country	Stock at end-2014 (\$ million)	2024 rank	Country	Stock at end-2024 (\$ million)
1	Hong Kong	509,919.83	1	Hong Kong	1,920,809.36
2	British Virgin Islands	49,320.41	2	British Virgin Is.	331,910.47
3	Cayman Islands	44,236.72	3	Cayman Islands	214,933.81
4	United States	38,010.97	4	Singapore	102,641.42
5	Australia	23,882.26	5	United States	89,959.17
6	Singapore	20,639.95	6	Netherlands	38,422.28
7	Luxembourg	15,666.77	7	Australia	34,011.22
8	United Kingdom	12,804.65	8	United Kingdom	30,575.22
9	Russia	8,694.63	9	Indonesia	25,482.34
10	Canada	7,789.08	10	Luxembourg	25,153.62
..15	India	3,407.21	..34	India	2,449.77

Table 4: China's country-wise Outward Direct Investment (ODI) stock in 2014 and 2024. The countries are ranked in descending order of China's ODI stock with them. Stock corresponds to cumulative FDI flows over the years

Action without accountability

Transfers and suspensions after public crises point to damage control

STATE OF PLAY

Mehul Malpani
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In January 2, the Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) Commissioner, Dileep Kumar Yadav, was transferred after a diarrhoea outbreak claimed several lives. The tragedy occurred as the drinking water supplied by the IMC was contaminated. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav suspended various officials of the civic body apart from Mr. Dileep Yadav. He said that the government "will not tolerate negligence in the incident that occurred in Bhagirathpura, Indore". The transfer and suspensions came following anger against IMC officials over delays in repairing and replacing decades-old drinking water and sewage pipelines.

Mr. Dileep Yadav was appointed Deputy Secretary in the Panchayat and Rural Development Department. However, on January 18, amid a major reshuffle of bureaucrats, he was appointed Managing Director of the State Tourism Development Corporation. This is considered a prestigious posting given the significance of tourism in the State. The timing was odd too: If patients continue to be in hospital. While an audit report of government doctors has pegged the death toll at 15, local reports say at least 24 people have died in the tragedy.

Mr. Dileep Yadav was appointed the IMC Commissioner last September. The allegations of delays and unresolved complaints in Indore predate his brief tenure. However, his latest appointment brings focus to the regime's approach in the wake of a tragedy.

Every time a tragedy occurs,



curs, there is public resentment against the government. The government suspends or transfers officials in the eye of the storm. In most cases, it initiates an inquiry. However, the same officials soon find their way back into the system with new postings. Sometimes, they even have bigger responsibilities. The question that naturally arises is: were they solely responsible for the negligence? And if not, where does accountability lie?

Following Mr. Dileep Yadav's new posting, the Congress lambasted the BJP government. State Congress president Jitu Patwari wrote on X, "...This is not [the] BJP's good governance, this is a reward system for insensitivity! [The] BJP is not concerned about accountability, [the] BJP is only worried about management and messaging!"

In January 2024, Mr. Mohan Yadav removed IAS officer Kishore Kanyal as the Shahapur district collector after a purported video showed him allegedly involved in an argument with a representative of protesting truck drivers. Mr. Kanyal was appointed the Deputy Secretary of the Forest Department the same month and has since held the role of Collector of two districts.

A former Chief Secretary of Madhya Pradesh, who served during the Digvijaya Singh-led Congress government, told *The Hindu* that this pattern has increased over the past few years. "If the government takes action against an official,

it means that prima facie, it considers the official responsible. But if it gives the official an important posting soon after the episode, it makes the decision look like an effort to dial down public anger," he said. "This harms the system in three ways: accountability is not fixed, public attention shifts, and long-term improvements are overlooked. Laxity spreads in the administration because bureaucrats may feel that they can get away with anything."

Another former Chief Secretary, who served during Shivraj Singh Chouhan's regime, had a different view. He said that swift action during a crisis allows the government to focus on finding solutions. "After any crisis, there is a need to first cool down passions even as the government takes short- or long-term steps to fix the problem. It does not mean that the government has ignored the problem. Rather, doing this will help it focus on the real issue," he argued. He added that it is necessary to take corrective measures after the immediate action.

Mr. Dileep Yadav's case is another instance in a broader pattern of swift government action, often seen as damage control, with the Chief Minister or Ministers projecting a tough stance. However, while officials face action following tragedies or controversial remarks, BJP minister Vijay Shah, who made objectionable comments against Army officer Sofia Qureshi, faces no action. This is despite an FIR being filed against him and the Supreme Court's directive to decide on prosecution sanction within two weeks. These developments show that swift action is taken against officials to manage outrage, while political responsibility and accountability remain elusive.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 21, 1976

CIA was unable to predict Indian nuclear test

Washington, Jan. 20: A post-mortem assessment of the Central Intelligence Agency's activities abroad has criticised the U.S. intelligence community for failing to predict the underground nuclear test conducted by India in May 1974. This failure, it is said to have admitted, deprived American policymakers of advance warning of the event, which they could have used to "consider diplomatic or other initiatives to prevent this significant step in nuclear proliferation". The CIA's "shortcoming" in this instance is ascribed to its failure to interpret photographs taken by U.S. spy satellites which were later found to have clearly shown India's nuclear testing facilities.

This CIA self-criticism is said to be contained in documents the agency provided to the House Select Committee on Intelligence, which along with another committee set up by the Senate, is conducting a probe of the CIA. The contents of the House Committee report, though still secret, have found their way into the American press. The report also refers to the agency's failure to predict other events such as the Russian preparations to oust Alexander Dubcek from power in Czechoslovakia in August 1968, the West Asia war of 1973, the overthrow of Makarios in Cyprus the next year and the military coup in Portugal.

The report also questions Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger's approval of a project to supply weapons to Kurdish rebels in Iraq. Though the CIA itself was against the idea, Dr. Kissinger is said to have ordered it as a favour to the Shah of Iran, who was then feuding with neighbouring Iraq.

Other unsavoury doings of the CIA referred to in the report involve the agency's indiscriminate use of Government funds.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 21, 1926

New dam on blue Nile

Rugby, Jan. 20: The great new Makwar Dam on the Blue Nile in Sudan will be officially opened by Lord Lloyd, British High Commissioner in Egypt, tomorrow. The Dam represents one of the world's greatest engineering feats and it is estimated that it will bring into cultivation immediately some 300,000 acres of land, which have hitherto been an arid desert.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

International tourist arrivals worldwide in the last year

1.52 In billion. The number of international tourist arrivals last year was 4% higher than the 1.4 billion recorded in 2024, reaching its highest level in the post-pandemic era and setting a new record, UN Tourism said. Africa saw an 8% rise in arrivals in 2025 to 81 million. AFP

The slow pace of India's infrastructure output in December

3.7 In per cent. India's eight key infrastructure sectors grew at a slower pace of 3.7% in December 2025 against the 5.1% in the same month a year ago, amid a dip in production of crude oil, natural gas, and refinery products, according to official data released on Tuesday. PTI

The surge in Uganda's gold exports in the last 12 months

75.8 In per cent. Uganda's gold exports leaped 75.8% last year from the previous 12 months, helped by record prices that attracted new dealers into the sector. Gold has surpassed coffee as the east-African country's biggest export and source of foreign exchange. REUTERS

Applications received for Delhi govt. scheme for PwD caretakers

1,000 The Delhi government has received more than 1,000 applications under its recently launched scheme providing financial assistance of ₹6,000 to the caretaker of persons with benchmark disabilities requiring high support. PTI

Persons arrested in Portugal's crackdown on a neo-Nazi group

15 Portuguese police said that they had detained dozens of suspected members of a group that spread neo-Nazi propaganda and committed hate crimes against immigrants. The 37 suspects had "extensive criminal records". AFP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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The importance of Pax Silica for India

The Pax Silica initiative seeks to reduce coercive dependencies, secure global tech/AI supply chains, and build trusted digital infrastructure.
India seeks to join it as it has a strong digital infrastructure, and a growing AI market

WORLD INSIGHT

Sanjay Pulipaka

Both enduring continuities and significant shifts define the functioning of the global economy. While the North-South divide in per capita income and resource utilisation remains an enduring feature, new technologies such as semiconductors and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are gaining greater salience in powering the global economy. These technologies will have a significant impact on the everyday lives of many people around the world. Consequently, there is now a growing urgency to secure the supply of Rare Earth Elements (REEs) and to nurture manufacturing processes associated with these technologies.

On December 12, 2025, the U.S. convened the inaugural Pax Silica Summit to secure the supply chain of critical minerals and build advanced manufacturing and logistics capabilities critical to new frontier technologies such as semiconductors and AI. 'Pax' in Latin means 'peace' and 'Silica' is a key compound used in chip manufacturing – taken together they suggest that the supply chain for new technologies should promote peace and prosperity. The Pax Silica Declaration noted that the initiative seeks to reduce coercive dependencies, secure global tech/AI supply chains, and build trusted digital infrastructure.

Major participants

The membership of the Pax Silica is evolving. While the U.S. and Japan are technological powerhouses, Australia is the leading exporter of Lithium (a key component in rechargeable batteries and digital products) and has significant REE deposits. The Netherlands has leading firms such as ASML, which develop advanced lithography technology that enables semiconductor chip engineering, while South Korea is well-known for its manufacturing prowess in memory chips. Singapore also has a long history of chip manufacturing in collaboration with leading U.S. firms. Israel has made significant strides in AI software, defence-related technologies and cybersecurity. Moreover, the United Kingdom has the third-largest AI market and a robust innovation ecosystem, which includes established research labs and start-ups. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates command large investment funds and have initiated measures to develop world-class AI ecosystems.

Canada, the European Union, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and Taiwan participated in the inaugural Pax Silica Summit as observers, and they may be admitted as members at a later date.

Countering China

Pax Silica is a response to new geopolitical realities. There are concerns that China has emerged as a principal supplier of REEs and acquired the capability to shape the global flow of these resources. In recent years, China has restricted the flow of critical resources to achieve its desired political and economic ends. Last year, in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff policies, China suspended the export of REEs to the U.S. and other countries. India also experienced disruptions to the import of rare-earth magnets from China, negatively impacting the country's automobile and electronics industries. The supply of rare-earth magnets to India was restored only after



Global demand: A view of a rare earth processing plant in Dingnan County, Ganzhou, in eastern China's Jiangxi province, on November 20, 2025. AFP

Indian companies complied with China's stringent licensing regulations, which included providing an undertaking that imported rare-earth magnets would not be used for defence or dual-use purposes.

Even before the recent challenges in accessing REEs, the pandemic demonstrated the limitations of supply chains that are heavily reliant on a single country. In 2021, India, along with Australia and Japan, launched the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative. India was also working with the Quad countries to strengthen the supply chain resilience of critical and emerging technologies. The Quad Critical Minerals Initiative was launched at the foreign ministers' meeting in Washington in 2025. Interestingly, despite being a member of the above-mentioned initiatives, India was not invited to the inaugural meeting of Pax Silica. However, on January 12, the new U.S. Ambassador to India, Sergio Gor, in his arrival speech, stated that India will soon be invited to join the Pax Silica.

India's challenges

What would India bring to the table in the Pax Silica? Indian and American firms have a history of healthy collaboration in the technology domain. India has a strong digital infrastructure, and its AI market is growing rapidly, with many enterprises adopting AI solutions. It is also true that India's AI and semiconductor ecosystems are well behind those of Pax Silica countries. However, it should be noted that India has launched AI and Semiconductor Missions with substantial financial allocations in recent years. While Indian private companies such as the Tatas have invested in the semiconductor segment, leading U.S. chip

manufacturers such as Micron have also invested in India. There has also been a steady increase in the number of newly funded AI companies in India.

Furthermore, India is sending a large number of educated young people to pursue graduate and PhD programmes in computer science and related fields in the U.S. If the current U.S. visa policies persist, many of these engineers will have to return to their home country, providing India with a large, highly trained human resource pool to power AI and semiconductor industries.

Moreover, India has been working to develop resilient semiconductor supply chains with other Pax Silica countries such as Japan and Singapore. Indian private-sector companies are also collaborating with Israeli firms to establish semiconductor fabrication plants in India. By participating in the Pax Silica, India can scale-up its collaborations with other countries to develop robust semiconductor and AI ecosystems in the country.

However, India will need to be mindful of a few challenges that it needs to navigate carefully. Thus far, the member countries of the Pax Silica, in addition to their technological strengths, are U.S. allies and high-income countries. If India decides to join the Pax Silica, it will be the first developing country to do so. India will also be the first non-ally (but a strategic partner) of the U.S. to join the Pax Silica. This may create an 'expectation gap' between India and the other members of Pax Silica. While India's response to global security threats may not undermine the interests of the U.S. and its allies, it will differ in nuance. India will be keen to ensure that its strategic

autonomy is not diluted through its participation in the Pax Silica.

As a developing country, India has relatively young semiconductor and AI ecosystems compared with those of other Pax Silica countries. Consequently, India will seek to protect its semiconductor and AI ecosystems by granting domestic firms preferential treatment through subsidies, government procurement, and calibrated import regulations. While the current mood in Washington may not be in agreement with such policy measures, it remains unclear how other Pax Silica countries will respond to such initiatives.

The road ahead

At the moment, China is a leading player in the REE supply chain and has already instituted export control regulations to preserve its dominant position.

Beijing has also not demonstrated a willingness to create REE supply chains that are sensitive to the development needs of emerging economies such as India. It is likely that the Pax Silica will come up with its own export regulation framework. Over time, two REE supply chains will dominate the global economy, namely that of China's and Pax Silica's. Given the history of collaboration between Indian and Western firms in information technology and related domains, India may lean towards the Pax Silica.

However, given the current strain in economic relations with the U.S., India may seek to have more conversations to better understand the possible trajectory of Pax Silica's evolution.

Sanjay Pulipaka is the Chairperson of the Politeia Research Foundation. The views expressed here are personal.

THE GIST

On December 12, 2025, the United States (U.S.) convened the inaugural Pax Silica Summit to secure the supply chain of critical minerals and build advanced manufacturing and logistics capabilities critical to new frontier technologies such as semiconductors and AI.

Pax Silica is a response to new geopolitical realities. There are concerns that China has emerged as a principal supplier of REEs and acquired the capability to shape the global flow of these resources.

As a developing country, India has relatively young semiconductor and AI ecosystems compared with those of other Pax Silica countries.

CACHE



Exciting innovations: A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket with a Crew Dragon capsule lifts off from Pad 39-A at the Kennedy Space Center, in Cape Canaveral, Florida, U.S. on August 1, 2025. AP

How reusability can lead to sustainable, cost-effective access to space

The commercial space industry is evolving rapidly, driven by reusable rocket technologies that significantly lower launch costs. Companies like SpaceX lead the charge, with the market projected to exceed \$1 trillion by 2030, enhancing sustainability and increasing mission frequencies

Unnikrishnan Nair S.

