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Scan to Register

IN BRIEF



Gadkari, Thakur in BJP second list for Lok Sabha poll

NEW DELHI/HYDERABAD
The BJP on Wednesday released its second list of 72 candidates for the Lok Sabha election, fielding Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari from Nagpur and Anurag Thakur from Hamirpur. » Page 15

Rahul announces five guarantees for women

DHULE
Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday announced five Nari Nyay guarantees, including ₹1 lakh annually for poor women and 50% reservation in Central government jobs, if his party is voted to power in the Lok Sabha election. » Page 15

SC to hear plea to include CJI on EC selection panel

NGO tells Supreme Court that Centre can take 'unfair advantage' while filling two vacancies; organisation asks the court to stay the new law on appointment of Election Commissioners

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to urgently hear on Friday a plea which said the Centre could take "unfair advantage" while filling the two vacancies of Election Commissioners (ECs) in the Election Commission of India (ECI) following the unexpected resignation of Arun Goel ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

A Bench headed by Justice Sanjiv Khanna agreed to list for hearing the plea by NGO Association for Democratic Reforms, which said the new law on the appointments of ECs should be put on hold.

The NGO said the Chief Justice of India (CJI) should be brought back on board

Matter of concern

The NGO's plea before the Supreme Court has asked for these specific interventions



Stay the implementation of Section 7 of The Chief Election Commission and other Election Commissions (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023

Direct the Union of India to appoint the vacant positions of Election Commissioners, till the pendency of the case in the Supreme Court, in accordance with the Selection Committee laid down by the Anoop Baranwal vs Union of India judgment of March 2023

Bring the CJI back on board the high-profile selection committee headed by the Prime Minister for appointment of ECs

the high-profile selection committee headed by the Prime Minister for appointments of ECs to the top poll body as directed by a landmark Supreme Court judgment in the Anoop Baranwal case of March 2, 2023.

"Now, the Executive has the ability to appoint two Election Commissioners which can give an unfair advantage to the Executive. The role of the Election Commission is critical in ensuring free and fair

elections and therefore, the appointments must also be seen to be fair and free from any bias or latches to the government of that time," the organisation, represented by advocate Prashant Bhushan and Cheryl D'Souza, submitted.

In Anoop Baranwal versus Union of India in March last year, a Constitution Bench headed by Justice K.M. Joseph (now retired) ordered the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and two ECs to be appointed by the President on the advice tendered by a committee of Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha or the leader of the single largest party in Opposition and the CJI.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 14

Will publish details of poll bonds 'in time', says CEC

The Hindu Bureau
JAMMU

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Wednesday said that the Commission would share details of electoral bonds "in time" and asserted that it believed in complete transparency.

The State Bank of India (SBI) was directed by the Supreme Court to submit the data by March 12. "They have given us the details in time. I will go back and look at the data, and would definitely disclose it in time," he said, speaking in Jammu where he was ending his nationwide visits before announcing the Lok Sabha election schedule.

He said the Commission believed only "in disclosure, disclosure and disclosure" to ensure high standards of transparency.

The SBI has issued bonds worth ₹16,518 crore in 30 tranches since 2018.

Press Conference on preparedness for General Elections



Rajiv Kumar addresses a press conference on poll preparedness for the upcoming Lok Sabha election, in Jammu. PTI

Data on electoral bonds hand-delivered to EC: SBI

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The State Bank of India (SBI) on Wednesday informed the Supreme Court that details of electoral bonds anonymously purchased by contributors and encashed by political parties from April 2019 to February 15, 2024 were

hand-delivered to the Election Commission (EC).

The SBI said a total of 22,217 electoral bonds were purchased and 22,030 were redeemed by political parties between April 1, 2019, and February 15, 2024.

CONTINUED ON
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Governor stalls move to re-induct Ponnudiy

S. Vijay Kumar
Dennis S. Jesudasan
CHENNAI

In yet another stand-off with the Tamil Nadu government, Governor R.N. Ravi has put on hold the proposed swearing-in of senior DMK leader and former Minister K. Ponnudiy to re-induct him into the Cabinet.

The former Higher Education Minister was disqualified as MLA after the Madras High Court sentenced him to three years in jail in a disproportionate assets case in December.

After the Supreme Court stayed his conviction and sentence, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin had sought time from the Governor on



R. N. Ravi

Wednesday or Thursday for Mr. Ponnudiy's swearing-in, official sources said.

Sources in the Raj Bhavan said Mr. Ravi would travel to Delhi on Thursday on a three-day visit. As regards the swearing-in, the Raj Bhavan has sought legal opinion from experts.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 14

HC dismisses Cong. plea in tax dues case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday rejected the plea by the Congress challenging an order of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) declining to stay an Income Tax department notice to the party for recovery of outstanding tax of over ₹100 crore.

"The problems that beset the petitioner [Congress] today are thus, and to a large extent, of its own making," the High Court said noting that the party has been "remiss in taking peremptory steps in respect of a demand that had remained outstanding right from 2021".

Senior advocate Vivek

Tankha, representing the Congress, had said that the notification for the Lok Sabha election is expected in the next few days and the party is under tremendous pressure as its bank accounts have been frozen.

The court pointed out that though the I-T department issued notice as far back as in July 2021, and the first application by the party for complete stay was rejected in October that year, "no concrete steps appear to have been taken by the petitioner to either consider securitising the outstanding demand or to seek appropriate interim protection".

CONTINUED ON
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FINANCIAL AID ROW

Centre, Kerala spar in SC as talks hit an impasse

NEWS » PAGE 14



HARYANA UPDATE

Nayab Singh Saini-led BJP govt. wins trust vote

NEWS » PAGE 15

Nominations secure, Biden and Trump set for rematch

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump clinched their parties' presidential nominations on Tuesday with decisive victories in a slate of low-profile primaries, setting up a general election rematch.

The outcome of contests across Georgia, Mississippi and Washington state was never in doubt. Neither Mr. Biden, a Democrat, nor Mr. Trump, a Republican, faced major opposition. But the magnitude of their wins gave each man the delegate majority he needed to claim his party's nomi-

nation at the summertime national conventions.

Not even halfway through the presidential primary calendar, Tuesday marked a crystallising moment for a nation uneasy with its choices in 2024.

At 81, Mr. Biden is already the oldest President in U.S. history, while the 77-year-old Mr. Trump is facing decades in prison as a defendant in four criminal cases.

Their rematch — the first featuring two U.S. presidents since 1912 — will almost certainly deepen the nation's searing political and cultural divides over the eight-month grind that lies ahead.

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(अगर और कोई मैगजीन चाहिए तो डिमांड करे उपलब्ध करा दिया जाएगा)

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CM says CAA will eat into jobs for citizens; it will only shelter the persecuted: BJP

Central govt.'s notification of rules on CAA smacks of vote-bank politics, says CM Arvind Kejriwal; BJP calls him anti-Hindu, says legislation's implementation won't take away anyone's citizenship

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday alleged that the BJP-led Centre's move allowing poor minorities from neighbouring nations to settle in India will snatch away job opportunities from the countrymen, who are already reeling under the impact of rising inflation and unemployment.

The Chief Minister said this in a video message while reacting to the notification of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) rules by the Centre, a move which he termed "extremely dangerous" and aimed at "only creating a vote bank" for the BJP in the areas where it is weak. The BJP condemned Mr. Kejriwal's remarks, with its Delhi unit chief Virendra Sachdeva describing the CM's statement as "anti-Hindu and anti-Sikh".

The Union Home Ministry on Monday notified the rules for the implementation of the CAA that was passed by Parliament in



In a video message on Wednesday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal urged people to vote against the BJP in the Lok Sabha poll. ANI

December 2019.

The law facilitates citizenship to "persecuted" people belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Parsi, Christian, and Jain communities from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan.

"With this law, the BJP government has opened the floodgates for the arrival of a large number of poor minorities from Pakistan and Bangladesh into India," said the AAP chief.

He added that the three countries put together are home to around three

crore people belonging to the six communities. "Even if 1.5 crore people come to India, how will the BJP settle them?" he said, alleging that the party will "selectively settle them in the areas where it is weak", creating a "permanent vote bank" for itself.

Mr. Kejriwal said instead of indulging in "dirty vote-bank politics", the BJP should focus on addressing issues of price rise and unemployment.

"The BJP wants to settle Pakistanis in India and provide employment to their

children. What kind of nonsense is this to bring people from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan to India and give the rightful employment of our children to them?" he said.

The CM said that instead of rehabilitating people from neighbouring countries, the Central government should bring back those industrialists who have left India in the past decade under the BJP rule.

"These people were running large-scale industries. The BJP should bring back these people to provide jobs to our children," he said.

'CM insulting refugees'
Reacting to the CM's statement, Mr. Sachdeva said the AAP chief does not understand that the CAA will provide shelter to all needy people persecuted by "jihadis", and it will not strip anyone of their citizenship.

"The Chief Minister either intentionally disrespects refugees or is unaware of how Muslim fundamentalism has persecuted Hindus and Sikhs, taken their jobs, and humiliated their sisters and daughters," he added.

Full steam ahead

The new corridors will be built at a cost of ₹8,399 crore

Inderlok to Indraprastha
12.377 km
■ 11.349 km underground
■ 1.028 km of elevated line
■ 10 stations

Lajpat Nagar to Saket G-Block
8.385 km
■ Entirely elevated
■ Eight stations

■ Expected daily ridership of both corridors: 2.5 lakh
■ Estimated completion date: March 2026



Union Minister Anurag Thakur announcing the new metro corridors. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

Delhi to get 2 new metro corridors

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved two new Delhi Metro corridors — one from Inderlok to Indraprastha and the other from Lajpat Nagar to Saket G-Block — at a cost of ₹8,399 crore. The funds will be sourced from the Centre, Delhi government, and international funding agencies. The approval was given at a meeting of the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Inderlok-Indraprastha corridor will be an extension of the Green Line and will provide interchange with the Red, Yellow, Airport, Magenta, Violet, and Blue Lines. The Lajpat Nagar-Saket G-Block corridor will connect the Silver, Magenta, Pink, and Violet lines.

Eight new interchange stations will appear on these corridors at Inderlok, Nabi Karim, New Delhi, Delhi Gate, Indraprastha, Lajpat Nagar, Chirag Dilli, and Saket G-Block. According to a statement by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, these stations will significantly improve the connectivity among all operational lines of the Delhi Metro network.

The Delhi Metro is already constructing a network of 65 km as part of its fourth phase of expansion. These new corridors are expected to be completed by March 2026. The DMRC currently operates a network of 391 km of 286 stations. Over 60 lakh passengers rely on the Delhi Metro every day for travelling, making it the lifeline of the National Capital Region, the statement said.

BJP announces candidates for two remaining LS seats

Satvika Mahajan
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday announced Harsh Malhotra and Yogendra Chandolia, both general secretaries of the party's Delhi unit, as its candidates for East Delhi and North West Delhi Lok Sabha seats. Mr. Malhotra is a former Mayor of the East Delhi Municipal Corporation, while Mr. Chandolia is a former Mayor of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation.

Sitting East Delhi MP Gautam Gambhir had, earlier this month, written to BJP national president J.P. Nadda, asking to be relieved of political duties, citing cricket-related commitments. Hans Raj Hans is the sitting MP from North West Delhi, a reserved constituency.

The party had on March 2 announced the names of its candidates on five of the seven Lok Sabha seats of Delhi — Manoj Tiwari from North East Delhi, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri from South Delhi, Bansuri Swaraj from New Delhi, Kamaljeet Sehrawat from West Delhi, and Praveen Khandelwal from Chandni Chowk. Mr. Tiwari, 53, a popular Bhojpuri singer-actor, is the only candidate to have been retained by the party. He will contest from the same seat for the third time in a row.

A party source said both Mr. Malhotra and Mr. Chandolia were chosen for their "ground connect".

AAP, which is fighting on 4 LS seats in Delhi in alliance with the Congress, named its candidates last month; the Congress is yet to declare its nominees

Another source said the two leaders stood out for their "organisation work and grounded mindset" that was seen to be placing the BJP "on the right track".

A party leader said Mr. Malhotra's work in organising party events and election management was appreciated by the top leadership. Another leader described Mr. Chandolia as a man who looks after the party workers and whose "dedication to the party's principles" was recognised by the headquarters.

Reacting to the development, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said, "The BJP has changed six out of seven candidates. This is an admission by the party that their MPs were either corrupt or ineffective. In either case, the BJP should apologise to the people of Delhi for wasting their five years."

AAP, which is contesting on four Lok Sabha seats in Delhi in alliance with the Congress, had announced its candidates on February 27. The Congress is yet to declare its candidates.

GOVERNMENT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT

SHORT TERMS NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Sealed item rate tenders for the following works are hereby invited on form PW 6 and 8 by the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division Nahan on behalf of Governor of H.P. from the approved contractors registered in the Jal Shakti Vibhag in the appropriate class. The application for purchase of tender documents shall be entertained up to 3:00 PM on dated 20/03/2024 on payment non-refundable in cash or by money order as per cost shown below. The tender forms shall be issued in the office of the Executive Engineer up to 4:00 PM on dated 20/03/2024. The earnest money as shown below shall be accompanied with tender in the shape of FDR / Deposit at Call from any nationalized bank duly pledged in the name of Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division, Nahan. The contractors who do not deposit the earnest money in the prescribed manner at the time of tender submission, their offer shall be summarily rejected and the tender offers received will be processed on the basis of eligibility criteria prescribed for the work that has been tendered for. The draft Notice Inviting Tender can also be downloaded from the departmental website www.hp.jshd.org. The conditional offer shall be out rightly rejected. The offer shall be kept open for 120 days. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason. The tenders shall be received up to 11:00 AM on 21/03/2024 & opened on same day at 11:30 AM in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representatives, who may wish to be present. If the date of opening happens to be a holiday the tender will be open on next working day at the same time.

Sr. No	Description	E/ Cost	E/Money	Time	Cost of Form
1	Restoration of rain damages of Providing FHTC of Renukaji under JIM GP Khals Kiyar Tehsil Dadahu Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- Laying, jointing and testing of GMS pipe of various dia at Jaicha Majhai) under JIM.	2,96,629/-	5,933/-	3 Months	250
2	Restoration of rain damages of Providing FHTC of various dia under JIM GP Dadahu Tehsil Dadahu Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- Laying, jointing and testing of GMS pipe of various dia at various LWSS/GWSS) under JIM.	2,99,633/-	5,993/-	3 Months	250
3	Restoration of rain damages of Providing FHTC of various dia under JIM GP Barog Baneri Tehsil Dadahu Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- Laying, jointing and testing of GMS pipe of various dia at various GWSS/LWSS) under JIM.	3,08,352/-	6,167/-	3 Months	250
4	Providing LWSS to PC habitation under GP Koulanwala Bhood, Burmapapri, Pallon, Nahan and Bankala in Tehsil Nahan Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- C/O RCC main storage tank 50000 ltrs capacity at Burmapapri and C/O slab of LWSS Maidhar 1 st stage and L/J of distribution system LWSS Maidhar) Job No. 1	4,93,583/-	9,900/-	3 Months	250
5	Providing LWSS to PC habitation under GP Koulanwala Bhood, Burmapapri, Pallon, Nahan and Bankala in Tehsil Nahan Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- Laying, jointing of GMS pipe at LWSS Kandaiwala main storage tank Malpur to GPS Kandaiwala under Burmapapri section) Job No. 4.	3,65,590/-	7,350/-	1 Month	250
6	Providing LWSS to PC habitation under GP Koulanwala Bhood, Burmapapri, Pallon, Nahan and Bankala in Tehsil Nahan Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- Laying, jointing of GMS pipe at Jal (FHTC) at various villages in Burmapapri section) Job No. 7.	4,98,160/-	10,000/-	1 Month	250
7	Providing sewerage with primary treatment unit for Ka/Amb, Moginand area Tehsil Nahan Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- Laying, dismantling, relaying and jointing and testing of sewerage network, Manholes and supporting system and Primary treatment unit (Inlet chamber, screen chamber Grit removal unit/mechanical/Electrical equipment etc as per site requirement) Operation and maintenance of sewer of server network for 12 Months (1 year) Job No. I	3,75,140/-	7,550/-	3 Months	250
8	Providing sewerage with primary treatment unit for Ka/Amb, Moginand area Tehsil Nahan Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- Laying, dismantling, relaying and jointing and testing of sewerage network, Manholes and supporting system and Primary treatment unit (Inlet chamber, screen chamber Grit removal unit/mechanical/Electrical equipment etc as per site requirement) Operation and maintenance of sewer of server network for 12 Months (1 year) Job No. II	2,94,091/-	5,900/-	1 Month	250
9	Providing sewerage with primary treatment unit for Ka/Amb, Moginand area Tehsil Nahan Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- Laying, dismantling, relaying and jointing and testing of sewerage network, Manholes and supporting system and Primary treatment unit (Inlet chamber, screen chamber Grit removal unit/mechanical/Electrical equipment etc as per site requirement) Operation and maintenance of sewer of server network for 12 Months (1 year) Job No. III	2,94,091/-	5,900/-	1 Month	250
10	Providing sewerage with primary treatment unit for Ka/Amb, Moginand area Tehsil Nahan Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- Laying, dismantling, relaying and jointing and testing of sewerage network, Manholes and supporting system and Primary treatment unit (Inlet chamber, screen chamber Grit removal unit/mechanical/Electrical equipment etc as per site requirement) Operation and maintenance of sewer of server network for 12 Months (1 year) Job No. IV	4,96,000/-	10,000/-	3 Months	250
11	Providing sewerage with primary treatment unit for Ka/Amb, Moginand area Tehsil Nahan Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- Laying, dismantling, relaying and jointing and testing of sewerage network, Manholes and supporting system and Primary treatment unit (Inlet chamber, screen chamber Grit removal unit/mechanical/Electrical equipment etc as per site requirement) Operation and maintenance of sewer of server network for 12 Months (1 year) Job No. V	4,71,216/-	9,450/-	3 Months	250
12	Providing sewerage with primary treatment unit for Ka/Amb, Moginand area Tehsil Nahan Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- Laying, dismantling, relaying and jointing and testing of sewerage network, Manholes and supporting system and Primary treatment unit (Inlet chamber, screen chamber Grit removal unit/mechanical/Electrical equipment etc as per site requirement) Operation and maintenance of sewer of server network for 12 Months (1 year) Job No. VI	4,71,216/-	9,450/-	3 Months	250
13	Providing sewerage with primary treatment unit for Ka/Amb, Moginand area Tehsil Nahan Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- Laying, dismantling, relaying and jointing and testing of sewerage network, Manholes and supporting system and Primary treatment unit (Inlet chamber, screen chamber Grit removal unit/mechanical/Electrical equipment etc as per site requirement) Operation and maintenance of sewer of server network for 12 Months (1 year) Job No. VII	4,71,216/-	9,450/-	3 Months	250
14	Providing sewerage with primary treatment unit for Ka/Amb, Moginand area Tehsil Nahan Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- Laying, dismantling, relaying and jointing and testing of sewerage network, Manholes and supporting system and Primary treatment unit (Inlet chamber, screen chamber Grit removal unit/mechanical/Electrical equipment etc as per site requirement) Operation and maintenance of sewer of server network for 12 Months (1 year) Job No. VIII	4,71,216/-	9,450/-	3 Months	250
15	Providing sewerage with primary treatment unit for Ka/Amb, Moginand area Tehsil Nahan Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- Laying, dismantling, relaying and jointing and testing of sewerage network, Manholes and supporting system and Primary treatment unit (Inlet chamber, screen chamber Grit removal unit/mechanical/Electrical equipment etc as per site requirement) Operation and maintenance of sewer of server network for 12 Months (1 year) Job No. IX	4,74,118/-	9,500/-	3 Months	250
16	R/M of LWSS Nahan Town in Tehsil Nahan Distt, Sirmour HP (SH- Providing and fixing non return valves).	3,38,445/-	6,800/-	1 Month	250

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:-

- The Tender of those Contractors/Firms will not be considered whose previous performance is not found satisfactory.
- EMD is required to be deposited by the contractor in shape of Bank FDR duly pledged in favour of "Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Nahan" at the time of applying for tender form.
- The contractors will submit the copy of Registration in HPJSV/Earnest Money/PAN/ EPF No./GST No along-with application for tender form, otherwise no tender form will be issue.
- The Job No. 7 to 15 shall be issued those contractor, who have experience of same kind of work i.e., sewerage network work.
- Contractor having more than two major works pending (without progress) are not allowed to participate and only 2 No. works tender form will be issued to single contractor.
- All participating contractor have to submit the detail of pending works with their bid, in case of submitting false information there tender will be rejected.

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LEGAL NOTICE

Before the 1st Addl. Motor Accidents Claims Tribunal: Nellore, A.P. State M.V.O.P.No. 706/2022
1. Gandikota Venkateswarlu and 3 Others ... Claimants
Vs
1. Satyapal Singh and 2 Others ... Respondents
Notice.
R1: Satyapal Singh S/o. Kundli Singh, Siddh Nagla Village, Riwarra Post, Shikarapur, Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh.
R2: M/s. Kapoor Diesels Garage Pvt. Ltd., SC/1, 2nd Floor, Opp Liberty Cinema, New Rohatk, New Delhi-110 005.
Please take notice that the above claimants filed M.V.O.P. Case against you and your insurance Company for compensation. The Case is posted to 01.04.2024 for your appearance. you are required to appear before the Hon'ble Tribunal on 01.04.2024 at 10.30 A.M. either in person or an Advocate. failing which the matter will be decided in your absence.
K.Santhi Kumar, B.A., B.L., Advocate for the Claimants, Nellore

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE MOTOR ACCIDENT CLAIMS TRIBUNAL (IInd ADDL. DIST. JUDGE AT KHAMMAM, M.L.O.P. No. 168/2023
Between :-
1) Tammarapu @ Tammarapu Sravani
2) Tammarapu @ Tammarapu Tejasi @ Rakashi
3) Tammarapu @ Tammarapu Ruviksha @ Sara
4) Tammarapu @ Tammarapu Mangamma
5) Tammarapu @ Tammarapu Narsala
(Claim Petitioners no. 2&3 are minors hence reg. by their mother T. Sravani i.e. claim petitioner no. 1 as natural guardian) ... Claim Petitioner
AND
I. T. Sathireddy and others ... Respondents
NOTICE
R2: Ideal Surface Cargo Pvt. Ltd Rep. by its proprietor, occ owner of the Lorry bearing No. MH46AR4888 G.O. Plot-141, Truck Terminal Complex, Kalamboli Panvel, Raigad, Maharashtra State - 410206.
Take Notice that the Above named claim petitioner filed the above MATOP Against you and another and the same is posted on 27-03-2024 for your Appearance you are hereby to appear before the Hon'ble Court at Khammam in Telangana on 27/03/2024 at 10:30 A.M. in person or through advocate without fail if you field the matter will be decided exparte against you.
/BY ORDERS OF THE HON'BLE COURT/
MALLEMPATI APPARAO, Advocate, KHAMMAM City, Telangana State. Cell: 98486 76547

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given on behalf of Axis Bank Limited that Mr. Ved Prakash Goel intends to purchase & mortgage the Entire Ground Floor without roof rights of Property No. 26/190, admeasuring 100 sq. yards, at West Patel Nagar, New Delhi with our client against the financial assistance. Whereas Mrs. Promila Mehta was the owner of said property by way of Release/Relinquishment Deed dt. 12.05.2010 and after her death, her legal heirs namely Mrs. Shivani Gambhir & Mrs. Shalini Bajaj both daughters as per Surviving Member Certificate dt. 12.05.2022, becomes the joint owners of above said property. Now they intend to sell the same to Mr. Ved Prakash Goel. If any person(s) having objection with regard to ownership/mortgage of the said property is/are requested to intimate in writing to undersigned within 07 days from the date of issue of this notice at below address. In the event no information is received within 07 days from date hereof, our Client i.e. Axis Bank Limited will proceed with the mortgage process.
DEEPIYOT SINGH, ADVOCATE
A-13, LGF, South Extn-II, New Delhi-49 @ 011-40587824

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
To be known to all that the original allotment letter/possession letter of Flat no. 237-G, DDA MIG Flats, situated in Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027, in the name of Pratap Balwani has been lost. An FIR to this effect has been lodged in Police Station, Any person (s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or find in possession of original document, may write or contact with Mr. Raubindia Singh Kohli at mobile 9810292052 within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE HON'BLE JUDGE ADDL DIST AND SESSIONS JUDGE AT SANGAREDDY (MV Tribunal) M.V.O.P.No. 12 OF 2020
Between:
Geetha ... Claimant
And
Varuna Integrated Logistics Pvt.Ltd ... Respondents
NOTICE
1. Varuna Integrated Logistics Pvt.Ltd, Occ: Owner of Lorry No.NL-01-AA6426, Rio, VIII Lhijuri, Rowari, Haryana-123401, NST Colony, Kohima, Nagaland-797001, 2. Bharath Lal, S/o B.Ram Sahay, Occ: Driver of Lorry No.NL-01-AA6426, Rio Gaultiya Kishanpur(V), Goletha Khandruya Post, Aonla P.S., Bareilly Dist., U.P.-243301.
... Respondent No.1 & 2
Take Notice In the above case the Petitioner has filed the above case against Respondents U/Sec 166 of MV Act, before the above Hon'ble Judge. The case is posted on 10-04-2024 at 10:30 AM, for your appearance and counter or if any, Hence hereby required, that you shall be present on the said date and time in the above court at 10:30 AM. Otherwise the matter will proceed according to the law.
/BY ORDE OF THE COURT/
Sd/- (T.BUCHANAN)
Advocate, Sangareddy, Cal No. 9966610356.
Date: 13-03-2024
Place: Sangareddy

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE MOTOR ACCIDENT CLAIMS TRIBUNAL (IInd ADDL. DIST. JUDGE AT KHAMMAM, M.L.O.P. No. 181/2023
Between :-
Tammarapu @ Tammarapu Ruviksha @ Sara
(Claim Petitioner being minor, hence rep by her mother i.e. T. Sravani as natural Guardian) ... Claim Petitioner
AND
I. T. Sathireddy and others ... Respondents
NOTICE
R2: Ideal Surface Cargo Pvt. Ltd Rep. by its proprietor, occ owner of the Lorry bearing No. MH46AR4888 G.O. Plot-141, Truck Terminal Complex, Kalamboli Panvel, Raigad, Maharashtra State - 410206.
Take Notice that the Above named claim petitioner filed the above MATOP Against you and another and the same is posted on 27-03-2024 for your Appearance you are hereby to appear before the Hon'ble Court at Khammam in Telangana on 27/03/2024 at 10:30 A.M. in person or through advocate without fail if you field the matter will be decided exparte against you.
/BY ORDERS OF THE HON'BLE COURT/
MALLEMPATI APPARAO, Advocate, KHAMMAM City, Telangana State. Cell: 98486 76547

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IN BRIEF



Mukhtar Ansari sentenced to life in fake arms licence case

An MP/MLA special court in Varanasi sentenced gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari to life imprisonment on Wednesday in a more than three-decades-old fake arms licence case. On March 12, the court convicted Ansari under Sections 120 B (criminal conspiracy), 428 (mischief), 467 (forgery of valuable security), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Section 30 of the Arms Act. This is the seventh case in the last 18 months in which Ansari, 61, has been convicted by the courts. He is facing more than five dozen cases and has been in jail since 2005.

HC seeks JNU's stand on plea against students' union polls

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) to respond to a plea challenging the upcoming students' union elections. The JNUSU polls are scheduled to be held on March 22. A university student had moved the court, claiming that the elections were being held in violation of the Lyngdoh committee recommendations. The petitioner, Sakshi, submitted that as per one of the recommendations, the polls should be held within six to eight weeks after commencement of an academic session, but the upcoming polls are being conducted at the end of the session.

AIMIM expands base in Bihar, to field 11 candidates for Lok Sabha election

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

For the first time in Bihar, the All India Majlis-e-Itehadul Muslimin (AIMIM) is trying to expand its base beyond the Seemanchal region and on Wednesday announced that it would field candidates from 11 seats in the forthcoming Lok Sabha election. Apart from Purnea, Katihar, Kishanganj, and Araria, which fall under Seemanchal, the party will field candidates from Buxar, Gaya, Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur, Ujjaypur, Darbhanga, and Karakat Lok Sabha seats.

