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INSIDE



JD(S) suspends MP Prajwal; SIT sends him notice

BENGALURU
The Janata Dal (Secular) on Tuesday suspended Prajwal Revanna, its MP in Hassan, who has been accused of sexually exploiting several women. Meanwhile, the Special Investigation Team probing the case, issued notices to him and his father H.D. Revanna. » PAGE 3



Bengaluru region witnesses driest April in 41 years

BENGALURU
With the pre-monsoon showers eluding Bengaluru, the city has witnessed the driest April in the last four decades. The India Meteorological Department observatory recorded zero mm of rainfall during the month. This was last observed in 1983. There has been rainfall in April every year since. » PAGE 3

A.P. train crash: no voice record facility at stations

CHENNAI
A piece of crucial evidence to ascertain the reasons that led to the fatal collision between two passenger trains, 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. » PAGE 6

Come clean on timing of Kejriwal arrest: SC to ED

Bench tells the investigating agency that 'life and liberty' is very important and it cannot be denied

Delhi CM's petition argues that his arrest came just before LS election to 'crush' the Opposition

CM's counsel says arrest based on hearsay; ED maintains basis of material evidence for arrest

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 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 address 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



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

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. Justice Khanna ex-

plained 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 (PMLA). 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.

legations 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. Mr. Singhvi had pointed out that no adverse findings were recorded against Mr. Kejriwal by the Supreme Court in an earlier judgment that had denied Mr. Sisodia bail in the excise policy case.

'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 al-

Tourist paradise



Steady trot: Tourists enjoy pony rides in fresh snowfall at Gulmarg in north Kashmir on Tuesday. NISSAR AHMAD

Doctors aware of COVID vaccine's rare side effect

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

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

FULL REPORT
» PAGE 6

SC slams IMA chief for remarks about court's criticism

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.

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 after the court intervened and passed orders. » PAGE 4

doctors allegedly prescribing over-priced medicine brands in cahoots with pharmaceutical companies.

'Vague statements'
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 behove 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 Supreme Court's observations in its hearing on April 23 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.

Inflated bills
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

Columbia locks down campus after anti-war protests escalate

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'. Hamilton Hall, the building at Columbia University that protesters occupied on 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 zip-tying 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 Israeli 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 re-



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

maining 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. Meanwhile the University of Southern California cancelled its main com-

mencement ceremony, citing safety concerns amid the protests. On Monday, chaos erupted at the University of Texas in Austin as law enforcement moved in to make arrests and forcibly dismantle a pro-Palestine protest encampment amid chants of "Free Palestine". 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". Ms. Polat said university officials "have shown a clear disregard" for the protesters' demands. **Police intervention** The university has been trying to avoid calling back the police, whose intervention on April 18 at the request of administrators came under heavy criticism and attracted a wave of angry protests. Columbia was the first institution struck by protests in support of the Palestinian cause, with students demanding that the school divest from investments that support weapons manufacturing and Israel amid the backdrop of the

war on Gaza, in which more than 34,000 Palestinians have been killed. Columbia University Apartheid Divest, the coalition organising the encampment protest, said in a statement on Monday: "These repulsive scare tactics mean nothing compared to the deaths of over 34,000 Palestinians. We will not move until Columbia meets our demands or we are moved by force." The group criticised the university's "threat to mass suspend, evict and possibly expel students" with just hours' notice as a violation of the school's rules. Columbia University spokesperson did not respond to queries on whether the administration will allow NYPD on the campus again to disperse the students from the encampment. (Anisha Dutta is a New York-based freelance journalist)

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 polls. 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 polls 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. government statement.

Congress fields Raj Babbar from Gurgaon; ex-Minister hints at infighting in State unit

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

The Congress on Tuesday named actor-turned-politician Raj Babbar as the party candidate for the Gurgaon Lok Sabha seat in Haryana. The candidates for the remaining eight seats that the party is contesting were announced last week.

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 Congress Haryana state leaders to crush the senior Congress leaders", hinting at infighting in the party. The former Minister, however, added that he would abide by the party leadership's decision.



Raj Babbar, who has earlier been party's Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MP from U.P., is pitted against BJP's Rao Inderjit Singh.

Though Mr. Yadav refrained from naming anyone, he does not get along well with former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, who is believed to have called the shots in finalising the candidates for Haryana. Earlier, former Hisar MP Brijendra Singh had also blamed the internal polit-

ics for denial of party ticket to him.

Of the 10 Lok Sabha seats in Haryana, the Congress is contesting on nine. In the remaining seat, Kurukshetra, Aam Aadmi Party State unit president Sushil Gupta is the joint INDIA bloc candidate.

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 in 2014.

The Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) has fielded Bollywood singer and rapper Rahul Fazilpuria from this seat.

The Gurgaon Lok Sabha seat, with over 25 lakh voters, has been represented by Mr. Singh since it was re-created in 2008.

In 2019, Capt. Yadav had lost to Mr. Singh with a margin of over three lakh votes.

Spread across three districts, the Gurgaon Lok Sabha constituency comprises three Assembly segments of Muslim-dominated Nuh district, which had voted overwhelmingly for the Congress in the previous Lok Sabha election.

Trinamool faces brunt of BJP attack on Congress leader's Bengal home turf

In recent rallies, Yogi Adityanath and J.P. Nadda have been silent on Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, five-time Congress MP from Baharampur, targeting Trinamool instead over 'demographic change'

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

As campaigning picks up for the Baharampur Lok Sabha seat in the heart of West Bengal, there is a discernible shift in the campaign speeches by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders who have refrained from any direct attack on the sitting Congress MP and West Bengal Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

Over the past three days, two key BJP leaders – party president J.P. Nadda and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath – held rallies in Baharampur but their speeches made no mention of the Congress MP.

Addressing election rallies for the BJP candidates from Baharampur, Asansol and Birbhum Lok Sabha seats on Tuesday, Mr. Adityanath raised the issue of violence during the Ram Navami procession on April 17. "Had such inci-



Change in tone: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at an election rally in Asansol, West Bengal on Tuesday. PTI

dents taken place in Uttar Pradesh, I would have taught the perpetrators such a lesson that their next seven generations would not have dared to even think of doing any such thing," he said.

The U.P. CM also alleged that there was a demographic change across several constituencies of West Bengal and attacked the Trinamool Congress government for this.

On Sunday, Mr. Nadda said at an election meeting in Baharampur that the

Mamata Banerjee-led government was a "terrorist sympathiser" and wanted a Union government that was "soft on terrorism".

Electoral challenge

According to the 2011 census, Muslims account for 66% of the population in three Lok Sabha seats – Jangipur, Murshidabad and Baharampur. Mr. Chowdhury, who has defended Baharampur five times, is facing one of the biggest electoral challenges of his career. "They will target

me only if there are any allegations," he said when asked about the BJP taking a step back in their attack.

Mr. Chowdhury won this seat in 2019 with a margin of over 80,000 votes, down from a 3.5 lakh victory margin in 2014.

This time his rival Trinamool Congress candidate is former cricketer Yusuf Pathan and BJP's Nirmal Saha. Dr. Saha, once a physician to the State Congress president, said the BJP leaders were not targeting Mr. Chowdhury as his "popularity among the masses had decreased".

Mr. Chowdhury too has been soft in targeting the BJP, and has instead been blaming the Trinamool for the rise of the BJP in the State.

The Trinamool Congress leadership, including Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, have often charged the Congress leader of being the BJP's "Trojan horse".

Tejashwi accuses BJP of protecting Prajwal Revanna

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday accused the BJP of protecting Janata Dal's (Secular) Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna 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 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, free the rapist)".

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

Anand Sharma 'surprise' pick for Kangra seat; candidature aimed at unifying H.P. Cong.

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

The Congress on Tuesday announced the names of two remaining candidates for the upcoming parliamentary polls in Himachal Pradesh with former Union Minister Anand Sharma as a 'surprise' pick from the Kangra constituency. It also announced Satpal Raizada as its candidate from Hamirpur to take on Union Minister Anurag Thakur of the BJP.

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 following the defeat of Abhishek Singhvi – the official Congress candidate in the recent Rajya



Anand Sharma

Sabha elections – due to cross-voting by six MLAs.

Party insiders are optimistic that with Mr. Anand 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, something that would eventually help not just in Kan-

gra but across the four Lok Sabha seats in Himachal Pradesh.

"The decision to field Anand Sharma will strengthen the party across the State. Not only him, all the Congress candidates are set to win the Lok Sabha polls," said Naresh Chauhan, principal media adviser to Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu.

The unifying effect of Mr. Sharma's candidature comes ahead of the outcome of the bypolls to six Assembly seats (following the disqualification of the Congress MLAs who cross-voted), upon which the State government's survival hinges. With its latest list, the Congress has declared all its candidates for H.P.

Woes of Cong. continue in M.P. as its 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 Bhind 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 from 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 the polls 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 polls is an existential election for India. Edited excerpts:

How do you see the 2024 Lok Sabha polls?

