



One dead in elephant attack in Kerala STATES » PAGE 3





SBI seeks time from SC to disclose details NEWS >> PAGE 4



It is an apt example of 'franchisee politics' told through two narratives



Mumbai crushes T.N. enters Ranji final SPORT » PAGE 16

INSIDE



Ladakh leaders meet Amit Shah over Statehood

NEW DELHI

NEW DELHI Civil society leaders in Ladakh, who are protesting for constitutional safeguards for the region, met Union Home Minister Amit Shah, on Monday, but the "meeting did not result in any positive outcome". This is the first meeting of the leaders with Mr Shah since 2020. » PAGE 4

Khurshid's wife accused of money laundering by ED

NEW DELHI The Enforcement Directorate on Monday alleged that Louise Khurshid, wife of Congress leader Salman Khurshid and the then project director of Dr. Zakir Husain Memorial Trust, and two others allegedly laundered ₹71.50 lakh. » PAGE 5

Cong. manifesto committee holds crucial meeting

NEW DELHI

The Congress manifesto committee, headed by former Finance Minister and senior party leader P. Chidambaram, party leader P. Chidambaram, on Monday discussed the draft election manifesto as the party started gathering momentum in preparation for the coming Lok Sabha polls. **» PAGE 5**

Govt. employees protest against promotion delay

NEW DELHI Employees of the Union government have threatened a "non-cooperation movement" if an expedited decision is not taken regarding their promotions. Over 100 Central Secretariat Sensire officiale on Secretariat Service officials on Monday took out a peace march at Raisina Hill, » PAGE 6 SC ends immunity for legislators taking bribes The Bench observes that corruption by elected

members puts representative democracy at stake

Taking away privilege

 The JMM bribery case judgment of 1998, judgment of 19 granting lawma immunity from

ramificase. on public in-

pression, which include voting in the House, and at-tendant immunities grant-ed to legislators under Arti-cles 105 and 194 did not extend to giving or taking bribes

A look at the observations made by the seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court in its unanimous verdict:

A claim of immunity should fulfil the twofold test that it is tethered to the collective functioning of the Hous and that it is necessar

r the discharge of th essential duties of a legislator

court said.

Seven-judge Bench overrules the judgment by a five-judge Bench in 25-year-old JMM bribery case

Krishnadas Rajagopal

preme Court, laid down in the JMM bribery case judg-ment of 1998, that lawnak-ers who took bribes were immune from prosecution for corruption if they go ahead and vote or speak in the House as agreed. seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court on Monday declared that parliamen-tary privilege or immunity will not protect legislators who take bribes to vote or seeak in Parliament or 'Majority erred'

"Majority erred" The seven-judge Bench said the majority on the five-judge Bench in the JMM bribery case had erred. The court did not speak in Parliament or State Legislative Assem-blies from criminal State Legislative Assen-biles from criminal prosecution. "Privileges and immuni-ties are not gateways to claim exemptions from the general law of the land... Corruption and bribery of members of the legislature erode the foundation of In-dian parliamentary de-mocracy," the Supreme Court observed. The unanimous verdict authored by Chief Justice of India DY. Chandrachud overruled a Z5year-old majority view of the Suwant to perpetuate the grave error. Representative democracy was at stake. Chief Justice Chandrachud

clarified that the offence of clarined that the offence of bribery was complete the moment the corruption money was accepted. "The legislator will face "The legislator win race criminal prosecution whether or not he makes a speech or votes in favour of the bribe-giver. The of-fence of bribery is com-

makers in the House to cri-minal investigation and thus enhance the possibil-ty of abuse of the law by political parties in power. Bribed lawmakers, the court said, were destruc-tive to the "aspirational and deliberative ideals of the Constitution and create a polity which deprives ci-tizens of a responsible, res-ponsive and representative democracy". Chief Justice Chandra-chud reasoned that the freedom of speech and ex-

plete on the acceptance of

piete on the acceptance of the money or on the agree-ment to accept money be-ing concluded," Chief Jus-tice Chandrachud

tice observed. The Constitution Bench

The Constitution Bench dismissed notions that whittling down parliamen-tary immunity would ex-pose a vote or a speech made by Opposition law-makers in the House to cri-minal invectoration, and



Nepal's ruling alliance broke down after Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Da-hal Prachanda's Commu-nist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) switched sides from the Nepali Congress and joined with former Prime Minister K.P. Shar-ma Oli's Communist Party. ma Oli's Communist Party of Nepal (Unied Marxist-Leninist) on Monday.

Leninist) on Monday. The latest development puts the Nepali Congress, the largest party in parlia-ment with 88 seats, in the Opposition seat. The Ras-triya Swatantra Party (RSP) and the Janata Samajbadi Party will also be part of the new Maoist-UML coali-tion.

FULL REPORT » PAGE 12

Supreme Court to hear Udhayanidhi's petition to club FIRs

Krishnadas Rajagopal

The Supreme Court on The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to examine a plea by Tamil Nadu Mi-nister Udhayanidhi Stalin to club First Information Reports (FIRs) registered against him in multiple States over his remarks on 'Sanatana Dharma'. Initially, the Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta said that Mr. Stalin was no layman

Mr. Stalin was no layman and should have realised the consequences that would follow his comments.

Comments. The Minister responded that he was not before the Supreme Court on the me-rits of the case but on a question of procedure. He said the registration of multiple FIRs was a vio-



lation of his right to a fair trial and amounted to "persecution before prosecution".

persection", occurs of prosection", "You abuse Article 19(1) (a) [free speech], you abuse Article 25 [freedom of conscience]. Now you are coming here under Ar-ticle 32 [wirt protection of fundamental rights]... You are not a layman. You are a Minister. You should have realised the consequenc-es," Justice Datta ad-dressed senior advocates A.M.Singhvi, Mukal Rohar-gi and P.Wilson, appearing 100 gi and P. Wilson, appearing for the Tamil Nadu

Minister.

Minister. Justice Khanna said Mr. Stalin could approach the High Courts in each of these States. The judge rea-soned that it was not even certain at present whether chargesheets would even es, including promoting communal enmity and outraging religious outraging Mr. Singhvi said there

The plea said only the criminal courts within whose jurisdiction the alleged offence took place would proceed with the case. FILE PHOTO

be filed in all these FIRs spread across Uttar Pra-desh, Maharashtra, Bihar, were instances in the past when the top court had in-tervened and clubbed the tervened and clubbed the FIRs in one place. "I may lose or win the case on merits. But this is persecution, making me run around. The FIRs are based on the same state-ment," Mr. Singhvi submit-Karnataka and Jammu and Kashmir for various offence

ted. Justice Datta asked if the Minister expected of Minister expected a ness to come all the way from Jammu to Tamil Nadu to appear in the case

Neutral place "Then do not have it in Ta-mil Nadu. Have it in a neu-tral place. Have it in one place and not all places at the same time. Otherwise this is persecution before prosecution... I will suffer my fate whatever the place my fate whatever the place you club the FIRs at. I am not on the merits of the

case," Mr. Singhvi responded. The petition filed by Mr. Stalin, through advocate Purvish Jitendra Malkan, said it was well-settled in criminal law that only the criminal courts within whose territorial jurisdic-tion the alleged offence

took place would proceed with the case. Mr. Stalin made the speech at Kama-rajar auditorium in Chammei

Take use speech at kallar rajar a auditorium in Chennai. The jurdsdiction would be vested in a court in Chennai. Kr Stalin voiced apprehension that enqui-ries in Utar Stalin voiced Maharashtra would 'cect-tainly have political over-tones' and affect his right to a fair trial. "Filing different com-plaints in different com-plaints in different and drown him

:::

was a means to narass the petitioner and drown him in litigation. The petitioner will have to spend all his time travelling to courts across the country. He has already received grave threats, including death threats," the petition said. The court listed the case on March 15.

The court dismisses fears of enhanced possibility for abuse of the law by political parties in power

"The jurisdiction exercised nity and authority of the nity and authority of the House and its members as a collective body and, se-condly, if they were in the exercise of his rights to free speech, protest and free-dom from arrest, among others. A claim for immun-ity would not survive if it failed this two-fold test, the court said "The jurisdiction exercised by a competent court to prosecute a criminal of-fence and the authority of the House to take action for a breach of discipline in relation to the acceptance of a bribe by a member of the levislature exist in disthe legislature exist in dis-tinct spheres," Chief Justice Chandrachud laid down. The reference came in an appeal filed by JMM leader Sita Soren, who was accused of taking a bribe to the file of taking a bribe to

court said. "An interpretation which enables an MP to claim immunity from pro-secution for an offence of vote for a particular candi-date in the Rajya Sabha

date in the Rajya Sabha elections of 2012. Though she later denied culpability on the ground that she voted for the offi-cial nominee of her own party, the CBI had field a chargesheet in the case. The Jharkhand High Court had refused to quash the chargesheet, following which she had moved the apex court.

PM slams political 'dynasts', says the country's people are his 'family'



ing in Ch

The Hindu Bureau CHENNAI

mily). "But I keep saying "Nation First". Hence, the INDIA bloc has come up with a new formula to abuse me. They say Modi has no family. Do those who have a family get the licence for corruption?" he wondered. Hitting out at the Opposi-tion alliance after Rashtri-ya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Lalu Prasad mocked him as a person who did not have a fomily. Drino. Ministor a family, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday wondered. Mr. Modi alleged that said the country's "140 crore people" were his fa-mily and he was working the Congress, its ally DMK, and the INDIA parties were day and night for their

"soaked in corruption and dynastic politics". Referring to Monday's Supreme Court judgment holding there was no im-munity from prosecution for lawmakers indulging in corruption, the Prime Mi-nister said he welcomed it. According to him, this ver-dict has left the INDIA bloc and its leaders worried. elopment. "Merri Bharat, Mera Pe-river" (My India, My fami-ly), he declared and said the entire country was speaking in one voice -T am Modi's family". The Prime Minister, addressing a public meeting of the BJP in Chemal, said parties such as the DMK and Con-gress believed in the motio of "family first" and the In-dian National Develop-mental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) leaders have made it a habit to abuse his fami-ly repeatedly. "Mera Bharat, Mera Pa

Afraid and trembling

"Their tears are not drying up, they are afraid and trembling," he said. "Those in the INDIA bloc have, for decades, been in ly repeatedly. "The farmers and the the politics of loot. Be-cause of them, the youth of poor are my family. I have dedicated myself to empo-wering them," Mr. Modi emphasised, adding for those who did not have a the country are keeping away from politics," he charged and further confamily, he was their relative and vice versa. On his call, the party cadre chanted "Naan Dhaan Modiyin Ku-dumbam" (I am Modi's fa-

tended that the apex court verdict would give a push for "swachch rajneethi" (clean politics). MODI KA PARIVAR

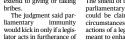
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'soaked in corruption and



njeev Satgainya

Nepal PM Prachanda forges a new ruling alliance





INBRIEF

2



Defreeze varsities accounts, Bihar Raj Bhavan tells banks

Bihar Raj Bhavan has written to banks to overrule an Education Department order that had frozen the accounts of all State-run universities, barring one. The Raj Bhavan's direction comes after the Bihar government had ordered the freezing of the bank accounts of State-run universities and withheld salaries of their Vice-Chancellors for allegedly being absent at a recent review meeting convened by the Education Department. The Department's letter to all V-Cs, except that of Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga Sanskrit Univers sought clarification for their absence from the ersity meeting. PTI

Stranded tourists in H.P.'s Spiti Valley shifted to safer places

As many as 81 tourists stranded in Himachal As thatly as is toursis stratuded in Hinfactial Pradesh's spiti Valley due to closure of roads after heavy snowfall have been shifted to safer places, police said on Monday. The tourists were on Sunday night shifted to and accommodated in different hotels and homestays there, the police said in a statement. Meanwhile, An excavator said in a statement. Meanwhile, An excavator operator engaged in clearing a blocked stretch on the Shimla-Kinnaur road on National Highway 5 at Negulsari in Kinnaur died after shooting stones fell on him. Over 650 roads, including four national highways, in the State remained closed for vehicular movement on Monday following several avalanches and landslides. rn

Kerala struggles to pay employee salaries, limits withdrawals to ₹50,000

Finance Minister Balagopal blames Union govt. for financial crunch; Leader of the Opposition Satheesan says empty treasury stands testimony to financial mismanagement by LDF government

The Hindu Bureau

he Kerala govern ment began credit-ing the salaries of government employees or Monday, but temporarily limited the daily withdrawal at ₹50,000 citing tech-nical issues. Finance Minister K.N. Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal, talking to repor-ters here, said the govern-ment hoped to complete the disbursal of salaries and pensions for February in the next two to three daw

Overdraft issue The ₹50,000 cap has been set reportedly to prevent the treasury from drifting into overdraft once again. Mr. Balagopal roundly blamed the Union government for the financial crunch.

The Centre has whittled The official account is that the limit has been set to down the State's eligible funds by ₹57,400 crore. It prevent the online system from collapsing. The pay-ment of salaries via the em-ployee-Treasury Savings Bank (e-TSB) accounts was has offered to permit the State borrow ₹13,608 crore State borrow ₹13,608 crore in return for withdrawing the suit filed in the Su-preme Court. Kerala ex-pects a favourable decision from the Supreme Court hit on March 1, triggering protests from employees' organisations.

immediate payment of their salary. S. MAHINSH



Hunger strike

Inaugurating the prot-est, Leader of the Opposi-tion V.D. Satheesan said the United Democratic

Mr. Satheesan accused the Finance Minister – who had attributed the problem to "technical is-sues" – of misleading the reasons for the delay. The empty treasury stands tes-timony to the financial mis-management by the Left government, he said. Congress-backed State Employees and Teachers Organisation staged a prot-est outside the Govern-ment Guest House here where the Finance Minis-ter hosted a lunch for the Kerala NGO Association members stage a protest in front of the District Treasury in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday demanding

when the case is heard on March 6 and 7, he added. ter hosted a lunch for the Finance department offi-cials who had helped pre-pare the State Budget for the 2024-25 fiscal. Hunger strike Meanwhile, the Opposi-tion-backed Secretariat Ac-tion Council staged a hun-ger strike demanding urgent steps to disburse the salaries.

Secretariat Action Coun-cil convener Irshad M.S. cii convener irshad M.S. said the council's hunger strike will continue as more than half the em-ployees were yet to receive their salaries. ₹1,500 monthly aid for Himachal women, savs CM

Vikas Vasudeva CHANDIGARH

Even as the political tur-moil in Himachal Pradesh appears to be settling, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu on Monday an-nounced that a monthly financial assistance of ₹1,500 will be given to women above 18 years during CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu the ongoing financial year addressing a press conference Pointing out that the contribution of women toin Shimla on Monday. ANI contribution of women to contribution of women to wards progress of women to is incomparable, Mr. Suk-hu said hat under 'Indira Ganditi Yayari Behna Sukh Samman Nidhi Yojana', all the women above 18 years of age of the State will be gi-ven 12,500 per month. "Our government is fully committed to your respect and your rights," he said at a press conference in Shimla.

Pre-poll guarantees

He said the decision has been taken as a part of the

Congress's commitment to

fulfil its pre-poll guaran-tees. The financial assis-

tance will be given during the ongoing financial year, which will put an addition-al financial burden of

ai nnanciai burden or about ₹800 crore annually on the State exchequer. He said around five lakh wo-

Row in Punjab Assembly after

men were expected to be nefit from the scheme

Sa. C

Rebels' concern

Rebels' concerns Meanwhile, PWD Minister Vikramaditya Singh, who recently held a meeting with the disqualified Com-gress MLAs in Panchkula, met senior All India Com-gress Committee leaders in Delhi and has reportedly conveyed their (rebel MLAs) message and con-cerns to the high com-mand. Some of the rebel MLAs have reportedly called up Mr. Singh and ex-pressed their willingness to return to the party fold. Speaking on the politi-Speaking on the politi cal situation in the State cal situation in the State, Mr. Sukhu said he followed the guidelines of the par-ty's central leadership and no one was upset in the party.

Teary Kalpana Soren makes political debut, blasts Centre

'Won't bow down'

against h rest him.

Amit Bhelari PATNA

Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren's wife Kalpana Murmu Soren wife Kalpana Murmu Soren on Monday made her polit-ical debut in an emotional-ly charged rally in the State's Giridih district, where she broke down while delivering her first speech.

"Today, I am standing in front of you all with a hea-vy heart. My in-laws are not well, they are dis-turbed. I had decided to control my tears but after seeing so much love and affection I could not control it. This love is giving me a lot of strength, which I had never imagined," she said

never imagined," she said in the presence of Chief Mi-nister Champai Soren. The former CM was ar-rested in a money launder-ing case by the Enforce-ment Directorate last month. At that time, specu-lations were rife that Ms. Kalpana might take over as the Chief Minister from her



Chief Minister," she asserted. Ms. Kalpana said Jhark-hand and its people will never bow down in front of the Central government. Unving done her engidistrict, Jharkhand. PT husband. However, the rul-

ing Jharkhand Mukti Mor-cha (JMM) picked Champai Soren for the post. Having done her engi-neering and MBA from her native State Odisha, Ms Kalpana had married Mr Soren on February 7, 2006. The couple have two As soon as Ms. Kalpana broke down, party work-ers raised slogans in favour of her husband. children

children.² On Sunday, she had posted a message on X an-nouncing her entry into public life. "Until Hemantji comes back among us, I will continue to be his voice and share his thoughts with you all and will continue to serve you," she said. of her husband. Wiping off her tears dur-ing the event held to mark the 51st foundation day of the JMM, she accused the Centre and the BJP of hatching a conspiracy against her husband to ar-react bim she said.

from Bijnor, Baghpat Anuj Kumar GHAZIABAD

of LS candidates

RLD releases names

A day after formalising its A day after formalising its entry into the National De-mocratic Alliance, the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) on Monday announced its candidates from Baghpat and Bijnor Lok Sabha seats and a Legislative Council slot. Party sources said it had been done after con-sultation with the BJP. Na-tional spokesperson Mohd Islam said loyalty had been an' acolyte of Chaudhary Charan Singh, from its tra-ditional Baghpat seat while Meerapur (Muzaffarna-gar) MLA Chandan Chau-han will contest from the Bijnor seat which is cur-rently held by Bahujan Sa-maj Party's Malook Nagar. Speculation was rife that Mr. Nagar, a prominent Gurjar leader in the region, would join the RLD but the

Islam said loyalty had been rewarded and no outsider was thrust on the workers. "The party is also expected to get one or two members the Guriar community

to get one or two members in the next expansion of the Yogi Adityanath Cabi-net," he said. The nine MLAs of the party had vot-ed for the BJP candidate in the finerely-contested Ra-iya Sabha poll recently. Striking a balance bet-ween its Jat and Gurjar vote base and giving a firm answer to erstwhile partn-er Samajwadi Party, the Samajwadi Party, the

RLD announced its trusted veteran and national secre tary Rajkumar Sangwan, an acolyte of Chaudhary

Gurjar leader in the region, would join the RLD but the party chose Mr. Chauhan, grandson of former Deputy Chief Minister of Uttar Pra-desh Chaudhary Narayan Singh, who also hails from

the Gurjar community. The choice of candi-dates is being seen as party president Chaudhary Jayant Singh's statement of why he moved away from the SP. In the 2022 Assemb-ly poll, Mr. Chauhan was one of the three SP candi-dates who contested on the RLD symbol.

the Badal family of looting Chhattis crores from the State fo personal benefits during their regimes. In response to Mr. Mann's remarks, Congress

MLAs raised slogans against the AAP govern-ment in the well of the House even as the Leader of the Opposition, Partap Singh Bajwa, said that the Congress never runs away. Outside the House, Mr. MLAs raised slogans Outside the House, Mr. Bajwa said Mr. Mann was indulging in theatrics and adopting unethical and un-constitutional behaviour on the floor of the House.

Bharuch braces for 'Vasava versus Vasava' contest as first-time MLA is pitted against six-time MP

Mahesh Langa

Among Gujarat's 26 Lok Among Gujarat's 26 Lok Sabha seats, Bharuch is likely to witness one of the most absorbing contests this time. The South Guja-rat constituency, unique in being represented by a tri-bal leader since 1989 des-pite the seat being a non-reserved one, will have the State's most senior parlia-State's most senior parlia-mentarian from the Vajpayee-Advani era crossing swords with a first-time MLA: sitting BJP MP Mansukhbhai D. Vasava and the Aam Aadmi Party's Chaitar Vasava.

Once a pocket borough of the late Congress leader Ahmed Patel, who had won the seat thrice in a row from 1977 to 1984, the BJP has had a vice-like grip over Bharuch since it won

CM CM

for the first time in 1989. with Mr. Mansukh Vasava representing it since 1998. As part of the alliance between Congress and AAP, two Lok Sabha seats AAP, two Lok šabha seats in Gujarat - Bharuch and Bhavnagar - have been gi-ven to the latter while the principal Oposition party will contest on the remain-ing 24 seats. AAP picked Mr. Chaitar Vasava, its 37-year-old tribal face who en-joys strong popularity in the region after winning the Dediapada Assembly seat in December 2022, for Bharuch. His candidature Bharuch, His candidature was announced as early as January by Delhi Chief Mi-nister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal when the MLA was in jail in a case related to an alleged assault on a government employee. The South Gujarat con-

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AAP candidate Chaitar Vasava and (right) BJP's Mansukhbhai Vasava with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. FILE PHOTO

stituency has a large con-centration of tribal and Nandod. Mr. Chaitar Vasava, once centration of tribal and Muslim voters, with both communities making up around 7.5 lakh voters in this seat that houses some of the largest industrial es-tates such as Ankleshwar and Dahej, Gujarat's life-line Narmada dam, and tri-bal pockets such as Dedi-pada, Jhagadia and a protege of another tribal veteran from the region, Chhotubhai Vasava, helped AAP gain a large chunk of tribal votes from the Congress in the 2022 Assembly polls as he went on to defeat Mahesh Vasa-va, his mentor's son and

their own political outfit Bharatiya Tribal Party (BTP). In fact, Congress was the first choice of Mr. Chaitar Vasava but com-ments by party leaders about an alliance with BTP prompted him to join AAP ahead of the Assembly poll.

and his wife Shakumiala in jail, Mr. Kejwak had tod da gathering in Bharuch that "Chaitar Vasava and his wife have been arrested by the BJP government of Guj-arat in a fake case". The AAP national convener went on to laud his MLA for fighting for his people's water, forests, land, schools, and hospitals. "There is anger against the BJP government in the enthen incumbent MLA from

unsible for selection of news under the PRB Act)

their own political outfit Bharatiya Tribal Party

ahead of the Assembly poll. AAP has stood firmly be-hind Mr. Chaitar Vasava since his induction into the party. After meeting him and his wife Shakuntala in iail Mr. Keiriwal bad todd a

tire tribal community re-garding his arrest," he had said. By announcing him as By announcing him as the AAP candidate from Bharuch, Mr. Kejrival had sought to strengthen his party sgrip over the tribal votes in this seat. Now out on bail, Mr. Chaitar Vasava has been criss-crossing the area ad-dressing small public gath-erings, playing the martyr and painting both BJP and Congress as "anti-tribal"

and painting both BJP and Congress as "anti-tribal" parties. He softened his stance against the Con-gress after AAP's alliance with the party was an-nounced and has been try-ing to make inroads in Mus-lim-dominated pockets as well well.

Heartburn in Cons The Congress ceding the seat to AAP caused much

...

ten been critical of the State government and ad-ministration for their "lack of interest in resolving the issues of tribals in the

issues of tribals in the region". In 2020, he had even re-signed as an MP and post-ed his resignation letter on social media after being re-portedly upset over the in-clusion of around 12 villag-es in Narmada district in the "eco-sensitive zone". After a meeting with then CM Vijar Rupani, he with-CM Vijay Rupani, he with-drew his resignation and claimed not to have any central Mr. Chaitar Vasava's candidature is understood dispute with either the State or central leadership. candidature is understood to have prompted the BJP, which was reportedly in a mood to replace Mr. Man-sukh Vasava, to stick with him despite his mercurial attitude and outspoken nature. However, Mr. Mansukh Vasava continues to be crit-

ical of the local administra tion on occasion - in April last year, for instance, he threatened to sit on a fast over "illegal sand mining" in the Narmada.

A IN-X

heartburn among local leaders, particularly Mum-taz Patel and Faizal Patel, daughter and son of Ahmed Patel. Leaders in the Bharuch unit led by former district Congress chief Parimalsinh Rana and party candidate from the sear in the 2019 elec-tion Sherkhan Pathan de-manded that the decision be reconsidered. Both of Ahmed Patel's children al-so expressed their disap pointment bul later accepte ed the, party, central

nday. A gress, Rahul Gandhi, was wandering in wandering in Chhattis-garh. They are the most ir-responsible party in the country which is least bothered about the com-mon man," he said. The Chief Minister said

The Chief Minister said that the Congress is now on its knees and is daily re-questing AAP to forge an aliance with it. He said these leaders are political deadwoods who don't have any base among the people and have been re-jected by them. He also attacked the shi-romani Akali Dal, accusing

ed the party ce leadership's decision.

The Bharuch MP has of-

ning away' from a discus-sion on the Governor's ad-dress as they were not able to digest the path-breaking initiatives taken by his government. 'Running away' Hitting out at the Congress, Mr. Mann said that running away from the core issues is in the DNA of the Con-gress and its State unit is doing the same. "At a time when the budget session of Parliament was going on, the top leader of the Con-



Protest erupts after wild jumbo kills woman

Congress holds protest at Kothamangalam town in Kerala after the 70-year-old was attacked near Adimaly in Idukki district; she dies on way to the hospital; State govt. says ₹10 lakh was given to family members of victim; this is the fifth such death in Munnar forest division in the last two months

The Hindu Bureau

70-year-old woman was trampled to death by a wild ele-phant at Kanjiraveli near Adimaly in Idukki on Mon-day morning. The de-ceased was identified as Kanjiraveli resident Indira Kanjiraveli resident Indira Ramakrishnan. According to officials, the incident occurred

around 9.30 a.m. on Mon-Local residents rushed her to hospital. But she died en route to the Kothamangalam taluk hos-pital. The elephant also charged at Kanisseri Shaji,

The Hindu Bureau

Prime Minister Narendra

Modi on Monday wit-nessed the commence-ment of "core loading" at India's first indigenous Fast

Breeder Reactor (500 MWe) at Kalpakkam near here. He took a tour of the

here. He took a tour of the reactor vault and the con-trol room of the reactor. India has developed comprehensive capabili-ties spanning the entire spectrum of the nuclear fuel cycle. The government had approved in 2003 the creation of Bhartiya Nabhi-kiva Vidvut Nisam Ltd.

kiya Vidyut Nigam Ltd. (BHAVINI) to operate In-

dia's most advanced nu-

Three held

in 'pro-Pak.

slogan' case

in Bengaluru

CHENNAL

PM visits Kalpakkam nuclear power plant

another resident, while he was tapping rubber. Meanwhile, the Con-gress launched a protest with the victim's body in Kothamangalam town around noon before an in-usest and post-mortem exquest and post-mortem ex-amination could be con-ducted. Idukki MP Dean Kuriakose, MLAs Mathew Kuzhalnadan and Eldhose Kunnapillil, and Ernaku lam District Congress Committee president Muham-mad Shiyas led the protest.

The police resorted to cane charging around 2.30 p.m., pulled down the ma-keshift tents erected by the protesters, and shifted the

Narendra Modi at the nuclear

clear reactor-Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR), said a statement. The PFBR has been fully designed and constructed indigenously by BHAVINI with contributions from 200 Indian industries. Once commissioned, India will be the second country after Russia to have com-

after Russia to have com mercial operating

Breeder Reactor, it added.

plant on Monday, PT

pital on around 3



th: Body of elephant attack victim Indira being taken to Tragic d al for autopsy. SPECIAL ARRA

body back to the taluk hos began a hunger strike at Post Office Junction at 6 p.m. demanding compen-sation to the victim's family tal on an ambulance ound 3 p.m. Mr. Kuzhaland Mr. Kunnapillil

and a permanent solution to man-wildlife conflict. Minister for Law P. Ra-jeeve said the alleged for-ceful seizure of the mortal remains of the victim from the mortuary without the permission of the mourn-ing family members and before the inquest and post-mortem was unheard of in the history of the of in the history of the State. He said the govern-ment has handed over a compensation of ₹10 lakh to the family of the victim farm and came under at After a post-mortem ex-amination, the body was

handed over to the rela-tives. Indira is survived by husband, Ramakrishnan

and children Shibu, Sindu

and children Shibu, Sindu, and Sheeja. A senior Forest depart-ment official said that on Monday morning, a herd of wild elephants entered the Neendapara area. "For-est officials and Rapid Res-ponse Team (RRT) mem-bers chased the animals to the Naearanmara. range <u>N. Sai Charan</u> MAYILADUTHURAI Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Monday accused the Union government of ig-noring the genuine de-mands of the Tamil Nadu government and said Prime Minister Narendra the Nagarampara range around 7 a.m. But one ele phant crossed the Periyar and moved to Kanjiraveli. The woman was on the

tack," said the official Within two months, five people lost their lives in wild elephant attacks in the Munnar forest division.

sualties could have been more," an officer added.