In February, AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi had launched his election campaign from Seemanchal during a three-day visit to Bihar. In the 2019 Lok

The move will pose a challenge to the INDIA bloc as it may lead to a division in minority votes in the State with 17% Muslim population

Sabha election, the AIMIM had contested just one seat from Kishanganj but in 2020, the party won five Assembly seats. But four of the five legislators later quit the party and joined the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD).

"On the instruction of our national president, we have decided to contest 11 Lok Sabha seats out of 40 [from Bihar]," AIMIM State president and party MLA Akhtarul Iman told *The Hindu*.

When asked if fielding AIMIM candidates would result in a division of minority votes, which will ultimately benefit the BJP, Mr. Iman said the Indian National Democratic, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc did not allow his party to join them.

"Never want BJP to win"
"We never want the BJP to win the election neither do we want a division of secular votes. However, it is very unfortunate that INDIA bloc leaders want to grab power but they do not want to give due share to minorities and Dalits. If they are so concerned about the division of votes, the INDIA bloc should not field their candidates. It's not like only they can stop [the BJP], we can also stop

the BJP from coming to power," Mr. Iman added.

The Seemanchal region in north Bihar comprises four districts - Purnea, Katihar, Kishanganj and Araria. In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won three seats and the Congress won one seat (Kishanganj).

The four districts represent 24 Assembly constituencies. Seemanchal is therefore important for next year's Assembly election too.

Apart from Seemanchal, of the seven Lok Sabha seats for which the AIMIM is fielding its candidates, three are held by the JD(U), and four are with the BJP. In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, the NDA had won 39 out of the 40 seats in Bihar.

Ashok Kumar
GURUGRAM

Former Haryana Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala on Wednesday accused the BJP of unilaterally calling off the Bharatiya Janata Party-Jannayak Janta Party alliance in Haryana over sharing of seats for the upcoming Lok Sabha poll, and vowed to secure absolute majority in the Assembly election.

Amid loud cheers of "CM aaya, CM aaya" (here comes the future Chief Minister), Mr. Dushyant, addressing the 'Nav Sankalp Rally' in Hisar, said the central BJP leadership had offered his party the Rohtak Lok Sabha seat, a Hooda bastion, while the JJP was eyeing the Hisar and Bhiwani-Mahendragarh seats. "When I returned after meeting Nadda [BJP national president J.P. Nadda], I discussed it with our party president. He told me to meet the top BJP leader-

ship and ask them to first fulfil our election promise of providing old-age pension of ₹5,100 a month. I met them [BJP leaders] at 1 a.m. and they assured me to deliberate upon it. But this is what they did," said Mr. Dushyant, referring to the sudden change of guard in Haryana on Tuesday.

On the future course of action, he said his father and JJP national chief Ajay Chautala will take the decision whether to contest the

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

Lashing out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi of the BJP and AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Wednesday said, "Not only in the Lok Sabha election... be it any election, I say with confidence that victory is ours."
"What good has the AIADMK, which boasts about the Kongu region being its fort, done for the region," he asked, referring to the Pollachi sexual assault case and the intimidation of those who had filed complaints. Describing the former AIADMK regime, led by Mr. Palaniswami, as the most irresponsible government, he said that it was the AIADMK govern-



CM Stalin at a function in Pollachi. SIVA SARAVANAN S

ment that disclosed the identity of the sexual assault victim.

The Kodanad dacoity-cum-murder, the assault on protesters who sought to revoke the ban on jallikattu, and the Thoothukudi police firing that claimed 13 lives had all taken place when the AIADMK was in power, he said. The names of an AIADMK Minister and a Director-General of Police who had served under



A journalist lost around ₹1.2 crore to scammers who called her via WhatsApp. ISTOCK

₹1.2 crore to scammers who called her via WhatsApp.

"So far, in the investigations, we have found that there are many layers of 'interrogations' involved, just to ensure the victim ends up believing the process. Their body language is also convincing," the senior officer said.

He said the victims usually get their first call from a 'constable', then from a sub-inspector-level officer, followed by a DCP-

level officer, to give the entire scam the veneer of authenticity.

When asked how such connen get hold of one's personal details, such as Aadhaar data, a police source said, "We haven't been able to locate the source of data yet. But we know that bulk data is sold to these people, sometimes through the Dark Web."

"Contact the police"

In January, four persons, including a woman and her son, were arrested by the Delhi police from parts of Delhi and U.P. for a 'digital arrest' operation, in which they posed as officers and threatened people through video calls.

One of their victims was a 65-year-old retired senior manager from Air India.

The victim was told about a parcel being allegedly seized at Mumbai airport by the Customs Department. She was duped of ₹35 lakh.

"When she insisted on knowing whether they

were genuine police officers, the imposters even showed the victim a cabin, where two 'policemen' were present," said an officer who is investigating the case.

"We are running public awareness campaigns. Those who get such calls should immediately contact the police and block such callers," the officer added.

Many such fraudsters dupe people by using profile photos of IPS officers on their WhatsApp and Truecaller IDs.

"What people often fail to notice is that the domains from which these emails are sent don't end with .gov," the officer added.

A source in the Bengaluru police said, "Cross-questioning in such situations can help a lot. When you start questioning who the nearest SHO is or who the DCP-level officer is of that zone or district, the scammers feel out of depth because they don't have access to the latest database."

Dushyant blames BJP for calling off alliance over seat sharing for LS poll

Former Haryana Deputy CM says the central BJP leadership had offered JJP the Rohtak Lok Sabha seat, a Hooda bastion, while the party was eyeing the Hisar and Bhiwani-Mahendragarh seats



JJP leader Dushyant Chautala addressing the party's 'Nav Sankalp Rally' in Hisar on Wednesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ter, the Uchana Kalan MLA said he could work for the farmers, the poor and the women because his party was part of the coalition government. "The JJP has always adhered to *gathbandhan dharma* and fulfilled its responsibility as a coalition partner," he said.

With just six months to go for the Assembly poll, he urged the party cadre not get misled, and work towards creating an environment in favour of the party. Mr. Dushyant said the party secured 15% votes in the 2019 Assembly poll, just 11 months after it was launched, and would now increase its tally from 10 to 50 MLAs.

He said he is "pained" to see media reports suggesting that the JJP had pulled out of the coalition to eat into the Opposition's votes. Taking a dig at the five party MLAs missing from the rally, Mr. Dushyant said, "Two-three persons have ditched us... they were not trustworthy."

BJP puts faith in most sitting MPs in Maharashtra

Shoumojit Banerjee
PUNE

Even as the ruling *Mahayuti* alliance in Maharashtra firms up the final contours of its seat-sharing arrangement for the general election, its biggest constituent, the BJP, announced a list of 20 candidates as part of its 72-strong second list across States. The party has repeated 14 of its 19 candidates from the 2019 poll; Girish Bapat passed away last year while still the incumbent MP from Pune.

Stalwarts retained

Among those retained as candidates are stalwarts Nitin Gadkari and Raosaheb Danve from Nagpur and Jalna, four-term MP Sanjay Dhotre from Akola and two-term MP Ramdas Tadas from Wardha.

The party also retained sitting MPs Sujay Vikhe-Patil (Ahmednagar), Ranjitsingh Naik-Nimbalkar (Madha in Solapur), Sanjaykaka Patil (Sangli), Prataprao Chikhlikar (Nanded) and Raksha Khadse (Raver in Jalgaon), who is the daughter-in-law of ex-BJP leader Eknath Khadse, now in Sharad Pawar's

NCP camp.

Former Minister Pankaja Munde, whose relations with the BJP top brass have been frosty for a while, was announced as the candidate for the Beed Lok Sabha seat in lieu of her sister, sitting MP Pritam Munde.

Chance for Pankaja

The candidature is an opportunity for Ms. Pankaja, the daughter of late BJP stalwart Gopinath Munde, to end her political drift besides allowing the Munde family to close ranks and back her, given that her cousin and one-time rival Dhananjay Munde (of the Ajit Pawar-led NCP) is now a BJP ally in government.

In a sign that the Mahayuti seat-sharing talks are still a work in progress, former Maharashtra Minister Vijay Shrivastava - a senior leader in the ruling Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena - on Wednesday said he remained firm on contesting as an Independent from Baramati Lok Sabha seat. Mr. Ajit Pawar is widely expected to field his wife, Sunetra, as the *Mahayuti's* potential candidate to take on incumbent MP Supriya Sule of the Sharad Pawar-led NCP.

AIADMK, BJP are in a secret alliance; we will win any poll, says Tamil Nadu CM

the AIADMK government had figured on the list of bribe-takers who had allowed the sale of ganja and gutkha, he said.

The Chief Minister claimed that the AIADMK and the BJP were in a secret alliance, and that the INDIA bloc was fighting them vehemently.

"Covering up the facts"
Claiming that Mr. Modi had done nothing for the people, he said that newspapers and channels were full of advertisements on the 'Modi Guarantee' to cover up the facts.

What happened to Mr. Modi's promises of bringing black money back from abroad, depositing ₹15 lakh into the bank account of each individual, and providing two crore jobs to un-

employed youth, he asked.

When the Prime Minister visits Tamil Nadu next week, the people should ask him about the projects implemented by his government in the State, Mr. Stalin said. When Mr. Modi last visited the State, he lied "in his inimitable style" that his government's projects were being stalled by the DMK regime, Mr. Stalin said, adding that Mr. Modi should name at least one such project. "Who stalled AIIMS in Madurai that was announced in 2014," he asked.

For the past 10 years, the Modi government was silent on Tamil Nadu; but with the poll approaching, he was visiting the State frequently, dishing out lies, Mr. Stalin said.

'Digital arrest': duping people by posing as officers

Samridhi Tewari
NEW DELHI

In November 2023, 50-year-old Rohini, a resident of Noida's Sector 34, received a phone call from "TRAI officials". Ms. Rohini was told that a SIM card purchased using her Aadhaar credentials had been used to launder money. At no point did she suspect that she was being led into a rabbit hole of deception that would culminate in her getting defrauded through a modus operandi known as 'digital arrest'.

Ms. Rohini received more follow-up calls from "senior IPS officers" who asked her to download Skype, a videoconferencing app. She was "interrogated" on Skype calls and told that an arrest warrant had been issued in her name. Only after she transferred some money into an account and an "auditor" approved the transaction would she avoid getting arrested. She was asked not to talk about it as it was a "national security issue".

Ms. Rohini ended up transferring all her savings - ₹11,12,295 - into the account as instructed.

For the next three days, she tried to contact the "IPS officers" through Skype, but nobody picked up. On the fourth day, she understood that she had been scammed and called the police. Her case is still under investigation.

"Several interrogations"
DCP Kuldeep Kumar R. Jain, a senior Bengaluru Traffic Police officer, who has the additional charge of cybercrime, told *The Hindu*, "We can say that the victims of such fraud are put in a virtual house arrest by the imposters."

Mr. Jain is investigating two cases of similar fraud in Karnataka. In the first case, a retired IAS officer was duped of ₹11.5 lakh by scammers who introduced themselves as Mumbai Police Crime Branch officers.

A similar case from Bengaluru involved a senior journalist losing around

NCB arrests 'drug lord' Jaffer Sadiq's close associate from Delhi

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) officers on Wednesday arrested Sada, alias Sadanand, 55, a close associate of Jaffer Sadiq, the alleged kingpin of an international drug syndicate that smuggled pseudoephedrine into Australia, New Zealand and other countries in the guise of food products.

The NCB arrested Sadiq in New Delhi last Saturday, and he is being interrogated in custody.

The multi-crore racket came to light following information from Australian and New Zealand officials about a consignment of drugs sent to their countries from New Delhi in the guise of food products such as health mix and desiccated coconut.

In February, a team of the NCB and the Delhi pol-

The drug syndicate smuggled pseudoephedrine into Australia. New Zealand in the guise of food products

ice raided a godown of a company named Aventa at Basai Darapur in West Delhi and arrested three persons packaging pseudoephedrine as a multigrain food mix. The team also recovered 50.070 kg of pseudoephedrine.

Subsequently, the NCB declared Sadiq the kingpin of the network, which is suspected to have sent 3,500 kg of pseudoephedrine in 45 consignments over the past three years to various countries. Sadiq was arrested after a two-week search. Sada is native of Tiruchi. He used to package the drugs as food products for Sadiq.

Youth stages own kidnapping to avoid going to Leh for work

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A 19-year-old man, who was on his way to Leh with his friends to look for employment, was apprehended for staging his own kidnapping at New Delhi railway station to escape the cold weather conditions of Leh, the police said on Wednesday. The accused was identified as Suraj, a resident of Maharajganj in Uttar Pradesh.

An officer said that Suraj had come to the railway station with two of his friends from Bihar's West Champaran. The three were bound for Leh, but when Suraj heard his friends discussing the cold weather of the Union Territory, he slipped away and posted a ransom message on X. An investigation was launched based on a complaint by his family and the accused was traced.

Academics push DU for reinstatement of Saibaba

Cannot restore the professor's job until court directs it, say university officials

Ashna Butani
NEW DELHI

As former Delhi University (DU) professor G.N. Saibaba undergoes medical treatment after being acquitted in a Maoist links case, the academic community has said that it will continue to fight for his reinstatement at Ram Lal Anand College, where he worked as an assistant professor in the English department until his termination from the post in 2021.

Prof. Saibaba, who was acquitted after spending 10 years in prison, had last week addressed journalists and stated his wish to get his job back. Reiterating his request, he told *The Hindu* on Wednesday that he "hoped" the university would take action.

"I am currently undergoing



Professor Dr G.N. Saibaba. FILE PHOTO

treatment and focusing on my health. However, I hope the university does something. My colleagues are fighting for my reinstatement and taking the issue forward," he said.

Prof. Saibaba was suspended from his job at Ram Lal Anand College in 2014 after being arrested under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for having alleged Maoist links. His services were terminated in 2021.

Meanwhile, DU officials said that they have not taken any steps to reinstate Prof. Saibaba, since they have not yet received directions regarding the same from any court.

Former Delhi University Teachers' Association chief Nandita Narain, who is also part of the Committee for the Defence and Release of Dr. G.N. Saibaba, said that the defence panel will soon write to the university's vice-chancellor.

"Now that Prof. Saibaba has been acquitted, he should be reinstated given that his termination was on the grounds of being implicated in the case," she said.

On Tuesday, Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers' Association too demanded for Prof. Saibaba's immediate reinstatement.

Kerala looking at options to challenge CAA rules

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Cabinet has asked the Advocate-General to explore legal options to challenge the Centre's framing of rules to implement the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.

The State government is against enforcing the "patently anti-Muslim and deeply schismatic" Act in Kerala. The Assembly had in 2019 adopted a resolution demanding that the Centre repeal the Act that sets religion as a criterion for Indian citizenship.

The State government had filed an original suit before the Supreme Court under Article 131 of the Con-

stitution which gives the top court sole jurisdiction over Centre-State disputes.

The Cabinet on Wednesday said the Union government's notification of the CAA Rules had brought a new sense of egal urgency to the case.

Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala, the Democratic Youth Federation of India, and the Indian Union Muslim League have moved the Supreme Court against the CAA.

Meanwhile, anti-CAA protests rocked the State for the third day on Wednesday. DYFI activists blocked trains in Alappuzha and hundreds of Congress workers marched to the Raj Bhavan.

Timings
DELHI

THURSDAY, MAR. 14
RISE 06:32 SET 18:29
RISE 09:01 SET 23:05

FRIDAY, MAR. 15
RISE 06:31 SET 18:30
RISE 09:44 SET 00:00

SATURDAY, MAR. 16
RISE 06:30 SET 18:30
RISE 10:31 SET 00:12

Delhi Weather max min

Delhi City 31 13
Safdarjang 31 13
Palam 31 15

Delhi Palam Today
30°C A mostly dry weather to prevail. Morning will be cool with mist and haze. Day will be slight warm with strong winds. Night also will be cool.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
30°C The weather will be mostly dry. Morning will be cool with mist and haze. Day will be slight warm. Night will be cool.

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Delhi gears up for farmers' rally

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The police have allowed farmers to hold a *mahapanchayat* at Ramila Maidan on Aruna Asaf Ali Road in

central Delhi on Thursday, but on the condition that the gathering will have to be restricted to 5,000 people and tractor-trailers won't be permitted in the Capital. A traffic advisory for the same has been issued.

बिहार सरकार
कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय,
लोक स्वास्थ्य प्रमंडल, हाजीपुर
प्रेस विज्ञापित

लोक स्वास्थ्य प्रमंडल, हाजीपुर द्वारा आमंत्रित ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या-13 PHED
Hajipur/2023-24 (SBNQ) जिसका PR No.013744 (PHED) 2023-24 है के 06 युपों को यथा
युप संख्या-02,03,18,20,24 एवं 29 को अपरिहार्य कारणों से रद्द किया जाता है।
उक्त सूचना www.state.bihar.gov.in/prbihar पर भी देखी जा सकती है।

PR. No. 019748 (PHED) 2023-24 कार्यपालक अभियंता,
नये की मार, बर्बाद करे सुखी परिवार। लोक स्वास्थ्य प्रमंडल हाजीपुर

WATCO
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, WATCO
Ground Floor, Unnati Bhawan, H.B.Colony, Satyanagar, Bhubaneswar-751007, Odisha, India
Telefax :- +91-674-2391444 ; E-mail :- ceowatcoodisha@gmail.com; md@watcoodisha.in

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB) - Bid Identification No.WATCO(W)-54/2023-24 Dtd. 07.03.2024
WATCO No. 1688, Date : 07.03.2024

- Name of the work : "External power supply to raw water and clear water plant Mundail."
- Estimated Cost : Rs.1200.00 Lakh
- Period of Completion : 03 (Three) Months
- Date & Time of availability of bid document in the Portal : From 11.00 AM of Dt.28.03.2024 to 5.00 PM of 11.04.2024
- Last date/time of receipt of bids in the portal : 5.00 PM of 11.04.2024.
- Date & Time of opening of technical bids : 12.30 PM of 12.04.2024
- Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid : CEO, WATCO
E-Mail : ceowatcoodisha@gmail.com
- The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only.

Further details can be seen from the web site www.tendersodisha.gov.in CEO, WATCO
C-1931- QIPR-13194/11/0098/2324

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP/ AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP/AUTH	NO. OF OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	UHBVN	11 KV4S POLYMER OBC INSULATOR, BAS AND T&C TYPE	11/03/2024 02/04/2024	0.99 CRORES	www.uhbvn.org.in TENDER NO-314JHMM/ XENP-4/QH-48/2120 dated 11/03/2024 2024_HBC_367098_Pack1	ceem@uhbvn.org.in
2	UHBVN	11 KV 5KN COMPOSITE POLYMER PIN INSULATOR ALONGWITH PINS	11/03/2024 02/04/2024	3.51 CRORES	www.uhbvn.org.in TENDER NO-314JHMM/ XENP-4/QH-48/2121 dated 11/03/2024 2024_HBC_367034_Pack1	ceem@uhbvn.org.in
3	UHBVN	SHIFTING OF HT/LT LINE DUE TO CONSTRUCTION OF FLY OVER ALONG RAILWAY ROAD FROM KHALSA CHOKH TO HARYANA NURSING HOME AND WALMIKI CHOKH TO AMBEDKAR CHOKH UNDER SMART CITY MESSIN FOR 08 NO FEEDERS ON TURNKEY BASIS UNDER OPERATION CIRCLE KARNAL	CLOSING DATE 04/04/2024	7.70 LACS	www.uhbvn.org.in NIT No.CER - 5117/CEOP/ RTK/2023-24	01722570431 cepd@uhbvn.org.in
4	UHBVN	CREATION OF 11 KV SWITCHING SUBSTATION OF SUKHEV NAGAR PHNIPAT ON TURNKEY BASIS	CLOSING DATE 04/04/2024	5.43 LACS	www.uhbvn.org.in NIT-30304/11 KV Switching S/Str/2024/Bid No. 8-783	01722570431 cepd@uhbvn.org.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.tenders.hry.nic.in
SAMVAD - 13/2024/80/25840/N/199/7

HINDUSTAN PETROLEUM CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Maharatna Company)

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited and Chevron Brands International LLC have entered into a long-term agreement encompassing the licensing, production, distribution, and marketing of Chevron's lubricant products under the Caltex brand in India. Applications are invited in the prescribed format from eligible candidates for appointment as Bazar Lube Distributor for Selling Caltex (A Chevron Company product) and premium grades of HPCCL Lubricants in India. For details on the advertisement, please see the website www.hplubricants.in and click 'Become a CALTEX Distributor' under the Head 'Lube Distributor'. Any addendum/corrigendum shall be posted on the website only.

M.P. PASCHIM KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN CO. LTD.
GPI Compound, Palogroad, Bhopal
(Pr. No. - 073-205144, 242524, 242616, E-mail : seprchase06@gmail.com
CN-148189MP28250219121)
No. MDW705/PUR/NIT-302/232 Indore, Dated : 13.03.2024

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

(A) Online tenders are invited for supply of following items as per TS :-

TS No.	Name of Item	Unit	Approx Qty.	Online Tender Opening Date
1787	3 Phase 4 wire LT WC AMR Meters (10-100 or 20-100 Amp)	No.	2281	24.04.2024
1788	RCA for Reclamation of Burnt/Used/Old Transformer Oil	Kl.	1000	30.05.2024
1789	Purchase of Safety appliances and tools & plants for Line work.	No.	25500	30.04.2024

(B) Online tenders are invited for supply of following Services as per TS :-

TS No.	Name of Item	Estimated Cost (Vc of GST) (Rs. Lac.)	Online Tender Opening Date
1790	Providing specialized highly skilled resources for 2 years.	465.00	23.04.2024
1791	Rate contract of photocopy work for different section of the Corporate Office under MPPKVVCL, Indore.	11.17	07.05.2024
1792	Management of Operations of Centralized Call Center at MPPKVVCL, Indore.	2488.00	22.05.2024

Note : NIT No. 301 dated 07.03.2024 in respect of TS-1762 is hereby cancelled. For further detailed information visit website <http://www.mnpvc.co.in> or <https://www.mnpvc.co.in>.
M.P. Madhyam/114417/2024 CHIEF ENGINEER (PURCHASE)

MADHYA PRADESH BUILDING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
(An Agency of Govt. of M.P. Public Works Department)
16-A, CEDMAP Building, Arera Hills, Bhopal (MP)-462011
Telephone No. : 0755-4853297, 0755-4853295
E-mail : elinc-mpbdc@mp.gov.in, ajay.nagaria@mp.gov.in
NIT No. : 4975/GM/MPBDC/CW/24/NIT-53 Bhopal, Dtd. : 13.03.2024

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Madhya Pradesh Building Development Corporation invites online tender for the following works in various Districts of Madhya Pradesh :-

- Construction of Nursing Colleges in Medical College at Vidisha, Shahdol, Ratlam, Khandwa, Datia and Shivpuri-06 Works - PAC for each work Rs. 1183.72 Lakhs
- Construction, Renovation and Upgradation of Existing 100 Bedded District Hospital into 200 Bedded District Hospital along with 50 Bedded MCH in District Hospital Alirajpur, District Alirajpur - 01 Work - PAC Rs. 2900.00 Lakhs
- Construction/Upgradation of Existing 100 Bedded District Hospital into 200 Bedded District Hospital in District Hospital Niwari, District Niwari - 01 Work - PAC Rs. 2016.00 Lakhs
- Construction Work of Technical Office and Other Renovation Work at State Shooting Academy Bhopal, M.P. (2nd Call) - 01 Work - PAC Rs. 263.83 Lakhs

From bidders registered in M.P. PWD Department under appropriate category. Detailed NIT and tender documents can be viewed and purchased online only from 05.04.2024 at 18:00 hrs. to 06.05.2024 at 15:30 hrs (for S. No. 1 to 8) and 18.03.2024 at 18:00 hrs. to 02.04.2024 at 15:30 hrs (for S. No. 9 only) from website www.mptenders.gov.in PAC can verify at the time of uploading of tender if required in document. Any amendment/corrigendum if any will be published on website only, will not be published on newspapers. M.P. Madhyam/114397/2024 MANAGING DIRECTOR



Narendra Modi
Prime Minister



सत्यमेव जयते
Government of Maharashtra
संविधान संघ



Eknath Shinde
Chief Minister, Maharashtra

Hon'ble Prime Minister

Shri Narendra Modi

Guiding Maharashtra towards Progress

Innovative Activities

- Swami Vivekananda International Skill Academy
- Sant Gadge Baba Swachh Bharat Skill Academy
- Pramod Mahajan Gramin Kaushalya Vikas Kendra
- Establishment of Maharashtra State Skills University

- Acharya Chanakya Kaushalya Kendra
- Skill on Wheels for Women
- Modernization of Industrial Training Institutes
- Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj Career Guidance Camps

- Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Employment Fairs
- 6,84,000 new job opportunities will be created
- "MahaPurushon ke Kaushal Vichar" - A book included in curriculum
- Special Provisions for Women led Startups.



Department of Skills, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Government of Maharashtra



Wrong messaging

The underpinning of religion in the implementation of CAA is problematic

The government's decision to implement the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, just days before the dates for the general election are expected to be announced seems to be a precursor to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) exploiting a polarising issue in the poll campaign. A law strongly opposed by many, especially by the Muslim community, for introducing a religion-based test for grant of citizenship to immigrants from three chosen countries, the CAA is under legal challenge before the Supreme Court of India. Enacted in 2019, it was not implemented until now as the government did not notify the rules to operationalise its provisions. The timing of the rules being notified raises a legitimate doubt if it is an attempt to divert attention away from the electoral bonds controversy. The rules were unveiled at a time when the nation was questioning the delay in the submission of details about the purchasers of anonymous electoral bonds and the parties that redeemed them. The circumstances make one question the urgent need to implement a law that has not been acted upon for five years. The new rules also appear carefully crafted, designed as they are to introduce processes that will leave no scope for States to impede its implementation. It is possible that the rules were ready for a long time, and the CAA issue is being revived for electoral gains.

The essence of the CAA, in reality, may not affect the interests of minority citizens: after all, it is only a fast-tracking mechanism for minorities – Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians – from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan to gain citizenship. Instead of the usual 11 years (out of the preceding 14 years), the waiting period for this class of immigrants will only be five years, provided they had arrived before December 31, 2014. Further, there is nothing in it that removes anyone's citizenship. The problem with the CAA is two-fold: first, in its discriminatory norm that specifies some religious communities as eligible for citizenship. All those from these six religions in these three countries are presumed to have fled persecution. Others who do not fall into this category, either due to their entering the country after the cut-off date, or because of their religion, will continue to be treated as illegal migrants. The second aspect is the unfortunate political propaganda that sought to link the CAA with the National Register of Citizens. This rhetoric accentuated the fears of Muslims that the CAA may lead to loss of citizenship without adequate documentary proof. More than its content, the CAA is causing harm through its use for the Narendra Modi regime's political messaging to the effect that all its policies will have an underpinning of religion.

A fresh stance

India's free trade pact with four EU nations matters even if gains are limited

On Sunday, India signed a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) with a bloc of four European countries – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, formally known as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). The pact has been in the works since 2008 but slipped off India's to-do list after the UPA government's exit. In market access terms, the deal offers more room for Indian services firms, with easier visa rules, so that they can also tap other European markets using these countries as a base. Professionals (architects, accountants and nurses), can also expect more opportunities. Most goods exports already get duty-free treatment in Switzerland, India's largest EFTA trade partner, so the lynchpin in this deal is the in-built goal to nudge \$100 billion of fresh foreign direct investment into India and create a million jobs over 15 years. Indian consumers can expect cheaper wines and chocolates, while producers may access cheaper machinery. India's tariff cuts are linked to investment inflows, but a full assessment of those outcomes will only happen after 20 years, so persistent hard work is needed on both sides to realise these goals.

