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NIA SEARCH

Baramulla doctor held in Red Fort blast case

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NEWS » PAGE 14



DATA POINT

Could IndiGo have hired more pilots to prevent the crisis?

It scaled up operations but not crew strength

OPINION » PAGE 9

Citizenship under CAA only if claims verified: SC

Act provides rights to persecuted religious minorities, but their claims must clear official review, says court after petitioner flags panic among refugees from neighbouring nations after SIR began

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said conferment of rights associated with Indian citizenship to people claiming to be religious minorities who fled persecution from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh and protected under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, would be wholly dependent on whether their claims turn out to be true. The court said that though the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, had introduced changes in favour of granting “enforceable rights” to persecuted religious minorities from these countries, every such claim would have to be enquired into and verified by the authorities.



A file picture of Bangladeshi Hindus arriving at a village in West Bengal. REUTERS

The oral observations from a Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymaya Bagchi came on a petition filed by an NGO, Aatmadeep. The NGO submitted that these groups, especially those who had fled Bangladesh and were living in West Bengal, were petri-

Fear of statelessness

Key issues raised in the petition regarding persecuted minorities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan

- The delay in issuing citizenship certificates, combined with the non-recognition of acknowledgment receipts during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR), has created a “serious constitutional crisis”
- The affected persons — recognised by Parliament as deserving protection and integration — are now exposed to the risk of statelessness, social exclusion, and disenfranchisement
- The acknowledgment receipt generated upon online submission of an application for a certificate of naturalisation must be treated as valid provisional proof of pending citizenship determination, at least for the SIR

fied that the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls would render them stateless. Chief Justice Kant said the conferment of Indian citizenship was not a given for CAA applicants. They should fulfil certain conditions, and in due course, could apply for inclusion in

the voters’ list, the Chief Justice said. The court, however, issued notice to the Election Commission and the Centre, seeking a response. It posted the case for hearing next week.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

Top court slams EC’s ‘mechanical’ replies to SIR-related issues

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

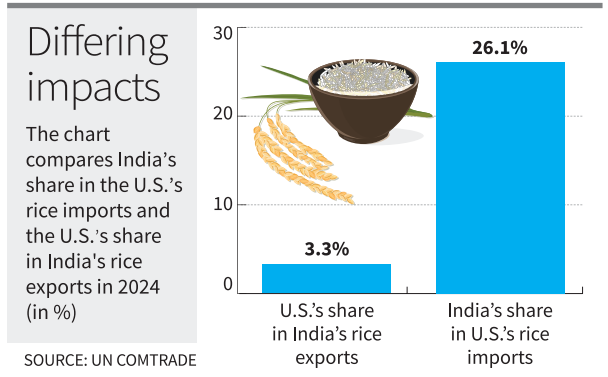
The Supreme Court on Tuesday remonstrated with the Election Commission of India (EC) for giving “mechanical and cyclostyled” answers every time a human problem is presented in court by anxious voters about the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. Chief Justice of India Surya Kant voiced the top court’s exasperation at repeatedly being witness to the EC trying to parry the practical difficulties raised in the court with figures and statistics on the number of enumeration forms that have been submitted and digitised. T.N. migrant workers’ woes The latest instance came while the court was hearing applications seeking an extension of time to submit the enumeration

forms in Tamil Nadu. The applicants said that many people living in the hilly regions of the State were migrant workers, and many leave for their annual pilgrimage to Sabarimala and will only return by Pongal in mid-January. The enumeration phase, however, is set to end on December 11 in the State. The EC’s response was a blank statement: “99.27% enumeration forms were received and digitised in Tamil Nadu.” “For you, it is 90% and 97% every time a practical difficulty is raised in this court. Your answers are always mechanical and cyclostyled,” the Chief Justice berated the EC. Another applicant submitted that 56 lakh people were yet to submit their enumeration forms in the State. CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

Trump mulls tariffs on Indian rice; move may hit U.S. more

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Days before a team of negotiators from the United States is to visit India to discuss tariffs, U.S. President Donald Trump has hinted at imposing further tariffs on India, this time on rice, to prevent it from “dumping” rice in the U.S. However, an analysis of trade data between the two countries shows that such tariffs would hurt the U.S. far more than India since only about 3% of India’s rice exports go to the U.S., whereas Indian rice makes up more than one-fourth of the quantity imported into the U.S. In other words, for rice, the U.S. is not a major export destination for India, but India is a major import source for the U.S. The Hindu had recently



reported that a U.S. team of negotiators led by Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Rick Switzer would be in New Delhi on December 10-12 to discuss tariffs. The U.S. has currently imposed a total of 50% tariffs on imports from India. Mr. Trump made his rice tariff comments during a White House meeting in which he unveiled a \$12 billion package to support

American farmers. At a meeting in the White House, when a farmers’ representative complained that India, Thailand and other countries were “dumping” rice in the U.S., Mr. Trump asked the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent: “Why is India allowed to do that? They have to pay tariffs. Do they have an exemption on rice?”

Exercising franchise



Voters stand in queue before a polling station in Thripunithura, Kochi, on Tuesday. In the first phase of the Kerala local body polls, seven southern districts recorded 70.9% polling, as per the data released by the State Election Commission. THULASIA KAKKAT (REPORT ON PAGE 6)

IndiGo set to reduce 400-500 flights daily to stabilise schedule

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

IndiGo will slash 400 to 500 flights to fully stabilise its daily schedule, nearly double the number of cuts the government ordered after the airline’s failure to allocate enough pilots after the new night-flying rules crippled its operations and led to the cancellation of hundreds of flights over the past week. The airline will now operate 1,800 to 1,900 flights daily instead of 2,300 it was operating earlier, an IndiGo executive told The Hindu. This implies that nearly 81,000 passengers a day will be affected until full capacity is restored, according to back-of-the-envelope calculations assuming 90% seat occupancy on its 180-seat aircraft. The airline did not provide any clarity on how long it would take to return to full capacity, but the executive said the airline would inform passengers about cancellations 72 hours in advance. IndiGo’s decision to curtail flights came even as Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu said in a post on X that the airline had been ordered to slash 10% of its flights. This was up from the 5% the government ordered earlier in the day. However, the final tally means IndiGo is slashing 17%-21% of its daily flights. IndiGo chief executive officer (CEO) Pieter Elbers, who met Mr. Naidu on Tuesday, said in a recorded video statement before the meeting that the airline’s operations had “fully stabilised, which means the flights reflecting on our website are scheduled to



Passengers exit the airport in Kanpur, following cancellation of flights to Delhi and Mumbai on Tuesday. PTI

operate with an adjusted network”. The airline also said it was now flying to all the 138 destinations in its network, and its on-time performance (OTP) had improved to 85% to 90% of flights adhering to their arrival and departure slots; the figure had dropped to as low as 3.5% last week.

IN BRIEF



Goa club blaze: owner Ajay Gupta detained in Delhi

NEW DELHI/PANAJI The Goa police on Tuesday detained Ajay Gupta, one of the four owners of ‘Birch by Romeo Lane’ nightclub, where a devastating fire on December 6 claimed the lives of 25 people. Mr. Gupta was apprehended from the national capital. » Page 4

OPPORTUNITIES
» PAGE 5

INDIA bloc MPs move motion to impeach HC judge

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

MPs of the INDIA bloc on Tuesday submitted a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to move an impeachment motion in Parliament against Justice G.R. Swaminathan of the Madras High Court’s Madurai Bench. They accused the judge of deciding cases based on political ideology and sought his removal under Article 217, read with Article 124, of the Constitution. “The House resolves to pass a motion for the impeachment of Justice G.R. Swaminathan,” stated the letter. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) Parliamentary Party leader Kanimozhi said Mr. Birla told



Justice G.R. Swaminathan the MPs that he would look into the issue. Other MPs who submitted the letter include the party’s Lok Sabha leader T.R. Baalu, Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi, Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav, CPI(M) member Su. Venkatesan, DMK member A. Raja, VCK MP Thol. Thirumavalavan and MDMK leader Durai Vaiko. The Opposition’s move

The move comes against the backdrop of the judge’s order directing authorities of the Subramaniya Swamy Temple at Thirupparankundram, Madurai, to ensure that the Karthigai Deepam was lit at deepathoon (pillar) near a dargah atop the hill.

comes against the backdrop of Justice Swaminathan’s order directing the authorities of the Subramaniya Swamy Temple at Thirupparankundram, Madurai, to ensure that the Karthigai Deepam was lit at a deepathoon (pillar) near a dargah atop the hill. As many as 107 MPs signed the letter, stating that the judge’s conduct raised serious questions

about the judiciary’s impartiality, transparency, and secular functioning. The Opposition leaders accused the judge of showing undue favouritism to senior advocate M. Sricharan Ranganathan in deciding cases, and of favouring advocates from a particular community. “He is deciding cases on the basis of a particular political ideology and against the secular principles of the Indian Constitution,” they alleged. Copies to President, CJI The MPs submitted copies of letters written by members of the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha to President Droupadi Murmu and Chief Justice of India (CJI)

Surya Kant. Last week, the Lok Sabha witnessed a face-off between the DMK, which leads the United Progressive Alliance government in Tamil Nadu, and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which leads the National Democratic Alliance at the Centre, over the deepathoon issue. Poll-bound State On December 5, Mr. Baalu accused the BJP of trying to “ignite communal tensions” in the State, which is due to go to the polls next year, while Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs L. Murugan charged the DMK-led government with “denying devotees their right to worship”.

“Safety non-negotiable” Earlier in the day, Mr. Naidu said in the Lok Sabha that the airline had been directed to restructure its operations and reserve crew capacity. “No airline, however large, will be permitted to cause such hardship to passengers through planning failures, non-compliance or non-adherence to statutory provisions. Safety in civil aviation is completely non-negotiable,” he said. The airline was also directed to ensure reserve crew capacity. A four-member committee has been set up to inquire into the large-scale flight disruptions at IndiGo, and the airline’s CEO and COO have been issued show-cause notices warning of enforcement action. CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

No scope for fire-safety lapses: Gupta; MCD initiates compliance survey

Inspection of major events, commercial spaces vital to avert Goa-like tragedy: CM; asks Chief Secretary, fire dept. officials to review current mechanism, frame new guidelines if necessary; civic body panel chair seeks compliance report in five days

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday said her government will not tolerate lapses in fire-safety compliance and instructed officials to ensure the process of issuing no-objection certificates (NOCs) to commercial establishments becomes more transparent and hassle-free.

Her remarks, made during a review meeting with senior Delhi Fire Services (DFS) officials, coincided with a citywide inspection drive ordered by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), which licenses these establishments. The move follows the December 6 fire in Goa that claimed 25 lives, including four Delhi residents. The civic body has directed



Policy discussion: Councillors discussing fire-safety measures at a meeting in the MCD headquarters on Tuesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

checks at hotels, restaurants, clubs, and multiplexes to verify compliance with fire-safety requirements and licensing rules.

Ms. Gupta said regular inspections of large events and commercial spaces were essential to prevent tragedies. "Fire safety is not the responsibility of the government alone.

Owners of establishments must also ensure that all required safety measures are in place," she said.

Smoother NOCs

The CM said she had received complaints about delays and cumbersome procedures in obtaining NOCs. She directed officials to identify such cases,

submit a detailed report, and prepare proposals to simplify the rules. Ms. Gupta directed the Chief Secretary and DFS officials to examine the current mechanism and frame new guidelines if needed.

She said Delhi's firefighting system must be "swift, transparent, and reliable". "The purpose of the NOC system is public safety, not to burden business owners," she said.

No room for negligence
MCD Standing Committee chairperson Satya Sharma said the Goa tragedy underscores the need for a comprehensive review of hotels, restaurants and bars. She stressed that every establishment must hold a valid MCD licence and comply with fire-safety rules. "Any kind of negligence will not be tolerat-

ed," Ms. Sharma said.

The chair of the civic body panel directed Health Department officials to prepare a zone- and ward-wise list of all establishments concerned within five days.

The list must include details on licensing status, seating capacity permissions, and renewal dates, helping the committee identify businesses operating without permission or those with overdue renewals, she said, warning of strict, immediate action against violators.

A day earlier, councillor and Indraprastha Vikas Party leader Mukesh Goyal raised concerns about open-terrace restaurants, alleging widespread violations. Without urgent checks, he warned that a "Goa-like tragedy could happen in Delhi".

Ensure care for child mauled by pitbull, plug regulatory gaps: HC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday directed authorities to ensure continued medical care for the six-year-old boy who suffered grievous injuries, including the loss of his left ear, after being attacked by a pet pitbull in north-west Delhi last month.

The court also sought a status report from the police on the steps taken following the registration of the FIR against Rajesh Pal, the dog's owner. Justice Sachin Datta noted that previous complaints had been made about the same dog, yet no action was taken.

The court was told that a resident had filed a complaint against the canine in July this year and that the pitbull had attack a child last year as well.

The court observed that an FIR was registered on November 23 in connection with the latest attack and asked the police to

The court asked the Delhi government to specify the measures in place for dealing with such cases

take "expeditious steps" in the matter. During the hearing, counsel for the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Tushar Sannu, informed the court that the dog was unregistered and had been seized on the day of the incident.

'Prevent this menace'

Seeking clarity on the regulatory framework, the court asked the Delhi government to specify the measures in place for dealing with such cases. "Do the regulations contemplate any action against the owner? What are the consequences if something like this happens?... You have to take measures to prevent this menace," the court observed.

It directed that the dog

should not be released until adequate safeguards are in place "to ensure that a similar incident does not recur". Safdarjung Hospital, where the child was admitted and later discharged, was instructed to continue providing necessary treatment and ensure all appropriate medical steps are taken.

On the question of expenses, the court said it would be "appropriate for the owner of the dog to bear the costs". "We will issue that direction next time. Let him appear," the court said while issuing notice to Mr. Pal.

The plea filed by the child's father through advocate Avadh Kaushik, stated that the LKG student was attacked while playing outside his home in Prem Nagar. Mr. Kaushik, appearing pro bono, said the boy's father, a daily-wage labourer living with his wife and two minor sons, is unable to meet the mounting medical bills.

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I, PRIYA Verma, r/o WZ-1013A, Gali No.13, Sadh Nagar, Palam Colony, Delhi-110045 mother of Ridhima Verma, declare our correct names as Priya Verma and Ridhima Verma D/O Sumit Verma.

TENDERS

CHENNAI PORT AUTHORITY TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT
No.1 Rajaji Salai, Chennai-1

E-AUCTION NOTIFICATION
NO.SWH/E-Auction-1/009/2025/TC dt. 08.12.25 MSTC REF: MSTC/SRO/Chennai Port Authority/5/Traffic Department /25-26/48736(547230) E-AUCTION NOTICE for sale of 1 Lot, Stone aggregates in bulk lying inside Chennai Port area, in "as is where is" condition on 31/12/2025. Inspection date: From 10-12-25 to 30-12-25. For Further Details log on to: www.chennaiport.gov.in or https://www.mstccommerce.com/auctionhome/index_new.jsp Sd/- TRAFFIC MANAGER

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Under the due instructions from our client M/S. NATIONAL CENTER FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, we are issuing this public notice cautioning the general public that it has come to the notice of the M/S. NATIONAL CENTER FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION that some of the disgruntled former employees of the institution and particularly Mrs. Dikshitha and Mrs. Priya Natarajan are using the name of the M/S. NATIONAL CENTER FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION and had created a fake website www.ncvte.in and www.ncvteac.in to deceive our associates, clients and students. The above said Mrs. Dikshitha and Mrs. Priya Natarajan are fraudulently misleading and converting existing NCVTE-affiliated institutions to NSDVE by falsely claiming that NCVTE has been changed to NSDVE, thereby cheating institutions and causing reputational and financial damage to M/S. NATIONAL CENTER FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION. This is to inform to the esteemed affiliated institutions, associates, clients, students and public at large that for any act of cheating or loss or damage caused by unscrupulous persons/entities that are illegally using the name of M/S. NATIONAL CENTER FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION is not liable to unwary affiliated institutions, associates, clients, students and public at large for any act of cheating or loss or damage caused by unscrupulous persons/entities that are illegally using the name of M/S. NATIONAL CENTER FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

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India's National Newspaper

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CONSTRUCTION DIVISION (E/M), U.P. JAL NIGAM (NAGARIYA), 15 Shanti Niketan, Meerut

Letter No.: 885/Nivida/88
Date: 08.12.2025

E-TENDER NOTICE

U.P. Jal Nigam (Urban) invites E-bids for "Augmentation of Existing Water Supply System in Ward No. 37 L Block Ganganagar," from eligible, reputed and experienced bidders. Detailed bid document will be available for download from 16.12.2025 at 05:00 P.M. on Uttar Pradesh Government's e-procurement portal <https://etender.up.nic.in> and maybe submitted online upto 23.12.2025 at 05:00 P.M. E-tender Cost is Rs. 3000/-18% GST. Tenders will be opened on 27.12.2025 at 03:00 P.M., in this office.

CENTRAL RAILWAY

OPEN TENDER NOTICE No. DRMWNGP-88-2025 OF 08/12/2025

Name of work: Phased Array Ultrasonic Testing (PAUT) of Flash Butt Welds of Ganganagar division. (i) Approximate cost: Rs. 2,21,79,339.00 (ii) Earnest Money: Rs. 2,60,900.00 Date & time of closing of tender: 29/12/2025, 15:00 Hrs. Complete details and instructions for the above work is available on Railway's website www.irps.gov.in

DRM (Works), Nagpur

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CENTRAL RAILWAY

OPEN TENDER NOTICE No. DRMWNGP-86-2025 OF 28/11/2025

1) Name of work: Electric loco shed, Ajni-Creation of Advance Inspection Centre for Inspection & Maintenance Activity loco shed. (i) Approximate cost: Rs. 9,38,40,212.78 (ii) Earnest Money: Rs. 6,19,200.00 (2) Name of work: 1) Proposed TSR(P) at (A)-1) kms 766.00-767.500=1.500kms DN RD, 2) kms 779.100-780.100=1.000kms DN RD, 3) kms 787.00-788.00=1.000kms DN RD, 4) kms 792.00-793.00=1.000kms DN RD, 5) kms 806.00-807.250=1.250kms DN RD, 6) kms 822.00-824.00=2.000kms DN RD, 7) kms 812.600-814.000=1.400kms UP RD, Total=9.150 kms in Nagpur-Wardha section, (B)-1) kms 844.00-852.00=8.000kms DN RD, 2) kms 844.00-852.00=8.000kms UP RD, Total=16 kms in Sewagram-Balharshah section, G.Total kms=25.150 kms in Nagpur division. 2) Proposed CTR (P) at (A)-1) kms 889.000-894.000=5.000 kms Single line in Amla Chhindwara section under DEN(N)NGP's jurisdiction. 3) Proposed TSR(P) at (A)-1) kms 834.980-835.320=0.340kms UP RD, 2) kms 835.440-835.692=0.252 kms UP RD, 3) kms 836.200-836.387=0.187 kms UP RD, 4) kms 836.700-836.795=0.095 kms UP RD, 5) kms 839.580-840.135=0.555 kms UP RD, 6) kms 850.500-852.300=1.800 kms UP RD, 7) kms 914.600-915.200=0.600kms DN RD, 8) kms 920.140-920.660=0.520kms UP RD, Total=4.349 kms in Itarsi-Nagpur section. (B)1) kms 819.000-822.000=3.000 kms DN RD, 2) kms 808.000-808.600=0.600 kms UP RD, 3) kms 808.800-809.350=0.550 kms UP RD, Total=4.150 kms in Nagpur Wardha section. (C)-1) kms 831.000-833.000=2.000kms DN RD, 2) kms 844.00-852.00=8.000kms UP RD, Total=16 kms in Sewagram-Balharshah section, G.Total kms=25.150 kms in Nagpur division. 2) Proposed CTR (P) at (A)-1) kms 889.000-894.000=5.000 kms Single line in Amla Chhindwara section under DEN(N)NGP's jurisdiction. 3) Proposed TSR(P) at (A)-1) kms 834.980-835.320=0.340kms UP RD, 2) kms 835.440-835.692=0.252 kms UP RD, 3) kms 836.200-836.387=0.187 kms UP RD, 4) kms 836.700-836.795=0.095 kms UP RD, 5) kms 839.580-840.135=0.555 kms UP RD, 6) kms 850.500-852.300=1.800 kms UP RD, 7) kms 914.600-915.200=0.600kms DN RD, 8) kms 920.140-920.660=0.520kms UP RD, Total=4.349 kms in Itarsi-Nagpur section. 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Hours after staying Karnataka govt.'s notification on menstrual leave, High Court recalls order

Two separate pleas filed in court challenged notification contending that there is no provision to grant leave during periods; govt. has no power to introduce additional leave to different establishments, registered under various labour laws: petitioners

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka recalled its earlier interim order of staying the State government's November 20 notification mandating registered establishments to grant one-day leave per month for women employees, aged between 18 and 52 years, during their menstrual cycle.

Justice Jyoti M. had passed the interim order at 10.45 a.m. on Tuesday staying the notification after hearing the arguments on two separate petitions, filed by Bangalore Hotels' Association and Avirata AFL Connectivity Systems Ltd, Bengaluru.

However, at around 1.30 p.m., the court recalled the interim order of stay after the State Advocate-General K. Shashi Kiran Shetty requested the court to hear arguments on behalf of the State on Wednesday before considering the plea of the petitioners for staying the



A participant at the 62nd All India Congress of Obstetrics and Gynaecology making a line stretching 1,078 metres using 10,105 sanitary pads. FILE PHOTO

notification on menstrual leave. Accepting the A-G's request, the court adjourned hearing till December 10 by recalling the stay order.

The primary ground on which the petitioners had

challenged the validity of the notification was that there exists no provision in the statutes concerned to grant leave during menstrual cycle, and hence the government had no power to introduce additional leave to

various establishments, registered under various labour laws, through a notification.

'Not consulted'

It was also pointed out to the court that the govern-

ment had not held consultations with the petitioners or similarly situated establishments prior to introducing additional leave through the "Menstrual Leave Policy 2025".

Leave policy

The menstrual leave was mandated to the establishments registered under the Factories Act, 1948, the Karnataka Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, 1961, the Plantation Labour Act, 1951, the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966, and the Motor Transport Workers Act, 1961. The notification states that women employees should utilise the menstrual leave of a month in the respective month itself and the leave of the previous month shall not be allowed to be extended (carry over) to the next month. Also, the notification states that women employees are not required to provide any medical certificate to avail themselves of this leave every month.

'Bow your head': Mamata demands PM's apology over 'Bankim da' remark

Shiv Sahav Singh
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday demanded an apology from Prime Minister Narendra Modi for allegedly insulting Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay by referring to him as "Bankim da" in Parliament. Ms. Banerjee said that the remark by the Prime Minister is akin to disrespecting country's history and freedom struggle.

"The person who wrote the national song was disrespected. You should bow your head and ask for forgiveness from the people. Yet you won't be forgiven, because you have disrespected the country's history and freedom struggle," the Chief Minister said while addressing a public meeting in the State's Cooch Behar district.

Participating in a discussion in Lok Sabha on 150 years of Vande Mataram, Prime Minister on Monday

referred to the writer of the national song Vande Mataram as "Bankim da". After intervention by TMC MP Sougata Roy, Mr. Modi switched to 'Bankim Babu', but the Trinamool Congress (TMC) has launched a scathing attack.

The development assumes significance before the upcoming Assembly poll in the State, especially with the TMC often dubbing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) an outfit of "outsiders".

'Trivialising icons'

"This is what happens when outsiders who have no organic connection to Bengal's intellectual tradition try to mimic reverence they have never learned to practice. They mispronounce, they trivialise, they reduce giants to gimmicks, and in the process, expose their utter contempt for what Bengal truly stands for," the TMC posted on social media on Monday.

'Cash-for-CM' row: Cong. MP sends notice to Kaur

Press Trust of India
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Congress leader Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa on Tuesday served a notice on suspended party leader Navjot Kaur Sidhu, asking her to apologise for making "defamatory" remarks against him or face legal action. Mr. Randhawa, who is also the party's in-charge for Rajasthan, took exception to Ms. Kaur's statements levelling corruption charges against him.

On Monday, the State Congress had suspended Ms. Kaur from its primary membership over her "cash-for-CM" remark. His counsel said that on December 7 and 8, Ms. Kaur made "false, baseless, and defamatory" statements against Mr. Randhawa. "You alleged that my client indulged in corruption while serving as the in-charge of Rajasthan Congress, including in the distribution of party tickets in exchange for money. These statements were intended to malign my client's character and reputation," it read.

'Track them down': Punjab BJP chief demands probe into drug money trail

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday pressed for a probe into the drug money trail to track down the "powerful" end beneficiaries. This comes amid the government's anti-narcotics

campaign. Writing to Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, State BJP president Sunil Jakhar demanded that an investigation under the supervision of the Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Sheel Nagu be conducted. "This is important if your government wants to estab-

lish credibility and resolve in the fight against drugs," Mr. Jakhar said. "It would thus be appropriate if you, as Chief Minister, write to the honourable Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice seeking his intervention to set up a 'time-bound' probe by a credible agency," he added.

BJP hits out at TMC MLA for 'each vote cost ₹60,000' remark

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Raiganj Trinamool Congress (TMC) MLA Krishna Kalyani drew the ire of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday for his recent remarks at a public meeting, claiming that "each vote costs ₹60,000".

Earlier in the day, the BJP had shared the video on social media two days after the Raiganj MLA was seen making the remark.

"Do you know how much each of your votes costs? Minimum ₹60,000. Every month, each of you get ₹1,000 from the Lakshmir Bhandar scheme amounting to ₹60,000 in five years. So, do not vote for someone if they offer anything less than ₹60,000," Mr. Kalyani said while addressing a public meeting in Raiganj on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Ms. Banerjee, addressing a gathering in Cooch Behar on Tuesday, said, "I do not buy votes with money like the

BJP, I buy votes with love." Mr. Kalyani was a BJP MLA during the 2021 West Bengal Assembly poll. However, he switched to TMC three days before the by-polls in the State in October 2021.

Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari, criticised Mr. Kalyani's speech after sharing the video on his social media handle. The LoP termed the TMC MLA a "turncoat", citing the latter's history of switching political parties.

"Today, while trying to jab the BJP from the meeting in Cooch Behar, she [Mamata Banerjee] said, 'I don't buy votes as the BJP does'. But, her own party's turncoat MLA Krishna Kalyani has dismissed this claim of hers," Mr. Adhikari wrote.

Criticising the differences in the comments the TMC leaders made, Mr. Adhikari said that the people of West Bengal will reject the TMC's plan to "buy votes in exchange for government grants".

Webinar on MBA journey beyond academics to be organised on December 13

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT), Vellore, in collaboration with The Hindu Education Plus, will conduct a webinar titled 'Beyond the Classroom: The Real MBA Experience' on Saturday at 11.30 a.m., as part of the Career Path Series.

The session will offer students a comprehensive understanding of the MBA journey beyond academics - providing insights into real-world learning, industry exposure, leadership development, and the ex-



periences that shape future-ready professionals. From hands-on industry projects to cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset, the webinar will highlight how an MBA contributes to both personal and professional growth.