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



Congress candidate from Chandigarh Lok Sabha seat, Manish Tewari, with party leaders and supporters. 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, which 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 city. So, even though my opponent targets me for being an "outsider", the fact is that if there is a legatee to Chandigarh, it is me.

Between the Congress and its potential allies, do you think your party is able to formulate a united front in terms of ideas and mobilisation? Putting together a pre-poll coalition is easier said than done, but despite the hiccups the INDIA bloc has managed fairly.

Those who decided not to get into a pre-poll arrangement, I think would do post-poll alliance because you actually fall on the same side of the fence. When you have parties that have contradictions, ground coordination is laborious. But so far, we seem to be doing alright. The Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had a

joint 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 spelt 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 polls...

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 opposed 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.

JD(S) suspends MP Prajwal; probe team sends notice to him

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Janata Dal (Secular) [JD(S)] on Tuesday suspended Prajwal Revanna, its MP in Hassan, who has been accused of sexually exploiting several women. It was announced after the JD(S)'s core committee meeting in Hubballi.

Pen drives that show alleged acts of sexual exploitation by Mr. Prajwal have been in circulation in Hassan even prior to elections on April 26, embarrassing the party and also the BJP with which it had aligned for the Lok Sabha election.

Meanwhile, the Special Investigation Team, which is probing the case, issued notices to him and his father H.D. Revanna on Tues-



Prajwal Revanna

day. They have been asked to appear before the SIT for questioning. However, no date has been mentioned in the notices.

It has been issued in the sexual harassment case filed at the Holenarasipur Town Police Station on April 28, in which a former cook at the Revanna household alleged that the father-son duo had sexually harassed her while she worked there.

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.

INBRIEF



Kerala HC to hear ED's plea in Thomas Isaac case on May 20

A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Tuesday adjourned to May 20 the hearing on an appeal filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) against a single judge's interim order directing it not to summon former Kerala Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac in a case of Foreign Exchange Management Act violations in the floating of masala bonds for infrastructure work. The single judge had said that Mr. Isaac was contesting the election and that it was not proper to disturb a candidate by summoning him during poll days.

TDP, JSP promise dole for unemployed, free bus rides

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the Jana Sena Party (JSP) on Tuesday released a common manifesto for the 2024 general election in Andhra Pradesh. One of the main assurances in the manifesto is the creation of 20 lakh jobs in the next five years. Unemployed youth will get an allowance of ₹3,000 per month. It also promises interest-free loans of up to ₹10 lakh for women through self-help groups, cash benefit of ₹20,000 a year to farmers and free bus travel for women.

Commandos and Maoists exchange gunfire in Wayanad

Suspected Maoists and Thunderbolt commandos exchanged gunfire inside the Makkimala forest in Wayanad on Tuesday. The commandos are engaged in combat operations in the area for the past six days after four members of the proscribed Communist Party of India (Maoist) visited the Kambalala tea estate on April 23 and asked workers to boycott the Lok Sabha election.

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

The Hindu Bureau
ZAHTEERABAD

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.

34 mandals in A.P. likely to have severe heatwave today

The Hindu Bureau
VISAKHAPATNAM

Rajam in Vizianagaram district recorded 45.3 degree Celsius, the maximum temperature in the north coastal A.P. region on Tuesday, the Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) said in its weather warning report.

It added that Ravikamatham in Anakapalli district recorded 44.8 degree Celsius.

The APSDMA has warned that 34 mandals in Andhra Pradesh are likely to witness severe heat wave conditions on May 1 (Wednesday) while 216

Rajam mandal in Vizianagaram district records 45.3 degree Celsius on Tuesday

mandals may experience heat wave conditions. Mandals in Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Parvathipuram-Manyam and Alluri Sitharama Raju districts are likely to record maximum temperatures between 45 degree Celsius and 47 degree Celsius on May 1, it said.

The Cyclone Warning Centre said Visakhapatnam Airport recorded 38 degree Celsius on Tuesday, while Waltair recorded 34.2 degree Celsius.

Sweat and salt



Despite scorching heat, workers load salt bags from the fields along the shore in Kothapatnam village of Andhra Pradesh. KOMMURI SRINIVAS

Doctor ends life after killing wife, children, mother in Vijayawada

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

An orthopaedic doctor, D. Srinivas, 41, allegedly ended his life after murdering four members of his family in Vijayawada on Tuesday. "The doctor's mother, D. Ramanamma, 65, wife D. Usha Rani, 36 and children Sailaja, 9, and Srihan, 6, were found murdered in his house," said the Patamata Police.

The doctor opened Srija Hospital a few months ago. "Having incurred losses, he leased out the hospital and was working there. He appeared to be suffering of mental distress of late," said his friends.

Police Commissioner

P.H.D. Ramakrishna, DCP Adhiraj Singh Rana and Central Zone ACP P. Bhaskar Rao inspected the spot. CLUES team, sniffer dogs and fingerprint experts collected evidence from the spot, said Patamata Circle-Inspector D.K.N. Mohan Reddy.

"A murder case has been registered in connection with the deaths of the four family members, while a suicide case has been registered on the death of the doctor. The police have seized a knife and a suicide note," Mr. Bhaskar Rao said. (Those battling suicidal thoughts can dial the helpline number 100 for counselling.)

16,875 ducks among 17,980 birds culled in Alappuzha

The Hindu Bureau
ALAPPUZHA

Rapid response teams of the Animal Husbandry Department (AHD) culled 17,980 birds, including 16,875 ducks, within one-km radius of bird flu hotspots in Alappuzha on Tuesday.

"The culling operations have been completed at two avian flu hotspots in Thakazhi and Ambalappuzha North panchayats. However, the process in Edathua was affected by rain. The rest of the birds there will be culled in the coming days," said an AHD official. Bird flu (H5N1) has so far been reported at five places in the district.

Kerala BJP suffers damage over disclosure by Sobha Surendran on Jayarajan issue

G. Anand
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The BJP in Kerala appears to have absorbed some collateral damage in the aftermath of Sobha Surendran's "give the game away disclosure" about her party's "entrenched efforts to woo" Left Democratic Front (LDF) convener E.P. Jayarajan to the NDA fold.

A section of the BJP's State leadership appears miffed that Ms. Surendran had cast the party's attempt to enhance its bipartisan appeal, bolster its top ranks and erase the "Hindutva slur" in a poor light by accentuating the outside role of an alleged political fixer. Ms. Surendran stirred the pot at a post-poll press conference in



Sobha Surendran

Alappuzha last week by following up on Congress State president K. Sudhakaran's politically tempestuous election-day claim that BJP's Kerala in-charge Prakash Javadekar had met Mr. Jayarajan through the good offices of a political fixer. She claimed she was also part of the BJP's covert negotiations to win over Mr. Jayarajan. Mr. Javadekar, under

whose watch the BJP claimed Congress' scalp by reeling in Anil K. Antony and Padmaja Venugopal, both scions of Congress families in Kerala, has not responded to Ms. Surendran's "let the cat out of the bag" statement.

The "discontent" with Ms. Surendran's "ill-considered expose" seemed manifest in a scathing Facebook post by BJP State vice-president P. Raghunath. He said the BJP did not need the favour of any dubious middleman to attract the public to the party. PM Narendra Modi's "good governance was a magnet enough".

He cautioned that hobnobbing with powerbrokers would not bode well for public figures.

Mr. Raghunath asked whether the controversy was a made-for-media narrative to eclipse the "Modi wave" sweeping Kerala by endorsing Congress' line.

BJP's national executive member P. K. Krishnadas fended off the question of whether Ms. Surendran was in the wrong. He said Ms. Surendran had made a public statement and no BJP worker could be faulted for working to increase the party's public influence.

Ms. Surendran, BJP's political firebrand known for her crowd-stirring demagoguery, has a history of running afoul of the BJP's State leadership. In 2021, she had also claimed the she felt sidelined by the party unit in Kerala.

KCR spreading lies about the closure of OU hostel: Revanth

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Equating BRS chief K. Chandrashekar Rao with Nazi-era propagandist Joseph Goebbels, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said that the former was spreading lies on the closure of Osmania University (OU) hostels, adding that the notice was issued as per the varsity almanac.

Taking to X, the Chief Minister shared a similar notice issued by the OU authorities last year when BRS was in power. The notice contained information on closure of hostels due to summer vacation and also mentioned that hostels were being closed due to acute shortage of power and water.



A. Revanth Reddy

The Chief Minister in his post said that seeing KCR, it felt like Goebbels was born again. He said in May 2023, when KCR was the Chief Minister, a similar notice was issued by the university chief warden regarding summer vacations and closure of hostels.

Controversy over the closure of hostels for the summer vacation erupted after KCR shared a notice

from the chief warden that hostels would be closed due to summer vacation alleging that "Telangana CM and Deputy CM were misleading people on power, irrigation and drinking water supply in the State for the last four months".

OU Vice-Chancellor D. Ravinder also clarified that the vacation was declared as per the varsity almanac. Meanwhile, a student leader, Chanagani Dayakar, said that a 'frustrated' KCR was spreading lies. A person who has never visited the campus, has suddenly found love, he said. Another student leader, Valigonda Narasimha thanked Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka for assuring that hostels would be kept open.