CCTV footages

Modi was only frequenting the State as the Lok Sabha poll were around the corner. "The Prime Minister can visit the State, but at the same time, he should con-

plementing various schemes to benefit every family in the State.

family in the State. "To ensure their proper implementation, a new in-itiative, 'Neengal Nalama', will be launched on March 6. Under the scheme, the Chief Minister, Ministers, Secretaries, and Collectors will interact with beneficiwill interact with benefici aries through phone calls to get their feedback on various schemes and services offered by the governmen for further improvement,' he said. The State govern ment had followed up on all its announcements by

he said. To ease the challenges faced by people living in rural areas in getting pattas for their Grama Natham lands, the State govern-ment, for the first time, has launched the Natham On-line Patta Transfer

1 M.K. Stalin

Modi is neglecting genuine demands

of T.N. govt.: Stalin

same time, he should con-sider the genuine demands put forth by the State go vernment. They (the BJP government at the Centre] neglected our request to release 37,000 crore to-wards flood relief following the two disasters in De-cember last year. Not even a single rupee was re-leased, but hey want the taxes and votes from Tamil Nadu in order to to tretian Karnataka Police hand over Bengaluru tions. This minimised the damage and injuries. Had it spread around, the ca-

Nadu in order to to retain power," he said. "But they cannot de-ceive the people of Tamil Nadu, who always stand by the 'Dravidian Model' gothe 'Dravidian Model' go-vernment that works for the rights and develop-ment of the State," he adment of the State," he ad-ded, while inaugurating the Integrated Collectorate complex in Mayiladuthur rai, built at acost of 114.48 crore at Mannampandal. He also virtually inaugu-rated 70 other completed projects at a total cost 300.88 crore and laid the foundation stone for 40 new projects at a cost of

new projects at a cost of ₹80.62 crore in Mayila-duthurai, Nagapattinam, and Tiruvarur districts. He distributed welfare assis-



Net-working

Fast

<u>The Hindu Bureau</u>

The Vidhana Soudha police in Karnataka on Mon day arrested three people for allegedly raising "Pakistan Zindabad" slogans in the corridors of State Assembly during the victory celebrations of Rajya Sabha member Syed Naseer Hussain

Shekhar H.T., Deputy Shekhar H.T., Deputy Commissioner of Police, Central division, con-firmed that the arrest is based on FSL report, cir-cumstantial evidence and statements of the witness-es gathered at the event. The accused have been identified as Iltaj from Del-hi. Munawar from R.T. Nahi, Munawar from R.T. Na gar in Bengaluru and Mo hammed Shafi Nashipudi from Byadagi in Haveri district. The accused have been produced before the court for further probe.

A video had gone viral soon after the election results were announced, claiming that a few Congress supporters had shouted "Pakistan Zinda had Shouted "Påkistan Zinda-bad" slogans in the corri-dors of Assembly to cele-brate the win of Mr. Hussain. Some Congress leaders had, however, de-nied the allegations saying supporters were cheering for Syed Naseer Hussain, and shouting "Naseer stab zindabad." BJP MLAs had staged a protest inside and staged a protest inside and outside the Vidhana Soudha demanding the arrest of the accused.

The accused had been The accused had been detained for questioning where they denied raising any pro-Pakistan slogans. However, the police conti-nued to probe and waited for the FSL report on the video clip submitted to as-certain the facts.

iolden waters: Fishermen venture out to the Bay of Bengal off the Visakhapatnam coast as the first rays of the sun spread golden hues on he water. V. RAUU Three girls suffer burn | GI recognition for Narasapur crochet lace injuries in acid attack

The Hindu Bureau MANGALURU

Three second year Pre-Un-iversity girl students of science stream suffered burns following an acid at tack at the Government PU College in Dakshina Kanna-da district on Monday. The Kadaba police ar-rested Abin, 23, an MBA student from Malappuram district of Kerala, for throwing the acid. The pol-ice said that the youth was ice said that the youth was enraged as one of the girls had refused to love him.

fusing his proposal. Deputy Director of PU Department C.D. Jayanna spoke to students who wrote the exam. Mr. Jayan-Abin entered the college premises in uniform at about 9 a.m. and threw acid on the 17-year-old girl who was with her class-mates. She suffered burns on her face and hands. Acid fell on two other girls wrote the exam. Mr. Jayan-na said the three students will be allowed to appear for the paper in the second attempt, the examination of which will be held soon.

who also suffered burns, T. Appala Naidu WEST GODAVARI

who also suffered burns, the police said. All three students are undergoing treatment in a hospital in Mangaluru. Soon after the attack, five of their classmates chased and caught Abin and handed him over to the college principal. Fol-The famed Narasapur cro-chet lace craft has received the Geographical Indica-tions (G) tag, giving a new lease of life to the dying craft in the Godavari re-gion of Andhra Pradesh. The Department of Pro-motion of Industry and In-

and handed him over to the college principal. Fol-lowing a complaint by the victim, the Kadaba police arrested Abin. Preliminary investiga-tion revealed that Abin was motion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry registered the craft in the Geographiangry with the girl for recal Indications Registry (GIR) on March 1 certifying

that the craft is geographi-cally limited to 19 mandals in West Godavari and Dr. B.R.Ambedkar Konaseema districts in the Godavari region. Narsapur and Palacole are the major trade points



An artisan knitting a lace product near Narasapur

for lace products in West Godavari district. In Kona-seema region, Razole and Amalapuram are known for the craft. Nearly 15,000 women are directly involved in the craft, producing three ca-

tegories of products made of lace – garments, home furnishings and accessories. West Godavari District Alankriti Lace Manufactur-ing Mahila Mutual Aided Co-operative Societies' Federation Limited (popu-larly known as Alankriti Federation), Narasapur All India Crochet Lace Expor-ters Association and And-hra Pradesh Handicrafts Development Corporation Development Corporation Limited (APHDC) jointly applied for the GI Tag for the crochet lace craft.

Bleak scenario

Bleak scenario "Finally, our craft has re-ceived the GI tag. More than 15,000 women are as-sociated with our federa-tion comprising 51 socie-ties. However, barely 200

craft revives hopes of struggling artisans omen are now active in

women are now active in the regular production. The crochet lace craft mar-ket here has remained pa-ralysed since COVID-19 pandemic due to a lack of new orders. We hope that the GI tag will help revive the craft and foreign trade," Alankriti Federa-tion president Pulaparthi Mahalashmi told The Hin-du over the phone. du over the phone. An estimated 60% of the

artisans involved in the craft are women. The State-run Alankriti Lace Park in Narasapur town resumed operations in May 2023 years after it was shut down. China's machinedown. China's machine-made lace products are dictating the terms in the market, giving a death blow to the Narasapur lace products, she explained.

tance to 12,653 beneficiar ies at a cost of ₹143.46 crore under various schemes The DMK government, Mr. Stalin said, had been im-

au its announcements by issuing Government Or-ders and ensuring their proper implementation, he said. To ease the challenges

line Patta Transfer Scheme. This will benefit 75.33 lakh people in the first phase, he said.

KSU activists, Kerala police clash over student death

Chaos descended on the Kerala Veterinary and Ani-mal Sciences University (KVASU) headquarters at Pookode in Wayanad dis trict on Monday with Kera-la Students Union (KSU) ac-

that in Montaly with Refer la Students Union (KSD) acid tivists clashing with the police at the entrance of the university. The violence unfolded when the KSU activists marched to the university headquarters raising a slew of demands, includ-ing handing over the case in connection with the death of Sidharthan J.S., a second-year Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry stu-dent, to Central agencies for an impartial impartial for an investigation.

The protesters also raised demands such as providing a solatium of ₹1 crore to the family of Sidharthan, adopting legal ac tion against the university officials involved in the officials involved in the crime, dismissing the teachers who protected the accused, registering murder case against the ac-cused, and the resignation of Chief Minister Pinarayi Viiavan.

Vijayan. Students from Kannur, Kasaragod, Kozhikode, Wayanad, and Malappu-ram districts attempted to ram districts attempted to enter the university cam-pus by pulling down the barricades set up at the en-trance to block the march. The police responded by discharging truck-mount-ed water cannon several ed water cannon several times. The pressurised jets of water felled several stu-dents, but the police could not disperse the protes-ters. The protesters then threw stones and sticks at the police.

The Odisha government on Monday imposed a ban on the use of single-use plastic in national parks, tiger re-serves, wildlife sanctuaries and eco-tourism sites in the state from April 1.

da. As the use of plastic wa-ter bottles will also be banned inside the protect-ed forest areas, alternate drinking water facilities will be arranged for the tourists, said Mr. Nanda, who is also the Principal Chief Conservator of For-ests (Wildlife). Visitors carrying food items in wraps will be ad-

An order to this effect was issued by Chief Wil-dlife Warden Susanta Nanda. As the use of plastic wa

Mr. Nanda, in a letter to all regional chief conserva-tors of forests, divisional forest officers and deputy directors of Similpal Tiger Reserve (STR) and Nandan-kanan Zoo, said, "While this was necessitated for protecting habitats of the last mile of our State, it is reiterated that the public at large should not be put to inconvenience."

vised to dispose of the wraps at designated gar-bage bins and not litter the protected areas, the order stated. stated. All the garbage generat-ed by visitors, nature camps and other places in-side the protected areas will be disposed of in ac-cordance with existing guidelines.

Mr. Nanda, in a letter to

Press Trust of India

The Hindu Bureau KALPETTA







cafe explosion case to Central agency

INBRIEF



Yadav Mahakumbh BJP's old tactic for division: Akhilesh

Samajwadi Party (SP) President Akhilesh Yadav on Monday reacted sharply over Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav's visit to Uttar Pradesh to attend the Yadav Mahakumbh. Mr. Yadav added that attacking his family is an 'old tactic' of the BJP. He added that the saffron party intends to create division but reiterated that the backward classes, Dalits, and minorities are backward classes, Dalits, and minorities are solidly behind the SP. "The BP is a very smart party, this trick [Yadaw Mahakumbh] is an old trick for division," Mr. Akhilesh said. Mr. Mohan participated in a Mahakumbh on Sunday in Lucknow, and said that the Yadav community freed itself from the contractual system of vote bank politics practiced by one family.

'Ensure 60 lakh children of age 3 to 6 attend playschool'

The Ministry of Education (MoE) wants to ensure that 60 lakh children between the ages of three to six years attend play school or Balvatika, and can be accommodated in 14 lakh Anganwadis across the country, Sanjay Kumar, Secretary (School Education), said. Mr. Kumar was speaking at the Early Childhood Care and Education conference, Udaan 2024, in Delhi on Education conference, Udaan 2024, in Delhi on Monday, He urged all government and non-government stakeholders to work with the MoE to create mapping towards this. "We need to take this matter with the States and nudge them to do it as quickly as possible," he added.



2 involved in INLD leader Rathee's killing held in Goa

Two people have been arrested from Goa in connection with the killing of INLD's Haryana unit president Nafe Singh Rathee, police said on Monday. Rathee and Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) worker Jai Kishan were killed after multiple rounds were fired on their vehicle in Bahadurgarh in Jhajjar district on February 25. Achieha and Sturgbh usene arrested from Cox in a Ashish and Saurabh were arrested from Goa in a joint operation by the Haryana Police's Special Task Force, the district police and the Delhi Police's Special Cell, officials said. They were flown to Delhi from Goa and then taken to Jhajjar on Monday afternoon, said police officials adding that the duo was arrested from a hotel in North Goa. PTI

AIADMK invites VCK to join its alliance for LS election

The AIADMK on Monday invited the VCK to contest the Lok Sabha election together. Interacting with the media, the party's organisation secretary D. Jayakumar said "If they [VCK] come to us, they will benefit. If they remain with the DMK, they won't get any seats." During the 2006 Assembly poll, the VCK was part of the AIADMK-led coalition and won two seats (Kattumannarkoil and Mangalore) out of the nine it contested. It polled 4.26 lakh votes with about 1 3% in vote sh



Feeding stray dogs is making them territorial, says Delhi HC

The Delhi High Court on March 4 expressed concerns regarding people feeding stray dogs which is making them territorial, which leads Winch is making inchi territoria, Winch teads them to attack people who enter "their territory". The remarks came as the court issued notice to the Delhi government, New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), and Delhi Police on a plea filed by the father of 18 months-old baby who was mauled to death by a pack of dogs last month, seeking 550 lakh compensation for the incident.

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ADR says it will oppose SBI plea on poll bonds

The Hindu Bureau

As the State Bank of India The Hindu Burea NEW DELHI

As the State Bank of India (SBI) moved the Supreme Court seeking time to comply with a direction to make public details of elec-toral bonds, the Associahe State Bank of In-dia (SBI) on Mon-day moved the Su-preme Court seeking time till June 30 to comply with tion for Democratic Re-forms (ADR), chief petitioner in the case, said it was considering all legal options, including opposa direction from the Supreme Court to make pu-blic details of electoral ing the SBI plea in court. bonds purchased since April 2019, including the . The data is obviously in digital format and col-lecting data from different In digital format and col-lecting data from different States and locations and taking four months for that is impossible in this day and age," Jagdeep Chho-kar, founder-member and trustee of the ADR, told The Hindu. RTI activist Anjail Bhardwaj, who is a mem-ber of the board of Com-mon Cause, which is one of the petitioners, said: "Do-nor names and redemp-tion details of electoral bonds are bohd wailable in SBI's Mumbai Branch in sealed cover as per their af

April 2019, including the date of purchase, the name of the buyer, and the de-nomination of the bond. A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, head-ed by Chief Justice of India DX. Chandrachud, had struck down the electoral bonds scheme, which pro-vided blanket anonymity for financial contributions to political parties, as "un-constitutional and manif-estly arbitrary" on Febru-ary 15. ary 15.

Full disclosure The bank was directed to make a full disclosure to the Election Commission (EC) of political parties which had received contri-



SBI seeks time till June 30 to

disclose details of poll bonds

The SC had told the bank to furnish the information to the Election Commission by March 6;

SBI said there were practical difficulties with the decoding exercise and the timeline fixed for it

The extension of time sought by the SBI would ensure that the details are made public after the Lok Sabha election. REUTERS

butions and encashed the butions and encashed the electoral bonds since April 12, 2019. The bank was or-dered to furnish the infor-mation to the EC by March 6. The poll body, in turn, had to publish the entire information given by the SBI on its website by March 13. The extension of time

13. The extension of time sought by the SBI would ensure that details are made public after the Lok Sabha election.

In its nine-page applica-tion, the bank said there were "certain practical dif-ficulties with the decoding

exercise and the timeline exercise and the timeline fixed for it". "Due to the stringent measures undertaken to ensure that the identity of the donors was kept ano-nymous, decoding of the electoral bonds and the matching of the donor to the donations made would be a complex process," the SBI submitted.

SBI submitted. The bank has laid down a detailed standard operat-ing procedure (SoP) for 29 authorised branches across India and no central database was maintained. Donor details were kept in

'Travesty of justice', says Opposition on SBI demand

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Opposition parties on Monday questioned the SBI's plea for extending the date for submitting details of electoral bonds and called it a "travesty of jus-tice". They cald every of tice". They said every ef-fort was being made to ensure that the data were not released in time for the elections to shield the "corrupt practices" of the Modi vernment.

a sealed cover at the desig-nated branches. "In order to make avail-able donor information, the date of issue of each bond will have to be checked and matched against the date of pur-chase by a particular do-nor. This exercise would only deal with the first silo of information. These

information. These

bonds were redeemed by

political parties in their de-signated bank accounts.

signated bank accounts. Accordingly, this informa-tion would then have to be matched against the bond redemption information that makes up the second silo," the bank explained. It said the details or-dered by the court to be made public were stored separately.

with Shah: Ladakh leaders

sealed cover at the desig

government. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a post on X asked, "When the Su-preme Court has said that it is the right of the coun-trymen to know the truth about electoral bonds, then why does SBI want this information not to be made public before the elections?". CPI(M) general secre-tary Sitrara Yechury

made public were stored separately. "Some of the details stuch as number of bonds, etc. are stored digitally while the other set of de-tails are stored physically. The purpose of not storing all details digitally was to ensure that it cannot be gathered easily," the appli-cation said. CPI(M) general secre-tary Sitaram Yechury asked whether the SBI's ex-tension was only to shield the government. Trina-mool Congress leader Sa-ket Gokhale said, "This is 'Modi Ka Parivaar' work ing overtime to hide the large-scale corruption done by him and BJP."

Bribery involving legislators: No positive result from talks PM, Congress hail SC ruling

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Congress, and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Monday welcomed the Supreme Court's judgment that members of Parliament

sealed cover as per their af-fidavit. Why is SBI not dis-

these

closing immediately?"

Contra Judgitein that members of Parliament and Legislative Assemblies do not enjoy immunity from prosecution for tak-ing bribes to make speech-es or to cast votes in the legislature. A seven-judge Constitu-tion Bench, headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandra-chud, unanimously over-nide the 1998 verdict deli-vered by a five-judge Bench in the Jinarkhand Mukit Morzha (JMM) bribery case by which MPs and MLAs by which MPs and MLAs were granted immunity from prosecution for taking bribe to make a speech or vote in the legislature.

Minutes after the judg-ment was delivered, Mr. ment was delivered, Mr. Modi posted on X (former-ly Twitter): "SWAGATAM! [welcome] A great judg-ment by the Hon'ble Su-preme Court which will en-sure clean politics and



deepen people's faith in

'Historic decision Congress spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi al-so welcomed the judg-ment, stating that this had been "a long-pending issue for many years to correct a purely legal issue", which cannot be the law on the cort of the Correctivution text of the Constitution.

text of the Constitution. "It is a salutary, desira-ble, welcome judgement. It is something which sets right the law and it should have been done earlier. It is a legal issue decided on the assumption that some peo-ple did not so vote and some people did vote on the allegation of bribery

and whether they can at al be prosecuted, not wheth er they are convictable or not, on the merits," said Mr. Singhvi.

Mr. Singhvi. "These provisions of protection to Members of Parliament or an MLA are made for the discharge of their duties and only for their duties and only for those things without which they cannot discharge their duties, and not to give them additional benefits like, for example, receiving bribe," he added in a video message.

CPI(M) general secre-tary Sitaram Yechury termed the judgment "his-toric" and also connected it to horse trading and top-

pling of governments through pecuniary appeals to legislators. He posted on X: "A his-toric 7 Judge Constitution toric 7 Judge Constitution bench judgement. Mega horse trading allegedly through bribery indulged by the BJP has toppled ma-ny democratically elected governments replaced by BJP govts! Likewise, some BJP RS (Rajya Sabha) MPs have been elected in this manner."

Vijaita Singh NEW DELHI

Civil society leaders in La dakh, who are protesting to demand Constitutional safeguards for the region. met Union Home Minister

sateguadas tor the region, met Union Home Minister Amit Shah, on Monday, but the "meeting did not result in any positive outcome". This is the first meeting of the Ladakh groups with Mr. Shah since 2020. The members of the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) said they had two rounds of meetings with of-ficials from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Monday. "Today the sub-commit-tee of LAB and KDA held a meeting with the officials

tee of LAB and KDA held a meeting with the officials of MHA and adviser Union Territory. Ladakh. The meeting ended without any concrete outcome. Subsequently, the sub-committee members had a meeting with Home Minis-ter Amit Shah at his resi-dence. This meeting too didn't result in any positive outcome. Both the bodies will devise future course of



with Amit Shah at his residence on Mo

action after consultation action after consultation with the people of the two districts," a statement is-sued by the leaders said. The MHA and the civil society groups have had three rounds of talks so far. The Union Territory, with a population of 2.74 lakh (2011 Census) has erunted in protests several

erupted in protests several times in the past four years amid concerns over protection of land, resources, and employment for the locals, and bureaucratic overreach. Earlier, MHA of-ficials had agreed to exa-mine how the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution could be im-plemented in Ladakh's context. tection of land, resour

The LAB and KDA ar The LAB and KDA are jointly protesting for State-hood and inclusion of La-dakh in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, thus giving it a tribal status; job reservation for locals; and a parliamentary seat each a parliamentary seat each for Leh and Kargil. Former Member of Par-

liament Thupstan Chhe-wang, who is also the chief of the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA), has been leading the talks.

leading the talks. After the special status of J&K under Article 370 of the Constitution was abro-gated by the Parliament on August 5, 2019, Ladakh was turned into a Union Territory without any Le-gislative Assembly.

Allow MPs, MLAs to speak without fear of harassment in House, says SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal

A Constitution Bench or A Constitution Bench on Monday said the Parlia-ment and State legislatures would lose their represen-tative character in a demo-cratic polity if MPs and MLAs are not able to at-tend the House and speak their minds in the exercise of their duties as members without fear of being ha-rassed by the executive or rassed by the executive or

any agencies. "The freedom of elected legislators to discuss and debate matters of the mo-ment on the floor of the House is a key component of a deliberative democraof a deliberative democra-cy in a parliamentary form of government. The ability of legislators to conduct their functions in an envi-ronment which protects their freedom to do so

observed



Fearless debates: The top court said freedom of speech was a 'necessary privilege' essential to the functioning of the House.

without being overawed by coercion or fear is constitu-tionally secured. As citi-zens, legislators have a funcolonial reluctance, the demand for parliamentary privileges in India was al-ways tied to the relationdamental right to the freedom of speech and ex-pression," Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud ship which it bore to the functions which the Indian legislators sought to dis-charge," the judgment said.

However, the Bench said the parliamentary pri-vilege and immunity would swing into action if legislators were threatened The judgment overruled a majority judgment of 1998 in the JMM bribery se. "... Even in the face of

with prosecution for their official actions or speeches given in the House to en-hance the dignity and authority of the legislature. The Chief Justice said freedom of speech in the Houses of Parliament and their committees was one such "necessary privilege" essential to the functioning of the House. "This privilege is not on-ly essential to the ability of Parliament and its mem-bers to carry out their du-ties, but it is also at the core of the function of a demowith prosecution for their

of the function of a demo cratic legislative institu-tion," the judgment noted.

tion," the judgment noted. Similarly, the vote given by an MP was an extension of speech. "Therefore, the freedom of a Member of Parliament to cast a vote is also protected by the free-dom of speech in Parlia-ment," the court set down. :::

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI The Supreme Court on Monday said the elections to the Rajya Sabha and Council of States required "utmost protection" and the right to vote should be carried out freely without fear or nersecution

Rajya Sabha elections

must be given utmost

protection, says court

fear or persecution. "The Rajya Sabha or the Council of States performs an integral function in the working of our democracy and the role played by the Rajya Sabha constitutes a part of the basic structure of the Constitution. Thereof the Constitution. There-fore, the role played by elected members of the State Legislative Assem-blies in electing members of the Rajya Sabha under Article 80 is significant and requires utmost protection to ensure that the vote is

exercised freely and with

exercised freely and with-out fear of legal persecu-tion," a Constitution Bench of seven judges, headed by Chief Justice of India DX. Chandrachud, said. He also said the free and fearless exercise of fran-chise by elected members of the Legislative Assembly while electing members of the Rajva Sabha was un-doubtedly necessary for the dignity and efficient functioning of the State Le-gislative Assembly.

mentary privilege was not to be restricted to only law as not making on the floor of the House but extended to oth-House but extended to oth-er powers and responsibili-ties of elected members, which took place in the Le-gislature or Parliament even when the House was not sitting.

gislative Assembly. The court said parlia-



Congress manifesto, screening committees hold crucial meetings

Party's election panel to meet on Thursday to finalise names for first list; manifesto for LS polls to focus on MSP legal guarantee, caste census

The Hindu Bureau

he Congress held a series of important meetings on Monday as the party geared up for the Lok Sabha elec-

The manifesto commit tee, headed by former Fi tee, headed by tormer Fi-nance Minister and senior party leader P. Chidamba-ram, discussed the draft manifesto. Meetings of screening committees were also held to shortlist candidates for the elections

The party's Central Elections. The party's Central Election Committee (CE) will meet on Thursday to fi-nalise the names for the first list of Lok Sabha can-didates caid courses didates, said sources.

didates, said sources. The manifesto commit-tee will also be meeting on Tuesday for further discus-sions. Sources said the pa-nel cleared about 10 pages of the 50-page document on Monday.

on Monday. Once the document is fi-nalised, it will be sent to the Congress Working Committee for the final stamp of approval. On Sa-turday, *The Hindu* had re-ported that giving legal guarantee to minimum



P. Chidambaram, and T.S. Singh the manifesto. FILE PHOTO Congress leaders Supriya Shrinate, P. Deo during the website launch for the

support price, conducting a caste-based census, and filling up existing govern-ment vacancies as a priori-ty would prominently fi-gure in the perturb of justice, that the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra has been high-lighting for the past two months. gure in the party's manifesto for the elections.

months. In a post on X on Mon-day, Mr. Gandhi said the data presented by the Centre in Parliament showed that 9.64 lakh mannesto for the elections. A source told *The Hindu* that apart from caste cen-sus, the party would focus on better access to educa-tion for marginalised sec-tions history cohemister. posts were vacant across 78 departments. "If we look at important depart-ments only, 2.93 lakh posts ments only, 2.93 lakh posts are vacant in the Railways, 1.43 lakh in the Home Mi-nistry and 2.64 lakh in the Defence Ministry, 'he said. "The INDIA bloc's re-solve is that we will open closed doors of jobs for the youth,' he asserted.

the

tion for marginalised sec-tions, higher scholarships, economic packages for dif-ferent target groups like women, youth, backward classes, micro and small entrepreneurs, gig work-ers, and so on. Thematically, the docu-ment would focus on paanch nyay, or five pillars

After Lalu's jibe, BJP launches 'Modi Ka Parivar' campaign

Nistula Hebbar NEW DELHI

Opposition had been Reacting to Rashtriya Jana-ta Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Pra-sad's jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for having "no family", BJP leaders on Monday added "Modi Ka *Parivar*" (Modi's family) to their social media profiles. Mr Prazad had made launching persona attacks against Modi for past 17 years

BJP MP said the

ty remarks were made against Prime Minister Mo-di by Mr. Prasad in the pre-Mr. Prasad had made sence of INDIA alliance the remarks at a rally in Patna on Sunday while re-ferring to Mr. Modi's atleaders. This is sad and painful," Mr. Trivedi said at a press conference at the tacks on dynastic politics, BJP headquarters here

"He [Prasad] has talked about Modi's family. I want to remind [him] that for Prime Minister Modi, the

Prime Minister Modi, the entire country is his fami-ly," he added. The BJP's move in sup-port of Mr. Modi in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elec-tion is reminiscent of a si-milar campaign the party had mounted prior to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. It then had launched the "Main bhi chowkidar" campaign to take on Con-gress leader Rahul Gand-

gress leader Rahul Gand-hi's "chowkidar chor hai" dig at Mr. Modi. Responding to the re-mark, Mr. Modi at a rally in the Opposition parties which "have been launchwhich "have been launch-ing personal attacks against Modi by making such 'petty' remarks against him for the past I6-17 years". "In that series, yester-day (Sunday), at a rally in Patna, once again such pet-

mark, Mr. Modi at a rally in Telangana said that "140 crore people of India are my family". He also kept up his attack on "dynastic parties" in the country, saying that they may have different faces, but "jhoot aur loot" (ies and loot) was their "common cha-racter".

Modi's 'real family' loots country,

says Rahul The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Taking a dig at the 'Modi' Ka Parivar' (Modi's family) campaign launched by the BJP on social media, the Congress on Monday said it was an attempt at "mis-leading" people from real issue? issues.

"Farmers are in debt youth are unemployed, la-bourers are helpless, and yourn are unenpoyee, ar bourrers are helpless, and the country is being looted by Modi's 'real family'? Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said in a post on X. Mr. Gandhi also shared his earlier photo from the Lok Sabha, in which he had held a poster-size pho-tograph of Mr. Modi in a private jet with business ty-coon Gautam Adani. The Congress's social media handles ran a hash-tag 'Modi Ka Asi! Parivar' (Modi's real family) and pointed to his ties with Mr. Adani. "Do women of Ma-

Adani. "Do women of Ma-nipur find a place in Modi ka parivar? Will the PM call the farmers protesting on the borders of Delhi his parivar? What about the unemployed youth?" Congress general secretary (or-ganisation) K.C. Venugopal

asked on X asked on X. The party also targeted the Prime Minister over Mi-nister of State for Home Ajay Mishra Teni, whose son allegedly mowed down a group of protesting farm-ers with his SUV.