Mary Cherian, dean, VIT Business School, Vellore, Sasikumar S., director, admissions and professor (higher academic grade), VIT, Vellore, Anwar Sadad, co-founder, Olive Ridley and founder, Delta4.co, and Avesh, final year MBA Student, VIT Business School, Vellore, will be the speakers in the webinar.

The session will be moderated by Soma Basu, Journalist. To register, visit: <https://newsth.live/THVITMBAE> or scan the QR code.

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 26 09
Safdarjang 26 09
Palam 23 10

Delhi Palam Today
24°C The weather will be dry. Day will be pleasant day with moderate cool winds. Night also will be cold and hazy.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
23°C Morning will be cold. Day will be pleasant with gusty cool winds. Night also will be cold and hazy. Dry weather to prevail.

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- GURUGRAM 306, City Center, Sector 29 (Near Hotel Pilazio)
- WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)
- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

INBRIEF



Baba Adhav cremated with state honours in Pune

The last rites of renowned social activist Baba Adhav were performed on Tuesday in Pune with state honours as hundreds of people paid tributes to the man who fought for the rights of workers in the unorganised sector. Adhav (95), who fought against caste discrimination and for the rights of labourers, head-loaders, waste-pickers, and street vendors for decades, passed away in Pune on Monday evening. Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar said, "Dr. Adhav dedicated his entire life to the welfare of workers, labourers, the poor and weaker sections of society. He fought for them through movements such as rickshaw panchayat and hamal panchayat."

Bihar Cabinet clears creation of three new departments

The Bihar Cabinet on Tuesday approved the creation of three new Departments to ensure better and effective implementation of its schemes and policies in order to achieve the government's target of providing jobs and employment opportunities to one crore youth in the next five years. These new Departments are youth, employment & skill development, higher education and civil aviation. These are in addition to the existing 45 Departments, Cabinet Secretariat Department's Additional Chief Secretary Arvind Kumar Chaudhary said. A total of 19 decisions were taken at today's meeting.

Panel seeks public input on fresh draft proposal for MHA on issues faced by Ladakh

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The Leh Apex Body (LAB), an amalgam of socio-religious bodies in Ladakh, on Tuesday urged locals to share their inputs to draft a fresh proposal for the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on the issues faced by the Union Territory.

"The LAB seeks inputs and ideas from the general public for its fresh draft proposal. It has already submitted several draft proposals to the MHA, including one on the Sixth Schedule and Statehood. The thrust of the LAB is on transparency and inclusive participation, rather than just social media comments," LAB member Mustafa Haji said in Leh.

Fresh round of consultation comes in the backdrop of a letter sent to the MHA by a civil society group



Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance supporters during a protest in Ladakh. FILE PHOTO

from Zaskar. The group, headed by Tsering Tashi, has opposed any demand for Statehood and two additional Lok Sabha seats for Ladakh.

Meanwhile, the LAB has praised locals for submitting more than 50 affidavits to the commission, headed by Justice (ret.) B.S. Chauhan, which is inquiring into the September 24 protests and the killing of four civilians in alleged firing by the security forces.

Goa blaze: 1 more club owner detained; hunt on for Luthra brothers

One of the nightclub owners is a British citizen; police; help sought from Interpol to locate the main owners, says CM; Tourism Department demolishes beach shack illegally constructed by Luthras

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI/PANAJI

Goa Police on Tuesday detained Ajay Gupta, one of the four owners of 'Birch by Romeo Lane' nightclub, where a devastating fire claimed the lives of 25 people on Saturday.

The State police had earlier issued a Look Out Circular (LOC) against him and Surinder Kumar Khosla, a British citizen. The two were also believed to own the nightclub, said Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Varsha Sharma.

"We have detained Ajay Gupta, one of the owners of the nightclub. This is the sixth person to be held in connection with the case," a Goa Police spokesperson said.

He will soon be arrested after the completion of formalities to bring him to Goa, the official said.

Saurabh Luthra and Gaurav Luthra, the two primary owners of the nightclub, had fled to Phuket in Thailand following the tragedy in Arpora.



A portion of the Romeo Lane restaurant being demolished by the district administration officials in Panaji on Tuesday. ANI

The Goa Chief Minister's office said an Interpol Blue Corner Notice, meant to gather information about the accused, has been issued against the Luthras.

"All attempts are being made to get them back to India," Ms. Sharma said, adding that the tracing attempts began immediately after the fire.

The police have so far arrested five persons - nightclub's chief general manager Rajiv Modak, general manager Vivek Singh, bar manager Rajiv Singhania, gate manager Riyanshu Thakur and employee Bharat Kohli.

Mr. Kohli, a resident of Delhi, was allegedly responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the nightclub and was arrested in the national capital.

Pradeep Ghadi Amonkar, the original landowner, stepped forward, stating he has fought a 20 year legal battle against Mr. Khosla, alleging persistent illegalities on the property. "I have been fighting a battle for the last 20 years against Khosla, who has been involved in all kinds of illegalities in this property (land) I own," he said.

Then Director of Panchayat Siddhi Halarnkar

and then Goa State Pollution Control Board Member Secretary Shamila Monteiro have been asked to join the investigation, the DIG said.

The Goa Tourism Department demolished 'Romeo Lane', a beach shack illegally constructed at Vagator by the Luthras, on the directive of Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, and reclaimed the 198 sq. mt of land. The structure was razed using machines, a senior official said, adding the demolition was carried out in the presence of police.

Petition filed

The Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court will hear on December 16 a public interest litigation petition seeking a court-monitored investigation into the fire.

The petition, filed by social activist Aishwarya Arjun Salgaonkar, alleges "grave, recurring failures of public safety, regulatory oversight, fire safety enforcement, disaster preparedness, and crowd management in Goa", and calls for reforms to prevent such tragedies.

Madras HC summons T.N. Chief Secretary, ADGP in Deepam row

The Hindu Bureau
MADURAI

Justice G.R. Swaminathan of the Madras High Court (Madurai Bench) on Tuesday summoned the Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary and the Additional Director-General of Police (Law and Order) to appear before the court through video-conference at 3 p.m. on December 17. He was hearing the contempt petition filed in the issue of lighting of Karthigai Deepam (pillar) in the Thirupparankundram hill.

He also impleaded the Union Home Secretary as a respondent in the case.

He said, "I notice a definite pattern. I am certain that officials at the district level would not dare so brazenly to defy the orders of this court. Let me remind the officials concerned that their duty is to enforce the law and not go by diktats that are often issued orally. While the order of any administrative superior has to be complied with, this obligation does not extend to illegal orders. I have already ordered notice in the contempt petition. It is beyond dispute that the order of this court has been breached repeatedly."



The Madurai Bench of the Madras HC was hearing the contempt petition in the issue of lighting of Karthigai Deepam at deepathoon. FILE PHOTO

The judge said such a breach would acquire a contumacious character only if it was wilful. The officials might have to explain why they behaved in the manner they did.

"But since such conduct is not confined to one district, I have to necessarily call upon the highest officers of the State to clarify. I would want to know from them if they propose to issue any circular or instructions for the guidance of the district-level officers. I am not here to throw up my hands and helplessly cry, 'O Father, Forgive Them, for they do not know what they are doing'," the judge said.

Arunachal outfits demand ouster of 'illegal' immigrants

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

A 12-hour shutdown called by three youth organisations seeking the ouster of migrants without proper documents affected normal life in the Itanagar Capital Region (ICR) of Arunachal Pradesh on Tuesday.

The ICR comprises the State's capital, Itanagar, Naharlagun town and other satellite settlements in the vicinity.

The three organisations - Arunachal Pradesh Indigenous Youth Organisation, Indigenous Youth Force of Arunachal, and the All Naharlagun Youth Organisation - have also been demanding action against people behind unauthorised religious structures in the ICR, apart from a drive to oust "illegal immigrants from Bangladesh" and Rohingya.

Vehicles stayed off the roads, and commercial establishments remained shut. However, the district administration had declared the shutdown "illegal and unlawful" through an order citing a Supreme Court ruling that bars bandhs imposed by organisations.

ICR Deputy Inspector General of Police Tumme Amo said 31 people were detained as a precautionary measure. "Adequate security personnel were deployed to maintain order," he said.

State Home Minister Mamma Natung said shutdowns are never the solution, especially during election time. The panchayat and municipal council elections will be held on December 15. "The shutdown could have been avoided, especially because the government is always open to dialogue," he said.

Kejriwal hits out at Gujarat govt.; says he was not allowed to meet farmers in Rajkot jail

The Hindu Bureau
AHMEDABAD

Questioning the Gujarat government's handling of recent farmer arrests, Aam Aadmi Party national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday alleged that officials denied him permission to meet the arrested farmers and party workers in Rajkot.

Mr. Kejriwal said he had applied in advance to visit the prisoners, including 46 of the 88 individuals arrested in October after protests in Haddad village of Botad district. "I was not allowed to meet farmers and farmer leaders at Rajkot jail. Am I a terrorist or a criminal," he asked at a press conference, adding that those in custody were ordinary citizens exercising their rights.

He said that even during the freedom struggle, revo-



AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal and party MLA Gopal Rai at a press conference in Rajkot in Gujarat on Tuesday. PTI

lutionaries were not completely cut off from visitors.

He alleged that the administration had behaved in a manner "far harsher than what our freedom fighters could have imagined from an independent Indian government".

Mr. Kejriwal, who travelled across Gujarat during the day, also alleged that the arrested farmers were denied food and drinking water for an entire day after being taken

into custody. "Their families told me they were assaulted inside the lock-up. Is the BJP trying to crush their spirit," he said.

He also criticised the State government for failing to check the drug crisis and for repeated exam paper leaks. "Drugs are easily available across the State. Students' futures are at risk and households are being destroyed. Thirty years of this government is enough, people now want change," he said.

Fear of dog meat trade rises in Assam town as strays go missing

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Animal rights activists have expressed concern over the disappearance of stray dogs in a northeastern Assam town.

In a November 19 complaint lodged at a local police station, Dimpri Pareek, Dipankar Saikia, Luhit Das, and Ritutpal Phukan flagged the "abrupt reduction" in the population of street dogs in North Lakhimpur, the headquarters of Lakhimpur district, about 360 km northeast of Guwahati. In another complaint on December 2, animal lover Priyamjyoti Phukan said almost 80% of the stray dogs in the town have

Animal rights activists fear the dogs may have been captured illegally

vanished suddenly.

"There is a growing suspicion that these dogs may have been illegally captured for meat trade," the first complaint read.

North Lakhimpur Municipal Board officials said they were aware of the matter, and the town police was accordingly informed through a letter on November 25.

District Additional Superintendent of Police (Crime) Nayan Moni Barman said the matter was under investigation.

Over 30% students in Odisha schools drop out before higher-secondary level: CAG

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha recorded a sharp decline in the gross enrollment ratio (GER) during the transition of students from the secondary to the higher-secondary level, according to a Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) report tabled in the Assembly on Tuesday.

"The transition rate in secondary to higher secondary was only 70.3%, indicating that approximately 30% of the students were not able to make the transition to higher classes, either due to dropping out of school or due to not qualifying for promotion to the next level," the audit report on the State's education sector stated.



Students in a queue outside a school in Bhubaneswar. FILE PHOTO

CAG pointed out that GER in secondary and higher-secondary levels declined in the State during 2022-23 compared to 2018-19, even as the ratio improved nationally over the same period.

Odisha's Education Department did not analyse the reasons for the same, the report added.

It also flagged purported discrepancies in official records. CAG found that the transition rate from the upper primary to the secondary level in 2018-19 for Bhadrak and Nuapada districts was more than 100%, which was not possible.

During 2018-23, 1.50 lakh to 5.47 lakh children enrolled in Classes 1 to 11,

discontinued education before reaching the intermediate-higher classes while the dropout rate across classes ranged from 3.12% to 7.26%.

Moreover, 61,487 out-of-school children aged six to 18 years were not brought back into the school education system during 2018-23, as per the report.

"The reasons for such decline in GER had not been analysed by Odisha State Education Programme Authority. However, ineffective measures to arrest the dropout of students during the transition from upper primary to secondary, as well as inadequate school infrastructure and facilities, were the indicative reasons for the decline in GER," it stated.

Facial recognition for food aid: anganwadi workers move court

Purnima Sah
MUMBAI

Several anganwadi workers approached the Bombay High Court on Tuesday, challenging the Union government's decision to make facial recognition and one-time password (OTP) verification mandatory for distribution of 'Take Home Ration (THR)' under the Poshan 2.0 scheme. The petition alleges that the system has caused "great hardship" to workers and beneficiaries, and seeks directions to make the digital process optional.

The matter came up before a Division Bench of Justice Revati Mohite Dere and Justice Sandesh Dadasaheb

Patil, which issued notices to the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development, the State of Maharashtra, and the Commissioner of Integrated Child Development Services.

Filed by six unions, including Anganwadi Karmachari Sanghatana and Maharashtra Rajya Anganwadi Karmachari Sangh, the petition states that the mandatory use of the Poshan Tracker app with facial recognition system (FRS) and OTP verification has disrupted ration delivery. The petitioners represent over 1.10 lakh anganwadi workers catering to nearly 28 lakh children and over nine lakh pregnant and lactating mothers in Maharashtra.

OPPORTUNITIES

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT • JOBS • TECHNOLOGY

'Firms in India strive to grow leaders'

Deloitte India's Talent Readiness Study 2025 points out that 78 percent of Indian organisations have institutionalised formal succession management frameworks

Opportunities Desk

India Inc. is placing leadership continuity at the heart of its growth agenda. Deloitte India's Talent Readiness Study 2025 found that 78 percent of organisations have institutionalised formal succession management frameworks, a sharp rise from 72 per cent in 2024. This decisive shift reflects how Indian businesses are moving beyond traditional HR processes to build resilient, future-ready leadership pipelines that can navigate uncertainty and sustain competitiveness, says the report.

The study, covering 156 organisations across the manufacturing, services and life sciences industries, highlights how businesses are reimagining their talent strategies amid technological disruption and evolving workforce priorities. It highlights five emerging priorities shaping India Inc.'s next wave of talent readiness: succession planning for CXO readiness, family business succession, AI-driven talent decisions,

increased investment in high-potential talent management and specialist tracks for high-potential talent.

High-potential talent
Three in four organisations in India have adopted formal high-potential talent management processes and now define high-potential talent as a person who is "ambitious" and demonstrates "next-level capability". In 2024, it was characterised as "high performer" and "next level capability". India Inc. also has 24 percent women as high-potential employees, with their representation becoming increasingly skewed negatively as one progresses to higher levels of management.

Family-led enterprises
The study finds that most next generation leaders (57 percent) step into business between the ages of 24 and 27. Four in five of these leaders progress to board-level roles within the first five years of their joining. Additionally, 60 per cent of family enterprises now include spouses in active bu-



business roles. Three out of four organisations (74 percent) have institutionalised high-potential (HiPo) programmes, while 77 percent offer fast-track career opportunities to accelerate leadership growth. However, only 20 percent of organisations have embedded AI and analytics into these programmes, signalling a major opportunity for digital integration in talent management.

Only nine percent of organisations currently use AI tools in succession management. Most respondents (74 percent) reported minimal data use, indicating an emerging frontier where AI

can power deeper talent insights, from mapping collaboration networks to predicting leadership success profiles. As India's growth story accelerates, the findings underscore that the country's talent agenda is entering a new era, one defined by readiness, resilience and reinvention, says the report. Organisations that align capability-building with business strategy, harness AI to unlock workforce intelligence, and empower emerging leaders will not only future-proof their enterprises but also shape the next generation of India's corporate leadership.

HR BUZZ

Expressing gratitude in sign language

Zomato, India's food ordering and delivery platform, unveiled a new film that celebrates the resilience of its hearing-impaired delivery partners and highlights how small acts of kindness can make their daily hustle more meaningful.

The film, launched on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, follows the journey of Rakesh, one of 1,000 plus hearing and speech impaired delivery partners onboarded on Zomato.

It captures Rakesh's resilience as he delivers with a hearing impairment, while revealing how customers' appreciation often does not reach him in the way he can truly experience.

This changes in the film's closing moments, when a young customer uses sign language to thank him, prompted by a tutorial on the Zomato customer app offering a simple guide on how to communicate gratitude in sign language.

As of October 2025, Zomato has onboarded more than

5,000 PwD delivery partners including 1,000 delivery partners with hearing and speech impairments, added the release.

Training rural women as drone pilots

Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR), a non-profit dedicated to rural development and climate-resilient agriculture, with the support of Walmart Foundation, is training women in rural areas to become professional drone pilots.

The initiative also promotes inclusivity and gender equity, ensuring women play a central role in advancing climate-resilient agriculture in their communities, said a press release.

WOTR has facilitated a model where Farmer-Producer Organisations (FPOs) purchase drones for their groups.

With support from the Walmart Foundation, the training and capacity building of women pilots was achieved. These drones are now being deployed for precision spraying and crop monitoring.

Initially launched in the districts of Jalna and Dharashiv in Maharashtra, this initiative under the ProRISE project would be expanded to other parts of the country.

GENERAL

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7 Kerala districts record over 70% voter turnout

The first phase of local body elections was peaceful, says State Election Commissioner; Ernakulam sees the highest voter turnout and Pathanamthitta the lowest; polls postponed in three wards

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The seven southern Kerala districts recorded a polling percentage of 70.9 on Tuesday in first phase of the 2025 local body elections, as per the data on voter turnout released by the State Election Commissioner (SEC).

This accounts for nearly 93 lakh of the total 1.32 crore voters in the local bodies in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Kottayam, Idukki, Alappuzha and Ernakulam districts where elections were held on Tuesday.

The SEC said that the figures were provisional based on updates till 9 p.m. on Tuesday and that the final data would be published only on Wednesday. As per the available data, Ernakulam recorded the highest voter turnout, while Pathanamthitta had the lowest. The updates on the district-wise polling percentages are as follows: Thiruvananthapuram 67.4, Kollam 70.36, Pathanamthitta 66.78, Alappuzha 73.76, Kottayam 70.94, Idukki 71.77, and Ernakulam 74.58.

To compare, these seven districts had logged a turnout of 73.85% in the 2020 elections, show SEC data. On Tuesday, 70.28% of the female voters, 71.6% of the male voters and 40.48% of the transgender voters exercised their right



Civic duty: People stand in queue to vote at a polling booth at Perumathura coastal village during the first phase of local body elections in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

to vote.

As per the update, Thiruvananthapuram Corporation recorded a turnout of 58.24%, Kollam Corporation 63.32% and the Kochi Corporation, 62.52%.

The first phase of elections was held peacefully across the seven districts, State Election Commissioner A. Shajahan said. He sought the support of all stakeholders for the smooth conduct of the second phase of elections in the seven northern districts on December 11.

On Tuesday, polling opened at 7 a.m. across the seven districts after a mock poll was held one hour prior to the actual exercise. Voting closed at 6 p.m., but all voters who were at the polling stations

at the time were allowed to vote.

Repolling ordered

The SEC has ordered a repoll in Mannancherry in Alappuzha district after polling was disrupted at the polling station in the Government High School Mannancherry on account of a faulty electronic voting machine. The repoll will be held from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. on December 11 to the Ambalakkadavu ward in Mannancherry grama panchayat, Mannancherry ward in the Aryad block panchayat and the Aryad block of the Alappuzha district panchayat, the SEC said. Elections were postponed in three wards following the death of candidates.

604 local bodies to see Phase 2 polls tomorrow

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Over 12,000 local body wards in seven districts in northern Kerala will see Phase II of the 2025 local body elections on Thursday. Arrangements are in place for the conduct of free and fair elections in Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Wayanad, Kozhikode, Kannur, and Kasaragod districts, the SEC said. Elections will be held in 12,391 wards in 604 local bodies. Polling will begin at 7 a.m. and conclude at 6 p.m.. A mock poll to check the readiness of the electronic voting machines will be held an hour before the actual polling.

Fadnavis loses cool over repeated mention of Ladki Bahin scheme

Snehal Mutha
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday warned his MLA and others from the Opposition for repeatedly mentioning the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin scheme while raising "unrelated questions" during the Question Hour in the Assembly.

Mr. Fadnavis got triggered when his former personal assistant and AUSA (Latur) BJP legislator, Abhimanyu Dattatray Pawar, said, "We call them Ladki Bahin, but their biggest pain is illegal liquor. We keep mentioning Ladki Bahin when sisters in rural



Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. ANI

areas raise their grievances related to illegal liquor."

In response, Mr. Fadnavis warned, "No need to mention Ladki Bahin in everything, otherwise you will have to sit at home. The scheme will go on, and women will continue to re-

ceive a monthly instalment. Do not compare with other schemes."

Ladki Bahin was introduced in July 2024, ahead of the State Assembly election, and has been surrounded by controversies.

Under the scheme, women aged 21 to 65 with an income below ₹2.5 lakh receive a monthly instalment of ₹1,500, which Mahayuti promised to raise to ₹2,500 per month if voted to power.

Mr. Pawar reiterated that the same issue had been raised in the previous session and that, despite directions to the Excise and Food Departments, "nothing substantial has been done".

Doctor's death: 'handwriting on suicide note verified'

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday said the handwriting in a note left by the woman medical officer in Satara district's Phaltan town, whose death by suicide in October sparked Statewide protests, had been confirmed as hers. "As per the probe, the handwriting is hers, and the accused [Gopal] Badne is responsible for harassing her and falsely promising her marriage," the CM said.

(Those in distress can contact Tele MANAS at 14416 to seek help)

More investments flow in on second day of Telangana Rising Global Summit

R. Ravikanth Reddy
HYDERABAD

The second day of the Telangana Rising Global Summit-2025 witnessed an unprecedented surge of investment commitments as Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy participated in a marathon series of meetings and signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs).

The Chief Minister positioned Telangana as a global hub for advanced manufacturing, clean energy, data infrastructure, pharmaceuticals, electronics, tourism, and creative industries. Companies announced projects worth



A. Revanth Reddy with representatives of a company after inking the MoU at Telangana Rising Global Summit. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

thousands of crores across food processing, life sciences, FMCG, green energy, data centres and tourism sectors. The Infra-

key DC Parks outlined one of the biggest announcements of the day with ₹70,000 crore investments. A One GW AI-ready

data park over 150 acres will be set up with advanced cooling and future-ready digital infrastructure.

In a massive boost to the food processing and FMCG manufacturing, Godrej Industries signed a MoU to expand its dairy business with a 5 lakh litre per day capacity plant requiring 40 acres. The ₹150 crore project would generate 300 direct jobs in two years.

Fertis India Pvt. Ltd. announced one of the day's largest agrifood-tech commitments that included a ₹2,000 crore cutting-edge Food and Agriculture R&D Centre and Rare Sugars facility.

IN BRIEF



A.P. CM calls for complete overhaul of revenue system

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has instructed the officials to complete the Statewide land resurvey by December 2027, calling for detailed monthly progress reports to ensure accountability. Mr. Naidu said that the Revenue Department would undergo a complete structural overhaul, including redesigning the system to prevent delays, strengthen accountability, and ensure seamless service delivery to citizens. "Revenue services must be accessible, transparent, and citizen-friendly, with minimal inconvenience to landowners," he said.

Mercury plunges to single digit in Ghat areas of Kerala

Winter-like conditions are prevailing in the hilly terrains of Kerala with mercury dropping to below 10 degrees Celsius in these districts. With stability in the atmosphere, the minimum temperature is likely to drop further, while the daytime maximum temperature will see a rise in the coming days. Mercury plunged to single digit in places such as Kundala dam on Monday night, where the lowest temperature of 7.5 degrees Celsius was recorded. There was a substantial dip in night temperatures in Wayanad also.

57,000 cybercrime cases filed in Karnataka in the last 3 years

Karnataka has witnessed over 57,000 cyber crime cases in the last three years, accounting for financial fraud to the tune of ₹5,473 crore, says Home Minister G. Parameshwara. Replying to BJP member Cement Manju during Question Hour in the Assembly, he said 22,255 cyber crime cases had been filed in 2023 in Karnataka amounting to financial fraud of ₹873.29 crore. In 2024, the number of registered cyber crime cases stood at 22,478, accounting for financial fraud of ₹2,562 crore. So far, in 2025, these cases have stood at 13,000 with a financial fraud of ₹2,038 crore.

All decked up



Children taking part in the Amaravati Balotsav, organised on the premises of P.B. Siddhartha College in Vijayawada on Tuesday. K.V.S. GIRI

Karnataka moots meeting of Labour Ministers of South

Sharath S. Srivatsa
BELAGAVI

The Congress government in Karnataka is likely to convene a conclave of Labour Ministers from the southern States in January to discuss and formulate their response to the four Labour Codes that the Centre notified recently.

The crucial minimum wages revision in Karnataka, pending from 2022-23, is now hanging in the balance even as the State is expected to write to the Centre highlighting the lacunae in the Labour Code. Labour Department sources told *The Hindu* that the Labour Ministers

from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are likely to participate in the discussions on the four Labour Codes. Sources also said that the Kerala Labour Minister has written to Karnataka government on the Labour Code issue.

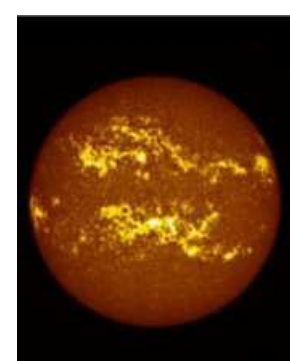
Labour Minister Santhosh Lad is expected to write to the Centre about the State government's objection to the Labour Code, said a source, terming the codes a "bunch of contradiction besides being anti-labour". The codes, he said, will not encourage permanent employment in the industrial sector in the future.

Aditya-L1 joins global effort revealing why the 2024 solar storm behaved unusually

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

India's first solar observatory Aditya-L1, along with six U.S. satellites, in a major breakthrough, has revealed why the May 2024 solar storm also known as Gannon's storm behaved so unusually.

The solar storm is composed of a series of giant explosions on the Sun, called coronal mass ejections (CMEs). CMEs are like massive bubbles of hot gas and magnetic energy thrown out from the Sun into space. When these bubbles hit Earth, they can shake our planet's magnetic shield and cause serious trouble for satellites, communication systems, GPS,



The images of the Sun captured by Aditya-L1 during May solar storm, released by the ISRO.

and even power grids.

According to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), during the May 2024 solar storm, the Sun's magnetic fields, which are like twisted ropes inside a solar storm, were breaking

and rejoining within the storm.

"Usually, a CME carries a twisted 'magnetic rope' that interacts with Earth's magnetic shield as it approaches Earth. But this time, two CMEs collided in space and squeezed each other so firmly that the magnetic field lines inside one of them snapped and rejoined in new ways, a process called magnetic reconnection," ISRO said. It added that this sudden reversal of the magnetic field made the storm's impact stronger than expected.

"At the heart of this discovery is India's first solar observatory, Aditya-L1, which joined forces with six U.S. satellites (NASA's Wind, ACE, THEMIS-C,

STEREO-A, MMS, and NASA-NOAA joint mission DSCOVR)," the ISRO said.