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.

Police action

"The moment Congress leaders make posts critical of the BJP, the Prime Minister advances the police to knock at their doors. Meanwhile, the Delhi 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 des-

peration 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.

Funding controversy

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. His vindictiveness has been on full display in Telangana where the Centre has now racked up a laundry list of funds that were promised but have still not been released to the State," 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.

"For every rupee of tax that Telangana pays to the Centre, the State only receives 43 paise in return. Even the Interim budget allocations to Telangana earlier this year were found to be sorely lacking," he said.

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 was 66.22% among men and 66.07% among women. 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 elections in 2019, the first



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

phase final turnout was shared two days after the voting. The voter 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 late on Tuesday, CPI (M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury posted on X: "Finally EC 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 ab-

solute 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.

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 Ansanuddin Amanullah were not impressed by the authority's affidavit which said it had, on April 15, suspended the manufacturing licences of Divya Pharmacy and 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.

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 is-

sued to the police to address this issue as per the law," Mr. Shah said.

Since Sunday, the police in Delhi, Assam, Maharashtra and Gujarat have filed four separate cases in connection with the video. Most persons named in the first information reports (FIRs) were Opposition party workers who shared the post on social media platforms X and Facebook. The police are yet to arrest the person who created the video.

While in the doctored video, Mr. Shah was heard saying the BJP intended to eradicate reservations for SCs, STs, and OBCs, in the original video, he said the party intended to remove the 4% reservation for Muslims in Telangana. The Delhi Police have issued summons to Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy as the video was shared from the Telangana Congress's handle as well.

AAP, Congress hold first strategy meeting since declaring poll tie-up

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



AAP supporters hold placards of jailed Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal during an INDIA bloc rally in Mumbai. AFP

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," he 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.

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 the 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.

Salman 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 Shakya from the Farrukhabad seat.

Seeking votes for Mr. Shakya, 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. "Together, do vote jihad - with intelligence, without being sentimental, and with silence. As we can only do vote jihad to drive away

this Sanghi government," she said.

Taking cognisance of her remarks, a case was registered against Ms. Alam for violating the provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Representation of People Act, police said, and added that a case was also registered against Mr. Khurshid, who was the chief guest at the election meeting.

Asked to comment on the issue, Mr. Khurshid said he generally avoided using such words because its literal meaning was misinterpreted. "Jihad means to fight against a situation. Her intention must have been to carry out vote jihad to protect the Constitution," 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.

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

Odisha CM files nomination from Hinjili seat

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday filed the nomination papers from Hinjili Assembly constituency in his home district of Ganjam for the sixth consecutive time. Mr. Patnaik, who is set to become the longest serving Chief Minister if his party wins the Assembly election, was

flanked by his close aides V. K. Pandian and senior Minister Bikram Arukha. Before submitting nomination papers in the office of the returning officer, Mr. Patnaik visited Tara Tarini Temple, the famous shrine in Ganjam district. He has been winning Hinjili seat consecutively since 2000. This time, he is also contesting from Kantabanji Assembly seat in Balangir district of western Odisha. He is likely to file his nomination for Kantabanji on May 2.



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 govt. 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".

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 Ranesh (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



Campaign mode: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Ministers Ajit Pawar and Devendra Fadnis 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 Dhairyashel 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 Dhairyashel 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 on 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.

PM's speeches show he is frustrated, says 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 a big majority in the first two phases, so 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.

BJP eliminates terrorists on their home turf, says Modi

PM contrasts UPA government's diplomatic dossiers post the 2008 Mumbai terror attack with the BJP-led NDA's 'surgical strikes'; slams Congress for alleged plan to impose inheritance tax

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, which, he said, had merely compiled and sent dossiers on the terror attacks to neighbouring Pakistan.

Addressing a poll rally in Latur district in the Marathwada 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 Pakistan 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 post the 2008



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

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 bogey of the Opposition Congress' alleged plan to introduce an inheritance tax if it comes to power. "By this tax, if one is leaving behind 10 acres of land after their death, then their legal heirs will get only five acres each, and the remaining will go to the Congress. This party has given power and privilege to its own first family [alluding to the Nehru-Gandhi family] and its

new generation through inheritance," he said.

Addressing a public 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.

"A tall leader from Maharashtra, whom you all know, had pledged to bring water to Solapur back in 2009. Was he able to give you the water? It is time to teach him a lesson. His tenure as MP was so abysmal that he did not dare to contest from the Madha constituency after that. There were 99 incomplete irrigation projects in the country, 26 from Maharashtra. It is my mission to deliver on my promise of giving water to every field and household. We have completed 63 of these projects," Mr. Modi said.

'Modi-Shah bent on doing away with Constitution'

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 an election rally in Bhind Lok Sabha seat in 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.

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 Thrombosis with 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)

A.P. crash: Railways had no voice recording facility at train stations

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 Pranjeev 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

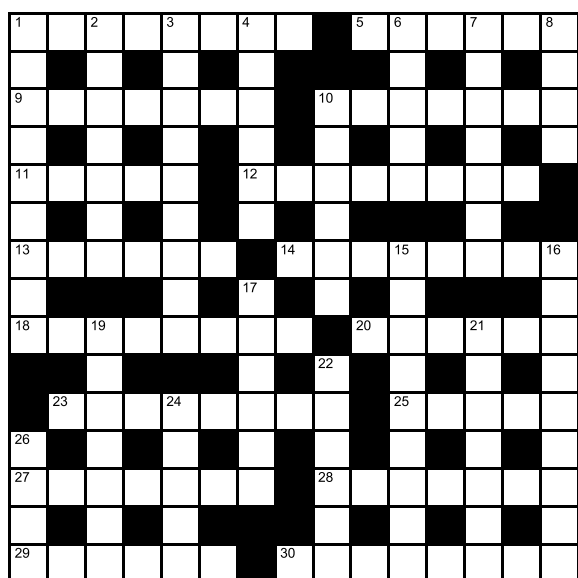
Superintendent of Kantakapalle railway station issued a Private Number (a secret code) authorising him to cross the signal in red. "The role of the Train Manager [Guard] is suspect as he is the only surviving crew member who could have acted in time to prevent the mishap... TMR has sufficient reasons 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>



- Across**
- Entered "N/A" (her office rejected revealing court action) (8)
 - Form cults bristling to seize power (6)
 - Indian state's push for growth (7)
 - Reversing scene? Staple part of a bowler's arsenal (7)
 - Propose firing head of firm (5)
 - Fabric worn by Spain's male court judges (8)
- Down**
- Random illness caught aunt badly (9)
 - Gentleman: "In hindsight, I almost sounded ridiculous" (7)
 - Controls a variety of shares, including half of sensex, after recession (9)
 - Born in turmoil, led conflict (6)
 - Review of these pacts shows some outstanding features (5)
 - See what people are saying about bill on IPL's restructuring (3-4)
 - Bomb smelled bad (burning sulphur) (4)
 - Game in which "fault" and "net" are reviewed (6)
 - Experiencing post-flight problems is not regular around east terminal — disheartened! (3-6)
 - Scholars in universities say IST superior (9)
 - Wade softly and turn (6)
 - Scamper around and start to sweat after old lover blackmailed (7)
 - Rainy season is imminent, as explained in Jamaica (7)
 - Setter's irrational about love, per complaint (6)
 - Goal: beer, nothing canned (5)
 - Male, possibly out of his league (4)

SUDOKU



Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Beginning with pranava

In the first verse of Kandar Anubhuti, Arunagirinatha begins with the word 'aadam'. Thus the work may be said to begin with the pranava mantra – AUM, said So. So. Mee-nakshisundaram in a discourse. The word 'aadam' contains 'a', 'u' and 'm'. *Aadam 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 'aadam' (dancing), it would have been read as 'aadamayil'. Thus the separate word *aadam*, 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. Because of the many references to the *vel* in Kandar Anubhuti, it is called *manthira nool* – the work about 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. Arunagirinatha prays that he should always have the blessing of singing about Muruga.

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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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



Dr. Chandrakant Lahariya

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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

intervention with greater utilisation from 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"



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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.

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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.



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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

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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?