INBRIDE



Delhi HC dismisses Mahua's plea in cash for query case

The Delhi High Court on Monday dismissed a plea filed by Trinamool Congress leader Mahua Moitra that requested the court to restrain BJP MP Nishikant Dubey and advocate Jai Anant Dehadrai from making bribery allegations against her for asking questions in Parliament. Justice Sachin Datta, who had reserved the verdict on the application for the interim relief by Ms the application for the interim relief by Ms. Moirra on December 20, rejected it on Monday. She was expelled from the Lok Sabha in December after Mr. Dubey and Mr. Dehadrai alleged that she has taken bribe from businessman Darshan Hiranandani to ask questions in Parliament. Ms. Moira has refuted the allegations against her as "political vendetta"

BJP's Barabanki MP opts out of LS race after viral video

BI Lok Sabha MP from Barabanki, Upendra Singh Rawat, whose alleged obscene video went viral on Monday, declared that he would not contest any election until proven innocent, and urged party president J.P. Nadda to probe the video. Mr. Rawat, whose name was declared in the first list of Lok Sabha candidates, alleged that the video had been generated by deep fake artificial intelligence technology for which he has lodged an FIR. The Barabanki MP alleged that the video had been made public after he had been renominated in an attempt to tarnish his image. Mr. Rawat won the Barabanki sea in the 2019 Lok Sabha election defeating the Samajwadi Party candidate Ram Sagar Rawat.

Media ignoring joblessness, farmers' protest, says Rahul in Madhya Pradesh

Mehul Malpani

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday hir out at the mainstream media for telecasting billionaire Mukesh Ambani's son Anant Ambani and Radhi-ka Merchant's pre-wedding festivities, and accused it of not highlighting issues like farmers' profest. unemfarmers' protest, unem-ployment, and inflation.

The remarks came on the third day of his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Madhya Pradesh.

He said the biggest is-He said the biggest is-sues in the country were unemployment, inflation, and corruption. "Why is Ambani ji's wedding being discussed in the media all daylong? Someone explain this to me," he asked. "When you watch the TV (news) you will see Bolly-wood stars, they will talk



Hitting out: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi greeting the crowd at the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Madhya Pradesh's Binaganj on Monday. AN

about cricket sometimes. Monday. From Shivpuri But they will not talk about your issues because you have no control over the media," he said. He reiterthe yatra travelled through Guna, the bastion of Union Guna, the bastion of Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scin-dia, who was announced as the BJP's candidate for the Lok Sabha elections. He had unsuccessfully conmedia," he said. He reiter-ated his stance that OBCs, Dalits, and tribal people do not have proper represen-tation across sectors. Mr. Gandhi resumed his march from Shivpuri on He had unsuccessfully con-tested from the seat on Congress ticket in 2019, be-fore switching to the BJP.

With the election With the election around the corner, the Congress has been work-ing to negate the Scindia-factor in the region and make a comeback. The party currently does not hold any of the four Lok Sabha seats – Morena, Bhind, Gwalior, and Guna – in the belt.

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Criticising the Union go-vernment over the issues of rising ticket prices, re-duction in number of non-AC coaches, falling train speeds, rail safety, and de-teriorating finances, Con-gress general secretary Jai-ram Ramesh said that it had been a 'decade of de-gradation'' for the Rail-ways.

contributing to this hike.



extort people," he said. He listed out "fake su-perfast surcharges", "se-nior citizen concessions withdrawal", "dynamic pricing fraud" and "long ears since this policy, over ₹3,700 crore has been loot-ed from senior citizens!" The dynamic pricing, he said, was exclusionary and shunted out migrant workextensions of so-called 'special' trains" as factors

A decade of degradation for Railways,

says Cong.; cites price hike, poor safety

ers who want to visit their families for Chhath Puja or a student wishing to see her family for the holidays. her family for the holidays. Mr. Ramesh also ac-cused the government of "anti-poor mindset" when it comes to constructing rail infrastructure. "While the UPA spent crores on high-quality services for the common man, such as the Garib Rath trains, the Modi government has shift-ed spending to expensive AC coaches – even though 95.3% of train passengers ride sleeper and general classes," he said, underlin-ing that more than 33% of seats added in the last 10 years went to AC 3-tier coaches. The schedule for the Railways Coach Factor ry for 2023-25 has just 1,42 general and sleeper coach-es against 3,044 air condi-tioned coaches on order. the Garib Rath trains. the tioned coaches on order. He criticised the

He criticised the Centre's lackadaisical atti-tude towards safety. "The CAG has flagged a huge backlog in renewal and replacement of 'over aged as sets' critical for safe run sets' critical for safe run-ning of trains. It found that the decline in fund availa-bility and non-utilisation of available funds for track re-newals was causing derail-ments," he said.

ED accuses Congress leader Salman Khurshid's wife, two others of money laundering

The Hindu Bureau

The Enforcement Directo-rate on Monday alleged that Louise Khurshid, wife of Congress leader Salman Khurshid and the then pro-ject director of Dr. Zakir Husain Memorial Trust, and two others allegedly laundered 77.50 lakh. The agency Lucknow

The agency Lucknow Zonal office of ED has provisionally attached 15 im visionally attached 15 im-movable properties worth 729.51 lakh, in the form of agricultural land, in Far-rukhabad, Uttar Pradesh and 716.41 lakh lying in four bank accounts linked

to the trust. The agency's money-laundering probe is based on 17 FIRs registered by the Uttar Pradesh Police's Eco-

SW C



interest of the trust and their personal gain". Last month, an MP-MLA court in Uttar Pradesh's Banomic Offences Wing against late Pratyush Shukreilly district issued an arla, a representative of the trust, and others. rest warrant against the Mr. Athar and Ms. Khurshid.

nomic

Charge sheet filed The police have filed char-gesheets in all 17 cases against Athar Farooqui alias Mohammed Athar, as the then secretary of the trust; and the then project the funds purportedly for the distribution of hearing aids and wheelchairs among persons with dis-abilities in Uttar Pradesh. (With PTI inputs)

Senior leader Tapas Roy quits Trinamool, resigns from Assembly

The Hindu Bureau director, Ms. Khurshid, it

said. According to the ED, the grant-in-aid of 771.50 lakh received by the trust was not used for holding camps as sanctioned by the Centre. The funds were in-stead allegedly laundered by Mr. Shukla, Mr. Athar and Ms. Khurshid, "for the interest of the trust and Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, senior Trina-mool Congress MLA Tapas Roy on Monday resigned from all posts in the Trina-mool Congress and as a member of West Bengal Legislative Assembly. He had been voicing his discontent in the media ox-

The trust had received

leader remained tight-lipped about his plans. Mr. Roy said that Trinamool chief Mamata Banerjee did not stand by him when his soldier of the party.

house was raided by the

nouse was raided by the Enforcement Directorate about 50 days ago. Leader of the Opposi-tion Suvendu Adhikari wel-comed Tapas Roy's deci-sion to resign. His resignation comes as a set-back to the Trinamool Con-gress ahead of the Lok Sab-ha polls.

Tumult in party Meanwhile, Trinamool Congress leader Kunal Ghosh who has been airing his dissatisfaction over Su dip Banerjee, received a show cause notice for speaking against the party. Mr. Ghosh announced Mr. Gnosh announced his decision to quit as gen-eral secretary and spokes-person of the party. Mr. Ghosh, however, added that he will remain a loyal colding of the party.

Congress asks why BJP LS candidate was not named in FIR in Chhattisgarh coal scam

Shubhomoy Sikdar RAIPUR

The Opposition Congress party has accused the State police of providing prefe-rential treatment to a BJP Lok Sabha election candi-date from Chhattisgarh whose name cropped up during the Enforcement Directorate (ED) probe in the coal levy scam case. Party spokesperson Party spokesperson Sushil Anand Shukla on Monday asked why Chinta-mani Maharaj - whose name featured among the

195 candidates announced by the BJP last week - had not been named in the FIR not been named in the FIR filed by the Anti-Corrup-tion Bureau (ACB) in the coal levy case based on a letter by the ED. The purported letter

Maharaj was put in the "Modi [a reference to Prime Minister Narendra ...

Modi] washing machine" and all his sins were washed away, while liken-ing his case to other lead-ers from across the coun-try who have switched over to the BJP in the past decade

"When a case is regis-"minet 35 people or tered against 35 people on the basis of a letter, then why was Chintamani Mah-araj's name left out of the FIR? It's because he has joined the BJP. This is the character of BJP, cases are filed against leaders of Op-position parties by for-warding them to ED, I-T, CBI and pressure is creat-ed. But as soon as that ed. But as soon as that leader joins BJP, all pro-ceedings against him are stopped There are many examples of this...," said Mr. Shukla.

discontent in the media ov-er the past few days. Mr. Roy was also vocal against

veteran Trinamool leader Sudip Banerjee. Specula-tion is rife that Mr. Roy may join the BJP and contest

against Mr. Sudip from Kol-kata Uttar Lok Sabha seat. The former Trinamool

ways. Mr. Ramesh in a post on X on Sunday said the aver-

X on Sunday said the aver-age price per passenger per kilometre had regis-tered a 107% increase "from 0.32/passenger-km in 2013-14 to 0.66/passen-ger-km". For the United Progressive Alliance de-cade, he said the increase was only 33%. "We must credit the Modi govern-ment for coming up with so many different ways to

"Ticket concessions' Mr. Ramesh said, "In a move that requires a spe-cial kind of cruelty, the Mo-di government withdrew rail ticket concessions for senior citizens during the pandemic. In the three

The BJP leader was named in ED's letter in the case but was left out of ACB's FIR, says Congress



asking why the Prime Mi-nister did not have a family. Union Ministers Amit Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari, and Nirmala Sith-araman, and BJP chief J.P. Nadda were joined by par-ty members from across the country in declaring themselves as "Modi Ka Parivar" on their social media accounts, as the rul-ing party launched a coun-ter-attack.

ter-attack. Many supporters of Mr. Modi also made the change on their pages. BJP MP and spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said this was in response to

INBRIDE

6



Swedish defence major SAAB begins work on unit in India

Swedish defence major Saab on Monday started construction of its new manufacturing facility in India for its iconic Carl-Gustaf M4 weapons with a formal ground-breaking ceremony. The facility is being built at MET City in Haryana. The State has a strong industrial base of good potential a strong industrial base of good potential partners and skilled employees, the company said. "Today is an important milestone for Sweden and India. Saab's factory will be the first foreign fully-owned defence production facility in India. It is a testament to the strong bilateral relationship between our countries," says Håkan Jewrell, State Secretary for Foreign Trade, Sweden

Court seeks response from WFI, govt. on wrestlers' plea

WF1, gOVt. OIT WTCSUETS DEA The Delhi High Court on Monday sought response from the Union government and the Wrestling Federation of India (WFD) on a plea filed by wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik, and Satyawart Kadian challenging a WF1 circular for conducting the selection trials for the Asian Olympic Qualifiers and the World Olympic Qualifiers, 2024. The petitioners were at the forefront of the protest against former WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh for allegedly nolesting women grapplers. Justice Sachin Datta has put the matter for hearing on March 7 before which the ad-hoc committee has to reply to the plea.

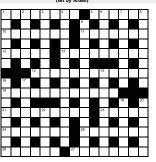
Vacate party offices at Rouse Avenue by June 15: SC to AAP

The Supreme Court on Monday allowed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) time till June 15 to vacate its offices from a property at Rouse Avenue allotted to the Delhi High Court for expanding judicial infrastructure. "In view of the impending general elections, we grant time till June 15, 2024 to elections, we grant time till june 15, 2024 to vacate the premises so that land allotted to expand the district judiciary's footprint can be utilised on an expeditious basis," a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India DX. Chandrachud observed. The court asked the AAP to approach the Land and Development Office for allotment of land for its offices.

Arvind Kejriwal skips eighth summons by ED in excise case

Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Monday skipped the eighth summons by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to appear before the agency. Mr. Kejriwal, however, agreed to appear before the agency virtually on any date after March 12. The ED had summoned Mr. Kejriwal on Monday in relation to a money laundering probe in the Delhi excise policy case. ED sources, however, said they had no provisions for doing a virtual hearing. Mr. Kejriwal has repeatedly skipped the summons by the agency stating that they were illegal, unfair, and politically motivated. AAP leaders have alleged that the Centre was using the ED as a political tool to intimidate the Opposition.

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Across

- Live coverage of break during IPL, is it New York? (3,5) 5 American central bank admitted the statute is defective (6)
- 10 Jesus! I enjoy being outside (7)

ÇM CON

11 Time consuming, it's about a country in Africa (7)

Govt. employees protest against promotion delay

They threaten to stage a 'non-cooperation movement' if an expedited decision is not taken regarding their promotions and the Union government does not 'wake up from its deep slumber'

Vijaita Singh NEW DELHI

mployees of the Un-ion government have threatened a non-cooperation move ment" if an expedited deci-sion is not taken regarding their promotions and the "government does not wake up from its deep slumber".

The officials said that many employees suffer stagnation in their careers

stamation turners and their careers and financial losses in pen-sion as they retire without getting promoted. Over 100 Central Secre-tariat Service (CSS) officials on Monday took out a peace march at Raisina Hill, where the Prime Mi-nister's Office and several Ministrics such as Home and Defence are located, to mark their protest. A cadre review commit-A cadre review commit-tee (CRC) constituted in 2022 is yet to submit its findings. The committee is headed by officials of the

Department of Personnel view committee on Octob-

Uttarakhand Cabinet nod for Ordinance to recover damage cost

Those found guilty

a fine of up to ₹8

recovery amount

will also have to pay

lakh apart from the

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Uttarakhand Cabinet on Monday approved an Ordinance for the recovery of the cost of damage public property during riots and protests from those involved.

The government has al-so formed a tribunal which will assess the cost of the

the violence. "With the aim of strictly curbing the cases of riots and unrest, the Cabinet has approved the constitution of a Spe-cial Tribunal. The damage caused to public property during the riots will be compensated by the rio-ters themselves. Those who disturb the peace of the State will have to pay a heavy price," Chief Minis-ter Pushkar Singh Dhami wrote on X. will assess the cost ot the damage. Those found guilty will also have to pay a fine of up to ₹8 lakh apart from the recovery amount. It will be used to pay for the expens-es incurred on riot control.

Heavy price The Cabinet nod to the Ut-tarakhand Public (Governwrote on X. A government communique said that in addition to the compensation, the rioters will also have to pay for the treatment of those ment) and Recovery of Damage to Private Property (Ordinance) Act 2024, comes less than a month comes less than a month after violence broke out in Haldwani's Banbhoolpura after the civic body demol-ished an illegal madrasa and mazar built on *Nazool* (owned by government) land. Five people were killed and 100 injured in

heart (5)

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23 24

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Down

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get across to our crossword site. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

12 Kannada or Tamil, some of it comes straight from the

Reform over masters' admission in old college (4,5)

Miss Turner fills up gas and gets something to eat (7)

13 Gather under cover, one goes for duck (9)

Beer bottles - dispatch a messenger (7)

26 Secure around a governor (6)
27 She goes into a depression, he follows (8)

Increase pressure and work on stone (9)

Testing ground for holy bishops (5,9) Placed right inside for a land owner (5)

Departs, having taken a chance with disease (8) Repeated refusal to come down from paradise (14) Bird modulates voice (9)

Countrymen face terrorists hiding real bomb (8)

Cat creates some problem in the shop (8) Man follows law, I suffer pain (6)

22 Hot stuff comes up during a team game (5)

Select range, erect on all sides of the road (6)

Defect is not with the make up (3,5)

Stop supporting bus conductor (6) 26 no alternative to rule (6)

Go on line by coincidence (12)

Fight to catch river fish (5)

18 Served rivals who became tyrants (5.7)



and Training (DoPT). "The CSS forum has pursued the matter at ev-ery level, however, we are yet to receive any positive outcome from the govern-ment with CSS officers who are considered as back-bone of Central govern-ment is very visappointing and frustrating," the forum said in a letter sent to the said in a letter sent to the

Secretary, DoPT. It said the government had constituted a cadre re-

power, which is also ham-pering official work. There is also stagnation in almost each grade of CSS due to which officers are dis-tressed and dismayed," the forum said. The forum has decided to take out a series of prot-est marches in the next few days. each grade of CSS du er 27, 2022 to assess the ris-ing demand for manpower across various Ministries and departments in view of a growing number of schemes and projects of the Government of India and to suggest the steps for better cadre management and smooth career pro-27 2022 to assess the ris

est marches in the next few days. "We will start a non-cooperation movement if the government does not act. We will only work dur-ing the official hours, 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., and will not put in any actre hours. and smooth career pro-gression of CSS officials. "As per information available with us, the deliberations of the committee have been completed long ago. However, the matter is still pending with the gonot put in any extra hours as we do on a usual basis," one of the members of the forum said.

Tired of spam or fraud calls? File a plaint on Chakshu

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Department of Tele-communications (DoT) on Monday launched Chakshu, a platform for te-lecom users to report fraud or spam callers. The facili-ty, available at sanchar-saathi.govin/sfc, will allow citizens to 'mroactively recitizens to "proactively re-port suspected fraud com-munication", the DoT said in its announcement. The platform will allow

In its announcement. The platform will allow users to report frauds relat-ed to bank account, pay-ment wallet, SIM, gas con-nection, electricity connection, KYC update, expiry, deactivation, im-personation as govern-ment official or relative, and sectoritor. The Digital Intelligence Platform was also launched, which would be a non-public data-sharing resource for "Telecom Ser-vice Providers, law enfor-cement agencies, banks and financial institutions, social media platforms.

social media platforms, identity document issuing authorities, and so on", the DoT said.

Ashwini Vaishnaw

cations and Electronics & Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw also supported Caller Name supported Caller Name Presentation (CNAP), a fea-ture that would allow tele-com users who opt for the service to view the regis-tered name of everyone calling them. Telecom firms and some civil socie-ty groups had warned that it would adversely impact people's privacy rights. Mr. Vaishnaw likened the feature to the right to know who was knocking at

know who was knocking at the door but added that recommendations favouring CNAP's introduction by the Telecom Regulatory Auth-ority of India would be re-viewed in detail before further steps are taken.

Submit report on gang rape

of Spanish

The Hindu Bureau PATNA

The Iharkhand High Court

on Monday took suo motu cognisance of the gang

rape of a Spanish woman in the State on Friday night. A Division Bench led

In the black off rithed night. A Division Bench led by Acting Chief Justice S. Chandrashekhar sought a report from Jharkhand's Chief Secretary and Direc-tor-General of Police (OGP), as well as the Supe-rintendent of Police (SP) of Dumka district, where the incident took place. The next hearing is scheduled on Thursday. The court staid, "The in-cident of crime of any kind against a foreign national

against a foreign national may have serious national

and international reper-

cussions including impact

cussions including impact-ing the tourism economy of the country. A sex-relat-ed crime against a foreign woman is likely to bring ad-verse publicity against the country and thereby tar-nishing the image of India across the globe." The police said three pe-ople had been arrested.

woman: HC

Minister for Communi-

Hundreds of govt. officials to be mobilised for Modi's rally

vernment. As per informa-tion available with us, at least 20 government de-partments have sent requi-sitions for more than 2,500 additional posts. The sum

additional posts. The num-ber will be huge if the data

of all the departments are to be considered. Due to

the delay in the submission

of the report of CRC, these

departments are crippled due to shortage of man-power, which is also ham-

Peerzada Ashiq SRINAGAR

Corporation, Integrated Child Development Servic-es, Directorate of Youth Services & Sports, Nehru Yuva Kendra, J&K Khadi

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★公公

nt in Srinagar

tending the rally strictly ensure that vehitending the rally. "Security agencies even sought details of spouses and family members and asked if they had any links with militants," one em-ployee said on the condi-tion of anonymity. A teacher from the Edu-cation Denartment in Sristrictly ensure that vehi-cles allotted to their res-pective sectors shall only be utilised at respective identified pickup loca-tions, keeping in view of the security measures. No alteration shall be enter-tained in the list of partici-pants, Vehicle Nodal Per-sons, allotted vehicles," an acation Department in Sri-nagar expressed ignorance about their requirement at the venue. Official sources

official circular read. One list, accessed by *The Hindu*, suggested that around 7,000 emsaid they will be picked up before the sunrise for the venue. "We have been asked to

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 $\begin{array}{c} \mbox{Solution to yesterday's Solution} \\ \hline 3 & 1 & 7 & 8 & 5 & 2 & 4 & 9 & 6 \\ \hline 4 & 5 & 9 & 6 & 3 & 7 & 1 & 2 & 8 \\ \hline 2 & 8 & 6 & 9 & 1 & 4 & 7 & 3 & 5 \\ \hline 9 & 6 & 8 & 5 & 7 & 3 & 2 & 1 & 4 \\ \hline 9 & 6 & 8 & 5 & 7 & 3 & 2 & 1 & 4 \\ \hline 9 & 6 & 8 & 5 & 0 & 8 & 7 & 3 \\ \hline 7 & 3 & 2 & 1 & 4 & 8 & 6 & 5 & 9 \\ \hline 1 & 2 & 4 & 3 & 6 & 5 & 9 & 8 & 7 \\ \hline 1 & 2 & 4 & 3 & 6 & 5 & 9 & 8 & 7 \\ \hline 8 & 7 & 3 & 4 & 2 & 9 & 5 & 6 & 1 \\ \hline \end{array}$

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that around 7,000 em-ployees from 13 depart-ments will attend the Prime Minister's rally. A massive security clea-rance initiative has been launched to carry out a background check of these government employees at-"We have been asked to arrive at school premises around 4 a.m. Except phones, no bags will be al-lowed. There is no further direction to us," another teacher said.

FAITH

Unique actions of God

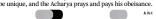
Human beings are born in this world, which is not perma-nent, but the magnum opus of Acharyas is considered as 'Aprakrutham' or 'Dhyam' or permanent. How can it be? Velukkudi sri Krishnan Swamy said in a discourse that the divine works of Acharyas show us the way to eternal bliss, which is permanent; hence, they are called 'Aprakruth-am'.

Winct is permanetary, access and an and a second se

But His deeds were not so. While everyone in the forest knew Ravana abducting

While everyone in the forest knew Ravana abducting Sri Sita, how did Lord Rama not know and was in search of Her? The bird Jatayu didn't know karma, jnana or bhaki yoga. How did the Lord grant moksha to Jatayu? When Ra-ma's arrow can pierce through seven trees and hit Vali, would it take seven days for Rama to fight with Ravana? Will anyone let his arch-trival go off granting a chance? Why did Rama ask Ravana to come the next day? As a young child, Sri Krishna feigned to be tied up by the rope tethered with a mortar by Yasodha. How could a seven-year-old boy lift the Govardhana hills?

Sri Koorathazhwan says whatever God undertakes will be unique, and the Acharya prays and pays his obeisance.



for the treatment of those injured in the violence. Apart from this, the en-tire expense incurred dur-ing the riots on the police, administration or other agencies for riot control will also be recovered from the people involved. To solve this puzzle online

and Village Industries Board, Social Welfare, and Jal Shakti. Jal Shakti. The Food Safety Depart-ment has been directed to ensure the presence of re-presentatives from 62 bak-ery shops across the city. "All Departmental/Sec-toral Nodal Officers shall

SUDOKU

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DIIITTE YENCREST

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The J&K Lieutenant-Governor's administration has made elaborate arrange-ments to mobilise hundreds of government em-ployees to attend the public rally of Prime Minis the violence. "With the ter Narendra Modi in Srinagar's Bakshi Stadium on

March 7.

March 7. Top official sources said 13 departments have been directed to send their em-ployees to the venue. These departments are Education, National Rural Livelihood Mission, Agri-culture, Rural Develop-ment Department, Handi-crafts, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Integrated

THE HINDU -SCIENCE

Big Swedish study hints at link between bowel disease, infant diet

The authors of the new study found that children who had a high intake of fish and vegetables at one year of age were at lower risk of developing Inflammatory Bowel Disease while those who had a higher intake of sugar-sweetened beverages at the same age were at higher risk

Sayantan Datta

nflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) describes disorders where the lining of the digestive tract is Inflamed. There are two types of IBD disorders: ulcerative colitis, where the large intestine and the rectum are prone to inflammation and sores, and Crohn's disease, which usually affects the small intestine.

Researchers have reported diet, age,

Researchers have reported diet, age, family history, cigarette smoking, and certain medications, among other factors, as being responsible for causing or worsening IBD. They have also said changing diet patterns of the prevalence of IBD. For example, a 2023 study in *The Lancet* attributed a higher incidence of IBD in rural Telangana to the greater availability and consumption of processed foods.

and consumption of processed foods. A diet that predicts IBD More recently, a study published in the journal *Gut* in January reported that the diet of infants as young as a year old could affect their chances of developing IBD in future. Researchers behind the study followed the dietary habits of more than 80,000 children through adolescence in Norway and Sweden as they consumed plenty of vegetables and fish in the first year of life, and were associated with a lower future risk of developing IBD. Consuming sugar-sweetened beverages in this time was associated with a higher risk of IBD, they reported. According to their analysis, at three years of age, no dietary factor other than fish intake was associated with IBD risk. The researchers suspect the developing gut microbiome may be at the heart of the apparent age-dependent relationship of dietary turka wal IBD

age-dependent relationship of dietary intake and IBD.

The gut microbiome comprises a vast number and types of micro-organisms that live in the human gut. According to the authors of the *Gut* paper, it changes significantly through the first year and stabilises by the time the infant is two to three years old.

ABIS and MoBa database

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ABIS and MoBa databases Ashwin Anamhakrishnan, a gastroenterologist at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, suggested in an article accompanying the paper that infants may benefit from a "preventive" diet that includes "adequate dietary fibre, particularly from fruit and vegetables", "intake of fish", a minimal amount of sugarsweetened beverages, and a preference of "fresh over processed and ultra-processed foods and snacks". The authors of the *Gut* paper, led by doctoral student Annie Guo from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden,

University of Gothenburg, Sweden, tracked participants from two large-scale databases: All Babies in Southeast Sweden

hacket participants from two targescate databases: All Babies in Southeast Sweden (ABIS) and Norwegian Mother, Father and Child Cohort (MoBa). Both databases use questionnaires to document a child's upbringing and lifestyle, including diets. ABIS records data from children born in southeast Sweden from October 1997 to October 1999. MoBa recruited pregnant women throughout Norway from 1999 to 2008. Together, the researchers had a cohort of 81,280 children, of which roughly half were female. They found an IBD incidence rate of 32 per 100,000 person-years in the ABIS database and 22 per 100,000 person years in the MoBa

per 100,000 person years in the MoBa database. (If 1,000 people participated in a study for one year, the study is said to have 1,000 person-years of data.)

Statistical prediction of IBD risk

To test whether an early-life diet correlated with later incidence of IBD, the To test whether an early-lue diet correlated with later incidence of IBD, the authors collated data of the children's dietary habits at 1.5. years and 2.5.3 years of age from the two databases. They assigned a score to the diet quality, and recorded the frequency of intake of nine food categories: dairy, isñ, truits, grains, ugar-sweetened beverages, and vegetables. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, fish, and eggs was seen to comprise "healthy food groups". A diet had "unhealthy foods" if it was rich in "sally snacks and sweet snacks". In their analyses, the researchers used a statistical test to check whether a child's early-life dietary intake could also predict

early-life dietary intake could also predict later IBD risk

The analysis was adjusted to account In earlarysis was adjusted to account for several factors implicated in the past as causes of IBD, including parental history of IBD, early-life antibiotic exposure, and intake of formula food in the first year.

The effect of fish **CM** YK



The researchers also excluded from their final analysis data from children who were diagnosed with IBD at less than six years of age because such a case "often constitutes a highly genetically determined subtype of IBD", they wrote in their paper.

in their paper. The authors found that children who had a high intake of fish and vegetables at one year of age were at lower risk of developing IBD while those who had a higher intake of sugar-sweetened

beverages at the same age were at higher risk At three years, fish intake was the only dietary predictor of IBD: a high intake correlated with a lower risk. The authors speculate, "The content of poly-unsaturated fatty acids or vitamin D in fish may be of special importance for

IBD." This is because, they add, previous studies on adults have observed that higher intake of PUFAs and Vitamin D are associated with lower risk of ulcerative colitis and Crohr's disease respectively. According to the authors, the study's strength lies in being the first to "preparedrukni insurgient the according

"prospectively investigate the association between early-life diet quality and intake frequency of specific food groups and later IBD risk".

