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U.S. ON MODI-PUTIN MEET

'There is no strategic autonomy during conflict'

NEWS » PAGE 12

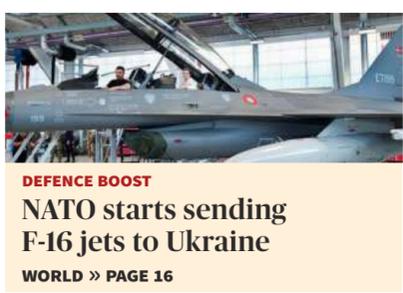


PARLEY

Should States get special packages?

These could potentially increase scale of burden on the Centre and other States

OPINION » PAGE 9



DEFENCE BOOST

NATO starts sending F-16 jets to Ukraine

WORLD » PAGE 16

NEET counselling from July third week, says govt.

SC adjourns hearing to July 18; govt. says candidatures of students found to be beneficiaries of any malpractices will be cancelled at any stage during the counselling process or even afterwards

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Union government has said that counselling for eligible NEET-UG candidates will be conducted in four rounds from the third week of July even as the Supreme Court on Thursday deferred the hearing of the case to July 18.

The government, in its latest affidavit, has banked on an IIT Madras report to count out "mass malpractice" in the exam.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud accepted the request of lawyers to adjourn the hearing. Advocates Mathew J. Nedumpara and Charu Mathur, appearing for the petitioners, said the Centre and the National Testing



A student holds a placard demanding reconducting of NEET-UG, outside the Supreme Court on Thursday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Agency (NTA) had filed their counter-affidavits late on Wednesday, leaving little time for them to go through the documents.

Chief Justice Chandrachud informed the assembled lawyers that the CBI has already filed a status report. During the previous hearing on July 8, the top court orally remarked

that the sanctity of NEET was compromised beyond doubt. Despite this, the Chief Justice had expressed reluctance to order a re-test. The top judge reasoned that such a step would be an "extreme last resort".

The Centre said that candidatures of students found to be beneficiaries of

CBI arrests key accused in NEET paper leak case

PATNA

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Thursday arrested one of the key accused in the NEET-UG paper leak case. Rakesh Ranjan alias Rocky allegedly ran a racket involved in leaking the exam papers. » PAGE 14

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CAN OF WORMS

» PAGE 8

Ensure flow of water for T.N., Cauvery panel tells Karnataka govt.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) on Thursday asked Karnataka to ensure the flow of 11,500 cusecs of water at Biligundlu every day till July 31 to supply water for Tamil Nadu. Karnataka had cited deficit water flow, and urged the panel to defer any decision till July 25.

According to a note from the office of Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and Water Resources Minister D.K. Shivakumar, the State informed the CWRC that between June 1 and July 9, the inflow into four reservoirs in Karnataka was 41.651 tmcft, a 28.71% deficit from the average inflow in previous years.

The total storage in four reservoirs in Karnataka currently stands at 58.66 tmcft, while the total storage in three reservoirs in Tamil Nadu is 24.705 tmcft.

It was also pointed out that 4.905 tmcft of water from Mettur and 0.618 tmcft from the Bhavani (a total of 5.523 tmcft) was being released into the river.

Based on the data, the note said, Karnataka argued that it was better to wait till July 25 before any decision on water release is taken.

The note said Tamil Nadu argued that Karnataka had not maintained the flow of water into the river for environmental purposes between February and May. The current year is being treated as a normal year and inflow into the river also remains normal. Hence, the water flow at Biligundlu should be what the Cauvery Water Dispute Tribunal awarded and confirmed by the Supreme Court, it argued.

Mr. Shivakumar told presspersons that the available water was inadequate for Karnataka.

IN BRIEF

Govt. begins work to implement 4 Labour Codes

NEW DELHI

Almost a month after the swearing-in of the Narendra Modi government for the third term, the Union Labour Ministry has started efforts to implement the four Labour Codes, which were passed in Parliament in its second term in 2019 and 2020. » Page 13



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Manipur Police arrests two members of Meitei outfit Arambai Tenggol in Imphal

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Manipur Police arrested two members of the radical armed Meitei outfit, Arambai Tenggol, in the Paona Bazaar area in Imphal on Wednesday.

The police also seized arms and ammunition, including an INSAS rifle with 16 live rounds and a pistol with three live rounds.

The accused have been identified as Kangabam Lenin Singh, 43, and Toijam Shantikishor, 50.

Manipur Police said a case had been registered

"for further investigation and legal action".

Fresh tensions

The arrest comes within days of fresh tensions erupting in parts of Kangpokpi and in Jiribam district, which has seen violence and arson since June. The Arambai Tenggol group has come into prominence as one of the largest armed actors in the ongoing ethnic conflict.

In the first weeks after the conflict broke out in the State, multiple India Reserve Battalion camps across the valley area re-

ported having their armories "looted" of over 5,000 weapons, including INSAS rifles. Over 4,000 weapons are yet to be recovered.

In the course of the conflict, it came to be widely believed that these weapons had armed large parts of the civilian population, including members of Arambai Tenggol.

The arrest came a day after the Manipur Police and the Central Reserve Police Force arrested three individuals they identified as "armed cadres of an underground outfit" in Kang-

pokpi district, during joint operations.

The police were acting on inputs from the National Investigation Agency and handed the accused over to the agency after making the arrest.

This triggered massive protests in Kangpokpi district, with Kuki-Zo groups seeking their unconditional release on the grounds that they were village volunteers.

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ANOTHER REPORT

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DU V-C rejects addition of Manusmriti readings to Faculty of Law syllabus

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University on Thursday said amendments proposing the inclusion of

readings from the Manusmriti in the syllabus of the Faculty of Law have been rejected. "Today, the Delhi University received a proposal from the Faculty of Law suggesting changes

to some courses. The two suggested texts and the amendment have been rejected by the university and will not be taught," Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh said in a statement.

INLD, BSP reunite for Haryana poll; Abhay Chautala CM face

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

Former allies Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) announced on Thursday that they would be jointly contesting the Haryana Assembly election due later this year.

The two parties agreed to join hands again following a meeting between INLD general secretary Abhay Chautala and BSP chief Mayawati last week.

At a joint press conference in Chandigarh, BSP national coordinator Akash Anand said the BSP would contest 37 out of the 90 Assembly seats in the State, leaving the remaining 53 for the INLD.

He announced that Mr. Chautala, the lone member of the INLD in the House, would be the chief

ministerial face of the alliance and the two parties would continue to jointly contest elections even after the Assembly poll.

The two parties had forged a tie-up in 2018 ahead of the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls, but the BSP unilaterally broke the alliance 10 months later, blaming it on the split in the Chautala family.

Mr. Chautala said the two parties had to part ways because of a few selfish people, but reunited considering the sentiments of the masses. He said an attempt would be made to include more parties opposed to the Congress and the BJP in the alliance.

The INLD leader also read out the promises in the alliance's manifesto such as filling the backlog of SC/ST vacancies in State government jobs.

No intrusion recorded on cameras on Jammu-Pak. border, says BSF official

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Amid a fresh wave of terror attacks in the Jammu division, a security audit by the Border Security Force (BSF) has not found any breach along the Jammu-Pakistan border, a senior BSF official said.

The BSF checked the footage of underwater and surface surveillance cameras installed along the 192-km International Border in Jammu but no suspicious movement was recorded in the past few days, the official told *The Hindu*.

Five terror attacks

This year, at least five terror attacks have been reported in Jammu, in which eight security personnel and 10 civilians have been killed. Security forces are

investigating if the highly trained terrorists infiltrated from the International Border as four attacks since June 9 have been reported in areas such as Kathua, close to the Jammu border. On July 9, five Army personnel were killed when terrorists opened fire at two Army vehicles from two directions at Jenda Nallah in Badnota village, around 124 km away from Kathua town.

Four attacks since June 9 have been reported in areas such as Kathua, close to the Jammu border

investigating if the highly trained terrorists infiltrated from the International Border as four attacks since June 9 have been reported in areas such as Kathua, close to the Jammu border. On July 9, five Army personnel were killed when terrorists opened fire at two Army vehicles from two directions at Jenda Nallah in Badnota village, around 124 km away from Kathua town.

'Use of tunnels'

The official said the possibility of terrorists using tunnels was also being

looked into. Till 2022, the BSF had detected at least five tunnels along the Jammu border.

"As part of comprehensive border security, we have placed underwater cameras and sensors in the riverine patches. Live electric wires have also been laid down. If an infiltrator tries to cross the border, these devices can send an alarm. This is in addition to BSF personnel who are also stationed there. We checked the footage but none of the sensors or cameras recorded anything amiss," the official said.

The International Border is secured by the BSF, while the 740-km Line of Control, the effective border in the Kashmir Valley and parts of Jammu, is under the operational control of the Army.



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Breach in Munak Canal leaves Bawana JJ colony inundated

Water Minister Atishi says repair work to plug the breach has started on war footing, water level has receded; functioning of four water treatment plants affected in the city due to breach in the canal that brings Yamuna water from Haryana to Delhi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A sub-branch of Munak Canal, which brings Yamuna water from Haryana to Delhi, breached around 12 a.m. on Thursday, flooding north-west Delhi's Bawana JJ colony.

Water Minister Atishi said repair work has started on a war footing to plug the breach and water level has receded. "The water coming into the sub-branch CLC (carrier lined channel) was diverted to another branch and flow of water in the CLC has almost stopped. Various departments have been coordinating to pump out water from the colony," Ms. Atishi said after visiting the area. "We are hopeful that things will normalise in Bawana JJ colony by evening. Power supply to the area has been shut down due to the waterlogging since there was a risk of electrocution," she added.

The Minister said that the breach in Munak Canal, which brings raw water to Delhi, affected four water treatment plants in Delhi. While production at the Bawana, Nangloi and Hyder-

pur plants was expected to normalise by Thursday, the Dwarka water treatment plant will remain affected till Friday morning, Ms. Atishi said, adding that they were hopeful that water supply in Dwarka will resume by Friday evening. She said the canal is maintained by the Haryana government and an inquiry will be conducted by the Irrigation departments of Delhi and Haryana into the reason behind the breach.

Meanwhile, a letter issued by the Lieutenant-Governor's office to the Chief Secretary said that the breach underlines the absence of adequate maintenance of the canal, which "should have been undertaken by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) through Haryana Irrigation Department from time to time".

While there was no official statement from the L-G's office, sources in Raj Niwas said L-G V.K. Saxena had earlier flagged the matter of repair and maintenance of Munak Canal. Raj Niwas officials said the L-G also directed the DJB CEO to reach the spot along with his team of engineers and coordinate with the Haryana

na government to ensure the restoration of the canal at the earliest. He also asked NDRF teams to immediately evacuate the affected people, and the Irrigation and Flood Control Department to deploy pumps to drain out water at the earliest and provide additional boats to NDRF as required, according to the letter. Mr. Saxena, officials said, directed the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board to make arrangements for relief and rehabilitation measures.

War of words

As a political war of words ensued following the breach in the canal, senior AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj said it was the duty of the Haryana government to maintain the sub-canal. BJP's North West Delhi MP Yogendra Chandoliya accused the AAP-led Delhi government and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) of not responding adequately. He said calls were made to the MCD, DJB and Irrigation and Flood Control Department but only seven pumps were installed after 11 a.m., which was insufficient.



In deep waters: Residents of JJ colony waded through a flooded lane in north-west Delhi's Bawana on Thursday. PTI

DDA emails show L-G had visited Ridge on Feb. 3 and asked to cut trees immediately: Bharadwaj

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Senior AAP leader and Delhi Urban Development Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj on Thursday alleged that the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), under the Central government-appointed Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena, sacrificed hundreds of trees without permission, just to save the "farm houses of the rich and the influential".

"Two emails were presented before the Supreme Court by the DDA in which its Executive Engineer is telling the Chief Engineer that on February 3, 2024, the L-G came to the site and directed that the work of felling trees and widening the road should be done immediately. This email has been placed before the Supreme Court by the DDA itself," Mr. Bharadwaj said in a statement.

"Supreme Court has asked the DDA Vice-Chairman to tell whether the L-G had gone to that area on February 3, 2024 or not? I, Saurabh Bharadwaj, am telling you that the L-G had gone there on February 3. Apart from that, he has also gone there many other times. The L-G is hiding this matter. As a Mi-



The Supreme Court had last month rapped the DDA over the felling of 1,100 trees in the Ridge area without its permission. FILE PHOTO

nister, I am telling you with full responsibility that the L-G went there many times," Mr. Bharadwaj said. The L-G's office did not respond to the allegations. The Supreme Court had last month rapped the DDA over the felling of 1,100 trees in the Ridge area without its permission and asked it if it was done on the orders of Mr. Saxena.

The DDA is an autonomous body under the Central government and the L-G is its chairman.

'Misread notification'

Mr. Bharadwaj also highlighted that the DDA, in an affidavit submitted to the top court on July 10, said that it "misread" an initial permission (notification)

given for felling of 422 trees in "non-Ridge area" in Satbari as the final approval for felling of trees.

"In written reply/letter dated 08.05.2024, DDA official submitted that notification dated 14/02/24 was misread as final permission," reads the DDA's affidavit, dated July 10, submitted to the Supreme Court.

Mr. Bharadwaj said there were media reports that the Delhi government had given permission for felling of these trees but the affidavit proves that it was completely untrue. He added that the initial exemption or approval was given for "non-Ridge area" and not for felling of trees in the Ridge area, which was done by the DDA.

Clear Yamuna banks of encroachments: HC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The High Court has ordered the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to remove all encroachments from the Yamuna banks, riverbed and drains flowing into it.

In its order on July 8, the court also asked the DDA Vice-Chairman to file an action taken report within six weeks, and listed the

matter for hearing on September 9.

The order came on a plea filed by Shabnam Burney highlighting unauthorised constructions on the Yamuna bank around the Shaheen Bagh area.

Though the plea was confined to the Shaheen Bagh area, the court was recommended by the Delhi government to pass an order for the entire riverbed and all river banks.

Clean drains on urgent basis: L-G; Minister says measures in place to check flooding

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Taking stock of the city's flood preparedness, Delhi Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena on Thursday ordered civic agencies to complete the desilting of drains on an urgent basis and remove obstructions to the flow of the Yamuna water.

Chairing a meeting of the Delhi Disaster Manage-

Chairing a DDMA meeting, the L-G said desilting of drains should have been done by June 15

ment Authority (DDMA), he said the work should have been completed by June 15. The meeting was also attended by Water Minister Atishi.

The L-G directed Irriga-

tion and Flood Control Department (IFCD) to monitor rainfall levels in upper reaches of Himachal Pradesh and remain in constant touch with their counterparts in Haryana to keep tabs on the discharge of water from the Hathnikund barrage.

Meanwhile, IFCD Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj told reporters that the primary cause of flooding in the Capital was the dis-

charge of extra water from the Haryana's Hathnikund barrage. This water reaches Delhi in 36 to 72 hours depending on different factors.

The Minister said learning from last year's floods in the city, his government has taken several special measures this year to prevent flooding, including the testing of regulators on drains and their cleaning.

'Applications of Delhi riots accused seeking probe status malafide'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Thursday said the applications filed by some of the accused in the Delhi riots case seeking to know the status of the probe were "malafide", and "filed with a clear intent to delay the trial". The Sessions court was hearing applications filed by ac-

cused Devangana Kalita, Natasha Narwal, Asif Iqbal Tanha, Meeran Haider and Athar Khan.

"There is no legal provision for granting relief and these pleas had been filed with clear intent to delay the trial," said Special Public Prosecutor Amit Prasad.

The court has posted the matter for August 8.

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमण्डल, सरायकेला					
ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना					
ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या - RDD/SD/SKELLA/06/2024-25					
1. कार्य की विस्तृत विवरणी					
क्र.सं.	कार्य का नाम	प्राक्कलित राशि	अग्रघन की राशि	परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि
1	सरायकेला-खरसावाँ जिला के गम्हरिया प्रखण्ड अन्तर्गत ग्राम तिरला से नयाडीह के बीच नाला पर पुल निर्माण।	1,78,00,800.00	3,56,100.00	10000.00	15 माह
2	सरायकेला-खरसावाँ जिला के राजनगर प्रखण्ड के कुडुमा पंचायत अन्तर्गत ग्राम बड़ा घोलाडीह और रानीगंज के बीच नाला पर पुल निर्माण	1,58,20,300.00	3,16,500.00	10000.00	15 माह
2. वेबसाइट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि - 20.07.2024					
3. ई-निविदा प्राप्त की तिथि एवं समय - दिनांक 20.07.2024 से दिनांक 02.08.2024 को अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक।					
4. ई-निविदा खोलने का स्थान - कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमण्डल, सरायकेला।					
5. ई-निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय - 03.08.2024 अपराह्न 2:00 बजे					
6. ई-निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता - कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण विकास विशेष प्रमण्डल, सरायकेला।					
7. ई-निविदा प्रकोष्ठ का दूरभाष सं. - 9431183167 (संबन्धित कार्यपालक अभियंता का दूरभाष नम्बर)					
8. परिमाण विपत्र की राशि घट-बढ़ सकती है तदनुसार अग्रघन की राशि देय होगी।					
9. निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रघन की राशि केवल Online Mode द्वारा स्वीकार्य होगी।					
10. निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रघन की राशि का ई-मुद्रातन जिस खाता से किया जायेगा, उसी खाते में अग्रघन की राशि वापस होगी। अगर खाता को बंद कर दिया जाता है तो उसकी सारी जवाबदेही आपकी होगी।					
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PR 329298 Rural Development(24-25)#D					

झारखण्ड सरकार ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय, तृतीय तल्ला, नया समाहरणालय भवन, पपरवाटाड़, गिरिडीह, झारखण्ड - 815301						
ई-पुनर्निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना						
ई-निविदा सं. :-06/R1/2024-25/RWD/EE/GIRIDIH दिनांक :- 10.07.2024						
कार्य प्रमण्डल, गिरिडीह द्वारा निम्नविवरण के अनुसार e-procurement पद्धति से निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।						
1. कार्य का नाम :-						
क्र.सं.	आई-टी/ई-केज संख्या	कार्य का नाम	प्राक्कलित राशि (रुपया में)	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि	टेंडर कॉल संख्या	
1.	RWD/GIRID IH/47/2023-24	बगोडीह रोड से गीमासिधा तक पथ निर्माण कार्य। (लं-1,000 किमी)	98,95,900.00	अनारम्भे लाख पंचानवे हजार नौ सौ ०० मात्र	06 माह	द्वितीय
2.	RWD/GIRID IH/50/2023-24	अटका से करियाटाड़ तक पथ निर्माण कार्य। (लं-3,080 किमी)	3,66,68,500.00	तीन करोड़ छियासठ लाख अरसठ हजार सौ ०० मात्र	15 माह	द्वितीय
3.	RWD/GIRID IH/64/2023-24	कड़को पंचायत अन्तर्गत बरदो से करियाडीह तक पथ निर्माण कार्य। (लं-2800 किमी)	2,78,59,700.00	दो करोड़ अठारह लाख उनसठ हजार सात सौ ०० मात्र	15 माह	द्वितीय
2. वेबसाइट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि - 19.07.2024						
3. ई-निविदा प्राप्त की तिथि एवं समय - 08.08.2024 अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक।						
4. निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय - 10.08.2024 अपराह्न 3:30 बजे।						
5. निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का पता - कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, गिरिडीह, तृतीय तल्ला, नया समाहरणालय भवन, पपरवाटाड़, गिरिडीह, झारखण्ड - 815301						
6. ई-निविदा प्रकोष्ठ का दूरभाष सं. - 065324-22581						
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PR 329352 (REO) 24-25 (D)						

Jamia students allege sexual harassment by their PhD supervisor

Ashna Butani
NEW DELHI

Three women research scholars at Jamia Millia Islamia's Centre for Jawaharlal Nehru Studies have alleged "mental and sexual harassment" by their PhD supervisor.

One of the students quit her course on June 26, citing gender-based discrimi-

nation, sexual comments by the professor and the delay in action against him as reasons.

The university said the matter has been taken up by its internal complaints committee (ICC) while the professor termed the charges "baseless". "These are merely attempts to ruin my reputation," the professor added.

JNU considering restoration of own PhD exam after UGC-NET cancelled

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Sources at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) on Thursday said the university is considering reverting to its in-house PhD entrance examination following the cancellation of the University Grants Commission-National Eligibility Test (UGC-NET).

"JNU is not abandoning UGC-NET. It is considering conducting its own PhD en-

trance exams as many other Central universities are also doing. Discussions are under way," the source said.

Vice-Chancellor Santishree D. Pandit, however, said no decision has been taken yet. "We have only taken suggestions from the stakeholders since it will take some time for the National Testing Agency (NTA) to declare results," she said.

The JNU Teachers' Asso-

ciation issued a statement saying it welcomed the "possibility of resurrecting the old system of JNU". "There is no reason to wait for the 2025-26 admission cycle to revive our own entrance examinations," it said.

Several students and teachers had questioned the efficacy of the NTA, which cancelled the exam following an alleged paper leak in June.

(With inputs from PTI)

Rural Works Department		
NIT Corrigendum		
Corrigendum		
Reference to the Notice Inviting Tender No- MMSGUY-4515-01/2024-25 (PR-001988 (RWD) 2024-25), due to unavoidable circumstances, the important date and time for this NIT are being hereby extended as per following table.		
Description	Published Date & Time	Amended date & Time
1	2	3
Downloading of Bidding Documents	From: 08.07.2024 to 19.07.2024 (09:00 hrs to 15:00hrs)	From: 08.07.2024 to 07.08.2024 (09:00 hrs to 15:00hrs)
Online Bid Submission end date	19.07.2024 up to 15:00 hrs	07.08.2024 up to 15:00 hrs
Offline Bid Submission end date	19.07.2024 up to 15:00 hrs	07.08.2024 up to 15:00 hrs
Online Bid opening date	19.07.2024 at 15:30 hrs	07.08.2024 at 15:30 hrs
Pre Bid Meeting at concerned office of Superintending Engineer	10.07.2024 From 15:00 hrs	
All other information as mentioned in the advertisement will remain unaltered. This corrigendum will be addendum to the original NIT.		
Engineer in Chief-cum Additional Commissioner-cum- Special Secretary Rural Works Department		
PR- 003751 (R W D) 2024-25		
नयी की मार, बर्बाद करे सुखी परिवार।		

Timings DELHI	
FRIDAY, JUL. 12	
RISE 05:33	SET 19:22
RISE 11:07	SET 23:19
SATURDAY, JUL. 13	
RISE 05:33	SET 19:22
RISE 11:59	SET 23:46
SUNDAY, JUL. 14	
RISE 05:34	SET 19:22
RISE 12:52	SET 00:00

Delhi Weather		max	min
Delhi City		39	27
Safdarjang		39	27
Palam		39	27

Delhi Palam Today
34°C The weather will be warm with cloudy sky. Spell of light rain and thundershower with gusty winds is likely to occur.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
33°C A warm weather to continue. Spell of light to moderate rain and thundershower with gusty winds will occur.

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Don't wait for 24 hours to trace a missing child, court tells city police

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has ordered all police stations in the Capital not to wait for 24 hours to initiate investigation into cases regarding missing children. The inquiry should begin as soon as a complaint is received, the court directed the Delhi Police Commissioner in its July 9 order.

"There is no scope for any speculation or conjecture that the child may return home in 24 hours and hence the police can wait. In fact, the first 24-hour period is the crucial period when steps for tracing a missing person or child could lead to a positive outcome," the court said while hearing a plea filed by a city resident, Vinod, whose daughter had gone missing on February 19.

IN BRIEF



Yogi visits flood-hit areas in U.P., orders prompt relief

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday visited flood-hit areas of Balrampur and Shravasti districts of the State, apart from conducting an aerial survey to gather information about the extent of the deluge. Mr. Adityanath directed senior government officials to expedite delivery of relief materials to the affected people. During his visit to the flood-affected villages, the Chief Minister interacted with the people and monitored distribution of relief materials. He also handed over cheques of ₹4 lakh each to the families who had lost their kin due to the floods.

Mamata to meet Uddhav, Sharad Pawar in Mumbai

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday reached Mumbai to participate in the wedding ceremony of Reliance Industries Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani's son Anant. She said that she would also meet Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Sharad Pawar on Friday. Ms. Banerjee said that Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav was likely to be in Mumbai for the wedding and she would hold discussions with him too. Before leaving for Mumbai, Ms. Banerjee also accused the media of maligning West Bengal over the recent incidents of mob assaults in the State.

Mahayuti MLAs shifted to hotels amid cross-voting fears in Council elections

Uddhav-led Shiv Sena (UBT) legislators too check in at Mumbai hotel a day before crucial polls; 12 candidates in fray for 11 seats after Maha Vikas Aghadi makes a desperate bid to win a third seat

Ateeq Shaikh
MUMBAI

Resort politics has made a comeback after two years in Maharashtra, with the BJP and its ruling Mahayuti alliance partners on Thursday shifting their MLAs to three Mumbai hotels fearing cross-voting during the State Legislative Council elections slated for Friday.

The Shiv Sena (UBT), which along with the Congress and the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) is part of the Opposition's Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), also took its 16 legislators to Hotel ITC Grand Central in Lower Parel.

The BJP's 103 MLAs were taken to Taj President, Cuffe Parade, while 40 legislators of Chief Minister Shinde-led Shiv Sena were shifted to sea-facing Taj Lands End in Bandra.

The 40 legislators belonging to Deputy CM Ajit Pawar-led NCP checked in at Andheri's The Lalit.

The development comes in the backdrop of



The MVA allies have a total of 65 MLAs and require a minimum of 69 for all three of their nominees to get elected. FILE PHOTO

12 candidates contesting 11 seats in the Upper House of the State Legislature with the Shiv Sena (UBT) fielding its chief Uddhav Thackeray's close aide Milind Narvekar as the third candidate of the Opposition alliance.

The MVA's three partners have a combined strength of 65 MLAs, enough to win two seats and are short of at least four votes to get all the three candidates elected.

However, with the support of the Samajwadi Party (2), Communist Party of India-Marxist (1) and Peasants and Workers Party of

India (1), the MVA is hoping to touch the required 69 mark to win all three seats as each candidate will be requiring at least 23 votes to clinch the contest.

'Defection fears'

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader and former Minister Bhaskar Jadhav on Thursday told reporters that one of the BJP candidates is set to lose, stoking speculations that the Mahayuti MLAs wanting to join the Opposition camp after the ruling alliance's poor show in Lok Sabha poll may have been asked to prove their loyalty by voting for the MVA bloc.

Last week, Mr. Thackeray also had expressed confidence that all MVA candidates would win the elections.

Before the MVA sprung a surprise by fielding a third candidate, the Mahayuti alliance was expected to win nine seats as it has the support of more than 200 MLAs, including Independents, in the Assembly, whose existing strength is 274 as 14 seats are vacant due to varied reasons.

The Congress has fielded Pradya Satav while the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) is backing Peasants and Workers' Party of India sitting MLC Jayant Patil.

The Mahayuti candidates contesting the elections include BJP's Pankaj Munde, Amit Gorkhe, Satabhau Khot, Yogesh Tilkar and Parinay Phuke. Mr. Shinde's Shiv Sena has fielded former Lok Sabha members Bhawana Gawli and Krupal Tumane.

The NCP has fielded Shivajirao Garje and Rajesh Vitkar.

Centre holding back funds for T.N. projects: CM Stalin

The Hindu Bureau
DHARMAPURI

Smarting from the crushing defeat in Tamil Nadu in the Lok Sabha poll, the Centre (BJP government) was withholding funding for the State's Metro Rail and other projects, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin alleged here on Thursday.

'Smear campaign'

While the DMK government was implementing projects for the welfare of people, irrespective of the voting pattern, the "jealous" Opposition was into a smear campaign, he charged. The Centre had failed to rise above likes and dislikes; there was not a single major project the Centre had sanctioned for Tamil Nadu in the last 10 years. "On behalf of the people of the State, I urge the Union government to learn a lesson at least now", the Chief Minister said after launching the rural extension of 'Makkaludan Mudhalvar' scheme to redress people's grievances through coordination of 13 departments, in 30 days of submission of petitions.

According to him, the DMK government was treading the path of 'Mak-

kalidam Sel, Makkalai Patri Arindhukol, Makkalukkaga Seyalpadu' (go to the people, know them and work for them). This path was delineated by former Chief Ministers Arignar Anna (C. N. Annadurai) and Kalaingar M. Karunanidhi. The people were reciprocating well, the Chief Minister said, citing a couple of instances of the direct response he had received from petitioners owing to the redressal of grievances of the public through the specially-created Mudhalvanin Mugavari Department.

'People with the govt.'

The people were with the government and vice-versa. The government would continue striving to bring about real growth and make Tamil Nadu the best State in the country. "This is the reason for the success of the Dravida Model; the Union government has to learn a lesson at least now," Mr. Stalin said.

The Chief Minister also commissioned 621 projects, being implemented at an expenditure of ₹444.77 crore, handed over welfare assistance to the tune of ₹56.04 crore to beneficiaries on the occasion.

Over 20 patients allege loss in vision after cataract surgery at Kolkata govt. hospital

Movuric Som
KOLKATA

After 20 patients alleged loss in vision after undergoing a cataract surgery in the West Bengal government-run Garden Reach State General Hospital (GRSGH) in end-June, several of them have slammed the State government, saying low-quality medication and poor medical service has cost them their livelihood.

While the patients, the bulk of them employed as tailors, were transferred to the Regional Institute of Ophthalmology (RIO) at the State-run medical college on July 1 after the botched surgeries, most were told by doctors that they may never regain their vision.

Sixty-year-old Rizwana Parveen, who had undergone the surgery in her right eye on June 28, said she has not been able to see from that eye since the surgery. "Doctors at GRSGH assured me that eye drops



Salim Sheikh, a tailor, said his livelihood is at stake after the surgery rendered him blind in his left eye. DEBASISH BHADURI

would fix it. Two days later, they called me and told me to report to the medical college, saying my eye has been infected," she said.

"The biggest fault here is the government's. Their standard medicine has cost my family its livelihood," her daughter Saba Aafreen said.

Salim Sheikh, a tailor in his 50s, said that work seems unlikely following the surgery that botched his left eye on June 27. He took early discharge from the RIO due to acute finan-

cial stress. "I work hard to put food on the table, and my work demands good eyesight. Now, I have lost one eye completely, and don't know what the future holds," he said, adding that though he earns only ₹6,000 a month for cutting and sizing fabric thread, he has already spent a similar amount on medicines in the last few days.

