



‘MOCKING RELIGION’

Modi slams ‘foreign powers’ on M.P. visit

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KING OF CHASES

Kohli on song as India eases past Pakistan

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AHMEDABAD SESSION

AICC to deliberate on future road map

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DATA POINT

Economic woes of conflict-hit Manipur

Inflation surges, GST growth rate declines

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HEZBOLLAH MOURNS

Thousands pour in for Nasrallah's funeral

WORLD » PAGE 14

Rescue team yet to contact workers trapped in tunnel

Personnel reach up to 150 metres from the spot of accident in Nagarkurnool district of Telangana, but debris, mud are hindering further progress; more than a day has passed since the cave-in

B. Chandrashekhar
HYDERABAD

Rescue teams could not achieve a breakthrough till late on Sunday evening in tracking eight persons trapped for over 30 hours in an under-construction tunnel in Nagarkurnool district of Telangana. Two engineers, two technical staffers and four workers have been trapped 14 km inside the tunnel of the Srisaillam Left Bank Canal Project since Saturday morning, after a portion of its roof collapsed during excavation with a tunnel-boring machine. After a day-long effort, rescuers said they were 150 metres from the accident site, with mud and debris hindering progress. The joint rescue operation was



People inside an intact portion of the tunnel in Nagarkurnool, Telangana, on Sunday night. NAGARA GOPAL

taken up by National Disaster Response Force, Army, Singareni Collieries, State Disaster Response Force and NHIDCL personnel. “The situation inside is very scary with muck and other debris covering al-

most the entire tunnel,” said State Minister for Excise and Tourism Jupally Krishna Rao, who supervised the rescue operation from deep inside the tunnel for several hours on Sunday. The debris had co-


vered the entire 23-foot-high, 31-foot-wide tunnel, he said.

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‘IN FULL SWING’
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Trump attacks USAID again over ‘India grant’ amid doubts over DOGE charge

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

U.S. President Donald Trump took another swipe on Sunday at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and India for an alleged grant of millions for “voter turnout” during Indian elections. Since the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) headed by tech billionaire Elon Musk spoke of the grant on February 16, Mr. Trump has referred to it on five occasions at various public events, but more and more questions are being raised on the veracity of the information. “Eighteen million dollars for helping India with its elections. Why the hell?” Mr. Trump said at the Conservative Political Action Conference on Sunday. As he reeled off the number of grants allocated by the USAID according to the DOGE list, which in-



They [India] take advantage of us pretty good. One of the highest tariff nations in the world...and then we're giving them a lot of money to help them with their election

DONALD TRUMP
President of the United States

cluded allegedly those to Bangladesh, Nepal, and other Asian and African countries, Mr. Trump referred to the figure being given to India as “18 million dollars”, a shift from the 21 million dollars used thus far. “We’re giving money to India for elections. They don’t need money,” he added. “They take advantage of us pretty good. One of the highest tariff nations in the world... We have 200% [tariffs] there and then we are giving them a lot of money to help them with their

election,” the U.S. President said. In his latest statement on February 23, it was unclear whether Mr. Trump mistakenly referred to the figure of \$18 million, or this was a revised figure. Apart from the contradictions in Mr. Trump’s statements, many are now questioning whether the money allocated to USAID had even been transferred as a “disbursal”, or was still an “obligation” or allocation from the agency. The original statements made in the DOGE post on social

USAID funded 7 projects in India in FY24: Ministry

NEW DELHI
The Finance Ministry has disclosed that the USAID funded seven projects in India in 2023-24. However, no funding was made for a better voter turnout. » PAGE 10

media platform X said U.S. taxpayer dollars “were going to be spent on the following items”, not that they had been spent already, adding that all payments planned have now been cancelled. Second, the entry on India refers to “\$486M to the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening”, including “\$21M for voter turnout in India”.

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EDITORIAL
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IN BRIEF

Border remains tense as language row escalates

BELAGAVI
The Karnataka Transport Minister will visit Belagavi on Monday amid tension on the border with Maharashtra after the assault on a bus conductor for asking a passenger to speak in Kannada. » Page 4

12 arrive in Delhi after deportation to Panama by U.S.

NEW DELHI
Twelve Indians, deported to Panama by the U.S., returned to India from the Latin American nation on Sunday, officials said. They arrived at the Delhi airport. » Page 3

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 5

Surging crowds



To the confluence: Crowd near the Sangam in Prayagraj on Sunday as pilgrims rush to take a dip during the Maha Kumbh. VIJAY SONEJI

CDU’s Merz set to be next Chancellor of Germany

Agence France-Presse
BERLIN

Germany’s conservatives won Sunday’s elections, with their leader Friedrich Merz set to become the next Chancellor, followed by the far-right AfD in second place after record gains, according to exit polls. If confirmed in the final count, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) roughly doubled its score to at least 19.5%, boosted by fears over immigration and security after a spate of attacks blamed on asylum seekers. Mr. Merz’s CDU/CSU alliance won at least 28.5%, said the first exit polls from two public broadcasters, crushing the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) of the outgoing Chancellor, Olaf



Victory move: Friedrich Merz with supporters at the party headquarters in Berlin on Sunday, after the national election. AP

Scholz, which were looking at around 16%. Mr. Merz – a long-time party rival of ex-chancellor Angela Merkel – has vowed a crackdown on irregular immigration. He hopes to win back votes from the AfD and halt its rise, which has stunned many in a country still seeking to atone for its Nazi history. For now, the AfD – bask-

ing in the vocal support of key allies of U.S. President Donald Trump – is set to stay in Opposition. Before Mr. Merz, 69, takes over from the now caretaker chancellor Scholz, he will have to forge a new coalition government in Europe’s top economy, an often drawn-out process he has vowed to complete by Easter.

Atishi elected LoP in Delhi, says will hold BJP to all its promises

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday unanimously elected former Delhi Chief Minister and MLA Atishi as the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly. At an AAP legislature group meeting, Ms. Atishi’s name was proposed by Sanjeev Jha, MLA-elect, with Kuldeep Kumar and Jarnail Singh backing the nomination. This will be the first time AAP will be in the Opposition since coming to power in 2013. AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal met all MLAs-elect and congratulated Ms. Atishi for being chosen as the leader of the legislature party. “AAP will play the role of a construc-



Atishi

tive Opposition in the interest of the people,” he said. Ms. Atishi said AAP accepted the responsibility of serving in the Opposition with full commitment. “A strong Opposition plays a crucial role in a democracy, and AAP will ensure that the voices of the people are effectively raised in the Assembly. The BJP made several promises to the people of Delhi, based on which they received the

public mandate. As the Opposition, it is our duty to ensure that these promises are fulfilled,” she said. Ms. Atishi noted that one of BJP’s significant promises was made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself – a guarantee to approve in the very first Cabinet meeting a scheme to provide ₹2,500 per month to every woman in Delhi, with the first instalment to be credited by March 8. “However, the first Cabinet meeting has already taken place, and this scheme was not approved. As the Opposition, it is our responsibility to hold the BJP accountable,” she said.

ASSEMBLY SESSION TODAY
» PAGE 2

32 T.N. fishermen held by Sri Lankan Navy; Stalin writes to Jaishankar seeking permanent solution

The Hindu Bureau
RAMESWARAM/CHENNAI

A total of 32 fishermen from Rameswaram, Than-gachimadam, and nearby areas in Tamil Nadu’s Ramanathapuram district were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on charges of poaching in the Palk Strait in the early hours of Sunday. Five trawlers were also seized. Fisheries officials said they had issued 478 tokens to fishermen at the Rameswaram harbour on Saturday. When they were fishing near Mannar, the Sri Lankan authorities arrested them and took them to a naval base. Along with the trawlers, the catch was also seized,



Fishermen taking part in a meeting in Rameswaram on Sunday. L. BALACHANDAR

sources said, adding that one of the trawlers belonged to Jesu Raja, a fisherman leader of Thangachimadam.

Indefinite strike
Various fishermen associations in Rameswaram have announced an indefinite strike to protest

against “frequent” arrests by the Sri Lankan Navy. The decision was taken at an emergency meeting on Sunday. “We want the Union and State governments to help us in this hour of crisis,” said R. Sagayam, a fisherman leader. The next course of action would be announced in a day or two, he said. A fishermen leader in Rameswaram told *The Hindu* that the Sri Lankan authorities had announced that they would sell 67 trawlers through public auction, including five country boats and 62 mechanised boats seized by the Navy in 2024. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Sunday wrote to Union Minister of

External Affairs S. Jaishankar reiterating his earlier request to convene a Joint Working Group to find a permanent solution and to secure the release of all 32 arrested fishermen from Rameswaram and their fishing boats from the Sri Lankan authorities. “The apprehension of Tamil Nadu fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy is still continuing in spite of my repeated requests to prevail upon the Sri Lankan government to prevent such arrests,” Mr. Stalin said in the letter. This year, 119 fishermen and 16 boats have been apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy in eight separate incidents, he said. Reiterating his request,

Mr. Stalin contended: “This is especially crucial since the livelihood of our fishermen families are impacted severely due to these apprehensions.” Annamalai’s letter
Earlier in the day, BJP Tamil Nadu president K. Annamalai wrote to Mr. Jaishankar, seeking his intervention for the early repatriation of the arrested fishermen. In his letter, Mr. Annamalai said it is disheartening that the Sri Lankan Navy had continued to detain Tamil fishermen in large numbers in recent times. The BJP leader added that the family members of the arrested fishermen are highly distressed.

First session of new Delhi Assembly today

New BJP govt. is set to table 14 pending CAG reports in the House during the three-day session; BJP making unnecessary hue and cry, says Atishi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Newly elected members of the eighth Legislative Assembly of Delhi will take oath on Monday when Chief Minister Rekha Gupta is scheduled to move a motion to name BJP MLA-elect Vijender Gupta the Speaker of the House.

The list of business for the three-day session shows that the 14 pending Comptroller and Auditor-General (CAG) reports on the performance of the erstwhile AAP government will be tabled in the House on the second day.

After her first Cabinet meeting on February 20, the day she was sworn in, Ms. Gupta said her government would table the 14 CAG reports in the Assembly's first session. The BJP has been alleging that AAP had not tabled the reports as they contained "proof of corruption".

Responding to the development, former Chief Minister and senior AAP lead-



BJP's MLAs-elect attending a closed-door meeting chaired by Delhi CM Rekha Gupta on Sunday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

er Atishi said "the BJP's only motive is to score political points". Ms. Atishi claimed that as CM, she had personally signed the CAG reports and submitted them to the Speaker of the previous Assembly. "It is a routine procedure. The BJP is making it a big deal by showing that they have presented the CAG reports. Whatever is there in the reports, it will be out in front of the people of Delhi," she added.

Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena has appointed

BJP MLA-elect Arvinder Singh Lovely as the pro tem Speaker. The members of the House will take oath before the pro tem Speaker.

According to the list of businesses, the L-G will address the House on the second day of the three-day session, and the CAG reports will be tabled. This will be followed by a motion of thanks, which will continue on the third day, February 27. The election of the Deputy Speaker will be held the same day.

AAP left 'public exchequer empty': CM; Atishi hits back

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Sunday alleged that the previous AAP government had left the "public exchequer empty", prompting her predecessor Atishi to hit back claiming that it was an "excuse" by the BJP to not deliver on its election promises.

Ms. Gupta said she held meetings with officers over the implementation of the Mahila Samridhi Yojana, the scheme that promises ₹2,500 per month to women beneficiaries in Delhi. "When we sat with the officials to review the financial status, the public exchequer was found completely empty," Ms. Gupta said while addressing mediapersons ahead of the first session of the newly constituted 8th Delhi Assembly. However, she gave assurance that the scheme will be implemented after proper planning.

Responding to the Chief Minister's allegation, Ms. Atishi said the BJP was using the "financial crisis" as an excuse to not deliver on its promises. She said the BJP had promised to clear



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta (left) with Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva addressing mediapersons on Sunday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

the scheme in the first Cabinet meeting, but had failed to do so. "The women had put their trust in Modi's guarantee, but now they feel deceived," the AAP MLA-elect said.

Delhi's budget has grown from ₹31,000 crore in 2014-15 to ₹77,000 crore in 2024-25 under AAP and "we handed over a fiscally strong Delhi to the BJP", she said. "I challenge the BJP to show any State where it is in power that has seen economic growth like Delhi," Ms. Atishi said.

Earlier, BJP general secretary Pavan Rana briefed the BJP MLAs-elect on conduct in the House. Ms. Gupta also met the MLAs-

elect, many of them first-time members like her. They were given dos and don'ts in the House.

'Faith in decision' Meanwhile, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on social media expressed his trust in the BJP's decision to choose Ms. Gupta as the CM. "Keeping the trust that the people of Delhi have shown in the leadership and public welfare policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi intact, your tenure as Chief Minister will definitely take Delhi to new heights and fulfil all the hopes and aspirations of the people," Mr. Shah said in a post on X.

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SCHEDULE
The Entire Third Floor with Entire Terrace over and above the third floor, with two Cars Parking space in the Still Area (towards Property No. G-30) and one Utility with common W.C. in the Still Area, of the Property bearing No. G-29, Jangpura Extension, New Delhi-110014, measuring 200 sq. yards along with all rights, titles and interests, structure standing therein, fittings and fixtures installed therein, along with 22.5% undivided, indivisible and impartible share of ownership rights in the land underneath. Sd/-
Place: New Delhi
Date: 24.02.2025
Brijesh Kumar Tambar
Advocate

LEGAL NOTICE

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No. C-1788/17
IN THE MATTER OF
Eshan Tandon Complainant
Versus
M/s Visava Developers Pvt. Ltd., Opposite Party (IES)
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Pocket 6, Sector-12, Dwarka New Delhi
& M/s Visava Developers Pvt. Ltd.,
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Sector-19, Dwarka, New Delhi.

Whereas a complaint has been made against you (Copy Enclosed) before this Commission. The claim is stated in the Complaint served with this Commission. In order to defend against the complaint, you must respond to the complaint by filing an Answer (written statement) stating your defence in writing and serving copy to the Complainant within a period of 30 days (Thirty days), as provided under Section 38 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, after the service of this Commission, excluding the day of service. You are further summoned to appear in this Commission in person or by a pleader or an authorized agent duly instructed and able to answer all the material question in relation to the complaint on 10/04/2025 at 10:30 am. sharp. Please take note that default of your appearance on the said date the matter will be heard and determined in your absence given under my hand and the seal of this Commission on this 04/02/2025

Registrar
State Commission

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to the public at large that my client Smt. Pnyanka Goyal wife of Shri Manish Goyal resident of B125, First Floor, Pushpanjali Enclave, Pitampura, Delhi-110034, had agreed to purchased the Entire Ground Floor Without Roof Rights Alongwith Mazzanine Between Ground Floor And First Floor, Part Of Built-up Property Bearing No.125, area measuring 142.38 sq. mtrs., in Block-B, situated at Pushpanjali Enclave, Pitampura, Delhi-110034, who claims to be the owner of the above said property. All persons and/or bank/financial institution/any individual person(s) having any claim or demand or rights in respect of the said floor or against the said floor or any part or portion thereof by way of inheritance, share, sale, transfer, assignment, mortgage, charge, lien, encumbrance, gift, exchange, possession, covenant, easement or otherwise howsoever, are hereby required to make the same known in writing with documentary proof to my client or the undersigned within 15 days from the date of publication hereof, failing which the claim of such person(s), if any, will be considered as waived and not binding on my client and the proposed transaction of purchase of the said floor shall be completed without any reference to such claim(s).

Vikas Kumar Jain (Advocate)
12, RU-Market, Pitampura, Delhi-34, Enrol. No.D/1062/01 • 9810293343

LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE HON'BLE SUB COURT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

E.P.No.: 122/2017 IN OS No. 21/2014 DECREE HOLDER/PLAINTIFF
KGN Constructions represented by its Managing Director, Muhammad Sadique Hussain aged 41 years S/o Late Mohammad Tushend, residing at Flat No: 14-D Wind Brook Place, Sothern Investments near BP Petrol Pump Althara, Vazhuthacaud, Thiruvananthapuram.
JUDGEMENT DEBTOR / DEFENDANT UEM India Pvt. Limited represented by its proprietor Krishnan, M Kesivary 2nd and 3rd Floor, Tower - B, A-1, Windsore IT Park sector-125, Noida, UP-201301
Whereas it has been provide to the satisfaction of the court that the Judgement debtor/defendant above named called in the Ordinary way of service. Hence, This Proclamation under Order 5 Rule 20 Cpc is hereby issued against him and should appear personally or through their counsel on 24/02/2025 at 11:00 am Take Notice that, in default of his appearance on the day before mentioned the above said case will be heard and determined in his absence.
Thiruvananthapuram 27/05/2024
Muhammed Safer (Advocate)

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public, that Bank of Baroda, Krishna Park Branch has accepted the under mentioned property standing in the name of M/S Rana Motors Private Limited as security for a loan credit facility requested by M/S Rana Motors Private Limited. In case anyone has got any right/ title/ interest/ claims over the under mentioned property, they are advised to approach the Bank within 10 days alongwith necessary proof to substantiate their claim. If no response is received within 10 days, it is presumed that the property is free of any charge/ claim/ encumbrance and Bank shall continue with the mortgage. Details of property: Industrial property bearing no 60, situated in Industrial Estate Known as Industrial Development Colony, Mehraula Road, Gurugram, Haryana & District Gurugram, Haryana 120001, land area measuring 1972.14 square meters or equivalent to 2358.69 square yards, bounded as under: East: Entry from road 60 feet, West: Property no 63, North: Property no 59, South: Property no 61 M. Krishna Shah, Branch Head (Chief Manager), Krishna Park, Delhi - 110018

HUNNY SHARMA ADVOCATE
Chamber No. 594, Western Wing, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054

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Notice Inviting e-Tender
(Tender Identification No. 02/RAPDRP-A/2024-25 dated 22-02-2025)
For "Appointment of an IT Agency for Facility Management Services, Technical Support Services & AMC of Call Centre Software and provision of hardware & software for operation of DC Dehradun, DRC Haldwani & Field offices of UPCL for a period of 01 year".
Uttarakhand Power Corporation Limited, Dehradun invites tender from eligible bidders for "Appointment of an IT agency for Facility Management Services, Technical Support Services & AMC of Call Centre Software and provision of hardware & software for operation of DC, Dehradun, DRC, Haldwani & field offices of UPCL for a period of 01 year"
The references for the tender are given below :-

Tender Identification No.	02/RAPDRP-A/2024-25 dated 22-02-2025
Estimate Cost (In Rs. Crores)	Rs. 18.30 Crore
Cost of Tender Document (Tender Fee)	Rs. 29500.00 (25000.00+4500.00) inclusive of GST @18%
Earnest Money Deposit/Bid Security	Rs. 37 Lakh
Date & Time of Pre-bid conference	03rd March 2025 at 11:30 Hrs.
Last Date and Time of Submission of Bid (online & offline mode)	11th March 2025 up to 17:00 Hrs.
Due Date of Opening of Technical Bid	12th March 2025 at 16:30 Hrs.
Due Date of Opening of Financial Bid	To be notified later

Detailed document, eligibility criteria and prescribed format for submission of bids will be available on website https://uktenders.gov.in and https://www.upcl.org. In case any of the above date, is a holiday, the due date shall be the next working day at the same time. Any amendment/corrigendum in the future against the above mentioned tender shall be uploaded at https://uktenders.gov.in and https://www.upcl.org only.

Superintending Engineer (RAPDRP Part-A)
No.: 84/EE(CM)/UPCL/A-2 Dated : 22.02.2025
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THE HINDU
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"NOTICE INVITING TENDER"
Online bids on item rate basis are invited by the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Reckong Peo on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh in electronic tendering system in two covers for the under mentioned work from the contractor/firms enlisted with Himachal Pradesh Jal Shakti Vibhag in appropriate class..

S. N.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Cost of form	Time
1.	Providing Flood Protection Work to Village Sapni (Sapni Khad to First Bend of Sapni Road) in Tehsil Sangla Distt Kinnaur HP(SH: C/o Pcc retaining wall and wire crate apron at various dia)	48937068/-	489371/-	Rs. 5000/-	12 months

- Tender documents and other instructions can be downloaded or viewed online from the portal <http://hptenders.gov.in> by the firms/individual registered on the website which is free of cost.
- As the bids are to be submitted online are required to be encrypted and digitally signed, the bidders are advised to obtain Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from suitable vendors or from any authorized agency at the earliest.
- KEY DATES:-**

1. Date of online publication	15/02/2025 upto 5.00 PM
2. Downloading of e-tender documents	17/02/2025, at 10.00 AM 25/02/2025 upto 5.00PM
3. Date of submission of e-tendering	17/02/2025, at 10.00 AM 25/02/2025 upto 5.00PM
4. submission of earnest money deposit and cost form through online mode (e-payment)	Upto 25/02/2025 5.00 PM
5. Date of opening bid	27/02/2025 at 11.00AM
Cover-1 eligibility criteria
Cover-2 Financial Bid	Shall be intimated Separately.

CONDITIONS:- 1. The e-tender documents shall be uploaded online in 2 (two) covers:-
i) **Cover-1** shall contain scanned copies of "eligibility information".
ii) **Cover-2** shall contain "Financial Bid" on the prescribed form.
2. **Cover-1** shall contain Scanned copies of following "eligibility information" (Scanned copies to be uploaded in Pdf file). No physical submission of documents will be allowed.
a) The Earnest money shall be through online mode (e-payment) only
b) The cost of tender form shall be through online (e-payment).
c) Certificate of registration with Jal Shakti Vibhag HP any other Govt./Semi Govt. departments/Autonomous body in appropriate class.
Eligibility criteria shall be as under:-
(d) **Copy of PAN, EPF and GST Registration.**
(e) Scanned copies of latest Income Tax clearance certificate issued by competent authority.
(f) The authorization letter regarding digital signature certificate (DSC) of the person authorized by the registered tenderer to upload the bid, be uploaded along with the other documents online.
(g) The contractor/Firm shall submit/upload the scanned copies of the documents as required in NIT through online mode only. No physical submission of documents will be allowed.
(h) The scanned copy of undertaking that I have carefully studied all the terms and condition stipulated in per PWIA 6 & 8 as well as special terms & condition appended along with schedule of quantity before quoting the rates in the BOQ chart and that I have visited the site of work before quoting the rates.
(i) The Contractor shall provide vetted drawings, structural design, Hydraulic design from IIT/NIT/PEC or any other premier institute before starting the work.
3. **Cover-2 Shall contain "Financial Bid" which will be opened at a later date to be notified separately and opened only of those contractors/Firms whose documents will be found as per Eligibility information & Technical Bid "Cover-1". Cover-2 shall contain only Financial Bid/offers on Departmental schedule quantity/Boq where contractor/Firma will quote his/their offer for each item.**
4. Earnest money of L1, shall be retained for a period of 120 days or signing of contract agreement by L1, whichever is earlier.
5. No subletting of work as a whole by the contractor is permissible.
6. In case, opening day is a holiday, the tenders shall be opened on next working day at the same time.
7. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 120 days, however every efforts shall be made to award the work within 27 days time period prescribed by Govt.
8. Conditional bids/tenders are liable to be rejected without assigning any reason. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to reject/cancel any or all the tenders/bids without assigning any reason.
9. Certificate regarding site visit duly signed by concern Assistant Engineer and Junior Engineer may also be uploaded. Without uploading of site visit certificate bid shall be rejected.
10. Any enquiry regarding tender can be obtained on e-mail of the Divisional Officer under e-mail address xeniphpeo@yahoo.com.

Executive Engineer,
HP / 5418/24-25 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPARK Jal Shakti Division R/Peo, Distt. Kinnaur H.P.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE
DEATH
A.S Vijayadev (66), Retired Sr Deputy Regional General Manager (Advt), The Hindu, Bengaluru passed away on 22-February-2025. Address: No. 986, 29th Main Road, Poornapragna Layout, Bengaluru - 560061. Contact: 9916379982.
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People at Jantar Mantar demanding stricter implementation of POC SO Act and law against bullying. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Arvey's mother seeks justice for son, strict laws against bullying

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Three years after the death of 16-year-old Arvey Malhotra, his mother on Sunday held a protest at Jantar Mantar seeking justice for her son and stringent laws against bullying in schools.

Arty Malhotra, along with parents who lost their children to alleged bullying, also demanded stricter implementation of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Arvey, a student of a private school in Farida-

bad, had died by suicide following alleged bullying over his sexuality.

"The school principal, academic coordinator and three male students were named in the FIR. They all got bail in a single day and there has been no justice even after three years," Ms. Malhotra said.

She said her fight is not just for her son but for all children who are being harassed in their schools for not "fitting in".

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

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
e-Procurement Notice INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
The Executive Engineer HPPWD Rampur Division on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering, system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the works as detailed in the table.

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost	Starting Date for down-loading Bid	Earnest Money	Deadline for Submission of Bid
1.	C/O Science Bock (Lab & Classroom) of Govt. Sr. Sec. School (Boys) at Rampur in Tehsil Rampur Distt. Shimla H.P. (SH- C/O Building portion, WS & SI, rain water harvesting tank & site development)	2,03,54,163/-	01.03.2025	4,10,000/-	07.03.2025

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders form the department website www.hptenders.gov.in.
The undersigned has right to extend or cancel the tender without declaring any reason.
HIM SUCHANA
HP / 5438/24-25 AVAM JAN SAMPARK Governor of Himachal Pradesh

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The Executive Engineer, HPPWD Kangra Distt. Kangra H.P. on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the percentage rate bids, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the work as detailed in the table.

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1.	C/O 30 Bedded Additional Block at newly upgraded community Health Centre at Lunj under Block Tiarat(SH- C/O Building portion WS & SI, Septic Tank and C/O rain water harvesting tank) (Basement floor and ground floor)	33987512/-	27.02.2025	680000/-	07.03.2025	One Year

The bidders are advised to note other details/Terms and conditions of tender from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in
HP / 5437/24-25 HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPARK

Timings			
DELHI			
MONDAY, FEB. 24			
RISE	06:51	SET	18:18
RISE	04:10	SET	14:20
TUESDAY, FEB. 25			
RISE	06:50	SET	18:18
RISE	04:59	SET	15:26
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 26			
RISE	06:49	SET	18:19
RISE	05:44	SET	16:33

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	27	10
Safdarjang	27	10
Palam	26	11

Delhi Palam Today
28°C Morning will be very cool with mist and haze. Day will be comfortable. Night also will be very cool. Dry weather to prevail.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
28°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be very cool with mist and haze. Day will be comfortable. Night also will be very cool.