For India, the speed with which the EFTA deal has been dusted off and sealed within months of resuming negotiations is creditable. It constitutes the second major trade pact in recent years since the deal with the United Arab Emirates, and the first such arrangement with a western nations' grouping. An interim deal with Australia that kicked in late 2022, is yet to be followed through to a comprehensive agreement. Parleys for a deal with the Gulf Cooperation Council, mooted since 2004, are yet to take off. A deal with Canada has been waylaid by political frictions. Talks are on with the European Union (EU) and the United Kingdom, with the latter likely in the last mile. The EFTA deal assumes greater symbolic significance than the size of trade flows involved. It signals that India's apparent aversion to such trade pacts since 2014, capped by its walkout from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership in 2019, is likely a thing of the past. A country that has often been criticised for its high import tariffs and protectionist approach, now seems willing and able to walk the talk on free trade when many nations are turning protectionist. The EFTA pact, expected to be ratified by the end of 2024, also marks the first time that India has agreed to include non-trade issues such as labour, human rights, environment and gender in an economic agreement. Whether the inclusion of these issues in trade deals is necessary can be debated, but this is a positive augury for potential allies such as the EU that consider them critical.

The announcement in the interim Budget for 2024-25, of a corpus of ₹1 lakh crore to bolster the research and innovation ecosystem within the country, has sparked enthusiasm within the scientific and research communities. The decision to rebrand the slogan, 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan' (by Lal Bahadur Shastri) to 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan' (A.B. Vajpayee) to now 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan' (by the Prime Minister) is intended to reinforce the foundation of research and innovation for development. The significance of research and innovation cannot be overstated in fuelling economic growth, technological advancement, and global competitiveness. However, to fully realise the impact, it is crucial to assess the current research and development (R&D) funding landscape in India and its resulting output. This entails examining India's comparatively lower R&D expenditure as a percentage of GDP alongside its noteworthy output in terms of patent grants, PhDs awarded, and publication outputs. Analysing the quality of this output is equally imperative in understanding the true implications of these initiatives.

India's R&D is witnessing significant growth, with a notable increase in Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) from ₹6,01,968 million in 2010-11 to ₹12,73,810 million in 2020-21. However, with research and development investment as a percentage of GDP standing at 0.64%, India falls behind major developed and emerging economies such as China (2.4%), Germany (3.1%), South Korea (4.8%) and the United States (3.5%).

Research output, innovation

Despite the comparatively lower share of GDP dedicated to R&D, India has emerged as a powerhouse in producing academic talent. Annually, India generates an impressive 40,813 PhDs and is in third place after the United States and China. This achievement reflects India's

Comparison of research productivity and innovation metrics in selected countries (2021-22)

Country	Researchers per million inhabitants (2021) (FTE)	PhDs produced annually (2021) (Rank)	Publication output (2022) (Rank)	Top 1% most cited articles (% share)	Patents granted (2022) (Rank)
India	262	40,813 (3)	3,06,800 (3)	0.7	30,490 (6)
The U.S.	4,452	69,525 (1)	15,06,000 (1)	1.88	3,23,410 (2)
The U.K.	4,491	27,366 (5)	2,87,200 (4)	2.35	10,578 (15)
China	1,687	53,778 (2)	9,78,100 (2)	1.12	7,98,347 (1)
S. Korea	9,082	13,882 (11)	1,09,200 (16)	1.02	1,35,180 (4)
Japan	5,638	15,804 (10)	1,71,000 (9)	0.88	2,01,420 (3)

Source: Publications data has been extracted from OpenAlex on February 7, 2024.



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India's technological and manufacturing aspirations hinge on a transformative shift in its R&D landscape

commitment to fostering intellectual capital and contributing significantly to global research endeavours. Additionally, India's research output remains substantial, ranking third globally, with over 3,00,000 publications in 2022, highlighting the nation's robust research ecosystem and its commitment to advancing knowledge across diverse fields. India also demonstrates commendable performance in patent grants, securing the sixth position globally with 30,490 patents granted in 2022. While this figure is lower compared to the U.S. and China, it underscores India's evolving innovation landscape and its potential for further growth in intellectual property creation.

In India, GERD is primarily driven by the government sector, including the central government (43.7%), State governments (6.7%), Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (8.8%), and the public sector industry (4.4%), with the private sector industry contributing only 36.4% during 2020-21. Collaboration between the government, business enterprises and HEIs is essential to maximise the positive impact of science, technology, and innovation on economic growth and technological advancement.

Investment in R&D

According to the R&D statistics (2022-23) of the Department of Science and Technology, India's total investment in R&D reached \$17.2 billion in 2020-21. Within this sum, 54% (\$9.4 billion) is allocated to the government sector and predominantly utilised by four key scientific agencies – the Defence Research and Development Organisation (30.7%), the Department of Space (18.4%), the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (12.4%), and the Department of Atomic Energy (11.4%). A significant portion of R&D funding originates from the government, with considerable allocation directed towards autonomous R&D laboratories operated by the government. These laboratories serve a pivotal role in driving research and technology development with strategic implications. This symbiotic relationship between government funding, R&D execution, and strategic focus underscores the integral role of the government in steering and fostering key scientific advancements.

However, the contribution of private industries lags behind that of many other economies. At approximately \$6.2 billion, Indian businesses represent 37% of the country's GERD, in contrast to the global trend, where business enterprises typically contribute over 65% of R&D. In leading innovative economies such as China, Japan, South Korea, and the U.S., a significant portion (>70%) of R&D funding is from private industries, driven by market forces and profit motives, and the actual R&D activities are conducted in the

HEIs. India's R&D ecosystem has its advantages in terms of efficiency, but could benefit more from strong private enterprises involvement and stronger industry-academia collaboration, facilitating knowledge transfer and fostering innovation.

HEIs play a comparatively minor role in the overall R&D investment, contributing 8.8% (\$1.5 billion). It is important to recognise that increasing industry contribution to R&D is a complex issue with no single solution. A multi-pronged approach involving diverse stakeholders is necessary to address the challenges and unlock the potential of R&D for India's economic growth and competitiveness. Learning from the R&D ecosystem in other developed countries while maintaining India's strengths in streamlined decision-making and strategic alignment could be a powerful force to optimise its R&D landscape. India must implement policies that incentivise private companies to invest in R&D.

Impact of initiatives

India's technological and manufacturing aspirations hinge on a transformative shift in its R&D landscape. Closing the existing gap demands a dual strategy: encouraging private sector involvement and fortifying academia's research infrastructure. Initiatives such as the National Deep Tech Startup Policy (NDTSP) signal a strong commitment to technological progress and innovation. This policy holds the potential to incentivise private sector engagement in India's R&D ecosystem. Despite the substantial time and technical uncertainties involved in Deep Tech's creation, allocating resources to safeguard intellectual property and tackle technical obstacles can unlock untapped markets. The recent enactment of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) Act, underscores the government's dedication to catalysing research and innovation as the cornerstone of development.

This legislative move will bolster scientific research nationwide. The Act aims to bridge India's persistent R&D investment gap while nurturing a robust research culture within HEIs. Although promising, this initiative must surmount challenges such as ensuring equitable fund distribution, fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, and upholding global standards. These efforts are poised to elevate R&D spending in India, providing strategic guidance for research, innovation, and entrepreneurship while encouraging greater private sector involvement. The interim Budget, combined with the NDTSP and ANRF Act, sends positive signals regarding India's commitment to incentivising private sector-led research and innovation, particularly in burgeoning industries.

The Karnataka civil engineers Bill, its pathway

The goal of the Karnataka Professional Civil Engineers Bill, that was passed recently, to improve professionalisation and construction standards, is laudable. However, the route it recommends, which mandates only certified civil engineers to offer engineering designs, is bound to create confusion, become unnecessarily restrictive, turn impractical and remain out of sync with best practices.

The brick and mortar

The Bill establishes four key things. First, it defines a civil engineer, lists engineering designs, imposes restrictions on those who can offer engineering design services, and, finally, instructs how to ensure this.

Anyone with a diploma or a degree in a civil engineering discipline in India or abroad can qualify as a civil engineer. However, they must register with the Karnataka Council of Professional Civil Engineers within one year from the date of commencement of the Act. In addition, they should obtain a certificate to become a 'professional civil engineer' in Karnataka. For this, those with degrees need one year of experience, while those with diplomas require two years of experience. Only professional civil engineers can offer engineering designs, which includes 'civil, structural, geotechnical, and environmental engineering designs and drawings'. It also includes 'conceptual plans, master plans, layout plans, and other designs and drawings for buildings and infrastructure'.

The Bill insists that any building that is more than 50 square metres in plinth area or taller than the ground floor or that is not built with load-bearing masonry structure (meaning, buildings with columns and beams, and others) or a group housing project with more than three buildings must be supervised or executed or certified only by professional civil engineers. Strict gatekeeping is imposed by instructing government authorities not to permit construction unless registered professional civil engineers certify designs and drawings.

These provisions must be rethought for three



A. Srivathsan

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The Karnataka Professional Civil Engineers Bill pushes a bright-line rule and flounders

reasons. First, despite the overlaps between professional services in the building industry, the Bill, unthinkingly and restrictively, defines engineering designs. This is baffling since the Supreme Court of India, pointing out difficulties in a comparable situation involving architects, has refused to exclude related professionals from offering overlapping services.

In 2020, while settling architects' claim that their professional Act prohibits non-architects from offering architectural services, the Court pointed out that services, including site design, structural design, structural integration of services, incorporation of mechanical systems and inspection of construction, are carried out concertedly by a host of related professionals. Hence, to favour one group by imposing 'absolute prohibition' on others would lead to 'considerable confusion'. It wisely observed that 'varied professions form essential cogs in the overall machinery of construction' and one cannot take a hard and exclusionary regulatory view.

It is probably for these reasons that the Gujarat Professional Civil Engineers Act, 2006, which is similar, is restrained in its scope. It limits registered professional civil engineers only to certify engineering designs, which it does not define. Even this limited version may not withstand a legal challenge. Also, on the ground, anecdotally, the regulations are more honoured in the breach.

Global practices

Second, many countries are cautious about regulations restricting competition, reinforcing monopoly tendencies, raising prices, and working against user interest. Hence, they support the self-regulation of professions. Recalling a study on engineering licensing and professional practice across several countries would also be worthwhile. It pointed out that "there is no hard evidence that tight engineering licensure provides economic gains to societies". Also, large firms that employ many engineers and architects could easily countervail these provisions, making them difficult to implement.

Third, many professional councils across the world, aware of these complexities, have not tried to ring fence their services. Instead, they take the alternative and effective route of protecting titles such as 'chartered engineer or architect' by establishing a rigorous process that demands high academic standards and experience.

The councils also mandate additional peer interviews or examinations as non-negotiable requirements. Through this, they let users know that professional titles are not offered lightly, and only the competent ones earn them. Users, convinced by the credibility of the collective, voluntarily seek certified professionals.

For example, the Engineering Council in the United Kingdom clarifies that there are no restrictions on practising as an engineer. However, it protects titles offered to the qualified and those who pass professional reviews. Only a limited number of high-risk constructions, such as reservoir design and road tunnel safety regulations, are reserved for licensed persons. The same goes for the Architects Registration Board in the U.K. In comparison, the Karnataka Bill seeks an absolute protection of services and falls short of licensing requirements. There are no examinations and fewer experience requirements in the Bill. It would serve better to tighten the process leading to certification.

The question of which professional is more competent to offer a particular service will continue to arise regularly. As was decided in one of the cases involving the architect-engineer dispute in the signing of drawings for permits in Washington State, U.S., there cannot be a bright-line rule, and divisions are impossible in a 'general sense'. It must be decided on an event-to-event basis, locally and based on education, experience, and special knowledge. What would be even better is to resist the demand for professional turfs to control supply. An effective solution would be to influence the demand side by continuously demonstrating the usefulness of professionals and certification.

The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Acquittal
In recent times, the Supreme Court of India has come onto its own in speaking eloquently for people's freedom and democracy. Justice B.R. Gavai's statement that there was no urgency in staying Professor Sai Baba's

acquittal is part of this trend. Prof. Sai Baba's wife standing next to him cheerfully while the Court declined to stay his acquittal is noteworthy. Almost 80% of prisoners in India are undertrials. Their cases need to be disposed of expeditiously. Appeals

against acquittals being heard by the Court on a Saturday should also become a thing of the past. It is comforting that freedom is finally reaching a man who is on a wheelchair.
N.G.R. Prasad,
Chennai

Reservation and judgment
My father, M.R. Veerabadrhan, was the petitioner (W.P. no. 8142 of 87 and WA 1692 of 1987) seeking separate reservation for Scheduled Tribes in Tamil Nadu. The judgment was delivered on January 8, 1990 by

Justice Sathidev and Justice (Mrs) Padmini Jesudurai, as V. Vijayamulu (minor), represented by her father and natural guardian, M.R. Veerabadrhan (Appellant) vs The Director of Medical Education (Respondent). Senior counsel M.R.M. Abdul

Kareem had argued that SCs and STs are unequal, which was affirmed by the judgment. The N.M. Thomas judgment was used by the judges in the separate reservation for ST judgment.
V. Karunakaran,
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

Higher engagement, better learning

The Annual Status of Education Report 2023 states that more than 86.8% individuals in the age group of 14-18 are enrolled in educational institutions, but one-fourth of them cannot read a Class 2-level text fluently in their regional languages.



Urmila Chowdhury
has 35 years of experience as an educationist and currently serves as the Education Director at Peepul, an education non-profit

A learning deficit
India has been struggling with a learning deficit for years now. And though there is more awareness about this thanks to Pratham's annual surveys, little seems to have changed on the ground. Attendance in public schools tends to be low, so despite children being enrolled in school, many of them don't learn much. This is largely because schools are unable to engage children. Therefore, children and parents see little value in school. Across classrooms, government school teachers attribute poor student learning outcomes to poor student attendance. When students don't show up, teachers lose their motivation and do little to increase the level of engagement with learners, which could in turn motivate students to show up. It's a chicken and egg situation.

Students learn when there is motivation to do so and that happens when classrooms are meaningful and psychologically safe spaces. However, in classrooms across India, the teacher focuses only on the few students who sit in the front rows. The teacher writes questions and often even the answers on the blackboard. The students spend most of their learning hours copying off the board while the teacher leaves the room to do "more important" work. The teacher asks questions, but only a few children generally answer. Otherwise, the class answers in a chorus. The children repeat after the teacher in unison. The teacher asks if everyone has understood and receives an enthusiastic "yes" in response. But this does not give a sense of how much the students have really learned. This looks and

Student engagement is the key to driving better learning, but this is missing from many classrooms in India

sounds like active learning, but is not, because the children are not cognitively or emotionally engaged. India has a long tradition of rote learning. Many have progressed in life learning this way, but this kind of learning does not serve all students. In any case, with the world changing so fast, children need different skills.

A two-way communication
Now imagine a classroom where the teacher calls upon every child randomly. Every child is alert, curious, and attentive. The students are allowed to discuss and solve problems with their peers and learn from one another. Every child gets to touch, feel, and use the learning material – whether a maths manipulative, a book, or a science kit. The teacher stays in the classroom while the children work and gives them feedback in real time. The children cognitively engage with the topic. There is a happy buzz of students taking ownership for their own learning. This is student engagement and this is what makes the classroom a meaningful space for every learner.

Unless the teacher participates, student engagement cannot happen. Classroom learning opportunities must be made available to everyone, irrespective of gender, caste, religion, special needs, or disability. When teachers actively engage students in a lesson, learning outcomes improve. This seems like a simple premise. Why then is it so difficult to implement in the classroom? The many problems that plague the education system, including inadequate teacher allocation, poor systemic governance, outdated teaching practices, lack of teacher support and coaching, all contribute to making this hard to implement at scale.

There are many teachers who teach with passion and dedication, despite the challenges. However, even when we have dedicated teachers teaching and good student attendance, children still do not always learn. A part of the

problem is that many of these teachers were themselves not taught in an engaging way. So, very few of them worry about whether they are engaging the learner as they don't see it as their responsibility. Teaching is largely seen as a one-way communication with the teacher getting no feedback from the student during the lesson. The teacher does not know what is going on in the learner's mind and therefore cannot customise their teaching to suit the learner's needs.

Teaching the teacher
Teachers have not seen how practices such as questioning are practiced. This is because teacher education and training in India tends to be theoretical. It is conducted in seminar-style and tends to be a one-way communication. There is little opportunity for practice provided to the participants. We must see teachers as learners too and provide them with an engaging learning environment with 70% practice and 30% theory so that training serves a two-fold purpose: teachers get trained, but also experience learner engagement for themselves.

Additionally, there is no one in school to support teachers. All of us need coaching and hand-holding to support us in adopting new behaviour. Even though teaching is a vital job, teachers do not get help.

Student engagement is the key to driving better learning, but this is missing from many classrooms. Structured lessons, high quality teacher-student relationships, and student autonomy, i.e. allowing students choices in the classroom result in higher engagement and better learning outcomes. Simple changes in classroom techniques can positively impact the learning environment. In India, we have spent a few years discussing the Right to Education but this is a good time to shift the focus to the Right to Learning. Else, reading every ASER report will only lead to more disappointment.

Too many trekkers spoil the mountains

The Karnataka Ecotourism Development Board has forgotten its role

STATE OF PLAY

Ianaki Murali



After 4,000 trekkers climbed the Kumara Parvatha peak in the ecologically fragile Pushpagiri Wildlife Sanctuary on the Republic Day weekend, an alarmed Karnataka government temporarily banned trekking in the State. Until a standard operating procedure is put in place, routes without an online booking system would remain closed, it said.

Although temporary in nature, the ban will effectively extend until September, as trekking is not allowed in the forest from March to September due to the risks associated with the monsoon months and probable forest fires.

Videos of a traffic jam of climbers en route to the peak went viral on social media. The government took this decision after ecologists and conservationists raised concerns about the damage that this could cause to the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats. While welcoming prompt action from the government, activists have called for more stringent measures and access to be limited to only serious trekkers studying forests and the environment.

Nowadays, many young trekkers with disposable incomes book weekend getaways that are challenging. They often flood social media with their personal vlogs, capturing their unique experience of negotiating a tough terrain. At a height of 5,600 feet, the Kumara Parvatha in Dakshina Kannada is considered one of the toughest treks in south India. The trek extends 25 km both ways, starting from the Kukke Subramanya temple, about 280 km

from Bengaluru. Several private tourism agents and trekking clubs offer trekking packages to large groups, which include food packets, tents, and forest entry fees. So much so that forest department officials face challenges in handling the crowds at entry points. This is where baggage is checked for banned items and passes are then issued. Some serious trekkers have likened the weekend crowds to that of the Everest base camp during peak season and prefer to trek during the weekdays.

It is puzzling that the forest department has not fixed restrictions on the number of trekkers who can enter the forest per day, especially since the Karnataka Tourism Policy 2020-26 (revised) states that "ecotourism activities shall focus on increasing awareness towards conservation and sustainability of biodiversity and natural environments." It adds, "The development and promotion of ecotourism shall be done after careful consideration of the destination's carrying capacity."

The Pushpagiri wildlife sanctuary, proposed as a World Heritage Site, is one of 21 sanctuaries in Karnataka. It is situated in the Western Ghats, which has been recognised by UNESCO as one of the eight "hottest hotspots" in the world. The UNESCO says, "Forests of the site include some of the best representa-

tives of non-equatorial tropical evergreen forests anywhere and are home to at least 325 globally threatened flora, fauna, bird, amphibian, reptile and fish species."

When the Karnataka Ecotourism Development Board (KEDB) was set up in 2013, its aim was to "help the government immensely in protecting the wildlife, creating awareness about it, encouraging eco-tourism, forest safaris and also prevent damage to the eco-system in the name of tourism." Under its objectives, the KEDB states that "the Forest Department shall encourage and permit wilderness tourism in specified areas of the National Parks/Sanctuaries/Forests, as a conservation tool. It is necessary that tourists desirous of entering wilderness areas should have interest in the flora and fauna. Casual tourists shall be discouraged." It adds, "The wilderness areas are sacrosanct, and should continue to sustain themselves in pristine state... the entry of the number of tourists permissible shall be kept within limits."

So, what went wrong? How did a body set up expressly to protect the sensitive ecological regions while promoting ecotourism forget its role? How did the board remain a silent bystander to the indiscriminate entry of tourists into this eco-sensitive region?

Overcrowding damages the delicate biodiversity of the region and also poses dangers to the tourists themselves. Forests are not just a source of livelihood, food, and fuel, but also act as carbon sinks. They purify our air and water and help fight climate change. Both the state and civil society have a role to play in conserving our rich biodiversity.

Ianaki Murali is a journalist and author

Russian dominance in India's arms imports declines

Russia's share in India's arms imports shrunk from 76% in 2009-13 to 36% in 2019-23

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

In the last 15 years, India has significantly reduced its dependence on its biggest arms supplier, Russia. According to new data released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), a Swedish think tank, about 76% of arms imported by India during the 2009-13 period was from Russia. In contrast, in the 2019-23 period, Russia's share reduced to 36%.

While Russia still remains India's largest supplier, arms imports have increased substantially from France and the U.S. in recent years (Chart 1). France's share in India's arms imports was just 0.9% in the 2009-13 period. However, in the 2019-23 period, its share climbed to 33%, making it the second largest supplier. The U.S.'s share increased from 8% in 2009-13 to 13% in 2019-23. The chart shows the volume of arms transfers from the five major arms exporters to India in terms of trend-indicator value. This is calculated based on the known unit production cost of a core set of weapons and is intended to represent the transfer of military resources rather than the financial value of the transfer. India's arms imports increased by 4.7% during 2019-23 compared to the previous five-year period.

Between 2019 and 2023, India climbed one spot to become the world's biggest arms importer (Chart 2), displacing Saudi Arabia. India's share in global arms imports rose from 9.1% in 2014-18 to 9.8% in 2019-23. Saudi Arabia, which was the biggest importer in the previous five-year period, reduced from 11% to 8.4%.

Understandably, Ukraine, which had a negligible share in global arms imports in 2014-18, increased its share to 4.9% in the next five years, especially after the Russian invasion in February 2022. As far as India's neighbours are

concerned, Pakistan's share in global imports increased from 2.9% in 2014-18 to 4.3% in 2019-23. The share of China, on the other hand, declined from 4.9% to 2.9% in the same period.

According to SIPRI, countries in Asia, Oceania, and West Asia continued to import arms in much larger volumes than Europe. In 2019-23, nine of the 10 biggest arms importers were from Asia, Oceania, or West Asia. Chart 2 shows the share of top countries in global arms imports in two five-year periods.

Russia's role as an arms supplier diminished not just in the case of India but across the world. Russia accounted for 21% of all arms exports in 2014-18. In 2019-23, this share came down to 11% (Chart 3). In volume terms, Russia's exports fell by 52% during the two periods.

According to the think tank, until the year 2019, the volume of Russian arms exports remained more or less constant with minimal changes. However, export volumes started to rapidly decline in 2020, 2021, and 2022. In 2023, the volume exported was 74% lower than the levels recorded in 2019.

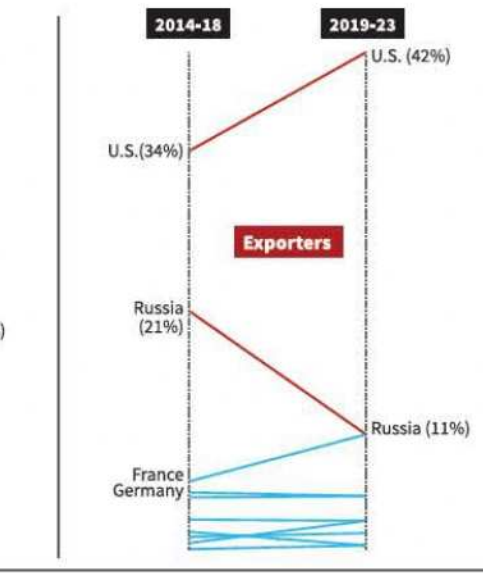
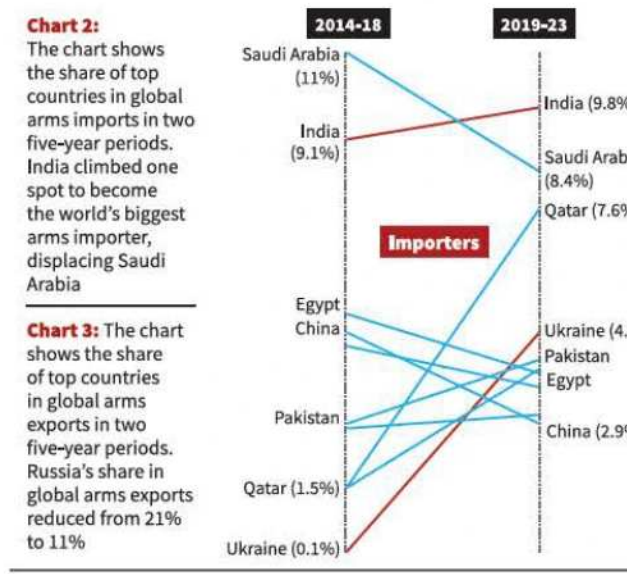
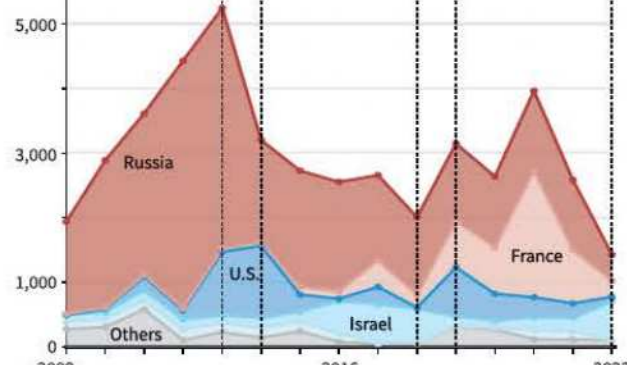
Russia was the major arms supplier to 31 nations in 2019. This figure decreased to 14 in 2022 and 12 by 2023. On the other hand, the U.S., the biggest exporter of arms, further cemented its position by increasing its share in global exports from 34% to 42%. Chart 3 shows the share of top countries in global arms exports in two five-year periods.

Table 4 lists the units of various types of weapons ordered by India in the last 15 years. Missiles formed the largest component in India's arms order and a majority of them were from Russia followed by the U.S., Israel, and France. Most ordered commodities also included engines, armoured vehicles, and aircraft. While engines and aircraft were mostly ordered from Russia, France and the U.S., armoured vehicles came from South Africa and Russia.



Table 4: The table lists the units of various types of weapons ordered by India in the last 15 years

Seller	Missiles	Engines	Armoured vehicles	Aircraft
Russia	59,821	593	1,005	356
U.S.	4,622	329		136
Israel	1,821			44
France	1,343	342	14	172
S. Africa			640	
Ukraine	360	240		
U.K.	200			57
Germany		240		46
Canada		215		2
S. Korea				



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 14, 1974

Why is the national motto missing on notes?

New Delhi, March 13: A question about the national emblem motto Satyameva Jayate was the subject of a 20-minute exchange, which included digs at the Government and philosophical observations, in the Lok Sabha today.

Mr. Madhu Dandavate, the alert and quick-witted Socialist member, had asked the Government to explain the absence of the motto from currency notes and postal stamps.

Mr. F.H. Mohsin, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, replied that although the motto was an integral part of the national emblem, there were instructions that for technical reasons there could be a modification of the emblem for use on coins, currency notes and stamps.

To a supplementary question from Mr. Dandavate, the Home Minister, Mr. Uma Shankar Dikshit, said the Government certainly did not regard the motto to be of marginal or secondary importance.

Mr. Dandavate asked whether one reason for dropping the motto from currency notes was because the rupee value had eroded and the Government realised that the inscription in the notes "I promise to pay the bearer a sum..." was a breach of truth.

Mr. Dikshit: It is a very poor joke. I refused to take note of it.

Mr. Mohsin said the question of printing the motto on coins and currency was referred by the Ministry to the then Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister (Mr. Morarji Desai). It was later considered in detail by the Finance Ministry. It was found that printing the motto was not possible as it would increase the lettering.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 14, 1924

Help from America

New York, Mar. 12: American bankers headed by the Morgans have established a credit of hundred million dollars in favour of the Banque of France.

