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**Lakshya enters last four, makes history**  
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## Search continues amid fading hope in Wayanad

E.M. Manoj  
KALPETTA

Joint teams of the Army, State police, National Disaster Response Force, Coast Guard, and volunteers scoured the landslide-devastated Chooralmala, Mundakkai, and Attamala localities of Wayanad for survivors, as search and rescue operations entered the fourth day on Friday.

The laborious, and often dangerous work, seemed to enter a new phase as rescuers and officials quietly acknowledged that the possibility of finding survivors remained remote, as operations continued amid the expansive and muddy field of mangled bodies, displaced boulders, uprooted trees, and collapsed houses.

Friday's search yielded 14 more bodies.

The government put the official death toll at 210 – 96 men, 85 women and 29



**Sustained efforts:** The Army's Engineer Task Force personnel conduct a rescue operation in Wayanad on Friday. ANI

children – with 146 of them being identified by families.

Over 134 body parts were retrieved by Friday evening.

Local hospitals have been treating 273 persons admitted since July 30. The government has housed hundreds more in nine relief camps.

**CONTINUED ON**

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**DEATH RAINS ON WAYANAD**

**» PAGE 7**

### The two tales of survival that kindled hope

KALPETTA

In two tales of survival that kindled hope among rescuers in Wayanad, a tribal family, with three children, was rescued from a rock face by a forest team after a seven-km trek, and four members of a family were rescued from their surprisingly intact house near Chooralmala. **» PAGE 5**

## SC asks govt. to overhaul NEET-UG on a deadline

Top court pulls up NTA for lapses in conducting the test, directs committee led by ex-ISRO chief K. Radhakrishnan to submit to Centre its recommendations on restructuring the test by Sept. 30

Krishnadas Rajagopal  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday pronounced a scathing judgment calling out the “flip-flops” of the National Testing Agency (NTA) in the conduct of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test, 2024 for admission to undergraduate medical courses, and put the government on a deadline to completely restructure the exam process.

“The manner in which NTA organised the exam this year gives rise to serious concerns... NTA has sufficient resources at its disposal. It has adequate funding, time, and opportunities to organise exams such as the NEET without lapses of the kind that occurred this year,” Chief Jus-

### A test for NEET

Here are a few recommendations of the Supreme Court:



after handing them over to invigilators

- Comprehensive CCTV surveillance of test centres, including real-time monitoring
- Rigorous checks and balances at every stage from the setting of question papers to the declaration of the results
- Review of allotment of test centres

- Data protection measures, periodic audits, surprise inspections of test centres, grievance redress mechanisms, foolproof logistics
- Standard operating procedure detailing specific timelines for registration of candidates, changes to preferred cities, sealing of OMR sheets

ice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, who authored the verdict, criticised the agency.

The three-judge Bench, headed by the Chief Justice, directed the Centre, acting through its high-po-

wered committee headed by former Indian Space Research Organisation Chairperson K. Radhakrishnan, to recommend and implement top-to-bottom overhauling of the test process, including rectify-

ing “serious security lapses”, introduce data protection measures, periodic audits, surprise inspections of test centres, grievance redress mechanisms for students and foolproof logistics while specifically highlighting how question papers were transported in e-rickshaws for the May 5 test.

The court directed the Radhakrishnan committee to submit its report to the Education Ministry by September 30. The Ministry has to take a decision on the committee's recommendations within a month thereafter and implement the plan of action. The government has to file a compliance report in the court.

**CONTINUED ON**

**» PAGE 8**

### IN BRIEF



### HC transfers probe into IAS coaching centre case to CBI

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday transferred the probe into the drowning of three Civil Services aspirants in the basement of a coaching centre in Old Rajinder Nagar on July 27 from Delhi Police to the Central Bureau of Investigation. **» Page 2**

### Delhi govt. orders probe into shelter home deaths

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Friday ordered a magisterial probe into the deaths of 14 inmates at Asha Kiran, a shelter home in Rohini for the intellectually disabled.

**» Page 2**

## Cong. moves privilege motion over Shah's speech on Wayanad

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Citing *The Hindu's* fact-check on Home Minister Amit Shah's speech in Parliament on the landslides in Wayanad, the Congress has moved a privilege motion in the Rajya Sabha against him for misleading the House.

Congress chief whip in the Rajya Sabha Jairam Ramesh wrote to Chairman of the Upper House Jagdeep Dhankhar citing *The Hindu* report, which, he said, shows that Mr. Shah's “emphatic statements on early warnings issued by the Union government have been proven to be false”.

He said privilege proceedings should be initiated against the Home



Amit Shah

Minister.

Answering a calling attention motion, Mr. Shah had said that the first advance warning was sent to the State on July 23 and subsequent warnings were issued on July 24, 25 and 26.

Nine NDRF teams were sent on July 23 to prepare for the impending tragedy, he had said.

**CONTINUED ON**

**» PAGE 8**

### End of a long wait



**Great win:** Goalkeeper P.R. Sreejesh was in his element as India beat Australia 3-2 in a Pool B men's hockey match on Friday. India, which posted its first win over the Kookaburras in the Olympics since 1972, has made the quarterfinals as the second best team in the pool. AP (FULL REPORT: PAGE 15)



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## 72% of assesseees opted for new tax regime in 2023-24

Vikas Dhoot  
NEW DELHI

Most of India's personal income-tax payers have moved to the simpler new tax regime in the financial year 2023-24, with 72% of those who had filed their returns opting for it, even as the number of Income Tax (IT) return filings rose 7.5% to hit a record high of almost 7.29 crore.

“Out of the total ITRs [IT returns] of 7.28 crore filed for Assessment Year 2024-25, 5.27 crore have been filed in the new tax regime compared to 2.01 crore ITRs filed in the old tax regime,” the Central Board of Direct Taxes said on Friday, terming the increase in number of taxpayers under the new tax regime “heartening”.

### Record returns

The number of income tax returns (ITRs) as on July 31 touched 7.28 crore for 2023-24, 7.5% more than in the previous fiscal

A.Y.*	Due date	No. of ITRs filed
2020-21	Jan. 10, 2021	5,78,45,678
2021-22	Dec. 31, 2021	5,77,39,682
2022-23	July 31, 2022	5,82,88,692
2023-24	July 31, 2023	6,77,42,303
2024-25	July 31, 2024	7,28,80,318

\*ASSESSMENT YEAR

The switchover has likely been expedited by significant changes in the new tax regime. Apart from making the new system “the default tax regime”, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had slashed the tax rate slabs to five from six and raised the tax-free income limit to ₹3 lakh

from ₹2.5 lakh. Last year's Budget had also granted a hike in the tax rebate limit from ₹5 lakh to ₹7 lakh a year under the new tax regime, compared with ₹5 lakh a year applicable for the old tax regime.

**CONTINUED ON**

**» PAGE 8**

## Himachal flood toll mounts to six; 47 people still missing

The Hindu Bureau  
CHANDIGARH

The death toll in separate incidents of cloudbursts and flash floods across Himachal Pradesh rose to six on Friday, even as rescue and search operations continued on a war footing.

As many as 47 people are still missing in Shimla, Mandi and Kullu districts, after heavy rain left rivers in spate. Fifty-five people have been evacuated so far, while 27 are stranded at different places.

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, who visited Samej in Shimla district to review the ongoing relief and rehabilitation efforts,



**Task at hand:** A rescue operation under way at Rajvan village in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh on Friday. PTI

said, “Each affected family will receive ₹50,000 as immediate assistance and ₹5,000 per month, for three months, for hiring rented accommodation.”

Mr. Sukhu said widespread damage was reported in Shimla, Mandi and Kullu districts on Wednes-

day. Vehicular traffic was disrupted across the State as several roads were blocked due to landslides and debris. The rain has damaged several roads, including national and State highways and bridges, causing losses worth crores of rupees.

## Quid pro quo via poll bonds are assumptions for now: SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by a former top court judge to probe the allegations of “quid pro quo” among political parties, public servants, companies and even officers of law enforcement agencies revealed through data made public on electoral bonds.

A three-judge Bench of Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud termed these allegations sheer “assumptions” at this stage and refused to embark on what it called a “roving and general inquiry”.

ing one by NGOs Common Cause and Centre for Public Interest Litigation, were based on primarily two assumptions.

One, that there was *prima facie quid pro quo* whenever the date of purchase of electoral bonds and donation to a ruling political party was proximate to change in policy or award of contracts. Secondly, the involvement of officers of investigative agencies in the corruption and *quid pro quo* did not guarantee a fair probe.

### ‘Accessories to graft’

The petitioners had argued that officers of the Central Bureau of Investigation, Enforcement Directorate, and Income Tax Department “appear to

### The court found it both ‘premature’ and ‘inappropriate’ to constitute an SIT to probe the allegations as there are other remedies available in law

have become accessories to corruption”. They said data showed the purchase of bonds by accused persons had coincided with the sudden fading away of hotly pursued criminal prosecutions.

“But these are only assumptions at the present stage,” the Chief Justice Chandrachud said. Besides, the court pointed out that the electoral bonds scheme was

embodied within several enactments or amendments made by Parliament until it was found unconstitutional by a Constitution Bench in March.

“Donations were made to political parties through electoral bonds on the basis of laws enacted by Parliament,” the Chief Justice Chandrachud reasoned. The court said if the petitioners suspected an “element of criminality” in any individual instance of proximity between the purchase of bonds and government largesse, they should first invoke the normal remedies available under the law of criminal procedure.

The petitioners could file writ petitions with the State High Court con-

cerned under Article 226 if agencies refused to investigate or file a seemingly unfounded closure report.

The Bench said any writ petition filed under Article 32 in the Supreme Court must be preceded by the invocation of normal remedies. The court found it both “premature” and “inappropriate” to constitute an SIT. It would be premature as there were other remedies available in law. The petitioners had to test them first, and approach the apex court only when they had failed.

Again, it would be inappropriate to order an apex court-monitored probe by an SIT now as this would postulate that the normal criminal remedies were not efficacious, it said.

**Timings**

**DELHI**

**SATURDAY, AUG. 03**

RISE 05:45 SET 19:11

RISE 04:17 SET 18:46

**SUNDAY, AUG. 04**

RISE 05:45 SET 19:10

RISE 05:18 SET 19:25

**MONDAY, AUG. 05**

RISE 05:46 SET 19:09

RISE 06:17 SET 19:58

**Delhi Weather**

	max	min
Delhi City	33	26
Safdarjang	33	26
Palam	31	26

**Delhi Palam Today**  
34°C Day will be warm. Spell of light to moderate rain and thundershower with strong winds will occur.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
35°C Mostly dry weather is likely. The weather will be warm and uneasy during the day. Night also will be uneasy.

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**THE HINDU**

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# Atishi orders inquiry into deaths at govt. shelter home

14 deaths in July at facility for people with intellectual disability a serious matter, says Minister; absence of supervision points to criminal act: L-G; inmates treated like animals, alleges Maliwal

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Atishi ordered a magisterial probe into the deaths of 14 inmates at Asha Kiran, a shelter home in Rohini for people with intellectual disability, and promised that if found, negligent behaviour "would not go unpunished".

Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena also directed a comprehensive inquiry into all shelter homes run by the Delhi government, and ordered a White Paper on the homes run by the Social Welfare, Women and Child Department and the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board.

Official data stated that 25 inmates died at the government-run shelter home since February, with 14 deaths – including that of a minor and six women – occurring in July alone.

Reports stated that several of the deceased were suffering from health issues, including lung infections, tuberculosis and pneumonia. Results of the post-mortem are awaited.

"Initial investigation re-



Delhi Mahila Congress workers protest against the government outside Asha Kiran shelter home on Friday. ANI

vealed that many deceased suffered from physical problems other than intellectual disability. Fourteen deaths in a month is a very serious matter. Given this, we have ordered a magisterial inquiry and a deadline of 48 hours has been given for a preliminary investigation report," Ms. Atishi said at a press conference.

The facility houses 980 inmates, and has round-the-clock medical care units, which include six doctors, 17 nurses, and 450 caregivers.

The Minister said stringent action would be taken against those found guilty of negligence.

A letter from the L-G of

fice to the Chief Secretary also stated that the parents or guardians of the individuals must be contacted and compensated suitably.

"Mr. Saxena has observed that this lack of sensitivity and absence of supervision points not only to dereliction of duty but is also an act of criminality against the most helpless and disadvantaged, who were entrusted to the care of the government," the letter stated.

**'Horror home'**

Rajya Sabha member Swati Maliwal visited the shelter home and termed its condition "horrific".

"People who need special care are being treated

like animals. It's a horror home!" she posted on X. Ms. Maliwal added that during her visit, she had observed overcrowding and a lack of beds. The former Delhi Commission for Women chief said she would raise the issue in Parliament.

BJP workers carried out a protest outside the shelter home on Friday, with party leader Rekha Gupta stating that the crores of rupees allocated by the Delhi government to run it were being "misused".

"There is nothing in the name of facilities inside the shelter home. The children are being given dirty water through tankers, and there is no ambulance facility to take them to the hospital," she said.

Delhi Mahila Congress workers too staged a protest outside the facility.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and National Commission for Women's Rights also took cognizance of the issue.

The AAP government, meanwhile, declined to issue a reply to the allegations levelled against it.

# Court hauls up police, transfers IAS coaching centre case to CBI

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday transferred the probe into the drowning of three Civil Services aspirants in the basement of a coaching centre in Old Rajinder Nagar on July 27 from Delhi Police to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The court said it took the decision after taking into account "the seriousness of incidents and that it may involve corruption by public servants".

A Bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela asked the Central Vigilance Commission to appoint a senior official to oversee the CBI probe in a time-bound manner.

The court wondered how the police arrested the SUV driver who was driving past the institute where the incident took place instead of the official who did not notice that the stormwater drain in the area was dysfunctional. It pulled up the police for not questioning any Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) official or even seizing the relevant file from the civic body, which could have been an important piece of evidence.

The panel, headed by the Delhi Chief Secretary and comprising the DDA Vice-Chairperson, Delhi Police Commissioner, and MCD commissioner, was asked to submit its report within eight weeks.



Mercifully, you have not challaned the rainwater for entering the basement... You could have fined the water also, the way you arrested the SUV driver for driving his car there

**HIGH COURT BENCH**

"Mercifully, you have not challaned the rainwater for entering the basement... You would have said, 'How dare the water enter the basement'. You could have fined the water also, the way you arrested the SUV driver for driving his car there," the Bench remarked.

It constituted a committee to revamp and reform the administrative, financial, and physical infrastructure in the Capital after observing that the city was heading "from one crisis to another".

The panel, headed by the Delhi Chief Secretary and comprising the DDA Vice-Chairperson, Delhi Police Commissioner, and MCD commissioner, was asked to submit its report within eight weeks.

# 4 coaching institutes offer ₹10 lakh each to victims' kin

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

At least four coaching institutes – Vajiram & Ravi Institute for IAS Examination, Drishti IAS, NEXT IAS, and SRIRAM'S IAS – have offered ₹10 lakh each to the families of Shreya Yadav, Tanya Soni and Nevin Dalvin, the three Civil Services aspirants who died after they were trapped for over four hours when water suddenly gushed into the basement of Rau's IAS Study Circle in Old Rajinder Nagar on July 27.

Drishti and SRIRAM'S have also offered a compensation of ₹10 lakh to Nilesh Rai, another UPSC aspirant, who was electrocuted in Patel Nagar on July 22. In a statement on X, Vajiram & Ravi said it is "volunteering to admit free of cost students who are currently enrolled with Rau's IAS Study Circle" preparing for the Mains Exam 2024 and Prelims-cum-Mains 2025.

Scores of Civil Services aspirants, who have been staging protests over the deaths of the three students, called the compensation a gimmick.

Meanwhile, the faculty members of Rau's IAS Study Circle said online classes will begin from August 5.

# DU holds webinar to explain admission process to students

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

With Delhi University admissions entering the second phase of the Common Seat Allocation

System, under which candidates can mark their preferences on the DU dashboard, the Dean of Admissions on Friday held a webinar to explain the process in detail.

# Three dead, four injured after portion of building collapses in Jahangirpuri

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

A portion of a three-storey building collapsed in north-west Delhi's Jahangirpuri area on Friday, killing three persons and injuring four, said the Delhi police.

According to the Delhi Fire Services, an emergency call was received at 12.51 p.m., following which five fire tenders were pressed into service. National Disaster Response Force teams were also rushed to the spot.

"The building was being repaired after occupants reported severe water seepage when the roof collapsed following heavy rain, trapping the workers inside," said a senior police officer.

The officer said a man



The building crumbled during repairs, trapping several people under the rubble. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

named Jitendra owned the commercial building. He had rented it out to several people who ran small businesses like sewing shops. An FIR under relevant sections has been registered against him.

After an hours-long rescue operation, two persons – a woman, Phoolwati, and a man, Vinod – were rushed to Babu Jagjivan Ram Memorial Hospital, where they were declared dead on arrival. Another

person, Mukesh, succumbed to his injuries during treatment. Four others, including three men – Thakur Das, Hari Shankar and Jasin – and one woman, Nirmala, sustained injuries and are being treated.

Rescue operations were completed by 7 p.m., as per an update by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).

In a statement, the civic body said the building was located in an area developed by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). "Till date, the area has not been handed over to the MCD for repair of roads or drains," it said.

The DDA, however, stated that the building was "neither constructed nor maintained by it", and was built on private land.

**HIMACHAL PRADESH  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**  
E-mail ee-roh-tp@nic.in E-Procurement Notice

**INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)**

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Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (Rs)	Starting Date for downloading Bid	Earnest money	Deadline for Submission of bid
1.	C/o Govt. Sr. Sec. School building at Bartu in tehsil Chiragon Distt Shimla (SH- C/o Building portion, WS & SI work RWHT, Septic tank & site development etc)	27080955/-	03.08.2024	541619/-	09.08.2024

The Bidders are advised to note other details for tenders and letter No.PWD(B) A(3) 1/2020 dated 12.01.2023 issued by secretary PW) to the Govt. of himachal Pradesh Public Works Department from the department website [www.hptenders.gov.in](http://www.hptenders.gov.in) and any corrigendum will be uploaded on the website only.

**Executive Engineer  
HPPWD Division Rohru  
Distt Shimla HP**

HP/1214/24-25 HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPARK

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**MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS  
NOTIFICATION**  
New Delhi, the 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2024

**S.O 2731** - In exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 3A of the National Highways Act, 1956 (48 of 1956) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government, after being satisfied that for the public purpose, the land, the brief description of which is given in the Schedule below, is required for building (widening/two lane with paved shoulder/four laning etc.), maintenance, management and operation of NH19 in the stretch of land from Km. 44.2 to Km. 93.8 in the village(s) namely - Agawanpur, Dhaulagarh, Kheda Sarai, Softa, Bahraula Taluk - Palwal and in the village(s) namely - Aurangabad, Taluk - Hodal in the district of PALWAL in the state of HARYANA hereby declares its intention to acquire such land.

Any person interested in the said land may, within twenty-one days from the date of publication of this notification in the Official Gazette, object to the use of such land for the aforesaid purpose under sub-section(1) of section 3C of the said Act.

Every such objection shall be made to the Competent Authority, namely, C.A.L.A. Palwal in writing and shall set out the grounds thereof and the Competent Authority shall give the objector an opportunity of being heard, either in person or by a legal practitioner, and may, after hearing all such objections and after making such further enquiry, if any, as the Competent Authority thinks necessary, by order, either allow or disallow the objections.

Any order made by the Competent Authority under sub-section (2) of section 3C of the said Act shall be final.

The land plans and other details of the land to be acquired under their notification are available and can be inspected by the interested person at the aforesaid office of the Competent Authority.

**SCHEDULE**

Brief Description of the land to be acquired with or without structures falling NH19 in the stretch of land from Km. 44.2 to Km. 93.8 in the village(s) namely - Agawanpur, Dhaulagarh, Kheda Sarai, Softa, Bahraula Taluk - Palwal and in the village(s) namely - Aurangabad, Taluk - Hodal in the district of PALWAL in the state of HARYANA

File Number: 11012/Ph. VNH-2/LA/DA/DK-II/2009/3A  
ABHAY JAIN, Dy. Secy.

District: PALWAL  
<https://egazette.gov.in>  
Publication Date: 12 July 2024  
<https://egazette.gov.in>  
<https://bhoomirashi.gov.in>

Note : The physical copy of this notification is also available at the office of CALA/PIU/PMU/RO/ED and Landowners may also see the notification there.

**Govt. of Jharkhand  
Energy Department**

**Jharkhand Renewable Energy Development Agency (JREDA)**  
3rd Floor, S.L.D.C. Building, Kusai Colony, Doranda, Ranchi-834002.  
Ph.: 0651-2491161, Fax: 0651-2491165,  
E-mail: [info@jreda.com](mailto:info@jreda.com); Website: [www.jreda.com](http://www.jreda.com)

**e-Procurement Notice**

Tender Reference No.: 09/JREDA/CMC/WS/OFF GRID/24-25  
Dated: 02.08.2024

1	Name of the work	Selection of Agencies for five Years Comprehensive Maintenance Contract & Operation (CMCO) of total 47 nos. of Solar Mini/Micro grid plant installed under West Singhbhum District in Jharkhand including repairing/ replacement of PCUs, Modules & Batteries and other components as and where required.
2	Estimated Capacity (kWp)	891 kWp
3	Estimated Project cost (Rs.)	Rs 87029355.00
4	Period of Completion	04 (Four) Months
5	Contract Period	05(Five) Years
6	Date of publication of NIT on website: <a href="http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in">http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in</a>	03.08.2024 (Saturday)
7	Date & time of Pre-bid meeting	08.08.2024 (Thursday) at 2.00 P.M.
8	Last date & time for receipt of online bids	24.08.2024 (Saturday) upto 05:00 PM
9	Submission of original copies of Bid fee & EMD (Online) via SBI Payment Gateway of Jharkhand Tenders	24.08.2024 (Saturday) upto 05:00 PM
10	Technical Bid Opening Date	27.08.2024 (Tuesday) at 3.00 P.M.
11	Name & address of office inviting tender	Director, Jharkhand Renewable Energy Development Agency (JREDA) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, SLDC Building, Kusai, Doranda, Ranchi- 834002 (Jharkhand)
12	Contact no. of procurement officer	0651-2491163/61/7004806449
13	Helpline no. of e-procurement	0651-2491163/61

Any corrigendum/addendum can be seen on website: <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in> & [www.jreda.com](http://www.jreda.com). Further details can be seen on website: <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in> & [www.jreda.com](http://www.jreda.com)

Sd/-  
Director,  
JREDA, Ranchi

PR 331554 Energy(24-25).D

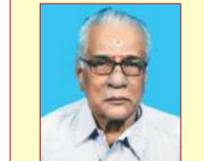
**THE HINDU  
AT THE GAMES  
PHOTO CONTEST**

**Turn to the sports pages to participate in today's quiz**

**OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE**

**DEATH**

With profound sadness, we regret to inform our beloved father



**A SANKARA SUBRAMANIAN**  
Prop. Instruments & Equipments  
attained His Lotus Feet on  
02-08-2024 at 9:20 a.m  
in grief  
Mangalam (Wife)  
(Children) Hamsa, Roopa,  
Anand and Ramachandran  
Ph: +91 95660 01911

For enquiries on announcements in this section, please contact our office at the following number between 10a.m. to 8p.m.  
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**DEATH**

**MEENAKSHI STEEL**

*In Loving Memory of*

**SHRI HARI MOHAN BANSAL**  
FOUNDER OF MEENAKSHI STEEL  
15 JUNE 1936 - 1 AUGUST 2024

IT IS WITH PROFOUND SADNESS THAT WE ANNOUNCE THE PASSING OF SHRI HARI MOHAN BANSAL, THE FOUNDER OF MEENAKSHI STEEL, WHOSE HARD WORK AND DILIGENCE TRANSFORMED OUR COMPANY INTO THE SUCCESS IT IS TODAY. HIS UNWAVERING COMMITMENT AND PASSION WERE THE DRIVING FORCES BEHIND EVERY ACHIEVEMENT, AND HIS LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE WILL CONTINUE TO INSPIRE US ALL. MEENAKSHI STEEL WAS MORE THAN A BUSINESS TO HIM; IT WAS HIS JOY AND PRIDE, A TESTAMENT TO HIS RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF INNOVATION AND QUALITY. HE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LIFE ARE HONESTY AND HARD WORK, AND ONLY THEN DOES GOOD LUCK FOLLOW. THESE PRINCIPLES GUIDED HIS EVERY ENDEAVOR AND HELPED SHAPE OUR COMPANY'S CORE VALUES. AS WE MOURN HIS LOSS, WE ALSO CELEBRATE THE INDELIBLE MARK HE HAS LEFT ON OUR HEARTS AND THE INDUSTRY. HIS SPIRIT WILL FOREVER BE THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR CONTINUED GROWTH AND SUCCESS.

*In Loving Memory*  
**BANSAL FAMILY**

**ED seizes documents in fake Ayushman cards case**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has seized documents containing information about suspicious transactions worth ₹21 crore for 23,000 patients during searches conducted in connection with a case of alleged generation of fake Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana cards in Himachal Pradesh, it said on Friday.

The searches were carried out at 20 locations in Delhi, Chandigarh, Punjab, and Himachal Pradesh (Kangra, Una, Shimla, Mandi and Kullu) on July 31 against several hospitals and their managements.

**373 fake cards**

The probe is based on an FIR registered by the State Vigilance & Anti-Corruption Bureau in Himachal Pradesh's Una. "During investigation, as many as 373 fake Ayushman cards have been identified wherein claims of about ₹40.68 lakh were made for reimbursement from the government in the name of treatments given to the said card beneficiaries...hospitals have made claims for treatments/surgery/admission which were actually never given/done to the patient," it said.

**IAF's Chinook, MI17 choppers join rescue operations in Uttarakhand; 5,000 evacuated**

**SDRF and NDRF are aiding in the efforts, says CM Dhami; 18,000 food packets, 35,000 water bottles distributed among pilgrims; Union Home Minister assures all possible help to the State**

**Press Trust of India**  
RUDRAPRAYAG

The IAF's Chinook and MI17 helicopters on Friday joined the rescue operations in Uttarakhand to evacuate stranded pilgrims on the rain-ravaged trek route to Kedarnath.

The route to Kedarnath had suffered extensive damage as a result of a cloudburst in Junglehatti near Lincholi on Wednesday night.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said since the start of rescue operations on Thursday morning, 5,000 people have been evacuated to safety, with some being airlifted.

The State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) aided in the efforts, he said.

"If the weather remains good, all stranded pilgrims will be taken to safe locations by this evening," Mr. Dhami said.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to Mr. Dhami over the phone on relief and rescue opera-



**A tough task:** SDRF and police personnel climbing a steep hill while rescuing stranded pilgrims on the Kedarnath Yatra's Sonprayag-Gaurikund route on Friday. ANI

tions, and assured him of all possible help.

According to officials, nearly 2,100 people were rescued on Friday by 3.30 p.m.. Aerial and surface rescue operations by NDRF and SDRF personnel on Thursday led to the safe evacuation of more than 3,000 pilgrims.

As many as 18,000 food packets and 35,000 water bottles have been distributed among pilgrims in Kedarnath, Lincholi, Bhimbali, Sonprayag, Shersi, Guptkashi and Chaimasi, a

State government release stated. Two helpline numbers - 7579257572 and 01364-233387 - and one emergency number 112 have also been issued by the district administration to help people get information about their stranded kin among the pilgrims, they said.

**'Give funds to all'**

Meanwhile, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge demanded that the Modi government immediately provide additional disaster

management funds to States without any discrimination.

He also called for improving disaster management and taking steps by adopting a scientific approach to make a solid policy for dealing with the effects of climate change such as floods, heavy rainfall, cloudburst and drought-like situations.

He made the remarks while condoling the loss of lives due to cloudburst and heavy rainfall in Uttarakhand.

**Odisha taps U.P. to reduce its potato reliance on Bengal**

**Satyasundar Barik**  
BHUBANESWAR

Angered by the disruption in the supply of potatoes, the Odisha government announced plans to reduce its reliance on West Bengal by opting to bring in the tuber from Uttar Pradesh.

Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra said, "We have already brought in 10 trucks of potato from Uttar Pradesh. We will not entirely stop our purchase from West Bengal...we will no more solely depend on the State for potato."

"Gradually, we will increase our production and reduce the 'import' of other food commodities also," Mr. Patra said, commenting on increase in price of potato due to its shortage.

A quintal of potatoes will cost ₹2,600 if brought from West Bengal while the higher transportation costs from U.P. will raise the price to ₹2,700.

The West Bengal government last week stopped truckloads of potato at the Odisha border, forcing the trucks to return. This led to a sharp increase in potato prices.

Some traders managed to smuggle potato-laden trucks into Odisha, but



We will not entirely stop our purchase from West Bengal...we will no more solely depend on the State

**KRUSHNA CHANDRA PATRA**  
Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister

these were insufficient.

State traders' association president Sudhakar Panda said, "The prices of potato are getting stabilised following 'import' from Uttar Pradesh. More trucks are likely to arrive in the coming days."

Though there was anger among government functionaries and traders about stoppage of potato at the border, traders are also apprehensive of the quality of tuber coming from U.P. The longer time taken in transportation can deteriorate its shelf life.

Chief Minister Mohan Majhi had held a discussion with his counterpart Mamata Banerjee during recent NITI Aayog meeting in New Delhi. The discussion did not yield the desired result.

Former CM and Leader of the Opposition Naveen Patnaik too had written to Ms. Banerjee requesting her intervention.

**HC dismisses Bibhav's plea challenging his arrest**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday dismissed a plea by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's close aide Bibhav Kumar challenging his arrest in connection with the alleged assault on AAP MP Swati Malwani at the CM's residence.

