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Governor reached out to Kerala CM, SC told

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Medical colleges: Jagan complains to Governor

VIJAYAWADA
YSRCP president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy lodged a complaint with Governor S. Abdul Nazeer against the construction of medical colleges in PPP model. » Page 4

Centre okays procurement of pulses at MSP

AMARAVATI
The Centre has approved procurement of pulses in Andhra Pradesh under the Price Support Scheme (PSS) for the Kharif 2025–26 season, extending MSP coverage to farmers. » Page 4

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Consider 'ground realities' in various States, SC tells EC

SC asks the poll body to take a 'sympathetic view' to petitions seeking to extend enumeration phase of SIR; it requests EC to take 'appropriate decision' on the petitions from U.P. and Kerala

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Election Commission of India (EC) to take a "sympathetic view" of representations to extend the enumeration phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, taking into consideration the "ground realities" in various States.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant passed the order, requesting the EC to take an "appropriate decision" after petitioners from Uttar Pradesh and Kerala said the enumeration phase was still too hasty for comfort.

The enumeration schedule for Kerala had been revised earlier, with the deadline pushed to December 18 and the draft voter list to be published on December 23. The revised deadline for Uttar Pradesh was extended to December 26.



> The probability of the Assembly elections (in Uttar Pradesh) is in April or May of 2027. It is a large State as far as population is concerned, and there is clearly no urgency to hold this exercise now
>
> **SIDDHARTH DAVE**
> Advocate for petitioners

Senior advocate Siddharth Dave, appearing for petitioners including Barabanki MP Tanuj Punia, challenging the SIR of electoral rolls in Uttar Pradesh, asked what was the hurry to conduct the exercise when the Assembly election was only scheduled to be held in 2027.

"The probability of the Assembly elections is in April or May of 2027. It is a large State as far as population was concerned, and there is clearly no urgency to hold this exercise now," Mr. Dave submitted.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal and advocate C.K. Sasi, appearing for Kerala, joined in to urge the top court to order an extension of the enumeration phase deadline.

'Keeping a watch'

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, for the EC, intervened to urge the court to not pass any judicial orders extending the deadline.

"The Election Commission is keeping a watch. It is evident with the extensions given in the past. Your Lordships may not extend, leave it to the Election Commission," Mr. Dwivedi pressed.

A Bench of Chief Justice Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi further listed the hearing on the constitutionality of the SIR on January 6, 2026, after the winter break.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

India signs trade pact with Oman for duty-free exports

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

India and Oman signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) on Thursday, under which Oman will provide India duty-free access to 98.08% of its tariff lines, covering 99.38% of India's exports to Oman.

India, on the other hand, has offered liberalised tariffs on 77.79% of its total tariff lines, covering 94.81% of what India imports from Oman. Apart from tariff removal on merchandise exports, the deal also includes several concessions that are expected to benefit India's service sector, including in terms of mobility of workers.

The deal was signed in Muscat by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Oman's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tarik oversee the signing of the FTA in Muscat on Thursday. PTI

India exported $4.06 billion worth of merchandise to Oman in 2024-25, which made up 0.93% of India's total exports that financial year. It imported $6.5 billion worth of goods from Oman, comprising 0.91% of India's total imports.

"The CEPA will infuse the India-Oman partnership in the 21st Century with renewed faith and energy," Mr. Modi said earlier in the day while speaking at the India-Oman Business Forum. "This is a blueprint for our future. It will give our trade new vigour and new trust for investments and will open the doors of new opportunities in every sector."

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

'202 Indians hired for Russian armed forces'

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

As many as 202 Indians are "believed to have been recruited into the Russian armed forces" since 2022, and 26 of them are reported to have lost their lives, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) informed the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, adding that at least two Indians have been cremated in Russia.

"Concerted efforts by the Government have resulted in early discharge of 119 of them; 26 are reported to have lost their lives and seven are reported missing by the Russian side. Efforts are ongoing for early discharge of 50 individuals," Minister of State Kirti Vardhan Singh said in a written reply.

Of the 202 Indians recruited, 119 were discharged early, 26 reportedly died and seven remain missing, MEA tells Rajya Sabha

Mr. Singh was responding to a question by Trinamool Congress MP Saket Gokhale and Congress MP Randeep Singh Surjewala on the number of Indian nationals identified as illegally working or forced to work in the Russian army, along with the count of fatalities and missing people since 2022, when Russia began its war with Ukraine.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

LS passes rural jobs Bill amid protests

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Thursday passed the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Bill, replacing the 20-year-old Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), amid loud protests from Opposition MPs who stormed the well of the House, tore copies of the Bill, and raised slogans.

The Rajya Sabha began debating the Bill, a little past 6.50 p.m.

The Opposition criticised the "rushed approach" of the government, saying that the Upper House members got only 45 minutes to file their amendments.

RS gives nod to SHANTI Bill on nuclear sector

NEW DELHI
The Rajya Sabha cleared the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill on Thursday. The amendments and proposal to send the Bill to a Select Committee were defeated in a voice vote. » PAGE 11

Eight hours have been allotted for the Bill and the debate is expected to go on till the early hours of Friday. In the Lok Sabha, the debate had gone on till 1.30 a.m. on Thursday.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10



Population Management Policy will be introduced in A.P. by Ugadi, says CM

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Reiterating that his government is committed to providing the promised 20 lakh jobs, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has said that 4.50 lakh jobs have been given so far.

The government is striving to realise the Swarnandhra-2047 Vision by focusing on its 10 principles, he said and announced that a Population Management Policy would be introduced by Ugadi. Addressing the Collectors' Conference on its second day at the Secretariat on Thursday, Mr. Naidu said degrees would be offered in skill development, alongside traditional courses.



Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu addressing the Collectors' Conference at the Secretariat on Thursday. Chief Secretary K. Vijayanand is seen.

He instructed the Collectors to achieve zero maternal and infant mortality rates, and zero suicides, for which farmers, students, and families should be counselled. Rayalaseema would be developed as a horticulture hub for international markets .

The Chief Minister ordered that top priority be given to resolving disputes arising from placing lands under Section 22-A of the Registration Act. "Political interference in land disputes will not be tolerated," he said.

He clarified that power tariffs were not being hiked. He advocated for zero tolerance towards crime. He said a Cabinet Sub - Committee would be formed to help curb the menace of malicious propaganda and fake accounts used on social media for character assassination.

Deputy CM K. Pawan Kalyan stressed the importance of maintaining law and order to achieve 15% growth rate. DGP Harish Kumar Gupta reported a 5.50% decline in the crime rate in the State.

INBRIEF



Sri City firm exports liquid nitrogen storage tank to Egypt

Sri City-based VRV Asia Pacific, a subsidiary of Chart Industries, achieved a landmark international milestone by exporting a massive liquid nitrogen storage tank to Air Liquide in Egypt. The 531-kilolitre vessel, weighing 168 tonnes and stretching 39 metres, was made under the 'Make in India' initiative. Its transportation represented the pinnacle of cryogenic engineering and required complex multi-axle logistics to reach Chennai port. Sri City managing director Ravindra Sannareddy called the export a 'crowning success' that further cemented VRV's reputation for world-class cryogenic engineering.

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carry explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (December 19, Friday), the following articles are available:

- Making sense of DHRUV64 indigenous microprocessor **newsth.live/microprocessorexp**
- Visibility and inclusion- advancing the case of children with disabilities **newsth.live/childdisabilities**

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

Five babies rescued from trafficking gang

Gang used to purchase babies from Delhi and Mumbai for ₹1 lakh and sell them to childless couples for ₹5 lakh, according to police

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

The Task Force police, in association with the West and North Zone police, busted a child trafficking racket and arrested ten people in connection with the case.

The police rescued five children from the gang and seized ₹3.3 lakh cash from the accused.

The police conducted simultaneous raids at different places under Bhavanipuram, Nunna and Kothapet police station limits and rescued the babies kept in the houses of the mediators, Police Commissioner S.V. Rajasekhar Babu told the media, here, on Thursday.

The gang allegedly trafficked the children from Delhi and Mumbai by paying ₹1 lakh and above for each. They had plans to sell babies for ₹5 lakh each.

The accused have been identified Balagam Sarojini, Garikamukku Vijayalakshmi, Vadapalli Blessy, Shaik Baba Vali, Amadala Mani, Shaik Farheena, Shanka Yohan and P. Srinivas Rao and B. Kiran Kumar, all hailing from Vijayawada and Guntur districts, and Muktipeta Nandini of Hyderabad.



Commissioner of Police S.V. Rajasekhar Babu producing the accused before the media in Vijayawada on Thursday. K.V.S. GIRI

Held in similar cases

Sarojini, Vijayalakshmi, Mani and Farheena were arrested earlier in similar cases in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and were on bail.

Explaining about the modus operandi of the gang, Mr. Rajasekhar Babu said the accused would identify childless couples and sell the trafficked children to them.

"We are trying to nab Kiran Sharma, Suri, Kavitha and Satish, who allegedly supplied babies to the gang," Assistant Commissioners of Police K. Latha Kumari and N. V. Durga Rao said, who monitored the operations, said.

Teachers told to pass on heritage knowledge

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Former Supreme Court Judge Justice Jasti Chelameswar on Thursday stressed the importance of helping children understand heritage.

Speaking at the inaugural session of a two-day workshop for teachers organised by Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH-Vijayawada), in collaboration with Heritage Education and Communication Service (HECS), Justice Chelameswar emphasised the need to know all about "our local heritage".

"We are well-versed with national and international events, but we often lack awareness of our local history," he said and went on to cite the example of Sri Krishnadevaraya, a prominent king of southern India, whose birth and death dates remain unrecorded.

Contrary to this, he pointed out, King Henry VIII of England, a contemporary of Krishnadevaraya, had extensively documented history.



Police dog 'Sonu', who helped solve a murder, receives a pat from the Kadapa district police officials on Thursday.

Police dog 'Sonu' helps solve murder case in Kadapa

A.D. Rangarajan
KADAPA

Upon hearing that Sonu was moving around his residence, the accused surrendered before the police

Police dog 'Sonu' played a pivotal role in finding the accused in a murder that took place in Kadapa city on December 11 evening.

According the police, Vallepu Venkaiah alias Venkat was found dead at NGO plots in Swaraj Nagar on December 11, and based on the complaint by his mother Vallepu Subbamma, a case was registered at RIMS Police Station.

When the dog squad was pressed into service, Sonu reached the crime scene and went on the trail of the accused, significantly contributing to the rapid arrest of the accused. On coming to know of Sonu moving around his residence, the accused, identified as Arun Kumar, and a juvenile reportedly involved in the case surrendered before the police on December 17.

Arun was produced before a court, which remanded him in judicial custody. The minor was sent to a juvenile home. Material objects and electronic evidence like mobile phones, photographs have been forwarded for forensic examination.

Friendship goes sour

Childhood friends Arun and Venkat turned into enemies after Arun failed to repay some money that Venkat had arranged for him by mortgaging his motorcycle. After Venkat hurled abuses at Arun's family members, the latter nursed a grudge. He got him drunk and then hit him on his head with cement blocks, according to the police.

Sonu was recently inducted into the district police dog squad at Mangalagiri headquarters, on completion of the dual training on detecting explosives as well as criminals. Sub-Divisional Police Officer (Kadapa) A. Venkateswarlu called Sonu "a proven asset" and gave him a pat on its back, telling him: "Well done Sonu".

Durgesh rebuts Bhumana's charges on land allotment

P. Sujatha Varma
VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Tourism Kandula Durgesh on Thursday rebutted the statements made by YSRCP leader and former TTD chairperson Bhumana Karunakar Reddy on land allotment made to the Oberoi Hotel project in Tirupati.

In a statement, the Minister rejected the allegations and called them "irresponsible". He warned the YSRCP leader that any attempts to play with the sentiments of Lord Venkateswara's devotees would not be tolerated.

Recalling the developments, the Minister said the YSRCP government, through G.O. No. 24 issued on November 24, 2021, had allotted 20 acres of land in Survey No. 604 of Peruru village, located at the foothills of Tirumala, to Mumtaz Hotels Private Limited, an affiliate of the Oberoi Group. The project was approved with a proposed investment of ₹250 crore, aiming to develop the Oberoi Resorts with 100 villas, restaurants, banquet hall, spa, fitness centre, coffee shop, bar, and other luxury amenities, promising employment to 1,500 people.

The Minister said Mr. Bhumana had approved and endorsed the project, while the then Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy laid the foundation stone for the project, without consulting religious institutions or key stakeholders. This triggered widespread protests from religious bodies and the public, demanding protection to Tirumala's sanctity, said Mr. Durgesh. He said the TDP-led coalition government, in view of the public sentiment, cancelled the lease on August 7, 2025 after the TTD Board passed a resolution (G.O. No. 102 dated 18.11.2024) requesting cancellation of the land allotment.

He said as the project was stalled for nearly four years, the Oberoi Group reportedly incurred losses of ₹14 crore towards project preparation, construction timelines, recruitment and training. Additionally, the State suffered losses in tourism revenue and brand value. The Minister questioned who should be held responsible for these losses and blamed the YSRCP government for it.

Corrective measures

He said to restore investor confidence, the coalition government initiated corrective measures and explored alternative land for the Oberoi Group. After examining the land at Daminidu and coordinating with the Tirupati District Collector, suitable land was identified in Survey No. 588/A of Tirupati R.S. village, approximately 500 metres opposite the earlier site. Saying that the hotel group had accepted the Tirupati R.S. land, the Minister said it had requested for early allotment of the new land along with certain concessions and adjustments in payments on account of financial losses it had incurred due to the delay. Mr. Durgesh strongly denied the allegation that TTD land worth ₹460 crore was allotted in exchange for tourism land valued at ₹18 crore.

Four held for selling lottery tickets

The Hindu Bureau
CHITTOOR

Police have arrested four persons for allegedly selling lottery tickets, which is banned in Andhra Pradesh, in Chittoor town.

The Chittoor sub-division police, led by Deputy Superintendent of Police T. Sainath, received information about the sale of lottery tickets in the town.

During searches in Chittoor town and Janakarpalli Junction, the team caught four persons selling the tickets and seized ₹25,200 from them.

Kerala lottery

Police said the accused had been selling Kerala lottery online tickets at a higher price to earn easy money. The arrested were identified as B. Nanda Kumar, Sendhil Kumaran, S. Ansar and N. Latheef, all residents of Chittoor town and its outskirts. The police appealed to the people not to purchase lottery tickets and waste their hard earned money.

Road to the rescue



Challenges galore: A farmer drying freshly harvested paddy on a road in an Andhra–Telangana border village on Thursday, highlighting the challenges faced by farmers during the post-harvest season. G.N. RAO

Timings
VIJAYAWADA

FRIDAY, DEC. 19	
RISE	06:30
SET	17:39
RISE	05:48
SET	16:58
SATURDAY, DEC. 20	
RISE	06:30
SET	17:40
RISE	06:41
SET	17:50
SUNDAY, DEC. 21	
RISE	06:31
SET	17:40
RISE	07:32
SET	18:45

Vijayawada Weather	max	min
Machilipatnam	30	19
Guntur Town	30	15
Vijayawada City	30	18

Vijayawada City Today
30°C The weather will be dry. Day will be slight warm. Night will be pleasant.

Vijayawada City Tomorrow
31°C Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be slight warm. Night will be pleasant. Mostly dry weather to prevail.

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THE HINDU
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CM praises 'Champion Farmers'

The Hindu Bureau
NELLORE

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday lauded SPSR Nellore District Collector Himanshu Shukla's concept of 'Champion Farmers'. He congratulated Mr. Shukla for designing this programme to directly benefit the farmers by connecting all the departments.

On the second day of the Collectors' Conference held under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister at the Secretariat in Amaravati, Mr. Himanshu Shukla presented the details of the 'Champion Farmers' programme, explaining water reserves, crop patterns and the measures taken to increase farmers' income.

Champion Farmers will be trained to use the latest agricultural techniques and continuously guided by the local Village Agricultural Assistants (VAAs) for the next couple of years.

Farmer develops cost-effective weeding tool



Reddypalem farmer P. Lakshmi Narayana removing weeds using his 'cycle weeder' at his field in Reddypalem, Kothapatnam mandal, Prakasam district. KOMMURI SRINIVAS

The Hindu Bureau
ONGOLE

The 'cycle weeder' was developed by P. Lakshmi Narayana from Reddypalem village with an old bicycle and costs only ₹1,000 to make

P. Lakshmi Narayana, a farmer from Reddypalem village in Kothapatnam mandal of Prakasam district, has developed a simple weeder that costs just ₹1,000.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, he said the idea to make his 'Cycle Weeder' came from a random discussion on getting rid of weeds on fields without spending large sums. He said the tool, which he made by removing the front wheel of his old bicycle and welding a blade to it, allows him to easily weed an acre of field alone, a task which otherwise took 10 workers to complete.

Mr. Lakshmi Narayana currently cultivates chilli, groundnut and vegetables on his own one-and-half acre in the village. He pays a farmhand ₹1,500 a day to weeds his field using the 'cycle weeder'. He said he used to spend over ₹5,000 a day for the task earlier.

"Taking their cue from the 'cycle weeder', many local farmers have made similar tools by spending ₹1,000 at the wielding shop," he claimed.

Spurious liquor case: no breather for Jogi

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

A court here on Thursday rejected the bail petition of former Minister Jogi Ramesh and three others in spurious liquor case.

The Bhavanipuram Excise police had arrested the main accused, Addepalli Janardhana Rao, his brother A. Jaganmohan Rao, Jogi Ramesh and his brother Jogi Ramu for allegedly manufacturing and selling spurious liquor.

Case against Vamsi

Meanwhile, the Machavaram police of the NTR Commissionerate registered a case against former MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi for allegedly attacking a person, identified as N. Sunil, in Vijayawada a few days ago.

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A VJ-VJE

Jagan complains to Governor against PPP in medical colleges

YSRCP president says that the party will challenge the matter in the court if the State government does not withdraw the decision, and appeals for a rethink on the issue

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

A delegation of YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) led by its president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy lodged a complaint with Governor S. Abdul Nazeer against the PPP model of construction of medical colleges, maintaining that its intention was to privatise the colleges and that it would be detrimental to medical education in the State.

Addressing media persons later, Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy said he submitted a report to the Governor on the one crore signature campaign organised by the YSRCP against the government's attempts to "privatise the medical colleges under the garb of PPP" and that the matter would be challenged in the courts, to which the papers containing 1,04,11,136 signatures would be submitted if required to convey the gravity of the situation.


YSRCP president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy greeting supporters while proceeding to Lok Bhavan in Vijayawada on Thursday. G.N. RAO

He said the YSRCP would not keep quiet if the government does not give up its plan to privatise the colleges, and that completion of the construction of the colleges which came to a pause in 2024, would require ₹5,000 crore and the government appeared to be reluctant to spend it from its ₹2 lakh crore budget. The government owed an explanation for this, Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy said, while appealing for a rethink on the decision.

Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy pointed out that during the YSRCP regime, a medical college was sanctioned for every district to make free super - specialty services accessible to the people through the teaching hospitals.

Public satisfaction is true measure of officials' performance, says Naidu

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

The two-day Collectors' Conference ended on Thursday with an assertion by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu that public satisfaction was the only true measure of the officers' performance and announcement of surprise inspections by him beginning in January.

"Numbers do matter but I will not entirely believe them. I will soon make field visits to see for myself to what extent the government's promises are being delivered," he said, reiterating that the NDA was under the obligation to fulfil the people's wishes.

Mr. Chandrababu Naidu said the government would fix a Welfare Calendar in April 2026 and wanted the Central funds to be fully utilised in order to garner additional sums for implementation of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes. He ordered that the presentations given by the Collectors of six districts on best practices related to various departments adopted by them to be followed across the State to achieve better results.


Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu speaking on the second and concluding day of the Collectors' Conference on Thursday.

He told the Collectors to duly focus on resolving the '22-A land disputes', noting that they were an impediment to development in many areas, and to register cases under the Preventive Detention Act against individuals committing frauds thereof.

The CM went on to instruct the Collectors and SPs not to tolerate political interference in land disputes, when Deputy CM K. Pawan Kalyan pointed it out by citing some specific instances in Visakhapatnam district. He exhorted the Collectors to eliminate corruption in the Registration Department. Boats should be immediately purchased for strengthening coastal security.

Speed of Delivering Governance should be the new norm, he said, adding that the Collectors should strive to realise the potential of the respective districts in various fields.

In a social media post, the Chief Minister said he reviewed the progress achieved in the last 18 months and reflected on key areas to strengthen governance. "Accountability to the people is central to our responsibility, and service to them is our foremost duty," he stated.

Jagan misleading people: Minister

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav on Thursday accused YSRCP president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy of deliberately obstructing development and misleading public through "irresponsible protests and false propaganda."

At a press conference, Mr. Satya Kumar condemned the "threats" allegedly made to companies involved in the construction of medical colleges, and challenged Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy to seek a CBI inquiry, or legal action, if he had proof of any wrongdoing.

The Minister defended the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model of developing the medical colleges, stating that it was an NDA policy and it was also used during the previous YSR and YSRCP regimes for services such as '108', Aarogyasri, and Cath Labs. He dismissed claims on the misuse of funds, and asserted that the PPP model hospitals would increase medical seats and healthcare access for the poor.

Meanwhile, addressing the media in Amaravati, Lanka Dinakar, Chairman of the 20-Point Programme, said that Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy's remarks reflected his flawed understanding of the PPP framework.

Sharing a similar view, TDP official spokesperson and Swachh Andhra Corporation Chairman K. Pattabhiram said in Mangalagiri that the YSRCP was adopting contradictory stance on the PPP model.

INBRIEF

Naidu leaves for Delhi; to meet six Union Ministers

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu left for New Delhi on Thursday evening. Mr. Naidu is scheduled to meet six Union Ministers and discuss the Centre's support for various development projects in Andhra Pradesh. Mr. Naidu is scheduled to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister of Jal Shakti C.R. Patil, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri, and Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal.

CM to take part in Swachh event in Kasimkota tomorrow

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu will visit Anakapalli district on Saturday to participate in Swarna Andhra - Swachh Andhra' programme. Mr. Naidu will visit Tallapalem village in Kasimkota mandal to participate in the programme and later attend the Praja Vedika, where he will interact with the villagers. He will also interact with the party cadre before leaving for Amaravati.

Centre okays procurement of pulses at MSP in State

The Union government has approved procurement of pulses in Andhra Pradesh under the Price Support Scheme (PSS) for the Kharif 2025-26 season, extending Minimum Support Price (MSP) coverage to farmers. The decision was conveyed by Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in a letter to State Agriculture Minister K. Atchannaidu. According to the communication, the Centre has permitted procurement at MSP, 1,16,690 MT of tur (red gram), 903 MT of moong (green gram) and 28,440 MT of urad (black gram) in the State. The approval followed a request from the State government.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

REMEMBRANCE



N.KAMESWARI
(Wife of Late Dr. N.Jayaraman)
06.01.1925 - 19.12.2021
Deeply missed by all Family Members and Friends

DEATH

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
LALITHA VENKATESWARAN



09 JULY 1946 — 17 DEC 2025

"... WHO WILL BE DEEPLY MISSED BY ALL FAMILY MEMBERS AND EVERYONE WHO HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO HAVE BEEN IN HER PRESENCE.

Sandeep, Priyanka, Shri, Kumar, Sangeeta, Shiva, Rudra
61/1, Near BG-7 Gate, Clement Town Contonment, Clement Town, Dehradun, UTTARAKHAND, 248002
Contact no +919560378876

यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Union Bank of India

Regional Office , Krishna plaza, D.No 26-21-22,Nagaram Palem, G.T ROAD, GUNTUR, A.P.PIN:522004 Tel: 0863-2241184, 2243572 Email: zogtr@unionbankofindia.com

PREMISES WANTED

Union Bank of India, a leading Nationalized Bank, requires a well-constructed / under construction/ to be constructed premise (ready to modify as per Bank's requirement) at **1.Kolakalur Branch In & Around of our existing Kolakalur branch area(Kolakalur Main Road,Kolakaluru, Tenali Mandal, Guntur District-522307)** with **1400+/- 10% Sq.Ft.** of carpet area preferably on the Ground Floor with adequate parking space. (The owners/landlord's **NEED TO** CONSTRUCT STRONG ROOM as per bank's specifications).
2.Chandramouli Nagar Offsite ATM In &Nearby location to +Chandramouli Nagar, Guntur Area with**60-100 Sq.Ft.** of carpet area preferably on the Ground Floor with good frontage and facing main road for Offsite ATM premises

The owners should have clear marketable title of the property, occupancy certificate with necessary permission for commercial use from concerned local authorities. The premises should have all the facilities as outlined in the RFP. Prospective vendors holding ownership or power to negotiate on behalf of the owners may collect the technical bid/price bid formats from Regional Office or any other branch of Union Bank of India or download from the website **www.unionbankofindia.co.in** or **http:/tenders.gov.in** and should submit their technical and price bid offers in separate sealed covers super scribing **(1) "Technical bid" for Kolakalur Branch / Chandramouli Nagar Offsite ATM** and (2) **"Price bid" for Kolakalur Branch / Chandramouli Nagar Offsite ATM** on or before **09.01.2026** up to **3 PM** to Union Bank of India Regional Office at the given address. The technical bid will be opened on **09.01.2026 at 5 PM** at the above address in the presence of vendor/their representative. No brokers or intermediaries please. Priority will be accorded to the property to be leased by the public sector undertakings or Government/Semi Government bodies. Bank reserves the right to accept or reject the offers without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Date:19.12.2025 — Deputy General Manager & Regional Head

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I, BENGALURU
4th Floor, Telephone House Builiding Rajbhavan Road Bengaluru - 560001

Form No. 14 (See Regulation 33(2))
DEMAND NOTICE
Notice under Sections 25 to 28 of the Recovery of Debts & Bankruptcy Act, 1993 and Rule 2 of Second Schedule to the Income Tax Act, 1961.
RC No. 546/2021 IN OA No. 956/2019
Karnataka Bank Limited V/s G. BASAVARAJU
Karnataka Bank Limited, Bellary Branch, 1st Floor, Meenakshi Lodge Building, Meenakshi Circle, Bangalore Road, Bellary - 583 101, Karnataka . **... Certificate Holders**
To
Sri G. Basvaraju S/o. Sri Danappa, Residing at : G-2-117, B. C. Colony , Bollanaguddam Village, Bommanahal Mandal, Bommanahal - 515 870, Ananthapur Taluk and District. **... Certificate Debtors**
This is to notify that as per the Recovery Certificate issued in pursuance of orders passed by the Presiding Officer, DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, BANGALORE (DRT-1) in **OA /956/2019** an amount of **Rs.49,46,678.26** (Rupees Forty Nine Lakhs Forty Six Thousands Six Hundred Seventy Eight and Paise Twenty Six Only) along with pedentellite and future interest and cost till till realization. 2. You are hereby directed to pay the above sum within 15 days of the receipts of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993 and Rules there under. 3.You are hereby ordered to declare on an affidavit the particulars of yours assets on or before the next date of hearing. 4. You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned within 15 days of the receipts of the notice, for further proceedings. 5. In addition to the sum aforesaid, you will be liable to pay: (a) Such interests as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the certificate/ execution proceedings. (b) All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and warrants and other processess and all other proceedings taken for recovering the amount due.
Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on **03.12.2021**
Sd/- Recovery Officer- II,
Debts Recovery Tribunal (DRT -1)

Note: Attention is invited to Rule 16 of the Second Schedule of the Income Tax Act 1961 read with Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 which is reproduced below: "Rule 16 (1) Where a notice has been served on a defaulter under Rule 2, the defaulter or his representative in interest shall not be competent to mortgage, charge, lease or otherwise deal with any property belonging to him except with the permission of the Debt Recovery Officer, nor shall any Civil Court issue any process against such property in execution of a decree for the payment of money. (2) Where an attachment has been made under this Schedule any private transfer or delivery of the property attached or of any interest therein and any payment to the defaulter of any debt, dividend or other monies contrary to such attachment, shall be void, as against all claims enforceable under the attachment".3) You are also liable to disclose your assets both movable and immovable to this Tribunal along with the Income Tax Returns of last 5 years.

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PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Smt. SIVA LAKSHMI,** W/o Ex-No. 14356894 Sepoy **BADDI REDDI NAGESWARA RAO** resident of Door No.7-9-25/2, Mulagala vari street, Pathuru, Kanaka Durga Temple back side, Tadepalligudem - Village and Post and Mandal, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, Pin: 534 101., have changed my Name from the existing **SIVA LAKSHMI to BADDIREDDY SIVA LAKSHMI** as per Affidavit 18/12/2025 executed in presence of Notary Public, Eluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **RANGA REDDY SABBASANI** (Old Name) S/o. SABBASANI BALIREDDY residing at H.No.s3-374, Srirama Nagar, Near 6th APSP, Mangalagiri, Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh, India., i have Changed my name as **SABBASANI BALA RANGA REDDY (New Name) S/o. SABBASANI BALIREDDY.** Hereafter my name is known as **SABBASANI BALA RANGA REDDY (New Name) S/o. SABBASANI BALIREDDY.**

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FOR SALE
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PUBLIC NOTICE

TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN
This is to inform you that M/s. **Tapair Engineering Pvt. Ltd.,** Chennai, is a separate legal entity, incorporated in the year 2022, and is an Authorized Dealer of M/s. **Atlas Copco (India) Pvt. Ltd.** for the South Region of Tamilnadu, India.
We further clarify that M/s. Tapair Engineering Pvt. Ltd. has no legal or business association whatsoever with M/s.Tapco Pneumatics Pvt Ltd.
M/s. **Tapco Pneumatics Pvt. Ltd.** is not authorized to sell or represent any Atlas Copco range of products across India.
In the event that any person or organization is approached with **Atlas Copco products** claimed to be supplied by M/s. **Tapco Pneumatics Pvt. Ltd.,** we request that such offers not be entertained. M/s. **Tapair Engineering Pvt. Ltd.** shall not be responsible for any such transactions or representations.
This notice is issued for general information and necessary compliance.
TAPAIR ENGINEERING PVT LTD
No. 76A/1, 11th St., SIDCO Indl. Estate, Ambattur, Ch-98

PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SUMAN PECHERLA (Old Name),** Residing at Macharlavaripalem Village, T.P. Gudur Mandal, SPSR Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh-524311. Here by declare that I have changed my name as **SUMAN PERICHERLA (New Name)** S/o. ADINARAYANA PERICHERLA (Aadhar Card).

SITUATION VACANT
GENERAL

AISECT
Recruitment of Vocational Trainers For implementing Vocational Education under Samagra Shiksha across Govt. schools in Andhra Pradesh. Contractual-Institutional Positions for following sector/trade: "Banking, Financial Services & Insurance (BFSI)"
Applications are invited from eligible candidates for Vocational Trainers and Coordinators for above mentioned Sector/Trade in various Govt. schools of Andhra Pradesh for Implementation of Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Vocationalization of Schools in alignment with NSQF.
Age Limit- For Vocational Trainers: 21-37 years (as on 1.12.2025).