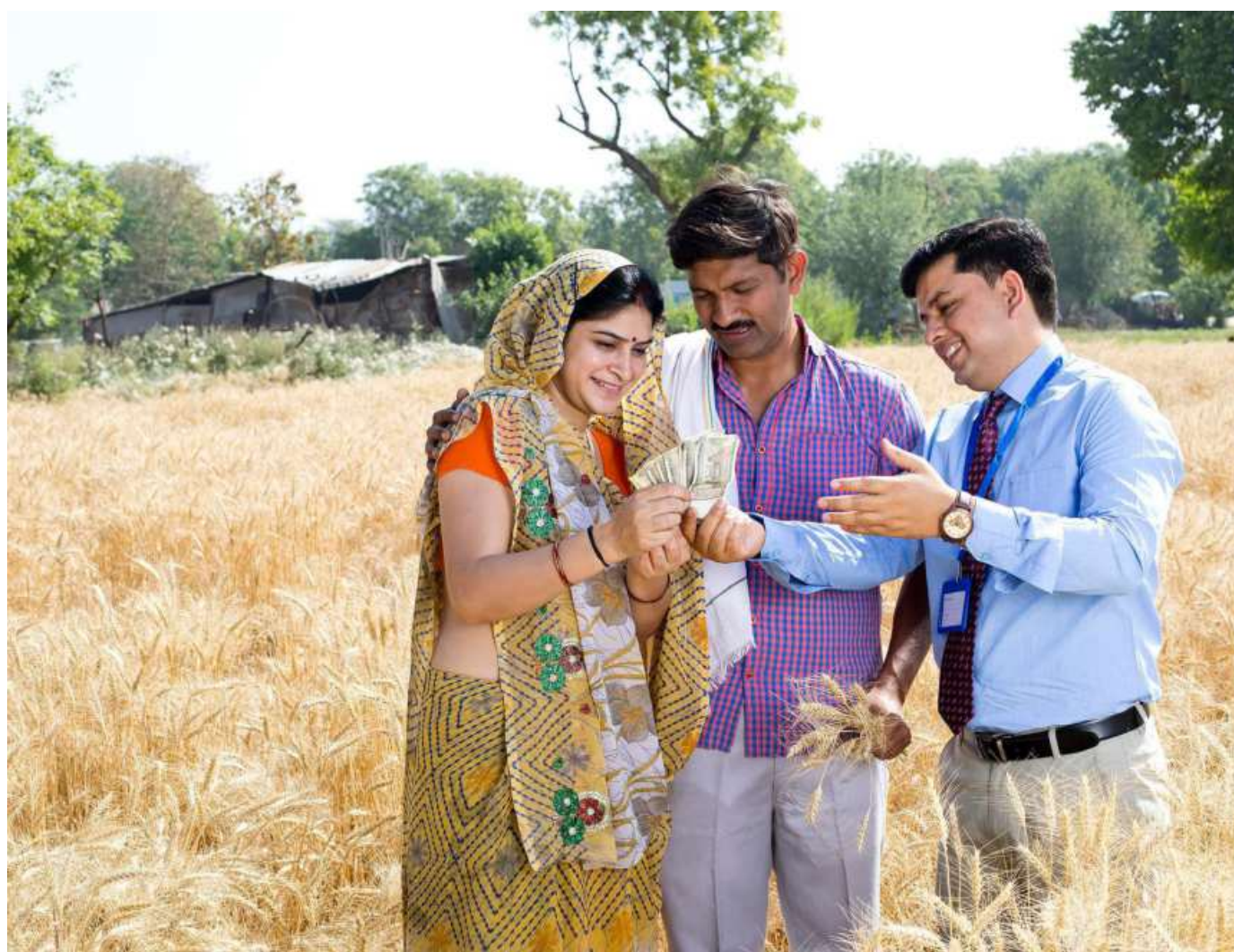
The Preamble to the Constitution aims to secure to all citizens social and economic justice, liberty and equality. Part III of the Constitution lists down the fundamental rights that guarantee liberty and equality while Part IV contains the DPSP. These are principles that the central and State governments 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

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.

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

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'

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%.

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 Nayar, 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.

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

N. Anand
CHENNAI



Vidyashankar Krishnan

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.

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 reve-

nue 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.

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.

'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.

TeamLease EdTech, a learning and employability solution services firm, forecasts 7% surge in hiring

in the first half of the calendar based on a survey.

"This reflects growing confidence in industry's growth," said Shantanu Rooj, Founder-CEO.

Aditya Narayan Mishra, MD & CEO, CIEL HR, said the rise in the number of middle-class households and related socio-economic changes were raising demand for consumer goods.

Hiring prospects would only improve as sectors like aviation, defence, semiconductors, EVs and mobile phone manufacturing experience rapid growth, said Puneet Arora, Managing Partner, Biz Staffing Comrade.

Fertilizer subsidy in FY24 exceeds RE by ₹6,500 crore

Shishir Sinha
Prabhudatta Mishra
NEW DELHI

The fertilizer subsidy in Fiscal Year 2023-24 (FY24) has exceeded Revised Estimates (RE) by over ₹6,500 crore, latest government data show. However, this is unlikely to impact revised estimate of fiscal deficit.

One possible reason for the increase in subsidy is rise in input cost and operations cost mainly on account of an increase in natural gas prices. Data, analysed by *businessine*, showed subsidy on urea going up to more than ₹1.30-lakh crore as against RE of ₹1.29-lakh crore. However, it is still lower than the Budget Estimate of over ₹1.35-lakh crore. Under nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) expenditure rose to



more than ₹65,000 crore as against RE of more than ₹60,000 crore and Budget Estimate of ₹44,000 crore.

Urea subsidy

Last June, the government extended urea subsidy scheme up to March 31, 2025. Between FY23 and FY25, the total estimated outlay was pegged at more than ₹3.68-lakh crore. The actual expenditure is expected to vary based on

the prices of natural gas and other inputs used in the production of urea.

Under the subsidy scheme, urea is provided to farmers at a statutorily notified maximum retail price (MRP). The MRP of 45 kg bag of urea is ₹242 per bag (exclusive of charges towards neem coating and taxes as applicable), while the cost, on some occasions, crossed ₹3,000 for a 45 kg bag.

The difference between the delivered cost of urea at farm gate and net market realisation by the urea units is given as subsidy to the urea manufacturer/importer by the government. Further, government implemented nutrient-based subsidy policy w.e.f. April 1, 2010 nationwide, which has now been extended till 2025-26.

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.

Britain starts physical checks on fresh food imports from the EU

Reuters
LONDON

Britain launched physical checks on fresh food products imported from the European Union on Tuesday some three years after it left the bloc's single market and eight years after it voted to leave the EU.

While Britain's major supermarkets and large EU exporting businesses have greater resources to handle the paperwork and new demands, smaller retailers and wholesalers have warned of delays and disruption and said consumers should expect a reduced variety of quality goods, less fresh produce and higher prices.

The first phase of Britain's so called new Border Target Operating Model, requiring additional certification, came into force on Jan. 31.

A second phase kicked off on Tuesday introducing physical checks at ports for so called "medium risk" animal products, plants

The government says the new checks are essential to help prevent diseases and pests entering Britain

and plant products, such as meat, fish, cheese, eggs, dairy products and certain cut flowers. New charges have also been introduced.

The government says the new checks, which involve visual inspections and the temperature readings of goods, are essential to help prevent diseases and pests entering Britain and will level the playing field for U.K. exporters.

"It is essential that we introduce these global, risk-based checks to improve the U.K.'s biosecurity," Cabinet Office minister Lucy Neville-Rolfe said.

"We cannot continue with temporary measures which leave the U.K. open to threats from diseases and could do considerable damage to our livelihoods, our economy and our farming industry."

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	74,483	-0.25
US Dollar	83.43	0.02
Gold	72,600	-0.20
Brent oil	87.84	-0.84

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3054.70	-26.50
Adani Ports	1324.90	-7.65
Apollo Hosp	5947.10	-21.25
Asian Paints	2875.90	-7.70
Axis Bank	1165.90	6.65
Bajaj Auto	8903.65	143.55
Bajaj Finserv	1615.00	19.35
Bajaj Finance	6923.55	96.95
Bharti Airtel	1322.30	-10.15
BPCL	607.35	-11.45
Britannia Ind	4775.95	-23.90
Cipla	1400.00	-8.00
Coal India	454.30	1.05
Divis Lab	4002.40	13.15
Dr Reddys Lab	6204.30	-92.80
Eicher Motors	4597.40	25.55
Grasim Ind	2411.65	25.05
HCL Tech	1366.60	-20.80
HDFC Bank	1520.10	-9.40
HDFC Life	583.65	8.55
Hero MotoCorp	4543.05	85.35
Hindalco	644.40	-5.65
Hind Unilever	2230.45	-4.35
ICI Bank	1150.40	-4.75
IndusInd Bank	1515.70	28.45
Infosys	1420.55	-14.20
ITC	435.65	-2.55
JSW Steel	882.20	-13.55
Kotak Bank	1623.35	-16.45
L&T	3594.30	-40.00
LTIMindtree Ltd.	4706.40	-37.55
M&M	2156.35	94.30
Maruti Suzuki	12817.50	127.65
NestleIndia	2507.40	-2.40
NTPC	363.20	0.20
ONGC	282.85	-8.35
PowerGrid Corp	301.85	-0.15
Reliance Ind	2934.00	3.95
SBI Life	1436.55	14.20
State Bank	826.25	-0.25
Shriram Finance	2551.70	59.50
Sun Pharma	1502.10	-19.50
TataConsumerPro-		
duct	1108.35	9.85
Tata Motors	1007.90	7.30
Tata Steel	165.00	-2.40
TCS	3820.65	-49.55
Tech Mahindra	1263.50	-24.80
Titan	3589.25	-15.60
UltraTech Cement	9971.85	7.40
Wipro	462.40	-0.55

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 30

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.23	83.55
Euro	89.31	89.65
British Pound	104.44	104.85
Japanese Yen (100)	53.04	53.25
Chinese Yuan	11.50	11.54
Swiss Franc	91.33	91.69
Singapore Dollar	61.16	61.40
Canadian Dollar	60.82	61.05
Malaysian Ringgit	17.43	17.52
Australian Dollar	54.39	54.60

Source: Indian Bank

Danish brewer Carlsberg sees higher sales



Bland drink: The company said revenue was negatively impacted by currency effects. REUTERS

Agence France-Presse
COPENHAGEN

Danish brewer Carlsberg on Tuesday reported a 4.4% increase in revenue in the first quarter, boosted by higher sales of name brand beers.