Not readily generalisable

The probability of a child developing IBD may be the result of their dietary intake and their socioeconomic status which could affect their diet and exposure to toxins

Guo et al.'s study as is, such studies in India must also account for nutritional deficiencies and dormant infections that participants aren't regularly screened for. For example, activist groups have raised concerns about the Indian government's distribution of iron-fortified rice that has allowed waverbated

rice that has allegedly exacerbated

dormant tuberculosis in tribal populations in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

complications from undiagnosed sickle-cell anaemia, thalassaemia, and

Dr. Karpagam also suggested studies on IBD focus not on diet alone but on "multiple factors that interplay with and aggravate each other".

aggravate each other". For example, she mentioned that the For example, she mentioned that the probability of a child developing IBD later in their life may be the result of their dietary intake and of their socioeconomic status, which could affect their diet and exposure to toxins, duration of breastfeeding, and their likelihood of consuming junk foods. "These confounding variables are not taken into account and one variable gets highlighted," she said.

editorial that the study didn't account for additives and emulsifiers common in baby

Charging the Composition of the gar microbiome. Dr. Karpagam said "individual foods cannot be blanket-classified in a context of IBD." For example, she said, "some people with IBD show improvement with whole milk" While others deteriorate. Fruits and vegetables are high in dietary fibre and a high-fibre diet is implicated in IBD development and aggravation, she added. A 2021 review found that while several studies demonstrate the benefit of

high-fibre diets for people with IBD, other studies show "fibre intake prior to developing IBD [to be] linked to risk of disease."

disease"." Dr. Karpagam also advised against a "preventive" diet like what Dr. Ananthakrishnan proposed. One reason is the Gut study's use of secondary data – Le. data collected by a different researcher and not specifically for the purpose of studying the relationship between early-life diet and later development of IBD. Such data may be less qualitatively suited for a specific analysis than that collected for the purpose.

purpose. Instead, she suggested a clinical trial that could systematically follow a group of pregnant women and their infants over a period of time to study "what variables are associated with the development of

*Especially with conditions like IBD,

"Especially with conditions like IBD, which have been shown to be aggravated by multiple triggers and their interactions with each other, interventions that provide one or the other foods or eliminate one or the other would not be advisable; she added. (Sayantan Datta is a science journalist and a faculty member at Krea University. The writer tweets at @queersprings)

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studies demonstrate the benefit of

A 'preventive' diet for infants Dr. Ananthakrishnan also wrote in his

These compounds have been implicated in accelerating IBD by changing the composition of the gut microbiome.

foods

disease

IBD"

That said, Ms. Guo, the lead author, told this reporter that "since diet and other lifestyle habits may be strongly influenced by factors such as country of living and cultural differences, our findings should current at uniferences, our findings should be replicated in other settings before we can generalise the results to other parts of the world."

the world." In their paper, the team added that since the study's sample came from two high-income countries, the results may not be readily generalisable to low- and middle-income countries. Researchers know the composition of the gut microbiome composition – an imbalance of which is implicated in IBD -varies between different generathical

varies between different geographical locations and between different ethnic groups in the same area.

However, Sylvia Karpagam, a public health doctor and researcher, told this writer that instead of exactly replicating



A high intake of fish reduced the chances of developing IBD. GETTY IMAGES



The study finds 80% of the human exposure to heat stress in India can be avoided by adherin the Paris Agreement. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

'3 degrees to year-long droughts in Himalayas'

Press Trust of India

About 90% of the Himalayan region will

About 90% of the Himalayan region will experience drought lasting over a year if the world warms by 3 degrees C, according to anew research. The findings, published in the journal *Climatic Change*, show 80% of the increased human exposure to heat stress in India can be avoided by adhering to the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees C. Researchers at the University of East Anglia (UEA) in the U.K. quantified how risks to human and natural systems increase at a national scale as the level of global warming increases. A collection of eight studies – focusing on India, Brazil, Chima, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Ghana – found the risks of drought, flooding, declines in corp yields, and loss of biodiversity and natural capital greatly increase for each additional degree of warming.

warming. It added that in India, pollination was reduced that in india, pointation was reduction by a quarter at 1.5 degrees. The team also reported large increases

in the exposure of agricultural land to drought with 3 degrees of warming: more than 50% of the agricultural land in each of the countries was projected to be exposed to severe droughts longer than a

More efforts are required to reduce global warming since the policies already in place worldwide are likely to result in warming by 3 degrees C

year over a 30-year period. Economic damages associated with sea-level rise were also projected to increase in coastal nations, but more slowly if warming was limited to 1.5 degrees C. The researchers said more efforts are

required to reduce global warming since the policies already in place worldwide are likely to result in warming by 3

are likely to result in warming by 3 degrees C. One paper explored the risks to plants and vertebrates due to increases in global warming while another developed a new natural capital risk register for each of the six countries, including projected changes in risks stemming from future human population changes. Their results in combination showed that many areas in the six countries are

that many areas in the six countries are already at high natural capital risk at 1.5 degrees C once the effects of higher human population are accounted for.

'The results presented in this collection confirm the need for the implementation of climate policies aligned to the Paris Agreement limits if widespread and escalating climate change risk is to be avoided," said Prof. Rachel Warren of the UEA and lead author of the

Warren of the UEA and lead author of the study, "They provide additional confirmation of the rapid escalation of climate change risks with global warming found in the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change 2022 report, which identifies how the risk of severe consequences increases with every additional increment of global warming," Prof. Warren said. Although these studies focus on the risks to six countries only, other nations

risks to six countries only, other nations are projected to experience similar issues, the researchers added.



THE HINDU -Editorial



8

Tepid trade-offs

World Trade Organization continues to struggle to foster free and fair trade

he latest meeting of the World Trade Or-ganization's (WTO) apex decision-making body concluded late on Friday with precious little progress on key issues that affect glo-bal trade, despite extending deliberations by a day. To be clear, hopes for any significant out-comes from the 13th Ministerial Conference comes from the 13th Ministerial Conterence (MC3) in Abu Dhabi vere not high to begin with. Yet, this was an important moment for the WTO to deliver on its mandate amid an increasingly fractious environment for the very rules of trade it seeks to enforce. The intervening period has delivered significant shocks to the global trading architecture such as the ripple effects of conflicts in some parts of the world, the disruptions on tritical shipment routes that are expected to lin-ger for long, and recalibrations in supply chains to reduce dependence on single suppliers such as China. An increasing inward-looking tendency among nations has also catalysed isolationist, ta-riffheavy trade policies that run adrift of the benefit of all. The Abu Dhabi declaration does refer to some of the challenges, such as the need to en-sure open, inclusive and resilient supply chains, but there is little of substance beyond lip service. Divergences between the WTO's 164 nember-countries persisted on most issues carried for ward from Geneea (MC2), nutuduing areas of par (MC13) in Abu Dhabi were not high to begin with

Divergences between the W10's loc4 member-countries persisted on most issues carried for-ward from Geneva (MC22), including areas of par-ticular interest to India, such as a permanent so-lution in agriculture for public stock holding to ensure domestic food security or subsidies to the fisheries sector. The WTO Director-General, Ngo-il Okonjo-lweala, has noted that the agriculture deliberations, in the works for over two decades now, have made some progress as there is finally a text to work with that the body will strive to clinch in future parleys. The exemption from cus-toms duties for e-commerce, that India had sought an end to, citing the adverse impact on countries' revenues, will now carry on for at least two more years. Commerce Minister Physich Goyal has manced this outcome stating that In-dia is "not necessarily" fully opposed to them. Prospects for the resuscitation of WTO's dispute resolution body, rendered defunct for four years, remain bleak, though the Ceneva commitment to remain bleak, though the Geneva commitment to revive the vital body by 2024 was reiterated. A key win for India at the MCI3 was its successful efkey win for India at the MC3 was its successful ef-forts with South Africa to thwart an attempt that was led by China and backed by over 120 coun-ries, to introduce an investment facilitation pact into the WTO framework. Going forward, India will have to redouble efforts to retain policy space for sensitive sectors, especially farms. The WTO itself must do much more to stay relevant in an increasingly polarised world. That members find it convenient to tour its failed biennial meet-ings a successes is a sad commentary on its wan-ing efficacy.

What's in a surname?

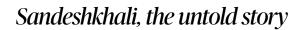
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Women should not be tied to the name of their husbands

n the quest for equal rights for women in all spheres of life, every act that justifies hierar-chy, othering, and a partiarchal mindset must be shunned totally. Seeking the right to choose her own identity, Ms. Divya Modi Tongya, had petitioned the Delhi High Court that she be Chrose He fown length, also, brygt adolf Toliggy, had petitioned then Delhi High Court that she be allowed to revert to her maiden name after her running into a barrier in the form of a govern-ment notification which said a married woman who wants to use her maiden name after divorce unst either furnish divorce papers or a no-objec-tion certificate from her husband. The Delhi High Court has sough the Union government's res-ponse by May 28, the next date of hearing. In her lea, Ms. Modi Tongya states that the notification is "gender biased" and creates unnecessary res-trictions for women who seek to exercise their constitutional right to choose their name – in her case a change of surname – by violating Articles 4, 19 and 21. The very idea of an NOC is objec-tionable, divorce proceedings orn, and is re-fective of a deep-seated misogny that wants to flective of a deep-seated misogyny that wants to control an individual's preference. Ms. Modi Tongya should be able to choose whichever surname she is comfortable with and not have to fight for

Women have often complained of harassment when they have taken the path less trodden. For instance, women who have decided not to opt for their husband's surname after marriage face a barrage of unnecessary questions and a moun-tain of paperwork while, say, opening a joint bank account, or during a child's admission in school, or applying for a passport. A society that is already batting caste-based hierarchies should not add to the discrimination by giving an upper hand to anyone in a relationship, but work to wards safer spaces without gender bias, diffe-rence and humiliation. In India, the most popu-lous country in the world, stark gender disparities persist, both politically and socially. Women do most of the unpaid work at home, and are often edged out of the labour force for various reasons. What a gift or a woman can – and cam-not – do, is often laid down by the men in the fa-bity; sometimes women to caxquiesce to such in mily; sometimes women to acquiesce to such in Women have often complained of harassmen not – do, is often lad down by the filer in the fa-mily; sometimes women too acquiesce to such in-dignities in the name of tradition. The United Nations has said that the greatest human rights challenge in the world right now is achieving genchallenge in the world right now is achieving gen-der equality and empowering women and girls. Paying lip service to rhetoric that women are equal without effecting change on the ground with legislative backing and strong social frame-works defeats the purpose.

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here are two routes to Sandeshkhali in West Bengal. One takes you through a Hindu-Muslim divide. The other

• These heights that is a specific the other through the acquisition-deprivation divide. Both stories are compelling and powerful. In the first story, the name of the villarities the other story fits into the long take of Muslim attacks on the hapless Hindu whenever and wherever the Hindu is weak or in a minority, be it in Bangdadesh, Pakistan or places such as Sandeshkhali. The strength of this say are interesting a weak for a matrix the that has gained traction in West Bengal in recent years, restoring the festering wounds of Partition. The problem is that in Sandeshkhali the story is not only partial but also false. The immediate only partial but also false. The immediate perpetrators of alleged crimes against women here are Uttam Sardar and Shibaprasad Hazra, both non-Muslims. The third is Ajit Maity, whom the villagers of Sandeshkhali attacked last week.

the villagers of Sandeshkhali attacked last week. Under public pressure, Mamata Banerjee's police arrested all three men, though Sheikh was absconding. That he had been spared for so long helped to feed the allegation of Ms. Banerjee's Muslim 'appeasement' with an eye to the forthcoming elections. Hindus are all but in 'minority' in both Sandeshkhali blocks: 70% in one and 77% in the other, mostly belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

A crisis of governance Rather than a Hindu-Muslim strife, Sandeshkhali guintessentially reflects the crisis of Mamata Banerjee's model of governance. Unlike in many other States where people form collectives around caste, rinbal, inguistic or religious identifies, in West Bengal's post-Partition strife for life and livelihood, people clung to different political parties for both protection and rowisions provisions.

pointicing parties for both protection and provisions. During the long rule of the Left Front, due to the well-coordinated structure of the hegemonic CPI(M), partisan affiliations of individuals and groups got further reinforced in offering the master key to enter public life. Party affiliation gave people an identity which, in turn, created a fusion called party-society. In the twilight years of the Left Front, the educated middle class party leaders were slowly but steadily getting replaced at the grassroots by enterprising individuals representing either relatively well-off farmers or those running small trade and businesses. With the Left Front Selfeat, the most ambitious of these local political managers changed sides and

an apt example of franchisee politics, told through two compelling and powerful narratives

Sandeshkhali i

<u>Dwaipayan</u> Bhattacharyya is Professor at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

joined the Trinamool Congress (TMC). Ms. Banerjee realised early on that although she had to work with party society, she could nor run a government the CP(00 way. In her party, she alone drew universal authority without any stable hierarchy of command. She compensated for this in a three-pronged manner. She brought some key bureaucrast and police officers, irrespective of their rankings, under her direct command and placed her faith in them over party workers. She befriended ethnic, caste and religious community leaders, and inducted them in the party. Moreover, she extended protection to the local party chieftains to expand their dubious businesses in lieu of complete personal loyalty. These enterprising political managers loyalty. These enterprising political managers were quick to leverage their political power – in cahoots with the local administration and police for usurping as much profit as possible from legal and illegal businesses involving land, forest legal and ulegal businesses involving and, torest, sand, coal, fisheries, foodgrains and siphoning off cash from various government schemes and contracts. Most of these people are from relatively rich peasant households who earlier lost land due to the Left Front's land reforms but eventually were positioned in places of power – first in the CPI(M) and thereafter in the TMC. With Unevelopment to business of the lands of the lands

first in the CPI(M) and thereafter in the TMC. With West Bengal's steady industrial decline, these enterprising individuals are now the main employers in the informal economy. Such a combination of power and profit has created cronyism of small capital in West Bengal's vast washts of rural and semi-urban settlements. These micro-appropriators and also political leaders cash in on Ms. Banerjee's popularity for running personal fieldoms. They eliminate all possible challenges to their local power and prosperity, routinely forcing Opposition parties to withdraw their candidates in the panchayat elections.

elections. The TMC embodies such a two-way flow of The TMC embodies such a two-way flow of might and money spread over "leased out" zoness of control and command to its key players. Note, the structure primarily stands on absolute material gains and uses people's vague faith in Did's good intentions' as its moral hinge. In a long essay, I have called it "franchisee politics" ("Of Collaboration and Conflict: Manta Banerjee and the Making of "Franchisee Politics" in West Bengal", *Economic & Political Weekly (EPW)*, September 9, 2023).

The essence of Sandeshkhali Sandeshkhali is an apt example of franchisee politics. The crisis sparked off when the

Reports also suggest that the two countries are

discussing cooperation in sensitive areas that cannot be disclosed, with Mr. Putin also offering

technical support for the development of spy satellites (a feat that North Korea has been aiming

Enforcement Directorea (ED) officers went to Sheikh Shahjahari ya house. They were attacked by the locals. Sheven journalists were not spared. For the locals, Sheikh is a patron-provider of their livelihood. Sheikh's name surfaced during an investigation of a Public Distribution System (PDS) scam in which a large amount of foodgrains was allegedly siphoned off to the open market. In October, the ED arrested Jyotopriya Mallick, former Minister of Food and Supplies in Ms. Banerjee's gyoerment. Sheikh reported to him. While Mallick ran his fieldiom over North 24 Pargatas district, he' sub let' the two blocks of Sandeshkhail Block-II to Shibu Hazra. Hazra 'sub let' Sandeshkhail Block-II to Shibu Hazra. Enforcement Directorate (ED) officers went to Hazra 'sub let' Sandeshkhali Gram Panchayat to Uttam Sardar. A clear chain of profit and power was drawn, which constitutes the lifeblood of the TMC.

When the chain snapped Why did the chain snap? It snapped because the

When the chain snapped Why did the chain snapp its snapped because the equation flipped with Mallick's arrest and Shelk's absence from the scene. As the media focused on Sandeshkhall, the locals found enough courage to open their mouths. They made two specific allegations: that the TMC leaders like Hazra and Sardar ellegally seized their farmland and turned them into private fisheries without any compensation. And the TMC workers routinely called women from the village to the party office late in the night and sexually abused them. The first is a classic case of the reversal of land reforms in which the Left Front in the late 1970s and early 1980s had distributed privately held agricultural land above a fised amount among the landless and the land-poor peasants. The second is a typical demonstration of monstrous masculine power by activists of a monstrous masculine power by activists of a political party bereft of any binding ideological-moral discipline.

Predictably, the TMC now attempts to distance itself from the Sheikh, Hazra and Sardar. And the itself from the Sheikh, Hazra and Sardar. And the Bharatiya Janata Party is on an overdrive to paint it as exploitation of Hindu women by Muslim goons. With the party's massive occupation of the Opposition space in Bengai today, it may find fertile ground to further polarise the turf in the days ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. Yet, the untold story of Sandeshkhali is one of the usurpation of absolute power to misappropriate property from the poor in a reversal of land reforms and rejection of local democracy by an emergent class of rural rich, pampered and promoted by the Trinamool Congress.

Korea-Russia border, pointing to North Korea's

The American factor Among other factors contributing to this rapprochement is the shared challenge posed by the United States and its allies in the region. North Korea and Russia have faced varying degrees of strain in their relations with the West, prompting a pragmatic recalibration of their foreign policy priorities. Moscow perceives engagement with North Korea as a means to influence the broader security landscape in northeast Asia. The diplomatic initiatives undertaken by Russia, often in collaboration with China, underscore a desire to shape regional security architecture independently of western influence. The North Korean Foreign Minister, Choe Son-hui, observed in October 2023 that powerful

architecture independently of westerin influence. The North Korean Foreign Minister, Choe Son-hui, observed in October 2023 that powerful ties between Moscow and Pyongyang could potentially offset the U.S.-led efforts of a strong alliance between Washington, Tokyo and Seoul. Developments in 2023, and indication' of biateral ties between Russia and North Korea, with both countries having found instinctive collaborators in each other. This partnership, forged amid common challenges and shared strategic objectives, has far-reaching implications for regional stability and global geopolitics. As both nations deepen their engagement and cooperation across various sectors, their relationship is likely to exert a significant influence on the dynamics of the Korean Peninsula and the broader northeast Asian region. As such, Russia-North Korean

represent a notable development in the geopolitical landscape, with ramifications that extend beyond the immediate bilateral

transfers of ammunition to Russia.

The American factor

The quick transformation of Russia-North Korea ties

discu

n the middle of a series of actions that are uelling tensions in the Korean penins ncluding the abandoning of the

Including the abandoning of the decades-long unification goal with Seoul, Pyongyang is quickly deepening its ties with Russia. The pace and the depth appear to have gained momentum since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 which led to a strain in most of Moscow's international dies. It gathered further fuel during the visit, in July 2023, of a delegation from Russia led by Russian Defence Minister Sergiei Shoigu to Pyongyang, which was followed soon after by North Korean leader Kim Jong-ur's subsequent visit to Moscow in September 2023. The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, is expected to visit Pyongyang once again in 2024, with both countries preparing for a summit

expected to visit Pyongyang once again in 2024, with both countries preparing for a summit between the two leaders where "very good" deals are expected to be signed. With 2023 having been a year in which bilateral ties were fast-tracked, Russia's Ambassador to North Korea, Alexander Mategora, anticipates 2024 to be a breakthrough year for the two countries. Just last month, Mr. Putin gifted the North Korean leader a luxury Russian-made car, a type that is used by Mr. Putin himself. himcolf

Warming ties, greater collaboration While historically, the two nations maintained diplomatic ties during the Cold War era, largely driven by shared ideological affinities as communist states, relations between Moscow and Pyongyang experienced fluctuations as the geopolitical landscape shifted. In recent years, there has been a noticeable warming of ties between Russia and North Korea, manifesting itself in diplomatic engagements and strategic collaborations, with Pyongyang emerging as a key collaborations, with Pyongyang emerging as a key arms, munitions, artillery shells and another conventional weaponry supplier to Moscow during the ongoing Ukraine crisis.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

private. These can be ascertained only through more information on the candidates and their mode of activities being put out in the public domain. The ECI's directives often appear to infringe on this absolutely personal right of voters to select a candidate on any count of her/his Campaign and conduct The Election Commission of India (ECI) advisory to political parties, asking leaders not to reach out to voters on the basis of "appealing to castes, raising communal cassions and communal passions and religious symbols, raking up personal issues, vilifying women and peddling half-truths' is a case of on any count of her/his (voter's) choice. half-truths' is a case of closing one's eyes to the true position. How caste, community and religion play out in all areas in public life, including politics, is well known. People want their representatives to be of good character and integrity, both in public and P.R.V. Raja, Pandalam, Kerala The ECI appears to be losing its impartiality and freedom under the current administration. The recent surge in the 'integration of' religion into the political landscape, notably

Harsh V. Pant

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amid common challenges and shared strategic objectives

> amplified by the inauguration of the Ram Temple, is a matter of great concern. The exponential increase in temple visits by certain leaders and the extensive coverage provided by electronic media in this regard only accentuate this issue. issue. The intertwining of religion with politics poses a potential threat to the fairness and the integrity of

taimess and the integrity of the Lok Sabha election. As the custodian of electoral integrity, the ECI must enforce measures to maintain a level playing field for all political parties. N. Nagarajan, Secunderabad

Political long jump It is the right of any political party or alliance to wish to return to power but the Bharatiya Janata Party has rang overbard hy

gone overboard by discussing 'a 100-day agenda for govt. after poll' (Page 1, March 4). It is amusing and ridiculous and it appears to be subjecting the Opposition INDIA bloc the Opposition INDIA bloc to some sort of psychological political pressure. On what basis is the BJP so confident? Is it going to adopt malpractices using EVMs or are we going to see Chandigah mayoral election-like situations? The electorate will exercise its mind and choice at the

A. Jainulabdeen

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in a big way. Depending on the Cauvery alone is unlikely to meet the needs of an ever-burgeoning city ('Ground Zero' page, March

H.N. Ramakrishna,

Bengaluru is no longer a garden city. The metropolis is another instance of poor urbanisation — like Chennai — where water bodies have been lost.

V.M. Mahendran, Chennai

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



This is a

Pratnashree Basu is an Associate Fellow Indo-Pacific, at the Observer Research Foundation

Earlier, infrastructure projects such as the Rajin-Khasan railway linking Russia to North Korea's Rajin port, underscored the tangible efforts to bolster economic cooperation.

partnership that has been forged

stellites (a feat that North Korea has been aiming for some time now). There are also talks of trilateral naval exercises with Beijing although these are unconfirmed. In February 2024, Pyongyang also welcomed the first group of tourists from Russia since the COVID-19 pandemic. For Russia, as a country that is an outcaste in world politics and yet a nuclear power, North Korea is a useful neighbour to cultivate. For North Korea, grappling with economic challenges and international sanctions, Russia has emerged as a potential saviour for development in sectors such as energy and transportation, and even in as energy and transportation, and even in addressing Pyongyang's chronic food shortages.

> The energy link Energy collaboration has also formed another Energy collaboration has also formed another crucial aspect of the partnership, Russia has been a key supplier of fuel to North Korea, and discussions have been under way to explore further cooperation in the energy sector. The mainstay of bilateral cooperation is, however, a food-for-arms agreement, evidence of which surfaced during August 2023, although both countries have not confirmed the existence of such an agreement. The utility of a deal such as this is underinable though, as Moscow needs arms to sustain its invasion of Ukraine while Pyongyang is in dire need of commodities and food. Satellite is in dire need of commodities and food. Satellite images in October 2023 tracked a significant increase in freight railcar traffic at the Tumangang rail facility located near the North

> > polling booth. The party

relationship.

India's parched IT capital

'India's parched IT capital' Bengaluru, once labelled as a pensioner's paradise and known for its alubrious climate, is no longer so. The city receives rain that is in no way insignificant, and every drop needs to be conserved. Bengaluru is a classic example of how humans have extinguished access to a life-sustaining commodity. The

access to a life-sustaining commodity. The government and the Army, with vast land holdings in and around the city, should adopt rainwater harvesting

A vaccine that prevents six cancers

outlines a 90-70-90 triple pillar

anuary was observed as Anuary was observed as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. Additionally, every year, March 4 is observed as International HPV Awareness Day.

International HPV Awareness Day, Protecting women's health includes protecting the cervix, the lower-most part of the uterus. With HPV vaccination, we can prevent cervical cancers that can seriously affect a woman's health. As the fourth most common cancer arong women wordbuilde cancer among women worldwide, cervical cancer claims the lives of more than 3,00,000 women every year, or one life every two minutes. Nine out of 10 women dying of cervical cancer live in lower- and middle-income countries. In India, cervical cancer is the second most common cancer after breast cancer. Given the country's population size, about 500 million women above the age of 15 are at risk of cervical cancer. If there is no action taken, the number of cases and deaths from cervical cancer are projected to rise significantly in the future. With the current population growth rate, the absolute number of new cases of cervical cancer for growth rate, the absolute number of new cases of cervical cancer for increase of 54% over the number cancer after breast cancer. Given increase of 54% over the number of new cases reported in 2020.

Strategies for prevention It was in 1983 that German scientist Harald zur Hausen scientist Harald zur Hausen demonstrated that cervical cancer in humans is caused by certain types of papilloma viruses (wart viruses). Knowledge of HPV epidemiology and its role in causation of cancer has resulted in the development of two major strategies for prevention and early detection: HPV vaccination and screening for precancerous screening for precancerous lesions. Although elimination of cervical cancer is a real possibility, the tragedy is that even today, many lower-resourced communities lack effective intervention programmes for elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem. The World Health Organization's strategy



outlines a 90-70-90 triple pillar intervention to be implemented by 2030 with an additional focus on high-quality health care sarvices. The intervention targets are: 90% of girls must be fully vaccinated with the HPV vaccine by the age of 15, 70% of women must be screened using a high-performance screening test by the age of 35 and again by 45; and 90% of women detected with cervical pre-cancer and cancer lesions must receive

and cancer lesions must receive treatment and care. A recent report titled 'Accelerating global health pathways: to health equity for the G20' highlighted the commitment is President, IAP 2023 of India's G20 presidency to promoting equitable access to vaccines, particularly for lower promoting equinates access to vaccines, particularly for lower-and middle-income countries. The HPV vaccine was introduced in India in 2008. After sufficient country-level studies and successful State-level roll-outs, it was recommended for inclusion in the Universal Immunization Programme in 2023. An initial announcement was made in this Programme in Health Ministry in early 2023 and, recently, by the Finance Minister in her Interim Budget speech. The vaccine now awaits a national launch.

awaits a national launch. Research indicates that the HPV vaccine is not widely accessible to all girls across India. Currently, it is available in the private market at a significant out-of-pocket cost. a significant out-of-pocket cost. Many physicians underestimate the incidence and risk of cervical cancer and risk of cervical cancer and the HPV infection. Physicians also underestimate the safety and effectiveness of HPV vaccines. The lack of trust in vaccine safety and effectiveness leads to hesitation in recommending the HPV vaccine to parents of age-ellipble adolescents. Physicians may also hesitate to recommend this cancer prevention vaccination because HPV infections are primarily transmitted through intimate

HPV vaccination transmitted through intimate skin-to-skin contact. They may also feel it might be time-consuming to answer parents' questions regarding

Over 1,000 Indians crossed into U.K. illegally in 2023

The number of Indians applying for asylum in the U.K. crossed the 5,000-mark for the first time in 2023

myths and misinformation about the HPV vaccine.

Facts and best practices In support of the widely anticipated national roll-out of the HPV vaccine, the Federation of Obstertic and Gynaecological Societies of India (FOCSI) and the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP), with a combined membership of over 80,000 physicians, have joined hands to remind member remind member obstetricians-gynecologists and pediatricians about the facts of HPV vaccination and share best practices for effectively communicating with parents about this cancer-preventing vaccine. This safe and effective abort mis timic to perform year of the second secon woman above the age of 30 years. As apex national medical societies with a track record of promoting health and well being of the population, the FOGSI and IAP population, the POCSI and LAP seek to ensure that every girl grows up protected from cervical cancer through HPV vaccination and every woman is protected through regular every screening. In doing so, they are creating at least 20,000 HPV physician champitons in their cadres by mid-2024. These member physicians will share the importance of HPV vaccination among their peers and and the

among their peers and and the community at large. Physicians are the most respected leaders in society and the trusted source for health-related information. Their leadership is needed to eliminate

cervical cancer in India

In Karnataka, Congress on the defensive

But it hopes to shift focus to 'guarantee schemes' and the issue of devolution of funds

STATE OF PLAY S. Bageshree

n the heels of the Budending on a raucous note, an IED blast at the Rameshwaram Cafe in Bengaluru's IT hub has act off on rengitatehile agenetics set off a predictable narrative ahead of Lok Sabha elections.