Dr. Koushik Ray, the Medical Superintendent at GRSGH, said infections were detected in the 20 patients, of whom 18 have

been discharged from the RIO so far. "We contacted all the patients after we detected an infection in one of them during a post-surgical follow-up," he told *The Hindu*. Principal Secretary of the State Health Department Narayan Swaroop Nigam said the medicines used in the surgeries have been sent for examination, while a team is conducting a probe into the matter.

'Bear no responsibility' Alamara Bibi, 60, was also admitted to the RIO following complications from the cataract surgery. "The doctors made the families write and sign a letter giving consent to all treatments, which said that the responsibility for any eventualities would not fall on the RIO," her daughter Reshma said. "I was disappointed that no government official or elected representative came to meet us, and we were not offered compensation either," she added.

Expect implementation of A.P. Reorganisation Act: Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The BJP-led government in the past 10 years dragged its feet in implementing the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said on Thursday, while hoping that since the BJP was now no longer in majority, there would be rapid implementation of the Act.

Flagging a news report on the Centre initiating a feasibility report for an oil refinery and petrochemical complex in Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Ramesh said it was part of the original commitment made by the Manmohan Singh government as part of the 13th Schedule of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014.

"In fact, the 'one-third PM's' government was legally obliged to deliver the project within the last 10 years, and IOC/HPCL were



Lackadaisical pace of implementation of the Act was one of the reasons why TDP chief N. Chandrababu Naidu withdrew from the NDA in 2018, says Congress leader Jairam Ramesh. FILE PHOTO

obliged to examine the feasibility of the project within six months," Mr. Ramesh said, noting that it was only now that the government was initiating the feasibility study.

Shrunken presence

The phrase "one-third PM" that the Congress has been using for Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in reference to the BJP's shrunken presence in the Lok

Sabha with 240 seats.

"This lackadaisical pace of implementation of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act was one of the reasons why Telugu Desam Party chief N. Chandrababu Naidu famously withdrew from the NDA in 2018. Perhaps now that the 'one-third PM' has lost his majority and his ego, we can expect rapid implementation of the Act," Mr. Ramesh said.

Stampede-like situation for job interview in Gujarat

The Hindu Bureau
AHMEDABAD

A stampede-like situation was witnessed in Ankelshwar in Gujarat when several hundred youngsters turned up at a hotel for a job interview organised by chemical firm Thermax Company for just 10 vacant positions at its plant in Bharuch district.

Due to overcrowding and rush by the applicants trying to enter, a side railing at the hotel collapsed.

A video of applicants pushing through the entrance along the side railing went viral on social media. It showed a large crowd of applicants struggling to enter the hotel where the interviews were being conducted.

No injuries have been reported so far. There was also a minor scuffle between some of the applicants.

Controversial probationary IAS officer Pooja Khedkar joins new posting; Centre to look into her appointment

Shoumojit Banerjee
PUNE

Probationary Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer Pooja Khedkar, in the eye of a storm for seeking special privileges and "faking" certificates, joined the Washim district administration on Thursday to complete her training amid a demand for an in-depth probe into the circumstances of her recruitment.

Meanwhile, the Union government said on Thursday that a senior officer, of the rank of Additional Secretary to Government of India, will verify the claims and other details of Ms. Khedkar and submit a report within two weeks.

A 2023-batch IAS officer, Ms. Khedkar, who was



Pune police personnel arrive at the residence of probationary IAS officer Pooja Khedkar in Pune. X/@ANI

posted as Additional Collector in Pune, made news for seeking special privileges including a separate office, house, car, and staff (including a constable) before taking charge as an assistant collector.

These perks are not given to trainee officers and there were allegations that

her father, a retired IAS officer, used his influence to get her demands fulfilled.

She is said to have used a 'Government of Maharashtra' sticker and a red-blue beacon on her private luxury car while on probation in Pune.

Hailing from a family of bureaucrats, it also emerged that she allegedly faked mental illness to secure a disability certificate and appeared for the UPSC exam under the visually impaired category.

Khedkar mum on row

The allegations led to a probe and a report was submitted by Pune District Collector Suhās Diwase to the General Administration Department (GAD), which resulted in Ms. Khedkar's transfer to

Washim district as a "supernumerary assistant collector" till July 30, 2025.

Speaking to reporters in Washim before joining duty, Ms. Khedkar said, "I am looking forward to working here... I am not authorised to comment on the issue as per government rules."

Washim District Collector Buveneswari S. said, "The GAD has a schedule for probationary IAS officers. We are ready to give training to her under that schedule."

Besides faking disability, Ms. Khedkar is also alleged to have furnished an Other Backward Class (OBC) certificate ahead of the civil services exam.

She has skipped her medical examination six times despite being asked

to report at AIIMS in Delhi for verification of her disability certificate.

Meanwhile, demanding a probe into her recruitment, Pune-based RTI activist Vijay Kumbhar said in the OBC category the annual parental income limit is ₹8 lakh.

Ms. Khedkar's father, Deelip Khedkar, had unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha election from the Ahmednagar constituency as a candidate of the Prakash Ambedkar-led Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi and his election affidavit puts his wealth around ₹40 crore.

Mr. Kumbhar further alleged that Ms. Khedkar herself owned property worth ₹17 crore.

(With inputs from Vijayta Singh)

Trial in ISRO espionage frame-up case may be significantly delayed

K.S. Sudhi
KOCHI

The trial in the Indian Space Research Organisation espionage frame-up case may take a significant time to begin as a host of legal options are available for the accused to challenge the case proceedings, including the chargesheet filed against them.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had filed a chargesheet against four former Kerala Police officials and an Intelligence Bureau official in the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) court, Thiruvananthapuram. The agency named police officers S. Vijayan, Siby Mathews, K.K. Joshua, and P.S. Jayaprakash and former Intelligence Bureau

official R.B. Sreekumar as the accused in the case.

The CBI listed Maldivian national Mariam Rasheeda, who was allegedly molested by the first accused Vijayan and illegally detained and tortured by all the other accused, as a witness. The prominent witnesses include former ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan, who too was illegally detained and tortured by the accused and former top police officer Raman Srivastava.

Can obtain bail

The accused need not appear in person in court on July 26 when the CJM considers the case. The accused, if being served with summons from the court, can appear through their

lawyers and seek an adjournment for appearance or appear in person and obtain bail after fulfilling the bail conditions imposed by the court.

Later, they can challenge the proceedings adopted by the magistrate in the case. The accused can move a discharge petition before the CJM arguing that there is no sufficient grounds for framing charges against them.

They can argue for discharge up to the Supreme Court in the event of the CJM and HC turning down the discharge pleas. The legal process may take significant time to complete and the trial will be put on hold till the appeal courts adjudge on the plea of the accused, sources say.

SPOTLIGHT



A farmer from the Mallah community of fisherfolk and boatmen that traditionally harvest makhana. A.M. JIGEESH

Running on vegetable protein

Foxnuts are in demand as a 'super snack', with its prices soaring in domestic and international markets since 2019. In Bihar's Mithila region, which produces most of the country's crop, A.M. Jigeesh finds that farmers receive very little of the money earned from this health food pie, despite the intensive labour involved

Swaran Kumar Roy went from Bihar's Darbhanga to Tamil Nadu's Thanjavur to study food technology. Despite their seeming differences, the two places are tied together by water – Darbhanga has wetlands and numerous rivers and ponds; Thanjavur is on the banks of the Cauvery. Both are known for rich cultivation, a lot of it being rice.

At the National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management, where Roy did a B.Tech between 2009 and 2013, he was nicknamed 'Makhana Man'. "I introduced my teachers and batchmates to this 'wonder food'. Except for the four north Indian students on my campus, no one had heard about makhana. Everyone else only spoke about the cashew trees on campus," he recalls. Foxnuts were then eaten only in north India during Hindu fasts, along with sabudana (sago) and kutu ka atta (buckwheat flour).

Today, Roy owns a business that retails from Darbhanga and online, producing 22 items from makhana, from the traditional kheer to the innovative dosa and idli powder, to cater to customers down south, and even a 100% makhana cookie for the urban health food market.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) estimates that Bihar produces 10,000 tonnes of makhana per annum, about 90% of the country's total. India contributes to 80% of the world's demand. The prickly water lily, from which the seed is harvested, is spread across more than 15,000 hectares in Bihar, and traditionally grows wild.

About five lakh families, mostly from the Mallah community, are involved in its processing. Nine districts in the Mithila region now grow it for production: Darbhanga, Madhubani, Purnea, Katihar, Saharsa, Supaul, Araria, Kishanganj, and Sitamarhi.

Makhana, sold in the international wholesale market at about ₹8,000 per kg, up from ₹1,000 about 10 years ago, is in high demand as a source of vegetarian protein in a world burdened by 'meat guilt' from animal cruelty and methane-related temperature rises. Indian wholesale markets sold makhana at ₹250 per kg a decade ago, with prices now at ₹1,400. However, rates are cyclical, with price increases during festivals, when demand goes up.

Mukhiya, the master of makhana

The people who harvest the seeds though – traditionally boatmen and fisherfolk – say the government offers them little support, and they now want a minimum support price (MSP) to ensure that the crop is sustainable for cultivation.

The Bihar government runs the Makhana Development Scheme that gives a 75% subsidy on the Suvarna Vaidehi variety of seeds, calculated at ₹97,000 per hectare.

Also, makhana is a product approved under the Union government's One District One Product scheme, under which subsidies are provided



Workers who don't approach the plant carefully get wounded. It needs training to transplant and harvest, especially in big ponds. We have been doing this from childhood

VINOD MUKHIYA
Makhana farmer

ed to food processors for branding, marketing, and developing infrastructure.

Vinod Mukhiya, 42, is a landless farmer belonging to the Mallah community. He cultivates makhana across the five acres he has leased and partners with landowning farmers in about 20 acres. He also works as a farmhand, something he has done for the last 25 years.

When raised for cultivation, sowing is done in December and January, transplantation in February and March, and harvest between July and October. The wild variety too is harvested at the same time. "The seeds fall into water. We collect them from the bottom of ponds, grade them, and dry them in the shade. Women in our homes roast the seed and break the shell off. They take out the lava (the white food commonly seen) and sell it. Now, makhana has a market," he says.

Tall and lean, Mukhiya does not find it hard to handle the *Euryale ferox*, the lily's scientific term, named after the Greek goddess, Euryale, born of a sea goddess and god, with hair of snakes, protruding teeth, and tongue hanging out. The plant, with dark pink flowers, has thorns all over. Only trained workers like Mukhiya are able to approach it. Workers use country-made boats to navigate the large leaves.

"Makhane ke patte se mooh pochke aao (Go wipe your face with makhana leaves)" is an old saying of the Mithila region used on someone to check their ego or loose talk. "Workers who don't approach the plant carefully get wounded. It needs training to transplant and harvest, especially in big ponds. We have been doing this from childhood," Mukhiya adds.

The Mallahs of Mithila are considered the original inhabitants of this region. Kamala, a Mallah woman, sells makhana at the Darbhanga market. She pops it at home and brings it here. "I have been doing this since childhood," she says. Women play an important role in increasing the earnings of a family. Farmers sell unprocessed, ungraded makhana seeds at ₹50-₹200 per kg. The moment the shell is removed, the price climbs to ₹400-₹800. For first-grade makhana lava, farmers can demand up to ₹1,100-₹1,250.

"We do not get enough support from the government," Mukhiya says, adding that cooperative societies, formed to help Mallahs cultivate

makhana and grow fish in public ponds, are not working in their favour. Though rights to farm and harvest are given only to Mallahs, landowners most often maintain control. "We go for popping work to Assam and Bengal, for landowners there. Here, cultivation is going down. Had we got enough support here, we wouldn't have to leave Darbhanga." He has heard of popping machines, but fears that they could take away the jobs of Mallah women.

Roy, the thinker and doer

Roy sits in his makhana processing unit situated in a lane near the Darbhanga Municipal Corporation office. The government has given him space to set up a corporate office in Patna. He says the video he made on his graduation project, a makhana popping machine, got about a million views on YouTube. It also won an award at the Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, where he presented it. While his machine wasn't a commercial success, it laid the foundation for his start-up.

Roy opened his business in his grandmother's name, Sumitra, and named the brand FT-MBA Makhana, where FT and MBA stand for the degrees he earned in Food Technology and Business Administration. He put an illustration of his face on the branding with the tagline, 'Now the time is for Super Food, not for junk food'. He invested ₹20 lakh initially, but does not disclose what his turnover is. What he can say is that by the time it is packaged, makhana could retail for up to ₹2,000 per kg.

One of Roy's hopes is to break the pattern of thinking in Bihar's middle-class families. "If you are a man and not in a government job, people

think either you or the institution you studied in has a problem," he says, adding that his own family has held government jobs for a couple of generations. He secured corporate jobs soon after his graduation, including at Adani Wilmar. "I was earning well, but I always felt this was

not for me." Six years later, he decided to start his own business.

U.N. JHA
Former professor at Lalit Narayan Mithila University

Earlier, it was proposed that the GI tag be given to Bihar Makhana, but people protested and the government made it Mithila Makhana

Roy's business partner, Bhushan, is an engineer who also worked in corporate companies before deciding to come back to his hometown. "I wanted to create jobs for people in Bihar," Bhushan says, citing the heavy migration the State sees. "During COVID, makhana got a bump for its nutritional value. Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi talked about it. We are now supplying to foreign and Indian clients," he says, adding that what they source from farmers has almost doubled in the past couple of years.

China and Pakistan also produce makhana, and the seed has markets across the world, from America and Europe to the United Arab Emirates and Southeast Asia.

Roy and Bhushan mostly employ women in their three-room unit. They hope to hone the existing skills of those traditionally from families involved in picking and popping of makhana, but are also training other women.

Kanchan Devi, who is not from the Mallah community, says she has been working here for two years now. "I have learnt how to pop makhana, but I also want to learn other techniques in food processing," she says.

Roy sees large corporates entering the market as a problem as they will be "purely profit-driven". "We process 20 to 30 tonnes of makhana every month. We help some farmers lease ponds and cultivate makhana. These farmers have increased their volume of cultivation," he says. Another problem, he says, is that value addition to the commodity takes place in urban centres. "Our effort is to ensure that value-added pro-

ducts go from here."

Professors, the protein propounders

B.R. Jana, a senior scientist at ICAR-National Research Centre for Makhana, Darbhanga, says the crop is a good source of vegetarian protein, at 10%, and contains five of the nine amino acids. "There are also quercetin and kaempferol flavonoids, both of which protect against diabetes and obesity," he says.

At the centre, Jana and other scientists are trying to cultivate the lily in managed ponds, so its hygiene can be ensured. They have shown that transplanted makhana grown in summer has a smaller yield than that of the rainy season, but has a higher protein content. "Organic makhana has a larger pop size, which opens doors to greater financial gain," Jana says.

Vidya Nath Jha, a botanist and retired professor of Botany at Lalit Narayan Mithila University, has also spent many years researching makhana. At his modest home in Professor's Colony in the suburbs of Darbhanga, he has found space for copious literature on makhana, in different languages. His PhD thesis was one of the first academic studies on the crop. In 1988, he had established that makhana contains "very good quality protein".

He also published a book through ICAR on the crop. "It had articles from all parts of India where it is cultivated – from Kashmir to Manipur," remembers U.N. Jha, Vidya Nath's guide at the time. Jha talks of its cultural significance in the region. Makhana is derived from the Sanskrit words *makh* and *anna*, meaning the grains used during *yagnas* (rituals). "For the Mithila region, makhana is a must for all rituals," he says.

Kojagra, a marital ritual observed on the full moon night of the Ashvin month in Mithila, has the bride's parents send makhana as a gift to the groom's house. This is distributed in the whole village. Recently, scientists at Banaras Hindu University found that the seed "has spermatogenic and aphrodisiac properties", says Jha.

He speaks of makhana and fish breeding as being part of the pond ecosystem, each dependent on the other. Traditionally, farmers practise pisciculture, with makhana-picking as a side hustle. It was only when ICAR established a centre in Mithila that the fisherfolk began to see it was a crop. "Earlier, it was proposed that the GI tag be given to Bihar Makhana, but people protested and the government made it Mithila Makhana," he adds.

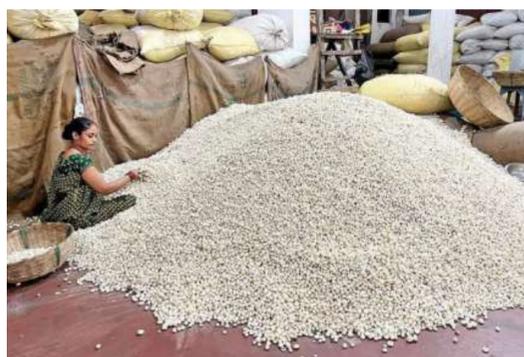
Big food firms and weather changes

Over the years, there has been a gradual decline in rains in this region. "Makhana does not require more than five feet of water, but now it is being cultivated in one or two feet of water, through transplantation. Women are involved in cultivation, too, as it can be handled easily in shallow water," says Jha.

Paras Kumar Singh, a farmer and Jha's student, now cultivates makhana in about 20 acres of wasteland, leasing it for ₹8,000 per acre per year. "The input cost per acre is about ₹40,000. In 2021, I got 800 kg per acre. In 2022, the production decreased, and the price per quintal was ₹4,000 (₹40 per kg) to ₹5,000 (₹50 per kg). In 2023, production was still low because of a drought, but prices started at ₹16,000 (₹160 per kg) and went up to ₹22,000 per quintal (₹220 per kg)," says Singh.

Very few farmers are engaged in popping as they do not have the resources to stock or trade. "Farmers are not wealthy, but traders can bear the logistics costs," he says. He has been trying to get workers to pop the seeds, but finds it hard as most women work at home on their own family's crop. He hopes that someone will invent a popping machine as small farmers who are not from the Mallah community find the task hard.

Small-scale traders are also nervous about big food companies. Tarachand Amolak Chand Jain – a makhana wholesaler, supplier, and commission agent at the Darbhanga market – says unless the government provides an MSP, it will be difficult for them to continue the business.



Deft hands: A worker separates makhana into different grades at a unit; (top left) FT-MBA Makhana founder Swaran Kumar Roy. A.M. JIGEESH



Captivating The old homes of Delhi. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Reimagining Delhi's homes

Archaeologist Anica Mann has been documenting the metamorphosis of Delhi's residential landscape

Nayantara Singh
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In 2021, curator Anica Mann, who works at the Archaeological Survey of India, began her page Delhi Houses on Instagram to capture the distinct personality of Delhi's homes. The idea came to her when she shifted out of her house in a north Delhi village. "When a new family moved into my childhood home, they left no trace of my past. It revealed how impermanent houses can really be," she says.

This transience Anica refers to was exacerbated by the 2011 notification that made stilt parking mandatory for newer constructions. That one move, she says, slowly eroded the uniqueness of Delhi's residential terrain, which was painstakingly built by the melting pot of communities that made the city their home after Partition.

"It was a watershed moment for me," says Anica. "Builders started tearing down old plots to construct four-storey houses that look like similar concrete blocks. Bungalows began disappearing. Barsatis (single rooms on top floors) became far and few. Single-storey houses are now unheard of," she says, adding that while houses have a natural tendency to upgrade themselves, the quintessential character of Delhi's homes has begun to fade away.

As Anica drives through the neighbourhoods of Lutyens' Delhi, she points out the few-odd houses that have clung to their old identity.

"The urgency to document the last of these homes before they, too, are lost to the fast-growing city skyline is what keeps me going," she says.

Through an open gate, she wheels into the driveway of a



massive, decaying property on Barakhamba Road framed by colossal commercial structures on either side.

"This is the last standing bungalow here," she rues. Even in its dilapidated condition, with big chunks of its walls and ceilings missing, the house is an ode to Delhi of a bygone era. "They could never build anything like this ever again," says the caretaker with a tinge of sadness.

Order in chaos

Delhi is known as a notoriously unplanned city, but Anica feels it possesses a graceful sense of order.

"Cities are intuitive," she says. "The Capital has historically always made room for people from all over, right from the Mughal era to



While houses have a natural tendency to upgrade themselves, the quintessential character of Delhi's homes has begun to fade away.

ANICA MANN
Writer and archaeologist

decade," she says.

Pausing at a plot on Hanuman Road, she shows the thin, sleek red bricks making up the boundary wall and says, "This sort of masonry went completely out of fashion by the 1960s".

Little marvels flourish in the city even today. "Tara Apartments in Alaknanda, for instance, was very much an experiment in community living at a time when Delhi was transitioning from bungalow to hybrid living," says Anica. The red-brick flats, which coexist with untamed greenery, were built by Charles Correa in the mid-1970s, and carry his trademark style of blending modernist techniques with the local climate.

"Unlike newer apartments, each flat at Tara is built in a way that nobody's windows look into anybody's bedrooms. Yet, the sense of community is such that if you shout, your neighbours will always hear you," says Noor Enayat, a publicist, whose family was the second to shift into the complex in 1979.

Fuelled by community

Privacy is Anica's first priority and she limits herself to photographing houses on the main road which fall in the public eye, and always blurs out their addresses.

Her network is close-knit. "I either reach out to people through my own circle, or receive tips via my followers," she says. With a new project in the pipeline, she hopes to broaden her scope by designing postcards which she plans to drop into people's mailboxes and request them to allow her to document their home.

"Delhi Houses is very much a community-driven initiative. I want to showcase as many stories as possible and want more people of the city to participate," she says.

The journey of Art deco style in Delhi is crowd sourced, inviting people to share images of buildings, typefaces, posters and fascinating stories attached to them.

Email your stories to anicamandehli@gmail.com

Terroir on tap

Captain's Cellar, launched at Taj Mahal Hotel, offers a choice of wines from around the world

Anubhuti Krishna

When you think of Delhi's drinking scene, wine-centric bars hardly cross your mind. Captain's Cellar, a recent addition to the long list of watering holes in the capital, is beginning to change that. The place not just brings a selection of fine wines from across the world but also offers them in a new format – on tap.

The cellar, set inside the Taj Mahal Hotel, features bottles from vineyards spanning Bordeaux, Tuscany, Rioja, Napa, and Akluj. "The goal was to provide a panorama of the world's great wine regions. We wanted to showcase the intricate diversity of wines based on the expression of terroir, climate and complexity," explains Susmita Bomzon, sommelier and manager at Captain's Cellar.

And so, for whites, they sourced crisp wines – like Albert Bichot Chablis – from France, while the complex whites – like Urbans-Hof Riesling and Warwick The First Lady Chardonnay – were sourced from Germany and South Africa, respectively.

The collection

The Reds include classic Bourgogne Pinot Noir from Beaujolais Village and bolder Brancaia Tre from Italy; for rosé lovers, Mirabeau Classic Provence Rosé and Mateus Rosé from Portugal have been brought in.

"We wanted to celebrate the wine culture in India. Akluj, located in Maharashtra, has been producing some excellent wines, so we have The Source Sauvignon Blanc from Sula and Fratelli's J'Noon Red and Whites, which add great value to our wine list," adds Bomzon.

The most expensive bottle, Le Clarence de Haut-Brion 2011, an exquisite second wine from the renowned Haut-Brion family, is priced at ₹1,74,000 (a bottle).

Many of the expensive wines are also available by the glass thanks to the new state of the art enomatic systems, an Italian technology that uses inert gases to preserve freshness, enables wines to be dispensed by glass. These start at ₹600 and go up to ₹2,500 a glass. For



Diversity Gazpacho served at Captain's Cellar, where the menu is a journey through global vineyards. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

someone who finds it hard to commit to a bottle, it is a great option to try multiple wines.

By your side

The wine is complemented by an expansive menu featuring classic Spanish tapas and French small plates. While the patatas bravas, empanada with spinach and ricotta, and cheese and chicken croquetas transport you to the streets of Spain and complement the lighter wines, camembert baked in pastry, pulled lamb, mushrooms and chips pair with French reds. The jamón, imported from Spain, is salty and light, the croquetas are rich and warm.

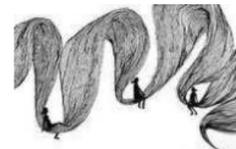
"The menu," says Chef Arun Sundararaj, director of culinary operations, "serves as a journey through global vineyards by pairing regional ingredients, cooking techniques, flavours with curated selection of wines."

The seasonal, market-driven menu – which includes wine-paired menus called Epicurean and Wine Symphony – complements the wine programme. If you are in the mood for sharing, there is a grazing board with Parma, coppa, and Iberico ham, along with Danish Blue, Emmental and Cheddar cheese. To round off the evening, the Basque cheesecake and crème brûlée are your best bet.

The rustic brick walls and arched walkways hark back to the stone cellars of old world vineyards even as modern light fixtures and abstract artwork lend contrast. Different sections in the lounge are named after specific wine regions.

At 1 Mansingh Road; Meal for two costs ₹5,000; for reservations, call 8700021450.

STEP OUT



Free-spirited art

Seema Pandey's solo art exhibition "Between these lines in this space I root and grow" explores the subtleties of black and white contrasts threading themes across environmental landscapes, human resilience, dreams and contemplation, moments and memories. It is the culmination of her two years of creative work.

At Shridharani Art Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205 Tansen Marg; July 12 to 21; 11am to 8pm

Blast from the past

JH Thakker, known for his mastery of light and shadow, evokes a sense of nostalgia with his black-and-white photographs of legendary stars of yesteryears. The exhibition titled A Bollywood Retro organised by the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art also has vintage film posters complementing the evocatively striking images. At the Skybridge connecting Nexus Select City Walk and the DLF South Court Mall, Saket; Till July 14; 10am to 11pm

Talat Mahmood centennial

An evening of music, dance and literature to celebrate 100 years of legendary singer Talat Mahmood. Presented by Media Net Works and Jashn-e-Talat, the programme will feature the singer's timeless classics, dance performance and book talk. At Kamani Auditorium, 1 Copernicus Marg, Mandi House; July 15; 7pm; Entry free



Nida Fatima Momin

With a target of covering 4,000 kilometers in 50 days on bicycle from Kashmir to Kanniyakumari, Chandigarh boy Pankaj Mahla is on a mission to inspire people to install solar panels to reduce carbon footprint.

The 20-year-old Punjab Engineering College student wishes to make an impact on the environment by promoting solar energy.

"As I am pedalling 4,000 kilometres, I intend to visit at least 4,000 homes en route and convince families to get solar plants installed. If they all do so, it will be equivalent to growing 8,000 trees and will also prevent 20,000 tons of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere," he says.

A personal health crisis prompted Pankaj to undertake this expedition. On July 5 last year, he contracted a

On a 'solaride'

Pankaj Mahla is pedalling from Kashmir to Kanniyakumari on a solar energy mission



respiratory infection and suddenly could not breathe. "It scared me. When I recovered, I felt I had got a second life; and had this strong urge to do something meaningful for people and the planet," says Pankaj.

The desire to contribute to society and the environment has always been strong in this third-year student of Electronics and Communication Engineering.

As a member of the Solar Energy Society of India in his college, he decided to do something on a large scale and take the message of importance and the benefits of clean and green energy to the people.

"I have been planning meticulously, training daily in running and cycling with my father and brother encouraging me," he says. Six months ago he moved to Bengaluru for his internship and

Enterprising Pankaj Mahla takes a break on the way from Kashmir to Kanniyakumari. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

finalised the route for his journey.

Pankaj started on May 30 from Khummoh in Srinagar and has now reached Telangana. He cycles 120 kilometres a day and plans to cover 33 cities during his journey. He shares updates about his journey on his Instagram handle (pankajmahla) where he uploads his reels documenting the daily progress of his initiative named Solaride.

Before setting off Pankaj made a small video on Instagram about his bicycle expedition to reduce green house gas emissions. The video caught the attention of some Army officials across the country.

Help from the Army

"They were kind enough to arrange my stay in various Army units across cities including Banihal, Udhampur, Pathankot, Agra, Jhansi, and asked me to talk to soldiers about solar energy."

By the time Pankaj reached his hometown Chandigarh on June 8, the news about his mission had already spread leading to an

invitation from the Haryana Governor to educate students from different colleges along his route.

"During my interactions with people, I tell them how to create an ecosystem by using solar energy and also explain why there is an increase in temperature and how by installing solar panels, there will be no burning of coal for generating electricity," he says and adds, "I also advocate the use of electric vehicles charged with solar energy."

Pankaj also informs people about a Government scheme that requires only 10% of the payment at the time of solar installation with the remaining 90% to be paid through EMI. The balance amount paid through EMI over five to seven years works out to be less than the electricity bills we pay each month," he says, and adds, solar panels also come with a 25-year warranty.

Pankaj who crossed Delhi on June 15, says his journey is not just about reaching Kanniyakumari. "It is about inspiring others to adopt sustainable practices."



Secular remedy

Muslim women's right to maintenance under secular laws is well established

In holding that a divorced Muslim woman is not barred from invoking the secular remedy of seeking maintenance under the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), the Supreme Court of India has done well to clarify an important question concerning the impact of a 1986 law that appeared to restrict their relief to what is allowed in Muslim personal law alone. The enactment of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986, was a watershed moment that is seen as having undermined the country's secular ethos by seeking to nullify a Court judgment in the Shah Bano case (1985), which allowed a divorced Muslim woman to apply for maintenance from a magistrate under Section 125 of the CrPC. Subsequently, the 1986 law was upheld by a Constitution Bench in 2001 after coming close to declaring its provisions unconstitutional for discriminating against Muslim women. The Act was declared valid after the Bench read it down in such a way as not to foreclose the secular remedy for Muslim women. Several High Court judgments took different views on whether Muslim women should avail of Section 3 of the 1986 Act or Section 125 of CrPC. The latest verdict by a Bench of Justice B.V. Nagarathna and Justice Augustine George Masih settles this question by holding that the codification of a Muslim woman's rights in the 1986 Act – including the right to maintenance during the *iddat* period, provision for a dignified life until she remarries, and return of *mehr* and dowry – was only in addition to and not in derogation of her right to seek maintenance like a woman of any other religion.