In a comment, CEO Jacob Aarup-Andersen welcomed "a solid start" to the year.

"We're particularly satisfied with the growth of our premium portfolio and the volume and revenue growth in Asia, both of which are important strategic growth drivers," Aarup-Andersen said.

Revenue grew 4.4% compared to a year earlier, reaching 17.1 billion kroner (\$2.5 billion).

Carlsberg said sales of its namesake brand grew by 15%, driven by China, India, Vietnam and Ukraine. Sales of Tuborg meanwhile increased by 8%, also driven in part by China. While 1664 Blanc saw good growth in Western Europe, Asia, and Eastern Europe, this was offset "by lower volumes in certain export and licence markets."

The company said revenue was negatively impacted by currency effects and organically revenue grew 6.4%. As permitted by the Copenhagen Stock Exchange, the Danish brewer only reports its net profit every six months.

"Performance was in line with expectations, and we maintain our full-year earnings outlook," Mr. Aarup-Andersen said. Carlsberg expects its organic operating profit to grow by between 1-5% in 2024. In 2023, Carlsberg reported a loss of over 40 billion kroner after Moscow took control of its Russian unit following the company's decision to sell the business and exit the country.

Tesla's bid to launch self-driving cars in China pushes rivals to race ahead

Tesla could prove a fierce competitor in China's autonomous-vehicle segment, but it faces potent rivals including BYD and Huawei that have rolled out systems to navigate China's densely packed urban areas; officials hope competition from Tesla would make Chinese EV makers swim faster

NEWS ANALYSIS

Reuters
SHANGHAI/BEIJING

If Tesla succeeds in bringing its "Full Self-Driving" system to China, the world's largest car market, the U.S. electric-car pioneer will be shifting into the fast lane of the global race toward autonomous vehicles.

On a whirlwind trip to Beijing starting Sunday, Mr. Musk came to discuss the potential rollout of its FSD driver-assistance system and the possibility of securing government approvals for overseas transfers of data from Tesla vehicles in China, according to a source with knowledge of the trip.

Such data, used to train self-driving systems, would boost Tesla's long-term efforts to produce fully autonomous vehicles.

As it did with electric cars, Tesla could prove a fierce competitor in China's autonomous-vehicle segment, industry analysts and executives say, citing its early lead in developing driver-assistance systems with some autonomous features.

But Tesla faces potent rivals including BYD, China's largest EV maker, and Huawei, a smartphone maker emerging as a national tech champion, that have rolled out systems de-



Big fish: Tesla is among the toughest competitors given its ability to collect data from vehicles. REUTERS

signed to navigate China's densely packed urban landscapes.

Those two giants are among at least 10 automakers and suppliers that have unveiled driver-assistance systems over the past two years that can navigate city streets and make turns at intersections. Others include EV makers Xpeng and Li Auto, and Xiaomi, the smartphone maker that recently introduced its first car, an instant hit.

Any new model priced at more than \$30,000 in China now needs advanced driver-assistance features to compete, said Maxwell Zhou, co-founder of DeepRoute.ai, a China-based startup selling software for advanced driver-assistance systems.

"You must have a high-



You must have a high-level driving solution to prove you have a smart car, not a stupid car

MAXWELL ZHOU
co-founder of DeepRoute.ai

level driving solution to prove you have a smart car, not a stupid car," Mr. Zhou told Reuters.

Xpeng has said it plans to launch a new mass-market brand, Mona, with self-driving features on a car priced below \$21,000. That's more than \$10,000 cheaper than the China price of Tesla's Model 3.

Many industry experts expect it will take years be-

fore fully autonomous cars are commonplace, but predictions vary widely.

Driver-assistance features now offered in China are "level two" systems, meaning they require a driver ready to take over. Tesla's FSD and its less-advanced options of Autopilot, are also level-two systems requiring attentive drivers.

More fully automated vehicle fleets operated by Baidu, China's biggest search engine operator, and Pony.ai, an autonomous driving startup, run in limited test zones.

'Catfish effect'

Tesla's push to roll out FSD in China would "pressure other EV start-ups to accelerate their research and development", said Yale

Zhang, managing director at Automotive Foresight.

China saw the same dynamic in electric-vehicle development when its government approved Tesla to open a Shanghai plant in 2018. At the time, officials hoped for what they called a "catfish effect"—that dropping a big catfish, Tesla, in the tank would make the other fish, China EV makers, swim faster.

China's industry responded. BYD, the nation's EV leader, has since introduced a slew of models at all price points—starting below \$10,000—as its China EV sales exploded from just over 105,000 in 2018 to more than 1.5 million last year.

Mr. Zhang said Tesla's autonomous-vehicle development in China could have the same impact: "It would be the 'catfish effect' for the second half of the game."

'Disruptive'

At the Beijing auto show that opened last week, Chinese automakers and suppliers touted "level-two-plus" driver-assistance systems with more advanced sensors and displays. While they are not cleared by regulators for hands-off-the-wheel driving, some are designed to be with future software upgrades.

While Tesla relies only on cameras to detect hazards around self-driving cars, other automakers are

rolling out systems that include lidar, which uses pulses of light to detect objects.

Huawei showed off components from telematics receivers that work with both the U.S.-backed GPS system and China's rival BeiDou satellite system, along with lidar and optical sensors, for advanced driving systems.

The Chinese tech giant aims to compete with other major suppliers of such systems including Bosch and Continental. Bosch welcomes the competition, said Markus Heyn, a Bosch board member. "It's good for the market," he said. "We love doing innovative and disruptive stuff."

Tesla could be among the toughest competitors, in part because of its ability to collect data from its vehicles—the world's largest fleet of EVs currently on roads. However, under Beijing's data security rules, it cannot transfer data from its cars in China offshore without approvals.

Xpeng Motors CEO He Xiaopeng said that a move by Tesla to launch FSD in China could intensify what he predicted would be a decade-long battle for dominance of "smart EVs".

China won't be the only battlefield. It's critical for China's self-driving technology industry, Mr. He said, to start "making its mark on international markets outside its own turf."

Yen for life



Currency play: A man (second from left) has lunch while sitting outside with other visitors in the tourist area of Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo as the country marks the 'Golden Week' holidays on Tuesday. While Japan is seeing record numbers of foreign visitors, the weakness of the yen, which fell to a new 34-year low against the U.S. dollar on April 29, is boosting consumption, delighting certain traders. AFP

Asia's first spot bitcoin, ether ETFs begin trading in Hong Kong

Agence France-Presse
HONG KONG

Hong Kong on Tuesday launched trading of Asia's first spot bitcoin and ether exchange-traded funds (ETFs), moving forward in the city's race to become a regional virtual asset investment hub.

The debut comes three months after the United States gave the green light to ETFs pegged to bitcoin's spot price, making it easier for mainstream investors to add the unit to portfolio.

Hong Kong's pioneering crypto ETFs on the city's bourse include six funds issued by three managers — Boseru Funds, China Asset Management (Hong Kong) Limited and Harvest Glo-



Following suit: The debut comes three months after the U.S. gave the green light to ETFs pegged to bitcoin's spot price. AFP

bal Investments.

Each company issued a spot bitcoin and a spot ether ETF, which can be traded in both Hong Kong and U.S. dollars, while ChinaAMC (HK) also allowed trading in Chinese yuan.

"These are the first spot

ETF products of virtual assets in (the) Asia market, which has proven Hong Kong's leading status in virtual asset development in the region," Joseph Chan, the city's undersecretary for financial services, said at the bell-tolling ceremony.

in the morning.

He added the government would submit a proposal for creating a licensing scheme for over-the-counter virtual asset trading services to the city's legislature "as soon as possible." By the close of trade Tuesday, the new bitcoin ETFs recorded an average price rise of nearly 1.7%, while the ether ETFs dropped about 0.5%.

CCData, a digital assets analysis firm, said on Friday the new funds were "predicted to not attract the same level of inflows as those in" the United States.

But "industry experts believe they might encourage other nations to approve cryptocurrency ETFs", it said.

Strained Chinese cities struggle to pay home buying subsidies

Reuters
BEIJING/HONG KONG

Amy Wang was counting on a 100,000 yuan (\$13,800) subsidy promised by authorities in the eastern Chinese city of Weifang to fit and furnish an apartment she bought two years ago. Still waiting for the money, she is yet to move in.

The 30-year-old now pays 6,000 yuan of her 8,000 monthly salary on the mortgage for the 1.1 million yuan apartment and another 1,800 yuan to rent another one, relying on her parents for other basic expenses.

