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IED blast: CM to consider NIA probe

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Two days after an IED blast rocked Rameshwaram Cafe in Brookefield, near Whitefield, the Bengaluru police are yet to make a breakthrough in the case, even as multiple teams are working to crack it.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Sunday that the State government would consider handing over the probe to the National Investigation Agency (NIA). However, accusing the BJP of trying to politicise the episode, he trained his guns at the Centre asking if the blast was not a failure of Central agencies like the NIA, IB and RAW. The BJP accused the Congress of sympathising with anti-social elements and terror groups. Dy.CM D.K. Shivakumar said BJP was tarnishing the image of Karnataka and Bengaluru by trying to politicise the blast.

DETAILS ON
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Ministers discuss 100-day agenda for govt. after poll

Council of Ministers, at its last meeting, brainstorms a vision document for 'Viksit Bharat 2047', and a detailed action plan for next five years; PM exudes confidence over NDA returning to power

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

Seeking to send a message of confidence that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) would return to power, the Union Council of Ministers, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at its last meeting, on Sunday, deliberated over a 100-day agenda for quick implementation after the formation of the new government in May.

At the meeting, the Prime Minister reportedly told his colleagues: "Go and win. We will meet again soon."

According to sources in the government, the Council also brainstormed the vision document for "Viksit Bharat 2047" (Developed



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at the meeting of the Union Council of Ministers on Sunday. ANI

India 2047") and a detailed action plan for the next five years.

"The road map for Viksit Bharat is a result of more than two years of intensive preparation. It takes a 'whole of government' approach involving all Ministries, and wide-

ranging consultations with State governments, academia, industry bodies, civil society, scientific organisations, and the mobilisation of the youth for seeking their ideas, suggestions and inputs. More than 2,700 meetings, workshops, and seminars were

held at various levels. Suggestions of more than 20 lakh youth were received," a source said. "Its goals include the areas of economic growth, sustainable development goals, ease of living, ease of doing business, infrastructure, and social welfare," the source added.

Mr. Modi had earlier asked his ministerial colleagues to hold extensive consultations and, based on the inputs, prepare a plan of action for the first 100 days of the new government, to be taken up at the last meeting of the Council of Ministers.

The Niti Aayog was also involved in giving final touches to the draft plan of action.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

Seizure of cargo by India unjustified: Pak.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Pakistan has condemned India's "high-handedness" over the seizure of dual-use items bound for Karachi from China, saying that the "specifications of the equipment clearly indicate its purely commercial use".

The Hindu reported on Saturday that two advanced computer numerical control machines were seized by Customs authorities at Mumbai Port on January 23.

The spokesperson for Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a statement late on Saturday, said this "disruption of free trade underscores the dangers inherent in the arbitrary assumption of policing roles by states with dubious credentials".

"This is a simple case of import of a commercial lathe machine by a Karachi-based commercial entity which supplies parts to



A container of dual-use items that was seized in Mumbai. PTI

the automobile industry in Pakistan... The transaction was being conducted through transparent banking channels with all the relevant documentation," the spokesperson said, adding that relevant private entities were pursuing the matter against "this unjustified seizure".

Termining reports on this as reflective of Indian media's "habitual misrepresentation of facts", the spokesperson added, "Such acts highlight the growing impunity of certain states in violating international norms and taking arbitrary measures in violation of international law".

NEARBY



Driverless trains to have drivers in initial phase

BENGALURU
Namma Metro's first driverless train will be operated with drivers initially. Following this, BMRCL will conduct tests for the driverless operation.
» PAGE 4

Schemes have reached 4.6 cr. people, says CM

BENGALURU
Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said the government's guarantee schemes have reached over 4.6 crore people in the State, and with that, the purchasing power of the people strengthened.
» PAGE 6

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 9

A vivo India CSR initiative



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Vedanshi Mehta, Aarav Mohanraj, Arushi Ganguly
Smart Street ₹7 Lakhs

2nd
Shubhashree Sahu
Multi-Functional Eco-Friendly Agro-machine
₹5 Lakhs

3rd
Shreyansh Nayak
Automatic Machine for Ready-to-grow Oyster Mushroom Bags
₹4 Lakhs

4th
Sharvi Baisiwala
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Yash Yadav
STEMLY
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Moving car catches fire, family escapes unhurt

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A moving car caught fire near Nayandahalli metro station in Bengaluru in the wee hours of Sunday. Fortunately, the family inside

managed to escape without any injuries.

According to police, the family was heading towards Channarayana on Mysuru Road at around 2 a.m. on Sunday night. The vehicle owner is Najibul-

lah, a resident of Tannery Road. The police said that smoke unexpectedly began emanating from the vehicle. The family noticed the smoke and swiftly evacuated from the vehicle. Within a few minutes,

the fire rapidly engulfed the entire car.

A fire brigade arrived at the scene, successfully extinguishing the car fire. Byatarayanapura police registered a case, and investigation is under way.

FIR registered for hiding number plate

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

K.R. Puram police have registered an FIR against a 23-year-old youth who was riding a bike covering the number plate. On March 1, the accused identified as Dhanush was riding the bike at T.C. Palya junction when a citizen captured a photo of the

motorcycle with number plate covered.

The photo was uploaded on X (previously Twitter).

As soon as the police took note of the photo, KR Puram traffic police identified the bike and the rider. Later, an FIR was filed in K.R. Puram police station. The police has now seized the bike.

'Use Yuva Nidhi aid to crack KPSC, UPSC exams'

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Former director of Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research Dr. C.N. Manjunath on Sunday advised the unemployed youth (referring to those identified under the Yuva Nidhi guarantee scheme) to make use of the financial assistance of

₹3,000 for fresh graduates and ₹1500 for diploma holders given by the State government for developing skills and for getting coaching for cracking competitive examinations conducted by the KPSC and UPSC.

He told the youth to keep an open mind and try to look for jobs whether it is in the government or the private sector.

Speeding car hits divider

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

An accident occurred on the Nagarbhavi flyover due to reckless driving, resulting in car driver sustaining injuries. He was later hospitalised.

At 2 a.m. on Sunday, the driver of the car, traveling at high speed, collided with the road divider, sustaining injuries, reported the police.

Police officials stated that the Inanabharathi police have filed a case and are currently investigating.

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HOME VISITS
9945633115

Indiranagar	Jayanagar	Koramangala	Bannerghatta Road
2521 4746 / 47 / 48	2653 3055 / 56 / 57	2563 4411 / 12 / 13	2648 6033 / 34
Sadashivanagar	Vijayanagar	Kammanahalli	Marathalli
2361 8037 / 38 / 39	9900044214 / 23180011	2545 5078 / 79	9686449392

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ENERGY DEPARTMENT

SELF-RELIANCE IN POWER PRODUCTION

Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister

Sri D K Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister

Enhancing the installed capacity of generation in the state from **32,000 MW to 60,000 MW in next 7 years** through attracting the investment.

Aiming to generate 4000 MW power per year.

Encouraging private investment on renewable energy sector. **Currently 63% power being generated by Renewable Sources.**

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DELIVERED & PROMISED

Free bus service for women across

Graha Nyathi LIFTED 200% FREE ELECTRICITY

Anna Bhagya 10kg Free food grains per person per month for 100 days in a year

Graha Lakshmi ₹2000 Per month for 100 days in a year

Yuva Nidhi ₹3000 ₹1500 Per month for Graduate Per month for Diploma Holder

Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Department

Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister

Sri D K Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister

Foundation Laying of Vrishabhavati Lift Irrigation Project

By Hon'ble Chief Minister Sri Siddaramaiah & Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Sri D.K. Shivakumar

On 4th March 2024 | Time : 10.00 AM
Venue : Bommanahalli Grama, Bengaluru-Tumukuru National Highway, Budihala Grama Panchayiti, Nelamangala Taluk.

IN THE PRESENCE OF

Sri K.H. Muniyappa
Hon'ble Minister of Food & Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs

Dr. G. Parameshwar
Hon'ble Home Minister and Tumkur District In-charge Minister

Dr. M.C. Sudhakar
Hon'ble Minister of Higher Education and Chikkaballapur In-charge Minister

Sri N.S. Boseraju
Hon'ble Minister for Minor Irrigation, Science and Technology

The persistent failure of rains in the dry plains of Bengaluru Rural, Bangalore City, Tumkur, and Chikkaballapur districts over the last several decades has resulted in the drying up of rivers, lakes, and several water bodies in ditches devoid of water. As a result, the only available water source for farmers in this area is tube wells. According to groundwater statistics, the groundwater level has dropped by approximately 1000-1200 feet as a result of excessive groundwater extraction for agriculture and other activities. To address this, the Department of Minor Irrigation, led by Minister N.S. Boseraju, has launched a Rs 1081 crore lift irrigation project to fill 70 lakes in the first phase, resulting in long-term groundwater augmentation. This is one of the ambitious projects to divert 243 MLD of the total 308 MLD of water from the Rajarajeshwari Nagar BWSSB Nayandahalli & 65 MLD from Mylasandra BWSSB sewage treatment plant in Bengaluru to a total of 259 lakes, including 189 lakes planned for implementation in the second and third phases.

DELIVERED & PROMISED

Free bus service for women across

Graha Nyathi LIFTED 200% FREE ELECTRICITY

Anna Bhagya 10kg Free food grains per person per month for 100 days in a year

Graha Lakshmi ₹2000 Per month for 100 days in a year

Yuva Nidhi ₹3000 ₹1500 Per month for Graduate Per month for Diploma Holder

Sri N.S. Boseraju, Hon'ble Minister for Minor Irrigation, Science and Technology inspecting the progress of the project with department officials.

All are welcome

Bengaluru

Pulse Polio Campaign



Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dinesh Gundu Rao launching the Polio Plus programme by giving drops to a baby at Kodandarama Nagar in Bengaluru on Sunday. About 94.33% of children were administered the polio vaccine on the National Pulse Polio Campaign Day in BMP Limits. According to the data, of the 11,13,617 children, 10,50,348 children were vaccinated on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ISRO has a long-term plan for Gaganyaan, says Somanath

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

ISRO Chairman S. Somanath has said that the space agency has a long-term plan for the Gaganyaan programme. Mr. Somanath, who hosted an hour-long live Instagram session, said that the Gaganyaan programme that envisages to launch astronauts to an orbit of 400 km for a three-day mission will not be a one-off event. "We have a long-term plan now for Gaganyaan, what we call continued access to space by Indians. We will also be building a space station (Bhartiya Antariksha Station) for which we have a goal to

launch it by 2035 besides going to the moon etc," Mr. Somanath said. In a reply to a question by a student on whether the future ISRO will choose astronauts from the bio stream, Mr. Somanath said, "The first set of astronauts are air force pilots as they have the type of skill sets to handle the early part of the Gaganyaan mission especially when it is under development. But future astronauts will be from various other skill sets, some of them can be engineers or bio scientists or doctors or even a person with a literary background." During an hour-long session, Mr. Somanath answered a wide range of

The ISRO chairman says Gaganyaan programme that envisages to launch astronauts to an orbit of 400 km for a three-day mission will not be a one-off event

nath said replying to a query on whether the ICRB exam is tough to crack.

Increased capacity
On a question to the launch capacity augmentation that ISRO is undertaking and number of launches the space agency is undertaking, he said, "If the users are more, the launches will be more and viceversa. Today at ISRO we have created a capability that up to 24 to 30 satellite launches are really possible theoretically."

The ISRO Chairman said that for the Instagram session more than 450 questions were submitted by various people ranging from the age group of 6 to 74 years.

Namma Metro to run driverless trains with drivers initially

The transition to commercial service in the driverless mode is contingent upon approval from the Commissioner of Metro Railway Safety, says BMRLC official

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bengaluru Metro's first driverless train will be operated with drivers initially. Officials of Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRLC) said that the initial phase of commercial service will involve drivers. Following this, BMRLC will conduct tests for the driverless operation. "The transition to commercial service in the driverless mode is contingent upon approval from the Commissioner of Metro Railway Safety (CMRS). Currently, BMRLC operates trains, where the trains autonomously travel between stations, and drivers handle tasks such as door operations, obstacle detection on tracks, and manage train operations during disruptions," an official explained.



Metro prototype train (driving motor coach) at the unloading area of Hebbagodi depot. FILE PHOTO

According to BMRLC, the driverless train undergoes an automatic self-check regularly. Each morning, the train initiates its services with an early 'wake-up' command from control centre

services. During the night, the train enters 'sleep mode'. These driverless coaches will undergo static tests within the depot, including tests on tracks inside the depot. After a series of tests at the depot, the coaches will be tested on the tracks of the metro. The official informed that this entire process is expected to last a few months. The R.V. Road - Bomma-

sandra elevated line is expected to become operational by July 2024. The much-awaited Yellow Line, linking R.V. Road to Bommasandra and connecting Electronics City, is expected to serve a significant number of commuters. This stretch is expected to alleviate traffic congestion on Hosur Road, linking south Bengaluru to the south-eastern regions of the city. On February 14, the much-awaited six coaches of the driverless train for the Yellow Line of Namma Metro reached Bengaluru. The coaches were shipped by sea from Shanghai in China to Chennai from where they were transported by road to Hebbagodi depot in Bengaluru. In 2019, CRRC Nanjing Puzhen Company Limited,

a Chinese firm, secured a ₹1,78 crore contract to supply 216 metro coaches to BMRLC. However, as they lacked a manufacturing plant in India, fulfilling the order became impractical. To address this limitation, the Chinese company forged a partnership with Titagarh Rail, based in Kolkata (West Bengal), for the production and supply of these coaches. The manufacturing of these coaches is presently in progress at Titagarh Rail's wagon manufacturing facility in Uttarpara, near Kolkata. The training coaches are slated for production by Titagarh Rail Systems in India. Officials have said that Titagarh Rail will deliver the coaches to BMRLC in phases, with the entire delivery anticipated to conclude by March 2025.

READER'S MAIL

Water crisis
Sir, - This with reference to 'Ground Zero' article "India's parched IT capital", Bengaluru, which was once labelled as a pensioner's paradise and was known for its salubrious climate, is no longer so. The scarcity of water has become worse. So, every drop needs to be conserved. Bengaluru is a classic example of how water

amounts of land must take Sir, - This with reference to 'Ground Zero' article "India's parched IT capital", Bengaluru, which was once labelled as a pensioner's paradise and was known for its salubrious climate, is no longer so. The scarcity of water has become worse. So, every drop needs to be conserved. Bengaluru is a classic example of how water

amounts of land must take Sir, - This with reference to 'Ground Zero' article "India's parched IT capital", Bengaluru, which was once labelled as a pensioner's paradise and was known for its salubrious climate, is no longer so. The scarcity of water has become worse. So, every drop needs to be conserved. Bengaluru is a classic example of how water

Other than from the main thoroughfares, the collection and removal of these leaves from the interior roads and bylanes is abysmal. In many parts of Bengaluru city, the pourkarmikas are not doing their job regularly. Even when they do, they create heaps of these leaves that remain there for days on end. Com complaints made online are rarely addressed, and

the contact number of the assigned staff at times turns out to be wrong, and there is no notification of the next level contact officer. Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike should streamline its operation so that the streets are clean. Kamal Laddha Bengaluru

<p>CLASSIFIEDS MART</p> <p>TO ADVERTISE VISIT www.thehinduads.com Bengaluru: 9455 2981 086-2071326 Mangaluru: 0824-2417575 2417580 Hoballi: 0836-2338002 233770</p>	<p>PERSONAL</p> <p>CHANGE OF NAME</p> <p>I, Syed Amethulla also known as Rafiq Ahmed S/O of Late Pasha Syed Abdulla P/O No. 22, 14th B Cross, behind Metro Station, Sarakki Layout, JP Nagar, Bengaluru 560078, Karnataka, India, shall henceforth be known as Syed Amethulla with affidavit sworn before notary public at Bengaluru. Passed dated 29th February 2024.</p>	<p>SITUATION VACANT</p> <p>GENERAL</p> <p>REQUIRED Kannada Telecallers, (Fresher / Experienced) Location: Mallewaram, Bengaluru Salary (Rs. 15000/- per month), Working Hours: 8:00 PM to 8:30 PM. Interested give missed call to 7699250202</p>
<p>LEGAL NOTICE</p> <p>IN THE COURT OF THE JUDGE MAYOHALI UNIT AT BANGALORE (CCH-29) O.S. No. 26880/2022</p> <p>Between ICICI Bank Limited, Having its registered office at Landmark, Race Course Circle, Vidyanagar-560 007 and having its Corporate office at ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai-400 051 and its branch office at Mythes Centre, 47/10, Hour Road, Bommanahalli, Bengaluru-560 066.</p> <p>Represented by its POA Holder Sri. Pramodh Gurumallappa, ...Plaintiff And Sri. Javad Allipora ...Defendant</p> <p>SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT To, Sri. Javad Allipora, S/O Sri. Savad Allipora, Aged about 35 years, No. 17, Ground Floor, Anantavani Apartments, Curuguda Layout, 10th Main, 3rd Cross, Banashankari, Bengaluru-560 085.</p> <p>WHEREAS the Plaintiff has instituted above said suit against you for recovery Rs.10,86,733/- (Rupees Ten Lakh Sixty Six Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty Three Only) together with interest @ 24% p.a. cost of the suit and grant such other or further order as may be deemed fit.</p> <p>The above mentioned Defendant hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble 28th Additional City Civil & Sessions Judge (CCH-29) in person or through a Counsel who can file to answer the claim made against you on 16/03/2024 at 11:00 a.m. failing which the suit is heard and disposed ex-parte. Given under my hand and the seal of the Hon'ble Court on this 16/02/2024.</p> <p>BY ORDER OF THE DEPUTY REGISTRAR, CITY CIVIL COURT, MAYOHALI UNIT, BANGALORE</p> <p>ADVOCATE FOR PLAINTIFF S.A. Associates, No. 10, 7th Cross, Victoria Layout, Bengaluru - 560 047</p>	<p>LEGAL NOTICE</p> <p>IN THE COURT OF THE JUDGE MAYOHALI UNIT AT BANGALORE (CCH-29) O.S. No. 271/2021</p> <p>BETWEEN: Smt. Rani, W/o, Late Anantharam B.S. & Another, both as PLAINTIFFS, Residing at No. 26, Chera Street, Hindustani School, 1st Tenple Road, Hebbal, Bengaluru-56.</p> <p>AND: Sri Venkatesh & Others</p> <p>Respondents No. 7, 10 and 11B are summoned U/O Rule 20 CPC</p> <p>7. Smt. Ravaretti, daughter of late Manjappa Shetty, Aged about 42 years, (Defendants 8 to 11) are residing at Co. Karanamma, No.593, 1st Tenple Road, Hebbal, Bengaluru-56.</p> <p>10. Smt. Lalitha, daughter of late Koomaraswamy Shetty, Aged about 40 years (Defendants 12 to 14) are residing at 15, Piggilime Main Road, 10th Cross, Hebbal, Bengaluru-56.</p> <p>11. Smt. Lalitha, daughter of late Koomaraswamy Shetty, aged about 42 years, Residing at No. 26, Chera Street, Hindustani School, 1st Tenple Road, Hebbal, Bengaluru-56.</p> <p>NOTICE</p> <p>WHEREAS, the above named have filed petition before the Hon'ble Court under Order XXIV, Rule 54 of Code of Civil Procedure seeking for disbursement, interest and interest.</p> <p>You are hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble Court in person or through a Counsel who shall be accompanied by some person able to answer all such questions on the 27th day of March 2024 at 11 A.M. to answer the claim, and you are directed to produce on that day all the documents upon which you intend to rely upon in support of your defence.</p> <p>Take notice that, in default of your appearance on the day aforesaid mentioned, the petition will be heard and disposed in your absence.</p> <p>SCHEDULE PROPERTY</p> <p>North Western portion of the A schedule property, measuring 100 feet by 100 feet, with city order flooring having a hall, kitchen, bed room with bathroom with a separate entrance, such as water, electric and sewage connections measuring an area of about 600 square feet and bounded on the East by No. 10, 7th Cross, Victoria Layout, West by Road, North by Common passage on the A schedule property. South by Another house of the schedule property. Given under my hand and the seal of the Hon'ble Court on this 05/02/2024.</p> <p>By order of the Court, Assistant Registrar, City Civil Court, Bengaluru, Karnataka in presence of the Parties.</p> <p>K.S. CHANDRANARAYAN, Advocate, No. 32/3 Sri Ramya Nagar, Opp. B.D.A. Complex, 3rd Main, 1st Block, Bengaluru - Bengaluru - 560 053.</p>	<p>LEGAL NOTICE</p> <p>IN THE COURT OF THE JUDGE MAYOHALI UNIT AT BANGALORE (CCH-29) O.S. No. 25413/2023</p> <p>Between ICICI Bank Limited, Having its registered office at Landmark, Race Course Circle, Vidyanagar-560 007 and having its Corporate office at ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai-400 051 and its branch office at Mythes Centre, 47/10, Hour Road, Bommanahalli, Bengaluru-560 066.</p> <p>Represented by its Collection Manager & POA Holder, Sri Pramodh Gurumallappa ...Plaintiff And Sri Pradeep V. ...Defendant</p> <p>SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT To, Sri Pradeep V. S/O. Sri Verma P.R. Aged about 36 years, No. 11, 2nd Floor, 3rd Cross, JC Nagar, Behind Canara Bank, Bengaluru-560 086</p> <p>WHEREAS the Plaintiff has instituted above said suit against you for recovery of Rs. 4,98,900/- (Rupees Four Lakh Ninety Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty Five Only) MAYOHALI UNIT, BANGALORE</p> <p>WHEREAS the Plaintiff has instituted above said suit against you for recovery of Rs. 4,98,900/- (Rupees Four Lakh Ninety Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty Five Only) MAYOHALI UNIT, BANGALORE</p> <p>The above mentioned Defendant hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble 28th Additional City Civil & Sessions Judge (CCH - 29) in person or through a Counsel who can file to answer the claim made against you on 12/03/2024, at 11:00 a.m. failing which the suit is heard and disposed ex-parte. The above mentioned Defendant hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble 28th Additional City Civil & Sessions Judge (CCH - 29) in person or through a Counsel who can file to answer the claim made against you on 12/03/2024, at 11:00 a.m. failing which the suit is heard and disposed ex-parte.</p> <p>Given under my hand and the seal of the Hon'ble Court on this 05/02/2024.</p> <p>BY ORDER OF THE DEPUTY REGISTRAR, CITY CIVIL COURT, MAYOHALI UNIT, BANGALORE</p> <p>ADVOCATE FOR PLAINTIFF S.A. Associates, No. 10, 7th Cross, Victoria Layout, Bengaluru-560 047</p>

Timings

BENGALURU	
MONDAY, MAR. 04	
RISE: 06:34	SET: 18:29
TUESDAY, MAR. 05	
RISE: 06:55	SET: 18:24
WEDNESDAY, MAR. 06	
RISE: 06:32	SET: 18:29
RISE: 06:33	SET: 18:29
RISE: 06:34	SET: 18:24

Bengaluru Weather max min
 Bengaluru 33 23
 Mysuru 34 20
 Bengaluru 33 19

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

Bengaluru Tomorrow
 32°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm. Night will be pleasant.

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The Great Flap: Non-events can be history too: Mukund Padmanabhan

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

"I am trying to make the point that a non-event can be a historical event," said Mukund Padmanabhan, former editor of The Hindu, at the Bengaluru launch of his book The Great Flap of 1942: How the Raj Panicked over a Japanese Non-invasion. At the event, which was held at the Leela Bhartiya City, Padmanabhan spoke about the title of his debut book. It came from the expression that British bureaucrats used informally to refer to that period of history between 1941 and 42 when the Raj believed that the Japanese would invade India, too, said Padmanabhan, who today is a distinguished professor of philosophy at Krea University. "Essentially, it is a fear of a Japanese invasion that never happened," he told veteran



Virender Razdan, General Manager of The Leela Bhartiya City Bengaluru, and journalist Karan Thapar at the launch of the book, The Great Flap of 1942 by journalist Mukund Padmanabhan (right). THE LEELA, BHARTIYA CITY

journalist Karan Thapar, whom he was in conversation with at the event. Thapar, who works with The Wire, brought up several fascinating anecdotes detailed in the book, veering from the tragic massacre of the Madras Zoo to how the city became a ghost town and the ICS officer Paul M. Jayaraj's somewhat atypical version of a scorched earth policy. "It seems that the city which was most affected by the fear of an invasion that never happened was Madras, as it was called at that time," said Thapar, quoting from a section of the book that estimated that nearly 87.5% of the city's residents fled from it at this time. Padmanabhan, in response, went into why the city was so badly hit. "Madras

was the only city where an official order was issued to please go to not absolutely needed. That set Madras apart," he said. Some of the other things discussed included some interesting revelations about Mahatma Gandhi, the British paranoia about rumours which portrayed the Japanese in a positive way and why Indian record-keeping left much to be desired. "The Flap hasn't got the attention it deserves," said Padmanabhan, admitting that he wished he had written the book 20 years earlier when more people who had memories of this period were still alive. He also spoke about his mother's memories of the Flap and how he lived and grew up with this story. "Every boy has a story of the Flap, but it is not put down with accuracy. There are just anecdotal stories," he said.

Months after KIC orders FIR over missing files, BBMP yet to lodge complaint

RTI Study Centre has now filed a complaint in this connection with the Dy. CM urging him to take action against errant officials who were involved in the alleged misappropriation of funds

Shreyas H.S.
BENGALURU

Months after the Karnataka Information Commission directed the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) to register a complaint in the police station over missing files in connection with the annual maintenance of storm-water drains (SWD), the civic body is yet to do so. The case is coming up for a hearing on March 7. The direction was given on October 13, 2023 and the civic body claims they are yet to receive the copy of the order.

Initially, an RTI application was filed with the BBMP seeking bills and other files on payment to a private company for annual maintenance of SWD. The company was given a ₹25 crore annual contract in 2019-2020 for three years. It is suspected that the BBMP generated fabricated bills and there was no such private company in existence and no work was done. An activist named Veeresh filed a complaint with the Lokayukta.

In 2022, when an RTI activist, B. Balakrishna filed a Right to Information (RTI) application seeking details and documents of these works, the information officer in the SWD Depart-



An RTI application was filed with the BBMP seeking bills and other files on payment to a private company for annual maintenance of storm-water drains. FILE PHOTO

ment responded by saying that the department did not have any details that the activist sought. After this, he filed an appeal with the first appellate authority. Even after submitting an appeal, the BBMP did not share the details.

Mr. Balakrishna then approached the Karnataka Information Commission seeking directions to the BBMP to provide copies of the relevant files. The commission, after hearing the case for several months, found the files in the SWD Department to be "missing". Shocked by the development, the commission directed the Executive Engineer to lodge a com-

A BBMP official from the SWD Department says the department has not received the order and once they receive the order, a complaint will be filed

plaint and get an FIR registered on October 13, 2023. Veeresh, an RTI activist talking to *The Hindu* said the BBMP is yet to file the complaint. From the BBMP website, he had downloaded a few bills and found that the civic body allegedly paid ₹100 crore to this company. But there were no details about the contract, inspection, or verification of the work done.