"Thanks to precise magnetic field measurements from India's Aditya-L1 mission, scientists were able to map this reconnection region. They found that the area where the CME's magnetic field was tearing and reconnecting was enormous - about 1.3 million km across, i.e., nearly 100 times the size of Earth. It was the first time such a giant magnetic breakup and rejoining had ever been seen inside a CME," it added.

This discovery is expected to enhance the understanding of how solar storms evolve as they travel from the Sun to Earth.

Shivakumar tells BJP to target Centre, not State, over farm crisis

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has said that BJP leaders from the State should have ideally staged protest against the Union government instead of the State government, because it was the Centre which had meted out injustice to the farmers of the State.

Speaking to presspersons in Belagavi on Tuesday, Mr. Shivakumar said that injustice had been done to Karnataka by the Centre in the issues of maize, sugarcane and ethanol and no grant had been released by the Centre.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the Union govern-



D.K. Shivakumar TH

ment should have released ₹5,400 crore, which had not been released till date. He said the State government had already initiated procurement of sugarcane, maize. However MSP was fixed by the Centre, and BJP leaders should have protested, Mr. Shivakumar added.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION,
SRINAGAR NEAR J&K BANK (Zaldagar)
Telefax No. 0194-2952696 e-mail id: to-exemmidirsnagar@jk.gov.in
Gist of e-NIT No. 31 of 2025-26, dated: 08-12-2025

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of UT of J&K, Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division, Srinagar, invites e-tenders from established and accredited Original Pump Manufacturers (OPMs) or their Authorized dealers or reputed firms or Joint Venture Consortia having relevant Experience and other requisite pre-qualification criteria for the advertised work. The bidding process shall be completed online in two covers viz. Cover '1st' consisting of Tender fee, Earnest Money Deposit, Prequalification criteria, General Terms and Conditions and Technical Specifications. Cover '2nd' shall consist of Financial Bid in the prescribed BOC.

S. No	Particulars of the work	Tender fee (In Rs.)	Estimated Cost "Rs" in Lacs	EMD Amount (In Rs.)	50 % Exemption Allowed for MSE	Completion Period
1	Lift Irrigation Scheme Chountwallwar (Stage 1st & 2nd)	2500.00	452,791 (Civil works=157,081 Lacs, Electromechanical works=295,711 Lacs)	Rs.905582	No	18 months

The critical dates are as tabulated below:

Sl	Particulars	Date
i	Publication Date	08-12-2025 at 1730 hrs
ii	Document Download/site start Date	08-12-2025 from 1730 hrs
iii	Clarification start date	N/A
iv	Pre-bid meeting date	08-12-2025 from 1730 hrs
v	Pre-bid meeting date	18-12-2025 at 1200 hrs
vi	Document Download/site end date	29-12-2025 upto 1400 hrs
vii	Pre-bid meeting date	29-12-2025 upto 1400 hrs
viii	Date and time of Bid opening	30-12-2025 at 1230 hrs

Position of funds: Budgetary Provisions
Position of AAA: Accorded under Order No. 138 DDCG of 2025 dated: 02-12-2025
Position of Technical sanction: Sanctioned vide No. 05-DB of 2025-26, dated: 03-12-2025

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Mechanical Irrigation Division,
Srinagar
DIPK-8664/25

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BALASORE
No: 4503 /WE, Dt:-29/11/2025
e-Procurement Notice

1. Name of the Work : "Building Works,"
2. Estimated Cost : As per Annexure
3. Time for Completion : As per Annexure
4. No of Work : As per Annexure
5. Summary for key dates is provided below :-

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Balasore.	N.C.B No.53 of 2025-26	DL.10.12.2025 up to 11.00 A.M.	DL.23.12.2025 up to 5.00 P.M.	DL.22.12.2025 up to 1.00 P.M.	DL.24.12.2025 at 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
Any other changes/Corrigendums may be seen only in website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
Sd/-Er,Durjoydhan Behera
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Balasore
O-1678: OIPR-2510511/0098/2526

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ୍ ଶକ୍ତି ସଂଚାରଣ ନିଗମ ଲିମିଟେଡ୍
ODISHA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)
Regd. Office: OPTCL Tech Tower, Janpath, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
Bids are invited from reputed firms/agencies for the following tenders:

E-Tender No.	Tender Description:	Estimated Cost
HRD-04/2025-26	Selection of security agency for providing watch & ward services to OPTCL for 01 year initially, which may be extended by another 01 year subject to satisfactory performance of the service provider from the date of commencement of the agreement.	Rs. 53,43,63,744/-

Last date & time of submission of online bid is 29.12.2025, 17:30 hrs. Complete set of bidding documents are available at www.optcl.co.in.
HIPP-49/2025-26
CAD-2644
optcl.odisha

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Lokseva Bhawan, Sachivalaya Marg, Bhubaneswar - 751001
HE-SCH-PLAN-0059-2025/67221(H.E., Bhubaneswar, Dated: 09/12/2025)
CORRIGENDUM-IV

NOTICE INVITING RFP FOR ENGAGEMENT OF STATE PSU/ CENTRAL PSU/DEPARTMENTAL UNDERTAKING AS PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT (PMC) FOR "CONSTRUCTION, REPAIR/RENOVATION ACROSS FIVE STATE PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, ODISHA UNDER PM USHA. In continuation to the Request for Proposal (RFP) No. PM-USA/01/2025 dated 09.10.2025, the following changes are hereby issued.

Sl. No.	RFP No.	P. No.	Description	Modified Provisions
1.	15a	19	Revised (Corrigendum-1, Dt.29.10.2025): The Agency shall submit an irrevocable Performance Guarantee/Security of 3% (Three Percent) of the total contract value for proper performance and due fulfillment of the terms and conditions of the contract within 30 days from the date of issue of letter of Acceptance by the Higher Education Department, Govt. of Odisha. The guarantee shall be in the form of Account Payee Demand Draft, Bank Guarantee including e- Bank Guarantee or Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDR) and will be released after the project completed and handed over.	The Agency shall submit an irrevocable Performance Guarantee/Security of 3% (Three Percent) of the PMC Service Charges for proper performance and due fulfillment of the terms and conditions of the contract by the Higher Education Department, Govt. of Odisha and before signing the agreement with respective universities. The guarantee shall be in the form of Account Payee Demand Draft, Bank Guarantee including e- Bank Guarantee or Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDR) and will be released after the project completed and handed over.

N-231
Special Secretary to Govt. & SPD, RUSA/PM-USHA
OIPR-11001/11/0122/2526

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, KENDRAPARA-JAJPUR
AT-CHANDIKHOL, PO- SONGUDA, JAJPUR -754296, Email-serw_kpd@yahoo.com
No:Tender Online RCK - 20/25 e-Procurement Notice Letter No. 4008 Date:-27.11.25

1. Name of the Work : Tender for the Road works under (MMSY-TRIP) in the Dist. of Kendrapara & Jajpur.
2. Class of Contractor : As specified in the Column-6 of the Annexure.
3. Time of Completion : As specified in the Column-7 of the Annexure.
4. Detail Projects : As per Annexure attached
5. Other Details :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Kendrapara-Jajpur	Tender Online RCK-20/25	10.12.2025 at 11.00 A.M.	30.12.2025 up to 05.00 P.M.	29.12.2025 up to 2.00 P.M.	30.12.2025 at 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
O-1651: OIPR-25129/11/0069/2526

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
INVITATION FOR TENDERS (Through KPP Portal Only)

BWSSB invites tenders in Two Stage Tender System from eligible Contractors for the following Works.

Sl. No.	Name of the Works	Amount Put to Tender EMD Amount
Office of the Chief Engineer (East), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009.		
IFT No.: BWSSB/CE(E)/ACE(E)/DCE(M)-1/TA(E)/5424/2025-26 Date: 08-12-2025		
1	Work of Providing and Laying 600 mm Dia MS Water Supply Pipeline, 450 mm Dia MS Pipeline, 100 mm Dia DI Pipeline to facilitate under Pass Construction Work Proposed by BBMP at Hope Farm Circle, Whitefield coming under the Jurisdiction of Hoodi S/s. of AEE(E)-1-1 Sub Division.	Rs. 138.22 Lakhs Rs. 2,07,400/-
IFT No.: BWSSB/CE(E)/ACE(E)/DCE(M)-1/TA(E)/5428/2025-26 Date: 08-12-2025		
2	Work of Providing and Laying of 300 mm Dia RCC NP-3 Class Pipeline in the Place of 300 mm Dia & 150 mm Dia SW Pipeline with Construction of New Machinehole (In Order to Avoid Overflow of Sewage from Machinehole into SWD which is against NGT norms) From 13th Main Road 100 feet Road to 13th Main 5th Cross, 13th A Main, 13th B Main, 13th C Main 13th H G Main Road and Surrounding Area Indiranagar coming under Indiranagar Service Station of AEE SE-4 Sub Division.	Rs. 151.38 Lakhs Rs. 2,28,000/-
IFT No.: BWSSB/CE(E)/ACE(E)/DCE(M)-1/TA(E)/5427/2025-26 Date: 08-12-2025		
3	Work of Providing and Laying 300 mm Dia RCC NP-3 Class Pipeline in Place of 230 mm Dia Silted and Damaged SW Pipeline along with Construction of New Machineholes at 1st Cross, 2nd Cross, 3rd Cross, 4th Cross Opposite to Ganesh Temple Road New Thippasandra under JBN S/s. of AEE SE-4 Sub Division.	Rs. 114.11 Lakhs Rs. 1,71,200/-
For both the above works, Last Date for Receipt of Tenders: 26-12-2025 upto 16.00 Hours. Tenders will be Opened on: 29-12-2025 after 16.00 Hours. Sd/- Chief Engineer (East)		
Office of the Engineer-in-Chief, 2nd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009.		
IFT No.: BWSSB/EIC/ACE(CStr & DCW)/TA/5469/2025-26 Date: 09-12-2025		
4	Work of Modernisation & Remodelling of Water Supply System and Reduction in UFW in Kathriguppe of Existing SW2DMA06 DMA coming under AEE SW-4 Sub Division Limit of BWSSB, Bengaluru.	Rs. 365.01 Lakhs Rs. 3.65 Lakhs
IFT No.: BWSSB/EIC/ACE(CStr & DCW)/TA/5475/2025-26 Date: 09-12-2025		
5	Work of Modernisation & Remodelling of Water Supply System and Reduction in UFW in Channamanakere Achukattu and Surrounding Areas of Existing SW2DMA04 DMA coming under AEE SW-4 Sub Division Limit of BWSSB, Bengaluru.	Rs. 366.13 Lakhs Rs. 3.67 Lakhs
For both the above works, Last Date for Receipt of Tenders: 24-12-2025 upto 15.00 Hours. Tenders will be Opened on: 26-12-2025 at 16.00 Hours. Sd/- Engineer-in-Chief		
The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-Procurement Process can be obtained by logging on to https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in . For further details contact the above signed office during working hours. DIPR/CPI/Advt/04312/2025-26		

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SUNABEDA
e-mail - serwsbd2003@yahoo.com
Letter No. 6550 1st Corrigendum Date: 08.12.2025

In continuation to this office Bid Identification No. CCRWCSBD-Online-23/2025-26 invited vide this office Notice No.5576 Dtd.30.10.2025, partial modification of NCB has been made as follows:-

Sl No.	Item	Time Schedule as per original NCB	Time Schedule as per 1 st Corrigendum notice
1	Availability of Tender online for bidding	10.11.2025 at 11.00 AM to 09.12.2025 up to 5.00 PM	Extended up to 30.12.2025 5.00 PM
2	Date and Time of seeking tender clarification if any	08.12.2025 up to 2.00 PM	29.12.2025 up to 2.00 PM
3	Date & Time of opening of tender (Technical Bid)	10.12.2025 at 11.00 AM	31.12.2025 at 11.00 AM
4	Date & Time of opening of tender (Price Bid)	Will be intimated later on to the successful bidders	Will be intimated later on to the successful bidders

All other terms and conditions will remain unaltered.
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sunabeda.
O-1743: OIPR-25182/11/0108/2526

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SUNABEDA.
email : serwsbd2003@yahoo.com Date:
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement Notice

1. Name of the Work : Construction of Road Works - 07 Nos.
2. Class of Contractor : "B" Class, "A" Class & Special Class of (Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authority.
3. Estimated Cost : Varies from Rs.103.00 Lakhs to Rs.778.50 Lakhs (Approximately)
4. Details of projects : As per Annexure attached.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender online for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bids
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sunabeda	CCRWCSBD - Online - 35/2025-26	10.12.2025 at 11.00 A.M.	30.12.2025 up to 05.00 P.M.	29.12.2025 up to 2.00 P.M.	31.12.2025 at 11.00 A.M.	To be intimated separately

5. The details of works can be seen from the web site : <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>
6. Any Corrigendum / Addendum will be displayed in the above e-tender web site.
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sunabeda.
O-1708: OIPR-25182/11/0122/2526

देवी अहिल्या विश्वविद्यालय
विश्वविद्यालय भवन, आर. एन. टी. मार्ग, इन्दौर- 452001
क्र.: भण्डार/इन्टरैक्टिव डिस्प्ले पैनल/2025/139 दि.: 09.12.2025
ऑनलाइन ई-निविदा आमंत्रण

देवी अहिल्या विश्वविद्यालय, इन्दौर द्वारा Interactive Panels with CPU के संबंध में निविदा क्रमांक GEM/2025/B/6961716 जेम पर आमंत्रित की जाती है। अतः निविदा का निम्नलिखित डिस्पले पैनल/2025/139 दि.: 09.12.2025 वेबसाइट पर देखी जा सकती है। संपर्क हेतु - मो. 9977871841
म.प्र. माध्यम/123434/2025 कुलसचिव

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER,
PWD (BORDER ROADS & NEC WORKS),
ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3
Email ID -ibrcebr2021@gmail.com

No.CE/BR/10/2024/35
SHORT NOTICE FOR REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL AND TERMS OF REFERENCE (RFP & TOR)

The Chief Engineer PWD (Border Roads & NEC Works), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3, invites sealed Lump Sum proposal to two tier (Technical Bid & Financial Bid) from any reputed consultancy firm / individual consultant / private company with experience of similar nature of work for "3rd Party Monitoring & Quality Control for 1 (one) no. of package in the District of Cachar under CRIF for the year 2025-26" for a total amount of Rs.82,08,906/- (Rupees Eighty Two Lakh Eight Thousand Nine Hundred and Six) Only. Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.gov.in>. Amendment / Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours.
Sd/-
Chief Engineer PWD (Border Roads & NEC Works)
DIPRC/HIND/656/10-Dec-25 Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3.

TAMIL NADU WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE BOARD
INVITATION FOR BIDS for Providing Services on monthly Contract Basis-TWO COVER-TENMVAR TENDER SYSTEM (E-Submission)

Sl. No.	Item	Time Schedule as per original NCB	Time Schedule as per 1 st Corrigendum notice
1	Availability of Tender online for bidding	10.11.2025 at 11.00 AM to 09.12.2025 up to 5.00 PM	Extended up to 30.12.2025 5.00 PM
2	Date and Time of seeking tender clarification if any	08.12.2025 up to 2.00 PM	29.12.2025 up to 2.00 PM
3	Date & Time of opening of tender (Technical Bid)	10.12.2025 at 11.00 AM	31.12.2025 at 11.00 AM
4	Date & Time of opening of tender (Price Bid)	Will be intimated later on to the successful bidders	Will be intimated later on to the successful bidders

All other terms and conditions will remain unaltered.
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sunabeda.
O-1743: OIPR-25182/11/0108/2526

THE HINDU
DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper. THE PUBLISHING PVT. LTD., the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director, Employees of this newspaper/company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY
Open Tender Notice No. GEM/2025/B/6966720

E-Tenders are invited from experienced contractors on behalf of the President of India for the under mentioned work- **Name of work:** 03 years comprehensive contract for cleaning, brooming, sanitation, disinfection of all office buildings, all lavatories, all roads, all shop floor area, shades, store wards etc. including Administrative Building, CMT LAB, Colony Sub-Station, RPF Barack and Canteen. The work shall include intensive cleaning of shops shades, shop floor/storage area including collection & segregation of scrap to nominated bins and its transportation for disposal to nominated place, garden maintenance and excess & harmful vegetation removal/cutting of branches of tree in CRWS/BPL premises (Out come basis contract).
Cost of work: ₹ 4,88,41,578.30
Cost of tender form: ₹ 0.00, Earnest Money/EMD Amount : ₹ 3,94,21,000.00, **Time of Completion:** 36 Months, **Online tender closing date and time:** 29.12.2025 Up to 20:00 hrs., **Date and time of opening of tender:** 29.12.2025 Up to 20:30 hrs. **Note:** Detailed information about tender and tender format is available at website <http://bidplus.gem.gov.in> (Sd).
Chief Workshop Manager
CRWS, Nishatpura, WCR, Bhopal

CENTRAL RAILWAY
Divisional Railway Manager (Works), Central Railway, Pune for and on behalf of the President of India, invites Open E-tenders through website www.ireps.gov.in for the work- **DRM-WA-E-Tend-2025-N-17** Track Linking - Laying of track to connect DOD defence siding at Talegaon. **Adv.Cost:- 1952461.01 Earnest Money/ Bid Security (Rs.):- 247800.00 DRM-WA-E-Tend-2025-N-18 A.** Construction of Cross drainage for improvement of yard drainage (Pune-Lonavala Section). 2. Construction of Cross drainage for improvement of yard drainage (Pune-Daund Section). **Adv.Cost:- 17235736.98 Earnest Money/ Bid Security (Rs.):- 236500.00 DRM-WA-E-Tend-2025-N-19** Extension of Minor Bidges for laying of Trk. 12.2025. The prospective bidders are requested to visit the website www.ireps.gov.in for details of tenders & corrigendum, if any. Tenderer may participate in above E-tender electronically through website www.ireps.gov.in only & submission of manual offers against E-tender are not accepted. If submitted, shall neither be opened nor considered. For further enquiry, may contact: Divisional Railway Manager (Works), Office, Central Railway, Pune on Phone No. 020-26105309. Tenderer who wants to be present at the time of Opening of tenders, he/she may do so.
DRM (Works), Pune
अनुसूचित तथा अनुसूचित रूप से लखन के पास कार्य करना इच्छनीय अपर्याप्त है

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED
Credit Recovery and Management Department
Administrative Office: No.24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612001. E-Mail id: crmd@cityunionbank.in, Phone: 0435-2432322, Fax: 0435-2431746

RE-TENDER-CUM-AUCTION SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002

The following properties mortgaged to City Union Bank Limited will be sold in Re-Tender-cum-Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 8 (6) & (9) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of Rs.1,55,03,803/- (Rupees One Crore Fifty Five Lakh Three Thousand Eight Hundred and Three) only as on 05-12-2025 together with further interest to be charged from 06-12-2025 onwards and other expenses, any other dues to be paid by the borrowers / guarantors No.1) M/s. Bnt. Inc., at 1st Floor, 35A, Street No.6, Rajendra Nagar, Industrial Area, Mohan Nagar, Ghaziabad - 201002. No.2) Mr. Farid Uz Zaman Khan, S/o. Dr. Qamar Uz zaman Khan, at Flat No.1217,12th Floor, Vasto, Type HIG - 3T Phase, Mahagan Mansion, Plot No.1/4, Vaibhav Khand, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, U. P. - 201004. No.3) Mrs. Saba Khan, Wo. Farid Uz Zaman Khan, at Flat No.1217, 12th Floor, Vasto, Type HIG-3T Phase, Mahagan Mansion, Plot No.1/4, Vaibhav Khand, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, U. P. - 201004.

Immovable Property Mortgaged to our Bank (Property Owned by Mr. Farid Uz Zaman Khan, S/o. Dr. Qamar Uz Zaman Khan)
Residential Flat Space No.1217, Floor 12th, Block Vasto, Type HIG-3T in Mahagan Mansion on Group Housing Plot No.1/4, Vaibhav Khand, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad U.P. Having an approx. Super Covered Area 1,600 Sq.ft., or 154.21 Sq.mt., and Terrace Area of 350 Sq.ft., or 32.52 Sq.mt. and bounded as under:- West by - Plot No.1/5, Vaibhav Khand, East by - Plot No.1/3, Vaibhav Khand, South by - 80 feet wide Road, North by - 100 feet wide Road.

Reserve Price: Rs. 1,15,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore Fifteen Lakh only)

RE-AUCTION DETAILS

Date of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale	Venue
29-12-2025	City Union Bank Limited, New Delhi-Karol Bagh Branch, 18/23, Ground Floor, W.E.A, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110005. Telephone No.011-28758696, Cell No.9312927967.

Terms and Conditions of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale:
(1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself. (2) The intending bidders may obtain the Tender Forms from The Manager, City Union Bank Limited, New Delhi-Karol Bagh Branch 18/23, Ground Floor, W.E.A, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110005. (3) The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the Tender Form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd., together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of 10% of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of "City Union Bank Ltd.", on or before 12.00 Noon on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. (4) For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact: Telephone No.011-28758696, Cell No.9312927967. (5) The property/ies are sold on "As-is-where-is" "As-is-what-is" and "whatever-her-is" basis. (6) The sealed tenders will be opened in the presence of the intending bidders at 01.00 p.m. on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. Though in general the sale will be by way of closed tenders, the Authorised Officer may, at his sole discretion, conduct an Open Auction among the interested bidders who desire to quote a bid higher than the one received in the closed tender process, and in such an event, the sale shall be conferred on the person making highest bid. The sale, however, is subject to confirmation of City Union Bank Limited. (7) The successful bidder shall have to pay 25% (inclusive of EMD paid) of the sale amount immediately on completion of sale and the balance amount of 75% within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale, failing which the initial deposit of 25% shall be forfeited. (8) The Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful purchaser only after receipt of the entire sale consideration within the time limit stipulated herein. (9) The successful purchaser shall bear the charges/fees payable for conveyance, such as stamp duty, registration fee etc., as applicable under law. (10) The successful bidder should pay the statutory dues (lawful house tax, electricity charges and other dues), TDS, GST if any, due to Government, Government Undertaking and local bodies. (11) The Authorised Officer shall have all the powers to accept or reject the bids or postpone or cancel the sale without assigning any reason whatsoever. Place : Kumbakonam, Date : 08-12-2025 Authorised Officer
Regd. Office: 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612001, CIN - L65110TN1904PLC001287, Telephone No.0435-2432322, Fax: 0435-2431746, Website: www.cityunionbank.com

BSES Yamuna Power Limited, Delhi
... A Joint venture with Govt. of NCT of Delhi
NOTICE INVITING TENDER Date: 10.12.2025

E-tender is invited under the Two-Bid System (Unpriced & Priced) for the following works:-

NIT No.	Tender Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	EMD Amount (₹)	Submission Due Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
CMC/BY/25-26/R/S/ S/ASR/30 [RFx No. 2200000158]	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Cable Fault Locator for EHV (66KV) & 110KV & LT Cable - 1 No.	₹ 5.08 Crore	₹ 5.08 Lakh	30.12.2025 15:00 Hrs	30.12.2025 16:00 Hrs
CMC/BY/25-26/R/S/ S/ASR/31 [RFx No. 2200000157]	Procurement of Electric Buses under CSR activity	₹ 2.20 Crore	₹ 4.40 Lakh	30.12.2025 15:00 Hrs	30.12.2025 16:00 Hrs
CMC/BY/25-26/R/S/ S/ASR/32 [RFx No. 2200000159]	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning (SITC) for Precision Air-conditioning (PAC) System of data centre in BYPL	₹ 1.00 Crore	₹ 2.00 Lakh	30.12.2025 15:00 Hrs	30.12.2025 16:00 Hrs
CMC/BY/25-26/R/S/ S/ASR/33 [RFx No. 2200000160]	Supply of partial discharge measurement instruments for switchgear panel and overhead network in BYPL	₹ 1.45 Crore	₹ 2.90 Lakh	30.12.2025 15:00 Hrs	30.12.2025 16:00 Hrs

Cost of Tender Document: ₹ 1,180/- each.
For further details regarding equipment, BOM, services, qualifying requirements, terms and conditions, tender document purchase/ submission, corrigendum, etc. Kindly visit our website www.bsedelhi.com → BSES YAMUNA POWER LTD → Tenders → Open Tenders
Head (Contracts & Materials)
Regd.Off: BSES Yamuna Power Ltd, Shakti Kiran Building, Karkardooma, Delhi-110032 | CIN: U40109DL2001PLC11125.1
Website: www.bsedelhi.com

POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH CHANDIGARH
Global Tender Enquiry Notice No. PI(EP)/25-26/G/03
Phone No. 0172-2756469

Tender applications are invited for purchase of various items against Global tender No. 1-18 from the Manufacturers or their sole authorized distributors/agents. The bidders can place their bids as per terms & conditions contained on <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>

Sr. No.	Equipment/Item Name	Quantity	EMD (Rs.)	Bid Submission Date	Bid Opening Date	Deptt. Name
Non-Pre Bid case						
1.	Automated, Integrated ICU Monitoring and Charting System	115 Nos.	20,00,000/-	29-12-2025	30-12-2025	Neurosurgery
2.	Multimode Microplate Reader and Fluorimeter	01 No.	40,00,000/-	-do-	-do-	ENT
3.	Incubator for Culturing Human Gametes and Embryos (incl. Automatic Gas Analyzer)	01 No.	40,00,000/-	-do-	-do-	Obst. & Gynae
4.	Fluorescent Microscope/ Portable Fluorescent Microscope	01 No.	70,00,000/-	-do-	-do-	Medical Microbiology
5.	High End Intraoperative Ultrasound for Surgeries	01 No.	50,00,000/-	30-12-2025	31-12-202	

A deep cleaning of India's electoral rolls

On April 12, 1950, while introducing the Representation of the People Bill in Parliament, the Minister of Law, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, emphasised that the preparation of an electoral roll is "a condition precedent for election". The statutory framework in India, therefore, provides for periodic and special revisions to ensure accuracy of the electoral roll. Nevertheless, there have been concerns about the decision of the Election Commission of India (ECI) to revise the electoral rolls in some States by carrying out a Special Intensive Revision (SIR). The question that arises is whether the ECI's endeavour is ultimately directed at reinforcing or undermining public trust in the democratic process.

Restoring the foundation
There are two modes of updating rolls: intensive revisions, which rebuild the list from scratch, and summary revisions, which make incremental corrections. The last major intensive revision took place between 2002 to 2003. In recent decades, the ECI has relied on special summary revisions, under which claims and objections are invited on a draft roll. In the meantime, rapid migration, expanding urban centres, and high residential mobility have left electoral rolls riddled with duplicates, outdated entries and inaccuracies. Therefore, SIR 2025 was the need of the hour.

