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SADESHKHALI CASE
CBI will probe attack on ED officers, says HC
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Philippine and Chinese vessels collide
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Google to restore delisted Indian apps
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LOK SABHA POLLS
Heady electoral rhetoric
As the NDA seeks another term, there is a shift in its pitch
EDITORIAL » PAGE 10

100
Ashwin@100
Scan the QR code or use the link for a data-driven interactive story on spin legend R. Ashwin—who recently claimed his 500th Test wicket—as he embarks upon his 100th Test.
think.in/Ashwin



NEARBY
Nadda seeks explanation on 'pro-Pak' slogans



BEHALAVI
BJP national president J.P. Nadda set the tone for the party's Lok Sabha poll battle by demanding an explanation from AIACC president M. Mallikarjun Kharge about the alleged incident of "pro-Pakistan" slogans raised in Bengaluru. » PAGE 6

100 taluks hit by drinking water crisis: CM

BENGALURU
Close to 100 taluks in Karnataka have been facing severe drinking water crisis and tankers have been pressed into service to supply water to residents, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said. » PAGE 2

OPPORTUNITIES » PAGE 3

HC acquits DU ex-professor, 5 others in 'Maoist link' case

Nagpur Bench of Bombay High Court sets aside the life sentence awarded to all accused; Maharashtra government files an appeal in the Supreme Court, in a replay of 2022 events

Purnima Sah
MUMBAI

The Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court on Tuesday acquitted former Delhi University Professor G.N. Saibaba and five others in a case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for alleged Maoist links, saying the prosecution could not prove the case against them beyond reasonable doubt.

Within hours, the Maharashtra government approached the Supreme Court seeking an urgent hearing, after it failed to convince the High Court to stay the implementation of the judgment.

Long wait

A timeline of events in the case against Delhi University former professor G.N. Saibaba and five others

May 9, 2014: Professor G.N. Saibaba arrested on charges of having Maoist links

April 6, 2015: Sanction to prosecute him under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act granted

March 3, 2017: Saibaba and five others convicted under various sections of the UAPA and the IPC by a Sessions

October 14, 2022: All six acquitted in the case by the HC. The Maharashtra government approached the Supreme Court challenging the decision

March 29, 2023: Appeal filed in the Bombay High Court against conviction and the sentence

October 15, 2023: Acquittal stayed by the SC

April 2023: The SC directed the HC to hear the appeal filed by Saibaba afresh

March 5, 2024: HC acquits Saibaba and five others



to Prof. Saibaba and the other accused – Mahesh Tirki, Hem Mishra, Pandu Narote, Vijay Tirki and Prashant Rahi – by a sessions court in 2017, and held the sanction for prosecution under UAPA as "null and void".

Bench too had acquitted him and the other accused on October 14, 2022, only for the Supreme Court to stay the verdict and ask for the case to be heard afresh.

Prof. Saibaba, who is wheelchair-bound, was arrested in 2014, by a joint team of the Maharashtra Police, Andhra Pradesh Police, and the Intelligence Bureau, in a case pertaining to ties with Maoist organisations.

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» PAGE 12
MAHARASHTRA MOVES SC
» PAGE 12

SC dismisses money laundering case against Shivakumar

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed the proceedings instituted by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) against Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and Congress president D.K. Shivakumar under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) on the basis of an Income Tax department complaint filed in 2018.

The complaint was filed following searches on the premises of Mr. Shivakumar and his associates. The Income Tax department had alleged that Mr. Shivakumar, who ran business concerns, "hatched a criminal conspiracy" and engaged "different people for the purpose of concealing unaccounted and illegal money, and projecting it as unaccounted property" to evade income tax.

Mr. Shivakumar had



D.K. Shivakumar

maintained that the case was motivated by political reasons.

On Tuesday, a Supreme Court Bench of Justices Surya Kant and K.V. Viswanathan quashed the ED case against Mr. Shivakumar on the basis of its recent *Pavana Dibbur Judgment*, which had held that criminal conspiracy alone would not attract money laundering charges.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

Karnataka CM, Deputy CM get bomb threat email

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar received emails on March 2, warning them of "more bomb blasts" in the State.

This comes after a the low-intensity blast at the Rameshwaram Cafe in Bengaluru on March 1, which left nine injured. Home Minister G. Parameshwara and Bengaluru City Police Commissioner B. Dayananda too got similar emails on Saturday.

Following the threats, the cybercrime police stepped up investigations and registered a *suo motu* case. The emails warned of attacks at public places and transport.

"The police have stepped up vigil at public places even though the mail looks like a hoax," said an official.

'Foreign state actors stashed illicit funds in Paytm bank accounts'

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

"Extensive illegal activity" perpetrated by multiple businesses managed by "a syndicate of individuals connected to a foreign state" who offered lakhs of Indians by creating "fraudulent services including prohibited gambling activities and dating services" was the trigger for the ₹5.49 crore fine imposed on Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL) by the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) last week.

The matter first came to light over two years ago with the Cyber Crime Station of Hyderabad lodging FIRs under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Telangana State Gambling Act.

The FIRs flagged certain

business entities and their network of businesses engaging in a number of illegal acts such as organising and assisting online gambling, routing the proceeds of such criminal activities through bank accounts they maintained with the payments bank.

The agency also listed out payout-related charges against the bank, which included its failure to put an internal mechanism in place to detect and report suspicious transactions in the manner prescribed under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and PML rules.

The March 1 order against PPBL does not indicate which foreign state was involved.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

Sea of red



Holy day: Devotees take part in 'Shreenath Veer Mhaskoba' festival at Veer village, 50 km from Pune in Maharashtra on Tuesday. They worship an avatar of Lord Shiva during the festival that falls on Magh Purnima (full moon). P11

Savitribai Phule, Periyar, and progressive Kannada writers to make a comeback in textbooks

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The literary works of various progressive writers, including Girish Karnad, P. Lankesh, Devanur Mahadeva, Mudnakudu Chinnaswamy, and Nagesh Hegde, among others, will make a re-entry into Kannada language textbooks from the 2024-25 academic year in Karnataka.

The Textbooks Revision Committee, headed by Prof. Manjunatha G. Hegde, which has submitted its report to the government, has also recommended reintroducing lessons on radical reformers such as Savitribai Phule and Periyar, and a few other subjects that were earlier dropped from the lesson "Social and Religious Reform Movements" in the

Textbooks Revision Committee, however, has not recommended reintroducing lessons related to Tipu Sultan and Hyder Ali

class X history textbook. However, the committee has not recommended reintroducing lessons related to Tipu Sultan and Hyder Ali, which were dropped by the earlier committee.

"The social science textbooks have been revised giving importance to the Constitution, gender sensitivity, child rights, democratic and secular values, and scientific temper," said the committee in its report. For instance, in the class VI social science textbook, the lesson "Citizen and Conduct" has been re-

vised considering gender equality. A lesson on welfare of sexual minorities has been added in the class X social science textbook.

Among other changes, in the class VIII history book, the chapter titled "Indus-Saraswati Civilisation" has been changed as "Civilisations of Ancient India: Indus-Saraswati Civilisation and Vedic Period." Information on icons of the Bhakti movement, including Kanaka Dasa, Purandara Dasa, and Shishunala Sharif, has been added to a lesson in the class IX History textbook. The class VII social science lesson refers to 12th Century social reformer Basaveshwara as "cultural leader" of the State.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 2

Man from Kerala killed in Hezbollah attack in Israel

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

An Indian national was killed and two were injured in a rocket attack by Hezbollah, the Shia militant organisation of Lebanon, in northern Israel on Monday.

In an announcement, the Embassy of Israel said on Tuesday that the incident took place in an orchard in Margaliot, located along the Lebanese border.



Pat Nibin Maxwell

said Pat Nibin Maxwell of Kerala was among those killed in the attack. He hails from Kollam district. This is the first reported death of an Indian near Israel's border with Lebanon

More Indians held up in Russia seek help to return

Vijaiata Singh
NEW DELHI

A group of seven more Indians stuck on the Russia-Ukraine border released two videos this week seeking the government's help to return to India.

One of the men said that they arrived in Russia on tourist visas and were forced to join the Russian Army as "helpers" after police detained them for not possessing a "slip".

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Country's first ready-to-serve dragon fruit juice, jackfruit curry unveiled

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

For what is touted as the first time in the country, scientists at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IHR) have developed a ready-to-serve (RTS) dragon fruit/kamalam fruit beverage.

It is difficult to prepare an RTS dragon fruit beverage due to the tiny seeds and the nature of its pulp, said Pushpa Chethan Kumar, senior scientist, IHR. "Therefore, IHR has developed an RTS dragon

fruit beverage using a method where the seeds and the mucilage have been removed but retaining its exotic color and taste. The RTS will provide consumers a soothing lighter taste and a bright pink colored dragon fruit beverage," she said.

The beverage will have a shelf life of six months and contains no synthetic flavour or colour. The scientists are also working on developing dragon fruit pulp powder and different flavoured dragon fruit RTS.

popular jackfruit by making it into a ready-to-eat curry. This innovation was perhaps the most intriguing product for many visitors at the National Horticulture Fair (NHF) which kickstarted on Tuesday. Scientists have used Retort Processing Technology for recipe standardisation and storage stabilisation. With no preservatives, the curry has a shelf life of 18 months at room temperature.

Like any other ready-to-eat product, the packet of curry should be dipped in hot water for five to eight minutes before consumption. "The tender jackfruit increases its reach-to-eat form in its ready-to-eat form as well as meet the requirements of consumers, besides helping in growth of ready-to-eat segment of processing industry," IHR officials said.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 6

Bengaluru

Prime accused in RSS activist attempt to murder case held | Man falls from moving train, dies

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Kalaisalya police arrested the prime accused in the attempt to murder case of RSS activist reported in December 2019.

The accused Azharuddin, 41, had allegedly fled to Saudi Arabia after the incident and returned to

Bangarpet after which he was tracked down and arrested.

According to the police, the activist, identified as Varun Bopala, 31, was returning on a rented scooter after attending a pro CAA protest when armed men attacked him in Bamboo Bazaar Road in Kalaisalya.

The police registered a case of attempt to murder and arrested Mohammed Irfan, from KT Nagar, Syed Akbar, Syed Siddiqh, Akbar Anwar Basha and Sadiq Ameen from Shivajinagar, but prime accused Azharuddin had managed to escape to Saudi Arabia.

He returned a few years ago and was working as a

salesman in a second-hand car dealer shop in Bangarpet in Kolar from where he was arrested.

The accused was produced before the court and taken into custody for further investigations.

The accused, Azharuddin, 41, had allegedly fled to Saudi Arabia after the incident and returned to Bangarpet after which he was tracked down and arrested

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 21-year-old man died after falling on a car from a train on which he was travelling near the Windsor Manor Bridge in Vasantnagar on Tuesday afternoon.

The deceased, a native of Vellore in Tamil Nadu, was returning home by

train. The police suspect that he was standing on the footboard and accidentally fell from a height of 35 ft. on a car passing under the bridge. The woman who was driving the car escaped unhurt as the victim fell on the rear windshield.

The city railway police identified the victim as Gowrish alias Gowri Shan-

kar. He was working in a poultry farm in Kunjal.

Probe revealed that the deceased had made the last call to his brother. It appears that the victim must have accidentally fallen from the moving train, said the police. The railway police registered a case of unnatural death and are investigating.

Timings BENGALURU

WEDNESDAY, MAR. 06

RISE 06:32 SET 18:29

THURSDAY, MAR. 07

RISE 06:32 SET 18:29

FRIDAY, MAR. 08

RISE 06:31 SET 18:29

Bengaluru Weather max min

Tumakuru 34 23

Mysuru 35 21

Bengaluru 35 20

Bengaluru Today

33°C A dry weather to continue. Morning will be slight cool with mist and haze. Day will be warm. Night will remain slight cool.

Bengaluru Tomorrow

33°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm. Night will be pleasant.

© Copyright Skyline Weather 2024 All rights reserved.

Class 5, 8 and 9 exams: Students to be given only question papers, they have to bring answer sheets

Decision by Department of School Education and Literacy has drawn criticism from teachers, parents, and School Development and Monitoring Committees

Jayanth B.
BENGALURU

Instead of providing answer booklets for the board exam of classes 5, 8, and 9, the Department of School Education and Literacy (DSEL) has decided to provide only question papers and asked the students to bring their answer sheets. The department has also decided to evaluate the answer sheets at the block level.

The DSEL is conducting board exam for class 5 and 8 since the academic year of 2022-23 and extended the exam for class 9 from the academic year of 2023-24.

The Karnataka State Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) is the authority to conduct the exams



In a video conference last week, the KSEAB instructed all headmasters of high schools that they should inform students about bringing their answer sheets during the board exams. FILE PHOTO

to conduct the exams and has scheduled the exams from March 11 to 18.

In 2022-23, the department conducted the exam

by providing an answer booklet with questions free of cost. Earlier this year, the department had announced that answer book-

lets will be provided. The KSEAB has released the model question papers on its website in the form of the booklet.

However, the department took a U-turn from its announcement and has now said it will provide only the question paper and a sheet to write the student's information. In a video conference last week, the KSEAB instructed all headmasters of high schools that they should inform students about bringing their answer sheets during the board exams.

The All India Democratic Students Organisation (AIDSO) also strongly condemned the government's decision.

Umesh G. Gangavadi, State president of the School Development and Monitoring Committee (SDMC) said, "So far, they have collected fees for class 10 preparatory exam and given only question paper. Last year, for the board exam for classes 5 and 8 students, they were given a booklet without any fee. But is the government bankrupt for not issuing the booklet this year? If the government has any dignity, it should immediately decide to provide answer booklets to the students."

OPPORTUNITIES

GENERAL

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN)
(Dept of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Divyangjan)
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt of India
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Employment Notice No.01 (R)/2024 & 02 (R)/2024

NIEMPD/ID invites applications from Indian Nationals, who fulfill the prescribed qualification, experience, age and other conditions for filling up the following sanctioned regular posts, as per the details given:-

- Associate Professor in Speech Pathology & Audiology - 01
- Associate Professor (Medical Science) - 01
- Lecturer in Clinical Psychology ** - 01

** The previous advert. Notification No.5R/2023 published in Employment News dated 28.11.2023 to 15.12.2023 stands cancelled due to administrative reasons. For detailed advertisement, essential/ desirable qualifications, age limit, format of application and the recruitment fee details etc, please visit our website: www.niempd.in. The last date of receipt of applications and necessary documents is 30 days from the date of publication of employment news.

Sd/-
DIRECTOR

INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE CULTIVATION OF SCIENCE
(An Autonomous Body under Department of Science & Technology, Govt. of India and a Deemed to be University u/s 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)
Jadavpur, Kolkata - 700032

Call for Applications/ Nominations for Appointment of Director

Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS), Kolkata, an autonomous grant-in-aid institution of Department of Science and Technology, Government of India invites applications from highly motivated professionals, who are Indian nationals, for the position of Director. Those who are dynamic leaders with a clear vision for an established Institution dedicated to this field of research in the country may apply for the post.

Applications received in response to this advertisement as well as nominations received from eminent fellows of prestigious national science and engineering academies, Directors of national R&D laboratories and Vice-Chancellors of universities will be considered by a Search-cum-Selection Committee. Based on the recommendations of the Search-cum-Selection Committee, the Director will be appointed after obtaining the approval of the Competent Authority.

The incumbent will be appointed on Direct Recruitment/Deputation including contract/Regular employment basis for a period of 3 to 5 years or on attaining the age of superannuation (62 years at present), whichever is earlier.

Pay scale: Pay Level 15 HAG Scale (Rs. 1,82,200-2,24,100) plus admissible allowances as per 7th CPC.

The applicant's age should not exceed 58 years on 01.01.2024.

Applications/nominations should be sent by post to "The Registrar, Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, 2A & 2B, Raja Subodh Chandra Mallick Rd, Jadavpur, Kolkata-700032, West Bengal-India", in the prescribed format along with self-attested photocopies of certificates in support of Age, Qualifications and experience so as to reach the above mentioned address latest by 15th April, 2024. Detailed Advertisement is available at the website of IACS viz. <https://iacs.res.in>.

Registrar

GENERAL

राष्ट्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान, कुरुक्षेत्र
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, KURUKSHETRA
(Under the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)
KURUKSHETRA - 135119 (HARYANA)

Advt. No.01/2024

RECRUITMENT TO THE POST OF REGISTRAR

National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra invites applications in the prescribed format from the Indian Nationals for filling up of the post of Registrar in the Institute on deputation (including Short Term Contract) basis. The prescribed Application form and other details can be downloaded from the Institute Website www.nitr.ac.in. Applications duly filled in all respects along with self-attested photocopies of certificates and online fee payment receipt should send through proper channel so as to reach on or before 10.04.2024 by Speed Post/Registered Post. Applications received after the last date due to postal delay or any other reasons will not be considered.

Sd/-
Registrar

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Sl. No.	Discipline	No of Posts
01	Mechanical	127
02	Electrical	100
03	Instrumentation	20
04	Metallurgy	10
05	Chemical	13
06	Chemistry	7
Total		277

Candidates wishing to apply in NALCO may visit career section of NALCO website www.nalcoindia.com for further details.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- Opening of online submission of application: 04/03/2024 (10 AM)
- Last date of deposit of application/processing fees through SBI collect: 02/04/2024 (4 PM)
- Last date of submission of online application: 02/04/2024 (5 PM)

Advt. No.10242026, Dt. 21.02.2024 General Manager (H&A)-R&P

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Last Date for Submission of Application is 27.03.2024. For details, please visit www.bel-india.in

MANAGER(H&RA) Phone - 01382 - 236450

'Har Ek Kaam Desh Ke Naam'

ALL INDIA SPEECH INSTITUTE OF SPEECH AND HEARING
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Ph: 0821-2520200, 2521210
Email: director@aiishsp.org.in Website: www.aiishsp.org.in

ADVERTISEMENT No. 03/2024 Dated: March 01, 2024

AIISH Mysore invites applications for the post of Stores & Purchase Officer to be filled on deputation basis at the Institute. The detailed advertisement and applications for the same has been hosted in our Institute website i.e. www.aiishmysore.in

Interested candidates who meet the requirement, may fill the online application through E-Samarth portal. The link for online application is <https://aiishmysore.in>. samarth@aiishsp.org.in phs@aiishsp.org.in

The profile of online application along with all necessary documents mentioned in the detailed advertisement should be sent through proper channel to the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, Manasaagotri, Mysore - 570009 on or before 15.05.2024 at 5.30 PM or 45 days from the date of publication in the Employment news whichever is later.

Sd/-
Director

MOIL LIMITED
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Website: www.moil.in | Ph: 0712-2529273

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Sr. No.	Name of Post	No. of Posts
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2.	Graduate Trainee (Mechanical)	05
3.	Graduate Trainee (Electrical)	04
4.	Management Trainee (Geology)	01
5.	Graduate Trainee (Process)	03
6.	Management Trainee (Materials)	05
7.	Management Trainee (Contract Mgmt.)	01
8.	Management Trainee (Pers./Welfare)	05
9.	Management Trainee (Fin. & Accts.)	05
10.	Manager (Survey)	02

For details log on to our website www.moil.in on the link "Recruitment". Any amendment/modification relating to this advertisement will be notified on MOIL's website only.

Last Date for Submission of On-line Applications: 21-03-2024
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National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology, Calcutta
इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स और सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान / Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, भारत सरकार / Government of India

नाइलिट कालीकट, केरल में एम्टेकएडवॉक फैकल्टी at NIELIT Calicut, Kerala

सैंच-इन-इंटरव्यू - 14.03.2024
WALK-IN-INTERVIEW - 14.03.2024

नाइलिट कलकत्ता में एम्टेकएडवॉक फैकल्टी में एम्टेकएडवॉक संस्थापक के लिए पत्र भेजें इच्छुक उम्मीदवारों को आमंत्रित किया है।

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TRANSFORMING CULTURAL SPIRITUAL HUBS INTO ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE



Uttar Pradesh's remarkable transformation, spearheaded by CM Yogi's relentless crackdown on crime and corruption, has earned the unshakable trust of investors, propelling Uttar Pradesh into a prime investment destination. Investments pouring in all sectors and job opportunities for lakhs of youth have effectively controlled migration to other states. In a concerted effort, the state government has prioritized the development of world-class infrastructure, while also highlighting the cultural, spiritual, and historical significance of its cities. This dual focus has not only enhanced the overall appeal of these cities but has also contributed significantly to the state's economic growth. Cities such as Ayodhya Dham, Varanasi, Mathura, Prayagraj, and the Buddhist circuits have emerged as highly sought-after destinations for tourists within the country. Additionally, the government has embarked on the establishment of a State Capital Region (SCR), modeled after the National Capital Region (NCR). This initiative aims to equip districts, including Lucknow, with cutting-edge infrastructure and amenities, thereby attracting more investors and fostering a thriving business environment. Programs like One District One Product (DDOP) and Vishwakarma Shram Samman Yojana have not only provided a distinct identity to these districts but have also bolstered their economic self-reliance. UP has achieved a monumental milestone by simultaneously launching investment projects exceeding Rs 10 lakh crore during the GBC 4.0, marking a historic first in the nation. The initiative, comprising over 14,500 projects, promises to generate employment opportunities for 34 lakh youths in the foreseeable future.