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12 Indians arrive in Delhi days after deportation to Panama by the U.S.

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Twelve Indians, deported to Panama by the U.S., returned to India from the Latin American nation on Sunday, officials said.

The deportees arrived at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi, marking the first batch of Indians returning from Panama following their deportation by the U.S.

The 12 Indians are learnt to be part of 299 undocumented migrants

Over 300 Indians have already been deported to India by the U.S. in three flights this month

deported to Panama by the U.S. a few days ago.

The Trump administration has begun a mass deportation programme of foreign nationals living illegally in the U.S..

Over 300 Indians have already been deported to India by the U.S. in three flights this month.

India has maintained that it will take back all Indians who have either overstayed in the U.S. or are there without documentation after their nationality is verified.

“It is the obligation of all nations to take back their nationals, if they are found to be living illegally abroad,” External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said in Parliament on February 6.

“It is a general accepted principle in international relations,” he had said.

Elephant kills elderly couple in Kerala

The Hindu Bureau
KANNUR

A wild elephant attack claimed the lives of an elderly tribal couple in Kerala's Aralam farm here on Sunday.

The deceased, identified as Velli, 80, and his wife, Leela, 70, were attacked while they were collecting cashew nuts near the Rapid Response Team office in Karikmukku.

Protests continued on the site of the attack late on Sunday demanding immediate steps to prevent wildlife incursions. Seventeen lives have been lost to wild elephant attacks in Aralam since 2014.

Wayanad landslides survivors stage protest

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

Survivors of the 2024 landslides at Chooralmala and Mundakkai in Kerala's

Wayanad district on Sunday staged a protest against the alleged delay in the rehabilitation process.

This led to tension at Chooralmala when the police

blocked their march to the landslide-affected areas. The protest was later temporarily called off following talks with the authorities.



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Himachal Pradesh Public Works Department INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer H.P.P.W.D., Theog Division on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the item rate basis, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with H.P.P.W.D., for the works as detailed in the table:-

Sr.No.1
Name of Work:- Construction of Govt. Senior Secondary School at Sandhu Tehsil Theog Distt. Shimla, HP. (SH:- C/O Building portion, ground floor and one class room in 1st floor only, W. S. & S.I., rain water harvesting tank, Septic tank, site development etc.)
Estimated cost:- 1,38,08,880,
Starting Date for downloading Bid :- 25/02/2025 17:00 Hrs,
Earnest money:- 275800,
Time allowed:- Eighteen months, **Cost of form:-** 5000,
Deadline for submission of bid :- 07/03/2025 17:00 Hrs.

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department Sd/-
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Theog Division B&R,
H.P.P.W.D., Theog
Tel.01783 238376
Email: ee-the-hp@nic.in

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4 JANUARY

BENGALURU

18 FEBRUARY

BHOPAL

25 FEBRUARY

CHANDIGARH

18 JUNE

HYDERABAD

3 MARCH

JAIPUR

18 FEBRUARY

LUCKNOW

11 FEBRUARY

PUNE

20 JANUARY

GTB NAGAR, DELHI

8 FEB, 8 AM | 25 FEB, 6 PM

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18 FEBRUARY

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INBRIEF



DMK functionary, four others deface Hindi signage; booked

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) on Sunday booked a DMK functionary and four others for defacing the Hindi words on the signage at Tamil Nadu's Pollachi Junction railway station. The RPF registered a case against "Thendral" Selvaraj, who is in-charge of DMK's legal wing for Coimbatore south, and four others. A case has been registered against the accused for offences committed under Sections 166 (defacing public notices), 147 (trespass and refusal to desist from trespass), and 145 (b) (commits any nuisance or act of indecency or uses abusive or obscene language) of the Railways Act, 1989.

Assam: USTM chancellor sent to 14 days' judicial custody

The chancellor of the University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya (USTM), Mahbabul Haque, arrested on charges of promising students to allow unfair means in exams, has been remanded in judicial custody by a local court in Assam's Sribhum district. Mr. Haque, along with five teachers of a school in the district, were sent to 14 days' custody after a late-night hearing by the court on Saturday, an advocate involved in the case said. Commenting on the arrest, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma said he was aware of a "large network", which promises students high marks through unfair means.

Oppn. to raise deportation issue in Punjab Assembly

Press Trust of India
CHANDIGARH

The Opposition parties will try to corner the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on a host of issues, including law and order, rising State debt, deportation of illegal Indian immigrants, and the plight of farmers, in the two-day session of the Punjab Assembly commencing on Monday.

Shiromani Akali Dal leader Daljit Singh Cheema

said many issues will be raised in the session by the party MLAs.

"Besides, farmers' plight, illegal sand mining, unemployment, drugs, and higher fiscal deficit will be taken up in the session," said Mr. Cheema.

The issue of illegal travel agents will also be taken up, he added.

The Punjab Vidhan Sabha session will start with obituary references on February 24.

Karnataka-Maharashtra border remains tense as language row escalates

One more held over assault of Karnataka bus conductor; State Transport Minister to visit Belagavi today; bus services to Maharashtra expected to resume soon if no exacerbation of tension: officials

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Karnataka Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy will visit Belagavi on Monday amid the tense situation on both sides of the Karnataka-Maharashtra border following the assault on a North Western Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) bus conductor on Friday after he asked a passenger to speak in Kannada.

Bus services across the boundary have been suspended by both States as part of safety measures soon after the assault.

Mr. Reddy's planned visit has triggered hopes that bus services may resume on Monday from the Karnataka side. Karnataka transport officials have indicated that the services are expected to resume on Monday if there is no more escalation of tension.

Mr. Reddy stressed the need for taking action against those who attacked



Protest scenes: Shiv Sena (UBT) workers blacken a Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation bus in Pune on Sunday. PTI

the conductor and damaged KSRTC buses. He said defacing buses in both States served no purpose and would only escalate tension. He also called for the various linguistic communities to live peacefully.

Meanwhile, the Belagavi police have arrested one more person accused of assaulting the conductor. With the arrest of Mohan Hanchinal of Chikka Balekundri village, the number

of those arrested has risen to five, including a minor.

The injured conductor, Mahadevappa Hukkeri, is undergoing treatment in Belagavi.

On Saturday, a counter-case had been filed under provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act against the conductor by some villagers of Chikka Balekundri, alleging that he was trying to molest a

minor girl on the bus.

Karnataka Rakshana Vedike president Narayana Gowda will be visiting Belagavi on Tuesday to condemn the attack on the conductor.

Retaliatory attacks

Bus services between Karnataka and Maharashtra were stopped after some activists of the Shiv Sena (UBT) allegedly damaged KSRTC vehicles in Pune and Kolhapur. Karnataka Rakshana Vedike activists had stopped some Maharashtra buses in Athani and Ramdurg in Belagavi.

As of now, buses are plying only up to the inter-State boundary. According to officials, NWKRTC buses may start inter-State operations on Monday.

Maharashtra Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik had said on Saturday that Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) buses will not operate till talks are held between the Ministers concerned of both States.

Rajasthan Minister defends comment amid Cong. backlash

Press Trust of India
JAIPUR

Amid protests by Congress MLAs in the Rajasthan Assembly over his remark on former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Avinash Gehlot has defended his statement, saying the word he used for her was not insulting.

During Question Hour on Friday, Mr. Gehlot pointed towards the Opposition and said, "Like always, you named the scheme [on working women's hostels] after your daadi Indira Gandhi in the 2023-24 budget." The remark caused an uproar in the House, and led to three adjournments and the suspension of six Congress MLAs, including State Congress chief Govind Singh Dotsara, Ramkesh Meena, Amin Kagzi, Jakir Hussain, Hakam Ali, and Sanjay Kumar.

"Indira Gandhi was a respected Prime Minister of our country. I only used the word daadi (grandmother) for her, which is not inappropriate in any context," Mr. Gehlot said during a visit to Jhunjhunu on Sunday.

Demanding an apology from the Minister and revocation of the suspension of



The Congress MLAs sitting on a dharna in the Rajasthan Assembly on Saturday. PTI

MLAs, Congress legislators have been sitting on dharna in the Assembly after the House was adjourned on Friday. They plan to gherao the Assembly on Monday.

'Phone still being tapped' Meanwhile, Rajasthan Agriculture Minister Kirodi Lal Meena on Sunday once again claimed that his phone is still being tapped and he is under surveillance. "I am still saying my phone is being tapped and the CID is following me," he said. The claim comes days after Minister of State for Home Jawahar Singh Bedham denied the allegations in the Assembly, stating Mr. Meena's phone was not tapped. Earlier, after replying to a show-cause notice by the BJP over the allegation, Mr. Meena had said, "I have submitted my reply for the mistake I made."

Haryana municipal elections low-key affair for JJP, AAP, INLD

Ashok Kumar
GURUGRAM

Less than six months after a closely fought Assembly poll, the Congress and the ruling BJP are gearing up for yet another contest in Haryana with the election to 33 municipal bodies, including eight municipal corporations, slated for March 2. More than 600 wards are up for grabs.

However, the two regional parties led by the Chautalas – Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) and Indian Na-

tional Lok Dal (INLD) – and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which contested 89 out of the 90 seats in the Assembly poll, remain largely indifferent towards the polls and are contesting fewer seats this time.

'In revamp mode'

The Dushyant Chautala-led JJP had joined hands with the BJP to contest the elections to 46 municipal bodies in June 2022 and won the president's post in three civic bodies. The party has fielded only two can-

didates for the municipal polls this time. "The party is in restructuring mode after the Assembly poll and dissolved all its units in December last year. Only after all district units are re-constituted would the party consider contesting any poll. As two of our leaders were keen on contesting, the party allowed them to fight on its symbol," said JJP spokesperson Deepkamal Saharan.

A JJP leader on condition of anonymity said the party did not have a significant support base in urban areas and that was one of the reasons to stay away from the municipal polls.

Struggling to find a foothold in Haryana politics for more than a decade, AAP faces internal strife now. A faction is staying away from the polls and seeking an overhaul in the wake of the party's dismal show in the Assembly poll.

AAP had registered its first electoral victory in Haryana by winning the president's post in the Ismailabad municipal committee

in 2022 and got about 10% of the votes in the State. However, the party has fielded only three mayoral and six presidential candidates this time, besides around 50 candidates for various municipal wards.

Traditionally not keen on contesting municipal elections, the INLD, with its mostly rural vote bank, has only fielded a mayoral candidate in Rohtak, a candidate for the president's post in Sirsa, and candidates in three wards in Ambala Cantonment. Party

spokesperson Rakesh Shihag said the decision to contest the polls was left to the district units, and candidates were fielded in consultation with them.

Congress manifesto The State Congress unit on Sunday released its 37-point manifesto for the upcoming municipal elections, promising to "immediately correct wrong Property IDs, simplify house tax, improve the traffic system, and create street vending zones".

Station stampede: as life chugs back to normalcy, kin of victims struggle to find answers

SPOTLIGHT

Alisha Dutta

Forty-eight hours is a long time to get on with life, especially at the New Delhi Railway Station. On February 17, nearly 48 hours after the stampede that killed 18 people, 52-year-old Rajesh Upadhyay was in a hurry to board a train to Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. While platform no. 16 remained crowded, with few signs of the chaos that had transpired two days before, Upadhyay was confident that his good karma would see him through the journey. "I have committed no paap (sin), so I believe I'll not face any badha (hindrance)," he said, hopping on to an AC 3-tier compartment of the Magadh Express along with his wife and son.

As people continue to head to Prayagraj for the Maha Kumbh, the crowd surge at the railway station has left officials on the ground baffled. If anything, people are in a hurry since the religious fair is coming to an end on February 26, said a railway official.

According to his colleagues, even on February 16, a day after the stampede, 18.48 lakh passengers were ferried to the Maha Kumbh in 388 trains from various States. Till 6

p.m. on February 17, more than 14 lakh passengers were transported in 266 trains. "The Kumbh rush will continue till February 26," officials told *The Hindu*.

Upadhyay believes one needs to be fortunate enough to be able to make the trip and take a dip in the "sacred waters" of the Triveni Sangam. "I believe my fate will take me to Prayagraj safely."

Boarding the general compartment of the Shiv Ganga Express, Rakhi Shaw, 27, and her husband Rajat Shaw, 28, didn't want to back out at the last minute. "Both of us have appeared for government job exams and are awaiting the results. We feel if we take this holy journey together, maybe we can get through this hurdle," she said.

Of fate and faith

Mira Devi, a 45-year-old resident of Kanjhawala in Delhi, said attending this year's Kumbh was extremely important for her. "My three children are unemployed. If taking a dip in the Sangam can rid me of my sins and help my children, I'll take a chance," she said, adding that she said her prayers before setting out for the station.

Employment was a big reason why Prabhu Shaw, a resident of Motihari in Bihar, also sent his 18-year-old daughter Baby Kumari



The scene of the tragedy: New Delhi Railway Station, where 18 people died in a stampede on February 15; (above) Gupteshwar Yadav pointing at the site where he got separated from his wife; Opil Singh showing a photograph of his daughter who was killed. ALISHA DUTTA

to live with her uncle's family in Delhi. Kumari was headed to Prayagraj along with her uncle, aunt, and cousin when they were caught in the stampede. While Kumari died, her cousin Khushi and aunt Sharda Devi were injured in the incident.

"My parents, Baby didi, and I were travelling together from Delhi, while our relatives from Bihar were supposed to meet us at the Prayagraj station," recalled Khushi.

While all three left their rented accommodation in Delhi's Bijwasan on February 15 together, by the end of the night, Kumari's body, wrapped in white sheets, was sent to her vil-

lage in Bihar along with ₹10 lakh in cash and police protection.

Prabhu doesn't want to blame anyone and claimed it's God who snatched his daughter away. "Punya kamane ja rahi thi, par kisam ko manjoor nahin tha (She was going to receive blessings, but was not destined for it)," he said, adding that he had sent his child to Delhi to pursue higher education so she could secure a job.

However, her aunt blames the railway officials and the government. "If you know that the trains are packed, then why sell more tickets?" a visibly angry Sharda said.

Mohit Malik, husband of

Sangeeta Malik, one of the 18 killed in the stampede, also feels the railway officials were at fault. "Why boast that you have provided special trains when there is no space for people to even stand inside them? Why continue to sell tickets when you can clearly see that the stations are overcrowded?" said the resident of Mundhal in Haryana.

Talking about the instant ex gratia payment to the families of the deceased and the injured in cash, he wondered if the money could bring his wife back to life. "Then what good is it for? Is this the price of a life, or to buy people's silence?"



The 2023 guideline, they said, is "routine and applies to normal incidents". The February 15 incident was an extraordinary situation. Even in earlier incidents, cash had been distributed as it became cumbersome and time-consuming to gather bank account details, while cash could be used instantly during the crisis, they added.

The Railways distributed nearly ₹2 crore in cash as compensation following the stampede to victims and their families.

"How does all that matter," said Opil Singh, 32, a resident of Delhi's West Sagarpur. Just after losing his seven-year-old daughter, Singh found himself standing in front of TV cameras at Lady Hardinge hospital as eager reporters thrust their microphones in his face. As he opened his mouth to speak, a policeman warned him, "Bas tumhare gharwalon mei kaun kaun ghayal huya aur tum wahan kya kar rahe the yeh bolna hai, baki zyada bolte rahoge toh muavza nahin milega (Just say whatever transpired that night and who all were hurt in your family. You may just lose the compensation coming your way if you talk too much)."

More than a week after the tragedy, the usual commotion at the New Delhi Railway Station belies any

signs of a tragedy.

While railway staff worked through the night following the stampede to clear the haunting remains – shoes, bags, clothes, and strewn food – a pile of unclaimed belongings lay stacked in a corner of a room in the police post near platform no. 16.

An officer is in charge of taking photographs of the people who come to claim their goods, and then post them on the police WhatsApp group to ensure that "they don't claim what is not theirs". If the items continue to lie unclaimed, they will be sent to the 'Lost & Found' section, said a railway official.

No telltale signs

Forty-year-old Hasib, a porter who was present at the station on the night of the stampede, said it's difficult to trace the telltale signs of the tragedy at the site now. "Just like the man who kept looking for his wife for two days," Hashib said, referring to Gupteshwar Yadav, 50, a resident of Shadipur Depot, Delhi, whose wife, Tara Devi, got separated from him in the stampede. "No one knows if he found her. No one cares any longer I guess," he said.

(With inputs from Maitri Porecha)

LINK TO FULL STORY
» <https://bit.ly/4buxekF>

Two booked for ‘attempt to sabotage train’ in Kerala

The Hindu Bureau
KOLLAM

Two persons detained on Saturday for allegedly placing a telephone pole across a railway track at Kundara in Kerala have been charged under Section 327 (I) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Sections 150 (I) (a) and 153 of the Railway Act.

The accused were brought to the incident site on Sunday for collecting evidence. They had earlier testified that the post was placed on the track so that a train could break the cast iron part of the post, which could then be sold.

The police suspect a different motive as the post was placed in two places. They said a detailed investigation would follow.

There were allegations that the accused had tried to derail the Palaruvi Express. One of the accused is involved in around 11 criminal cases while the other is involved in five cases, including an attack on a former Kundara SI, a senior police officer said.

When asked whether the duo was questioned by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the police officers said multiple national agencies interrogated them.

Railway authorities had removed the obstruction early Saturday morning after a resident spotted the telephone post around 1.30 a.m. and alerted them. CCTV footage from the scene led to the arrest of the duo.

(With inputs from PTI)

Rescue efforts on in full swing: Telangana Minister

Dewatering operation is on and oxygen being pumped into tunnel, says N. Uttam Kumar Reddy; steps being taken to prevent waterlogging; govt. looking into possibility of other methods, he adds

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The Telangana government is making all-out efforts to rescue the eight workers trapped inside the collapsed portion of the Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) project tunnel in Nagarkurnool district.

The joint rescue teams leading the efforts comprise the Army, the NDRF, the SDRF, Singareni Collieries, NHIDCL personnel and experts who handled the Silkyara tunnel collapse in Uttarakhand.

Minister for Irrigation N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said that as part of the efforts to ensure a swift and safe rescue of those trapped inside, dewatering operation was going on and oxygen



Risky terrain: Since taking heavy machinery into the tunnel is hard, officials are working on other methods to remove debris.PTI

(fresh air) was being continuously pumped into the tunnel.

“Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is personally monitoring the situation and the entire administration is on a high alert,” Mr. Reddy said after returning

to Hyderabad from the accident site at Domalapenta.

He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to the Telangana Chief Minister on Saturday, assuring him of providing all necessary assistance. Leader of

the Opposition Rahul Gandhi also expressed support for the rescue efforts.

The situation at the accident site is critical and the intense seepage of water and muck deposit on the tunnel floor after collapse of a portion of it is seriously hampering the rescue operation, the Minister said. Steps are being taken to prevent waterlogging and the government is also exploring the possibility of employing alternative methods not only to clear the mud inside but also to bring out those trapped safely.

He added that taking heavy machinery into the tunnel was difficult due to the terrain, but officials were working on alternate methods to remove the debris.

Cong. brass irked as Tharoor says party leaderless in Kerala

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Congress Working Committee member Shashi Tharoor, MP, seemingly struck a discordant note within the party by reportedly speaking of the “absence of a leader in Kerala’s Congress”, meaning the party is leaderless in the State.

Mr. Tharoor’s “avowal” in an interview in a newspaper published from New Delhi on Sunday appeared to ruffle feathers in the Congress leadership in the State. Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president K. Sudhakaran told presspersons in Thrissur that Mr. Tharoor had crossed a line.

Mr. Tharoor had yet to deny the statement, which



Shashi Tharoor

stirred controversy less than a week after he earned the Congress’s ire for praising the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government for its work in the start-up sector and ease of doing business in the State.

That controversy had culminated in a private meeting with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi. Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala hinted that Mr. Tharoor’s

interview was likely politically superfluous as it was given before the meeting with Mr. Gandhi.

Mr. Tharoor appeared to advocate for his candidacy as the party’s leader ahead of the 2026 Assembly election. In the interview, he said opinion polls from independent agencies indicated he was “ahead of others in leadership stakes in [the Congress] in Kerala”.

In the interview, Mr. Tharoor said non-partisan political support had catalysed his four consecutive wins from the Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha constituency. The Congress should expand its base among non-Congress voters as he had done. “That is what we want in 2026,” he said.

South’s top cybercrime officials to meet in Hyderabad in March

Lavpreet Kaur
HYDERABAD

Hyderabad is gearing up to host a high-level cybercrime meeting in March, bringing together top police officials from the southern States to strengthen inter-State collaboration, identify critical loopholes, and develop effective strategies to combat online

frauds that transcend borders.

Senior officials leading cybercrime investigations from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu will participate.

The focus will be on streamlining cooperation between States and ad-

ressing grey areas in investigations that often hinder swift action.

Telangana Cyber Security Bureau Director Shikha Goel said that inputs from Shield 2025 – a cybersecurity conference held on February 18 and 19 – will be shared at the meeting.

“We are compiling key challenges, solutions, and

recommendations identified during the summit. These findings will be presented at the Southern States’ meeting and also shared with relevant departments to drive necessary reforms. For example, policy-related suggestions will be forwarded to the Central government for action,” she explained.

सी.एस.आई.आर. – भारतीय रासायनिक जीवविज्ञान संस्थान
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Amit Kundal

Who would have thought attention

would start becoming a rare resource? Amid the chaos of juggling multiple tasks, the ability to pay attention to details stands out as a superpower, and a rather subtle one at that. How attention to detail can transform and transcend our creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills often goes overlooked. This, unknowingly, has a direct impact on our daily experiences.

In a world where rapid results are all the rage, the magic lies in taking a pause to deliberately observe, listen, and truly engage with the world around us. It isn't just an aesthetic exercise but rather a mindset that tends to shape how humans, especially students, navigate their lives through their education and careers.

Perception and interpretation

At its core, attention to detail begins with how we perceive and interpret the world through our senses. Learning to truly perceive and pay attention is not about passivity.

It is about actively engaging with the nuances of our environment and its complexities and allowing it to inform your creative and intellectual pursuits. That means not just observing the world but also participating in it. The way you look at an everyday ob-

Today’s superpower

Attention to detail allows students to dig deeper, find patterns, and draw connections between different aspects of their lives.

ject, interact with a space, or observe human behaviour can become the seed of inspiration for something transformative.

Design is everywhere, and we are in it. Every type of design exists to create value and profoundly meaningful human experiences. From the shape of our coffee mugs, thoughtfully

designed to cater to our ergonomic needs, to solving the convoluted issue of climate calamities through well-crafted strategies, design always surrounds us and becomes an organic part of our environment. This is why paying attention to detail has substantial implications.

Take a good look at your

phone screen and imagine if the ‘home’ button had been placed on the top left corner. Would it be more convenient than its original position?

Attention to such details bridges the gap between functionality and delight, between an acceptable outcome and an extraordinary one.

Students who cultivate and embrace this mindset of leveraging attention often find themselves creating work that resonates deeply, whether it is designing immersive interfaces, crafting compelling narratives, or solving complex global issues. The ripple effect of paying attention can lead to outcomes that are

not only functional but also meaningful.

Curating experiences

Have you noticed the apparent fragrance when you walk into a Starbucks? Or the warm welcoming lighting that draws you in to enjoy a cup of coffee? If these details weren't part of a customer's experience, the chances of going back there would be slimmer. Elements in the environment that are otherwise thought of as dispensable actually make or break an experience. Today, it has become the designer's role to curate these experiences. Needless to say, being able to consciously and creatively integrate these details results in a memorable experience.

In today's interconnected world, technological and human experiences

are mingling in ways that demand the invaluable ability to notice, interpret, and act on the details. Future designers, innovators, and thinkers must nurture this skill to navigate the intricate relationship between people and new-age tech especially as it becomes increasingly complex. A design education grounded in interdisciplinary learning that combines Technology, Psychology, Business Analytics, and the Humanities can equip students with the capabilities to balance technical precision with humanity-centric empathy, fostering a mindset where every detail contributes to a larger, purpose-driven vision.

With a growing focus on improving human and user experiences, the need for impactful experience design has become para-

mount. Experience design as a field takes a holistic approach that effectively merges aesthetics with empathy and fosters innovation across sectors. It is a creative process of shaping meaningful products, services, and business frameworks, embracing tangible and virtual interactions alike.

For students stepping into tomorrow's dynamic world, attention to detail is a superpower that allows people to dig deeper, find patterns and draw connections between different aspects of their lives.

Ultimately, it is a simple, yet effective weapon to achieve more mindful outcomes that have an invaluable positive impact on the world around us.

The writer is Associate Dean, Faculty of Design, Art and Performance, FLAME University.

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Necessary infusion

The RBI's long-term currency swap was likely forced by financial volatility

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) recent decision to inject an additional \$10 billion into the financial system through a dollar/rupee swap auction is a timely measure aimed at addressing long-term liquidity concerns among domestic lenders. These concerns stem from a flight of foreign capital from Indian stock markets, as investors seek better returns in the United States amid President Donald Trump's proposed corporate tax cuts and ongoing tariff wars, which have strengthened the U.S. dollar against global currencies. This marks the second such rupee infusion in less than a month. However, unlike the first tranche of \$5 billion on January 31, which had a six-month tenor, the latest swap auction has a three-year duration. The combined effect of these two auctions will inject approximately ₹1.3 trillion into the banking system, as lenders deposit their dollar reserves with the RBI in exchange for rupees at a pre-determined buy-back premium. Currency swaps are among the tools central banks deploy during periods of high volatility in the global financial system. These measures have the primary aim of stabilising the local currency, mitigating liquidity constraints in the domestic financial system, and curbing inflationary pressures. Economists estimate that an additional \$5 billion infusion may be necessary to neutralise the ₹1.7 trillion liquidity deficit in India's banking system as of February 20, 2025.