After four decades of government-led space exploration, the new millennium has ushered in a commercial revolution where private companies now lead and fund the industry's most significant breakthroughs. Space is now a fast-growing industry, expected to exceed \$1 trillion in value by 2030. The application of innovative technologies, notably partial reusability of rockets by these new players, has reduced the cost of access per kg to space by a factor of 5-20 compared to expendable rockets and increased the launch cadence considerably.

How efficiently can rockets launch payloads or crew?

Human space missions are 3-5-times more expensive than satellite missions because of the more complex requirements for life support, safety, redundancy, and mission planning. These systems require higher investment in technology and infrastructure compared to uncrewed satellite missions. In contrast, most satellite missions are one-way trips built with comparatively simpler hardware/software architectures.

Rockets have to face two major hurdles on their way to orbit through the atmosphere: gravity and aerodynamic drag. To move forward, the rocket has nothing to push against; hence, it must eject engine exhaust backward in a supersonic jet.

The Tsolkovsky rocket equation connects how fast a rocket can go to the amount of fuel it burns and how much it weighs. It shows that space travel has a

weight problem: because fuel is so heavy, the rocket needs more fuel just to lift the first load of fuel. This creates a cycle where over 90% of a rocket's mass is dedicated to propellant and tankages, leaving less than 4% for the actual satellite.

Why do rockets have stages? Staging splits a rocket into independent propulsion units that are discarded sequentially to shed dead weight. It's an engineering trick used to beat the 'trap' of the Tsolkovsky equation by discarding spent stages in-flight so that the propellant-to-mass fraction of the remaining vehicle improves. In traditional expendable rockets, including PSLV and LVM-3, each stage is used once and thrown away, usually falling into the ocean.

The private company SpaceX brought in many path-breaking technologies, including 3D printing rocket parts, modular design, making most parts in-house (called vertical integration), and reusing rocket stages. Together they have cut costs sharply and increased launch frequency.

Reusability is widely considered the single most significant game-changer for human access to space, fundamentally shifting the industry from a 'disposable' model to a 'transportation' model. The SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket's first stage comes back to the earth using a mix of smart engineering and automation. Here, the stage fires its engines to slow down as it nears the ground, removing most of its kinetic energy. The remainder is dissipated by the aerodynamic drag during its journey through the air.

SpaceX has successfully recovered the

first stages of its Falcon 9 rockets more than 520 times. It's currently developing its next generation multi-purpose rocket, Starship, as a fully reusable vehicle with a more efficient architecture. It has enough power to carry crew and cargo to the earth's orbit, the moon, and even Mars.

Worldwide there are more than a dozen private companies and start-ups actively developing reusable rocket technology. At least three of them are working on the more challenging fully-reusable rocket technology. Washington-based Blue Origin has successfully demonstrated recovery of the booster for its New Glenn vehicle via vertical landing. The commercial space sector in China is also rapidly advancing, with companies like LandSpace recently attempting to recover parts of its orbital-class Zhuque 3 rocket.

Can a stage be reused multiple times? The number of times a recovered rocket stage can be used is limited primarily by structural and material fatigue, especially in the main engines and fuel tanks.

The extreme temperature swings from cryogenic propellants to combustion heat, combined with immense pressure and g-force cycling during ascent and re-entry, cause fatigue and microfractures. The practical limit is also set by refurbishment economics and acceptable risk. As the number of flights increase, the cost and time required for rigorous inspection, testing, and replacement of vulnerable components, to maintain high reliability, will eventually outweigh the cost savings compared to building a new stage. SpaceX has been known to reuse the first stage more than 30 times for launch missions.

Where does India stand?

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has been working on different models of recovery technologies. One option is the Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV), a winged spacecraft, like a mini shuttle, that can be launched to space on a rocket and then made to re-enter to land on a runway. The other option is recovering the spent first stage of a rocket with a combination of aerodynamic drag and retro-propulsion to land on a barge or land. Technology development activities are progressing in these domains.

In order to be competitive in a rapidly emerging space market where fully reusable launch vehicles are about to be a usual feature, the need of the hour is inducting disruptive technologies that will lower the cost of accessing space. Therefore, future launch vehicles should target configurations with a minimum number of stages with partial or full recovery and with reuse of stages as a non-negotiable design driver.

Today, advances in propellant density and engine efficiency allow two-stage systems to perform missions that previously required three or more stages. A careful balancing of the energy delivered by each stage, its cost share, innovative technologies for high performance, compact engine development, recovery of stages, and refurbishment for increasing launch cadence are some of the aspects to be seriously addressed while designing any future launch vehicle.

Unnikrishnan Nair S. is former director, VSSC and IIST; founding director, HSFC; and an expert in launch vehicle systems, orbital re-entry, and human spaceflight technologies.

THE DAILY QUIZ

The ongoing protests in Iran were triggered by an economic crisis worsened by international sanctions. A quiz on the country's tumultuous history since 1979

Mohammed Hidhayat

QUESTION 1

Which country invaded Iran in 1980, a year after the Islamic Revolution?

QUESTION 2

In 1981, Mohammad Ali Rajai and Mohammad Javad Bahonar were assassinated in a Tehran bombing. What positions did they hold in the Iranian government?

QUESTION 3

After Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, Iran began funding a Lebanese resistance movement that has since gained prominence. Name the group.

QUESTION 4

In 1988, a U.S. navy vessel shot down an Iranian civilian aircraft killing all 290 people on board. Who was the U.S. President at the

time?

QUESTION 5

Over 40,000 people perished when a powerful earthquake struck northern Iran in 1990. Which major water body borders the region?

QUESTION 6

In 1998, Taliban forces killed Iranian diplomats in Mazar-i-Sharif. Iran was a supporter of which military alliance during the Afghan Civil War?

QUESTION 7

In a 2002 speech, U.S. President George Bush labelled three countries, including Iran, as part of an "axis of evil". Name the other two nations.

QUESTION 8

Which malicious computer program, widely attributed to Israel and the U.S., sabotaged Iran's nuclear facilities in 2010?



Visual question:

Name the 2009 protest movement that emerged following disputed Presidential election results. This reformist opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi became the symbolic face of the movement. AFP

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. Identify the date on which the U.S. first marked Martin Luther King Jr. Day at the federal level. **Ans: January 20, 1986**

2. Martin Luther King Jr. Day is observed on this Monday every year.

Ans: Third Monday in January

3. The official name of MLK Day as designated by U.S. law. **Ans: Birthday of Martin Luther King Jr.**

4. The date of Martin Luther King Jr.'s actual birthday. **Ans: January 15, 1929**

5. This U.S. president signed the bill creating Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Ans: Ronald Reagan

Visual: Name the political figure. **Ans: Former U.S. President Barack Obama**

Early Birds: Sonali Das| Dodo Jayaditya| Erfanally Oosmany| Sukdev Shet| Daksh Yadav



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

What is the meaning and origin of "nitpicking"? (R. J. Sreenivasan)

Remember the days when you went to school and came home with lice in your hair? Do you recall what you did to get rid of them? You went to your mother! She usually made use of a special comb, ran it through your hair for an hour or so and picked off the lice one by one. What your mother was doing was "nitpicking"! The "nit" is actually the egg of a louse or any other parasitic insect. Getting rid of nits from a person's head or an animal's body is a very demanding task. You have to examine the person's head very minutely. And that is what the informal expression "nitpicking" means – to examine someone's work very minutely and find fault with it. When you indulge in nitpicking you concentrate on the small and unimportant details to find faults.

At the meeting, the Chairman didn't allow any nitpicking criticism.

What is the difference in meaning between "handy" and "portable"? (T. Venkata Rao, Andhra Pradesh)

Anything that is "portable" can be easily carried or moved from one place to another. For example, we have portable television sets and portable typewriters. Some hospitals have portable X-ray machines. The Pentagon, I understand, refers to a pencil as "portable wooden handheld communications inscriber"! When you refer to something as being "handy", you are saying that it is useful and easy to use. A handy object is not necessarily portable. A computer may or may not be portable, but it is a handy way of keeping in touch with people – both within and outside India. This doesn't mean that all handy things have to be big. An electric kettle is a handy thing to have at home. When you say something "came in handy", you are saying that it was useful in a given situation.

What is the correct pronunciation of the word "often"? (Dharmesh Shah)

The word "often" is pronounced differently by different people. The 'o' in the first syllable is pronounced like the 'o' in 'cot', 'pot' and 'hot'. The 'e' in the second syllable is like the 'a' in "China" and "amount". The 't' remains silent. When pronounced in this manner, the word rhymes with "soften". Some people however pronounce the 't' in "often". Whether you pronounce the 't' or not, the stress is on the first syllable.

Is the following correct? "There was an accident. 14 people were killed on the spot and the remaining 6 were killed in the hospital."

Grammatically there is nothing wrong with the two sentences. What strikes one as being odd is that "the remaining 6 were killed in the hospital". It suggests that somebody went into the hospital and killed the 6 people who had survived the accident. "There was an accident. 14 people died on the spot. 6 others succumbed to their injuries at the hospital." This is one way of rewriting the sentence; then it would be clear that nobody actually killed the six survivors, they died because of the injuries they had sustained in the accident.

Published in The Hindu on May 11, 1999.

Word of the day

Bivouacking:

the act of encamping and living in tents in a camp

Synonyms: camping, encampment, tenting

Usage: They were stopped, after bivouacking, for travelling without documentation.

Pronunciation: newsthr.live/bivouackingpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /biv.uæk/, /biv.wæk/

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

From Page One**Governor altered policy address, says Kerala CM**

In paragraph 15, the Governor omitted the following section from the Cabinet-approved version: "Bills passed by State legislatures have remained pending for prolonged periods. My government has approached the Supreme Court on these issues, which have been referred to a Constitution Bench."

The Cabinet-approved section in paragraph 16 stated: "Tax devolution and Finance Commission grants are constitutional entitlements of States and not acts of charity, and any pressure on constitutional bodies entrusted with this task undermines federal principles." Mr. Vijayan said the Governor prefaced this section with the words, "My government feels..."

Article 176 of the Constitution mandates a special address by the Governor to State legislatures at the commencement of the first session after a general election and at the start of the first session each year. Tuesday's address by Mr. Arlekar marked the beginning of the first session of 2026 and the 16th and final session of the 15th Kerala Assembly. The State is due to go to the polls later this year.

The CPI(M)-led Left government's relations with Lok Bhawan have not been cordial in recent years. In January 2024, then Governor Arif Mohammed Khan had created headlines when he wrapped up his policy address in less than a minute. The government's relationship with Mr. Arlekar had also soured over a number of issues, including delays in securing assent for Bills passed by the Assembly.

At a press conference announcing the 16th session last week, Speaker A.N. Shamseer said that 14 Bills passed by the Kerala Assembly were awaiting assent.

T.N. Governor refuses to read customary address

An uneasy silence prevailed among members of the House, with Mr. Stalin and Leader of the Opposition Edappadi K. Palaniswami in attendance, as the customary procedure was not being honoured, yet again. During the past three years, the Governor has either digressed from the prepared speech or refused to read it out and walked out of the House.

Citing Constitutional provisions, the Speaker reminded the House about the duties of the Governor. "The Governor cannot voice out his opinion in the Assembly. Please follow the procedure," the Speaker requested repeatedly, reminding the Assembly that only its 234 elected members are permitted to express their opinions on the floor of the House.

Later, the Governor chose to walk out of the House. Sources said that Assembly officials escorted the Governor and his aides to his convoy.

Addressing the Lok Bhawan's contention that the national anthem was "insulted", the Speaker said it was a "settled issue" and his decision to play the State anthem at the beginning and national anthem at the end of the day's session had been announced last year too. After the Speaker completed reading out the Tamil version of the Governor's speech in the House, the national anthem was sung.

During a press conference, Mr. Appavu clarified that whenever the Speaker's microphone was on, other microphones remain turned off. Replying to a query, Mr. Appavu reiterated that the State government had prepared the speech and as per the custom, it was the duty of the Governor to read it out in the Assembly. To another query, he said: "He [the Governor] is not a politician. If he wants to express his opinion, he can come out of the Raj Bhavan and join any of the political movements and then voice out his opinion."

Mob violence over road accident claims two lives in western Assam

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Mob violence over a road accident on Monday night claimed two lives in western Assam's Kokrajhar district, plunging a strategic area into chaos and threatening to reopen old wounds.

The government reacted by suspending mobile data services in Kokrajhar and the adjoining Chirang districts, and rushing the Army and the Rapid Action Force of the Central Reserve Police Force to the trouble-torn areas.

A notification issued by the State's Home Department on Tuesday said the government received a report from the Kokrajhar District Commissioner regarding a serious law-and-order situation "that has arisen in the district during



Police deployed during a protest between two groups on the National Highway in Kokrajhar on Tuesday. ANI VIDEO GRAB

the night when one Scorpio vehicle with 3 Bodo individuals hit 2 Adivasi persons at Mansingh Road under the Karigaon (police) outpost of Kokrajhar police station".

The notification stated that the Bodo individuals were beaten up by "neighbouring Adivasi villagers" and the vehicle was

torched. "...the incident has escalated involving both the Bodo and Adivasi communities blocking the National Highway adjacent to Karigaon outpost, burning tyres and a few houses and setting fire to an office building and also attacking the Karigaon outpost," it said.

According to the police,

"The occupants of the vehicle were associated with a road construction project and were returning from an inspection. The driver refused to stop, but the vehicle soon met with an accident," a district police officer said.

The mob then attacked the occupants and set the vehicle on fire.

The victims were taken to the Kokrajhar Medical College and Hospital, where one of them - Sikkha Jwhwla Bismit, the son-in-law of the contractor of the road project - died of his injuries Monday night. Another victim, Sunil Murmu, succumbed to his injuries on Tuesday.

India withdraws families of diplomats from Bangladesh

Kalol Kanti Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Ahead of the February 12 election and referendum, India has withdrawn all family members and dependents of diplomats and other officials from the High Commission of India and other missions located in Bangladesh, official sources said on Tuesday, citing prevailing security situation.

A source said that the evacuation of family members and dependents was carried out "given the security situation, as a precautionary measure". Indian diplomats, however, said the Indian High Commission in Dhaka and all posts in Bangladesh continue to operate in "full strength".

