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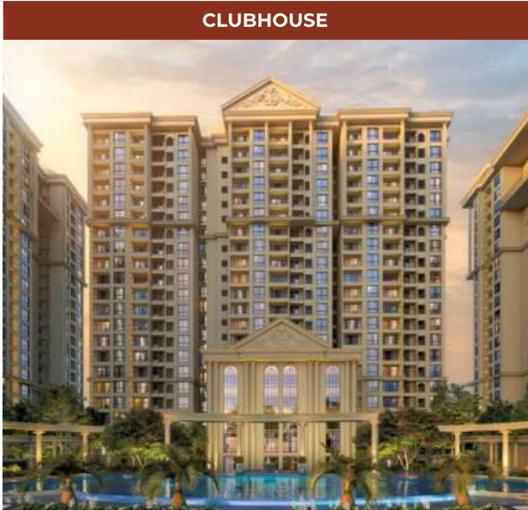
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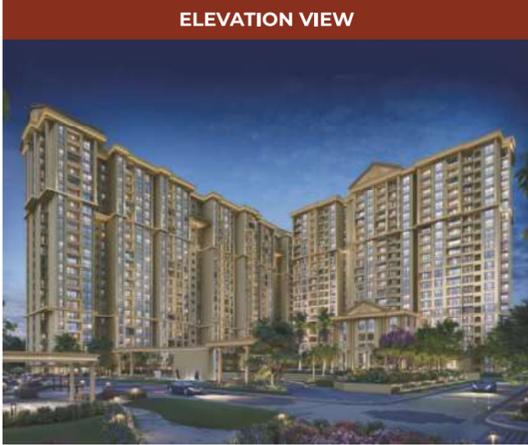
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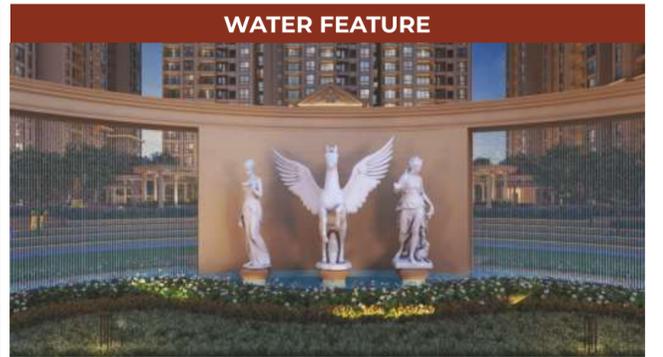
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KIDS

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25. GARDEN SEATING PATIO
26. SENIOR CITIZEN PAVILION
27. WIFI PLAZA
28. REFLEXOLOGY PATHWAY
29. TRELIS PAVILION
30. AROMA GARDEN
31. HAMMOCK GARDEN
32. TROPICAL FOREST WITH TEAK PLANTATION

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34. GUEST ENTERTAINMENT LOUNGE
35. BUISNESS CENTRE
36. LEARNING CENTRE
37. MINI THEATRE
38. GUEST BEDROOMS
39. MUSIC ROOM AUX ENABLED
40. SPA
41. SALON
42. STEAM
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INDOOR GAMES

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47. FOOSBALL
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49. TABLE TENNIS
50. VIDEO / VR GAMES ROOM
51. SOCCER POOL ROOM

INDOOR SPORTS

52. BADMINTON COURT
53. SQUASH COURT

FITNESS AND WELLBEING

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55. TRX & CROSSFIT TRAINING
56. INTREACTIVE GYM
57. ZUMBA / AEROBICS / YOGA

KIDS

58. CRECHE
59. PLUM LARGE CLIMBING WITH SLIDE
60. TENT HOUSE
61. KIDS INDOOR GYM
62. WALL GAMES
63. WALL PEGS/CLIMBER
64. RIDE ONS

FACILITIES

65. ATM
66. LAUNDRY ROOM
67. ASSOCIATION ROOM
68. CONVENIO STORE
69. CAR WASH BAY
70. CAR CHARGING BAY

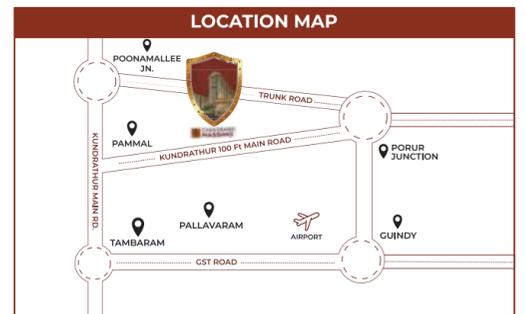
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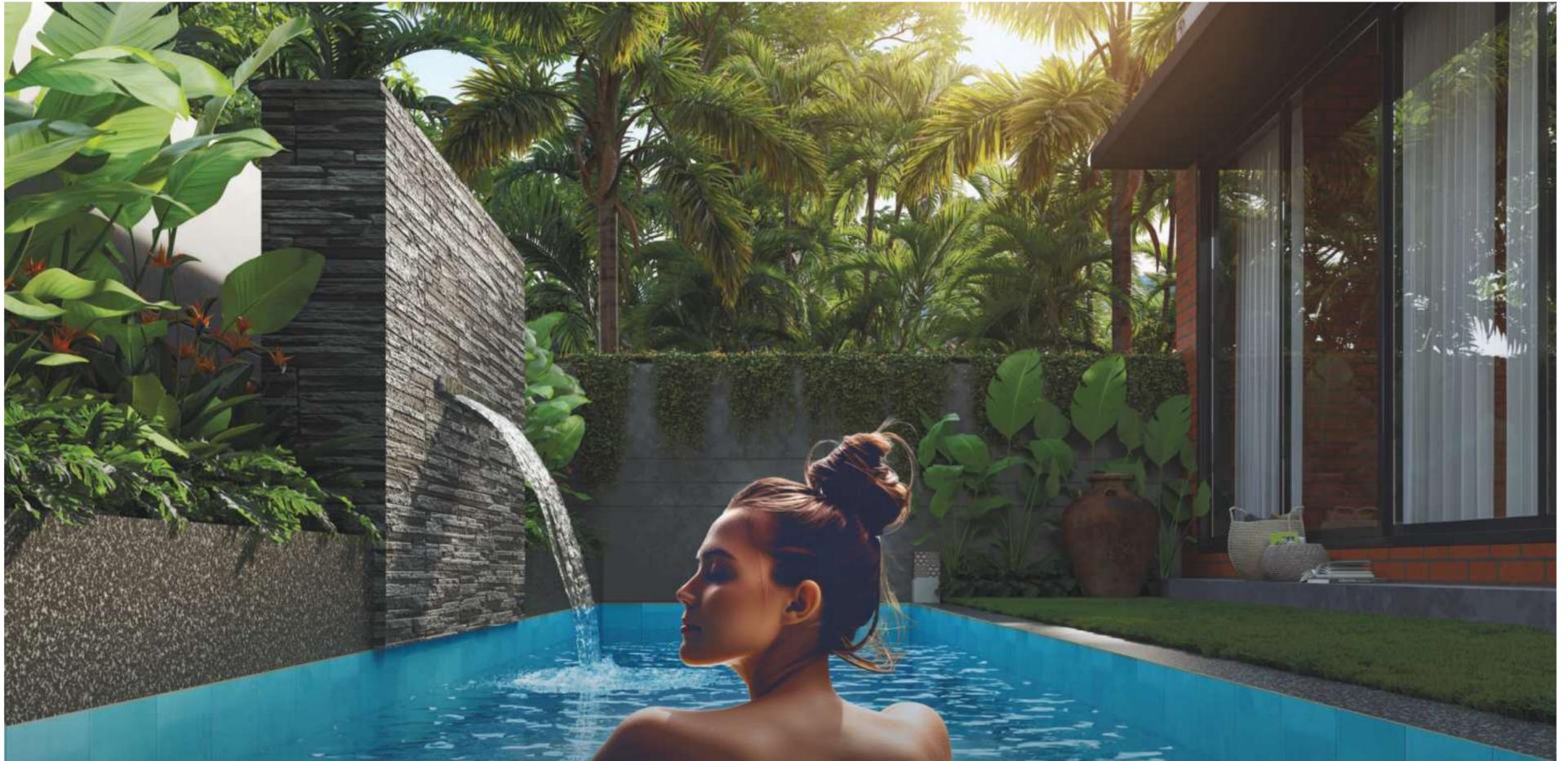
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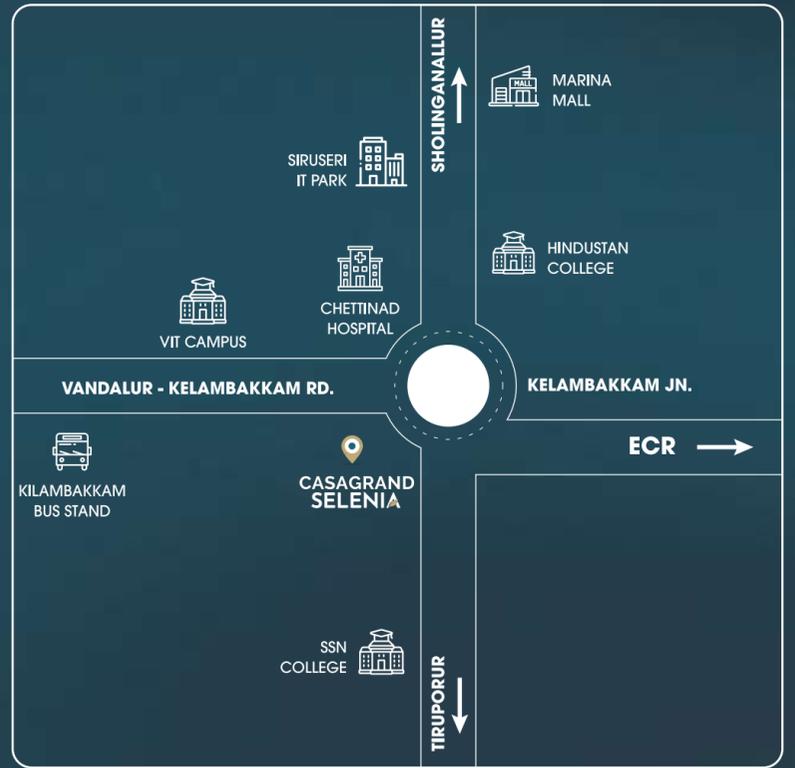
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**CRISIS IN HARYANA**  
**Saini calls Cabinet meeting on May 15**  
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**PAWAN KALYAN INTERVIEW**  
**'My focus is on revival of democratic systems'**  
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**THE REVANNA FILES**  
**Power play, politics, and perversion**  
*A crime that has left the nation shaking*  
GROUND ZERO » PAGE 9



**OPENERS' DAY OUT**  
**Sai Sudarshan, Gill keep Titans alive**  
SPORT » PAGE 15

**NEARBY**



**Guideline value of property set to increase**  
CHENNAI  
An elaborate exercise is under way to revise the Market Value Guidelines (MVG) of immovable properties in T.N and the MVG is expected to soar. » PAGE 6

**SC seeks States' reply on plea by Udhayanidhi**  
NEW DELHI  
The SC issued notice to four States and a U.T. on a plea by Udhayanidhi Stalin to club FIRs against him in the Sanatana Dharma case. » PAGE 6

**METROPLUS WEEKEND** » 6 PAGES  
**PROPERTYPLUS** » 6 PAGES

## Kejriwal walks out of jail as SC grants interim bail

The temporary relief will allow Delhi Chief Minister to campaign for the Lok Sabha election; court orders him not to visit office, sign files, comment on the liquor policy case or access related files

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday granted interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the liquor policy case till June 1 to campaign for the Lok Sabha election.

Mr. Kejriwal walked out of the Tihar Jail in the evening and participated in a roadshow.

"There is no gainsaying that General Elections to Lok Sabha is the most significant and an important event this year, as it should be in a national election year. Between 650-700 million voters out of an electorate of about 970 million will cast their votes to elect the government of this country for the next five years. General Elec-



**Back in campaign:** Arvind Kejriwal arrives at his residence after being released from the Tihar Jail on Friday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

tions supply the *vis viva* to a democracy," a Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta observed.

The court barred Mr. Kejriwal from visiting the Chief Minister's Office or the Delhi Secretariat. He cannot sign any official files unless it is required to obtain the clearance or ap-

proval of the Lieutenant-Governor of Delhi. The order prohibited him from making any comments with regard to his role in the liquor policy case. He will not interact with witnesses or have access to files connected with the case. He has been directed to furnish bail

bonds worth ₹50,000, with one surety. Mr. Kejriwal has to surrender on June 2. The court made it clear that its grant of interim bail was not a comment on the merits of the case or on the appeal filed by Mr. Kejriwal against his arrest on March 21. The eight-page order rejected an argument by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) that releasing Mr. Kejriwal on interim bail would create an impression among the public – and worse still, a judicial precedent – that politicians are a separate class, higher in status than the ordinary citizen and immune from arrest. Every criminal would vie to be a politician, the ED had said.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 10

## Court convicts 2, acquits 3 in Dabholkar murder case

**Purnima Sah**  
**Sneha Mutha**  
MUMBAI

After nearly three years of trial, a Pune court on Friday convicted two persons and acquitted three in the murder of activist Narendra Achyut Dabholkar.

Dabholkar, 67, social activist, writer and rationalist, was shot dead on August 20, 2013, by two motorcycle-borne assailants on the Omkareshwar bridge near the Shaniwar Peth area in Pune when he was out on a morning walk.

Sessions court judge P.P. Jadhav pronounced the judgment sentencing the assailants – Sachin Andure and Sharad Kalaskar – to life imprisonment and imposing a fine of ₹5 lakh.

Virendrasinh Tawade, Vikram Bhawe and Sanjeev Punalekar were acquitted for lack of evidence.

Dr. Tawade was alleged to be one of the master-



The anti-superstition activist was shot dead by two bike-borne assailants in 2013.

minds of the murder.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Dabholkar's son and daughter, Hamid and Mukta Dabholkar, said they were satisfied that the two accused had been convicted and sentenced to life, but the masterminds also need to be punished. They were determined to pursue justice and take the case to the Supreme Court.

The chargesheets, including those related to the murders of Govind Pan-

sare, M.M. Kalburgi, and Gauri Lankesh revealed alarming connections, indicating a broader conspiracy spanning multiple cases. All the cases had a common thread, which was what investigation agencies had been saying. Until the conspirator in all these cases was apprehended, the safety of all rationalists remained in jeopardy, they said.

Ms. Mukta added, "This journey of 11 years was not easy, but we stuck together. The family and Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti [MANS] activists channelled our hurt and anger into getting justice. The loss suffered by our family cannot be compensated in any way, and the damage caused to the social movement in Maharashtra cannot be undone. It has been life-changing."

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 10

## Day of the 'globetrotters'



**Flamboyant visitors:** A flock of flamingos make merry at a pond in Navi Mumbai at the end of their migratory season. World Migratory Bird Day is observed on May 11, Saturday. EMMANUEL YOGINI

## EC rebuts Cong. chief's allegation on voting data

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**  
**Sobhana K. Nair**  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission rebutted allegations in a letter by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge to his INDIA colleagues on the alleged "discrepancies in voting data" released by the election panel. The EC called the letter an "attempt to push a biased narrative under the guise of seeking clarifications".

The rebuttal was released an hour before the EC's meeting with INDIA bloc leaders, where apart from the turnout data, the leaders questioned the EC's inaction on complaints against BJP leaders.

**FULL REPORT ON**  
» PAGE 10

## Dalit girl from Kamuthi gets top marks in Class X exam

**C. Palanivel Rajan**  
RAMANATHAPURAM

The daughter of a welder in Ramanathapuram, who travelled 15 km to reach her school by public transport, has scored top marks in the Class X State board examination, the results of which were released on Friday. The State recorded a pass percentage of 91.55.

D. Kaviya Janani, 15, a student belonging to Dalit community and hailing from Peraiyur, a village located in Ramanathapuram district near Kamuthi, scored 499 marks out of 500.

Her father R. Dharmaraj works as a welder on contract basis in Coimbatore and his wife D. Vasanthi is employed at a grocery store in Kamuthi. Both have struggled all



**Proud moment:** D. Kaviya Janani celebrating her top score in the Class X exam with her mother and sister at Peraiyur village in Ramanathapuram district on Friday. L. BALACHANDAR

these years to educate their two daughters – Kaviya Janani and Akshaya.

**Financial burden** Ms. Vasanthi, said, despite all the struggles they faced, they took a firm decision to educate both their girl children.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 6

## Industrial output slows to 4.9% in March

**Vikas Dhoot**  
NEW DELHI

India's industrial output growth slowed to 4.9% in March from 5.6% in February, the National Statistical Office revealed on Friday, with base effects from last March, when output had grown a feeble 1.9%, boosting the uptick. Mining output slid to a 19-month low growth of 1.2%, while electricity generation rose 8.6% from a 1.6% contraction in March 2023. Manufacturing, which

### Highs and lows

India's industrial production growth slowed marginally to 4.9% in March 2024, from February's 5.6% pace

- Mining output growth decelerated to 1.2%, a 19-month low
- Consumer durables output recorded the sharpest surge for the second month in a row, rising 9.5%, albeit over an 8% contraction in March 2023



constitutes 77.6% of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), grew at a five-month high pace of 5.2% in

March, relative to a mild 1.5% uptick in the same month last year. Manufacturing growth for February

was revised to 4.9% from 5% estimated earlier, along with the month's IIP growth which was downgraded from 5.7%. Overall industrial output grew 5.8% in 2023-24, a tad higher than the 5.2% rise in the previous year, with manufacturing output growing 5.5% compared with 4.7% in 2022-23 and mining output accelerating by 7.5% last year from a 5.8% rise in the preceding year.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 10

## 12 Naxalites killed in an encounter in Chhattisgarh

**Press Trust of India**  
BIJAPUR

As many as 12 Naxalites were gunned down in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Friday, the police said, taking the number of left-wing extremists killed so far this year in the State to 103.

Two security personnel were injured in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast triggered by Maoists during the operation, they said.

This was the third major strike on Naxalites by security forces in one month. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai commended security forces and senior officials for the successful offensive in Bijapur.

The latest gunfight took place in a forest near Pidia village in the Gangaloor police station limits when a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-Naxal operation, a police official said.

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Scan to know more

# Learning deficit, rising tech dependence among reasons for fall in Class X pass rate

Experts call for steps to address the pandemic-induced learning loss, such as a diagnostic test to identify the learning stage the students are at and prepare a curriculum according to their needs

Meghna M.  
R. Aishwaryaa  
CHENNAI

In the academic year 2018-19, Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) schools recorded a pass percentage of 92.44 in the Class X Board examination. As the world battled a pandemic, the schools remained closed for two years, and the State declared a blanket 'all-pass' to the students. Cut to academic year 2021-2022, GCC-run schools' pass percentage hit a 10-year low of 75.84. Since then, Chennai district's pass percentage has struggled to leave the 70 scale.

This year, the district recorded a pass percentage of 88.21, with GCC schools recording 79.11 and government schools recording 79.07. The government school performance in the city is only the second lowest in the State. This consistent dip in the pass percentage has been attributed to many factors, chief among these being the learning deficit that occurred due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

"Steps have not been taken by schools to remedy the pandemic-induced learning loss among the children. This is affecting students from Class I. There should be a diagnostic test conducted to under-

## Fluctuating trend

While until 2019, Chennai had maintained a good pass percentage in the Class X board examination, it dipped after the COVID-19 pandemic hit



stand at what learning stage the students are and a curriculum that would benefit them must be planned accordingly," said K.R. Maalathi, CEO, Auuro Educational Services.

Even with the learning loss, other experts point out that the technological dependence among students has gone up. "Other districts have been able to bounce back to the pre-COVID-19 numbers but Chennai has not. The dependence on technology for

things other than studies has adversely affected them. Despite counselling sessions with children and parents, the students are not able to move away from the screens," said N. Vijayan, Senior Principal, Zion Group of Schools.

However, these are not the only problems that plague the schools as P.B. Prince Gajendra Babu, general secretary, The State Platform for Common School System-Tamil Nadu (SPCSS-TN), points out.

"On a foundation-level, the students need to be told why education is an important aspect and be taught the importance of pursuing it," he said.

Cyril Alexander of the Tamil Nadu People's Forum for Tobacco Control (TNPFTC) stated that all schools should be declared a tobacco-free zone, otherwise even younger children will start falling prey to it.

An official in the GCC said: "Interest in education is critical. Methods to handle students who are not comfortable with conventional form of education must be assessed. Skill-based support can also be extended in all schools to empower children to seek better opportunities."

He added that, "Low-performing GCC-run schools can be partnered with high-scoring schools to understand the latter's model and help the other. Ideally, transport services can also be offered to students so dropout rates can be monitored." GCC Commissioner J. Radhakrishnan said a granular analysis of the results, both Class X and XII and school-wise and subject-wise, would be done and students who needed special guidance would be identified by September for the upcoming academic year.

# Corpn. school topper hopes to crack NEET

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

B. Sadhana, the topper in the Class X board examination among students of the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) schools, aims to become a medical doctor and will prepare for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) through the free coaching classes offered by the civic body.

"My sister, B. Sandhya, is an engineer. I want to be a doctor. I aspire to give free medical services to pe-



B. Sadhana

ople of my community in the future," she said, and added that she would first have to crack NEET with flying colours before deciding on a stream of medicine to pursue. Her moth-

er, B. Vijayalakshmi, 44, a native of Rameshwaram, who works as a domestic help in Chennai, said: "We cannot pay for courses in private colleges. We hope she scores high in the Class XII examination and NEET so she can get a seat in a government medical college under the 7.5% horizontal reservation for government school students."

Highlighting her daughter's achievements in sports, Ms. Vijayalakshmi said there was no space in their house to display the medals and trophies that

Ms. Sadhana had won. "Five of us live in the Tamil Nadu Urban Housing Development Board tenements at Pushpa Nagar in Besant Nagar. It is cramped and noisy. My daughter goes to school by 7 a.m., where she studies. The headmistress, Girija, is with the students at all times, be it 7 a.m. or 8 p.m., to guide them," said P. Balamurugan, 50, Sadhana's father. Her parents said she also would help her classmates and juniors with their studies and had a passion for learning.

# Five girls from shelter home pass Class X exam

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

V. Pavithra is all smiles after seeing her Class X board exam results. "I want to pursue computer science and use it to further pursue football," she said. Ms. Pavithra is one of the five girls to clear the exam from the Urban Homeless Shelter for Girls located on the Communicable Diseases Hospital campus in Tondiarpet. It wasn't an easy task for M. Kavya, C.

Poongodhai, B. Anbarasi, S. Saranya, and Ms. Pavithra to clear the public exam as they were under constant fear of being without a home. The Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) had decided to shut down the shelter a little over a year ago. "Over five years ago, I was rescued from the streets. Residing in this shelter has not only given me the safety to study but also an environment where I was able to think about other aspects of life

with my friends," said Ms. Pavithra, who scored 327 out of 500. So, when they heard the news that they might not have a place to stay soon, the girls took it hard.

"Their focus on studies took a hit. Some had decided to go back to their life on the street," said P. Jennifer, the shelter's coordinator. But soon news arrived that the GCC had decided to keep the shelter running, ensuring that the children were able to pursue their studies. All five girls want to pursue a career in sports as they are already part of the Street Child Football and Cricket teams. "In providing such a space for children, it also ensured that they had opportunities that they could take advantage of - be it safety, sanitation, or studies. GCC Commissioner J. Radhakrishnan understood the importance and helped us out," said Paul Sundar Singh, secretary of Karunalyaya.

# GCC-run schools record pass percentage of 79.11

CHENNAI: Class X students studying in school run by the Greater Chennai Corporation recorded a pass percentage of 79.11% in the board exam this year.

The number of centums scored by students increased from three to 33 this year, with 24 in math, five in social studies, and four in science.

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**S. E. RAILWAY - TENDER**  
E-NIT No.: ST-RCN-S02-AMC-MSDAC,  
Dated: 09.05.2024. For and on behalf of the President of India, Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer, South Eastern Railway, Ranchi invites Open E-tender for the following work. Name of the work: Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (CAMC) of Siemens make Multi Section Digital Axle Counters (MSDACs); Qty-437 DPs, installed at different Locations (Stations/Auto sections) in Ranchi Division of South Eastern Railway for a period of 02 (Two) years by OEM or authorised dealer of OEM. Advertisment Value: ₹ 3,92,66,442.72. EMD: ₹ 3,46,300. Cost of Tender Document: Nil. Date & Time for closing of e-Tender: 03.06.2024 at 11.00 Hrs. Bidding start date: 20.05.2024. Website particulars and details: www.reps.gov.in for works tender. (PR-129)

**उत्तर पश्चिम रेलवे**  
निविदा सूचना  
नरिख मण्डल यांकि इन्जीनियर (सवमा) अजमेर, भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से निमालिखित कार्य हेतु दिनांक 31.05.2024 को 15:00 बजे तक ई-निविदा (Single packet system) आर्मांति की जाती है। कार्य का नाम: Repair of CCTV Camera inside LHB Coaches, Coaching depot premises and CAMC of Cameras of LHB coaches for 02 years at Madar & Udaipur depots. कार्य की अनुमानित लागत: ₹ 37,64,536.00. निविदा दस्तावेज की कीमत: Nil. बयाना राशि: ₹ 75,300.00/-। ई-प्रस्ताव का वेबसाइट पर अपलोड करना एवम खुलना: दिनांक 09.05.2024 को अपलोड करना एवम दिनांक 31.05.2024 को 15:30 बजे खुलना। Website Particulars: www.reps.gov.in 545-AR/24

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
Tender Notice No. WAT-TRD-58-23-24 DT020524  
NAME OF WORK WITH ITS LOCATION :  
OUTSOURCING OF TSS OPERATIONS FOR EIGHTEEN (18) TRACTION SUB-STATIONS OF WALTAIR DIVISION OF A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS.  
Value of Tender (₹) : 4,27,31,280.00, EMD (₹) : 3,63,700.00, Cost of Tender Form (₹) : 11,800.00, Completion Period of the work : 36 months from the date of LOA.  
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 24.05.2024.  
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.  
Complete information including e-Tender documents of the above e-Tenders is available in website http://www.reps.gov.in  
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Sl. No.	Description of Document	Date of the Document	Document No.	Executed by	Executed in favour of
1	Settlement deed	05.04.1956		William Alfred Rahm	Kathleen Lilian Wilton and Leslie Wilton
2	Agreement of Sale	30.12.1957		Kathleen Lilian Wilton and Leslie Wilton	K.S.Vengu
3	Registered copies of Sale deed: 14 Nos	13.04.1958	1725 of 1958	Kathleen Lilian Wilton and Leslie Wilton	(1) K.S.Vengu, (2) K.Rajagopala Aiyer, (3) S.N.A.S.A.Annamalai Chettiar, (4) O.R.M.M.SP.SV.M.RM.Ramanathan Chettiar, (5) O.R.M.M.SP.SV.M.SV.Sevugan Chettiar, (6) S.V.M.Ranganayai Achi, (7) S.P.S.R.M.Subramaniam Chettiar, (8) K.R.Kishnaswami Aiyar and (9) K.R.Valliyammai
4	Partnership deed	10.04.1958		Chencaud Estates	
5	Partnership deed	01.04.1956		Chencaud Estates	
6	Partnership deed	01.04.1997		Chencaud Estates	
7	Partnership deed	17.08.2012		Chencaud Estates	
8	Retirement deeds: 31.03.1956 by K.Rajagopala Aiyer, 31.03.1956 by SVM Ranganayai Achi, 01.04.1957 by S.P.S.R.M.Subramaniam Chettiar, 31.12.1956 by S.Subramaniam Chettiar, 22.04.1991 by S.N.A.S.A.Annamalai Chettiar, 19.07.1995 by K.S.Ramu, 02.04.2014 by V.Ramakrishnan, 02.04.2014 by SV.Meyyappa and 02.04.2014 by SV.Sevugan Chetty.				

The general public is hereby informed that My client M/s.CHENCAUD ESTATES, is the absolute owner of the "Said Lands" and if any person(s), other than my client, claiming any right, title, claim and/or interest of whatsoever nature into the "Said Lands" or the said documents must lodge their claims with the undersigned, together with complete documentary evidence/proof thereof, within TEN (10) DAYS from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, it will be presumed that no person(s), other than my client, has/have any right, title, claim and/or interest into the Said Lands or the documents. The general public is further informed / requested to hand over the aforesaid documents to the undersigned, if anybody finds and/or is in possession of any of the same.

For and on behalf of my client: **N.CHANDRASEKAR** Advocate  
Office: No.1E, First Floor, No.609, Lakshmi Bhavan, Thousand Lights, Chennai - 600 006. Phone: 98410 51473, Email: chandra@nclawfirm.in

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I, Sri.K.LAKSHMI NARASIMAN, Son of Mr.E.Karunamoorthy, (Aadhaar ID No.4372-1272-8323) residing at No. 14/77, Nalathonnu Street, Thirumazhaisai, Poonamallee Taluk, Thiruvallur District, Chennai-600124, do hereby solemnly affirm and state as follows.  
1. I am residing in the above address.  
2. I state that my original name is "K.LAKSHMI NARASIMAN".  
3. I further declare that the person mentioned in the Aadhaar Card (4372-1272-8323) as "K.Lakshmi Narasiman" and person mentioned in the Passport as "K.Lakshmi Narasimhan" are one and the same person.  
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# Parts of north Chennai to get improved water, sewer network

Tenders are set to be floated for these projects under the *Vada Chennai Valarchi Thittam* by June. Officials of Metrowater say 49 projects will be carried out over the next three years to strengthen and modify the network to address sewage issues

**K. Lakshmi**  
CHENNAI

A solution seems closer to the decades-long issue of frequent sewage overflow and gaps in water supply in the densely populated areas of north Chennai.

Tenders are set to be floated for projects to improve water and sewer infrastructure under the *Vada Chennai Valarchi Thittam* by June. The Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (Metrowater) is preparing estimates to replace the old sewer, water infrastructure, improve the sewage collection system and initiate drinking water supply in unserved merged areas, officials said.