This is the second time that the RBI has conducted a long-duration currency swap. The first was in 2019, in response to global financial volatility during Mr. Trump's first term, amid trade tariff tensions and tax cuts. However, unlike 2019, when India's foreign exchange reserves were rising, ensuring dollar availability while rupee liquidity remained constrained, today's situation is more challenging. Between October 2024 and February 21, 2025, the rupee has depreciated approximately 3.3% against the dollar, breaching the 85 per dollar mark on December 19, 2024. Foreign portfolio investors and foreign institutional investors have also withdrawn roughly \$31 billion from Indian equity markets. Since December 2024, the RBI has sold an estimated \$11.2 billion (about 18% of its foreign exchange reserves) to stabilise the rupee. Given these conditions, the latest long-term currency swap appears to be a necessity rather than a proactive measure. Indian banks must capitalise on this liquidity infusion by continuing to extend credit, ensuring that the cycle of capital investment, employment generation, wage growth, and consumer demand remains intact. This, in turn, could help propel India's real GDP growth beyond the current 6.4%, despite prevailing global economic headwinds.

Foreign influence

India's response to tainted aid must be rooted in policy, not rhetoric

The controversy over USAID's presence in India reflects an increasingly unhinged public discourse, undermining the nation's confidence and global standing. The BJP and the Congress have been engaged in a political tug-of-war, attempting to corner each other over USAID-funded projects and foreign connections. However, much of this cacophony that passes for debate is fuelled by misinformation and misinterpretation, often drawing from insinuations made by the Trump administration which views international aid as a waste of American resources. While the U.S. may have its reasons to reassess its aid priorities, it is regrettable that India's major political parties are echoing these arguments without a nuanced understanding. USAID has long supported projects in India, including those in partnership with the government. In the absence of verifiable data on the extent and impact of these initiatives, discussions are bound to be ill-informed and prejudiced. In a globalised world, where countries compete for capital, technology, and talent from across borders, branding political opponents as foreign agents may be an easy propaganda tactic, but poisons the domestic political environment and weakens India's aspirations to emerge as a global power.

It is true that foreign aid can be a tool of soft power, often used by stronger nations to exert influence over domestic affairs of other countries. However, recognising this reality requires a responsible and measured approach, and not an overreaction that borders on self-sabotage. India itself has evolved into an aid provider, a role it seeks to expand. According to an ORF analysis, since 2000, the Ministry of External Affairs has overseen financial assistance exceeding \$48 billion to over 65 countries, through grants, lines of credit, and capacity-building programmes. This growing role, as a donor nation, has coincided with stricter regulations on foreign contributions within India. However, these regulations have been heavily politicised – entities aligned with the ruling establishment often face fewer hurdles, while others, even those engaged in purely apolitical activities, encounter significant restrictions. The American debate over USAID's role in India does raise concerns about foreign influence, but any response must be rooted in clear-headed policy rather than reactionary rhetoric. If the government genuinely suspects that foreign funding is shaping India's political landscape in undesirable ways, it must approach the issue with transparency and a well-defined plan for investigation. Managing national security in an era of increasing global interconnectedness and transnational challenges is a complex task, one that requires a mature, strategic outlook rather than a chaotic, polarised public discourse.

A few months ago, this writer and his colleagues interviewed migrant industrial workers in Ludhiana, Punjab, for a research project. The respondents worked in factories (producing garments, auto components, and other products) for 11 hours to 12 hours a day. When orders were high, they worked for days on end without a break. Away from the shop floor, their waking hours were spent almost entirely on cooking and in their daily commute.

It is puzzling that some of the well-known corporate leaders in the country have been urging Indians to work longer hours. They may not be aware that most of India's workers are informal and must work extremely long hours, sweating to earn a living (manual workers or household helpers). In 2023-24, the Periodic Labour Force Survey showed that only 21.7% of India's workers were in regular jobs with a salary, while the rest were casual workers or self-employed. Even within the category of regular workers, approximately half of them had to face informal working conditions (they did not have a written job contract, were not eligible for paid leave, and did not receive any social security benefit).

Competing with the cheap labour advantage

By publicly expressing their preference for having longer working hours, industry bosses have inadvertently confirmed a well-known, yet not-much-discussed, fact. Indian industry continues to derive its competitive advantage mainly from cheap labour rather than technology and innovation. In the developed world, the mode of surplus extraction underwent a transformation long ago, from making workers labour longer hours to employing them more efficiently with superior technologies and management practices. Based on workers' conditions during the Industrial Revolution in Britain in the 18th century, Marx wrote: "In its ...werewolf hunger for surplus-labour, capital oversteps even the merely physical maximum bounds of the working day. It steals the time required for the consumption of fresh air and sunlight. It haggles over a meal-time...."

However, working conditions in Britain improved by the middle of the 19th century, following regulations brought about by labour union pressures and the sweeping economic and technological changes (although exploitative labour practices continued unabatedly in the colonies). Today, workers in rich countries put in much fewer hours but have significantly higher productivity than those in developing countries.



Javan Jose Thomas

is a Professor of Economics at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi

With an over-reliance on cheap labour for growth, captains of the Indian industry have been shooting themselves in the foot

According to data reported by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2024, an employee's average weekly work hours was 38 hours in the United States and 36.6 hours in Japan as compared to 46.7 hours in India.

India's capitalists have deployed one strategy after another to ensure that they have at their disposal a large labour force willing to work long hours for low wages. Big businesses in India have abetted a structural shift in industry from the organised sector, which is governed by regulations of wages and working conditions, to the unorganised sector, where such rules do not apply. In industrial clusters across the country, there is a predominance of small units with six or less workers. At any time in a crowded industrial area in Coimbatore or Ludhiana, one hears the sounds of several hundreds of machines (lathes, milling and rolling machines, foundries) operating in small sheds. Each shed produces a small part or a component that feeds into a production network coordinated by more prominent firms to manufacture a range of products, including pumps, automobiles, and agricultural tools. In most small firms, the owners, often former workers, work alongside the hired labourers. Over 70% of India's manufacturing workforce (68 million in 2021-22) are in small, unregistered enterprises (each with less than 10 workers).

Losing out on innovation

The relations between the small and large firms in India have not been mutually enriching (of the kind that prospered in Japan), but instead, have been enfeebling the small firms even more. In interviews this writer had with them over the years, the owners of small firms highlighted issues relating to payments for the parts or components they supply. The bigger firms typically delay these payments several months after receiving the supply, leaving the small-firm owners desperate for fresh funds to run their factories. The big firms refuse to pay more for the parts despite increases in material and other production-related costs, encouraging a race-to-the-bottom competition among the small firms. All these are at a time when small firms are weakened by inadequate state support, especially bank credit, and rising competition from cheaper imports.

India's factories are increasingly dependent on workers who are employed through contractors rather than those they directly employ. Of all workers who joined India's factory sector after 2011-12, 56% are contract workers. These workers, who are not protected by labour

regulations, are paid much lower wages than directly employed workers. Workers who migrate from their villages to seek jobs in distant lands form the core of the labour supply for Indian industry.

The low wages migrant workers receive manifest their multiple disadvantages – on account of their social position and their lack of ownership of assets or access to social security benefits. As wages have been pushed downward, profits have soared, especially after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. In India's factory sector, profit as a share of value added was 31.6% in 2019-20, but shot upward to 46.4% in 2021-22.

The garment industry

However, with its over-reliance on cheap labour for growth, the Indian industry has been shooting itself in the foot, hindering its forward movement in the long run, especially globally. A case in point is India's garment industry experience. One expects a labour-surplus India to outshine other countries in this low-wage industry. However, India's share of the worldwide export of garments has remained stagnant at 3.1% over the last two decades. China, Bangladesh, and Vietnam have considerably outperformed India in the garment industry. Chinju Johny and this writer (*Economic and Political Weekly*, August 24, 2024) have argued that the main barrier to progress for India in this industry is the reluctance shown by the capitalists to modernise firms. They lack the ambition to go beyond the limited advantages that low wages offer them in the domestic and niche segments of the export markets in the garment industry, which western multinational companies dominate.

The easy availability of labour has lulled Indian industry into a stupor, closing its eyes to the wider opportunities and the gaping need for technological and managerial changes. This has undermined growth in all fields, including new-generation ones such as the IT sector. Low wages and long working hours have reduced the purchasing capabilities of the working classes and depressed the domestic market, reinforcing the negative momentum.

Stretching the limits of the working day, allowing little time for recuperation for tired minds and bodies, and having all these driven by the greed for profits, is unconscionable. And the industry's gains, if any, are only in the short run. In the long run, the swelling ranks of impoverished workers will strangle the industry, leaving it gasping for innovation and growth. The earlier the masters of the Indian industry realise this, the better.

Talent shortage — global challenge, India's opportunity

The global labour market does not seem to be future-ready. No one has the crystal ball to tell the future exactly, but it can be safely said that the skills needed in 2030 will be quite different from what we have today. This is a challenge for the entire world – and an opportunity for India.

A recent FICCI-KPMG study, 'Global Mobility of Indian Workforce', has estimated that by 2030, the demand for skilled workers will exceed supply, leading to a talent shortage of over 85.2 million people. "This global skills shortage could result in estimated \$8.45 trillion in unrealised annual revenue by 2030 – equivalent to the combined GDPs of Germany and Japan," the study says. For India, the challenge, and the opportunity, is to grab as large a slice of the 8.45 trillion pie as soon as possible.

Addressing this challenge requires targeted strategies, international cooperation and proactive policy interventions to optimise workforce mobility and economic productivity. At the national level, the need of the hour is a properly coordinated effort among government, the private sector and other stakeholders.

Geographic regions and their demands

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Europe (including the United Kingdom) and Australia emerge as three key geographies where workforce mobility will be critical. The talent shortage will neither be uniform across all regions nor follow similar patterns. Each of these regions faces specific workforce demands. However, health care will be a common requirement across all three regions, with aging populations and increasing health-care needs driving demand. In general, services will be prevalent in the three geographies. Manufacturing and construction are pivotal for the GCC and Australia, while Europe, being the oldest post-industrial society, will require more service-sector workers. Besides, there are emerging sectors. As in the study, 'Across all these sectors, there is growing demand towards skills pertaining to automation, AI [Artificial Intelligence], big data, predictive analytics, IoT Join FREE Whatsapp Channel <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6RGJOKH6oBd0F>



Jvoti Vij

is Director General, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

The demand for skilled workers is set to exceed supply, and India must move quickly to tap the needs in key geographies

(internet of things), blockchain, management, resource efficiency and sustainability.'

Existing barriers and strategies

There are several barriers that obstruct the efficient movement of skilled workers across borders. Some of these are regulatory and immigration barriers (complex visa processes and stringent work permit regulations hinder skilled migration) and recruitment malpractices and trafficking (exploitative recruitment practices and human trafficking that pose serious threats to migrant workers' safety and rights). In his recent visit to the United States, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted this menace and underlined the need to fight it. Other obstructions include policy barriers and skill mismatches (many Indian degrees, particularly in medicine, are not recognised everywhere in Europe, leading to underemployment or unemployment of qualified professionals) and language and cultural barriers (integration challenges, including language proficiency and cultural adaptation, affect workforce efficiency and productivity).

The Government of India has initiated various programmes to address the challenges. These include Bilateral Agreements and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) – India has several agreements with the GCC nations to protect the rights of Indian workers. For instance, the Joint India-United Arab Emirates Vision recognises the importance of skill cooperation between the two nations. Some other notable initiatives are skill development programmes to align workers' skills with global market needs and digital platforms for workforce support, where online recruitment systems are focused on ensuring legal protections for workers and shielding them from fraudsters, particularly in GCC countries.

To capitalise on the global demand for skilled labour, several strategic measures should be prioritised which include sector-specific skill training (workforce training should be aligned with the needs of target geographies and preparation must be made for emerging sectors); regulation of recruitment practices (authorities

must implement stricter oversight on recruitment agencies to prevent exploitation and trafficking); recognition of qualifications (international collaborations must focus on mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications to ease workforce integration); incentivising public-private partnerships (governments at the Centre and in the States should encourage private sector involvement in training programmes and global employment facilitation) and promoting circular migration and mobility (temporary work visas and rotational workforce models can address labour shortages without causing demographic imbalances).

The political climate regarding immigration policies is ever-changing. While Europe may tighten its regulations, Australia remains more open to skilled migration. In the FICCI-KPMG study, the Indian diaspora is the second largest and fastest growing diaspora in Australia.

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India's advantage At any rate, strict immigration policies mainly target illegal migration. India must remain resilient in its efforts to position its skilled workforce globally, undeterred by shifting political rhetoric. A major advantage for Indian workers is the absence of significant hostility towards them, and towards India, in most global markets. Even in countries with growing anti-immigration sentiments, skilled Indian workers continue to find opportunities. However, to maintain and enhance this position, the Indian government must take measures to curb illegal migration. Preventing illegal immigration will not only protect Indian workers from exploitative agents but also enhance India's global reputation as a reliable supplier of skilled labour.

This will also help us realise the dream of becoming Viksit Bharat. The Chairman of the Sixteenth Finance Commission, Arvind Panagariya, recently projected that India's GDP could reach between \$6.5 trillion and \$9 trillion by 2030. India's ability to move closer to the \$9-trillion mark will be directly linked to how much of the estimated \$8.45 trillion in unrealised global economic potential it can tap into.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Political ping pong

The political furore over U.S. President Donald Trump's claim on USAID funds seems to be growing. It is an old American trait to be poking its nose in another country's affairs. Mr. Trump needs to get to the bottom of the issue and expose who the beneficiaries of the '\$21 million fund' are. Beating the same drum everyday does not help anybody.

There has to be a transparent investigation as well as irrefutable proof.
Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee,
Faridabad, Haryana

It is a mystery why the U.S. was interested in voter turnout in India and that there was a sum marked for this. As the issue is very serious, and has seen Mr. Trump going at it hammer and tongs, there needs to

be a proper investigation. The said amount is huge and embarrassing as far as India is concerned. It must clear the air.

Kirti Wadhawan,
Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh

It is alarming that there are external forces meddling in the internal affairs of the subcontinent. It does not seem to be hearsay but possible fact as the U.S.

President himself says so. Whether the funds were meant for India or Bangladesh, such 'foreign interventions' could upset bilateral relationships in the region. Perhaps India needs to reach out to regional leaders and ensure that democratic processes remain free from 'undue external influences'.
Parry Garg,
Ludhiana, Punjab

Political change in Delhi

That the BJP has chosen a first-time legislator to lead the city of Delhi shows that the party has taken a calculated risk. The promise is that Delhi will become a world class city, but as the new Chief Minister, Rekha Gupta has her task cut out. She is said to be sincere and should fulfil all promises made to the people in terms of infrastructure, the

basic necessities and even in health and education. There must be a focus on the industrial development of Delhi. The days ahead must see an end to false promises.

Ravi Mathur,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

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

A new age of imperialism

In Ernest Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*, a character is asked how he went bankrupt. “Gradually and then suddenly,” he says. So, too, perhaps with the rules-based international order that has governed relations between member states, after the dizzying first weeks of the second Trump presidency. Three years ago, when Russia invaded Ukraine, the violation of the UN Charter by a permanent member of the Security Council severely tested the principles upon which the post-war order had been built. It exposed the fragility of an open, rules-based international system founded on the three pillars: economic integration through a global trading system and international financial institutions; collective security based on sovereign equality; and self-determination. However, today, the U.S. has switched from backing Ukraine to echoing Russia in a repudiation of the Charter principles. This has dealt a body blow to the UN-based system of global governance.

The birth of the world order
The current world order rose from the ashes of World War II. Over several conferences between 1941 and 1945, the U.S., the U.K., and the Soviet Union agreed to the formation of an international organisation based on collective security to maintain peace and manage relations between states as sovereign equals. Beneath the lofty principles was a hard-nosed recognition that loyalty to the system rested on calculations of self-interest. It was therefore decided at the Tehran Conference of 1943 between Winston Churchill, Theodore Roosevelt, and Joseph Stalin that this organisation would enforce peace through ‘four policemen’: the U.S., Britain (then still an imperial power), the Soviet Union, and China (the latter two were needed to fight Japan). By the Yalta Conference of 1945, France was included at the top table, mainly



Priyanjali Malik
writes on politics and international relations

The rhetoric from the White House signals a new world order that is nasty and brutish and in which might makes right

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to deal with territories that had been occupied by the Third Reich. The imposition of a victor’s peace was avoided by insisting on the sovereign equality of all states in a rules-based order. Great power rivalries would be managed by a system of collective security and economic integration. In reality, however, the 1945 Yalta Conference implicitly accepted spheres of influence for the Soviet Union in eastern Europe and, by extension, for the U.K. and the U.S. in the rest of Europe. This was the price for Stalin’s agreement to fight with the Allies against Japan. Yet, flawed though it was, the UN system, the Bretton Woods organisations, and subsidiary organisations lubricated the conduct of relations between states. Even if war did not disappear, the system privileged norms and principles that made international relations more predictable and consensual and fettered the power of larger states to the ideals of a rules-based forum of sovereign equals. In time, spheres of influence yielded to self-determination.

Upending the world order
President Donald Trump has taken a bulldozer to this system. He has undermined international agreements by pulling the U.S. out of the Paris Agreement, signalling its departure from the World Health Organization, and ordering a review of American membership of all international organisations and treaties. And by unilaterally imposing tariffs on trading partners, he has thrown the global trading system into complete disarray. Overnight, norms and expectations of behaviour from a founding member of this international order have been upended. The U.S., the most powerful nation, is behaving like a nationalist foreign policy, seeking to expand its influence and borders within its hemisphere, and promoting its economic and mercantilist interests. But perhaps the most dramatic

move has been Mr. Trump’s reinstatement of ties with Vladimir Putin. His attempts to negotiate a peace in Ukraine without Kyiv at the table, calling Volodymyr Zelenskyy a dictator, and agreeing to Russian demands that no NATO troops set foot on Ukrainian soil to enforce any ‘peace’ that is negotiated have stunned Europe. Europe has to come to terms with managing its own security, having ridden on the U.S.’s coattails for decades within NATO. The meeting between American and Russian officials at Riyadh may not have been a Yalta moment, but the parallels are strong. The main difference is that this is not a victor’s peace, but a sell-out from Ukraine’s former backer. The rhetoric from the White House (and Mr. Trump’s Truth Social account) signals a new world order that is nasty and brutish and in which might makes right. The U.S.’s retreat from the global stage to its neighbourhood, while Mr. Trump tries acquiring Greenland, Canada, the Panama Canal, and perhaps Gaza, may seem the stuff of fantasy, but if he is to be taken at his word, it signals the start of a new imperial age. The world is being divided into spheres of influence. The U.S. will exert power on its own hemisphere, and perhaps on West Asia. By repeating Mr. Putin’s lines on Ukraine and NATO expansion, Mr. Trump has effectively handed over Europe to Russia, leaving Mr. Putin free to pursue his revanchist claims on Ukraine and recreate imperial Russia’s lost glory. That leaves China, which has propped up Russia through its Ukrainian adventure. Beijing’s irredentism regarding Taiwan has so far been held in check by the U.S.’s security guarantees in East and Southeast Asia. America’s retreat leaves China free to consider moving on its claims to Taiwan. India would do well to remember that China has never accepted the McMahon Line. Suddenly, along with the world order, our neighbourhood too is starting to look more insecure.

An early shift to election mode

The Tamil Nadu political landscape has changed significantly since 2021

STATE OF PLAY

D. Suresh Kumar
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Tamil Nadu still has about 15 months to go before it faces Assembly elections, but major political parties have already begun re-jigging their respective organisations to get them ready for the big battle.

Earlier this month, the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) bifurcated its district units and created four new units. It also gave representation to members of certain key communities. Some sulking seniors have been assuaged, weaklings removed, and those who switched over from the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) rewarded.

The AIADMK followed suit by appointing front-line leaders for its 82 district units. They have been tasked with visiting their respective districts and submitting reports by the end of March.

The political landscape has changed significantly since M.K. Stalin took oath as Chief Minister in the midst of COVID-19 in May 2021. While the DMK’s eight-year-old rainbow alliance is largely intact, the front that the AIADMK headed four summers ago is in a shambles and so is the party. Last year, during the Lok Sabha polls, for the first time, the Bharatiya Janata Party headed an alliance and bettered its electoral performance; Seeman’s Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) was recognised as a State party; and actor C. Joseph Vijay launched the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK).

Alliances have been indispensable for the two Dravidian majors for capturing power, barring 2016, but it is

too early to predict how they will take shape. What is clear, though, is that 2026 will not be a cakewalk for any party. Notwithstanding the strengths of the alliances, the NTK and TVK, if they contest on their own, could damage the prospects of the principal forces.

Despite saying that the DMK will easily win more than 200 Assembly seats, Mr. Stalin is leaving nothing to chance. He knows that it will be perilous to underestimate the potential of the AIADMK, even if the party has its own woes and weaknesses; the AIADMK could still forge a strong alliance and challenge the DMK.

Mr. Stalin hit the ground running late last year. He has been going on two-day tours to various districts, conducting roadshows, and meeting people. Video footage of Mr. Stalin eating halwa from Tirunelveli’s famous sweets shop, Iruttu Kadai, and meeting with goldsmiths in Coimbatore is reminiscent of his earlier political roadshows, such as ‘Namakku Naame (We stand for ourselves)’ in 2015-16 and ‘Ungal Thogithiyil Stalin (Stalin in your constituency)’ in 2021. The DMK is focused on projecting him as a father figure; Mr. Stalin says he is overjoyed when young people address him as ‘Appa (father)’. He has also launched an app, APPA (Anaithu Palli Parent Teachers Association), which is designed to bridge the communication gap between pa-

rents, teachers, and the administration. This has inevitably resulted in people wondering if the attempt is to draw parallels between him and the late AIADMK leader, Jayalalithaa, who took pride in being called ‘Ammma (mother)’.

The DMK is also aware that its populist schemes, outreach programmes, and claims of having fulfilled 90% of its 505 electoral promises will not guarantee it a second consecutive term in office unless State government employees are convinced that they should vote for it. This section is disillusioned that the government has not restored the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), the Contributory Pension Scheme, and the Unified Pension Scheme, and submit a detailed report with recommendations within nine months.

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami has also been touring various districts and addressing public meetings, while battling discontent within and trying to manoeuvre a soft salvo by party veteran K.A. Sengottaiyan. As he had to face the ignominy of AIADMK candidates forfeiting deposits in seven Lok Sabha constituencies last year, and traditional support from the Mukkulathors has eroded after former coordinator O. Panneerselvam’s expulsion from the party, Mr. Palaniswami feels compelled to forge a politically creditworthy alliance. He also has to contend with external attempts aimed at preventing the AIADMK from allying with newer political forces in the State.

The political landscape is pregnant with possibilities. It is difficult to judge now which way the wind will blow.

Manipur’s GST growth rate declines, inflation surges

Thousands of hours of Internet shutdowns have added to the State’s woes

DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan,
Samreen Wani
Kushal Varma I.V.

The ongoing conflict in Manipur has had a significant impact on the State’s economy. The revenue flow from GST has slowed down drastically, while retail inflation levels have skyrocketed. The double whammy came amid over 1,000 hours of Internet shutdowns last year preceded by more than 4,300 hours in 2023. While ethnic violence continues to lead to numerous deaths, the theatre of conflict has now shifted to the peripheral districts of Jiribam and Kamjong.

While the growth rate of GST revenues from Manipur was among the highest across all States between FY18 and FY19 and between FY19 and FY20, it was among the lowest between FY23 and FY24. Manipur collected ₹670 crore in GST revenues in FY24, an 8.9% increase from FY23 – the fifth lowest growth rate among 31 States and Union Territories. In contrast, it had ranked second and third in India in terms of GST growth rate in FY18-FY19 and FY19-FY20.

Chart 1 compares the GST growth rates for India and Manipur. Manipur’s GST growth rate was 2.5 times higher than India’s between FY18 and FY19, and five times higher than India’s between FY19 and FY20. However, in FY23-FY24, Manipur’s GST growth rate was three-fifths of India’s.

While the rise in cost of living, driven in part by an increase in food prices, is a pan-India concern, the rise in retail inflation is pinching the wallets of Manipuri consumers more than anywhere else in the country. Before the start of hostilities in May 2023, Manipur had the lowest retail inflation among all the States. In January 2023, while the average Indian retail inflation was exceeding 6%, it was just 1.7% in Manipur. In May

2023, while the average inflation in India was 4.3%, inflation climbed to 9.5% in Manipur, the highest among all the States.

Since then, inflation in Manipur has remained higher than the all-India average across most months. The inflation rates in May, June, and July 2024 were the only exceptions to the trend and this was mainly due to the base effect. In January 2025, while Indian retail inflation eased to a five-month low of 4.3%, the corresponding number was 7.4% for Manipur (**Chart 2**).

Apart from price rise, Internet shutdowns have disrupted life and work in Manipur in the last two years. An Internet shutdown was first imposed in the districts of Churachandpur and Pherzawl on April 28, 2023. It was extended to the whole State on May 3, 2023, following communal clashes. The Internet shutdown in Manipur lasted 200 days in 2023, which is the longest in the north-east and the second longest in the country after Jammu and Kashmir. Shutdowns continued in 2024, with the latest recorded last December.

A district-wise breakdown of Internet shutdowns since 2023 shows that Churachandpur is the worst affected (about 30 shutdowns) followed by Imphal East, Imphal West, Bishnupur, and Thoubal (more than 25 shutdowns each). Kakching and Kangpokpi have experienced 23 and 21 shutdowns, respectively.

As noted before, the theatre of conflict has shifted. In the first year of the conflict (May 2023 to June 2024), the majority of conflict-related fatalities were concentrated in the districts of Imphal east, Imphal west, Bishnupur, Kangpokpi, Kakching, Thoubal and Tengnoupal (**Map 3A**).

However, communal tensions began to rise in the peripheral district of Jiribam after the murder of a Meitei farmer in June 2024. From the second half of 2024 (**Map 3B**), while fatalities occurred everywhere, many were reported from the Jiribam and Kamjong districts.