"I feel under a lot of pressure," said Ms. Wang, who works in electronics manufacturing, and bought the bare shell of

her apartment, without floors, interior walls or other fittings—which is common in China.

Weifang, with a population of more than 9 million and an economy larger than Croatia's, and dozens of other Chinese cities, have promised subsidies and other incentives to homebuyers to prop up the ailing property sector.

But the real estate downturn also affects the ability of cities to lease land to developers, a key revenue source.

Frustrated buyers

This meant some local governments were unable to raise funds to pay the promised subsidies, frustrating buyers and casting doubts over future support measures. All of that could



Drying revenue: Real estate downturn affects the ability of cities to lease land to developers. REUTERS

delay the property market's recovery.

"There's a risk that households will start to perceive local governments as too cash-strapped to make

good on their subsidy promises," said Christopher Beddor, deputy China research director at Gavekal Dragonomics.

"That will certainly

make an impact on homebuying decisions."

Some 150 people from more than 50 Chinese cities have used a section for public comments on the

website of People's Daily, the official newspaper of the Communist Party, to complain about unpaid subsidies in the past six months.

Authorities in many of the cities have replied on the same platform, which requires users to register with their identification documents before posting.

Officials from Weifang, which had promised subsidies of 30,000 to 300,000 yuan, wrote on several occasions, blaming COVID-19, the economic downturn and tax cuts for not making the payments.

"Unusual short-term conflicts between fiscal revenues and expenditures and enormous pressure on local financial security resulted in delays in the disbursement of housing sub-

sidies," the finance department of Zhucheng, a municipality administered by Weifang, wrote in January.

In March, the human resources department of Weifang's High-tech Industrial Development Zone said their district has "partially disbursed" the subsidies and more payments were being processed.

Officials from Zigong and Zibo issued similarly worded responses as Zhucheng in April. Also this month, Shangqiu pleaded for "patience," saying the subsidies would be issued "when they are ready."

Key sector

The property market accounted for about a quarter of China's economic activity at its peak and

budget revenues from land auctions dwarfed other sources of income in many cities before the pandemic.

Across China, land auction revenues in 2023 were about 20% below pre-pandemic levels in 2019, official data show. In Zibo, Shangqiu and Weifang, off-budget revenues—which include land sales—were down 30%-50% over the same period.

The sums and total number of people affected by unpaid subsidies remain unclear.

Shangqiu civil servant Alan Liu, 30, says that some homebuyers in the city have received their subsidies, but he is still waiting for the promised 30,000 yuan, having bought a flat in a "prime location" in June 2022.

GENEVA

\$267 million in aid still suspended over protest, says UNRWA chief

Philippe Lazzarini, the head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, said on Tuesday that \$267 million in its funding was still suspended over allegations that some United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees in the Near East staff participated in the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel. **AFP**

LONDON

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

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**

MANILA

Chinese coast guard fires water cannons at Philippine vessels

Chinese coast guard ships fired water cannons at two Philippine patrol vessels on Tuesday near a disputed Scarborough shoal in the South China Sea, causing minor damage to one vessel, in the latest flare-up in an increasingly tense territorial conflict. There were no immediate reports of injuries in the incident. **AP**

LONDON

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

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**

Amid truce talks, Netanyahu vows to invade Rafah 'with or without a deal'

The current deal being discussed, brokered by the U.S., Egypt and Qatar, would see the release of dozens of hostages in exchange for a six-week halt in fighting as part of an initial phase, according to an Egyptian official and Israeli media

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 talks - which appear to be one of the most serious rounds of negotiations between Israel and Hamas since the war began. The



People protest against Benjamin Netanyahu's government and call for the release of hostages held in Gaza, in Tel Aviv on Saturday. **AP**

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. Mr. Netanyahu's comments appeared to be meant to appease his nationalist governing partners but it was not clear whether they would have any bearing on

any emerging deal with Hamas.

"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."

Mr. Netanyahu has faced pressure from his governing partners not to proceed with a deal that might prevent Israel from invading Rafah, which it says is Hamas's last major stronghold. His government could be threatened if he agrees to a deal because hard-line Cabinet members have demanded an attack on Rafah. Mr. Net-

anyahu met on Tuesday with one of those partners, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, according to the minister's office, although it did not disclose details.

With more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million people sheltering in Rafah, the international community, including Israel's top ally the U.S., has warned Israel against any offensive that puts civilians at risk.

The current deal being discussed, brokered by the U.S., Egypt and Qatar, would see the release of dozens of hostages in exchange for a six-week halt in fighting as part of an initial phase, according to an Egyptian official and Israeli media.

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 race, such as the 2020 election 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.

U.S. to make marijuana use a less serious crime

Reuters
WASHINGTON

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 proposal is being sent to the White House for review.

The shift, however, would not legalise marijuana for recreational use.

Adding up

Electoral officials count votes at a polling station in Lome on April 29, 2024, during Togo's legislative elections. **AFP**

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 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 specific 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 solidarity and unity at an early date.

They highly appreciated China's firm support for the just cause of the Palestinian people in restoring their legitimate rights... and reached an agreement on ideas for future dialogue

MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON

"They highly appreciated the China's firm support for the just cause of the Palestinian people in restoring their legitimate national rights, thanked the Chinese side for its efforts to help strengthen Palestinian internal unity, 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.)

UN chief calls for 'independent' probe into mass graves in Gaza

Agence France-Presse
UNITED NATIONS

United Nations chief Antonio Guterres expressed alarm on Tuesday over reports of mass graves discovered in Gaza including at two hospitals and allegations those buried there were unlawfully killed, as he demanded an independent investigation.

"It is imperative that independent international investigators with forensic expertise are allowed immediate access to the sites of these mass graves to establish the precise circumstances under which the Palestinians lost their lives and were buried or reburied," Mr. Guterres said.

ICC interview
Prosecutors from the International Criminal Court had earlier interviewed



Tragic sight: People gather near bodies unearthed from a mass grave found in the Nasser Medical Complex in southern Gaza. **AFP**

staff from Gaza's two biggest hospitals, two sources said, the first confirmation that ICC investigators were speaking to medics about possible crimes in Gaza.

The sources, who asked not to be identified due to the sensitivity of the subject, said ICC investigators had taken testimony from staff who had worked in

the main hospital in Gaza City in the north of the enclave, Al Shifa, and the main hospital in Khan Younis in the south, Nasser.

One of the sources said that events surrounding the hospitals could become part of the investigation by the ICC, which hears criminal cases against individuals for war

crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and aggression.

The ICC's office of the prosecutor declined to comment on operational matters in ongoing investigations citing the need to ensure the safety of victims and witnesses.

The ICC has said it is investigating both sides in the conflict, including both the October 7 attack by Hamas fighters on Israel and the subsequent Israeli offensive in Gaza.

During the conflict, the two main Gaza hospitals have both been high-profile Israeli targets - surrounded, besieged and stormed by Israeli forces who accused Hamas militants of using them for military purposes, which Hamas and medical staff deny. (With Reuters inputs)

Judge fines Trump \$9,000 for contempt

Reuters
NEW YORK

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.

In a written order, Justice Juan Merchan said the fine may not be enough to serve as a deterrent for the wealthy businessman-turned-politician and lamented he did not have the authority to impose a higher penalty.

Judge Merchan had imposed the gag order to prevent Trump from criticizing witnesses and others involved in the case.

The Republican candidate in the 2024 presidential election is charged with falsifying business records



Donald Trump

to conceal a \$1,30,000 payment to adult star Stormy Daniels in exchange for her silence about a sexual encounter she said she had with Mr. Trump in 2006.

The historic criminal trial is the first of a former U.S. President and began on April 22.

The criminal case is one of four pending against Mr. Trump, but could be the only one to go to trial and result in a verdict before the election.



Protesters attend a rally against Iranian rapper Toomaj Salehi's death sentence in Berlin, Germany, on Sunday. AP

Iran rapper facing death isolated in jail, say supporters

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Iranian authorities have deprived rapper Toomaj Salehi, sentenced to death after supporting protests sparked by the death in custody of Mahsa Amini in 2022, of his right to make telephone calls from jail, his social media accounts run by supporters said on Tuesday.

Mr. Salehi, who performs under the name Toomaj, was last week sentenced to death in a verdict seen by activists as retaliation for his music backing the nationwide protests.

The rapper, a prominent figure for youth in Iran even before his arrest, was convicted on the sharia charge of "corruption on earth" by a Revolutionary Court. His lawyers plan to appeal the verdict while he remains jailed in Dastgerd prison outside the central city of Isfahan.

"Toomaj's phone privileges at Isfahan's Dastgerd prison were cut off. This means he has zero contact with his family and the outside world," said the artist's official account on X which has been run by an administrator since his incarceration.

"Furthermore, in a move meant to inflict maximum psychological pressure on him, all prisoners at Dastgerd have been forbidden from speaking to him, and have been threatened with severe punishment if they do," it said. "This is a gross violation of Toomaj's human rights, and must immediately stop," the post added.