London, Mar. 13: The French loan is fully secured by gold in the vaults of the Banque de France, which is acting for the French Government and will be used to stabilise French exchange and for other purposes. It is understood that the duration of the loan is for one year.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of electoral bonds purchased since its inception

22,217 SBI informed the Supreme Court that out of all the bonds purchased by parties between April 1, 2019, and February 15, 2024, 22,030 were redeemed. PTI

The fall in vegetable oil imports in the month of February

13 in percentage. India's vegetable oil (comprising edible oils and non-edible oils) imports fell year-on-year in February to nearly 9.75 lakh tonnes, according to data from the Solvent Extractors' Association of India. PTI

Worth of weapons to be sent to Ukraine by the U.S.

300 in \$ million. Pentagon will send weapons to Ukraine after finding some cost savings in its contracts, even though the military remains deeply overdrawn, the White House said. AP

The writers who won the Sahitya Akademi Award for 2023

24 The awards coincided with the 70th anniversary celebrations of the National Academy of Letters at the 'Sahityotsav'. Awards were given to authors including English author Neelum Saran Gaur. PTI

Number of Indians arrested for illegally working in Sri Lanka

21 Sri Lankan authorities arrested Indian nationals aged 24 to 25 for illegally operating an online marketing centre in the country, breaching relaxed tourist visa norms. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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On judges and bureaucrats joining politics

What are the restrictions on judges and senior government officials with respect to their employment when it comes to other posts within the government or in the private sphere? Can a former judge join a political party and contest elections?

EXPLAINER

Rangarajan. R

The story so far:

Recently a Calcutta High Court judge and a senior IPS officer in West Bengal resigned from their posts and joined political parties. This has once again raised questions of propriety about independent constitutional authorities and other senior government officials joining political parties after demitting office.

What are constitutional restrictions? The Constitution works on the principle of checks and balance between various organs. The executive is accountable to the legislature. An independent judiciary keeps a check on both these branches of the State. There are also other independent bodies like the Election Commission, Public Service Commission, Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) who are required to perform their constitutional duties without any interference from the government. The independence of these institutions is ensured through guaranteeing fixed tenure, financial independence, stringent removal procedure and restrictions after demitting office. A judge of a Supreme Court after ceasing to hold office cannot appear as a lawyer before any court or authority in India. A judge of a High Court has similar restrictions except for appearance before the Supreme Court or other High Courts. The CAG and the chairman/members of the Public Service Commission cannot take up any other employment with Central or State governments after demitting office. These restrictions are laid down to avoid favouritism, during the period of holding such positions, towards the government in power with an intent of securing any post-retirement benefit.

What about political posts? There are no restrictions when it comes



Necessary safeguards: Former Calcutta High Court judge Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay joins the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Kolkata on March 7. ANI

to joining political parties, contesting elections or being nominated to certain posts. There are notable instances of persons who held independent constitutional posts and later went on to join politics or were nominated to various posts. There have been two Supreme Court judges in 1967 and 1983, who resigned from their posts to contest the presidential and parliamentary elections from Assam, respectively. Another Supreme Court judge joined a political party in Tamil Nadu and contested elections five years after his retirement in 1999. A former Chief Election Commissioner became a Rajya Sabha member and Minister in 2004, three years after his retirement. Recently, a retired Chief Justice of India was nominated to the Rajya Sabha in 2020 within four months of his retirement.

There have also been occasions where retired CAG and judges have been appointed as Governors of States. Numerous bureaucrats have also joined political parties and contested elections after resigning from service or soon after their retirement.

What are the recommendations? The Election Commission had in 2012 recommended to the Union government to provide for a cooling-off period for top bureaucrats after their retirement before they could join political parties and contest elections. However, the Government had rejected this recommendation based on the opinion of the Attorney General that this may not be in line with constitutional provisions and democratic values. The Supreme Court had dismissed a writ petition in May 2022

that sought a direction from the top court to the legislature to frame a law imposing a cooling-off period for retired bureaucrats before joining politics. The court observed that it is for the legislature to determine whether a cooling-off period is required for bureaucrats before they join politics after retirement.

Is a cooling-off period desirable?

One of the essential features of a democracy is every citizen's right to contest elections. The Attorney General while providing his opinion against the 2012 recommendation of Election Commission had said that maintenance of independence and neutrality will be relevant during the period a person is in service. There are rules at present which restrict a senior bureaucrat from joining a private job for at least one year after he or she retires from government service. The Attorney General had opined that such restriction for commercial employment is based on intelligible differentia to avoid conflicts of interest. However, such a restriction against officials contesting polls may not be a valid classification and would not be in harmony with democratic principles in the Constitution.

While the opinion of Attorney General is based on sound legal principle, it is equally imperative to remember the famous judicial quote that 'justice should not only be done but should also be seen to be done'. This applies equally to judges, independent constitutional authorities and senior bureaucrats. It is an indispensable trait while discharging their official functions. Extending this principle even after they demit office will have a salutary effect. This may be achieved by prescribing a cooling-off period of say at least two years for joining political parties or being nominated to political posts by the government. This will instil confidence in the public at large and negate any allegation of quid pro quo.

Rangarajan. R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Polity Simplified'. He trains civil-service aspirants at 'Officers IAS Academy'. Views expressed are personal.

THE GIST

A judge of a Supreme Court after ceasing to hold office cannot appear as a lawyer before any court or authority in India. The CAG and the chairman/members of the Public Service Commission cannot take up any other employment with Central or State governments after demitting office.

There are no restrictions when it comes to joining political parties, contesting elections or being nominated to certain posts.

The Election Commission had in 2012 recommended to the Union government to provide for a cooling-off period for top bureaucrats after their retirement before they could join political parties and contest elections.

How did Indians end up in the Russia-Ukraine war?

What did the CBI uncover with respect to the illegal recruitment of Indian youth to the Russian military?

Sumeda

The story so far:

The deaths of two Indian nationals in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and the recent raids by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) which uncovered a human trafficking network recruiting Indians as "security helpers" and other personnel for the Russian military have sparked widespread concern. This has highlighted the plight of dozens of Indians stuck on the frontlines of the Russia-Ukraine war after they were deceived into working with the Russian military under false pretences.

What happened?

The presence of Indians in combat roles on the Russian side, first surfaced in February this year. In a series of reports, *The Hindu* brought attention to the situation, stating that some Indian nationals, initially hired as "army security helpers," were compelled to fight against

their will after their passports and documents were seized.

One of the men, a resident of Uttar Pradesh, told the daily that he went to Russia with the help of an agent in November last year after he was assured that there would be no deployment in the war zone. However, he was sent to the frontline in January after some basic training in handling weapons. "We were categorically told that we would not be sent to the battlefield and promised ₹1.95 lakh salary and ₹50,000 additional bonus per month. Except for the ₹50,000 bonus for two months, I have not received any money," he said. The U.P. resident claimed that he tried to contact the Indian Embassy in Moscow but all his pleas went in vain. In the subsequent days, more Indian citizens and their families came forward to seek the government's intervention. A group of seven Indians from Punjab and Haryana released a set of videos, claiming that they arrived in Russia on tourist visas but were forced to join the Russian Army as "helpers" after

being detained.

An Indian-origin Russian official associated with the Russian Ministry of Defence told *The Hindu* that approximately 100 Indians were recruited at the Moscow recruitment centre in the past year. However, the actual number of Indians hired could be higher, since there are several recruitment centres across Russia. The official said all recruits had to sign a contract to join as "army security helpers." He added that the contract requires a minimum of one year of service and prohibits signees to leave or exit before six months of service.

How did the agents con people?

A multi-State human trafficking network busted by the CBI in a crackdown on visa recruiters in seven cities across India last week revealed how Indian youths were allegedly pushed into the war zone by consultancy firms on the pretext of a better life and livelihood with the Russian military as security guards and helpers, as well as higher education. So far, the probe

agency has found 35 instances of people sent to Russia and listed at least 17 consultancy companies spread across India who were involved in the trafficking.

As per the CBI, the "organised network" lured Indian youth through social media and local agents, offering them highly paid jobs and lucrative employment opportunities in Russia. A number of students were reportedly tricked into enrolling in dubious private universities by agents promising low fees and visa extensions. Once the aspirants reached Russia, the local agents seized their passports and forced them to join the armed forces, the CBI said. At least two Indians with the Russian military have lost their lives in the fighting so far.

What has the government said?

The Indian government is in talks with the Russian authorities about the early release of Indian citizens who were duped into working with the Russian military. "We are doing our best to locate them. We are in touch with the Russian authorities so that they can be released and discharged early," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at a regular media briefing last week. "We remain committed to the early release of our nationals serving as support staff with the Russian Army and their eventual return home," the spokesperson added. Noting the findings of the CBI raids, the MEA appealed to Indian nationals not to be "swayed" by offers made by agents for support jobs with the Russian Army.

THE GIST

The deaths of two Indian nationals in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and the recent raids by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) which uncovered a human trafficking network recruiting Indians as "security helpers" and other personnel for the Russian military have sparked widespread concern.

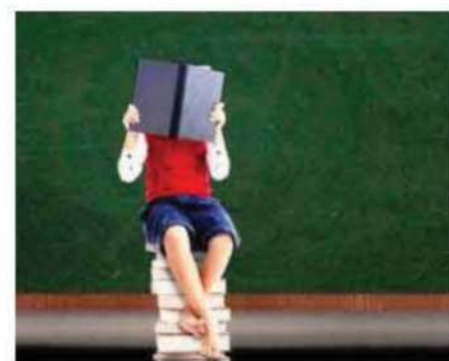
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The cost of war: A woman mourns beside the body of a dead child, on February 4, in Rafah, Gaza. GETTY IMAGES



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

Mr. N. S. Mani, Maraimalai Nagar, Madras, wants to know the exact meaning of 'flak' and how to use it.

"Flak" literally means 'anti-aircraft fire.' Figuratively, it means severe criticism or abuse.

The proposal to increase the price of petrol has come in for a lot of flak. The proposal to increase the price of petrol has run into a lot of flak.

It means that the proposal has been severely criticised.

The 'a' in 'flak' is pronounced like the 'a' in 'fan'. 'Flak' is also spelt 'fleck'.

"Mr. K. Bomma Raju, Malleswaram, Bangalore, wants to know the meaning of (a) Tom, Dick and Harry (b) cakewalk."

"Tom, Dick and Harry" is a Victorian term for 'the man in the street.' It has a derogatory meaning. It means 'people unworthy of notice.'

Do not expect me to listen to every Tom, Dick and Harry.

A 'cakewalk' is a 'dance developed from an American black contest in graceful walking with a cake as prize.' The prize is given to the couple who walk most gracefully round the cake.

Figuratively, it means 'an easy task'.

Winning from this constituency is not going to be a cakewalk for him.

'Cakes and ale' means 'merry making', 'a good time.'

Life is not cakes and ale.

Cakes and Ale is the title of a novel by Somerset Maugham. 'It's a piece of cake' means that it is something that can be done with little effort, something that is easily done. 'To take the cake' means 'to be conspicuously foolish, amusing, annoying, astonishing, outrageous.' This expression is from 'cakewalk'. It originally meant 'to win a prize.' Now it is used ironically.

He takes the cake for sheer stupidity.

'To take the cake' is used informally in British English.

"Mr. M. P. V. Shankar, Channappatna, Madras, wants to know how to pronounce the past tense of 'beat'."

"It rhymes with 'feet' and 'seat'. Most people in this country pronounce it 'bet'. It is incorrect. There is no difference in pronunciation between the present and past tense of the word. Their spellings are also the same. Beat-beat-beaten. The 'ea' in 'beaten' is pronounced the way 'ea' is pronounced in the present and past tense of the word.

"Mr. V. Sankaran, S.P. Hospital, Madras, wants to know what is meant by 'back-formation.'"

"It has nothing to do with posterior development. It is a linguistic term. It describes the formation of a new word by the removal of the prefix or suffix of an existing word. Generally verbs are formed in this fashion from nouns and adjectives. The word 'enthuse' was formed from 'enthusiasm', 'laze' from 'lazy', 'burgle' from 'burglar', 'edit' from 'editor'. Other back-formations are legislate, televise, automate, diagnose, liaison, self-destruct."

"Ms. D. Sailaja Sarma wants to know the meaning of 'primrose path.'"

"It means 'the pursuit of pleasure, especially with disastrous consequences.'

Be careful. The primrose path appears attractive. But you will be ruined eventually if you take that path.

Published in The Hindu on June 4, 1991.

From the frontlines: what we see when we look at suffering

By witnessing photographs of the assault on Gaza, are citizens around the world marking themselves as unwitting participants in the disquieting intrusion? In the backdrop of violence, we revisit Susan Sontag's observations on photography

Jonathan Koshy Varghese

It has been a little over five months since Israel's assault on Gaza. To mark this dismal occasion, *The New York Times* unveiled a catalogue of images in early March 2024. The online gallery opens with a stark portrayal: Palestinian women grieving for their loved ones lost in Israeli airstrikes at the al-Najjar hospital in Rafah. The photograph zooms in on three anonymous women, their faces etched with anguish. In the frame's centre, a woman embraces two children, unaware of the camera's intrusion. The photographer appeared to have interrupted a moment of private grief. By looking at it, we too turn into voyeurs.

The *Times* arranges the photographs chronologically so that as we scroll down, we are guided through the different stages of human suffering since its unfolding in October 2023. It labels Palestinians and Israelis distinctly on their website, suggesting universal suffering. Photography aspires towards objectivity despite war's bias.

This was impossible, Susan Sontag argued. "War was and still is the most irresistible – and picturesque – news," she emphasised. Her acerbic words are difficult to overlook. It is an idea she expanded in her works, *On Photography* (1977) and *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003).

Sontag's Image-World

We live in an age of images. We are seen,

and sometimes we see. We are both observers and the observed, caught in the perpetual exchange of scrutiny. We have come a long way from Talbot's *Pencil of Nature* (1844) or Joseph Nicéphore Niépce's "heliography." We've taken a leap from Louis Daguerre's once revolutionary metal plates to Open AI's DALL-E. We make images just as they make us.

Indeed, in making such progress, we have had to confront our role concerning the technologies of image-making. What makes images human? Is a photograph different from other forms of visual images? John Berger, the renowned art critic and historian, seemed to think so.

In his discerning ode to photography, *About Looking* (1991), Berger asserted that, unlike other forms of visual images, a photograph was not an interpretation or an imitation of its subject but rather a trace of it. While the human eye and camera both "registered" an image, a camera did what the human eye could not. It "fixed" the appearance of the event. It froze time. Berger's words are a discerning annotation to Susan Sontag's celebrated *On Photography* (1977). Unlike Berger, Sontag is dramatic in her assessment. "Reality has always been interpreted through the reports given by images," she asserted on an occasion.

A photograph had little power to summon the past, they insist. Marcel Proust, the author of the monumental *In Search of Lost Time* (1913-27), was distinctively unimpressed by its influence. The photographic process, its output, and

the voluntary deliberateness of the past thus evoked seemed shallow to him. Berger reminds us that while Proust's judgment may seem harsh, it is inevitable. Before the advent of the camera, humans had no means of capturing appearances. The faculty of memory came close. Despite this, Berger clarifies, "unlike memory, photographs do not in themselves preserve meaning. They offer appearances –"

Indeed, even as a photograph preserves appearances, it does not narrate. It freezes time without explaining it. To Berger, the camera transformed modern perception itself. The camera atomised the world, making it manageable. The taking of the photograph was no longer a ritual but a reflex. Reality was no longer inscrutable. Veracity became a function of the apparent. We've all faced moments of helplessness as images commandeer our reality. Photographs have transformed us into consumers of events, of appearances. Images have given rise to what Sontag dubs the Image-World. In this system, unlike other technologies of image-making, the role of the image-maker is rendered negligible. In choosing to photograph, the photographer may assert his own role in the registering of reality. Yet, the end result – the photograph and its correlation to reality – is mediated by chemical processes in a laboratory. The earliest photographer manipulated light. Now, the manipulation is facilitated by the keypad.

Looking at, Looking away

Sontag directs our attention to a crucial aspect concerning the photograph: its ability to depersonalise our connection to reality. She observes that we've devolved into bystanders, voraciously devouring an unrelenting blitz of images depicting violence and suffering. And we remain insatiable.

In her subsequent book-length essay, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003), Sontag focuses on the consumers of images. Photographs of the sufferings of others are as seductive to the photographers as it is to us. We look at photographs in a gallery, book, or website. We are stimulated, moved, perhaps shocked. However, just as a visit to the gallery must eventually end, a book must be shut, and websites must inevitably be closed. Even the strongest emotions are transient, Sontag reminds us.

Do we then cease to look? Sontag seems to think otherwise. The impulse to look is rooted in the privilege to look away. If, however, we persist, the structures of violence reveal themselves.

The photographs on the *Times*' website are particularly revealing in this regard. The Palestinians suffer, endure, and die, but the Israelis are privileged to a dignified burial. Palestinians are traced amidst sand and concrete rubble while the Israeli war machine is meticulous. The Palestinian is barely named, while the Israeli is memorialised.

Jonathan Koshy Varghese teaches Literature at Lady Shri Ram College.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Pi Day is observed on March 14 every year. A quiz on the mathematical constant

Sindhu Nagaraj

QUESTION 1
Let's start with a simple one. Why is March 14 observed as Pi Day?

QUESTION 2
Who founded this day and in which year?

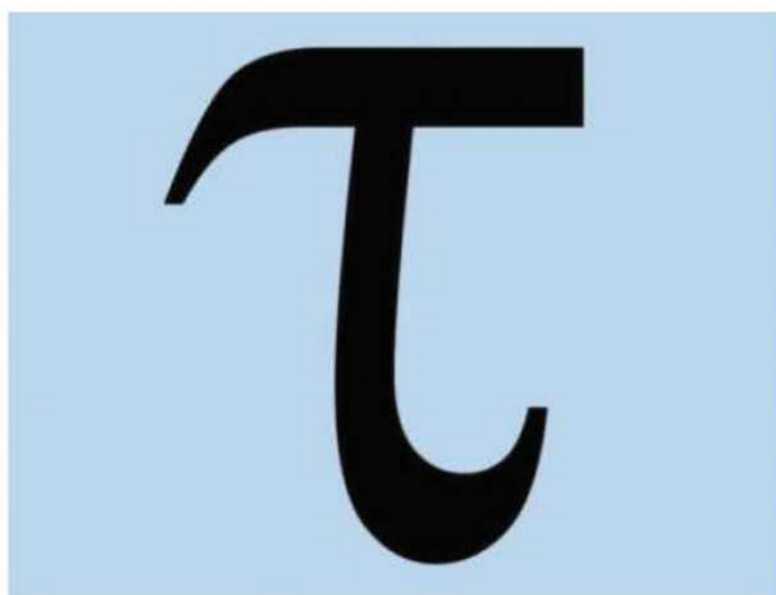
QUESTION 3
In 2019, UNESCO designated Pi Day to be celebrated as which day?

QUESTION 4
People also celebrate Pi on other dates in the year. Which are they? Why?

QUESTION 5
In the year 2015, March 14 was celebrated as Super Pi Day. Why?

QUESTION 6
Name two common ways of celebrating Pi Day.

QUESTION 7
Which famous scientist's birthday falls on Pi Day?
A: Albert Einstein



Visual question:
What is the symbol present in the image? How is it related to Pi? There is a specific time associated with the symbol. What is it?

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. This U.S. singer-songwriter became the youngest two-time Oscar winner. Ans: Billie Eilish
2. These actors who presented the award for visual effects and film editing, were an unlikely pairing in this 1988 comedy film. Ans: Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito; Twins
3. *The Zone of Interest* won the award for Best international feature film. It also won in this category. Ans: Best sound
4. This movie won the category in which *The Creator*, *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 3* etc were nominated. Ans: *Godzilla Minus One*
5. The action sequence from this movie made an appearance in a montage celebrating the contribution of stunt actors. Ans: *RRR*
6. Christopher Nolan was nominated previously for this film. Ans: *Dunkirk*
Visual: Identify this renowned production director. Ans: Nitin Desai
Early Birds: K.N. Viswanathan| Akshay Kumar Khanna| Animesh Mohan| Divya Jaiswal| Tamal Biswas

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

Word of the day

Blare:
a loud harsh or strident noise

Synonyms: cacophony, din, clamour, honk, toot

Usage: He blared the horns of the taxi.

Pronunciation: bit.ly/blarepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /bleə/

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

From Page One

SC to hear plea to include CJI on EC panel

The court had reasoned that "fierce independence, neutrality and honesty" envisaged in the institution of the EC required an end to government monopoly and "exclusive control" over appointments. However, the government had enacted a new law – The Chief Election Commission and other Election Commissions (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023 – to countermand the judgment. The law had replaced the CJI with a Cabinet Minister on the selection committee, giving the Centre a dominant role in the appointment process.

"... Democracy is a facet of the basic structure of the Constitution and in order to ensure free and fair elections and to maintain healthy democracy in our country, the Election Commission should be insulated from political and/or executive interference," the NGO argued.

The application filed by the NGO also pointed out that the ECI at present was under the sole charge of CEC Rajiv Kumar.

Data on electoral bonds hand-delivered to EC: SBI

From April 1, 2019, to April 11 the same month, 3,346 bonds were purchased and 1,609 were redeemed by parties. Between April 12, 2019, and February 15, 2024, donors bought 18,871 bonds and 20,421 were redeemed by parties, the SBI affidavit said.

Though the Supreme Court had sought information only from April 12, 2019, the bank said the selling and redeeming of electoral bonds had started from April 1. The EC has time till March 15 to publish the information from the bank on its official website. The bank said it has shared information with the EC about the dates of purchase of electoral bonds, the names of purchasers and the denomination of the bonds. Similarly, the dates of encashment of the bonds, names of political parties which received the contributions and denomination of the bonds encashed were also provided. The bank has shown impressive alacrity in divulging the information which was readily available to it.

Governor stalls move to re-induct Ponmudy

The Governor has sought a clarification whether inducting Mr. Ponmudy into the Council of Ministers would be legally correct when his conviction and sentence has only been stayed in the interim, and not set aside by the top court. Parrying questions, a Raj Bhavan official said the "matter was under consideration of the Governor."

Following his conviction and sentencing in the assets case, the higher education portfolio held by Mr. Ponmudy was reallocated to his Cabinet colleague, R.S. Rajakannappan. However, after the Supreme Court order, Assembly Speaker M. Appavu on Wednesday rescinded his earlier notification declaring the Thirukkoyilur Assembly constituency (held earlier by Mr. Ponmudy) vacant.

HC dismisses Congress plea in tax dues case

The Congress approached the court after the ITAT on March 8 dismissed the party's application seeking a stay on the February 13 notice of the I-T department initiating recovery proceedings against it. The assessing officer had raised a tax demand of more than ₹100 crore for the assessment year 2018-19 when the income was assessed to be over ₹199 crore. The court, however, said the Congress can approach ITAT by way of a fresh stay application bringing to its attention the fact that ₹65.94 crore has already been recovered.

"... that amount translating to roughly 48% of the outstanding demand. This changed circumstance is an aspect which, in our considered opinion, would merit consideration by the ITAT in case the petitioner chooses to move a fresh application for stay," the court said.

Kerala rejects Centre's one-time offer of ₹5,000 cr. to tide over fund crunch

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The bugle has sounded for a legal battle between the Centre and Kerala in the Supreme Court, after the Union government said on Wednesday that it could only spare ₹5,000 crore as a one-time measure to avert an immediate financial crisis in the State.

The amount offered by the Union government will not be enough to fulfil Kerala's most basic financial commitments, including pensions and salaries, senior advocate Kapil Sibal

and C.K. Sasi, representing the State, told a Bench of Justices Surya Kant and K.V. Viswanathan.

The Union government also said it would deduct ₹5,000 crore from the State's net borrowing ceiling in the first nine months of the financial year 2024-2025, and stipulated that the State would not be allowed any "ad hoc" borrowing in 2024-2025 if it takes the ₹5,000 crore being proffered now.

Rejecting the offer, Mr. Sibal said: "We want an absolute minimum of at least ₹10,000 crore."

'Hacker-for-hire gang with links to Pune police planted emails on the computers of Bhima Koregaon accused'

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The alleged evidence used to incarcerate 16 people in the Bhima Koregaon case was "likely to have been implanted remotely through a hacker-for-hire mercenary gang infrastructure that has clients all over the world, but whose epicentre is in India", according to claims made in a new book.

In her book, *The Incarcerations: Bhima Koregaon And The Search For Democracy In India*, London School of Economics Professor Alpa Shah draws from interviews with cybersecurity analysts and researchers to allege that the hacker gang was connected to a Pune police officer.

In the book, she elaborates on the role of the police in hacking into the computers of at least three of the accused at Bhima Koregaon and planting the emails and files that were used to implicate them.

Professor Shah says the

16 arrests were used to divert attention away from the Hindutva instigators of a communal riot targeting Dalits, which took place on January 1, 2018 at Bhima Koregaon in Maharashtra.

'Linked to police'

As reported by *The Hindu* in December 2022, U.S.-based digital forensics firm Arsenal Consulting had found that the computers belonging to the late Father Stan Swamy and his co-accused Rona Wilson and Surendra Gadling in the Bhima Koregaon caste violence case were compromised by the same attacker.

On February 10, 2021, the same consultancy had found that a hacker had controlled Mr. Wilson's computer for a period of 22 months to plant documents, which led to an investigation that supposedly unravelled a Communist Party of India (Maoist) conspiracy to eliminate Prime Minister Narendra Modi "in another Rajiv Gandhi type incident".



Pune police raided Surendra Gadling's residence in the Bhima Koregaon caste violence case on April 17, 2018. FILE PHOTO

Professor Shah writes that a security analyst working with an email provider enabled Andy Greenberg, a U.S.-based cybersecurity journalist, to connect the hackers to an officer in Pune police.

In June 2022, Mr. Greenberg had published new research by SentinelOne, a California-based cybersecurity company, on a long-running hacking campaign which targeted hundreds of activists, journalists, academics, and lawyers in India from as far back as 2012. Those associated

with the Bhima Koregaon case were notable targets.

'Shockingly brazen'

"These guys are not going after terrorists. They are going after human rights defenders and journalists. And it's not right," the security analyst is quoted as saying.

The book also quotes Mr. Greenberg as saying, "I cover a ton of state-sponsored hacking stories and usually figuring out who did it is incredibly complex. The actual identity of a hacker, figuring out

which government agency is tied to a hacking operation, is like a Holy Grail. It's a very difficult thing to prove. To see this person just put their name and contact information in the backup for these email accounts, it was so bizarre. It was such a shockingly brazen thing to do."

Professor Shah writes that 16 largely unconnected people from different parts of India found themselves thrown into jail between 2018 and 2020, accused of being Maoist terrorists and "urban Naxals". She notes that they are all custodians of democracy; people who had persistently supported grassroots social movements against rising inequality, land grabs, and State atrocities; and protectors of environmental, land, and forest rights.

In 2018, the Pune police arrested Sudha Bharadwaj, Shoma Sen, Surendra Gadling, Mahesh Raut, Arun Ferreira, Sudhir Dhawale, Rona Wilson, Vernon Gonsalves, and Varavara Rao,

for their alleged involvement in the Bhima Koregaon riots, based on a complaint lodged by a local builder, Tushar Damgude. He alleged that members of the CPI (Maoist) and the Kabir Kala Manch spread hatred through provocative songs, plays, and speeches delivered at the Elgar Parishad held at Shanwar Wada in Pune on December 31, 2017. The police claimed that the event triggered violence the next day near the Koregaon Bhima war memorial located on the outskirts of Pune.

The case, initially investigated by the Pune police, was transferred to the National Investigation Agency on January 24, 2020. The NIA also arrested civil rights campaigner Gautam Navlakha; Anand Teltumbde, who taught at IIT Kharagpur; Hany Babu, an associate professor at Delhi University; and Jyoti Jagtap, Sagar Gorkhe, and Ramesh Gaichor, all members of the Kabir Kala Manch, a cultural organisation.

