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Jaipur	English Medium 17 May 8 AM	हिंदी माध्यम 8 मई शाम 5:30 बजे
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WORLD » PAGE 14



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BUSINESS » PAGE 13

Come clean on timing of Kejriwal arrest: SC to ED

Bench tells the agency that 'life and liberty' is very important; Delhi Chief Minister's petition argues that the action came just before Lok Sabha election in order to crush the Opposition

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) would have to justify the timing of the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the excise policy case on March 21, barely a week after the Model Code of Conduct for the Lok Sabha election came into force.

A Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta wound up the second consecutive day of hearings in a petition filed by Mr. Kejriwal, on his fifth furlough of remand till May 7, with a parting shot at the Central agency.

"Life and liberty is very important. We cannot deny that," Justice Khanna reminded Additional Solicitor



Calling on: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann leaves after meeting Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal in Tihar Jail on Tuesday. ANI

General S.V. Raju, who will open the ED's counter arguments on May 3.

Justice Khanna said the Central agency has to address the court "on the timing of his [Mr. Kejriwal's] arrest before the elections".

The court's insistence that the agency should ad-

dress the issue was significant as the Delhi Chief Minister has based his petition on the argument that his arrest was timed to crush the Opposition ahead of the general election.

Mr. Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) he heads have portrayed the

ED as a "tool" for the ruling BJP.

"What was so imminent about my arrest? Was I a hardened criminal or a terrorist who would run away... So, did you leave a guilty Chief Minister to roam free all these years?" senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, appearing for the Chief Minister, had argued on Monday.

The ED has maintained that the arrest was based on material evidence. "Criminal" politicians cannot expect immunity from arrest on the grounds that they want to campaign for elections, the agency had retorted in an 87-page affidavit.

CONTINUED ON

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POLL TIME, PRISON TIME

» PAGE 6

SC slams IMA chief's remarks about court

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Tables turned on Tuesday when the Supreme Court took stern exception to comments reportedly made by Indian Medical Association (IMA) president R.V. Asokan in an interview about the court's criticism of practices of private doctors.

"After all this, you do this? The IMA has not covered itself with glory... How can you decide which way we [Supreme Court] should go?" Justice Hima Kohli asked the IMA lawyers.

The media interview of Mr. Asokan was brought to the attention of a Bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah by Patanjali Ayurved's lawyer, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi.

The contempt proceedings against Patanjali Ayurved, its co-founder Baba Ramdev and his close associate Acharya Balkrishna

Patanjali case: SC chides State body

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Tuesday expressed dissatisfaction at the Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority, saying it only "woke up" and moved against Patanjali Ayurved and its co-founder Baba Ramdev after the top court intervened and passed orders. » PAGE 10

were initiated in a petition filed by the IMA.

Meanwhile, the court "appreciated" the second round of unconditional apologies published by Patanjali, Ramdev and Balkrishna in over 300 newspapers.

However, the court ordered them to file the original pages of the newspapers in which the apology was published.

CONTINUED ON

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IN BRIEF



2 more held over doctored video of Amit Shah

NEW DELHI
Two more persons, political functionaries from AAP and the Congress, were arrested on Tuesday in Gujarat for allegedly posting a doctored video of Union Minister Amit Shah's April 23 speech. A day ago, Assam Police arrested Reetam Singh, a lawyer at the Gauhati HC working as the Congress's Assam war room coordinator. » Page 10

OPPORTUNITIES » PAGE 5

JD(S) suspends Prajwal; SIT issues notices to him, father

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Janata Dal (Secular) on Tuesday suspended Prajwal Revanna, the party's MP in Hassan who has been accused of sexually exploiting several women. In the letter announcing his suspension, the party stated that the videos of the Hassan MP doing the rounds have "caused considerable damage to party's dignity and leadership".

The decision was announced after party's core committee meeting in Hubballi which was scheduled to chalk out the poll strate-



Protesters burn a poster of JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna in Bengaluru on Tuesday. PTI

gy for the second phase of elections in Karnataka. The meeting was attended by State JD(S) president H.D. Kumaraswamy, his uncle.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged sex scandal also issued notices to Mr. Prajwal and his father, former Mi-

nister H.D. Revanna. The father and son have been asked to appear before the SIT. Sources said they may move court seeking anticipatory bail. The notice has been issued in the sexual harassment case registered on April 28 in which a former cook at the Revanna household lodged a complaint that the father-son duo had sexually harassed her while she worked there.

The notice attains significance as Mr. Prajwal is not in the country and is said to have flown to Europe on April 27, hours before the State government decided to form an SIT.

BJP govt. eliminates terrorists on their home turf, says PM Modi

Shoumojit Banerjee
PUNE

For the second time in two days, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Union government eliminated terrorists by entering their home turf, in stark contrast to the previous Congress-led UPA regime. The UPA government, he said, had merely compiled and sent dossiers on the terror attacks to neighbouring Pakistan.

Addressing a poll rally in Latur district in the Maharashtra region, Mr. Modi mocked the alleged ineffectiveness of previous Congress-led governments. "During the Congress regime, news headlines used to be about India handing over another dossier to Pa-



Narendra Modi being felicitated by Eknath Shinde and Devendra Fadnis at Latur in Maharashtra on Tuesday. ANI

kistan about terror activities and terrorists. It used to be big news. Some of our friends in the media used to clap after any such dossier was sent," he remarked, commenting on the situation after the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.

Claiming that it was his government that had made the country safe and secure, the PM said: "Today, India does not dispatch

dossiers, but we eliminate terrorists on their home turf. The headlines in the 'New Bharat' read: 'Mission LoC, India punishes Pakistan through surgical strikes.'

Mr. Modi was campaigning for NDA candidates for the Latur, Dharashiv (formerly Osmanabad), and Madha (in Solapur) Lok Sabha seats, which go to the polls on May 7 in the

third phase. The PM resurrected the issue of the Opposition Congress's alleged plan to introduce an inheritance tax if it comes to power. A political row erupted recently after Sam Pitroda, chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, mentioned about inheritance tax, a system similar to an existing tax structure in the U.S., and described it as an "interesting law".

Addressing a rally at Malshiras in Madha, the PM launched a broadside against Nationalist Congress Party (SP) president Sharad Pawar, saying that the time had come "to punish him" for not keeping his promise made in 2009 to bring water to Solapur district, which faces acute scarcity. Mr. Pawar had contested and won the Madha seat in 2009.

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PROCLAMATION REGARDING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT

(Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Sh. Deepanker Mohan, Additional District Judge-04, District: Shahdara, Room No. 306, 3rd Floor, New Building, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi-110032

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...DEFENDANTS

The Defendants above named WHEREAS you are intentionally evading service of summons it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on 07.05.2024 the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex-parte.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Court, this 19-02-2024

Additional District Judge-04 Shahdara District Karkardooma Courts, Delhi-110032

PERSONAL CHANGE OF NAME

I, MADHURI M/o Madhur Yadav No - 15757166Y Rank - Sigm, R/o Vill- Ruchhai post - Bajora Teh - Deori - Sagar State - Madhya Pradesh PIN - 470226. Have changed my name from Madhuri to Madhuri Ya. dav.

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Excise case: court denies bail to Sisodia

CBI terms former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister 'architect' of alleged scam; court says 'stage not right' for relief to AAP leader

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A court here on Tuesday rejected bail pleas of former Deputy Chief Minister and senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Manish Sisodia in the corruption and money laundering cases linked to the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy.

Special Judge Kaveri Ba-weja declined both the pe-

Sisodia has been in jail for over 14 months, and was denied bail earlier too

titions, saying the "stage was not right" for it.

Mr. Sisodia was arrested by the Central probe agencies in February last year. This is the second time that the trial court has rejected the bail pleas of Mr. Siso-

dia. His bail was first rejected on March 31, 2023.

The Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court had upheld the trial court's order.

'Mastermind of scam' During the hearing on his bail applications, the CBI had submitted in the court that Mr. Sisodia is the "mastermind" and "architect" of the alleged scam. Zoheb Hossain, the ED

counsel, told the court that the Delhi excise policy was meant to be an "evergreen vehicle" to accumulate illegal gains.

The counsel representing the AAP leader argued that he has been in jail for over 14 months now and the trial going on for an indefinite time.

The case against Mr. Sisodia is based on an FIR registered by the CBI on the complaint of the Delhi

Lieutenant-Governor, alleging irregularities in the excise policy for 2021-22, which was subsequently withdrawn.

After the CBI case, the ED lodged a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, alleging that the money earned through the policy was diverted through "hawala" channels for the AAP's campaign in the 2022 Goa Assembly poll.

2020 riots case: charges framed against Ishrat Jahan

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has formally framed charges, including that of attempt to murder, against former Congress councillor Ishrat Jahan, activist Khalid Saifi, and 11 others in a 2020 north-east Delhi riots case, paving the way for a trial.

The case pertains to an alleged rioting incident during the communal violence on February 26, 2020, in Jagat Puri.

According to the chargesheet, a riotous mob, including the 13 accused, refused to follow the Delhi police's direction to disperse, threw stones, and assaulted police officers while obstructing them in performing their duties, and also fired a gunshot at a head constable.

जल संसाधन विभाग
कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
बाढ़ नियंत्रण प्रमंडल, नवगछिया

पत्रांक-353/नवगछिया

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Department of Women and Child Development
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MISSING CHILDREN

Sr. No.	Description	Photograph
1	Era (name given by agency) Female child, aged about one month old, Wheatish complexion, child and her mother named Guidya found an attended at New Delhi Railway station and were admitted in the hospital. After that Mother Guidya discharged and kept with an NGO via order of CWC-III and child was kept with Delhi Council for Child Welfare /PALNA via order of Child Welfare Committee-III on 22/11/2023. Case lodged at P.S. New Delhi Railway Station DD No:3142/23 dated 22/11/2022. At the time of arrival she was wrapped in a orange and yellow baby blanket. Low birth weight baby.	
2	Alfez (name told by child) male child, aged about 7 years old, Wheatish complexion, child found missing at Old Delhi Railway Station along with his two younger sibling sisters. After that children were produced before the Child Welfare Committee-III, and then transferred to Delhi Council for Child Welfare /PALNA via order of CWC-III on 13/12/2023 Case has lodged at P.S. Kashmere Gate, GD no: 0075 dated on 12/12/23. At the time of arrival child was wearing warm half sleeve T-shirt, blue denim jeans and black jacket. Older child, Alfiza, Aafia and Alfez three of them are siblings.	
3	Alfiza (name given by her elder brother Alfez) female child, aged about 4 years old, wheatish complexion, child was found missing at Old Delhi Railway Station along with her siblings. After that children were produced before the Child Welfare Committee-III, and then transferred to Delhi Council for Child Welfare /PALNA via order of CWC-III on 13/12/2023 Case has lodged at P.S. Kashmere Gate, GD no: 0075 dated on 12/12/23. At the time of arrival child was wearing red gray color T-shirt, white frock with pink color pant and full warm sweater. Alfiza, Aafia and Alfez three of them are siblings.	
4	Aafia (name given by her elder brother) female child, aged about 2 years old, wheatish complexion, child was found missing at Old Delhi Railway Station along with her siblings. After that children were produced before the Child Welfare Committee-III, and then transferred to Delhi Council for Child Welfare /PALNA via order of CWC-III on 13/12/2022 Case has lodged at P.S. Kashmere Gate GD no: 0075 dated on 12/12/23. At the time of arrival child was wearing Tom and Jerry printed green T-shirt, Pink colored printed white frock and light sky blue colored full sweater. Alfiza, Aafia and Alfez three of them are siblings.	
5	Avyank (name given by agency) male child, aged about 15 days old wheatish complexion, child was found abandoned in the train at Old Delhi Railway station and then transferred to Delhi Council for Child Welfare/PALNA on 16/01/2024 via order of CWC-III. Case has lodged at P.S. Old Delhi Railway station vide GDNo: 0018 A dated on 16/01/24. At the time of arrival child was wearing sleeveless front open cream brown colored T-shirt and woolen cap, yellow blue red woolen full sweater and wrapped in a white sheet.	
6	Khyan (Name given by agency) male child, approx 7 days old wheatish complexion, child was found abandoned in the Cradle placed at the gates of an our Institution Delhi Council for Child Welfare/PALNA on 17/02/24 Child was produced before the committee and kept the child Delhi Council for Child Welfare/PALNA on 17/02/2024 via order of CWC-III. DD entry lodged at P.S. Civil Lines GDNo: 0043A dated on 19/02/24. At the time of arrival child was wearing Gray colored gem suit wrapped in a printed cream colored cotton sheet. Very low birth weight baby.	
7	Rajkumar (name told by minor) male child, approx 5 years old, wheatish complexion, child was found abandoned at GPO chotta road at Kashmaere Gate and transferred to Delhi Council for Child Welfare/PALNA on 22/02/24 via order of CWC-III, Kingsway Camp, Delhi. DD entry lodged at P.S. Kashmere Gate, GDNo: 0081 A dated on 21/02/24. At the time of arrival child was wearing Gray colored gem suit wrapped in a printed cream colored cotton sheet. Very low birth weight baby.	

Note: Parents/Guardians/Relatives of SL.No. 1 & 2 in case of above mentioned children may contact at address/phone numbers given at SL.No.1 & 2 given below-

1. Incharge: Delhi Council for Child Welfare (PALNA), Qudsia Bagh, Yamuna Marg, Civil Lines, Delhi-54 Contact No. 011-23944655/011-23968907

2. District Child Protection Unit- Central, Sewa Kutir Complex, Kingsway Camp, Delhi-110009.

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QUIZ

1. Who among the following is not eligible to vote?

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3. According to Article 324(2) of the Constitution of India, who has the authority to appoint the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioners?

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NBEMS DIPLOMA FINAL THEORY EXAMINATION - June 2024

NOTICE

National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) shall conduct the NBEMS Diploma Final Theory Examinations on 14, 15 and 16 June 2024.

Please refer to the Information Bulletin at NBEMS website <https://natboard.edu.in> for eligibility criteria, fee structure, scheme of examination and other details.

Important Dates

Online Submission of the Application Form (Theory & Practical)	30 th April 2024 (3 PM Onwards) to 20 th May 2024 (Till 11:55 PM)
Date of Theory Examination	14 th , 15 th and 16 th June 2024
Last Date for submission of "Only Practical Examination" applications	31 st July 2024

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• Helpline Portal on applicant login page
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FOREIGN MEDICAL GRADUATE EXAMINATION - JUNE 2024

NOTICE

National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) shall conduct the next FMGE on 6th July 2024.

Please refer to the Information Bulletin at NBEMS website <https://natboard.edu.in> for details pertaining to eligibility criteria, fee structure, scheme of examination and other details.

Important Dates

Online Submission of the Application Form	29 th April 2024 (1 PM Onwards) to 20 th May 2024 (Till 11:55 PM)
Date of Examination	6 th July 2024
Declaration of the Result	By 6 th August 2024

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SL No.-01, Name of work: Provision of 25 KV Electrical work in connection to removal of infringement due to construction of FOBs under Amrit Bharat Vojana at SV Station in BSB Division of North Eastern Railway.

Tender reference no.: SrDEE-TRD-BSB-2024-25-T05, Approx. Cost (in Rs.): ₹ 1,16,58,039.96, Earnest Money (in Rs.): ₹ 2,08,300/-, Cost of Tender documents (in Rs.): Nil, E-Tender closing date and time: 21-05-2024 up to 14:45 Hrs., Completion period: 04 Months.

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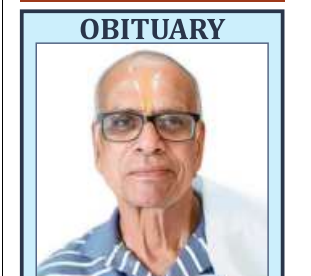
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DONATE EYES - GIFT SIGHT

AAP, Cong. leaders hold first strategy meet after declaring LS poll tie-up

Joint poll road map to be fixed over next 2 days; more interactions among party leaders on cards; Mann meets Kejriwal, says AAP chief told him to ensure party workers attend all INDIA bloc events

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Senior leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Congress on Tuesday held their first campaign strategy meeting after announcing their alliance in Delhi in February this year. As part of their seat-sharing arrangement, AAP is fighting on four seats, while Congress is contesting on the other three. Voting for Delhi's seven Lok Sabha seats is scheduled for May 25. AAP and Congress have also joined forces in Haryana, where they are fighting on one and nine seats, respectively.

A senior Delhi Congress leader said both parties had agreed to finalise a joint poll road map over the next two days. The leaders also agreed to meet regularly to take stock of the ground situation and "fully activate ground-level workers to defeat the BJP in all seven Lok Sabha seats of Delhi and 10 seats



Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann said AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal asked him to actively campaign for all INDIA bloc candidates. FILE PHOTO

of Haryana".

Leaders who attended the meeting included Deepak Babaria, All India Congress Committee general secretary and party in-charge of Delhi and Haryana; Sandeep Pathak, AAP's general secretary (organisation); and Devender Yadav, newly appointed Delhi Congress interim chief. Sources said the prospects of the candidates in Delhi and Haryana were discussed at the meeting.

The meeting comes two

days after former Delhi Congress chief Arvinder Singh Lovely, in his resignation letter, said local party workers were not in favour of a tie-up with AAP, which, he said, was "formed on the sole basis of levelling fabricated corruption charges against the Congress party".

'Campaign actively'
Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann met his Delhi counterpart and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal in Ti-

har Jail on Tuesday. This was Mr. Mann's second visit to see the jailed Delhi CM in a fortnight. Speaking to mediapersons after his visit, Mr. Mann said the AAP chief had asked him to actively campaign for all Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc candidates in the general election. "He told me that wherever there is an INDIA bloc programme, be it in Assam, Gujarat, Maharashtra, U.P. or Bihar, our leaders must attend it," Mr. Mann added.

Meanwhile, senior AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj on Tuesday said the party's Rajya Sabha member Raghav Chadha will join the election campaign as soon as he recovers from an eye operation.

"It is said that his [Mr. Chadha's] condition was serious and there was a possibility of blindness. As soon as he gets better, he will come back to India and join us," Mr. Bharadwaj told a news agency.

Vacancies at rights panel: HC seeks govt. response

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The High Court on Tuesday asked the Delhi government to respond to a plea seeking directions to fill the vacant positions of the chairperson and other members of the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR).

The court also issued notices to the DCPCR and the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development on the petition filed by the National Child Development Council, which said that the DCPCR has been functioning without a chief since July 2, 2023 illegally. It said that as per rules, a vacancy caused by death, resignation or any other reason must be filled by nomination within 90 days from the date of such occurrence.

The court listed the matter for further hearing on July 16.

Cong. picks Devender Yadav as interim chief of Delhi unit; party a 'sinking ship', says BJP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday appointed Devender Yadav as the interim chief of the party's Delhi unit, two days after Arvinder Singh Lovely resigned from the post citing his inability to continue without a free hand.

Mr. Lovely's resignation had come as a shock to the Congress, which is hoping to revive its fortunes in the Capital, where it has not been able to win any of the seven Lok Sabha seats since 2014. The resignation also brought to the fore resentment within a section of the Congress over the seat-sharing pact with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the decision to give tickets to "outsiders", such as Udit Raj, a BJP turncoat, and Kanhaiya Kumar, overlooking the local leaders.



Devender Yadav is currently the AICC in-charge of Punjab. PTI

Mr. Yadav is a former MLA from Delhi's Badli and the AICC in-charge for Punjab. Thanking the Congress leadership, Mr. Yadav said his priority will be to bridge the rift within the party.

'Will listen to all'
He said, "The only solution is to listen to everyone. There are many senior leaders in the Delhi unit who have worked hard for the party. Some of them

have spoken openly, others I will meet soon."

AICC treasurer Ajay Maken termed Mr. Yadav's appointment the "right choice". In a post on X, Mr. Maken said without taking any name, "In politics, things don't always go our way. Sometimes, our desires remain unfulfilled, our voices unheard. Yet, does this justify undermining the very organisation that defines our political identity? Should we repeatedly inflict harm on our organisation for personal gains?"

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said the Congress in Delhi is a "sinking ship". "The local Congress leaders want to revive the party, but its central leadership wants the Delhi unit to play second fiddle to [CM] Arvind Kejriwal, who had, in 2013, pushed the Congress out of power," he said.

LS poll: BJP's Bansuri Swaraj, AAP's Sahi Ram Pehelwan file nomination papers on Day 2

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

BJP's New Delhi candidate Bansuri Swaraj and Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) South Delhi candidate Sahi Ram Pehelwan on Tuesday filed their nomination papers for the Lok Sabha election on Tuesday.

According to the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer, over 30 candidates filed their papers on the second day of nominations for the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi, where voting is slated for May 25, in the sixth phase of the general election.

The last day for filing papers is May 6, and the nominations can be withdrawn by May 9. The papers will be scrutinised on May 7.



BJP candidate Bansuri Swaraj on her way to file nomination papers. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Before filing her nomination papers, Ms. Swaraj took part in a *havan*. Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva were among those who accompanied her to the District Magistrate's office.

Ms. Bansuri, daughter of the late BJP leader Sushma

Swaraj, in her affidavit declared assets totalling over ₹19 crore, including ₹11.27 crore in movable assets and over ₹8 crore in immovable assets, in her election affidavit.

Mr. Pehelwan, who is the first among the INDIA bloc candidates to file his nomination, started his day with a visit to a temple. He embarked on an 8-km "Ashirwad Yatra" that culminated at the District Magistrate's office in Mehrauli.

AAP leaders Saurabh Bharadwaj and Atishi accompanied him, along with party MLAs and supporters. According to his affidavit, AAP's South Delhi candidate owns movable assets worth ₹34.80 lakh and ₹1.04 crore in immovable assets.

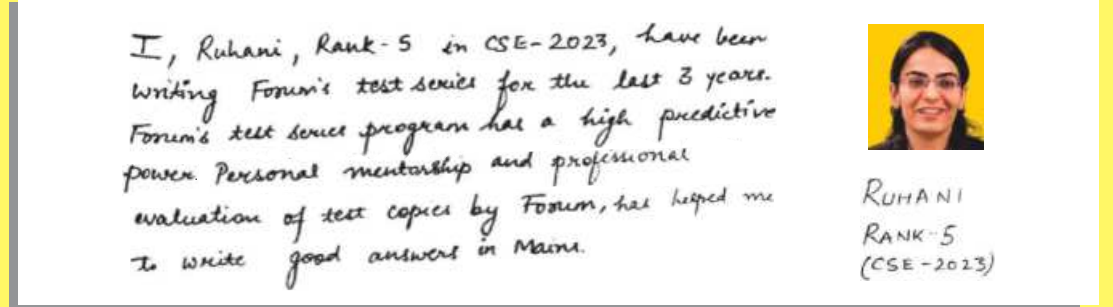
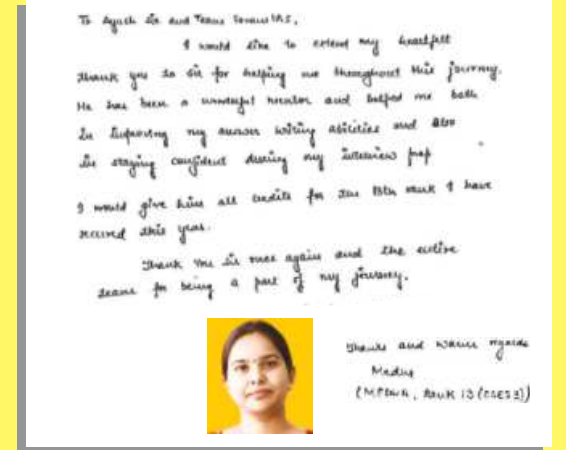
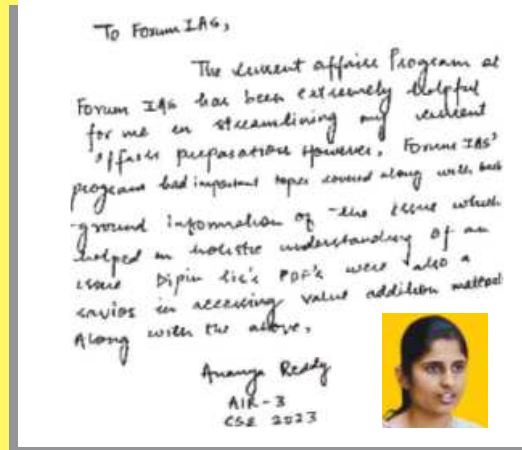
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Ruhani, Medha, Ayushi and Chandana have secured Ranks 5, 13, 36 and 50 this year. And that they will be adding the three letter - IAS to their names.

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RISE 05:40 SET 18:58
RISE 01:50 SET 12:45

FRIDAY, MAY. 03
RISE 05:39 SET 18:58
RISE 02:27 SET 13:52

Delhi Weather

	max	min
Delhi City	36	22
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Palam	37	22

Delhi Palam Today
39°C A dry weather to prevail. Morning will be pleasant. Day will be hot and uneasy with gusty winds. Night also will be comfortable.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
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IN BRIEF



Piyush Goyal files nomination from Mumbai North LS seat

Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday filed his nomination papers from the Mumbai North Lok Sabha seat. Accompanied by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Mr. Goyal submitted his papers before the returning officer in Bandra. This is the first time that Mr. Goyal is contesting the Lok Sabha poll. He is currently the Leader of House in the Rajya Sabha. Talking to reporters, Mr. Goyal claimed the Congress is a "failed" party without any leadership or policy. The Congress has so far not announced any candidate from the Mumbai North seat. Mr. Shinde said Mr. Goyal's victory is assured. PTI

U.P. govt. to establish cyber police stations in 57 districts

The Uttar Pradesh government will establish cyber police stations in 57 districts after the Lok Sabha poll with each police station having 25 posts for officers and employees. The government plans to create a total of 1,425 posts in the designated 57 police stations. "The State government, in response to the rising incidents of cybercrime nationally and globally, has decided to establish cyber police stations across all 75 districts. While cyber stations are already operational in 18 divisions, it will be established in the remaining 57 districts following the Lok Sabha poll," reads a U.P. govt. statement.

Raj Babbar is Cong. LS candidate from Gurgaon, Anand Sharma from Kangra

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM/CHANDIGARH

The Congress on Tuesday named actor-turned politician Raj Babbar as its candidate for the Gurgaon Lok Sabha seat. In its latest list of candidates for the ongoing parliamentary election, the party has named former Union Minister Anand Sharma as the candidate from Kangra in Himachal Pradesh, while former Una MLA Satpal Raizada will contest from Hamirpur. Congress leader Bhushan Patil is the party's candidate from Mumbai North (Maharashtra).

Mr. Babbar, who has earlier been the party's Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MP from Uttar Pradesh, is pitted against Ahirwal leader Rao Inderjit Singh, who had quit the Congress to join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2014.



Raj Babbar

Soon after the announcement, All India Congress Committee Other Backward Classes department chairman Capt. Ajay Singh Yadav, who was also in the race for this seat, posted on X that "there is a deep-rooted conspiracy of a few Haryana Congress leaders to crush the senior Congress leaders", hinting at infighting within the party. The former Minister, however, added that he would abide by the decision of the party leadership.