Justice Masih, in his main opinion, concludes that both the personal law provision and the secular remedy for seeking maintenance ought to exist in parallel in their distinct domains. While the CrPC may be invoked by a woman if she was unable to maintain herself, the 1986 Act makes it a Muslim husband's obligation to provide for his divorced wife and her children up to a certain point. Justice Nagarathna, in her concurring opinion, looks at the social purpose behind the provision for maintenance in the CrPC, namely that it aims to prevent vagrancy among women by compelling the husband to support his wife. The 1986 Act codified the right available to a divorced Muslim woman in personal law. This right is in addition to, and not at the cost of, the rights available in existing law. The verdict is a great example of the Court using harmonious interpretation to expand the scope of rights as well as to secularise access to remedies. In the process, the Court has also neutralised the perception that the right of Muslim women to seek maintenance under secular provisions stood extinguished since 1986.

Can of worms

The government must ensure greater transparency in NEET

Trust can be everything, in governance. The can of worms that split open with the publication of results of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET)-UG-2024 has elevated the entrance examination for medical (and dental) seats to a metaphor for distrust in the system, among the people. This year, dogged by accusations of paper leak, malpractices, and technical failures, besides the grant of grace marks to some students, NEET, which was conceived to homogenise selection on merit, has now morphed into a beast that is far removed from its original idea. The Supreme Court of India, on Thursday, rescheduled the NEET-UG hearing to July 18, to address complaints regarding irregularities and malpractices during the exam conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA). A CBI investigation into the charges is ongoing. Meanwhile, the Centre has leaned heavily on a report, a data analysis, submitted by IIT Madras, examining the results to see if malpractices have occurred. The report's executive summary claimed that there was no abnormality that was discovered in a centre and city-wise analysis that was done for two years. The analysis was carried out for the top 1.4 lakh ranks in the country. It further stated that there was no evidence of either mass malpractice or a localised set of candidates benefiting. The overall increase of marks among students, a charge that was laid out initially, is attributed to the 25% reduction in syllabus, and it confirms that this occurred across multiple cities. However, outrage among student applicants on social media continues.

While NEET is no stranger to controversy, with States opposing it, the charges that have been levelled against it this year have had the effect of invoking distrust against the test among a larger subset of chary students across the country. The only way to move forward from here is to ensure that the issue is debated threadbare on public platforms and all doubt is removed, instead of trying to sweep the worms that have spilled out under the carpet. Loud denials of malpractice should be matched with the willingness to engage with those affected in a public forum and provide clarifications. Where errors have taken place, as is possible in an exercise of this scale, it behoves a proper acknowledgement and apology. When trust is violated, the reparation for it should sometimes be utter honesty. For the longer term, the government must introduce greater limpidity in the examination process, and make sure that the NTA and its line agencies remain committed to maintaining transparency. It might also be the opportunity to set right other issues raised about the conduct of the examination itself, including security checks on students.

Reading the tea leaves ahead of China's Third Plenum

Commentators in the West have been stating for some time that it was time to move beyond the rosy vision of a post-Cold War world, as, according to them, Moscow and Beijing (and certain other states aligned with them) could no longer be expected to become responsible stakeholders within a rules-based international order. Against this backdrop, considerable attention is being devoted to the Third Plenum of China's 20th Party Congress for signs of a possible thaw. There is a lingering hope that the plenum, scheduled to be held from July 15-18, might signify a shift in policy and a change in direction, at least as far as China is concerned. Pessimism is, nevertheless, rife in the West that China would ever subscribe to the idea that the security of every country is intimately linked to the security of the other. Yet, China is well known to spring surprises.

Meantime, a belief exists in the West that China had 'peaked' economically following its disastrous 'Zero COVID' policy. Also, that China's economy is still in terminal decline. Hence, the plenum might well pave the way for a change in direction, unlikely though it might look as of now. There is, thus, considerable interest, all around, about the eventual outcome of the plenum.

Economic reforms, issues

The fact that the date of the Third Plenum has been advanced this time – it normally takes place in October or November of the year following the standard Five Year Party Congress interval – has spurred this speculation that China is contemplating sweeping reforms to ensure China's rapid progress in the period ahead. Third Plenums typically set the economic strategy for the next five to 10 years, and are generally viewed as the most crucial Plenum in the Central Committee's five-year cycle. Across the world, many still recall that it was at the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Party Congress in December 1978 that Deng Xiaoping unveiled a whole new range of economic reforms that set China on the path of economic resurgence.

That China has economic problems is not denied: an ageing population, shrinking workforce, high levels of debt, and an economy that is still facing problems, notwithstanding the measures that have been put in place. This has given rise to a great deal of pessimism within China itself about its future. Hopes are high that the Plenum will come out with certain new guidelines that would at least convey an impression to the people and the world outside that China's economy is in good shape.

It has been a long time since any meeting devoted almost entirely to economic reforms has



M.K. Narayanan

a former Director, Intelligence Bureau, a former National Security Adviser, and a former Governor of West Bengal

There is some hope that the plenum might point to a change in direction for China

been programmed by the leaders of China's Communist Party. Most outside experts, however, are uncertain whether the plenum would indeed provide China an opportunity to experiment with new ideas. Further, that the current leadership would do so. Understandably, China's 'Maximum Leader', Xi Jinping, is hardly in a position to repeat what Deng Xiaoping said at the plenum in 1978 (which was held after Mao's demise), that China had been 30% wrong, though 70% right. This would amount to an admission of failure on Mr. Xi's part, which could impact his future.

The view about China's 'intentions'

The West's drumbeat of allegations against China is, meanwhile, set to continue. Notwithstanding the outcome of the plenum deliberations, they will convince themselves that China's 'gray zone coercion' tactics are likely to continue. Activities such as 'disinformation' campaigns, interference in elections in democracies, military provocations in the seas around China, within and outside the First and Second Island Chains, the threat to Taiwan and countries in the South and East China Seas will, they claim, remain. Taiwan would also continue to remain the centrepiece of China's military and propaganda offensive.

Countries in Asia in particular, may, therefore, need to contend specifically with the threat posed by a mix of Chinese values, cultural expansionism, and national security paranoia. China's Global Development Initiative (GDI), Global Security Initiative (GSI) and Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) well encompass many of China's beliefs, leaving little scope for any adjustment. Having elevated the issue of national security to the highest level, Mr. Xi in turn sees danger everywhere. And this increases the paranoia about China's intentions in Asia, as also elsewhere.

China's approach is, thus, likely to add a great deal of 'flux' to an already difficult regional and global situation. It could also pose a dilemma for India's policymakers. For many years now, and more so since 2020, India's relations with China have remained under deep strain. This is not solely due to the tense situation prevailing on the China-India border, but has been the catalyst. As far as the border is concerned, the Chinese still demonstrate little 'give', despite India indicating a willingness to show more flexibility.

The result of all this is that both China and India appear to be hardening their attitudes. Already, reams are being written in India about the size of Beijing's growing missile and nuclear inventory. China's approach to the deployment of dual capability missiles is being adversely commented upon. Members from India's

strategic community also continue to draw attention to the danger posed by China's Rocket Force (which oversees its nuclear and conventional missiles), and about the advances made by China in space and electronic warfare. The broad hint is that India should prepare for the worst, and take adequate steps in the event of a confrontation.

The issue, therefore, is whether a confrontation is inevitable, or whether an attempt could be made to deflect China's 'evil intentions' through diplomacy and other means. This has no relationship to the relative difference in China's and India's force structure, and is intended, at best, to avoid any misadventure through wrong signalling. There is no hint forthcoming, that China would respond positively to such overtures, given China's hard line stance and its aggressive mien. This is, however, as good a time as any for any experimentation, given that the economic and the strategic consequences of a conflict would be grim for both countries.

Where India stands

Today, India is far better positioned than China to take such an initiative. It is on the cusp of becoming a 'major' from a 'middle level' power. Its economic parameters are among the best in the world at present. It has a strong and focused leadership and has friends across the spectrum in all corners of the world. An initiative on India's part at this time would not be seen as a sign of weakness; it would be tantamount to a major initiative in favour of world peace. In the long history of China-India rivalry and conflict, from the early 1960s till date, there have been many periods when India has taken the initiative, and on occasions with spectacular outcomes. In the realm of diplomacy, place names such as Sumdorong Chu and Wangdung still reverberate. In terms of grand initiatives, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's path-breaking visit to China in 1988 and his discussions with Deng Xiaoping at the time, ensured almost three decades of peace for India and the world.

The situation today is again less tense than during many periods in the past. 'Peace is not at hand', but India today holds a stronger card, *vis-à-vis* China, than at any time in modern history. Mr. Xi invoking a relevance to the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence (Panchsheel by India) in Beijing (to mark the 70th anniversary of the Panchsheel) could well provide the opportunity for India to embark on a grand new initiative. It is India's choice to do this or not. What is certain is that to have a successful result would be highly beneficial for India and China, Asia and the world.

Breaking the taboo around men's reproductive health

World Population Day (July 11) has passed. As we grapple with the multifaceted challenges of global population dynamics, it is crucial to turn the spotlight on a subject often overshadowed in discussions on reproductive health: male infertility. Male infertility remains a stigmatised issue, shrouded in silence and with misconceptions. This neglect exacerbates the emotional and psychological toll on those who are affected and impedes progress towards effective solutions.

In 2004, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that globally, between 60 million to 80 million couples struggle with infertility. However, the exact prevalence of infertility in India remains unspecified according to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) National Guidelines for Accreditation, Supervision and Regulation of Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART) Clinics (2005). Extrapolating from WHO's data, it is suggested that approximately 13 million to 19 million Indian couples may face infertility issues. This incidence is only set to increase, shaped by factors such as environmental pollution and adverse lifestyle shifts. Male infertility accounts for 50% of all infertility cases in the country. Thus, it is important to shed light on male infertility, understand its causes, and identify solutions to aid the millions of affected couples.

Understanding the subject

Male infertility is not a standard experience. Its causes, and therefore its forms, vary. Infertility in men can manifest as an absence of sperm, low sperm count, low sperm motility, or both. The form of infertility can depend on various factors that include stress, hormonal imbalance, genetic, anatomical and epigenetic factors, or even



Dr. Privanka Parte

Scientist F, Indian Council of Medical Research, National Institute for Research in Reproductive and Child Health (ICMR-NIRRH)

It is time to recognise and address the subject of male reproductive health issues in India

exposure to certain infections. External factors such as environmental pollution and an indiscriminate use of pesticides on crops, plastics, and plasticisers can also affect fertility and influence the epigenetic makeup. Lifestyle factors such as diets, sleep patterns, work schedules, and consumption of alcohol and tobacco also play a major role. Adding to these factors is a growing preference for late marriages among youth, creating challenges due to declining sperm quality with age.

While the challenges listed above may appear daunting, male reproductive health can be safeguarded through various lifestyle interventions. First and foremost, it is imperative to be aware of reproductive and sexual health and the factors that influence it, particularly during the formative period from secondary school to junior college. Here, parents, particularly fathers, play a critical role and must educate their sons on the issue. At an individual level, young men should proactively adopt good lifestyle practices, ensuring healthy eating, regular sleep patterns, and eliminating the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and other intoxicants. While mobile phones and laptops have become occupational hazards in most fields, their excessive usage, in proximity to the body, should be avoided. Stress is a major deterrent to reproductive health, and regular exercise, yoga, and meditation can go a long way in reducing its adverse effects on well-being. Couples together must also adopt such healthy lifestyle practices to safeguard their reproductive health and enhance their well-being.

Treatment options

While lifestyle interventions play a critical preventative role, it is also important to discuss

treatments available for those grappling with infertility. Treatment options are varied, and their efficacy depends on the cause and the form of infertility. It is important to seek help from a medical professional to identify and treat the issue. The medical professional will guide the person to undergo a routine semen analysis, conducted after a two to seven day period of sexual abstinence (WHO recommended). If the issue is physical or anatomical such as blocked sperm flow, undescended testicles, or an abnormal urethral opening, these can be fixed with surgery. If the issue is an absence of sperm, then treatments such as intra cytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) should be undertaken. Alternatively, couples facing this issue can also opt for donor sperm insemination or adoption. In cases where the sperm count is very low, there is a chance for the couple to conceive naturally if sperm motility is very good. However, if both sperm count and motility are low, intrauterine insemination (IUI), in vitro fertilisation (IVF), or ICSI are advocated. In cases of male infertility due to gene mutation/s, genetic counselling is of utmost importance before seeking the support of assisted reproductive technologies such as IVF and ICSI.

With millions of couples in India facing infertility issues, there is an urgent need for open and informed discussions on reproductive health. It is time to recognise and address the significant issue of male reproductive health. Awareness building, sex education, and timely medical interventions are key to supporting couples on their journey to parenthood. By breaking the taboo surrounding male infertility and fostering a more informed and supportive environment, we can help many couples realise their dream of having children.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Court on maintenance

The Supreme Court of India's verdict (Page 1, "Divorced Muslim women entitled to secular remedy: SC", July 11) will truly empower them financially and socially. This is yet another landmark judgment by the apex Court after *Mary Roy vs The State Of Kerala* (1986) that gave equal rights to Syrian Christian women as their male siblings in matters of inheritance.

N.A. Joseph,
Ettumanoor, Kottayam, Kerala

The Court ruling is not only the need of the times but

would also go a long way in empowering divorced Muslim women. It will protect their individuality and enhance their self-respect.

C.G. Kuriakose,
Kothamangalam, Kerala

Judge on the homemaker

Justice B.V. Nagarathna of the Supreme Court of India has hit the mark in her comments on a lack of emotional and financial security that many Indian women homemakers face (Inside pages, July 11). Financial empowerment is only the second stage in the journey towards financial

independence. The first step is financial awareness. In most Indian homes, all financial decisions are taken by the man without even consulting his wife, even in those cases where the wife contributes to the household income. Every Indian woman should be aware of the state of the household balance sheet. This alone will enable her to help make the right monetary decisions. It will also relieve some of the burden on the husband who is expected to know everything about finance.

Sharada Sivaram,
Ernakulam, Kerala

As patriarchy is deeply entrenched in our society, men cannot be expected to heed the advice of Justice Nagarathna and do "justice" by sharing their income with their wives. The passing of a law that makes working men to share a percentage of their income, say 10%, with their wives to meet their personal needs, over and

above the amount being given towards household expenses, may be the solution. Such a law would definitely help in increasing awareness about the necessity for the financial independence of homemaker housewives and, eventually, a change in the mindset of men.

Kosaraju Chandramouli,
Hyderabad

Corrections & Clarifications

In a report, "Ahead of Congress leader's visit, firing reported in Jiribam" (Inside pages, July 9, 2024), a sentence in the third paragraph read, "The houses were occupied, the police said." It should have been "Neither of the houses were occupied, the police said."

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Should States get special packages outside Finance Commission allocations?



Arun Kumar

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PARLEY

In the run-up to the Union Budget, Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu, the Chief Ministers of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, respectively, who are in a position to decide the political fate of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government at the Centre, have demanded special financial packages for their respective States. These packages could potentially increase the fiscal burden on the Centre and also on other States. Should States get special packages outside Finance Commission allocations? Arun Kumar and Pinaki Chakraborty discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Prashanth Perumal J. Edited excerpts:

What is the basis on which the Finance Commission determines how much money is allocated to different States? Do you think there is a case for States such as Bihar and Andhra Pradesh to receive funds beyond what is being allocated to them through the Finance Commission?

Arun Kumar: The last Finance Commission had said that States should be given 41% of the divisible tax pool. Within that 41%, what does each State get? For that, there is a formula which is based on income, population, the area, forests and ecology, demographic performance, etc. If we look at the 15th Finance Commission, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in 2020-21 got the largest amount of funds and Karnataka and Kerala saw the largest decrease in the share of funds. So, in other words, the criteria that the Finance Commission use can change the amount of funds going to different States.

Apart from the Finance Commission devolution, which is statutory, how the remaining amount is spent is determined by the Centre, and that is where political determination comes in; States which are closer to the Centre get more funds. Andhra Pradesh and Bihar are part of the NDA and their support is critical to the government. So, I suppose they will be able to draw more funds.

Pinaki Chakraborty: As far as transfers by the Finance Commission are concerned, the scope for discretion is very limited. Other Central transfers are also determined by certain principles of distribution across States. We can debate those schemes, their designs, etc., but those are certainly not arbitrary. So, that is the overall framework of transfer.

When there is a specific demand by a specific State for higher transfer of resources for a specific purpose, constitutionally there is no bar on giving more money to that State. But generally, it is not done on a large scale because if that becomes the order of the day, fiscal



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and his Ministers meet Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi. ANI

prudence becomes a casualty. So, the possibility of large-scale discretionary transfers is limited.

Andhra Pradesh had a major fiscal shock after bifurcation and that was partly offset when the Finance Commission provided revenue deficit grants. Why Andhra Pradesh still requires Central support requires a careful analysis. But Bihar's case is different. Bihar's per capita development spending is less than 60% of the all-States average. So, Bihar has a serious fiscal capacity problem. This has not been fully offset by Finance Commission transfers or additional Central transfers.

What is the relationship between additional Central aid and the economic performance of States? Does the allocation of more funds to a certain State boost its long-term economic performance?

AK: There are several factors. The public and private sector together determine the development of a State. But with all other things remaining the same, higher allocations from the Centre to a State would boost the growth of that State. The major problem is the issue of governance – how well is the State governed and how well are the resources that are received by the State spent on development. Poorer States tend to have a greater amount of leakage of funds. But more importantly, the credit-deposit ratio of Bihar is much lower than the all-India average. This means that a large part of Bihar's savings is leaking out of the State to other States. So, even if you allocate more funds from the Centre, the leakage may be greater than the additional resources they get.

PC: If we look at revenue sharing, the part which is not within the purview of the Finance Commission has increased and that is also why we see an increase in centrally sponsored schemes. So, there is a larger political economy



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PINAKI CHAKRABORTY

question which needs to be discussed. When we talk about resource flow to the richer regions of the country, it is much, much higher than the resource flow to the poorer regions of the country. This cannot be explained by governance differences alone. If there is a problem of resources, where a State is spending only 50% of the all-States average as public expenditure, this can't just be explained by differences in governance and quality of expenditure. We need to channelise more resources for higher capital investment in the poorer regions of the country for balanced regional development.

By taking away from States the power to tax their citizens, has GST (Goods and Services Tax) exacerbated competition among States to get more funds from the Centre? We also see that there is no longer tax competition between the States after the centralisation of taxation under GST. Is that good or bad?

PC: Because of this race to the bottom among States after liberalisation, States themselves decided to introduce a floor rate for sales tax in 2000-01. GST has resulted in significant loss of fiscal autonomy for the States because the States used to get two-thirds of their revenue from VAT (Value Added Tax). States also cannot set the tax rate, which is a key component of fiscal autonomy. So, there needs to be some flexibility somewhere within the GST structure so that the States don't feel that they are not able to tax to provide public services. We should discuss what kind of GST flexibility can bring an element of fiscal autonomy without compromising on the fiscal harmonisation across States.

AK: GST has damaged federalism because States are very diverse. The problems of Assam are not the same as those of Gujarat. The States have different sources of revenue and expenditure requirements. What we require in India, a very diverse country, is greater decentralisation and it is the only answer to the problems we face. Across the country, greater centralisation that has come in with GST is perhaps not good. What has happened with GST is that it has benefited the organised sector at the expense of the

unorganised sector. Even though the unorganised sector has been kept out of GST, the organised sector is the one that has been rising and that is why you see that GST collections have been rising post-pandemic. This decline in the unorganised sector, which is concentrated in the backward States, means that backward States will under-perform. So, GST needs reform. I recommend that the tax be collected at the last point instead of at each intermediate stage, which creates a lot of complications. There is a lot of corruption associated with input credit, there are fake companies, etc. Trucks are stopped by the police and implementing agencies and money is extorted. So, the black economy continues to flourish. We need to collect a lot more from direct taxes and reduce collections from indirect taxes, which are having a negative effect on the backward States as compared to the advanced ones.

We see that States with political weight usually get more funds from the Centre at the cost of other States. So, how fair and objective is Central aid to states? Is there any way to stop politics from influencing how Central funds are allocated to the States?

AK: Seventy per cent of the funds that the Centre spends is non-discretionary. But the remaining 30% are discretionary. The allocation of funds by the Centre to the States depends on politics or political considerations. Greater decentralisation and greater autonomy to the States is the only way to change that.

PC: The real problem of discretion is that if the Centre decides to introduce a new scheme and says that 60% of it will be funded by the Centre and 40% will be funded by the States, it is actually tying up State resources. So, we need deliberations at the national level involving all the stakeholders to understand which schemes the Centre should intervene in, and which it should leave to the States. The 14th Finance Commission had given an important framework for this, recommending that the Centre should intervene in schemes where there are large externalities or national priorities involved. But if the Centre wants to run a primary health centre in a remote village, that is not going to help. So, I think this discussion about political alignment is only of marginal importance. What is really discretionary is the Centre's complete autonomy in deciding which sector and where to spend.



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NOTEBOOK

The trauma of covering tragedies

Reporters lurch from one unfortunate event to the next with little time to process the incident or mourn the dead

Ishita Mishra

On the evening of July 2, social media was flooded with visuals of bodies of women lying scattered on the ground in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh. Many of these women, who wore long veils, did not have dignity in death.

It emerged that they had attended a religious gathering of a 'godman'. When the event got over, the followers rushed out and a stampede took place. By late evening, it was clear that this was perhaps the worst stampede in recent times in India. Bodies of women and children were piling up in mortuaries. As the small town of Hathras was not equipped to deal with a tragedy of this scale, many bodies were transported to places such as Agra, Etah, and Aligarh. The death toll was 121.

Within hours of the tragedy, my colleagues and I took a cab to the site. As I walked around, meeting one distraught family after another, I met a man who had lost all the women in his family – mother, wife, and daughter – in the stampede. He uncovered the face of his 10-year-old daughter for us. The sight shook me. Her small body had a Y-shaped incision, her ponytail was soaked in blood, and her eyes had scars. That image of a young life cut short so brutally will perhaps stay with me for a long time. As reporters, we are expected to be stoic in such instances. Stoicism over a long period of time can make people numb. Perhaps, that is our coping mechanism.

The wails of men, women, and children were disturbing, but I had to watch it all unfold to report on the tragedy with nuance and sensitivity. In such times, reporters cannot afford to feel ashamed of asking questions to grieving families. The news of the tragedy must be told with empathy, while holding those responsible accountable, even if the world moves on to another tragedy the next day.

On the streets near hospitals, people stood in long queues, searching for their loved ones who had gone missing. I had two jobs at the time: to note the details of

the missing people and to help the kin reach the various hospitals and mortuaries where the injured and dead had been kept, respectively. This too was traumatic: every family member trembled when asked to lift a shroud. The relatives naturally looked exhausted. One woman, who had been searching for her 15-year-old granddaughter, said she had not eaten anything though someone at the site had offered her food. She looked tired and weak.

It was humbling to speak to the villagers who had gathered at the spot. They helped the media by sharing minute details of the tragedy. They betrayed no fear of any consequence, given that the police and the administration were as responsible for the incident as the organisers. It was also troubling to see how prominent people were visiting the accident site and hospitals only to take photos.

However, journalists cannot be entirely focused on the trauma alone; we need to equally cover the police investigation. We moved on to report on the arrests being made and the amount of compensation being given to victims' families. That is always the hardest part: to leave the grieving families who had cooperated with us while we did our job.

While it is a struggle to report on disasters and tragedies, the stories of survivors keep us going. Where there is despair, there is always a ray of hope. One such story was of Pappu Singh from Bharatpur, Rajasthan. His mother and paternal aunt had been missing from the stampede site. The same night I met him, he called me just to share the good news that the two of them had reached home safely. There was so much relief in his voice.

The hardest part on reporting on tragedies is that we lurch from one to the next with little time to process the incident or mourn the dead. As reporters, our primary job is to tell stories and chase deadlines. There is little time to reflect or heal.

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PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Keeping your head above water



A wild elephant in the flooded waters of Hajo in Kamrup district of Assam. Two waves of floods in the State left 84 people dead and displaced more than 24 lakh people while Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve recorded the highest level of flood since 2014, claiming 174 animals so far. PTI

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The *Hindu*

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 12, 1974

BHEL to make oil rigs with U.S. collaboration

New Delhi, July 11: Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. will be signing in a fortnight, a technical collaboration agreement with Oil Well Ltd. of USA for the manufacture of oil drilling rigs needed for off-shore exploration. The Union

Minister of Heavy Industry, Mr. T.A. Mal, told the consultative committee of MPs here to-day that BHEL would be the co-ordinating agency, using the capacity available in the public and the private sector engineering units to make sub-assemblies and components. BHEL would supply a large number of electrical items, including power packs. An assembly plant for the rigs would be set up under a crash programme. Mr. Pal said there was a big demand for the rigs and they were not available, and where available were expensive.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 12, 1924

Railway risk notes

Simla, July 11: The Gazette of India contains the Railway Risk Note forms A.B.D.G. and H. as amended by the Government of India in pursuance of the recommendations made by the Railway Risk Note Committee. These forms will come into use with effect from 1st October 1924. The Government of India have passed orders on the report of the Risk Note Revision Committee and have gazetted new forms A.B.D.G. and H. which come into force from 1st October.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Rise in import of vegetable oils in India in June

18 in percentage. Vegetable oil imports, comprising edible and non-edible oils, rose to 15.5 lakh tonnes in June on higher imports of crude palm oil and crude sunflower oil, according to Solvent Extractors' Association of India data. PTI

Number of Indian fishermen arrested by Sri Lanka

13 The fishermen were arrested, and their three trawlers were seized north of the Delft Island, Jaffna, according to the Sri Lanka Navy. The total number of Indian fishermen apprehended this year by the Sri Lankan Navy is now 252, a statement said. PTI

Number of flexi jobs added by Indian Staffing Federation

2.2 lakh. Industry body Indian Staffing Federation said it added new flexi jobs to reach 16.6 lakh in FY24. The data was shared as part of its 'Annual Employment Trends 2024' report which showed a 15.3% year-on-year growth in new jobs. PTI

U.S. grants unveiled to boost electric vehicle manufacturing

1.7 in \$ billion. Joe Biden's administration is issuing grants to help expand or revive auto facilities for making electric vehicles and parts in election battlegrounds Michigan and Georgia and in converting 11 shuttered or at-risk facilities. AFP

Disproportionate assets unearthed by Lokayukta in Karnataka

45.14 in ₹ crore. Lokayukta sleuths found that 11 government officers and engineers had amassed assets that were disproportionate to their known sources of income. PTI
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Future investments in India's EV space

Why is the government considering extending the EV policy? How does the revised policy align with India's goals of enhancing local manufacturing and technology adoption in the EV industry? In what ways can the policy's focus on localisation and production volume increase competition and lower costs?

EXPLAINER

Saptaparno Ghosh

The story so far:

According to media reports, the government is looking to expand the scope of its electric vehicle (EV) policy, announced in March, to include a retrospective effect. This means that the policy, that endeavours to prompt global players to localise production and invest in the domestic ecosystem, will now extend benefits to entities who have already made their investments. Earlier, entities were eligible for incentives only if they set up local facilities within three years of receiving approval. The revised policy is expected to be formally announced in August, the publications learnt from people familiar with the development.

What was the March policy's focus on investment and localisation about?

The policy announced in March aimed to provide Indian consumers with access to the latest technology and strengthen the EV ecosystem by encouraging healthy competition among EV players by attaining higher volumes of production, economies of scale and lower cost of production. All in all, better the electric vehicle economics for Indian consumers, and in a commercially viable manner for the ecosystem. The policy also mandated that half of the value addition in the overall manufacturing be done domestically within five years. To maintain commercial viability and retain a foothold in the Indian market, the import duty on EVs as completely built units (CBUs) with a minimum cost, insurance, and freight (CIF) value of \$35,000 was reduced from 70%-100% to 15%.

The policy document held India, being the third-largest automotive market in the world, could potentially "lead the global transition" from internal combustion



Towards change: A person uses an electric vehicle charging station, in Hyderabad. NAGARA GOPAL

engine (ICE) to decarbonised electric counterparts. Overall, the policy was potentially a recognition that import substitution for EVs would require a layered and longer-sustained approach. To this effect, for a commercially viable transition, it further provided mechanisms for manufacturers to address the imperative affordability paradigm of Indian consumers.

Why does the ecosystem need investment and intervention?

A Niti Aayog report in 2022 argued that purchasing a vehicle is a "major investment decision" for most Indian consumers. Thus, it was essential to ensure viable economics for owning, as well as maintaining and running the same - the total cost of ownership.

The report suggested that a sharper decline in costs would prepone the EV adoption timeline. It is essential to note that the report points to India's structural unit cost disadvantages in the production of select cell components such as CAM NMC (8-10%) and electrolyte (2-3%). Furthermore, as per the report, certain cell components such as separators, copper foil and anode active material

(AAM) require sizeable capital investment - about \$200-500 million for a 20-30 GWh plant. The commission thus recommended it was imperative to offset the dynamics and "create an enabling eco-system to attract large-scale capex investment vis-à-vis other geographies".

The other essentiality for a comprehensive ecosystem stems from the observed experience of after-sales service. Bain & Company's India EV Report (2023), observing the two-wheeler EV segment, had pointed to after-sales service being a "big pain point" for EV customers. It also cast apprehensions about the scalability of business models that had OEMs partnering with standalone breakdown service providers (such as Ampere with ReadyAssist).

The report also held that India would require "significant investor support" to realise the \$100 billion-plus EV opportunity.

"As the landscape evolves, investors need to evaluate potential assets based on five criteria, namely, sustainable competitive advantages, go-to-market and distribution capabilities, customer feedback and brand perception, talent and culture as well as manufacturing and

supply chain strategy," it held.

Does all of it address the paradigm?

The EV policy announced in March shares similar priorities with those in the U.S., China and Europe, where incentives have been endowed on a case-by-case basis to different companies for setting up capacity for EV value chain manufacturing. They entail land and infrastructure, capital subsidies, financing support, fiscal incentives and subsidised utilities. However, unrelatedly, the International Energy Agency (IEA)'s Global EV Outlook for 2024 pointed out that electric cars remain 10% to 50% more expensive than combustion engine equivalents in Europe and the U.S., depending on the country and car segment.

Notably, Europe and the U.S. meet 20% and 30% of their EV battery demands through imports, according to the report. This also forms a case for the necessity for integrated production lines.

Dinesh Abrol, a retired professor at the Institute for Studies in Industrial Development and a long-time observer of industry and trade told *The Hindu*, that in a broader context, foreign investments have not always been known to deliver. He held that such policies should be able to dictate the type of production that must take place. It must not be restricted to de-risking and de-leveraging, he said.

