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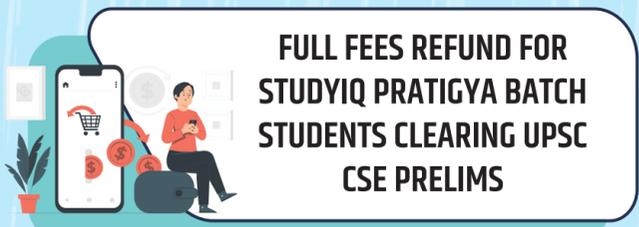
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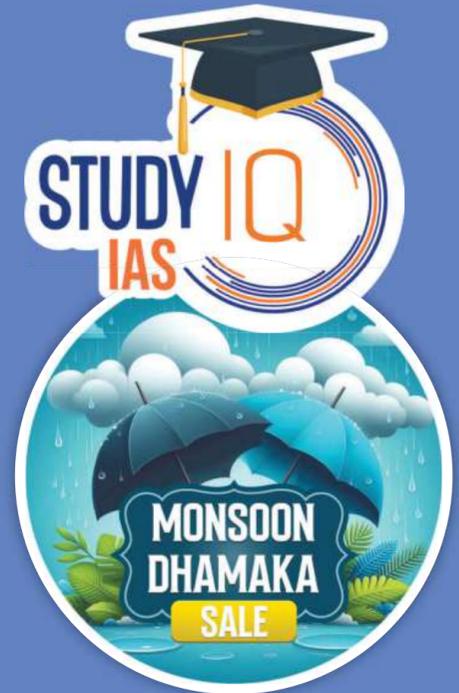
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**TOUGH OPENER**  
Nikhat overcomes  
Kloetzer's challenge  
SPORT » PAGE 16

# Manu's historic bronze opens India's medal hunt

The 22-year-old is the first Indian woman shooter to be on the Olympic podium as she wins medal in the 10m air pistol event; she will now compete in 10m pistol mixed team and 25m pistol events

**Jonathan Selvaraj**  
PARIS

Three years ago, Manu Bhaker broke down in tears at the conclusion of a dismal campaign at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics where she finished medalless across three events.

On Sunday at Chateauroux, the 22-year-old, who is competing at her second Olympics, wiped away tears from her eyes once again. This time though they were of joy following the conclusion of the women's 10m air pistol event where she won a bronze medal, opening India's medal count at the Paris 2024 Games.

The medal was also the first won by an Indian woman shooter.

After qualifying for the



**The trailblazer:** Manu Bhaker celebrates with her bronze medal in women's 10 metre air pistol at the Paris Olympics, in the Chateauroux shooting range, on Sunday. RITU RAJ KONWAR

final in third place, Manu hit the ground running. Of the 22 shots she took, just 7 were in the '9' ring.

She was never out of medal contention and was in silver medal place until her final shot of the com-

petition where she was pipped by the narrowest of margins - 0.1 - by South Korea's Kim Yeji.

Another Korean Ye Jin Oh took gold.

Manu isn't done just yet. She will also be competing

in the women's 10m pistol mixed team event on Monday and the women's 25m pistol events later in the competition.

**MORE REPORTS**  
» PAGE 15

# Two held day after three IAS aspirants drown in basement

**Samridhi Tewari**  
NEW DELHI

A day after three Civil Services aspirants drowned in the basement of a private coaching centre, the Delhi Police on Sunday arrested its coordinator and the building owner, and booked them for culpable homicide. The accused have been sent to judicial custody for 14 days.

The deceased have been identified as Shreya Yadav, 25, from Uttar Pradesh; Tanya Soni, 25, a resident of Telangana; and Nevin Dalvin, 28, from Kerala.

Senior police officers said the basement was around eight feet below ground level and more than 20 students were present inside it on Saturday evening. While the basement gate was closed, it got damaged after water gushed in at a high pressure, an officer said.

Mayor Shelly Oberoi said Rau's IAS Study Circle had been running a library



Security personnel stand guard near the UPSC exam coaching centre in New Delhi, where three people drowned on Saturday. PTI

in the basement in violation of the law.

"It was said that a drain passing in front of the building burst, and like a flash flood, water entered the basement and the students got trapped," Ms. Oberoi told presspersons.

She and an official of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi said none of the other buildings next to the centre had faced flooding.

Later, the Corporation said in a statement, "The so-called bursting of drain-

age outside the coaching centre is not conclusive and the matter is under investigation."

**Students stage protest**  
Since morning, students from coaching institutes and residential complexes have been protesting against the negligence that caused the deaths.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 10  
**MORE REPORTS**  
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## IN BRIEF

**PM to CMs: ensure full coverage of welfare schemes**

**NEW DELHI**  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged the CMs of BJP-ruled States to ensure saturation-level coverage of welfare programmes announced by them and the Centre. » Page 12

**NTA announces CUET-UG results after 30-day delay**

**NEW DELHI**  
The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Sunday declared the CUET-UG results, which were expected on June 30 but were delayed as controversies gripped the NTA. » Page 12

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# Fewer bidders: Centre scraps auction of 3 critical mineral blocks

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

The Centre has scrapped the auction of three critical mineral blocks as there were fewer bidders than expected. The auction is part of the Centre's push towards self-reliance in critical mineral supplies.

The blocks are the Salal-Haimna lithium, titanium and bauxite block in Jammu and Kashmir, Muskaniya-Gareriatala-Barwari potash block in Jharkhand and Kurunjakulam graphite block in Tamil Nadu. "The auction was annulled as the required number of bids under the rules have not been received," said a Mines Ministry notice.

The Ministry, on March 14, put on sale seven critical mineral blocks in the

third round of auction. The blocks that received fewer than three bids in the first tranche were notified under this round. These seven blocks pertain to critical minerals such as glauconite, graphite, nickel, platinum group element, potash, lithium, and titanium and are spread across Bihar, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

In June, the government cancelled the auction of 14 blocks of critical minerals launched in the second tranche. In the first tranche, the Centre had cancelled the auction for 13 of the 20 blocks put on sale due to a lukewarm response.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 10

## Spiritual sojourn



**Seeking blessings:** Kanwariyas gather to collect holy water from the Ganga river during their pilgrimage in the holy month of Shraavan at Har Ki Pauri ghat in Haridwar on Sunday. PTI

# Not all require tax clearance certificate to go abroad: govt.

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

After outrage over a Union Budget proposal making it mandatory to get tax clearance certificates for going abroad, the government on Sunday said only those accused of financial irregularities or having huge tax arrears needed them.

"The proposed amendment does not require all the residents to obtain the tax clearance certificate," the Finance Ministry said in a statement. The Ministry, in the Finance Bill, has proposed to add the reference of the Black Money Act, 2015, to the list of Acts under which any person should clear his liabilities to obtain the certificate.

The Ministry said the In-

**Centre says only those accused of financial irregularities or having huge tax arrears need it**

come Tax Department, through a 2004 notification, had specified that the certificate may be required only in case of serious financial irregularities and investigation of cases under the Income Tax or Wealth Tax Act requiring a person's presence and leading to a tax demand, or if a person has direct-tax arrears exceeding ₹10 lakh, which have not been stayed.

The department said a person could be asked to get the certificate only after recording the reasons.

# New job schemes to kick off soon: Somanathan

**Vikas Dhoot**  
NEW DELHI

The Union government is confident of launching the schemes in the Prime Minister's package for employment and skilling, which were announced in last week's Budget, within this financial year.

The schemes include an internship programme for one crore youth in 500 top companies whose design details will be worked out in consultation with the industry, Finance Secretary T.V. Somanathan said on Sunday.

"We expect all of these schemes to start off within this financial year... We have tried to make sure the coverage of the employ-



We have tried to make sure the coverage of the employment-linked incentive schemes is, as far as possible, widespread, and not tried to make technological, sectoral choices

**T.V. SOMANATHAN**  
Finance Secretary

ment-linked incentive schemes is, as far as possible, widespread, and not tried to make technological, sectoral choices. While Schemes A and C are for all industries, Scheme B is for manufacturing jobs," Mr. Somanathan told *The Hindu*.

The Finance Secretary also said that the decision to incentivise hiring for first-timers with a salary limit of ₹1 lakh a month had been aimed at keeping the schemes sector-neutral.

"I agree ₹1 lakh is high, but it is not so if you are trying to cover the hiring of

# 'Centre will deliver on promises to A.P., Bihar'

**Vikas Dhoot**  
NEW DELHI

The Centre is confident of delivering on its promise to help develop Andhra Pradesh's capital by

people with sophisticated skills, or knowledge of AI [Artificial Intelligence]," he said, adding that the schemes could spur new jobs in areas under threat from the advent of technologies like AI.

Referring to the recent tendency of large tech

external financing, and arrange funds for capex in Bihar, Finance Secretary T.V. Somanathan says.

**FULL INTERVIEW**  
» PAGE 11

companies to defer joining dates for fresh recruits, the Secretary said that it was precisely for this reason that the government did not want to exclude such people.

**CONTINUED ON**  
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# SP appoints Mata Prasad Pandey as LoP in Uttar Pradesh Assembly

**Mayank Kumar**  
LUCKNOW

A day ahead of the start of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly's monsoon session, the Samajwadi Party (SP) on Sunday appointed seven-time MLA Mata Prasad Pandey as the Leader of the Opposition (LoP).

The 81-year-old legislator from Itwa in Siddharthnagar district will replace SP president Akhilesh Yadav, who resigned as MLA from the Karhal seat in Mainpuri district after being elected to the Lok Sabha from Kannauj.

The party also appointed Kanth MLA Kamal Akhtar as its chief whip in the



Mata Prasad Pandey

Assembly, Raniganj MLA Rakesh Kumar Verma as its deputy whip, and Manjhanpur legislator Indrajeet Saroj as its deputy leader in the House.

**Brahmin leader**  
The appointment of a Brahmin leader to the key post holds significance as the SP continues its efforts to build its base among the backward classes, Dalits,

and minorities based on its PDA [Pichada, Dalit, and Alpasankhyak] plank.

On Mr. Pandey's caste identity and whether it is a shift from the Backward-centric politics of the party, Rajendra Choudhary, the SP's chief spokesperson, said, "Our party believes in inclusive politics. In PDA, A stands for Alpa-sankhyak (minorities), Agara (upper caste), and Aadhi Aabadi (women)."

**It's a betrayal: Maurya**  
Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya lashed out at the SP chief for not making a Backward or Dalit leader the LoP and described the appointment as a betrayal.

# IAS coaching centre 'held classes in basement'; complaint filed month ago

Complainant had urged Delhi govt. to take strict action against Rau's IAS Study Circle for not obtaining permission for it; aspirant alleged that a high-level MCD official 'received money' to let violation continue; institute had fire NOC: DFS chief

Samridhi Tewari  
NEW DELHI

Almost a month before tragedy struck at Rau's IAS Study Circle, a student of the institute had filed a complaint with the Delhi government about a classroom being run "illegally" from the building's basement.

In the complaint filed on June 26 on a public grievance portal of the Administrative Reforms Department, the student said the classes were being run "without obtaining a no-objection certificate" from the authorities concerned.

The student also alleged that when he complained to the authorities concerned about it, he was told that a high-level official in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is "being paid money" to continue with the violation.

"This is an example of corruption in the MCD. Please take strict action against big UPSC coaching institutes putting students



Students staging a protest against the death of three civil services aspirants in the basement of a coaching institute at Old Rajinder Nagar in New Delhi on Sunday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

lives at risk by holding classes at unauthorised places," the complaint stated.

'Poor living conditions' Several students protesting against the death of three students who were trapped inside the flooded basement of the institute highlighted the crumbling infrastructure and living conditions in the area, con-

sidered to be a hub of coaching institutes.

Reenu Rawat, a 24-year-old defence services aspirant from Haryana's Rewari, said most coaching institutes have opened libraries in their basements, which get flooded when it rains.

"This issue is not limited to coaching institutes, many people are running paying guest facilities in basements. On Saturday, when

it rained, sewage entered our room, which is inside a basement. We are out on the street since then," Ms. Rawat said

Praniti, 21, a UPSC aspirant from Hyderabad, said basements lack emergency exit points and proper ventilation

"We have left our families and homes to come here and study because Delhi is a hub of coaching

institutes. A student died last week in Patel Nagar. All politicians said action will be taken, and now, three more students have died. This is disheartening for us," he said.

'Complaints ignored' According to the protesting students, they had complained to the MCD several times, but to no avail. "Our lives are at risk and nobody is going to take responsibility after we're dead," a student said.

However, Delhi Fire Services (DFS) chief Atul Garg said Rau's IAS Study Circle had obtained the fire NOC. He said the major issue is that the basements in the area are at the level of the road. "Coaching centres have installed iron gates at their entrance. Whenever it rains, they shut down their gates and use plastic wraps to cover them in a bid to prevent water from entering their buildings. On Saturday, the coaching institute's gate broke and the water that had accumulated on the road entered the basement," he said.

# 'Can never forget how my friends gasped for breath'

Samridhi Tewari  
NEW DELHI

Traumatized students who were inside the library in the basement of the private coaching institute in Delhi that flooded on Saturday evening shared harrowing accounts of their narrow escape.

They recalled how they were gasping for air and climbed on top of tables and chairs to protect themselves from the rising water.

A 20-year-old student said she had left the basement of Rau's IAS Study Circle to eat, and just minutes later, it was flooded with water. Around 30 students were in the library at the time, she said.

"I can never forget how my friends were gasping for air. They were struggling as the water was dirty. I remember a student crying because his sister was trapped inside," she said.

Another student said they were trapped inside but managed to get out when the glass door broke. "The force of the water was so much that the entire basement was flooded in

just five minutes," the student said. "Since the glass door broke, we also got cuts. The students sitting near the door were able to escape. Those who were sitting at the back of the room found it difficult to escape and eventually drowned," said the 23-year-old students.

'We were scared'

A 22-year-old student from Assam said, "The signal was weak, so we were not able to make phone calls. We just sat on top of tables and chairs for hours, as students were getting rescued slowly. All of us were scared."

"All students were sitting in the library. The staff asked us to leave as the library shuts around 7 p.m. When we reached near the door, the pressure of water was so much that our knees were submerged. It was difficult to even climb the stairs due to the flow of water," he said. "While ropes were thrown for students to come out, the water so dirty that we struggled to locate anything. We couldn't see. I was able to come out after someone pulled my rope," he said.

# Dreams nipped in the bud, say kin of dead IAS aspirants

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Parents and relatives struggled to come to terms with the sudden demise of three civil services aspirants, even as several students staged a protest on Sunday in front of the building housing Rau's IAS Study Circle.

Fear gripped Dharmendra Yadav, a professor at an engineering college in Ghaziabad, as he watched the events unfolding on TV on Saturday.

When frantic calls to his niece, Shreya, went unanswered, he rushed to the Old Rajinder Nagar area, with the search tragically ending at the mortuary of Ram Manohar Lohia (RML)



The flooded basement at Rau's IAS Study Circle. FILE PHOTO

"We sent her to Delhi and not Lucknow or Allahabad. We thought the facilities here are better. Everything we dreamed of is gone," he said.

Nevin was pursuing PhD in Arts and Aesthetics from Jawaharlal Nehru University and was also a UPSC aspirant. He was staying near his university and had gone to the institute's library, a relative said.

A student of Delhi University, Tanya Soni, hailing from Aurangabad in Bihar, had joined the coaching centre two months ago. Her father works in Telangana. Her parents were inconsolable as doctors at RML Hospital handed them over her body.

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IN THE COURT OF THE SENIOR CIVIL JUDGE : PENUKONDA  
Succession O.P.No : 1/2023  
IA No. 132/2023 & 593/2023

Between :-  
Malathi Bhatnagar and others  
Petitioners/Petitioners  
AND: Indian Overseas Bank,  
Bhatinda & others  
...Respondents/Respondents

To:  
R-1: Indian Overseas Bank, Kikar Bazaar Branch, Battinda Town, Punjab State, PIN : 151 001, Rep. by its Branch Manager.  
R-2: UNIT TRUST OF INDIA MUTUAL FUND (MUTUAL FUND), 1st Floor, Near Vandana Hospital, Ganesha Basti Bus Stop, Gonia Road, Bhatinda-151 001.  
R-4: Muthoot Finance Ltd., Bank Bazaar, Main Bazaar Road, Ramman Mandi, Battinda Town, Punjab State, PIN : 151 301, Rep. by its Branch Manager.  
R-5: State Bank of India, Bhatti Road, Opp to Care Hospital, Battinda Town, Punjab State, PIN : 151 001, Rep. by its Branch Manager.  
R-6: SHRI. PARASARAM HOLDINGS PVT LTD-B, Nirmal Shopping Center Gupta Chambers, Bharat Nagar, Delhi-110052.  
R-9: Finance IOB, Kikar Bazaar Branch, Battinda Town, Punjab State, PIN : 151 001, Rep. by its Branch Manager.

Please take notice that the above Succession IA No. 132/2023 & 593/2023 in SOP 01/2023 filed by the petitioners stands posted for your appearance. Hence, you are hereby informed you to appear before the court either in person or through an advocate at 10-30 AM on 08-08-2024, failing which the matter will be decided in your absence.

By order of the Court /  
Praneeth GN,  
Advocate for petitioners, Bangalore,  
Date: 26-07-2024, Place: Penukonda

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S. no.	Job no / Work name	Amount (Rs. in Lacs.)
1.	47/D(H)DD(H)-II/2023-23, D/o Park, Gren Belt & RSP in sector - 40, 45 & 48 with two year maintenance.	80.02
2.	106/D(H)DD(H)-II/2023-24, M/o RSP with two year maintenance sector-71 crossing to sector-62, 63 NH-24, Road No-06 under the Metro line including round about and Triangle Noida	76.26

Which can be uploaded by date 05/08/2024 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 06/08/2024 at 11.00 AM.

S. no.	Job no / Work name	Amount (Rs. in Lacs.)
1.	15/D(H)DD(H)-II/2024-25, M/o Park (R/o boundary wall, P/F MS grill & SFRCC grill and reconstruction of Kachcha footpath & other civil maintenance work in different parks sector-19) Noida.	71.96
2.	20/D(H)DD(H)-II/2024-25, D/o Park (C/o MS Gazebo Hut in different park in Horticulture Division-I) Noida. (05 Nos. of MS Gazebo Hut)	42.31
3.	26/D(H)DD(H)-II/2024-25, Annual Maintenance & Repair of M.S. Tree Guards) All Division-Ist Noida	89.77
4.	22/D(H)DD(H)-II/2024-25, M/o Park/ Green belt with two year Maintenance Sector-14A and Sector-14 Ghosala and Green Belt Chilla Regulator Noida	88.20
5.	29/D(H)DD(H)-II/2024-25, Annual Maintenance Work (M/o Park and Green Belt in sector- 11 and 12 under horticulture Division-I area for One year civil work maintenance) Noida	79.36
6.	26/D(H)DD(H)-II/2024-25, D/o Park Sector-115 Playground with two year maintenance.	51.32
7.	27/D(H)DD(H)-II/2024-25, D/o Park Sector-51 B-Block Two Year Maintenance.	52.34
8.	28/D(H)DD(H)-II/2024-25, M/o Park (P/F MS Grill and Fencing Concertina Coil around Vedvan Park boundary wall in sector- 78) Noida.	76.25
9.	29/D(H)DD(H)-II/2024-25, M/o Park (Construction of Catchment Chamber at different parks in Horticulture Division-II) Noida	66.23

Which can be uploaded by date 12/08/2024 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 13/08/2024 at 11.00 AM.

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विज्ञापन संख्या- BCECEB(PGDAC)-2024/03 दिनांक 16.07.2024 एवं 2024/04 दिनांक 25.07.2024 के क्रम में PGDAC-2024 से सम्बन्धित सभी अभ्यर्थियों / संस्थानों / सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि;

- वेसे अभ्यर्थी जो PGDAC-2024 Counselling हेतु Security Deposit को राशि जमा करते हुए पूर्ण रूप से आवेदन भर चुके हैं परन्तु किसी कारणवश Round-1 Counselling हेतु Choice filling नहीं कर पाये हैं तथा Round-2 Counselling में Participate करना चाहते हैं तो वे भी निम्नवत् कार्यक्रम अनुसार Choice filling करने हेतु पात्रता-प्राप्त हैं, जिसके लिए उन्हें निम्नवत् कार्यक्रम अनुसार Online counselling Portal के माध्यम से Online Registration-cum-Choice filling करना अनिवार्य होगा।
- विज्ञापन संख्या- BCECEB(PGDAC)-2024/04 दिनांक 25.07.2024 के आलोक में वेसे अभ्यर्थी जो Free Exit हुए हैं एवं Round-2 कॉन्सलिंग में participate करना चाहते हैं तो वेसे सभी अभ्यर्थी निम्नवत् कार्यक्रम अनुसार Round-2 Counselling हेतु अपने Online counselling Portal के Account में Login कर Fresh choice filling करना अनिवार्य होगा।
- Round-2 Seat Allotment / Document Verification / Admission** से सम्बन्धित कार्यक्रम निम्नवत् है;
  - Date of online registration-cum-choice filling for seat allotment (2nd round) ..... 30.07.2024
  - Last date of online registration-cum-choice filling for seat allotment and locking (2nd round) ..... 01.08.2024
  - 2nd Round provisional Seat Allotment Order publication ..... 04.08.2024
  - Downloading of allotment order (2nd round) ..... 04.08.2024 to 06.08.2024
  - Document Verification/Admission (2nd round) ..... 05.08.2024 to 06.08.2024
- पूर्व प्रकाशित विज्ञापन संख्या-BCECEB(PGDAC)-2024/03 दिनांक 16.07.2024 एवं 2024/04 दिनांक 25.07.2024 को अन्य शर्तों / नियम यथावत् रहेंगे।

परीक्षा निरन्तरक

## Waterlogging woes continue as Delhi relies on 1976 master plan

**Nikhil M Babu**  
NEW DELHI

As both the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) continue to blame each other for the death of three students in the basement of a coaching centre that was inundated following rain, at the centre of the issue is the struggling drainage network of the national capital.

On Saturday, the Pusa observatory of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), located close to the Rau's IAS Study Circle in Old Rajinder Nagar, recorded only 26.5 mm of rainfall from 2.30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and 31.5 mm of rainfall between 5.30 p.m. and 8.30 p.m.

The total 58 mm of rainfall in a day is not extraordinary during the monsoon season. One of the main reasons for the waterlogging in the city is that Delhi continues to operate on a drainage master plan made in 1976, which is cap-



Police personnel stand guard near the coaching centre where three aspirants died, in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

able of handling only 50 mm of rainfall.

The plan was made when the city's population was around 60 lakh and since then, it has increased about fourfold.

Also, over the years, the concrete area too has increased. So, if earlier, a particular amount of rainfall generated 50% of run-off water and the rest was absorbed by the earth, now the run-off water will be

more than 50%.

### Not upgraded

As the drainage system has not been upgraded, it is unable to handle the excess water.

Last year, after the city received 153 mm of rainfall on July 9 and 10, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had said the city drainage system was "not designed to handle the unprecedented level of rain".

## Karnataka govt. driving away investors: Nirmala

Its policies have driven State's rate of inflation above national average; poor law and order situation has left industries scared: Finance Minister

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

Accusing the State government of driving away investors from Karnataka, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said the government's policies had driven the rate of inflation in the State above the national average.



Nirmala Sitharaman

### FM's rebuttal

"Because of the worsening law and order situation, industries are scared and they want to get out. I do not want to take the names of companies that are going out," she told presspersons here in a rebuttal to the allegations that Karnataka and many other States have been ignored in the recently presented Union Budget. Ms. Sitharaman said:

"Karnataka is facing high inflation which is above the national average. The rate of inflation between June 2023 and June 2024 in Karnataka was 6.1%, much higher than the national average of 5.4%. The rate of inflation in Karnataka between June 2022 and May 2023, before the Congress came to power was 5.3%, lower than the national average of 6%."

Blaming the State government's actions as res-

ponsible for spiking up the inflation, she said: "Petrol and diesel prices were hiked by about ₹3 and ₹3.5 a litre, respectively, and milk price has gone up. The property guidance value has gone up from 25% to 30%, the stamp duty has increased by 200% to 500%, vehicle registration fee has gone up by 3%, and an additional 10% lifetime tax has been imposed on electric vehicles [EVs]."

### 'High revenue deficit'

Inflation, the Finance Minister said, "is naturally higher than the national average due to these factors. The revenue deficit is high, capital expenditure is not happening or happening less. If you don't invest on capital expenditure, employment will not come to Karnataka, and the demand and consumption will also not increase."

## NCW summons Durgesh Pathak over death of IAS aspirants

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has summoned AAP MLA from Delhi's Rajinder Nagar Durgesh Pathak over the incident where three students, including two women, lost their lives due to flooding in the basement of a coaching centre in the area.

The NCW, in a post, said it has taken cognizance of the coaching centre incident where three students died in the Old Rajinder Nagar area of the national capital.

"Allegations of ignored appeals for drain cleaning are concerning. A hearing is scheduled on 02.08.2024 at 12:30 p.m. Notice has been given and Durgesh Pathak, MLA Rajinder Nagar, has been directed to appear in person. Non-compliance will result in appropriate action," it said.

The civil services aspirants - two females and a male - died on Saturday evening as they were trapped inside the library running in the basement of Old Rajinder Nagar-based coaching centre.

## Patel Nagar electrocution: live wire was touching iron gate, says probe

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

A magisterial probe into the death of a 26-year-old civil services aspirant from electrocution in Patel Nagar here last week has found that it happened as the iron gate he accidentally touched was in contact with an open wire of a water pump.

The probe into Nilesh Rai's death was conducted by the Patel Nagar Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM).

On Monday, Rai was electrocuted after he touched the gate that had

electricity running through it following heavy rain in central Delhi's Patel Nagar area.

The engineer and a native of Ghazipur in Uttar Pradesh had stepped out of his PG accommodation to buy something.

In the probe report, the Patel Nagar SDM stated that wire of a water pump was in contact with the iron gate that the victim touched accidentally, leading to his death.

'Damaged insulation' The wire with "damaged insulation" was found

touching the iron gate at several points. This wire supplied electricity to a water pump, it stated.

"Heavy rainfall on the day of the incident likely exacerbated the situation, resulting in the death of victim Nilesh Rai," the report stated.

The SDM, in his report, also recommended police verification of all PG accommodations and a comprehensive drive by the civic agency to regulate and ensure the safety of all such accommodations and residential libraries to avoid such accidents.

## Gujarat HC summons Surat MP over pleas challenging his 'unopposed win' in LS poll

**Press Trust of India**  
AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat High Court has issued summons to the Bharatiya Janata Party MP from the Surat Lok Sabha constituency, Mukesh Dalal, over two petitions challenging his uncontested victory.

The court of Justice J.C.

Doshi issued summons to Mr. Dalal, directing him to respond by August 9, after the matter came up for hearing on July 25, the lawyer for petitioners P.S. Champaneri said on Sunday. Mr. Dalal was declared the winner on April 22, the last date for withdrawal of nominations, after Congress pick Nilesh Kumbha-

ni's nomination was rejected and other candidates withdrew from the race.

The remaining 25 Lok Sabha seats in Gujarat went to poll on May 7 in the third phase.

### Validity of decision

The petitioners have challenged the legality and validity of the decision of the

Surat Collector and returning officer to reject Mr. Kumbhani's nomination.

The two petitions questioned the decision of the returning officer to reject Mr. Kumbhani's form under the provisions of Section 36 of the Representation of the People Act, concerning scrutiny of the nomination forms.

## OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

### DEATH

## Bobby Sista

March 26, 1931 - July 27, 2024



Mr Shambhu V. Sista, (Bobby Sista) loving husband, father and grandfather, and founder and chairman of Sista's Private Limited, passed away peacefully on July 27, 2024, at the age of 93. In keeping with his wishes, there was no funeral. He touched the lives of many and will be remembered as he was - kind, gentle yet outgoing.

He is survived by his children, Subhadra and Apu, his son-in-law George, and his grandchildren, Sonia, Zaki and Sheehan.

We miss you Nanna. We miss you Thatha.

thehindubusinessline.

## DECODING THE BUDGET 2024-2025

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## TUNE IN AS WE DELVE INTO THE KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS IN OUR POST-BUDGET ANALYSIS.

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V Anantha Nageswaran  
Chief Economic Advisor,  
Govt of India

### CHIEF GUEST



Sanjay Malhotra  
Revenue Secretary,  
Govt of India

### WELCOME ADDRESS BY



Poornima Joshi  
Chief of Bureau,  
businessline, New Delhi

### PANEL DISCUSSION: POST-BUDGET ANALYSIS



Ashok Gulati  
Distinguished Professor (ICRIER)  
and Chief Editor (AF-TAB)



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Chief Economist,  
India Ratings and Research



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Managing Director & CEO,  
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Director General, FICCI



Sitikantha Pattanaik  
Chief Economist, NABARD



Lokeshwarri S K  
Moderator,  
Data Editor, businessline

Tuesday, July 30, 2024 | 4:30 PM onwards

Federation of Indian Chambers of  
Commerce and Industry,  
Federation House, New Delhi



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**Timings**  
DELHI

<b>MONDAY, JUL. 29</b>		
RISE 05:42	SET 19:14	
RISE 00:00	SET 13:58	
<b>TUESDAY, JUL. 30</b>		
RISE 05:42	SET 19:14	
RISE 00:37	SET 15:04	
<b>WEDNESDAY, JUL. 31</b>		
RISE 05:43	SET 19:13	
RISE 01:25	SET 16:08	

**Delhi Weather**

	max	min
Delhi City	38	26
Safdarjang	38	26
Palam	37	28

**Delhi Palam Today**  
37°C The weather will be mostly dry. Day will be very warm and uneasy with cloudy sky. Night will be uneasy.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
36°C Day will be very warm and uneasy with cloudy sky. Night will be comfortable. Chances of light to moderate rain and thundershower.