Indian missions have

been facing heightened security threat in Bangladesh, especially in the aftermath of the December 12, 2025 shooting of Islamist youth leader Sharif Osman Hadi. The threats started soon after reports and rumours were circulated suggesting that the shooters of Hadi had fled to India like deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

India had reminded Bangladesh's interim government that it was the responsibility of the Government of Bangladesh to ensure security of Indian missions and posts.

Bengal BDO offices vandalised as SIR protests continue

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Violent protests continued in different parts of West Bengal over the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, with local people attacking the Block Development Offices (BDOs) where the SIR hearings are being held.

The BDO offices at Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district and at Basanti in South 24 Parganas district both came under attack. A mob was seen vandalising office furniture and burning tyres in front of the BDO office at Basanti. Large groups of people also blocked roads with burning tyres at multiple locations, including at Maheshkhali and Dholahat in South 24 Parganas, Polba in Hooghly, and Barasat in North 24 Parganas.

This is not the first time that BDO offices have been attacked during the ongoing SIR in the State, with the offices at Farakka in Murshidabad district and Chakulia in Uttar Dinajpur district facing earlier attacks by angry mobs.

On Tuesday, Congress supporters held protests outside the office of Chief Electoral Officer in Kolkata. Leader of the Opposition Suvenu Adhikari, of the BJP, said the ruling Trinamool Congress was unleashing "anarchy" across the State in the name of SIR protests. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written five letters to Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar on the SIR. In her fifth letter dated January 12, she had pointed out that many genuine voters were being wrongly categorised as "logical discrepancies".

'Transparent SIR'

The protests erupted a day after the Supreme Court observed that the SIR in West Bengal should be transparent and not cause inconvenience. The court also directed the Election

Commission to display the names of voters whose SIR forms were found to have "logical discrepancies" at gram panchayat bhavans and block offices.

Both States want the Supreme Court to decide the question of law authoritatively.

A statutory body can exercise only the power conferred by the relevant statute and all statutory bodies need not be body corporate with power to sue. Only a body corporate, with power to sue specifically conferred by the statute, can claim legal status or juristic person, which the Enforcement Directorate admittedly does not have..., Kerala argued.

fore the Kerala High Court. The agency had challenged a notification issued by the State in May 2021 setting up a Commission of Inquiry (CoI) to investigate an audio clip and a letter from two accused persons in the gold smuggling case. The duo had alleged that ED officials were coaxing them to implicate persons holding high offices in the State. The State government had tasked the Inquiry Commission to probe if there was a conspiracy afoot against the State's political leaders and, if so, to unearth the identity of those behind the plot.

On hearing of Kerala's cause, Tamil Nadu has joined ranks with its neighbour in the Supreme Court.

Tamil Nadu accused the ED of indulging in a "gross

Envoy to attend event by Fisheries Ministry

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Ambassadors and High Commissioners from about 80 countries will attend a "Fisheries Round Table" organised by the Union Fisheries Ministry here on Wednesday to find new export destinations for Indian seafood. The Ministry said the meeting was for strengthening bilateral

trade and international market linkage.

The event, to be chaired by Union Minister for Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Rajiv Ranjan Singh, will discuss promotion of sustainable, traceable and value-added seafood trade. The meeting will also identify avenues for investment, joint ventures, technology transfer and capacity building.



Umaphathy is 18 years old suffering from Severe Heart Disease. He needs to undergo Mitral Valve Replacement (Heart Surgery) at Public Health Centre, Chennai. The total expenditure is Rs. 2,00,000/- His father is a farmer with poor income. They are not in a position to meet the cost of the treatment. Please help him to undergo the surgery and lead a healthy life. The donations sent through ChD.M.O/ NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/c No. 60182010063310, IFSC No: CNRB0016018) favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is exempted under 80G.

All correspondence is done through WWS, Regd Public Charitable Trust, Flat No. GF 1, Cordell Apartments, O.N. No. 13, N.O. No. 29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401/ 31523781/ 7338978027. E-mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org

Congress takes a swipe at the poll process for new BJP chief

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday mocked the BJP over the appointment of its new national president, Nitin Nabin, alleging that the ruling party had dispensed with any real electoral process while formally describing the exercise as an election.

"Where is the election? Why do you even call it an election? You announce the president first and then say there will be an election, and then there is no election," Congress's media and publicity department chairperson Pawan Khera said, reacting to the announcement at a press conference in New Delhi.

On Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remark that Mr. Nabin was his "boss" in party matters, Mr. Khera likened the process to a television reality show, asking whether the BJP was "playing Bigg Boss". "They can keep playing games among themselves. Sometimes Mohan Bhagwat becomes someone's boss, sometimes Modi becomes someone's boss," he said.

Mr. Khera also took a dig at Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, whom the Congress has been accusing of presiding over flawed electoral processes in its alleged 'vote chori' (theft) campaign.

"Gyanesh Kumar wants to resign in protest; he has no role. He can't influence, he can't even manipulate anything," Mr. Khera said, in a sarcastic remark aimed at the poll authority.

Nitin Nabin formally assumes role as BJP's national chief

PM Narendra Modi says that in party matters, he is a worker accountable to the president; ahead of Assembly polls, Nabin slams Opposition for 'interfering with cultural and religious traditions'

Nistula Hebbal
NEW DELHI

Nitin Nabin, 45, formally took charge as the BJP's new national president on Tuesday in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who declared that, in party matters, Mr. Nabin would be his "boss".

Mr. Modi's remarks sought to assert the separation of the BJP organisation headed by the new party president and the government headed by the Prime Minister himself. He had previously made a similar statement in 2019, during a press conference alongside the former BJP president Amit Shah.

"I, too, as a party worker, was giving an account of my work to the new president. I have given an account of my work. He will now write my CR [confidential report]. I am awaiting his guidance," Mr. Modi said. "When it comes to party matters, honourable Nitin Nabin ji... I am a worker, and you are my boss," he added.

In a reference to Mr. Nabin's relative youth, Mr. Modi said that he belonged to an era where he listened to the news on the radio in childhood and is now well-versed in using artificial intelligence.

Mr. Nabin was declared the BJP national president at the party headquarters on Monday after 37 nominations received on his behalf were found to be cor-



PM Narendra Modi and newly elected BJP chief Nitin Nabin at the party headquarters in New Delhi on Tuesday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

rect, with no other candidate in the fray following a nearly year-long exercise of organisational polls.

On political issues, Mr. Modi said that infiltrators posed a serious threat to the country's security and stressed that identifying and sending them back was necessary.

Congress's mistakes

Targeting the Congress, he urged BJP workers to learn from the mistakes committed by that party. He noted that in 1984, the Congress had won more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha election with more than 50% of the votes. "But today, the Congress is yearning to cross the 100-seat mark," he said.

In contrast, he said that the BJP conducts a dispassionate review of its performance even after winning elections and tries to im-

prove in regions where it faces a loss, citing the recent victory of the BJP in the civic body polls in Maharashtra.

'Ideals do not change'
"In the BJP, presidents change, but ideals do not change. Leadership changes, but the direction does not change," he said.

Former BJP presidents, including Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Roads and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Home Minister Amit Shah, and Health Minister J.P. Nadda, were also present at the event.

Taking up the reins, Mr. Nabin spoke of his history in the BJP and expressed his gratitude to the party's central leadership as well as party workers for his elevation to the president's post.

On top of his list of future challenges are the upcoming Assembly elections

in four States and one Union Territory.

Assembly elections

"In the next few months, elections are about to be held in Tamil Nadu, Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, and Puducherry, and the demographics of these States are being widely discussed. The changing demographics are altering the situation there, and this presents a challenge for us," he said.

He criticised Opposition parties for allegedly trying to interfere with cultural and religious traditions, inciting the recent controversy over the Karthigai Deepam festival in Tamil Nadu and the attempt to impeach a judge of the Madras High Court over the matter.

"Recently we saw how Opposition parties tried to stop the sacred Karthigai Deepam festival on a hill in Tamil Nadu. This isn't the only instance; the Opposition has conspired to stop other things as well. We recently saw how an attempt was made to impeach a judge. Today, when we talk about Somnath and try to celebrate this festival of pride, the people in the Opposition feel uneasy. We believe that it is necessary to confront the forces that try to stop such traditions. We must ensure that those who deny the existence of Ram Setu and oppose the Karthigai Deepam festival have no place in Indian politics," Mr. Nabin added.

Mr. Nabin's election is

Politics is a long marathon, not a sprint, says Nabin

Nistula Hebbal
NEW DELHI

Newly elected BJP national president Nitin Nabin took formal charge on Tuesday morning, with his elevation being seen as a generational leap for the party's future leadership. The 45-year-old leader spoke at length on the inclusion of young people within the organisation and on managing expectations among his own cohort.

"On August 15, 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address from the ramparts of the Red Fort said that he wanted to bring in one lakh politically unaffiliated youngsters into politics. I want to tell the youth that politics is not a shortcut. It is not a 100 metre sprint, but a long marathon, where success is not determined by speed, but by stamina.

He criticised Opposition parties for allegedly trying to interfere with cultural and religious traditions, inciting the recent controversy over the Karthigai Deepam festival in Tamil Nadu and the attempt to impeach a judge of the Madras High Court over the matter.

"Recently we saw how

BJP president urges youth to actively participate in politics, rather than distancing from it

also being viewed as a continuation of the generational shift initiated under former party president J.P. Nadda, during whose tenure efforts were made to lower the average age of party leadership from the district level upwards to around 45 to 50 years.

As per organisational polls held at the time, in 98 organisational districts of Uttar Pradesh, only two districts had presidents over the age of 45. In Bihar, the same pattern was followed, with the average age in its 45 organisational districts being 45, and no office-bearer above 50. In Karnataka, which has 36 organisational districts, the average age ranged between 39 and 55 years.

Among BJP Chief Ministers too, a preference for a generational shift has been evident. Devendra Fadnavis was 44 when he became Maharashtra Chief Minister in 2014. Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini is 55, while Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was 44 when he first assumed office in 2017.

Mr. Nabin referred to the BJP's "watch tower" system of supervision, under which party workers are observed and identified for higher responsibility. These remarks are being seen as signalling the possible direction of organisational appointments under his leadership as he sets about putting a new team in place.

Mr. Nabin's elevation is

Summoning of journalists in J&K is a concern, says Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday expressed concern over reports of journalists from national newspapers being summoned and questioned for what it described as "routine reporting" in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), saying such actions undermined democratic functioning and press freedom.

In a statement posted on X, AICC in-charge for Jammu and Kashmir, Syed Naseer Hussain, said a democratic society could not function if "the basic act of asking questions is treated as an act of defiance".

He said journalists in the region had, for years, worked under conditions that tested both professional integrity and personal security.

Referring to repeated summons, restrictions and administrative pressure, Mr. Hussain said these had become part of the environment in which Kashmiri journalists were expected to discharge their constitutional role.

The Congress, he said, shared the "deep anguish" of the people of J&K and of journalists and the free media in the region, who continued to bear the consequences of such a "climate".

He called upon the office of the Lieutenant-Governor to ensure that governance in J&K was exercised through "transparent, consultative, and lawful means".

Activists urge SC to treat hate speech as a constitutional tort

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

Prominent activists and religious leaders on Tuesday urged the Supreme Court to recognise hate speech as a "constitutional tort" rather than mere disruption of law and order. They contended that its inherently "discriminatory" character strikes at the core of constitutional guarantees.

A constitutional tort is a judicial remedy through which the State can be held vicariously liable for the actions of its agents when they violate constitutional guarantees.

A Bench of Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta was hearing a batch of petitions highlighting the rise in hate speech incidents and seeking directions to regulate religious gatherings and congregations that promote such practices. The Bench reserved its order and directed the parties to file their written submissions within two weeks.

Appearing for activist Syeda Hameed and academic Alok Rai, advocate Shahrukh Alam submitted that hate speech could not be reduced to a routine policing concern. "Hate speech must be viewed beyond the prism of law and order, given its discriminatory impact. Treating it as a constitutional tort would ensure greater accountability," she told the court.

Echoing these concerns, advocate Nizam Pasha, appearing for journalist-petitioners Shaheen Abdullah and Qurban Ali, pointed out that despite the Supreme Court's October 21,

Modi govt. systematically strangling protections for the poor, says Rahul

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Tuesday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his BJP government of undermining the protections provided for poor people and attempting to centralise power.

On a visit to Rae Bareli, his Lok Sabha constituency, Mr. Gandhi alleged that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was an insult to him. But the main issue isn't just the name change. The Modi government has eliminated the protections that were provided to our poor people," Mr. Gandhi said. "The Congress party is agi-

tating across the country to save MGNREGA and we stand firmly with the workers to protect them. On the one hand, we are protecting the public and on the other hand, Narendra Modi is taking away all the money of the country and giving it to selected industrialists," he added.

Weakening MGNREGA
He was addressing a MGNREGA Chaupal in his constituency, aimed at educating people about the loopholes in the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-GRAM G), which replaces the UPA-era MGNREGA, 2005.

He accused the government of systematically "strangling" MGNREGA so that funds meant for workers, women, and the poor could be diverted to big industrialists like Gautam Adani and Mukesh Ambani. "The BJP is not able to end the scheme openly, so they are weakening it slow-

ly," he said, adding that the Congress has launched a nationwide movement to protect MGNREGA.

The rulers of India are only working for the rich, he said. "Unemployment is the major issue in the country but they [the BJP] will not talk about it. They would try to deviate you whenever the issue of unemployment is raised. We are witness to two different Indias today, one is for the billionaires, rich and the other for the poor," the Leader of Opposition said.

Mr. Gandhi also inaugurated 31 development projects under the MP Development Fund and laid the foundation stones of eight new projects at the Bhumeau Guest House in Rae Bareli.

"Through these development projects, an important step has been taken towards strengthening the infrastructure in Rae Bareli, improving public amenities and giving new impetus to local development," he said.

Congress slams U.P. govt. notice to seer over usage of title

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday criticised the Uttar Pradesh government over a notice issued to Swami Avimuktshwaranand Saraswati, asking an explanation for his use of the title of Shankaracharya.

Addressing a press conference, Congress media and publicity department head Pawan Khera questioned whether any government authority had the right to challenge the status of a Hindu seer.

Mr. Khera said the ac-

tion marked an unprecedented intrusion into religious traditions and accused the BJP of double standards. "Those who once asked Muslims - *kaagaz dikhao* [show papers] - are now asking the same of Hinduism's top seer," the Congress leader said.

Mr. Khera alleged that the action followed the seer's criticism of the Narendra Modi government on issues such as cow slaughter, the consecration of the Ram temple at Ayodhya prematurely and the alleged mismanagement of the Kumbh Mela.