"If FDI is to reap its potential fully, the focus must be on ensuring that it is towards building a core country, such that the critical components are made here, there is the transfer of technology and local manufacturing is built here," states Prof Abrol, adding, "If FDI does not enable one to be a core country, you will not be to progress towards an enabling capacity to establish yourself as a core player. Instead, you shall stand inserted as a peripheral player in the larger supply manufacturing chain." According to Mr. Abrol, the way forward is to strengthen the domestic players in the creation of capabilities for critical components and make the foreign automakers use the domestic suppliers' networks.

THE GIST

The Indian government plans to expand its electric vehicle (EV) policy announced in March to include retrospective benefits, incentivising both current and future investments in the domestic EV ecosystem.

Earlier, incentives were tied to setting up local facilities within three years of approval; the revised policy will extend benefits to entities that have already invested in local EV production.

The policy aims to encourage localisation of EV production, boost technology adoption, and enhance competitiveness in the Indian EV market.

The move is expected to stimulate investment in manufacturing capacity, reduce costs, and accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles in India.

Why are dengue cases on the rise worldwide?

Are urbanisation and climate change fuelling dengue spread in the world?

Serena Josephine M.

The story so far:

Dengue cases have surged in India, with Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu seeing significant increases.

According to data published by the National Centre for Vector Borne Diseases Control, as of April 30, India recorded 19,447 cases and 16 deaths, with Kerala and Tamil Nadu leading in numbers. Karnataka, initially reporting 2,503 cases, has now recorded 7,840 cases and seven deaths as of July 10, with 293 new cases reported on that day alone.

What is the global situation of dengue?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), as of April 30, over 7.6 million cases of dengue were reported in 2024. This included 3.4 million confirmed cases, over 16,000 severe cases and over 3,000 deaths. In an update on the global scenario on May 30, it said that 90 countries have known active dengue

transmission, adding that "not all of which have been captured in formal reporting".

The WHO noted that at least five countries, including India, were grappling with the onset of monsoon season, which created suitable conditions for the breeding and survival of Aedes mosquito. Urbanisation and population movements have also played a pivotal role in the increasing burden in the region.

Dengue is endemic in more than 100 countries in the WHO regions of Africa, the Americas, the Eastern Mediterranean, South-East Asia and Western Pacific. The Americas, South-East Asia and Western Pacific regions were the most seriously affected, with Asia accounting for around 70% of the global disease burden. However, it also noted that dengue is spreading to new areas in Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean and South America.

How does dengue spread and how is it treated?

Dengue virus is transmitted to humans

through the bite of infected mosquitoes, with the primary vector that transmits the disease being Aedes aegypti. While cases are mostly asymptomatic or mild, some may develop severe dengue that could include shock, severe bleeding or organ impairment. According to the National Guidelines for Clinical Management of Dengue Fever, dengue presents as an acute febrile illness lasting two to seven days, characterised by symptoms such as headache, retro-orbital pain, myalgia, arthralgia, rash, and hemorrhagic manifestations. In those without any warning signs or complications, dengue is managed through symptomatic and supportive treatment.

What are the emerging patterns in dengue?

Researchers and public health experts have been closely monitoring the emerging patterns in dengue.

According to the WHO, factors contributing to the increasing risk of dengue epidemics include the changing distribution of the Aedes aegypti vector,

urbanisation, and human activities that create conducive environments for vector-host interaction, and climate change-induced shifts in weather patterns.

In the article 'Prevention and Control Strategies to Counter the Dengue Cyclical Trend in Tamil Nadu', published in the Tamil Nadu Journal of Public Health and Medical Research, public health officials said that the first epidemic of clinical dengue-like illness was recorded in erstwhile Madras in 1780. Dengue virus was isolated in India during 1945 for the first time. The first evidence of the occurrence of dengue fever in the country was reported in 1956 from Vellore district in the State, they said.

They said the infection has spread to all geographic regions due to rapid increase in urbanisation, expanding travel patterns and climatic changes.

Tamil Nadu, they said, has witnessed outbreaks of dengue infection once every five years in the past decade with the last outbreak occurring in 2017.

The State's Director of Public Health and Preventive Medicine T. S. Selvavinayagam pointed out seasonal variation every five years, probably due to the building up of susceptible populations. "We are seeing cases throughout the year. There are more cases in a short time if control measures are not taken on time. As for Tamil Nadu, we expect cases to rise in the coming months. Surveillance and immediate response are critical. Along with this, community empowerment and education is needed," he said.

THE GIST

Dengue cases have surged in Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, with significant increases reported

Dengue is endemic in over 100 countries, with the Americas, Southeast Asia, and the Western Pacific regions most affected.

Factors contributing to dengue epidemics include changing mosquito distribution, urbanisation, human activities, and climate change.

IN THE LIMELIGHT



A still from *Indian 2*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Modern challenges, old ideals: what could Indian *thaatha* do in present-day India?

Going by the discourse around *Indian* over the last 30 years, expectations for *Indian 2* suggest a deeper exploration of corruption; *Indian* sparked discussions on corruption and vigilantism and with *Indian 2*, there is anticipation that these themes will be approached in a more nuanced manner

Udhav Naig

The humongous success of the 1996 Tamil blockbuster *Indian*, starring Kamal Haasan and directed by Shankar, can be attributed to a number of reasons, such as Kamal Haasan's brilliant portrayal of a 70-year-old freedom fighter, exquisite music by A.R. Rahman, and Shankar's imaginative storytelling. However, the primary reason for its success was its instant appeal to the 'common man', who was forced to shell out money to government officials on an everyday basis.

The impact of *Gentleman*, *Indian* and subsequently several of director Shankar's films such as *Mudhalvan* and *Anniyan* spoke to generations of Tamil people, shaping their understanding of politics and corruption in the society, often privileging problematic vigilantes over systemic, long drawn-out, incremental reform of the system. Like every movie, *Indian* was written and made within a specific socio-political context in India. Five years before the film's release, in 1991, the Indian government decided to break the locks of the economy by implementing a series of structural reforms that loosened the state's vice-grip on the economy, adopting liberalisation to kickstart economic growth and provide jobs.

In 1990, the then Prime Minister V.P. Singh's government agreed to provide 27% reservations to Other Backward Classes (OBCs), which resulted in widespread protests against its implementation, spawning debates over whether this would affect the efficiency and quality of personnel in bureaucracy. India also witnessed the controversial Ram Janmabhoomi movement, which aimed to build a temple for Lord Ram at the site where the Babri Masjid stood. This, a Hindutva project, still in a nascent stage then, was realised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier this year.

These events had a tremendous impact on the psyche of all Indians, including the

fictional 'Indian' Senapathy, a freedom fighter turned murderer of corrupt government officials.

For one, he must have started to distrust state control of the Indian economy and other government institutions, viewing them as citadels of corruption. Two, he seems to have developed a subconscious bias against reservations, which provided a pathway for the OBCs along with SCs and STs to get representation in education and jobs (supported by personal experience of the death of his daughter in the film). And, not to mention, he ends up killing his own son, Chandru, a brake inspector in the government, for taking a bribe which results in the deaths of numerous kids.

If we use these ideological and socio-political frameworks, director Shankar's earlier film *Gentleman*, which narrates the story of a non-Brahmin, Kicha, the son of a cook working at a government school, who, to realise the dreams of students like Ramesh, his poor Brahmin friend, unable to secure admission to a medical college due to caste and poverty, decides to rob the rich and powerful to build a college that would admit everyone.

Thirty years later, it is obvious that *Gentleman's* premise hasn't aged well when we look at how abysmally poor the representation of the OBCs and SCs/STs continues to be in India in every sphere, so much so that it became a rallying cry for the Opposition INDIA bloc in the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

Desire for vigilante justice

There is a perceptive interview of Kamal Haasan from the 1990s, in which he speaks about the ideological issues he had with *Gentleman* and *Indian* that still rings true.

With respect to *Gentleman*, he says he was not too keen to do the film because the original idea dealt with the militancy of a Brahmin kid, and with *Indian*, he acknowledges that though a man who kills the corrupt and instils fear in them is

a dream of every 'common' man, the narrative promotes shades of fascism as it erects a freedom fighter and an uncompromising old man, who kills the corrupt officials as the solution.

Indian's structure is rather interesting: to justify why Senapathy is killing small fries in the State government machinery – a doctor, a Treasury official, an inspector, a VAO and a brake inspector (his own son) – there are two different flashbacks and numerous subplots, one to show his patriotic and valorous past which justifies his killing spree and two, to explain why he selects these people to 'weed out'.

And this is where actor Kamal Haasan's opinion that the film plays on a fascist desire to seek a saviour to clean up the corrupt 'system', a political idea that continues to be popular across the world, instead of participating in a long-drawn-out reform of the system, rings true.

Indian creates villains out of government officials who are appointed through reservations and it prescribes death for these corrupt officials as the only solution, dismissing the idea of 'trying them in a Court of Law' as a complete and utter waste of time. Senapathy is ready to sacrifice his own daughter by refusing to pay a bribe to officials to complete legal formalities for her burn treatment, but later kills all those who sought a bribe from him, unwilling to explore using the law as a solution.

In the last 33 years since the Indian economy was liberalised, big businesses have routinely colluded with the state machinery, resulting in the creation of a small number of big and flashy billionaires, whose loans are routinely written off. Not to be left behind, there are politicians and political parties who can rival big billionaires in India.

Promise of a new narrative?

The trailer for *Indian 2* offers some insights into what the film is likely to be about: the desire to seek a saviour

continues to exist and be popular in India, considering the depleting quality of life and growth of Indians, even as an ill-gotten wealth of politicians is used to bribe voters in elections and billionaires continue to corner India's resources.

Indian 2's trailer begins with a voice-over declaring that the country has become worse, rightly so: "What sort of a country is this? There are no jobs that match our qualification...no job pays the salary that it job deserves... we don't get facilities despite paying taxes, thieves continue to steal, those who overstep the law are continuing to do it (without repercussions)" to which the character played by actor Siddharth says, "We don't do enough to change the system."

However, he quickly declares that 'we need a hunting dog', foreshadowing the arrival of Indian *thaatha* to weed out corruption once again in India today.

Going by the discourse around *Indian* in the last 30 years or so, one perhaps expects that the issue of corruption in India is painted in a much more nuanced and holistic manner instead of blaming some low-level 'corrupt government officials' and going further than arguing that murder is the only permanent solution to the problem.

There is a line uttered by Kamal Haasan in the trailer: "You take the Gandhian route, I will take the Netaji route", which promises that the film while retaining its impatience related to corruption in society, acknowledges the problem of the original and does not want to simplify issues down to the local Village Administrative Officer as the root cause of corruption.

Of course, Indians continue to face a number of social ills today: the continued hate against minorities, and atrocities against Dalits and other disadvantaged groups, have continued unabated. One hopes that the Indian *thaatha* has also thought long and hard in the last thirty years about these issues and has something to offer as a solution.

Indian 2 is releasing in theatres today



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

Chafe, chaff (K. K. Shah, Chandigarh). 'Chafe' means 'to become irritated or impatient (because of something). You chafe at something or under something. She chafed at the delay in the arrival of the train.

'Chafe' also means '(cause something to) become sore by rubbing.'

The stiff collar chafed his neck.

'Chafe' also means 'to rub (especially the skin to restore warmth or sensation).'

She chafed the child's hands and feet when it fainted.

The 'a' in 'chafe' is pronounced like the 'a' in 'fame,' 'name.' 'Chaff as a verb means 'to tease.' You chaff somebody in a good-natured way about something.

They chaffed her about her new dress.

The 'a' in 'chaff' is pronounced like the 'a' in 'path.' In American English, it is pronounced like the 'a' in 'man.' The 'ch' in 'chafe' and 'chaff' is pronounced like the 'ch' in 'child.'

'Bomb along' (M. R. Kamat, Mangalore).

'Bomb along' means 'to move very fast (usually in a vehicle) in the specified direction.'

He bombed along the highway at 100 miles per hour.

Meaning of 'a skeleton in a cupboard'

(M. P. Vidyashankar, Channapatna).

It means 'a family secret or scandal kept concealed to avoid public shame and disgrace; any confidential matter which, if revealed, could be a source of embarrassment.' In American English, the word 'cupboard' is replaced by 'closet.' The idiomatic expressions 'a skeleton in the cupboard' and 'a skeleton in the closet' mean one and the same thing.

Rao's house was raided yesterday. He has enough skeletons in his cupboard to keep the Income Tax officials busy for the next three months.

We all have skeletons in our cupboards.

Otherwise, we would not be human beings. There are many explanations for the origin of this expression. One such relates to the practice of English doctors who used to keep a human skeleton in their cupboard. Before 1832, doctors in England were allowed to conduct an autopsy only on criminals who had been executed. When autopsy became legal, doctors wanted to own a skeleton. They wanted to study the skeleton at leisure to have a greater understanding of the human body. The demand for skeletons was so great that robbers dug graves and sold the skeletons to doctors. Doctors usually paid a handsome price for a skeleton. They were forced to keep the skeleton in a place where nobody could see it. They hid the skeleton in a cupboard. Every doctor was suspected to have a skeleton in his cupboard. With the passage of time, the phrase took on a wider meaning. Now it means 'a secret that would embarrass someone if it became known.'

Published in *The Hindu* on August 31, 1992

THE DAILY QUIZ

World Population Day was on July 11. Let us see if you got the figures right

Ramya Kannan

QUESTION 1
World Population Day falls on July 11. It was designated so by the governing council of the UNDP, for a specific reason. What was the reason?

QUESTION 2
When was the last Indian census conducted?

QUESTION 3
In the 200 years or so, since the world hit the magic number of 1 billion in terms of population, it grew _____. Fill in the blank, by how many times did the population grow?

QUESTION 4
Total fertility rate is the average

number of children born per woman in a country, and it has been reducing over the years. India's fertility rate has been declining for decades, and it has now dropped to below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman. What is the fertility rate for India as of 2021?

QUESTION 5
Which are the top three most populous countries in the world? The first two may be easy to guess, not a big challenge. Name the third-most populous country and while you are at it, throw in No. 1 and 2 as well.



Visual Question:
Which continent has the highest rate of population growth? GETTY IMAGES

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. A classic of modern American literature, this book won this prize. **Ans: Pulitzer Prize**

2. This character, a lawyer in the book, has served as a moral hero for many readers and as a model of integrity for lawyers. Name the character. **Ans: Atticus Finch**

3. Which genre does this novel belong to, given that it focuses on the psychological and moral growth of the protagonist from childhood to adulthood? **Ans: Bildungsroman**

4. Who won the award for best actor, for portraying the leading role? **Ans: Gregory Peck**

5. This character Dill Harris is the best friend of the Finch children in the novel. He is believed to be based on a childhood friend of Harper Lee, who was a novelist and playwright himself. **Ans: Truman Capote**

6. What is the metaphor behind the title of the novel? **Ans: 'To kill a mockingbird' is to kill that which is innocent and harmless**

Visual: The sign that reads watchman refers to Harper Lee's only other book. **Ans: Go Set a Watchman**

Early Birds: Seema Das | Jyot Prakash | Debarati Kar | Sadhan Kumar Panda | Prachi Sharma

Word of the day

Castigate:
To severely criticise (someone/something)

Synonyms: reproach, censure, rebuke

Usage: Parties castigated the Chief Minister for his remark.

Pronunciation: bit.ly/castigatepronun

International Phonetic Alphabet: /kæstəgeɪt/

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

From Page One

NEET counselling from July third week: govt.

The government explained that the allocation of seats would depend on the timing of the cancellation of seats if certain candidates were found to be beneficiaries of malpractices. Candidates are usually allowed to change seats in the first and second rounds of counselling as per the options exercised by them. Cancellation would not have any impact on the overall counselling process and allocation of seats if done before the third round, which is expected to start in the second week of September.

If candidature is cancelled after the third round, the vacant seats could still be offered in the subsequent round. Candidates who have already been allocated seats in the earlier rounds would not be able to participate in the subsequent round, the government said.

In case the candidature of any candidate is cancelled after the conclusion of four rounds, the vacated seats could be put up for additional rounds of counselling, the Centre submitted.

Two members of Meitei outfit held in Imphal

A day earlier, on July 8, gunfire was reported in Jiribam, just as Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi was planning a visit to the district. In the ensuing security operations, two village volunteers from Phaitol village in Jiribam were arrested with a cache of local handmade weapons, explosives, and ammunition.

Kuki-Zo civil society organisations and the apex bodies of Kuki-Zo tribes held a 12-hour shutdown on July 10 in all Kuki-Zo-dominated districts, to protest against the arrest of "village volunteers" in Phaitol and Kangpoki. During the protest, the Kuki Inpi Manipur, an apex body of Kuki tribes in the State, accused security forces of acting only against their people while "turning a blind eye" to "armed militants" like Arambai Tenggol.

Apart from the recent wave of disturbances in Jiribam district, the combing operations, arrests and weapons recovery come on the heels of continuing protests from both communities, demanding starkly contrasting pre-requisites for "peace and justice" before the conflict can be ended.

The Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity, one of the largest Meitei civil society groups in the valley, held a massive rally at the end of June, explicitly accusing the security forces of conducting combing operations and weapons recoveries only in the valley areas without acting against armed groups in the hills. They called for the implementation of the National Register of Citizens and an ouster of all "Kuki-Chin narco-terrorists from Manipur" as part of their demands for peace and justice.

This rally had come within a week of peace marches held across the State's hill districts by Kuki-Zo groups, led by the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum and Kuki Inpi Manipur.

Nazir Ronga, J&K Bar's ad hoc chief, arrested

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

The ad hoc chairman of the J&K High Court Bar Association (JKHCBA), Kashmir, Nazir Ahmad Ronga, was arrested by the Lieutenant-Governor's administration in Srinagar, just hours after the Bar issued a notification related to the internal election.

Lawyer Umair Ronga, son of Mr. Ahmad, said the J&K police arrived at their home at 1.10 a.m. "without any arrest warrant" and claimed "Uper se order hai (It's an order from the top)".

The 3,000-strong Bar on July 10 sought nominations from lawyers to fill different posts through an internal election. In a fresh notification on Thursday, a Bar spokesman said, "On turn of events the JKHCBA has decided to suspend notification [issued on July 10]."

The J&K administration disallowed elections in the Bar in the past five years. It recently invoked Section 144 and barred any elections. The latest crackdown comes in spite of the recent amendment made to the Bar's erstwhile constitution dropping a paragraph that stated the Bar "will work towards a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute".

San Fernando becomes first mothership to dock at Vizhinjam seaport

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Scripting a new chapter in the maritime history of the country, the first mothership carrying cargo from the Xiamen port in China called at the Vizhinjam international seaport, India's first deep-water container transshipment port, on Thursday morning.

The Marshall Island-flagged container ship *San Fernando*, owned by SFL Corporation Ltd. and chartered by Maersk (AP Moller Group), Denmark, is managed and operated by Bernhard Schulte Ship Management, Singapore.

Adani Port pilots boarded the ship carrying 1,930 containers around 7.45 a.m. when the ship reached the passage leading to the berth. The ship was then navigated through the buoyed channel to enter the tranquil breakwater area inside the port. The ship turned around before the tugs pushed it to the berth and moved the ship to the wharf with mooring ropes.

Four tugs were pressed in to bring the ship to the berth. Three tugs were involved in pushing the ship forward and pulling the aft, or vice versa, to turn the ship to get the bow facing out and then aligned the ship with the berth be-

During conflict, there is no such thing as strategic autonomy: U.S. Ambassador

As Washington raises concerns over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Moscow, Eric Garcetti says India and the U.S. must 'act together' in 'times of need' as trusted partners; both countries should also be open to criticising each other, especially on issues of human rights, says the Ambassador

Subhasini Haidar
Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

There is no such thing as "strategic autonomy" during a conflict, U.S. Ambassador Eric Garcetti said on Thursday, even as sources said that U.S. officials have raised concerns with Indian officials over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia this week.

The comments, including a series of statements critical of the visit by the U.S. State Department, are the sharpest sign of tensions between the U.S. and India over the Putin-Modi summit, including the timing of the talks that came as Western leaders met in Washington for a conference of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and a series of deadly Russian missile strikes across Ukraine.

"I respect that India likes its strategic auto-

my. But in times of conflict there is no such thing as strategic autonomy, we will, in crisis moments, need to know each other," Mr. Garcetti said, addressing a conference in Delhi, stressing the need for India and the U.S. to "act together" in "times of need" as trusted partners.

The U.S. Ambassador was addressing a conclave on India-U.S. defence and security partnership, organised by CUTS International and U.S. Consulate-General, Kolkata.

"No war is distant any more and we must not just stand for peace. We must take concrete actions to make sure those who don't play by peaceful rules, that their war machines cannot continue unabated," Mr. Garcetti continued, without specifically naming Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 or China's transgressions at the Line of Actual Control in 2020, but referring to countries



U.S. Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti was addressing a conclave on India-U.S. defence and security partnership in Delhi. FILE PHOTO

that have "ignored sovereign borders" in the past three years.

In statements on Ukraine, the U.S. State Department regularly refers to the "Russian war machine".

India has consistently held that its ties with Russia are part of its independent bilateral relations and strategic autonomy, and has thus far not directly criticised Russia at the Un-

ited Nations for the war in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, sources confirmed to *The Hindu* that U.S. officials have raised concerns directly over India's ties with Russia, including the surprise visit by Mr. Modi to Moscow this week, which had not been announced until recently.

According to the sources, India's Acting Ambassador in Washington, Sripri-

ya Ranganathan, was "asked" to explain the reason for the visit and its timing by the U.S. State Department officials. U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell had also spoken to Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra about the issue.

External Affairs Ministry officials did not deny the conversations, but an official downplayed their significance, saying that Indian diplomats are in "constant touch with the State Department and the White House".

On Wednesday, U.S. State Department spokesperson Mathew Miller had confirmed that conversations had been held, without revealing the identity of the officials.

"We have been quite clear about our concerns about India's relationship with Russia. We have expressed those privately, directly to the Indian government and continue to do

so, and that hasn't changed," Mr. Miller said, in response to a question. "We have had conversations with them in the past 24 hours, and I think I'll keep the contents of those private," he added, when pressed for more details.

The External Affairs Ministry declined to comment on the latest remarks by the U.S. or on the U.S. statements of "concern" to Indian officials. On Tuesday, Mr. Kwatra had responded to questions about criticism from the U.S. and from Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy by repeating Mr. Modi's statement to Mr. Putin that there was "no solution on the battlefield" to the Ukraine conflict.

In other comments likely to raise eyebrows in South Block, Mr. Garcetti said India and the U.S. should be open to criticising each other, especially on issues of human rights and NGOs.

Delhi HC judge recuses himself from hearing Yasin Malik case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Delhi High Court judge Amit Sharma on Thursday recused himself from hearing a plea by the National Investigation Agency seeking the death penalty for separatist leader Yasin Malik in a terror funding case. The judge did not assign any reason for it.

The case will now come up for hearing on August 9 before another Bench of the High Court.

The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front chief,



Yasin Malik case will now come up for hearing on August 9.

who is currently serving a life term in the case, was virtually present for the court proceedings from the Tihar jail in New Delhi. The court directed that he

would appear virtually on the next date as well.

On May 29 last year, the court had issued a notice to Malik on the NIA's plea seeking death penalty for him in the terror funding case and had sought his presence before it on the next date. Subsequently, jail authorities had filed an application seeking permission for his virtual appearance on the grounds that he was a "very high-risk prisoner", and it was imperative to not physically produce him in court to maintain public order and

safety. On May 24, 2022, a trial court in New Delhi had sentenced Malik to life imprisonment after holding him guilty for offences under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the IPC.

Malik had pleaded guilty to the charges and was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. Appealing against the sentence, the NIA has emphasised that a terrorist cannot be sentenced life term only because he has pleaded guilty and chosen not to go through trial.



The meeting's top agenda was to plug the holes in the security apparatus, especially along the International Border. ANI

J&K, Punjab officials meet to tackle rise in militancy in Jammu

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

In the wake of rising militancy in Jammu, which borders both Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, top security officials from Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab held an inter-State meeting in Kathua on Thursday. At the same time, over 50 local residents have been rounded up to track down militants and their supporters in Kathua district in connection with the July 8 attack that left five soldiers dead.

Official sources said the meeting's top agenda was to plug the holes in the security apparatus, especially along the International Border in J&K and Punjab. The officials discussed cross-border infiltration and new routes being identified by militants to fan out into the Jammu region's two major valleys — the Pir Panjal Valley (comprising Rajouri and Poonch districts) and the Chenab Valley (comprising Doda, Ramban and Kishtwar).

Of Jammu's 10 districts, nine — Rajouri, Poonch, Reasi, Udhampur, Kathua, Doda, Kishtwar, Jammu, and Ramban — have seen a rise in militancy, especially

after the Union government revoked J&K's special constitutional status in 2019.

Deadly attacks

After major attacks on the Army in Poonch and Rajouri from 2020, the militants have fanned out into the previously peaceful areas of Udhampur, Reasi, Doda, and Kathua. All these districts had been declared free of militancy by 2005.

Since April, however, six security personnel have been killed in the Jammu region, including the five soldiers killed in the July 8 attack in Kathua. Five militants were also killed in anti-militancy operations in the region. Kathua comes under the Western Command.

The inter-State meeting was attended by J&K Director-General of Police (DGP) R.R. Swain, Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav, and the Special Director-General of BSF, Western Command, Y.B. Khurania. An official said that J&K Additional DGP (Law and Order) Vijay Kumar and Punjab ADG, Law and Order, Arpit Shukla also attended the meeting, along with BSF officers of Inspector General-rank from Punjab and Jammu.

India hosts BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers amid raging Myanmar crisis

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

The seven-member Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) should find solutions to the regional challenges within itself, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Thursday, addressing the first BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' retreat held here.

The meeting assumes significance as it is being held against the backdrop of major developments in Myanmar, where the military junta has been receiving battlefield setbacks against dozens of ethnic armed organisations.

"Global and regional developments also make it imperative that we find more solutions among ourselves. There are long-standing goals such as capacity-building and economic cooperation that have acquired a new urgency. And not least, a grouping that is so complementary and so congenial in its membership should surely harbour higher aspirations," Mr. Jaishankar said.

This is the first time such an event was organised since the Charter of BIMSTEC came into effect



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with the Foreign Ministers of other countries, in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

on May 20, which marked a landmark development in the evolution of the organisation.

The developments in Myanmar pose a major issue before the BIMSTEC as instability there has put a question mark on a number of developmental and connectivity projects that were aimed at firming up ties among countries like Nepal, Bhutan, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Thailand.

A day before the beginning of the meeting in Delhi, the military junta in Naypyidaw lost control of Naungcho, a major town along a trade highway to China in the northern Shan State, to the Ta'ang National Liberation Army.

Following his meeting with Myanmar Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister U. Than

Swe, Mr. Jaishankar said, "Our discussions focused on the connectivity projects, so crucial for the future of BIMSTEC. Also exchanged views on border stability and humanitarian assistance."

The External Affairs Ministry is yet to clarify if India will extend humanitarian assistance to the affected civilian population inside Myanmar. Till now, assistance has been limited to the displaced population and personnel of the Myanmar military who sought refuge in Mizoram.

The Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh (Hasan Mahmood), Thailand (Maris Sangiampongsa), Myanmar, and Bhutan (D.N. Dhungyel) participated. The Nepalese and Sri Lankan Foreign Ministers skipped the meeting.

APPEAL
Master LAKAVATH MAHESHWAR, son of Lakavath Rajendhar, 14 years admitted in Christian Medical College, Ranipet is suffering from HB S Beta Thalassemia. This is a type of life-threatening blood disorder. The best option for him would be to undergo Allogeneic Peripheral Blood Stem Cell Transplant (PBST). The estimated cost of PBST at this hospital is approximately Rs. 15,00,000/-

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Will raise Manipur issue with full force in Parliament: Rahul

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Congress and the INDIA bloc will raise the need for peace in Manipur with full force in Parliament to put pressure on the government to end this tragedy, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said on Thursday, days after his visit to the violence-hit State.

He also reiterated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi should visit Manipur and appeal for peace.

Mr. Gandhi made the remarks in a post in Hindi on X (formerly Twitter) as he shared a video of his interactions with the people of Manipur during his day-long visit to the State on Monday.

'No improvement'

"I have visited Manipur three times since violence broke out there, but unfortunately there is no improvement in the situation - even today the State is divided into two parts. Houses are burning, innocent lives are in danger and thousands of families are forced to live in relief camps," the former Con-

gress chief said. The Prime Minister should personally visit Manipur, listen to the problems of the people of the State and appeal for peace, Mr. Gandhi said.

During his stay in Manipur, Mr. Gandhi had visited three relief camps in different districts of the BJP-ruled State and interacted with people belonging to both the warring ethnic groups - Meiteis and Kukis - who were displaced by the violence. In the video, Mr. Gandhi is seen interacting with people at various relief camps.

"I can help you, I can raise the issue and put pressure but I can't reassure you when you will be able to go to your homes because the government has the answer to this. You will see in the next session, I will raise your voice," Mr. Gandhi is seen telling people at the camp.

Centre begins efforts to implement Labour Codes

Mandaviya starts meeting representatives of trade unions seeking their cooperation; passed by both Houses, the Codes are not yet operational following the objections raised by the unions

A.M. Jigeesh
NEW DELHI

Almost a month after the swearing-in of a Narendra Modi government for the third term, the Union Labour Ministry has started efforts to implement the four Labour Codes, which were passed in Parliament in its second term in 2019 and 2020.

Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and Union Labour Secretary Sumita Dawra have started meeting representatives of various trade unions seeking their cooperation to implement the controversial legislation.

Though passed in both Houses, the Codes are not yet operational owing to objections from trade unions. The Centre has been maintaining that some States are yet to frame the Rules for the Codes. Almost all the States have framed the Rules, and the Centre had said it is helping those States which could not draft the Rules to complete the process.



Strong opposition: Leaders of trade unions taking out a rally in Visakhapatnam opposing the Labour Codes. FILE PHOTO

The Central trade unions (CTUs) had opposed the implementation of the Codes citing that they will curtail trade union rights and social security measures for workers. Recently, the Citigroup had said in its employment analysis report on India that implementing the four Labour Codes could improve the "ease of doing business" scenario in the country.