During the Budget session the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) alleged that supporters of the Congress's Rajya Sabha winner Syed Naseer Hussain raised "Pakistan Zindabad" slogans in the corridors of the slogans in the corridors of the State Secretariat. On Monday three people were arrested in connection with the case. BJP State party president B.Y. Vi-jayendra described the blast in the cafe as an "extension" of the incident involving the al-leged slogans and blamed the "my brother" policy of the Congress government for both. Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Union Minister and BJP con-testant from Thiruvananthap-uram, also said that both were a result of the "appeasement

testant from Thirvanathrap-uram, also said that both were a result of the "appeasement politics" of the Congress. Even as the investigating agencies are yet to make a significant breakthrough in either of the cases – with the forensis science laboratory report on the audio clip awaited in the first and no arrests made yet in the second – there has been political cacophony. The Opposition has also been talking about the 'fai-lure" of the Congress govern-ment's guarantee schemes and mounting allegations of corruption. But the two recent episodes and the manner in which the BJP has seized these

episodes and the manner which the BJP has seized these opportunities to target the rul-ing party is an indication of the tenor of its Lok Sabha campaign. Its leaders' statements are in the party's com-



which is in tune with what is perceived to be the national mood after the inauguration of the Ram Mandir at Ayod-hya. The two incidents have succeeded in putting the Con-gress on the defensive, yet succeeded in putting the Con-gress on the defensive, yet again compelling it to bend backwards to "prove" that it is not "anti-Hindu." Effectively countering this narrative and bringing the discussion back to what it was hoping for in the run up to the elections is a challenge for the Congress. Besides riding on the "suc-cess" of its five guarantee schemes, the party gave a fair indication of what it is keen to focus on during its campaign, during the Budget session. Chief Minister Siddaramatah launched no-holds-barred at-tacks against the Centre over

Lauchted no-holds-barred at-tacks against the Centre over "stepmotherly treatment" in the devolution of taxes and drought relief. The Congress government went on to even pass a resolution in the As-sembly against the Union go-vernment. This led to acerbic exchanges, dharnas, and wai-kouts in the Budget session. Mr. Siddaramaiah's Budget speech and his reply to the Budget discussion were re-plete with accusations against the BJP government at the plete with accusations against the BJP government at the Centre for decreasing the State's share of devolved taxes, and gradually decreasing the grant-in-aid allocation for

centrally sponsored schemes

and forcing the State to in-

crease its share. Every time

the Opposition brought up the question of drought or fund-ing for works, the Chief Minis-ter laid the blame squarely at the door of the Centre. In early February, the State government's leadership, led by Mr. Siddaramaiah, staged a protest in New Delhi, calling it a "movement to protect the

a "movement to protect the interests of Karnataka and Kannadigas" and against the "gross injustice" of the Centre. Mr. Siddaramaiah wrote a let-ter to all the MPs of the BJP and the Janata Dal (Secular), the DIP aretice la for the Lob the BJP party's ally for the Lok Sabha polls, asking them to participate in this agitation "in the interest of Kannadigas."

the interest of Kaműadgas." Devolution of funds has re-mained a hot issue, with De-puty Chief Minister D.K. Shiva-kumar's brother and Lok Sabha member D.K. Suresh going as far as to argue that "South Indian States may be forced to demand a separate country if the Centre does not provide them with adequate funds." While this was dubbed "anti-national" by the BIP, the Congress government has Congress government has continued to make overtures related to federalism and re-gional identity, also evident in the passage in the Budget ses-sion of the Kannada Language Comprehensive Development (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which mandates 60% of text on the name boards of all busi ness and industrial establish ness and industrial establish-ments to be in Kannada in the top half. The Congress has made similar attempts in the past, including demanding that the Centre to grant official status to the 'Kannada flag'. The Lok Sabha polls are go-ing to be held in summer. Kar-nataka is reeling under a drinking water crisis and

drinking water crisis and farmers have already lost a large part of their crops. What narrative will cut ice with the voters in a such a situation remains to be seen.

FROM THE ARCHIVES The Man Kindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 5, 1974 Speaker threatens to "walk ouf"

New Delhi, March 4: The Lok Sabha to-day witnessed an unusual protest. The Speaker, Mr. G.S. Dhillon, threatened to withdraw from the House, taking exception to the disrespectful remarks against the Chair made by a senior

House, itaking exception to the dust spectrum remarks against the Chair imade by a senior Opposition member, Mr. S.N. Mishra (Cong.-O). It happened when the House was discussing the Government action in announcing outside the House the price hike of petrol, kerosene and other petroleum products, decided by the Cabinet tast Friday. The Speaker, upholding the points raised by the Opposition, chastised the Government for not taking the House into confidence on the price rise as the House had been in session till 6 p.m. that day. Mr. Mishra was not present when the Speaker, replying to points raised by some Opposition members, observed that the Government action was "improper." A few Congress members joined the Opposition in cheering the Speaker's observations. As the discussion was on, Mr. Mishra entered the House. So also, a smiling Mishra entered the House. So also, a smiling senior Minister, Mr. D.K. Barooah, apparently unaware of the anger of the Opposition. Mr. Barooah, who was coming after answering similar protests in the Rajya Sabha, explained similar protests in the Raja Sabha, explained that the price hike was to compensate for the increased food prices. The Cabinet had taken the decision at 7 p.m. and it had to be announced before midnight for administrative reasons. Opposition members again rose up to protest and the Speaker tried to end the discussion by pointing out that under the rules they could not have an immediate discussion on the Minister's statement. An angry Mr. Mishra, who had asked to when the increase in price of crude was effected, insisted on getting a reply to his point. Mr. Mishra went on to charge the Speaker with trying to protect the Government.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 5, 1924 Davis tennis cup

Washington, March 3: The draw for the Davis cup will be held at the White House on March 17th. Mr. Coolidge will draw the first number. 15 nations besides the United States will participate. Ambassadors and Ministers will draw for their respective countries. Mr. Collidge will draw for the United States and the challenger round will be played in Philadelphia early in September.

DATA POINT

and screening

lesions are two major strategies

for prevention and early

detection of

cervical and

other cancers

for precancerous

Vignesh Radhakrishnan & Jasmin Nihalani

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2023, more than 1,000 In dians risked their lives to reach the U.K. by crossing the English Channel from Europe in inflatable small boats, searching inflatable small boats, searching for jobs and seeking asylum. The number of Indians who took this dangerous journey has surged in recent years. In 2023, the number more than doubled from the pre-vious year. The share of illegal mi-grants from India aged 18:29 has shot up in recent years; they formed close to 60% of the total number of illegal indian migrants in 2023. In parallel, the number of Indians applying for asylum in the U.K. has also surged in recent U.K. has also surged in recent years, crossing the 5,000-mark for the first time in 2023. Notably, the number of Indians crossing into the U.S. illegally has also surged re-cently, with close to 1 lakh people doing so in 2023.

cently, with close to 1 lakh people doing so in 2023. The U.K. has been grappling with the problem of a sudden surge in the inflow of illegal mi-grants in recent years. There has been a notable rise in the number of asylum-seekers arriving in the U.K. by small boats from the Euro-pean mainland. Through most of 2021 and 2022, daily crossings of the perilous English Channel by thousands of migrants were re-corded. Although the number of these crossings decreased in 2023 compared with the previous two years, the incidence of such events remained substantially higher trend continues in 2024, with over 2,000 people crossing into the U.K. until February 27 this year. **Chart** 1 shows the number of In-dians who arrived in small boats between 2018 and 2023. In 2023, next of these a the crossed into the

dian's who arrived in smail boats between 2018 and 2023. In 2023, most of those who crossed into the U.K. were from Afghanistan (5,545 people), Iran (3,562), and Turkey (3,060). Indians featured ninth on

SM 🚛

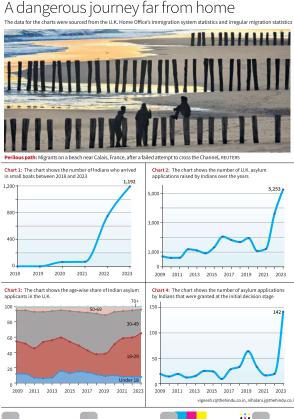
the list with 1,192 crossings, similar to the number of people from Al-bania and Egypt. In 2022, Albania recorded 12,600 crossings, the highest that year, as its economy had turned anaemic, impacting jobs and wages. Chart 2 shows the number of

Chart 2 shows the number of U.K. asylum applications raised by Indians over the years. The number skyrocketed post-pandemic, with 5,253 Indians applying for asylum in the U.K. in 2023. In total, close to 84,500 people from around the world applied for asy-lum last year. Close to 9,300 were (5,273), and India (5,253). Chart 3 shows the age-wise share of India asylum applicants in the U.K. After the pandemic, the share of Pandian asylum applicants in the U.K. After the pandemic, the were from this age group.

were from this age group. Chart 4 shows the number of

asylum applications by Indians that were granted at the initial stage. In 2023, over 140 Indian asythat we're ganted at the image large. In 2023, over 140 Indian asy-lum applicants were granted eith-er protection or leave to remain (those who do not qualify for refu-gee status but are given permission to stay for various other reasons). It is important to note that most In-dian asylum applicants them-selves withdrew after some time. This rising tide of asylum seek-ers is now a political issue in the U.K. as the country may go to the polls later this year or in early Ja-nuary next year. The British Prime bimister, Rishi Sunak, has long been pledging to "stop the boats" – a reference to the recent surge in illegal migrath.

illegal migrants crossing the En glish Channel, Given that the Conglish Channel. Given that the Con-servative Party has been trailing the opposition Labour Party by a considerable margin in the opi-nion polls until now, Mr. Sunak has been pushing a Bill to send asy-lum-seekers in the U.K. to Rwanda, the outcome of which may have an impact on his and his party's suc-cess in the polls.







Upendra S. Kinjawadekar

Text&Contex

THE HINDU -

NEWS IN NUMBERS

A marginal decline in sugar output so far this year

11109 in percentage. India's sugar production fell to 25.53 million tonnes (MT) in the ongoing 2023/24 marketing year, the Indian Sugar Mills Association said. Sugar production stood at 25.84 MT till February in the year, ago needed ==: in the year-ago period. PTI

The budget allocated for education by the Delhi government

166,3996 in t crore. There is a gight decline in Delhi government allocation for education in its budget for fiscal year 2024:25 from the previous fiscal budgetary outlay of 126,575 crore. m

The fine the EU imposed on Apple over competition laws

in billion euro. The Europ 1.8 in billion euro. The European Union levelled its first anti-trust penalty against Apple, fining the U.S. tech giant for breaking the bloc's competition laws by unfairly favouring its own music streaming repuire over truls. service over rivals. AP

The number of visas issued by Pakistan to Indian pilgrims

The Pakistan High Commission issued visas to pilgrims from India to facilitate their travel to Shree Katas Raj temples in the Chakwal district. Under bilateral protocol, Sikh and Hindu pilgrims from India visit Pakistan every year. Pri

The wastewater flowing into Ganga in Varanasi: NGT

million litres per day. The National Green Tribunal was hearing a matter regarding the discharge of untreated water into the Ganga, hurting religious sentiments. m

Follow us 1 facebook.com/thehindu 2 twitter.com/the hindu 3 instagram.com/the hindu

The status of India's nuclear programme

Why is the core-loading event of the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor being hailed as a milestone? What does the reactor do? Why has the event taken so long to materialise? What led to the delays? What are small modular reactors?

EXPLAINER

Vasudevan Mukunth

The story so far: The story so far: March 4, Prime Minister Narendra Modi witnessed the start of the process of core-loading the indigenous Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at the Madras Atomic Power Station in Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu. A statement from his office called the occasion "a historic milectanle in India's nuclear power programme".

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What is the PFBR? The PFBR is a machine that produces more nuclear fuel than it consumes. Its core-loading event is being hailed as a "milestone" because operationalisation of the PFBR will mark the start of stage II of India's three-stage nuclear power programme. In the first, India used Pressurised

Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) and natural uranium-238 (U-238), which Heavy water Reactors (Privites) and natural uranium-238 (U-238), which contains minuscule amounts of U-235, as the fissile material. In nuclear fission, the nucleus of an atom absorbs a neutron, destabilises, and breaks into two while releasing some energy. If the destabilised nucleus releases more neutrons, the reactor's facilities will attempt to use them to instigate more fission reactions. The heavy water in PHWR – water molecules containing the deuterium isotope of hydrogen – slows neutrons released by one fission reaction enough to be captured by other U-238 and U-235 nuclei and cause new fission. The heavy water is pressurised to keep it from boiling. The reactions produce plutonium-239 (Pu-239) and energy. Only U-235, not U-238, can sustain a

Only U-235, not U-236, can sustain a chain reaction but it is consumed fully in stage I. In stage II, India will use Pu-239 together with U-238 in the PFBR to produce energy, U-233, and more Pu-239. The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) set up a special-purpose vehicle in 2003 called Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam, Ltd. (BHAVIN) to implement stage II. In stage III, Pu-239 will be combined with thorium-232 (Th-232) in reactors to produce energy and U-233. Homi J. Bhabha designed the three-stage programme because India hosts roughly a Only U-235, not U-238, can sustain a

programme because India hosts roughly a quarter of the world's thorium. The three stages are expected to make the country completely self-sufficient in nuclear energy.

Why was the PFBR delayed?

The PFBR saga in India has been associated with numerous delays, cost

The relation of the second sec retirement. The Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic

Research (IGCAR), Kalpakkam, designed the PFBR. Its original cost was ₹3,492 crore and the original deadline, 2010. Six years later, the DAE sought more funds and an extended deadline, which the government granted in 2012 – ₹5,677 crore and commercial operations by March 2015. The nuclear power establishment further pushed the



deadline to the next year, then the year after that, and so on until by March 2020, the new deadline to commercialise was October 2022. Even by 2019, its cost had ballooned to 65,800 crore. In a 2014 audit, the Comptroller and Auditor General found BHAVINI had fumbled the procurement of some PFBR components by becoming inordinately dependent on the Nuclear Power Corporation of India, Ltd. The result: the placement of a hundred purchase orders had a "median delay" of 158 days per order. Other causes of delay included technical difficulties with the reactor coolant. deadline to the next year, then the year with the reactor coolant.

How does the PFBR work?

PHWRs use natural or low-enriched U-238 as the fissile material and produce Pu-239 as the fissile material and produce Pu-239 as a byproduct. This Pu-239 is combined with more U-238 into a mixed oxide and loaded into the core of a new reactor together with a breeder blanket. This is a material the fission products in the core react with to produce more Pu-239. A breeder reactor is a nuclear reactor that produces more fissile material than it consumes. In a 'fast' breeder reactor, the neutrons aren't slowed, allowing them to trigger specific fission reactions. The PFBR is designed to produce more Pu-239 than it consumes. It uses liquid

Pu-239 than it consumes. It uses liquid sodium, a highly reactive substance, as coolant in two circuits. Coolant in the first circuit enters the reactor and leaves with

(heat) energy and radioactivity. Via heat-exchangers, it transfers only the heat to the coolant in a secondary circuit. The latter transfers the heat to generators to produce electricity. In a 2020 paper, former IGCAR scientist R.D. Kale wrote about several issues with getting this system to work as expected. For example, according to him, personnel working with the PFBR had expected the reactor vessel could be preheated to 150 degrees Celsius in about a month based on theoretical calculations and tests with a mock-up. But (heat) energy and radioactivity. Via calculations and tests with a mock-up. But the process took more than a year in reality.

What role can SMRs play?

The delays brooked another potential complication in the form of Small

complication in the form of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs). These reactor designs have a maximum capacity of 300 MW, require less land, and accommodate more safety features. "Several countries are developing SMRs to complement conventional [facilities] since SMRs can be installed at reduced cost and time by repurposing... Srikanth, a professor at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru, told The Hindu. He added SMRs can work with low-enriched uranium, which India with low-enriched uranium, which India can import from the U.S. via its 123 Agreement. According to him, increasing SMRs' contribution would require, among

other things, amendments to the Atomic other things, amendments to the Atomic Energy Act (1962) "and other related statutes" to allow private sector participation "under the oversight of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Body (AERB), with both nuclear fuel and waste controlled by the DAE" according to international safeguards.

What is the value of stage II? The PFBR has a capacity of 500 MWe. In 2019, the DAE proposed building four more fast breeder reactors (FBRs) of 600 MWe capacity each – two in Kalpakkam from 2021 and two from 2025, with sites the acleared. Furnert here were ide here were to be selected. Experts have said the best way to moot work on stage II technologies is to press the reactors into commercial service.

The delays haven't helped, however. In 2003, renewable sources of energy were a blip on the horizon. Today, the tariff for solar electricity is under ₹2.5/kWh whereas nuclear electricity costs around ₹ 4/kWh. The 2011 Fukushima Daikchi diaster also shifted public opinion worldwide against nuclear power, slowing work on new facilities. Today nuclear power has a new lease of life thanks to the pressure on India to decarbonise, reduce its import of fossil fuels, and give its renewable sector some breathing space. The delays haven't helped, however, In renewable sector some breathing space. NPCIL chairman B.C. Pathak told *The* Hindu the corporation plans to "commission a nuclear power reactor every year" from 2024.

What are the challenges of stage II? On the flip side, bigger challenges await FBRs are harder to handle than other

FBRs are harder to handle than other reactor designs, whereas the DAE has acquired an unfavourable public reputation over its often heavy-handed response to safety concerns. Further, the civilian nuclear programme's nodal regulatory body, the AERB, was set up by executive order and reports ulfmately to the DAE sceretary. In 2015, the International Atomic Energy Agency urged India to set up an independent statutory atomic regulator instead.

instead. The DAE had responded to similar concerns with the Nuclear Safety Regulatory Authority (NSRA) Bill in 2011. It sought to replace the AERB with the NSRA. But it was criticised for allowing the Union government too much control

the Union government too much control over the NSA's composition. Finally, among other products, the thorium fuel cycle produces caesium-137, actinium-227, radium-224, radium-228, and thorium-230 – all isotopes radioactive in ways that complicate their handling and storage.

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THE GIST

On March 4, Prime Minister Narendra Modi witnessed the start of the process of core-loading the indigenous Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at the Madras Atomic Power Station in Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu.

The PFBR is a machine that produces more nuclear fuel than it consumes. Its core-loading event is being hailed as a "milestone" because operationalisation of the PFBR will mark the start of stage II of India's three-stage nuclear power programme.

• The PFBR saga in India has been associated with numerous delays, cost overruns, and broken promises, and has accrued many critics.

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A IN-X

Fissile Core Biological Liquid metal coolar

Heat exchanger

"Loop" Design

The FBTR is a loop-type sodium-cooled fast breeder reactor. GRAEVEMOORE (CC BY-SA 3.0)

THE HINDU — Text&Context

FROM THE ARCHIVES



A case to reform bail law and guidelines, but make the right diagnosis first

A large number of undertrials continue to remain in prison despite being granted bail due to challenges in complying with bail conditions. Lack of means to arrange for money/property and local sureties are the most significant reasons accounting for the inability to comply with bail conditions

<u>Medha Deo</u> Mavank Labh

Recently, the Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud said that there is a growing reluctance on the part of trial judges to grant bail and that jail, and not bail, was becoming the rule. In this article, dated July 26, 2022, Medha De oand Mayank Labh further complicate the question of granting bial to undertrials, most of whom are unable to furnish the necessary bond/money to avail of bail.

er 75% of India's prison population are undertrials while overcrowding in Indian prisons stands at 118%. These stark realities are often cited to represent the scale of the crisis in India's criminal justice system. The Supreme Court of India recently acknowledged, in Satender Kumar Antil vs CBI, the ineffectiveness of Tatinan Yahni 's Gui, the infectiveness of India's bail system and its contribution to this crisis. The Court noted that despite repeated guidelines on bail law, things have not changed much on the ground. The Court provided comprehensive guidelines on laws related to bail, such as mandating timelines for the disposal of bail applications and laying emphasis on the need to enact a separate legislation. The judgment noted that crowding jails with undertrial prisoners ignored the principle of presumption of innocence' and that 'bail not jail' should be the norm. However, there is still a need to reflect on why these established principles are honoured more in their breach than India's bail system and its contribution to honoured more in their breach than observance.

Any reimagination of the law on bail needs to first understand the exact nature needs to inst understand the exact nature of the problem that results in large-scale undertrial incarceration. This assessment needs to be based on multiple parameters and we have no real empirical evidence on how each of these impacts the issue. What proportion of undertrials are

THE DAILY QUIZ

applying for bail? What proportion of bail applications are accepted or rejected, and on what grounds? Is bail compliance a far bigger problem than denial of bail? These are some fundamental empirical questions which need answers. An effective bail aw must be based on the correlation of these answers with variables such as the demographics of undertrials, category of offences and timelines for bail, and also address socio-economic and structural barriers. The foundations of structural barriers. The foundations of backgrounds. The solutions marginalised backgrounds. The solutions marginalised backgrounds. The solutions we intend to craft must be based on a

realistic understanding of the problem.

applying for bail? What proportion of bail

Lack of safeguards

The Court averred that effective enforcement of safeguards against arbitrary arrest would eliminate the need atorital y aires, would eminiate the need to seek kall from courts. However, these safeguards exclude a significant proportion of arrested persons, especially those from disadvantaged sections of society, who form the large majority of undertrial prisoners. For example, the arrest of a person is justified as 'necessary' if the police have 'reasons to believe' that it is required to ensure their presence in court. Such vague justifications put migrants, persons without assets or those with no contact with family at higher risk of arrest because of their socio-economic conditions. Data from the Fair Trial Programme (FTP) in Yervada and Nagur to seek bail from courts. However, these Programme (FTP) in Yerwada and Nagpur central prisons can be instructive here. Of the undertrials (2,313) represented by the FTP, 18.50% were migrants, 93.48% did FTP, 18.50% were migrants, 93.48% did not own any assets, 62.22% did not have any contact with family, and 10% had a history of previous incarceration. Evidently, a significant proportion from the sample would be unjustifiably excluded from protections against arrest

and contribute to the large proportion of undertrials in our prisons

Approach to bail adjudication Approach to bail adjudication The power to grant bail is largely based on the court's discretion and depends on the facts of each case. The Supreme Court has time and again laid down principles for guiding the exercise of such discretion by courts in deciding bail applications. While these guidelines lay stress upon the need to release applications to bail, they also validate the denial of bail or imposition of onerous bail conditions based on the gravity of the offence, character of the accused and likelihood of the accused absconding or tampering the accused absconding or tampering with evidence. In all such cases, courts rarely exercise their discretion for granting bail and are likely to take a more stringent approach against release on bail. Despite existing guidelines, courts do not usually record reasons for rejecting bail; the rationale behind how courts factor in

Issuary lector reservoirs factor in offence-based and person-based considerations in deciding bail applications remains unclear. This is important because marginalised persons bear the brunt of these broad exceptions. They are either denied bail or granted bail with onerous conditions, in absolute disregard of their realities. Bail conditions in the nature of cash bonds, surety bond, proof of property ownership and solvency, as is commonplace, are at odds with the reality of undertrial prisoners languishing in jails.

Challenges in bail compliance

A large number of undertrials continue to A large number of undertrials continue to remain in prison despite being granted bail due to challenges in complying with bail conditions. Lack of means to arrange for money/property and local sureties are the most significant reasons accounting for an undertrial's inability to comply with bail conditions, realities borne out by our experience in the FTP. However,

factors such as lack of residence and identity proof, abandonment by family and limitations in navigating the court and minitations in Hangading the court system also undermine an undertrial's ability to comply with bail conditions. Compliance with bail conditions and ensuring presence in courts for the overwhelmingly structurally disadvantaged undertrials requires constant handholding, as is evident by the FTP's interventions in the past three years. This is a crucial aspect of ensuring last mile delivery of justice that the extant bail aw does not consider. Our experience shows that in 14% of cases, undertrials were unable to comply with bail conditions and remained in prison despite being granted bail. In system also undermine an undertrial's

prison despite being granted bail. In almost 35% of these cases, it took over a month after obtaining the bail for undertrials to comply with bail conditions and secure their release.

Flawed assumptions

Flawed assumptions The bail system, as it currently operates, has flawed assumptions that every arrested person will be propertied or have access to propertied social connections. It presumes that the risk of financial loss is necessary to ensure the presence of the accused in court. Such assumptions have the effect of rendering the rule of 'bail not jail' meaningless for a significant proportion of undertrial persons. For any ball law to effectively provide relief, a careful re-evaluation of the said presumptions is imperative. There is an urgent need for bail reform but it would be counterproductive to There is an urgent need for ball reform but it would be counterproductive to undertake a reform exercise without first developing the basis to understand and diagnose the problem at hand. Medha Deo and Mayank Labh are with the Fair Trial Programme, an undertrial legal aid initiative at Project 39A, National Legal Individue Debli The uncorrestment

Law University Delhi. The programme provides legal aid to undertrials in Pune provides legul and to and and Nagpur central prisons

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



Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

"Mr. P. Radhakrishnamurthy, Babu Camp, Kothagudam, wants to know which of the following is correct: (a) He came on foot

 (b) He came by foot."
 " 'He came on foot' is correct. 'By walk' is also used commonly in India. I came by walk. This is not acceptable. I came on foot or I came walking. 'Foot it' means 'walk, not travel by bus, etc.' It is about ten kilometres from here. But I will foot it

It is about the knowlettes from here. But I will foot it. 'Foot it' is used when the distance is long. 'Foot' as a verb is also used to mean 'to pay a bill, especially one considered lower'

'to pay a bill, especially one conside large.' He footed the bill for the party." "Mr. Y. Murali Nath, Old Town, Anantapur, wants to know whether 'return back' is acceptable."

"Return' means 'come or go back to a place.' He returned home or he came back home, 'Return back' is not

acceptable." "Mr. L. C. Venkatarangan, Korattur, Madras, wants to know which of the following is correct: (a) administer (b) administrate."

administrate." "Both are correct. Some may jump to the conclusion that 'administrate' is an Americanism. 'Administrate' vas used in Britain as early as the 17th century. Most administrators administer, 'Madministrate' is increasingly used in business correspondence." "Mr. Y. Raghavendran, K.K. Pudur, Coimbatore, wants to know the meaning of 'watershed."

of 'watershed.'" " 'Watershed' is 'a line of separation between waters flowing to different rivers, basins or seas.' When used figuratively, it means 'a turning point in affairs.' Politicians and journalists are fond of this word. This is likely to be a watershed between

This is likely to be a watershed between war and peace. Darwin's Origin of the Species was a watershed in the history of ideas. "Watersheed is a translation of the German word 'wasserscheide' and the earliest entry for this word in the Oxford English Dictionary was in 1803." "Mr. X: Steekrishna, Sripuram Colony, Tirupat, wants to know the difference between 'dissutisified' and 'unsatisfied." "When you do not get the satisfaction that you expected, you are unsatisfied. I attended the dinner. I came away unsatisfied.

unsatisfied. When you are dissatisfied, you are

thoroughly displeased, discontented. 'Dissatisfied' is a stronger word than 'unsatisfied.'

She was dissatisfied with the arrangements he had made for the

"Mrs. Satyamurthy, Bagh Lingampalli, Hyderabad, wants to know the meaning of the idiom 'A rolling stone gathers no

of the idiom' A rolling stone gathers no moss." "It means that a person who moves from place to place and does not settle down will never become prosperous. He is a rolling stone. A stone which is at one place will gather moss and the moss will protect it from erosion. 'Moss' is 'a very small green or yellow flowerless plant growing in thick masses on damp surfaces or trees or stones.'"

or trees or stones." Published in The Hindu on April 23, 1991.

Word of the day Connive:

encourage or assent to illegally or criminally; form intrigues (for) in an underhand manner

Synonyms: intrigue, scheme Usage: He accused her of conniving with

Pronunciation: bit.ly/connivepro

International Phonetic



A quiz on Antonio Vivaldi, one of the greatest baroque composers, who was born on March 4, 1678

V.V. Ramanan QUESTION 1 Why was Antonio Vivaldi nicknamed 'Red Priest'?

QUESTION 2 -Vivaldi was ordained as a priest in 1703 but did not function as one because he suffered from 'strettezza di petto'. What has this ailment been interpreted as?

QUESTION 3

QUESTION 5 r spent 37 years of his life as a music teacher/director at the Pio Ospedale della Pietà asylum and most of his compositions were during



If MOZART'S WORKS are prefixed with 'K' (for Kochel Catalogue), by what two letters are compositions by Vivaldi identified today?

that tenure. What sort of inmates were housed in that asylum?

1718–1720 when Vivaldi was the court chapel master in Mantua. Name

this group of four concerti and for which

instrument were they written?

If Mozart's works are

QUESTION 4 The most recognised of his compositions were composed around



. isual o Name this famous composer, who between 1713 and 1714 transcribed at least nine concertos of Vivaldi for keyboard, strings, organ, and harpsichord.

