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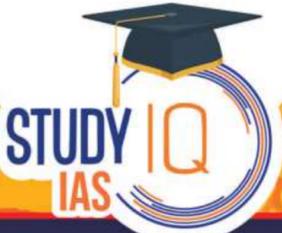
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Barapullah bridge restoration by ASI to begin in three months: L-G

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena on Sunday said that the historic Barapullah bridge near Nizamuddin, has been cleared of all encroachments. The bridge, which is protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has been handed back to the conservation agency, and its resto-

ration will begin in three months.

"With concrete efforts of the agencies, encroachment from the bridge has been removed, and the desilting of the drain is under way. The ASI will take up the restoration work immediately after the desilting is completed," Mr. Saxena said in a post on social media platform X.

On August 4, the L-G

had visited the area and directed officials to remove encroachments. On Sunday, the L-G visited the area for the second time this week to check on the progress on the restoration work. Meanwhile, the Aam Aadmi Party has accused the L-G of removing about 400 vendors from the area without following due process in the name of clearing encroachment.

Sisodia hits the ground running, to embark on padyatra from Aug. 14

Formal post in govt. or party for the leader to be decided by CM: Pathak; BJP claims the Delhi Assembly election will end Kejriwal's 'anarchic rule'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia will start a *padyatra* from August 14 and "spearhead" preparations for the Delhi Assembly election scheduled for next year, said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday.

The decision has come as the party's top brass has been holding discussions for the past two days over the future role for Mr. Sisodia after he was granted bail by the Supreme Court in the corruption cases linked to the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy for 2021-22.

The meeting to decide the role for him was attended by senior AAP leaders, including Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh, Sandeep Pathak, Durgesh Pathak, Gopal Rai, Saurobh Bharadwaj, and Atishi.

"Tomorrow, there will be a meeting with all party MLAs and on Tuesday, Manish ji will meet all AAP



Manish Sisodia. FILE PHOTO

councillors. On August 14, on he will start the *padyatra* to meet people of Delhi," AAP general secretary (organisation) Sandeep Pathak told reporters.

When asked whether Mr. Sisodia will be given any formal position in the party or in the government, Mr. Pathak said it will be decided in future by party chief Arvind Kejriwal.

"By now, people have understood that the BJP and [Prime Minister] Narendra Modi have only one agenda of destroying AAP. Despite all adverse conditions, the party is strong

and growing. We will meet people and get their blessings," Mr. Pathak added.

Mr. Bharadwaj too claimed that ever since Mr. Sisodia has returned home after spending 17 months in jail, the party cadre is brimming with confidence.

A senior leader told *The Hindu* that they are not "bothered" about Mr. Sisodia's designation.

"He is the one who built the party from scratch with Arvind Kejriwal ji. So, a formal position in the government or the party is irrelevant," the leader said.

'Voters will reject AAP' Reacting to it, BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said the next year's Assembly poll will mark the end of Kejriwal's "anarchic rule".

"It's strange that AAP leaders are expecting to win in Delhi even after voters rejected Kejriwal's appeal to vote for AAP to save him from going to jail during the parliamentary poll," he said.

Resident doctors at govt. hospitals to go on strike from today

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Patients at major government hospitals in the Capital are set to face difficulties as resident doctors have decided to boycott out-patient department (OPD) and elective services from Monday.

The move came in response to the brutal rape and murder of a resident doctor in Kolkata. The call for a nationwide strike was given by the Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA).

However, emergency and ICU services will not be affected at the city hospitals as resident doctors will continue to perform these duties wearing black ribbons.

Senior doctors at Delhi government-run Lok Nayak Hospital Central government-run Safdarjung Hospital said OPDs, elective surgeries and ward duties will not be completely shut, though these will be "strongly affected".

"OPDs and other services will run tomorrow, but with less strength of permanent doctors. Medical officers, general duty medical officers, specialists, who are also in a large number in our hospital,

The move came in response to the brutal rape and murder of a resident doctor in Kolkata

will work. Even teachers will be asked to work. The services will be affected, but these will not be shut down," a senior doctor at Safdarjung Hospital said.

A senior doctor at Lok Nayak Hospital said "consultants and other doctors will work on Monday". "But elective services will be affected," the doctor added.

'Protect medicos' Meanwhile, the resident doctors' body wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah demanding swift justice for the deceased doctor and strict enforcement of security protocol for all health care workers across the country.

Dr. Aviral Mathur, president of FORDA, said, "We know patients will be affected by it, but such a travesty of justice has never occurred in all of history of medical profession in India. This is as bad it could get for anybody in any profession. We need concrete actions."

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Khushhali Solanki	274	130	144
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Dhruv Sapra	273	131	142
Piyush Gautam	269	128	141
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Boy electrocuted while playing cricket; residents protest demanding justice

Samridhi Tewari
NEW DELHI

A 13-year-old boy was electrocuted when he came in contact with a live wire while playing cricket in the north-west Delhi's Ranhola area, police officials said on Sunday.

The incident took place in Kotla Vihar Phase-2 on Saturday when Aditya Raj, a Class 7 student, went to fetch the cricket ball and came in contact with a pole, carrying electricity to a *gaushala* (cowshed) situated in a corner of the playground.

The police said the wire was wrapped around an iron pipe.

He was taken to hospital, where he was declared brought dead. The police have lodged a case under Section 106(1) (death of any person by doing any rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable

Death shock

At least 8 persons died from electrocution in the past one month

July 13: A constable lost his life as he came in contact with a high-tension wire in Najafgarh

July 13: A BSES employee died while trying to fix an electricity pole in Dwarka

July 13: A 34-year-old woman electrocuted on a waterlogged road in Bhajanpura

July 24: A 26-year-old UPSC aspirant died from an electric shock after he grabbed an iron gate that was in contact with a live wire in Patel Nagar

July 25: A 30-year-old labourer electrocuted in Karawal Nagar



July 31: An 18-year-old ragpicker electrocuted after he accidentally touched a wire near his rented accommodation in Sangam Vihar

July 31: A 12-year-old boy died after coming in contact with hanging wires in Dwarka's Bindapur

SOURCE: DELHI POLICE

homicide) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

The incident led to a protest by local residents, who placed the body on

the Nangloi-Najafgarh road demanding justice for the boy's family.

Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva sought a probe

into the boy's death. "There have been growing incidents of electrocution deaths that highlight the criminal negligence in the maintenance of power infrastructure by discoms," he said.

'Private playground'

However, a source in the Power Department said the discom network was "located around 100 metres away from the incident spot".

"The discom network is nowhere involved in it," he said, adding that the incident took place within an "enclosed private playground", where the cowshed owners had made an "internal wiring arrangement" for the power supply.

The Delhi government expressed solidarity with the victim's family and ensured that guilty will be punished.

7-year-old boy drowns in waterlogged park in Rohini

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

A seven-year-old boy drowned in a park, which was waterlogged due to rain, in Rohini's Sector 20, an official said on Sunday.

The official said the body has been sent for a post-mortem and necessary action has been taken in the matter. The incident took place on Saturday evening when the boy was playing in the park, he added.

After the Aman Vihar police station received a PCR call, a police team immediately reached the spot and was informed that the child had been rushed to a hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead, the officer said.

CCTV footage is being scanned to know the actual sequence of events, the officer added.

Waterlogging throws traffic out of gear as rain lashes Capital

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Heavy rainfall in the national capital on Sunday led to traffic snarls in several areas as Delhiites reported 47 incidents of waterlogging across the city.

Safdarjung, the city's primary weather station, recorded 26.3 mm of rain, while Lodi Road recorded 30.4 mm, Palam 20.4 mm and Mayur Vihar 55.5 mm between 2.30 and 5.30, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD) data.

Today, the city was on "orange" alert, a warning for potential disruptions to transport, rail and road traffic.

A PWD official said they received 40 calls regarding waterlogging. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi received 12 complaints -

seven regarding waterlogging.

"Traffic is affected on the Najafgarh-Phirni road near Dhansa Stand and Bahadurgarh stand. Please avoid these stretches and plan your journey accordingly," the police said in a post on X. In another post, the police said that traffic was disrupted on the Najafgarh Phirni road due to waterlogging. Traffic was also affected on several roads, including MB Road.

Meanwhile, heavy rainfall was also recorded in Gurugram, causing severe waterlogging and traffic snarls.

Many parts of the city were heavily inundated, with the Narsinghpur stretch of the Delhi-Gurugram Expressway and places near Basai and Golf Course Extension Road heavily waterlogged.

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01	Last date of online e-Tender submission	22.08.2024 up to 1600 hrs
02	Bid will be opened on	23.08.2024 up to 1600 hrs
03	Bid Opening Place	MT CELL, SB PHQ BHPAL

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G-14783/24

Bihar: another small bridge collapses

Press Trust of India
HAJIPUR

Another small bridge has collapsed in the Raghobpur block of Bihar's Vaishali district, an official said on Sunday. No casualty was reported after the structure collapsed in Paharpur village on Saturday.

According to a statement issued by the district administration, "the bridge that collapsed on Saturday was 20 years old and it was closed to the public in 2021".

Timings
DELHI

MONDAY, AUG. 12		
RISE	05:50	SET 19:03
RISE	12:33	SET 23:17
TUESDAY, AUG. 13		
RISE	05:50	SET 19:02
RISE	13:32	SET 23:57
WEDNESDAY, AUG. 14		
RISE	05:51	SET 19:02
RISE	14:33	SET 00:00

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	31	26
Safdarjang	31	26
Palam	29	25

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Protesters step up heat on Pawar over Maratha reservation

Youth stop convoy in Solapur; another group raises slogans supporting Jarange-Patil at NCP(SP) leader's rally in Barshi and waves black flags

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Maratha protesters on Sunday accosted Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) president Sharad Pawar in Solapur's Barshi town, seeking his stance on providing reservation to the community.

The protesters stopped Mr. Pawar's car near Kurduwadi village and one of them asked him, "Do you support Maratha reservation? If you do, then why do you not publicly speak up and take your stand? For years you have been saying that you support the Maratha community..."

Before the car sped away, Mr. Pawar briefly said that he supported Maratha reservation. The group raised slogans waving black flags, 'Maratha aarakshan [Maratha reservation]'.

A similar incident occurred in the Barshi town where Mr. Pawar addressed a political rally on Sunday in the run-up to the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly election. A group of youth at the venue raised slogans mentioning Maratha quota leader Manoj Jarange-Patil's name.

Inspector Balkrishna Dabade from the Barshi police station confirmed the incident to *The Hindu* and said: "We had detained the youth for sometime be-



NCP(SP) president Sharad Pawar (right) along with Congress leader Sushilkumar Shinde during a rally in Solapur district on Sunday. PTI

cause they were creating unrest by raising slogans on Maratha reservation by holding black flags. They were in the age group of 20 to 25. They were overpowered by the security guards on the ground and the police. We released them after 5 p.m. when the rally was over."

Mr. Jarange-Patil has been spearheading the reservation protests demanding Kunbi certificates for Marathas and their blood relatives as Kunbis enjoy benefits under the OBC quota. On Sunday, the Maratha Aarakshan Shantata rally was carried out by the activist in Pune.

Targeting the PM

In Barshi, Mr. Pawar addressed a rally as part of the upcoming State Legislative Assembly poll, expected to be held by October. Criticising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said, "The PM

had made promises to double the income of farmers, but instead, farmer suicides have doubled in Maharashtra. The BJP government at the Centre and the State government have not utilised their resources and power to support farmers that could reduce their hardships and generate employment opportunities for the youth. We are at a crucial stage that demands urgent attention to reduce debt burden on farmers and waive their loans. It is possible, I had done it when I was the Union Agriculture Minister."

The NCP(SP) chief also took a jibe at the BJP's vote share in the recently held Lok Sabha election and said, "The BJP could not even win 300 seats despite loud slogans of 'Abki Baar 400 paar'. It could only form the government with the help of parties from Andhra Pradesh and Bihar."

Video of woman washing pistols with soap goes viral, leads police to illegal arms unit

Press Trust of India
MORENA

The police have unearthed an illegal arms factory in Madhya Pradesh's Morena district and arrested a man-son duo after a video showed a woman washing some pistols with soap to make them shine, an official said on Sunday.

Country-made pistols

After verification of the video, a police team on Friday night raided a house in Ganeshpura area from where the illegal arms unit was being operated for the last six months, Mahua police station in-charge Pawan



The woman's husband and father-in-law have been arrested for allegedly running the illegal arms factory. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Singh said.

Three country-made pistols, several half-made weapons, various other equipment and materials were

seized from the factory, he said. A video showing a woman washing country-made pistols with soap and brush had surfaced on so-

cial media, the official said. The woman's husband, Shakti Kapoor Sakhwar, and father-in-law Biharilal Sakhwar were arrested for allegedly running the illegal arms factory, he said.

Police custody

The police registered a case against the accused under the Arms Act and were investigating where they supplied the weapons, the official said.

The accused were on Saturday produced before a local court which sent Biharilal Sakhwar to jail and his son to one-day police custody for interrogation, he added.

'Ladki Bahin instalments to be credited on Aug. 17'

Press Trust of India
AKOLA

The Maharashtra government will deposit on August 17 the 'Ladki Bahin' instalments for July and this month in the beneficiaries' accounts, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said on Sunday.

The scheme is getting a huge response in the State and 1.5 crore women have registered for it so far, he said. Under the scheme, married, divorced, and destitute women aged 21-60 will receive ₹1,500 per month, with the annual family income of beneficiaries capped at ₹2.5 lakh.

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Sakshi Kathuria

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it." Alan Kay

As an educator, I'm constantly looking for ways to improve my students' learning experience.

Recently, one particular conversation around ChatGPT, which was generating significant buzz, sparked my curiosity. While some viewed it with suspicion, a group of my students saw it as a potential game-changer. The discussion began casually during an office hour.

A student hesitantly mentioned using ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas for an upcoming essay. Her initial apprehension stemmed from concerns about plagiarism and academic integrity.

But, as she elaborated, it became clear that ChatGPT wasn't providing pre-written essays; it was helping her generate different perspectives and angles.

Benefits

Intrigued, I decided to delve deeper. Over the next few classes, I opened the floor for a discussion. To my surprise, several students admitted to using ChatGPT for various tasks such as summarising complex research papers, formulating creative writing prompts, and even practising code for Computer Science students. As the conversation unfolded, some fascinating benefits emerged:

Enhanced Creativity:

A collaborative journey

An educator on her experience of exploring ChatGPT along with her students



Several students highlighted how ChatGPT's ability to generate different text formats – poems, code, scripts – sparked their creativity and pushed them beyond their usual approaches, igniting new ideas and approaches.

Improved Research Skills: For some, ChatGPT served as a research assistant. By feeding in keywords, they could generate summaries of scholarly articles, saving valuable time and allowing them to focus on analysis and critical

thinking.

Personalised Learning: A few students with learning disabilities found ChatGPT's ability to rephrase complex concepts particularly helpful. It allowed them to grasp information in a way that resonated with their learning styles.

Ethical concerns While the potential of ChatGPT was undeniable, I also had concerns that I shared with my students:

Academic Integrity:

The biggest concern was the misuse of ChatGPT for plagiarism. We discussed the importance of using the tool ethically, emphasising proper citation and ensuring their own understanding of the content.

Overdependence and Critical Thinking: A valid concern was students becoming overly reliant on ChatGPT for tasks that required critical thinking and analysis. We emphasised using the tool as a springboard, not a crutch.

Bias and Misinformation: The potential for bias within AI models was another point of discussion. We explored the importance of fact-checking and evaluating the information generated by ChatGPT.

Way ahead Our exploration of ChatGPT was an eye-opening experience. It highlighted the potential of AI tools to personalise learning, enhance creativity, and empower students. However, it also under-

scored the importance of responsible use and critical thinking.

As educators, we must embrace AI not with fear, but with a spirit of exploration.

Open Discussions: Fostering open discussions about AI tools like ChatGPT allows students to explore their potential and limitations.

Ethical Guidelines: Developing clear ethical guidelines around the use of AI tools in the classroom promotes responsible use and academic integrity.

Curriculum Integration: Instead of viewing AI tools as separate entities, we can integrate them into the curriculum, teaching students how to use them effectively for research, analysis, and creative expression.

The conversation around ChatGPT with my students was a valuable reminder that education is a collaborative journey. By embracing new technologies thoughtfully and ethically, we can create a learning environment that fosters curiosity, critical thinking, and a lifelong love of learning. As AI continues to evolve, it's our responsibility to ensure it empowers students.

After all, the future of learning isn't about AI replacing teachers; it's about AI and educators working together to create a more engaging and enriching learning experience for all.

The author is a Faculty of Marketing and Marketing and Communications Chair at Fortune Institute of International Business (FIIB)

Empower future leaders

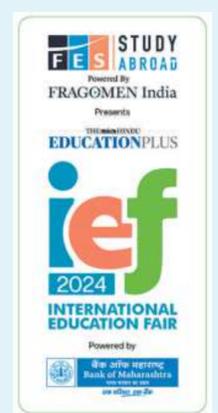
The 20th edition of The Hindu Education Plus International Education Fair presented by FES Study Abroad (powered by Fragomen India) and powered by Bank of Maharashtra will travel across seven major cities from August 15.

With a focus on personalised interactions with international institutions and consulates and financial institutions, the event aims to empower study abroad aspirants with the tools and information needed to navigate their educational journey abroad.

There will be sessions on visa applications and requirements and seminars on topics such as scholarship applications, financial aid, and career prospects.

The Unimoni stall will host a UFLY Slogan Contest, which has travel vouchers and scholarships as prizes.

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IN BRIEF



Bishnoi appointed convener of BJP's Haryana poll panel

Former Lok Sabha MP and BJP leader Kuldeep Bishnoi has been appointed the convener of the party's Haryana election management committee for the upcoming Assembly poll in the State. The 32-member committee is headed by State BJP chief Mohan Lal Badoli. Mr. Bishnoi, the son of late Chief Minister Bhajan Lal, had quit the Congress to join the BJP two years ago. However, he was upset over being denied the Hisar Lok Sabha ticket during the recently concluded parliamentary poll. BJP's Hisar Lok Sabha candidate Ranjit Chautala lost the election to Congress leader Jai Prakash.

Fire rumour: six hospitalised after jumping from train in U.P.

Six passengers were hospitalised after they jumped out of a moving train in panic near Uttar Pradesh's Bilpur on Sunday following rumours of a fire, Government Railway Police officials said. Earlier, Northern Railway spokesperson Kulraj Singh had said that "12 passengers have been injured". The incident took place in a general coach of the Howrah-Amritsar Mail in the morning near Bilpur station, which falls under the Moradabad division, he said. GRP station in-charge Rehan Khan said when the train reached Bilpur station in Bareilly, a rumour spread that the train has caught fire. PH

Teacher dies after assault by mob over 'molestation'

Press Trust of India
AGARTALA

Accusing a schoolteacher in Tripura's Gomati district of molesting a minor girl student, a mob assaulted him, leading to his death two days later, a police officer said on Sunday.

The police have registered an FIR in this connection, but no arrest has been made yet.

It is alleged that the man, who was in his 40s, molested the girl during a private tuition session in Udaipur town.

Bangladesh upheaval: Meghalaya villagers spend sleepless nights

Press Trust of India
SHILLONG

From reinforcing a bamboo fence separating them from Bangladeshis to staying up all night for vigil, residents of a Meghalaya village located metres from the international border are on the edge fearing influx of people from the other side after unrest that overthrew the Sheikh Hasina government.

The 90-odd residents of Lyngkhong village in East Khasi Hills district had erected a rag-tag bamboo fence along the border during the COVID-19 pandemic

to prevent petty crimes from across the border.

Lyngkhong is one of several sectors in Meghalaya where border fence could not be constructed due to land demarcation issues and the presence of habitations within 150 yards of the international border pillar or zero line.

A quick tour of the village revealed that most of the houses were located very close to the international border, while the only football ground is situated on the zero line.

Although Lyngkhong has not experienced any serious incident since the

fall of the Hasina government, villagers remain in a state of constant fear.

Vigil increased

"On August 5, we were anxious and could not sleep at night fearing our neighbours in Bangladesh might turn violent. Thankfully, the BSF increased its vigil, in addition to the village defence party and the men who stayed up all night to ensure our safety," Deria Khongdir, a 42-year-old mother of nine, said while recounting her anxiety.

Villagers have now added fresh bamboo to the fence to reinforce it.



The journey of young Gotipua dancers in Odisha involves over 20,000 hours of rigorous training spanning 10 years, dressing as girls on stage, sacrificing their education, and staying away from their families. BISWARANJAN ROUT

tipua. "It is difficult for me to pay my son's school fee, the *gurukul* is bearing the expense," he says.

Tradition troubles

Gotipua, which translates to 'one boy', has children trained in singing, dancing, yoga, and acrobatics. They dress as girls and perform at temple festivals, social gatherings, and religious ceremonies. Originating in the 16th century, Gotipua is celebrated as the precursor to the classical Odissi dance form.

At an art exhibition titled 'Boy Dancer' organised by New Bridge India, a non-profit cultural initiative, and the Odisha State Museum in Bhubaneswar in the recent past, Gotipua

aficionados wondered about the future of the dance and its dancers.

Birendra Pani, a contemporary visual artist, says, "These young performers are constantly on the edge, facing the harsh reality that once they reach the age of 16, securing a means of livelihood becomes a challenge."

Chitta Ranjan Malia, who has a PhD in Gotipua, says, "After the advent of Sri Chaitanya [considered a Hindu saint and Krishna devotee], Vaishnavism was in full swing in Odisha in the 16th century. The Vaishnavites had, however, not approved of dancing by women. Instead, they preached and practised the cult of Sakhi Bhava or

Tripura remains cautious to avoid turmoil spillover

Press Trust of India
AGARTALA

The Tripura police have decided not to allow agitations or rallies in the West Tripura district, including Agartala, to maintain the law and order situation in view of the volatile situation in Bangladesh, an officer said on Sunday.

The police have also arrested two persons for posting provocative messages on social media to avoid unrest or untoward incidents.

"The situation in Bangladesh is unstable. The vigil on the international border has been stepped up. The Tripura State Rifles has

been performing joint patrolling with the BSF troops along the border to thwart any intrusion bid from across the border," the Superintendent of Police, West Tripura, Kiran Kumar, told reporters.

Meanwhile, the Agartala Press Club on Sunday protested against the attack on media in Bangladesh after the regime change. "At least five journalists were murdered while about 100 mediapersons were injured in attacks in the neighbouring country since August 5. We condemn the attack on the media," said Jayanta Bhattacharya, the president of Agartala Press Club.



The journey of young Gotipua dancers in Odisha involves over 20,000 hours of rigorous training spanning 10 years, dressing as girls on stage, sacrificing their education, and staying away from their families. BISWARANJAN ROUT

offering oneself to Krishna as a female attendant, and introduced boy dancers."