State under seige

The data for the charts were sourced from MOSPI, the GST portal and Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED)

Civil unrest: Security personnel stand guard during a protest in the Kangpokpi district of Manipur in November last year (PTI)



Chart 1: The chart shows the rate of change of GST collections for India and Manipur over the previous financial year (in %)

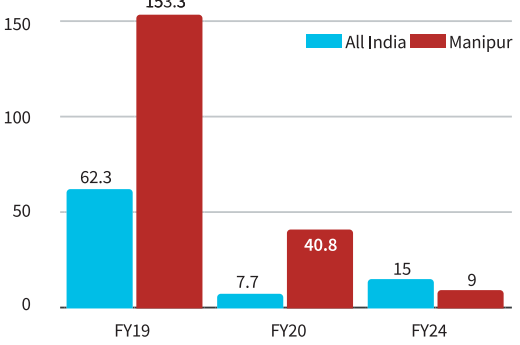
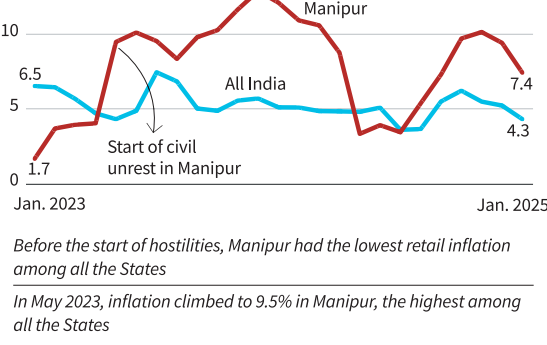
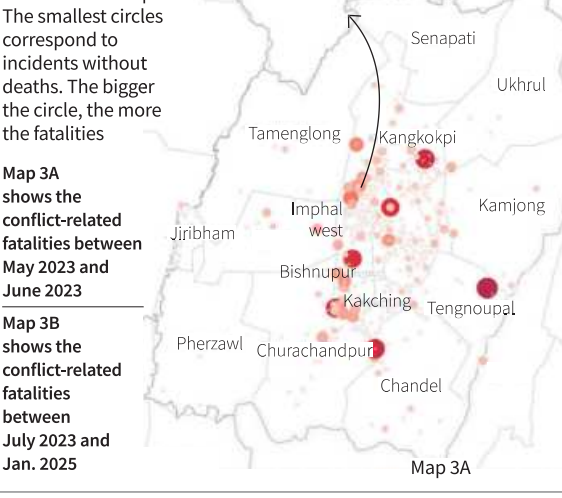


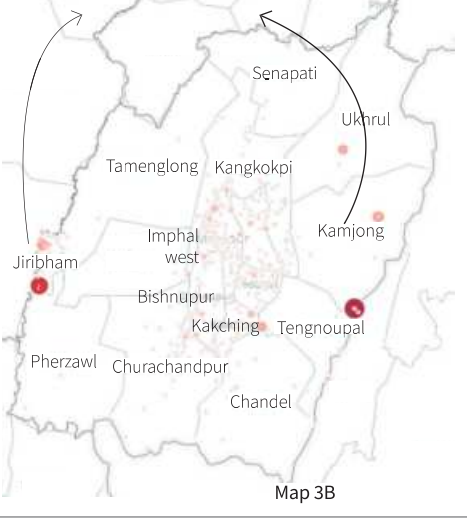
Chart 2: The chart shows the retail inflation (y-o-y change, in %)



Map 3: The maps show the location-wise incidents in Manipur. The smallest circles correspond to incidents without deaths. The bigger the circle, the more the fatalities



■ Since the second half of 2024, while fatalities occurred everywhere, many were reported from the Jiribam and Kamjong districts



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The **Hindu**.

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 24, 1975

Swiss firm’s move hits Bangalore watch unit

New Delhi, Feb. 22: Asuag of Switzerland, a monopolistic entity controlling the Swiss watch industry, has caused serious dislocation to a Bangalore firm, having a technological tie-up with a Swiss firm for the manufacture of electronic watches by choking off all credit facilities to its Swiss collaborator, Bernard Golay.

The Bangalore firm is now making strenuous efforts to go to the rescue of its Swiss partner, and keep its own manufacturing programme going, by taking up shares in the Swiss company. It has asked the Union Government permission to do so and for release of foreign exchange to the tune of about two million Swiss francs (About Rs. 6 millions) for this purpose. It has also made an alternative proposal for the release of a similar amount to enable it to buy the technological documentation from Bernard Golay.

In recent years, despite all its assurances to the contrary, it appears that Asuag has become increasingly alarmed over the progress being made by the watch industry in India. Though the Swiss industry has disowned any responsibility for the smuggling of Swiss watches into India, it has been widely suspected that such smuggling has been thriving with its connivance.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 24, 1925

Drugging babies in industrial areas

London, Feb. 23: In the Commons, Mr. Johnstone drew attention to the fact that medical evidence showed that 98 per cent of the children born in the industrial area of Bombay were drugged with opium, so that they might sleep and not cry for food while their mothers were working in factories. He declared that infant mortality in Bombay was 666 per thousand compared with 80 per thousand in London. Asked as to what steps he proposed to take in the matter, Earl Winterton replied that Lord Birkenhead had been informed that the Government of Bombay was considering the question of the administration of opium to children. According to official statistics, infant mortality in Bombay was 178.11 per thousand and not 666.

Text & Context

THE  HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of Indian projects funded by USAID in FY24

7 Amid controversy over USAID's alleged role in influencing Indian elections, the latest annual report of the Finance Ministry has disclosed that the agency funded projects worth \$750 million in 2023-24. During the year, no funding was made to enhance voter turnout but were for projects related to agriculture and food security; water and sanitation; renewable energy; disaster management, health. PTI

Investment proposals approved by the Assam cabinet

1.22 In ₹ lakh crore. Addressing a press conference after a Cabinet meeting, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that it had been decided that all MoUs, which will be signed during the Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment and Infrastructure Summit, will be "properly scrutinised and then approved" by the council of ministers. PTI

Number of CCTV cameras to be installed in Sambhal

300 The administration in Sambhal is set to install CCTV cameras at 127 locations across the city to bolster security and surveillance. This comes following violence in November last year in which four persons were killed. The project, funded under the 15th Finance Commission grant, will be implemented as part of the city surveillance initiative. PTI

Australia's Prime Minister promises boost for healthcare

5.4 In \$ billion. Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese promised a \$5.4-billion boost to the national healthcare system in an overture to voters ahead of elections that must be held by May 17. Surveys show the cost of living is at the top of voters' minds. This would result in patients not having to pay for 90% of visits to the doctor by 2030, the government said. AFP

Domestic trips undertaken in China during the lunar new year

9.02 In billion. China notched a record domestic trips during the 40-day lunar new year travel rush, *Xinhua* reported, surpassing the 8.4 billion trips taken in the same holiday period a year earlier. Some 513 million train trips were taken during the Spring Festival, as the holiday is known in China. REUTERS

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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What has SC previously ruled on gag orders?

What were the stringent conditions imposed on podcaster and influencer Ranveer Allahbadia by the Supreme Court? What are the factors on which the top court grants interim relief to the accused in a case? What has the Court said about gag orders in the past?

EXPLAINER

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

The Supreme Court on February 18, granted interim protection from arrest to podcaster and influencer Ranveer Allahbadia in connection with the First Information Reports (FIRs) registered against him over remarks made on the YouTube show "India Got Latent". A Bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and N. Kotiswar Singh imposed stringent conditions, prohibiting Allahbadia and his associates from posting any content on social media until further orders. The court also directed him to surrender his passport to the police. These conditions contravene prior SC rulings that have cautioned against the imposition of onerous restrictions that unduly curtail personal liberty while granting interim relief.

What was Allahbadia's plea?

Multiple FIRs were registered against Allahbadia in Maharashtra, Assam, and Rajasthan under various provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, the Information Technology Act, 2000, and the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, for allegedly promoting obscenity and engaging in sexually explicit discussions.

Consequently, he approached the Supreme Court seeking a consolidation of these FIRs and an interim order granting him protection from arrest. Such petitions, akin to anticipatory bail applications, are entertained under Article 32 of the Constitution for the enforcement of fundamental rights and to shield individuals from arbitrary police action. In such cases, courts either club the FIRs or permit the investigation to proceed under a single one while staying the rest. This spares the accused from the hassle of appearing before multiple courts. Ultimately, even if convicted, the accused serves a common sentence

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In *Parteek Bansal versus State of Rajasthan* (2022), the Supreme Court denounced the practice of filing multiple FIRs for the same alleged offence, recognising it as a tool for harassment and abuse of state machinery. That same year, a Bench led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao even mooted the establishment of a body akin to the U.S. Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation to centralise the registration of such cases.

How does one get interim relief?

The conditions for granting interim relief in criminal cases are not statutorily prescribed. Instead, judges have the discretion to impose conditions they consider necessary to uphold justice and prevent interference with the investigation or trial.

In exercising this discretion, courts

typically assess three key factors: flight risk (the likelihood of the accused absconding); intimidation of witnesses (apprehension that the accused may threaten witnesses); and tampering with evidence (the possibility that interim relief could enable the accused to interfere with the investigation).

For instance, courts often impose bail conditions such as requiring the accused to deposit their passport, setting a high bail bond to ensure their participation in the investigation, and mandating periodic appearances before the concerned police authority. However, the Supreme Court has consistently cautioned against imposing unduly restrictive conditions, such as requiring the accused to share their Google Maps location PIN or reside in a specific locality, deeming them disproportionate and unwarranted.

In *Satender Kumar Antil versus Central*

Bureau of Investigation & Anr (2022), the top court ruled that imposing bail conditions that were "impossible of compliance" would be defeating the very object of release. More recently, in *Frank Vitus versus Narcotics Control Bureau* (2024), a Bench comprising Justices A.S. Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan ruled that a bail condition requiring the accused to share their Google Maps location PIN was unconstitutional. "The investigating agency cannot be permitted to continuously peep into the private life of the accused enlarged on bail by imposing arbitrary conditions since that will violate the right of privacy of the accused, as guaranteed by Article 21", they observed.

Is this case different?

The condition imposed on Allahbadia and his associates to "not air any show on Youtube or any other audio/video visual mode of communication till further orders" effectively constitutes a gag order. In free speech jurisprudence, this falls under the doctrine of "prior restraint" – state action that prohibits speech or expression before it occurs.

Courts have consistently cautioned against prior restraints on speech, deeming them impermissible except in exceptional circumstances. In 2021, the Supreme Court stayed a Kerala High Court bail condition restricting woman rights activist Rehana Fathima from publishing her views on social media. Notably, while granting interim bail to *Alt News* co-founder Mohammed Zubair in 2021, a Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and also comprising Justices Surya Kant and A.S. Bopanna rejected the Uttar Pradesh government's request to prohibit him from tweeting while on bail. The Bench underscored that such a disproportionate restriction would create a "chilling effect on the freedom of speech." The court further noted that Zubair's profession required him to engage with social media and underscored that a gag order would constitute an "unjustified violation" of the right to practise his profession."

THE GIST

▼ The Supreme Court on February 18, granted interim protection from arrest to podcaster and influencer Ranveer Allahbadia in connection with the FIRs registered against him over remarks made on the YouTube show "India Got Latent".

▼ The condition imposed on Allahbadia and his associates to "not air any show on Youtube or any other audio/video visual mode of communication till further orders" effectively constitutes a gag order.

▼ The conditions for granting interim relief in criminal cases are not statutorily prescribed. Instead, judges have the discretion to impose conditions they consider necessary.

Why has the UGC-CARE list of journals been discontinued?

What are the suggestive parameters introduced by the University Grants Commission with respect to academic journals? Will it lead to a proliferation of low quality journals?

A. M. Jigeesh

The story so far:

The University Grants Commission (UGC) decided to discontinue the UGC Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (UGC-CARE) list, which is a list of quality academic journals, first introduced in 2018. The UGC-CARE list will now be replaced by a set of suggestive parameters for choosing journals based on eight criteria. Stakeholders can submit suggestions by February 25.

What do the new parameters say?

There are about 36 suggestive parameters under eight criteria in the draft notification titled "Suggestive Parameters for Peer-Reviewed Journals." Under the journal preliminary criteria, the UGC has asked teachers to note the journal title,

the international standard serial number, periodicity and continuity and transparency review policy etc before sending an article for publication. Under the editorial board criteria, the UGC wants authors to ensure that the journal's editorial board details and editorial board composition are made available. Similarly other criteria under suggestive parameters include journal editorial policy, journal standards, journal visibility and research ethics.

Why did the UGC withdraw it?

The aim of the UGC-CARE listing was to ensure that only "reputable" journals are recognised for faculty selections, promotions, and research funding applications. According to UGC Chairman M Jagadesh Kumar, the UGC-CARE list faced several criticisms, including over-centralisation in deciding what

constitutes high-quality research and journals, and unnecessary delays in including or excluding journals from the list. Academics had also raised concerns that in certain fields, such as Tamil, the availability of research journals were limited as per the UGC CARE list. Mr. Kumar said there was lack of transparency in the decision-making process and highly respected journals published in Indian languages were excluded from the list.

Furthermore, the UGC claims that the new approach will help in combating predatory journals and decentralise the mechanism of choosing academic journals. Higher education institutions will "now be responsible for establishing credible mechanisms to evaluate journals and ensure they meet high ethical and scholarly standards." They can develop their own institutional mechanisms for

evaluating the quality of publications and journals. "These mechanisms should align with established academic norms and indicative parameters suggested by the UGC. This decentralised approach allows HEIs to tailor their evaluation processes to suit their specific needs," Mr. Kumar said in a statement. Institutions can now create evaluation models that consider the unique characteristics of different disciplines, and accommodate newer, evolving fields.

What has been the response?

Students and academics have voiced their concerns on the latest move. Their main worry is that the decision will result in the mushrooming of low-quality journals. The Central Executive Committee of the Students' Federation of India (SFI) condemned the UGC's move, which they said was taken without adequate consultation with student and research communities. The SFI termed the decision as a serious setback to academic integrity and quality research in India. The SFI added that the UGC's decision is part of a broader pattern of deregulation in higher education under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. "While decentralisation is essential for academic freedom, the lack of a central oversight mechanism could lead to arbitrary and inconsistent journal evaluation processes across institutions," it said.

THE GIST

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▼ Students and academics have voiced their concerns on the latest move.

CACHE



AP

What does the AWS-Adarsh Developers case say about cloud data management?

Adarsh Developers said that it was using Amazon cloud to secure the company’s financial data and customers’ personal data. However, on January 9, the company said, the data environment hosted on AWS was completely deleted

Sahana Venugopal

The story so far:

On February 11, Bengaluru-based Adarsh Developers filed a complaint against Amazon Web Services (AWS), claiming that years’ worth of company and customer data hosted on AWS was lost, resulting in a financial loss of well beyond ₹100 crore. The loss of data and Adarsh Developers’ decision to take legal action against the tech giant in India has raised questions about security in enterprise-grade cloud storage, the need for multiple versions of backed-up data, and the legality of such cases.

What happened?

In its FIR filed on February 11, Adarsh Developers said that it was using SAP ERP hosted on Amazon cloud to secure the company’s financial data and customers’ personal data. The real estate firm alleged that in May 2023, AWS’s business development representative Saidalawi Safan advised the company to opt for an upgraded service to secure their data, so as to ward off cyberterrorism or sabotage. They complied. But on January 9, 2025 at 10.48 AM., the company said, the data environment – the entire SAP S/4HANA environment, to be specific– hosted on AWS was completely deleted. After making inquiries through its

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partner SAVIC Technologies Pvt. Ltd., Adarsh Developers said that the data loss was a result of the action taken by individuals at Redington, a vendor, and AWS. The participants’ exact actions and the specific allegations against them are not known.

The real estate company further claimed that years’ worth of vital financial records, supply chain data, customer information, and operational insights had become inaccessible. The loss of the data brought its business functions and operations to a complete halt, Adarsh Developers said in their complaint. The company estimated that the value of the data it lost to around ₹150 crore as of January 31, with approximate losses of ₹5 crore per day starting from January 9.

Adarsh Developers also said that it was unable to collect customer payments, pay statutory taxes, and facilitate interest payments to lenders.

The cybercrime police has registered a case against AWS and others, under the IT Act, Section 318(4) (cheating and fraud), and Section 319(2) (impersonation) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

How might the data have gone missing?

There is a general tendency to think data loss is a result of actions performed by malicious agents, such as hackers or even disgruntled employees. However, there

can be a number of reasons behind data loss, especially when teams of vendors, technical partners, clients, service-providers, and consultants work together to keep a company’s complex systems up and running in a secure environment.

One possibility is cloud misconfiguration, which stems from poorly implemented cloud storage settings, bad system architecture, low-quality security infrastructure, unsecured databases, or unmanaged access. Human error is also a common cause for large-scale outages and data loss incidents. In the FIR, Adarsh Developers cited SAVIC’s claims that some individuals in the Redington and AWS teams were responsible for the data loss, and that, “...employees at Redington Group have entered into our storage area at root level and deleted our account completely.”

However, it is not possible to pinpoint the exact cause of the data loss and those behind it until a comprehensive forensic investigation is carried out and the results backed up by evidence. For this to happen though, Adarsh Developers, Redington, SAVIC, and AWS will all have to present their claims and technical data to make sure they are in the clear.

What was Amazon’s response

Adarsh Developers claimed that AWS India responded by saying that they could

not retrieve the data or restore it, forcing the real estate company to take legal action. Amazon, however, has refused to accept Adarsh Developers’ allegations. “The claims against AWS are false. AWS operated as designed and is not responsible for the deletion of Adarsh Developers’ data,” said an AWS spokesperson in response to *The Hindu*. The cybercrime investigation is ongoing.

Have such cases happened before?

While the root cause of Adarsh Developers’ data loss incident is not yet clear, some similar incidents involving data loss through cloud services have been recorded in the past.

For example, *The Register* outlet reported that the Microsoft Azure outage of January 29, 2019 affected Azure SQL databases and also led to some data loss within a certain time window. To compensate users, the company waived a few Azure usage charges for 2-3 months, depending on how the databases were affected, per *The Register*. Even before this, code-hosting platform Code Spaces had to shut down after its servers were hit by a DDoS attack and its Amazon Web Service account [Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2)] was breached by a hacker. Most of the platform’s data and its backups (including offsite backups) were deleted, said Code Spaces.



Visual question: Name the celebrated designer who created the famous turtleneck top that became synonymous with Jobs. REUTERS

Questions and Answers to the February 21 edition of the daily quiz: 1. Name this feminist social movement which played a major role in fighting against drug abuse and alcoholism, in Bangkok. **Ans: Meira Paibi. It means women torch bearers**
2. This athlete won the gold medal in the Bantamweight category at the 1998 Asian Games in Bangkok. **Ans: Dingko Singh**
3. This weightlifter won the silver medal at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020 in the women’s 49 kg event. **Ans: Saikhom Mirabai Chanu**
4. This artiste was awarded the Padma Shri in 1986 and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship. **Ans: Rajkumar Singajit Singh**
5. Name this politician who has served as the Chief Minister of the State for the longest period. **Ans: Okram Ibobi Singh**
Visual: Name this freedom fighter and later, a Padma Bhushan awardee in 1982. **Ans: Gaidinliu Pamei, known as “Rani” Gaidinliu**
Early Birds: Sonali Das| Varnika Semwal| Umesh Kumar Gupta| Udayashree Chaganty| Albina Chanam



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

It is tiresome to talk to him everyday

He was working at his old company for peanuts. I am glad he left and joined a new firm

S. Upendran

What is the difference between ‘tiring’ and ‘tiresome’? (Anand Rao) ‘Tiresome’ can be used with both people and things, and it is the more negative of the two. When you accuse someone of being ‘tiresome’, what you are suggesting is that the individual is rather boring. The word also carries with it the suggestion that you find the person rather irritating to talk to. You find yourself mentally or emotionally drained being in the person’s company.

The baby spilt water on the forms. I had to go through the tiresome process of filling them out again.

Something that makes you feel rather tired is ‘tiring’. In this case, you feel physically drained.

I don’t want to go. It’s been a tiring day.

What is the meaning of ‘for peanuts’? (Jyot Prakash, Madina)

The word ‘peanuts’ is frequently used in informal contexts in American English to refer to a very small or an insignificant amount of money. For example, when you say that the job pays you peanuts, what you are suggesting is that it hardly pays you anything. An expression that is frequently heard is ‘work for peanuts’ – the job pays you such an insignificant amount that it is not even worth mentioning. Other expressions which are frequently used with peanuts are ‘earn peanuts’, ‘make peanuts’, ‘pay peanuts’.

Vinay worked on it for three months. The company paid him peanuts for it.

The expression ‘work for peanuts’ is said to have been made famous by the British immigrant, Harry Mozley Stevens. When Stevens attended his first baseball game in the U.S., he found that the scorecards that were being sold were inadequate. He came up with his own version of one, and soon, both the fans and the professional teams, began to take an interest in them. With the success of the cards, Stevens began to expand his business. He became a caterer, and began selling peanuts and hotdogs, among other things, to the hungry fans inside baseball stadiums. After becoming a millionaire, Stevens remarked that he ‘worked for peanuts’ earlier in his career.

What do you call someone who drinks a lot of coffee? (K. Sharmila)

Usually, the suffix ‘holic’ is added to a word to suggest that someone has an abnormal desire for something. For example, the word ‘chocoholic’ is used to refer to someone who desires or is extremely fond of chocolates. Therefore, someone who loves coffee can be called ‘coffeholic’.

Sharmila is not a coffeholic. upendrankye@gmail.com

THE DAILY QUIZ

A quiz on the tech pioneer and co-founder of Apple, Steve Jobs, who would have turned 70 on February 24

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1

Who were Joanne Carole Schieble and Abdulfattah Jandali in the context of Steve’s life?

QUESTION 2

It is well known that Jobs practised Zen Buddhism and was influenced by a 1971 book on meditation by spiritual teacher Ram Dass. Name the work.

QUESTION 3

Jobs dropped out of Reed College and took a job as a video game designer in early 1974 at which famous company?

QUESTION 4

Who once said about Jobs: “He did not know technology. He’d never designed anything as a hardware engineer, and

he didn’t know software. He wanted to be important, and the important people are always the business people. So that’s what he wanted to do.”?

QUESTION 5

Before meeting his future wife Laurence, Jobs dated a music icon of the 1960s. Name her.

QUESTION 6

At which famous sporting event was the iconic commercial ‘1984’ shown (the only time) to launch the pioneering Apple Macintosh.

QUESTION 7

Name the company Jobs founded in 1985 and from which famous studio did he buy Pixar in 1986?

QUESTION 8

What is the significance of the words ‘Oh wow. Oh wow. Oh wow’?

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

Word of the day

Salubrious:

promoting health; favourable to health of mind or body

Synonym: healthy

Usage: *This is not the most salubrious campsite.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/salubriouspro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /səˈl(j)uː.bj.əs/

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

From Page One

Rescue team yet to contact trapped workers



Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy visited the accident site and reviewed the rescue work. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

No heavy machinery could be moved inside as train tracks laid for moving workers and technical staff in the tunnel proved to be a hindrance. However, a large-capacity diesel generator made its way inside with the help of a train to meet the power needs of the excavation work.

Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, who visited the accident site, reviewed the rescue work with team leaders and Irrigation Department officials. Later, he stated that the State government had requested the services of the Navy’s elite commando force, Marcos, which has expertise in the underwater rescue operations.

Efforts of the rescue teams to ascertain the condition of those trapped inside were unfruitful as they could not communicate or establish any contact with them. The Army personnel called out names of the trapped personnel through a portable public address system from the closest point to the accident site, hoping to get a response, but in vain.

It is being assessed that the persons trapped inside could have fainted or were unconscious due to lack of food and water since Saturday morning even if the air being pumped in is assumed to be reaching them. The heat, pressure and anxiety could have made them faint even if they are alive.

The rescue teams are going on the locomotive till 11.5 km inside, on a conveyor belt set up to bring out excavated material for another 2 km and from there, by foot.

Trump attacks USAID again amid DOGE charge



U.S. President Donald Trump at the Conservative Political Action Conference. AP

This week, Indian media and the *Washington Post* also published investigations speaking to officials at the USAID and documents where they said there was no evidence of a “voter turnout” project for India at all.

The DOGE has not responded to *The Hindu’s* written requests for further details of the alleged allocations for India. The Ministry of External Affairs, which had said on Friday that the allegations were “deeply troubling” and that relevant government departments were looking into the issues involved, has declined to comment on Mr. Trump’s latest remarks.

A study of archived versions of the agency’s websites also provide some discrepancies.

Since the freezing of all foreign funding by the USAID and suspension of staff by the DOGE, websites of the USAID and the USAID-funded consortium of NGOs called the “Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening” have been taken down. An archived version of the CEPPS Website does not list India amongst the 45 countries it has operated in (2015-2020).

However, some of the NGOs that are part of the consortium have run projects in India, including the 2012 memorandum of understanding with the Election Commission for electoral training, which was renewed in 2020. The consortium’s funding reports show that in 2018 and 2019, a figure of approximately \$319,000 were approved for expenses, far lower than the figure of \$21 million.

Death threat to Rajasthan CM: jailer removed, 2 suspended

Press Trust of India
JAIPUR

Two days after a prisoner lodged in Dausa’s Shyala was jail threatened to kill Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma, the Prison Department on Sunday removed the jailer and suspended two jail personnel.

Vikas Bhagoriya replaced Rajesh Dukiya as the jailer in Shyalawas jail

while head warder Ramprasad Meena and warder Mahendra Meena were suspended.

On Friday night, a prisoner serving life sentence in a rape case called the Jaipur police control room and allegedly threatened to kill the CM. Police later traced the location of the phone used to make the call to the Shyalawas jail and recovered it.

USAID funded 7 projects in India in FY24: report

Finance Ministry report says U.S. agency funded projects worth \$750 million related to agriculture, food security, water, sanitation and hygiene, disaster management, health, and renewable energy

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Amid a raging political controversy over the United States Agency for International Development’s alleged role in influencing Indian elections, the latest annual report of the Finance Ministry has disclosed that USAID funded seven projects estimated at \$750 million in 2023-24.

“Currently, seven projects worth a total budget of \$750 million (approx.) are being implemented by USAID in partnership with Government of India,” says the Finance Ministry annual report for 2023-24.

For the financial year 2023-24, an obligation of a total of \$97 million (about ₹825 crore) has been made by USAID under the seven projects, it said.

The Department of Economic Affairs under the Finance Ministry which is the nodal department for bilateral funding arrangements has also shared the



Annual commitment: For 2023-24, USAID has made an obligation of \$97 million under the seven projects, the report said. REUTERS

details of projects funded in 2023-24 in the report.