VARANASI

UPGIS-2023	
Projects	MoUs (Rs. crore)
581	142903
GBC 4.0	
Investment (Rs. crore)	Employment
19245	44215

INVESTMENT FRIENDLY STATE

Gorakhpur is witnessing a lot of industrial development. GIDA is the economic capital of east UP, Nepal, and border districts of Bihar. It has a market potential with a good supply of manpower also. We are expanding our paper disposable unit with an investment of Rs 10 crore

Sudhanshu Tibrewal, Industrialist, Gorakhpur

AYODHYA

UPGIS-2023	
Projects	MoUs (Rs. crore)
508	145116
GBC 4.0	
Investment (Rs. crore)	Employment
12915	25000



MATHURA

UPGIS-2023	
Projects	MoUs (Rs. crore)
484	30235
GBC 4.0	
Investment (Rs. crore)	Employment
16587	31680

The Uttar Pradesh government has focussed on urban development resulting in the creation of job opportunities and the development of cities. Our company is investing about Rs 750 crore in real estate projects of housing and commercial complexes at Prayagraj, Lucknow, Gorakhpur and Mathura

Sunil Solanki, Omaxe Ltd., Prayagraj

GORAKHPUR

UPGIS-2023	
Projects	MoUs (Rs. crore)
630	183738
GBC 4.0	
Investment (Rs. crore)	Employment
17313	37000



PRAYAGRAJ

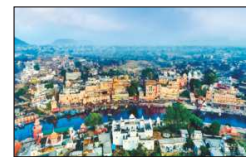
UPGIS-2023	
Projects	MoUs (Rs. crore)
460	63618
GBC 4.0	
Investment (Rs. crore)	Employment
13227	25000

A favorable business environment is prevailing at Sitapur. The policies of the government are helpful in promoting business and development. Industries are being set up in accordance with local needs facilitating easy availability of raw materials. Naimsharanya has great potential in terms of tourism

Ajeet Kumar Singh, Industrialist Sitapur

CHITRAKOOT

UPGIS-2023	
Projects	MoUs (Rs. crore)
280	67422
GBC 4.0	
Investment (Rs. crore)	Employment
7147	7000



SANT KABIR NAGAR

UPGIS-2023	
Projects	MoUs (Rs. crore)
92	5480
GBC 4.0	
Investment (Rs. crore)	Employment
1872	3652

MAJOR INVESTMENT BY COMPANIES

AYODHYA

House of Abhinandan Lodha (Real Estate)
Investment - Rs. 3000 crore
Employment Opportunity - 100 people
Pakka Limited (Paper Manufacturing Machines)
Investment - Rs. 550 crore
Employment Opportunity - 600 people

SITAPUR

UPGIS-2023	
Projects	MoUs (Rs. crore)
302	29886
GBC 4.0	
Investment (Rs. crore)	Employment
22172	18000



SHRAVASTI

UPGIS-2023	
Projects	MoUs (Rs. crore)
439	2422
GBC 4.0	
Investment (Rs. crore)	Employment
866	3905

MIRZAPUR

Dalmia Cement Bharat Limited (Cement Manufacturing)
Investment - Rs. 3000 crore
Employment Opportunity - 2500 people

MIRZAPUR

UPGIS-2023	
Projects	MoUs (Rs. crore)
243	17166
GBC 4.0	
Investment (Rs. crore)	Employment
7437	15135



BALRAMPUR

UPGIS-2023	
Projects	MoUs (Rs. crore)
194	1402
GBC 4.0	
Investment (Rs. crore)	Employment
438	1851

Keshav Publications Pvt Limited (Stationary goods, electric items, plastic products mfg.)
Investment - Rs. 1250 crore
Employment Opportunity - 10000 people
IFP Petro Products Pvt Limited (Refinery)
Investment - Rs. 1100 crore
Employment Opportunity - 700 people

KAUSHAMBI

UPGIS-2023	
Projects	MoUs (Rs. crore)
143	1589
GBC 4.0	
Investment (Rs. crore)	Employment
681	3382



MUZAFFARNAGAR

UPGIS-2023	
Projects	MoUs (Rs. crore)
249	15549
GBC 4.0	
Investment (Rs. crore)	Employment
9938	10284

MUZAFFARNAGAR

Bhartiyam Beverages Pvt Limited (Beverages)
Investment - Rs. 600 crore
Employment Opportunity - 500 people

KUSHINAGAR

UPGIS-2023	
Projects	MoUs (Rs. crore)
346	3713
GBC 4.0	
Investment (Rs. crore)	Employment
1169	9133



JK Cement Limited (Cement Manufacturing)
Investment - Rs. 400 crore
Employment Opportunity - 250 people

PRAYAGRAJ, GORAKHPUR, CHITRAKOOT, AMETHI

Varun Beverages Limited (Beverages)
Investment - Rs. 3500 crore
Employment Opportunity - 1000 people

A multi-sensory art exhibition that builds conversations around food

Breakfast Table, an exhibition at the Archives at NCBS, is a way to facilitate conversations through food and explore different ways of harnessing the energy and symbolism of food

Preeti Zachariah
BENGALURU

In a small round table flanked by four chairs, a tomato placed on a velvet-shrouded stand gleams dully under a glass cloche, an unlikely gemstone. Around this is scattered an eclectic collection of objects: a small white vase, a sketchbook, headphones, a stand filled with pencils, a recipe book and an immovable red plate.

"This installation encapsulates the story of food from the field to the breakfast table," says Pragya Bhargava, one of the three artists behind the recently launched 'Breakfast Table', a multi-sensory exhibition at the Archives at NCBS. She adds that engaging with the artwork by sitting down at this table is a way to facilitate a conversation through food.

Take, for instance, the tomato whose presence at the table is a nod to a very contemporary event: the recent tomato crisis in the country. "The team wanted to keep it as a really precious object because at some point it was," says Aparajitha Vasudev, one of the other artists (filmmaker Nausheen Khan is the third).

Similarly, the placement of the red plate - it faces the gallery's exit, disallowing access to the rest of the exhibition - intends to start a conversation about the lack of access to amenities and opportunities faced by people who belong to marginalised communities. "Just by sitting at this spot, you don't have access to one big part of the show," says Vasudev, pointing out that this sort of marginalisation continues at different levels throughout India. "It could be



segregation in housing or being excluded from certain types of jobs...the denial of various things," she adds.

Inspiration and themes

Breakfast Table was launched in the city on February 17 as part of the event that marked the five year anniversary of the Archives. The team responded to the Archive's annual proposal call for exhibitions, which broadly fit the theme 'Grow', lay at the intersection of history, design, culture and science and used material from its collection. This year, the exhibition focused on two of the Archives collections that pertain specifically to Indian agriculture: the M.S. Swaminathan Papers and Leslie Coleman Papers. "We looked at the Archives and began thinking about what we could pull out from it," says Bhargava, who, along with the other two artists, spent months immersed in these collections. "The works are influenced by us reading specific papers and getting inspired," she says, point-



ing out ideas about plants and food converged in them. "We wanted to explore how science and agriculture are applied to the raw and natural state of food to make it a cultural signifier. How the story of food unfolds, and what can food tell us through this journey."

At the exhibition According to the exhibition's catalogue, the exhibition attempts to explore different ways of harnessing the energy and symbolism of food as it transitions from raw to cooked. "Food is the carrier of energy that



"This installation encapsulates the story of food from the field to the breakfast table," says Pragya Bhargava



Artworks at Breakfast Table



Aparajitha Vasudev, Pragya Bhargava, and Nausheen Khan.

helps sustain the vital operations and growth of living organisms. Synchronously, it functions as a powerful semiotic device that is reflective of societal conditions and collective representation," states the catalogue.

Three juxtaposed videos depicting very different landscapes - the lush expanse of Dachigam National Park in Kashmir, a dairy farm in Punjab and a sugar factory in Uttar Pradesh - run in a loop in the corner of a gallery. "I wanted to

capture the essence of growth in different ways," says Khan, the artist behind this artwork, titled Contrasting Understandings of Growth. Each video, she says, depicts a different interpretation of growth. "In this convergence of natural serenity, agrarian toil, and industrial pragmatism, I am reminded of the profound interdependence of humanity and nature, prompting me to reconsider the true essence of progress in a world driven by material pursuits and technological advancements," she says. According to her, a viewer's reaction to this visual essay is

says Bhargava, who contrived these archival objects by summarising them with interpretative drawings overlaid on the text.

Diverse media

Despite the diversity of the media, which includes film, photographs, games, patchwork, recipes, sculptures, painting, and embroidery, they all essentially draw on the various functions of food, whether political, scientific, cultural, societal or economic.

Khan, who shot the photographs depicting diverse people in kitchens across Kashmir, Delhi, Punjab and Karnataka, talks about how the process of making that food and how we look at it differs from household to household, with elements of gender and caste often shaping this narrative. "Hopefully, when you see these photographs, you can make these connections and think about your own stories related to kitchen and food and question these constructs that we are ingrained in," she says.

Vasudev, in turn, talks about the fabric installation she has created, using patchwork to represent paddy fields, a crop that was talked about extensively in the show. "Basically, it is an aerial view of paddy fields...the majesty and visual drama of seeing a landscape from a height," she says of the artwork.

She also explains why she chose this medium to represent these varicoloured fields. "It has played a role in preserving cultural heritage...a way of telling a story, recording history, expressing identity," she says, adding the pieces of cloth that went into the quilt were all donated. "It was important to us to understand how different events across industries, like the malaria outbreak, the share price of the Mysore Sugar Company, the widespread use of DDT, and heavier taxation, were linked to the story of food,"

Breakfast Table will be exhibited at the Archives at NCBS till December 2024

Molière's classic comedy meets new-age tech with Sanchaya's new play

The play is a classic theatrical comedy that revolves around a rich man who becomes vulnerable to an imposter preacher

Yemen S.
BENGALURU

Sanchaya, a 15-year-old amateur theatre troupe and one among the oldest Kannada theatre troupes in Bengaluru, is back with its latest production, a new age representation of Molière's *Tartuffe* titled *Natyadevacharite*.

Opened at the Ranga Shankara Kamada Natyakotsava 2024, in Sheshagiri, the play will have its public premiere on March 9, at 3.30 p.m in Ranga Shankara, J.P. Nagar.

Directed by Prithvi Venugopal, an actor and lighting designer, *Natyadevacharite* marks his debut as a director of a full-fledged play. The play, a classic theatrical comedy revolves around a rich man who becomes vulnerable to an imposter preacher or Guru pretending to be pious and religious. The plot unfolds through a mix of comedy and drama, revealing the Guru's insincerity. The Guru



Despite being a script that is four centuries old, *Natyadevacharite* has been made relevant to this age using new technical aspects like projection, a GoPro camera, and virtual reality (VR) headsets.

takes advantage of the wealthy man's unquestioning admiration.

Dangers of blind trust

As the family plots a smart plan, the audience is invited to watch the unfolding events, wondering if the imposter will be caught. The main theme humorously explores dishonesty in religious practices, the risks of trusting the wrong people, and the outcomes of blindly following someone, all presented in a satirical manner. The play aims to entertain

while shedding light on the dangers of blindly trusting those who manipulate religious appearances for personal gain. Through its mix of comedy and drama, the play unfolds a tale that prompts the audience to reflect on the consequences of misplaced trust and the humorous aspects of religious hypocrisy, says the director of the play. Speaking to *The Hindu*, Prithvi says that as a first-time director of a play along with many first-time actors, it was a challenge

and a learning process. "When Ranga Shankara offered me this opportunity, I wanted to present it through Sanchaya, who I have been working with for many years, and the team immediately agreed to make this a Sanchaya production. I have directed short plays before, but this is my first full-fledged play, and this process has taught me a lot. I have been a lighting designer for a long time, and designing the lights for this play was never a challenge. However,

aspects such as adapting the script, editing, creating and conceptualising a storyline, conveying my ideas to the costume designer, all of this is something I have not done before, and is a new learning experience."

Many new faces

"Another challenge was that out of 17 people on stage, not more than three actors were experienced. Most of the actors were getting on stage for the first time or were part of one or two plays as replacement actors. None of them had the experience of doing a full-fledged production. It was a challenge for me to train them in simple matters like stage-presence, movement, taking the right spot for light and more. However, over the period, I realised each actor's strengths and made use of their best traits," he says. Despite being a script that is four centuries old, *Natyadevacharite* has been

made relevant to this age using new technical aspects like projection, a GoPro camera, and virtual reality (VR) headsets. "New age technology has been used in this play despite this being a 400-year-old play. The play has scenes of exposing the insincerity of a preacher. With GoPro cameras playing as spy cameras, and those visuals projected on a screen, the audience will get to explore the other side of this imposter-preacher. We have also used VR headsets, where the actors will play a scene wearing it, and the same visual will be projected for the audience to experience," Prithvi adds.

Along with *Natyadevacharite*, Sanchaya will also present its popular stylised play *Kamaroopigal* directed by Ganesh Mandarthi, on the same day and venue, at 7.30 p.m. Tickets for both the shows are available on *BookMyShow* and at the Ranga Shankara box-office.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 6, 1974

Fair elections: Urs' Call to Opposition

Bangalore, March 5: The Chief Minister, Mr. Devaraj Urs in the Legislature Council to-day urged opposition parties to co-operate with the Government in conducting the by-elections to the State Assembly in a free and fair manner.

Mr. Urs was replying to an adjournment motion moved by Mr. V.S. Krishna Iyer (Cong-O) who had alleged that the police had committed excesses on students at an election meeting addressed by the Chief Minister in Mysore City on Saturday.

Mr. Urs said the opposition always accused the police of committing excesses.

Sharing of Krishna waters: Charge against Govt.

Bangalore, March 5: Mr. M.C. Basappa, (Cong O) in the Legislative Council to-day charged the State Government with failure to protect the interests of the State regarding the sharing of the Krishna waters.

Speaking on the motion of thanks to the Governor's address, Mr. Basappa said that although it was over two months since the Tribunal had given its verdict, the State Government had not come out with its comments. The Tribunal's award was unjust to the State he said, as against the State's demand of 1,25,000 Trillion cuft of Krishna water, the Tribunal had given it only 698 TMC. "The Government seems to be not interested in getting justice done for the State, Mr. Basappa remarked.



Breathe in Lalbagh's secrets, one tree at a time

Want to know more about our city's favourite garden? A Fragrance Walk could be a refreshing experience

Rashmi Gopal Rao

There is no denying that the Lalbagh Botanical Gardens in south Bengaluru is a favourite haunt for morning walkers, nature-loving locals and tourists. This sprawling garden is spread over 240 acres and houses close to 2,000 species of plants.

Apart from their famous biannual flower show, the gardens are popular for nature trails as well as activities such as bird watching. Did you know you can also participate in a Fragrance

Walk each Sunday where you can immerse yourself in diverse scents ranging from fruity, floral and even spicy notes? Well, this is possible due to the efforts of 37-year-old Abhishek Khan who is also the creator of Lalbagh.info, a site that serves as a free guide for this spectacular garden.

A sensory experience
The Fragrance Walk is a narrative experience meant to tell the stories of how botany has shaped the aromatic aesthetics of the western world. The walk features flowers and

leaves which can be located in plain sight as one walks through the garden. Whether it is the fruity aroma of the frangipani vine or the mild fragrance of a golden gardenia or the bitter notes of the bottlebrush tree, the walk is a treat for the senses.

"At a Fragrance Walk, we traverse through the garden, all the while smelling, tasting, touching and listening to what it has to say. This walk is always accompanied by a narrative where I talk about trees and plants that usually go unnoticed. I have curated a special set of trees, plants



and botanical aspects that have an interesting story and shared context," says Abhishek.

Previous walks, Abhishek says, covered the Botany of Alcohol and Mafia of House Plants. "I am currently on the Botany of Psychedelics. Lalbagh has all of these botanicals in plain sight whose stories are waiting to be discovered."

In Botany of Alcohol, Abhishek talks about plants used to make spi-



Walk the talk

Book a spot on the Fragrance Walk by sending Abhishek Khan a DM on @lalbagh.info on Instagram

Price: ₹800 per person

Meeting point: Double Road Gate

Timings: Sundays 8 am-10 am; plan to arrive at least at 7.50 am for parking and walking to gate

Suggested materials to bring along include refillable water bottle (no single use plastic), sun hat, sunglasses, small basket to collect flowers/botanicals (optional) and snacks (optional)

Please note the following will not be allowed: DSLR cameras, single use plastic bottles and strong perfumes as they keep birds away



Wake up and smell the roses
Abhishek Khan (top centre) and Fragrance Walk participants. THE HINDU / SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



rits, apart from the popular ones, such as the fruit of the sausage tree, sea grapes, Mysore figs and the like. "Mafia of House Plants is about those botanicals associated with poaching which cause ecological disruption and extinction, while the Botany of Psychedelics covers the entheogenic use of botany by shamanic cultures."

Abhishek says he weaves these narratives into the sensory experiences of the walk as he wants

to be seen beyond their ornamental or nutritional value. During these walks, he also tries to teach people to read trees by breaking down features of their anatomy.

"Each tree has its own unique morphology. For example, people are always surprised when they first taste the rain tree pod. It is sweet like dates and the fact that we are so familiar with that pod and never considered it to be edible blows people's

minds." The route of the walk changes by the season which again provides a refreshing perspective on how the garden is viewed.

Motivated by climate change

Abhishek who is a letterist by profession and practices calligraphy, lettering and typography, firmly believes that in the context of climate change it makes sense to help people be friend trees. His site is an

explorer's guide and has a detailed map of Lalbagh which includes monuments and botanicals apart from a flower finder. The latter provides a list of flowers that are in season and blooming with a navigator to help find them.

"I also give away cards to help people identify leaf shapes, mushroom caps etc. I believe once we learn to recognise different aspects of anatomy, we learn to read these trees better and it leads to a more intimate connection with them."

According to Abhishek, Lalbagh is a treasure house of botanical species and is akin to a tree museum; helping people read and understand the specimens within the garden is what motivates him. His future plans include drawing a book of maps for Lalbagh, and to continue help people read trees, mushroom and birds.

Igniting ideas



The Under 25 Summit 2024, one of the most prominent youth events in Bengaluru, will take place on March 9 and 10 at Jayamahal Palace.

This festival is a melting pot of innovative ideas and entertainment, featuring an impressive roster of luminaries from various sectors.

Laugh out loud with comedians Kenny Sebastian and Tanmay Bhat, and gain insights from financial wizard Nikhil Kamath.

The stage will also be graced by the musical genius of Bharg Kalle and the acting prowess of Vilkrant Massey. Influencer Ankush Bahuguna is set to bring his unique perspective, with a constellation of other stars

including Babil Khan, Barkha Singh, and Daini Hariharan. The summit provides a platform for burgeoning talents such as Nicole Concessao, Naina Bhan, and Pranay Binu, alongside artistic expressions from Saba Azad and Sahiba Bali.

Prepare to engage with the stories of Mukesh Chhabra, Sesh Adit, and many more. The event is a showcase of the energy and dynamism of the under-25s, proving that the voice of youth is not just loud but also incredibly diverse.

For the full line-up of the festival and more information about it, visit under25summit.com. Tickets from ₹999 onwards are on insider.in.

EATING OUT

Ruth Dhanaraj

They say there's no better proof of a cuisine's authenticity than to see people from its land of origin enjoying a meal there. And that is exactly what we see at the United Telugu Kitchens.

A larger-than-life mural of a smiling lady (yesteryear actor Suryakantam), welcomes one into this no-frills restaurant that is not only cosy and comfortable, but focuses on food as it well should. The actor is in no way connected to the restaurant, she is simply a symbol of the wholesome, comfort food they serve.

It is a hot, sweltering day and as we sit back sipping goli sodas, we notice families of different sizes and age groups happily tucking away into their meals. We also realise there are people still waiting to get in even though its closer to tea time than lunch hour.

A quick look at the menu shows consideration for those who may not be familiar with the cuisine, hence the inclusion of Indo-Chinese and North Indian dishes from the soups and starters to the mains. For those in the know and



Say yes to gunpowder and ghee

raring to go on a culinary adventure into the Telugu heartland, there is plenty to indulge in.

Dishes falling under the 'Telugudi' category retain their regional names, but are carefully explained so you are not ordering blind. We begin with the Rayalseema natu bombs -

minced vegetable balls tossed with a choice of pandumirchi (red chilli), awakaya (raw mango) or gongura (sorrel leaves) - and the palletotlu mushroom vepudu. Both are a great choice and fulfil their purpose of getting you curious to try out a few more starters.



The Bezwada fried wings are a fiery, lip-smacking, nose-watering choice, but the fantastic blend of garlic and spices, only had us reaching out for yet another piece. The same goes for the thagub-



United Telugu Kitchens

Hits: Bezwada fried wings, Rayalseema natu bombs, gongura mamsam

Misses: None

Pocket pinch: ₹1000 for two

ture on the menu. There are surprisingly a good number of egg dishes too.

The menu continues to pleasantly surprise with a lovely spread of rice and dal (pappu) items, rich from popular favourites such as bagara or flavoured rice and middle class rice (a simple serving of rice, gunpowder and ghee) to pappucharu with options of meat or eggs.

This is apart from the biryanis, pulasas, meals and roti options.

Best of all is the presence of ragi sankati (the Telugu avatar of ragi mudde) that one can enjoy with a host of vegetarian and non-vegetarian curries.

In the end, we settled for bagara rice and mutton chops. Both were well-flavoured and aromatic, and with the succulent meat falling off the bone, there was really not much one could ask for.

Double ka meetha, gulab jamun and carrot halwa are traditional sweet choices, and there is always ice cream if you cannot make up your mind.

CITYBEATS



Seeing stars

REGISTRATIONS OPEN

There will be a short course in basic astronomy and astrophysics for students of class eight, nine and 10 from April 29 to May 11 (11am to 3pm). Application forms can be accessed from www.mpbfir-blr.in and sent to MP Birla Institute of Fundamental Research, Bhatraiya Vidya Bhavan Campus, 43/1, Race Course Road, Bengaluru 560001. Call 22385956/57, 40914507 for details



Jazz by four

MARCH 8, 9

The Antoine Karacostas Quartet featuring Antoine Karacostas (piano), Pierre Bernier (saxophone), Gabriel Midon (bass) and Simon Bernier (drums), will be performing in the city. Antoine, hailed as a musical alchemist, leads the quartet and is inspired by composers like Emmanuel Chabrier. At Windmills, Whitefield, 9.30pm. Tickets on BookMyShow



Sketching from life

MARCH 9

There will be a Botanical Sketching Workshop by Nirupa Rao as part of the exhibition, 'Critical Zones. In Search of a Common Ground', from 11am to 1pm at the Reading Room in the Science Gallery Bengaluru. For details, visit the websites of Science Gallery Bengaluru or Max Mueller Bhavan.

Telangana is new ATM for Cong.: PM

The Hindu Bureau
PATANCHERU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accused the Congress Party of making Telangana its new ATM after coming to power. He also charged the party with having an alleged secret pact with Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS).

"You have given an opportunity for Congress Party after suffering years of corruption under the BRS government. They are both sides of the same coin and have an understanding among themselves to share the looted wealth," he said at a public meeting held in Patancheru in Sangareddy district.

"BJP ki vote veyyali (vote for BJP) and we should get 400 seats this time," he exhorted the gathering.

Mr. Modi, who began the speech with "Na Telangana Kutumba Sabhyalu Andaraki Namaskaram" (Greetings to my Telangana family members), claimed that the Congress and its INDIA allies are "abusing"



Narendra Modi

him and his "family" since he had raised his voice against "family parties".

He charged that governments run by family-based parties have "hidden their black money" in foreign banks and kept "expensive gifts" for themselves wherever they had put up every gift received for public auction, realising ₹140 crore and using the money to clean up River Ganga. He said his regular income in government was utilised for girls' education and took a swipe at the media claiming that they "will not report these kind of issues".

Mr. Rajan identified the elephant as "Manjankomban", a frequent trouble-

Man-animal conflict claims two more lives in Kerala

On Tuesday, Valsala, wife of tribal chief, was trampled to death by an elephant in Thrissur and a man was killed by wild gaur in Kozhikode; a day earlier, a woman was killed by elephant in Idukki

The Hindu Bureau
THRISSUR

For the second consecutive day in Kerala, a wild elephant trampled to death a woman on Tuesday. Valsala, a 64-year-old tribal woman, who went to the forest at Peringalkuthu in Thrissur for collecting forest resources was trampled to death by the animal around 3.30 p.m.