Temple dances performed by *devadasis* or *maharis* (women dedicated in childhood to deities) were brought outside the temple by male dancers dressed as women, says Malia.

Then and now

He adds that initially Gotipua was performed within the temple precincts and only during festivals, but soon the dance became a popular form of entertainment outside the temple, especially in rural areas.

Historically, Gotipua *gurukuls* flourished under the patronage of kings and zamindars. In the 20th

century, efforts were made to formalise and structure Gotipua, leading to the establishment of Odissi as a distinct and systematic dance form.

However, very few dancers make the transition to Odissi, which is centred in urban areas and is woman-focused.

When they leave Gotipua behind, securing a job based solely on academic performance is challenging. "Throughout our school years, we undergo intense training, leaving us fatigued and unable to focus on studies," says Sradhananda. "When stage performances clashed with school schedules, we were often required to prioritise dance over academics."

What lies ahead? Gurupada Baliyarsingh, secretary of the Gotipua Sangha, is striving to secure government support. "These groups often face scrutiny under the Juvenile Justice Act [2015] and are

Annamalai slams DMK over police 'refusing permission' to take out rallies on motorcycles mounted with the Tricolour; State Cong. chief urges party leaders to take out similar marches from today to make people aware of its bond with national flag

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

In the run-up to Independence Day, controversy broke out in Tamil Nadu on Sunday with State BJP chief K. Annamalai alleging that the police denied the party permission to hold 'Tiranga Yatras (Tricolour marches)' and this action by the DMK government amounted to "showing dislike towards the national flag".

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Annamalai pointed out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his 'Har Ghar Tiranga' appeal had called on the public to hoist the national flag at houses on August 13, 14, and 15.

The BJP wanted to raise awareness about this by taking out rallies on motorcycles mounted with the Tricolour, he said. "There is no BJP flag and everyone is welcome; there will be vehicles and there will be the national flag. This is the Tricolour march and it is aimed at creating aware-



K. Annamalai

ness among people and seeing the national flag flutter in all houses."

Mr. Annamalai termed the denial of permission "a big surprise" and said "this happens only in Tamil Nadu". "The national flag itself is a problem for the DMK people... see how they are showing that they do not like the national flag... by denying permission for the vehicle rally, they have shown their anger. What is the law and order problem when one carries the national flag?"

The BJP leader said the party's office-bearers in Coimbatore had petitioned the police seeking permission to hold the Tricolour



K. Selvaperunthagai

march. The BJP workers submitted that they would take out the rally only on the route specified and the date and time fixed by the police. Still, permission was denied, he said.

He said the government should have organised such awareness rallies and Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, as DMK president, should task his party's youth wing with holding similar rallies. "We are doing what the Chief Minister should have done," he said.

Cong. attacks BJP

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu Congress Committee president K. Selvaperunthagai termed the BJP's 'Tiranga

Yatra' an attempt to "appropriate" the national flag and tasked his party office-bearers with holding Tricolour *padayatras* and marches on two-wheelers.

He said no force, including the BJP, can break the bond that the Congress has with the Tricolour and everyone has a right to hoist the national flag on Independence Day. The State Congress chief said the BJP holding rallies with the Tricolour is not a usual practice, but based on Mr. Modi's recent appeal.

From August 12 to 15, Mr. Selvaperunthagai said district Congress committee presidents should organise 'Tricolour rallies' in their respective district headquarter towns. In villages and talukas, *padayatras* should be taken out by holding the national flag. In such celebratory events, the connect and bond that the Congress has with the national flag should be explained to people by speaking about the freedom movement, the role played

by Mahatma Gandhi and the party's pivotal contributions, he said.

The Congress leader alleged that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the ideological parent of the BJP, had not hoisted the national flag for 52 years. Only on August 15, 1947 and on January 26, 1950, the national flag was hoisted at the RSS headquarters in Nagpur, Mr. Selvaperunthagai said.

After a gap of 52 years, the national flag was hoisted by the RSS only on January 26, 2001. The RSS boycotted the national flag and now the BJP is attempting to appropriate it; this is a "conspiracy", he added.

On August 9, Mr. Modi had appealed to people to make the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign a memorable mass movement. He replaced his X profile picture with the national flag and urged them to do the same. The BJP announced 'Tiranga Yatras' in different States from August 11 to 14. (With inputs from PTI)

Cong. mounts attack on BJP over 'poor' law and order in Haryana

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

Former Chief Minister and Leader of the Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda and AICC general secretary Kumari Selja, in separate rallies, on Sunday attacked the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for the "deteriorating law and order" situation in Haryana. While Mr. Hooda addressed traders in Panipat, Ms. Selja held a rally at Hisar's Narnaund Assembly constituency.

'Double blow'

"Inspector Raj, which was abolished by Congress, has been re-established by the BJP. Also, this government has ruined the law and order situation, and has made the traders an easy prey for the criminals," said Mr. Hooda, speaking at the 'Maha Sammelan', alleging that the BJP had dealt a double blow to the trading community. Ms. Selja said the job of farmers is to produce food in the fields, but now they are shedding blood instead of sweat.

The Sirsa MP said the Narendra Modi government had promised to double the income of farmers, but that hadn't happened.

Jharkhand ration dealers threaten to go on strike

The Hindu Bureau
RANCHI

The Fair Price Shop Dealers Association (FPSDA), a body of ration dealers in Jharkhand, on Sunday threatened to go on a strike if its demands, including increased commission promised by the Hemant Soren government, were not fulfilled in a month.

In a State-level meeting in Ranchi, the organisation alleged that its members are still deprived of the increased commission as promised by the government and said allotment of shops on a compensatory ground in case of death of

a dealer is still pending. "After the Statewide stir in January this year, the State government had promised to increase our commission against distribution of ration from ₹1 to ₹1.5 per kg. Ironically, we received only ₹4.50 paise per kg as commission.

"According to the State government, the full commission of ₹1 cannot be provided as it is yet to receive the amount of Central share," the association general secretary Sanjay Kundu said.

"We don't know if it is Central or State share. We want our full commission," he said.

The Gotipua dancers who stumble from boyhood stardom to adulthood anonymity

SPOTLIGHT

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

Sradhananda Behera's hands move with a rhythm as he mixes cement and sand at a construction site in Odisha's coastal district of Puri.

In his early 20s now, Sradhananda's mind goes back to the days he had danced in France, Morocco, and Portugal – a journey unimaginable for most in his village.

His brother, Gadadhar Behera, now 27, had also felt the thrill of international applause and the bustle of foreign airports. Today, he drives a tractor, transporting construction material across their village in Piteipur, just 20 kilometres from Puri town.

"The guru [who is also the troupe manager] would organise performances in India and abroad," says Gadadhar, who now earns ₹300 a day.

In this traditionally revered boys-only dance form, a child's journey as an artiste often concludes at puberty, leaving them without the education required for an office job or

the skills for a tradesperson.

Now, *akhadas*, where boys are nurtured into graceful dancers, are finding it difficult to attract disciples.

There are approximately 10 to 15 *akhadas* in Odisha where Gotipua is taught in the traditional *gurukul* style. Each one has four to five students, all under the age of 14. About 30 years ago, there used to be about 20 students at each *akhada*.

The journey for Gotipua dancers involves over 20,000 hours of rigorous training spanning 10 years, dressing as girls on stage, sacrificing their education, and staying away from their families. Children are initiated into the practice as early as five. By the time they are 16 and their bodies change, complex hand and body movements that require suppleness become difficult. That is their age of 'retirement'.

The few parents, who do send their children to learn, do so for reasons other than upholding a cultural practice. Sushant Kumar Behera, a daily wage earner in Puri district, is happy to send his son Sudhir, a fourth-grader, to learn Go-

Karnataka govt. responsible for dam damage: BJP; JD(S) differs with ally

The NDA partners express different views on the breaking of a crest gate; BJP leader Ashok alleges that the Congress regime has failed to take up maintenance work, says Water Resources Minister Shivakumar is busy eyeing CM post; Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy refuses to blame the govt.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The BJP and the Janata Dal (Secular) differed over the breaking of a crest gate at the Tungbhadra reservoir late on Saturday. While the BJP blamed the Karnataka government for its failure to take up maintenance work at the reservoir, the JD(S) said the government cannot be blamed.

"Farmers, who had lost their crop last year due to drought, were looking forward to raising two crops this year. Good rainfall had resulted in full storage in reservoir. However, they now remain anxious not knowing whether they will get water for even one crop for which sowing has been completed. The government should have taken up maintenance work during the drought when the water level in the reservoir had plummeted," said Leader of the Opposition R. Ashok on X.

Particularly blaming Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar, who holds the Water Resources portfolio, the BJP leader said: "Where does the Deputy Chief Minister have time to look after his portfolio when he is busy in corruption, having an eye on the Chief Minister's post, indulging in factional fights and arranging money for elections in neighbouring States? If he had held time-



New problem: Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar at the dam in Vijayanagara district, after a crest gate of the reservoir was washed away, on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ly meetings to look into dam safety and management, this incident would not have happened."

Accusing the State government of ignoring suggestions from the Tungbhadra Dam Management Committee, former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday said: "The reservoir has been facing troubles, including silt accumulation, over a period. The dam committee that came from the Centre had given many recommendations. I feel that the State has not taken the recommendation seriously. Had that been the case, this situation would have not arisen," Mr. Bommai said.

"There could be technical or financial problems. There were enough indications that the region would

receive more than average rainfall. A probe would reveal the truth," he added.

'Check safety of dams'

Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H.D. Kumaraswamy has urged the government to ascertain the position of crest gates in all reservoirs across Karnataka. Terming it a big accident, he said: "The stop-log gates at Narayanpur and Almatti reservoirs are not present in the Tungbhadra dam and the Krishnaraja Sagar, since that was not available during its construction. It should be erected now. Farmers are in trouble and this is like playing with their lives."

Stating that the government cannot be held responsible, Mr. Kumarasw-

my said that a technical committee that inspects reservoirs gives lackadaisical reports.

"This is a result of that. Repairs are going to be challenging for the government. It should consult technical experts to rectify the problem."

CM to visit dam

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will visit the Tungbhadra reservoir on Tuesday. A note from the Chief Minister's Office said Mr. Siddaramaiah held a discussion and received information from senior officials of the Water Resources Department, including Principal Secretary Gaurav Gupta. He has instructed the officials to take up precautionary work to prevent any losses, the note said.

Bihar: 7 persons held for fraudulent activities in police constable exam

Press Trust of India
PATNA

Seven people were arrested across Bihar on Sunday in connection with alleged malpractices on the second day of the State police constable recruitment exam, an official statement said. Of them, four were candidates, it added.

The State police also registered cases against eight other candidates - who

were not arrested - for allegedly indulging in fraudulent practices during the examination on Sunday.

"Four candidates were arrested from examination centres. Five other candidates were asked to leave the centres as certain discrepancies were found in their documents." Those arrested candidates include two from Begusarai and one each from Kaimur and Gopalganj districts, it said.

Stay vigilant: A.P. govt. to Kurnool residents

The Hindu Bureau
KURNOOL

The Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) on Sunday cautioned people living along the banks of Krishna river to remain vigilant, following the washing away of a Tungbhadra dam gate in Karnataka.

The washing away of 19th gate of the reservoir has resulted in the gushing out of a significant volume of water from that gate. The incident occurred when the gates were being closed due to the receding flood level in the reservoir.

The current water level in the project stands above 100 tmcft. Engineers indicated that the restoration work could commence only after the discharge of 60 tmcft of water. Currently, 33 gates are open, releasing almost one lakh cusecs of water downstream.

This is the first major incident related to the dam's safety in the past 70 years. Officials said one lakh cusecs of water is at present flowing to the Sunkesula project located downstream.

The Tungbhadra River Board officials issued a warning to the people residing along the river basin

to be alert.

Engineers advised the residents of Kurnool city, Kauthalam, Kosigi, Mantralayam, and Nandavaram mandals in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh to be vigilant and not to cross the riverbed and canals adjoining it.

The APSDMA said people in need of emergency assistance should contact toll-free numbers 1070, 112, and 18004250101. It also alerted the Police and Revenue authorities of the district to alert the villagers in the Krishna river catchment area.

'Prevent water wastage'

Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav underscored the urgency of restoring the Tungbhadra dam gate. He said the Andhra Pradesh government acted swiftly to the development. He said Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu was in contact with the Government of Karnataka, and directed measures to tackle the possible flooding along the catchment areas in Andhra Pradesh.

Mr. Keshav said the government was focusing on resolving the matter and preventing further water wastage from the dam. (With PTI inputs)

Presumed dead, Assam BJP leader's electronic footprint traced: police

Press Trust of India
GUWAHATI

Contractor and BJP leader Sunil Gogoi, who was earlier presumed dead, is alive, as his 'electronic footprint' detected, a top Assam police officer claimed on Sunday.

Mr. Gogoi was declared absconder for the alleged murder of his family mason, the officer said.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID), which is probing the matter, has collected evidence about his presence, and has found out that he is currently outside the State, the Director General of Assam Police (DGP), G.P. Singh, said.

After the charred remains of a headless body was found near Mr. Go-

goy's residence in Sapatia Chetia village in Dhakuakhana of Lakhimpur district in June, the BJP leader was thought to be dead.

However, a DNA report had later revealed that the body was not of Mr. Gogoi's but of Jahangir Hosain's, a mason working for the family. This led the police to declare the BJP leader an absconder in the alleged murder case of the mason.

The DGP had earlier said that the motive for the murder seemed to be financial gain through insurance claim.

Mr. Gogoi was the BJP Kisan Morcha Dhakuakhana District Committee vice president and was involved with Jal Jeevan Mission as a contractor.

Fearing Wayanad-like incident, Kerala forum wants new dam at Mullaperiyar

K.S. Sudhi
KOCHI

The deaths and devastation caused by the Wayanad landslides have once again stoked apprehensions about the safety of the 129-year-old masonry gravity dam at Mullaperiyar in Idukki. The issue found resonance in the Lok Sabha recently with MPs Hibi Eden and Dean Kuriakose demanding the decommissioning of the ageing structure. Haris Beeran raised the issue in the Rajya Sabha.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan tried to calm the nerves by asserting that there need not be any worries regarding the dam's safety. However, Mr. Vijayan's intervention has apparently not pacified the Mullaperiyar Samara Samiti, which is all set to restart the agitation it had launched at Karimkulam Chappathu in 2006 for a



Bone of contention: Water gushing out from the Mullaperiyar dam near Thekkady in Kerala. FILE PHOTO

new dam. The protest continued for 3,000 days.

Fears about Wayanad

"Extreme weather events such as cloudbursts and incessant rain, which the State has experienced over the past few years, are worrying people. The Wayanad tragedy has added to the fears of thousands living downstream. The samiti plans to resume the agitation against this

background," said Fr. Joy Nirappell, its chairperson.

Mr. Eden said the United Nations University-Institute for Water, Environment and Health had highlighted the issues faced by the dam in its 2021 report, "Ageing water storage infrastructure: an emerging global risk". The Union government needs to intervene to ensure people's safety. Union Minister for Water Resources C.R. Patil

has offered to convene a high-level meeting to look into the issue, he said. The Kerala Assembly had unanimously passed a resolution stating that a new dam should be constructed, which would provide water for Tamil Nadu and ensure the safety of the people of Kerala, Mr. Eden said. Mr. Kuriakose criticised the Union government for failing to comply with the directives of the Supreme Court regarding the dam, including its safety evaluation and formation of a National Dam Safety Authority. The government should act in time to avert a disaster, Mr. Kuriakose said.

Mr. Beeran wanted the government to appoint an expert committee to review the safety of the dam and allay people's fears. The State had offered to construct a new dam and provide water to Tamil Nadu, he said.

Railways to lay track connecting tribal areas in A.P., Odisha, and Telangana

Rajulapudi Srinivas
VIJAYAWADA

South Central Railway (SCR) has taken up a new project connecting the tribal habitations in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Telangana States.

The new railway line will be an additional corridor to coastal areas of the existing Vijayawada-Visakhapatnam-Bhubaneswar-Kolkata main line.

The proposed 290-km Junagarh-Nabarangpur and Jeypore-Malkangiri-Bhadrachalam-Pandurapuram project will connect the tribal and aspirational districts of Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Malkangiri and Koraput, once affected by Left-wing extremism (LWE).

"The Pandurangapuram-Bhadrachalam-Malkangiri railway line project was one of the projects cleared by the Cabinet re-



New vistas: The project will help transportation of goods such as farm produce. K.V.S GIRI

cently. The new line will reduce the distance from southern Odisha and Bastar to South India, and will act as an alternative route bypassing busy corridors such as Rajahmundry and Visakhapatnam," said Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Saturday.

The Minister said the new railway project, which would act as an alternative route between Asansol and Warangal, would benefit

Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

The project would improve connectivity to thermal power plants, iron ore and aluminium industries in southern India, and would result in faster connectivity to power plants in Central and South India from the Mahanadi Coalfields area. Besides, the proposed railway line would provide a wider market to agricultural pro-

duce in A.P. and Telangana, Mr. Vaishnaw said.

"The Pandurangapuram-Bhadrachalam-Malkangiri project, being taken up on a priority basis, would lead to socio-economic development of Koraput, Rayagada, Malkangiri, East Godavari, Bhadradi-Kothagudem and other districts in Odisha, A.P. and Telangana. The project would cover 85 km in A.P., 19.5 km in Telangana and the remaining will be in Odisha," the Minister said.

Transportation of fertilizers, agricultural produce such as foodgrains and cement would become easy to the tribal villages, once the new railway line was completed. The new line would provide alternative connectivity to the Agency districts in Odisha during cyclones, even if the rail routes get affected on the Howrah-Vijayawada coastal route, the Minister said.

Paradesi Jewish matriarch Queenie Hallegua passes away at 89

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The last of the Paradesi Jewish women in Kochi, Queenie Hallegua, 89, died here on Sunday. She was the wife of the late S.H. Hallegua and daughter of S. Koder, who was considered the iconic member of the Jewish community in the city.

Ms. Hallegua's two children, who are now in the U.S., were at her bedside when she passed away peacefully. She was the warden and managing trustee of the Paradesi Synagogue from 2012 to 2018. She was also a managing

partner of S. Koder Private Ltd. until 2011.

In Mattancherry

Her father, Mr. Koder, was the first electricity distributor in Kochi and, at one time, operated the Kochi boat services. She was born in the landmark Koder House in Fort Kochi and went to Mattancherry after her marriage to Samuel Hallegua.

She is survived by her children, Fiona and David Hallegua, their spouses Alan and Cici, and her grandchild Eliana who live in the U.S.

Her last rites were conducted at the Jew Street in



Community icon: Queenie Hallegua (right), who was the last of the Paradesi Jewish women in Kochi, died on Sunday. FILE PHOTO

Mattancherry around 3.30 p.m. in the presence of a large number of Jewish community members, said

Taha Ibrahim, a Muslim man from Mattancherry who has been closely associated with the Jewish com-

munity for several decades. He took care of Sarah Jacob Cohen, a prominent member of the community in Kochi, till her death in August 2019, at the age of 96.

The only Jew now in Kochi is Keith Hallegua, nephew of Samuel Hallegua.

Though Jewish traders are believed to have frequented Kochi during the time of King Solomon, who established trade relations with India, the ancestors of the extant Sephardic Jewish community here arrived after their expulsion from the Iberian peninsula following the Alhambra Decree in 1472.

Jews were ordered under the decree either to leave Spain or convert to Catholics. Many chose to flee, reached port towns in India and the Jews of Kochi were among them.

Wave of migration

The community was treated well in Kochi, where the kings gave them land to settle and they prospered.

The coming into being of Israel in 1948 triggered a wave of migration of the Jews from different parts of the world into Israel and Paradesi Jews were among them, though some of them migrated to other countries as well.

4 fishermen injured in mid-sea attack

The Hindu Bureau
NAGAPATTINAM

Four fishermen from Nagapattinam were hospitalised on Sunday after being attacked by unidentified persons, suspected to be Sri Lankans, while fishing off the Vedaranyam coast.

M. Sivasankar, 55, P. Selvakrishnan, 21, P. Dhana-sekaran, 37, and K. Rajagopal, 54, from Arcot Thurai near Vedaranyam, had ventured into the sea on Saturday.

They were intercepted by three Tamil-speaking

persons on a boat.

The trio boarded the Nagapattinam fishermen's vessel and allegedly assaulted them with weapons before robbing them of their possessions, including a fishing net, a GPS device, a walkie-talkie, five torch lights, a battery, a mobile phone, a silver chain and a silver ring.

The injured managed to return to the shore and were admitted to the Vedaranyam Government Hospital for treatment.



Rule and exception

Courts should ensure free trial without prolonged imprisonment

The Supreme Court of India's order granting bail to Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia is a reminder to judges that they cannot deny bail as a form of punishment. It is also a reminder that the fundamentals of bail law are quite simple. Where a case turns mainly on documentary evidence, bail is the norm, and it is to be denied only if the suspect is a flight risk and is unlikely to appear before the court for trial, or is in a position to influence witnesses and tamper with evidence. The possibility of the trial not beginning anytime soon or that it may be a protracted one is also a circumstance warranting grant of bail. In times when Opposition political leaders are targeted and investigative agencies have no compunction about being seen as branches of the ruling party, the mere act of releasing a person on conditional bail after giving enough time for the completion of the investigation is seen as something extraordinary. In the Delhi liquor policy case, Mr. Sisodia was arrested by the CBI and then the Enforcement Directorate in early 2023. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's turn came this year, but he managed to get interim bail in the ED's case concerning money-laundering charges, while he is still in custody in connection with the CBI's corruption case.

The order of Justices B.R. Gava and K.V. Viswanathan has done more than pave the way for Mr. Sisodia's release after nearly a year-and-a-half in prison. It has foregrounded the principle that the rigours of a bail-denying law, the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in this case, need not stand in the way of a person's conditional release if there is a prolonged delay in the trial proceedings. It has also brought under focus the tendency among some judges to "play safe". The Bench has rightly highlighted the tendency among some judges to ignore the principle that bail is the rule, and not the exception. In Mr. Sisodia's case, based on the ED's assurance that the trial would be complete within six to eight months, the Court had allowed him to apply for bail again if the trial progresses too slowly or is protracted. This was on October 30, 2023. However, both the trial court and the Delhi High Court paid no heed to the Supreme Court's pointed reference to the need for speedy trial, but dismissed his application on merits and claimed that any delay in the commencement of the trial was attributable to the various petitions he has filed. Judges should guard against a likely loss of public trust in the judiciary's ability to protect the liberty of citizens and ensure fair trial without prolonged and needless pre-trial imprisonment.

Perfunctory panacea

Scientists need greater funding for research, not national awards

Later this month, 33 scientists will be awarded the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP), the current government's revamped approach to independent India's long tradition of annually awarding scientists with promise. The rejig is in doing away with the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB) awards, once awarded to scientists under 45 by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). It comprised a certificate, a cash prize and some additional monetary benefits. The RVP replaces it with a medal and a certificate and, renaming it the Vigyan Yuva-SSB. There are also other RVP awards – the Vigyan Shri, Vigyan Ratna and Vigyan Team awards. The latter will be for scientists over 45 who have made distinguished contributions in science and technology over their entire career as well, as for teams of scientists and technologists with exceptional contributions.