Of the 10 Lok Sabha seats



Anand Sharma

in Haryana, the Congress is contesting on nine. The candidates for the rest of the eight seats were announced last week. In the remaining seat of Kurukshetra, AAP's State unit president Sushil Gupta is the joint INDIA bloc candidate.

The Kangra call

In Himachal Pradesh, the party's decision to field Mr. Sharma from Kangra is being seen as a strategic move to unite the State unit as it is likely to paper over the cracks that deepened fol-

lowing the defeat of Abhishek Singhvi - the official Congress candidate in the recent Rajya Sabha elections - due to cross-voting by six MLAs.

Party insiders are optimistic that with Mr. Sharma in the fray against the BJP's Rajeev Bhardwaj, the Congress cadre and State unit leaders will be united.

The former Union Minister is seen as a 'tall leader' who can bond with both party workers and leaders. "The decision to field Anand Sharma will strengthen the party across the State," said Naresh Chauhan, principal media adviser to Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu. Mr. Raizada, meanwhile, will take on Union Minister Anurag Thakur of the BJP.

In Maharashtra, Mr. Patil will take on Union Minister Piyush Goyal of the BJP.



If there is a legate to Chandigarh, it is me, says Manish Tewari, the Congress candidate from this LS seat. FILE PHOTO

which resonates very strongly with the people because they have seen it unfolding right before their eyes... this was only a trailer of what is in store for us.

Why Chandigarh?

I have represented Ludhiana (Punjab) in the past, I represent the adjoining constituency of Sri Anandpur Sahib; I think I have acquitted myself fairly over the five years. It was the party's decision to shift me to

Chandigarh. I too wanted to serve the city where I was born, went to school, college, and university, where my father was assassinated by terrorists on April 3, 1984, and where my mother spent her entire working life. There is an intrinsic connection that I have with the city. And incidentally, I am perhaps the only candidate since 1967, when Chandigarh started having a Lok Sabha election, who was actually born in this ci-

'Was democracy not under threat when Cong. candidates were elected unopposed?'

Mehul Malpani
MORENA

The Congress will "become extinct like the dinosaurs" in the coming years, Union Defence Minister and senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh said in Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday.

"Just as dinosaurs became extinct from all over the world, I think the Congress will also become extinct. After years, if their names are mentioned in front of children, then the children will also ask what is Congress," Mr. Singh said at a rally in Badwani of the Khargone Lok Sabha constituency.

The Minister's remarks came a day after Congress candidate from Indore, Akshay Kanti Bam, withdrew his nomination and



Defence Minister and senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh.

joined the BJP. Mr. Singh rubbished the Congress' allegations that democracy in the country was "under threat" and said Congress candidates had been elected unopposed about 20 times in the past.

"The Surat Lok Sabha BJP candidate has been elected unopposed. The Congress candidate from

Tejashwi accuses BJP of protecting JD(S) MP Prajwal

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday accused the BJP of protecting Prajwal Revanna, the Janata Dal (Secular) MP from Hassan, who is embroiled in the Karnataka sexual harassment case. Videos, allegedly recorded by the MP, had been doing rounds in Hassan ahead of the election.

Attacking the JD(S), which is the BJP's ally in Karnataka, Mr. Yadav said the BJP provided a safe passage to Mr. Revanna to escape to Germany. The former Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar questioned the silence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the issue saying Mr. Modi also remained silent on the Manipur violence and protest by women wrestlers against alleged sexual abuse.

"Our 2,500 sisters were exploited in Karnataka. Who is the one responsible for it, the alliance partner of the BJP. We came to know that he has escaped to Germany now," Mr. Yadav said at Patna airport.

The JD(S) has suspended Mr. Revanna from the



RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav.

party. The Hassan MP is the grandson of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda and the nephew of former Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy.

Lashing out at the BJP, Mr. Yadav said, "The Prime Minister gave the slogan 'Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao' and he was campaigning for the same party two to three days back. What is going on? Why is the Prime Minister and Amit Shah not speaking anything over the issue? The slogan has now become *Balatkari ko bachao, balatkari ko bhagao* (save the rapist, let the rapist flee)."

Earlier in the day, RJD Rajya Sabha member Manojha released the party's theme song for the Lok Sabha election titled 'Apna Tejashwi'.

Cong. woes continue in M.P., party MLA joins BJP

Press Trust of India
BHOPAL

Senior Congress leader and sitting Madhya Pradesh MLA Ramniwas Rawat on Tuesday joined the BJP, in a fresh blow to the Opposition party a day after its Indore Lok Sabha seat candidate withdrew his nomination.

Mr. Rawat (64) joined the BJP in the presence of Chief Minister Mohan Yadav at a rally in Sheopur district, the day when Congress MP Rahul Gandhi was in neighbouring Bhand to address an election gathering.

Besides Mr. Rawat, Morena mayor Sharda Solanki also joined the BJP. Sheopur is part of the Morena Lok Sabha seat where polling will be held in the third phase on May 7.

'Sole objective of fighting this election is to save and redeem the soul of the nation'

The Congress candidate for the Chandigarh Lok Sabha seat says what happened during the recent mayoral elections was only a trailer of things to come if the BJP comes back to power at the Centre

INTERVIEW

Manish Tewari

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

As the Union Territory of Chandigarh, the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana, goes to poll on June 1, Congress candidate Manish Tewari, a former Union Minister and currently a Member of Parliament from Punjab's Anandpur Sahib constituency, is toiling to wrest the seat from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In an interview with *The Hindu*, Mr. Tewari, a two-time MP, says that the 2024 Lok Sabha poll is an existential election for India. Edited excerpts:

How do you see the 2024 Lok Sabha poll?

This is an existential election for India. I am firmly convinced that this could be the last election in this country, if those who are in power at the Centre were to succeed, which, given the ground reality, looks difficult at this point in time. This is an election that I am fighting to protect democracy, to protect the Constitution of India... they [the BJP leaders] have been very explicit about their intentions that they would scrap the Constitution and replace it with something of their own.

In Chandigarh, people witnessed what happened during the mayoral elections. Someone had the vote, and someone else became the Mayor. And the Supreme Court had to exercise its extraordinary jurisdiction under Article 142 to preserve democracy in general. So this is something

meeting that has sent a positive message.

Within the Congress there are contradictory voices. For example, on inheritance tax, wealth redistribution, caste census etc. What's your take?

The Congress's position is spelled out in its manifesto, which is the last authoritative word as far as the party is concerned. Yes, we don't follow a regimented-Hitlerian discipline, where people don't articulate their point of views, but those are personal views.

The Congress is fighting in alliance with AAP in Chandigarh, but contesting against it in Punjab. How difficult is it to convince people of this contradiction? It is not as much of a contradiction. Historically, we

have been fighting polls against the Left in Kerala but we have been cooperating at the national level. Even in West Bengal, we fought against the Trinamool Congress but cooperated at the national level. In north India, it's a new experiment. During my campaign, I explained to the people why we are fighting together here [in Chandigarh] and separately there [in Punjab]. The sole objective of [fighting] this election is to save and redeem the soul of the nation.

The voting percentage has been relatively low in the first phase of Lok Sabha poll...

More people need to come out and vote. But a low turnout does not necessarily reflect pro-incumbency. It is reflective of a fatigue with the incumbent national government. People who sup-

ported the government previously are not coming out in large numbers.

To strengthen the city's public transport, would you push for a metro rail service, which was offered by BJP MP Kirron Kher?

In 2019, when I was an MP from Sri Anandpur Sahib, I had written to Union Minister of Roads and Highways Nitin Gadkari, suggesting a Mass Rapid Transit System (MRTS) from Ambala to Landran to Panchkula. The reason I suggested such a wide expanse was that it would harness the created potential of the Tricity [Chandigarh-Panchkula-Mohali]. More importantly, it would bring financial viability as well for the project. The solution to exponentially growing traffic is an efficient and efficacious MRTS.

PM's speech slow as he is frustrated: Kharge

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

Criticising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent remarks on an array of topics — from wealth tax to the consumption of non-vegetarian food during Hindu festivals — Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday said that Mr. Modi was speaking out of “frustration”.

“Everybody is saying the Congress will get big majority in first two phases, hence Modi *sahab* is writhing, the land beneath his [Mr. Modi's] feet is shaking, and out of frustration, he is abusing us, speaking on *mangalsutra*, Mughals, Muslims, to even mutton and chicken,” Mr. Kharge said in his public speech at Janjgir-Champa in Chhattisgarh on Tuesday.

The references cited by the Congress president

pertained to the content of Mr. Modi's campaign speeches.

Countering the claims, the 81-year-old leader said that Muslims were Indians, and appealed to the gathering to not be misled by the BJP and, instead, build the country together.

Referring to another of Mr. Modi's recent statements on the *mangalsutra* of women being taken away as part of a wealth survey, he said that his party had only been speaking of a census for the backward classes.

“The Congress ruled India for 55 years, but did we ever steal anyone's *mangalsutra*?” he said.

He said the PM spoke of ‘*sabka saath sabka vikas*’, but while he took *saath* (support) of everyone, he did not do any *vikas* (development).

“The Congress ruled India for 55 years, but did we ever steal anyone's *mangalsutra*?” he said.

Bengaluru region witnesses driest April in last 41 years

City regularly gets pre-monsoon showers in April; however, this year, IMD observatory recorded zero mm of rainfall; 12 districts, including Bengaluru Urban, in the grip of huge rainfall deficiency

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU

With the pre-monsoon showers eluding Bengaluru, the city has witnessed the driest April in the last four decades.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) observatory recorded zero mm of rainfall during the month. This was last observed in 1983. Since then, there has been rainfall in April every year.

“In 1983, we did not record any rain in April. Since then, we have had rain/light rainfall in April. After 1983, this is the first year when we have not had any rainfall, making this



Mercury surging: A fruit vendor sets up an umbrella to protect her as Bengaluru experienced a surge in temperature. AFP

April the driest in the last 41 years,” IMD officials said. On April 19 and 20, some parts of the city received a light drizzle, the first in 2024. However, the IMD's observation data recorded at 5.30 p.m. on April 19 stated that the three stations — Bengaluru

City, Kempegowda International Airport, and HAL airport — received zero mm rainfall.

Likewise, on April 20, Bengaluru city recorded zero mm rainfall and the two other stations recorded trace (less than 0.2 mm) rainfall. According to the

Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre's (KSNDMC) district-wise cumulative rainfall recorded between April 1 and 30, 12 districts, including Bengaluru Urban, saw large rainfall deficiency during this period. As per the data, six districts had a deficiency in rainfall.

As per KSNDMC's pre-monsoon rainfall pattern-2024 recorded between March 1 and April 30, one district received no rainfall, 12 districts received significant deficit rainfall, eight districts received deficit rainfall, eight districts received normal rainfall, and two districts received excess rainfall.

No quota for Muslims as long as I am alive, says Modi

The Hindu Bureau
ZAHAEERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Tuesday that as long as he “is alive, he will not allow the Indian Constitution-mandated reservation for the SC/STs and BCs to be distributed to the Muslims”.

“The Constitution makers led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had decided against religion-based quota and made it only for the SC/ST/BCs. But the Congress party and its ‘prince’ [Rahul Gandhi], are undermining

the Indian Constitution by snatching the rights of the marginalised sections by bringing quota for the Muslims through the backdoor for their vote-bank politics,” he said.

Addressing a public meeting at Zaheerabad in Telangana, Mr. Modi affirmed in an emotional tone, that his commitment and respect to the Indian Constitution is total.

Beginning his marathon hour-long speech in Telugu — *Na Telangana kutumba sabhyulandariki namaskaramulu* (Greetings to my



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy and other leaders in Zaheerabad, Telangana, on Tuesday. PTI

Telangana family members), he also announced that the 75th anniversary of the Indian Constitution will be celebrated with

“pomp and gaiety” throughout the country during his third term, where he will also “expose” the Congress party's

efforts to “insult” and “poke holes” into it under its rule.

Attacks Rahul

He blasted Mr. Gandhi without mentioning his name, but calling him ‘*shehzada*’, for tearing a Cabinet note prepared by the Manmohan Singh government in front of the media showing “utter disregard to constitutional propriety”. “He [Rahul Gandhi] is now talking of protecting the Constitution from us? It is a holy book to me equal to the Gita, Bible

or the Koran,” he declared.

“Everything is fine as long as they [Congress] are in power or else they will obstruct Parliament, question the Election Commission and EVMs for vote bank politics. They are out to defame the Constitution and will go to any extent,” he said.

Mr. Modi accused the party of believing in five principles — “lies, vote bank politics, mafia/anti-social elements, corruption and dynasty politics” symbolising the five fingers of the hand.

Modi, Shah bent on doing away with Constitution: Rahul

Mehul Malpani
MORENA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made up his mind that if the BJP wins the Lok Sabha election, they will “tear up and throw away” the Constitution, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said in Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday.

“The Prime Minister, [Union Home Minister] Amit Shah and various MPs of theirs have made up their mind that if they win the elections, they will tear up and throw away this book,” Mr. Gandhi said, holding a copy of the Constitution while addressing a rally in Bhind Lok Sabha constituency in the Gwalior-Chambal region.

“This is the fight. Whatever growth has happened in the nation, whatever the poor have gotten whether its under MGNREGA, Land Acquisition Bill, white revolution, will all vanish. The BJP wants this book to be thrown away and the nation to be run by 20-25 billionaires,” he said, adding that all of people's rights such as reservation are due to the Constitution.

“The democracy that has given voice to the poor, Dalits, backwards, tribals and the poor general caste, all this will end if this book is finished,” he added.

Mr. Gandhi, who has been alleging that the BJP wants to end the reservation, asked if the BJP is not against it then why is it privatising the PSUs, Rail



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi holds the Constitution at a rally in Bhind, Madhya Pradesh, on Tuesday. PTI

ways and other sectors. He also hit out at the BJP-led Centre over the Agnipath scheme for recruitment in the Armed Forces.

“Imagine sending two people to war, telling one of them that if anything happens to you, we will protect your family. And telling the other *jawan*, if anything happens to you, you will not get any pension or help. You will not even get the status of martyr. Modiji has insulted the Army,” said Mr. Gandhi as he targeted the youth of the Gwalior-Chambal region. The region, which has a significant number of aspirants to the forces, had seen massive protests against the scheme.

The Congress has fielded MLA Phool Singh Baraiya from Bhind against BJP's sitting MP and candidate Sandhya Rai.

Apart from Bhind, Mr. Gandhi's rally is also likely to have an impact on two neighbouring seats — Morena and Gwalior.

ENTERPRISE CONNECT

Farmer's Son inspires millions: ALLENite Nikrishna secures AIR 1 in JEE Main 2024



Allen Classroom Student Nikrishna Gajare, hailing from Maharashtra's Washim, has emerged as the shining star of the JEE Main 2024 examination, clinching the prestigious All India Rank 1. His remarkable achievement comes alongside ALLENites Dakshesh Sanjay Mishra and Aaditya Kumar, securing AIR 2 and 4 respectively. 34 students of ALLEN have made it to the top-100 AIR while 19 students have scored overall 100 percentile. 25708 students of Allen qualify for JEE Advanced. The son of a farmer, Gajare's journey is one of perseverance and dedication. Leaving his village behind, he embarked on a rigorous preparation journey, ultimately triumphing over the challenging exam. His stellar performance is a testament to his unwavering commitment and relentless pursuit of knowledge.

Reflecting on his journey, he shared, “When my journey started in class 11 with ALLEN Career Institute, in the first one or two months, I faced a little challenge. I mean, compared to class 10, the syllabus of classes 11 and 12 is quite extensive, so I encountered some difficulties initially in matching up to it. But I didn't give up. I kept my studies going consistently. So I just want to give students the message that if you face such difficulties where you feel like maybe you can't do it or not, then keep your preparation going continuously. Good things are ahead. Gajare attributes his success to meticulous preparation and a clear understanding of fundamental concepts. “To clear an exam like JEE, it is very important to have clear concepts. Apart from this, practice revision and knowledge.” He emphasized, “Joining ALLEN Career Institute in class 11, Gajare honed his skills under expert guidance, overcoming obstacles and emerging stronger with each challenge. His advice to fellow aspirants echoes with wisdom beyond his years: “Set your target and keep your preparation continuous. Study your subjects with genuine interest so that they don't seem like a burden. Keep your preparation consistent any continuous. Looking ahead, Gajare aims to secure a seat in IIT Bombay for computer science, setting his sights on the next milestone in his academic journey. With determination and resilience as his guiding lights, Nikrishna Gajare exemplifies the spirit of excellence and inspires countless others to pursue their dreams relentlessly. ALLEN Director Anand Maheshwari said 34 students of ALLEN have made it to the top-100 AIR while 19 students have scored overall 100 percentile. 25708 students of Allen qualify for JEE Advanced. Along with this, all 5 students including Mohammad Sufyan who was at All India Rank 16 and Himanshu who was at Rank 22, got perfect scores. There are 16 students in All India Top-50, 34 in Top-100, 176 in Top-500 and 323 in Top-1000. Allen's 25708 students selected for JEE Advanced. Which includes 20039 Classrooms program and Allen Digital Live Classes and 5669 from Allen Digital Offline Test Series. 514 students have secured 100 percentile score in individual subject, 320 students have scored 100 percentile in Physics, 86 in Chemistry, 108 students in Maths. 28 students are among state toppers.

REC AVAILS SPACE-COVERED GREEN LOAN FACILITY FOR JPY 60.536 BILLION

In a significant step towards sustainable development in India, REC Limited, a leader in the Indian power sector, has successfully availed a SACE-Covered Green Loan for JPY 60.536 Billion to finance Eligible Green Projects in India. This strategic investment reinforces REC's commitment to foster sustainable growth, in alignment with the Company's Green Finance Framework. The green facility benefits from an 80% guarantee by Italian Export Credit Agency, SACE (Italy) under their innovative Push Strategy programme. It is a breakthrough and first of its kind successful collaboration between an Indian government entity and SACE. This facility sets a benchmark in the Indian public sector landscape for similar green financing transactions, highlighting a growing commitment to sustainable financing. The facility also marks SACE's first JPY-denominated loan transaction and first green loan transaction in India. The Green Loan has been named by banks across Asia, USA and Europe, namely, Credit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank, Bank of America, Citibank, KW-Index Bank and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation as Mandated Lead Arrangers with Credit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank acting as the ECA Coordinator, Green Loan Coordinator, Documentation Bank and Facility Agent. This facility demonstrates REC Limited's and its

partners' dedication to supporting projects that meet rigorous environmental standards, promote renewable energy and contribute to reducing carbon emissions throughout India. Additionally, it also reflects the growing momentum towards green financing and the collective efforts of stakeholders to address environmental challenges. Commenting on this occasion, Mr. Vivek Kumar Dewangan, IAS, Chairman & Managing Director, REC said, “The successful transaction in this truly global facility is anticipated to pave way for more such collaborations, further enhancing Indo-Italian business relationships in green energy financing and sustainable projects capabilities, as well as the global community's support for sustainable development projects in India.” Mr. Gautam Bhansali, Head of SACE — India & South Asia, commented, “SACE is proud to partner with REC for this ‘Green Push Strategy’ transaction, which is an innovative and first in its kind structure executed in India. Through this facility, SACE is committed to support projects in renewable energy, green mobility and energy efficiency, enabling sustainable long-term growth in India.” Mr. Franck Passillier, Senior Country Officer for India, Crédit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank, said, “The transaction exemplifies Crédit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank's unwavering dedication to fostering sustainable development, in line with our Bank's leading position in global sustainable finance for more than a decade. Our strategic collaboration with REC underscores our steadfast commitment to advancing environmentally responsible initiatives and promoting the growth of sustainable financing within India's promising market.”

Wipro Energy Congress 2024: Power Secretary and Indian Ambassador Inaugurates India Pavilion

Shri Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Power and Mrs. Reenat Sandhu, Ambassador of India to the Netherlands, jointly inaugurated the India Pavilion at the 26th World Energy Congress (WEC) 2024 today. Jointed by Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) and other CPSEs under the Ministry of Power, the India Pavilion showcased India's presence at the event. The visit of the Power Secretary and the Indian Ambassador at IREDA's stall marked a significant exchange of ideas, focusing on IREDA's initiatives and the transformative potential of renewable technologies in the energy sector. CMD, IREDA, provided insights into the company's recent best-ever financial results, ongoing initiatives, and expansion plans. The India Pavilion at WEC serves as a hub for showcasing innovative technologies and power generation practices, reinforcing India's commitment to environmental conservation on the global stage. Other CPSEs such as ONGC, NTPC, PFC, REC, Power Grid, NHPC, and SECI also participated in the flagship event, collectively reinforcing India's leadership in the global energy transition.

Delhi International School Edge Shines at 10th SIFFCY International Children Film Festival

In a dazzling display of talent and creativity, students from Delhi International School Edge stole the spotlight at the 10th SIFFCY International Children Film Festival held from April 9th to April 11th, 2024. The festival, renowned for showcasing the finest cinematic works from around the world, provided a platform for young talents to shine. The school's performance by the students from DIS Edge during both the opening and closing ceremonies. The opening & Closing ceremonies, marked by a fusion of art and entertainment, was set abuzz as Dishes captivated the audience with their breathtaking performances. From mesmerizing dance routines to captivating theatrical acts, the students left an indelible mark on the minds of the attendees, setting the stage for an unforgettable festival. The pinnacle of pride for DIS Edge came with six of our students being selected as jury members for the festival. This remarkable achievement not only speaks volumes about the caliber of talent nurtured at DIS Edge but also underscores the recognition and respect garnered by the institution within the film fraternity. “We are immensely proud of our students for their exceptional performances and for being chosen as jury members at such a prestigious event,” remarked Ms. Anubha Srivastava, Principal of Delhi International School Edge. “It is a testament to their dedication, passion, and hard work.” Critiquing a film movie is not an easy task. The Jury members were exposed to a roller coaster of socio-emotional situations, sensitizing them beyond measures & nudging their critical thinking skills. I was glad to embrace the more matured & resilient young juries as they receive their giving certifications pride & humility. The success of Delhi International School Edge at the 10th Smile International Film Festival not

only highlights the institution's commitment to nurturing holistic development but also serves as an inspiration for aspiring artists and filmmakers across the country. As the curtains draw to a close on another edition of the festival, the legacy of DIS Edge continues to shine bright, illuminating the path for future generations of artists and performers. With their remarkable achievements and stellar performances, the students of Delhi International School Edge have truly etched their names in the annals of cinematic excellence, promising a future filled with limitless possibilities and boundless creativity.

LUCKNOW METRO GIFTS EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME TO LSG METRO CONTEST WINNERS



5 LSG FANS MET LSG CRICKETERS AND WATCHED THEIR EXCLUSIVE PRACTICE SESSION AT EKANA STADIUM. It was a dream come true for winners of the Metro-LSG Poetry contest when they got a chance to meet their favourite LSG Cricketers and watch them in action during a practice session at the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium, today. The contest which was a part of Lucknow Metro-LSG partnership, witnessed great response from Lucknowites who sent their creative posties in larger numbers. Lucknow Metro shortlisted 5 best entries and arranged a very special Meet of the winners with the LSG Cricketers in the Ekana Stadium. Lucknow Metro arranged for special vehicles for the winners to reach Ekana and gave them a once in a lifetime gift of watching LSG practice session followed by a one-on-one meeting with players. The winners Prince Singh, Anshuman Mishra, Kirti, Sumit Gupta and Adarsh Chaturvedi were ecstatic to meet their favourite LSG team and expressed heartfelt gratitude to Lucknow Metro for giving them this experience of a lifetime. MD UPMRC Shri Sushil Kumar said, “I congratulate all the winners who won the chance to for this special meet and greet with the LSG team. Lucknow Metro is not just your go to transport medium, but is also synonymous with ‘Transporting Happiness’ with year along public engagement activities and experiences. The midnight metro trains that we are operating on IPL match days are a testimony to our consistent efforts to provide the people of Lucknow with a world class travel experience.”

Uttar Pradesh Travel Mart Concludes with FAM Trip to Ayodhya and Other Significant Destinations

The sixth edition of the Uttar Pradesh Travel Mart (UPTM) concluded with an enthralling FAM Trip organized by four operators and bloggers from April 27-29, by the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). Preceding this, discussion sessions on tapping tourism potential of Uttar Pradesh was held on April 25-26 at the Baba Gambhirnath Auditorium in Gorakhpur. For the final three days of the event a FAM Trip to Gorakhpur-Yamunotsari-Sarnath, Gorakhpur-Shravasti-Kapilvastu, and Gorakhpur-Ayodhya-Lucknow was organised. Lord Shri Ram Temple at Ayodhya remained the center of attraction, travelers were left spellbound with its beauty and infrastructure development. Delhi resident Pallavi Sharma, who embarked on the Ayodhya excursion, expressed profound joy and satisfaction. Besides the Lord Shri Ram Temple, she found herself captivated by Ayodhya City. Tour operator Kirti Kumar Srivastava remarked, “The Ramgarh Tal and Gorakhpur Temple are beautiful and hold significant importance in the tourism landscape of Eastern Uttar Pradesh.” He extended gratitude to the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department and FICCI for the successful organization of UPTM. After focusing on domestic tourism for the past two years, Uttar Pradesh is now marching towards becoming a leading destination for foreign tourists (inbound). The sixth edition of Travel Mart was organized keeping this in view and it witnessed participation from over 1500 tour operators, bloggers, and stakeholders from more than 12 countries. The event facilitated discussions on various strategies to boost tourism through business-to-business (B2B) meetings. With improved connectivity, better law and order, and continuous development of tourism facilities in the state, Uttar Pradesh has emerged as a top destination for tourists. Tour operators and bloggers will also play a role in promoting and disseminating information about Uttar Pradesh's prominent as well as lesser known tourist destinations through various platforms of social media.

THE HINDU OPPORTUNITIES

GENERAL

CHRISTIAN MEDICAL COLLEGE, VELLORE, INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR THE POST OF HEAD, Centre for Stem Cell Research

(a unit of InStem Bengaluru) CMC Campus, Bagayam, Vellore-632 002. Applications and Nominations are invited for the post of Head, Centre for Stem Cell Research, (CSCR-inStem), [www.cscr.in]. A translational Unit of the Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine (instem) [www.instem.res.in], Bengaluru, an autonomous Institute under the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India <https://dbtindia.gov.in/> located on the Bagayam campus of the Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore. [www.cmch-vellore.edu].

The post is on a contract basis for a period up to 5 years and carries the pay scale of a professor at CMC, Vellore with other allowances and perks allowed for such positions in the institution. Applicants would typically be expected to have held senior leadership positions managing research in medical/scientific organizations and have 14 years of experience after MD or PhD in relevant research. Applications may be sent to the Director, Christian Medical College, Ida Scudder Road, Vellore - 632004 so as to reach latest by 14th June 2024. The details of this advertisement and the format of application are available at the CSCR, instem and CMC, Vellore websites. Essential: 1). MD, MS (Medical) or Ph.D in Life Sciences or equivalent. 2). Relevant experience in the area of translational research with emphasis in stem cell biology, regenerative medicine, cell and molecular biology and biotechnology. 3). Excellent track record, proven expertise of guiding research activities in these areas. 4). Experience in Science - administration will be an advantage. 5). The incumbent should be capable of running the translational unit as per the MoA between instem and CMC and in line with the norms and guidelines for functioning of an organisation with Government funding.