Valsala is the wife of Rajan, tribal chief of Vachinaram Colony, Mr. Rajan, who witnessed the incident, said the elephant that was behind a tree attacked Valsala. Rajan, who was terrified by the attack, has been hospitalised.

The elephant trampled Valsala when she tried to escape and fell down.

Mr. Rajan identified the elephant as "Manjankomban", a frequent trouble-



Kerala Opposition leader V.D. Satheeshan calls on tribal Chief of Vachinaram Colony, Rajan, on Tuesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

maker in the area.

Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheeshan, who visited Mr. Rajan in the hospital, criticised the State government and the Centre for their apathy towards the plight of people living in the forest fringes.

Tense moments prevailed at Chalakudy Taluk Hospital as UDF workers protested against shifting

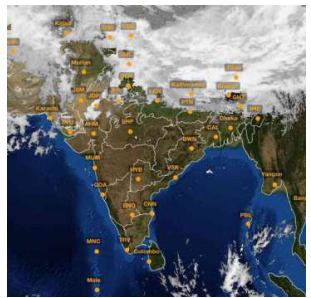
the body to the mortuary.

In another incident, a 70-year-old man, P.D. Abraham, was killed in a wild gaur attack at Kakkayam in Kozhikode district on Tuesday afternoon. The incident led to strong protests and both the Left Democratic Front and the United Democratic Front called for a hartal in Koorachund grama pan-

chayat on Wednesday. In another incident, a herd of elephants entered the house of the welfare officer of the Athirappilly plantation corporation in Thrissur on Monday night and damaged furniture and other things inside the house. The family members were not in the house at the time of the attack. Meanwhile, the Kothamangalam First Class Judicial Magistrate Court on Thursday extended the interim bail of MLA Mathew Kuzhaladan, Ernakulam District Congress Committee president Mohammed Shiyas, and 30 other Congress leaders arrested in connection with a protest held at Kothamangalam town with the body of a woman trampled to death by elephant at Kanjiravelli in Idukki on Monday. (With inputs from Kozhikode)

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: (M), POLLUTION DATA: (C), MAP: (INS) / (M) (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Wednesday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan, Mizaffarabad and Himachal Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	30.2	17.3
Almedabad	31.3	13.6
Azawl	26.0	14.8
Allahabad	27.5	12.6
Bengaluru	36.0	29.5
Bhopal	27.7	12.2
Bhubaneswar	23.3	15.2
Chandigarh	21.2	8.5
Chennai	32.1	24.3
Coimbatore	37.2	22.3
Delhi	25.5	7.9
Gangtok	0.2	18.0
Goa	33.0	20.6
Sonebhat	32.6	16.0
Hubballi	37.0	19.0
Hyderabad	35.5	22.5
Imphal	26.3	12.7
Jaipur	24.8	12.2
Kochi	32.0	26.8
Kolkata	29.0	9.4
Kolkata	30.8	22.8
Vizakhapatnam	32.7	22.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE	Yesterday	
Ahmedabad	7	17	.....	182	127	4:00 p.m., Mandi	
Bengaluru	12	94	.....	108	153	Golconda, Punjab	
Chennai	7	21	.....	80	66	recorded an overall air	
Delhi	16	67	.....	40	203	145	quality index (AQI) score
Hyderabad	5	31	.....	48	70	114	of 200 indicating an
Kolkata	5	18	.....	26	101	108	unhealthy level of
Lucknow	10	32	.....	49	136	54	pollution. In contrast,
Mumbai	75	49	.....	290	136	54	Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
Pune	55	2	.....	198	234	253	recorded a healthy AQI
Vizakhapatnam	14	45	.....	15	111	127	score of 23

Air Quality Code: Poor (red), Moderate (orange), Good (green) readings indicate average AQI

NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease.

Jail radicalisation: NIA conducts searches

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Expanding the ambit of its investigation in the Bengaluru Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) prison radicalisation case, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday searched multiple locations in six States and seized a host of digital devices and incriminating documents, along with cash.

NIA teams swooped down on the premises of suspects in various places across Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Punjab, Gujarat and West Bengal on Tuesday, and recovered 25 mobile phones, six laptops and four storage devices, besides various incriminating documents, cash, apart from currency

notes of various countries. The NIA has been probing the case since October 25, 2023, and has filed a charge sheet against eight persons on January 12 this year. Two of them are absconding. Investigations had revealed that the absconders had established a network comprising individuals across India to procure the LeT's activities.

The case relating to radicalisation of inmates in Bengaluru's Parappana Agrahara Central Prison by alleged LeT operative T. Nazeer was originally registered by the Bengaluru City Police following the seizure of arms and ammunition. Nazeer was arrested in connection with the 2008 serial bomb blasts.

Kerala student's death: V-C suspends Dean

The Hindu Bureau
KALPETTA

Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University of Kollam, in connection with the death of a student. Sidharthan was found hanging in the hostel on varsity campus on February 18.

In his explanation, Dr. Narayanan said there were no lapses on the part of the administration.

IN BRIEF



BRS, BSP to join hands for Lok Sabha polls in Telangana

The Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) have decided to enter into a formal alliance for the upcoming Parliamentary elections in Telangana. The decision came during a meeting between BRS president and former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and BSP State president R.S. Praveen Kumar in Hyderabad on Tuesday. The alliance would be respectable for both parties and the seat sharing would be finalised in consultation with BSP national president Mayawati soon, presidents of the two parties announced after their meeting.

ED issues new summons to Isaac in masala bonds case

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued fresh summons to former Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac asking him to appear before the investigators at its Kochi office on March 12 in connection with the issue of masala bonds by the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB). Dr. Isaac had not turned up despite earlier summons by the agency asking him to appear for interrogation. The ED suspects that the funds were raised and utilised in violation of the Foreign Exchange Management Act.

Crown's worth was in tune to my capacity, says Suresh Gopi

Responding to the controversy over the purity and quantity of gold in the crown offered by him to Lourdes Metropolitan Cathedral in Thrissur, BJP candidate for the Thrissur Lok Sabha constituency Suresh Gopi said he offered the crown according to his capacity. It was said that we had to explain what we offered to a church, he said in Thrissur on Tuesday. He said his wife had promised to offer gold to the tune of ₹10 lakh if he won from the Thrissur Lok Sabha constituency.

Festivities begin



Thousands of Shivalingams being stacked in the shape of a 'Mahashivlingam' on K.R. Beach in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday ahead of the Mahashivratri celebrations on March 8. The 'Mahashivlingam', which is put up every year, draws devotees from far and wide. K.R. DEEPAK

Karnataka HC puts transfer of Jayalalithaa's ornaments on hold

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka on Tuesday stayed until March 26, the process of handing over the confiscated gold ornaments of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J. Jayalalitha to the authorised officers of the T.N. State government.

Plea filed by niece Justice Mohammad Nawaz passed the interim order on a plea filed by J. Deepa, pa, niece and legal heir of late Jayalalitha.

A special court in Bengaluru was scheduled to hold proceedings on March 6 and 7, 2024, to hand over the ornaments confiscated in the disproportionate assets case against Jayalalitha and others to the authorised officers of the Tamil Nadu government. The petitioner had requested the July 12, 2023, order passed by the special court in rejecting her plea for releasing the confiscated properties/assets in the disproportionate assets in favour of her and her brother, J. Deepak. The special court had held that properties confiscated on conviction of the accused persons will have to be handed over to the Tamil Nadu government.

tioned the July 12, 2023, order passed by the special court in rejecting her plea for releasing the confiscated properties/assets in the disproportionate assets in favour of her and her brother, J. Deepak. The special court had held that properties confiscated on conviction of the accused persons will have to be handed over to the Tamil Nadu government.

Treated as acquitted However, it has been claimed in the petition that the trial court failed to appreciate the fact that the proceedings against late Jayalalitha were abated before the apex court, and hence, she has to be treated as 'acquitted' in the case as the earlier order of the High Court of Karnataka acquitting her in the case was in operation at the time of her death.

We look forward to working with ISRO: Dr. Nicola Fox

INTERVIEW
Hemanth C.S.

Dr. Nicola "Nicky" Fox, associate administrator, NASA Science Mission Directorate, NASA Headquarters, who is in India to review the upcoming NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR) project, spoke to The Hindu on topics ranging from the NISAR mission to sending an Indian astronaut to the International Space Station later this year.



This is my very first trip to India and I am very excited to be here. We are here celebrating the partnership between NASA and ISRO on our big flagship mission the NISAR mission. I am really looking forward to tomorrow to meeting with NISAR team when I visit

the U.R. Rao Satellite Centre and honestly seeing the spacecraft in the clean room is always a very inspiring thing to do. And then of course talking about the ways the two agencies interact in a whole round of not just science but also in astrophysics, heliophysics and in planetary.

It is still on the ground and not when it is in space. So, we are progressing hopefully to launch later this year. We don't have a specific date yet.

Are you meeting ISRO officials and visiting any of the centres? We are meeting the Secretary of Space and we are looking forward to that. India signed the Artemis Accords last year and NASA will be training an Indian astronaut for a mission

with ISRO? We will be talking about the ongoing ones. I am a heliophysicist, so I am excited about the Aditya-L1 missions. We have a total solar eclipse that will be happening in the U.S. in April and we have 18 missions that are focusing and taking data of the Sun during that eclipse. We are excited that Aditya-L1 will be doing the same and joining in so that we can pool all the data together. Also talking about Chandrayaan-3, the fact that we had a Laser Retroreflector Array on the moon were able to ping it, so that is another great collaboration.

Any other space collaborations with India will be discussed



Deprivileging bribe

Voters should know that MPs do not act under monetary inducement

It was a judgment that has ruffled for years. The artificial distinction that the Supreme Court of India made over 25 years ago between 'bribe-givers' and 'bribe-takers' in the infamous JMM bribery case left many aghast that those who paid crores of rupees to MPs for voting in favour of the P.V. Narasimha Rao government in a no-confidence motion were to be prosecuted for corruption, but those who took the money were immune from prosecution. The reason was that those who had voted for money enjoyed the constitutional privilege of not being subject to any legal consequence for "anything said or any vote given in Parliament". There was one exception among the alleged bribe-takers: Ajit Singh, who was accused of taking a payoff, was to be prosecuted because he was absent during the voting, and was thus stripped of the protection enjoyed by those who actually voted in terms of the bribery agreement. The Court has corrected this anomaly in the law related to parliamentary privileges by holding that there can be no immunity for a Member of Parliament or a State legislator against a bribery charge in connection with a vote or speech in the legislature. In overruling the majority verdict in *P.V. Narasimha Rao vs State (CBI/SPE)* (1998), a seven-member Constitution Bench has foregrounded probity as the main aspect of parliamentary functioning.

The Court has made it clear that parliamentary privilege, enshrined in Article 105 (for MPs) and Article 194 (for State legislators) is aimed at protecting the freedom of speech and independence of the legislators in their functioning in the House and cannot extend to bribery, as it is not essential to the casting of the vote or in deciding how to cast it. A key rationale that weighed with the Constitution Bench in 1998 was that parliamentary privilege was essential to protecting members from persecution for anything said or any vote in the House. The majority feared that limiting this privilege might have serious consequences and felt that public indignation over the conduct of some MPs accepting a bribe should not lead to the court constraining the Constitution so narrowly that it removes the guarantee for effective parliamentary participation and debate. However, the seven-member Bench has concluded that the potential for such misuse is neither enhanced nor diminished by recognising the court's jurisdiction to prosecute a member for bribery. The Bench has also held that voting in a Rajya Sabha election, being part of a legislator's function, is protected under Article 194 of the Constitution as a privilege. It requires utmost protection for a member to vote freely and without fear of legal persecution. Overall, the verdict meets public expectation that the members they elect do not act under monetary inducement.

Law and disorder

The continued radicalisation of Manipuri society is a cause of concern

One of the cardinal principles of a functioning and modern democracy is that only the state, led by a government that is elected by the people, has a legitimate right to use or to authorise the use of physical force. When civilian groups resort to violence against state actors without repercussions, one has to call into question the maintenance of law and order in the State of Manipur. In late February, cadres of the Meitei chauvinist group, the Arambai Tengol, allegedly abducted a police officer, assaulted him and vandalised his home. Police officers protested the attack, demanding the ability to take action against the group. It is another matter that the group has managed to source its weapons from the looting of police stations in the valley following the ethnic conflagration last May. Many of the weapons are yet to be seized or returned despite the government's appeals. The police in the valley are heavily ethnised with barely any representation from the Kuki-Zo minority. Yet, the impunity with which the Arambai Tengol has acted against a police officer, and even assaulted a leader of the opposition in the recent past besides administering oath to legislators from the valley to pledge for its majoritarian cause, suggest that such actions have either the nod of the leadership of the State government or have been deliberately ignored. The severe ethnisation in the valley and the hills has also granted a degree of popularity to groups such as the Arambai Tengol and counterparts in the hills, making law enforcement difficult to achieve.

It is now incumbent upon the Union government and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to take into account the severity of the ethnic polarisation and the dangers posed to law and order. Humanitarian concerns related to the displacement of people apart, the predominance of extra-legal forces in public life in the valley and the hills points to the delegitimisation of the idea of the state alone having a monopoly over the use of physical force in establishing law and order. The rampant radicalisation provides an opportunity for the muzzled civic voices in Manipur, and in the valley in particular, to raise their concerns about the impunity enjoyed by such forces. Unless the Chief Minister, N. Biren Singh, cracks the whip on the Arambai Tengol, the radicalisation of Manipuri society will continue, making a return to a much-needed civic state of affairs all the more difficult. But with Mr. Singh acting less as a Chief Minister and more as a public prosecutor in majoritarian politics, it is incumbent upon the BJP leadership to yet again rethink its strategy to let the status quo continue in the State.

Heady electoral rhetoric with a hegemonic ring to it

The run-up to the general election this year is a propitious moment to interrogate the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition's self-proclamation of its rule to the electorate, in whose name it governs. As the ruling coalition seeks a third consecutive mandate at the Centre, one can trace a tangible shift in the coalition's campaign pitch to voters. At the surface, one finds a perceptible repositioning in the campaign's mainline narrative: economic progress and 'softer' cultural rejuvenation have morphed into 'welfare' guarantees and blunter Hindu majoritarianism. At a deeper level, the defining characteristic of the sought mandate has turned away from promises of socio-economic transformation and moved closer towards a referendum on a hegemonic political order.

The latter shift can be gauged from the disproportionate political capital expended towards demonstrating the ineptitude or venality of the opposition parties. The government appears on less sure ground on its billboard 'Modi ki guarantee' theme: a motley of stated governmental achievements (identified in a personalistic manner with the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi) across social, economic and cultural fronts.

The rationale for the government's apparent hesitancy in clearly foregrounding a pro-incumbency campaign — similar to the NDA's 'India Shining' campaign in 2004 — is not particularly hard to fathom. While the term 'guarantee' signifies an expectation of certainty, the claims encoded within the 'guarantees' appear to carry, on the whole, a much more limited popular credibility.

'Guarantees' versus survey
To illustrate the point, let us juxtapose the claimed guarantees being proffered in the Prime Minister's name, with the corresponding set of survey evidence (taken from last month's bi-annual *India Today* 'Mood of the Nation' (MOTN) survey).

The guarantee of 'A Promising Ecosystem for the Amrit Peedhi' portrays a rapid pace of job creation — "reducing the unemployment rate from 5.8% in 2018-19 to 3.2% in 2022-23". In contrast, the voter survey exhibits a marked dissatisfaction on job creation, with only about a third of respondents crediting success to the government on this front. The "welfare guarantee" also appears to be on a shaky foundation as 62% express difficulty in managing daily expenses. What about the 'empowering *amudata* (farmers) guarantee' or the 'middle class emerges a winner' guarantee? The survey shows a plurality (45%) blaming government policies for widening the gap between rich and poor. What about the 'India Economy: A Story that Inspires' guarantee? A quarter believe their household income will improve in future, while



Asim Ali is a political researcher and columnist

three-quarters believe it will either remain stagnant or worsen. In fact, more respondents expect a reduction in future income (30% than those who expect an improvement (25%).

The most damning indictment is expressed on the question probing which sections are seen to have benefited most from government policies — 52% say big businesses, compared to 9% for farmers, 8% for salaried classes and 6% for daily wage labourers.

The basis of a hegemonic strategy
In spite of this awkward dissonance between incumbent claims and popular perceptions, the headline figure of the *India Today* survey depicts the NDA heading for a comfortable majority, skirting the scale of the 2019 mandate. The government itself projects the ringing figure of 400-plus. The inevitability and incontrovertibility of a third term is itself presented as the overarching guarantee of the campaign narrative.

This is what we mean when we say that the NDA seeks a mandate characteristic of an aspiring political hegemon. A political regime can draw sustenance through such self-perpetuating hegemonic effect even in the absence of widespread popular approval of its political project. The critical condition hinges on the political project's credibility as representing the 'only game in town'.

What are the mechanisms through which such a hegemonic effect is maintained? One can glean three complementary legs of the NDA's hegemonic tripod: the first is a tactical incorporation of rival political elites through a mix of coercive measures and power-sharing incentives. The second is delegitimising the political opposition as corrupt or pernicious, focusing attention on their 'normless' self-seeking opportunism. The third is undermining the possibilities for emergence of a broad programmatic coalition, while inundating the media spaces, with depictions of the fragmented or listless state of rival political formations, heralding the much-trumpeted certainty of coming electoral triumph.

However, even this overarching guarantee of electoral triumph remains blighted with deficits in credibility. On the question of whether the NDA bloc can defeat the NDA, 31% of the 'MOTN' survey respondents say yes and 55% say no. Nevertheless, as the magazine adds: "the drop in voter confidence has not been as sharp even as the alliance has lost key partners".

The NDA's own political manoeuvres also betray the stubborn openness of the political contest. The portrayal of opposition alliances as woefully lacking in popular acceptability seems to be rebuffed by the regime's high-profile attempts at breaking away these very rival formations, including in the core heartland states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

In the book, *Neoliberal Hegemony and the Pink Tide in Latin America: Breaking Up with TINA*,

As the National Democratic Alliance seeks a third consecutive mandate at the Centre, there is a tangible shift in the coalition's strident campaign pitch to the voter

political scientist Tom Chodor examines the conditions undergirding hegemonic sustenance and breakdown. In the Latin America of the 1980s and 1990s, right-wing regimes took power by instituting neoliberal economic policies which were consistently blamed for increasing socio-economic inequality and even intensifying absolute poverty.

As Chodor explains, while their economic policies remained widely resented by the broad populace, these 'Cesarist' regimes survived by assembling a coalition of dominant social classes: industrial bourgeoisie, rural oligarchy and upper middle classes. A steady mix of coercion and incorporation of elite challengers, buffeted by an equal emphasis on the opposition's 'unfitness to govern', helped institute a 'common sense' understanding in Latin America that there was no alternative to their respective regimes of unconstrained neoliberalism.

The pink tide of social democratic forces taking power across the continent from the early 2000s (notably in Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela), according to Chodor, succeeded through a forging together of an evolving counter-hegemonic bloc. This convergence entailed fusing the old leftist 'working class consciousness' with newly politicised 'marginalized and excluded subjectivities': an 'anti-elite' coalition built on an enlarged political bloc including women, indigenous communities and growing sectors of informal labourers.

Chodor argued that this coalition strategy followed Gramsci's insistence that the construction of a radical collective will is 'an active and reciprocal' educative relationship, illuminating the intersecting dimensions of class, race, and gender exploitation".

A similar coalition of backward castes, labouring classes, and marginalised minorities and women was formulated more than half-a-century ago by Rammanohar Lohia. Interestingly, the choice of the newly incorporated parties in the NDA (the Janata Dal (United) and Rashtriya Lok Dal) suggests the BJP's discomfort at the possibility of an INDIA coalition that can fuse together the constituencies of caste-based social justice and agrarian discontent within its ideological umbrella.

Notwithstanding the heady hegemonic rhetoric, the NDA remains acutely cognisant of its previous losses: from the 2015 defeat in Bihar to a social justice platform of a Karmataka alliance to the recent electoral losses in Gramadala and Telangana.

The Hindutva coalition has indeed willed away on quite a few occasions in the recent past, faced with a backlash emanating from the backward castes and rural sectors. The only guarantee inherent in the political process is of a fluid space where alternative imaginations and possibilities can be temporarily suppressed but never foreclosed.

Green jobs and the problem of gender disparity

The transition to low-carbon development has the potential to add about 35 million green jobs in India by 2047. The International Labour Organization defines green jobs as "jobs that contribute to the conservation or restoration of the environment". Many of these span across sectors, such as manufacturing, construction, renewable energy, energy efficiency and automobiles, which traditionally saw a lower representation of women.

Globally, men are likely to transition to green jobs faster than women. Even as India increased its renewable energy capacity by 250% between 2015 to 2021, women comprised merely 11% of workers in the solar rooftop sector. The Annual Survey of Industries 2019-20 shows that women workers are mostly concentrated in industries such as apparel, textile, leather, food, and tobacco. In contrast, a Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) 2019 report shows that men comprise 85% of the work force in sectors such as infrastructure, transport, construction, and manufacturing.

A study in 2023 by the Skill Council for Green Jobs indicated that 85% of the training for green skills was imparted to men while over 90% of women believed that social norms limited their participation in training for green jobs. These restrictive social norms include factors such as the belief that women are unsuitable for certain technical roles, safety concerns, lower representation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects, and familial constraints.

As the sector enters a green transition, empowering women and advancing gender equity in climate actions will be one of the keys to unlock the co-benefits of a low-carbon and environmentally sustainable economy. Increasing women's representation in green jobs has several benefits.

In the short run, it can address the gender biases in the Indian labour market and improve women's labour force participation rates. In the

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long run, this can contribute to improving women's agency and their empowerment by creating economic, technical, and social opportunities.

Address the gaps in data
There is limited data to understand the landscape of women's work for green jobs in India. Mapping emerging areas for green growth and collecting sex-disaggregated data on green jobs could be the starting point to improve women's participation.

There is need to build evidence on the present and future impact of low-carbon transitions on women workers and entrepreneurs while considering the hidden and invisible roles played by women across different sectors and geographies. This could be done by conducting gender analysis, collecting gender statistics on green jobs through periodic labour force surveys and mobilising additional resources to emphasise and encourage women's role in the green transition.

Globally, women are being left behind in the worldwide race to achieve climate targets and sustainability goals. This is particularly evident in the transition to a low-carbon economy, where new opportunities are created alongside job displacement and transformation. Recently in a critical stride towards justice and inclusivity in transition planning, COP 28's high-level dialogue launched 'Gender-Responsive Just Transitions and Climate Action Partnership' with a focus on improved data, targeted finance, and skill development.

Given the unequal landscape of women's work and participation in green jobs, we need to ensure that women can access emerging opportunities from low-carbon transitions. There is a strong need to review the status quo, map the current roles of women, address structural barriers that hinder women's employment choices, and also create a conducive ecosystem to foster their participation in green jobs.