In theory the total number of awards, under all categories, is capped at 56, though those selected for this year are fewer than the ceiling. The team award has been conferred on the Indian Space Research Organisation's 'Chandrayaan-3 team', which certainly has over three members. These may well be technicalities and, being the first edition of the prizes, could be transitional. The list of awardees spans a wide range of fields from astrophysics to agriculture, and this is not unique to the RVP, the awardees are overwhelmingly from centrally funded and the most elite of India's scientific and research institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research, CSIR and atomic energy institutions. The RVP awards were instituted after the Ministry of Home Affairs and heads of science departments concluded in 2022 that there were too many awards being given out by individual scientific departments and that it was necessary to trim them and raise their 'stature' to national awards. While distinguished scientists have always received the Padma awards, just as those in other fields, the original schema for scientist-specific awards was to encourage them to stick to research, whose outcomes are not always immediately tangible and whose impact is not immediately assessed. Much like Olympic medals, Nobel Prizes continue to elude Indian scientists and this has been a touchy topic for many governments. The national awards are not a substitute or catalyst for the Nobels. The government should not assume that scientists only crave honour and recognition. Too many scientists in India labour with minimal funds, substandard equipment and a discouraging milieu, forcing them to compete at the cutting edge of research with their hands tied. Raising the budgetary allocation and making scientific research more rewarding in India will do greater service to science than tokenism.

Parties, serious crimes and the need for judicial clarity

Two recent observations from two different Benches of the Supreme Court of India in the bail petitions of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia deserve in-depth analysis. The first was the observation from the Bench headed by Justice Sanjiv Khanna. The judge asked the government lawyer whether in a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) involving leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the party too is not involved. What is the role of the political party? Can it be made an accused party? These questions from the Bench prompted the Enforcement Directorate to make AAP too an accused party in Mr. Kejriwal's case. It is perhaps for the first time that a political party is being made as an accused under the PMLA. In a parliamentary democratic system, where political parties play a pivotal role in mobilising people on the basis of ideologies and political programmes and run a government, making them the accused in serious criminal cases is fraught with grave problems.

An analysis, in legal terms

Let us look at this issue academically and not present any argument in favour of or against a particular case. So, let us analyse it in terms of the relevant legal provisions. Newspaper reports show that the investigative agency invoked Section 70 of the PMLA to rope in the AAP. This section deals with offences by companies. The gist of this provision is that if the person committing a contravention of any of the provisions of the Act is a company, then every person who was in charge of the company shall be deemed to be guilty under the Act and shall be proceeded against and punished accordingly. In this section, there is an explanation which says that 'company means any body corporate and includes a firm or other association of individuals'. Where does a political party come in under this definition?

The investigative agency reportedly picked up the definition of political parties from The Representation of The People Act (RPA), 1951 and brought it under Section 70 of the PMLA. Section 29A of the RPA 1951 defines a political party as "any association or body of individual citizen of India calling itself a political party..." Under this definition, an association or individual citizen of India becomes a political party only when it calls itself a political party. So, all associations of



P.D.T. Achary

Former Secretary General, Lok Sabha

individuals cannot be treated as political parties unless they call themselves a political party. But the explanation to Section 70 of the PMLA covers only associations of individuals and not associations which call themselves a political party. Thus, there is an obvious distinction between these two definitions. The conclusion, therefore, is that Section 70 of the PMLA does not cover political parties. Thus, it is not legally permissible to bring a political party within the definition in this clause.

Further, under the above explanation, "other association of individuals" are preceded by the words "any body corporate and includes a firm"; applying the rule of interpretation of statutes, ejusdem generis (of the same kind), association of individuals can only mean a body in the nature of a body corporate or a firm. A political party is not in the nature of a body corporate or a firm. We may try to understand the context of this definition. The context is the generation of black money through certain illegal transactions and the laundering of it.

Political parties are not basically transactional bodies. Their job is to mobilise people, fight elections and run a government. Running a business, legal or otherwise, is not the domain of a political party. It is a matter of common knowledge that most political parties run their affairs with money donated by individuals or corporates. The law permits this but it does not concern itself with why such donations are made. Of course the law requires political parties to make a declaration to the Election Commission of India of all contributions received from individuals or companies other than government companies under Section 29C of the RP Act 1951. If a political party does not comply with this provision, it will not get any income-tax relief. It may be noted here that the entire donation received by a political party is exempted from income-tax. We can very well see that the law is mindful of the role played by the political parties in our democratic system, and is, therefore, considerate to them. So, it is a little difficult to understand the observation of the learned Bench about bringing political parties within the purview of the PMLA.

Policy and criminality

The second observation is from a Bench of Justice B.R. Gava and Justice K.V. Viswanathan in a bail petition of Mr. Sisodia. The Bench, with its characteristic incisiveness, asked the lawyer of

the Enforcement Directorate: Where do you draw the line between policy and criminality? This is the most relevant question that comes up in a case arising out of a policy framed by a cabinet. The Constitution has adopted the British system of parliamentary democracy, with the cabinet form of government for the Union and the States. Under this system, the highest decision-making body is the cabinet headed by the Prime Minister at the Centre and Chief Ministers in the State. The cabinet of the Union or of a State has exclusive and final authority to frame a policy on any matter.

Ivor Jennings, the renowned authority on constitutional law, says, "in substance the cabinet is the directing body of the national policy", it may be a good policy or a bad one. In case a bad policy is made, it may be disapproved by Parliament or the Assembly, as the case may be. And, ultimately, the cabinet is accountable to the people. They can punish the government and the party which runs it if the policy is harmful to them. But under no circumstances does the judiciary examine the correctness or otherwise or the motive of a policy made by a cabinet. The Supreme Court has consistently taken this view. So, no criminality can be attributed to the cabinet for a policy made by it. Therefore, a criminal charge against an individual Minister for a decision taken by the cabinet is legally unsustainable and is unheard of in the history of the cabinet form of governments. Of course, a Minister as a public servant becomes culpable for an individual action which is in violation of law, but not as a part of the constitutional entity like the cabinet which has framed a policy. In the case above, the Bench is reported to have further observed that no cabinet can function if the Ministers are charged individually with criminality for a collective decision of the cabinet.

The judiciary must clarify

Bringing political parties within the purview of Prevention of Corruption Act and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act will have far-reaching consequences. In a country where political vendetta is almost an accepted method of dealing with political adversaries, such an action would make all political parties vulnerable. There is, therefore, an urgent need for the Supreme Court to clarify the law in this regard, and also about the culpability of individual Ministers for a cabinet decision.

In a parliamentary democratic system, making political parties the accused in serious criminal cases is a problem-fraught one

A nutrition strategy would have averted Olympic agony

The high-stakes case, of the disqualification of Indian woman wrestler Vinesh Phogat from the women's 50kg wrestling final in the Paris Olympics 2024, was a setback for India. She was found to be 100 grams heavier than permissible limits. This incident highlights the role of support staff including the sports nutritionist, doctors, and the team management in the Indian contingent.

A myopic view indicates a slip, but the situation highlights the need to integrate precision nutrition in sport. Precision nutrition tailors dietary recommendations based on specific individual requirements, characteristics and circumstances. This process focuses on better understanding and meeting an athlete's individual requirements, particularly their individual response to different food/supplement intakes and avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.

The science

Precision nutrition involves understanding an individual's metabolism, microbiome, and how their body responds to food and calorie expenditure to determine the best dietary practices for them. It focuses on systems biology and a multi-omics approach (including genomics, proteomics, metabolomics, microbiomes, and epigenetics), integrated with bioinformatics and machine learning to provide evidence-based individualised nutrition recommendations. This data-driven approach allows for adjustments based on an athlete's physiological responses, ensuring they are in peak condition for a competition. The integration with bioinformatics and machine learning will help in the identification of patterns and predict how different nutritional strategies affect an athlete's performance. The gut microflora may be influenced by diet, especially a plant-based diet and regular exercise, resulting in the production of short chain fatty acids which may support athletic performance and post-exercise metabolic recovery.

An effective nutrition recommendation rides on high granularity of an individual's dietary intake and physical activity data. Traditional questionnaire/interview-based methods of collecting such data have drawbacks such as self-reporting, memory bias, high respondent burden, and socially desirable responses. Combining this subjective information with



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targeted individual continuous monitoring (for example, continuous blood glucose monitoring) can provide more specific and individualised recommendations for athletes that not only address dietary requirements but also check the regulatory requirements of sport. Many wearable sensors track and provide information on physical activity levels, stress, sleep quality, and heart rate monitoring. This incident with Ms. Phogat underscores the importance of continuous and real-time tracking of targeted outcomes for athletes during training sessions, making it easier to achieve and maintain target weight.

Glucose monitoring

Continuous glucose monitors (CGM) are commonly used by people with diabetes to monitor interstitial blood glucose responses to food. These devices, implanted in the subcutaneous layer (just under the skin), record blood glucose levels minute by minute. The use of CGMs, under the supervision of a trained nutritionist, can help monitor athletes' blood glucose responses to food. The information collected can be used to individualise recommendations for building muscle, boosting energy, reducing inflammation, and maintaining body weight – important parameters for an athlete.

A few players have reportedly improved their sports performance using CGM. Retired Olympic gold medal-winning Australian swimmer Chelsea Hodges, once admitted that CGM helped manage her fuel levels and exhaustion during training sessions. Long-distance runner Eliud Kipchoge of Kenya has been using the CGM since 2021 to build personalised nutrition plans that give him a competitive advantage. The Union Cycliste Internationale (the world governing body of cycling and recognised by the International Olympic Committee) has banned the use of CGM by healthy athletes during competitions. However, these could potentially be used during training sessions to see how players respond to food. This use of technology for personalised nutrition recommendation is still in its early stages and requires further exploration.

The need for such personalised approaches becomes more apparent in weight-based sports, where "making weight" is crucial. Athletes in weight-based sports, such as boxing, wrestling,

and martial arts, often struggle to stay within their designated weight class. To do so, they resort to extreme measures such as starvation, intentional dehydration, and using saunas or sweat suits to reduce weight quickly before weigh-ins. These drastic measures jeopardise their mental and physical health and adversely impact their performance. Reports indicate that Ms. Phogat spent an entire night trying to shed extra weight. Likewise, another Indian woman wrestler, Antim Panghal, reportedly starved herself for two days to make weight. Such instances would severely impact the capabilities of such sportspersons in such high-level competitions.

A role for sports nutritionists

A study found that coaches and fellow players play an influential role in deciding what dietary regimen works best for the athlete during training and competition. Athletes need sports nutritionists trained in precision nutrition to monitor their nutritional requirements, intake, and understand their body composition and metabolism.

It would be in everyone's best interest if nutritionists are assigned to different types of sports and become involved with the athletes longer, allowing their recommendations and body responses to be tracked and tested over time. These nutritionists must familiarise themselves with the rules of the sports, weight categories, weigh-in procedures, and methods to reduce weight without compromising an athlete's performance and annual training cycles.

Integrating precision nutrition into sports involves not only individualising dietary plans but also continuously monitoring and adjusting them based on the athlete's changing needs. This approach can help prevent the drastic measures often resorted to by athletes, in turn promoting healthier, and more sustainable practices.

In conclusion, the disqualification of Ms. Phogat underscores that there is a critical gap in the Indian sports support system. Precision nutrition, a data-driven approach to dietary planning, is imperative to prevent such setbacks and optimise athlete performance. By integrating technology and expert nutritionists, India can revolutionise its sports training, ensuring that sportspersons reach their full potential while prioritising their health and their well-being.

The Vinesh Phogat case highlights the need for integrating precision nutrition with sportsperson training in India

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Hindenburg allegations

If proved right, the allegations by Hindenburg Research against the Chairperson of India's stock market regulator 'for having stakes in an obscure offshore entity' (Page 1, August 11) will further undermine the already deteriorating trust that a common man has in the

government and financial dealings. We are fed up with the collusion that those in power have with businessmen. There needs to be a fair investigation.

Rohith Varon S.S., Chennai

There's no smoke without fire or where there's smoke there's fire. The judiciary

needs to step in and order an inquiry. Is there truth in the allegations? Is there some conspiracy to target India? Or will Hindenburg Research continue to come up with more exposés?

K.V. Ramesh Nair, Chennai

K. Natwar Singh Diplomat-turned politician

K. Natwar Singh wore many hats in his illustrious career (Inside pages, August 11). He also won his spurs as a writer and a chronicler, and his books turned out to be bestsellers. He was a political analyst and commentator par excellence.

C.V. Aravind, Bengaluru

The country has lost not just an astute politician but also an exceptional orator and writer whose influence extended far beyond the political arena. His political career, marked by numerous ups and downs, reflected his resilience. What set him apart was his ability to infuse enthusiasm and inspiration into his

writings. I have had the privilege of reading many of his columns and his words have always stayed with me. His autobiography, *One Life Is Not Enough*, is a particularly compelling read. His other literary works were equally sought after.

Laigudi Muralidharan, Laigudi, Tamil Nadu

The Left's centrist conundrum

The term 'centrist' has recently emerged to refer to a politics that is neither formally right-wing nor left-wing. Levelled by some self-identifying leftists in debates on social media platforms, the label is intentionally derogatory and scornful. At best, it signifies the morally dubious and cowardly politics of 'liberals' in the face of right-wing assaults on democracy, equality, freedom, truth, justice, and social progress. At worst, centrism is seen as tacitly complicit in these assaults, even as their prime enabler. Therefore, despite opposing the right-wing, these left-leaning individuals often spend more time denouncing centrists, who they view as equal or even greater adversaries.

Some individuals who self-identify as neither right- nor left-wing indeed exhibit a morally dubious 'centrism'. To appear objective and nonpartisan, they indulge in an all-sides-pleasing tightrope. Consequently, they make forced and false moral equivalences, give equal weight to illiberal, anti-democratic, and anti-constitutional voices and liberal-democratic and constitutional ones, and display amoral neutrality in situations demanding clear moral-political judgment. Such moral flimsiness cedes ground to illiberal, exclusionary, anti-constitutional ideological-political forces.

A second type of 'centrism' is more sinister, using the name of liberal moderation but readily sacrificing values of democracy, equality, pluralism, justice, truth, and liberty. This colludes with illiberal, inequality-promoting, exclusionary, authoritarian, and anti-constitutional forces.

However, some leftists on social media pejoratively use the term 'centrist' to criticise a third type of politics: one embodied by individuals who grasp the need to avoid extremes to build coalitions, which they recognise are essential to defeat their primary ideological adversary and realise their constitutionally-driven ideological



Vanya Vaidehi Bhargav

intellectual historian of modern India, and the author of the recently published book, 'Being Hindu, Being Indian: Lala Lajpat Rai's Ideas of Nationhood'

Political realism demands recognising that political power is vital for moral positions to have efficacy. Nothing made this more evident than the helplessness of liberals and the left over the last decade

vision. A firm commitment to constitutional morality and political realism leads such individuals to reject ideological purism and sectarianism. Their deliberate renunciation of purity and absolute truth is an adoption of a prudent, sensible path to realise their constitutionally guided ideological vision, to which they remain committed.

A commitment to politico-moral ideals makes these 'centrists' reject purism. They know that while idealism is often crucial to inspire all progress, utopian purism has reduced an ideological and political group to a radical but politically irrelevant sect. And that self-defeating sectarianism thwarts the alliance-building necessary to defeat the gravest threats to one's ideological-moral visions.

Moral purity is relatively easy when not seeking power. Choosing not to seek political power is often viewed as a moral virtue, indicating disinterest in corrupting power. However, political realism demands recognising that political power is vital for moral positions to have efficacy. Nothing made this more evident than the helplessness of liberals and the left over the last decade. Their moral outcries against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the building of a Ram temple atop a destroyed mosque, the vilification of Muslims, and other aspects of the unfolding Hindutva revolution, had little effect without power backing them. Power is crucial to enforce moral visions. And, gaining power requires identifying allies, building coalitions, making limited compromises, and rejecting ideological purism.

In the past decade, some leftist individuals criticised the Congress as centrist. Some aspects of the party's history legitimise this criticism. But the Congress has also successfully represented – as Yogendra Yadav once said – a 'centrist coalition of social groups, classes, and regions', which 'accommodates conflicting visions of India without giving into any extreme', and 'stands for a

non-majoritarian way of creating electoral majority'. If the Congress's intermittent adoption of a problematic 'centrism' enabled anti-constitutional forces, as some argue, its championing of another, principled centrism paradoxically kept supremacist Hindutva nationalism at bay until the 1980s. The success was demonstrated by Hindu Mahasabha leaders admitting that 'the entire Hindu population is with Gandhiji and his movement'. The Jana Sangh and the BJP's national vote share of roughly 3%-11% till 1989 similarly highlight the 'centrist' Congress's success at keeping Hindutva ethno-nationalism at bay. The Congress's 19.3% national vote share, even at its lowest nadir in 2014, means it remains the primary political force capable of challenging Hindutva supremacism nationally. Meanwhile, even when the CPI was more politically influential, during 1951-89, its vote share hovered between 2.5% and 9.94%. Since 1999, the CPI has steadily declined, ending with 0.49% of the national vote and two Lok Sabha seats in 2024.

The Hindutva ideological project has been actualised via state power. While people's power is highly significant in a democracy, state power is indispensable to ensuring that the polity remains a humane constitutional democracy and does not turn to inhumane unconstitutional authoritarianism.

Given the electoral irrelevance and political inefficacy of the left, I imagine that to halt the Hindutva juggernaut, many left-leaning Indians were compelled to rely on, in the 2024 elections, the same 'centrist' force they frequently castigated. This awkward reliance begs serious questions: will such individuals re-evaluate their ideological purism and their uncharitable judgments of others who are less purist? Might renouncing such self-defeating purism open a path to a less sectarian, and more ally-friendly, and politically effective left-wing progressivism in India?

Data on quota is a Pandora's box

Debate over reservation shows ongoing issues with data transparency in T.N.

STATE OF PLAY

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Politics over reservation in education and public employment is nothing new to Tamil Nadu. The State is one of the early movers with regard to the quota, having introduced it over 100 years ago. But, the absence of quantifiable data on community-wise representation under Backward Classes (BC) and Most Backward Classes (MBC)-Denotified Communities (DNC) categories has been a subject matter of debate since the quantum of reservation was hiked to 50% in 1980. In the State, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have 18% and 1% reservations, respectively. The overall 69% quota was, through a 1994 Act, protected under the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution.

The question over the data has been addressed partially through the publication of the State Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes and Minorities Welfare Department's reply to a query under the RTI on the representation of Vanniya and the rest within the exclusive 20% quota for MBC-DNCs over the last 10-odd years. The query, made in 2023, got a reply on July 31. The timing of the reply was significant, as the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), a chief advocate for the 10.5% separate reservation for the Vanniya, had been pressing the government to issue an interim report on the issue, in view of reports that the State Backward Classes Commission had sought a one-year extension to make a recommendation on the internal reservation for the Vanniya within the MBC-DNCs' share.

It all began with the previous AIADMK regime, which, on the eve of the announcement of the Assembly election schedule in February 2021, got a reservation law passed by the House and cleared by the then Governor.

Citing "extreme backwardness" of Vanniya (who, in turn, encompass seven sub-castes – Vanniya, Vanniya, Vannia Gounder, Gounder or Kander, Padayachi, Palli and Agnikula Kshatriya), the Special Reservation Act of 2021 had assigned 10.5% to this community, apart from 7% for 25 MBCs and 68 DNCs, and 2.5% for the remaining 22 MBCs. The law was first quashed by the Madurai Bench in Madras High Court in November 2021, and the Supreme Court upheld the decision in March 2022. In its judgment, the court saw "no substantial basis" for classifying Vanniya into one distinct group for internal reservation. Now, only the BC Quota. The law was given a 3.5% reservation under the BC quota.

Since then, the PMK and other pro-Vanniya activists have been demanding the restoration of the 10.5%. On July 24, PMK founder S. Ramadoss demanded an interim report on the work done by the State government and the Backward Classes Commission in 18 months. The RTI query revealed that Vanniya were well ahead of the rest of the MBCs and DNCs in terms of re-

presentation in higher education and public employment. For example, with respect to admission to the MBBS, 5,938 candidates belonging to the MBC-DNCs were selected during 2018-22, both under the 20% exclusive reservation and open competition. Of them, Vanniya accounted for 3,354. Likewise, of the 893 MBC-DNC candidates who qualified in the examination held by the Teachers Recruitment Board in 2021 for post-graduate assistants in government schools, 533 were from the community.

But, PMK president Anbumani Ramadoss dismissed the data as "incorrect" and demanded that the government release a White Paper on the representation of all communities within the MBC-DNCs in education and jobs since 1989. While the data sought to show that the Vanniya's share within the 20% quota was above 10.5%, the PMK leader, relying on the data sourced by his party, contended that the share of Vanniya in directly recruited Group I posts was much lower than 10.5%. The ruling DMK and the PMK differ on one other issue too. During the recently-held Assembly session, on June 26, the House adopted a resolution, proposed by the CM, urging the Centre to conduct a caste-based Census along with the general Census. However, the PMK argues that the State government itself can hold a socio-economic survey.

The episode has underscored the need for making public, at the earliest, the data on the break-up of caste-wise and Group-I-wise representation of all communities in education and employment under the 69% quota scheme and all the government's replies under the RTI Act, just as the Ministry of External Affairs has been doing for years.

As the world warms, more ACs are sold, heating up the globe further

China and India will have the highest number of AC units, more than 45% of the total units available globally

DATA POINT

Hannah Ritchie

An average consumer in India tends to buy the least efficient air conditioner in the market, a recent analysis by the International Energy Agency (IEA) shows. While this pattern of behaviour is similar to the other five countries and regions – Australia, the U.S., China, Japan, and Europe – the range of efficiency in AC units available in India is not as wide as in other markets.

The IEA estimates that globally, people buy AC units that are half as efficient as what is available in stores. As Chart 1 shows, the dark line or the AC unit purchased by the average consumer lies on the extreme left end in the range of AC units available in the market.

One significant barrier to buying efficient AC units is the cost involved. While they are cheaper to run in the longer run, the high upfront cost deters consumers from buying them. According to an analysis by Our World In Data, in India, the cheapest AC unit with a 3-star efficiency rating costs around ₹29,000 while the cheapest variant with a 5-star rating costs about ₹36,000. This premium on the upfront cost makes households opt for the less efficient option.

The efficiency of air conditioning units becomes significant because their numbers are set to triple by 2050. The IEA estimates that there are two billion AC units in the world and according to its projections, this figure is set to rise to over 5.5 billion by 2050. As Chart 2 shows, by 2050, China and India will have the highest number of AC units, more than 45% of the total units available globally.