Rाष्ट्रीय पृथ्वी विज्ञान अध्ययन केंद्र
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR EARTH SCIENCE STUDIES
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Ministry of Earth Sciences, Govt. of India
Akkulam, Thiruvananthapuram - 67
No.NCESS/P&GA/1224/16/2025
Date:20.01.2026

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Directorate Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)
Women & Child Development Department
2 Jalpath, Gandhi Nagar, Rajasthan, Jaipur
Phone No: 0141-2713693 website: www.wcd.rajasthan.gov.in
NIB No. F.6(85)ICDS/STORE/Medicine Kit/2025-26/2931 Dated: 8-1-26
e-Tender Ref. No. 13/2025-26

e-Bid is invited from Manufacturer for procurement of Medicine Kit for Anganwadi Centers upto on 04/01/2026 Details may be seen in the Bidding Document on our website www.wcd.rajasthan.gov.in and <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>. Bid form may be seen and downloaded from website eproc.rajasthan.gov.in. This bid shall be processed through e-procurement portal of Govt. of Rajasthan, Estimated value of the procurement is Rs. 945.00 Lac.

NIB No. IC2526A1187
NIB No. IC2526GL0B1630
DIPRC/6/2026 Director, Integrated Child Development Services

DR. BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR LAW UNIVERSITY
(A State Funded University of Rajasthan), Plot No.08, Dehlvi Kalan,
JDA Institutional Scheme, Bagru - Tehsil - Sangamner, Distt. Jaipur-303007
F. No.: F2(140)GAD/ALU/2025-26/4838 Date : 13/01/2026

राजस्थान के रायपाल महादेव की ओर से पंजीकृत एवं नान्यता प्राप्त सेवा प्रदाता के रूप में उपलब्ध होने वाली एक प्राविष्ठा। इसमें शामिल लगातार राजस्थान के अंतर्गत बाली आमतिर की जाति है। बाली संस्कृति विवरण / शर्त वेबसाइट <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppt.rajarashtri.gov.in> एवं <http://www.alujapurac.in> पर देखी जा सकती है।

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कृष्णविद्य

LS attendance to be marked only from members' seats: Birla

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday said that the attendance of Members of Parliament will now be recorded only when they are physically present inside the House at their designated seats. The new rule will come into effect from the upcoming Budget Session.

Mr. Birla says that the move would enhance accountability and transparency. Earlier, MPs were allowed to mark their attendance from outside the House chamber within the Parliament premises.

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INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

Letter No.-411, Date: 17.01.2026

NOTICE INVITATION FOR BIDS (NIFB)
E-Procurement Notice No. BP-I/27/2025-26 Dt.17.01.2026

1. Nature of Work : Civil, P.H. & Electrical Works
2. Total No. of Works : 04 Nos.
3. Value of Works : From Rs.66.49 Lakhs to

IN BRIEF



Kisan Sabha flags draft Seeds Bill, says it is unacceptable

The provisions of the draft Seeds Bill undermine the role of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and other public sector research institutions and allow monopoly of the private sector over the seed sector, the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) said in its response to the Union Agriculture Ministry on the draft Seeds Bill. The AIKS asked the government to consult farmers' organisations, state governments, and scientific communities engaged in the seed sector. "Any law on seeds should protect the basic rights of the farmers to grow, sow, re-sow, save, use, exchange, share or sell seeds. This should be protected as an inalienable right," AIKS said.

MVA should have contested civic polls together, says Sule

After the BJP put up an impressive performance in recent civic body elections, NCP working president Supriya Sule on Tuesday said the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) should have contested together and underlined the need for introspection by the Opposition. Citing a landslide victory of the Congress in 1992, the Baramati MP said the records show that ruling parties win civic body elections. "A micro level introspection is required at the booth level to find out where the Opposition fell short," Ms. Sule said, referring to separate contests by its constituents. PTI

Congress urges Centre to ensure reservation in private institutions under Article 15(5)

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday said that any regulator for higher education must be mandated to oversee the implementation of Article 15(5) of the Constitution, which empowers the state to provide reservation for the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in private educational institutions.

Referring to the VIKSIT Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, which seeks to establish a single regulator for higher education and was introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 15, 2025, before being referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee, Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh said such a body must have a clear mandate to ensure

the implementation of Article 15(5).

"Any such regulator should be mandated to oversee the implementation of Article 15(5) of the Constitution, which came into effect exactly 20 years ago today," he said.

Full implementation
He urged the Centre to fully implement Article 15(5) on the 20th anniversary of its enactment through the 93rd Constitutional Amendment by the Man-

mohan Singh-led UPA government.

Calling it a historic moment, Mr. Ramesh said the amendment enabled the introduction of a 27% reservation for OBC students in Centrally funded higher education institutions (HEIs), including the IITs, IIMs, Central Universities, and NITs. "Since then, lakhs of students from the OBC communities have availed of this reservation, bringing economic and social mobility to millions," he said.

Article 15(5) also permits the government to mandate reservation for SC, ST and OBC students in private higher education institutions, Mr. Ramesh said, noting that its validity was upheld by the Supreme Court in the *Pramati Educational and Cultural Trust vs Union of India* judgment on May 6, 2014.

DGCA directs airline operators to appoint a 'chief of flight safety'

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

With accident investigations consistently pointing to recurring causal factors and systemic deficiencies within aviation operations, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has directed airline operators to appoint a 'chief of flight safety' to ensure implementation of safety protocols.

In a bid to prevent accidents or incidents, the aviation regulator asked the operators to set up a dedicated "flight safety department" with an adequate number of competent personnel for promoting flight safety and implementing accident/incident prevention programme.

In addition, the operators shall nominate a "deputy chief of flight safety". "It shall be ensured that if a chief of flight safety is a pilot, the deputy chief shall



The DGCA says accident investigations have highlighted recurring causal factors and systemic deficiencies. FILE PHOTO

be an engineer and vice-versa," the DGCA said.

Systemic deficiencies
Explaining the necessity for creating such posts, the DGCA said accident investigations had consistently highlighted recurring causal factors and systemic deficiencies within aviation operations.

While such investigations remained valuable for incremental improvements, the scope for significant safety enhancement through reactive measures

alone was limited.

With the effective implementation of a safety management system (SMS), the aviation industry had shifted from a reactive approach to a proactive approach which helped in identification of safety concerns before they escalated into incidents or accidents.

It was essential to integrate safety management system with the safety awareness and accident/incident prevention programmes, which established a structured

IndiGo to continue 10% flight cuts till March-end

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

IndiGo will continue to face a 10% reduction in its flights, amounting to nearly 200 fewer services, until the end of the winter season in late March, according to government officials.

The airline has informed the government that it expects to be able to implement the revised pilot norms from February 10, when the special exemption granted to it for rules that came into effect on November 1, 2025, expires.

The relaxation was granted after the airline saw over 5,000 flight cancellations in November and early December 2025 due to planning gaps and overstretching of its crew, for which the Directorate General of Civil Aviation imposed a ₹22 crore penalty last week.

FAITH

Inner mind defines life

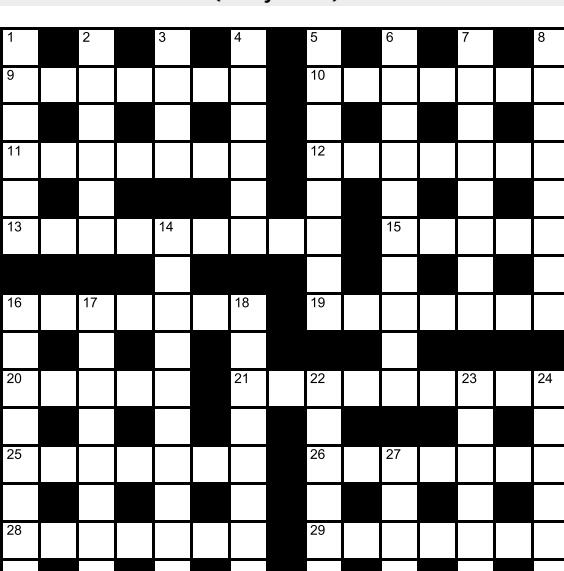
Knowledge and wealth may elevate stature, but their brilliance fades. Lasting greatness arises from virtue and noble character. Humility, as Tiruvalluvar teaches (*Endrum Perumai* – Kural 978), shapes true character: great minds are humble; lesser minds dwell on achievements. Our strength is defined by the state of our inner mind, not external factors.

A warrior proves valour on the battlefield and earns fame; the learned earn through intelligence. But a person of character gains lasting respect through straightforwardness, love, and compassion. Such noble souls remain humble in the face of success. In any situation, good people face challenges with courage and rise above with grace. Ultimately, the strength of mind and virtue define a well-lived life. Thanneerpalli Sri Krishnan Swamy said a sick person prays to God for his recovery, a poor person prays for wealth, and an unmarried person may pray for a virtuous spouse. But a person who lacks self-realisation doesn't even understand that he lacks it, doesn't repent, or pray to God to provide the means for self-realisation.

Awareness of this need is the first step to true greatness. By seeking self-realisation and nurturing humility and compassion, one begins a journey towards a life of genuine fulfilment and lasting inner strength. The path to divinity is illuminated by the guidance and grace of a noble Acharya. A true Acharya is one who has studied the *Sastras*, embodies their teachings, and selflessly imparts that wisdom. Lord Krishna teaches in the *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* that one's actions should align with the *Sastras*, which stand as the authority on what is to be done or avoided.

TH CROSSWORD + 14696
(set by Arden)

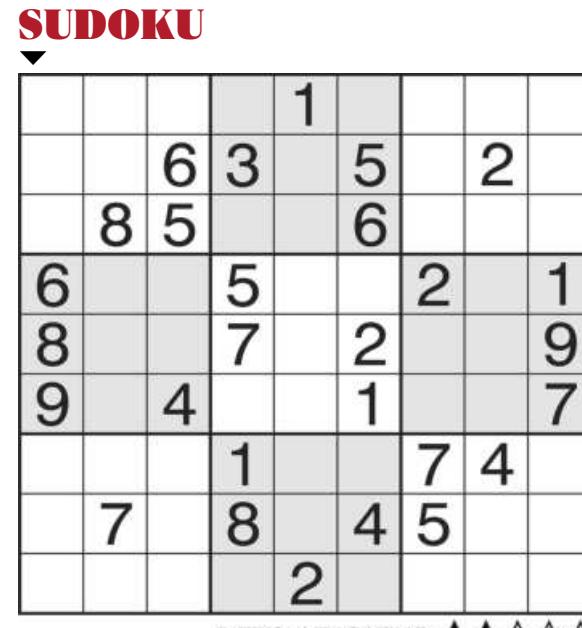
Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at <https://thehindu.com/crosswords>



Across

- 9 Crucify people in the wrong (7)
- 10 Empty vessel interrupting a game (7)
- 11 Part of steel bonnet to reclaim honour (7)
- 12 Protected circle giving the glad eye (7)
- 13 The devil gets credit – is he looking after the church affairs? (9)
- 15 Game on a flat dry ground (5)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

No SS/9 Distribution: www.knightfeatur.es.com

Solution to previous puzzle

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

IN BRIEF



PhonePe Gets SEBI nod for IPO, to file updated DRHP

PhonePe has received SEBI approval for its IPO, and will be filing its Updated Draft Red Herring Prospectus (UDRHP) soon, setting the stage for India's most anticipated fintech IPO in the near horizon, as per sources. The IPO will be an Offer For Sale by existing shareholders. The company will not be raising any additional primary capital in the IPO, the sources said. PhonePe leads India's digital payments market with over 45% market share in UPI transactions. PTI

Jio BlackRock AMC attracts 10 lakh investors, 18% first-timers

Jio BlackRock Asset Management, which launched its services in May, has built an investor base of 10 lakh, with nearly 18% comprising first-time mutual fund investors, its MD and CEO Sid Swaminathan said on Tuesday. The JV between Jio Financial Services and BlackRock has also seen strong participation from investors beyond major metros, with 40% of its retail investors coming from B-30 cities, significantly higher than the industry average of 28%. PTI

Arohan plans to hit capital market with ₹1,500 cr. IPO

NBFC-MFI Arohan Financial Services plans to hit the capital market during the middle of next financial year with an IPO of ₹1,500 crore, managing director Manoj Kumar Nambiar said. The company has already appointed merchant bankers and hopes to file the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with capital markets regulator SEBI in the next two months, he said. Mr. Nambiar said there will be no stake sale by the promoters. PTI

In Dec., core sectors grew at 4-month high

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Growth in the eight core industries of the economy quickened to a four-month high of 3.7% in December on a bounce-back in electricity and coal sectors, official data showed.

The December update of the Index of Eight Core Industries showed growth in December was, however, slower than the 5.1% logged a year earlier.

Growth in the electricity sector came in at a nine-month high of 5.3% in December, snapping two months of consecutive contractions. This was, however, slower than the 6.2% growth the sector saw in December 2024.

The coal sector saw growth accelerate to a four-



Coal sector grew at 3.6%.

month high of 3.6% in December 2025.

The steel sector saw growth hasten to 6.85% from 6.7% in November and 7.3% in December 2024. The cement sector saw growth coming in at 13.5% in December 2025, albeit slower than 14.6% seen in November. However, December's growth came on a high base of 10.3% in December 2024.

Lodha adds ₹1 lakh cr. to data centre plan

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Lodha Developers Ltd. will invest an additional ₹1 lakh crore in a data centre park in Maharashtra.

On January 19, Abhishek Lodha, MD and CEO of Lodha Developers, signed a MoU with the Government of Maharashtra committing ₹1 lakh crore in the backdrop of World Economic Forum at Davos.

Four months ago, the firm signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) of ₹30,000 crore with the Maharashtra government to develop the data centre park.



about 2.5 GW data centre, it is slated to be the largest in India, Lodha said.

Amazon had already acquired a land parcel for a data centre and made arrangements for power requirements for the next 15 years. Singapore-based STT Global Data Centres had also acquired a land parcel in the park.

With a total investment of ₹1.3 lakh crore in an

Will ensure U.S. govt. officials visit India regularly: envoy Gor

Senator Daines concludes visit to persuade leaders to include 'favourable' pulse provisions in future FTA, pursue Trump administration's interests

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan

NEW DELHI

U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Gor on Tuesday said he would ensure that senior officials of the U.S. Government regularly travelled to India, even as U.S. Senator Steve Daines concluded a two-day visit to India, during which he tried to persuade the Indian side to include "favourable" pulse crop provisions in a future trade deal.

During his visit, Mr. Daines met Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar, Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, members of parliament, and U.S. and Indian business leaders.

"I came to India to reaffirm our two countries' shared values and strategic partnership and to advocate on behalf of Montana's pulse crop farmers," Mr. Daines said in a press statement.

"I appreciated Minister Goyal for listening to our farmers' concerns and will continue to work with President Trump to press this important priority."