In India, despite 42.7% of the total number of STEM graduates being women, they represent

only 30.8% in engineering, manufacturing and construction programmes which are the key sectors for green transition. To bridge this gap early hands-on learning, mentorship, scholarships, financial assistance, and awareness generation are crucial to empower women in green jobs-related fields.

Supporting women entrepreneurs
Gender-focused financial policies and products catering to the requirements of women entrepreneurs can spur their ability to enter the green transition market. Collateral-free lending, financial literacy training and building supportive networks are crucial steps to unlock their potential. Suitable tools must be developed to assess creditworthiness, disburse loans, and reduce operational costs for women-owned businesses.

Finally, bringing in more women into leadership positions to incorporate gender-specific needs in low-carbon development strategies can promote women's integration in green jobs.

A gender-just transition demands a multi-pronged strategy that focuses on employment, social protection, reduces the burden of care work, and enables skill development. Partnerships across government, private sector and other stakeholders are necessary to leverage the benefits of innovation, technology and finance for women entrepreneurs and workers.

Businesses must recognise the centrality of gender justice and ensure equity throughout the process of green transition by mitigating barriers that exist due to stereotyping or gender bias and fostering equitable job opportunities for a just transition that benefits everyone. This is the time to build the capacity and support women in meeting the demands of the new world of work and co-design a future pathway that is socially equitable and inclusive for all.

The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Poll bonds, bank plea

That the nation's premier bank which prides itself on its digital initiatives is seeking more time to collate data on poll bonds, is shocking and surprising (inside pages, March 5). It is amply evident that the

bank's nine-page application in the top court of the land is aimed at delaying the whole process beyond the general election, by which time any kind of disclosure will not affect the fortunes of the biggest gainer among the

political parties.
J. Anantha Padmanabhan,
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

Name, name change
Long before women fought for equal rights, in Kerala, women and men used the surnames of their mothers'

families. My name has the initial 'A', for 'Allath', the family name of my mother. Bravo Ms. Divya Modi Tongya (Editorial, March 5).
A. Balagangadharan,
Pollachi, Tamil Nadu

States, the practice of adding the father's name when a baby is born or admitted in school is not followed. The name has just the initials(s). Well-informed parents add a surname so that the name is uniform in government records. But

the girl child is usually not given any surname. After marriage, some add the husband's name. Perhaps it is best to have the full name of the father in the child's name and just stick to it!
V. Lakshmanan,
Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

The dynamics of household consumption

The eagerly awaited fact sheet of the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) 2022-23 was released recently by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. The results of the survey are significant as the last results on household consumption expenditure were released in 2011-12.

What the survey does

The HCES offers a close look at how households across India incur expenditures on consumable items in a given period. It captures auxiliary information on household characteristics and demographic details. The information gleaned from the HCES is instrumental in constructing a weighted diagram for Consumer Price Indices, an index that tracks retail inflation. The weights obtained from the HCES represent the relative significance of goods and services, determined by their respective shares in the overall consumption patterns of households.

The HCES has played a pivotal role in India's growth story since its inception in 1950-51. Beyond merely detailing spending habits, this survey has been a crucial factor in estimating the head count ratio, which is the percentage of the population living below the national poverty line. Moreover, the HCES has been an invaluable resource for research in diverse fields, including economics and sociology, contributing to our understanding of the nation's socio-economic landscape.

The HCES was initially scheduled to be conducted in 2020-21 but this could not happen due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey finally commenced in August 2022 and went on until July 2023, symbolising resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity. Another phase of HCES, ongoing in 2023-24, started after the completion of the first phase.



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The views are the authors' own

The Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2022-23 is a testament to India's commitment to a resilient statistical system embracing both tradition and innovation

The two-phase approach not only underscores the perseverance displayed in navigating the challenges in the first phase but also emphasises the commitment to capturing a comprehensive and evolving snapshot of India's household consumption patterns.

A significant stride in HCES 2022-23 was the positive shift to the modern and efficient computer-assisted personal interview method from the traditional paper-aided personal interview method. Data this time were entered using tablets. This shift expedited data collection and processing, introducing a more streamlined scrutiny mechanism across divisions of the NSSO.

Engaging a significant sample size of 2,61,746 households, strategically selected through statistically sound sampling design, the survey was designed to align with the consumption patterns of 'New India'. The questionnaire was enriched with contemporary items (such as paneer, LED bulbs, headphones, and details on online purchases) and the removal of obsolete items. To ensure a more efficient and accurate data collection process, the survey employed a strategic approach. The questionnaire was divided into three parts, and households were surveyed in three separate monthly visits within a quarter. This not only expedited the canvassing process but also resulted in an improvement in response quality, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the consumption expenditure on all 407 items.

This holistic approach to data collection, combining both conventional and contemporary practices, highlights the commitment of the HCES to accurately capture the diverse consumption patterns of households. The robust sampling design, coupled with the incorporation of new items and innovative survey techniques, reflects a dedication to staying attuned to the dynamics of a rapidly changing official statistics

domain. The fact sheet provides key estimates within six months of the end of the survey, with low relative standard errors for monthly per capita expenditure at both national and State levels.

While embracing modernity, the survey also retained certain traditional practices. The age-old method of imputing the value of home-grown or produced stock, gifts, loans, and exchanges persisted. Additionally, the NSSO took a pioneering step by imputing the value of items received free of cost through various social welfare programmes for the first time.

Insights into changes, trends

The fact sheet provides intriguing and precise insights into India's economic landscape. The average per capita stands at \$3,773 in rural India and \$6,450 in urban India. Notably, when considering imputed values of free items, these figures increase to \$3,860 and \$6,521, respectively. The fact sheet covers various aspects, including the consumption share of item groups, average MPCI by household type, and figures at both the all-India level and across States and Union Territories.

It provides trends as well. Analysing the trend from 1999-2000 to 2022-23 reveals a significant transformation in MPCI composition in rural and urban areas. There is a noticeable decline in the percentage share of expenditure on food items (especially cereals), accompanied by an increase in the share of spending on fresh fruits and processed foods. There is a surge in non-food expenditures' share, particularly on durable goods, indicating an improved standard of living and a growing preference for lifestyle enhancements.

HCES, through the collective endeavor of the Indian Statistical Service officers, the Subordinate Statistical Service officers and the entire staff, stands as a beacon of reliability, a valuable tool for shaping the trajectory of New India's economic policies.

The question of Rajya Sabha seats

The Congress has to tread cautiously with the IUML

STATE OF PLAY

Biju Govind
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The rival political coalitions in Kerala – the Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) – have nearly hammered out the differences within their alliances to reach a consensus on seat allocation for the 20 Lok Sabha seats in the State.

Known for its adept handling of allies, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), which leads the LDF, has seen greater success in seat distribution compared to the Congress, which leads the UDF and which has encountered challenges due to its dominant partner, the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), demanding an additional seat to contest the elections. Reportedly, both the main parties engaged in negotiations with their constituents and offered them a Rajya Sabha seat in the near future. Kerala elects nine members to the Rajya Sabha for a six-year term.

The Rajya Sabha terms of CPI(M) member Elamaram Kareem, CPI State secretary Binoy Viswom, and Kerala Congress (Mani) chairman Jose K. Mani will end on July 1. These three vacancies are likely to be a bone of contention within these coalitions soon after the Lok Sabha polls and could potentially trigger a realignment of forces in the complex political landscape of Kerala.

Currently, all these seats are held by the LDF. But the LDF will lose a seat to the UDF based on the strength of legislators from both fronts in the Assembly. The CPI(M), which has three more members in the Rajya Sabha, i.e., in addition to Mr. Kareem, will have

to persuade the CPI, which is contesting four Lok Sabha seats, to offer the second winnable Rajya Sabha seat to the KC(M).

With the KC(M) announcing its candidate, Thomas Chazhikadan, for the lone allocated seat in Kottayam, Mr. Mani at present holds no official position in the LDF. The KC(M) enjoys support in Central Travancore, while the CPI has built a presence in all the districts over the years, though its influence is waning now. After the elections, reportedly, both the main parties engaged in negotiations with their constituents and offered them a Rajya Sabha seat in the near future. Kerala elects nine members to the Rajya Sabha for a six-year term.

Dilemma of the Congress

Meanwhile, the Congress party is coping with the dilemma of accommodating the IUML's demand for a Rajya Sabha seat without having one of its own members elected to the Upper House. Incidentally, the Congress had to forgo the Rajya Sabha seat that it could have easily won in 2018, as the party handed it over to the KC(M) to facilitate its return to the UDF. In 2016, the KC(M) walked out of the UDF, ending a three decade-long association, saying the Congress had not supported K.M. Mani in the alleged bar bribery scam. At that time, the Congress' Central leaders criticised its Kerala leaders for offering the Rajya Sabha seat to its junior partner. Six years later, the

prospect of the Rajya Sabha poll is again looming over the Congress ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

The IUML's demand for a third Lok Sabha seat or another Rajya Sabha seat resonates with the rank and file. The party seeks better representation for Muslims in elected bodies, commensurate with the community's population share (28%) in Kerala. The UDF already has two Rajya Sabha members – P.V. Abdul Wahab of the IUML and Jebi Mather Hisham of the Congress; both belong to the Muslim community.

Post-dilemma, when Malappuram district gained 10% of the Muslim population, and Palakkad districts in Malabar each gained one seat, the IUML expanded its base. This contrasts with the southern districts, with Alappuzha and Pathanamthitta losing two seats each and Kollam and Kottayam losing one each. Interestingly, the LDF secured 10% of the Muslim votes in the 2021 Assembly polls, according to the Loknit-CSD post-poll survey.

Electoral-wise, the Congress needs the IUML, but IUML does not need the Congress, to win Lok Sabha seats in Malabar. The Congress high command is expected to make the final decision on the IUML's demand for the Rajya Sabha seat. However, if it hands over the Rajya Sabha seat to the IUML, it could spell serious trouble for the party and the UDF. Already facing accusations of appeasement, the Congress has to tread cautiously. It needs to balance electoral pragmatism and ideological integrity, while remaining mindful of the IUML's option of aligning with the CPI (M), which has been aggressively wooing the party for some time.

Airlines damaged luggage of one in every two flyers: survey

While the number of lost and damaged luggage has increased over time, customer handling has become better

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

In the last two years, every one in two flyers in India had experienced damaged baggage at least once, as per a survey by LocalCircles. In the same period, every two in five flyers in India had their baggage delayed or lost by an airline at least once. Moreover, one in four flyers whose baggage was lost/delayed/damaged by an airline said that when they reached out to complain, customer service and the responsiveness of the airline was poor or pathetic.

The survey, conducted through the LocalCircles platform in 2024, garnered responses from more than 41,000 airline passengers across 303 districts in India. Of them, 67% were male and 33% female. The geographical distribution of the participants included 41% from tier-1 areas, 30% from tier-2 areas, and 29% from tier-3, tier-4, and rural areas. To take part in the survey, participants were required to be verified citizens registered with LocalCircles.

Recently, after incessant complaints from passengers, the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, which oversees regulations, issued instructions to seven leading Indian airlines to increase their staff. This directive aimed at optimising and improving the process of baggage handling at airports before the deadline of February 26. It warned that failure to comply may lead to more regulatory measures.

Chart 1 shows the times in the last two years (2022-2024) when travellers experienced delayed or lost baggage. Among respondents, 18% said that they had experienced this more than once, while 24% said that they had experienced it once. Together, 42% had experienced this at least once. Only 56% said that they had always got their baggage on time.

form in 2022, for the years 2020 to 2022. Chart 2 shows the comparison. In 2022, only 11% had said that they had experienced lost/delayed baggage more than once, while only 14% said that they had done so once; 75% of them always got it on time. So, the share of passengers whose luggage was lost or delayed by airlines has sharply increased. However, it is to be noted that the 2022 survey was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic when airlines were not in operation for a while.

Chart 3 shows the times in the last two years (2022-2024) when travellers experienced damaged baggage. Among respondents, 26% said that they had experienced damaged baggage more than once, while 24% said that they had done so once. Together, 50% had experienced this at least once. Only 48% said that their baggage had never been damaged.

The same question was asked in a survey conducted by the platform in 2022. Chart 4 shows the comparison. In 2022, only 35% said that they had experienced damaged baggage at least once, while 65% said that their baggage had never been damaged. So, the share of passengers whose luggage was damaged by airlines has sharply increased.

Chart 5 shows the share of flyers among those whose baggage was delayed, lost or damaged who rated the responsiveness of the airlines as excellent, good, average, poor and pathetic in 2024. Only 10% rated it excellent; 27% rated it good, 31% average, 12% poor, and a similar share said it was pathetic.

The same question was asked in a survey conducted in 2022. Chart 6 shows the comparison. In 2022, 50% had rated the customer service as poor or pathetic. So, customer service has improved significantly in the last two years.

Handle with care

The data for the charts were sourced from a survey conducted by LocalCircles



Chart 1: The chart shows the times in the last two years (2022-2024) when travellers experienced delayed or lost baggage

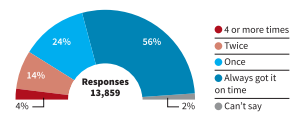


Chart 2: The chart shows the times in the last two years (2022-2024) when travellers experienced damaged baggage

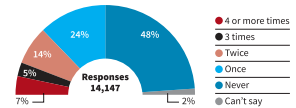


Chart 3: The chart shows the share of travellers among those whose baggage was delayed, lost or damaged who rated the responsiveness of the airlines

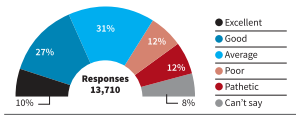


Chart 4: The chart plots the same data shown in chart 1 for 2022 & 2024

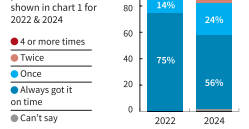


Chart 5: The chart plots the same data shown in chart 3 for 2022 & 2024

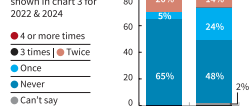
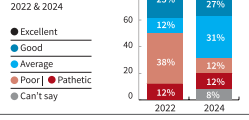


Chart 6: The chart plots the same data shown in chart 5 for 2022 & 2024



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 6, 1974

Wilson returns to power in UK.

London, March 5: The Labour Party leader, Mr. Harold Wilson, returned to power as Britain's Prime Minister last night.

Mr. Wilson, 58, accepted Queen Elizabeth's commission to form a new Government soon after Mr. Heath turned in his resignation at Buckingham Palace.

With 301 of the 635 seats in the House of Commons, the new Labour Government will be a minority administration, the first since 1929. Mr. Wilson's moment came when the 14 MPs of the Liberal Party - the party playing its biggest role in British politics for half a century - opted out of any action to keep Mr. Heath's Conservatives in power.

The Liberal MPs expressed themselves unanimously in favour of a national government made up of members of all the three main parties.

Mr. Heath's resignation came four days after the general election in which his Conservative Party lost its majority in Parliament and emerged five seats behind the Labour Party. He publicly said last night that he would support the new Labour Government on every policy that he considered realistic and in the national interest.

Mr. Wilson named a cabinet of familiar faces with one surprise - left-winger Michael Foot in the key job of Employment Secretary, empowered to try and settle the coal miners' strike.

Otherwise key cabinet posts went to most of the same men who served in Mr. Wilson's last Labour Government defeated in 1970, although not always in the same posts.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 6, 1924

Jute boom in Scotland

London, March 4: Scottish jute cloth manufacturers have received orders beyond their brightest hopes. Contracts for many million yards of Hessian cloth have been booked, delivery being as far ahead as the end of this year. Prices have risen sharply. The explanation is that consumers are purchasing heavily in view of the great demand for floor cloth which will follow the Government's housing schemes.

From Page One

HC acquits ex-professor in 'Maoist link' case

In March 2017, a sessions court in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra, convicted Prof. Saibaba and five others accused of indulging in activities amounting to waging war against the country. They were also held guilty of possessing Naxal literature that they planned to circulate among underground Naxalites and the residents of Gadchiroli to provoke the people to resort to violence.

Advocate-General Birendra Saraf, on behalf of the State, requested the High Court to stay the operation of its judgment for six weeks to allow the government to approach the Supreme Court. However, the Bench refused. "We have already acquitted the accused and directed their release forthwith if not required in any other case. We cannot stall the said order, which may affect the right to personal liberty," the court said. Noting that the prosecution had failed to "establish any legal seizure or any incriminating material against the accused", the court said, "the trial court judgment is not sustainable in the hands of law".

The Maharashtra government subsequently filed an appeal in the Supreme Court on Tuesday. (With inputs from New Delhi Bureau and PTI)

SC dismisses PMLA case against Shivakumar

The Bench passed the order on the basis of special leave petitions filed by Mr. Shivakumar and two others, variously represented by senior advocates A.M. Singhvi, Siddharth Luthra, S. Nagamuthu and advocate Parmatma Singh, challenging the jurisdiction of the Central agency.

They had appealed to the top court against a Karnataka HC judgment in 2019 upholding the summons issued by the ED. "The trial court judgment is not sustainable in the hands of law".

However, the Supreme Court issued notice on October 15, 2019, and directed the ED not to take any coercive action against Mr. Shivakumar, Anjaneya Hanumanthiah, and Sunil Kumar Sharma. Mr. Shivakumar had argued that the ED had commenced "illegal proceedings" by registering an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) against him under Section 3 of the PMLA, 2002. The senior lawyers said the ED strayed far from its turf by basing its ECIR entirely on an Income Tax department complaint alleging tax and penalty offences. None of the offences were "scheduled offences" under the PMLA, the petitioners said.

Mr. Shivakumar had argued that with no scheduled offence alleged, there were no proceeds of crime. Evidence of crime proceeds was necessary to invoke money laundering charges. The Supreme Court referred to the *Pavana Dibbar* judgment, which had held that Section 120B would be deemed a scheduled offence under the PMLA only if the conspiracy had been directed towards the commission of an offence specified in the Act.

'Illicit funds stashed in Paytm bank accounts'

The FIU, as per a summary the order against PPBL, said the inception of its probe into the troubled payments bank stemmed from law enforcement agencies "identification" of this illegal activity. As part of the FIU's mandate to ensure effective implementation of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), it regularly examines compliance levels of reporting entities like PPBL in the wake of any criminal conduct or fraud coming to light.

In the course of such investigation, certain entities were found to have cheated lakhs of Indians through the offering of fraudulent services including prohibited gambling activities, dating services, and streaming. The proceeds of these fraudulent activities were subsequently remitted abroad," the FIU noted. The agency added that it also came to light that several of the involved entities had used payment intermediaries to implement their fraudulent designs within India.

Based on the bank's responses to its show-cause notices, the FIU concluded that it had violated the law by failing to exercise ongoing due diligence with reference to the accounts of 34 beneficiaries and failed to file suspicious transaction reports in respect of those accounts.

Kerala man dies in missile attack in Israel

The two Indians who were injured in the attack hail from Idukki in Kerala, but their injuries are not as serious as earlier feared, the officials said.

"Our prayers and thoughts naturally go to the families of the bereaved and those of the injured. We will be there to support the families and offer assistance," the Israeli Embassy in India said. The incident once again highlights the fragile security situation in Israel after its raids against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. This has drawn in external actors such as Hezbollah.

"In view of the prevailing security situation and local safety advisories, all Indian nationals in Israel, especially those working in or visiting border areas in the north and south, are advised to relocate to safe areas within Israel," an advisory from the Indian Embassy in Israel said. The Indian mission also gave a helpline number +972-35226748 for those seeking emergency assistance. (With inputs from Thiruvananthapuram bureau)

Seven more Indians forced to fight in Russia seek govt. help

In video message, the men say this could be their last video and allege they were forced by police to join Russian Army or face imprisonment; they claim to have gone to Russia on tourist visas

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

A group of seven more Indians stuck on the Russia-Ukraine border released two videos this week seeking the government's help to return to India.

The seven Indians have been identified as Gagandeep Singh (24), Lovepreet Singh (24), Narain Singh (22), Gurpreet Singh (21), Gurpreet Singh (23), Harsh Kumar (20) and Abhishek Kumar (21). While five workers are said to be from Punjab, the other two are from Haryana.

One of the men said that they arrived in Russia on tourist visas and were forced to join the Russian Army as "helpers" after police detained them for not possessing a "slip".

The men alleged that they were forced by the police to join the Russian Army or risk facing 10 years imprisonment. "We were told that we only have to work as helpers. But they enlisted us for training in arms and ammunition and are preparing to send us to Ukraine. They kept us hungry



The Indians stuck on the Russia border seen in a screenshot from a video. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

and snatched our phones," one of the men, who is speaking in Hindi, said in a video on March 3.

He added that their fervent pleas for help with the Russians have not yielded any result. "The Russian Army tells us that we can leave only after a year. They are asking us to help them win the war. We don't know how to help them. If we don't, we may not survive," the man in his early 20s said in the video. The same group released another video on March 4.

One of the workers says in Hindi: "We had made you aware about our plight earlier also. There are many Indians stuck in either Ukraine or Russia. We request the Indian Embassy and the Indian government to help us. This could be our last video, they are sending us to the war zone in Ukraine."

The *Hindu* reported first on February 20 that at least three Indians who were hired as security helpers by Russia were forced to fight alongside the coun-

try's forces on the Russia-Ukraine border. *The Hindu* subsequently reported that there are around 100 Indians who are said to have been hired by the Russian Army in the past one year.

Russia and Ukraine have been at war since February 24, 2022. While a few Indians volunteered to join the International Legion created to fight Russian forces in Ukraine in 2022, the presence of Indians on the Russian side in combat has been reported for the first time.

Simultaneous polls: panel's report likely next week

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Law Commission may submit its report on simultaneous elections to the government next week in which it could recommend adding a new chapter to the Constitution on "one nation, one election" and holding the democratic exercise for Lok Sabha, State Assemblies and local bodies across the country by mid-2023. According to sources, the panel would recommend an amendment to the Constitution.

The panel would also recommend synchronising the terms of Legislative Assemblies in "three phases" in the next five years, they said.

Maharashtra drags Saibaba to top court again

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Maharashtra government has dragged wheel-chair-bound former Delhi University Professor G.N. Saibaba to the Supreme Court for the second time in as many years.

The State's appeal against Tuesday's acquittal of Professor Saibaba, in jail since 2014 for offences under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act linking him with Maoist groups, is a sequel of sorts to a train of events, which began in October 2022.

Discharged in 2022 On October 14, 2022, the Bombay High Court discharged Mr. Saibaba in the case for lack of valid sanction under Section 45(1) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, or the UAPA. The State had

not lost time. It rushed to the top court the same evening, a Friday.

In an uncharacteristic move, that too concerning a State's appeal against an order of discharge, the Supreme Court acquiesced to constitute a Special Bench of Justices M.R. Shah (now retired) and Bela M. Trivedi the very next day, a Saturday. The Bench went on to suspend the discharge order of the Bombay High Court Bench of Justices Rohit Deo and Anil Pansare.