One reason for high demand is climate change. As the world warms, more people will be exposed to heat waves, and those who already live in hot climates will experience more intense ones.

The other reason is the rise in incomes. In extremely hot countries, like India or Indonesia, if people can afford an AC, they will buy it. The higher the demand for AC units, the more electricity it would require. According to the IEA estimates, "space cooling", consumed around 2,100 terawatt-hours (TWh) of power in 2022. Global electricity use in 2022 was around 29,000 TWh. That means AC uses around seven per cent of the world's electricity.

Chart 3 shows the growth in electricity demand for ACs since 2000. Electricity demand for air conditioning has more than doubled in 22 years. This is also in line with growth rates in total electricity use, which increased by 90% between 2000 and 2022. Some of the electricity AC units use comes from fossil fuels, making them one of the drivers of carbon emissions. According to the IEA estimates, space cooling caused around one billion tonnes of CO₂ from electricity use in 2022. This amounts to 2.7% of total CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels and industry. But, this doesn't take into account the climate impact of refrigerants used in AC units.

The AC unit's (cooling) contribution to global emissions is much lower than emissions from heating such as space and water heating. Chart 4 shows the global carbon emissions from heating and cooling over time.

If the release of greenhouse gases from refrigerants is taken into account, it adds another 720 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂ eq) to the annual carbon footprint of air conditioners. This takes the greenhouse gas emissions from ACs to 3.2% of all greenhouse gas emissions in 2022. Despite the electricity usage and emissions, research shows that air conditioning makes extreme heat tolerable. The 2021 Lancet Countdown report estimated that air conditioning prevented almost 200,000 premature deaths in 2019.

Conditioning rising emissions

The charts were sourced from Our World In Data (OWID). Hannah Ritchie is deputy editor and science outreach lead at OWID



Chart 1: Chart shows the average consumer's air conditioner purchase trends and energy efficiency ratings

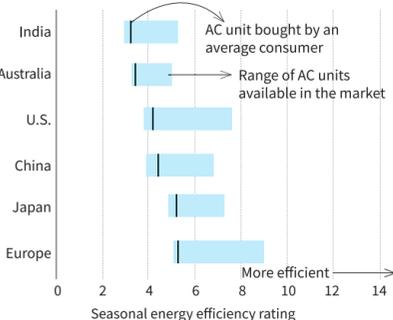


Chart 3: Chart shows the global electricity use for air conditioning in terawatt-hours (TWh)

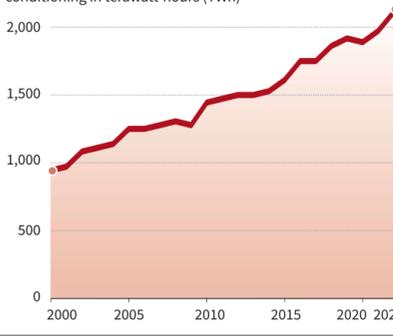


Chart 2: Chart shows the projected number of air conditioning units (in billion)

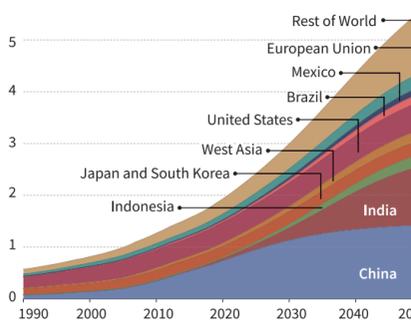
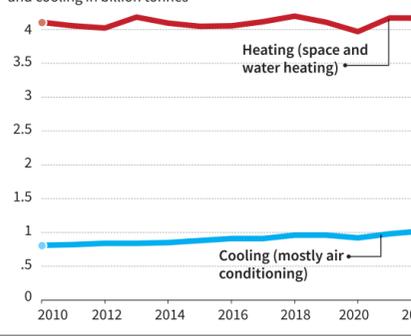


Chart 4: Chart shows global carbon emissions from heating and cooling in billion tonnes



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The **Hindu**

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 12, 1974

Food imports to maintain public distribution system

New Delhi, August 11: The total quantity of foodgrains imported, including wheat received on loan from the Soviet Union during the 18 months from January 1973 to June 1974 was 6 million tonnes. These imports were made from Argentina, Australia, Canada, the U. S. and Russia.

Besides this, about 1.95 million tonnes of foodgrains (comprising 1.152 million tonnes of wheat and 4.3 lakh tonnes of milo) were purchased in April this year and this is expected to be received during the next few months. There are clear indications that the Government wants to go in for more imports to maintain the public distribution system, as the internal procurement of wheat has failed miserably. The total procurement of wheat in the current season has not touched two million tonnes and the earlier hopes of a pick-up in market arrivals following the rains have not materialised.

In addition to the import of 1.95 million tonnes contracted last April, the Government is reported to be closely watching the availability and price of wheat in international markets. It is stated that supplies will present no problem now as the total world production of wheat this year, excluding that of China, is expected to beat the previous record of 341 million tonnes in 1973.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 12, 1924

Rendition of the Berars.

Amritsar, August 11: Sheikh Sadiq Hassan, Barrister and Member of the Legislative Assembly, who has gone to Europe writes from London that he had an opportunity of seeing Lord Olivier, Secretary of State for India. In the course of his interviews the former impressed upon the latter the absolute necessity of a Round Table Conference with a view to establish Home Rule in India. He also spoke in favour of enforcing prohibition in India and asked for the appointment of a Commission to settle the claim of Nizam of Hyderabad for the restoration of Berar. In the course of his last plea, he referred to the assistance rendered by the Nizam in time of need to the British Government, Shiekh Sadiq Hassan is now proceeding to America where he will study the prohibition question as it works there.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The climate-resilient seed varieties introduced by PM

109 Prime Minister Narendra Modi released high-yielding, climate-resilient and bio-fortified seed varieties of agricultural and horticultural crops to enhance farm productivity and farmers' income. PTI

The death toll from the Uganda garbage dump landslide

13 After torrential rain in recent weeks, a chunk of garbage from Kampala city's only landfill site broke off late on Friday, crushing and burying homes on the edge of the site as residents slept. At least 14 people have been rescued so far. REUTERS

The share by which India's coal imports increased

6 In per cent. India's coal import rose to 75.26 million tonnes (MT) in the first quarter of the current fiscal compared to 71.16 MT of coal in the same period of the previous fiscal. Import demand is likely to remain subdued in the coming month. PTI

The China-based companies blacklisted by the U.S.

73 The U.S. banned imports from five more Chinese companies over alleged human rights abuses involving the Uyghurs. They said this was to eradicate forced labour and promote accountability for China's "ongoing genocide against Uyghurs". ANI

Bangladeshis held by BSF while entering into India

11 The Border Security Force has apprehended Bangladeshis who tried to infiltrate into India through the border in West Bengal, Tripura and Meghalaya. The BSF said that it was in touch with Border Guard Bangladesh. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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On amendments to the Waqf Act

What are the various contentious changes being proposed to the 1995 Waqf Act? Why have Muslim bodies and several Opposition parties registered their protest? How has the definition of 'waqf' being altered in the new Bill? What is the way forward?

EXPLAINER

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

On August 8, the Union government introduced a Bill in the Lok Sabha to amend the 1995 Waqf Act (1995 Act). The proposed amendments seek to significantly reform the law by enhancing the Centre's regulatory authority over waqf properties and, for the first time, permitting the inclusion of non-Muslim members in Waqf Boards. The draft legislation, proposed to be renamed the Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and Development Act, 2024, is heralded by the government as a comprehensive overhaul aimed at enhancing "the efficiency of the administration and management of the waqf properties." However, several Opposition parties have accused the Centre of floating the Bill without adequate consultation with stakeholders, claiming it encroaches upon the Muslim community's religious rights.

What is India's 'waqf' law?

In Islamic law, waqf refers to property dedicated in the name of God for religious and charitable purposes. This can include any movable or immovable property set aside for the public good, embodying an act of piety that allows Muslims to extend their charitable deeds beyond their lifetime. A waqf can be established through a formal deed or instrument, or a property can be deemed waqf if it has been used for religious or charitable purposes over an extended period. The proceeds from such properties are typically used to maintain mosques, fund schools or provide for the poor. However, once designated as waqf, the property cannot be transferred through inheritance, sold, or given away. A non-Muslim is also allowed to create a waqf as long as the objective of creating it aligns with Islamic principles.

In India, waqfs are regulated by the 1995 Act. Waqf properties are identified and delineated through a survey conducted by the State government. A survey commissioner, appointed under the Act, identifies these properties through local investigations, witness testimonies, and review of public documents. Once identified, the properties are recorded in the State's official gazette, and a list is maintained by the State Waqf Board. Each waqf is managed by a *mutawalli* (custodian) who oversees its administration. While similar to a trust established under the Indian Trusts Act of 1882, a waqf, unlike a trust, cannot be dissolved by a Board.

What is the role of the Waqf Board?

The 1995 Act establishes Waqf Boards in each State to oversee the administration of waqf properties within their jurisdiction. These Boards are considered juristic persons, allowing them to sue or be sued in a court of law. Each State Waqf Board has a chairperson and includes one or two nominees from the State government, Muslim legislators, recognised Islamic scholars, and *mutawalli* of the waqfs. The Act also mandates the appointment of a full-time Chief Executive Officer for each Board, who must be a Muslim by faith and hold at least the rank of Deputy Secretary in the State government.

The Waqf Board is authorised to manage waqf properties and take measures to recover lost assets. It can also sanction the transfer of immovable waqf property through sale, gift, mortgage,



Next move: Union Minister Kiren Rijiju with a delegation of Muslim clerics for a meeting on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 in New Delhi, on August 9. PTI

exchange, or lease. However, this would require the approval of at least two-thirds of the Board members. Amendments to the 1995 Act in 2013 further strengthened the Board's authority and made the sale of waqf properties nearly impossible, as neither the *mutawalli* nor the Board had the right to sell a waqf property.

In addition to the State Waqf Boards, the legislation also establishes the Central Waqf Council – a national advisory body under the Ministry of Minority Affairs. The Council ensures the uniform administration of waqf properties across the country and is headed by the Union Minister of Minority Affairs. It also advises the Union government on waqf-related issues, including policy development, implementation of waqf laws, and resolution of inter-State disputes.

What are the key changes in the proposed law?

The definition of 'waqf' has been altered. Now, under the Bill, only lawful property owners who have practised Islam for at least five years are authorised to create 'waqf' properties through the execution of formal deeds. This revision abolishes the 'waqf by use' concept – which permits a property to be considered waqf based on usage, even if the original deed was disputed. Traditionally, waqf properties were often dedicated orally until formal documentation became standard practice.

To prevent any fraudulent waqf claims, the Bill states, "Any government property identified or declared as waqf property, before or after the commencement of this Act, shall not be recognised as waqf property." Additionally, the law also permits widows, divorced women, and orphans to be beneficiaries of proceeds from waqf assets.

Under the new Bill, the responsibility of surveying waqf properties, previously managed by survey commissioners under the 1995 Act, will now be assigned to district collectors or officers of equivalent rank. To improve the accuracy of waqf property records, the Bill proposes a centralised registration system. All

information about waqf properties must be uploaded to this portal within six months of the new law's enactment. Moreover, any new waqf property registrations must be submitted exclusively through this portal to the Waqf Boards. Notably, the Bill omits section 40, which previously granted waqf tribunals the authority to determine whether a property qualifies as waqf. Instead, it designates the district collector as the final arbiter in such matters. Once a determination is made, the collector must update the revenue records and submit a report to the State government. However, the Bill makes it clear that the disputed property cannot be treated as a waqf property till the collector submits his final report. This implies that until the government decides the issue, a Waqf Board cannot be in control of the disputed land.

One of the most contentious aspects of the Bill is the proposed inclusion of non-Muslims in key waqf institutions – the Central Waqf Council, State Waqf Boards, and waqf tribunals. It empowers the Centre to appoint three Members of Parliament (two from the Lok Sabha and one from the Rajya Sabha) to the Central Waqf Council without specifying that they have to be Muslims. Under the 1995 Act, the three MPs to be included in the Council had to be from the Muslim community. But, as per the new Bill, State Waqf Boards have to include two non-Muslims and two women as members. The composition of waqf tribunals has been changed from a three-member body to a two-member body. The tribunal will now consist of a district judge and an officer of joint secretary rank to the State government. Under the proposed law, tribunals must resolve disputes within six months, with a possible extension of six months.

Additionally, the Bill empowers the Centre to "direct the audit of any waqf at any time by an auditor appointed by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, or by any officer designated by the Central Government for that purpose." The Waqf Boards are required to audit

their accounts annually, selecting auditors from a panel constituted by the State governments. Penalties will also be levelled upon *mutawallis* if they fail to maintain proper accounts.

The proposed law allows courts to intervene in waqf disputes. It removes the finality of decisions made by waqf tribunals, allowing aggrieved parties to appeal directly to the concerned High Court. This is aimed at increasing judicial oversight and curbing instances of arbitrary exercise of power by Waqf Boards or tribunals.

What are the potential implications?

Professor Faizan Mustafa, noted academician and Vice Chancellor of Chanakya National Law University, Patna, told *The Hindu* that while the amendments are a positive step, it is crucial to implement measures that adequately protect waqf properties without infringing upon the freedom of religion guaranteed under Article 25 of the Constitution.

"Rights vested in waqf properties hundreds of years ago cannot be taken over by executive officers without fair judicial determination," he added.

He also noted that the increased centralisation of waqf property management might undermine the autonomy of Muslim religious institutions. While welcoming the inclusion of non-Muslims and women in waqf governance, Mr. Mustafa questioned, "Will non-Hindus be allowed on Hindu temple boards in States such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka?" He further asserted that excessive government control is at odds with the principles of economic liberalisation.

After its introduction in Parliament, the Bill was referred to a joint parliamentary panel for further scrutiny after the Congress-led INDIA bloc opposed the proposed law in its present form.

In March last year, the Union government apprised the Delhi High Court that close to 120 petitions challenging provisions of the 1995 Act are pending before courts across the country.

THE GIST

▼ In Islamic law, waqf refers to property dedicated in the name of God for religious and charitable purposes. This can include any movable or immovable property set aside for the public good, embodying an act of piety that allows Muslims to extend their charitable deeds beyond their lifetime.

▼ One of the most contentious aspects of the Bill is the proposed inclusion of non-Muslims in key waqf institutions – the Central Waqf Council, State Waqf Boards, and waqf tribunals.

▼ After its introduction in Parliament, the Bill was referred to a joint parliamentary panel for further scrutiny after the Congress-led INDIA bloc opposed the proposed law in its present form.

CACHE



GETTY IMAGES

What is the Google ‘monopoly’ antitrust case and how does it affect consumers?

When a monopoly comes into existence, rivals are forced out and the company with the most power is able to abuse customers because they have very few other options. The U.S. Department of Justice sought to establish that Google had a monopoly in the web search and advertising sectors

John Xavier
Sahana Venugopal

The story so far:

In August 5, Google lost a major antitrust case brought against it by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) that sought to establish that the tech giant had a monopoly in the web search and advertising sectors. The 10-week-long bench trial that took place in September 2023 saw high-profile tech leaders, including Google CEO Sundar Pichai and Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, testifying before the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. The lawsuit accused Google of using its dominant position in the search engine market to elbow out rivals and maintain monopoly. Its exclusive deals with handset makers were brought before the court as evidence. In the end, U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta ruled that Google was a monopolist.

What did the ruling state?

According to the ruling, Google’s search dominance was majorly achieved through a strategy of exclusive distribution agreements, or default distribution. This refers to the way Google entered into lucrative contracts with “browser developers, mobile device manufacturers, and wireless carriers” so that it was the first or default search engine that users of such services or new phones were given. Google pays for this privilege and has shelled out more than \$26 billion for it in 2021, per the court.

“After having carefully considered and

weighed the witness testimony and evidence, the court reaches the following conclusion: Google is a monopolist, and it has acted as one to maintain its monopoly. It has violated Section 2 of the Sherman Act,” the ruling noted, referencing a U.S. law that views business monopoly or attempts at monopolising as an offence. Per the court, Google used its monopoly power in two markets: general search services and general search text ads. “Importantly, the court also finds that Google has exercised its monopoly power by charging supra-competitive prices for general search text ads. That conduct has allowed Google to earn monopoly profits,” reported the filing. Furthermore, the court harshly criticised the way Google failed to preserve employee correspondence that could have served as evidence.

However, some of the court’s conclusions were in favour of the tech giant. It was determined that Google did not have monopoly power in the search advertising market. The court also noted there was no product market for general search advertising and that Google was not liable for actions involving its advertising platform.

In addition to this, Google will not be sanctioned for the way it failed to preserve employee chat messages, though the court warned it might not be so “lucky” in a future case. Interestingly, the judge observed that Google had brought out the “industry’s highest quality search engine, which has earned Google the trust of hundreds of millions of daily users.”

How do monopolistic practices harm consumer experience?

Regulators around the world monitor how businesses use technology in their countries, to prevent the concentration of power in the hands of a few entities. This ensures healthy competition in the market segment, so that all participants are striving to do better for their customers. When a monopoly comes into existence, however, rivals may be forced out of the market while the company with the most power is able to abuse customers because they have very few other options. Such companies also lose the incentive to keep improving the quality of their product.

The court ruling in the Google case even pointed to this as a risk factor. “Google’s indifference is unsurprising. In 2020, Google conducted a quality degradation study, which showed that it would not lose search revenue if it were to significantly reduce the quality of its search product,” observed the filing, “the fact that Google makes product changes without concern that its users might go elsewhere is something only a firm with monopoly power could do.”

What did the U.S. DOJ say?

The U.S. DOJ hailed the ruling as a public victory for internet users in the U.S. “This victory against Google is an historic win for the American people,” said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland in a statement on the DOJ website. “No company – no matter how large or influential – is above the law. The Justice Department will continue to vigorously

enforce our antitrust laws.”

Google is far from the only company in the regulator’s line of vision.

The U.S. DOJ is also reportedly teaming up with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to act against other large tech players on antitrust grounds, including Microsoft, OpenAI, and Nvidia, as per *The New York Times*.

What happens next?

Google will be appealing the ruling. In the meantime, the court has asked both parties, Google and the Department of Justice, to find a remedy ahead of their meeting with Judge Mehta on September 9. The remedy, in this case, could range anywhere between breaking up Google to ordering the search giant to end its exclusive deals with mobile makers.

The former could fundamentally alter the dynamics of consumer digital business market as Google plays a key role by providing its platform to both individuals and businesses to interact. In the latter case, in terms of immediate effect, handset makers could lose billions of dollars they receive from Google to pre-load the company’s search engine in the smartphone.

This hefty payment to smartphone makers, particularly Apple, disincentivises them from innovating a rival search engine. Apple, during the hearing, had said that it will continue to use Google as its default search engine. Apart from this lawsuit, the Justice Department is set to go against Google in another antitrust trial that deals with the internet company’s ad technology.



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

I was miffed that I was not invited to sing

Everybody in office seems disturbed. However, my colleagues are being very tight-lipped about it

S. Upendran

“You look happy! Does this mean that you’ve got your promotion?”
“I haven’t heard anything about it.”
“It’s been more than a week. Hasn’t your boss told you anything?”
“Nobody is talking. They’re being very tight-lipped about the interviews.”
“Tight-lipped? Does it mean they’re angry about something?”
“That’s one of the meanings of the word. When you look at someone tight-lipped, you look at the individual with your lips pressed together.”
“Something that people do when they’re angry – keep their lips pressed together.”
“Exactly!”

“How about this example? There’s no point talking to Aditya right now. He’s only giving tight-lipped replies.”

“Great example. ‘Tight-lipped’ can also be used to mean not saying anything. When an individual remains tight-lipped about some matter, he remains silent about it.”

“He’s unwilling to give any information about the matter.”

“Exactly! The Minister has remained tight-lipped about the cause of the accident.”

“Nobody really knows much about Naveen. He’s always been tight lipped about his private life.”

“Jai, on the other hand, is not tight-lipped at all.”

“Tell me, does ‘tight-lipped’ and ‘stiff upper lip’ mean the same thing?”

“No, they don’t! Someone who maintains a ‘stiff upper lip’, does not show or reveal his feelings.”

“In other words, even when he is terribly upset, he keeps his cool.”

“Exactly! A bad situation doesn’t get the better of him.”

“He is a very determined individual who doesn’t show his emotions.”

“Here’s an example. I thought Revathi would start crying after having lost in the final. But she kept a stiff upper lip.”

“The CEO maintained a stiff upper lip even when the union representatives threatened to go on an indefinite strike.”

“No matter what they say or do, keep a stiff upper lip. Don’t let them get a sense of what you’re really interested in.”

“Aren’t you angry that your colleagues are being tight-lipped about your promotion? After all, isn’t it...”

“Well, I was a bit miffed, initially.”

“Miffed? What does that mean?”

“Miffed is mostly used in informal contexts to mean annoyed – especially about the way a person behaves – the way he treats you.”

“In other words, the person is not nice to you.”

“His behaviour may be rather annoying. When you’re miffed about something, you’re only slightly angry about it – not very angry. The children were miffed when the school decided to cancel their visit to the zoo.”

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THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

On his 105th birth anniversary, a quiz on Vikram Sarabhai’s life beyond ISRO

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

Name the national research institute Sarabhai founded in November 1947. In its first days, it operated out of his residence before eventually taking shape at the M.G. Science Institute in Ahmedabad.

QUESTION 2

In 1962, Sarabhai set up the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR), the body that later became ISRO. Which body oversaw space-related activities in India before INCOSPAR?

QUESTION 3

When Sarabhai was doing his PhD at the University of

Cambridge, who was his doctoral adviser? Likewise, name the ISRO chairman whose doctoral adviser Sarabhai was.

QUESTION 4

In the mid-1970s, a French aerospace company transferred its Viking engine technology to India, where the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre used it to build the famous _____ engine. Fill in the blank. Hint: It is based on Sarabhai’s full name.

QUESTION 5

Sarabhai’s siblings X and Y were instrumental in establishing the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, based on ‘The India Report’ on industrial design in 1958. Name X and Y.