Sl.No.	Sector
1.	Vocational Trainer Banking, Financial Services & Insurance (BFSI)

Eligibility : Post Graduate in commerce/ management/ finance from a recognized institute/university Preference given to higher education with MBA (Finance)
Districts: Anantapur(1),Annamaya(2) Chittoor(2),YSR Kadapa(1), Kurnool (3),Nandyal((3) Eligible Only for Female Candidates), Sri Sathya Sai(3)
How to Apply: Eligible candidates can apply with the following link:
For Vocational Trainers
https://www.aisect.org/AP-VTrecruitment2025
Only Shortlisted candidates will be called for the recruitment process
Last Date of Application: 24/12/2025
Note: All Communication for Job application to be done through e-mails. All positions are purely on Contractual basis. This is not a Government job and the selection process is strictly based on Merit and Management reserves the Right to accept/reject an Application without assigning any reasons whatsoever.
For any queries do contact : aisectnsqfap@gmail.com

SITUATION VACANT
GENERAL

JOB OPPORTUNITY
Under Skill Tree Consulting Limited (Contractual Basis)
Corporate Lotus Park, Goregaon, Mumbai-400063, INDIA
Skill Tree Consulting Limited, an NSDC empaneled Training Partner, invites **Applications** from candidates with prescribed qualification & experience for deployment as **Vocational Trainers in Secondary & Higher Secondary, APSWRS, APTWRS,KGBV&ASHRAM in Andhra Pradesh**
Agriculture (20) –Post Graduation/Graduate/B Tech In Agriculture/Horticulture from a recognized institution / university/B.Voc (Bachelor of Vocation) in any Science discipline.
Anakapalli-2, ASR-6, EG-1, Kakinada-5, Manyam-3, Srikakulam-2, Vizianagaram-1
Apparel, Made-ups and Home Furnishing(15) - Post Graduation/Graduate/Diploma in Textiles and Clothing or relevant area.
Anakapalli-2, ASR-3, Eluru-4, Kakinada-2, Konaseema-1, NTR-1, Palnadu-1, Srikakulam-1
Beauty & Wellness(20) -Any Graduate with Diploma in Cosmetology/Beauty Therapy/Beauty Culture.
Anakapalli-1, Bapatla-3, EG-2, Eluru-3, Guntur-1, Kakinada-1, Konaseema-1, Manyam-1, NTR-3 Srikakulam-2, Visakapatnam-1, Vizianagaram-1
Electronics & Hardware (24) - Graduation in Electrical & Electronics Engineering/Diploma in Electrical Engineering with Graduation in Science/Diploma in Electrical & Electronics with Graduation in Science Subject/B.Voc (bachelor in vocational) in Electronics.
Anakapalli-6, ASR-4, EG-2, Kakinada-3, Konaseema-1, Manyam-2, Srikakulam-4, Visakapatnam-1, VZA-1
Power (21) -BE/ BTech/Diploma in Electrical Engineering/B.Voc (Bachelor in vocational) in Electrical.
Annamayya-3, Chittoor-1, EG-1, Eluru-2, Guntur-1, Kakinada-1, Krishna-1, Palnadu-2, Prakasam-1, Sri Satya sai-4, Srikakulam-1, Tirupati-1, YSR Kadapa-2
Retail - 23 - Graduate/Diploma in Retail Management/MBA/PG Diploma in Marketing, PG Diploma in Retail Management.
Anakapalli-1, ASR-1, Bapatla-1, EG-4, Eluru-5, Guntur-1, Krishna-2, Srikakulam-1, Vizianagaram-2, WG-5
Vocational Coordinator (4) - Masters (3+2 or 4+2) with 2years of experience at district Level in manager/ coordinator position (Age limit:25 Years to 37 Years as on 1st December 2025).
ASR-2, Vizianagaram-1, East Godavari-1
All-inclusive Gross Honorarium for Vocational Coordinators-30,000/-
Minimum Competency: Effective Communication Skills (oral and written),Basic Computing Skills, Technical Competency, Soft Skills, and Facilitation Skills.
All-inclusive Gross Honorarium for Vocational Trainers- 24,000/- per month.
Age limit of Trainers 21- 37 years (As on 1st December 2025).
All communications for job applications to be done through - mails. All positions are purely on contractual basis. This is not a government job, and the selection process is strictly based on merit. Only Shortlisted candidates will be called for the examination.
Last Date of Applications for both Positions: 23/12/2025.
Exam Date for Vocational Trainer & VCs: 26/12/2025
Scan QR for Vocational Trainer (VT) Application Copy paste the below link in browser https://forms.office.com/r/RTzXYstQh
Scan QR for Vocational Coordinator(VC)Application Copy paste the below link in browser https://forms.office.com/r/ngXMqTKcDw

SITUATION VACANT
GENERAL

JOB OPPORTUNITY (Contractual Basis)
INDUS EDUTRAIN
Indus Edutrain Pvt. Ltd
304, Chintamani Classique
Churi Wadi, Goregaon, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400063
Indus Edutrain Pvt.Ltd, an NSDC empaneled Training Partner, invites **Applications** from candidates with prescribed qualification & experience for deployment as **Vocational Trainers in Secondary & Higher Secondary,** APSWRS, APTWRS, KGBV & ASHRAM in Andhra Pradesh
Automotive (16) - Graduation in Automobile Engineering /Mechanical Engineering from a recognized Institute /University. **OR** Diploma in Automobile Engineering / Mechanical Engineering from a recognized Institute / University. **OR** B.Voc (bachelor in vocational) in Automobile engineering from recognized institute / University.
Anantapuram - 1, Annamayya - 6, Chittoor - 5, Sri satya Sai - 3, Tirupati - 1.
Agriculture (23)–Post Graduation / Graduate / B Tech In Agriculture/Horticulture from a recognized institution / university / B.Voc (Bachelor of Vocational) in any Science discipline. Bapatla - 4, Guntur - 1, Krishna - 1, Kurnool - 3, Nandyal - 2, NTR - 3, Palnadu -1, Nellore - 4, Srisatya sai - 1, Tirupati - 3.
Beauty & Wellness (12) Diploma in Cosmetology / Beauty Therapy / Beauty Culture after graduation from a recognized institution.
Anantapur - 3, Annamayya - 2, Chittor - 3, Kurnool - 1, Sri Satya sai - 1, Tirupati - 2
Electronics & Hardware (43) - Bachelor of Engineering / Technology in Electricals OR Electronics OR Graduate with Diploma in Electronics/ OR SSC Certified on the said job role OR B.Voc (bachelor in vocational) in Electronics from recognized institute / University.
Anantapuram - 3, Annamayya - 3, Chittoor - 13, Kurnool - 6, Nandyal -1, Prakasam - 5, SPSR Nellore - 1, Sri Satya Sai -6, Tirupati - 4, YSR Kadapa - 1.
Food Processing (3) - B.Sc / B.Tech /BE in Food Technology/ Food Engineering/ Food Production/ Hotel Management from a recognized Institute /University. **Or** 3-year diploma in Hotel Management and Catering Technology from recognized (AICTE) approved University, Colleges. **Or** 1- year Diploma in Patisserie and bakery arts from reputed culinary Institute in India. **Or** 1- year craft course. Or 1 - Year Diploma in Culinary Arts with any Graduation. YSR Kadapa - 1, SPSR Nellore - 1, Prakasam - 1.
Health Care (35) - B.Sc. Nursing and Midwifery (4 years) or 3½ years Diploma in GNM.
Anantapuram - 6, Annamayya - 3, Bapatla - 2, Eluru - 1, Kurnool - 2, Nandyal - 3, Palnadu - 10, Prakasam - 2, SPSR Nellore - 1, Sri Satya Sai - 4, YSR Kadapa - 1.
Retail (21) - Graduate in Retail Management **OR** Diploma in Retail Management **OR** P.G. Diploma in Marketing/Retail Management **OR** MBA in Marketing. Preference given to higher education with MBA (Retail Marketing & Finance) and/ or PG Diploma in Retail Management.
Anantapur - 2, Bapatla - 1, Kurnool - 4, Nandyal - 2, Palnadu - 2, Prakasam - 2, SPSR Nellore - 2, Sri Satya Sai -2, Tirupati - 3, YSR Kadapa - 1.
Vocational Coordinator (3) - Masters (3+2 or 4+2) with two years of experience at district level in manager/ coordinator position. Age limit 25-37 years (as on 01.12.2025).
Bapatla - 1, Palnadu - 1, West Godavari - 1.
All-inclusive Gross Honorarium for Vocational Coordinators-30,000/-
Minimum Competency: Effective Communication Skills (oral and written),Basic Computing Skills, Technical Competency, Soft Skills, and Facilitation Skills.
All-inclusive Gross Honorarium for Vocational Trainers- 24,000/- per month.
Age limit of Trainers 21- 37 years (As of 1st December 2025).
All communications for job applications to be done through - mails. All positions are purely on contractual basis. This is not a government job, and the selection process is strictly based on merit.Only Shortlisted candidates will be called for the examination.
Last Date of Applications for both Positions : 24/12/2025 . Exam Date for Vocational Trainer & VCs : 26/12/2025
Scan QR for VT Application Copy Paste the below link in browswer https://forms.gle/6vf2L2ucN6EW5uPJ7
Scan QR for VC Application Copy Paste the below link in browswer https://forms.gle/XZuZfpoQkredNgJF6

SBI STATE BANK OF INDIA
SME PATAMATA BRANCH (00578), NEAR AUTO NAGAR BUS STOP, AUTO NAGAR, Vijayawada - 520 007, NTR District,

DEMAND NOTICE
Under Section 13 (2) of "The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002"
To,
M/s. Paramashiva Motors Private Limited, Rep by its Director 1. Sri Maganti Venkata Phani Krishna S/o.Maganti Venugopal, 2. Smt Maganti Sundari W/o. Magani Venugopal, D.No:38-8-17, Punnamathota, M.G Road, Opp: All Indian Radio Station, Vijayawada, N.T.R District, Andhra Pradesh-520010 (Maruti Suzuki NEXA Showroom)
M/s. Paramashiva Motors Private Limited, Rep by its Director 1. Sri Maganti Venkata Phani Krishna S/o.Maganti Venugopal, 2. Smt Maganti Sundari W/o. Magani Venugopal, Sy no:507, Wyra Road, Velugumatla Village, Khammam Dt, Khammam, Telangana-507318 (Maruti Suzuki NEXA Showroom)
Guarantors: 1. Sri Maganti Venkata Phani Krishna S/o.Maganti Venugopal, H.No:40-15-8/2, Nandamurivari Street, Brundavan Colony, Labbipet, Vijayawada, N.T.R District-520010. 2. Smt Maganti Sundari W/o. Maganti Venugopal, H.No:40-15-8/2, Nandamurivari Street, Brundavan Colony, Labbipet, Vijayawada, N.T.R District-520010. 3. M/s. Mithra Auto Agencies Pvt Ltd, Rep by its Director 1. Sri Maganti Venkata Phani Krishna S/o.Maganti Venugopal, 2. Smt Maganti Sundari W/o. Maganti Venugopal, D.No:32-2-6, Madhu Mahalakshmi Chambers, Beside Cross Road Hotel, Vijayawada, N.T.R District, Andhra Pradesh-520010, 4. M/s. Mithra Auto Agencies Pvt Ltd, Rep by its Director 1. Sri Maganti Venkata Phani Krishna S/o.Maganti Venugopal, 2. Smt Maganti Sundari W/o. Maganti Venugopal, Sy no:182, Opp PCI Godown, Sai Prabhath Nagar, Gandhi Chowk Post, Pedda Thanda, Khammam, Telangana-507003
Sir/Madam,
You have availed various credit facilities from SBI, SME Patamata Branch (00578), Beside Auto Nagar Bus Stop, Vijayawada, NTR District and further secured by mortgage of the immovable property referred to herein below against which the outstanding dues are mentioned as here under Loan Sum of aggregating Rs.15,19,31,470/- (Rupees Fifteen Crores Nineteen Lakhs Thirty One Thousand Four Hundred Seventy only) as on 11.12.2025. You are also liable to pay future interest w.e.f. 11.12.2025 as the contractual rate on the aforesaid amount together with incidental expenses, cost, charges, etc.
Description of the immovable property/ies
Immovable Property mortgaged by M/s.Mithra Auto Agencies Private Limited Rep by its Director Sri Maganti Venkata Phani Krishna vide Regd Doc No. 5167 of 2022 dt.12.09.2022, SRO Khammam:-
All that part and parcel of Commercial site to an Extent of 2422.61 Sq Yards or 2025.61 sqmts site of H.No;8-2/3, (Assessment No:1120) in Plot No's:1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9, in Sy.No:182, along with Acc Sheet Roof Shed and plinth area RCC Ground floor :7695.98 Sq ft RCC first Floor: 7695.98 Sq ft, and G I Sheet roofed body shed:3211.76 sq ft therein Situated at Edulapuram Revenue Village, Peddathanda Grama Panchayath, Khammam Rural Mandal, Khammam District, standing in the name of M/s.Mithra Auto Agencies Private Limited Rep by its Director Sri Maganti Venkata Phani Krishna vide Regd Doc No. 5167 of 2022 dt.12.09.2022, SRO Khammam,and bounded by: **East:** House of Bharatamma & Open Place **South:** 100.0 Feet Wide R & B Road **West:** Plot No:5 belongs to Kavuri Venkateswara Rao **North:** 30.0 Feet Wide Road.
M/s.Mithra Auto Agencies Private Limited Rep by Sri Maganti Venkata Phani Krishna S/o.Maganti Venugopal has created equitable mortgage of the above mentioned property to secure the outstanding liability to the bank. **Demand notice dated 11.12.2025** under Section 13 (2) of the above act was issued by the bank on you. But notice was not acknowledged by the borrowers/guarantor. **Hence this paper publication**. As you have failed to adhere to the terms of the sanction and repayment, the account is classified as **NPA on 08.12.2025** as per RBI guidelines. You are hereby called upon to pay the above said amount with contractual rate of interest within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which as a secured creditor, the undersigned will be constrained to initiate action to enforce the provisions of the SARFAESI Act, 2002 against the aforesaid security under Sec.13 (4) without any further notice
This is without prejudice to any other rights available to us under the subject Act and/or any other Law in force.
Date : 18-12-2025 — Authorised Officer
Place: Vijayawada — State Bank of India

Punished by BRS for speaking on 'vested interests', says Kavitha

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI


Kalvakuntla Kavitha

Former Lok Sabha MP K. Kavitha is all set to contest the next Assembly polls in Telangana due in 2028.

Currently, she on a yatra across all 33 districts of the State, under the aegis of a non-political organisation, Telangana Jagruti, founded by her during the movement for a separate State. She told *The Hindu*, "I do want to contest the next Assembly polls, the rest [party name, nature] of it is all technicality."

She said that she had no contact with family members, including her father, former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhara Rao, since her suspension.

"Neither have I reached out, nor has anyone reached out to me," she said, adding that she had been punished for "speaking the truth" about the "vested interests" that she said led to Mr. Rao's name appearing in a CBI case related to graft.

"Why is KCR's name in CBI today? It is because of a few people with vested interests. I know my father, he's fundamentally not the kind of person who would overlook such mistakes," she said.

"I pointed out some of these mistakes, a reason perhaps why one of my cousins was not reappointed as a Minister in the second term of our government. So, he [KCR] did try to control them, but the mishaps are huge and somebody needs to be held accountable. That is what I was flagging," the former MP said.

Focus of new outfit

As for the political programme for her new outfit, she said that while her father's government was good at welfare measures like the Raithu Bharose and others, people's basic needs were not met, which would be her focus: "drinking water, roads, employment."

"Don't get me wrong. The BRS government has done some good things. But there is a very thin line between welfare and development. Step out of Hyderabad and the disparity is great," she said.

"KCR has done a lot of good things, which was a kind of a relief to people. That is why a second time also the government came with a huge number of seats. But what happened after? People slowly started realising, we are not being represented or empowered. My main agenda is to get to social justice and equity, or at least set the course for it. We could have done things differently, but again, we resorted to being a regular political party," she said.

Arlekar called Pinarayi over V-C appointments: A-G to SC

This broke the deadlock between the Governor and Kerala CM over V-C appointments in two universities, Venkataramani tells apex court; we hope they keep talking, Justice Pardiwala says

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI


The Chancellor had a meeting with the Chief Minister and resolved the issue, the Attorney General told the Bench. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

The Supreme Court was informed by Attorney General R. Venkataramani on Thursday that Kerala Governor Rajendra Arlekar reached out to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to successfully break the deadlock over the appointments of Vice-Chancellors in the State-run A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Technological University and the Kerala University of Digital Sciences, Innovation and Technology.

"We hope they keep talking and arrive at an understanding in matters, keeping in mind the larger interests of the country," Justice J.B. Pardiwala said.

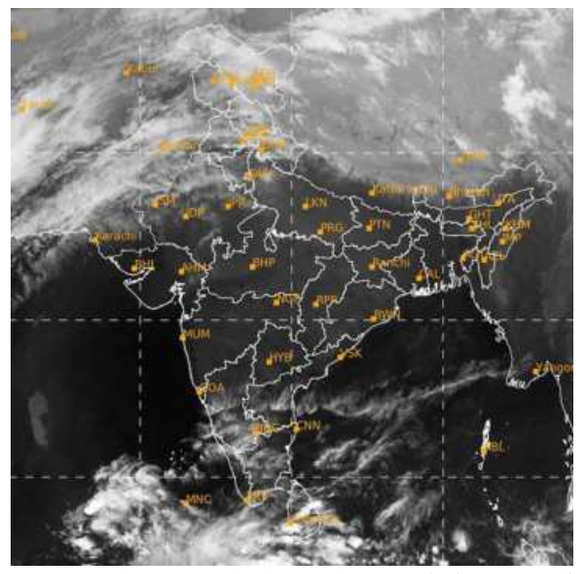
Justice K.V. Viswanathan, also on the Bench, said the "sailing should be smooth and waters should not be choppy" between the Governors and the elected governments in the States. The Bench termed the prolonged stand-off between the Governor, who is also Chancellor of the two universities, and the Kerala government a "saga" in which the ultimate stakeholders, the students, suffer. The Kerala government, represented by senior advocate Jaideep Gupta and advocate C.K. Sasi, said the apex court's intervention was instrumental in breaking the ice.

Justice Pardiwala's Bench had stepped in to constitute search committees under the chairmanship of a former apex court judge, Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia, to shortlist suitable names for the Vice-Chancellorships.

"The Chancellor told me that he himself should call the Chief Minister. He called. They had a meeting. That is how the issue got resolved," Mr. Venkataramani briefed the Bench.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday


TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.15 HRS)

Forecast for Friday: Cold day likely at isolated places over Uttar Pradesh. Dense/very dense fog likely at few/isolated pockets over Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	30.3	14.2	Kozhikode	—	33.0	23.8
Ahmedabad	—	30.3	15.4	Kurnool	—	31.6	15.5
Aizawl	—	23.5	10.4	Lucknow	—	19.5	11.6
Allahabad	—	15.0	10.6	Madurai	—	31.0	18.8
Bengaluru	—	28.2	15.6	Mangaluru	—	32.2	21.4
Bhopal	—	27.0	5.4	Mumbai	—	34.1	17.4
Bhubaneswar	—	27.2	13.9	Mysuru	—	29.0	15.4
Chandigarh	—	21.9	9.9	New Delhi	—	20.1	9.0
Chennai	—	29.1	22.2	Patna	—	16.9	14.0
Coimbatore	—	30.0	19.0	Port Blair	—	30.5	25.7
Dehradun	—	24.5	9.5	Puducherry	—	28.5	20.6
Gangtok	—	19.4	8.6	Pune	—	32.0	14.4
Goa	—	32.7	20.8	Raipur	—	28.5	11.8
Guwahati	—	27.4	11.9	Ranchi	—	23.0	9.1
Hubballi	—	30.0	13.0	Shillong	—	19.4	8.3
Hyderabad	—	30.4	11.7	Shimla	—	18.8	10.2
Imphal	—	25.0	6.2	Srinagar	—	10.6	0.2
Jaipur	—	28.8	11.1	Thiruvananthapuram	—	34.1	22.6
Kochi	—	31.6	24.6	Tiruchi	—	29.7	20.0
Kohima	—	18.2	7.0	Vijayawada	—	29.1	18.8
Kolkata	—	27.4	16.5	Visakhapatnam	—	28.3	18.9

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.56	..88	.45	...198	...160	
Bengaluru	...4	..22	.61	...134	...164	
Chennai	...8	..22	.36	...155	...121	
Delhi	.29	..72	108	...444	...426	
Hyderabad	.15	..20	.58	...134	...131	
Kolkata	...5	..21	.24	...290	...165	
Lucknow	...7	..41	.48	...273	...173	
Mumbai	.23	123	.12	...137	...148	
Pune	.19	..98	.87	...282	...243	
Visakhapatnam	.45	141	.20	...325	...273	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Noida, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 397 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu recorded a healthy AQI score of 29

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Kerala SIR: CEO lodges plaint over 'misuse' of absentees' list

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM


Rathan U. Kelkar

The office of Chief Electoral Officer (Kerala) Rathan U. Kelkar has lodged a complaint with the cyber police following reports of misinformation campaigns over list of absent, shifted or dead (ASD) voters.

In connection with the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral roll, Mr. Kelkar's office had published the ASD list online ahead of publishing the draft roll on December 23.

He said on Thursday the complaint was lodged following the "misuse" of the list on social media. He said his office had received information that some people were portraying the list as the final one.

He warned people to be on guard against such fake information. According to officials, the number of uncollectable forms (ASD voters) stands at 24.81 lakh.

This includes 6.49 lakh deceased voters, 6.89 lakh untraceable ones, 8.21 lakh shifted, 1.34 lakh duplicated names and 1.86 lakh in the 'others' category.

Special drive to enrol new voters after December 23

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

With the special intensive revision (SIR) of the electoral roll ending on Thursday in Kerala, election officials are planning a drive to enrol new voters – those who have turned 18 and others who have not yet enrolled – once the draft SIR roll gets published on December 23.

Kerala cine tourism to reunite *Bombay* crew

Dhinesh Kallungal
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Tthe crew of the iconic movie *Bombay,* shot by Mani Ratnam and starring Arvind Swami and Manisha Koirala, will gather at Bekal Fort in Kasaragod on December 20 on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the 1995-released film.

The crew, including Manisha Koirala, Mani Ratnam and cinematographer Rajiv Menon, gets ready for an anniversary bash on Bekal Beach and the fort on Saturday. They were invited by the Kerala Tourism Department as part of promoting cinema tourism in Kerala.

Actor assault case: convict booked by cyber police for revealing survivor's identity

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI


Martin Antony

The Thrissur Cyber Police in Kerala have registered a case against Martin Antony, the second accused and now a convict in the actor rape case, on the charge of posting a video on social media revealing the name of the survivor.

Survivor petitions CM

The video, believed to have been shot when he was out on bail, was shared on his Facebook page and began circulating widely on social media after the Ernakulam Principal Sessions Court convicted the first six accused in the case earlier this month.

The video not only mentions the survivor's name but also levels serious allegations against the investigation team that probed the case.

As the clip went viral, the survivor reportedly petitioned the Chief Minister, demanding action against those circulating it as it violated her privacy. Following the complaint, the Thrissur Cyber Police registered the case. Martin is currently serving his sentence in the Viyyur Central Jail in Thrissur.

Those found to have shared the video may also be arraigned as accused.

The police have reportedly identified nearly 30 social media accounts linked to the circulation of the video. The accused may face charges including those under the IT Act.

Aerospace start-ups should shed 'classical approach' to innovation: former ISRO chief

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU


S. Somanath

Former Indian Space Research Organisation Chairman S. Somanath on Thursday expressed concern over the competence and capability to innovate among start-ups and companies working in the domain of aerostructures.

Speaking at the International Conference on Advances in Computational and Experimental Approaches in Aerostructures, Mr. Somanath said, "I think it is a point of concern to me because I have been going around the country and looking at start-ups and companies that have been designing aerospace structures. Concerning hardware, especially in the domain of aerospace structures, I am not seeing that type of competence or that type of capability to innovate or do things differently than in the past."

He added that "classical approaches still continue" and "integration of artificial intelligence [AI]" is not happening.

Mr. Somanath also said that he has also not been able to see much progress around digital twins – virtual replicas of physical parts – in the aerostructures sector.

"They also talk about digital twins, but I am not able to see digital twins in these domains (aerostructures) on a scale that should have actually happened... So, I think the conferences should debate, discuss what are the limitations and why collaboration is not happening," Mr. Somanath said.

Court stays proceedings on ED notice to Pinarayi

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Thursday stayed for three months all proceedings on the show-cause notice the ED had issued to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, former Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac, and CEO of Kerala Infrastructure Invesment Fund Board K.M. Abraham on the usage of funds mobilised by the board through masala bonds for infrastructure projects.

The stay order came on a joint petition they had filed challenging the show-cause notice issued a month ago over the masala bonds issue.

ANDHRA PRADESH CAPITAL REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (APCRDA)
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NIT No. MAU61-ADMN0SD(VI)/42/2025-HB Dt.18.12.2025.
Name of Work: APCRDA-Social Development - Formation of internal roads up to Wet Mix Macadam level in the Nursery of APCRDA at Uddandarayunipalem, Estimate Cost Rs. 60.00 Lakhs. The bid can be downloaded on AP e-procurement portal from 19.12.2025 to 02.01.2026 up to 14.00 Hrs. Due date for submission of Bid 02.01.2026 up to 15.00 Hrs. Technical bid opening 02.01.2026 @16.00Hrs. For further details please refer to **www.apeprocurement.gov.in** and **www.crda.ap.gov.in**
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AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable properties mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of branches mentioned below of the **Canara Bank,** will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on **07.01.2026,** for recovery of **amounts mentioned below** due to the **ARM Branch, Vijayawada** of **Canara Bank** from the below mentioned Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s). Description of the immovable properties with no encumbrances to the knowledge of the bank.

DATE & TIME OF E-AUCTION: 07.01.2026 at 2.00 PM to 4.00 PM (With unlimited extension of 5 minutes duration each till the conclusion of the sale) | **LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF EMD: 07.01.2026 by 12.00 pm**

EMD amount of 10% of the Reserve Price is to be deposited in E-wallet of M/s PSB Alliance Private Limited (baanknet) portal directly or by generating the challan therein to deposit the EMD amount through RTGS/NEFT in the account details as mentioned in the said challan on or before 07.01.2026 at 12.00 PM.

Borrower/Guarantors & Branch Details (All Accounts Transfered to ARM, Vijayawada Branch)	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTIES	Reserve Price (in Rs.)	EMD (10% of Reserve Price)
Chandramouli Nagar Branch, Guntur **M/s Harshitha Cotton Traders** represented by 1) Proprietor: Sri. Nalluri Subbarao, 2) Guarantor : Sri. Nalluri Siva Ramaiah, 3) Guarantor : Smt. Nalluri Bharathi, W/o Subbarao. Total Liability : Rs.2,56,41,307.61/- as on 30.11.2025 + Ineterst + Other Expenses	Property 1: RCC Roof Ground Floor residential building measuring an extent of 121.50 Sq yds, situated at D No. 50/B, Door No.1-74, Kondepadu Grama Panchayat, Prathipadu Mandal, Guntur Dist. Boundaries as per deed.	Rs. 5.50 Lakhs	Rs. 0.55 Lakhs
	Property 2: An undivided and unspecified share of site measuring an extent of 39.804 Sq yds of residential Flat having plinth area of 1000 sft bearing No.416, 3rd Floor, Satya Comforts Apartment situated in D. No.152/2 of Dwarka Nagar, Koritepadu, Guntur. Boundaries as per deed.	Rs. 25.00 Lakhs	Rs. 2.50 Lakhs

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* Dues/taxes, if any, known/not known to the Bank are to be borne by the auction purchaser and the same is exclusive of the final bid amount. Bidders shall improve their offers in multiplies of Rs 10,000/- for Reserve Price up to Rs.25 lacs. The bidder who submits the highest bid (above the Reserve price) on closure of 'Online' auction shall be declared as successful bidder.
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The displaced families gather near the Mantooru Panchayat headquarters in Devipatnam Mandal of Alluri Sitarama Raju district. The Konda Reddi, Konda Kammara and Koya tribes inhabited the areas along the Godavari river bank. T. APPALA NAIDU

Polavaram displaced families look to tide over livelihood crisis

Families are struggling to make ends meet as government agencies have failed to ensure sustainable livelihoods for their survival. They allege that farming or fishing in their abandoned villages, even for temporary sustenance, has become nearly impossible due to the inaccessibility from the R&R colonies. Despite being pushed into penury, the families remain hopeful that the government will honour the entitlements in both letter and spirit, writes **T. Appala Naidu.**

A mighty Peepal tree stands guard as the sacred Godavari River curves along the hillside to reach Penikilapadu, a village once inhabited by the Koya tribe, in Mantooru Panchayat of Devipatnam Mandal in the Alluri Sitarama Raju district. The tribal community, which eked out a living through fishing, had to abandon the village in July 2020 to make way for the Polavaram Project, labelled India's largest multi-purpose irrigation project.

The Polavaram Project is being built across the Godavari River in the erstwhile West Godavari district. Declared a national project, it aims to divert 80 TMC of Godavari water to Krishna River, irrigate 4.36 lakh hectares, supply drinking water to 28 lakh people, and generate 960 MW of hydropower.

At least 56 Project Displaced Families (PDFs) were relocated to the Kondamodalu Polavaram Project Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) colony at Pedda Bhimpalli village in Devipatnam Mandal. With this, the total number of PDFs in the colony rose to 310, belonging to three tribes–Koya, Konda Kammara and Konda Reddi, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group in Andhra Pradesh. The Kondamodalu R&R colony lies 40-50 km away from their ancestral villages.

"It was around the end of July 2020 when the river swelled with record-high flood inflows, forcing us to flee. The floods washed away nine dhones–traditional boats–belonging to our village and buried part of the settlement near the Polavaram spillway," recalled Mr. Ramana Dora.

In July 2020, the flood level at Bhadrachalam, upstream of the Polavaram project, touched 71.30 ft–the highest since the great flood of 1986, when it reached 75.6 ft.

In the Polavaram submergence area, the Konda Reddi, Konda Kammara and Koya tribes shared a deep bond with dhone. Crafted from the Booriga tree (local name) and measuring approximately 10 to 15 feet, the dhone was used for fishing, crossing the river, and even during medical emergencies. Owing to the nature of the wood, the *dhone* could float even when overturned and could carry eight to nine people.

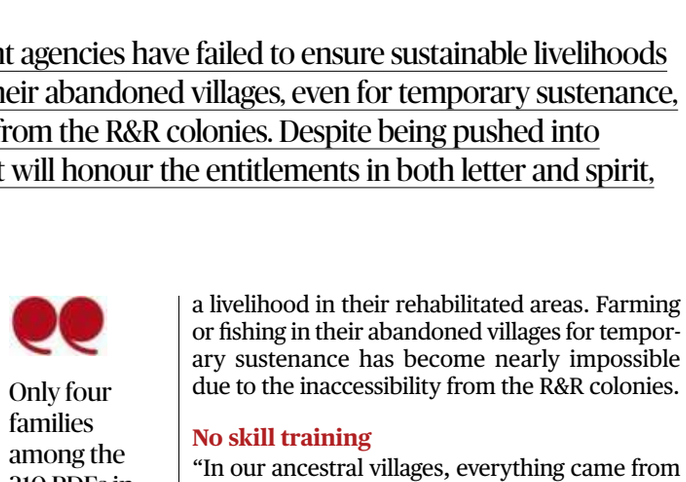
The PDFs said that they are struggling to earn a livelihood in their rehabilitated areas. Farming or fishing in their abandoned villages for temporary sustenance has become nearly impossible due to the inaccessibility from the R&R colonies.

> Only four families among the 310 PDFs in Kondamodalu R&R colony accepted land under the LTL component. Every family here is still searching for a guaranteed livelihood
>
> **KONUTHULA PAPAYAMMA**
> Thallooru village

No skill training

"In our ancestral villages, everything came from nature–the river and the forest. In the R&R colony, nothing comes without cash. How can we earn money when we have no skills to find work outside the forest?" lamented 36-year-old Kareem Ramana Dora, a bachelor enrolled as a Para Legal Volunteer. "Our family's seven acres of land in our native village are yet to be submerged. But tending to the fields or resuming fishing is impossible, as we cannot afford to cross the river regularly," he added.

In Kachuluru village, located two kilometres upstream from Penikilapadu, at least 80 families fled during the 2020 floods and settled in the Indukuru-2 R&R colony. The tribes of Kachuluru had displayed remarkable courage by rescuing 26 tourists after the private tourist vessel *Royal Vasishta Punnami* capsized near their village on September 15, 2019, killing 51 people.



Polavaram-displaced women returning from a day's work in the nearby towns, near Konda Modalu R&R Colony in Pedda Bhimpalli village, Devipatnam Mandal, Alluri Sitarama Raju district.



The dhone used for fishing, crossing the river, and even during medical emergencies.

"Our family's 20 acres of land, with nearly 300 palm trees, fell within the Polavaram submergence area. Most villagers are now jobless in the R&R colony, particularly the men," said Konutula Chittibabu.