Mr. Mandaviya met the representatives of Sangh Parivar-backed trade union Bharatiya Mazdoor

and Occupational Safety and Health Code contain many anti-worker provisions which need to be changed. Manali Shah, national secretary of SEWA, said the issue came up in the meeting and the Centre is keen to implement it. She, however, said SEWA is opposed to the four codes and the purpose of visit was mainly to raise the lack of social security measures for unorganised and migrant workers.

"The current social security legislation fails to adequately safeguard their rights as State policies and laws concerning social security offer no specific provisions for migrant workers. Both migrant workers crossing State borders and workers employed outside India face similar deprivation of protection under social security laws and schemes," a memorandum by SEWA said. Ten Central unions, including SEWA, had written to Mr. Mandaviya urging him to meet the trade unions on the issues of workers.

Vizag steel plant will not be shut down, says Steel Minister



Maiden visit: Union Minister of Steel & Heavy Industries H.D. Kumaraswamy at the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant on Thursday.

V. Kamalakara Rao
VISAKHAPATNAM

Do not panic, we will not shut down the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), assured Union Steel & Heavy Industries Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy.

"The family of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), the corporate arm of VSP, should not panic about its closure," Mr. Kumaraswamy said during his visit to the plant here for the first time on Thursday. He was accompanied by Union Minister of State for Steel Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma.

Mr. Kumaraswamy is president of the Karantaka unit of the Janata Dal (Secular), which is a part of the NDA coalition government

at the Centre.

Addressing the trade union representatives, Mr. Kumaraswamy extended all support to the steel plant, and said, "With the support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, RINL will not be shut down and, instead, its production will reach 100%. We believe that RINL is one of the PSUs that helps in improving the country's GDP."

Earlier, Mr. Kumaraswamy visited the key production units of the plant. He first visited the model room in the ED (Works) building, wherein he was given the details by CMD Atul Bhatt. Later, he visited the award gallery, where he congratulated the team for bagging national and international awards.

SJM seeks 'robot tax' for AI-induced job loss

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

A 'robot tax' to cross-subsidise employees who lose jobs because of the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by their employers is a key item on the budget wishlist of the Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM), which is affiliated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

In a pre-Budget meeting of economists with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman last month, the SJM also suggested that tax incentives be given to industries generating more employment, based on an employment-output ratio.

Ashwani Mahajan, economist and national co-convenor of the SJM, who attended the June 20 meeting, told *The Hindu* that economic measures were needed to cope with the human cost of AI. "We are not against the adoption of cutting-edge technology including AI, but it is a fact that in the short run, this will lead to loss of employment among certain sections of employees, and a 'robot tax', as it's being termed, can be used for creating a fund that would help these workers upskill and adapt to new technologies," he said.

On job creation Apart from the 'robot tax', some concerns raised during the Lok Sabha poll campaign are also reflected in the SJM's wishlist. With unemployment being a major theme during the campaign, the SJM has suggested that industries be incentivised to create more jobs through tax measures. With regard to food inflation, it proposed that small farmers be given subsidies for micro-irrigation projects that they can start on their lands to increase productivity.

On the issue of housing for all, the SJM suggested that a wealth tax be imposed on those holding "vacant land", in order to "discourage unnecessary land holding on the pretext of future requirements".

Justices Kotiswar Singh, R. Mahadevan proposed for elevation to top court

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on Thursday recommended Justice N. Kotiswar Singh, Justice of the High Court for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, and Madras High Court Acting Chief Justice R. Mahadevan for appointment as apex court judges.

If the recommendation comes through, Justice Singh will be the first judge from Manipur, a State which has witnessed traumatic months of ethnic vio-

lence, to be elevated to the Supreme Court.

"Mr. Justice N. Kotiswar Singh originally hails from Manipur... His (Justice Singh) appointment as a Judge of the Supreme Court will provide representation to the North-East, and in particular he will be the first Judge from the State of Manipur to be appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court," the collegium said in its resolution on Thursday.

The Collegium said Justice Mahadevan was "eminently suitable" for appointment as a Supreme Court judge. He belongs to

a backward community from Tamil Nadu, and will bring diversity to the Supreme Court Bench.

Other recommendations It recommended Justice Tashi Rabstan be appointed Chief Justice of the Meghalaya High Court.

It recommended Justice K.R. Shriram, a senior judge of the Bombay High Court, for appointment as Madras High Court Chief Justice. Justice G.S. Sandhawalia, from the Punjab and Haryana High Court, was recommended for appointment as the Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh

High Court. Justice Nitin Madhukar Jamdar was recommended for appointment as Chief Justice of the High Court of Kerala.

The Collegium suggested Justice Rajiv Shakdher to be appointed as Chief Justice of the High Court of Himachal Pradesh. It recommended the transfer of the Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court, M.S. Ramachandra Rao, as Chief Justice of the Jharkhand High Court.

Justice Manmohan, the Acting Chief Justice of Delhi High Court, was recommended to be appointed as its Chief Justice.

SKM farmers to meet MPs, send petition to PM with 14 demands

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Farmers groups belonging to the Samyukt Kisan Morcha have renewed their struggle with a charter of 14 demands, including the immediate enactment of a law to guarantee minimum support prices (MSPs) for their produce in accordance with the M.S. Swaminathan Committee's formula.

The charter will be presented to the Centre and Opposition parties, with petitions to be sent to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi.

Farmers also plan to meet all MPs to ensure that their demands are raised in Parliament, SKM leaders told journalists on Thursday after a general body meeting on Wednesday.

The SKM is an umbrella body of the farmers groups who held a year-long agitation outside Delhi in 2020 and 2021 against three contentious agricultural marketing laws. Though the protesting farmers went home after the government repealed the three laws, several of their other demands, including a legal guarantee for MSPs, remain unfulfilled.

Apart from an MSP law, the SKM charter also seeks a loan waiver to free farmers from indebtedness and end farm suicides. They have also reiterated their stand against the privatisation of the power sector and against prepaid smart meters. The charter includes a demand for public sector insurance coverage for all crops and animal husbandry, scrapping the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. Another demand is for a pension of ₹10,000 per month to be given to all farmers and agricultural workers.

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Call for Proposals : Sustainable Agrarian Mission on use of Agri-Residue in Thermal Power Plants (SAMARTH)

Research proposals are invited from Academia and R&D Institutions on some of the identified research areas of SAMARTH, under the "R&D Schemes of MoP being implemented through CPRI" in the area of co-firing of biomass in thermal power plants.

Proposals along with technical and financial particulars may be submitted in the prescribed "R&D under National Perspective Plan (NPP)" format. The duration of the project should not exceed 2 years. For further details and format, kindly visit the CPRI website <https://cpri.res.in>.

The last date for submission of the proposal is **09th August 2024.**

Additional Chief Engineer P.W.D. Zone-II, Jaipur
PWD Campus, Jacob Road, Jaipur, Phone:- 0141-226537 Ex:- 299

File No.- 803 Date- 04/07/2024

Short-Term NIB No.-03/PMGSY/2024-25

Bids for 3-No. Package for Renewal of Rural Roads in Alwar and Jaipur District are invited from interested bidders upto 12-00 Noon on 16-07-2024. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>) of the state; <http://pwd.rajasthan.gov.in> and <http://pmsysendersraj.gov.in>. The approximate value of the procurement is Rs. 545.08 lacs.

S. No.	UBN
1	PWD2425WS020134
2	PWD2425WS020133
3	PWD2425WS020167

Addl. Chief Engineer
PWD Zone-II, Jaipur

DPR/C/5722/2024

Rajasthan Medical Education Society
(Directorate of Medical Education), Chikitsa Silsha Bhawan
Near Pink Square Mall, Opp. Psychiatric Centre, Janta Colony, Jaipur-302004

Tel No. +0141-2605994, Email: rmes@rajasthan.gov.in
F.6(109)store/rajmes/Furniture/Part-1/2024/3097 DATE: 03/07/2024

(NIB for Publication on State Public Procurement Portal)
(NIB No. 71/2024-25)

Sealed Single Stage Two - envelopes and unconditional online Bids for Rate contract for Supply and Installation of Various furniture items in Raj-MES Medical Colleges for 2 years are invited from interested bidders (From Micro/Small enterprises/Manufacturers of Bid Item Situated in Rajasthan) upto 25.07.2024 at 05.00 PM. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.raj.nic.in> of the state.
UBN:- MES2425GRC00074 Director,
DPR/C/5611/2024 Raj-MES

Uttar Pradesh State Institute of Forensic Science, Lucknow
Aurawan, P.O. Banthra, Lucknow-226401 (U.P.)
Admissions-2024-25 OPEN
(Last Date for application-21.07.2024)

The UPSIFS, Lucknow (Established in 2021) functioning under the aegis of the Home Department, Govt. of U.P. & affiliated with the National Forensic Science University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat invites the applications for registration in order to get admission on vacant seats in this Institute for the following courses in the forthcoming Academic Session 2024-25:-

S.N.	Name of the Course	Mode of Selection
1.	B.Sc./M.Sc. Forensic Science (five-years integrated programme)	The selection shall be based on merit of the scores obtained in NFAT-2024, NEET-2023 & 2024, CUET (UG)-2023 & 2024.
2.	B.Sc. LL.B. (five-years integrated programme)	The selection shall be based on merit of the scores obtained in CLAT (UG)-2023 & 2024, CUET (UG)-2023 & 2024, JEE (Mains)-2024, AILET-2024.
3.	B.Tech.-M.Tech. Computer Science & Engineering (Cyber Security) (Five-years programme)	The selection shall be based on merit of the marks obtained in JEE(Mains) & (Advanced)-2024.
4.	M.Sc. Forensic Science (two-years programme)	The selection shall be based on merit of the scores obtained in NFAT-2024, CUET (PG)-2023 & 2024.
5.	LL.M. (Criminal Law & Criminal Justice Administration) (one-year programme)	The selection shall be based on merit of the scores obtained in CLAT (PG)-2023 & 2024, CUET (PG)-2023 & 2024, AILET-2024.
6.	M.Tech.-Artificial Intelligence & Data Science (Specialization in Cyber Security) (two-years programme)	The selection shall be based on merit of the score obtained in GATE 2023 & 2024 & CUET (PG)-2023 & 2024, NFAT-2024.

The unreserved vacant seats are open for all at All India Basis and the reserve seats are open to the applicants of State of Uttar Pradesh as per the reservation policy of the State Govt.

For the Registration & other details please visit the website www.upsifs.ac.in. For any query e-mail to admissions@upsifs.ac.in. Mobile No. 7839001310.

UPID RO: 217334
RO Dt: 11-07-24
Director
UPSIFS, Lucknow

नलको NALCO
National Aluminium Company Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)

Nalco Bhawan, P/1, Nayapalli
Bhubaneswar-751013, Odisha, India
CIN : L27203OR1981GOI000920
A NAVRATNA COMPANY

EXTENSION OF RFQ SUBMISSION DATE FOR EMPANELMENT OF DIFFERENT CATEGORY OF HOSPITALS / PATHOLOGICAL LABS / CLINICS / PHYSIOTHERAPY CENTERS

The last date of submission of offer for RFQ Ref no. TNCC-021/2024 for empanelment of different category of Hospitals / Pathological Labs / Clinics / Physiotherapy Centers etc is hereby further extended upto 02/08/2024. For details and further updates visit www.nalcoindia.com (under Menu / Active Tender).

Dy. General Manager (T&C)

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER PHED CIRCLE NCR ALWAR
PHED CAMPUS, MANU MARG ALWAR (RAJ.) E-Mail - sencr.alw.phed@rajasthan.gov.in

No-897 - 909 Date- 01/7/24

NOTICE INVITING BID (NIT No. 01-12/2024-25) (Corrigendum No.-01)

Bids for Works of Construction of Source, PLJ of Rising Main & Distribution Pipe Line with FHTC, Construction of Reservoir for Various Villages in the jurisdiction of PHED Division-II (NCR) Alwar, were invited earlier. Correction in Tender Document has been made. Last bid submission date is extended upto 05:00 PM on Date 22.07.2024. Other particulars of the Bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.raj.nic.in>) of the state and <http://phedwater.rajasthan.gov.in> departmental website.

SPPP UBN No. of above NITs-

PHE2425WS0801697	PHE2425WS0801698	PHE2425WS0801699	PHE2425WS0801700
PHE2425WS0801701	PHE2425WS0801703	PHE2425WS0801704	PHE2425WS0801706
PHE2425WS0801707	PHE2425WS0801709	PHE2425WS0801711	PHE2425WS0801712

DPR/C/5642/2024
Superintending Engineer, PHED Circle, NCR Alwar

Government of Rajasthan
Department of Archaeology and Museums, Rajasthan
(Albert Hall Campus, Ramnivas Garden, Jaipur)
Phone: +91 141 2820360 email: dirarchraj@gmail.com

No. A&M/EE/2024/9120 Dated: 28/6/24

Notice Inviting 'Expression of Interest' (Eoi) for Empanelment of Consultants in Archaeology and Museums Department, Jaipur

On behalf of Hon'ble Governor Rajasthan Archaeology and Museums Department, Jaipur proposals are invited from the experienced and working consultancy firms/ individuals/ companies/ joint venture companies/ consortium of allied professionals or firms/autonomous government owned enterprises etc. for empanelment of Consultant for Conservation, restoration and development works in Department of Archaeology and Museums, Rajasthan -

Estimated Cost of Project	This EOI is for empanelment only
EOI document Fee	Rs.1000.00
Processing Fees	Rs.1500.00
Bid Security	Not required at EOI Stage
Date of downloading of EOI documents on website	From 08.07.2024 to 22.07.2024 Up to 02.00 P.M.
Last date for upload proposals	22.07.2024 Up to 02.00 P.M.
Date of opening of Technical Proposal	23.07.2024 Up to 03.00 P.M.

Complete details relating to eligibility criteria, broad scope of work, procedure for submission of Eoi proposals, terms and conditions and other information are available on the official website <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> and <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>
Applications duly completed in all respect must be uploaded on website <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> latest by 2:00 PM as prescribed above.

DPR/C/5264/2024 EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

IN BRIEF



14-day judicial custody for Sena politician's family driver

The Sewri Court in Mumbai sent Rajrishi Bidawat, the driver employed by Shiv Sena politician Rajesh Shah, to a 14-day judicial custody on Thursday in a hit-and-run case. At the time of the accident in which a woman was killed on July 7, Mr. Bidawat was sitting next to the prime accused Mihir Shah, the 23-year-old son of Mr. Rajesh. The high-end car, owned by the politician, was being driven by Mihir, who was purportedly in an inebriated state. Based on instructions from Mr. Rajesh, Mr. Bidawat moved to the driver's seat after the accident, police said.

DRDO approval for seven new projects by the private sector

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has sanctioned seven new projects for the private sector under the Technology Development Fund scheme. The technologies include Underwater Launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicles; the development of Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System-based timing acquisition and dissemination system and long-range remotely operated vehicles for detection and neutralisation of targets and development of ice-detection sensor for aircraft.

SC's alimony verdict: Muslim groups looking at legal options

Ziya Us Salam
NEW DELHI

The Muslim religious bodies have decided to adopt a wait and watch approach with respect to the Supreme Court's verdict earlier this week on Muslim women being entitled to a claim of maintenance under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure against her erstwhile husband.

Spokesperson of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board S.Q.R Ilyas told *The Hindu* that the Board's legal committee was studying the judgment. "On its advice, the Board may seek legal and other options available to us," he said.

The All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat president Zafarul Islam Khan called the order a "judicial overreach", while adding that Muslim organisations should approach a larger Bench to overturn this decision. Senior leaders of Jamaat Ulama-i-Hind and Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) also preferred to understand the nuances of the verdict before deciding on a future course of action.

CBI arrests key accused in NEET paper leak case

Rakesh Ranjan, alias Rocky, was arrested from Jharkhand; special CBI court in Patna sends him to 10-day CBI custody; agency had seized copies of chequebook, voter and PAN cards from his house

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

The Central Bureau of Investigation on Thursday arrested one of the key accused, Rakesh Ranjan, alias Rocky, in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate) paper leak case.

Earlier this week, the CBI had searched 15 locations in Bihar and Jharkhand in connection with the case.

Mr. Ranjan allegedly ran a racket involved in the leaking of exam papers. CBI sources said he was arrested from Jharkhand and was brought here on Thursday. A special CBI court here remanded him in CBI custody for 10 days.

On June 30, the CBI team searched the house of Mr. Ranjan at Gagendra Bigha village in Hilsa block of Nalanda district. The team had to break the lock to enter the house. After a search for nearly an hour, the agency seized photocopies of some documents including a chequebook and voter and PAN cards.



A group of students met Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan at his residence to discuss the controversy around the NEET-UG examination, in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

Sources said the accused had arranged MBBS students from Patna and Ranchi to solve the NEET question paper after the leak and he is one of the trusted gang members of Sanjeev Mukhiya, who is believed to be the kingpin in the case. He is a relative of Mr. Mukhiya.

Mr. Ranjan is the sixth person from Nalanda to be arrested in the case. The last arrest was made by the CBI on July 9 when it arrested Sunny Kumar. With the arrest of Mr. Ranjan, 28 people have been arrested by the Bihar Police Economic Offences Unit and the CBI. The Central agency has arrested 10 from Bihar.

From Jharkhand, the CBI earlier arrested Ahsanul Haque, Principal, and Imtiaz Alam, Vice-Principal of Oasis School in Hazaribagh, along with a Hindi newspaper journalist, Jamaluddin, who allegedly assisted them on the day of test. Last week, the CBI had arrested Aman Singh from Dhanbad.

CBI sources said Mr. Ranjan was planning to flee to Nepal. With his arrest, the CBI has come closer to Mr. Mukhiya, alias Lootan, who is employed as a technical assistant at the Noor-sarai Horticulture College in Nalanda. Mr. Mukhiya is a close associate of Ranjit Don, who was arrested by the CBI in 2003 for being involved in the Common Admission Test paper leak. Ranjit Don also hails from Hilsa.

arrested Aman Singh from Dhanbad.

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'Youth posted a doctored NET paper; no question leak'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation is likely to file a chargesheet against a youth who allegedly circulated the screenshot of a "doctored" UGC-NET question paper on Telegram ahead of the test on June 18, which led to its cancellation over suspicion of a leak.

The CBI found out after taking over the investigation on June 23 that the screenshot was manipulated to create the impression that the question paper was available before the test was conducted. An alert from the Union Home Ministry on June 19 about a possible "breach" led to the cancellation of the test, officials said.

Nine lakh candidates had appeared across 317 cities for the test, which is held for Ph.D. admissions and entry-level teaching jobs in colleges and universities. The Home Ministry had received an input that the screenshot was circulated around 2 p.m. on the test day with comments suggesting a leak.

Chiefs of BSF, CISF reiterate 10% quota for Agniveers

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

As Centre feels the heat on Agniveer scheme, it fielded the chiefs of the Central Industrial Security Force and Border Security Force to reiterate the government's commitment to reserve 10% vacancies in Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) for Agniveers.

The first batch of Agniveers will be eligible for joining CAPFs in 2026.

On Thursday, Nina Singh, Director-General of CISF, and Nitin Agrawal, D-G, BSF appeared on *Doordarshan* to reiterate the reservation policy. Ms. Singh said, "The CISF has made all arrangements to absorb Agniveers. They will be an asset to the force. They will be exempted from physical eligibility test." Mr. Agrawal stated, "Since they are trained and disciplined, they will be aligned with BSF's work culture. After a short conversion training, they will be deployed at borders."

PM's heart bleeds for victims in Ukraine but not in Manipur, says Meitei body

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Meitei Coordinating Committee, one of the many conglomerates of Meitei organisations in Delhi, on Thursday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to solving the crisis in Manipur while preaching peace at the international stage with regard to the conflict in Ukraine.

The DMCC, in a statement, said the Prime Minister had "no heart to bleed" for the hundreds killed in Manipur but apparently had one for the innocent lives lost in conflicts such as the one in Ukraine.

"In his addresses [in Russia], Prime Minister Modi underscored that 'peace is of utmost importance' and stressed that 'a solution to the war in Ukraine cannot be found on the battlefield'. While Prime Minister Modi's efforts to promote peace on the international stage have been applauded, his



A demonstration organised by the Delhi Meitei Coordination Committee calling for an end to the violence in Manipur. FILE PHOTO

apparent neglect of a severe domestic crisis in Manipur has raised significant concerns among citizens and political observers," the committee said.

Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh has said that Mr. Modi was directly supervising peace efforts to end the ethnic conflict that has been on for more than 14 months now, for which talks had already purportedly started though both Meitei and Kuki bodies have said they have no knowledge of any such

peace talks being under way.

The DMCC said it had gone through Mr. Modi's official schedule and found that he had travelled to Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh 21 times each in 2017 alone, but just once to Sikkim, Mizoram, and Puducherry, while visiting Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland just twice in the past four years.

"Between 2014 and 2018, he has travelled to U.P. the most for both official and unofficial trips, to-

talling 49 visits. The Prime Minister has visited his bastion, Gujarat, 23 times on official visits, with 10 unofficial visits, totalling 33; but had failed to visit Manipur, where the conflict had killed 221 people, displaced over 60,000 people, led to burning and vandalism of thousands of homes and hundreds of religious structures, with dozens of people still missing."

Meanwhile, reacting to the Chief Minister's remarks that he had full confidence in Mr. Modi's direct supervision of the efforts to resolve the crisis in Manipur, Kuki bodies such as the Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), the apex body of Kuki tribes in the State, said they had no knowledge of any peace talks. Several Meitei organisations have also said that they had no knowledge of such measures.

The Kuki Students Organisation in Churachandpur too issued a statement saying that they were not aware of any such peace talks being under way.

HC upholds larger warning labels on pan masala packs

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has ruled in favour of the Union government's decision to increase the size of statutory warnings on *pan masala* packages to cover 50% of the front of the label, up from the previous 3 mm font size.

The court's decision came in response to a petition by a *pan masala* maker challenging the regulation issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.

The company said there was no scientific basis to the increased size. No study was done by the committee formed under the Food Safety and Standards Act.

It appeared that the decision was taken at the instance of one member of the committee at its November 15, 2018 meeting.

The company alleged an inconsistency in warning sizes for similar harmful products, such as alcohol, that still had the 3 mm size. The FSSAI said the in-



The government said the more visible warnings would enhance consumer awareness.

creased warning size was part of a broader public health policy aimed at enhancing consumer awareness and was a reasonable restriction under Article 19 (6) of the Constitution.

The court, in its judgment on July 9, said the contention of the company that no scientific studies had been done before recommending the increase was without any merits.

It noted that the recommendation for increasing the statutory warning size was made by the committee at its 31st Meeting on November 15, 2018, on the

basis of the scientific opinion of the Scientific Panel on Food Additives, which concluded that pan masala is not safe for human consumption.

The "regulation gives effect to the legislative intent of safeguarding the larger public interest which is paramount".

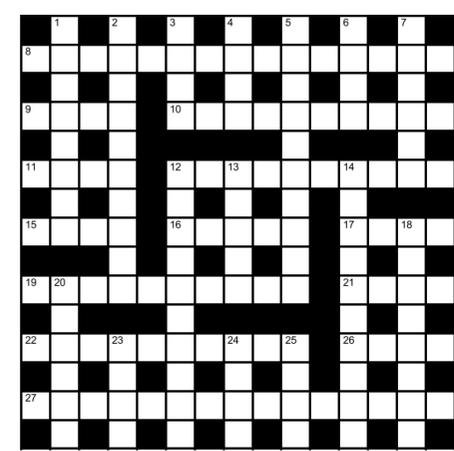
The court further referenced expert reports and guidelines from the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry of December 6, 2018, which showed that though there is a worldwide recommendation for banning *pan masala*, yet the Food Authority has for the present only taken the limited step of increasing the warning size.

The resistance of the petitioners to the increase in the warning size while accepting the existence of the health hazard of *pan masala*, as evidenced by the expert studies, shows that the petitioner is only seeking to subvert personal interest without regard for the public health, the court said while dismissing the plea of the company.

THE CROSSWORD+ 14225
(set by Vidwan)

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

SCAN TO PLAY



- Across**
- 8 Irrelevance of poor, desperate singles coming to head (15)
 - 9 Champion of the romantics (4)
 - 10 Support or convert into symmetry (10)
 - 11 Ban English for zero level (4)
 - 12 Supreme Court in splits! Certain to be charmed! (10)
 - 15 Limit of accounts without limits (4)

- 16 Runs every distance (5)
 - 17 Don't start to talk at summit (4)
 - 19 Curious street diner, most exotic! (10)
 - 21 Finishes send-off (4)
 - 22 It is fine carbon copy prepared in careful and systematic manner (10)
 - 26 Keen on it? No? Maybe! (4)
 - 27 Logical justification right before state takeover of private property? Not new! (15)
- Down**
- 1 Picked one of the top players, having half of classes cancelled (8)
 - 2 Short, popular race covering third of mile (10)
 - 3 Moves camera lens around for a photograph (4)
 - 4 Footballer Xabi's not working too (4)
 - 5 Stunned! A second hundred! He is surprisingly beginning to dazzle! (10)
 - 6 Join Navy in uniform (4)
 - 7 Aground like sex worker without work (6)
 - 12 Not remembering? Make time! Thing's not hard! (10)
 - 13 Move one displaced by a staff (5)
 - 14 Like epic art recreated in parody (10)
 - 18 Shun cocaine habit for increment (8)
 - 20 Drink and do trance (6)
 - 23 Go out and have sex with an old flame first (4)
 - 24 Bureaucrat's life, perhaps! (4)
 - 25 Go after hot, unemployed client (4)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

MADGALDEEP SCENT 3in1
PREMIUM QUALITY INCENSE PERFUME LIKE FRAGRANCES

FAITH
Guruvayurappan's greatness

Narayaneeyam begins with the words *Sandaranandham*, truly encapsulating the delight and spiritual merit one derives from stepping foot in Guruvayur. If *Sandra* signifies the purity of the ground, *anandham* denotes delights that is indescribable: it has to be experienced by each individual, much as Narayana Bhattacharji did, when he composed Narayaneeyam, said Damal S. Ramakrishnan in a discourse.

There are various kinds of *anandham*, but *Sandaranandham* is the highest form. Every morning before dawn at Guruvayur, devotees rush in, chanting His name in pure joy, eager for a first sight of Him. The ancient stone idol (*pathala anjana kal*) was fashioned by Vishnu Himself and handed over to Brahma who gave the idol to a couple. Vishnu informed the couple that he Himself would come to earth and conduct puja for the idol no less than three times and safeguard it so that devotees in Kali Yuga can reap spiritual benefit. Later, as His sojourn on earth was nearing its end, Krishna asked Uddava to save the idol from deluge. When Uddava struggled to hold aloft the idol, Varuna tempered the fury so that Guru and Vayu could spot the idol and preserve it. Since Guru and Vayu installed the idol, the town took the name of Guruvayur and the deity came to be known as Guruvayurappan.

IN BRIEF



Shibaura Machine targets higher exports, revenue

Shibaura Machine India Pvt. Ltd., which is into manufacturing of high-end plastics injection moulding machines, aims to double exports and increase revenue by almost four-fold in the next 5 years with the expansion of its existing facility in Chennai, said Managing Director M. Kumar. "Today, we inaugurated the unit two factory at Chembarambakkam. It is built at an investment of ₹225 crore, plus another ₹50 crore for land acquisition," Mr. Kumar told mediapersons.

Brookfield to invest \$200 mn in Leap Green Energy stake

Canadian asset management firm Brookfield on Thursday announced the acquisition of a majority stake in Tamil Nadu-based Leap Green Energy with an upfront investment of more than \$200 million and an option to infuse \$350 million more in the future. "Brookfield and Leap Green recently entered into definitive strategic investment agreements pursuant to which Brookfield has acquired a majority controlling stake in the company," the firm said.

RBI allows resident Indians to open FCAs in GIFT City IFSC

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in a notification issued on Wednesday, allowed resident individuals to open Foreign Currency Accounts (FCAs) in the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) at GIFT City in Gujarat under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS). "Authorised persons [those permitted by RBI to provide forex services] shall bring the contents of this circular to the notice of their constituents and customers," the banking regulator added.

'Food prices a worry but June inflation may not exceed 5%'

Economists see favourable base effects tempering pace of retail price gains, with the headline reading likely slowing to less than 4% over July and August; CPI data release is likely on Friday

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Volatile and high food prices remain a concern, but base effects may temper the retail inflation pace in June and possibly even cool it below 4% over July and August, economists reckon.

Retail price rise touched a 12-month low of 4.75% in May, even though food inflation stayed stuck at 8.7% for a second straight month. The NSO will release June's Consumer Price Index data on Friday. The prolonged heat-

Base benefits

A favourable base effect is expected to help temper retail inflation over June through August period, economists reckon



- Retail price rise eased to 4.75% in May, though food inflation stayed stuck at 8.7% for a second month
- Heatwave, delayed start to monsoon likely pushed June's inflation to 5%: DBS Bank's Rao
- Ms. Rao sees no interest rate cuts this year citing RBI's resolve to look through base effects

wave and a delayed start to the southwest monsoon likely pushed June's inflation to 5%, said Radhika Rao, ED and senior econo-

mist at DBS Bank. Vegetable prices began to rise sharply as the month progressed, while telecom tariffs were raised, she said.

With the monsoon regaining ground this month, vegetable prices are expected to moderate, and base effects will also push July-August inflation to sub-4%, she estimated. Ms. Rao, however, expects no interest rate cuts this year in light of the RBI's signal that they will look through base effect-driven swings and focus on sticky food prices.

In 2023, June inflation was 4.9% before it sped to 7.4% and 6.8% in July and August, respectively.

India Ratings sees inflation easing to 4.5% in June.

'Joint group formed for reforms in E&P sector'

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said a joint working group (JWG) has been constituted to improve ease of doing business in the exploration and production (E&P) sector. The JWG consists of private exploration and production operators, national oil companies, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons. Mr. Puri said 37 approvals have been simplified into 18, with nine eligible for self-certification. He said the government recognises the need for further reforms.

TCS net rose 8.7% to ₹12,040 cr. in Q1, buoyed by manufacturing

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. (TCS) on Thursday reported consolidated first-quarter net profit grew 8.7% to ₹12,040 crore, as a 9.4% expansion in the manufacturing vertical offset degrowth in several other businesses. Net margin for the quarter ending June 30 was 19.2%, India's biggest IT services company by revenue said in a filing.

Revenue rose 5.4% to ₹62,613 crore, while operating margin, at 24.7%, saw an expansion of 1.5 percentage points year-on-year.