The Saturday Bench of the top court, in its October 15, 2022, order said the "offences are very serious against the sovereignty and integrity of the country".

It surmised that the Division Bench of the High Court had "not at all dealt with and considered anything on the merits of the judgment" passed by the Sessions Court that



Professor G.N. Saibaba

sentenced Professor Saibaba to life imprisonment in 2017. The decision of the Supreme Court, which came within 24 hours of the High Court's discharge of the case against the 57-year-old paraplegic, had attracted criticism.

SC order

Months later, on April 19 last year, the Bench set aside the discharge order of the High Court. The Bench had reasoned that an appellate court (High Court) could not delve into

HC asks Bengal police to hand over ED attack case to CBI

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday directed the West Bengal Police to hand over the probe into an attack on Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials in Sandeshkhali to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The officials were attacked on January 5. A Division Bench of Chief Justice T.S. Sivagnanam and Justice Hirannay Bhattacharyya also directed the police to hand over the custody of suspended Trinamool Congress leader Sheikh Shahjahan to the CBI by 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday.

The police, however, did not hand over Mr. Shahjahan to the CBI. A team of CBI officials also visited Bhawani Bhavan, the headquarters of the West Bengal Police where the accused has been lodged, but they had to return empty-handed.

In an oral mention before Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, the State government requested for an early hearing of its appeal against the High Court order to hand over the case to the CBI.

Mr. Shahjahan was arrested by the police on February 29 after villagers,



Sheikh Shahjahan, PTI

held protests for days.

The court also set aside the order of a single-judge Bench of the High Court for setting up an SIT to probe the attack on ED officials. "The order passed by the learned Single Bench constituting the Special Investigating Team is set aside, and the writ petition filed by the Enforcement Directorate is allowed, and cases in FIR No. 8 and 9 of 2024 on the file of the Nazari Police Station and FIR 18 on the file of the Bongaon Police Station shall be transferred to CBI," the court said.

The court said Mr. Shahjahan is not an ordinary citizen, and it has become necessary for doing complete justice and enforcing the fundamental rights of the public that the cases be transferred to the CBI.

The ED, meanwhile, provisionally attached assets worth ₹2.78 crore under the PMLA of Mr. Shahjahan and others.

PM wants youth to be glued to phone, starve to death: Rahul

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday offered prayers at Ujjain's Mahakaleswar Temple as his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra reached Madhya Pradesh's pilgrim city. Mr. Gandhi was accompanied by former Chief Minister Kamal Nath among other party leaders.

As the former Congress president was entering the temple, a crowd present there started raising "Modi, Modi" slogans. "Today, I met some BJP men. They were shouting and carrying their party flags. But when I got down the car and asked them how they were doing, they stopped shouting and started smiling. And then when I was leaving, they were giving me flying kiss," he said. "So, it's not that difficult [dealing with such situations], he said.

"No loans" In Shajapur, Mr. Gandhi hit out at the Prime Minister



Paying obeisance: Rahul Gandhi and Kamal Nath offering prayers at Mahakaleswar Temple in Ujjain on Tuesday, PTI

is easy to do away with hatred.

"Today, I met some BJP men. They were shouting and carrying their party flags. But when I got down the car and asked them how they were doing, they stopped shouting and started smiling. And then when I was leaving, they were giving me flying kiss," he said. "So, it's not that difficult [dealing with such situations], he said.

"No loans" In Shajapur, Mr. Gandhi hit out at the Prime Minister

Congress will win at least 12 seats in M.P., says Kamal

The Hindu Bureau
BHOPAL

The Congress will win at least 12 to 13 seats (of the total 29) in Madhya Pradesh in the forthcoming Lok Sabha election, former Chief Minister and party veteran Kamal Nath said in Ujjain on Tuesday.

Mr. Nath was in the city to attend Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra.

"Look, I believe the Congress should win at least 12 to 13 seats. The BJP is an expert in creating a fake atmosphere of (claiming) to win all 29 seats," Mr. Nath said.

He also refuted the rumours that were rife last month about him joining the BJP. "Did you ever hear anything from my mouth? You guys [the media] only ran news, and everybody started asking me questions. I had already said out its tenure is taking out a nyay yatra. That refuted them first," he said.

NC top brass meets to deliberate over LS polls

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The National Conference (NC), which held several rounds of talks with its ally Congress recently over seat sharing meeting, on Tuesday held a meeting of its top leadership in Srinagar to discuss the upcoming Lok Sabha election in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

An NC spokesman said party President Feroz Khan Noon, along with vice-president Omar Abdullah, chaired the meeting of

the party parliamentary board and deliberated on the forthcoming polls.

Sources said the NC also discussed the proposals put forth by the Congress on seat sharing. Several rounds of talks held between the NC and Congress remain inconclusive. Both parties are part of the INDIA bloc. J&K has five Lok Sabha seats. The NC has been insisting that it will have a pre-poll alliance only in those seats where the BJP won during the 2019 elections, which is Udhampur and Jammu.

APPEAL
I am Varalakshmi (43 years advised to undergo Complex Open Heart Surgery (Double Valve Replacement) at Madras Medical Mission Chennai. The total expenditure is Rs. 4,00,000/-. My family is very poor and cannot afford the huge cost. Please help me to lead a healthy and normal life. The donations sent through CHD.DINEET Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Central Bank, Neerambal SAHAY, A/C No.6015201005310, IFSC: No.6015201005310) favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SOCIETY is exempted under 80G IT.

All correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No.6/1, Gandhi Apath, P.O.No.15, N.No.29, Periyar Garden Lane, Chennai - 600006, Ph: 6644217460/243324, 73387802, E Mail: Dr. womeenwelfare@yahoo.com@gmail.com, Website: www.womeenwelfare.org/india.org.

Varalakshmi

IN BRIEF



U.P. Police Recruitment Board chief made scapegoat: activists

Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment Board Chairperson Renuka Mishra has been made a scapegoat to hide the morass of the recent constable examination paper leak episode, activists said on Tuesday. "The decision to remove the Chairperson of the Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment and Promotion Board was taken amid rising public pressure. The official in question has been made a scapegoat to save higher-ups in the State administration. This is just an eyewash to hide the systemic corruption and organised syndicate responsible for paper leaks in Uttar Pradesh," Amitabh Thakur, an anti-corruption activist, alleged.

INS urges govt. to scrap 5% Customs duty on newsprint

The Indian Newspaper Society has urged the government to scrap the 5% Customs duty on newsprint to allow publishers to manage their operational costs more effectively. In a statement, the INS said a combination of factors affecting the price and availability of newsprint have created a formidable burden for publishers in the country. "This measure, if withdrawn, would provide much-needed relief to the print media industry, allowing publishers to manage their operational costs more effectively and ensure the continued dissemination of credible news and information to the public," INS president Rakesh Sharma said.

6 disqualified Himachal MLAs move Supreme Court for relief

Six Congress MLAs who were disqualified after they cross-voted in the recent Rajya Sabha polls in Himachal Pradesh moved the Supreme Court on Tuesday against their disqualification. The former MLAs have filed a plea against the February 29 decision of the State Legislative Assembly Speaker, Kuldeep Singh Pathania. These Congress rebels, who had voted in favour of BJP nominee Harsh Mahajan in the Rajya Sabha polls on February 27, later abstained from voting on the Budget, defying a party whip. Senior Congress leader Abhishek Singhvi lost the Rajya Sabha elections owing to cross-voting by the rebels.

Tejashwi Yadav calls for issue-based debate with PM

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader and former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday hit back at the BJP's 'Modi Ka Pariwar' (Modi's family) campaign, which came about as a response to his father Lalu Prasad's recent remarks on Prime Minister Narendra Modi having "no family". "Eighty per cent people are suffering from poverty, 100 crore people are unemployed, 120 crore people are helpless due to inflation, all the families are unhappy, yet he (Mr. Modi) calls them his family," Mr. Yadav told mediapersons in Patna. "There should be issue-based debate... He cannot run away from his responsibilities," the leader added.

Indian troops out, Maldives inks defence pact with China

The agreement says Beijing will provide free military assistance to Maldives to foster ties between the two nations; Muizzu says no Indian troops to remain on island, 'in uniform or in civil clothes'

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

Days after a technical team from India arrived in the Maldives to replace troops that President Mohamed Muizzu wanted removed, the Maldivian Defence Ministry announced signing a military pact with China.

Maldives's Minister of Defence Mohamed Ghassan Maumoon and Major General Zhang Baoqun, Deputy Director at China's Office for International Military Cooperation, on Monday signed an agreement on "China's provision of military assistance gratis to the Republic of Maldives, fostering stronger bilateral ties", the Maldivian Defence Ministry said. The two sides also held bilateral talks on military cooperation.

The Ministry's post on social media platform X did not mention details of what the agreement entails. Further, China donated 12 green ambulances to the Maldives's Health Ministry on Monday. The development is in line with the two countries agreeing to "elevate" China-Maldives relations to a "comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership", during Mr. Muizzu's five-day state visit to China in January.



Mohamed Ghassan Maumoon and Zhang Baoqun at China's Office for International Military Cooperation. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Maldivian Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer posted on X, "Delighted to host the China EXIM Bank delegation, and the Chinese military delegation for lunch today. We had fruitful discussions on bolstering our economic and security partnerships between the two countries. Looking forward to continued collaboration."

It also coincides with New Delhi's apparent compromise with Male, agreeing to withdraw its troops stationed in the island nation, instead replacing them with a technical team to help operate India-gifted aircraft. The decision was made amid Mr. Muizzu's persistent calls for the removal of Indian troops, a campaign promise-turned-official pledge made by the leader.

bullies don't provide USD 4.5 billion in aid when the neighbours are in trouble", referring to Indian assistance to Sri Lanka during its crisis in 2022, have drawn wide attention in the Maldives.

Interpreting it as a "swipe at" Mr. Muizzu, several Maldivian media outlets reported the remarks, linking them to Mr. Muizzu's media comments soon after his return from China in January.

"Maldives may be small, but that doesn't give others the licence to bully the country," Mr. Muizzu had said. During his China visit, the Maldivian leader also urged Chinese travellers to reclaim their top spot in tourist arrivals to the island nation. India was the largest source market last year, but has since moved to the sixth spot, following the "boycott Maldives" campaign that went viral on Indian social media earlier this year.

According to the Maldivian Tourism Ministry's latest figures, China accounts for 12.8% of the total number of visitors - 4,31,002 as of March 3 - recorded in March 2023, while India accounts for 6.4%. Earlier this year, Beijing said, "The relations between China and the Maldives now stand at a new historical starting point."

Bitter back and forth
Meanwhile, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's recent comments at an event in New Delhi, where he said that "big

INDIA bloc leaders not able to digest success of govt.: PM

Satvasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday strongly criticised the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), asserting that its nepotistic leaders intensified their attacks on him due to their inability to counter his government's accomplishments.

Addressing a public meeting in Odisha's Jajpur district, he said, "Corrupt leaders of INDIA alliance do not like the developments undertaken in the country. These dynasts do not have any answer to our commitments, achievements, policies, and dedication. INDIA alliance has now stepped up its attack on Modi."

"We are implementing a

Every farmer, son, and daughter refers to themselves as part of Modi's family, the Prime Minister says

free-rider programme for the poorer section of society. This is the reason why we continue to get blessings of people. We have extended the scheme by another five years. We are also executing Har Ghar Jal Yojana to make provision for tap water supply to every rural household. I am also working on making three crore *lakhpatti didis* (women self-help group leaders)," he said.

"Now, corrupt INDIA alliance leaders are saying Modi does not have any family and they want to oust

Modi. INDIA alliance leaders say that it is an ideological fight against me. The ideology of INDIA alliance leaders is family first while Modi's ideology is nation first. These leaders only live for their families while Modi toils hard for every family of the country," Mr. Modi said.

"These leaders have used power to get rid of their own poverty. But during administration of Modi, 25 crore families have elevated themselves from poverty. This is why I call *mera bharat mera pariwar* (my country, my family). These statements are disturbing family-centric leaders. Since yesterday, every farmer, son and daughter have been resenting this, calling them part of Modi's family," he said

Google reinstates Indian apps 'in spirit of cooperation'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Google is reinstating dozens of apps that were delisted by the company on March 1 for resisting the firm's platform fees on in-app payments, the tech company said in a statement on Tuesday.

"In the spirit of cooperation, we are temporarily reinstating the apps of the developers with appeals pending in the Supreme Court," a Google spokesperson said, referring to apps by developers like Bharat Matrimony and Kuku FM.

"Google maintains its right to implement and enforce its business model, as established in various courts. We will invoice our full applicable services fees

Bengal officials have been warned to curb poll violence: CEC

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar said on Tuesday that the Election Commission has issued strict instructions to the West Bengal bureaucracy to contain violence and ensure a level-playing field during the Lok Sabha elections.

Mr. Kumar said adequate personnel of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) would be deployed in the State. The CAPF personnel would be jointly deployed by the nodal officer of the State police, the Chief Electoral Officer, and the Central Observer for the State. Information on deployment of forces would be provided to all parties, he added.

Speaking to the media, Mr. Kumar said the bureaucracy in the State had been fully sensitised to make sure that the elections were "free and fair". On previous failures to curtail violence during polls, Mr. Kumar said, "Incidents will not be taken into account when it will make them take action."

Law enforcement agencies have been directed to monitor inter-State boundaries and international borders to curb flow of in-



Rajiv Kumar

ductions, especially drugs, gold, and counterfeit Indian currency, he added.

"All enforcement agencies will coordinate closely and not operate in silos and will ensure not only violence-free elections but also prevent any incident," he said.

The CEC said there were 7.58 crore voters - 3.85 crore men and 3.73 crore women - in the State. The number of first-time voters stood at 15.25 lakh.

The electoral gender ratio in the State stood at an impressive 968 women voters for 1,000 men voters, with 90 Assembly seats having a gender ratio of over 1,000. The full bench of the Election Commission has been in Kolkata for two days and held meetings with political parties and officials of the State government.



The tech firm currently collects 11% to 30% per transaction in platform fees.

what they characterised as high fees that Google conditioned on their products being available on the company's Android application store. The tech firm collects 11%-30% per transaction in platform fees, which an emerging class of apps eager to charge for their services in India - such as in the dating, matrimony or OTT streaming space - are trying to avoid.

In the interim and are extending payment timelines for these companies. We look forward to a collaborative effort to find solutions that respect the needs of all parties."

The announcement remains a setback for the apps' developers, who had moved the court to avoid

CROSSWORD 14115 (set by Arden)
13 Crucial time lost, the medicine may be inside this (4)
14 Still it's missing in the dark night (8)
15 Attack the study on animal (8)
16 Still not seen, still I follow (4)
17 Ban it, reportedly some of it can explode (5)
18 Madras refused to entertain regular singer for the carnival (5,4)
19 Cut, ball in turn does spin (9)
20 It doesn't make sense to restrict travel (5)
21 Study - even Israel follows another country (7)
22 Most simple in a different garment (7)
Down
1 Well known, but not universal tree (6)
2 Some smaller version in lieu of fancy car (9)
3 Suffering, not something unknown for a skinflint (5)
4 Extremely careful with the work done, many cross at the minister (9)
5 Part of lunch, may be after one? (5)
6 Live with doubt - need guts to become a big corporation (4,5)
7 Open at the centre, volume goes up somewhat (5)
8 Old woman's happiness cut short in the bargain (6)
9 Free tips on how to tie them up and finish the job (5,4)
10 Gum used often inside? (9)
11 Function perhaps with a wind down (9)
12 Synchronised with a part inside pumps, say... (6)
13 ...like money growth? (6)
14 Terrible torture to be left out, when one is more faithful (5)
15 Honour to get a date for say, dinner outside (5)
16 Starts investigating nine different reserves involving these primates (5)

SUDOKU
4 3
6 5 3 4
7 2 8
7 6 8
1 4 3
1 5 8 1
6 7 9
2 5 1 7
1 8
DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★
Solution to previous puzzle
6 1 4 7 8 3 2 5 9
7 2 9 4 5 1 6 3 8
5 3 8 2 9 6 4 7 1
8 6 7 3 4 5 1 9 2
3 5 2 1 6 9 8 4 7
9 4 1 8 7 2 3 6 5
1 7 3 5 2 4 9 8 6
4 8 6 9 1 7 5 2 3
2 9 5 6 3 8 7 1 4

MAHAGALDEEP Sandal With Sandalwood Oil
FAITH
Gratitude to parents
The sacrifices that parents make for their children can never be wholly described. Aitareya Brahmana points out why such a description is difficult, said Velukkudi Krishnan in a discourse.
Aitareya Brahmana first talks of what the earth, fire and water do for us. The earth gives us food. Can we ever repay her for what she gives us? Fire is essential for cooking our food. Can we repay the fire for this? We need water to bathe, to quench our thirst, etc. Can we repay water for its many uses? The answer to all the above questions is a 'no'. Now, place the benefits that these three elements give us, on one plate of a balance, and on the other, place all the things our parents do for us. The plate that holds what our parents do for us will tip downwards, showing the magnitude of what they do for us.
The Vedas say that a man's lifespan is 100 years. Even if we take 100 births, and live for 100 years in each birth, we cannot repay our parents for their affection. The least we can do is to look after them when they are alive, and then do the prescribed rituals for them after they have departed from this world. In fact, rituals such as tarpana, shraadh and mahatya paksha are observed keeping in mind all our ancestors. This is the only way we can show our gratitude to our ancestors.

IN BRIEF



BYD India unveils luxury EV sedan SEAL at ₹41 lakh

Chinese auto major BYD India, a subsidiary of New Energy Vehicles (NEV), has entered the luxury, electric-sedan segment by introducing BYD SEAL with prices starting at ₹41 lakh. BYD said bookings were open for the vehicle which would be available in three variants. With a range of up to 650km per charge, BYD SEAL can accelerate to 100 km/h in 3.8 seconds. "We are confident BYD SEAL will play a significant role in accelerating the new energy vehicle revolution in India," said Sanjay Gopalakrishnan, Senior VP, Passenger Vehicle Business, BYD India.

Venture Center, BFI sign pact on biomedical innovation

Venture Center has tied up with Blockchain For Impact (BFI) under the BFI-Biome Virtual Network Program to expand initiatives aimed at nurturing innovation and driving advancements in healthcare. Venture Center is the first incubator across India to partner BFI for the initiative, the Pune-based firm said. Under this programme, BFI will allocate more than \$2 lakh over three years and leverage Venture Center's expertise for healthcare start-up programmes.

Ex-LIC chief Kumar joins Bol as Non-Executive Chairman

Bank of India (BoI) named M. R. Kumar as the Non-Executive Chairman. He will be responsible for overseeing the overall growth trajectory of the public sector lender. He was the Chairman of LIC India from 2019 to March 2022. The bank named Rajiv Mishra as Executive Director. He will handle stressed-asset resolution and recovery, including policy matters.



Lubrizol names Bindra as MD of IMEA region

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Specialty chemicals major Lubrizol has named Bindra as MD for India, Middle East & Africa (IMEA) Region.

She will be responsible for leading the company's IMEA team to deliver regional growth for Lubrizol and its customers based on a local-for-local approach.

Singapore gives nod for Vistara-AI merger

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

The Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (CCCS) has granted conditional approval for Vistara's merger with Air India along with Singapore International Airline's 25.1% stake in the latter.

The approval was granted following commitments from all three airlines that the merged entity would "maintain" capacity, or passenger seats, at pre-COVID-19 level (calendar year 2019) for flights between Singapore and Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Thiruvananthapuram.

This followed competition concerns identified by CCCS as the three entities hold majority of the mar-

Settled 1-cr. claims in 18 years: Star Health

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Star Health and Allied Insurance Co. Ltd. (Star Health Insurance), claimed to be the first standalone health insurer to settle more than 1 crore claims since its inception in 2006. Star Health Insurance disbursed more than ₹44,000 crore in claim payments, covering cashless and reimbursement claims across India. Most claims were from Maharashtra, followed by Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Delhi, the insurer said in a statement.

About 14% claims were paid to senior citizens, 61% to adults and 25% for children. Fever and infectious



diseases were the prominent reasons for claims, amounting to 20% of the total. General medicine, gastroenterology, and orthopaedics also accounted for sizeable claims. As of January 2024, Star Health Insurance held 33% market share in the retail health insurance business in India, the company said.

MRF cuts price of 'Steel Muscle' truck tyres by ₹350

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

MRF Ltd. reduced the price of its mainline truck tyres by ₹350 apiece beginning March 4.

MRF said this was to meet market requirements of its most popular truck tyre - Steel Muscle, which is currently sold at ₹25,250 apiece. After the price reduction, it is expected to sell at ₹24,900 apiece, the leading tyre manufacturer said in a statement.

MRF said Steel Muscle tyres are ideal for heavy duty use. They have even tread wear, better abrasion, lower heat build-up and cut resistance.



Dubai's Al Khaleej Sugar aims to lift output at its sugar refinery this year, with competition from India curtailed by bad weather in the South Asian country, its MD said on Tuesday.

Jamal Al Ghurair said on the sidelines of the annual Dubai sugar conference that its refinery at Jebel Ali in Dubai was operating at 40% capacity last year with output of about 6,00,000 metric tons, but was aiming if possible to produce up to 1.5 million tons this year. The refinery's normal capacity is 1.5 million tons although it can produce more refined sugar if demand is strong. In 2017 it produced a record 1.87 million tons.

Mr. Al Ghurair said India had stopped exporting because of bad weather and this had created more demand, at least temporarily.

The International Sugar Organization last month forecast that Indian sugar output would fall to 31.7 million tons in 2023/24.

Feb. services sector growth slows

Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) signals fractional job creation that was weakest in 21 months. Services PMI contradicts the signals put out by the HSBC India Flash PMI for last month, which is based on early responses from surveyed firms

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

For India's services sector, growth in new orders and output slowed in February, denting business confidence levels and resulting in only a fractional uptick in employment that was the slowest in 21 months, as per the HSBC India Services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI).

The seasonally-adjusted PMI print for services eased to 60.6 in February from 61.8 in January. A reading of over 50 on the index indicates growth in activity levels. Surveyed firms reported the second-

Losing steam

February's overall private sector output in India slips to 60.6 from January's six-month high of 61.2



- The seasonally-adjusted PMI print for the services sector eased to 60.6 in February, from 61.8 in January
- Feb. Flash PMI had indicated services output rose at a seven-month high pace
- The PMI ascertains business confidence levels on the basis of firms' outlook for the year ahead

weakest input cost pressures since August 2020 and raised prices at the mildest pace in two years.

The services PMI contradicts the signals put out by the HSBC India Flash PMI for last month, which

is based on early responses from surveyed firms. For services, the Flash PMI had indicated that output rose at a seven-month high pace and fresh contracts surged at the fastest rate in a decade in February.

"India's services PMI suggests... the pace of expansion in the services sector eased in February from January," HSBC economist Ines Lam wrote. "Due to a slowdown in growth in new orders and output, services companies' outlook for future business activity, while remaining strongly positive, weakened slightly," she added.