The implementation of SIR in Bihar in June 2025 resulted in the filing of several petitions before the Supreme Court labelling the revision exercise unconstitutional and illegal. The challenge proceeds on the basis that insistence on fresh enumeration and documents from existing registered electors is contrary to the constitutional right of universal adult franchise and will result in mass deletion of voters from the rolls. Notably, however, the authority to undertake such an exercise flows directly from the



Naira Jejeebhoy

Advocate whose area of practice includes election law and has represented the Election Commission of India in proceedings



Kumar Utsav

Advocate whose area of practice includes election law and has represented the Election Commission of India in proceedings

The revision and verification of electoral rolls is a routine and necessary process. Such corrections do not, by themselves, imply disenfranchisement or targeting

constitutional scheme itself, which vests the superintendence, direction, and control over the preparation of electoral rolls in the ECI. At the heart of this exercise lies the ECI's endeavour to ensure that only eligible citizens vote, as envisaged under Article 326 of the Constitution. The revision and verification of electoral rolls is a routine and necessary process. Such corrections do not, by themselves, imply disenfranchisement or targeting. Countries such as Germany and Canada rely on civil registries or information sharing between different government agencies to update voter rolls; India does not have such a mechanism. The ECI must therefore independently verify eligibility.

The criticism levelled at SIR 2025 ignores the inherent difficulties in screening citizenship, which is the fundamental basis for eligibility to vote. These difficulties in ascertaining eligibility were, however, anticipated by the Indian legislature, which conferred power on the ECI to carry out a special revision in such manner as it may think fit. SIR 2025 is being carried out pursuant to the constitutional mandate and to ensure that no eligible citizen is excluded from the roll, while simultaneously excluding ineligible persons.

The detailed guidelines for SIR 2025 issued by the ECI contain administrative innovations, technological improvements, and efforts at transparency and participation. Under the present framework of SIR, the ECI has undertaken door-to-door physical verification of each elector. The onus of proving citizenship continues to lie on the applicant. However, the list of acceptable documentary proof is expanded to 11 items, from merely four in 2003, resulting in a more liberal and elector-friendly framework. At the suggestion of the Supreme Court, the ECI also agreed to accept Aadhaar cards as proof of identity. Further, booth-level officers

actively assisted electors in tracing their eligibility and obtaining prescribed eligibility documents.

The SIR process marks a notable shift towards technological accessibility. For the first time, all supporting documents are digitised. Further, enumeration forms are being made available through online platforms. After the publication of the draft roll, any person who has any claim or objections has the option to file the same using the online platform.

The ECI did not restrict capacity-building to its own machinery but also trained booth-level agents of recognised political parties. The SIR guidelines also contain provisions for engagement with parties and sharing of electoral rolls.

What the numbers show

Over 7.5 crore entries were subjected to verification during SIR in Bihar. The total number of electors removed from the draft list was 65 lakh. In addition to the 1,60,813 BLAs of political parties, the Supreme Court also deputed volunteers from the State Legal Services Authority to assist in the submission of the claims/objections/corrections online. Nevertheless, only 2,53,524 claims and objections were received in total after publication of the draft roll. Of these, only 36,500 were claims for inclusion (0.56% when compared to the total number of deletions during the revision). Not a single appeal was filed against any deletion. These figures indicate that the SIR exercise was, more or less, grounded in careful and accountable scrutiny.

By embracing SIR, the ECI has demonstrated that its constitutional duties will not be subordinated to convenience or political pressures. Instead, they are being pursued with clarity, courage, and accountability. A democracy strengthens itself not by avoiding difficult tasks, but by undertaking them when it matters most. SIR 2025 is one such effort.

Grappling with the politics of division

There is renewed focus on the threat to religious harmony in Mandya

STATE OF PLAY

Laiqah A. Khan
laiqah.khan@thehindu.co.in



Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameashwara's announcement that the Special Action Force (SAF) would be deployed in Mandya district has brought renewed attention to threats to religious harmony. The SAF is already deployed in the communally volatile coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi, besides Shivamogga.

Formed by restructuring the Anti Naxal Force, the 280-member SAF is tasked with maintaining communal peace by cracking down on those fomenting religious hatred; gathering intelligence on communally provocative speeches; and monitoring social media for content that has potential to vitiate the atmosphere. Headed by an officer of the rank of Deputy Inspector General of Police, the SAF does not have the authority to investigate cases. It only identifies potential offences and alerts the jurisdictional police to take appropriate action. The Home Minister said he was satisfied with the SAF's performance, noting that since its launch in June 2025, the coastal districts had not seen any communal flare-ups.

His decision to deploy the SAF in Mandya comes on the back of a spate of recent communal incidents in the district. Dominated by the largely agrarian and land-owning Vokkaligas, Mandya has historically remained insulated from communal politics. In the 1970s and 1980s, the youth of Mandya gravitated towards progressive movements such as the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha and the Dalit Sanghar

sha Samithi, and embraced poet laureate Kuvempu's philosophy of a 'Vishwa Manava' (universal human being).

But in recent years, communal tensions have repeatedly surfaced. The annual Hanuma Jayanti procession in Srirangapatna, the erstwhile seat of power during Tipu Sultan's reign, often sparks communal tension when the Hindu Jagran Vedike march passes by the 18th century Jamia Masjid and its activists make a vain bid to enter the fortified mosque. In January 2024, there was a row in Keregodu over replacing a saffron flag with the Indian tricolour on a flagpole. In September that year in Nagamangala, there was stone throwing during the Ganesha immersion procession, which escalated into clashes; the same happened in Maddur this September. These episodes, in addition to the heckling of a hijab-clad girl by a group of boys waving saffron shawls in a college in 2022, signal a worrying communal drift.

Political analysts have observed that the rise in instances of religious intolerance in Mandya has coincided with the BJP's electoral alliance with the JD(S) – a party traditionally backed by Vokkaligas and a key competitor to the ruling Congress in the region.

The Congress secured six out of seven Assembly seats in Mandya district in the 2023 polls, including the Melukote

seat, where it supported Darshan Puttannaiah of the Sarvodaya Karnataka Paksha party. However, it lost the Mandya Lok Sabha seat to JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy in the 2024 elections. It now blames JD(S) cadres' support for BJP's Hindutva politics for deepening religious polarisation.

For decades, the Congress and the JD(S) were directly in contest in the Old Mysore region, while the BJP struggled to gain a foothold. But the alliance between the H.D. Deve Gowda-led party with the BJP appears to have significantly altered the dynamics on the ground. The JD(S) cadre, who had previously competed with the Congress for Muslim votes to maintain a fragile communal balance, now find themselves aligned with the BJP and its affiliates. The shift was evident during the padayatra taken out to protest against the Keregodu flag controversy when even Mr. Kumaraswamy sported a saffron shawl. It was also seen during demonstrations against the stone pelting on Ganesha idols in Maddur.

The public response to the call for protest against the recent stone pelting incident in Maddur was striking. Even though the local police had acted swiftly by arresting more than 20 people belonging to the Muslim community, the demonstrations remained massive. JD(S) leaders flanked BJP firebrands at demonstrations in Maddur.

While the Congress grapples with the challenges of communalisation and the BJP-JD(S) combine, it hopes that the SAF will help restore stability. While the BJP, which gained votes between 2018 and 2023, is strengthened by its JD(S) alliance in the Vokkaliga heartland, the long-term future of the JD(S) remains uncertain.

Could IndiGo have hired more pilots to prevent the crisis?

Even adding 900 more pilots would have cost IndiGo just a fraction of the airline's annual profits

DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan
Sambavi Parthasarathy
Nitika Francis
Devvanshi Bihani

Starting this month, IndiGo's operations unravelled as thousands of flights were cancelled. The primary trigger was the airline's failure to prepare for the new pilot rest and duty norms (Phase II), which came into full effect on November 1, 2025. These stricter mandates – specifically raising the weekly rest period of pilots from 36 to 48 hours and capping night landings – effectively shrank the available pool of pilot hours. The company informed officials that "misjudgement and planning gaps" led to the fiasco.

IndiGo is managing the current crisis by contracting its daily operations from 2,300 to approximately 1,800-1,900 flights. This creates a distinct 'lose-lose' scenario: the airline limits its output, and passengers face reduced connectivity. The impact is magnified by IndiGo's sheer dominance; its market share – measured in Revenue Passenger Kilometers – has climbed from under 40% in 2015-16 to over 60% in 2024-25 (Chart 1). Its nearest competitor, Air India, trails significantly at roughly 14%. With rivals grappling with their own aircraft shortages and scale limitations, the broader industry is ill-equipped to bridge the supply gap left by the market leader.

Could IndiGo have averted this fiasco by aligning its hiring strategy with the impending regulatory shifts? According to a recent report by *Mint*, the airline intends to onboard over 900 pilots by next December, with an initial intake of about 160 by February. Could this have been done before?

To understand the crisis, consider IndiGo's massive operational expansion. Chart 2 plots IndiGo's share in total industry pilots versus total flying hours. In 2019-20, Indi-

Go had 44.6% of all pilots and contributed to 42.1% of total flight hours. By 2023-24, its pilot share dipped to 43.6% while flight hours surged to 50.9%. While this does not strictly prove that pilots are 'overworked', it hints at a divergence of operations scaling up significantly, but the pilot workforce not keeping pace.

Capt. A. Ranganathan, a former airline instructor pilot and aviation safety adviser, confirms this. "IndiGo knew very well that they should have hired more pilots by November 1 this year. Despite not doing that, they applied for approval for the winter schedule this year. They actually increased the number of flights, which was approved by the DGCA."

Would hiring more pilots erode the bottom line of IndiGo, the only consistently profitable Indian carrier? To answer this, we analysed pilot expenditures. In 2023-24, IndiGo spent ₹31,217 million on 5,038 pilots, averaging ₹6.2 million per pilot annually (Chart 3A). This figure is slightly lower than Air India's, yet higher than SpiceJet's (Chart 3B). With plans to onboard 900 new pilots by next year, a back-of-the-envelope calculation projects an additional annual cost of roughly ₹5,500 million.

This additional ₹5,500 million outlay constitutes merely 6-8% of IndiGo's Profit After Tax, which stood at ₹81.6 billion in 2023-24 and ₹72.5 billion in 2024-25 (Chart 4). Even if we assume these hires are strictly for compliance rather than expansion, the trade-off is stark: the airline had to forego less than 8% of its surplus to insulate itself from this fiasco. It remains to be seen if the actual losses from the current crisis will outweigh this expense.

According to Capt. Ranganathan, IndiGo will in fact struggle to complete these additional hires. He noted that the airline delayed promoting many Senior First Officers to Captains, prompting an exodus of pilots. He also highlighted that allowances have been cut.

Penny wise, pound foolish?

The data for the charts were sourced from the Handbook on Civil Aviation Statistics and other reports published by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation



Chart 1: Market share of select airlines measured in terms of passenger kilometres (figures in %)

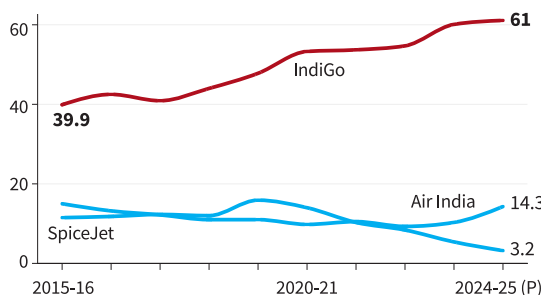


Chart 3A: Average expenditure incurred by IndiGo per pilot, annually (Figures in ₹ Million)

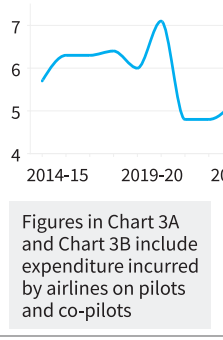
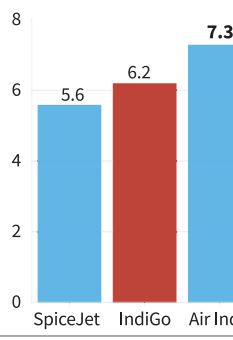


Chart 3B: Average expenditure incurred by airlines per pilot in 2023-24 (Figures in ₹ Million)



Figures in Chart 3A and Chart 3B include expenditure incurred by airlines on pilots and co-pilots

Chart 2: IndiGo's share in total pilots and total flying hours of all airlines. Figures in %

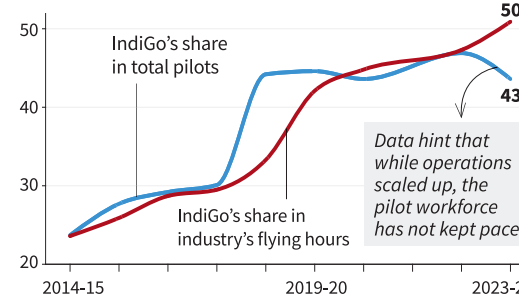
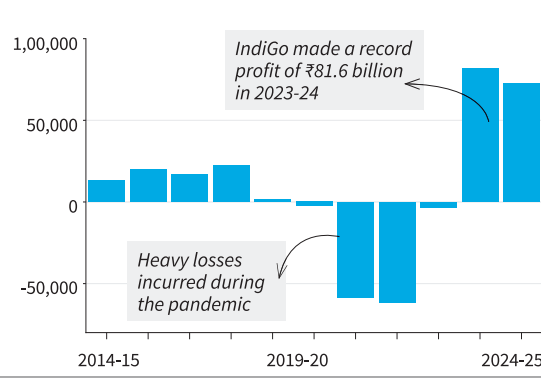


Chart 4: Net profit or loss recorded by IndiGo after income tax in the last decade (Figures in ₹ Million)



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The *Hindu*

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 10, 1975

Delhi superbazar as model institution

New Delhi, Dec. 9: The Superbazar here, which is a premier consumer co-operative institution, will be developed further into an institution of national stature so that it can extend its services to cover a larger number of consumers, particularly the low and middle income groups, salaried workers and other vulnerable sections of the society.

The Central Government intends to make it a model for other Supermarkets. The Ministry of Civil Supplies is convinced that the Superbazar has a healthy influence on the market, and that it has been rendering service to the community by selling unadulterated quality goods at fair prices, besides eschewing malpractices like underweighting and tax evasion.

The Ministry, therefore, wants to strengthen the Superbazar and already additional financial assistance of Rs. 60 lakhs has been provided in the Fifth Plan outlay for its various development schemes which include the opening of a large department store, establishment of ten mini-branches, introduction of mobile van shops, setting up of consumer industries, and acquisition of business and technical equipment.

At the same time, the Ministry is also finalising comprehensive legislation for multi-State co-operative societies in the light of the recommendations made by an expert committee. The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal in principle and desired that the necessary draft Bill may be prepared and the State Governments also consulted. This process has practically been completed.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DECEMBER 10, 1925

Indian tea

London, Dec. 9: The Morning Post states that owing to the failure of Indian tea crop which is expected to be some twenty million pounds less than the last year, the prices of grades of tea at present being detailed at 18d and 20d per pound, will be raised to 2 sh in next few weeks.

The Daily Express understands that there is no ground for the report of the coming rise in the price of tea and says that although Northern India crop is eighteen million pounds, below last year's, stocks at end of October were 181 3/4 million pounds compared with 145 3/4 million pounds of same period last year.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

UN grants relief after Cyclone Ditwah batters Sri Lanka

4.5 million dollars. The United Nations has released \$4.5 million from its Central Emergency Response Fund to support Sri Lanka's recovery from Cyclone Ditwah. Sri Lanka's foreign minister thanked the UN, noting the disaster's severe impact on livelihoods and infrastructure. PTI

Projected population of the elderly in India by 2036

22.74 crore. India's elderly population is projected to surge to 22.74 crore by 2036, the Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai told the Lok Sabha. The share of citizens aged 60 and above is expected to rise from 8.4% in 2011 to 14.9% in 2036. ANI

Returnable plots which are yet to be registered in Amaravati

7,000 Andhra Pradesh Municipal Minister P. Narayana said 7,000 of the 66,000 returnable plots allotted to farmers in Amaravati are yet to be registered. Farmers are completing 30 to 60 registrations daily. PTI

Worth of possible cyber frauds blocked via I4C's registry

8,031 crore. The government told Parliament that the I4C's suspect registry, launched in 2024, helped block ₹8,031.56 crore in suspected cyber fraud transactions. The database has identified over 18 lakh suspicious individuals. PTI

Sudanese militia leader gets sentenced by the ICC

20 years. The International Criminal Court has sentenced Sudanese Janjaweed leader Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman to 20 years in prison for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the 2003-04 Darfur conflict. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Lessons from recent transport crises

In October, trains to Bihar experienced immense rush. In December, the mass cancellation of Indigo flights led to stranded passengers and inflated prices. Low prices of government services do not increase welfare unless accompanied by government investment, while deregulated prices only reduce welfare in the presence of monopolies

ECONOMIC NOTES

Rahul Menon

In the past couple of months, India has witnessed its transport infrastructure come under massive strain. In October and November, trains to Bihar experienced immense rush, owing to migrants travelling home for Chhath Puja and the Bihar elections. Travellers were forced to travel in cramped and inhospitable conditions in unreserved compartments due to the paucity of trains. In December, the mass cancellation of Indigo flights owing to regulatory non-compliance led to stranded passengers and inflated prices.

Both events can be used to explain the reaction of prices and the responses of government and private players to demand and supply shocks. But the divergent behaviour of prices – and its effects – in these cases indicate the constraints imposed on welfare in a neo-liberal economy. Low prices of government services do not increase welfare unless accompanied by significant government investment, while deregulated prices only reduce welfare in the presence of monopolies.

Demand shock and Indian Railways

The sudden increase in demand for Bihar-bound trains in October is a classic indication of a demand shock. In the face of a given supply, such an increase in demand would lead to higher prices. If prices remain fixed due to government intervention, it would lead to an increase in the number of travellers far beyond the capacity of the trains. This led to overcrowded trains and hazardous travelling conditions. Standard economic theory would state that prices need to rise such that demand and supply are in equilibrium. While this would lead to the inability to travel for many, economic efficiency would be achieved.

Critics point to this as the fundamental issue with government services, where



Out of options: Passengers crowd at the platform as they arrive to board a train to their home town a day after the Chhath Puja festival at a railway station in Patna on October 29. AFP

keeping prices low due to social compulsions leads to excess demand of services and rampant inefficiency. But this criticism misses a fundamental problem. It is true that low prices lead to overcrowding, but the answer lies not in raising prices, but ensuring an increase in supply. Prices for certain services like health, education and train travel must be kept affordable for welfare, but at the same time, there must be significant investment by the state to expand access.

This is difficult to do in a neo-liberal economy, which places strict constraints on government intervention in the economy. Limits are placed on the size of the fiscal deficit, limiting government investment. A route that increases government spending while maintaining the deficit is through raising resources by wealth and income taxation of the top 1%. As shown by Thomas Piketty and his

team, modest taxation of the top 1% would be enough to raise a considerable amount to strengthen the Indian welfare state. This, however, would not be acceptable to domestic and global capital.

Monopolies and grounded flights

The solution, as advanced by many, is deregulation, and the entry of private capital into the provision of services. The logic goes that focusing on the profit motive ensures an efficient match of demand and supply, and investment in search of profit will ensure the expansion of services to all. However, the recent crisis surrounding Indigo has shown the shortcomings of this model.

The Indigo crisis is an example of a supply shock. The withdrawal of flights in the face of normal demand leads to price increases, amplified by the near-monopoly enjoyed by Indigo in

Indian markets. The reduction in such a large amount of supply meant huge price increases for other flights and significant consumer loss. Supply restrictions for one firm in a market would not lead to such massive market-wide disruptions if the market was genuinely competitive.

Non-competitive pricing power was highlighted as a key factor leading to the rapid increase in inflation during former U.S. President Joe Biden's term, which played a role in bringing Donald Trump to power. The massive supply disruptions brought about by lockdowns increased costs, but were translated into a cost-of-living crisis due to the presence of significant monopolies. The argument for flexible prices implicitly assumes a competitive economy, which requires government intervention to prevent the rise of monopolies.

On the liberal economy

The two outcomes are not distinct but are the consequences of a neo-liberal economy that places restrictions on the actions of the state but pushes for deregulation of private activities. The inability of the state to raise taxes and increase spending leaves them with no option but to keep prices low for essential services and struggle with the increased demand and the fallout from overcrowding. The withdrawal of regulation leads to the concentration of capital and the rise of monopolies, a feature of Indian markets today. Far from ensuring consumer welfare, unregulated private markets can lead to rising monopolies which lower welfare and lead to high prices, as seen in the case of Indigo and the U.S. The two travel disruptions may seem dissimilar, yet they are both logical outcomes of an economic model that prizes the private, and downplays the importance of the public. These massive disruptions will emerge once more, if the underlying tendencies towards monopolies and the degradation of public services are not arrested.

Rahul Menon is associate professor at O.P. Jindal Global University.

THE GIST

The sudden increase in demand for Bihar-bound trains in October is a classic indication of a demand shock. In the face of a given supply, such an increase in demand would lead to higher prices. If prices remain fixed due to government intervention, it would lead to an increase in the number of travellers far beyond the capacity of the trains.

The Indigo crisis is an example of a supply shock. The withdrawal of flights in the face of normal demand leads to price increases, amplified by the near-monopoly enjoyed by Indigo in Indian markets.

The two outcomes are not distinct but are the outcomes of a neo-liberal economy that places restrictions on the actions of the state but pushes for deregulation of private activities.

Does Google's Quantum Echoes bring Q-day closer?

What was the Willow experiment? How does an RSA encryption work? Is Q-day on the horizon?

Priti Kumari

The story so far:

Using a 65-qubit Willow superconducting processor, Google researchers have measured how quantum information spreads and refocuses within an entangled system. This technological leap in quantum computing has been called Quantum Echoes.

What was the experiment?

Unlike the 2019 Sycamore experiment, which claimed "quantum supremacy" for completing a random-number task faster than any supercomputer, Quantum Echoes was not a speed race but a test of understanding. Scientists measured out-of-time-order correlators (OTOC) – tiny echoes that reveal how disturbances travel through a network of qubits. The method resembles giving a material a microscopic "poke," reversing time

evolution, and listening for the returning echo. The echo's strength reveals how quickly information disperses, offering insight for chemistry, materials science, and superconductivity. Despite its scientific importance, the experiment does not bring the world closer to breaking encryption or to Q-day.

'Harvest now, decrypt later'

Q-day refers to the day a cryptographically relevant quantum computer becomes powerful enough to break public-key encryption. It would not instantly expose all secrets, but any encrypted data stored today could be decoded later if intercepted now – a risk known as "harvest now, decrypt later."

Governments and researchers are already preparing. The U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has standardised new post-quantum cryptography (PQC) algorithms – CRYSTALS-Kyber for

encryption and Dilithium for digital signatures. These rely on mathematical problems that are believed to resist both classical and quantum attacks.

Experts expect that machines capable of breaking RSA-2048 will need millions of logical qubits, which could take 5 to 8 years to build (RSA-2048 is a commonly used standard for public-key cryptography). Until then, Q-day remains a theoretical horizon. RSA encryption works by multiplying two large prime numbers to create an enormous product. Multiplication is easy, but reversing it and finding the original primes is so difficult that even the fastest classical computers would need billions of years to solve it.

Machines that test multiple possibilities

Quantum computers operate under the laws of quantum mechanics. Their building blocks, called qubits, exploit superposition, the ability to exist as both 0 and 1 simultaneously, and

entanglement, where qubits influence each other instantly, even when far apart. These features let quantum machines test many possibilities at once rather than sequentially. This aspect of existing in multiple places at the same time powers Shor's algorithm, which converts the hard task of factoring numbers into one of finding repeating patterns, or periods, in modular arithmetic. To expose those patterns, the algorithm uses the Quantum Fourier Transform (QFT), a tool that acts like a detector of hidden rhythms within a signal. Scaling this method to large RSA numbers would let a quantum computer find their prime factors exponentially faster than classical machines.

Craig Gidney and Martin Ekerå of Google Research estimated in 2019 that factoring a 2,048-bit RSA key would need about 20 million physical qubits and eight hours of computation. Current processors, such as Google's Willow and IBM's Condor, have only a few hundred noisy qubits. A true fault-tolerant quantum computer would require millions of logical qubits, which are stable, error-corrected versions capable of long calculations. That scale remains far beyond present technology.

Shor's algorithm and encryption systems

In theory, Shor's algorithm is a computational tool designed to factor large numbers efficiently. Its purpose is mathematical and, eventually,

cryptographic: it challenges the foundations of today's encryption systems. Quantum Echoes is an experiment in physics. Instead of solving equations, it studies how quantum information spreads and re-emerges within entangled particles. While both use quantum hardware, they serve very different goals. Shor's algorithm seeks computational advantage; Quantum Echoes seeks physical understanding.

So, the Willow experiment differs as its results can be verified through repeated measurements and signal-to-noise analysis. It represents progress in scientific reproducibility rather than in cryptographic power. But experts caution that some entities may already be storing encrypted information today to decrypt in the future. Regulators, including India's central bank, are urging organisations to transition to quantum-safe systems before the end of the decade.

How far is Q-Day?

Google's Quantum Echoes does not bring Q-day any closer. But it does mark a scientific milestone in understanding quantum behaviour. The experiment shows that quantum processors can now verify complex physical interactions within entangled systems – a sign of maturity in quantum science rather than a cybersecurity threat.

Dr. Priti Kumari is a research analyst at an international asset management company.

ABSTRACT



Precious liquid: Women fetching water through the Jal Jeevan Mission water pipes installed at Malaichampuram near Y. Othakadai in Madurai in July. ASHOK. R

Value of water: evaluating the pricelessness of clean, potable water

In a study conducted in Odisha, researchers have found that households value clean water far more than previously estimated, highlighting the need for effective water policies. This study contributes a new way of thinking about water valuation

Rebecca Rose Varghese

Burlig Fiona, Jina Amir and Sudarshan Anant, 'The Value of Clean Water: Experimental Evidence from Rural India', *Studies in Indian Politics*, NBER Working Paper 33557, 2025

Water is an essential resource with no substitute. Despite its fundamental importance, a large proportion of the global population lacks access to safe drinking water. Only 30% of people in low-income countries, and just 14% of those in rural areas, have reliable access to potable water, resulting in a significant decline in quality of life. India is no exception, with many communities facing persistent challenges in accessing safe water.

Discussions on water access and quality are widespread across development research, public policy, and global health, reflecting their importance to well-being and everyday life. Although there is extensive literature on how households obtain water, and on the technologies used to make it safe, much of existing research estimates valuation indirectly – through hedonic pricing, adoption of chlorine or filters, or studies of piped-water take-up. What remains far less explored is a direct measure of how much households value clean, potable water independent of the burdens of collection time, taste, labour, or irregular access that shape earlier estimates.

This paper contributes to research on improving access to clean water and joins a broader conversation within environmental economics literature on measuring how people in low-income countries value environmental quality. It addresses this gap by delivering clean water directly to households and observing real purchasing and exchange behaviour, measuring both Willingness to Pay (WTP) and Willingness to Accept (WTA) under conditions where non-monetary burdens are removed. This approach allows the study to examine how households order water, how sensitive they are to price, and whether they prefer receiving water or equivalent cash. In addition, the study assesses associated benefits, including changes in water sources, collection time, household

water treatment practices, and self-reported health. In doing so, it offers a clearer picture of how people perceive the importance of water quality. It offers insights into interventions that could expand access to safe drinking water in contexts where infrastructure remains uneven, and treatment burdens fall heavily on households. The findings provide evidence that can inform effective and equitable drinking water policies in low-income settings.