Mr. Kumar, currently in judicial custody, is alleged to have assaulted Ms. Malwani on May 13 at the Chief Minister's official residence. Subsequently, he was arrested on May 18.

Mr. Kumar, in his plea, had sought a direction to declare his arrest as illegal and in gross violation of the provisions of Section 41A (notice of appearance before police officer) of the Code of Criminal Procedure and against the mandate of the law.

Delhi Police had opposed the petition and submitted that Mr. Kumar was not arrested "in haste" and he was taken into custody as per the law.

The FIR against Mr. Kumar was registered on May 16 under various provisions of the IPC, including those related to criminal intimidation, assault or criminal force on a woman with the intent to disrobe, and attempt to commit culpable homicide.

**GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU ENERGY DEPARTMENT**

The time limit for receipt of applications to the post of Chairperson, Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission is further extended from **03.08.2024 upto 6.00 P.M. on 16.08.2024**. Further details are available at: <https://www.tn.gov.in/departments/7>

DIPR / 799 /DISPLAY/2024 **Principal Secretary to Government**

**PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.**  
(Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala)  
Corporate Identification No. U40109PB2010SGC033813  
Website: [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in), (Contact 9646118773)

**Short Term Tender Enquiry No.Q-4027/24-25/PO-T/CE-MM**

Chief Purchase Officer / MM, Central Purchase Organization, PSPCL, 2nd Floor, Multi Storey Building, The Mall PSPCL invites Short Term E-tender of 4500 Nos., Three Phase, 200 kVA, ISI Marked, EE-2/Star-2, oil immersed, CRGO / Amorphous core, Aluminium wound, distribution transformers complete with fittings as per PSPCL specifications & conforming to IS 1180 Part-1 (2014) & IS 2026 (with latest amendments). For detailed NIT & tender Specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 03.08.2024 onwards.

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

**C-526/24 76155/12/3220/2023/36326**

**HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)**

The Executive Engineer, B&R Division, HPPWD Nahana, District Sirmour, H.P. on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invites the item/percentage rates bids, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class of Contractors registered with HPPWD for the works detailed in the table.

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)
1	2	3	4
1.	Repair of the Seismic Vulnerability assessment & retrofit of health/lifeline of Community Health Centre of Community Health centre building at Nahana, (UNIT-I & II) & Govt. Senior Secondary School at Dadahu ( Unit-I & Unit-II), in District Sirmour ( HP ) .	3,72,45,325/- only	4,05,000/- only

Starting Date for Downloading Bid: -07.08.2024  
Deadline for Submission of Bid: -16.08.2024 up to 10:00 AM

Executive Engineer  
HPPWD (B&R) Division Nahana  
Tel/Fax: 01702-222260 E-mail: ee-nah-hp@nic.in  
On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh

HP / 1224/24-25

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FRONTLINE SPORTSTAR THE HINDU WORLD TITLES HINDU

**PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.**  
(Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala)  
Corporate Identification Number: U40109PB2010SGC033813  
Website: [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in), (Contact Number: 9646118774)

**RFP/Tender Enquiry No. MQP-240/2024-25/PO(M)** Dated: 02.08.2024

Chief Engineer / Metering, C-3, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala invites E-tender for Appointment of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) for Smart System Metering (Feeder Metering and DT Metering) in Punjab State Power Corporation Ltd. (PSPCL) on DFOOT basis under RDSS. For detailed NIT & tender Specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 02.08.2024 from 04:00 PM onwards.

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

**C-525/24 76155/12/3219/2023/36325**

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (ROADS) ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3**  
No. CE/STBR/Jalukbari/12/2024-25/5

**CORRIGENDUM NOTICE**

With reference to the Press Notice issued vide no. CE/STBR/Jalukbari/12/2024-25/4 Dated 12.07.2024, it is hereby notified that the name of the work should be read as "Construction of RCC Bridge No. 2/1 on Bamunagar Road to Forest School Road under Mukhya Mantrir Unnato Pokipath Nirman Achari (RIDF-XXX) for the year 2024-25 under Jalukbari Territorial Road Division, Jalukbari LAC" instead of "Construction of RCC Bridge No. 2/1 on Bamunagar Road to Forest School Road under SOPD-G for the year 2024-25 under Jalukbari LAC." This correction will be applicable for all related entries in the Tender Document.

Further, it is for general information to all concerned that the previous last date and time for submission of Bids for the package which was scheduled on 05.08.2024 upto 14.00 Hrs is hereby extended as follows:

i) Bid Submission Closing Date : 12.08.2024 upto 14.00 Hrs  
ii) Technical Bid Opening Date : 13.08.2024 at 11.00 Hrs

Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads), Assam,  
Janasanyog /C/1801/ 24/3-Aug-24 Chandmari, Guwahati-03

**NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY E-Tendering Notice**

Sr. Divisional Material Manager, N. E. Railway, Varanasi for and on behalf of President of India, invites Tender through E-Procurement system "Open Tender" for the supply of the following item. Complete description of the item and other terms and conditions are available on website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). S.No.: 01 E-Tender No.:50245295A. Due Date: 30.08.2024. Description:- UTS Thermal Ticket Printer make-TVS/Epson or similar compatible with CRIS UTS/PRS Software on site comprehensive warranty 3 years. (Warranty Period-36 months after the date of delivery). Quantity:- 132 Nos. Earnest Money:- Rs. 64,480.00. NOTE:- The Firms, who desire to participate in e-tender are advised to electronically register themselves on the above website for which they would require to have a Class-III Digital signature Certificate Authority Licensed by CCA of India. Manual offers against e-tenders will not be considered.

Sr. Divisional Materials Manager  
CPR/5-46 Varanasi  
Do Not Smoke Bidi/Cigarette in train

**GOVERNMENT OF JHARKHAND AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY & CO-OPERATIVE DEPARTMENT (CO-OPERATIVE DIVISION)**

**OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR, CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES JHARKHAND, RANCHI INTEGRATED CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (I.C.D.P.) CELL, RANCHI**

**Very Short e-Tender Notice**

Tender Reference No:- ICDP/RANCHI/16/RE-2/2024-25 DATE:- 01.08.2024

Sl. No.	Name of work	No. of Unit	Estimated Value of Work (in Rs)	Cost Of BoQ (in Rs)	Earnest Money (in Rs)	Time Of Completion Of Work
01.	(A) Construction of 100 MT Capacity Godown with Marketing Centre in Different Lamps of Districts East Singhbhum (Jamshedpur)	29	10,18,33,500.00	10,000.00	10,18,400.00	
	(B) Construction of 100 MT Capacity Godown with Marketing Centre in Different Pacts Of Districts Godda & Sahibganj.	43	15,09,94,500.00	10,000.00	15,10,000.00	12 Months
02.	Date Of Publication of on Website		05.08.2024	AT 11:00 AM		
03.	Last Date & Time of Submission of bids		13.08.2024	AT 05:00 PM		
04.	Name & Address of Office Inviting Tender		State Monitoring Officer, ICDP Cell, Ranchi, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Pasupalan-Sahakarita Bhawan Singh More, Hesaag, Hatia, Ranchi. 834003			
05.	Contact No of Procurement Officer		7979760612, 725089527			

02. Bid document with details terms and conditions will be available online on e-tendering portal, <http://jharhandtenders.gov.in> from 05.08.2024 at 11:00 AM to 13.08.2024 up to 05:00 PM. Bids must be Submitted online only at the e-tendering portal <http://jharhandtender.gov.in> on or before 05:00 PM on 13.08.2024. Tender Fee and EMD Will be received through online mode only. Bidders can use internet banking facility for faster processing of tender fee and EMD. Alternatively, bidders can use NEFT/RTGS challan generated for the tender from [jharhandtenders.gov.in](http://jharhandtenders.gov.in) portal. Technical Bid received online will be opened at 05:00 PM on 14.08.2024.

03. Estimate Cost May Vary.

04. Corrigendum/Amendment if any will be published only on the above mentioned website. **Sd/-**  
PR 331649 Co-opretive(24-25)D **State monitoring Officer ICDP Cell, Ranchi**

**NEW DELHI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL Public Relations Department**  
Palika Kendra, New Delhi-110001

**EMPALEMENT OF CREATIVE/ADVERTISING AGENCIES**  
For the period of two years

NDMC Intends to empanel five Creative/Advertising Agencies for the period of two years. Applications are invited by Director (PR), NDMC Palika Kendra, Sansad Marg, New Delhi and should be submitted up to 1500 hrs. on 19.08.2024.

Date of Issue	02.08.2024
Date of Pre-Bid Meeting	09.08.2024
Last Date of Submission of bid	19.08.2024
Date of Opening	19.08.2024

For more details, please visit NDMC website i.e. [ndmc.gov.in](http://ndmc.gov.in)

Director (PR)

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कॉलेज ऑफ फिजिशियन्स अँड सर्जन्स ऑफ मुंबई

Notice is given to all the Fellows (by examination) who have been conferred their fellowship on or before 31st July 2014, for renewal of their membership on the basis of fellowship by examination.

In terms thereof as per Section 13 (d) of Chapter-VII, of the Bye-Laws it is mandatory for every fellow to renew his/her membership every 10 years from his/her convocation as a fellow by paying the fees as decided by the Executive Committee from time to time otherwise his/her name shall be removed from the electoral roll.

In view of the above all the Fellows, who have completed 10 years from the date and year of convocation are hereby directed to renew the membership as fellow by paying fees of Rs. 1000/- (Rs. One Thousand Only) on or before 17th September, 2024 as decided by Executive Committee. It is hereby made clear that, if anyone fails to renew his/her membership, his/her name shall be removed from electoral roll without giving any further notice. The renewal form is made available on our official website [www.cpsmumbai.org](http://www.cpsmumbai.org) and/or in the office, during office hours.

All the fellows are further instructed to check in person whether their names are included in the present electoral roll, kept in the office of the Secretary of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Mumbai, during office hours, at CPS house, Dr. E. Borges road, Parel Mumbai 400 012, till 30th September, 2024 up-to 12:00 noon. To update their addresses, please email addressed to Dy. Secretary, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Mumbai, CPS house, on [cpsadmin@cpsmumbai.org](mailto:cpsadmin@cpsmumbai.org).

**Sd/-**  
Registrar

Dated: 03-08-2024.

**उत्तर प्रदेश संस्कृत संस्थानम्**  
(भाषा विभाग उत्तर प्रदेश शासनाधीन स्वायत्तशासी संस्था)  
संस्कृत भवन, नया हैदराबाद, निशातगंज, लखनऊ

श्रीधर रजिस्ट्रेशन करें

**लखनऊ**

संस्कृत साहित्य के साथ सिविल सेवा की तैयारी का सुनहरा अवसर

**फ्री कोचिंग के साथ स्कॉलरशिप**

महत्त्वपूर्ण तिथि  
निःशुल्क रजिस्ट्रेशन प्रारम्भ : 31 जुलाई, 2024 से 31 अगस्त, 2024  
सत्र प्रारम्भ : अक्टूबर-2024

संस्कृत साहित्य के साथ पढ़े सामान्य अध्ययन दिल्ली, लखनऊ के सर्वश्रेष्ठ विशेषज्ञों द्वारा सिविल सेवा प्रवेश परीक्षा सत्र 2024-25 के लिए उत्तर प्रदेश संस्कृत संस्थानम् की वेबसाइट <http://upsscivil.in> पर जाकर निःशुल्क रजिस्ट्रेशन करें अथवा <http://upsscivil.in> लिंक पर भी जाकर रजिस्ट्रेशन कर सकते हैं।

पात्रता : ● आवेदन प्राप्त किये जाने की अंतिम तिथि तक विधि द्वारा स्थापित किसी मान्यता प्राप्त विश्वविद्यालय की स्नातक डिग्री या समकक्ष अर्हता। ● आयु सीमा : 21 से 35 वर्ष

● कोचिंग हेतु अन्यायियों का चयन प्रवेश परीक्षा एवं साक्षात्कार के आधार पर किया जायेगा।  
● प्रवेश परीक्षा का विषय : सामान्य अध्ययन एवं संस्कृत सामान्य व्याकरण की होगी।  
● प्रवेश परीक्षा लखनऊ में आयोजित होगी।

नोट-1 : इस कोचिंग से पूर्व के सत्रों में प्रशिक्षण प्राप्त कर चुके विद्यार्थी पात्र नहीं होंगे।

● सामान्य अध्ययन एवं संस्कृत साहित्य के, देश के सबसे अनुभवी विशेषज्ञों द्वारा कोचिंग।  
● ऑनलाइन/ऑफलाइन एवं वीडियो लेक्चर के माध्यम से कक्षाएं।  
● संस्कृत, सामान्य अध्ययन एवं समसामयिकी की द्विभाषीय पाठ्य सामग्री।  
● बहुस्तरीय कक्षा टेस्ट एवं टेस्ट सीटिंग तथा समसामयिकी की साप्ताहिक कक्षाएं।  
● अत्याधुनिक डिजिटल पुस्तकालय।

नोट-2: संस्कृत साहित्य रचकर तैयारी करने वाले ही आवेदन करें।

निदेशक: उत्तर प्रदेश संस्कृत संस्थानम्

अधिक जानकारी के लिए सम्पर्क करें  
**+91-9936469208 / +91-6390006920, 0522-4330139**

**MADHYA PRADESH BUILDING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
(An Agency of Govt. of M.P., Public Works Department)  
16-A, CEDMAP Building, Arera Hills, Bhopal (MP)-462011  
Telephone No. : 0755 - 4853297, 0755 - 4853295, Email: [einc-mpbdc@mp.gov.in](mailto:einc-mpbdc@mp.gov.in)  
NIT No. : 7287/GM/MPBDC/CW.DPR.SQC/24/NIT-58 Bhopal, Dated: 02.08.2024

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

Madhya Pradesh Building Development Corporation invites online tender for the following works of construction, DPR and SQC consultancy services :-

- Additional work of 50 bedded Critical Care Hospital Block (CCHB) and 100 bedded ward block in District Hospital Sheopur, M.P. - **01 Work - Probable Amount of Construction Work - Rs. 595.56 Lacs**
- Additional work of 100 bedded Critical Care Hospital Block (CCHB) and 100 bedded ward block in District Hospital Chhatrapur, M.P. - **01 Work - Probable Amount of Construction Works - Rs. 599.62 Lacs**
- Preparation of Architectural, Design and DPR for Construction & renovation of MCH, OPD, emergency ward along with Nursing College, Hostel and allied services in Shyam Shah Medical College Campus Rewa, Package No. 011/2024/PPR/BDC/REWA - **01 Work - Probable amount of Consultancy Fees Rs. 375.00 Lacs**
- Preparation of Architectural, Design and DPR for Construction, renovation & upgradation of various buildings in Maharaja Yashwantrao Hospital Indore (Trauma Centre, MRTB Hospital, Pediatric Hospital alongwith site development and allied services) Package No. 012/2024/DPR/BDC/INDORE - **01 Work - Probable amount of Consultancy Fees - Rs. 1350.00 Lacs**
- SQC Consultancy Work for Construction of Various Building Works Under MPBDC, Zone-1 Package No. 015/2024/SQC/BDC/Zone-1 - **01 Work - Probable amount of Consultancy Fees - Rs. 3000.00 Lacs**
- SQC Consultancy Work for Construction of Various Building Works Under MPBDC, Zone-2 Package No. 016/2024/SQC/BDC/Zone-2 - **01 Work - Probable amount of Consultancy Fees - Rs. 3000.00 Lacs**

Detailed NIT and tender documents can be viewed, downloaded and purchased online from 08.08.2024 at 18:00 hrs. to 28.08.2024 at 15:30 hrs (for S.No. 01 and 02), 16.08.2024 at 18:00 hrs. to 25.09.2024 at 15:30 hrs (for S.No. 3 and 4 only) and 13.08.2024 at 18:00 hrs. to 18.09.2024 at 15:30 hrs (for S.No. 05 and 06) from website [www.mptenders.gov.in](http://www.mptenders.gov.in) PAC can vary at the time of uploading of tender document. Any amendment/corrigendum 'if any' will be published on website only, will not be published on newspapers.

M.P. Madhyam/115702/2024 **MANAGING DIRECTOR**

## INBRIEF



## Modi urged to create new lion sanctuaries in Gujarat

Rajya Sabha MP Parimal Nathwani on Friday said he has drawn the attention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to various issues related to Asiatic lions in Gujarat and the need for more facilities and infrastructure for tourists visiting Gir forest. Mr. Nathwani, a member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Environment, Forest and Climate Change, presented the first copy of his new book *Call of the Gir* to Mr. Modi in New Delhi on July 31. Talking to reporters about his interaction with the Prime Minister, Mr. Nathwani said he stressed the need for new lion sanctuaries like Barda Wildlife Sanctuary. PTI

## RPF arrests YouTuber for dangerous rail track stunts

In a major crackdown on reckless behaviour, the Railway Protection Force has arrested a YouTuber for endangering public safety by criminal tampering with railway tracks for publicity. Viral videos on Twitter had shown a person placing various kinds of objects on railway tracks, including a gas cylinder, stones, birds with their legs tied, prompting an urgent investigation. The culprit, Gulzar Sheikh, has uploaded more than 250 videos on his YouTube channel, which has over two lakh subscribers. His on-camera activities posed a significant risk to both railway safety and operations, the Ministry of Railways has stated.

## SC suggests setting up of a 'neutral panel' for talks with protesting farmers

'Do not hurt their sentiments. Show statesmanship. Try to convince them that their tractors, JCBs and agricultural equipment ought to return to where they are required, in their farms and lands'

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday advised statesmanship and empathy on the part of the government while reaching out to protesting farmers, who have blockaded the Shambhu border linking Punjab and Haryana. It also suggested the setting up of a "neutral panel" to negotiate with the farmers. A Bench headed by Justice Surya Kant was considering the prospect of opening the boundary in a phased manner to allow free movement for commuters, especially ambulances and senior citizens travelling between the States.

Farmers have been protesting on the inter-State boundary since February over various issues, including a statutory guarantee for minimum support price for crops.

"Do not hurt their sentiments. Show statesmanship. Try to convince them



Tractors parked at the Shambhu border in Punjab by protesting farmers. FILE PHOTO

that their tractors, JCBs, and agricultural equipment ought to return to where they are required, in their farms and lands," Justice Kant addressed Haryana, Punjab, and the Centre.

The Bench suggested having a former top court judge with an agricultural background to be part of the "neutral panel" to negotiate with the farmers and the government. It mooted inclusion of agri-

cultural scientists, economists, and professors from agricultural universities in Punjab and Haryana in the committee.

## 'No suspicion'

Justice Kant said though there may be seasoned politicians who could be part of the panel, it did not want to raise any suspicion in the minds of the farmers that such people would take advantage of the protests to fulfil their political

agendas.

"We want a smooth beginning to the dialogue process. Sometimes there is a mindblock when a politician comes into the picture. We suggest neutral persons," Justice Kant observed orally.

The court scheduled the next hearing for August 12.

In the previous hearing, the court had referred to a "trust deficit" between the agitating farmers and the government.

## Fishermen bat for release of those held by Sri Lanka

The Hindu Bureau  
RAMESWARAM

Announcing an indefinite strike with immediate effect from Friday, the members of all fishermen associations in Rameswaram said they would resume work only when their grievances were redressed by the Tamil Nadu and Union governments. An urgent meeting of various fishermen associations was held at Rameswaram under the leadership of Sagayam.

The meeting resolved to boycott fishing from Friday until all the fishermen from Tamil Nadu arrested by Sri Lanka were released. The members stated that though the governments helped in release of the arrested fishermen in the past, the impounded mechanised trawlers were yet to be returned. Hence, the governments should get back the boats that were in good condition and provide compensation for those crafts that were beyond repair.

The meeting thanked Tamil Nadu government for immediately providing solatium of ₹10 lakh to the family members of fisherman K. Malaisamy, 59, who had died mid-sea after his



A meeting of fishermen's associations on Friday.

boat was allegedly damaged by a surveillance vessel of the Sri Lankan Navy on Wednesday night. In the same incident, another fisherman V. Ramachandran, 64, was said to be missing, while Mookiah, 54, and Muthu Muniandi, 57, had been detained by the Sri Lankan Navy.

## 'Centre should help'

Speaking to mediapersons, Mr. Sagayam said the Centre should come to the rescue of fishermen as it involved their livelihood.

Thanking the government and the officials for carrying out search operation along the Palk Straits after Ramachandran went missing, he said the government should give compensation within about 10 days to the family members regardless of if the fisherman was found.

## U.P. govt. continues to face heat over Nazul land Bill

Press Trust of India  
LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Friday demanded the permanent withdrawal of the Uttar Pradesh Nazul Property (Management and Use for Public Purposes) Bill, 2024, calling it a decision that would completely uproot homes. "It is entirely a decision to uproot homes because a bulldozer cannot run over every house," the SP president said in a post on X.

The Lok Sabha MP accused the BJP of deriving joy by causing suffering to people. "Ever since the BJP came to power, people have been struggling for livelihood and employment, and now the ruling party wants to snatch away their homes as well," he said.

Nazul land refers to government-owned land but not directly managed as State property. These were originally acquired during the colonial period for pur-

poses such as public utilities, administrative functions or settlement of displaced individuals. Over time, they have been used or leased for various public and private purposes.

## Objections raised

On Wednesday, the State Assembly had passed the Bill that aims to prevent its conversion into private ownership. However, on Thursday, the Legislative Council did not approve it, and sent it to the Select Committee of the House on the demand of the members of the ruling party.

The Bill proposes that any court proceedings or applications for transferring Nazul land to private individuals or institutions will be cancelled and rejected, ensuring that these lands remain under government control. The Bill allows the State government to extend lease for current leaseholders in good standing, who regularly pay rent

and comply with the terms of the lease.

The Bill has faced dissent from members of both the Opposition and the ruling National Democratic Alliance, including several BJP legislators.

Apna Dal leader and Union Minister Anupriya Patel and Nirbal Indian Shoshit Hamara Aam Dal (NISHAD) chief Sanjay Nishad have called it "unnecessary" and "against public sentiments". "I firmly believe the government should withdraw this Bill," Ms. Patel posted on X, hours after the Bill was passed.

Mr. Nishad, State Minister and BJP ally, said, "If we [government] displace anyone living on these lands for 70-80 years, these poor people will displace the ruling regime in 2027. The government should take vacant land, but should accommodate the poor living on Nazul land."

(With inputs from The Hindu Bureau)

## Former MLA quits, reignites 'original' and 'imported' divide in Assam BJP

Rahul Karmakar  
GUWAHATI

The resignation of a former MLA on Friday has reignited the battle between the "original" and "imported" leaders within the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Assam.

Ashok Sarma, who was the Nalbari MLA from 2016 to 2021, said the lack of respect for elders in the party was the primary reason why he quit the BJP. He was denied a ticket in 2021 and found himself sidelined in the party since. "I did not leave the BJP during its bad days nor did I revolt when I was not given the ticket in the 2021 Assembly polls," he told journalists after submitting his resignation.

"A few who joined the party over the past few years do not know how to respect the elders," said Mr. Sarma, who was issued a show-cause notice in May for criticising the BJP's



Ex-MLA Ashok Sarma

State leadership. He said he would join Congress on August 9.

Mr. Sarma is the second people's representative from the "old" or "original" set of leaders who quit the BJP in the last five years. The first was former MP Ram Prasad Sharma after he was denied a ticket to contest the Tezpur parliamentary constituency in 2019.

## Closed-door meeting

The ex-MLA's resignation coincided with the second closed-door meeting veteran BJP leader Rajen Go-

hain held with disgruntled old party leaders in Golaghat.

Mr. Gohain, a former Union Minister, held a similar meeting with other party veterans of eastern Assam in Tinsukia on July 31. He did not disclose what was discussed at the two meetings.

Friday's developments have triggered speculations about the BJP house not being in order with less than two years to go before the next Assembly elections.

Reacting to the former MP's meetings, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said: "We are not worried about who is going where but they should remain good Hindus. The Hindu society of Assam is at stake."

The Chief Minister and many MLAs who defected from Congress in 2015 and thereafter are referred to as "new" BJP leaders while those who strengthened

the party since the 1980s are called the "old" leaders.

Ahead of this year's Lok Sabha polls, Mr. Gohain had publicly criticised the 2023 delimitation exercise that changed the demographic composition of Nowgong (now Nagaon), the Lok Sabha seat he represented four times from 1999-2019.

## 'Take measures'

Another BJP leader, Manoj Kumar Mahanta appealed to eight former presidents of the party to examine why the senior leaders want to quit the party. He said appropriate measures should be taken to arrest this tendency.

"The BJP is enjoying power in Assam for the second successive term because of the hard work and sacrifice of thousands of its workers. Unfortunately, the party seems to be on the path of disintegration now," he said.

## Forensic report negates foul play in girl's death: police

Mehul Malpani  
BHOPAL

Months after a 23-year-old Dalit girl, who was a victim of sexual harassment, died after allegedly falling from an ambulance in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district, the police has claimed that its investigation has found no foul play in her death.

Additional Superintendent of Police, Sagar, Sanjeev Uikey told *The Hindu* on Friday that a forensic investigation of the girl's mobile phone has revealed that the incident in which she died did not involve any criminal conspiracy.

The girl, a resident of Sagar's Khurai, had passed away on May 26 after she reportedly fell from the ambulance while taking home the body of her uncle, who died after he was allegedly thrashed a day before by some men over a dispute.

## Disquiet in Telangana as canine attacks claim 15 lives in the State this year

## SPOTLIGHT

Swathi Vadlamudi

Stepping out of home unescorted proved to be a costly misadventure for 18-month-old Pulluri Vihaan at Adarsh Nagar Colony of Jawahar Nagar, located about 25 kilometres from the zero mile of Hyderabad city. The toddler's mother, Venkata Lakshmi, saw him last around 6.30 p.m. on July 16 this year while going out with her husband to buy medicines for her ailing daughter.

The family, originally from Siddipet district, had been staying at Lakshmi's brother's house in Hyderabad. "Vihaan came running to the gate, offering a piece of banana to me. I petted him and left along with my husband, with the

image of my cheerful son imprinted in my mind," recalls Lakshmi, a homemaker.

Just hours later, she saw her son's body at the mortuary of Gandhi Hospital in Hyderabad - disfigured, swollen and full of deep gash wounds.

As soon as Vihaan had stepped out of the gate escaping his grandmother's watch, he was dragged away by a pack of stray dogs that attacked him viciously for 20 minutes before anybody noticed. Two private hospitals refused admission seeing the boy's condition. He was finally shifted to Gandhi Hospital, 16 kilometres away. Vihaan died on the way.

## Municipal apathy

Local residents blame the incident on the apathy of



The spot in Jawahar Nagar where Vihaan was killed. NAGARA GOPAL

municipal authorities, whose lack of action, they allege, has turned the government land into a haven for dogs and drug addicts.

"Under the cover of darkness, meat sellers and restaurateurs dump waste here every night. Stray dogs feed on that and thrive. Attacks on people returning home at night

are a routine occurrence," says K. Satyanarayanachari, a resident.

Door-to-door garbage collection, segregation and disposal as enunciated in the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, is still a distant dream for Telangana, which bagged over 20 awards in Swachh Survekshan 2024.

Mounds of garbage line

both sides of the main road leading to Adarsh Nagar area, with packs of dogs rummaging through the waste for food.

"Private garbage collectors charge ₹100-150 per month, which people here cannot afford to pay. They deposit the trash in dumper bins installed at select locations by the municipality or in the open for the dogs to forage," says K. Kishore, president of the Adarsh Nagar Welfare Association.

Vihaan is the 15th fatality due to canine attacks in Telangana this year alone. About 75% of the victims are children.

Less than three weeks before Vihaan's death, seven-year-old Vishal, son of migrant labourers from Bihar, was mauled to death by stray dogs in Isnapur of Patancheru mandal, San-

gareddy district. On the same day, three kilometres away in Muthangi village, a seven-month-old was also attacked by dogs but was fortunately rescued and taken to hospital. In April, Deepali, another toddler, had been mauled to death in Jeedimetla area.

The news of Vihaan's death sparked outrage across the city. Residents held a demonstration at the attack site, seeking solution to the stray dogs issue.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy was forced to take note, and issued instructions to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) dog-catching squads descended on the area, capturing over 100 dogs and relocating them to animal care centres

managed by Blue Cross, an NGO.

## Call for culling

The demand for euthanising stray dogs is growing shriller with each new attack. Post Vihaan's death, Forum for Better Hyderabad, a civil society organisation, invoked provisions of the GHMC Act to argue that strays can be culled.

In a letter to the Principal Secretary of Municipal Administration & Urban Development, the forum's president, M. Padmanabha Reddy, questioned why dogs may not be killed when culling orders are issued for wild animals like boars and elephants when they become unmanageable.

Srinivasulu Chelmala, a Zoology professor at Hyderabad's Osmania University with a special interest in

wildlife biology, offers a unique perspective into the aggression among stray dogs, and attributes it to absence of early imprinting of the human as the leader of the pack. "Dogs evolved from wolves. Their domestication happened around the time humans shifted to agriculture-based lifestyle, which is very recent in anthropological perspective. When wild instincts kick in, dogs are equal to wild animals," he says.

If puppies are exposed to human petting and control, they will not exhibit such aggressive behaviour, he says. Even if one dog without this early imprint initiates an attack, the others form a pseudo-pack and join in.

## LINK TO FULL STORY

» bit.ly/Canineconundrum

NGT impleads Kerala, T.N. in suo motu case on Wayanad landslides

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

The Southern Bench of the National Green Tribunal has taken suo motu cognisance of the devastating landslides in Wayanad and has directed the Kerala and Tamil Nadu governments to file reports on landslide-prone areas in the two States.