The State government had earlier announced the *Vada Chennai Valarchi Thittam* to address the deficiencies in the infrastructure in north Chennai. The sewer network laid in north Chennai is the oldest in the city and comprises brick gravity sewers, served by pumping stations in places such as Royapuram and Purasawalkam since 1914.

To keep pace with the growing needs of the expanding metropolis, the water agency has chalked out projects to upgrade the network in chronically affected areas. It had hired Sai Consultants to study

## Infrastructure boost

The *Vada Chennai Valarchi Thittam* looks to ensure equitable development of north Chennai

**Areas identified as having deficiencies in sewer and water network**

- Madhavaram
- Kolathur
- Perambur
- Tiruvottiyur
- Royapuram
- R.K. Nagar
- Thiru. Vi. Ka. Nagar

**Some of the ongoing sewer works**

- Drainage network in merged areas – Manali and Chinnasekkadu **₹83.49 crore**
- Strengthening of pipelines at Tondiarpet sewage pumping stations **₹22.33 crore**
- Improvement of drain infrastructure in Kolathur **₹6.90 crore**

**Project cost ₹946.43 crore**

Total number of proposals submitted by Metrowater **72**

Number of Metrowater projects sanctioned for three years **49**

**Eleven** government entities, including the Greater Chennai Corporation, the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority, the police and the Youth Welfare and Sports Department, have been provided with funds to upgrade the locality's infrastructure

**Upcoming sewer projects (2024-25)**

- Construction of a drainage network in Edayanchavadi and Sadayankuppam **₹238.52 crore**
- Construction of roadside sewage pumping station at Broadway **₹4.33 crore**

**Upcoming water supply projects (2024-25)**

- Construction of overhead tank and sumps and laying of pipelines in Bharathi Nagar and Korukkupet – **₹18 crore**
- Improvement of supply infrastructure in Kannigapuram and Vyasarpari – **₹59.15 crore**

the decades-old sewerage and water supply infrastructure in the core parts of north Chennai. Of the 560.97 million litres of sewage treated daily (mld), nearly 159 mld is received

and treated in Kodungaiyur sewage treatment plant (STP). It also has a 45 mld tertiary treatment reverse osmosis plant added to supply treated water to industrial belt in north Chennai.

Metrowater officials said 49 projects would be carried out over the next three years to strengthen and modify the network to address sewage issues and water contamination apart

from providing adequate piped water supply. While some projects have already been begun, new proposals have been chalked out to improve the capacity of the sewage pumping stations and provide drinking water supply to the left-out streets.

The long-awaited comprehensive sewerage project in Chinnasekkadu has reached its final stages and will soon be inaugurated. Some of the sewer works to be taken up in the first phase include sewer network in merged areas in Edayanchavadi, Puzhal, Vadaperumbakkam and new pipelines between sewage pumping stations in Royapuram and improved sewage collection system in Kolathur and Periyar Nagar.

Metrowater also plans to enlarge sewer pipelines in various areas such as Tiruvottiyur, Perambur, Tondiarpet and R.K. Nagar and construct a 6-mld modular STP to treat sewage collected at Kilijosium Nagar, Tiruvottiyur.

Officials said works were under way to provide piped water supply to added areas in Manali and Puzhal and replace old water pipelines in R.K. Nagar and Perambur. In the next three years, choked water lines in areas such as R.K. Nagar, Royapuram, and Perambur would be replaced.

# More than 700 medical professionals participate in meet on paediatric cancer

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

The fourth annual Proton Practicum began at the Apollo Proton Cancer Centre (APCC) here on Friday.

Over 700 participants, including radiation oncologists and medical physicists from India and abroad, attended the conference. The theme of the practicum is 'improving survival and survivorship in paediatric and central nervous system (CNS) tumours with proton beam therapy'.

Rakesh Jalali, Medical Director and Head of Radiation Oncology, APCC, said the academic event for clinicians would help them learn from experts, and the doctors would also interact with patients on social media platforms during the event.

"The more we do, the more we learn. It is a continuum of the learning process for the benefit of patients," Dr. Jalali, who is also the course director of the practicum, said.

Harshad Reddy, Director, APCC, said the diversity of the practicum's participants would ensure comprehensive understanding of global practices in patient selection, clinical workflow, and planning for proton beam therapy.

The practicum will include talks by over 30 radiation oncologists and medical physicists from across the world besides practical demonstrations to showcase the strength and versatility of proton therapy technology for various paediatric cancers and CNS tumours.

Minesh Mehta, Deputy Director and Chief of Radiation Oncology at the Miami Cancer Institute, Baptist Health South Florida, will deliver the Dr. Pratap C. Reddy Proton Oration.

Preetha Reddy, Executive Vice-chairperson, Apollo Hospitals Group, said the challenge was to provide access to people who need it. APCC provided the best-in-care treatment at a tenth of the cost at other places.

Apollo Hospitals is committed to detecting the disease early, treating it, and making people disease-free, she added, and praised the institution for doing well in focusing on treating paediatric cancers.

## Boy riding bike fatally knocked down by lorry

CHENNAI: L. Jeevanandam, 15, died after he was knocked down by a lorry while riding a bike in Maduravoyal on Friday. The accident occurred on the service road near Maduravoyal bridge. The lorry driver fled the spot. A police investigation is on.

**Timings**

**CHENNAI**

**SATURDAY, MAY 11**

RISE 05:45 SET 18:26

RISE 08:22 SET 21:51

**SUNDAY, MAY 12**

RISE 05:45 SET 18:27

RISE 09:22 SET 22:45

**MONDAY, MAY 13**

RISE 05:45 SET 18:27

RISE 10:19 SET 23:34

**Chennai Weather** max min

Thiruvallur 39 27

Chennai Airport 37 28

Chennai City 36 30

**Chennai Airport Today**  
37°C Weather will be dry. Morning will be slightly warm. Day will be warm and uneasy with gusty winds. Night will be uneasy.

**Chennai Airport Tomorrow**  
37°C Weather will be warm and humid with uneasy afternoon. Night will be uneasy. Light rain and thundershowers may occur.

**THE HINDU**

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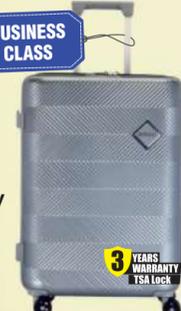


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## At The Hindu Fridays event, Ranjani and Gayatri discuss Ilaiyaraaja, music and more

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

Decades ago, Carnatic musician Gayatri of the Ranjani and Gayatri duo, was introduced to maestro Ilaiyaraaja's music when she had to play for competitions for her college orchestra.

At a time when men's college orchestra walked away with prizes since they had an added advantage of playing instruments, Gayatri walked in as a surprise star element in her college orchestra playing violin. Be it *Andhi Mazhai Pozhigiradhu* or *Paadu Nilavae*, she played the violin and used it to create maximum effect.

"I tried to unravel as much of layers as possible in a single violin and would try to capture as much as I could. That is how my journey of getting introduced to his world of music opened up. We ended up getting greeted with huge claps. The richness of the melodies and the ragas were the heart of his compositions. We didn't imagine that one day we would end up doing Raaja by Raga. That's how beautiful the canvas of life is," Ms. Gayatri said.

In conversation with independent journalist and founder of Aalaap, Akhila



Musical musings: Carnatic vocalists Ranjani and Gayatri during an interaction at The Hindu's office in Chennai on Friday. R.RAVINDRAN

Krishnamurthy, as part of *The Hindu* Fridays event, the RaGa sisters spoke at length about the numerous aspects from pursuit of music from childhood to life being anchored in music, interluded with generous doses of different ragas.

Ms. Ranjani said film songs have played an important role in introducing to the people the sounds of Carnatic music. "But when a person listens to film songs, he is consuming it as a film song not as classical music," she added.

She said whatever they do, their life is deeply rooted and anchored to music. "I will be cooking or doing any other routine activity

but my mind is always in music. I was writing my Class X board examination and heard students around me asking me to hush. It was then I realised that I was singing," she said.

Ms. Gayatri said from their childhood, music was more than an integral part of their daily life. She recollected how it was a life filled with music packed in different ways. "We didn't think that one day we would become performers. Performance happened by chance. There was a lot of time committing yourself unconditionally to music. The journey was always all about preparation. We didn't achieve fame easily," she said.

## T.N. gearing up to provide agrotourism facilities to visitors

TTDC is trying its hand at offering farm tours to visitors. As tourists are evincing interest, it will be a win-win situation for farmers, visitors: officials

Deepa H. Ramakrishnan  
CHENNAI

Imagine a break where you will be waking up with the rooster, trying your hand at milking the cows, feeding the chicken, plucking tender lady's finger from the fields and having lunch under the shade of a canopy of trees. The images in your mind will remain even after you return to the mill and grind of your daily routine. Agrotourism centres give such lasting memories to those who like to be one with nature.

The Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) is trying its hand at offering farm tours to visitors in the State. Studying models from other States, it is charting a strategy for the same. Recently, a meeting of various stakeholders was held where different models were discussed. Officials said tourists were evincing interest in learning about rural life and it would be a win-win situation for both the farmers and tourists.

A.P. Arul James Edwin Thambu, founder and secretary, Tamil Nadu Agro-



Agrotourism is being offered at a small scale in some places, and there is a need to widen the scope, says Commissioner of Tourism.

tourism Federation, who has been providing training to farmers interested in agrotourism, said visitors have to be able to do something in the farm, to see and learn something and buy something from the farm. "By bringing the profitable tourism and mostly loss-making agriculture together, we can give an authentic feel to the visitors," he explained.

Shammy Jacob and his wife Charlotte Vant Klooster, who started their farm in 2016 at Thalambur, off OMR near Chennai, said their objective was to expose their children to live one with nature when they moved back from The Netherlands. "We planted

trees and then the farm started telling us what to do. We brought in cows, chicken and ducks and designed our farm around our house. Since we had additional rooms, we opened them to people who wanted to enjoy farm life. We give people space to have picnics beneath the trees," Mr. Jacob said.

C.Samayamoorthy, Commissioner of Tourism, said a policy was under preparation for agrotourism in the State. "There is a lot of interest in Tamil Nadu, which is evident from the rising numbers of tourists to the State. Agrotourism is already being offered, we want to enlarge the scope," he said.

## Three held in Krishnagiri for murdering businessman

R. Sivaraman  
CHENNAI

The Kundrathur police have arrested three suspects who allegedly kidnapped and murdered a 54-year-old businessman for cheating them of money by promising to get them government jobs.

The police identified the victim as K. Venkatesan of Jaswant Nagar in West Mogappair. He worked at a leading car manufacturer in Sriperumpudur and later became a coconut wholesaler. His wife, Lakshmi, 50, was a teacher who had



K. Venkatesan

taken voluntary retirement.

Last Sunday, the couple dropped their two sons at an examination centre in Poonthalam in a car as Chandrakumar, the younger, was writing the Nation-

al Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test. The couple then left for Salem to settle a land dispute. However, they did not return and their mobile phones had been switched off. One of the sons lodged a complaint with the Kundrathur police seeking to trace his parents. Kundrathur police inspector E. Velu took up the case for investigation.

The son told the police that he had received a call from his mother asking them to come to the house of S. Ganeshan, 47, a school teacher and district secretary of the Tamilnadu

Asiriyar Kootani, in Sunnalampatti, near Uthangarai, in Krishnagiri. A team of police personnel accompanied the sons to the village and surrounded Ganeshan's house. Ganeshan and two others, who attempted to flee, were nabbed. Further investigation revealed that they had murdered Venkatesan.

A police officer said Venkatesan had claimed that he was close to bureaucrats in the Centre and State governments and that he could get them government jobs for a price. He had received money to

the tune of ₹12.5 crore from several persons, including Ganeshan. However, he failed to keep his promise and delayed returning the money.

So, the cheated parties planned to either recover their money from Venkatesan or usurp his properties. They used Vijayaragavan, a real estate broker acquainted with Venkatesan, to lure him to Sooramangalam in Salem. When Venkatesan and his wife arrived, the suspects beat them up to get back their money. While Venkatesan died due to physical tor-

ture, Ms. Lakshmi was confined in a room. Venkatesan's body was buried near a stone quarry, the police said.

They continued to torture Ms. Lakshmi to usurp the properties. She told them that her sons needed to be present to execute the deeds, and so, they allowed her to contact them over phone. Following this, the sons informed the police.

The police arrested Ganeshan, G. Nithyanandan, 32, of Anaimalai in Coimbatore, and E. Vignesh, 32, of Uthangarai.

## Burglary at jewellery shop in East Tambaram

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

Burglars drilled a hole in the wall of a jewellery shop in East Tambaram and took away at least 10 sovereigns of gold jewellery and 8 kg of silver articles.

The jewellery shop is located on Camp Road in East Tambaram on the Ve-

lavery-Tambaram Road. On Friday morning, when the owner of the shop opened the shutter, he found several items lying scattered.

A hole was found in a portion of the wall at the back of the shop.

Police said that they are analysing CCTV footage from the spot to trace the suspects.

## CM welcomes SC decision to grant bail to Kejriwal

CHENNAI: DMK president and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Friday welcomed the Supreme Court order granting interim bail to his Delhi counterpart Arvind Kejriwal.

In a social media post, Mr. Stalin said that this victory against "injustice" strengthened democracy.

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REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
NIOS, RC-CHENNAI

**TAMIL NADU PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**  
The list of register number of candidates provisionally admitted to **Oral Test** for direct recruitment to the posts of Agricultural Officer (Extension), Assistant Director of Agriculture (Extension) and Horticultural Officer based on the results of the Examination (CBT) conducted on 20.05.2023 & 21.05.2023 FN & AN by the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission and other conditions stipulated in the notification for the said recruitment, is available in the Commission's website at <http://www.tnpsc.gov.in>  
Chennai : 600 003  
Dated : 10.05.2024  
DIPR/483/DISPLAY/2024  
Controller of Examinations

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**EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND ORGANISATION**  
(श्रम एवं रोजगार मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार)  
(MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT, GOVT. OF INDIA)  
क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय/REGIONAL OFFICE, Chennai (North)  
भविष्य निधि भवन, नं. 37, रोयपट्टा हाई रोड, चेन्नई - 600 014.  
Bhavishya Nidhi Bhawan, No. 37, Royapettah High Road, Chennai - 600 014  
Phone: 044-28139200/203 Fax: 044-28139220  
E-mail: comp.rochennai1@epfndia.gov.in Internet: www.epfndia.gov.in

### NOTICE

Whereas, the establishment M/s. Kamdev Projects Pvt. Ltd, No.127, Bharathiyar Street, Manali, Chennai - 600 068 (TN/MAS/85765) has failed to pay the sum of Rs.41,80,026/- towards 7A, 14B and 7Q dues under Employee's Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1952. Whereas the Recovery Officer, Employees Provident Fund Organisation, Chennai North, in exercise of the power conferred on Recovery Officer under section 8B of the Employee's Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, attached the under mentioned immovable property of Sh. Devaraj Reddy and Sh.Thirunath Reddy employer of the defaulted establishment M/s.Kamdev Projects Private Limited, Chennai - 600 068 (TN/85765) on 26.03.2024.

### SPECIFICATION OF PROPERTY

The Immovable Property situated at:  
All the piece and parcel of land measuring 6510 Sq.ft and 17340 Sq.ft together with building comprised in:  
**Schedule 1:** Survey No. 230/1A, 230/2A bearing New Door No. 196/5, Bharathiyar Street, Manali, Chennai - 600 068. And bounded on the -  
North : Vacant land  
South : Chinthamani land  
East by : SRF compound wall  
West by : Bharathiyar salai  
**Schedule 2:** Survey No. 230/1A, 230/2A bearing New Door No. 196, Bharathiyar Street, Manali, Chennai - 600 068.  
North : land belongs to Thulasi  
South : Road  
East by : land belongs to Devaraj  
West by : land belongs to Selvakumar

Sd/-  
(L. Mangayarkarasi)  
Assistant Provident Fund Commissioner & Recovery Officer  
Employees Provident Fund Organisation  
Regional Office, Royapettah, Chennai-14

## OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

### BIRTH CENTENARY

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our beloved AMMA  
1924 - 2024  
**KOUSALYA SRINIVASAN**  
11.05.1924 - 23.03.2014  
All of us miss you  
Padma  
Kamala & K S V Seshadri  
D V Sundar & Sharada Sundar  
D V Sridhar & Radha Sridhar  
Malathi & S Rajagopal  
Grand Children & Great Grand Children

## DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

### 13<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

**PROF. A.S. THAMBAIAH**  
02.01.1924 - 11.05.2011  
Years have Passed,  
But Sweet Memories of You  
are still fresh in our Hearts.  
You are always remembered  
for Your kindness & Your  
famous Quote  
"Faithfulness to your daily task"  
**BY HIS STUDENTS**

### DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

#### THIRD DEATH ANNIVERSARY

"We miss you every second of every day. You will always be in our hearts and minds"



**A.P. ELLAPPAN**  
(Retd) Managing Director, State Express Transport Corporation  
DOB: 01.12.1947 - DOD: 11.05.2021  
Missed by  
Wife, Sons, Daughters-in-Law, Grandsons, Grand daughters,  
Family and Friends.  
Manoharan Ellappan-9884003684  
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## Tamil Nadu

## From Page One

## Class X: Dalit girl from Kamuthi gets top marks

"Both our incomes put together would only add up to ₹13,000 per month, but that should not hinder our children's dreams," Ms. Vasanthi said, adding that her daughter's dream of becoming an IAS officer stemmed from the social life she experienced in their village.

Though incidents of child marriage had reduced, many girls were still not allowed to continue their education after a certain age. "These societal pressures have got etched as a painful memory in her, and hence, she believes that she can put an end to all these social evils when she becomes an IAS officer," Ms. Vasanthi said.

Ms. Janani, who aspires to become an IAS officer, has chosen Commerce and History for Class XII as she hopes that they would help her in her journey to become a bureaucrat.

"The marks that I have scored will further boost my confidence towards reaching my goal. This has also instilled confidence in many girls in my village," she added.

When asked about her resolve to become an IAS officer, she said that it was her wish since Class III. "The wish has become a strong desire now, after knowing about the changes that the position is capable of ushering in," she added.

However, Ms. Janani's mother hopes that their family would get financial help from the government to educate both her daughters.

B.N. Bathusha, head of the Rahmania Higher Secondary School, where Ms. Janani is a student, said they had planned to provide her free education for the next two years, besides other forms of support.

## IN BRIEF

## 228 prison inmates pass Class X board examination

A total of 228 prison inmates have passed the Class X board examination. About 260 inmates, including 21 woman prisoners from central prisons and special prisons for women across the State, registered to write the examination for the 2023-2024 academic year. Of them, 228 cleared the examination, recording a pass percentage of 87.69.

## 91.55% pass Class X exam in State, Ariyalur tops the table

This year's pass percentage is slightly higher than the 91.39% recorded last year. However, the total number of students who took the exam has fallen to 8,94,260 from 9,14,320 last year

Meghna M.  
CHENNAI

As much as 91.55% of students have passed the Class X State board examination this year, according to the results released by the Directorate of Government Examination (DGE) on Friday. Ariyalur district tops the table with a pass percentage of 97.3, followed by Sivaganga at 97 and Ramnathapuram at 96.3.

This year's pass percentage is slightly higher than the 91.39% recorded last year. However, the total number of students who took the exam has fallen to 8,94,260 from 9,14,320 last year.

A total of 4,48,061 girls and 4,47,203 boys from 12,616 schools wrote the exam. Girls achieved a pass percentage of 94.53, outperforming boys (88.58).

Out of the 12,625 schools in the State, 1,364 government schools and 4,105 other schools recorded a 100% pass. A total of 20,691 students scored a centum in Mathematics and 5,104 in science. There were 415 centums in English and only eight in Tamil.

Private schools outperformed other schools with a pass percentage of 97.43.

Of the 13,510 disabled candidates who wrote the exam, 12,491 cleared it, recording a 92.45% pass. Congratulating the stu-

## Report card

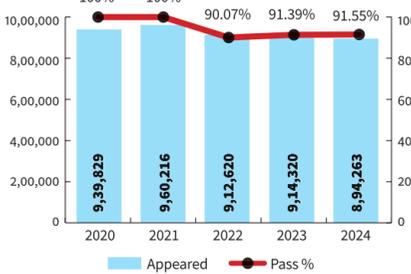
An in-depth look at how students have fared in the Class X board examination this year



Performance check: Students viewing the results of the Class X exam on their phone in Chennai on Friday. AKHILA EASWARAN

## TREND TRACKER

The graph shows the pass percentage over the past five years. Though there has been a decline in the number of students taking up the exam, the pass percentage has remained consistent



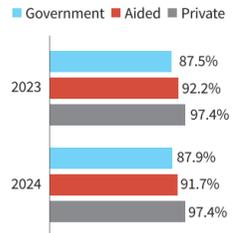
Source: Higher secondary result analysis provided by Directorate of Government Examinations. COMPILED BY MEGHNA M.

dents, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said, "To pursue higher education in vocational or other streams, there are platforms like the Naan Mudhalvan scheme that the students should take advantage of."

In a social media post, School Education Minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi congratulated the students and urged those who had scored low marks to take the supplementary exam. The Directorate of Go-

## SCHOOL-WISE PERFORMANCE

The pass percentage of government and aided schools is lower than that of private schools. The figure for private schools remains unchanged when compared to last year, while increasing slightly in government schools. However, aided schools have seen a dip in the pass percentage



## CENTUMS RECORDED

The number of centums in government schools has gone up this year. Private schools, which saw a dip last year, have also recorded an increase in centums this year

Type	2022	2023	2024
Govt.	886	1,026	1,364
Others	4,006	3,718	4,105

## Adi Dravidar, Tribal Welfare schools record 85% pass

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

As many as 7,520 students out of a total of 8,651 who appeared for the Class X board exam from schools falling under the Department of Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare have passed this year.

According to official sources, of the 6,630 students from Adi Dravidar Welfare schools who appeared for the Class X exam, 5,659 cleared it, recording a pass percentage of 85.4 - higher than the 84% pass recorded in 2023 and 79% in 2022.

The pass percentage of girls and boys from Adi Dravidar Welfare schools

The pass percentage of Adi Dravidar Welfare schools is higher than the 84% recorded in 2023

was 91 and 80, respectively. A total of 2,021 students from Tribal Welfare schools appeared for the exam, of whom 1,861 passed.

The pass percentage was 92.08. Girls outperformed boys by a slim margin. The pass percentage of girls and boys was 92.64 and 91.56, respectively.

## 127 high-risk Class XII students counselled

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

In the four days since the launch of psychological counselling services for students who did not pass the Class XII board examination, the Health Department has identified 127 high-risk students and provided counselling to them.

On May 6, the day on which the results were declared, the department launched counselling services through its health

helpline number 104 and TeleMANAS call centre number 14416. Through the School Education Department, a list of 51,919 students, including 32,164 boys and 19,755 girls, who were not successful, was obtained. High-risk students were being identified and referred to the District Mental Health Programme teams for counselling and follow-up.

"So far, 127 high-risk students have been counselled," an official said.

## Property guideline values set for upward revision

S Vijay Kumar  
CHENNAI

An elaborate exercise is under way to revise the Market Value Guidelines (MVG) of immovable properties in Tamil Nadu. The MVG is expected to soar, considering the increase in the cost of land across the State, Registration Department sources said.

The process was initiated soon after the Madras High Court quashed a circular of the Inspector-General of Registration to collect stamp duty and registration charges on the basis of the guideline values fixed for lands in 2012, without following a decision taken in 2017 to reduce the value by 33%.

The sources said that the Valuation Sub-Committees headed by the Collectors in all the districts were preparing the draft guideline values under the provisions of the Tamil Nadu (Constitution of Valuation Committee for Estimation, Publication and Revision of Market Value Guidelines of Properties) Rule 4(2). The process was expected to be completed in 15 days, after which the State-level Valuation Committee



The values are expected to soar, considering the increase in the cost of land across the State, Registration Department sources said.

would approve the revised MVG.

For the purpose of preparing the MVG of properties, the Valuation Committee was constituted under Section 47-AA of the Tamil Nadu Act 13 of 2008, which came into effect on June 1, 2010. Accordingly, the Valuation Committee was the final authority for the formulation of the policy, methodology and administration of the MVG, and may constitute a Valuation Sub-Committee in each district, comprising such members as may be prescribed, for estimation and revision of the MVG, the sources said.

Explaining the process of revising the guideline values, the sources said that inquiries would be

made with locals having adequate knowledge of the subject. "The inquiries shall be made with at least five persons from various places in the same village. Among the values ascertained from them, a reasonable and realistic figure shall be adopted for the purpose of fixing the guideline value. Unreasonable and motivated information on values shall be strictly ignored," a senior official said.

Citing procedures, the official said that the sales statistics of properties in each category, such as agricultural, residential, commercial, etc. recorded in the past two years would be prepared. Fancy values and unreasonable rates would not be considered.

"Based on these two factors, a reasonable and realistic value would be arrived at and proposed as the draft MVG for approval," the official said.

## Registrants' objections

In cases where the registrant did not accept the guideline values, there was a recourse provision under Section 47A(I) of the Indian Stamp Act. However, the number of such objections had declined over the years. The number of objections raised by the applicants, which was 10,381 out of a total of 7.95 lakh registrations in 2017-18, reduced to 3,083 out of the 14.13 lakh registrations in 2023-24. "It can be inferred from this data that the MVG was accepted by the registrants in a majority of the cases, which also implies that the value is not more than the prevailing market value," the official said.

He said that the MVG being followed did not reflect the real market value, which could lead to evasion of stamp duty/transfer duty and unreasonable cases.

Quashing the order of the Inspector-General of Registrations stating that the MVG of 2012 had been restored, the court had pointed to non-compliance with Rules 3, 4 and 5 of the Tamil Nadu Stamp Rules, 2010, and wondered how the Valuation Committee had arrived at the value without adequate inputs from the Valuation Sub-Committees on the prevailing market rates.

The court directed the State to follow the MVG fixed with effect from June 9, 2017, till the Valuation Committee revises the same by following due process. It ruled that the documents already registered during the period from the date of the circular (March 30, 2023) and the date of the judgment stood excluded. Consequently, no one was entitled to claim a refund of the stamp duty already paid for registering documents based on the circular.

When asked whether the MVG was revised and restored to the 2017 value after the court order, the official said that no changes were made in the software, and the status quo was being maintained.

## Sanatana Dharma: SC seeks response from States, U.T. on Udhayanidhi's plea to club FIRs

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday issued notice to four States, a Union Territory and several individuals on a petition filed by Tamil Nadu Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin to club the FIRs registered against him over his remarks on Sanatana Dharma.

A Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta sought responses from Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Bihar, and Jammu and Kashmir, where cases had been registered against the DMK leader.

Mr. Udhayanidhi was represented by senior advocates A.M. Singhvi, P. Wilson and Atul Chitole.

He had argued that his petition was not about the merits of the case, but focused on the question of procedure. He said that the registration of multiple FIRs was a violation of his right to a fair trial, and amounted to "persecution



The registration of multiple FIRs was a violation of the right to a fair trial, the Minister said.

before prosecution". "You abuse Article 19(1) (a) [free speech], you abuse Article 25 [freedom of conscience]. Now, you are coming here under Article 32 [writ protection of fundamental rights]...You are not a layman. You are a Minister. You should have realised the consequences," Justice Datta had observed during a hearing on March 4.

Mr. Singhvi had referred to past cases involving television anchors Arnab Goswami, Amish Devgan and Nupur Shar-

ma, in which the top court had intervened and clubbed the FIRs in one place.

"I may lose or win the case on merits. But this is persecution, making me run around. The FIRs are based on the same statement," Mr. Singhvi had submitted.

**Question of jurisdiction**  
The petition filed by Mr. Udhayanidhi had said that it was well-settled in criminal law that only a criminal court, within whose territorial jurisdiction the alleged offence took place, would proceed with the case.

Mr. Udhayanidhi had made the speech at Kamarajar Auditorium in Chennai. The jurisdiction would be vested in a court in Chennai.

He had voiced apprehension that inquiries in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra would "certainly have political overtones" and affect his right to a fair trial.

## Southern Railway to teach regional language of each State to staff from other States

S. Vijay Kumar  
CHENNAI

In a move aimed at bridging the communication gap between frontline staff and local travellers, Southern Railway has decided to teach the regional language of every State to employees belonging to other States.

According to sources in the Railways, the move follows instances of staff not being conversant in the local language resulting in arguments and complaints,

particularly at ticket booking counters.

Realising that several employees posted in Tamil Nadu and Kerala hailed from other States and were not conversant in the local language, Southern Railway, in a circular, said that it was imperative that they acquired a working knowledge of Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu or Kannada to serve the public and the organisation better.

## Training module

Instructions were given to

the heads of all departments, workshops, recruitment and training centres, and Divisional Railway Managers of Chennai, Tiruchi, Madurai, Salem, Thiruvananthapuram and Palakkad to develop a training module for basic learning of spoken regional languages (depending on the Divisions) for employees, and incorporate the same in the induction and refresher training programmes. Training institutes were told to create the content under the 'Kar-

mayogi' e-learning platform.

In a communication, the Zonal Railways said that the use of the 'Bhasha Sangam' mobile application (developed by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, in collaboration with 'MyGov' India) may also be popularised for easy learning by employees hailing from other States.

The sources said that many ticket booking staff, travelling ticket examiners, catering staff of the Indian

Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation, locopilot and other employees belonged to predominantly Hindi-speaking States and lacked a basic working knowledge of the regional language.

A senior railway official said that besides language issues between some employees and the travelling public, there were communication problems at work, too. In a recent case reported in the Salem Division, where the locopilot of a relief engine was instructed

by the Chief Loco Inspector to run at 50 kmph instead of the prescribed limit of 15 kmph during the day and 10 kmph at night, the conversation took place in Hindi.

"It appeared that the Chief Loco Inspector was trying to speak in whatever Hindi he knew with the locopilot, who belonged to a North Indian State. Understanding and being conversant in the local language also helps in implementing safety instructions," the official said.