Recalling that his only fishing boat, the dhone, was washed away by the river, he said, "I sold my *lanchi*, which once plied across the river between Polavaram and Kondamodalu, at a throwaway price of ₹80,000. If I hadn't sold it, where would I have anchored it in the R&R colony?" Mr. Chittibabu asked.

A father of three, Mr. Chittibabu is now trying his luck in agriculture on the land allotted under the Land-to-Land (LTL) component near the Indukuru-2 colony.

> Our family's 20 acres of land, with nearly 300 palm trees, fell within the Polavaram submergence area. Most villagers are now jobless in the R&R colony, particularly the men
>
> **KONUTULA CHITTIBABU**
> Kachuluru village

Industries

As of October 2025, of the total 38,060 PDFs across 172 habitations in the submerged areas of the erstwhile East and West Godavari districts, 14,371 PDFs have been relocated to 26 R&R colonies, according to the Polavaram Project Authority under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

A total of 89,996 acres of land has been acquired for constructing 121 R&R colonies and allotment under the LTL component. The acquisition of 1,00,100 acres requires ₹12,832 crore, but nearly half of the funds are yet to be released by the Centre.

Polavaram Irrigation Project Administrator V. Abhishek said the State government has roped in the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC) to identify suitable land for setting up industries near R&R colonies.

"We have adopted consent-based rehabilitation for economic viability. Families are being asked to choose LTL land, and ₹700 crore has already been spent on land acquisition since November," he said. Construction of 49 more R&R colonies is underway following re-tendering. Land is also being identified for rehabilitating 17,114 PDFs from 49 habitations in the Chintoor agency area, which faces submergence risks post-2020 floods.

Despite these efforts, many families are still struggling to make a livelihood. Konuthula Papayamma, a mother of five from Thallooru village, said: "We were allotted 2.5 acres under the LTL component, but it has no irrigation access and is unsuitable for cultivation. Using compensation money, we prepared the land, but in four years, we could grow cashew on only half an acre." "Only four families among the 310 PDFs in Kondamodalu R&R colony accepted land under the LTL component. Every family here is still searching for a guaranteed livelihood," she said. Accompanied by her husband Babu Rao, she works wherever labour is available in nearby Gokavaram town.

Meagre wages

Alluri Sitarama Raju District Collector A.S. Dinesh Kumar said that a mapping exercise is underway to assess skill-training requirements among PDFs. "MSME parks are being encouraged near R&R colonies. Each colony will eventually have a Skill Training Centre."

Sangam Sreelatha, 26, a mother of three, said families now accept any unskilled work in nearby towns like Rajamahendravaram, Gokavaram and Kakinada. "My husband works in construction, while women find seasonal work in tobacco and maize fields. The wages are meagre–₹350 per day–excluding ₹100 for transportation. Monsoon is the hardest time," she said.

In R&R colonies under ITDA limits, women travel long distances by autorickshaws to find work, while many men remain unemployed. "During winter, we leave home by 5 a.m. and return in the evening after working in maize fields and tobacco nurseries, travelling nearly 50 km one way," said Nesika Subbayamma of Indukuru-2 colony. Women earn a maximum of ₹500 per day in agriculture and shift to construction work during the off-season. "Over the years, men have remained unemployed and take care of children," she added.

Families have also been forced to alter their traditional diets due to worsening poverty. "I haven't seen Vonjalu fish since 2020. In our village, it was abundant. Here, we can't even afford farmed fish. Our food habits have changed to those of the plains," said Mr. Ramana Dora. Women once fished alongside men in the Godavari.

Hope still alive

The PDFs remain hopeful that they can resume fishing, as they are entitled to fishing rights in the Polavaram reservoir only once the project is commissioned.

According to the Second Schedule of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, "In cases of irrigation or hydel projects, the affected families may be allowed fishing rights in the reservoirs, in such manner as may be prescribed by the appropriate government."

"If entitlements are honoured in letter and spirit, we hope to regain our fishing rights in the reservoir. We wish to live the life we once lived by the river – perhaps after the project is commissioned. Until then, our lives hang between uncertainty and the sacred river Godavari," he added.

Meanwhile, during a high-level review in Amaravati on October 3, 2025, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu set a new deadline to commission the Polavaram project by the Godavari Pushkarams in 2027.

As of October, 79% of earthwork, 84.78% of concrete work, and 86.26% of steel work had been completed.



Stepping stone Regena Cassandra. SHIVA RAJ S

Actor Regena Cassandrra on her 20-year journey in films and the joys of preparing for a character

As time goes by

Bhuvanesh Chandar
bhuvanesh.chandar@thehindu.co.in

"When I was younger, I used to romanticise the rain a lot. I couldn't drink tea or coffee often. So, when it rained, I would imagine myself reading a Mills & Boon novel and drinking tea or hot chocolate." With clouds converging outside her residence, actor Regena Cassandrra gets quite nostalgic as she sits with us for a freewheeling chat.

I ask her what the name 'Latha' brings to mind, and she smiles – that is the name of the character she played in her debut Tamil film, *Kanda Naal Mudhal*. "I was 14, the youngest on the set, and I was supposed to look 20. I played this girl who elopes and comes back pregnant!"

She grins, recollecting how she got to work with a female director (V Priya) in her first movie. "And Nandhini" – director Nandhini JS, who then assisted Priya – "was the one who would help me tie my belly and my saree. It brings back a lot of memories."

Kanda Naal Mudhal was released in 2005, which means that Regena has been a film actor for 20 years now. Having grown as someone who would not easily celebrate special occasions, Regena says that she has learnt not to be so hard on herself. This is an occasion she would celebrate wholeheartedly.

"You tend to learn and unlearn things, and this year has been about going out of my comfort zone." That she is still pursuing what she had started without much thought makes her happy. "It's nice to look back and see that this has worked out. Also, all of those years have made me very present. So, even though 20 years have passed, I still feel like this present moment means a lot," she says.

Given Regena's diverse filmography, it would be hard not to see a film lover in her. To much surprise, she says that it was film acting, not films, that has always spoken to her. "I just enjoy the process of doing different expressions for different characters. So I did not watch films and go, 'Oh, one night I will have this celebrity status'."

The actor – who, interestingly, studied Psychology to understand human behaviour – says she gets a kick out of delving through the many layers that make her characters. "I really enjoy waking up and deciding how this character will look and behave in a particular scene. It's about working on a scene with my team, my director, my hairstylist, makeup artist, co-director or the AD; or figuring out dialogues, reading my scene and adding to it, asking questions, and seeing it translate from paper to screen...I love that process," she says.

While she may not have chosen to do such an unconventional role in *Kanda Naal Mudhal*, Regena has grown as an actor who chooses many such offbeat roles amid routine offers. As she recollects, there was a time when both her item number, 'Saana Kashtam,' from *Acharya*, and the trailer of *The Rocket Boys*, in which she played Mrinalini Sarabhai, came out on the same day.

> ***I would love to have dinner with Dr Brian Weiss, a psychiatrist and author. I am fascinated by concepts like past-life regression and progression, which he speaks about a lot.***
>
> **REGENA CASSANDRRA**
> Actor

However, the actor says that it was never a conscious decision to keep switching between the two schools of acting.

"I have never gone out and said I want to do this film. I've just been blessed to pick such roles, or for such roles to be offered to me."

2025 was quite an eventful year for Regena. Her performances in both *Vidaamuyarchi* and *Jaat* turned heads, and up next, she has *Mookuthi Amman 2*, *Section 108*, *The Wives*, and a long-unreleased Tamil project set to release.

She does not have a 2026 resolution, but is resolute that some changes are in order. "I feel like whatever has carried me these years has been good enough till now, but things can get better. I think these coming years are going to see a difference."

Neeraja Murthy
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Show of empathy Photographs by Vishwanathan, (below) Manjusha Pillai. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Indie Calendar 2026 features 12 stories of those who care for strays, despite minimal resources

A date with street dogs and cats

Ten-year-old Mani is much loved in his neighbourhood in Adyar, Chennai. Found as a puppy and cared for with with affection, the streetie shares a special bond with newspaper collector Pandian and is often seen hitching a ride on his tricycle. Mani's one such joyful moment captured by amateur photographer Vishwanathan is one among the 12 heartwarming stories of The Indie Calendar 2026.

Pet photographer Prathima Pingali, founder of Pawparazzi, a pet photography company calls The India Calendar 2026 - *Awaara nahi, humara hain* a heartfelt tribute to the bond shared with streeties including cats. Pratima has been working on a pet calendar for six years to create awareness for indies and their adoption. "This year's calendar is different," she says. "Many animal lovers have taken to the streets to protest against the recent Supreme Court verdict on stray dogs and the revolution was tagged as *'Awara nahin, hamaara hai'* ('They are not strays, they are ours'). We wanted to highlight it in this year's calendar.

Like a family

The intent was to feature stories of people who do not have enough money, resources or even a home but they have opened their hearts to take care of streeties and treat them like their own family. "Apart from featuring stories, we also thank these individuals to highlight the fact that if they can be so loving and open, what is stopping us from doing so? Why are we running after breeds? Why aren't we giving enough love to our Indies?"



More than 50 people enrolled for the project in October and submitted the photos in early November 2025. "Whether they were selected or not, they still went out and brought us those beautiful stories." Prathima also did photo walks to help members understand the nuances of photography.

The selection process was simple – a heartwarming story, photo with a human element and an indie stray dog being cared for by someone who provides food and shelter everyday. "We wanted the interaction between the individual and the stray dog to be highlighted. We have featured cats as well."

Twelve stories were selected from Chennai, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Baindur in Karnataka, and Kochi. Speaking of the creative agency Homegrown which designed the calendar, Prathima says, "Homegrown's owner Varsha Patra and I connected on our love for animals and this was the perfect start to our journey."

The desk calendar is priced at ₹899; wall calendar is ₹1199. Available at www.pawparazzi .com.

Continuing ANR's legacy

Actor-producer Nagarjuna Akkineni, who attended the diamond jubilee celebrations of ANR College in Gudivada, Krishna district, as the chief guest, announced a two-crore scholarship fund for the college. Addressing the students and faculty, he announced that the Akkineni family will establish a two-crore scholarship fund in honour of his parents Akkineni Nageswara Rao and Annapurna Akkineni. He stated that the initiative was a collective decision of the ANR family. In 1958, ANR had contributed a lakh to this institution, following which the college, earlier known as The Gudivada College, came to be known as ANR College.





Rosewood palettes @ AxWC Objects

Co-founded by architect-designer Neeti Marji (of wooden lifestyle brand, Woodcocktails) and Ankit Yogi of Overseas Traders (woodmaking specialists), the brand turns factory offcuts into design-forward objects. "We work with four-five different species of wood, allowing every wood to express its grain and colour," says Neeti, adding that the brand based in Hubli-Dharwad sources timber responsibly through Karnataka Forest Department auctions (they auction dead and fallen trees). Her picks for the holiday season are the rosewood coasters (₹899 for a pair) made from *Dalbergia latifolia*, a durable hardwood known for its unique grain patterns. Another option is the rosewood art palette (₹399) crafted with the same wood.
woodcocktails.in



Colourful koodais @ And Alt Foundation

This not-for-profit organisation based in rural Tamil Nadu is "working towards long-term skill training, creation of meaningful livelihood opportunities and community inclusion for adults with disabilities," says co-founder and director Anu Alex. The Foundation is led by three co-founders, with the other two being Aarabhi Badri, a special educator and artist, and Ghana NB, an artist invested in social justice.

The product catalogue comprises botanical-printed and woven koodais, notebooks, cards, laptop sleeves, tote bags, pouches, lamps, stoles, and cushion covers. "We collaborate with artists and designers to build creative, skill-based pathways for individuals with diverse abilities thereby enabling them to learn, earn, and thrive within their communities," she adds.
Upwards of ₹350 on andaltfoundation.org

On fire @ True Condiments

Shradhanjali Sarma's idea to take her homemade chilli oil to the world was born when her friends kept coming back for more. Her friend Ajupan Sonowal, who now leads the business, saw her recipe's potential and decided to turn it into a brand. "Together, we crafted a Signature Chilli Oil (₹129) made for the Indian palate. It is an Indianised version inspired by traditional Chinese and Korean oils, but designed to complement local, indigenous foods from every State," says Shradhanjali of the brand based in Guwahati, Assam. The duo also has a Bhoot Jolokia Chilli Oil (₹229) that uses the region's famed fiery chilli.
true_condiments on Instagram



Patchwork love @ Upvalued

Discarded upholstery textiles turn into patchwork laptop sleeves, cushion covers, and totes at Richa Mishra's Benagluru-based brand that she launched in 2023. "We focus on circularity, significantly reducing landfill waste and we also partner with local artisans," says Richa. The brand veers away from new products every season and instead focusses on new designs. "With designs that emphasise durability and high functionality, it encourages mindful consumption and prioritises slow, quality fashion."
Upwards of ₹700 on upvalued.com



From rosewood palettes and artisanal toys to handmade journals and chilli oils, here is how to gift with a purpose this festive season

The 2026 conscious gifting guide

Nidhi Adlakha
nidhi.adlakha@thehindu.co.in

Still looking for that perfect gift? We suggest looking into what India's homegrown makers have to offer. After all, it is where you will find the most unique gifts. Be it small batch chilli oils, folk-art inspired toys or textile offcuts being turned into bags, here is our list for the 2026 gifting season.



Handmade journals @ Ekatra

A public space designer by profession, Aishwarya Jhawar worked in Ladakh, Uttarakhand, and Pune before moving back to join her family-run brand Ekatra full-time three years ago. The women-run, gifting collective based in Kota, Rajasthan, has a community of over 250 women artisans across India. "We focus on handmade, design-led products that blend functionality with purpose and traditional techniques," says Aishwarya. Their catalogue comprises wedding and corporate gift boxes, journals, notebooks, utility pouches, and more.
Upwards of ₹500 on ekatrahandmade.com

Art-inspired play @ Gubbachhi

The brand was founded by husband-wife duo Abhijith and Pallavi Shetty to introduce children to India's rich repository of art. "Gubbachhi's current offerings include stackers, soft toys, puzzles and pretend play toys. Our bestsellers are the Folk Art Series featuring wooden puzzle blocks, the Kutumba set of family dolls, and a rangoli puzzle set," says Abhijith.
Upwards of ₹599 on gubbachhi.com



Temporary relief

The depreciation of the rupee is helping bring down trade deficit

India's remarkable merchandise trade performance in November should come as some relief for the government, but should not be the basis for any complacency. India's merchandise exports, hit by the stiff headwind of 50% tariffs by the United States, the biggest export destination, unexpectedly grew 19.4% to $38.1 billion in November 2025. This is the highest it has been in any November in the last 10 years. Also, India's exports to the U.S. grew 22.6% to $6.98 billion in November 2025 as compared to November 2024. This was also 10.7% higher than in October 2024. This is all certainly welcome news, but it hides an element of deeper distress that will make itself apparent in the months ahead. While exports to the U.S. recovered in November, exporters say that this is because they are absorbing the hit of the higher tariffs, hoping that they will be short-lived. The other option, of losing customers and trying to win them back later after moderation of tariffs, is seen to be harder, at least for now. However, it might soon be the only option. Indian exporters to the U.S., a large chunk of which are micro, small, and medium enterprises in labour-intensive sectors, cannot continue absorbing the tariff impact for too long. The depreciating rupee is helping offset some of the impact, but India's tariff differential with competing countries is too big to overcome. It also takes some time for supply chains to reroute. Reports are already coming in that exporters are seeing a significant drop in orders for January.

The trade deficit also shrank because India's merchandise imports fell 1.9% to $62.7 billion in November 2025. Reducing imports is a tricky topic for India. While it is preferable to reduce import dependence in the medium term, India's domestic capabilities are not yet robust enough to shoulder the load. Falling merchandise imports, therefore, suggest slackening demand. Coming so soon after the Goods and Services Tax rate reductions, this should be monitored carefully by the government. The broad outlines of the government's Export Promotion Mission show that the government is thinking about how to alleviate the financial stress being faced by exporters. However, the detailed schemes have not been notified yet. These must be expedited. The government could also perhaps adapt some of its more successful COVID-era relief measures as well. For example, a credit guarantee scheme for exporters will do them more good than the planned moratorium on loan repayments will. Of course, these troubles will go away once the tariffs issue is resolved, which the government is saying will happen "very soon". But the decision on this lies with the mercurial U.S. President Donald Trump. As such, the most prudent way forward is to hope for the best but continue preparing for the worst.

A gamble

Uncapped Indians competed with big names from abroad for IPL money

At the recent Indian Premier League's (IPL) auction, classified as 'mini', there was big money on offer as always. With most squads having their nucleus in place, the mini auction at Abu Dhabi on Tuesday was all about picking 77 players from a registered pool of 369. Australian all-rounder Cameron Green was the most expensive buy at ₹25.20 crore with Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) offering the winning bid. Green also became the costliest overseas star in IPL history, going past fellow Aussie Mitchell Starc's ₹24.75 crore deal, again with KKR, in 2024. Having plied his wares previously for Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Green was much in demand for his all-round skills of brisk pace and big hits. The variance between brand valuation and sporting unpredictability was driven home the very next day when Green was dismissed for a duck in the current Ashes Test at Adelaide. That the IPL auction is a ruthless place devoid of sentiments was also driven home when stars such as New Zealander Devon Conway and England's Jonny Bairstow found no takers. Utility in T20s, current form and fitness, and the individual as a marketable brand, have always influenced these choices since 2008 when the league was launched. In 2011, Brian Lara was unsold and never played the league.

The auction also helped many uncapped players, yet to turn up for India, laugh all the way to the bank. Chennai Super Kings (CSK) led the charge and bagged Prashant Veer and Kartik Sharma at ₹14.20 crore each. Veer, the Uttar Pradesh all-rounder bowling left-arm spin, and Kartik, the Rajasthan wicket keeper, are 20 and 19 years old, respectively. They are a pointer to CSK's quest for fresh legs while veteran M.S. Dhoni remains the pivot and Ruturaj Gaikwad leads the unit. Kashmir's Auqib Nabi was another uncapped player, who went for ₹8.40 crore to Delhi Capitals. The speedster caught the eye when former India seamer Irfan Pathan backed him, and Auqib has been consistent in the domestic circuit. Besides the overseas icons and local players, a few comeback stories emerged as Sarfaraz Khan got a buyer in CSK at ₹75 lakh. The Mumbaikar, who has been dropped from the Indian squad after playing six Tests, gets a chance to reiterate his credentials. The auction went on with clockwork precision, and the BCCI would do well to show the same intelligence in scheduling international fixtures. The latest T20I jousts involving South Africa, being staged at venues affected by winter could have been avoided, while the IPL marches on as a sporting behemoth.

Cutting off a rural lifeline and the Directive Principles



Brinda Karat

is a senior leader of the CPI(M)

The central government has, using its majority in the Lok Sabha, pushed through a Bill to replace the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The proposed draft – an outright "*adhikar chori* (rights theft") Bill – seeks to change the very nature of MGNREGA, the present Act. While the Bill is a direct assault on the rights of the rural working poor, it should be seen in the framework of an attack on the Constitution of India. This is why it must go to the Standing Committee of Parliament.

Article 41 of the Constitution states: "The State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work...." In the Constituent Assembly, there was a strong difference of opinion between those who were influenced by socialist ideals who wanted the right to work included as a fundamental right, and the strong capitalist lobby who opposed it. Ultimately, it was included in the Directive Principles of the Constitution. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had described this as a " novel feature", asserting that though these Directive Principles were not justiciable, they were to be considered as "instruments of instruction" for lawmakers and as "essential for economic democracy". Pro-socialist member K.T. Shah had then described this as "pious wishes". Shah's words resonate through these years of capitalist "development" in the lived experience of the unemployed and the denial of work opportunities.

The critical role of the Left

It took a five-and-a-half decade struggle by working people and dramatic political developments to ensure a policy shift that was somewhat closer to the Directive Principles, and, more specifically, the right to work. In the 2004 general election, the Bharatiya Janata Party was defeated by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance but without a majority, leading to a situation where, for the first time, the central government was dependent on the support of Left parties. Importantly, the Left parties led by the CPI(M) had fought the elections independently on their own programme and strength. MGNREGA was possible because of this political configuration. The Left parties played a critical role in the shaping of the final law adopted unanimously by Parliament in 2005.

The law is a partial recognition of the right to work and the acceptance of the responsibility of the state to ensure an increased share of national resources for the provision of work at a minimum wage. The law guarantees a minimum of 100 days of work throughout the year to a rural household and is universal, open to all adults (men and women) who volunteer for manual labour. Most importantly, the law is based on fulfilling the demand for work, which is not static and can increase or decrease according to the requirement of rural households. There is a deep democratic content in this. If a household has better choices for employment, it has the right to exercise that choice while retaining the fallback provided by MGNREGA. The law guarantees equal wages for men and women, with the entire wage bill to be paid by the central government.

The State governments, under the law, bear some financial responsibility of around 10% and have a say in the design of schemes and their implementation in tune with the needs of the State. Panchayats have both a right and a responsibility to identify and design projects required in the areas under their jurisdiction. This demand-driven universally applicable law was probably the first of its kind in the capitalist world.

The Viksit Bharat-G RAM G Bill 2025 is a direct assault on the rights of India's rural working poor

An erasure of fundamental features

The Narendra Modi government, with its partners, the Telugu Desam Party and the Janata Dal (United) as drum beaters, scraps all these fundamental features in its draft Bill. It will no longer be demand driven, but determined by "normative financial allocations" decided by the central government. The Centre will legally have no obligation now if expenditure exceeds this allocation. The States, already in financial crisis because of the unjust denial of their share in central tax revenues, are being saddled with 40% of the cost. The Bill is highly centralised and everything – from the design of projects to digitalised audits – will be controlled by the central government. These features are a direct assault on the federal character of the Constitution.

The class bias in favour of the rural rich is blatantly displayed in the clause in the Bill which prohibits any work under the proposed law during the peak agricultural season. With increased mechanisation in agriculture, workdays have drastically reduced. The work pattern of MGNREGA shows that it is only when agricultural work is not available and when wages paid are below MGNREGA standards that workers opt for MGNREGA in the peak season.

The prohibition will reduce the bargaining capacity of rural workers, who, in the absence of MGNREGA, will be forced to accept terms and conditions set by big landowners. This will affect women who get lower wages than men in agriculture. The law legalises Aadhaar card linkage, online digitally recorded attendance as a condition for eligibility and wage payment. This is despite ample evidence that such conditions including poor connectivity have victimised workers.

Using the acronym G Ram G, as the name of the law (Viksit Bharat-G RAM G Bill 2025), is a low-level manoeuvre to appeal to believers. But when crores of people will shout 'G-Ram-G *murdabad*' against the law, it may hurt sentiments and backfire on the government.

A reflection of distress

Those of us who have worked closely with MGNREGA workers know the difficult conditions in which people work. In some cases women have to lift up to 3,000 kilograms of mud a day to fulfil the productivity norm. Yet, if they make up well over 50% of MGNREGA workers in most States, it is surely a reflection of deep agrarian distress and the lack of a better alternative.

Adivasis constitute around 8.6% of the population. But among MGNREGA workers, according to last year's figures, they are as high as 18% and Scheduled Castes make up 19%. Therefore, over two-thirds of workers belong to social categories protected by the Constitution. Any reversal of their rights is an attack on the Constitution. But even their representation in the redress/advisory councils has been eliminated in the draft law.

Since 2014, the Narendra Modi government has diluted and starved MGNREGA of funds even as it has greatly increased tax concessions and write-offs to corporates. While the number of workers increased from around two crores in the early days to over 7.7 crore workers now, the expenditures have stagnated or declined – never over 0.2% of GDP. In 2024-25, 8.9 crore workers demanded work but only 7.9 crore workers got work – 99 lakh workers were turned away. Wage arrears have mounted – sometimes up to ₹8,000 crore. On an average, households have got less than 50 days of work instead of 100 days. The farce of promising 125 days in the proposed draft rubs salt into the wound. But if people keep coming to MGNREGA sites it is because they have no alternative – such is the desperation and instability in the lives of India's rural poor.

That lifeline, instead of being strengthened, is now being cut. The Directive Principles of the Constitution are being bulldozed. Shame on this government.

A bold step amid an ambitious nuclear energy target



R.B. Grover

is Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Homi Bhabha National Institute, and Member, Atomic Energy Commission

Human development correlates with energy consumption. In a seminal paper published in *Scientific American* in 1971, Earl Cook traced the growth in per capita energy consumption through stages, from primitive to technological man. The primitive man needed energy only for food. The energy needs for home and commerce were added at the hunting stage. When humans became agriculturists, their energy needs also arose from industry, agriculture and transportation. The energy needs for food, home, commerce, agriculture and transportation continued to increase through the industrial and technological stages. The present era belongs to digital technologies, and the digitalisation of the economy demands additional energy.

Growth rate and generation

The metric "Human Development Index (HDI)" is a fair representation of human development. It combines three important indicators, *viz.*, per capita income, education and health. Using the correlation between HDI and per capita Final Energy Consumption (FEC), one can determine the level of energy needed to reach a specific HDI.

As a member of the G-20 grouping, India rubs shoulders with countries that have an HDI above 0.9. Estimates indicate that to reach 0.9, and considering further improvements in energy efficiency and electrification of end uses, India will need to generate about 24,000 Terra-Watt-Hours (TWh) per annum (*Curr. Sci.*, 2022, 122(5), 517-527). As a part of it, about 60% will be used as electricity, and the rest to generate hydrogen in electrolysers. Hydrogen is needed to decarbonise sectors such as the production of steel, fertilizers and plastics. When alternative processes for producing hydrogen are developed at scale, less electricity will be needed.

The generation in 2023-24 was about 1,950 TWh, and the CAGR in the recent past has been about 4.8%. Maintaining a growth rate at about this level, it would be possible to generate 24,000 TWh per annum in four to five decades. However, there are two complexities. First, India has to decarbonise its energy mix. Therefore, the growth in electricity generation must be accompanied by end-use electrification and a redesign of the energy mix.

The SHANTI Bill, 2025, will help India's nuclear energy plans

The present share of electricity in the FEC is about 22% and must rise significantly. The present energy mix is one that is heavily reliant on fossil fuels, and has to be replaced by energy sources that do not emit carbon. That implies that India has to generate more using hydro, nuclear, solar and wind power.

The decarbonised energy mix

In India, hydro and wind potential in India is limited. India is densely populated and it precludes diverting large tracts of land for the deployment of solar photovoltaic. While the full potential of hydro, solar and wind must be exploited, their potential is insufficient to provide the energy level necessary to achieve an HDI above 0.9. Therefore, nuclear generation has to be ramped up. Until that is done, India will have to continue exploiting fossil fuels.

Second, solar and wind are intermittent sources. Electricity generated by photovoltaic cells or windmills is variable. Therefore, to match electricity supply with demand, it must be stored when it is in excess and augmented when generation is less than demand. Storage is expensive and providing storage to address seasonal variations in solar and wind is prohibitively expensive. To provide affordable electricity to consumers, the electricity mix must have sufficient baseload generation capacity – that is, generation that is not dependent on seasons or time of day. Nuclear power plants are base-load and must be a part of a decarbonised energy mix.

Realising this imperative, the units of the Department of Atomic Energy, in cooperation with Indian industry, have been working to harness nuclear energy in a manner so that the complete supply chain is indigenous. It is only uranium that has to be imported as India does not have enough uranium. India has developed technology for fabricating fuel, producing heavy water, and manufacturing all the equipment that is needed to support the construction of Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs). The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited has mastered the design and operation of PHWRs of various ratings, the highest being 700 MW. Three 700 MW units are already working, and the fourth is about to be completed. Two more are in an advanced stage of construction. In 2017, the central government sanctioned the construction of 10 700 MW PHWRs and work on these units is progressing.

A regulatory body was established in the 1980s and has developed the capability and capacity to regulate nuclear power plants. The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre has developed technologies to reprocess spent nuclear fuel to recover valuable materials and handle nuclear waste. As a result of these efforts, nuclear power generation is a technically-feasible, affordable and safe option for India.

The SHANTI Bill

These successes have emboldened the central government to set a target of 100 GW of nuclear installed capacity by mid-century. Both Houses of Parliament have passed The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025. The Bill is an overarching piece of legislation and combines provisions included in the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010. It says that the existing Atomic Energy Regulatory Board "shall be deemed to have been constituted under this Act". The Bill ensures that the prime responsibility for safety, security and safeguards lies with the licensee of the facility.

The target set for nuclear energy is ambitious. The Bill passed by Parliament is a bold step. India needs ambitious targets and bold steps to become a developed country.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Welfare and schemes

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was one of the worst policies ever made by the United Progressive Alliance government. The aim of the policy may have been with good intentions, but its execution was very poor. The 'terms and conditions' of this policy should have been area-specific, by identifying the poorest people in remote areas in districts of States . Most rich districts in northern India should have been excluded. There are instances of people with a *pucca* house that is well furnished and with the latest gadgets, registered under the scheme, which is an example of the gross misutilisation of the state exchequer.

Mohinder Kumar Saharan,
Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan

It is a wonder how the ruling dispensation boasts that the VB-G Ram G Act will usher in '*Ram Rajya*' to villages while the said new Act has been promulgated with the sole intention of depriving the poor and the needy of their livelihood. That State governments will also be forced to bear 40% of the cost of the new scheme will disturb the financial planning of State governments and affect the allocations made for other welfare schemes in their Budget.

Tharcius S. Fernando,
Chennai

What is being altered is not merely administrative design but also constitutional intent. MGNREGA embodied a secular, legal guarantee rooted in citizenship, decentralisation and justiciable entitlements. By recasting it as a centrally-sponsored, supply-driven scheme, the Bill weakens States, caps demand, and converts a right into discretionary benevolence. Replacing Gandhiji's name with "Ram" reframes welfare as cultural patronage rather than citizenship entitlement, blurring the constitutional boundary between state and religion. This mirrors a broader trend, from projecting state institutions under a *Dharma Dhwaja* to recoding welfare in religious symbolism. Development policies in India should not become a vehicle for ideological signalling.

Harsh Pawaria,
Rohtak, Haryana

The SHANTI Bill

The nuclear energy Bill is an instance where the Centre is acting in haste. The Bhopal gas tragedy still haunts the nation and a private airline created chaos recently. Privatisation and private parties will only see the pursuit of profit as the first goal. The Centre should have a broader debate.

Balasubramaniam Pavani,
Secunderabad

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

Is the Artificial Intelligence boom a bubble?



Bhagwan Chowdhry

Professor of Finance and Faculty Director, I-Venture at the Indian School of Business and Professor Emeritus at UCLA Anderson



Anoop Kunchukuttan

Principal Applied Researcher at Microsoft India and founding member and co-lead of AI4Bharat, a research centre based in IIT Madras that works on advancing language technologies for Indian languages

PARLEY

Global spending on Artificial Intelligence (AI) is projected to reach $375 billion this year and $500 billion by 2026, according to the UBS. That raises a fundamental question: is AI's value being driven by genuine technological progress, or by investor enthusiasm racing ahead of reality? Is the AI boom a bubble? Bhagwan Chowdhry and Anoop Kunchukuttan discuss the question in a conversation moderated by **Areena Arora.** Edited excerpts:

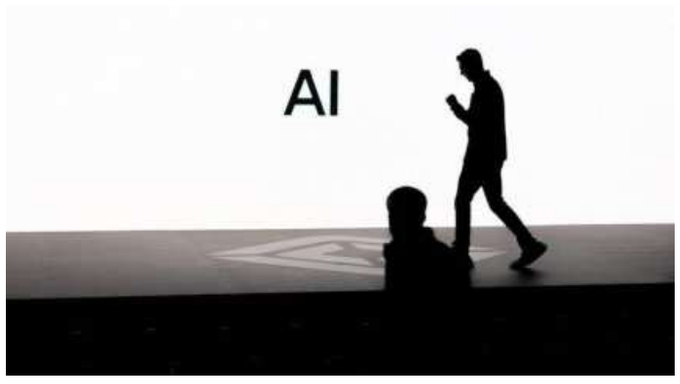
Where did the idea that the AI boom might be a bubble originate? Is it driven by weak monetisation, comparisons to the dot-com bubble era, or by limits in what current AI can realistically deliver?