Protests were held across the world at the weekend in cities including in Toronto, Paris and Sydney, urging Iran to spare the rapper's life and release him. Nine men have already been executed in Iran in protest-related cases.

German law to clean up supply chains triggers fears of industrial regression

The Supply Chain Act that took effect in Germany in January 2023, which requires companies to take due diligence procedures to monitor suppliers' human rights practices and environmental standards, is putting pressure on small and medium enterprises struggling with bureaucratic burden

Reuters
BERLIN

Many German small and medium enterprises (SMEs) said they have been struggling to meet the cost and bureaucratic burden of the Supply Chain Act that took effect in January 2023, adding that this harmed their global competitiveness.

German engineering company BAUCH makes machines and engine components out of materials mined in China, Africa or South America that pass through multiple hands and processes before they reach its factories in southern Germany and China. To comply with the Act, BAUCH, like other firms with more than 1,000 staff, must take due diligence procedures to monitor suppliers' human rights practices and environmental protection standards – a task which CEO Manfred Bauch says is almost impossible and threatens to rip apart his supply chain.

Their experience signalled what industries throughout the European Union may soon face, after the European Parliament last week passed the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive that will require larger companies operating in the bloc to check if their supply chains use forced labour or cause environmental damage and take action if they do.



Ripple effect: Germany's logistics sector has protested that applying the law to companies that merely transport imported goods from ports within the country was unreasonable. FILE PHOTO

Supporters say the legislation will foster responsible corporate behaviour and anchor human rights and environmental considerations in their operations. Some also point out the law will support companies as investors and consumers demand more sustainability.

Rights group Amnesty International has called the EU directive – which EU countries will have to incorporate as a law in their own legislations – an opportunity to close a gap which allowed companies operating in the EU "to escape accountability for widespread rights abuses around the world."

But some German companies with global supply chains, and long lists of input materials say it is a struggle to obtain accurate information, and issues

such as workers' rights are regulated by foreign laws outside of their control.

Strikingly, Germany failed to support the new EU law, as the pro-business Free Democrats (FDP), the smallest party in Germany's three-way coalition, said it would burden business with excessive bureaucracy.

Lack of access

"It is almost impossible to access a mine in Asia or Africa from Europe," Mr. Bauch said.

Whether a foreign mine has any information on sustainability or governance available depends on its owner, with London-listed mining companies for example providing more information than privately-owned mines in China.

BAUCH's suppliers that

deal with the mines directly don't always have the information to pass on or the clout to demand it from the mines themselves, Mr. Bauch added.

More than 5,000 German companies now submit a due-diligence report to the Labour Ministry addressing issues such as workers' rights, child labour, and environmental protections. They must identify problems and devise a policy to mitigate risk through the supply chain.

"Nothing unreasonable is expected of companies," said a spokesperson for the German Labour Ministry in response.

"They do not have to guarantee that their supply chains are free from violations of human rights or environmental damage." Rather, they must be able

to show they have made checks. "If this is not legally or actually possible – despite reasonable endeavours – a company has nevertheless fulfilled its due diligence obligations," the Ministry added.

As de-industrialisation fears grow, German manufacturers say the Supply Chain Act further weakens the position of Europe's industrial powerhouse.

Industrial machinery manufacturer SMS group has 14,000 suppliers and has been preparing for the law for three years. Matthias Hedergott, Vice President Supply Chain Management, said the law leads to increased costs and a competitive disadvantage.

"Our non-European, Chinese or Indian competitors do not have these requirements" said Mr. Hedergott.

The logistics sector has protested that applying the law to companies that merely transport imported goods from ports within Germany was unreasonable.

"At the moment the economic situation is very tense ... Everyone is fighting for survival, and we have to do nonsense like this," said Harry Seifert, chairman of Seifert Logistics GmbH, of the law.

Berlin estimated the compliance costs at 43.5 million euros per year, plus a one-off cost of 109.7 million euros, but business groups say they are much

higher. A company violating the law could be fined up to 8 million euros or 2% of the company's annual revenue.

Small firms hit

Some smaller German enterprises say they are indirectly affected by the law because bigger companies lean on them to meet the reporting requirements.

"There is a cascade effect," said Achim Dercks, Deputy Chief Executive of the German Chamber of Commerce DIHK.

Some 82% of companies in Germany with more than 250 employees said they were indirectly affected by the law, a survey by the German economic institute IW Koeln showed. Among mid-sized enterprises of 50 to 249 employees, it was 72%.

Germany's Federal Office of Economics and Export Control has said, "the law does not allow companies to pass on their obligations to small and medium suppliers." But some SMEs say they feel forced to cooperate as they fear being replaced.

"SMEs cannot cope with the flood of different information requests," said Mr. Dercks.

"This law came about because the Germans wanted to do something good for the employees in other countries," Mr. Bauch said. "But this law is pure bureaucracy, completely pointless."

Meta is facing EU probe over suspected rule breaches

Associated Press
LONDON

The European Union said on Tuesday that it was investigating Facebook and Instagram over a range of suspected violations of the bloc's digital rulebook, including not doing enough to protect users from foreign disinformation ahead of EU-wide elections.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, said it's opening formal proceedings into whether parent company Meta Platforms breached the Digital Services Act (DSA), a sweeping set of regulations designed to protect Internet users and clean up social media platforms under threat of hefty fines worth up to 6% of annual revenue.

European Commissioner Thierry Breton said in a social media post that the bloc is probing Meta "for suspected breach of DSA obligations to protect integrity of elections."

Brussels has been cracking down on tech companies since the DSA took effect last year, opening investigations into social media sites TikTok and X and ecommerce platform AliExpress. TikTok bowed to EU pressure last week and halted a reward feature on its new app after the Commission started demanding answers about it.

The EU is stepping up measures to safeguard elections as citizens of the bloc's 27 nations prepare to vote in June for European Parliament lawmakers, amid widespread fears that the latest generative AI systems could be used to disrupt the many votes around the world this year.

Breaking free



Demolition drive: Workers dismantle a Soviet-era monument to the Pereiaslav Agreement on Ukraine-Russia union, in Kyiv on Tuesday. AFP

'Border clashes in Lebanon taking heavy toll on children'

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

UNICEF, children's agency of the UN, said on Tuesday that conflict on Lebanon's border between Hezbollah militant group and Israel was taking a heavy toll on children, with thousands out of school and healthcare "critically impacted".

"We are deeply alarmed by the situation of children and families who have been forced from their homes," Edouard Beigbeder, the Lebanon representative for UNICEF, said in a statement.

He also highlighted "the profound long-term impact the violence is taking on children's safety, health and access to education".

"We call for an immediate ceasefire and the protection of children and civilians," he said.



A house destroyed by an Israeli strike in Lebanon as exchange of fire continues between Israeli forces and Hezbollah militants. AP

"We must redouble our efforts to make sure every child in Lebanon is in school and learning, is protected from physical and mental harm, and has the opportunity to thrive."

Eight children have been killed in Lebanon and 75 wounded since hostilities started following Israel's war on Gaza, UNICEF said, citing figures from the

country's Health Ministry. More than 92,000 people, almost a third of them children, have meanwhile been displaced, according to the UN's migration agency. "Should this conflict continue to escalate... the repercussions for children will be devastating," UNICEF spokesperson James Elder told a press conference in Geneva.

U.S. military ships work on floating platform off Gaza coast to deliver aid

Associated Press
JERUSALEM

A U.S. Navy ship and several Army vessels involved in a U.S.-led effort to bring more aid into the besieged Gaza Strip are offshore of the enclave and building out a floating platform for the operation that the Pentagon has said will cost at least \$320 million.

Sabrina Singh, Pentagon spokesperson, said that the cost is a rough estimate for the project and includes the transportation of the equipment and pier sections from the U.S. to the coast of Gaza, as well as the construction and aid delivery operations.

Satellite photos analysed on Tuesday show the

USNS Roy P. Benavidez about 11 kilometre from the port on shore, where the base of operations for the project is being built by the Israeli military.

A U.S. military official confirmed late last week that the Benavidez had begun construction and that it was far enough off shore to ensure that the troops building the platform would be safe.

'Operations from May' U.S. and Israeli officials have said they hope to have the floating pier in place, the causeway attached to the shore and operations underway by early May.

Under the plan by the U.S. military, aid will be



Buoyant effort: An undated image released by the U.S. on Tuesday shows a floating pier under construction off the Gaza Strip. AP

loaded onto commercial ships in Cyprus to sail to the floating platform. The pallets will be loaded onto trucks, which will be loaded onto smaller ships that will travel to a metal, floating two-lane causeway.

The 550-metre causeway will be attached to the shore by the Israeli Defence Forces.

The U.S. military official said an American Army engineering unit has teamed with an Israeli military en-

gineering unit in recent weeks to practice the installation of the causeway, training on an Israeli beach just up the coast.

The new port sits southwest of Gaza City and a bit north of a road bisecting Gaza that the Israeli military built during the current war against Hamas. The area was the territory's most populous before the Israeli ground offensive rolled through and pushed more than 1 million people south toward the city of Rafah on the border with Egypt.