To hide the alleged corruption, the BBMP is not providing the information, he alleged.

On the other hand, the Right to Information Study Centre has now filed a complaint in this connection with Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister D.K. Shivakumar. The complaint has urged Mr. Shivakumar to take action against errant officials who were involved in the alleged misappropriation of the funds.

A BBMP official from the SWD Department said the department has not received the order and once they receive the order, a complaint will be filed.



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Karnataka

Cafe blast: Is it not failure of NIA, IB, and RAW, asks CM

Siddaramaiah says govt. has taken the incident seriously and probe has been handed over to the special crime branch

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Taking exception to the BJP leaders' comments on the blast in Rameshwaram Cafe in Bengaluru, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday wondered if it was not the failure of the Central agencies like National Investigation Agency (NIA), Intelligence Bureau (IB), and Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).

Answering a query during an interaction with presspersons in Chikkama-



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah speaking to presspersons in Chikkamagaluru on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

galuru, Mr. Siddaramaiah said the government had taken the incident seriously.

body should do politics over the incident. Who was in power when a blast occurred in Mangaluru? Who was in power when there was a blast near the BJP office in Malleshwaram? There were four such blasts during the BJP rule," he said. "Is it not failure of NIA, IB, RAW?" he said, adding "under whose control are these agencies?"

Asked if the investigation would be handed over to the NIA, the Chief Minister said the State government had handed over the case to the CCB and they

had begun the investigation. "If handing over to NIA is necessary, we will examine the issue," he said.

Regarding the increase in KFD cases in Chikkamagaluru, the Chief Minister said he would discuss the issue with the Minister for Health and senior officers of the department. The Chief Minister visited Chikkamagaluru to address a meeting of beneficiaries of the government's guarantee schemes and attend the marriage of M.L.S.L. Bhoje Gowda's daughter.

Blast episode triggers political slugfest between BJP and Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The episode of blast at Rameshwaram Cafe in Bengaluru triggered a political slugfest on Sunday between the BJP and the Congress.

The BJP accused the Congress government of sympathising with anti-social elements and terror organisations. It maintained that the Congress had no moral right to continue in power. Responding sharply to it, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar alleged that the BJP was tarnishing the image of Karnataka as well as Bengaluru by trying to politicise the episode of blast.

Accusing the Congress government of sympathising with anti-social elements and terror organisations, Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly R. Ashok said that though permission was sought for the entry of 25 persons, more than 100 had gained entry into the Vidhana Soudha.

"The Congress is focusing on the Lok Sabha elections and indulging in vote bank politics. It is continuing with its anti-people policies. We have petitioned the Governor to dismiss the government," Mr. Ashok said after inaugurating BJP's "Sankalp Abhiyan", the preparatory meeting for the manifesto preparation for the Lok Sabha elections.

Mr. Ashok said that it was a matter of concern to see the manner in which Congress government was behaving after the "pro-Pakistan" slogan shouting



Former cricketer Venkatesh Prasad at the 'Viksit Bharat' event with BJP State president B.V. Vijayendra and Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly R. Ashok in Bengaluru on Sunday.

in Vidhana Soudha and Rameshwaram Cafe blast. Seeking reasons from the government for not arresting anyone in the slogan shouting incident, Mr. Ashok said that though permission was sought for the entry of 25 persons, more than 100 had gained entry into the Vidhana Soudha.

"Though FSL has given its report, the government is stating that the report has not reached them. What is the force that is stopping the government from releasing the report," he asked.

Stating that the government has shown a way for the accused to escape, he said: "Section 505 and section 153 of IPC have been invoked whereas the police should have actually invoked section 124 A for anti-national activities. Everyone, including Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, are saying different things,

and there is no coordination in the government." With respect to Rameshwaram Cafe blast, he said that the government for political reasons was not ready to accept that it was a blast though police have acknowledged that it was an act of terror. He said: "The government looks dead. It is better for them to resign and go."

DKS responds

Responding sharply to it, Mr. Shivakumar said: "The BJP is exploiting the opportunity to gain political mileage. They are tarnishing the image of Bengaluru and Karnataka in the process. They may have forgotten things that happened during their term. I don't want to indulge in politics over that, but they should be aware of the nation's unity, integrity and peace."

'Guarantee schemes have reached 4.6 cr. people'

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the government's guarantee schemes have reached over 4.6 crore people in the State, and with that, the purchasing power of the people strengthened.

He was addressing a convention of beneficiaries of guarantee schemes in Chikkamagaluru on Sunday. In Chikkamagaluru district alone, women had utilised the benefit of free travel under the Shakti scheme over 1.52 crore



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, and Minister of Energy K.J. George inaugurating development works in Chikkamagaluru on Sunday.

times, which incurred an expenditure of over ₹55 crore.

Besides that, the number of people visiting the pilgrimage centres also in-

creased in the State with the effective implementation of the scheme.

Similarly, 2.95 lakh families were getting the benefit of Gruhajyothi, 2.41 lakh families were getting Anna Bhagya, 2.44 lakh women were getting ₹2,000 every month under Gruha Lakshmi, and 2,657 youth had enrolled in the Yuva Nidhi scheme. The government had been spending ₹486.86 crore to reach these benefits to the beneficiaries in the district, he said.

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, address-

ing the beneficiaries, said the guarantee schemes had been benefiting all families, irrespective of the party they supported.

Referring to leaders of the BJP and JD(S) criticizing the guarantee schemes, Mr. Shivakumar challenged them to ask their party supporters to give up the benefits of the schemes.

Energy Minister K.J. George, legislators H.D. Thammaiah, T.D. Rajee Gowda, Nayana Motamma, G.H. Srinivas and officers were present at the programme.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

MP's self-appraisal

Appraisal is a common exercise in the private sector and the session tends to be aloof with gossip revolving around "low performers" walking away with the highest raise while the self-righteous with lower score will sulk in the corner airing their woes to anyone walking past the water cooler.

But in possibly a first, a politician has carried out such an exercise and submitted it to the party bigwigs. The self-appraisal was carried out by Mysuru MP Prapat Simsha (in picture) and he called upon BJP national president J.P. Nadda and Union Home Minister Amit Shah recently and submitted what he described as a "report card" of his performance. Mr. Simsha said the "report card" was a statement on various development works undertaken or works in process in the jurisdiction of Mysuru and Kodagu which he represents, since 2014, when he was first elected. "These works have profoundly impacted the lives of common people and acted as a catalyst for the overall economic growth of the region," said Mr. Simsha. While one cannot recall

any other example of an MP submitting a "report card" prepared by himself to his higher-ups, Mr. Simsha's self-appraisal comes ahead of the general elections amidst rumours in certain circles that he could be denied the coveted 'B' form to contest from his constituency.

Remove 'secular' tag

The word "secular" seems to be the most contested one in Indian politics at the moment. The parties interpret the word according to their political convenience. During his reply to the debate on the State Budget in the Legislative Assembly last week, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah suggested to JD (S) leaders to remove the word "secular" from its name. The Chief Minister took strong exception to the BJP-JD (S) alliance and told the leaders of the latter to remove the word "secular" from its name, amidst anti-Congress slogans by the BJP. Mr. Siddaramaiah said JD (S) was true to its principles when he was the State president of the party in the 1990s. After tie-up with the BJP, it has lost its "secular" character and it was better to remove the tag from its name.

R. Krishna Kumar
Nagesh Prabhu

Nadda to review poll preparations

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

BJP president J.P. Nadda will hold a meeting of party leaders of a few NK districts in Belagavi on Monday and Tuesday to review the party's preparations for Lok Sabha polls. He will arrive in Belagavi at 8 p.m. on Monday and chair a party core committee meeting. Party State unit president B.V. Vijayendra, office-bearers and members of the election committee from Bagalkot, Vijayapura and Belagavi districts will attend.

NOTICE TO 2ND RESPONDENT
Exclusive Motor Accident Claims Tribunal Tirupur
Tribunal Tirupur
IA. No: 31/2018
IA. No: 1/2023
MCOP. No: 139/2013
Murugesan vs - Petitioner
Vadivelu Murugan, No. 802, Main Road, K.B.N. Extension, Bengaluru
Karnataka State - 2nd Respondent
Whereas the above named petitioner has made a main application to the above court for claiming compensation arising out of an accident in which the petitioner sustained injury in a road accident. Meanwhile the petitioner filed a petition in IA. No.31/2018 under section 5 limitation act before the above court. You are hereby duly instructed to appear before the above court in person or by a pleader on the day of 4th March 2024 at 10.00 O'clock in the forenoon failing where in the said application will be heard and determined ex parte.
Advocate for the Petitioner
V.S. Subramanian (B.A., B.L., Advocate & Notary (Govt. of India),
Rd No 87/11996, Kummatha-438 103, Shihudali (TK), Tirupur (Dt), Tamilnadu

RAICHUR DEPUTY COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE
Raichur District Urban Development Cell
Comp No: 33601 DCRAI-PDOENG/1/2023-PD/UD-RAICHUR Dated: 01-03-2024
SHORT TERM TENDER
The Under signed invites online proposals through the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal (KPPP) with URL <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> from experienced and eligible consultants/engineers/Engineering consultants for the selection of agency for providing third party services for inspection and monitoring of developmental works executed and goods procured by the urban local bodies of Raichur district under various grants and funds for the year 2024-25. The KPPP Tender number is DMA/2023-24/SE/1804. Estimated cost of assignment is Rs 55.00 lakhs (Amount put to Bid is Rs 53.73 lakhs including GST) and EMD to be paid is Rs 1,07,460.00. Date & time of uploading RFP document on KPPP: 01-03-2024 at 5:00 PM. Last date & time for submitting proposal for the service through KPPP: 12-03-2024 up to 5:00 p.m. Date and time of opening of the technical bid through KPPP: 13-03-2024 at 5:15 PM. Date and time of opening of the Financial bid through KPPP: 15-03-2024 at 11:00 AM. For detailed RFP notification the proposers may visit website www.raichurdudc.mrc.gov.in.
Sd/- Project Director
DIP/RCR/568/KSMCA/Job No 565/2023-24 Raichur District Urban Development Cell

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Sl. No.	Division	IFT Number	Amount put to tender EMD (in Rs.)	Last date & time for Submission of tender	Date & time for Opening of Tender
1	East-2	BWSSB/EE(E)-2/PB/5475/2023-24 Date: 02.03.2024	Rs. 11,52,533/- Rs. 34,000/-	11.03.2024 upto 4:00 p.m.	13.03.2024 after 4:00 p.m.
Sd/- Executive Engineer (East)-2					
2	South East-2	BWSSB/EESE-2/TO/PB/3579/2023-24 Date: 28.02.2024	Rs. 33,69,258.42 Rs. 79,520/- Rs. 29,31,931.44	13.03.2024 upto 4:00 p.m.	15.03.2024 after 3:00 p.m.
Sd/- Executive Engineer (South East -2)					
Office of the Chief Engineer (South), 7th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 009.					
4	South West-2	BWSSB/EEESW-2/TO/PB/3487/2023-24 Date: 29.02.2024	Rs. 29,12,481/- Rs. 68,750/- Rs. 42,08,921/-	14.03.2024 upto 4:00 p.m.	16.03.2024 after 12:00 Noon
5	South West-2	BWSSB/EEEW-2/TO/PB/3489/2023-24 Date: 29.02.2024	Rs. 99,350/-		
Sd/- Executive Engineer (South West-2)					
Office of the Chief Engineer (West), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 009.					
6	West-1	BWSSB/EEW-1/PB/4180/2023-24 Date: 01.03.2024 (Call-2)	Rs. 52,02,319/- Rs. 1,04,100/-	13.03.2024 upto 4:00 p.m.	14.03.2024 after 4:30 p.m.
7	West-1	BWSSB/EEW-1/PB/4182/2023-24 Date: 01.03.2024 (Call-2)	Rs. 27,72,394/- Rs. 55,500/-	13.03.2024 upto 4:00 p.m.	14.03.2024 after 4:30 p.m.
Sd/- Executive Engineer (West)-1					
8	North West-2	BWSSB/EEENW-2/TO/PB/3257/2023-24 Date: 01.03.2024	Rs. 92,59,209/- Rs. 1,85,200/-	13.03.2024 upto 4:00 p.m.	15.03.2024 after 4:30 p.m.
Sd/- Executive Engineer (North West)-2					
Office of the Chief Engineer (Design & Quality Assurance), 9th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 009.					
9	RB-IT	BWSSB/EE(RB-IT)/961/2023-24 Date: 02.03.2024 (Call-2)	Rs. 30,42,455/- Rs. 62,000/-	13.03.2024 upto 4:00 p.m.	14.03.2024 at 4:01 p.m.
Sd/- Executive Engineer (RB-IT)					

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to <https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. For further details contact the above office during working hours.
DIP/CP/RA/4027/2023-24

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

REMEMBRANCE
IN FOND REMEMBRANCE

Sri. K. Kuppuswamy Naidu
Founder & Managing Director
Born: 13-10-1925 Died: 04-03-2007
Your pioneering effort & fighting spirit will always remain our guiding force
R. Vijay Krishna
S/o K. Rajiah, Founder Director
Chamundeshwari Studio & Lab. Pvt. Ltd.
Family, Grandsons & Loyal Workers

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MoUs to enhance skills among students: Minister

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Minister for Higher Education M.C. Sudhakar on Sunday said the State government has set its vision for improving employability skills among the youth, joining hands with private

players and educational foundations for the purpose.

The process of getting into MoUs with the idea of imparting skills among the students of universities and government degree colleges has begun, the Minister said.

KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT STOCK (SECURITIES) Finance Department Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru.
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2. Method of Issue : By auction, through PDO, RBI, Mumbai (Fort).
3. Date of Auction: March 05, 2024.
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Sd/- (Dr. P. C. Jaffer) Secretary to Government (Budget & Resources), Finance Department
DIP/RCR/RO/3960/2023-24

Government of Karnataka
Administrative Medical Officer (Office), General Hospital Belur, Belur(T), Hassan(D)-573115.
Phone No-08177-222246 E-mail ID: gbelur@gmail.com
Tender Notification
(Through www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in / www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in) Tender were Invited through E-Procurement/ KPP portal for Out Source Group D and Nonclinical service to Taluk General Hospital, Belur, Belur Dist (100 Bedded Hospital). Tender Document can be submitted from Dated:02.03/2024 and Deadline for receipt of tender Documents is on D:16/03/2024 4.30pm, for more details will be available at www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in
Sd/-Administrative medical officer, General Hospital, Belur Hassan Dist-573115
DIP/RCR/RO/3960/2023-24

Healing ways: Contours of mental health landscape of Bengaluru

A panel discussion on 'How Can Bangalore Do Better for the Mental Health of Its Residents?' held at the BIC, Domlur, looked at a range of issues like the history and evolution of NIMHANS, the positive effect of green spaces on mental health, the role of family in caregiving, the limitations of legislation, and the treatment gap in mental health

Preeti Zachariah
BENGALURU

S ometime in the 1980s, a man barged into the cockpit of an Indian airliner, brandishing a plastic gun, claiming that it was being hijacked. "The plane was forced to land in Bengaluru," recalled renowned psychiatrist Dr Sanjeev Jain at a panel discussion titled "Minding the City: How Can Bangalore Do Better for the Mental Health of Its Residents?" held at the Bangalore International Centre (BIC) in Domlur. When the man, a patient of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) who was having a manic episode, came out of the plane, he pulled out his NIMHANS card, almost as if the document provided some indemnity.

He was brought to the institute, continued the Bengaluru-based clinician and teacher, who shared the stage with sociologist and mental health rights activist Dr Nirmala Srinivasan and writer and editor Kavya Murthy at the event. "NIMHANS had become part of the local ecology of the whole city," he said, recalling a time when simply showing a NIMHANS OPD slip was enough to get one a free bus fare to the institute. "You didn't need a disability card or stamps from various authorities," he said. According to him, even though we are more open, technologically-savvy society today, this kind of graciousness for people coming to the hospital and their families has reduced over the years.

Mental health
Anecdotes such as this constantly popped up during the panel discussion, furthering a nuanced, complex discussion on mental health, which

veered from the history and evolution of the institute to the positive effect of green spaces on mental health, the role of family in caregiving, the limitations of legislation, the treatment gap in mental health and so much more. "There is a lot of noise about mental health," pointed out Dr Srinivasan. She said she saw this as a positive development as was the increased sensitivity towards mental health. "I look forward to a bright and positive future for mental health."

However, one thing that disturbs her is the tendency to ignore the distinction between the broad spectrum of mental health and mental health disorders within it. "That is not happening. I look forward to that taking place, and I am sure that the trend is towards that," she said, adding that accessibility is another important thing that needs to be addressed. "There should be distributive justice of services," she stated.

About NIMHANS

Murthy, who was moderating the session, started by asking about the landscapes important for mental healthcare to work, the unique infrastructure of open pavilions and trees at NIMHANS and its close relationship with Bengaluru. "Could you tell us about what you have explored in your work and how you look at the individual, society and institution?" she asked.

Dr Jain responded by briefly tracing the institution's journey. "It starts off at the Hospital for Peons, Paupers and Soldiers in the Cantonment, and it moves to another side of the city, what is now the State Bank of Mysore," he said. In the 1930s or so, as that part of town became more crowd-



Francis Xavier Noronha, the first superintendent of NIMHANS, played a pivotal role in creating the institute's lush campus. FILE PHOTO

ed, the asylum moved to a hillcock between Lal Bagh and Basavangudi, close to the Victoria Hospital.

"Indian psychiatrists were trained in the UK and felt that there is a need for better asylums matching those of the UK," said Dr Jain, adding that a lot of planning went into choosing a site that would be even more salubrious than the larger city of Bengaluru in the 19th century.

Dr Jain also mentioned how Dr Francis (Frank) Xavier Noronha, the first superintendent of this new facility, played a pivotal role in creating the institute's lush campus. Dr Noronha was a passionate gardener, which led to the planting of many semi-decortative and medicinal trees on the 125-acre campus, he said, adding that there were around 350 patients back then, in keeping with the idea that 5-6 people needed an acre of land to spend their lives on. And while the city has grown exponentially since then, "these kinds of spaces haven't been created any-



Mental health rights activist Nirmala Srinivasan, psychiatrist Sanjeev Jain, and writer and editor Kavya Murthy at a panel discussion in Bengaluru. LEENA NAUDU

where else," he says. So what has worked and not worked, asked Murthy. "Success lies in the eyes of the beholder," laughed Dr Jain. NIMHANS - which had a staff of 6 when it was established in 1954 as the All India Institute of Mental Health - today has a staff of 200. "We used to see about 1000 admissions a year. Now we have around 12,000 in psychiatry and another 8000 in neuro-

logy," he said. These numbers, the institute gets around half a million patient visits annually, he says, put immense pressure on NIMHANS.

While the service provision has improved, it doesn't always answer the needs of the people efficiently, he admitted. "Every morning, you get 1,000 patients. No matter how many staff you have, and if you



I don't separate the family from the individual the way mental health experts look at it. How can you use 'burden of care'; it is my flesh-and-blood.

NIRMALA SRINIVASAN
mental health rights activist

need to spend at least half an hour per person, there is simply no time."

A family matter

Family and their role in the management of mental health was another thing that came up in the discussion. Dr Srinivasan, for instance, shared her first impression of NIMHANS when she walked into it "as a 6-year daughter of a mother who was admitted there," she said, recalling the beautiful park and courtyard of the institute, the trees and buildings and acres of land surrounding the cottage her mother was housed in.

"I didn't find anything odd," said Dr Srinivasan, adding that her trust with mental illness was a long journey, starting when she was a 3-year-old baby born in Victoria Hospital. "It is a beautiful experience to understand mental illness," he said. Dr Srinivasan, who played a pivotal role in enabling an ambulance service for psychiatric emergencies in the city.

Dr Jain talked about the establishment of the mental hospital in Amritsar and how it started from tents, with families playing a key role in the caregiving process, something that was also seen in the family wards of CMC Vellore.

"With that came the assumption that the families can be engaged in treatment and long-term outcome of the patient," he said. Unfortunately, ho-

wever, caregiving has become more complicated with shrinking family units. "The average size of family has dropped to four. If one person is ill, the other three cannot afford to look after another person," he said, pointing out that the question of who will look after a person with mental illness after their primary caregiver's time is a very high concern in the Indian context. "Family members need to share the care, but that should not reduce or make the government insensitive to providing care."

Srinivasan offered a slightly different take on the matter. "I don't separate the family from the individual the way mental health experts look at it. How can you use 'burden of care'; it is my flesh-and-blood." In her opinion, the words chosen by doctors matter a lot since they influence the family's thinking, attitude and behaviour. "I wish that we banish this expression, the burden of care," she said.

Dr Jain added that the term "burden" in relation to mental illness was specifically formulated in Nazi Germany. "They killed people in mental hospitals in Germany because of this concept of burden," he said. He also noted that the word was often only applied to mental illness. "No one talks about the burden of cancer, hypertension, heart diseases. It is a problem to be solved," he said. "The word burden has unfortunate connotations."

This event is part of the 'Listening to Voices' project that documents audio stories about mental health in Bengaluru. A pilot installation, inspired by Itaru Sasaki's windphone, will be open to the public from Feb 29th (5 pm) to March 5th (8 pm) at the BIC Garden area.

Australian Consulate extends a helping hand

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Australian Consulate-General, Bengaluru, recently announced a new partnership with SEED, an NGO, to support women entrepreneurs in tier 2 and 3 cities in Karnataka.

According to a release, the project EmpowerHER will help women in tier 2 and 3 cities to enter the workforce and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

"SEED will facilitate a combination of practical training, mentorship, and community support for the participants in cities including Mysuru, Hubballi, Dharwad and Belagavi. The program will target an estimated 2,000 participants," said the release.

Australian Consul General Hilary McCauley said, "Australia is proud to continue our support of women's aspirations in India. As a new Consulate-General based in Bengaluru, we are particularly proud this project will be building relationships with communities across Karnataka." Australia will provide ₹10.8 lakh for the facilitation of the programme.

Tide and one-time passwords wait for no man

I haven't had the courage to share the OTP with a random stranger just to see what might happen. Don't forget that even in the OTP world, context is everything. If I told you, say, 4296, would you know what to do with it?

ABOUT 500 WORDS

Suresh Menon

Consider the OTP. Affectionately known as the one-time password. Or, alternatively, the original trigger for pain.

It probably makes people's lives simpler. It gives the OTP generator in our banks something to do. I imagine the generator as a wizened man in a long white beard whose hobby is frightening children waiting at bus stops with a well-placed 'boo' in their ears.

After sterling service for many years generating three-time passwords and two-time ditto, he has now made it to the top of the profession. For one time. Actually, the OTP wheeze is a many-splendored thing. It gives the illusion of protecting our money, our honour, our future. And it gives the message-generator the excuse to send us another message, this one warning us against sharing the OTP with friend or foe. I haven't had the



courage to share the OTP with a random stranger just to see what might happen. Don't forget that even in the OTP world, context is everything. If I told you, say, 4296, would you know what to do with it?

Two-fold problem

My problem is two-fold. Firstly, my phone and I don't always share the same space, and when an

OTP arrives with the fanfare of a groom riding to his wedding, I rush about like the priest, discovering he is in the wrong place at the wrong time. When my wife hears my desperation as I run around the house screaming 'OTP, OTP' at the top of my voice, she hides herself in a cupboard till the storm blows over. My ears have a version

of long-sightedness. I can hear the neighbour's phone announcing a message, the car backing near a faraway metro station, but I can't hear my phone nearby. By the time I locate it under a book (who phones hide under books?) and find the OTP, I discover that the time limit has expired and the OTP needs to be re-sent. Sometimes I need to start the whole process

from the start. The second problem is how deeply the OTP philosophy has been embedded in my daily life. I dash off a quick message to a friend and wait for the OTP.

I call another friend to wish her for her birthday and think I hear an OTP in the distance, which I promptly repeat to her. She says it back to me in case I get violent if there's no response.

One more figure

I was watching the budget speech the other day and thought the Finance Minister might end with an OTP. Just one more figure told dramatically and in support of our galloping economy.

After Queen Mary lost Calais to the French (it was England's last foothold on continental Europe), she remarked "when I am dead and opened, you shall find Calais engraved on my heart". If they open me up, they will find 'OTP' written beside a four-digit, six-digit or eight-digit number, as the case might be. Maybe they'll find 'Calais' too in some corner, it's difficult to say.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 4, 1974

Co-ordinated effort in promotion of education

MYSORE, March 3: Mr. Mohanlal Sukhadia, Karnataka Governor, called for co-ordinating private and Governmental effort in promotion of education.

Inaugurating the Royal Educational Society's School Day celebrations here, the governor praised private initiative for its role in children's education. But as the number of schools going children was bound to keep on increasing, what was required was careful perspective planning, which would take into account the demand for schooling in the years to come, he said.

Mrs. K.S. Nagarathanamma, Karnataka Assembly Speaker presided.

Taluk Boards poll: Bill published

BANGALORE, March 3: The Bill to replace the ordinance seeking the postponement of elections to the panchayats and taluk boards to the end of February 1975 has been published. The extended term of office of the members of the panchayats and the taluk boards under the Karnataka Village panchayats and local boards, Act 1959 are due to expire in February 1974 and November 1974. According to the Bill, there was no provision to postpone the elections beyond February 1974 as the maximum term of 6 years would expire by that time and view of the unfavourable conditions which prevailed in the State and further in the interest of fair and peaceful conduct of the panchayat elections, the Government considered it necessary to postpone the elections to January 1975.

CITYBEATS



Para-verse' it

MARCH 5 TO 9

Be a part of the 'Write Out Loud Poetry Evening'. Called a celebration of the spoken word, where poets and poetry enthusiasts come together to share their creative expressions, language and explore the depths of human emotions through poetry. The organisers describe it as an opportunity for people "to connect with the power of words and immerse themselves in a night of literary artistry".

At Lahe Lahe. Tickets on BookMyShow



Celebrating art and artists

ON TILL MARCH 31

This exhibition is called 'The Masters & The Modern: An Amalgamation of the Old & New World Classics'. The exhibition is said to bridge the historical depth and contemporary vitality of Indian art, and will see works by renowned artists sharing the space with contemporary ones. The show will also feature art by VS Gaitonde and MF Husain to name a few.

On at Gallery G, Lavelle Road, between 10am and 6pm.



Tradition on a platter

ONGOING

Now you can dig into the classic traditional dish from Vijayawada, *ulavacharu guddu biryani* in Bengaluru. Made with the native *ulavala* (horse gram), fragrant rice and vegetables, the vegetarian *biryani* is a hot favourite. The speciality of this dish is that it is slow-cooked with traditional recipes.

Available at United Telugu Kitchens, Kanakapura Road. Call 9459986666.