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**THE HINDU**  
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## INBRIEF



## Prashant Kishor to launch political party on October 2

Former election strategist Prashant Kishor on Sunday said his Jan Suraj campaign will become a political party on October 2, coinciding with Gandhi Jayanti, and contest the Assembly poll in Bihar next year. Mr. Kishor was addressing a State-level workshop of Jan Suraj in Patna, which was attended by several persons, including a granddaughter of former Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur, joining the campaign. "As stated earlier, Jan Suraj will become a political party on October 2. Other details, such as the party leadership, will be decided in due course," said Mr. Kishor, who had launched the campaign two years ago. PTI

## Meghalaya CM 'disappointed' over Paris Olympics tableau

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Sunday said he is "deeply disappointed" over a tableau reminiscent of Leonardo da Vinci's 'The Last Supper', featuring drag queens and other performers, at the Paris Olympics opening ceremony. This segment of the performance has drawn significant attention and attracted criticism from some quarters. "Deeply disappointed by the drag act depicting the 'Last Supper' at the Paris Olympics. Religious sentiments must be respected. Strongly condemn such act," Mr. Sangma said in a post on X. PTI

Increased vigil in Ghaziabad after violence by *kanwariyas*

Press Trust of India  
GHAZIABAD

The police have intensified security in some areas of Ghaziabad district and imposed more traffic curbs after some *kanwariyas* thrashed a car driver and vandalised the vehicle after it allegedly hit them in Muradnagar, an official said on Sunday.

The *kanwariyas* later blocked a stretch of the Delhi-Meerut expressway on which the incident took place, and created a ruckus, resulting in a traffic jam, the official said.

Two companies of the



The ruckus ensued after some *kanwariyas* were allegedly hit by a car. FILE PHOTO

Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) have been deployed at Ganga canal bridge of Muradnagar town, adjacent to Rawali Road, and security has been beefed up in other areas of the district as well

## BJP hits out at Jharkhand Cong. MLA for 'comparing Biharis to Bangladeshis'

Shilpi Neha Tirkey an 'immature politician', says Opposition party that has been raising the issue of alleged Bangladeshi infiltration in the tribal-dominated State ahead of the Assembly election

Amit Bhelari  
PATNA

Ahead of the Assembly poll in Jharkhand, controversy broke out on Sunday with the BJP accusing Congress MLA Shilpi Neha Tirkey of comparing migrant workers from Bihar to undocumented immigrants from Bangladesh and suggesting that Biharis are responsible for demographic changes in the State.

While responding to allegations by BJP leaders on demographic change in the Santhal region on Saturday, Ms. Tirkey had said, "Those who talk about demographic change in Santhal should start it from Ranchi, where tribals who are natives of the State have been kept under the carpet like dust. What is the situation in Ramgarh today? Who becomes the *mukhiya* (panchayat head). A Bihari becomes *mukhiya* in Ramgarh. Demographic change has taken place in the entire State and the discussion should start from Ran-



Congress MLA Shilpi Neha Tirkey with her father Bandhu Tirkey and Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

chi, we will talk about Santhal later."

She was elected legislator from the Mandar seat in the 2022 bypoll, which was necessitated after the disqualification of her father Bandhu Tirkey as an MLA following his conviction in a corruption case.

Newly appointed Bihar BJP president Dilip Jaiswal on Sunday criticised the Congress leader and called her an "immature politician". "If a politician does not know the difference between foreign infiltration and people of our own country, then it is not right

for me to say much about her. The people of our country have the right to stay and do business anywhere in the country. Why so much hatred for Biharis? Bihar and Jharkhand have *roti-beti* [kitchen and kin] relations," he said.

The Opposition BJP has been raising the issue of alleged Bangladeshi infiltration in the tribal-dominated State, where the subject of demographic change is a contentious issue.

Last week, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had brought up the issue while addressing a rally in Ranchi

and claimed that if the party comes to power, it will issue a White Paper on the State's population. Biharis comprise 7-10% of Jharkhand's population and form a key vote bank.

## 'Politics of division'

Chirag Paswan, Union Minister and national president of the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), accused the Congress of engaging in the politics of division. "Time and again the Opposition leaders make an attempt to divide people on the basis of caste, religion, and region. If you look at any State, you will find a Bihari playing an important role in the top position. Maximum IAS and IPS officers hail from Bihar. Those who are talking like this are making a conspiracy to divide people on the basis of region," he said.

Jharkhand BJP leader Pratul Sahdev said by "comparing the two, she has brought petty politics. Congress has a history of appeasing Muslim voters and doing vote bank politics".

## YSCRCP leader let off after arrest in poll violence case

The Hindu Bureau  
TIRUPATI

YSR Congress Party leader Chevreddy Mohith Reddy was released on Sunday after his arrest the previous night over a case of attack on his rival candidate from the Telugu Desam Party, Pulivarthi Venkata Mani Prasad (Nani), following the poll in the Chandragiri Assembly constituency in Andhra Pradesh.

Immigration authorities detained him when he was about to fly to Dubai from the Bengaluru International Airport.

The YSRCR activists led by Mr. Mohith's father and former MLA Chevreddy Bhaskar Reddy staged a silent protest at the SVU Campus police station. They called off the protest after his release.

Mr. Bhaskar, a close confidant of YSRCR president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, termed the arrest "unwarranted", saying his son had no role in the case.

The attack on Mr. Nani's car in the vicinity of the strongroom set up for EVMs was one of the major violence cases after the elections in the State. Mr. Mohith's car was also set



Chevreddy Mohith Reddy

afire earlier at a village 15 km away from Tirupati.

Mr. Mohith was present, along with the Collector and Joint Collector, inside the strongroom at the time of the attack. He was named the 37th accused.

Mr. Bhaskar squarely blamed the TDP regime and said he would go to any extent to prove his son's innocence.

Mr. Bhaskar said his son was about to board a flight to Dubai to attend the wedding of his friend when he was arrested.

Two days ago, he told the media that the attack was faked by Mr. Nani, producing hospital documents that showed no major injuries on the latter.

Earlier, the police cautioned Mr. Mohith against leaving the country in view of the look-out notice issued against him.

## 'No skimpy western clothes': M.P. temple imposes dress code

Press Trust of India  
RATLAM

Devotees clad in "skimpy western dress" and shorts will not be allowed to enter Goddess Kalika temple in Ratlam city of Madhya Pradesh, its priest said.

## Plaques put up

Several plaques mentioning the type of banned clothes are put up around the 4th-century temple.

"Any devotee clad in indecent dress won't be allowed to enter the temple or the sanctum sanatori-

um," priest Rajendra Sharma said, adding that such devotees can have darshan from outside.

The temple is looked after by the Ratlam district administration under the Court of Wards Act.

"I have heard the temple management committee's decision to ban western outfits," tehsildar Rishabh Thakur said.

The temple is frequented by a huge number of devotees from Ratlam and elsewhere. A garba festival is organised on the temple premises during Navratri.

## Kerala HC asks Centre to grant citizenship to two Pak.-born women

The Hindu Bureau  
KOCHI

The Kerala High Court has directed the Union government to grant citizenship to two young women born in Pakistan, taking into account the no-objection certificate issued by the Pakistan High Commission, and without insisting on a certificate of renunciation of Pakistan citizenship.

Justice T.R. Ravi passed the verdict while allowing a writ petition by Rasheeda Bano from Thalassery and her two daughters. The pe-

tion said Ms. Bano's husband, Mohammed Maroof, now employed in the UAE, had migrated from Kerala to Pakistan in 1977 along with his grandmother.

In 2008, the family moved to India upon getting permission from the Indian government.

The Centre decided to grant them registration as citizens subject to submission of documents. One of the documents was the renunciation certificate. As her daughters were minors, Ms. Bano could not apply for the certificates.

## Inmate gives threat call to Rajasthan CM from jail

Press Trust of India  
JAIPUR

A prisoner from the Dausa jail allegedly made a call to the police control room and threatened to kill Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, an officer said on Sunday.

Inspector General of Police (Jaipur Range) Anil Tank said the call was made by a prisoner sentenced in a rape case late on Saturday night. He said the police traced the location of the call and took the inmate into custody.

## Hindu faith, Muslim spirit: locals at the service of pilgrims on Amarnath Yatra

## SPOTLIGHT

## Peerzada Ashiq

The gushes of the Lidder river have turned into roars as the water rolls down the north-western Himalayan range. It runs 73 km, flowing through the centre of the Pahalgam valley in south Kashmir's Anantnag. The main tributary of the Jhelum river, it acquires its speed from the melting snow up in the narrow troughs of the Kolahoi glacier located at an altitude of 17,799 feet.

On its flat banks, Abdul Rehman Paddar, 64, is tending to his horses between seven and 11 years old. Four of his horses are already up in the mountains in the service of pilgrims. These horses help pilgrims make the arduous trek to the Amarnath cave shrine, located at an altitude of 12,756 feet.

The cave sees between four and six lakh pilgrims each year, according to official estimates. So far this year, 4.36 lakh people have arrived. They come in with the belief that a particular stalagmite formed is a Shivaling. Two smaller ones represent Parvati, his wife,

and Ganesha, their child. The belief is that Shiva, the god of destruction, was telling his wife the secret to immortality, when two pigeons overheard them, and these are still seen flying around.

The *yatra* begins in the Hindu month of Shravan and usually ends by Shraavan Purnima, which coincides with Raksha Bandhan. This year, the *yatra* began on June 29 and will extend to 52 days, one of the longest periods.

## Trust and support

"The day the *yatra* started this year, my son Fayaz Ahmad Paddar left for the upper reaches. We have posted two horses at Sheshnag and two at Panchtarni. My son is going to stay back in the mountains till the pilgrim rush continues. I may not see him for more than 40 days," says Rehman, who charges ₹800-₹8,000 depending on a variety of factors, including the stopovers and distance.

Legend has it that Bota Malik, a local shepherd from Pahalgam, discovered the cave shrine in 1850. Malik is supposed to have met a Sufi saint who gave him a bag of coal that turned out to be gold when



Arduous trek: Four to six lakh pilgrims pay obeisance at the Amarnath cave shrine every year under the watchful eye of security forces. The pilgrimage starts in the Hindu month of Shravan and ends on Shraavan Purnima, which coincides with Raksha Bandhan. IMRAN NISSAR

he got home. In gratitude, he rushed back to the spot to thank him, only to discover the cave instead.

"The Malik started the practice of Muslims accompanying pilgrims to the cave shrine," says Rehman. The original pilgrims were mainly sadhus, Dogra kings and their guests.

Hindu pilgrims put faith in the people who walk alongside them, up one of two routes: via Pahalgam in south Kashmir, which was the traditional one, and Baltal in central Kashmir, opened in 1999. The traditional route of Pahalgam requires a pilgrim to stay at the Nunwan base camp and cover a distance

of 46 km up to the shrine.

The Baltal route is just a 14-km trek. Even before the pilgrims arrive from across the country, families like that of the Paddars ferry raw food to *langars* that dot the twin routes.

Chirag Jain, a 33-year-old pilgrim from Uttar Pradesh's Meerut, says it does not bother him if the pony owner is a Muslim or Hindu. "We are all brothers. The daunting task they complete is not possible for many of us. They are actually doing the real *sewa* (service)," says Jain.

According to official figures, 14,826 owners have registered 16,978 equines with the board this year.

"I have six children. I have to work hard to earn money; I don't own large tracts of land. I manage to earn between ₹15,000 and ₹30,000 during the *yatra* period. That helps me feed my family and stock up for the winter too," says Kabir Khatana, a resident of Srigufwara in Anantnag.

## Beasts of burden

The mountain peaks are jagged; the track is steep. Many patches are landslide prone and slippery. The treacherousness of the trek can be gauged from the fact that on an average 200 to 250 horses die on the trekking routes annually.

Official data suggest that

these horses die due to urine retention, stomach ruptures, intestinal obstructions, and over exertion at high altitudes.

"A sudden change in dietary habits too takes a toll on horses," an official says. A horse costs between ₹40,000 and ₹1.20 lakh. A horse can bear weight up to 80 kg on the tracks and trek only up to nine hours at a stretch. The steep, craggy stone trail, with deep gorges on one side from Sheshnag to Panjtarni, has reported the highest animal deaths.

According to shrine board officials, the Animal Husbandry Department pays an insurance premi-

um of ₹2,610 for each equine. "Ponies are insured. The owner is given ₹50,000 if a horse dies. Up to 70 veterinary camps have been set up along the Pahalgam axis and on all established camps from the Baltal side, which provide free medical check-ups and medicines. All camps are manned by trained vets," says Shahid Choudhary, one of the nodal officers for the *yatra*.

However, poor infrastructure at the veterinary hospital in Pahalgam tells a different story.

"No surgeries can be performed in Pahalgam in case of intestinal obstruction, caused by exertion and dehydration. Such cases cause 90% of the deaths during the *yatra*," a senior official at the department in Srinagar said.

The pilgrimage has been equally taxing for palanquin-bearers or *pithu wallahs*. The Jammu and Kashmir Labour Department has registered 10,464 locals as palanquin-bearers and 4,878 as *pithu wallahs*.

Mukhtar Ahmad Magray, 35, a pony owner from Anantnag's Aishmuqam, suffered a minor heart attack on June 30 at Sheshnag as he accompa-

nied a group of pilgrims from Uttar Pradesh. He was airlifted to Pahalgam and is struggling to meet medical expenses as the board doesn't pay for that. Ironically, they only pay ₹2 lakh when a worker dies.

The toughest service of all is the *pithu wallahs*. "For 15 years, I have been offering this service. I can carry up to 50 kg. I find Chandanwari to Sheshnag very difficult," says Tariq Ahmad Khan, from the Hapatnaar area, adding that the stretch that takes three to four hours makes him feel like throwing up. "We don't eat solid food all day while taking pilgrims up in the mountains, and prefer milk-leaves tea," he says.

Mohammad Haleem Khatana, a palanquin-bearer, has felt breathless on the journey many times. "I take short rest in between. I entertain pilgrims with stories from the past. They like it," says Khatana, who has two sons. "I won't shy away from sending my son into the service of the pilgrimage. Kashmir has so much joblessness. The *yatra* provides an option for us to earn a living."

LINK TO FULL STORY  
» bit.ly/35mQJml

## Godavari in spate: many tribal habitations under knee-deep water in A.P.

**Rajulapudi Srinivas**  
KUKUNUR (ELURU DISTRICT)

Many habitations on the banks of the Godavari were severely affected by floods in the Agency area in Eluru district of Andhra Pradesh. Though Ministers and MLAs visited the flood-hit areas and directed the officials to distribute rations, vegetables, tarpaulin sheets, chlorine tablets, kerosene and medicines, there was no proper supply, the villagers alleged.

“We have been in knee-deep water for the past 10 days in the low-lying areas. Every year, groceries are given for three months before the onset of monsoon. But this year, rations were supplied after floods inundated our habitations,” said Satyanarayana of Gommugudem village in Kukunur. Flood level in the Godavari at Bhadrachalam was at 49.7 feet by Sunday evening, and the water level was decreasing, an official said.

## Teacher suspended for trimming hair of students

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KHAMMAM

A teacher at Zilla Parishad High School in Peruvancha village in Telangana's Khammam district was sus-

pended on Saturday for trimming the hair of nearly 15 students as part of enforcing 'discipline'. Infuriated parents staged a protest demanding action against the 'outrageous act'.

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## Surat's Deputy Mayor takes piggyback ride to flooded areas

**Press Trust of India**  
SURAT

Photos showing the Deputy Mayor of Surat, Narendra Patil, being carried on the back of a fire official during his recent visit to a flood-affected area in the city have surfaced on social media.

The fire official on Sunday played down the incident saying he helped Mr. Patil because the BJP leader had pain in his legs so he carried him on his back for just 2-3 feet. Mr. Patil could not be reached despite attempts.

The Deputy Mayor recently visited flood-hit areas in Surat and was trying to ensure that the body of a man, trapped in the flooded basement of a building, was brought out and handed over to his family, a fire official said.

दिल्ली सरकार  
आप की सरकार

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Repair work is to be done by the Public Works Department on Sarita Vihar Flyover

Ashram to Badarpur (Half Carriageway) will be closed for repair work from 29.07.2024 to 12.08.2024

Route Diversion Plan (Phase-1)

NOTE:-  
— TRAFFIC FLOW  
— DIVERSION ROUTE

SARITA VIHAR FLYOVER

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## Planning better

The NITI Aayog suffers from both structural and functional issues

With 10 State and Union Territory representatives skipping the ninth Governing Council meeting of the NITI Aayog chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi – seven of them boycotted it – the think tank's role has been called into question. The Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Jharkhand did so because of concerns with the perceived lack of allocations and projects to their States in the Union Budget. But the boycott and, later, the walkout by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, suggest that the role of the think tank, limiting itself to an advisory body to the Union Government, has led to disenchantment among States, even if the protests were limited to leaders belonging to the political opposition. Constituted by the NDA government in its first term, the NITI Aayog was to replace the Planning Commission, doing away with the “top-down” approach of the earlier body, and to focus on “cooperative federalism”. But by limiting itself to an advisory body without any powers of resource distribution or allocation to States and other bodies and focusing on creating indices to evaluate States, it has led to the unintended consequence of “competitive federalism”; while the Finance Ministry has unfettered powers to decide on grants to States. In contrast, the Planning Commission, which too had its detractors, at least allowed for consultations with States in such matters.

It has not helped matters that the Bharatiya Janata Party has sought to seek votes in State elections on the basis of providing “double engine” governments, leading to complaints by Opposition-ruled States that the Centre has favoured those ruled by the BJP for investment projects. The fact that the NDA government now is crucially dependent upon the support of parties that rule Bihar and Andhra Pradesh – States that suffer varying developmental deficits – and the express intention of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to address their demands specifically in the Budget have not been lost on the government's detractors. Irrespective of the merit in this contention, the fact is that consultations with States on grants and projects have become limited after the end of the Planning Commission. While the 16th Finance Commission is tasked with the removal of a horizontal imbalance among States and the Finance Ministry's focus is on macro-economic stability and the financial system, the need to address growth through infrastructure and capital investments in States is something that requires institutional backing at the Centre as well. The NITI Aayog must be re-envisioned to bring back some of the responsibilities that the Planning Commission had for States for a truer “cooperative federalism”.

## Plastic mess

More efforts must be made to curb production and promote alternatives

India, like other large economies, faces a significant plastic waste problem. According to a 2020-21 report by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), four million tonnes of plastic waste are generated annually. Unfortunately, only a quarter of this waste is recycled or treated, with the rest ending up in landfills or being disposed of unsustainably. Since 2016, the Plastic Waste Management Rules have mandated that users of plastics are responsible for collecting and recycling their waste. These requirements, or the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) rules, were initially voluntary but are now enforced through an online EPR trading platform. The EPR system involves packagers, importers, and large industrial users of plastic packaging, as well as professional recyclers, registering with the CPCB. Recyclers, who have networks to collect plastic waste, recycle the waste and receive validated certificates for each tonne recycled. These certificates can be uploaded to a dedicated CPCB portal and purchased by plastic packaging companies that fall short of their annual recycling targets. In 2022-23, the CPCB estimated that certificates for nearly 3.7 million tonnes of recycled plastic were generated. However, it was discovered that not all of these certificates were legitimate – there were approximately 6,00,000 fraudulent certificates. Additionally, hackers reportedly stole several thousand certificates last year and sold them to companies. A criminal investigation is ongoing, and it remains unclear how much of the claimed 3.7 million tonnes was genuinely recycled.

In response, the CPCB has taken two significant actions. First, it commissioned an audit of nearly 800 firms, representing almost a fourth of the 2,300 registered recyclers who had traded certificates. Second, it undertook a comprehensive overhaul of the security features on the EPR trading platform, although this has delayed the process of filing returns for 2023-24 by several months. The CPCB has described these problems as “teething issues” associated with implementing a large-scale electronic system. While the audit is necessary, it should be a one-time initiative to avoid undermining trust in the system with annual, lengthy investigations. Although the CPCB has the authority to impose heavy fines, the process is lengthy and fraught with legal challenges. A market-driven approach to solving plastic waste has a significant but limited effect. Greater efforts must be made to curb plastic production and promote sustainable alternatives. Addressing the root causes of plastic waste and enhancing the effectiveness of recycling systems are crucial in mitigating India's plastic waste problem.

# Recasting care models for mental illness, homelessness

Socio-normative representations of homeless persons living with a mental illness (HPMI) have ubiquitously ascribed them to the role of refuge seekers. This has resulted in rescue missions that are singularly focused on transferring them, volitionally or coercively, to mental hospitals, shelter homes, beggars' homes and even prisons. The primary assumption that HPIMs must be displaced from the streets because of the many risks that it poses, while valid, is also contestable.

As a mental health professional and bureaucrat, respectively, our perspective was similarly limiting over two decades ago, when we prioritised shelter and treatment over agency, choice and place-making. Social order, while it is of relevance and valuable in many contexts, can sometimes constrain the imagination and restrict responses that fall within the safer, more dominant narratives, albeit well-intentioned. That there is a social world not necessarily aligned to the mores of the day and that culture, freedoms and notions of safety can be experienced in non-typical ways take some getting used to.

### Challenging notions, efforts at integration

Engagement with lived experience experts can often support this journey and challenge notions of what care and responsiveness constitute. Often, homeless persons form affiliations with local support circles that include fellow homeless persons, local eateries and pets, that offer them a self-curated sense of belongingness. Equally, and perhaps more significantly among the multitude of truths, is the narrative of oppression, scarcity, abuse, exposure to inclement weather conditions, and an exacerbation of symptoms associated with psychoses. Consequently, we would be loath to locate the problem in sacred and rigid binaries. It requires more than the paltry effort that is accorded now, to complicate the narrative and texture the phenomenon with the complexity that it deserves.

Noteworthy among a few efforts in India that have supported several HPMI reenter communities is the collaboration between the National Health Mission, the Tamil Nadu Department of Health, the Institute of Mental Health, The Banyan, the Azim Premji Foundation and local civil society organisations. This has resulted in access to emergency care and recovery centres (ECRCs) within district hospitals. This integration serves two purposes.

First it ruptures the hegemonic domination of large asylum-styled treatment spaces that perpetuate the stereotypical identity of a diseased mind. More importantly, it services an increased number of people with greater immediacy, ensuring last-mile proximal care and crises responses across scattered geographies. Overcrowding, limited human service professionals, the use of restraint, and poor personal attention have impacted care ecologies globally, just as they have in India.

A transformation that allows for design and social architecture adaptations in this context locates care in smaller units, are reasonably staffed, and mandate personal attention and better medical care to address comorbidities



**Vandana Gopikumar**

with The Banyan, The Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health and Aaladamara and has worked with homeless persons living with a mental illness (HPMI) for three decades



**Supriya Sahu**

Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Tamil Nadu, Health and Family Welfare

commonly found among those exposed to enduring adversities.

While recent policy shifts represent progress, they also demand deeper engagement and longer term commitment. We must also critically examine when and why rights are stripped away, examine the attitude and practice of society and care professionals and develop leadership and governance systems that are adaptive, dynamic, reflective and address intricate dilemmas and contested issues.

In this context, especially among those who opt to sleep rough despite there being an availability of care options, the symbolism of appearance – matted hair or shaven heads – deserves careful consideration. As Obeyesekere notes, a shaven head can signify renunciation, when seen in contexts, from Vrindavan's widows to residents of mental hospitals, and must not be immediately conflated with mental illness. Our approach, therefore, must be to be in continuous engagement, drawing frameworks for admission that respect individual agency. While the gains of intervention can be significant and the hardships of street life are real, coercive care often yields poor outcomes.

### Problems with institutional spaces

Meanwhile, about 37% of people living in State psychiatric facilities and other care homes experience long-term needs, with a median duration of stay of six years. Most of them have histories of homelessness and have been typically brought into the system as a result of police and judicial intervention. In 2017 the Supreme Court of India, in response to a public interest litigation, mandated that State governments undertake rehabilitative measures. In this context, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, had filed guidelines for rehabilitation homes. Unfortunately, the imagination of community re-entry pathways for those living long term in psychiatric facilities remains cloistered: in semi-institutional or trans-institutional options that transfer their custodial existence from one place to another. Further, these considerations are limited in their conceptualisation of who is “cured” and therefore “ready for discharge”, imposing deterministic expectations of eligibility to live in the community. Besides perpetuating continued distancing from social resources and participation on equal terms, these institutional spaces risk defaulting to similar experiences of a lowered quality of life and violations of rights violations.

Globally and in India, large-scale housing initiatives such as Housing First and Tarasha offer comprehensive social and clinical care and demonstrate the feasibility of such groundbreaking options for those with a range of disabilities and clinical needs. Similarly, over 700 people have accessed housing support and social care through the ‘Home Again’ collaborative across nine States in India, piloted first in 2018 as a research trial with support from Grand Challenges, Canada, and scaled up in partnership with the Rural India Supporting Trust. This has

also been adopted by the Government of Tamil Nadu and other stakeholders nationally. For those transitioning from hospitals, with mild to moderate disabilities, hostel-like co-living facilities that symbolise enhanced social capital and security, rather than rehabilitation homes, may be considered.

### Reframe support measures

Social protection and support measures for homeless people with mental illness require a radical shift and a reframing from paternalistic interventions to liberatory-focused strategies. A monthly priority disability allowance or out of work allowance of ₹1,500, while modest, could serve as a critical lifeline for those pushed to the margins of social hierarchy. By addressing the bureaucratic hurdles of securing Aadhar and facilitating banking access for HPMI, we pave the way for financial inclusion and economic empowerment.

These documentation and financial scaffolds, however, must be complemented by more imaginative and holistic approaches. In parallel, structural issues such as discrimination and violence, segregation and deprivation, need to be emphatically addressed. Towards this end, social care and post-discharge support must be strengthened and integrated within the District Mental Health Programme. As a result of initiatives led by state and non-state actors, service engagement among 800 mental health service users who exited the ECRCs over a three-year period is at 75% post discharge, which is higher than the global experience.

Advancing economic justice demands confronting systemic barriers, elevating insights from marginalised groups, and creating transformative models that accelerate inclusion. Workforce participation, when thoughtfully facilitated, becomes a powerful tool for reappropriating economic space. Traditional employment models and vocational training initiatives are often not only disconnected from contemporary economic realities but they fail to account for individual agency, strengths and aspirations. Instead, they default to narrow notions of productivity and consistency. In this background, social cooperatives, where groups of individuals drive the exchange of their labour, offer a promising avenue for meaningful engagement, which fosters a sense of community and purpose. Our efforts must extend to cultivating social capital and implementing affirmative action policies that spur substantive socio-economic, cultural and political inclusion of HPMI. Tamil Nadu will be the first State that will soon release a policy that will integrate many of these pragmatic and studied approaches.

It is our hope that this multifaceted approach will challenge the reductionist view of HPMI as mere recipients of charity to be extricated from their circumstances. Instead, it advocates for a framework that honours their agency, respects their choices, and supports their right to claim a place in society on their own terms.

With contributions from Lakshmi Narasimhan, Director, The Banyan

An outline of a care paradigm and shift in mindset that advance the rights of homeless persons with mental illness

# The right way to counter a poor Covaxin safety study

It took all of five days for the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to strongly criticise the poor design of the long-term safety study of Covaxin by researchers from the Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. The study was published in the journal, *Drug Safety*. Bharat Biotech too pointed out the major limitations in the Covaxin study on May 16, 2024, three days after the paper was published.

### Many gaps

The BHU study, which is based on one year follow-up, is of course riddled with major limitations. The study lacked a control arm and data on the background rates of observed adverse events, making it almost impossible to ascertain whether the adverse events observed were indeed caused by or associated with Covaxin. The study was carried out over the telephone and relied solely on participants' recall of adverse events 12 months after vaccination, thereby introducing recall bias.

Including a control arm is extremely important while studying vaccine safety. Only such a study can provide meaningful and reliable information about the adverse effects of a vaccine. Studying the safety of a vaccine in thousands of participants for periods lasting one to three years is vital. Clinical evaluation of every adverse event is also paramount to rule out causality. Finally, randomly assigning the participants either to an intervention arm or a control group is important to eliminate bias. A phase-3 randomised, controlled trial involving a large number of participants is thus ideal for studying vaccine safety.

Bharat Biotech and the ICMR had carried out such a phase-3 clinical trial that was randomised, placebo-controlled and double-blind, involving nearly 25,800 participants. The trial began in November 2020 and the interim results were first



**R. Prasad**

The deafening silence around Covaxin's phase-3 trial final safety results must end

posted as a preprint on July 2, 2021. The interim results were based on data as of May 17, 2021 when 130 cases were reported in the trial. The safety data that was captured was only up to 56 days following vaccination.

### A publication failure that is glaring

Three years after the interim data were posted as a preprint, Bharat Biotech and ICMR are yet to publish any long-term safety data of the Covaxin phase-3 trial. Given Bharat Biotech's excellent track record of publishing clinical trial results, including the animal and phase-1, phase-2 and interim phase-3 trial data of Covaxin, the failure to publish the long-term, final safety results of the phase-3 trial of Covaxin is perplexing. The failure to publish the trial safety data becomes all the more glaring as according to the information posted by the company in the clinical trial registry website, the duration of the phase-3 trial was only for one year. This would mean that both the ICMR and Bharat Biotech have been in possession of the phase-3 safety data but have failed to publish them even two and a half years after the trial came to an end. The lapse becomes all the more striking as Bharat Biotech had published six papers on Covaxin after the phase-3 interim results were published.