N.B: The Search-cum-Selection Committee is empowered to consider / nominate suitable persons of capability and eminence with lesser experience if otherwise suitable for this position. Payscale / emoluments will be commensurate with their experience. The maximum age limit for appointment should not exceed 60 years as on the closing date of receipt of nominations / applications. The application along with detailed curriculum vitae including the date of birth, address for correspondence including telephone no., fax and e-mail address, qualifications acquired, professional and research experience, present position and scale of pay with total emoluments, publication details and a 500 words write-up on the candidate's vision for CSCR-in Stem for the next 5-10 years may be sent to Director, Christian Medical College, Ida Scudder Road, Vellore - 632004 in a cover marked “Nomination / Application for the Post of Head, CSCR” so as to reach latest by 14th June 2024. The details of this advertisement and the format of application is available at the CSCR, inStem and CMC, Vellore websites mentioned above. Jurisdiction: All legal disputes will be in the Jurisdiction of Vellore, Tamilnadu. Information: All information, corrigendum, etc to this recruitment shall be available on the website of CMC and instem only. Communication: All communication shall be in the email provided in the application. Please take care to provide a valid and accessible email id.

WALK-IN INTERVIEW FOR FACULTY POSITIONS
SRM UNIVERSITY AP
SRM University-AP invites applications for the following positions in the Department of Computer Science & Engineering. Interested candidates are requested to attend the interviews in person.
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Position: Assistant Professor
Qualification: Ph.D. in CSE (Thesis Submitted or Completed) from UGC-recognised institutions.
Walk-in Interview Schedule: Date: May 3, 2024 & May 4, 2024. Time: 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM.
Venue: SRM University-AP Administrative Office, 2nd Floor, RK Calleria, Srinivasa Nagar Bank Colony, Mahanadu Signal, Near Sweet Magic Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh.
For any inquiries, please contact 73867 24229 & 91105 11585

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Poll time, prison time

Kejriwal's continuing imprisonment casts a shadow on election campaign

The continued incarceration of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the midst of a general election highlights the hard political realities that seem to determine which leader gets prosecuted or arrested on allegations of corruption. Over the decades, it has become clear that only an unfriendly regime usually pursues charges against key political rivals; and that the status of relations between the party that runs the government of the day and those facing such charges dictates the course of action for supposedly independent agencies. That the number of leaders whose offences are forgotten as soon as they join the ruling party or become an ally is increasing, while jail time is reserved for adversaries. In Mr. Kejriwal's case, there is an astounding element of politics vitiating his arrest and prosecution for allegedly taking kickbacks to formulate a liquor policy favourable to the industry. Mr. Kejriwal, who leads the Aam Aadmi Party, has been denied participation in the campaign for the general election. The adverse implications of his absence are quite obvious, even though there is no law that spares politicians from criminal liability in election time. The Delhi excise policy case was registered in August 2022. The CBI and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) have filed charge sheets, but the investigation has been continuing piecemeal. Witnesses have been giving multiple statements, with each one containing newer material.

The power to arrest a suspect exists only to prevent suspects from fleeing justice, influencing or threatening witnesses and tampering with evidence, or repeating a crime. There is a huge gulf between the power to arrest and the necessity to arrest. It is a disturbing reality that political leaders have been arrested in this case on the basis of statements made by approvers, and not any independent witnesses. The timing of the arrest has also become an issue of substance. That Mr. Kejriwal did not respond to multiple ED summonses may be cited as a reason for his being arrested now rather than months ago. However, this expectation that the accused should "cooperate" with the investigation agency is quite peculiar. Agencies ought to be able to prosecute people without their statements. It is known that Section 50 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act has been weaponised by the ED to record a statement that is admissible and then record the person's arrest. Whether non-appearance in response to a summons is a ground for arrest and denial of bail is a question that has arisen in this case. Equally tenable is the question whether arresting serving Chief Ministers through central agencies and keeping them in prison throughout a multi-phase election does not amount to subversion of federalism and democracy.

Competition, conflict

U.S. and China must manage their differences responsibly

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's marathon talks with top officials in China, which includes President Xi Jinping, have underscored the desire of the two countries to stabilise their relationship and the resultant challenges. Mr. Blinken stressed that the U.S. would make sure that the competition between the world's two largest economies "doesn't veer into conflict". Mr. Xi said they should seek common ground "rather than engage in vicious competition". But the Blinken visit also exposed the structural fault lines in the Sino-American competition. He raised America's concerns about what he called China's "support for Russia's defence industry" and threatened actions if Beijing "doesn't address this problem". China slammed the "hypocrisy and irresponsibility" of the U.S., which just decided to send military aid worth \$61 billion to Ukraine and then made "groundless accusations" against normal economic and trade exchanges between China and Russia. China also attacked the U.S. policy towards Taiwan and the South China Sea and urged Washington to look at China's development "in a positive light".

Both the U.S. and China have mutual deep misgivings. U.S. National Defence Strategy documents name China as a "revisionist power" and a pacing technological and military challenger. The U.S. has imposed export controls to limit China's growth in strategic sectors, particularly semiconductors, and imposed high tariffs on Chinese goods. It has also doubled down on its support for Taiwan and bolstered defence cooperation with the Philippines, which has disputes with China in the South China Sea. Beijing has blamed the U.S. for South China Sea tensions and called Washington's support for Taiwan as an intervention in its internal affairs. While it is practically impossible to reset ties given these structural challenges, there are areas of cooperation as well. In November 2023, when Presidents Xi and Biden met in California, both sides decided to resume bilateral military-to-military communication, cooperate in addressing the risks of artificial intelligence and launch efforts to control the production of fentanyl. Tackling climate change and global food security are also areas of cooperation. A key lesson from the Cold War is that if competition between superpowers turns ugly, it could affect the world through proxy conflicts, economic wars and diplomatic crises. As the two most powerful countries, they should stay away from repeating history. Even if they are not able to resolve their ideological and geopolitical differences, they should build the guardrails that could prevent the competition from turning ugly and stay focused on the areas of cooperation, addressing the common challenges of the world.

Make EPI an 'Essential Programme on Immunisation'

The year 2024 marks a significant milestone for immunisation programmes, both globally and in India. It commemorates 50 years since the launch of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1974. The EPI was introduced as the eradication of smallpox virus was on the horizon, and a need to leverage the then immunisation infrastructure and a trained workforce was recognised to expand the benefit of available vaccines. Following the announcement, nearly every country across the world initiated its national immunisation programme. India launched the EPI in 1978, which was later renamed as the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) in 1985. In India, this year is also two decades since the country conducted the last nationwide independent field evaluation of the UIP, in collaboration with international experts. This is an opportune moment to assess the progress made and envision the future.

Globally, and in India, there has been significant progress in terms of the impact of immunisation and vaccines. While in 1974, there were vaccines to prevent six diseases, five decades later, there are vaccines against 13 diseases which are universally recommended; and vaccines against 17 additional diseases are recommended for a context-specific situation. There is research in progress to develop vaccines against nearly 125 pathogens – many would prevent diseases prevalent in low- and middle-income countries.

A success story

The children with three doses of DPT, a tracer indicator of coverage, has been rising over these years. In the early 1970s, around 5% of children in low- and middle-income countries had received three doses of DPT, which increased to 84% in 2022 at the global level. Smallpox has been eradicated, polio eliminated from all but two countries and many vaccine preventable diseases have nearly disappeared. In India, the coverage has increased every passing year and in 2019-21, 76% of children received the recommended vaccines.

Since the launch of EPI, studies have shown that vaccines have saved millions of lives and prevented billions of hospital visits and hospitalisations. Economic analyses have estimated that vaccines are highly cost-effective interventions, with every single dollar (or rupee) of expenditure on vaccination programmes ensuring a seven to 11-fold return.

In nearly all low- and middle-income countries, including India, the immunisation programme remains a success among all government initiatives, nearly always with far greater coverage than any other health programme. Moreover, in mixed health systems with both the public and private sector delivering services, immunisation often remains the only health intervention with greater utilisation from



Dr. Chandrakant Lahariya

a medical doctor, has 15 years of work experience with the World Health Organization in its India Office, Regional office for Africa, Brazzaville, and Headquarters in Geneva



Dr. Rakesh Kumar

a medical doctor, is a former Joint Secretary, Reproductive and Child Health, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, and also a global health expert. He is the CEO of Wadhvani Initiative for Sustainable Healthcare (WISH), India

In the 50 years of the Expanded Programme on Immunization, it is time for another expansion

the government sector. For instance, in India, the share of the private sector in overall health services is nearly two thirds; however, nearly 85% to 90% of all vaccines are delivered from government facilities. Experts often argue that the immunisation coverage is a tracer indicator of the possible highest coverage any government intervention can achieve in a given setting.

Yet, it is not without challenges. In early 2023, the UNICEF's "The State of the World's Children" report revealed a concerning trend: for the first time in more than a decade, the childhood immunisation coverage had declined in 2021. In 2022, globally, an estimated 14.3 million children were zero dose (did not receive any recommended vaccine) while another 6.2 million children were partially immunised. Over the years, the vaccination coverage in India has increased, both nationally and State-wise. However, there are persisting inequities in coverage by geography, socio-economic strata and other parameters, which demand urgent interventions.

From childhood focus to life course

It is interesting that when it comes to vaccination, people often (and wrongly) believe that the vaccines are only for children only. The truth is that in nearly 225 years since the availability of the first vaccine against smallpox in 1798, vaccines have always been available for individuals of all age groups, including adults. The first anti rabies vaccine, cholera, and typhoid vaccines developed between 1880s to mid 1890s were primarily for adults. The first vaccine ever developed in any part of the world against plague (in 1897) was from India and meant for individuals across all age groups. The BCG vaccine (against tuberculosis) was first introduced in a nationwide campaign in 1951 and was also administered to the adult population. Influenza vaccines have always been administered to adults and children alike. This history clearly illustrates that vaccines have always been intended for individuals of all age groups.

However, considering that children are most vulnerable from vaccine-preventable diseases, they have rightly been prioritised for vaccination. A few decades ago, the supply of vaccines was limited, and the financial resources and trained workforce that governments had were scarce. Thus, vaccines were aimed to be delivered to the population groups which would benefit from them the most – children.

However, in the last five decades, things have changed for the better. With increased vaccine coverage, children are better protected. However, diseases that are preventable with vaccines are increasingly becoming common in the adult population.

Therefore, it becomes imperative that government policies now focus on the vaccination of adults and the elderly, as well, as is happening in many countries. For better coverage of adult vaccines, we can learn from the past and five decades of the EPI.

First, there are some initial policy and technical discussions regarding expanding immunisation coverage in additional populations. The recent announcement on HPV vaccines for teenage girls is a good start.

However, the Indian government needs to consider providing recommended vaccines for a wider section of adults and elderly population. Considering that vaccines are highly cost effective, once recommended by the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI), vaccines for all age groups should be made available as free at the government facilities.

Second, the NTAGI in India, which provides recommendations on the use of vaccines should start providing recommendations on the use of vaccines in adults and the elderly. We need to remember that once a vaccine is recommended by the government body, the coverage is likely to be far greater than if the vaccines are not recommended by the government.

Third, the prevailing myths and misconceptions about vaccines must be proactively addressed to tackle vaccine hesitancy. The government must consider the help of professional communication agencies to dispel myths (and in a layperson's language and with the use of social media). This also requires citizens to learn and educate themselves about these vaccines from reliable sources.

Fourth, various professional associations of doctors – community medicine experts, family physicians and paediatricians should work to increase awareness about vaccines among adults and the elderly. Physicians treating patients with any disease should use the opportunity to make them aware of vaccines.

Fifth, medical colleges and research institutions should generate evidence on the burden of diseases in the adult population in India.

There are studies which have noted that the introduction of new vaccines in national programmes contributes to increased coverage of all existing vaccines. Therefore, it is likely that expanding coverage of vaccines for adults and the elderly may result in improved coverage with childhood vaccines and reduced vaccine inequities. India's EPI has made major progress and it is arguably a time for another independent national level review of the UIP in India, engaging key partners and international experts.

In late 2023, India launched a pilot initiative of adult BCG vaccination as part of efforts to 'end TB' from India. The COVID-19 vaccination of the adult population has made the public sensitized to the need for and the benefits of adult vaccination. This is a right opportunity to start a new journey of adult vaccination in India. In the 50 years of the EPI, it is time for another expansion of the programme with focus on zero dose children, addressing inequities in vaccine coverage and offering vaccines to adults and the elderly. It is time to make EPI an 'Essential Program on Immunization'.

The need for the use of labour statistics

The reform of labour institutions is always in the air as objective (variables) and subjective (orientation of agencies involved) factors keep changing. In the case of the industrial relations system and labour market (IRS-LM), variables such as product market, technology, trade and investment, and labour institutions such as trade unions, collective bargaining and strikes keep changing. There are two aspects of reforms – substantive issues and procedural aspects.

Social dialogue is an important procedural institutional process to debate and arrive at consensual conclusions which could be used for legal and other policy-oriented actions. In the post-reform period, the government uses social dialogue agency, viz., the Indian Labour Conference (ILC), to push the reforms agenda. Evidence-based reform arguments enrich social dialogue – something which has not happened thus far. Social partners have been advocating their "class-based opinions" unbacked by credible data or experience. The ILC has degenerated into a "talking shop".

Labour statistics, unlike economic and industrial data, are not rigorous. For example, the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) and the National Sample Survey Office produce excellent statistics but have limited information relating to the IRS-LM. The Labour Bureau provides statistics on a range of industrial relations (strikes and trade unions) and labour statistics (contract labour, absenteeism, labour turnover, labour inspections). It mostly provides administrative data, viz., those generated as a part of implementing labour laws. The statistics on work stoppages are collected voluntarily. The composition and the scope of data published by the Labour Bureau has remained virtually the same over the decades.

Reform arguments

Let us look at three reform arguments put forth relentlessly by employers and neoliberal academics. Employers have criticised the labour inspection system as a case of "Inspector-Raj"



K.R. Shyam Sundar

is Adjunct Professor, Management Development Institute, Gurgaon

Trade unions can play a pivotal role in producing labour statistics

and called for its reforms. This criticism stems probably from their "limited experience". They have complained that State governments hardly sanction applications for retrenchment or the closure of establishments. They also demand a curb on the right to strike and prefer non-union workplaces. Some academics and global agencies such as the World Bank/International Monetary Fund which have "priors" similar to the reform opinions of employers have published studies "consistently" supporting the benevolent impact of reforms and refuting their obverse. For example, a study by Besley and Burgess (B&B) on the impact of labour regulation in 2004 has been widely used by employers and others to push hire and fire reforms, among others. This is despite glaring weaknesses in the studies using B&B methodology, original or revised. The government has fallen for these "strong prior-based evidence" hook, line and sinker and sought to introduce labour law reforms.

To counter the reform arguments mentioned above, trade unions should have collected the relevant information/statistics on inspection (such as the number of sanctioned and actually employed inspectors, the universe of inspection and actual inspection, the frequency of inspections) and studied them to make informed arguments to support labour inspection – even strengthening them. It is then that social partners and the government would have realised the poor quality of data on inspections. They would realise that labour inspectors are much fewer in number than the inspection universe. Research has shown that there is no all-India data on labour inspections.

Closure reform

Again, on firing/closure reform, trade unions have not collected data on the retrenchment/closure applications under Chapter V-B submitted to the labour department, permissions granted/refused by the labour department. These are not published in most States except in Maharashtra for a limited period. The denial of permissions was surely prevalent

during the command economy, but is this prevalent in the post-reform period? My study on retrenchments/closures under Chapter V-B in 2001-05 showed that Maharashtra was more liberal in granting permissions for retrenchments/closures (Impact of Labour Regulations ... in Maharashtra, Bookwell, 2008).

On strikes

The Industrial Relations Code, 2020 Code on Industrial Relations (CIR) has made legal strikes well-nigh impossible. Illegal strikes carry a heavy penalty. Trade unions could have used the data on strikes and lockouts published by the Labour Bureau which would show that lockouts are more frequent and account for more workdays lost than strikes during the post-reform period. This evidence would have challenged the need for introducing harsher clauses on strikes in the CIR.

Trade unions are well placed to "produce" statistics on several aspects of the IRS-LM at the establishment level. Employers' organisations such as NASSCOM generate statistics on the IT industry which is used indiscriminately. India has ratified the Labour Statistics Convention (No.160), 1985 and Labour Inspection Convention (081), 1947. India must generate statistics that are valid, comprehensive and reliable on IRS-LM. Trade unions must know by now that reforms are contested not only by street struggles but also primarily in the realm of ideas where objective data and rich empirical studies are used.

In essence, trade unions should produce labour statistics, do research on IRS-LM, build an active and productive interface with academics and use academic studies to make "evidence-based arguments" in the ILC. Imagine a massive strike demanding good labour statistics! The larger society and the government are bound to stand up and seek reform labour statistics. For once, strikes would enjoy public legitimacy.

This May Day, in 2024, trade unions must resolve to carry out these measures. If nothing, statistical agencies such as the Labour Bureau will be reformed as a result of these pursuits.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Examination dates issue

The date for the All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, Mysuru's computer-based All India Entrance Examination 2024

for Bachelor of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology (B.ASLP) falls on the same day as the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research

Aptitude Test (IAT), i.e., Sunday, June 9, 2024, at 9 a.m. Many students who have completed Class 12 are now anxious on getting to know this as they want to

appear and write both tests. Could the authorities/officials please look into this?
P. Murugiah,
Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu

Corrections & Clarifications

A Business page story on a Coca Cola bottler setting up a plant in Amethi (April 30, 2024) erroneously gave the name of the bottler as SLAM Beverages. It should have been SLMG Beverages.

E-mail:readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

Implementing the Street Vendors Act

A decade has passed since the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act came into effect on May 1, 2014, marking a significant milestone after nearly four decades of legal jurisprudence and the tireless efforts of street vendor movements across India. Celebrated as a progressive legislation, the Act now faces numerous challenges in its implementation. Looking back, the mere enactment of a law did not ensure the protection and security of street vendors in Indian cities; there was much to be desired in its execution.



Aravind Unni is an urban practitioner-researcher focusing on informal workers and urban communities' inclusion in urban planning and cities



Shalini Sinha is the Asia strategist at the Urban Policies Program, WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing). Views are personal

and mandates that street vendor representatives must constitute 40% of TVC members, with a sub-representation of 33% of women street vendors. These committees are tasked with ensuring the inclusion of all existing vendors in vending zones. Additionally, the Act outlines mechanisms for addressing grievances and disputes, proposing the establishment of a Grievance Redressal Committee chaired by a civil judge or judicial magistrate. Its provisions set a crucial precedent for inclusive and participatory approaches to address street vending needs in cities, at least in theory.

Three broad challenges

However, the Act has faced three broad challenges. First, at the administrative level, there has been a noticeable increase in harassment and evictions of street vendors, despite the Act's emphasis on their protection and regulation. This is often due to an outdated bureaucratic mindset that views vendors as illegal entities to be cleared. There is also a pervasive lack of awareness and sensitisation about the Act among state authorities, the wider public, and vendors themselves. TVCs often remain under the control of local city authorities, with limited influence from street vendor representatives. And the representation of women vendors in TVCs is mostly tokenistic.

Second, at the governance level, existing urban governance mechanisms are often weak. The Act does not integrate well with the framework established by the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act for urban governance. ULBs lack sufficient powers and capacities. Schemes like the Smart Cities Mission, laden with resources and pushed through as policy priorities from the top-down, mostly focus on infrastructure development and ignore the provisions of the Act for the inclusion of street vendors in city planning.

Third, at the societal level, the

prevailing image of the 'world class city tends to be exclusionary. It marginalises and stigmatises street vendors as obstacles to urban development instead of acknowledging them as legitimate contributors to the urban economy. These challenges are reflected in city designs, urban policies, and public perceptions of neighbourhoods.

The way forward

While the Act is progressive and detailed, its implementation requires support, possibly (and ironically) necessitating top-down direction and management starting from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. This needs to be decentralised over time to ensure effectiveness in addressing the diverse needs and contexts of street vendors nationwide. PM SVANidhi, a micro-credit facility for street vendors, has been a positive example in that direction. There is a strong need to decentralise interventions, enhance the capacities of ULBs to plan for street vending in cities, and move away from high-handed department-led actions to actual deliberative processes at the TVC level. Urban schemes, city planning guidelines, and policies need to be amended to include street vending.

The Act now faces new challenges such as the impact of climate change on vendors, a surge in the number of vendors, competition from e-commerce, and reduced incomes. The Act's broad welfare provisions must be used creatively to meet the emerging needs of street vendors. The sub-component on street vendors in the National Urban Livelihood Mission needs to take cognisance of the changed realities and facilitate innovative measures for addressing needs. The case of the Street Vendors Act highlights the complex interplay of contestation over space, workers in urban areas, and governance, offering valuable lessons for future lawmaking and implementation.

Provisions of the law

Street vendors, estimated to constitute 2.5% of any city's population, play multifaceted roles in city life. Local vegetable sellers and food vendors are essential providers of daily services. Vending offers many migrants and the urban poor a source of modest yet consistent income. The vendors also make city life affordable for others by providing vital links in the food, nutrition, and goods distribution chain at reasonable prices.

Street vendors are also integral to Indian culture – imagine Mumbai without its *vada pav* or Chennai without its roadside *dosai*. The law was enacted to acknowledge this reality. It aimed to 'protect' and 'regulate' street vending in cities, with State-level rules and schemes, and execution by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) through by-laws, planning, and regulation. The Act clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of both vendors and various levels of government. It recognises the positive urban role of vendors and the need for livelihood protection. It commits to accommodating all 'existing' vendors in vending zones and issuing vending certificates. The Act establishes a participatory governance structure through Town Vending Committees (TVCs)

Celebrated as a progressive legislation, the Act now faces numerous challenges in its implementation

Impartial volunteers no longer

The YSRCP has been using village and ward volunteers for its election campaign

STATE OF PLAY

Sambasiva Rao M.
sambasivarao.m@thehindu.co.in



The village and ward volunteers' system, introduced by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy in 2019 in Andhra Pradesh to bridge the gap between the government and citizens, has become deeply politicised, with the Opposition accusing the ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) of using the volunteers as its foot soldiers.

At its core, the system aimed to decentralise governance by appointing local residents as volunteers to oversee implementation of government welfare programmes. Each volunteer is assigned to 50 households and is responsible for ensuring the transparent delivery of services such as social security pensions and essential commodities. For their work, volunteers are paid a monthly sum of ₹5,000 each as honorarium. There are 2,62,483 volunteers, as per government data.

Essentially, the volunteer system aims to bring governance to the people's doorstep. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the volunteers became the backbone of Andhra Pradesh's response efforts. They distributed masks, facilitated the transportation of patients to healthcare facilities, and conducted household surveys to monitor the health status of every family. Their tireless efforts earned them praise from various sections of society and showed the potential of community-driven governance in times of crisis.

But as elections loomed on the horizon, allegations of misuse and manipulation began to surface. The Opposition accused the YSRCP of exploit-

ing the volunteer network to sway voters in its favour. It raised concerns about the lack of impartiality, claiming that the volunteers had turned into assets for the ruling party for its electoral campaign. This claim was substantiated by the fact that more than 60,000 volunteers resigned from their posts and officially began working with the YSRCP to help it during its campaign. It was clear that the party hoped to use the volunteers' familiarity with the people at the grassroots to its advantage.

Following complaints by Opposition parties in various districts, District Election Officers suspended a number of volunteers. Later, based on a writ petition filed by Dr. Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar, Secretary, Citizens for Democracy (CFD) of Andhra Pradesh, the Andhra Pradesh High Court barred volunteers from participating in the distribution of welfare schemes after the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) was put in place. Mr. Ramesh Kumar is a retired Indian Administrative Service officer who served as State Election Commissioner. The court ruling was met with both praise and criticism: while some lauded it as a necessary safeguard against electoral malpractice, others claimed that it created obstacles in the delivery of services.

Based on the court orders, the Election Commission of India (ECI) instructed the

State government to bar volunteers from delivering government services for as long as the MCC was in place. Following this, Chief Secretary K.S. Jawahar Reddy instructed the village and ward secretariat staff to disburse the money and asked pensioners to collect it from the respective offices. However, later, as per the directions of the ECI, the State government said it would disburse pensions through Direct Beneficiary Transfer to up to 75% of the pensioners. The rest would receive it at their doorstep during May and June, it said.

While the plan seemed to work on paper, in reality it turned into a tragedy. Some of the pensioners died, allegedly because they stood in the heat for hours to collect their due. This expectedly led to a controversy. Mr. Jagan Reddy and other YSRCP leaders blamed the CFD and the National Democratic Alliance for the deaths, while Telugu Desam Party national president N. Chandrababu Naidu and other Opposition leaders faulted the State government, claiming that it wilfully avoided employing village and ward secretariat staff to disburse pensions at beneficiaries' homes.

Based on multiple complaints that volunteers are influencing voters at the grassroots level, the Andhra Pradesh High Court asked the ECI to take action. The ECI has barred the volunteers from distributing cash benefits under any scheme, including pensions. The YSRCP continues to staunchly defend the volunteer system and claims that it is being politicised. This entire episode could have been avoided if the volunteers were merely allowed to do their duty and were not appropriated by the YSRCP for its own political gain.

Cost of meals rose by 71% in five years, salaries by just 37%

This disparity means that households with regular salaried people might be cutting back on spending on non-essential items or luxury products

DATA POINT

Sruthi Balaji
& **Vignesh Radhakrishnan**

The average cost of a home-cooked vegetarian thali in Maharashtra increased by 71% in the last five years. At the same time, the average monthly salary earned by a person through regular employment in the State increased by only 37%. While the wages of casual labourers kept pace with the rise in prices, increasing by 67% in the period, it is crucial to note that labourers were already spending a high share of their monthly wages on food.

For this analysis, it has been assumed that an average Indian family will be able to meet their daily dietary needs if they consume food equivalent to two thalis per day, spread across breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Non-vegetarian meals were not considered due to lack of past data. To get commodity prices, Maharashtra was chosen as an exemplar due to the availability of consistent data. The average wages and salaries of workers in Maharashtra were considered for comparison.

To decode how much two thalis cost, on average, in Maharashtra, the ingredients used were identified – white rice, toor dal, onion, garlic, green chilli, ginger, tomato, potato, peas, atta, cabbage, sunflower oil, and salt – and the grams required for two servings were measured. The average retail cost for buying those ingredients in Maharashtra – as of March this year, a year ago (2023), and five years ago (2019) – were collated from the Consumer Affairs Ministry and the National Horticulture Board. For some vegetables, for which data were not available, prices in Mumbai were considered as a proxy.