Canadian probe into Nijjar case is not over: New Zealand Deputy PM

New Zealand is one of the 'Five Eyes' grouping countries that have urged New Delhi to cooperate in the investigation; it is too early to comment on the issue, says Winston Peters, who is on a four-day visit to India for talks on bilateral ties

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Evidence in the Nijjar killing in Canada can only be known once Canadian authorities complete their investigation and take the trial to the court, New Zealand's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Winston Peters said, indicating it was too early to comment on the issue that has damaged India-Canada ties for the past few months. At the end of a four-day visit to India, the first by him as part of the recently formed coalition government in New Zealand, Mr. Peters also said that India and New Zealand shared common views about Indo-Pacific security challenges, and should work more closely together.

"Is the investigation complete?" he asked in response to a question from *The Hindu* on how New Zealand, a member of the



Shared visions: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with New Zealand Deputy PM Winston Peters on Wednesday. ANI

'Five Eyes' intelligence partnership with Canada, views Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in Parliament that Indian government agents were allegedly involved in the plot to assassinate a Khalistani separatist Canadian activist, who was killed in June 2023. Since then the issue has snowballed, especially since U.S. authorities filed the indictment of an Indian national for ordering the assassination of another

Khalistani separatist, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, at the behest of a senior Indian intelligence official. However, Canadian authorities, who made their charge publicly before the U.S., have yet to take their case to trial.

Mr. Peters' comments are significant as they come months after the previous New Zealand government had joined other 'Five Eyes' grouping countries in calling on New Delhi to cooperate in the Ca-

nadian investigation of the Nijjar killing, and subsequently expressed concerns over the Modi government's decision to ask half the Canadian High Commission's diplomats to leave India in the wake of the allegations.

"Indians are famous for understanding the law. If there is something suspicious, you wait for all the facts to come out," Mr. Peters said when asked about Canada's evidence in the case while speaking to journalists at a reception held in his honour. During his visit to Delhi, Mr. Peters met with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, and Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankar.

"India, like New Zealand, is an extremely diverse country in which varied communities come together to forge a common future. It was my pleasure to learn more about India's faith communities

and its rich spiritual heritage during this visit," Mr. Peters said, according to a press release by the New Zealand High Commission.

"It is clear that New Zealand and India share common strategic perspectives about the security challenges our Indo-Pacific region faces as well as a commitment to do more together to meet them," Mr. Peters was quoted as saying after talks with Dr. Jaishankar.

In a social media post, Dr. Jaishankar said he welcomed New Zealand's decision to join the International Solar Alliance and discussed cooperation in the Commonwealth, UN Security Council reform, Indo-Pacific, and global issues. "[We] agreed on enhancing our political, trade & economic, security, connectivity, mobility, education and people to people ties," the External Affairs Minister wrote on Tuesday.

ED arrests Delhi resident in ₹4,978-cr. cheating case

Devesh K Pandey
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Delhi resident Ashish Kakkar for allegedly running a cybercrime syndicate that cheated people across the country of ₹4,978 crore over the past four years. The funds were siphoned off and diverted overseas.

Mr. Kakkar was picked up from a hotel in neighbouring Gurugram on March 2, the central agency said in a statement. The agency secured his 10-day custody from a special court till March 12. It did not say if he was subsequently remanded to further custody of the ED or sent to judicial custody by the court.

The ED alleged that the funds generated by the syndicate were layered and accumulated in the bank accounts of the companies/firms controlled by the "kingpin" and his associates. They were transferred abroad through the "hawala" route via "circular trading".

No stay on notification of fact-check unit, says HC

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

In a setback to the petitioners fighting against the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2023, the Bombay High Court on Wednesday refused to accept applications seeking a stay on the notification for the formation of a fact-check unit (FCU).

The rules empower the Centre to establish an FCU to identify fake, false, and misleading information about the government on social media platforms. The social media companies will then be compelled to remove the content or information declared as fake, false, or misleading, and if not, they will have to defend their reasons in court.

Mamata snaps ties with brother for opposing Howrah candidate

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee said on Wednesday that she was snapping ties with her younger brother Swapnan Banerjee, popularly known as Babun.

The remarks came a day after Mr. Babun said he would contest the Lok Sabha election as an Independent from Howrah against two-time Trinamool MP Prasan Banerjee.

"From now on, please do not link my name with him. Not only me, other members of my family will also disassociate themselves from him," Ms. Banerjee told presspersons.

Mr. Babun, a popular name in Kolkata's sporting circles, has aired his differences with Mr. Prasan, who is a former footballer. "I have a lot of allergy to-



Mamata Banerjee

wards Prasan Banerjee. I may contest as an Independent candidate against him," Mr. Babun had told a news channel.

Youngest of Ms. Mamata's six brothers, Mr. Babun is the president of the Bengal Olympic Association and the Bengal Hockey Association. He is the Secretary of the Bengal Boxing Association and is also in charge of the sports wing of the Trinamool. He was keen to contest from Howrah and had also registered as a voter there.

"Sometimes, people be-

come greedy as they grow older. In every election, he creates problems. I do not like greedy people," Ms. Banerjee said, adding that she was unhappy with his conduct.

There has been talk that Mr. Babun was trying to reach out to the BJP. However, after the Chief Minister issued a strong statement, he softened his stance and said that he would not do anything against the wishes of his *di-di* (elder sister).

In a post on X, the Trinamool said: "Mamata Banerjee reflected on her humble beginnings, recounting the days of toil and hardship at a milk depot to support her family and the betrayal she endured from those closest to her. But for her, 'family' transcends the confines of blood relations; it encompasses the people of Bengal as a collective..."

Uttarakhand Bill on Uniform Civil Code gets President's nod

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Uttarakhand has now become the first State in Independent India to have a Uniform Civil Code after President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday gave assent to the UCC Bill, 2024.

The Bill, which has kept tribal people out of its ambit, has banned practices like *halala*, *iddat*, and *talaaq* (customs related to marriage and divorce in Muslim Personal Law).

The Assembly passed the Bill on February 7. It ensures that women are given equal rights in matters related to property and inheritance rights.

"Under Article 201 of the 'Constitution of India', the President gave assent to the 'Uniform Civil Code Uttarakhand 2024' Bill passed by the Uttarakhand

Legislative Assembly, on March 11 and it is published as Act Number 3, the year 2024, of Uttarakhand for general information," read the gazette notification issued by the State on Wednesday.

The Bill was one of the poll promises of the BJP during the Assembly election in Uttarakhand in 2022.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said that with the implementation of the UCC law, the government was committed to providing equal rights to all citizens. The Bill, which has 392 Sections under seven Schedules, is based on a 750-page draft, spread over four volumes, prepared by an expert committee formed by the government in June 2022, to examine the way UCC can be introduced in the State.

Gadkari, Thakur in BJP second list

Party releases second list of 72 candidates for the Lok Sabha election, covering 10 States and one Union Territory; Mysuru's erstwhile royal replaces MP Pratap Simha; Union Minister Piyush Goyal to contest from Mumbai North; party drops 29 MPs

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI/HYDERABAD

The BJP on Wednesday released its second list of candidates for the Lok Sabha election, fielding Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari from Nagpur, Anurag Thakur from Hamirpur in Himachal Pradesh, Pralhad Joshi from Dharwad, and Piyush Goyal from Mumbai North.

The list of 72 candidates covers 10 States and one Union Territory. With this, the party has declared candidates for all seats in Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Tripura, and Uttarakhand. Around 29 MPs have been replaced.

In Karnataka, the BJP declared candidates for 20 out of 28 seats. It has replaced nine MPs. Mysuru MP Pratap Simha has been replaced by the scion of the Mysuru royal family, Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar. The



BJP workers celebrate after the announcement of Union Minister Nitin Gadkari's name as the party's candidate from Nagpur. PTI

party has also replaced former Chief Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda, with his Bangalore North seat going to Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje, who has shifted from Udipi-Chikmagalur. Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha president Tejaswi Surya has been repeated from Bangalore South.

An interesting contest is brewing in Bangalore Rural

with renowned cardiologist C.N. Manjunath – the son-in-law of JD(S) veteran and former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda – getting BJP ticket to contest against sitting MP D.K. Suresh, brother of Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar.

In Maharashtra, the BJP's list of 20 candidates saw at least two notable changes: former Minister

Pankaja Munde, whose relations with the BJP top brass have been frigid for a while, was announced as the candidate from Beed in lieu of her sister, sitting MP Pritam Munde, while Union Minister Goyal was fielded from Mumbai North, in place of Gopal Shetty.

Replacing the sitting MPs in the East and North-West Delhi, Gautam Gambhir and Hans Raj Hans respectively, the BJP in its second candidate list has announced Delhi BJP general secretary and former East MCD Mayor Harsh Malhotra from East Delhi, and BJP general secretary and former North MCD Mayor Yogendra Chandolia from North West.

In Gujarat, the party has dropped sitting MPs from Surat, Valsad, Sabarkantha, Bhavnagar and Chhota Udepur.

In Uttarakhand, the BJP fielded two new candi-

dates – former Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat replaced another former Chief Minister and ex-Union Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank in Haridwar, while in Garhwal, BJP's media cell chief Anil Baluni replaced a former Chief Minister, Tirath Singh Rawat.

Ex-CM from Karnal In Haryana, the party dropped two MPs. Former Chief Minister Manohar Lal has been declared the candidate from Karnal in place of Sanjay Bhatia.

In Telangana, the BJP continues to hedge its bets on newcomers, with turncoats, mostly those from the BRS, getting ticket in the second list. Former BRS MPs A. Seetaram Naik and G. Nagesh got the party nod for the seats of Mahabubabad and Adilabad respectively. Former BRS MLA S. Saidi Reddy will contest from Nalgonda.

Saini govt. wins Haryana trust vote

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

The new Bharatiya Janata Party government in Haryana, led by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, won the motion of confidence by voice vote in the Assembly on Wednesday.

A Special Session of the Assembly had been convened to hold the vote of confidence after Mr. Saini was sworn in on Tuesday as the new Chief Minister, replacing Manohar Lal.

'Will work hard' Mr. Saini, in his address, said the new government would work hard to serve the people of the State, just like how Haryana saw all-round development in the past nine-and-a-half years under the leadership of Mr. Lal.

In the 90-member Assembly, the BJP has 41 MLAs. It also enjoys the support of six Independents. The lone MLA of the Haryana Lokhit Party also



Nayab Singh Saini

extended his support to the BJP, ensuring that the government enjoys a comfortable majority.

The main Opposition Congress has 30 MLAs, while the Indian National Lok Dal has one.

The Jannayak Janata Party (JJP), a former ally of the BJP, had issued a whip asking its 10 MLAs to remain absent from the House during voting on the confidence motion. JJP MLAs Devender Singh Babli, Ram Kumar Gautam, Ishwar Singh, Ram Niwas, and Jogi Ram Sihag, who were in the House, left when the trust vote was taken up.

'One nation, one poll' panel may submit report today

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The committee on "one nation, one election", headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind, may submit its report on Thursday.

The report is likely to recommend amending relevant articles of the Constitution and/or adding new sections to enable holding of simultaneous polls in the country.

Set up in September 2023, the committee was mandated to examine and make recommendations with regard to holding simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha, State Assemblies, municipalities, and panchayats.

The panel includes Home Minister Amit Shah, former Finance Commission Chairman N.K. Singh, former Lok Sabha Secretary-General Subhash Kashyap, and senior advocate Harish Salve.

BJP picks Chirag Paswan over his uncle

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

The BJP has chosen Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti (Ram Vilas) Party over his uncle Pashupati Paras's Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party, ending days of speculation.

According to sources, the BJP has agreed to concede five seats to Mr. Paswan, including the Hajipur Lok Sabha constituency that his father and Dalit leader Ram Vilas Paswan won eight times. It is currently held by Mr. Paras.

A jubilant Mr. Paswan posted pictures of his



Chirag Paswan

meeting with BJP president J.P. Nadda on social media. "We have together finalised the seat sharing in Bihar for the ensuing Lok Sabha polls. The same will be announced in due course," he wrote on X.

The breakthrough came

after Mr. Paswan's public posturing that he was ready to walk out of the alliance if the BJP did not give him a "respectable share".

Sources said for the past one week, senior BJP leader Mangal Pandey was told to settle the feud between the two LJP factions. But the talks bore no result as Mr. Paswan clearly laid down the condition that he would remain a part of the NDA only if his uncle's faction was not given any berth.

"We were clear from the beginning that the person who engineered a split in

the party founded by Ram Vilasji should not be accommodated in the NDA, either by giving them a Rajya Sabha berth or with seats in the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls," a senior leader close to Mr. Paswan said.

Sources said the BJP acceded to this demand based on the condition that Mr. Paswan would not press for the 2019 Lok Sabha seat-sharing formula.

In 2019, the united LJP under the late Ram Vilas Paswan, was offered six Lok Sabha seats in Bihar and one Rajya Sabha seat. The party won all six seats.

Adhir seeks details on EC candidates

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Ahead of Thursday's meeting of the selection committee to fill two vacancies in the Election Commission, created by the sudden resignation of Arun Goel and superannuation of Anup Chandra Pandey, Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has written to the Law Ministry seeking details on the shortlisted candidates.

Mr. Chowdhury is a member of the selection committee, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which also chooses

the two new Election Commissioners (ECs). A Union Minister is the third member of the panel.

"I would request you to make available the 'dossier' containing biodatas of shortlisted candidates for the post of Election Commissioners before the meeting," Mr. Chowdhury is learnt to have said in his letter to Legislative Department Secretary Rajiv Mani.

The selection committee will peruse the names on the shortlist prepared by a search committee, which is headed by Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal. The search panel,

which also includes the Union Home Secretary and the Secretary of the Department of Personnel and Training, will shortlist five names for each vacancy.

With the dates for the Lok Sabha election to be announced soon, the Congress has been targeting the government for reducing the EC to a one-man body.

On Wednesday, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh alleged that the EC's independence had eroded since the Modi-led government came to power at the Centre. "The EC has refused to meet INDIA par-

ties on the issue of 100% VVPATs [Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails]. It is a Constitutional body but its independence has been severely eroded since 2014," Mr. Ramesh said in a post on X.

His comments came following reports that the police in Jammu had detained National Panthers Party (NPP) chairman and former minister Harsh Dev Singh along with his several supporters for trying to stage a protest outside Nirvachan Bhawan in Jammu against the "delay" in holding Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

In Maharashtra, Rahul announces five guarantees for women

Abhinav Deshpande
DHULE

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday announced five Nari Nyay guarantees, including ₹1 lakh annually for poor women and 50% reservation in Central government jobs, if his party is voted to power in the Lok Sabha election.

Addressing a Mahila Sammelan (women's conference) in Maharashtra's Dhule district as part of his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, the Wayanad MP promised to double the income of ASHA workers, women in Anganwadis, and those in mid-day meal schemes under 'Shakti ka Samman' scheme. He also proposed plans to establish 'Savitribai Phule working women's hostels' in every district across the country.

Adhikar Maitri is the fifth guarantee under which a paralegal (nodal officer) will be appointed in every panchayat to educate women about their rights and help in the fight for their cases, he said.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, through a video message, said the party's guarantees were "pathar ki lakeer (set in stone)" and not a "jumla". "Before this, we announced guarantees on participatory justice, farmer justice, and youth justice. Our words are set in stone. This is our record from 1926 till now, when our opponents were not even born, we have been making manifestos and fulfilling those declarations," he said.

Accusing the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party of deceiving women on reservation issues, Mr. Gandhi promised immediate implementation if his party comes to power.

"Women have been fooled by the Centre over reservation [in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies] as the Bill pertaining to it has been passed by Parliament, but its implementation will take place after 10 years. Our guarantee of 50% reservation will be implemented immediately, without any survey," he said.

CSIR - INDIAN INSTITUTE OF CHEMICAL BIOLOGY
4, Raja SC Mullick Road, Jadavpur, Kolkata - 700032

Advt. No. R&C/572/2024 and R&C/573/2024
Vacancy Code : 5722401 and 5732401

A walk-in-interview for engagement of JRF(Direct) and JRF(GATE) will be held by CSIR-ICB at 4, Raja S. C. Mullick Road, Kolkata - 32, on 19.03.2024 and 21.03.2024 from 9:30 a.m. For details log on to our website www.csr.org.in

Administrative Officer

Office of the Superintending Engineer PHED, Project Circle, Jaipur, Sector 26, Near Ayush Bhawan, Pratap Nagar, Jaipur
Email: senorj.lal.phed@rajasthan.gov.in

Notice Inviting Bid (NIB) No. 05/2023-24
Behalf of the Government of Rajasthan, online short term bid is invited from eligible bidders for the Work for Operation and Maintenance of Transmission Main System-III (Year O and M Period) for Surajpura to Chaksu for costing of Rs. 12.14 Crores, last date of submission is 01.04.2024 upto 06:00 PM. As per criteria mentioned in the detailed NIT / tender document available on website: <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> and <http://proc.rajasthan.gov.in>

NIB CODE: PHE2324A6212 UBN: PHE2324W0B14961

Sd
(Ram Chandra Rar)
Superintending Engineer
PHED, Project Circle,
Jaipur

DIPR/C/2825/2024

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियंता, जन स्वा. अभि. विभाग, जयपुर क्षेत्र- द्वितीय, गांधी नगर, जयपुर
ई-मेल: acc.region2jaipur@yahoo.com फोन नं. 0141-2702700
क्रमांक: अजप्र-11/सप/2022-23/22717-725 दिनांक: 04.03.2024

ई-निविदा सूचना 137-138/23-24

राजस्थान के ग्रामपाल क्षेत्रों के अंतर्गत "Work of Rural Water Supply of Village Thekriya and 10 Dhani (Habitation) in Gram Panchayat Thekriya for providing functional household tap connection under Jal Jeevan Mission, Tehsil Viratnagar, District Jaipur and work of Rural Water Supply of Village Rajneta and 13 Dhani (Habitation) in Gram Panchayat Thekriya for providing functional household tap connection under Jal Jeevan Mission, Tehsil Viratnagar, District Jaipur" का कार्य हेतु ई-प्रोक्विट के माध्यम से निविदा सूचना 137-138/23-24 के द्वारा आमंत्रित की जाती है।

उक्त निविदा 04.03.2024 से राजस्थान के जयपुर दिनांक 27.03.2024 तक अस्थायी रूप से खोली जा सकती है।

निविदा पत्र व इसी संबंधित विषय व संबंधित विवरण निम्नलिखित वेबसाइट पर देखे जा सकते हैं।
(1) www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in (2) <http://ppp.raj.nic.in> (3) www.rajwater.gov.in

NIB No. : PHE2324A6213 UBN No. : PHE2324W0B14962, PHE2324W0B14963

(अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियंता जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिकी विभाग जयपुर क्षेत्र-द्वितीय जयपुर)

DIPR/C/2739/2024

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT, MAHARANA BHUPAL, GOVT. HOSPITAL, ADAIPUR.
BID NOTICE No. 21 Date 6-3-2024 (E-Tender)

On line Bids are invited from Principal Manufacturer/Authorized, Dealer/Distributors for the following items (Rate Contract for 2 Year). The Bid documents can be downloaded from website <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> Details of this Bid notification and pre-qualification criteria can also be seen in NIB exhibited on website www.dioronline.org as well as www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in. Bids are to be submitted online in electronic format on website <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>

S. No.	Item name	Estt Total Cost (in Lakh)	Submission end date	UBN No.
1	Orthopedic Implants & Surgical Item	250.00	15.4.2024 at 5.00 PM	(GHU 2324 GLRC00121)
2	Disposable Surgical Items.	150.00	15.4.2024 at 5.00 PM	(GHU 2324 GLRC00122)
3	Surgical Item for Ophthalmology department	70.00	15.4.2024 at 5.00 PM	(GHU 2324 GLRC00123)
4	Surgical Item for department of Dentistry	30.00	15.4.2024 at 5.00 PM	(GHU 2324 GLRC00124)
5	Furniture Repairing & colour	10.00	15.4.2024 at 5.00 PM	(GHU 2324 GLRC00125)

DIPR/C/2850/24 SUPERINTENDENT

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियंता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, गांधी नगर, जयपुर
फोन: 3399 फेक्स: 3398

निविदा सूचना संख्या 10/2023-24
NIB Code: PWD 2324A5032

राजस्थान के राजस्थान प्रदेश के अंतर्गत "Work of Rural Water Supply of Village Thekriya and 10 Dhani (Habitation) in Gram Panchayat Thekriya for providing functional household tap connection under Jal Jeevan Mission, Tehsil Viratnagar, District Jaipur and work of Rural Water Supply of Village Rajneta and 13 Dhani (Habitation) in Gram Panchayat Thekriya for providing functional household tap connection under Jal Jeevan Mission, Tehsil Viratnagar, District Jaipur" का कार्य हेतु ई-प्रोक्विट के माध्यम से निविदा सूचना 10/2023-24 के द्वारा आमंत्रित की जाती है।

निविदा पत्र व इसी संबंधित विषय व संबंधित विवरण निम्नलिखित वेबसाइट पर देखे जा सकते हैं।
(1) www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in (2) <http://ppp.rajasthan.gov.in> (3) www.rajwater.gov.in

UBN No. : PWD2324W0B21926, PWD2324W0B21927, PWD2324W0B21928, PWD2324W0B21929, PWD2324W0B21930, PWD2324W0B21931

अधीक्षण अभियंता सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग गांधी नगर, जयपुर

DIPR/C/2859/2024

Department of Tourism Government of Rajasthan
"Paryatan Bhawan", Opp. Vidhyakuri Police Station, Sanjay Marg, M.I. Road, Jaipur
www.tourism.rajasthan.gov.in, email: mktdot@rajasthan.gov.in
No.F 3 (J)Mktg/Pavilion Construction/D7/2024/20194 Dated: 06-03-2024
EOI No. 224/ 6/03/2024

Expression of interest
Expression of Interest for Agencies working in the field of construction and setting up of Rajasthan Tourism stand pavilions in domestic and international travel marts

Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan invites Expression of Interest (EOI) for Agencies working in the field of construction and setting up of Stand Pavilions in domestic and international travel marts for Rajasthan Tourism with proven experience and credentials.

Name of work	Estimated Cost of work (in Rs.) excluding taxes	E-Bid invited from	Bid Security	Time and date for submission of bid	Time and date for opening of technical bid
Construction and setting up of Stand Pavilions in domestic and international travel marts for Rajasthan Tourism	3.50 Crore	06.03.2024	2% of the bid value i.e., Rs. 7.00 Lakh	27.03.2024 at 12:00 Noon	27.03.2024 at 3:00 PM

(Note: Estimated cost of work is tentative)

The EOI can be downloaded from www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in (e-procurement portal of the State Government) and www.tourism.rajasthan.gov.in. Duly filled bids can be submitted online latest by 27/03/2024 by 12:00 Noon. E-Bid processing fee of Rs. 1500/- (non-refundable) in favour of MD, RJSL, Jaipur will have to be deposited through e-GRAS portal and Bid document fee of Rs. 1000/- (non-refundable) in favour of Director, Department of Tourism, Rajasthan, Jaipur and bid security of Rs. 7.00 Lakh (2% of the bid value) will have to be deposited through e-GRAS portal/ DD/ BC and submitted physically to the Department before last date and time of submission of EOI.

Interested bidders eligible as per eligibility criteria may submit their response to the EOI by 27.03.2024 till 12:00 Noon, Time and date for opening of technical bid is 27/03/2024 at 3:00 pm. The detailed EOI document can be downloaded from www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in and www.tourism.rajasthan.gov.in from date 06.03.2024. For any other information contact on +91-141-2822835 or email - mktdot@rajasthan.gov.in

UBN No. TOU2324SL0B0069.

(Sumita Saroch)
Joint Director

DIPR/C/2841/2024

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OFFICE OF THE TRANSPORT COMMISSIONER-CUM-CHAIRMAN STATE TRANSPORT AUTHORITY, ODISHA, CUTTACK

Notice No: 3963/LX-47/2024/TECH/TC Date: 12/03/2024

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR SELECTION OF SUCCESSFUL BIDDER FOR "SETTING UP OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS (EVCS) AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN ODISHA"

E-Tenders are invited from intending bidders for Selection of successful bidder for "Setting up of Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) at various locations in Odisha". Interested bidders are advised to study the RFP document carefully, before submitting their proposals, in response to this RFP Notice. Submission of proposal in response to this notice shall be deemed to have been done after careful study and examination of this document with full understanding of its terms, conditions, and implications. Please refer to the website www.odishatransport.gov.in and www.envida.odisha.gov.in for details.

Sd/-
Transport Commissioner, Odisha
OPR-38003/11/0049/2324

Tel. 06766-258301(0), Email ID: se_nerwkrj@rediffmail.com

GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE: KEONJHAR

Identification No. PMGSY / Online NCB No.430 / 2023-24
No. 1214 / Date: 06-03-2024

- Name of the work :- Repair / Maintenance of the Rural roads Constructed under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the District of Keonjhar.
- Total No. of Package :- 08 (Eight) Nos. individual work.
- Estimated Cost of individual package :- Rs.7.55 Crore (Approximately)
- Period of completion :- 60 Calendar Months.
- Other details :-

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	No. of Work	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding	
			From	To
1	2	3	4	5
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Keonjhar.	PMGSY Online NCB No.430	08	11.03.2024 at 11.00 A.M	27.03.2024 Upto 5.00 P.M

Further details can be seen from the website: www.pmgstenders.gov.in
Chief Engineer, R.W. Circle, Keonjhar.
OPR-25177/110078/2324

E-mail ID: cebbuildings_orissa@yahoo.co.in, Tel. - (0674)-2391523

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA
NIRMAN SOUDHA, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR

No. B-4V-H(H&D)-66/22 Letter No.-11071 Dt. 7th Mar., 2024
Invitation For Bids - Bid Identification No. CE (B) - 64 / 2023-24

- The Chief Engineer, Buildings on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites bids from reputed Indian firms registered with the State Government and bidders of equivalent Grade / Class registered with Central Government / MES / Railways for the Building works (STP, ETP) on turnkey basis (i.e. Design & execution of ETP & STP)
- Nature of work :- Building Works (Establishment of STP & ETP)
- Nos. of work :- 02 Nos.
- Cost of Bid Document :- ₹ 10,000/- (Each)
- Class of Contractor :- Special & Super
- Availability of Bid Documents in the website :- From dt.13.03.2024 to 05:30 P.M of dt.03.04.2024.
- Pre-bid meeting :- Dt.19.03.2024 at 11:00 AM
- Last dt. of Submission of Bid (Online) :- Dt.03.04.2024 up to 5.30 PM
- Last dt. of Submission of hardcopy :- Dt.08.04.2024 up to 5.30 PM
- Date of Opening of Bid :- Dt. 09.04.2024 at 11:30 AM
- The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.

Chief Engineer, Buildings (I/C), Odisha
OPR-34117/110153/2324

IN BRIEF



Proposal to add 3 lakh NCC cadet vacancies approved

A proposal for expansion of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) with the addition of three lakh cadet vacancies has been approved by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. This expansion is expected to cater to the increasing demand for the NCC from educational institutions throughout the country, the Defence Ministry said. It will lead to the proportionate distribution of vacancies, and would reduce the waiting list of institutions aspiring for the NCC, the Ministry said. The expansion plan encompasses the establishment of four new group headquarters and the addition of two new NCC units.

Nagaland church body says LGBTQ+ lifestyle unacceptable

The LGBTQ+ lifestyle is unacceptable according to the biblical principles, an apex church organisation in Christian-majority Nagaland has said. LGBTQ+ expands to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and all other sexual orientations. A statement issued by the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) on Tuesday affirming its opposition to LGBTQ+ lifestyle came a week after an extremist group asked the "propagators of the community" to quit Naga-inhabited areas. "We are not against the people who struggle with an LGBTQ+ lifestyle. Love the person but hate the sin should always be our approach," the statement read.