Arts, science, and climate change: Intertwined entanglements

Arkatapa Basu

At a time when climate change has become a buzzword and global machinations are remiss in showing any constructive action, artists and scientists are coming together to show how critical the natural world and our interactions with it are.

The travelling exhibition, *Critical Zones: In Search of a Common Ground*, after travelling to Mumbai, Colombo, Pune, Kolkata and Delhi, is finally here in Bengaluru. It has brought with it a plethora of photographs, videos and multimedia installations that not only highlight geographically critical zones but also the social fabric enmeshed with the natural world.

The exhibition, which started in 2020 at the ZKM: Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe, Germany, is conceptualised around the idea that the habitable zones on Earth only stretch for a few precious kilometres and are critical to life on the planet.

Conceived by Bruno Latour, a French philosopher, anthropologist and sociologist, and Peter Weibel, an Austrian artist, curator and visual poet, the exhibition features a unique curatorial method that is based on aesthetics and the participatory capacity of the arts. This method uses the arts to evoke critical thinking on issues such as the climate crisis and shines a light on the intersectional biases that come with it.

"What is man's attitude towards the planet Earth?" says Francesca Romana Audretsch, the art mediator of the exhibition. "Humanity can no longer deny that the earth has its own agency and is reactive. This relationship is indeed changing, as the climate crisis is urgently showing us. What do we do when our relationship with the Earth is changing? We need to reorient ourselves. What is our next step?"

Critical Zones: In Search of a Common Ground, now in Bengaluru, showcases the works of Uriel Orlow and Ravi Agarwal, apart from photographs, videos and multimedia installations



Coming together for a cause Ravi Agarwal with Francesca Romana Audretsch and Uriel Orlow, and the works on display at the exhibition. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



These are some of the questions that drove this exhibition. "This thought exhibition which started out in Germany, aimed to look at the critical situation of the Earth in a novel and diverse way and explore new modes of coexistence between all forms of life, albeit in a European context. It featured Uriel Orlow's *Soil Affinities* (also featured in Bengaluru), Edith Morales's *Raiz Adere* (*Aerial Root*), and Armin Linke's 2018 film *Prospecting Ocean* to name a few.

To see how the dualism of nature and culture worked outside of Europe, the exhibition travelled to India and Sri Lanka where an activation programme was created to bring together local artists whose work resonated with *Critical Zones*.

Hosted at Science Gallery Bengaluru, in association with the Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan, showcases the works of Uriel Orlow and Ravi Agarwal who tackle two important critical zones – soil and water.



fields as factories started taking over. From there, it delves into the theme of colonial violence and its role in plants and crops as European countries started colonising Africa. Orlow's work traces these networks of botanical connections and the entanglement between plants, people and places.

Ocean bond

Closer to home, artist and environmental activist Ravi Agarwal's artworks titled 'Ecologies of Loss I & II' look at the ecological conditions of fishing and the plight of fishermen along the Bay of Bengal as climate crisis escalates. His work captures the junction

provide this kind of platform. "The exhibition showcases artworks that have often been conceived in collaborations between artists and scientists, or artists that research with scientific methods and settings. The collaboration of disciplines comes from the desire to describe, understand and co-exist with life on Earth," she says.

"It acknowledges the fact that in the light of a new public awareness on ecological change, we as human beings do not yet understand how ecologies function and are in need of a multiplicity of perspectives, tools and perspective experiments," she adds.

One of the aims of the exhibition is to evoke thought, says Francesca. "The different disciplines we see in *Critical Zones* are not considered divided from each other, we want to show arts and sciences as an intertwined entanglement."

The ongoing inhumanisation in the world is cruel, but we must understand our connectedness to that."

Commenting on how the travelling exhibition has evolved, Mira says, "The exhibition has brought new ecologies to light. These were less present in the original show in Germany, such as coastal and oceanic habitats. It has also emphasised the importance of the activation program which roots the exhibition in each city through local participants."

The activation program has enabled many dialogues and discussions around the ideas of the exhibition, which was the main purpose of it travelling. The exhibition not only highlights the climate crisis but also engages with those who entangle with it everyday.

Critical Zones will be on at Science Gallery till March 17



Bring on the prawn

High on humour
Olga Koch on her
Prawn Cocktail
India tour.
SPECIAL
ARRANGEMENT

Ruth Priyadarshini
Dhanaraj

"Funny is the thing I value most in other people and funny is what I'm most proud of myself. And I think that's why I do comedy too, because I think funny," says Olga Koch, who was in Bengaluru recently.

Originally from Russia, the stand up comic who now lives in the United Kingdom, says, "When I was younger I didn't know stand up could be a job. There wasn't a natural career path to it – it's not like

you can go to university to study to be one," she laughs.

"It is not so much that I wanted to be a comedian, but more that the family that I was raised in and my friends saw me make my way in this field."

A look at any of her shows online is testament to what she says.

Olga's brand of humour stems from herself (her surname effortlessly lends itself to a lot of her material), her family and those around her, expanding outwards to encompass

her surroundings and audience.

The artist who first visited India in 2022, says, "I honestly enjoyed it even more the second time. I absolutely love Bengaluru – I went to CTR for dosas. I also visited a Jain temple and KR Market." Olga was in Mumbai and Bengaluru as part of her *Prawn Cocktail* tour.

"For my first show in India last year, I presented some of the best jokes of my career. I also added some crowd work and off-the-cuff material. This

time, I performed *Prawn Cocktail*, a show I debuted at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and went on to do all over Northern Europe."

"*Prawn Cocktail* is based on a storytelling format which is an hour long. It has a beginning, middle and end, and follows a narrative structure that I have put of a melting pot of cultures."

"The second you start doing stand up as an outsider – you have this very specific outsider point of view which makes it easier to go international. If from

the outset, I write stuff about the UK as an outsider, when I do those jokes in India or elsewhere, it makes sense because my listeners are outsiders too."

According to Olga, a lot of UK-based stand ups she looks up to such as Lara Ricote, Janine Harouni and Sara Barron write material as outsiders.

"Lara has a Mexican heritage, while Janine is of Lebanese-American origin and Sara is an American. I believe having lived in another culture, it comes more naturally to us to see things as outsiders. We know how to speak to people from a different culture in a way they can relate."

The biggest message Olga wants to spread "is telling the world to go out and see live comedy."

"I used to be a fan of comedy on TV and YouTube. But the second I saw live comedy I realised that there is nothing like it. A recorded clip does not communicate even a tenth of the electricity you experience live. The sort of electricity that's created by both the audience and the performer never compares to a clip. Besides, some jokes are only funny if you're in the room. So if you think you like comedy, but you've only ever seen it recorded, you are in for a treat when you go see it live," she says.

For updates on Olga's shows and events log on to rocknrolga.com

Flavours with an edge



Moglu, defining itself as an edgy veggie restaurant, opens its outlet in Bengaluru.

Co-founded by Anika Shree, an ex-IRIS officer-turned-entrepreneur and Kiran Narayanan, a computational physicist who switched to a culinary career at 40 after training at the Institute of Culinary Education in New York, Moglu will serve an exclusive vegetarian menu.

Some of the dishes you can look forward to are *buratta* with green beans and toasted lentils, barbecue mushroom burger, spinach coconut lentil soup, beet and *paneer* salad, crispy okra and tamarind, spagheti tempeh bolognese.

The other highlight is beverages that come with local flavours such as kokum, jackfruit and cardamom that are curated to from an in-house base liqueurs, like campari and Jamaican rum, limoncello, Venetian campari spritzer, lychee champagne and amaro.

If you want to kick-start your day here then the breakfast menu offers you egg-less omelettes, pastries and coffee, served with in-house sour-dough toast.

Average meal for one is priced at ₹1200.

The place can seat 55 people at a go.

Situated at 1 Sobha on St Marks Road, Moglu can be contacted on 49527158.

INBRIEF



Rally marks three-year protest against Vizag steel plant sale

Political leaders and members of the Visakha Utkuk Parirakshana Porata Committee (VUPPC) took out a 'Maha Padayatra' on Sunday in Visakhapatnam to mark the completion of 1,116 days of protest against the Union government's decision on strategic sale of RINL-Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. The activists took out a 20-km-long walk from Kurnannapalem to the Gandhi statue near the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC). The participants carried placards against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and raised slogans against the authorities who they believed were behind the Centre's privatisation move.

T.N. police devise plans to curb freebies, cash distribution

Post a two-day meet in Chennai, the ECI said that any incident involving distribution of freebies or money to voters would result in severe action against the officials concerned, say sources

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

With the Election Commission of India (ECI) cracking the whip on distribution of cash for votes and warning bureaucrats to take or face action, the Tamil Nadu police are chalking out elaborate strategies to effectively curb distribution of money or freebies to voters by political parties.

In a two-day meeting chaired by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioners or Commissioners of India Arun Goel with IAS/IPS officers here last week, and

the communications that followed, the ECI had made it clear that any incident involving distribution of freebies or money to voters would result in "severe" action against the concerned Commissioner/Superintendent of Police, sources said on Sunday.

Though there was an option to place the Flying Squad Teams (FST) and Static Surveillance Teams (SST) at the disposal of Poll Observers, the ECI said that the teams would remain under the command of the Returning Officers (Collectors or Commissioners or SPs). However, the commission would not hesitate to

change its mind if the desired results were not achieved, sources added.

Money power

Recalling instances of distribution of money to voters in Aravakurichi, Vellore, and R.K. Nagar, among other places, in the past resulting in countermanding of elections in these constituencies, the ECI called for steps to eradicate the role of money or muscle power in influencing voters, they added.

Besides IAS/IPS officers, the CEC and Election Commissioners of India held discussions with enforcement agencies such as the Nar-

otics Control Bureau, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Directorate of Enforcement, and Central Industrial Security Force. "The ECI has said that detection of money or free distribution should result in registration of case against the party functionaries involved and the candidate. This may not only result in arrest of the accused, but also debarment of the candidate. They have reiterated that the responsibility to ensure free and fair elections starts and ends with the Collectors/Commissioners or SPs, as the case may be," a senior police officer told *The Hindu*.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA (°C), RAINFALL DATA (CM), MAP: INDIA/TAKEN AT 17:00 HRS

Forecast for Monday: Heavy rainfall/snowfall very likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh. Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning, gusty winds very likely at isolated places over Gangetic West Bengal; with lightning at isolated places over Jharkhand, Sub-Himalayan West Bengal & Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh

Table with columns: CITY, RAIN, MAX, MIN, CITY, RAIN, MAX, MIN. Lists weather data for various cities like Agartala, Ahmedabad, Alwar, Allahabad, Bangalore, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Coimbatore, Dehradun, Gangtok, Goa, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kochi, Kohima, Kolkata, and Visakhapatnam.

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Table with columns: CITY, AQI, PM2.5, PM10, OZONE, CO2, AQI score of 100, AQI score of 50, AQI score of 10. Lists air quality data for various cities like Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Pune, and Visakhapatnam.

Air Quality Index (AQI) is a measure of the degree of air pollution. AQI values range from 0 to 500. AQI values of 0-50 are considered good, 51-100 are moderate, 101-150 are unhealthy for sensitive groups, 151-200 are unhealthy, 201-300 are very unhealthy, and 301-500 are hazardous.

Alleged Veerappan aide Stella Mary acquitted by Juvenile Justice Board

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Stella Mary, 45, who had been arrested by the police from Martalli village in Chamarajanagar for her alleged association with forest bandit Veerappan in the past, has been acquitted by the Juvenile Justice Board of the district. Ms. Mary, who had been arrested by the police in February 2020, was booked for her alleged role in the Ramapura police station attack of 1992 and Palar blasts of 1993.

Though she was released on bail two months later in April 2020 when child

rights activists questioned the legality of sending her to judicial custody as she was a minor when the offence was reported, the Chamarajanagar District and Sessions court, which was hearing the matter initially, subsequently transferred the case to the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB).

Ms. Mary's advocate P.P. Baburaj, who is also a child rights activist, had argued that she was barely 14 to 15 years old in 1992 and 1993 when the Ramapura police station attack and Palar blasts had taken place. After radiological tests were conducted, the district sur-

geon had given a report to the court stating that she was between 16 and 18 years at the time of the reported offences, he said.

He also contended that her name in the school records was Elizabeth Rani and she was allegedly kidnapped by Veerappan's gang when she was a minor. Subsequently, she was married to a gang member Sunda Veliyar, who was later killed in a police encounter.

About a fortnight back, the JJB acquitted Ms. Stella Mary of all the charges under Arms Act, Explosives Act, and TADA besides various provisions of IPC.

Sweet victory



Carnival ends: Actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu presenting the overall cultural champions trophy to winners at the valedictory of Riviera 2024, an international sports and cultural fest at VT Vellore, on Sunday. VT vice-president G.V. Selvam is also in the picture. The Hindu was the media partner for the event. C. VENKATACHALAPATHY

EDUCATION PLUS

GET THE EDGE Follow us facebook.com/thehindu twitter.com/the_hindu instagram.com/the_hindu

"Education was transformative in my life"

Safeena Husain, founder of Educate Girls and winner of the WISE Prize for Education 2023, talks about how and why she helps girls to go back to school

Soma Basu
soma.basu@thehindu.co.in

Safeena Husain grew up in adverse circumstances. "Poverty, violence, abuse... my family circumstances were difficult," says the first Indian woman recipient of the WISE Prize for Education. At one point, she had to drop out of school. Her family was keen to marry off the adolescent girl. But, with the support of an aunt, Husain went on to graduate from the London School of Economics.

"Education was transformative in my life," she says. After working abroad, she returned to India in 2007 to found the non-profit organisation Educate Girls, which identifies girls between five and 14 years in rural and educationally backward areas and gets them into schools. In the last 16 years, Educate Girls has led 1.4 million girls back to school and has expanded its reach to work across Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Girls are still battling with household chores, family responsibilities, discrimination and patriarchal mindsets.

Post the pandemic, a road trip across UP showed Husain that an entire generation of girls were being robbed off education. "Marriage was a cost-effective solution during the pandemic. We wanted to create a second chance for them," she says. So the first phase of Project Pragati was launched in Rajasthan in 2021, with 300 girls between 15 and 25 years. In two years, 7,000 girls re-enrolled in schools with 61,000 successfully clearing the Class 10 exam in the first attempt.

In 2023, Husain won The Hindu businessline Changemaker Award in the Social Transformation Category and the WISE Prize awarded by the Qatar Foundation. Excerpts from an interview:

You have worked across four states for over a decade. What is the status of education for girls in India?

According to government figures, 66 million girls will not be attending high school and in 5% of India's villages, 40% of girls are still out of primary school. The enrollment rates have increased at the primary level but the problem has shifted to older girls, as the



drop out rates going into secondary education are high. Girls are still battling with household chores, family responsibilities, discrimination and patriarchal mindsets.

What was Educate Girls' roadmap when it started?

There are seven lakh villages in India. I got a list of 26 red districts with a critical gender gap in education, of which nine were in Rajasthan. I started in 2007 with 50 villages in Pali district as a social experiment. Now we work in 25,000 villages across Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

What is your modus operandi?

We work in partnership with the state governments leveraging the existing educational infrastructure to identify, enrol and retain out-of-school girls and improve their foundational skills in literacy and numeracy.

We have a robust network of 3,000 employees and 18,000 volunteers drawn from the villages and trained in community ownership: My Village, My Problem, I Am the Solution. These gender champions do door-to-door survey, convince families and ensure girls are enrolled into the nearest government school

and also help them with remedial classes in English, Hindi and Maths.

How challenging has it been to address the issue of educational disparity and social challenges?

We started our pilot phase in RTE (Right To Education) days. We did not want to miss out on a single girl but access to school was difficult. Doors were shut on our faces, as parents felt their daughters were better off learning and doing household chores in preparation for marriage rather than wasting time, energy, and money at school. There are people who

still believe a goat is an asset and a girl a liability.

How did the change come about?

After RTE came into effect in 2010, people became more aligned to the thought of educating girls. Once we got that access, we could authoritatively ask people to send girls to school because it is their right. We could also give the girls extra coaching. We had to work differently in every region.

What is the difference now?

There has been progress. The drop-out problem at the

primary level has shrunk considerably. But secondary education has new hotspots because the older girls are at risk of never completing their studies due to being over-age or married with children, or facing academic setbacks. However, compared to 15 years ago, girls are gaining confidence now and have aspirations.

Is that why you launched Project Pragati?

Yes. We found girls are vulnerable and take a lot of shame on themselves. The girl's education becomes the first casualty of any calamity that strikes the family, from illness to death. We are helping older girls restart their lives by writing the Class 10 exam and following it up with ITI skills and training that will fetch them jobs of nurses, Anganwadi or ASHA workers,

or schools teachers.

What do you foresee for the girls who fall off the education map?

It took us 10 years to enter homes and convince families. The mindset is changing, but very slowly. Learning has to be gender-neutral. But when you do not have the gender lens, girls get missed. If we have all the tools of their transcription and equip our girls with education, then their transformation can be rapid.

Your work has won global recognition. What's next?

Never to lose sight of our primary objective: to enhance the access to and the quality of education for over 15 million children by 2025. To impact the lives of 10 million out-of-school girls over next 10 years under Pragati scheme.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY WARANGAL-506 004 (An Institution of National Importance) Notification for Admission to Ph.D. (Regular/Self-Finance), July 2024 Session / M.Tech (Self-Finance) Program/ MBA Program for Academic Year 2024-25. Applications are invited from highly motivated candidates for admission into Ph.D. (Regular/Self-Finance) for July 2024 Session/ M.Tech (Self-Finance) MBA Programs at NIT Warangal.



Facts and statistics

GDP numbers bring cheer in election year, but need more scrutiny

The latest national income data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) last week have generated a fair amount of excitement as well as bewilderment. While the markets have cheered the NSO's estimate of a robust 8.4% year-on-year growth in real gross domestic product (GDP) in the October-December quarter, some economists have been hard pressed to reconcile the sharp differences of well over a 100 basis points between the official estimates and their projections that many of them had made. The release also points that real GDP grew by 8.2% and 8.1%, respectively, in the first and second quarters of the current fiscal, 40 and 50 basis points quicker than it had estimated earlier. Full-year real GDP growth too is now forecast at 7.6%, 30 basis points faster than the 7.3% growth it had estimated as recently as in January. A factor behind the upgrades in the current fiscal's income estimates is the NSO's revisions to the estimates for 2021-22 and 2022-23. While the revisions to 2021-22 data have resulted in that year's real GDP growth being raised by 60 basis points to 9.7%, a fall-out is the consequent scaling down of 2022-23's GDP expansion to 7%, from the earlier estimate of 7.2%. Given that revisions to a previous year's data alter the year-on-year pace of growth, the base effect is a crucial element that has to be factored in while gauging the import of the headline number.

In real productive sectors of the economy, third-quarter gross value added (GVA) growth slowed to 6.5%, from an upwardly revised 7.7% pace in the preceding July-September period, as output in the key rural agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishing sector contracted 0.8% year-on-year and growth momentum slowed sequentially across five of the other seven sectors that contribute to the GVA. That the GVA growth rate is a full 190 basis points slower than the GDP's 8.4% pace is primarily because net indirect taxes are estimated to have surged 32% year-on-year in the last quarter, largely as a result of subsidy payouts, including on fertilisers, being drastically lower. To that extent, the GVA growth rate presents a truer picture of the health of the economy. And even on the demand or expenditure side, the data on private consumption spending and government consumption expenditure in the third quarter reveal a lack of traction. While private spending grew by a mere 3.5% year-on-year, government consumption spending actually shrank 3.2%. With the general election set to be announced any day now, the headlines around the NSO data serve as a poll-eve talking point. But there must be a sober analysis of the real state of the economy that draws on multiple statistical sets.

Bloody Thursday

Israel's allies cannot avoid blame for the situation in Gaza

In the early hours of February 29, Palestinians gathered in Gaza City on hearing that trucks carrying food deliveries were arriving. When they opened fire as they thought the hungry Palestinians "posed a threat", Gaza's health authorities said at least 112 Palestinians were killed and over 700 injured in the subsequent stampede, which triggered global outrage and calls for an international probe. This incident is a testimony to everything that went wrong with Israel's brutal, indiscriminate attack on the defenceless Palestinians. The war, which started with Hamas's October 7 attack in Israel, has already turned much of the Gaza Strip into a pile of rubble. Over 30,000 people, most of them women and children, have been killed and 70,000 wounded by Israeli troops. More than 90% of Gaza's population of 2.4 million have been displaced. According to the UN World Food Programme, Gaza is suffering from the worst level of child malnutrition in the world and is headed towards famine. Most of the enclave's population are crammed in to the refugee camps of southern Gaza with hardly any essentials. The hospital system is on the verge of collapse. And the powerful nations are just watching as one of the deadliest man-made calamities of the 21st century is unfolding.

Israel has successfully turned Gaza into a bombed-out enclave of death, misery and hunger. But it is still far from meeting any of its objectives, which includes the "dismantling" of Hamas and the release of hostages. If international public opinion was largely in favour of Israel on October 7, today, there is a groundswell of anger against its conduct of the war. South Africa took Israel to the International Court of Justice accusing it of apartheid against Palestinians. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Brazil's President, says Israel is carrying out genocide. Several western cities have seen massive protests, though their governments remain spectators. Despite global anger, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Cabinet colleagues — some have made outrageous comments about expelling Palestinians from their territories — manage to continue the war without facing any real consequences mainly because of the support from the United States and the West. The Biden administration has repeatedly vetoed UN Security Council Resolutions that called for a ceasefire in Gaza and continues to supply weapons to Israel. President Joe Biden, a Democrat who once said his foreign policy would be centred around human rights, should give up this moral ambivalence and be ready to use real pressure on his closest ally. This war should be brought to end immediately and aid allowed into Gaza without any ifs and buts.

Mountains of plastic are choking the Himalayan States

Plastic is ubiquitous everywhere, from the top of the highest mountain to the deepest of trenches in the ocean. It is found even inside the human lungs and placenta. Microplastics are formed by the degradation and the fragmentation of large plastic pieces that are improperly disposed of. Microplastic deposition and accumulation has been found in the Himalayan mountains, rivers, lakes and streams. These microplastics can be trapped in glaciers for a long time and released into rivers during snow melting. The Indian Himalayan Region is a critical source of water in the subcontinent, feeding a number of major rivers of India that include the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra river systems. Unscientific plastic disposal is causing soil and water pollution in the Indian Himalayan Region and impacting its biodiversity, which is having an adverse impact on the fresh water sources that communities downstream depend on.

Rapid and unplanned urbanisation and changing production and consumption patterns are responsible for the plastic waste crisis in the Indian Himalayan Region. A quantum jump in tourist footfalls is another reason for exacerbation of the problem. A recent report by the Social Development for Communities (SDC) Foundation Dehradun highlighting the plight of towns in Uttarakhand drowning in plastic waste is no surprise — almost all the mountain States face a similar situation. Recently, the National Green Tribunal issued notices to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the Himachal Pradesh State Pollution Control Board, the Deputy Commissioner Lahaul and Spiti and the Panchayat of Koksir in Himachal Pradesh on waste dumping in eco-sensitive areas by tourists and commercial establishments. In Assam, at the Ramsar site of Deepor Beel, Greater adjutant storks have been feasting on the plastic waste in the landfill instead of fish from the wetland. In Manipur, growing pollution in rivers, that include the Nambul, has been widely reported. The Himalayan Clean up (2018-20) that was conducted by the Integrated Mountain Initiative with Zero Waste Himalayas and the National Productivity Council of India's waste and brand audit show increasing plastic waste, especially non-recyclables, in the Indian Himalayan Region. The Himalayan Clean up (2022) waste audit results showed that 92.7% of trash was plastic, with 72% of waste being non-recyclable plastic.

Plastic waste versus management capacities
Every year, there is a day when the amount of plastic waste surpasses the capability of waste management systems to manage this. Environment Action, a Swiss-based organisation, called it Plastic Overshoot Day. In 2023, India reached its plastic overshoot day on January 6,



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which is shocking especially as the EPR portal of CPCB claims that there is a systemic ability to deal with plastic waste. India has one of the highest mismanaged waste index (MWI), at 68.5%, in the world (after Kenya, Nigeria and Mozambique) which is the gap in waste management capacity and plastic consumption. The Government of India claims that it recycles 60% of plastic waste. In statistical analysis done by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) using CPCB data, India is merely recycling (through mechanical recycling) 12% of its plastic waste. Close to 20% of this waste is channelled for end-of-life solutions such as co-incineration, plastic-to-fuel and road making, which means we are burning 20% of our plastic waste and still calling it 'recycling' and when 68% of plastic waste is unaccounted for.

Legal mandate for waste management
Solid Waste Management Rules (SWM) 2016, Plastic Waste Management (PWM) Rules 2016 and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) 2022 constitute the regulatory framework for plastic waste management for India (at the country level). Special needs of hill areas are recognised by the SWM but are not factored in while creating a mandate for both local bodies and producers, importers and brand owners (PIBOs), while PWM and EPR have not even recognised the special needs of the hills.

States across the Indian Himalayan Region have also been taking various initiatives including enacting laws to curb this menace. Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim have special State laws banning the use of plastics. Himachal Pradesh has a buy back policy for non-recyclable and single-use plastic waste since 2019, but there is still widespread littering of plastic waste. Sikkim banned packaged mineral water use from January 2022 and has a fairly robust regulatory system, but in the absence of proper infrastructure to handle plastic waste, the State is still grappling with the issue. Mizoram has been proactive on the regulatory front — the Alzawal Municipal Corporation made by-laws under the PWM in 2019. Tripura has made policy changes, enacted municipal by-laws and has a State-level task force to eliminate Single Use Plastic though the results are not visible. The collective mandate of SWM/PWM/EPR requires waste segregation at source. Segregation of not only plastic but other waste but also different types of plastics is a prerequisite for any strategy to dispose of plastic waste in a scientific and sustainable manner. Waste segregation exists on paper, but a closer look shows landfills overflowing with mixed waste. The leachate from the mixed waste causes soil and groundwater pollution while fumes from such mixed waste cause air pollution. A huge amount of plastic waste which can be recycled still remains in landfills.

Under the SWM, PWM and EPR, the task of

waste management from collection to its scientific disposal is the duty of local bodies. They can take help from PIBOs for the setting up and operationalisation of the plastic waste management system, as mandated under the EPR. Though local bodies are the pivot of the waste management system in the country, a commensurate devolution of power to them is still work in progress. Very few States have enacted model by-laws and very few local bodies themselves have made by-laws to operationalise the mandate. There is no clarity regarding the mandate to ensure collaboration between local bodies and PIBOs. There is a need to include traditional institutions within the definition of local bodies when it comes to the Indian Himalayan Region (prevalent in many States in the northeast). It is important to note that under Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) and the Fifteenth Finance Commission, money was allocated to these traditional institutions.