A release by the U.S. embassy in New Delhi added that Mr. Daines "pursued interests of the Trump Administration as well as the people of Montana, including urging favourable pulse crop provisions in fu-



Beyond borders: Piyush Goyal with U.S. Senator Steve Daines and U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Gor during a meeting. PTI

ture trade agreements between the United States and India".

The issue of allowing agricultural imports has been a sensitive one for India, which has resisted the inclusion of sensitive agricultural products in any free trade agreement it has signed so far. Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agarwal has confirmed that sensitive agricultural issues would be excluded from the upcoming India-EU free trade agreement as well.

The U.S., however, is a different matter as even Indian Government officials have conceded that the bigger the economy we are dealing with, the larger the concessions we would have to give. However, agriculture and dairy remain "big red lines" for India, as

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in June 2025.

Following his meeting with Mr. Daines, Mr. Goyal took to X to say that Mr. Gor, Mr. Daines and he had had a "productive exchange of views on our bilateral relationship".

"As we work to take the partnership between our two nations to the next level in cooperation, I will ensure that senior government officials will regularly travel to India," Mr. Gor said.

"As a key member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with extensive experience in Asia, Senator Daines' meetings with official and private sector stakeholders in New Delhi were instrumental in advancing our bilateral relationship," he added.

"Market breadth re-



Tight leash: The index has been on a quiet streak for more than 3 months with either an increase or a decline below 1%. REUTERS

Nifty tanks 1.38%, its worst fall in 8 months

Ashokamithran T.

MUMBAI

The benchmark Nifty50 declined 1.38% – its lowest in more than eight months – to 25,232 points, on a broad-based crash in small and midcap indices and increasing global uncertainties, on Tuesday. BSE Sensex, too, fell 1.28% to 82,180.47 points.

Nifty50 opened at 25,850 and hit the day's high at the open at 25,858, after which it tumbled to the day's low at 25,171.35 before settling at the day's close. The index has been on a quiet streak for more than three months with either an increase or a decline below 1%. In this context, the current downward movement becomes important.

Small cap 100 and Mid-cap 100 indices had their worst days in eight months, dipping nearly 25,000/82,000-81,700.

On the flip side, above 25,300/82,300, a pullback move could take the market to 25,400-25,435/82,500-82,800," said Shrikant Chouhan, head of Equity Research at Kotak Securities.

persistent selling across the mid and small-cap segments," said Nandish Shah, deputy vice president, HDFC Securities.

Weak earnings

The overall decline in the market comes in the backdrop of weak earnings of companies that have announced their third quarter results in the current fiscal. Moreover, the uncertainty has increased due to fears around U.S. acquisition of Greenland, and the suspension of EU-U.S. trade deal over the issue.

The increasing uncertainty could be gauged by the rally in safe haven assets like gold and silver.

"As long as the market is trading below 25,300 in the Nifty and 82,300 for Sensex, a weak sentiment is likely to continue. On the lower side, the market could slip to 25,100-25,000/82,000-81,700.

"Market breadth remained negative for eight consecutive sessions, as the BSE advance-decline ratio dropped sharply to 0.80, the lowest reading in nine months, signalling

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	82,180	-79.50
US Dollar	90.97	-0.07
Gold	1,53,200	3.44
Brent oil	64.96	1.27

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2055.10	-79.50
Adani Ports	1367.60	-35.40
Apollo Hosp	6912.50	-220.50
Asian Paints	2675.60	-78.40
Axis Bank	1293.50	-14.00
Bajaj Auto	9180.00	-24.50
Bajaj Finance	1958.70	-59.10
Bharti Airtel	933.20	-36.25
Bharti Life	409.35	-3.45
Cipla	1378.40	-13.90
Coal India	415.30	-14.85
Dr Reddys Lab	1166.70	-0.50
Eicher Motors	7173.50	-150.00
Emtela	269.60	-11.75
Grasim Ind.	2713.60	-66.40
HCL Tech	1687.30	-29.50
HDFC Bank	931.20	3.30
HDFC Life	732.10	-4.70
Hindalco	928.10	-11.85
Hindu Unilever	2379.10	-34.80
ICICI Bank	1375.80	-4.80
IntGlobeAvi	4790.00	-151.50
Infosys	1658.90	-22.30
ITC	326.30	-6.90
Jio Financial Servic- es	265.50	-10.15
JSW Steel	1160.00	-24.10
Kotak Bank	423.80	-3.10
L&T	3810.50	-59.30
M&M	3557.50	-99.90
Maruti Suzuki	15879.00	-297.00
Max Healthcare	992.90	-20.70
NestleIndia	1295.70	-19.90
NTPC	338.75	-4.60
ONGC	240.39	-2.72
PowerGrid Corp	254.05	-3.60
Reliance Ind.	1394.00	-19.60
SBI Life	2049.10	-24.60
State Bank	1036.40	-2.00
Shriram Finance	987.50	-22.85
Sun Pharma	1613.80	-61.60
TataConsumerPro- duct	1185.00	4.80
Tata Steel	183.56	-4.71
TCS	3102.30	-61.30
Tech Mahindra	1678.50	-39.80
Titan	4075.50	-68.60
Tata Motors PV	337.85	-6.15
Trent Ltd.	3836.10	-109.50
UltraTech Cement	12059.00	-238.00
Wipro	239.90	-6.05

ITC Hotels Q3 net rises 9.6%

ITC Hotels on Tuesday reported a 9.64% rise in consolidated net profit to ₹236.33 crore for the third quarter ended December on higher revenue. It had earned a net profit of ₹216 crore a year ago. PTI

APPOINTMENT

NALCO
National Aluminium Company Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)

Adv. No.10260105 Date : 07/01/2026

NALCO IS LOOKING FOR COMMITTED, PROMISING AND RESULT ORIENTED PROFESSIONALS

National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO), a Leading Navratna PSU is looking for committed, promising and result oriented professionals in the following grades of various disciplines for its production units/offices in different locations.

Name of the Post / Grade	No. of Posts
Manager (Civil)/E03	02
Manager (Mechanical)/E03	12
Manager (Electrical)/E03	08
Manager (Chemical)/E03	20
Manager (E&I)/E03	06

Interested candidates may visit the Career Section of Company's website at www.nalcoindia.com for further details.

Chief General Manager (HR)-R&P

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TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF TELANGANA LIMITED
TENDER NOTICE

The TGTRANSCO invites online Bids on e-procurement platform for supply of the following Material.

SI.No.	Tender Specification No.	Description of Equipment
1	TGPM11- 01/2026	33 KV Lightning Arrestors.
2	TGPM11- 03/2026	400 KV Lightning Arrestors.
3	TGPM11- 04/2026	Hot Line T & P.

Bidders can have further details and download the tender schedule from e-procurement platform@ www.tender.telangana.gov.in (Telangana state). Contact Nos: O/o. The Chief Engineer/P&MM, TGTransco, Hyderabad. Phone: 040-23396000, Extn:3670/3583/3276, www.tgtransco.com

Sd/-
Chief Engineer/P&MM

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

TENTH ANNIVERSARY

R.SAI SANKAR

Fondly remembered by Simma, Siva & staff of Southern Gasket Products, Cell : 9884078578

DOB 12.09.1954 DOD 21.01.20

DAVOS

EU vows 'unflinching' response to Trump's threats over Greenland



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen vowed on Tuesday an "unflinching" response to Donald Trump's threats over Greenland. In a speech to the World Economic Forum, she warned that Mr. Trump risked plunging U.S. ties with the European Union into a "downward spiral". AFP

KANO

Gunmen abduct over 150 Christian worshippers in Nigeria, says clergy



Armed gangs kidnapped at least 163 Christian worshippers after storming two churches in Nigeria's northern Kaduna State on Sunday, a clergy member said. Gangs frequently carry out mass kidnappings for ransom. Sunday's attacks are the latest in a wave of kidnappings targeting both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. AFP

LONDON

U.K. approves 'contentious' plan for largest Chinese embassy in Europe



Britain's government gave approval on Tuesday for China to build its largest embassy in Europe in London, eight years after the process began, hoping to improve ties with Beijing despite warnings from British and U.S. politicians that it could be used as a base for spying. Reuters

JERUSALEM

Israel pulls down headquarters of UN agency for Palestinian refugees



Israel began demolitions at the headquarters of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees in east Jerusalem on Tuesday, in what the organisation called an "unprecedented attack". Israel's far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir posted a video standing in front of the compound as a bulldozer began to tear it down. AFP

'I am here to calm the waters,' U.S. Speaker Johnson to U.K. lawmakers

The Republican dwelt on current American right-wing themes of Western civilisation being at risk and the need for civilisational pride and strong borders in the West; he also delivered a veiled criticism of liberal and leftist thought

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

The Speaker of U.S. House of Representatives, Mike Johnson, told British lawmakers in London that he was here to "calm the waters", following recent events between the U.S. and its European allies, including the UK.

Britain and seven other European countries have been unnerved and searching for a response to U.S. President Donald Trump's Saturday announcement of tariffs on them, the latest move by the President to pressure Europeans into transferring the semi-autonomous Danish territory of Greenland to the U.S.

"We didn't know how the events would develop over the last few days, but I told the President that I felt that my mission here today was to encourage our friends and help to calm the waters, so to speak, and I hope to do so," Mr. Johnson told members of the House of Commons



In the chair: U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson addresses MPs in the House of Commons alongside Speakers Lord McFall (left) and Lindsay Hoyle in Westminster, Britain on Tuesday. Reuters

and Lords in Westminster on Tuesday. The U.S. Speaker's interaction was planned in October last year, to commemorate the 250th year of America's independence from Britain. During his remarks, Mr. Johnson supported U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer's address to the nation on Monday, in which the Prime Minister had suggested that the U.S. and the U.K. were close allies and working issues out. Mr. Starmer had, however,

strongly criticised the use of tariffs on allies and acknowledged differences with Washington on the question of Greenland's sovereignty.

"I thought that was exactly the right message in the right tone... we've always been able to work through our differences calmly as friends," Mr. Johnson said. "I want to assure you this morning that that is still the case," he added.

Mr. Johnson repeated

the U.S. are at odds over the magnitude and imminence of the threat posed by China and Russia in the Arctic, especially with regard to Greenland.

With multiple references to conservative leaders, such as former U.S. President Ronald Reagan and U.K. Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher and Winston Churchill, Mr. Johnson dwelt on current American right-wing themes of Western civilisation being at risk and the need for civilisational pride – and strong borders – in the West. Mr. Johnson, a Republican, also delivered a veiled criticism of liberal and leftist thought.

"Our brightest minds are too often taught to view our history only through the lens of its sins," he said. "We have faced this in America, just as you have here, a truly menacing scepticism towards history and our national institutions." Mr. Johnson met with Mr. Starmer and House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle as part of his visit.

European countries and

Mr. Trump's claims that Russia and China were threats in the Arctic.

"Clearly, President Trump is taking seriously the modern and dynamic threats that China and Russia pose to our global security, especially in focus the last few days as it relates to the Arctic," he said. While allies could debate how best to counter these threats, the threats were ignored at their own peril, Mr. Johnson said.

European countries and

Trump slams U.K.'s move to hand over Chagos Islands

Associated Press
LONDON

A startled British government on Tuesday defended its decision to hand sovereignty of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, after U.S. President Donald Trump attacked the plan, which his administration had previously supported.

Mr. Trump said that relinquishing the remote Indian Ocean archipelago, home to a strategically important American naval and bomber base, was an act of "stupidity" that shows why he needs to take over Greenland.

"Shockingly, our brilliant NATO Ally, the United Kingdom, is currently planning to give away the Island of Diego Garcia, the site of a vital U.S. Military Base, to Mauritius, and to do so FOR NO REASON WHATSOEVER," he said in a post on his social media platform Truth Social.

"There is no doubt that China and Russia have noticed this act of total weakness."

"The U.K. giving away extremely important land is an act of GREAT STUPIDITY, and is another in a very long line of National Security reasons why



Ground zero: An aerial view of the Diego Garcia island. Thousands of Chagos islanders were evicted to make way for the U.S. base. AP

Greenland has to be acquired," Mr. Trump said.

99-year lease

The United Kingdom and Mauritius signed a deal in May 2025 to give Mauritius sovereignty over the Chagos Islands after two centuries under British control, though the U.K. will lease back Diego Garcia where the U.S. base is located, for at least 99 years.

The U.S. government welcomed the agreement at the time, saying it "secures the long-term, stable, and effective operation of the joint U.S.-U.K. military facility at Diego Garcia."

In recent years, the United Nations and its top court have urged Britain to return the islands to Mauritius and the Seychelles.

Itus, and the British government says it's acting to protect the security of the base from international legal challenge.

But the deal has met strong opposition from British opposition parties, which say that giving up the islands puts them at risk of interference by China and Russia.

The U.K. kept control of the Chagos Islands after Mauritius gained independence from Britain in the 1960s. But it evicted thousands of Chagos islanders, who have since mounted a series of legal claims for compensation in British courts. Over 10,000 displaced Chagossians and their descendants now live primarily in Britain, Mauritius and the Seychelles.

With threats to take over Greenland, Trump turns NATO against NATO

NEWS ANALYSIS



Trump's repeated statements have thrown transatlantic cooperation into disarray.

The U.S. has a military base on the island, called Pituffik, where more than 100 personnel are permanently stationed. On Tuesday, Mr. Trump shared a generated image of himself placing an American flag in Greenland beside a board that read, "Greenland: U.S. territory; Est. 2026".

For decades, Europe has been heavily dependent on the U.S. for security. The U.S. accounts for roughly two-thirds of NATO's military spending, and provides most of the alliance's missile defence, nuclear umbrella (along with Britain and France) and long-range precision capabilities. The Supreme Allied Commander Europe, the highest military commander in NATO, is always an American General, and many European militaries are interoperable with U.S. systems by design. The U.S. operates at least 37 military bases in Europe, hosting roughly 80,000 soldiers.

Most European countries have pledged to increase defence spending, but it will take years before they build the capacity to stand on their own. In the meantime, they need the U.S. and NATO for security. That dependency has only deepened since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Europe has adopted a strong moral and strategic position

against Russia, and has, until now, opposed major Ukrainian concessions to Moscow for peace. But if Europe wants Ukraine to continue to fight the invasion, it also needs sustained America's support – what Keir Starmer, the British Prime Minister, described as the "backstop". Mr. Trump, who has always been sceptical of NATO, understands this leverage.

Few good options
Mr. Trump is not interested in a prolonged confrontation with Russia. His immediate strategic focus, per his National Security Strategy, is on the Western Hemisphere and long-term focus is on China. Europe, in his worldview, is steadily losing its strategic relevance.