The move follows instances of staff not being conversant in the local language resulting in arguments and complaints, particularly at ticket booking counters.

# Modi's comments don't suit stature of Indian PM: Kharge

**R. Ravikanth Reddy**  
HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is fascinated with "Mughals, mutton, Muslim League and mangalasutra" and tries to scare people with irrelevant issues, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said here on Friday.

"Such cheap political discourse was never seen in Indian politics and it doesn't suit the stature of Indian Prime Minister," he said addressing a press conference.

Mr. Kharge questioned whether Mr. Modi was sleeping if he knew money was being sent in 'tempos' to Congress by industrialists Gautam Adani and Mukesh Ambani, and advised



Mallikarjun Kharge addresses the media on Friday. PTI

him to send Central agencies to the residences of the industrialists.

"Let the agencies raid their houses if he had that information."

Charging the Prime Minister with favouritism, he asked why Gujarat was getting "preference".

# Cong. wants to treat Hindus as second-class citizens: PM

Addressing a meeting in Hyderabad, Modi says Congress is dividing the nation in the name of religion and it thinks building a temple and celebrating Ram Navami is against the 'idea of India'

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Friday, accused the Congress of "wanting to treat Hindus as second-class citizens in their own country with a particular dislike for the Hindu religion and its festivals".

"They (Congress) did not want the Ram Mandir to be built in Ayodhya. They say building the temple and celebrating Ram Navami is against the 'idea of India'. Those looking from foreigners' eyes do not know it as it is justice to all and appeasement to none. I am proud of going



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being felicitated during a public meeting in Hyderabad on Friday. ANI

to temples. But, it is made as if going to temples is against the nation. Do you like to go to Ayodhya for 'darshan' or not," he asked.

Continuing his tirade

against the Congress and its 'Shehzade' (Prince) at a meeting in Narayanpet-Mahabubnagar, he said the party is dividing the nation in the name of religion, and, despite being aware

that religious quotas are against the Constitution and the will of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, it is not talking about scrapping it because it is their "real agenda".

The Congress is not concerned about the Hindus or the nation though religious quota will only encourage fake religious conversions.

Psychologically, it is against Hindus, had opposed BC quotas and now wants to give away SC/ST/BC quota to Muslims. This was evident during the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation polls when the reserved BC seats were handed over to Muslims, he claimed.

# Steel plant privatisation issue takes centre stage in Gajuwaka

**B. Madhu Gopal**  
VISAKHAPATNAM

The people of Visakhapatnam in general and those from the industrial belt of Gajuwaka in particular, who eagerly awaited the arrival of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his public meeting in Anakapalli on May 6, were disappointed as he conveniently skirted the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) privatisation issue.

The steel plant is located in the Gajuwaka Assembly segment in the Visakhapatnam Lok Sabha constituency. A vast major-

ity of workers of the VSP, and their families live in Ukkunagaram, Gajuwaka and adjoining areas.

For over three years, the decision taken by the Modi government on the "strategic sale of VSP", has caused considerable disquiet not only among steel plant employees but also all sections of people. The employees launched an indefinite relay hunger strike at Kurmannapalem, and are still taking turns to continue the strike even as they attend to their duties at the plant. They had persisted with the strike even when the COVID-19 pan-



Several people lost their lives in the struggle for the establishment of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. K.R. DEEPAK

demic was at its peak, taking adequate precautions such as wearing masks. It's a different matter that some of the workers died from the infection.

While the ruling YSRCP government and the Opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Jana Sena Party (JSP) extended support to the strike, they have failed

to openly oppose the decision of the Modi government. On the other hand, the Left parties, Congress and other Opposition parties have criticised the Centre sharply.

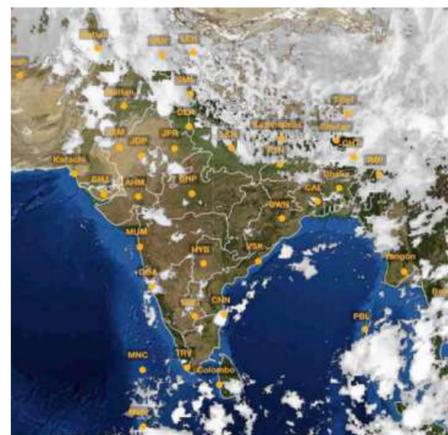
The VSP issue has grabbed national attention and no party can afford to ignore it. The Centre's silence is bound to have a huge impact on the prospects of not only the BJP but its alliance partners in A.P., the TDP and JSP, mainly in Gajuwaka. It may also impact the prospects of YSRCP as it was content with adopting a resolution in the Assembly while

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy wrote a letter to Mr. Modi seeking reversal of the decision.

VSP was established following innumerable sacrifices made by the people of combined Andhra Pradesh and Visakhapatnam region and is an emotive issue. "A total of 32 persons lost their lives in the struggle. Farmers of 62 villages gave up 22,000 acres of fertile land for the plant," says Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) State President Ch. Narasinga Rao, who had participated in the agitation for VSP's establishment as a student.

## WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Saturday:** Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, coastal Karnataka, Kerala and Mahe. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Sikkim, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	.....	35.5	23.6	Kozhikode	.....	35.9	27.8
Ahmedabad	.....	41.4	28.8	Kurnool	.....	39.6	25.2
Aizawl	.....	29.7	21.1	Lucknow	.....	36.1	25.4
Allahabad	.....	39.4	25.7	Madurai	.....	39.9	26.5
Bangaluru	.....	31.9	22.0	Mangaluru	.....	34.4	29.6
Bhopal	.....	41.5	26.7	Mumbai	.....	33.6	26.8
Bhubaneswar	.....	38.2	25.5	Mysuru	.....	36.0	26.0
Chandigarh	.....	37.0	28.9	New Delhi	.....	39.0	27.7
Chennai	.....	37.2	27.6	Patna	.....	33.5	22.8
Coimbatore	.....	35.8	24.0	Port Blair	.....	17	33.5
Dehradun	.....	34.2	24.2	Puducherry	.....	35.6	29.0
Gangtok	.....	19.9	14.0	Pune	.....	39.2	25.3
Goa	.....	34.3	25.9	Raipur	.....	38.5	25.3
Guwahati	.....	31.2	22.2	Ranchi	.....	15.34.2	18.7
Hubballi	.....	38.0	25.0	Shillong	.....	0.3	20.8
Hyderabad	.....	37.8	26.2	Shimla	.....	27.5	17.6
Imphal	.....	28	17.3	Srinagar	.....	23.5	13.8
Jaisalmer	.....	43.0	29.7	Thiruvananthapuram	.....	35	26.9
Kochi	.....	31	24.6	Tiruchi	.....	39.9	28.6
Kohima	.....	20.6	12.0	Vijayawada	.....	39.2	28.6
Kolkata	.....	32.6	22.0	Visakhapatnam	.....	35.0	26.5

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CODE	Yesterday
Ahmedabad	.....	23	32	26	250	153	In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Sri
Bangaluru	.....	6	11	35	110	75	Ganganagar, Rajasthan
Chennai	.....	3	9	70	35	35	recorded an overall air
Delhi	.....	13	112	56	275	166	quality index (AQI) score
Hyderabad	.....	14	11	16	96	84	of 307 indicating an
Kolkata	.....	12	30	22	49	42	unhealthy level of
Lucknow	.....	6	52	22	262	131	pollution. In contrast,
Mumbai	.....	7	48	9	195	93	Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
Pune	.....	19	64	102	89	70	recorded a healthy AQI
Visakhapatnam	.....	13	36	16	35	76	score of 27

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

**SO<sub>2</sub>:** 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<sub>2</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes ozone 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.

**PM<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>:** 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

# Kishan Reddy faces a tough battle in Secunderabad

**V. Geetanath**  
HYDERABAD

The Secunderabad Lok Sabha constituency has been a lucky one for BJP candidates in the recent past. Whoever won from here, such as Bandaru Dattatreya (1998, 1999 & 2014) and Telangana BJP president G. Kishan Reddy (2019), have gone on to become Union Ministers.

Though Mr. Dattatreya (now Haryana Governor) was unceremoniously ousted from the Modi government without any reason being assigned, Mr. Kishan Reddy, who had replaced him in the constituency in the last election, was also accommodated in the Centre - first as Union Minister of State and later as a full-fledged Cabinet Minister in 2019.

There has been a sea change in the political scenario since then with the Congress forming the government in Telangana last December. However, the Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) had won six of the seven Assembly segments in Musheerabad, Amberpet, Khairatabad, Jubilee Hills, Sanatnagar and Secunderabad. The remaining seat was won by the Majlis Party narrowly with the Congress putting up a stiff fight in Nampally.

The saffron party fared poorly in many seats, even coming third, making it quite a task for Mr. Kishan Reddy to turn the tables and emerge victorious again. Yet, he is unfazed. "It happened in the last elections also. We won just one Assembly seat. I lost from Amberpet, but we won four Lok Sabha constituencies including getting a majority in the segment within four months. Voters clearly told us at the time



G. Kishan Reddy

of the Assembly polls that they will vote for BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the parliamentary election," he says.

Mr. Reddy has released a progress report on his work such as getting Secunderabad railway station modernised, completing MMTS phase II, Cherlapalli terminal station upgrade, Kazipet wagon repair workshop, and development of tribal museum. He has been taking no chances, spending considerable time in touring the constituency even if it meant avoiding campaigning elsewhere.

But, he faces a tough electoral battle because his opponents are no pushovers.

## Sitting MLA

T. Padma Rao of the BRS is a sitting MLA from Secunderabad, having won in three successive elections, and is considered a popular leader. He has been campaigning extensively, and his leader K.T. Rama Rao has been addressing street-side public meetings about civic infrastructure improvement during their government, while taking aim at State and Central governments.

Congress candidate Danam Nagender is another unique case, who conti-

nues to be BRS MLA from the Khairatabad constituency even after switching parties. He was chosen by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy over many other claimants because of his solid voter base. He is a five-time legislator, having won thrice from Asifnagar, once on TDP ticket and twice on BRS ticket, indicating his sway among voters.

## Feedback differs

Voter feedback varies from area to area.

"Mr. Padma Rao is approachable and is liked across party lines so it does not matter whether BRS is on the backfoot or not," says businessman Preetham.

"Parties are luring small-time leaders seeking support for their respective candidates with no overt promises being made. Mr. Kishan Reddy's people are all over, but you can never underestimate Nagender's following," says Srinivas, another businessman.

"Mr. Modi remains popular and Mr. Reddy is approachable," says Prasad, an advocate.

Plus, there is the minority vote which can decide the winner despite being unevenly distributed, as it is close to 30%. Will they stick with the BRS as they may have done during the Assembly election, or shift their loyalties? The constituency has issues of inadequate water supply, bad internal roads, flooding during rains, sewage network, traffic problems, etc.

With local corporators switching sides or sailing on two boats in a three-cornered contest, it will be interesting to see who will come up trumps.

# Police file another rape case against Hassan MP

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

The "absconding" Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, accused of multiple instances of sexual abuse, has been booked for rape in another case. This is the second rape case against him. Prajwal was booked for rape in the first case on May 2.

He is learnt to have flown to Germany on April 27 and is still at large. Interpol has issued a Blue Corner Notice against him.

The new FIR was registered on May 5, based on a complaint lodged by a former domestic help in H.D. Revanna's house. Acting on her complaint, the police have registered an FIR against Prajwal, booking him for rape.

# Man beheads minor girl in Kodagu

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MYSURU

A minor girl from Kumbargadige village in Karnataka's Kodagu was beheaded on Thursday by a person to whom she was engaged.

The girl, who had cleared the SSLC examination, was engaged to Prakash, 33, on Thursday. However, the officials of Social Welfare Department took a bond from the parents that their daughter would not be married till she turned 18.

Upset about the developments, Prakash dragged the girl out of her house and severed her head from her torso.

**EMPANELMENT OF ADVERTISING AGENCIES**  
**ADDENDUM**

In reference to the above mentioned advertisement published in this newspaper on 01.05.2024 under PR-99, it is to further state that the Annual Turnover duly audited and certified by the Chartered Accountant for the Financial Year 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 are to be considered for financial eligibility. Annual Turnover of 2023-24 need not to be submitted. All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged.

(PR-135) **Chief Public Relations Officer**

**South Eastern Railway**  
We serve with a smile

**THE HINDU**

Air Surcharge as applicable:  
New Delhi - Rs. 15/-;  
Port Blair - Rs. 20/-

**Centre for Railway Information Systems**  
Chennai, New Delhi-110021  
Tel: 011-24105717, 24105625

Tender No. 01245138. Subject: AI enabled WhatsApp Chatbot Integration with RailMadad and other applications. Date of Closing: 25.06.2024 (Tuesday) 15:30 hrs. Pre-bid Meeting on: 24.05.2024 (Friday) at 11.00 hrs. at CRIS, IPTI Building, Near ITO, New Delhi-110002. Documents can be downloaded from Website [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in). For future modification/ extensions pls see [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in).

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
e-Tender Notice No. VSKP-ELECTG-24-25-WC-8-1. Dt. 06.05.2024

**NAME OF THE WORK:** PROVISION OF 28 NOS. LIFTS AT VARIOUS STATIONS OVER WALTAIR DIVISION UNDER AMRIT BHARAT SCHEME.

Tender Value (₹): 13,68,28,540.50, EMD (₹): 8,34,200.00, Completion period: 180 Days.

2) Tender Notice No. VSKP-ELECTG-24-25-WC-8-2. Dt. 06.05.2024

**NAME OF THE WORK:** SOLAR ROOF TOP 20KWPP ONGRID PLANT ARRANGEMENT IN CONNECTION WITH PROVISION OF 28 NOS. LIFT AT VARIOUS STATIONS OVER WALTAIR DIVISION UNDER AMRIT BHARAT SCHEME.

Tender Value (₹): 6,14,20,825.95, EMD (₹): 4,57,100.00, Completion period: 180 Days.

3) Tender Notice No. VSKP-ELECTG-24-25-WC-8-3. Dt. 06.05.2024

**NAME OF THE WORK:** POWER SUPPLY ARRANGEMENT FOR PROVISION OF 28 NOS. LIFT AT VARIOUS STATIONS OVER WALTAIR DIVISION UNDER AMRIT BHARAT SCHEME.

Tender Value (₹): 6,14,20,825.95, EMD (₹): 4,57,100.00, Completion period: 180 Days.

Tender Closing Date and Time: At 1330 Hrs. of 31.05.2024 (for SI. No. 1) and At 1330 Hrs. of 05.06.2024 (for SI. No. 2 & 3). Date and Time of opening of Tenders: At 1600 Hrs. of 31.05.2024 (for SI. No. 1) and At 1600 Hrs. of 05.06.2024 (for SI. No. 2 & 3).

The tender documents complete details available at: <http://www.irps.gov.in>

The tenderers are required to watch the website for any corrigendum's issued for this tender.

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G), Waltair  
PR-104/P/24-25

**TENDER NOTICE**

GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHAL) invites bids for "Hiring of Agency for Security Services at Hyderabad Airport for a period of 10 years and further extendable up to 5 years".

For details, interested parties may download the tender document free of charge from [www.hyderabad.aero/tenders.asp](http://www.hyderabad.aero/tenders.asp) between 11.05.2024 to 20.05.2024 till 12:00 am and submit their bid on or before 03.06.2024, as per the process prescribed in the Tender Document.

HA/57/PREM ASSOCIATES

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
e-Tender Notice No. CPMGSUWATENG 2024003, Dated : 04.05.2024

**NAME OF WORK:** EXECUTION OF PWAY LINKING WORKS ALONG WITH SUPPLY, STACKING AND SPREADING OF MACHINE CRUSHED HARD STONE BALLAST FOR DIVERSION OF DOWN KK LINE IN CONNECTION WITH DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSED NEW BLOCK STATION AT KM 277.030 BETWEEN AMBAGAOA - AMAGURA FOR REGULATION OF GOODS TRAFFIC TO NMDC INTEGRATED STEEL PLANT IN WALTAIR DIVISION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY.

Approx. Cost of the Work (₹) : 1,31,48,405.12, EMD (₹) : 2,15,800.00, Completion Period of the Work : 04 (Four) Months.

Tender Closing Date & Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 27.05.2024.

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person shall be accepted against such tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : <http://www.irps.gov.in>

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers / bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IRPS portal. Only registered tenderer / bidder can participate on e-tendering.

The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions.

Dy. Chief Engineer / GSU / Waltair  
PR-103/P/24-25

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**

Tender Notice No. : JHS-N-GSU-02-24 Date : 06.05.2024

**TENDER NOTICE**

Dy.Chief Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/GSU/ Jhansi, DRM's office, Jhansi, for and on behalf of President of India invite open Tender through on Line (E-Tendering) for the following works.

Approx Cost : Rs. 172348588.46 Earnest Money : Rs. 1011800/-

**Description of work:** Provision of dual detection of Track circuit with axle counter on UP/DN main line from VGL to BINA section of Jhansi division (17 stations).

Cost of Tender Form : Nil. Completion period from issue of letter of acceptance : 18 Months. \* Tender on line can be submitted upto 15.00 hrs on 06.06.2024. \* For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in) (JHANSI DIVISION-GATI SHAKTI, NORTH CENTRAL RLY) 821/24 (AN)

North central railways @ [www.nccr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.nccr.indianrailways.gov.in) @northcentralrailway @CPNCR

**INDIAN RAILWAYS**  
**PATIALA LOCOMOTIVE WORKS**  
PATIALA - 147003  
Tel.: 0175-2396000, 2396001, Fax: 0175-2306413

**NOTICE INVITING ELECTRONIC TENDERS**

On behalf of President of India Principal Chief Materials Manager/PLW/Patiala invites tenders in electronic form for following items:

**A) e-Tender Notice No. 07ET/2024-25**

SN	Tender No.	Description	Qty.	Tender closing date
1	02241659	Transmitter Wheel For AC Motor	2250 Nos.	24.05.2024
2	02241016	Labyrinth Ring	2299 Nos.	31.05.2024
3	02241554	Shrunk On Ring	1813 Nos.	22.05.2024
4	02241015	End Shield (Bearing Shield)	128 Nos.	28.06.2024
5	02241431	Shrunk On Ring	247 Nos.	27.05.2024
6	02241008	Bearing Cover (Outer)	2240 Nos.	06.06.2024
7	02241456	Bearing Housing	2416 Nos.	30.05.2024
8	20241113	UIC Socket 22 PIN	268 Nos.	31.05.2024*
9	20240013	Waterless Urinal System	100 Sets	12.06.2024
10	20241216	Polypropylene Components	493 Set	03.06.2024*
11	22241114	STN. Steel Hardware	439 Sets	11.06.2024*
12	20241049	High Voltage Bushing	439 Nos.	13.06.2024*
13	20241046	Set of Neoprene Hose	446 Set	03.06.2024*
14	21241210	Crew Fan	1858 Nos.	04.06.2024*
15	22241181	Gasket Non Metallic	942 Sets	05.06.2024*
16	20241062	Hose for CAB Heater.	409 Meter	31.05.2024*
17	20241160	High Tensile Tight Lock Transition Centre Buffer Coupler WAP-7	168 Nos.	18.06.2024**
18	21241283	Wheel Set Guide	5809 Nos.	06.06



## Voting for relief

Interim bail for Delhi CM reverses damage to level playing field in polls

In granting interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the Supreme Court of India has reversed a development that upset the level playing field for the ongoing general election. When Mr. Kejriwal was arrested in March for his alleged involvement in corruption in the formulation of a liquor policy for Delhi, it might not have seemed an obvious setback to federalism and democracy. But the arrest of a serving Chief Minister and a key figure in the Opposition, when the election process was already on, sent shock waves among regional parties. And, as he remained behind bars, it stoked fears that States run by parties other than those in power at the Centre could easily be undermined by getting central agencies to arrest Chief Ministers on charges that may or may not be based on evidence. In Mr. Kejriwal's case, the Court is right in both citing the general election as a good enough reason to grant him interim bail until June 1, when the last phase of polling will be held, and in rejecting the Centre's argument that it would amount to favourable treatment to politicians. As the Court has pointed out, interim release orders relate to the "peculiarities associated with the person in question and surrounding circumstances". The absence of a notable leader from the campaign arena, especially when he is yet to be convicted, will be a factor that will cast a doubt on the free and fair nature of the election.

The Court has made his bail conditional on his keeping away from the Delhi Secretariat and the CM's office. And he is to abide by his statement that he would not sign any official file, unless required to do so to get the Lieutenant General's approval for something. That Mr. Kejriwal did not respond to several summonses from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) does not show him in a good light. But, at the same time, it cannot be forgotten that be it the CBI's corruption charge, or the ED's money-laundering charge, the case against him is based on a belated statement made by suspects who had turned approvers and obtained pardon on the promise of testifying against him. The probative value of these statements will be tested during trial. Another factor to be noted is that there are statutory restrictions under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act on seeking bail, resulting in many questioning the validity of their arrest, as Mr. Kejriwal has done, rather than file for bail. If only courts applied the basic principle of granting bail to those who are unlikely to flee from justice, with appropriate conditions to neutralise their likely influence over witnesses and to safeguard evidence, orders granting bail would not evoke political reactions and doubts whether the political class is being unduly favoured.

## Folds and faults

Free use of AlphaFold 3 must extend to scrutiny of its inner mechanisms

Proteins are long chains of amino-acid residues that fold into specific shapes. Properly folded proteins function normally whereas misfolded ones can lead to debilitating diseases. Since these chains are quite long, a given protein can actually fold into one of a very large number of shapes – yet it makes a beeline for a specific shape while avoiding all the others. How and why this happens constitute an important mystery in structural biology called the protein-folding problem. In 2018, five decades after it was mooted, a Google subsidiary named DeepMind developed a purpose-built AI tool to predict the shapes into which different proteins could fold, called AlphaFold. The upgraded AlphaFold 2 followed two years later. Many scientists and technologists acknowledge that these two deep-learning systems have transformed human awareness of protein structures, a feat the machines demonstrated in the biennial Critical Assessment of Protein Structure Prediction contest. Recently, DeepMind launched AlphaFold 3, which can reportedly predict the shapes with nearly 80% accuracy as well as model DNA, RNA, ligands, and modifications to them. As with the first two AlphaFolds, no. 3 is great for being able to elucidate the folded proteins' structures in seconds rather than the years humans have required with advanced microscopic techniques.

Not surprisingly, the excitement that followed the release of AlphaFold 3 has been unable to escape the hype and overblown expectations that dogged the launches of its predecessors. These machines can predict protein structures with relatively high accuracy but they cannot say why they are folded that way; this is still the task of human scientists. How the AlphaFolds will catalyse drug discovery is also unclear. Many drugs fail to make it to the market from the laboratory because medical researchers are unable to anticipate all the interactions between the drugs' various components and various parts of the body. The protein-folding problem is important to crack but it will not magically improve drugs' chances in human clinical trials. It is a step in that direction. Finally, the free use of AlphaFold 3 is limited while its inner mechanisms are unavailable for public exploration or scrutiny, so far. While the motivation to innovate of DeepMind is laudable, the cutting-edge value AlphaFold 3 presents to health care means the company should explore alternative revenue models in which the system is not trapped behind paywalls or exorbitant prices – a fate that has already befallen scientific papers and medicines born of publicly funded research. Recall that the AlphaFolds' training data itself includes protein structures first elucidated by such research.

The model code of conduct has, once again, attracted national attention because of its egregious violation by senior politicians during the election campaign for the 18th Lok Sabha. Political parties are duty bound to obey the code as it was framed by the Election Commission of India (ECI) on the basis of a consensus among all political parties in order to have a peaceful, orderly and civilised election. However, as elections in India are a no holds barred war, this consensus often breaks down with party leaders losing no opportunity to hit their opponents below the belt. Of late, elections are a free for all. Distortions, blatant falsehoods, mischievous misinterpretations, slanging matches – all are par for the course.

The Constitution mandates the ECI to conduct elections in a free and fair manner. In fact, free and fair elections are a part of the basic structure of the Constitution. Article 324 confers on the Election Commission, plenary powers to enable it to ensure a free and fair election. In *Election Commission of India vs State of Tamil Nadu and Others* (1993), the Supreme Court of India restates the role and powers of the Commission in the following words: "The ECI is a high constitutional authority charged with the function and the duty of ensuring free and fair elections and of the purity of the electoral process. It has all the incidental and ancillary powers to effectuate the constitutional objective and purpose. The plenitude of the Commission's powers corresponds to the high constitutional functions it has to discharge."

### Key provisions

The model code of conduct was framed by the Commission to ensure that the elections are free and fair and the electoral process remains pure. Also, a level playing field is a necessary condition to ensure that elections are free and fair. The key provisions of the code are: no party or candidate shall indulge in any activity which may aggravate existing differences or create communal hatred or cause tension between different castes, communities – religious or linguistic; criticism of other political parties shall be confined to their policies and programs. No unverified allegations or distortions against other parties shall be allowed; there shall be no appeal to cast or communal feelings for securing votes; no party or its candidate shall indulge in corrupt practices or commit offences under the election law.

Needless to say that violation of these directions are serious infractions of the code, making it impossible to hold free and fair elections and maintain the purity of the electoral process. So, it is the duty of the ECI to quickly examine those violations and take suitable action



**P.D.T. Achary**

is former Secretary General, Lok Sabha

It is the duty of the Election Commission of India to quickly examine violations and take action so that the purity of the electoral process is maintained

against the violators so that the purity of the electoral process is maintained. Here a question arises as to what action the Commission can take in such cases.

### On deterrent action

It is common knowledge that the model code of conduct is not legally enforceable. So, it is not possible to seek any relief from the court for violation of the code. The only way open to the aggrieved party is to complain to the Commission and seek its intervention. It must be noted here that neither The Representation of the People Act nor The Conduct of Election Rules makes any provision for the model code of conduct. However, the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order brought out by the ECI in 1968 makes a provision to deal with the violation of the Model Code of Conduct. The Symbols order was issued in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 324. Paragraph 16A of the Symbols order says that in case of violation of the model code of conduct or other direction or orders of the Commission, it can suspend the recognition of a party, or, in an extreme case, even withdraw its recognition. Suspension or withdrawal of recognition of a party will deprive it of the symbol reserved for it. This will pose enormous problems to a recognised party as it will not be able to use its reserved symbol in the election. So, the ECI has the power to act decisively against the violators of the model code of conduct. We have seen the ECI taking violators off the election campaign for 24 to 48 hours. It can also take the violator off the campaign in the elections no matter how high he or she is in the party. Such actions by the ECI will definitely act as a deterrent and send the right message to the political parties.

However, experience shows that after the late T.N. Seshan, the ECI has never acted so decisively as he used to do. T.N. Seshan struck terror in the minds of politicians. Elections in India today are a do-or-die battle and the only aim here is to defeat the enemy. Political adversaries are treated as enemies and the goal is to exterminate them. Elections have long ceased to be the civilised democratic exercise they are meant to be, where each player scrupulously adheres to be norms set by law. Now, every effort is made to stir the basest passions in men. At one time there existed a consensus among politicians that nothing should be done to exacerbate the divisions in the society especially on the basis of religion.

We should not forget that religion in India is a potent tool which can be effectively used to divide society. The founding fathers of the Constitution wisely chose secularism and democracy as the warp and woof of the

Constitution. They believed that only secularism can hold this country of immense diversities together. The Representation of People Act 1951, has made any appeal in the name of any religion a corrupt practice which will invalidate an election. Thus, religion is kept out of the electoral battle by the statute. But it is brought back and installed at the centre of this battlefield by politicians. The nation wants the ECI to address this issue with full seriousness.

### A violation of oath

The issue of senior members of the Council of Ministers making communally charged speeches during the election campaign has not been dealt with sternly by the ECI or the courts. Speeches of such persons during the election campaign, which have extremely toxic references to the followers of a particular religion or community or caste and which can promote hatred in a section of voters, flagrantly violate the oath they have taken as Ministers. A Minister, through the oath he takes, gives a solemn assurance to the people of the country that he will do right to all manner of people without favour or ill will. By speaking directly or indirectly against a section of the society, they demonstrate their inherent bias and ill will against them which is a violation of oath. The Constitution or the election law does not prescribe any punishment for violating the oath by Ministers. Section 125 of the Representation of People Act 1951, provides for a three-year sentence as maximum punishment for promoting feelings of enmity or hatred between different classes of citizens on the ground of religion. Members of the Council of Ministers of the Union as well as the States are holding high constitutional office and are oath bound to do right to all without ill will towards anyone. Therefore, any utterances on their part to the contrary need to be seriously dealt with. The apex court can give a standing direction to the ECI to initiate criminal proceedings under Section 125 of the Representation of People Act 1951 whenever such occasion arises and also take the violators off the campaign till the ongoing elections are over.

The top court has always laid stress on maintaining the purity of an election. It says: "what is meant by purity of elections? According to us, it means that the elections should not only be free from corrupt practices but also free from evil practices" (*A. Neelalohithadasan Nadar vs George Mascarene*). Promoting hatred between two sections of people on the ground of religion, cast or community is an evil practice. The Constitution puts a lot of powers in the hands of the ECI. These powers are meant to be exercised when the need arises.

# Freshwater quest, the likely new gold hunt

One would never imagine that huge volumes of freshwater exist under the saline ocean. In the 1960s, says a media report, the U.S. Geological Survey drilled boreholes off the New Jersey coast and unexpectedly struck freshwater. Similarly, with time, a team of scientists from Vietnam and even in other countries have discovered underwater sources of fresh water. For example, a river under the sea was discovered at the bottom of the Black Sea. This river appears to be over a 100 feet deep and has a flow rate of about four miles per hour; about 22,000 cubic meters of water passes through this particular channel. It would count among one of the largest rivers in the world when compared to land-based rivers, say media links. This makes one thing certain: there is scientific evidence of rivers under the sea.

Statistics show that the total volume of water on earth is estimated at 1.386 billion km<sup>3</sup>, where 97.5% is salt water and 2.5% freshwater. Out of this freshwater, only 0.3% is in liquid form on the surface, which means that the rest of the freshwater is underground, including on or under the ocean bed.