Plugging data gaps is one step

This is a need for appropriate resource allocation and support that is considerate of and reflective of the rich biodiversity, ecological sensitivity and fragility of the Indian Himalayan Region, besides taking into account the specific geographical challenges to mountain waste management. Empowering local bodies and creating the necessary infrastructure for waste management need immediate attention. Segregation of waste and the participation of the people in this endeavour with the help of sustained public education campaigns are a sine qua non. Geographical neutrality of targets under the EPR could be countered if the higher cost of EPR operationalisation in the mountain region is given its due consideration. The value of the EPR certificate which is earned by a PIBO in the Indian Himalayan Region could be higher than one earned in the rest of the country for every ton of plastic waste processed.

Data gaps in terms of the quantity and quality of waste being generated in the Indian Himalayan Region States should be plugged. Convergence in existing schemes such as SBM, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and the Finance Commission's grants could be used to create the infrastructure, maintain and run operations. The Swachh Bharat Kosh Trust set up to facilitate the channelisation of philanthropic contributions and corporate social responsibility funds towards this cause could also be used to augment resources. The Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and Smart Cities Scheme under which many cities in the Indian Himalayan Region are selected, could also work in convergence on the issue of scientific waste management and making cities in the Indian Himalayan Region free of plastic.

The long road to reforming India's political party system

With the general election 2024 inching closer, the spate of political defections across the country is no cause for surprise. In Bihar, MLAs from the Congress and the Rashtriya Janata Dal have moved to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) while the elections to the Rajya Sabha that were held recently saw cross-voting in favour of the BJP in Himachal Pradesh. The MLAs concerned have now been disqualified under the anti-defection law. In the Andhra Pradesh Assembly too there have been disqualifications under this law.

However, an adjudicatory development from more than a fortnight ago makes one doubt the perceived need and utility of India's anti-defection law. On February 15, 2024, the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Speaker delivered his verdict on the split in 2023 within the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). No MLA from either faction of the NCP was disqualified, and the Ajit Pawar faction was recognised as being the "real" NCP. Unsurprisingly, the order appears to be similar to the Speaker's decision in the split in the Shiv Sena where neither faction was disqualified, and one of the competing factions (in that case, the Eknath Shinde faction) was recognised as the real Shiv Sena.

Transgressions that pass muster

While official copies of both these decisions are unavailable, the reasoning that went into the decision can be discerned from the livestreaming of the Assembly proceedings. Relying on the test of legislative majority, the Speaker noted that the Ajit Pawar-led faction of the NCP had the support of 41 out of 53 NCP MLAs, making it the real NCP. More intriguing was the Speaker's observations on the applicability of the anti-defection law to these proceedings.

What transpired between June 30 and July 2, 2023, when the NCP split vertically, is termed as an expression of "intra-party dissent". In uncritical terms, the Speaker has said that such intra-party dissent cannot be subject to the punitive provisions of the Tenth Schedule, and the dissenting MLAs cannot be disqualified from



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the Assembly. However, the soundness of this observation can be questioned on the ground that if any dissenting group within a political party wishes to distance itself from such a party, it must ideally merge with another party so as to be able to claim protection under the Tenth Schedule. Under the anti-defection law, a faction that splits from its original party cannot claim exemption from disqualification on its own, given that the "split" exception was deleted from the Tenth Schedule in 2003.

The only exemption available now to legislators moving in groups is that of mergers, which mandatorily requires a minimum of two-third members to separate from their political party and merge with another. As is well-known, in both the Shiv Sena and NCP splits, the splitting factions (led by Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, respectively), did not opt to either merge with an existing political party or establish an altogether new party. Instead, each of the two factions claimed to be the original political party themselves, and formed an alternate government with other political parties. In neither of these cases was there a merger within the strict terms of the Tenth Schedule.

It would have been interesting to see the Speaker contend with this issue in both these cases purely in terms of the language of the law. Instead, the Speaker made a rather worrying observation to the effect that it is in the very nature of politics for leaders to forge new alliances, undo old relations, and make or break into new forms, and that such political movements cannot qualify as defections under the Tenth Schedule. Why even the anti-defection law in the Constitution when even the most manifest transgressions of the law are allowed to pass muster with the adjudicating authority?

The Speaker's concern for preservation of intra-party dissent is laudable, especially when he says that the anti-defection law cannot be used to silence party members. The Speaker had to go by the legislative strength of each faction to determine the real NCP, because reliable information to that end could not be sourced

from the party's constitution, leadership and organisational structure.

The issue of inner-party democracy

Undenbly, this highlights the need for better thought-out reform of the political party system — one which accounts for adequate democracy within parties. Defections are often engineered on the premise of an absence of inner-party democracy in the original political party of a turncoat legislator. To systematically remedy this concern, it is time to first conduct a thorough study of how robust democratic structures and processes are within parties, and, second, usher in statutory regulation that compels political parties to ensure greater inner democracy. The 25th Report of the Law Commission of India proposed amendments to the Representation of the People Act, 1951 which could mandate that besides having a constitution, political parties elect an executive committee (for the party), select candidates who are to contest elections to Parliament or State Assemblies, and conduct regular elections within the party at every level. The Law Commission also proposed granting the election Commission of India the powers to impose monetary penalties or withdraw the registration of a political party in case it failed to comply.

The Law Commission's recommendations have yet to see the light of day. Evidently, in the absence of more robust means to ensure inner-party democracy, the Tenth Schedule had to be circumvented just into disuse in the Shiv Sena and NCP verdicts — both instances where the anti-defection law could well be applied. The Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Speaker is now presiding over a committee which will review the anti-defection law. Given his recent encounters with this law in two high-profile matters, there could not be a better opportunity than now for India to get an anti-defection law best suited to its felt needs and realities.

Vidhi recently published a report titled 'Anatomy of India's Anti-Defection Law: Identifying Problems, Suggesting Solutions'

Recent political events make one doubt the perceived need and utility of India's anti-defection law

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Overdrive?

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has gone into overdrive in its quest for a third term in power. It seems to be unmindful of the danger of an overkill if a political party, however invincible it may seem, plans and does everything

too early, too carefully and too professionally. The BJP and its supporters assert that 2024 is a 'done deal'. But they ought to realise that India's political diversity and a host of factors that influence the electorate, making it difficult to predict the

electoral outcome. Large sections of the media are 'pro-BJP' for whatever reason and present a very one-sided picture of the pre-election scene. It is to state the obvious that the BJP owes its political dominance to the overarching appeal of

Hindutva subsuming caste distinctions, its (and its ideological parent, the RSS's) organisational strength and also money power. It is indeed welcome if the omission of anti-caste names in the first list of candidates marks a shift away from hardline

Hindutva (Page 1, "BJP's first list is out; PM keeps Varanasi", March 3).
G. David Milton,
Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

A shame
It was distressing to have read a report that a Spanish lady, who came to India on

a tour, had to face brutality ("Spanish woman raped in Jharkhand's Dumka; 3 held", March 3). Such crimes tarnish India's image on a global level. The perpetrators should face severe punishment.
Balagopal Gopinath,
Keerikkad, Alappuzha, Kerala

A women's urban employment guarantee act

Reducing gender gaps and increasing women's employment are part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Notwithstanding ethical and constitutional imperatives, there is also evidence suggesting that increasing women's employment rates can be an engine for economic growth.

Unmet demand
Despite functioning at a fraction of its intended capacity, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has been pivotal in providing financial autonomy to women in rural areas. More than half the MGNREGA workforce are women. However, urban realities are different. Social norms, lack of safety, and hostile transportation options are some of the factors inhibiting urban women to enter the workforce. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) pegs women's employment rate in urban areas at 22.9% in the last quarter of 2023. There are clear signs of high unmet demand for employment among urban women. First, the unemployment rate in urban areas, which is a measure of how many would like employment (irrespective of whether they are actively seeking it or not), is 9% compared to 4% in rural areas. Second, there are two types of unemployment – individuals who would like to work and are actively seeking a job versus those who would like to work but may not be actively seeking a job. A much larger share of unemployed women in urban areas are seeking employment compared to rural areas. Further, nearly 25% of urban women have completed higher secondary education compared to 5% in rural areas. The low urban employment rates among women also points to wastage of much potential.

To address overall urban unemployment, some States have an urban employment programme. While these are not restricted to women, early evidence suggests a higher



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Views expressed are personal. The authors thank Akshita Arora for data support

Notwithstanding ethical and constitutional imperatives, there is also evidence suggesting that increasing women's employment rates can be an engine for economic growth

participation rate for women. Building on these and other ideas such as the Decentralised Urban Employment and Training Scheme by Jean Drèze, we propose a national Women's Urban Employment Guarantee Act (WUEGA). We envision a WUEGA where women form at least 50% (ideally 100%) of the programme management staff. Involving women and local communities can also potentially strengthen the constitutional mandate of decentralisation. Each worksite would have essential worksite facilities including childcare facilities. Work must be available within a 5-km radius and public transportation must be free for women. A detailed list of possible urban works such as plantation and harvesting needs on floating wetlands already exist; these should be supplemented based on local needs and wider consultation. Incentives such as automatic inclusion in welfare boards can be created; these could act as agencies to provide maternity entitlements, pensions, and serve as resources for emergency funds. For many women, the school to work transition is impeded by the lack of skills and mobility issues. A recent study of women in Delhi and Bengaluru found that three out of five reported not having adequate skills as a constraint to getting secure employment. Apprenticeship for women college students from different disciplines could be done; this could become a channel for women with higher degrees to join as programme functionaries. This could also act as a stimulus for younger women to take up technical courses. Women who have completed Class 10 could be eligible to run Information Facilitation Centres at each urban local body with computer training facilities. Such centres can be empowered through regular capacity-building initiatives to compensate for the gap in skills. Given the low levels of apprentice intake in India, apprenticeships embedded within an urban employment guarantee

for women can neatly dovetail with the larger mandate of apprenticeships of making women job-ready. Additionally, it can be a means to empower local communities acting as a single window for grievance registration. A social audit unit of WUEGA with at least 50% women staff can be conceived for independent monitoring of the programme. Social audits would require an array of skill sets and this could be an important avenue for women who have completed Class 12 to join part time or full time and improve their job readiness.

Women-led initiatives
There is precedence of such initiatives. In Karnataka, for instance, women handle end-to-end waste management in gram panchayats of selected districts including collection and driving of the 'Swachh' vehicles. Not only has the initiative been a success, it has also enabled several women to acquire driving licenses.

As per the PLFS, an estimate of the number of women in urban areas in the age group of 15-59 who are out of the workforce is 10.18 crore. If we add those who are self-employed and in casual labour, we get about 11.65 crore. In reality, to begin with, perhaps 50% of them are likely to be interested in such a programme. Assuming 150 days of work per year at ₹500 as daily wages, the wage component, to be funded by the Union government, would then cost around 1.5% of the GDP. Adding material and administrative costs to this is likely to make it around 2%. Such a scheme has to be rolled out in a phased manner with periodic assessments on uptake and the nature of the shelf of works. This is also likely to smoothen the cost. Depending on its positives and challenges, this can just be the way for an urban employment programme for all, not just women. The benefits of this act far outweigh fiscal conservatism. It is also time to move from income as insurance to assurance of income, especially for women.

Not the right cure for urban maladies

The unification of urban local bodies may not help citizens

STATE OF PLAY

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The Government of Telangana has been exploring the possibility of expanding the purview of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) by merging together peripheral corporations and municipalities. All the seven municipal corporations and 30 municipalities which fall under the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) are to be unified with the GHMC to form one urban civic body, along the lines of the merger of three corporations into the Municipal Corporation of Delhi two years ago.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is said to have issued instructions to Municipal Administration and Urban Development officials to study the feasibility of the proposal and come up with a report. It is proposed that the existing divisions also be re-organised because a few have a population of more than 1,00,000 while a few others have a population of only 30,000.

If this detailed project becomes a reality, Telangana will probably have the biggest civic body in India. The government is said to have decided to centralise urban local governance because of the unequal distribution of funds and the patchy development among urban local bodies (ULBs) around the State capital.

It is true that a few corporations such as Nizampet and municipalities such as Manikonda, Narsingi, and Telangana are financially better off than others. But financial prosperity does not matter when the facilities in these corporations are poor.

The prosperity – or lack

struggle with traffic problems. Sanitation issues have worsened. The sewerage system collapses every time it rains. Illegal structures are flourishing, government lands in the city are being encroached on, and lakes are disappearing while the civic body is struggling with a poor staff strength. Most staff members are reaching retirement age. A third of the sanctioned posts in the GHMC are vacant. Even if all the posts are filled up now, the corporation will still struggle to pay salaries. Under such circumstances, it is anybody's guess how the proposed merger can improve local governance. For robust local self-governance as envisaged by the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, there needs to be minimum interference from the State/Central governments in the functioning of local bodies. In the case of the GHMC or any other ULB in Telangana, there has always been a top-down approach.

The GHMC council is yet to form standing ward committees and area committees which should ideally make resolutions for local area development. The State is shirking its responsibility in providing affordable housing to the lower and middle classes of the city. The housing department has been wound up, and the HMDA has graduated from allotting housing plots to aspiring home owners through a draw of lots to auctioning large chunks of government land to realtors, who in turn build skyscrapers priced to suit investors from affluent sections. Rising real estate values are shown as the sole prong of development in urban regions which are plagued by civic issues.

Against this backdrop, it is difficult to believe that the unification of ULBs will help the common citizen.

A majority of Indians support authoritarianism: Pew survey

The share of Indians who supported representative democracy was on the wane in 2023, with more wanting strong leaders or the military to rule

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

In India, 85% of respondents to a 2023 survey said that military rule or rule by an authoritarian leader would be good for the country. India's share was the highest among the 24 countries surveyed. Notably, the share of Indians who said that it is important for Opposition parties to operate freely was the third lowest among the countries surveyed. In 2023, the share of Indians who believed that representative democracy is a good way of governance declined considerably from 2017, when the same survey was conducted. Interestingly, a very high share of Indians also wanted experts to rule and not elected officials.

These were some of the conclusions of the Pew Research Center's Spring 2023 Global Attitudes Survey. In India, face-to-face interviews were conducted between March 25 and May 11, 2023, among adults. The north-eastern States and the Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands were excluded. The sample was selected in a way to proportionally represent Indians across gender, age, education, region, and urbanity.

The survey asked about preferences for two types of authoritarian governance: one led by a powerful leader who operates without the need for approval from legislative or judicial bodies (authoritarian leader) and one governed by the military (military governance). Public support for at least one of these governance models varied significantly across countries, with 85% in India showing support in contrast to just 8% in Sweden. Such support was more prevalent in middle-income countries than in wealthier ones. Further, a higher proportion of respondents from countries in the Asia-Pacific, Africa, and Latin America expressed support for

these models compared to those from Europe and North America. Chart 1 displays the share of participants who believed that governance by a strong leader or military rule would be beneficial for their country, in 2023.

In countries where fewer individuals regarded democratic values as crucial, there was a greater share of people favouring governance by an authoritarian leader or military rule. In countries where a smaller proportion of the population believed in the importance of allowing Opposition parties to operate without restrictions, there tended to be greater endorsement of authoritarian forms of governance. India had the third lowest share of people who considered the freedom of Opposition parties crucial. Concurrently, Indians exhibited high levels of support for authoritarian governance, as shown in Chart 2.

Since the last survey in 2017, in many countries, there has been a notable decrease in support for representative democracy. In 11 of the 22 countries with comparable data from 2017 (excluding Australia and the U.S.), there was a significant reduction in the share of the population that viewed representative democracy as a highly effective method of governance. Chart 3 shows the figures for India. Close to 44% of Indians believed that representative democracy was a very good approach in 2017, while just 36% held this view in 2023.

Compared to 2017, in 2023 there was also a considerable increase in the number of people who favoured a governance model where experts, rather than elected representatives, are put in charge of taking crucial decisions. This shift in opinion towards technocracy may be partly attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. This share in India increased from 65% in 2017 to 82% in 2023. The share who felt that this was a bad way of governance stayed put at around 15% in both these years.



Chart 1 | % who believed that governance by a strong leader or military rule would be beneficial

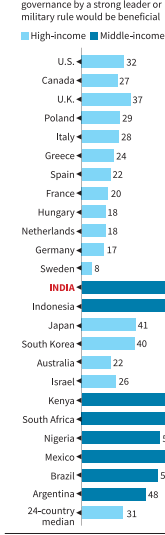


Chart 2 | % who support authoritarian rule against % who said that freedom of opposition parties is not important

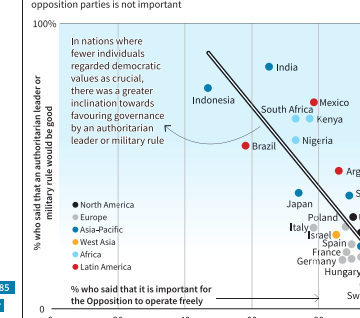
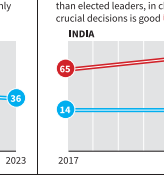


Chart 3 | % population that viewed representative democracy as a highly effective method of governance



Chart 4 | % who said that experts, rather than elected leaders, in charge of making crucial decisions is good



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 4, 1974

Scope for more exports to Australia

New Delhi, March 3: Considerable emphasis was placed on developing and strengthening bilateral relations at the sixth round of Indo-Australian officials' talks held in Canberra from February 27 to March 1.

A press communique issued here to-day of the conclusion of the talks said it was agreed that efforts would be made to increase the level of trade and economic exchanges between the two countries.

The talks covering a wide range of international and bilateral questions were held "in a frank and friendly atmosphere" and revealed close identity of views held on international questions shared by the two governments.

The Indian delegation was led by the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Keval Singh, and the Australian delegation by the Secretary of Department of Foreign Affairs, Mr. A.P. Renouf.

The maintenance of Indian Ocean as a zone of peace was discussed at the talks. The delegations welcomed the recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan.

The urgent need to improve the international monetary system was recognised. The effects of the world energy crisis particularly on the developing countries were also discussed. The Indian delegation noted the increased opportunities provided for the expansion of Indian exports to Australia as a result of the measures recently adopted by the Australian Government. The possibility of arranging regular consultations on bilateral economic matters and of concluding trade agreements was examined.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 4, 1924

The Caliphate abolished

Constantinople, March 2: The police have been instructed from Ankara to supervise the households of the Caliph and the Imperial Princes with a view of preventing the removal of valuables. It is reported that the Caliph's principal wife is prostrated with grief and the principal eunuch has refused to take food for three days.

From Page One

100-day agenda for new govt. discussed at meet

As part of the exercise, on December 11, 2023, the Prime Minister launched an outreach programme to seek inputs from youth on their vision for India in 2047. During the programme, Mr. Modi said that in the life of any nation, history provides a period when the nation could make exponential strides in its development journey. For India, the 'Amrit Kaal' was ongoing and it was the period in the history of India when the country was going to take a quantum leap.

"Today, every institution and every individual should move with a resolution that every effort and act will be for Viksit Bharat. The aim of your goals and your resolutions should be only one — developed India. We have 25 years of 'Amrit Kaal' in front of us. We have to work 24 hours a day for the goal of Viksit Bharat. This is the environment we have to create as a family," the Prime Minister had said, pointing out that India was going to be the leader in terms of the working-age population for the next 25-30 years and that the world recognised this.

From the ramparts of the Red Fort on August 15, 2022, which marked 75 years of the country's Independence Mr. Modi spelled out "Panch Pran (five resolves)" for citizens, which included the pledge to make India a developed nation by 2047.

Modi to inaugurate railway projects in Telangana today

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will dedicate the electrified Ambari-Adilabad-Pimpalkhuti stretch to the nation at Adilabad in Telangana on Monday.

The project is part of the Mukhed-Pimpalkhuti electrification project sanctioned for 182 route km in 2017-18 at an estimated cost of ₹206 crore.

The 58 route km (71 track km) of the Ambari-Adilabad-Pimpalkhuti section has been electrified at a cost of approximately ₹70 crore, said an official release on Sunday.

This railway line section falls in the backward district of Adilabad (46.6 route km) in northern Telangana region, and parts of Nanded and Yavatmal districts in Maharashtra (11.5 route km). It serves as the connecting route towards Nagpur and other parts of Maharashtra.

This critical section falls in the railway line connecting Hyderabad/Secunderabad towards Nagpur (via Nizamabad) and beyond.

Hence, the project facilitates seamless connectivity from Adilabad towards Hyderabad/Secunderabad, Bengaluru in the south as well as Nagpur and beyond. It will also avoid detention of trains on account of traction change thereby improving the average speed of both passenger and freight trains.

Mr. Modi will also inaugurate the doubling and electrification of 22-km Sanathnagar-Moula Ali rail line, along with six new station buildings, as part of the MMTS (Multi Modal Transport Service) Phase-II during his visit to the capital the next day.

The new stations are at Ferozguda, Suchitra Centre, Bhudevdi Nagar, Ammuguda, Neredmet and Moula Ali Housing Board stations.

He will also flag off the inaugural MMTS train service from Chakravarthy-Lingampalli via Moula Ali-Sanathnagar, connecting the new areas in the eastern part of the city like Cherlapalli, Moula Ali with the western part of the twin city region, the release said.

Plans for non-lapsable defence modernisation fund put on hold

Officials say all defence funding needs are being met as and when they arise; creating a non-lapsable pool has drawbacks as it affects parliamentary scrutiny and accountability, and money is usually drawn from cesses levied for specific purpose

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

The idea of setting up a non-lapsable defence modernisation fund is off the table for now, top government officials told *The Hindu*, stressing that all defence funding needs are being met as and when they arise, and creating a non-lapsable pool has drawbacks as it affects parliamentary scrutiny and accountability.

Among Central Ministries, defence spending accounts for the largest outlays and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) had informed Parliament as recently as December 2023 that a "separate mechanism is being worked out" to explore a special dispensation to operationalise a "Non-lapsable Defence Modernisation Fund".

"As of now, no such decision has been taken on such a Fund and it is not under any active contemplation because there are drawbacks such as reducing parliamentary accountability. The only funds that are non-lapsable traditionally are those funded through cesses levied for a specific purpose," a top Finance Ministry official said on the issue.

"Except for things financed through a cess, taking away today's appropriations and saying I will use it tomorrow goes against the basic norms or parliamentary financial accountability. Parliament



Critical funding: The 15th Finance Commission recommended the constitution of a non-lapsable defence modernisation fund. P11

would like to know whether you spent the money they voted for, or not, and it needs to be told, Yes or No," the first official said.

Assurance of funding Ministries would only want a non-lapsable fund for a certain "assurance of funding," pointed out another government official dealing with the subject. "If we are able to assure that funding without a non-lapsable fund and Budget provisions are made when necessary, then the question

of a non-lapsable fund becomes academic. The real question is to make funds available when they are necessary to complete the procurements that are decided upon," he pointed out.

Asserting that all necessary defence capital spending has been provided for by the Interim Budget 2024-25, the official emphasised that the consolidation of capex demands of the Services under one head instead of three heads for each Service in the Budget provides more space for the Defence Ministry.

"Dovetailing the Services' capex budgets together under one head is aimed at creating a more unified approach to procurements. It is a push towards jointness so the three Services can sit together and optimise their capital expenditure and if one is not able to spend, another can take more money," the official explained.

While such optimisation used to be done earlier as well, it required the Finance Ministry to get involved to reallocate the outlays. "Now, the power to optimise is within the Ministry of Defence so you are likely to get better utilisation of this money because you will see this inter-se fluidity," he noted.

The 15th Finance Commission had recommended the constitution of a dedicated non-lapsable Modernisation Fund for Defence and Internal Security (MFDIS) in the Budget provided more space for the Defence Ministry. The Centre had included the examination of such a fund's creation in its terms of reference. In 2021, placing an action-taken report in Parliament along with the Commission's report, the government had said it has "in-principle" accepted the creation of such a fund in the Public Account of India. "Sources of funding and modalities will be examined in due course," it had said.

Chargesheet against seven in Manipur arms loot case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed a chargesheet against seven accused in a case of alleged loot of arms and ammunition from the 2nd Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB), Naransana, in Manipur's Bishnupur district on August 3 last year.

The chargesheet has been submitted in the court of chief judicial magistrate, Kamrup, Guwahati, Assam.

The CBI had registered the case on August 24, 2023 to take over the first information report instituted by the Moirang police, following a reference from the Union government.

As alleged, the incident took place on August 3 last year when a large number of armed miscreants and their associates looted more than 300 arms, close to 19,800 rounds of ammunition and about 800 types of munitions and other accessories from two rooms of the battalion headquarters located in Kote inside the Quarter Guard, 2-IRB.

Maharashtra ex-Minister eyes 'home comforts' in U.P. seat

NEWS ANALYSIS

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

The list of 195 names announced by the BJP in its first list of candidates was not one that created shock waves in its unexpectedness, but one name did create a frisson of interest, tickling the memory of those who followed Maharashtra politics in the 1990s and 2000s — that of Kripashankar Singh.

Mr. Singh, a former Minister in the Congress-led government in Maharashtra, has been fielded by the BJP from Jaunpur (his birthplace) in Uttar Pradesh, in a 'return of the native' move perhaps only possible in Indian politics.

Of humble beginnings, Mr. Singh moved to Mumbai from Jaunpur in the



Kripashankar Singh

of the soil' politics, and for the Congress. Mr. Singh filled that void. His rise was swift and he grew to be a Minister of State for Home in the Congress-led Maharashtra government in 1999.

In 2011, a Public Interest Litigation petition was filed against him alleging that he and his family had amassed assets disproportionate to their income to the tune of ₹230 crore. Cases piled up, and he joined the BJP in 2021. For the BJP, which has a lack of leaders who can appeal to north Indian voters in the city, Mr. Singh has been a good addition. "Our other north Indian leaders in the city don't have the clout to even get five votes together, while Kripashankar Singh has good connections both in Mumbai and in Jaunpur," said a source in Mumbai BJP.

Calcutta HC judge to resign, hints at taking poll plunge

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Calcutta High Court Judge Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay, who has given several orders in the West Bengal recruitment scam, announced his decision to resign as judge and hinted at taking the plunge into politics ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. Opposition parties, including the BJP, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), and the Congress sought to welcome him into their ranks.

Speaking to Bengali TV news channel ABP Ananda, Justice Gangopadhyay said he would resign on Tuesday. Justice Gangopadhyay became a permanent judge in 2019 and on 14 instances, had directed a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into allegations of corruption in the West Bengal



Abhijit Gangopadhyay

school and municipal recruitment scams.

Justice Gangopadhyay thanked the Trinamool Congress and said the State's ruling party had challenged him to face them politically. His announcement triggered strong reactions in political circles. Opposition leaders said that a person with the integrity and stature of Justice Gangopadhyay would make positive contributions to the State and the country.

Justice Gangopadhyay

has become a household name in Bengal because of his orders in the recruitment scam.

Job aspirants who have been protesting against the government have hailed his intervention. The Trinamool leadership had often targeted the judge and described his interventions as "politically motivated". Many leaders of the ruling party, including party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, have been at the receiving end of his directions.