The Bench comprising Justice Pushpa Sathyana-rayana and expert member Satyagopal Korlapati on Friday expressed deep concerns about the incident, which has claimed 210 lives so far in Mundakkai and Chooralmala, in Wayanad.

When the standing counsel for Kerala noted that nearly 90% of the houses at the incident sites were part of earlier settlements, Justice Sathyana-rayana remarked that the terrain, characterised by loose soil rather than rocky ground, can only support a limited amount of development.

She then questioned the State governments' reluctance to implement the recommendations from the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, led by ecologist Madhav Gadgil, and the High-Level Working Group, chaired by renowned scientist K. Kasturirangan.

The next hearing on the matter has been posted on September 9.

# Two tales of survival kindle hope among Wayanad rescue workers

A tribal family, with three children, cocooned in a hollow in a rock face, was rescued by a forest team after a 7-km trek; Army and NDRF team combing Padavatti Kunnu found four members of a family in their surprisingly intact house

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KALPETTA

Two gritty survival episodes provided a glimmer of hope for rescue workers scouring forests and far-flung hills in the landslide-flattened localities in Wayanad for signs of life.

On Friday, a forest team led by Forest Range officer (Kalpetta) Ashif Keloth found Santha, a tribal woman, and her four-year-old son looking lost in the forests near Erattukunnu. The rugged locality is home to the Kattu Paniya tribe. Mr. Keloth told *The Hindu* in Wayanad that the tribe members were courteous but generally aloof in strangers' presence.



**Trekking to safety:** The Army rescuing four members of a family from a landslide site on Friday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Mr. Keloth and his team had visited the locality after the landslide on July 30. They evacuated 24 tribe members to the quarters of a nearby plantation. He was surprised to find the

lone tribal woman and her son in the deep jungle.

**Short on food**  
After much convincing, Ms. Santha told the officer that her husband, Krish-

man, and three children, aged 3, 2 and 1, had sought refuge in a hollow on a rock face a little distance from the Sentinel waterfall (Soochipara). She said the family was short on food.

Armed with ropes, the forest team trekked with the mother-son duo 7 km through a switchback of forested hills and dense valleys to reach the top of the rockface. The team then rappelled down the precipice to reach the cave where the rest of the family had taken refuge.

The team found the children naked and shivering. A few half-eaten fruits were strewn around. The forest enforcers used a torn blanket to secure the children to their bodies as their col-

leagues hauled them up the slithery and perilous escarpment.

On Friday, an Army and NDRF team combing Padavatti Kunnu for survivors found four members of a family hunkering down in their surprisingly intact house. The house abutted one of the worst-hit and far-flung localities in Chooralmala. The survivors escaped the worst ravages of nature because their home was away from the path of the massive earthquake.

The family appeared shocked but willing to trek to safety with their Army escorts.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan lauded the Forest Department and Army for their bravery.



Locals pose for photos with actor Avinash Tiwary during the re-release of the movie *Laila Majnu* in Srinagar on Friday. IMRAN NISSAR

# Laila Majnu runs houseful in Srinagar on its re-release

**Peerzada Ashiq**  
SRINAGAR

Bollywood movie *Laila Majnu*, a tragic romance that portrayed Kashmiri characters in the backdrop of the peaceful valley in 2018, has run houseful on Day One of its re-release at the INOX Theatre in Srinagar on Friday.

"We had all the tickets sold for the first show. It was houseful," Vikas Dhar, Managing Director of the Taksal Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. that owns the multiplex, told *The Hindu*.

The tragic love story with all the trappings of local culture and family settings failed to make a mark on the box office in 2018. The movie consciously stays away from showing any aspect of conflict, whether masked militants or gun-toting security personnel, and managed to win hearts locally for bringing real cultural and emotional aspects of Kashmir to the silver screen.

"This film always addressed my nostalgia by

portraying Kashmir as it was when I studied in Bengaluru. I was waiting for its re-release in Srinagar. It's a dream come true to watch the movie in Srinagar today," Majid Altaf, an engineering student, said.

The movie stars actors Avinash Tiwary and Tripti Dimri. Directed by director Sajid Ali, who is a brother of film-maker Imtiaz Ali, the film was conceived and the shoot began in a year when Kashmir erupted with street violence after the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen 'commander' Burhan Wani.

"When I visited a cinema hall after the movie's release outside J&K, it had just 25 people, including my family. There was just one poster promoting it. Cut to 2024, it is houseful in Srinagar. The re-release has become a reality because of the love shown by Kashmiris. When the movie was made there were no cinema halls in Kashmir. Today, I sat with the audience to watch it," actor Tiwary said.

# Congress will build 100 houses for survivors: Rahul

**The Hindu Bureau**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Rahul Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, has said the Congress will construct 100 houses for the survivors of the landslides in Wayanad.

Speaking to reporters after visiting survivors and families of the dead in Wayanad on Friday, Mr. Gandhi described the landslides as a "terrible traged-

dy" that should be treated differently. The Congress MP said he is going to raise the matter in Delhi and with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan as "this is a different level of tragedy and should be treated differently".

Right now the focus is on finding the bodies and potential survivors, making sure that the displaced are comfortable in relief camps, and rehabilitating

them, he said.

The MP said rehabilitation is going to be very important as a lot of survivors told him that they did not want to go back to the landslides-hit areas.

"So, I think it is important that they are rehabilitated in a safe area and are not forced to go back. These are the things that we have already raised with the Kerala government," he said.



Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and K.C. Venugopal visit Wayanad on Friday. ANI

# Governor is working as 'puppet' of Centre, says Siddaramaiah on MUDA 'scam' notice

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MYSURU

Upping his ante against Governor Thaaarchand Gehlot for issuing a show-cause notice to him over the alleged irregularities in the allotment of sites by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) to his wife, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday accused the former of working as a "puppet" in the hands of the Centre.

This came a day after the Council of Ministers held a meeting and asked the Governor to withdraw the "illegal and anti-constitutional" show-cause notice issued to the Chief Minister.



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah speaking to reporters on his arrival at Mysuru airport on Friday. M.A. SRIRAM

Speaking to presspersons on his arrival in Mysuru before proceeding to review the flood situation in Kodagu, Mr. Siddaramaiah accused the Centre of misusing the Raj Bhavan to destabilise an elected State government, while calling

upon the Governor to withdraw the notice immediately.

Mr. Siddaramaiah emphasised that he had no role to play in the allotment of residential sites to his wife.

He also accused T.J.

Abraham, an activist whose complaint was the basis for the Governor issuing the show-cause notice, of being a "blackmailer" who had submitted such complaints against several people.

**In haste**

He sought to know the reason for the "haste" with which the Governor had issued a show-cause notice. "Before issuing a show-cause notice to the Chief Minister, shouldn't the Governor go through all legal aspects comprehensively," he asked.

Though the Chief Secretary had sent a detailed explanation to the Governor the same day, the Raj Bhavan had not considered it.

# We will expose BJP scams, says Karnataka Deputy CM

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Friday described the proposed BJP-JD(S) padayatra against alleged irregularities in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), as a yatra "of the corrupt, by the corrupt, for the corrupt".

The seven-day foot march from Bengaluru to Mysuru is set to begin on Saturday.

At 'Janandolana', a programme organised by the Congress to "expose the BJP scams", he said, "When the BJP-JD(S) padayatra reaches Bidadi, we want them to answer our questions on their ₹87-



D.K. Shivakumar participating in a bike rally in Bidadi on Friday.

crore scam in the Bhovi Development Corporation and ₹47-crore scam in the APMCs during their regime. I challenge them to answer within a week, else we will give the details of the scam." "Why are the BJP and the JD(S) not fighting this corruption or investigating it," he asked.

Challenging Union Minister and JD(S) State president H.D. Kumaraswamy to disclose his and his family's assets, Mr. Shivakumar said, "His family has hundreds of acres near Bidadi and 200 to 250 acres near Kumbalgarod. Let him disclose the value of his property."

# Tirumala getting ready for annual Brahmotsavams

**The Hindu Bureau**  
TIRUMALA

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Executive Officer J. Shyamala Rao on Friday said extensive preparations were under way for the annual Brahmotsavams of Lord Venkateswara, beginning October 4.

He told the media that work was in full swing and would be completed by the end of September.

The *pushkarini* (temple tank) has been closed since August 1 for renovation and maintenance works, and the '*Pushkarini Harathi*' rituals will remain suspended till August 31, Mr. Rao said.

# Telangana House takes serious view of morphed video of proceedings involving Minister

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

The Telangana Assembly has taken a serious view of a morphed video of the Assembly proceedings insulting Panchayat Raj Minister Danasari Anasuya alias Seethakka in circulation in the social media.

Speaker G. Prasad Kumar said orders would be issued for a serious examination of the morphed video and stringent action will be initiated against those found guilty of the offence.

**Stern action**

The Speaker said civil society would hang its head in shame once it watches the morphed video and therefore it was decided to



Danasari Anasuya

dignity of the House. "All the legislators need to join hands cutting across party lines in protecting the dignity of the House," he said.

BRS member K.T. Rama Rao suggested that the House study the practices in the Parliament on whether taking videos and photographs inside the House was permitted.

Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy, who was an MP in the past, said there was no such provision in the Parliament and it was strictly prohibited.

He recalled that a Congress Rajya Sabha member Rajni Patil was suspended for the entire session on the charges that she took videos of the proceedings in the Upper House.

# Telangana to unveil comprehensive sports policy soon

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has resolved to bring out a comprehensive sports policy to encourage budding sportsmen from the State to participate in tournaments in the national and international arena.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said the government has made budgetary allocation of ₹321 crore for sports this year. Studies of policies under implementation in different States were taken up and it was found that Haryana has the best policy relating to the encouragement and assistance to sportspersons. "A comprehensive policy will be tabled in the Legislature in the next session," he said.

He recalled that infrastructure was created for hosting the Afro-Asian games in the city, but successive governments neglected the sports sector. The government was focussed on prompting sports infrastructure and had accordingly held discussions with the Board of Control for Cricket in India for constructing a world class stadium in the proposed city at Mucherla.

Mr. Revanth Reddy recalled that sports events were held for legislators in the past, but the practice was not followed since the formation of a separate State. He asked Speaker G. Prasad Kumar to constitute an all party committee to finalise details relating to legislators' sports meet so that it could be held soon.

# Telangana government to give Group-I posts of DSP cadre to boxer Zareen, cricketer Siraj

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has resolved to sanction Group-I posts of Deputy Superintendent of Police to boxer Nikhat Zareen and cricketer Mohammed Siraj in appreciation of their outstanding performance in their respective sports fields.

The State government has amended the Telangana (Regulation of appointments to public services and rationalisation of staff pattern and pay structure) Act, 1994 to facilitate the appointments. A Bill to this effect was passed by the Legislative Assembly on Friday.

Nikhat Zareen won the World Championship Gold



Nikhat Zareen, and, right, Mohammed Siraj

medal at Istanbul in 2022 and in New Delhi 2023 International Boxing Association Women's World Boxing championships. She had won 11 international and seven national medals in addition to winning best boxer award three times. This was in addition to winning two gold medals at 70&73 Strandja Interna-

tional Boxing Tournament at Sofia, Bulgaria.

Mr. Siraj represented the country in the World Test Championship, and One Day International World Cup finals. Recently, the country won the T-20 World Cup after 13 years and Mr. Siraj was the only cricketer from Telangana who was part of the squad.



## Weakest first

Allowing sub-quotas to least advanced among SCs deepens social justice

The jurisprudence of affirmative action has been evolving constantly. From a notion of formal equality rooted in a general principle of non-discrimination, it has reached a point where the aim is substantive equality. Reservation is no more seen as an exception to the equality norm, but as a deepening of the idea of equality by embracing diversity and accommodation of those suffering from historical and social disabilities. The latest Supreme Court judgment allowing States to classify Scheduled Castes (SC) into groups and give preferential treatment to the weaker and more backward among them is in line with this progression. By a majority of 6:1, the Court has rejected the idea that the SCs constitute a single homogenous class and that sub-classification will violate the equality rule. The verdict dislodges a 2005 Constitution Bench judgment (*E.V. Chinnaiah vs AP*) that had struck down an Andhra Pradesh law classifying SC communities into groups as unconstitutional. The Court had then ruled that once the President notifies the list of SCs under Article 341, Parliament alone could modify it by law, and that States were barred from “tinkering” with the list. This judgment was cited by the Punjab and Haryana High Court while quashing a preferential sub-quota for Balmikis and Mazhabi Sikhs within the SC quota. When the matter came to the apex court, a Bench doubted the correctness of *E.V. Chinnaiah* and referred the question to a larger Bench.

The majority verdict is based on a clear recognition that SCs do not constitute a homogeneous class. Under the Presidential List, they have a common constitutional status, but it does not mean that there are no differences in the extent of backwardness among them. A history of untouchability is indeed a common feature among them, but there is historical and empirical evidence that the level of advancement is not uniform. States are empowered to further identify the weaker sections among SCs and extend beneficial treatment. Four judges have taken the view that excluding the “creamy layer” among the SCs from reservation benefits is necessary to give full effect to the principle that the weakest should get the benefits of affirmative action and not be elbowed out by those more advanced than them. Applying the ‘creamy layer’ concept, hitherto confined to OBCs may not be easy. Justice B.R. Gavai, who writes in support of the exclusion of the better-off among the SCs, also notes that the creamy layer norms cannot be the same as those prescribed for the OBCs. The exclusion of the more advanced sections among Dalits was not an issue before the Bench, and the opinions may be non-binding as of now. While excluding the creamy layer may happen some day, the focus should be on the marginalised among Dalits getting adequate representation.

## Stealing the vote

Maduro seems to have resorted to irregularities to hold on to power

In Nicolás Maduro’s watch, Venezuela’s economy contracted 80% in less than a decade. Some 7.8 million Venezuelans fled from the economic hardships. If extreme poverty was at 11% in 2013, the year Hugo Chávez died and Mr. Maduro ascended to presidency, it now stands at 53%, while household poverty is much higher, at 82%, as per the UN. The oil-rich country had witnessed anti-government protests in recent years which were met with crackdowns. Before the July 28 presidential election, opinion polls showed that Edmundo González, the main opposition candidate, had a 20-point lead over the President. But none of these seemed to have mattered in the election, according to official results. Mr. Maduro won 51% of the vote, while Mr. Gonzalez secured 44%, said Venezuela’s election authority. Mr. Maduro can now extend his rule for six more years. But the opposition has reported widespread irregularities in the counting, and accused the President and his allies in state institutions of stealing the vote. According to the opposition, its vote tallies show that Mr. González won some 7.1 million votes against Mr. Maduro’s 3.2 million. Anti-Maduro protests broke out after the official results were announced. And the government is yet to release detailed voter data.

Mr. Maduro is not singularly responsible for the economic crisis. Chavez, a former tank commander who rose to power through elections, defied the liberal economic orthodoxy and built a new welfare state that was funded by oil revenues. By the time Mr. Maduro, who lacked his predecessor’s charisma, came to power, falling oil prices had dealt a blow to Venezuela’s economy. The sanctions by the Trump administration on the oil industry, pushed the economy to the brink of collapse. Mr. Maduro’s response was to tighten his grip on power. His regime seemed helpless when Venezuela was gripped by hyperinflation and scarcity of essential goods and medicines. In the run-up to the elections, the government had promised a free and fair vote. But even before the campaign started, María Corina Machado, the opposition’s most popular candidate, was banned from contesting. Mr. Maduro has rejected the opposition’s claims of fraud after the vote, but he is also under pressure. The U.S. on Thursday recognised Mr. González as the winner and called for a peaceful transition. Even Mr. Maduro’s leftist allies in Latin America, including Colombia and Brazil, have called for full and transparent voting data. Mr. Maduro now has the support of the military. But the deepening divisions at home and isolation abroad would continue to pose questions of legitimacy to his presidency.

# The five guidelines to a Dragon-Elephant tango

I arrived in New Delhi, on May 10, as the 17th Chinese Ambassador to India, and presented the letter of credence to the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, on May 31. Over the past three months, I have met many Indian friends from all walks of life and visited two other States. I am glad to see that this land, which has nurtured a splendid ancient civilization, is brimming with new vitality. I am also deeply impressed by the broad public support for China-India friendship, and the confidence and the expectations for bilateral relations.

### Five guidelines of ‘Mutuals’

China and India are close neighbours. We learned from each other in ancient times, shared weal and woe in modern times, and have a common cause of rejuvenation today. China-India relations have become one of the most important bilateral relations. President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi attach great importance to China-India relations, and have reached an important consensus that China and India are not rivals or threats to each other, but are partners in cooperation and development opportunities. This provides a clear direction for the development of bilateral relations. We need to figure out how to implement it. Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with India’s External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar twice recently, and stressed that China and India should adhere to mutual respect, mutual understanding, mutual trust, mutual accommodation and mutual accomplishment. The “Five Mutuals” provide a significant path for us to implement the above consensus. They should also be the guiding principles for the two big neighbours to get along well. Against the backdrop of profound changes unseen in a century, I believe that the “Five Mutuals” are conducive to bring China-India relations back to a stable and sound track.

Mutual respect is the prerequisite for the development of China-India relations. As an Indian proverb goes, “*jaisa des waisa bhes*” (which roughly means ‘adapt the environment in which you are living’). Not long ago, I visited Maharashtra, attended a traditional Indian wedding, wore local folk costumes and tasted *masala* tea. I realise that as two ancient civilisations, both China and India have their own uniqueness in terms of dietary habits, lifestyles, cultural traditions and development paths. However, these differences did not impede us from attracting and inspiring each other in history. In the new era, it is of even greater significance for us to view each other with an open mind, respect each other’s development path, social system and role on the world stage, and jointly promote development and prosperity



Xu Feihong

the 17th Chinese Ambassador to India

of the two countries, the region and the world.

Mutual understanding is the basis of the development of China-India relations. The two peoples empathised with and supported each other in their respective struggles for national independence and liberation. China understands India’s aspiration for national rejuvenation, and supports India’s foreign policy of strategic autonomy. We are both among the largest developing countries. No country understands better than China what a great cause it is to enable more than 1.4 billion Indians to live a good life, and how much effort it requires. Meanwhile, when I interacted with the Indian people, I found that the exchanges and understanding between us are not enough. We need to further promote dialogue and communication at all levels in various fields, encourage the two peoples to have more exchanges, and promote mutual understanding and political trust, so as to consolidate the political and public foundation for the development of bilateral relations.

Mutual trust is the key to the development of China-India relations. The international situation is more volatile and uncertain than before. More and more people have realised that as being among the largest developing countries, China and India should avoid mutual suspicion and attrition in order to rise together. We need to view bilateral relations from a strategic perspective, form the right perception of each other, view each other’s strategic intentions objectively, and stick to the right vision – that China and India are partners and development opportunities to each other instead of being rivals or threats. We could work together for peaceful coexistence and insist on resolving disputes in a peaceful manner. With political trust, not even the Himalayas can stop us from strengthening friendly exchanges. Without it, not even level land can bring us together. The Chinese people are willing to be good friends and partners of the Indian people forever, living in harmony and pursuing common development.

### An ‘all-round relationship’

Mutual accommodation is the guarantee of the development of China-India relations. China and India are neighbours who cannot be moved away. It is natural for us to have differences and frictions. The key is to form a correct perception of differences and handle them in a proper manner. As we both inherit the political wisdom of ancient oriental civilisations, it is believed that we can find effective ways to mutually accommodate each other’s core interests and major concerns, properly handle differences through dialogue, and reach a mutually acceptable solution. Meanwhile, our relationship is all-round and cannot be defined by certain

The formulation of ‘five mutuals’ can help bring China-India relations back to a stable and sound track

# An unstated shift in Modi’s economic direction

“We are nudging industry to use less automation and more labour,” said Finance Secretary T.V. Somanathan in a post-Budget interview. He was referring to the Narendra Modi government’s Budget announcement of a new employment linked incentive (ELI) scheme for corporates. Under the scheme, companies will be provided a financial incentive for every new employee they hire. Dozens of commentators and experts have critiqued it and have questioned the assumption that a company will hire more people, merely for a financial incentive. This is a myopic and technocratic analysis that misses a fundamental shift in economic thought. The Finance Secretary’s statement symbolises a significant and profound change in the economic policy direction of the Modi government. It signals a recognition of the misplaced faith in chasing GDP growth, the big capital-labour skew, and the need for course correction.

### Initiatives that did not work well

For a decade, the Modi government’s economic philosophy was the traditional Washington Consensus’ trickle-down development model that emphasised the efficient production of goods and services, in the assumption that it would automatically lead to jobs, incomes and prosperity for people. When companies produce, GDP grows, and jobs are created, was the doctrine. ‘Make in India’, which was launched in 2014, was this quintessential example that aimed to spur manufacturing in the hope that it would make companies hire large numbers of workers. In 2019, the Modi government made a sudden off-Budget announcement of a big cut in corporate tax rates for companies, again in the hope that it would lure industry to invest more, which would then trickle down to more jobs. In 2020, the government announced a new production linked incentive (PLI) scheme of a whopping ₹2 lakh crore as financial incentives to be provided to companies based on the achieving of certain production targets. Once again, the intent was to incentivise companies financially to produce more, which would then lead to more



Praveen Chakravarty

Chairman, All India Professionals’ Congress

jobs. Of course, we know now that none of these initiatives yielded the expected number of jobs. Companies either pocketed the tax cuts without investing or they invested more in equipment than in hiring people. Simply put, production incentives or tax cuts for corporates neither trickled nor dripped down to enough people through jobs and incomes.

ELI is a recognition of this failure and a change in course to provide direct incentives to corporates to employ people rather than through indirect trickle-down means. After all, if one agrees that production incentives can entice companies to produce more by lowering marginal production costs, then, by the same logic, employment incentives should propel companies to hire more people by lowering marginal labour costs. ELI must be viewed in the context of PLI and not as a standalone idea for job creation. PLI is an incentive for the economy to pour more into the top of a funnel. ELI is an incentive to collect more at the bottom of the funnel, which is the eventual objective anyway.

ELI is the first such policy of the Modi government that acknowledges the breakdown between GDP growth and jobs. If the ultimate goal of economic development is to improve the living standards of the median citizen, then the neo-liberal economic development paradigm of chasing GDP growth has run its course because it has stopped translating into jobs and prosperity for people. Which is why the bombastic rhetoric about India being the fastest growing economy in the world has no significance for the average Indian. The natural next step then is to call for direct policy interventions for jobs for people, rather than for economic output. And a PLI to ELI transition is the first attempt in this shift in economic direction.

### It can make a difference

ELI by itself may not incentivise corporates to create more jobs. But it can impact firm level decisions at the margin, of buying equipment versus hiring more people. Ceteris paribus, an ELI scheme encourages firms to hire people rather than use machines. When a million small, medium and large enterprises are ‘ELI nudged’ to

differences, and our cooperation cannot be disrupted by a single incident.

Mutual accomplishment is the direction of the development of China-India relations. As important emerging economies, China and India are both at a critical stage of national development and revitalisation, and enjoy broad common interests and the space for cooperation. The third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, which concluded recently, launched a new journey of comprehensively deepening reform. China is advancing Chinese modernisation on all fronts, which will provide new opportunities to the world. India also has the vision of “Viksit Bharat 2047”. China hopes to develop itself well and wishes India the same. We are glad to see India make new achievements in national development and play a constructive role in international and regional affairs. We would like to work with India to help each other succeed, achieve common development and revitalisation, promote the unity and cooperation of the Global South, and join hands to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

### From the principles of peaceful coexistence

The “Five Mutuals” carry forward and further develop the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, and echo the “mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests” proposed by the Indian leader. They are also a useful guide for both sides to implement the important consensus reached by the two leaders. I believe that they will be understood and recognised by the Indian side. It is normal to have ups and downs in China-India relations. I believe that as two great ancient civilisations, both sides can look beyond the horizon and steer bilateral relations in the right direction, and jointly usher in a new future. In June 2024, I attended the inauguration of the new campus of Nalanda University in Bihar, and visited its ancient ruins where Monk Xuanzang studied nearly 1,400 years ago. I deeply recognise that we had close historical and cultural ties. In the 21st century, there is no reason why we cannot develop bilateral relations well.

President Xi Jinping stated that if China and India speak with one voice, the whole world will listen. Prime Minister Modi said India and China are “two bodies with one spirit”. A “Dragon-Elephant Tango” is the only correct choice for the two sides.

I firmly believe that under the strategic guidance of the two leaders, both sides have enough wisdom and the capability to handle bilateral relations well and forge a right path for the neighbouring countries to coexist in harmony and develop hand in hand.

choose labour over machines (capital), it can make a meaningful difference to overall job creation.

Neo-liberal economists, for whom technology-led productivity and efficiency are the cornerstones of economic development, would deem ELI blasphemous. Their argument is that it would render Indian companies less productive and, hence, less competitive globally. They are partially justified in their fears but the current model of development that prizes capital over labour and headline GDP over jobs is unsustainable in a democratic society.

### Jobs deficit and ideas deficit

The shortage of jobs is the root cause of dangerous and foolhardy proposals such as the recent one in Karnataka to reserve all jobs for locals. When there are very few jobs generated overall in the economy, political compulsions in a democracy are bound to induce a mad rush to grab as many of the few available jobs for their voters. It is intellectually dishonest to merely criticise such proposals but not provide concrete ideas to create new jobs. India not only has a jobs deficit but also an ideas deficit to bridge the jobs deficit. The stock response by economists for creating more jobs is the much abused “R” word – reforms. Their standard refrain is that a concoction of labour, education, skills and ease of doing business reforms is the magic pill to create more jobs, which is easier written than done.

ELI may or may not work to create additional jobs, but it is certainly a concrete new idea to alleviate the capital-labour imbalance and jobless growth woes of India’s economy. More importantly, it marks a distinct shift in policy direction from trickle-down economics to bottom-up interventions. “India is ready for ELI, regardless of whose idea it is” was the last line in my article in a daily on the morning of Budget 2024. Just a few hours later, much to my utter surprise, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the ELI scheme in Parliament. ELI was proposed in the Congress’s manifesto, and it is extremely laudable that the Finance Minister chose to keep politics aside to adopt this idea in the larger national interest.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Endless quotas?

After the top court’s verdict, it will be a case of sub-classifications and more quotas (Page 1, August 2). It could become a mammoth task to settle for these from an objective and political angle. Our political leaders could also begin to

manipulate quotas to suit their political needs. **Gopalaswamy J.,** Chennai

States must act with care and the identification of groups should be based on unchallengeable evidence and reason. The

categorisation should not be made or perceived to be made on political reasons.

**Dr. D.V.G. Sankara Rao,** Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh

### Rail coaches

The Railway Minister appears to be content with the ratio of 2:1 between

non-air-conditioned and air-conditioned coaches on trains (“Railways will soon add 2,500 general coaches, says Minister”, August 2).

Previously, the ratio was around 4:1. This has resulted in a significant shortage of seats in the lower classes, as seen by

### Corrections & Clarifications

Ms. Preeti Sudan is the fourth woman to head the UPSC, and not second as mentioned in a report, “Preeti Sudan appointed Chairperson of UPSC” (August 1, 2024).

multiple ground reports of passengers crammed like sardines in the general and sleeper coaches. He could have clarified whether the share of air-conditioned coaches would increase after the new arrivals.

**Kamal Laddha,** Bengaluru

# GROUND ZERO



**Sombre recovery** A body being transported across the river using a rope and pulley by rescue personnel at the landslide hit Chooralmala. THULASI KAKKAT

# Death rains on Wayanad

Over 200 people died, two settlements were wiped out, and one severely impacted, after heavy rains caused a landslide in north-east Kerala's hilly district. **Abdul Latheef Naha** finds a land battered beyond recognition, with about 500 injured and many still missing. Even as support from across India pours in, questions are raised about why this happened

*Trigger warning: The following article has disturbing details.*

In the early, dark hours of July 30, Nature staged a macabre dance on two sleepy villages in the lap of the Vellarimala hill range in the Western Ghats. In a few minutes, roughly 200 households in the biggest ever landslide in Kerala's history, were wiped out.

When the sun rose in the morning, Mundakkai and Chooralmala, twin settlements in Wayanad's Vellarimala village in Meppadi panchayat had vanished, transforming a landscape of rolling hills into a horrifying trail of havoc. Two landslides, at about 1 a.m. and 4:10 a.m. have killed over 200 people so far and injured about 500. The number of people missing is nearly 300.

The Indian Space Research Organisation's National Remote Sensing Centre would later release satellite images showing that 86,000 square metres of land had simply slipped out of place. The swift flowing debris, from crown to run-out zone, lasted 8 kilometres. The crown zone was "a reactivation of an older landslide," it observed. The landslide plunged into the Iruvazhinjipuzha, one of the tributaries of the Chaliyar river, swollen with the rain. Both raged and burst their banks. The combination of cascading heavy mud and gushing water took its toll.

Now, families count missing loved ones. Every family has losses, some more than others. "I lost my sister Afeeda, her husband Sattar, and their children Filu, Adi, and Sanu at Mundakkai. Twenty-five members of Sattar's family have disappeared," says Sakeer K., a construction worker who had asked his sister to come to his house at Nellimunda, a couple of kilometres away, far from the river. "I feared for them as it was raining unusually heavily that night."

Jitika Prem, a dance teacher from Mundakkai, shudders at the thought of her missing students. She attempts to describe how she and her family ran out of their house to safety when giant rocks and logs flattened their home. She lost her cousins Sivan, Jijina, and Pramodini, who were found in a huddle, in death. Many gathered in a resort near Mundakkai to shelter.

The last time Kerala witnessed devastation like this was during the floods of 2018 that claimed 433 lives and affected over 5.4 million people. The Puthumala tragedy of August 2019 left 17 dead and flattened 58 houses.