Mr. Trump says he is committed to NATO. But he wants NATO to help him take over Greenland, violating the sovereignty of a European NATO member. In effect, he is turning NATO against NATO, seeking to extract a major territorial concession from Europe. Unable to secure peace with Russia and increasingly dependent on NATO (U.S.) at a time of war in eastern Europe, European leaders are left with few good options when it comes to dealing with Mr. Trump's threats.

Shah, Oli vying for top post in Nepal elections

Press Trust of India
KATHMANDU

Former Kathmandu mayor Balendra Shah and deposed Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli on Tuesday registered their candidacy from eastern Nepal's Jhapa-5 constituency for the general elections expected to be held on March 5.

Both Mr. Shah, 35, and Mr. Oli, 74, have been projected as prime ministerial candidates by their respective parties.

Russian attack leaves half of Kyiv without heat, power

Agence France-Presse
KYIV

An overnight Russian bombardment left thousands of residential buildings in Kyiv without heating and water in -14C temperatures on Tuesday, when the Ukrainian capital was working to restore utilities damaged in previous attacks.

"Almost half of Kyiv is in blackout right now," Ukraine's Deputy Foreign Minister Mariana Betsa confirmed.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU - HINDU RELIGIOUS & CHARITABLE ENDOWMENTS DEPARTMENT ARULMIGU DHANDRAYUTHPANI SWAMY TEMPLE PALANI NAGAR, PALANI TALUK, DINDIGUL DISTRICT. E - Shot Tender Notice - Two cover System E - Shot Tender Notice No:5 /2025-2026/Dated:20.01.2026 TYPE OF CONTRACT : ITEM WISE RATE					
E-Tenders are invited by Joint Commissioner / Executive Officer / Head of the Temple for the following work. The e-tender schedules (BOQ) are available from 23.01.2026 to 09.02.2026 upto 4:00 pm. The tender documents (BOQ) are to be uploaded through online on (or) before 10.02.2026 upto 3:00 pm. The received tenders will be opened on 10.02.2026 at 4:00 pm through online. EMD will be remitted through online. All documents are produced through online in the mode of pdf file. Important documents, Tender documents and correctness documents are downloaded from the website https://www.tntenders.gov.in and not publish in newspaper.					
Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Tender value in Rs (including GST 18%)	E.M.D. Amount	Period of Completion	Contractor Qualification
1.	NA-K-K-No-165024/E2 DISMANTLING EXISTING DAMAGED KANDAN ILLAM, KADAMBAN ILLAM, IDUMAN KUDIL AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW PILGRIMS REST HOUSE TWO COVERS SYSTEM	Rs.45.63,88,00/-	Rs.22,92,00/-	15 Month	Registered, Live class of qualified contractors of Tamil Nadu Government Departments / State Government Under Takings.
All the details regarding the Tender invite is available in the https://www.tntenders.gov.in Website. Any corrections/modifications will be intimated only through the above website. Joint Commissioner / Executive Officer DPR/342/Tender/2026 Chairman and Board of Trustees					

KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER, NEW PUBLIC OFFICES, NRUPATUNGA ROAD, BANGALORE-560 001, Phone : 080-22214350 WEBSITE : (http://www.schooleducation.kar.nic.in)	
No: DPI-CPI0CPE1(UFP)/1/2025-1900278 Date: 19.01.2026	

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

The Director, Primary Education, Office of the Commissioner, Department of School Education, Bangalore hereby invites tender in two cover system (Technical and Commercial Bid) as per KTPP Act 1999 & Rules 2000 from the registered and eligible companies for Supply of Uniform cloth material to all the students studying in Class 1 to 10 in all Government Schools of the State for the year 2026-27 through e-procurement portal of GoK (<https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>). The prospective bidders willing to participate in this tender shall necessarily register with the above mentioned e-procurement portal.

1	Tender Reference No.	DPI/2025-26/IND0637
2	Date of Commencement of Download of Tender Document from Karnataka Public Procurement Portal website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in	19/01/2026 onwards
3	Date and time of Pre-bid Meeting	28/01/2026 11:00 AM, at the following venue: Office of Commissioner, School Education, First Floor, New Public Office Building, Nrupatunga road, K.R. Circle, Bengaluru.
4	Last Date and Time for uploading Online Queries in Karnataka Public Procurement Portal.	28/01/2026 5:00 PM
5	Last Date and Time for uploading of e-Tender in Karnataka Public Procurement Portal	09/02/2026 5:00 PM
6	Date and Time of Online Opening of Technical Bids	10/02/2026 5:10 PM
7	Date and Time of Sample Submission	11/02/2026 upto 5:00 PM
8	Address for Communication	First floor, New public office Building, Nrupatunga road, K.R. Circle, Bengaluru -560001, Email: primarydipi@gmail.com , Contact: 080-2227072.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed tenders shall be uploaded through e-tendering system by the Tenderers using their User ID on or before the last date & time stipulated. In the event of the specified date of opening of Technical Bid (First Cover) being declared a holiday for the purchaser, the technical bid will be opened on the next working day. 		
Sd/- Director (Primary Education)		

Stanly Johny
For Europe, it was first a surprise and then a shock. During his first term, Donald Trump had shown interest in buying Greenland, an autonomous Arctic island that's part of Denmark. When Mr. Trump, after returning to the White House last year, said, "We are going to have Greenland one way or the other", many thought he was not serious.

But after the January 3 U.S. attack on Venezuela, Mr. Trump escalated his claims over Greenland. Mr. Trump's repeated statements have thrown transatlantic cooperation into disarray. Tensions reached a new peak on January 17

NOTHING TO WORRY

Suryakumar plays down recent struggles of the Indian spinners



K.R. DEEPAK

We have been batting well against the spinners, and our spinners have been bowling well as far as I'm concerned and in whatever series I've played. There's nothing to worry about this. We'll continue playing cricket the way we've been playing — T20 skipper Suryakumar Yadav, when asked about India's recent spin troubles.

JUST IN CASE

Kiwis include Clarke as cover for Bracewell for first three T20Is



K.R. DEEPAK

Coach Rob Walter confirmed that pacer Kristian Clarke, right, has been added to the New Zealand squad for the first three T20Is against India. He has been asked to remain with the squad as cover for the injured Michael Bracewell, whose availability for the series opener remains uncertain.

INTO THE RECORD BOOKS

Malajczuk hits fastest century in the ICC under-19 World Cup



GETTY IMAGES

Opener Will Malajczuk smashed both the fastest fifty (23b) and century (51) in the history of ICC u-19 World Cup to steer Australia to an eight-wicket win over Japan in Windhoek on Tuesday. **The scores:** Japan 201/8 in 50 overs (Tani-Kelly 79 n.o.) lost to Australia 204/2 in 29.1 overs (Will Malajczuk 102, Nitesh Samuel 60 n.o.).

AFRICAN SAFARI

Women in Blue to figure in a five-match T20I series in SA



FILE PHOTO: NIRMAL HARINDRAN

Cricket South Africa (CSA) will host India in a five-match T20I series from April 17 to April 27. The first two matches will be played at Durban's Kingsmead on April 17 and 19 before the caravan moves to the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg for the third and fourth T20Is (April 22 and 25). The fifth game will be in Benoni on April 27.

Dress rehearsal for the Men in Blue and Black Caps

With barely three weeks to go for the T20 World Cup, both sides will want to dot their i's and cross their t's in the five-match series; comeback man Kishan to bat at the No. 3 spot for the home team

NZ IN INDIA

Sankar Narayanan E.H.
NAGPUR

This is the season of model examinations. Just as students across the country get ready for their upcoming boards, India and New Zealand have their own mock tests lined up ahead of the all-important T20 World Cup.

The five-match T20I series, starting at the VCA Stadium here on Wednesday, serves as the ideal dress rehearsal for Suryakumar Yadav's Men in Blue and Mitchell Santner's Black Caps.

With the 20-team extravaganza barely three weeks away, both sides – armed with almost full-strength squads – will want to dot their i's and cross their t's, much like studious students revising the chapters.

India head coach Gautam Gambhir, though, will have to make some revisions to his original plan due to injuries to Tilak Varma (sidelined for the first three matches) and Washington Sundar (ruled out of the series).

The home team will field its strongest available XI, which means pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah



Time to grab it: Kishan will be keen to make the most of the opportunity on his return. K.R. DEEPAK

and talismanic all-rounder Hardik Pandya will be seen in action.

Wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson, after a rather tumultuous period, will want to use these five games to solidify his spot at the top of the order.

When asked who among Ishan Kishan and Shreyas Iyer will take Tilak's spot, Suryakumar

confirmed: "Kishan will play at No. 3. He is in our World Cup team. We had picked him first, and hence it is his place and responsibility. The scenario would have been different if we were talking about the No. 4 or No. 5 spots."

For the Kiwis – buoyant after their 'back-up' team's triumph over India in the ODI leg – the challenge will

be to ensure that their T20 globetrotters, some of them coming from their franchise league commitments, hit the ground running efficiently and cohesively.

Nagpur 2016-2026

The viral 2016-2026 social media challenge has a curious sporting parallel this week. It was here, on

March 15, 2016, that the New Zealand spinners – led by Santner (4-0-11-4) – fashioned a famous victory over India in a T20 World Cup fixture. Almost a decade later, as the teams return to the scene, can the Indian tweakers flip the script?

The Kiwis seem to have made a happy habit of scripting history on Indian shores. After winning the Test series in 2024 and the ODIs recently, can they make it three in three by clinching the T20I series, or even better, the T20 World Cup? They couldn't have asked for a better mock test, for sure.

The teams (from):

India: Suryakumar Yadav (Capt.), Axar Patel (Vice-capt.), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wk), Shreyas Iyer, Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Rinku Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Kuldeep Yadav, Varun Chakaravarthy, Ishan Kishan (wk) and Ravi Bishnoi.

New Zealand: Mitchell Santner (Capt.), Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway (wk), Jacob Duffy, Zak Foulkes, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Bevon Jacobs, Daryl Mitchell, James Neesham, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Tim Robinson, Ish Sodhi and Kristian Clarke.

The schedule:

Jan. 21: Nagpur.

Jan. 23: Raipur.

Jan. 25: Guwahati.

Jan. 28: Visakhapatnam.

Jan. 31: Thiruvananthapuram.

All matches start at 7 p.m.

Suryakumar reveals he won't change his batting approach

Sankar Narayanan E.H.
NAGPUR

Suryakumar Yadav's recent lean patch has not shaken his self-belief.

The 35-year-old – who will play his 100th T20I when he leads the Indian side in the first T20I against New Zealand – was his joyous self while fielding pointed questions about his dwindling returns.

When asked how he was working on his game 'behind the curtains', a tongue-in-cheek reply ensued: "Parde ke peeche tho nahin kiya mein. Khula ground hee tha. Udar hee batting karne gaya tha. (I did not bat behind the curtain. I batted in an open ground itself)," Suryakumar said, evoking chuckles across the press conference hall at the VCA Stadium.

"I've been short of runs. But I can't change my identity. I have decided to keep doing what I have been doing in the last three or four years, which has given me a lot of success," Suryakumar said.

The skipper conveyed that his focus was on In-



Milestone beckons: The opening match against New Zealand will be Suryakumar's 100th in the shortest format. K.R. DEEPAK

dia's performance in the five-match series and the upcoming T20 World Cup, and not his individual numbers.

"If I were playing a singles sport like table tennis or lawn tennis, I would have given more thought to it. This is a team sport, and my first responsibility is to know how the team is doing. I'm happy if I perform in the team's victory. If not, it doesn't matter, as it can happen. I have to look after the other 14 players also, as I've been appointed as the

leader of everyone," he explained.

Suryakumar was quick to point out that the Test and ODI series losses to New Zealand are history, and that India has been doing exceptionally well in the shortest format.

"The Test series loss was long back. The T20Is are about to start, and we'll talk about that.

"We've been playing this format well. There will be pressure, but where's the fun in playing if there is no pressure?"

Gautami proves her worth on the big stage

WPL-4

Vivek Krishnan
VADODARA

Gautami Naik's debut for Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the Women's Premier League came against UP Warriorz in Navi Mumbai on January 12. Having watched the first three seasons from afar, this was an opportunity on the big stage for the 27-year-old that had taken a fair share of time and toil.

No longer than a week later, against Gujarat Giants on Monday, Gautami became the first uncapped Indian to score a half-century in the WPL.

That she was asked to lead the RCB players off the field after victory was the cherry on top.

Gautami's 73 (55b, 7x4, 1x6) on Monday demonstrated her maturity. "We had been working for 12-13 years for a moment like this. Yesterday's innings vindicated that hard work," Gautami's coach, Avinash Shinde, told *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

For Gautami to rise from the obscurity of domestic cricket, where she has played for Nagaland, Baroda and Maharashtra, is a testament to her perseve-

Jemimah and Lee help DC down MI

Vivek Krishnan
VADODARA



In modern-day T20 cricket, a target of 155 is fancied by the chasing team on most days. In a game that rested on fine margins, it wasn't quite straightforward for Delhi Capitals against Mumbai Indians in the Women's Premier League on Tuesday, but Jemimah Rodrigues and Co. eventually sailed home with seven wickets in hand and an over to spare at the Kotambli Stadium. Capitals had solid contributions from Jemimah (51 n.o., 37b, 5x4, 1x6) and Lizelle Lee (46, 28b, 7x4, 1x6), overshadowing Nat Sciver-Brunt's half-century for MI.

In sharp contrast to MI's slow start, DC raced off the blocks as Lee and Shafali Verma stitched together a 63-run opening stand in 7.3 overs. They seldom spared the loose deliveries, and seemed keen on finishing proceedings in a hurry.

But MI regained a semblance of control when 20-year-old left-arm spinner Vaishnavi Sharma, who was drafted into the squad on Tuesday as a replacement for the injured G. Kamalini for the remainder of the campaign, bowled Shafali and punched the air in delight.

Two quiet overs later, Lee was adjudged stumped

by Rahila Firdous off Amanjot Kaur by third umpire Ajitesh Argal. Lee's frustration was compounded by Argal taking

eight minutes to make the decision. While Jemimah and Laura Wolvaardt built a steady partnership to take DC closer, another po-

SCOREBOARD

▼

MUMBAI INDIANS

Sajeewa Sajana b Nandani 9 (9b, 1x4), Hayley Matthews b Kapp 12 (15b, 2x4), Nat Sciver-Brunt (not out) 65 (45b, 6x4, 2x6),

Harmanpreet Kaur c Hamilton b Shree Charani 41 (33b, 7x4), Nicola Carey c Shree Charani 12 (11b, 1x4), Amanjot Kaur c Lee b Shree Charani 3 (3b, 5x4), Sanskriti Gupta (not out) 10 (5b, 1x6); Extras (nb-1, w-1); Total (for five wkt.s in 20 overs): 154.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-21 (Sajana, 3.5 overs), 2-21

(Matthews, 4.1), 3-99 (Harmanpreet, 13.5), 4-130 (Carey, 17.1), 5-134 (Amanjot, 17.5).