The index ascertains business confidence levels on the basis of firms' outlook from surveyed firms. For services, the Flash PMI had indicated that output rose at a seven-month high pace and fresh contracts surged at the fastest rate in a decade in February.

On the bright side, new business from abroad rose for the thirteenth month in

a row, and at a pace that was among the best in nine and a half years.

Taken together with the manufacturing sector's performance last month, with its PMI rising to 56.9, from 56.5 in January, overall private sector output in India decelerated in February. The HSBC India Composite PMI Output Index slipped from a six-month high of 61.2 in January to 60.6, as per a note on last month's index.

"Rates of expansion were broadly similar at manufacturers and services firms, though the former registered an acceleration and the latter a slowdown," HSBC explained.

RBI bars JMFPPL from loans on IPO shares

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India has directed regulated entity JM Financial Products Ltd. (JMFPPL) to cease and desist, with immediate effect, from doing any form of financing against shares and debentures, including sanction and disbursement of loans against Initial Public Offering (IPO) of shares or against subscription to debentures as the entity has been found violating regulatory guidelines.

"It was observed that the company repeatedly



helped a group of its customers to bid for various IPO and NCD offerings by using loaned funds. The credit underwriting was found to be perfunctory, and financing was done against meagre margins," the RBI said.

Bloomberg to add Indian bonds to EM indexes in Jan.

Reuters
MUMBAI

Bloomberg Index Services said on Tuesday it would include in its Emerging Market Local Currency Index from Jan. 31 next year 34 Indian government bonds eligible for investment via the country's fully accessible route (FAR).

"The inclusion of these bonds will be phased in over a 10-month period starting on the rebalance date of January 31, 2025," it said in a statement. "The weight of India FAR bonds will be increased in increments of 10% of their full market value every month over the 10-month period ending in October 2025."

Discussions from 2013

The Indian government began discussing inclusion of its securities in global indexes as far back as 2013, but the move was held back by its curbs on foreign investments in domestic debt. In April 2020, the Reserve Bank of India introduced a clutch of securities free of foreign investment curbs under a "fully accessible route" (FAR), that would be eligible for in-

clusion in global indexes. JPMorgan was the first to announce India's inclusion in its widely tracked emerging market debt index in September, setting the stage for billions of dollars of inflows into India.

Tuesday's inclusion by Bloomberg Index Services Ltd. was based on feedback invited in January on its plan to include eligible Indian bonds in the EM local currency indexes.

By January 31, 34 Indian FAR bonds with a market value of \$448 billion were eligible for EM Local Currency Government Index.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	74,877	-0.26
US Dollar	82.90	-
Gold	65,000	1.25
Brent oil	83.03	-0.20

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3310.20	-4.95
Adani Ports	1338.50	-4.30
Agro Corp	6062.10	27.80
Asian Paints	2620.40	-11.35
Aiis Bank	1200.80	-5.95
Bajaj Auto	8251.75	144.45
Bajaj Finance	1555.50	-68.80
Bajaj Finance	6234.25	-278.20
Bharti Airtel	1168.60	35.40
BKSL	645.10	-4.65
Britannia Ind	4425.65	-13.25
Cipla	1473.45	1.95
Coal India	462.65	5.25
Dixis Lab	3484.45	2.15
Dr Reddy's Lab	6030.30	-31.80
Eicher Motors	3791.60	40.45
Grain Ind	2232.60	-21.60
HCL Tech	1619.35	-18.60
HFCL Bank	1440.65	8.15
HFCL Life	607.70	-2.60
Hony Intl Corp	4990.00	-21.70
Hindalco	522.10	-2.85
Hind Unilever	2399.85	-22.15
ICICI Bank	1088.65	-4.20
IndusInd Bank	1342.45	11.15
Infosys	1006.50	-30.70
ITC	405.15	-2.95
JSW Steel	819.30	-5.00
Kotak Bank	1715.70	-11.50
L&T	3822.60	31.85
LTIM-Indene Ltd	511.55	-65.30
M&M	1899.25	18.20
Maruti Suzuki	11670.60	76.45
Neelchem Ind	2338.65	55.45
NTPC	358.25	4.40
ONGC	283.75	4.55
PowerGrid Corp	299.80	0.25
Reliance Ind	3000.60	-14.40
SBI Life	1491.25	-26.70
State Bank	783.85	11.90
Sun Pharma	1574.20	22.10
TataConsumerPro-		
duct	1200.60	-2.65
Tata Motors	1022.60	34.70
Tata Steel	151.85	-1.25
TCS	4022.10	-68.60
Tech Mahindra	1272.50	-7.55
Titan	3750.75	18.35
UltraTech Cement	9838.35	-140.05
UPL	474.25	0.00
Wipro	513.30	-7.20

EXCHANGE RATES

Includes cross rates in rupees except yen at 94 p.m. on March 05

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	82.70	83.02
Euro	89.75	90.11
British Pound	104.49	105.30
Japanese Yen (100)	54.98	55.19
Chinese Yuan	11.49	11.53
Swiss Franc	93.34	93.71
Singapore Dollar	69.89	61.78
Canadian Dollar	69.89	61.12
Malaysian Ringgit	17.46	17.55
Australian Dollar	53.69	53.90

Source: Reuters

The longest war in human history was not waged between countries.

History tells us that animals used to share a home with us. We hunted them for a living. So did they when they were attacked or hungry. But even back then, we were not a threat to their very existence. We consumed what was essential from our shared home. Eventually, we upgraded ourselves to better homes, better survival plans, better food habits, better everything. With their sole enemy out of their hair, life should have gotten easier for the animals. Not really. Their enemy left the jungle and built their cities only to expand them right back into the jungle. We cut trees, killed ecosystems and took

away sand from the rivers. Their watering holes have all dried up, thanks to the global warming we escalated into existence. The need being theirs, they began walking a few extra miles to find water but that is where the catch lay. We decorated the path to the next nearest waterbody with death traps. Railway tracks, electrified fences, highways, power lines and the works. Inventions that simplified human lives and complicated animal lives. Now, every time an animal ventures out in search of food or water, they stand the risk of getting killed. Sounds like a battlefield of

sorts, eh? It is. One who no one wants to take over anyone's territory and yet end up killing each other in a bid to survive. Progress must serve everyone. The world would be a different place if animals were capable of making technological progress. Sadly for them and fortunately for us, they cannot. As the 'superior being' on the planet, can we not use our intellect to find better ways to co-exist rather than sadder ways to ensure their doom?

This World Wildlife Day, let us take concrete measures to stop making this planet a battlefield for animals.



THE HINDU
CARE COMMUNITY
CONVERSATION



Scan to read the story on human-animal conflicts in India and various mitigation efforts taken or visit <https://www.newsthehindu.com/news/2024/03/05/>

THE HINDU

March 3, 2024
World Wildlife Day

LION ALERT

Captain Dhoni lands in Chennai ahead of the IPL season



Chennai Super Kings skipper M.S. Dhoni landed in Chennai on Tuesday ahead of the IPL season. CSK posted a picture of Dhoni, who led the team to its fifth title last season, exiting a vehicle on social media, captioning it "#THATA Dharisanam!" Speculation is rife that this season will be Dhoni's final one as a player.

TOUCH OF HUMOUR

Not sure I've insurance: Perry jokes after breaking car window



Elyse Perry played an instrumental role during RCB's 23-run triumph over UP Warriorz at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium. In the 19th over, she smashed the window of the display car in Deepthi Sharma's over. After the game, she talked about her window breaking six and said, "Not sure I have insurance here to cover that."

TAKEAWAY

Domestic tourneys give chance to rediscover basics: Tendulkar



The legendary Sachin Tendulkar on Tuesday said, "When India players turn up for their domestic teams, it raises the quality of play for youngsters and sometimes new talent is identified. It also gives the national players a chance to sometimes rediscover the basics." Tendulkar posted on X.

I AM BACK!

Halep wins doping case on appeal, cleared to resume tennis at once



Two-time Grand Slam champion Simona Halep was cleared for an immediate return to tennis on Tuesday after the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) said its judges partially upheld Halep's appeal and reduced her four-year ban to just nine months. It was applied retroactively and expired last July.

Ashwin and Bairstow all set for a century of Tests

The duo will share the rare milestone of playing the 100th match in the longest format of the game when India takes on England in the final game of the engrossing series

ENGLAND IN INDIA

Rakesh Rao
DHARAMSHALA

For R. Ashwin and Jonny Bairstow, this week at the foothills of the imposing Dhauadhar mountain ranges would coincide with their scaling "Peak 100" in Tests.

When the fifth and final India-England Test opens here on Thursday, the duo would share the milestone of playing the 100th Test.

No doubt, Ashwin's journey has been more glorious and comes days after he took the 500th Test wicket in a winning cause. In contrast, Bairstow still has not been in the best of forms with the bat in the series.

As Ashwin said, "A lot of things need to go your way when you have to get a breakthrough and also continue playing for so many years."

Looking back, Ashwin chose to mention the 2012



Reflecting: Ashwin mentioned how many things have to go one's way in a long career while Bairstow said it will be an emotional week. R.J. MOORTHY & FILE PHOTO, K.R. DEEPAK

England's tour to India during which he learnt lessons that were to stand him in good stead.

"One of the turning points of my life was the England series when (Alastair) Cook came here and made all those runs along with (Kevin) Pietersen, who had a great game in Mumbai. It has been spoken about a lot. Leading in

to the next series against Australia at home, there was a lot of noise about me being left out of the team.

"And that is a wonderful lesson I have still kept with me all these years. Whatever happens, we can hold a lot of complaints against somebody external or blame it on another individual. But for me, if you look internally, you can im-

prove at least by another five per cent.

"Until and unless there is something wrong with you, people aren't going to throw punches at you or point fingers at you..."

As Ashwin graciously acknowledged the role played by S. Badrinath, Mithun Manhas, and Rajat Bhatia during the days before he made it big. "These are

some of the greatest batters of spin who I would have not wanted to encounter in international cricket. They were my finishing school before I went on to play international cricket."

On his part, Bairstow declared, "Playing 100 Tests means a hell of a lot. It will be an emotional week for me." Bairstow, like Ashwin,

Series won, but Indians surprisingly caught in spin-web

Rakesh Rao
DHARAMSHALA

A dead rubber in a Test series is no longer an opportunity to experiment with the bench-strength. Thanks to the World Test Championship, no team risks the points earned. Teams in contention for a spot in the final do not get influenced by the outcome of an ongoing series.

When the fifth and final Test between India and England begins here at the picturesque HPCA Stadium on Thursday, there will be no let up in the intensity in both camps. The current 3-1 scoreline could have looked a lot different, but credit to India for seizing the big moments after squandering them in the first Test.

From India's point of view, it is a good time to reflect on what this series has thrown up instead of being

satisfied with the much-anticipated series-win. This series has exposed the vulnerability of the Indian batsmen against debutant spinners in home conditions. In contrast, some English batters gave a much better account of facing quality spinners.

Barring the exception of the first Test, where England commensably fought back from a 190-run first-innings deficit to turn things around, Indian batters battled tough phases and the bowlers – not just the spinners – struck when needed.

But the larger question remains. How could England, despite losing the services of its most-experienced spinner, left-armers Jack Leach (36 Tests) after the first Test, keep the Indian batters on tenterhooks for the next three Tests with their grossly inexperienced spin attack?

After Lanning and Jemimah pilot DC to big total, Jonassen takes over

WPL SEASON 2

Lavanva L
NEW DELHI

Jemimah Rodrigues is an entertainer. She knows how to turn up on a big stage. Delhi Capitals' 29-run win over Mumbai Indians in its first ever home fixture in the Women's Premier League (WPL) saw the batter at her explosive best as she made a match-winning 33-ball 69 at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Tuesday.

A 48-run opening stand set the tone for Capitals, put in to bat on a slow surface. After promising starts, Shafali and Alice Caspary fell in quick succession. Meg Lanning slowly sunk her teeth into the MI bowling stock pile. Even a 132kmp ripper from Shabnim Islam couldn't stop the Australian from cruising to a half-century. When she fell soon after, courtesy a brilliant catch by Amelia Kerr at deep midwicket, the onus fell on Jemimah.

A rare off-day with the ball didn't help MI's case, with Jemimah finding enough time to walk across the stumps most times and send the ball to the ropes. The over in which she hit Nat Sciver-Brunnt for a four and two sixes was particularly delightful. It saw



Audacious: Jemimah did as she pleased, cashing in on the MI bowlers' off-day. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

her fist-pumping her way up and down the field as her team's score inflated.

With 192 on the board, Marizanne Kapp and Shikha Pandey cleaned up Yastika Bhatia and Sciver-Brunnt. Jess Jonassen did not allow Hayley Matthews to capitalise on a botched catch by Taniya Bhatia behind the stumps as Caspary snapped up another mistimed hit at midwicket.

Pooja Vastrakar and Amanjot Kaur's 48-run partnership gave MI some hope before the latter fell to Jonassen. Capitals fielded four pacers but it was the wily left-arm spinner who sealed the game in the host's favour.

Pooja and S. Sajana's big hitting only reduced the margin of defeat for the defending champion.

SCOREBOARD

DELHI CAPITALS
Meg Lanning c Kerr b Pooja 53 (38), 64, 2x6; Shafali Verma c Yastika b Ismail 28 (12b, 3x4, 2x6), 3x4; Jemimah Rodrigues (not out) 69 (33b, 8x4, 3x6); Marizanne Kapp b Salka 11 (12b, 1x4); Jess Jonassen (not out) 4 (5b); Extras (lb-1, w-7); 8; Total (for four wkts, in 20 overs): 192.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-48 (Shafali, 4.3 overs), 2-79 (Caspary, 9.3), 3-114 (Lanning, 12.6), 4-151 (Kapp, 17.2).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING
Ismail 4-0-46-1, Salka 4-0-29-1, Sciver-Brunnt 4-0-38-0, Pooja 4-0-20-1, Kerr 2-0-35-0, Matthews 2-0-23-1.

DELHI CAPITALS

Jemimah b Titus 17 (20b, 1x4, 1x6); Pooja Vastrakar c Taniya b Radha 17 (22b, 1x6); Amanjot Kaur b Jonassen 42 (27b, 7x4), S. Sajana (not out) 24 (14b, 3x4, 1x6); Humaira Kazi b Jonassen 6 (8b); Extras (w-11); 11; Total (for eight wkts, in 20 overs): 163.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-7 (Yastika, 0.4), 2-12 (Sciver-Brunnt, 1.1), 3-29 (Hamarnpreet, 2.6), 4-54 (Matthews, 5.5), 5-58 (Kerr, 8.5), 6-116 (Amanjot, 15.1), 7-137 (Pooja, 17.4), 8-163 (Humaira, 19.6).

CAPITALS BOWLING
Kapp 4-0-37-2, Shikha 3-0-27-1, Jonassen 4-0-21-3, Titus 3-0-23-1, Radha 3-0-23-1, Arundhati 3-0-32-0.

Dubey's dismissal gives Vidarbhya hopes of a late fightback

RANJI TROPHY

Abhishek Saini
NAGPUR

The promise of the second-wicket partnership between Yash Dubey (94, 212b, 10x4) and Harsh Gawali (67, 80b, 11x4) withered away in the wake of a meek middle-order display, leaving Vidarbhya within reach of a victory against Madhya Pradesh in the first Ranji Trophy semifinal at the VCA Stadium here on Tuesday.

MP was still in contention under Dubey's watch but his fall in the penultimate over of the fourth day left the side at 228 for six, still 93 runs away from a victory.

The 106-run alliance between Dubey and Gawali was a course correction after Himanshu Mantri holed out at mid-on off Aditya Sarvate in the sixth over. While Dubey was content with the slap through point and the flick with which he flagged off the chase in Umesh Yadav's first over, Gawali set the side's counter in motion with three boundaries in as many deliveries of Yash Thakur. Gawali drew from his share of luck too, when his poke outside off against Thakur came at a trickle but were steering the side closer.

However, an inside edge popped up for silly point



The rock: Dubey's knock arrested a batting collapse for MP in pursuit of a tricky target. B. JOTHIRAMALINGAM

an edge to the wicketkeeper. Akshay Wakhare was aided by purchase as he accounted for Sagar Solanki and captain Shubham Sharma before tea. Just when Venkatesh Iyer brought hope with an assault, Wakhare's delivery jumped from a length, took the shoulder of Venkatesh's bat, and went to first slip.

Dubey, who brought up a fifty in 84 balls, was desperate for support when Saransh Jain arrived. Their 32 runs for the sixth wicket came at a trickle but were steering the side closer.

Dubey's pad and turned the plot again. Earlier in the day, Yash Rathod's burst helped Vidarbhya set a fighting target. He took two deliveries in the morning to breach the fence and register his maiden First-Class century off 167 deliveries.

Rathod then latched on when Kulwant Khejroliya offered width, picking two more boundaries through point. Rathod remained a thorn for MP even as his side slipped from 377 for six to 385 for nine.

Rathod pummeled Anubhav for back-to-back sixes over midwicket to

swell his team's total past 400 runs. It was a slower one from Khejroliya that fossed him on 441, taking his inside edge and ricocheting onto the stumps.

The scores:
Vidarbha – 1st innings: 170.
MP – 1st innings: 252.

Vidarbhya – 2nd innings:
Ahanu Talde (lbw b Avesh 2, Dhruv Shorey c Mantri b Kartikeya 40, Akshay Wakhare c Gawali b Anubhav 1, Aman Mokhadde (lbw b Kartikeya 59, Karun Kar b Khejroliya 38, Yash Rathod b Khejroliya 141, Akshay Wadkar c (sub) Kushwah b Anubhav 77, Aditya Sarvate c Venkatesh b Anubhav 21, Yash Thakur c Gawali b Anubhav 2, Umesh Yadav b Anubhav 0, Akshay Wakhare (not out) 1; Extras (b-5, lb-14, nb-1); 20; Total (in 101.3 overs): 402.

Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-17, 3-90, 4-156, 5-313, 6-377, 7-385, 8-385.
MP bowling: Avesh 19-3-73-1, Venkatesh 3-0-20-0, Anubhav 18-1-92-5, Khejroliya 15-3-1-64-2, Kartikeya 30-4-76-2, Saransh 7-1-28-0, Sagar 9-1-30-0.
MP – 2nd innings: Yash Dubey c Mokhadde b Sarvate 94, Himanshu Mantri c Thakare b Sarvate 8, Harsh Gawali c Wadkar b Thakur 67, Sagar Solanki (lbw b Wakhare 12, Shubham Sharma c (sub) Kabe b Wakhare 6, Venkatesh Yver c Karun b Wakhare 19, Saransh Jain (batting) 16, Kumar Kartikeya (batting) 0; Extras (b-4, lb-2); 6; Total (for six wkts, in 71.0 overs): 228.
Vidarbhya's: 2-22, 2-28, 3-157, 4-165, 5-195, 6-227.
Vidarbhya bowling: Umesh 11-1-47-0, Sarvate 23-5-51-2, Thakur 11-1-38-0, Thakur 9-0-48-1, Wakhare 17-3-38-3.

IN BRIEF



Shahbaz Nadeem retires from international cricket

Jharkhand left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem, 34, who featured in two Tests for India, has announced his retirement from international cricket to try his luck in franchise-based leagues as he does not foresee opportunities in the national team. "I realise I can't feature for Team India anymore, as there is a pool of talented youngsters waiting for their chance," Nadeem said. "I would have continued playing if there were opportunities for me in Team India. I don't foresee any chances in near future."

Delhi Toofans rally to beat Kochi Blue Spikers

Delhi Toofans came from two sets down to register a 9-15, 15-17, 15-10, 15-8, 15-8 win over Kochi Blue Spikers in the third RFL Volleyball League in Chennai on Monday. While Delhi secured its fifth win in seven outings Kochi remains winless after seven games.

People will criticise if I miss, I'll focus on scoring: Haaland

Erling Haaland admits he will "keep on missing chances" but insists he will shut out the critics as he targets perfection. "I will still score goals so I'll probably miss a big chance in the future and people are going to criticise me... I should focus on scoring more goals and helping the team."

Prajwal Dev crashes out in the first round in Kigali

S.D. Prajwal Dev lost to Thomas Fancutt in the first round of the Challenger in Kigali, Rwanda. The results: \$41,000 Challenger, Kigali, Rwanda: First round: Thomas Fancutt bt S.D. Prajwal Dev 6-2, 7-5. \$15,000 ITF men, Kish Island, Iran: First round: Ishaque Eqbal bt Savelly Ivanov 7-5, 6-3. \$15,000 ITF men, Sharm El Sheikh: Doubles: Pre-quarterfinals: Szymon Kielan & Volodymyr Uzhylyovskiy bt George Gregoriou & Arjan Lakshmanan 7-5, 6-3.

Chahar bows out in World Olympic boxing qualifier

Lakshya Chahar (80kg) was the fourth Indian boxer to bow out of the first World Olympic boxing qualifier at Busto Arsizio (Italy) late on Monday. Up against Iranian Meysam Gheslaghi, Chahar, who lost the first round 3-2 and fought back to win the second 3-2, was knocked out with 20 seconds to go in the final period.

LIVE TELECAST

Ranji Trophy: (semifinal), Jio Cinema App, 9.30 a.m.
Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka: 2nd T20I, FanCode, 5.30 p.m.
PVL: Sony Sports Ten 1 (SD & HD) & LIV, 6.30 p.m.
WPL: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.
ISL: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.
Champions League: Sony Sports Ten 2, 7.50 (SD & HD), LIV, 1.30 a.m. (Thursday)

Ruthless Arsenal shoots six past Sheffield United

Arteta's side is third with 61 points after 27 games, just one behind Manchester City, but with a much better goal difference than its title rival

EURO LEAGUES

Reuters
SHEFFIELD

Arsenal matched its biggest Premier League away win with the 6-0 pummeling of Sheffield United on Monday after scoring five times in the first half when it tore the home side apart. The win helped Arsenal stay within two points of leader Liverpool.

Mikel Arteta's team is third with 61 points after 27 games, a point behind Manchester City but with a much better goal difference than its title rival. The Blades remain rooted to the bottom on 13 points, 11 adrift of the safety zone.

Arsenal was ruthless as it sliced through Sheffield's defence with ease from the start. Martin Odegaard opened the floodgates with his fifth-minute goal, firing home from the middle of the box after a cute cut-back from Declan Rice.

There was more misery to come for United goal-



Sublime form: Arsenal matched its record Premier League away victory set in the 6-0 rout of West Ham on February 11. AP

keeper Ivo Grbic on a night that saw six different names on the scoresheet. Jayden Bogle put through his own goal in the 13th before Gabriel Martinelli struck two minutes later, sending scores of weary United fans to the Bramall Lane exits, while Kai Havertz (25th minute),

Rice (39), and Ben White (58) also netted. The early fireworks from the Gunners had the 9-0 Premier League scoring record looking in jeopardy, but Blades fans were spared partly due to Arteta's substitutions including forward Bukayo Saka heading to the bench

after 45 minutes.