For instance, the cost of buying 125 grams of toor dal, which is required to make two thalis, increased from ₹9.3 to ₹20.1 in the

past five years (Table 1). Similarly, the cost of buying 300 grams of potato increased from ₹6.8 to ₹8.6. The average cost of all the ingredients for two thalis in Maharashtra totalled ₹79.2 this year, ₹64.2 last year, and ₹46.2 in 2019 (Table 2). In essence, the cost of making two thalis in a household in Maharashtra every day of a month increased from ₹1,386 in 2019 to ₹2,377 in 2024.

The daily average wage of an individual in Maharashtra increased from ₹218 a day in 2019 to ₹365 a day in 2024. This was then extrapolated for 30 days to arrive at monthly earnings. The average salary of a person in Maharashtra increased from ₹17,189 to ₹23,549 in the same period.

The cost of making two thalis every day of a month, when considered as a share of wages/salaries, marginally increased from 21.1% of a casual labourer's monthly earnings in 2019 to 21.7% in 2024. This is assuming that the labourer got paid on all days, including rest days. In the case of regular salaried workers, there was a considerable increase from 8.1% to 10.1% in the same period (Table 4).

As can be seen from Tables 2 and 3, while the cost of making a thali increased by 71% in the past five years, the monthly salary increased by only 37%. As can be seen from Tables 3 and 4, while casual labourers' wages kept pace with the rise in prices, they were already spending over 20% of their earnings on food, the cost of which also went up marginally.

This disparity between salaries and expenditure means that households with regular salaried people might be cutting back on spending on non-essential items and luxury products. For daily wage-earning households, such spending anyway remained elusive as their expenditure on food was high and has now marginally gone up.

Sruthi Balaji is interning with The Hindu Data Team

Food has become more expensive

The tables are constructed based on data sourced from the Department for Consumer Affairs, National Horticulture Board, Periodic Labour Force Survey, and Report on District Level Estimates for the State of Maharashtra



^ Sunflower oil All figures in ₹ except those in Column A (grams)

Table 1: The table lists the weight of commodities required to prepare two thalis and its retail prices in ₹

Item	A: Grams needed for 2 thalis	B: Cost of a kg. (March 2024)	C: Cost (1 year ago)	D: Cost (5 years ago)	Buying price (March) (B*A/1000)	Buying price (1 year ago) (C*A/1000)	Buying price (5 years ago) (D*A/1000)
Rice	125	51.12	43.12	35.83	6.4	5.4	4.5
Atta(wheat)	250	42.74	41.1	30.03	10.7	10.3	7.5
Oil^	36.3	119.92	150.39	90.71	4.4	5.5	3.3
Tomato	100	28.28	20.78	25.56	2.8	2.1	2.6
Onion	100	26.01	22.04	14.3	2.6	2.2	1.4
Salt	12.8	23.43	23.39	16	0.3	0.3	0.2
Potato	300	28.65	25.07	22.55	8.6	7.5	6.8
Toor dal	125	160.99	119.94	74.23	20.1	15.0	9.3
Garlic	25	238.7	100.87	43.04	6.0	2.5	1.1
Green chilli	25	102.61	57.83	68.7	2.6	1.4	1.7
Ginger	7.5	163.04	80	86.09	1.2	0.6	0.6
Peas	60	76.52	46.96	37.83	4.6	2.8	2.3
Cabbage	250	36.09	34.35	20	9.0	8.6	5.0

Table 2: The table shows the cost of a thali in ₹ in March 2024, a year ago, and five years ago

Cost	As on March 2024	1 year ago	5 years ago
Cost of making two thalis	79.2	64.2	46.2
Cost of making one thali	39.6	32.1	23.1
Cost of making two thalis every day for a month	2,377.4	1,925.7	1,386.7

Table 3: Average daily wage of a casual labourer and the average salary of a regular salaried employee in urban Maharashtra

Average earnings in Maharashtra	As on March	1 year ago	5 years ago
Average wage earnings of a person per day from casual labour work other than public works in CWS*	364.93	328.24	218.35
Average salary earnings of a person during the preceding calendar month from regular wage/salaried employment in CWS*	23,549.45	21,810.82	17,189.56

*CWS: Current Weekly Status provides a snapshot of a person's employment during a particular reference week

Table 4: The table shows the cost of making two thalis every day for a month as a share of monthly wages/salaries

	As on March	1 year ago	5 years ago
The cost of making two thalis every day for a month, when considered as a share of daily wage	21.72%	19.55%	21.15%
The cost of making two thalis every day for a month, when considered as a share of regular salary	10.10%	8.82%	8.06%

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The *Hindu*

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 1, 1974

Central Government employees to go on strike

New Delhi, April 30: The Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers to-day directed its Class III and IV employees all over the country to go on an indefinite strike from May 10. The Confederation, which claims to represent over seven lakh employees, called upon its members, who include those belonging to the Posts and Telegraphs Department, Audit, Income Tax and several other departments, excluding the Defence Services and Railways to commence the strike at 6 a.m. The strike will be preceded by a two-day "non-cooperation movement" from May 8 in the form of mass casual leave, work-to-rule, tool-down and pen-down to coincide with the threatened strike by railwaymen, Mr. S.K. Vyas, Secretary-General of the Confederation, said in a press statement. He added that this action would continue till the demands, already submitted to the Finance Minister and the respective Heads of Departments, were conceded. The demands included parity in pay scales with the public sector undertakings, a need-based minimum wage and bonus. The statement said the affiliates of the Confederation including the National Federation of P and T employees and the All-India Non-Garretted Audit and Accounts Association, had meetings of their policymaking bodies here from April 27 to 29. They held a joint meeting to-day at which the decision to go on strike was taken.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 1, 1924

Broadcasting in Madras

A Broadcasting concert took place for an hour this forenoon in the office of Messrs Milton & Co, Mount Road, next to Simpson and Coy. Some songs played on Piano and a short speech were transmitted from the premises to the Gramophone Department of Messrs. Spencer Buildings where the receiving apparatus was fixed. The concert was well attended by Europeans and Indians. It was very much appreciated by those present and was voted a success. Mr. Coningsby, the Marconi Engineer, is in communication with Mr. Weston of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore where there is a receiving apparatus and has requested the Institute to receive the programme that is going on in Madras.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

People of Sudan face food shortage and possible famine

18 million. The people of Sudan are facing high levels of acute food insecurity. According to estimates, at least 6% of the country's population will face famine. In the worst case, it would be 40% of people between harvests. REUTERS

Capex needed for aluminium industry to clock net-zero emission

2.2 in lakh crore. The Indian aluminium industry would require an additional capital expenditure of nearly ₹2.2 lakh crore to achieve net-zero carbon emission. Renewable power sources could abate 49% of the emissions from the industry. PTI

Number of migrants from U.K. that Rwanda shall accommodate

5,700 Migrants who arrived in the U.K. between January 2022 and June 2023 are liable to have asylum claims deemed inadmissible and be removed to Rwanda. More than 57,000 people arrived in this period. AFP

Pakistan's GDP growth in second quarter ending in June

1 in percentage. The GDP of Pakistan is expected to improve in the second half of the fiscal year. Also, inflation is expected to be 18.5-19.5% in April and reduce to 17.5-18.5% in May, the country's Finance Ministry said in its monthly economic update report. REUTERS

Canada revises work hour limits for international students

24 in hours. International students, including those from India, in Canada, can work off-campus for only up to 24 hours per week from September, according to a rule that will come into effect on Tuesday. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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About the redistribution of wealth

What is the debate surrounding the redistribution of wealth that has piqued interest during the ongoing election campaigns? Where does it fit in the constitutional framework? How has the judiciary ruled on the topic from the start?

EXPLAINER

Rangarajan. R

The story so far:

There have been heated exchanges between the ruling government and the Opposition with respect to the redistribution of wealth during the ongoing election campaign. The Supreme Court has also constituted a nine-judge Bench to interpret the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) with respect to ownership and control of material resources.

What does the Constitution provide?

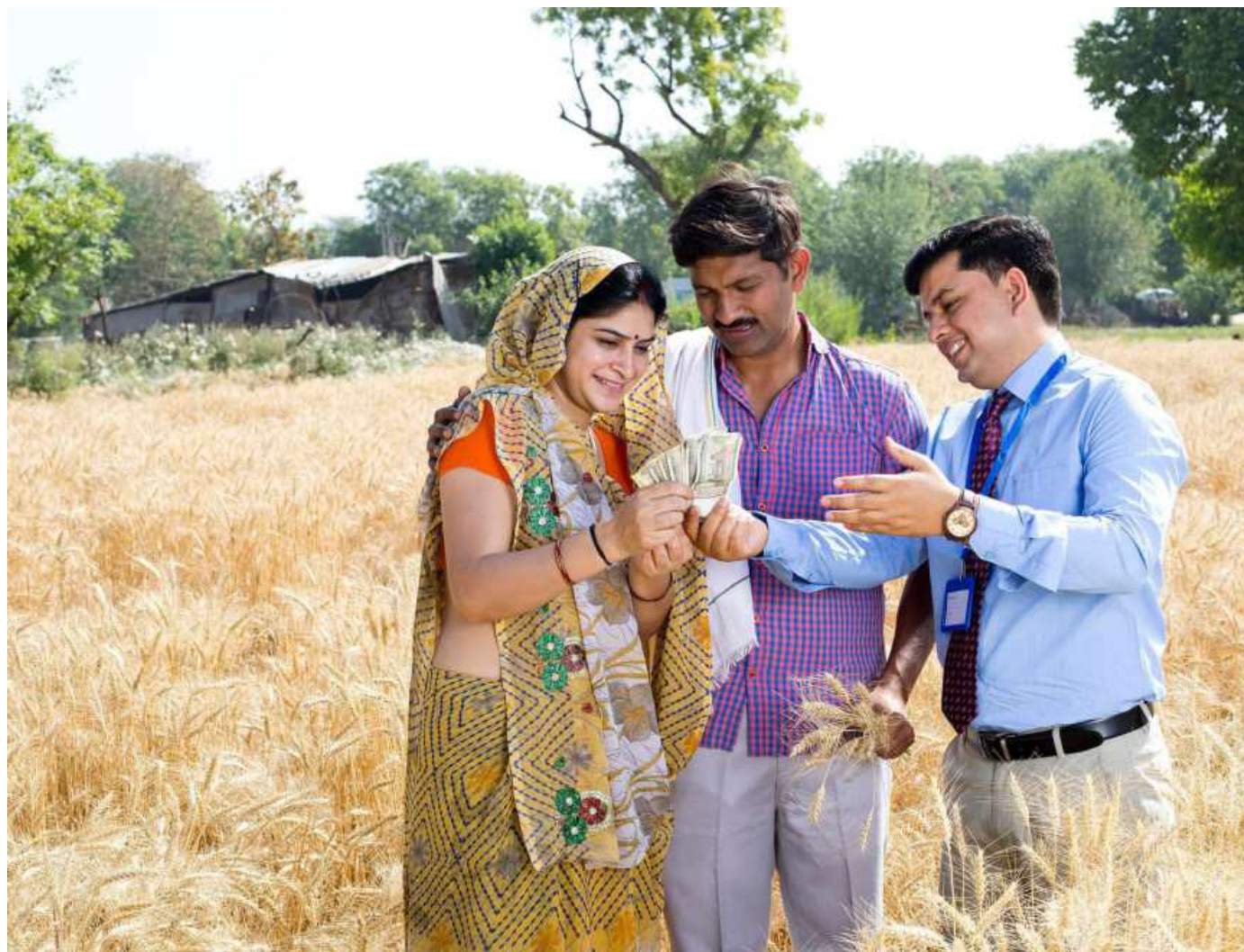
The Preamble to the Constitution aims to secure to all citizens social and economic justice, liberty and equality. Part III of the Constitution lists down the fundamental rights that guarantee liberty and equality while Part IV contains the DPSP. These are principles that the central and State governments should follow to achieve social and economic justice in our country. Unlike the fundamental rights in Part III, the DPSP is not enforceable in court. They are nevertheless fundamental in the governance of the country. Article 39(b) and (c) in Part IV contain principles that are aimed at securing economic justice. They provide that ownership and control of material resources of the society should be distributed to serve the common good and that the operation of the economic system does not result in concentration of wealth to the common detriment.

What is the historical context?

The Constitution originally guaranteed right to property as a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(f). It provided under Article 31 that the state shall pay compensation in case of acquisition of private property. It is pertinent to note that at the time of independence, the main property rights related to agricultural and other land. The government had to acquire the rights in such estates for carrying out land reforms and construction of public assets. Considering the inadequate resources with the government and in order to provide greater flexibility in acquiring land for public welfare, various amendments were carried out curtailing the right to property. Notable among them are exceptions under Articles 31A, 31B and 31C that are briefly explained in Table 1.

The Supreme Court in various cases has interpreted the relationship between fundamental rights and the DPSP. Most of these cases were against constitutional amendments made by the state that curtailed the right to property that was then a fundamental right. In the *Golak Nath* case (1967), the Supreme Court held that fundamental rights cannot be abridged or diluted to implement DPSP. Finally, in the *Kesavananda Bharati* case (1973), a thirteen-judge Bench of the Supreme Court upheld the validity of Article 31C but made it subject to judicial review. In the *Minerva Mills* case (1980), the Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution exists on a harmonious balance between fundamental rights and DPSP.

In 1978, in order to avoid excessive litigation directly in the Supreme Court by the propertied class, the 44th amendment act omitted right to property as a fundamental right and made it a constitutional right under Article 300A. The right to private property continues to be an important constitutional cum legal right. Any law to acquire private property



At the time of independence, the main property rights were related to agricultural and other land. The government had to acquire the rights in such estates for carrying out land reforms and construction of public assets. ISTOCKPHOTO

The Gist

The Preamble to the Constitution aims to secure to all citizens social and economic justice, liberty and equality. Part III of the Constitution lists down the fundamental rights that guarantee liberty and equality while Part IV contains the Directive Principles of State Policy that talks about ownership and control of material resources. These are principles that the central and State governments should follow to achieve social and economic justice in our country.

The Supreme Court in various cases has interpreted the relationship between fundamental rights and the DPSP. In 1978, in order to avoid excessive litigation directly in the Supreme Court by the propertied class, the 44th amendment act omitted the right to property as a fundamental right and made it a constitutional right under Article 300A.

The Supreme Court has now constituted a nine-judge Bench to interpret the Directive Principles of State Policy

Exceptions to fundamental rights

Considering the inadequate resources with the government and to provide greater flexibility in acquiring land for public welfare, various amendments were carried out curtailing the right to property. Notable among them are exceptions under Articles 31A, 31B and 31C

Article	Amendment & year	Brief explanation
31A	1st amendment, 1951	Provided that laws made for acquisition of estates etc. shall not be void on the ground that it violated fundamental rights including right to property
31B	1st amendment, 1951	Made laws placed under the Ninth Schedule immune from judicial review on the grounds of violating any fundamental right. In <i>Coelho</i> case (2007), the SC held that laws placed in Ninth Schedule after April 1973 would be subject to judicial review
31C	25th amendment, 1971	Provided primacy to the DPSP under Articles 39(b) and (c). Laws made to fulfil these principles shall not be void on the ground that it violated fundamental rights including right to property

by the state should be only for a public purpose and provide for adequate compensation.

What is the current debate?

Indian governments in the first four decades after independence followed a "socialistic model" of economy. There were many laws made by the Centre and States to acquire land from zamindars and big landlords for public purpose. The economic policies resulted in the nationalisation of banking and insurance, extremely high rates of direct taxes (even up to 97%), estate duty on inheritance, tax on wealth etc. There were also regulations that placed restrictions on growth of private enterprise like The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1969 (MRTP Act). The rationale behind these measures during those times was to reduce inequality and redistribute wealth among the poorer sections who constituted majority of the population. However, such measures stifled growth and also resulted in the concealment of income/wealth. Taxes like estate duty and wealth tax generated

revenue that was much less than the cost incurred in administering them.

The nineties saw the country move from a closed economy towards liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation. A new industrial policy was unveiled in July 1991 with the objective of empowering market forces, improving efficiency and rectifying deficiencies in the country's industrial structure. The MRTP Act was repealed and replaced with the Competition Act, 2002 and income tax rates were reduced considerably. Estate duty was abolished in 1985 and wealth tax in 2016.

The market driven economy has resulted in additional resources for the government that has helped in bringing people out of abject poverty. This economic system, nonetheless, has also resulted in growing inequality. A report by the World Inequality Lab states that the top 10% of the country's population have a share of 65% and 57% of the wealth and income respectively as of 2022-23. The bottom 50% on the other hand have a meagre share of 6.5% and 15% of the wealth and income respectively.

The manifesto for the current Lok Sabha elections of the Congress, the principal Opposition party, promises various measures for the poorer sections including payment of ₹1 lakh per annum to a woman from every poor family. Rahul Gandhi had also mentioned in his campaign that there would be a financial survey to ascertain the distribution of wealth among the people in the country and address the issue of inequality. The ruling party campaigners led by the Prime Minister have targeted the Opposition on this matter. They claim that the Opposition, if voted to power, would bring back inheritance tax laws that would tax even the poorer sections. The Supreme Court meanwhile has constituted a nine-judge Bench to interpret whether material resources under Article 39(b) include private resources as well.

What can be the way forward?

It is not just in India, but growing inequality is a worldwide problem of a liberalised open-market economic system. However, it is the responsibility of the government to protect the interest of the poorer classes who are most dependant on the state machinery for their livelihood. At the same time past policies of extremely high tax rates, estate duty, wealth tax etc., did not achieve their desired goals. Instead, they only led to concealment of income and wealth. Innovation and growth should not be curtailed but the benefits of growth should reach all sections especially the marginalised. The policies may vary and need to be framed after adequate debate in line with current economic models. The underlying principle to be achieved nevertheless remains the same – economic justice for all as enshrined in our Constitution.

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

What are the behavioural patterns of fans of Tamil movie stars on social media?

Movie stars with political aspirations are making the leap from acting to political roles with their fan bases holding the potential to transform into potent political entities; the extensive activity of such fans on social media is notable owing to their ability to influence public discourse

Vignesh Karthik KR
Ajay Chandra Vasagam U

In Tamil Nadu, cinema serves a role beyond entertainment – it significantly influences and merges with the political sphere. The digital expressions of Tamil cinema fans on Twitter have illuminated a compelling dialogue between filmic content and political engagement. As movie stars with political aspirations make the leap from acting to political roles, their fan bases hold the potential to transform into potent political entities. The extensive activity of such fans on social media is notable owing to their ability to influence public discourse. The appointment of a hitherto online personality who had a case filed against him by a senior journalist as a spokesperson of the Tamil Vetri Kazhagam party founded by actor Vijay is a case in point. This article delves into the narratives that the fans of popular Tamil movie stars subscribe to on social media.

We use Twitter to study this as it is a representative platform suitable to gauge the effect, albeit it may not give the exact picture of the magnitude. By analysing trending Twitter topics related to Tamil cinema and politics, we explore how fans utilise their devotion to film stars and cinematic stories to participate in and influence politics, showcasing a distinctive fusion of cultural loyalty and political activism.

This research was jointly conducted by the Social Media Networks and (Dis)information Research Group at King's College London and the Populous Empowerment Network India, a research organisation based in Chennai. We systematically collected the top five Twitter hashtags trending every half-hour within the 'India' geography from November 26, 2018, to December 17, 2022. Each day, hashtags were ranked based on their duration of trend, and a descending order list was compiled to determine the top hashtags for further analysis. Out of the total 6,138 hashtags collected, 342 related to Tamil Nadu were specifically identified and further classified into political (115) and non-political (227) themes. This section of the study, encompassing accounts and hashtags, is confined to Tamil Nadu, and all percentages and numbers are to be interpreted within this regional context. Detailed tweet data – including usernames, engagement metrics, timestamps, IDs, and URLs – associated with these hashtags were extracted using the Twitter API for academic purposes.

Segregation of accounts

To better understand the relationship matrix between fan accounts and the political hashtags, we grouped the fan accounts into groups, namely – 'Anti-Ajith', 'Anti-Vijay', 'Pro-Suriya', 'Pro-Ajith', 'Pro-Dhanush', 'Pro-Kamal', 'Pro-Rajini', 'Pro-Simbu', 'Pro-Sivakarthiskeyan', 'Pro-Vijay', 'Pro-Vikram', and others. Likewise, we grouped the political hashtags into 'Pro-NTK', 'Pro-INC', 'Pro-DMK', 'Pro-BJP', 'Anti-NTK', 'Anti-INC', 'Anti-DMK', 'Anti-BJP', 'Anti-AIADMK', 'Anti-State-Govt', and 'Anti-State-Govt-from-May-21'.

Fan accounts were mapped using actor hashtags that they frequently interacted with. These fan accounts were then studied for their interactions with



Potent group: Fans utilise their devotion to film stars and cinematic stories to participate in and influence politics, showcasing a distinctive fusion of cultural loyalty and political activism. THE HINDU

political hashtags. To compare the influence of certain 'fan bases' in the Twitter political trends, let us take a look at how the movie fan accounts of different actors share the Twitter space based on their interaction with certain hashtags.

Pattern of engagement

The structure of engagement among fans of different stars, when deductively categorised into dominants (with the most reach), fans (intermediary users with moderate reach), and regulars (those with the least engagement) highlights how some actors, like Rajinikanth, have a broader organic reach directly to fans, compared to others who rely more on intermediaries to amplify their message. This suggests differences in how fan clubs and communities form around each star and engage with political content on Twitter.

Among the political hashtags that trended in the study period, the hashtags that supported the DMK showed the highest number of occurrences. It was close to 24% of the total number of political hashtags. Tamil actor Vijay had the most number of fan accounts during the study period.

Movie fans contribute significantly, representing 55.12% of total participants in political hashtags. The two largest participants per hashtag in our study are those that are aligned with the BJP – 'Pro-BJP' hashtags, and the hashtags that are against the DMK – 'Anti-DMK' hashtags. This observation suggests potential external funding. While on the other hand, the hashtags that favoured the DMK – 'Pro-DMK', and the hashtags that were against the BJP – 'Anti-BJP', showed very low participants per hashtag.

Since the DMK-led State government

assumed power in May 2021, the participants per hashtag number for the anti-State government trends went up by 35.43%. This could indicate the presence of funding by other parties that do not align with the DMK. This also suggests dissatisfaction among the people with the governance of the State government regardless of the ruling party (AIADMK and DMK). But judging by the sheer scale of the participants per hashtag, it could be a funded effort by parties that are not in favour of regional/State powers.

Dominance of critics

The data seems to suggest there is a dominance of anti-Party tweets, for both the DMK as well as the BJP. This shows the substantial presence of critics on the platform. This is followed by the strong presence of supporters for each party – an active base of supporters. The discussions/trends are also heavily focused on parties other than the DMK and the BJP, including the AIADMK, the NTK, and the INC.

While the data collected is spread over a large timeline, it is important to consider external factors such as ongoing events and political developments that have an influence on Twitter trends.

Our observation on the prevalence of political messaging and the participation of movie fan bases in the political world show a very balanced picture. Upon drawing out standard deviations of actors' fan bases across the various political trends, we find the variance to be minimal. Nonetheless, the following insights were particularly intriguing: 14.78% of politically interested (interacted with political hashtags) Kamal fan accounts participated in Pro-DMK hashtags – this is the highest amongst the major actors fan accounts, closely

followed by Ajith fan accounts (14.57%). On the other hand, a remarkable 17.95% of politically interested Rajinikanth fan accounts participated in Pro-BJP hashtags. This participation is huge, overshadowing the second place contender, which has only single-digit representation.

During the period of study, cinema surpassed even politics as the most discussed subject. The aforementioned findings provide a slightly clearer answer or response to the frequently asked question or prevailing perception regarding the political success of movie actors in Tamil Nadu, as observed from the perspective of fan activity. Amidst the vibrant film and celebrity fan base in the State, their political involvement is an extension of the broader political ethos of dissent and debate that is pervasive in Tamil Nadu and is mirrored in the State's cinema.

But, it is pertinent to note that while social media metrics such as hits, likes, and clicks certainly help create a narrative or build an opinion, elections are still primarily fought at the grassroots level – such as booths. It might be premature to ascertain the extent to which an active social media following would actually translate into votes. However, as argued elsewhere, control over discourse, access to resources, and a motivated cadre of personnel are crucial for electoral forays and political success. This requires vision complemented by political labour.

Vignesh Karthik KR is a postdoctoral research fellow of Indian and Indonesian politics at the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies. Ajay Chandra Vasagam U is a researcher at the Social Media Networks and (Dis)information Research Group, King's College London. We acknowledge the support extended by Regan K and team.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

Feasible (S.K. Bhatnagar, New Delhi)

'Feasible' means 'practicable, easily and conveniently done.' It is a *feasible idea*. His proposals are good, but we must carry out a *feasibility study*. Fowler says of 'feasible': 'Its proper sense is practicable, capable of being done, accomplished, or carried out' (OED). It means the same as 'possible' where that might be ambiguous. A thunderstorm is possible (not feasible). A counter-revolution is possible – (a) one may happen for all we know, or (b) we can bring one about if we choose to. If (b) is the meaning, 'feasible' is better than 'possible' because it cannot properly bear sense (a) and therefore obviates ambiguity.

Fowler is against the use of 'feasible' in the sense of 'reasonable, likely, possible.' But more and more writers are using the word in the sense of 'likely, possible.' Here is a sentence from T.S. Eliot's 'The Humanism of Irving Babbitt': 'I am not here concerned with the question whether such a 'humanistic' civilisation ... is or is not *desirable*: only with the question whether it is *feasible*.' The use of the word in the sense of 'possible' still attracts criticism. The latest edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary records 'likely, probable' as one of the meanings of 'feasible' and says it is disputed.

Go for (P. K. Bannerjee, Jamshedpur)

'Go for' has several meanings depending on the context. 'Go for somebody or something' means 'to be attracted by, like very much.' *He goes for ice cream. She does not go much for Western music. I don't go for TV news.* It also means 'to attack'. *They went for the thief with sticks and swords.*

It can also be used figuratively. *He went for the Finance Minister over his new proposals.* When you say that what you have said about someone or thing goes for another person or thing, it means that it applies to the second person or thing. *What is said about my boss goes for your boss also. There is a lot of corruption in this State. That goes for most other States also.*

'Go for something or somebody' also means 'to fetch something or somebody.' *Shall I go for a doctor? She has gone for some fresh vegetables.* 'To go for something' also means (a) 'to choose something' (b) 'to attempt to have or achieve something'. *I will go for coffee.* When you say that something is going for you, you mean that you are in an advantageous position. *He is amazingly lucky. Everything is going for him at the moment.*

THE DAILY QUIZ

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

May 1 is observed as International Workers' Day. Here is a quiz on the same

Sindhu Nagaraj

QUESTION #1

Why was May 1 chosen to observe this day?

abuses of working time. Spain became the first country to introduce this by law for factory and fortification workers. What was this movement called?

QUESTION #2

This was the aftermath of a bombing that took place at a labour demonstration, which is related to the answer to the first question. This incident is considered significant to the origin of the International Workers' Day. What is it called?