Funded projects

During the year, no funding was made for enhancing voter turnout but to projects related to agriculture and food security programme; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); renewable energy; disaster management and health.

Besides, funds were committed for Sustainable Forests and Climate Adaptation Programme and

Energy Efficiency Technology Commercialisation and Innovation Project.

Political controversy erupted in India earlier this month after the Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) claimed that it had cancelled a \$21 million grant to India to boost “voter turnout”.

U.S. President Donald Trump also repeatedly claimed that USAID under the previous administration led by Joe Biden allo-

cated \$21 million to India for ‘voter turnout’. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Saturday said the information put out by the Trump administration is “concerning” and that the government is looking into it.

‘Procession of liars’

The Congress on Sunday accused the BJP of indulging in “anti-national work” by spreading “fake news from America” and asserted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mr. Jaishankar will also have to answer as to why the government is silent when Mr. Trump and Mr. Musk are “insulting” India repeatedly.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, “BJP is a procession of liars and illiterates. The news about \$21 million, on which the BJP and their bootlickers were jumping on, turned out to be fake. The \$21 million in 2022 was not for ‘voter turnout’ in India, but for Bangladesh.”

Sanjay Raut slams Marathi literary committee for ‘using event for political purposes’

Snehal Mutha
MUMBAI



Sanjay Raut

After Shiv Sena leader Nee-lam Gorhe created a stir with her comments against Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday wrote an open letter to the organisers of the Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Mahamandal (ABMSM), a literary conference where Ms. Gorhe had spoken.

In his open letter addressed to Usha Tambe, president of ABMSM, Mr. Raut criticised the conference, which concluded on Sunday in Delhi, saying the topics discussed were not literary in nature.

“The conference was organised under pressure from a certain political ideology. This doesn’t suit the tradition of the Sahitya Mahamandal. A few conveners directly misused the platform for political purposes. Will the literary

committee take responsibility for accusations made by guests against their political opponents?” he said. Mr. Raut added that Ms. Gorhe had made objectionable statements against Mr. Uddhav Thackeray.

At a seminar in the conference, Ms. Gorhe spoke of how she had joined Eknath Shinde’s party when the hitherto undivided Shiv Sena was split. She said that all appointments in the party before the split were given only to those who could pay for it. “For

two Mercedes, you get one post,” Ms. Gorhe said.

Mr. Raut slammed the literary committee and asked if the platform had been created for political mudslinging. “Does the current committee approve this? If not, then the committee should apologise immediately,” he added.

While speaking to media in Mumbai, Mr. Uddhav Thackeray preferred not to comment on Ms. Gorhe. “What to say about *gajre log* (unimportant people),” he said.

Mr. Raut hit out at Ms. Gorhe sarcastically and asked her to provide the bills for the eight Mercedes she had ostensibly given to the party on being appointed MLC for four terms. Later, Ms. Gorhe clarified that her statement had been based on general observations.

Ms. Tambe also refuted claims of having received gifts.

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

The Sambhal district administration in Uttar Pradesh is planning to install over 300 CCTV cameras at 127 locations across the city to bolster security and surveillance. This comes following violence in November last year in which five persons were killed

The project, funded under the Finance Commission grant, will be implemented as part of the city surveillance initiative, municipal executive officer Mani Bhushan Tiwari said.

“We proposed this plan to ensure security and monitor any future incidents effectively,” he said. The CCTV cameras will be installed at major intersections, key locations, and entry and exit routes of the city.

The system will include Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras and Pan Tilt Zoom

Army chief begins 5-day France visit to bolster military ties

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI



General Upendra Dwivedi

Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi will hold wide-ranging talks with his French counterpart, General Pierre Schill, in Paris on Monday focusing on boosting military cooperation between the two countries. He began a five-day visit to France on Sunday.

“General Dwivedi’s visit aims to strengthen the military collaboration between India and France, exploring new avenues of cooperation and enhancing strategic partnerships between the two nations’ armed forces,” the Indian Army said.

General Dwivedi’s itinerary also includes a visit to the École Militaire, the prestigious Military School and Institution complex in Paris. At the institute, he will be briefed on Future Combat Command.

Additionally, he will be briefed at the Technical Section of the French Army and will visit the Battle Lab Terre at Versailles.

On February 25, Gener-

al Dwivedi will travel to Marseille, where he will visit the third division of the French Army and will be briefed on its mission and role, India-France training cooperation, and the French Army’s modernisation programme.

The following day, he will visit Carpiagne to witness a dynamic demonstration of the Scorpion Division with live firing exercises, the Army said.

On February 27, the Army chief will visit the Neuve Chapelle Indian War memorial to lay a solemn wreath in honour of the fallen Indian soldiers who participated in the First World War.

Sambhal administration plans to install 300 CCTV cameras at 127 locations



Tense moment: Five people died in the clashes that erupted during a survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal last year. PTI

(PTZ) cameras with voice controllers. The administration will establish two centralised control rooms for monitoring the cameras and the data collected. They will be operated jointly by municipal authorities and the local police. “After completion, they will help us to do real-time tracking, strengthening Sambhal’s security framework,” Mr. Tiwari said.

Sambhal witnessed violence on November 24 last year, the second day of the Shahi Jama Masjid survey

ordered by a local court. Demonstrators assembled near the mosque and clashed with the police personnel deployed there. The police have denied allegations that they fired at the crowd.

Five people died and several were injured in the clashes. The Supreme Court later ordered the Sambhal trial court to halt proceedings in the case and also the mosque survey. The police have arrested over 50 people in the case so far.

UNESCO heritage tag sought for Shivaji’s forts

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

A delegation led by Maharashtra Cultural Affairs Minister Ashish Shelar is in Paris to seek UNESCO World Heritage Status for the 12 forts of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, officials said on Sunday.

The four-member delegation will be in Paris from February 22 to 26. The State has submitted a proposal under the concept of ‘Maratha Military Landscape of India’ for obtaining the UNESCO status for the forts.

The forts of Lohagad, Salher, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Panhala, Shivneri, Sindhadurg, Suvarnadurg, Vijaydurg, Khanderi and Gingee (Tamil Nadu) have been included in the proposal.

Jaishankar, 45 Ambassadors interact with Tamil delegates at Kashi Tamil Sangamam

Press Trust of India
VARANASI



S. Jaishankar at the Kashi Tamil Sangamam in Varanasi on Sunday. PTI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and 45 Ambassadors from different countries on Sunday interacted with Tamil delegates who are on a visit for the third edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam.

The session gave international representatives a unique opportunity to witness the connection between the two great cultures of Kashi and Kanchipuram and gain a deeper understanding of India beyond Delhi.

Mr. Jaishankar described Kashi as India’s cultural heart, deeply linked to people across the country.

“Kamail Nadu has a special bond with Kashi, and

Kashi Tamil Sangamam celebrates this unique connection. India is a land of diversity and despite its many languages, traditions and beliefs, the country remains united. This unity within diversity keeps India together as a nation,” he said.

Mr. Jaishankar empha-

sised the importance of celebrating India’s rich heritage, as it helps pass it on to future generations and introduce the world to India’s glorious past and deep-rooted traditions.

He highlighted that cultures remain alive through celebrations and the Indian government actively supports such efforts.

The External Affairs Minister also spoke about how traditions contribute to progress in technology. He mentioned the role of the Indian knowledge system in this regard and said Indian universities are conducting advanced research in areas such as drone and space technology.

“More such notable developments will be seen in the coming future,” he said.

Kuki spokesperson removed from DU literature fest panel

Ashna Butani
Abhinav Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Seilen Haokip, spokesperson of the Kuki National Organisation (KNO), was removed from a panel at the Delhi University Literature Festival (DULF) that he had been invited to on Sunday, the third day of the festival, which is being held at SRCC in New Delhi. He said he was asked to leave 15 minutes before the panel was scheduled to begin, after being informed that his participation had been “politicised”.

Kuki National Organisation is part of the umbrella groups of Kuki-Zo insurgent groups that are in a Suspension of Operation pact with the Centre.

Mr. Haokip received an invite signed by festival di-

rector Swapan Dasgupta on January 15, asking him to be a part of a panel discussion titled “The Great Game East: The Northeast Cauldron” at the Delhi University Literature Festival 2025.

Mr. Haokip told *The Hindu* that he flew to Delhi from Aizawl on February 20 as per the travel that had been arranged for him by the organisers. “After I arrived at the venue in SRCC, we were mingling with the other guests on the panel when I was informed.”

Mr. Dasgupta did not respond to *The Hindu’s* questions regarding the matter. A university official on Sunday evening said the matter had not reached the administration yet. The organisers too did not comment when reached.

Some leaders and foreign powers are mocking religion, says Modi

During two-day visit to Madhya Pradesh, he laid foundation stone of a ₹218-crore cancer hospital; he lauds eye check-ups being conducted at the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj; Prime Minister will inaugurate mega investor summit in Bhopal today

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that there was a section of leaders who mocked and ridiculed religion and were working to divide people. Foreign powers were seen supporting such forces and trying to weaken the nation and the faith, he added.

Mr. Modi made the remarks after laying the foundation stone for the Bageshwar Dham Medical and Science Research Institute for Cancer at Garha village of Chhatarpur district in Madhya Pradesh being developed by the preacher Dharendra Shastri.

Mr. Modi's remarks come amid the controversy surrounding U.S. President Donald Trump's statement regarding USAID grant of \$21 million to "increase voter turnout" in India.

After the function, Mr. Shastri said a ward at the ₹218-crore cancer hospital



Grand event: Prime Minister Narendra Modi laying the foundation stone of the Bageshwar Dham Medical and Science Research Institute in Madhya Pradesh on Sunday. ANI

would be named after Mr. Modi's mother – the late Heeraben Modi.

On a two-day visit to Madhya Pradesh, Mr. Modi is scheduled to inaugurate the Global Investors Summit (GIS) on Monday as the government looks to revamp the State into a top destination for investment, manufacturing and infrastructure.

Mr. Modi said people who hated Hindu beliefs

had been living in the country under different guises for centuries.

"These elements with a slave mentality attack our temples, beliefs, saints, culture, and principles. They target our festivals, customs, and rituals, and even dare to defame the inherently progressive nature of our religion and culture. Their agenda is to only divide our society and destroy its unity," he said.

He praised the sanitation workers and police personnel working at the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj.

'Netra Maha Kumbh' Terming the mega religious gathering the "Maha Kumbh of unity", Mr. Modi said, "Amid the Maha Kumbh, a 'Netra Maha Kumbh' is also being held, though it hasn't garnered as much attention, where

over two lakh eye check-ups have been conducted, around 1.5 lakh people have received free medicine and glasses, and about 16,000 patients have been referred to various hospitals for cataract and other surgeries."

Later in the evening, Mr. Modi arrived in Bhopal where he held an interactive session with BJP MPs, MLAs, and other senior party leaders.

The two-day mega investor summit, an ambitious project of Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, will kick-start on Monday and is expected to see participation from industry leaders from India and abroad.

A senior government official told *The Hindu* that more than 5,000 registrations were cancelled after a scrutiny to avoid overcrowding at the summit.

"Most of the potential investors whose registrations were cancelled have been directed to the departments concerned with their proposals. Nobody will be turned away," the official said.

Congress to hold session in Ahmedabad to discuss future plan, BJP's policies

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A session of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) will be held in Ahmedabad on April 8 and 9 to deliberate on the challenges posed by the Bharatiya Janata Party's "anti-people" policies, alleged attack on the Constitution, and the party's future road map, the Congress announced on Sunday.

In a statement, Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said the session would begin on April 8. An extended Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting would be held after the session, and an AICC delegates' meeting would be held on April 9.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge will preside over both the meetings, which will be attended by Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition in the



K.C. Venugopal

Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, all Chief Ministers of Congress-ruled States, national office-bearers, senior party leaders, and other AICC delegates, Mr. Venugopal said.

'Address concerns' "The upcoming session will serve not only as a platform for crucial deliberations but also as a reaffirmation of the Congress party's collective resolve to address the concerns of the common people and present a strong alternative vision for the nation,"

Mr. Venugopal said.

He stressed that the party had recognised the need to preserve, protect and promote the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, and the Constitution.

"...it was decided that between January 26 2025 and January 26th 2026, the Indian National Congress will launch a massive, nationwide public outreach campaign called the Samvidhan Bachao Rashtriya Padayatra, along with an AICC session in Gujarat, the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi, reaffirming our commitment to his ideals of truth, non-violence, and justice," he said.

The AICC session is being convened as a continuation of the resolutions adopted at the Belagavi extended CWC meeting ('Nava Satyagraha Baithak'), which commemorated the 100th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's presidency at the 1924 Congress session, Mr. Venugopal said.

A.P. advocates to launch stir for HC Bench in Visakhapatnam

The Hindu Bureau
VISAKHAPATNAM

A meeting of advocates from seven districts of north Andhra Pradesh held at the District Court complex here on Sunday unanimously resolved to hold agitations in phases to press for their long-pending demand for a High Court Bench in Visakhapatnam.

Advocates from Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Parvathipuram Manyam, Visakhapatnam, Anakapalli, Alluri Sitarama Raju and Kakinada districts participated in the meeting.

Stalin hits out at Centre, calls for total withdrawal of Advocates Amendment Bill

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Sunday demanded the total withdrawal of the Advocates Amendment Bill, 2025, and appealed to the Union government to respect the autonomy of the legal profession.

The Union Law Ministry had on Saturday put the draft Bill on hold and further announced that it would bring in a new draft Bill to amend the Advocates Act after receiving public feedback on the existing draft Bill.

In a social media post on Sunday, Mr. Stalin charged that the Bill was a "direct



M.K. Stalin

assault" on the autonomy of the legal profession. Since 2014, the BJP government has been "systematically undermining the independence of the judiciary," he said. Initially the BJP government tried to "hijack" judicial ap-

The Tamil Nadu CM appealed to the Union government to respect the autonomy of the legal profession

pointments through the National Judicial Appointments Commission, and later, it "ignored" the collegium's recommendations for judicial appointments and transfers, he said.

By "seeking control over Bar Councils," the BJP government aimed to "weaken judicial independence by eroding the autonomy of the legal profession," he charged. "The BJP's aver-

sion to 'Tamil' is evident in this Bill, as it wants to rename the Bar Council of Tamil Nadu & Puducherry as the Bar Council of Madras. Tamil Nadu is not just a name; it is our identity!" Mr. Stalin said.

Though spontaneous protests and strong opposition to the draft Bill forced the Union government to withdraw it, "the rider that it will be reconsidered and processed afresh is condemnable," the DMK president said. Mr. Stalin went on to quote late DMK founder and former Chief Minister C.N. Annadurai that law was a dark room, and that an advocate's arguments were the lamps.

Makhana will take over the world of superfoods in future, says Shivraj Chouhan

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Days after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the formation of a Makhana Board in Bihar, Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday interacted with makhana producers in Darbhanga district.

He also accompanied farmers to a pond to sow makhana seeds.

Mr. Chouhan said that the Centre was preparing a framework for the Makhana Board by listening to farmers' suggestions and their difficulties.

Along with Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary and Darbhanga MP Gopal Jee Thakur, the Union Minister visited a makhana processing unit at the National Research Centre for Makhana.

"One day, makhana will take over the world of superfoods. It has received the blessings of Janaki Maaya [Goddess Janaki]. We will provide full cooperation in marketing, branding, and packaging of mak-



On the ground: Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan visiting a Makhana field in Darbhanga of Bihar on Sunday. ANI

hana," Mr. Chouhan said while addressing farmers.

"I bow to the respected Atal Bihari Vajpayeeji for establishing the National Makhana Research Centre in Darbhanga. I salute Prime Minister Narendra Modi, under whose leadership a Makhana Board is being established in Bihar."

Inclusion in schemes He pointed out that his department was considering the inclusion of farmers who cultivated makhana on leased areas in Union government's schemes.

On challenges faced by makhana producers, Mr.

Chouhan said, "Makhana is a superfood and a storehouse of nutrition but not easily produced. One can see how much hardship farmers endure to produce makhana. However, thornless makhana seeds and mechanisation will make farming easier."

Mr. Chouhan added, "Makhana Board will go forward in the direction of its value, research, mechanisation, and how the produced crop is sold, while ensuring that Makhana producers get the right price. Efforts will be made to ensure our makhana becomes popular all over the world."

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Name of the work	Amount put to tender
	EMD
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1) Work of Providing and laying of 300mm dia MS water pipeline from BSNL office to 3rd main upto GLR in OMBR layout pertaining to OMBR S/Stn. of AEEE-2-2 Sub Division. (Call-5)	Rs.215.02 Lakhs
	Rs.3,23,000/-
2) Work of Providing and laying of 300mm dia MS water pipeline from 2nd main, Nanda Gokul Hotel to BBMP office in East of NGEF layout, Kasthurinagar pertaining to OMBR S/Stn. of AEEE-2-2 Sub Division. (Call-5)	Rs.216.10 Lakhs
	Rs.3,25,000/-
3) Work of Replacement of 200, 150, 100mm dia CI water supply line by laying 200mm, 150mm, 100mm dia DI water line in OMBR layout (Part-B) pertaining to OMBR S/Stn. of AEEE-2-2 Sub Division. (Call-4)	Rs.158.63 Lakhs
	Rs.2,38,000/-
4) Work of Replacement of 200, 150, 100mm dia CI water supply line by laying 200mm, 150mm, 100mm dia DI water line in Kasthurinagara (Part-A) pertaining to OMBR S/Stn. of AEEE-2-2 Sub Division. (Call-4)	Rs.158.63 Lakhs
	Rs.2,38,000/-
5) Work of Replacement of 200, 150, 100mm dia CI water supply line by laying 200mm, 150mm, 100mm dia DI water line in Kasthurinagara (Part-B) pertaining to OMBR S/Stn. of AEEE-2-2 Sub Division. (Call-4)	Rs.158.63 Lakhs
	Rs.2,38,000/-

The Last date for submission of completed tender documents is on **10.03.2025 upto 16:00 hrs.** Date of opening of tender is on **11.03.2025 after 16:00 hrs.**
Sd/-
Chief Engineer (East)

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> For further details contact the above signed office during the working hours.

DIPR/CP/BCPL/5243/2024-25

INBRIEF



American Airlines flight to New Delhi diverted to Rome

An American Airlines flight from New York to Delhi was forced to divert to Rome on Sunday evening. The Italian Air Force scrambled fighter jets to escort the aircraft to the airport. American Airlines Flight AA292 took off from New York on Saturday for a 14-hour journey. With four hours left to reach the destination, the aircraft took a U-turn after crossing Azerbaijan, according to flight tracking website Flightradar24. Flightradar reported that the diversion was due to a bomb threat. However, there was no official statement from the airline. After being escorted by Italian Eurojet fighter planes, the flight landed at Rome’s Fiumicino airport.

India to host a conference on women peacekeepers

India will host a two-day conference beginning Monday on women peacekeepers at UN missions to highlight their contributions. The conference will bring together women peacekeepers from 35 troop-contributing countries from the Global South. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will deliver the keynote address. The conference is being organised by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), in collaboration with the Defence Ministry and the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping. “The first-ever Conference for Women Peacekeepers on the theme “Women in peacekeeping: a Global South perspective” will take place in New Delhi on February 24 and 25,” the MEA said.

Women achievers to take charge of PM’s social media accounts for a day

In *Mann Ki Baat* address, PM says the achievers will share their insights on his social media accounts to mark International Women’s Day; he also praises ISRO’s recent feats, underscores the importance of AI and the country’s growth in the field

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Days after Delhi got its fourth woman Chief Minister, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his monthly *Mann Ki Baat* radio address on Sunday, highlighted the contribution of women across all sectors.

He said that on International Women’s Day, March 8, he would hand over his social media accounts to women achievers who would share their insights with fellow Indians.

Mr. Modi said Women’s Day was a special occasion to salute “our *Nari Shakti*”. “In our culture, respect for daughters has been paramount. The *Matri Shakti* [motherly energy] of the country also played a big role in our freedom struggle and creation of the Constitution. I am sharing with all of you what Hansa Mehtaji had said while presenting our National Flag in the Constituent Assembly, in her own voice,” he said, before an audio clip of the freedom fighter’s speech was played.

“Hansa Mehtaji brought to the fore the contribution of women from all over the country, right from the



Making a mark: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said participation of women in the space sector has been on the rise in the country. PTI

making of our national flag to sacrificing their lives for its sake. She was of the belief that the saffron colour in our Tricolour also reflects this sentiment. She had expressed confidence that our woman power would make its valuable contribution for a strong and prosperous India. Today, her words are proving to be true,” he said.

The Prime Minister said on the occasion of Women’s Day, he would hand over his social media accounts, such as those on X and Instagram, “to women who had achieved success in myriad fields, who had

innovated and created a unique identity for themselves in various fields”.

“If you want to avail yourself of this opportunity, become a part of this experiment through the special forum created on NamoApp and share your message with the whole world through my X and Instagram accounts,” he said.

Growth in space sector
Mr. Modi talked about the growing opportunities for the youth and the country’s recent achievements in the space sector. He said over the past 10 years

alone, around 460 satellites, including those of other countries, were launched.

Another important aspect witnessed in recent years was that the participation of women was constantly on the rise among our team of space scientists, he said.

About “National Science Day” on February 28, he urged the youth and children to spend one day as a “scientist”, visit a research lab, planetarium, or space centre.

Importance of AI
Underscoring the importance of artificial intelligence, Mr. Modi spoke about his recent visit to Paris to participate in an AI conference.

“There, the world praised India’s progress in this sector. We are also getting to see examples of how people of our country are using AI today,” he said citing the example of Thodasam Kailash, a government schoolteacher in Adilabad, Telangana who creates digital music in Kolami language.

Mr. Modi spoke about the recently concluded National Games in Uttarakhand, which saw the parti-

cipation of over 11,000 athletes from all over the country.

“The number of teenage champions in this year’s National Games is astonishing. Fifteen-year-old shooter Gavin Antony, 16-year-old hammer thrower Anushka Yadav from Uttar Pradesh and 19-year-old pole vaulter Dev Kumar Meena from Madhya Pradesh have proved that India’s sporting future lies in the hands of a very talented generation,” he added.

During the address, Mr. Modi spoke about wild animals, which are “deeply embedded in our history and culture”.

“Many animals are also observed as the vehicles of our gods and goddesses.... I would also like to thank my tribal brothers and sisters, because they actively participate in work related to wildlife protection,” he said.

About the ongoing Board examinations, Mr. Modi wished the students well and asked them to appear for papers without any stress and with a positive spirit.

He also talked about various issues covered under the *Pariksha Pe Charcha* initiative.

‘Over 62 crore devotees took holy dip at Maha Kumbh’

Press Trust of India
AGRA/MAHAKUMBH NAGAR

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said 62 crore devotees had come to Maha Kumbh so far and out of about 120 crore *Sanatan Dharma* followers in the world, half of them had already taken the holy dip.

Addressing the seers in the presence of Kanchi Kamkoti Peeth Shankaracharya Shankara Vijayendra Saraswati at the Maha Kumbh Mela Mahotsav held at Mahakumbh Nagar, he said, “Which is that religion and sect in the world where such a large number of devotees are coming and expressing their faith within a specific time frame?”

He said, “This [Kumbh] has become a medium for the followers of *Sanatan Dharma* to express their gratitude towards their seers, the ‘Rishi’ tradition of India, their ‘Dev’ tradition and their festivals and celebrations.” He added that the Kanchi Kamakoti Peeth had always been at the forefront of promoting *Sanatan Dharma*. Speaking at an event in Agra, he said the gathering of such a large number of people during a certain period in itself is “one of the rarest events of the century”.

Health Ministry bans export of drugs containing Tapentadol, Carisoprodol

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Following reports about the export of unapproved combination drugs containing Tapentadol and Carisoprodol by Aveo Pharmaceuticals, Mumbai, to certain countries in West Africa, the Health Ministry on Sunday issued a stop activity order and immediate withdrawal of export no-objection certificate (NoC) and manufacturing licences for the combinations.

Tapentadol is an opioid medication that is used to treat moderate to severe pain. Carisoprodol is a muscle relaxant which works on the centres in the brain and spinal cord to relieve pain.

“Both Tapentadol and Carisoprodol are individually approved by the Central Drugs Standard Organisation [CDSCO] in India. Tapenta-



Tapentadol and Carisoprodol are not part of the NDPS list in India. GETTY IMAGES

dol is approved in 50, 75, and 100 mg tablet forms, as well as 100, 150, and 200 mg extended-release tablets. However, the combination of Tapentadol and Carisoprodol is not approved in India. Neither of these drugs is included in the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) list in India,” the Health Ministry said.

In a release issued on Sunday, the Ministry said

that to ensure regulatory compliance across the pharmaceutical sector, the CDSCO, in collaboration with State regulators, initiated risk-based inspections of drug manufacturing and testing firms in December 2022. As of now, 905 units have been inspected, resulting in 694 actions being taken. These actions include stop production orders, stop testing orders, licence suspensions/cancellations, warning letters, and show-cause notices, depending on the severity of non-compliance.

Comprehensive audit
Listing the actions taken by the Health Ministry, the release said a joint team from the CDSCO and the State Regulatory Authority conducted a comprehensive audit of Aveo Pharmaceuticals between February 21 and 22. The findings from

the audit led to the issuance of a stop activity order, halting all operations at the company’s premises.

Following the audit, the investigation team seized all raw materials, in-process materials, and finished products. Approximately 1.3 crore tablets/capsules and 26 batches of APIs (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients) of Tapentadol and Carisoprodol were seized to prevent further distribution of these potentially dangerous drugs.

The Maharashtra FDA issued a stop production order on Saturday and issued communications to all State Drugs Control Authorities and Zonal Offices to immediately withdraw export NoCs and manufacturing licences granted for any combination of Tapentadol and Carisoprodol.

XR Creator Hackathon throws open opportunities for myriad aspirants

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

Born with a clubfoot, S. Bala Subramaniam, 27, a postgraduate from Chennai, was no stranger to mobility challenges and societal biases. Despite holding two Extended Reality (XR) patents, he struggled to find opportunities in the industry. However, the XR Creator Hackathon, organised under the Information and Broadcasting Ministry’s “WAVES” initiative, has provided him with a platform to showcase his ideas.