Home Ministry to launch CAA helpline to assist applicants

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs said it would soon launch a helpline to assist applicants for Indian citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019. "Applicants can make free calls from anywhere in India and get information related to CAA-2019. Helpline to be available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.," the Ministry posted on X. Users are required to register on the portal (<https://indiancitizenshiponline.nic.in>). A mobile application, 'CAA-2019', has also been readied. All documents, along with photographs are to be uploaded online, and applications will be processed after a background check by security agencies and the payment of ₹50.

Maharashtra's Ahmednagar to be called Ahilyanagar

The Maharashtra Cabinet on Wednesday formally approved the renaming of Ahmednagar district to Ahilyanagar after the 18th Century Maratha queen Ahilyabai Holkar. The decision to rename the district had already been announced by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde in May last year on the 298th birth anniversary of Ahilyabai Holkar. The renaming of Ahmednagar follows the Mahayuti government's decision to rename Aurangabad district as Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar and Osmanabad as Dharashiv. The demand for renaming Ahmednagar was started by BJP leader and MLC Gopichand Padalkar, an influential leader of the Dhargar (shepherd) community.

SC stops Assam govt. move to de-notify rhino habitat

The Forest Department issued the notification in 1998 without consulting the Cabinet or Revenue Department, says State; court says it won't stand in the way of protecting rights of forest dwellers

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday froze the Assam government's move to withdraw an almost 26-year-old notification constituting the Pobitora wildlife sanctuary, which hosts one of the largest rhino populations in the country.



Protected land: An adult Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros walks with a calf inside the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, RITU RAJ KONWAR

"The State government was not right in resolving to withdraw the notification dated March 17, 1998 notifying Pobitora wildlife sanctuary... We direct that no further steps be taken with respect to the withdrawal of the notification dated March 17, 1998 by the State," a Bench of Justices B.R. Gawai and Sandeep Mehta ordered.

The Assam Cabinet had on March 10 withdrawn the notification issued by the State Forest Department in 1998. The Cabinet decision of March 10 said the notification was issued unilaterally by the Forest department without consulting the Revenue Department or even the Chief Minister.

The government reasoned that declaration of

the sanctuary was made without settling the rights of the people living in villages in the area, including Thengabhang, Murkata and Mayong. These villagers belonged to the marginalised communities and had been residing in the area even before Independence.

Panel set up

The government, having withdrawn the 1998 notification declaring the wildlife sanctuary, had also constituted a committee to look into both the rights and claims of the forest dwellers in the area as well as taking a considered decision, this time, to declare the Pobitora region as a

wildlife sanctuary.

"We will not permit any de-notification. Withdrawing a notification declaring a wildlife sanctuary is not your answer. Such withdrawals cannot be done without the permission of the National Board of Wildlife. Besides, the Supreme Court has also passed an order against de-reservation of national parks, sanctuaries and forests," Justice Gawai clarified to the Assam counsel, senior advocate Nalin Kohli.

Amicus curiae, advocate K. Parameswar, said the withdrawal was "ex facie illegal".

"The notification was done unilaterally by the Forest department in 1998.

The Revenue Department or the Cabinet was not involved," Mr. Kohli said.

But Justice Mehta said the declaration of the sanctuary in 1998 was an "act of government". "Then how can you now disown it?" Justice Mehta asked.

Mr. Kohli said the idea behind the withdrawal was not to close the Pobitora wildlife sanctuary, but to correct an error regarding the demarcation of lands.

"Fresh notification will be issued. It was not done properly in 1998. Our intention is to do the right thing. It only came to our attention now. Pobitora is our pride," Mr. Kohli submitted.

"The fact that the Forest Department did it without consultation came to light only 25 years later?" Justice Gawai asked Mr. Kohli.

The court, however, clarified that its order staying the withdrawal of the 1998 notification would not stand in the way of the State "doing something to protect the rights of the forest dwellers".

The court asked the State to file a detailed counter-affidavit by the next hearing.

Panel recommends ban on 'ferocious dogs'

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

An expert committee constituted by the Department of Animal Welfare and Husbandry, Ministry of Agriculture, has recommended that certain breeds of "ferocious dogs" be prohibited from being kept as pets.

An official letter has gone out from the department to all States listing out these dog breeds as well as instructions to no longer register licences that permit their sale.

The expert committee was constituted after citizen groups complained of attacks on people - sometimes fatal - by these dogs. There is also a petition being deliberated upon in the Delhi High Court requesting it to ban certain breeds. The High Court, in De-

ceMBER 2023 had said it would decide on the issue "in three months."

The breeds include mixed and cross-breeds like pit bull terrier, tosa inu, American Staffordshire terrier, fila brasileiro, dogo argentino, American bulldog, boerboel, kangal, central Asian shepherd dog, caucasian shepherd dog, south mastiffs, rottweiler, terrier, rhodesian ridgeback, wolf dogs, canario, akbash dog, Moscow guard dog, Cane corso and dogs commonly classified as bandog.

These rules are expected to be implemented by local authorities. Dogs that have already been kept as pets must be sterilised to ensure that further breeding does not happen, said the letter signed by Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture.



Prasar Bharati launches news sharing service

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur on Wednesday launched 'PB-SHABD' - Prasar Bharati's news sharing service and the revamped websites of DD News and Akashvani News.

Mr. Thakur said news organisations would be provided with clean feed and they would not have to carry the *Doordarshan* logo. He said the SHABD service was being provided free of cost for the first year as an introductory offer and would provide news stories in all major Indian languages across 50 categories.

The PB-SHABD has been designed to provide daily news feeds in video, audio, text, and other formats to subscribers.

Modi, British PM assess progress on free trade agreement negotiations

The Hindu Bureau
LONDON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak spoke over the phone on Tuesday assessing the progress made on negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), as both countries face general elections.

New Delhi and London have been negotiating a deal since January 2022, but an agreement has thus far remained out of reach with British negotiators returning from India earlier after the 14th round of talks.

As the U.K. negotiating team left for India on March 4, a British official had said, it was a "last-gasp attempt to clinch an FTA before the Indian election campaign pauses talks",

PM launches portal for marginalised sections

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Launching the Pradhan Mantri Samajik Utthan evam Rozgar Adharit Jankalyan (PM-SURAJ) portal for credit support to entrepreneurs from disadvantaged sections of society virtually on Wednesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "This is a testament to our commitment to provide dignity and justice to the underprivileged. Modi gives you this guarantee - this campaign of development and respect for

the deprived class will intensify in the coming five years."

Mr. Modi also disbursed around ₹720 crore worth of credit to one lakh beneficiaries from the Scheduled Castes, Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes, Other Backward Classes and Safai Karamcharis. The portal will be a one-stop point where people from disadvantaged sections of society can apply for and monitor the progress of all loan and credit schemes already available to them.

RSS to pass resolution on Ram Temple

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) will pass a resolution on the Ram Temple during its *Pratinidhi Sabha*, the meeting of the highest decision-making body of Sangh, scheduled to be held from March 15 to 17 in Nagpur, said the organisation's all-India publicity head, Sumil Ambekar, on Wednesday.

The annual meeting, which aims at setting the course of action and programmes of the RSS for the

rest of the year, will also witness deliberation over various issues prevailing in the country, including Sandeshkhali and the farmers' protest.

He added that the plans prepared for this year will hold special importance as the RSS is completing 100 years of its formation in 2025.

BJP president J.P. Nadda, the heads and organising secretaries of 36 Sangh outfits, and other RSS-affiliated organisations will take part in the *Pratinidhi Sabha*.



Face to face: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his British counterpart, Rishi Sunak, in New Delhi, in this file photo.

according to a report in *The Guardian*.

On Tuesday, Mr. Modi tweeted that he and Mr. Sunak had reaffirmed their commitment to the "early conclusion" of a "mutually beneficial" agreement.

"The Prime Minister [Mr. Sunak] reiterated the importance of reaching an ambitious outcome on goods and services,"

Downing Street said in a readout, adding that the two Prime Ministers agreed to remain in close contact.

The readouts also said the leaders discussed the overall partnership. Mr. Modi and Mr. Sunak discussed regional and global developments, according to the Indian government readout.

THE CROSSWORD + 14122
(set by KrisKross)

To solve this puzzle online, get access to our crossword site. @ <https://qrqo.page.link/jpTn>

Across

- Churchman in the olden days, ready to control Italy (6)
- Beginner shot selfies that are dull (8)
- Places to go excitedly? Some nude resorts (9)
- Weakness of a boy overwhelmed by success (5)
- Prepare to print form before game of tennis (7)
- Women's work, mostly performed by men (7)

Down

- Temporary leave, followed by discharge? On the contrary (4-4)
- Weak batting by pair regularly included in team - finally game lost (7)
- Goddess of performing arts and studies, always in white basically (9)
- DI eventually succeeded in arresting criminal for financial wrongdoing (7,7)
- Encourage those having spirit (5)
- Cover containing rupee became wrinkled (7)
- Start a journey with extremely suave, well-dressed gentleman (3,3)
- Run inside, kiss wife, winning good game (8,6)
- Unyielding boss at last is splitting target (9)
- Gives a name to pet bass swimming outside island (8)
- Feeling sorry - no time to accept love (7)
- Spooner cites items required to imprison humorist (7)
- Squint-eyed like a German philosopher (6)
- Treat tips of nails, oily locks and skin here? (5)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

E	X	P	L	I	C	I	T	I	S	L	A	N	D
N	E	B	N	O	N	A							
M	A	N	T	I	S	S	A	S	L	O	G	A	
I	I	Z	U	I	D								
T	O	N	A	R	A	D	I	C	A	L	L	I	
Y	S	E	L	I	I								
G	U	A	S	A	R	I	S	T	H	M	U	S	
S	L	I	O	A	H								
C	H	A	N	N	E	L	I	S	T	R	A	I	
T	G	A	I	N	E	W							
E	A	R	A	R	K	E	D	F	I	E	R	V	
N	A	P	E	E	J	I	R	V					
C	A	N	Y	O	N	S	A	B	O	T	A	B	
E	O	R	R	S	A	B	O	T	A	B			
S	K	E	W	E	R	S	M	I	D	G	E	O	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

The power of women

Some may believe International Women's Day is a modern day construct; however, celebration of women power is an ancient one in our culture, dating back eons. Karadaiyan Nonbu is one such, said Suchithra Balasubramanian in a discourse.

We are all asked to chant, *Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all beings everywhere be happy and free). One should always pray for the well-being of others, since God comes rushing to the aid of those one prays for. The observance of Karadaiyan Nonbu is in line with this principle. Also known as Gauri puja, on this day, women pray to Goddess Devi for the longevity and health of their husband.

Falling in the cusp of the end of the Tamil month Maasi and start of Panguni, the nonbu celebrates Savitri's unwavering love and presence of mind, which helped her wrest her husband literally from the jaws of death.

At the end of a year of the marriage, Yama, the God of Death, arrived to claim Satyavan's life. Known as someone who showed neither fear nor favour in his duty, he was nevertheless moved by Savitri's love. He offered her a boon. The clever woman said she wanted to birth a few children. Yama quickly granted her wish, before realising that to do so, he would have to allow Satyavan live.

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IN BRIEF



Ramco commences transport on dedicated freight corridor

Ramco Cements said it had begun to move crushed limestone from its mines in Budawada to its integrated cement plant in Jayanthipuram in Andhra Pradesh through the dedicated freight corridor inaugurated under the Gati Shakti cargo terminal project on Tuesday. The railway wagons with crushed limestone from Budawada mines will travel 8.3 km to the Jayanthipuram plant unloading point, of which 3.4 km will be Ramco Cements' dedicated sidings.

Royal Sundaram, Dvara tie up to market insurance products

Royal Sundaram General Insurance Co. Ltd. said it had partnered Chennai-based Dvara KGFS to provide customers access to a comprehensive range of its general insurance products across the country. "Our extensive suite of general insurance products will now be accessible across over 400 Dvara KGFS branches, empowering customers with comprehensive, customised, and affordable solutions," Royal Sundaram MD Amit S. Ganorkar said in a statement.

India allows RBI to import gold without import levies

India has allowed its central bank to import gold without paying import levies, the government said in a notification issued late on Tuesday. Gold importers need to pay basic customs duty and Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess. As of September 2023, the RBI held 800.79 metric tonnes of gold, including gold deposits of 39.89 tonnes. Of that, 388.06 tonnes is held overseas and 372.84 tonnes domestically, RBI said in its reserve management report.

FinMin asks PSU banks to review gold loan portfolio

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The finance ministry has directed all state-owned banks to review their gold loan portfolio as instances of non-compliance with regulatory norms have been noticed by the government.

The Department of Financial Services (DFS) in a communication addressed to heads of public sector banks has asked them to look at their system and processes related to gold loan.

"We have asked banks to undertake comprehensive review of the gold loan business," Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi told PTI.

Petrol, shelter costs drove U.S. inflation higher in February

Reuters
WASHINGTON

U.S. consumer prices increased 3.2% year-on-year in February, with core CPI rising 3.8%, amid higher gasoline and shelter costs, suggesting stickiness in inflation that cast doubts on whether the Federal Reserve would start cutting interest rates in June.

February marked the second straight month of firmer inflation readings. Inflation-weary Americans, however, got some relief from their grocery bills, as food prices were unchanged. U.S. central bank officials, including Fed Chair Jerome Powell have indicated they are in

'Ease e-commerce for MSME exports'

Govt. must simplify merchandise trade processes, establish a single national trade portal for approvals and compliances in order to help spur exports by smaller players, Niti Aayog and Foundation for Economic Development recommend in report

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The government must make it easier for smaller firms to export their goods via e-commerce platforms, simplify merchandise trade processes and establish a single national trade portal for all approvals and compliances, the Niti Aayog recommended in a report on boosting exports from Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

While China exported \$200 billion worth of goods through e-commerce in 2022, India ex-

Unclog the pipe

Government must make it easier for smaller firms to export their goods through e-commerce platforms, moots Niti Aayog

- While China exported \$200 billion of goods via e-commerce in 2022, India shipped only \$2 billion
- Key reason for this gap is cumbersome compliance process tied to exports, especially for payment reconciliation



Think tank moots exempting import duties on rejects that come back as returns

ported only \$2 billion, and a key reason for this gap is the cumbersome compliance process associated with exports, especially when it comes to payment

reconciliation, which is particularly challenging for new or small exporters, the public policy think tank noted in the report. Stressing that e-com-

merce resolves market access issues that are a significant obstacle hindering MSME exports, the Foundation for Economic Development, which authored the report, said it was essential to create a distinction between 'Exporter on Record' and 'Seller on Record', introduce annual financial reconciliation process for e-commerce exporters and exempt import duties on rejects that come back as returns.

'Unreliable' data While MSMEs are said to account for 38.4% of India's manufacturing out-

put and contribute 45% of exports, the report's authors reckoned that MSME export numbers were "almost certainly inflated" and needed to be more accurately measured. The current estimates were "likely unreliable" as they relied on an outdated list of reserved sectors for MSMEs, they wrote.

MSMEs can compete in export markets in sectors like handicrafts, handloom textiles, ayurveda and herbal supplements, leather goods, imitation jewellery and wooden products, which have global demand of more than \$340 billion.

'REITs, InvITs and Muni bonds offer high growth opportunity'

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) and Muni (Municipal) bonds have emerged as high growth areas for investment, Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch said on Wednesday.

"Within SEBI we have done a very simple exercise, sort of a back of the envelope exercise where we asked ourselves, how big can this market be? And we reached the conclusion that just as our



Madhabi Puri Buch

equity market cap is about one time of the GDP, we believe that the total value of our REITs, InvITs and Muni bonds ecosystem can be another one time of GDP," Ms. Buch said while addressing the SEBI-NISM Research Conference.

"So that is the oppor-

tunity for growth which is available to us as a nation," she said adding that the value of REITs, InvITs and Muni bonds would far exceed the value of goods and services produced by the corporate sector today.

She said fractional ownership of real estate and fractional ownership of infrastructure is where the strength of India will lie.

Ms. Buch said SEBI as a regulator has ensured that the governance and disclosure elements of these asset classes provide comfort and confidence to retail investors so that they can go and invest without any apprehensions.

Sensex declines 1.2% as selling pressure widens

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Key benchmark indices slid sharply on Wednesday as investors turned wary after SEBI's chief flagged signs of 'froth' in the small- and mid-cap segments.

The S&P BSE Sensex plunged 906 points, or 1.23%, to 72,761.89 points. Sensex stocks which lost the most included Power Grid (7.28%), NTPC (6.67%), Tata Steel (5.87%) and Tata Motors (4.28%).

Adani stocks tumble

Adani Group stocks also declined across the board, led by Adani Total Gas, which tumbled 9.5%, and

Adani Green, which plunged 9.07%. While flagship Adani Enterprises fell 6.91%, Adani Ports shed 6.97%, Adani Power lost 4.99% and Adani Energy Solutions dropped 8.54%.

The NSE's Nifty50 fell 1.51% to 21,997.70 points.

"The selling pressure was widespread... metal, realty and energy lost over 5% each," said Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd. "The broader indices extended their prevailing bias and lost in the range of 4-5%."

"We suggest maintaining negative bias in the index now and utilising rebounds to create short positions," he added.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

Table showing market watch for Wednesday, March 13, 2024. Columns include instrument, price, and % change. Instruments include Sensex, US Dollar, Gold, Brent oil, and NIFTY 50.

NIFTY 50

Table showing NIFTY 50 index components, prices, and changes. Components include Adani Enter, Adani Ports, Apollo Hosp, Asian Paints, Axis Bank, Bajaj Auto, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, Bharti Airtel, BPL, Britannia Ind, Cipla, Coal India, Divis Lab, Dr Reddys Lab, Eicher Motors, Grasim Ind, HCL Tech, HDFC Bank, HDFC Life, Hero MotoCorp, Hindalco, Hind Unilever, IICI Bank, Indusind Bank, Infosys, ITC, JSW Steel, Kotak Bank, L&T, LTMIndtree Ltd., M&M, Maruti Suzuki, NestleIndia, NTPC, ONGC, PowerGrid Corp, Reliance Ind, SBI Life, State Bank, Sun Pharma, TataConsumerPro, Tata Motors, Tata Steel, TCS, Tech Mahindra, Titan, UltraTech Cement, UPL, and Wipro.

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on March 13

Table showing exchange rates for various currencies including US Dollar, Euro, British Pound, Japanese Yen, Chinese Yuan, Swiss Franc, Singapore Dollar, Canadian Dollar, Malaysian Ringgit, and Australian Dollar.

'First chip from Tata plant to be out in 2026'

Press Trust of India
DHOLERA

The first set of semiconductors will start rolling out from Tata Electronics' plant here in December 2026, Union Minister for Communications and IT Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Wednesday.

Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony of Tata Group and CG Power chip plants, Mr. Vaishnaw said India would be among the top five chip ecosystems in the world by 2029.

"The first chip from Dholera plant will be out in December 2026 and chip from Micron plant will be out by December 2024," the minister said.

He said Tata's Dholera plant will make chips in 28,



Ashwini Vaishnaw

50, 55 nanometer node. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday laid the foundation of three chip plants - two units by Tata Electronics and the third by CG Power - entailing total investment of ₹1.26 lakh crore.

These chips driven by advanced technology will cater to multiple sectors.

'CG Semi to commence semiconductor chip operations in 3 years'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

CG Semi Pvt. Ltd., a subsidiary of CG Power and Industrial Solutions Ltd., will commence production at its ₹7,600 crore Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) facility in Sanand in three years, said its Chairman Vellayan Subbiah.

"For India to become a truly global player in the semiconductor space, it is critical that we build a semiconductor cluster in a concentrated location similar to global leaders such as Taiwan," he said in a company statement. "With a few facilities al-

Sanand in Gujarat emerging as India's chip cluster, says CG Semi Chairman Vellayan Subbiah

ready announced in Gujarat, there are early signs of the State emerging as this cluster. We are very keen to establish India's semiconductor ecosystem and plan to build a world-class OSAT facility at Sanand. We intend to commence production in the next 2.5 to 3 years," Mr. Subbiah added.

CG Semi was incorporated on March 8, the Murugappa group firm said in a regulatory filing.

'Retail play in F&O eyeing instant profits, is a concern'

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran on Wednesday said he is "worried" about retail investors' play in risky Futures and Options (F&O) segment for instant profits.

Speaking at a conference organised by capital markets regulator SEBI, Mr. Nageswaran said "The biggest risk for sustained capital formation and sustained economic growth is... in our short-termism." Mr. Nageswaran asked India Inc. to reflect on corporate governance practices and analyse its own conduct, while discussing allowing corporate groups to promote banks.

Advertisement for Malabar Cancer Centre (Post Graduate Institute of Oncology Sciences & Research) listing existing and arising vacancies for various medical and research positions.

Advertisement for Government of Rajasthan, Directorate of Civil Aviation, regarding a tender for hiring of a Multi Engine Mid Size Jet Aeroplane.

Advertisement for Government of Rajasthan, Directorate of Civil Aviation, regarding a tender for hiring of a Multi Engine Mid Size Jet Aeroplane.

Advertisement for Government of Rajasthan, Directorate of Civil Aviation, regarding a tender for hiring of a Multi Engine Mid Size Jet Aeroplane.

Advertisement for Wheels India Limited, inviting offers from interested parties for purchase of Mild Steel scrap items.

Advertisement for Kochi Metro Rail Limited, listing various e-tender opportunities for design, supply, and installation of automated electro-mechanical multi-level car parking systems and other infrastructure works.

RAMALLAH

Israeli forces kill two Palestinians at West Bank hospital in the north



Israeli forces shot dead two Palestinian men at a hospital in the West Bank on Wednesday, the latest in a spate of killings in the occupied territory since the war in Gaza began. The killings before dawn took place on the compound of the government hospital in Jenin, in the north of the West Bank, the hospital's director said. AFP

LONDON

U.K. mulls plan to pay migrants to move to Rwanda voluntarily



The U.K. government said on Wednesday it was considering a scheme to send rejected asylum seekers to Rwanda voluntarily and will reportedly pay them up to £3,000 to make the move. The plan is an extension of existing voluntary returns arrangements and part of the U.K.'s plan to deport migrants to the East African nation. AFP

WASHINGTON

U.S. House overwhelmingly passes Bill to ban Chinese-owned TikTok



The U.S. House of Representatives approved a Bill that would force TikTok to divest from its Chinese owner or get banned from the U.S. The lawmakers voted 352 in favour and 65 against. The fate of the Bill is uncertain in the Senate, as some consider such a move drastic against an app that has 170 million U.S. users. AFP

VILNIUS

Navalny ally, Volkov, attacked outside home in Lithuania



Leonid Volkov, a close ally of late Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, was assaulted outside his home in Vilnius on Tuesday, an incident that sparked an uproar from the Lithuanian government. Volkov, 43, is a prominent opposition figure and was Navalny's ex-chief of staff and chair of his Anti-Corruption Foundation. AFP

Nepal PM Prachanda wins vote of confidence, third time in 15 months

Floor test was called after he broke an alliance with the Nepali Congress and joined hands with the Unified Marxist-Leninist last week; the Maoist-Centre leader's coalition secured 157 votes, while 110 members, including Congress MPs, voted against

Sanjeev Satganiya
KATHMANDU

Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' won a vote of confidence in parliament on Wednesday with the support of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and other smaller parties.

It was Prachanda's third confidence vote on Wednesday since he was elected Prime Minister in December 2022.

Speaker Devraj Ghimire announced after the vote that Prachanda secured 157 votes, while 110 members voted against.

In the 275-member parliament, he required a mi-



Number game: Prachanda required a minimum of 138 votes to pass the floor test in the 275-member parliament. REUTERS

nimum of 138 votes to pass the floor test. During Wednesday's vote 268 members were present in parliament, the Speaker said. In a dramatic move, Pra-

chanda, a former rebel leader who led an armed struggle from 1996 to 2006, broke his one-year-old alliance with the Nepali Congress on March 4 to

join hands with the UML.

The Nepali Congress, the largest party in parliament with 88 seats, voted against the confidence motion.

Prachanda's Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist-Centre) had fought the 2022 general elections under an alliance with the Congress. But following a row over which party should lead the government, Prachanda reached out to the UML, the second largest party with 78 seats, which supported him to become Prime Minister.

Subsequently, he went for the floor test on January 10 last year, which he passed with flying colours as even the Congress voted in fa-

vour. He had secured 268 votes.

However, riled at Prachanda's decision to support the Nepali Congress presidential candidate, the UML withdrew support to the government in February, paving the way for the Congress to join the government. A year later, Prachanda, last week, ditched the Nepali Congress and forged a new Left alliance with the UML.

On Wednesday, besides the Maoist-Centre and the UML, Rastriya Swatantra Party, Janata Samajbadi Party, CPN (Unified Socialist), Nagarik Unmukti Party and Aam Janata Party (Prabhu Shah) voted in favour of Prachanda.

Chinese military team visits Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal

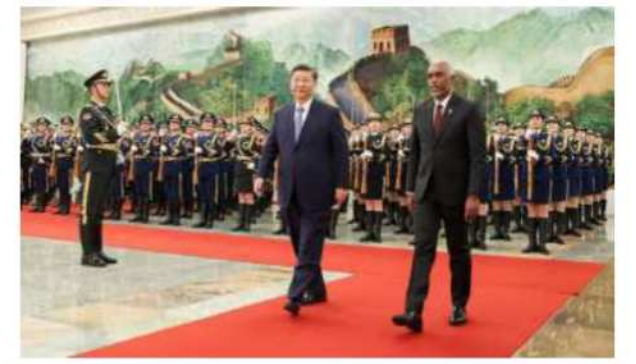
Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

A Chinese military delegation recently visited the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Nepal to discuss further cooperation in defence issues, Beijing said on Wednesday.

Beijing is seeking to build closer ties in South Asia in a push to counter its strategic rival India for influence.

Last week, the Maldives said it had signed a "military assistance" deal with China after ordering Indian troops deployed in the small but strategically-placed archipelago to leave.

Meeting with Muizzu And Beijing confirmed on Wednesday that a delegation had visited the country and met with pro-China



New allies: The Maldives signed a military assistance deal with China last week after ordering Indian troops to leave. REUTERS

President Mohamed Muizzu during a trip that also took them to Sri Lanka and Nepal from March 4 to 13.

In all three countries, "they exchanged views on military relations and regional security issues of common concern", the Chinese military said in a statement. The delegation of officials from the military's international mili-

tary cooperation department focused on "in-depth consultations on promoting bilateral defence cooperation".

"A series of consensus was reached to further enriched defence cooperation between the PLA and the relevant countries," it added, referring to the Chinese military by its official acronym.

As parties rush aid to Gaza, EU says hunger being used as weapon

Agence France-Presse
GAZA STRIP

Donor nations, aid agencies and charities pushed on with efforts on Wednesday to rush food to war-torn Gaza by land, air and sea after the EU top diplomat Josep Borrell said starvation had become "a weapon of war".

The Israel-Hamas conflict raging since October 7 has caused mass civilian deaths and sparked warnings of looming famine in the Palestinian territory of 2.4 million people.

A Spanish charity vessel, the *Open Arms*, was on its way to Gaza from Cyprus with 200 tonnes of aid.

About half a dozen Arab and western nations have air-dropped food parcels on parachutes into Gaza, and Morocco has sent a plane-load of relief supplies via Israel's Ben Gurion airport.

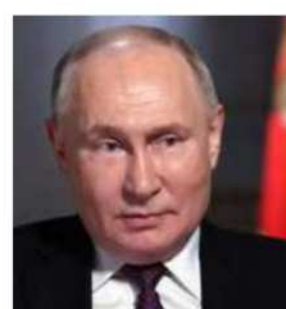
The UN World Food Programme sent an initial six aid trucks on Tuesday into worst-hit northern Gaza, through a gate in the security fence, the Israeli Army said.

Russia ready to use nuclear weapons if sovereignty is threatened, says Putin

Associated Press

President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday that Russia is ready to use nuclear weapons if its sovereignty or independence is threatened, issuing another blunt warning to the West just days ahead of an election in which he's all but certain to secure another six-year term.

The Russian leader has repeatedly talked about his readiness to use nuclear weapons since invading Ukraine in February 2022. The most recent such threat came in his state-of-the-nation address last



Vladimir Putin

month, when he warned the West against getting too involved in the Ukraine war.