"It is better if such people come to politics. But the question is, whichever group you join, your pre-accepted neutrality of dialogue will be questioned. Whichever party you go to, there will be allegations of corruption. Can you accept them?" Trinamool leader Kunal Ghosh asked.

In bid to expand vote base, Tejashwi brands RJD as party of 'A to Z' castes

NEWS ANALYSIS

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

Seeking to shake off the Rashtriya Janata Dal's (RJD) labelling as a party of Muslims and Yadavs alone, its top leader Tejashwi Yadav asserted that the RJD stands for the 'A to Z' of castes and communities.

As a counter, he has offered an umbrella combination that is aimed at taking along the backward and forward castes, women, and the poor.

"Some people say that we are only a MY party — a party of Muslims and Yadavs. But we are also a BAAP, where B stands for Bahujan, A for 'agda' [upper caste], and P for 'aadihi aabadi' [women, half the population], and P for the poor," he claimed, as he spoke on the various achievements in the 17 months the RJD was in power, including providing employment to five lakh



Lalu Prasad, Tejashwi Yadav, Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi and others join hands in Patna's Gandhi Maidan. A11

persons. "In this very Gandhi Maidan [in Patna], we distributed employment letters. When I first promised 10 lakh jobs, Nitish Kumar asked whether the money came from. In 17 months, I proved him wrong," he said as the crowd roared in response.

Offering an alternative definition for the RJD, Mr. Tejashwi Yadav said it also stands for "Rights, Jobs, and Development".

Party insiders claim that the re-making of the RJD as a pro-development party, countering the spectre of "jungle raj" that is raised in

connection with it, is not an overnight effort. "In the 2020 Assembly election, Tejashwi ji had similarly given the slogan of *kamai* [employment], *dawai* [medical facilities], *padhai* [education], *sichi* [irrigation] and *mehngai* [price rise]," a senior party leader pointed out.

In 2020, despite the party's best efforts, it fell short thanks to a counter consolidation against the Yadav euphoria, and finished within striking distance of a victory. The 'A to Z' pitch is the RJD's promise to the voters that no one will be

excluded, the senior RJD leader explained.

The MY-only tag that the RJD is assiduously trying to avoid will not fade away so easily, political scientist and fellow at the Delhi-based think tank Centre for Policy Research (CPR) Rahul Verma said. "RJD did not begin as an MY party. It used to attract the larger Bahujan electorate, winning the votes of Backward Classes, not just Yadavs, but also a section of Dalits. But over time, its vote base has reduced because the votes of the Backward Classes have further fragmented," Dr. Verma said.

And on the other side of the balance is the BJP, which draws votes from multiple segments, barring the Muslims.

"While directionally it is the right move to expand beyond the confines of 'MY', the turnaround is not going to be easy, and one that is not without the risk of a possible backlash from the core voters," Dr. Verma said.

Lalu criticises Modi at Bihar rally, says PM is not Hindu

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad made sharp remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Jan Vishwas Mahalarly in Patna's Gandhi Maidan on Sunday, saying the PM was "not Hindu" and spread disharmony in the country.

The public meeting was the first joint rally of *Maha-gabandhan* (grand alliance) after the Janata Dal (United) led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar snapped ties with the RJD and joined hands with the BJP to form a government in the State. "Narendra Modi is not a Hindu! Why did he not shave his head (after his mother's death)? He should answer this," Mr. Prasad said.

An impressive crowd of over five lakh people gathered at the ground to be a part of the rally.

Workers of the Congress, Communist Party of India (CPI), Communist Party of India (Marxist-L-



Lalu Prasad and Rahul Gandhi during the Jan Vishwas Mahalarly in Patna on Sunday.

minist) and Communist Party of India (Marxist) also congregated at the historic ground, which has witnessed hundreds of rallies of socialist leaders in the past including the late Jayaprakash Narayan.

Lashing out at Mr. Kumar for betraying the grand alliance's mandate, the RJD chief said: "When he first betrayed us, I did not abuse him. However, the second time, we made the mistake... I made the mistake and Tejashwi [Yadav] also made the mistake too slammed Mr. Modi, accusing him of "destroying the Constitution". Samajwadi Party leader and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav was also present.

"Whenever there is change in the country, a cyclone starts in Bihar because Bihar is the nerve centre of politics. There is a battle of ideology in the country between hatred and violence and love and brotherhood. Why is there hatred in the country? The only reason is injustice. The Prime Minister only works for two to three in-laws," said Mr. Gandhi. Mr. Kharge called Mr. Modi "sardar (leader) of liars".

India on track to attain goal of drugs-free society: Shah

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Modi government's ruthless approach towards narco-trade has borne effective results and there has been a drastic rise in the number of arrests and seizures, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday.

Writing on X, Mr. Shah said India is speeding to achieve the goal of a drugs-free Bharat which will be the greatest gift to the future generations. "Our nation is speeding to achieve this goal through the detection of drugs, destruction of drug networks, and detention of culprits while rehabilitating addicts under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he said.

Mr. Shah also said an invincible anti-narcotics apparatus has been built through coordination, cooperation and collaboration among governments and agencies.

'Rebel MLAs were angry for taking action against mining mafia'

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister slams 'conspiracy' by BJP against his government, says the dissident Congress MLAs were flown to Haryana by helicopter under the protection of the Central Reserve Police Force; he says the Congress government will complete its full tenure with cooperation and assistance from all quarters in the State and adds that everyone is committed to the party's ideology

INTERVIEW
Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu

Sandeep Phukan
Vikas Vasudeva

As the Congress attempts to save its government in Himachal Pradesh, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu speaks on the political crisis and on what lies ahead for the party. Excerpts:

The Congress had 40 members in the 68-member Assembly, yet you lost the recent Rajya Sabha elections. And your government

now faces a crisis?

As far as the six MLAs are concerned, some of them were angry with my government. At least, three of them were angry that the government had started taking action against the 'mining and stone-crushing mafia' after our State faced natural calamity and flash floods. Then, there were others who wanted to be made Ministers.

The three Independent MLAs who were supporting us were actually BJP rebels. So, there was a conspiracy by the BJP as well as internally within our party. Our MLAs were flown to BJP-ruled Haryana by helicopter under the protection of the Central

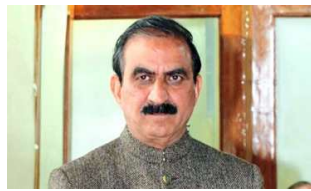
Reserve Police Force.

But the rebel MLAs have questioned your style of functioning?

I had spoken to some of the MLAs before the Rajya Sabha elections. They had breakfast with us even on the day of the elections. But I agree my assessment somewhat went wrong.

Some say if the party had held a Himachali like Anand Sharma instead of Abhishek Singhvi, your party would have won the election.

On the day of voting, only one MLA made this point to me. We had sufficient



numbers to win the Rajya Sabha seat.

Is the crisis over now? The rebels have said they are in touch with nine or 10 Congress MLAs.

I can say that now there is no one who will leave the party and everyone is com-

mitted to the Congress ideology. As far as I am concerned, people of Himachal Pradesh have elected us for five years and I am working towards fulfilling our commitment to the people of the State. Some people who have vested interest may be troubled with the crack-down on corruption by my

government but I will continue my work.

Himachal Pradesh Congress chief Pratibha Singh has said that the BJP is better placed in terms of contesting an election.

What can I say about it? I think only Pratibha can explain what she would have meant by it.

Pratibha Singh and former Chief Minister the late Virbhadra Singh's son, Vikramaditya Singh, first resigned as a Minister in your government and then took it back. He said the Congress had his

father's name in seeking votes and now he is humiliated.

Well, Virbhadra Singhji is not just his (Vikramaditya's) father but was one of our most respected leaders. He has always been part of the Congress's ideology and legacy. I don't wish to drag him in this episode. As I said before, we have a mandate to serve the people and that should be our priority.

How will the Congress fare in the bypolls if there is no stay on the disqualification of the six MLAs?

We will win all the six seats. If there are Assembly elections today in Hima-

chal, we will win two-thirds of the majority.

Is there any possibility of a rapprochement?

In politics, there is always scope for rapprochement and doors are always open for everyone.

What is the road ahead for you and the Congress?

We will run the government in the State, and it will complete its full tenure with cooperation and assistance from all the quarters. We are all preparing for the Lok Sabha elections and along with the Pradesh Congress Committee chief, we will work together and win the elections.

BJP's Asansol candidate opts out of Lok Sabha elections

The decision to field Pawan Singh had drawn criticism due to his song allegedly targeting women; Trinamool terms his withdrawal a result of 'indomitable spirit and power of the people of Bengal'

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

After the BJP announced Pawan Singh as its candidate for Asansol in West Bengal, the Bhojpur actor and singer on Sunday withdrew from contesting the Lok Sabha elections.

"I express my heartfelt gratitude to the top leadership of the BJP. The party trusted me and declared me as the candidate from Asansol but due to some reason, I will not be able to contest the elections from Asansol," Mr. Singh posted on X.

Questions raised There was outrage in political circles after Mr. Singh's name was announced, par-



BJP leaders Bajjant Panda and Vinod Tawde announcing the first list of candidates for the Lok Sabha elections on Saturday. PTI

ticularly because of his songs allegedly targeting Bengali women. Leaders of the ruling Trinamool Congress, and political and social groups had also raised questions over his candidature. Photographs of Mr.

power of the people of West Bengal".

A section of the State BJP leadership was also not happy. Since the party is attempting to use the unrest at Sandeshkhali, where allegations of sexual assault have been made against the local Trinamool leadership, as a poll plank ahead of Lok Sabha elections, the candidature of Mr. Singh could have turned counter-productive for the party.

Actor Shruthrang Sinha is the Trinamool MP from Asansol. He won the bypoll to the seat in 2022 with a margin of over three lakh votes after Babul Supriyo resigned as the BJP MP and joined the Trinamool. The BJP had won the seat in 2014 and 2019.

BJP leader Nitin Patel withdraws from LS race

The Hindu Bureau AHMEDABAD

Former Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister and BJP leader Nitin Patel on Sunday said he had withdrawn his claim to contest the Lok Sabha elections from Mehsana.

Mr. Patel did not cite any reason for the decision. The BJP is yet to officially announce its candidate from the seat. "The selection process of Mehsana candidate is still under way. But before that, I withdraw my claim as a BJP candidate," he said.

Mehsana is the home district of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is one of the first two Lok Sabha seats that the BJP won in the 1984 elections and has remained with the party since then barring two exceptions.

Doors still open for alliance with Trinamool Congress, says Jairam

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

On a day the INDIA bloc parties presented a united front at the Jan Vishwas rally in Patna, the Congress said the doors were still open for an alliance with the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal and the final word had not been spoken on the issue.

Trinamool chief and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who has recently announced that her party will contest all 42 seats in the State, has also said that this does not mean that there is a final divorce from the INDIA bloc. The Trinamool was not represented at the rally on Sunday.

When Ms. Banerjee says she is in the INDIA bloc, her priority is to defeat the BJP, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, adding that this showed her "priority and intent". "As far as we are concerned, talks are still continuing, the doors are still open and the final word will not be said till the final word is said," he added.

Denied ticket, BJP MP Harsh Vardhan bows out of active politics

Press Trust of India NEW DELHI

With sitting MP and former Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan's name not figuring from the Chandni Chowk constituency in the list of candidates announced by the BJP for the Lok Sabha elections, the leader on Sunday announced that he was bowing out of active politics.

"In a post on X, Mr. Vardhan said he will return to his roots after over 30 years of a 'glorious electoral career'."

In the first list of candidates announced by the BJP, Praveen Khandelwal has been fielded from Chandni Chowk.

Advertisement for Odisha Mining Corporation Limited (OMC) recruitment for Executive In-Charge. Includes details on application process, eligibility criteria, and contact information.

Advertisement for JIPMER, Puducherry recruitment for various posts including Deputy Director, Senior Financial Advisor, and Controller of Examinations. Includes details on application process and eligibility.

Advertisement for JIPMER, Karaikal recruitment for various posts including Computer Programmer, Accounts Officer, and Assistant Registrar. Includes details on application process and eligibility.

Advertisement for West Bengal State Electricity Transmission Company Limited (WBSETCL) recruitment for various posts including Project Engineer and Assistant Engineer. Includes details on application process and eligibility.

Advertisement for TNPSC Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Papers Limited recruitment for various posts including Manager and Assistant Manager. Includes details on application process and eligibility.

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IN BRIEF



CBI arrests NHA official in ₹20-lakh bribery case

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested a general manager of the National Highways Authority of India (NHA) in an alleged bribery case of ₹20 lakh in Nagpur, Maharashtra, officials said on Sunday. Arvind Kale, who is also a project director, allegedly received the bribe from a private company, they said. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) recovered ₹45 lakh cash, including the bribe of ₹20 lakh, during a search operation following Mr. Kale's arrest, the officials said. A case has been registered against Mr. Kale and 11 others, including the private company, they said.

CUET-UG dates may change based on LS polls schedule

The schedule for the Common University Entrance Test (CUET-UG) is likely to be changed depending on the Lok Sabha election schedule, according to University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Jagadish Kumar. The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Tuesday announced that the exam would be conducted from May 15 to 31 and the results declared on June 30. "The dates announced by the NTA are tentative. Once the election dates are announced, the NTA will finalise the CUET-UG dates. The tentative schedule is from May 15," the UGC chief said.

Search on for 4 in Spanish woman rape case

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

Three persons arrested for gang-raping a Spanish woman were produced before a Judicial Magistrate Court on Sunday. Later, they were sent to judicial custody.

"The remaining four criminals have been identified and we have got their details. We are also trying to give compensation to the woman. We also appeal to the court for a speedy trial," Dumka SP Pitambar Singh Khewar said.

The couple's statements have been recorded under Section 164 of the Cr.P.C.

The woman was gang-raped in Dumka district of Jharkhand on Friday night. Mamta Kumari, Member, National Women for Commission (NCW), met the victim. She termed the incident unfortunate and blamed the State government for the deteriorating law and order in the State.

Farmer leaders give call for Delhi march, 'rail roko' protest

While farmers on Punjab boundary would continue their protest, their counterparts from other States would reach Delhi by trains and buses on March 6; 'rail roko' planned on March 10

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

The Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) and the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) — the two umbrella bodies that are spearheading the fresh farmer's agitation — on Sunday gave a call to farmers from across the country to reach Delhi on March 6.

Along with the 'Delhi Chalo' march, the farmer outfits have announced a 'rail roko' agitation for four hours on March 10 to press their demands.

Farmers from Punjab and Haryana would, however, continue their protest at Shambhu-Ambala and Khanauri-Jind — the inter-State boundary between Haryana and Punjab, where they have been camping after being stopped from entering Haryana since February 13. The KMM and the SKM (Non-Political) had earlier given the call for the 'Delhi Chalo' march last month to press for fulfilment of their demands.

KMM coordinator Sar-



Farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pander said the Centre is treating farmers and labourers like enemies and that their struggle would continue till the demands are fulfilled.

wan Singh Pander said farmers, labourers, and tribal people from all over the country would reach Delhi by trains and buses on March 6. "The government keeps saying that the farmers should come with out tractor-trolleys, so we have decided that the friends who were supposed to come to Delhi by trains and buses should now march to Delhi. Farmers from Punjab and Haryana will continue to

camp at the different locations on the inter-State boundary of both the States," he said.

Rail roko protest

"Also, we have decided that a 'rail roko' protest will be held on March 10 across the country, which will be held from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.," he added.

Mr. Pander alleged that the Centre was treating the farmers and labourers demanding their rights like

enemies. "This is unfortunate and an attempt is being made to establish dictatorship in the country, but the people of the country will not allow this to happen," he said.

"The struggle will continue till the MSP and crop purchase guarantee act, implementation of the Swaminathan Report, complete loan waiver of farmers and the entire charter of demands are resolved," he added.

Odisha's famed Rupa Tarakasi, Banglar Muslin earn GI tag

Sangeetha Kandavel
CHENNAI

The famous Cuttack Rupa Tarakasi (silver filigree) has been given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry in Chennai. The application for this was filed by the Odisha State Cooperative Handicrafts Corporation Limited and was facilitated by the Department of Textile and Handicrafts, Government of Odisha. Filigree has been traditionally associated with fine craftsmanship and luxurious design in classical jewellery.

The historical records attached along with the GI filing mention: "Archaeological evidence suggests that filigree was incorporated into jewellery as early as 3,500 BCE in Mesopotamia where it is practised even today as Telkari work. According to historians, there is every possibility that the 'Tarakasi' work reached Cuttack from Persia through Indonesia some 500 years ago by sea trade. The argument is based on similar workmanship seen in both Cuttack and Indonesia."

"There are multiple pieces of evidence that mention the exchange of jewellery and gems between Kalinga and Indonesia," the record noted. The other products to join the GI league are Banglar Muslin, one of the popular traditional handloom crafts of Bengal; Narasapur crochet lace products; and Kutch rogan craft. Ratlam Riyawan Lahsun (Garlic), a variety named after Riyawan village in Ratlam district of Madhya Pradesh, also bagged the GI tag along with the Am-baji White Marble, which is formed when limestone is re-crystallised under the earth's crust due to intense pressure and heat. Tripura Risa Textile, Hyderabad Lac Bangles, Majuli Mask of Assam and the Assam Majuli Manuscript Painting are other products that got GI tag.

The Majuli Mask of Assam is made in different varieties and sizes as they are mainly divided into different categories — Mukha bhaona covers the face; the Lotokoi hanging mask, which is bigger in size, extends to the chest; while Cho Mukha (huge mask) covers the head and body.

Advanced landing systems cut flight delays, but come at a cost

Lavpreet Kaur
HYDERABAD

In January, major airports across India witnessed severe flight disruptions owing to bad weather conditions. Hyderabad ended up playing host to international flights diverted from several destinations, including Singapore, London, Kuwait and Colombo. Meanwhile, Chennai airport's visibility dropped to as low as 100 metres, causing the cancellation of several flights across major cities in India.

The fiasco has raised serious questions about the status of the existing Instrument Landing System (ILS) and the installation of advanced technologies across the major airports.

To enhance the air navigation services infrastructure at airports within the Indian airspace, the Airports Authority of India has started commissioning and upgrading the latest categories of the ILS at several airports in the past few

years. Aviation experts also called for urgent action on this front.

Landing aid

ILS is a standard precision landing aid established by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). It is used to provide accurate lateral and vertical guidance to aircraft for landing on the runway under normal or adverse weather conditions. Interestingly, the need for advanced ILS is now felt in airports which traditionally would not have fog problems, but report visibility challenges due to increased pollution (or smog).

Currently, only six international airports in India, including Delhi, Jaipur, Amritsar, Kolkata, Lucknow and Bengaluru have CAT III B landing facilities, according to data revealed by the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA). "Flights often get delayed due to challenges in landing at some of the airports which lack advanced

ILS (CAT II or CAT III) systems. This trend is particularly pronounced in tier 2 and tier 3 cities of India, leading to a constant knock-out effect in flight delays even in major cities and hence passenger inconvenience," Rishi Jain, chief executive officer at Jain Aviation Consultants, said.

ILS systems, however, are a costly affair. According to experts, the average cost of installing a CAT III ILS at an airport is about ₹100 crore, with added maintenance cost in the range of ₹40 lakh to ₹50 lakh. Moreover, it is an added cost for airlines as well. "It is a catch-22 situation. Advanced CAT II or CAT III ILS installation also requires airlines to invest in the training and certification of their pilots for specific technologies while disrupting their rostering schedules," Captain Sanjay Karve N.M., retired Accountable Manager and Chief Pilot, Government of Maharashtra, said.

150 bank accounts linked to syndicate smuggling opioids under ED scanner

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has examined nearly 150 bank accounts linked to an international syndicate, which allegedly supplied opioid drugs in huge quantities to its contacts overseas. The agency is investigating the money-laundering case based on an FIR registered by the Mumbai Police. The proceeds of alleged crime are currently estimated to be around ₹44.50 crore.

It is learnt that these bank accounts were in the name of certain individuals and entities related to a key accused, Ali Asgar Shirazi, who was arrested by the agency in January, and currently in judicial custody.

Over 25 companies, partnership firms, and proprietorship concerns came under the ED scanner and four companies and partnership firms (Hustlers Hospitality Private Limited, Zetetic Techno



Over 25 firms are under ED scrutiny and four firms have been included as accused.

India, Trans Air Express, Falisha Technoworld LLP, and One Logistics) have been included as accused.

These entities were allegedly instrumental in the projection of drug money as genuine business proceeds. The investments made by some individuals in the share market, FOC instruments and cryptocurrency wallets were also examined in detail to trace the end usage of the money generated by the illegal sale of opioids.

Mr. Shirazi was initially arrested by the Mumbai Police in May last year when he was attempting to

escape to the UAE. The police suspected that he was instrumental in the supply of drugs worth over ₹200 crore overseas. The ED said Mr. Shirazi and others received orders through call centres being run in different parts of the country. The operations were being run through a network of call centres, websites, logistics companies, consultancy firms, and dummy pharma companies for supply of opioids to the U.S. and U.K.

Properties attached

About a week ago, the ED attached properties worth about ₹5 crore in the form of flats, a shop, and land parcels purportedly belonging to Mr. Shirazi, Mehreen Shirazi, Abdul Samad, Manoj Patel, and Bhavesh Shah and the movable assets valued at ₹36.81 lakh in the form of fixed deposits and balance in the bank accounts of Ramakhandan Patel, Shobha Patel, and Hustlers Hospitality Private Limited.

As it turns out, one U.S.-based member of the syndicate named Ezhil Sezhan Kamalodoss had been held guilty by a court in U.S. in June 2022 for "conspiring to distribute millions of opioid pills and other illegal controlled substances imported from India and money laundering conspiracy".

CROSSWORD 14113 (set by Arden)
To solve this puzzle online, go across to our crossword site @ https://qrgo.pugc.link/jip/Tn
13 Real time changes in lawless state (7)
14 With frientless siding, it's a hit (4)
15 ...famous singer keen to make a comeback (4)
20 Fancy entranceway goes awry, it's a mess (7)
23 Rule on charity (5)
24 The man heads off taking his newly married wife, an islander (9)
26 Fancy thing, sport for retirement (9)
27 Loves work, there's some delay (5)
28 Long for some money (3)
29 Top down, down in the dumps (11)
Down
1 Covered those born, dead and age in between (8)
2 Universal festival, not hard to hold outside (8)
3 Organs involved in a noteworthy mission (5)
4 Too excited, brief version not in line (7)
5 Seats of burden working by changing gears (7)
6 On the other hand, a profit follows later (4,5)
7 Lament about her virginity (6)
8 Close to June, a flower festival (6)
14 Given a world leader with atomic bomb (9)
16 Pleased about Tory leader's inclusive stand... (8)
17 ...together with son in marriage (2,6)
19 Articles about permit for a sportsperson (7)
20 Special act to cover naked performance (7)
21 By hoarding money it gives you a high (6)
22 Indian road in the border (6)
25 Some are paid nicely to go upcountry (5)

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

MADGALDEEP Sandal Try Our New With Sandalwood Oil
FAITH Essence of Bhajagovindham
Adi Sankara's granthas are useful to many devotees and the biggest takeaway is that tatsang is a big blessing, said Swami Ramachandra Tirtha (Nochur) in a discourse. Even if a devotee feels he is not well versed in scriptures, he would know Adi Sankara's Bhajagovindham.
The essence of Bhajagovindham lies in the sloka, "Satsangave nissangatvam, nissangave nirmohatvam, nirmohatve nischalatattvam, nischalattatve jivan mukhti". Everyone wants to be comfortable, but do not know how to go about it. Why does a child cry at birth? It does so because it is aware that the comfort of the womb is gone and the situation is changed. It cries, seeks comfort... This quest for sukham starts from the moment of birth and continues throughout one's life. How will such inner equipoise come? It is only through the company of the wise, through discourses.
In Sivananda Lahiri, Adi Sankara prays to Sarveswara, saying, "I will pray and perform pujas; Oh, loka guru, kindly advise in a manner that will bring me inner santi." Listening to discourses in itself would bring one nirvrti or inner bliss.
Satsang, the company of good people, and hearing their lectures would enhance one's intelligence quotient, while strengthening one's bhakti.

MONEYWISE



Gold, silver remain range-bound

PRECIOUS METALS

Gold oscillating in \$2,000-2,100 range. A decisive break out will set the tone for the next move

B. Krishnakumar

Extending the lacklustre trend witnessed in January, precious metals remained range-bound, and the price action was devoid of any direction in February. The strength in U.S. dollar and the recovery in the equity markets dented sentiments towards the precious metals.

The only positive aspect was that the Comex gold price managed to trade above the psychological \$2,000 level throughout the month.

Comex gold closed 0.24% lower in February to end at \$2,052.8. A similar trend was witnessed in Comex silver as well. The white metal closed 0.78% lower to settle at \$22.9 an ounce.

Mirroring the trend in the global markets, MCX gold closed 0.33% lower in February and closed at \$62,540 per 10-gram. MCX silver closed 3% lower at ₹71,265 per kilogram.

As observed last month, Comex gold is still oscillating in the \$2,000-2,100 range. A decisive break out from this range will set the tone for the next big move. A move past \$2,100 will impart momentum to the upside and could help Comex gold reach the next target zone of \$2,150-2,160 zone. On the other hand, a fall below \$2,000 would be a sign of weakness and could push the price to \$1,935-\$1,950 zone.

Similar to gold, Comex silver too is yet to break out of the \$21.926-4 range that the price has been confined to for several months now. Only a break out of this range would trigger the next big move. Until then expect silver price to remain range-bound and volatile. A fall below \$21.9 would be a sign of weakness and the price could then slide to \$19.2-\$19.8 zone.

Mirroring the global trend, the price action in MCX gold too was devoid of any trend in February. The price is still stuck in the same range of ₹61,300-64,200. As observed last month, a move above ₹64,200 would impart momentum to the upside and the price could then head to ₹65,500-66,000. A fall below ₹61,300 would be a sign of weakness and could push the gold price to ₹59,500-60,200.

Silver too range-bound
MCX silver price too is still confined in the ₹70,400-74,000 zone. The short-term price direction depends on the break out from this range. Above ₹74,000 would be a sign of strength and could push the price higher to ₹76,500-77,500.

A fall below ₹70,400 would impart weakness and could push MCX silver price to ₹68,000-68,500. Until the price breaks out of the above range, expect volatile range-bound price action to persist.

To summarise, expect range-bound and volatile price action to persist in precious metals. As observed last month, only a break out from the prevailing range would lead to any meaningful move.

(The author is a Chennai based analyst/trader. The views and opinion featured in this column is based on the analysis of short-term price movement in gold and silver futures at COMEX & Multi Commodity Exchange of India. This is not meant to be a trading or investment advice)

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



Good practice: Use your credit card responsibly, clear the dues on time, and maintain a healthy credit utilisation ratio. GETTY IMAGES | ISTOCK

How to choose a credit card that suits your pocket

While rewards credit cards provide reward points on your purchase which can later be redeemed for discount vouchers, cashback cards offer a percentage of spending back to your card account

PLASTIC MONEY

Rohit Chibbar

When used responsibly, a credit card can help you build a strong credit profile and save on your regular spends. However, choosing one from multiple options available may be a challenge, especially for young professionals with limited knowledge of credit cards.