Wavelaps founder Ashutosh Kumar, who is the nodal officer of the hackathon, told *The Hindu*: “Mr. Subramaniam said the XR industry had been difficult to make an entry as most companies prioritised candidates with conventional tech degrees, making it hard for innovators like



Solving problems: The challenge saw registration of over 2,200 aspirants, from hobbyists to academicians. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

him. However, the XR Creator Hackathon provided him with an opportunity to present his ideas. Mr. Subramaniam said many individuals, due to physical limitations, are unable to travel for work, education, or medical treatment, but XR technology can break these barriers by bringing the world to them”.

Mr. Subramaniam’s team, XR Titans, is developing a Virtual Reality so-

lution for enabling remote medical diagnosis and surgery using 3D Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) visualisations.

While physiotherapy often is painful, repetitive, and expensive, he is of the view that it can be transformed into an interactive experience using XR-based gaming.

The challenge which was launched in August 2024 saw registration of over 2,200 aspirants – rang-

ing from hobbyists, working professionals, students, freelance professionals, entrepreneurs, and academicians to social workers – from about 250 cities in over 25 States and Union Territories. About 30% of the participants were women.

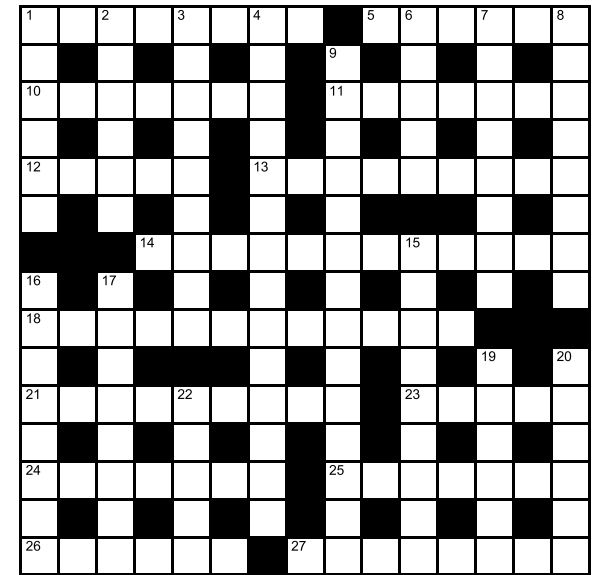
The XR Creator Hackathon is being organised by Wavelaps in association with the WAVES 2025 initiative of the Ministry. Bharat XR and XDG, two XR communities within India, are co-organisers. With the WAVES grand finale set from May 1 to 5, the top five teams will showcase their innovations. The finalists are exploring various domains for XR/VR applications. Many of them are focusing on “healthcare, fitness, and well-being” for solutions enhancing medical training, mental wellness, and personalised fitness experiences.

THCROSSWORD+14416

(set by Dr. X)

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

SCAN TO PLAY



- 14 Remain calm, avoid curling tongs perhaps (3,4,1,4)
- 18 Neat pointers to transform show (12)
- 21 Enjoyable party in excellent Japanese city (9)
- 23 Plunge into water to perform exploit (5)
- 24 Iran’s foremost politician on English broadcast about supreme powers (7)
- 25 Fancy pinkish tie (7)
- 26 Tell class about the French revolution (6)
- 27 Popular cryptic setter’s charm (8)
- Down
- 1 Plays with different stance (6)
- 2 Bit of soda in energy drink giving gas (6)
- 3 Stunned and shaken, opener wants bit of protection first (6,3)
- 4 Experienced politician ends stalemate, artfully crushing resistance (5,9)
- 6 Some turned exceptional at converting base-8 number system (5)
- 7 Second male wearing coloured kerchief mostly is member of musical group (8)
- 8 Secure sample to check special ornamental textile (8)
- 9 Scared witless by blunders, cheat in final round (6-8)
- 15 Escape slyly via canoe after crossing delta (9)
- 16 Prince, more unsettled after citizens finally become smarter (8)
- 17 Seabird over border around city of Ukraine (8)
- 19 Cheer up after receiving flush essentially in card game (6)
- 20 Tyrant in extremely desperate situation (6)
- 22 Container in basement, gutted and charred (5)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

Solution to yesterday’s Sudoku

FAITH
Prapatti, the prescribed way

Parasara Bhattar, in his Rangaraja Stava, first praises his father Kooratazhvan and then his own Acharya – Embar. His next verse of praise is about Ramanujacharya, who, he says, destroyed the fear of Kali. And what was the weapon that Ramanujacharya used for this? It was the yantra called bhakti. In Visishtadvaita, the path to reach Sri Vaikuntha and to serve at the Lord’s feet is prapatti, said P.B. Rangaramanujam in a discourse. That being the case, we should take the reference to bhakti here in this Rangaraja Stava verse as referring to prapatti.

For Visishtadvaitins, what is meant by bhakti is not what we usually understand as bhakti yoga. The bhakti that a Visishtadvaitin has, is a result of his prapatti. The navavidha bhaktis are the fruits of his prapatti. They are the gifts given to him by Lord Narayana, because he has surrendered to Him. Prapatti is said to be one of the 32 Brahma vidyas. While following the other Brahma vidyas may not be possible for everyone, prapatti, by its very nature, is simple and can be resorted to by everyone. While praising Alavandar, Parasara Bhattar again uses the word bhakti. Before Alavandar’s time, the Vedic path was strewn with thorns, making life difficult for those traversing that path, and Alavandar removed these thorns. But what were these thorns? They were the arguments of those who questioned the validity of the Vedas. Again, when he next talks about Nathamuni, Bhattar talks of bhakti. Here too, it should be taken to mean prapatti. Bhattar says that Nathamuni was like a cloud, which rained three things – disregard for anything other than the Lord; jnana about the nature of the Paramatma and love for the Lord.

'Forest' friends in Dalal Street

ANIMAL FARM

Vaishali R. Venkat

With tricky jargons and complexities, the stock market is a labyrinth that often perplexes new investors. In the previous episode, we unravelled the jungle and highlighted a few animals and their behaviour. Now, we are untangling a few more from bourses.

Rapid Rabbits

Known for impulsive behaviour, scalpers and intra-day traders are the picture-perfect examples of nimble rabbits. Quite averse to overnight risk and aiming at instant profit, rabbits (traders, not investors) avoid holding a position even for a day. Often considered darlings of the brokerage firms for multiple entries and exits on a single day, they pay huge brokerage fee to the Depository Participants (DP). Dividend, return on equity, PE ratio are all not really up their alley. For instance, Hari purchases 5,000 shares of Mannar & Co. at 9.32 a.m. for ₹125 and at 9.34 a.m., the price hits ₹125.20. Within two minutes, Hari would book a profit of ₹1,000 (5,000*0.20). In the same vein, he would make more entries and exits before the market closes on the day, booking small profit from each trade. This way, he makes considerable profit on a single trading day and also pay a hefty brokerage fee to the DP.

Thoughtful Turtles

For Turtles, market crashes are like water off a duck's back, they just shrug it off and move on. Jumping with joy, they consider the bearish market an opportunity to accumulate more shares. They remain unfazed by any bad news, short-term fluctuation or volatility in the market. The more the stock nosedives, the more they buy and keep on averaging it. Let's assume Hari had purchased one share of Mannar & Co. for ₹125, after which the market crashed bringing the stock to ₹25. Instead of indulging in panic selling, prudent Hari bought five more stocks for ₹125. When the price was at a record high of ₹125, Hari could purchased only one but after the crash, he bought five. If the market remained bullish, Hari could buy only two shares for ₹250. But, Hari's portfolio now has six shares costing ₹250, thanks to market crash and averaging.

Oblivious Ostriches

When faced with danger, an ostrich buries its head into the sand. Likewise, these investors turn a Nelson's eye to any bad news in the market, in the hope the news would disappear on its own. They just blindly believe that "all is well", when really "all is not well." Let's assume an Ostrich investor heard it through the grapevine that Mannar & Co. will pull the curtain down soon, and that's the reason its shares fell like ninepins from ₹125 to ₹25. Despite this insight, this investor doesn't sell and realise at least ₹25 per share. Instead, he believes, often without valid reason, the news is not true and the stock would recover soon. Alas! The news would be true and the entire money is lost forever.

Speculative Stags

Stag investors, otherwise dubbed as IPO opportunists, are speculators who eye on making quick profit, predominantly in the IPO markets. They are often compared with deer for speed in execution of the strategy. They are not average Joes who easily settle down with the usual bullish or bearish markets. Day traders, they target quick bucks as soon as a stock is listed on the bourse. Generally, IPOs of the most reputable companies are oversubscribed and stocks allotted only to limited number of applicants. Hence, stags cash in on the opportunity. They apply for a bulk number of shares during the IPO and the moment they are listed at a high price, they offload them and exit. These forest friends are metaphors that shed insights on trading/investing strategies in the stock market and by now, we hope you know which kind of investor or trader you are.

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

MONEYWISE



ILLUSTRATION: SAAI

Why personal accident insurance is a lifeline

One of the greatest advantages of this insurance product is its affordability; compared with health or life cover, premiums are relatively low, making it accessible to individuals across income groups

GO FOR IT

Nirmal Gupta

In 2023, road accidents in India claimed almost 1.73 lakh lives and left 4.63 lakh injured, as per data shared by States with the Union government.

While road accidents are widely reported, other incidents are just as disruptive. Home accidents, for instance, are a significant concern, with falls constituting about 30% of such incidents, burns making up 20%, accidental poisoning from household chemicals and medications accounting for 15% and drowning, particularly involving young children, making up about 10%.

Workplaces are even more perilous, with over 400 workers killed and more than 850 seriously injured in 2024 alone across various sectors. Today extreme sports are considered recreational, but they pose serious risks, with mountain climbing, trekking, rafting, and paragliding contributing to numerous accidents.

The statistics highlight the pervasive nature of accidents that go beyond road traffic incidents.

Personal accident insurance acts as a financial safety net, protecting you and your loved ones from the economic impact of life's unpredictable accidents. Let's explore the standout features of these policies available in the market currently.



While road mishaps are widely reported, others are as disruptive. Home mishaps, for instance, are a significant concern, with falls constituting 30% of such incidents

In the unfortunate event of an accidental death or permanent disabilities, a personal accident policy offers a lifeline by providing a fixed payout to the affected family.

Financial support

This ensures dependents can maintain their standard of living despite loss of income. Many policies go a step further by including specific provisions for dependents, such as parents, widows, and children. The provisions often include dedicated education and marriage funds to secure their future.

Medical benefits

Injuries from mishaps can lead to hospitalisation placing heavy financial burden. Fortunately, some insurance products offer comprehensive coverage to help alleviate these costs. The policies often include unique benefits for injuries from burns or broken bones. Also, some policies provide lump sum payouts for coma benefits in cases of permanent neurological damage.

Recovery benefits

Living with disabilities re-



Personal accident insurance acts as a financial safety net, protecting you and your loved ones from the economic impact of life's unpredictable accidents

sulting from accidents can be far more challenging. Life after an accident often requires significant adjustments, such as modifying homes or personal vehicles to support daily living. Innovative insurance products not only cover the costs of home and vehicle modifications but also extend to expenses for essential aids like artificial limbs, prostheses, crutches, and wheelchairs.

Loss of income

Accidents often cause individuals to miss work and lose income. Thankfully, there are specific covers to address these challenges. These provide fixed payouts during the recovery period, ensuring one can focus on healing without the added stress of financial instability.

Financial liability

When accidents strike breadwinners, the financial stability of families can be severely impacted, often leaving them burdened with outstanding loans. A few comprehensive insurance products offer specific covers to address this issue. These can take care of outstanding loans.

Innovative features

For adventure seekers and those who take the road less travelled, innovative policies can be lifesavers. Accidents can happen in remote or inaccessible areas where immediate medical attention is crucial. That's why many policies now include air ambulance services, ensuring timely transfer to the nearest hospital.

Exclusions to policy

While these policies offer comprehensive coverage, certain scenarios are excluded like self-inflicted injuries or suicide attempts, accidents under the influence of alcohol or drugs, injuries from high-risk sports or criminal activities, pre-existing disabilities or illnesses.

Understanding these exclusions is crucial to making an informed choice when purchasing a policy.

Occupational risks also influence premiums. For example, miners or factory workers face higher accident probabilities than office employees, leading to different premium rates based on risk categories.

One of the greatest advantages of this insurance product is its affordability. Compared with health or life insurance, premiums are relatively low, making it accessible to individuals across all income groups.

(The writer is head - health underwriting & claims, Magma General Insurance Ltd. (formerly Magma HDI General Insurance Company Ltd.)

SIP: pause and restart, or continue?

THINK INVESTOR

Continuing your SIPs is optimal despite the downside risk; that said, reducing your equity exposure during the last five years of the time horizon for your life goal is very important

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

Some critics argue that systematic investment plans (SIPs) expose your investments to high risk when market valuations are rich. In this article, we discuss why SIP is optimal for most individuals despite its inherent risk.

Market timing

Goal-based portfolios typically have a long-term horizon. Continually timing the market for multiple goals may require lot of time and effort. Also, the more frequently you try to time the market for multiple investments, the more you are likely to risk making suboptimal decisions. Hence, the SIPs.

The tenure of an SIP on a passive equity fund must preferably match the time horizon for a life goal; the SIP for an active fund must be for 12 months at a time. The structure of an SIP is such that you will invest a fixed sum of money every month. This is behaviourally optimal because you are aware of the proportion of monthly savings that goes into your chosen equity fund. The automatic debit from your bank account means that you do not have to worry about forgetting to make the investment every month. But there is an issue.

Value averaging

Suppose you set up a monthly SIP for ₹20,000. You invest the same amount through the tenure of the SIP, whether the stock market has been continually moving up or down.

The argument that critics make is investing the same amount when the market is trending up exposes your investment to high risk. After all, if stocks are on a consistent uptrend, they are more likely to take a dive when the momentum slows down. This is a valid argument. An alternative investment process called value averaging addresses this issue. But the process requires your continual involvement, unlike an SIP.

Conclusion

A study on market timing suggests that returns will be significantly lower if you miss the ten best trading days in a year. Likewise, your returns will be significantly better if you are not in the market during the ten worst days.

The issue is that you will know the ten best and worst days only in hindsight. Even if you get it right one year, can you bank on your skill and luck to stop and restart SIPs through the time horizon for all your goals?

That is why continuing your SIPs is optimal despite the downside risk. That said, reducing your equity exposure during the last five years of the time horizon for your life goal is very important.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%)			
	Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Small Finance Banks				
AU Small Finance Bank	8.10	7.25	7.50	7.25
Equitas Small Finance Bank	8.25	8.10	8.00	7.25
ESAF Small Finance Bank	8.38	6.00	6.75	6.25
Jana Small Finance Bank	8.25	8.25	8.25	8.20
NorthEast Small Finance Bank	9.00	7.00	9.00	8.00
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.60	8.25	8.25	8.60
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	8.25	8.25	7.20	7.20
Unity Small Finance Bank	9.00	7.85	8.15	8.15
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.00	8.50	7.75
Private Sector Banks				
Axis Bank	7.25	6.70	7.10	7.00
Bandhan Bank	8.05	8.05	7.25	5.85
City Union Bank	7.50	7.00	6.50	6.25
CSB Bank	8.00	5.00	5.75	5.75
DBS Bank	7.50	7.00	6.50	6.50
DCB Bank	8.05	7.10	7.50	7.40
Federal Bank	7.50	7.00	7.10	7.10
HDFC Bank	7.40	6.60	7.00	7.00
ICICI Bank	7.25	6.70	7.00	7.00
IDFC FIRST Bank	7.90	6.50	6.80	6.75
Indusind Bank	7.99	7.75	7.25	7.25

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%)			
	Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Public Sector Banks				
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	7.25	7.00	6.75	6.50
Karur Vysya Bank	7.60	7.00	7.00	7.00
Karnataka Bank	7.50	7.25	6.50	6.50
Kotak Mahindra Bank	7.40	7.10	7.00	6.20
RBL Bank	8.00	7.50	7.50	7.10
SBM Bank India	8.25	7.05	7.30	7.75
South Indian Bank	7.40	6.70	6.70	6.00
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	7.60	7.00	6.50	6.50
YES Bank	8.00	7.75	7.25	7.25
Public Sector Banks				
Bank of Baroda	7.30	6.85	7.15	6.80
Bank of India	7.30	6.80	6.50	6.00
Bank of Maharashtra	7.45	6.75	6.50	6.50
Canara Bank	7.40	6.85	7.40	6.70
Central Bank of India	7.50	6.85	7.00	6.75
Indian Bank	7.30	6.10	6.25	6.25
Indian Overseas Bank	7.30	7.10	6.50	6.50
Punjab National Bank	7.25	6.80	7.00	6.50
Punjab & Sind Bank	7.45	6.30	6.00	6.00
State Bank of India	7.25	6.80	6.75	6.50
Union Bank of India	7.30	6.80	6.70	6.50

Home Loan Interest Rates

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)		
	Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
(In %)			
Public Sector Banks			
State Bank of India	8.25-9.40	8.25-9.40	8.25-9.40
Bank of Baroda	8.15-10.40	8.15-10.40	8.40-10.65
Punjab National Bank	8.20-10.00	8.15-9.90	8.15-9.90
Bank of India	8.25-10.60	8.25-10.60	8.25-10.85
UCO Bank	8.30 #	8.30 #	8.30 #
Bank of Maharashtra	8.10-11.15	8.10-11.15	8.10-11.15
Punjab and Sind Bank	8.35-9.85	8.35-9.85	8.35-9.85
Indian Overseas Bank	8.15-10.75	8.15-10.75	8.15-10.75
Indian Bank	8.15-9.55	8.15-9.55	8.15-9.55
Private Sector Banks			
Kotak Mahindra Bank	8.75 #	8.75 #	8.75 #
ICICI Bank	8.75 #	8.75 #	8.75 #
Axis Bank	8.75-13.30	8.75-13.30	8.75-9.65
HSBC Bank	8.50 #	8.50 #	8.50 #
South Indian Bank	8.50 #	8.50 #	8.50 #
Karur Vysya Bank	8.75-11.70	8.75-11.70	8.75-11.70
Karnataka Bank	8.79-10.91	8.79-10.91	8.79-9.44
Federal Bank	8.80 #	8.80 #	8.80 #

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)		
	Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
(In %)			
Public Sector Banks			
Dhanlaxmi Bank	8.75 #	8.75 #	8.75 #
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	8.60-9.95	8.60-9.95	8.60-9.95
Bandhan Bank	9.16-15.00	9.16-13.33	9.16-13.33
RBL Bank	9.00 #	9.00 #	9.00 #
CSB Bank	10.24-12.09	10.24-12.09	10.24-12.09
HDFC Bank Ltd.	8.75 #	8.75 #	8.75 #
City Union Bank	10.35-15.75	10.15-15.75	10.15-14.05
Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)			
LIC Housing Finance	8.50 #	8.50 #	8.50 #
Bajaj Housing Finance	8.25 #	8.25 #	8.25 #
Tata Capital	8.75 #	8.75 #	8.75 #
PNB Housing Finance	8.50-14.50	8.50-14.50	8.50-11.45
GIC Housing Finance	8.80 #	8.80 #	8.80 #
SMFG India Home Finance	10.00 #	10.00 #	10.00 #
Sammaan Capital	8.75 #	8.75 #	8.75 #
Aditya Birla Capital	8.60 #	8.60 #	8.60 #
ICICI Home Finance	9.30 #	9.30 #	9.30 #
Godrej Housing Finance	8.55 #	8.55 #	8.55 #
#Onwards Rates as on February 19 Source:Paisabazaar.com			

NAIROBI
Sudan's RSF, allies sign charter to establish a parallel government



Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and allies have signed a charter to establish a parallel government, raising concern about further fragmentation of the war-torn nation. The agreement aims for a "government of peace and unity" in rebel-controlled areas, amid ongoing conflict that has displaced millions. AFP

VATICAN CITY
Pope Francis, in critical condition, had 'tranquil' night, says Vatican



Pope Francis, in critical condition battling double pneumonia, had a "tranquil" night and rested following a respiratory crisis and blood transfusions, the Vatican said on Sunday. The Pope was admitted to Rome's Gemelli hospital on February 14 after experiencing difficulty breathing for several days. REUTERS

WASHINGTON
Trump to appoint new FBI chief
Kash Patel as Acting ATF director



President Trump is set to appoint new FBI Director Kash Patel as the Acting head of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Despite opposition from Democrats and moderate Republicans, Mr. Patel's nomination received broad Republican support, aiming to shift ATF's focus away from gun control. REUTERS

ISLAMABAD
Pak. to deport Afghan refugees
if U.S. resettlement not approved



Pakistan has warned that Afghan refugees denied resettlement by the U.S. will be treated as illegal immigrants and deported. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar stated negotiations are possible, but refugees not accepted will face repatriation to Afghanistan, increasing uncertainty for many awaiting relocation. PTI

Tens of thousands of mourners pour in for Nasrallah's funeral

Despite the loss of its leader, Hezbollah maintains a strong support base within Lebanon's Shia community by providing social and economic services; Araghchi says 'the path of resistance will continue'; Israel states 'the world is a better place'

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

Tens of thousands of mourners dressed in black, some waving Hezbollah flags or carrying portraits of the group's slain leader Hassan Nasrallah, flocked to his funeral on Sunday in a stadium on the outskirts of Beirut.

The killing of the charismatic leader, who guided the Lebanese movement for more than three decades, dealt a heavy blow to the Iran-backed group's reputation as a fighting force.

But Hezbollah, which also played a major role in



Bidding adieu: Nasrallah's portraits being carried during his funeral at the Camille Chamoun stadium in Beirut on Sunday. AFP

the country's politics for decades, has long had a support base in the country's majority Shia Muslim community by providing social and economic ser-

vices. Many men, women and children from Lebanon and beyond walked on foot in the biting cold to reach the site of the ceremony, delayed for security

reasons after Nasrallah's death in a massive Israeli strike on Hezbollah's south Beirut bastion in September 2024.

One of them was Umm Mahdi, 55, who had come "to see him (Nasrallah) one last time and see his shrine".

As the crowds gathered, Lebanese state media reported Israeli strikes on areas in Lebanon's south, including a location about 20 km from the border. Israel's military said it had struck in southern Lebanon "several rocket launchers that posed an imminent threat to Israeli civilians".

Hezbollah has invited

top Lebanese officials to the ceremony, with Iranian speaker of parliament, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in attendance.

Mr. Araghchi, in a speech from Beirut, described the slain leaders as "two heroes of the resistance" and vowed that "the path of resistance will continue".

Meanwhile, Israel's Army on Sunday said "the world is a better place" on the day of the funeral for Nasrallah.

"Today is Hassan Nasrallah's funeral. Today the world is a better place," the Army posted on X.

Russia launches 'largest drone attack' on Ukraine: Zelenskyy

Reuters & AFP
KYIV

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday said Russia launched over 200 drones in an overnight attack, the largest of the war, as he condemned Russia's "aerial terror" and called for unity among Ukraine's allies.

"Every day, our people stand against aerial terror," he wrote on X.

"On the eve of the third anniversary of the full-scale war, Russia launched 267 attack drones against Ukraine – the largest attack since Iranian drones began striking Ukrainian cities and villages."

Ukraine's Air Force said that 138 of the drones were downed and another 119 disappeared from radars after being jammed by electronic warfare, adding that Russia also launched



Massive strike: Russia's drone attack destroyed buildings in the frontline Toretsk town of Ukraine on Saturday. REUTERS

three ballistic missiles. Damage was reported in five regions of Ukraine.

Moscow has launched near-nightly massed drone attacks at Ukraine for months.

Mr. Zelenskyy said in total, nearly 1,150 attack drones, more than 1,400 guided aerial bombs and 35 missiles of various types, were launched by Russia at Ukraine in the past week. The President thanked those operating Ukraine's air defences, and

called on the country's foreign allies to stand united to secure a "lasting peace".

'Ready to quit' Mr. Zelenskyy said on Sunday that he was ready to quit as Ukraine's President if it meant Kyiv would be admitted to the NATO military alliance.

"If there is peace for Ukraine, if you really need me to leave my post, I am ready. ... I can exchange it for NATO," Mr. Zelenskyy told a Kyiv press conference.

Bangladesh to mark Feb. 25 as Military Martyrdom Day

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Bangladesh will mark February 25 as National Military Martyrdom Day, the interim government of Dhaka announced on Sunday. The announcement formalises months-long discussion within the Mohammed Yunus-led government about the February 2009 Pilkhana killings of military officers in a failed mutiny by a section of the Bangladesh Rifles.

The decision of the government to create a new memorial day dedicated to the military casualties during the mutiny and the consequent crackdown led to social media discussion about the timing of the decision.

The mutineers had looted weapons and tried to launch a military coup but were crushed, which led to the death of 74 military personnel, out of which 57 were Army officers. The

The decision to commemorate military casualties during 2009 mutiny has led to a debate in the country

mutiny was the last big rebellion by sections of the Bangladesh armed forces which has played an important role in the political evolution of the country.

Martyrdom of students The decision of Sunday comes just a day after February 21 when Bangladesh marks the martyrdom of the students who died in police firing in 1952 during Pakistan rule.

Since the martyrdom of students in Dhaka under police firing on February 21, 1952, February has been known as the month dedicated to the mother tongue of the region which subsequently became Bangladesh in 1971.

The interim government has been focused on ensuring a thorough investigation into the 2009 incident and in December a commission headed by A.L.M Fazlur Rahman was ordered to probe the incident. The mutiny was investigated during the Sheikh Hasina years and around 450 individuals were given punishments ranging from death sentence to varied jail terms. However, questions were raised about the trial during the Hasina regime which came to an end on August 5, 2024.

While the earlier investigations were focused on internal reasons, the current commission and various components of the interim government – especially the anti-Hasina agitators – have been raising the "foreign" angle to the mutiny, indicating that the investigation will probe angles that were earlier not explored.

Russia signs memorandum to build port in Myanmar

Reuters
MOSCOW

Myanmar and its close ally Russia signed a memorandum on investment cooperation in a special economic zone in Dawei, including construction of a port and an oil refinery, Russia's Ministry of Economic Development said on Sunday.

The document was signed by the head of the Russian Ministry Maxim Reshetnikov and Myanmar's Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations Kan Zaw during a visit of a Russian delegation to the south-east Asian country.