This failure is just one of many blinding shortcomings. On January 3, 2021, the drug regulator had granted emergency-use authorisation for Covaxin under “clinical trial mode”, and the recipients were to be followed up for safety. In the second week of March 2021, the drug regulator removed the “clinical trial mode” tag. This was based on the first interim analysis of the vaccine when 43 COVID-19 cases were reported in the trial participants. According to Dr. V.K. Paul, Head of India's Vaccine Administration committee, more than 19 lakh people were administered Covaxin and 311 cases of

“side-effects” were reported as on the day the drug regulator removed the “clinical trial mode” condition. Despite being in possession of these instances of adverse effects, no details of the vaccine safety have been published.

### On the Covishield study

Finally, it is surprising that the ICMR did not criticise the BHU authors for a similar study carried out on people who were administered Covishield, and published in May 2023. In addition to the long-term Covishield safety study having similar limitations as the Covaxin study, the study found that people who received the vaccine after developing COVID-19 were two times at risk of persistent adverse events when compared to those who received the vaccine before COVID-19. Based on this, the authors went overboard to caution against mass vaccination of people with Covishield and instead advocated an individualised vaccination strategy as a “better alternative for public health safety”. So did the ICMR react the way it did for the Covaxin study only because it was a co-developer of the vaccine and was involved in the clinical trials, and not because of the critical limitations of the study per se? While demanding that the journal retract the paper for its safety conclusions not based on evidence, the ICMR has failed to disclose its conflicts of interest, thus setting a bad example. Finally, the ICMR and Bharat Biotech owe it to the trial participants and the people who received the vaccine, and should publish the long-pending phase-3 vaccine safety data soon. That is the only right way to counter BHU's badly designed study findings. It should stop behaving like a bully by resorting to academic censorship (the ICMR had demanded that the journal Editor retract the paper).

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Shed bias

While the Prime Minister's clarion call to all States to pool in their efforts for the overall growth of the country and the economy was in the right direction, what has always stuck out

like a sore thumb is the clear discrimination shown by the government against the States that are not ruled by the BJP. Be it budgetary allocations or grants for calamities, the Centre's attitude has been partisan.

That as many as 10 States and Union Territories chose to skip the meeting (Page 1, “At NITI meet, PM calls for combined efforts of all states”; July 28) is evidence of this. If the goal of a ‘Viksit Bharat’ is to be achieved,

the government must shed its bias.

**C.V. Aravind,**  
Bengaluru

### Corrections & Clarifications

A sentence in the fifth paragraph of a report, “PM defends Agnipath scheme on anniversary of Kargil War” (July 27, 2024) read, “...we have a list of 5,000 weapons that are no longer being exported from outside...” It should have been imported.

### The first medal

Manu Bhaker has erased the disappointment she faced at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Now with India's first medal, she can be proud.  
**A.P. Thiruvadi,**  
Chennai

## Defending disability reservations

The recent controversy involving Puja Khedkar, who allegedly faked her disability and caste to obtain benefits, has ignited a debate on the reservations granted to persons with disabilities (PwDs). The issue gained further traction when a former chief executive officer of NITI Aayog tweeted that reservations for PwDs need to be reviewed. Although he later clarified that he was referring only to mental disabilities (thereby drawing an unnecessary and baseless wedge between physical and mental disabilities), his statement, along with similar comments from other civil servants, raises troubling questions about societal attitudes towards disabilities and reservation policies.



**Rahul Bajaj**

practicing lawyer; Co-Founder, Mission Accessibility; Senior Associate Fellow, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy; and adjunct faculty, BML Munjal University School of Law



**Ayushmita Samal**

Research Fellow with the Center for Inclusive Policy

### Deep-rooted ableism

First, how many disabled individuals have these officers interacted with, or had the opportunity to know? Have they ever been introduced to the challenges faced by PwDs, during a session or a workshop? The deep-rooted ableism that their statements reflect are the lived realities of many PwDs.

PwDs face multiple barriers to their effective participation in society and the workforce. These include infrastructural challenges, the education system, and exam curricula and formats that are designed to be used by, and suit, able-bodied individuals. Reservation policies aim to level the playing field by providing equitable opportunities to PwDs. That a few individuals are exploiting these benefits should not overshadow the broader purpose and impact of such policies. Sweeping generalisations based on isolated incidents are unfair and counterproductive. Certain officers have asked whether PwDs who hold positions within the civil services have the "physical fitness" to fulfil their duties. Such statements reflect the unconscious bias that many people hold against PwDs.

Puja Khedkar's alleged fraudulent activities should be met with stringent punishment. This is the solution, not the review of the reservation system that provides crucial support to a marginalised group

PwDs continue to face challenges in both the education and employment sectors, yet those are hardly highlighted. The 76th round of the National Sample Survey in 2018 found that only 23.8% of PwDs were employed, whereas the Labour Force Participation Rate at the national level was 50.2% the same year. This can be attributed to lack of access to accessible education; stigma and biases at the hiring stage; and lack of reasonable accommodation at the workplace for PwDs.

These structural issues, however, are hardly ever pointed out by the same individuals who question the validity of affirmative action provided to PwDs. For instance, take the case of Kartik Kansal, who is affected by muscular dystrophy. He has not been allotted a service despite clearing the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)'s civil service exam four times. Similarly, due to her disability, Ira Singhal had to approach the Central Administrative Tribunal to secure her rightful posting despite having secured the first rank in the civil service exams. These are the moments when the conscience of our intellectuals should be stirred.

### Potential misuse

In a related context, the Supreme Court addressed the potential misuse of scribes in *Vikash Kumar v. UPSC* (2021). The argument was that PwDs, if allowed to choose their scribes and if their disability percentage is less than 40%, might misuse this provision. The Court countered this saying: "If some incidents come to light of able-bodied candidates hiding chits in their dress code and misusing them to cheat in an exam, the normal consequence is suitable punitive action against such students. It is not to switch to a different dress code that is so uncomfortable that many competent students find it hard to sit in it for the entire duration of the exam and perform to the best of their ability." This principle

should similarly apply to reservations for PwDs.

### Certification system

India's certification system for disabilities also has significant flaws. The practice of quantifying disabilities by percentage is outdated and not supported by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Functional limitations, rather than medical percentages, should be the basis for assessment. Also, the UPSC insists on a separate and independent disability assessment, thereby cocking a snook at the disability certification process recognised by the government that results in the issuance of a disability certificate and Unique Disability ID (UDID). This gives rise to the possibility of the two sets of assessments yielding contradictory results.

An additional challenge is the lack of specialists to evaluate various disabilities, which makes the certification process inaccessible and time consuming. The complicated assessment guidelines prescribed by the state are often unrealistic at the level of district hospitals, which are constrained in terms of both infrastructure and resources. This leaves the assessment of the disability and its extent open to interpretation. Psychosocial disabilities, whose assessment is relatively more subjective, are assessed based on the outdated IDEAS (Indian Disability Evaluation and Assessment Scale) scale. In many cases, such tests are not even conducted. Persons with invisible, hidden, or less apparent disabilities, such as blood disorders, often face rejection because they "do not look disabled".

The focus should be on addressing these systemic issues. Ms. Khedkar's alleged fraudulent activities should be met with stringent punishment. This is the solution, not the unwarranted review of the reservation system that provides crucial support to a marginalised group.

## Udhayanidhi Stalin's great challenge

If he does not rise to the occasion, it could affect the Dravidian movement

### STATE OF PLAY

**B. Kolappan**  
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M.K. Stalin, who had waited for decades to become president of the DMK and Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, seems to have fast-tracked the rise of his son, Udhayanidhi Stalin. The younger Stalin, a debutant Minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development, and secretary of the DMK's youth wing, has climbed the political ladder quickly. There is now intense speculation that he could be elevated as Deputy Chief Minister.

While Mr. Udhayanidhi Stalin has sought to play down the rumours saying he "values the post of the secretary of the youth wing above all positions", senior leaders and ministers believe there is "no smoke without fire." They have reasons to say this. When there were whispers earlier that Mr. Udhayanidhi Stalin and his brother-in-law Sabareesan would join politics, Mr. Stalin had said no one from his family would enter politics, but it did not take long for him to contradict his statements.

Back then, it was a different time in Tamil Nadu. Mr. Stalin, who had inherited the party from his father, DMK patriarch M. Karunanidhi, was wary of public opinion against the elevation of his son. Mr. Stalin had taken over as DMK working president when Karunanidhi was inactive in politics due to old age, but still had a significant presence in the party. The AIADMK, the main opposition party, which was in power after the death of its leader Jayalalithaa, could claim the moral high ground saying it was free from the pressures of family politics.

The 2021 Assembly polls were crucial for the DMK, which had been out of power for 10 years, and Mr. Stalin was worried that his son's rise could work against the party. But the death of Jayalalithaa and Karunanidhi would have emboldened him to appoint his son – first as secretary of the youth wing and later as the DMK candidate for the Thiruvallikeni-Chepauk Assembly constituency.

It is not as if Mr. Udhayanidhi was given everything on a platter. He proved himself as a campaigner during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. In the 2021 Assembly polls, by holding a single piece of brick, he conveyed the message that the BJP-led Central government had not done anything beyond announcing that it would set up an All Indian Institute of Medical Science in Madurai. He had already gained attention in Tamil Nadu as an actor even though none of his films, barring *Maamannan*, a political drama that was released after the 2021 Assembly polls, carried a strong social message.

The DMK won the Assembly elections comfortably in 2021. However, despite the fact that Mr. Udhayanidhi Stalin had gained acceptance among the party leaders and cadres alike, Mr. Stalin did not include his son in his Cabinet. Mr. Udhayanidhi Stalin had to

wait for more than a year to find a place in the cabinet and rank ninth in seniority in the ministry.

Clad in jeans and tee shirts with a logo of the party's youth wing, Mr. Udhayanidhi Stalin has refused to be bogged down by embarrassing questions, such as those relating to dynasty politics. He has shown that he is capable of handling major political issues, such as the uproar that followed his comments on Santana Dharma. At the same time, he has not made any significant change that is expected of a successor. Whenever he was expected to be proactive in dealing with certain issues, he has left them to be tackled by his father. For instance, the recent hooch tragedy in Kallakurichi, which claimed the lives of 67 people, provided a great opportunity for him to rise to the occasion. But the DMK government handled it the way the previous governments in the State did. The killing of Bahujan Samaj Party leader Armstrong and the gunning down of one of his assassins after their arrest speak poorly of the planning and performance of the government.

The Dravidian movement captured the imagination of the people by highlighting genuine issues that failed to be addressed by the Congress, which led the freedom movement in the country. The DMK and its offshoot, the AIADMK, dominated the political scene by meeting regional aspirations. But half a decade of Dravidian rule has not brought any qualitative change in Tamil Nadu politics. If Mr. Udhayanidhi Stalin fails to usher in the changes expected of young politicians of modern times, it will prove to be difficult for the Dravidian movement as a whole.

## The Dalit factor in the 2024 Lok Sabha election

The Congress improved its vote share in Scheduled Caste-reserved seats to 20.8% in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections from 16.7% in 2019

### DATA POINT

**Sanjay Kumar**  
**Jyoti Mishra**  
**Vibha Attrii**

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lost the election in the Faizabad Lok Sabha constituency, which is home to the Ram Mandir. There was a lot of speculation that the party would make gains in this seat because this was the first election after the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. However, the verdict came as a surprise. Not only did the BJP lose, but the Dalit candidate from the Samajwadi Party (SP), Awadhesh Prasad, defeated the Thakur candidate from the BJP, Lallu Singh, in this non-reserved seat. In Indian electoral history, this was one of the few instances of a Dalit candidate winning from an unreserved Lok Sabha seat. This draws attention to how Dalits voted in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

### Gains for Congress

A look at the performance of political parties in parliamentary constituencies reserved for the Scheduled Castes (SCs) – 84 in total – shows that the Congress won 20 such seats and the Congress and its allies won 33. The Congress won only six SC-reserved seats in 2019, so its performance in 2024 in SC-reserved seats was a considerable improvement for the party. The Congress performed better not only in terms of seats but also in terms of vote share: it secured 20.8% of the vote share in the 2024 elections compared to 16.7% in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

On the other hand, the BJP suffered a setback in SC-reserved seats. It won only 29 seats in 2024 compared to 46 in 2019. Overall, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) managed to win 39 SC-reserved seats in 2024, which is 15 seats fewer than in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections (Table 1).



Samajwadi Party MP Awadhesh Prasad speaks in the Lok Sabha in New Delhi. ANI

### The electoral fate of parties

In many States, the choices of Dalit voters may have changed the electoral fate of political parties. More specifically, they may have been instrumental to an extent in shaping the electoral outcome of the NDA and INDIA blocs in many States. While Dalits did not vote in a similar manner in all States, data suggest that wherever Dalit voters supported the NDA or the INDIA bloc, that alliance got more seats. For instance, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have a similar nature of political contest. The INDIA bloc performed well in Uttar Pradesh, but not to the same extent in Bihar. The findings of the National Election Study (NES) 2024 show that Dalit voters backed the INDIA bloc candidates in Uttar Pradesh, but not to the same extent in Bihar.

The findings of the NES reveal the same story in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Dalits preferred voting for candidates of the INDIA bloc in higher numbers compared to those of the NDA in Maharashtra, but not in Madhya Pradesh.

In Rajasthan, 46% of the Dalits voted for the Congress, while only 37% voted for the BJP candidates (Table 2). In this State, the BJP had won all 25 seats in both the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections; it lost 10 Lok Sabha seats in 2024.

In Gujarat, 57% of Dalit voters voted for the BJP and only 43% vot-

ed for the Congress. The BJP won 25 of the total 26 Lok Sabha seats.

Dalit voters favoured the Congress in Haryana; Congress won five of the 10 seats. During the 2019 elections, the BJP had won all the 10 Lok Sabha seats in Haryana.

The BJP won 20 of the 21 Lok Sabha seats and 78 of the 147 Assembly seats in Odisha. Among the Dalit voters, 46% voted for the BJP, 40% voted for the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), and 15% voted for the Congress/INDIA bloc in this State.

In neighbouring West Bengal, the Trinamool Congress maintained its dominance winning 29 out of 42 Lok Sabha seats; here, however, 45% of Dalits voted for the BJP, while a smaller share (41%) voted for the Trinamool, which managed to mobilise voters from various other social communities.

### In the south

In Andhra Pradesh, the Dalit vote was more or less equally divided between the Telugu Desam Party and its allies, and the YSR Congress Party.

In Telangana, 46% of Dalits voted for the Congress/INDIA bloc, 23% for the BJP/NDA, and 31% for the Bharatiya Rashtra Samiti (BRS).

The good performance of the Congress in Karnataka is largely credited to the shift of the Dalit voters to the Congress (66% voted for the party).

The BJP's good performance in Assam is credited to the continued support of Dalits for the party. The NES 2024 data indicate that 70% of the Dalits voted for the BJP/NDA in Assam while only 12% voted for the Congress/INDIA bloc.

The data show the significance of the Dalit votes for the victory/good performance of political parties in various States, though they do not indicate that this may be the only reason for the party's victory in these States.

Sanjay Kumar is Professor and Co-director Lokniti-CSDS, Jyoti Mishra is a researcher at Lokniti-CSDS, and Vibha Attrii is a researcher at Lokniti-CSDS

## How Dalits voted

The tables were sourced from Centre for the Study of Developing Societies' Data Unit and the National Election Study (NES) 2024 conducted by Lokniti-CSDS



Table 1 | The table shows the party and alliance-wise performance in Dalit reserved seats in the past three Lok Sabha elections

Poll year	Congress		UPA/INDIA		BJP		NDA		Others	
	Won	Vote (%)	Won	Vote (%)	Won	Vote (%)	Won	Vote (%)	Won	Vote (%)
2014	7	17.6	7	18.9	40	27.6	49	35.4	28	45.7
2019	6	16.7	12	22.1	46	35.3	54	44.3	18	33.6
2024	20	20.8	33	31.9	29	34.5	39	42.4	12	25.7

Table 2 | The chart shows how Dalits voted in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. Figures are in percentage

States	INDIA bloc	NDA	Other state parties
Bihar	40	60	—
U.P.	38	26	32 BSP
M.P.	36	53	—
Maharashtra	46	35	—
Gujarat	43	57	—
Rajasthan	46	37	—
Punjab	31	15	54 AAP
Haryana	67	25	—
Odisha	15	46	40 BJD
West Bengal	3	45	41 TMC
Andhra Pradesh	2	48	50 YSRCP
Telangana	46	23	31 BRS
Karnataka	66	33	—
Assam	12	70	—

Dalits backed the INDIA bloc in Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Telangana. The NDA candidates were supported in States such as Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal, Assam and Andhra Pradesh

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

The *Hindu*

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 29, 1974

## Floods recede in Kerala: 38 dead

At least 38 persons have lost their lives in floods and landslides caused by heavy rains that ravaged the central and northern districts of Kerala during the weekend.

Twenty-eight of these deaths occurred in the worst-affected Idikki district in the High Ranges. Official confirmation was available only for 19, all in Devicolam taluk. Officials, however, feared that the toll might be even higher. The remaining ten deaths were in the Malabar region.

As reports of damage to property and standing crops were trickling in, the floods have started receding everywhere. Road communication between Cochin and the northern region, snapped yesterday following the inundation of patches of the national highway, was restored this afternoon as the rains ceased and the waters got drained out.

While information from Idikki was tardy in coming because of communication bottlenecks reports from other centres spoke of mass evacuation of people from low-lying areas. As many as 25,000 people were removed to places of safety in the three northern districts and another 1,000 in Ernakulam district.

A number of buses and passengers were reported trapped in several localities as boulders had blocked roads at many points in Idukki. In certain areas portions of roads had been completely washed away. Till to-night there was no information about these buses.

Five persons including three women were killed in a landslide in Vellathuval. Seven were killed in Koompanpara. Among these were three members of a family who left their house fearing that it was not safe and took shelter in another building which was razed to the ground when boulders came hurtling down. Ironically their houses remained intact. Three perished in a landslide at Adimali.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 29, 1924

## Rebellion in Brazil

New York, July 28: The Cable Company has received a message from an authentic source stating that the revolutionary outbreak in Sao Paulo is concluded by a Government victory. The message adds the conditions in Sao Paulo are rapidly becoming normal.

# Text & Context

THE HINDU

**NEWS IN NUMBERS**

**Number of Indian sportswomen who won Olympic medals**

**8** Manu Bhaker becomes the first Indian marksman to secure an Olympic medal, ending a 12-year drought in medals for shooting, with the most recent win being from shooter Vijay Kumar in the 2012 London Olympics. PTI

**Funds raised by the Harris campaign for the U.S. electoral race**

**200** in \$ million. This amount was raised in less than a week. Vice President Kamala Harris' candidacy earned enough delegates to become the presumptive nominee. PTI

**The points deducted from Canada women's soccer team**

**6** FIFA dished out several punishments to the Canadian women's soccer team. Two assistant coaches were caught using drones to spy on opponent New Zealand's practices before their opening game. PTI

**The projects advanced by Coal India Ltd to boost output**

**119** Coal India Ltd is advancing projects with a capacity of 896 million tonne per year and a sanctioned capital of ₹1,33,576 crore. The company has set a target of 1 billion tonne of production by 2025-26. PTI

**The smuggled foreign cigarettes seized in Mumbai**

**63** in lakh. The Special Intelligence and Investigation Branch seized the cigarettes with an estimated value of ₹6.5 crore from Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust in Mumbai. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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## On reservations and the OBC creamy layer

What were the recommendations of the Mandal Commission? What is the criteria for exclusion of the 'creamy layer' of the Other Backward Class? Is the concentration of reservation benefits a concern? What can be done for a more equitable distribution?

**EXPLAINER**

**Rangarajan. R**

**The story so far:**

The allotment of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) to Pujya Khedkar as an Other Backward Class (OBC) Non-Creamy Layer (NCL) candidate coupled with multiple disabilities has raised issues surrounding the creamy layer in OBC reservation.

**What is the history of reservation?** Articles 15 and 16 guarantee equality to all citizens in any policy of the government and public employment respectively. In order to achieve social justice, they also enable special provisions for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes or OBC, Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). Reservations for SC and ST are fixed at 15% and 7.5% respectively, in jobs, educational institutions and public sector undertakings (PSU) at the central level. It was in 1990, when V. P. Singh was Prime Minister, that 27% reservation for OBC was implemented in central government employment based on Mandal Commission (1980) recommendations. Subsequently in 2005, reservation was enabled for OBC, SC and ST in educational institutions including private institutions. In 2019, 10% reservation was enabled for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) among the unreserved category.

**What is the creamy layer?** The 27% reservation for OBC was upheld by the Supreme Court in the *Indra Sawhney* case (1992). It opined that caste is a determinant of class in the Indian context. However, in order to uphold the basic structure of equality, it fixed a cap of 50% for reservation unless there are exceptional circumstances. The court also provided for exclusion of creamy layer from OBC.



**High stakes:** Aspirants look for their roll numbers before the UPSC civil services exam, on June 16. PTI

The criteria for identifying a person as part of the creamy layer is based on the recommendations of the Justice Ram Nandan Prasad Committee (1993). It is determined by the position/income of an applicant's parents alone. The criteria for belonging to creamy layer is parental income, excluding income from salary and agricultural income, being more than ₹8 lakh in each year in the last three consecutive financial years. Further, the following categories of applicants are also considered as belonging to creamy layer: (a) parents, either of whom entered government service (centre or State) as Group A/Class I officer or parents, both of whom entered as Group B/Class II officers or father, who was recruited in Group B/Class II post and promoted to Group A/Class I before 40 years of age; (b) either of the parents employed in a managerial position in PSUs; (c) either of the parents

holding constitutional posts.

**What are the issues?**

The recent controversy has raised issues surrounding the inadequacies in the process. There are allegations that some applicants manage to obtain NCL or EWS certificate through dubious means. The same may also be true with respect to disability certificates in order to take benefit of the 4% of seats reserved for persons with disabilities in central government jobs. There are also allegations of applicants and their parents adopting strategies to get around the creamy layer exclusion like gifting of assets, taking premature retirement etc., since the applicant's or his/her spouse's income is not considered for such exclusion. Another contentious issue relates to concentration of reservation benefits. The Rohini Commission, that

was set up for providing recommendation on sub-categorisation among OBC castes, has estimated that 97% of reserved jobs and seats in educational institutions have been garnered by just around 25% of the OBC castes/sub-castes at the central level. Close to 1,000 of around 2,600 communities under the OBC category had zero representation in jobs and educational institutes. Similar issue of concentration of reservation benefits persists in the SC and ST category as well. There is neither any exclusion based on 'creamy layer' for these communities. The reservation at present stands at 60%, including the reservation for EWS. Considering societal realities, this higher percentage of reservation is required. It is pertinent to note that as per government replies in Parliament, 40-50% of seats reserved for OBC, SC and ST in the central government remain unfilled.

**What can be the way forward?**

The foremost requirement is to plug the loopholes in the issue of NCL, EWS and disability certificates. There must be thorough scrutiny to ensure that only eligible applicants obtain these benefits. The vacancies for reserved communities should be filled without backlogs. Sub-categorisation of reservation may be essential to address the under representation or non-representation of various communities. Similarly, creamy layer exclusion in SC and ST category, at least for children of Group I/Class A government officials may be considered. These are sensitive matters in which for every argument in favour of such a proposal, there are valid counter arguments that can be advanced. Nevertheless, a discussion should begin on these aspects with all stakeholders to implement them. This would ensure that benefits of reservation reach the more marginalised among underprivileged in successive generations.

*Rangarajan. R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Polity Simplified'. Views expressed are personal.*

**THE GIST**

Articles 15 and 16 guarantee equality to all citizens in any policy of the government and public employment respectively. In order to achieve social justice, they also enable special provisions for advancement of socially and educationally backward classes or OBC, Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST).

The 27% reservation for OBC was upheld by the Supreme Court in the *Indra Sawhney* case (1992). It opined that caste is a determinant of class in the Indian context.

Sub-categorisation of reservation may be essential to address the under representation or non-representation of various communities.

## What is South Africa's new law on climate change?

What are the features of the law? Does India have an omnibus legislation on climate change?

**Jacob Koshy**

**The story so far:**

South Africa's President, Cyril Ramaphosa, signed into law a piece of legislation that will impose mandatory curbs on the emissions from large, fossil-fuel heavy industries and, require climate-adaptation plans from towns and villages. The President said this would enable South Africa to meet its emissions reduction commitments under the Paris agreement.

**What is the significance of this law?** The Climate Change Bill was approved by South Africa's National Assembly last November. South Africa relies on coal as its primary fuel source for electricity generation and is one of the world's top 15 greenhouse gas (GHG) emitters. According to an official estimate, net emissions in 2017 were estimated at 512 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e), an increase of 14% from 2000. In 2022, this fell to 405 Mt

CO<sub>2</sub>e, a 3% fall from 2021, according to Statista. It is unclear if these numbers are strictly comparable and if the fall was linked to the worldwide, temporary dip in emissions following COVID-19. The energy sector represents roughly 80% of gross emissions, with energy industries (-60%) and transport (-12%). Being an economy which is dependent on agriculture and tourism, South Africa has faced increasing Western pressure to accelerate its transition away from fossil fuel.

**What steps has South Africa taken?**

Every country submits Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), which are time-bound commitments to lower emissions. South Africa submitted its first NDC in 2016 and its updated NDC in 2021. The updated NDC commits to 31% reduction and a fixed target for GHG emissions levels of 398-510 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2025, and 350-420 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2030.

The NDC outlines an approach for a 'just transition,' - or the sustainable movement to jobs away from fossil-fuel

dependent industries - to achieve targets, focusing on agriculture, forestry and other land use, energy, industrial processes and product use, and waste sectors. South Africa has estimated that it requires \$8 billion per year by 2030. It has set an internal goal of reaching 'net zero emissions' by 2050 in its Low-Emission Development Strategy submitted in 2020. In addition, the Presidential Climate Commission released its Just Transition Framework in 2022, which aims to inform policy making at the nexus of climate and development to enable deep, just transformational shifts. These were the actions that preceded the signing of the Climate Change Bill.

**What about India?**

India does not have a comprehensive legislation on climate change. Priyanka Chaturvedi, the Rajya Sabha parliamentarian, had moved a Private Member's Bill, called the Council on Climate Change Bill, most recently in 2022. This proposed setting up a Council,

chaired by the Prime Minister, for advising the Union government on all matters related to climate change but there has been no significant movement on this so far. However, climate change features in multiple Acts and subordinate legislation. These include the Environmental Protection Act, Forest Conservation Act, Energy Conservation Act, Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act among others.

**Are these enough?**

In April this year, the Supreme Court ruled that citizens have a "right against the adverse effects of climate change," and referred to the fact that India did not have an omnibus legislation on climate change. "Despite Constitutional guarantees that give the citizens equality before the law and right to life and personal liberty, it was now necessary, in the Court's view, to explicitly link the impact of climate change as something which impedes these rights of liberty, life and equality." Prior to the UN Conference of Parties in Dubai last year, India communicated that the intensity of its energy emissions had reduced by 33% from 2005-2019, 11 years ahead of target. It also committed to revising its emissions intensity to 45% by 2030 in the updated set of NDC. Emission intensity refers to the total amount of GHG emitted for every unit increase of GDP. It is different from absolute emissions. India has also committed to source 50% of its electricity in 2030 from non-fossil fuel resources.

**THE GIST**

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CACHE



GETTY IMAGES

# What are the various efforts being taken to mitigate caller ID spoofing?

Caller ID spoofing is a technique with which the phone number that a call appears to originate from can be falsified. Spoofing techniques have been honed by enthusiasts, telemarketers, and fraudsters alike, over the years

**Karan Saini**

Several friends and family members of mine received a call from a North American (+1) phone number which played a pre-recorded message informing them of a supposed court summons. I happened to receive a call from a +1 number too. I had also missed a domestic call shortly before the international one. While these automated calls are part of a well-known scam, looking at the phone numbers, I noticed that the Indian and North American phone numbers were identical to each other, save for their country codes. The Indian number was +91 98199 69857, and the American number was +1 (981) 996-9857.

**What is caller ID spoofing?**

Caller ID spoofing is a technique with which the phone number that a call appears to originate from can be falsified. On a technical level, caller ID spoofing is not difficult to perform. Spoofing techniques have been honed by enthusiasts, telemarketers, and fraudsters alike, over the years. Malicious individuals use caller ID spoofing primarily to shield their identity when engaging in illicit activity. At times, caller ID spoofing is used by these individuals to carry out social engineering attacks, where the spoofed caller ID is abused for the implicit trust that the receiving party associates with it. Caller ID spoofing can also be used to circumvent standard call blocking

systems, and even for exploiting vulnerabilities in insecure Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems.

Caller ID spoofing in itself is perfectly legal in many jurisdictions, and as a result of this several companies offering caller ID spoofing services to customers around the world have popped up over the years, with the first commercial caller ID spoofing service launching in 2004.

**Tackling scam calls**

Caller ID spoofing is a costly affair for everyone involved. Telecommunication service providers lose revenue, users that are defrauded due to a scam call abusing a spoofed caller ID lose money, and law enforcement has a harder time investigating crimes where spoofed caller IDs are used. Caller ID spoofing is not a new phenomenon, and there have been several earnest technical efforts made for fixing the problem.

The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) is a special UN agency focused on improving and standardising global information and communication technologies. The ITU was originally established as the International Telegraph Union in 1865, much before the UN existed, and of which India has been a member since 1869 onward. In 2021, the ITU published a technical report on countering caller ID spoofing. While this report does not have any mandatory provisions, it does provide a reference using Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) based authentication which could be

implemented by Indian telecom operators to fix caller ID spoofing for good.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) had earlier recommended to telecom operators to integrate a system known as Calling Name Presentation (CNAP), with the idea of allowing consumers to know who is calling them in a way similar to how applications such as TrueCaller do it, except CNAP would be mandatory, and caller names would appear as per KYC documents. A 2022 consultation paper on the project makes only a few mentions of caller ID spoofing, and does not provide a plan or technical measures for tackling the issue. It merely acknowledges in one sentence that caller ID spoofing is a problem that exists. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) is reportedly in the process of launching a pilot of the CNAP project. Though it is not known whether CNAP will (or should) be implemented, it can be said that introducing such a system without first implementing a technical fix for caller ID spoofing will be a mistake.