Considering that freshwater is a depleting resource, countries will begin exploring for and exploiting freshwater from above or under their ocean bed, within their maritime zones. Eventually, countries will expand exploration beyond their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), into what is commonly known as the "Area", which is covered under Part XI of the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention, 1982 (UNCLOS). The "Area" under UNCLOS is defined as the seabed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and is referred to as the common heritage of mankind. This means that it is available for everyone's use and benefit, keeping in mind the



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India can take the lead in shaping non-controversial legislative text that addresses the gaps in the laws of the sea, especially in exploratory activities that concern freshwater extraction

future generations.

### The law of the sea

Although UNCLOS arrays most of the internationally accepted law on the subject, customary international law continues to remain an important source of the law of the sea. While UNCLOS is known as a single comprehensive text covering the constitution and the governance of the oceans, it is interesting to know that the Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone, the Convention on the High Seas, the Convention on Fishing and Conservation of the Living Resources of the High Seas and the Convention on the Continental Shelf (Geneva Conventions on the Law of the Sea, 1958) cover most of the issues as UNCLOS and these Geneva conventions are mostly platformed over customary international law.

To complicate matters further, Article 311 of UNCLOS states that this Convention shall prevail as between states parties, over the Geneva Conventions on the Law of the Sea, 1958. Hence, not only is UNCLOS not applicable to these non-signatory states but also these countries do not recognise the doctrine of Exclusive Economic Zone (200 nm) or the "Area" (beyond 200 nm). The least of the surprise is that the United States is a signatory to the Geneva Conventions 1958 and not UNCLOS.

Exploration and exploitation of the "Area" under UNCLOS is limited to the term "resources", which is defined as all solid, liquid or gaseous mineral resources in situ in the Area or beneath the seabed, including polymetallic nodules – and resources when recovered from the Area are referred to as "minerals". If this be the case, does the definition of the term "minerals" cover "freshwater"? The International Seabed Authority (referred to as the Authority) is

empowered under UNCLOS to administer and control the activities in the Area. Consequently, exploration of all minerals from the Area is required to be in accordance with the rules, regulations and procedures laid down by the Authority. If state parties to UNCLOS are regulated by the Authority, who regulates state parties to the Geneva Conventions, especially in activities concerning mining and exploratory activities in the "Area"?

### A zone of exploration

As evident from current events, the next wars are expected to be fought over water and expansion. Given that in the years to come freshwater will become a very scarce and an expensive commodity, the Area will qualify as a potential zone for freshwater exploration and extraction. Just as oil wells are explored and capped for future use, fresh water wells may be identified and capped for future use. In the lacuna of specific legislation and terminologies governing and controlling the advancement of resource beyond national jurisdiction (such as fresh water) integrated with multiple legislations governing the law of the sea, the "Area" will once again attract controversy.

Given that a large international community is diligently working towards Sustainable Development Goals and activities beyond national jurisdictions, arriving at an amicable non-controversial legislative text, addressing various lacunae in the laws of the sea, especially exploratory activities concerning freshwater from the Area, ought to be the next logical milestone. In this, India can take the lead role. This would be an area which would truly benefit mankind, rather than spending gallons of money, looking for water and proposing plans for human settlement on Mars and the moon.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Interim bail granted

I write this letter as Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India, and a former Union Minister for Law and Justice. The Supreme Court's order granting interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal balances the sanctity of the fundamental right to personal liberty and freedom of expression in the election season with the necessity to observe the legal due process in a criminal investigation. In as much as the Court's order facilitates

campaigning by Mr. Kejriwal and casting of his vote in the Lok Sabha elections, the order subserves the democratic cause in furtherance of the basic structure of the Constitution. At the same time, the order clearly suggests that interim bail to Mr. Kejriwal is upon its own facts and will not serve as a precedent nor be seen as a discriminatory concession to politicians consistent with the constitutional mandate of non-discrimination and equality under law.

The Court order reaffirms the legal principles for the grant of interim bail to those in custody, and is a fine balancing act in furtherance of the democratic fundamentals.

**Ashwani Kumar,**  
New Delhi

The top court has proved, yet again, that justice is very much alive and kicking in our country. We can now expect the wounded tiger using all his might to see that the NDA has a difficult time. One hopes that Mr. Kejriwal makes the best use

of this god-sent opportunity.

**Tharcus S. Fernando,**  
Chennai

Mr. Kejriwal can now move to the campaign trail with new energy. It seems democracy in India is being guarded by the top court that is thwarting the machinations of an autocratic entity.

**M.C. Vijay Shankar,**  
Chennai

### Debt and China

China's debt trap diplomacy is focused on nations that

are either strategically located or rich in resources such as cobalt, oil or Lithium. China's signature foreign policy, the Belt and Road Initiative and its maritime version, is to connect Chinese ports on the South China Sea to seaports in the Indian Ocean, West Asia, and the Horn of Africa. These networks clearly benefit China through an increase in commerce, and when debts cannot be repaid, they renegotiate by conceding valuable and strategic national assets. It

is true that no nation invests or lends enormous amounts in another country for altruistic reasons. China insists on sovereign guarantees for loans by the host governments. Sri Lanka has become a cautionary tale on the kind of problems Chinese projects can cause (Datapoint, Opinion page, May 9).

**H.N. Ramakrishna,**  
Bengaluru

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

# GROUND ZERO



JD(S) MLA H.D. Revanna being arrested and brought to the SIT office in Bengaluru. SUDHAKARA JAIN

## Power play, politics, and perversion

Days before Hassan district went to the polls, videos and photos allegedly showing MP Prajwal Revanna sexually abusing women have circulated in Karnataka, sparking outrage. While political parties have been attacking one another over the issue, Prajwal, who is seeking re-election, has gone abroad. **K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj** and **Sathish G.T.** report on the incident that has left the State and the country shaken, and the investigation

**Trigger warning:** The following article contains references to rape and abuse. Please avoid reading if you are triggered by these themes.

**O**n the morning of April 22, a resident of Hassan in south Karnataka was walking along the tracks of the district stadium, about 190 km from Bengaluru, when he noticed a pen drive placed on a pedestal. He ignored it at first, but then curiosity got the better of him. He picked up the pen drive and gave it to a friend, he said.

That was not the only pen drive in the stadium. Others said they noticed 8-10 pen drives in different areas of the same stadium. Walkers in Maharaja's Park in the heart of Hassan said they had also spotted pen drives on the benches.

As the day went by, it became clear that it was raining pen drives in Hassan. When people downloaded the content, they found sexually explicit video clips, photos, and screenshots of video calls. Soon, this went viral. The women in the photos and videos were clearly visible, but the man was not. However, he could be seen partially in the screenshots of the video calls he made to the women.

The man is allegedly Prajwal Revanna, the Janata Dal (Secular) [JD(S)] Member of Parliament from Hassan and the grandson of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda. He is the candidate of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. The Hassan Lok Sabha constituency was scheduled to go to the polls in the second phase, four days later, on April 26.

There were at least two clips in which the women could be seen resisting the man's advances and pleading with him even as he raped them while recording the act. One of them was later allegedly abducted by Prajwal's father H.D. Revanna, who is a former Minister, and MLA of Holenarasipur, the home town of the Gowda clan.

The police estimate that there are close to 100 women in these videos. The women, both young and old, single and married, come from different backgrounds: they are house-helps, party workers, professionals, and government officials. Some of them were familiar to the people of Hassan as they had been actively involved in political events and as officials. Nobody had complained to the police until the videos went viral.

Two survivors lodged complaints with the police. Sources in the police say the MP sexually abused women who approached him for personal, professional, or constituency work. One of the victims said that he coerced her while threatening to harm her family members. He recorded videos of the sexual act and blackmailed her, she said. Police say he used the official residence of Deve Gowda, a Rajya Sabha MP, for these acts.

The episode sparked massive protests in Karnataka and led to mudslinging among the political parties. The agitators demanded a probe into the case and the immediate arrest of the accused.

### A warning

By the evening of April 22, the people realised that these were the videos that a local BJP leader and lawyer, G. Devaraje Gowda, had often re-



People across political parties are making use of these women as pawns in their own game.

**ROOPA HASSAN**  
Activist and poet based in Hassan

ferred to during his press conferences. Devaraje, who had unsuccessfully contested from Holenarasipur against H.D. Revanna in 2023, is known for his scathing attacks against the Revanna family. He had said, "I have videos and photos related to Prajwal Revanna. The content exposes the true character of the JD(S) leader. I am not in a position to release them to the media as Prajwal Revanna has got a stay order from the court restraining the media from broadcasting the videos and photos," Devaraje told the media a couple of times earlier this year.

Soon, a letter written by Devaraje Gowda to the BJP State president in December 2023 surfaced. In it, Devaraje had claimed that he had a pen drive containing 2,976 explicit clips of Prajwal and advised the State president not to field him as the NDA candidate. He also said a copy of the pen drive had been sent to leaders of the Congress, the ruling party in Karnataka.

Though JD(S) workers have blamed the Congress, there has been a buzz in political circles that BJP workers played a major role in circulating the videos.

Devaraje has now alleged that the Congress circulated the content and claimed that Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar spoke to him about the issue. However, Karthik Gowda, a former driver of Prajwal, who has released a video message from an undisclosed location, claimed that he downloaded the videos from Prajwal's phone, transferred them to his own phone, and handed them over to Devaraje, who leaked them. Karthik Gowda has often said that he fell out with Prajwal's family over a land issue.



Members of the National Students' Union of India, the student wing of the Congress, hold a poster of JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna during a protest in Bengaluru. PTI

He claimed that Prajwal's family forced him to sell his land to a businessman in Bengaluru.

### Prajwal flees

Hassan went to the polls on April 26. Prajwal cast his vote in Paduvalahippe in Holenarasipur taluk. That was the last time he was seen in public. The next day, he flew to Germany from Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, at 2 a.m. using his diplomatic passport. He was suspended by the JD(S).

Prajwal's flight led to more anger. Following a letter by the Karnataka State Commission for Women seeking a probe into the alleged instances of sexual abuse, the State government formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT). Bijay Kumar Singh, a 1996 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, who is Additional Director General of Police, Criminal Investigation Department, is heading the SIT. He successfully cracked the murders of rationalists Gauri Lankesh and M.M. Kalburgi. The team that is nearly all-women includes two women IPS officers, Suman D. Pennekar and Seema Latkar.

The SIT was referred a First Information Report (FIR) registered on April 28 at Holenarasipura. A former house help of the Revannas, who does not feature in the clips, alleged sexual harassment by Revanna and Prajwal. It then expanded the probe to include Revanna as well.

The SIT has since then registered three new FIRs: two booking Prajwal for rape, based on the complaints of two victims, and one booking Revanna for abducting one of the women in an alleged bid to prevent her from testifying against Prajwal. She was eventually rescued by the SIT.

"Though we have been able to identify many victims from the videos doing the rounds, the challenge has been to convince them to lodge complaints," says a senior SIT official.

When the videos went viral, the women did not know what to do, according to their friends. Initially, a couple of them approached senior police officers, complaining that some unknown people had been circulating images morphed with their photographs. When the police insisted that they file a formal complaint, they did not.

A few of the survivors have either left town or remained incommunicado. "They just want to be far from everyone," says a person who interacted with a couple of them.

Another friend of one of the survivors says, "It is the State government's responsibility to provide them with counselling."

The State government has announced that the survivors who come forward to complain will be given financial assistance and security cover. The SIT has roped in nearly 10 professional women counsellors who have provided the survivors support. "Most of the women are scared to complain. Moreover, in many cases their families may not know that their videos are being circulated. We need to counsel their families as well," a senior official says.

A resident of Holenarasipur says, "The Revanna family is feudal and ran the 'Republic of Hassan' with great impunity. Now it has come out in the open that the women who approached them seeking help were abused."

"The women were mostly from Hassan. This indicates the impunity Prajwal seemed to enjoy in Hassan," a political worker says.

### Tales of horror

Two survivors have recounted their ordeal to the police. Based on their complaints, Prajwal has been booked for rape in two cases.

A political worker of the JD(S), 44, alleged that Prajwal raped her at his official residence in Hassan when she had gone to meet him in 2021 seeking seats for some women students in a hostel. She said he threatened to kill her and her husband if she did not cooperate. She also alleged that Prajwal took out his mobile phone and recorded the act. "He said he would make this video public if I told anyone. He said he was not visible in the video, while I was. He said I had to have sex with him whenever he called me. Later too, he used to make video calls to me asking me

to strip, and harass me. He has sexually assaulted me multiple times in these years and blackmailed me saying he will make the video public," she said in her complaint.

In many of the videos they have accessed, the man's face is not visible, say SIT officials. They believe this gave the perpetrator confidence that he would not be caught. However, SIT officials are confident of using forensics and establishing the man's identity in the video.

The second complaint pertains to a former house help in the Revannas' Holenarasipura household. She is about 60. She is seen in a video clip pleading with the man to spare her. In the video, she says she served food to the man's father and grandfather and begs that he leave her alone. But the man, whose face is not visible, forces himself on her.

The woman had gone missing since. On May 1, her 20-year-old son walked into K.R. Nagar Police Station in Mysuru claiming that his mother was forcibly taken away by a man called Satish Babu at Revanna's behest to prevent her from testifying against Prajwal. He said Satish had claimed that his mother was in danger of being arrested and took her away. He realised that his mother had been abducted after he discovered the video clip. This led to an FIR against Revanna for abduction.

On May 4, the SIT rescued the woman. She was allegedly held captive at a farmhouse belonging to the former personal secretary to Revanna in Hunsur, Mysuru. Minutes after Revanna's anticipatory bail plea was turned down by the Special Court for Elected Representatives, Bengaluru, the SIT team arrested him from the house of his father. Out of deference for the former Prime Minister who is in his 90s, the SIT officials say they waited at the door for half an hour for Revanna to emerge. Revanna has now been remanded to judicial custody. The total number of arrests in the abduction case is now six.

### The politics

The incident has led to protests in many pockets of Karnataka. Interpol has issued a Blue Corner Notice against Prajwal. This notice is part of Interpol's colour-coded notices which enable countries to "share alerts and requests for information (on wanted persons/crimes) worldwide".

Meanwhile, speculations are rife that Prajwal is unlikely to return home before June 4, when the results of the elections will be declared. "Prajwal's case has become a national issue and the INDIA bloc parties are trying to embarrass the BJP with it. If Prajwal returns now, he will dominate the news cycle for at least a week. So, it is unlikely he will return in a hurry," says a leader.

Former Rajya Sabha member H.K. Javare Gowda says he was shocked when he learned about



He said he would make this video public if I told anyone. He said he was not visible in the video, while I was. He said I had to have sex with him whenever he called me. He has sexually assaulted me multiple times in the last few years and blackmailed me.

### SURVIVOR IN HER POLICE COMPLAINT

the issue a few days ago. "I was a blind follower of Deve Gowda once, but not now. I pity him. I want him to talk about the issue," he says. Deve Gowda has not made a public appearance since the news broke and has remained silent.

The JD(S), the BJP, and Congress have been busy in a mudslinging match over the issue of how the video clips came into the public domain, so much so that this debate is threatening to mask the alleged abuse of the women.

JD(S) State president and Prajwal's uncle H.D. Kumaraswamy, who initially sought to distance himself and his father Deve Gowda from the controversy, is now accusing Shivakumar of distributing "25,000 pen drives" to "evidently influence elections in Hassan". He has also told Shivakumar that this was "not the way to become a leader of the Vokkaligas". He has alleged that the SIT is biased and has demanded, along with the BJP, a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation.

At the same time, JD(S) workers have held multiple protests across the State claiming to fight for the survivors and against Shivakumar. There are posters in Bengaluru condemning Shivakumar for "misusing" the explicit clips for his politics. In various instances, Kumaraswamy has expressed doubt over the veracity of the clips, while also saying he is "not defending" Prajwal.

Countering the JD(S) charge, many Vokkaliga Ministers and leaders of the Congress have accused Kumaraswamy and BJP of "attempting to cover-up of the sex abuse" by diverting the attention from ensuring justice to the survivors to the alleged role of leaders involved in the distribution of pen drives.

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda, also a Vokkaliga leader, attacked Kumaraswamy for "trying to use the community as a shield to cover up heinous crimes and, in the process, dragging the community into the biggest sex abuse scandal in the world".

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has maintained that the SIT is "impartial" and has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his intervention to cancel Prajwal's diplomatic passport immediately, so that the MP is forced to return to India. Prajwal's passport has not been cancelled yet. Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah have hit back saying law and order is a State issue.

Activists are angry about the political turn the case has taken. "People across political parties are making use of these women as pawns in their own game," says Roopa Hassan, an activist and poet based in Hassan.

For now, everyone is waiting for the Lok Sabha election results, especially in Hassan, and Prajwal's return. But this alleged sex abuse case will likely cast a shadow on Karnataka's politics for years to come. Meanwhile, the victims are scared, stigmatised, and are battling patriarchy.

## From Page One

## Kejriwal walks out of jail as SC grants interim bail

During the short pronouncement of the order, which lasted a little over four minutes after the lunch break, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the Central agency, said that the ball has already started rolling, with Amritpal Singh, who is detained under the National Security Act over Khalistani activities, approaching the court for bail to contest in the elections.

"That is a different concern," Justice Khanna said. "It is the concern of the nation," Mr. Mehta replied.

"We cannot compare that with this case... Let us not put it in such simple straitjacket terms like that," Justice Khanna said.

The two-judge Bench agreed with the ED that Mr. Kejriwal avoiding nine summons was a "negative factor", but noted there were still other facets which had to be considered.

"Arvind Kejriwal is the Chief Minister of Delhi and a leader of one of the national parties. No doubt, serious accusations have been made, but he has not been convicted. He does not have any criminal antecedents. He is not a threat to society," the court listed points in favour of Mr. Kejriwal.

## Arrest timing

The court noted that the ED had filed its Enforcement Case Information Report in August 2022. The case had been pending since then, but Mr. Kejriwal was arrested only on March 21, a few days after the Model Code of Conduct came into force. Justice Khanna said that 22 days of liberty for Mr. Kejriwal to campaign for the Aam Aadmi Party would "not make a difference now".

## Court convicts 2, acquits 3 in Dabholkar case

For the first five years after his murder in 2013, the family and supporters of Dabholkar had gathered at the bridge where he was shot dead.

Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee president Nana Patole too demanded that the masterminds be brought to justice, highlighting that "Dr. Tawade and his aides have been acquitted".

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), in a statement, said it took over the case based on orders of the Bombay High Court in May 2014. "Chargesheets were filed in Pune court on September 6, 2016, supplementary chargesheets were filed on February 13, 2019 and November 20, 2019. The trial of the case was conducted in the special court for Unlawful Activities Prevention Act [UAPA] against the accused Sachin Prakashrao Andure, Sharad Bhausaheb Kalaskar, Virendrasinh Tawde, Vikram Vinay Bhavane and Sanjiv Punalekar. After completion of trial, on May 10, 2024 the sessions court convicted accused Mr. Prakashrao and Mr. Kalaskar and sentenced them. The other three accused were acquitted by the court."

## Industrial output slows to 4.9% in March

Electricity generation grew 7.1% in 2023-24, easing from an 8.9% surge in the previous year.

Seven of 23 major manufacturing segments recorded a contraction in March, but as many as ten segments reported a drop in output through 2023-24, including wearing apparel (-14.2%), computers and electronics (-11.4%), furniture (-6.9%), wood products (-5.9%), chemicals (-1.7%) and leather (-1.1%).

Consumer durables grew the weakest at 3.6% compared with a meagre 0.6% rise in 2022-23, while non-durables rose 4% vis-à-vis a 0.7% uptick in the previous year.

In March, consumer durables output recorded the sharpest surge for the second month in a row, rising 9.5%, albeit over an 8% contraction in March 2023. In February, they had grown 12.3% relative to a 4.1% contraction a year ago. Consumer non-durables broke a two-month streak of contraction to rise 4.9%, but again over a weak base from March 2023, when they shrank 1.9%.

"The consumption scenario remained mixed last year with urban demand showing resilience while rural demand continued to lag," said Rajani Sinha, CareEdge Ratings' chief economist. While hopes of a good monsoon, moderating inflation, and pick-up in rural demand are positives, a broad-based and durable improvement in consumption remains the key monitorable this year, she stressed.

Infrastructure and construction goods continued to record healthy growth at 6.9% in March, while capital goods growth picked up to 6.1% from just 1.2% in February. Intermediate goods and primary goods rose 5.1% and 2.5%, respectively.

Over the full year gone by, Infrastructure and Construction goods recorded the strongest growth of 9.6% over an 8.4% rise in 2022-23, followed by capital goods which grew 6.2% compared with a 13.1% rise in the previous year. Primary and intermediate goods grew 6% and 5.2%, respectively.

ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayar said she expects industrial output growth to slow to around 3% to 4% in April owing to base effects as the same month had seen a 4.6% uptick in 2023.

In absolute terms, the industrial output index was up 8.22% from February with a sequential rise in output recorded in Manufacturing, Mining and Electricity, as well as the six end-use-based classifications of factory output.

## Kharge's letter an attempt to push a biased narrative: EC

Congress president has raised 'discrepancies' in the voting data: the poll panel's rebuttal was made public before a scheduled meeting between the INDIA bloc delegation and the commission

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**  
**Sobhana K. Nair**  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) rebutted a letter written by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge to his colleagues in the INDIA bloc parties on the alleged "discrepancies in voting data" released by the election panel. The EC called Mr. Kharge's letter an "attempt to push a biased narrative under the guise of seeking clarifications".

The rebuttal was released just an hour before the scheduled meeting of the INDIA bloc leaders with the EC, where apart from the voter turnout data, the leaders also questioned the EC's inaction on complaints against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. They also flagged the Uttar Pradesh Police's practice of issuing "red cards" to individuals, asking them to stay away from polling stations on voting day. At the meeting, according to sources, the leaders expressed dismay at EC's public rebuttal.

Mr. Kharge's letter to chiefs of other INDIA parties, which he also posted on social media, cast doubts on the EC's func-



**Common claims:** The EC said it finds a pattern in a series of past and present statements from the Congress. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

tioning and wondered whether the "unusual spike" in the final voter turnout in comparison to the one released at the end of the day, was an attempt to "doctor" the final results.

"Though in the genre of internal correspondence within a political party grouping, yet you have chosen to make the same public," the EC noted. Placing such a letter in the public domain in the middle of the ongoing electoral process was designed to "create confusion, misdirection and an impediment to the conduct of smooth, free and fair elections", the panel said.

"Through innuendos and insinuations, the contents of the post, tend to create disharmony in respect of the delicate space

of election management, can plant doubts in the minds of voters and political parties and potentially created an anarchic situation, when you said 'could this be an attempt to doctor the final results?' which this commission hopes you do not have any intention of," the EC said.

The EC said it finds a "pattern" in a series of past and present irresponsible statements from the Congress, and called it "disconcerting".

Addressing reporters at the end of the one-hour-long meeting, Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi said that broadly two issues were raised. "We spoke about the great trust deficit, feeling of alarm and distress that 11 complaints by the Con-

gress alone and 15-20 complaints in total by all parties put together against the Honourable Prime Minister and Home Minister have not been addressed," he said. "If they [EC] don't act promptly, it is a complete abdication of their constitutional duty," he said.

On the issue of delay in releasing details of voter turnout and not explaining the "unusual" spike, Mr. Singhvi said, "The difference between the provisional figures and the final one, for the three phases of polling, was over 5%. This, in comparison to the corresponding figures from 2019 when the difference ranged from 1% to 2.5%, is directly double," he said.

## No assurance

The EC did not, as per at least three leaders who attended the meeting, give any assurance on the issues raised by the Opposition, though it agreed on one matter raised by Samajwadi Party MP Javed Ali Khan. "The Uttar Pradesh Police have been handing out 'red cards' to some people... Calling it a gross violation of the voter's right, the EC has assured us that they will direct the Uttar Pradesh Police to stop the practice," Mr. Khan said.

## Haryana govt. calls Cabinet meet as Cong. writes to Governor

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHANDIGARH

As the political turmoil continues in Haryana, after three Independent MLAs withdrew their support to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government, the Nayab Singh Saini Cabinet will meet on May 15.

In the meeting, according to sources, it is expected that a decision could be taken to convene a session of the State Assembly to prove the government's majority amid the ongoing political turmoil in which the incumbent government appears to be in the minority with 43 MLAs by its side.

In the 90-member Assembly, which currently has an effective strength of 88, the BJP needs 45 for a majority.

At least three disgruntled MLAs of the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), the former coalition partner in the government, have reportedly met the senior BJP leader and former Chief Minister Manohar Lal, fuelling speculation of these MLAs siding with the BJP.

## 'Fresh election'

The Congress, meanwhile, on Friday, handed over a memorandum and urged Governor Bandaru Dattatreya to dismiss the State government, impose Presi-



Bhopinder Singh Hooda

dent's Rule, and hold a fresh Assembly election.

In a letter to the Governor, Leader of the Opposition Bhopinder Singh Hooda said 45 MLAs are opposing this government while only 43 MLAs are now supporting the government, which shows that this government has lost the confidence of the majority of the MLAs in the present House.

"Ideally, the Chief Minister should resign on moral grounds but this government is unabashedly seeking shelter under sheer technicalities or rather unconstitutionality by claiming that they have the majority," Mr. Hooda said in the letter, urging the Governor to exercise his constitutional authority to dismiss this government immediately and order fresh elections under President's Rule.

## Come together, fight against dictatorship, says Arvind Kejriwal

**Satvika Mahajan**  
NEW DELHI

Minutes after walking out of the Tihar Jail here on Friday, Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo Arvind Kejriwal asked supporters to save the country from dictatorship.

The AAP chief started his address by shouting *Inquilab Zindabad* and *Vande Mantram*.

Addressing a large number of workers and some prominent AAP leaders, including his wife Sunita Kejriwal, Mr. Kejriwal said, "I appeal to all of you to come together and fight against dictatorship in the country."

"I had promised you I will be out soon. Here I am in front of you," he added.

AAP workers participated in a roadshow from the Tihar Jail to the Chief Minister's residence in Civil Lines. Mr. Kejriwal thanked the crores of people who supported him and showered him with blessings during the 50 days he spent in jail. He also thanked the Supreme



Arvind Kejriwal

Court judges for his bail.

On Saturday, the Chief Minister is likely to take part in an election roadshow for AAP candidate Sahi Ram Pehelwan in south Delhi.

While speaking to the media, the AAP leader said: "Our country is more than 4,000 years old. It's a great country but whenever anyone has tried to be dictatorial in the country, people haven't let them win. Today, the country is going through this dictatorial rule and is fighting against it but 140 crore [people] will have to come together to fight it. I appeal to everyone to fight this together."

## No restriction on political activities: SC

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday in the Arvind Kejriwal case confirmed that bail conditions restricting a political leader from political activities and public rallies amount to a breach of fundamental rights.

To reach this conclusion, a Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta referred to the very judgments quoted by the Directorate of Enforce-

ment (ED) against Mr. Kejriwal.

One of these judgments happened to concern former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's case. In this case, the top court had deleted the bail condition restricting his political participation.

"A coordinate Bench (of the Supreme Court) by an interim order had deleted the condition restraining Mr. Naidu from organising or participating in public

rallies and meetings, thereby permitting him to participate in the political process," the Bench pointed out. This petition seeking special leave to appeal is still pending.

The ED had earlier argued that Mr. Kejriwal should not be allowed interim bail because even the right to vote could be curtailed under Section 62(5) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. The agency argued that there was no fundamental right

to campaign in an election when one's right to vote itself could be restricted.

However, the court found a loophole in the argument. "Interestingly, the proviso to Section 62(5) states that a person subjected to preventive detention can vote". The court said there were several of its decisions which referred to the role of elections in a democracy as that of a barometer and the lifeline of the parliamentary system.

## 'Interim bail is granted based on facts'

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court order in the Arvind Kejriwal case said interim bail is granted based on the individual facts of each case.

A Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta has thus negated any propensity to use the interim bail order in the case of Mr. Kejriwal as a judicial precedent in the future.

"Power to grant interim bail is commonly exercised in a number of cases. Interim bail is granted in the

facts of each case. This case is not an exception," the order said on Friday.

The terse three sentences in the order countered arguments by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) that interim bail for the Delhi Chief Minister would be misused by unscrupulous politicians to seek the same relief.

"There are many politicians in judicial custody under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. There are also several political leaders in judicial custody throughout the

country in non-PMLA offences... If the court extends any interim relief to Mr. Kejriwal, there is no gainsaying that all of them would claim similar treatment claiming that politicians are a class of their own," the ED had contended in its affidavit on Thursday.

The Bench noted that the term "interim bail" is not defined in the Code of Criminal Procedure. But that has not stopped courts from extending jailed persons this temporary relief. "Interim" bail entailing

temporary release can be granted under compelling circumstances and grounds, even when regular bail would not be justified," the apex court said.

A situation of "intolerable grief and suffering" may be one of many reasons to justify the temporary release of an incarcerated person even though regular bail is not warranted, the court pointed out.

"Such situations are not difficult to recount, though making a catalogue would be an unnecessary exercise," the court said.

## Health Ministry issues norms for confirming heat-related deaths

**Bindu Shajan Perappadan**  
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry has issued standardised guidelines for confirming heatstroke and heat-related deaths in the country. Prepared by the National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health and the National Centre for Disease Control, the set of guidelines is aimed at helping hospitals become aware of the criteria to label a death as heat-related or heatstroke and bring in

evidence-based medical decision-making processes.

"The decision to conduct an autopsy should be based on the circumstances of the death, the age of the deceased, and the available resources. The collection of blood, urine, etc., for toxicological examination, is highly desirable if the condition of the body allows it. When these specimens are collected and preserved, toxicological analyses can be performed as resources be-

come available," the guidelines said. The note states that climate change is raising risks by increasing exposure to extreme heat events.

The guidelines have recommended that autopsy is not mandatory in all cases of heat-related illnesses and hospitals with the forensic medicine departments may be collaborated to perform the autopsies and send the samples to pathology departments for histopathological evaluation.

## Govt. notifies Act for armed forces' control

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The government has notified the Inter-Services Organisations (ISOs) (Command, Control, and Discipline) Act through a Gazette notification to be enforced with effect from Friday.