According to the Russian Ministry, the Dawei special economic zone is a 196 sq. km project in the Andaman Sea which is planned to house high-tech industrial zones and transport hubs, IT zones and export processing zones.

Israel ramps up West Bank offensive, says troops to remain in some areas for a year

Associated Press
JENIN

Israel's Defence Minister said on Sunday troops would remain "for the coming year" in parts of the occupied West Bank where they have launched a weeks-long offensive and would prevent tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians from returning, as Israel deepens its crackdown on the Palestinian territory.

Israel launched a broad

offensive on the northern West Bank on January 21 – two days after the ceasefire that paused the war in Gaza took hold – and then expanded it to include other nearby areas. Israel says it is determined to stamp out militancy amid a rise in attacks. Palestinians view such raids as part of an effort to cement Israeli control over the territory, where 3 million Palestinians live under military rule. The raids have been deadly, caused destruction



Israel Katz

to urban areas and displaced tens of thousands.

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said he had in-

structed the military to prepare to remain in some of the West Bank's urban refugee camps, from where he said some 40,000 Palestinians had fled – a figure confirmed by the United Nations – leaving the areas "emptied of residents".

He said in a statement he had ordered the military to "prepare for an extended stay in the camps that were cleared for the coming year and to not allow return of residents".

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

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TURBO-CHARGED

Kohli becomes the quickest to cross the 14,000-run mark in ODIs



Virat Kohli went past the 14,000-mark in ODIs during his knock against Pakistan in Dubai on Sunday. He achieved this feat in his 287th innings, making him the fastest player to reach the milestone. Sachin Tendulkar (18,426) and Kumara Sangakkara (14,234), the only players ahead of him, did the same in their 350th and 378th innings.

158 AND COUNTING

Virat moves past Azharuddin, reaches No. 3 on the all-time list



Virat Kohli, when he pounced on Naseem Shah off the bowling of Kuldeep Yadav during the India-Pakistan Champions Trophy match in Dubai on Sunday, went past Mohammad Azharuddin's record of 156 catches for India in ODIs. Kohli is now third in the all-time list behind Mahela Jayawardene (218) and Ricky Ponting (160).

WAY ABOVE

The eighth 50-plus score for Kohli against Pakistan in ICC events



During his match-winning innings on Sunday, Virat Kohli made his eighth 50-plus score for India against Pakistan in ICC events (50-over World Cup, Champions Trophy, T20 World Cup) — the most by a batter. Viv Richards, Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Rohit Sharma, Michael Hussey and Shakib Al Hasan (three each) are second.

PROUD OWNER

Bumrah receives ICC awards for 2024 before India-Pakistan match



Jasprit Bumrah on Sunday received his ICC honours, including the Men's Cricketer of the Year and Men's Test Cricketer of the Year awards, before the start of the Champions Trophy match between India and Pakistan. The 31-year-old was present to collect the awards, which also includes a place in the Men's Test and T20I Teams for 2024.

King Kohli's day out as India aces the Pakistan test

The No. 3 batter masterminds the chase with his 51st ODI century as the Men in Blue win by six wickets and push Rizwan's side to the brink of elimination; Shreyas proves an able ally



In the zone: From the moment he took strike, Kohli hardly put a foot wrong. PTI

CHAMPIONS TROPHY

S. Dipak Ragav
DUBAI

Pakistan was the 'home' team for its must-win encounter against India. But, in front of a near sell-out crowd — more than three-fourths decked in blue — Mohammad Rizwan's men were witness to a Virat Kohli masterclass as he reaffirmed his status as one of the greatest ODI batters. The 36-year-old's brilliant unbeaten 100 (111b, 7x4) powered the Men in Blue to a comprehensive six-wicket win in their second league match (Group-A) of the ICC Champions Trophy at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Sunday. Chasing a target of 242, skipper Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill lit the fire-works before Kohli took centre-stage. From the moment he hit two trademark cover drives in an over off Haris Rauf, the No. 3 batter showed he meant business. Kohli, who has struggled against the tweakers in recent times, looked far more assured against Pakistan's thin spin attack, rotating the strike comfortably. He was dominant against the pacers, pulling Rauf to the



Two to tango: Kohli and Shreyas forged a match-winning partnership. AP

fine-leg fence and reaching his half-century by lofting Naseem Shah over cover. In Shreyas Iyer (56), Kohli found an able ally. The duo's 114-run stand for the third wicket took the game away from the opponent. Gill flourishes Pakistan's only chance to make a fight of it was by taking early wickets, but Gill extinguished those hopes by smashing left-arm pacer Shaheen Afridi for seven boundaries. The opener threaded the ball through the cover region, pulled with power on the leg-side and executed a copy-book straight drive. Earlier, the Pakistan batters blew hot and cold. After choosing to take guard first, a promising platform came undone in the middle

and finished in a moderate 241. Saud Shakeel's half-century and Khushdil Shah's final flourish were the bright spots in an otherwise inconsistent and disappointing effort. On a two-paced surface, Pakistan played too many dot balls (80 in the first 20 overs) against a disciplined Indian bowling attack. Babar Azam provided a good start, producing pristine drives through the off-side. At the other end, Imam-ul-Haq gobbled up deliveries in the PowerPlay without hitting a single boundary and was left stranded while going for a non-existent single. After Babar departed, Shakeel and skipper Mohammed Rizwan (46) forged a 104-run alliance for the third wicket. The duo took its time to

SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN Imam-ul-Haq run out 10 (26b), Babar Azam c Rahul b Hardik 23 (26b, 5x4), Saud Shakeel c Axar b Hardik 62 (76b, 5x4), Mohammad Rizwan b Axar 46 (77b, 3x4), Salman Agha c Jadeja b Kuldeep 19 (24b), Tayyab Tahir b Jadeja 4 (6b), Khushdil Shah c Kohli b Harshit 38 (39b, 2x6), Shaheen Afridi lbw b Kuldeep 0 (1b), Naseem Shah c Kohli b Kuldeep 14 (16b, 1x4), Haris Rauf run out 8 (7b, 1x6), Abrar Ahmed (not out) 0 (0b); Extras (lb-8, w-9); 17; Total (in 49.4 overs): 241.	10-0-49-1, Kuldeep 9-0-40-3, Jadeja 7-0-40-1.
FALL OF WICKETS 1-41 (Babar, 8.2 overs), 2-47 (Imam, 9.2), 3-151 (Rizwan, 33.2), 4-159 (Shakeel, 34.5), 5-165 (Tahir, 36.1), 6-200 (Agha, 42.4), 7-200 (Afridi, 42.5), 8-222 (Naseem, 46.4), 9-241 (Rauf, 48.6).	INDIA Rohit Sharma b Afridi 20 (15b, 3x4, 1x6), Shubman Gill b Abrar 46 (52b, 7x4), Virat Kohli (not out) 100 (111b, 7x4), Shreyas Iyer c Imam b Khushdil 56 (67b, 5x4, 1x6), Hardik Pandya c Rizwan b Afridi 8 (6b, 1x4), Axar Patel (not out) 3 (4b); Extras (w-11); 11; Total (for four wkts. in 42.3 overs): 244.
INDIA BOWLING Shami 8-0-43-0, Harshit 7.4-0-30-1, Hardik 8-0-31-2, Axar	FALL OF WICKETS 1-31 (Rohit, 4.6), 2-100 (Gill, 17.3), 3-214 (Shreyas, 38.5), 4-223 (Hardik, 39.6).
	PAKISTAN BOWLING Afridi 8-0-74-2, Naseem 8-0-37-0, Rauf 7-0-52-0, Abrar 10-0-28-1, Khushdil 7.3-0-43-1, Agha 2-0-10-0.
	Toss: Pakistan; PoM: Kohli.
	India won by six wickets with 45 balls to spare.
	India's next match: March 2 vs. New Zealand.

It was crucial to see off Abrar: Shreyas

S. Dipak Ragav
DUBAI

On a day when Virat Kohli hogged the limelight, Shreyas Iyer went about his job unassumingly, playing perfect foil to his senior partner. The Mumbai batter was pleased with the way he went about his business. "Initially, I was struggling a bit to manoeuvre the ball through the gaps. I think Abrar (Ahmed) bowled brilliantly. It was important and crucial for me to play out that spell and, at the same time, rotate the strike," said Shreyas. "I took some time, and once I got my eye in, I thought the sweep and reverse-sweep would be a good option to put them on the backfoot. I think that worked pretty well," revealed Shreyas. As India extended its unbeaten run (six) over Pakistan in ODIs, Shreyas felt the margin of victory could have been even bigger. "I think we could have won a bit earlier and been even more convincing given the way the pitch played. The ball was coming on pretty well when it was new. After that, it was difficult to score when it became old. Had we had played more aggressively,



Shreyas... in full flow. REUTERS

we could have finished it sooner," he added. The 30-year-old credited the Indian bowlers for restricting Pakistan to a modest total. "They bowled tremendously, especially in the middle phase when the ball spun and there was help from the surface. "The wicket was a bit slow like in the previous game we played here. It's spinner-friendly and they have been bowling consistently over a period of time. "I think the amalgamation of the three bowlers (Axar Patel, Ravindra Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav), who mixed it up quite well, and the experience they possess brings a lot of clarity," said Shreyas.

NZ looks to seal semifinal spot as it meets Bangladesh

Shayan Acharya
RAWALPINDI

New Zealand and Bangladesh go into Monday's Champions Trophy fixture with contrasting fortunes. While New Zealand will be hoping to keep its momentum going and ensure a spot in the semifinals, for Bangladesh, which went down to India in the opener, it will be about returning to winning ways and staying in the hunt. With the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium likely to aid the batters, with a bit of help for fast bowlers early on, New Zealand will bank on Tom Latham and Will Young, who scored centuries in the campaign starter against Pakistan to get going, while there's no clarity over the availability of Rachin Ravindra, who was struck by the ball on his forehead during the tri-series earlier this month. Having beaten Pakistan at home earlier in the week and remaining unbeaten in the tri-series, New Zealand is a confident unit, and with enough depth in batting, it will be starting as a favourite. However, it's a fight for survival for Bangladesh. Despite Towhid Hridoy scoring a century against



Wily customer: Santner will pose a threat to Bangladesh with his tricks, both as a spinner and captain. AFP

India, none of the top batters could show resilience and against a bowling department led by Matt Henry, Will O'Rourke and captain Mitchell Santner, it will be a challenge for the Bangladesh batters to rise to the occasion. Mahmudullah Riyad, who missed out against India with a hamstring niggle, is likely to return, bolstering the team's batting unit. However, it will be important for the top-order to fire in a must-win outing. In terms of bowling,

Bangladesh had a decent outing against India with Taskin Ahmed, Rishad Hossain and Mehidy Hasan Miraz putting up a spirited show. But it would be interesting to see whether the team management unleashes young fast bowler Nahid Rana on the New Zealand batters. The Kiwis haven't played Rana before and he could bring in a surprise element. If New Zealand beats Bangladesh, it will be curtains for the latter as well as Pakistan.

Imperious Liverpool blows away Man City

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
MANCHESTER

Liverpool took a giant stride towards the Premier League title on Sunday as a 2-0 win over Manchester City opened up an 11-point lead over Arsenal at the top of the table. Mohamed Salah was again Liverpool's star performer as he opened the scoring with his 30th goal of the season before setting up Dominik Szoboszlai to double the lead before half-time. Luka Modric scored a brilliant goal from long range to help Real Madrid secure a 2-0 win against Girona on Sunday which took it back level with Barcelona at the top of LaLiga. Vinicius Junior wrapped up the win late on as Carlo Ancelotti's side produced a solid display at the Santiago Bernabeu. Dani Olmo and Ferran Torres struck to earn Barcelona a 2-0 win at Las Palmas on Saturday. After Atletico Madrid beat Valencia to temporarily take pole position, the Catalans replaced it with a narrow victory on the road and sit one point ahead.



Starring role: Salah scores Liverpool's opener against City. AP

Napoli conceded top spot in Serie A to Inter Milan ahead of next weekend's title showdown in Naples after falling to a shock 2-1 defeat at promoted Como on Sunday. **The results: Premier League:** Newcastle 4 (Miley 23, Murphy 25, Isak 33-pen, 34) bt Nottingham Forest 3 (Hudson-Odoi 6, Milenkovic 63, Yates 90); Manchester City 0 lost to Liverpool 2 (Salah 14, Szoboszlai 37). **LaLiga:** Athletic Bilbao 7 (Jauregizar 10, Nico Williams 35, 66, Sannadi 43, Sancet 45+2, Guruzeta 69, Inaki Williams 87) bt Valladolid 1 (Sylla 47); Real Madrid 2 (Modric 41, Vinicius 83) bt Girona 0. **Serie A:** Como 2 (Rahmani 7-og, Diaio 77) bt Napoli 1 (Raspadori 17). **Bundesliga:** RB Leipzig 2 (Openda 45+2, Sesko 64-pen) drew with Heidenheim 2 (Honsak 6, Pieringer 13-pen); Bayern Munich 4 (Olise 45+2, Ito 61, Musiala 83, Gnabry 90+2) bt Eintracht Frankfurt 0. **On Saturday: LaLiga:** Valencia 0 lost to Atletico Madrid 3 (Alvarez 12, 30, Correa 86); Las Palmas 0 lost to Barcelona 2 (Olmo 62, Ferran 90+5). **Serie A:** Inter Milan 1 (Martinez 78) bt Genoa 0; Parma 2 (Bonny 37-pen, Sohm 79) bt Bologna 0; Torino 2 (Thiaw 5-og, Gineitsis 76) bt AC Milan 1 (Reijnders 74). **Bundesliga:** Borussia M'gladbach 0 lost to Augsburg 3 (Claude-Maurice 55, 61, 70); Wolfsburg 1 (Svanberg 81) drew with Bochum 1 (Masovic 49); Mainz 2 (Lee 67, Nebel 90+5) bt St. Pauli 0; Holstein Kiel 0 lost to Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Schick 9, Adli 45); Borussia Dortmund 6 (Leite 25-og, Guirassy 40, 75, 80, 83, Beier 89) bt Union Berlin 0.

INBRIEF



Andreeva, 17, is youngest ever WTA 1000 champion

Russian 17-year-old Mirra Andreeva on Saturday became the youngest champion of a WTA 1000 tournament when she defeated Clara Tauson in the Dubai Championships final. Andreeva won 7-6(1), 6-1 and will move to ninth in the world, the first 17-year-old to be ranked in the top 10 since Nicole Pietrangeli in 2007.

Gulveer clocks record time in 5000m, qualifies for Worlds

Hangzhou Asian Games bronze medalist Gulveer Singh broke the 13-minute barrier in an indoor 5000m event while improving his outdoor National record and earning a berth in the World athletics championships in Tokyo in September. Gulveer, whose previous personal best (13:11.82) over 5000m had come last year, clocked 12:59.77 to finish fourth in the Terrier DMR Challenge indoor competition in Boston. USA's 1500m Olympic champion Cole Hocker (12:57.82), Cooper Teare (12:57.97) and Jack Rayner (12:59.43) claimed first, second and third spots respectively.



Naveen-led Services pips Railways to win title

Services won an exciting final against Railways to clinch the 71st senior National kabaddi title at Cuttack on Sunday. After the teams were tied 30-30, Services prevailed 6-4 in the tie-breaker. Services was led by Pro Kabaddi League star Naveen Kumar. In the semifinals, Services registered an impressive 43-35 victory over Punjab while Railways eased past Uttar Pradesh 42-34. Services got past Haryana 43-32 in the quarterfinal while Railways crushed Rajasthan 54-31.

GM Iniyar finishes runner-up in Dunkirk chess tournament

Grandmaster P. Iniyar finished runner-up in the 41st Cappelle La Grande International Open chess tournament after losing to IM Mahel of France in the tie-break in Dunkirk (France). The fifth seed Indian scored 7.5 points, with six wins and 3 draws to be tied first alongside Mahel after nine rounds. The result has helped Iniyar gain 16 rating points and his live rating now is 2566.



Sainz replaces Vettel as director of GPDA

Carlos Sainz has replaced retired four-time Formula One world champion Sebastian Vettel as a director of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association (GPDA), the trade union of Formula One drivers announced on Sunday. The 30-year-old Spaniard, who ceded his place at Ferrari to seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton and is now on his fifth different Formula One team with Williams, joins Mercedes driver George Russell on the board. Sainz has won four Formula One Grands Prix across 10 seasons. German Vettel, 37, left Formula One at the end of 2022.

LIVE TELECAST

I-League: Sony Sports Ten 1 (SD & HD) & LIV, 2 & 4.30 p.m.
Champions Trophy: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & JioHotstar, 2.30 p.m.
Hockey: Pro League, (Women), India vs Netherlands, SS Select 1 (SD & HD) & JioHotstar, 5.15 p.m.; **Men:** India vs England, 7.30 p.m.
WPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.
Series A: gxr.world, 1.15 a.m. (Tuesday)
LaLiga: gxr.world, 1.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Indian teams will strive to extend their winning momentum

While the women face the dominant Dutch, the men have a tricky opponent in England in the final set of games at home on Monday and Tuesday

FIH PRO LEAGUE

Uthra Ganesan
BHUBANESWAR

A crucial win and three points against Germany in its previous game would hopefully provide the necessary momentum and burst of confidence when the Indian women's hockey team takes on the all-winning, dominant Netherlands in its final set of FIH Pro League games at home on Monday and Tuesday.

It definitely won't be easy though.

On a roll

The Dutch women have been on a roll for the past few years, sweeping everyone away in what is undoubtedly among the most dominant winning streaks in any team sport anywhere ever.

They have lost just 20 matches out of over 300



Good tidings: Both the Indian men's and women's teams would like to have such happy moments in their last two matches. BISWARANJAN ROUT

since the Athens Olympics in 2004! With 11 of the 16 who won its fifth Olympic gold at Paris travelling, the Indians will have to play out of their skin to cause an upset.

They made their intentions clear with massive wins against England in the two games so far here but the positive, for India, has been its impressive teenagers despite the losses. The

close 1-0 win against Germany after a 4-0 loss a day before should help the girls find belief that they can match the best.

For the men, the two upcoming matches against

England will be important to not only maintain the winning momentum but also collect points that will help Craig Fulton's boys go into the next leg in Europe in a comfortable position.

The Indian men have lost two games so far and won four but have managed to keep a clean sheet in three of those wins, highlighting the defensive abilities and, more importantly, those of the two goalkeepers Krishan Pathak and Suraj Karkera. It was one of the areas the team was concerned about after Paris Olympics and the retirement of P.R. Sreejesh but both Pathak and Karkera have been effective so far.

With an eye on the next three years, Fulton has rotated his players constantly with 27 already stepping on the field in the six games so far, many of them youngsters.

The likes of Rajinder Singh, Arajjeet Singh Hun-

dal, Angad Bir Singh and Yashdeep Siwach have been impressive as well. India will have to be guard, however, against England, a team with just one loss and two shootout wins.

Experienced

It is also a team with a fair amount of experience, none more than the likes of Sam Ward and Zack Wallace creating problems for the opposition and James Mazarello and Oliver Payne stopping anything thrown at them and India will have to navigate the tricky patches in the middle carefully.

The Irish men, meanwhile, will be hoping to finish the India leg on a high against a German side that is rebuilding and has not had a great time so far.

Monday's matches:

Men: Germany vs. Ireland (3 p.m.), India vs. England (7.30 p.m.).

Women: India vs. Netherlands (5.15 pm).

Svrcina takes the honours in Maha Open Challenger

TENNIS

Sports Bureau

Unseeded Dalibor Svrcina of the Czech Republic capped a fine run by beating sixth seed Brandon Holt of USA 7-6(3), 6-1 in the final of the Pune Metropolitan \$160,000 Maha Open Challenger tennis tournament in Pune on Sunday.

It was the sixth singles title in the professional circuit for the 22-year-old Svrcina, and third on Indian soil.

The champion won 100 ATP points and \$22,730. The runner-up got 50 points and \$13,350.

Svrcina, who had made the semifinals in Chennai and the second round in Delhi in the current series



Big prize: Svrcina with his reward.

in India, had won his last two titles in Bhubaneswar and Mumbai in \$25,000 events.

The Czech, who had lost the third round of the qual-

ifying event at the Australian Open this year, converted four of seven break point chances, as against two of six by his American opponent.

Commendable run

It was a commendable run by the 26-year-old Holt, currently ranked a career-best 153, as he had beaten the top seed Billy Harris along the way. Son of former World No.1 and two-time US Open women's champion Tracy Austin, Holt was looking for his second title of the season following the one in Nonthaburi, Thailand, and the tenth of his career.

The caravan now moves to Bengaluru on Monday.

The results (final):

Dalibor Svrcina (Cze) bt Brandon Holt (USA) 7-6(3), 6-1.

Siddharth should go one better in the Heritage Plate

HYDERABAD: The five-year-old gelding Siddharth, who ran second in his last start, should make amends in the Heritage Plate, the main event of penultimate day's races to be run on Monday.

1. TIME AND PLACE PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II), 1.10 p.m.: 1. Authoritarian (3) Gaurav 56, 2. Hanuman-mahabala (4) Neeraj 56, 3. Royal Warrior (8) P. Sai K 56, 4. Sharanga (6) Ashad Asbar 56, 5. Blue Nile (5) Akshay K 54.5, 6. Feel The Magic (2) Mukesh 54.5, 7. Moonlite Rose (1) Vivek G 54.5 and 8. N R I High Power (7) Kuldeep Sr. 54.5.

1. N R I HIGH POWER, BLUE NILE, 3. ROYAL WARRIOR

2. OSMAN SAGAR CUP (DIV. II) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), no whip, 1.45: 1. Planet Super (2) Kuldeep Jr. 60, 2. Shoolin (3) B. Nikhil 58, 3. Cosmico (4) Mukesh 56.5, 4. Ambosell (6) Ashad Asbar 54.5, 5. Flashing Memories (1) R.S. Jodha 54, 6. Pinatubo (7) Kuldeep Sr. 54, 7. Genie (5) Md. Ekram 53 and 8. Ilene (8) Abhay 52.

1. COSMICO, 2. AMBOSELL, 3. SHOOLIN

3. MOSSY BANK PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 2.20: 1. The Thunder (6) Gaurav 60, 2. Best Buddy (1) Md. Ekram 58, 3. Dyanoosh (5) Neeraj 55, 4. Ragnarak (4) B.R. Kumar 54, 5. She Can (7) Akshay K 53.5, 6. Tripurari (2) Mukesh

53, 7. Malibu (8) Surya Prakash 51.5 and 8. Pontefract (3) P. Ajeeth K 50.

1. SHE CAN, 2. TRIPURARI, 3. DYANOOSH

4. P. VEERESHVAR RAO MEMORIAL CUP (1,400m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 2.55: 1. Burgundy Black (6) Mukesh 60, 2. Annihilator (1) Kuldeep Sr. 59, 3. Winning Attitude (7) Alex Rozario 59, 4. Just Incredible (2) P. Sai K 58.5, 5. Juramento (8) Uday Kiran 55, 6. Great Giver (3) Kuldeep Jr. 53, 7. Role Model (4) Md. Ekram 52.5 and 8. Shadow Of Light (5) Vivek G 52.5.

1. JUST INCREDIBLE, ANNHILATOR, 3. BURGUNDY BLACK

5. REPUBLIC PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated upto 25 (Cat. III), 3.30: 1. Anagha (II) Mukesh 61.5, 2. Club Queen (7) R.S. Jodha 61.5, 3. Hibiscus (4) Santosh Raj 61.5, 4. Mirzeta (8) R.S. Bhati 61.5, 5. Iconic Star (3) A.A. Vikrant 61, 6. Prince (10) Md. Ekram 60.5, 7. Reining Queen (5) P. Ajeeth K 60, 8. Most Beautiful (2) Shivansh 58, 9. Hoping Wind (10) Md. Ismail 56, 10. Lucky Fiero (6) Kuldeep Jr. 55.5 and 11. Bien Pensant (9) Surya Prakash 54.5.

1. ANAGHA, 2. CLUB QUEEN, 3. HOPING WIND

6. MOSS BANK PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 4.45: 1. Decoy (3) Akshay K 60, 2. Strauss (5) Mukesh 58, 3. Kingston (4) Md. Ekram 56.5, 4. Darling's Boy (6)

Neeraj 55.5, 5. Runlikethewind (2) Vivek G 54.5, 6. Amyra (1) Alex Rozario 54, 7. Rival (8) P. Sai K 53 and 8. Calista Girl (7) Gaurav 52.5.

1. DECOY, 2. STRAUSS, 3. RIVAL

7. HERITAGE PLATE (1,800m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 80 and above (Cat. I), 4.40: 1. Huntingdon (7) Shivansh 62, 2. Siddharth (9) Akshay K 61.5, 3. High Command (6) Ashad Asbar 61, 4. Akido (8) R.S. Jodha 60.5, 5. Black Onyx (4) B. Nikhil 60.5, 6. Hugh Capet (5) Suraj Narreddu 57, 7. Shadow Of The Moon (10) Alex Rozario 56, 8. N R I Superpower (1) B.R. Kumar 54.5, 9. Silver Act (3) Mukesh 52 and 10. Hurricane Bay (2) Vivek G 50.

1. SIDDHARTH, 2. HUNTINGDON, 3. HURRICANE BAY

8. REPUBLIC PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated upto 25 (Cat. III), 5.15: 1. Master Touch (5) Mukesh 61.5, 2. N R I Star (9) Kuldeep Sr. 61.5, 3. Taaliyah (6) Deepak 61.5, 4. Hoping High (4) Md. Ismail 61, 5. Nav Lakhaa (1) Surya Prakash 60.5, 6. Fortune Art (7) G. Naresh King, 7. Hoping King (2) R.S. Bhati 59, 8. My Brother (10) R.S. Jodha 58.5, 9. Shubhshak (3) A.A. Vikrant 58 and 10. Blue Brigade (8) B. Nikhil 50.

1. N R I STAR, 2. TAALIYAH, 3. MASTER TOUCH

Day's Best: Decoy Jackpot: 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8. Mini Jackpot: (i) 2, 3, 4 & 5, (ii) 5, 6, 7 & 8. Treble: (i) 1, 2 & 3, (ii) 3, 4 & 5, (iii) 6, 7 & 8. Tanala: All races.