Rescue and relief was quick, with over 1,800 personnel coming in, from the Indian Army, Navy, and Airforce; Indian Coast Guard Disaster Relief Team; and the National and State level Disaster Response Forces. State forces from the police, forest, excise, and motor vehicle departments are providing logistical support.

### Forewarned but unarmred

The first landslide took place at around 1 a.m. The thunderous sound of the floodwaters woke people up, but many could not get out of their



I lost my sister Afeeda, her husband Sattar, and their children.... Twenty-five members of Sattar's family have disappeared

**SAKEER K.**  
Construction worker

houses in time. Local WhatsApp groups were soon flooded with screams for help. The cry of a woman named Minnath went viral as it was forwarded from group to group. "Many people are stuck in their homes. Please come; help us. The house behind Basheerka's shop is gone. I don't know what happened to my husband." Her cries were heard, and she was saved by local people.

Onapparambil Moidu hung on to a ceiling fan after standing on a cot along with his daughter and her eight-month-old child. The swirling water and mud reached his neck. At that point, he says he made the most decisive move of his life, to get through a half open door. "I stared death in the face. The bypass surgery I recently underwent has weakened me. I mustered all my energy; my daughter hung on to my back, and I held my grandchild over my head. We pushed ourselves through the mud for about 250 metres," recounts Moidu, at a relief camp at Government Higher Secondary School, Meppadi town, about 15 km from the disaster zone. His feet were bandaged for injuries he suffered during the escape. Two camps in Meppadi of the 82 camps across Wayanad are catering to survivors. They are established in a government and a private school.

Moidu's was a two-storey concrete house, about 50 metres from the Iruvazhinji that flowed through Chooralmala. Nothing of it remains now. "I lost my wife's mother, her sister, her husband, and their children in Mundakkai. Several of my family and friends have disappeared," he says. Then adds, "If the first landslide was a test dose, then the second was nature's prescription."

### Deadly deluge

When he heard the news of the first landslide, Wayanad District Panchayat president Samshad Marakkar reached Chooralmala at 2 a.m. along with his friends. "The second landslide came after 4 a.m. unleashing the sound of a dinosaur in a

DTS theatre. It was so huge that it wiped out everything in its path. I retrieved the first body of a man that morning, followed by that of a girl, and took them to hospital," he says.

The landslide took away people in their sleep and brought their mangled bodies to the Chaliyar downstream at Munderi. Many bodies went through the steep waterfalls of Soochippara, Kanthanpara, and Meenmutty before reaching Munderi in Pothukal near Nilambur.

It knocked down a bridge connecting Chooralmala with Mundakkai and Attamala, the Shiva temple of Chooramala, a mosque at Mundakkai, a Government Vocational Higher Secondary School in Vellarimala, and houses and business establishments. A few resorts were destroyed.

"I had several of my friends in Mundakkai and Attamala. They are missing," said Dheera Singh, a tea estate labourer from Madhya Pradesh, as he stands dazed at the site where the Shiva temple had stood. A ficus tree next to the temple site still stands, a witness to what is lost. So does a portion of the large temple auditorium. Temple priest Kumar Swamy's body was recovered and taken to his home State of Tamil Nadu. Mundakkai Masjid Imam Shihab Faizy Qayyoomi's body was retrieved from the Chaliyar at Pothukal. The landslide took away a portion of the masjid in which Qayyoomi was sleeping.

Shailaja K.M., who used to help Kumar Swamy clean the bronze lamps at the Chooralmala temple, says Shiva helped them get out of the chest-deep water. "My children and I gathered in one room as floodwaters began rising. We thought we would die. I sent messages on WhatsApp to my brothers, bidding them farewell," she remembers. They managed to push through the mud to safety. "We climbed to the second floor of our neighbour Azeez's house," says Shailaja.

It was pitch dark as the power lines had snapped. Some with clothes on and some without, ran into the coffee and cardamom plantations nearby to escape. There, they confronted elephants, but remained safe. "We realised that the wild elephant understood our plight. The tusker did nothing to us," whimpers Sujata, who was trapped in front of an elephant in the dark chilly night.

### Trauma and support

Until the Army constructed a Bailey bridge across the Iruvazhinjipuzha, using prefabricated trusses on August 1 evening, the search for bodies in Mundakkai was hard, as rescue teams and machines could not make it across the river. "The bridge will make a big difference in the search operation. We have to search the whole area using earth movers and other heavy equipment. It will speed up the search and rescue operation," says Maj. Gen. V.T. Mathew, general officer commanding (GOC) of Kerala and Karnataka sub-area, in charge of the rescue operations at Mundakkai.



The bridge is going to make a big difference in the search operation.... It will speed up the rescue and search operation

**MAJ. GEN. V.T. MATHEW**  
GOC, Kerala and Karnataka sub-area

Search teams too had harrowing experiences to report. "When our men entered a mud-covered abandoned house, they were anguished to see the bodies of three children huddling on a sofa under the concrete rubble. Similarly, they found the body of a man lying peacefully on a cot in another house," said a Fire and Rescue Services senior official.

When it rained during the search, people on the site raised worries about a fresh landslide. Toys, books, spectacles, children's clothes, utensils, medicines, framed marriage photos were found in damaged homes. Gas cylinders were seen under the rubble of some houses. "We expect bodies to be trapped under the debris, whether it is concrete or logs," says Sajeer Madasery, a volunteer.

Most bodies retrieved by the search teams were disfigured and mutilated. Identifying them remains a hard task at the Community Health Centre, Meppadi. Forensic surgeons have been brought in from different government medical colleges for postmortems. "We are making sure that postmortem procedures are done as fast as we can to help relatives identify and claim the bodies," says Dr. Reena K.J., Director of Health Services, Kerala.

The identification of mangled bodies is another traumatising experience for the survivors. "There is nothing more painful," says Basheer Saadi, Wayanad district president of the Shanwanam help group that is volunteering here.

Mass graves have been dug at the graveyards of Meppadi Juma masjid, Nellimunda Juma masjid, and St. Sebastian Church at Chooralmala. Mass pyres have been prepared at Meppadi public crematorium. Many funerals were over with none shedding tears, because traumatised survivors and their relatives have been numbed by the tragedy. "The trauma is so deep; it will take a long time for them to recover. We are prioritising counselling for them," says Dr. Reena.

The State and Central governments responded to the disaster by mobilising forces for rescue and search. The State has posted four ministers at Meppadi to supervise the rescue and rehabilitation. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan says, "Counselling and privacy are very important for the survivors now." The Education Department will soon send teachers to the relief camps to teach the children lodged there.

Forest and Wildlife Minister A.K. Saseendran says the government will work on rehabilitation after completing the search operations. "It's going to be a top priority for us. We will use all our experience for it," he says.

### Times of trouble

While the Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced ₹2 lakh for the next of kin of the deceased and ₹50,000 for the injured, the tragedy opened up a debate between the Centre and the State. Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that the Centre had warned Kerala of heavy rains and landslides on July 23, 24, and 25.

Kerala Chief Minister, even when calling for joint measures to parry natural disasters caused by climate change and extreme weather conditions, refuted Shah's claims. He said that neither the India Meteorological Department (IMD), nor the Geological Survey of India (GSI), nor the Central Water Commission had issued a red alert for Wayanad ahead of the July 30 landslides. IMD issued a red alert for Kerala in the early morning of July 30, a few hours after the State witnessed its worst landslide.

The GSI had however, categorised the Vellarimala region of Wayanad as a highly vulnerable zone after the 2019 Puthumala landslide that took place just a few kilometres downhill from Mundakkai. In an atlas of landslide-prone areas made by ISRO, Wayanad is said to be the most vulnerable in Kerala and is in the 13th position among the country's 147 landslide-susceptible districts.

In 2011 the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, headed by ecologist-author Madhav Gadgil, had categorised the area into three ecologically sensitive zones, with the now impacted Vythiri taluk being one of the most sensitive. In an interview with *The Hindu* after the disaster, he had said, "No development should have taken place in these highly sensitive areas." There are resorts, artificial lakes, and other commercial construction in the area.

Experts say the continuous rain the region witnessed over the last two weeks had softened the soil, triggering the landslides. But they differ on how it happened. According to former GSI deputy director general C. Muraleedharan, heavy rain caused the supersaturated soil to blast like a dam, leading to a debris flow.

According to C.P. Rajendran, professor at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru, deforestation and unplanned buildings too were responsible. A study published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* in 2022 found that 85% of Wayanad was under forest cover until the 1950s and 62% disappeared between 1950 and 2018, whereas area under plantations went up by 1800.75%. However, Kerala Forest Statistics 2020 records show that forest cover in Wayanad stands at 74.18%, and is the highest in the State.

"The frequency of landslides has gone up in Wayanad," says Rajendran, suggesting long-term strategies. Imaginative and humane initiatives are the need of the hour for Kerala, which has a high-density population, he says, adding that landslide risk mapping is a must, using all available resources, including satellite images.

Meanwhile, rainfall continues in Wayanad.



People stranded at Attamala after the landslide, being evacuated via a temporary bridge THULASI KAKKAT

## From Page One

## Search continues amid fading hope in Wayanad

However, rescue workers continued their relentless search for survivors. They actively pursued signals picked up by ground-penetrating radars and points flagged by the Army and police dog squads. GPS-aided digital maps were used to pinpoint locations of houses in the disaster zone. The spots were excavated for possible survivors and bodies. Simultaneously, a large posse of police personnel, local divers, scouts, and guides combed the banks of the Chaliyar river in Malappuram for bodies of Wayanad landslide victims washed downstream by the swollen Iruvanjipuzha river, which abuts the disaster zone.

The government moved heavy machinery, including earthmovers, to the disaster-hit Mundakkai area, which remained cut off for more than two days after the catastrophe.

The massive earthfall had swept away the bridge across the Iruvanjipuzha, forcing rescue workers to take perilous detours and ropeways to reach Mundakkai. The impact had bifurcated the river into two fast-flowing streams.

The government has requisitioned several classrooms in a local school to set up a temporary morgue powered by diesel generators.

## SC asks govt. to overhaul NEET-UG on a deadline

The court pointed to how NTA initially gave 1,563 students grace marks after realising that they were allotted the wrong question paper, and then later decided to withdraw their scores and conduct a re-test. "A body such as NTA which is entrusted with immense responsibility in relation to highly important competitive exams cannot afford to misstep, take an incorrect decision, and amend it at a later stage. Flip-flops are an anathema to fairness," the court chastised.

The Chief Justice said the mishaps orchestrated by the NTA was a "luxury students cannot afford".

"The Centre has to restructure the whole process of the NEET through the high-powered committee. It has to ensure that we do not have further such examples in the future," Chief Justice Chandrachud said. In the judgment, the court pointed to varying versions given by the NTA about when and where the question papers were breached, including that it was taken away by people who had breached the "rear door" of an exam centre. The judgment then referred to the NTA's decision to grant marks for two options to a physics question in the NEET paper, reasoning that both answers were right.

## Privilege motion moved over Amit Shah's speech

But *The Hindu* report, published on August 2, pointed out that the weather warnings issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) carried an orange alert for Kerala for July 25 and a yellow "watch" alert for July 23, 24, 26 and 27.

A yellow alert does not specifically call for action. It also said that the IMD had issued an orange alert for very heavy rainfall at isolated places over Kerala and Mahe on July 29 and a red alert for July 30 was issued after the landslides hit Wayanad.

## 72% of assessee opted for new tax regime

With Budget 2024-25 raising the standard deduction to ₹75,000 from ₹50,000 and rejigging the tax slabs under the new regime again, there could be a greater impetus for taxpayers to opt out of the old regime. Nearly 58.6 lakh I-T returns were filed by first-time filers, a fair indication of widening of tax base, the Department said. A little over 6.77 crore returns had been filed by the July 31 deadline last year, while total ITR filings were 8.61 crore. Taking the first-time filers into account, back-of-the-envelope calculations show that about 7.19 lakh taxpayers have not met the deadline this year.

Responding to tax practitioners' concerns about slow processing and down times on the I-T e-filing portal ahead of the deadline, CBDT Chairperson Ravi Agarwal had told *The Hindu* that those issues had been resolved by ramping up the portal's handling capacity. The filings data for the last few days suggests this.

From about 28 lakh filings on the portal on July 24, the number of ITRs filed soared to almost 70 lakh on July 31. "The filing of ITRs peaked on July 31 [due date for salaried taxpayers and other non-tax audit cases] with over 69.92 lakh ITRs being filed on a single day and a highest per hour rate of 5.07 lakh recorded between 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. on July 31," the I-T department said.

The highest per second rate of ITR filings was 917, achieved on July 17 early morning, while the highest per minute rate of ITR filings was 9,367, at 8.08 p.m. on the deadline day.

"During the peak filing period, the e-filing portal successfully handled huge traffic, providing a seamless experience to taxpayers for filing of ITRs. On July 31, 2024 alone, successful logins stood at 3.2 crore," the statement said.

Over 43.82% of ITRs were filed using the online utility available on the e-filing portal and the balance have been filed using offline ITR utilities.

## Centre reissues draft notification on ecosensitive areas in Western Ghats

Despite its six iterations, the draft notification is yet to become law as Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and T.N. have objected to specific places being classified as ecologically sensitive areas; panel formed to study the concerns of States

Jacob Koshy  
NEW DELHI

In the aftermath of the devastating landslide in Wayanad in Kerala, the Union government has reissued – for the sixth time in a decade – a draft notification classifying parts of the Western Ghats in six States as ecologically sensitive areas (ESAs).

This will impose restrictions on economic activities such as quarrying, mining, and large infrastructure development in these areas. A senior official told *The Hindu* that the timing of the sixth draft was "coincidental", and not related to the Wayanad disaster.

The last time the draft was issued was in July 2022. Among other areas, it had proposed to declare 13 villages in Wayanad, spanning the three taluks of Mananthavady, Sulthan Batheri, and Vythiri, as part of an ESA. Despite its six iterations, the draft notification is yet to become law as all six affected States – Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu – have objected to specific places



The fifth version of the draft notification was issued in July 2022 and its validity ended on July 31, said an official. FILE PHOTO

that have been included in the ESA regions. The dominant sentiment in Kerala was that this notification will subsume agricultural plantations, curtail the State's hydroelectricity plans, and would lead to a migration crisis given the State's high population density.

The current draft, issued on July 31 and made public on Friday, is "open to comments" from the public for 60 days. While such notifications typically become law after that period, the Union government has historically refrained from doing so with

regard to this particular notification given the severe public backlash that it has invited.

A senior official said the latest notification was not connected to the Wayanad disaster. "The fifth version of the draft was issued in July 2022. While open for comments for 60 days, a draft is valid for 725 days and this ended on the 31st (July 2024). So we had to reissue it. There is no change in the content. The tragedy in Wayanad is just coincidental," he said. "It is difficult to get the States to arrive at a consensus and the committee is looking

into it," he added. The first version of the draft had been issued in March 2014.

## No consensus

A committee steered by ecologist Madhav Gadgil and mandated to examine the degree of protection needed in the Western Ghats recommended in 2011 that the entire region – spanning 1,29,000 square km – be declared as ecologically sensitive. Following consultations with residents, industrialists, and government officials, the Gadgil panel recommended the creation of three broad zones – ESA 1, ESA 2 and ESA 3 – with the first two inviting the strictest restrictions on economic activity. With the States unwilling to accept the recommendations, a second committee, led by former ISRO Chairman K. Kasturirangan, reconvened the exercise and halved the area of protected regions.

The committee also invited the States to draw up their own ESAs. Kerala was the first to do so. While there have been several meetings involving the Centre and the States that

have spanned both the UPA and the NDA governments, it has been a challenge to arrive at a consensus ESA zone within the Western Ghats.

## New panel

A separate committee has been formed to examine the concerns of the States and it was expected that a final notification would follow upon the recommendation of this committee. "The said Committee is addressing the issues raised by the States in the Western Ghats region on discrepancies or information gaps in the draft notification... July, 2022, on the correct names and area of villages to be included in the Ecologically Sensitive Area. The Committee is also examining the suggestions received from the States," the latest draft says.

This committee, constituted in 2022, is mandated to balance "conservation aspects of the disaster-prone pristine ecosystem, and the rights, privileges, needs and developmental aspirations of the region", but is yet to submit its report.

## Indian nationals in Israel told to 'stay vigilant'

Suhasini Haidar  
NEW DELHI

India on Friday issued an updated advisory for Indians living in Israel, asking them to avoid "unnecessary travel" and to stay vigilant in light of the "prevailing security situation".

The advisory follows the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on Wednesday. Iran has blamed Israel and the U.S. for the killing of a "guest" and threatened to exact "revenge" for the violation of its sovereignty.

"In view of the prevailing situation in the region, all Indian nationals in Israel are advised to adhere to the safety protocols as advised by the local authorities," the Indian Embassy said in its notice, without mentioning any specific references to the killing.

"Please exercise caution, avoid unnecessary travel within the country and stay close to safety shelters," it said, adding that the embassy was "closely monitoring" the situation.

There are about 18,000 Indians living in Israel as students, professionals, construction workers, and caregivers.

## India-U.S. ties testimony to changing world: Jaishankar

Dinakar Peri  
NEW DELHI

The India-U.S. relationship has been one policy that has "not been inconsistent or partisan" whatever the public debate on it is and the two countries are consistently beating market expectations for the past 25 years, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Friday, while acknowledging that there have been bumps and divergences. The comments came against the backdrop of recent friction in the relationship, the latest being Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia last month.

"To me, the U.S. relationship, more than any other relationship, is testimony of the changing world. I feel that often the pessimistic scenarios happen because they are behind the curve. They're not actually understanding today where the relationship is. We have bumps. I'm not saying we don't. We have issues, we have divergences. But we are consistently beating market expectations because the market is consistently behind us where this relationship is concerned, not



S. Jaishankar

now, for the last 25 years," Mr. Jaishankar said speaking at the Jasjit Singh Memorial Lecture organised by the Centre For Air Power Studies.

Days after Mr. Modi's visit to Russia in July, U.S. Ambassador Eric Garcetti cautioned that the relationship with the U.S. should "not be taken for granted" and that "in times of conflict there's no such thing as strategic autonomy".

## Narasimha Rao's role

Tracing the trajectory of the India-U.S. relationship, Mr. Jaishankar said there were opportunities in the early 1940s to 1950s and then after the 1962 war with China. "Then I have a bit of a question mark about it you can say in the [PM] Rajiv Gandhi era," he remarked, but "I think structurally we were too close to the Soviets for that

really to work. In fact, I would give more credit to [former PM] Narasimha Rao as a person who in a way, you know, freed up our system there."

"But and I think subsequently, every government has built up on it. At least that's one policy which has not been inconsistent or partisan, actually, at least where the actual policy is concerned, whatever the public debate on it is," Mr. Jaishankar noted.

Pointing out that the world has changed, American interests have changed, and so has global competition, the Union Minister said: "Our value in the world is different for the world, but for the U.S. as well. America's utility for us is also very different. That also is not a point to be forgotten."

"So a large part of, when you say grand strategy, is actually to continuously in today's parlance is to keep pressing the refresh button. Because the moment we are three years, five years out of date, we are actually not on the right track. That we are pursuing something which is outdated, which is probably not going to happen because of that."

## Supreme Court upholds validity of Tamil Nadu's Arunthathiyar quota law

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

A majority judgment of the Supreme Court on Thursday has backed the constitutional validity of a Tamil Nadu law that offered preferential treatment among the Scheduled Castes (SCs) to socially and educationally backward Arunthathiyars. A seven-judge Bench, headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, in a 6:1 ratio, held that sub-categorisation within a class was a Constitutional requirement to secure substantive equality.

"The principle of sub-classification will be applicable to the SCs if the social positions of the constituents among the castes/groups is not comparable," the judgment held. The Tamil Nadu government was represented by senior advocate Shekhar Naphade and advocates Purnima Krishna and M.F. Philip.

The Tamil Nadu State Legislature had enacted the Tamil Nadu Arunthathiyars Reservation Act, 2009, to provide the Arunthathiyars reservation in appointments or posts in



The batch of matters challenging the Tamil Nadu Arunthathiyars Reservation Act, 2009, was tagged with a batch challenging a similar law in Punjab. FILE PHOTO

State services on a preferential basis among the SCs.

## Listed castes

The Act defined Arunthathiyars to include the castes – Arunthathiyar, Chakkiliyan, Madari, Madiga, Pagadi, Thoti, and Adi Andhra – from the list of 76 SCs notified by the President under Article 341 of the Constitution.

Section 3 of the Act stipulated that 16% of the seats reserved for the SCs in educational institutions should be offered to the Arunthathiyars, if available, having regard to the social and educational backwardness of the community. Section

4 makes a similar provision for the Arunthathiyars in the recruitment to government posts.

The batch of matters challenging the Tamil Nadu Act was tagged with a batch challenging a similar law in Punjab, which gave preference to Balmikis and Mazhabi Sikhs among the SCs. A Constitution Bench of five judges referred the case to a Constitution Bench of seven judges in August 2020 for an authoritative pronouncement on the question whether States could sub-classify SCs "if the social positions of the constituents among the castes/groups is not comparable."

## BSF chief, Special Director-General sent back to parent cadres as tenures curtailed

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) approved the proposal of the Union Home Ministry to repatriate Nitin Agarwal, Director-General (D-G) of the Border Security Force (BSF), and Y.B. Khurania, Special D-G of the BSF, to their parent cadres of Kerala and Odisha, respectively.

The Ministry sent a proposal to the ACC to prematurely repatriate Mr. Agarwal, a 1989-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer on July 30, while the pro-

posal to send back Mr. Khurania, a 1990-batch IPS officer, was sent on July 26.

"The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Home Affairs for premature repatriation of Nitin Agarwal, IPS, D-G, BSF to his parent cadre with immediate effect," the government order said. Mr. Agarwal was appointed the D-G on June 12, 2023, and he had a tenure till July 30, 2026.

As Special D-G (West), Mr. Khurania was in charge of the security along the Pakistan border. On Fri-

day, Mr. Khurania arrived in Jammu on a two-day visit.

"He was briefed on operational aspects and prevailing security situation in J&K. The SDG appreciated troops dedication and professionalism in performance of duties," the BSF Jammu Frontier posted on X. A day ago, the BSF shot dead an "intruder" in the Samba border area of Jammu.

The repatriation comes amid reports of infiltration from the Jammu border, which is under the operational control of the BSF.

Since 2021, there has been a spate of terror attacks in the Jammu region.

Around a dozen security personnel have been killed in targeted attacks by armed militants who are said to have freshly infiltrated from the Jammu border in the past few months.

The attacks suggest concerted attempts to revive militancy in the Jammu region – in the Chenab Valley comprising Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban, Kathua, Udhampur and Reasi districts and south of the Pir Panjal after almost two decades.

## House torched in Manipur's Jiribam

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

A day after the Meitei and Hmar communities in Manipur's Jiribam agreed to a peace meeting to try and prevent arson and exchanges of gunfire in the district, a house in the Lalpani area was torched on Friday evening by miscreants, the police said.

They said the Meitei family occupying the house had managed to flee to safety and that no injuries or casualties were reported. The Lalpani area is dominated by the Bengali com-

munity with a few Meitei households.

Jiribam's Superintendent of Police M. Pradip Singh told *The Hindu*, "A case will be registered for arson in the matter. It appears to be an attempt to derail peace processes being attempted in Jiribam."

"Given the location, it is very unlikely that any of the parties that signed the peace pact were involved," a source said.

The peace meeting, brokered by district and security officials, was held in Assam's Cachar district on Thursday.

# Citizenship process under CAA Rules degrading, says MP

Sobhana K. Nair  
NEW DELHI

Trinamool Congress MP Mamata Thakur, the party's Matua face, denounced the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) during the Zero Hour in the Rajya Sabha on Friday, calling the process of seeking citizenship under the law "degrading" and "dehumanising".

Evoking the national unity seen at the ongoing Olympics, she denounced attempts to divide citizens or impose conditions on their citizenship.

The Matua sect was founded in what is now Bangladesh and lakhs of its members have migrated to India for decades. Many of their descendants are now being pushed to apply for formal citizenship under the CAA.

The Trinamool has been rallying against the CAA, saying its Rules require people who have been living in India for decades to renounce their Indian citizenship to apply afresh. The BJP, however, has been campaigning that the law allows groups such as Matuas to formalise their citizenship.

There has been a tepid response to its campaign,

**She says making people renounce citizenship to apply for it all over again is dehumanising**

with very few applicants so far seeking Indian citizenship under the law in West Bengal.

"Attempting to divide our citizens on grounds of religion, language, sub-national identity, caste is never right. No citizen should be served with conditions in order to pursue a life of peace in this country. We stand for natural, unconditional citizenship. We are against making citizens show any unnatural paper for that," Ms. Thakur said.

A person who has valid identification to cast their vote should not be forced to furnish documents over and over again, she argued. "Making them renounce citizenship in order to apply for citizenship all over again is degrading. Adding conditions in the name of giving citizenship, forcing them to submit ancestral documents, and refusing citizenship if they fail to do so, and sending them to detention camps is immensely dehumanising," she said.

# Governor should be a bridge between Centre and State: PM

President urges Governors to contribute to the reform process as Chancellors of universities; Modi says they can play a crucial role in the welfare of the people, particularly in tribal areas

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday urged the Governors to be an effective bridge between the Centre and the State governments.

Addressing a two-day Conference of Governors, which was inaugurated by President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Prime Minister said that the post of Governor was an important institution that could play a crucial role in the welfare of the people within the framework of the Constitution, particularly with reference to tribal areas.

"In his address, the Prime Minister urged the Governors to play the role of an effective bridge between the Centre and the State and interact with people and social organisations in a manner to co-opt those who are underprivileged," a release from the Rashtrapati Bhavan said.

President Murmu, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar and Union Home Minister Amit Shah also addressed the inaugural session.



Droupadi Murmu, Jagdeep Dhankhar, Narendra Modi, and Amit Shah at the Governors' conference, in New Delhi, on Friday. ANI

In her opening remarks, Ms. Murmu said it was crucial for the smooth functioning of democracy that various Central agencies work with better coordination across all the States.

As constitutional heads of their respective States, Governors should think how they can promote this coordination, she said.

Ms. Murmu said the agenda for the conference included carefully chosen issues that were crucial in achieving national goals. The two-day conference will cover a wide range of issues that play a critical role in not only shaping the Centre-State relations but also promoting welfare schemes for common people, the release from the

Rashtrapati Bhavan said.

The President said that deliberations of the conference would be an enriching experience for all participants and help them in their functioning.

She expressed confidence that all Governors would continue to contribute to the service and welfare of the people, doing justice to the oath taken by them.

**'New era'**  
Commenting on the implementation of three new laws related to criminal justice, Ms. Murmu said a new era of the justice system had begun in the country.

Noting that quality higher education was an intangible asset for individual

development and social change as well as innovation and economic progress, Ms. Murmu said the National Education Policy has placed emphasis on improving the accreditation and assessment system of educational institutions.

"The President also urged Governors to contribute to this reform process in their capacity as the Chancellors of State universities," the Rashtrapati Bhavan statement said.

In his address, Mr. Dhankhar urged Governors to discharge their constitutional responsibility of making people aware of social welfare schemes and the "incredible developments" that have taken place during the past decade.

"The Modi government is working towards making the coordination between the States and the Centre even more seamless to reach out to more people with services and solutions," Mr. Shah said in a post on X, adding that the Conference of Governors served as a meeting point of not only the Constitutional heads of the States but also of ideas.

## IN BRIEF



### Centre is suppressing truth on Broadcast Bill: Trinamool MP

Jawhar Sircar, Rajya Sabha member, on Friday accused the Centre of concealing information on the draft Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill after the Information and Broadcasting Ministry largely sidestepped a written query by him on the contentious law. The Bill, whose original draft was put out for public consultation last year, has had a subsequent version provided confidentially to select stakeholders. Mr. Sircar asked the government to name any "other democratic country" that subjects online content to this requirement. Minister L. Murugan did not address that query.

### Only govt. can fact-check news on Ministries: Minister

The Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, Railways, and Information & Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday acknowledged the Supreme Court's stay on the notification of the Press Information Bureau's fact check unit, set up to report alleged misinformation and fake news about the Union government. The notification "has been stayed by the honorable Supreme Court... but our point is, [for] anything related to the Government of India, only the Government of India can say whether it is a correct fact or a wrong fact," Mr. Vaishnaw said in response to a supplementary question. "That is still under contest."

# MPs demand more funds, manpower for health sector

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Lack of Central grants for the healthcare sector, NEET question paper leak, rising number of deaths among the youth from heart attack, lack of manpower, and appeal for more AIIMS-like institutions dominated Friday's discussion in the Lok Sabha on the demands for grants of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for 2024-25. Health and Family Welfare Minister J.P. Nadda is expected to present his response on August 5.

Raising concerns about young and middle-aged Indians becoming prone to various non-communicable diseases, Bangalore Rural MP C.N. Manjunath said 60% of the deaths today were caused by non-communicable diseases - the number one killer being heart attack. Those in the age group of 25-45 were becoming prone to it, Dr. Manjunath said.

# Minister blames Congress regime for problems in agriculture sector

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Friday that the "anti-farmer mentality" of the past Congress governments was the reason for the problems plaguing the agriculture sector at present.

Speaking in the Rajya Sabha during a debate on the functioning of his Ministry, he alleged that the priorities of the previous Congress governments for the sector were wrong.

"Anti-farmer mentality is in the DNA of the Congress," he said and alleged that former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru wanted to implement the "Russian model" of agriculture in India, which was opposed by farmers' leader Charan



Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan speaks in the Rajya Sabha in New Delhi, on Friday. PTI

Singh, who later became the Prime Minister. He said the policies of the Congress government led to the import of wheat from the U.S. and the lack of remunerative prices for agriculture produce. "Things have changed after Narendra Modi took over as the Prime Minister," he said.