"The Act empowers Commanders-in-Chief and Officers-in-Command of ISOs to exercise control over Service personnel, serving under them, for effective maintenance of

discipline and administration, without disturbing the unique service conditions of each individual Service," the Ministry said. The Act will empower the heads of ISOs and pave the way for expeditious disposal of cases, avoid multiple proceedings and will be a step towards greater integration among the armed forces personnel, it stated.

The Act comes ahead of the planned reorganisation of the Indian military into integrated theatre commands.

## Plea questions EC's delay in publishing turnout data

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

A petition was filed in the Supreme Court on Friday highlighting the inordinate delay in the publication of voter turnout data after the first two phases of polling in the ongoing Lok Sabha election. The petition said the sharp spike in figures from the initial percentages released by the Election Commission have raised concerns and suspicion.

# ELECTIONS 2024



## 'Gandhi family, Amethi share a holy bond'

Addressing a public meeting in Amethi on Friday, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra highlighted the decades-old ties the Gandhi family shares with the constituency, adding that the relationship would never break. Ms. Vadra requested voters to support the Congress candidate and

described Amethi as her father's *karmabhoomi* and a holy land for herself. "This relation [between the Gandhi family and people of Amethi] is a holy bond, a relation of mutual respect, love, a bond of blood," said Ms. Vadra, addressing a public meeting in Amethi district. "Whosoever becomes your MP, indulges in any kind of politics, speaks 2,000 false narratives against us, even if you believe them, the relationship will not break," she added.



Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra at a public meeting in Amethi. ANI

## Parra defends reference to 'referendum'

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidate Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra, responding to a notice from the Election Commission (EC), clarified on Friday that the reference to a "referendum" was to highlight the "importance of the election and nothing else".

"The reference to the aspect that the 'ensuing election is no less than a referendum', only points towards the importance the present election holds and nothing else. Any other inference drawn by any person is not the intent of the undersigned," Mr. Parra said, in the reply. The EC, in its notice on Thursday, allowed two days' time to clear speeches made during campaigning in the Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency.



In Sandeshkhali, Trinamool tortured hundreds of our sisters based on religion. Mamata *didi* was not ready to arrest the criminals  
**AMIT SHAH**  
Union Home Minister

## Need 400 seats for 'unfinished' tasks: Assam CM

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday said the National Democratic Alliance needs to win at least 400 seats in the election to complete a number of "unfinished tasks". "We want to bring in the Uniform Civil Code in the country," he said.



Is the Congress a party of scams or not. Did Lalu's party indulge in a scam? *Sare bhrashtachariyon ka jamavda hai* (an assembly of the corrupt)  
**J.P. NADDA**  
BJP president



Raring to vote: A woman uses the vote-from-home facility in Srinagar on Thursday. REUTERS

## Srinagar sways to the sights and sounds of campaign

Peerzada Ashiq  
SRINAGAR

The Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency will vote on May 13 amid a poll fever in the once "boycott capital" of Jammu and Kashmir, which saw less than 14% voting in 2019. Rare late-evening door-to-door campaigns, musical events at rallies and whirring vehicles of political parties have brought with it a paradigm shift in mainstream politics here. It is the first time in over 30 years that ideology, and not the slogan of "*sadak, bijli, pani*" (road, electricity and water), has taken centre stage. With neither the BJP nor the Congress fielding candidates, it remains a contest mainly between former allies, National Conference (NC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), of the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration, an amalgam forged to restore the pre-August 5, 2019 position of the Union Territory. The J&K Apni Party, which came into being after 2019, has fielded Ashraf Mir, a former PDP leader, as the candidate. These elections are evenly poised between J&K's two main traditional parties, the NC and the PDP, who are slugging it out over ideology to win votes in a constituency considered the bastion of separatists. "This time the voting percentage will go up. It will also be a vote against the ongoing crackdown the Kashmiri society is facing at different levels," Rayees Ahmad, a private school teacher from the old city, said.

### Ideological vanguards

Conscious of the violent past and the sense of political awareness among voters in Srinagar, both the NC and the PDP fielded candidates who are ideological vanguards. The NC's Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi and the PDP's Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra emerged as the main voices to represent their respective political parties' ideological opposition to the BJP's move to end J&K's special constitutional position in 2019. The post-2019 speeches of Mr. Ruhullah, whose father was assassinated in 2000 in the Magam area of north Kashmir, earned him the reputation of being "the moral compass" of the NC. He has managed to shape the party's ideological discourse. "He is one who will fight for people's dignity and identity, if voted, at the highest platform of Parliament," NC vice-president Omar Abdullah said at a poll rally at Badamwari in Srinagar.

### Breaking silence

In the highly volatile pockets of south Kashmir such as Tahab, Chandgam, Begpora and Karimabad in Pulwama, which saw recruitment of scores of local people into militant ranks since 2013 and deaths of civilians in street protests, Mr. Parra is making a rare attempt to strike a chord with the population known for its deep sense of alienation and anger. He has managed to hold late-evening poll rallies in pockets that saw multiple militant attacks in the run-up to the election in 2019. "I want to break the silence imposed on people after 2019... We will fight for our land. We will end the persecution," Mr. Parra said. It's not just two lakh voters in the age group of 18-20, out of 17.4 lakh, who qualify to be first-time voters in Srinagar. A large section of those who boycotted elections for ideological reasons in the past are likely to become first-time voters this time.

## 'My focus is on a skill census and revival of democratic systems in A.P.'

People have lost their faith in the YSR Congress Party; there is a need to strengthen institutions in the State and empower the youth by honing their skills, says Jana Sena Party president, promising that the BJP-TDP-JSP alliance will bring about change

### INTERVIEW

## Pawan Kalyan

Appaji Reddem  
VIJAYAWADA

A skill census, developing the movie industry ecosystem, strengthening democratic systems and shaping Pithapuram as a spiritual hub are some of the plans for Andhra Pradesh envisaged by Pawan Kalyan, president of the Jana Sena Party, which is in alliance with the Telugu Desam Party and the BJP. He says the people of the State are scared of the present government and its policies. Edited excerpts:

### Post your marathon tours along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, TDP leader N. Chandrababu Naidu and others, what are your thoughts on the public mood?

When the YSR Congress Party regime began and the promises were made, people really believed Jagan Mohan Reddy and thought this guy would do something, taking his father as a touchstone. But reality turned out different and even the hardcore followers of Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy have become mute.



### You were very keen on the BJP-TDP-JSP alliance from the beginning. What's the motive and what's the value addition you expected out of it?

I grew up in Chennai. During my Chennai days, I came across an article which dealt with M.G. Ramachandran, Indira Gandhi and the issue of Krishna water for Tamil Nadu. I remembered one line and that is... for a State to prosper, Centre's cooperation is very crucial. In a federal structure, Centre's support to States is very important.

When it comes to the BJP, more importantly Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it's a special connect. When the repeated terrorist attacks happened in different parts of the country, my generation and the next generation wanted a strong and ideal leader who could motivate, instil confidence and take the country to such a strong pedestal that the anti-social elements and terrorists would be scared of touching Indian integrity. And I saw such a strong leader in Mr. Modi and that's the reason why I aligned with him in 2014. Now we continue sailing with the BJP, along with the TDP. Mr. Modi understands the need of the hour. We need a person of such traits for the alliance for the good of the country and the State.

### What are the Jana Sena Party's promises? What kind of changes do you want to bring in?

We need to restore and strengthen the democratic systems. In A.P., successive governments, except the TDP, have successfully killed the systems. For instance, during Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy's regime, recall how many IAS offic-

ers went to jail. I went against the TDP government in a couple of instances but there was no vendetta, it was issue-based. Now in A.P., entire democratic institutions are failing. My primary motto is to strengthen democracy by strengthening the institutions. Individuals build institutions and institutions build individuals.

Secondly, we all think of demographic dividends. But if you look at the youth in A.P., most of them are clueless about the resources to empower them. Even I suffered from a lack of guidance in my youth. I was clueless till I was 20 years old and was a late learner. Personally, I feel we have a responsibility to strengthen youth through the right education, right skills, right hobbies etc. For that, I propose the concept of 'Skill Census'.

There is no skill identification process and career guidance in the present set-up. We need to groom youth with diversified skill sets.

### What's your take on building an ecosystem for the film industry?

I think we should definitely create an ecosystem for the movie industry here. There should be less interference in the economic affairs of the industry and more governance. What

we have now is maximum interference and maximum violence in A.P. We need to have a single window system for all the approvals and permissions. You have to create enough infrastructure.

### Coming to Pithapuram, the constituency you are contesting from, how do you perceive people's support and the fight from the YSR Congress Party candidate?

I'm thankful that the people are giving me a great opportunity to serve them. Coming to the Opposition, I believe, we need to have it in the democratic set-up. But the present government has not paid attention to development. The government has opened doors for the free movement of *ganja* and people are scared.

Pithapuram should be a religious and spiritual hub as well as a developmental cluster. Enough avenues need to be developed for employment opportunities for the youth. The coastal belt can be developed till Kakinada to make it a tourist destination. Several parts of Pithapuram are undeveloped. Connecting all the temples with sufficient infrastructure can make it a spiritual hub. (Full interview at [bit.ly/pawankalyanonpolls](http://bit.ly/pawankalyanonpolls))

## Modi will not return as PM after polls: Rahul in U.P.

Mayank Kumar  
LUCKNOW

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday said Narendra Modi will not become the Prime Minister again after the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

"Take it in writing, Narendra Modi will not become the Prime Minister of India," said Mr. Gandhi, addressing a joint rally of the INDIA bloc in support of Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav in Kannauj.

Mr. Gandhi said the BJP will suffer its biggest loss of seats from Uttar Pradesh because the people of the State have decided to vote in favour of the Opposition alliance. "An INDIA bloc storm is arriving in U.P., people have made up their mind to bring change and unseat the BJP," he said.

Mr. Gandhi said the country is witnessing an ideological battle between the INDIA bloc and the BJP-RSS. "On one hand you have the INDIA bloc, aiming to save the democratic and constitutional values of our republic, while on the other side, the BJP-RSS is trying to dismantle its foundational ideas," said Mr. Gandhi.

Speaking at a public event in Lucknow, Mr. Gandhi, who is contesting from Rae Bareilly, invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a debate. "I am ready to debate with Narendra Modi anywhere, but he will not debate with me," he said.

## BJP strives to breach BJD fortress in Odisha first phase

Satvasundar Barik  
BHUBANESWAR

It is not often that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) deploys its entire top leadership - including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and party president J.P. Nadda - to campaign in a single Lok Sabha constituency.

Over the past three months, party heavyweights have held separate public meetings in Berhampur in Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's home district, as the saffron party makes an audacious attempt to breach the fortress of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), the State's ruling party.

Berhampur is one of the four Lok Sabha constituencies in Odisha where polling will take place on May 13, the first phase of the election in the State; the other three are Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, and Koraput.

After scrutiny, 37 candidates remain in the fray for the four Lok Sabha seats, while 243 candidates will fight it out for the 28 seats in the Assembly election.



(left) BJP supporters gather during a public rally of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Berhampur, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik waves towards BJD supporters in the constituency. ANI, BISWARANJAN ROUT

The electoral showdown in Berhampur is taking place between Pradeep Panigrahy, a former close aide of the Chief Minister and BJP candidate, and Bhruhu Baxipatra, who recently switched sides to the BJD after a long association with the BJP. The BJP sees a potential triumph in Berhampur as a blow to Mr. Patnaik, the five-time Chief Minister, especially in his own home district.

The BJP has never won in Berhampur, Koraput, or Nabarangpur on its own. The party's last win in Berhampur was in 1999, but it was in alliance with the BJD at the time. Similarly, Nabarangpur, in the south-

ernmost part of Odisha, has been held by the BJD since 2014. While the BJP held Nabarangpur in 1999 and 2004, it was only through its alliance with the BJD. Koraput has remained elusive for the BJP.

### Triangular fight

Apart from Berhampur, Mr. Modi addressed a public meeting in Nabarangpur, where his party had polled a significant number of votes in past elections. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma addressed a rally in Malkangiri district, part of the Nabarangpur constituency, to win over Bengali Hindu voters. The constituency may

see a triangular fight between the BJD's Pradeep Majhi, the BJP's Balabhadra Majhi and Congress candidate Bhujabala Majhi.

In Koraput, Saptagiri Ulaka, the lone Congress MP from Odisha, faces an uphill task to retain his seat. Mr. Ulaka faces Kausalya Hikaka of the BJD and Kaliram Majhi of the BJP. This traditional stronghold of the Congress was won by the BJD in 2009 and 2014.

The BJP, which in 2019 won Kalahandi in western Odisha, has changed its candidate this time to offset allegations of non-performance. To retain its grip, it has turned to Malvi-

ka Keshari Deo, a member of Kalahandi's erstwhile royal family. She will face a tough challenge from the BJD's Lambodhar Nial, who belongs to the dominant Yadav community. The Congress has reposed its faith in newcomer Draupadi Majhi.

However, it is an Independent candidate who is drawing much of the attention: Dharmananda Gahir, who quit his job as an assistant professor at Delhi's Ramjas College, has plunged into electoral politics to highlight labour migration issues.

The four Lok Sabha constituencies, which span 500 km from one end to the other, were earlier affected by left-wing extremism. Though the impact of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist) has now waned, security forces have been mobilised in large numbers for the smooth conduct of the election.

All eyes are on the voting in Swabhiman Anchal, a former bastion of left-wing extremism that became part of the mainstream following area domination by security

forces. Another area of interest is the Kotia group of villages, whose jurisdiction has been claimed by Odisha and Andhra Pradesh; many voters have announced that they plan to vote for candidates of both States.

### In limelight

In the Assembly election, the profiles of candidates give a glimpse into aspects of societal representation in the State election. Two Independent candidates have stolen the limelight.

Padia Padiami, an electrician, was pushed to fight the election as an Independent candidate by villagers from Chimitapalli and other villages nearby, in the Chittrakonda Assembly constituency. He meets election expenses through crowd-funding.

Dambaru Sisa, who belongs to the Bonda community, a particularly vulnerable tribal group, is in the fray in Chittrakonda as a BJP candidate.

Suchitra Majhi had filed her nomination as an Independent candidate from Gunupur to take forward her anti-mining resistance movement.

IN BRIEF



Modi threat to parliamentary democracy: Sharad Pawar

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) supremo Sharad Pawar said on Friday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi poses a threat to parliamentary democracy. He said he would not form alliances with those who don't uphold democratic principles. His reaction comes hours after Mr. Modi suggested the Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) join hands with Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and his deputy Ajit Pawar after the Lok Sabha polls instead of merging with the Congress.

Repolling in four booths in M.P. seat sees 72.97% turnout

A voter turnout of 72.97% was recorded at four booths in Madhya Pradesh's Betul Lok Sabha seat where repolling took place on Friday after electronic voting machines (EVMs) used in the May 7 voting were damaged in a fire, an official said. The voting started at 7 a.m. and ended at 6 p.m., the official added. The EC on Wednesday ordered repolling at the four booths after a few EVMs were damaged when a bus ferrying the gadgets and polling personnel post-voting caught fire on Tuesday near Sonora Gaula village.

NCW urges EC to look into Sandeshkhali allegations

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Claiming that women from Sandeshkhali in West Bengal were being forced to withdraw their complaints by the Trinamool Congress, the National Commission for Women (NCW) on Friday asked the Election Commission to inquire into the matter.

The NCW said a few women had suddenly taken back their complaints against Sheikh Shahjahan, who along with his aides are among the key accused in cases of land grab and sexual harassment.

The NCW said its Chairperson sent a letter to the poll body highlighting the "alarming situation where women are allegedly being threatened into retracting their cases and providing false statements and creating an atmosphere of fear for women".

It urged the poll body to take proactive measures to ensure that women were not subjected to undue pressure that may compromise the sanctity of the electoral process.

Congress says it doesn't agree with Aiyar's remarks on Pak.

After old video resurfaces, Opposition party dissociates itself from comments by leader; it counters BJP with an interview of Union Minister Jaishankar advising against picking up a fight with China

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The resurfacing of an old video of Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar in which he talks of treating Pakistan with respect triggered a political row on Friday, with the BJP accusing the Congress of becoming an 'apologist' for Pakistan.

The Congress promptly dissociated itself from Mr. Aiyar's comment, but countered the BJP with a video interview of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar advising against picking up a fight with China.

Mr. Aiyar said the video was old and dug up now as the BJP's election campaign is faltering. "It is obvious from the sweater I am wearing that my comments to 'Chill Pill' were made in the winter several months ago. They have been dredged up now as the BJP's election campaign falters. I refuse to play their game," he said in a statement.



In trouble: Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar during a meeting in Visakhapatnam in February. V. RAJU

In the video that has gone viral on social media, Mr. Aiyar is heard saying that India should give respect to Pakistan as it is a sovereign nation and also possesses an atom bomb. If a "mad person" were to come to power there and uses the atom bomb, it will have its effect here too, Mr. Aiyar added.

BJP takes on Congress Targeting the Congress, the BJP fielded Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar to corner the Opposition party

in the middle of the election season. Mr. Chandrasekhar said that "new India" does not fear anyone and that the Congress leader's remark reflects the intentions, policies and ideology of the party. "The Congress under Rahul Gandhi has become an apologist and defender of Pakistan and its terrorism," he said.

Quick response The Congress was quick to distance itself from Mr. Aiyar's comments, and said

he does not speak for the party in any capacity whatsoever.

"Indian National Congress dissociates itself completely from and disagrees totally with some remarks made by Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar a few months back which have been revived today by the BJP in its attempt to deflect attention from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's daily goof-ups. Mr. Aiyar does not speak for the party in any capacity whatsoever," Congress leader Pawan Khera said in a post on X.

Mr. Khera too shared an old video of Mr. Jaishankar in which the Union Minister, while answering a question on India and China facing off, wondered if India would "as a smaller economy go pick up a fight with a bigger economy (China)". "If old videos are to be used, here is a not so old video where the External Affairs Minister is publicly advising India to be afraid of China," Mr. Khera pointed out.

PoK belongs to India, says Shah as he slams Aiyar

The Hindu Bureau  
PATNA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday slammed senior Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar over his comments on Pakistan, asserting that Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) is part of India and nobody can snatch it.

"Mani Shankar Aiyar is threatening the country to give respect to Pakistan as they have the atom bomb. A few days ago, Farooq Abdullah, the leader of the same INDIA bloc, had said that don't talk about PoK, Pakistan has the atom bomb. I want to tell the Congress and the alliance that PoK belongs to India, no one can snatch it," Mr. Shah said at a rally in Khunti, Jharkhand.

"Instead of taking back PoK from Pakistan, Congress is scaring the people of India by talking about the atom bomb. I don't know what has happened to the Congress party. The BJP's stand is clear that every inch of land of PoK belongs to India and should remain in India," he said.

Caste equations hold the key in 5 Bihar seats going to the polls

Amarnath Tewary  
PATNA

Munger, Begusarai, Samastipur, Ujjarpur, and Darbhanga will vote in the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha election on May 13 in Bihar with 56 candidates in the fray. Political parties have fielded contestants keeping in mind caste equations that are known to influence election in Bihar.

From Munger, former Janata Dal(U) president Rajiv Ranjan Singh, aka Lalan Singh, a sitting MP and a close aide of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, is contesting against the Mahagathbandhan candidate, Anita Kumari Mahto, of the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). Ms. Mahto, 45, married the main accused of the Nawada jailbreak incident and Apsadh massacre case, Ashok Mahto, 57, and got ticket to contest. Since Ashok had served 17 years in prison, he could not fight the election.

In 2019, Mr. Lalan had defeated the Opposition's Congress candidate, Nilam Devi, the wife of babubali (strongman) Anant Singh. Both Mr. Lalan and Ms. Devi are from the upper caste Bhumihar community.

This time, the Opposition RJD has fielded Ms. Anita, an OBC candidate, hoping to pocket the community's votes along with votes from the Extremely Backward Classes (EBC) and Muslims.

In Begusarai, the firebrand BJP leader and Union Minister Giriraj Singh is pitted against the Mahagathbandhan candidate, Awadhesh Kumar Rai, of the CPI. In 2019, Mr. Singh had defeated CPI candidate and former Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union president Kanhaiya Kumar, who is also from Begusarai, by more than 4 lakh votes. In that election, the RJD had fielded Tanvir Akhtar who cut into the vote share of Mr. Kumar.

Begusarai has been a Left bastion and was once known as the "Leningrad of Bihar". The constituency has a sizeable number of Bhumihar voters. But Muslims, Yadavs (OBC), and EBCs play a crucial role in deciding the fate of contestants. The CPI candidate is a Yadav, and he is expected to give a tough fight to Mr. Singh. Among the Bhumihars, the community to which Mr. Singh belongs to, the slogan do-



Duty bound: People waiting in queue outside a polling station during the third phase of Lok Sabha polls on May 7. PTI

ing the rounds is "Giriraj majboori hai, lekin Modi jaruri hai (Giriraj is a compulsion, but Modi is necessary)".

Reserved seat

Samastipur is a reserved Lok Sabha constituency from where the youngest Dalit candidate of the State, Sambhavi Choudhary, 25, of the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), led by Chirag Paswan, is contesting against the Congress candidate, Sunny Hazari, 33. Both come from SC communities and are children of Ministers in the Nitish Kumar-led Cabinet.

Maheshwar Hazari, who was also the former Deputy Speaker of the Assem-

bly, however, is not campaigning for his son and has said he will be with the Chief Minister. Ashok Choudhary is campaigning for his daughter Ms. Sambhavi.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, Prince Raj, the nephew of then united Lok Janshakti Party chief Ram Vilas Paswan, had won by defeating the Congress candidate, Ashok Kumar, by a margin of over 1 lakh votes. However, after Paswan's death in October 2020, the party split. When the BJP made a seat-sharing deal with the LJP (Ram Vilas) for the 2024 election and the party got five seats to contest from, including Samastipur, Mr.

Raj was dropped and Ms. Sambhavi was named the surprise candidate.

Both Mr. Sunny and Ms. Sambhavi are expected to give a tough fight to each other and are highlighting issues of non-development and recurring flood.

In Darbhanga, the BJP has reposed faith in its sitting MP, Gopalji Thakur, while the Mahagathbandhan candidate is the RJD's Lalit Yadav. In the last election, Mr. Thakur had defeated the RJD candidate, Abdul Bari Siddiqui, by over 2.5 lakh votes.

Mr. Yadav is the RJD MLA from Darbhanga Rural Assembly seat and is a long-time leader. In July 2000, he was a Minister in the Cabinet of the RJD government led by Lalu Prasad and was accused of plucking out the nails of a Dalit truck driver and the vehicle's cleaner. He was infamously called the "monster of Bihar" by the media.

On May 4, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a public meeting in favour of Mr. Thakur in Darbhanga. The constituency has Brahmin voters and a sizeable number of Yadav and Muslim voters

who can influence the poll result.

In the Ujjarpur Lok Sabha constituency, the BJP has fielded its MP and Union Home Minister for State Nityanand Rai against the Mahagathbandhan candidate, Alok Mehta (RJD). In the 2019 election, Mr. Rai had defeated the now-defunct Rashtriya Lok Samata Party's Upendra Kushwaha by over 2.7 lakh votes. Mr. Kushwaha's party is now renamed the Rashtriya Lok Morcha and he is contesting the election from the Karakat seat.

The RJD's Mr. Mehta is an MLA from the Ujjarpur Assembly seat and has been a Minister several times in the Mahagathbandhan government. He has been a founder member of the RJD and is said to be the political mentor of Tejashwi Yadav. Both Mr. Rai and Mr. Mehta come from the OBC community and are considered suave leaders. While Mr. Rai has highlighted Mr. Modi's "magic" and the NDA government's welfare schemes, Mr. Mehta has campaigned against the "falseness and propaganda of the Modi government".

Why is PM not taking action against Adani, Ambani: Congress

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Attacking Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his allegations that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has gone "silent" in his criticism of top industrialists "Adani-Ambani" as they have bribed the Opposition, the Congress asked why the PM has not used investigative agencies against them if he has actionable evidence.

In a statement, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said that Mr. Modi has "trapped himself" with his remarks and will find it difficult to "extricate himself".

Mr. Ramesh said that the Prime Minister's accusation - that "Adani and Ambani" had supplied the Opposition with bags of cash, transported in "Tempo" vans, describing the alleged cash as "chori ka maal (loot)" - is an unexpected attack on India's "top wealth creators" that raises several questions.

"How does the PM know

that Adani and Ambani supply bags of cash loaded in Tempos? If he has this knowledge, why has he not done anything about it? What has prevented him from using his pet investigative agencies against Adani and Ambani if he has such detailed and actionable information?" Mr. Ramesh asked.

Alleged PM-Adani ties

The Congress leader asserted that his party and Mr. Gandhi "have long questioned the PM's close relationship with Adani and other monopolists".

"In 2023, we asked the PM 100 pointed questions under the Hum Adani ke Hain Kaun (HAHK) series. Is the PM now breaking his long silence with a confession to the nation about receiving bags of cash in tempos? The close and durable relationship between the PM and Adani, and the length to which the PM has gone to protect Adani's illegalities, is well known to most Indians," Mr. Ramesh said.

Crossword puzzle section with a grid and clues. The crossword is titled 'CROSSWORD + 14172' and is set by Incognito. Clues include: 14 List of mistakes traitor committed in long period of time (6), 16 Tight fitting arms? Rejected! (4), 17 Legendary female's warning device (5), 18 Short army officer's ship (4), 19 Wrong stance for climbing (6), 20 She clued wrongly for 'timetable' (8), 23 Perhaps, blind person from Italian city (8), 26 Bird sitting on Chinese spanner (6), 27 Take more money that merited for fleece (10), 28 Thanks! Thanks again! Goodbye! (2-2). Down clues include: 1 Republican takes umbrage and submits petition (10), 2 Urgent! It is decreasing! (8), 3 Scheme with alien for Earth, for example (6), 4 Has title to sow walking around middle of ranch (4), 5 Operator consumes tail of last fish (8), 6 After loss of temperature, mix water with a couple of poles to get solution (6), 7 Note: Church creatures (4), 11 Day, for example, in Abbottabad or Islamabad (5), 15 In Chennai locality, Tamil leader mentioned instead of name in three copies (10), 17 How an intoxicated person may take seat and refuse to move? (3,5), 18 Wildly stabbed around heart of model to get unrecoverable dues (3,5), 20 Old dear builds portico (6), 22 That lady swallowed a bird? It's a stupid mistake! (6), 24 English victory is hollow... results in jealousy (4), 25 Standard type of gate fixed to rear end of tram (4).

Sudoku puzzle section. It features a 9x9 grid with some numbers filled in. The puzzle is titled 'SUDOKU' and has a difficulty rating of five stars. Below the grid is a solution to the previous puzzle and a solution to yesterday's Sudoku. The solution to yesterday's Sudoku is: 9 2 1 8 5 6 3 7 4, 8 4 7 1 3 2 5 9 6, 3 5 6 9 7 4 8 1 2, 1 6 5 2 4 9 7 3 8, 7 9 3 6 8 5 4 2 1, 2 8 4 7 1 3 9 6 5, 5 1 8 3 2 7 6 4 9, 6 3 2 4 9 8 1 5 7, 4 7 9 5 6 1 2 8 3.

Advertisement for Sandal incense. It features the brand name 'Sandal' and 'MANGALDEEP' with a QR code. Below the advertisement is a section titled 'FAITH' with the sub-heading 'Service to mankind'. The text discusses the name Seshan, which means someone who serves his guru or lord with utmost devotion. It mentions that Adi Seshan serves Mahavishnu at all times, even during his avatars - as Lakshmana when the Lord manifested as Rama and as Balarama during Krishna Avatar. In Kali Yuga, Adi Seshan appeared as the great preceptor Ramanuja in order to help people reconnect with divinity, said Tirukkudanthai Dr. Venkatesh in a discourse. Ramanuja's mission is five-fold, says Manavala Mamuni-gal. First, he taught the world that god resides within a person. Secondly, in Kali Yuga when sins are multiplying, he established that moksha is not the purview of merely a few privileged people, but is within reach of anyone who surrenders to the Lord. Third, his unstinting efforts to inculcate bhakti in all had positive results: it is said that proliferation of sinners burdens Mother Earth. Fourth, he ensured that the Tamil pasurams of the Azhvars, encapsulating the essence of Vedas, were given their due importance, and reached a wider audience. Last but not the least, he showed the faithful that the great idols in various temples such as Sri Rangam, Srimushnam, Kanchipuram, Kumbakonam, etc., were not mere symbols, but archa avatars: resident gods offering succour to the devout.

**IN BRIEF**



**ITA seeks Centre's support for ailing Darjeeling tea industry**

The Indian Tea Association (ITA) on Friday reiterated its plea for financial assistance from the Centre to support the struggling Darjeeling tea industry. Without a financial relief package, the survival of the Darjeeling tea industry is in jeopardy, the association said, adding that it has urged the government to consider and act upon a financial revival package endorsed by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce in March 2022. PTI

**Insurer Go Digit fixes IPO price band at ₹258-272 a share**

Go Digit General Insurance has announced an IPO of its equity shares in the price band of ₹258-272 per share. The IPO will open on Wednesday for subscription and close on Friday. Investors can bid for a minimum of 55 equity shares and in multiples of 55 shares thereafter. The offer with a face value of ₹10 per equity share is a mix of fresh issue of ₹1,125 crore and an offer for sale up to 54.77 million equity shares by promoters and other selling shareholders.

**Wipro appoints Vinay Firake as CEO for APMEA region**

Wipro Ltd. has appointed Vinay Firake as Chief Executive Officer, Asia Pacific, India, Middle East & Africa (APMEA) Strategic Market Unit (SMU), with immediate effect. Mr. Firake will report to Sridi Pallia and will also join Wipro's executive board. He succeeds Anis Chenchah, who is stepping down to pursue opportunities outside the organisation, the company said. Mr. Firake will be based in Dubai. He has been with Wipro for 26 years in various leadership roles.