QUESTION #4

Even though the majority of countries observe International Workers' Day on May 1, the United States also celebrates Labour Day to recognize the American labour movement. This is celebrated on which date every year?

QUESTION #3

This was a social movement to regulate the length of a working day, preventing excesses and

QUESTION #5

Which erstwhile political party in India first organised the May Day celebration in India?



Visual question: In which part of India is this statue located? What is it called? The statue also commemorates an event connected to the International Workers' Day. What is it?

Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:

- Which famous American jazz musician mooted the idea for an International Jazz Day and when was it first observed? **Ans: Herbie Hancock and 2012**
 - Which African city is the Global Host for 2024 the International Jazz Day? **Ans: Tangier, Morocco**
 - Characterised by heavy mode modulation and few chord changes, which type of jazz had its pioneers in Miles Davis and John Coltrane? **Ans: Modal Jazz**
 - Bird*, the 1988 biographical film, is about which famous jazz musician? **Ans: Charlie Parker**
 - What is the claim to fame of 'Livery Stable Blues' released in February 1917? **Ans: First commercial jazz recording**
 - Which musicians were nicknamed 'High Priest of Bop' and 'King of the Clarinet'? **Ans: Thelonious Monk and Artie Shaw**
 - Whose autobiography is titled 'Lady Sings the Blues' and adapted into a 1972 movie? **Ans: Billie Holiday.**
- Visual Question: Identify this legendary singer dubbed the 'the Lady of Swing'. **Ans: Ella Fitzgerald**

Early Birds

Prashant Nain – Rajmohan V – Jyot Prakash Gulati – Niharbala Behera – Sadhan Kumar Panda

Word of the day

Blight:

a disease or injury of plants marked by the formation of lesions, withering, and death of parts; something that frustrates plans or hopes

Synonyms: plague, smite, afflict, blemish, blotch

Usage: *The apple trees were blighted by fungus. The expanding urban sprawl is a blight on the countryside*

International Phonetic Alphabet: /blaɪt/

Pronunciation: bit.ly/blightnew

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

From Page One

ED told to come clean on timing of arrest

Justice Khanna explained that Mr. Kejriwal's defence was focussed on the circumstances of his arrest as getting bail would be hard under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Under Section 19 (the ED's power to arrest), the onus was on the agency to show reasonable basis and material to prove an accused person's guilt. Whereas, under Section 45 (bail under PMLA), the burden shifts to the accused to *prima facie* convince a court that he was innocent.

Earlier in the hearing, Mr. Singhvi pointed out that an arrest in a PMLA case could only be effected if the investigating officer had reason to believe the "guilt" of the accused. "An arrest cannot happen on the basis of suspicion. The threshold is very high," the senior lawyer contended.

He said the arrest of Mr. Kejriwal was based on hearsay and statements that accused-turned-approvers had made after their arrest. Though none of their earlier statements had named Mr. Kejriwal, these were suppressed by the agency.

One of the accused, Sarath Reddy, had earlier refused to name Mr. Kejriwal. The ED had objected to his plea for interim bail though his wife was unwell. His request for bail, however, sailed through after he made a statement implicating Mr. Kejriwal. A similar train of events happened with another accused, Raghav Magunta. "Once the statement (naming the CM is made), the ED's opposition suddenly turns into benevolence," Mr. Singhvi said. He said Mr. Magunta and his father were contesting the elections. "It was a farce... turning approvers and all," he added.

'No evidence'

He stressed that there was not a shred of evidence on the money trail or the proceeds of crime under Section 3 of the PMLA. The statement of Mr. Kejriwal under Section 50 of the PMLA was not recorded before his arrest. On the allegations that money was spent on the Goa election campaign, Mr. Singhvi said neither was AAP made a party in this case nor did the ED claim that the money was crime proceeds that passed through Mr. Kejriwal into the party coffers.

The Supreme Court questioned the continuous flow of complaints from the initiation of proceedings. It noted that Section 8 of the PMLA required the investigation to be completed at the most in 365 days. The court asked the ED which facts of AAP leader Manish Sisodia's case were relevant to Mr. Kejriwal's case.

SC slams IMA chief's remarks about court

The IMA had complained to the court about the blatant disregard shown by Patanjali to the Supreme Court and the field of allopathic medicine.

In the last hearing, on April 23, the Bench had turned to the IMA and said it would look into the phenomenon of inflated bills and doctors allegedly prescribing over-priced medicine brands in cahoots with pharmaceutical companies.

Mr. Rohatgi drew the court's attention to Mr. Asokan's interview in which he had said it was "unfortunate" for the court to have criticised the IMA. He had reportedly said the "vague and generalised statements" had demoralised private doctors. The senior lawyer repeatedly pointed to the part where Mr. Asokan was quoted to have said that "it does not behave the Supreme Court to take a broadside against the medical profession of the country which after all sacrificed so many lives for the Covid war".

Mr. Asokan had been replying to a query about the court's observations in a hearing that when it was pointing one finger at Patanjali, the remaining four fingers were pointed towards IMA.

Mr. Rohatgi sought an exemption for Mr. Ramdev and Mr. Balkrishna from appearing in court. The Bench allowed them a respite for the next date of hearing alone.

Turnout data update without total voter count leads to row

Opposition flags issue after EC shares turnout numbers several days after two phases; CPI(M) says fears over manipulation of results remain as voter numbers can be altered at the time of counting

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

More than 10 days after Phase 1 and four days after Phase 2 of polling for the ongoing general elections, the Election Commission (EC) released the final voter turnout figures for the two rounds on April 30. While Phase 1 saw a turnout of 66.14%, for Phase 2, it was 66.7%.

However, the poll body did not release the total number of voters in each constituency. The Opposition parties, which had earlier in the day raised this issue majorly on social media platforms, pointed this out after the EC released the data.

Polling was held in 102 constituencies on April 19 under Phase 1, while 88 seats went to the polls on April 26 in Phase 2.

In Phase 1, the turnout of male voters was 66.22% while that of women electors was 66.07%. The corresponding figures for Phase 2 were 66.99% and 66.42%, according to a statement from the EC on Tuesday.

During the last general



The Opposition also expressed worry over the 5.75% jump in voter turnout between initial numbers and final figure for phase 2. AFP

elections in 2019, the first phase final turnout was shared two days after the voting. The turnout for the first phase in 2019 was 69.43% and for the second phase was 69.44%.

Both phases have shown a dip in voting percentages.

Seeks transparency

After the EC released the figures, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury posted on X: "Finally ECI has put out the final voter turnout figures for the first 2 phases which are substantially, not marginally as is normal, higher than the initial figures. But why

are the absolute numbers of voters in each parliamentary constituency not put out? Percentages are meaningless unless this figure is known."

"Apprehensions of manipulation of results continue as total voter numbers can be altered at the time of counting. Total number of voters in each constituency was always available on ECI website till 2014! ECI must be transparent and put out this data."

Trinamool Congress leader Derek O'Brien said: "Four days after Phase 2 ends, Election Commission releases final voting figures. A bump up (jump in

turnout) of 5.75% from what EC released 4 days ago! Is this normal? What am I missing here?"

Earlier in the day, Opposition leaders questioned the delay in sharing of data by the EC. In a post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said: "For the first time, even 11 days after the first phase of the polls and four days after the second phase, the final voter turnout has not been published by the ECI. In the past, ECI used to publish the final voter turnout immediately after voting or within 24 hours. Only approximate polling figures are available on ECI's website. What accounts for this delay?"

"Additionally, the number of registered voters in each Lok Sabha constituency and the Assembly constituencies included in that Lok Sabha constituency is also not available on the Commission's website," he posted on X.

Mr. Yechury also pointed out that the delay in the release of data was "very disturbing". "This raises serious apprehensions on manipulation of results," he said.

Summons to Revanth another nail in coffin of fair polls: Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the Delhi Police summons to Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy in connection with an alleged doctored video of Union Home Minister Amit Shah that was being circulated on social media.

The Delhi Police, which come under the Ministry of Home Affairs, had asked Mr. Reddy, also the Telangana Congress chief, to join the investigation on Wednesday.

In a post on X, Congress's general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the summons to Mr. Reddy was yet another nail in the coffin of free and fair elections. "The moment Congress leaders make posts critical of the BJP, the Prime Minister advances the police to knock at their doors. Meanwhile, the Del-

hi Police is quiet while the BJP creates and circulates fake videos of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh," he wrote.

He said the summons clearly underlined the desperation of the BJP after its lacklustre performance in the first two phases of the Lok Sabha election.

"Is the PM afraid that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will torpedo his party's prospects in a free and fair election?" he asked.

Mr. Ramesh further accused the Prime Minister of withholding Central funds to Telangana. "The PM has made a habit of neglecting States that reject him at Assembly polls," he said in his post.

The Union government, he said, was yet to release to the State ₹4,000 crore of GST compensation, ₹24,205 crore recommended by NITI Aayog, and the ₹1,800 crore grant for the development of backward districts.

Gujarat Police arrest two Congress, AAP workers over 'doctored' video of Shah

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Two more persons, political functionaries from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Congress party, were arrested on Tuesday in Gujarat for allegedly posting a "doctored video" of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's April 23 speech in Telangana regarding reservation. A day ago, the Assam Police arrested Reetam Singh, a lawyer at the Gauhati High Court working as the Congress's Assam war room coordinator.

Mr. Shah appealed for information on the people who were disseminating the doctored video. "If you come across any such fake video anywhere, please inform us about the details of the disseminator. We will take strict action against the culprits," the Minister said in a post on X.

"The Congress has now



Amit Shah

resorted to misleading citizens with fake videos out of panic and fear of defeat. The right to reservations in the country belongs to SC, ST and OBC brothers and sisters, and as long as the BJP government is in office, no one can change it. The INDIA Alliance has given reservations to Muslims, reducing the share of SCs, STs and OBCs. Congress is misleading people by editing a speech of mine in which I committed to abolishing the unconstitutional reservations for Muslims. Directions have been issued to the police to address this issue as per the law," Mr. Shah said.

SC raps Uttarakhand licensing authority in Patanjali case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday expressed dissatisfaction at the Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority, saying it only "woke up" and moved against Patanjali Ayurved and its co-founder Baba Ramdev like "lightning" for repeated violations committed under the Drugs and Magic Remedies Act after the court intervened and passed orders.

A Bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah were not impressed by the authority's affidavit which said it had, on April 15, suspended the manufacturing licences of Patanjali Ayurved Ltd. for 14 products - Swasari Gold, Swasari Vati, Bronchom, Swasari Pravahi, Swasari Avaleh, Mukta Vati Extra Power, Lipidom, Bp Grit, Madhugrit, Madhunashini Vati Extra Power, Livamrit Advance, Livogrit, Eyegrit Gold and Patanjali Drishti Eye Drop - under Rule 159 (1) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945.

"This is something you should have done as a routine. So, if you want to, you can move like lightning. Otherwise, you simply do

Licensing body was criticised for cancelling 14 licences of Divya Pharmacy only after SC intervention

not," Justice Kohli addressed senior advocate Dhruv Mehta, who appeared for the State Licensing Authority (SLA).

"It was only after our order that you [SLA] realised that there is a law - Drugs and Magic Remedies Act. You were oblivious of it till then. Now, you wake up and realise you have power... Why were you in limbo for nearly six years?" Justice Kohli asked.

Justice Amanullah said the SLA has "shot from the court's shoulders".

Dr. Mithilesh Kumar, Joint Director State Licensing Authority, Ayurvedic and Unani Services, tendered an unconditional apology to the Court. However, the court took exception to Mr. Kumar's submission that the SLA had been "vigilant in its duties".

The Bench gave the SLA another 10 days to file fresh affidavits.

The case was posted for hearing on May 14.

Congress govt. failed to act on Revanna issue: Shah

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday slammed the Congress government in Karnataka for its alleged failure to take action against Janata Dal(S) MP Prajwal Revanna, grandson of former PM H.D. Deve Gowda, who has been accused of sexually exploiting a large number of women with hundreds of explicit video clips in circulation allegedly showing these assaults.

The JD(S) is part of the BJP-led NDA, and Mr. Revanna is its candidate from Hassan, which went to the polls on April 26. Mr. Shah told journalists that the Karnataka government should be held accountable for not taking action in the Revanna case. "The Congress, which is running the government in Karnataka, is trying to blame us... Why has it not taken action so far?" he said.

CBI chargesheet notes Manipur govt. did not sanction charges of 'enmity'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Manipur government had not granted sanction to prosecute the accused under Section 153A for promoting enmity among different groups on the grounds of race, at the time the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) filed its chargesheet in the Manipur case of gang rape and sexual assault and parading of two Kuki-Zo women by a mob of the Meitei community in the first few days of the ethnic conflict in the State.

The chargesheet also revealed that the CBI had not made any fresh arrests in the case apart from the six accused first arrested by the Manipur Police after videos of the incident went



The State has not replied to questions about whether the sanction has been granted.

viral on social media months after it had happened. It also added that three of the accused in the case, identified by the two victims, were still absconding.

The chargesheet, filed in October 2023, five months after the incident, said that the federal probe

agency was awaiting sanction to prosecute the accused under Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code (promoting enmity between groups on grounds of race, religion, etc.) as required by provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

The Manipur government has not responded to questions about whether the prosecution sanction has been granted yet.

The CBI's chargesheet in the case, which has now become public, concluded that the accused persons conspired with a large number of unidentified people of the Meitei community to execute a series of pre-planned crimes, including violence, arson, sexual assault, and murder, which specifically tar-

getted the tribal community.

This particular case from May 4 came to light only months later when a video of the incident, recorded by the perpetrators, went viral on social media and public outrage forced the Police to register a First Information Report (FIR). The case was then transferred to the CBI by the Supreme Court, along with other similar cases of sexual assault that occurred during the ongoing conflict in Manipur.

The agency added that the law and order situation in the State, given the ethnic conflict, was such that it was forced to conduct the Test Identification Parade (TIP) by showing photographs of the accused to the victims.

Women block Army contingent moving weapons in Manipur

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Eleven armed miscreants dressed in police uniform were intercepted by the Mahar regiment of the Army in Manipur's Bishnupur district around 2.30 a.m. on Tuesday.

A cache of three AK series of rifles, 5 INSAS, 2 SLR rifles, two hand grenades, over 600 rounds of ammunition and bulletproof jackets were recovered from their possession, the Manipur Police said.

Later in the day, around hundred women blocked the Army contingent carrying the weapons seized from the armed miscreants. The Army opened fire in the air to disperse

the women who were demanding that the seized weapons be returned.

"On being informed by the Army about the developing situation, District Police rushed to the spot. On reaching, it was informed by the Army personnel that the 11 persons have been snatched by the womenfolk during aggressive confrontation with them despite their best efforts," the police said.

However, teams of both Manipur Police and the Army could reach out to the teams at Kumbi police station. The recovered weapons were kept in safe custody. "The mob was later dispersed and the situation was brought under control," the police said.

Khurshid, niece booked for 'vote jihad' appeal

Press Trust of India
FARRUKHABAD

The Uttar Pradesh Police on Tuesday booked Congress leader Salman Khurshid and his niece Maria Alam after she called for a "vote jihad" in favour of the INDIA bloc candidate Naval Kishore Shykya from the Farrukhabad seat.

Seeking votes for Mr. Shykya, Ms. Alam, of Samajwadi Party, made the appeal, terming it as necessary in the current situation for the minority community to drive away the BJP government. While a case was registered against her, Mr. Khurshid was added to the case as he was the chief guest at the event.

APPEAL

Kanishkasri aged 6 years is advised to undergo Complex Open Heart Surgery (Hami Mustard + Rastelli Procedure) at The Madras Medical Mission, Chennai. The total expenditure is Rs. 5,35,000/-. Her family is very poor and cannot afford this huge cost. Please help her to undergo the surgery and lead a healthy life. The donations sent through CH/D/DINEFT Transfer & Google Pay (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C. No:60182010063310, IFSC No: CNRB0016018) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT.

All correspondence is done through **WWS**, Read Public Charitable Trust, Flat No. G.F.1, Cordelia Apartments, O.No.13, N.No.29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai - 600006. Ph: 044-42137401/28235324/738978027. E Mail ID: womenswelfare syndicate@gmail.com. Website: www.womenswelfare syndicate.org.

WWS

ELECTIONS 2024



Modi writes to NDA's Phase 3 candidates

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday wrote letters to all NDA candidates in the fray in the third phase of the Lok Sabha election, asking them to take on the Congress's "divisive agenda" of giving reservation to Muslims by snatching it from the SCs, the STs, and the OBCs, and

"dangerous ideas" like bringing in inheritance tax. Stressing that the current polls were "no ordinary election", he said: "They [Opposition] are bent upon taking away the hard-earned wealth of the people and giving it to their vote bank. The Congress has also made it clear that they will bring in dangerous ideas like inheritance tax. The nation must unite to stop them." "I send you my wishes for your victory in the election", the Prime Minister said.



Modi asked the candidates to take on the Congress's 'divisive' agenda. AFP

Shinde fields Waikar from NW Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena on Tuesday announced MLAs Ravindra Waikar and Yamini Jadav as its candidates from Mumbai North West and Mumbai South Lok Sabha constituencies respectively. An MLA from Jogeshwari in Mumbai, Mr. Waikar was

previously a close associate of Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray or UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray before he joined Mr. Shinde's Shiv Sena recently. He has been under the scrutiny of the Central agencies. He will now be contesting against Amol Kirtikar of the Shiv Sena (UBT). The BJP has chosen Piyush Goyal for Mumbai North, Mihir Kotecha for Mumbai North East, and lawyer Ujjwal Nikam for Mumbai North Central.



Like dinosaurs became extinct. Cong. will also become extinct. After years, if names are mentioned in front of children, they will ask what is Congress
RAJNATH SINGH
Defence Minister

Repoll peaceful in six booths in Outer Manipur

Repolling concluded in six booths of the Outer Manipur constituency on Tuesday, completing voting for the Lok Sabha poll in the State. Repoll was ordered for 17 polling stations. Chief Electoral Officer told *The Hindu* that repolling was peaceful with a turnout of 81.16%.



Amit Shah has claimed at a meeting that we have not sent utilisation certificates ₹2.2 crore spending by our gov. I challenge him to prove it
MAMATA BANERJEE
West Bengal Chief Minister



First pick: Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray addressing a public meeting for the Lok Sabha election, in Solapur on Monday. PTI

For Muslims in Maharashtra, Uddhav's Sena emerges as 'right choice'

Nistula Hebbar
MUMBAI/NASHIK

The paradigm shift that occurred in Maharashtra politics in 2019, when the then united Shiv Sena walked out of the NDA to form the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in the State, along with the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), is perhaps best exemplified by the fact that leaders of the Muslim community are now looking at Uddhav Thackeray's faction as its most likely bet in the Lok Sabha election, even from among the MVA constituents. According to Ghulam Arif, convener of the "Community Talking" platform, a debating group among the Muslim community in Maharashtra, it has not been an easy journey. For the community, which felt alienated from the Shiv Sena before the 1992 riots, the Sena (UBT) has become the first choice among its voters, sometimes even over the Congress, as its relative strength makes it a more formidable opponent to the BJP.

"Currently, there is an existential crisis in the Muslim community, which fears that a return of the BJP may lead to erosion of constitutional rights of minorities. Any reservation that Muslims have about the Sena (UBT) is superseded by this sense of crisis," he said.

"Unlike Muslims in the Konkan belt, where society is better integrated on religious lines, Mumbai Muslims had felt alienated by the Shiv Sena," he added. Muslims comprise nearly 10.6% of the population and are largely in the urban centres and some areas in the Konkan region.

However, none of the MVA constituents have fielded any Muslim candidate in this Lok Sabha election, a fact that has led to the resignation of Maharashtra Congress working president Arif Naseem Khan.

Farid Khan, socio-political activist and convener of Urdu Karavan, an organisation devoted to the promotion of Urdu, does point out to the lack of positive affirmation when politicians come to solicit support.

"We are literally like a barren field, which is to be ring-fenced but nothing is to be spent to cultivate it," said Mr Khan. In fact, a few days back, Rais Khan, Samajwadi Party (SP) MLA from Bhiwandi (East), who recently also quit the party over differences, held a meeting of Muslim community members exhorting them to vote for the MVA constituents as an "extraordinary" situation was prevailing in the country.

Mr. Khan, however, does add that the two years of the MVA saw not just the pandemic but also the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests, and that both challenges were handled by the then government "keeping everyone's sensitivities in mind".

In Western Maharashtra, Shabbir Ansari, the founding president of the All India Muslim OBC organisation, said that apart from tactical reasons, the Muslim community, especially OBCs among Muslims, was heartened by the promise of a caste census promised by the MVA constituents.

The Assembly election, just a few months away, will be the real test, but for now, for the Muslim community, the Sena (UBT) has emerged as the "right choice".

Splitting of parties, clan prestige loom large ahead of Phase 3 in Maharashtra

The *Mahayuti* alliance is straining every sinew to obliterate the influence of the Maha Vikas Aghadi coalition in the seats; prestige of Maharashtra's most influential political clans — the Pawars, the Ranés, the Shindes, the Tatkars — hang in the balance in a string of high-profile contests

OVERVIEW

Shoumojit Banerjee
PUNE

The upheaval in Maharashtra's politics following vertical splits within the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Shiv Sena, coupled with clan rivalry and conflicts within the ruling and Opposition alliances, looms large in the third phase of the Lok Sabha election.

Like a John le Carré Cold War thriller, the principals on these 11 Lok Sabha seats (including those in the prosperous 'sugar belt' districts), which go to the polls on May 7, have switched sides with bewildering rapidity, rendering the contest in this phase unpredictable owing to the personality-centric politics that have prevailed here.

Amid a maze of byzantine intrigue, the prestige of State's most influential political clans — the Pawars (Baramati), the Ranés (Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg), the Shindes (Solapur), and the Tatkars (Raigad) — hangs in the balance in a string of high-profile contests.

The ruling *Mahayuti* alliance (the BJP along with Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena and Ajit

Past performance

The table lists the 2019 election winners, runners-up, and their vote shares in the 11 constituencies going to the polls in the third phase of the Lok Sabha election in Maharashtra

Constituency	Party (winner)	Vote share (%)	Party (runner-up)	Vote share (%)
Baramati	NCP	52.63	BJP	40.69
Hatkanangle	SHS	46.78	SWP	39.11
Kolhapur	SHS	56.29	NCP	35.96
Latur	BJP	56.22	INC	31.65
Madha	BJP	48.2	NCP	41.5
Osmanabad	SHS	49.52	NCP	38.94
Raigad	NCP	47.49	SHS	44.42
Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg	SHS	50.83	MSHP	31.04
Sangli	BJP	42.77	SWP	28.96
Satara	NCP	51.91	SHS	40.57
Solapur	BJP	48.41	INC	33.78

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Campaign mode: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Ministers Ajit Pawar and Devendra Fadnavis during a public meeting for the Lok Sabha elections, in Pune. ANI

Pawar's NCP faction) is straining every sinew to obliterate the influence of the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition in these seats — the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) in Baramati, Madha, and Satara; the Uddhav Thackeray-led Sena (UBT) in Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg, Raigad, and Dharashiv; and the Congress in Latur, Solapur, Kolhapur and Sangli.

The Baramati Lok Sabha fight is microcosmic of the third phase, where one of the keenest electoral showdowns in the country has political rookie Sunetra Pawar (the *Mahayuti*'s candidate) squaring-off against her sister-in-law Supriya Sule, seeking re-election for the fourth time. After Ajit Pawar's adhe-

sion to the ruling alliance in 2023, the BJP finally sees a chance in storming the hitherto impregnable bastion of the Pawar clan, long considered the saffron party's holy grail in its mission to win 45 of the State's 48 Lok Sabha seats.

Pawar clash

Both Ajit Pawar and his uncle Mr. Sharad Pawar have indulged in frantic canvassing for their respective candidates, with Mr. Ajit Pawar holding out the lure of Central funds flowing directly to Baramati in the future, while the 83-year-old Mr. Pawar senior uses his emotional pull to combat his rebellious nephew.

Though in his twilight years, Mr. Sharad Pawar, with his deft manoeuvring,

has made things tough for the BJP-*Mahayuti* in Madha (in Solapur) by weaning away the politically influential Mohite-Patil clan from the BJP over to his side and fielding Dhairyasheel Mohite-Patil as the MVA's candidate.

Mr. Mohite-Patil takes on the BJP's sitting Madha MP Ranjitsinh Naik-Nimbalkar.

In the Konkan, things are not exactly balmy for the BJP and the Shinde faction of the Sena as Union Minister Narayan Rane, fielded from the key Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg seat, risks political oblivion if he loses the contest against the Sena (UBT) candidate, incumbent MP Vinayak Raut. The seat was a fierce bone of contention between the

BJP and its ally, the Shinde faction of the Sena.

In Raigad, Mr. Ajit Pawar's lieutenant and sitting MP, the NCP's Sunil Tatkare, faces a tough fight as he squares off with his old rival, former Union Minister and Sena (UBT) leader Anant Geete, whom he had beaten in the 2019 Lok Sabha Election by a thin margin.

Shivaji's descendants

In the sugar heartland of Satara and Kolhapur, the *Mahayuti* and the MVA have fielded direct descendants of the legendary Maratha warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji. Udayanraje Bhosale (the 13th direct descendant of Shivaji) is the BJP's choice for Satara, while Shahu Chhatrapati (Shivaji's 12th direct descendant) is the MVA's choice for Kolhapur.

The selection makes strategic sense given the deep reverence of the electorate towards the Maratha royals.

They have also been propped up with an eye to cashing on the Maratha agitation, which was strongly backed by both Mr. Bhosale and Mr. Shahu Chhatrapati, and both are respected by quota activist Manoj Jarange-Patil.

Hatkanangle, the other Lok Sabha seat in Kolha-

pur, sees MP Dhairyasheel Mane of the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena take on Satyajit Patil of the Sena (UBT).

However, the real contest here is between Mr. Mane and Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana chief Raju Shetti, the 'third force' in the fray and a former two-term MP.

Contesting independently, Mr. Shetti is attempting to reclaim lost ground by taking on the rich sugar barons by focusing on farmers' woes, poor agricultural produce, and water issues.

In the doddering Congress bastion of Solapur, the MVA's Praniti Shinde, daughter of veteran Congressman Sushilkumar Shinde, faces the BJP's Ram Satpute. This time, Ms. Shinde, bolstered by Sena (UBT), is said to be in a strong position.

Yet, despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's frequent visits to western Maharashtra, harping on the scrapping of Article 370 and raising the bogey of the Congress awarding OBC reservation to Muslims, this region will see a settling of scores on May 7 as many have not taken kindly to the splits engineered by the saffron party within the Shiv Sena and the NCP.

Delimitation, indigenous identity, and minority votes may influence Assam's last phase of voting

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

The BJP's regional allies have more at stake in the third and final phase of the Lok Sabha election in Assam with the focus on reclaiming the 'parliamentary space' for representatives of indigenous or majority communities, believed to have been made easier by the 2023 delimitation.