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1: This is the rarest disease in the world. Ans: RPI Deficiency. 2: The plot of the movie *Paa* was built around this rare disease.

ed. Ans: Kuru disease. It is an acquired infectious disease linked with the ritualistic practice of feeding upon the corpses of relatives as part of mourning. Putting an end to the practice meant an end to the disease as well. Early Birds: K.N. Viswanathan Rajmohan. V M. Suresh Kumar Sanjana Veerabhadra

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11

THE HINDU -World

PARIS

12

French parliament votes to make abortion constitutional right



The French parliament on Monday voted to anchor the right to abortion in the country's constitution, making France the first country in the world to offer protection for terminating a pregnancy. A congress of both the lower and upper houses easily ned the three-fifths supermajority needed for the change. AFF

PORT-AU-PRINCE

Haiti government declares state of emergency after huge prison break



Haiti's government on Sunday declared a state of emergency and night-time curfew after a deadly gang assault on the capital's main prison that allowed thousands of inmates to escape. The curfew will be enforced in the Ouest region, which includes the capital, through vernment said in a statement. AFF Nednesday, the go

SEOUL South Korea to start legal action against doctors over walkout



South Korea's Health Minister said on Monday that authorities will start inspecting hospitals to take legal action against doctors who have ignored an ultimatum to end a walkout over plans to increase medical school admissions. Around 9,000 resident and intern doctors have walked off the job since February 20. REUTERS

RANCKOK

Thailand's top court clears former PM Yingluck in corruption case



In the latest legal success for Thailand's powerful Shinawatra family the country's Supreme Court on Monday cleared former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra - who ruled from 2011 until she was ousted in a 2014 military coup - of corruption in awarding a vernment contract during her time in office. AFF

Joe Biden, Donald Trump set to win primary races on Super Tuesday

Sriram Lakshman

Presidential candidates criss-crossed the country in the run up to Super Tuesday this year, when 17 U.S. States and territories held their primeries and hold their primaries and caucuses to pick their con-tenders for November's general election. The sup-port of more than a third of each party's delegates (i.e., representatives who vote in the parties' conventions to select the candidate) is

to select the candidate) is up for grabs on Tuesday. Former U.S. President Donald Trump is expected to sweep the Republican contests on Tuesday, with Nikki Haley, the former American Ambassador to the UN, having won just one race thus far (Washing-ton DC). Although, at this ton DC). Although, at this stage, a Biden-Trump showdown is all but certain, further campaigning has been planned for the following weeks, with groups of States voting in March and April. The incumbent, U.S.

+President Joe Biden, is running uncontested for the



Donald Trump is expected to sweep the Republican contests on Tuesday, with Nikki Haley having won just one race thus far. AFP

Democratic (re)nomina-tion in many of the States, while some States will have other contestants on them, such as self-help author Marianne Williamson and Minnesota Congressman Dean Phillips. more challenging for Mr. Biden, than is often the case for a sitting President seeking a second term. Questions about Mr. Bi-den's age, perceptions about the economy and in-flation and Mr. Biden's han-ding of the Israel-Hamas dling of the Israel-Hamas

Challenging days Mr. Biden is therefore exconflict have been working against him. Mr. Biden was faced with bleak polling results over the weekend. A *New York Times*/ Sienna College pected to win the day on Tuesday but the process has revealed that the ulti-mate path to the White House, when the primar House – when the primar-ies are completed and Mr. Biden presumably faces poll indicated that the Pre-sident had the support of 43% of registered voters versus Mr. Trump's 48%. Mr. Trump – will be far



Associated Press

The U.S. Supreme Court The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday unanimously restored Donald Trump to 2024 presidential primary ballots, rejecting State attempts to ban the Republican former

Some 10% of those who voted for Mr. Biden in 2020 were planning to vote for Mr. Trump in 2024. Democratic primary vo-ters were more or less equally split on whether Mr. Biden should be their party's candidate, as per party's candidate, as per the poll, with the strongest opposition to the idea from those under 45 years of age. The data also indicated that Mr. Biden's edge ov er Mr. Trump among non-white non-college grad-uates had also significantly narrowed since 2020. After Democratic politipresident over the Capitol riot. The justices ruled States cannot invoke a States cannot invoke a post-Civil War constitutional provision to keep presidential candidates from appearing on ballots. That power resides with Congress, the court wrote.

cians urged primary voters in the crucial swing State of Michigan to show their frustration with Mr. Bi-den's policy towards Is-rael's retaliatory attacks on Gaza, which have claimed more than 30,000 lives, more than 100,000 Michi-

more than 1,00,000 Michiganders cast an 'uncom-mitted' ballot in last week's Democratic primary. This was more than the target of 10.000 uncom-

mitted votes and was some five times the number of such votes in the last two presidential elections and is being seen as a warning

Lessons from a conflict

to Mr. Biden to change his accommodative stance to-wards Israel. A growing number of voters, not just Muslim Americans but also youn-

ger voters across the board, could sit at home on election day if the administration continues with the status quo. A few thousand voters could make a huge difference: Mr. Trump beat difference: Mr. Trump beat former Democratic presi-dential candidate Hilary Clinton in Michigan by less than 11,000 votes in 2016 and Mr. Biden won the State from Mr Trump in 2020 by a margin of 2.8% (just over 1,54,000 votes).

Call for ceasefire On Sunday, Vice President Kamala Harris called for an immediate ceasefire in the region and a return of hos tages taken by Hamas. On Monday, she was scheduled to meet with Israeli War Cabinet Member Ben-

ny Gantz. Mr Trump has so far won 247 delegates – more than 10 times Ms. Haley's tally. So far his legal troubles have not prevented

Mr. Trump from moving forward and he has used them in his campaign ral-

lies to portray himself as the victim of a political witch-hunt. Ms. Haley, who served on the Trump Cabinet, has In the provided on the terms of te

Other contests There are also a number of 'down ballot' primaries on Super Tuesday – such as a fiscal deficit and spending

primary contest for the post of Governor (North Carolina), several for the U.S. House of Representa- particularly during Mr.
 Trump's time in the White House and criticised his isolationist 'foreign policy tives, where the Republi and admiration for Russian cans have a four-seat ma-jority, and the U.S. Senate, President Vladimir Putin' Significantly, Ms. Haley did not commit to support-ing Mr. Trump if he is the chosen GOP candidate, including a primary con-test in California for the late Senator Diane Feinstein's Senate seat.

R THE

Prachanda quits Congress alliance, joins hands with Oli

Communist coalition back at the helm in Nepal after little more than a year; CPN (Maoist-Centre)'s demand for the post of the National Assembly chair had caused a rift with Nepali Congress

Sanjeev Satgainya KATHMANDU

Ritinaadu epails ruling al-liance broke down after Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Pra-chanda's Communist Party of Nepal (Auoist Centre) switched sides from the Nepali Congress and joined with the K.P. Shar-ma Ol's Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) on Monday. The latest development puts the Nepali Congress, the largest party in parlia-ment with 88 seats, in the Opposition seat.

Opposition seat.

Leaders from both the CPN (Maoist-Centre) and the CPN-UML said that they have reached a new deal to form the govern-ment, once again bringing a communist coalition to

a communisé coalition to the helm in Kathmandu af-ter little more than a year. The Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) and the Janata Samajbadi Party will also be part of the new Maoist-UML coalition. Mr. Prachanda on Mon-day evening dismissed all his Ministers and inducted three new Ministers with-out portfolios into his Cabi-net – one each from his net – one each from his party, the CPN-UML and the RSP – and kept all 25 portfolios with him.

portfolios with him. Mr. Prachanda's CPN (Maoist-Centre) party had fought the 2022 general elections with the Nepali Congress. However, Mr. Prachanda was elected Prime Minister with the backing of the CPN-UML,



Oli in Kathmandu on Monday, AN

be surprised about this change. This Maoist-UML coalition was not a matter of if but when," Mr. Shar-

ma said.

Cracks began to appear in the Maoist-Congress coalition lately over va-rious issues. But the post of the National Assembly the second largest party with 78 seats, on Decem-ber 25, 2022, after the Nepali Congress refused to oblige his demand to lead oblige his demand to lead the government. Later in February 2023, the CPN-UML pulled out of the government after the CPN (Maoist-Centre) decid-ed to back Ram Chandra Poudel, a Congress leader, for the post of President. The Nepall Congress sub-sequently joined the go-vernment.

the National Assembly chair had become the ma-jor bone of contention. The Maoist-Centre's de-mand that it be given the National Assembly chair post had ratited the Nepali Congress. The National Assembly chair post is crucial, for he is a member of the Consti-tutional Council which re-commends members to constitutional bodies. Ne-pal is electing the new Na-

Cracks in coalition Hari Sharma, a writer and political analyst, says the Maoist-Congress coalition pal is electing the new Na-tional Assembly chair on March 12. Maoist-Congress coalition had become untenable, es-pecially after some Nepali Congress leaders began questioning Mr. Prachan-da's style of governance and the relevance of the al-liance. "There is nothing to Frequent government changes are not new in Nepal, and it has seen 11 go-vernments since it abol-ished the monarchy in 2008

Nepal's electoral system Nepal's electoral system is such that it is almost im-possible for any party to secure a majority in the 275-strong House of Repre-sentatives to form a go-

vernment on its own. Of the 275 members, 165 are elected under the direct election system, or first

election system, or first-past-the-post system, and the remaining IIO are elect-ed under the proportional representation system. It was because of that Mr. Prachanda found room to maneuvre and man-aged to wrest the post of the Prime Minister from the first and second largest parties despite his party parties despite his party coming third with just 32 seats in parliament. The CPN-UML and the

Maoists merged in 2018 to form the Nepal Communist Matists Integed in 2006 to form the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) in a bid to form a large Left force in Nepal. However, a power struggle between Mr. Pra-chanda and CPN-UML Chairman R.P. Sharma Oli led to the implosion of the NCP in 2021. A Maoist-UML unity in Nepal is something Beijing has always wanted. It is un-clear how India, which has traditionally enjoyed its clout in Nepal, will react to a suddenly evolved left-dominated dispensation in Kathmandu.

Kathmandu. Mr. Prachanda, a vocal critic of India in the past, in recent years has made peace with the south, and he does appear to be in New Delhi's good books, if recent high-level bilateral recent high-level bilateral exchanges and some for-ward-looking deals under his prime ministership are anything to go by. (Sanjeev Satgainya is an independent journalist based in Kathmandu)

ISLAMABAD

Nawaz (PML-N)'s Shehbaz Sharif on Monday took the oath as Prime Minister of oath as Prime Minister of Pakistan, assuming the cash-strapped country's reins for a second time, by allegations of vote rig-ging. President Arif Alvi ad-ministered the oath to Mr. Shehbaz, the 24th elected Prime Minister, in a cere-mony held at the Alwani-Sadr, the presidential pa-lace.

iournalists.

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leader Xi Jinping centralise control of the nation's af-fairs, said Alfred Wu, an associate professor at the Na-tional University of of

journalists. Lou Qinjian, the spokes-person for the National Pe-ople's Congress, said on the eve of the opening of the legislature's annual ses-sion that Premier Li Qiang would not hold a news conference at its conclu-sion, as Premiers have

ians, in Rafah on Monday, AFI

China eliminates Premier's annual news conference

said on Monday that it is eliminating an annual news con-ference by the Prime Mi-nister that was one of the rare times a top Chinese leader took questions from

tional university or Singapore. The meeting of the lar-gely ceremonial congress is being closely watched for any indications of what any indications of what steps the government will take to boost the economy.

summons German Ambassador

Associated Press

Moscow summoned Ger many's Ambassador Alex-ander Graf Lambsdorff to Russia's Foreign Ministry on Monday, local media re-ported, days after the re-lease of an audio recording on social media purporting to show German officer discussing support for Uk-

The 38-minute record The 38-minute record-ing features military offic-ers discussing in German how Taurus long-range cruise missiles could be used by Kyiv against invad-ing Russian forces.

smail Wahba, director of the UNRWA Ta Shehbaz

Sharif takes oath as Pakistan's PM

Press Trust of India

Pakistan Muslim League

Associated Press

China's government

BEIIING





done every year since

1993. The move appears to be in line with a diminishing of the premier's power, and that of the government bureaucracy generally, as the Communist Party and

raine

THE HINDU World



nes of the people onboard the missi H370 displayed in Subang Jaya. REU

Will reopen MH370 search if compelling evidence emerges'

Agence France-Presse MELBOURNE

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said on Monday that he would be "happy to reopen" the search for flight MH370 if "compelling" evidence emerged, opening the door to a renewed hunt a decade after the plane disappeared. "If there is compelling evidence that it needs to be reopened, we will certainly be happy to reopen it," he said when asked about the matter during a visit to Melbourne. His comments came as the fa-milies marked 10 years since the plane vanished in the Indian Ocean with 239 people aboard. "If don't think it's a technical issue. It's an issue affecting the lives of people and whatever needs

Ta don't trink it's a technical issue. It's an issue affecting the lives of people and whatever needs to be done must be done," he said. Małaysia Airlines flight 370, a Boeing 777 air-craft, disappeared from radar screens on March 8, 2014, while en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beij-2014, while enroute non-related human barry in the plane has never been found and the operation was suspended in January 2017. About 500 relatives and their supporters gath-

About 500 relatives and their supporters gath-ered on Sunday at a shopping centre near the Ma-laysian capital Kuala Lumpur for a "remembrance day", with many visibly overcome with grief. Some of the relatives came from China, where almost two-thirds of the passengers of the doomed plane were from. Speaking to the crowd, Grace Nathan, a Malay-sian lawyer whose mother was on the flight, called on the government to conduct a new search. Transport Winister Anthony Loke told press-

Transport Minister Anthony Loke told press-persons that "as far Malaysia is concerned, it is committed to finding the plane... cost is not the

After Amnesty's criticism, Cambodia defends relocations from Angkor Wat

Responding to UNESCO following a scathing report from Amnesty International which said thousands of families were forcibly evicted from around the World Heritage Site, Cambodia rejects the allegations saying it was only relocating squatters' and not the residents living there for 'generations'

Associated Press

ambodia is rejecting allegations that it violated interna-tional law by evicting people living around its fa-mous Angkor Wat temple complex, saying in a report to UNESCO released on Monday that it was only relocating squatters and not residents of more than 100

The UN cultural agency mesidents of more than 100 traditional villages. The UN cultural agency had demanded a response from Cambodian authori-ties in November after a scathing report from Am-nesty International claimed that thousands of families, some that had lived in the area for "sever-al generations," were being forcibly evicted from around the World Heritage Site as Cambodia seeks to develop the area for

about a year earlier than previously planned, while urging them to "ensure that any relocation is voluntary." The Angkor Wat site sprawls across some 400 square kilometre, contain-ing the ruins of Khmer Em-pire capitals from the 9th to the 15th centuries, in-cluding the temple of Angdevelop the area for tourism. Amnesty questioned Cambodia's assertion that Cambodia's assertion that the families were being vo-luntarily relocated, citing interviews with people who said they had been forced out, while maintain-ing that resettlement sites lacked adequate water, sanitation and other facil-ties, and criticising UNES-CO for failing to challenge Cambodian authorities. Paris-based UNESCO responded that it was "deeply concerned about the allegations" and or to the 15th centuries, in-cluding the temple of Ang-kor Wat. UNESCO calls it one of the most important archaeological sites in Southeast Asia, and it is critical to Cambodia's tou-rism industry.

'Illegal occupation' In its report to UNESCO, Cambodia argued it was only moving people in-volved in the "illegal occu-pation of heritage land," and not those identified by the allegations" and or-dered Cambodia to report and not those identified by UNESCO as inhabitants of on the state of conserva traditional villages shortly tion at the Angkor Wat site after the Angkor Wat com

are: The Angkor Wat site sprawls across some 400 square kilometre, containing the ruins of pire capitals from the 9th to the 15th centuries, including the temple of Angkor Wat. FILE РНОТО plex's inscription in 1992 as a World Heritage Site. "At the Angkor heritage site there are 112 villages where people have been living for generations, but there are squatters who have been coming in, and have been coming in, and these squatters are the peo-

tor the Cambodian govern-ment body in charge of the Angkor Wat site, said. "The people in the vil-lages are part of our herit-age; that is why we call Angkor a living heritage site."

Amnesty said, however, that it appears Cambodian authorities have decided to "cherry-pick" what details were included in their new report, and that it re-mained extremely unclear who could be considered came from the highest le-vels, noting in its Novem-ber report a speech from former Prime Minister Hun Sen in which he said people "must either leave the Angkor site soon and re-ceive some form of compensation or be evicted at a later time and receive nothing.

port or participate in the programme."

port or participate in the programme? The agency refused to comment on Cambodia's new submission, saying that it still needed to be analysed by its experts, but that it "stands by its pre-vious statement regarding the situation in Angior." In October, Cambodia opened the Siem Reap-Angkor International Air-port, the country's biggest, to serve as a gateway to the site with a capacity of 7 mil-lion passengers a year.

lion passengers a year. Cambodia began mov

ing people from the site in 2022. To date about half of an estimated 10,000 fami-lies have already been relo-

Status at risk Mr. Hun Sen's son, Hun Ma-

Conditions have im-proved as authorities have added much of the neces-sary infrastructure to sup-port the settlement, Ms. Ferrer said, but they still have not addressed the debt incurred by many in building their new homes nor the loss of income suf-fered by moving them. "They were given a plot of land, that's great, but what about everything else him last year and has conti-nued the policies, reiterat-ing the official Cambodian ing the official Cambodian government line that Ang-kor War risked losing its World Heritage status if the families were not relocat-ed. UNESCO in November, however, emphasised that it has "always categorically rejected the use of forced evictions," and "that at no point did it request, sup-port or participate in the

what about everything else they lost?" she said.

cated, primarily to a vast new settlement known as Run Ta Ek, about 25 km away from the Angkor Wat site.

site. New arrivals were given small plots of land, a two-month supply of canned food and rice, a tarpaulin and 30 sheets of corrugat-

ed metal to use to build a home, according to Am-

nesty's findings. Conditions have im-

13

During a visit to Run Ta Ek in December, Prime Mi nister Hun Manet refe-renced Amnesty's allega-tions that Cambodia was tines that Cambodia was responsible for human rights abuses, saying im-provements were being made rapidly and that 'you should come and see for yourself within a year." In its report to UNESCO, Cambodian authorities highlighted the fact that the people relocated were now landowners. "They now have the sta-tus of villagers, equal to that of the traditional endo-genous population settled in the Angkor zone for gen-erations," the report said.

erations," the report said

Amnesty's research team investigating the Angkor Wat resettlements. ple who are being relocat-ed, not the people living in the traditional villages," "So fast forward to now. that confusion remains on the books," she said, speak-ing from Geneva. She said several families relocated Long Kosal, spokesperson for the Cambodian governseveral families relocated told Amnesty that they had been living around the Ang-kor Wat site for genera-tions, and had not wanted to leave their homes. She added that their research found that very few people had been resettled "volun-tarily," as Amnesty would define it, with many being

define it, with many being threatened or otherwise coerced. Amnesty said the threats



An almond tree blossoms near the Acropolis in Athens in Greece on Monday. This winter was the hottest on record for Greece, according data analysed by Greek scientists, threatening the viability of crops and raising fears of another summer of devastating wildfires. REUTERS ssoms near the Acropolis in Athens in Greece on Monday. This winter was the hottest on record for Greece, according to

Indigenous Greenland women sue Denmark over forced contraception

Associated Press

A group of Indigenous wo-men in Greenland has sued Denmark for forcing them to be fitted with intrauterine contraceptive devices in the 1960s and 70s, and demanded total compensation of nearly 43 million kroner (\$6.3 million), Danish media reported on Monday.

Monday. The group of 143 Inuit women say Danish health authorities violated their human rights when they fitted them with the device-es, commonly known as coils. Some of the women – including many who were teenagers at the time – were not aware of what happened or did not con-sent to the intervention. Last year, 67 women Last year, 67 women had filed an initial lawsuit

against Denmark over

An Inuit village in Greenland. 143 Inuit women have accused Danish health authority of violating their human rights. FILE PHOTO

copper, and fitted in the uterus. prevents coordinate forced contraception. The purpose was allegcopper, and fitted in the utterus, prevents sperm from fertilizing an egg. Danish authorities say that as many as 4,500 wo-men and girls – reportedly half of the fertile women in Greenland – received coil implants between the 1960s and mid-1970s. Greenland, which is part of the Danish realm, forced contraception. The purpose was alleg-edly to limit population growth in Greenland by preventing pregnancy. The population on the Arctic is-land was rapidly increasing land was rapidly increasing at the time because of bet-ter living conditions and better health care. The small T-shaped dev-ice, made from plastic and

Probe ongoing In September 2022, the go-vernments of Denmark and Greenland launched

try.

was a colony under Den-mark's crown until 1953, when it became a province in the Scandinavian coun-

an investigation into the programme. The outcome of the probe is due next year. But the women's layear. But the women's la-wyer, Mads Pramming, said they will not wait until then, adding that the only option for the women is to seek justice through the court. "The oldest of us are over 80 years old, and the-refore we cannot wait any longer," Naja Lyberth, who was 14 when she had a coll fitted, told Greenland pu-blic broadcaster KNR. "As long as we live, we want to long as we live, we want to long as we live, we want to regain our self-respect and respect for our wombs."

Half a world away, four-year-old Gaza boy gets a new lease of life after losing an arm

Associated Press NEW YORK

Omar Abu Kuwaik is far from his home in Gaza. The four-year-old's parents and sister were killed by an Israeli airstrike, when he lost part of his arm. He's one of the 'lucky'

ones. Through the efforts of

family and strangers, Omar was brought out of Gaza and to the U.S., where he and to the U.S., where he received treatment, includ-ing a prosthetic arm. He spent his days in a house run by a medical charity in New York City, accompa-nied by his ant. It was a small measure of grace in a sea of turmoil for him and his aunt, Maha Abu Kuwaik, as they



looked to an uncertain fumuch " she said "They looked to an uncertain fu-ture. The grief and despair for those still trapped in Gaza is never far away. Ms. Abu Kuwaik is glad she could do this for her beloved brother's son, whom she now considers her fourth child. much," she said. "They told me, "We are not chil-dren anymore. Go, let Omar get treated. It's what is best for him. It's his only chance." Omar was an out-going boy, she said, and he is clever like his late father, an engineer. Now he is of ten withdrawn and breaks into tears casily. Ask Omar into tears easily. Ask Omar a question, and he covers his ears with his right hand

Difficult choice But it was a terrible choice. Going with Omar meant leaving her husband and

and the stump of his left arm, declaring, "I don't three teenage children be hind in a sprawling tent camp in Gaza's southern-most city of Rafah. With Is-rael carrying out strikes in areas where it told civilians want to talk." areas where it fold civilians to take shelter, including Rafah, Ms. Abu Kuwaik knows she might never see her family again. "My kids love Omar so

want to talk." "Kindergarten was nice," he eventually ad-mits, "and I was happy on the first day." He started school just weeks before the war. But he does not want to go to kindergarten anymore. He is afraid to leave his aunt's side.



Flying to New York may have given him a new dream, though. "When I grow up, I want to be pi-lot," Omar said, "so I can bring people places." Two weeks into the war,

The two families evacuated their Gaza City apartments just before Israeli airstrikes flattened the buildings. With only the clothes on their backs, the families split up to stay with diffe

'Anywhere is better' 'Anywhere is better' Omar was pinned beneath the rubble. Rescuers dug until they found his little body, still warm, bleeding but somehow alive. "Our view was, anywhere is bet-ter for him than being in Gaza," sial dalib chouiki, vice president of Rahma

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main on a waiting list to go abroad, according to the UN refugee agency. Mr. Chouiki began Mr. Chouiki began reaching out to contacts in the Palestinian, Israeli and Egyptian governments. He got new passports for Omar and Ms. Abu Kuwaik, and Israeli security clea-rance for them to travel to Egypt. An ambulance brought them to the bor-der, where an Egyptian ambulance whisked them across the Sinai desert. Inside an Egyptian mili-tary hospital, Omar and his aunt waited for weeks until U.S. Customs and Border Protection gave them the green light to fly to New

Omar and Ms. Abu Kuwaik

green light to fly to New York on January 17.

York on January I7. At Shriners Children's Hospital in Philadelphia, Omar had skin graft sur-gery for the burn on his leg. He was eager to get his new prosthetic arm on Wednesday, smiling mis-chievously as he reached out to touch it. "My arm is nice."

rent relatives

Helping hand: Omar Abu Kuwaik with his aunt, Maha Abu Kuwaik. at Shriners Children's Hospital in Philadelphia on February 28, AP

narrowly escaped death. The two families evacuated

Omar and Ms. Abu Kuwaik

rent relatives. On December 6, two Is-real airstrikes slammed in-to Omar's grandparents' home in the Vuseitar tefu-gee camp. The explosion peeled the skin from his face. His left arm could not be saved below the elbow. He had burns on his leg and torso. His parents, six-year-old sister, grandpa-rents, two aunts and a cou-sin were killed.

Worldwide, a U.S.-based charity, who heard about Omar from the group's team in Gaza. Israel and Egypt tightly restrict movement of peo-ple out of Gaza, allowing just a few hundred to exit each day, mostly those with foreign citizenship. The World Health Organi-zation says 2,29 patients -

zation says 2,293 patients -1,498 wounded and 795 ill have left Gaza for medical treatment alongside 1,625 companions. Yet roughly 8,000 patients re-Yet

Worldwide a U.S.-based

Seamless payments

The RBI had envisaged an interoperable system since it is difficult for banks to integrate with multiple payment aggregators

Currently, a bank is required to separately integrate with each

payment aggregator of different online merchants

cerns, enhance ... pliance, streamline pro-and work

cesses, and work collaboratively towards

making the system more transparent and efficient.

"Plugging loopholes" Stressing on the use of technology to plug loo-pholes and improve tax-payer services, the Minis-ter called for seamless coordination of officials across States "in the larger national interest". Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary expressed opti-

Chaudhary expressed opti-

mism about achieving a monthly GST revenue tar-

get of ₹2 lakh crore soon.

BLUE ST

(TED.)

lakh would be outsourced.

B. Thiagarajan

MONDAY 73,872 82.90 64,200 83.20 % CHANGE 0.09 0.01 1.39

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

NIFTY 5

INBRIDE

14



Powergrid Corporation to raise ₹1,200 crore via bonds

Power Grid Corporation of India (Powergrid) on Monday said its board has approved a proposal to raise up to ₹1,200 crore by issuing bonds. "Th Committee of Directors for Bonds approved the raising of bonds as unsecured, non-convertible, non-cumulative, redeemable, taxable Powergrid bonds - LXXVI (76th) issue up to ₹1,200 crore," the company said in an exchange filing. The firm said the issue base size is ₹400 crore with a green shoe option of ₹800 crore.

RBI bars IIFL Finance from disbursing gold loans

The Reserve Bank of India (RB) directed IFL Finance Ltd. to cease and desist, with immediate effect from sanctioning or disbursing gold loans or assigning/securitising/selling any of its gold loans. The curbs were imposed after the RB stumbled upon certain material supervisory concerns pertaining to the gold-loan portfolio of the company. However, IFL can continue to service existing gold-loan portfolio through usual collection and recovery moreses. collection and recovery processes.