CAPITALS BOWLING

Kapp 4-0-8-1, Hamilton 4-0-36-0,

Nandani 4-0-36-1, Shree Charani

4-0-33-3, Sneh 3-0-27-0, Shafali 1-0-14-0.

DELHI CAPITALS

Shafali Verma c Vaishnavi 29

(24b, 6x4), Lizelle Lee st. Rahila b

Amanjot 46 (28b, 7x4, 1x6), Laura

Wolvaardt run out 17 (19b),

Jemimah Rodrigues (not out) 51

(37b, 5x4, 1x6), Marizanne Kapp (not out) 10 (6b, 1x6); Extras (lb-1, w-1); Total (for three wkt.s in 19 overs): 155.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-63 (Shafali, 7.3), 2-84 (Lee, 10.2), 3-118 (Wolvaardt, 16.1).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING

Ismail 4-0-26-0, Carey 1-0-13-0,

Sciver-Brunt 4-0-42-0, Sanskriti

1-0-13-0, Amanjot 3-0-21-1,

Vaishnavi 4-0-20-1, Matthews 2-0-19-0.

Toss: DC; **PoM:** Jemimah; **Capitals won by seven wickets with an over to spare.**



Holding on: After taking a 3-2 lead, the Toofans defenders (in white) and goalkeeper kept HIL GC at bay. BISWARANJAN ROUT

Toofans move to third

HIL - MEN

Y.B. Sarangi
BHUBANESWAR

In a must-win contest, Hyderabad Toofans maintained its composure to register a 3-2 victory against HIL GC in the teams' final round-robin match of the Hockey India League at the Kalinga Stadium here on Tuesday.

Left-arm spinner Shree Charani can take much of the credit for that. The 21-year-old dismissed the well-set Harmanpreet, Nicola Carey and Amanjot to finish with figures of 4-0-33-3.

Though the two teams finished the league stage with 11 points, Toofans' third win helped it leapfrog HIL GC to the third spot on better goal difference. Ranchi Royals, placed second, also has 11 points with a match to go.

Toofans, who relied on their fluid midfield and active forward-line, made early inroads and took a 2-1 lead in the first quarter.

IN BRIEF



Osaka makes a stylish entry at the Australian Open

Naomi Osaka floated onto Rod Laver Arena at the Australian Open in a jellyfish-inspired outfit before winning over Croatian Antonia Ruzic to reach the second round on Tuesday. The former World No. 1 raised gasps in the crowd as she entered in a riot of colour, toting a white parasol, a matching broad-brimmed hat and wearing a marine-themed top complete with pastel yellow tassels on the sleeves.



Kostoulas stunner rescues Brighton a draw

Charalampos Kostoulas snatched a late equaliser via an overhead kick as Brighton survived Marcus Tavernier's controversial penalty to rescue a 1-1 draw against Bournemouth on Monday.

The results: Premier League: Brighton 1 (Kostoulas 90+1) drew with Bournemouth 1 (Tavernier 32-pen). LaLiga: Elche 2 (Febas 14, Valera 55) drew with Sevilla 2 (Adams 75, 90+2-pen). Serie A: Cremonese 0 drew with Verona 0; Lazio 0 lost to Como 3 (Baturina 2, Paz 24, 49).

Mercedes chief designer Owen set to leave team

Mercedes chief designer John Owen is to leave the Formula One team later this year. Owen, 52, joined the British-based outfit in 2007, when it was Honda.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SCHEDULE

Galatasaray vs Atletico Madrid, Qarabag vs Eintrach Frankfurt (11.15 p.m.); Marseille vs Liverpool, Newcastle vs PSV, Slavia Prague vs Barcelona, Juventus vs Benfica, Chelsea vs Pafos, Bayern vs Union Saint-Gilloise, Atalanta vs Athletic Club (1.30 a.m., Thursday).

LIVE TELECAST

Men's U-19 World Cup: SS Select 2 & JioHotstar, 1 p.m.
Australian Open: Sony Sports Ten 2, 3, 5 & LIV, 1.30 p.m. & 5.30 a.m. (Thursday)
India vs New Zealand: 1st T20, Star Sports 2 & JioHotstar, 7 p.m.
HIL: Sony Sports Ten 1 & LIV, 7.30 p.m.
Afghanistan vs West Indies: 2nd T20, FanCode, 8 p.m.
Champions League: Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 11.15 p.m.; Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 3, 5 & LIV, 1.30 a.m. (Thursday)

BCCI to 'simplify' central contracts

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI
The BCCI is set to streamline the players' central contracts by doing away with the A+ category introduced back in 2018.

As per the existing policy, a cricketer in A+ category is paid ₹7 crore annually, ₹5 crore in A, ₹3 crore in B and ₹1 crore in C.

In the yet to be announced retainers for 2025-26, players will only be bracketed in A, B and C category.

Only four players – Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah and Ravindra Jadeja – were placed in the highest A+ category in the previous cycle.

Out of four, only Bumrah remains an all-format player. Kohli and Rohit play only the ODI format while Jadeja remains part of the Test and ODI set-up having retired from the shortest format.

Valverde appointed women's football team head coach

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI
The All India Football Federation (AIF) on Tuesday announced the appointment of Costa Rica's Amelia Valverde as the head coach of the Indian senior women's team.

Valverde, 39, has joined the Indian camp in Antalya where the Blue Tigresses are preparing for the AFC Women's Asian Cup, scheduled for March in Australia. She joins the existing coaching staff including Crispin Chettri, Priya PV, and Mario Aguiar.

For a former player who began her coaching career in 2011, Valverde was the longest-serving coach in the history of the Costa Rican women's national team, leading Las Ticas from 2015 to 2023.

Under her tutelage, Costa Rica participated in the 2015 and 2023 FIFA Women's World Cups, their

Sinner and Keys begin title defence well

The Italian second seed, going for a 'three-peat', has it easy before his opponent retires with injury while the American ninth seed progresses in straight sets; Tsitsipas manages to avoid a first-round exit for the second year in a row; crowd favourite Monfils bids farewell to Melbourne Park

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Reuters

MELBOURNE

Jannik Sinner and Madison Keys made winning starts to their Australian Open title defences on Tuesday but former champion Naomi Osaka made the biggest splash on day three of the tournament with a dazzling entrance before her match.

Second-seeded Sinner, aiming for a third straight title at Melbourne Park, spent only 68 minutes on court in his first outing of the 2026 season before Hugo Gaston retired because of injury while losing 6-2, 6-1.

The Italian consoled the weeping Frenchman and wished him well in his recovery.

"I was very happy," said Sinner. "We put in a lot of work to be back on court and it felt great. Obviously not the way you want to win the match, but from my side I'm very happy to be back on court."

American Keys made a shaky start to her maiden Grand Slam title defence before posting a 7-6(6), 6-1



victory over Ukrainian Oleksandra Olynykova.

The 2019 and 2021 Melbourne Park champion Osaka's game was at times less impressive than her self-designed outfit but the Japanese finished strongly

to beat Croatian Antonia Ruzic 6-3, 3-6, 6-4 and take her place in the second round.

Leylah Fernandez, the 2021 U.S. Open runner-up, was not so fortunate and exited with a 6-2, 7-6(0) loss

to Janice Tjen, who became the first Indonesian to win a match at the Australian Open in 28 years.

There were comfortable first-round wins for fifth seed Elena Rybakina, Tokyo Olympics gold medal-

15 Sinner is the fourth man (Agassi, Federer and Djokovic) since 2000 to register 15 consecutive wins at the Australian Open

32 Since entering the top-50, Sinner is undefeated at hard court Slams against players ranked outside the top-20

40 Mensik (8/20) has played the highest percentage of five-setters at Majors among the active players (minimum 20 matches)

0 For the first time since 1980, no player has won after going two sets down in the first round of the Australian Open

1 Monfils holds the record for the longest timespan (21y 8d) between the first and last appearances at the Melbourne Major

1 Jodar's win against Sakamoto was the first battle between teenagers to go five sets since Monfils-Murray at Roland-Garros 2006

2 Siegemund (37y 320d) is the second oldest (after Pratt in 1970) to win a WTA main draw match after losing 0-6 in the opening set

3 Rybakina is the third woman (Swiatek and Mertens) to reach the second round at Melbourne Park in all the last seven editions

IMPORTANT RESULTS

First round: Men: 5-Musetti (Ita)

bt Collignon (Bel) 4-6, 7-6(3), 7-5,

3-2 retd; 9-Fritz (USA) bt Royer (Fra) 7-6(5), 5-7, 6-1, 6-3;

16-Mensik (Cze) bt Busta (Esp) 7-5, 4-6, 2-6, 7-6(1), 6-3; Quinn (USA) bt 23-Griekspoor (Ned) 2-6, 6-3, 6-2; 8-Shelton (USA) bt Humbert (Fra) 6-3, 7-6(2), 7-6(5); 15-Khachanov (Rus) bt Michelsen (USA) 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 5-7, 6-3;

22-Darden (Ita) bt Garin (Chi) 7-6(5), 7-5, 7-6(3); Spizziri (USA) bt 28-Fonseca (Bra) 6-4, 2-6, 6-1, 6-2; 2-Sinner (Ita) bt Gaston (Fra) 6-2, 6-1, 0-0 retd.; 31-Tsitsipas (Gre) bt Mochizuki (Jpn) 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-2; Sweeny (Aus) bt Monfils (Fra) 6-7(3), 7-5, 6-4, 7-5.

Doubles: Martinez & Munar (Esp) bt Poonacha (Ind) & Isaro (Tha) 7-6(3), 7-5.

Women: Tjen (Ina) bt 22-Fernandez (Can) 6-2, 7-6(1);

9-Keys (USA) bt Olynykova (Ukr) 7-6(6), 6-1; 24-Ostapenko (Lat) bt Smakova (Svk) 6-4, 6-4;

5-Rybalkina (Kaz) bt Juvan (Slo) 6-4, 6-3; 10-Bencic (Sui) bt Boulter (Gbr) 6-0, 7-5;

31-Kalininskaya (Rus) bt Kartal (GBr) 7-6(3), 6-1; Valentino (Cze) bt 30-Joint (Aus) 6-4, 6-4;

16-Osaka (Jpn) bt Ruzic (Cro) 6-3, 3-6, 6-4; Siegemund (Ger) bt 18-Samsonova (Rus) 0-6, 7-5, 6-4.

Fallen seeds: Men: 23-Griekspoor, 28-Fonseca.

Women: 18-Samsonova, 22-Fernandez, 30-Joint.

bt Poonacha (Ind) & Isaro (Tha) 7-6(3), 7-5.

Women: Tjen (Ina) bt

22-Fernandez (Can) 6-2, 7-6(1);

9-Keys (USA) bt Olynykova (Ukr) 7-6(6), 6-1; 24-Ostapenko (Lat) bt Smakova (Svk) 6-4, 6-4;

5-Rybalkina (Kaz) bt Juvan (Slo) 6-4, 6-3; 10-Bencic (Sui) bt Boulter (Gbr) 6-0, 7-5;

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Fallen seeds: Men: 23-Griekspoor, 28-Fonseca.

Women: 18-Samsonova, 22-Fernandez, 30-Joint.

list Belinda Bencic and 2017 French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko.

In the men's draw, 2023 finalist Stefanos Tsitsipas had to rally to beat Japan's Shintaro Mochizuki and avoid a first-round exit for the second year in a row. Sinner's compatriot Lorenzo Musetti, the fifth seed, also advanced after his opponent Raphael Collignon retired, while eighth seed Ben Shelton, who lost to Sinner in last year's semifinals, beat Ugo Humbert in three tight sets. Taylor Fritz, seeded nine, needed four to get

past the Frenchman Valentine Royer.

Melbourne Park's favorite Frenchman of recent years, Gael Monfils, bid farewell to the tournament for the 20th and final time after a four set loss to Australian qualifier Dane Sweeny.

"My journey started in 2003 with you guys, now we are in 2026 and somehow it's the finish line. Thank you so much for this amazing ride," the 39-year-old, who will retire at the end of the season, told the crowd after receiving a standing ovation.

Bangladesh remains adamant on not travelling to India for T20 WC

CRICKET

Press Trust of India

DHAKA

Bangladesh government's sports advisor Asif Nazrul on Tuesday reiterated that under no condition would the national team travel to India for the T20 World Cup, despite an ultimatum from the International Cricket Council to the Bangladesh Cricket Board on deciding its participation by Wednesday.

If BCB remains adamant on not travelling to India for the 20-team tournament, Scotland is likely to replace Bangladesh as per current rankings. "I am not aware that Scotland will be included in our place. If the ICC bows to pressure from the BCCI and tries to impose pressure on us by



Standoff: The ICC has told the BCB to decide on its participation by Wednesday. FILE PHOTO

setting unreasonable conditions, we will not accept those conditions," Nazrul told reporters.

"In the past, there are examples that Pakistan said that they will not travel to India and ICC changed the venue. We have asked to change the venue on logical ground and we cannot be pressur-

ised to play in India by putting illogical pressure," he added. The crisis was triggered by the removal of Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman from Kolkata Knight Riders' roster for this year's IPL on the BCCI's instructions for unspecified "developments all around".

Citing security concerns

and national pride, the BCB responded by announcing its national team won't travel to India for its group stage games in Kolkata and Mumbai.

The BCB wants to play each of the four group stage matches in Sri Lanka, where the marquee India-Pakistan clash will also be held as per the mutually agreed arrangement for ICC events until 2027.

Bangladesh is in Group C along with West Indies, Italy, England and Nepal.

In its last meeting with the ICC officials in Dhaka, the BCB had proposed swapping positions with Ireland in Group B, which features tournament co-host Sri Lanka, Australia, Oman and Zimbabwe. Such a move would allow Bangladesh to remain in Sri Lanka for entirety of its group-stage engagements.

UP Dominators fights back against Delhi Dangal Warriors

PWL

Sports Bureau

NOIDA

UP Dominators produced a stirring comeback from 4-1 down to defeat Delhi Dangal Warriors 5-4 in the 2026 Pro Wrestling League at the Noida Indoor Stadium on Monday.

After Delhi surged ahead through a strong opening led by Anastasiya Alpyeyeva and a dominant win from captain Sujeev Kalkal, UP Dominators turned the tie on its head through under-20 World wrestling champion Tapasya Gahlawat, skipper Nisha Dahiya, and a decisive final-bout masterclass from two-time World Championship medallist Antim Panghal.