Covering four constituencies — Barpeta, Dhubri, Guwahati, and Kokrajhar — in central and western Assam, this phase will also see the Congress pitted against more than one of its 15 partners in the United Opposition Forum, Assam (UOFA) apart from rivals in the BJP-led NDA.

The phase is headlined by Dhubri, which Maulana Badruddin Ajmal, the chief of the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) seeks to retain for the fourth straight time.

Bengali-origin Muslims constitute more than 70% of the voters in the constituency bordering Bangladesh, often used as a metaphor by indigenous groups to highlight the touchy is-



Home stretch: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at a rally for BJP's candidate for Guwahati, Bijuli Kalita Medhi. ANI

sue of "illegal immigration" in Assam.

Mr. Ajmal, whose family is known for a global perfume business, penetrated this erstwhile Congress bastion in 2009, four years after forming the AIUDF as a challenge to the UPA government for failing to prevent the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act from being scrapped. The Act was seen as a shield against the harassment of Muslims in the name of the detection and deportation of foreigners.

For Mr. Ajmal, 2024 is likely to be his toughest test as he faces former Assam Minister and MLA Rakibul Hussain of the Con-

gress and Zayed Islam of the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), one of the two allies of the BJP. The other is the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL). While Mr. Husain is confident of unfurling the Congress flag again in Dhubri after 15 years, the AGP is banking on the possible division of votes between the AIUDF and the Congress to win the seat for the first time.

The AGP, though, is surer of the Barpeta seat that underwent a demographic shift after the 2023 delimitation. Muslim-dominated Assembly segments were hived off from Barpeta and added to Dhubri while Hindu-dominated segments were added from adjoining

parliamentary constituencies. "We fulfilled the promise of giving the AGP a winnable seat," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said a few days ago.

The AGP has had a parliamentary drought since Joseph Toppo won the Sonitpur (now Tezpur) seat in 2009. The chances of the party's Barpeta candidate and former Minister Phani Bhushan Choudhury to fill the void are said to be high because of a likely split in the anti-NDA votes among three UOFA candidates — Deep Bayan of Congress, Manoranjan Talukdar of CPI(M), and Abul Kalam Azad of Trinamool Congress.

The UOFA has a similar problem in the Kokrajhar seat reserved for the Scheduled Tribes. Here, Congress candidate Garjan Mashahary faces Gauri Sankar Sarania of the Trinamool apart from Joyanta Basumatary of the UPPL, Kampa Borgoyari of the BPF, and Binita Deka of the Gana Suraksha Party.

Kokrajhar is the nerve centre of the Bodoland Territorial Region where the Bodos — the largest plains tribe in the north-

east — constitute about 35% of the population. The area has been witness to conflicts between the Bodos and at least 19 non-Bodo communities, who largely helped incumbent GSP's Naba Kumar Sarania win the seat in 2014 and 2019.

Mr. Sarania's candidature was rejected this time after the Gauhati High Court found his ST certificate to be invalid.

The absence of Mr. Sarania is expected to improve the chances of a Bodo candidate being elected from the Kokrajhar seat after 10 years. Mr. Basumatary, an MLA, believes the supporters of the UPPL and the BJP will help him get a Lok Sabha berth.

The BPF, on the other hand, is banking on the "misrule" and "anti-minority face" of the UPPL to spring a surprise.

Guwahati has the fewest candidates — eight — among the third-phase seats. The constituency is set to witness a straight fight between Bijuli Kalita Medhi of the BJP and Mira Borthakur Goswami of the Congress, thus ensuring a woman represents it for the fourth straight term.

After demand, EC defers poll in Anantnag to May 25

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday heeded the demand of a group of parties, including the BJP, the J&K Peoples Conference, and the J&K Apni Party, to defer the election in the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency to May 25. The election was scheduled to be held on May 7.

"The EC after considering report from the UT administration as well as analysing the ground situation prevailing in the constituency, has decided under Section 56 of Representation of People Act, 1951, to revise the date of poll in the said Parliamentary Constituency," Sanjeev Kumar Prasad, Secretary of the EC, said.

However, the National Conference, the Peoples Democratic Party and the CPI(M) opposed the move. These parties said the demand was being made by the BJP and the JKPC, which has not fielded any candidates from the constituency.

IN BRIEF



Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi takes charge as Navy chief

Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi assumed command of the Indian Navy as the 26th Chief of the Naval Staff. He succeeds Admiral R. Hari Kumar who retires upon superannuation after over 40 years of service. "The existing and emerging challenges in the maritime domain mandate the Indian Navy to remain operationally ready to deter potential adversities at sea in peace and to 'win the war at sea' when asked to do so," Admiral Tripathi said speaking to the media after inspecting a guard of honour on South Block lawns. "That will remain my singular focus and endeavour."

10 Naxalites killed in gunfight with forces in Chhattisgarh

Ten alleged Naxalites, including three women Maoist cadres, were killed in an anti-Naxal operation in Abujmad area in Chhattisgarh's Bastar on Tuesday. Police said the gunbattle began in the early hours of the inter-district border of Kanker and Narayanpur districts when a joint team of District Reserve Guards (DRG) and Special Task Force (STF) was out for operation. The police party and the Maoists exchanged fire in the forest between Tekmeta and Kakur villages. Arms and ammunition, including an AK47 and explosives, were also recovered.

SC asks if grounds for arrest were provided to NewsClick founder

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday told Delhi Police that judicial orders remanding 74-year-old journalist and online portal NewsClick founder Prabir Purkayastha will crumble if his arrest turns out to be illegal.

A Bench of Justices B.R. Gavi and Sandeep Mehta quizzed the police on their operation to pick up Mr. Purkayastha in the early hours of October 3 last year. He was rushed to the Magistrate, who passed an order at 6 a.m. remanding him to custody.

Mr. Purkayastha, who was charged under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, was represented by a legal aid lawyer. His own lawyer was not informed. The police had sent by WhatsApp the details of the arrest and remand to Mr. Purkayastha's lawyer after the order for his custody was passed.

If arrest is found illegal, subsequent orders turn invalid, says top court

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for Mr. Purkayastha, said, "When we asked why we were not informed, the police said it was 6 a.m. The FIR was not given to us. We applied. The police objected. The grounds of arrest were not communicated."

Justice Mehta asked Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju, "Was he given the grounds of arrest? Unless you give him the grounds, how can he defend himself or apply for bail?" Mr. Raju said Mr. Purkayastha was "orally informed" about the grounds for his arrest. "But now, giving them in writing is necessary... Look, if your arrest was illegal, the subsequent orders will also be illegal," the judge cautioned the police.

In his 'last election', Digvijaya tries to reignite old connect with Rajgarh

The Congress veteran has mounted an old school campaign, visiting about 25 villages every day, meeting people, and holding 'mukad sabhas'

GROUND REPORT

Mehul Malpani
RAJGARH (M.P.)

Around 2 p.m., when the sun is at its peak, former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh visits the Hoda Mata temple atop a hill in Rajgarh's Dhand village, barely a couple of kilometres from the State's border with Rajasthan. After the darshan, he briefly chats with vendors outside the temple, who share their views on various issues, including the broken road and an incomplete public toilet for devotees. He then heads to Bhumaria village for a small public meeting.

Loaded with a diverse profile ranging from 10 years as the CM to the Congress general secretary to currently a Rajya Sabha member, the 77-year-old 'Raja Saheb' (as he is called in the area) is now the party's Lok Sabha candidate from Rajgarh, his home

constituency. He is pitted against two-term BJP MP Rodmal Nagar, who won the seat in the 2019 election by a huge margin of 4.31 lakh votes.

After initial reluctance, Mr. Singh finally accepted the party leadership's decision. However, he has made it clear that this will be his "last election", which he does not forget to mention at his public meetings.

Tenure as CM

As he arrives in the small ground of Bhumaria's government primary school, a group of about 100 men and a handful of women gather under the tent. In his short speech, he recalls work done during his tenure as the CM between 1993 and 2003.

Apart from hitting out at the BJP on various issues, including unemployment, the prices of food items, and farmers' woes, Mr. Singh also alleges that the Constitution is "in danger".

"The BJP and Modiji are taking steps to end democ-



Congress leader and candidate for Madhya Pradesh's Rajgarh Lok Sabha Digvijaya Singh in Khilchipur. A.M. FARUQUI

racy," he says.

Mr. Singh is visiting about 25 villages every day, meeting people, and holding 'mukad sabhas' (street corner gatherings) in at least five to seven villages. His MLA son, Jaivardhan, is also actively campaigning across the constituency. Shortly after the announcement of his candidature, Mr. Singh also undertook an over 100 km-long 'padayatra' (foot march)

across the constituency.

In all, the Congress veteran is fully old school with his campaigning.

Challenging bastion

Locals say that an extensive campaign was necessary for Mr. Singh as they complain that he "did not stay connected locally" and the BJP has made deep inroads in most parts of the constituency.

"If you ask the elders,

they will be all praise for him, but the main problem is that the younger generation does not know him and his work during his tenure as the CM and as local MP [in 1984 and 1991]," says Bundel Singh Rajput, a farmer in Chachoura.

Mr. Singh himself can be heard telling the youth at meetings to ask their elders about his tenure and work.

Once a bastion of Mr. Singh and the Congress, Rajgarh has over the years turned into a stronghold for the BJP. In the 2023 Assembly election, the ruling party bagged six out of the eight Assembly seats in this Lok Sabha segment. Out of the two seats the Congress won, one was Mr. Singh's ancestral Raghogarh, which was won by his son.

Mr. Singh, a staunch critic of the RSS and Hindutva ideology, has been in the line of fire from BJP leaders for several years over his stance on various issues, including communalism.

The voters, however, say that the election this

time is going to be a close contest as many claim that Mr. Nagar, the incumbent MP, has been winning comfortably due to Mr. Modi's popularity and the absence of a strong opponent.

Dominating the constituency's voters, the OBC community consists of about 50% of the total voting population in Rajgarh, with the majority of them hailing from the Dangai and Sondhiya sub-castes. While the Sondhiyas, who hail from across Rajasthan border, have long supported the BJP, Mr. Singh would hope for the backing of the Dangis for the caste equations to work in his favour.

Local observers, however, argue that the parliamentary election is more between Mr. Singh's personal connect and Mr. Modi's popularity.

On May 7, Rajgarh is set to witness a fierce contest, one in which many things appear to be at stake — from Mr. Singh's political stature to the shaping of the State Congress unit in the coming years, given his hold on the organisation.

AstraZeneca submission over COVID vaccine nothing new, say doctors

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Following pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca's admission in U.K. court documents that its vaccine against COVID-19 has the potential to cause Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS), a rare side effect associated with blood clotting, doctors in India said this is not new information and that they are "well aware of the warning which has been available in India as an insert with the vaccine since the time it was introduced for general public here".

They added that any adverse event associated with the vaccine would have occurred within 21 days to a month of the first dose.

A report in British newspaper *The Daily Telegraph* stated that in a legal document submitted to the High Court in London in February for a group action being brought by 51 claimants, AstraZeneca admitted that the vaccine de-



Doctors say any adverse event would have occurred within a month of the first dose.

veloped with the University of Oxford to protect against COVID-19 may cause TTS in "very rare cases".

"It is admitted that the AZ vaccine can, in very rare cases, cause TTS. The causal mechanism is not known. Further, TTS can also occur in the absence of the AZ vaccine (or any vaccine). Causation in any individual case will be a matter for expert evidence," the newspaper quoted the legal document.

The consequences of TTS are potentially life-threatening including

strokes, brain damage, and heart attacks.

Both the Union Health Ministry and COVID-19 vaccine Covishield's manufacturer Serum Institute of India on Tuesday issued no statement regarding the development. The Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is sold under the brand name Covishield in India.

Product information

In India, the product information with the vaccine clearly mentions TTS in its special warnings and special precautions for use section while adding that a "majority of the events occurred within the first 21 days following vaccination and some events had a fatal outcome".

Doctors here said that the court admission now is "no secret".

Rajeev Jayadevan, co-chairman of the National Indian Medical Association (IMA) COVID Task Force, said: "The court admission is nothing new. In fact,

these are well documented facts validated since early 2021 (soon after vaccine rollout). The World Health Organisation (WHO) wrote about it in May 2021 and updated it in 2023."

He added that clotting was an issue for persons who were administered the first dose of the vaccine and in the first month afterwards.

"Therefore, in 2024, people are not at risk of TTS. Also, heart attacks and strokes we see in practice are not caused by TTS, which is an exceptionally rare immunological reaction that leads to clots in certain locations," he added.

"The clotting side effect of this vaccine is already known and is extremely rare. This is not the first time AstraZeneca admits risk of clotting events (again rarest side effect) associated with COVID," Cyriac Abby Philips, hepatologist from Kerala, wrote in a social media post. (With PTI inputs)

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

A piece of crucial evidence to ascertain the reasons that led to the devastating collision between two passenger trains, which left 17 people dead near Vizianagaram in Andhra Pradesh last year, has been lost since a safety advisory to install voice recording facility at railway stations was ignored, official sources said on Tuesday.

The accident pertains to the rear-end collision of Visakhapatnam-Rayagada Passenger with Visakhapatnam-Palasa Passenger between Kantakapalle and Alameda railway stations in Waltair Division of East Coast Railway on October 29, 2023.

In the statutory investigation, Commissioner of Railway Safety Pranveer Saxena has said that the loco pilot of the Visakhapatnam-Rayagada train was reluctant to cross the signal in danger. The Station

Commissioner of Railway Safety said the loco pilot of one train was reluctant to cross the signal

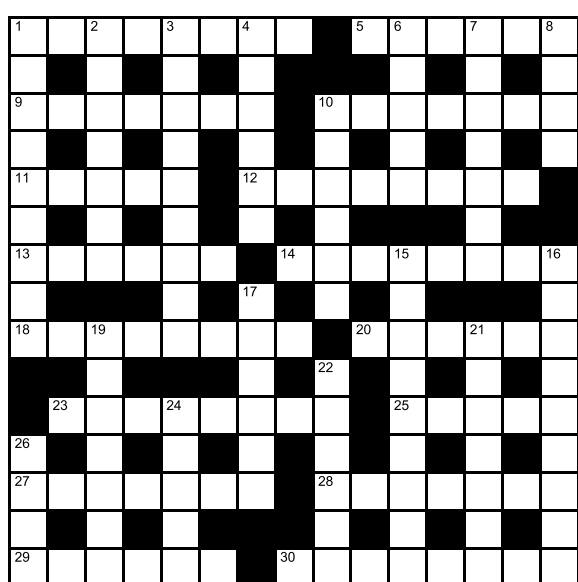
Superintendent of Kantakapalle railway station issued a Private Number (a secret code) authorising him to cross the signal in red. "The role of the Train Manager [Guard] is suspect as he is the only surviving crew member who could have acted in time to prevent the mishap... TMR has sufficient reasons not to disclose full facts as they may implicate him and the Station Superintendent of Kantakapalle," he said.

While the TMR train journal was reported "lost" and Superintendent had overwritten in the Private Number book, the "absence of audio recording of conversation on walkie-talkie makes this inconclusive", he said in the report given to the Railway Board.

THE CROSSWORD+ 14163

(set by Gussalufz)

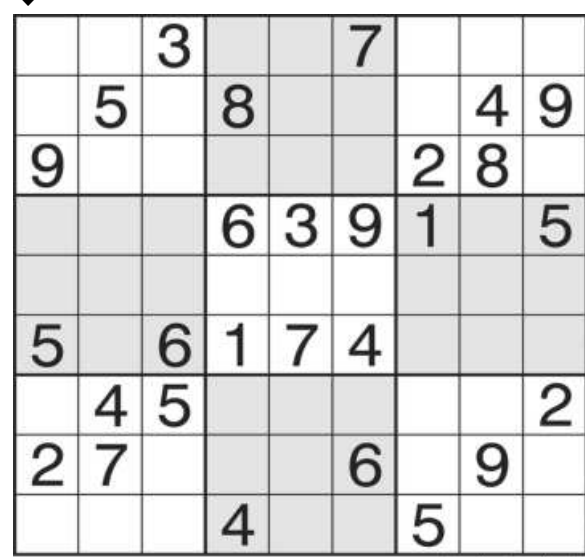
To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ <https://qrqo.page.link/jjpTn>



- 13 Killing every now and then was the way she relaxed (2,4)
14 Unfairly characterise Jedi's mugshot? (8)
18 What one often gets from a sleuth sneakily capturing a bit of unfaithfulness (3,5)
20 Dismisses puzzles (6)
23 Plonks back with laziness, without a thought (8)
25 Provoke pain in Tokyo regularly (5)
27 Work's... well, evil? (7)
28 One awfully into animals and birds (7)
29 Fake tears, grandiosely high security level (6)
30 Rain, wind at terminals coming in turbulently, signal flight closures (8)
- Down**
1 Random illness caught aunt badly (9)
2 Gentleman: "In hindsight, I almost sounded ridiculous" (7)
3 Controls a variety of shares, including half of sensex, after recession (9)
4 Born in turmoil, led conflict (6)
6 Review of these pacts shows some outstanding features (5)
7 See what people are saying about bill on IPL's restructuring (3-4)
8 Bomb smelled bad (burning sulphur) (4)
10 Game in which "fault" and "net" are reviewed (6)
15 Experiencing post-flight problems is not regular around east terminal — disheartened! (3-6)
16 Scholars in universities say IST superior (9)
17 Wade softly and turn (6)
19 Scamper around and start to sweat after old lover blackmailed (7)
21 Rainy season is imminent, as explained in Jamaica (7)
22 Setter's irrational about love, per complaint (6)
24 Goal: beer, nothing canned (5)
26 Male, possibly out of his league (4)

- Across**
1 Entered "N/A" (her office rejected revealing court action) (8)
5 Form cults bristling to seize power (6)
9 Indian state's push for growth (7)
10 Reversing scene? Staple part of a bowler's arsenal (7)
11 Propose firing head of firm (5)
12 Fabric worn by Spain's male court judges (8)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle							Solution to yesterday's Sudoku												
N	U	M	B	E	R	S	P	A	R	T	3	7	1	5	6	4	9	8	2
O	E	N	P	A	R	H	A	S	L	A	Y	E	R	S	P	A	R	T	3
H	S	R	E	S	T	I	T	H	U	N	G	S	P	A	R	L	I	A	M
R	I	T	I	E	L	L	A	E	O	V	E	R	S	P	R	E	A	D	Q
F	E	L	T	S	E	S	F	I	L	I	P	A	M	I	L	I	T	R	E
B	O	A	N	Y	V	M	E	R	E	G	I	S	T	R	E	D	P	O	S
E	I	T	X	R	H	P	S	A	I	R	T	A	M	I	S	Z	O	D	I
K	O	R	N	R	A	C	A	S	E	T	T	I	N	G	S	W	Y	V	E
3	7	1	5	6	4	9	8	2	2	8	9	3	7	1	5	6	4	9	
6	4	5	2	9	8	3	7	1	4	1	6	8	5	9	2	3	7	1	
5	2	7	6	4	3	1	9	8	9	3	8	1	2	7	4	5	6	4	
1	9	2	7	8	5	6	4	3	7	5	3	4	1	6	8	2	9	8	
8	6	4	9	3	2	7	1	5	8	6	4	9	3	2	7	1	5	6	



FAITH

Beginning with pranava

In the first verse of Kandar Anubhuti, Arunagirinatha begins with the word 'aadum'. Thus the work may be said to begin with the pranava mantra — AUM, said So. So. Mee-nakshisundaram in a discourse. The word 'aadum' contains 'a', 'u' and 'm'. Aadum pari are the first two words in the verse. Pari means horse but here, it is a reference to the peacock. The saint could have used the more commonly used word 'mayil' for peacock. But then, the pranava would be lost and his intention was to place the pranava right at the beginning.

If he had used the word mayil, then along with the adjective 'aadum' (dancing), it would have been read as 'aadumayil'. Thus the separate word aadum, with its emphasis on all the three letters, namely, 'a', 'u', and 'm', would no longer be there in the verse. Hence the use of the word pari, instead of mayil.

He talks next about Muruga's vel (spear). In Thiruppu-gazh, Arunagirinatha praises the spear as 'manthira vel', the spear as the embodiment of mantras.

Arunagirinatha then refers to 'azhagiya seval', the lovely rooster. Seval can be taken to mean protection. By beginning with Muruga's peacock mount, his spear, and the rooster on His flag, Arunagirinatha indicates to us that Kandar Anubhuti describes Muruga's appearance.

IN BRIEF



Central Bank of India Q4 PAT jumps 41.33% to ₹807 crore

Central Bank of India (CBI) reported fourth quarter net profit grew 41.33% to ₹807 crore from the year-earlier period. Total income improved by 13.2% to ₹9,699 crore. Net interest income (NII) improved marginally to ₹3,541 crore, up 0.80%, the lender said in a filing. For FY24, the bank's reported net profit grew 61.13% to ₹2,549 crore from the previous year. NII grew by 10.34% on a YoY basis to ₹12,896 crore. Total income improved to ₹35,434 crore.

Chola Investment Finance Q4 net rises 24% to ₹1,058 cr.

Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Co. Ltd. (CIFCL) reported standalone net profit for the March quarter rose 24% YoY to ₹1,058 crore. Net income grew 41% to ₹2,913 crore. Revenue from operations increased to ₹4,934 crore from ₹3,499 crore, the financial arm of the Murugappa Group said in a statement. Total assets under management increased by 36% to ₹1,53,718 crore and CIFCL clocked disbursements of ₹24,784 crore, a growth of 18%.

Star Health Insurance Q4 net profit rises 40% to ₹142 crore

Star Health and Allied Insurance Co. Ltd.'s (Star Health Insurance) standalone net profit for the quarter ended March 31, rose 40% YoY to ₹142 crore. Gross written premium rose 18% to ₹4,968 crore due to strong demand in retail health insurance. Underwriting profits grew robustly on the back of strong underwriting and risk management, the health insurer said in a statement. Combined ratio was 96.7% against 92.7%, while claim ratio rose to 66.5% from 65%.

MM Forgings forays into EV space, plans ₹500 cr. investment

N. Anand
CHENNAI

Castings and forgings major MM Forgings Ltd., (MMF) plans to invest ₹500 crore, of which ₹100 crore will be in the Electric Vehicle (EV) space over the next 18 months, and will be funded by internal accruals and debt, said MD Vidyashankar Krishnan during an interaction.



Vidyashankar Krishnan

MMF recently forayed into the EV space with the acquisition of start-up firm Abhinava Rizel Pvt. Ltd., to produce EV powertrain components for two-and three-wheelers and commercial vehicles.

"EV powertrain segment will emerge stronger in 10 years. We are aiming ₹1,000-2,000 crore revenue from the EV business alone in 7-10 years. We will achieve this by diversifying and refocusing on green energy and changing our product mix," he said.

MMF also announced N. Srinivasan had stepped down as Chairman on March 31.

He has been succeeded by Mr. Krishnan.

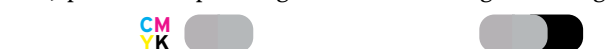
'Manufacturing witnessing an uptick in fresher hiring'

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

Fresher hiring in the manufacturing sector is seeing an uptick currently, in the first half of calendar 2024, and the trend coincides with an increase in capital investments, mergers and acquisitions activities in automobile, electronics and textiles and an increased focus on manufacturing, according to third-party hiring firms.



They typically get into the roles of design and engineering, automation, embedded and mechanical engineering, assembly line, production planning and control and supply-chain management. Firms hiring freshers include Siemens, GE, Philips, ABB and Bosch, according to industry observers.



Core sectors slid 5.2% in March

The Index of Core Industries rose at a three-year low pace of 7.5% through 2023-24, but hit a multi-year high in March; for the first time in 12 years all 8 sectors recorded annual growth, led by double-digit upticks in steel and coal

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's eight core infrastructure sectors' output growth moderated to 5.2% in March from an upgraded 7.1% uptick in February, with high growth in Cement and Electricity production offset by contractions in fertilisers and refinery products.

For the full year 2023-24, the core sectors recorded a three-year low growth of 7.5%, compared with 7.8% in 2022-23.

However, this also marked the first time in at least 12 years that all eight sectors had recorded annual growth, led by double-digit upticks in steel

Slippery slope

Growth moderated to 5.2% in March from an upgraded 7.1% uptick in February

■ Fertilisers contracted 1.3% from last March; refinery products shrank 0.3%

■ Steel output grew 5.5%; natural gas and crude oil production rose 6.3% and 2%, respectively



■ Cement, electricity rose at a 5-month high pace of 10.6% and 8%, respectively; Coal output rose 8.7%

and coal, even as crude oil output rose 0.6% after 11 years of contraction.

Notably, with a reading of 173.3 in March, the Index of Core Industries (ICI) was 9.9% over February levels, and marked the highest print in at least seven and a half years. The ICI

last March, marking the third successive month of a drop in output, while refinery products shrank 0.3%.

Steel output grew 5.5%, the slowest pace since July 2022, while natural gas and crude oil production rose 6.3% and 2%, respectively. Cement production and electricity generation rose at a five-month high pace of 10.6% and 8%, respectively.

Coal output rose 8.7%, marking the slowest growth since last June. However, coal production levels were 20.7% higher than February.

Economists expect overall industrial output growth to also cool off from the 5.7% uptick recorded in February. The

Index of Industrial Production for March will be released on May 10.

"Similar to the trend displayed by the core sector, IIP growth is likely to moderate somewhat in March 2024, as the leap year effect fades. We project the IIP growth at 3.5-5% in March 2024," said Aditi Nayyar, chief economist at rating agency ICRA.

In 2023-24, steel output grew 12.3%, followed by an 11.7% uptick in coal and a 9.1% rise in cement production. Electricity generation recorded a 7% rise, the slowest in three years, while natural gas output grew 6.1%.

Fertilisers and refinery products grew 3.7% and 3.4%, respectively.

Tiruppur garment exports show 'revival'

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE

Garment exports from Tiruppur registered growth in February and March after facing a slump in demand for more than a year.

As per the data with the Tiruppur Exporters' Association (TEA), Tiruppur knitwear exports rose 6.4% y-o-y in February and 5.6% in March in dollar terms.

India's total garment exports grew 4.8% in February and 1.7% in March.

K.M. Subramanian, President, TEA, said with India likely to sign a trade

pact with the U.K., Indian garments will be competitive and hence, large retailers, looking for suppliers, are booking factories in India. Tiruppur may see almost 10% export growth.

Kumar Duraisamy, Joint Secretary, TEA, small retailers in Europe exhausted inventory and are buying now. Also, almost 20% of MSME exporters in Tiruppur shut shop on order decline last year. Hence, the existing units are running to full capacity and planning capacity additions. There is 20% labour shortage in Tiruppur.

IOC shares decline more than 4% as Q4 net halves

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Shares of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) on Tuesday declined more than 4% after the company reported a halving of its March quarter net profit.

Profit was lower as refining margins dipped, the petrochemical segment turned negative, and the firm, last month, cut petrol and diesel prices by ₹2 per litre each despite crude oil prices edging up.

IOC was also not compensated for ₹1,017 crore loss it incurred on holding



domestic cooking gas prices by the government, according to the filing.

Stocks dropped 4.44% to settle at ₹168.95 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it tanked 4.97% to ₹168.