Visual question:

What is the original name of this building and what is its connection to Sarabhai? LAKSMO (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Questions and Answers to the August 9 edition of the daily quiz: 1. The name of the highest civilian award in Bangladesh. **Ans: The Swadhinata Padak (Independence Day Award)**

2. This river flows through Bangladesh and is known as the Padma in the country. **Ans: The Ganges River (Padma)**

3. The name of the traditional craft of Bangladesh where artisans create beautiful designs on textiles using a resist-dyeing technique. **Ans: Nakshi Kantha**

4. The Bangladeshi festival that involves colourful boat races. **Ans: Nouka Baich**

5. The organisers of the “Concert for Bangladesh”, on August 1, 1971, at Madison Square Garden in New York City. **Ans: George Harrison and Ravi Shankar**

6. The unique characteristic of the Grameen Bank’s approach to lending, particularly in the context of its borrowers. **Ans: The majority of its borrowers are women**

Visual: The UNESCO World Heritage site in Bangladesh which is famous for its intricate terracotta Hindu temples from the medieval period. **Ans: The Historic Mosque City of Bagerhat**

Early Bird: Seema Das

Word of the day

Incinerate: become reduced to ashes; cause to undergo combustion

Synonym: burn

Usage: *The paper incinerated quickly.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/incineratepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ɪnˈsɪnəreɪt/

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

From Page One

Hindenburg report raises political storm

Mr. Gandhi on Sunday said there was a significant risk in the Indian stock market as the governing institution was "compromised". "A serious allegation against the Adani Group was illegal share ownership and price manipulation using offshore funds. It has now emerged that SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Buch and her husband had an interest in one of those funds... the savings of millions of Indians are at risk. It is, therefore, imperative that this matter is investigated," he said.

Earlier, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the small and medium investors in the stock market needed to be protected, demanding a JPC inquiry. "Until then, concerns persist that PM Modi will continue to shield his ally, compromising India's Constitutional institutions, painstakingly built over seven decades," he said via a post on X.

CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury also sought a JPC probe, while D. Raja of the Communist Party of India accused the BJP of serving only corporate interests to the extent of protecting the "corrupt practices of their favoured corporates".

Mahua Moitra, Trinamool Congress MP, took to X to demand answers from the SEBI chief to several questions related to the new report. Talking to the media, Rashtriya Janata Dal MP Manoj Kumar Jha said the report showed how the system in the country was rigged and efforts were made to hide the "corruption".

However, terming the latest Hindenburg report a smoking gun, BJP leader and former Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar said it was an attack on SEBI by a foreign entity, which was in "an obvious partnership" with the Congress and had an ominous motive and goal. He said the move was meant for destabilising and discrediting one of the world's strongest financial systems and create chaos in the world's fastest growing economy.

On X, Mr. Chandrasekhar said "its classic Cong style innuendo & lies glued together with a few grains of truth" and was aimed at discrediting the regulator, causing chaos and losses in the markets for investors, thus slowing down bullish sentiments.

SEBI, Buch deny charges in Hindenburg report

SEBI said in a statement: "Investors may also like to take note of the disclaimer in the report that states that readers should assume that Hindenburg Research may have short positions in the securities covered in the report." The capital market regulator denied the allegation that it had not taken any action against the Adani Group and made changes in the SEBI (REIT) Regulations, 2014, to benefit Blackstone. It said "claims that such regulations, changes to regulations or circulars issued related to REITs [Real Estate Investment Trusts] were to favour one large multinational financial conglomerate, are inappropriate".

The couple's statement

The investments in the fund [IPE Plus Fund 1] referred to in the Hindenburg report were made in 2015 when the couple were private citizens living in Singapore. Ms. Buch and her spouse said in a statement, in addition to explaining the reasons for investing in that fund. "The decision to invest in this fund was because the Chief Investment Officer, Anil Ahuja, is Dhaval's [Mr. Buch] childhood friend from school and IIT Delhi and, being an employee of Citibank, J.P. Morgan and 3i Group plc, had many decades of a strong investing career. The fact that these were the drivers of the investment decision is borne out by the fact that when, in 2018, Mr. Ahuja, left his position as CIO of the fund, we redeemed the investment in that fund," the couple said in the statement.

They further said that at no point did the fund invest in instruments related to any company of Adani as disclosed by Mr. Ahuja. All regulations of SEBI were approved by its Board [and not by Chairperson] after extensive public consultation, they added.

Reacting to the Buchs' rebuttal, Hindenburg on X said the clarification confirms a "massive conflict of interest". "Buch's response now confirms her investment in an obscure Bermuda/Mauritius fund structure, alongside money allegedly siphoned by Vinod Adani," the firm said. On Ms. Buch's remarks that her husband used the consulting entities, starting in 2019 to transact with unnamed "prominent clients", it asked if these included clients SEBI is tasked with regulating.

Tungabhadra reservoir's crest gate washed away

"The reservoir was full with 105 tmcft of water when the incident happened at 10.50 p.m. on Saturday. At present, 98,000 cusecs of water is being released to the river by opening the remaining 32 gates. We need to bring down the water level to 60 tmcft to take up the repairs which may take at least four days," Mr. Shivakumar said.

Sources in the KNNL said the water level in the reservoir could be brought down to around 60 tmcft only when the slipway discharge is maintained at 2 lakh cusecs for the next four or five days. The authorities said there would be no threat of floods until the slipway discharge touches 2.5 lakh cusecs.

However, several monuments at the World Heritage Site of Hampi are likely to be flooded if the slipway discharge crosses 2 lakh cusecs.

Adani case: SC had said it can transfer probe if bias found

The top court, in its January judgment, acknowledged its power to transfer an investigation from 'authorised agency' if there was strong evidence on record that the probe was *prima facie* tainted

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court had said cogent evidence of bias or portrayal of inadequacy would convince it to transfer a probe to an independent agency or a court-appointed Special Investigation Team (SIT) while refusing a plea to drop the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) from investigating Hindenburg's allegations of share price manipulations and other irregularities against the Adani Group.

The judgment was delivered by a three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on January 3.

In fact, the court had said SEBI's conduct of the investigation "inspired confidence". The court patted SEBI on the back for conducting a "comprehensive investigation". At the time, the SEBI had concluded 22 of the 24 investigations. It was waiting for inputs from "external agencies/entities" before deciding on the future course action to take in the



Pat on the back: The court had said the SEBI's conduct of the investigation 'inspired confidence'.

remaining two probes. This was the last report on the status of the investigation in the Supreme Court.

The court's judgment had brought quietus to criticism about SEBI's probe into the Adani Group for the past eight months. However, a storm is gathering with Hindenburg's latest allegations against SEBI chief Madhabi Puri Buch. The shortseller has accused Ms. Buch of having a stake in obscure offshore entities used in what it alleged was "the Adani money siphoning scandal".

The Opposition has taken to social media. Leader of the Opposition in the

Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi has tweeted that the integrity of the SEBI has been gravely compromised by the allegations against its Chairperson.

The top court, in its January 3 judgment, had acknowledged its power under Article 32 and Article 142 of the Constitution to transfer an investigation from the "authorised agency" to the CBI or constitute an SIT.

However, it had said this was a rare power, to be used only if there was strong evidence on record that the investigation was *prima facie* tainted or biased and its continuation

would lead to a "failure of justice".

"Unless the authority statutorily entrusted with the power to investigate portrays a glaring, wilful and deliberate inaction in carrying out the investigation, the court will ordinarily not supplant the authority which has been vested with the power to investigate," the top court had explained.

One of the grounds the SC had highlighted for transferring an investigation was when accusations were levelled against the "top officials of the investigating agency thereby allowing them to influence the investigation". Transfer of the probe to another agency would be then necessary to instil confidence in the investigation.

In fact, the top court had turned the spotlight on Hindenburg. "The loss which has been sustained by Indian investors as a result of the volatility caused by the short positions taken by Hindenburg Research and other entities should be probed," Chief Justice Chandrachud had observed.

'11 Bangladesh nationals held while trying to enter India'

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

Amid the political unrest in Bangladesh, the Border Security Force (BSF) has started a special drive along the international border and apprehended 11 Bangladesh nationals trying to enter India.

"11 Bangladesh nationals have been apprehended on border while infiltrating into India. Two each from Bengal and Tripura border and seven from Meghalaya border with Bangladesh," the BSF said. For the past several days, crowds from Bangladesh have been seen along the border allegedly trying to enter into India following the unrest in the nation.

28 killed as heavy rain lashes North, Northwest India

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

At least 28 people died in rain-related incidents on Sunday as heavy downpours lashed North and Northwest India, causing landslides, traffic chaos, and house collapses, as well as a dam breach which inundated several villages in Haryana.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration said the annual Amarnath Yatra has been suspended after heavy rain in the Shri Amarnathji Yatra area.

This was the second straight day of heavy rain in the region with Rajasthan being the worst hit as the State reported 16 deaths over two days – two

on Saturday and 14 on Sunday. Its Karauli district recorded "exceptionally heavy rainfall" of 38 cm. Nine people died in Punjab's Hoshiarpur on Sunday as their vehicle was swept away by an overflowing seasonal rivulet.

Heavy rain lashed central, south, southwest, and east Delhi too, leading to waterlogging and traffic snarls on roads. Officials said a seven-year-old boy drowned in a waterlogged park in Rohini's Sector 20 the previous evening.

Rains lashed many parts of Punjab and Haryana too. Agricultural fields at many places were submerged and officials said the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) has been called in.

Wife of former Manipur MLA killed in 'bomb blast' at home

The Hindu Bureau
IMPHAL

The wife of a former Manipur MLA died in an explosion at her residence in Kangpokpi district's E. Mulam village on Saturday afternoon, the police said.

A two-time Congress legislator who joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2022, Yamthong Haokip was at home when his wife, Sapam Charubala Haokip, was struck by a suspected bomb while burning waste. Mr. Haokip and their daughter escaped unhurt.

In his complaint at the Saikul police station on Sunday, the former MLA said his 59-year-old wife was "hit by an explosive item" suspected "to be a bomb" while cleaning the



Sapam Charubala Haokip

house and compound around 3 p.m. on Saturday. She was rushed to a health centre at Saikul but died of excessive bleeding due to the blast.

Mr. Haokip sought an on-the-spot investigation and requested the police to identify the explosive material that killed his wife, a Meitei from Khurai in Imphal East district.

"We have launched a

thorough investigation to find out if any individual or organisation is involved in the incident," a police officer said in Saikul, one of the hotspots of the ethnic conflict between Meitei and Kuki-Zo people in Manipur since May 3, 2023.

He said the post-mortem examination of the victim's body was completed for the family to proceed with the last rites.

Mr. Haokip was elected from the Saikul Assembly constituency, which is dominated by Kuki-Zo people.

The fatal blast happened a day after four people were killed in a gunfight between members of the United Kuki Liberation Front and some Kuki "village volunteers" in Tengnoupal district.

Airport X-ray machine tender comes under the scanner

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

A tender to procure 770 dual-use X-ray baggage inspection systems (XBIS) for airports across the country has run into a controversy following complaints of corruption and attempts to favour a particular company.

Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale and Mathura MP Hema Malini have written to Civil Aviation Minister K. Ram Mohan Naidu raising the matter. It has also come to light that the systems supplied by the Indian company, which is alleged to be "unduly favoured", have not met the set standards. The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and several airports have raised concerns over multiple occasions over the past few years.

The tender for the supply, installation, testing and commissioning of the system at various airports in India, with one-year on-site warranty and seven-year comprehensive an-

nual maintenance contract with spares, was issued by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) with October 16, 2023, as the due date to submit bids.

The estimated cost of the tender is ₹306.5 crore. These machines are meant to replace the scanners at airport security check counters that have completed their service life, sources said.

One Indian company has qualified the bid, while a Brazilian company, an established manufacturer which tied up with an Indian company to bid, was disqualified on technical grounds, a source said.

In a letter to Mr. Naidu dated June 28, Mr. Athawale wrote, "The company (Brazilian manufacturer) has accused and invited attention towards suspicion of corruption in evaluation of tender by breaking rules of Airports Authority of India by respect to offices knowingly... Grateful if you could kindly issue directions concerned to investigate the case and make a fair inquiry in order to avoid injustice with the



The CISF reports received in July-end from the Delhi terminals show severe malfunctioning of the machines.

above company at the earliest."

Another letter to Mr. Naidu by Ms. Hema Malini on June 27, said, "I also feel serious irregularities in evaluation, and undue favour to some of the bidders by AAI, which needs to be investigated before placing the purchase order."

Flight safety concerns

The two letters, as well as several complaints and performance evaluation reports on the earlier lot of machines supplied by the same company, have been reviewed by *The Hindu*. These show the magnitude of the issue, raising serious

concern regarding flight safety and security. Queries sent to the stakeholders, including the Civil Aviation Ministry, did not elicit a response.

Through a tender issued in June 2021, the AAI procured 219 scanning machines from the company, in line with the efforts to promote "Make in India".

But several allegations of procedural deviation and favouritism were raised. Officials in the know, on condition of anonymity, said the machines were accepted despite deficiencies during their performance evaluation, which documents accessed also show. Of the total 219 scanners,

129 have been installed across the country – 22 in the western region, 33 in the north, 10 in the north-east, 26 in the east and 38 in the southern region. In some airports, the machines have not been accepted because of very poor performance and not meeting the tender's technical specifications and functional requirements during the site acceptance test, one of the sources cited above said.

In July-end, reports were received from the CISF at the Delhi terminals showing severe malfunctioning, documents show. The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security has asked for comparative reports of different scanners installed at all airports, a source said.

For instance, a report from the Visakhapatnam airport on December 24, 2021, says the resolution of visual display unit of these particular scanners is very high; so display of all images is very light in colour (organic/inorganic or metallic) resulting in "inconvenience of screeners" to detect match sticks, elec-

tronic lighters and so on. These machines show them in light orange, while in other scanners "organic colour is of different density which is much easier to detect".

In another instance, the CISF commandant sent a report to the Airport Director, Patna, on January 18, 2021, making several observations from a performance evaluation. Some of these are, "Heavy items like keys, coins are not clearly visible. Ghee, oils and other liquids are not clear. Colour of items are different from existing established scanners."

Documents show that during the pre-tender evaluation phase, at least on four occasions between November 2020 and December 2021, the CISF has communicated the under-performance to the AAI. Similarly, Kolkata, Visakhapatnam, Patna, Udaipur and Indore airports have reported issues, documents show. All trials are recorded on video, which can be accessed to ascertain any deviations in procedure, officials noted.

IN BRIEF



Mamata urges Majhi to look into 'assault' on labourers

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday called up her Odisha counterpart Mohan Charan Majhi and requested him to look into alleged incidents of assault on labourers from the State there, a senior official said. "Several people have gone from West Bengal to Odisha to work. There are reports that they are being beaten up and tortured by locals suspecting them to be Bangladeshis. The Bengal CM spoke to her Odisha counterpart and requested him to look into the matter," the official said. He added Ms. Banerjee also urged the labourers to return to West Bengal as soon as possible and grab the opportunities available there. PTI

Activists in Sikkim protest against shooting of stray dog

Animal rights activists in Sikkim's capital Gangtok took out a rally on Sunday to protest the shooting of a stray dog almost a month ago. The dog was found dead with a wound on its chest on July 19. Its carcass, buried by some unidentified people in the town's Kazi Road area, was exhumed and taken to a polyclinic where an examination confirmed that it had been shot. Members of organisations such as Guardian of Sikkim, People For Animals, and Citizens Animal Shelter Sikkim took to the streets of Gangtok to demand action.

PM Modi releases 109 high-yielding seed varieties

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday released 109 high-yielding, climate-resilient, and biofortified seed varieties of agricultural and horticultural crops, aiming to enhance farm productivity and farmers' income.

Developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), these varieties span 61 crops, including 34 field crops and 27 horticultural crops. The field crop varieties include cereals, millets, forage crops, oilseeds, pulses, sugarcane, cotton, and fiber crops.

For horticulture, the Prime Minister released new varieties of fruits, vegetables, plantation crops, tubers, spices, flowers, and medicinal plants.

Mr. Modi unveiled the seeds at three experimental agriculture plots at Delhi's Pusa Campus.

Biotechnologists detect difference in use of nitrogen by rice varieties

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Biotechnologists at Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGU) in New Delhi have discovered a wide variation among popular varieties of rice in India in their ability to use nitrogen. This knowledge can be used to develop newer varieties that use less nitrogen and are high-yielding, thus slashing expenditure on imported fertilizers and reducing nitrogen-linked pollution.

"Cereals consume two-thirds of all urea in India, led by rice. Poor nitrogen-use efficiency (NUE) wastes N (nitrogen)-fertilizers worth ₹1 trillion a year in India and over \$170 billion per year globally," N. Raghuram, Professor at GGU and lead author of the paper, said, reporting these findings.

Nitrogen use efficiency refers to the yield of a crop relative to the nitrogen (natural and artificial)

Khaps in Haryana seek justice for Vinesh Phogat, demand Bharat Ratna

They appeal to wrestler to rethink her decision on taking retirement, say entire incident should be inquired by a sitting judge of the Supreme Court; 'will honour her by organising a function'

Press Trust of India
CHANDIGARH

Several khaps in Haryana on Sunday came out in support of wrestler Vinesh Phogat, who was disqualified at the Paris Olympics for being overweight, seeking justice for the grappler and demanded the Bharat Ratna for her.

The khaps (caste-based councils), which held the 'Sarv Khap Mahapanchayat' at Haryana's Charkhi Dadri, also appealed to Ms. Phogat to review her decision of taking retirement from wrestling.

The 29-year-old wrestler was disqualified for being 100 gm overweight ahead of her women's 50 kg final bout on August 7. Crestfallen after being disqualified, the world championships bronze-medallist announced her retirement on social media.



Vinesh Phogat was disqualified for being 100 gm overweight ahead of her women's 50 kg final bout on August 7. PTI

Ms. Phogat has filed an appeal against her disqualification. The ad-hoc division of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) will announce its decision on August 13.

Speaking to reporters after the mahapanchayat, Sombir Sangwan, who heads the Sangwan Khap,

said the entire incident should be inquired by a sitting judge of the Supreme Court and she should get justice.

To a question on any conspiracy in the matter, Mr. Sangwan sought to know how her weight increased suddenly. Several persons accompanied her

and it was their responsibility that her weight should not have increased, he said.

Considering her achievements, she should get the Bharat Ratna, said Mr. Sangwan while reading out the khaps' demands which were decided in the mahapanchayat.

He also said Ms. Phogat should get all facilities what a gold medal winner at the Olympics gets.

Dadri MLA Sangwan said they have appealed the wrestler to continue playing her sport.

Replying to a question on whether Ms. Phogat should enter politics, he said it depends upon her. She has achieved a position which is above a Minister or MLA but if she takes a decision to enter politics then khaps will support her, he said. The khaps also announced that they would honour her by organising a function.

F&O norms proposed by SEBI to hit brokers, exchanges: reports

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI



Stock exchanges and brokers, catering to retail traders, could be hit hard by the Securities and Exchange Board of India's proposed measures for futures & options (F&O) trading regulations, with market volumes slumping 30%-40%, according to reports. If these measures are implemented, the number of investors could decrease.

Discount brokers, who depend heavily on retail investors, are expected to be more affected than traditional full-service brokers.

The SEBI, in its consultation paper in July, proposed seven measures, including increasing minimum contract size and upfront collection of option premiums, intraday monitoring of position limits, rationalisation of strike prices, removal of calendar spread benefit on expiry day and increase in near contract expiry margin. The SEBI stated that these measures are aimed at enhancing investor protection.

According to a report by Jefferies, the proposed

measures to reduce the number of weekly option contracts from 18 to six could impact around 35% of industry premiums. However, if trading shifts to the remaining contracts, the overall impact can be reduced to 20-25%.

IIFL Securities could see the highest impact from the withdrawal of weekly options (only one per exchange allowed) as index options account for 98% of the volumes. IIFL Securities expects the National Stock Exchange (NSE) to be more affected than the BSE because 60% of the NSE's revenue comes from options trading, compared with 40% for the BSE. It estimates that by 2026, the NSE's earnings could be reduced by 25-30% while the BSE's earnings could drop by 15%-18%.

NCERT removes cartoon on coalition politics, says it cast 'India in negative light'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has removed a political cartoon from the Class 12 political science textbook, *Politics in India since Independence*, saying "it shows India in a negative light".

The cartoon in Chapter 8 - Recent Developments in Indian Politics - depicted political leaders from 1990 onwards and posed questions on the survival of their respective governments.

The cartoon by Ravishankar, originally published in the *India Today* magazine, had on display former Prime Ministers V.P. Singh (1990), Chandra Shekhar (1990), P.V. Narasimha Rao (1991), H.D. Deve Gowda (1996), I.K. Gujral (1997), and A.B. Vajpayee (1998) and a string of questions on the survival

The cartoon depicted leaders from 1990 onwards, posing questions on survival of their governments

of their coalition governments and democracy.

Change made in April
The cartoon depicted the long phase of coalition politics in India from the National Front led by V.P. Singh in 1989, the United Front in 1996-97, and the BJP-led coalition in 1998 to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in 1999, and the United Progressive Alliance in 2004 and 2009.

This trend changed in 2014 when the BJP won a full majority in the Lok Sabha and led an NDA government.

However, a decade later, India yet again has a coalition government at the Centre post the 2024 Lok

Sabha election. The document published by the NCERT depicting the changes dates back to April, prior to the 2024 election and the formation of the NDA coalition government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in which the BJP does not have a majority on its own.

The illustration has been replaced with two students conversing with each other.

One student questions, "Does that mean that we will always have coalitions? Or can the national parties consolidate their positions again?" The other answers, "I am not worried about whether it is a single party or a coalition government. I am more worried about what they do. Does a coalition government involve more compromises? Can we not have bold and imaginative policies in a coalition?"

THE CROSSWORD+ 14251
(set by KrisKross)

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

SCAN TO PLAY

- Across**
- Cut work times in New Delhi (8)
 - Mishandles a vehicle - engine's gutted! (6)
 - Tally updated menu cost (8)
 - Wife reaches Bury in time for Christmas (6)
 - Lawyer from Rhode Island is involved in trade (9)
 - Run in the early morning, becoming fatigued (5)
- Down**
- Basically wasted effort...never touched books...yet passed (4,2)
 - Jail one setter consuming alcohol in retreat (6)
 - Marshy land covered by moderate rain (5)
 - Allow IT student to go through NEET after revision (7)
 - Opener at Lord's in trouble countering spinners - he can't see clearly here (5,4)
 - Ornate suit had diamonds installed (8)
 - Hurt Frenchman's piercing cry for help (8)
 - Egg on clean plate at first polished off (4)
 - Serious member engrossed in exciting tennis (2,7)
 - Lady wearing square watch - she is very finicky (8)
 - Stuff friend with Iranian bread (8)
 - Has everyone around tried soup for starters? (4)
 - Become inaudible...deaf? (4,3)
 - Plays a trick and collapses in the auditorium (6)
 - Places for putting vegetables (6)
 - Upset, miserable, do you have to cry shrilly? (5)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

MADGALDEEP SCENT 3in1
PREMIUM QUALITY INCENSE PERFUME LIKE FRAGRANCES

FAITH
Three steps to divinity

In the Bhagavad Gita, the verse, *Sammiyamyam indriya-gram sarvatra samabuddhayah, te prapnuvanti mam eva sarva-buta-hite ratah*, presents a three-step path to attain divinity, said Swami Mitranandaji. The first step, *Sammiyamyam indriya-gram* underscores mastering the control of one's senses. This control ensures one is not swayed by external circumstances, but remains steadfast in one's inner peace. *Sarvatra sama-buddhayah*, the second step, involves maintaining a balanced mind in all places and situations. This stability is rooted in understanding that every situation, even the most challenging, is temporary.