According to news reports from May 2024, the DoT has devised a system to “identify and block” international calls with a manipulated Calling Line Identity (CLI) and has issued directions to telecom operators to prevent such calls from reaching subscribers.

However, considering that the problem has still not been fixed, it is unclear whether the system (technical details of which have not been furnished) is effective, or if it has even been

implemented.

**Government inaction**

The Telecommunications Act, 2023 which was partially notified on June 26 of this year allows the Union Government to take over control and operation of any telecommunication service or network during times of “emergency.” Section 20 of the Act empowers the Government to take “temporary possession of any telecommunication service or telecommunication network from an authorised entity” for “any public emergency, including disaster management, or in the interest of public safety.” The Act has received criticism for being invasive and potentially increasing surveillance powers. That aside, it can be said that fixing caller ID spoofing would be “in the interest of public safety”; why then has the Government not taken action?

Fixing the technical and implementation problem of caller ID spoofing will have an outweighed impact for all stakeholders. For consumers, fixing caller ID spoofing will reduce spam and fraud calls, and will completely eliminate fraud that relies on false representation of one’s identity via phone number. For telecommunications providers, it will save revenue that would otherwise be lost, and for the Government and therefore the public, it would result in revenue that would contribute to the Indian economy.

*Karan Saini is a security engineer and researcher based in New Delhi, India*

**THE DAILY QUIZ**

Please send in your answers to [dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in](mailto:dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in)

## A quiz on some of the important events that happened on July 26

**Sindhu Nagaraj**

**QUESTION 1**

Two former Prime Ministers of these two countries, which are part of Oceania, were born on July 26. While one of them was the PM of this country between 1996 and 2007, the other was this country’s third female PM between 2017 and 2023. Name the Prime Ministers and the counties.

**QUESTION 2**

This American actor born on July 26 has received numerous accolades including Academy Awards. Known for this political show called *House of Cards*, he was recently accused of sexual misconduct in 2017. Name the actor.

**QUESTION 3**

This Irish singer-songwriter died on this day last year. After converting to Islam in 2018, she adopted the name Shuhada’ Sadaqat, while continuing to perform and record under her birth name. Identify her.

**QUESTION 4**

This is celebrated every year to observe India’s victory over Pakistan, in a war that ended on July 26, 1999. What is it called?

**QUESTION 5**

This English writer was born on this day in 1894. His novels include *The Genius* and *The Goddess*, *Point Counter Point* and *Eyeless in Gaza*, among others. Name the writer.



**Visual question:**

Identify this American sportsperson born on July 26. What is the sport she was known for?

**Questions and Answers to the July 26 edition of the daily quiz:**

- The Tiger of Drass* is a biography of this Mahavir Chakra awardee. **Ans: Capt. Anuj Nayyar, MVC(P)**
  - The sub-sector west of the Siachen glacier was renamed after this Vir Chakra awardee’s sacrifice. **Ans: Capt. Haneef Uddin, Vr C (P)**
  - The codename of the Indian Air Force operations during the Kargil War in 1999. **Ans: Operation Safed Safar**
  - The science block of the National Defence Academy is named after which Param Vir Chakra awardee of Kargil. **Ans: Capt. Manoj Pandey, PVC (P)**
  - Bikram Saluja portrayed which Vir Chakra awardee’s role in the movie *LOC*. **Ans: Capt. Sanjeev Singh Jamwal, VrC**
  - This PVC awardee’s code name was Shershah. **Ans: Capt. Vikram Batra, PVC**
  - The name of the Indian Navy operation launched in conjunction with Op Vijay in 1999. **Ans: Operation Talwar**
  - The Chief of Army Staff of India during the Kargil War. **Ans: Gen V. P. Malik**
- Visual: The monument of this ‘Batalik Hero’ was established in 2007. **Ans: Capt. M. Saravanan, VrC**  
**Early Birds:** Animesh Mohan| Tamal Biswas| Kaustubh Rana



**FROM THE ARCHIVES**

## Know your English

**K. Subramanian**

“Difference between ‘among’ and ‘amongst’ (Chandra Mouli, Madras).”  
 “There is no difference. Fowler says that ‘amongst’ is more usual before vowels. ‘Among’ and ‘amongst’ must be followed by a plural noun or pronoun. They can also be followed by a group noun, singular in form, but plural in sense such as ‘family,’ ‘crowd.’  
*I found him among his friends.*  
*He loves to work amongst the weaker sections of society.*  
*The girl was found among the crowd.*  
*They are always quarrelling among themselves.*  
*She is the most talented among her sisters.*

You use ‘among’ when more than two persons or things are involved. ‘Between’ is ‘used of people or things, either two in number or more than two considered individually.’

*This is strictly between you and me.*  
*There will be an interval of ten minutes between the acts* (not between each act).

“Between” and not “among” is used where three or more parties are considered to be in a close relationship.

*Negotiations are going on between members of the European Common Market.*

When you describe a triangular piece of land, you say the land is between three points and not among three points.”

“Crapulent (S. K. Chaturvedi, Nagpur).”  
 “‘Crapulent’ is a literary word which means ‘feeling unwell as a result of eating or drinking too much.’

*He drank like a fish last night and is in a crapulent state now.*

The ‘a’ is pronounced like the ‘a’ in ‘man’ and ‘u’ like the ‘u’ in ‘tube.’”

“Onomastics (G. Bapiah Gupta, Ponnur).”

“‘Onomastics’ is ‘the study of the origin and formation of (especially personal) proper names.’ This is a plural noun treated as a singular. Onomastics is an interesting science. The adjective is ‘onomastic.’ The first ‘o’ is pronounced like the ‘o’ in ‘got,’ the second one like the ‘a’ in ‘India,’ the ‘a’ like the ‘a’ in ‘man.’ The stress is on the third syllable. It is from Greek ‘onoma’ which means a name.”

“Meaning of ‘to turn a blind eye’ (G. Ravichandran, Bombay).”

“‘To turn a blind eye’ means ‘to take no notice (of an action), stop oneself deliberately from becoming concerned.’ When you turn a blind eye to something, you pretend not to have seen something, although you actually have. You do not let what you have seen affect you in any way because as far as you are concerned you have not seen anything!

*Shanthi’s behaviour at the party was outrageous. But her husband Ram turned a blind eye to everything.*

*Our new Vice-Chancellor is very strict. He has asked us not to turn a blind eye to copying by students.”*

*Published in The Hindu on October 20, 1992.*

## Word of the day

**Parsimony:**

extreme care in spending money; reluctance to spend money unnecessarily; extreme stinginess

**Synonyms:** thrift, penny-pinching, tightfistedness

**Usage:** *She was surprised by the parsimony of larger corporations.*

**Pronunciation:** bit.ly/parsimonypro

**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /pɑː.sə.məʊ.ni/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to [letters@thehindu.co.in](mailto:letters@thehindu.co.in) with the subject ‘Text & Context’

## From Page One

## 2 held day after three IAS aspirants drown

The Mayor ordered "immediate" action against all coaching centres running commercial activities in basements against the rules. The Corporation sealed the basements of Rau's IAS Study Circle and 13 other coaching institutes, the Mayor said.

Holding placards saying "Old Rajinder Nagar is not safe", students said such a disaster was waiting to happen. Many flagged the issues of poor drainage systems and frequent water logging inside basements. A number of shopkeepers have also shut their shops and removed their boards from basement shops.

The police have formed multiple teams to investigate the incident and have asked the Delhi Fire Services to provide a report on the building and the basement which was being used as a library, but was mentioned as a "storeroom", a senior police officer said.

An FIR was registered based on the statement of a sub-inspector (SI), who said that the owner of the coaching centre, who was present at the time of the incident, had failed to produce the documents required to run a library in the basement. He also accepted that there was no drainage system in the basement, the FIR stated. The FIR was registered under Sections 105 (culpable homicide), 106(I) (death of any person by doing any rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable homicide), 115(2) (punishment for voluntarily causing hurt), 290 (negligent conduct with respect to pulling down, repairing or constructing building) and 35 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Some students protesting on a main road near the coaching centre were removed by the Delhi Police later in the evening. "Around 2.30 p.m. on Sunday, some students blocked both carriage-ways of Pusa Road near Karol Bagh metro station, which is an arterial road with many hospitals in the vicinity. They were repeatedly requested to not block the main road and since they refused to clear the main road even after an hour, they were removed from there, considering the massive public inconvenience and nearby hospitals," DCP (Central Delhi) M. Harshvardhan said.

Delhi Fire Services Chief Atul Garg said that it had taken eight hours to completely pump the water out of the basement.

The coaching centre said in a statement that it was "fully committed to supporting ongoing investigation into the tragic incident".

## New job schemes to kick off soon: Somanathan

"We don't want to leave out the services or any sector from possible incentivisation if it will create jobs. We don't want to focus only on employees who draw up to ₹25,000 a month. You can pay the employee even one lakh, but our fiscal outgo is limited to the ₹25,000 level, but even 24% of that works out to 12% of a ₹50,000 salary, which is still a substantial subsidy," he emphasised.

"We don't know where these salary figures stop. In some of these industries, even fresh hires get more than ₹50,000 to ₹60,000. But we have capped our outgo so the incentive is strongest for those earning ₹25,000," the official noted. "Nothing to lose" The new scheme to facilitate internships for youth in the age bracket of 21 to 24 years has no connection with the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 announced in the Union Budget for 2023-24, and will be administered by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, not the Ministry of Skill Development, Mr. Somanathan underlined. He stressed that the scheme is voluntary and will not require firms to invest funds from their own pockets, but rather through their mandated corporate social responsibility (CSR) spends, combined with government resources.

"We are also open to the company doing the skilling through companies in the backward or forward supply chains, if they can't do it themselves," Mr. Somanathan underlined.

"While everybody agrees that something is to be done, very few people have concrete ideas on what the government can do to promote employment. We are relying on basic micro economics, that a subsidy triggers additional expenditure in the item which is subsidised," he summed up.

## Centre scraps auction of 3 critical mineral blocks

The Centre last month launched the fourth round of auctions of critical and strategic mineral blocks offering 21 mines in several States including Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

Of these 21 blocks, 11 are new, spanning Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. These blocks contain a variety of minerals including graphite, glauconite, phosphorite, potash, nickel, platinum group element, phosphate and rare earth elements.

## 'Relocate rain-hit people'

Press Trust of India  
DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Sunday directed the officials to immediately identify

"sensitive" villages and relocate the affected people to safer places in view of rains and landslides in the State. Cloudbursts on Saturday caused massive destruction, officials said.

## AICC cracks the whip on infighting in Kerala that may jeopardise Mission 2025

Deepa Dasmunshi, AICC general secretary in charge of Kerala, writes to KPCC to ferret out individuals who undermine discipline by planting exaggerated reports about organisational matters in the media

G. Anand  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Congress's national leadership has woken up to the peril of inner party leaks and infighting, which it fears will break the hard-won organisational cohesion in Kerala ahead of the crucial local body elections in 2025.

A series of media "disclosures" about a purportedly growing rift between Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president K. Sudhakaran and Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan has come as a blow to the All India Congress Committee's (AICC) hope of putting behind years of infighting in the State unit and uniting the party to win the local body elections and the Assembly elections in 2026.

## 'Disturbing trend'

Consequently, on July 27, Deepa Dasmunshi, the AICC general secretary in charge of Kerala, wrote to



Media 'disclosures' about a purportedly growing rift between KPCC chief K. Sudhakaran and LoP V.D. Satheesan has come as a blow to the AICC hope of putting behind infighting in the State unit. FILE PHOTO

the chairman of the KPCC disciplinary committee, Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan, to ferret out individuals who undermine party discipline by planting "exaggerated and untrue reports" about organisational matters in the media. Ms. Dasmunshi called the trend "disturbing" and an attempt to create rifts in the leadership.

The KPCC leadership's

alleged attempt to freeze out Mr. Satheesan from an online leadership meeting triggered the chain of events. Mr. Satheesan skipped a local body byelection-related meeting in protest. The AICC was also reportedly irked by media reports that the online conference brimmed with factional hostility, bitterness, and criticism of Mr. Satheesan. Several leaders complained that the KPCC kept

them out of the meeting's loop. By some accounts, the KPCC leadership convened the meeting at the instance of some allegedly disgruntled KPCC general secretaries and district party chiefs who felt that Mission 2025, a party programme to win the local body elections, was a trespass on their traditional fiefdoms and organisational jurisdictions. The Congress leadership conclave in Wayanad had tasked Mr. Satheesan with chairing the mission. Consequently, Mr. Satheesan opened direct channels with the party's rank and file ostensibly to rid the organisation of torpidity at the grassroots level, reportedly rendering some party satraps insecure.

Ms. Dasmunshi signalled that Congress could ill-afford to allow factionalism and leadership wrangles to retard Mission 2025's momentum and take public focus off the shortcomings of the Centre and State governments.

## UltraTech to acquire India Cements; buy 32.72% stake

Press Trust of India  
NEW DELHI

Aditya Birla Group flagship company UltraTech Cement will acquire a 32.72% stake in India Cements from promoters and their associates for ₹3,954 crore to expand its footprint in the highly competitive and fast-growing southern cement market, particularly Tamil Nadu.

Besides, UltraTech has also announced a ₹3,142.35-crore open offer to acquire another 26% share of India Cements Ltd. from its shareholders.

This announcement comes a month after Adani Group, the second largest cement maker announced the acquisition of Hyderabad-based Penna Cement for ₹10,422 crore, which will add 14 million tonnes per annum (MTPA), taking its capacity to 93 MTPA.

With an installed capacity of 154.86 MTPA of grey cement, UltraTech Cement leads the Indian cement industry. The company has



UltraTech Cements aims to be one of the largest cement companies in the world and has set a target of 200 MTPA.

an ambition to become one of the largest cement companies in the world and has set a target for 200 MTPA.

The Board of the Aditya Birla firm approved the acquisition of 32.72% stake from promoters and their associates at ₹390 per share, according to a regulatory filing from UltraTech on Sunday.

It has entered into share purchase agreements for a 28.42% stake from promoters - N. Srinivasan, Chitra Srinivasan, Rupa Gurunath, and S.K. Asokh Baa-

laje - and a 4.3% share from Sri Saradha Logistics.

After the completion of the ₹3,954-crore deal, UltraTech's stake in India Cements will increase to over 55%, mandating it to go for the open offer as per the SEBI regulations.

## Open offer

The Board of UltraTech has also approved an "open offer for up to 8.05 crore equity shares representing 26% of the equity share capital of the Target, at a price of ₹390 per equity share from the public shareholders of Target", the filing said.

The price offered by UltraTech is 4.1% higher than the India Cements share closing price of ₹374.60 on Friday. If fully subscribed, the open offer would cost UltraTech ₹3,142.35 crore.

In June, UltraTech acquired 23% of India Cements. It acquired Damani group's stake in India Cements through two block deals estimated at around ₹1,900 crore.

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged people to encourage the Indian athletes participating in the Paris Olympics, stating that the grand sporting event gave players a chance to hoist the Tricolour on the world stage.

In his *Mann Ki Baat* address, Mr. Modi also congratulated the Indian students who bagged four gold and one silver medal in the International Mathematics Olympiad. He interacted with the students, who shared their experiences and insights.

In order to address the serious issue of drug abuse, Mr. Modi said the government had launched Manas, a special centre with a toll-free helpline (1933) for support and rehabilitation.

On the issue of tourism, he said it was a matter of pride for all Indians that the Charaideo Moidams in Assam had been included

## Karnataka suspends search for missing driver; Kerala Minister calls it 'breach of trust'

The Hindu Bureau  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



Put on hold: Rescuers return to the banks of the Gangavali river on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Kerala government has expressed dismay at the decision of the Uttara Kannada district administration to suspend the search operation to locate lorry driver Arjun, suspected to have been washed away into the Gangavali river, following a massive landslide at Shirur in Karnataka on July 16.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan shot off a letter to his Karnataka counterpart Siddaramaiah on Sunday urging him to issue directions to continue the search.

On Sunday, the 13th day of the search mission, Karwar MLA Satish Krishna Sail and Uttara Kannada Deputy Commissioner Lakshmi Priya announced that the search would have to be called off temporarily as divers were unable to see through the turbulent waters of the river where Arjun's truck is believed to be stuck in the soil moved by the landslide. The strong current in the river had made the operation risky for the divers, they said.

Kerala Minister for Pu-

blic Works P.A. Mohamed Riyas, who visited the landslide site, expressed disappointment at the move to suspend the mission. He said the Uttara Kannada district administration had called off the mission arbitrarily.

Terming it a breach of trust, he said, "They are going back on the decision to bring pontoons and tug boats to assist the search. We have conveyed our objection to the decision."

## Pinarayi's appeal

Appreciating the efforts put in by the search teams, Mr. Vijayan, in his letter, requested Mr. Siddaramaiah to continue the mission with the required equipment.

## Cheer Indian athletes taking part in Paris Olympics: Modi

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

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On the issue of tourism, he said it was a matter of pride for all Indians that the Charaideo Moidams in Assam had been included

as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

## Modi mentions PARI

The Prime Minister also mentioned Project PARI, saying it was becoming a great medium to bring emerging artists on one platform to popularise public art. "You must have seen that beautiful paintings are made on the roadsides, on walls, in underpasses. These artefacts are made by the same artists who are associated with PARI..." he said.

Appreciating the efforts of over 250 women of Haryana's Rohtak who are associated with the handloom industry, Mr. Modi said, "...They decided to join the UNNATI self help group and received training in block printing and dyeing. These women who spread the magic of colours on clothes are earning lakhs of rupees today...Be it Sambalpuri saree of Odisha, Maheshwari saree of M.P. [Madhya Pradesh], Paithani of Mah-

arashtra or the hand block prints of Vidarbha, Bhutiko shawls and woollen clothes of Himachal or Kani shawls of Jammu & Kashmir, the work of handloom artisans is spread across every corner of the country... On August 7, we will celebrate the National Handloom Day," he said.

The Prime Minister also talked about the "Tiger Day" observed on July 29 every year the world over.

Referring to the 'Kulhadi Band Panchayat' campaign in Rajasthan's Ranthambore, he said the local communities had taken an oath that they would not cut forest trees. "Due to this one decision, the forests here are becoming green once again, and a better environment is being created for tigers...Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve of Maharashtra is one of the main habitats of tigers. The local communities here, especially Gond and Mana tribes, have taken rapid strides towards eco-tourism," he added.

## Cargo carrier structurally stable and operational after fire: Coast Guard

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has deployed five ships, two helicopters, and one Dornier aircraft for rescue operations over 10 days after *m.v. Maersk Frankfurt*, a Panamanian flag cargo carrier, reported a major fire on July 19.

The owners of the vessel have contracted a specialised salvage agency to take over firefighting efforts and for further disposal of the vessel while salvors and ocean-going tugs have already been roped in, the ICG said on Sunday.

The fire broke out around 80 nautical miles west of Goa, with the ICG launching rescue efforts under 'Operation Sahayata'.



Indian Coast Guard carries out fire-fighting operations on *m.v. Maersk Frankfurt* off Goa coast. PTI

"Further, ICG specialised pollution response team is on standby since the commencement of operations, in coordination with stakeholders, to effect suitable response in an unlikely event of oil spill. However, ICG's pollution preventive stance has ensured that no risk exists to the

marine environment and coastal areas of Karnataka from the fire onboard *MV Maersk Frankfurt*," the ICG said in a statement.

Infrared imagery has revealed reduction in hot-spots and smouldering is primarily restricted to "Bay 18 starboard side", it added.

The ICG ships are undertaking boundary cooling efforts and extinguishing sporadic minor flames that erupt from time to time due to the initial incineration of sealed containers, it said. More than 1,200 kg of dry chemical powder has been air-dropped at the area of fire so far. Of the 21 foreign crew, one Filipino national is missing, while others are safe and in good health, the ICG said. "The vessel is structurally stable and remains operational."

The ICG has had two meetings with Director-General, Shipping, the State administration, stakeholders, ports, salvage agency, ship owners and management to review the progress and find an early end to the crisis.

## Bring back Netaji's remains from Japan: grandnephew to PM

The Hindu Bureau  
KOLKATA

The grandnephew of freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Chandra Kumar Bose, on Sunday appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to bring back the "mortal remains of Netaji" from the Renkoji temple in Japan by August 18.

"Efforts must be made to bring the mortal remains of an immortal Hero to his home country-India, the land he liberated. My humble appeal to you is to bring back the mortal remains of Netaji from Renkoji to India by 18 August 2024," Mr. Bose wrote in a letter to Mr. Modi.

Mr. Bose said that after the release of several re-

ports "it is evident that Netaji perished on 18 August 1945". "It is, therefore imperative that a final statement is made from the Government of India, so that false narratives about the Liberator of India are laid to rest," he said.

Mr. Bose, a former vice-president of West Bengal BJP and now convener of The Open Platform for Netaji, told *The Hindu* that it was unfortunate that the Centre was maintaining silence over the demands to bring Netaji's remains to the country.

"Netaji's daughter Anita Bose Pfaff has also raised the demand for bringing Netaji's remains to India. I have been also raising the issue for the past three years," he said.

# 'The trajectory of the road is downhill in terms of debt to GDP'

Budget has steps to trigger consumption, but they are not in the nature of direct cash transfers, says Finance Secretary T.V. Somanathan; for Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, funds for some projects will be only through concessional multilateral loans, which could be from World Bank, Asian Development Bank, JICA, AIIB... any of these institutions, which extend assistance to India anyway, he adds

INTERVIEW

**T.V. Somanathan**

Vikas Dhoot  
NEW DELHI

The Centre is confident of delivering on its Budget promise to arrange external financing for infrastructure development projects in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, Finance Secretary T.V. Somanathan said in an interview with *The Hindu*. He also elaborated on measures to rein in food inflation and spur consumption. Edited excerpts:

**The Budget's push for job creation is welcome, but a key reason for**

**firms to hire is a rise in demand and capacity utilisation levels. Economists feel the consumption push is limited.**

Well, there is a moderate tax cut for the salaried class mainly, but also for others to a less extent. There is a continued push on capital investment. There is a big push on schemes like the PM Gram Sadak Yojana [rural roads], the Awas Yojana [housing], both rural and urban. These are big spenders in rural areas and there is a big expansion with the former covering 25,000 more habitations. This is spending in rural areas by rural people who are employed in these roles. So, there is quite a big trust there. Similarly, the three

crore new houses coming in, of which two crore would be in rural areas, is also actually a big trigger of consumption. So, I would argue there are measures here to trigger consumption, but they are not in the nature of direct cash transfers. They are consumption measures that act through creation of assets.

By the way, the employment incentives, when paid, will also result in some consumption. So it is consumption through some desirable objective rather than consumption through just transfer of cash, for the sake of consumption.

**What about measures to rein in food inflation, that has been spiking overall price rise?**



Whatever can be done on food inflation is being done. There is one important point which has not been very much highlighted in the Budget – a substantial provision for the Price Stabilisation Fund with the highest ever allocation (₹10,000 crore). We intend to use this more aggressively on the procurement of pulses and oilseeds, building up an

adequate buffer stock in years of low prices, and then releasing it at times of high prices. This is an initiative to stabilise food prices, particularly on pulses and oilseeds. And we mean business about procuring it at MSP (Minimum Support Price) for these items.

Once we do that, farmers will tend to shift... We hope to see an expansion

in the production of these items and reduce the volatility in those prices.

**For Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, you have provided funds for some projects, and promised to arrange funds for others...**

These will be only through concessional multilateral loans, which could be from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, JICA, AIIB... any of these institutions, which considerably extend assistance to India anyway. They will lend to the Government of India, and the GoI will on-lend to the States, just as with any multilaterally-funded projects in States. The banks are willing, and we will be able to tie it up. Building of a capital is very much an

infrastructure activity. We have not discussed [any interest subvention for the States] yet.

**The Budget pivots from targeting the fiscal deficit after 2025-26, to a focus on the debt-to-GDP ratio. Would this entail a goal like reaching 40% of GDP over time?**

It may not necessarily be 40%. We are saying it will decline gradually, how far and how fast, we are yet to determine, but it will be on a declining path.

So, after 2025-26, when we will be below 4.5% of GDP and that is a commitment, the intention is that it will be below 4.5% definitely. But what will be the deficit will also depend on how much we need to keep

the debt going down. Should the debt go down by x% and when should it reach what level, those are yet to be determined. So, the deficit will be under 4.5%, but it doesn't necessarily mean it would be 3% of GDP. And we can afford more than 3%, and still keep the debt declining steady. So that is the change of approach.

**Will we have a road map for it or we will take a view each year?**

That is something we will come up with. But we are saying one thing very clearly, that road map will be downwards. The trajectory of the road is downhill in terms of debt to GDP... how fast, what's the gradient, will be [determined] on a year-to-year basis.

## Biren meets PM to discuss the situation in Manipur

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on Sunday, the first such meeting between them since ethnic violence erupted in the State more than 14 months ago, sources said.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh were present.

Mr. Singh, who is in Delhi for the past two days, earlier met the Prime Minister during two group meetings.

The meeting lasted around 20 minutes. "The meeting ended on a positive note," another source said.

People in Manipur as well as the Opposition parties have questioned the PM's silence over the Manipur issue.

The meeting comes on a day when Manipur Governor Anusuiya Uikey was removed and newly appointed Governor of Assam, Lakshman Prasad Acharya was given additional charge of the State.

## In midnight reshuffle, President appoints six new Governors

BJP veteran Om Mathur has been appointed Governor of Sikkim, and former IAS officer K. Kailashnathan Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu appointed six new Governors and reshuffled three others, a Rashtrapati Bhavan communique has said.

The communique was issued past Saturday midnight.

BJP veteran Om Mathur has been appointed Governor of Sikkim, and Manipur Governor Anusuiya Uikey has been replaced by Lakshman Prasad Acharya, who has been moved from Sikkim to Assam and given additional charge of Manipur.

Mr. Mathur's appointment comes amid speculation that he is a contender for the post of BJP president.

Another significant appointment is that of former IAS officer K. Kailashnathan – a close aide of PM Narendra Modi when he was



Om Mathur

was also holding additional charge of Telangana, has been appointed Governor of Maharashtra.

Former Union Minister for Labour and Employment Santosh Kumar Gangwar will be the new Jharkhand Governor, while former Deputy Chief Minister of Tripura Jishnu Dev Varma will be the new Telangana Governor.

A former Lok Sabha member from Assam, Ramen Deka, has been appointed Governor of Chhattisgarh, while a former Lok Sabha member from Mysore in Karnataka, C.H. Vijayashankar, will be the Meghalaya Governor. In Rajasthan, a BJP leader from Maharashtra, Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde, has been appointed Governor to succeed Kalraj Mishra.

"The above appointments will take effect from the dates they will assume charge of their respective offices," a statement said.

## 'Capital gains is the fastest growing income class, can be taxed higher'

M. Ramesh  
CHENNAI

Capital gains is the fastest growing income class in India; it deserves to be taxed at a higher rate, on the grounds of raising revenues for the government and equity and fairness, Finance Secretary T.V. Somanathan said on Sunday.

In a conversation with Raghuvir Srinivasan, Editor, *Businessline*, at a post-Budget discussion, Mr. Somanathan said the increase in capital gains taxes was motivated by three factors. The "primary motivation" was to simplify the tax structure. Earlier, there were varied rates for different asset classes and different periods of holding the assets. Now, in response to calls for simplification, the structure has been simplified. The taxes are 12.5% for all long-term capital gains and the duration for qualifying for long-term is one year for listed securities and two for unlisted.

The second motivation, he said, was to raise revenues. In this context, he observed that 'capital gains' was the fastest-grow-



Finance Secretary T.V. Somanathan with Raghuvir Srinivasan, Editor, *Businessline*, and N. Ram and N. Ravi, Directors, Kasturi and Sons Ltd., at a post-Budget discussion by *Businessline*. BIJOY GHOSH

ing asset class in the country. "India needs taxation – we have to gather taxes at moderate rates," he said.

Finally, stressing that it was his personal opinion and not necessarily that of the government, Mr. Somanathan said it was only proper to raise taxes on capital gains because a concessional rate of tax on capital gains is unfair to those who earn incomes through other means.

The Finance Secretary said capital gains taxes in India, even after the recent hike, were much lower than those in developed countries. As an example, he mentioned that Canada taxes capital gains at half the applicable rate, whereas most other countries have a flat rate. He admitted that there was a justification for capital gains taxes to be lower than applicable rates because capital gains occur intermittently and could push the taxpayer into a higher tax bracket in the year it occurs. But, what the lower rate should be, is a matter of the respective government's decision. The Indian government has decided that long-term capital gains tax should be 12.5% and short-term 20%.

He also said that the country should get used to paying taxes at moderate rates, and said: "Our tax-GDP ratio is not high, our capital gains tax to overall

tax ratio is much lower than in most other developed countries." He said India "cannot have a world-class capital market and not expect to have some amount of reasonable taxes on capital gains".

On the real estate front, he said the decision to remove "indexation" (taking into account the effect of inflation while calculating capital gains) would benefit the taxpayer, noting that if the capital gains arising out of a real estate transaction were to be higher than 10%, the 12.5% rate of tax, without indexation, would be better than the previous 20% with indexation.

Mr. Somanathan also noted that while the idea behind raising long-term and short-term capital gains taxes on asset classes such as securities was to raise revenues, for real estate gains, no revenue gains were expected.

Describing the 12.5 per cent rate as "liberal", he said a person who makes capital gains on real estate has the option of avoiding a tax liability by reinvesting the gain in another property or buying capital gains bonds.