Bhagwan Chowdhry: People only remember dot-com as a bubble. I don't think of dot-com as a failure at all. What came out of that bubble was great progress. Look where we are today and how much we use the Internet. It wouldn't have been possible if not for the dot-com hype. All technological revolutions follow the same pattern. It starts with hope, goes to hype, which then translates to make. Make also means break. AI is going to be like that too.

With widespread usage but limited customer willingness to pay, what does AI resemble at this stage? Is it similar to early social media and cloud computing or something fundamentally different?

Anoop Kunchukuttan: In one sense, AI is already pervasive throughout the technology stack, from very early systems like email spam classifiers to recommendation systems. Increasingly, AI has started doing really well in narrow domains like speech recognition and translation. What we are seeing, especially since ChatGPT was released in late 2022, is the idea of a chat assistant and, more recently, highly autonomous agents. The bet is on whether we can automate tasks at a very large scale. In some narrow domains, AI is already successful. We will find more use cases where it boosts productivity. The challenge is whether we will have something transformative in terms of highly autonomous agents. We are not there yet and there is a lot of speculation and hype. The important thing is to ensure reliability, trust, factual correctness, safety, and common sense. These are challenges that should be addressed before mass adoption.

Do you have any predictions you would be comfortable making about AI's mass scale and adaptability?



REUTERS

AK: It is difficult to predict a timeline. Research takes its own path.

BC: We are going to overestimate what is going to happen in one year, but we will underestimate what is going to happen in 5-10 years.

What does the dot-com comparison get wrong about today's AI market?

BC: Speculators are going to bet on a hundred things of which 95 will fail. But they will fail financially, not in terms of technology. Technology will continue to get better. Out of so many startups, maybe only a handful will survive. So, it may look like a failure from that point of view. But the ones that do survive are going to change the world. This genie is out of the bottle and we are not going to put it back.

Where is the biggest mismatch between scientific progress and market expectations?

AK: Let us go back to the dot-com analogy. It was the idea that the Internet was a transformative technology and people built businesses which reached mass scale and achieved a lot of business value.

AI is different. The technology is known to some extent in some narrow domains and we will continue to see benefits there. However, when it comes to artificial general intelligence (human-like intelligence) and highly autonomous behaviour, we don't know to what extent they will succeed. Until 2-3 years ago, there was a notion that you could simply scale up models and they would get better. Those scaling laws are being challenged now. You don't get that quantum of improvement just by making models larger. It is difficult to predict the paths (AI) will take. A better analogy is the search engine infrastructure and the hype that came with it. Its potential was not clear. It was very ambitious to say that you could index the whole web and in microseconds it would fetch you an answer to a query. But it was done over time. Multiple search engine companies invested and built the technology that made this possible. AI is similar. Today, the gains might be smaller, but over time, the gains will accrue.

> We are making rapid advances in AI. No doubt a lot of experiments will fail. That is the nature of science. But I hope people investing in science understand that that is important.
> ANOOP KUNCHUKUTTAN

What are some of the important capability challenges in today's AI systems that we are underestimating or misunderstanding?

BC: When lay people think about AI, they only think about AI that is going to benefit them immediately. The biggest gains are going to come from how AI handles science – in biology, chemistry, 3D modelling, or the discovery of proteins and drugs. Most of us don't pay attention to those. Even mathematical research is going to change in a fundamental way.

AK: There are use cases which can make a larger impact in science, education, or medical science. We need to ask ourselves whether we are willing to invest in areas where the returns might not be immediate. There are transformative areas where sustained efforts will lead to gains.

Do you think scientific progress should always be judged against investor confidence? Does the fear of a bubble burst slow down genuine innovation?

AK: This is not the first time this is happening in AI. There is a term for it: AI winter. In the 1960s and 1970s, and then in the 1980s and 1990s, there was the promise that AI could come up with autonomous agents. But it did not pan out. Back then, the sentiment was the same and the hype did not materialise and there was a freeze in funding for AI. So, that risk exists. We should invest for the long term while also looking for short-term gains. Because we are focusing on innovation right now, there isn't as much focus on efficiency. If we focus on efficiency and competition in the chip market, we can make economics more viable.

BC: What we have to worry about is whether this will lead to any systemic crisis. Will it cause a sequence of banks failing or the economy going down? That is what we have to focus on. But the nature of the game of speculation is that some people will lose money and some people won't. When we ask if we should be worried about AI, we have to ask, who is this we? Even in the dot-com bubble, consumers benefited.

Investment in chip making and data centres amounts to roughly 0.5% of global GDP. Is that level of spending economically justified?

AK: It is difficult to judge. But one trend in computing is clear – that more computing power typically helps to improve systems. To that extent, investment in data centres and chips is warranted.

A McKinsey report said only a small minority of companies has reported any meaningful profits driven by AI. If productivity gains don't monetise in the next few years, will markets reprice AI like they do any other asset? How would researchers then make the case to keep investing to these companies that are not seeing profits from AI?

BC: Markets are going to reprice companies; they are not going to reprice AI as a whole. That will continue to exist. Companies and attempts may fail, but there will be successes too.

AK: From a technologist's standpoint, we are making rapid advances in AI. No doubt a lot of experiments will fail. That is the nature of science. But I hope people investing in science understand that that is important.

Is the AI boom a bubble waiting to be burst, or is this the early, messy phase of a real lasting technological shift?

BC: I would say it is both. There are little bubbles that will burst, but that is a good thing. In 10 years, we as a society will be ahead if we make sure it doesn't lead to a systemic crisis, either in terms of security or in terms of failure that percolates from one place to other.

AK: As far as technology goes, there is no doubt that it is positive. We are already living through a lot of AI embedded in whatever we are doing, and it is only going to grow more. ChatGPT was a moment of inflection that has led to this boom. In the process, there might be failures, but the overall trend is forward looking.

To listen to the full interview
Scan the code or go to the link
www.thehindu.com

NOTEBOOK

Creatures of the night: sub-editors who turn the wheels after dark

There is satisfaction in producing the newspaper, in wrapping up the minutiae, in having the last word

Kannal Achuthan

If Count Dracula should ever find a need to make a living, he would do well to apply for the role of a sub-editor in a newspaper. He could catch up on his beauty sleep during the day and be ready, as twilight falls, to taste copy, letting the words swirl in his mouth before prepping to feed on the news frenzy.

Sub-editors are, as Byron might describe, creatures of the night, "mellowed to a tender light that heaven to gaudy day denies". We wake up and let coffee run in our veins, catching up on the day's news and getting ready for the story list that will inevitably shape-shift before we can pin down the front-page line-up.

To reporters, those unfathomable creatures of the light, every story they write is important. But it is the sub-editors who must curate them, negotiating the tightrope between content and form, and story and space. Not for us the mad dash for a scoop or a quote; the nocturnal hunt is of a different kind. Like an owl waiting for the tiniest movement in the grass, we must remain alert to the possibility of errors, double-check facts, and find the right words for a headline that will fit a three-column, two-deck space in a 30-point size. This is why a reader may find 'bats for' as the go-to phrasal verb in a headline instead of 'recommends', which takes up far more space. Or why the verb 'flays' is used more frequently than the sober 'criticises'.

Multitasking while watching the clock is par for the course. Copy must be subbed for the Internet, a different headline worked out for print, pictures added, captions given, paragraphs trimmed, the revisions played back to the reporter, layouts swapped if a more important story arrives, and pages scrutinised before they are released and typeset. Indeed, we still use the word 'typeset' that originates from the letterpress era, when type was composed by hand for each page.

All these tasks need to be done at an hour when most people are tucked into bed, deep in slumber. This is when we need to be most active, keep our focus sharp and stay alert to the possibility of a late news break or, god forbid, a missing 'l' in the word 'public'.

Such an environment is a happy place for members of the nocturnal tribe, who work best when the stars twinkle. Our headlines for the 'city edition' (that takes shape after midnight) have more zing, the team's wisecracks have more sting, and leftover snacks get finished in a blink.

Our doctors are not pleased with the schedules we keep. You are going against the natural circadian rhythm, they say. There will be long-term health problems, they warn. Melatonin patterns will be disrupted, they counsel. But what if you are already on a delayed phase and have been a natural night owl? Become a sub-editor in a newspaper. Everyone has a place under the moon.

It is likely that you will not have many friends outside work. Pleasant evenings on the beach or going to a play at a theatre will have to be scheduled for rare days off. Relationship problems could creep in. Family may disown you because you rarely turn up for wedding ceremonies in the mornings.

Still, sub-editors persist. There is satisfaction in producing an edition that regular folks will wake up to in the morning, in wrapping up the minutiae, in having the last word.

When our work is done and we are on the way home in the office cab, we have a glimpse of the other night workers: sanitation staff sweeping roads, call centre employees huddled near a late-night tea shop, bleary-eyed security guards, factory-workers, police personnel, and more. Unsung heroes who work out of sight, whose names may not light up bylines, but who are the keepers of the fire and the gatekeepers of content.

The hands of the clock show it is 4 a.m., or maybe it is 5. The sun will rise, the sub-editor will sleep.

kannal.achuthan@thehindu.co.in

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Baby shower



A mother shields her child from the sudden downpour in Chennai. VELANKANNI RAJ B.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 19, 1975

Pardon for Nixon: New disclosure

Washington, Dec. 18: The U.S. President, Mr. Gerald Ford's reputation for candour has seemingly suffered a setback with the disclosure now that he had been persuaded by at least three former aides of Mr. Richard Nixon to grant the ex-President a pardon, after the latter had resigned last August in the wake of the Watergate scandals, and faced the possibility of criminal prosecutions being launched against him.

Ever since he succeeded Mr. Nixon, Mr. Ford had maintained that he had made the decision to grant the pardon on his own, and that he had not discussed the matter with anyone, before he announced his decision granting the pardon on September 8. 1974. After becoming President, in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee in October last year, Mr. Ford, who was questioned closely on the pardon issue, had said: "Nobody made any recommendations to me to pardon the former President. At no time after I became President was the subject of a pardon for Mr. Nixon raised by the former President or anyone representing him."

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DECEMBER 19, 1925

Indian Railway fares

Delhi, Dec. 18: I understand that the Railway Board have seriously taken up the question of the reduction of railway rates. They have already made an analysis of the statistics regarding railway earnings. The question of the reduction of railway fares was raised, several times, by the members of the Assembly and the Council of State in the speeches made on the last railway budget and, only a few days ago, the South Indian Railway announced a reduction in its fares.

From Page One

SC asks EC to consider 'ground realities' on SIR

Mr. Sibal said 25 lakh electors would be excluded from the draft list in Kerala.

"The wife is excluded and the husband is included. When the authorities know of this, they delete the husband too," Mr. Sibal said.

The EC is scheduled to make its submissions countering the challenge to the SIR exercise. The previous extension was announced on December 11, 2025, the earlier deadline to submit enumeration forms.

Further, the Supreme Court did not entertain a plea citing the dangers of passing on citizens' confidential data to "volunteers" in the enumeration phase.

India signs trade pact with Oman

This is the first bilateral agreement that Oman has signed with any country since it signed a deal with the U.S. in 2006. It is also the second deal India has signed with a country in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the first being with the United Arab Emirates in February 2022.

Mr. Goyal had also pointed out that a trade deal with Oman also serves as a gateway for India to the GCC region, eastern Europe, central Asia, and to Africa.

Benefit to labour-intensive sectors

The Prime Minister added that the CEPA will create new opportunities for growth, employment and innovation for the youth of both countries.

Taking to X soon after the signing of the deal, Mr. Goyal said that the deal would "significantly benefit" labour-intensive sectors, generating employment and strengthening Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), artisans, and women-led enterprises.

'202 Indians hired for Russian armed forces'

The Union government remains continuously engaged with the Russian government, to ensure the safety, well-being, and early discharge of all Indian nationals in the Russian armed forces, the Minister said. He added that the matter is being discussed at various levels, including during interactions between leaders, Ministers, and officials of the two sides.

Repatriating the dead

On December 17, *The Hindu* reported that the bodies of two Indians killed in the Russia-Ukraine warzone over the past three months had been brought to Delhi. The deceased were identified as Rajasthan resident Ajay Godara, 22, and Rakesh Kumar, 30, from Uttarakhand. Both Godara and Kumar had gone to Russia in the past year on student visas, but were allegedly enlisted in the Russian Army after being misled by agents who promised them work as cleaners and helpers.

Indians continue to be enlisted in the Russian Army despite an assurance by Moscow in 2024 that it no longer admits Indians.

"The Ministry has provided assistance in repatriation of mortal remains of 10 deceased Indian nationals to India, and local cremation of two deceased Indian nationals. DNA samples of family members of 18 Indians, who were reported dead or missing, have been shared with the Russian authorities...," the Minister said in his reply.

Lok Sabha passes rural jobs Bill amid protests

Responding to the debate in the Lower House, Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the MGNREGA was riddled with "problems" and "corruption was rampant". He also accused State governments of "misusing" funds.

"Funds were not allotted as expected. As per the Act, 60% of the funds were to be spent on labour and 40% on material. But only 26% was spent on material and funds were siphoned off," he said.

Mr. Chouhan accused the Congress of "killing" Mahatma Gandhi's ideals for political gains. Comparing the implementation of the Act by the previous United Progress Alliance regime with the Modi government's record, he claimed, "More money has been spent and better infrastructure created now."

At the outset, Congress MP K.C. Venugopal urged Speaker Om Birla to refer the Bill to a parliamentary committee. Mr. Birla rejected the plea, noting that 98 members had spoken during the marathon debate.

As Opposition members tore copies of the Bill, Mr. Chouhan retorted, "The Opposition is murdering Bapu's ideals. Just having your say and not listening to the views of others too is violence."

He added, "Congress killed the ideals of Bapu, NDA ensured Bapu lives through pucca houses built under PM Awas Yojana". He also listed the Ujjwala Yojana and Swachh Bharat Mission as part of the Modi government's welfare outreach. He claimed the Congress added "Mahatma Gandhi" to the Act in 2009 for electoral gains.

Operation Sindoor highlighted India's air power edge: Rajnath

Defence Minister calls the Indian Air Force a technologically advanced, operationally agile, strategically confident force safeguarding national interests amid evolving global order; he says govt. committed to strengthening security apparatus

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh and other dignitaries, at the IAF Commanders' Conclave in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said that India's high-impact, short-duration operational capability was clearly demonstrated during Operation Sindoor, underscoring the growing strength of Indian air power in modern warfare.

Addressing the Air Force Commanders' Conclave in New Delhi, he described the Indian Air Force (IAF) as a technologically advanced, operationally agile, strategically confident and future-oriented force safeguarding national interests amid a rapidly evolving global order.

The Defence Minister praised the courage, speed and precision with which the IAF destroyed terror camps during Operation Sindoor, while also effectively handling Pakistan's "irresponsible reaction" following the strikes. Highlighting the trust of the people in the armed forces, particularly in India's air defence capability, he said the calm response of citizens during the attempted attacks on Indian installations reflected strong confidence in operational preparedness.

Lessons from conflict

Mr. Singh urged the Commanders to draw lessons from Operation Sindoor, stressing on the need to thoroughly understand the offensive and defensive capabilities of adversaries.

Reflecting on the changing nature of warfare, Mr. Singh said recent conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine war, the Israel-Hamas conflict, the Balakot air strikes and Operation Sindoor had established air power as a decisive force.

He emphasised that air power was not merely a tactical asset but a strategic instrument, characterised by speed, surprise and shock, enabling the leadership to deliver clear strategic messages while aligning military means with national objectives.

Commending the performance of air defence systems and other equipment used during Operation Sindoor, the Defence Minister reiterated the government's commitment to further strengthening the country's security apparatus.

He noted that 21st Century warfare was increasingly driven by technology and adaptability, with cyber warfare, artificial intelligence, unmanned systems, satellite-based surveillance and space-enabled capabilities reshaping future conflicts. Precision-guided weapons, real-time intelligence and data-driven decision-making, he said, had become essential for success.

Sudarshan Chakra

Expressing confidence in future capabilities, Mr. Singh said the Sudarshan Chakra, announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during this year's Independence Day address, will play a crucial role in protecting national assets. He also reaffirmed that the development of indigenous jet engines has become a national mission.

Highlighting jointness as a force multiplier, the Defence Minister described Operation Sindoor as a shining example of tri-Service synergy.

India and the Netherlands reaffirm defence ties

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met the Foreign Minister of the Netherlands, David van Weel, in New Delhi on Thursday, reaffirming the steadily expanding defence partnership between the two nations.

During the meeting, they held wide-ranging discussions on bilateral security and defence cooperation, including priority areas for the co-development and co-production of defence equipment, the Ministry of Defence stated.

The two countries reiterated their commitment to strengthening military-to-military engagement, and developing defence cooperation as a key pillar of the India-Netherlands Strategic Partnership.

The talks also underscored the shared commitment of India and the Netherlands to a free and rules-based Indo-Pacific region. Emphasising the need for closer defence ties, the Ministers highlighted the importance of connecting the defence industries of both countries, particularly in niche and emerging technologies.

'India faces its greatest strategic challenge in Bangladesh since 1971'

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI



Bangladeshi Police try to stop protesters marching to the Assistant Indian High Commissioner's office in Rajshahi on Thursday. AFP

The developments in Bangladesh pose the "greatest strategic challenge" to India since the Liberation War of 1971, a parliamentary panel has said in its report. The report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, chaired by Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor, has covered the turbulent India-Bangladesh relation of the past two years and said that Bangladesh is witnessing a "shift" and that New Delhi could end up losing the "strategic space" in Dhaka without necessary recalibration.

"India faces its greatest strategic challenge in Bangladesh since the Liberation War of 1971. The challenge in 1971 was existential, a humanitarian crisis, and the birth of a new nation. Today, the threat is subtler but probably graver, more serious; a generational discontinuity, a shift of political order, and a potential strategic realignment away from India," the report said, quoting an expert who deposed before the panel on June 27, 2025.

"The collapse of the Awami League dominance, the surge of youth-led nationalism, the re-entry of Islamists, and intensifying Chinese and Pakistani influence marked a turning point," said the report, adding, "If India fails to recalibrate at this moment, it risks losing strategic space in Dhaka not to war, but to irrelevance."

Giving a detailed account of interactions held between the Committee and officials of the Ministry of External Affairs since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on August 5, 2024, the report said India has taken the right decision in providing shelter to ousted Prime Minister Hasina but pointed out that New Delhi needs to ensure that Ms. Hasina does not carry out political activities aimed at her country from Indian soil.

Giving refuge to Ms. Hasina has been a major issue between India and Bangladesh since the fall of the Awami League government, and the matter has come up repeatedly since Ms. Hasina was given a death sentence last month, and the authorities in Bangladesh have been accusing Ms. Hasina and her colleagues of fomenting trouble in various parts of the country.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri told the panel Ms. Hasina is issuing statements using "personal communication devices she has access to" and India "does not provide her with a political platform to undertake political activity from Indian territory".

Retired judges don't want to sit as junior ad hoc judges: CJI

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI



Serving judges ask why they should sit with a retired person on the Bench, adds CJI Kant.

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant revealed on Thursday that retired High Court judges are reluctant to return to the Bench as ad hoc judges to clear the massive pendency of criminal cases for a simple reason: they are "embarrassed" to sit as junior judges alongside younger colleagues.

The High Courts across the country are burdened by mounting arrears, particularly in criminal cases. Data from the National Judicial Data Grid shows that 18,98,833 criminal cases are pending in the 25 High Courts. Of these, 68.27% or 12,96,374 cases have been pending for over a year. Against a sanctioned strength of 1,122 judges, there are 298 vacancies in the High Courts as of December 15.

Based on SC verdict

Alarmed by the backlog, the Supreme Court in a judgment in January activated Article 224A of the Constitution, allowing the Chief Justices of the High Courts to appoint retired former judges as ad hoc judges to clear criminal appeals.

However, the response from the High Courts has been lukewarm, with several courts not sending names to the Supreme Court for appointment as ad hoc judges.

"In my travels to the various High Courts, I spoke to the Chief Justices. They said there were many former judges who were keen and willing to return to the Bench and work... But they feel very embarrassed to sit as a junior judge with a serving judge on Division Benches," Chief Justice Kant told Attorney-General R. Venkataramani during a special hearing. He pointed out that most criminal appeals were pending before Division Benches or two-judge Benches in the High Courts.

The Chief Justice, accompanied by Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M. Pancholi, noted that a large number of cases were pending in the Allahabad, Punjab and Haryana, and Patna High Courts.

The Chief Justice said the problem existed from the other end as well. "The serving judges would ask why they should sit with a retired person heading the Bench... Can we persuade a sitting judge to be a Bench partner with a retired judge heading the Bench?" he said.

Amicus curiae and senior advocate K. Parameshwar referred to an April 2021 judgment on the appointment of ad hoc judges.

Kingfisher employees to get ₹311.67 cr. pending dues

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has facilitated the restitution of ₹311.67 crore towards long-pending workmen dues of Kingfisher Airlines Limited, an official said on Thursday.

"The restitution has been enabled pursuant to the order...passed by the Recovery Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal-I, Chennai, directing release of funds realised from the sale of attached shares which had been earlier restituted to State Bank of India by the ED under Prevention of Money Laundering Act," the official said. The amount is to be transferred to the official liquidator for disbursement to former employees of the airline company.

NCST to investigate murder of tribal boy on university campus

The Hindu Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) on Thursday announced that it would investigate the alleged murder of a minor tribal student by three of his hostel mates at the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, which claims to provide education to nearly 30,000 tribal students on its Bhubaneswar campus.

The NCST has issued notices directing the Home, School and Mass Education, and Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes Development, Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare Departments to furnish information on the incident. In addition, the Director General of Police, the Commissionerate of Police for Bhubaneswar-Cuttack, and the District Collector of Khordha have been asked to submit details on developments in the case.

"The Commission has decided to investigate/inquire into the matter in pursuance of the powers conferred upon it under Article 338A of the Constitution of India. You are hereby requested to submit the facts and information on the action taken on the said allegations to the Commission within three days of receipt of this notice," the NCST said in a letter to six offices.

The Odisha Police on Wednesday arrested eight employees of the institute for allegedly suppressing information related to the suspected killing of a Class IX student by hostellers.



Ram Sutar

Sculptor Ram Sutar passes away at 100

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

Ram V. Sutar, the legendary sculptor whose creations, including the Statue of Unity, defined the country's public art landscape, was instrumental in giving Indian memorial sculpture global recognition.

Sutar passed away on Wednesday night at the age of 100.

Among his vast body of work are statues of Mahatma Gandhi at the Parliament complex, and Dr B.R. Ambedkar.

APPEAL



Master **Rudra Kumar Samanta**, Mazumdar Shaw Medical Center MRN No.10020001733927, 4 years son of Mr.Naba Kumar Samanta is diagnosed with Thalassemia Major. The only Curative Treatment is Bone Marrow Transplant. We are planning a Haploidentical Bone Marrow Transplant using one of the parents as the Stem Cell Donor. The approximate cost for the treatment is Rs.45,55,000/-.

Please send donation however small by Cheque/D.D/M.O Fav. Save Poor Lives A/c Rudra Kumar Samanta, Our A/c Details: S/B A/c No. 20000913487. S.B.I. R.A.Puram, IFSC CODE:SBIN0001855. Please Donate by G-pay No.9884607377, UPI Id: savepoorlives@oksbi. Donations are exempted under 80G of I.T.ACT.

SAVE POOR LIVES, Flat No. A1, Ceebros Garden, Door No.14/76, Kamarajar Salai, Raja Annamalaipuram, Chennai-600028. Ph. No.04442044165/9884607377 Email: savepoorlives@gmail.com. Our website: www.savepoorlives.com. *Merry Christmas to All*

Rajya Sabha passes Bill to allow private firms in nuclear sector

Amendments to SHANTI Bill and proposal to send it to a panel, moved by Opposition MPs, defeated in a voice vote; Jairam Ramesh warns against relaxation of any liability norms while Jitendra Singh says there will be no compromise with safety

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

With the Rajya Sabha also clearing the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill on Thursday, the Union government said the Bill seeks to reduce the dependence on fossil fuels and increase the capacity of India's atomic energy sector.

Senior Congress MP Jairam Ramesh, who initiated a debate, claimed that the Bill was brought with the intention of increasing the contribution of private companies in the nuclear sector. Mr. Ramesh warned the Centre against any relaxation in liability norms and cited the example of France, where all nuclear reactors are under government control.

The amendments to the Bill and the proposal to send the Bill to a Select Committee, moved by Opposition MPs, were defeated in a voice vote.



Big change: Union Minister Jitendra Singh speaking in the Rajya Sabha during the Winter Session of Parliament on Thursday. ANI

Countering the Opposition charges, Minister of State for Department of Atomic Energy Jitendra Singh said that nuclear power is a reliable source of energy, unlike other renewable energy options. He said there will be no compromise with safety. Mr. Singh said there has been no report of any radiation-related hazards to the public from any Indian reactors.

Mr. Ramesh said, "The Narendra Modi government has the habit of ignoring the milestones achieved by past governments." He said the BJP opposed the nuclear deal between India and America in 2008. "The BJP had then said that there is not much future in nuclear energy. It is because of the nuclear deal that happened in 2008 that now the BJP can think of such a Bill," he said.

"Our country has the capacity – we have installed plants of 220 megawatts and 540 megawatts. Utilise that capacity. Similarly, the government had brought farm laws to benefit the private sector, which had to be withdrawn. This Bill should not be vendor-driven. We are self-reliant in the matter of nuclear power. So, promote indigenous technology," Mr. Ramesh said. He said the private sector will bring capital, not technology.

'Will shape sector'

Harsh Vardhan Shringla, MP, said the country stands at a decisive juncture in its energy journey and the SHANTI Bill will shape the civil nuclear sector for generations, ending fragmented governance and creating an investment-ready framework. "This is not privatisation; this is partnership with accountability," he said.

Trinamool Congress MP Sagarika Ghose said the Bill is fundamentally dangerous. "This Bill brings neither Shanti nor security... we are not debating whether India should pursue nuclear energy, India has always pursued nuclear energy responsibly for decades..." she said.

DMK MP P. Wilson said the Bill was a "nuclear bomb which threatens the country's peace and security". "There is nothing peaceful, nothing sustainable, nothing transformative about this legislation. On the contrary, it is a reckless, dangerous and deeply flawed attempt to privatise one of the most sensitive and high-risk sectors of a nation – the nuclear energy sector," he said.

Unions oppose Bill

The legislation will dismantle India's carefully built nuclear safety and accountability framework and opens the most hazardous energy sector to large-scale private and foreign participation, the National Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees and Engineers, the platform of 10 central trade unions and the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) said in a joint statement. It says it would oppose the "draconian" Bill.

Dismantling MGNREGA will be a historic error: leading global academics

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Act reaffirms economic dignity as a fundamental right, they say in an open letter to the Centre

A group of leading international economists and social scientists have called upon the government to reverse the imminent repeal of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), warning that dismantling the scheme will be a "historic error".

The signatories have written an open letter addressed to the Centre. They include Nobel laureate Joseph E. Stiglitz; Pavlina R. Tcherneva, President, The Levy Economics Institute (U.S.); Thomas Piketty, Professor, Paris School of Economics (France); Isabelle Ferreras, Professor, University of Louvain (Belgium); Darrick Hamilton, Professor, New School for Social Research (U.S.); Randall Wray, Senior Scholar, The Levy Economics Institute (U.S.); and James Galbraith, Professor, The University of Texas at Austin (U.S.).

Describing the MGNREGA as "the world's most significant policy operationalising a demand-driven, legal right to employment", the academics said that it reaffirmed "economic dignity as a fundamental right". And there is empirical evidence to underscore its impact. "The early years of the Act coincided with unprecedented rural wage growth and studies confirmed the programme's positive effects on economic output and efficiency, dispelling myths of unproductivity."

The signatories said that "chronic underfunding and payment delays" had long hampered the scheme. But with the new Bill bringing in a shift to devolve the scheme to States and without commensurate fiscal support, it threatened its existence. Under the new funding pattern, the States could bear up to 100% of material costs, compared with 25% earlier. "This creates a catastrophic Catch-22: States are legally liable to provide employment, while central financing is withdrawn," the letter warned, arguing that poorer States will be forced to curb project approvals, stifling work demand.

They flagged provisions allowing discretionary suspension of the scheme, citing the unexplained defunding of West Bengal over the past three years as an example of political misuse. Such measures, they said, render the employment guarantee "meaningless". The MGNREGA's design not only provides wages but also creates rural assets such as wells, roads, and ponds, stimulating local economies. "To dismantle it now would abandon a proven instrument for poverty alleviation, social justice, and environmental care," the scholars wrote, calling for assured Central funding, timely wage payments, and restoration of the Act's foundational guarantee.

(For full text of the letter visit: newsth.live/openletter)

Matter is *sub judice*: govt. on verification of election affidavits

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had asked questions on creating a mechanism to verify candidate's affidavits

The government evaded a question on creating a mechanism to verify candidates' affidavits during elections. Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, in response to a question by Congress president and Rajya Sabha member Mallikarjun Kharge, said the matter was *sub judice* in the Allahabad High Court.

Mr. Kharge had asked the Law and Justice Ministry if the government had taken note of a committee's observation that responses from both the government and the Election Commission on creating a mechanism to verify candidate's affidavits were non-committal.

He asked if the government proposed to revisit those recommendations for a transparent affidavit verification system using technology and real-time data checks. He questioned whether consultations had been held with the poll panel or other agencies on the matter and if so, the details thereof and by when the verification mechanism would be put in place. Mr. Meghwal, in his written response, said the matter pertaining to the mechanism of verification of candidates' affidavit was *sub judice* before the Allahabad High Court.

Court's observation

A Division Bench of the court, in August, had observed that *prima facie* it appeared that the EC was the statutory body that was responsible for making the asset verification reports public. It sought an affidavit from the EC with explanation on why the verification reports of candidate's affidavits, mandated to be made public by the Supreme Court in 2018, had not been published.

Javed Akhtar slams Nitish Kumar over hijab incident

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

Lyricist and poet Javed Akhtar on Thursday demanded an unconditional apology from Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for pulling down the hijab of a Muslim woman during a function in Patna.

While distributing appointment letters to newly appointed AYUSH doctors on Monday, Mr. Kumar pulled down the hijab of one of the doctors who came to receive the appointment letter. The video of the incident went viral on social media and Mr. Kumar has received sharp criticism.

"Everyone who knows me even in the most cursory manner knows how much I am against the traditional concept of *Parda* but it doesn't mean that by any stretch of imagination I can accept what Mr. Nitish has done to a Muslim lady doctor. I condemn it in very strong words. Mr. Nitish owes an unconditional apology to the lady," Mr. Akhtar said in a post on X.

In RS, Opposition flags lack of consultations before tabling new rural jobs Bill

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

The Opposition parties flagged the lack of consultations before introducing the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Bill, asking the government to table evidence of discussions held with State governments before increasing their financial liability.

They also invoked the example of the three farm laws, which they said were passed under similar circumstances and later withdrawn after a prolonged farmers' agitation. This Bill will also face the same fate, they said.

The Rajya Sabha began deliberations on the legislation at 6.50 p.m. Eight hours have been allotted for the debate, which is expected to conclude in the early hours of Friday.

Congress MP Mukul Wasnik opened the Opposition's attack. Mr. Wasnik said that the MGNREGA



Mukul Wasnik

was passed unanimously after undergoing parliamentary scrutiny and extensive consultations. He asked, "Can the government say the same thing about this legislation?" He said that the Bill was introduced just three days before the last day of the Winter Session. He asked, "Did you speak to the State governments before increasing their financial liability? Were they taken into confidence? And if it has been done, can the government table those consultations in the House?"

RJD leader Manoj K. Jha said the MGNREGA was the closest approximation to the right to work as enshrined under Article 41 of the Indian Constitution. The new Bill, he said, was striking at the very soul of this Article.

AIADMK MP M. Thambidurai, while appreciating the increase in work-day entitlements from 100 days to 125 days, criticised the government for increasing the burden on State governments. If States are to bear 40% of the cost of the scheme as the new legislation lays down, he said, then States should also get 100% of taxes and other cess that the Centre collects.