Measuring the value

The study was conducted in Odisha, a State where access to water remains limited. As of 2021, Odisha ranked 32nd out of 37 States in piped water coverage, with 83% of households lacking connections. A 2023 survey found that 41% of villages still lacked safe drinking water. Water access has been a key local concern in the State, leading to protests and dissatisfaction among the population. Against this backdrop, the study implemented a randomised controlled trial across 160 villages, with successful execution in 99 villages where a private company already operated water treatment facilities. Households were randomly assigned to different experimental arms, allowing researchers to observe behaviour under conditions where clean water was delivered directly, removing typical burdens of collection, transport, and taste-related aversion, and capturing variations across income, water habits, and baseline access.

Households were assigned to one of three experimental arms designed to reveal distinct dimensions of valuation. In the price arm, households could purchase clean, home-delivered water at several subsidised price points. Observing the quantity ordered at each price allowed researchers to estimate willingness to pay based on revealed behaviour and identify price sensitivity. This arm also provided a comparison to prior studies that focused on demand for treatment technologies rather than clean water itself.

In the free-water arm, households received potable water at zero price, serving as an unconstrained benchmark. The quantity consumed in this arm reflected genuine demand independent of financial limitations and provided a contrast with the price arm to separate

preference from affordability.

The exchangeable entitlement arm offered households entitlements that could either be redeemed for water or exchanged for cash of equivalent value. Their choices revealed willingness to accept compensation to forgo clean water, which is particularly meaningful in low-income contexts with limited substitutes and where governments often provide cash transfers.

Randomisation within villages ensured that differences in behaviour were attributable to treatment conditions rather than geographic or infrastructural disparities. By removing the non-monetary costs associated with traditional water access, the study captured a more accurate picture of how households value clean water. In doing so, it provides policy-relevant insights on how to structure water delivery, subsidies, and interventions in settings where infrastructure and treatment burdens fall heavily on households.

Valuing clean water

The study's findings reveal several important patterns regarding how households perceive and value clean water. Both WTP and WTA estimates were substantially higher than those reported in earlier studies that relied on indirect measures, such as chlorine adoption or time-use patterns, suggesting that prior work underestimated the true value of potable water due to the bundled inconveniences of collection and treatment. WTA values, in particular, were strikingly high, indicating households' strong reluctance to forgo clean water even when offered cash. While demand did respond to price increases, the decline was moderate, highlighting that clean water is considered a necessity rather than a discretionary good. In the exchangeable entitlement arm, many households chose water over equivalent cash, reinforcing the preference for guaranteed access over short-term monetary gain. Access to home-delivered water also led households to shift away from less reliable sources, reducing collection time and alleviating burdens that disproportionately affect a few. Finally, although health outcomes were self-reported, households indicated improvements in physical well-being,

suggesting immediate perceived benefits from reliable clean water access.

Understanding choices

These findings highlight an important insight: when clean water is made easily accessible, households demonstrate a far higher valuation than previously assumed. This challenges common interpretations that low-income households do not care about water quality or are unwilling to pay for treatment. Instead, what they resist are the associated inconveniences – taste, effort, labour, and uncertainty.

By isolating water quality from these burdens, the study shows that people value purity deeply, and that their choices reflect a practical understanding of its importance for health and daily functioning. The strong WTP-WTA gap also reflects a psychological dimension: households may be wary of losing access once they experience the benefits of reliable, safe water.

This study, therefore, contributes a new way of thinking about water valuation, one that centres the service rather than the technology. It suggests that uptake of chlorine or filters may not reflect low valuation of cleanliness but instead reflect aversion to the method of treatment due to difficulties in adoption or financial constraints.

While it would have been interesting to also examine quantifiable health improvements rather than relying solely on self-reported outcomes, the behavioural evidence remains compelling.

The findings point to actionable government strategies: support decentralised, home-delivery models in areas with limited piped infrastructure; provide subsidies or pricing aligned with households' willingness to pay; and integrate entitlement-based systems for vulnerable households to ensure universal access. Such measures can act as effective interim solutions while long-term infrastructure is expanded.

The study reframes water access, not as technology adoption, but as making safe water easy, reliable, and dignified, and contributes to our understanding of household perceptions of water.

Rebecca Rose Varghese is a freelance journalist.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

What is the meaning of 'five o'clock shadow'? (S. Gopi, Trivandrum)

Some men shave every day before leaving for work. But by the time they return home in the evening, they find that some of the hair they had so carefully removed in the morning has grown back. This stubbly growth that a man has on his face at the end of the day is referred to as the five o'clock shadow. It is an informal expression and it is thought that it is the brainchild of the advertising company that promoted Gem razors and blades. "That unsightly beard growth which appears prematurely at about 5 p.m. looks bad" was one of their advertisements. Richard Nixon, the former American President, was a man who had a perpetual five o'clock shadow. Some political analysts have said that Nixon may have lost the TV debates in the U.S. Presidential race to John Kennedy in 1960 because of his five o'clock shadow. In his Memoirs, Nixon has this to say about his television debates with Kennedy: "Kennedy arrived... looking tanned, rested and fit. My television adviser, Ted Rodgers, recommended that I use television make-up, but unwisely I refused, permitting only a little 'beard stick' on my perpetual five o'clock shadow."

What does 'being on the wrong side of thirty' mean? (T. Santhana Krishnan, Vellore)

When you say that you are on the wrong side of thirty, it means that you are more than thirty years of age. Here are a few examples. Anitha cannot apply for the job because she is on the wrong side of twenty five (Meaning she is more than twenty five). Madhuri claims to be twenty five, but if you ask me, she is on the wrong side of thirty. If you wish to say that you are younger than thirty, then you use the expression 'on the right side of thirty'. For example, Madhusudan is on the right side of thirty. I am on the wrong side of forty, but my younger brother is on the right side of forty.

What does 'man Friday' mean? (Dr. S. Vaidyanathan, T.Nagar, Chennai)

Friday is the name of a character who appears in Daniel Defoe's well known work of fiction, 'Robinson Crusoe'. He is a savage whom Crusoe finds on an island. Crusoe names the savage 'Friday' because he first encounters him on a Friday. Friday becomes Robin's constant companion and assists him in everything. So when you refer to a man as being your 'man Friday', it means that he is a faithful and willing attendant, ready to do whatever you tell him to do. For example, Jeeves was Betram Wooster's man Friday. Many people in our office believe that Balaraman is our Chairman's man Friday. If the faithful attendant happens to be a woman, then you refer to her as 'girl Friday'. And 'girl Friday', like 'man Friday', does all the important and useful jobs that her boss wants to be done. A female secretary is often referred to as 'girl Friday'.

For example, as soon as my boss had a problem, he rang for Achala, his girl Friday.

Published in *The Hindu* on December 8, 1998.

THE DAILY QUIZ

The Nobel prize award ceremony starts every year on December 10. Here is a quiz on the prestigious prize and its awardees

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

Vighnesh P. Venkitesh

- QUESTION 1**
Initially only five fields were considered for the awards. Which of the current six fields was not among this?
- QUESTION 2**
Name the institution that established the prize in the field mentioned in question 1.
- QUESTION 3**
What is the maximum number of people who can share a Nobel?
- QUESTION 4**
Name the youngest and oldest Nobel laureates.
- QUESTION 5**
Who is the first Indian to win a Nobel?



Visual question: Name this writer who famously declined a Nobel awarded for literature. FILE PHOTO

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The Genocide Convention was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on this date. **Ans: December 9, 1948**
2. The Convention entered into force and became legally effective on this date. **Ans: January 12, 1951**
3. Number of states which are party to the Convention. **Ans: 153 state parties**
4. The four types of groups protected under the Convention's definition of 'genocide'. **Ans: National, ethnic, racial, or religious groups**
5. Does the Genocide Convention recognise cultural genocide or political genocide in its definition of genocide? **Ans: No**
Visual: Identify the man. **Ans: Raphael Lemkin. He was a Polish-Jewish lawyer who invented the term 'genocide'. He was the key advocate whose efforts pushed the UN to adopt the Genocide Convention**
Early Birds: Tito Shiladitya| Haridas Pal| Jagrati Shukla| Nitin Das| Sadhan Panda

Word of the day

Scurry: rushing about hastily in an undignified way; to move about or proceed hurriedly

Synonyms: scamper, scramble, scuttle, skitter

Usage: The girls scurried over to him.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/scurrypro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /sʃkʌr.i/

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

From Page One

'Citizenship under CAA only if claims verified'

The NGO, in its petition filed through advocate Anish Roy, submitted that the proviso to Section 2(i) (b) of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) exempted religious minorities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan who entered India on or before December 31, 2014, from being considered "illegal migrants". These communities were Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians. Section 6B of the CAA allows these persons to apply for grant of certificate of registration or certificate of naturalisation. The NGO argued that those who apply for naturalisation should not be deprived of citizens' rights and privileges.

However, the petition said the authorities had delayed the issuance of the citizenship certificates. This, coupled with the non-recognition of acknowledgment receipts during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR), has created a serious constitutional crisis.

The CJI said that if the government has made a law, there would be a following mechanism to implement the law, in this case, to determine claims of citizenship by naturalisation from refugees who had fled these three countries.

Top court slams EC's 'mechanical' answers

The hearing also saw the Kerala government, represented by advocate C.K. Sasi, seek a further extension of two weeks for electors in the State to submit their enumeration forms. He said that over 20 lakh voters were yet to submit their forms. The EC had earlier extended the deadline in Kerala from December 11 to December 18.

"There are students who are studying outside the State. On a personal front, there are also lawyers like me. We are waiting for the Christmas vacations to go back and submit our forms," senior advocate P.V. Surendranath said, explained the practical difficulties.

Here too, the EC responded by stating that 97.42% enumeration forms have been digitised in Kerala.

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, for the EC, said the State's submission was "speculative", claiming that the poll body had its "fingers on the pulse" in Kerala. "We are monitoring," Mr. Dwivedi submitted. The court posted the case on December 18 to assess the situation to pass appropriate orders, if necessary.

Driving BLOs to exhaustion

Justice Joymalya Bagchi questioned whether the EC was "too much of a driving force", leaving booth-level officers (BLOs) exhausted.

The EC dismissed the notion as a "political narrative floating around". It said there were only 1,200 voters in every polling booth, and the BLO for the booth had 37 days to submit and collect enumeration forms from them. "A BLO can cover them all in 37 days at the pace of 35 voters a day... There are small hamlets in some places. A BLO could easily visit six or seven houses and complete the daily quota," Mr. Dwivedi rationalised.

But Justice Bagchi said the explanation made it seem as though a BLO's job was merely "desk work".

"It is sheer leg work. They have to leg it house after house, verify the details, travel back and upload the enumeration forms. There is pressure on the BLOs... We are not on 'narratives', as you put it... We had taken note of strain on BLOs in our order on December 4," Justice Bagchi addressed the EC counsel.

'Hostile parties causing stress'

On December 4, the top court had put the onus on the States to substitute BLOs who fall sick on the job or depute additional personnel for SIR enumeration work to reduce stress. Tuesday's hearing saw the court clarify that the December 4 order would be applicable on a pan-India basis.

On Tuesday, Mr. Dwivedi contended that it was not the EC, but ruling political parties hostile to the SIR in States like West Bengal and Kerala, who are interfering with the BLOs' work, "bossing them around".

IndiGo to reduce 400-500 flights

Since November, over 5,000 flights have been cancelled, including 951 in November. A total of 9.5 lakh tickets were cancelled from November 21 to December 7, for which the airline maintains it has released refunds totalling ₹827 crore.

Earlier, the airline had sought permission to fly nearly 10% more flights in the winter season, effective from October 26, 2025 till March 28, 2026, compared with the 2024 winter season. This has raised questions about how the airline made such a demand, and why the aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, agreed without assessing whether IndiGo had adequate crew.

The airline has admitted to "planning gaps and misjudgement" in estimating crew requirements under the government's revised norms governing night flying for pilots, including for the first time capping the number of landings allowed per night shift to two in response to concerns over mounting fatigue.

As per the airline's own submission, it currently has 65 fewer captains than required - 2,357 available against 2,422 needed to comply with the new rule that came into effect from November 1.

Ease of life is a top priority for govt., Modi tells NDA MPs

Prime Minister emphasised undertaking reforms across all sectors to ease common man's life and ensure the public face no problems, says Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday told National Democratic Alliance (NDA) MPs that "ease of life" and "ease of doing business" were both top priorities for the government, and that his government was in a "reform express" phase, which was "not only revenue-centric but [also] citizen-centric", sources said.

Mr. Modi addressed the NDA's parliamentary party meet, the first to be held in the Winter Session of Parliament. NDA MPs and leaders felicitated the Prime Minister on the alliance's recent victory in the Bihar Assembly election.

"During the NDA parliamentary meeting, the PM told NDA MPs that people should not be troubled, [or] face inconvenience. Rules and laws are good, but in order to correct the system, it is not right to harass people," Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju told presspersons after the



PM Narendra Modi being felicitated by MPs for the NDA's victory in Bihar Assembly polls, at Parliament in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

meeting in the national capital.

Focus on reforms

Mr. Modi spoke of how his government was rapidly going ahead with reforms, with a clear intent, sources present at the meeting said. "He said that reforms should be citizen-centric, not just focussed on the economy or revenues. The goal should be to remove the everyday hurdles of people so that they can grow to their full potential," the source said, adding that MPs were told to "share the problems faced by citizens" so that reforms could be modified. He also

reportedly spoke of the need to "end the culture of 30-40-page forms and unnecessary paperwork" and "eliminate repeated data submissions". "He said the government trusted citizens by allowing self-certification, and that this has worked successfully for the last decade," the source added.

"All NDA leaders congratulated Prime Minister Modi for the NDA's victory in the Bihar elections. He guided all the NDA MPs to work for their respective constituencies. Prime Minister Modi emphasised undertaking reforms across all sectors to ease

PM's focus on ease in daily lives of citizens, economic reforms is significant in light of the IndiGo crisis

the public's lives and ensure they face no problems. The PM said that laws should help people. He also urged MPs to connect with the youth," Mr. Rijiju said.

Mr. Modi's focus on ease in the daily lives of citizens alongside economic reforms is significant in light of the aviation crisis.

Later in the day, Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu made a statement in the Lok Sabha on the Indigo airline imbroglio. "No airline, however large, will be permitted to cause hardship to passengers through planning failures and non-compliance with regulations," Mr. Naidu said.

The government was pursuing policies to encourage more airlines to operate in India and provide more choice for Indian consumers, the Minister said.



Security personnel conduct searches in Hutmurah forest as part of the Delhi blast probe, in Anantnag on Tuesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Red Fort blast case: NIA searches forest range in Anantnag

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Teams of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) along with the Jammu and Kashmir Police on Tuesday brought a terror accused doctor to a forest range in south Kashmir's Anantnag and arrested another local doctor from north Kashmir's Baramulla in the Red Fort blast case.

Officials said an NIA team was searching the Hutmurah forest area in Anantnag. The team was accompanied by Dr. Adeel Rather, one of the members of the inter-State terror module busted last month by the J&K Police. Another arrested youth, Jaisir Bilal Wani, who is a neighbour of Dr. Rather, has also been shifted to

Kashmir. Sources said the duo was shifted to identify possible hideouts in south Kashmir.

On November 7, an AK-47 rifle was recovered from Dr. Rather's locker at Anantnag Medical College, where he worked as a senior resident till 2024. Dr. Rather is among two local doctors arrested in the case and believed to be behind the blast that left 15 civilians dead on November 10 in Delhi.

Officials were also looking into the role of Dr. Rather's brother, Dr. Muzaffar Rather, who is believed to have shifted to Dubai earlier this year.

Meanwhile, the NIA said another key accused, Dr. Bilal Naseer Malla of Baramulla, was arrested in connection with the blast case.

SC seeks EC's view on plea to not hold SIR in Assam

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday pointed to the special protective laws in place in Assam addressing the region's unique needs while hearing a petition alleging that the Election Commission of India (EC) has discriminated against the State by not conducting a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of its electoral rolls despite the alleged presence of "40 to 50 lakh illegal immigrants" even way back in 1997.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant said it would hear next week the petition filed by Mrinal Kumar Choudhury, former President of Gauhati High Court Bar Association, questioning why revision of electoral rolls in Assam was only by way of "special revision" and not an SIR, as done in Bihar and currently under way in 12 other States and Union Territories.

The petitioner relied on a report of former Assam



A booth-level officer helps residents check their details during the special revision of electoral rolls in Guwahati. PTI

Governor Lt. General S.K. Sinha and ex-Home Minister of Assam Indrajit Gupta in 1997 that there were "40-50 lakh illegal immigrants" in the State. The petition asked whether the SIR's avowed objective to protect the purity of the electoral roll did not apply to Assam.

Even the Supreme Court had raised the issue of adverse demographic impact in view of the presence of large illegal immigrants, especially in a case challenging Section 6A of the Citizenship Act.

"There are lakhs of ille-

gal immigrants in Assam whose names have been incorporated in the electoral roll, and unless SIR is conducted these persons will get the right to vote in the upcoming Assembly elections in Assam which will have a cascading effect on the socio-political scenario and result in demographic imbalance," the petition submitted.

The plea questioned the "discrimination" shown to Assam when there was no difference on the ground realities between Assam and the other 12 States where SIR was underway.

India-Nepal Army exercise concludes in Uttarakhand

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The India-Nepal joint military exercise, SURYAKIRAN-XIX, concluded at Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand on Tuesday.

Marking the end of the intensive combined training cycle, the Directors-General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of the Indian and Nepal Armies jointly witnessed and validated a two-day battalion-level validation exercise at the Foreign Training Node in Pithoragarh.

The Indian Army said the validation phase showcased joint tactics, techniques and procedures for counter-terrorism operations mandated under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

The drills featured a suite of cutting-edge technologies, including ISR (intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) and precision-targeting drones, advanced day/night weapons sights, AI-enabled surveillance feeds, unmanned operational and logistics



DGMO Lieutenant General Manish Luthra along with DGMO of Nepal Army, Major General Anup Jung Thapa. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

platforms, and secure battlefield communication systems.

The exercise underscored seamless interoperability, synchronised mission planning and coordinated execution of combined tactical operations in a counter-terrorism environment across battalion, company and small-team levels. Troops carried out intelligence-based surgical missions in complex terrain, employing aerial insertion methods to strengthen rapid-response capability.

Acknowledging the importance of shared security and humanitarian preparedness in the

Himalayan region, both DGMOs lauded the exercise for enhancing operational synergy, deepening mutual trust and reinforcing the long-standing military brotherhood between the two armies, the Army added.

As a mark of this enduring partnership, the DGMOs jointly planted a Tree of Friendship, reaffirming the timeless bonds and strategic cooperation between India and Nepal.

SURYAKIRAN - XIX stands as a robust demonstration of unity, preparedness and partnership for regional peace and stability, the Army said in a release.

CBI books Reliance ADA Group firms, Anil Ambani's son in bank fraud cases

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered separate cases against two Reliance Anil Dhirubhai Ambani (ADA) Group companies, Reliance Home Finance Limited (RHFL) and Reliance Commercial Finance Limited (RCFL), on charges of bank loan fraud. Among the accused in one case is Anil Ambani's son, Jai Anmol Ambani.

On Tuesday, the agency conducted searches on the premises of Mr. Jai Anmol and other accused in Mumbai and Pune.

In the two cases, total alleged loan defaults involving all the lenders is worth

Agency conducts searches on premises of son Jai Anmol, other accused in Mumbai and Pune

₹14,852 crore. One First Information Report (FIR) is against RHFL, its promoters or directors, and unknown bank officials, based on a complaint from Union Bank of India, alleging criminal conspiracy, cheating, and criminal misconduct, and wrongful loss of ₹228.06 crore.

The bank had declared the account of RHFL a non-performing asset (NPA) on September 30, 2019, and a fraud on October 10, 2024. The company had taken

loans to the tune of ₹5,572.35 crore from 18 banks, financial institutions, and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), including Union Bank of India. "A thorough investigation will be conducted into the allegations of defrauding all the banks or FIs etc. by the accused company," said the CBI.

Following a court permission, the agency searched two official premises of RHFL and its then director, Mr. Jai Anmol, and then chief executive officer and whole-time director, Ravindra Sudhakar, in Mumbai.

In this case, the bank had got a forensic audit report done. It indicated a

"systematic diversion of borrowed funds".

The second case is against RCFL, the then directors Devang Pravin Mody and Ravindra Somayajula Rao, and unknown bank officials. As alleged, they cheated Bank of Maharashtra to the tune of ₹57.47 crore.

RCFL had taken ₹9,280 crore in loans from 31 banks, financial institutions, NBFCs, corporate bodies, etc. The bank alleged that a forensic audit detected many irregularities. A key issue was that the company disbursed 68% of the wholesale loans (₹1,218.58 crore) to PILE, some of which were further lent to PILE or related parties or group entities.

Navy chief embarks on 4-day official visit to Brazil

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), has embarked on an official visit to Brazil.

The visit, from December 9 to 12, is aimed at consolidating the robust mari-

time partnership between the Indian Navy and the Brazilian Navy - an essential pillar of the broader India-Brazil Strategic Partnership. The CNS will hold high-level discussions with Brazil's senior leadership, including Defence Minister Jose Mucio.

APPEAL

I am Mohamed Arshath, 12 years old suffering from "T Cell - Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia". I have to undergo Chemotherapy and Radiation Therapy for 3 years at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. The total expenditure is Rs. 8,00,000/-. My father works as a sales person. Please help me to undergo the treatment as my family is very poor and we cannot afford this huge expenditure. Donations sent by Ch/D.D. favouring

Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai will be acknowledged. The donations sent through Ch/D.D.M.O/NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakam Branch, A/c No. 60182010063310, IFSC No: CNRB0016018) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT. Your e-mail ID is requested.

All correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No. GF 1, Cordelia Apartments, O.No.13, N.No. 29, Pyroffs Garden Lane, Chennai-600006, Ph: 044-42137401/31523781/7338978027.

E-mail ID: womenswelfarefund@gmail.com.
Website: www.womenswelfarefund.org.

Mohamed Arshath

Opposition seeks change in panel to select Election Commissioners

They say that it should include the Chief Justice of India and the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha; MPs also seek an end to direct cash benefits ahead of elections; poll body has no legal right to conduct the SIR, says Manish Tewari

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Launching a multi-pronged attack over electoral reforms in the Lok Sabha, Opposition parties on Tuesday said the Election Commission (EC) had no legal right to conduct the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The Opposition sought a change in the selection panel for the appointment of Election Commissioners to include the Chief Justice of India and the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha.

At present, the selection committee comprises the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and a Union Cabinet Minister named by the Prime Minister.

MPs of Opposition parties, including the Congress, Samajwadi Party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, and Trinamool Congress, also sought an end to direct cash benefits ahead of elections.



Samajwadi Party MP Akhilesh Yadav speaking during a debate on electoral reforms in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. PTI

Congress MP Manish Tewari initiated the discussion from the Opposition's ranks. India had adopted universal franchise at a time when very few nations had it, Mr. Tewari said. The EC, he said, had been given powers under Article 324 with the hope that it would play a neutral empire. "There are many people who are feeling the need to discuss the neutrality of the EC [now]," he said.

According to the new 2023 law for the appoint-

ment of Election Commissioners, the panel to select the Chief Election Commissioner and the two Election Commissioners should comprise the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and a Cabinet Minister.

In order to remove doubts with reference to the EC, "It is my suggestion that two members should be added to this panel - the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, and the Chief Justice of India," the Congress MP said.

The EC has no legal right to conduct the SIR now taking place across the country as there is no provision for it either in the Constitution or in law, Mr. Tewari added.

The SIR, according to law, could only be conducted in specific constituencies after recording specific problems in writing, and thus the government must table in the House the issues with the current electoral rolls, the complaints the EC had received with regard to them, and what inquiry had been initiated, Mr. Tewari said. He also sought machine readable rolls for all political parties, and an end to direct cash benefits before elections.

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav said he agreed to most demands made by Mr. Tewari, and alleged electoral malpractices in the bypolls to the Rampur Lok Sabha and Milkpur Assembly constituencies of Uttar Pradesh.

"We gave the EC each and every incident report.

But despite this, EC did not take any action. Then we understood that the EC is biased," Mr. Tewari said.

Calling for a return to ballot paper voting, he argued that if developed countries, including the United States and Germany, had not accepted electronic voting machines, why should India.

The EC's role should be impartial, but people had lost confidence in the panel, DMK MP Dayanidhi Maran said, adding that even politicians had started doubting the election body, which was changing the rules to suit only one political party.

Kalyan Banerjee of the Trinamool Congress mentioned the alleged suicides by booth-level officers.

"If foreigners have come and the Border Security Force could not detect it, then it is the fault of the Home Minister and Prime Minister," Mr. Banerjee said on the EC's contention that the SIR was being conducted to weed out illegal immigrants in the list.

Rahul says BJP committing vote theft in collusion with EC to destroy idea of India

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress MP and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday accused the BJP of indulging in the "biggest" act against the nation by committing vote *chori* [theft] in collusion with the Election Commission (EC) to destroy the idea of India.

Mr. Gandhi, participating in a discussion on election reforms in the Lower House, said that the Narendra Modi government had changed the law to give complete immunity to the Election Commissioners for their decision, but added, "We are going to change the law and going to find you."

Describing Indian democracy as the world's greatest democracy, the Opposition leader asked three questions, which he said made it clear that the BJP was "directing and using" the EC to damage it.

As part of his suggestions, Mr. Gandhi called for providing machine readable voter list to all parties one month before elec-



Rahul Gandhi

tions, taking back the law that allowed destruction of CCTV footage after 45 days of poll, giving access to electronic voting machines (EVMs), and quash the law that allowed the Election Commissioners "to get away with whatever they want to do".

'Act against country'

Calling the alleged vote *chori* an act against the country, Mr. Gandhi said, "It is because when you destroy the vote, you destroy the fabric of this country, you destroy modern India, you destroy the idea of India. Those across the aisle are doing ...".

The senior Congress leader also asked why the Chief Justice of India (CJI) was removed from the selection panel for the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the Election Commissioners (ECs).

"I sit in that room. It is a so-called democratic decision. On one side, there is Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. On the other side, the Leader of the Opposition. I have no voice in that room. What they decide is what happens," Mr. Gandhi said, adding, "So, why are the Prime Minister and the Home Minister so keen on choosing exactly who the election commissioner is going to be".

Talking about the law that shields the ECs from being prosecuted for their decisions in office, Mr. Gandhi said "no Prime Minister has done this in the history of India".

"In December 2023, this government changed the law to make sure that no election commissioner could be punished for any action they take," he said.