Asked in an interview on Wednesday if he has ever considered using nuclear weapons in Ukraine,

Mr. Putin responded that there has been no need for that. He also said he does not think the world is heading for a nuclear war, describing U.S. President Joe Biden as a veteran politician who fully understands possible dangers of escalation.

Mr. Putin said that in line with the country's security doctrine, Moscow is ready to use nuclear weapons in case of a threat to "the existence of the Russian state, our sovereignty and independence." "All that is written in our strategy, we haven't changed it." In an apparent refer-

ence to NATO allies that support Kyiv, he also declared that "the nations that say they have no red lines regarding Russia should realise that Russia won't have any red lines regarding them either."

Lithuania's Foreign Minister, Gabrielius Landsbergis, had recently said the West too often constrains itself with self-imposed "red lines" regarding Russia. He also welcomed a comment by French President Emmanuel Macron that the possibility of Western troops being sent to Ukraine could not be ruled out.

Pro-Kyiv militias urge civilians to flee cities bordering Russia

Agence France-Presse
KYIV

Russian volunteer forces fighting alongside Kyiv on Wednesday urged civilians to flee Belgorod and Kursk, threatening large-scale attacks on military targets in the Russian border cities.

Groups of volunteer fighters, made up of Russians who oppose the Kremlin, said this week they had crossed into Russia from Ukraine and captured a village in the Russian border region of Kursk.

"We are forced to inflict shelling on military positions that are stationed in the cities of Belgorod and Kursk," said three groups, the Freedom of Russia Legion, the Russian Volunteer Corps and Sibir.

"We call on the local authorities to preserve human lives and begin evacuating the cities of Kursk and Belgorod," they added in a joint statement.

Moscow denied that the fighters had made ground this week, and later posted a statement alleging it had repelled all incursions.

Sport

A long wait, of varying degrees, ends for Arsenal and Barcelona

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Associated Press
LONDON

Arsenal's 14-year wait for a spot in the Champions League quarterfinals is over, thanks largely to David Raya's penalty saves.

Raya tipped one spot kick by Porto's Wendell against the post and then palmed away another from Galeno to secure a 4-2 win in the penalty shootout on Tuesday. It ended a long streak of round-of-16 losses for Arsenal, which had been eliminated at this stage in its last seven appearances in the competition but won 1-0 to level the aggregate score at 1-1. It was a massive moment for Raya, who was



Show-stopper: Arsenal's Raya makes the match-winning save off the fourth penalty from Galeno of Porto. GETTY IMAGES

brought in last summer to replace Aaron Ramsdale as Arsenal's No. 1 – a decision that has been frequently questioned by the club's supporters this season.

Arsenal trailed 0-1 from the first leg in Portugal – when Galeno scored the winner deep into stoppage

time – but went level through Leandro Trossard's 41st-minute goal. Neither side could find another goal despite extra time as Porto's disciplined defensive tactics largely held Arsenal at bay. Arsenal endured seven straight round-of-16 losses

under Arsene Wenger between 2011-17.

Meanwhile, Barcelona too returned to the quarterfinals, for the first time in four years, with a 3-1 win over Napoli.

Fermin Lopez, Joao Cancelo and Robert Lewandowski scored for Barcelona as it advanced 4-2 on aggregate after a 1-1 draw in the first leg in Italy three weeks ago.

Amir Rrahmani scored for Napoli, which couldn't repeat its last-eight appearance from last season.

The results (last 16, second leg): Arsenal 1 (Trossard 41) bt FC Porto 0 (tie level 1-1 on aggregate; Arsenal wins 4-2 on penalties after extra time). Barcelona 3 (Fermin 15, Cancelo 17, Lewandowski 83) bt Napoli 1 (Rrahmani 30) (Barcelona wins 4-2 on aggregate).

Silver for Manish and bronze for Rubina

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

Manish Narwal won the silver in men's air pistol in the para shooting WSPS World Cup on Wednesday.

In P2 women's air pistol, Rubina Francis won the bronze after topping qualification.

The results: P1 men's air pistol: 1. Yang Chao (Chn) 240.3 (578); 2. Manish Narwal 236.7 (574); 3. Jo Jeongdu (Kor) 214.7 (565). **P2 women's air pistol:** 1. Kriztina Daid (Hun) 234.8 (564); 2. Oksana Berezovskaia (NPA) 230.4 (565); 3. Rubina Francis 211.2 (569). **R5 women's 50m rifle 3-position:** 1. Iryna Shchetnik (Ukr) 456.6 (1165); 2. Anna Benson (Swe) 454.7 (1176); 3. Zhang Cuping (Chn) 443.7 (1172); 5. Avani Lekhara 418.6 (1165); 6. Mona Agarwal 407.9 (1142).

Sadiku's brace powers MBSG past Kerala Blasters

ISL-10

Stan Rayan
KOCHI

Albanian forward Armando Sadiku scored twice as Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG) defeated a fighting Kerala Blasters 4-3 in an ISL thriller here on Wednesday.

Despite playing its last match at home just three days ago as compared to the 10-day break which Blasters enjoyed, Bagan stayed focused and managed to come on top every time the home side found the equaliser. The victory carried Bagan to 39 points, the same as the league leader Mumbai City, while Blasters stay on the fifth



On target: Sadiku scores Bagan's opener. THULASI KAKKAT

rung with 29.

Sadiku's opening goal had some drama to it. He had the Blasters' centre-backs Milos Drincic and Pritam Kotal on either side as he moved towards the box from the right. But the Bagan forward suddenly gave them the slip, dashed forward and sent the ball to the left corner. Drincic made a desperate attempt to hold him back but it was

too late. Bagan's next two goals came from set pieces.

Diamantakos, who scored two of the three Blasters' goals, is now the joint top scorer this ISL season with Odisha FC's Roy Krishna (12 goals each).

The result: Blasters 3 (Vibin Mohanan 54, Diamantakos 63 & 90+9) lost to MBSG 4 (Armando Sadiku 4 & 60, Deepak Tangri 68, Jason Cummings 90+7).

NERVOUS

It feels like I am going to make my debut again, says Pant



Rishabh Pant will soon be back on the field 14 months after surviving a life-threatening car accident and ahead of that moment, the wicketkeeper-batter is "nervous" like a debutant all over again. "I am excited and nervous at the same time. It feels like I am going to make my debut again," said Pant in a Delhi Capitals release.

PROGRESSING

Looking forward to next stage of my healing journey: Shami



Mohammed Shami on Wednesday said he was looking forward to the next phase of his "healing journey". "It has been 15 days since my surgery, and I recently had my stitches removed. I am thankful for the advancements and looking forward to the next stage of my healing journey," Shami wrote on 'X'.

ICING ON THE CAKE

Ravindra becomes the youngest to win Sir Richard Hadlee Medal



Rachin Ravindra became the youngest recipient of the Sir Richard Hadlee Medal at the New Zealand Cricket awards. Kane Williamson won the Test player of the year award while Amelia Kerr clinched the Debbie Hockley Medal after being named the ODI and T20I player of the year and the Super Smash Women's Player-of-the-Year.

CAPTAIN'S KNOCK

Shanto in fine form as Bangladesh cruises past Sri Lanka in first ODI



Najmul Hossain Shanto's unbeaten 122 powered Bangladesh to a six-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the first ODI in Chittagong. **The scores:** Sri Lanka 255 in 48.5 overs (Janith Liyanage 67, Kusal Mendis 59) lost to Bangladesh 257/4 in 44.4 overs (Najmul Hossain Shanto 122 n.o., Mushfiqur Rahim 73 n.o.).

Capitals dwarf Giants to seal a spot in the final

After the Delhi bowlers shackle the Gujarat batters with an incisive display, Shafali's rollicking half-century powers Lanning & Co. to a big win; MI faces RCB in the Eliminator on Friday



In a hurry: Shafali slammed boundaries at will to hasten Capitals' victory. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

SCOREBOARD

GUJARAT GIANTS
Laura Wolvaardt c Shafali b Kapp 7 (11b, 1x4), Beth Mooney b Kapp 0 (5b), D. Hemalatha b Jonassen 4 (7b), Phoebe Litchfield c Radha b Minnu 21 (22b, 2x4, 1x6), Ashleigh Gardner b Minnu 12 (12b, 2x4), Bharti Fulmali b Shikha 42 (36b, 7x4), Kathryn Bryce (not out) 28 (22b, 4x4), Tanuja Kanwar b Shikha 0 (1b), Shabnam Shakil run out 1 (2b), Meghna Singh run out 4 (2b, 1x4), Mannat Kashyap (not out) 0 (0b); Extras (b-1, lb-4, w-2): 7; Total (for nine wkts. in 20 overs): 126.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-1 (Mooney, 0.6 overs), 2-12 (Hemalatha, 3.3), 3-16 (Wolvaardt, 4.2), 4-39 (Gardner, 8.4), 5-48 (Litchfield, 10.2), 6-116 (Bharti, 18.4), 7-116 (Tanuja, 18.5), 8-118 (Shabnam, 19.3), 9-122 (Meghna, 19.5).

CAPITALS BOWLING
Kapp 4-0-17-2, Shikha 4-0-23-2, Jonassen 4-0-32-1, Radha 2-0-17-0, Arundhati 3-0-20-0, Minnu 2-0-9-2, Capsey 1-0-3-0.

DELHI CAPITALS
Meg Lanning run out 18 (10b, 4x4), Shafali Verma c Litchfield b Tanuja 71 (37b, 7x4, 5x6), Alice Capsey c Mannat b Tanuja 0 (4b), Jemimah Rodrigues (not out) 38 (28b, 4x4, 1x6), Marizanne Kapp (not out) 0 (0b); Extras (w-2); Total (for three wkts. in 13.1 overs): 129.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-31 (Lanning, 3.1), 2-31 (Capsey, 3.5), 3-125 (Shafali, 12.6).

GIANTS BOWLING
Shabnam 2-0-15-0, Bryce 1-0-16-0, Tanuja 4-1-20-2, Meghna 2-0-28-0, Gardner 2-0-28-0, Mannat 2.1-0-22-0.

Toss: Gujarat Giants. **Player-of-the-Match:** Shafali. **Delhi Capitals won by seven wickets with 41 balls to spare.**

daries even as Jemimah Rodrigues cheered her on from the other end. Shafali fell to Tanuja Kanwar going for a glory shot to finish the game.

However, that didn't stop Capitals from winning with 6.5 overs to spare.

Karun and Wadkar dig deep to thwart Mumbai

RANJI TROPHY

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Karun Nair lived up to the tag of the senior pro with a defiant knock while Akshay Wadkar made an unbeaten fifty. As a result, despite the Mumbai spin trio bowling long spells on a fourth day pitch that offered slow turn, Vidarbha managed to keep the Ranji Trophy final alive.

At the end of the penultimate day's proceedings at the Wankhede Stadium, Vidarbha finished with 248 for five, still 290 runs away from an improbable target of 538.

The specialist batters rectified their mistakes from the first essay, playing close to the body on most occasions. Karun (74, 220b, 3x4), especially, applied himself well for almost five hours on a slow turner. Had wicketkeeper Hardik Tamore not dropped him off Tanush Kotian when he was on 4, Vidarbha could have been in big trouble.

After all, Kotian and birthday boy Shams Mulani were on a roll - having dismissed openers Atharva Taide and Dhruv Shorey in successive overs soon after the drinks break. Kotian bowled the ball of the match, turning one sharply from way outside off and sneaking through a hapless Dhruv Shorey's gap even before he got his bat down.

Vidarbha may have soon been staring down the barrel, derailing from 64 for no loss to 70 for three but Tamore's reprieve gave Karun a chance to build the innings along with rookie Aman Mokhadde who was tight with his defence.

The shot of the day, however, came from captain



Defiant: Karun stepped up to the occasion when the chips were down for Vidarbha. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Wadkar towards the fag end. With speedster Tushar Deshpande employing a short-ball ploy with the second new ball, Wadkar played a magnificent upper cut to raise his bat for a fifty.

Until Wadkar came in when DRS appeal resulted in Yash Rathod being adjudged lbw by Musheer, Vidarbha was playing too cautiously. With the spinners deriving additional turn and the trio pitching it to precision, there was a 23-over boundary-less spell.

The lull was over, thanks to Wadkar's cover drive off the first ball he faced and a pull off the fourth, both off Mulani. Despite Wadkar upping the ante, Mumbai bowlers stuck to their task and Musheer earned the

prize scalp around 15 minutes before stumps with one that was full and turned just enough to kiss the line for Tamore to have the last laugh.

The scores:
Mumbai - 1st innings: 224.
Vidarbha - 1st innings: 105.
Mumbai - 2nd innings: 418.
Vidarbha - 2nd innings: Atharva Taide lbw b Mulani 32, Dhruv Shorey b Kotian 28, Aman Mokhadde lbw b Musheer 32, Karun Nair c Tamore b Musheer 74, Yash Rathod lbw b Kotian 7, Akshay Wadkar (batting) 56, Harsh Dubey (batting) 11; Extras (b-1, lb-7); 8; Total (for five wkts. in 92 overs): 248.
Fall of wickets: 1-64, 2-64, 3-118, 4-133, 5-223.

Mumbai bowling: Mulani 29-8-56-1, Shardul 8-0-35-0, Kulkarni 5-0-20-0, Deshpande 10-0-35-0, Kotian 20-1-56-2, Musheer 20-3-38-2.

Getting runs in county gave me confidence, says Karun

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

The last time Karun Nair batted in a Ranji Trophy match at the Wankhede Stadium - also a final - he registered the highest individual score in a Ranji final with a sterling knock of 328. While Vidarbha would have wanted him to repeat his heroics, Karun stretched the game into the last day's play with a sedate knock of 74 on the penultimate day of the final against Mumbai.

The knock capped off Karun's return to Ranji Trophy with a tally of 690 runs. More than being set to end as Vidarbha's leading run-scorer in his maiden season as a pro (Akshay Wadkar has a tally of 591 and is at the crease), Karun was elated with being back in the domestic circuit after being dropped by his alma mater Karnataka the previous season.

"Quite honestly, I was really happy to play after a year. I haven't faced challenges as such. Everyone has been really welcoming, there is a good atmosphere in the team. Over the season, I really got to know people and understand them better," Karun said.

The 32-year-old admitted that the County Championship stint with Northamptonshire gave him the confidence ahead of the season. "I have batted well this season in all formats. At least this season, I have got quite a few runs. I played a few games in the County Championship and started getting runs and that gave me confidence," Karun said.

"If I could score in the Oval, score 150 when the conditions are much tougher, that gave me a lot of confidence before I came here."

WPL SEASON 2

Lavanya L
NEW DELHI

Math in sports can sometimes be absurd. The inconsequential final league game between Delhi Capitals and Gujarat Giants had one outlandish caveat. If Giants beat Capitals by 118 runs, they could strip the latter of a second straight final appearance and force them to play in the Eliminator.

However, this game was not for those who wanted to watch the world burn. Capitals sauntered to a seven-wicket win at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Wednesday to end the league stage on top for the second season in a row.

Beth Mooney opted to bat but fell to Marizanne Kapp for a five-ball duck.

Final points table

	M	W	L	Pts	NRR
Delhi Capitals (Q)	8	6	2	12	1.198
Mumbai Indians (Q)	8	5	3	10	0.024
Royal Challengers (Q)	8	4	4	8	0.306
UP Warriorz	8	3	5	6	-0.371
Gujarat Giants	8	2	6	4	-1.158

Q: Qualified

Jess Jonassen ripped one into D. Hemalatha's off-stump after which the South African stuck to her 'two wickets in the Power-Play' routine as Laura Wolvaardt holed out to Shafali Verma.

Ashleigh Gardner and Phoebe Litchfield, who have had an abysmal season with the bat, managed positive starts but lost their bearings to Minnu Mani and Shikha Pandey respectively.

Bharti Fulmali and Kathryn Bryce's resistance, which saw the two stitch

together a 68-run stand off 50 balls, helped the team reach a respectable 126 for nine.

In response, Meg Lanning and Shafali rattled up 31 in the first three overs. Shabnam Shakil, who has listed Lanning and Shafali in her list of dream wickets, was given a taste of quality batting.

While Lanning, who took over the Orange Cap from Deepti Sharma after crossing the 300-run mark in her second straight season, and Alice Capsey fell soon, Shafali dealt in boun-

Tanish-Ashwini pair and Lakshya advance

ALL ENGLAND

Press Trust of India
BIRMINGHAM

World Championship bronze medallist shuttler Lakshya Sen moved into the second round with an easy straight game win over Denmark's Magnus Johannesen at the All England Championships here on Wednesday.

The 22-year-old brushed aside the Dane 21-14, 21-15 in 40 minutes in the men's singles opening round contest. In the round of 16, he will meet another Danish opponent in fourth seed Anders Antonsen.

The women's doubles pair of Tanish Crasto and Ashwini Ponnappa also



Lakshya. GETTY IMAGES

progressed to the round of 16 with a comfortable 21-13, 21-18 win over Hong Kong's Yeung Nga Ting and Yeung Pui Lam.

However, it was curtains for young Priyanshu Rajawat, who lost a hard-fought men's singles contest to Chico Aura Dwi Wardoyo 19-21, 21-1, 9-21.

Toofans overcome Heroes' challenge, climb to the top of Super 5 standings

PVL

Saikat Chakraborty
CHENNAI

Delhi Toofans registered a 14-16, 15-9, 15-11, 15-13 win to leapfrog opponent Calicut Heroes and go to the top of the Super 5 table in the Prime Volleyball League here on Wednesday.

The first set was a nail-biter, with both teams showcasing their attacking prowess. Calicut's Utkra Pandian and Jerome Vinith displayed their skills, while Delhi's Daniel Aponza countered with a barrage of powerful smashes. However, a crucial net fault by Aponza handed Heroes a two-point advantage, al-



Delhi's Toofan! Anand makes a spectacular return in the match against Heroes. M. VEDHAN

lowing them to snatch the set 16-14. The second set remained equally close, with the score at 8-8. A successful review by Toofans turned the tide in their fa-

vor, and with the help of their opposite hitter Lazar Dodic, they secured the set. The momentum shifted in the third as Dodic and Rohit Kumar stepped up

for Delhi. Aponza continued to shine with impressive blocks, thwarting Heroes' attempts to regain control.

The fourth saw Heroes take an early lead (7-5) but Toofans clawed their way back, tying the score at 11. They strategically called for a 'Super Point', a high-pressure opportunity to win the set with a single point.

Unsuccessful review

Chirag Yadav's attempt sailed out and Heroes' desperate review proved unsuccessful. Delhi clinched the set 15-13, sealing a hard-fought win.

The result:
Delhi Toofans bt Calicut Heroes 14-16, 15-9, 15-11, 15-13.

Olympian shuttler Bhatia passes away

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

Wing Commander Satish Bhatia, a former junior World badminton champion, National champion and Olympian, passed away on Wednesday.

The Dehradun-born Wg. Cdr. Bhatia earned the World title in 1960, was crowned India's best in 1968 while representing the then Mysore state and participated in the 1972 Munich Games where badminton was introduced for the first time, as a demonstration sport, in the Olympics. He also featured in the Thomas Cup for India.

Bhatia had a distinguished career in the Indian Air Force which he joined in 1964 as a tran-



Satish Bhatia. THE HINDU ARCHIVES

sport pilot. He flew Devons and Dakotas from Bengaluru and also from Lucknow, and was part of two wars - the 1965 conflict with Pakistan and the 1971 campaign for Bangladesh's liberation.

INBRIEF



Ashwin reclaims top spot among Test bowlers

A nine-wicket haul in his 100th Test match helped Indian off-spinner R. Ashwin reclaim the top spot in the bowlers' list, while his captain Rohit Sharma was back in the top-10 at sixth in the batting charts of the latest ICC rankings on Wednesday.

India takes lead over Lanka in blind cricket series

India defeated Sri Lanka by seven wickets in the third T20 to take an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match Samarath championship for blind cricket in New Delhi on Wednesday. Chandana Deshapriya (76) helped Sri Lanka post 162 for three after being asked to bat. Dinesh Rathva, Naresh Tumda, Lokesh and Pankaj Bhue, who was adjudged player-of-the-match, contributed with the bat as India made 164 for three in 15.3 overs.



Kuldeep had inkling he will be my 700th scalp: Anderson

James Anderson revealed that Kuldeep Yadav had a hunch about being his 700th Test wicket when the two came face to face in the final Test against India in Dharamshala. Anderson became the first pacer and third bowler to take 700 Test wickets on March 9 with Kuldeep being his landmark scalp. "Kuldeep edged one down to third man for a single. As he got to the non-striker's end, he said: 'I'm going to be your 700th wicket,'" Anderson said BBC's Tailenders podcast.

Prathyusha Rachapudi loses in first round

Laura Dilekova of Slovakia beat Prathyusha Rachapudi 6-2, 6-2 in the first round of the \$25,000 ITF women's tennis tournament in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, on Wednesday.

Shrivalli outplays top seed Irina Maria Bara

Shrivalli Bhamidipaty outclassed top seed Irina Maria Bara of Romania 6-3, 6-0 in the first round of the \$25,000 ITF women's tennis at the Indore Tennis Club, Indore, on Wednesday.

The results: First round: Shrivalli Bhamidipaty bt Irina Maria Bara 6-3, 6-0; Viktoria Morvayova bt Vaidehi Chaudhari 3-6, 6-2, 6-4; Ekaterina Yashina bt Michika Ozeki 6-1, 6-3; Yeonwoo Ku bt Aanya Choubey 6-1, 6-0; Polina Iatcenko bt Akanksha Nitture 6-0, 6-3; Diana Marcinkевича bt Rinon Okuwaki 6-2, 3-6, 6-2; Jacqueline Cabaj Awad bt Daria Kudashova 6-3, 6-3; Sahaja Yamalapalli bt Zeel Desai 6-3, 6-1; Mananchaya Sswangkaew bt Rutuja Bhosale 6-2, 6-0; Thasaporn Naklo bt Vaishnavi Adkar 3-6, 7-6(3), 7-5; Mei Yamaguchi bt Akiko Omae 6-2, 6-1; Dalila Jakupovic bt Ayumi Koshishi 6-3, 6-1. **Doubles: Pre-quarterfinals:** Omae & Yamaguchi bt Rutuja & Ankit 6-2, 5-7, [10-7]; Riya Bhatia & Michika Ozeki bt Sharmada Balu & Rinon Okuwaki 6-1, 2-1 (retired); Ya-Hsuan Lee & Sohyun Park bt Akanksha & Soha Sadiq 6-0, 6-3; Jacqueline & Diana Marcinkевича bt Dayeong Back & Gyeong Seo Lee 7-5, 4-6, [10-5].

Lazio names Martusciello as new coach after Sarri resigns

Lazio officially announced coach Maurizio Sarri's resignation on Wednesday and said his longtime assistant Giovanni Martusciello will take over. Italian media had reported on Tuesday that the 65-year-old Sarri had decided to step down after five losses in Lazio's last six matches. Sarri was in his third season in charge of Lazio and had a contract until the end of next season. Martusciello was Sarri's assistant at Empoli, Juventus and Lazio.

LIVE TELECAST

Ranji Trophy: (final), day 5, Jio Cinema App, 9.30 a.m.
Badminton: All-England Championships, BWF YouTube Channel & Jio Cinema App, 3.30 p.m. onwards
PVL: Sony Sports Ten 1 (SD & HD) & LIV, 6.30 & 8.30 p.m.
ISL: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.
Europa League: Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 11.15 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Friday)



Winning streak: Karnataka's victory helped it complete the red-ball double in age-group cricket, also for the first time. K. MURALI KUMAR

Karnataka clinches its maiden title

It's the first trophy we have got at U-23 level; we just need to carry this momentum and win as many as we can, says skipper Smaran

C.K. NAYUDU TROPHY

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

Karnataka won its maiden Col. C.K. Nayudu (U-23) Trophy after overcoming Uttar Pradesh by virtue of having secured the first-innings lead, at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Wednesday.

The victory comes less than two months after Karnataka clinched the Cooch Behar (U-19) Trophy, helping complete the red-ball double in age-group cricket, also for the first time.

So special was the victory that it probably deserved a toast. But in the absence of champagne, the boys and the coaching staff made do with packaged drinking water, poking

holes in the bottle cap with the help of shoe spikes. Little did they realise that in the Bengaluru of today, water is more precious than spirit.

Skipper R. Smaran, though, was elated with the win. "We have been waiting for a long time and it's a very proud moment for Karnataka," he said. "It's the first trophy we have got at U-23 level. Earlier, we used to come, play knock-outs and go. Now that we have won this, it is a stepping stone. We just need to carry this momentum and win as many as we can."

The cricket that transpired before all the celebrations wasn't sparkling. Karnataka, starting from an overnight 444 for five was bowled out for 585, but not before K.V. Aneesh helped himself to a fine double-century (214, 273b, 18x4,

6x6). Chasing a mammoth 805, UP threatened to fold and give the host the added satisfaction of an outright win. Pacer Manvanth Kumar (5/36) had UP opener Rituraj Sharma off the second ball of the innings before going on to reduce the visitors to 34 for three.

But a 103-run partnership for the fifth wicket between Swastik (67, 78b, 7x4, 3x6) and Vipraj Nigam (73, 54b, 9x4, 2x6) arrested the slide. UP eventually finished on 174 for six, with the game called off roughly an hour before close.

The scores:

Karnataka 358 & 585 in 151.5 overs (MacNeil H. Noronha 79, Prakar Chaturvedi 86, K.V. Aneesh 214, R. Smaran 40, Kruthik Krishna 86, Kunal Tyagi 4/90) drew with Uttar Pradesh 139 & 174 for six in 31 overs (Swastik 67, Vipraj Nigam 73, Manvanth Kumar 5/36).

Bairstow available for Punjab Kings for full IPL season

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

England batter Jonny Bairstow will be available for the entire duration of the Indian Premier League, beginning March 22.

The BCCI officials were in talks with their England

and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) counterparts over the availability of their players for the IPL.

Ben Stokes, Joe Root and Mark Wood had already made themselves unavailable. "Bairstow is expected to arrive in India on March 18 or 19 and will be

available for the team's first game against Delhi Capitals on March 23," said a source.

Sanjay Bangar, who was appointed as cricket director at Punjab Kings ahead of the 2024 edition, will double up as the batting coach of the side.

Ramkumar has a smooth start



Easy outing: Ramkumar did not have to sweat much against Chanta. KAMESH SRINIVASAN

TENNIS

Kamesh Srinivasan
NEW DELHI

Third seed Ramkumar Ramanathan did not have to sweat much as he beat Thanapet Chanta of Thailand 6-4, 6-4 in the first round of the \$25,000 ITF men's tennis tournament at the DLTA Complex on Wednesday.

In the pre-quarterfinals, Ramkumar will play Jang Yuseok of Korea, who eased past Siddhant Banthia for the loss of three games.

Siddharth Vishwakarma, Kabir Hans and Chirag Duhan were the other Indians to progress into the second round, and they all beat compatriots, Nitin Kumar Sinha, Yash Chaurasia

and Raghav Jaisinghani.

The results: First round: Kabir Hans bt Yash Chaurasia 6-3, 7-6(2); Grigory Shebekin bt Rishi Reddy 6-1, 3-6, 6-3; Florent Bax bt Manass Dhamne 6-3, 0-6, 6-4; Chirag Duhan bt Raghav Jaisinghani 3-6, 6-4, 6-0; Yuichiro Inui bt Jagmeet Singh 6-0, 6-1.

Wishaya Trongcharoenchaikul bt Siddharth Rawat 6-0, 4-6, 6-2; Siddharth Vishwakarma bt Nitin Kumar Sinha 6-1, 6-4; Woobin Shin bt Aditya Balsekar 6-4, 6-4; Jang Yuseok bt Siddhant Banthia 6-1, 6-2; Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Thanapet Chanta 6-4, 6-4; Nam Hoang Ly bt Manish Ganesh 6-4, 6-2; Bang Shuo Yin bt Kazuma Kawachi 6-4, 6-3; Mitsuki Leong bt Dev Javia 6-3, 6-4.