## BJP govt. continues to suppress voice of Opposition: Chidambaram

The Hindu Bureau  
PUDUKOTTAI

Senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram on Sunday told journalists here that the BJP government at the Centre continued to suppress the voice of the Opposition

parties.

He was replying to a query on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's claim that she had walked out of the Centre's NITI Aayog meeting as she was not allowed to speak for more than five minutes.

## Water released from Mettur Dam as inflow, storage level increase

The Hindu Bureau  
SALEM

Minister for Municipal Administration K.N. Nehru opened the shutters of the Mettur Dam here on Sunday. This follows a direction from Chief Minister M.K. Stalin to release water from the dam in view of the increase in inflow and storage.

Inflow to the dam increased to 1.51 lakh cusecs, and the water in the dam is expected to reach the full reservoir level of 120 feet in one or two days. The inflow had increased to 1.34 lakh cusecs at 8 a.m. on Sunday from 1.23 lakh cusecs as of Saturday. By noon, it rose to 1.47 lakh cusecs and at 4 p.m., it stood at 1.51 lakh cusecs. The dam's water level stood at 110.76 feet, and the storage, 79.49 TMC, as against the full capacity of 93.47 TMC.

**TAMIL NADU MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD.**  
(A Government of Tamil Nadu Undertaking)  
No. 417, Pantheon Road, Chennai-600 008. Phone: 044-2819 1890, 2819 0259  
Website: www.tnmsc.tn.gov.in E-Mail: gm@tnmsc.tn.gov.in, mngprudrug.tnmsc@tn.gov.in

Online tenders are invited by the Tender Inviting Authority, Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation Ltd., Chennai – 600008, from the bidders meeting the eligibility criteria indicated in the tender document for the supply of **Reagents and Testing Kits** to TNMISC Ltd for two years from the date of acceptance of the tender

Sl. No	Description	e-Tender Reference	Tender Floating Period	e-Tender Submission Duration	Date and time of opening of Technical Bids
1	Online Tender for fixing rate contract for Reagents and Testing Kits to TNMISC Limited for two years from the date of acceptance	e-915(MP)/RE-KIPM/KITS/TNMSC/2024 Dated. 30.07.2024	30.07.2024 at 4.00 PM to 20.08.2024 upto 4.00 PM	08.08.2024 at 10.00 AM to 20.08.2024 upto 4.00 PM	21.08.2024 at 11.00 AM

The tender document can be downloaded and the tender shall be submitted at <https://tenders.gov.in>. The tender document can also be downloaded at [www.tnmsc.tn.gov.in](http://www.tnmsc.tn.gov.in) for reference purpose.

Tender Inviting Authority / General Manager (Drugs)  
DIPR/2638/2024

भारत सरकार - अंतरिक्ष विभाग / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA - DEPARTMENT OF SPACE  
निर्माण एवं अनुरक्षण समूह, एसडीएससी-शार / CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE GROUP, SDSC-SHAR  
श्रीहरिकोटा / नेल्सूर (जिला), आ.प्र. / SRIHARIKOTA - 524124

**संक्षिप्त ई-निविदा सूचना / Brief E-TENDER NOTICE**

ई-निविदा सूचना सं. / e-Tender Notice No: CMGC/CON/248716 तिथि/Date. 25.07.2024

भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से, "एसडीएससी शार के एसएमपीसी यूनिट-02 में विद्यमान विद्युत बाड़ा प्रणाली का मार्ग परिवर्तन एवं विस्तार" (₹250 लाख) के लिए ई-निविदा के माध्यम से मद दर निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा दस्तावेज 05.08.2024 को 14:30 बजे तक डाउनलोड किए जा सकते हैं। विस्तृत सूचना के लिए इच्छुक निविदाकार हमारी वेबसाइट [www.isro.gov.in](http://www.isro.gov.in) या [www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO](http://www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO) देखें।

On behalf of President of India, Item Rate tenders are invited through e-tendering for "Rerouting & Extension of existing Power Fencing System at SMP Unit-02, SDSC SHAR" (₹250 Lakhs); Tender documents can be downloaded up to 05.08.2024, 14:30 hrs. Interested tenderers may visit [www.isro.gov.in](http://www.isro.gov.in) or [www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO](http://www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO) for details.

हस्ताक्षरित- समूह प्रथम, सीएमजी / एसडीएससी शार / Sd/- GROUP HEAD, CMG / SDSC SHAR

भारत सरकार अंतरिक्ष विभाग राष्ट्रीय सतर्क संवेदन केंद्र हैदराबाद -500 037, तेलंगाना भारत टेलीफोन: +040-23884173 / 74 फैक्स: +040-23884179

Government of India Department of Space National Remote Sensing Centre Balanagar, Hyderabad - 500 037, Telangana, India Telephone: +040-23884173 / 74 Fax: +040-23884179

निर्माण एवं अनुरक्षण समूह / CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE GROUP  
ई-निविदा नोटिस / e-TENDER NOTICE

समूह निदेशक, सीएमजी, एसआरएससी, हैदराबाद द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्य के लिए ऑन-लाइन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।  
Online tenders are invited by the Group Director CMG, NRSC, Hyderabad for the following works:

एनआईटी सं. / NIT No.	कार्य का नाम / Name of work	अनुमानित प्राक्कलित लागत / Approximate Estimated Cost (Rs.)	निविदा दस्तावेज डाउनलोड करने की अवधि / Period during which the tender document can be downloaded	बोली अपलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि / Last date for Bid uploading
NRSC/CMG/NIT/ET/19/24 95/2024-25	एनआरएससी बालानगर परिसर, हैदराबाद में अग्नि सुरक्षा प्रणाली का पुनर्कक्षार (सिविल और विद्युत कार्य)। Revamping of Fire protection system at NRSC Balanagar campus, Hyderabad (Civil and Electrical works)	₹ 97.35 लाख / Lakhs	From : 29.07.2024 से To : 10.08.2024 तक	Up to 16.08.2024 16:00 बजे / Hrs
NRSC/CMG/NIT/ET/20/24 019/2024-25	एनआरएससी बालानगर परिसर हैदराबाद में वीआरएफ एसी सिस्टम का आपूर्ति, स्थापना, परीक्षण और कमीशनिंग। Supply, Installation Testing and Commissioning of VRF AC systems at NRSC Balanagar campus Hyderabad.	₹ 17.40 लाख / Lakhs	From : 29.07.2024 से To : 10.08.2024 तक	Up to 16.08.2024 16:00 बजे / Hrs
NRSC/CMG/NIT/ET/21/24 030/2024-25	एनआरएससी शानदनगर परिसर में विस्तारित डाटा सेंटर (ब्लॉक सी एक्सटेंशन) की छत पर सौर थर्मो-रिफ्लेक्टिव पेंट प्रदान करना। Providing solar thermo-reflective paint to terrace of extended data centre (Block C Extension) at NRSC Shadnagar Campus.	₹ 14.00 लाख / Lakhs	From : 29.07.2024 से To : 10.08.2024 तक	Up to 16.08.2024 16:00 बजे / Hrs

विस्तृत एनआईटी एवं पात्रता मानदंड ईएमडी बोली संबंधित प्रलेख आदि [www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO](http://www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO) पोर्टल से देखा/डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। किसी प्रकार के संशोधन, समय विस्तार, स्पष्टीकरण आदि वेबसाइट पर अपलोड किया जाएगा और किसी समाचार पत्र में प्रकाशित नहीं किया जाएगा। बोलीकर्ता अद्यतन जानकारी हेतु नियमित रूप से वेबसाइट देखें।  
Detailed NIT and eligibility criteria, EMD bidding document, etc. can be viewed/download from [www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO](http://www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO) portal. All amendments, time extension, clarifications, etc. will be uploaded on website and will not be published in newspapers. Bidders should regularly visit website to keep themselves updated.

समूह निदेशक / Group Director  
निर्माण एवं अनुरक्षण समूह / Construction & Maint. Group

**BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD**

**INVITATION FOR TENDERS**  
(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

BWSSB invites tenders in two stage tender system from eligible contractors for the following works.

Sl. No.	Name of the Works	Amount put to Tender EMD Amount
1	Work of laying UGD lateral on the Outer Ring Road coming under 110 villages of Mahadevapura zone	Rs. 464.34 lakhs Rs.6.97 lakhs
2	Procurement of 5,00,000 Nos. of Water saving Aerator with maximum flow rate of 3LPM	Rs. 2,44,65,000/- Rs. 3,67,000/-

Last date for receipt of tenders : 14.08.2024 upto 14:00 Hrs. The bids will be opened on: 16.08.2024 at 15:00 Hrs.  
Last date for receipt of tenders : 14.08.2024 before 15:00 Hrs. Technical Tenders will be opened on: 17.08.2024 at 12:00 Hrs.

Sd/- Chief Engineer (Project)

The details regarding the tender and participatin in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> For further details contact the above signed office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/JA/1122/2024-25

## INBRIEF



## Jaishankar holds talks with U.S. counterpart in Tokyo

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Sunday held "wide-ranging" talks with his American counterpart Antony Blinken against the backdrop of an unease in India-U.S. ties following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia three weeks ago. Both Mr. Jaishankar and Mr. Blinken are in Tokyo to attend a meeting of Foreign Ministers of the four-nation Quad grouping. The talks between the External Affairs Minister and the U.S. Secretary of State also came amid Washington consistently seeking accountability from New Delhi in the case relating to the alleged foiled plot to kill Sikh extremist Gurupatwant Singh Pannun in New York. It is not immediately clear whether Mr. Modi's visit to Russia and the murder-for-hire plot figured in the Jaishankar-Blinken talks. **PTI**

## CERT-In warns CrowdStrike users of phishing attacks

The Indian cyber security agency CERT-In has said that users impacted by the recent global computer outage were being targeted with phishing attacks. Fraudsters impersonating CrowdStrike support staff were offering to help them with system recovery tools and using the opportunity to install malware. According to a CERT-In advisory issued on Saturday, these attacks could "entice an unsuspecting user to install unidentified malware, which could lead to data leakage and crashes". The advisory asked users and organisations to configure firewalls to block 31 types of URLs, like 'crowdstrikeoutage[.]jinfo' and 'www.crowdstrikeoday[.]com' among others.

## NTA announces CUET-UG results after a month's delay

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Sunday declared the results of the Common University Entrance Test for undergraduate courses (CUET-UG). The results were expected to be declared on June 30 but were delayed as controversies gripped the NTA.

The CUET-UG, which was conducted in the hybrid mode for the first time across the country in May, was cancelled in Delhi a night before the scheduled exam day over "logistical reasons". The test was held in the national capital later. A retest was also conducted for some students on July 19.

A total of 8,024 candidates scored full marks in

business studies; followed by 5,141 in political science; 2,520 in history; 1,683 in English; and 1,602 in psychology.

The highest number of students appeared for the general test (7.09 lakh) and only one candidate got full marks. Every subject has at least a candidate scoring full marks.

The NTA, in a press release, said 13,47,820 candidates had registered for the exam, while 11,13,610 appeared.

Many students had flagged irregularities in the initial answer key, after which the answers were corrected in the final answer key. "Candidates were given an opportunity for the challenge from July 7 to 9 along with the Provisional Answer Key, Question Paper, and Recorded res-

ponses. In this duration, about 9,512 answer key challenges were received out of which 1,782 were unique challenges," the NTA said.

"The result of candidates is in the process of being shared with the universities. Candidates are advised to be in touch with the respective universities and Institutions for further details," it added.

Delhi University officials had earlier said that they were hoping to begin classes for first year by August 16. Registrar Vikas Gupta said, "We are expecting the results to be shared by the NTA tentatively by Wednesday. We will then begin the admission process, after which students can opt for the course preferences." **(With inputs from PTI)**

- Across**
- Mrs. Mop hugs doctor and engineer in the meeting place (7)
  - Light bang in rift (3,4)
  - Doctor enthralled by Chinese leader's dance (5)
  - American traffic policeman fulfilled fantastic dream to conceive child inside (5,4)
  - 4444 - This is how some animals walk! (10)
- Down**
- Usual encouragement gets man to forget exhaustion primarily (6)
  - Provide room and protective garment for player (3,3)
  - Toady spoils fight, Spooner says (10)
  - Ladies' man comes after Quebec, NATO revealed (5)
  - Worried about going into land in skirt (3,6)
  - A female forgot expedition gear (4)
  - One bear fights with a creature that lives without oxygen (8)
  - Position announced after exercise causes strain (8)
  - Ties of old opposite numbers (10)
  - World-shattering doctors acquiring English books by American! (9)
  - Out-of-the-way ladies to go berserk (7)
  - I run for gin of poor quality (4,4)
  - Item held by moneylender's wife in fashionable container (2,4)
  - Setter's work with insolvable clue, primarily thoughtless (6)
  - Shrub from old Madras central (5)
  - Peel off outhouse (4)

## Modi advises CMs to ensure full coverage of Central and State-level welfare measures

At two-day meeting of Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled States, Prime Minister listens to presentation of programmes that can be implemented across States, says party is working for good governance

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged the Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled States to ensure saturation-level coverage of welfare programmes announced by them and the Centre without tinkering, and sat through presentations of programmes which could be replicated across those States.

The meeting of 13 Chief Ministers and 15 Deputy Chief Ministers held over the weekend was addressed by Mr. Modi and BJP president J.P. Nadda. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Union Home Minister Amit Shah were present.

The 'Mukhyamantri Parishad' is organised by the BJP at regular intervals, aimed at reviewing key schemes in the States following the best governance practices, and the delivery of Union government welfare initiatives.

The BJP leaders said that certain schemes in different States were singled out for detailed presentation by the Chief Ministers, including Uttar Pradesh's



Narendra Modi poses for a group picture with Rajnath Singh, J.P. Nadda, Amit Shah, Chief Ministers and Deputy Chief Ministers, at the party headquarters in New Delhi on Sunday. **ANI**

Grameen Sachivalay Yojana (secretariat in rural areas); the Assam government's campaign to quickly fill vacant government posts; efforts made by the Gujarat government to encourage solar power generation; the Bihar government's drive to stop illegal mining; and Tripura's Aamar Sarkar (my government) outreach.

**'Working tirelessly'**  
"Our party is working tirelessly to further good governance and fulfil the as-

pirations of the people," Mr. Modi posted on social media platform X after the first part of the meeting on Saturday.

Chief Ministers Yogi Adityanath (Uttar Pradesh), Himanta Biswa Sarma (Assam), Bhajanlal Sharma (Rajasthan) and Mohan Charan Majhi (Odisha) were among the leaders who attended the meeting here. Those of Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Haryana, Manipur, and Chhattisgarh were part of

the deliberations. Uttar Pradesh Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya also attended the meeting.

The meeting comes in the wake of the presentation of the Union Budget, with the Opposition parties targeting the BJP-led government for allegedly ignoring other States at the expense of allies in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will be responding to the debate on the Budget in Parliament this week.

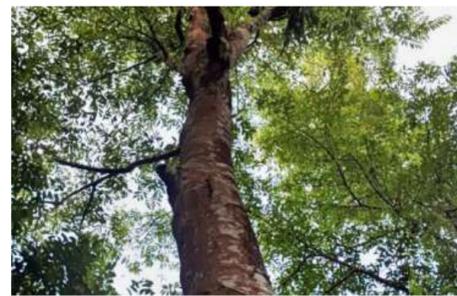
## CITES eases norms for agarwood export; move to benefit lakhs of farmers from the Northeast

**Shiv Sahay Singh**  
KOLKATA

India has successfully prevented the inclusion of agarwood (*Aquilaria malaccensis*) in the Review of Significant Trade (RST) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The CITES also notified a new export quota of the highly valuable and aromatic resinous wood and oil of the tree from India from April 2024.

Since agarwood is cultivated in different parts of India, especially in the northeastern States, this development is going to benefit lakhs of farmers in certain districts of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, and Tripura.



Agarwood extract is used in the preparation of incense, air fresheners, purifiers as well as medicines. **SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

*Aquilaria malaccensis* was listed in Appendix II of the CITES (a category of species that are not necessarily threatened but whose trade must be controlled) for the first time in 1995 based on India's proposal at CoP9 in 1994.

The removal of India

from the RST for *Aquilaria malaccensis* was achieved based on a non-detriment findings (NDFs) study of the plant species by the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) and the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC). The NDF prepared by

## 'Secret changes have been made to draft Broadcasting Bill'

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF) on Saturday decried "secret" changes to the draft Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, which expands regulatory requirements on online news and entertainment media.

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry has met "selective industry representatives, without representation from civil society, journalists, or other key stakeholders", the IFF said in a statement, repeating concerns from civil society that the Bill would lead to further censorship implications for online platforms.

The *Hindu* has received one of these subsequent versions that has not been circulated in public, but is withholding its contents because the document reportedly contains identifying markers that can expose the identity of each recipient of the draft.

A press note for the only version of the Bill released for the public to comment on said that it is an attempt to replace the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995. Streaming services are required in this version to constitute "content evaluation committees" to pre-screen content before it is released on their platforms.

**As per a press note, the Bill seeks to replace the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995**

The Bill also provides for the constitution of a Broadcast Advisory Council, with government membership, that would hear complaints against broadcasters. These requirements could be applied to streaming platforms and online influencers with a simple notification issued by the I&B Ministry. S. Meghnad, an online content creator, has titled a recent video on the topic: "This new law can shut down youtube journalists".

Every broadcaster covered under the Ministry's "regulatory ambit will be required to comply with a Code prescribed by the Union government, [and] failure to do so... will lead to monetary penalties or even imprisonment", the IFF said.

The Union government has shown concern on the impact of those it calls "negative influencers". In a 2021 report, it said "some negative influencers give false narratives and discredit the Government" and that "these need to be constantly tracked so that proper and timely response can be given".

the BSI suggested that the harvest of plants should be allowed from home, community gardens, plantations on leased/patta lands, private or community plantations, or any other types of small-scale or large-scale plantations.

However, the NDF added that "harvesting of plants or collection of seeds/seedlings/saplings and other propagules should not be allowed from the existing wild populations or plants in the protected areas and reserve forests".

The export quota recommended by the NDF for 2024-2027 for agarwood chips and powder/sawdust is 1,51,080 kg a year and agarwood oil is 7,050 kg a year.

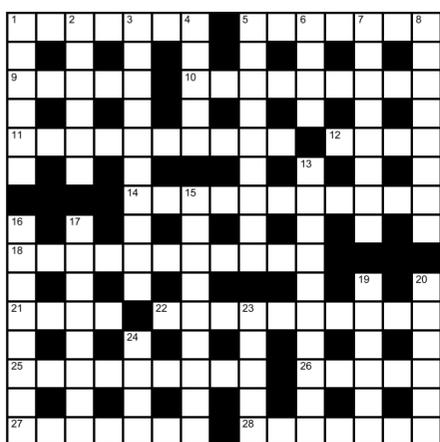
"The absence of an ex-

port quota for a long period and other trade-related restrictions in India caused an increase in informal trade/export of agar chips, oil, powder etc. to the Middle East and other foreign countries. It also caused an increase in costs of agarwood chips and oil in the global market as India is a major agarwood trading nation with which most importing countries have long trade records," the NDF report said.

Despite the export ban, the illegal trade of agarwood and its derivatives has continued in India, with more than 1.25 tonne of chips and six litres of oil/derivatives reportedly seized in six States between 2017 and 2021, a report by TRAFFIC, an NGO, said.

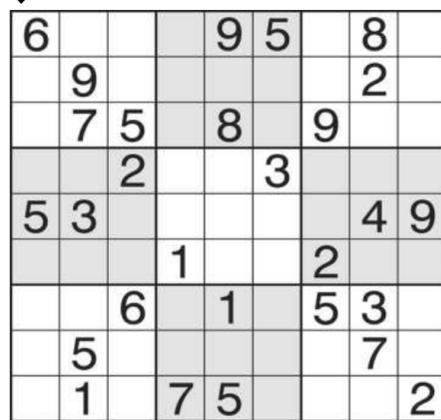
## THE CROSSWORD+ 14239

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



- Across**
- Mrs. Mop hugs doctor and engineer in the meeting place (7)
  - Light bang in rift (3,4)
  - Doctor enthralled by Chinese leader's dance (5)
  - American traffic policeman fulfilled fantastic dream to conceive child inside (5,4)
  - 4444 - This is how some animals walk! (10)

## SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

FAITH  
Sakubai's prema bhakti

Our scriptural history is replete with instances of God coming down to help His devotee, happy to be heeding to their supplicating call, said P. Swaminathan in a discourse. Sakubai, born to pious parents in Maharashtra, was extremely devoted to Lord Vittala. Married at 12 years, and suffering torture at her in-laws' house, she carried out her never ending chores thinking of Vittala. When a group of savants pass by the river where she is washing clothes, their cries 'Panduranga, Vittala', draws her like a magnet and she proceeds towards Pandharpur. Lord Vittala, aware of Sakubai's devotion, takes her place in her in-laws' house. He promises His Consort Rukhmini that He would return once Sakubai returns from Pandharpur.

Presenting Himself as Sakubai, He suffers all the hardship that the young devotee did. Sakubai, meanwhile, is ecstatic serving the Lord in Pandharpur and her prema bhakti is visible to all. One day she faints and passes away, and other devotees complete her last rites. Goddess Rukhmini, realising that Vittala would continue to impersonate Sakubai until she reappeared in her marital home, revives Sakubai and sends her home. When news of her death is conveyed to her in-laws, they realise that none but Vittala had been serving them in the guise of Sakubai and repent for their sins.

# MONEYWISE

## Some sparkle for the golden years

### COVERNOTE

New regulatory measures take away some of the hard edges of investing in pension policies; but until pensions are taxable, elephant stays firmly in room

**K. Nitya Kalyani**

Annuities, or pension policies, which form a very large and promising market and over which life insurers have a monopoly, haven't realised their true potential in India as Income Tax on pensions takes the sheen away.

#### Unlocking potential

However, here are some sweeteners that unlock the investment's potential for the policyholders.

IRDAI, in its recent master circular on life insurance, says that insurers may offer loans under annuity policies. It also specifies more flexibility in buying an annuity policy at the time of vesting (when the deferment period, if any, ends and the pension payout begins) or at the time of surrender. The nominee, too, gets more flexibility if the policyholder dies before vesting. What truly unlocks policy value at times of need is the new partial withdrawal facility.

#### Partial withdrawal

In the case of individual pension policies during the deferment period, the policyholder can make a partial withdrawal under certain terms and conditions. Up to 25% of the total premiums paid can be withdrawn after three years of commencement of the policy. The partial withdrawal will be counted towards commuted portion of the surrender/vesting benefit. Yet, the policy will not be terminated and the death or health sum assured cannot be adjusted downward due to the withdrawal.

This facility is allowed only three times during the deferment period and for stipulated reasons, somewhat like premature withdrawal from an employee or public provident fund account. They include higher education/ marriage of a child, acquiring a first home and for medical expenses. Most interestingly, two permitted reasons for withdrawal are skill development/ re-skilling or any other self-development activities and the establishment of own venture or any start-ups.

#### Freedom on buying annuity

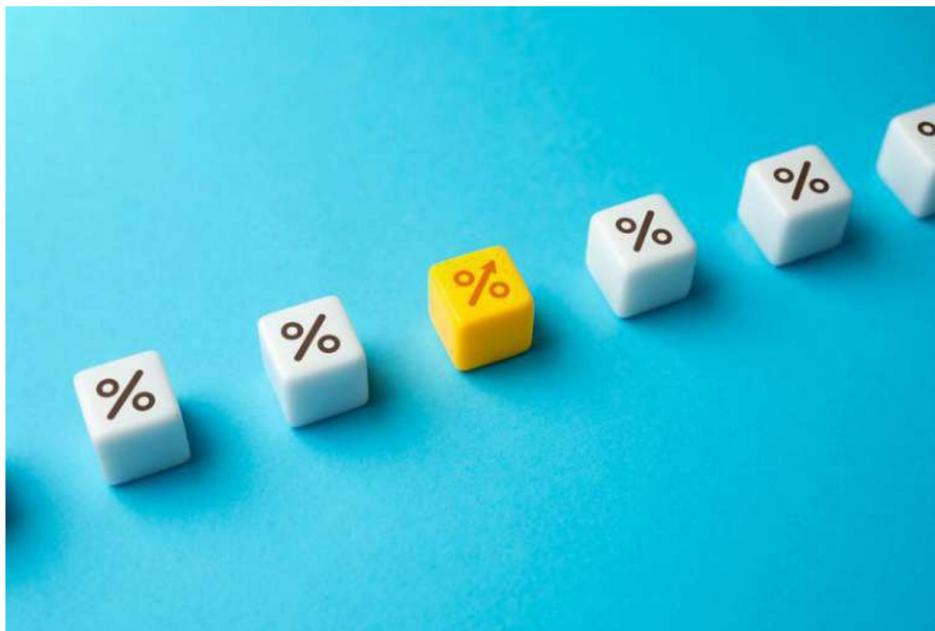
When the annuity policy vests, or when you surrender it, you can commute 60% of the accumulated amount and have to use the rest to buy an annuity from the same insurance company you have the policy with. Now, you have the flexibility to use 50% of the policy proceeds, net of commutation, to buy an annuity policy from any other insurance company. If the policy proceeds net of commutation are not enough to buy an annuity, you can withdraw the entire amount.

Should the annuity policyholder die during the deferment period, the nominee can commute up to 60% and use the rest to buy a policy (and withdraw it if its insufficient to buy an annuity) or, can simply withdraw the entire policy proceeds.

And lastly, the loan. Life insurers now have to offer policy loans, a definite breather to those contributing to retirement, but need funds urgently to tide over bad patches.

This is only for policies with the 'Return of Purchase Price' option (one of the half-a-dozen options when you start a deferred annuity including annuity for life or guaranteed annuity for a certain number of years or joint annuity with spouse). The loan amount is also based on the eligible surrender value and obviously only during the deferment period and not after the vesting of the policy.

*(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)*



**Right choice:** Loan applicants must compare interest rates/features of as many lenders as possible. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

## Study personal loan rates of various lenders

The best option would be the one charging the lowest interest rates; however, features such as loan tenure, processing fee etc. must be considered during loan selection process

### KEEPING A TAB

**Gaurav Aggarwal**

The personal loan interest rates offered by various lenders to the same applicant can vary widely depending on credit-pricing policies and the credit profile of the applicant. Thus, prospective loan applicants should compare the interest rates and other personal loan features of as many lenders as possible.

Many banks offer such loans at preferential interest rates to existing customers. They also offer pre-approved personal loans with instant disbursement to existing customers with good credit profiles. Thus, prospective borrowers should first check with the lenders with which they have deposit accounts or have availed loans or credit cards. The personal loan interest rates offered by those lenders can be used as a benchmark to compare interest rates of other banks/NBFCs.

This should be followed up by visiting online financial marketplaces to compare the rates offered by other banks and NBFCs. Then, they should opt for the lender offering the lowest interest rates and/or quickest disbursement.

#### Tenure-repayment

Longer repayment tenures reduce the EMI burden but increase the total interest cost. The opposite would be true for borrowers



Prospective applicants should start the process by first contacting lenders with whom they already maintain deposits or have availed loans/credit cards

choosing shorter tenures for loans. Thus, applicants should choose loan tenure primarily on the basis of repayment capacity. However, prospective borrowers should not sacrifice their fresh monthly contributions towards their unavoidable financial goals. Note, lenders usually prefer loan applicants whose monthly loan repayment obligations, including the EMI of the proposed personal loan, do not exceed 55-60% of the monthly income.

Those loan applicants exceeding this limit can either opt for longer repayment tenures and/or opt for lower loan amounts to bring EMI within the aforementioned ratios.

#### Processing fee, charges

Apart from the interest cost, a personal loan borrower would also incur processing charges, documentation fee, etc. while availing the loan. While the processing fee can range anywhere from 0.5% to 4% of the loan, some lenders waive it during festive season while some other lenders cap the processing charges irrespective of the loan amount. As the pro-



cessing fee can have a significant impact on the overall cost of borrowing, loan applicants should use online APR calculators to compare loan offers based on total borrowing cost.

Some lenders do not allow loan foreclosure or prepayment until the repayment of a pre-determined number of EMIs. Lenders also charge 3-5% on prepaying or foreclosure.

However, some public sector banks offer personal loans at floating interest rates, which, as per the RBI norms, are not allowed to charge prepayment or foreclosure fee.

Thus, personal loan applicants seeking to keep the option of part-prepayments/foreclosure open should compare the prepayment related charges and the flexibility allowed in prepayment/foreclosure during the loan selection process. Such applicants should prefer the lender charging nil or low prepayment charges with maximum possible flexibility.

#### Turnaround time

With the advent of end-to-end digital onboarding

processes, most lenders have started offering digital personal loans with quick/instant disbursement. Many lenders also offer pre-approved personal loans to existing customers with instant or same-day disbursement. However, depending on documentation and loan processing, lenders may still take up to seven days to disburse personal loans from the date of loan application.

Therefore, loan applicants requiring quick disbursement should also compare the lenders on the basis of the turnaround time for loan disbursement.

#### Conclusion

For most personal loan applicants, the best personal loan option would be the one charging the lowest interest rates. However, personal loan features such as the loan tenure (based on one's repayment capacity), processing fees and turnaround time for loan disbursement should also be considered during the loan selection process.

Prospective applicants should start the process by first contacting lenders with whom they already maintain deposits or have availed loans/credit cards.

Then, they should visit online financial marketplaces such as Paisabazaar.com to check and compare personal loan interest rates and other loan features offered by other banks and NBFCs based on their credit profile.