**Sundaram Clayton Q4 net loss narrows QoQ**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Sundaram-Clayton Ltd. (SCL) reported fourth-quarter consolidated net loss narrowed to ₹47 crore, from ₹63 crore in the preceding three months.

Revenue from operations slid by ₹9 crore to ₹555 crore, while materials costs rose by ₹32 crore to ₹322 crore.

As per the arrangement approved by NCLT Chennai Bench, TVS Holdings Ltd.'s manufacturing business along with assets and liabilities was demerged, transferred and vested into SCL from August 11, 2023. Hence results for March 2024 began only from August 11, 2023, it said.

**Citi upgrades India to 'overweight' on stable earnings, growth view**

**Reuters**  
BENGALURU

Citigroup analysts upgraded India to 'overweight' from 'neutral' in their emerging-markets allocation on Friday, citing strong earnings and economic growth momentum.

The brokerage expects India's blue-chip NSE Nifty 50 index to rise 7% between now and the end of the current financial year ending March 2025.

The Nifty 50 closed at 22,055.2 on Friday. It had underperformed the MSCI Emerging Market Index in 2024 so far. Citi's view is underpinned by the expectation India's economy will remain strong, growing at 6.8% in the current fiscal.

**Tata Motors Q4 net triples to ₹17,407 crore as JLR buoys**

The Jaguar Land Rover unit posted a 11% YoY increase in revenue to £7.9 billion, helping lift overall profitability at the maker of EVs and trucks; says 'cautiously optimistic' on FY25 domestic demand

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MUMBAI

Tata Motors Ltd. reported fourth-quarter consolidated net profit surged more than threefold to ₹17,407.18 crore, from ₹5,407.79 crore in the year-earlier period, propelled by a strong showing at its Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) luxury unit and a jump in tax credit.

Revenue for the quarter ended March 31 rose 13.5% to ₹1,19,213.35 crore.

JLR logged "another record-breaking quarter" in Q4, the company said. Revenue rose 11% YoY to ₹7.9

**Top gear**

Tata Motors' JLR business propelled a surge in Q4 profit as revenue at the U.K.-based luxury unit rose 6% QoQ

JLR generated free cash flow of £2.3 billion, enabling it to reduce net debt to £0.7 billion

For FY24, consolidated net profit vaulted more than 13-fold to ₹31,399.09 crore

Tata Motors says it expects H1 domestic demand to be 'relatively weaker'



billion, which was 6% higher on a sequential basis.

"We have delivered a record financial performance... generating free cashflow of ₹2.3 billion,

enabling us to reduce net debt to £0.7 billion, JLR CEO Adrian Mardell said in a statement.

For FY24, consolidated net profit vaulted more

than 13-fold to ₹31,399.09 crore as revenue climbed 27% to ₹4,34,984.12 crore.

"It is pleasing to report the FY24 results... Tata Motors Group delivered its highest-ever revenues, profits, and free cash flows," Tata Motors Group CFO P.B. Balaji said on a post-earnings call. "We are on track to become net automotive debt free on a consolidated basis in FY25," he added.

"We remain cautiously optimistic on domestic demand over the full year and expect H1 to be relatively weaker," the company said in the statement.

**Bank of India Q4 net rises 7% to ₹1,439 cr., NII increases by 7%**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MUMBAI

Bank of India Ltd. (BOI) reported fourth-quarter net profit grew 7% year-on-year (YoY) to ₹1,439 crore.

Operating profit was lower at ₹3,557 crore as against ₹4,184 crore in the year-earlier period. Q4 Net Interest Income (NII) rose 7% to ₹5,937 crore.

BOI's FY24 net profit rose 57% to ₹6,318 crore. Operating profit improved 5.05% to ₹14,069 crore.

NII for the full year rose

14% to ₹23,053 crore.

**Global business**

BOI's global business increased 11.7% to ₹13,23,515 crore in FY24, from ₹11,85,438 crore in FY23.

Global deposits increased 10.2% from ₹6,69,586 crore in FY23 to ₹7,37,920 crore in FY24.

Global advances increased 13.5% from ₹5,15,852 crore in FY23 to ₹5,85,595 crore in FY24.

Gross NPA slid 23% from ₹37,686 crore in FY23 to ₹29,183 crore in FY24.

**TVS Holdings to buy 81% stake in Home Credit India for ₹554 cr.**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

TVS Holdings Ltd. (TVSH), Premji Invest and other associates will acquire 100% equity stake in Home Credit India Finance Pvt. Ltd. for a total consideration of ₹680 crore to expand its presence in the consumer finance space.

TVSH said it agreed to buy 80.74% stake from Netherlands-based Home Credit India B.V. and Czech Republic-based Home Credit International A.S. for a

cash consideration of ₹554 crore, and the remaining 19.26% would be purchased by Premji Invest and other associates.

"Financial services represent a huge opportunity for penetration and growth in India," TVSH MD Sudarshan Venu said at a press meet.

He said the acquisition aligned with TVSH Group's strategy to play a leading role in deepening financial penetration in India, and collectively it would have a book of ₹32,000 crore.



**BoB Q4 net hit by Go First exposure, pension provisions**

**Press Trust of India**  
MUMBAI

State-run Bank of Baroda (BoB) on Friday reported a 2.3% growth in standalone net profit to ₹4,886 crore for the March quarter, restricted by a hit due to its exposure to the grounded airline Go First and also setting aside money towards pension liabilities.

On a consolidated basis, the lender's net profit declined to ₹5,132 crore, from ₹5,255 crore in the year-earlier period. For FY24, it rose to ₹18,767 crore, from ₹14,905 crore.

Non-interest income rose 20.9% to ₹4,191 crore.

Without naming Go First, CEO and MD Debajyoti Chandra said the bank recognised an aviation account with a ₹1,700-crore exposure as a non-performing asset during the quarter, and also decided to provide for it fully within a single quarter leading to a huge jump in provision for NPAs to ₹1,485 crore from ₹320 crore.

Also, a UAE-based hospitality account with a ₹500-crore exposure also slipped during the quarter.

**MARKETS**

**MARKET WATCH**

	FRIDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	72,664	0.36
US Dollar	83.51	-0.03
Gold	73,200	-1.31
Brent oil	82.91	-1.03

**NIFTY 50**

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	2797.25	-30.60
Adani Ports	1266.75	-22.20
Apollo Hosp	5842.45	-36.05
Asian Paints	2771.25	-61.15
Axis Bank	1120.10	-4.45
Bajaj Auto	8984.80	-134.95
Bajaj Finserv	1572.70	-8.10
Bajaj Finance	6684.15	-79.00
Bharti Airtel	1301.15	-25.70
BPCL	618.65	-26.50
Britannia Ind	5065.80	-3.30
Cipla	1339.55	-19.25
Coal India	449.40	-5.90
Divis Lab	3793.50	-3.55
Dr Reddys Lab	5921.00	-43.65
Eicher Motors	4657.85	-89.80
Grasim Ind.	2377.15	-23.45
HCL Tech	1316.20	-3.85
HDFC Bank	1437.90	-9.60
HDFC Life	548.55	-9.00
Hero MotoCorp	4877.40	-112.50
Hindalco	625.60	-6.20
Hind Unilever	2362.55	-36.90
ICI Bank	1117.05	-1.35
IndusInd Bank	1410.15	-8.70
Infosys	1424.90	-14.65
ITC	433.35	-8.25
JSW Steel	853.60	-19.95
Kotak Bank	1627.95	-15.15
L&T	3271.45	-4.00
LTIMindtree Ltd.	4607.65	-50.35
M&M	2193.05	-19.50
Maruti Suzuki	12675.50	-170.85
NestleIndia	2533.20	-19.75
NTPC	355.50	-9.45
ONGC	270.25	-5.00
PowerGrid Corp	303.75	-7.60
Reliance Ind	2814.85	-26.60
SBI Life	1431.95	-9.55
State Bank	817.35	-2.45
Shriram Finance		
Ltd.	2344.35	-16.55
Sun Pharma	1506.55	-11.90
Tata Consumer Pro-		
duct.	1090.95	-5.90
Tata Motors	1046.65	-16.35
Tata Steel	162.25	-0.35
TCS	3893.90	-66.30
Tech Mahindra	1264.40	-4.70
Titan	3289.85	-44.15
UltraTech Cement	9491.70	-45.60
Wipro	451.85	-4.05

**EXCHANGE RATES**

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on May 10

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.30	83.62
Euro	89.80	90.15
British Pound	104.38	104.79
Japanese Yen (100)	53.49	53.70
Chinese Yuan	11.53	11.58
Swiss Franc	91.88	92.24
Singapore Dollar	61.55	61.80
Canadian Dollar	60.88	61.12
Malaysian Ringgit	17.57	17.65
Australian Dollar	55.08	55.29

Source: Indian Bank

**Chola Financial Holdings Q4 consolidated net rises 27% to ₹1,144 cr.**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Cholamandalam Financial Holdings Ltd.'s (CFHL) consolidated net profit for the

quarter ended March rose 27% YoY to ₹1,144 crore.

Revenue from operations increased to ₹7,083 crore from ₹5,186 crore, of which the financial seg-

ment accounted for ₹5,428 crore and insurance segment for ₹1,751 crore, the core investment company of the Murugappa Group said in a statement.

Cholamandalam Investment & Finance Co. Ltd. disbursed ₹24,784 crore against ₹21,020 crore with a 24% increase in net profit to ₹1,058 crore. Assets un-

der management grew by 36% to ₹1,53,718 crore.

The board declared a final dividend of 55 paise per share, which will be paid by September 7.

**BPCL mulls investing ₹1.7 lakh cr. in core, new energy units**

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL) plans to invest ₹1.7 lakh crore over the next five years in its core oil refining, fuel marketing and petrochemical business and in clean energy such as hydrogen, Chairman G. Krishnakumar said on Friday.

As part of 'Project Aspire', a five-year strategic framework, BPCL plans to raise its oil-refining capacity, augment petrochemical business and expand its presence in cleaner fuel space with an eye on ener-



gy transition and meeting country's fuel demand, he said during earnings call.

Mr. Krishnakumar said growth in demand for petrol is expected to be about 5% and diesel about 1.5-2%.

On price outlook, he said the expectation is prices would be in the range of \$83-87 per barrel.

**'PNB may close institutional share sale in six months'**

**Reuters**  
MUMBAI

Punjab National Bank (PNB) aims at closing a planned share sale to large investors over the next six months, its CEO said, as the state-run lender looks to shore up capital.

Banks in Asia's third-largest economy are boosting capital base to meet the rising demand for loans. The country's largest lender, State Bank of India, is also open to raise equity capital. Punjab National Bank's board had in December approved a ₹75 billion (\$898 million) fund raise through equity capital.

**Sundaram-Clayton Limited**

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CIN : U51100TN2017PLC118316

**STATEMENT OF STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND PERIOD ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2024**

(₹ in Crores)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Standalone			Consolidated		
		Quarter ended	Quarter ended	Period ended	Quarter ended	Quarter ended	Period ended
		31.03.2024	31.12.2023	31.03.2024	31.03.2024	31.12.2023	31.03.2024
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited
1	Total Income	540.01	533.78	1,375.80	562.49	587.05	1,449.19
2	Net Profit / (Loss) before tax (before Exceptional Items)	29.59	28.70	88.80	(38.40)	(51.81)	(95.77)
3	Net Profit / (Loss) before tax (after Exceptional Items)	29.22	27.58	87.20	(38.77)	(52.93)	(97.37)
4	Net Profit / (Loss) after tax (after Exceptional Items)	20.73	17.61	64.52	(47.34)	(62.90)	(120.13)
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income / (Loss) (after tax)]	20.06	17.58	62.92	(48.01)	(62.93)	(121.73)
6	Equity share Capital (Face value of Rs.5/- each)	10.12	10.12	10.12	10.12	10.12	10.12
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	-	-	787.49	-	-	590.04
8	Security Premium Account	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	Network	797.61	787.12	797.61	600.16	656.99	600.16
10	Outstanding Debt	975.78	861.46	975.78	1,417.37	1,305.72	1,417.37
11	Outstanding redeemable Preference Shares	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87
12	Net Debt Equity Ratio (Times)	1.22	1.08	1.22	2.34	1.94	2.34
13	Earnings Per Share (Face value of Rs.5/- each) (not annualised) (In Rs.)						
	(i) Basic	10.25	8.70	31.89	(23.40)	(31.08)	(59.38)
	(ii) Diluted	10.25	8.70	31.89	(23.40)	(31.08)	(59.38)
14	Capital Redemption Reserve						
15	Debenture Redemption Reserve						
16	Debt Service Coverage Ratio (Times)	2.00	1.81	2.07	0.40	0.11	0.32
17	Interest Service Coverage Ratio (Times)	5.22	5.20	5.91	0.97	0.57	1.07
18	Current Ratio (Times)	0.76	0.72	0.76	0.62	0.67	0.62
19	Long term debt to working capital (Times)	-	-	-	-	-	-
20	Bad debts to Accounts Receivable (Times)	-	-	-	-	-	-
21	Current Liability Ratio (Times)	0.64	0.68	0.64	0.61	0.59	0.61
22	Total debts to total assets Ratio (Times)	0.41	0.40	0.41	0.53	0.52	0.53
23	Debtors Turnover Ratio (Times)	6.58	6.58	6.61	8.49	8.10	8.15
24	Inventory Turnover Ratio (Times)	3.39	3.37	3.24	3.18	3.12	3.04
25	Operating Margin (%)	11.45	8.81	11.26	2.71	(1.35)	2.18
26	Net Profit Margin (%)	3.98	3.76	4.93	(8.46)	(11.22)	(8.38)

Notes:

- The above financial results were reviewed and recommended by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at their meeting held on 10th May 2024. The statutory auditors of the Company have expressed an unmodified opinion on these financial results.
- The above is an extract of the detailed format of financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulations 33 & 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the financial results are available on the Stock exchange website www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com and on Company's website www.sundaram-clayton.com.

For Sundaram-Clayton Limited  
Sd/-  
R.Gopalan  
Chairman

## BOSTON

## Police dismantle pro-Palestinian tents at MIT as protests continue



Police in riot gear dismantled a pro-Palestinian tent encampment at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) early on Friday and moved to clear protesters from University of Pennsylvania's campus in Philadelphia. It was hours after police tear-gassed protesters and took down an encampment at the University of Arizona. **AFP**

## ZAGREB

## Incumbent Croatian PM clinches third term with right-wing support



Croatia's incumbent Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic on Friday was asked to form a new government after securing the backing of a right-wing party following an inconclusive election last month. Mr. Plenkovic, 54, reached a deal earlier this week with the Homeland Movement, which emerged as kingmaker after the election. **AFP**

## MANILA

## Philippines military must evolve fast, says its Defence Secretary



The Philippine military must evolve fast because of threats to a "free and open" Asia-Pacific region, Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said on Friday at the end of annual exercises with the U.S. His comments were made against the backdrop of a festering maritime row with China. **AFP**

## WASHINGTON

## U.S. imposes curbs on Chinese firms over spy balloon incident



The United States added 37 Chinese entities to a trade blacklist on Thursday, including some companies accused of supporting a suspected spy balloon that flew over U.S. soil last year. "These activities have substantial military applications and pose a threat to the national security," said the Commerce Department. **AFP**

## India backs Palestine's bid for full UN membership

The UNGA adopted a resolution with 143 votes in favour and nine against while 25 countries abstained; it does not give Palestinians full membership, but recognises them as qualified to join

Press Trust of India  
UNITED NATIONS

India on Friday voted in favour of a draft UN General Assembly resolution that said Palestine is qualified and should be admitted as full member of the United Nations and recommended that the Security Council "reconsider" the matter "favourably".

The 193-member General Assembly met in the morning for an emergency special session where the Arab Group resolution 'Admission of new Members to the United Nations', in support of the State of Palestine's full membership in the UN, was presented by the UAE, as Chair of the Arab Group in May.

The resolution got 143 votes in favour, including by India, nine against and 25 abstentions. The UNGA hall broke into an applause after the vote was cast.

The resolution deter-



**Key milestone:** Palestinian Ambassador to the UN Riyad Mansour speaks at the UN General Assembly in New York on Friday. **AFP**

mined that "the State of Palestine is qualified for membership in the United Nations" in accordance with Article 4 of the Charter of the UN and "should therefore be admitted to membership in the United Nations". It recommended that the Security Council "reconsider the matter favourably, in the light of this determination".

India was the first non-Arab State to recognise the Palestine Liberation Or-

ganisation as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in 1974. India was also one of the first countries to recognise the State of Palestine in 1988 and in 1996, Delhi opened its Representative Office to the Palestine Authority in Gaza, which was later shifted to Ramallah in 2003.

**Rights and privileges**  
An annex to the resolution said the additional rights

and privileges of participation of the State of Palestine will be effective as of the 79th session of the General Assembly that begins in September this year.

These include the right to be seated among member states in alphabetical order; the right to make statements on behalf of a group, including among representatives of major groups; the right of members of the delegation of the State of Palestine to be elected as officers in the plenary and the Main Committees of the General Assembly and the right to full and effective participation in UN conferences and international conferences and meetings convened under the auspices of the General Assembly.

Palestine, in its capacity as an observer state, does not have the right to vote in the General Assembly or to put forward its candidature to UN organs.

## Rafah attack will lead to a 'humanitarian disaster': UN

Agence France-Presse  
NAIROBI

An Israeli ground attack in Gaza's Rafah would lead to an "epic humanitarian disaster", UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned on Friday after negotiators left truce talks in Cairo without a deal.

"A massive ground attack in Rafah would lead to [an] epic humanitarian disaster and pull the plug on our efforts to support people as famine looms," Mr. Guterres said during a visit to Nairobi, adding that the situation in the city was "on a knife's edge".

"We are actively engaged with all involved for the resumption of the entry of life-saving supplies through Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings," he said.

## Russia launches offensive across border in northeast

Agence France-Presse  
KYIV

Russia launched a cross-border ground offensive into Ukraine's northeast Kharkiv region and civilians were being evacuated amid the fighting, Ukrainian officials said on Friday.

Ukraine pushed back Russian forces from most of Kharkiv region in late 2022, but Moscow is now back on the offensive there as Kyiv's troops struggle with ammunition and manpower shortages.

"At approximately 5.00 a.m. (0200 GMT), the enemy attempted to break through our defence line under the cover of armoured vehicles," the Ukrainian Defence Ministry said.

Ukraine said that it had



**Major attack:** Firefighters work at a site of a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kharkiv on Friday. **REUTERS**

repelled Russia's incursion but that "fighting of varying intensity" was ongoing and that Russia had launched aerial strikes into an area near the border.

A high-ranking Ukrainian military source said Russia had advanced into Ukraine by one kilometre, and was trying to "create a buffer zone" to prevent attacks into Russian

territory.

If Russia's advances are confirmed, it would represent the Kremlin's biggest land offensive in the region since it sent thousands of troops across the border in February 2022. The Russian Defence Ministry has not provided any comment but Russian military bloggers suggested active fighting was taking place.

## After 18 months, China sends Ambassador to India

Nikhil M. Babu  
BEIJING

After 18 months of China not having an Ambassador in India, senior diplomat Xu Feihong arrived in Delhi to assume office as the 17th Ambassador to India on Friday, Chinese government-run media *CGTN* reported.

Mr. Xu said his priority is to work to restore exchanges and cooperation in various fields and create favourable conditions for a sound and steady India-China relationship.

"President Xi [Jinping] and Prime Minister [Narendra] Modi have agreed on the important assessment that China and India are cooperation partners and not competitors. And reached an important common understanding that our two countries are each other's development opportunities and not threats. This should serve as the fundamental guidelines for the growth of bilateral relations," he told *CGTN*.

"As President Xi Jinping said, if China and India speak with one voice, the whole world will listen. If both countries join hands, the whole world will pay attention," he added. Mr. Xu will succeed Sun Weidong, who completed his tenure as Ambassador to India in October 2022.

Ties between the two countries have been strained since tensions



The newly appointed Chinese Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, being welcomed on arrival in Delhi on Friday. **ANI**

along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), following China's multiple transgressions starting in April 2020 and violent clashes in Galwan in June 2020, which resulted in casualties on both sides.

## Reaching out

Mr. Xu said he looks forward and trusts that he will have the support and assistance of the Indian government and friends from all sectors. "Both India and China are each other's important neighbours and the biggest emerging markets and developing countries of the world. I will follow the important consensus between our leaders and reach out to friends from all sectors of India," he said.

He said the world is facing multiple challenges such as climate change, food and energy prices, weak economic recovery and so on, and closer communication and coordination on global and regional affairs will not only bring

## India has completed its troop withdrawal, says Maldives

Agence France-Presse  
MALÉ

India withdrew its last remaining soldiers stationed in the Maldives on Friday to meet a deadline set by the archipelago nation's government, an official at the Maldivian Foreign Ministry said.

Pro-China President Mohamed Muizzu won office last year while campaigning on a promise to downgrade ties with India, and has since reoriented the strategically placed archipelago nation towards Beijing. After coming to power, he demanded the withdrawal of at least 88 Indian soldiers who had been stationed in the territory to assist with maritime patrols.

The third and final batch of 27 Indian troops left the archipelago on Friday, the official said. They added that there was no public ceremony held to mark the end of the Indian military deployment.

Both India and the Maldives struck a conciliatory note on Thursday, ahead of the withdrawal deadline.

Maldives Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer met his Indian counterpart during an official visit to New Delhi on Thursday, saying his trip marked a "new initiative of collaboration, symbolising enduring friendship and shared goals".

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**MILESTONE**

**Spectacular Gill notches up IPL's 100th hundred**



VIJAY SONEJI

Shubman Gill scored the hundredth IPL hundred, and his fourth in the competition, during the encounter between Gujarat Titans and Chennai Super Kings in Ahmedabad on Friday. Gill's century put him level with K.L. Rahul, Shane Watson and David Warner at fourth in the list of most hundreds in the League.

**CONSTANTLY EVOLVING**

**'I know I need to take risks, I'm trying to keep up the strike rate'**



R.V. MOORTHY

Royal Challengers batter Virat Kohli said he was looking to take more risks during his innings. "I brought out the slog-sweep to the spinners. I know I can hit it as I have done it in the past. I know I need to take risks. I am trying to keep up with the strike rate for me and the team," Kohli said.

**POSITIVE OUTLOOK**

**Have to keep our heads up, says PBKS skipper Curran after exit**



R.V. MOORTHY

After his side's loss against RCB, PBKS skipper Sam Curran said they needed to keep their heads up. "A lot of positive signs throughout the season, but not enough to get over the line unfortunately. We knew that we had the best side for the rest of the tournament and feel gutted for the team. Gotta keep our heads up," Curran said.

**HEAVY CRITICISM**

**It's ego-driven in a way, chest out: de Villiers on Hardik's captaincy**



K.R. DEEPAK

AB de Villiers raised questions on Mumbai Indians' Hardik Pandya's captaincy style in the IPL. "The captaincy style of Hardik Pandya is quite bravado. It's ego-driven in a way, chest out. I don't think how he walks on the field is always genuine, but he has decided that is his way of captaincy," de Villiers said on his YouTube channel.

# Gill and Sai Sudharsan hammer the daylights out of CSK attack

The openers smash centuries and script a 210-run partnership to lay the foundation for Titans who go on to pile up a mammoth 231 for three; the Chennai side falls 35 runs short as Mohit puts the skids on the chase with a three-for



Dealing in boundaries: Gill smashed nine fours and six sixes while Sai Sudharsan hit five fours and seven sixes. VIJAY SONEJI



Dealing in boundaries: Gill smashed nine fours and six sixes while Sai Sudharsan hit five fours and seven sixes. VIJAY SONEJI

**IPL-17**  
**S. Dipak Ragav**  
AHMEDABAD

The previous occasion Gujarat Titans met Chennai Super Kings at the Narendra Modi Stadium, B. Sai Sudharsan stroked his way to a brilliant 96 in the 2023 IPL final in a losing cause. Against the same opponent on Friday, Sai Sudharsan went on to score his maiden IPL hundred (103, 51b, 5x4, 7x6) as the two made mincemeat of a hapless Super Kings attack during their 210-run partnership and set up a 35-run

win. The duo made optimum use of the good batting conditions, displaying their full range with a mix of conventional batting and smart improvisation. Right from the first ball he faced, Gill showed he meant business; he cut Mitchell Santner for a four and deposited him over long-on in the first over. Sai Sudharsan joined the party with a couple of sixes. He then went after Ravindra Jadeja, targeting the leg-side boundary and getting to his half-century with a slog-sweep six. Raturaj Gaikwad had to rely on seamers Simarjeet Singh and Daryl Mitchell as the spinners struggled, but the plan backfired. The floodgates opened in the 11th over when Gill pulled Simarjeet over fine-leg for a maximum to reach his half-century before Sai Sudharsan finished the over with a brace of sixes. Gill turned his attention

**Points table**

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Kolkata Knight Riders	11	8	3	16	1.453
Rajasthan Royals	11	8	3	16	0.476
Sunrisers Hyderabad	12	7	5	14	0.406
Chennai Super Kings	12	6	6	12	0.491
Delhi Capitals	12	6	6	12	-0.316
Lucknow Super Giants	12	6	6	12	-0.769
Royal Challengers	12	5	7	10	0.217
Gujarat Titans	12	5	7	10	-1.063
Mumbai Indians (E)	12	4	8	8	-0.212
Punjab Kings (E)	12	4	8	8	-0.423

E: Eliminated

to Daryl Mitchell in the 14th over, smashing three sixes. To make it more agonising for the bowler, Tushar Deshpande dropped the second shot at long-off when the batter was on 72. As they had done throughout their innings, Gill and Sai Sudharsan majestically touched the three-figure mark in the 17th over bowled by Simarjeet. While the former punished

a full toss, the latter scooped the ball over fine-leg for a maximum. Though Deshpande and Shardul Thakur pulled things back for Super Kings in the final five overs, they couldn't stop Titans from making a mammoth total. Chasing a target of 232, CSK was reduced to 10 for three. Mitchell (63) and Moeen Ali (56) put up a fight, adding 109 for the

**SCOREBOARD**

**GUJARAT TITANS**  
B. Sai Sudharsan c Dube b Deshpande 103 (51b, 5x4, 7x6), Shubman Gill c Jadeja b Deshpande 104 (55b, 9x4, 6x6), David Miller (not out) 16 (11b, 1x4), M. Shahrulkh Khan run out 2 (3b); Extras (lb-3, w-5): 6; Total (for three wkts. in 20 overs): 231.

**FALL OF WICKETS**  
1-210 (Sai Sudharsan, 17.2 overs), 2-213 (Gill, 17.6), 3-231 (Shahrulkh, 19.6).

**SUPER KINGS BOWLING**  
Santner 2-0-31-0, Deshpande 4-0-33-2, Shardul 4-0-25-0, Simarjeet 4-0-60-0, Jadeja 2-0-29-0, Mitchell 4-0-52-0.

**CHENNAI SUPER KINGS**  
Ajinkya Rahane (Impact Player in place of Deshpande) c Tewatia b Warrior 1 (5b), Rachin Ravindra run out 1 (2b), Raturaj Gaikwad c Rashid b Umesh 0 (3b), Daryl Mitchell c Shahrulkh b Mohit 63 (34b, 7x4, 3x6), Moeen Ali c Noor b Mohit 56 (36b, 4x4, 4x6), Shivam Dube c Noor b Mohit 21 (13b, 2x4, 1x6), Ravindra Jadeja c Miller b Rashid 18 (10b, 2x4, 1x6), M.S. Dhoni (not out) 26 (11b, 1x4, 3x6), Mitchell Santner b Rashid 0 (2b), Shardul Thakur (not out) 3 (4b); Extras (lb-3, w-4): 7; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 196.

**FALL OF WICKETS**  
1-2 (Ravindra, 0.6), 2-2 (Rahane, 1.1), 3-10 (Raturaj, 2.5), 4-119 (Mitchell, 12.2), 5-135 (Moeen, 14.2), 6-165 (Dube, 16.4), 7-169 (Jadeja, 17.3), 8-169 (Santner, 17.5).

**TITANS BOWLING**  
Umesh 3-0-20-1, Warrior (Impact Player in place of Sai Sudharsan) 3-0-28-1, Tyagi 4-0-51-0, Noor 2-0-25-0, Rashid 4-0-38-2, Mohit 4-0-31-3.

**Toss:** CSK. **PoM:** Gill. *Titans won by 35 runs.*

**Next assignment**  
**CSK:** May 12 vs RR, Chennai, 3.30 p.m.  
**GT:** May 13 vs KKR, Ahmedabad, 7.30 p.m.

fourth wicket. Mohit Sharma weaved his magic, foxing Mitchell and Moeen with slower deliveries as the chase fizzled out. With their fifth victory, Titans lived to fight another day.

# KKR will look to seal playoff berth with win over MI

**Amitabha Das Sharma**  
KOLKATA

Kolkata Knight Riders will look to extend its recent run of success when it returns home after securing two emphatic away wins. KKR hosts Mumbai Indians at the Eden Gardens here on Saturday. The face-off against MI assumes more significance as a victory will ensure a play-off spot for the Knight Riders.

**Spate of success**  
The spate of success, highlighted by the fact that the team has won four of its last five outings, puts KKR on top of the league table with 16 points from 11 matches.

This also makes it the favourite against the struggling MI, currently lying in the eighth spot (with eight points from 12 matches). MI is out of the race for a spot in the playoffs.

The opening partnership of Sunil Narine and Phil Salt has been a crucial factor in KKR's consistent performance. Narine's belligerence with the bat has been a key element in KKR amassing 200-plus totals in six of the eight innings where it has batted first.

**Exceptional**  
Narine, who has scored 461 runs at a strike rate of 183.67, is in exceptional



**Dynamic duo:** Salt and Narine's blistering starts have been a crucial factor in KKR's consistent performance. K.R. DEEPAK

Today's match

**Kolkata Knight Riders** vs **Mumbai Indians**

Kolkata, 7.30 p.m.