Now Israeli military positions are on either side of the port, which initially had been built – as part of an effort led by World Central Kitchen – out of the

rubble of buildings leveled by Israel. That effort halted after an Israeli airstrike killed seven World Central Kitchen aid workers on April 1 as they traveled in clearly marked vehicles on a delivery mission authorised by Israel.

Scaling up aid

Aid has been slow to get into Gaza, with long backups of trucks awaiting Israeli inspections. The U.S. and other nations also have used air drops to send food into Gaza. The U.S. military official said deliveries on the sea route initially will total about 90 trucks a day and could quickly increase to about 150 trucks daily.

On Sunday, Israeli military spokesperson Rear

Adm. Daniel Hagari said the amount of aid going into Gaza would continue to scale up. "This temporary pier will provide a ship-to-shore distribution system that will further increase the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza," he said in a statement.

However, high-ranking Hamas political official Khalil al-Hayya said last week that the group would consider Israeli forces – or forces from any other country – stationed by the pier to guard it as "an occupying force and aggression," and that the militant group would resist it.

On Wednesday, a mortar attack targeted the port site, though no one was hurt.

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

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.

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

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

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.

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

S. Dipak Ragav CHENNAI

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

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.

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 was given the run around by Alexander Bublik before winning 7-6(3), 6-4. World No. 8 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.

India sweeps team titles in Asian carrom championships

India swept both the men's and women's team championships in the sixth Asian carrom championships in Maldives.

The results, finals: Men: India bt Maldives 3-0 (K. Srinivas bt Ismail Azmeen 25-19, 25-3; Md. Ghufuran 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).

Tyson to fight Paul in sanctioned heavyweight bout

Former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson's July 20 fight against YouTube sensation Jake Paul in Dallas will be a sanctioned heavyweight professional bout, fighters and promoters announced in Washington on Monday. The fight will be over eight two-minute rounds with the result to count on the record of both Paul and Tyson, who lost his last official bout in 2005. Tyson, 50-6 with 44 knockouts, has not won a fight since beating Clifford Etienne in 2003.

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

T20 WC
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



Ready to fire: Archer, who has been out of action due to injury, will be keen to do well at the marquee event. FILE PHOTO

duo of Ryan Rickelton and Ott Niel Baartman was included 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.

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.), Ott Niel 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.

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 Sonobe (Jpn) bt Kiara Cvetkovic (Sui) & Annika Kannan 6-1, 6-0.

\$15,000 ITF women, Antalya, Turkey: Doubles, pre-quarterfinals: Sofya Gapankova & Varvara Panshina bt Florencia Moran (Arg) & Bela Tamhankar 6-1, 6-1.

Lewandowski 'tricks in Barcelona's facile win

EURO LEAGUES

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. Those two teams will meet in a Catalonia derby on Saturday.

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.



Triple delight: Lewandowski heads in one of his three goals. AFP

Fermin Lopez's header from a Raphinha cross put Barca in front after 22 minutes but Valencia's Hugo Duro struck in the 27th and Pepelu scored from the spot after a foul by Ronald Araujo 11 minutes later to give the visitors the lead.

But after Valencia keeper Giorgi Mamardashvili saw red for a handball outside the box before the break Barca dominated

and Lewandowski scored with two headers from corners in the 49th and 82nd before getting his treble with a free-kick in added time.

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, Frentrup 27, Gudmundsson 63) bt Cagliari 0.

The eye is bored by repetition; bowlers need help



BETWEEN WICKETS
Suresh Menon

It is possible that even as you read this, the first score of 300-plus in an IPL innings might have been made already. Nepal's 314 for three against Mongolia is the record in a T20 International, but franchise cricket is of a higher standard.

Already the 100-mark in the first PowerPlay has been crossed. Six-hitting, the basis of all tall scores, might still be exciting but only just. Repetition is beginning to suck the thrill out of it. As the poet W.H. Auden said, the eye is bored by repetition. In fact, repetition doesn't create memories.

The IPL is being played for the 17th time, which means there are enough batters who first took to the game when they were in the first grade or so, and have grown with it.

Inevitable

We no longer gasp at 20-plus runs in an over, 24 sixes in an innings or 42 in a match. When Will Jacks takes just 10 deliveries to move from 50 to 100, it is merely interesting, not astounding. Someone, we tell ourselves, was bound to do it sooner or later. The more often such records are broken, the more inevitable it looks; unexpectedness, the essence of competition, is being replaced by inevitability. You can have too much of a good thing.

There aren't too many angles left unexplored by

either batter or bowler. Fielders on the boundary don't worry the hitter who aims to strike into the crowd. Even the great Jasprit Bumrah has been taken for 18 in a single over. What might cause a sharp intake of breath might actually be a forward defence or a batter letting a ball go through to the wicket keeper unharmed. That might suggest a cosmic disturbance.

Hundreds by Will Jacks (41 balls) and Travis Head (in 39) merely seem to be preparation for a 25-ball century.

Traditional statistics have become meaningless. When Delhi Capitals' Jake Fraser-McGurk made a 27-ball 84 against Mumbai Indians, the significant statistic was not the strike rate of 311, but the fact that of the 104 deliveries he faced, he attempted boundaries off 77. So here's a new metric: aggressive shot percentage.

Is the end of T20 near?

But does all this lead up to one conclusion: that the end of T20 is approaching faster than predicted? Theoretically, a team could hit each of the 120 deliveries it receives for six, and that would be that.

At the start of the previous century, physicists spoke about the end of physics, as if there was nothing remaining to be discovered.

That was just before the quantum revolution and the opening of new pathways. The political philosophers who emphasised the end of history are discovering that they spoke too soon.

Perhaps the approaching death of the T20 is an exaggeration. The future of

the format is in the hands of the bowlers. It is likely that batting will peak, reaching a stage beyond which it cannot progress (at least for a while) as the bowlers reassert themselves.

There is too the question of human limit, a question that pops up every Olympic year. If the rule-makers are enlightened, there will be an attempt to create a level playing field even if it means giving the bowler the greater advantage.

Perhaps a batter might be declared leg before even if the ball pitches outside the line of the leg stump. Perhaps the benefit of the doubt will always go in favour of the bowler. Perhaps the two best bowlers might be allowed to bowl six overs each in an innings.

All this just for the shortest format of the game, of course. Once it is accepted in theory that bowlers need help, there are always possibilities.

A recent cartoon doing the rounds on social media summed up the bowlers' plight well.

It shows a bunch of bowlers led by Mitchell Starc carrying banners saying things like 'Stop the Batriarchy', 'Bowlers Matter' and 'Abolish the Impact Substitute'. Like the best jokes, these reveal important truths.

Not supporting acts

Bowlers are not supporting acts. As the great Erapalli Prasanna said recently, "You can say all you want about batting, but a match does not begin till someone bowls."

IPL cricket may be 'progressing' too quickly for its own good.

Vishvanath, Akash, Preet in u-22 semifinals

BOXING

Sports Bureau

Vishvanath Suresh, Akash Gorkha and Preet Malik advanced to the under-22 semifinals on Tuesday as Indian boxers continued to add medals to their tally at the ASBC Asian u-22 and youth championships at Astana.

Reigning youth world champion Vishvanath (48kg) dominated Iran's Hassani Seyedarsham in a one sided-affair for a 5-0 win. National champion Akash (60kg) outclassed Ebad Arman of Iran with a

similar scoreline while Preet (67kg) earned an easy victory with the Referee Stopping the Contest in the first round against Vietnam's Nguyen Duc Ngoc.

Kunal (75kg), however, bowed out of the tournament after going down 0-5 to Iran's Mahshari Mohammad in the quarterfinals-stage.

Late on Monday, Rahul Kundu (75kg), Lakshay Rathi (+92kg), Laxmi (50kg), Tamanna (54kg), Yatri Patel (57kg) and Shrusthi Sathe (63kg) all assured themselves of medals after entering the semifinals in the youth category.

AIFF commemorates 50 years of AFC Youth Championship win

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

The All India Football Federation commemorated Golden Jubilee of the Indian team's triumph in the AFC Youth Championship in 1974 by felicitating the team members at a function here on Tuesday.

The well-attended ceremony remembered the exploits of the Indian team which was declared the joint winner with Iran in Bangkok after the teams were tied 2-2 in the final even after extra-time.

This was the last notable triumph for Indian in the international arena after the seniors had settled for a bronze in the 1970 Asian Games (also in Bangkok).

AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey presented mementos to six members of the

squad, including captain Shabbir Ali, C.C. Jacob, Dilip Palit, Shishir Guha Dastidar, Ranjit (Gobinda Das) and S.P. Kumar, who could make themselves available. The coach of the winning squad, Arun Ghosh, could not attend the function owing to health reasons. His son-in-law, former National table tennis champion Nupur Santra, received the memento on his behalf.

"For almost five decades after India's independence, we never focused on utilising the international friendly windows, the FIFA World Cup or even to collaborate with the world of football. We chose not to look beyond the Olympics and the Asian Games at that time. That seems to have cost us important international exposure," said the AIFF president.

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