K. Krithivasan

Net cash from operations at ₹11,168 crore was 92.8% of net profit, TCS said. The board approved a dividend of ₹10 per share.

"We are continuing to expand our client relationships, create new capabilities in emerging technolo-

gies and invest in innovation, including a new AI-focused TCS PacePor in France, IoT lab in the U.S. and expanding our delivery centers in Latin America, Canada and Europe," CEO K. Krithivasan said in the statement.

"In spite of the usual impact of the annual wage increments in this quarter, we have delivered strong operating margin performance, validating our efforts towards operational excellence," said CFO Samir Sekaria.

BFSI shrank 0.9% in constant currency, consumer business slid 0.3%.

Rethink tax on debt oriented MFs: AMFI

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Stressing the need for a deep and vibrant bond market spur private investment funds, India's apex mutual fund body urged the Finance Ministry to rethink the short-term capital gains tax introduced last year on debt-oriented mutual funds with equity exposure of up to 35%.

The Association of Mutual Funds in India has mooted amending 2023 Finance Act's Section 50AA, to encourage retail investor participation in bond markets through such debt

funds, by bringing them on par with the tax treatment for government securities. For those instruments, capital gains held for over three years are taxed at 10% without any indexation, with the holding period reduced to 12 months for listed debentures.

Before the introduction of section 50AA, such mutual fund schemes enjoyed the twin benefit of indexation and lower long-term capital gains tax rate, if held for more than 3 years. However, they are now considered as short-term capital assets irrespective of holding period.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	THURSDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	79,997	-0.03
US Dollar	83.53	-0.02
Gold	75,100	0.06
Brent oil	85.35	-0.16

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	3078.30	-17.70
Adani Ports	1483.85	-3.95
Apollo Hosp.	6389.05	13.35
Asian Paints	3022.05	25.60
Axis Bank	1296.75	5.10
Bajaj Auto	9466.80	-75.65
Bajaj Finserv	1587.85	5.30
Bajaj Finance	6950.30	-104.65
Bharti Airtel	1437.95	-7.10
BPCL	306.60	6.25
Britannia Ind.	5761.30	-5.75
Cipla	1506.00	-7.20
Coal India	500.05	9.30
Divis Lab	4582.50	-54.45
Dr Reddys Lab	6594.75	2.20
Eicher Motors	4828.65	-20.50
Grasim Ind.	2801.60	-4.55
HCL Tech	1511.90	1.95
HDFC Bank	1621.90	-4.20
HDFC Life	634.25	1.50
Hero MotoCorp	5526.25	17.50
Hindalco	696.30	-3.00
Hind Unilever	2608.85	-1.60
ICI Bank	1238.45	-4.75
IndusInd Bank	1429.75	-3.80
Infosys	1652.70	4.45
ITC	458.65	7.20
JSW Steel	925.00	-0.40
Kotak Bank	1844.50	14.65
L&T	3621.10	-28.95
LTI Mindtree Ltd.	5407.60	31.35
M&M	2698.05	-33.95
Maruti Suzuki	12715.20	-57.60
Nestle India	2593.20	-23.25
NTPC	377.10	4.30
ONGC	304.75	6.60
PowerGrid Corp	342.80	-3.25
Reliance Ind.	3161.30	-7.15
SBI Life	1558.80	0.00
State Bank	856.70	7.70
Shriram Finance		
Ltd.	2739.00	-23.10
Sun Pharma	1581.75	-16.80
Tata Consumer Pro-		
duct	1131.40	-19.40
Tata Motors	1020.80	15.30
Tata Steel	168.92	0.94
TCS	3923.70	14.55
Tech Mahindra	1460.60	-2.75
Titan	3248.60	23.60
UltraTech Cement	11354.95	-79.30
Wipro	534.10	-1.45

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on July 11

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.36	83.68
Euro	90.42	90.77
British Pound	107.33	107.75
Japanese Yen (100)	51.60	51.80
Chinese Yuan	11.47	11.52
Swiss Franc	92.79	93.15
Singapore Dollar	61.85	62.10
Canadian Dollar	61.12	61.36
Malaysian Ringgit	17.77	17.86
Australian Dollar	56.31	56.52

Source: Indian Bank

Keep raising road-infra spending, frame policies to boost electrification

BUDGET IN FOCUS

Santhosh Iyer

The growth of the automotive industry in India has happened because of the excellent road infrastructure which has been created during the last couple of years. A lot of intercity travel means consumers want luxury cars, they want to have safer cars and that has helped drive growth in the industry.

This time, from the Union Budget, we would expect not only continuity in infrastructure spending but also higher spending on road infrastructure because there is a lot of headroom for improvement for the industry to grow.

Retain EV tax subs

For long-term success of electrification of automobiles, one of the big factors helping us, is the reduced duty structure that enables to price Electric Vehicles (EVs) close to Internal Combustion Engines (ICE) cars. Our expectation is the government comes out with a clear policy road-map and gives a statement the tax incentives will continue for next 8 to 10 years.

This will give confidence to customers to get into EVs and OEMs to invest more when it comes to electrification. OEMs like us would be interested in introducing new cars in the Indian market. There is also a pressing need for the State governments to continue commitment to EV adoption, continuing tax breaks and incentives that attract end consumers.

For charging infrastructure, the onus is on Charging Point Operators (CPOs) to set up the desired net-



Right path: Excellent road infrastructure created in the last couple of years has boosted the growth of the auto industry. THE HINDU

work to democratise chargers. Today, we find a lot of CPOs are not opening up their APIs so the customers need to download multiple apps to charge their cars.

Common CPO platform

To address this, the government can come with a common platform for all CPOs to list, so that customers have the ease of payment like UPI to transact when it comes to charging EVs.

Apart from this, there are a lot of good ideas the world over to make it toll free for electric cars, providing special parking facility in cities for EVs.

So, I think, no amount of incentives is less, because electrification needs a major push from the government.

Zero emissions

As India aggressively transitions towards carbon neutrality, the government's role also becomes more pronounced. We believe the road towards creating a carbon-neutral ecosystem will come from zero emission, which can be delivered by electrifica-

concerted and coordinated efforts from OEMs, policymakers and customers.

When it comes to import duties, we have been in India for 30 years doing business based on the current taxation structure.

Continuity in taxation

Though lower taxes are always welcome, we also need to be pragmatic considering the current economic as well as political compulsions. So, we are realistic there, when it comes to tax cost. Hopefully, there are no increases as such in this Union Budget and there is continuity in taxation which should help us to do business as usual.

We expect the Indian auto industry to grow at 7% to 8% or maximum at 10% this year. The luxury car market size is 1 to 1.2% of the total industry and this segment should grow in double digit, may be slightly faster than the mass market passenger cars, because the base is low.

Strong market

Right now, if you look at the enablers; the stock market is at all-time high, the real estate sector is doing well, tax collections are at a record high.

So, we do not see any impediments to achieve the projected growth.

With the incoming festive season combined with the wedding season and the depreciation month of September [a lot of consumers buy cars in September to claim depreciation benefits], I think the market will remain strong in the balance part of the year as well.

(Santhosh Iyer is Managing Director & CEO, Mercedes-Benz India. As told to Lalatendu Mishra)

Edible-oil firm Gemini enters TN via Be-Rite brand

The Hindu Bureau

Gemini Edibles and Fats India Ltd. (GEF), an edible-oil firm, forayed into Tamil

Nadu under Be-Rite brand in a bid to capture 10-15% market share in five years.

"It was a conscious decision to give a new brand

name for our product in Tamil Nadu, instead of the existing brand Freedom," Senior VP Sales & Marketing P. Chandra Shekhara

Reddy told the media. "It was a market-driven decision," he said. GEF's turnover stood at ₹9,000 crore plus in FY23-24."

**THE SPECIAL OFFICER AND COMPETENT AUTHORITY,
(UNDER KPIDFE - IMA & OTHER SCAM)**

3rd Floor, Podium Block, V.V Tower, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru-560001

NOTICE/INVITATION FOR E-AUCTION FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

Pursuant to attachment of Immovable properties by the Government under the provisions of the Karnataka Protection of Interest of Depositors in Financial Establishments Act, 2004 (KPIDFE Act) and pursuant to the absolute attachment order by the Hon'ble Special Court the Special Officer & Competent Authority (under KPIDFE-IMA and other Scam), is issuing notice for e-auction of the immovable property through e-auction on 'as is where is and whatever there is basis'.

The intending bidders will be required to furnish Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (as mentioned against each auction in the e-portal provided by the Service Provider/Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only).

Short description of the Immovable Property

Properties are free of all encumbrances and are in the name of Competent Authority appointed by Government and Confirmed by the Special Court under KPIDFE Act, 2004.

Sl. No.	SCHEDULE PROPERTY - Under Construction 69 flats (SKY VIEW APARTMENTS)
1.	All that piece and parcel of the property bearing Sy.No.412, 416/1 and 416/2 of Devanahalli village, Kasaba Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural District, together measuring 7 Acres 16 guntas, residentially converted by the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore Rural District, Bangalore vide ALN(DK) SR.No.86/2012-13, dated: 20-04-2013, ALN (DK) SR 50/2012-13, dated: 20-04-2013 and ALN (DK) SR 52/2012-13, dated: 20-04-2013 respectively comes under the administrative jurisdiction of Devanahalli Town municipal council, Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural District bounded on: East by: Road, West by: Sy.no.413 & 420, North by: Sy.no 417 & 419, South by: Private property and Sy.no. 411. (Under Construction 69 flats (SKY VIEW APARTMENTS), for more details please visit Karnataka Public Procurement Portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in & https://sploca.karnataka.gov.in/ , Google Map Link: https://maps.app.goo.gl/kcpwxUcBIPP37zZ7
2.	All that piece and parcel of the property bearing Sy. No 33,35/3, 35/4 and 174 of Village and Sy.No.224, 184/5 and 189 of Bidaregere Village, Kasaba Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Urban District Together measuring 12-24.08 Acres (Converted by DC Bangalore urban Vide O.M. No. ALN (A&K) sr 118/2010-11 Dt: 23-2-2011, 44/2011-12 Dt:30/9/2011, 47,48/2011-12 dt: 30/9/2011 and O.M 163/2012-13 Dt:27/11/2012 under the Administrative Jurisdiction of Karpoor Grampanchayath, kasaba hobli, Anekal Taluk , Bangalore Rural District bounded on:East by: Sy.No.190 of Bidaregere village & Sy.no.32 of Karpoor village, West by: Road, North by: Sy. No. 28 and 29 of Karpoor village , South by: Sy.no. 183, 184, 186, 187, 188, 192 and 193 of bidaregere village . (8 flats (THE GREENS APARTMENTS), for more details please visit Karnataka Public Procurement Portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in & https://sploca.karnataka.gov.in/ , Google Map Link: https://maps.app.goo.gl/bLq2UMgBvS5ArSdq5

Bid Increase Value: **Rs.25,000/-**
 Date of Pre-bid meeting & time : **7th August 2024 3 pm to 4 pm**
 Date of Inspection & time: **8th August 2024 11:00am to 05:00pm**
 Last Date of Submission of Bids & EMD submission: **9th August 2024 until 5pm**
 Date & Time of E Auction : **12th August 2024 11 am to 1 pm**
 For Registration & Online Auction, you can login to: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> (Helpdesk No: 080-46010000, 080-68948777) The interested bidders who require auction related information can contact Joint Secretary, Office of the Special Officer & Competent Authority, 3rd Floor, Podium Block, Visveswaraiah Towers, Dr.Ambedkar Veedi, Bengaluru-560001, e-mail ID: splocaeauction@gmail.com or Contact Mob. No 6364403715

**Place: Bengaluru
Date: 03.07.2024
DIPR/CP/880/Zen/2024-25**

**Sd/-
The Special Officer & Competent Authority
(Under KPIDFE - IMA & Other Scam)
Bengaluru, Karnataka**

ISLAMABAD

About 44,000 Afghans in Pakistan awaiting resettlement in the West



At least 44,000 Afghans approved for relocation to Western nations following the Taliban's return to power are still waiting in limbo in Pakistan, Islamabad said on Thursday. Pakistani Foreign Office Spokeswoman Mumtaz Zahra Baloch (in picture) said there were 25,000 Afghans approved for relocation to the U.S. AFP

PARIS

Blaze breaks out in spire of Rouen medieval cathedral in France



A fire broke out Thursday in the spire of the medieval cathedral in the French city of Rouen, but authorities said it was under control about 90 minutes later. Witnesses described smoke emanating from the spire and recalled a devastating fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris that toppled its spire and collapsed its roof. AP

BANGKOK

Myanmar junta 'trying to destroy country': UN special rapporteur



Myanmar's junta appears to be "trying to destroy a country it cannot control", the UN special rapporteur warned on Thursday. "The junta is on its heels, it's losing troops, it's losing military facilities, it is literally losing ground," UN special rapporteur Tom Andrews said during a briefing. AFP

PARIS

France's Left leaders blast Macron, demand Prime Minister's post



French Left-wingers attacked President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday after he called for a broad coalition government, demanding that their movement alone should propose a Prime Minister. Socialist Party chief Olivier Faure accused Mr. Macron of failing to "respect the vote of the French people". AFP

China is a 'decisive enabler' of Russia's war, says NATO

Beijing says 'NATO hyping up China's responsibility on the Ukraine issue is unreasonable and has sinister motives'; the U.S. says it will start deployment of long-range missiles in Germany from 2026

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

NATO leaders on Thursday looked to bolster ties with Asian partners after slamming China as a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war, before holding talks with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the end of a summit in Washington. The 32-nation alliance has used the pomp-filled set piece in the U.S. capital to showcase its resolve against Moscow and backing for Kyiv. After spending the bulk of the summit focused on bolstering Ukraine, NATO shifted attention eastwards by welcoming the leaders of Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. A declaration from NATO released on Wednesday called Beijing a "decisive enabler of Russia's war



U.S. President Joe Biden, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and others attend a meeting in Washington on Thursday. REUTERS

against Ukraine" through its supplies of dual-use goods such as microchips that can help Moscow's military. China "cannot enable the largest war in Europe in recent history without this negatively impacting its interests and reputation," it said. Beijing hit back by warning NATO to "stop hyping up the so-called China

threat and provoking confrontation and rivalry". China presents itself as a neutral party in the conflict, but it has however offered a critical lifeline to Russia's isolated economy, with trade booming since the conflict began. After the sit-down, Ukraine's Mr. Zelenskyy will take centre stage at the giant convention centre in

the heart of the U.S. capital. The U.S. announced it would begin "episodic deployments" of long-range missiles to Germany in 2026. The White House said it would eventually look to permanently station them in Germany, and the missiles would "have significantly longer range" than current U.S. systems in Europe.

'Bringing chaos to Asia' China accused NATO of seeking security at the expense of others and told the alliance not to bring the same "chaos" to Asia. "NATO hyping up China's responsibility on the Ukraine issue is unreasonable and has sinister motives," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said. He said China has a fair and objective stance on the Ukraine issue.

NATO starts sending F-16 jets to support Ukraine

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

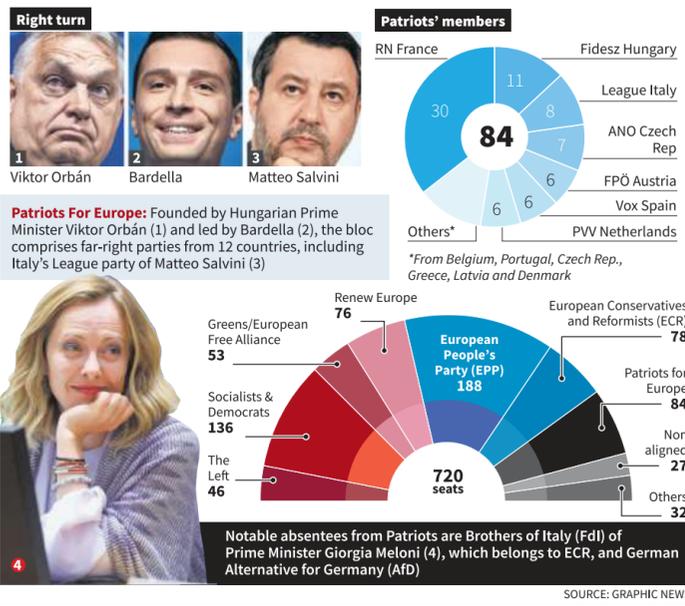
NATO allies on Wednesday announced they had started transferring F-16 jets to Ukraine while stepping up promises to Kyiv on eventual membership in the alliance, at a 75th anniversary summit clouded by political uncertainties in the United States.

U.S. President Joe Biden individually welcomed the other 31 leaders of the alliance before urging them to keep pace with Russia's military production. "We can - and will - defend every inch of NATO territory and we'll do it together," Mr. Biden told the North Atlantic Council.

Mr. Biden announced that Denmark and the Netherlands had begun sending U.S.-made F-16 jets to Ukraine - making good on a key promise last year to Kyiv, which has struggled to gain parity in the air with Russia.

Bardella to lead European far-right group

Jordan Bardella, of France's National Rally (RN), will head a new right-wing bloc, Patriots for Europe, which has become the third-largest force, in the 720-member EU Parliament



Israel military declares end to operation in northern Gaza

Agence France-Presse
GAZA CITY

Israeli air strikes pounded parts of Gaza's biggest city on Thursday, Hamas said, after Israel's military declared an end to its operation in an eastern district that saw Gaza City's heaviest combat in months.

The upsurge in fighting, bombardment and displacement followed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's statement in June that "the war in its intense phase is about to end". It also came as talks were held in the Gulf Emirate of Qatar towards a truce and hostage release deal after more than nine months of war. Gaza's ruling Hamas Islamists said troops had pulled back from Gaza Ci-



A Palestinian woman rides a bicycle past the rubble of destroyed buildings in east of Gaza city on Thursday. AFP

ty's eastern district of Shujaiya leaving behind "more than 300 residential units and more than 100 businesses destroyed". Witnesses said tanks and troops had moved into other Gaza City areas, and clashes between Israeli forces and militants were occurring. Hamas on Thursday reported 45 air strikes in the Gaza City area, and in Rafah. The Health Ministry said six bodies had been recovered after the pullback of Israeli troops from Shujaiya. On Wednesday, the Army dropped leaflets warning "everyone in Gaza City" that the area would "remain a dangerous combat zone".

Clooney, Democrats pile pressure on Biden

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

A Democratic Senator on Wednesday called on U.S. President Joe Biden to ditch his reelection bid, capping a brutal day that saw mounting pressure from actor and donor George Clooney and party heavyweight Nancy Pelosi. As the 81-year-old tried to show his leadership credentials at a NATO summit in Washington, calls have been growing for Mr. Biden to quit following his disas-



George Clooney, AP

trous debate performance against Republican challenger Donald Trump. At least eight House Democrats have openly called on Mr. Biden not to seek reelection, but Peter Welch

became the first in the Senate to explicitly do so as concerns rise over his age and fitness. "For the good of the country, I'm calling on President Biden to withdraw from the race," the Vermont Senator said in an opinion piece in the Washington Post. News outlet Axios reported on Wednesday that Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer had also privately signalled to donors that he was open to replacing Mr. Biden on the

Democratic ticket. However, in a statement, Mr. Schumer said "I support President Biden and remain committed to ensuring Donald Trump is defeated in November." Hollywood star Mr. Clooney penned a devastating editorial in the New York Times on Wednesday just three weeks after co-hosting a huge fundraiser in Los Angeles that raised nearly \$30 million for Mr. Biden. "It's devastating to say it, but the Joe Biden I was with three weeks ago

at the fundraiser was not the Joe Biden of 2010," he wrote. "He wasn't even the Joe Biden of 2020. He was the same man we all witnessed at the debate." He said that Mr. Biden would lose the presidential election, and Democrats would also lose both chambers of Congress. In response to Mr. Clooney's editorial, the Biden campaign pointed to the President's statements on Monday saying he was committed to running again in November.

Sport

Lerma heads Colombia into a Copa final after 23 years



On a high! Colombia's Lerma rises majestically to slot in the lone goal of the second semifinal. AP

Reuters
CHARLOTTE

Colombia beat Uruguay 1-0 in its Copa America semifinal on Wednesday despite playing the second half with only 10 men as Jefferson Lerma's first-half header set up a title decider against defending champion Argentina. Colombia's only triumph had come in 2001 when it played host.

Colombia's Daniel Muñoz was sent off at the end of the first half and while Uruguay dominated possession, it could not make the man-advantage count with Darwin Núñez missing three good opportunities to score early on.

The Liverpool forward had a great chance in the box in the 17th minute but

curled his effort inches wide before a scuffed shot and another curling strike failed to find the target as he sat on his haunches wondering how he had missed.

Uruguay was made to pay for those missed chances when Lerma rose above the defence at a corner and squeezed his header past goalkeeper Sergio Rochet as James Rodríguez claimed his sixth assist of the tournament.

Munoz ejected

Colombia was then reduced to 10 men when right back Muñoz received a second yellow card for elbowing Manuel Ugarte in the chest when play was stopped.

With Uruguay dominating possession in the se-

cond half, Bielsa threw on Luis Suárez in the 67th minute and the veteran striker nearly scored moments later, the 37-year-old's shot hitting the post as he sank to his knees in frustration.

Colombia had a golden opportunity to seal the win in the 88th minute when it won the ball back in Uruguay's box but Mateus Uribe sent his low shot wide. He saw another one deflect off the keeper and cannon off the crossbar in added time.

Colombia, which extended its unbeaten run to 28 games, held on for a famous win and will play Argentina in Sunday's final. Uruguay will play Canada a day earlier in the third-place playoff.

The result: Colombia 1 (Lerma 39) bt Uruguay 0.

India to tour Sri Lanka later this month for three ODIs and T20Is

CRICKET
Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India will play three T20Is and as many ODIs during its tour of Sri Lanka during July and August, and the matches will be played at Pallekele and Colombo, the BCCI announced on Thursday.

The tour will kick off with the T20Is (July 26, 27, 29) at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium and the series will then move to Colombo where the one-dayers (August 1, 4, 7) will be played at the R. Premadasa International Stadium.

India will be manned by newly-appointed head coach Gautam Gambhir, while the Lankans will also have a new coach in Sanath Jayasuriya.

Hasaranga quits Meanwhile, Sri Lanka, which was ousted in the group stages of the T20 World Cup, will have a new skipper after Wanindu Hasaranga stepped down from his post on Thursday. This will be India's first white-ball bilateral trip to the island nation since 2021. The tourists had won both the T20I and ODI series on that occasion.

The schedule: T20Is: July 26, 27 & 29 (Pallekele); **ODIs:** August 1, 4 & 7 (Colombo).

MAGIC

Musetti says making semifinal 'best day of life after son's birth'



Lorenzo Musetti said reaching his first Grand Slam semifinal at Wimbledon was the best day of his life after the birth of his son. Musetti defeated USA's Taylor Fritz and will face Novak Djokovic for a place in the final. "It's a magic day," said the 22-year-old. "I have to say after the birth of my son, I will put this in the second position today."

STANDING FIRM

Barty plays exhibition doubles at Wimbledon but happy to stay retired



Ash Barty was searching for a thesaurus after her exhibition doubles match at Wimbledon on Wednesday. A three-time Grand Slam singles champion, Barty retired just over two years ago at the age of 25. She plans to stay retired. "You guys are killing me," Barty told journalists. "Anyone have a thesaurus for a word that I can use for no?"

CANDID

Medvedev is like a wall, every ball bounces back: Alcaraz



Carlos Alcaraz was candid and clear when asked about his Wimbledon semifinal opponent Daniil Medvedev. "The most difficult thing about facing Daniil, or the most special thing about him, is he can reach every ball," Alcaraz said. "He is like a wall. Every ball bounces back," added the Spaniard.

CLEAR VISION

Need to give my 100% every single day, says Washington



Washington Sundar said on Wednesday that he "needs to give his 100%" to stake a claim for the spin all-rounder's slot in India's T20 side, a spot that is up for grabs after the retirement of Ravindra Jadeja. "I need to give my 100% every single day. That's something that I have not compromised on," said Washington.

Gritty Paolini outlasts Vekic in an epic, earns a shot at glory

The Italian loses the opening set before raising her game in the second, the thrilling decider lasts an hour and 25 minutes; Krejckova comes from behind to knock out the 2022 All England champion Rybakina in another exciting duel

WIMBLEDON

N. Sudarshan
LONDON

Women's tennis is in a unique place where there is space for both the familiar and the novel. There have been repeat Slam champions in the recent past, like Iga Swiatek and Aryna Sabalenka. There have also been first-time winners like Marketa Vondrousova and surprise finalists like Zheng Qinwen.

Wimbledon 2024 has stayed true to this, and on Thursday, Barbora Krejckova and Jasmine Paolini became the latest to join this assorted bunch, setting up Saturday's final following come-from-behind victories.

While Krejckova, the 2021 French Open champion, overcame Elena Rybakina, the 2022 All England winner, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4, Paolini edged a two-hour 51-minute thriller over Croatia's Donna Vekic 2-6, 6-4, 7-6(8).

In all fairness, Paolini is no novice. The 28-year-old finished runner-up to Swiatek at the French Open just a month ago and entered Wimbledon seeded seventh.

But she would have been nobody's bet to make a second straight final, for she had never won a main draw match at SW19, and the last woman to make the title-round in both Paris and London back to back was the legendary Serena Williams.



'Fight for every ball': Paolini refused to throw in the towel despite being a set down and falling behind in the third. GETTY IMAGES

"It was really tough," said a beaming Paolini after the Centre Court epic. "She was hitting winners everywhere and I was struggling. But I told myself to fight and there is no place better than here to fight for every ball. I will remember this forever."

For a good part of the contest, it seemed like she would end up remembering it for the wrong reasons. Paolini was clearly the craftier player, but Vekic's superior weight of stroke was a big advantage.

Vekic had six inches on Paolini, and it showed in the way she muscled the ball. A solitary break in the

fifth game was enough for Vekic to take the first set, as she won 16 of 19 service points and blasted 12 winners to Paolini's five.

In the second, the Italian raised her game, serving better, scurrying all over, making Vekic hit the extra shot and pulling the trigger herself when the opportunity arose. Paolini gave the ball a lot more air and hit with more spin to make Vekic's flat strokes difficult to control.

This was evident in the 10th game of the second set when Vekic served at 4-5 and Paolini hurried her 28-year-old opponent into making two forehand er-

rors. A nervy Vekic then dumped a double fault before a slapped forehand winner from Paolini levelled matters.

The decider was a one-hour 25-minute slugfest that will eventually come to define this duel. In the first eight games, the two traded breaks twice. Paolini hit at varying trajectories, giving Vekic multiple problems. But the latter managed to hold on, battling fatigue by going for the point-ending extreme angle and mostly finding it.

Vekic saved two match-points - the second with a terrific down-the-line forehand - and Paolini two

THE RESULTS

Women: Semifinals: 7-Paolini (Ita) bt Vekic (Cro) 2-6, 6-4, 7-6(8). 31-Krejckova (Cze) bt 4-Rybakina (Kaz) 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Today's matches

5-Medvedev (Rus) vs 3-Alcaraz (Esp)
25-Musetti (Ita) vs 2-Djokovic (Srb)

break-points, as the match unsurprisingly slipped into the 10-point tie-breaker.

They were again neck to neck, fighting to 8-8, before two forehand errors from Vekic sealed Paolini's spot in the summit clash.

Hall of Famers Amritraj, Paes and Evans feted



Honoured: Evans, Amritraj and Paes at the felicitation event in Wimbledon on Thursday. N. SUDARSHAN

N. Sudarshan
LONDON

Vijay Amritraj, Leander Paes and Richard Evans, the 2024 International Tennis Hall of Fame inductees, were honoured at an event held on the sidelines of The Championships in Wimbledon, on Thursday.

Amritraj, a former top-20 player and celebrated broadcaster, and Evans, a renowned author and journalist, have been inducted in the contributor category, while Paes, an 18-time Major champion and Olympic bronze medallist, is in the player category.

Interestingly, Paes was in the first batch of trainees at the erstwhile Britannia Amritraj Tennis Academy (BAT) in Chennai and Evans is the co-author of Amritraj's autobiography.

"What a privilege to watch these two who were

naturally skillful at a difficult sport," Evans said about Amritraj and Paes. "There was elegance, power and skill in them for such a long period of time."

"And we media guys couldn't have found more approachable players. I am honoured to be sandwiched between these two Indians."

Paes credited the Amritraj family for shaping his tennis career and also recollected the first time he met Evans.

"I grew up watching these guys," Paes said, pointing to Amritraj. "I wouldn't be what I am today without them. At that time, I was on a football scholarship at a European club. Tennis was never on my mind."

"Anand, his brother, gave me an audition. On 12th May 1986, I joined BAT. I went to church every

Sunday with their parents. The history I share with them, I am greatly proud of."

"On that 12th May, Richard [Evans] was also there, writing Vijay's autobiography. He asked me what I wanted to be and I said Olympic champion. He said I could also be a tennis Hall of Famer if I worked hard. To sit with them now is my greatest privilege," added Paes.

Amritraj, on his part, said his whole tennis journey was surreal. "All of these were distant goals. I am amazed at my parents who actually imagined and dreamed of things we couldn't."

"This [award] gives me a flash of my memory. From [age] 7 to 70 flashed before me. When I played, it was always an Indian on Centre Court, not me. So this is India being honoured."

Tendulkar's was a big wicket, he was the 'best batter' to bowl to: Anderson

Press Trust of India
LONDON

England fast bowling great James Anderson, who is into his final few days as an international cricketer, enjoyed his battles against Sachin Tendulkar the most over the course of his remarkably long career.

Even though Anderson dismissed Tendulkar on nine occasions, he could not have a set plan against the Indian master blaster.

Biggest test

"The best batter I would have to say is Sachin Tendulkar," Anderson told Sky Sports when asked about the toughest batter he bowled to.

"I don't remember having a specific game plan against Sachin Tendulkar. Once he came on, I would just think that I cannot

bowl a bad ball here, he was that kind of player.

"He was a key for India as well. If you get him out in India, the whole atmosphere, in the ground changes."

"He was such a big wicket," Anderson said.

Enjoyable competition

Anderson said both he and Tendulkar enjoyed success against each other.

"You just try on bowling your best ball, top of off-stump, the whole time and hope he miss a straight one. In England, he might knock the odd one, but generally, I'd try and get him out leg-before early," he said.

"I had some success against him, but he had success against me as well. He got runs against us quite a lot," Anderson said.