*(The writer is Chief Business Officer (Unsecured Lending) Paisabazaar)*

## Use Sortino Ratio for goal-based investment

### THINKINVESTOR

Sortino Ratio (SR) is more appropriate for goal-based investments in mutual funds; It would be useful if Asset Management Companies (AMCs) also disclose this metric alongside IR

**Venkatesh Bangaruswamy**

Previously, in this column, we discussed SEBI's proposal for asset management companies (AMCs) to disclose Information Ratio (IR) for each of their funds. IR is appropriate for investing surplus cash as such investments do not have a time horizon nor the need to earn a required return to achieve a life goal. Sortino Ratio (SR) is more appropriate for goal-based investments in mutual funds. Here, we discuss why SR is a better measure and why it would be useful if AMCs also disclose this metric alongside IR.

#### Downside risk

For goal-based investments, you must define risk and required return. The required return is the minimum return your investment must earn over a given time frame to accumulate the money needed to achieve desired goal. Call this Minimum Acceptable Return or MAR. This is the expected post-tax compounded annual return.

The risk is goal-based investments can earn lower than MAR in any year during the time horizon for a goal. So, downside deviation is a better measure of risk than standard deviation, for the latter measures both the upside and downside deviation. To determine MAR, you must define the time horizon, the amount needed to achieve the goal and the amount you can save. If MAR is 8.5%, it means your combined investments in equity and bonds will need to earn 8.5% annually to achieve the goal.

Suppose the pre-tax expected return on equity is 12% and post-tax return is 10.5%. The SR is calculated as the excess return of the fund over the pre-tax equity MAR divided by downside deviation of returns below the equity MAR. This tells you about the risk of investing in the fund to achieve a goal as SR is related to MAR.

#### Conclusion

The MAR to determine SR is the expected pre-tax annual return on equity and is independent of the goal you pursue. Hence, AMCs can report SR for each fund alongside the IR. Importantly, AMCs must use uniform equity MAR for determining SR. Otherwise, comparing SR among peer funds may not be meaningful. It would be useful to have AMCs disclose SR over one-, three-, five- and 10-year periods and since inception. The time horizon is very specific to each goal. So, you must determine the consistency of a fund's SR in relation to your goal's time horizon based on the information provided.

*(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)*

### Personal Loans

Rates and Charges	Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)	
Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee	
HDFC Bank	10.50 onwards	10,747 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to Rs 4,999
Tata Capital	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 5.5%
State Bank of India	11.35-15.50	10,959-12,027	2,192-2,405	1.50% (Min Rs 1,000 to Max Rs 15,000)
ICICI Bank	10.80 onwards	10,821 onwards	2,164 onwards	Up to 2%
Bank of Baroda	11.15-18.75	10,909-12,902	2,182-2,580	Up to 2% (Min Rs 1,000 Max Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3%
Bank of India	10.85-14.85	10,834-11,856	2,167-2,371	0.50%-1% (Min Rs 250 Max Rs 10,000)
Canara Bank	10.95-16.40	10,859-12,266	2,172-2,453	0.50% (Maximum Rs 2,500)
Punjab National Bank	10.40-17.95	10,772-12,683	2,144-2,537	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	9.99-15.00	10,621-11,895	2,124-2,379	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.49 onwards	10,994 onwards	2,199 onwards	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	11.35-15.45	10,959-12,013	2,192-2,403	Up to 1% (Maximum Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	11.00 onwards	10,871 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	10.75-13.50	10,809-11,505	2,162-2,301	0.50%-1%
South Indian Bank	12.85-20.60	11,338-13,414	2,268-2,683	Up to 2%
UCO Bank	12.45-12.85	11,236-11,338	2,247-2,268	Up to 1% (Minimum Rs 750)
IDFC First Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 2%
Bank of Maharashtra	10.00-12.80	10,624-11,325	2,125-2,265	1% (Rs 1,000-Rs 10,000)
Karnataka Bank	13.43	11,487	2,297	Up to 2% of loan (Min. Rs 2,500 Max. Rs 8,500)
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	1.5%-3.5%

### Car Loans

Rates and Charges	Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)	
Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
Union Bank of India	8.70 - 10.45	10,307 - 10,735	Rs 1,000
Punjab National Bank	8.75 - 10.60	10,319 - 10,772	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 1,500)
Bank of Baroda	8.90 - 12.70	10,355 - 11,300	Up to Rs 2,000
Canara Bank	8.70 - 12.70	10,307 - 11,300	0.25% (Maximum Rs 2,500)
Bank of India	8.85 - 10.85	10,343 - 10,834	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 5,000)
UCO Bank	8.45 - 10.55	10,246 - 10,759	Nil
State Bank of India	8.95 - 10.00	10,367-10,624	Up to Rs 1,500
IDBI Bank	8.80 - 9.65	10,331 - 10,294	Rs 2,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	8.70 - 13.00	10,307 - 11,377	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 15,000)
Indian Overseas Bank**	8.85 - 12.00	10,343 - 11,122	0.50% (Rs 500 - Rs 5,000)
ICICI Bank	9.10 onwards	10,403 onwards	Up to 2%
HDFC Bank	9.20 onwards	10,428 onwards	0.50% (Rs 3,500 - Rs 8,000)
Karnataka Bank	8.88 - 11.37	10,350 - 10,964	0.60% (Rs 3,000 - Rs 11,000)
Federal Bank	8.85 onwards	10,343 onwards	Rs 2,000 - Rs 4,500
South Indian Bank	8.75 onwards	10,319 onwards	0.75% (Max: Rs 10,000)
IDFC First Bank	9.75 onwards	10,562 onwards	Up to Rs 10,000
City Union Bank	14.45 - 14.95	11,751 - 11,882	1.25% (Min: Rs 1,000)

\*0.25% interest rate concession for existing housing loan borrowers and corporate salary account holders  
\*\*0.50% interest rate concession to borrowers with credit scores of 800 and above. Interest rate concession of 0.25% to borrowers having credit scores of 750-799.

Rates and charges as on July 24

Source: Paisabazaar.com

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the [moneywise@thehindu.co.in](mailto:moneywise@thehindu.co.in) ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

## DUBLIN

## Edna O'Brien, Ireland's daring chronicler of women's lives, dead



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Edna O'Brien, the author who wrote of her native Ireland in such febrile prose, steeped in sex, love and religious angst, that it sparked national outrage and led to her self-imposed exile, died aged 93. Her novels *The Country Girls* and included *The Lonely Girl* and *Girls in Their Married Bliss*, scandalised Irish society. REUTERS

## MALE

## Muizzu thanks India and China for supporting the Maldives' economy



ANI

President Mohamed Muizzu thanked India and China for helping strengthen the Maldives' fragile economy, highlighting the importance of the two countries in addressing the island nation's looming debt crisis. His comments came at an event held to mark the 59th anniversary of the country's independence. PTI

## DHAKA

## Mobile Internet services restored in violence-affected Bangladesh



AFP

The mobile Internet connection was restored in Bangladesh on Sunday, 10 days after it was shut down by the authorities across the country to stop the spread of fake news on social media amidst the deadly nationwide violence over reforms in the quota system in government jobs. The violence claimed the lives of 205 people. PTI

## SHANGHAI

## Landslip brings down Chinese guest house, killing 15 persons



AP

A landslip caused by flooding in central China's Hunan province destroyed a guesthouse and killed 15 persons on Sunday. The landslip was caused by flash flooding on a mountain, which destroyed the guesthouse. More than 300 emergency personnel were sent to the scene while six injured persons were found. AFP

## Five killed in Israeli strike on Gaza camp for civilians

Agence France-Presse  
GAZA STRIP

The civil defence agency in Hamas-run Gaza said an Israeli strike on Sunday hit tents in a declared safe zone in the Palestinian territory's south, killing at least five persons.

A witness said a newborn was among the dead in Al-Mawasi near Khan Younis city, where tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians have sought refuge from the war. Since Monday, Israeli forces have operated in and around Khan Younis.

"Five martyrs and seven wounded have been transferred to Nasser hospital" in Khan Yunis, an official said.

## Israel vows to avenge strike that killed 12 in Golan Heights

Iran warns of 'unforeseen consequences' if Israel attacks Lebanon; Western powers, including France and Germany, condemn the attack blamed on Hezbollah, and appeal for calm

Agence France-Presse  
MAJDAL SHAMS

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant on Sunday vowed to "hit the enemy hard" after rocket fire from Lebanon killed 12 youth in the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights and again raised fears that the war in Gaza will spread.

Iran warned Israel any new military "adventures" in Lebanon could lead to "unforeseen consequences". Western powers, including France and Germany, condemned the attack and appealed for calm. Israel's Army called it



Last rites: Druze clerics at the funeral on Sunday of the youth killed in a rocket strike at a soccer field in the Golan Heights. AP

"the deadliest attack on Israeli civilians" since the October 7 attack.

Israel blamed Lebanon's Hezbollah movement for

the attack but the Iranian-backed group said it had "no connection" to the incident. It said, however, that it had fired one such

rocket on Saturday toward an Israeli military target in the Golan.

The rocket fire in Majdal Shams, whose population are Arabic-speaking Druze, prompted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to return early from the U.S. Upon arrival he went immediately into a security Cabinet meeting.

He said "Hezbollah will pay a heavy price" for the attack, "a price it has not paid before."

Israel's military said later on Sunday it had hit Hezbollah targets "both deep inside Lebanese territory and in southern Lebanon".

## Venezuela casts ballots as Maduro warns of 'bloodbath'

Agence France-Presse  
CARACAS

Venezuelans voted on Sunday between continuity in President Nicolas Maduro or change in rival Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia amid high tension following the incumbent's threat of a "bloodbath" if he loses.

Polls suggest the vote poses the biggest threat yet to 25 years of "Chavismo," the populist movement founded by Mr. Maduro's predecessor and mentor, Hugo Chavez.

But analysts say Mr. Maduro is unlikely to concede defeat.

Mr. Maduro, 61, is seeking a third six-year term at the helm of the once wealthy petro-state that saw its GDP drop 80% in a decade, pushing more



Fresh hope: Voters line up outside a polling station during presidential elections in Caracas on Sunday. AP

than seven million of its 30 million citizens to emigrate.

He is accused of locking up critics and harassing the opposition in a climate of rising authoritarianism.

After casting his vote in the capital on Sunday, Mr. Maduro vowed to "make sure" the results were

respected.

His contender, Gonzalez Urrutia, a 74-year-old former diplomat, called on his compatriots to turn out in large numbers "to transform your future" in what "will undoubtedly be the most important democratic expression of the people in recent years."

## Iran's Khamenei formally grants Pezeshkian presidential powers

Agence France-Presse  
TEHRAN

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei gave his official endorsement of Masoud Pezeshkian as the Islamic republic's ninth President on Sunday, following snap elections won by the reformist camp's candidate.

In a message read by the director of Mr. Khamenei's office, he said: "I endorse the vote (for) the wise, honest, popular and scholarly Mr Pezeshkian, and I am appointing him as the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran".

The new reformist President is due to be sworn in



New chapter: Ayatollah Ali Khamenei delivering the endorsement letter to President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian on Sunday. AFP

before parliament on Tuesday.

The endorsement ceremony was held in the capital Tehran in the presence of senior Iranian officials and foreign diplomats, and

broadcast on state TV.

It took place as banks and most government offices were ordered shut nationwide on Sunday to tackle an extreme heatwave.

Following the event, acting President Mohammad Mokhber handed over official responsibilities to 69-year-old Mr. Pezeshkian.

## V-P appointed

Later on Sunday, Mr. Pezeshkian appointed reformist Mohammad Reza Aref, 72, as his first Vice-President, according to an announcement carried by state TV.

Mr. Aref has represented Tehran in parliament and served as first Vice-President and Communications Minister under Iran's last reformist President Mohammad Khatami, who held office from 1997 to 2005.

## U.S. revamps military posts in Japan to counter China

Reuters  
TOKYO

The United States said on Sunday it would revamp its military command in Japan to deepen coordination with its ally's forces, as the two countries labelled China the "greatest strategic challenge" facing the region.

The announcement followed security discussions in Tokyo between U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin and their respective Japanese counterparts, Yoko Kamikawa and Minoru Kihara.

## Italy and China sign a 3-year action plan during Meloni's visit

Associated Press  
BEIJING

Italy and China signed a three-year action plan on Sunday to implement past agreements and experiment with new forms of cooperation, Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said on an official visit to the Chinese capital.

"We certainly have a lot of work to do and I am convinced that this work can be useful in such a complex phase on a global level, and also important at a multilateral level," she said in remarks at the start of a meeting with Chinese Pre-

mier Li Qiang. Her five-day visit comes several months after Italy dropped out of China's Belt and Road Initiative, a signature policy of Chinese leader Xi Jinping to build power and transportation infrastructure around the world to stimulate global trade while also deepening China's ties with other nations.

## 36 killed in armed clashes between two Pak. tribes

Press Trust of India  
PESHWAR

At least 36 people were killed and 162 others injured in armed clashes between two tribes fighting over a piece of land in Pakistan's restive tribal district in northwest. Officials said heavy clashes started five days ago in Boshera in Upper Kurram district.

Officials brokered a truce between Shia and Sunni tribes in Boshera, Malikhel and Dandar areas a short while ago. However, firing is still continuing in other parts of the district.

## Sport

## Athapaththu, Samarawickrama script continental title win for Sri Lanka

## ASIA CUP

Press Trust of India  
DAMBULLA

Skipper Chamari Athapaththu's turbo-charged fifty combined well with the unbeaten half-century from Harshitha Samarawickrama as a resilient Sri Lanka carved an eight-wicket win over defending champion India to bag its maiden women's Asia Cup title here on Sunday.

Tasked with hunting down a strong target of 166, Sri Lanka served well by Athapaththu (61b, 43b, 9x4, 2x6) and Samarawickrama (69 n.o., 51b, 6x4, 2x6) and finished at 167 for two in 18.4 overs. The duo added 87 runs as Lankans always stayed ahead of their opponents. Athapaththu scored

through almost every reachable place on the field. But at the other end, Samarawickrama lacked the power of her senior but she offset that with clever sweeps, such as reverse sweeps off Deepti Sharma and Radha Yadav. But she picked up the tempo when Sri Lanka reached a rather safer zone.

In between, Deepti managed to bowl Athapaththu with a fuller delivery that sparked celebrations among the Indians.

But those merriments were premature as Samarawickrama found an able sidekick in Kavisha Dilhari (30 n.o., 16b, 1x4, 2x6) as the duo added 73 runs off just 40 balls to guide their side home.

Earlier, Smriti Mandhana's conditions-defying half-century (60, 47b, 10x4) had powered India to

a fighting 165 for six and she received reasonable backing from Jemimah Rodrigues (29, 16 balls, 3x4, 1x6) and Richa Ghosh (30, 14 balls, 4x4, 1x6).

## Bowlers deliver

The Lanka bowlers indeed made good use of a slow pitch as well, leaving the Indian batters a frustrated lot often. It was evident from the struggles of Shafali Verma (16, 19 balls).

While Smriti managed to beat the slowness of the deck, it consumed Harmanpreet and Uma Chetry, who got a promotion to No. 3.

At 87 for three in the 12th over, India needed a move-on and it was given by an aggressive Jemimah in the company of Smriti.

However, the run out of Jemimah and the dismissal of Smriti pushed India to

## SCOREBOARD

## INDIA

Shafali Verma lbw b Dilhari 16 (19b, 2x4), Smriti Mandhana c Athapaththu b Dilhari 60 (47b, 10x4), Uma Chetry lbw b Athapaththu 9 (7b, 1x4), Harmanpreet Kaur c Nilakshika b Nisansala 11 (11b, 1x4), Jemimah Rodrigues run out 29 (16b, 3x4, 1x6), Richa Ghosh c Sanjeevani b Prabodhani 30 (14b, 4x4, 1x6), Pooja Vastrakar (not out) 5 (6b), Radha Yadav (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (w-3, nb-1): 4; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 165.

## FALL OF WICKETS

1-44 (Shafali, 6.2 overs), 2-58 (Uma, 8.1), 3-87 (Harmanpreet, 11.6), 4-128 (Jemimah, 16.1), 5-133 (Smriti, 16.5), 6-164 (Richa, 19.4).

## SRI LANKA BOWLING

Priyadharshani 4-0-31-0, Prabodhani 3-0-27-1, Sugandika

133 for five in 16.5 overs.

Richa played a typical swift innings and carried

4-0-23-0, Dilhari 4-0-36-2, Nisansala 2-0-20-1, Athapaththu 3-0-28-1.

## SRI LANKA

Vishmi Gunaratne run out 1 (3b), Chamari Athapaththu b Deepti 61 (43b, 9x4, 2x6), Harshitha Samarawickrama (not out) 69 (51b, 6x4, 2x6), Kavisha Dilhari (not out) 30 (16b, 1x4, 2x6); Extras (lb-4, w-1, nb-1): 6; Total (for two wkts. in 18.4 overs): 167.

## FALL OF WICKETS

1-7 (Vishmi, 1.4), 2-94 (Athapaththu, 11.6).

## INDIA BOWLING

Renuka 3-0-23-0, Pooja 3.4-0-29-0, Deepti 4-0-30-1, Tanuja 4-0-34-0, Radha 4-0-47-0.

## Toss: India.

## PoM: Harshitha.

## PoS: Athapaththu.

Sri Lanka won by eight wickets with eight balls to spare.

India past the 160-run mark, which proved insufficient to defend the title.



Victory dance: A resilient Sri Lanka dethroned the Indians in spectacular fashion. ICC

**LONG PENDING**

**The feeling is surreal: Manu after winning India's first medal in Paris**



RITU RAJ KONWAR

After winning a historic bronze medal on Sunday, ace Indian shooter Manu Bhaker said it was a "surreal" feeling. "The feeling is surreal. I feel so good and happy that I could win this medal for all of us. This is coming home after so long. I am very happy. Maybe, many more (medals) will come in the following days," said Manu.

**HUGE ACHIEVEMENT**

**Every Indian is very proud, says head coach Suma Shirur**



RITU RAJ KONWAR

The head coach of the Indian shooting contingent, Suma Shirur, said on Sunday that every Indian is very proud after Manu Bhaker's historic medal win at the ongoing Paris Olympics. "Every Indian is very proud... Manu won a medal and the entire outlook changes. It is huge," Suma Shirur said.

**MOMENT TO CHERISH**

**Parents express delight after daughter's historic medal**



RITU RAJ KONWAR

Ramkishan, Manu Bhaker's father, said his daughter reaped the rewards of hard work. "We are extremely happy and all of our friends are congratulating us. Her hard work has paid off, and Manu has finally done it," he said. "I thank you all for supporting her, and I hope you all will continue to bless her," said her mother Sumedha.

**HAT-TRICK**

**A woman opens medal account for India at the Games yet again**



RITU RAJ KONWAR

When Manu Bhaker opened India's account at the Paris Olympics, it was the third consecutive time that a woman won the first medal at the Games. Wrestler Sakshi Malik won the 58kg bronze at Rio in 2016 while weightlifter Mirabai Chanu clinched the 49kg silver in Tokyo. Manu bagged the bronze in the 10m air pistol individual event.

# Gritty Manu's monumental achievement

The 22-year-old wins the country its first Olympic medal in shooting in 12 years, becomes the first Indian woman shooter to climb the podium; India off the mark in style in Paris



**Red-letter day:** Manu exorcised the ghosts of the Tokyo Olympics, where she did not make the final of any event, with a strong start to her Paris campaign. RITU RAJ KONWAR



**Jonathan Selvaraj**  
PARIS

Having shot two consecutive scores of 9.6 in her eighth and ninth shots of the 10m air pistol finals, Manu Bhaker slipped from inside the medal bracket to fourth place. She found herself behind Asian medalist Thu Vinh Trinh of Vietnam. She needed reassurance. She knew exactly where to look, to the extreme left hand side of the viewing gallery. There sat a man with dark glasses and a notebook - her coach Jaspal Rana. He closed his fist and brought it to his chest and Manu understood immediately. She didn't need to look to him, she only needed to look within. The cloud of nervousness passed. Manu turned back towards the target ten metres ahead of her. She

lifted her pistol once again, aimed at the black dot in the centre of the target and fired - 10.3, the digital board above her beamed. It put her back in the medal bracket and she never left it again. While Manu steadied herself, the others around her crumbled. Three-time World Cup gold winner Veronica Major was the first to fall. She was followed by Turkey's junior World champion Tarhan Seval Ilayda. China's Asian Games champion Jiang Ranxin dropped out following three shots in the '8' point ring over four series. World Championship bronze medallist Li Xue exited right after. Finally it was Trinh's turn. Barring the early blip, Manu cruised along and was even in silver medal position going into the final shot of the competition. She led by 0.1 at that point, but South Korea's Kim Yeji shot 10.5 to get ahead by the barest of margins. It was only then that Manu cracked a wry smile - the first real bit of emotion she'd shown in a while - at what could have been. When she had her medal placed around her neck, she even wiped away a few tears. It didn't matter at this point. She'd already



done more than enough to create history - winning India's first medal at the 2024 Paris Olympics. **Course correction** A few weeks ago, a street dancing troupe held out a hat after their performance in front of two Indians having dinner at a cafe in Luxembourg. They had expected a few coins at most for their efforts. Instead their eyes bulged as a young woman emptied a stack of Euros into their makeshift bowl. The slightly glum donor was Manu who was training in the European country ahead of the Olympic Games. The 22-year-old's generosity was an enforced one, part of a training method employed by the Rana, the other Indian at the table. It was designed to make sure she'd never let the intensity of

**Krishna tells Arjun focus on your work, don't worry about the results tomorrow. So the same was going on in my mind**  
**MANU**  
from a verse in Bhagavad Gita

training slip. It's a way to replicate - as much as possible - the stress Manu felt during a competition, in the otherwise inconsequential environs of a training hall. As part of the system, Rana would set ambitious targets for his shooter. She would be given a target of say 582 (out of theoretically possible 600 in air pistol). The consequence of any shortfall is made up for with a fine. If she shot a 578, Manu would be paying a fine of €4 or whatever the

local currency was. All the collected money was given to charity. The margin of penalty increased closer to the Olympics. One Euro for every point missed became 10. Then 20. Sometimes, no amount of training can help with the nerves that come stinging on the tournament eve. A day before her final, when Manu was battling the butterflies in her stomach, she revisited a verse in the Bhagavad Gita where Sri Krishna guides the Pandava prince Arjuna in his own moment of self doubt to focus on his duty. **Tough love** Manu wasn't always steely eyed and emotionless. Her equation with Rana not always as trusting. In contrast to the tears of joy she blinked away in Chateauroux, the last time she

**Redemption arc**

From the disappointment of Tokyo to the delight of Paris, life has come a full circle for Manu Bhaker.

MEDALS	G	B	S	TOTAL
Youth Olympic Games	1	0	0	0
World Championships	4	1	1	6
World Cup Final	4	0	0	4
World Cup	8	2	4	14
Junior World Cup	3	1	0	4
Asian Championships	3	1	0	4
Asian Games	1	0	0	1
Commonwealth Games	1	0	0	1

**Born:** February 18, 2002, Jhajjar, Haryana  
**World Rank:** 10m air pistol: No. 26; 25m pistol: No. 69  
**Junior world record:** 244.7 in 2019 in Putian, China (still stands)  
■ Junior world champion in air pistol in 2021, Lima, Peru  
■ Youth Olympics champion in air pistol in Buenos Aires in 2018

At the Tokyo Olympics, Manu finished 12th in 10m air pistol & seventh in mixed air pistol (with Saurabh Chaudhary) & 15th in 25m pistol.

**MANU BHAKER**



I'll work with any athlete who gives a hundred percent. Manu gives 100% and I will give her 200%  
**RANA**

top pistol shooters in the 1990s and at the turn of the millennium, had helmed a highly successful Indian junior program. He had been Manu's coach ever since she made her international debut in 2018. A disagreement over the makeup of the squad (Rana wanted Manu to focus on two events, she wanted to compete in three) was followed by court intrigues, the mother of all meltdowns, and falling outs that involved a heated phone call and Rana walking around New Delhi's Karni Singh shooting range in a t-shirt which had Manu's mother's last caustic message to him written on it. In the years that followed Manu's debacle at Tokyo, her own form fluctuated. She failed to make the Indian team for the Asian Games where other shooters from India went on to win gold and silver. She says she became disillusioned with the sport. She started thinking about writing the civil services exam. Before that though, as part of a final effort in the middle of last year, she called up Rana once again. Although he admits he would probably not have reached out if he was in her position, he immediately agreed to work with her. After Manu sealed bronze, Rana quietly made his way out of the finals range. He refused to take credit for Manu's achievement "She did this all on her own," he said. Both had tears in their eyes at the conclusion of the final on Sunday, but they know they aren't done just yet. After her medal ceremony, Manu headed right back to the practise halls to prepare for her next event - the qualifying round of the mixed team on Monday. She also has the women's 25m pistol events ahead of her. Rana believes she is capable of medalling in all of them.



competed at the Olympics, she wept in frustration - as she competed and failed across three different events. The Olympics - meant to be the highlight of the then 19-year-old's career - was anything but. There was no doubting her prodigious talent. At 16, she became the youngest Indian to win gold at the ISSF shooting World Cup and was soon winning World Cups and Commonwealth Games gold medals almost for fun. She also became one of the youngest to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics. Her impressive results had been achieved while training under Rana, a former two-time Olympian and one of the country's

**Incredible feat**

**X** Heartiest congratulations to Manu Bhaker for opening India's medal tally with her bronze medal in the 10m air pistol shooting event at the Paris Olympics. Her feat is going to inspire many sportspersons, especially women  
**DROUPADI MURMU**, President

A historic medal! Well done, Manu Bhaker, for winning India's first medal at the Paris Olympics. This success is even more special as she becomes the first woman to win a medal in shooting for India. An incredible achievement!  
**NARENDRA MODI**, PM  
Congratulations Manu, you

have displayed skill and dedication to become the first Indian woman shooter to win an Olympic medal  
**MANSUKH MANDAVIYA**, Sports Minister  
It's incredible to witness your skill and determination, bringing pride to India with each shot. This achievement is a testament

to your perseverance and determination. Keep shining, Manu!  
**ABHINAV BINDRA**  
As the first Indian woman to win in the 10 m air pistol at the Olympics and our youngest Indian shooter to do so, you've made history. I'm sure your success will inspire young athletes across India to dream

big and give it their all.  
**NITA AMBANI**  
After overcoming the heart-break in Tokyo, you have shown immense strength and determination to win a bronze at Paris 2024 and made India proud  
**SACHIN TENDULKAR**  
I am very happy. I told her to

believe in herself. This is a very big achievement  
**PRATAP SINGH**, Manu's uncle  
We hoped for a gold medal but we are still happy. She is the youngest Indian woman to win a medal. She is very hard working. We hope in the remaining events she will clinch gold  
**BALJEET SINGH**, Manu's uncle

## IN BRIEF



## Nadal to face Djokovic in Olympics blockbuster

Rafael Nadal set up an Olympic Games blockbuster against old rival Novak Djokovic on Sunday, justifying his last-minute decision to play despite injury concerns. Nadal, who has won 14 of his 22 Grand Slam titles at Roland Garros, defeated Marton Fucsovics 6-1, 4-6, 6-4 in the first round despite sporting strapping on his injured right thigh.



## Nagal exits Paris with a loss to Moutet in first round

Sumit Nagal stuck to his strong baseline game against a mercurial Frenchman Corentin Moutet, who knocked out the Indian with a 6-2, 2-6, 7-5 in a two-hour 28-minute contest on Sunday. It was Nagal's second appearance at the Olympic Games.

## Biles makes a dazzling start despite an injury scare

Simone Biles made a stunning return to Olympic competition on Sunday, powering through left-calf pain to get her multiple-medal bid off to a rousing start. She led the vault and floor exercise standings and was second in balance beam.

## GOLDIES

**Lukas Maertens** (Ger): Men: 400m freestyle.  
**Mallo Breton** (Fra): Women: epee individual.  
**Oh Sanguk** (Kor): Men: Sabre individual.  
**Xie Yu** (Chn): Men: 10m air pistol.  
**Oh Ye Jin** (Kor): Women: 10m air pistol.  
**Pauline Ferrand Prevot** (Fra): Women: Cycling: Mountain Bike: cross-country.  
**Abe Hifumi** (Jpn): Men: Judo: 66kg.  
**Diyora Keldiyorova** (Uzb): Women: Judo: 52kg.  
**Yoshizawa Coco** (Jpn): Women: Skateboarding: street.  
**Korea:** Women team: Archery.  
**Jessica Fox** (Aus): Women: Kayak Single.  
**Leon Marchand** (Fra): Men: 400m individual medley.  
**Torri Huske** (USA): Women: 100m freestyle.

## GOING FOR GOLD

**Artistic Gymnastics:** Men's Team  
**Canoe Slalom:** Men's Canoe Single  
**Cycling Mountain Bike:** Men's Cross-country  
**Diving:** Men's Synchronised 10m Platform  
**Equestrian:** Eventing Team Jumping, Eventing Individual Jumping  
**Fencing:** Women's Sabre Individual, Men's Foil Individual  
**Judo:** Women's 57kg, Men's 73 kg  
**Shooting:** 10m Air Rifle Women, 10m Air Rifle Men  
**Skateboarding:** Men's Street  
**Swimming:** Men's 200m Freestyle, Men's 100m backstroke, Women's 100m Breaststroke, Women's 200m Freestyle

## Nikhat begins campaign with a hard-fought win over Kloetzer

The Indian boxer persists to secure a unanimous decision in her favour after being caught off-guard by the German's early aggression; Preeti makes a winning start with a victory over Vietnam's Vo Thi Kim Anh on Saturday



Y.B. Sarangi  
PARIS

Two-time World champion boxer Nikhat Zareen survived a scare to begin her campaign with a hard-fought win in the Paris Olympics here on Monday. The 28-year-old Indian got past Germany's Maxi Kloetzer 5-0 in a keenly-fought women's 50kg first round contest at the North Paris Arena.