Mr. Chouhan said the

Centre had set six priorities for the growth of the agriculture sector - increasing production, reducing input cost, providing remunerative prices, granting proper compensation in case of natural calamities, diversification and value addition in agriculture and promotion of rural farming. His reply

will continue on Monday.

On questions about a statutory guarantee for minimum support price for farmers, he said farmers sold at the MSP only when the market price of the crop was lower than the MSP. "If farmers are getting the right price, they will not sell at MSP. The market price of many crops is much higher than the MSP," he said.

At this point, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar said the problems of farmers must be understood from the right perspective, and asked the Centre to regularly raise the MSP. Mr. Chouhan replied that the Modi government was committed to providing remunerative prices to farmers by purchasing their produce at the MSP.

# Rahul says ED set to raid him; BJP says Congress creating a new narrative

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

With Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi saying the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is planning a raid against him, senior BJP leader Rajeev Chandrasekhar on Friday accused the Congress leader of trying to evade accountability for the loss of over 300 lives in the Wayanad landslides.

The war of words was started by a post by Mr. Gandhi on X, in which he said the government did not like his speech during the Budget discussion in which he had accused it of pushing the people into a "chakravayuh [a battle formation]". "Apparently, 2 in



Rahul Gandhi

I didn't like my Chakravayuh speech. ED 'insiders' tell me a raid is being planned. Waiting with open arms @dir.ed.. Chai and biscuits on me," he said. The post came in the middle of his Wayanad visit.

Mr. Chandrasekhar told presspersons: "Rahul Gandhi and the Congress have perfected the strategy

that whenever they are confronted with a tough set of questions or issues that they have no answers to, they try and wriggle out of it by creating a new narrative."

Stating that Mr. Gandhi as MP of the constituency was the "last" to reach Wayanad, Mr. Chandrasekhar said: "He [Rahul Gandhi] wants to be the centre of attention, he wants to be playing the victim card... you can do this once, you can fool people some time, [but] you cannot fool people all the time. This is nothing but a silly attempt by Rahul Gandhi to take the new story away from Wayanad and on to this make-believe imaginary attempt by the ED on him."

## 'Lack of doctors' Shivomani Akali Dal MP from Punjab Harsimart Kaur Badal noted that the existing AIIMS in her State did not have enough manpower or infrastructure.

Demanding that the Union government bring in measures to reduce the rising out-of-pocket health expenditure, Congress MP Shivaji Bandappa Kalge said the tax on medical equipment should be brought down, besides allocating more funds for the healthcare sector. "We are dealing with a situation where there is a lack of doctors in the rural sector and this needs to be corrected," he added.

Independent MP Rajesh Ranjan stressed the need for standardisation of charges for various medical investigations. All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimen MP Asaduddin Owaisi said most primary healthcare centres lacked basic infrastructure.

**KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice**  
Tender No. : e-tender SE/PHC/KKD/19/2024-25, e-tender SE/PHC/KKD/20/2024-25, JJM - Wayanad District - 1, CVSSS to AMBALAVAYAL, NENMENI, POOTHADY and PULPALLY pts and Augmentation of WSS to KANIYAMBETTA pt-Construction and commissioning of 25 MLD WTP and allied works 2, CVSSS to Moopamed, Meppadi and Ythiri Pts - Supply, Laying, of R/WPM, Pumps, Transformer & Design, Construction and Commissioning of 15 MLD WTP in Meppadi GP, EMD : Rs. 5,00,000/- Tender Fee : Rs. 16,540/- + 18 % GST. Last Date for Submitting Tender : 16-08-2024, 04.00 pm. Phone : 0495-2371046. Website : www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in  
KWA-JB-GL-6-332-2024-25  
Superintending Engineer, PH Circle, Kozhikode

**RAJASTHAN STATE HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY, JAIPUR**  
GOVERNMENT OF RAJASTHAN  
No. F.7(19)RSHA/WB/HAM-01/76/2023-24/0-769 Date: 31/7/24  
NIT No.09/2024-25  
INVITATION OF BIDS FOR TOLL COLLECTION  
Bids for Collection of user fee through fee collecting agency on the basis of open competitive bidding in the state of rajasthan at the toll plazas located at design PADAMPUR-RAISINGH NAGAR, km 39.00 to 62.920 & SATTASAR-BIKANER, km 198.500 to 267.530 (Package: WB/RSHDP-II/Annulity-01/Toll) are invited from interested bidders upto 11:00 AM on 14.08.2024.  
Other particulars of bid may be visited on the procurement portal (http://eproc.rajjasthan.gov.in, https://sppp.rajjasthan.gov.in) of the state. The estimated value of Annual Remittance is Rs. 23.14 Cr.  
UBN No. PWD2425SL0B03686  
Email: ho.rsha@rajasthan.gov.in Member (WC&O), RSHA, Jaipur  
Tel: +91-141-2223547 DIPRC/6912/2024

**कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, वृत्त दोसा**  
क्रमांक-1567-87 दिनांक: 29.07.2024  
निविदा सूचना संख्या-02/2024-25  
राजस्थान के राज्यपाल कार्यालय की ओर से वृत्त दोसा में केन्द्रीय सड़क इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर निधि योजना के अन्तर्गत चौकीकरण एवं सुदुर्गम क्षेत्रों का निर्माण कार्य के निष्पत्तिगत कार्यों में एक वर्ष का कार्य करने के लिए 1 कार्य उपलब्ध है। निम्नलिखित विभाग राजस्थान में पंजीकृत संवेदकों एवं राज्य सरकार/केन्द्र सरकार के अधिकृत संवेदकों/केन्द्रीय लोक निर्माण विभाग/सड़क एवं पूर संघार विभाग/रेवेन्यू विभाग में पंजीकृत संवेदकों, जो कि राजस्थान सरकार के ए. ए. ए. अर्थात् संवेदकों के समकक्ष हैं; से निष्पत्ति प्राप्त में हैं-सोपानबद्ध प्रक्रिया से ऑन लाइन निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा से सम्बंधित विवरण वेब साइट http://diprc.rajjasthan.gov.in पर http://sppp.rajjasthan.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है।  
निविदा सूची संख्या-02/2024-25  
NIB code PWD2425WLB03598  
इच्छुक संवेदकों को अपने डिजिटल हस्ताक्षर के माध्यम से वेब साइट http://eproc.rajjasthan.gov.in पर रजिस्टर्ड होना आवश्यक है।  
(एच.एस. मीना) अधीक्षण अभियन्ता सा.नि.वि. वृत्त दोसा  
DIPRC/6845/2024

**कार्यालय अधीक्षणी अभियन्ता सा.नि.वि. विद्युत खण्ड प्रथम, जोधपुर**  
क्रमांक : अ.अ.वि.1/के.नि.वि.2024-25/949 दिनांक : 29.07.2024  
निविदा सूचना संख्या 10/2024-25  
NIB Code : PWD2425A0952  
राजस्थान के राज्यपाल कार्यालय की ओर से विद्युत निवृत्तिकरण कार्य हेतु सर्वसम्पन्न निविदा विभाग राजस्थान में संपूर्ण अर्थात् पंजीकृत संवेदकों द्वारा विद्युत कार्य हेतु 3-अंशों के माध्यम से निविदा प्रपत्र में एक कार्य का कार्य है। निविदा से संबंधित विवरण वेबसाइट www.diprc.rajjasthan.gov.in पर http://www.sppp.rajjasthan.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है।  
निविदा की कुल राशि ₹ 168.78 लाख  
अधिकतम एकल कार्य की राशि 117.54 लाख  
कुल परीक्षित राशि अनुमानित खर्च की दो प्रतिशत अर्थात् निम्नानुसार  
निविदा आवेदन / दस्तावेज करने की तिथि व समय 29/07/2024 से 10/08/2024 तक कार्य 06.00 बजे तक  
ऑनलाइन निविदा जमा करने की तिथि व समय 29/07/2024 से 10/08/2024 तक कार्य 06.00 बजे तक  
लकड़ी/निविदा बिल्ट कोटेशन की तिथि व समय 12/08/2024 अर्थात् 11.00 बजे से  
श्री-निविदा सॉलिंग की तिथि व समय 07/08/2024 को दोपहर 1.00 बजे से अतिरिक्त अधिकृत सा.नि.वि. विद्युत खण्ड प्रथम जोधपुर कार्यालय में  
1 PWD2425WLB03599  
2 PWD2425WLB03600  
3 PWD2425WLB03601  
4 PWD2425WLB03602  
अधीक्षणी अभियन्ता सा.नि.वि. विद्युत खण्ड प्रथम, जोधपुर  
DIPRC/6837/2024

**सी.एस.आई.आर.-भारतीय रासायनिक जीवविज्ञान संस्थान**  
CSIR-INDIAN INSTITUTE OF CHEMICAL BIOLOGY  
(COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC & INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH)  
4, Raja S.C. Mullick Road, Jadavpur, Kolkata - 700032 (W.B.) India  
SHORT TENDER NOTICE  
CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Biology, Kolkata intends to invite online tenders (e-Tenders) from eligible contractors / firms for the following works at CSIR-IICB, Campuses, Kolkata:  
Name of Work e-Tender No. Estimated cost (₹)  
Repair and Renovation of Different Rooms (2024-2025) Phase-1 at CSIR-IICB, Jadavpur campus, Kolkata - 700032 - (Civil and Electrical Work) and External and Internal common area painting of RL block at CSIR-IICB, Salt Lake campus, Kolkata - 700091. 2024\_CSIR\_203009\_1 75.12 lakhs  
N.B.: Publication in CPP, Date - 30th July, 2024 and Time - 4.00 PM. For further details about eligibility criteria and other information visit websites https://www.iicb.res.in/tender.html/ and https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app

**Himachal Pradesh Road and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited**  
State Roads Project, Nirman Bhawan, Nigam Vihar Shimla-171002  
Fax: 0177-2620663; Tel: 0177-2620663/2627602, E-mail: pdsrp-hp@nic.in  
NOTICE INVITING BID  
The Director (Projects) HPRIDCL, Nirman Bhawan, Nigam Vihar, Shimla-171002, Himachal Pradesh, India invites the Request for Proposal (RFP) from Consultancy Services for Construction Supervision of Balance Cantilever Bridge at Garkhal in Himachal Pradesh.  
Name of Work Total Duration of Project Tender Fee (in Rs.) Date of availability of bid document Last date & Time for submission of Bids  
Consultancy Services for Construction Supervision of Balance Cantilever Bridge at Garkhal in Himachal Pradesh. 24 Months 5900/- (With 18% GST) August 12, 2024 August 27, 2024  
RFP will be available on the official web site of HPRIDCL under link https://himachalservices.nic.in/hpridcl/HPSRTP.html  
Any further addendum/Corrigendum to this Request for Proposal document shall be available to all interested firms on the same web link. Proposal must be delivered in written form to the address below (in person, or by post) by August 27, 2024 at 15:00 hours (IST) positively.  
Note:  
1. Bid through any other mode shall not be entertained.  
2. Please note that the Executing Agency reserves the right to accept or reject all or any of the Bids without assigning any reason whatsoever.  
Director (Projects), State Roads Project, HPRIDCL, Nirman Bhawan, Shimla-171002  
HP / 0248/2024-2025

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA** email : serwsbd2003@yahoo.com  
**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SUNABEDA.**  
No : 3119 / 1<sup>st</sup> CORRIGENDUM Date: 01/08/2024  
In continuation to this office Bid Identification No- C-CERWCSBD Online-06/2024-25 invited vide this office Tender Call Notice No. 2857 Dtd. 12.07.2024 partial modification of TCN has been made as follows:-  
Sl No. Item Time Schedule as per original TCN Time Schedule as per Corrigendum notice  
1 Availability of Tender online for bidding 19.07.2024 at 11.00 AM to 02.08.2024 up to 5.00 Pm Extended to 20.08.2024 up to 5.00 PM  
2 Date and Time of seeking tender clarification if any 01.08.2024 up to 2.00 PM 17.08.2024 up to 2.00 PM  
3 Date & Time of opening of tender (Technical Bid) 03.08.2024 at 11.00 AM 21.08.2024 at 11.00 AM  
4 Date & Time of opening of tender (Price Bid) Will be intimated later on to the successful bidders Will be intimated later on to the successful bidders  
All other terms and conditions will remain unaltered.  
Chief Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sunabeda.  
O-161: OPR-2518211/0011/2425

**IN BRIEF**



**Hoarding collapses in Thane; 2 injured, 3 vehicles damaged**

A hoarding collapsed on Friday morning at Kalyan in Maharashtra's Thane, injuring two persons and damaging three vehicles. Kalyan Tehsildar Sachin Shejal confirmed that heavy rain with gusty winds were the cause for the collapse that happened around 10.15 a.m. at Sahajanand Chowk. "We will initiate action against the erring contractor for failing to adhere to the guidelines laid out for billboards and hoardings," Kalyan-Dombivli Municipal Corporation Commissioner Indurani Jakhad said. This has happened in just a few months after the hoarding collapse in Ghatkopar on May 13, claiming 17 lives and injuring over 80 individuals.

**Plea in SC on blood donation by transgender persons**

The Supreme Court on Friday issued a formal notice to the Union government in a petition challenging the exclusion of gay persons, transgender persons, and women sex workers from donating blood. A three-judge Bench also sought responses from the National AIDS Control Organisation and the National Blood Transfusion Council. The petition has questioned the validity of Clause 12 of the 'Guidelines for Blood Donor Selection & Blood Donor Referral, 2017' issued by the National Blood Transfusion Council and the National AIDS Control Organisation.

**India selects 2 crew members for Axiom-4 mission to ISS**

Shubhanshu Shukla and Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, Group Captains in the IAF, will train in U.S.; experience gained during the mission will be beneficial for human space programme, says ISRO

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

Indian astronaut-designates Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla and Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair have been shortlisted to go to the U.S. to train for the Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station (ISS).

The National Mission Assignment Board has recommended them as prime and back-up mission pilots for the mission. Group Captain Shukla will be the prime mission pilot and Group Captain Nair will be the back-up.

The Axiom-4 mission is the fourth private astronaut mission to the International Space Station.

The India-U.S. joint statement during the state visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the U.S. in June 2023 envisioned a joint ISRO-NASA effort to the ISS.

Towards the goal of mounting a joint ISRO-NASA effort, the Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC) of the ISRO has entered into a Space Flight Agree-



Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair (left) and Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ment with the NASA-identified service provider Axiom Space Inc., U.S., for its upcoming Axiom-4 mission to the ISS, the ISRO said.

**Scientific research**

The agency added that the assigned crew members will be finally approved to fly to the International Space Station by the Multi-lateral Crew Operations Panel. They will commence training for the mission from the first week of August, it said.

"During the mission,

the Gaganyatri will undertake selected scientific research and technology demonstration experiments on board the ISS as well as engage in space outreach activities. The experiences gained during this mission will be beneficial for the Indian Human Space Program and it will also strengthen human space flight cooperation between ISRO and NASA," the ISRO said.

Group Captain Shukla and Group Captain Nair are among the four selected for India's Gaganyaan mission.

Group Captain Shukla is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy and was commissioned on June 17, 2006 in the fighter stream of the IAF. He is a fighter combat leader and a test pilot with approximately 2,000 hours of flying experience. He has flown a variety of aircraft, including Su-30 MKI, MiG-21, MiG-29, Jaguar, Hawk, Dornier, and An-32.

Group Captain Nair is an alumnus of the NDA and recipient of the Sword of Honour at the Air Force Academy.

He was commissioned on December 19, 1998 in the fighter stream of the IAF. He is a Cat A flying instructor and a test pilot with approximately 3,000 hours of flying experience.

He has flown a variety of aircraft, including Su-30 MKI, MiG-21, MiG-29, Hawk, Dornier, and An-32. He is also an alumnus of the United States Staff College and a DS at the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, and the Flying Instructors School, Tambaram. He has commanded a premier fighter Su-30 squadron.

**Landslides, rain cause disruptions in north Bengal**

**Movurie Som**  
KOLKATA

Landslides and torrential rain pummeled northern West Bengal on Thursday, resulting in multiple road blocks on National Highway-10 and closures in Kalimpong.

The latest incident corroborates data from the Geological Survey of India (GSI) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on the region's exceptional vulnerability to landslide-related calamities.

**NH 10 shut**

Traffic was shut on National Highway 10 on Thursday, a day after it was reopened for the movement of light vehicles following a prolonged month-long closure in July. This National Highway, prone to landslides and damage due to surges in water levels in Teesta river, is considered critical in connecting Kalimpong in the State's northern region to Sikkim by road.

Places such as Melli, 27 Mile, 29 Mile, Ravijhora, and Birikdara in Kalimpong experienced road closures due to landslides on Thursday.

According to Kalimpong

district authorities, heavy rain also slowed down operations surrounding debris removal from roads and resumption of vehicular traffic movement.

Parts of the National Highway which were recently restored after landslides in the last two months, were again damaged under the impact of rubble and boulders on Thursday.

**Alert issued**

The GSI's National Landslide Forecasting Centre has issued landslide forecasts in places across Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts with an orange ("high") alert between Friday and Saturday and a yellow ("moderate") alert between Saturday and Sunday, on its online portal.

Of the 3,782 landslides that took place in India between 2015 and 2022, West Bengal comes second only to Kerala with a total of 376, show GSI data. Kerala tops the list with 2,239 incidents during the given period, according to a recent reply given in the Lok Sabha by Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Jitendra Singh.

**Restaurant 'Amaravati' to come up at YSRCP office in Kuppam!**

**K. Umashanker**  
KUPPAM

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) office in Kuppam, the constituency of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu in Chittoor district, which till recently buzzed with heightened political activity, is all set to make way for a multi-cuisine Indian restaurant titled, 'Amaravati'.

The office located at the entrance of Kuppam town and close to the government hospital was the party's busiest nerve centre during 2014-2024.

Even when Mr. Naidu was the Chief Minister from 2014-19, the office had attracted a large number of cadre from all over the constituency spread over Kuppam, Ramakuppam, Shantipuram, and Gudupalle mandals.

Party strongman and former Minister Peddiredi Ramachandra Reddy's

repeated vows to defeat Mr. Naidu in Kuppam had generated immense political heat, which made the office a hub.

**Poster announcement**

A few days ago, a flexi came up on the closed gates of the office announcing that a restaurant would be coming soon. Some temporary structures of the party were being demolished to accommodate the restaurant. In the recent days, two dozen cadre of the YSRCP, who included MPTC and ZPTC members, and municipal councillors, joined the TDP.

In this backdrop, admirers of Mr. Jagan attributed the "glory and decline" of the party office to Mr. Ramachandra Reddy, saying had he not created hype of defeating Mr. Naidu, the closure of Kuppam office would have gone unnoticed.

**Mamata urges Nirmala to withdraw GST on insurance**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday wrote to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and urged her to withdraw 18% GST on life insurance and health insurance premiums.

She said the imposition of the GST on premiums increases the financial burden on the common people. "With deep anguish, I am writing to you regarding the imposition of 18% GST on life insurance and health insurance policies/products and the withdrawal of deductions in the new tax regime under Sections 80C and 80D of the Income Tax Act, which, to me, are highly anti-people in nature," she said.

The letter came a day after Ms. Banerjee threatened protests if the Union government does not roll back the decision.

**Cabinet approves 8 high-speed road corridor projects**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Friday approved eight national high-speed road corridor projects totalling 936 km at a cost of ₹50,000 crore. They include a four-lane ring road for Ayodhya for pilgrims visiting the Ram Mandir and a bypass for Guwahati that will connect various cities in the north-eastern region.

The pilgrim town of Ayodhya will get a 68-km-long four-lane access-controlled ring road at a total capital cost of ₹3,935 crore enabling seamless connectivity to tourists arriving from airports in Lucknow and Ayodhya as well as major railway stations.

The Cabinet has also okayed a 214-km six-lane high-speed corridor between Tharad and Ahmedabad in Gujarat, which will provide connectivity between two key national cor-

ridors connecting Amritsar with Jamnagar and Delhi and Mumbai Expressway. This will provide seamless connectivity for freight vehicles originating from the industrial regions of Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan to the major ports in Maharashtra, the government said in a press release.

Guwahati will get a 121-km bypass to be developed at a total cost of ₹5,729 crore. A major bridge across the Brahmaputra will also be constructed as part of the project. The road will provide seamless connectivity to long-distance traffic plying on National Highway 27, which is the gateway to the north-east, the statement said.

Agra will get a national high-speed corridor which will connect it with Gwalior. It will be 88 km in length and will be developed at a cost of ₹4,613 crore.

**ICMR got ₹172 cr. from Bharat Biotech for Covaxin: Nadda**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has received ₹172 crore as royalty from Bharat Biotech International Ltd. for jointly developing Covaxin, an indigenously developed vaccine for COVID-19, Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda said during Question Hour in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

The Minister said that after the Union government objected to the failure to list ICMR as a co-owner and co-inventor during the filing of the patent for Covaxin, Bharat Biotech had accepted its mistake and rectified it. "Now ICMR, National Institute of Virology, along with three scientists are co-owners and co-inventors of Covaxin," Mr. Nadda said.

He informed the House that India had given Covaxin supplies to seven other countries under the Vaccine Maitri programme.



Covaxin was jointly developed by the ICMR, NIV, and Bharat Biotech.

₹20 crore towards the Phase 3 clinical trial which involved funding 25 sites for screening and recruiting 25,800 participants.

**Patent application**

Responding to Trinamool Congress member Sougata Roy, who had asked whether the government took any punitive action against Bharat Biotech for not mentioning the names of ICMR and NIV in the patent application, the Minister noted that there had been a joint memorandum of understanding between the ICMR, the NIV and Bharat Biotech for the vaccine's development.

Initially, when Bharat Biotech filed the patent application, it only included its own name. As soon as the government and the ICMR came to know about it, "we questioned them", Mr. Nadda said and added that after the objection was raised, the application was corrected by Bharat Biotech.

**THE CROSSWORD+ 14244** (set by Arden)

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

SCAN TO PLAY

- 13 Hard soil, not right, land not cultivated (5)
  - 14 A way to fall in line is more palatable (7)
  - 16 Paints the school colours, all of them in the end accept title (7)
  - 18 Four emptied, double that consignment (7)
  - 20 Clear order, one million to recover (7)
  - 22 Work and exercise initially did put one to sleep (5)
  - 24 Ten photos developed then and there (2,3-4)
  - 26 Loyal caller exposed the big man (9)
  - 27 Speech - PM gets India backing (5)
  - 28 Follow what the photographer wants to do (3,3,7)
- Down**
- 2 Star workers can cover 100 square metres (7)
  - 3 Jump over, breaking law - that's huge (9)
  - 4 Tea - collect from bottom to top (5)
  - 5 "No vehicle came up" - true version of his story (9)
  - 6 Change of heart - a desire to be under water (5)
  - 7 Upgrade? Leave out the banks (7)
  - 8 Auto foundries struggling, clueless (3,3,2,5)
  - 9 Simultaneously after a damage, estimate them (2,3,4,4)
  - 15 Reason to limit booze (9)
  - 17 St. Michael blessed old man of science (9)
  - 19 Get rid of old dal in Indian kitchen (7)
  - 21 "He wants a job as a salesman", they say... (7)
  - 23 ...till it follows one, for example (5)
  - 25 Foreign tourist or missing tribesman? (5)

**SUDOKU**

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

**Solution to previous puzzle**

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

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

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

**MADGALDEEP** SCENT 3in1

PREMIUM QUALITY INCENSE PERFUME LIKE FRAGRANCES

**FAITH**  
**Aadi 18: flood of devotion**

Faith in the higher being and social consciousness have always been the hallmark of south Indians from time immemorial. Natural resources, especially rivers, are revered and treated as divinity itself. Tiruvalluvar's Kural sums it up. The poet says, "If the rains were to fail there would be no more offerings and festivals to the Gods." River Cauvery is deified and treated as a goddess and worshipped, especially on the 18th day of the Tamil month of Aadi, said Dr. Sudha Seshayyan in a discourse. On this day, the river swells and flows gracefully through the delta and the feeling of piety and the happy emotions it generates in the residents of this area is unquantifiable.

The south-west monsoon, originating in the Western Ghats, fills up water bodies and flows southwards. For eons, dwellers near the rivers Cauvery, Palar, Vaigai and Tamirabarani have prayed primarily for rains, for without rainfall, there can be no sustenance of life on earth. The upswing of devotional fervour is triggered on Aadi 18 since the river is viewed as no less than a mother who nourishes her offspring. The swollen river is a sign that the future is secure. Such is the personalised characteristic of this day that men and women hold the river to be 'pregnant' and offer bangles, auspicious turmeric and hold a ritual one normally associates with pregnant women.

**IN BRIEF**



**Toyota reopens bookings for Innova Hycross models**

Toyota Kirloskar Motor has reopened bookings for the Innova Hycross ZX & ZX (O) models. Owing to high-demand, the bookings for these top-end grades were put on hold temporarily. "During this period, bookings for other grades of the Innova Hycross, both hybrid and gasoline, continued unabated. With streamlining and enhanced supply, the waiting period has been reduced and the bookings for Innova Hycross top-end grades commenced," the company said.

**Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Q1 net rises 10% on asset quality**

Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd., (TMB) reported standalone net profit for the June quarter rose 10% to ₹287 crore on improvement in asset quality and interest income. Interest income rose to ₹1,281 crore from ₹1,156 crore and non-interest income by ₹67 crore to ₹234 crore, the private sector lender said. Net interest income grew by 10% to ₹567 crore. Net interest margin increased to 4.12% from 4%. Gross NPAs slid 12 bps to 1.44% while net NPAs contracted by 1 bps to 0.65%.

**U.S. FDA issues 3 observations to Gland Pharma's facility**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (U.S. FDA) issued a Form 483 with three observations to Gland Pharma post inspection of the generic injectable-focused company's Pashamylaram facility in Hyderabad. The observations are neither repeat observations nor related to data integrity. The corrective and preventive actions for the observations will be submitted to the U.S. FDA within the stipulated period, Gland Pharma said in a filing on Friday.

**Sensex, Nifty slip over 1% led by sell-off in auto, steel stocks**

Weaker-than-expected U.S. data, with unemployment rate rising to 4.3% in July amid a significant slowdown in hiring, triggered a global slump with the contagion effect not sparing Indian bourses

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MUMBAI

Reversing the bullish trend, benchmark stock indices slipped by more than 1% on Friday led by a sell-off in auto and steel stocks, after weaker-than-expected U.S. jobs data triggered a global equities slump.

The S&P BSE Sensex witnessed a decline of 885.60 points, or 1.08%, to 80,981.95. Sensex stocks that lost the most included Maruti down 4.63%, Tata Motors (4.17%), JSW Steel (3.66%), Tata Steel (2.97%),



**Global wobble:** Equity investors become poorer by ₹4.4 lakh crore as markets crashed. REUTERS

L&T (2.91%) and M&M (2.84%). The NSE Nifty-50 index slid 293.20 points, or 1.17%, to 24,717.70, a day after it had crossed the 25,000-point mark.

Most sectors mirrored the benchmark's decline

and the broader indices also fell each losing half-a-percent, an analyst said.

"Today, our markets followed the trend of world equity markets, which closed with a massive drop in the last few days," Amol Athawale, VP-Technical Research, Kotak Securities said commenting on the slide in stock indices.

"They were down due to weak economy-related data as well as disappointing quarterly numbers. However, our markets held up relatively better than world markets, which fell by over 1.50%."

**Unemployment rate hits 4.3% in U.S. as job growth slows**

**Reuters**  
WASHINGTON

The U.S. unemployment rate jumped to near a three-year high of 4.3% in July amid a significant slowdown in hiring, heightening fears the labour market was deteriorating and potentially making the economy vulnerable to a recession.

The increase in the unemployment rate from 4.1% in June marked the fourth straight monthly increase, the U.S. Labor Department reported on Friday. It has risen from a five-decade low of 3.4% in April 2023. The labour market is slowing, driven by weak hiring, rather than layoffs, as the Federal Reserve's interest rate increases in 2022 and 2023 weigh on demand.

The employment report also showed the increase in annual wages last month was the smallest in more than three years, effectively sealing the case for the U.S. central bank to cut interest rates in September.

"The latest snapshot of the labour market is consistent with a slowdown, not necessarily a recession," said Jeffrey Roach, chief economist at LPL Financial. "However, early warning signs suggest further weakness. If [it]... weakens further, markets will likely price in three cuts this year."

Nonfarm payrolls rose by 1,4,000 jobs after rising by a downwardly revised 1,79,000 in June, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics said.