Bikas Ranjan Bhattacharya of the CPI(M) said the blackout period introduced in the legislation will rob the bargaining power of the rural poor, forcing them to work for minimum wages. The legislation allows for pausing the scheme during peak agricultural periods.

Congress committee meeting to focus on MGNREGA overhaul

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress Working Committee, the party's highest decision-making body, will meet on December 27 to deliberate on the government's move to replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) with new legislation, sources said on Thursday.

The MGNREGA was a flagship scheme introduced by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government in its first term in 2005.

This would be the first meeting of the CWC following the debacle the party faced in the Bihar Assembly election. It also assumes significance as the party's strategy for the next round of Assembly elections in the first half of 2026 – in Assam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, and West Bengal – could be framed.

The Opposition party is also looking to up the ante over the repeal of the MGNREGA, and to construct a campaign around the issue.



Mallikarjun Kharge

'Murder of scheme'

This was not merely a case of renaming MGNREGA but the "systematic murder of the world's largest employment scheme", Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, speaking about the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Bill.

The Union government was taking away the right to work from people, and "there will be a nationwide movement against it", the Congress president said.

Manikrao Kokate steps down from Maharashtra Cabinet

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

A day after Maharashtra Minister Manikrao Kokate lost all his portfolios following an arrest warrant issued by the Nashik District and Sessions court, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis accepted his resignation and forwarded it to Governor Acharya Devvrat on Thursday.

He held the Ministries of Sports and Youth Affairs, Minority Affairs, and Waqf portfolios. He has been given two years' rigorous imprisonment in a 1995 case on forgery to obtain housing meant for Economically Weaker Sections.

A non-bailable warrant has been issued against Mr. Kokate and his brother, and the Bombay High Court has listed the hearing of his application for relief on Friday.

A team of three officials and 10 constables has left for Mumbai for Mr. Kokate's arrest, a senior police official said.

"Laws and rules hold the supreme position and are above any individual; in line with our party's longstanding stance, this resignation has been accepted and forwarded to the Chief Minister for further action," Mr. Kokate's party colleague and Nationalist Congress Party chief Ajit Pawar announced.

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
(Regd Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)
Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2010SGC033813 Website: www.pspcl.in
Mobile No. 96461-10914

E-Tender Enq. No. 691/P-1/EMP-13192 dtd: 15.12.2025

Dy. Chief Engineer / Headquarter (Procurement Cell-1), GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites E-Tender ID No. 2025_POWER_155673_1 for For providing assistance to the regular staff for the operation of 4x 210 MW units at different locations of the plant round the clock in three shifts and during general duty hours at Operation Circle, GGSSTP, Rupnagar as per detailed scope of work On lump sum basis. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to **https://eproc.punjab.gov.in** from 16.12.25 from 05.00 PM onwards.

Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any, will be published online at **https://eproc.punjab.gov.in**

RTP-129/25 1079/12/2025-26/6023

ANDHRA UNIVERSITY VISAKHAPATNAM
Notice No. AU/(U1)R & D/RUSA 2.0/EQUIPMENT/2025, Dated:17-12-2025
TENDER NOTICE
Andhra University invites e-tenders for the **Procurement, Supply, Installation, Commissioning, Maintenance, and Training** of Eight **(08) equipment** bundles at the Center of Excellence for Advanced Learning & Food and Drug Testing Laboratory under the **RUSA 2.0** scheme, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam. Details regarding the e-tender can be obtained from the AP e-Procurement Portal: **https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in.** Any addendum, corrigendum, or cancellation will also be posted on the said website. **Last date and time for e-tender submission: 07-01-2026, 05.00 PM.** Sd/- Registrar

KERALA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD
(DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, GOVT. OF KERALA)
Head Office : Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram-14,
(Telephone No. 0471-2945600, 2945646
E-mail : edrugs.kmscl@kerala.gov.in,
website : www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in, CIN No. U24233KL2007SGC021616

No.KMSCL/ED/34/2025 Date :17.12.2025

E- TENDER NOTICE

Online bids are invited from manufacturers/direct importers / loan licensees on behalf of Department of Health, Govt of Kerala for the procurement insecticides for NVBDCP.

Sl. No.	Tender No. and Date	No. of items
1.	KMSCL/ED/INS-NVBDCP/RC/2025/031 dtd. 17/12/2025	2

The last date and time of online uploading of tenders will be 31.12.2025, 5.00 pm. The date and time of opening of Technical bid will be 03.01.2026 11.30 am. Tenders shall be downloaded and submitted online through the e-tender portal **www.etenders.kerala.gov.in.**

(Sd/-) MANAGING DIRECTOR (Tender Inviting Authority)

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, MEDICAL EDUCATION & TRAINING, UTTAR PRADESH, 6th FLOOR, JAWAHAR BHAWAN, LUCKNOW.

No. ME-3/2025/3072 Lucknow : Dated 18/12/2025

TIME SCHEDULE FOR "SPECIAL STRAY VACANCY ROUND" OF UP NEET UG COUNSELING 2025 (M.B.B.S./B.D.S.)

In accordance with the schedule issued by the Medical Counseling Committee (MCC), New Delhi for the NEET UG course, the **schedule for the SPECIAL STRAY VACANCY ROUND** of online counseling for admission to state quota seats in undergraduate courses (MBBS/BDS) in government/private medical/dental colleges/institutions/medical universities is as follows :-

S.No.	Description	Dates	Total Days
1.	Date of online registration and uploading of documents	**From:-** 19-12-2025 (05:00 PM) **To:-** 22-12-2025 (11:00 AM)	03 Days
2.	Date of depositing registration and security money	**From:-** 19-12-2025 (05:00 PM) **To:-** 22-12-2025 (02:00 PM)	03 Days
3.	Date of Merit List Declaration	**On:-** 22-12-2025	01 Days
4.	Date of On-line Choice filling	**From:-** 22-12-2025 (05:00 PM) **To:-** 26-12-2025 (11:00 AM)	04 Days
5.	Date of Allotment Result Declaration	**On:-** 26-12-2025	01 Days
6.	Date for downloading the allotment letters & Admission	**From:-** 27-12-2025 **To:-** 31-12-2025	05 Days

- As per the instructions contained in the government order/brochure of U.P. NEET UG 2025, candidates should assess their eligibility themselves.
- Only those candidates will be eligible for choice filling who have completed the online registration process, whose original documents have been verified online, and who have deposited the required security amount.
- The U.P. NEET UG 2025 information booklet (brochure) and important instructions are available on the websites www.upneet.in and www.dgme.up.gov.in, Keep checking websites regularly for updated information.
- The said counseling will be subject to the final orders passed by the Hon'ble High Court, Allahabad, Lucknow Bench, in Special Appeal No. 295/2025, Uttar Pradesh State & Others vs. Sabra Ahmad.

Helpline Numbers: 8189011696, 8189011697, 8189011698, 8189011699, 8189011700

DIRECTOR GENERAL

INBRIEF



NIA arrests another key accused in Red Fort blast case

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested another key accused in the Red Fort car bomb attack on Thursday. He was produced before a court, which sent him to the agency's custody till December 26. The car bomb went off near the Red Fort on November 10. Yasir Ahmed Dar is the ninth person to be arrested in the case. A resident of Shopian in Kashmir, the accused was picked up by the NIA in Delhi. According to the NIA, investigations have revealed that Yasir had an active role in the conspiracy behind the bomb blast. "An active participant in the conspiracy, he had sworn allegiance and taken an oath to carry out self-sacrificial operations...," it said.

SC recommends elevation of 5 judges as HC Chief Justices

The Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Thursday recommended the elevation of five judges as the Chief Justices of High Courts. Justice Manoj Gupta was proposed as the Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court. Justice Revati P. Mohit Dere was recommended as the Meghalaya High Court Chief Justice. The Collegium has recommended the transfer of Justice Soumen Sen as Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court. Justice M.S. Sonak was recommended as the Jharkhand High Court Chief Justice. Justice A. Muhamed Mustaque has been proposed as the Sikkim High Court Chief Justice. Justice Sangam Kumar Sahoo was proposed as Patna High Court Chief Justice.

'No direct link between air pollution and lung disease'

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

There is no direct correlation between higher Air Quality Index (AQI) levels and lung diseases, with no 'conclusive data' to establish such a link, Minister of State for Environment and Climate Change Kirti Vardhan Singh told the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

He, however, conceded that air pollution is one of the 'triggering factors' for respiratory ailments and associated diseases.

Mr. Singh was responding to a question from BJP parliamentarian Laxmikant Bajpayee, who has a degree in Ayurveda. He sought to know if the government was 'aware' of studies and medical tests that linked "prolonged hazardous AQI levels" in Delhi/ National Capital Region to lung fibrosis, and an irreversible reduction in lung capacity. He also wanted to know if the lung elasticity of citizens of Delhi/ NCR had reduced by half compared to that of residents in cities with 'good' AQI levels; and if the government had any 'solution' to save Delhi residents from pulmonary fibrosis, COPD, emphysema, reduced lung function and continuously declining lung elasticity.

Allahabad HC orders grant of protection to 12 live-in couples

'Living together without marriage cannot be termed an offence, no one can object to, and cause a hindrance to, peaceful existence of the couples'

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

Stating that the concept of a live-in relationship may not be acceptable to all, but such relationships are not illegal, the Allahabad High Court on Wednesday ordered the Uttar Pradesh police to provide protection to 12 live-in couples allegedly threatened by their families.

The Bench of Justice Vivek Kumar Singh, who was hearing the petitions filed by 12 women from different parts of the State, stated that it cannot be said that living together without the sanctity of marriage constitutes an offence.

The court cited the example of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, which says that a woman who is in a domestic relationship has been provided protection, maintenance, etc. But the act has not used the word "wife".

"Once an individual, who is a major, has chosen his/her partner, it is not for any other person, be it a family member, to object and cause a hindrance to their peaceful existence. It is the bounden duty of the State, as per the Constitutional obligations cast upon it, to protect the life and liberty of every citizen," the court said.

> Once an individual, who is a major, has chosen his/her partner, it is not for any other person, be it a family member, to object and cause a hindrance to their peaceful existence
> ALLAHABAD HC



It is the duty of the State to protect the life and liberty of every citizen, the High Court says

It added that the right to human life is to be treated on a much higher pedestal, regardless of a citizen being minor or major, married or unmarried, and due to the mere fact that the petitioners have not solemnised marriage, would not deprive them of their fundamental rights.

The court also cited Section 114 of the Indian Evidence Act/Section 119(1) of Bhartiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, which states that if couples live together for a significant amount of time, they will be presumed to be married.

"The courts shall apply this presumption to protect the rights of the parties in a live-in relationship, i.e. women and the children born as a result thereof," it added.

Sahitya Akademi cancels awards announcement

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

Confusion prevailed on Thursday when the Sahitya Akademi was forced to cancel a press conference called by it to announce its annual literary awards following a directive from the Union Ministry of Culture.

The press conference was scheduled to be held at 3 p.m. in Delhi after a meeting of the Executive Board of the literary body, which cleared the awardees. But minutes before it began, it was announced that the press meet had been cancelled and the awards process put on hold.

The Culture Ministry had sent a note to the Akademi, reminding it of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with all four autonomous institutions under it, namely, the National School of Drama, the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the Lalit Kala Akademi, and the Sahitya Akademi, that an exercise of restructuring of awards needed to be taken in consultation with the Ministry. The MoU was signed in July.

"This is to invite your attention to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Akademies and the Ministry for the year 2025-26, wherein it has been stipulated that the exercise of restructuring of awards is required to be undertaken in consultation with the Ministry. In this regard, you are requested to inform this Ministry of the measures taken so far," the note, a copy of which is with *The Hindu*, said.

The Ministry further directed that "till such time the restructuring process is duly approved by the Ministry, no process for declaration of awards shall be undertaken without the prior approval of the Ministry". The note was sent to all four autonomous culture bodies on Thursday.

The note was necessitated as the press conference had been called without the Ministry's knowledge, and without the approval of the due process for the selection of awardees, sources in the Ministry of Culture told *The Hindu*.

The MoUs for restructuring had been signed in line with the restructuring of awards across the board being undertaken under the aegis of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, the sources said.

Sahitya Akademi gives awards each year to books in 24 languages.

SC considers passive euthanasia for 31-year-old

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked to meet the parents of a 31-year-old man lying in a comatose condition for 13 years while contemplating their plea for passive euthanasia by withdrawing artificial life support for him.

"It is a very sad report. We cannot keep this boy in this stage," Justice J.B. Pardiwala, accompanied by Justice K.V. Viswanathan, addressed the family's counsel, advocate Rashmi Nandakumar, and Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati.

The court's comment came after perusing the report of a secondary medical board, headed by an AIIMS team of doctors, containing 31-year-old Harish Rana's medical history.

SC declines urgent hearing of plea on MCD's 'inhumane' stray dog rules

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday declined to entertain a plea seeking the urgent listing of a *suo motu* case to monitor stray dog-bite incidents, even as the petitioners flagged concerns that recent regulations proposed by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) could result in the "inhumane" treatment of canines.



The apex court's Nov. 7 order directs authorities to remove stray dogs from public areas and relocate them to shelters. FILE PHOTO

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for a petitioner, apprised a Bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta that the special three-judge Bench scheduled to hear the case on Thursday had not assembled. Justice Nath clarified that the matter would now be taken up for hearing on January 7, 2026.

Pressing for an early hearing, Mr. Sibal submitted that, pursuant to the apex court's November 7, 2025 order directing municipal authorities to remove stray dogs from public premises and relocate them to designated shelters after sterilisation and vaccination, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) had framed sweeping regulations. He contended that these were contrary to the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023 framed under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.

"The problem is that the MCD, in the meantime, has framed some rules which are completely contrary.... What is being done is very, very inhuman," he said.

Justice Nath, however, declined to intervene immediately.

The municipal authorities were likely to implement the regulations even before the next hearing, Mr. Sibal added, and cautioned that they were proceeding without adequate infrastructure, including sufficient dog shelters. "They will be implementing it, and they will be removing the dogs. They don't have shelters," he said.

Justice Mehta observed that the court would place the question of "humanity" in perspective on the next date of hearing. "On the next date, we will play a video for your benefit and ask you what humanity is," he said.

Mr. Sibal said that the petitioners would also be prepared with footage illustrating what was unfolding after the implementation of the regulations.

'900 million people will have diabetes by 2050, strong steps needed to slow progression'

Ramya Kannan
CHENNAI

In its projections for 2050, the 11th edition of the International Diabetes Federation's *Diabetes Atlas* has calculated that from around 500 million people living with diabetes in 2024, the number will grow to nearly 900 million people between the ages of 20 and 79.

Publishing the key results as an article in the peer-reviewed journal *Lancet Diabetes Endocrinal 2025*, the authors, who are scientists collaborating across the world, pointed out that in 2024, that figure was 11.11% of the population and just over 580 million adults. As per their projections, diabetes will affect 12.96% of the population – over 850 million people – in 2050. In the paper, Irini Genitsaridi and other researchers say, "As the diabetes epidemic has continued unchecked since the turn of the millenium, stronger efforts are needed to slow down progression." A total of 210 countries and five territories were included in the study.



Middle income countries will have the highest prevalence of diabetes, says the study.

In 2024, more people with diabetes were living in urban areas (400 million) than in rural areas (189 million). The authors state that this trend would continue with the projection for 2050 for urban centres (655 million), but in rural areas, it is likely to remain almost the same (198 million) in 2050.

A. Ramachandran, one of the authors of the paper, from the India Diabetes Research Foundation, says "one of the unique features of this year's Atlas, is the table listing the top 10 countries of the world with diabetes load. China is right at the top of the table with about 148 million people with diabetes, and India comes up second on the table, with nearly 90 million. The United States comes third, and Pakistan, fourth.

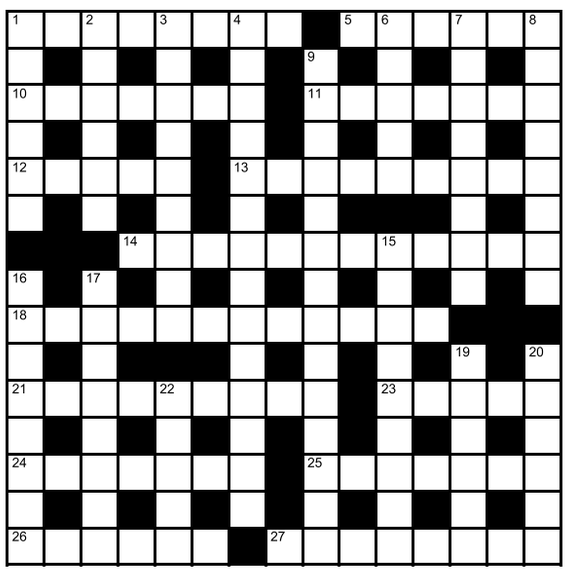
In 2050, while China and India will maintain their top positions on the table, it is projected that Pakistan will climb to the third slot.

TH CROSSWORD + 14669

(set by Arden)

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

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Wild cat back-biting workers from company, say (8)
5 Start with Buenos Aires randomly in this country (6)
10 Red mark allowed (7)
11 Watch two tennis shots - first missing top line (7)
12 Fish eating - Yankee is making it up (5)
13 Silence over hidden past - it's coined for a single occasion (5,4)
14 Work undone, setter under attack (12)
18 Unearths true form of a game (8,4)
21 Follow a genetic code - otherwise amuse to a sickening degree (2,7)
23 Two points within a point - go back to country (5)
24 A mineral recovered with sun spray... (7)
25 ...brings them together provided that is during sunset (7)
26 Meets as one finally escapes (6)
27 Borders of cloth, strangely no sign of knots (8)

Down

1 Take stock stealthily, find way to break law (6)
2 Last string on musical instrument strung up for free (6)
3 Poor Germans accept half lies from those who slander (9)
4 New route, only twice changed? No way! (3,2,4,5)
6 Even extremities, girl will follow (5)
7 Reveals fish inside parallel lines (3,5)
8 Account of stake holding, criminal code (8)
9 Use noun with method - not happy? (4,2,3,5)
15 Dignifying good French upbringing, it's evergreen (9)
16 A salt say grabbing attention (8)
17 She feeds babies that are very small, taking turns somehow (3-5)
19 Could be doing after I get a dye (6)
20 Lay up is for awareness (6)
22 To end it all, you keep this one, don't be angry (5)

SUDOKU

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

No.SS6735 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Hanuman's guidance

Desire is the one force that a person has to control to overcome temptation in various forms on earth. It calls for tremendous inner strength, moral courage, as exemplified by Hanuman. Hanuman's outstanding feature is his devotion to Rama. Revered for his courage, mental fortitude, control over his senses, his problem-solving ability, and above all, beloved of Rama, everyone prays to Hanuman for courage and guidance, said Damal S Ramakrishnan.

Once Hanuman met Him, he had no other interest in the world, except serving Rama, setting an example for all devotees on total surrender to God. As he undertook the task of finding Sita (abducted by Ravana) and flew to Sri Lanka after being tipped by Sampati, Hanuman was like an arrow from Rama's bow: unerringly finding the target. Wandering around Ravana's palace, and unable to spot Sita, Hanuman chanted Rama namam. Forthwith, he was in Ashoka Vanam (forest) where Sita was held captive; proof that dharma protects those who uphold it. When Hanuman saw her for the first time, Ravana was just leaving the grove after pressuring Sita to forget Rama and accept him. As Sita stood forlorn, Hanuman showed presence of mind by narrating the Ramayana: a rare occurrence, with Hanuman being the first to discourse upon it and Sita, the first to listen to it. Wary of trusting anyone, Sita is convinced that he is Rama's messenger. Hanuman proved that placing faith in Rama namam and surrendering to Him completely without getting sidetracked, is the reward for any quest, however difficult the task maybe. Hanuman has shown by example how to live in this material world and remain close to God.

INBRIEF

FinMin unveils new logo for Regional Rural Banks

The Finance Ministry on Thursday unveiled a new logo for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) to signify a single and unified brand identity. On the principle of 'One State One RRB', the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, has consolidated 26 Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) across 11 States/Union Territories, effective from May 1, 2025. The reform marks a crucial step toward building stronger and more efficient RRBs. PTI

MTAR Tech bags ₹310 crore order for civil nuke reactors

MTAR Technologies has secured a ₹310 crore order from Megha Engineering & Infrastructures for supply of various equipment for the Kaiga 5 and Kaiga 6 civil nuclear reactors. On the schedule, the company said the deliveries will be staggered up to February 2030. "We look forward to strong growth in this segment, backed by a robust order book and favourable industry outlook," MTAR Managing Director Parvat Srinivas Reddy said.

Cyient to acquire majority stake in U.S. firm for $93 mn

Cyient Semiconductors on Wednesday said it will be acquiring, through a subsidiary, a majority stake in U.S. firm Kinetic Technologies for $93 million. Cyient Semiconductors Singapore, the subsidiary, has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire a majority stake exceeding 65%.The combination will establish a scaled platform in the more than $40 billion power semiconductor market, accelerating Cyient Semiconductors' growth trajectory, it said.

FM tables Securities Market Code Bill 2025 in Lok Sabha

The Bill, which seeks to unify three laws governing the securities market, has been referred to the Standing Committee on Finance for review

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday tabled the Securities Market Code Bill 2025 in the Lok Sabha.

The Bill, which seeks to unify three laws governing securities market, was referred to the Standing Committee on Finance for review.

The Bill proposes to consolidate the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Act, 1992, and the Depositories Act, 1996.

The move was announced in the Union Budget in 2021-22 and the Bill has now been tabled to rationalise and consolidate the existing provisions, and provides a modern regulatory framework for investor protection and capital mobilisation at scale, according to the statement of objectives in the Bill.

As per the Bill, the government proposes to increase the number of members in SEBI to 15 from the current nine, including the Chairperson.

This will include the Chairperson, two officers appointed by the Central Government and one from the RBI as ex-officio members, and 11 others, of whom at least five will be whole-time members. Currently there are three whole-time members.


Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaks in Lok Sabha during the Winter session of Parliament on Thursday. PTI

In another significant change, Union Government also proposed to decriminalise violations of "minor, procedural and technical nature" into civil penalties to "facilitate the ease of doing business and to reduce the compliance burden."

Civil penalties

The Bill, if enacted in its current form, would bring "unlawful gains or losses" under civil penalties and limit punishments only to cases of market abuse such as insider trading or trading while in possession of material or non-public information. Further, in the case of contravention of any rules or provisions of the code, no inspection can be done if eight years had passed from the date of contravention. The Bill also mandates that the members of the board disclose any direct or indirect interests before making a decision to eliminate conflict of interest.

"These changes appear to be made in keeping with extant requirements balancing faster adjudication processes with the need for better deterrence," said Paras Parekh, Partner at CMS INDUSLAW.

Even as the Bill was being introduced, DMK MP Arun Nehru and Congress' Manish Tewari opposed it saying it gave excessive powers to a single body, which was against the principle of the separation of powers.

Responding to this, Ms. Sitharaman said that since the government was referring it to the standing committee, such details could be discussed by the panel.

(With inputs from Sreeparna Chakrabarty)


Troubled times: IndiGo had cancelled nearly 5,000 flights in the first 9 days of December, impacting 12.5 lakh passengers. REUTERS

CCI launches probe against IndiGo after plaints over disruptions

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) on Thursday said it had initiated an inquiry against IndiGo following complaints it had received against the airline over the recent disruptions.

"The CCI has taken cognisance of information filed against IndiGo in the context of the recent disruptions witnessed in the aviation sector, across various routes. Based on the initial assessment, the commission has decided to proceed further in the matter in accordance with the provisions of the Competition Act, 2002," the regulator said in a press statement. It, however, did not mention the number of complaints it had received against IndiGo, or the aspects the inquiry would explore.

The Hindu sent a questionnaire to CCI Chairperson Ravneet Kaur, which remained unanswered till the time of going to press.

IndiGo had cancelled nearly 5,000 flights in the first nine days of December that impacted at least 12.5 lakh passengers.

A Bengaluru-based lawyer, who requested not to be identified since he had not yet received a formal acknowledgment from the CCI, claimed to be one of those who had filed a complaint against IndiGo before the anti trust body.

'Abuse of position'

He told *The Hindu* that his Delhi-Bengaluru flight was cancelled by the airline and the tickets offered for travel on December 7 were at a much higher price, which amounted to "abuse of its dominant position in the market."

The airline's market share of nearly 42% in January 2019 has grown today to 65.7% market share, amidst the collapse of Jet Airways and Go First.

Air India, in the second spot in the market, has a market share of 25.7%.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	THURSDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	84,481	-0.09
US Dollar	90.20	0.19
Brent oil	60.23	0.35

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	2229.30	-3.20
Adani Ports	1495.70	9.40
Apollo Hosp	6918.50	-3.00
Asian Paints	2759.70	-26.00
Axis Bank	1229.80	5.10
Bajaj Auto	8831.00	-64.00
Bajaj Finserv	2026.30	5.10
Bajaj Finance	1000.30	0.70
Bharat Elec	383.45	-2.15
Bharti Airtel	2092.00	-16.00
Cipla	1498.90	2.00
Coal India	385.30	0.55
Dr Reddys Lab	1280.00	8.00
Hindustan Unilever	40.20	0.00
Eicher Motors	7106.50	-28.00
Eternal Ltd.	284.75	0.30
Grasim Ind	2807.60	1.00
HCL Tech	1661.40	6.40
HDFC Bank	979.70	-4.30
HDFC Life	757.00	3.50
Hindalco	856.70	7.90
Hind Unilever	2265.50	-10.10
ICICI Bank	1356.80	4.40
IntGlobeAvi	5115.50	135.00
Infosys	1626.80	24.80
ITC	400.40	0.60
Jio Financial Services Ltd.	292.30	-0.85
JSW Steel	1082.20	2.90
Kotak Bank	2164.60	-8.60
L&T	4031.10	-31.30
M&M	3586.60	-26.20
Maruti Suzuki	16329.00	-69.00
Max Healthcare	1048.50	17.40
NestleIndia	1233.50	-1.10
NTPC	318.50	-2.75
ONGC	232.00	-0.91
PowerGrid Corp	257.95	-3.15
Reliance Ind	1544.40	0.00
SBI Life	2014.40	4.20
State Bank	977.55	1.70
Shriram Finance Ltd.	869.45	5.25
Sun Pharma	1745.90	-47.00
TataConsumerProduct	1171.50	-8.30
Tata Steel	168.12	-2.22
TCS	3280.80	63.00
Tech Mahindra	1605.60	26.20
Titan	3919.30	11.40
Tata Motors PV	345.80	-0.55
Trent Ltd.	4030.00	-15.20
UltraTech Cement	11461.00	-79.00
Wipro	263.85	2.71

ICICI Bank gets ₹238 cr. GST demand notice

ICICI Bank on Thursday said tax authorities have slapped a demand notice of ₹238 crore on it for alleged short payment of Goods and Services Tax (GST). PTI

Exporters to gain on near duty-free access to Oman, says FIEO

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) would strengthen India's export competitiveness across goods and services, enhance professional mobility, and support inclusive and employment-led growth, The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said in its initial comment after signing of the deal.

"The CEPA secures unprecedented market access for Indian exports, with zero-duty access on 98.08% of Oman's tariff lines, covering 99.38% of India's exports by value,"


'This pact will benefit labour-intensive sectors'.

said S. C. Ralhan, President, FIEO.

"This will significantly enhance the competitiveness of Indian goods and benefit key labour-intensive sectors such as textiles and apparel, leather and footwear, gems and jewellery and sports goods."

Sun shares drop after U.S. FDA classifies Gujarat plant as OAI

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Shares of Sun Pharmaceutical Industries closed 2.77% lower on Thursday at ₹1,745.35 apiece on the BSE after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (U.S. FDA) classified the company's facility in Baska, Gujarat, as Official Action Indicated (OAI) following the inspection it conducted from September 8 to 19.

OAI status implies regulatory and/or administrative actions are recommended. "We continue to manufacture and supply approved products from the facility to the U.S. market... will work with the regulator to achieve fully compliant status," the company said.

OAI status implies regulatory and/or administrative actions are recommended

The OAI is one of three classifications the U.S. FDA issues post facility inspection. Voluntary Action Indicated is another, which means objectionable conditions or practices were found but the agency is not prepared to take action. No action indicated is the third classification which means no objectionable conditions/ practices were found during inspection.

'Combined NPS AUM went past ₹16 lakh crore in October'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The National Pension System (NPS) subscriber base has grown significantly, crossing 90 million by October while combined Assets Under Management (AUM) along with Atal Pension Yojana crossed ₹16 lakh crore, said PFRDA, (Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority) Chairperson Sivasubramanian Ramann.

PFRDA was committed to the vision of a pensioned society, ensuring pension coverage reached all sections of the private sector, he said adding the authority had a target to bring in 25 crore private-sector citizens under the pension net over five years.


Sivasubramanian Ramann

Several steps

"Over the last six months, PFRDA has undertaken several measures to enhance subscriber flexibility, organised awareness programmes across 30 Tier-II and Tier-III cities, and plans to expand outreach to 100 cities by March 2026," he added.

PFRDA was focusing on key segments such as platform workers, agripreneurs and MSMEs. The efforts were complemented by strengthening distribution channels, including the introduction of the Multiple Scheme Framework (MSF).

Later, he told the media, NPS consistently delivered competitive returns since inception with even the composite scheme carrying only 15% equity exposure generating returns of over 9%, reinforcing NPS as a robust and reliable retirement solution.

Shashwat Sharma to take over as Bharti CEO

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

Bharti Airtel Ltd. chief executive officer-designate Shashwat Sharma, currently the chief operating officer, will take over the firm's reins as CEO on January 1, the telco announced.

"In line with the planned succession, Gopal Vittal will move into the role of executive vice-chairman of Bharti Airtel on the 1st of January 2026 overseeing Bharti Airtel and all its subsidiaries," Bharti said. He helmed the telco through some of the most turbulent times for the telecom sector.



MOSCOW

Ukrainian drone attacks kill three in Russia's Rostov, say authorities



REUTERS

Ukrainian drone attacks overnight Thursday killed three people in Russia's Rostov region, the regional governor said. An attack caused a fire on a cargo ship in the port of the regional capital, killing two crew members and injuring three. A civilian was also killed and six others injured in the town of Bataysk. AFP

SINGAPORE

Bangladesh 2024 uprising leader dies of injuries in Singapore



AFP

A leader of Bangladesh's 2024 uprising who was wounded in an assassination attempt and flown to Singapore for treatment has died in the city-state, officials said on Friday. "Despite the best efforts of the doctors..., Mr. (Sharif Osman) Hadi succumbed to his injuries," Singapore's Foreign Affairs Ministry said. AFP

STOCKHOLM

Assange files plaint against Nobel Foundation over Machado's win



AP

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has filed a criminal complaint in Sweden against the Nobel Foundation after Venezuelan leader Maria Corina Machado won the Peace Prize. This year's prize represented a "gross misappropriation" of funds and the "facilitation of war crimes", according to the complaint. AFP

LOS ANGELES

Pulitzer Prize-winning war reporter Peter Arnett dies aged 91



AFP

Peter Arnett, the Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter who spent decades dodging bullets and bombs to bring the world eyewitness accounts of war from the rice paddies of Vietnam to the deserts of Iraq, has died on Wednesday, said his son Andrew Arnett. He was 91. He had been suffering from prostate cancer. AP

U.S. announces $10 billion in arms sales to Taiwan; China slams move

If approved by Congress, it would be the largest-ever U.S. arms package to the island; it includes 82 HIMARS systems, 420 ATACMS and 60 self-propelled howitzers; China says the U.S. decision would undermine its security and regional stability

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has announced a massive package of arms sales to Taiwan valued at more than $10 billion that includes medium-range missiles, howitzers and drones, drawing an angry response from China.

The State Department announced the sales late Wednesday during a nationally televised address by the Republican President, who made scant mention of foreign policy issues and did not speak about China or Taiwan. U.S.-Chinese tensions have



Weapons support: Taiwan's Defence Ministry expressed gratitude to the U.S. for supporting its defence capabilities. AFP

ebbed and flowed during Mr. Trump's second term, largely over trade and tariffs but also over China's increasing aggressiveness toward Taiwan, which Beijing has said must reunify with the mainland.