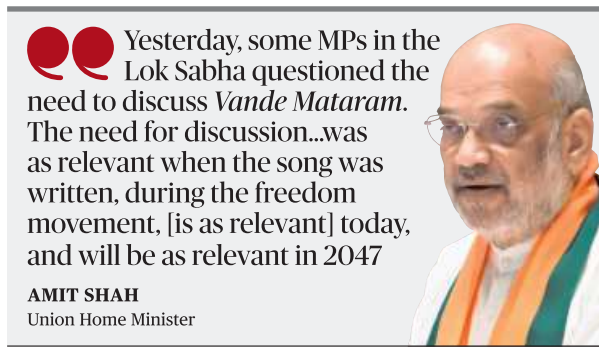
In RS, Shah accuses Congress and Nehru of 'dividing' National Song

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, opening the discussion on the 150th anniversary of National Song *Vande Mataram* in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, said the "division" of the song, and the Congress's "politics of appeasement" had led to Partition.

Countering the Opposition's allegation that the discussion was being organised in view of the coming West Bengal Assembly election, he said such remarks were aimed at diminishing the importance of the song.

'Nine instances'
Several Congress leaders had insulted *Vande Mataram*, and ended its recital in Parliament, Mr. Shah al-



leged. Mr. Shah should authenticate his claim, Congress general secretary and Chief Whip in the Rajya Sabha Jairam Ramesh said. Mr. Shah later sent in a letter to the Rajya Sabha Chairman, citing nine instances from 2018 till 2025 during which Congress leaders allegedly insulted the song.

Vande Mataram was the mantra that awakened In-

dia's cultural nationalism and energised the freedom struggle. "Yesterday, some MPs in the Lok Sabha questioned the need to discuss *Vande Mataram*. The need for discussion...was as relevant when the song was written, during the freedom movement, [is as relevant] today, and will be as relevant in 2047

The Minister did not name Congress general secretary and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who had posed this question during the discussion on the song in the Lok Sabha on Monday. The government was more interested in discussing the past than present issues affecting citizens, Ms. Gandhi had said.

He also accused the Congress and the late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of "dividing" the song.

"On the 50th anniversary of *Vande Mataram*, in 1937, Jawaharlal Nehru divided it into two, and limited it to two stanzas. This was the way the Congress honoured the *Vande Mataram*," Mr. Shah said, leading to protests from Opposition MPs.

SIR of poll rolls is not new, several have taken place since 1952: Law Minister

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Countering Opposition charges with regard to the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal on Tuesday asserted that it is the Constitutional responsibility of the Election Commission to clean up the list of voters, pointing out that the exercise has been held multiple times since 1952.

Responding to the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi's charge about the government changing the law regarding the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and fellow election commissioners (ECs), Mr. Meghwal said the government had created a framework following a March 2023 Supreme Court ruling.

Intervening in the debate on election reforms in the Lok Sabha, Mr. Meghwal accused the Congress of engaging in vote *chori* (theft) since the first Lok Sabha election, accusing the party of rigging the election through the invali-

Revision is necessary to address changes in the electoral rolls due to migration and urbanisation, he says

Also intervening in the debate, Union Minister and Janata Dal (United) MP Rajeev Ranjan Singh said that the Opposition parties questioned EVMs only when they were defeated in elections. "You won in Bengal, Himachal, and Karnataka; then the EVMs were correct. But in Maharashtra, Haryana or Bihar, the machines suddenly became faulty? People do not accept this double standard," he said. "The Opposition parties should take some free tips from Prime Minister Narendra Modi on how to succeed in elections," he quipped.

BJP MP Nishikant Dubey added that EVMs were first introduced in the country by the late Congress PM Rajiv Gandhi, as a pilot project in 1987.

He reminded members that the Supreme Court had upheld the SIR exercise in Bihar and confirmed that the Election Commission had the legal authority to undertake the clean-up of the voters' list.

SIRs had been conducted multiple times between 1952 and 2002, but no such exercise took place in the last two decades, Mr. Meghwal said. A revision was necessary to address changes on the electoral rolls due to migration and urbanisation, which often led to electors being registered in multiple places, he added.

2,167 Maoists surrendered this year, says Centre

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday that in 2025, security forces have facilitated the surrender of 2,167 Maoist cadre. The number of such surrenders since 2019 stood at 5,571.

The Minister said left-wing extremism related violent incidents had come down from a high of 1,936 in the year 2010 to 218 in 2025.

"Resultant deaths of civilians and security forces have also come down from the high of 1,005 in the year 2010 by 91% to 93 in the year 2025. From 2019, 1,106 Naxal cadres had been killed and 7,311 arrested and 5,571 surrendered. This shows that their capacity to engage with our security forces is completely eroded. Therefore, they have no option left except to surrender with weapons," he said.

In a written reply, he said the resolute implementation of the National Policy and Action Plan, 2015 had resulted in consistent decline in violence and constriction of geographical spread.

Debate on Vande Mataram attempt to divert attention from economic issues: Kharage

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Opposition on Tuesday demanded that the Union government take up for discussion in Parliament economic and livelihood issues rather than dwelling on topics to "divert" the attention of people from real issues.

"When there are economic challenges in front of the country, then to have a political discussion on National Song *Vande Mataram* is just an attempt to divert attention," said the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharage, during a debate on 150 years of the National Song.

Mr. Kharage said Parliament could pay true homage to Bharat Mata by discussing and resolving the issues of common people. He alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was holding a discussion on *Vande Mataram*, keeping



the West Bengal election in mind. Mr. Kharage said the discussion on *Vande Mataram* was to divert the people's attention from the real challenges such as economic issues, rising unemployment and depreciation in the value of the rupee and several social issues.

He said the country's influence on neighbouring countries was decreasing and China's influence was increasing. "Nepal is demanding investment from China. Bangladesh, with

China and Pakistan, is participating in trilateral meetings. Beijing is openly pulling South Asia towards itself under its strategic plan," he said.

He said it had become a habit of the BJP to abuse the Congress and to target Jawaharlal Nehru and spoil his image, "which is impossible as he is the tallest leader of this country".

DMK MP Tiruchi Siva said the government should also acknowledge contributions of freedom fighters from South India. He urged the Centre to dedicate the next warship to the memory of freedom fighter Chempakaraman Pillai.

AAP leader Sanjay Singh said the BJP was not giving respect to the motherland as it was trying to hide its failures in the garb of nationalism. "The government is just trying to hide its failures and crimes behind the sloganeering," he said.

No deaths due to air pollution, says Centre

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry informed the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday that there was no conclusive data available to establish a direct correlation of death or disease exclusively due to air pollution.

Minister of State for Health Prataprao Jadhav said in a written reply that air pollution was one of the triggering factors for respiratory ailments and associated diseases.

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Sd/- Chief General Manager/Projects, APCPDCL

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E-Tender is invited for procurement of Potential Transformer of various voltage class. Bid documents can be downloaded from 10.12.2025, 12:00 Noon and bids shall be submitted online up to 04:00 P.M., 07.01.2026.

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Tender Notice No.11.8/APMSIDC/2025-26 Dated: 08.12.2025

APMSIDC invites tenders through e-procurement platform <https://tender.approcurement.gov.in> for Dr. NTR Vaidya Seva Universal Health Coverage Scheme (AB PMJAY - Dr. NTR VS) Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana - Dr. NTR Vaidya Seva Scheme Families. For detailed notification and further details, please visit the website <https://apmsidc.ap.nic.in> & www.tender.approcurement.gov.in.

APMSIDC will reserve the right to cancel the tenders at any time without assigning any reasons.

Sd/- Managing Director

IN BRIEF



BJP condemns Opposition's move against HC judge

The BJP on Tuesday condemned Opposition MPs for submitting a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla for moving an impeachment motion in Parliament against Justice G.R. Swaminathan of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court. In a statement, BJP Tamil Nadu president Nainar Nagenthiran said, "Moving an impeachment motion against Justice Swaminathan, whose judgment upheld the cultural rights of Tamils, was utterly shameful. The move by the INDIA bloc was aimed at intimidating the judiciary." BJP chief spokesperson Narayanan Thirupathy said the DMK and its allies had "resorted to intimidation and threats".

CPIJ urges PM to address the matter of jailed journalists

Ahead of International Human Rights Day on December 10, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking to draw his attention to the matter of journalists imprisoned in India. The CPJ said the "continued detention and harassment of journalists risks eroding India's reputation as the world's largest democracy". "To mark International Human Rights Day, we ask that your government take steps to allow all journalists imprisoned in India to return to their families and continue their work without fear of reprisal," it said. The organisation urged the government to uphold its international and domestic human rights obligations.

Ensure free content access for LLMs, says working paper

It says data crawlers for training artificial intelligence models should not be restricted; instead a copyright society should be set up to collect royalties for members and non-members of body

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

A government working paper released on Monday suggested that AI large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT should, by default, have access to content freely available online, and that publishers should not have an opt-out mechanism for such content.

Instead, a copyright society-like non-profit should be set up to collect royalties for both members and non-members of that body.

The working paper, authored by a committee formed by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), is not final, and is accepting public comments for 30 days. The document is one of the main indicators of how the Indian government is thinking of balancing copyright holders' fears that AI systems will regurgitate content they invested in without remuneration, and the interests of LLM developers who have routinely consumed massive amounts of data online to train their models.

Nasscom, which was represented in the DPIIT's

LLMs and copyright

A committee formed by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is accepting public comments on a working paper for 30 days

- The core proposal suggests that LLMs should be allowed to freely access all publicly available online content
- A royalty system has been recommended instead of restrictions
- However, publishers are already concerned about AI regurgitating content. Some are already suing AI firms (e.g., DNPA vs OpenAI)
- There may be pushback from AI firms over the cost burden, while publishers may resist flat royalty distribution

committee, dissented, arguing that forced royalties would amount to a "tax on innovation", and said that "mining" or scraping the Web for data must be allowed for freely available content without paywalls, and that both "crawlable" and access-restricted content providers should have options to "reserve" their content from being mined for LLM development.

Opt-out not feasible

The committee rejected Nasscom's dissent, arguing that small content creators may not have the means to actually enforce such opt-outs.

The Digital News Publishers Association, which represents traditional news media outlets with

a digital presence, including *The Hindu*, has sued ChatGPT maker OpenAI in the Delhi High Court for copyright infringement. OpenAI denies the allegations. The working paper argues that it may not be prudent to wait the outcome of this and other similar litigation.

The recommendations, if put in place through a law, will eliminate any allegations of improper access to data, by blessing all access, provided a fee is paid. This model is similar to the "compulsory licensing" framework in place for radio stations in India, which are empowered to play music without negotiating rights for them, as long as a statutorily prescribed fee is paid to the rights holders.

This balancing may face pushback from AI developers and content creators; the former may argue against anything that increases development costs as few AI firms are even profitable at the moment, leaving little appetite to share revenues. Content creators may resist a flat fee if they feel their inputs are more valuable in training a model than those of other royalty recipients.

A payout to the copyright society set up for distributing AI riches to content creators, will be distributed by considering factors such as Web traffic and social indicators, like how respectable a publisher is. Any decision can be taken to the court, the working group says.

SC asks Centre to give nationwide data on missing children

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

It directs Home Ministry to appoint officer to coordinate with States and Union Territories

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the Union government to furnish six years of nationwide data on missing children and to appoint a dedicated officer in the Union Home Ministry to ensure effective coordination with the States and Union Territories in compiling such information.

A Bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and R. Mahadevan was hearing a public interest litigation petition filed by the non-profit organisation Guria Swyam Sevi Sansthan, which highlighted the rising number of children who remain untraced across several States. The court had earlier directed all States and Union Territories to depute dedicated officers to oversee cases of missing children and to ensure that such details are promptly uploaded on the Mission Vatsalya portal administered by the Women and Child Development Ministry.

Appearing for the Centre, Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati informed the Bench that all States and Union Territories had appointed such officers and uploaded

their particulars on the portal. She noted, however, that the effective dissemination of information and coordinated use of the platform remained essential to securing meaningful outcomes.

The Bench observed that the Home Ministry itself had not nominated a dedicated officer to oversee cases of missing children, despite being the central coordinating agency. It accordingly directed the Ministry to appoint such an officer within two weeks and to upload the officer's details on the Mission Vatsalya portal.

"We find that the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Union of India has not appointed a dedicated nodal officer for cases of missing children for the purpose of Mission Vatsalya, and hence an officer may be nominated as a dedicated nodal officer, whose details may also be uploaded on the Mission Vatsalya portal," the court ordered.

It will hear the matter next on February 10.

Mamata rejects conditions given by Centre to resume MGNREGS in West Bengal

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA



Mamata Banerjee

In a dramatic rejection of the Union government's conditions to resume the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in West Bengal after a three-year gap, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday publicly tore up the Centre's note on the issue.

"This is an order from the Centre. I am tearing it up. I think it is an insult, disrespectful," the Chief Minister said at a public meeting in Cooch Behar district.

"Day before yesterday, we received a letter stating that starting December 6, we must submit a quarterly labour budget. They have

imposed a restrictive condition. But where is the time to show it? This is December, and the election is due early next year. Then they said training has to be provided," Ms. Banerjee said.

The Centre had suspended the 100-day work scheme in the State in March 2022, alleging corruption in its implementa-

tion. Earlier this year, the Calcutta High Court had directed both the State and Union governments to resume the scheme from August 1.

The Supreme Court dismissed the Centre's appeal on September 27, directing that the scheme be resumed in the State.

Despite appeals by agriculture unions, however, the scheme is yet to be resumed.

At the public meeting on Tuesday, the Chief Minister said that West Bengal does not want to depend on any mercy of the Centre. "I say this piece of paper is valueless. We will come back to power. Under Karmashree, we are providing 70 days of work. We will increase it to 100 days..." Ms. Banerjee said.

'Rise in global use of Aadhaar-like ID systems dangerous'

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

Fifty-four civil society groups and over 200 individual signatories have put out an open letter pushing back against the expanding use of Aadhaar-like digital identity systems in countries other than India.

The two-page letter was signed by organisations such as Internet Freedom Foundation; the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan; JNU Students Union; Safai Karmachari Andolan; and People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCIL). It was also endorsed by individuals such as former Amnesty International India chair Aakar Patel, activist Jean Drèze, and constitutional law scholar Gautam Bhatia.

The Centre has promot-

54 civil society groups and over 200 individuals criticise move in open letter

ed digital identity systems such as Aadhaar around the world as a key plank of digital public infrastructure, a concept that India is promoting with both policy support and open source tools, such as those provided by the Modular Open Source Identity Platform (MOSIP). MOSIP, which was largely developed by the IIIT Bengaluru, does not use the same technology as Aadhaar.

Some countries engaged with MOSIP at various degrees include Morocco, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, and Uganda.

House panel tells govt. not to approve Eklavya schools until land is made available

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

With more than one-third of the sanctioned Eklavya schools for tribal children not yet functional, primarily because of land unavailability, a House panel on Tuesday told the Ministry of Tribal Affairs not to sanction new schools until land has been made available.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment on Tuesday tabled a report on the action taken by the government on its recommendations made earlier this year.

In this report, the panel noted that the unavailability of land for construction is a reason the Tribal Affairs Ministry is unable to

spend a portion of its allocation for Eklavya schools.

It further noted that out of 722 sanctioned EMRS locations, only 477 had been made functional, out of which 341 were being run from their own buildings. In replies to the House panel, headed by BJP MP P.C. Mohan, the government cited the unavailability of land as a reason for over 130 schools being run from rented or other government buildings.

In a report tabled on Tuesday, the House panel said, "The Committee are therefore of the strong view that in future the proposal of setting up of EMRS from State Governments should be considered by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs only when they ensure beforehand, the avail-

ability of land required for the purpose."

The House panel also looked at the proposed upgrade of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) that were constructed under the older version of the scheme. The panel recommended that the Tribal Affairs Ministry come up with a timeline for the completion of this work.

The Parliamentary Committee, in its report, also took issue with the government's slow progress in setting up Tribal Freedom Fighters' Museums across the country.

The panel had earlier noted that the government had inaugurated just three out of the 10 proposed museums to honour the contributions of Adivasi freedom fighters.

THE CROSSWORD+ 14661 (set by Vidwan)

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at <https://crossword.thehindu.com>

SCAN TO PLAY

Across

1 Retired Arsenal striker heading out to church for nothing! (5)

4 Oye Brutus! Cunning like some influencers on social media! (9)

9 Brothel keeper covering California road in olden days (7)

10 Edible bun, possibly unbeatable! (7)

11 Did we rant about an easterly gale? (5,4)

12 Swamp's cold, not hot after beginning of May (5)

Down

1 Zee TV's some broadcast about local councils in Russia (8)

2 Left work at England to produce milk (7)

3 Protection carried by distinguished gentlemen (5)

4 Male King, one very softly interrupting your time of atonement (3,6)

5 Super, limitless and extremely nuanced reverse (5)

6 Epitomes of many without male companions (9)

7 Restriction on movement! So acquires a post-graduate degree! (7)

8 Observe itchy men regularly expressing rage (6)

14 Ale finished as foretold (9)

15 Miss having comfort and bit of buying/selling property and renting same thereafter! (9)

16 Abnormal loss of strength like in the afflicted adult (8)

17 Limited, lacking in hormone and not extremely rare (7)

19 Routine moves within the womb (2,5)

20 Who may blast pile of straw? (6)

22 Country house had a chapel inside (5)

23 Native American promise for English male, say (5)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Likes, dislikes and ignorance

We need to give up our desire for those things that are impermanent. Not only wealth, but our families too come under this category. Parents, siblings, spouse, children – these are connections we have in one birth. When life ends, who knows where the departed soul will be? It might take birth anywhere. If a relative acquires atma jnana in this janma, then that atma will attain liberation. In any case, our bonds with our families are not permanent. But the jnana that we get through the grace of God lasts forever, said So. So. Meenakshisundaram in a discourse.

Why then do we think in terms of me and mine? While it is true that even wealth can only come with God's blessings, we must not ask Him for riches. Arunagirinatha in his Kandar Anubhuti says he has had the good fortune of receiving jnana from Muruga Himself, who is the son of Goddess Parvati, the daughter of Himavan. The moment Muruga blessed him with jnana, Arunagirinatha was able to perceive a transformation in himself. He was no longer bound by attachments of any kind. Tiruvalluvar talks of three blemishes – *kaamam*, *veguli* and *mayakkam* (likes, dislikes and ignorance). He says that if you are without these blemishes, you will not experience sorrow. Thirumoolar too talks of these three undesirable traits in his Thirumantiram. He says that when he had rid himself of *kaamam*, *veguli* and *mayakkam*, and was searching for the Truth, he heard the pranava, like the sound of a bell. When he analysed the pranava, he found the Supreme Truth in it. In Kandar Anubhuti, Arunagirinatha says Muruga vanquished the three bad qualities and imparted jnana to him.

IN BRIEF



China to limit access to Nvidia's H200 chips

Beijing is set to limit access to Nvidia's advanced H200 chips despite U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to allow export of technology to China, the *Financial Times* reported. Regulators in Beijing have been discussing ways to permit limited access to H200, Nvidia's second-best generation of AI chips, as per the report. Such a move would add hurdle to Nvidia and other top U.S. chipmakers' ability to address China market, after Mr. Trump's announcement appeared to settle a debate over whether these firms should keep their global lead by selling AI chips to China or withhold shipments. **REUTERS**

Indian-origin Arkin Gupta features in Forbes Under-30

Indian-origin Arkin Gupta has made it to the Forbes list of achievers under the age of 30 for his significant contributions to financial innovation and early-stage investment strategies. Forbes highlighted Mr. Gupta's pioneering work in developing data-driven investment frameworks and his leadership in creating scalable financial products as key factors behind his selection in the annual list. "This recognition reinforces the importance of democratising access to smarter financial tools," he said in a statement. Mr. Gupta is associated with several high-impact fintech initiatives. **PTI**

AvironiX unveils compact, backpack-size spraying drone

AvironiX Drones, a Chennai-based deep-tech drone company focused on precision farming and defence technologies on Monday announced the launch of its latest agricultural innovation, the AviSpray-10c, a compact, backpack-sized spraying drone 53% smaller than the current generation. According to the company, the drone is designed to significantly reduce the cost, operational complexity, and manpower requirements of drone-based crop spraying in India. The product was unveiled in the presence of M. Anand, CGM, NABARD Tamil Nadu.

India well positioned to build sovereign AI: AMD's Zacharia

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

India is rightly positioned to build its own sovereign AI, stated Thomas Zacharia, senior vice-president, Strategic Technology Partnerships and Public Policy at AMD (Advanced Micro Devices), a Santa Clara-based tech firm that designs and develops high-performance computing and graphics processors. "Sovereign AI is really about, determining, the future trajectory of how a country wants to be run. And to me, I think India is well positioned to do that. India has data as a major asset. And it has the computing infrastructure that comes as the building blocks in place," Mr. Zacharia told *The Hindu* in response to a query on his views on India's readiness for sovereign AI. He was speaking on the sidelines of the opening session of Supercomputing India 2025, a five-day conference on quantum computing, high performance computing and AI.

PPP model
On the importance of building public-private partnership to build digital public infrastructure and also super computing, he said, "So, you want to create an ecosystem where everybody is contributing and therefore you progress at a pace that is faster than what anyone individual or



Thomas Zacharia

a company." India has done remarkably well in terms of building the digital public infrastructure, Mr. Zacharia commented adding, "India has defied expectations in terms of what's been accomplished."

Public good
According to him, the government can basically provide policy for public good, the government can provide demand signals, through both infrastructure programmes and also through funding mechanisms and both these are happening in India. "I think India has the potential to continue to advance and become a major leader in HPC, AI and quantum computing. And everything that I heard today at the Supercomputing Conference confirms my belief that India will be a major player in HPC," Mr. Zacharia further said, commenting on India's thrust on building super computing capabilities.

Most retail investor money went to fund promoters in 2025

Growth in demat accounts and IPO issues coincide with each other in India, signalling a development of Indian retail investor, shows analysis

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

The coinciding increase in demat accounts and companies listing in the stock market may be good for promoters but not so much for retail investors, according to an analysis.

The growth in demat accounts and the growth of IPO issues coincide with each other in India and this signals a development in the Indian retail investor, according to the How India Invest Report 2025 by Groww and Bain and Company. "Dematerialised accounts grew nearly five times over the last five years, because of a post-pandemic boom in IPOs," according to the report.

Likely to rise
This is only expected to increase and can even give an impetus to 1,000 companies listing in the next



On a high: Men walk past a screen displaying market results outside Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) in Mumbai. **REUTERS**

two fiscal years, the authors wrote. On an average over subscription from the retail investor was 30 times in fiscal 2024, as against 7 times in fiscal 2023 and just 4 times in fiscal 2022.

While the data establishes a retail investor enthusiasm, data on IPO structure suggest that most of the money went to promoters of the companies that listed in the market.

About 63% of the issue size between January and

November 2025 (₹1.5 lakh crore) was offer for sale, based on calculations using data from Prime Database. This share was 60% in calendar year 2024.

Industry experts feel first breadth and depth of market need to rise. "It (rise in use of proceeds from capex) will come once you get more people coming to the market," said Sid Swaminathan, MD and CEO of JioBlackrock Asset Management Company.

In India, Microsoft to invest \$17.5 billion in 4 years: CEO Nadella

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

Microsoft, a Redmond-based tech giant, has committed a whopping \$17.5 billion, the largest investment ever in Asia, to help build the infrastructure, skills and sovereign capabilities needed for India's AI-first future.

This was announced by company CEO Satya Nadella on X, just after meeting Prime Minister, Narendra Modi in New Delhi.

Mr. Nadella posted: "Thank you, PM @narendramodi ji, for an inspiring conversation on India's AI opportunity. To support the country's ambitions, Microsoft is committing \$17.5B, our largest investment ever in Asia, to help build the infrastructure, skills, and sovereign capabilities needed for India's AI-first future."

Commenting on the meeting, the PM said he had a "productive discussion" with Mr. Nadella and "India's youth would harness the opportunity to innovate and leverage the power of AI for a better planet."



Satya Nadella

India stood at a pivotal moment in its AI journey, one defined by impact at scale, determined to lead, Microsoft said in its own news post online.

"As technology becomes a catalyst for inclusive growth and economic transformation, the country (India) is emerging as a frontier AI nation.

"Against this backdrop of bold ambition and accelerating innovation, today we are announcing our largest investment in Asia – \$17.5 billion over four years (CY2026 to CY2029) – to advance the country's cloud and artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure, skilling and ongoing operations," the post said.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	84,666	-0.51
US Dollar	89.87	0.20
Gold	1,31,600	-0.75
Brent oil	61.95	-1.46

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2245.20	29.00
Adani Ports	1497.20	16.70
Apollo Hosp.	7091.00	-5.00
Asian Paints	2796.00	-132.30
Axis Bank	1275.90	2.10
Bajaj Auto	8961.00	-65.00
Bajaj Finserv	2065.50	10.30
Bajaj Finance	1016.70	-9.70
Bharat Elec.	389.45	3.05
Bharti Airtel	2089.70	-3.50
Cipla	1490.60	-7.00
Coal India	379.35	-2.00
Dr Reddys Lab	1246.20	-20.30
Hindustan Unilever	40.20	0.00
Eicher Motors	7123.00	-19.00
Eternal Ltd.	291.70	6.45
Grasim Ind	2746.00	-1.80
HCL Tech	1657.60	-31.00
HDFC Bank	997.10	-6.00
HDFC Life	762.90	-1.15
Hindalco	812.90	-4.55
Hind Unilever	2306.50	-7.50
ICICI Bank	1375.20	-14.40
IntGlobeAvi	4967.50	44.00
Infosys	1599.00	-11.80
ITC	401.05	-1.25
Jio Financial Services Ltd.	293.20	-4.00
KJSW Steel	1107.80	-11.30
Kotak Bank	2127.70	-3.90
L&T	3997.50	0.80
M&M	3635.90	-45.80
Maruti Suzuki	16020.00	-167.00
Max Healthcare	1074.70	-4.70
NestleIndia	1215.80	1.00
NTPC	319.85	0.35
ONGC	239.84	1.32
PowerGrid Corp	264.55	-0.65
Reliance Ind	1529.40	-13.60
SBI Life	2006.20	-14.50
State Bank	959.35	-2.95
Shriram Finance Ltd.	846.70	12.45
Sun Pharma	1776.00	-20.20
TataConsumerProduct	1146.70	-0.90
Tata Steel	160.67	-2.80
TCS	3208.30	-28.20
Tech Mahindra	1561.60	-30.20
Titan	3849.00	82.00
Tata Motors PV	344.70	-3.60
Trent Ltd.	4085.40	-5.10
UltraTech Cement	1141.40	-126.00
Wipro	257.41	-3.97

'Indian firms report 2nd strongest hiring outlook for Jan.-Mar.'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Employers in India project the second strongest employment outlook globally during the January-March period next year, with the Net Employment Outlook

(NEO) at 52%, a report by ManpowerGroup said.

As per the ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook survey, NEO for first quarter of 2026 stood at 52%, a rise of 27% over previous quarter and up 30% from the year-ago period.