**MARKETS**

**MARKET WATCH**

	FRIDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	80,982	-1.08
US Dollar	83.72	0.01
Gold	72,850	-0.48
Brent oil	77.24	-3.67

**NIFTY 50**

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3160.90	-56.35
Adani Ports	1588.00	-2.15
Apollo Hosp	6710.15	-3.75
Asian Paints	3106.70	-7.35
Axis Bank	1160.85	-11.45
Bajaj Auto	9616.20	-114.30
Bajaj Finserv	1623.45	-11.35
Bajaj Finance	6725.00	-46.65
Bharti Airtel	1493.80	-11.70
BPCL	347.10	-2.00
Britannia Ind	5730.35	-9.80
Cipla	1528.80	-17.40
Coal India	524.50	-15.90
Divis Lab	4991.25	73.35
Dr Reddy's Lab	6964.15	76.20
Eicher Motors	4726.70	-242.10
Grasim Ind	2706.80	-60.20
HCL Tech	1609.30	-31.25
HDFC Bank	1659.15	20.35
HDFC Life	707.40	-6.20
Hero MotoCorp	5274.20	-97.65
Hindalco	648.05	-25.45
Hind Unilever	2692.55	-23.00
IICI Bank	1196.55	-13.55
IndusInd Bank	1404.30	-15.55
Infosys	1821.20	-31.40
ITC	489.10	-4.60
JSW Steel	899.55	-35.00
Kotak Bank	1803.45	10.80
L&T	3665.70	-113.60
LTIMindtree Ltd.	5509.90	-169.00
M&M	2749.65	-78.75
Maruti Suzuki	12726.40	-632.65
NestleIndia	2495.10	11.10
NTPC	419.70	-3.75
ONGC	330.10	-11.65
PowerGrid Corp	358.25	-2.85
Reliance Ind	2998.65	-31.95
SBI Life	1749.90	-22.35
State Bank	847.85	-14.80
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2992.10	2.85
Sun Pharma	1731.65	16.45
TataConsumerProduct	1193.65	-14.70
Tata Motors	1096.65	-47.75
Kotak Bank	158.22	-4.84
TCS	4283.05	-114.05
Tech Mahindra	1507.70	-36.75
Titan	3462.35	-6.00
UltraTech Cement	11764.50	-220.00
Wipro	502.15	-19.40

**EXCHANGE RATES**

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on August 02

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.55	83.87
Euro	90.51	90.85
British Pound	106.48	106.89
Japanese Yen (100)	56.07	56.29
Chinese Yuan	11.60	11.64
Swiss Franc	95.96	96.33
Singapore Dollar	62.74	62.99
Canadian Dollar	60.20	60.44
Malaysian Ringgit	18.57	18.66
Australian Dollar	54.42	54.63

Source: Indian Bank

**'Elevated, broad-based food inflation to force RBI to hold'**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MUMBAI

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which will be meeting from August 6-8, would likely keep policy rates unchanged on account of elevated food inflation, economists at Barclays India & Goldman Sachs Economics Research said in separate notes.

"Ending upward food price pressure on headline inflation would likely keep the MPC cautious," Shreya Sodhani and Amruta Ghare of Barclays wrote.

"We expect the MPC to keep policy settings unchanged in a 4-2 vote. With no urgency to cut rates given steady growth, we see a risk of rate cuts being delayed beyond December," they added.

"The MPC has lots to digest since the last meeting in June: food price pressures halted the disinflationary trend in the headline rate in June, the Union Budget maintained its commitment to fiscal consolidation, and the U.S. Fed is now hinting at a September cut. Domestic growth

indicators remain broadly steady, which should be taken as a source of comfort by the MPC," the Barclays economists wrote.

Goldman Sachs economists stated that elevated and broad-based food inflation had kept H1 calendar year 2024 headline inflation near 5%.

"Going forward, even though a high base... is going to pull headline inflation down towards 4% in Q3, there are upside risks to food inflation due to an uneven monsoon," the economists added.

**'SEBI targets reduction in time taken to fundraise'**

**Reuters**  
MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India is working to streamline the fundraising process for firms and simplifying IPO documents for investors, Chairperson Madhavi Puri Buch said on Friday.

SEBI is working to merge rights issues and preferential allotments to expedite fundraising, Ms. Buch said, adding it would cut the time companies need to raise funds by half.

**Rane Holdings Q1 net surges 61% to ₹19.5 cr.**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Rane Holdings Ltd. (RHL) reported consolidated net profit rose 61% from a year earlier to ₹19.5 crore.

Revenue from operations contracted by 7% to ₹831 crore, the holding company of the Rane group said in statement.

Revenue from Indian original equipment customers grew by 9% supported by strong growth in passenger vehicle segment, while revenue from Indian aftermarket segment decreased by 1%.

**Global revenue dips**

Rane Holdings' revenue from international customers decreased by 17% predominantly on account of



divestment of Rane Light Metal Casting Inc.'s business.

On an organic basis, it declined by 5% due to end of certain customer programme for steering and occupant safety products.

The board approved reappointment of Vice Chairman Harish Lakshman as Joint Managing Director for a period of five years from August 1.

**'CCI procures 33 lakh bales cotton at MSP'**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
COIMBATORE

The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) has procured 33 lakh bales of cotton at Minimum Support Price (MSP) from farmers during the current cotton season that will end next month.

CCI CMD Lalit Kumar Gupta told *The Hindu* that it holds two e-auctions every day - one for textile mills and another for all buyers. The offtake by mills was low reportedly because of yarn stocks with the mills and slowdown in demand. It sold only 25,000-30,000 bales of cotton for almost 25 days. However, the sales picked up on Thursday when it sold 20,000 bales. The CCI currently holds al-



most 20 lakh bales stock.

"We need to be prepared for the next cotton season (that will start in October) as we expect heavy MSP operations," Mr. Kumar said.

In order to boost sales to textile mills, the CCI allows the mills to take delivery in 60 days from August 1 and has appealed to the mills to cover their stock requirements for the current cotton season.

**Set quarterly revenue record in India: Cook**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

Apple, the Cupertino-based iPhone maker, on Friday said it saw record revenue growth across more than two dozen geographies, including India in the June-ended quarter.

Apple reported a new revenue record of \$85.8 billion, up 5% from a year earlier, and better than what it had expected. EPS grew in double digits to \$1.40 and achieved a record for the June quarter, according to CEO Tim Cook.

"We also set quarterly revenue records in more than two dozen countries and regions," he said.

**NCLAT okays Byju's-BCCI pact, sets aside insolvency order**

**Sanjay Vijayakumar**  
CHENNAI

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), Chennai accepted the settlement agreement between Byju's and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and set aside the order directing insolvency proceedings against Biju's parent Think and Learn Private Limited.

National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Bengaluru ordered insolvency proceedings against Think & Learn on July 16 in a case filed by BCCI claiming a default of ₹158 crore.

Byju Raveendran, suspended director, shareholder and promoter of the edtech firm, moved an ap-



peal before NCLAT.

Riju Raveendran, brother of Byju Raveendran and the largest shareholder of Think & Learn, offered to pay from personal funds.

He said while ₹50 crore had already been paid via RTGS, ₹25 crore would be paid on August 2 through RTGS and a sum of ₹83 crore would be paid on or before August 9 via RTGS.

The lenders opposed the settlement proposal questioning the source of funds alleging it was tainted money and argued settlement to the BCCI was a preferential transaction violating the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

In 2021, U.S. lenders, represented by Glas Trust, disbursed \$1.2 billion to Byju's Alpha, a step-down subsidiary of Think and Learn and a missing \$533 million of the amount was the subject matter of a dispute between the parties before the Delaware Court.

In his undertaking to NCLAT, Riju Raveendran said his proposal was not in violation of any order and it has nothing to do with the \$533 million.

# INDEPENDENCE DAY

**SPECIAL ISSUE DATED 9<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2024**

**Dive into the Spirit of Patriotism and Freedom**

Independence timeline

Nehru's 'Trust with Destiny'

Unsung heroes

Stories & activity sheets

Book Monster's pick

Drawings & poems

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## ABUJA

## At least 13 dead as protesters hit Nigerian streets over govt. policies



At least 13 persons died in protests over economic hardship in Nigeria on Thursday, according to Amnesty International, which accused security forces of killing peaceful demonstrators. Thousands took to the streets in cities across Nigeria to protest against government policies and the high cost of living. AFP

## WASHINGTON

## U.S. sues TikTok over privacy violations of children under 13



The U.S. Justice Department filed a lawsuit against TikTok and parent company ByteDance for failing to protect children's privacy on the social media app. The government said TikTok violated a law that requires services aimed at children to obtain parental consent to collect personal information from users under age 13. REUTERS

## SYDNEY

## Australia blames 'serious failures' for Israeli strike on WCK convoy



An Israeli strike that killed seven charity workers in a Gaza aid convoy was the result of "mistaken identification" and a raft of other serious failures, the Australian government found in a report on Friday. An Australian woman was among the group of seven World Central Kitchen staff killed by a Israeli strike in April. AFP

## CARACAS

## Opposition headquarters invaded in Venezuela, govt. claims coup bid



Venezuela, the movement headed by Venezuela's opposition leader Maria Corina Machado, on Friday said its headquarters was vandalised amid ongoing tensions over a disputed presidential election, as the country's Foreign Minister said the U.S. was at the forefront of what the government says is a coup attempt. REUTERS

## Harris secures Democratic presidential nomination

Agence France-Presse  
WASHINGTON

U.S. Vice-President Kamala Harris effectively secured the Democratic party's presidential nomination on Friday, confirming her rise to party standard bearer in November's showdown against Republican Donald Trump.

Ms. Harris was the sole candidate on the ballot of nearly 4,000 party convention delegates. She will be officially crowned later this month.

No other Democrats stepped forward to challenge her elevation to the top of the ticket, making her confirmation as the first Black and South Asian woman ever to secure a major party's nomination a formality.

## Slain Hamas chief buried in Qatar amid vows of revenge

Haniyeh's death will only make Hamas more determined to continue its fight for a free Palestine, says Khaled Meshaal, his predecessor; the Islamist militant group calls for 'a day of furious rage'

Agence France-Presse  
Reuters  
DOHA

Mourners and supporters bid farewell on Friday in Qatar to Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh after his killing in Tehran, blamed on Israel, has heightened regional tensions as the Gaza war dragged on. Thousands of people gathered at the Gulf emirate's largest mosque, where Haniyeh's casket, draped in a Palestinian flag, was taken before leaving again for burial in Lusak, north of Doha.

Haniyeh's predecessor Khaled Meshaal spoke at the ceremony, saying the slain leader had "served



Final adieu: Senior Hamas official Khalil al-Hayya, centre, praying near the coffins of Ismail Haniyeh and his bodyguard on Friday. AP

his cause, his people".

Mr. Meshaal said his death would only make the group more determined to continue its fight for a free Palestine. There would be

no concessions on its principles and no recognition of Israel, he said.

"Palestine will remain from the river to the sea...and the Zionists (Is-

rael) have no place on the land of Palestine, regardless of how many they kill of us," Mr. Meshaal said in a video released by Hamas.

"Our enemies don't learn the lesson, they have been killing our leaders for over 100 years, what happened? When a leader ascends (to heaven) another leader comes," he said.

Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told Reuters by phone: "Our message to the occupation (Israel) today is that you are sinking deep in the mud and your end is getting closer than ever. The blood of Haniyeh will change all equations."

Hamas called for a "day of furious rage".

## India faces 'dilemma' amid rising Iran-Israel tensions over Ismail Haniyeh's killing

## NEWS ANALYSIS

Suhasini Haidar  
NEW DELHI

India's silence for another day on rising tensions between Iran and Israel over the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh reflects its "dilemma" in trying to balance ties with both countries, say experts. The assassination of Mr. Haniyeh, the political chief of the group that carried out the October 7 terror attacks in Israel, who was also Hamas's lead negotiator with Israel and other countries on a possible ceasefire deal and hostage release negotiations that have failed to fructify for months, is likely to put a pause on the peace process under way.

While the Ministry of External Affairs has put out a travel advisory for Indians in Israel and Lebanon, and is likely to update travel advisories for other parts of the region, sources said there would be no statement on the Haniyeh killing itself.

"The assassination is definitely a major event for India, because it has happened very close to India's neighbourhood," said Sujatha Aishwarya, Professor at Jamia Millia University's School of West Asian Studies. "But the government appears to be in a dilemma as to how to respond to the event," she added, citing India's close ties with Iran and Israel as a factor.

Adding to the complications for New Delhi, India had sent Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari to Iranian President Masoud Pezesh-



Nitin Gadkari was in Iran to attend the swearing-in of the new President when the attack against Ismail Haniyeh happened. PTI

kian's inauguration and Mr. Gadkari was in Tehran when Haniyeh was killed and had been in a group photo with Haniyeh, as well as Hezbollah leaders along with dozens of international dignitaries attending.

## Indian workers

While India condemned the October 7 attacks in Israel as terrorist acts, the government has not banned Hamas as a terror group, despite requests from Israel. On the other hand, the government has facilitated the transfer of at least 5,000 construction workers and plans for about 5,000 caregivers to travel to Israel to fill in for jobs where Palestinian workers were terminated after the October 7 attacks. With Air India putting off flights to Tel Aviv for this week, and more travel advisories expected, the transfer of Indian workers may also be put on hold.

"India will want to issue any statement only after it carefully studies how it might impact ties with Israel, which are critical in certain security and military areas, and also Iran,

where [India] has important, critical economic stakes involved," Ms. Aishwarya concluded.

Others said New Delhi may also be concerned about the impact of the tensions on two recent initiatives: the India-Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) launched last September, and the 10-year India-Iran MoU for additional development of Chabahar port signed in June this year.

While bilateral talks on the IMEEC plan with various partners, including the UAE, Jordan and Greece, have taken place, the steering committee of all IMEEC countries has been unable to meet due to West Asian tensions for nearly a year. Any conflict in the region, and the implementation of any U.S. sanctions will also impact India's plans for Chabahar port, including land connectivity to Afghanistan and Central Asia. In addition, the India-Israel-UAE-U.S. I2U2 initiative and plans to connect Indian cargo routes through the International North South Transport Corridor to Russia could also be affected.

## Myanmar air strikes on border hospital near China kill 10

Agence France-Presse  
BANGKOK

Myanmar military air strikes hit a hospital in a city controlled by an ethnic minority armed group close to the China border killing 10 persons, local media reported on Friday.

Military planes carried out at least two air strikes on Laukkai city, normally home to some 25,000 people, late on Thursday night, a local resident had said.

Local media outlets quoted one resident as saying

10 civilians were killed in the air strikes.

The Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) group have held Laukkai since January after more than 2,000 junta troops surrendered there in one of the military's biggest defeats in decades.

## Junta strikes

The junta has bombed Laukkai several times in recent weeks after the MNDAA renewed its offensive in northern Shan State, shredding a Beijing-brokered ceasefire.

## U.S. citizens land in Texas after huge prisoner swap with Russia

Agence France-Presse  
SAN ANTONIO

Journalist Evan Gershkovich and two other Americans touched down in Texas on Friday for medical checks, after being freed by Russia in a huge prisoner swap.

Wall Street Journal reporter Gershkovich, former U.S. marine Paul Whelan, and journalist Alsu Kurmasheva had hours earlier been greeted by President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris during a brief stopover near Washington.

Their arrival on U.S. soil on Thursday was met by



Light of day: (from left) Alsu Kurmasheva, Paul Whelan and Evan Gershkovich after arriving in Texas on Friday. AFP

cheers from family.

They were among two dozen detainees released earlier on Thursday in the biggest East-West prisoner swap since the Cold War.

A fourth prisoner, Vladimir Kara-Murza, a Russian Kremlin critic with U.S. residency, was also among those freed but was returning separately to the U.S.

## Sport

## Downtown Heroes rides on Snorton's brace

## DURAND CUP

Sports Bureau  
KOLKATA

Downtown Heroes FC, a new entrant to the Indian club football scenario, picked up its first win of the Durand Cup by downing Indian Air Force team 2-0 in a Group A league match at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Friday.

Liberian forward Darius Snorton found the target once in each half to secure the win for the Srinagar-based team, which was founded in July 2021.

Downtown Heroes, which lost its opening match against holder Mohun Bagan Super Giant, began strongly against the airmen, who could not do much on the attacking front.



Hero! Snorton scored once in each half to give the debutant Heroes their first win. DEBASISH BHADURI

Snorton found the first goal in the 29th minute off an assist from his upfront colleague Aafreen Bashara.

He secured the win for Heroes late in the 84th minute after making the most of a lapse committed by

the IAF defence.

In another match, Wadajied Rynghkhem's early strike helped host Shillong Lajong beat Nepal's Tribhuvan Army FC by a solitary goal in the opening Group F match at the Jawa-

harlal Nehru Stadium.

The results: Group A: Downtown Heroes FC 2 (Darius Snorton 29, 84) bt Indian Air Force 0.

Group F: Shillong Lajong FC 1 (Wadajied Rynghkhem 7) bt Tribhuvan Army FC 0.

## Excellent Lass and African Gold favoured

## RACING

BENGALURU: Rajesh Narredu's ward Excellent Lass, who has been well tuned, is expected to score in the Fillies Championship Stakes (1,600m), while African Gold, who maintains form, may complete a hat-trick in the Colts Championship Stakes (1,600m), the stellar attraction of the first two classic events of the season to be held here on Saturday (Aug 3). There will be no false rails.

1. GUINDY PLATE (1,200m), rated 00 to 25, 5-y-o & over, 12-45 p.m.: 1 Phoenix Surprise (4) Faizan Khan 62.5, 2. Blues Ballad (3) Sai Kiran 60.5, 3. Chiraag (7) P. Mani 59, 4. Recreator (5) G. Vivek 57, 5. Akasi (6) Arvind K 56, 6. Air Blast (2) Tauseef 55.5, 7. Meghann (1) Jagadeesh 55.5 and 8. Burning Arrow (8) Kiran Rai 54.5.

1. RECREATOR, 2. BLUES BALLAD, 3. AKASI  
2. MALENAHALI PLATE (1,100m), rated 00 to 25, 1-15: 1. Springsteen (7) S.J. Moulin 62.5, 2. Tropical Mist (5) M. Naveen 62, 3. Benzema (6) Koshi K 61.5, 4. Estefania (8) Antony 59.5, 5. Loving Pearl (3) Dhani S 59, 6. Striking Eyes (2) G. Vivek 58, 7. Master Of Courage (4) Arvind K 57.5 and 8. Superhero (1) Rayan 57.  
1. ESTEFANIA, 2. STRIKING EYES, 3. LOVING PEARL

3. YOUNGSTERS PLATE (1,400m), rated 20 to 45, 1-45: 1. Amazing Rules (13) Sandesh 60, 2. Step To Destiny (1) Faizan Khan 60, 3. Crimson Flame (2) S.J. Moulin 58.5, 4. The Grey Geranium (11) M. Naveen 58, 5. Magical Bay (12) Akshay K 57.5, 6. Southernaristocrat (8) Arshad 57.5, 7. The Golden Dream (9) Sai Kiran 57.5, 8. Selhurst Park (4) Dhanu S 55, 9. Super Bold (3) Rayan 53.5, 10. Avicena (5) Neeraj 51.5, 11. Double Scotch (6) R. Girish 51.5, 12. Empress Bella (10) Vinod Shinde 51 and 13. Mystical Air (7) G. Vivek 51.  
1. AMAZING RULER, 2. AVICENA, 3. MAGICAL BAY

4. JUSTICE P. MEDAPA MEMORIAL CUP (1,600m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 2-15: 1. Amazing Stride (9) Sandesh 56, 2. Mescalito (11) Akshay K 56, 3. Michiko (8) Arvind K 56, 4. Pursuit Of Wealth (6) Darshan 56, 5. Rock Bank (10) Dhanu S 56, 6. Storm Shadow (1) Suraj 56, 7. Verazzano (5) Vinod Shinde 56, 8. Victor Hugo (3) G. Vivek 56, 9. Westlake (7) Antony 56, 10. Art Of Romance (2) Sai Kiran 54.5 and 11. Bowen (4) Touseef 54.5.  
1. AMAZING STRIDE, 2. VICTOR HUGO, 3. STORM SHADOW

5. BRIG R.C.R HILL MEMORIAL CUP (1,200m), rated 40 to 65, 5-y-o & over, 2-45: 1. Maple Leaf (6) Touseef 60.5, 2. Macron (1) Arvind K 57.5, 3. Solo Prince (7) Darshan 56, 4. Indian Blues (5)

Kiran Rai 55, 5. The Perfect Choice (2) Sai Kiran 53.5, 6. Southern Force (3) Neeraj 53, 7. Millbrook (4) Jagadeesh 52 and 8. Ultimate Striker (8) P. Siddharaju 50.5.  
1. MACRON, 2. THE PERFECT CHOICE, 3. INDIAN BLUES

6. FILLES CHAMPIONSHIP STAKES (1,600m), 3-y-o fillies, (Terms), 3-15: 1. Balmoral (2) Akshay K 56, 2. Del Aviz (7) G. Vivek 56, 3. Excellent Lass (5) Suraj 56, 4. Magnetic (8) Sandesh 56, 5. Masaki (6) Sai Kiran 56, 6. Nyx (3) J. Chinoy 56, 7. Scarlett Lady (4) Dhanu S 56 and 8. Tesorino (1) Antony 56.  
1. EXCELLENT LASS, 2. MASAKI, 3. BALMORAL

7. STEWARDS CUP (1,400m), rated 60 to 85, 3-45: 1. Philosophy (1) Sandesh 60, 2. Prana (9) Suraj 59, 3. Ravishing Form (7) Antony 59, 4. Galahad (4) Akshay K 58, 5. English Bay (2) Rayan 57, 6. Valvido (5) G. Vivek 56, 7. Fondness Of You (6) P. Siddharaju 54.5, 8. Grizzly (3) Sai Kiran 52.5 and 9. Aralina (8) Neeraj 51.5.  
1. GALAHAD, 2. ARALINA, 3. PRANA

8. COLTS CHAMPIONSHIP STAKES (1,600m), 3-y-o colts and geldings, (Terms), 4-15: 1. African Gold (3) Akshay K 56, 2. Castrel (4) Suraj 56, 3. Flight On (2) Sandesh 56, 4. Mandarino (1) Antony 56, 5. Mansa Musa (5) C. Umesh 56 and 6. Santissimo (6)

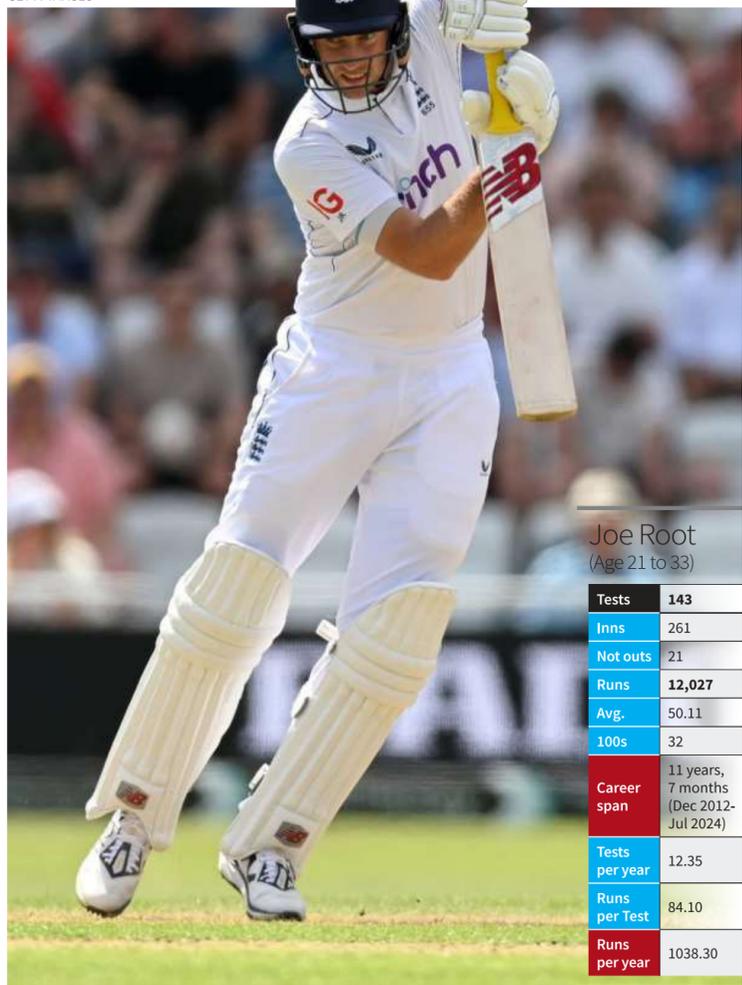
G. Vivek 56.  
1. AFRICAN GOLD, 2. SANTISSIMO

9. MARILINGAIAH MEMORIAL CUP (1,100m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 4-45: 1. Defence Counsel (5) S.K. Paswan 56, 2. Forever Royal (8) J. Chinoy 56, 3. Gismo (6) P. Mani 56, 4. Helios (11) Sandesh 56, 5. Stradinaro (7) Neeraj 56, 6. Thutmose (12) Darshan 56, 7. Ananya (2) Koshi K 54.5, 8. Days Date (10) B.R. Kumar 54.5, 9. Divine Art (4) Suraj 54.5, 10. Havaska (1) Antony 54.5, 11. Jolly (9) Arshad 54.5, 12. Loveisgod (13) Jagadeesh 54.5, 13. Martino (3) Sai Kiran 54.5 and 14. Mriga (14) Dhanu S 54.5.  
1. DIVINE ART, 2. MARTINO, 3. HELIOS

10. RICHELIEU PLATE (1,200m), rated 20 to 45, 5-y-o & over, 5-15: 1. Breeze Bluster (7) Faizan Khan 62.5, 2. General Patton (2) Antony 61, 3. Lauterbrunnen (8) M. Rajesh K 59.5, 4. Altamonte (4) Vivek 58, 5. Davu Rising (3) Arshad 54.5, 6. Debonair (5) Rayan 53, 7. Sling Shot (1) Koshi K 52.5 and 8. Embosom (6) Shreyas S 52.  
1. GENERAL PATTON, 2. DEBONAIR, 3. BREEZE BLUSTER  
Day's best: AMAZING RULER  
Double: GALAHAD - DIVINE ART  
Jkt: 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10; Tr (i): 2, 3 and 4; (ii): 5, 6 and 7; (iii): 8, 9 and 10.

# Weekend Sport

GETTY IMAGES



**Joe Root**  
(Age 21 to 33)

Tests	143
Inns	261
Not outs	21
Runs	12,027
Avg.	50.11
100s	32
Career span	11 years, 7 months (Dec 2012-Jul 2024)
Tests per year	12.35
Runs per Test	84.10
Runs per year	1038.30



**Sachin Tendulkar**  
(Age 16 to 40)

Tests	200
Inns	329
Not outs	33
Runs	15,921
Avg.	53.78
100s	51
Career span	24 years (Nov 1989-Nov 2013)
Tests per year	8.33
Runs per Test	79.61
Runs per year	663.38

## Does Joe Root have the legs to scale Mount Tendulkar?

Until recently, the Indian legend's rarefied heights were seen as too far up in the stratosphere for mortals to ascend. But a 33-year-old from Yorkshire, thanks to his unfussy progress and the sheer volume of Test cricket England plays, is within 3,894 runs of the ultimate peak

**K.C. Vijaya Kumar**

The name Charles Bannerman may not ring a bell. Neither would the relevance of a March day at Melbourne, way back in 1877. But for those invested in the classicism of Test cricket and for statisticians obsessed with numbers, March 15 of that year should have a resonance.

On that day, which ushered in cricket's inaugural Test, Australian opener Bannerman scored the first ever run in the game's longest format. He went on to score 165 before retiring hurt and the host eventually defeated rival England by 45 runs. Since those old days, cricket has grown and evolved, and also dealt with disruptions like the two World Wars and the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

Tests and the two limited-overs variants of ODIs and Twenty20s presently co-exist, carving out distinct loyalties and granular commercial muscle. While results matter as they define the

**Limbs may tire, form could evaporate, desire might wane, but still remember this, there is a possibility. That could fuel Root's hopes**

yardstick for judgement in a team sport, individual numbers offer relevance, trivia and also fuel obsessive fandom.

### Thrill of the chase

Readers of a certain vintage would have maintained a scrapbook, jotting down numbers stacked up by batters and bowlers. In the 1980s, it may have been a notepad with tables listed for Sunil Gavaskar, Vivian Richards, Javed Miandad, David Gower, Allan Border, Gordon Greenidge and Dilip Vengsarkar, with their individual scores in a Test noted down diligently, and then it would boil down to the whole thrill of finding out who was heading the batting race.

Gavaskar scaled 'Mount 10,000' with that dainty late cut of Pakistani spinner Ijaz Faqih at Ahmedabad in 1987. At that time it seemed too high a peak for anyone to scale again. It was presumed as being akin to Sir Don Bradman's Test average of 99.94, a miracle that perhaps will remain untouched for eternity.

But cricket always presses forward, building new forts, moving past old ones, and triggering debates about different eras. Gavaskar's world records, be it 10,122 Test runs or 34 centuries, eventually gave way to the modern stars even if it was his contemporary Border who first went past his Test tally.

Presently the Mumbai legend is placed 13th in the run-getters' list and is joint-sixth when it comes to hundreds. In both wings, a fellow Mumbaier, Sachin Ramesh Tendulkar, reigns supreme with 15,921 runs and 51 tons. Again Tendulkar's numerical accomplishment is seen as a bridge too far to cross for batters, who have followed his path towards greatness.

### Change, the only constant

But then change is a constant and Tendulkar's record in ODIs – 49 centuries – had to cede territory to Virat Kohli's current tally of 50! But as for Tests, Tendulkar's rarefied heights are seen as too far up in the stratosphere for mortals to ascend. Yet, whispers have begun with an incredulous air about a Yorkshire man perhaps having Tendulkar in his sights.

At 33, Joe Root is still doing what he does best: accumulating runs. All this while staying under the radar, unlike the 'look at me' swag of a Kohli,

the 'ain't I cute' aura of a Kane Williamson or the 'twitch and turn' hyperactivity of a Steve Smith. Against the West Indians, Root was among the runs, including a 122 at Nottingham's Trent Bridge.

Importantly, he now has 12,027 runs from 143 Tests, averaging 50.11, and with 32 hundreds to boot. He is 3,894 runs away from Tendulkar's peak and the fine print says much could change in the coming years. Limbs may tire, form could evaporate, desire might wane, but still remember this, there is a possibility. That could fuel Root's hopes, presuming he is thinking about it but not telling any of us.

The sporting 30s is seen as a senior citizen zone, when in real life, at that same age, men and women are still finding their way, be it careers, hearts, matrimony or the whole purpose of life. However, modern fitness and medical standards and the assistance of support staff ranging from physios to nutritionists have aided the greatest of sportspeople to keep that twilight zone hanging around for long.