On the NSE, it declined 4.46% to close at ₹168.85.

KMB Joint MD K.V.S. Manian steps down

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Kotak Mahindra Bank (KMB) informed the exchanges that K.V.S. Manian, its whole time director designated as Joint Managing Director had stepped down with immediate effect.

He had joined Kotak in 1995 and in his 29-year-long association, led various businesses across the group. KMB recently announced a new reporting structure.

The Wholesale, Commercial and Private Banking division will report directly to Ashok Vaswani, MD & CEO, while the Asset Reconstruction Division will report to Shanti Ekambaram, Deputy MD, who will also oversee the Investment Banking and Institutional Equities businesses.

SEBI board approves changes to mutual fund regulations

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is making it mandatory for Asset Management Companies (AMCs) to have an institutional mechanism for deterrence of potential market abuse, including front-running.

Considering the recent front-running instances observed by the market regulator, the SEBI Board on Tuesday approved amendments to SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 1996 to enhance the existing regulatory framework by requiring AMCs to put in place a structured insti-



tutional mechanism for identification and deterrence of potential market abuse including front-running and fraudulent transactions in securities.

'Enhanced surveillance' "The mechanism shall consist of enhanced surveillance systems, internal

control procedures and escalation processes to identify, monitor and address specific types of misconduct including front running, insider trading and misuse of sensitive information," SEBI announced.

Front-running is trading in stock, or any other financial asset by a broker who has inside knowledge of a future transaction that is about to affect its price substantially.

The Board also approved enhancing responsibility and accountability of AMCs for such an institutional mechanism and foster transparency by requiring AMCs to have a whistle blower mechanism.

SEBI approves SES ESG Research as ESG Ratings Provider

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

SES ESG Research Private Ltd. (SES ESG), a wholly owned subsidiary of Stakeholders Empowerment Services (SES), said it had received the 'Certificate of Registration as an ESG en-

vironment, social and governance' Ratings Provider' (ERP) from market regulator SEBI.

SES began ESG ratings in 2018-19. Its coverage has now increased to more than 500 companies. This could rise further based on client needs, the firm said.

NEW YORK

Judge fines Trump \$9,000 for contempt in hush money trial



REUTERS

The judge overseeing Donald Trump's criminal hush money trial fined the former U.S. president \$9,000 for contempt of court on Tuesday and said he would consider jailing him if he continued to violate a gag order. The judge had imposed the gag order to prevent Mr. Trump from criticising witnesses involved in the case. REUTERS

LONDON

U.K. to deport 5,700 migrants to Rwanda, stirring controversy



GETTY IMAGES

The United Kingdom expects to deport 5,700 migrants to Rwanda this year, a senior minister said on Tuesday, after the government published new details on the controversial plan. Rwanda has "in principle" agreed to accept 5,700 migrants already in the U.K., the Interior Ministry revealed late on Monday. AFP

WASHINGTON

Biden administration to make marijuana use a less serious crime



AP

The U.S. Department of Justice on Tuesday moved to make marijuana use as a less serious crime, a source familiar with the matter said. If finalised, the policy change could potentially be the biggest shift in federal cannabis policy in 40 years. The shift, however, would not legalise marijuana for recreational use. REUTERS

LONDON

'I'm well', says King Charles III as he resumes his public duties



GETTY IMAGES

King Charles III on Tuesday reportedly told fellow cancer patients "I'm well", as he carried out his first official public engagement since being diagnosed with the condition. The British head of state appeared relaxed as he and his wife met patients and staff at the University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre, London. AFP

Columbia locks down campus after anti-war student protests escalate

Students occupy Hamilton Hall, a building on the main campus that had been occupied in the past by protesters several times; they say the university has not made significant concessions, and refuse to leave the campus 'unless by force'

Anisha Dutta
NEW YORK

In the wee hours of Tuesday morning, student protesters occupied a building on Columbia University's main campus, escalating tensions at the university hours after administrators began suspending students who refused to leave a 'Gaza Solidarity Encampment'.



Protesters link arms outside Hamilton Hall barricading students inside the building, at Columbia University on Tuesday. REUTERS

Hamilton Hall, the building at Columbia University that protesters occupied early Tuesday morning, has been occupied several times by student activists over the past half-century. It was last occupied in 1968 amid protests against the Vietnam

War. Over several dozen protesters occupied the hall moving metal gates to barricade the doors, blocking entrances with wooden tables and chairs, and zipping doors shut.

The building was seized after demonstrators

marched around the Manhattan campus to chants of "Free Palestine." Around 1:40 a.m., protesters inside the hall unfurled a banner reading "Hind's Hall" — renaming Hamilton after Hind Rajab, a six-year-old Palestinian killed by the Is-

raeli military in Gaza. At around 6 a.m., the university announced that it had closed the campus to everyone but students who live inside the dorms on the campus and employees who provide essential services. "This access restriction will remain in place until circumstances allow otherwise," it said in a statement. On Monday, Columbia began suspending students who refused to leave a 'Gaza Solidarity Encampment' after negotiations with protesters failed and the students decided to ignore a warning that remaining would lead to their suspension and eviction.

Columbia said the nearly two-week-long protest

violated university policies, created an unwelcoming and "intolerable" environment for Jewish students and that "external actors" have contributed to a "hostile environment" around university gates.

Sueda Polat, a student organiser with the encampment, said the university had not made significant concessions to the protesters' main demand: divestment from companies with links to the Israeli occupation of Gaza. Columbia had stopped negotiating. As a result, she said, the students inside the encampment "will not be moved unless by force". (Anisha Dutta is a New York-based freelance journalist)

South Asia diaspora group starts mobilising for Biden

Sriram Lakshman

With just over six months left for the American general elections, some South Asian election activists are mobilising to re-elect U.S. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris to the White House. The all-volunteer group, South Asians for Mr. Biden, kicked off its activities for the election season with a virtual event held on April 25 that featured messages from lawmakers and functionaries of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and focused on issues such as reproductive rights and gun control.

The group, like other groups working in this space, is motivated by the idea that South Asian populations in battleground States had exceeded the margins of victory for Democrats in previous election cycles (2020 and 2021 for example). This makes South Asians, like other Asian American and Pacific Islander groups (AAPI or AANHNP) to include Native Hawaiians, a potential deciding factor in who wins in battleground States.

In a close election, such as the 2020 race between Donald Trump and Mr. Biden, winning swing States could be key to winning the 270 electoral votes needed to win the White House. However, Democrats and Republicans are focused not just on the Biden v Trump rematch this year but also other 'down ballot' races — crucial Senate and House seats as well as contests for State offices.

South Asians for Biden had reached out to a few hundred thousand South Asian and AAPI voters di-



South Asian social and political priorities were aligned with those of the Biden-Harris platform, a speaker at the event says. AP

rectly and via its digital and video campaigns in 2020 and 2021, according to Neha Dewan, national co-director of the group. Ms. Dewan listed the group's outreach in States such as Georgia and Wisconsin where Mr. Biden won by wafer-thin margins (around 12,000 votes in Georgia for example).

Important areas
During the virtual event, titled, 'Mobilising the South Asian Community to be the Margin of Victory', Ms. Dewan highlighted the work of the Biden administration in areas she said were of importance to the community: reproductive rights (e.g., women's access to contraception and abortion), curbing gun violence and hate crimes against Asian Americans.

"I know that the calls that were made into Georgia and into Wisconsin, were beyond the winning margin," said Quentin Fulks, principal deputy campaign manager for Biden-Harris 2024.

The AAPI vote was 4% of the electorate in Georgia, and an important part of the margin (just under 3%) that got Senator Raphael Warnock re-elected the Senate (December 2022), Mr. Fulks said. Democrats re-

tained control (51-49) of the U.S. Senate with Mr. Warnock getting elected for full term in the 118th Congress that began in 2023. "It's going to take all of us again in 2024 to make sure that we hit 270 electoral votes," Mr. Fulks said.

The majority of U.S. born and foreign-born Indian Americans lean towards the Democratic Party (as per 2020 data), a statistic the group appears to capitalise on.

One of the speakers at the virtual event, Washington (State) Democrat, Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal cited data to support the view that South Asian social and political priorities were aligned with those of the Biden-Harris platform.

Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Ro Khanna, an Indian American California Democrat, emphasised that South Asian voters were critical to electoral victories in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Nevada, Georgia and Arizona. Mr. Biden won the electoral college votes in each of these States in 2020.

"We were key to President Biden and Vice President Harris's 2020 historic win. We need to mobilise again," he said.

Hamas, Fatah held talks in Beijing: China

Nikhil M. Babu
BEIJING

Representatives of the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah) and the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) recently came to Beijing to have an "in-depth and candid" dialogue on promoting Palestinian reconciliation, at the invitation of China, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China.

"The two sides fully expressed their political will of realising reconciliation through dialogue and consultation, had discussions

on many issues, and made encouraging progress," a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Tuesday. He said that the two sides agreed to continue their dialogue to achieve Palestinian unity at an early date.

"They highly appreciated and thanked the China's firm support for the just cause of the Palestinian people in restoring their legitimate national rights, and reached an agreement on ideas for future dialogue," the spokesperson said. (The correspondent is in China at the invitation of the China Public Diplomacy Association.)

Netanyahu pledges to invade Rafah 'with or without a deal'

Associated Press
TEL AVIV

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged on Tuesday to launch an incursion into the southern Gaza city of Rafah, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are sheltering from the almost 7-month-long war, as ceasefire negotiations between Israel and Hamas appear to be gaining steam.

Mr. Netanyahu's comments came hours before U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrives in Israel to advance the truce



Benjamin Netanyahu

talks — which appear to be one of the most serious rounds of negotiations between Israel and Hamas since the war began. The deal is meant to free hostages, bring some relief to

the population and avert an Israeli offensive into Rafah and the potential harm to civilians there.

Mr. Netanyahu said Israel would enter Rafah to destroy Hamas's battalions there regardless of whether a truce-for-hostages deal was struck or not.

"The idea that we will stop the war before achieving all of its goals is out of the question," Mr. Netanyahu said, according to a statement. "We will enter Rafah and eliminate Hamas's battalions there — with or without a deal, to achieve the total victory."

Sport

Injury strikes Hima; Tajinderpal fails to turn up; Manu wins javelin

INDIAN GP

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Sprinter Hima Das failed to complete the women's 200m event in the Indian Grand Prix track and field competition at Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on Tuesday.

Hima, who returned to competition here after being provisionally suspended by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for three whereabouts failures, grimaced in pain and pulled out near the bend. The event was won by Andhra Pradesh's Chelimi (23.92s).

The men's shot put was



Nailing the gold: Manu won with an effort of 81.91m. ASHWIN ACHAL

not held as all three competitors in the IGP bib entry list — Sourabh Vij, Siddharth Rao and Tajinderpal Singh Toor — failed to turn up to the venue, an event official said.

Tajinderpal, whose personal best stands at 21.77m, was best placed to breach the 2024 Paris Olympics qualification standard of

21.50m. No athlete was able to achieve the Paris Olympics qualification standard on Tuesday. 2023 Asian Athletics Championships silver medalist D.P. Manu won the men's javelin with a 81.91m throw. Praveen Chithravel shut out favourite Eldhose Paul in the men's triple jump with a leap of 17.12m but

fell short of the Olympic mark of 17.22m. Shaili Singh (6.52m) won the women's long jump, while her rival Nayana James (6.44m) took silver.

The results (winners): Men: 100m: Animesh Kujur (Odi), 10.51s; **200m:** Animesh Kujur (Odi), 20.97s; **triple jump:** Praveen Chithravel (TN), 17.12m; **high jump:** Jesse Sandesh (Kar), 2.20m; **javelin:** D.P. Manu (Kar), 81.91m; **long jump:** Aditya Kumar (MP), 8.01m. **Women: 100m:** Nithya Gandhe (Tel), 11.78s; **200m:** Chelimi (AP), 23.92s; **800m:** Laxmipriya Kisan (Odi), 2:10.88s; **3,000m steeplechase:** Sonam (Del), 10:43.65s; **N.V. Sheena (Ker), 13.48m; high jump:** Abhinaya Shetty (Kar), 1.74m; **shot put:** Abha Khatua (Mah), 16.59m; **javelin:** K. Rashmi (AP), 53.77m; **long jump:** Shaili Singh (UP), 6.52m.

Dominant China steamrollers India

UBER CUP

Press Trust of India
CHENGDU (CHINA)

Teenager Anmol Kharb left the badminton court in tears owing to an ankle injury as an under-strength Indian women's team suffered a 0-5 defeat to China in its final Group A fixture of the Uber Cup here on Tuesday.

Having already qualified for the quarterfinals by picking up successive wins against Canada and Singapore, Ashmita Chaliha sat out the contest against the 15-time champion.

Olympic champion and World No. 2 Chen Yu Fei started off the proceedings for China with an easy 21-

12, 21-10 win over 83rd ranked Isharani Baruah. National champions Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra, ranked 67, were no match for reigning World champions Chen Qing Chen and Jia Yi Fan, who doubled China's lead with a 21-13, 21-12 win.

She received medical attention but the pain didn't seem to subside and the ankle looked swollen, forcing her to retire.

In the next two matches, Liu Shen Shu and Tan Ning defeated Simran Singh and Ritika Thaker 21-9, 21-10, while Tanvi Sharma lost 7-21, 16-21 to Wang Zhi Yi as China completed the 5-0 drubbing.

India will end the group stage proceedings in second place behind China.

Dortmund banks on home advantage against Mbappe's PSG

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Associated Press
DORTMUND

Borussia Dortmund's injury worries have eased and coach Edin Terzic is hopeful all but two players will be fit for the Champions League semifinal first leg against Paris Saint-Germain.

Terzic said on Tuesday that left back Remy Bensebaini and young forward Julien Duranville are definitely out of Wednesday's match, but that others can return. Dortmund already faced Kylian Mbappe's PSG in the group stage, losing 0-2 in Paris before drawing



Dortmund is unbeaten in its last 10 games at home in the competition. REUTERS

1-1 at home and topping the group. But Terzic is aware that PSG needs to finally win Europe's premier competition to justify more than a decade of huge investment from its Qatari owners.

Match starts at 00.30 a.m. on Thursday.

CONFIDENT

PBKS will be buoyed by its performance in last game: Fleming



S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

CSK coach Stephen Fleming talked about how PBKS will be confident coming into the contest after its record chase. "I would assume that the Kings will be buoyed by their performance in the last game [chasing 262 against KKR], but they'll also be realistic as they have to adjust to the new conditions in Chennai," Fleming said.

TRICKY WICKET

It's hard to play in Chepauk as they know the conditions: Langeveldt



S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

PBKS fast bowling coach Charl Langeveldt talked about the challenges of playing CSK at its den. "It's always a tricky wicket here. Sometimes it's slow but it looks like we're playing on a fresh deck. We beat them when we played here last year. But it's hard to play in Chepauk. They know the conditions and bowl well in them."

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Harshit Rana suspended for one match, fined 100% match fee



K.R. DEEPAK

Kolkata Knight Riders seamer Harshit Rana was on Tuesday fined 100% of his match fees and suspended for one match for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during the seven-wicket win over Delhi Capitals in Kolkata. Rana will now miss KKR's next match against Mumbai Indians away on Friday.

CAMEO

Kuldeep has second-highest score by a batter at No. 9 or below



K.R. DEEPAK

Ace India and DC spinner Kuldeep Yadav registered the second-highest score by a player batting at number nine or lower in the history of the IPL on Monday during the game against KKR. Kuldeep's 26-ball 35 n.o. is only behind Harbhajan Singh's unbeaten 49 in 18 balls for MI against Deccan Chargers in 2010.

Pant back in India colours; Chahal, Dube and Samson also get the nod

Rohit will lead the side and Hardik will be his deputy; selectors keep faith in Kohli; Rahul, Rinku miss the bus; Gill loses opener's slot to Jaiswal

Need players with X-factor like Dube in a World Cup: Fleming



Multi-dimensional: Dube has shown that there's a lot more to him than just smashing the spinners out of sight. EMMANUEL YOGINI

T20 WORLD CUP

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Yuzvendra Chahal and Shivam Dube were named in India's 15-member squad for the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

The team, announced by the BCCI on Tuesday, will be led by Rohit Sharma. Hardik Pandya has been named Rohit's deputy.

Leggie Chahal, ignored for India's recent T20 assignments, was picked on the strength of good returns for Rajasthan Royals in the ongoing IPL season.

Chahal is the only right-arm spinner in the squad, with southpaws Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav forming the rest of the spin attack.

Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh and Mohammed Siraj are the specialist pacers.

Lucknow Super Giants skipper K.L. Rahul and Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Dinesh Karthik were among the notable omis-

Mission T20 World Cup

A look at the Indian players who made the cut for the mega event to be held in the USA and Caribbean from June 1

THE SQUAD



RESERVES: Shubman Gill, Rinku Singh, Khaleel Ahmed, and Avesh Khan

THE SCHEDULE

- **June 5:** vs. Ireland, New York, 7.30 p.m. IST
- **June 9:** Pakistan, New York, 8 p.m.
- **June 12:** USA, New York, 8 p.m.
- **June 15:** Canada, Lauderhill, 8 p.m.
- The semifinals will be played on June 26 at Tarouba (Trinidad & Tobago) (8.30 p.m. local time, June 27, 6 a.m. in India) and June 27 at Providence (Guyana) (10.30 a.m. local time, June 27, 8 p.m. in India)
- The final will be held on June 29 in Bridgetown (Barbados) (10 a.m. local time, 7.30 p.m. in India)

sions. Karthik had harboured hopes of making the bus, after finding good form as a finisher for RCB. Shubman Gill lost out on the opener slot to Yashasvi Jaiswal. Gill and lower-order batter Rinku Singh were named in the reserves. Rinku gave way to Dube, who has shown a penchant for big hits. The tournament marks the international comeback of wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant. Pant, who last donned the India cap in December 2022, was forced into a long layoff after suffering a car accident. The 26-year-old has proved his worth in IPL 2024, making vital contri-

butions with the bat for Delhi Capitals (DC) and showing athleticism with the 'keeping gloves. RR captain and fan-favourite Sanju Samson is the second gloveman. Samson has shone

bright for RR, batting at a strike-rate of 161.08 with an average of 77.

The selectors have kept their faith in Virat Kohli, who in recent times has been criticised for not keeping a high strike-rate.

Kohli had dismissed these concerns after an unbeaten 44-ball 70 for RCB against Gujarat Titans on Sunday, stating that "it is just about winning the game for the team."

Trust has also been placed on Hardik, who has struggled in his maiden season as captain of Mumbai Indians.

Hardik has failed with both bat and ball, and has faced the ire of MI fans who are unhappy with him replacing Rohit as the MI skipper.

India commences its World Cup campaign against Ireland on June 5 at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium (New York), followed by the highly-anticipated clash against Pakistan on June 9 at the same venue.

India then takes on USA and Canada on June 12 and 15 respectively.

Sankar Narayanan E.H.
CHENNAI

Just hours after India announced its squad for the 2024 T20 World Cup, Chennai Super Kings coach Stephen Fleming heaped praise on the evolution of Shivam Dube as a player.

"Yeah, I think it's fantastic. Dube has proven this year that there's a lot more to him than just hitting spinners. He has raw power, which is something that really impressed us and he has consistently done that during the tournament," Fleming said ahead of CSK's IPL fixture against Punjab Kings on Wednesday.

"And in a World Cup, you need those X-factor

players. I'm delighted that he will get that opportunity."

Fleming also touched upon how the mental aspect in Dube's game has been improving as he gains more experience.

"He's a lot more complete in terms of what he's trying to do and understanding this game, and that comes with a little bit of experience. We've also benefited from him working hard on areas where he wasn't so strong."

"He has also continued to develop his strengths, which is the ability to hit the ball long and quite regularly. And he's done that for us this year. So, if that form continues, he is going to be an impactful player for India," Fleming added.

LSG compounds MI's misery with four-wkt. win

Super Kings will strive to break out of mid-table jam

IPL-17

Abhishek Saini
LUCKNOW

A no-show by Mumbai Indians (MI) batters nudged the side closer to the brink of elimination and gifted a four-wicket victory to Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in their Indian Premier League match at the Ekana Cricket Stadium here on Tuesday.

On a day when India announced the T20 World Cup side, its captain, vice-captain, and No. 4 fell for only 14 runs in Mumbai's meagre display with the willow.

Rohit Sharma started with an inventive paddle sweep off Mohsin Khan but sliced the next delivery to the cover fielder.

Suryakumar Yadav followed in the same vein getting strangled down leg three deliveries after smoking a half-tracker over mid wicket. Ravi Bishnoi's direct hit charging in from point caught Tilak Varma short of the striker's end. Hardik Pandya's golden duck meant the visitors hobbled to 28 for four by the end of the PowerPlay.

Ishan Kishan's match-saving 53-run alliance with Nehal Wadhara (46, 41b, 4x4, 2x6) allowed MI some breathing time before rear-guard muscle from Tim David (35 n.o., 18b, 3x4, 1x6) took it to 144 for seven.



Pulling his weight: Stoinis complemented his effective bowling with some resourceful batting. SANDEEP SAXENA

SCOREBOARD

MUMBAI INDIANS

Ishan Kishan c Mayank b Bishnoi 32 (36b, 3x4), Rohit Sharma c Stoinis b Mohsin 4 (5b, 1x4), Suryakumar Yadav c Rahul b Stoinis 10 (6b, 1x6), Tilak Varma run out 7 (11b, 1x4), Hardik Pandya c Rahul b Naveen 0 (1b), Nehal Wadhara b Mohsin 46 (41b, 4x4, 2x6), Tim David (not out) 35 (18b, 3x4, 1x6), Mohammad Nabi b Mayank 1 (2b), Gerald Coetzee (not out) 1 (2b); Extras (lb-2, nb-2, w-4); 8; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 144.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-7 (Rohit, 1.3 overs), 2-18 (Suryakumar, 2.4), 3-27 (Tilak, 5.1), 4-27 (Hardik, 5.2), 5-80 (Kishan, 13.6), 6-112 (Wadhara, 17.1), 7-123 (Nabi, 18.1).

SUPER GIANTS BOWLING

Stoinis 3-0-19-1, Mohsin 4-0-36-2, Naveen 3.5-0-15-1, Mayank 3.1-0-31-1, Bishnoi 4-0-28-1, Hooda 2-0-13-0.

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

K.L. Rahul c Nabi b Hardik 28 (22b, 3x4, 1x6), Arshin Kulkarni (Impact Player in place of Mayank) lbw b Thushara 0 (1b), Marcus Stoinis c Tilak b Nabi 62 (45b, 7x4, 2x6), Deepak Hooda c

Bumrah b Hardik 18 (18b, 2x4), Nicholas Pooran (not out) 14 (14b, 1x4), Ashton Turner b Coetzee 5 (9b), Ayush Badoni run out 6 (6b, 1x4), Krunal Pandya (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (lb-4, w-7); 11; Total (for six wkts. in 19.2 overs): 145.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-1 (Arshin, 0.4), 2-59 (Rahul, 7.2), 3-99 (Hooda, 13.1), 4-115 (Stoinis, 14.5), 5-123 (Turner, 17.1), 6-133 (Badoni, 18.1).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING

Thushara (Impact Player in place of Suryakumar) 4-0-30-1, Bumrah 4-0-17-0, Coetzee 3-0-29-1, Chawla 3-0-23-0, Hardik 4-0-26-2, Nabi 1.2-0-16-1.

Toss: LSG.

PoM: Stoinis.

LSG won by four wickets with four deliveries remaining.

Next assignment

MI: May 3 vs KKR Mumbai, 7.30 p.m.

LSG: May 5 vs KKR Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.

his partner's book in the next over from Nuwan Thushara and pocketed 18 runs in boundaries. Stoinis reserved his onslaught for Jasprit Bumrah too, lofting the Purple Cap holder over the long-off fence in the sixth over. The LSG captain, however, perished trying to take on his counterpart Hardik Pandya, holing out at deep mid wicket. Deepak Hooda top-edg-

ing a swat off Pandya to mid off could not slow down Marcus Stoinis either, who romped to a 39-ball fifty.

The game was in the home team's hand when Mohammed Nabi prised out Stoinis in the 15th over. The fall of Ashton Turner and Ayush Badoni in the space of six deliveries prolonged the contest to the final over but could not prevent the inevitable.

Following its thumping 78-run win over Sunrisers Hyderabad, Chennai Super Kings will look to move clear of a tight midfield pack of teams when it takes on a mercurial Punjab Kings at the MAC Stadium here on Wednesday.

The Super Kings bounced back in style against SRH with a clinical performance. Rituraj Gaikwad continued his merry run while Daryl Mitchell finally found form. More importantly, the host took wickets, thanks to Tushar Deshpande, in the PowerPlay, an area where the side has struggled often this season.

However, the form of Ajinkya Rahane continues to be a cause of concern, and there is a case to be made for giving someone like Sameer Rizvi an opportunity. Meanwhile, the Kings arrived in the city in a buoyant mood after their sensational record-chase of 262 against Kolkata Knight Riders. The win was set up by openers Prabhsimran Singh and Jonny Bairstow, both of whom finally came to the fore after an underwhelming start to the season. If the top-order can be more consistent, it eases the burden on Shashank



Waiting for another chance: It remains to be seen whether CSK will give Rizvi one more opportunity. S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

Points table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	9	8	1	16	0.694
Kolkata Knight Riders	9	6	3	12	1.096
Lucknow Super Giants	10	6	4	12	0.094
Chennai Super Kings	9	5	4	10	0.810
Sunrisers Hyderabad	9	5	4	10	0.075
Delhi Capitals	11	5	6	10	-0.442
Gujarat Titans	10	4	6	8	-1.113
Punjab Kings	9	3	6	6	-0.187
Mumbai Indians	10	3	7	6	-0.272
Royal Challengers	10	3	7	6	-0.415

In its pursuit, LSG needed back-to-back pull shots from Marcus Stoinis (62, 45b, 7x4, 2x6) off Gerald Coetzee in the fourth over

to break the snooze that fell upon it after the early wicket of debutant Arshin Kulkarni. Rahul took a leaf out of

IN BRIEF



Swiatek fights past Maia to make Madrid semifinals

Iga Swiatek defeated Beatriz Haddad Maia 4-6, 6-0, 6-2 and reach the Madrid Open semifinals for a second straight year on Tuesday. In the men's draw, third-seeded Daniil Medvedev beat Alexander Bublik 7-6(3), 6-4. Andrey Rublev comfortably defeated Tallon Griekspoor 6-2, 6-4. **Other results: Men: Fourth round:** Fritz bt Hurkacz 7-6(2), 6-4; Cerundolo bt Zverev 6-3, 6-4.

Vishu claims five, Raghav scores 79 in Telefunken's win

Vishu Tyagi took five for 10 and Raghav Vashisht made 79 as Telefunken downed Airliner Bharti College (ABC) by 152 runs in the first Summer Cup under-17 cricket tournament in New Delhi.

The scores: Telefunken 278/8 in 40 overs (Raghav Vashisht 79, Samarth Bajaj 5/26) bt ABC 126 in 30.4 overs (Vishu Tyagi 5/10).