Before you begin shortlisting credit cards, the first step should be to understand how a credit card works. You must not consider it as "extra" money, but instead take it as a means to borrow funds that need to be paid back timely.

Having basic knowledge of credit cards will help you make an informed decision, as you will be able to better understand and compare the benefits offered.

Check for eligibility

Not all card issuers offer credit cards to new-to-credit consumers, and those who do might only provide select entry-level cards.

Hence, if you have no credit history, chances are you would not be eligible for many cards.

While this holds true for most new-to-credit applicants, young individuals with higher income might have a wider choice of cards.

For salaried professionals who are looking for

if you have no credit history, chances are you would not be eligible for many cards. This holds true for new-to-credit applicants, young individuals with higher income might have a wider choice of cards

their first credit card, it is best to check the cards from the bank which holds their salary account, or where they have an existing relationship.

Understand your need
Identify if you need a card only for building credit or to enhance your savings on regular spends or a particular category of spends. For credit building, an entry-level low-fee credit card with basic features and minimal eligibility requirements could be the right choice. If you do not qualify for any such card, a secured credit card could also serve the purpose.

Explore options

However, if you are looking to save a considerable amount through credit cards, you must compare multiple options and choose the one that best aligns with your spending preferences.

For instance, if you are a frequent traveller, a travel credit card can help you save on your trips in the form of extra rewards/air miles, complimentary lounge access at airports,

for salaried professionals who are looking for their first credit card, it is best to check the cards from the bank which holds their salary account, or where they have an existing relationship

etc. Similarly, if you wish to save on your online spends, a card that offers a higher reward rate on online spends could be the right one for you. If you are loyal to a particular brand like Flipkart, Amazon, Yatra or EaseMyTrip, you could also go for cards co-branded with such platforms for substantial savings.

Narrow down on choice

Once you know why you need a credit card, the next step is to understand how different credit cards could cater to your requirement.

Credit cards can broadly be divided into two categories – rewards and cashback – basis the way they offer value-back.

Rewards credit cards provide reward points on your purchase, which can later be redeemed to avail discount vouchers, merchandise or converted into air miles or cash credit.

On the other hand, cashback credit cards mostly offer a percentage of your spending back into your card account. Ask yourself how you wish to

get value-back. Several other terms and conditions have a role to play in determining the overall value that the card offers. For example, you would want to know how much the card charges as joining/annual fee, what the reward points are worth, whether you are required to meet certain spend thresholds to avail benefits, etc. Asking the right questions will help you filter the options as per your needs.

How to apply

Nowadays, you can apply for a credit card through the issuer's website or through online marketplaces where you can compare options and choose a suitable one.

For most users, the first credit card is usually an entry-level card but it paves the way for you to establish credit and qualify for better cards in future.

A good credit score also makes it easier for you to avail loans to meet your life goals like buying a house. Hence, it is important to begin your credit journey as early as possible.

Get your first credit card, use it responsibly – clear the dues on time and maintain a healthy credit utilisation ratio (CUR). When you are confident, move on to better cards with more targeted benefits that will not only help you save more, but also improve your credit score, with disciplined usage.

(The author is head of Credit Cards Business, Paisabazaar)

Family matters

THINKINVESTOR

You should involve your spouse in all investment decisions you make for the family. This makes it less likely for a third party to scam your family out of the investments after your lifetime

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

You may have received several reminders from transfer agents about the last date for filing nominee details for your investments. It is important to ensure that the wealth you accumulate is available to the beneficiary at the time the money is required to meet a life goal. For instance, parents creating an education fund for their child must ensure that the wealth accumulated in the fund is easily accessible at the time the child turns 18. This requires that you thoughtfully craft your investments. In this article, we discuss two factors that are important in this regard – spousal involvement in investment decisions and ownership of the investments.

Spousal involvement

Two heads are typically better than one for decision making. You should, therefore, involve your spouse in all the investment decisions you make for the family. It is even better if your spouse does not understand the world of investments as you do? Why? The more you know about investments, typically the less you are likely to explore the obvious questions.

A case in point is bank deposits. You may know how to anticipate interest rate changes. While you may be focused on which tenure to select to optimise returns, your spouse may suggest that you break your deposits into smaller amounts and stagger the maturity amount through the term period chosen. Bond laddering, to use a technical term. Why? The argument may be that having cash flows through the year is much better than having lumpy flows at any point in time.

Of course, involving your spouse may not be an easy task if your spouse is uninterested in participating in the investment discussions. You must, therefore, address the other important benefit of spousal involvement – being aware of the investments. This makes it less likely for a third party to scam your family out of the investments after your lifetime. At the very least, your spouse will know how much wealth the family has and where the investments are located. Involving your child may be an arduous task but perhaps, beneficial if your child is above 18.

Conclusion

A simple way for spousal involvement in family finances is to jointly hold the family wealth. An alternative is to hold in "either or survivor" mode. That way, one of you can continue to operate bank deposits and savings accounts after the other's lifetime; your child will be the nominee for your goal-based investments in equity funds and bank deposits.

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

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%)			
	Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Small Finance Banks				
AU Small Finance Bank	8.00	6.75	7.50	7.25
Equitas Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.00	8.00	7.25
ESMF Small Finance Bank	8.25	6.00	6.75	6.25
Finance Small Finance Bank	8.61	7.65	8.11	8.00
Jain Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.50	7.25	7.25
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.65	6.65	8.60	8.25
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	8.25	8.25	7.20	7.20
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.00	8.50	7.50
Private Sector Banks				
Axis Bank	7.20	6.70	7.10	7.00
Bandhan Bank	7.85	7.25	7.25	5.85
City Union Bank	7.00	6.75	6.50	6.25
CSB Bank	7.75	5.00	5.75	5.75
DBS Bank	7.50	7.00	6.50	6.50
DCB Bank	8.00	7.15	7.60	7.40
Federal Bank	7.50	6.80	7.00	6.60
HDFC Bank	7.25	6.60	7.00	7.00
ICI Bank	7.20	6.70	7.00	7.00
IDFC First Bank	7.75	6.50	7.25	7.00
IndusInd Bank	7.75	7.75	7.25	7.25
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	7.10	7.10	6.50	6.50

Home Loan Interest Rates

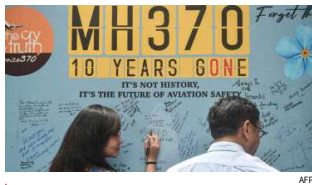
Bank Name	Interest Rates (%)			
	Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Karur Vysya Bank	7.50	7.00	7.00	7.00
Kotak Mahindra Bank	7.40	7.10	7.00	6.20
Naitnal Bank	7.05	6.70	6.25	5.75
RBL Bank	8.10	7.50	7.50	7.10
SBI Bank India	8.25	7.05	7.30	7.75
South Indian Bank	7.40	6.70	6.70	6.00
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	7.75	7.00	6.50	6.50
Public Sector Banks				
Bank of Baroda	7.25	6.85	7.25	6.50
Bank of India	7.25	6.50	6.50	6.00
Bank of Maharashtra	7.00	6.50	6.25	6.00
Canara Bank	7.25	6.85	6.80	6.70
Central Bank of India	7.25	6.75	6.50	6.35
Indian Bank	7.25	6.10	6.25	6.35
Indian Overseas Bank	7.30	6.90	6.50	6.50
Punjab National Bank	7.25	6.75	6.00	6.00
Punjab & Sind Bank	7.40	6.20	6.00	6.50
State Bank of India	7.10	6.80	6.75	6.50
Union Bank of India	7.25	6.75	6.50	6.50
Foreign Banks				
Deutsche Bank	8.00	7.00	8.00	7.50
HSBC Bank	7.25	4.00	7.00	6.50

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)		
	Up to 10 lakh	Above 10 lakh & up to 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
Public Sector Banks			
State Bank of India	8.40-10.15	8.40-10.05	8.40-10.05
Bank of Baroda	8.40-10.05	8.40-10.05	8.40-10.00
Union Bank of India	8.35-10.75	8.35-10.00	8.35-10.00
Punjab National Bank	8.45-10.25	8.40-10.15	8.40-10.15
Bank of India	8.30-10.75	8.30-10.75	8.30-10.75
Canara Bank	8.50-11.25	8.45-11.25	8.40-11.15
UCO Bank	8.45-10.30	8.45-10.30	8.45-10.30
Bank of Maharashtra	8.35-11.15	8.35-11.15	8.35-11.15
Punjab and Sind Bank	8.50-10.00	8.50-10.00	8.50-10.00
Indian Overseas Bank	8.40-10.60	8.40-10.60	8.40-10.60
Central Bank of India	8.45-9.80	8.45-9.80	8.45-9.80
Private Sector Banks			
Kotak Mahindra Bank	8.70*	8.70*	8.70*
ICI Bank	8.75*	8.75*	8.75*
Axis Bank	8.75-13.30	8.75-13.30	8.75-6.65
HSBC Bank	8.45*	8.45*	8.45*
South Indian Bank	9.84-11.24	9.84-11.04	9.84-11.09
Karur Vysya Bank	9.00-11.05	9.00-11.05	9.00-11.05
Home Loan Interest Rates			
Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)		
	Up to 10 lakh	Above 10 lakh & up to 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
Karnataka Bank	8.60-10.60	8.60-10.60	8.60-10.60
Federal Bank	8.80*	8.80*	8.80*
Dhanu Bank	9.35-10.50	9.35-10.50	9.35-10.50
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	9.45-9.95	9.45-9.95	9.45-9.95
Bandhan Bank	9.16-15.00	9.16-13.33	9.16-13.33
RBL Bank	8.90*	8.90*	8.90*
CSB Bank	10.69-12.54	10.69-12.54	10.69-12.54
HDFC Bank	8.55*	8.55*	8.55*
City Union Bank	12.35-14.10	12.85-14.60	13.35-14.85
Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)			
LIC Housing Finance	8.35-10.35	8.35-10.55	8.35-10.75
Bajaj Housing Finance	8.50*	8.50*	8.50*
Tata Capital	8.70*	8.70*	8.70*
PNB Housing Finance	8.50-14.50	8.50-14.50	8.50-14.45
GI Housing Finance	8.80*	8.80*	8.80*
SFM Home Finance	10.00*	10.00*	10.00*
Aditya Birla Capital	8.80-14.75	8.80-14.75	8.80-14.75
ICI Home Finance	9.20*	9.20*	9.20*
Godrej Housing Finance	8.55*	8.55*	8.55*

* Onwards Rating as on February 28 Source: Paisabazaar.com

KUALA LUMPUR

10 years after it disappeared, kin of MH370 victims call for new search



Relatives of passengers on a Malaysia Airlines plane that vanished 10 years ago pushed for a new search on Sunday as they spoke of grief and the struggle to find closure. Flight MH370, a Boeing 777 aircraft carrying 239 people, disappeared from radar screens on March 8, 2014, while en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. AFP

DHAKA

Nobel Laureate Yunus granted bail in Bangladesh embezzlement case



A court in Bangladesh on Sunday granted bail to Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus in a \$2.3 million embezzlement case. Yunus, who pioneered the use of microcredit to help poor people, was sentenced to six months in prison in January on a separate charge of violating labour laws. He was granted bail in that case too. PTI

GENEVA

Swiss voters approve proposal to increase pension payments



Swiss voters on Sunday backed a proposal to increase pension payments, a move hailed as "historic" at a time when the country's ageing population faces surging living expenses. But a separate vote to raise Switzerland's retirement age to 66 from 65 was soundly rejected by three-quarters of voters. AFP

PORT-AU-PRINCE

Armed gangs storm Haiti's main prison, letting prisoners escape



An unknown number of inmates have escaped after armed gangs stormed the main prison in the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince on Saturday evening. Gang leaders and those charged with the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse were among those incarcerated in the prison located near the National Palace. AFP

Many OPEC+ nations extend oil cuts to boost prices

Agence France-Presse
VIENNA

Moscow, Riyadh and several other OPEC+ members on Sunday announced extensions to oil production cuts first announced in 2023 as part of an agreement among oil producers to boost prices following economic uncertainty.

The plan to extend cuts to mid-2024 comes on top of previous cuts to both oil output and exports as some of the world's largest energy producers drive to push up market rates.

Saudi Arabia's Energy Ministry said it would cut its production by one million barrels per day (bpd) from April to June (Q2), while Russia announced 471,000 bpd of cuts in Q2. UAE, Kuwait, Iraq and Kazakhstan followed suit, saying they would extend existing voluntary cuts till the end of June.

Shehbaz Sharif becomes Pakistan PM for second time

PML-N leader secures 201 votes, while his PTI-backed opponent Omar Ayub Khan gets only 92 votes; 72-year-old leader raises Kashmir issue in victory speech and compares it to Palestine crisis

Press Trust of India
ISLAMABAD

Leading to revive Pakistan's debt-trapped economy and eradicate terrorism, newly-elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said his government would not allow the country to become part of some "great game" and would maintain cordial relations with neighbours based on the principles of equality.

In his victory speech in the National Assembly soon after he was elected as the 24th Prime Minister and for a second time since 2022, the 72-year-old Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leader profusely thanked his elder brother and three-time former premier Nawaz Sharif and allies for putting



Political duopoly: Nawaz Sharif, left, greets his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif at parliament in Islamabad on Sunday. AFP

their trust in him and allowing him to head a coalition government after last month's election resulted in a hung parliament.

While Mr. Shehbaz secured 201 votes, his challenger Omar Ayub Khan of jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan

facing an alarming debt crisis where even the expenditures of the National Assembly were being paid by borrowing money.

Not part of any game He said that Pakistan would not become part of any "great game" and his government would increase the number of friends. He pledged to improve ties with all leading nations, including its neighbours. "We will keep ties with neighbours on the basis of equality," Mr. Shehbaz said.

Mr. Shehbaz, however, raked up the Kashmir issue and equated it with Palestine. "Let's all come together [...] and the National Assembly should pass a resolution for the freedom of Kashmiris and Palestinians," he added.

Trump wins Republican vote in three States, edging toward U.S. presidential nomination

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

Donald Trump on Saturday inched ahead in his quest to become the Republican Party's presidential nominee, winning internal party elections in the States of Missouri, Michigan and Idaho, U.S. media reported.

The former President has now won every State nominating contest heading into next week's "Super Tuesday," when voters in 15 U.S. States choose their preferred candidate for each party.

Mr. Trump has gained huge momentum in the race to capture the Republican nomination at the party convention in July and Tuesday is expected to all but secure the result.

He is likely to face President Joe Biden in November elections, pitting the



Donald Trump

two for the second time since 2020.

The voting on Saturday in Missouri, Michigan and Idaho were hybrid internal elections with differing rules, in some cases reflecting rifts and tensions despite Mr. Trump's formidable sway.

Complete sweep

In Missouri, Mr. Trump swamped his main opponent, former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley,

winning every county caucus in the State, *The New York Times* reported.

In Michigan, around 2,000 party activists voted in a caucus convention, and Mr. Trump won all 39 delegates up for grabs, CNN reported.

The limited vote came in the wake of chaos within the State party, including allegations of overspending and mismanagement. Mr. Trump had grabbed 16 Michigan delegates earlier in the week in a limited primary vote.

The former President also handily won Republican caucuses in the western state of Idaho, NBC and ABC projected.

Ms. Haley has raced around the country in the run-up to Super Tuesday, trying to make an increasingly hard case against the inevitability of Trump's nomination.

'170 people executed' in attacks on Burkina villages: prosecutor

Agence France-Presse
OUAGADOUGOU

Around 170 people were "executed" in attacks on three villages in northern Burkina Faso a week ago, a regional prosecutor said on Sunday as jihadist violence flares in the junta-led country.

On that same day, February 25, separate attacks on a mosque in eastern Burkina and a Catholic

church in the north left dozens more dead.

Aly Benjamin Coulibaly said he had received reports of the attacks on the villages of Komsilga, Nodin and Sorore in Yatenga province on February 25, with a provisional toll of "around 170 people executed".

Survivors of the attacks said that dozens of women and young children were among the victims.

U.S., Qatari, and Hamas envoys push for Gaza ceasefire from Cairo as war rages

Agence France-Presse
GAZA STRIP

Mediators in Cairo made a renewed push for a Gaza ceasefire, but differences remained as fighting raged on in the Palestinian territory gripped by desperate food shortages.

U.S., Qatari and Hamas envoys travelled to Cairo for the latest effort towards a six-week truce, stepped-up aid deliveries and the exchange of hostages for Palestinian prisoners.

With another 90 Palestinians killed in past 24 hours, death toll reaches 30,410 in the besieged enclave

But sticking points remained, including a Hamas demand that the Israeli armed forces entirely withdraw from the Gaza Strip after almost five months of devastating war.

And Israel, which has so far announced no plans to

join the Egypt talks, has demanded Hamas provide it with a list of all 150 remaining captives, including more than 30 it fears are dead.

Despite the latest push to halt the fighting sparked by Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel, Israeli bombing and urban combat again rocked Gaza, home to 2.4 million people, most of whom have been displaced.

Another 90 Palestinians were killed within 24

hours, said Hamas-ruled Gaza's Health Ministry, which put the war's overall death toll at 30,410, mostly women and children.

Two babies buried

Two of the latest victims, twin babies Naem and Wissam Abu Anza, were buried on Sunday as their mother Rania wept in agony.

At least 16 children have died of malnutrition in recent days as "famine spreads" in Gaza's north.

Iran conservatives secure bulk of seats in elections: media

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iranian conservatives secured the bulk of seats in elections for a key clerical body and the national legislature, local media reported on Sunday, estimating a record low turnout.

Authorities were still counting ballots two days after Friday's vote for members of parliament and for the Assembly of Ex-

perts, which selects the Islamic republic's supreme leader.

The official IRNA news agency put the turnout at around "41%" among 61 million eligible voters.

The reformist daily Shargh predicted the next parliament would be "in the hands of radical conservatives" who "took advantage of the opportunity created by the low participation".

Sport

Pragg outwits Vedit Gujrathi

Press Trust of India
PRAGUE

Indian GM R. Praggnanandhaa crashed through the defences of compatriot Vedit Gujrathi, but D. Gukesh suffered a shock defeat from a position of strength against Czech Republic's David Navara of in the fifth round of the Prague Masters here.

Uzbekistan's Nodirbek Abdusattarov defeated Mateusz Bartel of Poland to emerge as the sole leader.

The results (fourth round): R. Praggnanandhaa (2.5) bt Vedit Gujrathi (2.5); Parham Maghsoudlou (In, 3.5) drew with Richard Rapport (Res, 3); D. Gukesh (2.5) lost to David Navara (Cze, 2.5); Nguyen Thai Dai Van (Cze, 2) drew with Vincent Keymer (Ger, 2); Mateusz Bartel (Pol, 1) lost to Nodirbek Abdusattarov (Uzb, 4).

Foden inspires City's terrific comeback win against United

EURO LEAGUES

Associated Press
MANCHESTER

Phil Foden led Manchester City's fightback after an astonishing miss by Erling Haaland for a 3-1 win over Manchester United in a one-sided derby on Sunday.

City trailed 0-1 at half-time after Marcus Rashford's rasping long-range strike in the eighth minute. Foden succeeded where Haaland earlier failed, smashing in a rising drive for the equaliser in the 56th and then sweeping in a low shot in the 80th off Julian Alvarez's inside pass. Haaland atoned for his mistake by taking advan-



Bang! Foden fires in his first goal for City against United in the "Manchester Derby". GETTY IMAGES

tage of a defensive error by Sofyan Amrabat to stroke home the third. Important results: Premier League: Manchester City 3 (Foden 56, 80, Haaland 90-1) bt Manchester United 1 (Rashford 8); Luton 2 (Chong 66, Morris 72) lost to Aston Villa 3 (Watkins 24, 38, Digne 89); Burnley 0 lost to Bournemouth 2 (Kluiver 13, Semenyo 88). LaLiga: Valencia 2 (Duro 27, Yaremchuk 30) drew with Real Madrid 2 (Vinicio 45-5, 76); Villarreal 5 (Sorloth 7, 19, 66, Capoue 32, Guedes 47) bt Granada 1 (Corbeanu 90-1). Atletico Madrid 2 (Rui Silva 8-0, Morata 44) bt Real Betis 1 (William 62). Serie A: Torino 0 drew with Fiorentina 0; Monza 1 (Carboni 87) lost to Roma 4 (Pellegrini 38, Lukaku 42, Dyballa 63, Paredes 82-pen); Verona 1 (Swiderski 79) bt Sassuolo 0.

Disappointing start for Indian boxers

Sports Bureau

India began its campaign on a disappointing note with World championship bronze medalist Deepak Bhoria (51kg) and Asian Games bronze medalist Narendar Berwal (692kg) losing their respective round-of-64 bouts in the first World Olympic boxing qualifier at the E-Work Arena in Busto Arsizio, Italy, on Sunday.

Narrow defeat

Bhoria exited after suffering a narrow 2-3 defeat to two-time European under-22 champion Nijat Husaynov of Azerbaijan. Later, Berwal lost 0-5 to 2022 European champion Nelvie Tiafack of Germany.

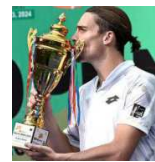
Blancaneaux clinches the title

DELHI OPEN

Kamesh Srinivasan
NEW DELHI

Geoffrey Blancaneaux of France played a fine all-round game to outwit the 19-year-old Coleman Wong of Hong Kong 6-4, 6-2 in the final of the Dafa News \$82,000 Delhi Open Challenger tennis tournament at the DLTA Complex here on Sunday.

It was the second Challenger title and 15th singles triumph in the 25-year-old Blancaneaux's career, who was ranked a career-best 134 two years ago. Wong, who trained at the Rafael Nadal Academy in Spain, showed glimpses of his athletic game but lacked the experience to tackle a seasoned player like Blancaneaux, who



Blancaneaux, KAMESH SRINIVASAN

he faced in the match and cruised home. He had beaten a string of high-quality opponents along the way, with considerable authority, including the second seed Adam Walton of Australia. He had dropped one set in all in five matches.

The champion collected \$11,200 and 75 ATP points. For Wong, who has won two singles titles in the ITF circuit, it was a memorable run, as he capitalised on the opening in the draw when he got a walkover from third seed and the champion of the last Challenger in Pune, Valentin Vaclerov of Monaco, in the second round. Wong collected \$6,575 and 44 points.

The results (final): Geoffrey Blancaneaux (Fra) bt Coleman Wong (Hkg) 6-4, 6-2.

DOMINATION

Lyon spins Australia to a thumping victory over New Zealand



Nathan Lyon took six for 65 as Australia dismissed New Zealand for 136 before lunch on the fourth day of the Test at the Basin Reserve on Sunday to win by 172 runs and go 1-0 up in the series. **The scores:** Australia 383 & 164 bt New Zealand 179 & 196 (Ravindra 59, Lyon 6/65). **Pos:** Green, Australia won by 172 runs.

POLE POSITION

India climbs to top spot in the latest WTC standings



India jumped to the top of the World Test Championship standings, replacing New Zealand in the latest rankings issued on Sunday. India has a point-percentage of 64.58 (62 points in eight matches: five wins, two losses and one draw). NZ has point-percentage of 60.00. (36 points in five matches: three wins, two losses).

DETERMINATION

RCB skipper Smriti praises Perry's fighting spirit



RCB captain Smriti Mandhana hailed Perry's resilience during the WPL match against Mumbai Indians. "Pezz (Elyse Perry) is a fighter. She wasn't hundred per cent but the way she was moving on the field, anyone would doubt that. She played a good knock to take us to that total," Smriti said.

INCREDIBLE FEAT

James becomes first NBA player to score 40,000 career points



LeBron James on Saturday became the first NBA player to reach 40,000 career regular-season points, when scoring nine against Denver Nuggets. James, who last year overtook Kareem Abdul-Jabbar for the all-time scoring mark, is a four-time NBA champion, four-time NBA MVP as well as the oldest active player.

Capitals move to top of the table with win over Giants

Meg Lanning kicks things off with a half-century; Ashleigh Gardner is lone star for Gujarat but Jess Jonassen and Radha Yadav neutralise her efforts as Beth Mooney's side ends Bengaluru leg winless

WPL SEASON 2

Meg Lanning
BENGALURU

Ashleigh Gardner (two for 37 and 40, 31b, 5x4, 1x6) shone for Gujarat Giants, but Jess Jonassen (4-0-22-3) and Radha Yadav (4-0-20-3) shone brighter to a 25-run win in the Women's Premier League match at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Sunday.

A spirited bowling effort helped DC pile on Giants' misery as the Beth Mooney side finished the Bengaluru leg winless after only managing 138 for eight chasing a target of 164. Titus Sadhu and Shikha Pandey started with maidens, the latter cleaning up Laura Wolvaardt for a duck as Giants got off to a dreadful start. Jonassen then picked up two in her first over. She



Wreaking havoc: Radha and Jonassen scalp three apiece to pile on Giants' misery after Lanning's breezy knock. K. MURALI KUMAR

trapped Mooney in front before removing Phoebe Litchfield. Wickets kept tumbling even as Gardner staged a fight. GG slid to 73 for five when Radha sent back Veda KrishnaMurthy and Kathryn Bryce. Giants couldn't make much headway once Jonassen ended Gardner's resistance. Earlier, Meg Lanning's half-century took DC to 163 for eight despite a superb spell by Meghna Singh (4-0-37-4). Meghna removed Shafali Verma, who flicked strongly to Wolvaardt at square-leg.

The in-form Alice Capsey did not let the tempo slip as she took just four deliveries to hit her first boundary. The Englishwoman went to strike four more fours in her 17-ball cameo, adding a quick 38 for the second wicket with skipper Lanning before being

caught by Taniya Kanwar of Meghna. Lanning switched gears and dealt in boundaries, pushing DC past 100 in the 13th over and reaching her fifty off 39 deliveries with a four. Just when Lanning looked on course to put the game beyond Giants'

reach, Meghna struck again. Jemimah Rodrigues was the next to go, losing her wicket to Mannat Kashyap. Meghna ended the innings with Radha's scalp, but the Giants dropped four catches and eventually slipped to their fourth straight loss.