Better DPR planning can help save upto ₹17 lakh crore: Vector

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Up to ₹17 lakh crore across the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) can be saved by India through strengthening pre-construction planning – especially the Detailed Project Report (DPR) stage – a white paper released by Vector Con-

sulting Group emphasised. The study cautions that India's infrastructure ecosystem is stuck in a pattern where all stakeholders – government agencies, DPR consultants and contractors – operate with good intent, yet systemic design flaws make delays and cost overruns nearly inevitable. The white paper, based

on insights from CXOs of 16 major infrastructure companies (each with revenue of more than ₹1,000 crore) and 30 leading DPR consulting companies, finds most mid-execution disruptions stem from incomplete surveys, outdated baseline data, and insufficient design validation during the DPR stage.

Ashok Leyland rolls out compact engine line

Press Trust of India
CHENNAI

Hinduja Group flagship Ashok Leyland unveiled next-generation compact engines series at EXCON 2025 with higher performance and enhanced efficiency, said a top official.

'India must define its own development trajectory'

Amit Bhelari

India must define its own development trajectory in a world marked increasingly by fractured alliances and strategic self-preservation, Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani said on Tuesday while speaking at the Indian Institute of Technology (Indian School of Mines) Dhanbad.

The institution was celebrating 100th Foundation Day during which Mr. Adani delivered the keynote address.

Mr. Adani said that India must define its own development trajectory in a world marked increasingly by fractured alliances and strategic self-preservation.

He asserted that in the 21st century, true sovereignty would depend on a nation's command over its natural resources and energy systems. Reflecting on the institute's origins, he said IIT (ISM) was born from a farsighted national aspiration – an early civilisational understanding that a country cannot rise without mastering the strength beneath its soil. "Master the resources below our feet, and master the energy that fuels our rise – these are the twin pillars of India's economic independence," he said.

Warning against "narrative colonisation," Mr. Adani said countries historically responsible for emissions now attempt to steer how developing nations pursue growth.

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS : TIRUPATI
HEALTH OFFICE, TTD, TIRUMALA e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
Health Office, TTD, Tirumala is inviting online bids from the suppliers / manufacturing firms for supply of Insecticides Items consisting 7 items. For further details see online e-tender document through below mentioned portal for the year 2025-26. Date of upload of tender document **11/12/2025** and last date for submission of tender document **18/12/2025**. For tender document log on to the website <http://www.tirumala.org> and <http://tender.approcurement.gov.in>. For further details contact Phone Nos: 0877-2263686 & 9866132451 and mail ID.ttdhealthoffice@gmail.com during office working hours.
TTD-40021/10/2025-PRO SEC(Adv.No.315) Dated: 09.12.2025 EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Government of Karnataka
KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT
MS Building, Dr. B R Ambedkar Veedhi Bengaluru-560001
No: RD/383/RMF/2025 Dated: 08.12.2025

Notification regarding engagement of Technical Staffs/Modelers for the KWSRP- KSNDMC
Subject: Advertisement for details in engaging various Technical Consultants/Staffs/Modelers for the proposed Team Urban Flood Modelling for Water Management & Planning for Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC) under Karnataka Water Security and Resilience Program (KWSRP) established in Revenue Department (DM) for implementation of World Bank funded Project. Timeline of Project Contract 2 Years.
The World Bank-funded Karnataka Water Security and Resilience Program (KWSRP) is being implemented across the State. The overarching objective of the Program is to enhance disaster resilience through a combination of structural and non-structural measures. The initiative seeks to develop climate-resilient infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of floods and droughts, while also strengthening disaster risk governance and resilience mechanisms.
The Revenue Department (Disaster Management) Government of Karnataka, invites applications from qualified and experienced professionals for the following positions:
i. Chief Urban Town Planner/ Environmental Planner (1 position)
ii. Chief Urban Designer (1 position)
iii. Chief Hydrological Modeller (1 position)
iv. Lead Hydrological Modeller (4 positions)
v. Hydrological Modeller / Data Analyst (7 positions)
The detailed terms of reference, eligibility criteria, and other conditions for engagement of the above positions are available in the Terms of Reference (ToR) and may be seen on the KSNDMC, website: <https://www.ksndmc.org/default.aspx>.
Note: a) Applications, along with the relevant supporting documents, should be submitted by email to jsrdssp@gmail.com, latest by **22.12.2025**.
b) Incomplete applications will not be considered. The Revenue Department (Disaster Management) reserves the right to reject any application without assigning a reason.
c) The qualified candidates will be shortlisted and called for interview for final selection. For any queries, contact - The Joint Secretary, Revenue Department (KAT, SSP and PP).
Ph: 080-22032010.
Sd/- (G. Venkatesh)
Joint Secretary to Government,
Revenue Department (KAT, SSP & PP)
DPR/CP/4307/SSC/2025-26

INDIANOIL LNG PRIVATE LIMITED
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REGD OFFICE: Level 8, Indian Oil Bhavan, 139, Nungambakkam High Road, Nungambakkam, Chennai - 600 034, TN. Web: <https://indianoillng.com>
EOI No: IOLPL/2025-26/PT-02/Polymer Compounding Date: 10.12.2025
IOLPL invites bids from interested parties for partnering to set up POLYMER COMPOUNDING Unit in India through a Joint Venture Model. Bid documents can be downloaded from our website from 10-12-2025 10 a.m onwards and Last date for submission of bid is 30-12-2025 5 p.m (both days inclusive). Any Addendum / Corrigendum shall be issued on our website only and no separate notification shall be issued in the press. Bidders are therefore requested to regularly visit our website to keep themselves updated. For clarifications, please mail to ennorelmg@indianoillng.in

RAIL WHEEL FACTORY
Yelahanka, Bengaluru-560054
Telephone: 080-2807261/63
E-Auction Notice No. RWF/GSD/WO-30/2025-2026/04 Dated: 08.12.2025
On behalf of the President of India, Principal Chief Material Manager invites E-Auction for the sale of scrap items (Ferrous/Non-Ferrous/Miscellaneous and Others), online through the website www.irps.gov.in.
E-Auction dates : 08/01/2026, 20/01/2026, 30/01/2026, 10/02/2026, 24/02/2026, 06/03/2026, 17/03/2026 and 25/03/2026.
The quantity indicated in the e-auction catalogue is only approximate. E-auction catalogue can be viewed on our website www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in or www.irps.gov.in, before 7 days (Seven days) from the date of E-auction.
Dy. CMM / Depot

THE HINDU
REWIND 2025 TRIVIA QUIZ
DAY 05
1. Which retired soccer star and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador visited a girls' residential school in Visakhapatnam in November 2025 to observe Project-Based Learning (PBL)?
2. Which band brought its 'Music of the Spheres' world tour to Mumbai's DY Patil Stadium in January 2025, drawing huge crowds despite reports of chaotic management?
3. Between September 21-27, 2025, which messaging app saw its downloads surge 185x in India following a government 'Swadeshi tech' push?
Answer to yesterday's quiz:
1. South Africa
2. Indonesia
3. Coffee Board of India
Yesterday's Winners:
1. Juhiwanki Pala, Shillong | 2. Namit Khurana, New Delhi | 3. Sadik Bilakhia, Mumbai
Scan QR code or visit bit.ly/Rewind2024TriviaQuiz take the quiz. Top 3 winners* every day win gift vouchers.
*S.C. apply.

ISLAMABAD

IMF okays \$1.2 bn for Pakistan from bailout, citing economic progress



REUTERS

The International Monetary Fund on Tuesday approved the release of \$1.2 billion to Pakistan, giving the cash-strapped country a fresh boost as it works to recover from one of its worst economic crises in years. In a statement, the IMF said Pakistan has made "significant progress" in stabilising the economy. AP

NEW YORK

U.S. judge orders the release of Ghislaine Maxwell probe records



GETTY IMAGES VIA AFP

A U.S. federal judge agreed on Tuesday to unseal grand jury records from the probe of Ghislaine Maxwell, accomplice of convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. Judge Paul Engelmayer cited a Bill President Donald Trump signed last month requiring that all records regarding Epstein be released by December 19. AP

JAKARTA

At least 22 people killed in office building fire in Indonesia's capital



AFP

A fire ripped through an office building in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, on Tuesday, killing at least 22 people, including a pregnant woman, police said. The fire, which broke out around midday, is believed to have started on the first floor of the building. The cause of the fire is still under investigation. AP

THE HAGUE

ICC sentences Sudanese militia leader to 20 years imprisonment



AFP

Judges at the International Criminal Court sentenced 76-year-old Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman, a leader of the feared Sudanese Janjaweed militia, to 20 years imprisonment on Tuesday for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the catastrophic conflict in Darfur more than two decades ago. AP

S. Korea sends fighters after Russian planes approach

Agence France-Presse
SEOUL

South Korea said it had sent up fighter jets on Tuesday after seven Russian and two Chinese military aircraft entered its air defence zone.

The Russian and Chinese aircraft entered the Korea Air Defence Identification Zone (KADIZ) around 10 a.m. local time, Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement. None of the planes violated South Korean airspace, they added.

Seoul said it deployed "fighter jets to take tactical measures in preparation for any contingencies" in response. The planes flew in and out of the zone for an hour before leaving, the military said.

Cambodia vows fierce fight as Thailand crisis worsens

Violence has left multiple casualties on both sides; while Cambodia reported seven civilian deaths, Thailand claimed that three of its soldiers were killed; the combat follows a Sunday skirmish

Associated Press
SURIN

Cambodia's powerful Senate President Hun Sen on Tuesday vowed a fierce fight against Thailand as a second day of widespread renewed combat between the Southeast Asian neighbors drove tens of thousands of people to flee border areas.

Fighting broke out following a skirmish on Sunday during which two Thai soldiers were injured, derauling a ceasefire that ended fighting over competing territorial claims in July. The five days of fighting then left dozens dead on



Fleeing for life: Evacuated Thai residents gather at a temporary shelter following clashes along the Thailand-Cambodia border. AFP

both sides, and forced the evacuation of over one lakh civilians.

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said on Tuesday that Cambodia

had not yet contacted Thailand about possible negotiations and the fighting would continue.

"We've got to do what we've got to do," he said.

Zelensky firmly refuses to cede any territory to Russia

Associated Press
ROME

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has reaffirmed his firm refusal to cede any territory, resisting U.S. pressure for a painful compromise with Russia as he continued to rally European support for Ukraine.

"Undoubtedly, Russia insists for us to give up territories. We, clearly, don't want to give up anything. That's what we are fighting for," Mr. Zelensky said in a WhatsApp chat late Monday in which he answered reporters' questions.

"Do we consider ceding any territories? According to the law we don't have such right. According to Ukraine's law, our Constitution, international law, and to be frank, we don't

with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz to strengthen Ukraine's hand amid mounting impatience from Mr. Trump.



Volodymyr Zelensky

have a moral right either."

In an interview with Politico released on Tuesday, U.S. President Donald Trump again pressed Mr. Zelensky to accept the U.S. proposal that Ukraine cede territory to Vladimir Putin, arguing that Russia retains the "upper hand" and that Mr. Zelensky's government must "play ball".

On Monday, Mr. Zelensky held talks in London

with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz to strengthen Ukraine's hand amid mounting impatience from Mr. Trump.

Sticking point

U.S. and Ukrainian negotiators completed three days of talks on Saturday aimed at trying to narrow differences on the United States administration's peace proposal.

A major sticking point in the plan is the suggestion that Kyiv must cede control of the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine to Russia, which illegally occupies most but not all of the territory. Ukraine and its European allies have firmly resisted the idea of handing over land.

Cyclone impact sparks fresh calls in Sri Lanka to recast IMF agreement

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

As Sri Lanka reels from Cyclone Ditwah's devastation, calls to revisit the ongoing International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme, which critics say imposes punishing austerity, are growing louder.

At least 638 people died – 191 remain missing – and millions were affected by torrential rains, unprecedented flooding, and multiple landslides that battered Sri Lanka late November. The climate disaster, one of the worst the country has witnessed, has dealt a sharp blow to the island's tentative recovery, three years after it declared bankruptcy amid a financial meltdown.

Last week, Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa urged the Anura Kumara Dissanayake government to renegotiate the IMF deal in the wake of the climate catastrophe, calling for immediate talks with the Fund to suspend or amend conditions that aggravate the people's hardships.

A UNDP study in 2022-23 found that the crushing economic crisis in 2022 had left over half of the island's population "multidimensionally vulnerable". Although Sri Lanka has since achieved relative fiscal stability, the condition of the country's poor – hit hardest by IMF-prescribed spending cuts – has worsened.

In the wake of the recent natural disaster, over 70 civil society groups and activists across Sri Lanka have called for renegotiation of the IMF deal, debt, and climate justice. "While a majority of people are reeling under austerity measures, including re-



President Anura Kumara Dissanayake meets landslide-affected communities in Sri Lanka on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

gressive tax hikes, subsidy cuts, and inadequate social security measures, the Government of Sri Lanka has become a prisoner of the ongoing Extended Fund Facility programme of the IMF," said their statement, issued on December 8, 2025.

'Urgent revision'

"The IMF controlling government spending not only restricts the ability of the government to respond to the ongoing humanitarian crisis, but severely impedes investment in infrastructure, recuperating livelihoods, and adapting to further climate change impacts," they contended, demanding an "urgent revision" of Sri Lanka's debt restructuring agreement, a "massive" debt reduction, a halt on subsidy removals, and an immediate standstill on current and future debt servicing for the country's recovery.

In 2026, the government must service debt totalling over \$2 billion, while it tries to lift the country out of the deluge, whose full impact is yet to be ascertained. Some development experts have observed that recovery might prove harder than after the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004.

vulnerable countries – has long called for reforming the DSA to properly value resilience investments and natural capital, and for a reformed G20 Common Framework that includes automatic debt standstills in response to climate shocks, said Mr. Nasheed, who is also the Secretary-General of the Forum.

Emergency financing

However, there are no signs yet that the Sri Lankan government may veer away from the IMF programme. In fact, the government has sought a \$200 million Rapid Financing Instrument from the Fund. An IMF spokesman confirmed that Sri Lanka's request for emergency financing will take precedence over the scheduled fifth review of the ongoing Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

Meanwhile, activists have demanded that the government urgently prioritise equitable relief, focusing on economically and socially marginalised communities most affected by the disaster. "The highest [number of] casualties were reported from Badulla, Kandy, Kegalle, Matale, and Nuwara Eliya districts – areas especially prone to landslides and home to already marginalised and vulnerable working-class tea plantation workers," the Feminist Collective for Economic Justice, a network of feminist activists across Sri Lanka, said in a statement. Demanding universal social protection schemes, the Collective called for urgent negotiations with the IMF and other creditors "to cancel debt repayment and reverse austerity policies in this crisis context."

Not just Sri Lanka, but several climate-vulnerable, debt-distressed countries are in a similar plight. The Climate Vulnerable Forum – an international alliance of over 70 highly climate-

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GOING FOR IT

The wicket had a bit of spice and I had to be a bit gutsy, says Hardik



I had to back my shots. The wicket had a bit of spice and I had to be a bit gutsy. It was more about timing the ball. I was very satisfied with the way I was batting. The last 50 days, being away from loved ones, being at NCA, making sure all things were covered... it feels good when you see the results come — Hardik Pandya.

UP, UP AND AWAY!

Hardik is fourth Indian batter to reach the 100 sixes mark in T20Is



Hardik Pandya became the fourth Indian batter to clear the hundred-sixes mark. The milestone came during the first T20I against South Africa in Cuttack, where Hardik produced a match-changing knock. The all-rounder joins Rohit Sharma (205), Suryakumar Yadav (155) and Virat Kohli (124) in the list.

IN ELITE CLUB

Bumrah first Indian to complete a century of wickets in all formats



Jasprit Bumrah joined the elite list of bowlers who have completed 100 wickets in all three formats at the international level. Bumrah achieved the milestone when he dismissed Dewald Brevis in Cuttack. Bumrah (101 wickets in 81 games) is the second Indian after Arshdeep Singh (107 in 69) to scalp 100 in the shortest format.

MIXED FORTUNES

Hazlewood & Wood out of Ashes; Cummins set to return in Adelaide



Injured Australia pacer Josh Hazlewood, *in pic.*, will miss the whole of the Ashes series. Meanwhile, Pat Cummins looks certain to return as captain in next week's third Test in Adelaide. England fast bowler Mark Wood will play no further part in the series and is set to fly back home. He will be replaced by Matthew Fisher.

Hardik returns in style as India crushes South Africa

The all-rounder's unbeaten 28-ball 59 takes the home team to 175; the Proteas lose the plot in the chase and slump to their lowest total in T20Is; Arshdeep, Bumrah, Varun and Axar claim two each



Impact player: Hardik's whirlwind knock gave the much-needed momentum to the Indian innings. AP

SA IN INDIA

Anirudh Velamuri
CUTTACK

Hardik Pandya's splendid effort left both the analysts and fans wondering if he overcame difficult conditions or made the most of a surface which got better. The proof was in the Protean pudding, with them succumbing to a 101-run defeat in the first T20I at the Barabati Stadium here on Tuesday.

South Africa's collapse put extra shine on comeback man Hardik's half-century, the all-rounder helping India recover from a spot of bother to set a 176-run target.

The visitor was eventually bundled out for 74 in 12.3 overs, its lowest total in the format.

Arshdeep Singh made early inroads with the new ball, his wide outswinger drawing an edge off Quinton de Kock. Abhishek Sharma made no mistake at second slip.

An inside edge was Tristan Stubbs' undoing, Arshdeep deceiving him with the wobble seam and Jitesh Sharma taking a low catch — a well-taken review sending Stubbs on the long walk back.

The introduction of spin further piled misery on the visitor, Axar Patel knocking back Aiden Markram's leg stump and ramping up



Castled: Markram has no clue to this one from Axar. AFP

the decibel levels. After that, it was a procession to the pavilion, David Miller and Donovan Ferreira falling in consecutive overs to leave South Africa five wickets down for just 50 runs.

A googly from Varun Chakaravathy then ended Marco Jansen's time in the middle while Jasprit Bumrah sent the dangerous Dewald Brevis and Keshav Maharaj back, crossing the 100-wicket milestone in T20Is in the process, as India cleaned up the lower-order to wrap up a comprehensive win.

Earlier, Jansen proved to be a troublesome firewall for India as the Proteas put the host under the pump to clinch early momentum.

Lungi Ngidi made the most of the pace-friendly red soil pitch, sending back Shubman Gill and captain Suryakumar Yadav.

Abhishek and Tilak Varma understandably dialled down cautiously.

The former tried to swivel the ball fine for four, but Jansen covered 11 meters in just five strides to take a brilliant catch off Lutho Sipamla's bowling to leave Abhishek and the In-

SCOREBOARD

INDIA

Abhishek Sharma c Jansen b Sipamla 17 (12b, 2x4, 1x6), Shubman Gill c Jansen b Ngidi 4 (2b, 1x4), Suryakumar Yadav c Markram b Ngidi 12 (11b, 1x4, 1x6), Tilak Varma c Jansen b Ngidi 26 (32b, 2x4, 1x6), Axar Patel c Ferreira b Sipamla 23 (21b, 1x6), Hardik Pandya (not out) 59 (28b, 6x4, 4x6), Shivam Dube b Ferreira 11 (9b, 2x4), Jitesh Sharma (not out) 10 (5b, 1x6); Extras (b-4, w-9): 13; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 175.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-5 (Gill, 0.3 overs), 2-17 (Suryakumar, 2.4), 3-48 (Abhishek, 6.3), 4-78 (Tilak, 11.4), 5-104 (Axar, 13.6), 6-137 (Dube, 17.1).

SOUTH AFRICA BOWLING

Ngidi 4-0-31-3, Jansen 4-0-23-0, Sipamla 4-0-38-2, Nortje 4-0-41-0, Maharaj 2-0-25-0, Ferreira 2-0-13-1.

SOUTH AFRICA

Quinton de Kock c Abhishek b Arshdeep 0 (2b), Aiden Markram b Axar 14 (14b, 1x4, 1x6), Tristan

Stubbs c Jitesh b Arshdeep 14 (9b, 2x4), Dewald Brevis c Suryakumar b Bumrah 22 (14b, 3x4, 1x6), David Miller c Jitesh b Hardik 1 (3b), Donovan Ferreira c Jitesh b Varun 5 (7b, 1x4), Marco Jansen b Varun 12 (12b, 2x6), Keshav Maharaj c Jitesh b Bumrah 0 (2b), Anrich Nortje b Axar 1 (3b), Lutho Sipamla c Abhishek b Dube 2 (5b), Lungi Ngidi (not out) 2 (4b); Extras (w-1): 1; Total (in 12.3 overs): 74.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-0 (de Kock, 0.2), 2-16 (Stubbs, 2.3), 3-40 (Markram, 5.1), 4-45 (Miller, 6.1), 5-50 (Ferreira, 7.2), 6-68 (Jansen, 9.5), 7-68 (Brevis, 10.2), 8-70 (Maharaj, 10.5), 9-72 (Nortje, 11.2).

INDIA BOWLING

Arshdeep 2-0-14-2, Bumrah 3-0-17-2, Varun 3-1-19-2, Axar 2-0-7-2, Hardik 2-0-16-1, Dube 0.3-0-1-1.

ToSS: South Africa; **PoM:** Hardik. India won by 101 runs to lead five-match series 1-0.

Second T20I: December 11, New Chandigarh, 7 p.m.

Sarfaraz, Shaw in the first set

IPL AUCTION

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Sarfaraz Khan and Prithvi Shaw, who went unsold in last year's auction, have been named in the opening set of players for the Indian Premier League (IPL) auction ahead of the 2026 edition. The auction is scheduled to take place in Abu Dhabi on December 16.

Going unsold

Sarfaraz found no bidders last IPL while Shaw, dropped by Mumbai midway through the previous domestic season before being passed over by the franchises, has since moved to Maharashtra.

The shift has worked for Shaw as he has rediscovered consistency with the bat and displayed noticeable improvement in his fitness.

Both Sarfaraz and Shaw now feature in the first set of capped batters with a base price of ₹75 lakh. They are grouped with De-

von Conway, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Cameron Green, and David Miller — each carrying a base price of ₹2 crore.

Notably, Green — the Australian all-rounder — has been listed only as a batter for the auction.

Final list

The final auction list was released by the IPL authorities on Tuesday morning, just a week before the auction.

The pool features 350 players — 240 Indians and 110 overseas cricketers — with a maximum of 77 slots available.

The second set includes Venkatesh Iyer (base price ₹2 crore) — the high-priced all-rounder released by Kolkata Knight Riders — along with Deepak Hooda (₹75 lakh) and five high-profile overseas all-rounders.

Of the 350 names, 40 have opted for the highest base price bracket of ₹2 crore while 227 uncapped domestic players have fixed their base price at ₹30 lakh — the lowest among the eight brackets.

SNAPSHOTS

India and Hong Kong begin with facile wins

CHENNAI: Second seed India opened its campaign with a comprehensive 4-0 win over debutant Switzerland in the World Cup squash at the Express Avenue Mall here on Tuesday.

The results: Pool A: Hong Kong bt Korea 4-0 (Henry Leung bt Youngjo Ko 7-3, 3-7, 7-6, 7-2; Tomato Ho bt Eum Hwayeong 7-3, 7-6, 7-5; Tsz Kwan Lau bt Jeongmin Ryou 7-2, 7-5, 7-2; Ka Yil Lee bt Song Chaewon 7-3, 5-7, 7-5, 7-2;

Pool B: India bt Switzerland 4-0 (Velavan Senthilkumar bt Robin Gadola 7-6, 7-6, 7-5; Anahat Singh bt Celine Walsler 7-1, 7-4, 7-2; Abhay Singh bt Loual Hafez 7-0, 7-5, 7-3; Joshua Chinappa bt Stella Kaufmann 7-1, 5-7, 7-2, 7-0).

Pool D: Japan bt Iran 4-0 (Tomotako Endo bt Poyua Shafiefard 7-3, 7-1, 7-0; Satomi Watanabe bt Fereshteh Eghtedari 7-4, 3-7, 3-7, 7-4, 7-1; Ryunosuke Tsukue bt Sepehr Etemarpour 7-2, 7-2, 7-0; Akari Midorikawa bt Fatemeh Falahati 4-7, 7-3, 7-3, 7-2).

Kamalini, Vaishnavi get maiden India call-up

G. Kamalini and Vaishnavi Sharma on Tuesday got their maiden call-ups to the India women's team for the upcoming five-match T20I series



Easily done: Anahat dispatched Walsler in straight games. R. RAGU

against Sri Lanka at home. While 17-year-old wicketkeeper-batter Kamalini has featured in nine matches for the Mumbai Indians in Women's Premier League, Vaishnavi, 19, was not drafted into the WPL auctions.

Kamalini and Vaishnavi came in place of Radha Yadav and Uma Chhetri. **The squad:** Harmanpreet Kaur (Capt.), Smriti Mandhana (Vice-capt.), Deepti Sharma, Sneha Rana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Harleen Deol, Amanjot Kaur, Arundhati Reddy, Kranti Gaud, Renuka Singh, Thakur, Richa Ghosh (wk), G. Kamalini (wk), Sree Charani, and Vaishnavi Sharma. **The schedule:** Dec 21 and 23

(both at Visakhapatnam); Dec 26, 28 and 30 (all three at Thiruvananthapuram).

India gets the better of Uruguay in shootout

SANTIAGO: Goalkeeper Nidhi thwarted two attempts as India edged Uruguay 3-1 in the shootout after the teams were tied 1-1 at regulation time in the FIH Junior Women's World Cup here on Tuesday.

India was on course for victory, thanks to Manisha's 19th-minute effort, before a penalty stroke conversion by Justina Arregui five seconds from the end forced the shootout.

A well-earned spot in the Candidates for Prag

CHESS

P.K. Ajith Kumar

Of India's unusually large number of disappointments at the recent Chess World Cup in Goa, R. Praggnanandhaa was the biggest. The third seed was knocked out in the fourth round by Russia's Daniil Dubov.

Praggnanandhaa had contested the final in the last World Cup, and was on the cusp of qualifying for the Candidates tournament through the FIDE Circuit. His early exit was a double blow — a top three finish at the World Cup would have also ensured his ticket for Cyprus, which will host the Candidates in March-April next year.

The poor show at Arpora meant the 20-year-old could no longer quite take the FIDE Circuit for granted. So he chose to play at the London Chess Classic, and went on to share the top prize in the Open section of the tournament. That would prove enough for him to win the Circuit;



All to play for: If Praggnanandhaa wins the Candidates, he will take on defending champion Gukesh for the World title. FILE PHOTO

his nearest rival, Uzbekistan's Nodirbek Abdusattorov, who shared the top prize in London Classic's Elite tournament with a round to spare, now could not catch up with him, even if he were to reproduce that kind of form at the World Rapid and Blitz championship in Doha late this month.

So Praggnanandhaa has kept alive hopes of an all-India — or an all-Chennai — fight for the next World championship. If he wins the Candidates, he will take on the defending champion D. Gukesh in the World title match.