The results:
Premier League: Sheffield United 0 lost to Arsenal 6 (Odegaard 5, Bogle 12-og, Martinelli 15, Havertz 25, Rice 39, White 58). **LaLiga:** Osasuna 1 (Budimir 76) bt Alaves 0. **Serie A:** Inter Milan 2 (Asllani 30, Alexis Sanchez 38-pen) bt Genoa 1 (Vasquez 54).

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Abdul Harsheek is Blitz FC's hero
M.A. Abdul Harsheek scored an injury-time winner as Blitz FC edged out RWF FC 1-0 in the BDFFA A-division league here on Tuesday.
The results:
Blitz FC 1 (M.A. Abdul Harsheek 90+1) bt RWF FC 0; Bangalore Eagles FC 1 (Arvind Kumar 53) bt Parikrma FC 0; BTH FC 1 (Rohan Jonathan 49) bt Sree Gajanana FC 0.



Talented bunch: Alchemey International FA emerged the winner of the U-15 boys' title in the Karnataka Youth Premier League. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Bhanu Prakash stars for Bangalore Star CA
K.M. Bhanu Prakash's all-round effort (46 & 4/31) helped Bangalore Star CA pip Jaipur Cricketers for four runs and enter the last four of the KSCA (Group D) fifth division league.
The scores (quarterfinals): Bangalore Star CA 207 in 46.4 overs (Chandan Lal 29, Rubesh Babu 27, K.L. Chethan 55, K.M. Bhanu Prakash 46, Rohit Antaal 1/24) bt Jaipur Cricketers 203 in 37.2 overs (Chinrajji Nagaraja Reddy 27, K. Somashekhar 32, Jibin John 67, K.M. Bhanu Prakash 4/31).
Ranji 47 in 16.5 overs (Arjun N. Gowda 4/26, V. Bharath Kumar 4/15) lost to Citizen Cultural CA 51/4 in 13.5 overs (Nikhil Sharma 3/21).

Alchemey Internationals FA triumphs
Alchemey Internationals FA defeated Kickstart FC 3-1 to emerge the U-15 boys' champion in the Karnataka Youth Premier League final held over the weekend.
The result (final): Alchemey Internationals FA 1 (Dhruv

Samer Kaloo 49) bt Kickstart FC 1 (Eric Chetan Ebenzezer 62) [3-1 on penalties].
Tisha on song for Bangalore Vanguards
Tisha scored 22 points as Bangalore Vanguards BC defeated DYES Mysore 55-38 in the State SMN Memorial Women's Basketball League Championship for Mathru Cup on Tuesday.
The results: SWR 79 (Sathya 31, Shobana 14) bt Southern Blues BC 22 (Nishith 12, Vyoma 10); K.S. Hegde BC Nitte 49 (Divya 16, Harshitha 12) bt Vivek's SC 20; Vimanapura SC 24 bt Veelahanka New Town BC 20; Mounts Club 43 (Harshitha 14, Nilaya 12) bt HBR BC 31 (Aditi 10, Rovys BC Dharwad 48 (Deepika 17, Shirshithi 12) bt

Devanga Union 42 (Sharlene 13, Shreya 13); Bangalore Vanguards BC 55 (Tisha 22, Priyanka 11) bt DYES Mysore 38 (Preethi 10, Aishwarya 10); Beagles BC 67 (Harshitha 20) bt MCHS BC 35 (Saavni 12).
Karnataka enters the final
Karnataka entered the final of the Col. C.K. Nayudr (t-23) Trophy with a 278-run victory over Vidarbha in Nagpur on Monday.
For an overnight 63 for three in its second innings, Karnataka folded for 141, setting the home side a 535-run target.
Then, Paras Gurbax Arya claimed a six-wicket haul (6/108) – to go with his four-wicket effort in the first innings – to help Karnataka dismiss Vidarbha for 256 and emerge victorious.

In the final that begins on March 10, Karnataka will take on Uttar Pradesh or Mumbai.
The scores: Karnataka 466 & 141 in 44.1 overs (Prakar Chaturvedi 26, Pravin Rokde 5/32) bt Vidarbha 73 & 256 in 49 overs (Abhishek 5, Agrawal 78, Satyam Bhojar 34, Md. Faiz 33, Jaggot 33, Paras Gurbax Arya 6/108).

Pragg to face Firouzja; Gukesh meets Vidit

CANDIDATES CHESS

Sports Bureau

R. Pragganandhaa will take on Alireza Firouzja of France, while D. Gukesh will meet Vidit Gujrathi in an all-India encounter in the opening round of the Candidates chess tournament, to be held in Toronto from April 4.

Humpy vs Vaishali

In the Women's Candidates tournament too, the two Indians – Koneru Humpy and R. Vaishali – will come face to face in the opening round.

Both the open and wo-

men's events feature eight players each. They will play one another twice.

The winners will earn the right to challenge the reigning World champions – Ding Liren (open) and Ju Wenjun (women), both of China.

The field:
Open: Fabiano Caruana (USA), Hikaru Nakamura (USA), Nijat Abasov (Aze), Ian Nepomniachtchi (Rus), Alireza Firouzja (Fra), R. Pragganandhaa, D. Gukesh, and Vidit Gujrathi.

Women: Koneru Humpy, Aleksandra Goryachkina (Rus), Kateryna Lagno (Ukr), Anna Muzychuk (Ukr), Nurgul Salimova (Bul), Lei Tingjie (Chn), Tan Zhongyi (Chn), and R. Vaishali.

Sports Ministry revokes PCI's suspension

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Sports Ministry on Tuesday revoked the suspension on the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) after the body initiated the process for its long-pending elections in which multiple Paralympic medalist Devendra Jhajharia is set to be elected president.

On February 2, the ministry terminated PCI's recognition for "intentional delay to elect a new Executive Committee" as per the National Sports Code. The PCI had postponed the elections, which should have been held before January 31, to March 28 because of the impending Para Shooting World Cup from March 6 to 15.

Mizoram outlasts Kerala in sudden-death

SANTOSH TROPHY

Amitabha Das Sharma
YUPIA (ARUNACHAL)

Mizoram outlasted Kerala 7-6 in sudden-death in the final quarterfinal action of the 77th National Football Championship for the Santosh Trophy at the Golden Jubilee Stadium here on Tuesday.

fore Sujith's blunder. The referee saw box to box action, with both Kerala and Mizoram creating a lot of openings. But the goal-keeping of their attackers and some good goalkeeping at both ends kept the sides locked goalless.

Earlier, former champion Manipur gave a nice display of attacking football to score a resounding 7-1 win over Assam in the third quarterfinal match.

Both teams were locked goalless in regulation and extra-time. The deadlock continued even in the tie-breaker, where the teams were tied 5-5 before Sujith V.R. lost his nerve and sent his attempt wide to give Mizoram the ticket to the last-four stage.

For Mizoram M.C. Malsawmzuala, Malsawmfela, F.C. Lalhmunmawia, E. Lalreinthuanga, L. Tochhawng, Lalreimruata and Lalbichanga were successful in their attempts while for Kerala Sanju G. Arjun V, Mohamed Salim, Riswanal Edakkavil, Sarath Prasanth K, Jithin Gopalakrishnan scored be-

The results:
Quarterfinals: Manipur 7 (Phijan Sanathoi Meetei 4, Wangthemyam Sandananda Singh 11, 16, 70, Ngarbam Pacha Singh 19-pen, Maibam Dery Singh 82, Imanson Meitei 88) bt Assam 1 (Joydeep Gogoi 64).
Mizoram 0 drew with Kerala 0 (Mizoram won 7-6 via sudden-death).

Ashwin, a modern master with a positive mindset



BETWEEN WICKETS
Suresh Menon

There is something magical about the figure '100' in cricket. In Dharamshala this week, R. Ashwin and Jonny Bairstow play their one-hundredth Test match, while in Christchurch it is the turn of Kane Williamson and Tim Southee to do the same by the Edgbaston crowd, later played with an injury and with Ge-

off Boycott as his runner, remaining unbeaten on 95 at the end of the day's play. "Crowdrey, in spite of a hampering injury, played one of the most accomplished and fallacious innings of his career..." wrote John Arlott.

"It is not easy to play 100 Test matches," Rahul Dravid, who has played 164, once said. "Test cricket is not easy. To be able to play one is great, to be able to play 100 is a fantastic achievement."

A player with 100 Tests behind him has an impressive CV when it comes to being selected for an all-time team to represent his country. Would Ashwin find a place in an all-time India team?

Such selections cannot be based on figures alone, although Ashwin would walk in as India's most successful off-spinner. They

are not based on averages either (although Ashwin has the best among Indian spinners with over 100 wickets) or strike rates (ditto). There is also the complication that contemporary bowlers have more tricks up their sleeve than those of an earlier vintage, thus giving them an advantage. After all, contemporary engineers know more than those of the 19th century, and most undergraduates in philosophy are better trained than Plato was.

By definition, therefore, Ashwin brings to his craft a wider range, a greater understanding (thanks to analytics) and even the necessary experimentation than, for example, Billy Bates, the 19th century offie who was the first Englishman to take a Test hat-trick and one of few to claim 14 wickets in a Test. Knowledge is one thing,

and modern bowlers are being constantly fed the data, but the skill to act on the knowledge is another matter. That requires both something inherent and something acquired, both nature and nurture. Ashwin has this by the bucketful.

Joe Root put his finger on 'Ashwinness' recently in a podcast saying Ashwin always tries to take wickets, not merely wear down the batter. This positive approach is special in the age of the T20.

It does not, of course, follow that a later generation automatically has the better players. This is no case for asserting that Bairstow is superior to Len Hutton because he came later and can play the reg- ular sweep! Each is capable of doing something the other cannot. But Bairstow has more access to infor-

mation, has played more formats and is likely to borrow from one to succeed in another.

Among the finest Indian off-spinners, from Ghulam Ahmed to Erapalli Prasanna and Srinivas Venkataraghavan to Harbhajan Singh, Prasanna had this combination of cricket intelligence and natural skill. Roughly half his 189 wickets were claimed abroad; Ashwin has played only 40 of his 99 Tests abroad as India often played only one spinner in those matches. Ravindra Jadeja bats left-handed and is a brilliant fielder and was thus preferred.

Ashwin, who has played all 59 home Tests since making his debut, has missed 24 away Tests. In many ways, Ashwin stands alone. He is constantly experimenting, constantly pushing him-

self, and always fighting two battles every time he steps onto the field.

The first, to achieve victory for his team, and the second to push the limits of his craft. Others have followed a version of his career ball flicked off the middle finger, but few have been as keen on surprising himself and discovering greater depths. Only Muthiah Muralitharan has claimed 500 wickets in fewer Tests than Ashwin.

All this talk of statistics is a bit off-key; it is as if Ashwin does not exist beyond his numbers, as if his achievements have to be constantly buttressed by figures, with his away record making everybody uncomfortable.

The fact is, Ashwin ought to be a certainty in all-time Indian squad. Let us applaud a modern master of the craft.

Antim given relief to compete in one final trial

Sports Bureau
KOLKATA

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) on Tuesday decided to give the country's lone Olympic quota place winner Antim Panghal (women's 53kg) the relief of competing in only one final bout in the upcoming selection trials for Asian championships.

The trials will be held at the Indra Gandhi Stadium in Delhi on March 10 and 11.

As per a WFI circular, the winner of the 53kg weight category will fight with World champions and two-time World under-20 champion Antim, who is reportedly nursing an injury, in a final trial which will be held in March end.
The wrestlers selected

in Olympic weight classes will represent the country in both the Asian championships (April 11-16) and the Asian Olympic Games qualifier (April 19-20) to be held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

A case filed by the protesting wrestlers, including Bhajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik, and Satyawart Kadian, challenging the trials is still pending in the Delhi High Court.

SGM on March 29
Meanwhile, the WFI, which is still 'suspended' by the Union Sports Ministry even though the United World Wrestling (UWW) has lifted the suspension, has decided to hold its special general meeting (SGM) in Noida on March 29.

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From bylanes of Hyderabad to the Olympics in Paris — Sreeja's journey

The 25-year-old two-time National champion is part of the Indian women's team which made it to the Games and the first paddler from Telangana to achieve this feat



THE GIST

Sreeja wants her coach Somnath to be present during her individual event at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games

She says the focus will be on consistency and playing more international tournaments to improve her ranking

Y.V. Subrahmanyan
HYDERABAD

It has been an inspiring journey for Sreeja Akula as she made it to the Paris Olympic Games from the bylanes of Naveenagar in the City, where she once trained in the one-room Global Table Tennis Academy under the tutelage of Somnath Ghosh with just one table available!

The 25-year-old two-time National champion is part of the Indian women's

team which made it to the Games and is also the first paddler from Telangana to achieve this feat.

"It's a testament of the dedication and synergy between a coach and an athlete," said Sreeja, expressing gratitude to Somnath for his unwavering support.

Sreeja wants her coach Somnath to be present during her individual event at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, underscoring the importance of his presence and guidance.

Both Sreeja and Somnath are ready to

make their mark on the world stage thanks to the support of Dream Sports Foundation, CTRI-s, Raheja and the UTT.

"I am also lucky to have my parents, who went out of the way to support me and grateful to TTFFI, Government of India and PWC.

"But for them, it would have been very difficult," said the Commonwealth Games mixed gold medalist (partnering A. Sharath Kamal). Special thanks to my coach Somnath who has been working with me for 13 years now. I will try to play

my best game and create a few upsets in the Olympics. "The focus will be on consistency and playing more international tournaments to improve my ranking and be ready for the biggest challenge of my career," Sreeja said.

"It has always been a dream, not just for me but for every athlete, to participate in the Olympics."

Reflecting on the journey so far, Somnath said: "We've poured our hearts and souls into this journey, overcoming obstacles and challenges along the way."

Art deco style posters prop up Paris as it gets ready for the Games

Associated Press
PARIS

Vibrant colours and striking landmarks illuminate posters for the Paris Olympic Games in an art deco style inspired by the city's flamboyant past.

The posters were unveiled on Monday at the Musée d'Orsay — a former railway station transformed into an imposing museum stretching along the Seine River — in the presence of Paris 2024 director of design Joachim Roncin and the artist behind them, Ugo Gattoni.

Telling a story
"I don't want it to be something dull like only a poster with only a logo and a date on it, which they usually are. I want to tell a story," Roncin said.

"I want it to be something very happy, because it's going to a huge party. I want it to be very joyful. Hopefully people will be inspired by these posters."

There are many eye-catching images to absorb.

Among the most striking is the Eiffel Tower piercing through the Stade de France. As if forming a giant cake mixing together two crucial ingredients: Paris' most famed landmark and its national stadium.

Spectators on the posters have expressions on their fresh faces that are perfectly captured. It's like they are frozen in time, enjoying a giant and timeless party somewhere. On a balcony admiring ballroom dancers, or guests at a grandiose fête thrown by the Great Gatsby himself.

"It's the art deco style," Roncin said. "I wanted something very flamboyant, very rich, very colourful. It's typical of Paris, when you look at various restaurant styles, you can see the art deco style. When



GETTY IMAGES

you look at the entrance on the subways, you can see the art nouveau style."

No coincidence
No coincidence that it has this feel, perhaps, since these Games mark the centenary of the 1924 Olympics in Paris.

Everywhere you look, even amid a blur of colours, the details are intricate and precise.

In the background you can see the Olympic flame arriving on a three-mast tall ship into the French port of Marseille, having sailed from Greece, and the high-rolling waves representing surfing events in Tahiti. Closer up, some of Paris' monuments which will be used during both Games.

Les Invalides, which holds former French emperor Napoléon Bonaparte's tomb; the imperious Grand Palais; the Arc de Triomphe, and the Château de Versailles, whose resplendent gardens will host

equestrian and pentathlon events.

The posters will also appear on billboards all over Paris from Tuesday.

It will be a relief to purists that no AI (artificial intelligence) was used to design the posters, which is part of the reason why Roncin selected Gattoni.

"It was very important to work with Ugo because he's a manual artist, he works with his hands. Nothing is digital assisted. Today we live in the world where there is a lot of AI," Roncin said.

It took six months to decide which colours to use and Gattoni has spent more than 2,000 hours working on the posters.

"It has this fresh feel... an atmosphere of good vibes," said Gattoni, whose work also included studying all the previous Olympic posters. Just like the 1924 poster, this poster has to work in 104 years' time. For me this is super important."

Smriti Mandhana hopes Delhi matches Bengaluru's 'crowd energy'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper Smriti Mandhana on Tuesday said she is looking forward to seeing how the crowd in the national capital embraces the Women's Premier League, after playing in front of a packed stadium in Bengaluru during the tournament's first leg.

The second season of the WPL is being held at two venues. The Bengaluru leg, comprising of 11 matches, concluded with RCB defeating UP Warriorz by 23 runs at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on Monday night. The caravan now rolls to New Delhi from Tuesday.

The fans in Bengaluru not only turned up in large numbers for RCB's matches but also for the other teams.

"We'll see if the Delhi crowd can

match the energy of the Bangalore crowd. We have seen men's cricket here, I had come in 2016 to watch a match and the crowd was like this and the atmosphere was like this. The way people have supported me has been great to see," Mandhana told *jo Cinema*.

Mandhana said looking at the reception in the first leg of WPL got and the massive turnouts at the Brabourne Stadium and D.Y. Patil Stadium in Mumbai which hosted the league last year, it seems that "women's cricket is winning."

"As a women's cricketer, at that moment, I think women's cricket has won. I am saying this not just about Smriti Mandhana or RCB, I feel like women's cricket is winning."

"Last year, Mumbai had a good turnout. Bangalore was the other, especially for our matches. It was great watching people come and

support not just the home team but also the others (teams).

"They call RCB the most loyal fanbase. We saw it this time. We couldn't even step out in Bangalore for the last 15 days — it's that good. It's a win for women's cricket and the entire fraternity," Mandhana added.

Mandhana also heaped praise on her opening partner Sabbineni Meghana, whose 164 runs in five games at a strike rate of 120.58 places her second after the RCB skipper in the list of highest run-getters this season.

Mandhana said she cannot take the credit alone in Meghana's success. "I can't take any credit; the way she has come back is amazing. I discussed this with her after the auction and told her that I had full faith in her, after what she had done on the domestic circuit," she said.



K. MURALI KUMAR

AI has a big and growing carbon footprint, but algorithms can help

Training GPT-3, the precursor AI system to the current ChatGPT, generated 502 metric tonnes of carbon, which is equivalent to driving 112 petrol cars for a year. GPT-3 further emits 8.4 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually due to inference. The requirements of large language models which are behind ChatGPT have gone up by a factor of 300,000

Shirin Dora

Given the huge problem-solving potential of artificial intelligence (AI), it wouldn't be far-fetched to think that AI could also help us in tackling the climate crisis. However, when we consider the energy needs of AI models, it becomes clear that the technology is as much a part of the climate problem as a solution.

The emissions come from the infrastructure associated with AI, such as building and running the data centres that handle the large amounts of information required to sustain these systems.

But different technological approaches to how we build AI systems could help reduce its carbon footprint. Two technologies in particular hold promise for doing this: spiking neural networks and lifelong learning.

The lifetime of an AI system can be split into two phases: training and inference. During training, a relevant dataset is used to build and tune - improve - the system. In inference, the trained system generates predictions on previously unseen data.

For example, training an AI that's to be used in self-driving cars would require a dataset of many different driving scenarios and decisions taken by human drivers.

After the training phase, the AI system will predict effective manoeuvres for a self-driving car. Artificial neural networks (ANN), are an underlying technology used in most current AI systems.

They have many different elements to them, called parameters, whose values are adjusted during the training phase of the AI system. These parameters can run to more than 100 billion in total.

While large numbers of parameters improve the capabilities of ANNs, they also make training and inference resource-intensive processes. To put things in perspective, training GPT-3 (the precursor AI system to the current ChatGPT) generated 502 metric tonnes of carbon, which is equivalent to driving 112 petrol powered cars for a year.

GPT-3 further emits 8.4 tonnes of CO₂ annually due to inference. Since the AI boom started in the early 2010s, the energy requirements of AI systems known as large language models - the type of technology that's behind ChatGPT - have gone up by a factor of 300,000.

With the increasing ubiquity and complexity of AI models, this trend is going to continue, potentially making AI a significant contributor of CO₂ emissions. In fact, our current estimates could be



AI systems make huge demands on energy resources. NAT/UNSPLASH

lower than AI's actual carbon footprint due to a lack of standard and accurate techniques for measuring AI-related emissions.

Spiking neural networks

The previously mentioned new technologies, spiking neural networks (SNNs) and lifelong learning (L2), have the potential to lower AI's ever-increasing carbon footprint, with SNNs acting as an energy-efficient alternative to ANNs.

ANNs work by processing and learning patterns from data, enabling them to make predictions. They work with decimal numbers. To make accurate calculations, especially when multiplying numbers with decimal points together, the computer needs to be very precise. It is because of these decimal numbers that ANNs require lots of computing power, memory and time.

This means ANNs become more energy-intensive as the networks get larger and more complex. Both ANNs and SNNs are inspired by the brain, which contains billions of neurons (nerve cells) connected to each other via synapses.

Like the brain, ANNs and SNNs also have components which researchers call neurons, although these are artificial, not biological ones. The key difference between the two types of neural networks is in the way individual neurons transmit information to each other.

Neurons in the human brain communicate with each other by transmitting intermittent electrical signals called spikes. The spikes themselves do not contain information. Instead, the information lies in the timing of these spikes. This binary, all-or-none characteristic of spikes (usually represented as 0 or 1) implies that



AI could also help us in tackling the climate crisis. However, when we consider energy needs it becomes clear that the technology is as much a part of the problem as a solution

neurons are active when they spike and inactive otherwise.

This is one of the reasons for energy efficient processing in the brain.

Just as Morse code uses specific sequences of dots and dashes to convey messages, SNNs use patterns or timings of spikes to process and transmit information. So, while the artificial neurons in ANNs are always active, SNNs consume energy only when a spike occurs.

Otherwise, they have closer to zero energy requirements. SNNs can be up to 280-times more energy efficient than ANNs.

My colleagues and I are developing learning algorithms for SNNs that may bring them even closer to the energy efficiency exhibited by the brain. The lower computational requirements also imply that SNNs might be able to make decisions more quickly.

These properties render SNNs useful for a broad range of applications, including space exploration, defence and self-driving cars because of the limited energy sources available in these scenarios.

Lifelong learning

L2 is another strategy for reducing the

overall energy requirements of ANNs over the course of their lifetime that we are also working on.

Training ANNs sequentially (where the systems learn from sequences of data) on new problems causes them to forget their previous knowledge while learning new tasks.

ANNs require retraining from scratch when their operating environment changes, further increasing AI-related emissions.

L2 is a collection of algorithms that enable AI models to be trained sequentially on multiple tasks with little or no forgetting.