**HEAD-TO-HEAD**  
PLAYED: 33

KKR 10 | MI 23

**PREVIOUS MEETING**  
KKR won by 24 runs, 2024

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & IIO CINEMA

**Race for the caps**

	ORANGE				
	Inns	Runs	HS	SR	100s/50s
Kohli (RCB)	12	634	113*	153.51	1/5
Raturaj (CSK)	12	541	108*	145.82	1/4
Head (SRH)	11	533	102	201.89	1/4
Sai Sudharsan (GT)	12	527	103	141.28	1/2

	PURPLE				
	Inns	Wkts	BB	Econ	4W/5W
Harshal (PBKS)	12	20	3/15	9.75	0/0
Bumrah (MI)	12	18	5/21	6.20	0/1
Varun (KKR)	11	16	3/16	8.75	0/0
Arshdeep (PBKS)	12	16	4/29	10.32	1/0

After the GT-CSK match on May 10

# We lost the match because of dropped catches, says Punjab Kings' Haddin

**Shavan Acharya**  
DHARAMSHALA

A butterfingering Punjab Kings paid the price for dropping five catches as it crashed out of the Indian Premier League after a defeat against Royal Challengers Bengaluru. The Kings gave two lifelines to Virat Kohli early on in the innings. While Punjab Kings assistant coach Brad Haddin admitted that those dropped catches cost his team the game, RCB's Cameron Green was of the opinion that an opponent team cannot afford to give

Kohli so many chances. "He will make you hurt, especially early in the innings - when he is trying to be aggressive. After a couple of drops, he played like he didn't have anything to lose. He played like vintage Virat that we all know," Green said on Thursday. "100 per cent we lost the match because of dropped catches. If we look through the game, we dropped two guys on a duck, and both of them scored big runs. "That was where the game was lost," Haddin said.



**Missed opportunity:** PBKS could not hold on to its chances against RCB and crashed out of the playoff race. R.V. MOORTHY

# Being consistent is tougher than improving, says Varun Chakaravarthy

**Amitabha Das Sharma**  
KOLKATA

The biggest challenge Kolkata Knight Riders now faces is to keep performing consistently, said the team's leg spinner Varun Chakaravarthy. "When you are at the top of the table, it gives you more responsibility. The best thing we can do right now is be consistent - which is tougher than trying to find out something and improve on it. It is about doing the basics right," Varun said ahead of KKR's match against Mumbai Indians at Eden



**Tweaking it:** Varun says he has made adjustments according to the situation to get his rhythm back. PTI

Gardens. Varun said despite the Eden Gardens pitch not supporting spin he has been able to make adjustments according to the situation to get his rhythm back. "Bowling at the Eden pitch was very tough initially and took everyone by storm. We have worked

on our lines and lengths. We are also working on the angles and are trying to bowl from different areas of the crease," Varun, who took three for 16 against Delhi Capitals in KKR's last outing at home, said. Varun said the team owner Sahrulkh Khan has been constantly motivating the players. "SRK has been present in almost all matches in Kolkata. Even in the match where we did not do well (against Punjab Kings), he came to the dressing room and spoke to every player for an hour and hugged everyone."

# Neeraj uncorks a 88.36m throw in his last attempt to claim silver

Vadlejch's effort of 88.38m in the opening round proves enough for the Czech to take the top spot; Jena comes up short and only manages a 76.31m; Tentoglou finishes second in men's long jump; Gardiner wins men's 400m

## DIAMOND LEAGUE

**Uthra Ganesan**  
DOHA

He saved his best for the last but for once, it just wasn't enough.

Neeraj Chopra, on Friday night, was in the unfamiliar position of playing catch up as Czech Jakub Vadlejch set the mark early on and managed to stay ahead all through, finishing on top at the Doha Diamond League here with a best throw of 88.38m to push Neeraj into second spot, just two centimetres behind with 88.36m.

Neeraj, participating in his first competition this year as he kicks off his Olympic gold defence, looked comfortable but not at his best. For someone known for his 'one and done' performances, starting with a foul throw was not ideal. It was similar to his situation at the Asian Games last year but here, the competition was different.

Vadlejch, who already had an 87m throw earlier this year, started with an 85.87 and while Neeraj improved over the next two

attempts, the Czech was in no mood to relent this time around. Neeraj, who has often claimed it isn't over till the last throw, proved why he rates consistency so highly.

While Jakub fouled his final attempt, Neeraj pushed himself all the way in his sixth attempt but fell agonisingly short of the mark.

The other Indian in the fray Kishore Kumar Jena, in his Diamond League debut, was unable to get anywhere close to his best, bowing out after the first three attempts and a best throw of only 76.31m. Jena had already said his main target was to get used to the field ahead of the Paris Olympics but he would be disappointed with not being able to cross the 80m mark.

On the long jump pit, Greek reigning Olympic and World champion Miltiadis Tentoglou steadily improved with every jump but could only end up second with a best of 8.36m in his final attempt, behind Jamaican Corey McLeod, who left the field behind with a massive 8.52m in his fourth attempt.

Not all favourites struggled, though. The men's



**Final flourish:** Neeraj pushed himself in the sixth attempt to come up with his best throw of the evening. AP

400m Olympic champion Steven Gardiner, who had to pull out of the World Championships last year with injury and only made his return earlier this year, took top spot in 44.76 seconds, ahead of Zambia's Muzala Samukonga (45.07s).

The men's 200m was an

all-American affair, led by Kenneth Bednarek in 19.67 seconds – again a World Lead, Meet Record and personal best.

**The results: Men: 200m:** 1. Kenneth Bednarek (USA) 19.67s, 2. Courtney Lindsey (USA) 20.01, 3. Kyree King (USA) 20.21; **400m:** 1. Steven Gardiner (Bah) 44.76s, 2. Muzala Samukonga (Zam)

45.07, 3. Leungo Scotch (Bot) 45.29; **1500m:** 1. Brian Komen (Ken) 3:32.43, 2. Timothy Cheruiyot (Ken) 3:32.67, 3. Reynold Kipkorir Cheruiyot (Ken) 3:32.96; **400m hurdles:** 1. Alson Dos Santos (Bra) 46.86s, 2. CJ Allen (USA) 48.39, 3. Wilfried Happio (Fra) 49.10.

**3000m steeplechase:** 1. Samuel Firewu (Eth) 8:07.25s, 2. Abraham Kibiwott (Ken) 8:07.38, 3. Getnet Wale (Eth) 8:09.69s; **Long Jump:** 1. Corey McLeod (Jam) 8.52m, 2. Miltiadis Tentoglou (Gre) 8.36, 3. Simon Ehammer (Sui) 8.30; **Javelin:** 1. Jakub Vadlejch (Cze) 88.38m, 2. Neeraj Chopra (Ind) 88.36, 3. Anderson Peters (Gre) 86.72.

**Women: 100m:** 1. Daryll Neita (GBR) 10.98s, 2. Tamari Davis (USA) 10.99, 3. Celera Barnes (USA) 11.02; **800m:** 1. Mary Moraa (Ken) 1:57.91s, 2. Jemma Reekie (GBR) 1:58.42, 3. Noelle Yarigo (Ben) 1:58.70; **1500m:** 1. Freweyni Hailu (Eth) 4:00.42, 2. Jessica Hull (Aus) 4:00.84, 3. Nelly Chepchirchir (Ken) 4:09.19; **5000m:** 1. Beatrice Chebet (Ken) 14:26.98, 2. Ejgayehu Taye (Eth) 14:29.26, 3. Medina Eisa (Eth) 14:34.11.

**100m hurdles:** 1. Ditaji Kambundji (Sui) 12.49s, 2. Tonea Marshall (USA) 12.51, 3. Pia Skrzyszowska (Pol) 12.53; **High jump:** 1. Angelina Topic (Srb) 1.94m, 2. Iryna Gerashchenko (Ukr) 1.91, 3. Eleanor Patterson (Aus) 1.91; **Pole Vault:** 1. Molly Caudery (GBR) 4.73m, 2. Nina Kennedy (Aus) 4.73m, 3. Tina Sutej (Slo) 4.63m.

# Brij Bhushan to face trial for sexual harassment of women wrestlers

**Ishita Mishra**  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday framed charges of sexual harassment against the former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. He will now face trial for allegedly harassing five women wrestlers.

The charges against Brij Bhushan were framed by the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) Priyanka Rajpoot of the Rouse Avenue Court. The detailed order is awaited.

## Sufficient material

In an open court, the judge said there was sufficient material on record to frame the accused for the offences punishable under Sections 354 (outraging the modesty of a woman) and 354A (sexual harassment) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), with respect to five wrestlers who were named as Victim No. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 by the court.

The court also observed that there was sufficient material on record to frame charges against Brij Bhushan for the offence punishable under Section 506(I) (criminal intimidation) with respect to two wrestlers. Charges were also



Brij Bhushan. FILE PHOTO

framed against Vinod Tomar, suspended assistant secretary of WFI, who is also an accused in this case for the offence of criminal intimidation against Victim No. 1.

The court has discharged him from the offence of abetment with regard to all the accused.

Many renowned wrestlers, including Sakshi Malik, Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia and Sangeeta Phogat, had protested for months in New Delhi last year, demanding the arrest of Brij Bhushan for allegedly sexually harassing several women grapplers, including a minor.

The harassment took place between 2016 and 2019 at the WFI office, Brij Bhushan's official residence, and also abroad, the victims alleged.

As the wrestlers' protest

continued for weeks, the sports ministry had constituted an oversight committee to internally investigate the matter.

The police filed an FIR against Brij Bhushan after the intervention of the Supreme Court in May 2023. In June, a 1,000-page chargesheet was filed at the Rouse Avenue court.

A minor wrestler, who too had protested against the former WFI president, later took back her complaint and changed the statement.

## 'False and motivated'

During the hearing on framing of charges, Brij Bhushan maintained that the case was "false and motivated".

Sakshi, who was at the forefront of the wrestlers' protest in Jantar Mantar, said all the women wrestlers were happy that charges have been framed against Brij Bhushan and Tomar.

Calling it a "big milestone" in the wrestlers' 18-month struggle, Sakshi said the protest started in January 2023 on the streets and ended in court.

"We have full faith in the judiciary, and look forward to a fair trial and justice being meted out to us," said Sakshi.

# BCCI to invite men's head coach applications next week

**Amol Karhadkar**  
MUMBAI

The appointment process for the head coach of India's men's cricket team is set to begin in the coming week. Jay Shah, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary, confirmed incumbent Rahul Dravid can reapply if he wants his tenure extended. "We will call for applications in the next few days. Dravid's tenure is coming to an end in June. If he wants to reapply, he can," Shah said during an interaction at the BCCI headquarters.

Dravid, who took over in November 2021, was handed a short-term extension till the T20 World Cup after his two-year contract expired at the end of India's loss in the final of the ODI World Cup last No-

vember. Shah confirmed the new head coach will be offered to take charge till the ODI World Cup in 2027.

## No split coaches

The BCCI is unlikely to opt for a split coaching role for the limited-over formats and Tests.

"We are looking for a long-term coach, for three years," Shah said. "There is no precedent of different coaches for different formats in Indian cricket. Besides, we have a number of all-format players.

"Ultimately, it will be the Cricket Advisory Committee's (CAC)'s call. I have to implement what they decide. If the CAC selects a foreign coach, I can't interfere."

Even before the head coach applications are invited, the three-member CAC – headed by former



Jay Shah. FILE PHOTO

batter Ashok Malhotra – includes Jatin Paranjape and Sulakshana Naik – will have to finalise the long-pending appointment of a national selector. "A few interviews for the selector's post have already happened. The CAC will meet in a week's time to finalise the name and we will announce it soon," Shah said.

The Hindu understands that domestic stalwart

Mithun Manhas and former India off-spinner Nikhil Chopra are the main contenders to join the Ajit Agarkar-chaired panel.

Shah stated that the uproar over the Impact Player rule in the IPL, introduced in the 2023 edition, will be discussed with various stakeholders after the conclusion of the T20 World Cup in June.

"The Impact Player rule was brought in as a test case. On the bright side, it is providing additional playing opportunities to two Indian players in every match," Shah said.

"We will consult with the franchise captains, players, franchises and then decide about the future course.

"It's neither a permanent rule nor am I saying we will move past it."

# Former US Open champion Thiem to retire at the end of the year

## TENNIS

**Agence France-Presse**  
VIENNA

Austria's Dominic Thiem, former US Open champion, announced on Friday that the 2024 season would be his last as a professional tennis player, ending a career plagued by a long-term wrist injury.

The 30-year-old's fortunes have nose-dived since his crowning moment in 2020, when he beat Alexander Zverev in the final of that year's pandemic-affected US Open held behind closed doors.

"The season 2024 is going to be my last one. I am going to finish my career at the end of this season," Thiem said via a video statement on social media.

Several reasons had influenced his decision to re-



**Crowning moment:** Thiem holds up the championship trophy after defeating Zverev in the 2020 US Open final. AP

tire, Thiem stated, but the main ones were his injured wrist and his "inner feeling" that had caused him to "very carefully" reflect on the ups and downs of his "incredible journey as a tennis player".

He said he had thought

about the decision to end his career "for a very long time".

"I am very happy with it [decision] and I am also super excited for everything that is coming up next."

Once World No.3,

Thiem's ranking plummeted to 352 in June 2022 after a wrist injury sidelined him for nine months and prevented him from defending his US Open title. He is currently ranked No. 117.

Over the course of his career, Thiem has won 17 tournaments. He was also twice a finalist at the French Open (2018 and 2019) and once at the Australian Open (2020) to go with two runner-up finishes at the year-ending ATP Finals (2019 and 2020).

Serbia's Novak Djokovic praised Thiem earlier this week, saying the Austrian had "always shown respect on the court and took time to say hello", according to APA press agency.

"I really like Dominic. We all know how hard it is to come back (after injury)," Djokovic was quoted as saying.

# Kohli should open in the T20 World Cup, says Ganguly

**Press Trust of India**  
BENGALURU

Former Indian captain Sourav Ganguly on Friday said the Indian team management should make Virat Kohli open in next month's T20 World Cup to exploit the star batter's rich vein of form in the ongoing Indian Premier League.

Kohli is the current Orange Cap holder in this IPL with 634 runs from 12 matches, averaging 70.44 and at an impressive strike-rate of 153.51, which is significantly higher than his career rate of 134.31.

"Virat is playing exceptionally well. The way Kohli batted [on Thursday] – 90 in quick time, you need to use him as opener in T20 World Cup. He should open, evidenced by his last few IPL innings which have been outstanding," Ganguly



**Latest evidence:** The way Kohli batted against Punjab Kings has convinced Ganguly that he should open. RV. MOORTHY

ly told PTI here on the sidelines of a promotional event.

Ganguly said India has picked a balanced squad for the T20 World Cup which has the wherewithal to land the trophy after a gap of 17 years.

India's lone triumph in the T20 World Cup came in 2007, the inaugural edition held in South Africa.

"This is an excellent squad. I think they have picked the best possible squad. Apart from batting depth, bowling looks excellent.

"Bumrah is the best fast bowler in the world at the moment. We have experience in Kuldeep, Axar, Siraj. It's an ideal combination we have this time," said Ganguly.

# Leverkusen's unbeaten run continues on and on and on

## EUROPA LEAGUE

**Agence France-Presse**  
LEVERKUSEN

Bayer Leverkusen is through to the Europa League final 4-2 on aggregate after a stoppage-time goal from Josip Stanic snatched a 2-2 draw at home on Thursday, extending its unbeaten run to a record 49 games.

In a rematch of last season's Europa League semi-final, Roma came to Leverkusen 2-0 down after the first leg but levelled the tie up despite having little possession thanks to penalties in each half from Leandro Paredes.

With the tie heading for extra time, Alex Grimaldo curled in a corner which goalie Mile Svilar failed to



**Unstoppable:** Stanic keeps Leverkusen's run going with this very late strike against Roma. GETTY IMAGES

catch, the ball going into the net after bouncing off Roma defender Gianluca Mancini.

Stanic then kept Lever-

kusen's stunning record of late goals alive by scoring on the counter in the seventh minute of added time, breaking Benfica's

European unbeaten record dating back to 1965.

Bundesliga champion Leverkusen will meet Atalanta, which beat Marseille 3-0 (4-1 on aggregate), in the final in Dublin on May 22 with hopes of a remarkable treble still alive.

## A first for Atalanta

Goals from Ademola Lookman, academy product Matteo Ruggeri and El Bilal Toure put Atalanta through to its first ever European final with a 4-1 aggregate win in front of delirious fans in Bergamo.

**The results (semifinals, second leg):** Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Mancini 82-og, Stanic 90+7) drew with AS Roma 2 (Paredes 43-pen, 66-pen) (Leverkusen wins 4-2 on aggregate); Atalanta 3 (Lookman 30, Ruggeri 52, Toure 90+5) bt Marseille 0 (Atalanta wins 4-1 on aggregate).

# Nisha makes the last four

**Press Trust of India**  
ISTANBUL

A day after all six Greco-roman wrestlers came up with forgettable performances, Nisha Dahiya kept India's hopes of Paris Games quota place alive by moving into the semifinals at the World Olympic Games Qualifier here on Friday.

The 68kg grappler defeated Belarusian teenager Alina Shauchukon points 3-0 to secure a place in the quarterfinals. Then she overcame Czech Republic's Adela Hanzlickova 7-4 on points to book a place in the semifinal against Romania's Alexandra Anghel.

Mansi (62kg) came up against a far superior opponent in Belarusian opponent Veranika Ivanova, who achieved a victory by fall in the pre-quarterfinals.

AROUND THE CITY



Anandkumar (Little Hearts CA, 113). Keshav Balaji (Little Hearts CA, 122 n.o.). Steven Curtis (Srishti, 6/25).

**Keshav, Anandkumar star for Little Hearts**  
Keshav Balaji hit an unbeaten 122 and A. Anandkumar 113 as Little Hearts CA beat Rider CC by 155 runs in the District Cricket Association of Chengalpatu (DCAC) cricket league.

Steven Curtis' six for 25 went in vain as Srishti lost to Praglad by 22 runs.

**The scores:** Krish CC 141/6 in 20 overs tied with Krishnaraj CC 141/7 in 20 overs (Thejeswar Ganesh 31, V. Sai Balaji 38).

Praglad CC 129/8 in 20 overs (Promotho 40, M. Sudharsanamoorthy 43, Steven Curtis 6/25) bt Srishti CC 107/6 in 20 overs (Sachin Anand 4/24).

Sudharsanamoorthy 43, Steven Curtis 6/25 bt Srishti CC 107/6 in 20 overs (Sachin Anand 4/24).

Spring Field CC 100 in 18.4 overs (E. Gokul 3/21) lost to Selvaganapathy MCC 101/3 in 12.2 overs.

Phoenix CC 163/8 in 20 overs (Saravanan Muthupandian 52, S. Vignesh 51, S. Aravind 4/45) bt Jai CC 140/9 in 20 overs (S. Sri Hari

30, Akshay Kumar 3/32). Little Hearts CA 268/1 in 20 overs (Keshav Balaji 122 n.o., A. Anandkumar 113) bt Rider CC 113/7 in 20 overs (Sabari 46, A. Anandkumar 4/23). Syndicate Nanganallur 142/5 in 20 overs (Sathvik Athma Raman 57, Anand 39, Vignesh S. Iyer 3/32) bt SRM IST 139 in 19.4 overs (G.B. Tharun 65, Sathvik Athma Raman 4/24). Asiatic CA 125/7 in 20 overs (Franky 43, S. Prabhu 35, Rohit 4/32) lost to Shan CC 127 for no loss in 12.4 overs (S.P. Vinod 43 n.o., Suresh Arumugam 74 n.o.).

LIVE TELECAST

**Premier League:** SS Select 1, 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 5, 7.30 & 10 p.m.

**LaLiga:** Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 5.30, 7.45, 10 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Sunday)

**Bundesliga:** Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 7 & 10 p.m.

**IPL:** Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 7.30 p.m.

'Need to improve tactics to beat the Chinese'

Manika is chuffed with her showing in WTT event in Jeddah where she went toe to toe with some of the big names, sets sights on doing well at the Paris Olympics

TABLE TENNIS

Press Trust of India NEW DELHI

Manika Batra could not be more thrilled about bossing the World No. 2 from China earlier this week but to beat the top-10 players more often, the Indian table tennis trailblazer knows she needs to do more on the tactical and fitness front.

After becoming the first Indian female to reach the quarterfinals of a Grand Smash (top tier events organised by World Table Tennis), the 28-year-old doesn't want to sit on her laurels and her focus is firmly fixed on the Paris Olympics in July-August.

Manika shocked Wang Manyu, the 2021 World Champion in women's singles and member of the



**Gameplan:** Manika has realised that she cannot win only using her backhand and needs to work on her forehand. PTI

Olympic gold-winning Chinese team at the Tokyo Olympics, before blanking 14th-ranked Nina Mittelham from Germany to make it a special week in Saudi Arabia.

"I am really happy. I had

a lot of fun beating her," said a beaming Batra, who had lost badly to Wang Manyu at the Macau World Cup last month.

Manika, who plays with long pimples on the backhand, is known for twid-

dling the racket in the middle of a point but of late she has made a conscious effort to not do that excessively.

"To be honest, I don't see any differences (between myself against Chinese) but I have noticed in this tournament that if you want to reach semifinals and finals, your stamina, your body should be trained like that. The Chinese and Japanese move really fast."

The Indian's pimples on the backhand allows her to slow the pace of the point so that she can get herself in an attacking position.

"I have to be more attacking because now I've realised that from backhand only, you cannot win. You have to attack from forehand. I have realised this and I am working on this with my coach."

INBRIEF



Injured Gnabry in doubt for Germany's Euros campaign

Bayern Munich forward Serge Gnabry has been ruled out for the season and could miss Germany's home Euro 2024 campaign with a hamstring injury, the club announced on Friday. Gnabry left the field after 27 minutes in Wednesday's 2-1 Champions League semifinal loss to Real Madrid. Bayern issued a statement saying the 28-year-old would "miss the remainder of the season" after a diagnosis showed a tear in his left hamstring. Germany opens the Euros against Scotland on June 14.

ENGAGEMENTS

**Cricket:** Thiruvallur DCA league, II div., Wheels India vs IEC (8 a.m.); Mugappair vs. Ebenezer CA (1 p.m.), DRBCC Hindu-A; III div., Sundar vs Sri Vaishnavi (8 a.m.); IV div., CPRC vs. SRF (1 p.m.), OCF ground; DCAC league, Gurananak Combines vs Asiatic CA (7 a.m.); SRM IST vs Srishti (11 a.m.), SRM IST. All-India YSCA Trophy, KDCA Secretary's XI vs Jubilee (8 a.m.); YSCA-B vs KRM Public School (1 p.m.), Gandhi Nagar; DCAC President's XI vs Bharathi (8 a.m.); Royal Gems vs. Korattur (1 p.m.), GE-A (alstom).

Rutuja and Hourigan enter the doubles final

TENNIS

Sports Bureau

Rutuja Bhosale and Paige Hourigan beat Yuki Naito and Naho Sato 6-4, 6-3 in the doubles semifinals of the \$60,000 ITF women's tennis tournament in Fukuoka, Japan, on Friday.

In the final, the Indo-Kiwi pair will play another Japanese team of Haruna Arakawa and Aoi Ito.

**Other results:** €74,825 Challenger, Francavilla al

**Mare, Italy: Doubles:** Semifinals: Sander Arends & Matwe Middelkoop bt Sriram Balaji & Andre Begemann 5-7, 6-3, [10-7].

€74,825 Challenger, Prague: Doubles: Quarterfinals: Jiri Barnat & Jan Hrazdil bt Anirudh Chandrasekar & Niki Poonacha 6-3, 1-6, [10-3].

\$15,000 ITF, Monastir: Men: Pre-quarterfinals: Karan Singh bt Corban Crowther 7-6(6), 2-6, 6-3.

Doubles: Quarterfinals: Niklas Schell & Karan Singh bt Kazuma Kawachi & Jumpei Yamasaki 6-3, 6-2.

Women: Pre-quarterfinals: Merna Refaat bt Vaishnavi Adkar 6-7(1), 6-3, 6-2.

Queen Anula for the Bangalore Turf Club Ltd Trophy

UDHAGAMANDALAM: Queen Anula has an edge over her rivals in the Bangalore Turf Club Ltd Trophy (1,200m), the main event of the races to be held here on Saturday (May 11). A carried over amount of ₹71,085 will be added to the Mini jackpot pool.

**SAPORO HANDICAP** (1,400m), rated 00 to 25, 11:00 a.m.: 1. Annalisa (3) C. Umesh 62, 2. Arikattu (1) R. Manish 61.5, 3. Eclipse Award (4) Koshi Kumar 61.5, 4. Touch Of Fury (6) G. Vivek 61.5, 5. Memory Lane (5) A.S. Peter 60, 6. Regent Prince (2) Kuldeep Singh 58.5, 7. Majestic Charmer (7) Farid Ansari 57, 8. Showmanship (10) B. Dharshan 56, 9. Stillwater (9) P. Sai Kumar 56 and 10. Little Wonder (8) Shyam Kumar 54.5.

**1. STILLWATER, 2. TOUCH OF FURY, 3. ANNALISA**

**2 OWN OPINION PLATE** (1,400m), maiden 3-y-o only (Terms), 11:30: 1. King's Guardian (4) Farid Ansari 56, 2. Annette (7) P. Sai Kumar 54.5, 3. Aspen (1) S.A. Amit 54.5, 4. Dakshin Vijay (5) Kuldeep Singh 54.5, 5. Dramatic (2) Hindu Singh 54.5, 6. Eriwin (3) C. Brissou 54.5, 7. Krishvi (8) C. Umesh 54.5 and 8. Lumiere (6) A.S. Peter 54.5.

**1. KRISHVI, 2. DRAMATIC, 3. ANNETTE**

**3 DELHI RACE CLUB (1940) LTD TROPHY (DIV. I),** (1,200m), 5-y-o over, rated 20 to 45, (0 to 19 eligible), 12 noon: 1. Great Spirit (6) Kuldeep Singh 62, 2. Knotty In Blue (7) A.S. Peter 61, 3. Saint Emilion (10) C. Umesh 60, 4. Turf Beauty (3) P. Vikram 60, 5. Dancing Queen (8) R.S. Jodha 59, 6. Lord Of The Turf (1) Farid Ansari 59, 7. Despacito (9) Hindu Singh 58.5, 8. Wild Frank (5) M.S. Deora 57, 9. Conscious Keeper (2) Surya Prakash 54.5 and 10. Bohemian Star (4) P. Sai Kumar 54.

**1. SAINT EMILION, 2. DANCING QUEEN, 3. DESPACITO**

Relic Warrior (6) P. Sai Kumar 59, 4. Raffinato (8) Koshi Kumar 58.5, 5. Bertha (4) Hindu Singh 58, 6. Seeking The Stars (10) C. Umesh 58, 7. Queen Anula (9) K.V. Baskar 56, 8. Samuraj Blue (7) S.J. Moulin 56, 9. First Missile (2) Kuldeep Singh 54 and 10. Sinatra (1) S.A. Amit 54.

**1. QUEEN ANULA, 2. SEEKING THE STARS, 3. SAMURAJ BLUE**

**5 DELHI RACE CLUB (1940) LTD TROPHY (DIV. II),** (1,200m), 5-y-o over rated 20 to 45, (0 to 19 eligible), 1:00: 1. Angawi (4) Kuldeep Singh 61.5, 2. Emperor Ashoka (8) Inayat 58, 3. Lady Luck (2) Surya Prakash 58, 4. Wood Art (10) M.S. Deora 57, 5. Single Malt (5) R. Manish 56.5, 6. Empire Of Dreams (3) Shyam Kumar 56, 7. Stolen Glance (9) P. Sai Kumar 53.5, 8. Stern Maiden (6) K.V. Baskar 53, 9. Royal Mayfair (7) Farid Ansari 52 and 10. Rwanda (1) P. Vikram 50.

**1. LADY LUCK, 2. STOLEN GLANCE, 3. RWANDA**

**6 HYDERABAD RACE CLUB CUP** (1,600m), rated 20 to 45 (0 to 19 eligible), 1:30: 1. Salome (4) Koshi Kumar 60, 2. Safety (3) Inayat 58, 3. Sweet Legacy (1) Farid Ansari 58, 4. Waytoogo (5) M.S. Deora 58, 5. Mystic Zlatan (9) P. Sai Kumar 57.5, 6. Radiant Joy (6) Surya Prakash 57, 7. Gold Fame (10) C. Umesh 57, 8. Gingersnap (2) L.A. Rozario 56, 9. Paris O'Connor (8) P. Ajeeth Kumar 55 and 10. Saro Superfast (7) Kuldeep Singh 53.5.

**1. GINGERSNAP, 2. SALOME, 3. GOLD FAME**

**7 MYSORE RACE CLUB LTD TROPHY** (1,400m), rated 20 to 45 (0 to 19 eligible), 2:00: 1. Sheer Elegance (2) A.M. Tograllu 60, 2. Kings Return (5) C. Brissou 58, 3. Momentous (8) P. Sai Kumar 58, 4. Summer Song (6) B. Dharshan 57.5, 5. Grey Beauty (3) S.J. Moulin 56.5, 6. King O Star (7) Kuldeep Singh 56, 7. Air Marshall (4) K.V. Baskar 55, 8. Kallania (1) C. Umesh 55, 9. Silver Soul (10) R. Manish 54 and 10. The Sting (9) M.S. Deora 51.

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Credit Card Cashback	: ₹3,000
Exchange Old AC	: ₹4,000
Exchange Subsidiary	: ₹4,000

MRP ₹67,900  
Effective Price ₹37,400  
Per Day EMI ₹75

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Credit Card Cashback	: ₹1,000
Exchange Old AC	: ₹4,000
Exchange Subsidiary	: ₹2,500

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Effective Price ₹33,300  
Per Day EMI ₹95

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# Usha, IOA team secure logistic support for Indian contingent during the Olympics

She returns to India after finalising the arrangements in Paris; adds that they have also ensured that shooters and golfers stay closer to the respective event venues

## GENERAL

Sports Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The president of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), P.T. Usha announced that the shooters and golfers would get to stay close to their competition venues during the Olympics in Paris.