As Lord Krishna states in Chapter II, *Agamapyayino nityas tams titikasva bhara*, the temporary nature of happiness and distress should be patiently endured. The third step, *Sarva-bhuta-hite ratah*, signifies wishing well for all beings. A person who genuinely delights in the welfare of others and actively contributes to their development experiences true happiness through his selfless actions. This fosters a deep connection with others and enhances one's spiritual journey. Lord Krishna assures that those who cultivate these qualities - control of senses, mental balance and altruism - will attain Him. *Te prapnuvanti mam eva* indicates that such a person ultimately achieves union with the Supreme and attains divinity.

MONEYWISE

Secure the future via a WOP plan

CHILDPLAN

Vivek Jain

Raising children for NRI parents comes with the promise of better exposure, global education and the ability to provide finer living standards. However, the last thing a parent wants is for children to have to compromise on dreams in the unfortunate circumstance of the parent passing away.

Sound financial planning ensures your child gets the best opportunities to achieve goals. This is why it's always advisable to look for specialised child plans in this context as these come with an added layer of safety in the form of Waiver of Premium (WOP).

The mechanics are straightforward yet immensely valuable. Should the policyholder pass away during the coverage period, the insurer steps in to cover premium payments, ensuring the investment plan is unaffected. This crucial provision safeguards the child's future financial well-being against all odds.

Insurance with investment

One of the distinguishing aspects of child investment plans with WOP is the seamless integration of insurance protection and investment components in it. These plans allocate premiums between insurance coverage and investments, catering to individual needs. Unlike conventional life insurance plans where coverage ceases upon disbursement of the death benefit, child plans with WOP continue to nurture the investment component until maturity. This not only ensures financial protection for the child but also fosters wealth accumulation over time.

The activation criteria for WOP are clear-cut, triggering upon the death of the policyholder. This ensures that dependents are spared the added stress of premium payments during a period of emotional upheaval. Such clarity and reliability are invaluable in navigating complexities of financial planning, especially in times of crisis.

Addressing rising education costs

The rising costs of education pose a significant challenge for parents, necessitating proactive financial planning. In case parents decide to send the children to study abroad, where educational expenses are escalating rapidly, child investment plans serve as a strategic tool for building a corpus to meet future educational needs. Whether tuition fees, books, or other school-related expenses, these plans offer a comprehensive solution to mitigate the impact of inflation and ensure uninterrupted education for the child.

Key features of child investment plans with WOP include a comprehensive blend of insurance protection, savings, and investment opportunities. The provision of financial support to the child in the event of the parent's demise underscores the intrinsic value of these plans. Moreover, the insurance company covering future premiums under the WOP option adds an extra layer of security, reinforcing the long-term viability of the investment.

Indispensable tool

In conclusion, child plans with Waiver of Premium emerge as indispensable tools for safeguarding a child's future. By combining insurance protection with investment opportunities and incorporating features like WOP, these plans offer a holistic approach towards financial planning.

In a rapidly evolving economic landscape where uncertainties abound, investing in the future of our children remains a paramount priority, and child plans with WOP serve as reliable allies in this endeavour.

As parents, it is imperative to proactively secure the financial well-being of our children, and child investment plans with WOP epitomise this ethos, providing a pathway to a brighter and more secure future.

(The writer is Head, Investments, Policybazaar.com)



Hold on: If you own international/ gold funds don't rush to sell them as the changes take effect only from April 1, 2025. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Untangling the Budget impact on mutual funds

Both equity and debt-oriented funds won no concessions in this Union Budget; but funds which fall in neither of these viz. gold, international categories saw some relaxations

TAXING FUNDS

Aarati Krishnan

Over a fortnight has passed since the presentation of the Union Budget. However, confusion still seems to be reigning on proposals to 'simplify and standardise' capital gains taxation. Here's a simplified account of what changes for retail investors in mutual funds (MFs), after a deep dive into the budget documents.

Equity: Mild rise

Prior to Budget, there were multiple rates and methods of calculation applied to capital gains made on MFs, depending on the equity-debt mix of a fund. This Budget has somewhat clarified the picture by clearly differentiating between equity-oriented and debt-oriented MFs.

All MFs which own 65% or more of the assets in equities are treated as equity funds. Now, capital gains from equity funds will be taxed at 20% if there are short-term and 12.5% if they are long-term. The holding period to define 'long term' will remain at 12 months. Earlier, long term and short-term gains from equity funds were taxed at 10% and 15% respectively. Apart from active equity funds, index funds, arbitrage funds and hybrid fund categories such as aggressive equity funds, balanced advantage funds, equity savings funds and multi-asset funds with



Prior to Budget, there were multiple rates, methods of calculation applied to capital gains on MFs, depending on equity-debt mix of fund

a more than 65% equity weight, will also fall into the 'equity' category and taxed at the above rates.

Equity fund investors have, however, bagged a mild sweetener to soften the blow from higher tax rates. They will now be liable to pay long term capital gains tax only if annual gains from this source exceed ₹1.25 lakh, as opposed to ₹1 lakh earlier.

If you are a long-time investor in equity funds, all gains prior to January 31, 2018 will continue to be grandfathered (protected from tax) and only gains made thereafter will be taxed. The new tax rates kick in from July 23, 2024, the date of the Budget.

Debt: No climb-down

Budget 2023 dealt an unkind cut to debt MFs by decreeing all the capital gains made from these funds, irrespective of the investor's holding period, would be treated like income and taxed at the investor's Income-Tax slab rate.

This stance has not been changed in the 2024 Budget. All the gains from debt MFs will continue to be taxed at your slab rate, irrespective of how long you held the fund. Debt MFs



The Budget may have introduced new element of uncertainty for debt fund investors by doing away with indexation benefits in toto

for this purpose will be defined as funds which invest 65% or more of the portfolio in bonds. Therefore, taxation at slab rates will apply to all categories of debt funds whether short term, medium term or long term, gilt funds, target maturity funds and hybrid funds which invest 65% or more in bonds.

However, the Budget may have introduced a new element of uncertainty for debt fund investors by doing away with indexation benefits in toto. In the 2023 Budget, when deciding to tax all gains from debt funds at slab rates, the government kept legacy investments made before April 1, 2023 out of the purview of this change. This meant debt fund investments made prior to April 1, 2023 still enjoyed long-term capital gains tax at 20%, after indexing purchase cost for inflation.

But indexation benefits are no longer part of the statute after July 23, 2024. Therefore, it appears likely long-term capital gains on debt funds bought before April 1, 2023 will also be taxed at 12.5% without indexation. The holding period to determine 'long term' will be 24 months. It

however needs to be seen if this is rectified, as was done in the case of legacy investments in property.

Global, gold funds

Both equity and debt-oriented funds won no concessions in this Budget. But funds which fall in neither of these categories saw some relaxations.

With the Budget changing the definition of 'specified mutual funds' under section 50AA of the Income Tax Act, funds which do not invest 65% or more of assets in bonds will no longer see capital gains taxed at slab rates.

The 2023 Budget, while subjecting capital gains from 'specified mutual funds' (read debt funds) to tax at slab rates defined these as funds which invest 'not more than 35% in equity shares'. This had inadvertently swept categories such as fund of funds, balanced hybrid funds, international funds and gold funds into debt taxation.

With this slip-up remedied now, only funds with over 65% investment in bonds will be subject to taxation at slab rates. Therefore, fund of funds (which do not invest over 65% in either equity or debt funds), gold and international funds will now see short-term capital gains taxed at slab rates, while long-term capital gains will be taxed at 12.5%. The holding period to decide long term is 24 months.

If you own international, gold funds don't rush to sell as the changes take effect from April 1, 2025.

What is a tactical index fund

THINKINVESTOR

The objective of a Tactical Index Fund is to reduce active risk and yet improve returns over an index fund; the fund will have a larger tracking error than a comparable index fund

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

Previously, in this column, we discussed how Asset Management Companies (AMCs) can nudge investors in index funds to optimally take profit. Continuing this argument about helping investors improve their financial well-being, we discuss how AMCs can offer an index fund variant.

Allowing tracking error

Take a large-cap index fund benchmarked to the Nifty 50 Index. There are two reasons why an open-end index fund cannot mirror its benchmark returns. One, index fund charges a fund management fee and incurs trading cost to buy securities, whereas the index is simply a weighted average of the constituent stocks. So, the index fund's returns will be dragged down by costs. And two, the index fund will hold some cash to meet redemption request. So, it will have 51 assets in its portfolio, including cash. Therefore, the weight of each stock will be lower than that of its corresponding weight in the index. If the index were to move up, the index fund will give a lower return. This is because the return generated on the cash will be lower than the returns generated on the stocks.

This is referred to as cash drag. The index fund also receives cash from investors who continually buy units in the fund, which the fund manager will invest in the index constituents. Suffice it to know costs of managing the fund and the cash drag will lead to the index fund returns being different from that of index returns.

Tracking error is the metric that captures this difference.

Now, let us differentiate between cash held for redemption purpose and cash inflow from investors. What if the index fund manager uses investor cash inflows to time purchase of the index constituents? This will allow the fund to generate a marginally higher return than a traditional index fund and, perhaps, neutralise fund costs. Call this a Tactical Index Fund as the fund manager engages in market timing to buy the index constituents.

Conclusion

The objective of a Tactical Index Fund is to cut active risk and yet improve returns over an index fund. It will have a larger tracking error than a comparable index fund. Active risk is the risk that an active fund will underperform its benchmark because of the security-selection bets taken by the fund manager. A Tactical Index Fund will not have such active risk, as the fund manager will invest only in the index constituents.

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

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
HDFC Bank	10.50 onwards	10,747 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to Rs 4,999
Tata Capital	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 5.5%
State Bank of India	11.35-15.50	10,959-12,027	2,192-2,405	1.50%(Min Rs 1,000 to Max Rs 15,000)
ICICI Bank	10.80 onwards	10,821 onwards	2,164 onwards	Up to 2%
Bank of Baroda	11.15-18.75	10,909-12,902	2,182-2,580	Up to 2% (Min Rs 1,000 Max Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	11.25 onwards	10,934 onwards	2,187 onwards	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3%
Bank of India	10.85-14.85	10,834-11,856	2,167-2,371	0.50%-1% (Min Rs250 Max Rs 10,000)
Canara Bank	10.95-16.40	10,859-12,266	2,172-2,453	0.50% (Maximum Rs 2,500)
Punjab National Bank	10.40-17.95	10,772-12,683	2,144-2,537	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	9.99-15.00	10,621-11,895	2,124-2,379	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.49 onwards	10,994 onwards	2,199 onwards	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	11.35-15.45	10,959-12,013	2,192-2,403	Up to 1% (Maximum Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	11.00 onwards	10,871 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	10.75-13.50	10,809-11,505	2,162-2,301	0.50%-1%
South Indian Bank	12.85-20.60	11,338-13,414	2,268-2,683	Up to 2%
UCO Bank	12.45-12.85	11,236-11,338	2,247-2,268	Up to 1% (Minimum Rs 750)
IDFC First Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 2%
Bank of Maharashtra	10.00-12.80	10,624-11,325	2,125-2,265	1% (Rs 1,000-Rs 10,000)
Karnataka Bank	13.43	11,487	2,297	Up to 2% of loan amount (Min. Rs 2,500 Max. Rs 8,500)
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	1.5% -3.5%

Car Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
Union Bank of India	8.70 - 10.45	10,307 - 10,735	Rs 1,000
Punjab National Bank	8.75 - 10.60	10,319 - 10,772	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 1,500)
Bank of Baroda	8.90 - 12.70	10,355 - 11,300	Up to Rs 2,000
Canara Bank	8.70 - 12.70	10,307 - 11,300	0.25% (Maximum Rs 2,500)
Bank of India	8.85 - 10.85	10,343 - 10,834	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 5,000)
UCO Bank	8.45 - 10.55	10,246 - 10,759	Nil
State Bank of India	8.95 - 10.00	10,367-10,624	Up to Rs 1,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	8.70 - 13.00	10,307 - 11,377	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 15,000)
Indian Overseas Bank**	8.85 - 12.00	10,343 - 11,122	0.50% (Rs 500 - Rs 5,000)
ICICI Bank	9.10 onwards	10,403 onwards	Up to 2%
HDFC Bank	9.20 onwards	10,428 onwards	0.50% (Rs 3,500 - Rs 8,000)
Karnataka Bank	8.88 - 11.37	10,350 - 10,964	0.60% (Rs 3,000 - Rs 11,000)
Federal Bank	8.85 onwards	10,343 onwards	Rs 2,000 - Rs 4,500
Punjab and Sind Bank***	8.85 - 10.25	10,343 - 10,685	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 15,000)
South Indian Bank	8.75 onwards	10,319 onwards	0.75% (Max: Rs 10,000)
City Union Bank	14.45 - 14.95	11,751 - 11,882	1.25% (Min: Rs 1,000)

**0.25% interest rate concession for existing housing loan borrowers and corporate salary account holders
***0.50% interest rate concession to borrowers with credit scores of 800 and above. Interest rate concession of 0.25% to borrowers having credit scores of 750-799
****Concession of up to 50% on processing fee for PSB Apna Vahan Sugam.

Rates and charges as on August 7

Source: Paisabazaar.com

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

KAMPALA

Death toll from garbage dump collapse in Uganda reaches 18



The death toll from a landslide at a garbage dump in the Ugandan capital Kampala has risen to 18, amid claims the site was a disaster waiting to happen. People and livestock were engulfed in mountains of waste at the landfill in northern Kampala on Saturday after a collapse caused by heavy downpours. AFP

LONDONDERRY

Ten police officials injured during clashes in Northern Ireland



The Northern Irish police on Sunday criticised "disgusting" rioting by pro-Irish unity youth in Londonderry overnight that injured 10 police. The violent scenes in the city follow disturbances in Belfast and elsewhere over the last week which initially mirrored unrest in English towns in the wake of the Southport knife attack. AFP

BEIRUT

Five pro-Iran fighters killed in drone strike in eastern Syria



Five Iran-backed fighters were killed on Sunday in a drone strike in Syria's east, near the Iraqi border, a war monitor said, adding it was not clear yet who was behind the attack. The strike occurred in Syria's eastern Deir Ezzor province, where Iran wields significant influence and which is regularly targeted by Israel and the U.S. AFP

KIGALI

Kagame sworn in as Rwanda President for fourth term



Rwanda President Paul Kagame was sworn in on Sunday for a fourth term after sweeping to victory in elections last month with 99% of the vote. The outcome of the July 15 poll was never in doubt for the iron-fisted Kagame, who has ruled the small African nation since the 1994 genocide, as de facto leader and then President. AFP

Court acquits Muhammad Yunus in graft case

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

Muhammad Yunus was on Sunday acquitted in a graft case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission over the misappropriation of funds from the Grameen Telecom Workers and Employees Welfare Fund, three days after he took oath as the head of Bangladesh's interim government, according to a media report.

Judge Md Rabiul Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka gave the order after accepting the graft agency's application, seeking to withdraw the case under the Code of Criminal Procedure, an official of the anti-graft agency was quoted as saying by *The Daily Star* newspaper.

Bangladesh govt. vows to end attacks on minority groups

Cabinet to sit with representative bodies, other groups to find ways to fix such 'heinous attacks'; new Chief Justice sworn in for Supreme Court after his predecessor quit over protesters' demand

Agence France-Presse
DHAKA

Bangladesh's new interim government said on Sunday it was working to resolve attacks on Hindus and other religious minorities reported after the dramatic ouster of autocratic Premier Sheikh Hasina. Hindus are the largest minority faith in mostly Muslim Bangladesh and are considered a steadfast support base for Ms. Hasina's party, the Awami League.

After Ms. Hasina's abrupt resignation and flight abroad on Monday, there were numerous reports of attacks against Hindu households, temples and businesses.



Limited choice: Hindus protest against the violence inflicted on their community in Dhaka on Saturday. REUTERS

"The attacks on religious minorities in some places have been noted with grave concern," the interim Cabinet said in its

first official statement. The Cabinet said it would "immediately sit with the representative bodies and other groups to find ways to resolve such

heinous attacks".

The government, led by Nobel peace laureate Muhammad Yunus, ordered "support" for the families of protesters who were killed in the weeks of demonstrations culminating in Ms. Hasina's departure.

Earlier in the day a new chief justice was sworn in to office the day after his predecessor, another Hasina ally accused of sublimating the Supreme Court to her government's will, quit following protester demands.

New top justice Syed Rezaat Ahmed replaced Obaidul Hassan after protesters gathered outside the court to demand the latter step-down.

Zelensky admits to Kyiv's new offensive against Russia

Reuters
KYIV

President Volodymyr Zelensky acknowledged for the first time on Saturday that Ukrainian forces were fighting in the surprise offensive in Russia's Kursk, as attacks on the border region continued with authorities rushing to evacuate people.

Moscow's forces were in their sixth day of intense battles against Kyiv's largest incursion into Russian territory since the start of the war, which left southwestern parts of Russia vulnerable before reinforcement started arriving.

In a sign of the gravity of the situation, Russia imposed a sweeping security regime in three border regions on Saturday, while Belarus, a staunch ally of Moscow, sent more troops



Renewed vigour: A burned car in front of an apartment building that was damaged by shelling in Kursk in Russia on Sunday. AP

to its border with Ukraine, accusing Kyiv of violating its air space.

In his nightly video address, Mr. Zelensky said he had discussed the operation with top Ukrainian commander Oleksandr Syrskyi, vowing to restore justice after Russia launched the full-scale invasion on its smaller neighbour in February 2022.

Russia's Defence Ministry said on Sunday it had destroyed 14 Ukrainian drones and four Tochka-U tactical ballistic missiles overnight over the Kursk region, and 18 drones over other Russian regions that Ukraine frequently attacks.

Russian President Vladimir Putin cast the Ukrainian attack as a major provocation.

Trump campaign hit by hackers, blames 'foreign sources'

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

Donald Trump's campaign said on Saturday it had been hacked, blaming "foreign sources" for distributing internal communications and a dossier on running mate J.D. Vance.

Mr. Trump's campaign implied Iran was behind the move as news outlet *Politico* reported it had received emails with the campaign material from a source who refused to identify themselves.

"These documents were

obtained illegally from foreign sources hostile to the United States, intended to interfere with the 2024 election and sow chaos throughout our democratic process," Trump campaign spokesman Steven Cheung said.

In 2016, a hack of Democratic National Committee emails - blamed on Russians - exposed internal party communications, including about candidate Hillary Clinton. Mr. Trump, who would go on to win the election, was criticised for encouraging the hack.

Woman Minister, Western-friendly diplomat among Iran President's proposed Cabinet

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian presented his Cabinet to parliament on Sunday, notably including a woman and a Western-friendly diplomat as the country's Foreign Minister.

Parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf announced the names of the 19-member Cabinet presented by the President during an Assembly session broadcast live on state television.

For the post of Foreign Minister, Mr. Pezeshkian has named Abbas Aragh-

chi, a 61-year-old career diplomat who led nuclear talks since 2013, is nominated as Foreign Minister

chi, a 61-year-old career diplomat who has led nuclear negotiations since 2013.

Second woman Minister Known for his openness to the West, he played a pivotal role in the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers that was torpedoed three years later by

the United States' decision to withdraw from it.

Mr. Pezeshkian has also nominated one woman, Farzaneh Sadegh, who would become only the second Iranian woman to hold a ministerial post since the Islamic republic was established in 1979.

The 48-year-old is set to head the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development.

The reformist President has named his future Interior Minister General Eskandar Momeni, a 60-year-old police commander and former member of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

General Aziz Nasirzadeh, a former commander of the Iranian Air Force and deputy chief of staff of the armed forces since 2021, is set to take the helm of the Defence Ministry.

Oil Minister

The President has chosen as his future Oil Minister Mohsen Paknezhad, a 58-year-old executive director with a long career in the country's energy industry.

Parliament is set to begin reviewing the proposed list of candidates on Monday and submit them to a vote by lawmakers starting Saturday.

Sport

Punjab FC's win against MCFC not enough for it to top group

Sports Bureau
KOLKATA

Punjab FC struck twice in injury-time to defeat Mumbai City FC 3-0 in its concluding Group C match of the 133rd Durand Cup at the Kishore Bharati Stadium on Sunday.

Norwegian forward Mushaga Bakenga scored twice while Croatian midfielder Filip Mrzljak netted once to complete PFC's dominance. The win saw PFC finish its group league engagements tied with Kerala Blasters on seven points but the latter took the top spot in the final standings with a superior goal difference.

Blasters qualified for the quarterfinals while Punjab FC remained the best se-



Easy-peasy: Bakenga slotted home a penalty. DEBASISH BHADURI

cond-placed team currently. The Shers will now have to wait for the results of other matches to confirm their place in the knockouts.

Chennaiyin FC beat Assam Rifles Football Team 2-1 in a Group D match at the JRD Tata Sports Complex stadium, Jamshedpur.

The results: Group C (Kolkata):

Punjab FC 3 (Mushaga Bakenga 62, 90+8-pen, Mrzljak 90+1) bt Mumbai City FC 0.

Group D (Jamshedpur): Chennaiyin FC 2 (Romario Jesuraj 89-pen, Praful 90+7) bt Assam Rifles FT 1 (Jefferson Nongrud 76).

LIVE TELECAST

Football: Durand Cup: Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 6.30 p.m.

Truth tipped to deliver in feature

RACING

HYDERABAD: The four-year-old grey gelding Truth, who is in excellent form as evidenced by his track performance and a mock race, should not find it difficult to win the Bhagyanagar Million, the feature event of Monday's (Aug. 12) races here.

1. ROYAL WINDSOR PLATE (1,800m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45, 1.20 p.m.: 1. Quality Warrior (7) M. Mark 60, 2. Voice of A Dream (5) Surya Prakash 59, 3. Caraxes (6) Shivansh 58.5, 4. White Pearl (2) Akshay K 58.5, 5. Das (3) G. Naresh 57, 6. Exclusive Spark (1) Mohit 55 and 7. London Bell (4) Md. Ekram 52.

1. WHITE PEARL, 2. CARAXES, 3. VOICE OF A DREAM

2. THREE WISHES PLATE (1,100m), 4-y-o and upward, rated upto 25 (Cat. III), 1.55: 1. Exeter (2) Ashad Asbar 60, 2. Magical Power (5) Kuldeep Jr. 3. Fortune Art (3) P. Sai K 56.5, 4. Blue Label (7) R.S. Jodha 56, 5. Reining Queen (1) Surya Prakash 55, 6. Stoli (6) Md. Ekram 55, 7. Nav Lakhaa (8) P. Ajeeth K 54 and 8. Zidane (4) G. Naresh 52.5.