L2 enables models to learn throughout their lifetime by building on their existing knowledge without having to retrain them from scratch.

The field of AI is growing fast and other potential advancements are emerging that can mitigate the energy demands of this technology. For instance, building smaller AI models that exhibit the same predictive capabilities as that of a larger model.

Advances in quantum computing - a different approach to building computers that harnesses phenomena from the world of quantum physics - would also enable faster training and inference using ANNs and SNNs.

The superior computing capabilities offered by quantum computing could allow us to find energy-efficient solutions for AI at a much larger scale.

The climate change challenge requires that we try to find solutions for rapidly advancing areas such as AI before their carbon footprint becomes too large.

(Shirin Dora is lecturer, computer science, Loughborough University. This article is republished from The Conversation.)

THE GIST

An AI system's life can be split into two phases: training and inference. During training, a relevant dataset is used to build and tune the system. In inference, the trained system generates predictions on previously unseen data

Spiking neural networks (SNNs) and lifelong learning (L2) have the potential to lower AI's ever-increasing carbon footprint, with SNNs acting as an energy-efficient alternative to ANNs

Advances in quantum computing will also enable faster training and inference using ANNs and SNNs. This could allow us to find energy-efficient solutions for AI at a much larger scale

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BIG SHOT



Toralf Mjoeen places an Arctic fox in a box for transport early this February. The fox will make a 500-km trip south, where it will be released into the wild in Oppland, Norway. As part of a state-sponsored programme to restore Arctic foxes, Norway has been feeding the population for nearly 20 years, and the programme has helped to boost the fox population from as few as 40 in Norway, Finland, and Sweden to around 550 across Scandinavia. REUTERS

QUESTION CORNER

Transparent yet impenetrable

Q: What constitutes bulletproof glass?

A: High-strength ceramics such as silicon nitride, dual hardness steel, and layers of heavy nylon fabric make up bulletproof glass. The hard ceramic stops the bullet abruptly, dissipating its energy as it destroys the first layers of the glass at the point of impact, and entangles it in a coarse mesh.

A textile bulletproof vest is fashioned of 16-24 layers of nylon cloth of heavy weave. The layers are stitched together like a quilt. Such vests, also known as full-torso protectors, can be worn undetected under regular clothing.

A vest of 16 layers will stop regular handgun and submachine-gun bullets, while those of 24 layers will stop the more powerful magnum bullets from the same weapons.



Bulletproof glass uses a variety of materials that make it difficult to breach. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

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

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The decline in India's unemployment rate in 2023, as per the NSSO

3.1 in percentage. Unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years or above declined in 2023 and was the lowest in the last three years, as per a report of National Sample Survey Organisation. PH

India's coal output from April to February in FY24

880.7 in million tonne. India is now just 119.28 MT away from its one billion tonne coal production target for FY24. In 2022-23, India's total coal output was 893 MT. PH

Worth of order bagged by BHEL from NTPC for thermal project

9,500 in ₹ crore. Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) said it was given the order from the NTPC to set up a 1,600 MW Singrauli thermal power project (Stage-II) in U.P. PH

Number of companies in the northeast to opt for the NPS

76 companies. There are over 17,000 registered companies in the northeastern region, of which only a few opted to enrol their employees under the National Pension System (NPS). PH

The decline in the borrowing cost of States in India

7.4 in percentage. Amid continuing lower supplies, the borrowing cost for States fell to a 32-week low, down by 4 bps from the previous week's auctions. PH
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Maharashtra's latest Maratha quota law

What have commissions said about the law? What is the legislative history of the Bill and will it pass judicial scrutiny, unlike its predecessors? What is the current reservation pool of the State? Why was the earlier Bill struck down by the Supreme Court?

EXPLAINER

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

In February 20, the Maharashtra Assembly unanimously passed a Bill granting 10% reservation in education and government jobs to the Maratha community. However, activists have claimed that the new legislation is a "betrayal" of the community and instead seek a Maratha quota carved out from the existing reservation for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) category.

What does the new Bill entail?

The Bill does not disturb the existing OBC quota and is distinct from the Maharashtra government's earlier notification on the issuance of Kumbi caste certificates to eligible Marathas for inclusion within the OBC category. Thus, non-Kumbi Marathas will continue to be covered under the new law, making the Maratha community eligible for reservations under two separate categories for the first time. However, those who fall within the "creamy layer" bracket will not be entitled to the benefit.

The law has been formulated based on a report by the Justice (retired) Sunil B Shukre-led Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission that claims to have surveyed 1,58,20,264 families across the State. It opined that "exceptional circumstances and extraordinary situations" justify granting reservation to the community beyond the Supreme Court-approved 50% limit. While concluding that the Marathas constitute 28% of the State's population, with 84% of them qualifying as not advanced, it pointed out that such a large backward class cannot be added to the existing reserved categories. The Commission also attributed extreme poverty, decline in agricultural income, and partitions in land holdings as reasons for the declining status of the Marathas.



Not over yet: People celebrate the passing of the Maratha reservation bill, in Mumbai on February 20. PH

Maharashtra already has 52% reservations, split into Scheduled Castes (13%), Scheduled Tribes (7%), OBC (19%), Vimukta Jati (3%), Nomadic Tribe B (2.5%), Nomadic Tribe C (3.5%), Nomadic Tribe D (2%), and Special Backward Classes (2%). The 10% Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) reservation is also applicable to the State — making the total reservation pool 72% with the inclusion of the new quota.

When was the demand first raised?

The first-ever bid for implementing a law to extend reservation to the Marathas was in 2014 when a non-statutory committee headed by veteran leader Narayan Kane submitted a report to the then Prithvraj Chavan-led Congress-NCP Democratic Front government, stipulating that the Marathas constitute 32% of the population in the State and needed economic

upliftment in the form of a special quota. Accordingly, the government passed an ordinance reserving 16% of government jobs and seats in educational institutions for Marathas and 5% for Muslims. However, the Bombay High Court passed an interim order staying the ordinance, pointing out that findings of previous committees such as that of the National Commission for Backward Classes have shown that the Marathas cannot be regarded as a backward class. Referring to the apex court's landmark verdict in *Indra Sawhney versus Union of India* (1992), the Court underscored that the 50% cap for reservations cannot be breached except "in extraordinary situations and for extraordinary reasons."

What has the Supreme Court said?

Following its failed attempt, the government constituted an 11-member

statutory commission — the Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission headed by Justice (retired) N.G. Gaikwad to conduct a survey. In its report submitted on November 15, 2018, the Commission recommended granting Marathas 12% reservation in higher education and 13% reservation in public employment. Based on this, the government on November 30, 2018, implemented the Maharashtra State Reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Act, 2018, which provided the Marathas 16% quota overall in education and government jobs.

However, in May 2021, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in *Indira Laxmanrao Patil versus Chief Minister, Maharashtra* struck it down and held that there were no "exceptional circumstances" that merit the government breaching the 50% ceiling limit to bestow quota benefits on the Maratha community. Declining to revisit its *Indira Sawhney* verdict, the Court said that the 50% cap is now constitutionally recognised. Dismissing the findings of the Gaikwad Commission, the Court observed that the Marathas are a "dominant forward class and are in the mainstream of national life."

Will it pass judicial muster?

According to Alok Prasanna Kumar, Co-Founder and Lead at the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, the legislation is unlikely to pass judicial scrutiny. "The Court refused to recognise the Marathas as a socially and educationally backward class. The criteria for granting such a reservation should be based on data which shows that the community suffers from social backwardness. For instance, were they denied access to education and social facilities?" he highlights.

"To breach the SC-ordained 50% reservation cap, exceptional circumstances need to be shown, which is absent in this case. Marathas are politically dominant, and have land holdings — by no metric can they be said to be socially and educationally oppressed," Mr. Kumar adds.

THE GIST

On February 20, the Maharashtra Assembly unanimously passed a Bill granting 10% reservation in education and government jobs to the Maratha community.

The law has been formulated based on a report of the Justice (retired) Sunil B Shukre-led Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission that claims to have surveyed 1,58,20,264 families across the State. It opined that "exceptional circumstances and extraordinary situations" justify granting reservation to the community beyond the Supreme Court-approved 50% limit.

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Why did Google delist some Indian apps from Play Store?

What is the platform fee issue that has brought Indian tech firms and the tech giant at crossroads?

Aroon Deep

The story so far:

In March 1, Google announced that it was pulling the apps of almost a dozen firms out of its marketplace for Android apps. While the announcement seemed sudden, it was preceded by years of wrangling between the search giant and Indian companies, with proceedings in the Madras High Court and the Supreme Court. After the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology intervened, the apps were restored on Monday, but the issue remains unresolved.

What is the problem?

At the heart of the issue is Google's platform fees. For all in-app purchases that involve a purely digital service — such as an ebook purchase or an OTT streaming subscription — Google collects a fee of anywhere between 11 to 30% per transaction. This fee, Google argues, helps the company pay for Google Play

and develop the Android ecosystem. The exact fee paid by each developer varies. If a developer is using Google's own billing product, and is offering a recurring subscription service, or if they make less than \$1 million a year in revenue from in-app payments, the company charges 15%. For app purchases for bigger firms, the amount is 30%. In India and South Korea, where regulatory scrutiny on these fees has been among the most intense, Google collects 11% or 20% in fees if developers choose to use a different payment method. However, Indian developers — like many global counterparts — see these fees as a high price to pay. Some, including Bharat Matrimony and Disney's Hotstar, approached the courts at different stages to avoid paying the fee altogether.

"While Google should definitely be able to charge a fee for creating and maintaining the app store ecosystem, the main contention is the size of the fee," Rohit Kumar, founder of the public policy firm The Quantum Hub explained.

What about other marketplaces?

Apple has not faced similar pushback in India, as relatively fewer Indians use its products. Android, however, dominates the smartphone market, and Google Play is widely seen as the best bet for developers who want to be discovered by consumers. However, both Apple and Google have faced serious international resistance to these fees, and both firms have pushed back strongly against developers' resistance. The music streaming firm Spotify filed a complaint with the European Commission, after Apple stopped Spotify from telling its users how to pay for its service using a browser to avoid the App Store's fees. Additionally, Spotify said this was anti-competitive because Apple Music was not subjected to the 30% barrier that was erected for Spotify. Following the complaint, Apple was hit with a €1.84 billion fine by the European Commission, which ruled that it had fined the company over unfair trading conditions. Similarly, in the U.S., Epic Games, the developer of

the popular Fortnite franchise, sued Apple as well as Google over the 30% fee.

Unlike Apple, Google allows third party app stores around the world, something that gives app developers a little more leeway in avoiding these fees. But Google Play comes installed by default on most Android phones.

How have regulators responded?

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) had in 2022 fined Google ₹36.44 crore for its Play Store policies. The company is in the process of appealing that fine, as well as orders by the CCI that it give developers comprehensive choices for in-app payments. An appeal by Google against this fine is pending at the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal. Meanwhile, the Indian apps that went to the Court are back on the platform for now. In-app payments are not yet a major part of the digital economy in India, as purely digital services for which Indian consumers have been willing to pay have been limited to content streaming, dating and matrimonial services — the very segment that is largely up in arms against Google's fees. "What we really need is regulation to increase competition in the app store market," Mr. Kumar said. "This should involve removing barriers to the adoption of other app stores (by placing restrictions on arrangements that Google makes with phone manufacturers to set defaults and give primacy to its own apps) and allowing sideloading (for apps to be downloaded via websites)."

THE GIST

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ABSTRACT

Have India's health centres really 'collapsed'?

In this paper, the authors counter and complicate the prevailing narrative of 'collapse'. They present a portrait of the healthcare centres in five north Indian States, documenting their strengths and struggles alike

Saumya Kalia

Jean Drèze, Reetika Khera, Rishabh Malhotra, "The Changing State of Health Centres in North India", Economic & Political Weekly (2024)

There is a well-documented infamy around public health centres. Some have likened it to a Chasm, others to a systemic rot representing the "greatest failure of the Indian state". There is proven dilapidation and disrepute – there are no doctors, no diagnostics, no drugs. There are no buildings either sometimes, and people walk for miles to get substandard treatment. These centres, as reflections of the vast network of public healthcare, stoke the fear that India's health system has either collapsed or is disintegrating rapidly.

In this paper, the authors counter and complicate the prevailing narrative of 'collapse'. They present a portrait of the healthcare centres in five north Indian States, documenting their strengths and struggles alike. Their survey shows a pattern of "improving quality and utilisation [of services] over time", but the nature of progress is "largely cosmetic", and "the pace of improvement" remains far from adequate. Still, there is scope and strength in redeeming health centres' potential, they say. Against all odds, health centres "are mostly functional" and show "a demonstrated capacity to improve".

Why do health centres matter?

Health centres are the lowest rung of India's public health system, charged with offering accessible and affordable primary care. Almost two lakh in number, they are conceptualised as a three-tier system: sub-centres (later renamed as health and wellness centres), public health centres (PHCs) and community health centres (CHCs). 94% of these centres are located in rural areas, but reports show that less than 20% of them function effectively, pushing disadvantaged communities to rely on expensive, exploitative private health care.

"Torn between the two, many patients end up risking their health or their wealth, if not both". Last year's Economic Survey showed that in the absence of proper insurance and affordable services, almost half of all health spending in India is still paid by patients themselves, pushing many households into poverty.

The answer to social and health inequity may lie in accelerating the expansion and improvement of health centres. Localised healthcare "is a much better way of dealing with most health problems than to let patients loose on larger public hospitals or the private sector".

'Unsurprising' improvements

The researchers studied the performance of 241 health centres – 26 CHCs, 65 PHCs and 150 sub-centres, spread across Bihar (23), Chhattisgarh (36), Himachal Pradesh (45), Jharkhand (37) and Rajasthan (100). They referred to data from two studies and one in three different decades, one in 2002 and one in 2013, conducted in Udaipur and parts of Bihar, Jharkhand, and Himachal Pradesh. Centres from the 2013



Still hope: People outside a flooded government health centre in Saran, Bihar in 2021. PTI

survey were revisited in 2022, with Chhattisgarh added to the mix.

Himachal Pradesh was always a "trailblazer" with functional centres serving 83% of its population, but States like Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan have introduced "valuable initiatives". "Health centres today have better facilities, dispense more medicines, serve more patients, and provide a wider range of services than they did 10 or 20 years ago", the researchers found. This perception of progress was shared by health workers too, who found that "the work environment and the work culture seem to improve hand in hand".

Two case studies stand out. Chhattisgarh was a pleasant surprise: by 2022, it illustrated a "radical expansion in public provision of healthcare". Local health workers reported running water, functional toilets, better facilities (for cold storage, vaccines, contraceptives, etc.), more medicines, a supportive role of ASHAs and open centres with staff

present most of the time. There also has been a surge in public healthcare utilisation. On the other hand, the "twin States" of Bihar and Jharkhand presented a contrasting narrative, with Bihar the apparent laggard. The quality of health centres was "dismal", some local sub-centres were dormant and others were non-existent.

On average, contrary to popular belief, there is "evidence of functionality" across PHCs: "The centres are generally open during working hours, patients are being treated, basic facilities (not more) are in place, and healthcare is more or less free except in Bihar".

What changed between 2002 and 2022? The share of health expenditure in the Union Budget increased drastically, coupled with the introduction of the National Rural Health Mission. India's flagship Ayushman Bharat programme, launched with the vision of achieving universal health coverage, in 2018 introduced a health insurance component

(PMJAY) and a public provision component through health and wellness centres (HWCs). State-specific schemes launched by Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh boosted their performance. The survey noted that COVID-19 contributed to a "sustained increase in patient utilisation", with people placing greater trust in public health facilities.

The flip side

Progress is rarely ever linear or logical. The study contextualises these signs of life as "modest improvements" only. The centres are still "grossly underutilised": there is high staff absenteeism, the number of patients per day is low, services are limited and "quite likely, of poor quality". Bihar's sub-centres "are still trapped in the old pattern where Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANMs) focus mainly on family planning targets and 'motivating' people—mainly women—for sterilisation".

The health workers interviewed listed challenges that remain neglected: lack of staff; irregular flow of funds; lack of toilet facilities; no transport or residential facilities; no drugs or functional testing equipment; and the growing burden of both online and on-field work. The study also documented social discrimination in health centres: some upper-caste doctors had "disparaging attitudes towards marginalised communities", and upper-caste families routinely disrespected Dalit ANMs. Care isn't offered in a vacuum devoid of social realities; identity markers like caste, class, gender, and religion have historically shaped Indians' access to health services.

Researchers also made a rare mention of the critical role women play in rural health settings. The study found female nurses and staff members ran district hospitals and did "the bulk of the effort", while men in senior positions tended "to take advantage of their seniority". ANMs and ASHAs worked in grim environments with centres lacking running water and toilets. Still, they "tend to perform much better than the system in which they work". The researchers echoed demands made by frontline health workers: to enhance investment in this "veritable army of valuable health workers" so that women can reap the recognition or rewards of their work.

The pursuit of development

Investment in healthcare increased, but the "improvements are patchy" and allocations prioritise material development in tertiary healthcare. Take the composition of the healthcare budget: the allocation in 2022-23 (1.9%) was almost the same as a decade ago in 2013-14 (1.7%). The National Health Mission share shrank from 69% to 44%. In comparison, the government spent 10 times as much money on PMJAY and new regional AIIMS hospitals than on public welfare arms like the HWCs. The researchers poked holes in the claim that lakhs of HWCs were 'created' – these were "minor upgrades" of existing centres. The HWCs "have a relatively attractive look" but were only "marginally better" than sub-centres, with improvements only "cosmetic" in nature.

The study sketches India's health centres as sites of hope, debunking cynicism surrounding its failures and dissects claims of progress. These struggles "cannot be regarded as successful, but nor is it hopeless", because "hope lies in the experiences of States that have shown how decent standards of healthcare can be achieved in the public sector". The researchers conclude by noting that "beyond the current tokenism of Ayushman Bharat", "major support from the poorer states to emulate these initiatives".



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subramanian

"Mr. A. Shankar, Kallai Road, Kozhikode, wants to know the contexts in which the following words are used: (a) excuse (b) forgive (c) pardon."

"Please excuse me for losing my temper. The sentence means that the person concerned is sorry for losing his temper and wants to apologise for it."

He always has a ready excuse for not doing his homework.

Here 'excuse' means 'some reason, whether true or untrue, given when asking to be forgiven for absence, bad behaviour, etc.' 'Excuse' also means 'reason, justification'.

She always has an excuse for entertaining people. It is either her birthday or her husband's salary day or her mother's recovery from a bad cold! Please make my excuses to her for not attending her party.

Here 'to make one's excuses' means 'to explain why someone is not doing something or for absence.' 'By way of excuse' or 'in excuse' is used when you want to justify your action.

I am sorry I did not attend the meeting. I can only say by way of excuse that I was unwell on that day.

"To excuse oneself for something" means 'to set someone free from a duty, requirement, punishment, etc.' In this sense, it is used in the passive.

He was excused from attending classes. She may be excused from PT classes.

'Excuse me' is used "as an apology when one interrupts, disagrees, disapproves or has to behave impolitely." Excuse me, can you tell me the way to the station?

'Excuse me,' he said, 'as he pushed his way through the crowd.'

Excuse my interruption.

He stepped on my foot and said, 'Excuse me.'

When you did not hear what someone had said and would like him to repeat it, you say, 'Excuse me?' This is used more in American English than in British English. In British English, in such contexts, you say 'Pardon?' or 'I beg your pardon.' You also say 'Sorry?' These are polite ways of asking another person to repeat what he had said. 'Pardon' also means 'an action of a court or rules forgiving a person for an illegal act and giving freedom from punishment.' 'Pardon' in this sense is a formal word. 'Forgive' also means 'to pardon.' When you forgive someone, you do not want to punish him; also you have no resentment against him. In 'forgive' there is an element of compassion. 'Pardon,' 'excuse' and 'forgive' are also used to convey one's apologies for causing some inconvenience to another.

I beg your pardon.

Excuse my interruption.

Forgive my interruption.

"Ms. Meera Chatterjee, Calcutta, wants to know the meaning of 'She danced like crazy'."

"Like crazy", 'like mad' are idioms which mean 'to an extreme degree,' 'very intensely.' 'She danced like crazy' means that she danced with great enthusiasm.

She talks like crazy.

She spoke like mad.

These are used in informal contexts.

'She laughed like crazy' means she laughed and laughed and laughed as if she were mad!"

Published in *The Hindu* on April 30, 1991.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez was born on this day in 1927. Here is a quiz on one of the most significant authors of the 20th century

Sindhu Nagaraj

QUESTION 1

Let's start with a simple one: in which year did Márquez win the Nobel Prize in Literature?

QUESTION 2

Upon García Márquez's death in April 2014, Juan Manuel Santos, then president of Colombia, called him something. What is it?

QUESTION 3

This is a fictional town from one of his most celebrated novels of all time, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The town is often supposed to draw from Márquez's

childhood town, Aracataca. Name the town.

QUESTION 4

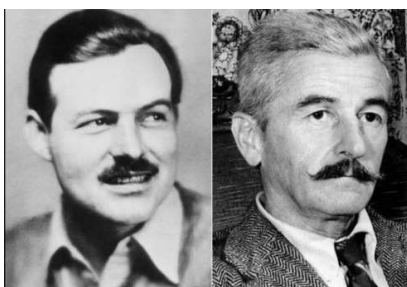
What was the name of the Colombian newscast that aired between 1992 and 1997? Márquez was one of the founders of this newscast.

QUESTION 5

This 1975 novel by Márquez is termed a 'dictator novel', having been based on a variety of real-life leaders. Name the novel.

QUESTION 6

What is the title of the speech given by Márquez upon being awarded the Nobel Prize? This theme also runs through much of Márquez's works.



Visual question: Name these two authors. How were they related to Márquez?

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

1. The reason Antonio Vivaldi was nicknamed 'Red Priest'. Ans: He had red hair and was trained as a priest.

2. The reason Vivaldi did not function as a priest was because of this ailment. Ans: Asthma

3. The composer spent 37 years of his life at the Pio Ospedale della Pietà asylum which housed these inmates. Ans: Orphaned girls

4. The most recognised of his compositions was this group of four concerti written for this instrument. Ans: 'The Four Seasons ('Le quattro stagioni') for the violin

5. Vivaldi's compositions are identified by these two letters. Ans: RV (Ryom-Verzeichnis), a number created by Danish musicologist Peter Ryom

Visual: Name this famous composer. Ans: Johann Sebastian Bach
Early Birds: Prashant Naini| Md Sarfaraj Nawab| K.N. Viswanathan| Asrin Khatun| Lavanya Ranveer

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

Word of the day

Emote: give expression or emotion to, in a stage or movie role

Synonyms: play, represent, act

Usage: The ease with which he was able to emote this character deserves applause.

Pronunciation: bit.ly/emotepr

International Phonetic Alphabet: /iˈməʊt/

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