On her return from Paris, Usha stated that every effort was made to ensure comfortable and convenient accommodation for the athletes and support staff.

"We have been able to secure accommodation for a number of sports-specific support staff at a short dis-



**Productive discussions:** The IOA team also had a meeting with the IOC president Bach. FILE PHOTO

tance from the Athletes Village, as not everyone can be accommodated at the village," said Usha. The shooting events will be held at the Chateauroux Range, about 250 kilometres from Paris. The IOA president also revealed

that her team had a fruitful meeting with the Ambassador of India in France, Jawed Ashraf, who assured the best possible support for the Indian athletes and the contingent during the Games. Many French-speaking Indians had also



We have been able to secure accommodation for a number of sports-specific support staff at a short distance from the Athletes Village USHA

agreed to be volunteers for the Indian contingent during the Olympics.

Usha and the IOA team also had a two-day stint at the International Olympic Committee (IOC), headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, and had a meeting with the IOC president Thomas Bach, apart from interaction with many departments.

## Indian team for Asians named

### SQUASH

Sports Bureau  
CHENNAI

Reigning National men's champion Velavan Senthilkumar and National women's semifinalist Rathika Seelan will spearhead the Indian contingent at the 22nd Asian Games in Dalian, China, from June 12 to 16, the Squash Rackets Federation of India announced here on Friday, after conducting the selection trials at the Indian Squash & Triathlon Academy here. The 2023 National

Games men's champion Abhay Singh, Rahul Baitha and Suraj Chand complete the men's lineup, while 2023 National Games women's silver medallist R. Pooja Arthi, Sunita Patel and Janet Vidhi form the rest of the women's squad.

The release further said: "Following India's spectacular performance at the last Asian Games in Hangzhou - with the team securing five medals in a competitive field - the SRFI is focused on promoting younger players with an eye on the 2026 Asian Games in Japan and the sport's much-awaited Olympic debut in LA '28."

### BASKETBALL

Sports Bureau  
CHENNAI

The Basketball Federation of India (BFI) has proposed the launch of two National-level leagues - the National Star Basketball 3x3 league and the National Star Basketball 5x5 league.

These leagues will feature both men's and women's divisions. BFI will also organise National u-23 Pro league. While maintaining 100% ownership of the leagues, BFI will look to get an organising partner through a selection process.

The partner will be granted a seven-year license to oversee the operations of the leagues. Those interested can bid for the rights to organise either one or both leagues, subject to meeting the criteria outlined by the BFI. "The tendering process will be over in around 40 days. And then we will start creating the structure. Moreover, we are planning to hold 3x3 across beaches of the country. The 5x5 league, too, will be held in Indoor and Outdoor as well. The primary purpose of the leagues is to take the sport to the masses," Aadhav Arjuna, BFI president told *The Hindu*.

## Shooters Raiza and Anantjeet miss medal round

Sports Bureau

Shooters Raiza Dhillon and Anantjeet Singh Naru-

ka shot 138 for the ninth place in mixed skeet in the shooting World Cup in Baku, Azerbaijan, on Friday.

The duo missed the medal round by two points. The other Indian team

of Ganemat Sekhon and Mairaj Ahmad Khan shot 137 for the 12th spot among 26 teams.

## U.P. boys win a thriller against Chandigarh

Sports Bureau  
INDORE

Defending champion Uttar Pradesh scored a thrilling 103-98 victory over Chandigarh in a group-A league match of the 74th National junior basketball championship at the Emerald Heights International School courts on Friday. In the women's section, host Madhya Pradesh beat Kerala 77-55, thanks to the fine work of Kushi Pal Singh and Ananya Maheshwari.

**The results (league): Men:**  
**Group-A:** Uttar Pradesh 103 Vedanshi Ranot 21, Abhi Panwar 20, Kunal Singh 20, Aman Tyagi 15) bt Chandigarh 93 (Himanshu Hooda 27, Gaurav Kumar Singh 19, Sumit 19, Ravinder Kaushik 13).

Kerala 73 (Aswin Krishna 21, Vinay Sankar 13, LR Niranjana 12) bt Delhi 32 (Anshuman Singh 17).

**Group-B:** Rajasthan 100 (Mohammed Ishan 23, Nitesh Kumar 18) bt Tamil Nadu 50 (D Mirthunvel 17, Dhanush Venkat 10). Andhra Pradesh 80 (Vaka Rahul 21, Gosla Nakesh Babu 13, Paneendra 10) bt Odisha 76 (Barik Abhishek 37, Sisa Biswanath 12, Saifuddin Shaik 10). **Women: Group-A:** Madhya Pradesh 77 (Kushi Pal Singh 24, Ananya Maheshwari 17) bt Kerala 55 (Amanda Rocha 17, Akshara Lakshmi 15).

Karnataka 88 (Aadhya Gowda 29, Aditi Subramaniam 17, Adhya Nagalinga 11, Nilaya Reddy 10) bt Rajasthan 53 (Priyanka Pal 18, Priyanshi Joshi 12).

Tamil Nadu 85 (Antheya Daisy 30, Theja Sri 20, Juana Chrisolin 12) bt Rajasthan 76 (Priyanka Pal 24, Payal 16, Priyanshi Joshi 13).

**B:** Maharashtra 80 (Anaanya Bhavasar 28, Muskan Singh 14, Rajvi Maladhari 13, Gunjari Mantri 13) bt Punjab 76 (Komalpreet Kaur 25, Nadar Dhillon 13, Gagandeep Kaur 11, Kishanpreet Kaur 10).

## Wrestler Bajrang issues another clarification on why he did not give sample to NADA

Sports Bureau  
KOLKATA

Wrestler Bajrang Punia on Friday took to his social media handle on 'X' to further clarify as to why he did not give a sample to the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) officials during the selection trials in Sonapat on March 10.

Bajrang, who has been suspended by United World Wrestling (UWW) until December 31, on the basis of the provisional suspension imposed by NADA, again claimed that he had not refused to give his sample.

"This is to clarify that I have at no stage refused to give my sample for doping control. On 10 March 2024, when I was approached by



**Staying by his words:** Bajrang again claimed that he had not refused to give his sample. FILE PHOTO: EMMANUEL YOGINI

alleged doping control officials, I merely reminded them that the last two times they came to collect my sample, they had gotten expired kits once and on the other instance, they had approached me with a single testing kit as opposed to the three testing kits.

"I then sought an answer

from them as the NADA did not provide an answer to any of my communications demanding an explanation for the same and informed them that I would give my sample upon receiving such explanation from them," Bajrang said.

"Not only did the doping control officials refuse to provide an explanation,



This is to clarify that I have at no stage refused to give my sample for doping control

they did not provide me any proof on this instance of them carrying proper equipment and merely left from the venue where I was at, claiming it to be a refusal from my end. I continued to be at the venue as I had another bout scheduled for 3/4 position. After my semifinal bout, I met the SAI doctor at the venue for treatment regarding a knee injury suffered during the semi-finals of the Wrestling Trials. I only left the venue about



The last two times they came to collect my sample, they had gotten expired kits once and on the other instance, they had approached me with a single testing kit as opposed to the three testing kits

an hour after the alleged doping control officials approached me, contrary to how it has been portrayed that I left immediately. "The dope controlling officer should have accompanied me till I submitted my medical report to the competition manager as per protocol, rather than leav-

ing in a hurry in the middle of the trials, to record my refusal. Even if this incident is treated as refusal, the fact that it was due to NADA using expired kits and not providing an explanation for using them, or giving me comfort, that they had not carried expired kits again, should be considered as a compelling justification. I took such a stance solely because of the NADAs actions in the past, which, in the absence of an explanation, could continue a dangerous trend of the use of expired kits or non-compliance with doping control protocol. It is my moral obligation towards the wrestling community and particularly the younger wrestlers that I exercised here."




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# Haaland activates beast mode, hands City cheat code

The Norwegian hitman is proving the difference-maker in a tight Premier League title race with Arsenal. Forced to deal with injuries and criticism this season, the 23-year-old appears back to his best in the run-in — as a result, the Citizens are eyeing a fourth consecutive English crown

Reuters  
Agence France-Presse

**W**hen Manchester City was held to a 0-0 draw by Arsenal at the end of March, Erling Haaland had not scored in three matches; City had failed to find the back of the net in a Premier League game at home for the first time since October 2021.

It was a frustrating result for Pep Guardiola's side, which trailed both the Gunners and then leader Liverpool at that stage. Haaland was beginning to face the sort of criticism he had never experienced before in his career. Former Manchester United captain Roy Keane described the centre-forward's play as "almost League Two level".

## On an unstoppable run

But since that draw, City has won four league games on the bounce, which has left the side with its destiny in its own hands. Although one point behind frontrunner Arsenal, City has a game in hand. Haaland has played a central role in City roaring back to contention, bagging seven goals in four Premier League matches and striking fear into the heart of every defence in England.

Clearly, the goal-scoring machine is rounding into form at the perfect time, with three games remaining in City's tight title race with Arsenal. Wolverhampton Wanderers was Haaland's most recent victim, with the 23-year-old scoring four goals in a 5-1 rout last weekend.

Three of Haaland's goals were in the first half, making him the third player to score two first-half hat-tricks in Premier League history, after Andrew Cole and Michael Owen.

Haaland converted from the penalty spot in the 12th minute after Rayan Ait-Nouri's late tackle took Josko Gvardiol down in the box. He then doubled City's lead in the 35th when he soared high to head home at the far post from Rodri's cross.

"That's a beautiful goal. My father [Alf-Inge Haaland, who played for City] is going to be happy with that one," he told Sky Sports. "A nice celebration, I enjoyed that one. We keep going."

Haaland converted again from the spot just be-



Erling was injured and he's so tall, so to get back to your best form you need time. [Now] he is back to business

PEP GUARDIOLA  
Manchester City manager

fore halftime after he was clipped from behind by Nelson Semedo in the area. His fourth came in the second half when he controlled a diagonal pass in the air from Phil Foden before slicing inside and curling a shot into the far corner.

Haaland, who missed nearly two months earlier this season with a foot injury, has now at least a hat-trick in six of his 63 matches in England's top flight. Wolves were left with the sobering realisation that there could even have been more on the day for City's number nine, who has twice before scored five in one game since arriving in England.

"Fantastic to score four goals," said Haaland. "It was a difficult game. They can play football so it was not easy but we were solid. We have to keep going, we have to push and focus."

## Finding his shooting feet

Guardiola deemed that the 6'4" Haaland was back in business after his injury struggles.

"He was injured, an important one, and he's so tall, so to get back to your best form you need time," said Guardiola. "But happy for his performance, for his exceptional goals, in the penalties as well because we know how some days it is not easy ... but the second and fourth (goals) were unbelievable. Erling is back to business"

Haaland's four-goal haul looks to have settled the race for the Golden Boot — awarded to the league's top scorer — as his 25 Premier League goals are now five more than Newcastle's Alexander Isak and Chelsea's Cole Palmer. Aston Villa's Ollie Watkins has 19. A 25-goal league season is an impressive achievement, but it pales



Twenty-five goals [is] not bad. We've got a not-so-bad manager who pushes me. I try to develop every day. I had some problems [this season] but let's not focus on them

ERLING HAALAND

in comparison with Haaland's record 36 in 2022-23. "Twenty-five goals [is] not bad," said Haaland. "We've got a not-so-bad manager who pushes me. I try to develop every day. I had some problems [this season] but let's not focus on them."

Despite criticism of his form this term, Haaland has now scored 36 goals in all competitions, including six in the Champions League, proving that he is a victim of his own high standards. Guardiola has often felt the need to defend his striker at several points during the season.

The City manager said Haaland was "the best striker in the world" following criticism from Keane. "He helped us to win [the treble] last season, and the reason why we don't create many chances is not because of Erling," said Guardiola. "For the quality and different skills we have, Haaland is exceptional."

Back in February, Guardiola also said Haaland had "shut the mouths" of his critics after scoring the only goal of a nervy 1-0 win over Brentford. "Top strikers score a lot of goals. Don't criticise, he will shut your mouth. Sooner or later he is there. He was out for two months, he lost his grandmother, it is not easy for a human being."

## The value of match-winners

In addition to his injury and personal struggles, Haaland, when he was fit earlier in the season, often missed his partner-in-crime Kevin De Bruyne, who was out with a hamstring injury.

"I try to do the same runs with everyone, but with him I know I'm going to get it perfect. I know the ball is going to come," said Haaland. "You can see I don't even look at the ball for two seconds when he has it because I'm focusing on running towards the goal. That's the difference, nothing bad towards other players, but it's the small difference of knowing that the ball will come."

Guardiola has often spoken about the difference between players who "help you play better" and those "who win games". The first category is central to establishing control whereas the second puts opposition teams away. Both Haaland and De Bruyne belong to the second category.

"It's simple. They are players that win games by themselves. When one player scores 60 goals, you win games," said Guardiola. "When a player makes a thousand million assists and goals, it helps you to win games. You don't have to study at Harvard or Yale to understand that."

With De Bruyne supplying Haaland with ammunition, City remains on course for an unprecedented fourth successive Premier League crown.

Three more wins — away to Fulham and Tottenham and then at home to West Ham — and the title is City's outright. As Haaland put it, "We've got four finals [three league games and the FA Cup final] left for our season. We're on a mission. Now focus on the next one."

## STACKING UP



### ATP Men's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Novak Djokovic	36	9,990	17
2	Jannik Sinner	22	8,860	19
3	Carlos Alcaraz	21	7,345	17
4	Daniil Medvedev	28	7,195	19
5	Alexander Zverev	27	5,435	26
6	Andrey Rublev	26	4,740	24
7	Casper Ruud	25	4,535	24
8	Stefanos Tsitsipas	25	3,860	25
9	Hubert Hurkacz	27	3,730	24
10	Grigor Dimitrov	32	3,605	22
11	Alex de Minaur	25	3,435	25
12	Holger Rune	21	3,250	23
13	Taylor Fritz	26	2,870	25
14	Ben Shelton	21	2,460	24
15	Ugo Humbert	25	2,455	28



### English Premier League Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Arsenal	36	26	5	5	88	28	60	83
2	Man. City	35	25	7	3	87	33	54	82
3	Liverpool	36	23	9	4	81	38	43	78
4	Aston Villa	36	20	7	9	73	53	20	67
5	Tottenham	35	18	6	11	69	58	11	60
6	Newcastle United	35	17	5	13	78	56	22	56
7	Chelsea	35	15	9	11	70	59	11	54
8	Man. United	35	16	6	13	52	55	-3	54
9	West Ham	36	13	10	13	56	70	-14	49
10	Bournemouth	36	13	9	14	52	63	-11	48
11	Brighton	35	12	11	12	53	57	-4	47
12	Wolves	36	13	7	16	49	60	-11	46
13	Fulham	36	12	8	16	51	55	-4	44
14	Crystal Palace	36	11	10	15	49	57	-8	43
15	Everton*	36	12	9	15	38	49	-11	37
16	Brentford	36	9	9	18	52	60	-8	36
17	N. Forest*	36	8	9	19	45	63	-18	29
18	Luton Town	36	6	8	22	49	78	-29	26
19	Burnley	36	5	9	22	39	74	-35	24
20	Sheffield	36	3	7	26	35	100	-65	16

\* Everton deducted eight points and Forest deducted four points following breaches of the PL's Profitability and Sustainability Rules



### Spanish LaLiga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Real Madrid	34	27	6	1	74	22	52	87
2	Girona	34	23	5	6	73	42	31	74
3	Barcelona	34	22	7	5	70	43	27	73
4	Atletico Madrid	34	21	4	9	63	39	24	67
5	Athletic Bilbao	34	17	10	7	55	33	22	61
6	Real Sociedad	34	14	12	8	48	35	13	54
7	Real Betis	34	13	13	8	43	39	4	52
8	Valencia	34	13	8	13	37	39	-2	47
9	Villarreal	34	12	9	13	56	58	-2	45
10	Getafe	34	10	13	11	41	47	-6	43
11	Alaves	34	11	8	15	32	38	-6	41
12	Sevilla	34	10	11	13	45	46	-1	41
13	Osasuna	34	11	6	17	37	51	-14	39
14	Las Palmas	34	10	7	17	30	43	-13	37
15	Celta Vigo	34	8	10	16	40	52	-12	34
16	Rayo Vallecano	34	7	13	14	27	43	-16	34
17	Real Mallorca	34	6	14	14	27	40	-13	32
18	Cadiz	34	4	14	16	23	49	-26	26
19	Granada	34	4	9	21	36	64	-28	21
20	Almeria	34	2	11	21	33	67	-34	17

### Test Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Kane Williamson	859	919
2	Joe Root	824	923
3	Babar Azam	768	882
4	Daryl Mitchell	768	804
5	Steve Smith	757	947
6	Rohit Sharma	751	813
7	Yashasvi Jaiswal	740	740
8	Dimuth Karunaratne	739	783
9	Virat Kohli	737	937
10	Harry Brook	735	773

### Test Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	R. Ashwin	870	904
2	Josh Hazlewood	847	864
3	Jasprit Bumrah	847	881
4	Kagiso Rabada	834	902
5	Pat Cummins	820	914
6	Nathan Lyon	801	801
7	Ravindra Jadeja	788	899
8	James Anderson	739	937
9	Shaheen Afridi	733	836
10	Kyle Jamieson	729	836

### ODI Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Babar Azam	824	898
2	Shubman Gill	801	847
3	Virat Kohli	768	909
4	Harry Tector	746	767
5	Rohit Sharma	746	882
6	Daryl Mitchell	728	750
7	David Warner	723	869
8	Pathum Nissanka	711	728
9	Dawid Malan	707	730
10	Rassie van der Dussen	701	796

### ODI Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Keshav Maharaj	716	741
2	Josh Hazlewood	688	727
3	Adam Zampa	686	695
4	Mohammed Siraj	678	736
5	Jasprit Bumrah	665	838
6	Mohammad Nabi	656	657
7	Shaheen Afridi	650	688
8	Kuldeep Yadav	645	760
9	Trent Boult	643	775
10	Bernard Scholtz	642	642

### T20I Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Suryakumar Yadav	861	910
2	Philipp Salt	802	802
3	Mohammad Rizwan	784	875
4	Babar Azam	763	896
5	Aiden Markram	755	796
6	Yashasvi Jaiswal	714	739
7	Rilee Rossouw	689	724
8	Jos Buttler	680	687
9	Reeza Hendricks	660	674
10	Dawid Malan	657	915

### T20I Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Adil Rashid	726	746
2	Wanindu Hasaranga	687	797
3	Akeal Hosein	664	683
4	Axar Patel	660	667
5	Maheesh Theekshana	659	684
6	Ravi Bishnoi	659	699
7	Josh Hazlewood	654	806
8	Tabraiz Shamsi	654	821
9	Rashid Khan	645	816
10	Reece Topley	643	662

Top Indians →  
Sumit Nagal Rank 93 ▼ 11 spots  
Ramesh Kumar Rank 358 ▲ 2 spots

### WTA Women's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Iga Swiatek	22	10,910	19
2	Aryna Sabalenka	26	7,498	17
3	Coco Gauff	20	7,313	19
4	Elena Rybakina	24	6,673	19
5	Jessica Pegula	30	6,655	22
6	Marketa Vondrousova	24	4,090	17
7	Qinwen Zheng	21	3,945	21
8	Maria Sakkari	28	3,925	24
9	Ons Jabeur	29	3,748	23
10	Jelena Ostapenko	26	3,493	23
11	Daria Kasatkina	26	3,313	24
12	Jasmine Paolini	28	3,048	28
13	Beatriz Haddad Maia	27	3,035	24
14	Karolina Muchova	27	2,930	11
15	Danielle Collins	30	2,759	18

Top Indians →  
Ankita Raina Rank 269 ▼ 11 spots  
Sahaja Yamalapalli Rank 315 ▼ 6 spots

GETTY IMAGES

# Why Adrian Newey's Red Bull exit could redraw F1's contours



He's a formidable engineer. He's always scratching for that last bit of performance... he challenges, he pushes the boundaries. It'll be with sadness that we see him depart but... the show goes on

**CHRISTIAN HORNER**  
Red Bull team boss

The suspension and the intricate floor design to maximise ground effect have laid the foundation for the side's dominance of the sport since then.

Modern-day F1 teams are enormous operations with hundreds of highly qualified engineers and the latest tools. But the presence of someone like Newey, who has also worked as a race engineer, adds considerable value, as he understands what the driver needs.

Red Bull has been blessed in that it has managed to get the best out of Newey by giving him complete freedom since he joined the organisation in 2006. He has responded by delivering 13 titles (seven drivers' and six constructors') and more than 100 wins.

This tally could further increase. The reigning champion has a baked-in advantage this year – it will likely win both titles and will probably still be competitive next year, as the regulations are stable. However, the team's biggest challenge begins now. How it handles the transition could determine the future of the energy-drink giant in the sport.

In recent times, the team has learnt to depend less on Newey, but losing such an influential figure is a massive blow as it always had the cushion of relying on him to troubleshoot any problem. More importantly, his exit couldn't have come at a worse time.

## Life after Newey

In 2026, a fresh set of regulations will come into force, and it will be the first time Red Bull will approach them without Newey illuminating the path. To add to the challenges, Red Bull will also be building its own power units starting in 2026, which is a huge undertaking, considering it is not an original equipment manufacturer.

Becoming a championship-winning team doesn't happen overnight, even with a blank cheque. There are no silver bullets for instant success, and it takes a lot of years to get the structure right. In Red Bull's case, the period from 2006 to 2008 allowed Newey to put things in place. That foundation was vital to tackling the '09 regulations, which helped it jump to the front of the grid.

The big test now will be to see how robust that structure is without its chief architect at the helm. Recently, it emerged that Newey felt team boss Christian Horner was downplaying his contributions in public. Newey hasn't commented on this, but his wife's social media posts hinted at it, which seems to have played a part in his decision to quit.

Horner has also been in the eye of the storm this year after a female employee accused him of harassment but he was cleared of wrongdoing after an internal investigation. The situation created a sense of unease in the team, and McLaren team boss Zak Brown even hinted that some Red Bull employees were shopping their CVs around.

The significant risk, though, pertains to Verstappen's future. The Dutchman wasn't happy with what was happening inside the team either. Could Newey's exit push him over the edge at a time when Mercedes is openly courting him?

It only takes a little for a team to crumble from a position of strength, especially when there is a personnel change at the top. Since Newey's departure, Williams hasn't won a title, and McLaren managed just one driver's title in 2008, which shows how vital he was to those teams. Can Red Bull break the jinx? Only time will tell.

In a highly complex sport, the 65-year-old design genius – F1's foremost aerodynamicist – is the closest guarantee of success. And so while Lewis Hamilton's Ferrari move is seismic, Newey's departure is much more significant, in terms of its potential effect on the pecking order

S. Dipak Ragav

Formula One's silly season usually only buzzes around mid-term, with driver contracts being negotiated during the summer break. But this year, things have been on overdrive from the start.

It began when Lewis Hamilton announced he would leave Mercedes and join Ferrari in 2025. Subsequently, there has been a lot of speculation surrounding Carlos Sainz's landing spot and even some smoke signals of Merc trying to audaciously poach Max Verstappen from Red Bull.

## Coming to a boil

But even as all this played out, a more significant event was brewing under the surface. It concerned the future of Red Bull's chief technical officer, Adrian Newey. Last week, ahead of the Miami Grand Prix, it was announced that the design genius would leave the team next year.

If Hamilton's move is seismic in its impact and shock value, Newey's departure is much more significant, in terms of its potential effect on the pecking order.

The 65-year-old is arguably the best F1 car designer ever, having won championships at three different teams – Williams, McLaren, and Red



It would be a privilege to work with Adrian. If I was to do a list of people that I would love to work with, he would absolutely be at the top of it

**LEWIS HAMILTON**  
Seven-time world champion

Bull – in a career spanning over four decades.

Newey has been instrumental in Red Bull becoming the force it is. Drivers are the stars of the show, but results in F1 are decided more by the quality of the machinery at their disposal. A Hamilton or Verstappen can probably put the 2024 Alpine or Sauber a few places higher than where they are placing. But those cars won't win races even in their brilliant hands. The machinery determines 80-90% of a team's success, the driver brings in the last 10-20%.

More than the engine horsepower and the mechanical platform, a car's performance potential is determined by its aerodynamics and downforce. And in F1, no one understands this cryptic art of physics better than Newey, the sport's foremost aerodynamicist who has revolutionised the subject across an ever-changing technical landscape.

It is famously said, tongue-in-cheek, that Newey can visualise airflow over the car and find the ideal solutions to achieve aerodynamic efficiency; such is his command of the subject.

In a highly complex sport with many variables, Newey's presence is the closest guarantee of success. He played a crucial role in Williams' dominance of the constructors' championship in the '90s, and his designs powered Nigel Mansell

(1992), Alain Prost (1993), Damon Hill (1996), and Jacques Villeneuve (1997) to the drivers' title.

## Priceless ability

The British engineer is known for his priceless ability to examine a new set of regulations and identify which facet of the car will be vital to unlocking maximum performance.

In 1998, F1 moved to narrow-track cars and grooved tyres, and his work in nailing those regulations in his first year at McLaren helped Mika Hakkinen win the titles in 1998 and 1999.

Similarly, in 2009, under a new aero regulation regime, Red Bull jumped from being a lower-mid-grid team to one fighting for the title and dominated the sport from 2010 to 2013, as Sebastian Vettel won four titles on the bounce. The team perfected the concept of blowing exhaust gases through the diffuser – an aerodynamic part in the car's rear – to generate downforce.

Although Newey has reduced his day-to-day involvement in recent years, he is still the guiding force. In 2022, when the current ground-effect regulations were introduced, he fell back on his work in this area in his early years in the sport to ensure Red Bull hit the ground running.

He realised that getting the suspension right would be critical to performance and focused his efforts on that. Most teams suffered from a problem called porpoising, in which the cars violently bounced on the track, costing lap time and causing discomfort to the drivers. Red Bull managed to mitigate this to a great extent, while a team like Mercedes continues to struggle.

## GAME THEORY

### Seven decades after Bannister's milestone

Seventy years ago this week, May 6, 1954 to be exact, Roger Bannister became the first man to complete the mile run in under four minutes. His world record of 3:59.4 lasted only 46 days, but his name and feat still endure. It's a good time to look at the fastest times in the men's mile, to get a sense of how much has changed since Bannister's record:

#### FASTEST TIMES IN THE MEN'S MILE

Rank	Mark	Competitor	Date of birth	Venue	Date
1	3:43.13	Hicham El Guerrouj	14 Sep 1974	Stadio Olimpico, Roma	07 Jul 1999
2	3:43.40	Noah Ngeny	02 Nov 1978	Stadio Olimpico, Roma	07 Jul 1999
3	3:43.73	Jakob Ingebrigtsen	19 Sep 2000	Hayward Field, Eugene	16 Sep 2023
4	3:43.97	Yared Nuguse	01 Jun 1999	Hayward Field, Eugene	16 Sep 2023
5	3:44.39	Noureddine Morceli	28 Feb 1970	Rieti	05 Sep 1993
6	3:44.60	Hicham El Guerrouj	14 Sep 1974	Nice	16 Jul 1998
7	3:44.90	Hicham El Guerrouj	14 Sep 1974	Oslo	04 Jul 1997
8	3:44.95	Hicham El Guerrouj	14 Sep 1974	Stadio Olimpico, Roma	29 Jun 2001
9	3:45.19	Noureddine Morceli	28 Feb 1970	Zurich	16 Aug 1995
10	3:45.64	Hicham El Guerrouj	14 Sep 1974	Olympiastadion, Berlin	26 Aug 1997
11	3:45.96	Hicham El Guerrouj	14 Sep 1974	Crystal Palace, London	05 Aug 2000
12	3:46.24	Hicham El Guerrouj	14 Sep 1974	Bislett Stadion, Oslo	28 Jul 2000
13	3:46.32	Steve Cram	14 Oct 1960	Oslo	27 Jul 1985
14	3:46.38	Daniel Komen	17 May 1976	Olympiastadion, Berlin	26 Aug 1997
15	3:46.46	Jakob Ingebrigtsen	19 Sep 2000	Bislett Stadion, Oslo	16 Jun 2022
16	3:46.70	Venuste Niyongabo	09 Dec 1973	Olympiastadion, Berlin	26 Aug 1997
17	3:46.76	Said Aouita	02 Nov 1959	Helsinki	02 Jul 1987
18	3:46.78	Noureddine Morceli	28 Feb 1970	Olympiastadion, Berlin	27 Aug 1993
19	3:46.91	Alan Webb	13 Jan 1983	Brasschaat	21 Jul 2007
20	3:46.92	Said Aouita	02 Nov 1959	Letzigrund, Zurich	21 Aug 1985
21	3:47.01	Yomif Kejelcha	01 Aug 1997	Boston	03 Mar 2019
22	3:47.10	Hicham El Guerrouj	14 Sep 1974	London	07 Aug 1999
23	3:47.24	Jakob Ingebrigtsen	19 Sep 2000	Hayward Field, Eugene	21 Aug 2021
24	3:47.28	Bernard Lagat	12 Dec 1974	Stadio Olimpico, Roma	29 Jun 2001
25	3:47.30	Noureddine Morceli	28 Feb 1970	Bruxelles	03 Sep 1993



## PICTURE THIS



### Drink's on me

That old dressing room routine of a cold beverage after the game has been reinterpreted in American sport: you don't pour it down your throat, you pour it on someone unsuspecting.

This relatively recent sports tradition, known as the

Gatorade shower, involves players dumping a cooler filled with liquid – typically Gatorade on ice, but water and other sports drinks are used, too – on someone high profile to celebrate a big win.

The person being 'bathed' is usually the team's coach, but star players, team owners and

even sports reporters have been doused during victory celebrations.

The tradition has its roots in friendly revenge. Reportedly New York Giants player Jim Burt dumped a cooler of Gatorade on head coach Bill Parcells after a 1984 win over then NFC champion Washington

Redskins – Parcells had driven Burt hard in training before the game and this was the player getting even with 'well-intentioned' mischief.

While the tradition comes from gridiron football, it's now common in several sports, as this photograph from a recent baseball game shows.