1. NAV LAKHAA, 2. MAGICAL POWER, 3. BLUE LABEL

3. DEVARAKONDA CUP (1,100m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 2.30: 1. Bold Beauty (3) G. Naresh 60, 2. Calista Girl (5)

Ajay K 60, 3. Crimson Rose (7) Shivansh 60, 4. Classy Dame (8) Md. Ekram 59.5, 5. Espionage (4) Kuldeep Sr. 57, 6. N R I Skypower (1) Likith Appu 55, 7. Deccan Ranger (2) Surya Prakash 53.5 and 8. Inderdhanush (6) Ashad Asbar 53.5.

1. ESPIONAGE, 2. INDERD-HARNUSH, 3. CRIMSON ROSE

4. RAZIA SULTANA PLATE (1,100m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II), 3.05: 1. Aashritha Pet (2) G. Naresh 56, 2. Anemoi (9) Santosh Raj 56, 3. Annihilator (10) Kuldeep Sr. 56, 4. Flying Fury (3) Md. Ismail 56, 5. Golden Unicorn (11) P. Sai K 56, 6. Jim (7) Akshay K 56, 7. Pricelless Prince (12) Suraj Narredu 56, 8. Soldier (4) Gaurav 56, 9. First Lady (1) Likith Appu 54.5, 10. Lady Jane (13) R.S. Jodha 54.5, 11. Lucky Fiero (14) Raftuke Sk. 54.5, 12. Most Beautiful (5) Surya Vikrant 54.5, 13. Opera Queen (8) Vikrant 54.5 and 14. Peppi (6) Ashad Asbar 54.5.

1. PRICELESS PRINCE, 2. JIM, 3. ANNIHILATOR

5. INDEPENDENCE CUP (DIV. I) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 3.40: 1. Bangor On Dee (3) Afroz K 60, 2. True Icon (8) Gaurav 59.5, 3. The Inheritor (7) P. Sai K 59, 4. Devils Magic (9) Akshay K 57, 5. Dynanoosh (2) Mukesh 56, 6. Wind Sprite (6) Abhay Singh 55.5, 7. Red Snapper (4) Likith Appu 54, 8. Alpine Girl (11) Kuldeep Jr. 53.5, 9.

Divine Connection (1) Md. Ekram 53.5, 10. Classical Music (10) Ajay K 51 and 11. Sopranos (5) P. Ajeeth K 51.

1. DEVILS MAGIC, 2. ALPINE GIRL, 3. WIND SPRITE

6. BHAGYANAGAR MILLION (1,800m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 80 and above (Cat. I), 4.15: 1. Siddharth (2) Akshay K 60, 2. Akido (3) Gaurav 58.5, 3. Truth (4) Kuldeep Sr. 55.5, 4. Livermore (5) Afroz K 53.5 and 5. High Command (1) Ashad Asbar 52.5.

1. TRUTH, 2. SIDDHARTH

7. INDEPENDENCE CUP (DIV. II) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 4.50: 1. Blissful (10) R.S. Jodha 60, 2. Malibu (5) Md. Ekram 60, 3. Morior Invictus (9) M. Mark 57.5, 4. Amyra (11) Abhay Singh 56, 5. Midsummer Star (2) P. Sai K 56, 6. Happy Go Lucky (7) Akshay K 54, 7. Winning Attitude (1) Afroz K 54, 8. Coming Home (6) Mohit 53.5, 9. Kings Best (8) Md. Ismail 52, 10. Fortunatus (4) Ashad Asbar 51.5 and 11. Exclusive Luck (3) G. Naresh 51.

1. HAPPY GO LUCKY, 2. WINNING ATTITUDE, 3. MALIBU

Day's Best: TRUTH
Jackpot: 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7.
Mini Jackpot: (i) 1, 2, 3 & 4, (ii) 4, 5, 6 & 7.
Trebble: (i) 2, 3 & 4, (ii) 5, 6 & 7.
Tanala: All races.

Divine Art obliges

HYDERABAD: Trainer Satish Narredu's filly Divine Art, piloted by Suraj Narredu, won the K. Mahipathi Rao Memorial Golconda Juvenile Million, the main event of Sunday's (Aug. 11) races here. The winner is owned by Mr. Ashok Ranpise, Mr. Daulat Chhabria, Mr. Teja Gollapudi & Mr. S. Raghu.

1. MICA EMPEROR PLATE (DIV. I): UCHCHAIHSHRAVAS (Neeraj Rawal) 1, Gloria (Ashad Asbar) 2, Tiger Ruby (Akshay K) 3 and Clarity (Suraj Narredu) 4. 6, 3-1/4 and 1-1/2. Im, 14.20s. ₹18 (w), 11, 12 and 13 (p). SHP: 45, THP: 26, SHW: 13 and 27, FP: 99, Q: 56, Tanala: 221. Favourite: Uchchaihshravas. Owners: Md. Kashif Khan, Mr. D.N. Kempogowda & Mr. Vara Prasad Reddy. Trainer: N. Rawal.

2. MICA EMPEROR PLATE (DIV. II): NONPARIEL (Akshay Kumar) 1, Torchbearer (Ashad Asbar) 2, Shooting Star (Abhay Singh) 3 and Rani Ruckus (Md. Ismail) 4. 4-1/4, 2 and 4. Im, 14.79s. ₹12 (w), 11, 10 and 27 (p). SHP: 19, THP: 78, SHW: 18 and 10, FP: 22, Q: 18, Tanala: 139. Favourite: Nonpariel. Owners: Mr. Rajendran rep. Rapar's Galloping Stars LLP, Mrs. T. Robin & Mr. P. Ranga Raju. Trainer: D. Netto.

3. NAWAB KHAJA MOINUDDIN KHAN MEMORIAL CUP (DIV. I): INDIAN SNIPER (Mohit Singh), Toffeee (Md. Ekram) 2, Queen Empress (Abhay Singh) 3 and Magnum (P. Sai Kumar) 4. 1-1/2, 3/4 and Neck. Im, 41.35s. ₹30 (w), 11, 28 and 45 (p). SHP: 74, THP: 125, SHW: 24 and 60, FP: 510, Q: 388, Tanala: 3,519. Favourite: Original Sin. Owners: Mr. Prabhakar Chowdhary Tripuraneni & Mr. Tripuranenivenkata Aditya Chowdhary. Trainer: Magan Singh.

4. K. MAHIPATHI RAO MEMORIAL GOLCONDA JUVENILE MILLION: DIVINE ART (Suraj Narredu) 1, Puranjaya (J. Chinoy) 2, Dapper Look (Kuldeep Sr.) 3 and Kalki (Antony Raj) 4. 2, 3-1/4 and 3-1/2. Im, 28.19s. ₹15 (w), 11 and 18, SHP: 29, THP: 31, SHW: 10 and 15, FP: 55, Q: 38, Tanala: 262. Favourite: Divine Art. Owners: Mr. Ashok Ranpise, Mr. Daulat Chhabria, Mr. Teja Gollapudi & Mr. S. Raghu. Trainer: Satish Narredu.

5. NAWAB KHAJA MOINUDDIN KHAN MEMORIAL CUP (DIV. II): ENCORE (Md. Ekram Alam), Brooklyn Beauty (G. Naresh) 2, Delhi Heights (Mukesh) 3 and Wallop And Gallop (P. Ajeeth K) 4. Head, 1/4 and 1. Im, 41.23s. ₹26 (w), 16, 16 and 21 (p). SHP: 49, THP: 61, SHW: 16 and 28, FP: 245, Q: 127, Tanala: 1100. Favourite: Encore. Owner: Mr. Al Murugappan. Trainer: K. Sateesh.

6. ADLER PLATE: CARNIVAL LADY (Shivansh) 1, Code Blue (Abhay Singh) 2, See My Attitude (Afroz Khan) 3 and Sadiya (Kuldeep Jr.) 4. 1-1/2, Shd and 2. Im, 29.19s. ₹46 (w), 10, 20 and 23 (p). SHP: 34, THP: 55, SHW: 19 and 35, FP: 243, Q: 98, Tanala: 412. Favourite: Code Blue. Owners: Mr. L. Arun Kumar & Mr. Rameshbabai Amrutlal Mehta. Trainer: N. Ravinder Singh. Jackpot: 70% 1,1,388 (219 tkts.), 30%: 104 (1,252 tkts.). Mini Jackpot: 710 (33 tkts.). Treble: (i) 149 (207 tkts.), (ii) 231 (237 tkts.).

LEGEND

Brazil's Marta hints at retirement after finishing with a silver



Marta said on Saturday that defeat in the Olympic women's football final was likely her last appearance for Brazil. "In the Olympic Games (yes) and probably in official competition," Marta said after Brazil's 0-1 loss against USA. "I am not going to disappear from football. I am going to try to contribute somehow to this generation."

REDEMPTION

Taiwan's Lin claims 57kg Olympic boxing crown



Taiwan's Lin Yu-ting won her Paris Olympics women's boxing final on Saturday. A day after Algeria's Imane Khelif clinched gold at 66kg, Lin claimed the 57kg crown with a unanimous points decision win over Poland's Julia Szeremeta at Roland Garros. It was Taiwan's second gold of the Games.

POWER-PACKED

Talakhadze clinches his third consecutive weightlifting gold



Lasha Talakhadze of Georgia won his third consecutive Olympic title in the heaviest weightlifting division, taking gold in the men's +102 kilograms on Saturday. Talakhadze won gold in the men's +102 kilograms after winning at +109 kilograms in Tokyo three years ago and +105 kilograms in 2016 at Rio de Janeiro.

RECOGNITION

Nadeem set to be honoured with Hilal-e-Imtiaz Award



Javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem is set to be honoured with the Hilal-e-Imtiaz Award by the Pakistan government. It is the second-highest civilian award given by the Government of Pakistan and Nadeem will get this award for his gold medal at the Paris Olympics.

A mixed bouquet of hits and near misses for India

It matched its second-best finish of six medals, achieved in London 2012, one less than that of Tokyo and the performance may make the decision makers at TOPS and MOC go in for a re-think



Y.B. Sarangi
PARIS

Paris 2024 will be remembered for the six medals which brought joy to the Indians as well as the six fourth place finishes that resulted in heartbreaks.

A medal less than what was achieved in Tokyo may have restricted celebrations in the Indian camp, but the mixed bouquet of hits and near misses paints a promising picture of Indian sports.

Neeraj Chopra, Manu Bhaker, Sarabjot Singh, Swapnil Kusale, Aman Sehrawat and the Indian hockey team contributed to the six medals, including a silver and five bronze.

India finished 71st on the medals tally while Tokyo's one gold, two silver and four bronze had put in 48th.

Shooters Manu (25m



The highs: Manu, Sarabjot, Aman, Neeraj, Kusale and the Indian men's hockey team ensured glory for themselves and joy to all of India. ANI

sports pistol), Arjun Babuta (10m air rifle) and the mixed team pair of Anantjeet Singh Naruka and Maheshwari Chauhan (skeet), the archery mixed team pair of Ankita Bhakat and B. Dhiraj, shuttler Lakshya Sen and weightlifter Mirabai Chanu missed podium

finishes by the smallest of margins.

The quarterfinal losses of boxers Nishant Dev and Lovlina Borgohain, just a step away from securing a medal, added to the country's so-near-yet-so-far moments.

The disqualification of

wrestler Vinesh Phogat after reaching the women's 50kg final was another huge blow to the country's aspirations.

After wrestler Sushil Kumar and shuttler P.V. Sindhu, Neeraj became the third Indian to claim two consecutive individual medals.

Always a big event athlete, the Tokyo gold medalist managed his workload well. Despite some injury issues Neeraj achieved his season best, 89.45m, which was close to his personal best 89.94m, to pick up a silver. The world champion needs to

get fitter to cross the much-awaited 90m mark.

After their flop shows in 2016 and 2020, the Indian shooters bounced back. Following her Tokyo disappointment, pistol shooter Manu – who scripted history by becoming the first Indian woman shooter and

the first from the country to take two bronze medals in a Games (in 10m air pistol individual and mixed team with Sarabjot) – scripted a superb turnaround.

Kusale added another bronze in the 50m rifle 3-position event.

Sehrawat, another product of Delhi's famous Chhatrasal Stadium that produced wrestlers of the class of Sushil, Yogeshwar Dutt and Ravi Dahiya, gave a fine display to land India's solitary medal from wrestling.

Two-time World championships medallist Vinesh, dropping down to 50kg, gave the country reasons to celebrate by stunning World and Olympic champion Yui Susaki of Japan on her way to the final. But the joy was short-lived as the ace wrestler was overweight by 100gm during the weigh-in on the second morning ahead of her title clash.

She has appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport against her disqualification and is claiming a silver for her efforts. Sports lovers will await CAS's decision, expected on Tuesday, to know whether the country manages to match its Tokyo medal tally.

The Indian hockey team showed consistency, despite the change in its coach about a year back, to retain its bronze medal. It delighted the crores of Indians, who are emotionally attached to the sport for its rich history in the country.

It was a fitting farewell to seasoned goal-keeper P.R. Sreejesh. The country matched its second-best finish of six medals, achieved in London 2012, and the performance, for which the central government spent hundreds of crores through the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) and Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) to provide full support to the athletes, may make the decision makers go in for a re-think.

To put the heart-breaking moments into perspective, they tell us the capability of the Indian athletes on the biggest stage.

These also underscore the necessity to continue with the all-round support so that the near-misses can be transformed into medals as the country aspires to bid for the 2036 Olympics. As Paris closed its third Games, India would do well to take a leaf out of France's book to transform itself as a sporting nation.

Kipyegon makes 1,500m history; USA underlines its dominance



What a show! The incredible Kipyegon completed a hat-trick, while Kerr won the high jump gold after a jump-off. AP & GETTY IMAGES



Agence France-Presse
PARIS

History-making Faith Kipyegon became the first woman to win three consecutive Olympic 1,500m titles as the United States bagged three more golds on Saturday to confirm its track and field dominance. The final Olympic session at a packed 69,000-capacity Stade de France offered up another startling night of dramatic action.

There was redemption for Jakob Ingebrigtsen in the 5,000m, while New Zealander Hamish Kerr won a jump-off for high jump gold.

Kipyegon made history in spectacular style, the 30-year-old 2016 and 2020

champion producing a tactical masterpiece to take gold in a new Olympic record of 3min 51.29sec.

It was another remarkable performance by Kipyegon, the reigning World champion and world record holder who can now arguably lay claim to being the greatest women's middle-distance runner in history.

"It has been a week with a lot of emotions," said Kipyegon in reference to winning the 5,000m silver earlier in the week.

"Tonight it is happiness and I am proud to win my third consecutive Olympic gold medal in the 1500m."

Kipyegon's teammate Emmanuel Wanyonyi made it two Kenyan golds on the night after he held

off world champion Marco Arop of Canada for victory in the men's 800m.

In high jump, Kerr and American Shelby McEwen were locked on 2.36m at the end of regulation competition. But neither wanted to share and the pair went into a jump-off, the New Zealander coming out on top to rapturous applause from the crowd.

"High jump's always a roller coaster, there's always guys who will miss and then clear, and then miss," said Kerr.

Two-time defending World champion Ingebrigtsen made up for his fourth place in the 1500m with a dominant victory in the 5,000m.

The Norwegian timed 13min 13.66sec for gold, Ke-

nya's Ronald Kwemai taking silver in 13:15.04.

USA's Masai Russell clocked 12.33sec for victory in the 100m hurdles before 400m hurdles winners Rai Benjamin and Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone and 200m champion Gabby Thomas helped steer the men and women's 4x400m relay teams to victory.

The women, who won in 3:15.27, narrowly missed out on breaking one of the oldest world records in athletics – the 3:15.17 set by the former Soviet Union in 1988.

USA topped the athletics medals table with 14 golds, 11 silvers and nine bronzes. Kenya was second with four golds, two silvers and four bronzes.

GOLDIES

Faith Kipyegon (Ken): Women's 1500m

Hamish Kerr (NZ): Men's High Jump

USA (Christopher Bailey, Vernon Norwood, Bryce Deadmon, Rai Benjamin): Men's 4x400m Relay

USA (Shamier Little, Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, Gabby Thomas, Alexis Holmes): Women's 4x400m Relay

Wang Liuyi & Wang Qianyi (Chn): Artistic Swimming Duet Free Routine

USA: Men's Basketball

David Ahman & Jonatan Hellvig (Swe): Men's Beach Volleyball

Lin Yu-ting (Tpe): Boxing Women's 57kg

Lydia Ko (NZ): Golf Women's Individual Stroke Play

Sakura Motoki (Jpn): Wrestling Women's Freestyle 62kg

Abdumalik Khalokov (Uzb): Boxing Men's 57kg

Li Qian (Chn): Boxing Women's 75kg

Bakhodir Jalolov (Uzb): Boxing Men's +92kg

Phil Wizard (Can): Breaking B-Boys

China: Rhythmic Gymnastics Group All-Around

China (Chen Meng, Wang Manyu, Sun Yingsha): Table Tennis Women

Arian Salimi (Iri): Taekwondo Men's +80kg

Althea Laurin (Fra): Taekwondo Women's +67kg

Lasha Talakhadze (Geo): Weightlifting Men's +102kg

Solfrid Koanda (Nor): Weightlifting Women's 81kg

Sifan Hassan (Ned): Athletics Women's Marathon

Li Wenwen (Chn): Weightlifting Women's +81kg

Kiyooka Kitaro (Jpn): Wrestling



Lavreysen... pedalling to three golds. GETTY IMAGES

Final medals table

Country	G	S	B	T
1 USA	40	44	42	126
2 China	40	27	24	91
3 Japan	20	12	13	45
4 Australia	18	19	16	53
5 France	16	26	22	64
6 Netherlands	15	7	12	34
7 Great Britain	14	22	29	65
8 Korea	13	9	10	32
9 Italy	12	13	15	40
10 Germany	12	13	8	33
71 India	0	1	5	6

Men's Freestyle 65kg

Akhmed Tazhudinov (Brn): Wrestling Men's Freestyle 97kg

Kagami Yuka (Jpn): Wrestling Women's Freestyle 76kg

Michelle Gulyas (Hun): Modern Pentathlon Women's Individual

Italy: Volleyball Women

Denmark: Handball Men

Harrie Lavreysen (Ned): Cycling Track Men's Keirin

Jennifer Valente (USA): Cycling Track Women's Omnium

Ellesse Andrews (NZ): Cycling Track Women's Sprint

Serbia: Water Polo Men

USA: Basketball Women

India's pride



The chosen ones: Manu and Sreejesh snapped before leading Team India at the Closing Ceremony. X@TEAMINDIA

POSTCARD FROM PARIS

A gesture

In a gesture to the contribution of journalists covering the sport, former India captain and Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey invited some of them over for lunch to celebrate the national hockey team's second consecutive bronze medal win in the Olympics.

Tirkey, always warm towards the scribes through his long career and even beyond it, underlined the importance of sports writers in the growth of the sport as he requested everyone present to give their autographs on a

piece of cloth, which he planned to frame in the HI office. A call from hockey great Dhanraj Pillay to acknowledge the role of journalists in popularising the sport made the occasion all the more special.

The big sale

With the Olympics drawing to a close, the organisers decided to offer huge discounts and as a result one could see long queues in front of the merchandising outlets with fans grabbing the opportunity to purchase the Paris 2024 products for their near and dear ones. — Y.B. Sarangi

United States reaffirms it is the gold standard in Olympic basketball

The Americans beat back a strong challenge from hosts France in tense and fiercely contested men's and women's finals



Agence France-Presse
PARIS

The United States made a clean sweep of the basketball titles at the Paris Games with the hosts France coming second best in both finals despite putting up a spirited fight.

The women narrowly beat the hosts to win an unprecedented eighth successive gold on Sunday and extend their run of victories at the Games to 61.

A'ja Wilson scored a game-high 21 points for the Americans who won the title for the 10th time, securing the country its 40th



Unstoppable: United States' raft of stars helped it land a record fifth consecutive gold while the women weathered a keen fight for an unprecedented eighth successive crown. REUTERS

gold of the Games to top the medals table.

Earlier on Saturday the men won their fifth straight crown, holding off France 98-87.

In a rematch of the Tokyo Olympics final three years ago, LeBron James and the US team stacked with NBA stars once again proved too much for France's sensational NBA Rookie of the Year Victor Wembanyama and his teammates.

France sliced a 14-point

deficit to three with 3min 04sec to play, but Golden State Warriors star Stephen Curry drilled a three-pointer and Phoenix Suns star Kevin Durant nailed two free throws as the United States relentlessly powered to the finish.

Curry finished with eight three-pointers and led the US scoring with 24 points. Durant and Devin Booker added 15 apiece and James scored 14 with six rebounds, 10 assists a steal and a block. For Du-

rant it was a record fourth Olympic gold. James earned his third and Curry, a four-time NBA champion, claimed his first in his first Olympic appearance.

Wembanyama had his best offensive game of the Olympics, scoring 26 points. Guerschon Yabusele added 20, but Isaia Cordinier - whose offensive contributions were key to France's bounce-back after a narrow victory over Japan and a humbling

loss to Germany in group play - was held scoreless.

France connected on just nine of 30 three-point attempts and the United States held a 31-9 advantage in fast-break points.

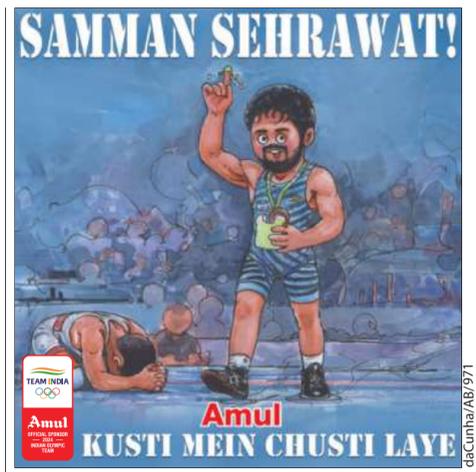
The dream final drew a raft of luminaries.

French President Emmanuel Macron was in the house and so were a bevy of former NBA stars including Scottie Pippen, Pau Gasol, Carmelo Anthony and France's Tony Parker. Sprint star Sha'Carri Ri-

chardson was courtside, a day after she anchored the US 4x100m relay to gold.

Earlier on Saturday, Serbia won bronze with a dominant 93-83 victory over World Cup champion Germany.

Three-time NBA Most Valuable Player Nikola Jokic posted a triple double of 19 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists to lead Serbia, which bounced back less than 40 hours after a heartbreaking 95-91 loss to the U.S. in the semifinals.



IN BRIEF



Women paddlers give China its 300th Olympic gold

China's Chen Meng, Sun Yingsha and Wang Manyu won the gold in the Olympic women's table tennis team final on Saturday, with Japan taking silver and South Korea the bronze. It was the country's 300th gold in Olympic history and fifth consecutive triumph in the women's team event, a feat that the men had also achieved on Friday. China has won 37 of the 42 golds in table tennis since the sport was added at Seoul in 1988.