Doubles: Pre-quarterfinals: Parikshit Somani & Manish Sureshkumar bt Adil Kalyanpur & Leong 6-3, 6-3; Banthia & Vishnu Vardhan bt Shivank Bhatnagar & Rohan Mehra 6-3, 6-3; Ramkumar & Khumoyun Sultanov bt Bax & Karan Singh 7-6(2), 6-2.

Smriti credits RCB management for revival in fortunes

WPL SEASON 2

Lavanya L
NEW DELHI

An improved show with bat and ball helped Royal Challengers Bangalore not only register its first-ever win against Mumbai Indians in the Women's Premier League but also make it to the play-offs of the tournament for the first time. Captain Smriti Mandhana credited the RCB management for its support to players and staff alike.

"Last season didn't go our way. It wasn't a bad team. We didn't step up and play the cricket we wanted to play. A lot of hard work and thought has gone into this over the past 12 months, not only from my side but all the support staff and the RCB management. For them to show their faith in all of us was just amazing," Smriti told reporters after her side's



Keeping faith: Smriti believes backing players have done wonders for the side. R.V. MOORTHY

seven-wicket win against MI on Tuesday.

"I wouldn't say that (this has been a) really satisfying campaign still, but we had a lot of ups and downs, but that's how WPL and T20 cricket is. You'll have good days and bad days."

"One important talk we had was to not look at the other games as its not in our hands. It takes away the cricketing talk. We treated it as quarterfinal, semifinal, final and spoke about playing our best cricket," she said.

Smriti hailed crowd support for the franchise in both legs.

"I was surprised to see the whole crowd chanting RCB during the match against Delhi Capitals. It's not something you expect to see. At the end of it, women's cricket is the winner. Of course, franchise has its own fan base for the last 15-odd years.

"Their expectations and whatever they say about us - good or bad - is important to have in the group because it motivates us to do better for them.

"As women cricketers, we've wanted this to happen and it is an amazing thing to watch it happen," she said.

DELHI ROUND-UP

Sanat Sangwan scores century

Sanat Sangwan's century saw Sonnet Club defeat Bright Club by 15 runs in the DCCA League. In another game, Sidharth Lohia, Mehul Choudhary and Raghav Kapoor cracked half-centuries as Rajnigandha Club beat Pelican Club by eight wickets and Yash Bhatia made an unbeaten 132 to help Pioneer Club down Young Cricketers Club by six wickets.

The scores: Sonnet 209 in 28.1 overs (Sanat Sangwan 105, Hritik Shokeen 38, Sunny Shankar 4/22, Shubham Sharma 3/32) bt Bright 194/7 in 30 overs (Mayank Gusa 57).

Pelican 243/9 in 40 overs (Ibrahim 66, Vikas 58, Deepanshu 57, Kushagra Sharma 4/36) lost to Rajnigandha 246/2 in 27.2 overs (Sidharth Lohia 98, Mehul Choudhary 71, Raghav Kapoor 50 n.o.).

Young Cricketers 215/9 in 40 overs (Kavya 52, Gautam Saxena

39, Divot Singh 3/46) lost to Pioneer 216/4 in 36 overs (Yash Bhatia 132 not out, Karan Garg 52).

Kranti Star 160 in 8 overs (Rahul Dagar 72, Raj Sagar 6/17) lost to Titak Nagar Colts 162/2 in 23.5 overs (Raj Gupta 78 n.o., Abhishek Jacob 40).

Hind 139 in 31.5 overs (Dishant 37, Vishal Choudhary 3/26) lost to Bank of Baroda 140/3 in 14 over (Rahul Dalal 52, Chetan Bisht 47).

Delhi Blues 269 in 39.1 overs (Ankit Negi 133) lost to Youngsters 272/5 in 39 overs (Nikhil Khatri 76, Sikander Kaushliya 51, Abhilove Shukla 46).

Air India 404 in 40 overs (Govind Rathore 126, Achal Singla 94, Vinay 83, Ayush Sachdeva 3/53) bt Delhi Club 208 in 39.3 overs (Vyom Arora 72 n.o., Ayush Sachdeva 67, Sonu Sharma 3/33, Ashish Pandey 3/34).

L.B. Shastri Coaching Centre 322 in 39.5 overs (Ankit Chillar 110, Anurag Rana 52) bt Bank of India 175/9 in 31 overs (Neeraj Sharma 63, Vickey Sood 3/16, Vikas Vibhu 3/26, Rohit Saini 3/32).

Down Syndrome National Games on March 16 and 17

The second Down Syndrome National Games will be held at the Tau Devi Lal Stadium, Gurugram, on March 16 and 17. Events will be held in swimming, athletics, badminton, table tennis, bocce and roller skating.

Rajasthan Polo beats Achievers

Three goals each by Padmanabh Singh and Juan Cruz helped Rajasthan Polo Club to a 9-6 victory over Vimal Arion Achievers in a league match of the Northern India polo.

The results (league): Rajasthan Polo Club 9 (Padmanabh Singh 3, Juan Cruz 3, Salvador Jauretche 2, Jaisal Singh) bt Vimal Arion Achievers 6 (Chris Mackenzie 3, Daniel Otamendi, Dhruv Godara, Vishwarupe Bajaj).

Shooters need fine-tuning ahead of the Paris Olympics, says Suma Shirur

Sports Bureau
MUMBAI

India's rifle shooting coach Suma Shirur believes the shooters are in a very good zone ahead of the Paris Olympics, and all they need is a bit of fine-tuning leading up to the mega event. The NRAI will hold four trials in April and May to select the Indian shooting team for the Games, and thereafter, the Indian continent will be heading to Munich for the ISSF World Cup.

"Most of the work has been done since last year. In every competition, we were working on little things, making positive changes in their system.



Suma Shirur.
FILE PHOTO: EMMANUAL YOGINI

Now, we need to fine tune those things," Shirur said on the sidelines of the launch of the 14th RR Lakshya Cup 2023, which will be held at the Karnala Sports Academy in Navi Mumbai on March 16 and

17. Around 54 shooters will compete in the tournament and NRAI's high performance director Pierre Beauchamp will attend the event.

Talking about Olympics preparation, Shirur said: "As national coaches, we are not teaching them how to shoot, but now the focus is on how to perform at a bigger stage. That's the main thing for us. Self-regulation is the most important aspect that we are going to work on because no matter how you train, you still need to go out there and perform."

Despite high expectations, India's shooters had a disappointing run in Tokyo Olympics as none of its

campaigners, barring Saurobh Chaudhary, could reach the final.

"Tokyo was a completely different ball game and back then, quite a few decisions had to be taken because of the circumstances. We did not have any control over those circumstances due to COVID. But this time, after the Munich World Cup, we will have our camp and the shooters will come back and emotionally recover, rejuvenate before the Paris Games," Shirur said.

"It's about getting the best out of them. The athletes are in a very good zone, it's just that we need to sharpen them a bit more."

AFC asks Bhattarjee to submit evidence of corruption charges against Chaubey

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has asked AIFF's ousted legal head Nilanjan Bhattarjee to submit evidence for the allegations of corruption he has levelled against national federation head Kalyan Chaubey.

AIFF president Chaubey on March 6 served a legal notice to Bhattarjee for accusing him of corruption.

Bhattarjee, in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has alleged that Chaubey was part of non-transparent tender processes and made attempts to "siphon off mo-

ney from the federation" for personal expenses.

Taking cognizance of the matter, the AFC has asked Bhattarjee to submit a "full written report" by March 18.

"We refer to the attached media articles in which we note that allegations relating to corruption have been made by you

against the AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey. In light of the seriousness of this matter, we kindly request that you provide the AFC with a full written report setting out your position on the matter by 18 March 2024 at the latest," deputy secretary to the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee, Barry Lysaght, wrote.



Perry proves she's cricket's Vitruvian woman

The Perry we see now is a far cry from the Perry of the past. The cherubic multi-sport player has evolved into a cheerful realist, working hard to keep a steady head

Lavanya Lakshminarayanan

Watching Ellyse Perry ply her trade is like watching a National Geographic documentary. Think the ones set against the absorbing baritone of David Attenborough; ones about apex predators effortlessly striking down their prey. There's a lot of hubbub around her but she, in the centre of it all, is unbothered. No aggression, no provocation, just results.

Ironically though, her side – Royal Challengers Bangalore – was the one trying to escape the claws of a much stronger opponent in Mumbai Indians. The stakes? Securing the final spot in the playoffs bracket of the Women's Premier League which also has two other franchises – Gujarat Giants and UP Warriorz – circling the skies around the kill, looking to usurp it for themselves.

Big fights demand big fighters. Perry is as warrior-like as they come in women's cricket. Quietly, often letting her bat and ball do the talking, Perry has – for decades – shown a world sceptical of women's cricket that the girls could play and play marvellously well.

The 33-year-old is a genuine all-rounder and, despite injury struggles every now and again, has an enviable record with bat, ball and the on the field. She's the kind of player you want in the team when you've got your backs to the wall. On a night when her team needed a hero, Perry took six ruthless wickets, took a catch and scored an unbeaten 38-ball 40 to take her team into the playoffs.

Six degrees of supremacy

Smriti Mandhana introduced Perry in the seventh over with MI having lost Hayley Matthews fairly early, courtesy a sharp sliding catch from Perry at deep square leg. S. Sajana was the side's makeshift opener in Yastika Bhatia's absence and understood the brief of keeping the scoreboard ticking. Perry was miserly in her first over, giving away just two runs and asking questions aplenty of Sajana and Nat Sciver-Brunt. She bowled to the stumps, keeping things simple, trying to get the ball into the batter, her consistency at hitting that line almost Test-like. She returned in the ninth over, giving away a generous half volley off the third ball. Sajana was happy to dispatch the ball to the fence. Perry punished her moments after, with a jaffa clipping Sajana's off stump. That already got fans on their feet, but the volumes would hit fever pitch a few seconds later when Harmanpreet chopped a delivery floating outside off back on to the stumps off the very next ball. Two deliveries, two off

stumps left glowing in red at 60 degree inclinations.

Perry's next victim was Amelia Kerr with the ball beating her defence and brushing the back pad. Paschim Pathak was not moved by Perry's persistent appeals. After a conversation with Richa Ghosh and Smriti, a review was taken, showing the ball crashing into the leg stump. Amanjot Kaur was the next batter who thought she could take the bull in red, black and gold by the horns, starting with a boundary that split the field between square and fine leg. But Perry was not to be toyed with, sending in a back of a length delivery that pitched outside off and then swung in to clip the off stump bail.

"You must be kidding! How are you getting so much deviation off this surface!" a gobsmacked W.V. Raman exclaimed on comms.

Perry bowled out in the 13th over, taking out Pooja Vastrakar and Sciver-Brunt in the span of four balls. Perry uprooted Pooja's off-stump as she tried to swing big to reach her five-for. Sciver-Brunt was trapped leg-before, with the ball heading into the side of her front pad.

"The conditions were conducive to the ball moving around a bit off the seam. When that happens, you can get it close to the stumps," Perry said in her assessment of her spell.

"Even Mumbai maximised on that when they were targeting the stumps I think we got a good grasp of the game. Something we targeted was starting the PowerPlay well with our bowling and that came together and I am glad to be a part of it."

Her contribution did not end there as she steadied a dicey chase and brought up a win with Richa Ghosh, the hero of a heartbreaking effort against Delhi Capitals, for company.

Charlotte Edwards, coach of Mumbai Indians, was helpless as she watched along from the team dugout.

"I still stand by what I said five years ago: she is the greatest player I have seen with bat and ball and on the field. She is an unbelievable person as well. We are lucky to have Ellyse in our game as a role model. Sometimes you just have to say well done to the opposition when they've

done better than us," she conceded after the game.

A rematch of the same fixture awaits Edwards and Co. in the Eliminator on Friday and she's counting on Perry running out of luck.

"She had a great day today, hopefully she won't have such a good day on Friday. We are watching greatness, and she will be around for longer," she added.

One with the elements

Perry is happy to credit every external factor she can find for her success – her team, the wicket, the nip in the air, even luck! For the uninitiated, the first thought is humility." In Perry's case, that's not all. It's how that slate remains free of old adamant chalk marks. After a night like this, she reveals that she had a chocolate brownie with ice-cream along with her

teammates, put on her reading glasses and caught up on some reading.

"It's easy to get carried away when things go well for you but I feel like a lot of the time, we don't have a lot of control over things going well for you. Of course, you work hard and put yourself in good positions but there are so many other factors that go into the outcome of a game. As I've grown older, I've learnt not to overreact either way whether it's a good night or a bad night."

"As I said, the sun comes up the next day. Thankfully, there's always another opportunity to play games quickly. Whether that goes well or not, we're so lucky to be out there playing in front of these big crowds that are so fanatical about the game, which is a far cry from what it was like when I first started playing. There was no one coming to our games and no interest in the sport like there is now," Perry said.

Gunning for glory

Perry's transformation in the Australian setup is fabled. So competitive is this

world-beating outfit that it did not hesitate to drop the veteran player in T20s when her form was not fitting into the team's jigsaw. Her career, since then, is one we can trace in two time periods, before and after that decision.

The Perry we see now is a far cry from the Perry of the past. The cherubic multi-sport player evolved into a cheerful realist, working hard to keep a steady head as she meandered through her roles in the team. Over the last few years, including her run in Australia's winter fixtures in India, one saw her bowl far less than one is used to, particularly in this format. Her strike rate benefited as a result. She returned to her boundary-clearing form, strengthening the spine of the Australian effort with the bat.

Perry and those around her broke this turn of fortune to a mindset switch.

"Skills aside, one important thing is to be open to changing your mindset and be able to look at the game and yourself differently. When you've been playing for a while and things have gone okay for you, it's easy to get stuck on defining yourself as that player and one of the cool challenges is trying to stay open to what else is possible and being effective. It's about looking for new potential, even within."

Ahead of this match against MI this season, Perry had bowled six overs going wicketless. So the six she managed going up against a line-up featuring the likes of the cream of international stars makes one wonder if the Australian management is taking notes. Perry isn't wondering as the only thing she takes home is the satisfaction of working for the team.

"I've never looked at it that way, to be honest. The thing I've enjoyed the most is the success we've had as a team in various competitions. Being involved in some World Cup wins and Ashes series triumphs is incredibly satisfying. Rankings and individual successes are so fleeting and unsatisfying in comparison to team successes. Neither have been particularly relevant to me. Just being here has been most gratifying," she said with a shrug.

"Without a doubt, being a part of women's cricket when it just exploded... to think I am sitting here in a chair in the WPL, with crowds over 20,000 and 30,000 people is mind-boggling."

For years, Perry has been the sport's Vitruvian woman, the symbol of renaissance in the women's game. It's in moments like this the Wahroonga-born firecracker provides proof of why she is rated so highly and across so many generations, and grateful are we to have the opportunity to bear witness.

THE GIST

▼ Perry became the first player to take six wickets in a WPL match, breaking Marizanne Kapp's record of five for 15 for Capitals against Giants in the inaugural edition

▼ Perry is the first player (man or woman) to score a century and take six-wicket hauls in First Class (6/32), List A (7/22) and T20 cricket

▼ For RCB, Perry has scored 246 runs in seven innings at an average of 61.50 and a strike-rate of 130.15. She has remained unbeaten thrice

▼ The Australian has been a valuable member of the RCB leadership group, doubling up as a sounding board for skipper Smriti Mandhana and being a pillar of support for the younger crop

RV. MOORTHY



AlphaGeometry and the threat of AI's takeover of mathematics

Google's machine was able to solve 25 out of 30 Olympiad-level geometry problems and could also write human-readable proofs and draw diagrams to explain a proof. According to a U.S. Mathematical Olympiad coach, this performance exceeds that of an average silver medallist

Mohan R.

A few weeks ago, an animated discussion unfolded in a WhatsApp group whose members are mathematicians interested in the Indian Mathematical Olympiad. The spark was a *Nature* paper that announced a Google DeepMind artificial intelligence (AI) named AlphaGeometry had achieved a milestone: it could solve geometry problems at the level of the International Mathematical Olympiad, nearly matching the prowess of gold medallists.

The news evoked a mix of awe, fear, and wonder among us, especially in light of how AI tools like ChatGPT have started to reshape education. Some mathematicians wondered if the advent of AlphaGeometry signals the start of AI's ascendancy in mathematics.

Is this truly the beginning of an AI takeover in mathematics? To answer this question, let's take a look at the inner workings of AlphaGeometry.

How does mathematical logic work?

The *Nature* paper was coauthored by two computer scientists at New York University and two DeepMind researchers. AlphaGeometry is one of DeepMind's array of AI systems – perhaps the most popular of which is AlphaZero, a deep-learning algorithm that excels at playing chess. Programs like these are part of researchers' efforts to work up a ladder of complexity, building tools that can perform more complex tasks with better reliability.

The AlphaGeometry team has published supplementary information describing the proofs generated by AlphaGeometry for some geometry problems, showcasing its ability to create hundreds of logical steps in proof construction.

Let's start with a simple example from school mathematics. Suppose we only know that for any number a , $a + 0 = a$. From this, we will be able to prove that for any number a , $a \times 0 = 0$. How? If $a + 0 = a$ for any number a , then we should have $0 + 0 = 0$. Thus $a \times 0$ can be written as $a \times (0 + 0)$, which is the same as $a \times 0 + a \times 0$. So we have the equality $a \times 0 = (a \times 0) + (a \times 0)$. Cancelling $a \times 0$ on both sides of the equation, we can conclude that $a \times 0 = 0$.

Here, the entire proof is simply derived from the hypothesis using the rules of logic. Many computer programs can execute such a process but AlphaGeometry stands apart because of its 'Deductive Database' – a method that significantly reduces the number of steps in a proof.

What is 'Deductive Database'?

Suppose we are given a statement A , and we want to deduce the statement Z . The program can spit out all possible next steps – let's call them B – that can be deduced from A using the rules of logic. Then it will spit out all possible next steps C that can be deduced from B , and so on. If there are only finitely many steps possible, then it should reach the conclusion Z at some point. But once it reaches Z , it will perform a 'traceback' process to find the proof that takes the minimum number of steps.

So much for arithmetic and logic; geometry requires something more. In geometry, we use algebraic relations between different kinds of measures to find new relations. For example, we will have used simple techniques in school geometry called 'angle chasing', 'ratio chasing' and 'distance chasing'.

To illustrate the meaning of these ideas, let us take an example from school geometry. Let a , b , and c be three lines on a plane. If we know the angle between a and b and the angle between b and c , we can immediately determine the angle between a and c (see figure 1). This is an example of 'angle chasing'. Similarly, AlphaGeometry can quickly discover all possible algebraic relationships between some given quantities using its 'Algebraic Rules' program.

When it combines its 'Deductive Database' and 'Algebraic Rules' programs, AlphaGeometry can write complete proofs for most school-level geometry problems.

For example, let A , B , C , and D be any four points on a plane (see figure 2). Suppose by angle chasing we know that the angle between the lines AB and BD is equal to the angle between the lines AC and CD .

Then 'Deductive Database' can immediately figure out all the four points lie on a circle while 'Algebraic Rules' can determine that the angle between the lines BC and CA is equal to the angle



AlphaGeometry stands apart because of its 'Deductive Database' – a method that significantly reduces the number of steps in a proof. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

between the lines BD and DA .

What are auxiliary constructions?

The combination of these two programs makes AlphaGeometry a very powerful tool. The AlphaGeometry team could solve 14 of the 30 geometry problems in the International Mathematical Olympiad in this way.

This achievement also reveals that a significant amount of difficulty in these problems was not in terms of the ingenuity required to solve them but in the ability to deduce the most number of relations – and computers are better at this than humans.

Fortunately, this ability is not sufficient to prove all problems in geometry, but AlphaGeometry seems to have summited this peak as well.

Mathematics is really a creative field because mathematicians often come up with clever constructions to solve a problem. Their name for such a construction is an auxiliary construction. Auxiliary constructions are not part of what is 'given' to us nor what we want to prove, and also illustrate what makes automatic theorem proving difficult. There are infinite ways to build constructions, and human



The success of this project will certainly lead to the development of AI programs that can efficiently do mathematics at least at the school level

intelligence is required to judge which one to choose for a given problem and how to use it.

There is a classic example: some 2,000 years ago, Euclid proved that there are infinitely many prime numbers. His proof goes as follows: suppose there are only finitely many primes numbers, say p_1, p_2, \dots, p_n . Take the product of all these primes and add 1 to the product. Let's call this new number p . That is, $p = p_1 p_2 \dots p_n + 1$. The question now is whether p is a prime.

If p is a prime, and since p is bigger than all the other primes, we have a new prime. However, this shouldn't be possible because we assumed originally that there is only a finite number of primes. If p is not a prime, we will be forced to conclude that one of the primes should divide 1, which is absurd. In sum,

assuming there is a number of primes leads us to absurdity, which means there have to be infinitely many primes.

The auxiliary construction in this proof is constructing the number p .

There are no particular restrictions for how we can come up with different constructions, and thus different ways to solve the problem. They simply require experience and deep insight.

What is the significance?

Invariably, most geometry proofs require auxiliary constructions. Large language models like GPT-4, which is behind ChatGPT, can be taught to come up with possible constructions. One can train them to use rule-sets from different fields to build auxiliary constructions and use them to write proofs. However, there is no guarantee that the new constructions they devise will be able to lead to new proofs.

But when the AlphaGeometry team combined GPT-4 with 'Deductive Database' and 'Algebraic Rules', the program could produce auxiliary constructions for geometry problems, with no prior human demonstration. This is a new development in the field, and in this sense, AlphaGeometry seems like a big step towards AI's takeover of mathematics, which has thus far been a very human enterprise.

In all, AlphaGeometry could solve 11 more Olympiad geometry problems, bringing its tally to 25 out of 30 problems. It is also commendable that AlphaGeometry can write human-readable proofs and can draw diagrams to explain a proof. Once it did so, the team asked a coach of the U.S. Mathematical Olympiad to evaluate the proofs and grade them. The result: AlphaGeometry performed better than an average silver medallist.

The architecture developed for AlphaGeometry may not have been able to solve the other Olympiad problems, but the techniques it developed are directly useful to solve problems from other areas of mathematics. The success of this project will certainly lead to the development of AI programs that can efficiently do mathematics at least at the school level.

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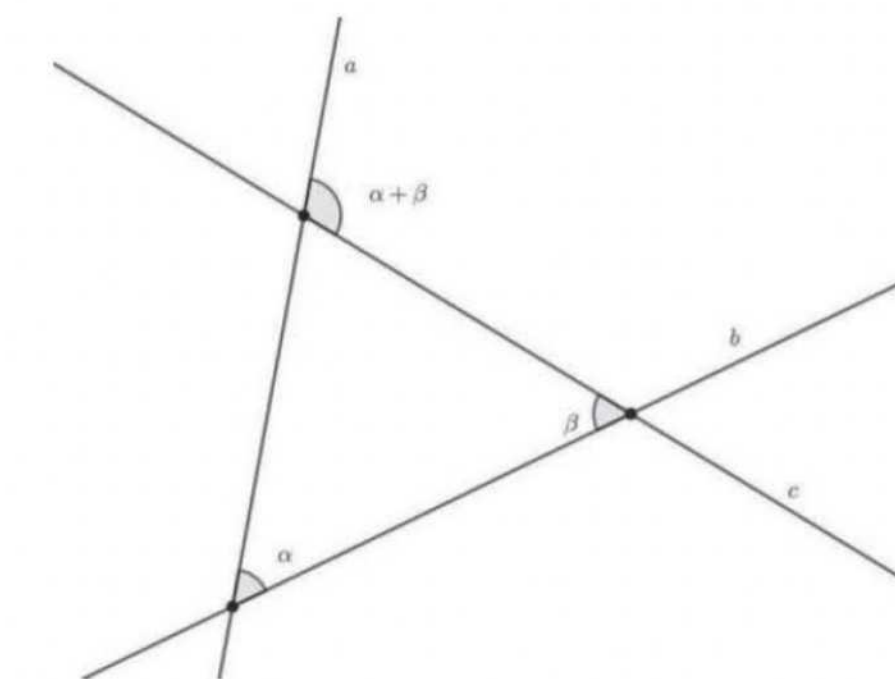


Figure 1. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

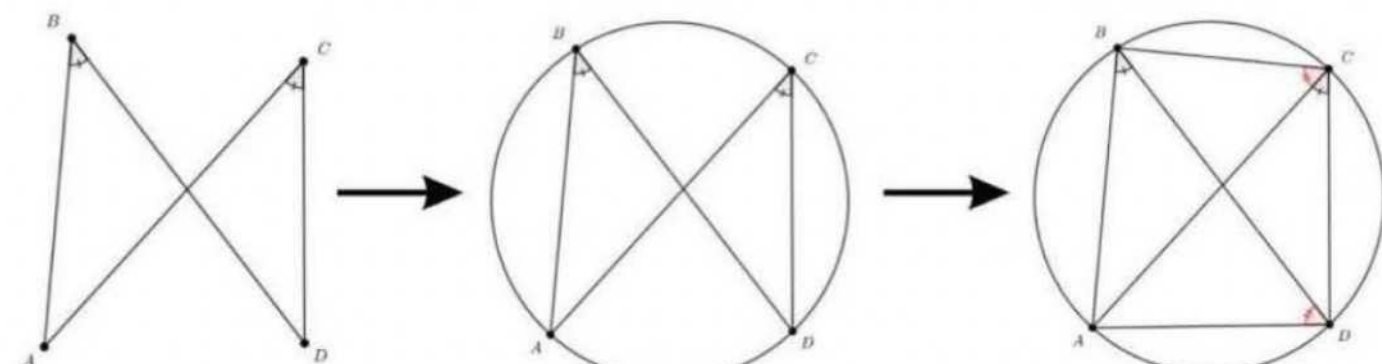


Figure 2. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Solar photo voltaics have inherent limitations which are the subject of research. FILE PHOTO

Overcoming theoretical limits on solar cell capacity

Priyali Prakash

In photovoltaics – i.e. the study of conversion of light energy into electrical energy – the Shockley-Queisser limit is a theoretical concept that defines the maximum capacity of a solar cell to produce electricity.

The Sun is the primary source of light and energy on the earth. Photovoltaic devices like solar cells allow us to harness this energy. Photovoltaic cells are made of semiconducting materials like (doped) silicon. When sunlight interacts with a semiconductor, it excites electrons from the lower-energy valence band to the higher-energy conduction band.

This transition leaves behind a vacancy in the valence band called a hole. (To be more precise, a hole is a vacant site where an electron is supposed to be. Since it denotes the absence of an electron, a hole is also a place with positive charge.)

The process of an electron moving to the conduction band and leaving a hole behind in the valence band creates an electron-hole pair. These pairs are the fundamental charge carriers in

Researchers have been trying to surpass the Shockley-Queisser limit and use more solar energy, and thus improve the cells' efficiency, but this has been easier said than done

semiconductors and play a crucial role in the operation of electronic devices.

In short, electron-hole pairs create the photocurrent – an electric current created as a result of radiation – in the semiconductor.

We know that the efficiency with which a solar cell can produce an electric current when sunlight is incident on it can't be 100% because some light particles (photons) pass through the material without interacting with it (i.e. transparency loss, around 25%) and some energy simply heats up the material without exciting the electrons (thermalisation, around 30%). As a result, the maximum efficiency of a conventional solar cell is confined, and this range is called the Shockley-Queisser limit. It is named after the physicists William Shockley (of the U.S.) and Hans-Joachim Queisser (Germany).

These days, a solar cell can convert only a third of the incident solar energy into electric energy. The semiconductor can't make use of photons with less energy than that required by electrons to jump across the band gap. Similarly, photons carrying significantly more energy than the size of the band gap only heat the device.

Researchers have been trying to find ways to surpass the Shockley-Queisser limit and use more solar energy, and thus improve the cells' efficiency, but this has been easier said than done.

South Korean physicist Young Hee Lee has said carrier multiplication and hot carrier extraction are two promising pathways. In the former, a cell allows a photon to create multiple electron-hole pairs. The latter aims to quickly capture photons with 'too much' energy before they dissipate as heat.

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