To win the Candidates will not be easy, of course. The tournament features

some of the strongest players, including the World No. 2 and No. 3 from the USA, Hikaru Nakamura and Fabiano Caruana. No. 8 Anish Giri of the Netherlands and China's Wei Yi, No. 9 Jovakhir Sindarov (Uzbekistan), Andrey Esipenko (Russia) and Matthias Bluebaum complete the line-up for the double round-robin league of eight men.

Some of them may be stronger than him, but they all know Praggnanandhaa is a tough customer.

His next tournament is the Global Chess League in Mumbai, starting on December 14. He is playing for Alpine SG Pipers.

INBRIEF



TN bags 'Best State Promoting Sports Development' honour

Tamil Nadu was on Tuesday named 'Best State Promoting Sports Development' at the CII Sports Business Awards in Chennai. Haryana Steelers, KITT, Shiv Naresh, and Manoj Badale were among the winners of the ceremony that recognised excellence, innovation, and leadership across India's sports industry. Convened in collaboration with the Sports Ministry, the conference brought together leading voices from the government, industry stakeholders, sports federations, technology innovators, and athlete support organisations.

Dembele, Chevalier to miss PSG's match against Bilbao

Ousmane Dembele and goalkeeper Lucas Chevalier will miss Paris Saint-Germain's trip to Athletic Bilbao in the Champions League on Wednesday. PSG said Dembele is sick while Chevalier is still recovering from ankle injury.

Delhi gets past Karnataka, in u-23 women's T20 final

P. Saloni's unbeaten 51 went in vain as Karnataka lost to Delhi by 10 runs in the semifinals of the BCCI under-23 Women's T20 Trophy in Ahmedabad on Tuesday.

The scores: Semifinal: Delhi 143/8 in 20 overs bt Karnataka 133 in 19.3 overs (P. Saloni 51 n.o.).

Sesa FA qualifies for the Indian Women's League

Sesa FA's senior women's team qualified for the Indian Women's League for the first time. It will now vie among India's elite in the ninth edition, scheduled in Bengal from Dec. 20 to Jan. 6, 2026.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SCHEDULE

Villarreal vs. FC Copenhagen; Qarabag FK vs. Ajax (both matches at 11.15 p.m. on Wednesday). Dortmund vs. FK Bodø/Glimt; Leverkusen vs. Newcastle United; Benfica vs. Napoli; Juventus vs. Pafos; Club Brugge vs. Arsenal; Athletic Bilbao vs. Paris Saint-Germain; Real Madrid vs. Manchester City (all matches at 1.30 a.m. on Thursday).

LIVE TELECAST

Hockey: Junior World Cup, SS Select 1 & JioHotstar, 12.30, 3, India vs Argentina, 5.30 & 8 p.m.
Tennis Premier League: Sony Sports Ten 5 & LIV, 4.30 p.m.
Champions League: Sony Sports Ten 2, 3 & LIV, 11.15 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Thursday).
West Indies vs New Zealand: 2nd Test, day 2, Sony Sports Ten 5 & LIV, 3.30 a.m. (Thursday).

Inaugural Total World Chess Championship announced

Sports Bureau

World champions and World rapid and blitz champions will be among the 24 players who will make up next year's pilot edition of Total World Chess Championship Tour, a new tour jointly organised by FIDE and Norway Chess.

FIDE announced on Tuesday that there would be different paths to qualify for the tour. Both the World open and women's champions, D. Gukesh and Ju Wenjun, have already qualified. Others will be picked from the World rapid and blitz championships, Candidates (open and women) and FIDE Circuit; top players based on FIDE rating will also be included.

The tour will be played across the three formats: classical, rapid and blitz. But classical format has been reduced to a shorter time control of 45 minutes, though. The tour carries a prize fund of \$750,000 for each of the three events, besides \$450,000 for finals.

Manchester United hunts down Wolves

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
WOLVERHAMPTON

Manchester United climbed back into the race to qualify for the Champions League as Bruno Fernandes inspired a 4-1 rout of woeful Wolves on Monday.

Ruben Amorim's side recovered from a disappointing draw with lowly West Ham last week thanks to Fernandes' double and goals from Bryan Mbeumo and Mason Mount at Molineux.

Jean-Ricner Bellegarde had cancelled out Fernandes' opener with Wolves' first goal in six games in all competitions and the first in the top-flight since October 26.

Bad run

United suffered an embarrassing 1-0 home loss to 10-man Everton on November 24 and 10 days later boos greeted the final whistle following a 1-1 draw with West Ham at Old Trafford. With Amorim growing increasingly tetchy in re-

Germany primed to extend its reign

The defending champion, which has been excellent both in attack and defence and efficient with its penalty corner conversions, would be quite a handful for a Spanish outfit that has shown tactical adaptability rather than relying on a one-dimensional approach

HOCKEY

K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

Germany has been nothing short of a force of nature at the FIH junior men's hockey World Cup. Unrelenting in attack, rock-solid in defence, and efficient – if not exceptional – in penalty-corner conversions, the defending champion has looked a class apart.

In contrast, Spain, its opponent in Wednesday's final, has appeared less convincing across these departments. It doesn't take a Nostradamus to see Germany, the seven-time champion, as the favourite when the two European sides clash.

Yet Spain, appearing in its maiden final after bronze-medal finishes in 2005 and 2023, has shown tactical adaptability, mixing open play attacks with

set-piece opportunities rather than relying on an one-dimensional approach.

Head coach Oriol Puig Torras acknowledged the challenge. "Germany, for me, is the best team in the tournament. It's a very good side with structure. But it's only one match – a final. We need to come out with our best version," he said.

Frailties

Spain's defensive frailties were exposed in the quarterfinal against New Zealand, when a 3-0 lead was nearly erased before Bruno Avila's late penalty-corner winner. The semifinal against Argentina was tighter, with Albert Serra-hima scoring the decisive goal. Spain did not dominate but controlled the key moments.

Germany has mostly pressed high, forced turnovers, and created repeated circle entries, cul-

minating in the demolition of India in the semifinals. Against France, it struggled in defence, but came back strongly to win thus showing its mental fortitude. Mirko Stenzel and Johannes Schmitz, Germany's co-coaches, said one of the team's biggest strengths is that doesn't look back.

"It's a different World Cup campaign this time with different players. We don't look back. The full focus in every game is so huge and I think it's the biggest difference between us and other teams," they said.

On taking on Spain, Stenzel said: "We've played them twice in this summer in Berlin and we saw what their qualities were. For us, it's no surprise that they are in the final now," he said.

India, meanwhile, will look to salvage its pride when it plays Argentina for the bronze medal.



Bonding well: Germany has thrived, thanks to great cohesion as a team. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Despite structural challenges, gritty Spain eyes maiden title

K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

Almost every second child in Terrassa, situated in the autonomous region of Catalonia in northeastern Spain, plays hockey in school with utmost passion. It is that popular.

Terrassa is home to nearly 10 hockey clubs, the most prominent being Club Egara, Atlètic Terrassa, and CD Terrassa Hockey.

Speaking on the sport's deep-rooted popularity, Spain's head coach, Oriol Puig Torras, during the ongoing FIH Junior Men's hockey World Cup, said: "Terrassa is 20 minutes by car from Barcelona. When you walk on the streets in Terrassa, you can see children with a stick in their hand inside the bus. And almost always it's hockey."

Despite a hockey culture that spans more than a century, Spain has struggled to convert this popularity into global success. Puig attributed the lack of



Key aspect: Spain coach Puig feels emotions will play a crucial role in the summit clash. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

consistency to Spain's hockey ecosystem which remains constrained by finances.

"It's difficult because in our country, the budget for hockey is limited, as it is not a fully professional sport. It's not a hobby either, but it's more than a hobby. I'd call it semi-professional because players don't earn a salary playing the sport. Maybe two or three players earn," he said.

Puig also pointed to structural challenges. Un-

like European rivals, Spain lacks regular, high-intensity competition.

"Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands play each other all year, almost every month. The distances are quite short. But for us to go to Belgium for one weekend, is too expensive," he explained.

Spain is known for their possession-based hockey built on short, slick passing and technical excellence rather than physicality. Looking ahead to the summit clash against Germany

in the junior men's World Cup at the SDAT-Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium here on Sunday, Puig – in his second World Cup stint as head coach – admitted that it was a challenge.

"It's 60-40 in favour of Germany. Moreover, we have 15 Catalans in our team, who are not very tall or physical in their game. Germany, of course, is more physical than us. I think it all boils down to the emotions. We are looking forward to play in our maiden final," he said.

Same number of ATP Challengers, but different prize pools

TENNIS

Nihit Sachdeva
CHENNAI

India is set to host four ATP Challenger Tour events for the third season in a row, albeit with significant changes in schedule, prize money and ranking points.

In 2025, the series began on February 3 in Chennai where the total prize money was \$160,000. It was followed by the ones in Delhi (\$100,000; 75 ranking points for the champion), Pune (\$160,000; 100 ranking points) and Bengaluru (\$200,000; 125 ranking points) in successive weeks. Across the four Challenger events, Indian players managed to win just one out of 13 singles matches in the main draw.

As per the revised ATP calendar released on December 4, the 2026 season for the second tier of men's tennis will open in Bengaluru on January 5. The

event will offer 125 ranking points and more prize money (\$225,000) this time.

However, the Chennai Challenger, scheduled to begin on February 9, will have a reduced prize pool of \$63,000 (50 ranking points).

The Delhi Open, starting on February 16, will have a slightly increased prize pool (\$107,000) and 75 ranking points while the Pune leg, beginning on February 23, will have a drop in prize money (\$107,000) and 75 ranking points.

Sunder Iyer, hon'y. secy., Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association, explained the reason behind the reduced prize money for Chennai and Pune.

"In 2025, all four tournaments in India received significant monetary help from ATP. For the next season, they have selected a different country for it. They will still support us but the monetary assistance has been reduced," said Sunder.



Hit-man: Fernandes fires in his second and United's fourth goal from the penalty spot. AFP

cent weeks, it was essential that sixth-placed United avoided an embarrassing result against bottom of the table Wolves as it moved within one point of the top four.

Wolves have just two points after 15 games and if they fail to win either of their next two against Arsenal and Brentford they will equal Sheffield United's longest winless start in the Premier League of 17 matches.

In Italy, Christian Pulisic

scored twice in 10 minutes as AC Milan came from behind to edge Torino 3-2 to move to the summit of Serie A.

Pulisic delivers

Pulisic was a second-half substitute in Turin and turned the game on its head having entered the fray after 67 minutes.

Milan goes above Napoli on goal difference and head to eighth-placed Sassuolo next Sunday. Nikola Vlasic and Duvan

Zapata had claimed an early advantage for the home side, which is now 16th looking for a first win since October 26.

The results: Premier League:

Wolves 1 (Bellegarde 45+2) lost to Manchester United 4 (Fernandes 25, 82-pen, Mbeumo 51, Mount 62).

Serie A: Pisa 0 lost to Parma 1 (Benedyczak 40-pen); Udinese 1 (Piotrowski (65) lost to Genoa 2 (Malinovskyi 34-pen, Norton-Cuffy 83); Torino 2 (Vlasic 10-pen, Zapata 17) lost to AC Milan 3 (Rabiot 24, Pulisic 67, 77).

RAVI GARYALI

17/07/1952 – 05/12/2025

Passed away peacefully surrounded by family. Cherished and loved for his warmth, humour and ability to make everyone feel valued. A dynamic business leader whose energy and vision inspired others. To his family, friends and IPI Team, he was a source of love, joy and encouragement. His presence filled every room, and his kind soul left an impression that will endure.

Survived by: Vita (wife) and Children: Sameer, Kabir and Kimberley, who will continue to honour his legacy.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

13th December 2025, 06:00 PM onwards
at
ISKON TEMPLE
Bhakti Vedanta Swami Rd, Akkarai, Sholinganallur, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600115

Vivek Krishnan

To those of us who watched cricket in the 1980s and 90s, Wasim Akram appeared to be a magician in the disguise of a fast bowler. So spellbinding was the left-armed artist's artistry, hooping the ball in either direction at will and bewitching opponents and onlookers alike.

The poetry of his bowling action was symbolised by a scurrying burst into his delivery stride and a quick-arm release that gave the batters little clue of their impending doom. Once the ball - new or old - left his hand, with the seam canted perfectly to procure swing, it would invariably do some mischief to hoodwink the batter at the opposite end.

The wizardry was best encapsulated by Wasim's sublime show in the 1992 ODI World Cup final, when he followed up an outswinger to Allan Lamb from around the wicket with an inswinger to Chris Lewis from the same angle to castle them off successive deliveries. The peach to dismiss Rahul Dravid at the MAC Stadium in 1999 in a humdinger of a Test springs to mind as another compelling example of his genius.

Such deliveries in the midst of his match-winning spells cemented his status as the finest practitioner of left-arm pace that the game had ever seen. So, when he bid adieu from international cricket in 2003, it seemed inconceivable for another left-armed to come along and surpass his feats.

It is remarkable, then, that Mitchell Starc has managed to go past the great fast bowler, statistically speaking, this past week. The affable Aussie left-armed did so by coaxing Harry Brook into an airy drive to the slip cordon in a six-wicket haul in England's first innings of the second Test in Brisbane, which the hosts won by eight wickets to canter to a 2-0 lead in the five-match affair. It has taken his tally in the longest format to 420 wickets in 102 Tests, six more than Wasim's 414 in 104 matches. It is also worth noting that Starc's current strike rate of 46.9 is the best for any bowler who has played 100 or more Tests.

Shortly after his special feat on the opening day of the pink-ball Test, Starc was asked for his reaction to overtaking the Pakistani, both of whom have coincidentally starred in World Cup-winning campaigns culminating at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG).

"I will reflect on it later. Wasim was still a far better bowler than I am. He is still the pinnacle of left-armed, and certainly right up there with bowlers to ever play the game. So, it is nice to be spoken about around him, but I will just try to keep churning a few out," the soft-spoken speedster would respond modestly.

Taking into cognisance Starc's own assessment, it is best to stay away from comparisons. Where Starc is strikingly similar to Akram, of course, is in his ability to recognise and seize moments that alter the course of a match.

A match haul of eight for 139 and a contribution of 77 in the day-night encounter at the Gabba, which yielded Starc his third successive Player-of-the-Match award in the format, was the latest proof. In the opener at Perth Stadium, which lasted all of two days, Starc scalped seven for 58 and three for 55 across the two innings in an emphatic victory.

By delivering rousing performances in each of the first two Tests when Australia was without skipper

Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood due to injuries, he has already gone a long way towards ensuring that this series is remembered as Starc's Ashes.

Setting the tone

As he has done in the past, Starc set the tone in the opening over of the series in Perth. Having dismissed Rory Burns off the very first ball of the 2021-22 Ashes series at home, he had to wait until the final ball of his first over this time to get rid of Zak Crawley for a blob. Before his first spell came to a close, he would also trap Ben Duckett plumb in front and find Joe Root's outside edge. When he returned after the lunch break, he added Ben Stokes, Gus Atkinson, Jamie Smith and Mark Wood to his list of victims in the space of 29 balls to finish with a

Making a Starc difference to the Ashes

During the second Test versus England in Brisbane, the 35-year-old Australian pacer surpassed Akram's tally of 414 Test wickets, the most by a left-arm quick; he went on to win his third successive Player-of-the-Match award, a testament to his skill, fitness and commitment to the longest format of the game



He has plenty of cricket in him. I think he will get 500 Test wickets

WASIM AKRAM



As a fast bowler, I can't fathom playing 100 games and keeping that 145 kmh speed. He is just a warrior

PAT CUMMINS

career-best seven-for.

By running through the English line-up with a ball that had gone out of shape pretty quickly, Starc underscored the subtle improvements he has made to his game at this stage of his career. Even with his stock weapon - the deadly inswinger to a right-hander - curtailed, he was able to maintain his wicket-taking threat with his shrewd use of the wobble-seam delivery. It is a variation that enables Starc to push the ball away from the right-handers and into the left-handers, and reduces his reliance on the ball moving in the air.

True to his self-effacing demeanour, Starc deflected the praise to Cummins and Hazlewood, his two best mates, when asked about the addition to his armoury.

"Two of my best mates are two of the best exponents of it in the world. To learn off Josh and Pat... if I had listened to those two a bit earlier, I may have added it to my repertoire a bit earlier," he told the media.

Starc's evolution reflects unequivocally in his numbers. In nine Tests in 2025, he has snared 47 wickets at an average of 16 and a strike rate of 26.9, the latter two figures being better than any previous year.

Top priority

For the 35-year-old from Sydney to be going stronger than ever before is a testament to his fitness. It has been facilitated by his unflinching commitment to donning the Baggy Green for Australia, with Starc notably eschewing the opportunity to land lucrative IPL deals from 2016 to 2023 - a period when he was among the best white-ball bowlers going around.

He has turned up unflinchingly for Australia in marquee white-ball events too, winning two ODI World Cups (2015, 2023) and one T20 World Cup (2021) along the way. It was only in September this year that Starc announced his T20I retirement with the intention of prolonging his Test career further and featuring in the 2027 ODI World Cup.

Though Starc's choices may have deprived him of a few financial gains, he has the honour of a long career in whites to cherish for the rest of his life. By playing his 100th Test, against West Indies in July, he became just the second Australian pacer after Glenn McGrath to reach the three-figure



milestone. In recognition of Starc's achievement, Cummins offered fitting praise at the time.

"A huge effort. As a fast bowler, I can't fathom playing 100 games and keeping that 145 kmh speed. He is just a warrior. He turns up every week and wants to play no matter what," the Australian skipper, who has featured in 71 Tests himself, had said.

Starc's endurance was epitomised by his efforts on the third day of the Brisbane Test. Having curbed his attacking stroke-play and stayed in the middle for 34.2 overs through the afternoon heat, his body was still robust enough to charge in at full tilt with the pink ball and touch speeds hovering around the 145 kmh mark in the very last over of the night session.

How much longer can Starc, who will turn 36 in January, potentially stretch himself in the five-day game? Akram, in an interview to *News Corp* before the Brisbane Test, prophesied where Starc could end up.

"He has plenty of cricket in him. I think he will get 500 Test wickets," the former Pakistani skipper said.

That won't be music to the ears of the England batters.

THE GIST

Where Starc is strikingly similar to Akram, of course, is in his ability to recognise and seize moments that alter the course of a match

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Starc's endurance was epitomised by his efforts on the third day of the Brisbane Test. Having curbed his attacking stroke-play and stayed in the middle for 34.2 overs through the afternoon heat, his body was still robust enough to charge in at full tilt with the pink ball and touch speeds hovering around the 145 kmh mark

New research traces how Africa's wildcats became today's house cats

Felines dispersed from northern Africa to Europe much more recently than thought, a study has found using iconographic evidence along with DNA: two waves of felines were introduced to Europe: the first comprised a wildcat species that was introduced to Sardinia, and the second wave came in not later than 2,000 years ago

Divya Gandhi

“You would know him if you saw him, for his eyes are sunken in/His brow is deeply lined with thought, his head is highly domed; His coat is dusty from neglect, his whiskers are uncombed. He sways his head from side to side, with movements like a snake; And when you think he's half asleep, he's always wide awake.”

Thus goes T.S. Eliot's famous poem on his beloved feline: the domestic cat. But when, and from where, did these creatures come to colonise the world and enter Eliot's poetic imagination in London? A new *Science* paper dug deep into the historical movements of the mystery cat and found that the domestic cat (*Felis catus*) originated from the African wildcat (*Felis lybica lybica*) and quickly spread, most likely by ship, across the globe just 2,000 years ago.

Researchers analysed 87 ancient and modern cat genomes – across Europe and Anatolia and 17 modern wildcats from Italy (including Sardinia), Bulgaria, and northern Africa (Morocco and Tunisia) – and generated a genomic time transect spanning 11,000 years.

The researchers challenged the commonly held view of a Neolithic introduction (from West Asia) of domestic cats to Europe, instead placing their arrival several millennia later, and from northern Africa.

The ancestor

The ancestor to all modern domestic cats, the genetic findings revealed, is the African wildcat, presently distributed across northern Africa and the Near East. Interestingly, domestic cats shared more genetic affinities with wildcats, particularly with the Tunisian ones.

The researchers identified at least two waves of introduction to Europe: first, a dispersal of wildcats from northwestern Africa that were introduced to Sardinia and founded the island's present-day wild population; second, a distinct and yet-unknown population in northern Africa that dispersed not later than 2,000 years ago that established the gene pool of modern domestic cats in Europe.

“Domestic cats form a distinct sister clade [cluster] to the African wildcats, thus suggesting a closer genetic proximity to these wildcats than to the modern Levantine [West Asian] population,” the researchers wrote. One of the “most successful mammalian domesticates”, the cat has a worldwide presence, even in remote islands. Including feral cats, their global population is approaching a staggering one billion, the paper added.

Author Claudio Ottoni, associate



The global population of cats is approaching a staggering one billion. REUTERS

professor anthropology at the University of Rome Tor Vergata and his co-authors studied ancient mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) data and realised that the timing and circumstances of cat domestication and dispersal remain “uncertain”.

For instance, while archaeozoological and iconographic evidence points to two possible centres of domestication – the Neolithic Levant (West Asia) around 9,500 years ago and Pharaonic Egypt around 3,500 years ago – genetic analysis has placed the years of domestication to 2,000 years ago.

Levant and humans

“Cats were definitely interacting with humans in the Levant [West Asia] in the Neolithic period, more than 10,000 years ago, but these were most likely wildcats that were not ultimately domesticated,” Mr. Ottoni told *The Hindu*. “A so-called commensal relationship was established between African wildcats in the Levant and humans in the Neolithic period, suggesting that cats were attracted to human settlements of the farmers who were storing grain that brought in rodents and other pests,” he added.

As for the relationship between humans and wildcats in Europe, it was possibly based on hunting for fur. “However, more complex sociocultural and symbolic relationships should not be discounted,” the authors pointed out.

So what drove the translocation of cats to new cultural settings?

The paper hypothesised thus: “As with the human-mediated dispersal of



Tomb-walls depict cats as family, adorned in earrings and necklaces; eating from dishes; sitting attentively under the chair of the woman of the house; and even accompanying the family on boating expeditions

JONATHAN B. LOSOS
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

domestic chickens or fallow deer, the initial translocation of cats could have been religiously motivated... Dispersal trajectories may also have been driven by the benefits of cats as pest controllers on ships, in view of the extensive maritime trade network of Carthage and the role of Egypt as a major grain supplier to the Roman Empire.”

Muse to menace

Mr. Ottoni expressed belief they travelled across the Mediterranean via the trade routes that connected the Roman Empire with northern Africa, and also together with the Roman Empire and its people that were moving across Europe.

But Eliot's elusive muse has become a bit of a menace today, and has “markedly impact[ed] biodiversity,” a 2023 paper in *Nature* reported. The researchers identified 2,084 species eaten by cats, “of which 347 (16.65%) are of conservation concern”. Birds, reptiles, and mammals constitute around 90% of species consumed, while insects and amphibians

were less frequent, the paper says.

But “another sampling issue requires more serious consideration”, cautions a *Science* commentary published last month. The author, Jonathan B. Losos, at the department of biology, Washington University in St Louis, U.S. observed that we might have thought that “with the abundance of Egyptian cat mummies, there would be no shortage of ancient genomic data from northern Africa; however, recovering such data from mummies is notoriously difficult and other types of feline remains in the archaeological record from this region are not common”.

By the time of Thutmose III (around 3,500 years ago), the cat was already a household pet in Ancient Egypt. We know this from “tomb-wall depictions of cats as family members adorned in collars, earrings, and necklaces; eating from dishes; sitting attentively under the chair of the woman of the house; and even accompanying the family on boating expeditions”, Mr. Losos wrote. And then, the rise of the goddess Bastet, (a woman with the head of a cat) “elevated the felines to revered status”.

“Technology has driven the way we unfold and understand historical events and has also clarified how humans have influenced species distribution, and still do,” Shomita Mukherjee, a cat ecologist, told *The Hindu*. In this case, genomic information is fast changing our understanding of the history of several domestic and wild species, she added.
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THE GIST

Researchers analysed 87 ancient and modern cat genomes – across Europe and Anatolia, and 17 modern wildcats from Italy, Bulgaria, and northern Africa – and generated a genomic time transect spanning 11,000 years

Humans established a relationship with African wildcats in the Neolithic period, suggesting that cats were attracted to settlements that stored grain, which in turn drew rodents and other pests

The felines celebrated by the ancients have become a bit of a menace. Researchers have identified 2,084 species preyed on by cats, of which 347 are of conservation concern. Birds, reptiles, and mammals constitute 90% of species consumed

BIG SHOT



Russian support personnel around the Soyuz MS-27 space capsule shortly after it landed in a remote area near the town of Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, with Expedition 73 NASA astronaut Jonny Kim, and Roscosmos cosmonauts Sergey Ryzhikov, and Alexey Zubritsky aboard. AFP

QUESTION CORNER

Caught in the headlights

Q: Why can't we see well right after entering a darker room?

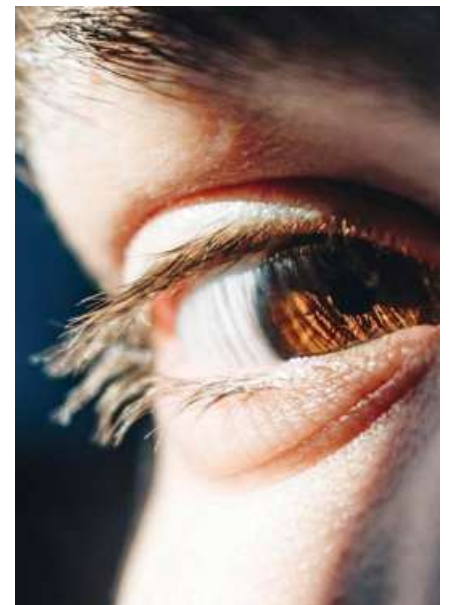
A: You're standing on your balcony in the noon sun. It's bright. After a moment, you step back into your darker room, and for a few moments, you're unable to see clearly. This is because your eyes need time to adjust.

The eyes are made of three layers: sclera and cornea, the pupil, and the retina. The pupil is like a camera's aperture: by changing how much it opens, it can say how much light reaches the retina.

Light that's too bright can damage the retina, so in bright conditions, the pupil shrinks. If the retina is damaged, it can lead to blurry vision and, in severe cases, permanent vision loss.

Conversely, in a dimmer room, there's not enough light, so the pupil opens wider and the retina can sense more light.

So when you suddenly enter the darker room after having been outside in the sun, your pupils are still small. They need a few moments to widen, and until they do, not enough light enters the eye and vision is blurred. There is another reason why things are not immediately visible in the dark. The retina contains rod cells and cone cells. The rod cells sense brightness using a light-sensitive protein called rhodopsin. Bright light breaks down



Light that's too bright can damage the retina. BACILA VLAD/UNSPLASH

rhodopsin quickly and the rod cells become inactive. When the eyes adjust to the darkness, the protein's levels are building back up.
S. Adithya Jyothi is interning with The Hindu

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to science@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Daily page'