Moody's raises India's 2024 GDP forecast sharply to 6.8%

Moody's Investor Service sharply raised its gross domestic product (GDP) forecast for India on Monday, following the strong momentum seen in the South Asian economy in recent quarters, which the ratings agency expects will continue into 2024. "India's stronger-than-expected data in 2023 he cused us to raise our 2024 growth in 2023 has caused us to raise our 2024 growth estimate to 6.8% from 6.1%," Moody's said. "India is likely to stay the fastest growing among G-20 economies over our forecast horizon." REUTERS

RBI tasks NBBL to ensure net banking is interoperable in 2024

The new system is expected to facilitate quicker settlement of funds for merchants; right now, a customer wanting to make a payment from a bank account to a merchant needs the bank to have an existing arrangement with the merchant's PA

The Hindu Bureau

he Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in a bid to speed up settle-ment of funds for mer-chants, has tasked NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd. (NBBL) to implement an interoper able system for Internet Banking and expects the system to be introduced in the current calendar year. "Internet Calendar year. "Internet Banking is a preferred channel for pay-ments like income tax, in-surance premium, mutual fund payments and e-com-

The Hindu Bureau

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday stressed the urgent need to bring clarity on classifica-tion-related issues under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, urging officials to resolve issues "at the earliest through ap-propriate channels". Addressing the first-ever "National Conference of Enforcement Chiefs of State and the Central GST Formations", M. Sithara

Formations', Ms. Sithara-man urged GST officials to

engage with stakeholders to understand their con-

The Hindu Bureau

Finance Minister Nirmala

merce," Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Monday. "At present, such tran-sactions processed

FM urges swift clarity

on GST classifications



through Payment Aggrega-tors (PAs) are not interop-erable, i.e., a bank is re-quired to separately

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Minister of State for Elec-tronics and Information Technology Rajeev Chan-drasekhar said that the TG Ministry's advisory on Sa-turday that 'under'testing' A.J. applications must be approved by the govern-ment before general public availability was intended 'only for large platforms and will not apply to start-ups." The advisory suggested tech firms 'to ensure that

tech firms "to ensure that use of AI model(s)/LLM/ Generative AI, software(s)

or algorithm(s) ... not per-

Minister of State for Elec-

integrate with each PA of different online mer-chants. As a result, if a cus-tomer wants to make pay-ment from his bank account to a certain mer-chant, the merchant's PA and customer's bank must have an arrangement," Mr. Das explained

"Given the multiple number of PAs, it is diffi-cult for each bank to intecult for each bank to inte-grate with each PA. Furth-er, due to lack of a payment system and a set of rules for these transac-tions, there are delays in actual receipt of payments

'Centre's AI 'under-testing'

advisory only for big firms'

mit its users to host, dis-play ... any unlawful con-tent," and that "use of under-testing/unreliable AI model(s)/LLM/Generative AI, software(s) or algo-rithm(s) and its availability.

rithm(s) and its availability to the users on Indian In-ternet must be done so with explicit permission of

by merchants and settle-ment risks," he added. The RBI had earlier en-visaged an interoperable payment system for Inter-net honking tensoretime.

net banking transactions. "In pursuance of this objective, we have given approval for implementing such an interoperable system to NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd. We expect the launch of this interoperable pay-ment system for Internet ment system for internet banking during the current calendar year. The new system will facilitate quick-er settlement of funds for merchants," he said.

the GoI and be deploy only after appropriately belling the possible and i herent fallibility or unreli

bility of the output." The advisory came of the heels of Mr. Chandr

'EFTA pact may be first for

India with committed

investments and jobs'

3317.15 1342.60 6033.30 2831.75 1106.75 8207.30 1619.30 6602.45 1133.50 640.45 4838.90 1471.50 455.40 5482.90 6335.10 3751.45 2234.15 1637.95 1432.70

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	ICICI Bank	1092.35	
:k-	IndusInd Bank	1531.30	5.3
or	Infosys	1637.20	-19.1
	ITC	409.10	-2.9
	JSW Steel	824.30	-20.6
	Kotak Bank	1727.20	3.5
	L&T.	3644.45	-10.8
	LTIMindtree Ltd.	5216.85	-78.0
	M&M	1921.05	-39.0
	Maruti Suzuki	11594.15	
	Nestielndia		
	NTPC.	353.85	12.1
	ONGC	279.20	
	PowerGrid Corp		
	Reliance Ind	3014.80	
	SBI Life		
	State Bank		
be	Sun Pharma	1552.10	1.5
	TataConsumerPro-		
la-	duct		
n-	Tata Motors		
ia-	Tata Steel		
ia-	TCS		
	Tech Mahindra		
on	Titan		
a-	UltraTech Cement		
	UPL		
se	Wipro	520.50	-2.3

the heels of Mr. Chandra- sekhar's pointed response	UltraTech Cement	474.25	-1.8	
to Google's Gemini chat-	Wipro	520.50	-2.3	
bot, whose response to the query, "Is [Prime Minister Narendra] Modi a fascist?"	EXCHANGE RATES Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except ye p.m. on March 04			
had circulated widely on	CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SEL	
social media, before Goo- gle took steps to prevent it from answering the ques- tion. "I'm still learning how to answer this question," is one of the chatbot's res-	US Dollar. Euro. British Pound Japanese Yen (100). Chinese Yuan. Swiss Franc. Singapore Dollar. Canadian Dollar. Malaysian Ringitt. Australian Dollar.	104.80 54.98 11.49 93.60 61.55 60.95 17.50	83.0 90.0 105.2 55.2 11.5 93.9 61.8 61.2 17.5 54.1	
ponses to this query now.	Source:Indian Bank			

'Ukraine war dulled exports of goods'

The Hindu Bureau COIMBATORE

The war in Ukraine had contributed to dampening merchandise export growth in FY24, which had not been as robust as in the past three years, Vipul Bansal, joint secretary, Department of Commerce, said on Monday.

said on Monday. Speaking at the Interna-tional Engineering Sourc-ing Show, organised by En-gineering Export Promotion Council of India (EEPC India), he said ex-ports had been impacted by several external factors. Exports from sectors like gens and jewellery had been impacted by the Uk-raine war, while engineer raine war, while engineer ing exports, constituting al-most 26%, had maintained

Reuters NEW DELHI

Google on Friday re-moved more than 100 In-

dian apps, including popu-lar ones by

lar ones by Matrimony.com, for not complying with its policy of paying a service fee when in-app payment op-tions other than Google's are used.

The start-ups have now taken the issue to the coun CM CM



ing Director B. Thiagarajan asserted. "Last year we sold eight lakh RACs, and this year we are hopeful of touching 10 lakh due to harsh sum-wer are planning to sell 13 lakh units," the air-condi-tioning major's MD added. The firm's Himachal Pradesh (HP) plant makes six lakh units, the Sri City facility 3 lakh, while one lakh units contsourced. Next year, HP and Sri Ci-ty would together account for 12 lakh units while one its composition this year. A \$1 trillion merchan-dise export target by 2030 requires a 12% growth rate, but challenges like the war persist, Mr. Bansal said. He urged EEPC to add more people in the export value chain to achieve growth. Mr. Bansal said the PLI scheme must not only aid in import substitution, but should become a tool to grow exports as well.

erted.

Maersk raises Blue Star targets 15% container of room AC market rates by \$1,000 to U.S., Canada

T.E. Raja Simhan

Danish shipping line Maersk has announced a rate increase of \$1,000 per container to ports in the U.S. and Canada.

U.S. and Canada. The increase, effective from Saturday, is applica-ble to shipments originat-ing from India and West Asia, and for all types of cargo, according to a trade notice issued by the line. The steep raise will im-pact shippers, already fac-ing delays in reaching des-tinations in the U.S. due to the Red Sea crisis, which

Follow suit? Industry sources say other shipping lines may follow suit as the detour via the Cape of Good Hope on the southern tip of Africa means a 15-day delay in cargo from Asia reaching destinations in Europe, and even more for the U.S. ports. Follow suit?

ports. French liner CMA-CGM had more than tripled Freight All Kinds (rates ap-plicable to all types of goods) from December 25. The FAK had been raised to \$4,750 per TEU (20-foot equivalent unit) against \$1,000 two months ago. The rates include basic freight and bunker-related

surcharges. Usually, box rate in-crease is different depend-ing on the size – a 20-ft or a 40-ft container.

40-ft container. However, according to an official of a large freight-forwarding company, Maersk had said it would keep the rate same for all types of boxes. (*The writer is with The Hindu businessline*)

:::

TRADE

ported oorted \$20.45 billion goods from the EFTA counhillion tries in 2023 with inflows of pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, and coins valued at \$167 billion

Generic drugs sector A senior government offi-cial earlier clarified that In-dia will not go against the interests of its generic drugs industry in any of the Free Trade Agreements (FTA) it is negotiating with partner countries, and repartner countries, and re-jected the demand for 'data exclusivity' provision in the free trade pact with the EFTA bloc.

EFTA bloc. "There is a likelihood that the free trade pact bet-ween India and the EFTA can be formalised before the Indian elections are anthe indian elections are an nounced as all the ground work has been done," the official said. (The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

Indian start-ups urge CCI to order Google to reinstate apps A group representing In-dian start-ups has asked the Competition Commis-sion of India (CCI) to order Google to reinstate apps it had removed for policy violations, a letter seen by Reuters shows, escalating a showdown with the US. giant in a key market. Google on Friday re-Google

try's antitrust watchdog CCI. The Commission has not public. Google declined to comalready spent months look-

ment on the letter. ADIF and CCI did not imme-diately respond to requests for comment. ing into start-ups' com-plaint that Google is not

plaint that Google is not following a 2022 antitrust directive that prevents it from taking adverse mea-sures against companies which use alternate billing systems. Google denies wrongdoing. The Alliance of Digital for comment. The app removal has sparked criticism from In-dian companies, many of which have been at odds with Google for years and criticised its practices.

Tata Motors to demerge into two listed companies India Foundation (ADIF) in

The Hindu Bureau

India Foundation (ADIF) in its March I letter to the CCI said Google's decision to remove apps was a "bra-zen move" which was anti-competitive and the regu-lator should ask the com-pany to reverse its decision. Google's move will cause "irreparable harm to the entire market", ADIF said in the letter, which is not public. Tata Motors Ltd.'s (TML) board has approved a de-merger of the company in-to two separate listed enti-ties: One for its commercial vehicles and related investments busi-ness and the other for pas-senger and electric vehi-cles, Jaguar Land Rover

and related investments The demerger would be implemented through a National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) scheme of

arrangement and all share-holders of TML would con-tinue to have identical sha-reholding in both entities, Tata Motors said in a filing.

lakh would be outsourced, he added. Blue Star cur-rently has a market share of 13.8% in RACs. On output, he said the existing plants were oper-ating at full capacity, while capacity was regularly be-ing added at Sri City. Blue Star posted ₹7,997 crore in consolidated reve-nue in FY23 and this year it could touch ₹10,000 crore. the Red Sea crisis, which started in October 19, 2023.

The proposed free trade agreement between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries, with a commit-ment of \$100-billion investment of \$100-billion invest-ments from the four-coun-try bloc into India over the next 15 years generating an the pact 'is generating an the pact 'is ready' and goes through legal scruti-ny, sources have said. "This is the first FTA for India where it has been able to get a commitment on investment and em-

Amiti Sen NEW DELHI

on investment and em-ployment from the partner nations. The EFTA coun-tries are looking at invest-

ing in joint ventures in areas such as pharmaceuti-

cals, especially medical devices, certain chemicals,

food processing and engi-neering products," an offi-cial tracking the matter told *businessline*.

vestment Agreement, in October 2016. The chapters contained

in the proposed pact in-clude trade in goods, rules

of origin, trade in services, investment promotion and

Free trade pact EFTA countries, which in-clude Switzerland, Fin-land, Norway and Leich-tenstein, re-started talks for a free trade pact with India, called Trade and In-vestment Agreement in

freight and bunker-related

cooperation, trade and sustainable development, and customs and trade facilitation.

facilitation. The promised invest-ments that will flow into In-dia from the EFTA coun-tries is likely to be made from their provident funds, the official said. The

Exports to EFTA India's exports to the EFTA bloc in 2023 (calendar year) were at \$1.87 billion, with items such as chemi-

and semi-precious stones, dominating the export basket. On the other hand, it im



the countries have

short-listed mainly

include areas where

the sources

there is no competition from India, according to

JV areas the countries have short-listed mainly include areas where there is no competition from India. "EFTA has agreed to the condition of investments being made in India be-cause they are getting mar-ket access. Also, they are not our competitors in the identified sectors. For in-stance, in India, most of the medical devices are be-ing imported from China. The pact will lead to diver-

The pact will lead to diver-sification of imports which is absolutely necessary," the official added.

cals, pharmaceuticals, ap-parel and pearls, precious The joint venture areas



Crypto trading in India hits 10-month high



Joining bits, pieces: The Indian market is riding the crest of a bitcoin rally, backed by institutional interest. REUTERS

Ayushi Kar

MUMBAI The bull run in Bitcoin has breathed new life into Indian exchanges with trading volumes touching a 10-month high in February. According to data shared by Crebaco, a cryptocurrency research firm, trades on Indian exchanges CoinDCX, WazirX and BitRNS hit \$2.6 million, \$3.4 million and \$7.8 million, respectively, in February clocking their highest-ever volumes since June 2023. However, these are still way short of the historic highs of 2021. These exchanges had been struggling with low trading volumes since the bear market of 2022.23, compounded by the Centre imposing a 30% on cryptocurrency trading.

transpondent synthesis and the Certure imposing a 20% on cryptocurrency trading. "The uptick in trading volumes on exchanges is driven by the improvement in sentiment and demand globally. [Vear] 2024 will be the year of crypto, although the Centre's tax regime will dampen the uptick in volume on Indian exchanges," said Rajagopal Menon, VP, WazirX. "Deposits increased by 80% in the last three months compared with the previous three months. There was 100% increase in total transactions across platform in last three months. There was 100% increase in sign-ups during the same period," Mr. Menon added. Bitcoin is currently trading at \$65,000 – about 6% lower than its all-time high in November 2021. The Indian crypto market is experiencing a The Indian crypto market is experiencing a high, riding the wave of Bitcoin rally. This surge is

largely driven by growing institutional interest. (The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

Land of the rising technology

How Chinese retailers can offer Americans steep bargains on clothes

In 2023, more than 1 billion de minimis packages came via U.S. customs, up from 134 million in 2015; China is the biggest source of retail packages entering the U.S., accounting for the bulk of the nearly 3 million small parcels that come through every day under the rule, according to official data

NEWS ANALYSIS

Associated Press WASHINGTON s a substitute teach er in her mid-20s, Lindsey Puls was delighted to discover the fashion world of Shein

more than 10 years ago, lured in by its super-low prices – with tops selling for a few dollars, dresses for a few dollars, dresses under \$10, and free ship-ping on orders over \$29. Ms. Puls, who has a blog called "Have Clothes, Will Travel," joined other in-fluencers in modelling her low-priced but trendy pur-chases on social media like Instarzam and TikTok. Instagram and TikTok, contributing to a surge in popularity for Shein. The company, which was founded in China and sells

with a trade rule known as

the de minimis exception,

lued under \$800 to enter

which allows parcels

son per day. With the explosion of online shopping, that rule is now coming under scru-tiny. While America's Gen clothing manufactured there, is now the top fast fashion retailer in the U.S. Z shoppers may celebrate online bargains, lawmak-ers from both parties are questioning if the rule al-lows manufacturers to fashion retailer in the U.S. "From my experience, they have pretty good de-signs for the price and ex-tensive varieties," said M.S. Puls, who lives in Shiocton, Wisconsin. "The U.S. Is in this phase where 'more is better." Many people want to get as much clothing as money can buy." How can stylish imports from the other side of the Pacific be so cheap? The answer has much to do with a trade rule known as lows manufacturers to avoid tariffs aimed at pro-tecting American firms and bypass laws barring the im-ports of products made by forced labour, illicit drugs or unsafe materials.

va

Drug trade fear On Thursday, a group of 40 lawmakers asked Home-land Security Secretary Alexander Mayorkas to crack down on the de mini-mic trade which they caid mis trade, which they said also facilitates the flow of



Trade on the line: E-com is behind the surge in the explosive growth of de minimis packages LaFonda Sutton-Burke, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Director of Field Operations, Arb

internationally in 2022

deadly drugs like fentanyl into the U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer of Oregon, the top Democrat on the House Ways and Means Trade Subcommit-tee, has introduced a legis-lation to exclude non-mar-ket economies like China from the rule. A bill intro-duced in the Senate would duced in the Senate would make the practice reciprocal. China, for example, sets the de minimis thresh

and import laws of the countries where it oper-ates, including the U.S. re-quirements for de minimis packages.

de minimis exception Introduced in 1938, the de minimis exception was intended to facilitate the flow of small packages valued at no more than \$5, the equiv-alent of about \$106 today. abinto thank 3, the equiv-alent of about 3166 today. The threshold increased to \$200 in 1994 and \$800 in 2016. At the time, Sen. John Thune, a South Dako-ta Republican, said the bill would "empower more Americans to engage in global commerce." In 2023, for the first time, more than 1 billion de through U.S. customs, up from 134 million packages in 2015. China is the big-gest source of retail pack-

gest source of retail pack-ages entering the U.S., accounting for the bulk of the nearly 3 million small par-cels that come through ev-

reles that come through ex-ery day under the rule, ac-evr day under the rule, ac-evr day under the rule, ac-evr day under proximately ac-field operations for Cus-tom and Border Protec-tion's Chicago field office, which oversees one of the nation's buisset ports for de minimis parcels. Behind the surge is the explosive the surge is the explosive growth in e-com, she said. A June 2023 report by

the House Select Commitcomply with the customs

tee on China's Communist Party found that Shein and Temu, a low-cost online re-tailer of clothing and household goods, alone ac-counted for more than 30% of all packages shipped to the U.S. daily

15

under the exemption. China's exports grew on-ly 0.6% last year, but the bright spot was cross-bor-der e-commerce, which inthere is a point was closs dot-der e-commerce, which in-cludes but is not limited to the de minimis packages. These online sales expand-ed nearly 20% in 2023 to reach L83 trillion yuan, or \$257 billion, nearly 8% of the country's total exports. The U.S. is the biggest market, accounting for more than a third of Chi-nese goods bought online and shipped international-by in 2022, the last year for which China's official cus-toms data are available.

toms data are available. The U.S. does not in-clude these direct online retail sales in import fi-gures, so it is difficult to know the true dollar value of the de minimis parcels. Charles Benoit, Trade Counsel for the Coalition Counsel for the Coalition for a Prosperous America, said an estimated \$188 bil-lion worth came into the U.S. from other countries in 2022.

in 2022. A repeal of the provision could add \$20 to \$30 to each transaction, making it financially impossible for businesses such as Shein to sell to U.S. consumers at the low prices they are of-fering now. M. Panoit caid fering now, Mr. Benoit said.

+

But, the deminimis rule also has powerful defen-ders. The National Foreign Trade Council, whose members include major shippers such as FedEs, UPS and DHL as well as on-line retailers like Amazon and eBay, argue restricting its use would make pur-chases more expensive for American consumers and small businesses. The cost of a \$50 package would double, the Council said . Shein, now based in Sin-Shein, now based in Singapore, said in a statement it has made it a priority to



Tokyo, Japan on Monday. Japan's Nikkei 225 share benchmark has topped 40,000 for the first time as strong demand for technology shares kept pushing the index higher.. REUTERS

the U.S.

cles (EVs). Significantly lighter than steel, it is now the metal of choice in a

wide range of parts for EVs.

or almost 9% of the global supplies last year, accord-ing to the International Aluminium Institute. Roughly two million of that was shipped to Europe and

Bitcoin bursts above \$65,000, record high comes into view

ns, Arbogast

old at about \$7. "The de minimis loo-phole is a threat to Ameri-can competitiveness, con-sumer safety and basic human rights," Mr. Blume-pauer said in December.

nauer said in December. But, the de minimis rule

Reuters

Bitcoin rallied to a twoyear high on Monday, breaking above \$65,000 as a wave of money carried it within striking distance of record levels.

The price hit a session high of \$65,537 early in Europe, having already hit a new two-year high in Asian trading. It was last up 4% at \$65,045. Bitcoin hit a reord \$68,999.99 in Novem-

cord \$68,999.99 in Novem-ber 2021. The largest cryptocur-rency by market value had gained 50% this year and most of the rise came in the last few weeks where inflows into U.S.-listed bit-coin funds had surged. Spot bitcoin exchangetraded funds were



Net flows into the 10 largest U.S. spot bito 1 \$2 17 hillion

cord levels in 2021. traded funds were ap-proved in the United States earlier this year. Their launch opened the way for new, large investors and has re-ignited enthusiasm and momentum reminic. cord levels in 2021. "The flows are not dry-ing up as investors feel more confident the higher price appears to go," said Markus Thielen, head of mesearch at crupto analyt. and momentum reminis-cent of the run up to reresearch at crypto analyt-ics house 10x Research in Singapore. Net flows into the 10 largest U.S. spot bit-coin funds reached \$2.17 billion in the week to March 1, with more than half going into BlackRock's Scharee Pitcein Trut, ac iShares Bitcoin Trust, ac-cording to LSEG data. Smaller rival ether has

hitched a ride on specula-tion that it too may soon have exchange-traded funds driving inflows. It's up 50% year-to-date and by Monday was trading at two-year highs, up 2.6% on the day at 33,518. The rally has come in tandem with records tum-bling on stock indices from Japan's Nikkei to the 5&P 500 and Nasdaq and with volatility agues in equities hitched a ride on specula

volatility gauges in equities and foreign exchange turn-ing lower.

away from Russia to othe

Europe to tussle with U.S. for aluminium if EU opts for Russia ban

NEWS ANALYSIS

Reuters

European and U.S. buyers will compete aggressively for West Asian aluminium if the European Union (EU) bans Russian metal in the coming months, sparking price rises reminiscent of 2018 when sanctions were imposed on Rusal.

A race for aluminium from West Asian countries, including the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, will Emirates and Bahrain, will fuel inflation for Western firms in the transport, packaging and construc-tion industries – already facing high raw-material and payroll costs. Aluminium is a key in-gredient for electric vehi-





The loss of Russian me tal would leave Europe with a shortfall of around 500,000 tonne, some of which could be offset with the restart of idled capaci-

ty in the region. But not all. "Middle Eastern (West Asian) suppliers will not be able to fully substitute Europe's shortfall quickly," said Dmitri Ceres at U.S.-based aluminium trader

PerenniAL Buvers of aluminium in

the physical market pay the London Metal Exchange (LME) price plus a premium to cover tran-sport and handling costs and taxes

and taxes. "European premiums will have to rise to attract metal away from other re-gions including the U.S. Stremiums in the U.S. will also have to rise to keep the metal coming," he said. U.S. sanctions on Rus-sian producer Rusal in April 2018 triggered a crisis that saw aluminium on the London Metal Exchange (LME) jump 3% in a few days to seven-year highs. European duty-paid

the following month, while U.S. premiums increased 20% over the same period.

LME response Price rises in the event of a new ban are unlikely to ex-tend as far as those in 2018 due to surpluses in Asia, with Russian supply also Self-sanctioning and 200% tariffs on U.S. im-ports have meant many U.S. firms have diversified

likely to be diverted to Chi-na, already a major reci-pient of Russian alumini-um after Russia invaded Ukraine. However, the strength of the reaction will depend on whether the LME as a result of EU sanctions decides to ban Russian origin aluminitum, which comprises 90% of inventories in LME regis-tered warehouses. "If Rusal's tonnages were no longer accepted in

TDM, EU imports of Rus-sian aluminium totalled 512,122 tonne in 2023, or 8% of the total, from 12% in

2022 and 19% in 2018. EU imports of alumini-um from West Asia were um from West Asia Were nearly 1.2 million tonne, or 18.8% of the total last year, while the U.S. imported more than 8,00,000 tonne or 19.3%.

European duty-paid premiums shot up 45% in

:::

likely to be diverted to Chi-

THE HINDU -Sport

BLOW FOR CSK

16

Conway set to undergo surgery, likely to miss this edition of IPL



New Zealand opener Devon Conway is all but ruled out of the Indian Premier League (IPL) due to a left thumb injury that will take eight weeks to heal, dealing a blow to Chennai Super Kings. Conway sustained the injury during the T20I series against Australia last month and will undergo a surgery on his left thumb

FRESH START SRH appoints Cummins as captain for IPL 2024



Australia's World Cup-winning captain Pat Cummins will lead Sunrisers Hyderabad in the upcoming Indian Premier League, the franchise announced on Monday. Cummins replaced South African Aiden Markram, who led the franchise in the 2023 season. This will be Cummins' first captaincy stint in the IPL

OPPORTUNITY James Franklin replaces Stevn as SRH pace bowling coach



Sunrisers Hyderabad on Monday named James Franklin as its pace bowling coach for the upcoming IPL. The Kiwi replaces Dale Steyn, who has sought a break. "Dale Steyn will not be joining us this season due to personal reasons and James Franklin will be the Pace wling coach for this season." SRH announced.

THRILLER Sri Lanka pips Bangladesh in a high-scoring encounter



Sri Lanka beat Bangladesh by three runs in a thrilling T20I series opener in Sylhet on Monday The scores: Sri Lanka 206/3 in 20 overs (Kusal Mendis 59 wickrama 61 n.o., Asalanka 44 n.o.) bt Bangladesh 203/8 in 20 overs (Mahmudullah 54, Jaker Ali 68).

Mumbai thrashes Tamil Nadu by an innings and 70 runs

The visitors' batters fail to fire yet again to be shot out for just 162; Mulani picks up four wickets in the second innings, while Shardul, Avasthi and Kotian scalp two each; the hosts enter the summit clash for the 48th time

RANJI TROPHY

Amol Karhadkar MUMBAI

The writing was on the wall after Mum-bar's lower-order united out to be a manic. Monday for Tamil Nadu as the hosts completed a thumping innings and 70-run win against their fami-liar foe to book a berth in the Ranji Trophy final for the 48th time. the 48th time. Forty-nine minutes after

tea on day three at the Sharad Pawar Cricket Acade-my ground, Shreyas Iyer who had dropped a sitter off the first ball of Tamil Nadu's second innings -caught a miscued heave off caught a miscued heave off Sandeep Warrier's blade to give Shams Mulani his fourth wicket to bring an end to the visitors innings. Tamil Nadu was bun-dled out for 162 in a little over two sessions for the second time in three days. At the start of the day, with a lead C207 runs and Tanush Kotian and Tushar Deshpande hawing added more than 60 runs for the last wicket, Tamil Nadu +

last wicket, Tamil Nadu hoped to wind up the Mumbai innings as quickly as possible. Just when Kotian was nearing a rare milestone of a No. 10 scoring two hun-dreds in succession, Sai

ureus in succession, Sai Sudharshan lunged for-ward to pouch an excellent catch off Washington Sun-dar to dismiss Deshpande. Kotian was stranded on

89 (126b, 12x4) as Mumbai



d Tamil Nadu's

ended its first essay at 378. Thanks to the last three wickets adding 272 runs, Mumbai finished with a lead of 232. Shardul Thakur and Mo-hit Avasthi then got into ac-tion right away as the Ta-mil Nadu top-order collapsed yet again. Sai Sudharsan (caught behind) and N. Jagadeesan (played across to be legsbe-fore) were dismissed by ended its first essay at 378.

and ended all of TN's hopes of making Mumbai bat again. The last five wickets fell

for only nine runs to give the Mumbai spin duo of Mulani and Kotian a booster ahead of the final. fore) were dismissed by Shardul while Washington,

The scores: Tamil Nadu — 1st innings: 146. Mumbai — 1st innings: Prithvi Shaw c Indrajith b Kuldeep Sen 5, Bhupen Lalwani Ibw b Sai

Shardui while Washington, promoted to No. 3, poked at one from Avasthi to get wicketkeeper Hardik Ta-more into action again. Tamore then accepted an edge to end Indrajith's

(70, 105b, 9x4) impressive knock. When Vijay Shan-kar was stumped off Shams Mulani, it gave Tamore his fifth victim with the gloves and ended all of TN's hopes of making Mumbai Sai Kishore 2, Ajinkya Raha Indrajith b Sai Kishore 19, Shreyas Iyer b Warrier 3, Hardik Tamore c Washington b Sai

9-161. Mumbai bowling: Shardul 10-4-16-2, Avasthi 10-2-26-2, Deshpande 9-1-26-0, Mulani 13.5-1-53-4, Kotian 5-0-18-2, Musheer 4-0-16-0. Player-of-the-Match: Shardul Thakur.

0, S. Ajith Ram b Mulani 4, Sandeep Warrier c Shreyas b

n Sundar c Tam Avasthi 4, B. Indrajith c Tamore asthi 70, Pradosh Ranjan Pau c Tamore b Kotian 25, Vijay Shankar st. Tamore b Mulani 24, R. Sai Kishore b Kotian 21, M. Mohammed c Rahane b Mulani Sandeep Warrier c Shreyas b Mulani 0, Kuldeep Sen (not out) 1; Extras (b-5, lb-2, nb-1): 8; Total (in 51.5 overs): 162. Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-6, 3-10, 4-83, 5-121, 6-153, 7-154, 8-160, 9-161.