If approved by Congress, it would be the largest-ever U.S. weapons package to Taiwan, exceeding the total amount of $8.4 billion in U.S. arms sales to Taiwan during President Joe Biden's Democratic administration.

The eight arms sales agreements announced on Wednesday cover 82 high-mobility artillery rocket systems, or HIMARS, and 420 Army Tactical Missile Systems, or ATACMS – similar to what the U.S. had been providing Ukraine during the Biden administration to defend itself from Russia – worth more than $4 billion. They also include 60 self-propelled howitzer systems and related equipment worth more than $4 billion and drones valued at more than $1 billion.

Other sales in the package include military software valued at more than $1 billion, Javelin and TOW missiles worth more than $700 million, helicopter spare parts worth $96 million and refurbishment kits for Harpoon missiles worth $91 million.

The eight sales agreements amount to $11.15 billion, according to Taiwan's Defence Ministry, which in a statement on Thursday expressed gratitude to the U.S. over the arms sale.

China's Foreign Ministry attacked the move, saying it would violate diplomatic agreements between China and the U.S.; gravely harm China's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity; and undermine regional stability.

Don't make 'fatal mistake' in Venezuela: Russia to U.S.

Agence France-Presse
MOSCOW

Russia on Thursday called on Donald Trump's administration not to make a "fatal mistake" in the Venezuela crisis, calling for restraint and saying it was in "constant contact" with its ally Caracas.

U.S. President Donald Trump ordered a blockade of sanctioned oil tankers in Venezuela this week, marking a new escalation between Washington and the South American country led President Nicolas Maduro.

Venezuela has insisted its crude oil exports were not impacted by the announcement, showing defiance.

Mr. Maduro is a friend of the Kremlin's and has been a regular guest in Moscow for years.



Dmitry Peskov

Russia's Foreign Ministry said it hoped the White House will "not allow a fatal mistake and will refrain from further sliding into a situation that threatens unpredictable consequences for the entire Western hemisphere".

It called for a "de-escalation" and expressed support for Maduro's government. The Kremlin said it was in "constant contact" with its "ally and partner" Venezuela.

"We, of course, call on all countries of the region to show restraint in order to avoid any unpredictable development in the situation," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said.

It is unclear how the blockade will play out, with U.S. warships in the Caribbean.

Potential attack

In his announcement earlier this week, Mr. Trump also said "Venezuela is completely surrounded by the largest Armada ever assembled in the History of South America" – raising fears of a potential U.S. intervention.

The Kremlin has in the past helped prop up Venezuela's economy. Russian leader Vladimir Putin reaffirmed his support to Mr. Maduro in a phone call earlier this month.

Israel hits Lebanon as deadline looms to disarm Hezbollah

Associated Press
BEIRUT

Israel carried out a series of air strikes on southern and northeastern Lebanon on Thursday as a deadline looms to disarm the militant Hezbollah group along the countries' tense frontier.

The strikes came a day before a meeting of the committee monitoring the enforcement of a U.S.-brokered ceasefire that halted the latest war between Israel and Hezbollah a year ago.

The gathering on Friday will be the second meeting of the mechanism after Israel and Lebanon appointed civilian members to a previously military-only committee. The group also includes the United States, France and the UN peacekeeping force deployed along the border.



Smoke rises from the site of a series of Israeli air strikes in a southern Lebanese village. AFP

The latest Israel-Hezbollah war began on October 8, 2023.

Outages in Sudan after drone attack strikes power plant

Agence France-Presse
PORT SUDAN

Sudan paramilitaries launched a large-scale drone attack in the east on Thursday, a military source said, with strikes hitting a key power station, causing outages and killing three.

Since April 2023, Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been locked in a conflict that has killed tens of thousands of people, displaced millions more and devastated infrastructure.

The attacks "led to power outages in several states", the national electricity company stated.

In recent months, the RSF has been accused of launching drone attacks on vast areas controlled by the army, targeting civilian infrastructure and causing power cuts affecting millions.

"At dawn this morning, the militia launched 35 drones against the cities of Atbara, Al-Damer and Berber in River Nile State, targeting civilian infrastructure," a military source said on condition of anonymity, attributing the strikes to the RSF.

The damaged power station is a strategic hub in the Sudanese electricity grid, receiving power generated by the Merowe Dam.

Thai jets bomb building in Cambodia's border casino hub injuring 2 civilians

Agence France-Presse
PHNOM PENH

Thailand on Thursday bombed a building in a Cambodian casino town and major crossing between the two nations, as foreign powers pressured them to halt reignited border clashes.

Thai fighter jets dropped three bombs in an area of Poipet city, a bustling casino hub popular with Thai gamblers, on Thursday morning, the Cambodian Interior Ministry said in a statement.

The attack damaged a warehouse and other property, leaving two civilians with minor injuries, it said.

Thai air force spokesperson Jackkrit Thammavichai told presspersons the strike destroyed a "logistics centre" used to store rockets. "These are facilities that have been used for military purposes."



Infrastructure hit: A garage damaged after Thai air strikes in Poipet town of Banteay Meanchey province in Cambodia. AFP

The renewed fighting between the Southeast Asian neighbours this month has killed at least 21 people in Thailand and 18 in Cambodia, while displacing more than 8 lakh, officials said.

The conflict stems from a territorial dispute over the colonial-era demarcation of their 800-km border and a smattering of ancient temple ruins situated on the frontier.

Each side has blamed the other for instigating the fresh fighting and traded accusations of attacks on civilians.

Border closure

Thailand said on Tuesday that between 5,000 and 6,000 Thai nationals remained stranded in Poipet after Cambodia closed its land border crossings with its neighbour.

Cambodia's Interior Ministry said the border closures were a "necessary measure" to reduce risks to civilians amid the ongoing combat, adding that air travel remained an option for those seeking to leave.

Rajasthan State Road Development And Construction Corporation Ltd., JAIPUR

No. : NIT/2025-26/29796 - 805 Date : 18/12/2025

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या 572/2025-26

निम्नलिखित कार्यों के लिए केन्द्र / राज्य सरकार के अभियांत्रिकी विभागों एवं उनके अधिकृत संगठनों में पंजीकृत एवं अनुभवी संवेदकों से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में ई-प्रोक्यूरमेन्ट प्रक्रिया हेतु ऑनलाइन निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती है

कार्य का विवरण	कार्य की कुल अनु. लागत (रु.)
External Development work (Roads, Parking Shed, Horticulture, Landscaping, Signages and Misc. works) and Renovation works at District Hospital, Sri Ganganagar. UBN: RRC2526WLRC01028	560.67 Lakh

निविदा से सम्बन्धित प्रपत्र में निविदा शुल्क, धरोहर राशि, डाउनलोड करने व खोलने की तारीख सहित सम्पूर्ण विवरण एवं संशोधन वेबसाईट: http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.nic.in तथा http://pwd.rajasthan.gov.in/rsrdc पर देखा जा सकता है। इच्छुक संवेदकों को अपने डिजिटल हस्ताक्षर के माध्यम से वेबसाईट http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर रजिस्टर्ड करवाना आवश्यक है। महाप्रबंधक

राजस्थान युवा बोर्ड
(युवा मामले एवं खेल विभाग, राजस्थान सरकार)
सवाई मानसिंह स्टेडियम, प्रताप नगर, जयपुर टेलीफैक्स 0141-2741489

क्रमांक :- F.01(15)RYB/2025-26/00021-7863630 जयपुर, दिनांक :- 15/12/2025

शुद्धि पत्र संख्या - 1

"राजस्थान युवा महोत्सव" का भव्य एवं सफल आयोजन हेतु इवेन्ट मैनेजमेंट (EVENT MANAGEMENT) के सम्पूर्ण कार्य हेतु दक्ष, प्रतिष्ठित व अनुभवी फर्मों / संस्था / कंम्पनी से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में ई–प्रोक्योरमेन्ट प्रक्रिया द्वारा ई–निविदा सूचना संख्या 05 / 2025–26, दिनांक 15.12.2025 को दोपहर 3.00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की गई है, जिसमें आंशिक संशोधन कर दिनांक 18.12.2025 दोपहर 3.00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जा रही है। संशोधन का पूर्ण विवरण राजस्थान युवा बोर्ड, जयपुर की वेबसाईट **www.youthboard.rajasthan.gov.in** एवं लोक उपापन पोर्टल **http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in** व ई–प्रोक्योरमेन्ट पोर्टल **https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** पर देखा जा सकता है।

राज.संवाद/सी/25/15928 सदस्य सचिव

HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD

NOTICE

CORRIGENDUM TO TENDER

(RFP No. AHC/Recruitment/01/2025)

In reference to the **Tender Document/RFP No. AHC/Recruitment/01/2025 dated 08.12.2025** for Engaging Agency for Conducting Recruitment in the Establishment of High Court, a Corrigendum has been issued. Detailed information regarding the Corrigendum is available on the official website of the High Court at **http://www.allahabadhighcourt.in**

Sd/-
Registrar General

THE HINDU GROUP

THE HINDU
REWIND 2025
TRIVIA QUIZ

DAY 14

1. Who became the first-ever Indian to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, announced as part of the Class of 2026?
2. A new blood group antigen discovered in a 38-year-old woman in Bengaluru has been officially recognised by the International Blood Group Reference Laboratory as part of the Cromer system. What is this newly identified antigen called?
3. Which government app—used for reporting suspicious calls, viewing numbers linked to a user, and blocking stolen phones—was ordered to be pre-installed on all smartphones but later clarified as optional for users to keep or delete?

*T&C apply.

Scan QR code or visit **bit.ly/Rewind2024TriviaQuiz** take the quiz. Top 3 winners* every day win gift vouchers.

Answer to yesterday's quiz:
1. Sin goods
2. High Seas Treaty
3. Dhanush

Yesterday's Winners:
1. Muthulakshmi.R, Madurai | 2. Anitha Arjun, Kollam | 3. Priyadarshi Das, Kolkatta

BIG CALL

Will review scheduling matches in North India during winter: Shukla



SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

After the cancellation of the fourth T20I between India and South Africa at Lucknow due to excessive fog, BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla said the board will review scheduling of matches between December 15 and January 15 in North India, following which it would be determined if the fixtures have to be shifted.

NOT A CHOICE ANYMORE

Workload management a necessity for Bumrah, says Uthappa



SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Jasprit Bumrah's "demanding action" and "high pace" put immense pressure on his body, and managing his workload is necessary, Robin Uthappa said. "Fast bowling is probably the toughest skill in the sport, and Bumrah does it at high pace with a demanding action," Uthappa said on *JioStar's 'Cricket Live'*.

MILESTONE

Lyon, with 564 wickets, is second on the Australian bowling chart



GETTY IMAGES

Nathan Lyon, on Thursday, moved past Glenn McGrath for second place on Australia's all-time bowling list. He reached the milestone on day two of the third Ashes Test. Muttiah Muralitharan (800) tops the list, followed by Shane Warne (708), Jimmy Anderson (704), Anil Kumble (619), Stuart Broad (604), Lyon (564), and McGrath (563).

STUFF OF LEGENDS

It's pretty humbling, says Lyon after surpassing McGrath



REUTERS

I grew up idolising Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath, they were my childhood heroes. To be able to take over or equal Glenn, it's pretty humbling, and it's something that I'll look back at the end of my career. Tonight I'll sit and have a moment to myself because this is extremely special — Nathan Lyon after moving past McGarth.

Chance for the Men in Blue to end the T20I series on a high

Cricket likely to take centre stage after the weather disruption in Lucknow with the Narendra Modi Stadium pitch — and dew factor — making it conducive for scoring runs; SA will count a series draw in the T20 format as a successful conclusion

SA IN INDIA

Ashwin Achal
AHMEDABAD

The fifth and final T20I here on Friday presents India the chance to salvage a positive at the end of a testing South Africa visit to these shores.

The tour began with two calamitous Test defeats for India, followed by the home team taking a 2-1 win in the ODI leg. Excessive fog at Lucknow on Wednesday meant that the series stayed alive, with India holding a 2-1 lead. There is unlikely to be any environmental disruptors at play at the Narendra Modi Stadium and cricket will be back centre stage.

Focus on Suryakumar

For India, skipper Suryakumar Yadav, this outing gives the batter another chance to find his rhythm.

The team takes a break for a month before featuring in five T20Is against New Zealand, making every occasion vital for the likes of Suryakumar to get runs under the belt ahead of the ICC men's T20 World Cup.

Shubman Gill, another player desperate to break out of a dip, is down with a foot injury. He may not partake in the proceedings on Friday, which leaves the door open for Kerala swashbuckler Sanju Samson to take his place at the top of the order.





Key personnel: With Gill unlikely to take part due to a foot injury, Samson may get an opportunity to loosen his limbs, while De Kock and Miller will hope to swing it for South Africa. VIJAY SONEJI

Axar Patel has been ruled out due to an illness. His replacement, Shahbaz Ahmed, may have to warm the bench, given that Varun Chakaravarthy and Kuldeep Yadav remain the lead spinners.

Hometown hero Jasprit Bumrah, who had flown home for personal reasons, could be back in action. In the interim, Arshdeep Singh and Harshit Rana acquitted themselves well, bowling with venom in the third T20I at Dharamshala.

In the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy group stage day matches held at this venue this month, batters held a slight edge. In this night encounter, taking dew into consideration, there should be more runs on offer.

The South Africans, meanwhile, have the goods to end this tour on a high. The visitor bats deep, with formidable power-hitting options available even in the lower order. South Africa, thoroughly outclassed at Dharamshala, will welcome more batting-friendly conditions here.

India cannot lose the series, but if Aiden Markram's men can draw level at 2-2, the South Africans will count this as a truly successful tour of India.

The teams (from):

India: Suryakumar Yadav (Capt.), Shubman Gill (Vice-capt.), Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Jitesh Sharma, Sanju Samson, Jasprit Bumrah, Varun Chakaravarthy, Arshdeep Singh, Kuldeep Yadav, Harshit Rana, Washington Sundar, Shahbaz Ahmed.

South Africa: Aiden Markram (Capt.), Ottneil Baartman, Corbin Bosch, Dewald Brevis, Quinton de Kock, Tony de Zorzi, Donovan Ferreira, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, George Linde, Kwena Maphaka, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Tristan Stubbs.

Match starts at 7 p.m.

England on life-support as Australia rips it apart



Giant leap: Green gives Brook the marching orders. GETTY IMAGES

THE ASHES

Agence France-Presse
ADELAIDE

A pumped-up Australia ripped through England's fragile batting on Thursday to leave the tourists staring down the barrel of a third Test defeat with their Ashes campaign on the brink, barring a miracle.

At stumps on a sweltering day two, the visitors had ground to 213 for eight, trailing by 158 after Australia added 45 to its overnight 326 for eight as temperatures soared to 40 Celsius. A gutsy Ben Stokes was a weary not out 45 after facing a marathon 151 balls in searing heat with Jofra Archer on 30 in a Test England must win and on a pitch ideal for batting.

Brave knock

The captain's mood was not helped by another suspect decision by the Snicko technology, but at least his brave knock – including a blow to the helmet off Mitchell Starc – helped his side avoid the follow-on.

Australia leads the five-match series 2-0 and will retain the urn if it wins or draw after back-to-back eight-wicket thumpings in Perth and Brisbane.

Opening pair Ben Duckett and Zak Crawley saw off the early overs from Starc and Pat Cummins.

But it was a mirage with England losing three wickets for five runs in a 15-ball blitz, the latest chapter in a familiar tale.

Cummins first tempted an edge from Crawley, on nine, to wicketkeeper Alex Carey.

Lyon grabbed two wickets in a sensational opening over with a hapless Ollie Pope (3) flicking to Josh Inglis at midwicket before he bowled Duckett for 29.

SCOREBOARD

Australia — 1st innings: Travis Head c Crawley b Carse 10, Jake Weatherald c Smith b Archer 18, Marnus Labuschagne c Carse b Archer 19, Usman Khawaja c Tongue b Jacks 82, Cameron Green c Carse b Archer 0, Alex Carey c Smith b Jacks 106, Josh Inglis b Tongue 32, Pat Cummins c Pope b Carse 13, Mitchell Starc b Archer 54, Nathan Lyon lbw b Archer 9, Scott Boland (not out) 14; Extras (lb-7, nb-7): 14; Total (in 91.2 overs): 371.

Fall of wickets: 1-33, 2-33, 3-94, 4-94, 5-185, 6-244, 7-271, 8-321, 9-348.

England bowling: Archer 20.2-5-53-5, Carse 16-0-89-2, Tongue 16-1-64-1, Stokes 19-3-53-0, Jacks 20-3-105-2.

England — 1st innings: Zak Crawley c Carey b Cummins 9, Ben Duckett b Lyon 29, Ollie Pope c Inglis b Lyon 3, Joe Root c Carey b Cummins 19, Harry Brook c Carey b Green 45, Ben Stokes (batting) 45, Jamie Smith c Carey b Cummins 22, Will Jacks c Carey b Boland 6, Brydon Carse b Boland 0, Jofra Archer (batting) 30; Extras (lb-1, nb-4): 5; Total (for eight wickets in 68 overs): 213.

Fall of wickets: 1-37, 2-41, 3-42, 4-71, 5-127, 6-159, 7-168, 8-168.

Australia bowling: Starc 12-1-54-0, Cummins 14-3-54-3, Boland 12-6-31-2, Lyon 22-4-51-2, Green 8-3-22-1.

Dhumal hints at shifting RR's base to Pune; optimistic about Bengaluru

IPL

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

The Indian Premier League (IPL) chairman Arun Dhumal has indicated that uncertainty surrounding the administration of the Rajasthan Cricket Association (RCA) could force IPL and Rajasthan Royals (RR) to look beyond Jaipur for its home matches in the 2026 season, with Pune emerging as a strong alternative.

Dhumal made it clear that the BCCI had already warned the RCA last year that failure to conduct elections would jeopardise the state's ability to host IPL matches.

"We had already communicated to the RCA last year that in case you are not able to organise these elections, it would be difficult for us to conduct the tournament there," Dhumal said after Tuesday night's IPL Auction in Abu Dhabi.



Wait and watch: IPL's decision to host games in Jaipur will depend on the Rajasthan Cricket Association elections. IPL

"As of now, that has not happened, so until and unless they conduct those elections and a new elected body comes in and the facility is good enough to take care of IPL games, we will watch the situation and take the right action in due course."

The RCA has been in administrative limbo, with two rival factions claiming legitimacy. As a result, the association has been run by an ad-hoc committee appointed by the BCCI in consultation with the Rajasthan state government, further complicating venue clearances.

With Jaipur's status as a venue uncertain, Rajasthan Royals have already inspected the Maharashtra Cricket Association stadium on the outskirts of Pune. Having previously hosted IPL matches, including Playoffs, earlier, Pune could end up being Rajasthan Royals' base for IPL 2026.

On Bengaluru's situation, Dhumal struck a more optimistic note. The city has not hosted a major cricket match since a fatal stampede outside the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium last June, which led to heightened scrutiny of crowd management and infrastructure.

"I had a word with the officials from KSCA. They are in touch with the state government. They had a fruitful meeting and we are very positive that we will get Bengaluru as the venue," Dhumal said.

While no formal decision has been announced, the signals from the IPL chairman suggest that unless the RCA resolves its administrative issues swiftly, Rajasthan Royals may once again be forced to operate away from their traditional home base.

Firouzja makes it five out of five as the Continental Kings lord over Masters

GCL

P.K. Ajith Kumar
MUMBAI

Alireza Firouzja just turns up at the Global Chess League and wins most of the time. Last year, he drew his first game and then won the following six, as he went on to play a major role in Triveni Continental Kings' title defence in London.

Things are hardly any different in the third season of the GCL. He has made it five out of five so far: he beat Maxime Vachier-Lagrave to lead Continental Kings to a 9-5 win against upGrad Mumba Masters in the clash between the table-toppers at the Royal Opera House here on Thursday.

It was indeed Firouzja's win that decided the closely-contested affair. All the other four boards had been drawn. He held his nerve in time pressure to take advantage of his rival's inaccurate moves.



Unstoppable: Firouzja stepped up for the Kings with a win over Vachier-Lagrave. GCL

So Firouzja has beaten every player on the Icon board, his previous victims being the World No. 3 Fabiano Caruana, the reigning World champion D. Gukesh, the World No. 2 Hikaru Nakamura and the five-time World champion Viswanathan Anand.

The day also saw the unbelievably bad run of PBG Alaskan Knights, the runner-up last year, coming to an end.

The Knights defeated Alpine SG Pipers 12-8, with Gukesh and fellow-Indian Arjun Erigaisi delivering on the top two boards, as they beat Caruana and Anish Giri, respectively. The match produced decisive results on all six boards, in fact.

In the day's other match, Ganges Grandmasters beat Fyers American Gambits 8-7. Javokhir Sindarov, the recent winner at the World Cup in Goa, was the hero: he beat Richard Rapport.

At the halfway mark of the league phase, Continental Kings and Mumba are ahead.

The results (fifth round):

upGrad Mumba Masters lost to Triveni Continental Kings 5-9 (Maxime Vachier-Lagrave lost to Alireza Firouzja; Wesley So drew with Wei Yi; Shakhriyar Mamedyarov drew with Vidit Gujrathi; Koneru Humpy drew with Zhu Jiner; D. Harika drew with Alexandra Kosteniuk; Bardiya Daneshvar drew with MarcAndria Maurizzi).

PBG Alaskan Knights bt Alpine SG Pipers 12-8 (D. Gukesh bt Fabiano Caruana; Arjun Erigaisi bt Anish Giri; Leinier Dominguez bt R. Praggnanandhaa; Kateryna Lagno bt Hou Yifan; Sarasadat Khademalsharieh lost to Nina Batsiashvili; Daniel Dardha lost to Leon Mendonca).

Fyers American Gambits lost to Ganges Grandmasters 7-8 (Hikaru Nakamura drew with Viswanathan Anand; Vladislav Artemiev drew with Vincent Keymer; Richard Rapport lost to Javokhir Sindarov; Bibisara Assaubayeva bt Polina Shuvalova; Teodora Injac drew with Stavroula Tsolakidou; Volodor Murzin drew with Raunak Sadhwani).

(The writer is in Mumbai at the invitation of Tech Mahindra).

INBRIEF



Sri Lanka women's squad for T20I series against India

The Sri Lankan women's cricket team will compete in a five-match T20I series against India from December 21. The first two matches will be played in Visakhapatnam on December 21 and 23 while the remaining games will be in Thiruvananthapuram on Dec. 26, 28 and 30.

The squad: Chamari Athapaththu (Capt.), Harshitha Samarawickrama (Vice-capt.), Hasini Perera, Vishmi Gunaratne, Nilakshika de Silva, Kavisha Dilhari, Imesha Dulani, Kaushani Nuthyangana (wk), Malsha Shehani, Inoka Ranaweera, Shashini Gimhani, Nimesha Madushani, Kavya Kawindi, Malki Madara, and Rashmika Sewwandi.

Ketan beats strong field, wins women's 10m air pistol gold

Haryana's Ketan Malik overcame a strong field, comprising Paris Olympic double medallist Manu Bhaker, to be crowned the women's 10m air pistol National shooting champion in New Delhi on Thursday. Ketan struck gold with 240.0, ahead of Meenu Pathak of Delhi, who took silver with 238.4, and Surbhi Rao, who claimed bronze with 219.5. In the junior women's category, Vanshika Chaudhary from U.P. emerged on top, edging out Anjali Shekhawat by 0.2 point for the gold, while Palak Gulia secured bronze.



FIFA World Cup winner to be richer by $50 million

The winner of the 2026 World Cup will receive $50 million from a $655 million prize pool, FIFA said on Wednesday in announcing record financial rewards. The champion's figure is up from $42 million won by Argentina in 2022 and $38 million gained by France in 2018 but less than half of what Chelsea earned for winning the Club World Cup this year.



Suarez to play another season with Messi at Inter Miami

Luis Suarez will play alongside Lionel Messi at Inter Miami for another season. The Uruguayan striker, who will turn 39 in January, signed a contract to play the 2026 season with the reigning MLS champions, Inter Miami announced Wednesday. Financial terms were not disclosed.

Samrat's show at Worlds rated among the top-five of the year

Indian pistol shooter Samrat Rana's showing at the Cairo World Championships last month has been rated among the top five performances of the year by the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF). The 20-year-old made history by winning the men's 10m air pistol gold at the Worlds, becoming the first Indian to clinch a senior individual world title in the event. "The only man to defeat Hu Kai (China) this season, Samrat Rana was composed under pressure to pull off an upset no one expected," said ISSF.

LIVE TELECAST

Men's U-19 Asia Cup: Sony Sports Ten 1, 2 & LIV, 10.30 a.m.
India vs South Africa: 5th T20I, Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7 p.m.
Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 1 a.m. (Saturday)
Serie A: DAZN, 1.15 a.m. (Saturday)
LaLiga: FanCode, 1.30 a.m. (Saturday)
New Zealand vs West Indies: 3rd Test, day 3, Sony Sports Ten 5 & LIV, 3.30 a.m. (Saturday)
The Ashes: 3rd Test, day 4, Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 5 a.m. (Saturday)



Mission Accomplished: Jharkhand capped off its remarkable run with a convincing victory in the summit clash. SHAYAN ACHARYA

Kishan leads Jharkhand to a memorable maiden triumph

The skipper's 49-ball 101 and his 177-run partnership with Kushagra helps the team pile up a massive total of 262 which proves too much for Haryana to overhaul

SMAT

Shayan Acharya
PUNE

Ishan Kishan, who offered glimpses of his brilliance throughout the tournament, saved his best for last.

Leading from the front, he toyed with the Haryana bowlers to score a 49-ball 101 and eventually guided Jharkhand to its maiden Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy title with a 69-run victory.

As fans turned up in large numbers at the MCA Stadium on Thursday, Kishan entertained them with his aggressive batting, hitting Haryana bowlers all around the park.

Despite losing opener Virat Singh early, Kishan made optimum use of a flat deck and unsettled the Haryana bowlers from the start.

Along the way, he forged a 177-run partnership with the young Kumar Kushagra (81, 38b, 8x4, 5x6) as Jharkhand put up 262 for three in its 20 overs.

With an objective to score as many runs as possible in the PowerPlay, both Kishan and Kushagra dealt in fours and sixes as Jharkhand racked up 69 runs in six overs.

Mauling Kamboj

Serving a timely reminder to the national selectors, who are likely to pick India's T20 World Cup squad on Saturday, Kishan accelerated with a couple of sixes off Parth Vats, before going after Anshul Kamboj. He hit the pacer for a couple of boundaries and a one-handed six over cover in the 14th over to become only the second batter, after Anmolpreet Singh, to score a century in the final of the SMAT.

Though Sumit Kumar knocked him over with a yorker in the next over, and Kushagra, too, fell shortly, Jharkhand was already near the 200-run mark.

As Haryana dropped quite a few catches, Anukul Roy and Robin Minz's unbroken 75-run stand for the third wicket ensured that Jharkhand scored the highest-ever total in the final of the tournament.

Pursuing a mammoth total, Haryana was never in the game. Ankit Kumar, who had a dream run in the tournament, fell to seamer Vikash Singh for a duck on the third ball of the innings, while Ashish Siwach was dismissed for a solitary run.

Haryana couldn't recover and lost wickets in clusters. Nishant Sindhu and Yashvardhan Dalal added 67 runs for the fourth wicket, before left-arm spinner Anukul removed both. With that, Haryana's hopes were dashed.

The scores: Jharkhand 262/3 in 20 overs (Ishan Kishan 101, Kumar Kushagra 81) bt Haryana 193 in 18.3 overs (Yashvardhan Dalal 53, Samant Jakhar 38, Sushant Mishra 3/21).
PoM: Kishan; **PoS:** Anukul Roy.

Safonov's heroics under the bar hands PSG the title



On a high: PSG players celebrate a sixth title in a calender year after beating Flamengo in the Intercontinental Cup. AFP

INTERCONTINENTAL CUP

Rajdeep Saha
DOHA

Russian goalkeeper Matvei Safonov saved four out of five kicks in the penalty shootout to help Paris Saint-Germain pip Flamengo 2-1 to lift the FIFA Intercontinental Cup 2025 title on Wednesday.

PSG became the first French club to win a world title as Luis Enrique's side finished the 2025 calendar year with six trophies – Trophee des Champions, the French league, the French Cup, the Champions League, the UEFA Super Cup and the Intercontinental Cup – and one runner-up finish, which came at the FIFA Club World Cup.

With the contest tied at 1-1 courtesy goals from Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Jorginho, the summit clash went into extra-time. After the two teams could not be separated despite the additional half an hour, the winner was decided on penalties.

The first two kicks, taken by Flamengo's Nicolas de la Cruz and PSG's Vitinha, were turned in before Safonov made his first save in the shootout, denying Saul. The French side then had a chance to go up but Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele rattled the crossbar, providing a moment of relief for the Flamengo faithful amongst the 42,150-strong crowd.

Safonov then saved Pedro's shot to make it two out of two, although initially the 'keeper seemed to be off his line. However, the referee sent Pedro back despite the protests. Nuno Mendes converted from the spot to give PSG lead.

Although Leo Pereira's shot was also saved by Safonov, Flamengo saw a glimmer of hope when its custodian Agustin Rossi's outstretched arm kept out Bradley Barcola's shot. Safonov took his side over the line after he saved Luiz Araujo's effort to send the PSG players and fans into pandemonium.

(The writer is in Doha on an invitation from the Qatar Local Organising Committee for 2025 FIFA events).

New franchise comes on board for SLI

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

UP Prometheans was on Thursday announced as the latest addition to the franchise-based Shooting League of India (SLI), the inaugural edition of which will be held from February 16 to 26, 2026.

"Uttar Pradesh has immense sporting potential, and the entry of a franchise driven by a strong educational and developmental philosophy adds great value to the league," said National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) president Kalikesh Singh Deo.

SLI will feature top Indian and international shooters competing in a mixed-team format across pistol, rifle and shotgun disciplines. The competition will have team events in multiple categories – pistol (10m, 25m), rifle (10m, 50m 3P), and shotgun (trap and skeet). The teams will be divided into two pools for the league stage, followed by knockout rounds.

NADA optimistic despite India reporting the highest number of dope positive cases

Sports Bureau
KOLKATA

After India – which will host the 2030 Commonwealth Games and is keen to stage the 2036 Olympics – earned the dubious distinction of reporting the highest number of dope positive cases for the third consecutive year, the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) gave a positive picture saying the increase in the number of positive cases was the result of a hike in number of samples.

As per the 2024 testing figures recently released by World Anti-Doping Agency, NADA tested 7,113 urine and blood samples and reported 260 Adverse Analytical Findings (AAFs), at 3.6%. The AAFs and total number of samples were 213 and 5,606 (3.8%) in 2023 and 125 and 3,865 (3.2%) in 2023.

NADA said it increased the number of tests to tackle the menace of doping and "the figures are a direct outcome of India's intensified anti-doping report". Despite the increase in testing, "the percentage of positive findings has shown a steady decline". It said this year, 110 AAFs had been reported out of 7,068 samples, at 1.5%, up to December 16.

Since Indian athletes also got tested by other agencies, the exact number of Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs) from the country would be known after getting all the stats.

Following India, France (91), Italy (85), Russia and USA (76 each) and Germany (54) stand in the list of AAFs in 2024. The National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) tested 7,651 samples, including some from other countries, and reported 268 positive results at 3.65%, which is the highest among all WADA accredited labs.

The NADA has underlined its efforts on several other aspects to curb doping in the country, which has been under pressure from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) over the issue.

Masterful Conway and Latham run West Indies ragged with huge stand

WI IN NZ

Agence France-Presse
MOUNT MAUNGANUI

Devon Conway and Tom Latham plundered a poor West Indies attack Thursday for a mammoth opening partnership on day one of the third Test in Mount Maunganui as New Zealand piled up 334 for one.

Conway ended the day 178 not out and captain Latham was out just before the close for 137.

The pair put on 323, the second highest opening partnership for New Zealand, only bettered by Glenn Turner and Terry Jarvis's 387 stand against the West Indies in Georgetown in 1972.

Chanceless effort

It was only the eighth time New Zealand had registered a stand in excess of 300 in Tests.