Worthy rivals! Though Anderson got the better of Tendulkar on nine occasions, the Indian maestro also held his own against the England speedster. GETTY IMAGES

Windies in dire straits after Smith's knock gives England a big lead

WI IN ENGLAND

Reuters
LONDON

West Indies limped to 79 for six at stumps on the second day of the first Test against England at Lord's on Thursday, trailing the host by 171 runs and heading for a heavy defeat.

Half-centuries by Joe Root, Harry Brook and Jamie Smith lifted England to a first-innings total of 371 before James Anderson, playing his 188th and last Test match, bowled Windies captain Kraigg Brathwaite with a fine delivery that jagged back.

Kirk McKenzie, Mikyle Louis and Kavem Hodge fell cheaply and only a battling partnership between Alick Athanaze and Jason Holder ensured the game went into a third day.



Hitting away: Smith played to his potential, smashing two sixes and eight fours. GETTY IMAGES

Anderson dismissed Athanaze for 22, however, and Gus Atkinson snared Holder for 20 with the final ball of the day.

Earlier, England had resumed on 189 for three and Brook batted with attacking intent, reaching his 12th fifty in 13 Tests. Ben Stokes was bowled by Gu-

shared a 52-run partnership with Chris Woakes who was caught at square leg off Jayden Seales for 23.

Fast bowler Gus Atkinson, who took seven West Indies first-innings wickets on his debut, fell first ball to Holder and Smith went on the attack, hitting two big sixes and eight fours in the sunshine to underline his potential.

Shoaib Bashir was run out by a brilliant throw from Louis and Smith became Seales' fourth victim when he holed out to McKenzie. Anderson did not face a ball in what may be his final Test innings after receiving another warm ovation from the crowd as he walked out to bat.

The scores:

West Indies 121 & 79/6 in 34.5 overs vs. England 371 in 90 overs (Crawley 76, Pope 57, Root 68, Brook 50, Smith 70, Seales 4/77).

INBRIEF



Girmay wins stage 12; Morkov withdraws with COVID-19

Eritrean Biniam Girmay won the 12th stage of the Tour de France on Thursday, a 204-kilometer ride from Aurillac to Villeneuve-Sur-Lot. Girmay took his third victory in this year's Tour, edging out Wout van Aert and Arnaud Demare who rounded out the podium, while Slovenian Tadej Pogacar retained the overall leader's yellow jersey. Meanwhile, the veteran rider Michael Morkov of the Astana team withdrew from the Tour before the start of the 12th stage because of a COVID-19 infection. The 39-year-old Dane tested positive on Wednesday evening and Thursday morning.

Sumit Nagal loses in Challenger second round

Second seed Sumit Nagal lost 6-4, 7-5 to Pedro Cachin of Argentina in the pre-quarterfinals of the €148,625 Challenger tennis tournament in Braunschweig, Germany.

Other results: €120,950 Challenger, Iasi, Romania: Doubles: Pre-quarterfinals: Anirudh Chandrasekar & Arjun Kadhe bt Abdullah Shelbayh (Jor) & Adolfo Valjejo (Par) 7-6(6), 6-2.

€120,950 Challenger, Trieste, Italy: Doubles: Quarterfinals: Rithvik Bollipalli & Niki Poonacha bt Inigo Cervantes (Esp) & Luca Margaroli (Sui) 2-6, 6-1, [10-7]. **Pre-quarterfinals:** Rithvik & Niki bt Zvonimir Babic & Luka Mikrut (Cro) 6-2, 3-6, [10-6].

\$25,000 ITF men, Tianjin: Pre-quarterfinals: S. Mukund bt Chung Yun Seong (Kor) 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.

\$15,000 ITF men, Litija, Slovenia: First round: Peter Heller (Ger) bt Manas Dhamne 6-2, 6-2.

\$15,000 ITF, Nakhon Si Thammarat: Men: Pre-quarterfinals: Mitsuki Leong (Mas) bt Dhakshinewar Suresh 7-6(3), 6-3. **Doubles: Pre-quarterfinals:** Adil Kalyanpur & Vishnu Vardhan bt Jayden Court (Aus) & Kazuma Kawachi (Jpn) 6-4, 6-3. **Women: Pre-quarterfinals:** Rinon Okuwaki (Jpn) bt Akanksha Nitture 6-0, 7-5; Ayumi Koshishi (Jpn) bt Sonal Patil 6-3, 6-1. **First round:** Sonal bt Ashmitha Easwararamurthi 6-3, 6-3.

\$15,000 ITF women, Lakewood, USA: First round: Paris Corley (USA) bt Teja Tirunelveli 6-0, 4-6, 6-3.

\$15,000 ITF women, Monastir: First round: Maria Kalyakina bt Tanisha Kashyap 6-4, 6-2.



Ganguly buys Kolkata team in Indian Racing League

Former India cricket captain and BCCI president Sourav Ganguly has joined the motorsports bandwagon by becoming the owner of Kolkata Royal Tigers Racing team in the Indian Racing Festival. It has two main championships – Indian Racing League (IRL) and Formula 4 Indian Championship (F4IC). Eight city-based teams – Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Goa, Kochi, and Ahmedabad – will compete in the championship from August to November.

LIVE TELECAST

England vs West Indies: 1st Test, day 3, Sony Sports Ten 1 (SD & HD) & LIV, 3.30 p.m.

Wimbledon: SS Select 1, 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 6.30 p.m.

Cycling: Tour de France, Eurosport (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

Watkins' last-gasp strike puts England in its second successive summit clash

Simons gives the Dutch the lead with a screamer after seven minutes before Kane scores from the spot in the 18th minute to restore parity



Reuters
DORTMUND

Substitute Ollie Watkins scored a stoppage-time winner to send England through to its second successive European Championship final on Wednesday as it finally turned on the style to beat Netherlands 2-1 on a memorable night.

With the match looking set for extra time, Watkins received a pass from fellow sub Cole Palmer and fired a sweet strike into the far corner. Xavi Simons had brilliantly put the Dutch ahead after seven minutes, with England equalising 11 minutes later with a Harry Kane penalty.

Chances came and went



Smoothly done! Watkins, right, lets it rip past Dutch 'keeper Verbruggen to send England in to the final. AP

in an all action first half, then things settled in the second before the late drama that sent England to play Spain on Sunday.

Frenetic start

It was a frenetic start as Simons robbed Declan Rice and slammed a screamer into top corner, and

though the Orange Wall behind the goal erupted, it proved something of a false dawn.

England levelled when Kane was caught by the studs of Denzel Dumfries as he shot, earning a VAR-reviewed penalty that the England striker drilled into the bottom corner.

They were desperately close to a second five minutes later when Phil Foden brilliantly skipped through a series of tackles almost to the line and when he finally dug out a shot Dumfries was on hand to clear it off the line.

Foden, Jude Bellingham and Bukayo Saka were

playing with the swagger that they showed all season for their clubs while the incredible 19-year-old Kobbie Mainoo was running midfield like a veteran.

It was a scarcely believable transformation as the team sent in crosses high and low, attempted prob-

ing through balls and even a couple of back heels in the box while forcing Bart Verbruggen into three sprawling saves.

The Dutch threw on striker Wout Weghorst for the second half while England brought on Luke Shaw.

Gareth Southgate took dramatic action by removing Foden and Kane, bringing on Ollie Watkins and Cole Palmer after 80 minutes.

Rare attack

Saka did turn in a low Kyle Walker cross in a rare attack but it was ruled out for offside.

However, Palmer, who has looked dangerous every time he has come on, threaded a pass into the path of Watkins to cue bedlam.

It was heartbreak for the Dutch, who have now lost four semifinals since winning the title in 1988.

The result (second semifinal): Netherlands 1 (Simons 7) lost to England 2 (Kane 18-pen, Watkins 90+1).

Aarav bounces back to knock out top seed Rian

Sports Bureau

Aarav Chawla bounced back from a slow start to oust the top seed Rian Sharma 3-6, 6-0, 6-3 in the quarterfinals of the HPCL Mittal AITA National series junior tennis tournament in Chandigarh on Thursday.

In the girls' section, Sherry Sharma got past third seed Tamanna Walia in quarterfinals.

The results: Under-18: Boys (quarterfinals): Aarav Chawla bt Rian Sharma 3-6, 6-0, 6-3; Gurbaaz Narang bt Armaan Walia 6-4, 6-4; Aditya Mor bt Mayank Sharma 6-4, 6-1; Tarush Ghildyal bt Vishwajeet Sanas 6-7(8), 6-2, 6-2. **Doubles (semifinals):** Aarav & Aditya bt Ashwajit Senjam & Rian Sharma 6-2, 6-2; Jevin Kanani & Neeraj Rangangaonkar bt Shreyas Dogial & Dev Prakash 6-2, 6-3.

Girls (quarterfinals): Satakshi Choudhary bt Jasmine Kaur 5-2 (retired); Sherry Sharma bt Tamanna Walia 6-3, 6-4; Mahika Khanna bt Mansi Singh 6-4, 6-3; Dhatri Dave bt Rubani Kaur Sidhu 1-0 (retired). **Doubles (semifinals):** Satakshi Choudhary & Snigdha Patibandla w/o Jasmine Kaur & Vaishnavi Singh; Sherry Sharma & Tamanna Walia bt Dhatri Dave & Radhika Sadhra 6-4, 3-6, [10-7].

Semifinal exit hard to take for Dutch coach Koeman

Agence France-Presse
DORTMUND

Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman admitted his team's 2-1 Euro 2024 semifinal defeat against England on Wednesday was "hard to accept" after a controversial penalty decision and then a last-gasp Ollie Watkins goal left his team floored.

"I am disappointed about the final result in a match which started really good for us," said Koeman at the Westfalenstadion.

England's penalty came when Kane sent a shot over the bar and was caught on the follow-through by Denzel Dumfries. Contact was minimal and seemingly innocuous, but German referee Felix Zwayer pointed to the spot after coming over to the VAR monitor.

Blame it on VAR

"What can you do as a defender? In my opinion this shouldn't have been a penalty," Koeman complained. "We cannot play properly and that is due to VAR. It breaks football."

Koeman felt his team had been in control after the 35th-minute introduc-



Tough luck: Koeman consoles Netherlands skipper van Dijk after being eliminated in the Euro semifinal. AP

tion of midfielder Joey Veerman for the injured Memphis Depay, which allowed it to stem the tide of England attacks.

"We had some difficulties in the midfield to stop the good players like (Jude) Bellingham and (Phil) Foden between the lines," he said. "We didn't control the game. We made some changes to get control back and the feeling was that in the last 20 minutes we were the better team and

attacking more. But then came the knockout on 90 minutes. A great goal, and then it's over, and that is difficult to accept."

Koeman, 61, returned for a second spell as Netherlands coach following the 2022 World Cup, when Louis van Gaal took the team to the last eight in Qatar. The run in Germany is its best performance at a European Championship since 2004, when it also went out in the semifinals.



Send-off: President Droupadi Murmu flags off the trophy tour of the Durand Cup at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Wednesday. PTI

President Murmu unveils Durand Cup trophies, flags off trophy tour

Sports Bureau

President Draupadi Murmu unveiled the Durand Cup trophies and flagged off the trophy tour ahead of the 133rd edition of the football tournament at the Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi on Wednesday.

The event saw the presence of all three Service chiefs and the CDS, former India football captain Sunil Chhetri, AIFF officials and representatives from the State governments of Assam, Meghalaya, Jharkhand and West Bengal, the

co-hosts of this year's competition.

The President alluded to the popularity of football across the world and extended her wishes to participating players.

The 133rd edition will begin in Kolkata on July 27, with Kokrajhar (Assam), Shillong (Meghalaya) and Jamshepur (Jharkhand) co-hosting games.

Kolkata's Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG) is the defending champion, having defeated its traditional rival East Bengal 1-0 last year.

Arshdeep credits Rohit and Bumrah for guiding him at critical junctures



Proud parents: Arshdeep with his father and mother during an interview with the Sportstar at his residence in Chandigarh. R.V. MOORTHY

CRICKET

Shayan Acharya
CHANDIGARH

Arshdeep Singh is just two years old in the international cricket arena, but the fast bowler has already emerged as one of death over specialists in the T20Is.

An architect of India's T20 World Cup win in the West Indies, Arshdeep finished as the joint highest wicket-taker with 17 wickets, the same as Afghanistan's Fazalhaq Farooqi, and earned a lot of praise for keeping calm under pressure.

The youngster, however, believes that a lot of credit goes to captain Rohit

Sharma and Jasprit Bumrah for guiding him at the crucial junctures.

"Rohit bhai and Jassi bhai are legends of the game. They have been dominating the international arena for a long time now. Whenever I have a point, I ask them whether I can implement it. They ensure that my suggestions are taken into account and the field is set accordingly. That helps me focus on the job at hand," Arshdeep told Sportstar.

The conversations

"Jassi bhai is a unique bowler with a different bowling action, so the things that work for him might not work for others, but he makes it a point to guide me on how to adjust the

bounce and even suggest areas *jahan pe ball jaldi* reverse *hoga* (where the ball will reverse quicker). During the World Cup, he told me not to go for swing early on because on those surfaces, the ball won't swing much, so it was better to hit the hard lengths.

"He keeps telling me those things throughout the match and our discussions often get animated because I am a young blood, so at times, I do disagree with him," Arshdeep said with a smile.

However, he learns from his mistakes. A similar incident happened during India's fixture against Afghanistan as well. "The ball was reversing a lot, so he (Bumrah) suggested a few field placements ac-

cordingly. But I thought otherwise, and suggested a different field setting. He told me calmly that I should have faith in him and send the fielder to where he was suggesting. I listened to him and bowled in the right areas. As luck would have it, we got an edge and the ball went straight to the fielder, and then, Jassi bhai walked up to me with a smile and said, "see, you should have faith in me and just keep bowling in the right areas." It indeed helped," Arshdeep said.

Arshdeep has so far featured in 52 T20Is and six ODIs, and now he hopes to play Test cricket. "Jassi bhai keeps telling me that I should play red-ball and I agree with him," he said.

In his journey, Arshdeep has had the backing of Rahul Dravid - first as the coach of India U-19 and later as the head coach of the senior team. "I made it a point to pick his brains and always ask questions about the game - and those conversations have always helped me," he said.

Rare sight

"It was a rare sight to see Rahul sir so emotional after we won the T20 World Cup. It also feels good to see someone of his stature getting the reward - a World Cup title - that he thoroughly deserves for all the effort he has put in over the years. I am glad that we were able to give him a fitting farewell by winning the title."

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PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Plot bearing No. 118, Sector-6, HSIDC, IMT Manesar, Gurugram-122 001
This Notice is for and on behalf of our Clients, namely Ms. Puja Sethi & Sh. Arshdeep Singh Sethi, R/o Tower 2/502, Vipul Belmonte, Sector-53, Gurugram - 122 002 that they are the registered owners and in possession of Plot bearing No. 118, Sector - 6, HSIDC, IMT Manesar, Gurugram - 122 001 (the "Property") vide a registered Sale Deed dated 27.04.2022, registered in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Manesar as Document bearing No. 1098, Page No. 107.5 of Book No. 1, Volume No. 293, Pages 7 to 9 of additional book No. 1, Volume No. 1680. By this notice, the public at large and/or anybody intending to deal with the Property is informed that he shall be dealing with the said Property at his own risk, cost and peril. Further in a litigation titled as "Ms Aashish Industries & Anr." bearing CIS No. EXE - 826 - 2018 before the Court of the Additional District Judge-Cum-Prsiding Judge, Exclusive Commercial Court, Gurugram our Clients have already filed appropriate application and are further in the process of taking steps/ application on which Notice is issued and matter now listed for 18.07.2024. Vide this Notice, hence the public at large/ anybody intending to deal with the Property is informed of the ownership of our Clients and forewarned to not deal with the same in any manner.

AAYUSH SAI (D/2972017) & KARAN SINGH
ADVOCATES & SOLICITORS
Office: 11/11, West Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110 008
M: 9711888008, Off: 011-41103459
Email: aayush@asa-partners.com

TENDERS

CHENNAI PORT AUTHORITY
TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT
NO.1, RAJAJI SALAI, CHENNAI - 1

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION:
NO.06/442/2024/7 dt.12.07.2024
Notice for e-Tender Cum e-Auction for allotment of 2 areas of Covered Space with RCC Road at the Ground Floor of Centre Berth Building, in Area II, inside custom bound area for a period of 5 years on Annual Licence basis in as is where is condition without renewal option, under two cover system from 12.07.2024 to 01.08.2024.
For further details visit Ch.P.A. website
www.chennaiport.gov.in and www.eprocure.gov.in

TENDERS

CHENNAI PORT AUTHORITY
Materials Management Division

e-Auctions are invited for the disposal of Plants and Machineries, Scrap & Vehicles (ELVs) in "as is where is" condition. e-Auction will be conducted by M/s. MSTC Ltd. For further details / corrigendum, if any, visit www.mstccommerce.com, www.chennaiport.gov.in

TENDERS

Chief Mechanical Engineer

PUBLIC NOTICE

CONSOLIDATE REALTORS PRIVATE LIMITED
41ST Floor, Tower-1, MSM International Financial Center, Sector-66, Badshahpur, Gurugram, Haryana, India, 122011. CIN No. U70109HR2006PTC047030, website: www.consolidaterealtors.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, Consolidate Realtors Private Limited (in short "Company") has requested the Office of Director, Town & Country Planning department, Haryana (in short "DTCP") for approval of the proposed building plans of Phase 2 (Tower 1) and revised building plans of EWS Block (No Phase) in respect of License No. 53 of 2011 dated 10.06.2011 granted for development of Group Housing Colony for an area measuring 13.344 acres (in short "Said Colony") at Sector-67, Gurugram, Haryana.

And whereas, several individuals/ persons (in short "Existing Allottees") have made bookings/ entered into purchase agreements/ buyer agreements for allotment and purchase of the unit(s) in the Said Colony till date.

And Whereas, DTCP, which had earlier approved the building plans for the Said Colony vide Memo No. ZP-748/AD (RA)/2015/3749 dated 10.03.2015 (in short "Approved Building Plans") has now granted in-principle approval for proposed building plans of Phase 2 (Tower 1) and revised building plans of EWS Block (No Phase) vide Memo No. ZP-748-III/PA(DK)/2024/20699 dated 10.07.2024 (in short "Proposed Building Plans").

Whereas, according to the above said in-principle approval, DTCP has directed the Company for seeking objections / suggestions with regards to the proposed amendment in the building plans as a pre-condition before granting final approval to the Proposed Building Plans.

Accordingly, vide this Public Notice, objections/ suggestions, if any, are hereby invited from the Existing Allottees with regards to the proposed amendment in the building plans. For this purpose, the "Approved Building Plans" and "Proposed Building Plans" have been made available for perusal / reference on (a) Company's website www.consolidaterealtors.com, (b) in the office of the undersigned at 41st Floor, Tower-1, MSM International Financial Center, Sector-66, Badshahpur, Gurugram, Haryana, India, 122011 (c) at the project site office in Sector-67, Gurugram, Haryana & (d) in the office of Senior Town Planner, Town & Country Planning Department, Haryana, HSPV Complex, Sector-14, Gurugram, Haryana (in short "STP").

Any Existing Allottee, having any objections/ suggestions with regards to the proposed amendment in the building plans, may file his/her/their objections/ suggestions in the office of the STP and in the office of the undersigned within thirty (30) days of the date of publication of this Public Notice i.e. upto 10.08.2024, failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the proposed amendment in the building plans.

Praveen Arora
Authorized Signatory
Date: 12.07.2024
For & on behalf of Consolidate Realtors Private Limited

LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE HON'BLE FAMILY COURT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
O.P.No. 3286 OF 2022

ORIGINAL PETITIONER
SHIBU.S., S/o. Late K.Sasidharan, aged 50, residing at PRA-D-35, Kalladayil House, Pandits Colony, Near Sabarigiri School, Kowdiar P.O., Thiruvananthapuram 695 003.

RESPONDENT
AMITA NAYAK, D/o. Bidyadhar Nayak, aged 50, residing at Plot No. 712, Baramunda Bhoisai, Post Baramunda Colony, Unit - 8, Bhuaneswar, Orissa 751 003, residential address at E1045, Gaur Green City, Vaibhav Khand, Indrapuram, Gaziabad, Uttar Pradesh 201 014

Notice to the Respondent
Where as the above said Original Petitioner has filed OP No: 3386/2022 before the Family Court, Thiruvananthapuram for declaration of title and other relief against the Respondent in connection with sale deed No. 5216/06 of SPO Pattom, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala and is Posted for hearing to 02/08/2024. If you have any objection, you may appear before the court on that date at 11 AM in person or through authorized pleader and file the same. Take notice that in case you fail to appear, the original petition will be disposed off in your absence.

BEFORE THE HON'BLE FAMILY COURT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
O.P.No. 3312 OF 2022

ORIGINAL PETITIONER
SHIBU.S., S/o. Late K.Sasidharan, aged 50, residing at PRA-D-35, Kalladayil House, Pandits Colony, Near Sabarigiri School, Kowdiar P.O., Thiruvananthapuram 695 003.

RESPONDENT
AMITA NAYAK, D/o. Bidyadhar Nayak, aged 50, residing at Plot No. 712, Baramunda Bhoisai, Post Baramunda Colony, Unit - 8, Bhuaneswar, Orissa 751 003, residential address at E1045, Gaur Green City, Vaibhav Khand, Indrapuram, Gaziabad, Uttar Pradesh 201 014

Notice to the Respondent
Where as the above said Original Petitioner has filed OP No: 3312/2022 before the Family Court, Thiruvananthapuram for dissolution of marriage against the Respondent under the Special Marriage Act, 1954 and is Posted for hearing to 02/08/2024. If you have any objection, you may appear before the court on that date at 11 AM in person or through authorized pleader and file the same. Take notice that in case you fail to appear, the original petition will be disposed off in your absence.

Place: Thiruvananthapuram
Date: 12/07/2024
(Sd/-) Advocate Rajapratap S.J.

TENDERS

CHENNAI PORT AUTHORITY
TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT
NO.1, RAJAJI SALAI, CHENNAI - 1

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION:
NO.06/442/2024/7 dt.12.07.2024
Notice for e-Tender Cum e-Auction for allotment of 2 areas of Covered Space with RCC Road at the Ground Floor of Centre Berth Building, in Area II, inside custom bound area for a period of 5 years on Annual Licence basis in as is where is condition without renewal option, under two cover system from 12.07.2024 to 01.08.2024.
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www.chennaiport.gov.in and www.eprocure.gov.in

TENDERS

CHENNAI PORT AUTHORITY
Materials Management Division

e-Auctions are invited for the disposal of Plants and Machineries, Scrap & Vehicles (ELVs) in "as is where is" condition. e-Auction will be conducted by M/s. MSTC Ltd. For further details / corrigendum, if any, visit www.mstccommerce.com, www.chennaiport.gov.in

PUBLIC NOTICE

CONSOLIDATE REALTORS PRIVATE LIMITED
41ST Floor, Tower-1, MSM International Financial Center, Sector-66, Badshahpur, Gurugram, Haryana, India, 122011. CIN No. U70109HR2006PTC047030, website: www.consolidaterealtors.com

GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA
Public Works Division, Dharashiv
E-Tender Notice No.: 03/2024-25
Online Tenders invited by the Executive Engineer, Public Works Division, Dharashiv (Phone No. 02472-222882/83) B-1 from eligible contractors.

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

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
(e-Procurement Module)
The Executive Engineer, Bharmour Division, HPPWD Bharmour H.P. on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the items rate bids, in electronic tendering system, from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the works as detailed in the table.

Table with 7 columns: Sr. No., Name of work, Estimated Cost (Rs.), Earnest Money (Rs.), Cost of tender form (Rs.), Class, Completion period. Contains 8 items related to road works, bridge repairs, and hostel construction.

2.KEY DATES: 1. Starting Date for downloading 18-07-2024 at 11.00 AM
2. Deadline for submission of Bid 26-07-2024 at 3.00 PM
3. Date of Technical bid opening 27.07.2024 at 11.30 AM

The undersigned has right to extend or cancel the bids without declaring any reasons there-of. The Bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in

Executive Engineer,
Bharmour Division, HPPWD Bharmour, Pin-176315
Email-ee-bhar-hp@nic.in
On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh

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NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
Tender No. Scope of Work Due date

Table with 3 columns: Tender No., Scope of Work, Due date. Contains 3 items for GI gratings, spray dried clay, and board machine.

Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNP&L Website & NIC Portal only. Detailed requirements, Period, Terms & conditions, Tender fee, EMD etc., are available in the tender document at our websites : www.tnpl.com / https://tenders.gov.in/nitapp

DIPR/2268/Tender/2024 TNP&L - Maker of bugussse based eco-friendly Paper

Rural Works Department
NIT Corrigendum

Reference to the Notice Inviting Tender No- MR-3054-01/2024-25 (PR-001868 (RWD) 2024-25), due to unavoidable circumstances, the important date and time for this NIT are being hereby extended as per following table.

Table with 3 columns: Description, Published Date & Time, Amended date & Time. Shows extension of bidding documents and submission dates.

All other information as mentioned in the advertisement will remain unaltered. This corrigendum will be addendum to the original NIT

Engineer in Chief-cum
Additional Commissioner-cum-
Special Secretary
Rural Works Department

PR- 003749 (R W D) 2024-25
नया की मार, बर्बाद करे सुखी परिवार।

Govt. of Bihar

Rural Works Department
NIT Corrigendum
Corrigendum No. - RWD/MMGSY(AWSESH)/HQ/ET/2024-25/01

With reference to the Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) No- RWD/MMGSY (AWSESH)/HQ/ET/2024-25/01, which was published in daily news paper vide advertisement PR No.- 001800 (RWD) 2024-25 & Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) No-RWD/MMGSY (AWSESH)/HQ/ET/2024-25/02, which was published in daily news paper vide advertisement PR No.- 001802 (RWD) 2024-25, the earlier description as mentioned in the Table-2 of the published NIT is being now modified as per Column-3 below due to some unavoidable circumstances.

Table with 3 columns: Sl. No, Earlier Description, Modified Description. Shows changes to bidding document download and submission dates.

All other information as mentioned in the advertisement will remain unaltered. This corrigendum will be an addendum of the original NIT and applicable for the aforesaid packages only.

This information is available on www.state.bihar.gov.in/prbihar also

(Shriprakash)
Engineer-in-Chief
PR. No. 003772 (RWD) 2024-25
नशामुक्त हो जाए बिहार, सुरक्षित रहे घर परिवार।

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED
Credit Recovery and Management Department
Administrative Office: No.24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612 001. E-Mail id: crmd@cityunionbank.in, Phone: 0435-2432322. Fax: 0435-2431746

RE-TENDER-CUM-AUCTION SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002
The following properties mortgaged to City Union Bank Limited will be sold in Re-Tender-cum-Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 8 (B) & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of Rs.68,71,392/- (Rupees Sixty Eight Lakh Seventy One Thousand Three Hundred and Ninety Two only) as on 07-07-2024 together with further interest to be charged from 08-07-2024 onwards other expenses and any other dues to the bank by the Borrowers / Guarantors No.1) M/s. Bhagwati Colour Centre, Shop No.124, Tikona Park, NIT, Faridabad, Haryana - 121001. No.2) Mr. Sunny Ahuja, S/o. Mr. Balwant Kumar Ahuja, House No.1E/WH/49 NIT, Faridabad, Haryana - 121001. No.3) Mr. Balwant Kumar Ahuja, S/o. Mr. Sundar Lal Ahuja, House No.1E/WH/49, NIT, Faridabad Haryana - 121001. No.4) Mrs. Geetika Ahuja, W/o. Mr. Sunny Ahuja, House No.1E/WH/49, NIT, Faridabad, Haryana - 121001.

Reserve Price : Rs.45,00,000/- (Rupees Forty Five Lakh only)
RE-AUCTION DETAILS
Date of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale Venue
09-08-2024 City Union Bank Limited, Faridabad Branch, E5/10, BP Railway Road, Near Neelam Bata Chowk, Faridabad - 121001. Telephone No.0129-2421708, Cell No.9354776693

Terms and Conditions of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale:
(1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself / herself. (2) The intending bidders may obtain the Tender Forms from The Manager, City Union Bank Limited, Faridabad Branch, E5/10, BP Railway Road, Near Neelam Bata Chowk, Faridabad - 121001. (3) The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the Tender Form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd., together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of 10% of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of "City Union Bank Ltd.", on or before 01.00 p.m. on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. (4) For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact Telephone No.0129-2421708, Cell No.9354776693. (5) The properties are sold on "As-is-where-is", "As-is-what-is" and "whatever-theres-is" basis. (6) The sealed tenders will be opened in the presence of the intending bidders at 02.00 p.m. on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. Though in general the sale will be by way of closed tenders, the Authorised Officer may, at his sole discretion, conduct an Open Auction among the interested bidders who desire to quote a bid higher than the one received in the closed tender process, and in such an event, the sale shall be conferred on the person making highest bid. The sale, however, is subject to confirmation of City Union Bank Limited. (7) The successful bidder shall have to pay 25% (inclusive of EMD paid) of the sale amount immediately on completion of sale and the balance amount of 75% within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale, failing which the initial deposit of 25% shall be forfeited. (8) The Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful purchaser only after receipt of the entire sale consideration within the time limit stipulated herein. (9) The successful purchaser shall bear the charges / fees payable for conveyance, such as stamp duty, registration fee etc., as applicable under law. (10) The successful bidder should pay the statutory dues (lawful house tax, electricity charges and other dues), TDS, GST if any, due to Government, Government Undertaking and local bodies. (11) The Authorised Officer shall have all the powers to accept or reject the bids or postpone or cancel the sale without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Regd. Office: 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612001. CIN - L65110TN1904PLC001287. Telephone No.0435-2402322, Fax: 0435-2431746. Website: www.cityunionbank.com

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY
E-TENDERING NOTICE

Divisional Railway Manager (Electrical), North Eastern Railway, Varanasi for and on behalf of President of India invites Online (E-tendering) "Open Tender" for the following works:-
SL.No-01, Tender reference No.: E-Tender-L-16-24-25. Name of work: Electrical work connection to (1) Provision of AC Dormitory (Male & Female), AC Lounge (Male & Female), Retiring room (02 Nos.), Switch room, office with store for commercial department at PRRB in Connection with Maha Kumbh-2025, (2) Face Lifting of Facade of Station building and other related works at Jhushi in connection with Maha Kumbh-2025, (3) Face Lifting of Facade of station Building at PRRB in connection of Maha Kumbh-2025, (4) PRRB-Provision of lifts & allied works at Railway Station in connection with Maha Kumbh-2025. Approx. Cost (in Rs.): ₹ 41,58,624.52. Earnest Money (in Rs.): ₹ 83,200/-. Completion period: 04 Months. Date & time of Closing Tender: 01-08-2024, 14:30 Hrs. For full details of above E-Tender work and to participate in tenders please visit Indian Railway Website www.irps.gov.in Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G), CPRO/Vidyt-78 Varanasi
Never travel on roof and foot boards.