Earlier, Preeti Pawar (54kg) had also made a winning start, beating Vietnam's Vo Thi Kim Anh 5-0 to enter the round of 16.

Nikhat, who entered the ring exactly when shooter



**Adapting swiftly:** Kloetzer moved in to gain early ground, but Nikhat managed to change her plans and clinch a win in her Olympic debut. GETTY IMAGES

Manu Bhaker confirmed India's first medal, was caught off guard with the shorter German's early aggression. Kloetzer moved in to land some stinging jabs and swift combinations to gain ground even

as Nikhat managed a few counters before trailing 2-3 in the opening round.

Even as the German crowd out-shouted the Indians in supporting Kloetzer, the experienced Indian stepped up aggression and

fought back in the second round. With the bout getting physical, the referee deducted points from both – Kloetzer for bending too much and Nikhat for clinching. Despite that, the Indian had a 2-0 lead going

into the third round.

In the final three minutes, most of which went like a wrestling bout, Nikhat maintained an upper hand to secure a unanimous decision.

"I had not sparred with this opponent during our camp in Germany.

"I did not expect her to fight like this. I managed to change my plan and am happy to get a unanimous decision in my Olympic debut match.

"I was a little nervous. That happens with me in the first bout of every tournament. It helps me give my best," said Nikhat, while congratulating Manu for opening India's account.

Nikhat will take on top-seeded Chinese and Asian Games champion Wu Yu in the next round on Thursday.

Asian Games bronze medallist Preeti will meet Worlds silver medallist and Pan American Games champion Yeni Arias of Colombia on Tuesday.

## Below-par Indian women exit in the quarterfinals



**Better show:** On a disappointing day, Bhajan shone the best for the Indian women. AP

Y.B. Sarangi  
PARIS

The Indian women's archery team, comprising Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat and Bhajan Kaur, performed below par to crash out in the quarterfinals of the Paris Olympics at the Invalides here on Sunday.

Without the support of Korean coach Baek Woong Ki, who was not given an accreditation for the Olympics, India, which got a first round bye, lost to the Neth-

erlands 6-0 (52-51, 54-49, 53-48).

While unpredictable winds posed a challenge, the Indians' nervousness, apparent from their blinking eyes, shaking hands and the long time taken to shoot an arrow, compounded their problem.

"This was unexpected. They could not judge the wind properly, but you cannot have the same excuse every time as other archers also shot in similar conditions," said women's coach Purnima Mahato.

## Sindhu shows her class, makes short work of Fatima

Y.B. Sarangi  
PARIS

Double Olympic medallist shuttler P.V. Sindhu made short work of the lesser-known Fatima Nabaaha Abdul Razzaq of Maldives 21-9, 21-6 in a women's singles Group-M match at the La Chapelle Arena here on Sunday.

Living up to her reputation, Sindhu dispatched Fatima in less than half-an hour to begin her third Olympics journey in style. The Indian and her opponent were a class apart and the scoreline reflected it. Sindhu displayed her fine array of shots to leave Fatima bamboozled. The Indian gave away some points because of errors at the line and the net, but the wayward Maldivian could not capitalise on it and lost the first game in 13 minutes.

The second game also continued in a similar way, as Fatima looked clueless against some of Sindhu's shots, before the Indian



**Facile win:** Sindhu was hardly troubled by her Maldivian opponent Fatima in the opening round. PTI

completed the formalities.

"It was a good start and I was getting used to the court, getting used to the atmosphere. Overall, the way I play has not changed, but there are some add-ons...initially I was a bit injured, so I was not moving really well on court," said Sindhu, who is being guided by the legendary Prakash Padukone.

"We worked on that, we worked on strokes, not only just net or defence, but I would say overall because when you come to a big tournament, you need to be at your 100 per cent in every stroke and every movement."

Sindhu will play Estonia's Kristin Kuuba in her next group engagement on Wednesday.

## THE INDIA SHOW

A look at some of the Indian performances on Sunday:  
**Archery: Women's team quarterfinal:** lost to Netherlands 0-6.

**Badminton: Group stage:** Women: Sindhu bt Nabaaha (Mdv) 21-9, 21-6; Men: Prannoy bt Roth (Ger) 21-18, 21-12.

**Boxing: Women's 50kg (round-of-32):** Nikhat bt Kloetzer (Ger) 5-0.

**Rowing: Men's Single Sculls:** Balraj (second in Repechage 2, enters quarterfinals).

**Shooting: 10m Air Pistol: Women's final:** Manu (Bronze).

**10m Air Rifle: Women's qualification:** 5. Ramita (qualifies for final), 10. Elavenil, Did Not Qualify (DNQ); **Men's qualification:** 7. Arjun Babuta (qualifies for final), 12. Sandeep, DNQ.

**Swimming: Men's 100m backstroke:** Srihari Nataraj (33rd overall), DNQ for semifinals; **Women's 200m freestyle:** Dhinidhi Desinghu (23rd overall), DNQ for semifinals.

**Table Tennis (round-of-64):** Women: Sreeja bt Kallberg (Swe) 11-4, 11-9, 11-7, 11-8; Manika bt Hursey (GBR) 11-8, 12-10, 11-9, 9-11, 11-5; Men: Sharath Kamal lost to Kozul (Slo) 12-10, 9-11, 6-11, 7-11, 11-8, 10-12; Harmet lost to Lebrun (Fra) 8-11, 8-11, 6-11, 8-11.

**Tennis: Men (first round):** Nagal lost to Moutet (Fra) 2-6, 6-2, 5-7.

## INDIANS IN ACTION

A look at some Indian players/teams who will compete on Monday (all times IST):

**Archery: Men's team quarterfinal** (Dhiraj, Pravina, Tarundeep), 6.30 p.m.

**Badminton: Group stage: Men: Doubles:** Satwiksairaj & Chirag vs Lamsfuss & Seidel (Ger), noon; **Singles:** Lakshya vs Carraggi (Bel), 5.30 p.m.; **Women's doubles:** Tanisha & Ashwini vs Matsuyama & Shida (Jpn), 12.50 p.m.

**Hockey: Men (Pool B):** vs Argentina (4.15 p.m.). **Shooting: 10m Air Pistol mixed team qualification** (Manu & Sarabjot, Rhythm & Arjun Cheema), 12.45 p.m.; **Trap: Men's qualification - Day 1** (Prithviraj), 1 p.m.

**10m Air Rifle: Women's final** (Ramita), 1 p.m.; **Men's final** (Arjun Babuta), 3.30 p.m. **Table tennis (session begins at 11.30 p.m.):** Women (round-of-32): Sreeja vs Zeng (Sgp).

## Medals table

	Country	G	S	B	T
1	Australia	4	2	0	6
2	France	3	2	2	7
3	Japan	3	2	1	6
3	South Korea	3	2	1	6
5	China	3	1	2	6
6	USA	2	4	3	9
7	Kazakhstan	1	0	2	3
8	Belgium	1	0	1	2
9	Germany	1	0	0	1
9	Hong Kong	1	0	0	1
9	Uzbekistan	1	0	0	1
22	India	0	0	1	1

## AROUND PARIS

## Rower Balraj qualifies for quarterfinals

Rower Balraj Panwar qualified for the quarterfinals in men's rowing at the Paris Olympics on Sunday. India's sole representative in the event, Balraj, finished second in the repechage of men's single sculls by clocking 7:12.41s.

## Swimmers Srihari and Dhinidhi bow out

India's swimming campaign at the Paris Games came to an end with both Srihari Nataraj and Dhinidhi Desinghu failing to progress to the semifinals of their respective events. Srihari finished joint-second in the slower heat with a timing of 55.01s but the 23-year-old was 33rd in the overall standing for the 100m men's backstroke event. The 16 fastest swimmers from the heats qualify to the semifinals.

## India prevails over Sri Lanka in a rain-curtailed encounter

## INDIA IN LANKA

Pranay Rajiv  
PALLEKELE

It is uncommon for a cricket series to unfold in Sri Lanka without rain unsettling the proceedings in at least a game.

Sunday's second T20I here ensured the 'tradition' stayed true as India pipped Sri Lanka by seven wickets in a rain-disrupted match to seal the series 2-0.

India hunted down a DLS-adjusted 78-run target in just 6.3 overs, with Yashasvi Jaiswal, Suryakumar Yadav and Hardik Pandya stitching up the win with some flashy stroke play.

The game, which started nearly an hour late due to a wet outfield, was called to a halt in the first over of the Indian chase when the skies opened up.

The Indian openers returned to the middle just

over an hour later, with Jaiswal restarting the chase by swatting Dasun Shanaka to the deep mid-wicket fence for a four.

Sanju Samson, who replaced an injured Shubman Gill, was caught off guard first ball by a quicker off-break from Maheesh Theekshana which disturbed his stumps.

But, skipper Suryakumar and Jaiswal employed the sweeps and the reverse sweeps to great effect to negate the Lankan spin threat of Theekshana and Wanindu Hasaranga, propelling India closer to the target.

This included a hat-trick of swept fours from Suryakumar against Theekshana.

The 33-year-old batter followed it up by audaciously flicking a fuller one from Matheesha Pathirana over deep fine leg's head.

The Lankan bowlers managed to dismiss both Jaiswal and Suryakumar.

But in the end, it proved to be too little too late as India romped home easily.

Earlier, Sri Lanka endured another middle-order collapse to settle for what proved to be a sub-par total of 161 for nine wickets.

Riding on a free-flowing fifty from Kusal Perera, Sri Lanka was well-placed at 130 for two at the 15-over mark after being inserted by Suryakumar. But much like in the series opener, where it lost its last nine wickets for 30 runs, the home side crumbled in the death.

Perera also had luck in his favour as he reached his fifty after he pulled a Hardik Pandya short ball into the hands of Rinku Singh, only for the Indian fielder to slip and slide into the boundary rider.

Hardik's bouncer ploy eventually bore fruit as he had Perera and Kamindu Mendis caught by Rinku at deep square leg, triggering

## SCOREBOARD

## SRI LANKA

Pathum Nissanka lbw b Bishnoi 32 (24b, 5x4), Kusal Mendis c Bishnoi b Arshdeep 10 (11b, 2x4), Kusal Perera c Rinku b Hardik 53 (34b, 6x4, 2x6), Kamindu Mendis c Rinku b Hardik 26 (23b, 4x4), Charith Asalanka c Samson b Arshdeep 14 (12b, 1x6), Dasun Shanaka b Bishnoi 0 (1b), Wanindu Hasaranga b Bishnoi 0 (1b), Ramesh Mendis st. Pant b Axar 12 (10b, 1x6), Maheesh Theekshana b Axar 2 (3b), Matheesha Pathirana (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (lb-1, w-10): 11; Total (for nine wks. in 20 overs): 161.

## FALL OF WICKETS

1-26 (Kusal Mendis, 3.3 overs), 2-80 (Nissanka, 9.3), 3-130 (Kamindu Mendis, 15.1), 4-139 (Kusal Perera, 15.6), 5-140 (Shanaka, 16.3), 6-140 (Hasaranga, 16.4), 7-151 (Asalanka, 18.4), 8-154 (Theekshana, 19.2), 9-161 (Ramesh Mendis, 19.6).

## INDIA BOWLING

the home side's collapse as it lost its last seven wickets for the addition of just 31

Siraj 3-0-27-0, Arshdeep 3-0-24-2, Axar 4-0-30-2, Bishnoi 4-0-26-3, Parag 4-0-30-0, Hardik 2-0-23-2.

## INDIA

Yashasvi Jaiswal c Shanaka b Hasaranga 30 (15b, 3x4, 2x6), Sanju Samson b Theekshana 0 (1b), Suryakumar Yadav c Shanaka b Pathirana 26 (12b, 4x4, 1x6), Hardik Pandya (not out) 22 (9b, 3x4, 1x6), Rishabh Pant (not out) 2 (2b); Extras (lb-1): 1; Total (for three wks. in 6.3 overs): 81.

## FALL OF WICKETS

1-12 (Samson, 1.1), 2-51 (Suryakumar, 4.2), 3-65 (Jaiswal, 5.4).

## SRI LANKA BOWLING

Shanaka 1-0-12-0, Theekshana 2-0-16-1, Hasaranga 2-0-34-1, Pathirana 1.3-0-18-1.

**Toss:** India; **PoM:** Bishnoi. India won by seven wickets with nine balls remaining (DLS Method) to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in three-match series.

**Third and final T20I: July 30, Pallekele, 7 p.m. IST.**



**Recker-in-chief:** Bishnoi sent back Shanaka and Hasaranga for golden ducks in his impressive spell. AFP

**IN BRIEF**



**Messi-less Inter Miami wins Leagues Cup opener**

Defending champion Inter Miami, playing without injured star Lionel Messi, blanked Mexico's Puebla 2-0 at home on Saturday to begin defending its Leagues Cup crown. Paraguay's Matias Rojas opened the scoring in the ninth minute and Uruguayan striker Luis Suarez added an insurance goal in the 72nd minute to deliver Inter Miami's triumph.

**USA Cricket appoints Jonathan Atkieson as CEO**

USA Cricket has fulfilled one of the two critical requirements to avoid being disqualified as an ICC Associate Nation by appointing Jonathan Atkieson as its CEO effective August 1. The USAC was 'put on notice' by the ICC earlier this month for breaching two norms. While not having a CEO was one, the other was USAC not fulfilling the governance norms which are set by the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC).

**LIVE TELECAST**

**Olympics 2024:** Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 11 a.m. onwards.  
**Football:** Durand Cup, Sony LIV, 7 p.m.

**Hamilton wins Belgian GP after Russell is disqualified**

Mercedes seals a 1-2 finish only for the latter to be dumped out after his car is found to be 1.5kg underweight; McLaren's Piastri moves up to second while Ferrari's Leclerc is third

**BELGIAN GP**

**Reuters**  
SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS

**L**ewis Hamilton emerged as the winner of a dramatic Belgian Grand Prix on Sunday after Mercedes teammate George Russell, who took the chequered flag, was disqualified when his car was found to be underweight following the race.

The 26-year-old Russell, who started sixth on the grid, produced a stunning performance on the track, the only driver to opt for a one-stop policy that saw him nursing his second set of tyres for 34 of the 44 laps.

He was able to hold off Hamilton and the flying McLaren of Piastri, who finished third, to claim what he thought was his third Grand Prix victory.

His joy, however, was short-lived as a technical report released after the race said Russell's car had been found to be 1.5kg below the minimum weight limit for car and driver combined.



**Lucky break:** Hamilton waves as he arrives for the podium ceremony. AFP

"Car 63 is disqualified from the race classification," the stewards announced in a statement.

"All other drivers move up in the classification," they added.

McLaren's Oscar Piastri was elevated to second with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc moving up from fourth to third.

Russell's car was initially weighed at 798kg, which is exactly on the minimum weight limit for car and driver combined.

But stewards found it

had not been fully drained of fuel and when it was weighed again it registered 796.5kg.

Leclerc, who started on pole position, crossed the line in fourth ahead of three-time world champion and series leader Max Verstappen of Red Bull, Lando Norris in the second McLaren and Carlos Sainz in the second Ferrari.

**The results:** 1. Hamilton (Mercedes); 2. Piastri (McLaren); 3. Leclerc (Ferrari); 4. Verstappen (Red Bull); 5. Norris (McLaren); 6. Sainz (Ferrari); 7. Perez (Red Bull);

8. Alonso (Aston Martin); 9. Ocon (Alpine); 10. Ricciardo (RB); 11. Stroll (Aston Martin); 12. Albon (Alpine); 13. Gasly (Alpine); 14. Magnussen (Haas); 15. Bottas (Stake F1); 16. Tsunoda (RB); 17. Sargeant (Williams); 18. Hulkenberg (Haas); DNF: Zhou (Stake F1); DSQ: Russell (Mercedes)

**Standings: Drivers:** 1. Verstappen 277; 2. Norris 199; 3. Leclerc 177; 4. Piastri 167; 5. Sainz 162.

**Constructors:** 1. Red Bull Racing 408; 2. McLaren 366; 3. Ferrari 345; 4. Mercedes 266; 5. Aston Martin 73.



**Too hot to handle:** West Indies had no answers to Wood's thunderbolts. GETTY IMAGES

**Stokes sets record, England hammers WI**

**WI IN ENGLAND**

**Reuters**  
BIRMINGHAM

England captain Ben Stokes butchered the West Indies bowling attack after Mark Wood had taken five wickets to lead England to a crushing 10-wicket win before tea on the third day of the final Test at Edgbaston on Sunday.

Stokes hit the quickest Test half century by an English batter, and was unbeaten on 55 off 28 balls as England took 7.2 overs to reach its target of 82.

Wood claimed five wickets in four overs — three in a single over — to skittle out the visitor for 175 in its second innings.

With Zak Crawley having hurt his hand, it was

the perfect stage for Stokes to promote himself up the order and the skipper wasted no time in thrashing the bowling to all corners of the ground.

Ben Duckett played the supporting role, scoring 25 off 16 balls.

England matched its own record for being the fastest team to reach 50 runs in a Test, achieved in 4.2 overs, while Stokes' 50 off 24 balls bettered Ian Botham's 28-ball half-century in India in 1981.

Earlier, Wood produced a brilliant burst of fast bowling after lunch to run through the tourists' tail, with his five wickets costing only seven runs.

**The scores:** West Indies 282 & 175 in 52 overs (Louis 57, Hodge 55, Wood 5/40) lost to England 376 & 87/0 in 7.2 overs (Stokes 57 n.o.). **PoM:** Wood; **Pos:** Atkinson.



**Podium finish:** Rishon, centre, Krish, left, and Ruhaan the top three in the Senior Max class.

**Rishon Rajeev has the last laugh**

**NATIONAL KARTING**

**Sports Bureau**  
COIMBATORE

Rishon Rajeev (Birel Art India) had to sweat out to the very end to finish on top of the podium in the Senior Max class of the MECO-FMCSI National Karting Championship Rotax Max classes at the CoASTT High Performance Centre here on Sunday.

Nikhilesh Raj (Peregrine Racing) and Rivaan Dev Preetham (MSport)

emerged the Junior Max and Micro Max winners respectively.

**The results (final):**  
**Micro Max (20 laps):** 1. Rivaan Dev Preetham (MSport) 16:07.601; 2. R. Rehan Khan (MSport) 16:09.439; 3. Danish Dalmiya (Rayo Racing) 16:14.864.

**Junior Max:** 1. Nikhilesh Raju (Peregrine Racing) 15:06.695; Aarav Dewan (Leapfrog Racing) 15:09.069; 3. Eshanth Vengatesan (MSport) 15:12.905.  
**Senior Max (19 laps):** 1. Rishon Rajeev (Birel Art India) 16:36.817; Krish Gupta (Rayo Racing) 14:44.230; Ruhaan Alva (MSport) 14:49.916.

**No stopping Aditya in Rally of Coimbatore**

**MOTORSPORTS**

**Sports Bureau**  
COIMBATORE

Aditya Thakur and his co-driver Virender Kashyap kept it simple on the two stages to seal the overall title in the Rally of Coimbatore, the third round of the Blueband – FMSCI Indian National Rally Championship (INRC) for four wheelers, at the Kethanur windmill farms, near Palladam, on Sunday.

The INRC2 driver, representing Team Chettinad Sporting, was quite gentle on the car. Gaurav Gill (co-driver Aniruddh Rangekar) and INRC2 driver Harkrishan Wadia (Kunal Kashyap) clocked the fastest for the day. However, it did not matter much for Aditya, as he had enough lead in his bag.

On playing it safe on the road, Aditya said he could have gone rough on the road to prove his toughness. "Over the years, I learnt that rallying is an art. You need to under-



**Well done:** Team Chettinad Sporting's Aditya Thakur, left, and co-driver Virender Kashyap after the overall win. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

stand how to save the car and the tyres, its pressure and compound to be used on these kind of stages. It's not about going flat out but being calculative."

He thanked MRF for the tyres, SIDVIN, his team and co-driver for the support. "Kashyap was spot on for the second day on trot," he said.

But Aditya did not wish to celebrate the victory following the death of his teammate, INRC3 driver K.V. Premalal, the other day.

Karna Kadur (Musa Sheriff) and Harkrishan staged a strong fightback to finish second and third in the overall class.

**The results: INRC overall:** 1. Aditya Thakur & Virender Kashyap, 2. Karna Kadur & Musa Sheriff, 3. Harkrishan Wadia & Kunal Kashyap.

**INRC2:** 1. Thakur & Virender, 2. Wadia & Kunal, 3. Phillippos Matthai & Murthy PVS.

**INRC3:** 1. Jeet Jhabak & V. Sekar, 2. Sheshank Jamwal & Aseem Sharma, 3. Chandan Gowda & Venu Rameshkumar.

**Triple crown for Mantra Racing's Muddappa**

**Sports Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Hemanth Muddappa (Mantra Racing) claimed a triple crown in the third round of the MMSC FMSCI Indian National Motorcycle Drag Racing Championship 2024 at the Madras International Circuit, here on Sunday.

Consistently crossing the 200 kmph speed barrier, Muddappa, the 12-time National champion, swept to victories in the Unrestricted, 1051-1650cc and 851-1050cc categories, besides finishing second behind Mohammed Riyaz in the 551-850cc class.

**Provisional results (all 4-Stroke unless mentioned):**  
**Unrestricted:** 1. Hemanth Muddappa (Mantra Racing) (08.110secs); 2. Attaulla Baig (08.112); 3. Mujahid Pasha (Fast Track Racing) (08.385).  
**1051-1650cc (Super Sport):** 1. Hemanth (07.970s); 2. Attaulla (08.196s); 3. Aayman Baig (08.227s).  
**851-1050cc (SS):** 1. Hemanth (08.006s); 2. Niranjan R. Kumar (08.805s); 3. Khaja Awais Ahmed (08.866s).  
**551-850cc (SS):** 1. Mohammed



**Hot-trick:** Muddappa with his trophies. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Riyaz (08.407s); 2. Hemanth (08.418s); 3. Altaf Khan (08.684s).  
**361-550cc (SS Indian):** 1. Jason D'Souza (Mantra Racing) (12.136s); 2. Mujahid Pasha (Fast Track Racing) (12.456s); Iqbal Shaikh (12.458s).  
**166-225cc (SS):** 1. S. Prashanth (13.719); 2. K. Prashanth (14.023); 3. R. Govardhan (14.154).  
**Up to 165cc (SS Indian):** 1. V. Shashi Kiran (14.143s); 2. J. Bharathraj (Rockers Racing) (14.281s); 3. Abdul Basim (Rockers Racing) (14.319s).

**Girls (Stock 165cc):** 1. Jagathishree Kumaresan (One Racing) (16.781s); 2. S.P. Shuria (One Racing) (17.305s); 3. Aisvarya (Motul Sparks Racing) (17.449s).  
**2-Stroke (131-165cc, SS):** 1. Syed Imran (Fast Track Racing) (13.019); 2. S. Prashanth (13.286); 3. Balasubramanian (ACCSYS India Rookies Racing) (13.315).  
**2-Stroke (Up to 130cc, SS):** 1. Shahrulkh Khan (13.488s); 2. Syed Imran (Fast Track Racing) (13.499); 3. S. Ashok (13.650).

**Siddharth should make amends in Anab E Shahi Plate**

**HYDERABAD:** The four-year-old gelding Siddharth, who ran second in his last start, should make amends in the Anab E Shahi Plate, the chief event of the Monday's (July 29) races.

**KOTHAGUDEM PLATE (Div. II) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) — 12.45 p.m.:** 1. Winning Attitude (3) Afroz Khan 60.5, 2. Classy Dame (8) Md. Ekram Alam 59.5, 3. Indian Temple (5) Surya Prakash 59, 4. N R I Ultra-power (10) Abhay Singh 59, 5. Sucker Punch (6) G. Nareesh 57, 6. Master Touch (2) Mohit Singh 54, 7. Exponent (7) R.S. Jodha 53.5, 8. Wandring Warrior (4) Rafique Sk. 51.5, 9. Desert Sultan (1) P. Sai Kumar 50 and 10. Silver Arrow (9) P. Ajeeth Kumar 50.

**1. CLASSY DAME, 2. N R I ULTRA-POWER, 3. INDIAN TEMPLE**

**2. ROYSTON ROCK PLATE (1,200m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II) — 1.15: 1. Aashritha Pet (6) G. Nareesh 56, 2. Country's Maximus (4) Abhay Singh 56, 3. Flying Fury (8) Md. Ismail 56, 4. Golden Unicorn (3) P. Sai Kumar 56, 5. Leo (10) Mohit Singh 56, 6. Lifes Journey (7) Suraj Narredu 56, 7. Secret Option (11) Shivansh 56, 8. Torchbearer (12) Ashad Asbar 56, 9. Cape May (5) Md. Ekram Alam 54.5, 10. Grey Sky (15) R.S. Jodha 54.5, 11. Lady Jane (2) Akshay Kumar 54.5, 12. Lucky Fiero (4) Rafique Sk. 54.5, 13. Mikimoto (1) Kuldeep Singh (Sr) 54.5, 14. Mountain Touch (14) Neeraj 54.5 and 15.**

**1. DEVILS MAGIC, 2. BARBET, 3. FLY TOTHE STARS**

**5. WWW.HYDRACES.COM CUP (Div. I) (1,100m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 — (Cat. II) — 2.50: 1. Blissful (10) Md. Ekram Alam 62.5, 2. The Thunder (3) Rafique Sk. 62.5, 3. Australia (6) Deepak Singh 61, 4.**

Peppi (9) Surya Prakash 54.5.

**1. LADY JANE, 2. LIFES JOURNEY, 3. TORCHBEARER**

**3. WWW.HYDRACES.COM CUP (Div. II) (1,100m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) — 1.45: 1. Delhi Heights (9) M. Mark 62.5, 2. Mincraft (10) Surya Prakash 62, 3. Gretsya (1) Shivansh 61, 4. Garnet (2) A.A. Vikrant 57.5, 5. Divine Connection (7) Md. Ekram Alam 55.5, 6. First Star (4) Mohit Singh 55.5, 7. Splendour On Grass (6) Santosh Raj 55.5, 8. Lashka (5) Akshay Kumar 54.5, 9. Glorious Power (3) Afroz Khan 52, 10. Fashion Icon (8) Arjun 50.**

**1. GRETSYA, 2. LASHKA, 3. GLORIOUS POWER**

**4. FIRECREST PLATE (Div. II) (1,400m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) — 2.15: 1. Briar Ridge (7) A.A. Vikrant 60, 2. Mark My Day (9) R.S. Jodha 60, 3. Fly Tothe Stars (8) Kuldeep Singh (Sr) 58, 4. Devils Magic (4) Akshay Kumar 57, 5. Barbet (2) Neeraj 56, 6. Brooklyn Beauty (6) G. Nareesh 52.5, 7. Only My Way (10) Afroz Khan 52.5, 8. Sopranos (1) Md. Ismail 52.5, 9. Fortunatus (3) Kuldeep Singh (Jr) 52 and 10. Role Model (5) Abhay Singh 51.**

**5. WWW.HYDRACES.COM CUP (Div. I) (1,100m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 — (Cat. II) — 2.50: 1. Blissful (10) Md. Ekram Alam 62.5, 2. The Thunder (3) Rafique Sk. 62.5, 3. Australia (6) Deepak Singh 61, 4.**

Midsummer Star (4) P. Sai Kumar 59.5, 5. Clefairy (11) M. Mark 57, 6.

**HAPPY GO LUCKY (1) M. Mark 57, 6. Happy Go Lucky (1) Akshay Kumar 56.5, 7. Coming Home (2) Surya Prakash 56, 8. Exclusive Luck (9) Md. Ismail 54.5, 9. Only The Brave (7) Abhay Singh 54, 10. Indian Sniper (8) Mohit Singh 53.5 and 11. Shadow Fax (5) Likith Appu 53.5.**

**1. COMING HOME, 2. HAPPY GO LUCKY, 3. INDIAN SNIPER**

**6. FIRECREST PLATE (Div. I) (1,400m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) — 3.20: 1. Bangor On Dee (3) M. Mark 60, 2. D Minchu (8) Akshay Kumar 59.5, 3. True Icon (6) Shivansh 59.5, 4. Divine Destiny (9) Ashad Asbar 57, 5. Armstrong (10) Suraj Narredu 56, 6. Top In Class (7) Surya Prakash 54, 7. Wallop And Gallop (2) P. Ajeeth Kumar 53, 8. Just Incredible (1) Rafique Sk. 52, 9. Nucleus (5) Mohit Singh 52 and 10. Power Ranger (4) Md. Ekram Alam 50.5.**

**1. WALLOP AND GALLOP, 2. D MINCHU, 3. POWER RANGER**

**7. FALAKNUMA CUP (1,600m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) — 3.50: 1. Voice Of A Dream (3) Kuldeep Singh (Jr) 60, 2. Carnival Lady (4) Shivansh 59, 3. Park Lane (5) Md. Ismail 59, 4. Exclusive Spark (2) Mohit Singh 58.5, 5. Caraxes (10) Kuldeep Singh (Sr) 58, 6. Sugar (8) B.R. Kumar 58, 7. White Pearl (9) Akshay Kumar 58, 8. Assured Success (7) Surya Prakash 57, 9. London Bell (6) Md. Ekram Alam 53.5 and 10. Planet Super (1) Rafique Sk. 52.5.**

**1. WHITE PEARL, 2. VOICE OF A DREAM, 3. SUGAR**

**8. ANAB E SHAHI PLATE (1,400m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 80 and above (Cat. I) — 4.20: 1. Candy Girl (1) Md. Ekram Alam 62, 2. Huntingdon (3) Suraj Narredu 62, 3. Astwa Morocco (5) Shivansh 61.5, 4. Siddharth (8) Akshay Kumar 60.5, 5. Akido (4) R.S. Jodha 60, 6. Mysterious Angel (11) P. Ajeeth Kumar 60, 7. Malaala (10) Arjun 59, 8. Ashoka (6) Sandesh 56.5, 9. Ramiel (2) Abhay Singh 52.5, 10. Baisa (7) Surya Prakash 50, 11. Ruby Red (9) Neeraj 50.**

**1. SIDDHARTH, 2. HUNTINGDON, 3. ASHWA MOROCCO**

**9. KOTHAGUDEM PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) — 4.50: 1. Pinatubo (10) Surya Prakash 60.5, 2. Crimson Rose (1) Shivansh 60, 3. Silver Lining (6) M. Mark 59.5, 4. Ambitious Star (4) Md. Ekram Alam 59, 5. N R I Fantasy (5) Likith Appu 58.5, 6. Royal Pal (3) R.S. Jodha 55.5, 7. Sadiya (9) Kuldeep Singh (Jr) 53, 8. Inderdhanush (7) Md. Ismail 52, 9. Star Cruise (2) Dharshan Antony 51 and 10. Jet Falcon (8) Abhay Singh 50.**

**1. CRIMSON ROSE, 2. SADIYA, 3. ROYAL PAL**

**Day's Best: SIDDHARTH**  
Jackpot: (i) 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5, (ii) 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9.  
**Mini Jackpot:** (i) 2, 3, 4 & 5, (ii) 6, 7, 8 & 9.  
**Treble:** (i) 1, 2 & 3, (ii) 4, 5 & 6, (iii) 7, 8 & 9. Tanala: All races.