SCOREBOARD

DELHI CAPITALS

Meg Lanning c Hemalatha b Meghna 55 (11b, 2x4, 1x6), Shafali Verma c Wolvaardt b Meghna 13 (9b, 1x4, 1x6), Alice Capsey c Taniya b Meghna 27 (7b, 1x6), Jemimah Rodrigues c Sarann b Mannat 7 (10b), Annabell Sutherland c Gardner b Taniya 20 (12b, 2x4, 1x6), Jess Jonassen c Mooney b Gardner 11 (7b, 1x6), Arundhati Reddy c Meghna b Gardner 5 (9b), Radha Yadav b Meghna 5 (7b), Shikha Pandey (not out) 14 (8b, 2x4), Extras (w-6); 6, Total (for eight wks. in 20 overs): 163.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-20 (Shafali, 2.4 overs), 2-58 (Capsey, 6.6), 3-105 (Lanning, 12.4), 4-111 (Jemimah, 13.1), 5-138 (Jonassen, 15.3), 6-142 (Sutherland, 16.6), 7-146 (Arundhati, 17.6), 8-163 (Radha, 19.6).

GIANTS BOWLING

Taniya 4-0-31-1, Bryce 4-0-32-0, Meghna 4-0-37-4, Gardner 4-0-37-2, Mannat 3-0-16-1, Sarannum 1-0-10-0.

GUJARAT GIANTS

Beth Mooney lbw b Jonassen 12 (14b, 2x4), Laura Wolvaardt b

DELHI CAPITALS

Shikha 0 (3b), Phoebe Litchfield c Sutherland b Jonassen 15 (10b, 2x4, 1x6), Veda KrishnaMurthy c Shikha b Radha 12 (13b, 2x4), Ashleigh Gardner st. Taniya b Jonassen 40 (31b, 5x4, 1x6), Kathryn Bryce lbw b Radha 3 (6b), Taniya Kanwar c Shafali b Radha 13 (16b, 1x4), Sarannum Pathan lbw b Arundhati 9 (11b, 1x4), Meghna Singh (not out) 10 (10b), Sayali Satghare (concussion substitute for Hemalatha) (not out) 7 (7b); Extras (lb-9, w-7, nb-1); Total (for eight wks. in 20 overs): 138.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-0 (Wolvaardt, 1.3), 2-28 (Mooney, 4.2), 3-34 (Litchfield, 4.5), 4-53 (Veda, 7.6), 5-73 (Bryce, 10.3), 6-105 (Gardner, 14.2), 7-113 (Taniya, 16.1), 8-123 (Sarannum, 17.5).

CAPITALS BOWLING

Titus 2-1-12-0, Shikha 4-1-28-1, Jonassen 4-0-22-3, Arundhati 3-0-27-1, Sutherland 3-0-20-0, Radha 4-0-20-3.

Toss: Gujarat Giants.

Delhi Capitals won by 25 runs. **Monday's match:** UP Warriors vs. Royal Challengers, 7.30 p.m.

Shardul swings it Mumbai's way, gives the host a big lead

RANJI TROPHY

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

"I won the bet." Shardul Thakur told R. Sai Kishore while exchanging a 'high-five' minutes after the end of the second day's play of the Ranji Trophy semifinal on Sunday. While Sai Kishore reminded him that it was only for T20s, both had a hearty laugh over it. The bet, one was later informed, was that Shardul will "smash him when I face him in a match."

On a day that was highlighted by the individual brilliance of both the all-rounders, Shardul overshadowed Sai Kishore at the Sharad Pawar Cricket Academy ground, with Mumbai's lower order taking the game away from the opposition.

Sai Kishore on song Shardul Thakur's (109, 105b, 13x4, 4x6) maiden First-Class hundred and his partnerships with Hardik Tamore (105 for the eighth wicket) and Tanush Kotian (79 for the ninth) put Mumbai in command after R. Sai Kishore (six for 97) had Mumbai in trouble. Kotian (74) and Tushar Deshpande's unbroken 63-run stand rubbed salt into Tamil Nadu's wounds as Mumbai was 353 for nine at stumps, an advantage of 207 runs.

The star of the day was Shardul. He bailed Mumbai out of trouble with a fearless yet masterful knock. When he took guard, with just 13 minutes remaining



Reversing it: Shardul pulled Mumbai out of the woods with a brilliant century. EMMAUJAL YOGINI

for lunch, Sai Kishore was on the rampage, having picked up four wickets in the morning to shatter another record. Mumbai, at that stage, was 106 for seven and in danger of conceding the lead. Shardul didn't waste time in showing his intent, hitting him for two fours. Even after lunch, he continued to go after the TN captain whose marathon spell was a treat to watch. While no other Mumbai batter was comfortable against him, Shardul scored 44 runs off the 37 balls he faced the lanky spinner.

He was dismissed after he reached his landmark with a one-bounced four as Jagadeesan - who had effected a brilliant stumping in the morning - took a lunging catch.

While the last two sessions belonged to Mumbai, Tamil Nadu dominated the morning session. Sai Kishore bowled unwell from the club house end. Despite an overcast morning, he used

the dampness to his advantage and broke the back of Mumbai's middle-order. Barring Shreyas Iyer - who played on to Sandeep Warrier early on in his innings - Sai Kishore earned all of Mumbai's five wickets.

The scores: Tamil Nadu - 1st innings: 146. Mumbai - 1st innings: Pritivi Shaw c Indrajith b Kuldeep Sen 5, Bhupen Lalwani lbw b Sai Kishore 15, Musheer Khan st Jagadeesan b Sai Kishore 55, Mohit Avasthi st Jagadeesan b Sai Kishore 2, Ajinkya Rahane c Indrajith b Sai Kishore 19, Shreyas Iyer b Warrier 3, Hardik Tamore c Washington b Sai Kishore 35, Shams Mulani b Sai Kishore 0, Sharad Thakur c Jagadeesan b Kuldeep Sen 109, Tanush Kotian (batting) 74, Tushar Deshpande (batting) 17; Extras (lb-12, nb-2, pen-5); 15; Total (for nine wks. in 100 overs): 353.

Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-40, 3-48, 4-91, 5-96, 6-107, 7-106, 8-211, 9-290. **Tamil Nadu bowling:** Warrier 18-0-66-1, Kuldeep Sen 15-0-65-2, Mohammed 8-2-21-0, Sai Kishore 37-9-97-6, Ajith Ram 14-1-68-0, Washington 7-0-19-0, Pradosh 1-1-0-0.

Shardul revels in a dream knock

S. Dipak Ragav
MUMBAI

Every aspiring cricketer, at some point, dreams of single-handedly saving the team from precarious situations with their individual brilliance. Shardul Thakur made it a reality with his scintillating counter-attacking century in the first Ranji Trophy semifinal against Tamil Nadu here on Sunday.

"I like these kinds of situations. When you play with passion, you wait for these moments," said Thakur, reveling at the fact that his knock took the game away from the opposition. "When the team is down, you want to lift them up with your performance; you want to do something in the middle that changes the game."

The 32-year-old did not hold himself back from going for his shots and felt his side's top order was a bit defensive in the morning. "At times, in big games, if you are scared, you tend to lose wickets. So, we might as well play with freedom. That was the idea when I started batting."

The all-rounder also hoped this knock would be the start of many more centuries to come in the future. "When I started, Bombay used to send me at number 10 and 11. So, I had to work my way up," said Thakur on his long wait for his maiden First-Class century. "Probably more hundreds will come, and it's a big opening that you should promote all-rounders in Mumbai cricket," he added.

MP rides on Mantri's ton to surge ahead against Vidarbha

Abhishek Saini
NAGPUR

Himanshu Mantri's century (126, 265b, 12x4, 1x6) served as the archetype of the steady resolve often associated with the longest format and laid the platform for Madhya Pradesh to pull ahead against Vidarbha on the second day of the first Ranji Trophy semifinal at the VCA Stadium (Civil Lines) here on Sunday.

The southpaw was handed a reprieve on 39 made the most of it, forging innings-steering partnerships with Sagar Solanki and Saransh Jain.

Vidarbha, chasing a deficit of 82 runs, lost Atharva Taide, who was given lef before while shouldering arms to a delivery that seemed back in the fray. Solanki and Mantri added 52 runs for the fifth wicket before a mix up led to the former's run out. Mantri took matters into his own hands, dancing down to hoist Wakhare for four and six off consecutive deliveries before getting to his third First-Class century of the season in 210 balls.

Saransh stepped out against Wakhare to lift the off-spinner down the ground. But the tweaker had the last laugh when his length delivery held off the surface, causing Saransh to slip to covers and thus ending their stand for 73 runs.

Mantri perished when wicketkeeper Akshay Wadkar promediated him with his sweep and pounced him down the leg side.



Leading from the front: Mantri's century gave MP a decisive edge against Vidarbha. B. JOTH RAMALINGAM

The scores: Vidarbha - 1st innings: 170. Madhya Pradesh - 1st innings: Himanshu Mantri b Wadkar b Wakhare 126, Yash Dubey c Wadkar b Umesh 11, Harsh Gawali lbw b Thakur 25, Shubham Sharma b Umesh 11, Sunil Kumar Iyer lbw b Thakur 0, Sagar Solanki run out Thakur 26, Saransh Jain c Mokshada b Wakhare 30, Anubhav Agarwal b Sarwate 6, Kumar Kartikeya b Thakur 6, Avesh Khan (not out) 7, Kulwant Khejroliya c (sub) Wath b Umesh 4; Extras (lb-7, nb-1); 8; Total (in 94.3 overs): 252.

Fall of wickets: 1-20, 2-81, 3-86, 4-93, 5-145, 6-218, 7-231, 8-235, 9-246. **Vidarbha bowling:** Umesh 19-3-4-0-3, Thakur 19-3-38-0, Sarwate 20-3-51-3, Sarwate 15-3-48-1, Wakhare 21-5-68-2. **Vidarbha - 2nd innings:** Atharva Taide lbw b Avesh 2, Dhruv Shreyas (batting) 10, Akshay Wakhare (batting) 1; Extras 0; Total (for one wicket in four overs): 13.

Fall of wickets: 1-12. **Madhya Pradesh bowling:** Avesh 2-0-1, Venkatesh 10-1-11-1, Anubhav 11-0-0.

Shardul and Sai Kishore call for better scheduling

S. Dipak Ragav
MUMBAI

At a time when the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) wants to ensure players do not skip domestic cricket, especially the Ranji Trophy, India all-rounder Shardul Thakur has called for better scheduling and gaps between games for the well-being of the players.

"It's difficult because we are playing First-Class matches with three-day gaps," said Shardul when asked about how he is managing workloads. "When I started playing Ranji Trophy, the first three games used to have a three-day break and then four days. Now we have seen all matches played with a three-day gap. So it is extremely tough to expect domestic players to play 10 games in a row with a three-day gap if a team reaches the final."

The 32-year-old felt the short gap is tough on fast bowlers and cited the example of his Mumbai teammate Mohit Avasthi picking up an injury.

"I think they will have to relook at it next year and give more breaks," he added.

TN skipper Sai Kishore echoed similar views. "A few players feel the same thing. We travel for one day and because of this I don't train much. The overs I am bowling are in the matches, and I manage myself that way, but it should be more challenging for the faster bowlers," said Sai Kishore.

Juliette unleashes a glorious run to keep her tryst with destiny

The peerless eight-year-old completes hat-trick of Invitation Cup triumphs by demolishing a high-class field with a record-breaking display. A Star Is Born upstages Knotty Chamer in the Super Mile; Siege Courageous delivers



Reaping the riches: Mehtab Singh, Karthik Ganapathy, Raunak Banerjee, Simone Poonawalla, Pandole, Zavaray Poonawalla, C.S. Jodha, Rishad Pandole, and Mrs. Behroze Poonawalla along with HPSL's Suresh Paladuguru, third left on top, and Turf Authority of India members after receiving the awards for Juliette's romp in the Invitation Cup. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

INVITATION CUP
Cyrus L Madan
Vinayak M. Zodge
KOLKATA

It ran out of superlatives to describe the wonder mare Juliette, the eight-year-old got abroad grey by Musketeer out of Gimmesmagar, as she stroled to victory in the HPSL Indian Turf Invitation Cup here on Sunday. Sporting the colours of the Poonawalla family this time, but with the professional combination of trainer Karthik Ganapathy and jockey C.S. Jodha remaining unchanged, Juliette put daylight between herself and her rivals. At the regal age of 8, it was almost as if she was making a statement when leaving the runner-up Janari eight lengths adrift while stopping the clock at a record time of 2 minutes, 26.78cs. In the bargain she also completed a hat-trick of Invitation Cups and there's no question that she's one of the greatest of all time. Every sport lover a superstar, and Juliette can rightly lay claim to the title 'Empress of the Indian Turf'. In the Major P.K. Mehra Super

Mile, A Star Is Born, a six-year-old bay horse trained by Rajesh Narredu and ridden with panache by Suraj Narredu, got going in time to peg back Knotty Chamer, who at one stage looked like having sealed the deal. Suraj, who kept the son of Roderic O'Connor in fourth place, pushed his steed with an electrifying run to win by a shade over a neck. Siege Courageous walked away in the Suresh Mahindra Multi Million. The Prasanna Kumar-trained five-year-old son of Gusto out of Golden Queen made amends for losing out in the Sprinters' Cup by turning in a record-breaking run. THE RESULTS: 1. BANGALORE TURF CLUB MILLION: MISS AMERICAN PIE (N.S. Parmar) 1, Fortune Teller (S. Saqlain) 2, Adjustment (Antony Raj) 3 and Toussaint (Neeraj) 4. 8. 3/4 and 2/4.2. Im. 23.45cs. 5/4 (w), 12, Ft and 1/4 (p). SHIP: 59, THP: 46, Q: 45. Tanala: 268. Favourite: Miss American Pie. Owner: Mr. Prashant Nagar rep. SKJ Thoroughbreds Pvt. Ltd. Trainer: M.K. Khanna. 2. DASHMESH STUD CALCUTTA MILLION: LADY SUNSHINE (P. Trevor) 1, Global Influence (Suraj Narredu) 2, Mothers Grace (Neeraj) 3 and Nomita (Yash Narredu) 4. 2. Link and Nose. Im.

36.71s. 2/30 (w), 13 and 71 (p). SHIP: 45, THP: 29, FP: 58, Q: 15. Tanala: 339. Favourite: Global Influence. Owners: Mr. Joydeep Datta Gupta, Ms. Ritu Puri, Ms. Tarshita Datta, Mr. Achuthan Siddharth, Mr. Sanjay Datta Gupta, Mr. Anuradha Lahiri, Mr. Manoh Mukherjee, Mr. Atul Singh, Mr. Pradeep Sathishwaral & Mr. Zeeshan Babu. Trainer: Bharat Singh. 3. OCI CABLES & BOLRACECARD-ZOOM MILLIONS: LA DOMINATE (Antony Raj) 1, Divine Thoughts (Mustakim) 2, Sir Raffert (P.S. Chouhan) 3 and All Time Legend (Bhawani) 4. Link, 2/4 and Head. Im. 5.15s. 1/20 (w), 26, 18 and 19 (p). SHIP: 50, THP: 85, FP: 77, Q: 294. Tanala: 6180. Favourite: Leather Back. Owners: Mrs. S. Dhanaalakshmi & Mr. B. Mahesh. Trainer: B. Mahesh. 4. SURESH MAHINDRA MULTI-MILLION TROPHY GR. 20: SIEGE COURAGEOUS (Vivek G) 1, Shamrock (Suraj Narredu) 2, Ahead Of My Time (C.S. Jodha) 3 and Savvy Chic (P.S. Chouhan) 4. 2 and 2. Im. 22.52s (record time), 5/7 (w), 21, 11 and 19 (p). SHIP: 42, THP: 51, FP: 158, Q: 46. Tanala: 955. Favourite: Shamrock. Owners: Mr. Dean Stephen & Ms. Mukteshwar Racing LLP. Trainer: Prasanna Kumar. 5. MAJ.P.K. MEHRA MEMORIAL SUPER MILE CUP (Gr. 1): A STAR IS

BORN (ROBERIC O' CONNOR-ANGEL DUST) (SURAJ NARREDU) 1, Knotty Chamer (Gusto-Stormy Princess) (Vivek G) 2, Mojito (Speaking Of Which-Margaria Rita) (N.S. Parmar) 3 and De Villiers (Sepoy-Expect (P. Trevor) 4. 1/2, 2 and 2. Im. 25.78s. 2/30 (w), 11, 14 and 14 (p). SHIP: 42, THP: 49, FP: 58, Q: 29. Tanala: 233. Favourite: A Star Is Born. Owners: Mr. Cyrus S. Poonawalla, Mr. Adar C. Poonawalla and Mrs. Natasha A. Poonawalla rep. Viloo Poonawalla Racing and Breeding Pvt. Ltd. & Mr. Zavaray S. Poonawalla, Mrs. Behroze Z. Poonawalla, Ms. Delna Z. Poonawalla and Mrs. Simone Poonawalla. Fandole rep. Poonawalla Racing and Breeding Pvt. Ltd. Trainer: Rajesh Narredu. 6. HPSL INDIAN TURF INVITATION CUP (Gr. 1): JULIETTE MUSKETEER-GIMMESMAGAR (C.S. Jodha) 1, Janari (Gaugar Mountai-Gydebourne) (P. Trevor) 2, Touch Of Grey (Top Class-Zaccara (Nesher) Kawaji) 3 and Synthesis (Speaking Of Which-Sana) (Suraj Narredu) 4. 8. 4/14 and 2/4.2. Im. 26.78cs (record time), 1/5 (w), 11, 10 and 21 (p). SHIP: 21, THP: 38, FP: 30, Q: 13. Tanala: 268. Favourite: Juliette. Owners: Mr. Zavaray S. Poonawalla, Mrs. Behroze Z. Poonawalla, Mr. Yohan Z. Poonawalla, Mrs. Michelle V. Poon-

awalla, Ms. Delna Z. Poonawalla, Mrs. Simone Poonawalla. Pandole, Mr. Rishad N. Pandole & Mr. Raunak Banerjee rep. Poonawalla Racing & Breeding Pvt. Ltd. Trainer: Karthik Ganapathy. 7. ROYAL WESTERN INDIA TURF CLUB MILLION: MAGNETO (S. Saqlain) 1, Golden Kingdom (P.S. Chouhan) 2, Life Is Good (Mohit Singh) 3 and Shubankar (Merchant) 4. 1/2, 5 and 3/4. 2m. 2:58s. 4/9 (w), 14, 13 and 23 (p). SHIP: 29, THP: 50, FP: 166, Q: 75. Tanala: 1,223. Favourite: Long Lease. Owner: Mr. Ajay Jalan rep. Ultimo Stud Farm Pvt. Ltd. Trainer: Faisal A. Abbas. NOTE: First favourite Long Lease (Suraj Narredu up) returned lame after the race. 8. MADRAS RACE CLUB MILLION: BLACKSTONE (Bhawani Singh) 1, Fresh Hope (S.K. Paswan) 2, Hastig Sunrise (Akshay Kumar) 3 and Sun Flare (Vimod Shinde) 4. 4/1-2, 3 and 2/4.4. Im. 12.18s. 8/6 (w), 12, 38 and 16 (p). SHIP: 209, THP: 57, FP: 35, Q: 469. Tanala: 2,396. Favourite: Blackstone. Owner: Mr. H.S. Chandar Gowda. Trainer: M. Rajendra Singh. Jackpot: 70s. ₹3,994 (244 tkts.) & 30s. ₹22 (403 tkts.). Mini Jackpot: 392 (147 tkts.). Treble: 0 (590 (34 tkts.)), 0 (5,003 (9 tkts.)), 0 (21 (594 tkts.)).

Chennaiyin wins a thriller against Odisha

ISL-10

Aashin Prasad
CHENNAI

Chennaiyin FC clinched a thrilling 2-1 win over the Indian Super League (ISL) table-topper Odisha FC in the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here on Sunday to breathe fresh life into its playoffs aspirations.

It looked like Chennaiyin's wastefulness in front of goal would bite the club once again when Roy Krishna leveled the scores in the 78th minute, but substitute Jordan Murray headed home the match-winner in the fourth minute of stoppage time to send the sparse local crowd into delirium.

The three points lifts CFC to 10th in the table while Odisha, remains level with second-placed Mohun Bagan Super Giant, having played a game more.

Chennaiyin's pressure from the start resulted in the opening goal when Rafael Crivellaro's inswinging corner was turned in by defender Ankit Mukherjee.

In the second period, out of nothing, Krishna, who was kept quiet for much of the game, looped in a header from a corner to bring Odisha back into the game.

Chennaiyin, however, continued to persist, and Murray nodded in a Connor Shields' corner past Amrinder to give the home side a much-needed win.

The result: Chennaiyin 2 (Ankit G. Muray 90+4) bt Odisha 1 (Krishna 78).

INBRIEF



de Minaur claims Mexican Open title again

Australia's Alex de Minaur won his second consecutive ATP Mexican Open title on Saturday, defeating Norberto's Casper Ruud 6-4, 6-4 in the final at Acapulco. The 25-year-old captured his eighth career ATP title.

Ishaque-Adil duo finishes runner-up in Iran tournament

Second seeds Ishaque Eqbal and Adil Kalyanpur lost 5-7, 6-4, [10-6] in the doubles final to Matyas Fuele and Gergely Madarasz of Hungary in the \$15,000 ITF men's tennis tournament in Kish Island, Iran, on Sunday.

Aneesh and Smaran give Karnataka in a strong start

K.V. Aneesh (143, 152b, 19x4, 4x6) and skipper R. Smaran (151 n.o., 217b, 14x4, 4x6) put Karnataka on a strong winning on day one of its Col. CK Nayudu (U-23) Trophy semifinal against Vidarbha in Nagpur on Sunday. Karnataka reached 368 for five at stumps.

The scores: Karnataka 368/5 in 90 overs (K.V. Aneesh 143, R. Smaran 151 batting) vs. Vidarbha.

LIVE TELECAST

Ranji Trophy: (semifinals), Jio Cinema App, 9.30 a.m.
Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka: 1st T20I, FanCode, 5.30 p.m.
PVL: Sony Sports Ten 1 (SD & HD) & LIV, 6.30 & 8.30 p.m.
ISL: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.
WPL: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.
Jackpot: 70s. ₹3,994 (244 tkts.) & 30s. ₹22 (403 tkts.).
Premier League: SS Select 1 & Hotstar, 1.15 a.m. (Tuesday)
LaLiga: Sports 18-1 & Jio Cinema App, 1.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Toofans beat Thunderbolts in the PVL

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

Delhi Toofans secured a dominant 15-9, 16-14, 17-15 win over Kolkata Thunderbolts in the third season of the Ruzay Prime Volleyball League here on Sunday.

Ahmedabad Defenders beat Mumbai Meteors 15-12, 15-11, 14-16, 13-15, 15-13 in the second match on Saturday.

Triple jumper Chitravel finishes 11th at World indoors

Sports Bureau

Praveen Chitravel, the triple jump National record-holder with last year's 17.37m, finished 11th with 16.45m in the World Athletics Indoor Championships in Glasgow on Saturday. The event was the season-opener for the 22-year-old from Tamil Nadu who had won a bronze in the Hangzhou Asian Games and finished fourth in the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Aditi finishes 21st; Green reigns

Press Trust of India
SINGAPORE

Aditi Ashok finished 21st at the Women's World Championship golf on Sunday after being in top-10 in the first two days. Australia's Hannah Green triumphed.

Kipruto and Kebede triumph with course record timings

TOKYO MARATHON

Reuters

TOKYO

Kenyan Benson Kipruto won the women's Tokyo Marathon in two hours, two minutes and 16 seconds on Sunday, breaking former World record holder Eliud Kipchoge's course mark in perfect racing conditions on the streets of the Japanese capital.

Ethiopia's Sutume Asefa Kebede won the women's race ahead of Kenya's defending champion Rosemary Wanjiru in 2:15:55, also bettering the best previous women's time over the course from Shinjuku to the Imperial Palace. Kipruto pulled clear of Timothy Kiplagat over the last few kilometres and finished 39s ahead of his competitor to add the Tokyo title to those he won in Boston in 2021 and Chicago in 2022.

The 32-year-old's time was almost two minutes better than his previous personal best and made him the fifth-fastest marathon runner of all time in events approved by World Athletics.

"I am so happy to get the course record," Kipruto said. "I think I'm ready for the Paris Olympics, I



Kipruto and Kebede, AP

would be happy to represent my country in Paris but that relies on my country for selection. I'm still waiting on that, but I'm ready.

Kiplagat had to be convinced not to pull out of the race by his coach after the death of his training partner, marathon World record holder Kelvin Kipmut, in a road accident last month.

Vincent Kipkemol Ngetich finished third in 2:04:18 to give Kenya a podium sweep.

Kebede and Wanjiru had been in the leading group throughout the women's race, but at the 37km mark, the Ethiopian pulled her pace to pull

clear of her rivals and claim her first major marathon title by 19s.

Her time bettered Brigid Kosgei's 2022 women's course record of 2:16:02 and took more than two minutes off her previous personal best time of 2:18:12.

"I'm truly happy," the 29-year-old said.

"It was a very tactical race. Everything went well and the result was better than I expected. I ran a good time in a major race and I hope the Ethiopian Athletics Federation will select me for the Paris Olympics."

Kebede's compatriot Amane Beriso was third in 2:16:58.

Race walker Priyanka ends seventh in top-class field

Press Trust of India
TAICANG

National record holder Priyanka Goswami clocked her best time outside the country to finish seventh in

a top-class field in the 20km event of the Chinese Race Walking GP on Sunday. Priyanka, who has already qualified for the Paris Olympics, clocked one hour 29 minutes, 48 seconds to fin-

ish seventh in the World Athletics Race Walking Tour gold label meet. This was the third best performance of her career. She had earlier clocked 1:28.45 (NR) in 2021 and 1:28.50 in 2023.

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Midfield magician Kroos' return will add impetus to Germany's Euro campaign

The 34-year-old, who has been at his best for Real Madrid, will be a key member in the country's bid to make a comeback in the international stage under coach Nagelsmann



AFP

Vignesh P. Venkitesh

Toni Kroos is 'in the mood' right now. The 34-year-old German midfielder has never turned down a chance to make it clear that he did not intend to stretch out his career for the sake of being around. However, he had lost the chance to quit while ahead with his national team.

After going from world champions to not being able to get out of the World Cup group stage, the German men's national team was in trouble going into the 2020 Euro Cup.

With its long-time serving legendary coach Joachim Low announcing his decision to step down after the 2020 Euros, the team wanted to forget the disastrous Russia World Cup and give the manager a proper farewell. But it failed to deliver and crashed out of the tournament with a round-of-16 loss to England.

With a poor string of results and the prospect of a new coach after 15 years, it was clear the time was right for a generation change. Kroos, for whom the team always comes first, surprised the world with his decision to retire at the age of 31 to make way for the generation change. Now the midfielder magician has surprised, and excited, the world again with his decision to don the German colours again.

After his shock resignation three years ago, fans of Spanish giants Real Madrid – whose midfield remains under the control of Kroos – were dreading the day the maestro decided to call it a day.

With his clear intention of not putting in a long shift, like his iconic partner in crime Luka Modric, Madridistas were prepared to see that day. But after leaving the national team, Kroos did nothing but keep getting better. The decline that he predicted his age would bring by is nowhere to be seen, and the German keeps making his accurate long balls from deep within his own half to effortlessly switch plays or start a counter.