Top seed Arjun Erigaisi could not get past the defenses of world champion D. Guakesh as the two Indians agreed to a draw in the third round of the Tata Steel Masters on Monday.

Having qualified to the candidates tournament, Matthias Bluebaum scored his first victory in the event, defeating compatriot Vincent Keymer.

Aravindh Chithambaram played out another draw with Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan.

Arjun, Abdusattorov and Hans Niemann were joined by Bluebaum in the lead on two points.

The results (round 3): Arjun Erigaisi (2) drew with D. Guakesh (1.5), Aravindh Chithambaram (1.5) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (2); Hans Niemann (2) drew with Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus (1.5); Vincent Keymer (1) lost to Matthias Bluebaum (2); Javokhir Sindarov (1.5) drew with Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo, 1.5).

Tilottama and Niraj secure top spots

Balancing act crucial as Manush hopes to raise the bar

The paddler, along with Diya, had a blockbuster 2025 and produced historic performances; maintaining the high standards in four events will not be easy but he is up for the challenge as he eyes Asian Games glory



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Amol Karhadkar

For Manush Shah, 2025 was not just another year on the professional circuit. It was the year when potential turned into proof – proof that Indian paddlers could not only climb the global rankings but also earn their place on table tennis' most exclusive stage.

"2025 was the best year of my sporting career," Manush, the bespectacled Barodian, says without hesitation after having started 2026 on a perfect note, a title at the WTT Feeder in front of his home crowd.

"In terms of how I developed in singles, mixed doubles and men's doubles, I rose significantly and performed exceptionally well for the country at the world level."

The numbers support the claim, but the milestones tell the real story. In a historic breakthrough, Manush and Diya Chitale qualified for the mixed doubles event at the WTT Finals, becoming the first Indian pair to feature at the season-ending championship reserved for the world's top eight in each category. For Indian table tennis, long accustomed to near-misses on the biggest stage, it was a moment of arrival.

"For us, qualifying itself was the biggest high to end the year on," Manush says. "It was history-making for India."

The beginning

The seeds of that achievement were sown far earlier – in October 2023, in Muscat, almost unnoticed.

"That was the first time Diya and I played together," Manush recalls. "We were both number five in the (Indian) team - young, just breaking into the senior set-up. That's where the idea came that maybe we should try mixed doubles."

Manush had previously experimented with partnerships that didn't quite click. With Diya, things felt different from the outset – technically and temperamentally.

"She was compatible with a left-hander, and that was a big plus for me. We complement each others' style," he says. The real belief, however, arrived in Goa at the WTT Star Contender in January 2024, where the pair recorded standout wins against fancied pairs from Sweden and Singapore.

"That's when we were very sure that we wanted to take this forward," Manush says. "Not just play tournaments, but play for India for as long as we can."

The roadmap for 2025 was clear: qualify for the Finals. A favourable draw in the Singapore Smash proved decisive,



delivering 350 ranking points and placing the Indian pair firmly in contention. Tunisia followed, and with it came a defining victory – a title win against a strong Japanese pair.

"The first half of the year was very solid," Manush explains. "We got big wins and big points. That helped us a lot in the second half, where results weren't as strong, but the early work paid off."

By the time they reached the Star Contender semifinals later in the year in Muscat, the equation was simple: qualification was within reach – and soon, confirmed.

Hong Kong, the venue for the WTT Finals, offered a reality check – and a learning curve.

"We played Olympic champions, the current world No. 1 pair, and the host favourites," Manush says. "The crowd was 5,000, with all the people cheering against us."

He smiles while recounting the experience. "It felt like three against five thousand – me, Diya and Massimo (Costantini, India's head coach.)"

The results didn't go India's way, but the experience proved invaluable.

"The conditions were very slow – conditions we had struggled in earlier," Manush explains. "But this time, we competed well. We were close in many sets."

For a pair that had built its reputation in faster conditions, this was a turning point. "The biggest positive was the belief that we can do it even in slow conditions," he says. "That belief didn't exist before 2025."

Tightrope walk

While the mixed doubles breakthrough grabbed headlines, it also complicated Manush's professional life. Unlike players who specialise, Manush now competes in four events – singles, men's doubles, mixed doubles and the team championship. And in a year where besides individual glory, the focus will also be on retaining India's bronze at the Asian Games, Manush knows it's a tight rope to walk on.

"It's difficult," he admits. "I have to manage Indian ranking, world ranking, singles, men's doubles, mixed doubles. Technically, four events."

The challenge isn't just physical. "I also have to take care of my body and my mind so that when the India team needs me at my peak, I'm ready."

That means planning differently from most of his peers. "I'm the only player doing four events," he says. "So my calendar has to be different."

Yet, Manush doesn't shy away from the challenge. "I'm up for it," he says. "I'm preparing mentally, physically and in my

game to be at my peak for most of the year."

For casual fans, rankings often feel abstract – numbers without emotion. Manush explains why they mean everything.

"In table tennis, if I lose one match, it affects my ranking, my selection, my future tournaments," he says.

"It's like cricket – the last ball, need four to win."

The pressure, he feels, is relentless. "You are expected to handle it. That's what being an elite athlete means."

Asked how he copes, Manush's answer reflects a mindset shaped by experience and inspiration. "I control what's in my hand," he says. "And I believe my racket will do the talking." He pauses, then adds with a smile: "I'm a big Kohli fan."

Looking ahead

With Asian Games on the horizon and Commonwealth Games off the table for table tennis, Manush's focus is sharp. "The Asian Games is the target," he says plainly.

The memory of Hangzhou still lingers – a near-upset against the World No. 1 men's doubles pair in 2023.

"We (Manav Thakkar and I) were unranked, they were No. 1, and we almost won," he says. "This time, we want to start in the top four so we get a better draw."

Clear goal

In mixed doubles, the goal is equally clear: break into the top eight and turn quarterfinals into medals. "The belief has already begun at the WTT Finals," Manush says. While he waits for the senior National championship window to be formalised, Manush has shifted entirely to the international circuit. The WTT Feeder Vadodara title was followed by the southpaw qualifying for the main draw of the WTT Star Contender in Doha before losing to Japan's Ryoichi Yoshiyama in the round of 64.

The coming weeks are mapped out meticulously: a planned break for skills training, then Chennai Star Contender and the Singapore Smash – the bigger stages that test both skill and endurance.

"I won't play the Asia Cup," he says. "I want to prepare properly for the bigger events."

For Manush, 2025 delivered lessons – about belief, balance and belonging at the top. 2026, he hopes, will deliver rewards.

"Qualifying for the Finals was the first step," he says. "Now the aim is to go back better – and do something special for India."

THE GIST

▼ Manush had previously experimented with partnerships that didn't quite click. With Diya, things felt different from the outset – technically and temperamentally

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SCIENCE

Why only female Darwin's bark spiders weave the toughest webs

The Darwin's bark spider, found in the forests of Madagascar, weaves silk that outperforms steel and most human-made fibres in both strength and toughness. Its silk has a tensile strength of about 1.6 gigapascals, around three times higher than that of iron, making it the toughest biological material ever tested

Ipsita Herlekar

Done of the strongest materials on the earth is not made in a factory or synthesised in a laboratory but spun by a creature barely two inches long.

The Darwin's bark spider (*Caerostris darwini*), found in the forests of Madagascar, weaves silk that outperforms steel and most human-made fibres in both strength and toughness.

Larger webs, stronger threads

Its silk has a tensile strength of about 1.6 gigapascals, around three times higher than that of iron, making it the toughest biological material ever tested. But as scientists are now finding, this extraordinary strength is not something every individual produces.

Across spider species, body size is often linked to silk quality. Larger spiders generally produce tougher silks to capture larger or faster prey. In orb-weaving spiders such as the Darwin's bark spider, larger bodies over evolutionary time have accompanied larger webs and stronger silk threads.

Scientists from institutions in China, Madagascar, Slovenia, and the U.S. studied bark spiders to understand the conditions in which they produce the tough silk. Their findings were recently published in *Integrative Zoology*.

Three hypotheses

The study focused on two bark spider species in Madagascar: *Caerostris darwini*, which spins the largest orb webs ever recorded, and its close relative *Caerostris kuntneri*.

Egg sacs from both species were collected from Analamazaotra National Park and the spiders were raised in laboratory conditions. This allowed the scientists to compare silk produced by males and females at different life stages while keeping environmental factors such as diet and humidity constant.

The team tested three competing hypotheses. The first proposed that all individuals – males and females, juveniles and adults – produce silk of similar toughness. The second suggested only females produce tougher silk, regardless of size. The third said only large individuals, especially large adult females, produce exceptionally tough silk as and when their body size and ecological role demand it.

Dragline silk

The size difference between male and female bark spiders is striking. In *C. darwini*, adult females are about three times larger than males. In *Caerostris kuntneri*, they can be up to five times



A Darwin's bark spider in Madagascar, 2010. MATJAZ GREGORIC (CC BY-SA)

larger, suggesting that females are under much stronger evolutionary pressure to invest in tougher silk. To measure silk quality, the researchers collected dragline silk, also known as major ampullate silk, from spiders of both sexes and at different life stages in each species. Each strand was carefully mounted on a cardboard frame and stretched to test its strength, stiffness, and ability to absorb energy before breaking.

Dragline silk is one of the most important types of spider silk. Nearly invisible to the naked eye, it forms the structural backbone of an orb web and serves as safety lines, anchor threads, and emergency escape ropes for the spiders.

Producing this silk, however, is metabolically expensive. The energy required to synthesise the amino acids that make up dragline silk varies; some such as proline, which plays an important role in making silk elastic, are particularly expensive.

Darwin's bark spider silk contains unusually high levels of this protein, explaining its exceptional mechanical properties but in turn increasing its



We think that very tough silk evolved because it was needed to structurally support the huge webs built by *Caerostris* spiders, rather than as an adaptation to hunt any specific prey

MATJAŽ GREGORIĆ
Researcher at the Jovan Hadži Institute of Biology

metabolic cost.

Quality and architecture

The study's results were unequivocal: only large adult females produced exceptionally tough silk. Their silk was also stiffer and more capable of absorbing far more mechanical strain before breaking than the silk produced by males or juveniles. The silk from adult males and juvenile males and females was mechanically indistinguishable.

The study also found that adult females produce high-performance silk only when it's biologically necessary. As the females grow larger and begin building large webs

capable of intercepting fast-moving prey, they 'turn on' the physiological machinery required to manufacture the superior silk.

The study also uncovered a close link between silk quality and the architecture of the web. Adult female Darwin's bark spiders build more sparse webs, with wider gaps between threads, using less silk per unit area. Despite being economical, these webs are highly effective because each thread can absorb relatively enormous forces. Juveniles and males on the other hand spin more dense webs made of metabolically cheaper and weaker silk.

Curiously, not all the properties of the silk varied with size and sex. Regardless of age or sex, all individuals produced silk of comparably high stretchability, or how much the silk could be stretched before it broke. It suggested that the elasticity of the silk of spiders of the genus *Caerostris* is a genetically conserved feature – while extreme toughness is tuned according to body size and ecological demand.

Time versus energy

At the molecular level, differences in silk properties arise from changes in protein composition, how the proteins are arranged and cross-linked, and even the shape and length of the ducts that spin silk inside the spider's body. *C. darwini* has an unusually long and complex spinning duct that scientists believe could be allowing silk proteins to produce exceptionally strong silk fibre.

The trade-off however is time and energy. Female bark spiders produce less silk overall, take longer to rebuild their webs, and invest more in quality over quantity.

"We think that very tough silk evolved because it was needed to structurally support the huge webs built by *Caerostris* spiders, rather than as an adaptation to hunt any specific prey," Matjaž Gregorić, the lead author of the study and a researcher at the Jovan Hadži Institute of Biology, Slovenia, said.

The strategy pays off in the spider's distinctive habitat. *C. darwini* builds enormous webs, up to 25 m wide, suspended over rivers and lakes. These aerial traps allow the spider to capture swarms of flies and beetles that few other spiders can.

Silk production in Darwin's bark spiders has evolved to ensure energy is invested only where it can yield a greater survival advantage. The extraordinary properties of its silk thus emerge from a complex interplay between body size, sex, ecology, and behaviour.

(*Ipsita Herlekar is an independent science writer.
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THE GIST

▼ Across spider species, body size is often linked to silk quality. Larger spiders generally produce tougher silks to capture larger or faster prey

▼ In this study on two bark spider species from Madagascar, the adult females were much larger than the males and were found to be producing exceptionally tough silk. Their silk was also stiffer and capable of absorbing far more mechanical strain before breaking than the silk produced by males or juveniles

▼ The study also found that the adult females produce high-performance silk only when it is biologically necessary and their webs are more sparse with wider gaps, using less silk per unit area

▼ Female bark spiders produce less silk overall, take longer to rebuild their webs, and invest more in quality over quantity

BIG SHOT



Scientists examine pompon moss in a pristine peat bog during an expedition by the International Peatland Conservation Group, which promotes the conservation and restoration of peatlands, carbon and water rich ecosystems that play a crucial role in climate change mitigation, in Punta Arenas, Chile. REUTERS

QUESTION CORNER

Call the doctor



Q: What happens if you have a medical emergency onboard the ISS?

A: On January 15 morning, Crew-11 to the International Space Station (ISS) performed a rapid evacuation, with NASA getting the astronauts back to the earth around one month early due to an undisclosed medical concern with one crew member.

When a medical emergency occurs on the International Space Station (ISS), the crew has a strict protocol it needs to follow, with help from ground support.

Every mission includes at least one Crew Medical Officer (CMO). This astronaut is usually not a doctor but would have received specialised training to perform procedures like stitch wounds and administer injections. The ISS is also stocked with medical kits including some drugs, first aid supplies, and diagnostic equipment such as ultrasound machines.

When there is an emergency, the crew contacts flight surgeons at mission control on earth: these are doctors who have access to the astronauts' medical records as well as real-time health data. If required they can guide the CMO through conducting simple medical examinations and administer treatments through private video and audio channels.

If an illness or injury is too severe to be managed on the station, the final option is immediate evacuation. The crew's transport capsule, such as a



This screengrab from video provided by NASA TV shows the SpaceX Dragon departing from the ISS shortly after undocking from four NASA Crew-11 members inside on January 14, 2026. AP

SpaceX Dragon or Soyuz spacecraft, is designated a 'lifeboat' and the relevant astronauts can undock from the ISS onboard it, re-enter the earth's atmosphere, and finally splash down or land on the earth within hours.

The Crew-11 return on January 15 demonstrated such an evacuation.

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