Winning over: Wizard had the crowd against him in the final, but he soon had them eating out of his hand. GETTY IMAGES

Canada's Wizard wins men's breaking title

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Canada's B-Boy Phil Wizard won the inaugural Olympic men's breaking gold in Paris on Saturday, beating France's Dany Dann in the final.

Phil Wizard, whose real name is Philip Kim, triumphed, with B-Boy Vic-

tor of the US taking bronze. The competition saw 16 dancers going head-to-head in a series of battles, starting with a pool stage before moving to a knockout round.

The B-Boys showcased phenomenal athleticism and creativity, wowing the crowd at one of Paris' most elegant public spaces.

American gymnast Chiles has to return her bronze, rules CAS

Associated Press
PARIS

American gymnast Jordan Chiles must return the bronze medal she won in the Paris Olympics floor exercise after the sport's highest court said her score was judged improperly, the IOC confirmed on Sunday.

The IOC announced early on Sunday it was reallocating the bronze from Monday's women's floor final to Romanian Ana Barbusu after the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) said Saturday night it would respect the court's decision and elevate Barbusu to third.

The decision came less than 24 hours after the Court of Arbitration for Sport voided a scoring ap-



Chiles. GETTY IMAGES

peal made by Team USA coach Cecile Landi during the competition that had vaulted Chiles onto the podium.

CAS ruled on Saturday that the on-floor appeal by Landi to have 0.1 added to Chiles' score came outside the 1-minute window allowed by the FIG.

Bach will not seek third term as IOC president

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach said at the Paris Games on Saturday that he will not seek to remain in charge for a third term. "New times are calling for new leaders," the 70-year-old German lawyer, who has been in charge since 2013, told a session of IOC members.

Bach said he was asked to stay in his role but insisted he would not attempt to extend his mandate by changing the Olympic charter that limits the president to a maximum of 12 years in the role. "I know with this decision I am disappointing many of you... but it is in the best interests of our beloved Olympic movement," he said.

His successor will be elected during the IOC's



Bach. AFP

143rd session in Athens from March 18-21, 2025 and will take office in June.

Some well-informed IOC watchers tipping Zimbabwean former swimmer Kirsty Coventry, 40, for the role. Aruban Nicole Hovertsz, a 60-year-old former synchronised swimmer and IOC vice-president, has also been cited as a possible contender along with Sebastian Coe.

Maharaj and Rabada put SA on the ascendancy

SA IN WI

Agence France-Presse
PORT OF SPAIN

Keshav Maharaj and Kagiso Rabada combined on Saturday to earn South Africa a healthy first innings lead over the West Indies with the visitors attempting to defy the impact of inclement weather in seeking to force an unlikely victory going into the final day of the first Test of a two-match series.

Steady rain restricted play to just the final session on the fourth day but in that time South Africa dismissed the home side for 233 in the first innings and then made its intentions clear in reaching 30 without loss off five overs in the second innings at the close.

The scores: South Africa 357 & 30/0 in 5 overs vs West Indies 233 in 91.5 overs (Keacy Carly 42, Jason Holder 36, Jomel Warrican 35 n.o., Maharaj 4/76, Rabada 3/56).

We will get good results if the mentality is right, says Marquez

FOOTBALL

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

The newly appointed national football coach Manolo Marquez has admitted there are challenges ahead for the team but is hopeful of improving both the standards and the standings in his three-year tenure that starts next week.

In his first official interaction with the media here on Sunday Spaniard Marquez, named as replacement for Igor Stimac last month, was honest in his assessment of Indian players being reluctant to move out of their comfort zones and being mentally not strong enough.

"The level of Indian players is better than what it was five years ago. But it can be better and improve faster. My feeling is that Indian players are very comfortable. Life is very good for them in the ISL and it is difficult for them to try and



New role: Head coach Marquez hopes to take Indian football to new heights during his stint. AIF

go abroad. You will grow when you play abroad. I am not speaking about the top level, Premier League or LaLiga. But if you go abroad and play against opponents who are better than you, you will improve," he said candidly.

Only a handful of Indians have ever signed up for a foreign club - Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, Sandesh Jhingan and Sunil Chhetri among them. Not surprisingly, they have been the best performers

with the national side in the last few years. Marquez also declared that the Indian players needed to toughen up mentally.

"We need to improve in this aspect, they have to be stronger mentally. Technique, tactics, fitness are important but if the head doesn't work, you can do nothing. If you are losing 2-0 in the 20th minute, you have 70 minutes to turn the game. And this is possible. If the mentality is correct, we will get good re-

sults," Marquez shrugged.

He also stressed on the importance of being professional more than once, refusing to be bothered with doubts of conflict of interest in his role as the chief coach of Indian Super League club FC Goa. "It is not the first time, it won't be the last. It is not common but there are big names, Guus Hiddink, Renus Michels and others, who have managed a club and national team. It is finally about professionalism. We will work very hard for the national team," he said.

While he was glad to get a chance to coach a national team, Marquez also agreed that getting Indian coaches was the key to long-term success. "One target for the national team going forward should be to have an Indian coach. I can speak very good about India but an Indian coach will know better how the country works and people in every part of India," he insisted.



McGrath. GETTY IMAGES

McGrath leads Australia-A's T20 series sweep

Press Trust of India
BRISBANE

Tahila McGrath was the lead cast with an unbeaten fifty as Australia Women-A team defeated India by seven wickets in the third and final T20 to complete a series sweep on Sunday.

Australia had won the first two matches by five runs and eight wickets respectively.

The scores: India-A 120/8 in 20 overs (Kiran Navgire 38) lost to Australia-A 121/3 in 13.5 overs (Tahila McGrath 51 n.o., Tahila Wilson 39).

Subroto Cup semifinals to be held today

Mother International School, Ranchi, will play Government Senior Secondary School, Alakhpura, Bhiwani, in the first semifinal of the 63rd Subroto Cup under-17 girls' football tournament at the Tejas ground on Monday. Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Protisthan will play The Prorompat Sabal Leikai High School, Imphal, in the second semifinal at the same venue. The matches are scheduled 7.30 & 9 a.m. respectively.

Global women's kabaddi league in Haryana

The Global women's kabaddi league, featuring about 15 countries, is scheduled to be staged in Haryana in September. The league will be organised by Holistic International Pravasi Sports Association (HIPSA) in collaboration with World Kabaddi, with an objective to promote women's kabaddi across the world. England, Poland, Argentina, Canada and Italy are reported to have expressed interest among others to be part of this initiative.

Jockey Akshay Kumar honoured for 1000 career wins

Jockey Akshay Kumar was honoured in Hyderabad on Sunday by R. Surender Reddy, chairman of the Hyderabad Race Club, in recognition of his achieving 1,000 career victories. The milestone came when Akshay guided Positano to victory in Bengaluru on August 9. Akshay, who started his career at the HRC in 2013, made an immediate impact by clinching the Leading Apprentice Jockey Award (with 10 wins) in his debut year. Over the years, Akshay has become one of the most consistent and successful jockeys in Indian racing.

Unfulfilled hopes and what-ifs — India's recurring theme in Paris

The country had six fourth-place finishes in the 2024 Summer Olympic Games, a sobering marker of a successful failure; a place that deems you worthier than the rest, but still not deserving of a medal; sport is cruel but for none more than those who land just outside the podium



GETTY IMAGES

Bhavin Shivaa

Lakshya Sen. Mirabai Chanu. Arjun Babuta. Manu Bhaker. Dhiraj Bommadevara, Ankita Bhakat. Anantjeet Singh Naruka and Maheshwari Chauhan. If there's one thing connecting the stories of these athletes - apart from representing India at the Olympics, that is - it is that all of these athletes finished immediately outside the podium in their respective events at the 2024 Summer Games in Paris.

You can ask any athlete which position they would not like to finish in, and every one of them will tell you that it is the dreaded fourth place. Sport is cruel but for none more than those who finish in fourth.

It is the sobering marker of a successful failure - a place that deems you worthier than the rest, but still not deserving of a medal. So close, yet so far.

Ace shuttler Lakshya Sen missing out on the bronze medal will arguably be the biggest heartbreak of the lot. He entered his debut Summer Games seeded fourteenth, following a breakthrough year in 2022 where he finished first in the Commonwealth Games and was part of the team that claimed a historic win at the Thomas Cup for India.

The 22-year-old was in blistering form in the group stages as he hammered all three of his opponents, including World No.3 Jonatan Christie, without dropping a single set. He also brushed past compatriot H.S.Prannoy in the round of 16 tie. The two brightest sparks from a nation known for its fireworks, it was saddening that only one would make it out. Lakshya was challenged in his quarterfinal against 12th seed Chou Tien-chen, but eventually prevailed.

Into the unknown

With that, he had entered uncharted territory as he became the first Indian to make it to the last four of the badminton Men's singles at the Olympics.

Viktor Axelsen was up next. A formidable shuttler who sent shivers down the spine of his opponents. The reigning Olympic champion towers over the field at 194cm and is sculpted for peak performance.

The Dane enjoyed a 7-1 advantage over Lakshya coming into the fixture. Despite the Indian's spirited fight, that head-to-head skewed further in Axelsen's favour.

"Lakshya could have won today. But he tensed up because he's gone where no Indian has gone before. I've gone through that myself. He's going to be a real contender at the Los Angeles Olympics in 4 years," Axelsen said.

In the bronze medal match against

Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia, Lakshya charged to a 21-13 win in the first game.

It was a familiar tale for Lakshya in the bronze medal clash against Malaysian Lee Zii Jia. The 14th-ranked shuttler seemed to have shaken his semifinal woes as came in thundering, winning his first game 21-13. However, the ghosts of Axelsen came back to haunt him.

It was a pitiful sight indeed. The Indian had no response to the Malaysian's relentless rockets and capitulated to a disheartening 21-13, 16-21, 11-21 loss, finishing fourth overall.

Matter of margins

Mirabai Chanu, the golden girl of Indian weightlifting, was a top medal contender for her nation going into Paris on the back of an unprecedented silver at Tokyo 2020.

Having recovered from a hip injury she picked up at the 2023 Huangzhou Asian Games which sidelined her for five months, Mirabai persevered with a fire in her eyes but with generous caution as even the slightest mismanagement of her injury would damage her hopes of competing in Paris.

The only event she took part in in 2024 was the World Championship where she finished 12th with a combined lift of 184kg, enough to book her ticket to the French capital.

In her third Olympics, a medal would have meant that she would have become only the third Indian to win an individual medal in consecutive games alongside P.V. Sindhu (2016, 2020) and Neeraj Chopra (2020, 2024).

Mirabai matched her highest snatch effort of 88kg in her third attempt while she recorded 111kg in clean and jerk. The target was set. The podium visible. The

Indian needed a cumulative total of over 200kg going into her final clean and jerk attempt to secure her medal.

Unfortunately, Mirabai couldn't replicate her Tokyo heroics, falling agonisingly short, as she failed to complete the 114kg lift and finished outside the medal bracket.

India's most successful showing at the Paris Olympics came 300km away from the French capital. The fabled Chateauroux Shooting Centre in central France was home to all shooting events and witnessed the Indian contingent win three bronze medals in the Women's 10m Air Pistol (Manu Bhaker), the Mixed 10m Air Pistol (Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh), and the Men's 50m Rifle Three Positions (Swapnil Kusale).

But Chateauroux also toyed with Indian hearts as much as it gave them joy with Indians finishing fourth in three events at the shooting centre.

The fact that it was closest to the podium magnified the distance from the mythical metal. Inches seemed like light years. It was only apt that the minuscule margins of elite sport were highlighted by shooting, a sport where millimetres are the difference between first and last.

In her quest for a historic third medal at the same Games, Manu Bhaker was on course for glory once more after two bronze medals already in the bag. She qualified for the final of the Women's 25m Pistol Shooting by finishing second in Rapid qualification and third in Precision.

The two-time Olympic medallist started the final strong and was consistently in the podium places as the final approached its last four contenders. Manu, tied for second at 26 points after Series 7, one away from the eventual

winner, F. Yang Jilin and one ahead of Hungarian Veronika Major, needed only a middling score of three from her next five to secure a medal as Major missed two.

Manu who had missed only two of her previous 10 shots, misfired thrice in the deciding round to finish level on points with Major and head into a shoot-off for a medal.

History was hanging in the balance. You could see the headlines being written. Magical Manu secures a golden hat-trick of bronzes in Paris. Could the Indian etch her name in the highest echelon of sport?

She started strong by making her first two shots while her Hungarian counterpart missed the second. She was three good shots away. Did she have the mettle?

The third time proved unlucky as the Indian missed while her competitor faced a better result. Level on points, Manu was still in contention.

But the nerves got the better of her as she missed her second consecutive shot, all but sealing her fate. Another bang later, it was over. Manu, still magical, would have to settle for a bronze double and a grey fourth place that came agonisingly close to being as colourful as the others.

Chateauroux, a beauty when it wants to be but a beast otherwise, spurred similar fates for Manu's compatriots as Arjun Babuta, and Anantjeet Singh and Maheshwari Chauhan missed out on medals in the Men's 10m Air Rifle and the Mixed Skeet Team events respectively.

Paris, the city of light, had given India a few glimmers of hope in an Olympic campaign otherwise dulled by close calls and what-could-have-beens.

THE GIST

India was placed 71st in the medals table with one silver and five bronze

Lakshya looked on course for a podium finish, but lost the plot and the medal

Mirabai, returning from injury, fell short narrowly

It was a similar story for shooters Manu and Babuta, the skeet pair of Anantjeet-Maheshwari and the archery duo of Dhiraj-Ankita



AP & RITU RAJ KONWAR

Cold War nuke tests light up a bug in present-day climate models

A study by an international team of researchers, recently published in the journal *Science*, suggests plants absorb more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than expected and also store it for a shorter duration, before releasing it into their surroundings

Karthik Vinod

For billions of years, the carbon cycle has been nature's solution to removing excess carbon from the atmosphere.

In nature, volcanic eruptions and life forms vent carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere. Plants and trees then draw in and store this CO₂ during photosynthesis.

Of late, the carbon cycle has been a focus area in climate mitigation. Plants' ability to lock away carbon produced by burning fossil fuels can offer respite. Both fossil-fuel corporations and governments have subscribed to this idea as they look for ways to offset their still-rising carbon footprints.

But a study recently published in the journal *Science* by an international team of researchers suggests plants absorb more CO₂ from the atmosphere than expected and also store it for a shorter duration than expected before releasing it into their surroundings.

To establish their findings, the researchers investigated the remains of nuclear bomb tests the U.S. and the Soviet Union conducted in the 1960s using climate models.

Relics of the Cold War

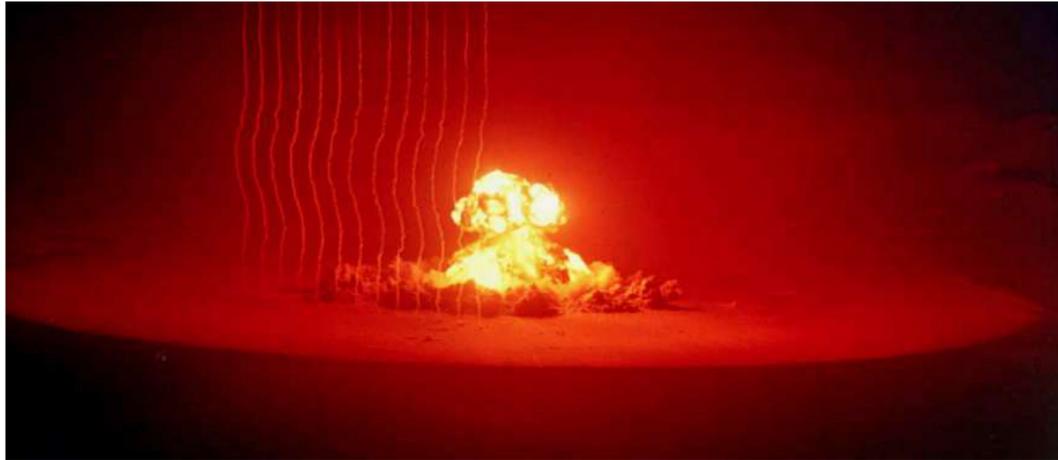
The dozens of nuclear bomb tests during the Cold War in the second half of the 20th century maintained an atmosphere of trepidation worldwide and, scientists later found, an opportunity for climate research.

"As terrible as they were, they've been quite useful to scientists," Heather Graven, a climate physicist at Imperial College London and the study's lead author, said.

The explosions sprayed radioactive material around the planet, including a lot of it in the atmosphere. One of them was carbon-14, an isotope also called radiocarbon. Its atom's nucleus has two neutrons more than in the nucleus of the more common carbon-12. Radiocarbon is naturally found in minute quantities, but the nuclear bomb tests steadily deposited more and more of it in the atmosphere.

In 1963, Cold War powers signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT) that prohibited nuclear testing over land, air, and under water. The atmospheric radiocarbon concentration stopped increasing beyond this year. Dr. Graven and her team used models to track the change in this level between 1963 and 1967 and found that it dropped steadily.

Often, radiocarbon bonds with oxygen to form CO₂. Plants, trees, and other vegetation absorb this CO₂ during photosynthesis to produce food and,



A view of the nuclear test Upshot-Knothole Annie, conducted by the U.S. on March 17, 1953. PUBLIC DOMAIN

ultimately, energy. The researchers found that the models suggested the radiocarbon was moving into vegetation from the atmosphere.

'The whole system is cycling faster'

Plants need food, to survive and they make it themselves. They absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere during photosynthesis and use it to make glucose. A plant consumes some of the glucose, and some it stores as starch in its leaves. In this process, some carbon is also lost when the plant exhales CO₂ as it respirates. Scientists don't have a direct way to measure the rates at which vegetation loses and gains carbon. But they have been able to use satellite data to estimate how much carbon vegetation around the world hosts.

The researchers behind the new study used climate models to estimate the amount of carbon stored in vegetation around the planet in a year. Previous studies had shown this value to be at least 43-76 billion tonnes of carbon per year worldwide. But the study team said it could be around 80 billion tonnes per year, with most of the carbon being stored in leaves and finer roots, i.e., the non-woody parts of the plant.

If the higher value is accurate, plants must also be shedding their carbon sooner than thought. Otherwise, the researchers figured, they would have more carbon than estimated based on satellite data.

The findings also shed light on how quickly carbon is exchanged between vegetation and the atmosphere. "The whole system is kind of cycling faster than we thought before," Dr. Graven said.

But Raghu Murtugudde, a climate scientist at IIT Bombay who wasn't



In nature, volcanic eruptions and life forms vent carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Plants and trees then draw in and store this CO₂ during photosynthesis

involved in the study, advised caution. "To say what the actual impact on the carbon cycle is would be a challenge," he told *The Hindu*. "Theoretically you want to include all the details [in the models], but there are missing understandings, a lack of data, and irreducible uncertainties."

He said the models simulating carbon stored in vegetation in the study make assumptions that, if tweaked, could change the results significantly.

The study's co-author, Will Wieder, a climate scientist with the U.S. National Center for Atmospheric Research, said Dr. Murtugudde's statement was "accurate" but also "short-sighted."

Radioactive representation

In 1995, the World Climate Research Program set up the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP), which prepares climate projections that inform the U.N.'s climate reports.

For the CMIP, scientific institutions in several countries pool their individual climate models together to produce better projections. But most of these models haven't been tested with radiocarbon data.

It's not difficult to input this data, according to Dr. Graven. "Some of them haven't really bothered to do so."

In fact, only one model, the

'Community Earth System Model 2' developed by the U.S. University Corporation for Atmospheric Research, accounted for radiocarbon in its simulations – but it also predicted plants had absorbed much less radiocarbon than Dr. Graven & co. found they should.

Climate models have always had uncertainties.

"They are not wrong. They are imperfect," Dr. Murtugudde said. "It's like a car that pulls to one side, but it can be driven. So it needs to be looked at by a mechanic to make sure it eventually drives straight."

The CMIP models used in the study included some of the latest versions (5 and 6). The shortfalls highlighted in the study are more of a stepping stone for future research into climate modelling, according to Dr. Wieder. "This kind of information is critical as we work to improve the models for CMIP 7 and beyond."

This said, all these climate scientists agreed that radiocarbon needs to be better represented in climate predictions. So far, radiocarbon inclusion has been plagued by "limited resources, both funding and effort, available for model development and observational research," Govindasamy Bala, a climate physicist at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, not involved in the study, told *The Hindu*.

"Representation of isotopes, ice sheet dynamics, permafrost, etc. in models is likely to gain momentum in the future," he added.

(Karthik Vinod is a freelance science journalist and co-founder of *Ed Publica*. He has masters' degrees in astrophysics and science, technology and society. krtvin18@gmail.com)

THE GIST

Radiocarbon released into the atmosphere from nuclear tests bonds with oxygen to form CO₂. Plants absorb this CO₂ during photosynthesis to produce food and, ultimately, energy

Models show carbon stored in vegetation ranges from 43-76 billion to 80 billion tonnes per year. If the higher value is accurate, plants must be shedding carbon sooner. The whole system is cycling faster than we thought before

Scientists agree that radiocarbon needs to be better represented in climate predictions. So far it has been plagued by 'limited resources available for model development and observational research'

BIG SHOT



A drone view shows smoke rising from burning vegetation in the Amazon rainforest in Apui, Amazonas State, Brazil, last week. The blazes are off to their worst start in 20 years for the rainforest, according to government satellite data, following a record-breaking drought. They may pose a tough test for President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who has staked his global reputation on Brazil's environmental stewardship ahead of hosting the COP30 climate summit next year. REUTERS

WHAT IS IT?

Perseid meteor shower

Vasudevan Mukunth

The Perseid meteor shower this year began around July and will last until late August, but their peak activity is going on now — between August 11 and 13. The shower should be visible to the naked eye in many places between midnight and dawn, especially in the northern hemisphere. Local weather conditions could affect this, however.

A meteor shower is a raining-down of meteors over the earth from space at a particular time of year. The Perseid meteors are debris left behind by the comet Swift-Tuttle, which orbits the Sun in an elliptical path that takes 133 years to complete once.

When the earth moves through the cloud of debris intersecting its path around the Sun, its gravity pulls the debris towards itself, producing the meteor shower. In the 1990s, scientists studying the Swift-Tuttle comet noticed there was an important chance it could strike the earth or the moon in mid-2126. The impact could be powerful because the comet is 26 km wide. Fortunately, when scientists performed more careful calculations prompted by this concern, they found the earth was safe from a Swift-Tuttle impact for at least two millennia more. The Perseids shower itself



Perseid meteors streak past in the night sky near Amman, Jordan, in the early hours of August 12, 2004. ALI JAREKJI/REUTERS

doesn't threaten the earth: most meteors burn up in the atmosphere. Some that take a more tangential path through the air produce small fireballs. During its peak, the shower can produce more than 60 meteors per hour.

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to science@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Daily page'