**McBrine shines as Ireland edges Zimbabwe**

**Agence France-Presse**  
BELFAST

Andy McBrine starred with both bat and ball as Ireland beat Zimbabwe by four wickets in a one-off Test in Belfast on Sunday.

Set just 158 to win in the shadow of Stormont Castle, Ireland had slumped to 33 for five at the close of third day.

Lorcan Tucker (56) and McBrine (55 n.o.), turned the tide with a 96-run stand. Mark Adair joined Tucker and finished the job.

**The scores:** Zimbabwe 210 & 197 lost to Ireland 250 & 158/6 in 36.1 overs (Tucker 56, McBrine 55 n.o., Ngarwa 4/53); **PoM:** McBrine.

**THE HINDU AT THE GAMES PHOTO CONTEST**

Scan QR code or visit [newsthehindu.com/thoph](http://newsthehindu.com/thoph) to take the quiz. Top 3 winners' every day win gift vouchers.

Answer to yesterday's quiz: Karnam Malleswari

**In which edition of the Olympics did Leander Paes win the men's singles tennis bronze medal, becoming the first Indian athlete since 1952 to win an individual Olympic medal?**



**Tough fight:** Mohammedan Sporting and Inter Kashi could not find a winning goal after a riveting contest. DEBASISH BHADURI

## Mohammedan holds Inter Kashi

Ashley finds the net for the Kolkata outfit; Sanan Mohammad's brace propels Jamshedpur to a 3-0 win over Assam Rifles Football Team

### DURAND CUP

Sports Bureau  
KOLKATA

I-League champion Mohammedan Sporting managed to find a second-half equaliser to hold Inter Kashi FC to a 1-1 draw in a Durand Cup Group B league match at the Kishore Bharati Stadium here on Sunday.

### Fine effort

Nikola Stojanovic produced a fine solo effort from the top of the box in the 38th minute to give Inter Kashi the lead.

The visitor had multiple

chances to enhance the lead but the Mohammedan Sporting defence kept a tight vigil to keep the former's advantage to a minimum.

### Strong comeback

The Kolkata outfit made a strong comeback following the break and equalised off a nice free-kick conversion by its forward Ashley Koli in the 67th minute and ensured a point from the encounter.

Sanan Mohammad found the mark twice to help Jamshedpur FC to a comfortable 3-0 win over Assam Rifles Football Team in a Group D league match at the JRD Tata

Sports Complex, Jamshedpur.

Imran Khan scored the third goal for Jamshedpur FC.

Sanan opened the scoring in the injury-time of the opening half before doubling the lead in the 68th minute off an assist from Imran, who made it 3-0 with a fine effort in the 86th minute.

**The result: Group B:** Mohammedan Sporting SC 1 (Ashley Koli 67) drew with Inter Kashi FC 1 (Nikola Stojanovic 38).

**Group D:** Jamshedpur FC 3 (Sanan Mohammad 45+2, 68, Imran Khan 86) bt Assam Rifles FT 0.

## Horse welfare is incredibly important, these wonderful animals mean so much: Boyd Martin

### OLYMPICS EQUESTRIAN

Associated Press  
VERSAILLES

Equestrian riders at the Paris Olympics say they were shocked by a recent video showing three-time gold medalist Charlotte Dujardin of Britain repeatedly whipping a horse during training, a scandal that has thrust the issue of animal welfare and abuse into the spotlight.

American rider Boyd Martin, taking part in his fourth Olympics, said he was "horrified" by the video.

"Horse welfare is incredibly important, these wonderful animals mean so much," Martin told *The Associated Press* after the first day of individual eventing Saturday. "Your teammate is an animal in this sport and what we saw was inexcusable."

Martin spoke a few hours after another rider, Carlos Parro, was formally warned by horse racing's governing body — the Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI) — for potentially causing "unnecessary discomfort" to his horse Safira. It did not take place at the Paris Games but further highlighted the issue of animal welfare.

The FEI reviewed photos sent to it by animal welfare group PETA showing Parro hyper-flexing Safira's neck in a prohibited movement called "Rollkur" — which comprises the horse's breathing.

"While we're relieved the FEI addressed our complaint and took action, we remain deeply con-



**New rules:** The Federation for Equestrian Sports has spelled out a series of reforms — such as more ethical training methods and clearer directives on how horses should be treated and ridden. AP



cerned about the horse," PETA's senior vice-president Kathy Guillermo said in an email to the AP. "The rider should have been disqualified by the safety team."

Martin did not comment on the decision and said he had not seen the photos at the time of speaking, but he said pressuring a horse through punishment or fear is wrong.

"To get the best out of an animal you've got to train in a way that it wants to please you," Martin said. "It's got to be positive and understanding."

But The British team has been under heavy scrutiny since a video emerged showing Dujardin repeatedly whipping a horse while coaching another rider. Dujardin withdrew from the Games and is provisionally suspended from all events, pending an FEI investigation.

"We are here 100% behind horse welfare," the 33-year-old rider Tom McEwen said Saturday. "I do agree it was a massive

shock to the equestrian world. But I believe that this week, all of us here will show the sport to be the amazing sport that it is."

Former American star David O'Connor, who won gold in individual eventing at the 2000 Games, is chief of the FEI's eventing committee and sits on its board. He is also the chief of sport for the U.S. Equestrian Federation.

He called Dujardin's actions "completely unacceptable in every aspect" but said the increased spotlight on the sport was entirely justified.

"I don't mind public scrutiny at all because you really want to make sure that unacceptable behavior is (exposed)," O'Connor told the AP on Saturday. "We are trying to do everything we can to find out about unethical behavior and put our foot down wherever it happens."

Asked if a U.S. team rider would be thrown off if a similar video of ill treatment surfaced, O'Connor was unequivocal.

"Yes," he said. "There's no statute of limitations."

He does not think cruelty toward horses is endemic and is hopeful that wider scrutiny will improve horse welfare. "One of the big changes now is to reach out beyond the competition. (Before) it was always within the competition," O'Connor said. "It's the only way that practices like that can be taken away."

Equestrian also features in the modern pentathlon, but for the final time these Games. Show jumping will no longer be included at the Los Angeles Games in 2028. It was dropped after a German coach was sent home from Tokyo 2020 for punching a horse when it refused to jump.

The day after the Dujardin video emerged, the FEI spelled out a series of reforms — such as more ethical training methods and clearer directives on how horses should be treated and ridden.

For the first time at the Olympics, there is an equine welfare coordina-

tor on site. The FEI's veterinary director, Goran Akerstrom, said it is paramount to recognize physical and emotional stress in horses.

Also on Saturday, Emiliano Portale and his horse Future were eliminated from dressage after blood was found in the horse's mouth during post-competition checks. This was in line with horse welfare protocol and did not imply there was "any intention to hurt or harm the horse," the FEI said.

Welfare of riders is also important.

Britain's Laura Collett almost died in a fall while competing in 2013. She was resuscitated five times and suffered a fractured shoulder, two broken ribs, a punctured lung, a lacerated liver, and kidney damage.

The highest risk of serious injury is caused by falls during the cross country discipline. Studies show there are more injuries compared to dressage and jumping.

THE HINDU

# EDUCATIONPLUS

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A. Joseph Dorairaj

Curriculum revision is a welcome phenomenon. Both universities and colleges must revise and, if necessary, restructure their curriculum every two or three years. It is essential to keep abreast of the latest trends and challenges in every domain so that academic programmes and courses do not become obsolete. But a few questions need to be answered. How often should the curriculum be revised? Should the revision be peripheral or substantial? Who decides what and how much should be revised? And with what rationale?

Not all questions are equally important. But the one about decision-makers warrants attention. In higher education institutions (HEIs), curriculum design and revision is initiated and overseen by individual departments and the institution's Academic Council at a higher level. The presence of external subject experts, an alumnus, and an 'industry' representative in the Board of Studies, which frames and revisits the curriculum periodically, is mandated in almost all institutions. External subject experts ensure that the curriculum is updated and is on a par with the best in the field. The alumnus gives feedback in terms of what is good and what needs to be revised. Industry representatives comment on whether the cur-

## A pragmatic mix

While inputs from the industry are necessary, curriculum revision in higher education should look beyond making students job ready

riculum makes students job-ready.

### Conflicting opinion

However there are conflicting opinions on who engineers the changes and on what basis. While one group argues that the industry should play a key role in designing and revisiting the curriculum for all programmes across institu-

tions, the other points out that curriculum revision and restructuring is the prerogative of educationists, not technocrats and that industry experts cannot dictate curriculum restructuring.

In recent times there has been an acrimonious battle between educationists and their industry counterparts on who should have

the last word on curriculum revision. The latter claim that a high percentage of graduates are not industry ready because the curriculum is not geared to meet job requirements. Their perspective is that the primary job of HEIs is to make students market-ready and employable. Educationists, on the other hand, argue that, while

they are willing to accommodate suggestions to ensure the graduates are certified job-ready, curriculum cannot be designed and restructured solely on the basis of market demand and prospects of employment.

If technocrats are allowed to have the last word on the design and restructuring of curriculum, what would be the ramifications? One is the cold shouldering of the Humanities and Liberal Studies. If all our programmes and courses are aligned with market needs, placement would certainly improve. Institutions can boast of placement records and this will certainly enhance the demand and institutions will go up a few notches in terms of accreditation.

### Beyond jobs

But higher education has another important mandate: to transform students into better human beings who will be empowered and responsible citizens. Therefore, it needs to be ensured that curriculum restructuring is not hijacked by non-academicians.

Recently in a meeting of the Board of Studies in English, which was convened to restructure the curriculum for M.A. English Studies, a technocrat wanted the programme to be reoriented to include skill-based courses like Journalism, Advertisements, Visual Communication, Translation, and Theatre Arts and demanded that conventional courses like

Shakespeare, Linguistics and Phonetics, and Comparative Literature be replaced with employment-oriented courses. A similar scene played out in the department of History where the 'industry' representative replaced almost half the traditional courses with those related to tourism and hospitality with the argument that students should be made job ready.

The situation will, of course, be different in Engineering and Technology, which have to constantly reinvent themselves to stay relevant and help their graduates land secure jobs. Even there, the basics should not be forgotten and a dose of liberal education should be injected into the curriculum.

While inputs from the industry and market should be taken into consideration during curriculum design and restructuring, both educationists and technocrats should not focus only on jobs and salaries. Higher education should empower students with critical thinking skills and a strong emotional, digital and ecological quotient. In the pursuit of gainful employment, liberal education should not be sidelined. Ultimately, what we need is a holistic education, which will ensure a healthy and pragmatic mix of information, knowledge, and skills.

The writer is Professor, School of English and Foreign Languages, Gandhigram Rural Institute (Deemed-to-be University), Gandhigram. Email: josephdorairaj@gmail.com

## International Education Fair

The 20<sup>th</sup> edition of International Education Fair (IEF) organised by The Hindu Education Plus will be held from August 15 to August 30 across seven cities. This one-stop platform will bring delegates from consulates, top international universities, colleges, consultants and financial institutions to give comprehensive information on overseas education.

Students can interact with experts from global consultants and colleges and attend seminars and sessions on visa counselling and financial aid services.

### When and Where:

August 15 at Taj Vivanta, Hyderabad;  
August 17 at Taj Vivanta, Vijayawada;  
August 19 at Christ University Central Campus, Bengaluru;  
August 20 at Christ University Kengeri Campus, Bengaluru;  
August 22 at Taj



Vivanta, Coimbatore;  
August 23 at Kumaraguru College of Technology, Coimbatore;  
August 25 and 26 at Loyola College, Chennai;  
August 28 at Taj Vivanta, Kochi;  
August 30 at Dr. Ambedkar Convention Centre, Delhi.

To register, visit [bit.ly/IEF2024](https://bit.ly/IEF2024) or scan the QR code



### YI24

ThinkStartup and the Management Entrepreneurship Professional Skills Council (MEPSC), in association with the CBSE, have launched the fourth edition of Youth Ideathon (YI24). The

five-stage competition will be held online initially and participants will be divided into Junior and Senior categories.

**Eligibility:** Students from Classes 4 to 12.  
**Theme:** iStartup a Good Thing for India.  
More details at [www.youthideathon.in](https://www.youthideathon.in)



# Pant is the real deal, never mind his occasional dalliance with ordinariness

With Indian cricket on the throes of transition across formats, Pant is the bridge between the glorious past and the exciting future; he is only 26, but a mature, experienced, seasoned campaigner who has literally stared the afterlife in the face and come back to tell the tale

**R. Kaushik**  
PALLEKELE

**H**e looked like Rishabh Pant, he answered to the name Rishabh Pant, but for more than a half-hour at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium on Saturday night, it appeared as if an impostor had taken his place. There was none of the characteristic ebullience, no muscling of the ball, no electric running between the wickets, no shape as he tried to hit the cover off the ball. Rishabh Pant sleepwalked through his innings, unable to build on the hectic start provided by Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill, struggling to sail in the wake of his marauding skipper Suryakumar Yadav.

Even the singles weren't readily forthcoming and his first shot in semi-anger nearly proved his undoing. Walking across to Maheesh Theekshana to shovel-sweep, he was put down by Asitha Fernando at long-leg, the ball trickling away to the boundary and throwing him a lifeline. That didn't energise him either. When Suryakumar was dismissed for an outrageous 58 in the first Twenty20 International against Sri Lanka, Pant had contributed just 16 off 17 deliveries in a third-wicket association worth 76.

What on earth was going on? Where was the acclaimed destroyer of bowling attacks? Where was the intrepid batter who thought little of going down on his haunches and smiting the ball behind square on the on-side, ending up on his backside even as the little orb sailed over the boundary ropes? Where was the gathering force that could crunch the ball through the off-side with such ferocity that even five yards was too much for the boundary-rider to cover? Where was Rishabh Pant?

Lying in wait, as it transpired. Having thrown him one lifeline as a fielder, Fernando handed Pant another gift - a juicy full toss that was disdainfully whipped over mid-wicket for six. From 20 off 23, Pant had moved to 26 off 24. A false dawn, or the start of a late charge? The next ball provided an emphatic answer - another full toss, this time clattered over point for four.

By the time he was dismissed by the excellent Matheesha Pathirana in the penultimate over, Pant had leapfrogged to 49 off 33. He had more than caught up with balls faced, blasting 29 off his final 10 deliveries. There he was, the Rishabh Pant

the cricketing world has come to love and admire. And envy and fear if one isn't an Indian fan.

With Indian cricket on the throes of transition across formats, Pant is the bridge between the glorious past and the exciting future. He is only 26, but a mature, experienced, seasoned 26 who has literally stared the afterlife in the face and come back to tell the tale. With nearly 140 international caps against his name, he is the consummate all-format player, his unabashed ball-striking complemented by his excellent glove-work that isn't quite steeped in orthodoxy but that is also not as unconventional as Mahendra Singh Dhoni's.

Pant has chosen his mentor and role model well. For nearly a decade and a half, Dhoni was Indian cricket's go-to option, first as a long-maned free-flowing batter who hit the ball the proverbial country mile and brought smarts to his wicketkeeping, then as captain fantastic who pulled non-existent rabbits out of imaginary hats, and finally as the mature, understated senior statesman who pulled the strings inconspicuously even as Virat Kohli donned the captaincy garb. Anyone who succeeded Dhoni would be measured, unfairly, against the great man. Wriddhiman Saha perhaps felt the pinch in the five-day game, but it's to Pant's credit that he has more than held his own, setting himself up as the X-factor in Test matches while, steadily, threatening to translate his immense white-ball potential into decisive performances.

## Incredible knocks

Already in his six-year Test career - he hasn't played a five-day game since December 2022, one must not forget - Pant has uncorked some of the most incredible knocks on foreign patch. He has more masterpieces in 33 Tests than most have in a lifetime of First Class cricket, a tribute to his immense skills but also his enormous self-belief and confidence. Stunning centuries in Australia, England and South Africa, a jaw-dropping 97 in Sydney in 2021 that nearly facilitated a successful assault on a fourth-innings target of 407, and an exceptional unbeaten 89 in the next outing in Brisbane to turbocharge India's historic three-wicket win, the first time in more than three decades that Australia had been tamed at the Gabba toir.

In patches, Pant's fledgling career seemed to mirror his Delhi mate Virender



**Pant has more masterpieces in 33 Tests than most have in a lifetime of First Class cricket, a tribute to his immense skills but also his enormous self-belief and confidence**

Sehwag's, though. Credited rightly with redefining the approach to opening the batting in Tests, Sehwag didn't exactly court the kind of limited-overs success his aggressive batsmanship commanded. True, he did become the second batter after Sachin Tendulkar to make a 50-over double hundred in internationals, but Sehwag's was a white-ball career unfulfilled, by and large. For all the strokes at his command, and the consistency and strike-rate in Tests, he didn't quite stride the white-ball firmament like a colossus. Pant seemed headed the same way for a while, though he now appears to have picked up the pieces and is well on his way to establishing himself as a cross-format behemoth.

And to think that, some 20 months back nearly to the day, he was waging a serious battle merely to stay alive. A horrific single-car road accident threatened to derail life as he knew it - not just cricketing, but life as a whole. Pant lay in hospital, physically battered, needing a series of surgeries to keep his crumbling body in shape. At the time, a comeback to international cricket was the last thing on anyone's mind. Except Pant's, that is.

It takes a special individual to possess the equanimity and sense of humour to make light of one of the most traumatic experiences. Firmly on the road to recovery as he put himself through an arduous rehabilitation process, Pant recalled that dark December 30 night of 2022 through the simplistic lens through which he has chosen to view life. "I had taken an SUV, but what I was seeing was a sedan," he said of his immediate thoughts

in the aftermath of the accident. He could afford to laugh at himself, more than 14 months later, but can one even begin to imagine what it must have been like for a professional sportsperson, for just anyone, to be confronted with the prospect of losing one's right leg?

Where Pant is today is a tribute to his resolve. To his resilience and to the realisation that, having been given a second chance in the real sense of the term, he must make the most of it. Pant isn't given to hyperbole; he isn't as visibly expressive as some of his other colleagues. But inside that once-stocky frame that now appears lighter than it ever has resides a strong mind and a big heart.

Keith Miller, the great Australian all-rounder who fought in World War II, was once asked by Michael Parkinson about pressure in cricket. "Pressure is a Messerschmitt (German fighter aircraft) up your arse, playing cricket is not," he retorted. Pant might hold a similar view though he might not articulate it as colourfully as the Aussie. He has come face to face with the worst of the worst and come out unscathed (as far as we can tell). What's a 150-kmph thunderbolt?

Since his return to competitive cricket in March during the IPL, Pant has played 20-over cricket exclusively - for his franchise Delhi Capitals, and for India at the T20 World Cup and now here in Sri Lanka. Next week in Colombo could be the first time in 21 months, since Christchurch in November 2022, that he will be playing a 50-over game. It's no one's guess how he will stand up to the rigours of an extended limited-overs encounter, or indeed to those of Test cricket - India will begin a packed season on September 19 with the first of two Tests against Bangladesh in Chennai - for Pant's fitness is no longer in question. He is well and truly back, the accident a distant but constant reminder of how things can turn in the bat of an eyelid, perhaps truer than imaginable in this instance.

## Found his calling

Pant seems to have found his calling as a top-four batter in T20s. It's a role he can reprise in the other two formats too simply because of the immense potential for damage coiled within his frame. In November, he will return to Australia, where he is something of a cult hero not just for his brazen knocks in 2018-19 and 2020-21, but also for his banter with then skipper Tim Paine on his first tour Down Under, six years back. Australia loves nothing more than a scrapper, someone capable of giving back as good as he gets. Pant is a handful with the bat and behind the stumps, but he is more than capable of holding his own in the battle of the lip with his quixotic humour delivered deadpan.

For all his gravitas, Pant is still the cuddly boy next door. The grim experiences of 20 months back haven't dampened his spirit; the little kid in him surfaces more than occasionally, especially when he hauls himself off the turf without using his hands through the strength of his legs and his upper body, thanks to his grounding in gymnastics. But there is no doubting his maturity, his cricketing acumen, his out-of-the-box thinking. Rishabh Pant is the real deal, never mind his occasional dalliance with ordinariness.

## THE GIST

It's to Pant's credit that he has more than held his own in the face of comparisons to his role model Dhoni, setting himself up as the X-factor in Test matches while, steadily, threatening to translate his immense white-ball potential into decisive performances

He seems to have found his calling as a top-four batter in T20s. It's a role he can reprise in the other two formats too simply because of the immense potential for damage coiled within his frame

Next week in Colombo could be the first time in 21 months, since Christchurch in November 2022, that Pant will be playing a 50-over game

Pant is a handful with the bat and behind the stumps, but he is more than capable of holding his own in the battle of the lip with his quixotic humour delivered deadpan

# Surprising 'dark oxygen' discovery could ensnarl deep-sea mining

Deep-sea mining is expected to be a major marine resource extraction activity in the coming decades. The International Seabed Authority has established at least two 15-year contracts with the Government of India to look for polymetallic nodules and polymetallic sulphides in the deep seabed

The Hindu Bureau

An unknown process is producing oxygen deep in the world's oceans, where it is too dark for photosynthesis, scientists reported on July 22 in the journal *Nature Geoscience*. The finding has important implications because oxygen helps support life and the discovery implies the existence of previously unknown ecosystems.

Many governments are also bound to take notice since one explanation for the oxygen is that polymetallic nodules are transporting electric charges that split water molecules around them, releasing oxygen. Polymetallic nodules are lumps of iron, manganese hydroxides, and rock partially submerged in many parts of the ocean floor. If their concentration exceeds 10 kg per square metre, mining them is considered to be economically feasible – and many countries are planning to do so as a new resource.

On July 22, *Reuters* reported an unnamed "top government scientist" saying India is planning to "apply for licences to explore for deep-sea minerals in the Pacific Ocean". India's Ministry of Earth Sciences is also currently building a submersible vehicle that will look for and mine similar resources in the Indian Ocean as part of its 'Deep Ocean Mission'.

## Where was the study conducted?

The oxygen discovery raises questions about how deep-sea mining to extract polymetallic nodules will affect marine ecosystems.

The scientists behind the study, from Germany, the U.K., and the U.S., were studying the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, a part of the ocean floor off Mexico's west coast. Covering an area larger than India, the Zone is considered to have the world's highest concentration of polymetallic nodules, including 6 billion tonnes of manganese and more than 200 million tonnes each of copper and nickel.

When the scientists were conducting experiments at a depth of 4 km, they noticed the oxygen concentration in some places rapidly increased instead of decreasing. They conducted follow-up studies in 2020 and 2021. In each case, they released a device from the surface that would land on the ocean floor, where it would isolate a small volume of the floor along with some sea water and measure the oxygen levels.

This underwater region is called the abyssal zone. It receives too little sunlight for photosynthesis to be feasible. Instead, life-forms here get oxygen from water carried in by a global circulation called



A study under way on the seafloor of the Clarion-Clipperton Zone to investigate the impact that potential manganese nodule mining in the deep sea would have on ecosystems there. ROV-TEAM/GEOMAR

the 'Great Conveyor Belt'. Still, the amount of oxygen is low and without any local production, the device should have measured the oxygen levels dropping as small animals consumed it. But the scientists found the opposite: it increased, sometimes tripling in just two days.

They double-checked the finding by recreating the conditions on the ocean floor in their lab, and found the oxygen levels to increase up to a point before dropping.

## What is the source?

When they measured the physical characteristics of the nodules, they found their surfaces to have a voltage of up to 0.95 V. Splitting one water molecule requires 1.5 V, but the researchers have suspected the voltage could build up if many nodules are close together, like the cells of a battery.

Andrew Sweetman, an ecologist with the Scottish Association for Marine Science in the U.K. and a coauthor of the study, told *Nature*, "We have another source of oxygen on the planet, other than photosynthesis." His team is calling it 'dark oxygen'.

Oxygen sources are valuable because they allow life to survive. But as the lab experiment indicated, the nodules could only produce oxygen as long as they could muster a sufficient voltage. The nodules' own energy source is also not clear.

## What is deep-sea mining?

Given the quantity of polymetallic nodules on the ocean floor, deep-sea



The finding has important implications because oxygen helps support life and the discovery implies the existence of previously unknown ecosystems

mining is expected to be a major marine resource extraction activity in the coming decades. The International Seabed Authority has established 15-year contracts with at least 22 contractors – including the Government of India – to look for polymetallic nodules, polymetallic sulphides, and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts in the deep seabed. China alone is expected to mine 17% of the Clarion-Clipperton Zone.

The new finding raises the possibility of such mining damaging ecosystems that require 'dark oxygen' to survive. Experts have found deep-sea mining itself could be harmful to the marine environment, 'dark oxygen' or not.

In 1989-1996, scientists from Germany conducted the Disturbance and Recolonisation (DISCOL) Experiment in the Peru Basin as the world's "first large-scale impact assessment" to assess the "environmental impacts originating from the mining of polymetallic nodules". They built a device that disturbed the sea floor like a deep-sea mining exercise might have and collected data about how the disturbances changed local oceanographic and sedimentological

profiles, among other things.

A 2019 study in the journal *Scientific Reports* reported that "the effects of simulated mining impacts induced during the DISCOL [Experiment] were still evident in the megabenthos of the Peru Basin after 26 years."

## The affect on deep-sea mining

The same study also reported "significantly lower heterogeneity diversity in disturbed areas" and added that "if the results of this experiment ... can be extrapolated to the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, the impacts of polymetallic nodule mining there may be greater than expected, and could potentially lead to an irreversible loss of some ecosystem functions".

In November 2023, *Nature* reported based on a paper published then that deep-sea mining "for minerals could harm deep-sea jellyfish, according to the first study of mining impacts on animals living in the water column."

Scientists also know less about ecosystems in the abyssal zone than they do about many of those aboveground, which means the models scientists use to predict their fate and their role in global climate processes could be unreliable. With these and other issues in mind, on July 20, three major European insurance companies said they would exclude deep-sea mining from their underwriting portfolios.

'Dark oxygen' adds to these challenges. If deep-sea mining doesn't find sustainable ways to respond to them, it may be rendered altogether infeasible.

## THE GIST

Polymetallic nodules are lumps of iron, manganese hydroxides, and rock partially submerged in many parts of the ocean floor. If their concentration exceeds 10 kg per sq.m, mining them is considered feasible. Many countries plan to do so

When many nodules are close together they could generate enough voltage to split one water molecule. According to one researcher, 'We have another source of oxygen on the planet.' His team is calling it 'dark oxygen.'

The finding raises the possibility of mining damaging ecosystems that require 'dark oxygen' to survive. Experts have found deep-sea mining itself could be harmful to the ocean, 'dark oxygen' or not

## BIG SHOT



Embers blowing away from a burning tree near Payne Creek, California, as the Park Fire, which has grown to 1.4 lakh ha, continued to spread on Saturday. Strong winds and dried vegetation fueled the fire that destroyed 28,000 ha in the first 24 hours after a man allegedly pushed a burning car into a ravine. In 2018, more than 18,000 structures were destroyed and 85 people were killed in nearby Paradise when a camp fire entrapped thousands of people and became the most destructive in California history. AFP

## WHAT IS IT?

# Ariel: another watery moon?

Vasudevan Mukunth

The Solar System has many mysteries. We don't know why the Sun's corona is so hot. We don't know why Saturn's moon, Titan, has such a significant atmosphere. We don't know why Triton rotates in the direction opposite to its host planet, Neptune, although a recent study found an answer: Triton and Pluto had a common origin before Neptune pulled Triton to itself.

Another mystery in the Solar System may be coming to a similar close. Astronomers have been curious why the surface of Uranus's moon Ariel has frozen carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). At that distance from the Sun, the CO<sub>2</sub> should have already vaporised into space — yet the ice covers the moon's surface. On July 24, NASA's James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) reported evidence of a liquid ocean buried under Ariel's surface, supplying CO<sub>2</sub> to the world above.

The people behind the finding came to this conclusion when they found carbon monoxide. If Ariel has to have this compound, it has to have a surface temperature around 18 degrees C less than what it is, or it could have a subsurface ocean producing carbon oxides. One side of Ariel has cracks and grooves through which icy slop and these compounds could be gushing out to



This image of the complex terrain of Ariel was taken by Voyager 2 in 1986. NASA

the surface. JWST also found signs of carbonite minerals, which could be formed when water interacts with rocks.

More studies and space missions will be needed to confirm these details. If there are, we'll have yet another water-bearing moon out there.

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