Years ago, there was a time when South African Graeme Smith was making waves in his debut season. Runs were plundered at will and the usual 'Oh, will he chase down Sachin?' talk did the rounds. Sport is a combination of a set history, a twitchy present and a future abounding with surprises. Speculation about the new challenger was rife even when Tendulkar was the reigning god of the willows, despite Brian Lara, Ricky Ponting, Rahul Dravid and Jacques Kallis being his shadows.

There was also a phase when Imran Khan, just to perhaps inspire Inzamam-ul-Haq, said that the latter is a better player than Tendulkar. But Smith was seen as being cut from a different cloth and it so happened that Tendulkar was training at Bengaluru's Chinnaswamy Stadium.

It was a day with its slivers of sun, puffs of clouds and birdsong from Cubbon Park, but the maestro was in his zen mode, striking the ball both with care and vigour. Once the nets concluded and the sweat dried, Tendulkar began to stride towards the pavilion. A few scribes walked beside him and one television presenter asked the legend: "So Sachin, what do you think about Graeme Smith?"

Tendulkar paused, a half-smile creasing his face, forehead wrinkled in thought, and then said: "He looks good, is scoring runs but we have to wait a bit, we have to give him some time". This was a man speaking after deep introspection and never was there a hint of envy.

### The dynamics of longevity

He was right too because players making a splash on debut often tend to struggle in their second and third seasons, as by then the bowlers have observed their flaws, which then get lashed with boiling oil and rough salt in full public glare. Smith, having retired in 2014, is now 17th on the list with a tally of 9,265.

Root has dealt with the vagaries of form, survived various Ashes battles, scored runs all over, against varying attacks and on diverse surfaces. He also has seemingly bolted well ahead of (Steve) Smith, Kohli and Williamson. Devoid of the pressures of captaincy, which is the preserve of Ben Stokes, Root can lengthen his career in the pursuit of runs and triumphs for England.

In the years ahead, there will be tussles with the Indians and Australians, tough rivals adept at flipping pressure. Additionally, Root has to keep his head clear on the approach he wants to follow. Coach Brendon McCullum's 'The horses should gallop all the time' instruction may not always sit easy.

Busy Root is from the obdurate soil of Yorkshire that in the past threw up a Geoffrey Boycott, who used to compete with Gavaskar for batting glory. It is delicious that decades down the line, the Yorkshire-Mumbai joust has pitted Root against Tendulkar's jaw-dropping Test runs. Bannerman, resting in his grave, would never have imagined what he has unleashed.

## STACKING UP

**ATP Men's Top 15**

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Jannik Sinner	22	9,570	18
2	Novak Djokovic	37	8,460	18
3	Carlos Alcaraz	21	8,130	17
4	Alexander Zverev	27	6,845	24
5	Daniil Medvedev	28	6,525	18
6	Alex de Minaur	25	4,185	24
7	Hubert Hurkacz	27	4,105	23
8	Andrey Rublev	26	3,885	24
9	Casper Ruud	25	3,880	23
10	Grigor Dimitrov	33	3,770	21
11	Stefanos Tsitsipas	25	3,705	24
12	Taylor Fritz	26	3,500	23
13	Tommy Paul	27	3,410	22
14	Ben Shelton	21	2,750	25
15	Ugo Humbert	26	2,405	28

**F1 Drivers' standings**

#	Driver	Team	Points	Wins
1	Max Verstappen	Red Bull	277	7
2	Lando Norris	McLaren	199	1
3	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari	177	1
4	Oscar Piastri	McLaren	167	1
5	Carlos Sainz	Ferrari	162	1
6	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	150	2
7	Sergio Perez	Red Bull	131	0
8	George Russell	Mercedes	116	1
9	Fernando Alonso	Aston Martin	49	0
10	Lance Stroll	Aston Martin	24	0
11	Nico Hulkenberg	Haas	22	0
12	Yuki Tsunoda	RB	22	0
13	Daniel Ricciardo	RB	12	0
14	Oliver Bearman	Ferrari	6	0
15	Pierre Gasly	Alpine	6	0
16	Kevin Magnussen	Haas	5	0
17	Esteban Ocon	Alpine	5	0
18	Alex Albon	Williams	4	0
19	Zhou Guanyu	Sauber	0	0
20	Valtteri Bottas	Sauber	0	0



**WTA Women's Top 15**

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Iga Swiatek	23	11,005	17
2	Coco Gauff	20	8,173	18
3	Aryna Sabalenka	26	7,061	17
4	Elena Rybakina	25	6,376	19
5	Jasmine Paolini	28	5,373	23
6	Jessica Pegula	30	4,665	22
7	Qinwen Zheng	21	4,025	20
8	Maria Sakkari	29	3,925	24
9	Danielle Collins	30	3,702	20
10	Barbora Krejickova	28	3,573	18
11	Jelena Ostapenko	27	3,418	23
12	Daria Kasatkina	27	3,283	23
13	Ljudmila Samsonova	25	2,950	25
14	Madison Keys	29	2,878	16
15	Emma Navarro	23	2,729	27



**Badminton Men's ranking**

#	Player	Points	Events
1	Shi Yu Qi	102,415	16
2	Viktor Axelsen	89,290	14
3	Anders Antonsen	85,081	21
4	Jonatan Christie	83,097	17
5	Kodai Naraoka	82,597	19
6	Li Shi Feng	82,196	17
7	Lee Zii Jia	78,816	22
8	Kunlavut Vitidsarn	76,258	16
9	Anthony Sinisuka Ginting	70,485	17
10	Kenta Nishimoto	64,612	23
11	Chou Tien Chen	64,567	28
12	Loh Kean Yew	62,433	22
13	Prannoy H. S.	60,492	17
14	Lu Guang Zu	58,551	20
15	Lin Chun-yi	58,501	29



**Badminton Women's ranking**

#	Player	Points	Events
1	An Se Young	109,817	14
2	Chen Yu Fei	104,282	16
3	Tai Tzu Ying	89,971	16
4	Carolina Marin	88,786	16
5	Wang Zhi Yi	83,215	19
6	Akane Yamaguchi	81,177	10
7	Han Yue	77,609	22
8	Gregoria Mariska Tunjung	72,762	20
9	He Bing Jiao	71,568	15
10	Aya Ohori	66,267	22
11	Beiwen Zhang	63,546	22
12	Nozomi Okuhara	62,911	22
13	P.V. Sindhu	59,782	14
14	Busanan Ongbamrunphan	58,440	24
15	Zhang Yi Man	58,294	17



**Test Batting**

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Joe Root	872	923
2	Kane Williamson	859	919
3	Babar Azam	768	882
3	Daryl Mitchell	768	804
5	Steve Smith	757	947
6	Rohit Sharma	751	813
7	Harry Brook	749	773
8	Yashasvi Jaiswal	740	740
9	Dimuth Karunaratne	739	783
10	Virat Kohli	737	937

**Test Bowling**

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	R. Ashwin	870	904
2	Josh Hazlewood	847	864
2	Jasprit Bumrah	847	881
4	Kagiso Rabada	834	902
5	Pat Cummins	820	914
6	Nathan Lyon	801	801
7	Ravindra Jadeja	788	899
8	Shaheen Afridi	733	836
9	Kyle Jamieson	729	836
10	Prabath Jayasuriya	724	783

**ODI Batting**

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Babar Azam	824	898
2	Shubman Gill	801	847
3	Virat Kohli	768	909
4	Harry Tector	746	767
4	Rohit Sharma	746	882
6	Daryl Mitchell	728	750
7	David Warner	723	869
8	Pathum Nissanka	711	728
9	Dawid Malan	707	730
10	Rassie van der Dussen	701	796

**ODI Bowling**

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Keshav Maharaj	716	741
2	Josh Hazlewood	688	727
3	Adam Zampa	686	695
4	Mohammed Siraj	678	736
5	Jasprit Bumrah	675	838
6	Bernard Scholtz	657	657
7	Mohammad Nabi	656	657
8	Shaheen Afridi	650	688
9	Kuldeep Yadav	645	760
10	Trent Boult	643	775

**T20I Batting**

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Travis Head	844	844
2	Suryakumar Yadav	805	910
3	Phillip Salt	797	833
4	Yashasvi Jaiswal	757	779
5	Babar Azam	755	896
6	Mohammad Rizwan	746	875
7	Jos Buttler	716	720
8	Ruturaj Gaikwad	664	706
9	Brandon King	656	704
10	Johnson Charles	655	669

**T20I Bowling**

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Adil Rashid	718	746
2	Anrich Nortje	675	695
3	Rashid Khan	668	816
4	Wanindu Hasaranga	663	797
5	Josh Hazlewood	662	806
6	Akeal Hosein	659	683
7	Adam Zampa	654	743
8	Fazalhaq Farooqi	645	692
9	Maheesh Theekshana	640	684
10	Ravi Bishnoi	635	699

GETTY IMAGES

# Why tennis' once tenuous relationship with the Olympics has changed

In earlier eras, many of the sport's stars viewed themselves as 'independent contractors', defined by their ranking not their nationality. But modern players, in part because of tennis' increasing global footprint, now also cherish the larger purpose of competing for their country



**N. Sudarshan**

Among the most striking images from Paris 2024 have been those of the jam-packed stands at the iconic Roland-Garros. Seat of the second Major of the year, the French Open, it is now playing host to the Olympic tennis event for only the first time in its history.

The jamboree may be because of the star appeal. Five of the ATP's top-10, including four of the top-five, and eight of the WTA's top-10 featured in the draw in Paris.

And there is a special following for a battered Rafael Nadal willing himself through matches, a bruised Andy Murray escaping reality and hiding the timelessness of an athlete's struggle, and an ambitious Novak Djokovic looking to add that one singles gold medal which will make his the best CV in men's tennis history.

## Stark contrast

This is a far cry from the late 1980s and 1990s when tennis was reintroduced as a medal sport (in 1988) after a lengthy hiatus since 1924. Though the legendary Steffi Graf won the gold at Seoul 1988 and went on to complete the 'Golden Slam' (winning all four Majors and the Olympic gold in a single season), Stefan Edberg was the only notable name among men that year.

Pete Sampras, the best player of the 1990s, turned up only for Barcelona 1992, and that came when he had won none of his 14 Major titles. At Atlanta 1996, only three of the ATP's top-10 were present.

Fellow racquet sports, table tennis and badminton, made their debuts as official medal disciplines in 1988 and 1992 respectively, and in no time the Olympic gold became the ultimate honour in those sports. Tennis, in contrast, gave the greatest sporting extravaganza in the universe



It's so special to be part of the oldest sports event in history. Winning a gold medal or any medal for my country is a great wish and desire. It is one of my greatest priorities

**NOVAK DJOKOVIC**

the cold shoulder. But not anymore. Tennis' once tenuous relationship with the Olympic movement has seemingly ceased and the two are now moving hand in hand. If Naomi Osaka lit the Olympic flame at Tokyo 2020, tennis had an out-sized presence at the opening ceremony in Paris, with Nadal, Serena Williams and Amelie Mauresmo all being part of the torch relay.

The United States of America, which has no dearth of Olympic champions, gave debutant tennis player and World No. 2 Coco Gauff the pride of place, bestowing the opportunity to be the nation's flag-bearer alongside basketball legend LeBron James.

Nadal, injured for a good part of the last two years, skipped Wimbledon to get ready for the Olympics. Murray could have had a poetic farewell at home at Wimbledon, where he won two of his three Majors, but instead chose the Olympics as the finish line.

Djokovic, who has a singles bronze from Beijing 2008, braved a surgically repaired knee and a radical shift in surfaces – from clay to grass to clay, with the hard courts to follow – to go on a hunt for the singles gold.

## The duality of the sport

Tennis has long been characterised by a certain duality. Competitors prize themselves for being 'independent contractors', defined only by their ranking and not nationality.

Fan support has mirrored this, with allegiance more to the player than the country. Until Roger Federer retired, a ticket to his match was the most important possession. In recent years, the four Grand Slam tournaments – Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and US Open – have only grown in popularity and stature despite having a negligible percentage of home-grown winners.

But the sport has also been a vehicle for na-

tional identity and tribalistic fandom. In the Davis Cup and Billie Jean King Cup (erstwhile Fed Cup), tennis has two team competitions with decades-long history.

Sampras may have once famously said that winning Slams and staying No.1 were his priorities and that if he tried to play Davis Cup, "those other things will be in jeopardy", but for the smaller nations, Cup success is the ticket to worldwide stardom. As Vijay Amritraj has repeatedly stressed, wherever he played, even at the hallowed Wimbledon Centre Court, it was not he but always "an Indian" who was playing.

What we are seeing now is the shrinking of the space between these two divergent strands. The spirit of tennis is no longer torn between being global and being nationalistic but is comfortable in the skin of both.

This has been primarily driven by top players' changed approach towards the Olympic Games. They increasingly cherish the camaraderie and the larger purpose of competing for one's country rather than just the individual self.

"You can only play a match at the Olympics once every four years and it's a different feeling when you're wearing the outfit with the national colours," Angelique Kerber, a three-time Slam finalist, told *Vogue*.

It doesn't seem to matter that the Games offer no prize money. Ranking points, which were introduced at Sydney 2000, were removed ahead of Rio 2016. The Olympics also doesn't have an exclusive slot in the calendar.

## A prominent pit stop

Yet, the big stars of the game have made the Olympics a prominent pit stop, unmindful of the thousands of air miles to be clocked, geographies to be traversed and time zones to get adjusted to.

The last four singles gold medallists among men have been Nadal (Beijing 2008), Murray

(London 2012 and Rio 2016) and Alexander Zverev (Tokyo 2020). Venus Williams won the gold at Sydney 2000, Justine Henin at Athens 2004 and Serena Williams at London 2012. Venus and Serena combined to secure back-to-back doubles gold medals in 2008 and 2012.

Jack Sock, who won the doubles bronze with Steve Johnson and mixed doubles gold with Bethanie Mattek-Sands at Rio 2016, said ahead of Tokyo 2020 that those two medals would be the first things he would show his kids.

"If you talk to the average person and you say you won the Madrid 1000, they will look at you like you're talking a different language," the American opined. "If you say you won a gold medal, they will know exactly what you mean."

The transformation may also be because of tennis' increasing global footprint. Australia, France, Great Britain and the United States were the early hegemonic forces and the championships in these countries form the four most important events in the calendar. Davis Cup, which began in 1900, gave players from these nations a taste of nationalistic flavour, and until 1974, there wasn't a Cup winner other than these four.

But the rise of central and eastern Europe, and Asia and the rest of the Americas, has democratised the scene and given a new dimension to tennis' relationship with nationalism. Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov winning gold at Sydney 2000, Chile's Nicolas Massu at Athens 2004 and Puerto Rico's Monica Puig at Rio 2016 were examples of this. Djokovic, a demigod in Serbia, is desperate to be the next.

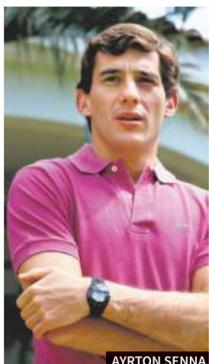
"I had the greatest honour of carrying the Serbian flag in the opening ceremony [London 2012]," Djokovic told *itftennis.com* in May. "It's so special to be part of the oldest sports event in history. Winning a gold medal or any medal for my country is a great wish and desire. It is one of my greatest priorities and goals."

## GAME THEORY

### One-lap masters: F1's most prolific pole-sitters

Although Charles Leclerc's Belgian Grand Prix pole came in fortuitous circumstances — he was promoted a spot because of Max Verstappen's 10-place grid penalty — it was more evidence of why he is rated so highly within F1. It was the Ferrari driver's 25th pole, many of them achieved without the fastest car on the grid. What's more, the only drivers with more poles than Leclerc are all world champions

Driver	Poles	Race entries	Pole%
Lewis Hamilton	104	346	30.06
Michael Schumacher	68	308	22.08
Ayrton Senna	65	162	40.12
Sebastian Vettel	57	300	19.00
Max Verstappen	40	199	20.10
Jim Clark	33	73	45.21
Alain Prost	33	202	16.34
Nigel Mansell	32	191	16.75
Nico Rosberg	30	206	14.56
Juan Manuel Fangio	29	52	55.77
Mika Hakkinen	26	165	15.76
Charles Leclerc	25	139	17.99
Niki Lauda	24	177	13.56
Nelson Piquet	24	207	11.59
Fernando Alonso	22	394	5.58
Damon Hill	20	122	16.39
Valtteri Bottas	20	237	8.44
Mario Andretti	18	131	13.74
Rene Arnoux	18	165	10.91
Kimi Raikkonen	18	353	5.10
Jackie Stewart	17	100	17.00
Stirling Moss	16	67	23.88
Felipe Massa	16	272	5.88
Alberto Ascari	14	33	42.42
James Hunt	14	93	15.05
Ronnie Peterson	14	123	11.38
Rubens Barrichello	14	326	4.29



## PICTURE THIS



### Chequered past

A NASCAR driver takes the chequered flag at the recent Cup Series Brickyard 400 in Indianapolis.

The iconic chequered flag signals that a race has officially finished. It is associated with the race winner, as they are the

first to 'take it' i.e. drive past it.

In addition to denoting the race's end, the black-and-white flag also has a safety-facilitating role: once drivers see the chequered flag, they are required to slow down and return to the paddock or parc ferme, as per the regulations of the series.

The chequered flag has no standard design; both the number of alternating squares and the cloth's proportions vary from one to another.

The origins of the chequered flag aren't clear. It's believed that its roots can be traced to officials, or 'checkers', who stationed themselves at critical

points along the course with flags. Another theory is that the idea came from an official wearing a black-and-white suit at the finish line.

There are also claims that the chequered flag predates motor racing, having been used in races involving horses and bicycles.

**PHENOM**

**Marchand wins a fourth gold with an Olympic record to boot**



GETTY IMAGES

French swimming superstar Leon Marchand won his fourth gold medal of the Paris Games with an emphatic victory in the men's 200m individual medley on Friday. Marchand won in 1min 54.06sec, the second-fastest time in history and an Olympic record, with Britain's Duncan Scott taking silver and China's Wang Shun third.

**DETHRONED**

**Douglass upstages Smith in women's 200m breaststroke**



REUTERS

Kate Douglass of the United States held off South African favourite Tatjana Smith to win a thrilling women's 200m breaststroke final on Thursday. Smith, the defending champion, established an early lead but Douglass was impressive at the turns as she finished in a time of 2min 19.24sec. Tes Schouten of the Netherlands took bronze.

**RECORD SWIM**

**Australia claims 4x200m freestyle relay with second-fastest time ever**



AFF

An Australian team spearheaded by Mollie O'Callaghan and Ariarne Titmus won the women's 4x200m freestyle relay gold in the second-fastest time ever. Led off by O'Callaghan and brought home by Titmus, with Lani Pallister and Brianna Throssell in the middle legs, they touched in an Olympic-record 7min, 38.08sec.

**HUNGARY'S FIRST**

**Kos takes the honours in the men's 200m backstroke**



AP

Hubert Kos took Hungary's first swimming gold in Paris by winning the men's 200m backstroke. Working with Michael Phelps' former coach Bob Bowman, he came from behind to touch out in one minute 54.26 seconds, 0.56 ahead of Greek silver medallist Apostolos Christou. Switzerland's Roman Mityukov took bronze.

# Impressive India edges past nemesis Australia in a thriller

The team notches up its first victory over the Kookaburras at the Olympics since the 1972 Munich Games; skipper Harmanpreet continues his good form, scoring twice in the match while Abhishek nets for the second game running



Press Trust of India  
PARIS

**S**kipper Harmanpreet Singh scored a brace as the Indian men's hockey team registered a 3-2 win over Tokyo Games silver medallist Australia in its final Pool B match.

Already assured of a quarterfinal berth before Friday's encounter, the Indians played valiantly and dominated the proceedings for the major part of the match to stun the Kookaburras, against whom they last won in the 1972 Munich Olympics.

India delivered a power-packed performance, playing attacking hockey from the beginning, and defending well throughout.

Abhishek (12th), skipper Harmanpreet (13th, 32nd) scored for India while Tom Craig (25th) and Blake Govers (55) found the target for Australia.

With this win, India will most likely finish its pool engagements in the second position with 10 points, behind table-topper Belgium (12).

India stunned Australia by taking the lead through Abhishek. Lalit attempted a shot which was saved by Andrew Charter. Abhishek got the ball on the rebound, turned, and hammered it past the rival goalkeeper.

A minute later, India got



**On the ball:** Abhishek drew first blood for the second consecutive game, drilling home a rebound in the 12th minute. GETTY IMAGES

a penalty corner when the ball touched the foot of Jake Harvie, and Harmanpreet beat Charter's defence with a fierce ground-level flick.

Australia got its third penalty corner in the 25th minute.

It was a poor injection from skipper Aran Zalewski but it somehow turned into a goal as the Kookaburras recovered quickly to pass it to an unmarked Craig at the second post, who deflected the ball in.

India earned a third penalty corner when Manpreet Singh was tackled by an Australian defender. Harmanpreet's goalmouth strike was obstructed by

Flynn Ogilvie which India reviewed. The referral resulted in a penalty stroke and the India skipper made no mistake in converting the chance.

In the 53rd minute, Abhishek scored another fine goal after he was fed by Mandeep but the goal was ruled out for a stick check.

Five minutes from the final hooter, Govers scored his seventh goal from a penalty stroke to reduce the margin.

Thereafter, the Indian defence stood tall to register a famous win.

**The result:** India 3 (Abhishek 12, Harmanpreet 13, 32) bt Australia 2 (Craig 25, Govers 55).

## Breaking a 52-year jinx

The Indian hockey team tasted success against Australia at the Olympics for the first time since the 1972 Munich Games

Year	City	Result
1972	Munich	India won 3-1
1976	Montreal	India lost 1-6
1980	Moscow	Australia didn't compete
1984	Los Angeles	India lost 2-4
1988	Seoul	Did not meet
1992	Barcelona	India lost 0-1
1996	Atlanta	Did not meet
2000	Sydney	Match drawn 2-2
2004	Athens	India lost 3-4
2008	Beijing	India didn't qualify
2012	London	Did not meet
2016	Rio	Did not meet
2020	Tokyo	India lost 1-7
2024	Paris	India bt Australia 3-2

# Ankita and Dhiraj stumble in the bronze medal clash after a game fight

Y.B. Sarangi  
PARIS

It was yet another case of 'so near yet so far' for India.

At the magnificent setting of the 17th century Invalides arena, with the Eiffel Tower, the Grand Palais and the Army Museum standing as witness, Indian archers made a bit of history by making it to the mixed team bronze medal match, but fell short of cornering Olympic glory in Paris 2024.

Like several much-talked about fourth-place finishes - including legends such as Milkha Singh, P.T. Usha and Dipa Karmakar - the one here involving Ankita Bhakat and B. Dhiraj, hailing from Kolkata and Vijayawada respectively, has the power to give Indian archery a big morale-boosting push.

The Indian duo overcame the absence of Korean coach Baek Woong Ki to shoot consistently well and won two rounds before losing to powerhouse Korea and then a more experienced USA in the bronze medal duel.

**Composure**

Ankita and Dhiraj, who emerged as the best archers of the country in respective ranking rounds but performed the worst in team events, shot with composure to help fifth-ranked India beat the 12th ranked Indonesian duo of Diananda Choirunisa and Arif Pangestu 5-1.

In the quarterfinals, Ankita-Dhiraj saw off 13th-placed Spain, comprising World Cup stage team gold medallists Elia Canales and Pablo Acha 5-3 following a keen contest.

After taking the first set and sharing honours in the second, the Indians



**So close:** While Ankita admitted to feeling the pressure, Dhiraj said they lacked minor things. PTI

dropped their intensity a shade to see the scores level at 3-3 before regaining rhythm to better the Spaniards.

**Bright start**

They began on a bright note against Korea before losing 6-2 in the semifinals.

It looked like the Indians would do the unthinkable by beating Asian Games champion Lim Si-hyeon and multiple Olympic and Worlds team gold medallist Kim Woo-jin, when the Koreans unexpectedly began with an 8 and a 9 and allowed Ankita-Dhiraj to claim the first set.

The soon the Koreans were in their element and carried on with the momentum.

In the bronze medal playoff against the third-ranked USA's Worlds silver medallist and World No.1 Casey Kaufhold and multiple Olympics and World championships medallist Brady Ellison, India put up a brief fight before bowing out 6-2.

**Crumbling**

The pressure of the big stage and the hot and windy afternoon played its part as Ankita crumbled

with two 7s in her opening attempts. It handed the USA the set and upper hand to take a 4-0 lead.

The Indians clawed back strongly to secure the third set as USA slipped a bit due to Casey's 7 and 8.

Even though Dhiraj maintained his cool to hit the yellow zone, two 8s from Ankita in the final set dashed India's hopes.

**Objective analysis**

"We never came inside the top-four. It's good for us that we're improving since the last few Olympics. We performed the same way as we normally do in the World Cups," said Dhiraj, veiling his emotions and analysing their performance objectively.

"There are the minor things that we've lacked, we'll work on them. This loss is painful, but it will make us stronger."

"The Olympic stage is different. When there's no limit (to the pressure)."

Ankita admitted that she was under pressure. "As we were moving forward, I was hoping for a medal.

"So, I took some pressure. There was some wind too. I couldn't control myself," she said.

# Manu qualifies for the final in 25m sports pistol

Press Trust of India  
CHATEAURoux

Indian shooter Manu Bhaker kept herself on track for a hat-trick of Olympic medals, coming up with one of her most memorable performances in her favourite event, the 25m sports pistol, as she booked a place in the final in second spot here on Friday.

The 22-year-old, who has already made history by becoming the first Indian athlete to win two bronze medals in one edition of the quadrennial showpiece, can add to her haul if she wins a third medal on Saturday, something which is well within her grasp after her commanding performance in the qualification round.

Manu, who continued to dominate the event and remained among the top three almost throughout the qualification phase of 'precision' and 'rapid' rounds, aggregated 590 to be placed second behind Hungary's Veronika Major who equalled the Olympic record with a score of 592.

**Marked improvement**

Manu, who has seen a marked improvement in her shooting after partnering with legendary shooter-turned-coach Jaspal Rana, has won the 10m women's air pistol bronze and 10m air pistol mixed team bronze pairing up with Sarabjot Singh.

She was in impregnable form in the sports pistol qualification rounds, firing



**Eyeing a third:** Manu, who has already made history, has a realistic opportunity to add to her haul. GETTY IMAGES

294 in the gruelling 'precision' round with scores of 97, 98 and 99.

The 'rapid round' brought out the best in her

as she shot a perfect 100, followed by two 98s for an aggregate of 296.

India's upcoming shooter and multiple Hangzhou

Asian Games medallist Esha Singh faltered, aggregating 581 (291 in precision and 290 in rapid) to finish 18th among 40 shooters

and falling well short of the eight-shooter final.

The abysmal Indian performance in shotgun continued with skeet marksman Anantjeet Singh Naruka placed at 26th position with a score of 68 after day 1 of qualification.

The men's and women's trap shooters have already finished their assignments without making an impression.

Naruka fired three rounds of 25 each, which fetched him 23, 22 and 23. Legendary Vincent Hancock of the USA had three perfect rounds of 25 each and was leading the 28-shooter field.

Two more qualification rounds will take place on Saturday before the six finalists are shortlisted.

**THE INDIA SHOW**

A look at some of the Indian performances on Friday:

**Archery:** Mixed Team: Bronze medal match: Ankita & Dhiraj lost to Kaufhold & Ellison (USA) 2-6; Semifinal: lost to Lim & Kim (Kor) 2-6; Quarterfinal: bt Canales & Acha (ESP) 5-3; 1/8 elimination: bt Choirunisa & Pangestu (Ina) 5-1.

**Athletics:** Women's 5000m (round 1): Ankita (20th in heat 1) and Parul (14th in heat 2), DNQ for final; Men's shot put: Tajinderpal (29th overall), DNQ for final.

**Badminton:** Men (quarterfinal): Lakshya bt Chou (Tpe) 19-21,

21-15, 21-12.

**Golf:** Men's Individual Stroke Play (round 2): Shubhankar (T25), Gaganjeet (T52).

**Judo:** Women: +78kg (elimination round-of-32): Tulika lost to Ortiz (Cub) 0-10.

**Hockey:** Men: bt Australia 3-2.

**Rowing:** Men's Single Sculls: Balraj (fifth in final D, 23rd overall).

**Sailing:** Women's Dinghy: Nethra (11th overall after three races); Men's Dinghy: Vishnu Saravanan (22nd overall after four races).

**Shooting:** 25m Pistol: 2. Manu (qualifies for final), 18. Esha, DNQ.

**INDIANS IN ACTION**

A look at some Indians who will compete on Saturday (all IST):

**Archery:** Women's Individual (1/8 elimination): Deepika vs Kroppen (Ger), 1.50 p.m.; Bhajan vs Choirunisa (Ina), 2.05 p.m.

**Golf:** Men's Individual Stroke Play: Round 3 (Shubhankar, Gaganjeet), 12.30 p.m.

**Sailing:** Women's Dinghy (Nethra), 3.35 p.m.; Men's Dinghy (Vishnu Saravanan) 3.50 p.m.

**Shooting:** Skeet: Men's qualification - Day 2 (Anantjeet), 12.30 p.m.; Women's qualification - Day 1 (Raiza, Maheshwari), 12.30 p.m.; 25m Pistol: Women's final: Manu (1 p.m.).

## IN BRIEF



## Litvinovich and Page bounce to gold in trampoline

Ivan Litvinovich, a Belarusian competing as an individual neutral athlete, bounced his way to the men's gold medal in trampoline on Friday to successfully defend his title from the Tokyo Games. Litvinovich became the first gymnast to win multiple Olympic gold medals in the sport, beating silver medallist China's Wang Zisai by more than a point. Wang's compatriot Yan Langyu took bronze. Earlier, Great Britain's Bryony Page claimed gold in the women's event for her third Olympic medal-winning appearance. Viyaleta Bardzilouskaya, a Belarusian competing as an individual neutral athlete, clinched silver, while Canada's Sophiane Methot took bronze. The 33-year-old Page had long been on a quest for gold, having won the silver at the 2016 Rio Games and bronze at the Tokyo Olympics.