With Kroos in his best-ever form, and the team performing better than expected for one depleted by injuries, the perfect ending to a glorious career was right in front of the midfield magician. But he

kept his word of giving it his all till his body allows; and the signs that his body has a lot more to give is evident from the way he has played this season.

But Kroos' departure was not an ease in transition for Germany. After back-to-back group stage exits from FIFA men's World Cups (2018 and 2022), German football found itself in deep trouble. Hansi Flick succeeded Low to manage the team, coming on the back of a European treble with Bayern Munich.

But he was unable to do with the national team what he did with Bayern, and his tenure came to an early exit a year later. Now with Julian Nagelsmann at the helm, the team is determined to get back to winning ways. And Nagelsmann believes Kroos is key to that.

Nagelsmann acknowledges the 'special role' Kroos has in Madrid. "He guides young players and shows them how they

can work well together as part of a team," said the coach after Kroos' decision to return. This 'special role' is what Germany is lacking right now.

Kroos is aware of the role he has to play. He "has a very clear view of the state of our national team," Nagelsmann had said. The team is filled with immense talent, like it always did, but there were no mentors playing beside them till now.

And with the young core, including the young manager, and presence of calm and experience in the form of Kroos, Germany is a serious contender for the 2024 Euros to be held in its own backyard.

One-man orchestra

Spanish publication *Marca* once described Kroos as a "one-man orchestra", which is exactly what he does in the middle of the ground. While his

partnership with Modric and the trio the two made with Brazilian Casemiro is lauded by many, the significance of Kroos lies in the simplicity with which he manages to orchestrate a game from the deep.

Kroos was considered a *Jahrhunderttalent*, talent of the century, in Germany when he was selected by Bayern Munich from the Hansa Rostock in 2006. Four years later, he made the 23-men list for Germany's World Cup team, and there was no looking back.

Low has praised the "symmetry and balance" that Kroos brings to the national team. French legend Zinedine Zidane – under whom Kroos played a pivotal role in winning Real Madrid the historic three-peat Champions League – labelled Kroos the "perfect player".

While Nagelsmann is also trying to convince right-back Joshua Kimmich to come out of retirement, the availability of Kroos will be a huge relief for the manager.

A player who has played in five Champions League finals and one World Cup final, and won them all, is what Germany needs at the moment. He is, in Nagelsmann's opinion "a player who will stay calm and keep his composure even in a tight European Championship and who you can always pass under pressure".

Kroos is one of the loudest critics of players' busy schedules combining club matches and international matches with not enough breaks to help them relax and rejuvenate, increasing the chances of injury. Some fans worry the toll of extra international matches might take Kroos past his breaking point.

But that is a concern most of the football world has decided to deal with later. For now, they just want to see one of the most exquisite passers of the ball the game has ever seen glide the ball to its destination.

With their beloved player returning to the international stage, both German supporters and Madridistas have their hopes high. While German fans see a major trophy in ten years as achievable, Real Madrid enthusiasts hope the decision is Kroos' way of saying he is not done yet and will be here for more.

THE GIST

▼ Kroos was considered a *Jahrhunderttalent*, talent of the century, in Germany when he was selected by Bayern Munich from the Hansa Rostock in 2006

▼ He made the 23-men list for Germany's World Cup team in 2010



GETTY IMAGES

In snake genes, study finds they evolved 3x faster than other reptiles

Organisms evolve by inheriting small changes over many generations that collectively enhance their ability to compete, survive, and reproduce. But some organisms also evolved at different speeds, leaving behind in the planet's history signs of bursts of change that researchers are yet to explain

Vinod Scaria
Sridhar Sivasubbu

The sci-fi writer David Brin built his fictitious 'Uplift Universe' in a series of novels for two decades from 1980. In the series, a patron race uplifts species of a future universe to a higher order of life.

Something similar happened in the earth's distant past when many species went through bursts of evolutionary innovation, taking giant leaps and incorporating extraordinary diversity in their population, while others were left behind.

Unexplained bursts of change

The question of how some species become capable of taking these quantum leaps has been an enduring mystery in evolutionary biology.

The popular Darwinian theory of evolution states that all organisms evolve through the process of natural selection. In other words, organisms inherit small changes over many generations and these changes collectively enhance the organism's ability to compete, survive, and reproduce. However, the earth's fossil records tell a more complex, in fact different story: in addition to a constant rate of transformation, organisms also evolved at different speeds and through varying degrees of complexity.

Our planet's evolutionary history is dotted with numerous instances of such unexplained bursts of evolutionary changes, leading to the emergence of new species or the extinction of old ones.

A tree of snakes and lizards

One such evolutionary explosion happened about 100-150 million years ago, when dinosaurs roamed the planet's surface. An extraordinary evolutionary transformation happened at this time: the nondescript lizards lost their legs to become one of the most highly adapted predators in history, capturing almost every environmental niche on the planet. We know them today as snakes.

Through a series of remarkable adaptations, snakes acquired legless bodies that could slither across diverse terrains, developed complex chemical sensory systems to track prey, incorporated flexible jaws to swallow large animals, and evolved an assortment of attack mechanisms, including the production of lethal venoms.

In a study published on February 22 in the *Journal Science*, an international team of scientists, led by researchers at the University of Michigan, worked together to unravel the genetic sequence of more



In the case of snakes a series of rapid changes in form and function occurred so close together that they appeared to be a single, unified event on the evolutionary time-scale. DAVID CLODE/UNSPASH

than 1,018 snake and lizard species. The result was the largest and most comprehensive evolutionary tree of snakes and lizards. They analysed the genetic sequence data together with previous studies, and revealed that snakes have been evolving much faster than their reptilian cousins.

Specifically, the team estimated snakes evolved almost three-times faster than lizards and other reptiles, allowing them to take advantage of the new environmental niches that rapidly emerged after the extinction of the dinosaurs.

A clock in the body's molecules

DNA and protein sequences evolve at a relatively constant rate over time, irrespective of the organism. This allows scientists to use genetic differences between two species to estimate the time that has passed since these species last shared a common ancestor. This is then used to calculate the relative pace of evolution of the organism. In a way, genetic sequences serve as a molecular clock using which scientists can determine the 'evolutionary distances' between various organisms.

Along with snakes, many lizards also adapted to these rapid changes and developed snake-like traits, including losing their limbs and elongating their bodies. The Australian scincid lizard (*Lerista*), a member of the clade *Squamata* (which includes lizards and snakes), provides perhaps the best example of such evolution.

Lerista comprises more than 75 closely related species that display a wide variety of digit (finger) layouts from five digits to being entirely limbless. Such extraordinary malleability of limb-count in this lizard is the result of at least 10



Along with snakes, many lizards also adapted to these rapid changes and developed snake-like traits, including losing their limbs and elongating their bodies

independent evolutionary limb-reduction events over a few million years.

But while the lizards made desperate attempts to evolve, snakes easily outpaced them, leading to a burst of diversification. Researchers have attributed this surge to a phenomenon they call the 'singularity of snakes'. This is akin to the Big Bang theory of cosmology, which postulates that our entire universe emerged from a singular event around 14 billion years ago. In the case of the evolution of snakes, the singularity emerged in a series of rapid changes in form and function, but which occurred so close together that they appeared to be a single, unified event on the evolutionary time-scale.

Availability of prey

The eventual result is that we have about 4,000 living species of snakes flourishing in a variety of geographical conditions. Today, snakes are terrestrial dwellers, rock-climbers, burrowers, swimmers, etc., sporting a bevy of hunting strategies and dietary preferences.

As part of the new study, scientists also painstakingly collected information about snakes' dietary preferences by studying the stomach contents of more than 60,000 snakes and lizards, mostly from field observations and natural-history

museum specimens. They found that snakes largely consumed small vertebrates while lizards preferred insects and invertebrates - meaning snakes specialised their food selection whereas lizards have tended to be non-specific.

However, the availability of prey alone is insufficient to explain snake diversity. The researchers also admitted the ultimate cause of the 'singularity' remains hidden from view.

The Sonic hedgehog gene

The hallmark of a snake is the elegant manner in which it glides over land or water. Snakes can move this way thanks to their long spinal column and specially designed vertebrae. They have over 300 vertebrae versus about 65 in lizards and 33 in humans. Also, all three organisms have a backbone and almost the same genetic blueprint - yet varied body plans.

In a previous study of snake genomes, researchers were able to identify snake-specific changes in a vertebrate limb-enhancer of the Sonic hedgehog gene (named for the videogame character). This limb-enhancer sequence has also been found in primitive snakes, such as pythons and boas, but not in modern snakes. When they replaced the mouse-specific limb-enhancer gene with the snake-specific one in mice, the researchers observed severe limb reduction.

Scientists suspect such evolutionary bursts in some species may have happened multiple times, not just once, and are certain that understanding them is key to understanding the earth's ecological future.

(The authors are senior consultants at the Vishwanath Cancer Care Foundation and adjunct professors at Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur.)

THE GIST

An evolutionary explosion happened about 100-150 million years ago. The nondescript lizards lost their legs to become one of the most highly adapted predators in history, capturing almost every environmental niche on the planet. We know them today as snakes

Researchers unravelled the genetic sequence of more than 1,018 snake and lizard species. They analysed the genetic sequence data together with previous studies, and revealed that snakes have been evolving much faster than their reptilian cousins

The hallmark of a snake is the manner in which it glides over land or water. Snakes can move this way thanks to their long spinal column and specially designed vertebrae. They have over 300 vertebrae versus about 65 in lizards and 33 in humans

+

+

BIG SHOT



An aerial view of mansions still standing along a cliff after a portion of the cliffside tumbled into the Pacific Ocean following days of heavy rains on February 27, at Dana Point, California. A powerful atmospheric river brought flooding, mudslides, and over 17 cm of rain - half the average yearly total. Such atmospheric rivers have been destroying the coveted coastal cliffs. AFP

WHAT IS IT?

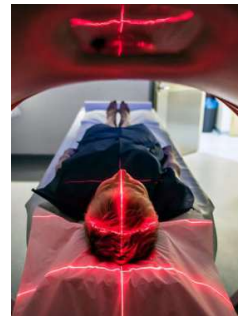
Resonance: a tendency to move in step

Vasudevan Mukunth

Sometimes some systems have a tendency to oscillate between two points - like the membrane of a drum that has been beaten. In this setting, the system will oscillate with a higher amplitude if its frequency matches its natural frequency. This phenomenon is called resonance. The natural frequency of a system is the frequency at which it has a tendency to oscillate even when it is not disturbed. Resonance is common in nature and in artificial systems. When you push a child on a swing, your push will have the most effect if you apply it at just the right time - called the resonant interval, which is related to the frequency at which the child is already swinging.

Resonance can be good or bad, depending on the context. It is good in applications like the quartz crystal in a quartz watch, when playing musical instruments or singing (with the vocal chords), when producing laser light, and in nuclear magnetic resonance (which MRI scanners use to look inside your body). You may have noticed the detrimental effects of resonance when you're sitting in a bus, the engine is idling, and you feel the vehicle's metal structure rattling.

On April 12, 1833, British soldiers were marching on the Broughton Suspension Bridge in England. As they marched in step (all together going left, right, left, right), they



Nuclear magnetic resonance is used by MRI scanners to look inside your body. GETTY IMAGES

exerted a periodic force on the bridge whose frequency matched its natural frequency, and the bridge broke and collapsed. Since then, soldiers often break step when marching across bridges.

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 amount IPOs are expected to raise in the coming week

1,325 in ₹ crore. Three companies are set to launch their maiden public issues. So far this year, 16 companies launched their IPOs to mobilise ₹13,000 crore. This came after 58 maiden public issues were initiated in 2023. PTI

The votes secured by Shehbaz Sharif to become Pakistan PM

201 Shehbaz Sharif defeated Omar Ayub of the Sunni Ittehad Council who got 92 votes. The winner only needs 169 votes to get a majority. Mr. Ayub was backed by former premier Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party of PTI. AP

Amount injected by FPIs in Indian equities in February

1,500 in ₹ crore. Foreign investors invested in Indian equities in February, reversing the massive outflows seen last month, primarily due to robust corporate earnings and economic growth. PTI

Revenue generated by Sri Lankan tourism in January 2024

342 in \$ million. The country saw a marked improvement, with tourism recording a 122% jump from last year. The economy recorded positive growth in the third quarter of 2023 after six successive quarters of negative growth. PTI

The number of years since MH370's disappearance

10 Malaysia's government said on Sunday it may renew the hunt for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 after a U.S. technology firm proposed a fresh search in the southern Indian Ocean. AP

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On the relevance of university rankings

What are some of the most popular rankings schemes worldwide? Is the number of citations an adequate marker of a university's research excellence? What are the concerns regarding conflicts of interest and data security issues?

EXPLAINER

Moumita Koley

The story so far: Since the first appearance of global university ranking systems around two decades ago, rankings have come to dominate the attention in higher education ecosystems around the world. Today, many countries including China, Japan, and Russia have committed substantial resources to elevate the statuses of their universities to "world class" as defined by these rankings, allowing them not-inconsiderable political heft as well. Of late, however, some universities worldwide have pulled out of being ranked, over concerns about the incentives the systems set up and their compatibility with the universities' own aspirations. But the din of these controversies have also drowned out two crucial aspects pertaining to the conduct of the companies behind some of the ranking systems. They are conflicts of interest and data rights.

What do ranking systems do? At present, the Times Higher Education (THE), the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), the Academic Ranking of World Universities (also known as the 'Shanghai Ranking'), and the U.S. News & World Report are the most popular rankings schemes worldwide and hold significant weight and influence in shaping educational policies and priorities in the higher education sector in many countries.

A ranking system orders the higher education institutes in a place (country, region, etc.) by their accomplishments on various fronts – including teaching, research, reputation, industry-focused research, and collaborative efforts. Each of these activities is complex, multifaceted, and highly contextual, but for the purposes of the ranking, an institute's performance on each one is translated into a few composite indicators, which are then combined to create a consolidated score.

Are ranking systems perfect?

In 2021, Elizabeth Gadd, a research officer at Loughborough University in the U.K., published a critique in which she reported that universities' quests for higher ranking mirrors the flawed pursuit of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as the sole measure of a country's prosperity. For example, in their 2010 book *Mis-Measuring Our Lives: Why GDP Doesn't Add Up*, eminent economists Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen, and Jean-Paul Fitoussi contended that the use of a single indicator to capture the economic and social progress of a country will inevitably overlook the environmental impact of its growth and measures of its inequality, among other crucial issues. According to Dr. Gadd, university rankings, like GDP, distill complex roles that universities play in society into a single, unidimensional score.

Experts have noticed that the highest ranked universities in various ranking systems are old, large, wealthy, research-intensive, science-focused, English-speaking, and in the Global North. Studies have also shown that higher scores in research excellence in rankings are influenced to a great degree by two factors: citations and reputation. For example Bielefeld University leaped from 250th to 166th in the 2020 THE rankings. The jump has been attributed to a single scholar's work, who published 10 papers, co-authored with hundreds of



ISTOCKPHOTO

other researchers, most of them in *The Lancet*, contributing to 20% of the university's total citations over two years. (These citations are not spurious but over-represented.)

Arbitrary measures of research excellence like citations can dramatically alter an entire university's performance in the rankings. For example, in 2023, Science reported the case of Saveetha Dental College in Chennai rocketing up the ranking ladder allegedly by manipulating citations.

In two analyses in 2016, Richard Holmes, an expert in ranking systems and who has been running the 'University Ranking Watch' initiative since 2006, wrote that THE's regional rankings appeared to favour universities that hosted an important THE summit. According to Mr. Holmes, these changes in favour were effected by, among other things, tweaking the way the ranking system counted citations. There are many similar instances, incentivised by the value accorded to ranking schemes and the riches that universities that rank highly reap.

What are the concerns over conflicts of interest?

Most entities that compile and publish rankings are private enterprises, and there have been instances of these entities consulting with universities to help the latter achieve better ranks in their own systems.

For example, in a 2021 paper, Igor Chirikov of the University of California, Berkeley, reported that "universities with frequent QS-related contracts had an

increase of 0.75 standard deviations (-140 positions) in QS World University Rankings and an increase of 0.9 standard deviations in reported QS faculty-student ratio scores over five years, regardless of changes in the institutional quality." His study was based on the ranks of 28 universities in Russia between 2016 and 2021. Likewise, THE offers membership to an elite group it runs called "World 100 Reputation Network". Dr. Gadd wrote that it's intended "for institutions ranked in the top 200 of one of the big four global rankings to... share strategies for retaining their ranking topping status".

Since these problems started to become more apparent, several prominent institutions have denounced traditional ranking systems. In 2022, Harvard and Yale Universities led a boycott against the U.S. News & World Report's ranking over what they said was a conflict between the careers they wished their law students to have after graduation and the careers the ranking incentivised. Utrecht University in the Netherlands withdrew from the THE world rankings in 2023 for similar reasons. In India, several IITs have boycotted the same rankings.

What about data security?

Like conflicts of interest, another issue deserves similar examination: by participating in ranking exercises, universities and institutes provide ranking agencies free reign over their data, compromising their data security.

For example, to use the THE platform, website, and related services, universities are required to agree to an additional set

of terms and conditions in addition to the general set. According to point 6 of the former: "You grant THE a royalty-free, perpetual, irrevocable, non-exclusive and fully sub-licensable right and license to use, reproduce, modify, adapt, publish, translate, create derivative works from, distribute, perform and display such data (in whole or part) worldwide and/or to incorporate it in other works in any form, media, or technology now known or later developed. With respect to all Data you post to the Website, you hereby waive any moral rights you have in the Data. You agree to perform all further acts necessary to perfect any of the above rights granted by you to THE, including the execution of deeds and documents, at our request".

That is, universities are to give THE a free and permanent right over their data without having to seek their permission in the future. Such data includes details of institutional, industry, and research incomes, and of patents. There is no reason why universities, especially public universities, should agree to such a wide-ranging grant of rights in order to participate in the ranking exercise.

As the UN University's statement on 'Global University Rankings' reads: "While rankings may have incentivised some improvement in the quality of some universities, there is growing recognition that they also incentivise a number of perverse and harmful behaviours and produce systemic long-term negative effects."

Moumita Koley is an STI Policy Researcher, DST-CPR, IISc, and consultant, International Science Council.

THE GIST

The Times Higher Education (THE), the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), the Academic Ranking of World Universities (also known as the 'Shanghai Ranking'), and the U.S. News & World Report are the most popular rankings schemes worldwide.

In 2021, Elizabeth Gadd, a research officer at Loughborough University in the U.K., published a critique in which she reported that universities' quests for higher ranking mirrors the flawed pursuit of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as the sole measure of a country's prosperity.

Additionally, by participating in ranking exercises, universities and institutes provide ranking agencies free reign over their data, compromising their data security.

CACHE



REUTERS

How does Apple's PQ3 protocol enhance data security for users?

Apple's PQ3 post-quantum cryptographic protocol seeks to protect messages on iMessage from hackers using quantum computers. The protocol can protect communications against current and future decryptions

Nabeel Ahmed

The story so far:

In February 21, Apple announced PQ3, a post-quantum cryptographic protocol, to encrypt conversations in iMessage. The company called it the "first messaging protocol to reach Level 3 security" and claimed it can defend "highly sophisticated quantum attacks." As per Apple, this protocol's security layer will surpass those available in all widely used messaging apps.

What is the PQ3 protocol, and how does it work?

Currently, most messaging apps have standard encryption methods which use public and private keys to securely deliver messages. There are two encryption methods. In the public key encryption method, a user's message is encrypted by the public key before transmission and then the private key is used to decrypt messages. In the private key method, while both keys are required, they are basically the same, and both the sender and the recipient are allowed to encrypt or decrypt the message.

Apple's PQ3 protocol uses a hybrid design combining traditional encryption methods with post-quantum encryption both during the initial key establishment between devices and during rekeying, which essentially rechecks the

cryptographic keys between devices to ensure continued protection.

Under the PQ3 protocol each device generates public keys locally and then transmits them to Apple servers as part of the iMessage registration process using the Module Lattice-based Key Encapsulation Mechanism or ML-KEM. This enables the sender device to get the receiver device's public keys and generate post-quantum encryption keys for the first message. Apple has also included a periodic post-quantum rekeying mechanism within the conversation which is capable of self-healing from key compromise and safeguarding future messages.

Why is Apple shifting to PQ3 protocol?

Currently, Apple's iMessage supports end-to-end encryption by default. This mode of protection relies on mathematical problems that could potentially be solved by powerful quantum computers.

Over the years, Apple has made improvements to encryption, enhancing its platform's overall protection against hackers. However, current cryptographic problems can be solved by quantum computers, though such computers are still in the works. Apple says extremely well-resourced attackers can mount attacks by taking advantage of the drop in data storage costs.

Essentially, attackers can store large amounts of today's encrypted data and file it for future reference. And though attackers may not be able to decrypt this data today, they can retain it until it can be decrypted at a later date by making use of a quantum computer.

What are PQ3's strengths and limitations?

The PQ3 protocol protects communications on iMessage against current and future decryptions. It also limits how many past and future messages can be decrypted with a single compromised key, reducing the impact of key compromises.

But, despite its enhanced protection, the PQ3 protocol, because of its intended application scenario, does not address group messaging, authentication against quantum adversaries, or cryptographic deniability. Also, messages stored in iCloud may not be protected by this protocol.

Will the PQ3 protocol impact Apple users?

The new protocol offers protection against adversaries capable of compromising the transport layer between devices. However, the protocol does protect against attacks mounted on messages delivered to a device, which remains the same and can be extracted after unlocking a device or by using

advanced attackers such as Pegasus, TirangleDB, and other spyware.

Additionally, since PQ3 relies on traditional signature algorithms for message authentication, a man-in-middle attacker with a powerful quantum computer may still have a chance of hacking it, Kaspersky said in a blog post.

Therefore, while the new protocol from Apple enhances security on iMessage and provides protection against future attacks using quantum computers, it is not a one-stop solution. And users concerned about the protection of their data should not rely only on post-quantum cryptographic protocols.

Are other messaging services also using methods like PQ3?

Currently in beta, PQ3 will start to roll out with the public release of iOS 17.4, iPadOS 17.4, macOS 14.4, and watchOS 10.4. However, this is not the first time a tech company has announced post-quantum encryption protocols.

Earlier in September 2023, Signal announced advancements in quantum resistance for the Signal Protocol.

The upgrade called PQXDH added a layer of protection against the threat of quantum computers being built for the future. The upgrade used a new post-quantum cryptosystem that implemented one-way functions that cannot be advantageously reversed by a quantum computer.



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

His well-heeled boss threw a party for him

He keeps his employees happy and satisfied so that they do not inform on him to authorities

S. Upendran

"You look tired. What's happening?"
"Venkat is in town, and as you know, it's a big fuddle. So, in the evenings, I've been taking him to the new restaurants."
"That's nice of you. I just hope you're not paying all the time. Are you talking about the well-heeled Venkat or the..."
"Well-heeled Venkat? I don't think I've ever looked at Venkat's heels."
"That's not what I'm talking about. The expression 'well-heeled' is used in informal contexts to mean 'rich'. A well-heeled individual is someone who has a lot of money."

"Some of the well-heeled in Delhi spend a month in Europe."
"When the news of the scandal broke, many of his well-heeled clients left him."
"That's a good example. I heard that your cousin is taking part in the college elections this year. How is she doing? Do you think she'll win?"

"Difficult to say. According to most people, the two candidates are running neck and neck."
"Neck and neck? You mean 'neck to neck', don't you?"
"No, it's always 'neck and neck', not 'neck to neck'. When you run neck and neck with someone..."

"I know what the expression 'neck and neck' means. When you say that two people are running neck and neck, what you're saying is that they're running side by side. That it's difficult to say who will win the race."
"Very good. According to exit polls, the two parties are running neck and neck. At this moment, it's difficult to say who will form the Government."
"For much of the race, Kumar was in the lead. But as he approached the finish line, he was running neck and neck with four others."
"Do you know where the expression comes from?"

"From two people running a race?"
"You're correct about the race part. But it's not a race between people, but horses."
"I see. So, it's the horses that are running neck and neck. That makes sense, I guess. I understand your boss is in some kind of trouble."
"Big trouble! Several people informed on him. The CEO is planning an inquiry."
"Is it 'inform' or 'in-form on'?"
"When you inform on someone, what you're doing is going to an individual in authority, and telling them about some wrong that a person has done."
"And I suppose this is done secretly."
"Yes, that's right! For example, you might decide to go to the police and tell them about the illegal activities happening in your company."
"In other words, you betray the company that you've been working for."
"Well, in a sense, yes. In most cases, 'inform on' has a negative connotation."
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THE DAILY QUIZ

Rare diseases are debilitating conditions that occur infrequently in a population, with very few of them having approved treatments. A quiz on some really rare diseases

Ramya Kannan

QUESTION 1

Which is considered to be the rarest disease in the world?

QUESTION 2

The plot of the movie *Paa*, starring father and son duo Amitabh Bachchan and Abhishek Bachchan in a role reversal situation, is built around a rare disease. Do you know what it is?

QUESTION 3

Of the more bizarre rare diseases, is one to do with a speech disorder that causes a sudden change to speech, so that a native speaker is perceived to speak with a 'foreign' accent. What is it?

QUESTION 4

Royals do not really have blue blood, but people suffering from a certain rare disease do have blue coloured blood. What is the disease that causes this discolouration?

QUESTION 5

What is stone man's disease, known to be so rare as to occur to only one in two million people?



Visual question: The only rare disease that came to an end itself is a brain disorder caused by a particular habit among the tribes in New Guinea. What is it? What was the habit?

Questions and Answers to the March 1 edition of the daily quiz:

1. Binaca Geetmala was a weekly countdown show of the top songs from Hindi cinema. Binaca was a popular toothpaste and subsequent incarnations of the show were renamed after this brand. **Ans: Cibaca, which was later acquired by Colgate**
 2. For a long time, Binaca Geetmala was broadcast from this country's radio because of this reason. **Ans: Radio Ceylon. The Information and Broadcasting Ministry, which controlled All India Radio, banned film music on radio calling it erotic and vulgar**
 3. The language in which Sayani hosted Binaca Geetmala. **Ans: Hindustani**
 4. Sponsored by Cadbury India, this show which began in 1972 was also hosted by Sayani. **Ans: Bournvita Quiz Contest**
 5. This actor, known for his baritone, once said that he had gone to a commercial broadcasting firm for auditions but they were too busy to attend to him. **Ans: Amitabh Bachchan**
- Visual: Identify the singer with Ameen Sayani. **Ans: Mannu Dey**
Early Birds: Rajmohan. V] Tama! Biswas] Saurabh Sinha

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

Word of the day

Folderol:
nonsensical talk or writing

Synonyms: trash, rubbish, codswallop

Usage: I have limits to how much folderol I can stand.

Pronunciation: bit.ly/folderolpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /fɒldəʊl/

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