Jagadeesan lbw b Shardul 0

TN coach Kulkarni

We lost the match at the toss, savs

Solid backing: Kulkarni said he wouldn't fully blame Sai Kishon as the skipper's instincts had v orked well till the semifina

While he was critical of the captain's decision to bat first, the coach felt he could see why the skipper chose to do what he did. "I wouldn't fully blame him either because if you look

either because if you look

at it positively, it has worked for him, and he got

the team to the semis." Though Sai Kishore was

the best bowler in the

match after taking six wick

ets, he lacked support from the other end, and the coach conceded that

<u>S. Dipak Ragav</u>

At the end of day two, R. Sai Kishore defended his decision to bat first on a pitch with generous grass covering that was friendly to the seamers, saying he felt batting last would be difficult difficult. The Tamil Nadu skipper

said, "I do a lot of things out of my instinct. It was my decision, and that in-stinct has worked so far.

hom the outer end, and the coach conceded that fellow left-arm spinner S. Ajith Ram was under-utilised. Despite the disappoint-forts of the batters who failed to adapt to pacer-friendly conditions, the 57-year-old praised their ef-forts this season. "A few batters scored more than 500 runs, and Indrajith played some cru-cial knocks against Karna-taka, Punjab and even to

my decision, and that in-stinct has worked so far. Only by day five, we will know if it is correct." Unfortunately, the TN batters did not put up a fight to ensure either the match lasted five days or Mumbai batted again. After the humiliating in-nings defeat, TN coach Su-lakshan Kulkarni did not mince words when he said his side lost the match at 9 a.m. on the first day. "The way we played, we could have done better. We planned everything and decided to play three seamers by dropping abat-ter who had done well. The main idea was that if we win the toss, we will book," said Kulkarni. cial knocks against Karna-taka, Punjab and even to-day. It gives a lot of pleasure watching his batting," "We have done well to reach the semifinals after a long time, though a trophy would have been better and an icing on the cake," said Kulkarni. said Kulkarni



I targeted 500 runs and 30 wickets in the season: Kotian

S. Dipak Ragav

Despite its top-order not firing, Mumbai has reaped the benefits of its lower-or-der batters' valuable con-tributions. One person who has done that effec-tively this year has been Tawyek Verian. The 25 Tanush Kotian. The 25-year-old has bailed out the 41-time champion a few times, including in the semifinals against Tamil Nadu with an unbeaten 89. He walked in at 211 for He walked in at 211 for eight and put the game beyond TN with his chan-celess knock. It shouldn't come as a surprise, though, as the all-rounder said he has worked on his skills with a number in mind. "I had a target like scor-ing 500 runs and 30 odd

ing 500 runs and 30 odd wickets because last year I showed that I could bat down the order and contribute 350 or 380 runs (sic 303 runs)," said Kotian, who now has 481 runs and 22 wickets with one more game left in the season

He felt in the season. He felt that having so-meone like Shardul Thakur at No. 8 ensured the team was confident of posting decent totals even if it lost the top-order cheaply

Rathod-Wadkar stand gives Vidarbha a second wind

Abhishek Saini NAGPUR

The fifties from Yash Rath od and Akshay Wadkar in the face of an impending crisis not only held Vidarbcrisis not only held Vidarb-ha through the third day but also put it in the driv-er's seat in the first Ranji Trophy semifinal against Madhya Pradesh at the VCA Stadium (Civil Lines) here on Monday. Their 158-run sixth-wick-et alliance started when Vi-darbha was staring down the barrel, at 161 for five, merely 59 runs ahead in

merely 59 runs ahead in the second innings. The pair's session-and-a-half-long defiance saw Vidarb-ha end at 343 for six, 261 runs ahead.

overs

82 deliverie

Mokhade was undaunt-

runs ahead. The pair started ticking ahead in singles against spinners Kumar Kartikeya and Saransh Jain. While Rathod gave only a glimpse of the trademark left-han-dar grave in bio for the der grace in his first essay, he stamped it with plea-sure in the second - the



back-to-back flicks off Kul-want Khejroliya being a both batters on either side of the lunch break. The left-arm spinner had Sho rey caught behind before getting Mokhade leg-before case in point. Captain Wadkar dis-Captain Wadkar dis-played great restraint, get-ting to fifty off 92 deliver-ies, but finally gave in at the stroke of stumps, in-dulging in a slash and hol-ing out at second slip on 77 runs. Rathod was unbea-ten on 97. on the first delivery post lunch.

Karun Nair flirted with danger, slashing outside off throughout his 43-ball stint He pocketed five boun-

Same vein Earlier in the morning, Dhruv Shorey resumed in the same vein he had closed the second day. The loss of Akshay Wakhare did not pinch as Shorey and Aman Mokhade wiped off the G9-run deficit inside 20 daries, two of them through the slip cordon, through the sip cordon, before an in-seaming deliv-ery from Khejroliya crashed into his stumps. Madhya Pradesh had little inkling that Rathod and Wadkar were just getting started. started the 69-run deficit inside 20 The score

Vidarbha —1st innings: 170. Madhya Pradesh —1st innings:

Moknade was undaunt-ed taking on the bouncers against Avesh Khan and Khejroliya even with traps at deep-fine and deep square-leg in place. He brought up his maiden First-Class half-century in 82 deliveries 252. Vidarbha —2nd innings: Atharva Taide Ibw b Avesh 2, Dhruv Shorey c Mantri b Kartike 40, Akshay Wakhare c Gawali b Anubhav 1, Aman Mokhade lbw b Kartikeya 59, Karun Nair b Khejroliya 38, Yash Rathod (batting) 97, Akshay Wadkar Kartikeya accounted for



(sub) Kushwah b Anubhav 77, Aditya Sarwate (batting) 14; Extras (b-4, lb-14, nb-1): 15; Total (for six wkts. in 90 overs): 343.

Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-17, 3-90, 4-137, 5-161, 6-319. Madhya Pradesh bowling: Avesh 18-3-65-1, Venkatesh

3-0-20-0, Anubhav 13-1-68-2, Kulwant 13-1-45-1, Kartikeya 27-4-73-2, Saransh 7-1-28-0, Sagar 9-1-30-0. :::

Mumbai Cricket Associa

Mumbai Cricket Associa-tion secretary, said. Four of Mumbai's five home games – including the quarterital and semil-nal – have been played at the suburban facility. The game at the Wankhede – against Utar Pradesh in Ja-nuary – was Mumbai's only loss of the season. It is understood that the feam management pre-ferred SPCA for the knock-ours due to the nature of

outs due to the nature of the pitch over Wankhede. Besides, the Wankhede was advised to be kept aside for Indian Premie League preparation. A combination of broadcast requirements, spectator convenience and avoidingflak for prioritising the IPL over Ranji, the MCA is un-derstood to have been ad-vised by BCCI to conduct

Wankhede Stadium to host Ranji final from March 10

Amol Karhadkar

MUMBAI Mumbai will host the Ranji Trophy final at the Wank-hede Stadium from March 10. It will only be the se-cond Ranji game at the Big W this season. Irrespective of its oppo-nent, the final will be played in Mumbai due to the tournament rules.

the tournament rules. Since Mumbai has more points in the league stage than Madhya Pradesh and Vidarbha, it will enjoy the

home advantage. "The Wankhede Stadium has been the home of Mumbai cricket for almost half a century. So consider-ing the legacy of the tour-nament and the impornament and the impor-tance of such a big game for the whole Mumbai cricket community, it is fit-ting that the final is played here," Ajinkya Naik, the



the final at Wankhede.

Kishore 15, Musheer Khan st. Jagadeesan b Sai Kishore 55, Mohit Avasthi st. Jagadeesan b

Tushar Deshpande c Sai Sudharsan b Washington 26; Jai Kalife 36-9-99-6, Ajili Kalif 14:1-68-0, Washington 7.5-0-21-1, Pradosh 1-1-0-0. **Tamil Nadu — 2nd innings:** Sai Sudharsan c Tamore b Shardul 5,

Sudharsan b Washington 26; Extras (lb-12, nb-3, pen-5): 20; Total (in 106.5 overs): 378. Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-40, 3-48, 4-91, 5-96, 6-106, 7-106, 8-211, 9-290. Tamil Nadu bowling: Warrier

Kishore 35, Shams Mulani b Sai Kishore 0, Shardul Thakur c Jagadeesan b Kuldeep Sen 109, Tanush Kotian (not out) 89, Tamil Nadu bowling: Warrier 21-0-77-1, Kuldeep Sen 17-0-75-2, Mohammed 8-2-21-0, Sai Kishore 38-9-99-6, Ajith Ram

INBRIDE



Injured NZ seamer O'Rourke out of second Australia Test

Black Caps seamer Will O'Rourke will miss the second Test against Australia in Christchurch this week with a hamstring strain, New Zealand Cricket said on Monday. Uncapped pace-bowler Ben Sears has been called up in his place for the sears dear direct horn search and with the line of the moment dear direct horn search and with the line of the search and the search of the search dear direct horn search and with the line of the search and the search of the search dear direct horn search and with the search dear direct horn search and the search dear direct horn search and the search dear direct horn search and search dear direct horn search and search and the search dear direct horn search and search dear dear direct horn search and search dear dear dear search dear dear dear search dear dear dear search dear se second and final home game against Australia, starting Friday at Hagley Park. The touring Australians lead the series 1-0 after their 172-run victory in the first Test, which finished on Sunday in Wellington. NZ head coach Gary Stead said 26-year-old Sears is ready for Test cricket.

Sony Pictures extends collaboration with UEFA

Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI) has extended its collaboration with the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) with the renewal of exclusive broadcast and digital rights for three years from 2024-25 to the 2026-27 season. Sony will broadcast some of the biggest European club football leagues, including the UEFA Champions League, UEFA Super League, UEFA Conference League, UEFA Super Cup and UEFA Vier League. UEFA Youth League.

Jaismine loses to Taguchi in the round-of-64 bout

Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Jaismine Lamboria lost 0-5 to Japanese Ayaka Taguchi in a women's 60kg round-of-64 contest in the first World Olympic boxing qualifier at the E-Work Arena in Busto Arsizo, Italy, late on Sunday, With Jaismine's defeat, three of the nine Urdina: in few for Diomsic outest abloces exited Indians in fray for Olympic quota places exited from the event on the opening day. National champion Lakshya Chahar will take on Iranian Meysam Gheshlaghi in an 80kg round-of-64 contest late on Monday night.

Big win for Torpedoes against Hawks in PVL

+

Bengaluru Torpedoes scored a dominant 15-6, 15-11, 15-12, win over Hyderabad Black Hawks in the third season of the RuPay-Prime Volleyball League held in Chennai on Monday. T.R. Sethu was named Player of the match.



Boulter's day out at the San Diego Open

Unseeded Katie Boulter of England capped a run of upsets to win the San Diego Open singles title with a 57, 62, 62 victory over sixth-seeded Marta Kostyuk of Ukraine on Sunday. A 10-year Tour veteran, the Z7-year-old Boulter won her second pro singles title with ther fifth straight victory over higher-seeded players in the waeklorg WTA 500 awart week-long WTA 500 event.

Berardi ruled out of Euro 2024 with Achilles injury

Italy forward Domenico Berardi has been ruled out of Euro 2024 after suffering a season-ending Achilles injury during Sassuolo's 1-0 defeat by Verona in Serie A on Sunday. Sassuolo said in a statement on Monday that tests had revealed a "complete rupture of the Achilles tendon" in Berardi's right leg. The 29-year-old will undergo surgery on Tuesday, his club added, without specifying how long he will be sidelined.

Yuan Yue wins in Austin, captures her first WTA title

ÇM C

Eighth seed Yuan Yue outlasted sixth ranked Wang Xiyu 6-4, 7-6(4) to win her first WTA title on Sunday, capturing an all-Chinese final at the ATX Open. Yuan needed two hours and 13 minutes Open. Yuan needed two hours and 13 minutes and seven championship points to subdue Wang, who rallied from 5-2 down in the second set to force a tie-breaker in the showdown at Austin. In her only prior WTA final, Yuan had lost to American Jessica Pegula last October at Seoul.

Indian table tennis teams script history, qualify for Paris Olympics

Men and women make the cut through World team rankings; sides will consist of four members, wherein the fourth player will be a substitute

K. Keerthivasan

or the first time in the history of Indian table tennis, the National men's and women's teams qualified for the Olympics through the World team rankings, the final list of which was re leased on Monday. The In-dian men's team is ranked dian men's team is ranked 15 while the women are 13. "It is a very big achieve-ment. It's been a long pro-cess. A big thanks to the Ex-ecutive Committee of Table Tennis Rederation of India (TTFP), coaches and players who have made it happen," TTFI secretary Kamlesh Mehat told *The Hindu*. It will be a four-member

because in the 'Race to Pa-ris' rankings, all the four players are fighting for a place in singles as well as in

Kumble to do so.

the team. Sharath is at the It will be a four-member top at 53 followed by Ma-nav Thakkar (57), Harmeet Desai (57) and G. Sathiyan eam wherein the fourth player will be a substitute. However, it might be a tough call for TTFI to make (62) As for the two spots in

Planning ahead

singles in men and women being available as a result of the team making it to Pa-ris, the TTFI Secretary,

said, "we will decide on it (who will play singles) as we have time till June 18 to give the names [to ITTF]." bles (a tie in Olympics con-sists of four singles and one doubles) by May so that we Harmeet urged TTFI to re-lease the team list by the

month of May so that players get enough time to get enough time to pre-pare," he said.

eling: The Indian players are delighted to be playing i prepare. "It's great India has qualified. I hope TTFI comes up with the final list of who will make up the

team, and who plays dou

Ashwin is always trying to find ways to get you out, says Root

Press Trust of India

England's Joe Root said that India's R. Ashwin, who will play his 100th Test during the fifth match against England in Dha-purchelo is a constant ramshala, is a constant threat who hardly believes in the concept of wearing the opposition down.

Mallorca stuns Girona:

Bilbao holds Barcelona

in a goalless affair

"Ashwin is always trying to find ways of getting you out rather than trying to

out rather than trying to wear you down over long periods of time," Root said on Sky Sports cricket pod-cast hosted by former En-gland captains Mike Ather-ton and Nasser Hussain. Ashwin recently went past the 500-wicket miles-tone in the traditional for-mat becoming only the se-cond Indian after Anil Kumble to do so. Root said the infinite variety that Ashwin has in his ly," he said.



s Ashwin has at his disposal. K.R. DEEPAR



Our first goal was to qualify and we have been working for a long time to improve our world rankings. "My focus will be on making the cut for Olym-

World teams in Busan, and Archana Kamath

Goa and Services enter Santosh Trophy semifinals

Sports Bureau

Goa made it to the semifinals of the 77th National Football Championship for the Santosh Trophy by the Santosh Trophy by prevailing over a gritty Del-hi in the second quarterfi-

hi in the second quarterh-nal in Yupia, Arunachal Pradesh, on Monday. All three goals came off 'corners' in the first half where Delhi took the lead early in the eight minute off a Sahil Kumar header. Sealing the issue

between Manipur and As-

Sealing the issue Jobern Cardozo produced the equaliser in the 20th minute before Lloyd Car-dozo diverted home the other flag-kick to seal the issue for Goa. The five-time champion and Mizoram (the second match on Tuesday)

The results (quarterfinals): Services 2 (Shafeel P.P. pen-9, Samir Murmu 45+1) bt Railways / Goa 2 (Jobern Cardozo 20, Lloyd Cardozo 29) bt Delhi 1 (Sahil Kumar 8).

Smriti-Perry duo revels in RCB's win

WPL SEASON 2

Mayank Chaudhary

Smriti Mandhana (80, 50b) 10x4, 3x6) instilled trophy 10x4, 3x6) instilled trophy hopes in the faithful sup-porters with an astonish-ing knock that helped the Royal Challengers Banga-lore finish the home leg on a birdh

Copete, right, found the decisive goal. AF

al Barcelona a chance to take second, but it drew Agence France-Presse MADRID take second, but it drew O-0 in Bilbao. Girona remained se-cond, seven points behind Real with Barcelona anoth-er point behind. Atletico Madrid tight-ened its grip on fourth as it beat Betis 2-1. Presented with a chance to gain ground on LaLiga leader Real Madrid, both Girona and Barcelona tamely surrendered points on Sunday.

After Real Madrid drew After Real Madrid drew in Valencia the night be-fore, surprising title chal-lenger Girona had a chance to reverse its recent slump and regain some ground. But it continued to subside as it lost 0-1 at Mallorca. That gave giant Catalan riv-The results: LaLiga: Mallorca 1 (Copete 33) bt Girona 0; Athletic Bilbao 0 drew with Barcelona 0. Serie A: Napoli 2 (Kvaratskhelia 42, Raspadori 88) bt Juventus 1 (Chiesa 81); Atalanta 1 (Lookman 28) lost to Bologna 2 (Zirkzee 57-pen, Ferguson 61).

On Monday night, after On Monday night, after posting the Women's Pre-mier League 2024's highest total of 198 for three, RCB handed UP Warriorz a 23-run loss at the M. Chinnas-wamy Stadium here. While chasing a mam While chasing a mam-moth 199, UPW openers Alyssa Healy and Kiran Navgire scored 46 in the

first four overs. Kiran mis-cued a lofted shot and was

cued a lotted shot and was caught by Georgia Ware-ham off Sophie Devine. So-phie Molineux trapped Chamari Athapaththu in front to give RCB another wicket in a contentious DRS review.

4x4, 4x6), Richa Gliosi (hoc but) 21 (10b, 2x4, 1x6), Sophie Devine (not out) 2 (2b); Extras (b-4, lb-1, w-4): 9; Total (for three wkts. in 20 overs): 198 Earlier, the league wit-nessed its first Indian opening duo with S. Meghopening duo with S. Megh-ana pairing up with Smriti. The out-of form Devine was pushed down the or-der. Meghana took good advantage of the opportun-

high.

overs): 198. FALL OF WICKETS 1-51 (Meghana, 5.3 overs), 2-146 (Smriti, 16.1), 3-188 (Perry, 19.1). WARRIORZ BOWLING Harris 3-0-250, Anjali 3-0-41-1, Rajeshwari 3-0-43-0, Athapaththu :::

ROYAL CHALLENGERS

KOYAL CHALLENGENS S. Meghana c Athapaththu b Anjali 28 (21b, 5x4), Smriti Mandhana c Poonam b Deepti 80 (50b, 10x4, 3x6), Ellyse Perry c Poonam b Ecclestone 58 (37b, 4x4, 4x6), Richa Ghosh (not out)



home leg on a high. K. MU

3-0-32-0, Deepti 4-0-30-1, 3-0-32-0, beepti 4-0-30-1, Ecclestone 4-0-22-1. **UP WARRIORZ** 45/38-Healys: R7, Kicha b Molineux 55 (328), 7r4, 3x6), Kiran Navgire c Wareham 10 (ebc), and (f), and (f), and (f), Uareham 16 (f), 2x4), Grace Harts c Richa b Devine 5 (f2), 1x4), Shveta Sehravact Exta b Asha 1 (5b), Deepti Sharma c & b Asha 33 (52), 4x4, 1x6), Osonam (Kenmar b Molineux 31 (24), 4x6), IS6)

175.

FALL OF WICKETS 1-47 (Kiran, 4.2), 2-63 (Athapaththu, 6.3), 3-74 (Harri 7.5), 4-89 (Shweta, 9.3), 5-113 (, 12.3), 6-154 (D -154 (Deepti, 17.4), one, 18.2), 8-175 7-159 (Ecclest

7-159 (Ecclestone, 18.2), 8-175 (Poonam, 19.6), **RCB BOWLING** Renuka 3-1-30-0, Devine 4-0-37-2, Molineux 4-0-29-2, Wareham 4-0-38-2, Asha 4-0-29-2, Ekta 1-0-10-0. **Toss:** Warriorz; **POM:** Smriti. *RCB won by 23 runs.* **Tuesday's match:** DC vs. MI, New Delhi, 7.30 p.m. Sophie Ecclestone b Wareham 4 (3b, 1x4), Anjali Sarvani (not out) 3 (4b); Extras (lb-2, w-15): 17; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs):



pics in mixed doubles with Manika Batra."

Sharath Kamal, a veteran of four Olympics, said it is a

great feeling of playing in the quadrennial event as a

"It is going to my last Olympics. If we can make

the quarters, it will be huge." Sharath said he will

play in quite a few WTT tournaments to see how

his singles form is. "I will

Manika Batra and Sreeja

The third spot in the

sam. which will be played

sam, which will be played on Tuesday. Earlier, six-time cham-pion Services put up a commanding display to de-

feat three-time champion Railways 2-0 in the first

first half. Services took the lead through a penalty convert-ed by Shafeel P.P. in the ninth minute before Samir Mumru scored the second in biturviting.

winner of the fourth quar-terfinal between Kerala

in injury-time. Services will meet the

Both goals came in the + first half.

quarterfinal of the day.

One last shot

team.

bowling keeps the batters guessing. "He uses creases diffe "He uses creases diffe-rently from traditional off-spinners. He uses over-spin, side-spin, can get really tight to the stumps, can go wider and he has got the carrom ball, you know, a lot of different tricks.

"So, you will have to be really wary of different threats that he poses and make sure that you have very good skill sets to coun-ter (him) and be on top of

ter (fiim) and be on top of him," he said. Root added that Ashwin often bowls six different deliveries in an over. "Ash-win is making sure that you don't play the previous ball. He is very good at try-ing to drag you across the crease and get your head to one side of it and heat to one side of it and beat both edges quite frequent-

I try to win games for my team irrespective of the format: Taide

The Vidarbha batter led the side to the knockout rounds of Syed Mushtaq Ali and Vijay Hazare Trophy and has been retained in the Punjab Kings squad for IPL 2024



Abhishek Saini NAGPUR

+

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hough Atharva Taide has aced most tests that his not-so-long career has entailed until now, the opening challenge confronting him with Vidarbha in the

Ranii Trophy was the litmus test of sorts. Ranji Trophy was the litmus test of sorts. Asked to succed a domestic giant, Faiz Fazal, who made 18a sppearances over a 20-year First Class career, Taidte would have been pardoned for dwelling more on his four-runs-from-two-innings record as opener in the Indian Premier League than the natural flair at the position through the rest of his career. But the 23-year-old rose to the occasion when his side took down Karnataka in the quarterfinals of the competition. Taide notched up a century at the top, helping

notched up a century at the top, helping Vidarbha to an imposing 460 runs in the first innings, which later proved a point of no return for the heavyweight. Landing the sucker punch on a team

Landing the sucker punch on a team that played out a draw against Chandigarh in its final group match, preferring to play Vidarbha over Saurashtra, made the victory even sweeter. "I would not like to put myself in someone else 's shoes. I am on there to fill in the space left by someone else. My goal

is to play cricket at the highest level, and that is what I am doing when I am playing First Class cricket. I want to go out there and express myself," said Taide.

A turnaround

This was the same confidence that allowed Taide to script a turnaround after scores of zero and four in his first two scores of zero and four in his first two outings with Punjab Kings in 2023. The left-hander moved to the No. 3 spot and got 182 runs from five innings at a strike rate nearing 150. There was a minor bilp in the comeback are, though. With Punjab chasing 2/4 against Delhi Capitals for a final push for the Playotfs, Taidés 42-ball 55 was not quite cutting it. With 86 runs needed off 30 deliveries, he became only the second batter in tournament to be 'retired out'. If the

tournament to be 'retired out'. If the ignominy was not enough in itself, questions over not retiring him sooner in the innings rubbed salt in his wound. "IPL is a platform where you cannot

"IPL is a platform where you cannot hide anything. If you are even slightly unfit mentally, physically, emotionally, or skill-wise, it shows. So you have to be 100% in all these departments and tick all these boxes to get the best out of yourself," said Taide. Despite the uncoremonious stat to his Despite the unceremonious stat to his

account, the importance of the seven games was not lost on Taide. "Every platform you play in, be it the IPL or the Ranji Trophy, you get

confidence that you are one step closer to your dream. Since I started playing, the goal has been to play for India. When I play with the best players in the world, it gives me confidence that I belong there.

pag with the best players in the worth, it gives me confidence that 1 belong there. And yes, the IPL also helped make me believe that I'm heading in the right direction," said Taide. Taide's career grew in leaps and bounds in 2023. If it commenced with the IPL debut, it runned another corner when he took over the reins of Vidarbha's white-ball teams. The news was not surprising, given he marshalled Vidarbha's white-ball teams. The news was not surprising, given he marshalled Vidarbha's or is maiden Cooch Behar Trophy in 2018. He led the side to the knockout rounds of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy and the Vijay Hazare Trophy. His retention in the Kings squad for the upcoming season bookended his year. While it might be prudent to start setting the benchmark even higher,

While it might be prudent to start setting the benchmark even higher, India-A in Taide's case, he is quick in admitting that is some distance away. "Going too far ahead of myself will be the biggest mistake I can make right now. What I have in my hand is to perform in every game that I play. I try to win games

for my team, irrespective of the format I play in. That is the only thing I can

control," says Taide. His 302 runs in seven innings in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, at a strike rate just shy of 170, are too far back in time for his liking. While his 529 runs in the Ranji Trophy this season make for a decent run-haul, Taide wants to ride into the IPL on the back of eye-catching performances in crunch matches.

After his 109 in the last-eight round was to that tune, Taide squandered an opportunity in the semifinal against Madhya Pradesh.

Talking straight "The wicket was good, we did not bat well. We should have shown more character," said Taide on getting strangled down leg on 39 in the first innings after navigating through the morning session on the opening day under overcast conditions.

His blunt, upfront admission of his giveaway is manifestation of Taide's eagerness to score and his expectations of himself.

As Vidarbha sits 261 runs ahead after three days of play, there is nothing Taide would want more than the final chance to sign-off the season in style.

THE GIST

Taide notched up a century at the top, helping Vidarbha to an imposing 460 runs in the first innings in the quarterfinals against Karnataka

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His career grew in leaps and bounds in 2023 as he made his IPL debut, it turned another corner when he took over the reins of Vidarbha's white-ball

Taide has 529 runs to his credit in the current Ranji Trophy season so far

Aggression — the driving force behind Vidarbha's Yash Thakur

Abhishek Saini

The most plain-sighted hint in Yash Thakur's disposition as he sets himself up at the top of his run-up are his raised collars. They do not drop even when he fields at deep fine leg. Yet if those fail to put the point across, the 25-year-old pacer lets his fist-pump celebrations, send-offs, and staredowns give it

away. "I think aggression is my strength. I believe it is necessary in the game. That is what drives me to give my best. We got just I70 in the first innings, Jand I to come back from there, we needed to be aggressive. Otherwise, I don't think we would have manaaced to, on this wicket," have managed to, on this wicket," said Thakur after the second day's play during Vidarbha's semifinal

against Madhya Pradesh (MP). While his three wickets for 51 runs were invaluable in Vidarbha restricting MP's lead to 82 runs on Sunday, it was his boldness, even if a footnote in the grander scheme of things, that truly underlined Thakur's flair.

Thakur's tiair. With Himanshu Mantri and Sagar Solanki beginning to wrest control back after MP's collapse earlier in the morning, Thakur took the



opportunity to remind who was charge, grabbing the ball tapped back at him by Solanki and flinging it back at the stumps.

'Celebrappeal' In the first session, Thakur

m une nrst session, Thakur unleashed a 'celebrappeal' after trapping Harsh Gawali leg before trapping Harsh Gawail leg before, topping it of with a fist pump in the path of the departing batter. The send-off was similar for Venkatesh lyer three overs later. "My nature is such. It would have been the same had we scored 300 in the first innings. It keeps me pumped," said Thakur. The highlight, hands down, came in the second session after Thakur

in the second session after Thakur darted from long on to the non-striker's end to catch Solanki inches outside the crease. As soon as the red light confirmed the third umpire's verdict, Thakur turned to the MP dugout and helped himself to

three fist-pumps. "I was double-minded. Had I "I was double-minded. Had 1 thrown and missed, that would have been a reprieve. So I thought why not go all the way. I thought about the Jonty diving run out as well, but the distance was a little too much, and then it was purely instincts taking over; "said Thakur. Though his genial responses off

the field cut a starkly distinct picture from his persona in the middle, Thakur said the switch is on purpose. "I think Morne Morkel convinced

me. He was aggressive when he played. He told me you have it inbuilt, so you should capitalise on

it. He said that will keep helping me develop and get the desired results," said Thakur, who worked with Morkel at Lucknow Super Giants in the Indian Premier League (IPL) last

year. Branded as a death-overs specialist after his exploits in the

Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy last season, Lucknow put faith in Thakur when Jaydev Unadkat's injury opened a spot in the eleven. The Vidarbha quick returned 13 wickets in nine games, including a four-wicket haul against Punjab Kings, which prompted the side to retain him for :::

with the player that I grew up watching, Gautam Gambhir. I learned so much from him. He taught me to be street-smart and tilt the match in the team's favour. That has helped me the most, which I can come back and use in domestic cricket. I'm lucky to have played that level," said Thakur.

the upcoming season. "I got to share the dressing room

level," said Thakur. This season, Thakur moved on from his tag of a limited-overs bowler, offering company to fellow quicks Umesh Yadav and Aditya Thakare in the Ranji Trophy with his senior partners have been more prolific, Thakur had an idea of what would improve his yield for the team. team.

Gameplan

"I think I can mix up the lengths well. I can switch between back-of-a-length and slightly fuller ones. I try to not let the batters settle to one pace or one length. But I would like to be more consistent with this," said Thakur.

with this," said Thakur. Before he moves on to the IPL bandwagon later this month, Thakur wants to go all in with Vidarbha, a side back in the semifinals of the Ranji Trophy after five years.