## Slovakian swimmer Potocka collapses after her heats

Slovakian swimmer Tamara Potocka collapsed poolside on Friday morning after a qualifying heat of the women's 200m individual medley. Potocka collapsed as she got out of the water and almost immediately was surrounded by a half-dozen medical attendants who put her on a stretcher after about a minute and carried her off the pool deck. Potocka finished seventh in her heat in a time of 2 minutes, 14.20 seconds.

## GOLDIES

- Hubert Kos (Hun):** Men's 200m Backstroke  
**Kate Douglass (USA):** Women's 200m Breaststroke  
**Australia (Mollie O'Callaghan, Ariarne Titmus, Lani Pallister, Brianna Throssell):** Women's 4x200m Freestyle Relay  
**Cameron McEvoy (Aus):** Men's 50m freestyle  
**Kaylee McKeown (Aus):** Women's 200m backstroke  
**Leon Marchand (Fra):** Men's 200m individual medley  
**USA:** Women's Foil Team  
**Spain (Diego Botin & Florian Trettel):** Men's Skiff  
**Netherlands (Odile van Aanholt & Annette Duetz):** Women's Skiff  
**Chiara Leone (Sui):** Women's 50m Rifle 3 Position  
**China (Wang Zongyuan & Long Daoyi):** Men's Synchronised 3m Springboard  
**Croatia (Valent Sinkovic & Martin Sinkovic):** Rowing Men's Pair  
**Netherlands (Ymkje Clevering & Veronique Meester):** Rowing Women's Pair  
**Ireland (Paul O'Donovan & Fintan McCarthy):** LWT Men's Double Sculls  
**Great Britain (Imogen Grant & Emily Craig):** LWT Women's Double Sculls  
**Spain (Diego Botin & Florian Trettel):** Sailing men's skiff  
**Netherlands (Odile van Aanholt & Annette Duetz):** Sailing women's skiff  
**Great Britain (Ben Maher, Harry Charles, Scott Brash):** Equestrian Men's team jumping  
**Bryony Page (GBR):** Women's trampoline  
**Ivan Litvinovich (AIN):** Men's trampoline  
**China (Zheng Si Wei & Huang Ya Qiong):** Badminton Mixed Doubles  
**Korea (Lim Sihyeon and Kim Woojin):** Archery Mixed Team  
**Beatriz Souza (Bra):** Judo women's +78kg  
**Teddy Riner (Fra):** Judo men's +100kg

## GOING FOR GOLD

- Archery:** Women's Individual  
**Artistic Gymnastics:** Men's Floor Exercise, Women's Vault, Men's Pommel Horse  
**Athletics:** Men's Shot Put, Women's Triple Jump, 4x400m Mixed Relay, Women's 100m, Decathlon  
**Badminton:** Women's Doubles  
**Cycling Road:** Men  
**Equestrian:** Dressage Team Grand Prix Special  
**Fencing:** Women's Sabre Team  
**Judo:** Mixed team  
**Rowing:** Women's & Men's Single Sculls, Men's Eight Final  
**Shooting:** Women's 25m Pistol, Men's Skeet  
**Table Tennis:** Women's Singles Gold Medal  
**Tennis:** Women's singles, Men's doubles  
**Surfing:** Men & Women  
**Swimming:** Men's 100m Butterfly, Women's 200m Individual Medley, Women's 800m Freestyle, Mixed 4 x 100m Medley Relay

## Lakshya storms into the semifinals

The Indian loses the first game to Chen before winning the next two; the 22-year-old becomes the first Indian male shuttler to enter the last four



Jonathan Selvaraj  
PARIS

There's a tattoo down Lakshya Sen's neck that reads, "The sky is the limit".

Whether or not he gets there, at least an Olympic quarterfinal isn't the limit of his potential. No Indian men's singles badminton player had ever reached the final-four at the Olympics before Lakshya crashed through the door and made history at the Arena Porte de La Chapelle.

The path to history wasn't easy, with the 22-year-old from Almora having to overcome a one-game deficit and push his defensive skills to the absolute limit to get the better of Taiwan's Chou Tien Chen 19-21, 21-15, 21-12.

"It feels good to become



Proving his mettle: Lakshya was on top of his game in a high-octane clash against Chen. AP

the first Indian male to reach the Olympic semifinals. I'm happy. But I am also very tired. I need to rest before my next match," he said.

Lakshya came into the match on the back of tremendous momentum, hav-

ing beaten All England and Asian champion Jonatan Christie and then compatriot H.S. Prannoy.

But he was far from the favourite against Chou, a 34-year-old veteran who also had a 3-1 advantage against the Indian. The

first game saw Chou trying to surprise Lakshya by varying his pace and pulling out disguised trick shots to wrong foot the Indian.

Both both players tried to take control of the net, and although Lakshya had a single point lead at 18-17,

the Taiwanese stuck to his tactics. Although Lakshya was scurrying around, he was putting in the work that would pay off late in the contest.

The first game might have been done but Chou knew he hadn't yet won. Every match the two have played has been a physical one. This was no exception. There was a moment in the second game, however, when Chou felt he had broken the Indian.

The two were locked 7-7 when, after a breathtaking rally that had it all – defensive shots piled on jump smashes paired with diving retrieves, shuttles catching the net cord and bobbling over and drop smashes – Chou hit a drive over Lakshya and found the backline of the court.

Although Lakshya challenged the call, there was no review on the big screen. The umpire, though, had seen the result on her private monitor and given the point to Chou. Although the Indian complained, there was nothing to do but play on.

From the coaches seat, former All England champion Prakash Padukone – at whose academy Lakshya trains – got up and yelled, "Josh dikhao" (show ener-

gy), josh dikhao."

Lakshya was near breaking point, Chou hit a smash winner and shrieked as if he had actually won. But he hadn't yet. Lakshya soaked up all the pressure he was under and turned it around.

## Resilient

At 11-11, it was Lakshya's turn to break the match, winning a point he shouldn't have. Completely wrong footed, he backtracked and hit a no-look retrieve back at Chou that forced an error.

As the match drew on, it was the 12-year younger Indian who seemed fresher. The match continued to be punctuated with fast, sharp, flat exchanges.

The errors in Chou's game became a flood as Lakshya extended his lead. He took the game and from then on, while Chou gamely tried to hold on, the Indian pulled ahead steadily.

"Lakshya was too fast today," Chou would admit after the match.

Just as his tattoo says, Lakshya may have pulled through but he is already looking even further.

"I'm going to rest for a bit and then I'm going to start preparing for my next match," he said.

## Afghan sprinter Yousoufi tells girls not to let others make decisions for them

Jonathan Selvaraj  
PARIS

The record books will show that Afghanistan's Kimia Yousoufi ran the slowest time in her preliminary round of the women's 100m competition at the Paris 2024 Olympics. Competing in her third Olympics – Rio de Janeiro and Tokyo – Yousoufi finished with a time of 13.42 seconds, slower than the 13.29 three years ago. Most athletes would be disappointed at this point, with years of struggle and hard work culminating in a less-than-impressive finish.

But for Yousoufi, this race is just the beginning. As the competition concludes, she removes the bib pinned to the back of her jersey, turns it around, eager to show the camera



Kimia Yousoufi.

what is written on the other side. It's important that people see it.

"Education, Sport, our right," it reads.

Each of the runners in the preliminary rounds has their own story. Faiqa Riaz, from Pakistan, is participating in her first international competition. She's never run in a stadium as big and filled with as many

people as the Stade de France.

Iakopo Filomenaleonisa of Samoa, a former body-builder, has made a multi-day trip to Paris and set a national record (12.78). Regine Tugade-Watson of Guam is a former USA Naval Academy member.

Each athlete is pursuing personal yet significant goals. Yousoufi has her own story, too. But she's not running just for that. "Of course, the Olympic Games is a big dream for every athlete. I've run at the Tokyo Olympics and the Rio Olympics. But in them, I was running just for myself. But now I'm here for Afghanistan's girls," she says.

"I was in Kabul when the Taliban came. I wanted to stay because I felt I was from this country. My peo-

ple needed me. But a lot of people told me they couldn't guarantee my safety. I was a woman with a public face because I'd carried the flag of Afghanistan just a few days before. I had to flee," Yousoufi adds.

Yousoufi is determined to fight for all Afghan women. "I had to choose between competing as a refugee or an Afghan. I was born not in Afghanistan but in Iran (her parents had fled to that country back in 1996 when she was born). So, when I opened my eyes for the first time, it was as a refugee. But I am an Afghan. I will always represent my women and people.

"I have a message for Afghan girls. Look for opportunities, and then use them. Don't give up. Don't let others make your decisions for you," she says.

## Djokovic sets up a dream summit clash with Alcaraz

Agencies  
PARIS

A fired-up Novak Djokovic on Friday reached his first Olympic Games final, where he will face Carlos Alcaraz in a dream gold medal showdown.

The top-seeded Serb, seeking an elusive Olympic title to sit along his 24 Grand Slam crowns, defeated Lorenzo Musetti 6-4, 6-2 in a tense semifinal at Roland Garros.

Earlier, Spain's Alcaraz powered into the final with a brutal 6-1, 6-1 thrashing of overwhelmed Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime.

The 21-year-old is bidding to add the Olympic gold to the French Open and Wimbledon titles he won recently and was in devastating form on Court Philippe Chatrier.

"I played at a very high level from the beginning to the end," said Alcaraz, who was sharper than in his quarterfinal win against Tommy Paul.

"One of my objectives at



Ruthless: Alcaraz dismantled Auger-Aliassime in quick time. GETTY IMAGES

the beginning of the year was to win a gold medal and now we have this one match to try to get it and I am going to have fun."

**Swiatek claims bronze**  
Iga Swiatek earned the consolation of a bronze medal as she outclassed Slovakia's Anna Karolina Schmiedlova 6-2, 6-1. By doing so, she became the first Polish player to win an Olympic medal in tennis.

Meanwhile on Thursday, Donna Vekic became Croatia's first-ever Olympic

singles finalist when she thrashed Schmiedlova 6-4, 6-0.

Andy Murray's illustrious career came to an end as he and Dan Evans were beaten 6-2, 6-4 by the American pair Taylor Fritz and Tommy Paul in the men's doubles quarterfinals.

The former World No. 1 and three-time Grand Slam champion had won the Olympics singles in 2012 and 2016 and also claimed a mixed doubles silver medal in 2012.



Riner. AFP

## Riner wins a record fourth judo gold

Agence France-Presse  
PARIS

Teddy Riner became the first judoka to win four Olympic gold medals after the Frenchman defeated South Korea's Kim Min-jong in the heavyweight final on Friday.

The 35-year-old is just the second three-time individual Olympic gold medallist in judo history, emulating Japan's Tadahiro Nomura, who won in 1996, 2000 and 2004. Riner had won gold in the mixed team event in Tokyo.

## IOC and IBA justify their stands over boxer's gender issue

Y.B. Sarangi  
PARIS

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Boxing Association (IBA) have tried to justify their own stands following the unwanted episode of Italian woman boxer Angela Carini withdrawing from her 66kg pre-quarterfinal bout with Imane Khelif after 46 seconds amid accusations of the Algerian being a "biological male."

The incident triggered international outrage and forced the IOC to issue a statement and defend the inclusion of Khelif.

The IBA, which has been suspended by the IOC for several irregularities, has advocated safety of the athletes and stood by its decision to disqualify the Algerian midway through the 2023 World championships in New Delhi.

The IOC, which conducted boxing competitions in the Tokyo Olympics through its Boxing Unit and is now doing the same here, said, "Every person has the right to practise sport without discrimination.

"All athletes participating in the boxing tournament of the Olympic Games Paris 2024 comply with the competition's eligibility and entry regulations, as well as all applicable medical regulations set by the Paris 2024 Boxing Unit (PBU).

"As with previous Olympic boxing competitions, the gender and age of the athletes are based on their passport."

It said these rules were applied during the qualifying events too.

The IOC stood firmly with Imane and the Taiwanese boxer Lin Yu-ting, saying the IBA decision to disqualify them was arbitrary.

"The two athletes have been competing in international boxing competitions for many years in the women's category, including Tokyo 2020, IBA World Championships and IBA-sanctioned tournaments.

## Medals table

Country	G	S	B	T	
1 China	13	8	9	30	
2 France	10	11	12	33	
3 Australia	10	6	5	21	
4 USA	9	18	15	42	
5 Great Britain	9	10	8	27	
6 Japan	8	3	6	17	
7 Korea	7	5	4	16	
8 Italy	5	8	4	17	
9 Netherlands	4	2	2	8	
10 Canada	3	2	6	11	
44 India	0	0	3	3	

"The current aggression against these two athletes is based entirely on this arbitrary decision, which was taken without any proper procedure."

The IBA, meanwhile, reaffirmed its position. "IBA remains committed to ensuring competitive fairness in all of our events, we absolutely condemn the inconsistencies in eligibility to compete in the boxing competition held in Paris 2024.

"To reiterate, both Imane Khelif and Lin Yu-ting post testing, did not meet the required eligibility criteria to compete within the female category of our respective events.

"The disqualification was based on two trustworthy tests conducted on both athletes in two independent laboratories in Istanbul in 2022 and New Delhi in 2023."

IBA pointed out that during the tests Lin and Imane 'did not undergo a testosterone examination' but were subject to a separate and recognized test. This test conclusively indicated that both athletes did not meet the required eligibility criteria and were found to have competitive advantages over other female competitors.

IBA said its decision to disqualify both is legally binding as Lin didn't appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) and Imane "withdrew the appeal."

# Spinners rule the day as Sri Lanka-India share honours

The home team scores 230 for eight, thanks to half-centuries from Nissanka and Wellalage; Rohit's men, going strong at 80 for one, lose their way; Hasaranga and Asalanka finish with three-fors

## INDIA IN LANKA

**S. Dipak Ragav**  
COLOMBO

If Sri Lanka squandered games from winning positions in the three-match T20I series, it was India's turn to make a mess of a relatively simple chase as the two sides played out a sensational tied encounter in the first ODI at the R. Premadasa Stadium here on Friday. Chasing 231, the visitor needed just five runs off the last three overs with two wickets in hand. And when Shivam Dube (25) punched Charith Asalanka (three for 30) to the cover boundary off the third ball of the 48th, the game seemed done and dusted. But the Lankan skipper did not throw in the towel and managed to trap Dube and Arshdeep Singh leg-before off consecutive deliveries to salvage pride for his team.

On a tricky pitch that offered considerable assistance to the spinners, the Men in Blue got off to a flyer but lost their way as the Sri Lankan tweekers kept their side in the hunt, picking wickets at regular intervals.

Skipper Rohit Sharma (58, 47b, 7x4, 3x6) set the tone for the chase when he belted out some of his classics — effortless pulls, flicks and cuts — and sent the Sri Lankan pacers on a leather hunt in the PowerPlay. He did not hold back against the spinners either, cutting Dunith Wellalage for two boundaries and sweeping off-spinner Akila Dananjaya for a four and six over square-leg to bring up his half-century off just 33 balls.



**Clutch performance:** Wellalage followed up his unbeaten half-century with a two-wicket haul. AFP

However, left-arm spinner Wellalage (two for 39) gave his side an opening when he removed openers

Shubman Gill and Rohit in successive overs. From 75 for no loss, India slumped to 87 for three when Da-

nanjaya had Washington Sundar leg-before.

nanjaya had Washington Sundar leg-before.

Wanindu Hasaranga (three for 58) then got the big scalp of Virat Kohli, trapped plumb in front, trying to play off the back foot. In the next over, Asitha Fernando castled Shreyas Iyer to leave India tottering at 132 for five.

K.L. Rahul (31) and Axar Patel (33) stitched a 57-run partnership for the sixth wicket to get the innings back on track.

Just when things looked in control, Hasaranga removed Rahul when he skied to short midwicket, while Asalanka had Axar caught behind. Dube almost saw India home, hitting two sixes, but failed to finish the job.

Earlier, half-centuries from opener Pathum Nissanka (56) and later Wellalage (67 n.o) helped the host post 230 for eight after opting to bat. Nissanka, who topped the run charts in the T20 series, carried his good form and looked positive in his approach. The 26-year-old played eye-catching shots off the front and backfoot against the quicks.

As was the case during the T20Is, Nissanka lacked support from the middle-order once the spinners took over and the home team looked in trouble at 101 for five. Fortunately for Sri Lanka, Wellalage rose to the occasion and played a composed knock, stitching three vital partnerships with the lower-order to help his side reach a fighting total. It was not enough to win, but it helped avoid an 11th straight defeat to India across formats.

## SCOREBOARD

**SRI LANKA**  
Pathum Nissanka lbw b Washington 56 (75b, 9x4), Avishka Fernando c Arshdeep b Siraj 1 (7b), Kusal Mendis lbw b Dube 14 (31b, 1x4), Sadeera Samarawickrama c Gill b Axar 8 (18b), Charith Asalanka c Rohit b Kuldeep 14 (21b, 2x4), Janith Liyanage c Rohit b Axar 20 (26b, 1x4, 1x6), Dunith Wellalage (not out) 67 (65b, 7x4, 2x6), Wanindu Hasaranga c Axar b Arshdeep 24 (35b, 1x4, 2x6), Akila Dananjaya c Washington b Arshdeep 17 (21b, 2x4), Mohamed Shiraz (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (lb-2, w-6): 8; Total (for eight wkts. in 50 overs): 230.

**FALL OF WICKETS**  
1-7 (Avishka, 2.3 overs), 2-46 (Kusal Mendis, 13.1), 3-60 (Samarawickrama, 18.3), 4-91

(Asalanka, 23.5), 5-101 (Nissanka, 26.3), 6-142 (Liyanage, 34.2), 7-178 (Hasaranga, 42.6), 8-224 (Dananjaya, 49.3).

## INDIA BOWLING

Siraj 8-2-36-1, Arshdeep 8-0-47-2, Axar 10-0-33-2, Dube 4-0-19-1, Kuldeep 10-0-33-1, Washington 9-1-46-1, Gill 1-0-14-0.

## INDIA

Rohit Sharma lbw b Wellalage 58 (47b, 7x4, 3x6), Shubman Gill c Kusal Mendis b Wellalage 16 (35b, 2x4), Virat Kohli lbw b Hasaranga 24 (32b, 2x4), Washington Sundar lbw b Dananjaya 5 (4b, 1x4), Shreyas Iyer b Asitha 23 (23b, 4x4), K.L. Rahul c Wellalage b Hasaranga 31 (43b, 2x4), Axar Patel c Kusal Mendis b Asalanka 33 (57b, 2x4, 1x6), Shivam Dube lbw b Asalanka 25 (24b, 1x4, 2x6),

Kuldeep Yadav b Hasaranga 2 (10b), Mohammed Siraj (not out) 5 (11b), Arshdeep Singh lbw b Asalanka 0 (1b); Extras (lb-4, w-4): 8; Total (in 47.5 overs): 230.

## FALL OF WICKETS

1-75 (Gill, 12.4), 2-80 (Rohit, 14.2), 3-87 (Washington, 15.4), 4-130 (Kohli, 23.1), 5-132 (Shreyas, 24.2), 6-189 (Rahul, 39.4), 7-197 (Axar, 40.5), 8-211 (Kuldeep, 44.3), 9-230 (Dube, 47.4).

## SRI LANKA BOWLING

Asitha 6-1-34-1, Shiraz 4-0-25-0, Wellalage 9-1-39-2, Dananjaya 10-0-40-1, Hasaranga 10-0-58-3, Asalanka 8.5-0-30-3.

**Toss:** Sri Lanka; **PoM:** Wellalage. **Match tied.**

**Second ODI: August 4, Colombo, 2.30 p.m. IST.**

**THE HINDU AT THE GAMES PHOTO CONTEST**

Winner of four gold medals in the 1936 Summer Olympics hosted by Nazi Germany, the first Adidas influencer, and a legendary act of victory in the Berlin Olympics in 1936 stand out as highlights of which Olympic athlete's career?

Scan QR code or visit [newsthlive/THOPH](http://newsthlive/THOPH) to take the quiz. Top 3 winners\* every day win gift vouchers.

Answer to yesterday's quiz: Johnny Weissmuller

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NET PROFIT	287	261
NET INTEREST INCOME	567	514
NET INTEREST MARGIN %	4.12	4.00
BOOK VALUE (in ₹)	520	454
TOTAL DEPOSITS	49,188	47,008
TOTAL ADVANCES	40,853	37,292
CRAR %	29.21	26.57
RAM %	92	90
SMA %	4.98	7.16
NNPA %	0.65	0.66
GNPA %	1.44	1.56

₹ in Crores

Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended 30.06.2024 (Unaudited)	Quarter Ended 30.06.2023 (Unaudited)	Year Ended 31.03.2024 (Audited)
1.	Total Income from Operations	1514.87	1322.89	5492.85
2.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	383.40	340.91	1393.58
3.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before Tax, (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	383.40	340.91	1393.58
4.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after Tax, (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	287.29	261.23	1072.03
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive Income (after tax)	NA	NA	NA
6.	Equity Share Capital	158.35	158.35	158.35
7.	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous Year	8085.96	7031.23	7762.85
8.	Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)			
	1. Basic:	*18.14	*16.50	67.70
	2. Diluted:	*18.14	*16.50	67.70

NOTE:

1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Financial Results are available on the website of the Stock Exchange(s) ([www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com) and [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com)) and on the Bank's Website ([www.tmb.in](http://www.tmb.in))

2. Information relating to Total comprehensive income and other comprehensive income is not furnished as Ind AS is not yet made applicable to banks.

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For and on behalf of the Directors of the Board  
**C. Chiranjeevraj**  
Director / Chairman - ACB

Place : Thoothukudi  
Date : 02.08.2024

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**Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Limited**

REGD. OFFICE : 57, V.E. ROAD, THOOTHUKUDI - 628 002  
CIN : L65110TN1921PLC001908

# Biles is back – maybe even better than ever

The American gymnast leads the United States to a team gold; at 27, becomes the oldest woman in 72 years to win an Olympic all-around gold

## OLYMPICS

Agence France-Presse  
PARIS

Simone Biles, with two Paris Olympics gold medals and counting, has cemented her legacy as the greatest gymnast of all time – an athlete who transcends her sport in both triumph and defeat.

The diminutive dynamo dazzled at the 2016 Rio Games, winning gold in all-around, vault, floor exercise and team events.

She arrived at the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Olympics with superstar billing and history in her sights, but withdrew from



**Jaw-dropping:** Biles has a tally of 39 world and Olympic medals, with 29 of them gold. AP

most of events as she struggled with the disorienting and “petrifying” mental block that gymnasts call the “twisties”.

Hailed by many as a trailblazer for athletes’ mental health but criticised by a few as a quitter, Biles has returned from a

two-year hiatus, at the age of 27, as good as or even better than ever.

She has laid the ghosts of Tokyo to rest, leading

the United States to a resounding team gold in Paris and following up by becoming, at 27, the oldest woman since 1952 to win Olympic all-around gold.

Biles shook off a disastrous uneven bars routine that had her trailing at the halfway point to edge Brazilian Rebeca Andrade for all-around gold on Thursday. She is the third woman to capture more than one Olympic all-around title and the first to do so in non-consecutive Olympics.

Biles now has six Olympic gold medals and nine medals in total. Her tally of world and Olympic medals is an incredible 39 – 29 of them gold.

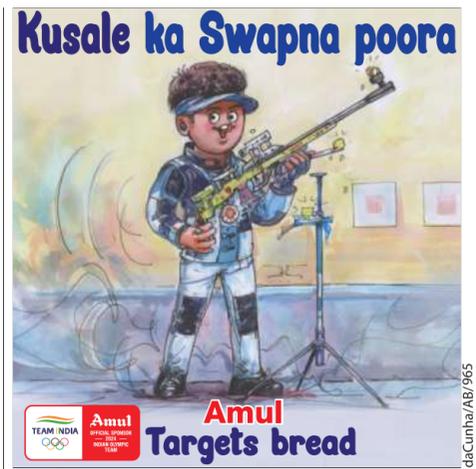
The American, who started that cache with her

first all-around world title in 2013, when she was just 16, remains a must-see sensation.

Her competitions at Bercy Arena have drawn stars from Hollywood and billionaire entrepreneurs as well as legions of young girls thrilled to see their idol.

On Thursday, Biles suggested the glamorous turnout was a celebration of an Olympics freed of the Covid restrictions that made Tokyo a sterile affair.

More than seven million Instagram followers basked in the fairytale photos of Biles’ wedding to NFL player Jonathan Owens, who received special dispensation from the Chicago Bears to miss a few days of training camp to watch her in Paris.



deCumha/AB/965

## INBRIEF



### Carlo Ancelotti: “Real Madrid will be my final club”

Coach Carlo Ancelotti has said that he considers Real Madrid to be his final club. He expressed that he is currently not interested in coaching a national team because he would miss his favourite aspect of the job – working daily with players and staff. While speaking on John Obi-Mikel’s podcast, Ancelotti said, “My idea is that Real Madrid will be my last club. At the moment I am not excited about coaching a national team because I would miss what I like most, the day-to-day work with the players and staff.”

## LIVE TELECAST

**Olympics 2024:** Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 11 a.m. onwards

**Football:** Durand Cup, Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 3.30 & 7 p.m.

# Rishabh Pant, Ishant Sharma to headline Delhi Premier League

## CRICKET

Sports Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Yet another T20 League was added to the Indian cricket calendar with the DDCA launching the Delhi Premier League here on Friday featuring both men’s and women’s teams, promising the likes of Rishabh Pant and Ishant Sharma headlining the competition.

The Delhi & District Cricket Association also unveiled the franchise for the six-team men’s competition with the top-four bidders also getting ownership for the women’s

teams. The winner’s purse has been kept at ₹1 crore and the players divided into four groups for the draft with the salary for a marquee player in the top-tier Group A capped at ₹10 lakh.

The franchise auction, held last Sunday, had seen the six teams sold for a cumulative ₹49.65 crore. The six franchise include South Delhi Superstars (Real Force Resources Pvt Ltd, ₹8.95cr), East Delhi Riders (Areion Finserve Pvt. Ltd, ₹8.3cr), Central Delhi Kings (Utech Developers Pvt. Ltd, ₹8.25cr), North Delhi Strikers (Gupta Jee Tent Services Pvt. Ltd, ₹8.15cr), West Delhi Lions (Brew Force Limited,



**New start:** Virender Sehwag and Rohan Jaitley, president DDCA, during the inauguration of DPL. PTI

₹8cr) and Purani Dilli 6 (SISL Infotech Pvt. Ltd, ₹8cr), with the first four also owning the women’s teams.

The league will be chaired by league commissioner and retired IAS officer Bimal Julka and held

from August 17-September 8 at the Arun Jaitley Stadium with a total of 40 matches – 33 men’s and seven women’s.

Virender Sehwag was named the brand ambassador for the inaugural season

While Pant’s availability will be subject to national team commitments, DDCA president Rohan Jaitley promised the other big names including Navdeep Saini, Harshit Rana and Ayush Badoni will be featuring in the competition. The tournament trophy and team jerseys were also unveiled at the event.

“We are proud to showcase the unique identities of each team and the spirit of competition they bring to the league. This event is a celebration of Delhi’s rich cricketing heritage and a glimpse into the bright future we envision for the sport in our region,” Jaitley said.

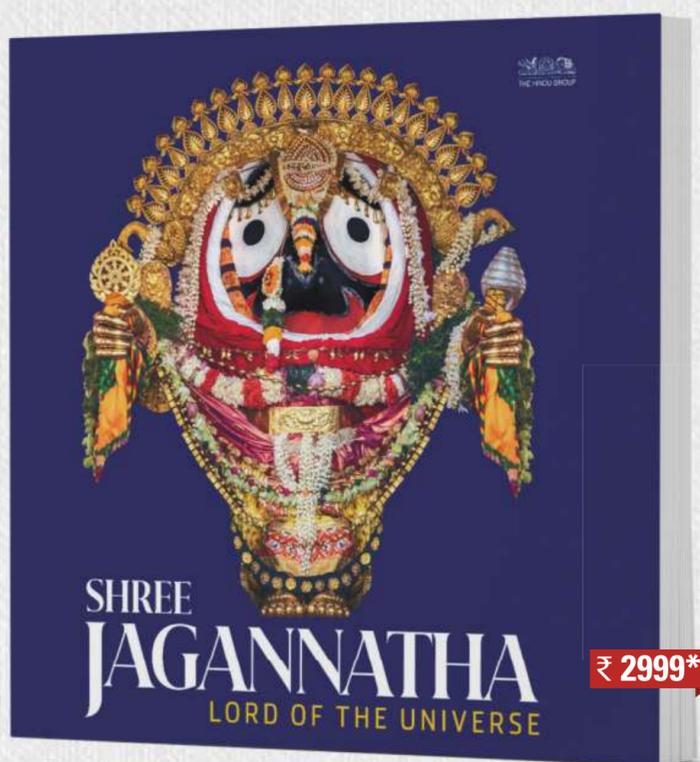
Sehwag, whose son

Aryavir will be one of the 270 players in the draft that also has under-19 and 23 players, said it was a good opportunity.

“The league will be a fantastic opportunity to those players who work hard in the nets but don’t get a chance in any major tournament. We didn’t get this type of opportunity in my younger days,” said Sehwag.

“Now my son is playing, I am glad he will be getting those opportunities. Delhi has always been close to my heart, and I believe this league will provide a fantastic platform for young and talented cricketers from the region to shine,” he added.

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