Jindal Panther triumphs

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

Simran Shergill scored five goals to guide Jindal Panther to a 7-4 victory over Jindal Polo Estate in the final of the Gen. Sparrow Cup polo tournament at the Jai-pur Polo ground in New Delhi on Sunday.

Simran was adjudged the "most valuable player", and mare El Colica was declared the 'best polo pony'.

The results (final): Jindal Panther 7 (Simran Shergill 5, Mahesh Sharma, Krishna Inkiya) bt Jindal Polo Estate 4 (Siddhant Sharma 3, Venkatesh Jindal).

Angel Yin wins in style

Press Trust of India
PATTAYA (THAILAND)

Angel Yin won the LPGA Thailand tournament at Pattaya by a stroke from Akie Iwai of Japan and claim her second tour title on Sunday.

The 26-year-old American made seven birdies – and no bogeys – for a four-round 28-under 260.

Mohun Bagan creates history by retaining the League Shield



Ecstatic: Bagan players celebrate their achievement. PTI

ISL

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

A capacity Salt Lake Stadium exploded in wild celebrations as Dimitri Petratos fetched the winner in the third minute of added time to help Mohun Bagan SG prevail over 10-man Odisha FC by a solitary goal in an ISL-11 fixture here on Sunday. The win ensured that Bagan retained the League Shield with an insurmountable 52 points from 22 matches and two matches to spare.

The host was held goalless by a resolute Odisha in regulation time, before Petratos, who came on as in the 78th minute, performed the heroic act.

Having won the shield with a win over Mumbai City FC in the last league match in the previous season, Bagan showed more authority with a series of superlative performances (that sank a number of records in the process) in the current season to make this conquest even more memorable for its fans.

This is the first time in the ISL that any team has won the league champion-

ship for two successive seasons.

The host mounted numerous attacks just to see an alert Odisha defence denying all its efforts.

The visitor's seemingly impregnable defence was dealt a big blow in the 83rd minute when Senegalese centre-back Mourtada Fall was shown a red card.

This seemed to weaken the opposition backbone and Bagan utilised the advantage to keep its date with history.

The result: Mohun Bagan SG 1 (Dimitri Petratos 90+3) bt Odisha FC 0.

Cherie Chevalier wins

HYDERABAD: Trainer K.S.V. Prasad Raju's Cherie Chevalier, ridden by P. Sai Kumar, won the N. Nari Reddy Memorial Million, the feature event of Sunday's (Feb. 23) races. The winner is owned by Mr. Seshadri Reddy Pochana, Mrs. Smita Bajoria, Mr. Bollineni Krishnaiah, Mr. Teegala Vijender Reddy, Mr. Teegala Sumant Reddy & Mr. Pochana Arjun Reddy.

1. OLYMPIC FLAME PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200m): HER LADYSHIP (Santosh Raj N R) 1, La Fleuriere (Kuldeep Jr.) 2, Senti (R.S. Jodha) 3 and State Man (Mukesh) 4, 2, 1/2 and 2-3/4. Im, 15.16s. ₹129 (w), 20, 23 and 20 (p). SHP: 83, THP: 43, SHW: 51 and 33, FP: 1,835, Q: 1,154, Tanala: 13,860. Favourite: Philodendron. Owner: Mr. S. Pathy. Trainer: D. Netto. NOTE: First favourite Philodendron, who was leading the field till the bend, broke down near 600m. Jockey Md. Ismail escaped with minor injuries, while Philodendron was euthanised on humanitarian grounds.

2. OLYMPIC FLAME PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200m): MEXICAN WAVE (R.S. Jodha) 1, Petaluma (P. Ajeeth K) 2, Gusto's Baby (Alex Rozario) 3 and Konaseema (Abhay) 4. Neck, 6-1/2 and 4. Im, 14.27s. 187 (w), 35, 18 and 13 (p). SHP: 65, THP: 53, SHW: 113 and 37, FP: 1,784, Q: 814, Tanala: 5,199. Favourite: Gusto's Baby. Owner: M.A.M. Ramaswamy Chettiar Of Chettinad Charitable Trust. Trainer: K. Sathesh.

3. SHRAVAN KUMAR MEMORIAL CUP (DIV. II) (1,400m): BORN BRAVE (Kuldeep Singh Sr.) 1, Romantic Grey (Alex Rozario) 2, Mix The Magic (Mukesh) 3 and Knotty Senorita (P. Sai K) 4. Not run: Worcester. 1-1/2, 6-1/4 and 2-1/2. Im, 12.74s. ₹15 (w), 10, 11 and 17 (p). SHP: 29, THP: 34, SHW: 12 and 18, FP: 33, Q: 26, Tanala: 71. Favourite: Born Brave. Owners: Mr. Donald Anthony Netto & Mr. Rajendran rep. Rapar's Galloping Stars LLP. Trainer: D. Netto.

4. RAJA R.J.K. RANGA RAO ZAMINDAR OF CHIKKAVARAM MEMORIAL TROPHY (1,400m): MISS MARVELOUS (Shivansh) 1, Smart Boy (Mukesh) 2, Char Ek Char (A.A. Vikrant) 3 and D Battle (P. Sai K) 4. 2-1/4, 1/2 and 1. Im, 28.31s. ₹56 (w), 17, 19 and 21 (p). SHP: 55, THP: 94,

SHW: 26 and 36, FP: 654, Q: 245, Tanala: 4,111. Favourite: City Cruise. Owners: Mr. Srinivas Pangam & Mrs. Nirupama Chodagan, Trainer: L. D' Silva.

5. MCME ROLLING TROPHY (1,600m): CHINA TOWN (P. Ajeeth K) 1, Coming Home (Mukesh) 2, N R I Ultrapower (Abhay) 3 and Armstrong (Deepak) 4. 2, 2 and 1/2. Im, 40.00s. ₹34 (w), 11, 16 and 47 (p). SHP: 34, THP: 142, SHW: 35 and 18, FP: 140, Q: 67, Tanala: 2,195. Favourite: China Town. Owner: Mr. Suresh Chintamaneni. Trainer: Ananta Vatsalya.

6. SHRAVAN KUMAR MEMORIAL CUP (DIV. I) (1,200m): CALISTOGA (Shivansh) 1, High Heels (Gaurav) 2, Knight Crusader (P. Ajeeth K) 3 and N R I Dheera (Kuldeep Sr.) 4. Not run: Exclusive Black. 3-1/2, 3/4 and 2. Im, 12.29s. ₹31 (w), 11, 18 and 10 (p). SHP: 38, THP: 66, SHW: 17 and 33, FP: 194, Q: 130, Tanala: 370. Favourite: Knight Crusader. Owners: Mr. M. Ramakrishna Reddy, Mr. Bharat Venkat Epur & Mrs. Rajini Meka. Trainer: L. D' Silva.

7. N. NARI REDDY MEMORIAL MILLION (1,200m): CHERIE CHEVALIER (P. Sai Kumar) 1, Walking Thunder (Ashad Asbar) 2, Stars Envid (Gaurav) 4. 2-3/4, 2 and Neck. Im, 12.22s. ₹21 (w), 11, 13 and 15 (p). SHP: 38, THP: 57, SHW: 18 and 20, FP: 118, Q: 73, Tanala: 403. Favourite: Cherie Chevalier. Owners: Mr. Seshadri Reddy Pochana, Mrs. Smita Bajoria, Mr. Bollineni Krishnaiah, Mr. Teegala Vijender Reddy, Mr. Teegala Sumant Reddy & Mr. Pochana Arjun Reddy. Trainer: K.S. V. Prasad Raju.

8. RAJA R.J.K. RANGA RAO ZAMINDAR OF CHIKKAVARAM MEMORIAL TROPHY (DIV. II) (1,400m): BLUE PANTHERESS (P. Ajeeth Kumar) 1, Pancho (Mukesh) 2, Power Ranger (Md. Ekram) 3 and Desert Sultan (G. Naresh) 4. 2, 3-1/2 and Short Head. Im, 26.98s. ₹17 (w), 14, 18 and 27 (p). SHP: 66, THP: 92, SHW: 10 and 50, FP: 99, Q: 80, Tanala: 957. Favourite: Blue Pantheress. Owner: Mr. Maddali Sai Kumar. Trainer: G. Shashikanth.

With a Flick, Barcelona regains control of the title race

After a dazzling start to the campaign, a youthful and inexperienced Barca lost the plot for a while; however, guided by coach Flick's German efficiency, it has achieved what looked unthinkable during the slump: a return to the top of the standings



AFP

Anirudh Velamuri

German pragmatism and discipline. FC Barcelona's traditional, expressive fair. On paper, there shouldn't be a sync between the two. At least, not as much as it has.

When Hansi Flick was named as Xavi Hernandez's successor, even the most optimistic of fans wouldn't have imagined the team to be as explosive and entertaining as it has. Barcelona has scored 116 goals across all competitions this season so far, six more than the 110 goals it managed in 2023-24.

In fact, the last time the Catalan club scored more goals (125 in 2020-21), Lionel Messi was running rampant in Europe. It's streak this season? Incredible. The underlying numbers? Delicious.

Maximising potential

Flick won seven titles, including two Bundesligas and a Champions League, in his two seasons at Bayern Munich. While he had all the right credentials and looked like a good bet for Barcelona, he had also walked into a chaotic club that finished a distant second to Real Madrid in 2023-24.

When the former German national team head coach landed in Spain, he inherited a club that was pinching pennies. The Blaugrana did its best all summer to recruit Nico Williams before it had to give up due to its inability to meet the financial demands of the transfer.

And when it did manage to sign a player, Dani Olmo from RB Leipzig, what followed was a long, tiring saga to register him. At the same time, arch rival Real Madrid, ironically, was polishing the latest jewel in its Galacticos 2.0 crown - Kylian Mbappe.

With resources lacking, Flick turned to the only options he had: making the most of the players at his disposal and dipping into La Masia to unearth the next generational star. Or two.

While many a million were needed to sign Robert Lewandowski, Jules Kounde and Raphinha, the rest of the star cast all have the 'Barca DNA' in them. They all came through the club's famed youth system that has time and again produced some of the most technically gifted players in the world.

Pau Cubarsi, Pedri, Alejandro Balde, Lamine Yamal, Marc Casado, Fermin Lopez, Gavi and Hector Fort. A group that has four teenagers, with the oldest being the 22-year-old Pedri.

Combine that youthful energy and explosive style, and you get a team that can run all night long and run up a cricket score.

Flick's go-to formation has been the 4-2-3-1, which changes to 4-3-3 according to

how the contest unfolds. A compact midfield, relentless pressing, and using the width. They have all been hallmarks of the latest chapter in the club's glorious history.

Over the years, and especially since Pep Guardiola's time at the helm, Barca has enjoyed keeping the ball and dictating the pace of matches, and it continues to do so. It has the highest average ball possession (67.44%) in the league, with only Real Madrid (61.29%) anywhere close to it.

Cubarsi and Inigo Martinez in the defence along with Pedri and Casado in the double pivot have given the team a solid base to build their tactics around. Short, slick passes (568 per game, only behind Real Madrid's 574) are preferred over long, raking, cross-field pings, of which there have been only 41 per game - the fewest in the league.

This season, Barcelona has played the most key passes (313), has the most touches in the opponent's box (817), has the best shot conversion ratio (1.62%), created the most big chances (115), and racked up the most xG (61.5).

Flick has also done well to improve the seasoned players in his squad. With fluid wide attackers around him and the freedom to find spaces between the lines, Lewandowski has also found a new lease of life. The 36-year-old, who scored 42 goals in 69 league matches before Flick's arrival, now has 20 after 24 matches.

The Pole isn't the only player who has seen his form improve. Raphinha, who was on the chopping block all summer, has 24 goals and 16 assists from 37 matches. For comparison, Vinicius Junior registered 25 goals and 12 assists in 2023-24, which he and Real Madrid deemed *Ballon d'Or* worthy, so much so that they collectively threw a hissy fit when he was beaten to the crown by Manchester City's Rodri.

Turn back the clock to the first week of November and there was an air of invincibility around FC Barcelona. After all, it had ended the previous month with two impressive back-to-back wins. The first was the 4-1 victory against the mighty

Bayern Munich in the UEFA Champions League. The Catalans then followed it with a 4-0 schooling of Real Madrid at the Santiago Bernabeu, which felt like a seminal moment in the club's run under Flick.

And just when it looked like the good times were about to roll again, they didn't...

Going off the rails

Despite the good run, the German coach was quick to temper expectations.

"A team's form fluctuates a lot over a long season. The important thing is to focus on winning the next match. The important thing is how we finish the season. We could say that our goal is to be in the top eight," he said in early November, almost prophetically.

After the Champions League win against Crvena Zvezda in the first week of November, Barca's league campaign nosedived. By the end of December, it lost four times and drew twice in six league outings - a run that ended with a 2-1 defeat at home to title rival Atletico.

The 1-1 draw with Getafe after the Christmas break meant Barcelona was on its joint-worst league run in its history: six points from eight games.

From leading the league by six points after matchday 12, Barcelona found itself eight points behind Real Madrid and six behind Atletico when the dust settled on the 18th round of fixtures.

It is the kind of form that normally derails campaigns, gets heads rolling, and brings talk of a 'much needed' squad overhaul. However, through it all, Flick kept faith - in himself and his players. He was the anchor that kept Barcelona's ship steady in choppy waters.

Post-Christmas cheer

Despite struggling in the league, Barcelona continued to do well in other competitions, including the Champions League. However, the team had also been dealing with a lot of injuries, both to key

players and some of its most promising youngsters.

The Christmas break came at the right time, as it not only gave Flick and the players to hit the reset button but also allowed the injured players to start making a comeback. This gave the German more options off the bench, and he hasn't been shy to use them.

Before November, Flick made substitutions at or before halftime only thrice, and twice it was because of injuries (Marc-Andre ter Stegen and Ferran Torres). The other was a tactical switch that saw Lopez replaced by Frenkie De Jong before the start of the second half against Real Madrid, a move that resulted in one of Barca's best wins this season.

Now, with the infirmary empty, Flick has been more ruthless in making changes, changes that have almost always made a difference. Case in point the match against Sevilla on February 9, when Lopez replaced Gavi and ended up scoring with his first touch in a 4-1 win.

After the Christmas break, Barca won 16 points from a possible 18. Fortuitously, Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid began to drop points, seven and nine respectively, in the same period.

Just before Christmas, on December 21, Barca, which was once the runaway leader, lost the top spot in the table following the defeat to Atletico Madrid. 58 days later, after a 1-0 win against Rayo Vallecano, it regained control of the title race.

When the form dropped at the end of 2024, Barca continued to do what it does best: dominate possession, keep the passes ticking, and create chances. However, it lost its defensive stability while also finding it hard to find the back of the net at the other end. It was like a house party where the host got so obsessed with the decor and ambiance that he/she forgot to dance and have a good time.

Now, Flick's team is back to its efficient best while continuing to entertain. Will it run away with the title? Maybe not. Should you bet against it? Only if foolish.

THE GIST

- Flick revived Barcelona immediately on his arrival, helping it score 116 goals across all competitions, six more than the 110 goals it managed in the 2023-24 season
- Barcelona was flying high in LaLiga, with the 4-0 El Clasico extending its lead at the top to six points
- November and December undid all the good work and the team fell to third in the table, eight points behind Real and six behind Atletico
- The Christmas break gave the coach and the players to reset and resume their league campaign with a spring in their step
- Nearly two months after being replaced at the top, Barca has retaken control of the title race and looks in good nick to keep the arch-rivals at bay and seal its 28th league crown



First detailed map of moon’s south pole made from Chandrayaan data

The new map of Vikram’s landing site shows an undulating landscape of highlands and low, flat plains around the lander. The researchers traced the alignment of secondary craters and identified Schomberger to be the primary source of debris covering the Chandrayaan-3 landing zone

Prakash Chandra

Astronomers are excited to be poring over the first ever detailed geological map of the moon’s south polar region, where India’s Chandrayaan-3 lunar module, Vikram, touched down on August 23, 2023.

The map is expected to throw new light on the moon’s origin and evolution.

Researchers from the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) in Ahmedabad, Panjab University in Chandigarh, and the Laboratory for Electro-Optics Systems, Indian Space Research Organisation, Bengaluru, created the map using data from the rover Pragyan, which was deployed by Vikram on a nine-day mission to analyse the chemical composition of the regolith – the loose rock fragments and dust that cover the lunar surface.

Solving the magma mystery

The cornucopia of geological information from the mission has helped scientists confirm what they always suspected: the moon harbours an underground ocean of molten rock, or primordial magma.

Data from previous missions, such as the US uncrewed Surveyor spacecraft, the crewed Apollo moonshots, and the robotic Russian Luna and Chinese Chang’e 3 probes, indicated the presence of such a sea of lava beneath the lunar surface.

But the actual extent of magma on the moon was not known since all the available data came from landing sites near the lunar equatorial and mid-latitude regions, which are far away from the poles.

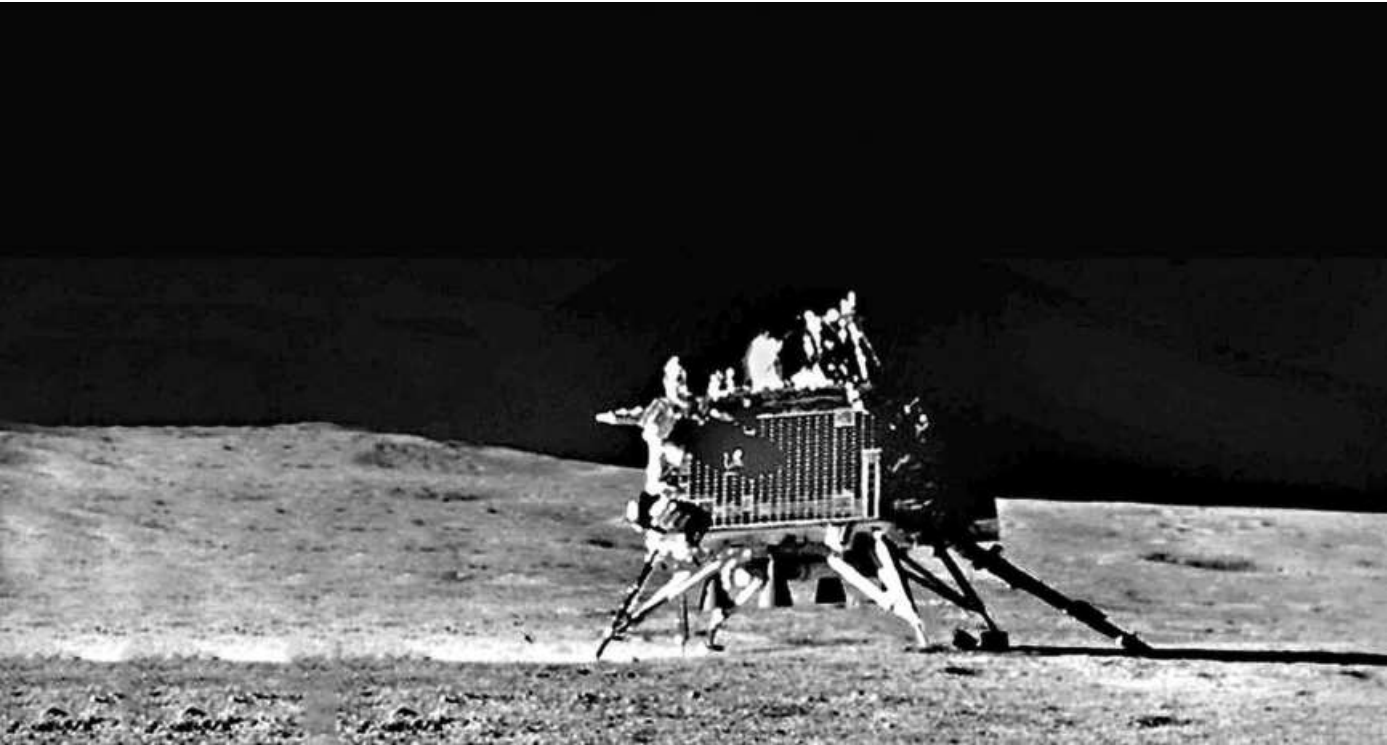
Chandrayaan-3, however, was the first mission to land in a high-latitude polar region of the moon, 630 km from the south pole, and scientists considered it the best bet to solve the magma mystery. In September 2024, a team of lunar geologists from PRL announced that the Alpha Particle X-ray Spectrometer aboard the Pragyan rover had detected magma under the landing site.

This meant the ancient ocean of molten lava extended across the entire moon.

The new map of Vikram’s landing site, published in the journal *Advances in Space Research* on January 20, shows an undulating landscape of highlands and low, flat plains around the lander.

The researchers traced the alignment of secondary craters – dug up when debris from an impact crater lands elsewhere – and identified Schomberger to be the primary source of the debris

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An image of the Chandrayaan-3 mission's Vikram lander clicked at about 15 m away by the Pragyan rover's navigation camera. ISRO Join FREE Whatsapp Channel <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6RGJOKH6oBd0F> covering the Chandrayaan-3 landing zone.

A common origin

Using the map, the scientists calculated the age of the region to be around 3.7 billion years, around the same time the first signs of microbial life emerged on earth.

In fact, earth and the moon have had similar evolutionary trajectories, as is evident in the dynamics of the earth-moon system. The inclination, or tilt, of the moon’s orbit is, for example, to the earth’s rotation, and both bodies are similarly aligned to the ecliptic plane of the solar system. Their terrestrial and lunar geochemistries are also complementary, with both possessing several common isotopes, pointing to their origins from the same cloud of molten material.

Astronomers believe that some 4.5 billion years ago, when the planets of the solar system were coalescing out of the rubble floating around the sun, the young earth had collided with a massive planetary rock roughly the size of Mars. The resulting debris from the collision was flung outwards explosively before it cooled over millions of years. This proto-planetary material gradually solidified into a molten sphere that was eventually captured by the earth’s gravity to become the moon we see today.

In those early millennia, the infant moon must have been pummelled by asteroids and space rocks, as is evidenced by its surface, which is studded with

The moon is a sterile environment in which craters can survive erosion for millennia. These impact basins are important tools for scientists to calculate the age of geological features on other planets with solid surfaces

numerous craters. The Vikram lander had touched down close to one of the oldest of these craters: the South Pole-Aitken Basin, which is also one of the largest impact craters in the Solar System.

Lunar craters are of great interest to astrogeologists, who study them to learn more about the evolution of impact craters elsewhere on the earth and on the inner planets of the solar system.

Cratering history

The airless and arid conditions on the moon render it a sterile environment in which craters can survive erosion for millennia.

In fact, lunar impact basins preserve the original records of space-rock crashes that occurred during the formation of the solar system.

Given that lunar craters are important tools for scientists to calculate the age of geological features on other planets with solid surfaces, moon maps like the new one assume greater significance.

Sadly, the moonscape may not endure undisturbed for very long as efforts to

colonise the moon get under way.

Littering the regolith

After the erstwhile Soviet Union’s Luna 2 lander became the first probe to ‘land’ (it was intentionally crash-landed) on the moon way back in 1959, scores of robotic and crewed spacecraft from the U.S., China, India, Israel, Japan, and the European Space Agency have reached the moon’s surface. These missions have also left spacecraft components and other waste items behind, littering the regolith.

It is largely unknown how the landers, rovers, and the dozen U.S. astronauts may have disturbed the regolith, which sustains the thin lunar atmosphere. The moon’s exosphere was formed when space rocks and the solar wind, the stream of charged particles flowing outwards from the sun, kicked up the powdery dust from the lunar surface.

Scientists also worry about the contamination of lunar ice reserves by exhaust fumes from lunar landers. When a spacecraft touches down on the moon, the water vapour released from its engines spreads across the lunar surface and ends up freezing at the poles. This leads to inaccurate readings for scientists who are studying the presence and the distribution of lunar water ice. These concerns are bound to increase as more and more missions head for the moon and mining for lunar resources eventually becomes a reality.

(Prakash Chandra is a science writer. prakashisat@gmail.com)

THE GIST

Researchers from the Physical Research Laboratory in Ahmedabad, Panjab University in Chandigarh, and Laboratory for Electro-Optics Systems, Indian Space Research Organisation, Bengaluru, created the map using data from the rover Pragyan

Using the map, the scientists calculated the age of the region to be around 3.7 billion years, around the same time the first signs of microbial life emerged on earth

Sadly, the moonscape may not endure undisturbed for very long as efforts to colonise the moon get underway, accompanied by the risk of lunar littering and the effects on the moon’s thin atmosphere

BIG SHOT



Volcanic steam and ash rise from Mount Etna, Italy, on February 12. Tourists climbing Europe’s highest and most active volcano at night in sneakers and light clothing to get a close-up view of an ongoing eruption may be risking their lives, rescuers warned. REUTERS

WHAT IS IT?

Condensed matter: a big piece of physics

Vasudevan Mukunth

Condensed matter physics is one of the largest, most active branches of contemporary physics research. Simply speaking, scientists in this field study the properties and behaviour of solid and liquid matter. Not so simply speaking, scientists here are interested in the behaviour of large collections of particles that are interacting strongly with each other. Such interactions are optional and infrequent in gases.

Because of its size and scope, condensed matter physics has numerous subcategories. For example, the branch of electronic condensed matter is concerned with how electrons behave in solids and liquids. Research on semiconductors would belong here. Likewise, magnetic condensed matter studies different kinds of magnets and magnetism. Soft matter physics studies objects that are easily deformed but not broken, like biological tissue. Nanoscience studies very small objects that can display both classical and quantum properties in the same settings (such work won the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 2023, for example). Superfluidity studies



The three most common phases of matter are visible in this image: the solid earth, the liquid water, and a vaporous mist encircling the waterfall. JOSHUA SORTIN

solids and liquids that flow without resistance, like the electrons in a superconductor. And so on.

Such research has already given us, among other things, modern computing, optical fibres, lasers, nanofabrication, and novel chemical reactions to synthesise new materials. Of late, researchers have also been exploring quantum condensed matter, where quantum physics processes enable very unusual behaviour not seen in macroscopic solids and liquids. Based on what they learn, they’re developing next-generation technologies like novel electronic items and quantum computers.

(mukunth.v@thehindu.co.in)

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