Conway batted all day in facing 279 balls for his second century of the calendar year, but his first at home since January 2022 against Bangladesh in Christchurch. He scored 153 against Zimbabwe in August.

The 34-year-old Conway brought up his sixth Test century from 147 balls, and stroked 25 fours during his 279-ball stay.

Latham's 15th Test century contained 15 fours and a six as he faced 264 balls.

Conway and captain Latham were flawless. For the first two sessions the West Indies toiled without so much as a single lbw shout.

Early in the third session they finally created a chance, but Latham was dropped by wicketkeeper Tevin Imlach off the bowling of Anderson Phillip when on 104 and New Zealand on 253.

The marathon partnership justified Latham's decision to bat first on a green-looking wicket that is tipped to suit spin later in the match.

The West Indies seamers found good movement off the grassy surface in the opening overs, bowling tight lines which had both Conway and Latham defending cautiously, but they became more aggressive once the new ball was seen off.

Kemar Roach was the best of the bowlers, taking the lone wicket for figures of 1-63 from 17 overs.

He walked off with a potential muscle injury after the second to last over of the day, and is in doubt for the rest of the Test.

West Indies assistant coach Rayon Griffith said the New Zealand batters put on a clinic, but insisted the match wasn't over.

"The game is still in progress," Griffith said. "We've been through this before. We will come better tomorrow."

The scores: New Zealand 334/1 in 90 overs (Latham 137, Conway 178 batting) vs West Indies.
Toss: New Zealand.



Smashing time: The 323-run partnership between Latham and Conway was the second highest opening stand for New Zealand. AFP

WFI makes attendance at national camps mandatory

WRESTLING

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has unveiled a new selection policy that makes attendance at national camps mandatory to be eligible for national selection. The new policy also bars wrestlers from training independently and mandates Olympic Games quota-winners to appear in a final one-bout selection trial.

The policy was discussed and cleared at WFI's recent General Council meeting during the Nationals in Ahmedabad. It was also presented to the Sports Authority of India (SAI) for feedback and a review.

"Participation in the national coaching camp is mandatory for all wrestlers, including elite and iconic athletes. To be eligible for the camp, a wrestler must have won a medal in the National Championship of the concerned year," the policy under the sub-head National Coaching Camps, stated.

"Once selected, wrestlers are required to train exclusively at the designated national camp. No athlete is permitted to train independently at any other venue."

It means Vinesh Phogat, who recently announced her comeback from retirement, will have to prove herself at the domestic level before being in the reckoning for a spot in the national team. The policy made it clear that a failure to attend the camp will make the wrestler "ineligible to participate in the selection trials".

The policy has also made a provision to keep a list of reserve wrestlers, who will be asked to do the national duty in case of injury to selected athlete.

The WFI policy makes it clear that "past performances will not be considered for selection trials".

Satwik-Chirag duo overcomes Alfian-Fikri

The third-seeded Indians register a win in three games against the unseeded Indonesian pair, move closer to the knockout stage

BADMINTON

Press Trust of India
HANGZHOU

India's Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty dished out a solid performance to outwit the Indonesian pair of Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Shohibul Fikri in their second Group B match and inch closer to the knockout stage of the BWF World Tour Finals here on Thursday.

The former World No. 1 pair shored up its defence and dominated the proceedings to register a 21-11, 16-21, 21-11 win over World No. 8 Alfian and Fikri in a men's doubles match that lasted 60 minutes.

With two wins from two matches, Satwik and Chirag now lead the group and have a considerable advantage in points difference.

The third-seeded Indian pair will face second seeds Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik in the last group match on Friday.

Facing a pair known for its exceptional front-court skills, the onus was on Chirag, but he was ably supported by Satwik, who was flawless. The Indians changed their aggressive approach to a more blended mix of shots and pace to counter the Indonesians.

Two deep pushes from Chirag and a series of shots buried at the net from the nervy Indonesians saw the Indians make a 6-0 start in the opening game before taking an 11-2 advantage.

Though the Indonesians made it 9-13, Chirag and Satwik took the lead to 18-10 before winning 21-11.

After losing the second game to 16-21, the Indians established a 11-4 lead in the decider before some mistimed shots from the Indonesians gave nine match points to the former who sealed the contest when their opponents sprayed one into the net.



Winning strategy: Chirag and Satwik blended a mix of shots and pace to counter the Indonesians. FILE PHOTO

Dhiraj and Shravari take the honours

ARCHERY

Sports Bureau
HYDERABAD

Bommadevara Dhiraj (SSCB) and Shravari Somnath Shende (Maharashtra) won the recurve men's and women's individual Olympic round gold in the senior National archery championships on Thursday.

Other results (winners only):
70m (overall): Men: Atanu Das (PSPB); **Women:** Gatha Anandrao Khadake (Mah).
Team: Men & women: Maharashtra; **Mixed:** RSPB.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
TAMIL NADU FOREST DEPARTMENT
Tamil Nadu Coastal Restoration Mission
Metros - CMRL Building, Nandanam, Chennai – 600 035.

Invitation for Bids No: Mangrove - IN-TNSHORE-520951-CW-RFB

Title: Mangrove Conservation Centre at Pichavaram, Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu

The Chief Mission Director, Tamil Nadu Coastal Restoration Mission, Chennai invites bids from eligible bidders for the work named above. Bids are invited under National Open Competitive Procurement (NCP). The detailed Notice Inviting Bids and bid documents for the above work will be available on the website **www.tntenders.gov.in** from **19.12.2025** at **15.00** hours. All relevant information and instructions to bidders are provided in the bid document.

1. The Pre-bid Meeting will be held at **11:30** hours on **29.12.2025.** All the prospective bidders are advised to participate in the Pre-bid meeting.
2. Any addendum, corrigendum or clarification to the bidder's queries etc. will be published on the **www.tntenders.gov.in** website only.

Chief Mission Director,
Tamil Nadu Coastal Restoration Mission,
Chennai.

DIPR/ 6729 /TENDER/2025

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File No. HO/CIV/T&E/E-5335/01/2025/ 35363 Dt.11.12.2025

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (CIVIL), IDCO, IDCO TOWER, BHUBANESWAR
Bid Identification No. Civil/EST/24/2025-26
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL UNDER NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDING THROUGH e-Procurement

1. **Name of the Work : " Engagement of Programme Management Consultant (PgMC) for various projects of IDCO ".**
2. **Availability of tender online for Bidding :**
   i. **Start Date : 20.12.2025 at 05:30 PM.**
   ii. **End Date : 15.01.2026 at 05:00 PM.**
   iii. **Opening date : 15.01.2026 at 05:30 PM**

RFP details can be seen from the e-procurement portal. **www.tendersorissa.gov.in.** Corrigendum or Addendum if any will not be published in newspapers and can be seen in **e-procurement portal** as well as in **IDCO website.**

Sd/-
Chief General Manager (Civil), IDCO, Bhubaneswar

CAD-2750: OIPR-14003/11/0270/2526

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF, RURAL WORKS, ODISHA, BHUBANESWAR
Letter No.40620, Dated : 08.12.2025 Email i.d. : crew_bbsr@yahoo.com

"e" Procurement Notice for bridge works in Odisha (Online-02(Bridge)/2024-25 dt. .12.2025)

1. Name of the work : **"Construction of bridge work"**
2. Total No. of Works : **06** (Six) nos
3. Estimated cost : **Rs.1150.00 to 2755.00 lakh**
4. Class of Contractor : **"A" Class, "Special" & "Super" Class as applicable.**
5. Period of Completion : **As mentioned in Column 7 of TCN**
6. Other details :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	No. of bridge works	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding From	To
Chief Engineer, Buildings & Bridges, Rural Works,Odisha, Bhubaneswar	Online-02 (Bridge)/ 2025-26	06 (Six) nos.	23.12.2025 at 11.00 A.M	10.01.2026 Upto 5.00 P.M

Other details can be seen in the bidding documents, which will be available in website : **www.tendersorissa.gov.in.**

Chief Engineer (Buildings & Bridges), Rural Works,Odisha, Bhubaneswar

O-1776: OIPR-25123/11/0004/2526

Ph. No. 06670-235504; E_Mail: serwbpt@yahoo.com
GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,
RURAL WORKS, CIRCLE, BHAWANIPATNA.
Bid Identification No.:- BPT/Online-15/2025-26 Date: 29.11.2025
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR ROAD AND BRIDGE WORKS IN ODISHA
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e - Procurement

1. Name of the Work : **Construction of Road and Bridge works under MMSY-Improvement to Existing RD Roads, MMSY-TRIP, MMSY-CUVDA and MMSY CMRL Schemes in the district Kalahandi and Nuapada.**
2. No of Works : **As per NIT**
3. Location details : **Kalahandi and Nuapada District**
4. Estimated Cost : As per NIT
5. Period of Completion : As per NIT.
6. Cost of tender paper : **Rs.10,000/-** per set
7. Other details :

Availability of tender for online bidding From	To	Last date & time for seeking tender clarification	Date and time of opening of technical bid
24.12.2025 11.00 A.M.	08.01.2026 5.00 P.M.	07.01.2026	09.01.2026 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the web site **"www.tendersorissa.gov.in"**

Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Bhawanipatna.

O-1716: OIPR-25102/11/0038/2526

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD DIVISION BHIM (RAJSAMAND)
File No. 2604 Date : 11/12/2025

Notice Inviting Bid

Bids for **Nit No 28/2025-26**, (Road & Building works) 12 Nos. are invited from interested bidders upto **Date 07.01.2026, 06.00 P.M.** Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (**http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.raj.nic.in**) of the state. and - departmental website. The approximate value of the procurement is **Rs. 2005.45 Lacs**.

NIB Code :- PWD2526A4695

S. No.	UBN No.	S. No.	UBN No.	S. No.	UBN No.
1	PWD2526WSOB18709	5	PWD2526WSOB18713	9	PWD2526WSOB18717
2	PWD2526WSOB18710	6	PWD2526WSOB18714	10	PWD2526WSOB18718
3	PWD2526WSOB18711	7	PWD2526WSOB18715	11	PWD2526WSOB18719
4	PWD2526WSOB18712	8	PWD2526WSOB18716	12	PWD2526WSOB18720

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
PWD DIVISION BHIM

DIPR/C/18556/2025

TNPL TAMIL NADU NEWSPRINT AND PAPERS LIMITED
Kagithapuram - 639 136. Karur Dist. Tamil Nadu.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender No.	Material Description	Due date
252623 003758	Bleached Softwood Kraft Pulp (BSKP) FSC Mix	02.01.2026
252623 003759	BCTMP Softwood 70 - High Yield Pulp	03.01.2026
252623 003760	BCTMP Hardwood 70 - High Yield Pulp	05.01.2026
252623 003761	BCTMP Hardwood 80 - High Yield Pulp (Low Tensile)	06.01.2026

Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPL Website and NIC Portal only. For further details, please visit websites : **www.tnpl.com / https://tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app**

DIPR/6731/Tender/2025 *TNPL - Maker of bagasse based eco-friendly Paper*

TNPL TAMIL NADU NEWSPRINT AND PAPERS LIMITED
Kagithapuram - 639 136. Karur Dist. Tamil Nadu.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender No.	Material Description	Due date
252613 006572	Supply of Debarked Acacia Pulpwood from open market sources of Kerala to TNPL Unit - I, Kagithapuram, Karur Dist., Tamilnadu.	05.01.2026
252613 006573	Supply of Debarked Acacia Pulpwood from open market sources of Karnataka to TNPL Unit - I, Kagithapuram, Karur Dist., Tamilnadu.	03.01.2026

Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPL Website only. Detailed Terms & Conditions are available in tender document at our website : **www.tnpl.com**

DIPR/6681/Tender/2025 *TNPL - Maker of bagasse based eco-friendly Paper*

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

BWSSB invites tenders in two stage system from registered agencies 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, KG Road, Bangalore-560009.	
	IFT No. BWSSB/CE(E)/ACE(E)-1/DCE(M)-1/TA(E)/5961/2025-26 Date: 18.12.2025	
1	Work of Providing, Laying & Linking 600mm dia Feeder Main MS water pipeline & Trenchless works to improve water supply facilities Hoodi Ward & Surrounding Areas and Cross Roads coming under AEE(E)-1-1 Sub Division	₹ 305.68 Lakhs / ₹ 4,59,000/-
2	Work of Providing & Laying 600mm dia Feeder Main MS water pipeline & allied works to improve water supply facilities to Ayyappa Nagar, Kodigehalli, Sadaramangala & KR Puram Areas coming under AEE(E)-1-1 Sub Division	₹ 318.50 Lakhs / ₹ 4,78,000/-

Last date for receipt of tenders: **03.01.2026** upto **16:00 Hrs.** The bid will be opened on: **05.01.2026** after **16:00 Hrs.**

Sd/- Chief Engineer (East)

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/CP/MIA/4523/2025-26

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

BWSSB invite tenders in Two Stage Tender System from Eligible Contractors for the below mentioned works.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Amount Put to Tender / EMD
	Office of The Chief Engineer (UWP), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bangalore-560009.	
	No: BWSSB/CE(UWP)/ACE(WWM-VV-W)/DCE(WWM-E&W)/TA-2/43/2025-26 Date:18.12.2025	
1	Providing and Laying 400mm dia DWC SN-8 class pipe line from 3rd cross Malleshwaram to Sheshadripuram main road Kumara park west of drain no. V-110, coming under AEE(WWM-V.V)-1-1 sub division, Bangalore.	Rs. 133.26 Lakhs / Rs. 2.00 Lakhs
	No: BWSSB/CE(UWP)/ACE(WWM-VV-W)/DCE(WWM-E&W)/TA-2/41/2025-26 Date:18.12.2025	
2	Providing & Laying of 450mm dia RCC NP-3 class pipe line from 4th main Karnataka Bank to along road linking to existing sub line at Malleshwaram coming under AEE(WW M-VV)-1-1 sub division	Rs. 177.88 Lakhs / Rs. 2.67 Lakhs

For the above works Last date and time for Receipt of tenders will be on **02.01.2026 upto 17.00 hrs**. The bids will be opened on: **03.01.2026 after 17.30 hrs**.

Sd/- Chief Engineer (UWP)

Office of The Engineer in Chief, 2nd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bangalore-560009.

	No: BWSSB/EIC/5974/2025-26 Date:18.12.2025	
3	Work of Comprehensive Operation and Maintenance of 15 MLD STP at Yelemallappachetty, 5 MLD ISPS at Sadaramangala and Maintenace of Pumping line of 450mm dia DI pipeline from Sadaramangala ISPS for 3.5kms for the period of 5 years. Call-2.	Rs. 1246.04 Lakhs / Rs. 15.00 Lakhs

For the above works Last date and time for Receipt of tenders will be on **29.12.2025 upto 16.00 hrs**. The bids will be opened on: **30.12.2025 after 17.00 hrs**.

Sd/- Engineer in Chief

The detail regarding the tender & participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** For further details contact the below signed office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/4533/Zen/2025-26

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ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ନିର୍ମାଣ ମଣ୍ଡଳ, ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁର

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR
(At/Po :- Ambapua, Near Income Tax Office, Berhampur-760011, Ganjam, Odisha)
(E-Mail:- serwbpr2004@yahoo.com; Tel No.:-0680-2404287)

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement E-Mail/ E-despatch
Bid Identification No. Online Tender/48-2025-26/BPR

Identification No.	Name of work	No. of Works	Approx. Estimated Cost (In lakh)	Class of Contractor	Period of Completion
Online Tender / 48 - 2025-26/ BPR	Road Works under MMSY-TRIP	18 Nos	From Rs.302.52 Lakhs to Rs.806.72 Lakhs	"A" Class & "Special" Class as applicable	Period of Completion as provided as per Col.No.5 of Annexure of NIT

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender online for bidding From	To
Chief Construction Engineer, R.W. Circle, Berhampur.	Online Tender / 48-2025-26/BPR	29.12.2025 at 10.00 A.M.	12.01.2026 upto 5.30 P.M.

(i) **EMD / Bid Security, Cost of Bid document is to be transferred through Online as per the procedure mentioned in the DTCN.**
(ii) **Non-submission of the information/documents through online by the bidder as per the items mentioned in the eligible criteria of the DTCN will also liable for rejection of his tender.**

Further details & Corrigendum if any can be seen from the website: - www.tendersodisha.gov.in

Chief Construction Engineer, R.W.Circle, Berhampur

O-1783: OIPR-25071/11/0181/2526

TAMIL NADU WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE BOARD
Invitation of Bids–Two Cover–Item War Tender System (E-Submission – Short Term)

IFB No.	23 to 28 /F.O&M of CWSS/SDO/CE-TNJ/2025/Dt.17.12.2025
Eligibility	Registered Class I Contractors (Civil)
Tender Invitee	The Chief Engineer, TWAD Board, Thanjavur - 613 403
Sale of Bid	**26.12.2025 to 09.01.2026** upto **15.00** hours.
EMD Payable	Online Mode or eBG through E-Tendering website **"https://tntenders.gov.in"**
Pre Bid meeting	**02.01.2026** at **11.00** hours at the office of the Tender Invitee.
Bid Submission	**09.01.2026 before 15.00** hours duly Digitally signed encrypted Tenders through E-Tendering website **"https://tntenders.gov.in"**
Bid opening	**12.01.2026** at **15.30** hours through E-Tender Portal **"https://tntenders.gov.in"**

IFB No.	Name of work	Appx. value (including 18% GST)	Bid Security
	Operation and Maintenance of the following CWSS including repair, rectification works and supply of Chemicals for the period from 2026-27 to 2028-29		
23	8 Nos of CWSS to Ariyalur District **(Pkg-27)**	Rs.31.91 Crore	Rs. 23.93 lakh
24	31 Nos of CWSS to Pudukkottai District **(Pkg-28)**	Rs.20.14 Crore	Rs. 15.11 lakh
25	CWSS to 1766 in Pudukkottai District (1 No) **(Pkg-33)**	Rs.48.33 Crore	Rs. 36.25 lakh
26	CWSS to 1751 in Pudukkottai District (1 No) **(Pkg-32)**	Rs.36.39 Crore	Rs. 27.29 lakh
27	4 Nos of CWSS to Trichy District (P-I) **(Pkg-37)**	Rs.28.06 Crore	Rs. 21.05 lakh
28	4 Nos of CWSS to Trichy District (P-II) **(Pkg-38)**	Rs.23.27 Crore	Rs. 17.45 lakh

DIPR/ 6715 /TENDER/2025

Chief Engineer (i/c), TWAD Board, Thanjavur.

SAVE WATER, CONSERVE WATER, EVERY DROP COUNTS

KMF Karnataka Co-Operative Milk Producers' Federation Limited
KMF Complex: Dr. M. H. Marigowda Road, DRC Post, Bangalore-560 029.
Tel: 080-25536625 / 26096834, e-mail : engg@kmf.coop

IFT No: KMF/ENGG/PIBOs_EPR_PWM/2025-26 Date: 17-12-2025

TENDER NOTIFICATION
[TWO COVER SYSTEM] [THROUGH KPP PORTAL ONLY]

Karnataka Milk Federation Ltd; Bengaluru invites tenders from the eligible CPCB Authorized Post Consumer Plastic Waste Recyclers / Waste Collection Agencies / any other eligible companies who are in the similar business through KPPP for the works mentioned in the table below. The interested Waste Collection Agencies & any other eligible companies who have executed similar kind of works may participate in the tender as indicated below, by logging on to website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in and also contact Help desk E-mail: admin.eproc@karnataka.gov.in, support@eprochelpdesk.com and helpline no. +91-8046010000, +91-8068948777, 080-22230960, 080-22234115.

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Tender Quantity (MTPA)	EMD (Rs)
1	EPR Fulfillment / Plastic Waste Management by way of Collection, Segregation & Recycling of Post-Consumer Plastic Waste generated by KMF & its Member Milk Unions & Units Across PAN India. The entire activities shall be managed in confirmation to Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 along with Annual Filing for the year 2025-26 (LDPE/LLDPE/PE/MLP/Tetra Pak paperboard Cartons / waste Film of Milk, Curd, Ghee, Butter Milk and Lassi etc – Pouch Milk, UHT Milk & Fresh Products Packaging Waste- All category Plastic Waste)	Approx. 16786	6,00,000/-

1. Tender schedules may be downloaded from dated **19-12-2025 to 09-01-2026 up to 4-00 pm.**
2. Pre Bid Meeting on date: **02-01-2026 at 12.00 pm.**
3. Last date for Tender submission on date: **09-01-2026 up to 4.00 pm**
4. Tender [Part 1] to be opened on date**: 12-01-2026 at 11.30 am.**

Any Modifications / changes in the Bid Document / Tender Specification / Tender Schedule will be uploaded in KPP Portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Only.

For Karnataka Milk Federation Limited
Sd/- Director [Engineering]-1

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The WTL mantra: stay, play and learn together

The results are hardly the focus as the Indian players like Nagal and Dhakshineswar have shown more interest in gleaning from the best in the business in a relaxed atmosphere

TENNIS

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU



Having a ball: Dhakshineswar and Krygios thrilled the fans with an entertaining show. K. MURALI KUMAR

Despite being a deeply individualistic sport, tennis has a glorious history of top-draw team events. The Davis Cup and Billie Jean King Cup (earlier Fed Cup) have been at the pinnacle for decades, and tournaments such as United Cup and Laver Cup are aspiring to be on a similar pedestal in the years to come.

The ongoing World Tennis League (WTL) exhibition is another competition that seeks to tap into the concept of togetherness. Though it comes during the off-season and carries no ATP or WTA ranking points, the environment has seemingly appealed to the participants.

"People are relaxed and the atmosphere is different," said the India No. 1 and World No. 277 Sumit Nagal on Thursday. "A lot of people are involved on your bench and you don't get that feeling on the actual Tour. There it is pretty much just you on the court, and may be a coach behind you.

"So leagues are always fun. It gets you into a lighter mood and I couldn't have asked for something better than this," he added.

According to Dhakshineswar Suresh, the tall and lanky Indian ranked No. 426, the chance to play with the likes of Nick Kyrgios is huge, for the little pearls of wisdom he can gather from someone who has beaten the best and been to a Grand Slam final.

"Having someone like Nick in the team... he is going to make it fun," said Dhakshineswar, who featured in a doubles match with the Australian. "I am also learning a little bit from his game. He is a big server as well and giving me a few tips."

This may be true for the Indian women's singles players like Sahaja Yamalapalli and Shrivalli Bhamidipaty too, but for now, they have just been on the bench and are yet to play a set. One hopes Friday is different.

The results:

AOS Eagles bt Aussie Mavericks Kites 25-13 (Paula Badosa bt Marta Kostyuk 6-1; Gael Monfils & Badosa bt Dhakshineswar Suresh & Kostyuk 6-3; Monfils & Sumit Nagal bt Nick Kyrgios & Dhakshineswar 6-3; Nagal bt Dhakshineswar 7-6).

Game Changers Falcons bt VB Realty Hawks 20-16 (Magda Linette lost to Elina Svitolina 2-6; Rohan Bopanna & Linette bt Yuki Bhambri & Maaya Rajeshwaran 6-3; Bopanna & Medvedev bt Denis Shapovalov & Yuki 6-3; Medvedev bt Shapovalov 6-4).





Super Kings' seismic shift — Dad's Army to T20 babies

The shedding of conservatism and embarking on a bold new tomorrow represents a dramatic change in the make-up of the team's DNA; how the revamped outfit performs in the 2026 edition will be followed with greater interest than normal; the franchise revisited its approach in light of the miserable campaign last year



R. Kaushik

When Chennai Super Kings clinched the last of their five Indian Premier League titles in May 2023, the driving forces of their successful campaign were all on the wrong side of 30. Among those who featured in the title clash against Gujarat Titans were Devon Conway (31 at the time), Ajinkya Rahane (34), Ambati Rayudu (37), Ravindra Jadeja (34) and Moeen Ali (35), playing under the able stewardship of Mahendra Singh Dhoni (41).

Before the tournament, CSK were dismissed as 'Dad's Army,' much like in 2021 when too, they cocked a snook at the critics and went all the way. Dad's Army found a way to overcome every obstacle in its path in 2023; their victory in a truncated final that was played out on the reserve day came on the back of a six and a four by Jadeja off the last two balls of the tournament, a fitting finale to a title clash that had until then been played in the shadow of unseasonal precipitation in Ahmedabad.

Over the years, CSK have smashed every accepted tenet of 20-over cricket, once naively and erroneously installed as a 'young player's format.' While the rest of the cricketing world invested heavily in young blood, the Chennai-based franchised drew from the traditional flavour of the city, relying heavily on experience and proven pedigree and distancing itself from the temptation of succumbing to the charms of the youth.

For all their stubbornness and steadfast adherence to the 'experience first' philosophy, CSK had the results to support their style. Defying clamour and sticking to their methodology had taken them all the way in 2021, as it did again two years later. In a world constantly in the quest for instant gratification and where the players were getting young and younger - remember, Vaibhav Suryavanshi went for ₹1.1 crore to Rajasthan Royals at the auctions before IPL 2025, when he was only 13 years of age - CSK placed implicit faith in its 'Dad's Army.'

Huge shift

It was in the natural order of things therefore that they would stick with that mantra going forward. But what had worked wonders for them until them unravelled spectacularly in 2025. Ageing legs, dimmed reflexes and tired bodies were no longer able to summon the adrenaline that could carry them for eight weeks while going toe-to-toe consistently with much younger and fresher minds and bodies. Dad's Army was shown up for what it was. With their season all but done and only token pride to play for, the multiple-times winners made a strong break from the past, turning their attention to the one commodity they had obdurately chosen to overlook - youth.

And so in their last game of IPL 2025, long after the horse had bolted, CSK's XI contained Ayush Mhatre, the 17-year-old opener, and Dewald Brevis, the effervescent 21-year-old from Johannesburg. This was right at the end of a season where they had blooded numerous other young resources, among the 19-year-old Shaik Rasheed and Urvil Patel, who made their debuts.

It indicated a tectonic shift in mindset and strategy, brought about by outcomes that needed immediate attention. From exciting and exuberant, CSK had devolved into ponderous and non-reactive. Their campaign was in shambles, a write-off from the halfway stage of the league phase, and while there remained the small matter of pride, the greater requirement was to focus on the future and to identify the personnel that the support staff were convinced would serve the franchise for years to come.

Young blood

Any suspicions that what happened in the second half of the last campaign was a mere knee-jerk reaction to recent events were emphatically laid to rest on Tuesday (December 16) at the mini-action in Abu Dhabi. CSK broke the proverbial bank to secure the services of a duo of young men with no more than a handful of senior representative appearances behind them. A week ago, it would have been unimaginable that Chennai, of all teams, would shell out ₹14.2 crore to procure the services of Prashant Veer, a 20-year-old from Amethi in Uttar Pradesh with only nine 20-over games under his belt.

Veer thus became the most expensive uncapped India player in the entire history of the tournament. Unassuming and unfussed, Veer etched his name in the record books. CSK needed a *Ravindra Jadeja-like* player at the auction after trading out the experienced left-handed all-rounder to Rajasthan Royals. Jadeja is practically irreplaceable even in the T20 format where his best days are clearly behind him, but CSK had to look long and hard, hoping to unearth a special talent for the future, if not necessarily for the immediate now.

Veer is an accomplished basher of the cricket ball who, in last season's Uttar Pradesh T20 league, amassed 320 muscular runs and backed it up with eight wickets in 10 matches. In his fledgling senior representative career, 12 wickets at an economy of 6.45 has been complemented by a terrific strike-rate of 167.16. Not too long back, CSK would have looked at these numbers, maybe even have done a 'double take' but nothing more than that. After all, he didn't fit their 'minimum age requirement' nor did he have a pedigreed record in state/franchise cricket. In so many ways, Veer is the very antithesis of the quintessential CSK acquiree. Not unlike Kartik Sharma, the 19-year-old who isn't an entirely unfamiliar face when it comes to the Chennai franchise. Last season, as an 18-year-old, he trialled with CSK and caught the eye of the management group though at that stage, there was no way to accommodate him in their larger squad. CSK bided their time, then went all out to pick up Kartik, just as they had done minutes previously with Veer.


Kartik Sharma

CSK came into the auction in Abu Dhabi with a purse of ₹43.40 crore, the second most of all the franchises, behind Kolkata Knight Riders (₹64.30 crore), so they had plenty to play with. But even so, no one would have imagined them doling out ₹28.40 crore on just two players, both of them uncapped Indians with a combined age of 39. Veer and Kartik thus became the most expensive uncapped indian buys ever in IPL history. Kartik, like Veer, has just a few matches under his belt but CSK had had first-hand knowledge of what he brought to the table.

Wicketkeeper-batter Kartik is one for the long-term, given that Dhoni isn't going to be around forever - like ever, 'Is this his last season?' debate has already started - and while CSK have brought Sanju Samson in from Rajasthan Royals after letting Jadeja and Sam Curran go in exchange, Kartik is the one they hope will be a bank going forward. In his brief run at the domestic level, the lad has smacked a devastating 28 sixes in 12 matches and is an acknowledged taker-down of quality spin, excellent virtues to possess if one is batting in the second half of the innings.

Stephen Fleming, the head coach who has been exclusively with CSK since the start of the 2008 season except for the two seasons when the franchise was suspended from the IPL, conceded that his side had been forced to revisit its approach in light of the miserable start to its campaign last year, when most of the senior pros came a cropper. "As the game has evolved, we might have been a little bit slow to evolve with it," the former New Zealand skipper said after the auction. "Only halfway through the (2025) tournament, we had a big shift and you saw with the players we got in as reserves, there was a shift in what we needed to do.

"Sometimes, you can hang on to theories and philosophies because of past success but we identified that we needed to shift and partly the work that we did last season halfway through has enabled us to continue that work done. My view used to be that experience was going to win, but now you have this fearless athlete that's been brought up on T20 cricket and has a skillset that's mouthwatering, and they just have no fear about what environment they need to exhibit these skills."

The shedding of conservatism and embarking on a bold new tomorrow is a seismic shift in the make-up of CSK's DNA, meaning that how they go in IPL 2026 will be followed with greater interest than normal. Dhoni is at one end of the age and experience spectrum; Veer and Kartik together are five years younger than him and it is clear from what they have said in the last few days that he is more than just a hero to them. They couldn't have hoped for a better mentor, a more level-headed and qualified life coach than the Jharkhandi who is more than just a player to the denizens of Chennai, and under whom the franchise has gone from strength to strength.

Chennai historically have shown great resilience in bouncing back from the disappointment of one season to make a bold statement in the next, as they showed in 2021 and 2023. Now, having brought up the foot of the table for the first time in their proud and glorious history, they will target immediate payback. Armed with a whole new mentality and with resources that they wouldn't have touched with a bargepole even a couple of years back, who is to say that they won't rewrite the record books and become the first side in the history of the tournament to be crowned six-time champions?


Prashant Veer

THE GIST

- Over the years, CSK smashed every accepted tenet of 20-over cricket, once naively and erroneously installed as a 'young player's format'
- In the 2025 edition, the multiple-times winners made a strong break from the past, turning the attention to the one commodity they had obdurately chosen to overlook – youth
- Chennai historically has shown great resilience in bouncing back from the disappointment of one season to make a bold statement in the next, as they showed in 2021 and 2023

Why intimate partner violence is an under-recognised public health crisis

For women in South Asia, intimate partner violence is a greater risk factor for poor health than obesity, smoking, or alcohol use — placing violence among the leading drivers of disability and chronic illness; this situation demands a paradigm shift to view domestic violence as a risk factor that impacts health

Christianez Ratna Kiruba

When Meera (*name changed on request*) first sought medical help, she was 34, a mother of two, and visibly exhausted. She went to a doctor at a private clinic, complaining of tightness in her chest, a rapidly-beating heart, and episodes of intense panic that left her gasping for air. "The doctor ran some tests. Everything came back normal," Meera recalled. "She just gave me multivitamin tablets and told me it would get better."

It did not.

Over the next three years, Meera shuttled between multiple departments at a government hospital in Assam – general medicine, cardiology, psychiatry. Doctors continued to investigate. Her ECGs were normal. Blood tests showed mild anaemia. She was prescribed iron supplements, antacids for gastric discomfort, and eventually, sleeping pills to manage what was described as stress. It was only after a particularly severe episode, when Meera collapsed following an intense panic attack that someone noticed what was really happening. A junior doctor noticed her flinch when her husband answered questions on her behalf and asked to speak to her alone. What emerged was a long history of physical violence, marital rape, economic control, and threats.