Vishvanath, Akash and Preet advance to u-22 semifinals

Vishvanath Suresh, Akash Gorkha and Preet Malik advanced to the under-22 semifinals on Tuesday in the ASBC Asian u-22 and youth championships at Astana. Vishvanath (48kg) dominated Iran's Hassani Seyedarsham 5-0. Akash (60kg) outclassed Ebadi Arman of Iran with a similar scoreline while Preet (67kg) earned an easy victory with RSC in the first round against Vietnam's Nguyen Duc Ngoc.

India to host 2025 World Jr. badminton Championship

The National Centre of Excellence for badminton in Guwahati will host the 2025 BWF World Juniors after the Badminton World Federation allotted the same on Tuesday. The decision was taken during the BWF AGM in Chengdu. "India's production line of elite badminton talent is booming and it is of great significance for the BWF to bring our World Juniors to India," BWF president Paul-Erik Hoyer said in a statement. The Centre, inaugurated in August last year, has 14 courts and a seating capacity of around 4000. "The allotment of the BWF World Juniors to Guwahati is a vindication of India's growing reputation as a badminton powerhouse," BAI secretary-general Sanjay Mishra said.

Odisha and Maharashtra start with thumping wins

The newly-announced National Women's Hockey League (Phase 1) started on Tuesday with Odisha and Maharashtra registering big wins against heavyweights Haryana and Manipur respectively in their opening matches in Ranchi.

The results: Odisha 4 (Sonali Ekka 2, Rambha Kujur, Dipi Monika Toppo) bt Haryana 1 (Shashi Khansa); Maharashtra 5 (Sanika Mane 4, Tanushree Kadu) bt Manipur 1 (Ritu Devi); Madhya Pradesh 1 (Sanskriti Sarwan) bt Bengal 0; Jharkhand 3 (Nikki Kullu, Pramodni Lakra, Edlin Bage) bt Mizoram 0.

LIVE TELECAST

Badminton: Thomas & Uber Cup, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema, 7 a.m.

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema, 7.30 p.m.

Champions League: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 12.30 a.m. (Thursday).

Dominant India takes a 2-0 lead

Radha Yadav's splendid show helped bundle out Bangladesh for a paltry total; Hemalatha's quickfire unbeaten 41 takes the visitor over the line

INDIA IN BANGLADESH

Press Trust of India
SYLHET (BANGLADESH)

Radha Yadav and D. Hemalatha sizzled produced an all-round show as a dominant India beat Bangladesh by 19 runs under the Duckworth/Lewis method in a rain-marred second women's T20 International here on Tuesday.

Led by left-arm spinner Radha's splendid show, Indian bowlers bundled out Bangladesh for 119 after the hosts opted to bat first.

Radha finished with excellent figures of 3/19, while there were two wickets apiece for Deepti Sharma (2/14) and Shreyanka Patil (2/24).

For Bangladesh, opener Murshida Khatun top-scored with 46 off 49 balls.

Chasing a modest total, India lost an early wicket as Shafali Verma (0) was caught down the leg side after she tried to flick it through fine leg. Hemalatha, however, blazed away to a 24-ball 41 as India raced to 47 for one in 5.2 overs, when the heaven opened up for the second time during the match. Hemalatha smashed five fours and two sixes in her unbeaten knock.

The par score was 28 and the Indian team was ahead by 19 runs, and with the surface rendered unplayable by the heavy rain,



On fire: Hemalatha smashed a 24-ball 41. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the visitors were declared winners.

India thus took a 2-0 lead in the five-match series.

Earlier, Dilara Akter got the Bangladesh innings underway when she pulled Renuka Singh over mid-wicket for a four in only the second ball of the match.

Akter got into a good position and whipped off her pads a swinging Renuka delivery over backward square leg for a boundary.

An 11-run first over was followed by the wicket of Akter.

One-down bat Sobhana Mostary opened her account with a boundary as she drove a Renuka delivery past backward point.

Off-spinner Shreyanka Patil struck in her very first over, having Mostary (19 off 15 balls) trapped in front of the wicket after a promising start by the batter.

Brought into the attack for the first time in the eighth over, left-arm spinner Radha started on a bright note before removing Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultana and Fahima Khatun off successive balls.

Radha, however, could not complete a hat-trick as Sultana Khatun struck her for a boundary.

The scores: Bangladesh 119 in 20 overs (Murshida Khatun 46, Radha Yadav 3/19) lost to India 41 for one in 5.2 overs (D. Hemalatha 41 n.o.).

Archer passes fitness test, back in the England squad

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Pacer Jofra Archer was on Tuesday recalled to England's squad for the defence of its T20 World Cup title after being out of action for a year.

The 29-year-old, who has endured a string run of injuries since his international breakthrough in 2019, has not played competitive cricket for a year following a right elbow injury. But he has been passed fit and takes his place in a 15-man squad that will defend the title. Jos Buttler's side won in Australia in 2022.

Nortje returns for SA Pacer Anrich Nortje will return to international action after a ninth-month injury layoff while the uncapped duo of Ryan Rickelton and Otniel Baartman was in-

cluded in South Africa's T20 World Cup squad on Tuesday.

Aiden Markram will lead the side in what will be his first World Cup assignment since being named T20I captain. Wicketkeeper-batter Rickelton and pacer Baartman have been rewarded for their stellar run in this year's SA20.

The squads:

England: Jos Buttler (Capt., wk), Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Jonny Bairstow, Harry Brook, Sam Curran, Ben Duckett, Tom Hartley, Will Jacks, Chris Jordan, Liam Livingstone, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Reece Topley and Mark Wood.

South Africa: Aiden Markram (Capt.), Otniel Baartman, Gerald Coetzee, Quinton de Kock, Bjorn Fortuin, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Anrich Nortje, Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton, Tabraiz Shamsi and Tristan Stubbs. **Reserves:** Nandre Burger and Lungi Ngidi.

Lewandowski 'tricks' in Barcelona's facile win

Reuters
BARCELONA

Robert Lewandowski scored a hat-trick in the second half to help Barcelona claim a hard-fought 4-2 win on Monday over visitors Valencia, which was leading 2-1 when it was reduced to 10 men just before the break.

Barca moved back to second in LaLiga on 73 points as it leapfrogged surprise package Girona, who are third with 71.

Barcelona's win postponed for a couple of weeks Real Madrid's almost inevitable title celebrations as Carlo Ancelotti's side sit atop the standings on 84 points.

The results: LaLiga: Barcelona 4 (Lopez 22, Lewandowski 49, 82, 90+3) bt Valencia 2 (Duro 27, Pepelu 38-pen). **Serie A:** Genoa 3 (Thorsby 17, Frenndrup 27, Gudmundsson 63) bt Cagliari 0.

Ankita loses to Kudashova in the first round of Georgia tournament

TENNIS

Sports Bureau

Second seed Ankita Raina lost 6-4, 4-6, 7-6(5) to Daria Kudashova in the first round of the \$40,000 ITF women's tennis in Lopota (Georgia). Ankita, however, made the doubles quarterfinals with Snehal Mane.

The results: \$25,000 ITF men, Margherita di Pula, Italy: First

round: Kai Wehnelt (Ger) bt Manas Dhamne 7-5, 6-2.

\$15,000 ITF men, Monastir, Tunisia: Doubles, pre-quarterfinals: Samir Reguig & Mohamed Makhlof (Alg) bt Abraham Asaba (Gha) & Karan Singh 6-7(2), 7-6(4), [10-7].

\$15,000 ITF women, Monastir: First round: Vaishnavi Adkar Liu Le Yi (Chn) 7-6(3), 6-1; Zeel Desai bt Merna Refaat (Egy) 6-1, 5-7, 6-1.

\$40,000 ITF women, Lopota, Georgia: First round: Daria Kudashova bt Ankita Raina 6-4, 4-6, 7-6(5); **Doubles,**

pre-quarterfinals: Snehal Mane & Ankita Raina bt Christine Gouws (RSA) & Georgia Kalamaris (Fra) 6-1, 6-1.

\$15,000 ITF women, Kursumlijska Banja, Serbia: Doubles, pre-quarter: Michaela Bayerlova (Cze) & Wakana Sonno (Jpn) bt Kiara Cvetkovic (Sui) & Annika Kannan 6-1, 6-0.

\$15,000 ITF women, Antalya, Turkey: Doubles, pre-quarterfinals: Sofya Gapankova & Varvara Panashina bt Florencia Moran (Arg) & Bela Tamhankar 6-1, 6-1.

NEW DELHI ROUND-UP

Paras sizzles

Paras Dogra's 142 and Rajinder Bisht's 53 helped Food Corporation of India (FCI) beat Sonnet Club by 62 runs in the DDCA League.

The scores: FCI 346/9 in 40 overs (Paras Dogra 142, Rajinder Bisht 53, Sagar Tanwar 4/53) bt Sonnet 284 in 35 overs (Aryan Dalal 101, Yash Sehrawat 75, Yashjeet 3/34). Paragon 289 in 39 overs (Aryan Dahiya 91, Priyank Sehrawat 67, Millind Godara 3/48) lost to Pelican 290/6 in 35 overs (Deepanshu 93, Shivam Kumar 53, Aryan Dahiya 3/71).

Mohit, Ekansh lead Collage to victory

A match-winning 115 by Mohit and Ekansh Dopal's 82 saw Collage Sports Club defeat Ravi Brothers by 12 runs in the 39th all-India Laxman Das Chabra cricket tournament.

The scores: Collage 313 in 39 overs (Mohit 115, Ekansh Dopal 82, Vikram Mehra 3/34, Punit 3/78) bt Ravi Brothers 301 in 38 overs (Hardik

Sharma 141, Ayush Doseja 38, Nitin 3/45).

Supriya excels

Supriya Tripathi's knock of 76 helped Bharti College beat GS Harry Academy by 61 runs in the first KI Sports girls' cricket tournament.

The scores: Bharti College 278/9 in 35 overs (Supriya Tripathi 76, Samridhi Dhinra 37, Ekta Singh 5/32) bt GSHA 217/7 in 35 overs (Ekta Singh 110 n.o.).

Deepanshu, Ritik shine

Man-of-the-match Deepanshu Choudhary top-scored with 71 while Ritik Vats made 56 as PR Academy crushed Ambika BV Amsterdam Club (ABVA) by 115 runs in the Late Shri Ratan Singh memorial tournament.

The scores: PR Academy 314/9 in 40 overs (Deepanshu Choudhary 71, Ritik Vats 56, Shivam Ranjan 4/68) bt ABVA Club 199/9 in 40 overs (Sachin Raghav 48, Sombir Deswal 3/26).

India sweeps team titles in Asian carrom



Golden day: The triumphant Indian men's and women's teams. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Sports Bureau

India swept both the men's and women's team championships in the sixth Asian carrom championships in Maldives.

The men beat Maldives

3-0 in the final, while the women defeated Sri Lanka by the same margin.

India had earlier claimed the Open Swiss league apart from the men's and women's doubles events.

The results, finals:

Men: India bt Maldives 3-0

(K. Srinivas bt Ismail Azmeen 25-19, 25-3; Md. Ghufan bt Hassan Nazim 25-8, 25-22; Sandeep Dive & Jugal Kishor Dutta bt Adam Adeel & Ibrahim Hujan 25-17, 25-5).

Women: India bt Sri Lanka 3-0

(Rashmi Kumari bt Tashmila Kavindi 25-0, 25-15; Nagajothi Kathavarayan bt Roshita Joseph 25-1, 25-0; Aaknaksha Kadam & Shainy Sebastian bt Tharushi Himahansika & Hirushi Malshani 25-16, 25-12).

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Senna Sempre

Thirty years after a horrifying crash left the world stunned and took the life of a man who was, and remains arguably, the best racer the sport has seen, here's how the world of motorsport still bears his indelible mark



GETTY IMAGES

S. Dipak Ragav

There are moments in time, however tragic they may be, that change the course of history and even force changes for the good.

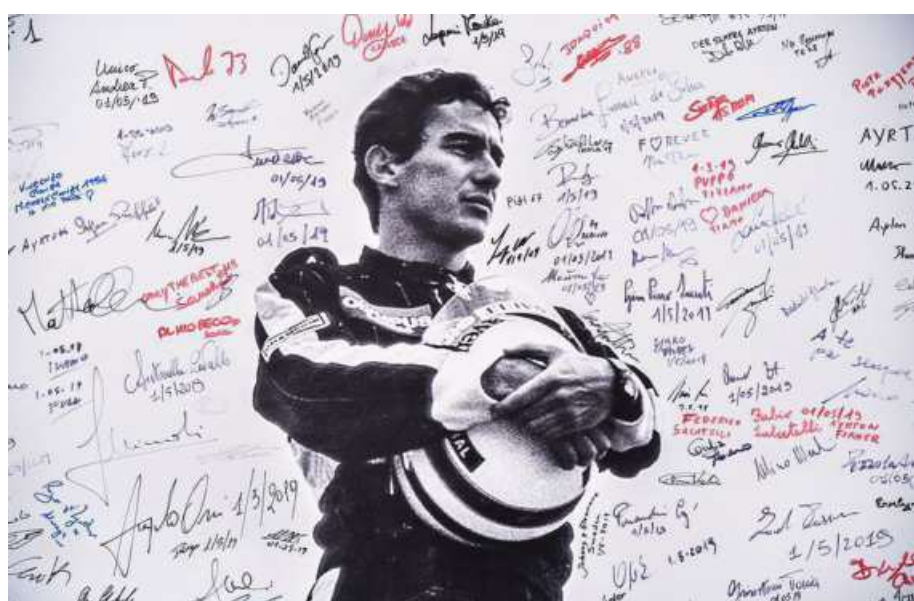
May 1, 1994, was one of those seminal moments in the history of Formula One. Arguably the greatest driver to have graced the sport until then, Ayrton Senna da Silva suffered a fatal crash on the seventh lap of the San Marino Grand Prix while leading the race at the now-infamous Tamburello corner of the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari circuit in Imola.

It marked one of the darkest chapters in the championship since its inception in 1950. Senna's crash on Sunday was the second fatality of that weekend after Roland Ratzenberger had lost his life during qualifying on Saturday. The Austrian driver hit a wall at high speed when his Simtek Ford suffered a front-wing failure. In fact, it was F1's weekend from hell. On Friday, another Brazilian, Rubens Barichello, had a severe crash during practice when he hit a kerb and got launched into the barriers. Only the timely intervention of F1 doctor Sid Watkins saved his life.

The three-time World champion moved to the all-conquering Williams F1 team for the '94 season after his long stint with McLaren, where he had won all his titles. In 1992 and 1993, Williams dominated the sport after mastering the Active Suspension Technology, powering Nigel Mansell and Alain Prost to the driver's crown. However, in 1994, the FIA banned electronic driver aids like active suspension, traction control and launch control. And Williams struggled during the initial part of the season.

Senna did not score points in the first two races when he crashed out in his home race in Brazil before being taken out by Mika Hakkinen in the second one in Aida, Japan. In Imola, the Brazilian took pole position. There was a massive crash on the opening lap. Pedro Lamy, in his Lotus, hit the rear of JJ Lheto's Benetton, which stalled on the grid. The Safety Car was brought in to clear the debris for the next five laps before racing resumed on lap six.

On lap seven, Senna's car veered straight into the concrete barrier as it approached the fast left-hander Tamburello corner. The driver suffered severe injuries when one of the tyres hit his helmet while a piece of suspension also pierced past his visor. There have been many theories surrounding the reason for the crash, from a driver mistake or a puncture to a steering column failure and even a drop in tyre pressure due to running behind a very



World Championships: 3 (1988, 1990-91)
Number of races: 161
Number of wins: 41
Number of pole positions: 65
Career points: 610

slow Safety Car. Senna was given emergency treatment at the track before being airlifted to a hospital in Bologna, where he was pronounced dead three hours later.

Prior to the events in Imola, F1 had not seen a casualty during a race meeting since Riccardo Paletti's fatal crash at the 1982 Canadian Grand Prix. The deaths of Ratzenberger and Senna sent shockwaves across the world and illustrated the dangerous nature of motorsport.

It was the kind of rude awakening the sport needed. Leading up to Imola 1994, there were apprehensions that cars were getting faster and safety needed to be improved. The fact that one of the best, if not THE best, the sport has seen succumbed woke the powers that be out of their slumber.

Immediately, the FIA sprung into action, and a slew of safety measures have been enforced since then, making F1 one of the safest categories of motorsport.

Some changes to the car included raised cockpit sides to protect the head, better headrest protection, and wheel tethers.

One of the most significant advances was the introduction of the Head and Neck Support (HANS) device in the early 2000s. The HANS device is attached to the driver's helmet and, as the name suggests, significantly reduces the impact on the head and neck. Many drivers have avoided severe impacts since then. Though drivers initially resisted it as it restricted their movement, it has become

ubiquitous across most categories.

More recently, the Halo device - a wishbone-like structure around the cockpit was introduced in 2018 to protect a loose wheel or, at times, even the wheels of another airborne car from hitting the driver's helmet. The wheel tethers ensure the tyres don't come loose quickly in case of a big crash or suspension damage.

Apart from the changes to the car, much work has been done on circuit safety in terms of barriers, run-offs, and fences. F1 has constantly reviewed safety measures and updated tyre and TechPro barriers to find ways to reduce the impact on the driver during violent crashes. Modern circuits have many asphalt run-off areas, which helps drivers avoid crashes even if they run wide.

However, the flip side of these has been that there is a perception that drivers don't pay the penalty for going off, which has taken the challenge out of the sport. It is a tricky balance between safety and fairness, but begrudgingly, safety has been prioritised.

The fact that Formula One did not see another driver fatality for another 21 years showed the sport's remarkable progress since that fateful weekend in Imola in 1994. In 2015, Jules Bianchi became the first driver since Senna to die because of an accident at an F1 race. During the 2014 Japanese Grand Prix, the Marussia driver hit a recovery vehicle attending to another stricken car away from the race track. But in damp conditions, Bianchi ran wide and hit the recovery vehicle, and his car slid under the wheel-loader, causing a significant head injury. In a way, the accident further accelerated

the need for a device like a halo to protect the cockpit without losing the essence of what F1 is - an open-wheel, open-cockpit racing series.

A lot of credit also has to go to the Grand Prix Drivers' Association (GPDA), which has worked closely with circuit promoters, the FIA and F1 to advance safety measures. Incidentally, on the morning of May 1, Senna proposed reviving the GPDA - which was disbanded between 1982 and 1994 - after Ratzenberger's death and offered to lead the organisation. The modern version of GPDA came into being immediately after the events of Imola. While Senna's blinding speed, mastery of wet conditions, and ability to be hard-nosed in battle are what people will remember him for, the Brazilian left an indelible mark even from the beyond, ensuring the sport he lorded over is safer even if it required his ultimate sacrifice.

THE GIST

Senna, known for his talent in rainy races, did not have a good result in his first kart race on a wet track. Because of that, he trained every day until he became a master in this condition

The Brazilian's favourite track was Spa in Belgium, a circuit where he won five times in F1

Senna always dreamed of, but never raced for, Ferrari. But Luca di Montezemolo, then president of the Italian team, revealed that there were strong negotiations as early as 1994 to make this happen. "He wanted to come to Ferrari and I wanted him on the team," said the manager

The striking helmet worn by Senna throughout his career was inspired by the design used by the Brazilian delegation at the 1979 Karting World Championship



Microbes, not fossil fuels, produced most new methane: study

A modelling study has found methane emissions from fossil fuels declined between 1990 and the 2000s and have been stable since, whereas microbes have been producing more methane of late. One reason could be an increase in cattle-rearing in Latin America and more emissions from waste in South and Southeast Asia

Monika Mondal

For the last three years, Naveen Chandra has been spending most of his days running simulations at the Research Institute for Global Change in Japan. He is trying to recreate the last 50 years of the earth's atmosphere on a supercomputer roughly the size of an auditorium.

Mr. Chandra has been trying to answer a question that came out of his team's research. During 2019-2020, these researchers examined the concentration of methane in the atmosphere and how it changed with time. Until the 1990s, the concentration increased, then stabilised for a bit, and then started to increase again around 2007. According to recent estimates, the atmospheric concentration of methane today is three-times what it was 300 years ago.

Where is this methane coming from? That's what they wanted to know.

Evolving understanding

Methane is the second most abundant anthropogenic greenhouse gas after carbon dioxide (CO₂) but it warms the planet more. Over a century, methane has a global warming potential 28-times greater than CO₂, and even higher over shorter periods like two decades.

It wasn't until recently that policymakers began to focus on methane vis-a-vis addressing global warming. At the U.N. climate talks in 2021, member countries launched the 'Global Methane Pledge' to cut the gas's emissions and slow the planet's warming. Yet our understanding of methane also continues to evolve.

For instance, Mr. Chandra and his team recently reported that microbes have been the biggest sources of methane in the atmosphere, not the burning of fossil fuels.

The sources of methane

Scientists are increasingly recognising various sources of methane, most of which fit in two categories: biogenic and thermogenic. When fossil fuels such as natural gas or oil are extracted from deep within the earth's crust, thermogenic methane is released. Biogenic methane comes from microbial action.

The microbes that produce methane are archaea – single-celled microorganisms distinct from bacteria and eukaryotes – and are called methanogens. They thrive in oxygen-deficient environments, such as the digestive tracts of animals, wetlands, rice paddies, landfills, and the sediments of lakes and oceans.

Methanogens play a crucial role in the



A cow walks through a field as an oil pumpjack and a flare burn off methane and other hydrocarbons in the background in the Permian Basin, Texas. Methanogenic bacteria thrive in oxygen-deficient environments, including the digestive tracts of animals. AP

global carbon cycle by converting organic matter into methane. While methane is a potent greenhouse gas, its production by methanogens is an essential part of natural ecosystems. But human activities like agriculture, dairy farming, and fossil fuel production have further increased methane emissions.

Both biogenic and thermogenic activities produce different isotopes of methane. Tracking the isotopes is a way to track which sources are the most active.

Modelling with a supercomputer

According to Prabir Patra, principal scientist at the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC) and one of the lead authors of the study, carbon-13 is key. (Atoms of this carbon isotope have 13 nucleons: 6 protons + 7 neutrons.)

If there are fewer carbon-13 atoms than a certain level in a group of 1,000 methane molecules, the methane is from a biological source. If the methane is from thermogenic sources, such as trapped



According to recent estimates, the atmospheric concentration of methane today is three-times what it was 300 years ago

fossil fuels or geological activities, there will be more carbon-13 atoms in 1,000 molecules.

Mr. Chandra and Mr. Patra worked with scientists from Austria, Japan, the Netherlands, and the U.S. to collect data from the 12 monitoring sites worldwide tracking atmospheric parameters since the 1990s. Then they sorted the methane isotope data by year and ran it through a program they had developed to recreate the atmosphere from 1980 to 2020 on a supercomputer.

"One year of data analysis takes about four to five hours," Mr. Chandra said.

Data mismatch

Finally, the team compared their own

results with two emissions inventories, called EDGAR and GAINS, and found some discrepancies. EDGAR had reported that methane emissions from oil and natural gas exploration had increased between 1990 and 2020. GAINS had recorded a large "unconventional" rise in emissions since 2006. Their findings disagreed with both inventories.

Mr. Patra said combining the numbers for all biogenic and thermogenic isotopes should match the total emissions in a year. They also took insights from other available data like, number of rice fields, wetlands, dairy farms, biomass burning and likewise sources of methane emissions, and estimated the emissions from those sources. But when they ran their atmosphere models with this data, the year-wise total methane emissions overshoot the total production.

In fact, the models said methane emissions from fossil fuels declined between 1990 and the 2000s and that they've been stable since. They also found microbes were producing more methane than fossil fuels.

Need for local data

One possible reason could be an increase in cattle-rearing in Latin America and more emissions from waste in South and Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa, the study's authors wrote in their paper. They added that the number of wetlands worldwide had increased as well.

Studies in the past have pointed to microbes like anaerobic archaea as potentially top contributors of atmospheric methane using satellite data. But according to Mr. Patra, "Most studies that use satellites cannot measure the actual [changes over time] of methane." Satellite data is interpreted using models "and thus are prone to uncertainties." He said ground models are required to confirm these interpretations.

He added that their own atmospheric model was also only the beginning. The data for it came from observatories located in far-flung places. "If you really want to ask what is from the wetland, what is from the rice fields, we need measurements in those exact locations," per Mr. Patra. "We don't have that kind of observation at all anywhere in the world to make that kind of measurement. We can only speak for global emissions."

But what we do know is: "If you want to reduce methane, anthropogenic activity should be first controlled. And we can clearly outline what is anthropogenic here. Waste and landfills, rice fields, enteric fermentation, oil and gas, and coal," he said.

(Monika Mondal is a freelance science and environment journalist.)

THE GIST

Methane is the second most abundant anthropogenic greenhouse gas after carbon dioxide but it warms the planet more. Over a century, methane has a global warming potential 28-times greater than CO₂

Methane is released by two main processes: biogenic and thermogenic. When fossil fuels are extracted from the earth's crust, thermogenic methane is released. Biogenic methane comes from microbial action

Studies in the past have pointed to microbes like anaerobic archaea as potentially top contributors of atmospheric methane using satellite data, but this information contains gaps that ground-based models can bridge

BIG SHOT



Mount Ruang seen erupting from Tagulandang island in Sitaro, North Sulawesi, on Tuesday. Ruang's eruption prompted authorities to order an evacuation and forced a nearby airport to close. The remote Indonesian volcano sent a tower of ash spewing into the sky on April 19. AFP

QUESTION CORNER

Shivering produces heat to keep you warm



Q: Why do we shiver when it is cold?

A: Shivering (physical thermogenesis) occurs when the tension of the

skeletal muscles rises beyond a critical level or when the body temperature falls below the critical level of 37.1 degrees C.

Shivering is actually an involuntary contraction of muscles to maintain body temperature during fever and in cool environments. It involves oscillating skeletal-muscle contractions that occur at 10-20 per second. The movement is at first irregular, then assumes quick involuntary movements during which small groups of muscles contract asynchronously. Due to the asynchronous movement, they do not move the parts associated with them in a coordinated manner.

The posterior hypothalamus region in the brain harbours the primary motor centre responsible for shivering. When the body temperature falls below 37.1 degrees C, the skin sends cold signals to the spinal cord. These are picked by the hypothalamus, which takes advantage of the fact that increased skeletal-muscle activity generates heat. Acting through descending pathways that terminate on the motor neurons controlling the body's skeletal muscles, the hypothalamus gradually increases



EGOR IVLEV/UNSPLASH

skeletal-muscle tone (constant level of tension within muscles).

Thus shivering begins throughout the body when the tension of the skeletal muscles rises beyond the critical level, producing heat and increasing the temperature of the body within a matter of seconds. Studies reveal that shivering may produce as much as 42.5 cal/hr, almost seven times greater than man's normal resting metabolism at room temperature. In a resting person, most body heat is produced by the thoracic and abdominal organs due to ongoing metabolic activities. Generally, shivering is seen only in birds and mammals.

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