For Divini, Railway Manager E.C. Rly, Danapur. PR/00668/DNR/ETRD/124-25/48

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
NOTICE INVITING OPEN TENDER

Danapur Division/Electrical (TRD) Branch Tender Notice No. 28/TRD/DNR/OT/24-25
The Divisional Railway Manager, E.C. Railway Danapur invites sealed open tender on behalf of the President of India for the following works:
Tender No: TRD/DNR/OT/24-25
1. Name of work with its location: (A) Provision of High level platform (PF) at Karahiya station under ADEN/BXR. (B) Provision of High level platform (DN PF) at Karahiya station under ADEN/BXR. (C) Provision of 3.00 meter wide FOB with Ramp for Divyangjan at Karahiya station under ADEN/BXR. (D) Raising and Extension of PF Surface of PF No. 3 & 4 with Provision of 02 bay PF shed at KIUL Station under SSE/WKEU. 2. Approx cost of the work (Nil value): Rs. 49,93,918.68/- 3. Earnest money to be deposited: Rs. 99,90,000/- 4. Date & time for selling, submission and opening of tender: The tender have to be submitted online on www.irps.gov.in upto 12.00 hrs. on the date of opening i.e. 07.08.2024 and will be opened on the same date at 12.00 hrs. 5. Website particulars, notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.: Detailed tender notice, eligibility criteria & tender documents can be seen from the CRIS website: http://www.irps.gov.in & full details of notice can be seen on notice board of Sr. DEE (TRD)/E.C. Railway / Danapur. All corrigendum will be uploaded on website if required. For Divini, Railway Manager E.C. Rly, Danapur. PR/00668/DNR/ETRD/124-25/48

Regd. Office: 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612 001. CIN - L65110TN1904PLC001287. Telephone No.0435-2402322, Fax: 0435-2431746. Website: www.cityunionbank.com

CHEIF ENGINEER, UTTARAKHAND RURAL ROADS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
First Floor, Directorate of Panchayatiraj, Opp. IT Park, Sahasradhara Road, Dehradun
Contact: 0135-2608125, Fax: 2608126, Email: ut-urda@pmgsy.nic.in
Ref. No. 576/11-02(xix)-2/ITCO/URRDA/24 Dated: 10-07-2024

PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY) e-Procurement Notice - 04(P-III/Bal.Work)/2024-25
The Chief Engineer, URRDA on behalf of Governor of Uttarakhand invites the item rate in electronic tendering system for construction of works under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the Districts of Pithoragarh & Uttarkashi for 02 number of packages with estimated cost totaling to Rs. 15.88 Crore including their maintenance for five years from the eligible contractors (Class-A and above) registered with PWD/CPWD or equivalent.

Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: 12-07-2024. Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid documents are available online and should be submitted online in www.pmgsytendersuk.gov.in. The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities. The bidders are required to submit original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B (ii) of ITB with CONCERNED CIRCLE OFFICES, mentioned in SBD/MBD, only up to or before the time and date of the submission of the Bids (for World Bank funded works) and on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the bid (for Regular PMGSY Works), either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive. No physical documents will be accepted after the closing date and time of submission of bids. Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: 18-07-2024, 01:00 PM

For further details please log on to www.pmgsytendersuk.gov.in
Chief Engineer URRDA, Dehradun
*Non Registered bidders may submit bids, however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.
Note: For e-Procurement for any sort of queries 135-2608125 number may be contacted 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM.

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED
Credit Recovery and Management Department

Administrative Office: No. 24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612001. E-Mail id: crmd@cityunionbank.in, Phone: 0435-2432322, Fax: 0435-2431746

RE-TENDER-CUM-AUCTION SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002
The following properties mortgaged to City Union Bank Limited will be sold in Re-Tender-cum-Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 8 (B) & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of Rs.1,36,36,430/- (Rupees One Crore Thirty Six Lakh Thirty Six Thousand Four Hundred and Thirty only) as on 15-03-2024 together with further interest to be charged from 16-03-2024 onwards and other expenses, any other dues to the Bank by the borrowers / guarantors No.1) M/s. Vinod Kumar Vipin Kumar, Shop No.36, New Anaj Mandi, Palwal, Haryana - 121102. No.2) Mr. Vinod Kumar, S/o. Kewal Ram, DC-126/1, 547/34, Jawahar Nagar, Palwal, Haryana - 121102. No.3) Mrs. Anita Rani, W/o. Vinod Kumar, H.No.140/84, ward No.12, Jawahar Nagar, Palwal, Haryana - 121102.

Reserve Price : Rs. 2,00,00,000/- (Rupees Two Crore only)
RE-AUCTION DETAILS
Date of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale Venue
09-08-2024 City Union Bank Limited, Faridabad Branch, E5/10, BP Railway Road, Near Neelam Bata Chowk, Faridabad, Haryana - 121001. Telephone No.0129-2421708, Cell No.9354776693

Terms and Conditions of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale:
(1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself / herself. (2) The intending bidders may obtain the Tender Forms from The Manager, City Union Bank Limited, Faridabad Branch, E5/10, BP Railway Road, Near Neelam Bata Chowk, Faridabad, Haryana - 121001. (3) The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the Tender Form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd., together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of 10% of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of "City Union Bank Ltd.", on or before 12.00 Noon on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. (4) For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact Telephone No.0129-2421708, Cell No.9354776693. (5) The properties are sold on "As-is-where-is", "As-is-what-is" and "whatever-theres-is" basis. (6) The sealed tenders will be opened in the presence of the intending bidders at 01.00 p.m. on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. Though in general the sale will be by way of closed tenders, the Authorised Officer may, at his sole discretion, conduct an Open Auction among the interested bidders who desire to quote a bid higher than the one received in the closed tender process, and in such an event, the sale shall be conferred on the person making highest bid. The sale, however, is subject to confirmation of City Union Bank Limited. (7) The successful bidder shall have to pay 25% (inclusive of EMD paid) of the sale amount immediately on completion of sale and the balance amount of 75% within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale, failing which the initial deposit of 25% shall be forfeited. (8) The Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful purchaser only after receipt of the entire sale consideration within the time limit stipulated herein. (9) The successful purchaser shall bear the charges/fees payable for conveyance, such as stamp duty, registration fee etc., as applicable under law. (10) The successful bidder should pay the statutory dues (lawful house tax, electricity charges and other dues), TDS, GST if any, due to Government, Government Undertaking and local bodies. (11) The Authorised Officer shall have all the powers to accept or reject the bids or postpone or cancel the sale without assigning any reason whatsoever.

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TIDEL TIDEL PARK LTD.

(An ISO 9001/14001/45001 Company)
CIN No. U74999TN1997PLC039523
No.4, RAJIV GANDHI SALAI, TARAMANI, CHENNAI - 600 113
Email: tenders@tidelpark.com, www.tidelpark.com
TENDER NO: TIDEL/2024-25/06
TIDEL invites E-Tender for the following works:
1. Construction of AEROHUB Project, at Plot No. L-5, SIPCOT Aerospace Park, Vallam Vadagal, Sripurambudur, Kanchipuram District as detailed below:
a) Civil, Plumbing, STP, Sump and utility building
b) External facade, facade and signage works.
c) Road parking and filling works
d) Compound wall and soil nailing
e) Landscaping works.

For more details and participation in the above E -Tender, please visit the website https://www.tenders.gov.in/. Last date for online submission of duly filled in Tender documents is 3.00 pm on 12-08-2024 TIDEL reserves the right to accept/reject any one/all tenders without assigning any reason thereof
DIPR/2301/TENDER/2024 Managing Director

Your feedback will keep us Cleaner, Sharper and Bolder

Call our toll-free number 1800 102 1878
Or write to us at customercare@thehindu.co.in
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THE HINDU

THE ADMINISTRATION OF UNION TERRITORY OF LADAKH
DIRECTORATE OF ANIMAL/SHEEP HUSBANDRY & FISHERIES DEPARTMENT

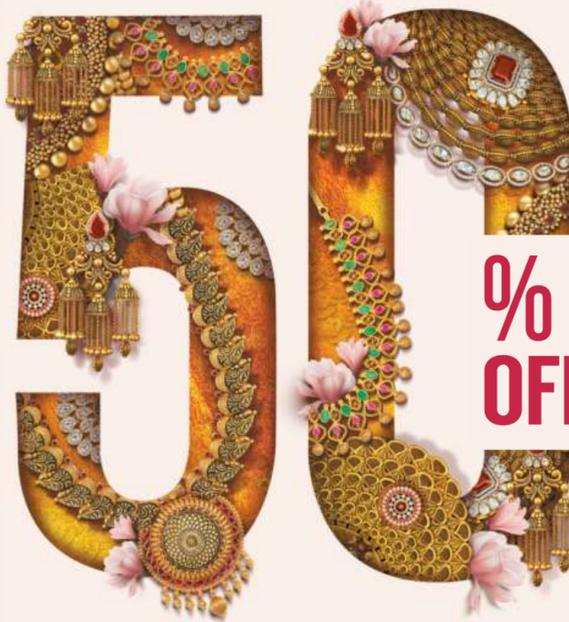
Tel. No. 01982-257583/ Email : directorshladakh@gmail.com

Subject: - Clarification on some items in the BoQ.
Reference: e-NIT ID No:- 2024_ASH_13108_1, dated: 20.06.2024

CORRIGENDUM

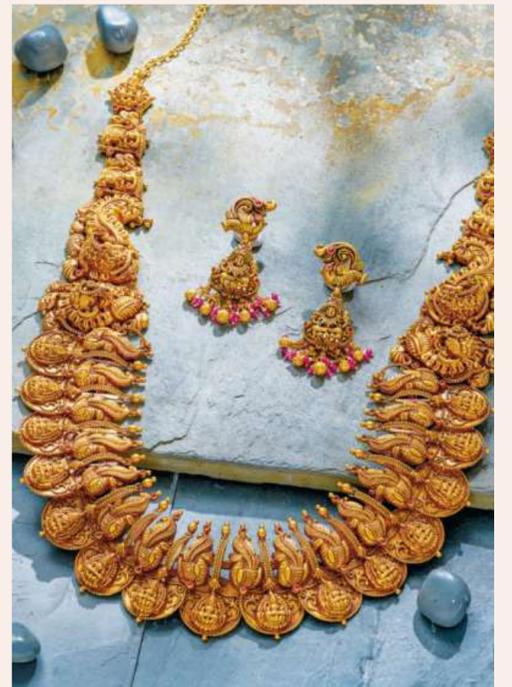


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www.joyalukkas.com

I'm in good shape and with a decent draw, I can make it

The primary goal will be the team event, where we want to win the first match; once you win it, you are in the quarterfinal and then anything can happen. Then we are in a great spot, funding will be better, people will be taken care of and players don't have to worry. That is my goal and that is what I am looking at



Trailblazer: Sharath, who kickstarted the Indian table tennis revolution, says Paris 2024 will be his last Olympics. K. MURALI KUMAR

INTERVIEW

SHARATH KAMAL

Amol Karhadkar

He won his first Commonwealth Games gold medal in 2004. He made his Olympic debut later that year. Since then, for two decades, A. Sharath Kamal – the lanky paddler from Chennai – has been the flagbearer of Indian table tennis all over the globe. Come July 26, and Sharath – in his fifth Olympic appearance – will be the Indian Olympic contingent's flag-bearer at the opening ceremony.

Set to turn 42, Sharath isn't thrilled as much with his new title as he is with having achieved what he set out to do a long time ago. He sits down for a long chat, spelling out everything around Paris and beyond. Excerpts:

What matters more for Sharath? Playing your fifth Olympics or being India's flag-bearer?

For me, what matters most in this Olympic Games – the main goal that I have been looking forward for the last eight years or so, even more – was the team qualifying. So when we qualified for the team event, I didn't care about if I played singles or mixed. Qualifying as a team is an important aspect for table tennis becoming much more popular. To add to that, the flag-bearer news was phenomenal. Because I still remember 2008 and Rathore was the flag-bearer. He called me by his side and he said 'you stay here'. Just standing beside him, I felt so proud and I was thinking how proud he must have been, people who know him, like the emotions that he would have while entering the stadium into holding the flag. I thought wow, such a lucky man. He, of course, deserved it. And now this time on the 26th of July, I will have the same honour.

It took me time to believe that it's not a prank, that it's something serious. But in the end, after a couple of days, I saw how the whole table tennis fraternity – not just in India but the whole world – showed its love and people were asking 'you know that you

are the flag-bearer?' That was nice. That was the cherry on the top.

Do you recall a moment when you particularly made up your mind that qualifying as a team has to be the next big goal for Indian table tennis?

Yes. When we lost out on qualification in 2020. We had the ranking, but we failed to make it in the qualification tournament. And that loss was quite heavy, at least for me. I felt like I didn't shoulder the responsibility well enough for the team. Those self-doubts were there and that was when it hit me. 'What next after the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham?' That was the question. 'To go in for (Olympic) singles. Last 16, quarterfinal? Fantastic, very good. But apart from Sharath Kamal, who benefits from that?' The sport is much bigger than me or a couple of players. Team qualification can raise the profile of the game. I had been there for singles, so I had to set my sights on the bigger picture. To qualify as a team, I have to drive, not just myself, but also the youngsters. I remember there was a phone call. I was driving for practice and Sathiyam called me up from France. We discussed our rankings are going down, we needed to make sure that one is in the top 40 and the other one is around 60-70. I said the first option is yours, the second option is mine.

Then we also brought in Chris (Pfeiffer, their coach) to help Manav, Manush, and myself. Harmeet also got his share. All of us had a part to play and we kept trying. The most important thing I kept telling all of them was, 'guys, we need to do it as a team and if we do it as a team, we will qualify in singles. We don't need to worry about anything else. The internal competition doesn't come in at all. We don't need to fight each other, we collectively fight, and this is all'. Harmeet was completely tuned for that. His main goal by December-January for the team to qualify, even though his ranking was so high. He would have made it for singles and everything. He channelised everything into the team goal, so I kept telling him, 'I am there to support you now. I'm right behind you. You drive

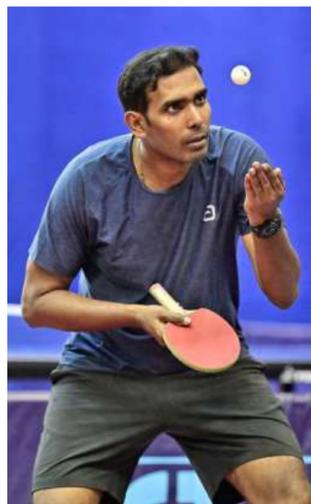
it.' That is what he did at the World Championships.

After the team qualification was formalised in early March, you seem to have just switched gears seamlessly...

Once the team got through – it was announced on the 5th of March – it was a burden off my shoulders. I started to breathe, I was happy, and then the Singapore Smash happened. Over there, I just ran helter-skelter. I was moving so swiftly, even though I was heavier. I was close to 90-91 kilos, my highest, but I was able to cover the full table with forehand. In fact, I had told my wife that I'll be back on Sunday or Monday and I kept on playing till next Sunday. My son asked me "which Sunday did you tell us that you will be home?" So then my singles place was also taken care of. And then one week after, I got the flag-bearer news. The month of March was like a dream.

What does it mean for women's team to qualify, especially considering Manika Batra is yet to peak in her career?

It is Manika's third Olympics. As a woman, I think she is the first Indian table tennis player to do so. She has equalled – if not surpassed – some of



the top male athletes in that respect. She is there at the front to lead Sreeja Akula, Archana Kamath and Ayhika's (Mukherjee, the reserve), all of whom are playing their first Olympic games. And Ayhika is the oldest of the lot. So I am sure there is still a long way to go for women's table tennis.

What can we expect in Paris?

This is going to be my last Olympic Games.

Are you sure? I am not, since we had a similar conversation ahead of Tokyo...

I am sure because I am having more fun in providing for the table tennis players in terms of an administrator or a high performance director. With the image and the connections that I have, I should be able to put a system in place. Kamlesh sir (Mehta, two-time Olympian who is the TTFI secretary general) is trying. But if I can join and put those things in place, have a few national training centers, it will greatly benefit Indian table tennis. India is very big country. You should have zonal centres. For that you need a lot of funding, but I'm sure that we can raise the funds with government and private support, so for me personally, I feel I can get those resources into the sport. If I am still playing, I can't be doing that.

Is this the most relaxed you have been going into an Olympics?

Certainly. For the last four Olympics, I qualified four or, at most, six weeks earlier. So all the energy was consumed on just qualifying for Olympics. This is the first time due to team qualification, we have almost five months to prepare for the Olympic



For me, what matters most in this Olympic Games – the main goal that I have been looking forward for the last eight years or so, even more – was the team qualifying

Games. And I am making the best of it.

How have you prepared for Paris?

In March, I sat down with my personal team, coach Rajath (Kamal, younger brother), Ramji Srinivasan, Chris, and everyone else. When they saw the plan, I needed downtime in March, so I spent two weeks catching up with friends and family. By the end of March, I started with diet regime. I was 92 kilos. I told the nutritionist I needed to lose five to six kilos gradually because I want to stabilise every kilo that I lose. Then we started doing fitness, two sessions a day and then gradually increased the playing workload. Then we went to Europe. Four weeks there, six to seven hours of table tennis on a daily basis. I hadn't done it for a long time. Came back and finished my other commitments before heading to Bengaluru for the team camp and entering the preparatory tournaments.

For the first time, you have had time to set goals for the Olympics. What is it that you want to achieve?

In Paris, of course you start with singles. I played a round of 32. That's been my best, in Tokyo and Beijing. I would like to better that. I am in good shape and with a decent draw, I think I can make it. If I can recreate the Singapore Smash, I'd be very, very happy. But the primary goal will be the team event, where we want to win the first match. We want to win the round of 16. Once you win it, you are in the quarterfinal and then anything can happen. God forbid, but if you lose, still Indian table tennis has reached the quarterfinals of the Olympic Games. Then we are in a great spot.

Funding will be better. People will be taken care of. Players don't have to worry. So that is my goal. That is what I am looking at.

Will we see you playing post Paris?

I doubt if I will be playing the team championship. I will play another year, but I might not go for all the tournaments. I might not be training as much. To be away from the family for two months at a stretch is tough for me, tougher for the family.

Weight loss is among the 'best routes to diabetes remission'

Advancements in hypoglycemic drugs, lifestyle management through bariatric surgery, reduced caloric food intake, use of intestinal hormones, and drugs to reduce body weight have paved the way for the possibility of remission of diabetes. Successful remission would relieve healthcare systems

Vijay Viswanathan
Reshma Mirshad

Several organisations across the world have accepted the term 'Remission of Diabetes'. We now know that diabetes is a vascular disease requiring lifelong management. Most of us are also aware that the cost of treating diabetes is escalating, and hence society can no longer afford to overlook the pandemic of this lifestyle disease. Therefore, understanding T2DM (type 2 diabetes mellitus) remission becomes more of a priority.

Advancements in hypoglycemic drugs, lifestyle management through bariatric surgery, reduced caloric food intake, use of intestinal hormones, and drugs to reduce body weight have paved the way for the possibility of remission of diabetes. There is no doubt that successful diabetes remission of T2DM would relieve healthcare systems and ease the increasingly unsustainable socio-economic burden.

Understanding diabetes remission

The major pathological causes of diabetes are insulin resistance in skeletal muscles, liver, and pancreas caused by defective glucose transporters or beta cell dysfunction due to oxidative stress and high fatty acid content. According to the American Diabetes Association, diabetes remission refers to the reduction or normalisation of glycated haemoglobin (HbA1c of under 6.5%) for at least 3 months after cessation of any glucose-lowering drugs. Diabetes remission is not to be considered a cure for the disease; it just means the disease is not actively progressing.

Hence, patients in the remission phase no longer show symptoms or require medications.

Key strategies for remission

One of the most effective methods for achieving diabetes remission is weight loss. The diabetes remission clinical trial (DIRECT) study showed that about 46% of type 2 diabetes patients (with diabetes for less than 6 years and not on insulin) reached remission in 12 months with a structured weight management programme. People with diabetes who achieved a weight loss reduction of over 10 to 15 kg showed diabetes remission. People with diabetes for more than 10 years are less likely to achieve remission. The findings of a meta-analysis revealed that T2DM patients with a BMI less than 35 kg/m², benefited from bariatric surgery to achieve better remission and good glycaemic control. The rate of diabetes remission in patients who have undergone bariatric surgery is 56.6%.

The other key factor is lifestyle intervention. Dietary changes such as low-calorie and low-carbohydrate diets showed effective weight loss, leading to diabetes remission, by reducing the fat in



Diabetes remission requires continuous monitoring, as remission is just a state where diabetes is not currently present, but the risk of recurrence remains high. GETTY IMAGES

the liver and pancreas. A weight loss of up to 12 kg in 2 years was reported in a non-randomised study.

There are, of course, plenty of medical interventions. The latest hypoglycemic drugs not only manage glycaemic control but also help in weight reduction. REMIT-sita (sitagliptin, metformin, and glargine) and REMIT-dapa (dapagliflozin, metformin, and glargine) studies showed greater efficacy in diabetes remission in patients with a short duration of diabetes, HbA1c under 7.5, and in the absence of comorbidities or diabetic complications. Drugs like GLP1-RA and tirzepatide (a dual agonist of GLP1 and GIP) help in 10-15% weight reduction and are efficient in diabetes remission.

Let's remember that diabetes remission requires continuous monitoring, as remission is just a state where diabetes is not currently present, but the risk of recurrence remains high. Diabetes can recur when weight is gained or due to stress or the decline in beta cell function and drugs that promote high blood sugar, like glucocorticoids and certain antipsychotic agents. Testing of HbA1c or another measure of glycaemic control should be performed annually.

A new paradigm in diabetes care

The role of healthcare providers is to develop personalised care depending on the patient's health status, preferences,



About 46% of type 2 diabetes patients (diabetes for less than 6 years and not on insulin) reached remission in 12 months with a weight management program

and goals. Educating the patients on the importance of lifestyle changes like calorie restriction and physical activity to attain weight loss. Regular monitoring of the blood glucose, weight, and any other necessary parameters. Depending on the reports, the medication should be adjusted.

Diabetes remission, or, is the latest revolution in diabetes care as its focus shifts from merely managing diabetes to strategies to eliminate the need for medication. Knowledge of remission can motivate patients to follow lifestyle modifications strictly. Therefore, a gradual dip in the burden of diabetes-related complications can be achieved. The importance of preventive care and early intervention can ultimately reduce healthcare costs and improve individual health outcomes.

Conclusion

In the future, type 2 diabetes management is likely to involve a step-wise approach towards remission of

diabetes based on the patient's metabolic profile.

The concept of diabetes remission is a game-changer in the fight against type 2 diabetes.

While it requires commitment and significant lifestyle changes, the benefits of achieving remission are profound, offering a path to improved health and quality of life.

Combination therapy, including possibly multi-drug therapy, rather than monotherapy, will be the key feature of successful remission.

Remission will be seen as the primary aim, especially for prediabetes and newly-diagnosed T2DM patients, who are the two groups most likely to go into long-term remission with the least effort. Many long-term trials are required to continue this evolution.

Patients, healthcare providers, and policymakers must embrace and support these transformative approaches to diabetes care.

(Dr. Vijay Viswanathan is president-elect of the Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India, the largest organisation of diabetes care professionals in the world, and Dr. Reshma is a medical associate, M V Hospital for Diabetes & Prof. M Viswanathan Diabetes Research Centre, Chennai. drvijay@mvdabetes.com.)

Zika virus: the need to improve surveillance and vector control

Zubeda Hamid

The Zika virus is making the news once again. At least 15 cases, including eight pregnant women, of Zika have been discovered so far in Pune, Maharashtra. In Karnataka, a 74-year-old who had Zika has died. State Health Department officials say the death was caused by other factors. Another suspected case in Karnataka is being investigated as well.

The Pune Municipal Corporation has said it has stepped up surveillance; the Karnataka Health Department has released guidelines on the virus for the public, and both States have urged members of the public to ensure there are no mosquito-breeding sites at their homes.

Meanwhile, the Union Health Ministry has issued an advisory to States to be vigilant; screen pregnant women, and strengthen entomological surveillance and intensive vector-control activities.

The Indian Council of

Medical Research (ICMR) has asked States not only to increase testing for Zika but also to test patients with chikungunya and dengue-like symptoms who test negative for these infections for Zika, as per a news report.

As the monsoon continues over large parts of the country, creating ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes, and with cases of dengue spiking as well, State administrations and members of the public need to step up mosquito-control measures to prevent transmission of diseases.

Here's a quick FAQ on Zika:

What is Zika virus?

As per the World Health Organization (WHO), Zika virus is a mosquito-borne virus first identified in Uganda in 1947 in a Rhesus macaque monkey, followed by evidence of infection and disease in humans in other African countries in the 1950s. Zika virus occurs through the bite of infected Aedes mosquitoes,



Mosquitoes carry dengue, yellow fever, chikungunya and Zika. AP

mainly *Aedes aegypti*, which also transmits dengue and chikungunya. The Aedes mosquitoes usually bite during the day. Sexual transmission, transmission from mother to foetus and transfusions of blood and blood products are other routes of transmission.

How it manifests?

Most people infected with the Zika virus do not develop symptoms, the WHO says. Among those who do, they typically start 3-14 days after infection and are generally mild, including rash, fever, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, and headache, which usually

last for 2-7 days.

How is it diagnosed?

Zika virus may be suspected based on symptoms or the fact that the person is living in or visiting areas where Zika transmission has occurred. A diagnosis can only be given after a laboratory test. A recent report in *The Hindu* pointed to gaps in the tracking and surveillance of the virus, highlighting the fact that in March 2023, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), India's apex agency for diagnostic approvals, confirmed that there was no approved

diagnostic test for Zika. This limitation, the report said, hinders the country's ability to diagnose Zika. At present, samples are generally sent to a few select labs, including the National Institute of Virology, for confirmation. The NIV, a media report indicates, is flooded with samples, leading to delays in the issuing of reports.

What are the ill effects?

Zika virus infection during pregnancy, the WHO says, can cause infants to be born with microcephaly and other congenital malformations and can also cause preterm births and miscarriage. Microcephaly is a condition in which an infant's head is smaller than what is typical for their age and can be caused by the brain not developing properly. An estimated 5-15% of infants born to women infected with Zika virus during pregnancy have evidence of Zika-related complications, as per the WHO. Zika virus infection is also associated with Guillain-Barré

syndrome, neuropathy, and myelitis in adults and children. Guillain-Barré syndrome is a rare condition that causes a person's immune system attacks the peripheral nerves.

Is there a vaccine?

No vaccine is as yet available for the prevention or treatment of Zika virus infection, the WHO says. The development of a Zika vaccine remains an active area of research.

A few studies have shown promising results. In India for instance, several companies are attempting to make a vaccine. In a study published in 2017, Bharat Biotech's "killed Zika virus vaccine" which uses an African strain showed 100% efficacy against mortality and disease in animal studies. Indian Immunologicals Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Dairy Development Board said earlier this year that it was also working on developing a vaccine.

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Masahiro Fujimoto using ChatGPT for directions in Kawasaki, south of Tokyo. AFP

Blind gamer puts ChatGPT to the test

Agence France Presse

Japanese eSports gamer Mashiro is blind and often relies on a companion to get around Tokyo – but he hopes that artificial intelligence, hailed as a promising tool for people with disabilities, can help him travel alone. The 26-year-old 'Street Fighter' player put the latest version of AI chatbot ChatGPT to the test on his way to a stadium for a recent Para eSports meet-up.

"I can't participate in an event like this without someone to rely on," he said. "Also, sometimes I just want to get around by myself without speaking to other people. "So if I can use technology like ChatGPT to design my own special needs support, that would be great."

This year, the US firm OpenAI, released GPT-4o, which understands voice, text and image commands in several languages. The generative gadget, along with others such as Google's Gemini, is part of a fast-growing field that experts say could make education, employment and everyday services more accessible.

Following the streets' tactile paving, Masahiro Fujimoto – who goes by his online handle Mashiro – used his stick adorned with a small monkey mascot to find his way from the station. As he went, he spoke to GPT-4o like a friend, receiving its answers through an earpiece in one ear, leaving the other side free to listen out for cars.

Having asked for basic directions, he

GPT-4o understands voice, text and image commands in several languages. The generative gadget, is part of a growing field that experts say could make everyday services more accessible

added: "In fact, I am blind, so could you give me further details for blind people?"

"Of course," the bot replied. "You might notice an increase in crowd noise and the sound of activities as you get closer." The journey, 20 minutes for sighted people, took Mashiro around four times as long with several U-turns. When it started to rain heavily, he requested help from his friend, who is partially sighted, to finish the journey.

"Arrival!" finally shouted Mashiro, who has microphthalmos and has been blind since birth, using only sound to demolish his opponents on 'Street Fighter 6'.

AI can cater to specific needs better than "one-size-fits-all" assistive products and technologies, said Youngjun Cho, an associate professor in computer science at University College London (UCL).

"Its potential is enormous," said Cho, who also works at UCL's Global Disability Innovation Hub. "I envisage that this can empower many individuals and promote independence."

People with hearing loss can, for example, use AI speech-to-text transcription, while chatbots can help format a resume for someone with learning disabilities.

Some tools for visually impaired people, such as Seeing AI, Envision AI and TapTapSee, describe phone camera images.

Danish app Be My Eyes, where real-life volunteers help via live chat, is working with OpenAI to develop a "digital visual assistant".

But Masahide Ishiki, a Japanese expert in disability and digital accessibility, warned it can be "tricky" to catch mistakes from ChatGPT, which "replies so naturally".

"The next objective is to improve the accuracy of real-time visual recognition, to ultimately reach capabilities close to that of an eye," said Ishiki, who is blind.

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