Meera was not suffering from an inexplicable collection of symptoms. She was living with untreated post-traumatic stress disorder, and it had taken years for the health system to recognise it.

The burden of violence

Meera's trajectory through India's health system mirrors what a recent Lancet analysis now describes as a global, yet under-recognised, public health failure. Drawing on data from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023, the paper identifies intimate partner violence as a significant and measurable contributor to a wide range of health outcomes, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety, suicide, chronic pain, cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disorders, substance use, sexually transmitted infections, and adverse reproductive outcomes.

For women of reproductive age in South Asia, the analysis finds that intimate partner violence is a greater risk factor for poor health than high fasting plasma glucose, obesity, smoking, or alcohol use – placing violence among the leading drivers of disability and chronic illness.

This enables a crucial paradigm shift. Domestic violence is no longer a social issue but a risk factor that impacts health.

Intimate partner violence is an insidious exposure that accumulates over years, shaping mental illness, non-communicable disease, and long-term disability rather than presenting as a single, identifiable event.



Call to action: A silent protest calling for an end to violence against women in Mumbai. Intimate partner violence has been identified as a significant and measurable contributor to a wide range of health issues. EMMANUAL YOGINI

This reframing also helps explain why violence so often remains invisible within the health system – even to the women living through it.

A.K. Jayashree, head, department of community medicine at the Government Medical College in Kannur, Kerala, began her career volunteering with organisations, interacting with a large number of women subjected to intimate partner violence. But when she entered formal medical education as a teacher in 2009, she was struck by how little of this knowledge had translated into training. What was being taught to medical students neither reflected the realities she had seen on the ground, nor did it take into account evidence generated by decades of research.

Studies show that women come to outpatient departments repeatedly with non-specific complaints that do not resolve – chronic pain, tiredness, inability to sleep etc. – but medical students are not taught to look for everyday violence. As a result doctors are often unprepared for what they encounter in real-world settings: women may arrive at emergency departments after being beaten, accompanied by husbands or in-laws who answer questions on their behalf. Junior doctors may sense something is wrong but lack the training to ask safely, document accurately, or refer appropriately.

What information does reach medical students is fragmented. "Most of it is confined to forensic medicine, as a legal and evidentiary exercise," Dr. Jayashree says. "It is not taught in clinical subjects that actually shape how doctors practise."

Nancy Angeline Gnanaselvam, assistant professor of community medicine at St. John's Medical College, Bengaluru, says the women most visible to the system are not representative of those living with intimate partner violence. "What we see in crisis centres or one-stop facilities are usually women in extreme distress, often brought in by the police after calling helplines or when neighbours report the violence," she says.

Invisible group

The much larger, invisible group, she explains, are women who continue to live with their partners and do not want to file complaints or leave home. "They come with diabetes, hypertension, anxiety, and chronic pain. And we don't recognise what we are seeing." Intimate partner violence remains poorly understood within medicine because it sits at the uneasy intersection of healthcare, social services, and law enforcement, Dr. Nancy adds.

Even when violence is suspected however, care pathways frequently collapse.

Referrals to psychiatry or other mental health services are often resisted by families or blocked altogether. The physicians, who are the only people the women have safe access to, receive little training in even basic mental healthcare, let alone trauma-informed care. "So the woman remains treated symptom by symptom, while the cause remains untouched," says Dr. Nancy.

For Dr. Nancy, this is why reframing intimate partner violence as a public health and chronic disease issue matters. It shifts the focus away from isolated incidents and moral judgment, toward recognising the long-term disability and preventable illnesses it causes. Without that shift, she argues, the health system will continue to manage diabetes, heart disease, anxiety, and depression – while remaining blind to the violence that fuels them.

At this point, says Dr. Nancy, the official training to deal with issues faced by women in the National Medical Council curriculum is a one-hour lecture. According to her, gender must be an ongoing conversation brought up again and again in various health contexts. "This needs to make it into the curriculum of nurses, psychologists and other healthcare workers as well," adds Dr. Jayashree.

Beginning conversations

Last month, at the Sree Uthradom Thirunal Academy of Medical Sciences in Thiruvananthapuram, a panel discussion brought doctors together to talk about intimate partner violence.

The discussion did not frame violence in the language of chronic disease or disability. But its significance lay elsewhere: in the acknowledgement that domestic violence is not external to healthcare.

The conversation was a nod toward to shift that is now happening: moving intimate partner violence out of the margins of emergency care and social work, and into the core of how medicine understands illness, risk, and long-term health.

(Dr. Christianez Ratna Kiruba is an internal medicine doctor, with a passion for patient rights advocacy. christianezdennis@gmail.com)

THE GIST

Intimate partner violence is an insidious exposure that accumulates over years, shaping mental illness, non-communicable diseases, and long-term disability rather than presenting as a single, identifiable event. Domestic violence is no longer a social issue but a risk factor that impacts health

Studies show that women come to outpatient departments repeatedly with non-specific complaints that do not resolve — chronic pain, tiredness, inability to sleep etc. — but medical students are not taught to look for everyday violence

Reframing intimate partner violence as a public health and chronic disease issue matters. It shifts the focus away from isolated incidents and moral judgment, toward it being seen for the long-term disability and preventable illnesses it causes. Without that shift, the health system will continue to manage diabetes, heart disease, anxiety, and depression — while remaining blind to the violence that fuels them

Visibility and inclusion: advancing the case of children with disabilities

Ramya Kannan

An invisibility cloak is a prop that is sure to excite children; what better than a touch of magic, to vanish, disappear for others, even when you are right there. But for children with disabilities, being invisible is a terrible fact of life – being counted, is a challenge.

The cascade of other inadequacies in society that inhibits children with disabilities from achieving their full potential continues to be a call for action – on the part of communities and governments. With World Disabilities Day observed in early December, it is time to evaluate what more needs to be done, acknowledging that the barriers are physical, but also much more.

No disaggregated data

A recent UNICEF report reveals stark disparities in access to rights and services for the nearly 108 million children with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. Birth registration, in particular, is a fundamental human right. Yet for many persons with disabilities, especially children, the process is riddled with barriers. Tanja B. Sejersen, and Manal Hassan of the ESCAP's (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) Statistics Division, say that a number of children in the region do not even have a birth certificate – thus impeding their access to basic rights, services such as health education and social protection. They argue, in an article, that "Civil registration, the official recording of life events such as births, deaths, marriages and divorces, is more than paperwork. It's a gateway to belonging."

"In terms of birth certification, in India, there's no explicit discrimination on the basis of disability," says Pratik Aggarwal, executive director, ASTHA, a non-governmental organisation working to include children with disabilities.

But he hastens to add: "When it's a larger ecosystem – how do you count children with disabilities? Apart from the Census and other surveys, we really don't have disaggregated data on the health conditions of children with disabilities. The National Family Health Survey should actually cover children with disabilities, but it doesn't. So, we don't have data on how many children with disabilities have been immunised, or how many children with disabilities are enrolled in anganwadis, how many of them have malnutrition. This is also undercounting of disability."



Need for attention: A UNICEF report reveals stark disparities in access to rights and services for the nearly 108 million children with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. G. RAMAKRISHNA

When a parent has a disability, or if both parents have some form of disability, it can be a nightmare trying to access hospitals and government systems in order to access treatments and services meant to assist them, including trying to figure out interventions for their child, school admissions, and immunisation, says Mr. Aggarwal.

Then the efforts to ensure the child gets a gainful education and is trained to be independent can be excruciatingly painful.

Expanding early intervention

Srinivas Tata, director of ESCAP's Social Development Division, says the "Incheon Strategy to 'Make the Right Real' for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific includes a goal to expand early intervention and education of children with disabilities. In 2022, ESCAP assessed the region's progress towards Incheon Strategy goals, and found most countries in the region were already implementing or in the process of designing early childhood intervention programmes." However, the quality and accessibility of these programmes varied, and many followed the medical model of disability rather than the social and rights-based model.

"Overall," he says, "children with disabilities are significantly less likely to attend and complete school – from preschool to upper-secondary school – than children without disabilities. Accessible learning environments, early identification and intervention capacity, and inclusive teaching and education are critical, but are not uniformly available in most countries. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a disruption in education, and those in need of special education models or strategies suffered more than children who did not need such interventions.

Early intervention and education are critical, Dr. Tata adds, as they have life-long impact.

"But change can only be accomplished if the ecosystem becomes more accessible and inclusive. For instance, without adequate and accessible disability benefits, children may not be able to access early intervention. When accessible public transport doesn't exist, children with disabilities in rural and remote areas won't be able to go to school easily. And unless the labour market becomes more inclusive, even highly educated persons with disabilities would fail to be an active member of the economy," he explains, indicating the disabling cascade that impacts the life of children with disability.

As Sejerson and Hasan add: "Inclusion isn't just about access – it's about recognition. It's about ensuring that every person, regardless of ability, is counted, seen and valued."

(ramya.kannan@thehindu.co.in)

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Additional vessels in Russia's shadow fleet targeted by the EU

41 The European Union imposed sanctions on 41 more ships in Russia's shadow fleet, taking the total of designated vessels to almost 600. The ships are banned from entering EU ports and can no longer receive a broad range of services related to maritime transport, the EU Council said. REUTERS

Number of public grievances received so far this year

21 In lakh. As many as 21,17,346 public grievances were received between January and December 9, of which 21,16,766 were disposed of. The government has undertaken a set of measures to reduce grievance pendency and improve the efficiency of the redressal process. PTI

The waterlogging-prone subways identified in India

2,670 Various railway zones carried out a survey and identified 2,670 out of a total 14,745 constructed road-under-bridges as prone to waterlogging earlier this year, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw informed the Lok Sabha in a written reply. PTI

Number of annual FASTag passes issued since August

40 In lakh. The government will implement barrier-free toll collection at all 1,050 toll plazas across the country by 2026. About 40 lakh annual FASTag passes have been issued in four months since August, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Thursday. PTI

Number of civilians killed in April attack on a camp in Sudan

1,013 More than 1,000 civilians were killed during three days of attacks by Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces on the Zamzam displacement camp in April, the UN said, demanding a war crimes investigation. AFP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Inside the DHRUV64 microprocessor

Who developed the DHRUV64 chip? What are the other chips within India's ecosystem of processors? What aspects have the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology not revealed about DHRUV64? What are some schemes started by the government to advance indigenous fab technologies?

EXPLAINER

Vasudevan Mukunth

The story so far:

On December 15, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) announced the launch of DHRUV64, an indigenous microprocessor that it said would strengthen the national indigenous processor pipeline. Its purported applications span the breadth of electronics to industrial automation.

What is DHRUV64?

The DHRUV64 chip is a fully indigenous microprocessor developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under MEITY's Microprocessor Development Programme.

The microprocessor is a general-purpose 'brain' for electronics – a 64-bit, dual-core processor that runs at 1 GHz. These specifications could mean the processor is fast enough to run operating systems while also being efficient enough for embedded deployment.

India is a major market for processors yet continues to depend on imported designs and supply chains. To this end the Indian government has pitched for a "homegrown processor technology". Such processors sit at the base of everything from telecom networks to industrial control. So whoever controls their design, toolchain, and update pathways will also control security assumptions and resilience during export controls or supply shocks.

What do DHRUV64's specs mean?

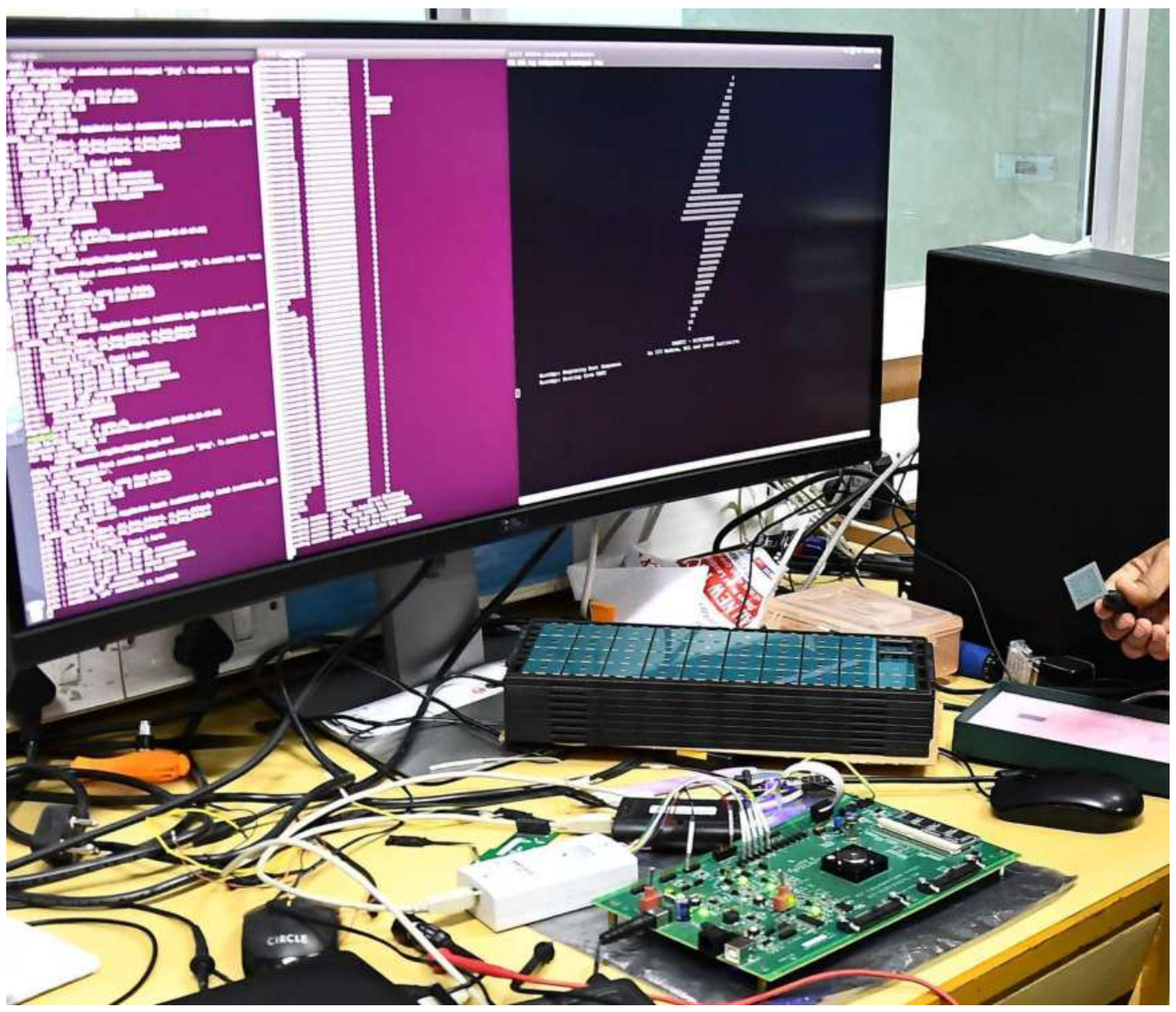
DHRUV64 is not a chip meant only for simple sensing or appliance logic. In general, 64-bit designs are used when users want modern operating systems and contemporary software.

The specified performance is low compared to top-tier consumer standards. Today's state-of-the-art smartphone and laptop processors tend to combine many more CPU cores with higher peak clock speeds. They also include specialised blocks like Graphic Processing Units (GPUs), which can efficiently handle machine-learning workloads.

This said, a lot of contemporary computing in the modern economy doesn't demand topline CPUs. These applications include base station subsystems in telecommunications, industrial controllers, routers, and many automotive modules. They prize reliability and better hardware-software integration. At the same time, as the technology publication *The Register* wrote, "Those are fields in which established chipmakers already offer mature products, and accompanying software and hardware development ecosystems. Even the most patriotic Indian electronics manufacturer would surely find it hard to put the DHRUV64 at the top of their bill of materials shopping list. India therefore has plenty left to do if DHRUV64 is going to win customers."

What processors is India working on?

According to MEITY, DHRUV64 is part of India's ecosystem of processors, including SHAKTI from IIT-Madras, AJIT from IIT-Bombay, VIKRAM from the ISRO-Semiconductor Lab, and THEJAS64 from C-DAC (2025). The needs these processors address include strategic operations, control systems in factories, spaceflight systems, and industrial automation. MEITY has also pitched DHRUV64 as a platform on which startups, academia, and industry can build and test products on, "without relying on foreign processors", and can develop prototypes for new system architectures at lower cost. This is commendable because all processors everywhere, from the Intel Core series to the Espressif processors in DIY electronics, only succeed when they have an ecosystem around them.



Another breakthrough: Team Shakti at work on the microprocessor project RISECREEK at IIT-Madras in Chennai in 2018. FILE PHOTO

What is DIR-V?

RISC-V (pronounced "risk five") is a set of basic instructions that a processor understands. A processor is like a cook who can only make the dishes written down in a recipe book. This book is the instruction set: it lists commands like "add two numbers", "move data from memory", "compare two values", "jump to another step in a program", etc.

RISC-V is an open instruction set, which means its core rules are publicly available and anyone can design a chip that follows them without paying a licence fee for the instruction set itself. This is different from instruction sets that are controlled by a company and licensed to others. There the chip designers will need to purchase licences, sign contracts, etc. This is why governments and research groups sometimes prefer RISC-V.

RISC-V is also modular: designers can start with a small, standard core, then add extra features like faster arithmetics or security features depending on what the chip is meant for. Put differently, different chips can speak the same base language while still being fine-tuned for different tasks. DHRUV64 is tied to the Digital India RISC-V (DIR-V) programme, which aims to build a portfolio of RISC-V-based microprocessors for industry, military, and consumer technologies. THEJAS32 was the first India-designed chip DIR-V chip to be fabricated (in Malaysia) and THEJAS64 was the second, made at SCL Mohali. DHRUV64 is the third on this list. However, MEITY hasn't said where DHRUV64 was fabricated, which leaves doubts about the supply chain.

What is not known about DHRUV64?

MEITY's announcement of DHRUV64 is thin on the engineering information required to judge the chip's readiness. There are five issues in particular.

First, the claim about the chip's performance hasn't been contextualised in measurable terms. The headline specs, that is, 1 GHz, 64-bit, dual-core, are not accompanied by benchmarks, details of the memory subsystem (for example, cache sizes and memory controller features), input/output capabilities, and the performance per watt. The MEITY statement also says the design includes "modern architectural features" and "enhanced multitasking capability" but doesn't specify what they entail.

Second, the statement claims the processor's "modern fabrication leverages technologies used for high-performance chips" but doesn't specify the foundry, packaging, yields or reliability targets. Applications in the telecommunications and automotive sectors require these details because they're used to determine the chip's lifecycle availability and failure rates.

Third, MEITY's claim that the chip is "fully indigenous" is ambiguous. The note highlights RISC-V's open architecture and "no licence costs". However "indigenous" can also mean an indigenous instruction set, indigenous core microarchitecture, indigenous system-on-chip integration, indigenous toolchain, indigenous fabrication or indigenous ownership of critical IP blocks.

Fourth, the announcement doesn't address questions relevant to an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), for example, when developer boards will ship, which operating systems are supported, what security features and audit mechanisms the chip has, and whether the government plans to use them in anchor scenarios (where by using them it will reduce the risks associated with adoption).

Fifth, the development roadmap is not clear. The statement says C-DAC's next indigenous chip will be 'DHANUSH' and 'DHANUSH+'; they appear to currently be in the engineering or design stage.

The MEITY statement indicated DHANUSH will be a 1.2-GHz quad-core processor and that DHANUSH+ will be a 2-GHz quad-core processor. One 2023 C-DAC document also reported that DHANUSH will have a process node – a figure denoting the transistors' size – of 28 nm. *The Register* reported that DHANUSH+'s would be 14 or 16 nm.

What comes next?

India has been focusing on schemes to widen talent and the scope for start-ups. The 'Chips to Startup' programme, with an outlay of ₹250 crore over five years; the Design Linked Incentive scheme; and the INUP-i2i initiative are intended to improve access to nanofabrication facilities and training. As of 2025, the India Semiconductor Mission has also approved 10 projects in six States with investments of ₹1.6 lakh crore.

Against this backdrop, the government's plan for DHRUV64 seems to be a move towards system-on-chip families, more reference designs, better software support, and sufficient manufacturing and testing capacity for domestic products. The end goal is for Indian consumers to choose an Indian chip without assuming unacceptable costs or risk.

THE GIST

- The DHRUV64 chip is a fully indigenous microprocessor developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under MEITY's Microprocessor Development Programme.
- DHRUV64 is tied to the Digital India RISC-V (DIR-V) programme, which aims to build a portfolio of RISC-V-based microprocessors for industry, military, and consumer technologies.
- The 'Chips to Startup' programme, with an outlay of ₹250 crore over five years; the Design Linked Incentive scheme; and the INUP-i2i initiative are intended to improve access to nanofabrication facilities and training.

IN THE LIMELIGHT



A still from 'Dhurandhar'. YOUTUBE

How 'Dhurandhar' is a prime example of government-embedded filmmaking

'Dhurandhar' features Ranveer Singh as an Indian spy infiltrating a Pakistani terror network. While some viewers celebrate its patriotic themes as a necessary response to historical narratives about Pakistan, the film perpetuates a one-dimensional view of the country and reinforces divisive tropes

Nissim Mannathukkaren

The Hindi film *Dhurandhar* is becoming a sensation and a debate. It shows an Indian spy (Ranveer Singh) infiltrating a Pakistani gangster/terror network through Operation Dhurandhar. But the film, ironically, displays another kind of infiltration, putting it under a genre called "government-embedded filmmaking', as coined by American writer Peter Maas. If the concept refers to the government giving special access to military/intelligence documents to induce favourable filmic portrayals of the security apparatus, here, I use it to mean how the ideological narrative of the government is being faithfully reproduced – a regular phenomenon now in India.

Different responses

Dhurandhar is different from many other government-embedded films in that it has combined commercial film elements with some technical finesse in direction, screenplay, cinematography, art direction, and acting. Besides, it has infused some realism at the expense of melodrama. This distinguishes the director Aditya Dhar from the Sudipto Sens (*Kerala Story*) and the Vivek Agnihotris (*The Kashmir Files; The Bengal Files*).

Dissenters of the politics of the film, like film critics, and actor Hrithik Roshan, have faced intense online hate and harassment. There have been two kinds of responses towards the film from its fans. One strand has proudly owned the film, whether it is propaganda or not. For it, the film depicts real Pakistan-perpetrated terror events. It asserts there is nothing wrong in showing patriotism in films, and that Bollywood has historically produced propaganda hiding the "real truths" of Pakistani terrorism, and advocated for peace with Pakistan. *Dhurandhar*, therefore, is "a cinematic correction," and a "cultural counterstrike." As a person wrote in response to Hrithik Roshan: "You literally glorified this barbaric Akbar and today you have the audacity to call *Dhurandhar* as propaganda. Shame on you," referring to Mr. Roshan playing Akbar in *Jodhaa Akbar* (2008). Notably, these sentiments, which speak to nationalism, as well as deep Hindu victimhood, are not just restricted to the Hindu far right.

The second response denies that the film is propaganda, and asserts that it is an espionage drama with a nationalist-perspective, similar to the likes which Hollywood regularly churns out. Even if it selectively dramatises events, it falls within legitimate genre conventions. The latter is a misreading for, as the biggest practitioners of political propaganda have shown, the most effective propaganda is one which is barely noticed. *Dhurandhar*'s distinctive quality is that it is not in your face with ideological sloganeering, yet it is in sync with Hindu nationalism and, specifically, policies of the present government.

Reinforcing the official narrative

Scenes of the film depict a Kandahar plane hijacker saying, "Hindus are cowards" (there is no historical record of this); there are scenes interspersed with real audio footage from 26/11, which evokes the barbarity of the terrorists; and brutal killings are celebrated by the conspirators with chants of 'Allah uh Akbar'. Without any scenes that show a Pakistani Muslim opposed to terrorism or enmity with India, the film preps the viewer to adopt the Pakistani state/terrorist view of "Muslim Pakistan" versus "Hindu India."

The film dramatises the frustrations of a central character, intelligence chief Ajay Sanyal (resembling National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, and played by R. Madhavan), with the Indian State's weak-kneed responses to Pakistani terror attacks in the 1990s/2000s. Instead of dovish initiatives such as Aman ki Asha, an India-Pakistan peace project, Sanyal advocates for proactive anti-terror policies like Operation Dhurandhar.

While *Dhurandhar* makes a moderate criticism of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in power during the Kandahar hijack and 2001 Parliament attacks, serious criticism is directed at the Congress/non-BJP governments at the centre and in Uttar Pradesh. A Union Minister is accused of having links with a Pakistani fake currency racket in 2005; slaughterhouses in U.P. are linked to it too, with any action on them leading to riots (leaving the audience to guess the identity of the community running slaughterhouses). It is stated that the real enemies of India are within, not outside – a familiar Hindu nationalist trope. Another similar stereotype is of Pakistani conspirators mocking Indian cowardliness in not responding to the 26/11 attacks of 2008.

There is a running reference in the film to still persist with diligent intelligence work hoping that a future "nationalist CM" of U.P. can use it (an explicit nod to Yogi Adityanath). The film ends with the slogan '*Yeh Naya Bharat Hain, Ghar Mein Ghuske Maarta Hain*' (this is new India, it will enter your [enemy's] home and attack you), which is a reference to Prime Minister's Modi's popular slogan. The film becomes propaganda because it lionises a powerful security figure of the present government, and partisanly lauds the government which has made muscular military and counterterrorism strategies as its distinguishing feature.

Moreover, *Dhurandhar*, despite bringing some human elements to gangsters and breaking some stereotypes by depicting modern nightlife, still does not change an average Indian's view of Pakistan. Pakistan is monochromatically monstrous: it is the source of all terrorism in the world, says a character. We largely only see gangsters, ISI, politicians and the Army who concertedly want to inflict a thousand bleeding cuts on India. Even the gangster from the dissident Baloch community parrots this. From *Dhurandhar,* we would not know that there were Pakistani newspaper articles post 26/11 urging Pakistanis to see the horrors perpetrated in the name of Islam, and those even apologising to Indians. We would not know that the Lyari neighbourhood in Karachi, the den of crime and terror networks in the film, is also "Mini Brazil," famous for its hip hop and passion for football.

Selective memory

Dhurandhar's success is also a commentary on the abysmal nature of Bollywood filmmaking, and the cartoonish, comic military and spy thrillers that it churns out, like the Yash Raj Films Spy Universe. Thus, for its admirers, the male-centric *Dhurandhar*, in which blood curdling violence is aestheticised, appears more relatable than thrillers showing Indian intelligence operatives either romancing Pakistani counterparts or turning rogue to aid the enemy.

The *Dhurandhar* debate also shows how public memory is selective. While many assert that this is a cultural reclaiming of Bollywood, they ignore that since the 1990s there has been an explosion of jingoistic Bollywood films, even before political shifts in 2014, centred on Pakistani terrorism, Kashmir Islamist militancy, Pakistan wars, and even Indian agents infiltrating Pakistan (*Roja*, *Border*, *Sarfarosh*, *Mission Kashmir*, *Maa Tujhe Salaam*, *Gadar*, *The Hero*, *LOC-Kargil*, *Ab Tumhare Hawale Hai Watan Saathiyon*, *Attacks of 26/11*, *D-Day*, *Baby*, *Phantom*, etc.).

A vast majority of these films demonised Pakistani people and not just the Pakistani state/terrorists. *Dhurandhar* says nothing new; but its deep and partisan immersion in the present government's avowed narratives, even when they remain in the background and couched in a believable world, puts it as another addition to the growing camp of government-embedded filmmaking.

Nissim Mannathukkaren is with Dalhousie University, Canada.

THE DAILY QUIZ

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

Messi's tour of India grabbed the headlines last week. A quiz on the football player

Radhika Santhanam

QUESTION 1
Messi's jersey number is also Sachin Tendulkar's jersey number. It was also worn in football by legends such as X and Y, who were the joint winners of the FIFA Player of the Century. What's the number? Also name X and Y.

QUESTION 2
Last month, Messi visited X and said he hoped to return there one day. The presidential candidate of X has also said he will do everything he can to bring Messi back if he wins next year's election. What is X?

QUESTION 3
This Uruguayan player provided the most assists for Messi for his Barcelona goals. He just signed a one-year deal to stay at Inter Miami. He also visited India. Who is he?

QUESTION 4
Only two accounts have more followers on Instagram than Messi. One is Cristiano Ronaldo. Who is the other?

QUESTION 5
Which club has Messi scored the most goals against in his career?

QUESTION 6
In which Indian city has a 70-ft Messi statue been installed?



Visual question:
This Argentinian was Messi's idol while growing up. He is currently the assistant coach of the Argentina national team. Who is he?

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. Name the movie directed by Spielberg based on a novel by Alice Walker. **Ans: *The Color Purple***
2. Name the movie that won Spielberg his first Academy award. **Ans. *Schindler's List***
3. Name the movie co-written by Spielberg which was based on his group of childhood friends. **Ans: *The Fabelmans***
4. Name the movie that won Spielberg the Distinguished Public Service Award. **Ans: *Saving Private Ryan***
5. Name the first feature film directed by Spielberg. **Ans: *The Sugarland Express***
Visual: Name the boy and the movie this still is from. **Ans: Christian Bale, *Empire of the Sun***
Early Birds: Sadhan Panda| Ambarin Aslam| M. Suresh Kumar| Deepak Sudhir| Abhay Krishan



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know Your English

S. Upendran

"Hi! You look different. Is it your hair?"
"Yes. I had a headbath this morning."
"I see."
"What – No reaction? When I told Sujatha the same thing she started to laugh. She said that the word 'headbath' doesn't exist."
"Of course it exists. We Indians use it all the time."
"I know that we Indians use it. But what about native speakers of English? Do they use it?"
"No, native speakers don't use this word. They would say 'I washed my hair', instead of 'I had a headbath'."
"I wash my hair twice a week. But tell me, is it wrong to ...."
"Within India the word 'headbath' is more or less acceptable. But as I said, native speakers don't use it."
"I see. Tell me, are there any other words that are commonly used here that are not used by native speakers of English? You've already told me that the words 'tiffin' and 'prepone' are not used by them."
"Let me think now. Native speakers..... Ah, yes! Native place!"
"You mean that 'native place' is Indian?"
"We have a tendency to say 'My native place is Mumbai.' A native speaker of English on the other hand, would say, 'My home town is Mumbai'."
"I see. My cousin's home town is Hyderabad."
"Speaking of cousins, weren't you and your cousin supposed to go to some remote village and...."
"....that's right! We got back two hours ago."
"That was pretty quick. How did you manage it? Did you leave early?"
"No. My cousin drove very fast. In many places he was overspeeding."
"Why was he speeding?"
"He was overspeeding because...."
"...not 'overspeeding', but 'speeding'."
"....but what's wrong with 'overspeeding'?"
"When you say that you were 'speeding', it implies that you were driving fast. You were driving beyond the legal speed limit. In other words, you were driving over the speed limit."
"I see. Since 'speeding' implies 'over the speed limit', I guess there is no point in attaching the word 'over' to it."
"Exactly! The word 'over' is unnecessary. In U.S., when you go beyond the legal speed limit, the policeman stops you and gives you a speeding ticket. He fines you for speeding."
"He doesn't give a ticket for 'overspeeding', I guess?"
"No. he doesn't. But tell me, why was your cousin speeding?"
"He is taking part in a tennis tournament this evening. And he needs to buy a half pant."
"A half pant?"
"Yes. Half pants are on sale at...."
"...do you know that 'half pant' and 'full pant' are not used by native speakers of English?"
"What do they call a 'half pant' then?"
" 'Half pants' are referred to as 'shorts'.
Published in The Hindu on January 12, 1999.

Word of the day

Ostracise:
expel from a community or group; avoid speaking to or dealing with

Synonyms: ban, banish, blackball, cast out, shun

Usage: *Ever since I spoke up, my colleagues have ostracised me.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/ostracisepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈɒstɹəsaɪz/

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